

## **Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance**

Conference Call

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

### **Participants:**

Brian Lindley, No-Till on the Plains

Blair McClinton, Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association

Russ Evans, Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association

Tim Healey, Agrotain

Susan Winsor, Corn & Soybean Digest

Karen Scanlon, CTIC

### **AGENDA**

1. Do you think no-till/conservation ag certification would be appealing to farmers or organizations in your area?
2. What efforts will be needed to create consumer awareness and acceptance of CA?
3. Should certification be a major focus for CASA?

#### **1. Do you think no-till/conservation ag certification would be appealing to farmers or organizations in your area?**

BM: probably would be, especially if could show return on investment for work required to do certification. Largely a group that exports, so don't deal much with local markets but rather. Have to have a marketing advantage. To some extent already doing some certification with carbon trading programs that exist.

RE: there has to be value to the certification. Carbon market has most immediate potential for return. Is there a premium to be certified as a direct seed farm? Pay a premium not to till. Shephards Grain is doing it for a local market.

BM: Canadian wheat board

RE: how do you preserve the identity of the product from the direct seed farm?

BM: organic producers ship huge amounts to buyers in Europe. A lot is done at individual grower levels.

BL: Jan 2009 at winter conference Jose Moreno, APPRESID, spoke about no-till certification project. NTOP polled farmers about level of interest involvement in this program. 70% said definitely interested. NTOP is committed to being involved in no-till certification and believe it must have value for producers. Carbon markets seem like possibility. Looking at Shepherd's Grain model and putting out own product. Initially will be small movement; close cooperative arrangement. Grains through CNT production seem to be higher in nutrients. Working to validate that. If we put science with it, NT certification with it, then it will work. Not sure it will add value to producer. Underlying

effects of certification (based on changing geography east-west in region) will help define and structure hierarchy for CA. Could lead to payment based on stewardship, as ranked on this certification scale.

Concern is who will police/verification for certification process.

APPRESID got ISO 9000 approved (developed by Brazil). Adjustments may be needed.

RE: who pays for it in South America?

BL: farmer pays to be part of certified program. Hoping it builds into value added scenario. Have to develop program, product and market. More questions than answers so far.

APPRESID manages, but outside company does certifying.

Dec 17 meeting in Wichita, KS, "Growing Food for Quality" using no-till and cover crops. Also will discuss certification. Jill Clapperton will attend and participate.

SW: farmers do have healthy suspicion of government programs, so may be wary of certification.

## **2. What efforts will be needed to create consumer awareness and acceptance of CA?**

BL: very few people know about no-till. Long way to go, but clean slate.

RE: just need money. Food Alliance certifies Shepherd's Grain; doesn't provide marketing assistance.

BM: FA has restrictions on use of GM crops; that would be significant obstacle for growers there.

RE: organic growers got together for uniform communication message to build market.

## **3. Should certification be a major focus for CASA?**

BL: think CASA should continue to discuss this. Suggest a go-to meeting with APPRESID to learn more about what they've developed and learn from there process.

TH: beneficial to talk with organic organization? OMRI that developed certification process.

RE: would be helpful to understand more about what organic has done

Next call Dec. 10, 2009

### Member Updates

No-till On the Plains: Working on upcoming annual conference. Seeing more reluctance in farmers to speak at conference (giving away competitive edge). Tough to provide information that will challenge the innovators. Inviting CASA to attend Dec. 17 meeting with Jill Clapperton.

SSCA: Board meeting next week; will decide staffing and operations in future. Crop Advisors workshop on Dec. 3 and 4 (eight hours over two days). Download from web site: [www.ssca.ca](http://www.ssca.ca). Going to press with brochure for Conference Feb 9-10 in Regina. Provincial government introducing climate change regulations this fall; including off-set trading system in place by next summer. May work with environment officials to establish verification guidance documents and establish performance standards for carbon aggregation brokers.

PNDSA: Annual conference is Jan 20-21 in Kennewick, Wash. Continue as many local breakfast meetings as possible. New drill coming to region. Looking for dollars. Board meeting coming at end of month. Continue work on CRP take-out issue. Upcoming meeting with FSA.

Agrotain: Ag amendment to climate change bill in Senate does mention no-till and carbon trading program. Will send a copy of legislation for distribution to CASA.

Corn & Soybean Digest: enjoy listening in on the call