

CONSERVATION *in* ACTION TOUR

America's Premier On-Farm Experience

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA • JUNE 3-4, 2026

**Real Farms,
Practical Innovation,
Genuine Impact.**

SEE WHAT WORKS.
TAKE IT HOME.



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AND ACTION IN CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE



ORGANIZED BY
**Conservation Technology
Information Center**

Innovating

in North Carolina
for farmers
all over the world



Learn more at
Syngenta-US.com



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CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Welcome

AS CHAIR OF THE CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CENTER BOARD, I'm happy to welcome you all to Raleigh, North Carolina, for this year's CTIC Conservation in Action Tour. I'm so pleased to be part of such a great group of partners that share a commitment to practical, producer-driven conservation.

At Ducks Unlimited, our work is grounded in the belief that conservation succeeds when it works for producers first. That means partnering with farmers and ranchers on voluntary, incentive-based conservation that keeps working lands productive while delivering real environmental benefits. From edge-of-field practices to whole-farm systems, we focus on solutions that fit operations, respect local knowledge, and protect the long-term viability of agriculture.

We also recognize that protecting farming for future generations requires long-term tools, like conservation easements, that protect producers' bottom line. Conservation easements are one way we help ensure that productive lands remain in farming, manage financial risks, and strengthen farm operations while achieving conservation outcomes that benefit soil, water, wildlife, and communities.

CTIC plays a critical role in advancing these shared goals by convening partners, elevating proven technologies, and keeping producers at the center of the conversation. I look forward to continuing our work together to drive solutions that support agriculture, conservation, and the people who make both possible.

Thank you so much for taking the time and making the effort to be here this week. I hope you meet new producers, partners, and friends this week who inspire collaboration and advance conservation solutions that help producers be profitable and agriculture be strong for generations to come. •

Sincerely,
Kellis Moss, Ducks Unlimited
CTIC Board Chair



Kellis Moss
Ducks Unlimited
CTIC CHAIR

“Our work is grounded in the belief that conservation succeeds when it works for producers first.”



Farmer-Led Solutions for Ag

AT THE CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CENTER (CTIC), we believe the most meaningful progress in agriculture begins at the field level, with farmers who are willing to innovate, adapt, and lead. Across the country, producers are finding practical ways to improve soil health, protect water quality, strengthen resilience, and maintain productive, profitable operations. Their work not only shapes the future of agriculture, but also serves as an example for neighbors, communities, and the country's agricultural prosperity.

The Conservation in Action Tour was created to bring those stories to life.

Over the next two days, you will hear directly from farmers and ranchers who are navigating the unique opportunities and challenges of North Carolina's Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions. You will see conservation systems in practice, explore how partnerships support implementation, and engage with the agronomists, researchers, agribusiness leaders, conservation professionals, and policymakers who help move innovation from concept to reality.

CTIC's mission is rooted in collaboration. We work to connect the people and organizations across the agricultural value chain who share a commitment to advancing conservation through practical solutions, trusted information, and real-field perspectives. The Conservation in Action Tour reflects that mission by creating space for honest dialogue, peer learning, and collective problem-solving.

We are especially grateful to the farmers opening their operations and sharing their experiences with us and for the other amazing farmers who left their operations and crops to bring their story to the tour. Their willingness to test new ideas, evaluate outcomes, and speak candidly about both successes and challenges is what makes this tour so valuable. Conservation is not one-size-fits-all, and there is no substitute for learning directly from producers who are implementing these systems every day.

Thank you for joining us in Raleigh and for being part of this community of innovation and stewardship. We hope the conversations, connections, and perspectives you gain during this tour inspire new ideas and strengthen your commitment to advancing conservation agriculture in your own work and communities. ●

Sincerely,
Ryan Heiniger, Executive Director
Conservation Technology Information Center



Ryan Heiniger
Executive Director
Conservation Information
Technology Center

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Connect. Inform. Champion. Deliver.



Membership That Supports Farmer-Led Conservation from Concept to Field

A Trusted Catalyst for Conservation Agriculture

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) brings together farmers, researchers, agribusiness, conservation organizations, and policymakers to accelerate the adoption of productive, profitable, and resilient agriculture systems.

For more than 40 years, CTIC has served as a trusted, science-based convener—turning data, partnerships, and on-farm experience into real-world conservation outcomes.

Putting Conservation Into Practice

CTIC focuses on three integrated areas of impact:

1. Convene and Lead Partnerships

We bring diverse stakeholders together to identify challenges, align priorities, and launch collaborative projects that drive conservation outcomes at scale.

2. Deliver Trusted Data and Insights

CTIC is a nationally recognized source for conservation practice trend data—transforming complex information into actionable insights for farmers, advisors, industry, and policymakers.

3. Accelerate On-Farm Adoption

Through field days, farmer-to-farmer learning, technical resources, and digital tools, CTIC helps move conservation from theory to implementation.

These priorities reflect CTIC's long-term strategic direction and commitment to scalable, outcomes-driven conservation solutions.

Membership Fuels Action



CTIC members are more than supporters — **they are partners in progress.**

Membership enables CTIC to:

Lead and participate in high-impact conservation initiatives

Convene cross-sector coalitions and advisory groups

Deliver unbiased, science-based information

Support farmer engagement, education, and technical assistance

Maintain trusted platforms that connect conservation resources to real needs

Together, members help ensure conservation efforts are **practical, credible, and durable.**



WHO JOINS CTIC

CTIC membership reflects the full conservation agriculture ecosystem, including:

- Farmers, landowners, and advisers
- Agribusinesses and agricultural retailers
- Ecosystem service and MMRV providers
- Conservation and environmental organizations
- University extension and research
- Trade, marketing, and professional associations
- Government agencies and partners
- Media and communications companies

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

CTIC membership levels are intended to be inclusive and accessible to all.

Diamond — \$15,000
Platinum — \$10,000
Gold — \$5,000
Silver — \$1,500
Bronze — \$750
Copper — \$250

Organizations are encouraged to select the level that best reflects their size, role, and commitment.

Thank You to our 2025 Member Organizations — leaders from every sector of agriculture and conservation who helped CTIC exceed its \$100k membership challenge with matching funds from the Walton Family Foundation.

DIAMOND MEMBERS

Syngenta
The Mosaic Company

PLATINUM MEMBERS

BASF
Bush's
Nutrien Ag Solutions

GOLD MEMBERS

Bayer CropScience
Corteva Agriscience
Ducks Unlimited
Farm Credit Services of America
Indigo Ag
Lessiter Media
National Corn Growers Assn.
The Fertilizer Institute
The Nature Conservancy

SILVER MEMBERS

Agriculture Retailers Assn.
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Assn.
ARVA
Conservation Ag Foundation
Cotton Incorporated
CropLife America
Illinois Corn Growers Assn.
Indiana Soybean Alliance
International Certified Crop Adviser Program
Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certificate Program
National Assn. of Conservation Districts
Precision Risk Management
Princeton University Library

BRONZE MEMBERS

Agri Drain Corp.
Farm Credit Mid-America
Fractal Agriculture
Houston Engineering
Indiana Corn Marketing Council
NC State University
Truax Company
USDA-ARS-NLAEHouston Engineering
NC State University
Truax Company
USDA-ARS-NLAE

Be Part of Coalition-Led Conservation

CTIC members help shape the future of conservation agriculture — grounded in data, guided by farmers, and strengthened through collaboration.

Join our community of changemakers from leading organizations to safeguard on-farm resources and America's farming future.

Learn more or become a member at ctic.org



Conservation Technology
Information Center

ITINERARY

WEDNESDAY- *June 3, 2026*

11:30-1:30 P.M. **REGISTRATION OPEN**

Sheraton Raleigh

1:30-4:30 P.M. **PRE-TOUR PRIMERS**

BEHIND-THE-SCENES INDUSTRY TOURS

Departing from Sheraton Raleigh

(pre-registration required)

- *BASF Center for Sustainable Ag*
- *Cotton Incorporated Headquarters & textile mill*
- *NCSU Plant Sciences Initiative*

4:30 P.M. **BUSES RETURN TO SHERATON FROM TOURS**

• **CELEBRATION OF CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE, UNION HALL** •

5:00-6:30 P.M. **COCKTAIL SOCIAL**

1st Floor and Terrace, Raleigh

6:30 P.M. **OPENING CEREMONY AND BANQUET**

Food With a Story + Keynote Speaker Vivian Howard

9:00 P.M. **ADJOURN**

THURSDAY- *June 4, 2026*

6:30 – 7:30 A.M. **REGISTRATION OPEN**

7:30 A.M. **BUSES DEPART FOR TOUR**

1 *Leggett Farming Partnership, Nashville*

2 *Upper Coastal Plain Research Station, Rocky Mount*

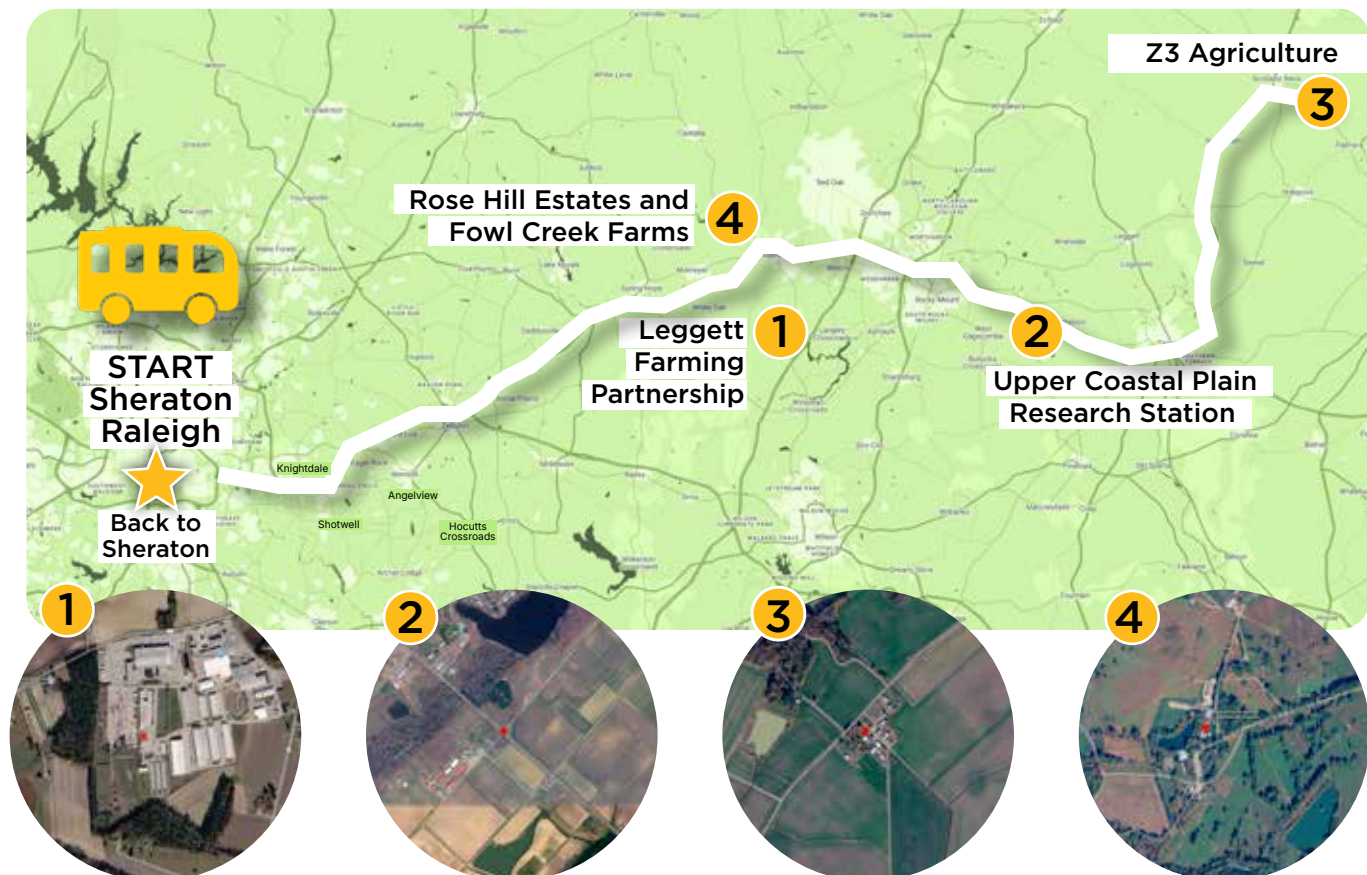
3 *Z3 Agriculture, Scotland Neck*

5:00 P.M. **CLOSING RECEPTION AND HALL OF FAME AWARDS**

4 *Rose Hill Estate, Nashville*

7:30 P.M. (ESTIMATE) **RETURN TO SHERATON RALEIGH**

TOUR STOPS: JUNE 4



★ Sheraton Raleigh, 421 S Salisbury St, Raleigh, NC 27601 • 919.834.9900

1 Leggett Farming Partnership
3197 Sandy Cross Rd, Nashville, NC 27856

2 Upper Coastal Plain Research Station
2811 Nobles Mill Pond Rd, Rocky Mount, NC 27801

3 Z3 Agriculture, 435 Winslow Rd
Scotland Neck, NC 27874

4 Rose Hill Estates and Fowl Creek Farms
3815 Rose Hill Ln, Nashville, NC 27856

★ Return to Sheraton, Raleigh



Committed to Nutrient Stewardship.

At Mosaic, we are helping shape a sustainable future built on reliability, guided by responsibility, and focused on the future. We pursue innovative, science-based solutions to help feed a growing global population while conserving natural resources. Together with our partners, we are committed to advancing 4R Nutrient Stewardship using the right source, right rate, right time, and right place as a best management practice for sustainable agriculture.

We proudly support CTIC.

Welcome To North Carolina

North Carolina: The Birthplace of Soil Conservation

ANSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA native Hugh Hammond Bennett was the foremost expert and advocate for soil conservation of the 20th Century. He drove the establishment of what is now the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which originated as the Soil Erosion Service in 1933 and was codified under USDA as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1935.

"The Father of Soil Conservation" served as the first chief for both organizations and famously testified to Congress in 1935 about the "national menace" of soil erosion following a spring dust storm that reached Washington, D.C. during the height of the Dust Bowl, leading to the Soil Conservation Act of 1935.

Following the establishment of SCS, North Carolina organized the first soil conservation district in 1937: The Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District, located in the Brown Creek watershed, covering parts of Anson and Union counties.

The initial district in North Carolina paved the way for more than 3,000 conservation districts that exist across the country today. Bennett's legacy continues to grow with each generation of NRCS scientists, technical assistance specialists, and implementing partners who help farmers and ranchers preserve their most precious resources for the next generation of producers. ●



Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett (left) and Roach Stewart of Duke Power Company attend a picnic for tenant farmers of the Duke Power Company near Mooresville, N.C.



Buried machinery in barn lot in Dallas, S.D., May 13, 1936.



A dust storm from the Midwest blew into Washington, D.C. in 1935, darkening the skies over the Lincoln Memorial.



One of the first Conservation Districts is formed after the creation of the Soil Conservation Service.

The Power Behind Every Acre

A clear path to stronger farms, resilient supply chains, and lasting impact.

Farm advisors—agronomists, retailers, and consultants—help shape everyday decisions across millions of acres. Now, there's a clear path to expand their impact and unlock new business opportunities.

The Farmer Advisor Roadmap brings together leaders across agriculture to:

- Build advisor capacity and expertise
- Align incentives with farm success
- Coordinate investment across the ag system
- Deliver measurable environmental and economic outcomes

Built on cross-sector collaboration, this roadmap helps farmers and advisors move agriculture forward together.

Download the roadmap and join the conversation:

nature.org/AdvisorRoadmap



Behind-the-Scenes Industry Tours

These behind-the-scenes industry stops showcase how value chains are supporting producers with programs and tools for sustainable production and demand creation. This year's pre-tour primers include:

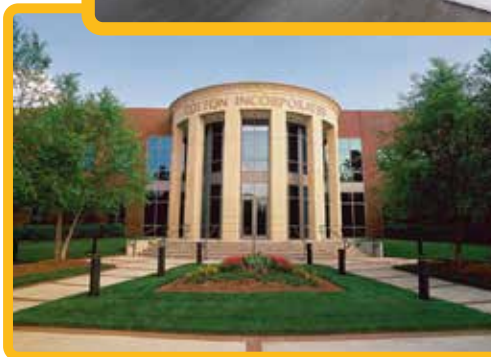
BASF Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Explore BASF's education and innovation hub with interactive exhibits highlighting sustainable agriculture, fiber, biofuels, conservation, and biodiversity. In addition, tour a large sustainable greenhouse and stroll in the pollinator garden with more than 100 plant species.



Cotton Incorporated

Engage with interactive demonstrations showcasing the latest innovations in cotton production, fiber quality research, and sustainability tools that help growers optimize yield and environmental outcomes — all designed to bridge on-farm practice with market and supply chain insights.



NC State Plant Sciences

See cutting-edge research infrastructure and hear from plant scientists about advances in crop genetics, data-driven trait development, and interdisciplinary work that connects fundamental plant science to real-world farm productivity and sustainability.



BANQUET PREVIEW

Emcee: Dr. Mark Schmidt

MARK SCHMIDT, PH.D. has been a longtime board member during his career and has helped lead CTIC as an officer for the past 10 years. He finished his term as Past Chair in March and will retain his seat on the board of directors. Schmidt also serves on the 2026 Conservation in Action Tour Committee.

He was appointed as interim vice chancellor for external affairs, partnerships, and economic development, effective Feb. 1. Mark has served as associate vice chancellor of partnerships since 2021, where he oversees NC State's strategy for engaging with corporate, government, and nonprofit partners, including the 70-plus partnerships on Centennial Campus. In his 22-year career at John Deere, he led the company's partnership strategy, as well as a range of external public and private stakeholder relationships and partnerships. Mark earned bachelor's degrees in landscape architecture and agronomy from Purdue University and a Ph.D. in crop sciences from the University of Illinois.



Dr. Mark Schmidt

Kellis Moss

Kellis Moss is Managing Director for Federal Affairs for Ducks Unlimited and CTIC's Board Chair. Kellis leads legislative affairs, governmental relations, and advocacy for Ducks Unlimited, which conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl and other wildlife at the intersection of America's working lands.



Kellis Moss

Adam Herges

Adam Herges is Sustainability Agronomist Advisor, Corporate Public Affairs at The Mosaic Company, the world's leading producer of phosphate and potash fertilizers. Adam leads Mosaic's North American 4R Nutrient Stewardship strategic partnerships, as well as provide technical agronomy expertise on key issues related to sustainable agriculture production, carbon, and water quality.

Prior to joining Mosaic in 2015, Adam was Director of Research and Market Development at South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council in Sioux Falls. Earlier in his career, Adam worked in a variety of roles with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and The University of Minnesota.



Adam Herges

Ann Steensland

Ann Steensland is Executive Director of The Mosaic Company Foundation for Sustainable Food Systems and Senior Manager of Community Investments at The Mosaic Company. As a member of the corporate CSR team, Ann leads the group's grantmaking strategy to advance food security, agricultural productivity, and sustainable food systems. During her three years with The Mosaic Company, Ann has focused on building cross-sector partnerships that align social investment with measurable, long-term impact.

Ann brings more than a decade of experience in global agriculture and hunger-focused initiatives. She has held leadership roles with the Global Agricultural Productivity Initiative at Virginia Tech, the Global Harvest Initiative, and the Alliance to End Hunger, and is recognized for her collaborative, strategic approach to addressing complex food system challenges.



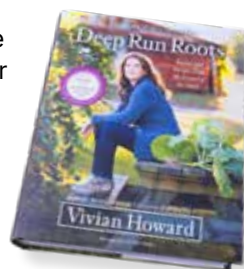
Ann Steensland

Keynote Speaker Vivian Howard

VIVIAN IS AN AWARD-WINNING cookbook author, TV personality, chef, restaurateur, and a farm kid from Deep Run, N.C. Her first cookbook, *Deep Run Roots: Stories & Recipes from My Corner of the South* (2016), is a *New York Times* bestseller and was named Cookbook of the Year by the International Association of Culinary Professionals.

She created and stars in public television shows *Somewhere South* and *A Chef's Life*, for which she has won Peabody, Emmy and James Beard awards. Vivian runs the restaurants Chef & the Farmer in Kinston, N.C., and Handy & Hot and Lenoir in Charleston, S.C. In October 2020, Vivian released her second cookbook, *This Will Make It Taste Good: A New Path to Simple Cooking*.

Vivian's new PBS show is now streaming! *Kitchen Curious with Vivian Howard* is a one-of-a-kind food variety show that unpacks the everyday questions we confront when we find ourselves in the kitchen. With her expertise as a chef, a farmer's daughter's rural sensibility, and a mom's no-nonsense approach, Vivian serves up answers to your burning kitchen questions — all with a generous side of humor. Whether you're a kitchen novice, a seasoned cook, or a microwave magician, you'll walk away with simple recipes, smarter (nutritionist-approved!) shopping tips, and the kind of knowledge that makes you a more interesting dinner party guest.



Vivian Howard

BANQUET PROGRAM

5:00 Social

6:30 Banquet Program Begins

Emcee: **Mark Schmidt**, Ph.D. Interim Vice Chancellor, NCSU

- Welcome to North Carolina
- History of CTIC
- CTIC Board Member Recognition

Ryan Heiniger, Executive Director, CTIC

- CTIC Priorities
- Food with a Conservation Story

Dinner

7:30 Program Continues

- **Kellis Moss**, CTIC Board Chair & Managing Director of Federal Affairs, Ducks Unlimited
- **Adam Herges**, Sustainability Agronomist Advisor, The Mosaic Company
- **Ann Steensland**, Executive Director, The Mosaic Company Foundation

Keynote Speaker: Vivian Howard



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



PUTTING AMERICAN FARMERS FIRST

REGENERATIVE PILOT PROGRAM

This pilot program addresses whole-farm resource concerns through support for voluntary regenerative agriculture conservation plans.

Pilot Program Details

- **Bundled practices** will be integrated into a single application, making programs easier to access and more impactful;
- **Whole-farm holistic conservation planning** is the centerpiece of the program, ensuring that all resource concerns (soil, water, and natural vitality) are addressed together;
- **Conservation planning** and producer objectives drive the process, ensuring site-specific solutions that work for the producer;
- **Outcomes are tracked**, measured, and credited back to the farmer.



FOR PRODUCERS AT EVERY STAGE

From beginning farmers just starting out with cover crops to advanced operations with years of conservation experience, producers will find a pathway through this pilot program.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Taking Care of Crops by Taking Care of the Land

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING GOING ON at Leggett Farming Partnership.

"We farm about 13 months out of the year," Sue Leggett jokes. "We are very busy people, but we're always looking for ways to innovate and be better and be progressive."

Sue and her husband, Brent, own and operate Leggett Farming Partnership. They grow sweet potatoes, tobacco, cotton, peanuts, soybeans, corn, watermelons, and strawberries across 4,000 acres. They also welcome school tours and operate Strawberry City, which offers u-pick strawberries and ice cream.

Innovative Solutions

Within their four-year crop rotation, the Leggetts use no-till or reduced tillage like strip-till on peanuts and row crops. On the peanuts, a crop that has historically been managed with extensive plowing and bed management, they're currently testing different tillage systems.

Those trials have been spearheaded by Brent and Sue's oldest son, Colin, who had seen different tillage systems in peanuts and wanted to try the conservation practices on his family's farm. Sue says they're in their second year of fall bedding—creating a raised row in the autumn, protecting it with a cover crop, and planting on it in the spring.

"Instead of doing all the tillage in the springtime, we went ahead and did the land work in the fall," Sue says. "We bedded it up and then spread the cover crop on top of that. The cover crop would grow all winter long, and then in the springtime, all you have to do is just plant straight into that bed. We'll spray the cover crop to terminate that, but then, once that cover crop dies down, we will come in and plant."

"The intent is that you won't have to plow them, that it'll be basically no-till peanuts," she explains. "You may have to spray them some just like any other ones, but there'll be no-till the whole season."

Cash crops that require tillage are accompanied by cover crops every winter.

"While tobacco and sweet potatoes are primarily full tillage crops, we look to those other companion and rotational crops to fill a little bit of that void and to be able to do more conservation in those off years," Sue says.

The Leggetts have used winter wheat and a multi-species cover crop mix.

Sue says she's seen benefits from reduced tillage, including increased moisture-holding capacity and weed suppression.

"Anytime we can build some soil structure and prevent erosion, that is a win," Sue says.

Through partnerships with North Carolina State University, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and private industry, the Leggetts run test plots, such as variety trials or fertilizer trials.



STOP 1 LEGGETT FARMING PARTNERSHIP

Benefits of Diversification

The Leggetts are partners in Nash Produce Company, where sweet potatoes are washed, graded, and packaged; then, they're shipped and marketed across the U.S. and globally.

The Leggetts also pack and ship their own watermelons along the East Coast. With their diversified production system, Sue says she sees several benefits.

"Diversification allows us to not be solely reliant on certain things," Sue says. "If the weather is very bad, for example, if the cotton doesn't do very well, then you still have the soybeans or the corn. It allows us to spread our risk, and it allows us to try different practices."

With their four year crop rotation, Sue says they've seen reduced disease and weed pressure. They also give the soil a rest between crops like sweet potatoes and tobacco that require full tillage. In addition, their conservation practices include grassy field borders.

Sue says farmers who are considering diversification in their operations can start by seeing what works well on their farms.

"Is there something that they can plant and use their existing equipment that fits well with their current level of labor?" she says. "What can they do that shares a lot of what they're doing already? Sharing equipment and labor, the labor source that they've already got, their labor availability, equipment operators. They're not having to recreate the wheel, per se."

Committed to Conservation

Conservation has always been at the heart of the Leggett Farming Partnership. The operation began in 2005 with 900 acres. Brent had worked as the farm manager for a local producer. When Brent's supervisor retired, he connected Brent and Sue with his landowners so the Leggetts were able to start their own operation as first-generation farmers.

Both Brent and Sue earned their degrees in agriculture. Sue was a 4-H member, raising livestock, riding horses, and tending a garden. She worked with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in high school, attending on-farm activities. She also

entered an essay contest focused on conservation agriculture practices.

"What attracted us to being farmers, we just have that love for the land and to see things grow and prosper," Sue says. "So conservation is something that is near and dear to us."

Farming Challenges

Like all farmers, the Leggetts face challenges with the weather.

"The weather plays a definite role in our ability to carry out the different conservation practices," Sue says, "like our ability to get the cover crops planted when we want to, and then to get back in the field to do the different conservation tillage. The weather just plays a huge role."

"And the weather is changing," she continues. "Less frequent, more intense rain events, stronger storms, and colder, hotter, just more extreme weather. It's definitely something that we're dealing with on a daily basis anymore."

And so, Sue sees conservation and constant improvement as a necessity.

"You have to take care of the land if it's going to take care of your crops," she says. "If we just let it all wash away, we're not going to have anything to tend."

Core Values Leading the Way

The Leggetts' core values of quality, safety, family, leadership, and fairness weave into conservation agriculture.

"Quality means you're taking care of the land—you're not just taking care of the crop that's being grown, but you're taking care of the land so that you can be there year after year," Sue says. "We're building soil health so that when my kids start farming this land, it's more fertile and more productive. We can't sustain ourselves as a farm if we don't produce a quality crop and we don't do a good job."

She adds the family value is seen in their sons' involvement and keeping an open mind.

"It's very important to us that we give them a hand in things, that it's not just our way," Sue says. "We're very open to ideas from them and suggestions from them. They can help steer this thing in a future direction." ●

Leggett Farming Partnership Speakers

Brent and Sue Leggett

Brent and Sue Leggett, along with their sons, Colin and Carter, farm about 3,000 acres and feature diverse rotations and cropping systems producing cotton, soybeans, corn, tobacco, strawberries, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and watermelon. They are partners in an integrated sweet potato packing/shipping operation and feature direct-to-consumer agritourism at Strawberry City, which serves 800 people per day during harvest.

Brent and Sue are active in their state ag and civic organizations. Brent serves on the NC Sweetpotato Commission and the USDA FSA state committee. Sue is a Nash County Commissioner and serves on the Grower Advisory Council for NC State's Plant Science Initiative.



Colin Leggett

Colin Leggett is a second generation farmer from Nash County NC. He will return NC State this fall for his second year in the Ag Business and Field Crops programs of the Agricultural Institute. At the young age of 19, Colin has always had a passion for farming and agriculture. He naturally has an inquisitive personality and is always looking for ways to innovate and improve farm operations and agronomic practices. He has embraced technology and looks for ways to practically implement its use into daily operations. Colin is looking forward to what the future in farming holds.



Colin Leggett

Chaz Holt

Charles Holt, who goes by Chaz, is the Director of Field Programs with the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol. Chaz has worked in sustainable cropping systems and agroecology for nearly 20 years. In this career he has been a fresh vegetable producer, crop consultant, in academic research, and an uplands conservation agronomist, upland habitat restoration, and other on-farm sustainability outcomes. Chaz has a B.S. in Agriculture Sciences from University of Wyoming and a M.S. in Agroecology in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University. He is married and a father to their 3 children residing on a family farm in Georgia.



Chaz Holt

SPEAKERS

Dr. Jesse Daystar

Dr. Jesse Daystar is the Chief Sustainability Officer and Vice President of Sustainability at Cotton Incorporated and an adjunct professor at the Duke Nicholas School of the Environment. Daystar leads the cotton industry towards a more regenerative and sustainable future through supporting research and outreach programs aimed at implementing best science and practices in the soil and throughout the supply chain.



Dr. Jesse Daystar

Tommy Wheeler

After studying physics at Davidson College, Tommy landed in NASCAR. He worked as a team engineer, engineering manager and technical director for teams like Hendrick Motorsports and Evernham Motorsports. He ended his career as operations director and general manager of Roush Fenway Racing in 2021. If you're wondering how a NASCAR engineer became a farmer, so is Tommy.

He teamed up with Al Spruill, a fifth-generation farmer, to establish a crop that would complement their favorite pastime – duck hunting. Growing rice turned out to mesh perfectly. By combining time-tested agriculture experience with cutting-edge techniques, Tidewater Grain has become the largest grower of both Carolina Gold and Santee Long Grain rice in the world.



Tommy Wheeler



ROOTED IN CONSERVATION.

DRIVEN BY RESEARCH.

Proud to support NC soybean farmers for their conservation and stewardship efforts.



RESEARCH
Investing in innovative solutions for a better future.



MARKET DEVELOPMENT
Creating opportunities and adding value for soybean farmers.



OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS
Connecting farmers, communities, and the next generation.



LEARN MORE AT [NCSOY.ORG](https://ncsoy.org)

  
@NCSOYBEANS

...
IN THE TIME IT TAKES TO DRINK A MORNING CUP OF COFFEE YOU CAN GET AN UPDATE ON THE WORK BEING DONE BY THE COTTON RESEARCH AND PROMOTION PROGRAM.



THE COTTON BOARD



JOIN US FOR COTTON & COFFEE

STOP 2 UPPER COASTAL PLAIN RESEARCH STATION

Research Driving the Future of Ag

North Carolina's Experiment Stations were established in 1877, and since then, the Department of Agriculture has partnered with the area's universities to establish living laboratories for regional crops, forestry, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture.

The 18-facility network has three research farms near Raleigh. The Upper Coastal Plain Research Station is the oldest in the network and is known for its disease nurseries, including tobacco black shank and peanut diseases, which are critical for developing and testing resistant cultivars.

The 440-acre site conducts projects on tobacco and peanut breeding, disease and insect management studies, and testing experimental pesticides for field crops such as corn, soybeans, and cotton. It has been pivotal in the state's tobacco research and new cultivar trials, and it also studies corn, cotton, peanuts, soybeans, sorghum, and small grains. These crops are of great economic importance to eastern North Carolina, totaling \$2.17 billion for farmers in 2017, totaling almost 60% of crop cash receipts. ●



Creig Deal, Superintendent of Upper Coastal Plain (right) discusses a field trial with a researcher.



LUNCH

Lunch Program and Speakers

Teresa Lambert

Teresa Lambert directs North Carolina's 18 statewide agricultural research stations through a partnership between the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NC-DA&CS), NC State University, and NC A&T State University. These stations serve as living laboratories for investigating crops, forestry, livestock, and aquaculture.

She graduated from N.C. State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's degree in poultry science.

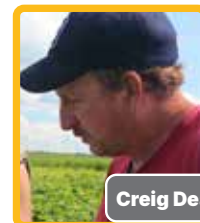
She started in her current role in 2021 and most recently served as the superintendent of the Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury for nearly five years. She has also worked with the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service in Statesville and Sparta as an extension agent specializing in row crops and livestock. Lambert was a meat and poultry relief inspector for nearly five years, covering processing facilities in 16 northwestern counties. In that role, she also provided on-site training to new employees.



Teresa Lambert

Creig Deal

Stephen "Creig" Deal is the Superintendent of Upper Coastal Plain Research Station, a key facility for agricultural research. He manages station operations focusing on disease nurseries, including tobacco black shank and peanuts and works with researchers to analyze insect findings and agricultural data.



Creig Deal

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STOP 3: Z3 AGRICULTURE

Systems Working for the Soil **How Z3 Agriculture uses every farm asset to drive soil health**

OPTIMIZING EVERY ASSET on the farm includes putting the soil to work.

That's according to Zeb Winslow III of Scotland Neck, North Carolina, our afternoon farm stop host.

Winslow operates Z3 Agriculture, a corn, soybean, and cotton operation using no-till and cover crops on 100% of their acres.

In college, he majored in economics and accounting. After graduation, he worked in transportation and warehousing, focusing on timing and asset utilization.

That experience drives not only his farm and equipment decisions, but it also drives his soil decisions.

"The most expensive thing that you will rent or buy over the course of your farming career is sitting dormant for 75-80 percent of the year," Winslow says. "It should be doing something. The soils weren't designed to lay empty for that amount of time."

Farm Changes Throughout Five Generations

Winslow is a fifth-generation farmer on an operation that has seen many different types of agricultural production: mules, dairy cows, farrow-to-finish hogs, peanuts, and today's mix of corn, soybeans, and cotton.

Winslow says the farm has evolved with its conservation and production systems to maximize the results of their soil health production system.

"A lot of that grew out of the work that my father did



Photos provided by Zeb Winslow III

Four generations of the Winslow family: (L to R) Zeb Winslow III holding his oldest son; Zeb Winslow, Jr., and Zeb Winslow, Sr.

before me," Winslow says. "He's always very much on the cutting edge or pushing efficiency on the farm."

In the mid-1990s, Winslow and his father, Zeb Winslow, Jr., started using reduced tillage systems, like strip-till, with a single species cover crop. In 2013, they planted their first multi-species cover crop.

By spring, the plants were waist-high. Winslow's father asked him how he would plant into the cover crops.

For advice, Winslow talked with Jay Brandt—his father David was inducted into the CTIC Hall of Fame during the 18th annual Conservation in Action Tour for his no-till pioneer work in Ohio.

After hearing about Winslow's set-up, Brandt said, "Go plant into it green."

To say the least, Winslow, Jr. was skeptical. But Winslow replied, "Give me one day. If I can't figure it out and make it work in one day, we'll spray."

So, when conditions were right, Winslow planted

STOP 3: Z3 AGRICULTURE



directly into the cover crop.

"It was some of the best planting conditions we'd ever had," Winslow said. "We had more soil moisture than we normally would have had; the tilth of the soil, just the way that it shaped up, you knew by the way it looked when you put the seed in the ground that you were onto something."

Winslow says throughout the 2014 growing season, he and his father saw noticeable differences: a higher biomass cover crop that hung onto more moisture, as well as less competition from weeds. Those benefits sealed the deal, and they've now been planting intensive cover crops for 13 years.

His work with conservation systems earned Winslow recognition as a finalist for the 2025 Carolinas Leopold Conservation Award.

Rooted in Improvement

Winslow says they've experimented with seeding rates. Even with reduced rates, he says the farm has still benefited from the cover crops.

"The largest part of how you're going to influence the characteristics of your soil and the biology of your soil is going to happen through that cover crop root," Winslow says. "The above-ground biomass is a place for our beneficial insects and all of our above-ground livestock to live. It's habitat, shelter, and food for them. But what's really moving everything along are the roots and what the roots are doing in the ground."

Having a living root year-round with both row crops and cover crops makes sense when managing a land investment, Winslow adds.

"Whether you're renting land or whether you're buying it, our soils are without a doubt the biggest investment that any farmer is ever going to make," Winslow says.

He says that just as equipment is cleaned af-



ter use and kept in a shed for shelter from the elements, the land needs cared for and improved, as well.

"Improving the land is one of the most important things I can do to ensure the longevity of my operation and agriculture in general," Winslow says. "They're not making any more land."

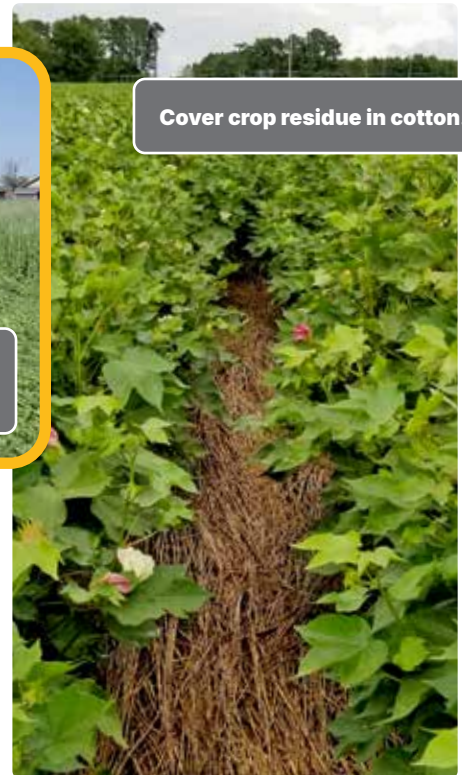
On-Farm Research and Data Guide Decisions

To optimize his soil asset, Winslow has designed research trials for his production system and tracked data for seven years.

In one trial, he tracks the soil test values for a 10-acre section in the middle of a 30-acre field that does not receive lime, phosphorus, or potassium. He says the soil test values haven't dropped so dramatically that they affect his crop.

"There's something going on where we're able to cycle nutrients from deeper in the soil profile with cover crops that's making the nutrients more available," Winslow says.

He says with the cover crops, they've been able to reduce their nitrogen rates in cotton from 120 units to 80-90 units per acre, de-



STOP 3: Z3 AGRICULTURE

Z3, continued

pending on the weather.

With fewer passes and no rippers, Winslow says he also saves ten gallons of diesel fuel per hour. With diesel prices in his area at \$5.79 on April 1, 2026, he'll be saving nearly \$600/day when he works ten-hour days.

He emphasizes that no two farm systems are alike and on-farm research is important for understanding the best way to manage an operation.

"No one's soil is going to be identical to yours," Winslow says. "You're creating that experiment and conducting that experiment in the same way that you're going to grow your crops."

What's Next?

When the Winslows first implemented their conser-

vation system, Winslow was excited to see the drastic changes in moisture retention, soil temperature, and weed suppression with the cover crops.

"Once you see something work and you can tell that you're on to something, it gets me fired up to see, 'What else can we get out of this?'" he says.

For the future, he's analyzing an increase in variety of cover crop species. He's also considered grazing cover crops, whether he adds cattle or other ruminants himself or partners with a producer to graze the cover crops.

Winslow says there are benefits to having livestock on crop ground, for both additional income and the soil.

"With how much it does for your soil health and for everything that's going on underground, it just seems like that's the next logical step," Winslow says. ●

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SPEAKERS



Donny Lassiter

Lassiter Family Farms started in 1944 when Donny Lassiter's grandfather returned from World War II. Donny and his brother, Mark, grow cotton, peanuts, corn, soybeans, wheat, and pumpkins on several thousand acres. The Lassiters use GPS and soil samples to create a prescription for every field, which ensures each field has just enough fertilizer. They use cover crops in the fall and winter, and plant their crops with no till.

Donny serves on the board of directors for Cotton Incorporated and is currently a board officer. He is a Farmer Mentor with the Soil Health Institute and is active with the state's commodity groups.

Lassiter Farms supplies cotton for Wrangler Jeans and Ralph Lauren, and their peanuts can be enjoyed and major league ball parks around the country.



Donny Lassiter

Emily Ball

Emily Ball is a Soil Health Educator working with the U.S. Regenerative Cotton Fund. Prior to SHI, she was a Soil Conservationist with USDA-NRCS in Maryland. She received her B.S. in Environmental Science from Delaware Valley University and her M.S. in Soil Science with a minor in Biogeochemistry from Penn State. Her research focused on soil properties and management decisions and their effect on nitrous oxide emissions in dairy cropping systems.



Emily Ball

Russell Hedrick

Hedrick is a first-generation farmer of JHR Grain Farms, a Leopold Conservation Award winner, serial entrepreneur, and dryland corn yield record holder (459.91 bushels per acre in 2022) in Hickory, N.C. He grows 650 acres of non-GMO corn and soybeans, along with barley, oats, triticale, and wheat. His crops thrive amid drought thanks to the soil's improved capacity to infiltrate and hold moisture, while cycling biological nutrients. He credits soil health practices with reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting nearby streams from sediment runoff. He has co-founded a handful of farmer-first businesses, including Revolution Drones, Regen Mills, Heritage Ground, Farmers Reserve Distillery, Soil Regen, and Southern Seeds and Feeds.

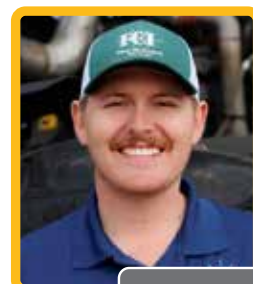


Russell Hedrick

John Leach

John's diverse responsibilities at FCI include helping clients solve practical problems on the farm, decreasing input costs and increasing yields through comprehensive management programs. With eight years of field experience in soil/crop fertility management and crop protection, he is able to provide solutions that utilize precision agriculture, such as soil and tissue sampling, data analysis, and custom prescriptions to ensure crop success.

John earned his B.S. in Agricultural Science from NC State University. He also holds an Agricultural Business Management and Sales Certificate from Bayer Crop Science.



John Leach

CLOSING RECEPTION

Rose Hill Estate and Fowl Creek Farms

Nathan Boddie, the first son of William Boddie and Mary Bennet, moved to Edgecombe (now Nash) County and settled on Peachtree Creek with his wife Chloe Crudup a short time prior to 1758. This land had been deeded by King George II's agents on May 1, 1762.

Rose Hill began with an earlier manor house built by Nathan, approximately 1,500 feet the existing mansion.

The house that stands today at Rose Hill was also started in 1790, by Nathan Boddie for his son George, his first wife Susan Parham Boddie, and their 22 children. It was built in traditional southern style with large porches and Doric columns, and it has been said that a landscape gardener came to Rose Hill from England to lay out the gardens.

The two Boddie homes co-existed for at least 125 years. Eventually the current mansion was enlarged, and the original home was torn down.

The Boddies continued to live at Rose Hill through World War I and the boom and bust period of the 1920's. Unfortunately, the stock market crash in 1929 led to the Great Depression, and there was no money to pay off the mortgage on the property. Rose Hill was sold at auction to Prudential Insurance Company on June 16, 1930.

In the mid 30's, Nicholas Bunn Boddie Sr., his wife Lucy Valeria Mayo Boddie, their children Nicholas Bunn Boddie Jr. (Nick Boddie), Ben Mayo Boddie (Mayo Boddie), and Lucy Ann Boddie (Lucy Ann), were required to move away from Rose Hill. For the first time since May 1st, 1762, Rose Hill was no longer in the hands of the Boddie Family.



From there, the home changed hands a few times, eventually being donated to NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. The college planned to use the mansion as a continuing education center, but financial problems

caused the college to abandon that plan.

"All my life, I would have dreams at night in which we moved back to Rose Hill, but I never really day-dreamed about it or really ever gave much thought to it," Mayo Boddie recalled. In 1962, Mayo Boddie, along with his brother Nick and their uncle Carleton Noell began Boddie-Noell Enterprises, a franchisee of Hardee's Food Systems. With the success of the company, and the help and support of the countless employees at Boddie-Noell, they were financially able to purchase what remained of Rose Hill in 1979.

However, much time had passed and Rose Hill had fallen into extensive disrepair. Mayo Boddie entrusted Sandra Livermon Builders of Rocky Mount to oversee the restoration and expansion of Rose Hill. Work began in 1980 and spanned the course of an entire decade, as Livermon and her team worked to rejuvenate and enhance Rose Hill's original charm.

Mayo Boddie never used the restored home as a primary residence. Instead, he saw the masterpiece as an opportunity to bring Rose Hill back to life in a grander way, by offering it as an event center for weddings and conferences.

Mayo passed away on March 31, 2020 and his beloved wife, Jean, passed in September of the



same year. They are buried in the family cemetery on the property. Today, there are five Boddie families living on Rose Hill's historic 860 acres.

In addition to the historic Manor House, Rose Hill Estate is home to: Rose Hill Conference Center, an event venue for weddings, conferences, and celebrations; Rose Hill Sporting Clays, which boasts automated skeet and trap shooting facilities; and, of course, Rose Hill Farm, a working cattle farm.

Although the roots of Rose Hill Farm date back to the 18th century, its current iteration began in the early 1980s. In addition to cattle, the farm also oper-

ated several poultry houses, in cooperation with Perdue. However, as technology changed, the expense of maintaining the houses outpaced profits and the farm got out of the poultry business.

Rose Hill Farm is managed by Madison Costa. The farm features 400 grazing acres, with large, wide open pastures. The grasses of each pasture are made up of mostly fescue and rye grasses and each pasture has its own pond. The herd has 90 cow-calf pairs. Guests visiting the conference center and sporting clays range are always delighted by the sight of the cattle and their three donkey friends. ●

Speaker Bios

Madison Costa

Madison Costa is a first-generation farmer and owner of Fowl Creek Farms, a cow-calf operation based in Eastern North Carolina. A graduate of North Carolina State University with a degree in Livestock and Poultry, Madison manages a herd primarily made up of Black Angus cattle and is involved in every step of the production process, from raising calves to meat processing.

Since childhood, Madison has dreamed of owning her own farm, despite not growing up in agriculture. Through hard work, determination, and a deep passion for the industry, she has built a growing operation. Madison is passionate about connecting consumers to agriculture and plans to continue expanding both her herd and direct-to-consumer beef business in the years ahead.



Madison Costa

Charles Atkinson

Charles Atkinson, a third-year Director of the United Soybean Board, grows soybeans, corn, wheat, sorghum, cover crops, native hay, and Bermuda hay with his father, Marion, and wife, Inga on his farm in Great Bend, Kansas. He also has a cow/calf operation. Charles and his wife, Inga, have three children, Chelsey, Lynette, and Matthew. They also have eight grandchildren.

Charles is a sixth-generation farmer who has operated an intense no-till crop rotation for almost 30 years with an emphasis on soil health and conservation. His goal for his farm is to leave the land better than he received it. Charles believes that our native ancestors have taught us that the decisions we make will affect the next seven generations, and he sees firsthand how being a steward builds a good foundation for the generations to come.

Outside of farming, Charles serves as President of the Barton County Fair, is a current and founding director of No-Till on the Plains, and is a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State University in Natural Resource Management and holds an Oklahoma license of Insurance as a seasonal Crop Adjuster.



Charles Atkinson

HALL OF FAME

2026

Terry Cosby

COSBY IS THE RETIRED CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Natural Resources Conservation Service, where he led a premier federal conservation agency known for its 3,000 field-office network that helps farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners nationwide plan and carry out voluntary conservation activities on their operations. During Terry's more than 40-year career with NRCS, he has held numerous leadership and staff positions. He began his career as an NRCS intern in Iowa in 1979 and rose through the agency's ranks to become its 17th chief on May 24, 2021. Prior to that, Terry served as NRCS's Acting Chief for several months.

Terry's conservation and agricultural roots run deep. He grew up on his family's cotton farm and attended a land-grant university that prepared him well to serve all producers, including those who were historically underserved. His childhood, education and passion for conservation and agriculture paved the way for him to reach great heights throughout his NRCS career. Prior to being named Acting Chief, Terry served as NRCS State Conservationist in Ohio for 16 years. His other leadership positions include Deputy State Conservationist in Idaho, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Missouri, and Area Resource Conservationist in Iowa.

Terry's great-grandfather purchased the family farm in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, in the late 1800s. Terry, a Tallahatchie County native, earned his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education from Alcorn State University in Alcorn, Mississippi, the nation's first Black land-grant college. Terry and his wife Brenda are the proud parents of four children. His leisure activities include hunting, fishing, and spending as much time as possible with his grandchildren.



Terry Cosby

Dr. Robert Myers

MYERS IS DIRECTOR OF THE MU CENTER FOR REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE and an Extension Professor in the Plant Science and Technology Division. Since 2010, he has also served as Regional Director of Extension Programs for the USDA North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program.

In his leadership role with the Center for Regenerative Agriculture, he administers a \$25 million USDA climate-smart grant called the Missouri CRCL Project and also the \$10 million National Cover Crop Variety Development Project. He also oversees several other grants with the Center supporting research, education, and extension programs. The Center focuses on farming practices contributing to improved soil health, including use of cover crops, no-till, regenerative grazing, and other conservation approaches.



Dr. Robert Myers



On behalf of SARE, he administers competitive grants and state funding for sustainable agriculture projects in 12 North Central states. He also serves as the national liaison for the SARE program on cover crop and soil health.

His professional expertise encompasses sustainable and regenerative agriculture, soil health, conservation and cropping system diversification. He has conducted research, education and extension programs with many cover crops and alternative crops. He has also led or served with several national councils and task forces addressing federal conservation programs and agriculture research and education programs.

Dr. Myers grew up on a family grain farm in Illinois that he still helps manage. He obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agronomy from the University of Minnesota. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, was named Missouri Conservationist of the Year in 2018, and honored with the national Agronomic Education and Extension Award from the American Society of Agronomy in 2022.

Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District

DR. HUGH HAMMOND BENNETT, an Anson native, who rose from a farm and antebellum plantation between Wadesboro and White Store to become chief of the United States Soil Conservation Service and a world authority on land use, is certainly one of Anson's most noted sons. Through his dedicated professional efforts, Brown Creek became the first Soil Conservation District in America on August 4, 1937, when North Carolina Secretary of State Thad Eure made history by signing the certificate of organization establishing the Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District (BCSWCD).

The chartering of the district was made possible by legislation passed by the 1937 General Assembly which created the North Carolina Soil Conservation District Law. This state law allowed landowners to petition the newly created State Soil Conservation Committee to hold a referendum on establishing a Soil Conservation District.

Today, over 80 years later, the Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District Board, staff and partnership agencies are dedicated to help preserve Anson County's natural beauty and resources, and continue Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett's legacy. ●



Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District, represented here by Hugh Hammond Bennett.

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and their leadership in our Strategic Plan*



Diverse Corn Belt Project

Studying the Real-World Impacts of Diversified Farming Systems

CTIC leads the Communications Team for the Diverse Corn Belt Project (DCB), a five-year, multidisciplinary project exploring opportunities beyond corn and soybeans and investigating the real-world impacts of diversified farming systems, including:

- More options for crop rotations
- Perennial crops for forage or bioenergy
- Grazing livestock
- Agroforestry
- Horticultural crops

With more than 30 research partners from land grant institutions, federal agencies, and non-profit organizations, the DCB team seeks to understand agronomic, economic, social, infrastructure, and policy changes that could make agricultural diversification viable.

The DCB Team conducts research, Extension, and modeling in Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana. Farmers, agribusiness representatives, policy makers, educators, and other stakeholders have contributed to DCB.

Research activities include:

- Focus groups, in which producers raising a variety of crops and livestock gather to discuss the challenges and opportunities of agricultural diversification;
- In-field research, allowing agronomists, entomologists, hydrologists, and soil scientists to study farmers' existing management systems; and
- Visioning sessions where producers, agricultural advisors, community leaders, and others share insights, explore policy implications, and envision what the Midwestern agricultural landscape can look like in the future.

The DCB Blog at diversecornbelt.org provides an in-depth look at each component of the project. Also on the website, learn more about DCB's vision and find resources focused on finding markets, managing risks, implementing new farm practices, and securing healthy communities.

DCB is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture through an Agriculture and Food Research Initiative competitive grant. •

For more information, contact Elise Koning, CTIC Project Director, at koning@ctic.org.



An AI-generated row crop landscape is the focus of lively conversation at an Indiana Reimagining Agricultural Diversity (RAD) Team Meeting. Participants were asked to view several types of AI-generated landscapes and provide feedback on the positives and challenges of producing agricultural products in that landscape.

Photo by DCB.

Learn more



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Conservation Connector

Connector.ag features a searchable directory that allows users to filter conservation programs by crop type, conservation practice, and geographic region, offering a customized experience that matches producers with programs that fit their operation so they can optimize profitability on every acre. It is the only database that aligns programs with technical assistance so farmers can find the support they might need to be successful with management changes.

Service providers can create a free listing for their services and technical assistance any time by logging into Connector.ag.

By providing transparent access to incentive opportunities and direct contact with local support, Connector.ag aims to be a trusted, one-stop shop for producers looking to implement or expand farming practices that improve or conserve soil, water, habitat, and other on-farm natural resources.

CTIC invites farmers, ranchers, technical service providers, and conservation partners across the country to explore the platform and provide feedback about your experience to help inform future iterations of the platform. ●



CTIC Executive Director Ryan Heiniger joins the Farm4Profit Podcast to discuss how Connector.ag can help producers be more profitable on every acre by finding the right incentive programs for their unique operation fit.



Create a listing for incentive programs and service providers, or research opportunities in your county.

What our partners say

"CTIC's Connector.ag has become a great way to help farmers in our area know what programs we have available when they are looking for help with adopting soil health and conservation practices. This central hub is needed to both socialize our programs and get more conservation on the ground in our district."

— DOUG BOS

Assistant Director, Rock County SWCD



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PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

2026 National Cover Crop Survey Report Coming in July

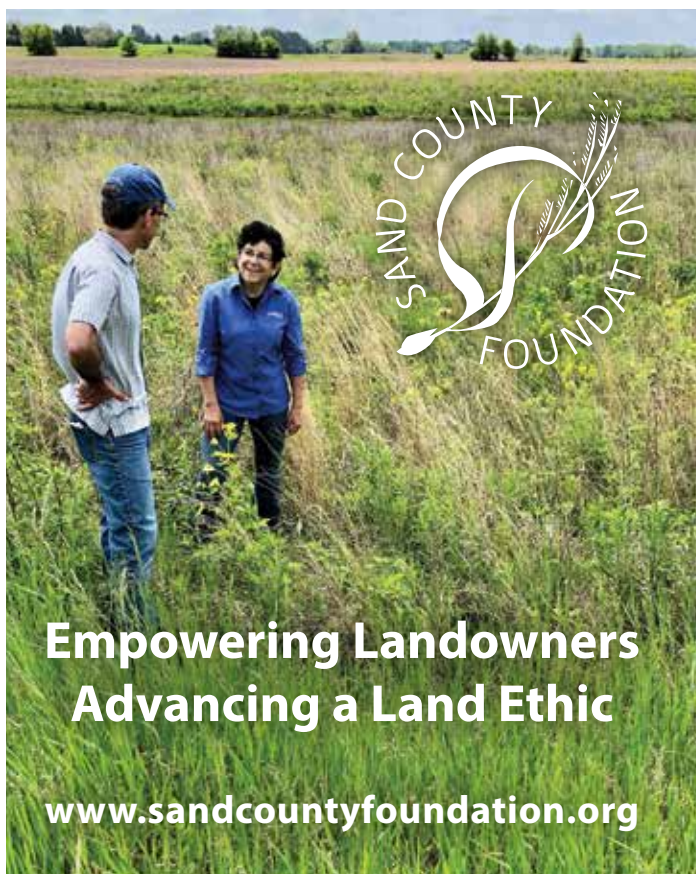
CTIC, SARE, and ASTA return to farmer sentiments on the country's most comprehensive benchmarking survey on practice adoption

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) will release the newest installment of the National Cover Crop Survey Report in July. The report will uncover why farmers use cover crops—or choose not to—and how those decisions impact farm operations and profitability. These insights directly inform research, incentives, technical assistance, and the next generation of conservation programs.

The July report will return to the traditional farmer-sentiment research that the benchmarking study is known for. The 2025 survey and report focused on farm advisors for the first time to help determine how farmers were being supported with technical assistance in their operations. That novel approach provided insights on advisors' attitudes on cover crops, how they get information, and how cover crops fit with other advisory services they provide. The survey was conducted online in October 2024 and was completed by 654 farm advisors. The American Soybean Association also contributed to the report.

Among the highlights of the 2025 survey:

- Advisors who also farm and use cover crops in their own operation are five times more likely to recommend them to their clients, and in turn, their clients are more likely to use cover crops.
- A majority of farm advisors expect to see cover crop acreage continue to increase.
- A majority of respondents expect farmers to continue to increase use of cover crop mixes and try ways to combine other soil health practices with cover crops.



View the full report in our archives, and check back in July for the 2026 Report.

Seeking Farmer-Mentors and Support from CTIC Members

Nominations for farmer-leaders open through June 15 in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Ohio.

What's your legacy? Farmer-to-farmer peer networks are critical for sharing local knowledge on how to optimize conservation practices, such as reduced tillage, cover crops, water management, and habitat development. Biological systems have nuances for every geography, and seasoned farmers have an opportunity to pass their knowledge to the next generation of farming families.

To maximize impact and coordination at the field level, CTIC also invites our member organizations and other partners to join with us in the creation and support of the four farmer peer networks. Each peer network will be led by one or more farmer-leaders, will host a field day during summer 2026, and a winter workshop for year-round engagement and sharing of practical knowledge, lessons learned, new innovations, and removing barriers for continuous improvement.

CTIC is seeking farmer nominations by June 15 and will review applications on an ongoing basis. Farmers with a passion for conservation agriculture are encouraged to apply and to consider teaming up with a local counterpart to jointly create the network. The application process should take 3-5 minutes. Through the generous Cargill grant, CTIC will provide funding to cover costs for the summer field day and winter workshops.

Organizations can use the same link to pledge their support, including technical assistance, advisory services, speaking roles at farmer events, professional products or services, or financial assistance to support farmers. ●



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