

# Analysis of Summary Calls with CCA Boards

## Top 6 Challenges Raised by Local Boards

### 1. Declining Membership and Retention

- Aging membership base and retirements without sufficient new CCAs joining.
- Lack of perceived value in certification, especially among younger professionals.
- Employers no longer incentivizing or requiring CCA certification.

### 2. Marketing and Awareness

- Limited outreach to students, young professionals, and farmers about the value of CCAs.
- Need for better promotional materials and campaigns to highlight the benefits of certification.
- Difficulty demonstrating ROI for marketing efforts.

### 3. CEU Approval Process

- Frustration with delays and complexity in getting CEUs approved.
- Lack of clarity on submission requirements and communication between local and national levels.

### 4. Employer Support

- Employers not covering exam fees, renewal costs, or CEU expenses.
- Reduced emphasis on certification as a hiring or promotion criterion.

### 5. Communication/Relationship with ICCA and Local Boards

- Lack of timely updates on policy changes, CEU approvals, or technical issues (e.g., database glitches).

- Feeling disconnected from ICCA national, with limited collaboration or awareness of resources.
- Desire for more transparency and proactive communication about program updates and decisions.
- Boards also expressed appreciation for recent improvements, but noted there is still room for better alignment and responsiveness.

#### **6. Exam Challenges**

- State exams perceived as overly difficult or not reflective of local agronomic realities.
- Limited availability of updated study materials and prep courses.

## Top 4 Things Going Well

#### **1. Strong Local Board Engagement**

- Active and committed board members, including experienced professionals willing to mentor.
- Collaboration with universities, agribusinesses, and government agencies.

#### **2. Successful Events and Partnerships**

- Annual conferences, field days, and in-service training programs providing CEUs.
- Partnerships with organizations like NRCS, FFA, and commodity groups.

#### **3. Improved Communication with ICCA National**

- Positive feedback on quarterly admin calls and new marketing platform.
- Appreciation for ICCA staff responsiveness and support.

#### **4. Collaboration with Universities and Educational Institutions**

- Boards highlighted strong partnerships with universities for hosting events, providing speakers, and supporting exam preparation.
- Some universities integrate CCA certification into their agronomy programs, helping students transition into the profession.

# Top 6 Opportunities to Support Boards

## 1. Enhanced Marketing Resources

- Provide customizable templates, brochures, and videos for local outreach.
- Translate materials into Spanish for international boards.
- Develop campaigns targeting students, young professionals, and employers.

## 2. Employer Engagement

- Work with agribusinesses to incentivize certification (e.g., bonuses, promotions).
- Highlight the value of CCAs in risk reduction and regulatory compliance.

## 3. Streamlined CEU Approval Process

- Simplify submission requirements and improve communication about approvals.
- Offer training or onboarding for admins on CEU processes.

## 4. Support for Exam Prep and Study Materials

- Create updated, accessible study guides and prep courses.
- Explore partnerships with universities to integrate CCA prep into curricula.

## 5. Scholarships and Incentives

- Expand scholarship programs for exam takers and under-resourced candidates.
- Offer promo codes or discounts for new CCAs and students.

## 6. Messaging Workshop

- What is our value proposition to farmers and employers?
- What does it mean to be a CCA?
- Targeted messaging for niche audiences – farmers, employers, students.
- Elevator pitch