

Soil Health Partnership – A Brief Introduction

What is the Soil Health Partnership?

The Soil Health Partnership is a farmer led initiative that brings together diverse partner organizations including federal agencies, universities and environmental groups to work toward the common goal of improving soil health.

The SHP is identifying, testing and measuring farm management practices that improve soil health and benefit farmers.

Our ultimate goal is to measure and communicate the economic and environmental benefits of different soil management strategies, and provide a set of regionally specific, data-driven recommendations that farmers can use to improve the productivity and sustainability of their farms.

How is the Soil Health Partnership achieving this goal?

We have 65 farmers enrolled in SHP (expanding to 100 by 2017) that are transitioning to adoption of cover crops, conservation tillage and advanced nutrient management.

SHP farms are serving as showcases for other farmers to investigate innovative soil management practices and talk about costs and benefits.

SHP has a very strong Science Advisory Council that has helped establish standardized research protocols.

Data from SHP will be utilized to help update locally specific farmer recommendations and publish findings in scientific journals.

SHP is supporting soil health networking and technical assistance that will help growers and their advisors make decisions that will result in positive changes for the profitability of their operation and the sustainability of the soil.

Who is eligible to be a Soil Health Partnership Demonstration Farmer?

The goal for the Soil Health Partnership Demonstration Farm Network is to enroll farmers that accurately represent the farming community across the corn-belt.

We aim to enroll transitioning farmers with an interest in soil health, cover crops, conservation tillage or advanced nutrient management, but they do not have to be experts.

Our farmers must have a commitment to collecting high quality precision field and economic practice data and sharing the results of the research on their farm with others to increase the adoption of practices through field days, media interactions, and online forums.

What are the benefits of becoming a Soil Health Partnership Demonstration Network Farmer?

Individual research results with summaries of how new management practices impact soil health, plant health, crop yields and economic outcomes on your farm.

SHP also offers the opportunity to be at the forefront of agricultural evolution while making their farm more profitable.

What are the expectations of a Soil Health Partnership Demonstration Network Farmer?

Enroll an individual field between 20-80 acres in the SHP for a 5 year period.

Implement randomized replicated strips comparing standard practices vs practices directed at improving soil health.

Allow for soil health samples to be collected in the spring by an agronomist of the farmers choosing.

Collect calibrated yield data.

Provide economic data about the practices utilized on the demonstration network site.

Serve as host for at least one field day annually.

Attend the annual Soil Health Summit and be available for other travel opportunities to communicate SHP findings.

Where are the current Soil Health Partnership Demonstration Farms?

