



## International Certified Crop Adviser Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting (Hybrid)

Aug. 19-20, 2025, Denver, CO (Mountain Time Zone)

[www.sciencesocieties.org/certified-crop-adviser/boards/minutes](http://www.sciencesocieties.org/certified-crop-adviser/boards/minutes)

### ICCA Executive Committee

- Karl Wyant, Chair (In person)
- Sandy Endicott, Past Chair (In person)
- Aaron Breimer, Vice Chair (In person)
- Andy Knepp, ASA ICCA Rep. (In person)
- Isaac Wolford, ARA Rep. (In person)

### Staff

- Lara Bryant, Comp. Relations Assoc. Dir.
- Jim Cudahy, CEO
- Dawn Gibas, Assessments Manager
- Luther Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
- Sara Uttech, Governance Director

### Arkansas

- Sterling Clifton, Admin (In person)

### Atlantic Provinces

- Walter J. Brown, Admin (Virtual)
- Jessica D'Entremont, Chair (Virtual)
- Rosalie Gillis-Madden, Vice Chair (Virtual)

### Brazil

- Flávio Bolzan, Administrator (Virtual)
- Luiz Lucchesi, Chair (Virtual)

### Colorado

- Sally Jones-Diamond, Vice Chair (In person)
- Alex Park, Chair (In person)

### Florida

- Mary Hartney, Admin (Virtual)
- Gene McAvoy, Board (In person)

### Illinois

- Karen Corrigan, Chair (Virtual / mixed)
- Lisa Martin, Admin (In person)
- Kris Reynolds, Vice Chair (In person)

### Indiana

- Abby Horlacher, Chair (Virtual)
- Carl Joern, Vice Chair (Virtual)
- Peter Kovacs, (Virtual)
- Mershon Tobin, Admin (Virtual)

### Iowa

- Ben Gleason, Admin (Virtual)
- David Simonson, Board (In person)

### Kansas

- Nathan Eck (Virtual)
- Clay Fagan (Virtual)

### Kentucky

- Tod Griffin (Virtual)

### Louisiana

- Tim Ford (Virtual)

### Mexico

- Juan Carlos Salinas Navarrete, Vice Chair (In person)
- Lidia Sánchez, Admin (Virtual)
- Charles van der Mersch, Chair (Virtual)

### Michigan

- Chuck Lippstreu, Admin (In person)
- Tim Schaub, Chair (In person)

### Mid-Atlantic Region

- Jennifer Gannon, Admin (Virtual)

### Minnesota: No attendees

### Mississippi:

- Michael Mulvaney, Admin (Virtual)

### Missouri: Andrea Rice, Admin (Virtual)

### Nebraska: Connie Schroeder, Admin (Virtual)

### New Mexico: No attendees

### North Carolina: No attendees

### North Dakota: No attendees

### Northeast Region:

- Shawn Wallace, Chair (Virtual)

### Northwest Region:

- Jake Shelburne, Board (In person)

### Ohio

- Jason Hartschuh, Chair (In person)
- Janice Welsheimer, Admin (In person)

### Oklahoma: No attendees

### Ontario Province

- Erin Burton, Admin (Virtual)
- Susan Fitzgerald, Admin (Virtual)
- Daina McMurray, Admin (Virtual)
- Nicole Weber, Chair (Virtual)

### Pennsylvania

- Ben Hushon, Board (Virtual)
- Jennifer Reed-Harry, Admin (Virtual)
- Frank Schneider, Board (Virtual)

### Prairie Provinces

- Mary-Jane Debreuil, Admin (In person)
- Wendy McDonald, Vice Chair (In person)
- David McKerchar, Chair (In person)

### Rocky Mountain: No attendees

### South Carolina:

- Jonathan Croft, Board (Virtual)

### South Dakota

- Sara Bauder, (Virtual)
- Paul Luetjen, Vice Chair (In person)
- Liv Stavick, Admin (Virtual)

### Southeast: No attendees

### Tennessee

- Sarah Dodd, Chair (Virtual)
- Julie Reeves, (Virtual)

### Texas: No attendees

### Western Region

- Miranda Driver, Admin (In person)
- Stephen Vasquez, Chair (In person)

### Wisconsin: No attendees

### Others:

- Donnie Taylor, ARA (In person)

## **Monday Aug. 18**

Admins Social Event at Tarantula Billiards Bar & Grill hosted by Component Relations Associate Director Lara Bryant.

## **Tuesday Aug. 19, 2025**

1. Chair Karl Wyant and Colorado Chair Alex Park welcomed the board to Denver.
2. Chair Karl Wyant recognized the ICCA of the Year Matt Montgomery, Beck's Superior Hybrids, IL who joined remotely. Karl and Andy Knepp shared Matt's 30-year career as a CCA, highlighting his integrity, credibility, and humility. Matt's acceptance emphasized the importance of serving farmers and the value of the CCA program, while encouraging humility and adherence to the Golden and Silver Rules in ag advising.
  - View: [Crops & Soils article on ICCA of the Year Matt Montgomery](#)
3. ACTION: Motion by David Simonson, seconded by Stephen Vasquez, to approve the Consent Agenda. Unanimous approval.
  - Aug. 19-2025, 2025 ICCA Board Agenda (Document posted)
  - June 12, 2025 ICCA Board Minutes (Document posted)
4. Certification Updates:
  - Vice Chair Aaron Breimer presented Q2 2025 ICCA Financials (Document posted). The 2026 budget will be finalized and sent via email to the ICCA Board for approval in September. Staff were asked to clarify and provide a detailed breakdown of indirect costs.
    - Current ICCA reserves are \$1,595,366 as of June 30, 2025
  - Component Relations Assoc Director Lara Bryant presented the 2025 Certification Review (Presentation Posted):
    - New: Admin and Board Virtual Training programs and online CCA Connect Series—opportunities for CCAs to connect and learn from each other
    - Current Statistics: we have improved our ability to pull and analyze data with the hiring of Stanley Wu that will ultimately help us all make better decisions
    - The program is gaining ~400 new CCAs, but losing ~800 annually. Reasons we lose CCAs: retirement, change in responsibilities, and the number one reason is because of CEUs. Staff will investigate long-term trends of CCA drop rates.
    - We want to increase our promotion of the CCA Candidate program, where someone passes the exam but does not yet have the experience.
  - Chair Karl Wyant reported on the Organic Specialty Certification, including a meeting in June with test questions and Performance Objectives finalized. The plan is to start with Western Region in 2026, and roll it out nationally with an opportunity to expand to Mexico and Brazil.
  - Chair Karl Wyant reported on the Retailer Award Update. Many employers used to require CCA certification. We want to recognize the retailers who are key partners. We have good momentum for a 2026 launch. Looking at presenting the award at an ARA event so they receive the award in front of their peers.
5. CEO Jim Cudahy presented the ICCA Strategic Plan, developed through volunteer and staff collaboration. The plan aims to address program challenges—such as outdated technology, complex applications, and limited marketing coordination—while focusing on measurable progress and resource allocation. (Presentation posted). Strategic objectives:
  - Demonstrably increase recognition and appreciation of the CCA credential among stakeholder groups
  - Continually increase the number of professionals holding the CCA credential
  - Expand the value proposition of holding the CCA credential and being part of the CCA community
  - Modernize the infrastructure that supports the CCA program

The Board emphasized simplifying procedures, improving communication, tracking KPIs, and developing a new compact outlining mutual expectations, while challenging long-standing practices (aka sacred cows) to ensure program success over the next five years. The group participated in an exercise on global brand adaptation strategies. The group explored how international companies maintain strong, consistent brands globally while adapting locally, citing examples like Domino's, Hilton, Apple, Starbucks, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Chick-fil-A, and Airbnb. Key factors included clear brand standards, service quality, strong training, technology integration, and cultural adaptability without losing identity. The discussion emphasized consistent customer experiences, accountability, feedback, and unified brand

practices. These principles were noted as directly applicable to the CCA International Program, while tailoring it to local needs.

6. Prairie Provinces Board Chair Wendy McDonald presented an overview of agrology and its regulation in Canada. Agrologists are provincially regulated professionals who must meet specific education and experience requirements, while certified crop advisers are a voluntary designation. Requirements for maintaining both designations include ongoing professional development and adherence to a code of ethics. There are challenges of regulating agrology across different provinces in Canada and the importance of protecting the public through proper licensing. (Presentation posted)
7. ACTION: Motion by Steve Vasquez to extend the ICCA Officer Terms by two years for vice chair, chair, and past chair, beginning in 2026, seconded by Alex Park. The motion carries, 16-2.
8. ACTION: Motion by Kris Reynolds to offer local boards an in-person exam proctor option in 2026, seconded by Steve Vasquez. Unanimous approval. Illinois and Indiana offered to pilot the program before offering it as an option to other boards.
9. ACTION: Motion by Tim Schaub to approve the 2026 ICCA Strategic Plan as presented by CEO Jim Cudahy and Associate Director Lara Bryant, seconded by Steve Vasquez. Motion was amended by Sandy Endicott to include a 6-month deadline to provide an operational plan with measurable outcomes. Unanimous approval.
10. Admin Excellence Award Janice Welsheimer, Ohio as presented by Chair Karl Wyant
  - View: [Crops & Soils article about Admin Excellence Award recipient Janice Welsheimer](#)
  - Past Chair Sandy Endicott announced Karen Corrigan of Illinois as the 2026 Vice Chair.
  - Chair Karl Wyant honored Past Chair Sandy Endicott with a plaque.

### **Wednesday Aug. 20, 2025**

1. Luiz Lucchesi, a professor at the University of Parana, discussed Brazil's Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAe) program, developed with ASA and Confea. Brazil's agronomy profession is federally regulated, with one-third of agronomists registered. Luiz noted concerns about educational quality due to rapid program growth and described how the CPAe certification promotes holistic education across areas like biotechnology and water management. He also presented on the ICCA program in Brazil, a voluntary certification aligned with international standards, with potential reach of 5% of the country's 100,000 agricultural professionals.
2. CEO Jim Cudahy led a discussion on implementing the new ICCA Strategic Plan, highlighting the need for a compact between national headquarters and local boards. Headquarters will provide high-level support while raising expectations for boards to meet minimum standards. Roles were clarified: local boards handle CEU reviews, program promotion, and stakeholder relationships, while headquarters manages exams, databases, national/international marketing, and communication. Opportunities for improvement include better onboarding, standardized procedures, and enhanced training materials. Challenges identified included inactive boards and low participation, with consolidation suggested to improve efficiency. Recommendations focused on improving communication, sharing resources, fostering community opportunities for CCAs, and establishing clear board standards with accountability. Lara Bryant will recruit volunteers for the CCA Application Process Task Force, and Chair Karl Wyant will work with the Executive Committee to set minimum board participation standards for board approval.
3. Chair Karl Wyant led a Board Share on New Ideas and Needs. Summaries by topic include:

#### **Webinars & Online CCA Calendar:**

- Stephen Vasquez: Can we create a portal to upload and share webinars? This could be a resource for local boards, admins, and CCAs.
- Juan Carlos: Is there a way for local boards to upload their webinars to the main ICCA YouTube channel as a central clearinghouse?
- Stephen Vasquez: Enhance the online CEU calendar by allowing clickable event details (bio, agenda), adding regional filters to avoid duplicate submissions, and making virtual/online events visible to all participants regardless of state or region.
- Mary-Jane Debreuil: Live event QR codes for CEUs should expire with the event date; webinars may keep theirs since CCAs view them year-round. Staff to review.

#### **Recognition, including Awards (CCA of the Year, etc.)**

- Aaron Breimer: CCAs are our best advocates, consider recognition beyond a 25-year pin.
- Abigail Horlacher: Indiana highlights CCAs through a conference, lunch features CCA of the Year, Hall of Fame, and retirements. This is a low-cost way to highlight CCAs – feature them on

the website, social media, and Prairie Farmer. We partner with Purdue to bring in lots of speakers to the event, offer CEUs.

- David Simonson: We partner with the local agri-business association event to offer CEUs and recognize CCA service milestones with plaques—smaller, cost-effective plates for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years displayed. This recognition promotes the program to non-CCAs in the audience. Headquarters provides an annual list of certification dates, and the CCA of the Year is also honored at this event.
- Agronomy Challenge: Partner with local universities to host a hands-on, Jeopardy-style event for undergraduates. Board members leverage their connections to organize the event across multiple schools, offering prizes and opportunities for CCAs to mentor student teams.
- Jake Shelburne: Nominations for ICCA of the Year remain active for three years, with the package updated as needed, ensuring it stays current without requiring resubmission.
- Sandy Endicott: Only one-third of boards submit for awards, and just 6 nominations for ICCA of the Year. Website improvements to simplify the process. Boards are encouraged to promote awards in local news, state meetings, and ag magazines, including photos. Award rollout: nominations November–January, announcement in March. Greenfield Scholars Program: Five selected this year from only seven applicants; targets college students to be mentored by a local CCA and includes a free ASA CANVAS trip. CCA Conservationist of the Year: No applicants this year; opportunities exist for USDA-NRCS TSP/Conservation nominees and may adjust timing. Sandy will ensure Excel list of awards and deadlines is sent to Board Chairs and Admins.
- Mershon Tobin: Is there a reason the reference letter has to be re-submitted for ICCA of the Year each year, can we improve this? Explore options.
- David Mc Kerchar: High Plains Journal, Western Producer, they publish stories about agrologists that goes over very well with farmers – how to get CCAs there. We also recognize retailers for Agronomists, Retailer of the Year Award. We want to recognize those retailers who hire CCAs, make the time and effort to apply.
- Ohio: Nomination windows should be flexible—send to local boards when convenient. Boards can submit at their own pace, and if a nominee is missed one year, their name can be submitted the following year.
- Tim Schaub: We highlight CCAs on our website as a spotlight as a way to acknowledge CCAs.
- Alex Park: Identify ag retailers in the area to foster peer competition. Engage Sales Managers, Ops Managers at co-ops, and Agronomy VPs as contacts to the board to initiate conversations.
- Jason Horlacher: We have to stop talking to ourselves, what do Ag Retailers want? We need to start talking to ag retailers to help them understand why they should hire and promote CCAs.
- Donnie Taylor: The ARA newsletter goes out every-other week, if you have something to announce, a call for nominations or when awards are announced, send him the Press Release.
- Stephen Vasquez: The Western Region offers \$500 honoraria to professors at universities and junior colleges in soil science or ag-related fields, recognizing them at the annual meeting. Student scholarships, including the Alan Romander Award, are awarded across Northern, Central Valley, Desert, and Coastline regions, focusing on applied students, including junior college recipients, with highlights on LinkedIn. Former scholarship recipients are encouraged to become CCAs and engage with regional committees. Scholarships and recognition are also presented at Crop Clubs, with a board member serving as program champion.
- Janice Welsheimer: Our boards visit the universities, interact with new faculty, introduce them to our board members, some didn't even know we had a local board. We also connect our Board with the Ohio Soybean Association.

### **Marketing, Website & Social Media**

- David Mc Kerchar: Marketing really drives social media, YouTube channel, submit interviews, photos, etc.
- Prairie Province: 28-30% of revenue spent on marketing.
- David Mc Kerchar: Certified Crop Adviser on Linked In, only 20-30 likes. How do we get more likes? Post about CCS, do a hashtag contest, appeal to a wider audience.
- Chuck Lipstreu: Our MichiganCCA.org website is on Squarespace. Explore offering a template for local boards that aligns with the CCA brand/logo. This could serve as a local communication tool with expanded content—board profiles, exam info, program details—while directing visitors to the main ASA/CCA site for certification information.

- Wendy McDonald: We needed content for our website highlighting CCAs, so we ran a photo contest, and offered prizes. One of our board members asked a CCA and then we highlighted them on a whole variety of CCA photos, pop up banner made.

### **Training/Database/Program**

- Database Training & Access: Provide better training for local boards on database use and roster management; ensure company names are captured and exportable.
  - Aaron Breimer: Consider mandatory employer info for applicants, with options for self-employed candidates.
  - Amnesty Program Marketing: Launch a marketing push to eligible individuals, with updated online forms; boards should track outreach and stay engaged.
  - Targeted Support: Give local boards access to exam and amnesty data to reach candidates who haven't passed and help them complete certification.
  - Amnesty lists, including who passed and failed, but more detailed data would help regions target candidates effectively. Need for access to on-board and market the program, focusing on "low-hanging fruit" candidates who could become CCAs. Regions should be able to reach out locally, share scores (with consent), and support candidates, especially self-employed or those without an employer—to complete certification. The goal is to maximize engagement and help candidates succeed, with clear guidance on using exam and outreach data.
4. Joe Ziobro, Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds and Frank Farruggia Office of Pesticide Programs provided an update from the Environmental Protection Agency. Joe provided an overview of Clean Water Act programs, including funding for agricultural projects and nutrient pollution initiatives. Frank discussed EPA's efforts to protect endangered species from pesticides, detailing risk assessments, mitigation strategies, and collaborative work with USDA and Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure targeted protections. (presentation posted)
  5. Donnie Taylor, Ag Retailers Association, discussed the partnership between ARA and ICCA and the challenges facing the program. He explains that many ag retailers no longer see value in CCA certification as organizations have shifted to more marketing-focused approaches with internal training programs. Taylor suggests highlighting the benefits, exploring potential insurance premium discounts for CCAs, and better communicating the value proposition to younger management. (Presentation posted)

Consensus to adjourn.

### *Colorado & Western Region CCA Boards Hosting Tours*

#### **Wednesday CSU-Spur - 4780 National**

#### **Western Dr., Park North of Terra Building**

- Meet in Hyatt lobby at 12:45pm, 1pm **Leave Hyatt via Ubers**
- Arrive @ Terra Lobby: 1:25 pm, Tour of CSU Spur: 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
- Q+A in Alfalfa Classroom: 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
- **Depart CSU-Spur Campus: 5:00pm Ubers**
- **3 Board Approved CEUs (scan QR code):**
  - Nutrient Management CEUs: 0.5
  - Soil & Water Management CEUs: 0.5
  - Integrated Pest Management CEUs: 0.5
  - Crop Management CEUs: 0.5
  - Professional Development CEUs: 1

#### **Thursday CSU Research Farm & Budweiser**

- Meet in Lobby @ 7:30am, **Leave @ 7:45am**
- CSU Farm Tour @ 9:00am – 11:00am
- Lunch – ARDEC @ 11:00am–12:30pm
- Leave for Budweiser Research Farm @ 12:30pm; Tour @ 1:00-2:30pm
- Leave for New Belgium @ 2:30pm; Beers @ 3-5pm
- **Leave for Hyatt @ 5:00pm**
- **5 Board Approved CEUs (scan QR Code):**
  - Nutrient Management CEUs: **0.5**
  - Soil & Water Management CEUs: **1**
  - Integrated Pest Management CEUs: **0.5**
  - Crop Management CEUs: **1**
  - Professional Development CEUs: **1**
  - Sustainability CEUs: **0.5**
  - Precision Ag CEUs: **0.5**