

2026 CSSA Program Planning Manual



Nov. 1–4, 2026 • Portland, Oregon
www.acsmeetings.org

Photo courtesy of Travel Portland.

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Headquarters Office Contacts

Staff Representative

Function

Sanford Moore, *Director of Finance*
 Phone: (608) 268-4956
 Email: smoore@sciencesocieties.org

Meetings budget
 Committee liaison

Kristina Tarantino, *Associate Director of Meetings*
 Phone: (608) 268-4949
 Email: ktarantino@sciencesocieties.org

Sourcing and Events management
 Advertising
 Sponsorships
 Exhibits

Nate Ehresman, *Technical Program Manager*
 Phone: (608) 268-4942
 Email: nehresman@sciencesocieties.org

Abstract submissions
 Invited speakers
 Program enhancement funds
 Online program/App platforms

Samantha Temby, *Meetings Planner*
 Phone: (608) 268-4980
 Email: stemby@sciencesocieties.org

Logistics
 Room assignments
 Tours and workshops
 Food and beverage functions

General CANVAS Questions: canvas@sciencesocieties.org

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Support Center: 608-273-8080; Fax: (608) 273-2021

CANVAS 2026

Portland Dates & Deadlines

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Nov. & Dec. | Leaders/Chairs solicit symposia/topical session ideas from membership |
| December 16 | Deadline for 2025 program enhancement fund expenses |
| December 18 | Symposia/topical session submission site opens |
| December 18 | Special session, tour, and workshop proposals open online |
| January | 2026 CANVAS website goes live |
| February 6 | Deadline for submitting symposia/topical sessions |
| February 6 | Deadline for submitting grad student competition descriptions |
| February 20 | Deadline for special session proposals |
| March 10 | Abstract submissions open online at www.acsm meetings.org |
| March 10 | Committee meeting submissions open online |
| March 10 | Early registration & housing opens online |
| March 27 | Deadline for tour and workshop proposals |
| late April | Division Chairs check on submissions via Confex access link |
| June 9 | Early abstract deadline, 4:00 pm CDT |
| June 23 | Final in-person abstract deadline, 4:00 pm CDT |
| June 25 | Scheduling webinar for Community Leaders, Section Chairs, and Division Chairs |
| June 25 | Begin scheduling sessions in Confex |
| July 15 | Session scheduling deadline. Confex access closes for all Leaders and Chairs. Date, time, estimated attendance, invited speakers, and presiders must be submitted by this deadline. Audio visual, catering, & room set requests must be submitted as well |
| August 6 | All catering must be finalized |
| August - TBD | CANVAS Program Finalizing Meeting |
| late August | Presenters are emailed presentation time, date, and format |
| September 23 | Final virtual abstract deadline |
| September 23 | Early registration rate deadline |
| early October | Presenters are emailed presentation location, as well as time and date reminder |
| early October | Moderators notification email sent |
| October 7 | Standard registration rate deadline |
| November 1-4 | CANVAS begins in Portland, OR |
| December 8 | Deadline for 2026 program enhancement fund expense requests |

Planning the Meeting in Confex

Introduction

This manual is designed to guide Program and Division Chairs smoothly through the process of assembling your programs for the upcoming CANVAS event. Take the time to read through the manual and become familiar with the various sections.

The Headquarters Office is available to assist you as questions arise. Please contact us with your questions. Our goal is to make this busy year an enjoyable one as well. Comments about this manual as well as the overall program planning process are always welcome.

Entering Sessions in Confex

You will receive an email in late December with a link to submit your sessions. The sessions you enter will be used for authors to submit their papers. To submit a session you will need to enter the following information:

- Title of session
- Symposia/topical session
- Oral/poster session
- Invited/contributed papers or both
- Does it include a student competition?
- Section/Division cosponsor
- Community cosponsor
- Session description (this will show online)
- Organizer

It is a good idea to have “general” poster and oral sessions followed by your Division name for papers that don’t fit a specific session topic. If a session contains a student competition, it is clearer for everyone if you include this in the session title. General oral, poster, rapid, and business meeting sessions will automatically be entered for every Division.

Symposia Sessions

A symposium is the major session of the week for a Division. It should focus on a key topic relevant to the Division and include invited speakers (at least one from outside the Societies). CSSA has a limit of two, two-hour symposia per Division. Because symposia include only invited speakers, a public call for volunteer papers will not be published online.

Invited Symposia Speakers

Invited symposia speakers (member and nonmember) do not have to pay the abstract submission fee.

The Division Chairs will receive a link to a special website requiring no payment when abstract submission opens. They must pass this link along to their invited speakers only. It is the Chair’s responsibility to ensure that abstracts are submitted by the abstract submission deadline.

Nonmember Invited Speakers

Invited speakers who are not Society members will be emailed a “discount code” in early September that will allow them complimentary registration. It is the speaker’s responsibility to complete their registration online in order for the fee to be waived.

Member Invited Speakers

Invited speakers who are Society members **do not** qualify for waived registration fees. They will receive an email in September reminding them to complete their registration form as normal with the fee. It is important to inform member speakers of this on the front end, as many individuals assume if invited, they will not have to pay registration.

Volunteer Abstract Submissions

Authors may submit their abstracts by internet only.

- Go to www.sciencesocieties.org/canvas/submit.
- Click the “Submit” option regarding the desired presentation format and follow directions.
- All abstracts require payment by credit card.
- Speakers will automatically receive an email confirmation of the submission.

Confex Session Scheduling

Please keep in mind these important scheduling dates:

| | |
|---------|--|
| June 23 | Final deadline for in-person abstracts |
| June 25 | Scheduling webinar |
| July 15 | Scheduling deadline |

Review sessions across all Societies. Look for similar content and themes that could be combined or should be scheduled on different days. In late August, the ACS732 Annual Meeting Planning Committee and Headquarters Office staff will meet for a final review of the program.

Scheduling in Confex

As Division Chairs, each of you will login to Confex with the email address and password you have on file with CSSA. Once logged in, you will be able to view all sessions you have created. Click on a session to view all the submitted abstracts it contains.

Planning the Meeting in Confex

Shortly after abstract submission closes, a webinar will be presented on how to schedule sessions in Confex. This will be recorded and available to reference.

Follow these six steps to schedule a session in Confex:

1. From your link, click on the title of the session you want to schedule. You will now see a list of the papers in that session.
2. Accept all papers by checking the boxes under the heading "Accept" (this is found just to the left of the abstract title). Click "Update" at the bottom to save.
3. Click "Non-paper Events" in the left control panel to add intro, breaks, discussions, adjourn, and freeform events (i.e., panel discussion).
4. Sort the abstracts and events with the numbering 1, 2, 3, etc. in the boxes under the "Order of Papers" heading.
5. Volunteer papers are 15 min. in length, so sessions will default to 15 min. Use the boxes under "Special duration" to enter times for other events (i.e., 5 min. intros or 60 min. business meetings).
6. Click "Schedule" in the left control panel to enter the date, time, and expected attendance for the session.

Papers in Sessions

The meeting space available is often limited. Volunteer oral sessions should be scheduled to fill a room for the whole part of a day (i.e., morning from 8 am–12 pm or afternoon from 1:30–4 pm). Be sure to include one 15-minute break in each part of the day. You may include two short sessions as long as you schedule them back to back so they fill a whole morning or afternoon. If a session does not have enough papers, either transfer papers to that session or transfer papers from that session to other sessions.

You may have a paper that does not fit into any of your sessions. If this happens, contact other Section or Division Chairs to see if they can accept it. If so, transfer the paper to the accepting Section/Division. You do not have to notify the author.

Session Transfers/Changing Formats

To transfer a paper to a different Section or Division in Confex, go into the session and choose "Transfer" on the left column and select the new Section/Division. To transfer a paper to a different session in the same Division, check the box under the "Transfer" header and select the new session from the drop down box on the bottom of the page.

You may change the format of presentations (oral/poster) if needed. You do not have to notify the author.

Scheduling Business Meetings

A business meeting will be automatically included as a session in Confex for every Division. You will be responsible for scheduling the time and date of the business meeting during the scheduling period. It is best if it follows your symposium or another popular oral session within your program.

Allow enough time for the Board Representative to brief members about significant Board items. The Division Chair will preside at the business meeting. The Headquarters Office will email the Chair regarding the submission of business meeting minutes.

Scheduling Moderators

A moderator must be assigned to each oral session in order to help keep it running smoothly at CANVAS. To add the moderator, enter the session and click on "People" in the left column. Then click "Add a Person" and indicate that they are "Moderator". Moderators must be Society members. Some individuals may have schedule conflicts, so make sure they can make the session time. Selecting younger members and/or presenters already scheduled within the session as moderators is an excellent way to involve people in Society activities. Regional representation of moderators is strongly encouraged. Each moderator will receive an email with instructions before the meetings. Moderator support is also offered at CANVAS.

Scheduling Advice

Poster sessions are generally scheduled on Monday and Tuesday from 4:00–6:00 pm and on Wednesday from 2:30–4:30 pm. If possible, do not schedule oral sessions during this time.

Balance your oral and poster sessions equally over all the days to minimize conflict for your colleagues. Divisions should also be aware of their Society's awards ceremony and daily plenary while scheduling.

Miscellaneous Sessions

When planning an uncommon session, symposium, or evening program, include these sessions in your program. For any questions on miscellaneous session scheduling, contact Nate Ehresman. If a miscellaneous session will be organized by someone else, the Division Chair must make sure that person is informed of all deadlines and that constant communication is kept.

Tour and workshop proposals must be submitted online before the deadline. Information can be obtained from the website at www.sciencesocieties.org/canvas/tours-and-workshops. Tours and workshops should not be entered as sessions in your Division program.

CEUs, Session Promotion, & PEFs

Applying for CEUs

Why apply for continuing education units (CEUs)? Participants in ASA and SSSA Certification Programs maintain their certification through continuing education.

Who are Certification participants? Participants include Certified Professional Agronomists, Certified Professional Soil Scientists, Certified Professional Soil Classifiers, and Certified Crop Advisers (CCA).

How do people apply for CCA Board Approved CEUs? There are three steps you must follow:

1. Complete the Certified Crop Advisers CEU Application Form available on-line at www.certifiedcropadviser.org/ceus.
2. Relate each talk to a CCA CEU Standard. The CCA CEU Standards Booklet PDF is located on the same website listed above.
3. Include the session agenda and provide a list of speaker names and biographies.

The Oregon CCA Board will review your application.

Promoting Sessions

There are a couple ways to promote sessions to potential authors and/or attendees.

1. **Division Circles**—session organizers can develop an announcement to be broadcasted to members via Circles channels. Circles entries must focus on Division activities and business. Sending job announcements and promoting other Societies' meetings is prohibited. You can receive your Circles information by emailing Membership (membership@sciencesocieties.org).
1. **CSA News magazine**—highlight the topic(s), day, and time of the session to promote. Email your promotional text to news@sciencesocieties.org and consider including a photo if possible. There is no charge for this service. When writing the call for papers, make sure to mention the lead Division and the full title so authors can choose it when submitting their abstract. Email news@sciencesocieties.org for further details.

Program Enhancement Funds

Program enhancement funds (PEFs) are provided for each Division to enhance the quality of their program, encourage the involvement of meetings participants, and recognize excellence during the current or previous CANVAS programs. Each Division Chair will receive an email in early-February indicating available funds for 2026.

Division PEFs

These funds are generally requested by symposia or topical session organizers. It is at the Division Chair's discretion to approve the use of funds. Please remember to track your funding promises so that you do not exceed your PEF budget.

Appropriate Uses for PEFs

Appropriate uses for PEFs include, but are not limited to:

- Paying expenses/awarding stipends to invited speakers (member and nonmember) of symposia.
- Monetary awards for outstanding accomplishments or graduate student awards.
- Funding food and drink events.
- Supporting professional tours or workshops.

Division Donation Links

"Donate" links are posted on the Division website (<https://www.crops.org/membership/divisions>) so sponsors can donate to program enhancement funds online. Chairs can also post the URL to their Circles to encourage donations.

Additional Funding

If a Division Chair has exhausted their funds, they can contact cosponsoring Communities/Sections/Divisions for financial assistance. They may also want to call on other societies, organizations, and companies that share a common interest in the program. Before contacting anyone about a financial contribution to your session, discuss your needs with the Director of Finance.

If the Division has a grant for the session, Headquarters will process the grant and distribute the funds according to the Chair's directions. The Societies will retain up to 10% of the grant to cover administrative fees.

PEF Reimbursements

Please inform Nate Ehresman as you promise the use of funds to individuals. He will assist in managing PEF budgets throughout the year.

After CANVAS, the Division Chair must submit all payment requests with original receipts to Nate Ehresman. Please submit all of your requests together and include a final amount to be paid to each speaker. Requests must be received no later than December 8. Payments will not be made after this date.

Food Functions & Tours

Food Functions

All catering requests are submitted while scheduling sessions. Requests must be entered into their appropriate sessions by July 15; to be finalized by August 6. This includes receptions, social hours, cash bars, etc. When submitting a food function, be sure to include session title, date, time, budget, number of people, and a description of what is envisioned. Entering a food function online does not ensure the function has been officially scheduled.

Tour Policies and Procedures

All tour proposals must be submitted online by the March 27 deadline. The tour organizer is responsible for planning, submitting, and organizing the tour.

Tour Organizer Responsibilities:

- Make arrangements for the tour program, tour guides, meals, snacks, or other activities during the tour. One complimentary tour guide per bus will be provided. Additional space must be submitted with costs.
- Inform Headquarters of the expected costs with all aspects of the tour (meals, handouts, entrance fees, etc.). Include arrangements the organizers make with outside groups and businesses.
- Prepare a promotional description of the tour. Headquarters will put this in *CSA News*, *News Flash*, the website, and the program.

Headquarters Responsibilities:

- Arrange transportation and housing (if applicable).
- Determine ticket price based on expected tour costs provided by tour organizer.
- Sell and distribute tickets and receipts.
- Provide advance payment or reimbursement of tour costs (invoices/original receipts required).

Refund requests must be submitted in writing to the Headquarters Office. Pending approval, refunds are processed after CANVAS.



Photo courtesy of Travel Portland.

Session Formats: Regular, Rapid, and Innovative

<https://www.sciencesocieties.org/canvas/planning>

Oral Session:

The “normal” oral session format is comprised of contributed submissions. 15-minute presentations are scheduled back-to-back with a 15-minute break for attendees every 90 minutes.

Poster Session:

This is the “normal” poster session format. Posters are posted all day by the presenter, however the “session” is scheduled for two hours (generally 4-6pm on Monday and Tuesday/2:30-4:30pm on Wednesday). During this time, the presenter will stand by the research to explain/interact with attendees.

Symposia Session:

Two-hour sessions containing presentations by invited speakers. Often comprised of three speakers at 40 minutes each or four speakers at 30 minutes each, no scheduled breaks for attendees are required. Divisions can each hold two per year/Sections and Communities can each hold one per year. Invited speakers of these symposia receive waived abstract fees.

5-Minute Rapid Oral Session:

Comprised of *only* oral submissions for authors who wish to present their research/material in a quick five-minute oral format. Ten presentations are scheduled back-to-back with a 10-minute buffer/Q&A period following.

Poster and 5-Minute Rapid Oral Session:

Although scheduled as a rapid oral session, this session is comprised of presentations *both* oral and poster in format. This is more for authors who would like to give a quick oral commercial/teaser for the poster format they will be presenting in a later poster session.

Roundtable Session:

This format includes an invited speaker who presents a hot topic for the session attendees. After giving the presentation (anywhere from 20-30 minutes), the speaker turns the floor over to the participants for discussion.

The C-6 Division has used this format effectively within their symposia the past few years.

Panel Discussion Session:

Similar to the Roundtable format, the Panel Discussion format uses several experts to present a topic to attendees instead of just one. Each expert is given approximately 10 minutes to present their contributing information. Once all experts have contributed, the floor is turned over to the participants for questions/discussion.

Debate Session:

This format is generally comprised of a moderator and two invited two-presenter teams. The moderator states the positions and then allows the teams to each persuade the attendees. Each speaker receives approximately 10 minutes (20 minutes per team). The moderator then recaps the major points and opens the floor for questions/discussions.

Session FAQs

What is the difference between a General/Topical Session and a Symposium?

General/Topical Sessions:

- No limits on how many general/topical sessions a program can have
- No time limit on how long the session can be
- Accepts contributed and invited presentations
- Can contain any combination of member and non-member presenters
- Can be oral or poster in format
- Can contain 5-minute rapid presentations
- No complimentary benefits for presenters

Symposia:

- Each Section and each Community can only have one symposium session in their program
- Each Division can only have two symposia
- The session can last no longer than two hours
- Invited presentations only
- Should contain at least one non-member presenter
- The sessions are oral in format
- Does not contain 5-minute rapid presentations
- Both member and non-member presenters receive waived abstract fees

How many symposia can I create for my program?

CSSA and SSSA Divisions are each allotted **two** 2-hour symposia. ASA Sections and Communities are each allotted **one** 2-hour symposium. If you would like to have additional symposia, consider "cosponsoring" with another Division/Section/Community that has not used up their allotted number of symposia.

How many symposia can I cosponsor?

You can cosponsor as many symposia as makes sense for your group's interests. *Please ensure that Chairs/Leaders agree to a session's cosponsorship before listing their group as a cosponsor for your session.*

There is no financial obligation to split costs on a cosponsored session. Generally, it just means the topic interests more than one group, and this is a way to boost attendance for the session.

That being said, Communities/Sections/Divisions will sometimes share costs if trying to make the session a bigger event than they normally can afford on their own. They can also share the workload if unable to financially assist. These details are left to the Chairs/Leaders to work out.

CANVAS 2026 Contacts

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY

Program Planning Officer
Melanie Bayles, *Oklahoma State University*
melanie.bayles@okstate.edu

Program Chair
Jim Ippolito, *Ohio State University*
970-402-8033; ippolito.38@osu.edu

ASA, CSSA, SSSA DEI Program Planning Committee Member
Endy Lopes Kailer, *Kansas State University*
785-340-2774; endy@ksu.edu

ASA SECTION CHAIRS:

Agronomic Production Systems
Lakesh Sharma, *University of Florida*
352-363-7040; lakesh.sharma@ufl.edu

Biometry and Statistical Computing
Zhanyou Xu, *USDA-ARS*
515-708-2858; zhanyou.xu@usda.gov

Climatology and Modeling
Elvis Elli, *University of Arkansas*
elli@uark.edu

Education and Extension
Melanie Bayles, *Oklahoma State University*
melanie.bayles@okstate.edu

Environmental Quality
Lindsay Pease, *University of Minnesota-Twin Cities*
218-281-8608; lpease@umn.edu

Global Agronomy
Peter Ampim, *Prairie View A&M University*
936-261-5096; paampim@pvamu.edu

Land Management and Conservation
Josh Lofton, *Oklahoma State University*
405-744-3389; josh.lofton@okstate.edu

CROP SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Program Planning Officer
Nithya Rajan, *Texas A&M University*
979-845-0360; nrajan@tamu.edu

Program Chair
Gary Muehlbauer, *University of Minnesota-Twin Cities*
612-625-7849; muehl003@umn.edu

CSSA DIVISION CHAIRS:

Div. C-1, Crop Breeding and Genetics
Devinder Sandhu, *USDA-ARS Salinity Laboratory*
devinder.sandhu@usda.gov

Div. C-2, Crop Physiology and Metabolism
Sruthi Narayanan, *Clemson University*
864-656-2419; skutty@clemson.edu

Div. C-3, Crop Ecology, Management, and Quality
Romulo Lollato, *Kansas State University*
785-477-4644; lolatto@ksu.edu

Div. C-4, Seed Physiology, Production, and Technology
Alexander Lindsey, *Ohio State University*
614-292-3864; lindsey.227@osu.edu

Div. C-5, Turfgrass Science
Chrissie Segars, *PBI-Gordon Corp.*
csegars@pbigordon.com

Div. C-6, Forage and Grazinglands
Erick Santos, *University of Alberta*
780-920-3542; ericksantos@ualberta.ca

Div. C-7, Genomics, Molecular Genetics, and Biotechnology
Jianxin Ma, *Purdue University*
765-496-3662; maj@purdue.edu

Div. C-8, Plant Genetic Resources
David Fang, *USDA-ARS*
504-286-4527; david.fang@usda.gov

Div. C-9, Crops for Nutrition and Health
Katherine Frels, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
kfrels2@unl.edu

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Program Planning Officer, Chair
Shannon Osborne, *USDA-ARS*
605-693-5220; shannon.osborne@usda.gov

Program Chair
John Kovar, *USDA-ARS*
515-294-3419; john.kovar@usda.gov

SSSA DIVISION CHAIRS:

Forest, Range, and Wildland Soils
Cole Gross, *SUNY-ESF*
315-470-4788; cdgross@esf.edu

Nutrient Management & Soil & Plant Analysis
Christopher Rogers, *USDA-ARS*
208-749-4296; christopher.w.rogers@usda.gov

Pedology
Felipe Aburto, *Texas A&M University*
979-845-3603; felipe.aburto@tamu.edu

Practicing Professional Soil Scientists
Daniel King, *TerraGenesis, LLC*
440-570-1298; dking@terragenesis.pro

Soil & Water Management & Conservation
Sandeep Kumar, *USDA-NIFA*
573-489-2262; kaundal@gmail.com

Soil Biology and Biochemistry
Thea Whitman, *University of British Columbia*
twhitman@wisc.edu

Soil Chemistry
Matthew Ginder-Vogel, *UW-Madison*
608-262-0768; mgingervogel@wisc.edu

Soil Education and Outreach
Bethany Wolters, *University of Tennessee-Martin*
bwolters@utm.edu

Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition
Bhupinder Farmaha, *Clemson University*
803-284-3343 Ext. 244; bfarmah@clemson.edu

Soil Mineralogy
Aditi Pandey, *NASA*
979-383-9892; aditi.pandey@nasa.gov

Soil Physics and Hydrology
Michael Cosh, *USDA-ARS*
Michael.Cosh@usda.gov

Soils and Environmental Quality
Udayakumar Sekaran, *Oregon State University*
605-690-8386; udayakumar.sekaran@oregonstate.edu

Urban and Anthropogenic Soils
Anna Wade, *EPA*
awade91@gmail.com

Wetland Soils
Chelsea Duball, *Utah State University*
435-797-9835; chelsea.duball@usu.edu

2026 ASA Section Chairs & Community Leaders

ASA Program Planning Officer, *Melanie Bayles*, melanie.bayles@okstate.edu

ASA Program Chair, *Jim Ippolito*, Ippolito.38@osu.edu

ASA, CSSA, SSSA DEI Program Planning Committee Member, *Endy Lopes Kailer*, endy@ksu.edu

Agronomic Production Systems, *Lakesh Sharma*, lakesh.sharma@ufl.edu

Applied Soybean Research, *Nicolas Cafaro La Menza*, ncafarolamenza2@unl.edu

Applied Wheat Research

Bioenergy Systems, *Amandeep Sharma*, amandeepsharma@ufl.edu

Cotton, Hemp, Flax, and Other Fiber Crops, *Bhupinder Singh*, bsbains17@gmail.com

Crop Irrigation Strategies and Management, *Abia Katimbo*, abia.katimbo@unl.edu

Nutrient Management Professionals, *Nutifafa Adotey*, nadotey@utk.edu

Organic Management Systems, *Carmen M Ugarte*, cugarte@illinois.edu

Precision Agriculture Systems, *Ahmed Rabia*, operaharb@hotmail.com

Semi-arid Dryland Cropping Systems, *Atinderpal Singh*, atinderpal.singh@montana.edu

Sensor-Based Nutrient Management, *Ayush Sharma*, ayushsharma@ufl.edu

Soil and Water Management Professionals, *Goutham Thotakuri*, thotaku4@msu.edu

Weedy and Invasive Plant Species, *Gustavo Silva*, gst66236@tamu.edu

Biometry and Statistical Computing, *Zhanyou Xu*, zhanyou.xu@usda.gov

Bioinformatics in Crops and Soils

Spatial Statistics and On-Farm Research

Statistical Education/Training for Researchers

Climatology and Modeling, *Elvis Elli*, elli@uark.edu

Agroclimatology and Agronomic Modeling, *Jasdeep Singh*, sing2577@purdue.edu

Airborne and Satellite Remote Sensing

Biophysical Measurements and Sensors

Evapotranspiration Measurement and Modeling, *Meetpal Kukal*, mkukal@uidaho.edu

Global Climate Change, *Debjani Sihi*, dsihi@ncsu.edu

Model Applications in Field Research, *Prakash Kumar Jha*, pj442@msstate.edu

Education and Extension, *Melanie Bayles*, melanie.bayles@okstate.edu

Advancing Agronomy via Public-Private Collaboration

Extension Education, *Calvin Trostle*, ctrostle@ag.tamu.edu

K-16 Education and Outreach, *Alexander Lindsey*, lindsey.227@osu.edu

Environmental Quality, *Lindsay Pease*, lpease@umn.edu

Animal Agriculture and the Environment, *Jess Sherman*, jessica.sherman@usda.gov

Beneficial Reuse By-Products in Agriculture

Biochar: Agronomic and Environmental Uses, *Jason Streubel*, docstrube@gmail.com

Managing Denitrification in Agronomic Systems, *Gabriel Johnson*, gjohnson@iastate.edu

Nutrients and Environmental Quality, *Surendra Singh*, surendra.singh@wsu.edu

Soil Carbon and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, *Arshdeep Singh*, arshdeepsnw@gmail.com

Sustainable Intensification, *Sayantana Sarkar*, sarkarsayantana@hotmail.com

Global Agronomy, *Peter Ampim*, paampim@pvamu.edu
Agronomic Solutions for Smallholders, *Pauline Chivenge*, p.chivenge@apni.net
Perennial Grain Development, *Priscila Pinto*, ppinto@wisc.edu
US-Sino Agricultural Research Forum

Land Management and Conservation, *Josh Lofton*, josh.lofton@okstate.edu
Cover Crop Management, *Lisa Fultz*, lisa.fultz@usda.gov
Long-Term Agricultural Research, *Jeffrey Strock*, jstrock@umn.edu
Soil Health, *Deirdre Griffin LaHue*, d.griffin@wsu.edu

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CSSA Meeting Planning Process

