

## **Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance**

Conference Call

Tuesday, March. 10 at 11 a.m. (eastern)

### **Participants:**

Russ Evans

Bill Kuentler

Randy Raper

Dave Brandt

Peter Gamache

Jerry Lemunyon

Blair McClinton

Karen Scanlon

### **Agenda:**

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Message Committee report

- KS will have brochure draft distributed this week. Need photos.

Operations Committee report

- Draft proposal for AGCO...need statement, what are we asking for?

Member updates

### Message Committee

Pictures requested. KS will send draft to whole group and request feedback.

### Operations Committee

KS to follow up on proposal to CSREES for a 2-year, \$200,000 planning grant – Purdue and KSU?

Karen to draft letter of interest for AGCO. Look for southern-state-focused foundations for proposals.

August CASA meeting – opportunity to invite funding groups to see CASA and give \$\$

Brian and Peter on working paper of what research should look like and direction it should take. Have outline and will continue to work on it.

Want to work on CASA PowerPoint that each member can use to promote CASA at their meetings, etc.

Bill and Jerry: SWCS conference in Kansas City in Sept. Annual meeting in July. Have CASA poster presentation at these meeting? Bill K and Jerry offered to write proposal/abstract and submit. KS send text to Bill to use.

### Member Updates

Ohio No-Till Council – Three-day CTC conference: 800+ to conference, 200+ to cover crop day. Interest in more information on cover crops. First week of March spent in Kansas visiting with 11 different groups. Attendance about 48 people at each. Seems great interest in learning about cover crops. Told each group about CASA, too.

Reduced Tillage LINKAGES: Projects: measuring energy uses in different tillage systems; evaluating GHG calculator, HOLOS, which can be downloaded and used to estimate GHG emissions from farm. Hoping to have something to share in April. Will be closing organization in August 2009; will keep us posted.

ARS – Randy: Chemical factory built in AL to create diesel from any kind of biomass (25% forest, 25% rubber tires, 50% ag material (hay, crop residue, etc., less than 20% moisture content). Toured facility with bioenergy expert from ARS. The conversion is a significant discovery. Many farmers now collecting wheat straw, any crop residue, and taking to factory for conversion. Producing 60,000 gallons of diesel per day. Plans to build more plants in South in next few years. Presents opportunity for CASA to provide education to producers about economic and soil cost that will also come from this practice.

NRCS –Bill & Jerry: Great time for CASA. Can be lead advocate for direction and resources to protect. Send people to meetings, talk to different organizations, work with adversaries (work with farmers to help keep cover crop and soils healthy); visit NRCS leadership. New no-till group forming in Shenandoah Valley No-Tillers in Virginia. Jerry will send info to Karen and Karen will invite. Bill attended MW Cover Crop Council meeting in Ontario. CASA was discussed.

SSCA: Annual conference was on Feb. 11-12 with 300 attending. We were happy with the event overall. However, one speaker on biofuels, Will Thurmond, cancelled out at the last minute for no reason. Put him on the do not recommend list. The second issue of our on-line journal, [www.prairiesoilsandcrops.ca](http://www.prairiesoilsandcrops.ca) will be published within the next week. This publication is available for SSCA members and to non-members for an annual fee of \$15. I have been invited to speak at the New Zealand Soil Carbon Conference in Napier, NZ this coming June. They got my name from the Kieley's from Australia.

CTIC – WQ trading workshop in Maryland last week; planning two more, most likely in Midwest. Tour planned for July 29, 2009 and invites all CASA to attend. Requested success stories for information campaign.

Jerry: Jeff Mitchell working hard in California. Would be worthwhile for CASA colleagues to go to that state and help to send the message about benefits of conservation systems.

#### Next Steps:

- Send photos to KS
- KS send text to Bill to use in writing abstract for poster presentations at SWCS meetings
- KS prepare draft proposal for ACGO and send for comment
- KS prepare message brochure; send draft to all, need comments back
- Brian and Peter to work on research white paper
- CTIC work on calendar of events to post CASA events and post on web site. Use in addition to CTIC web site calendar.

- Need to update contact list to include cell phone numbers.