

ICCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Hybrid/In-Person, Niagara Falls, Ontario

Tuesday Aug. 25, 2026

- 9:30 AM - 6:00 PM Niagara Tour hosted by Ontario CCA Board: Wineries, brewery, ginseng, and commercial cannabis growing (Document 3) - 5 CEUs in Crop Management

Wednesday Aug. 26, 2026

ICCA Board Website | ICCA Strategic Plan | Certification & Specialty Dashboards | CCA Map

01	**Welcome & Announcements**	
	• Welcome from Aaron Breimer included a cultural orientation for international attendees covering currency, measurements, taxes, and local food recommendations. • The Ontario CCA Board was thanked for hosting the meeting and tours, including Chair Nicole Weber, Vice Chair Meagan Ioi, and Administrators Susan Fitzgerald, Erin Burton, and Daina McMurray. • Edit Zoom name: Put your Local Board first to help track attendance. Example: Iowa - David Simonson	**9:00 AM** **Aaron Breimer**
02	**Approve Consent Agenda**	
	Action: Motion by David McKerchar, seconded by Tim Schaub, to approve Consent Agenda. Unanimous approval. • ICCA Board Minutes, June 4, 2026 (Document 2)	**9:05 AM** **Aaron Breimer**
03	**Local Boards Best Practices: Illinois**	
	• Illinois CCA Board applied for Soybean Association funds to support students to cover study materials and exam fees, mentored by several Community College professors/CCAs • $30,000 one-year grant, building on existing Soy Envoy relationship • Boards are encouraged to pursue similar partnerships with commodity organizations in their states	**9:07 AM** **Karen Corrigan** **Lisa Martin**
04	**Update: ASA Headquarters**	
	• CEO Jim Cudahy announced: Leon Katcharian joined as Director of Certification in May, Tina Sullivan joined as Certification Manager in June, Emma Johnston moved to Exam Program Coordinator, replacing Stanley Wu who is pursuing an MBA, and Luther Smith will	**9:25 AM** **Jim Cudahy**

retire on Dec. 31 after 31+ years, including the CCA program and two terms as interim CEO
- New staff guide distributed to improve collaboration between headquarters and local boards, encouraging direct contact with relevant staff (Document 7)
- Goal of making certification a whole-organization effort
- Results of the March 2026 Local Board Collaboration Survey were presented. The results will inform ongoing improvements to communication, governance, and collaboration between headquarters and local boards, including:
    - Proactive/timely/transparent communication; clarified governance and decision-making roles; rebuilding trust through collaboration; improved consistency and accountability; meaningful local board engagement in strategic planning; modernized tools and systems; and stronger articulation of the CCA value proposition

05 Progress Report & Feedback ICCA Strategic Plan

9:45 AM
Jim Cudahy
Aaron Breimer

- CEO Jim Cudahy provided an overview of the progress on the 2026-2030 ICCA Strategic Plan approved in August 2025 covering four strategic objectives (Document 4).
- Plans to focus quarterly meetings on a specific strategic objective
- The most significant progress on the marketing objective is ASA's Invest in CCAs campaign ($500,000) and a Marketing Working Group made up of local board representatives
- Infrastructure improvements are ongoing; the application simplification effort is a notable achievement
- Exam Prep Materials updated to include CCA Essential Video Series, updated CCA glossary, and CCA flashcards. Boards with exam prep needs contact Ann Edahl
- New grassroots advocacy platform "Muster" enables CCAs to contact legislators on specific topics.
- Objective 3, Expand the Value Proposition, we piloted "Canvas in the Field" in Pennsylvania in July; attendance was low but showed value in connecting research scientists with CCAs. A "Neighborhood" networking was piloted in six university towns (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Oregon, and others) with modest but positive results. The Sustainable Agronomy Conference had 4,000 registrants
    - Suggestion made for headquarters to inventory which local boards already host networking/educational events to identify gaps and leverage existing expertise
- Objective 4 Modernize Infrastructure: an independent assessment of the certification program was conducted. The CCA Application Task Force resulted in resolutions to simplify the application process

06 Certification by the Numbers

10:30 AM
Tina Sullivan

- Certification Manager Tina Sullivan presented CCA membership data showing a 12% decline in total CCAs from 2022-2026, with insufficient CEUs, non-payment of renewal fees, and retirement as the top reasons for credential loss
- 30,000 CEU events submitted from January 2025-July 2026, sufficient CEUs exist; the issue is awareness and accessibility. Further analysis of CEU data by region and format (online vs. in-person) needed
- Plans to improve the CEU calendar, application form, and budget form
- Develop CCA awareness outreach to FFA members and grad students

- The amnesty program will be reviewed for effectiveness across boards

07 Exams by the Numbers

10:55 AM
Dawn Gibas

- Dawn Gibas reported that 2026 Exam registrations are slightly down compared to 2024 and 2025, attributed in part to economic pressures on producers and Section exams are gaining traction and appear to be meeting a need for flexibility
- Specialty exam relevance will be reviewed as participation is declining; evaluating whether some specialty content could be rolled into local exams
- Seeking feedback on a proposal from the Northeast Region for an alternate local board exam path focused on horticultural and specialty crops (Document 5). The executive committee will continue discussions and bring a proposal to the next quarterly board meeting
- The Organic Specialty Exam launched in August 2026, supported by a USDA Transition to Organic Production (TOP) grant. A special registration window Sept. 9-30 for the November 2026 exam, with a $100 discount for the first 150 U.S. registrants using the promo code
- A meeting was held to explore a standalone organic certification program for non-CCAs (those in ecosystems, natural resources, soils). A survey is being drafted for September to assess interest
- Will continue to review in-person pilot testing, noting it is labor-intensive for both local boards and headquarters staff. Testing center option will be explored as an alternative

08 Discussion: Executive Committee

11:30 AM
Aaron Breimer
Sara Uttech

- Chair Aaron Breimer discussed the need for clarifications in the Policy Manual to Chair, Vice Chair, and Past Chair's roles and responsibilities, including attendance counting towards quorum and voting
- Following discussion, a motion to table the decision was passed allowing time for further clarification. It will be revisited at the next quarterly Board meeting

09 Workforce Development: DigInDoGood.com

1:00 PM
Valette Piper
Hanna Jeske

- Hanna Jeske and Valette Piper presented the "Dig In, Do Good" workforce development campaign targeting high school students that launched in May 2026, showing strong early results with 10 million impressions and 20,000 website users in the first quarter
- Boards are encouraged to share the campaign, engage with social media, and send authentic photos of CCAs at work for use on the website: DigInDoGood.com to Colleagues, Students, Teachers
- Follow on Social Media: Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, SnapChat

10 Marketing

1:35 PM
Hanna Jeske

- Hanna Jeske presented the “Invest in CCAs campaign, a $500,000 ASA-funded marketing initiative to increase and overall CCAs, including increasing exam registrations
- Local board representatives on the Marketing Task Force helped to identify the primary target audience as potential certificants; secondary audiences are employers and producers

- Phase 1: research-grounded discovery (surveys, focus groups, data analysis, social listening) to understand audience perceptions and define value propositions
- Phase 2: targeted marketing and communication campaigns with messaging focusing on the value of being knowledgeable in the latest field developments and the exclusivity of the credential
- Boards are encouraged to participate in the upcoming survey and share relevant data.
- CCA Marketing Resources on CCA Website

11 ICCA Financials

- Director of Finance Sanford Moore presented the 2026 ICCA Quarter 2 Financial Dashboard showing revenue of $678,000 (up 8%) and expenses of $671,000 (up 18%), with a net profit of $137,000 (Document 6)
- The 2027 ICCA Budget is in development
- Contact Sanford Moore with any financial questions

2:20 PM
Sanford Moore
Karen Corrigan

12 ICCA Awards

- 2026 ASA Greenfield Scholars, recognized at CANVAS in Portland – undergrads with full travel support and mentoring by local CCAs:
  - Justin Bedel (Purdue University)
  - Brandon Boyd (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
  - Benton Kerr (Kansas State University)
  - Sydney Schilling (Iowa State University)
  - Raena Stierwalt (Univ. of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign)
- Highlight 2026 ICCA Awards, recognized at this reception:
  - ICCA of the Year: Joe Nester, OH: Crops & Soils article
  - Admin Excellence Award: Lisa Martin, IL: Crops & Soils article
- Growth in CCA of the Year nominations: from single digits to 18 applications this year
- 2027 ICCA Awards: ICCA of the Year Award opens December, closes late February; 2027 Greenfield Scholars opens mid-January, closes mid-March

2:40 PM
Karl Wyant

13 Adjourn Day One

- Closing announcements
- 4:45-6:15pm Reception – all invited (including spouses/guests)

3:30 PM
Aaron Breimer

Thursday Aug. 27, 2026

01 Certification Assessment

- Director of Certification Leon Katcharian announced that the independent assessment of the certification program is complete. Programs reviewed:
  - CCA – National and Regional
  - Certified Professional Soil Scientists (CPSS)
  - Specialties: 4R NMS, Sustainability, others as requested
- Staff working with assessor on clarification of findings and to finalize results. Assessor will present findings in an upcoming town hall

9:05 AM
Leon Katcharain

02 Volunteer Leadership

- Thinking ahead to Spring 2027 Vice Chair Election – chair, vice chair, past chair, ARA Representative, and ICCA Rep. on ASA Board described their roles and responsibilities:
  - Chair: Aaron Breimer, 2-year term
  - Vice Chair: Karen Corrigan, 2-year term
  - Past Chair: Karl Wyant, 2-year term
  - Ag Retailers Association (ARA) Rep.: Isaac Wolford, 3-year term
  - ICCA Rep. on ASA Board: Mike Mulvaney, 3-year term

9:15 AM
Aaron Breimer
Karen Corrigan
Karl Wyant
Isaac Wolford
Mike Mulvaney

03 ICCA Study Guide & Study Tools

Senior Manager for Educational Materials Ann Edahl presented an update on the Study Guide and Study Tools on the CCA Website:

- Foundations of Applied Agronomy - self-paced (updated in 2027)
- ICCA Practice Exam
- ICCA Flashcards with 400+ terms (new in August)
- ICCA Glossary updated in 2026 with CCA volunteers – free
- CCA Essentials video series on Performance Objectives – free
- ICCA Study Guide on revised Performance Objectives (coming soon)
- Specialty Certifications: resources list, webinar series
- Local Boards: Aid in development of prep courses, study materials

9:40 AM
Ann Edahl

04 Update: ICCA Policy Committee

Co-Chair Dennis Godar presented an update:

- Seeking a representative from each board on the Policy Committee (16 local boards currently) Contact Luther Smith to join
- U.S. Farm Bill: has until end of year to pass or will need extension
- New action alerts (Muster) make it easier to contact Congress
- USDA-TSP (Technical Service Provider) process completed by 200+ CCAs, potential revenue stream for Ag Retailer employers
- EPA Endangered Species Act: CCAs recognized
- Learn about the ASA Policy Certificate and Ambassador program
- CCA representatives participated in Congressional Visit Day in Washington, DC in February 2026. Plans underway for 2027 CVD March 16-17, contact headquarters if interested

10:20 AM
Dennis Godar
Shawn Wallace
Luther Smith

05 Task Force Updates

- Digital App Task Force: mockups were shown, highlighting the ability to find CEU opportunities, as presented by Sandy Endicott and DJ May
- Application Task Force: Leon Katcharian reported that an internal team is reviewing the motions from the June ICCA Board Meeting to simplify the CCA application process, including system changes and business requirements and documentation with a potential launch in early 2027. Next steps include:
  - Complete mapping of process flows
  - Complete system change requirements
  - Update related program documentation and web collateral
  - Schedule implementation dates & announce changes to applicants/public

10:40 AM
Sandy Endicott/ DJ May
Leon Katcharian

06 Update: Ag Retailers Association

- Donnie Taylor provided an overview of the Ag Retailers Association (ARA) and advocacy issues, including the Farm Bill, Midterms and Redistricting efforts, Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) and why it matters to CCAs and Ag Retailers

10:50 AM
Donnie Taylor
Isaac Wolford

07 Upcoming Meetings

- CANVAS, Nov. 1-4, Portland, OR (CEUs available) – *registration open*
- ICCA Board Meeting, Dec. 10, Noon-2:00 PM (Central)
- Potential for 2027 in-person/hybrid ICCA Board Meeting to overlap with CTIC Conservation in Action Tour in Wisconsin in June/July with Wisconsin CCA Board. Will survey Board for preferred dates

11:00 AM
Aaron Breimer
Luther Smith
Sara Uttech

08 Board Share – Round Robin, Q&A, Feedback

- New Ideas and Needs
- Questions, Feedback, Items from the Board

11:20 AM
Aaron Breimer

09 Adjourn

- Announce: adjournment

Noon
Aaron Breimer

ICCA Board of Directors Roster

Attendance: View Google Doc

ICCA Executive Committee:

- Aaron Breimer, Chair
- Karen Corrigan, Vice Chair
- Karl Wyant, Past Chair
- Michael Mulvaney, ASA ICCA Board Rep.
- Isaac Wolford, ARA Rep.

ASA Executive Committee:

- Jim Ippolito, President-Elect

ASA Headquarters:

- Jim Cudahy, CEO
- Ann Edahl, Educational Programs Senior Manager
- Lacey Edwardson, Support Center Lead
- Dawn Gibas, Assessments Manager
- Hanna Jeske, Marketing & Brand Strategy Assoc Director
- Leon Katcharian, Certification Director
- DJ May, Member & Stakeholder Assoc Director
- Luther Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
- Tina Sullivan, Certification Manager
- Sara Uttech, Governance Director