

For Immediate Release



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CCTA awarded \$1.6 million to support soil health in the High Plains

KIT CARSON, Colo. – Nov. 26, 2019. The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service announced Tuesday that the Colorado Conservation Tillage Association will be awarded more than \$1.6 million through the On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials Soil Health Demonstrations, a new component of the Conservation Innovation Grants authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.

One of nine entities selected nationally to participate as part of the Soil Health Demonstration Trials, CCTA will implement a project titled “FARMS: Farmers Advancing Regenerative Management Systems” over the next three years in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska. The project will support producers in the High Plains by providing incentive payments to create and implement Comprehensive Soil Health Management Plans, facilitating a farmer-to-farmer mentoring program, and conducting a thorough evaluation of soil health, nutrient density, economic factors, and social outcomes on participating farms.

“We are very honored to receive this grant award,” said CCTA President Michael Thompson. “It is exciting to work on a project that will help farmers and ranchers improve their production practices and soil health in the High Plains.”

Several project partners will join CCTA in implementing the FARMS Project, including the College of Agricultural Sciences at Colorado State University, the Western Kansas Agricultural Research-Extension Centers, Health First, and many individuals representing an array of qualifications and experience. At the forefront, however, will be the producers of the High Plains.

“From the very beginning, we wanted this effort to be led by farmers,” said Joni Mitchek, CCTA Coordinator and FARMS Project Manager. “We wanted to recognize the expertise of long-term soil health practitioners and ensure that this program would be beneficial to producers in our area.”

Seventy-three proposals were submitted for the CIG On-Farm Trials competition in 2019, 16 of which were selected to receive funding in the categories of Irrigation Management Technologies, Precision Agriculture Technologies and Strategies, Management Technologies and Strategies, and the Soil Health Demonstration Trials. Altogether, USDA-NRCS will award \$24,314,560 to projects that will impact 23 states.

“The Conservation Innovation Grants program is funding the future of conservation and agriculture,” said NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr. “These On-Farm Trials will allow us to put the latest innovations in conservation to work on the land, while providing new data to show producers across the nation what these systems and practices can do for the health of their operations and our natural resources.”

Additional details about the FARMS Project will be discussed at the 32nd Annual High Plains No-Till Conference in Burlington, Colorado on Feb. 4-5, 2020. More information and registration can be found online at www.HighPlainsNoTill.com or by contacting Joni Mitchek at 1-833-466-8455.

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About CCTA

CCTA is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the conservation and no-till farmers of the High Plains. The group facilitates the exchange of ideas to preserve agricultural soil and water resources for generations by providing a system which drastically reduces soil erosion, conserves soil moisture, and builds organic matter.

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