



NEWS RELEASE

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Soil Health Partnership to expand to 100 farm sites for 2017

In large soil health data project, enrolled farmers serve as agents of change in agriculture

(ST. LOUIS) March 7, 2017 – This year, 35 more farms will join a revolutionary research effort that hopes to show U.S. farmers how sustainability through soil health can also lead to increased profitability. The [Soil Health Partnership](#) announced the planned expansion to 100 farms at the 2017 Commodity Classic, March 2 – 4 in San Antonio.

This is the largest farmer-led soil health research project of its kind, said Nick Goeser, SHP director.

“We believe our long-term data on real, working farms will result in a better understanding of the links between soil health and our farmers’ crop yields, economic investments and environmental risk,” Goeser said. “Our enrolled farmers are the backbone of this project, both for their participation in the data collection process, and for serving as ambassadors in this agricultural shift.”

The organization soon begins its fourth year identifying, testing and measuring farm management practices that improve sustainability through soil health. These practices include:

- Growing cover crops to improve water infiltration, prevent erosion and prevent nutrient losses,
- Implementing conservation tillage like no-till or strip-till improve aggregate stability and soil structure, and
- Using advanced, science-based nutrient management techniques to reduce nutrient loss to air and water.

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the program’s goal is to quantify the benefits of these practices from an economic standpoint, showing farmers how healthy soil benefits their bottom line.

Recent financial commitments from organizations and companies with common interests in sustainability through soil health are making it possible for SHP to expand to 100 farms a full year ahead of schedule. This includes a \$4 million pledge in 2016 from the Midwest Row Crop Collaborative, backed by Cargill, the Environmental Defense Fund, General Mills, Kellogg Company, Monsanto, PepsiCo, Unilever, Land O’ Lakes, The Nature Conservancy, Walmart and the World Wildlife Fund.

(more)

Most farmers enrolled in SHP live in the key states of Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, with additional sites in Nebraska, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri and North Dakota. The new farm sites, when identified, will likely expand beyond the current nine Midwestern states.

The data collection process is scientifically rigorous, led by a Scientific Advisory Council and executed by SHP's team of field managers and agronomists. The staff has recently expanded, hiring a fifth field manager and an operations manager.

"The momentum behind this effort is nothing short of exhilarating," Goeser said. "We look forward to releasing early data of this monumental effort soon."

About the Soil Health Partnership

The Soil Health Partnership is a farmer-led initiative that fosters transformation in agriculture through improved soil health, benefiting both farmer profitability and the environment. The SHP tests, measures and advances progressive farm management practices that will enhance sustainability and farm economics for generations to come. SHP brings together diverse partners to work towards common goals. At least a ten-year scientific program led by the National Corn Growers Association, our vision is driven by initial and continuing funding and guidance from NCGA, Monsanto, the Walton Family Foundation, the Midwest Row Crop Collaborative and USDA, with technical support from The Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund. For more, visit soilhealthpartnership.org.

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