In May, the ICCA program sent out a survey to a large, representative sample of CCAs in North America. The certificants were asked the importance of, and their satisfaction with, nine services conducted by ICCA. Two answers stood out as being ranked as the most important:

- Building awareness of CCA to farmers
- Building awareness of CCA to employers

While they are of the highest importance to certification holders, the satisfaction in the program’s efforts to build awareness among those groups were ranked as the lowest of the nine services in the survey. The CCA community has spoken and, as the new marketing manager, I have heard you! In an effort to meet your needs, build awareness, and increase value, the ICCA program has developed a comprehensive marketing plan to reach the groups you deem most important. This will be a multi-step process to help farmers and employers realize what you already do: CCAs set the standard for being classified as elite agronomy professionals.

As a part of our campaign to raise awareness, we have created a series of short promotional videos to be utilized by local CCA boards, agricultural retailers, and CCAs. All eight videos will be available for download through www.certifiedcropadviser.org and should be taken advantage of when conveying the importance of hiring or working with a certified professional. The videos consist of remarkable testimonials given by growers from all over North America and even a Farm Bureau president. The project highlights why growers seek out and rely on CCAs as partners in business success.

A special thanks to Stephanie Russell, Greg Hoeven, and SFP for helping us with the project coordination, on-site filming, editing, and final-cut production!

The promotional videos should be used at/grown and kickoff meetings, company newsletters and websites, tradeshows, Facebook, Twitter, Television advertisements, public service announcements, and anywhere you need them to promote the program.

This is one of the many steps we will take to build awareness of your certification. However, the most effective thing you can do is to be an outspoken advocate of the program and promote your efforts to continually educate yourself. Your clients and employers should know the extra time you put in to make their businesses successful.

The program is on the right path, and it is solely due to the dedication of individual volunteer CCA boards. Please reach out to your local board and get involved—your participation will be appreciated and seen as an investment in the future of agronomy.

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