

CASA Conference Call - March 4, 2008

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance Conference Call

Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 11 a.m. (eastern)

Participants:

Karen Scanlon
Peter Gamache
Blair McClinton
Doyle Wiebe, Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association
Brian Lindley
Russ Evans

Agenda:

Update on proposal to CTIC Board of Directors
Update on proposal to SARE
Message Committee report
Operations Committee report
News from CASA members

Update on proposal to CTIC Board of Directors

Board had many questions, but in the end was supportive of CASA. Board directed CTIC staff to continue to facilitate and coordinate through 2008. Will provide updates in June and Sept and full review in Feb 2009. Karen will write letter from Board to CASA to outline responses, requests and suggestions.

Update on proposal to SARE

Check back with Jill Auburn after March. Two options: small amount of national funds and national initiative proposal process. May be able to get small amount of national SARE funds if we get other partners to also contribute. We are to check with Jill in April. The full national initiative proposal process begins in June with preproposals; full proposals due later in the year.

Message Committee report

Need a foundation to build this network. Need to set timelines and have full participation. By CTIC's June meeting, have a document in place that defines the network and its message. Have a policy document outlining guiding principles. Message committee cut first draft, distribute to operations committee for review and comment.

Operations Committee report

Ready to send letter and questionnaire to other conservation ag groups. Will distribute this week and ask for responses by March 20.

News from CASA members

PNDSA: things starting to happen in Palouse. Did transect survey last fall to track adoption rates. High prices of grain will encourage people to move to direct seeding. Putting mentoring programs on the ground – matching no-tillers with intensive tillers; 8 matches in place for this spring.

Reduced Tillage LINKAGES: Farm Tech meeting went well with lots of enthusiasm. Prices have people happy, despite input prices. Still have challenge of guys going back to tillage if they get too stressed about something. Now, importance of diverse rotations to keep no-till working. Facing a funding crisis, like many other groups.

Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association: Recent conference (20th annual) was very successful. Moving ahead with online journal project. Papers being reviewed; plan to release in June. Across Canada, environmental/ag programs winding down. Facing funding questions.

No-Till on the Plains: Winter Conference (1,200 people) and AIM Symposium (175 people) held recently. Concentrating on cover crops and crop rotations. Putting out data on how to deal with certain issues.

General discussion

Russ: Can we share an international speaker for our big conferences? Share expenses to bring them to the U.S. Send around ideas and get folks to participate.

Peter: looking for ideas for speakers from northern Europe