



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Healthy Soil, Thriving Farmers: Soil Health Field Days Promote Agricultural Evolution**

Soil Health Partnership plans events to share environmental, economic benefits of best practices

(ST. LOUIS) – Brent Bible practiced no-till farming and the use of cover crops on his farm in Lafayette, Indiana, but until recently, it was a scattershot approach. By joining the Soil Health Partnership in 2014, he now takes a more disciplined approach, gaining a quantifiable understanding of the health of his soil and improvements in his operation's efficiencies.

The Soil Health Partnership and its demonstration network farmers, like Bible, hope to share ideas fueling the evolution of farming with other producers throughout the Midwest. The partnership will host soil health field days from August through the end of the year.

The field days will demonstrate how changing certain practices can create lasting environmental benefits while potentially increasing farm productivity and income. Examples of educational topics include:

- Cover crop benefits and integration into local cropping systems;
- Nutrient management and other strategies to improve soil health;
- Hands-on soil demonstrations; and
- Farmer panels to discuss local experiences with cover crops.

Cover crops have gained attention for improving soil health because they capture excess nitrogen left in the soil and put good plant residue back into the ground.

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the SHP works closely with diverse organizations including commodity groups, industry, foundations, federal agencies, universities and well-known environmental groups toward the common goal of improving soil health.

"We encourage sound soil practices combined with scientific quantification of results from farmers taking positive actions," said Nick Goeser, SHP director. "Improved crop productivity, environmental gains and economic growth are all benefits of progressive soil management strategies."

The partnership has scheduled about a dozen events in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, and anticipates dozens more in these and other Midwestern states throughout the summer and fall.

Bible plans on hosting one of the field days, where in part, he will share his success with cereal rye and oats on his farm. He also has experience with tillage cover such as turnips, radishes and snow peas.

“We have tried several different blends of cover crops, looking for the right combination,” he said. “It has had its challenges sometimes, but it has been a good experience overall. Our costs are lower, plus we have less erosion and runoff.”

For a complete list of Soil Health Field Days, visit [SoilHealthPartnership.org](http://SoilHealthPartnership.org). Events will be added throughout the summer.

### **About the Soil Health Partnership**

The Soil Health Partnership brings together diverse partner organizations including commodity groups, federal agencies, universities and environmental groups to work toward the common goal of improving soil health. Over a five-year period, the SHP will identify, test and measure farm management practices that improve soil health and benefit farmers. We believe the results of this farmer-led project will provide a platform for sharing peer-to-peer information, and lend resources to benefit agricultural sustainability and profitability. An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, we provide the spark for greater understanding and implementation of agricultural best practices to protect resources for future generations. For more, visit [soilhealthpartnership.org](http://soilhealthpartnership.org).



## NEWS RELEASE

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October 16, 2015

Springfield field tour to promote benefits of improved soil health, water quality  
This Springfield event will demonstrate cover crop benefits, soil testing and more.

(SPRINGFIELD, Ill.) – Cover crops, conservation tillage and water quality testing are some of the latest farming buzzwords—but they are catching on for good reason. These activities can potentially improve yields and economic return for Illinois farmers, while reaping substantial environmental benefits in the process.

The Soil Health Partnership and the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices invite farmers to attend a tour of several locations in the Lake Springfield watershed for demonstrations of tools to help improve soil health and water quality. Tour stops will feature cover crops, bioreactors and several field plots on Friday, Nov. 6.

The tour begins at Lincoln Land Community College at 9 a.m. Later in the morning, busses will take participants to the farms of Dave Moose and Tim Seifert, and also to the United States Geological Services Monitoring Site for a Watershed Management program update. The day will conclude at 2:45 p.m.

The field tour will demonstrate how a combination of practices can create lasting environmental benefits while possibly increasing farm productivity and income. The day's activities will include:

- Field walks
- Water quality monitoring equipment demonstrations
- Education on bioreactors
- Agricultural watershed management programs
- Discussions on practical means to improve soil health and water quality

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the Soil Health Partnership works closely with diverse organizations including commodity groups, industry, foundations, federal agencies, universities and well-known environmental groups toward common goals.

“Our partnership with farmers puts good soil practices in real-life environments for others to see,” said Nick Goeser, SHP Director. “More importantly, we are gathering the scientific data needed to truly quantify that these positive actions are making an impact both for the producer and in our environment. Improved yields, environmental betterment and economic gains are all benefits of progressive soil management strategies.”

Please register for this event by contacting Lyndsey Ramsey or at (309) 557-3279. Lunch will be served.

#### About the CBMP

The Illinois Council on Best Management Practices (CBMP) is a coalition of agricultural organizations and agribusinesses including Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Corn Growers Association, Illinois Soybean Association, Illinois Pork Producers Association, Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association, Syngenta, GROWMARK, and Monsanto. CBMP was founded in 1999 and works to assist and encourage adoption of best management practices (BMPs) to protect and enhance natural resources and the sustainability of agriculture in Illinois. For more, visit [illinoiscbmp.org](http://illinoiscbmp.org).

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July 16, 2015

### Soil Health Partnership Joins White House Drought Symposium

Healthy soil practices can play key role in drought mitigation, group says

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – A July 15 White House Drought Symposium brought about 40 diverse groups together to discuss the federal government’s role in building drought resilience into water management systems.

Among those at the table was Nicholas Goeser, director of the Soil Health Partnership. The organization’s mission is to advance agricultural sustainability and productivity by quantifying and communicating the economic and environmental benefits of improved soil health.

“Many aspects of soil health play a direct role in drought mitigation,” Goeser said. “Improved soil organic matter, soil water holding capacity, infiltration, and aggregate stability all enhance the soil’s ability to retain moisture to help withstand the effects of drought.”

Goeser said several soil management practices, such as cover cropping and conservation tillage, can help to build soil health and defend against drought. This is accomplished by improving the ability of soil to absorb precipitation, reducing soil temperature and soil evaporation, and enhancing the ability of plants to take up soil moisture.

During the meeting, White House officials sought input on ways the federal government can reduce barriers to drought mitigation efforts, and to evaluate how public–private partnerships can help to build and implement strategies for long-term drought resilience.

The symposium ended with a call to continue dialogue and expand upon opportunities presented during the panel discussions. About the Soil Health Partnership The Soil Health Partnership brings together diverse partner organizations including commodity groups, federal agencies, universities and environmental groups to work toward the common goal of improving soil health. Over a five-year period, the SHP will identify, test and measure farm management practices that improve soil health and benefit farmers. We believe the results of this farmer-led

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