Science Societies

CCAs and advocacy: virtual Congressional Visits Day

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From l to r: Cornell University student, Lena Abu-Ali; Worcester Polytechnic Institute student, Michell McKee; Congressman Jim McGovern (MA); and New York CCA, Sally Flis.

The Congressional Visits Day (CVD) program is an annual event hosted by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA that brings scientists, students, and CCAs together to advocate for agriculture research. Under normal circumstances, CCAs and Society members travel to Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress. However, like most things from the past year, the 2021 Congressional Visits Day will look a little different as we are going virtual. Even though we won't be meeting in-person, we are excited to continue our largest advocacy event even during these unusual times.

Virtual Congressional Visits Day (VCVD) will have many of the same components of the in-person event: advocacy and communication training, presentations from invited speakers, interactions with a team of fellow advocates, and of course, meetings with members of Congress and their staff. We also hope to again have strong participation from CCAs at VCVD. In congressional meetings, CCAs play a critical role in connecting federal research funding to growers in local communities. That's why it's so important to have as many CCAs as possible participate in VCVD.

ICCA Chair and past Congressional Visits Day participant, Sally Flis, knows firsthand the benefits of CCAs participating in the event. "Engaging in Congressional Visit Day has multiple values—learning how the legislative process works and getting to guide others through that process has been a huge value to me. It is hard to know where to start on any issue if you haven't had an experience like [Congressional Visit Day]," Flis says. "Additionally, getting to make new connections with professionals outside my regular circle, on the Hill, and in agencies has had value year over year."

This year, VCVD will take place on March 9-11. If are a CCA living in the U.S. and would like to participate in VCVD, reach out to your local CCA board or email Luther Smith at lsmith@sciencesocieties.org.

Participating in VCVD is an important opportunity to tell Congress about the value of agriculture research, and we need constituents like YOU to do that!

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