The old adage “too little, too late” came to mind when I was writing this article about continuing education requirements. The International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) Program and the Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) Program are going to evaluate their CEU requirements.

Too much?

From time to time, we receive comments from certified professionals expressing concern about the number of CEUs that are required. This came through in last year’s CCA survey as some expressed that these requirements were a burden to being certified. Currently, a total of 40 CEUs for CCAs and CPSS’s and 50 CEUs for CPAg’s are required every two years. Is this too much or just right? The totals have been in place for more than 20 years, and the vast majority, 97%, of professionals meet the minimums, with many earning well over the total without missing a beat.

As we compare the certifications to other professions, we tend to fall in the middle to high side of the range. The cycle tends to be two or three years with the average around 15 CEUs per year. That does not mean we should increased. They argue that the requirements should be challenging, so it helps grow people in knowledge and skills while weeding out those who are not committed to the profession. To quote a past ICCA Board chair, “…the minimum on the interstate is 40–45, but please stay in the right lane because I’m driving where I’m going and will be passing you.” The minimum is not where professionals are—they do more than the minimum to be top performers.

Too late?

We have lost professionals due to the comments being too difficult to continue, as comments we’ve received. Not a large number, but enough to make you question it. We will never lose some regardless of what the minimum is set at. We don’t want it to be either too much or too little, but just right for the professions.

The boards have agreed to evaluate the CEU requirements in 2014. A task force will be formed to determine the best course of action. We will look at other professions and licensing programs as comparisons and will be sending out a survey to gain a better understanding of what the professionals think and review the data we already have on what our history has been. When you receive the survey, please respond to it. Your input is very valuable and will help shape the future of the program.

Feel free to send your comments to me at lsmith@sciencsocieties.org even before you receive the survey or if you would like to serve on the task force.

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doi:10.2134/cs2014-47-1-4