Science Societies

Wolford begins term as vice-chair of the North American CCA Board

By Denice Rackley

February 3, 2022



Isaac Wolford, CCA from Lewisburg, WV, is the new vice-chair of the North American CCA Board.

"I am honored and blessed to be elected as the incoming vice-chair of the [North American] CCA Board," says CCA Isaac Wolford from Lewisburg, WV, who began serving in this role on Jan. 1, 2022.

Wolford's love of agronomy sprang from his childhood roots on his West Virginia family farm. Following in the footsteps of his dad, and grandfather, he learned to appreciate the importance of hard work and helping those surrounding him in his community.

He was taught that if you take care of the land and the people around you, they will take care of you. "We were one of the first families in our part of the state to explore the benefits of no-till and cover crops in the early '80s." The old adage "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" holds true in Wolford's case.

Wolford's grandfather served their community as an on-farm researcher. "Back then, in the 1930s and '40s, many individual farmers, rather than universities, did the research and served as local educators." It's not hard to envision why his career is going strong after more than three decades.

Wolford credits his involvement with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) for cementing his interest in an agronomy career. He was a high school FFA representative to the local conservation board at 14 years old and was a recipient of the first ever West Virginia Conservation District Scholarship. Later, he served as a FFA state officer. Attending West Virginia University, he graduated with both his bachelor's and master's

degree in Agronomy and Agriculture.

Wolford, remaining connected to the FFA during college, served as a collegiate soil-judging team member, which provided his foundational introduction to the American Society of Agronomy meetings.

“My goal has always been to work directly with agriculture producers,” Wolford notes. Becoming a CCA in 1998 furthered his goal. “I saw becoming a CCA as an opportunity to distinguish myself due to the combination of rigorous testing, recommendations from both employers and farmers, and the association with the American Society of Agronomy and their high ethical standards.”

As an agronomist, Wolford enjoys working with multiple farmers but says being a CCA is about more than solving farmers’ problems. “I feel I learn more from farmers and other CCAs than I teach them. I see my job as setting up farmers for success. By organizing and coordinating networks of farmers, bringing them together to share information and help themselves, CCAs extend their reach, impacting generations of producers, local communities, and beyond.”

Extending Reach and Increasing Impact

Wolford believes a CCA position, at its core, serves an information transfer role. “CCAs have the knowledge and responsibility to translate research and technological advances into useful small bites that benefit growers.”

Unfortunately, the many benefits and expertise available when working with a CCA are not as well known as they should be, and CCAs are not utilized as thoroughly as they could be, according to Wolford. As the incoming board vice-president, he is committed to increasing the visibility and impact of CCAs.

“I plan to expand networking opportunities, focus on opportunities within agriculture, and elevate CCA professionals on a larger stage within communities and nationally.”

Wolford wants to continue to build and expand networks within the ag community and sees CCAs serving as a vital connection among universities, extension, conservation organizations, private industry, and farmers. “CCAs encourage communication and support the building of relationships that benefit everyone.”

“Our organization is filled with bright, inventive individuals whose vital work impacts the food supply, security, and safety. While we develop one-on-one relationships with farmers, our work reaches far beyond farms. We touch entire communities, the suburbs, and urban areas. Our voice needs to be heard on a larger platform. CCAs need to pursue active roles in their communities, as well as within their state, to make their voices heard on a national stage.”

Field days, school programs, remote presentations, and scholarships provide avenues to include and reach past the rural community, offering a glimpse into not only growing healthy foods but agriculture as a career option. Certified Crop Advisers can help connect the dots among food, farming, and careers, letting children know there are numerous options to be a part of the farming community. “We need to present employment options to those that might have envisioned an outdoor career but have never connected their outdoor enthusiasm with an agricultural career.”

He also recommends running for your local CCA board and connecting with local government and your legislators. “While there is no silver bullet, if each CCA begins where they are at, we would benefit communities, build our visibility, and increase our impact.”

More people news

Back to issue

Back to home

Text © . The authors. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Except where otherwise noted, images are subject to copyright. Any reuse without express permission from the copyright owner is prohibited.