

Specialty and Horticultural Crops CCA Proposal

Rationale: Develop a CCA track for Specialty and Horticultural Crops for those who work primarily in the specialty crop space versus commodity crops. Currently our certification exams and materials for CCAs focus on commodity crops, which do not serve a growing sector of our crop advisers.

The premise is that everyone would continue to take/pass the ICCA exam as the general agronomy exam, however, the proposed Specialty/Horticulture Crop Exam would replace the local board exam in areas where this exam would be offered. The current committee working on this project are from the Northeastern U.S. and Ontario, Canada. It is thought that development could take place in this geographical region first and be adapted to other geographical areas as needed using the same set of Performance Objectives and exam format, with minor changes in content due to climate, crops, and soils. Crops that would be emphasized would be those shown to be statistically the major specialty or horticultural crops/cropping systems in a geographical region. Regions would be designated as part of the development of this proposed track.

Proposal:

Relationship to the Current CCA Program

- This program is intended to offer an alternate track within the CCA program for those that focus the majority of their time on specialty and horticultural crops. This could include subjects such as
 - Fruits, vegetables, orchards
 - small fruits (berries)
 - tree fruits (orchards)
 - processing versus fresh market stage
 - Irrigation, mulches, plastics
 - Indoor production
 - Food quality/safety
 - marketability through the lens of agronomy
- Ornamental crops and turfgrass are not included in this proposal.

Development

Committee: A committee has been formed and is meeting to develop the proposal for this track within the existing CCA program. Committee members are currently from the Northeastern U.S. and Ontario, Canada that are working with specialty and horticultural crops. The committee is prepared to

continue developing this alternate track upon approval of the ICCA Executive Committee.

Performance Objectives (POs): The POs would be developed to be consistent in structure to the ICCA program POs, with four sections (NM, SW, PM, CM). Therefore, it is plausible that many of the POs would remain the same, however their application would be to specialty and horticultural crops.

Exam: The structure and length of the exam associated with this alternate track are proposed to match the current local board exam structure with 100 multiple choice questions that are partitioned into the four major sections using the Job Task Analysis survey. This provides consistency across the exam program in all aspects of exam development, delivery, and scoring as well as providing an equivalent examination experience regardless of the track being followed to attain a CCA.

Structure for CEUs: The CEUs for this track within the CCA program will follow the structure and requirements of the existing CEUs required for commodity crops. The difference will be in the subject matter as applied to NM, SW, PM, and CM within specialty and horticultural crops.