I laughed out loud when Fred Vocasek, past chair of the ICCA Board, shared with me a verse out of an old salesman’s poem. “So tell me quick and tell me true or else mister, the *heck* with you. Less how your product came to be and more what the *darn* thing does for me.” What does certification do for you? I love Paul Tracy’s (past chair of the CCA–North American Board) response to that question. “What is in it for you is what you make it. As an organization, CCA provides the tools, credibility, and support to its members, but they need to follow through with effort.”

When I decided to write a column for *Crops & Soils* magazine as the chair of the CCA–National Board, I never dreamt it would be easy … but I never thought it would be so hard either. Maybe it’s because I have chosen to share with all of you some important areas that the CCA–National Board works with that I feel are harder to defend to the CCA in the field.

In this issue, I would like to share with you a discussion of the role of our public policy work. The information, ideas, and opinions that follow are a compilation of discussions that took place among Paul Tracy (regional agronomist at Winfield Solutions, LLC), Fred Vocasek (chair of the ASA’s Science Policy Committee and senior lab agronomist for Servi-Tech Laboratories), Luther Smith (director of certification programs for ASA, CSSA, and SSSA), Karl Anderson (director of government relations for ASA, CSSA and SSSA), and me.

### Background Information
ASA is the primary political entity when it comes to public policy work. CCA is the certification program of ASA and does not get as deeply involved unless issues are specifically connected to CCA/CPAg. Why? Certification needs to be viewed as being unbiased since it potentially impacts people’s employment. Certification works from standards, set by the profession, and it is important that it is not influenced by any one person, group, or segment.

If the political issue is very specific to what CCAs do or what CCAs represent, then the communication would include both ASA and CCA. We are stronger when presented as ASA and CCA—the agronomy profession. Public policy work is “big picture” work, and each of us needs to understand that it may not benefit all CCAs all the time. But, we are very much working together for the betterment of everyone involved.

### Our Role in Public Policy
One thing that I am certain of is in the political arena as it stands today, we will have new or revised policies and regulations around agriculture. What this group needs to concentrate on is making sure CCA is represented in policy issues for being the well-known and, more importantly, influential group that we are. There are direct and indirect benefits of being at the table. Long-term awareness of the CCA program among the policy makers and their advisers, along with the hard work of local CCA programs, has provided opportunities for us to be involved...