Science Societies

New Agreement Streamlines Technical Service Provider Enrollment for CCAs, CPSS's

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Photo by Brian Stark.

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that furthers conversation efforts targeted at improving nutrient management. With this MOU, ASA and the ICCA program establish a framework enabling ASA to recommend individuals for the NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP) program. The TSP program enables certified individuals outside of NRCS to provide, among other things, nutrient management plans to producers and landowners.

“The ICCA program is excited to continue our over 20-year relationship with USDA NRCS TSP. This new version of the MOU will create a more streamlined process for Certified Crop Advisers and Certified Professional Soil Scientists to engage with and expand NRCS’s workforce to meet the needs of U.S. farmers and landowners to increase their conservation practices,” says Luther Smith, Chief Administrative Officer of ASA and the Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America.

Trusted On-Farm Advisers

As trusted on-farm advisers, CCAs are uniquely positioned to become TSPs and assist producers with activities and planning related to nutrient management, soil health, integrated pest management, organics, and grazing management. Technical service providers offer planning, design, and implementation services to agricultural producers such as farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners on behalf of the NRCS. This assistance helps improve the producer’s operation.

“There are simply not enough TSPs certified currently to cover the increasing workload for the various conservation practices that NRCS will be funding in coming years,” says Dennis Godar, CPAg/CCA. “The MOU between ASA and NRCS is very encouraging and

timely to increase numbers by certifying qualified CCAs as TSPs. CCAs are highly trained individuals and trusted advisers already familiar with their clients' operations. It makes sense to strengthen relationships between NRCS, CCA TSPs, and farmers/landowners." Godar has been a TSP since 2003.

The MOU will benefit ASA by providing ASA/ICCA certified individuals the opportunity to become accepted by NRCS as a TSP through recognition of ASA/ICCA requirements. Technical Service Providers certified by ASA will be placed by NRCS on the approved list to provide technical service to USDA conservation program participants, thereby expanding their scope of services to existing and future clientele.

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