Each spring, members of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society travel to Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress and advocate for agricultural research during Congressional Visits Day (CVD). In recent years, CCAs have also been involved in CVD, playing a key role in showing members of Congress how research flows from the laboratory to the field. For the 2014 CVD, six practicing CCAs from across the U.S. joined the ICCA Executive Committee, doubling the CCA participation in the event.

The CVD participants were divided into small groups, consisting of a senior scientist, a graduate student, and a CCA. Each member of the group helped illustrate the “research pipeline,” where fundamental research lays the foundation for new innovations that can increase productivity, reduce costs, or improve resource management.

“The CCAs can show how we’re utilizing research done at the university level by bringing it to farmers and improving practices on the land,” says Lance Tarochione, a CCA from Illinois. “So it goes full circle, from where it starts to where it ends working with farmers.”

While in DC, CVD participants spoke to members of Congress about the importance of federal funding for research. The CCAs provided examples of how federally funded research, e.g., through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), gives rise to new agricultural practices that benefit farmers and the general public.

“In California, we have a lot of new nitrogen management regulations, some of which are based on research that came out of AFRI-funded programs,” says Patrick Dosier, a CCA from[continued on p. 13]