ASA President’s Message

Update on New Developments, Ongoing Activities

There have been a number of things going on that will have an impact on ASA, so I would like to use this month’s column to bring you up to date.

ASA Editor-in-Chief

We have several excellent candidates for the position of ASA editor-in-chief (term of service to begin next January) and have made our initial review of the applications. The search committee consists of myself, ASA president; Sharon Clay, ASA past president; Jean Steiner, ASA president-elect; Ellen Bergfeld, CEO of the Societies; Mark Mandelbaum, publications director of the Societies; Bill Raun, editor of Agronomy Journal; and Warren Dick, current ASA editor-in-chief. We hope to be able to bring a recommendation to the ASA board for the June meeting/call.

Crops and Soils Magazine

Starting with the March–April issue, the ASA board voted to give all ASA members access to the Enhanced Digital Version of Crops & Soils magazine. This magazine was relaunched back in 2007 to primarily serve our certificants (CCAs, CPAg’s, and CPSS’s) and students. You should be receiving email alerts with each new issue, which you can access by visiting www.agronomy.org/publications/crops-and-soils and logging in with your website username and password.

On a related note, by the time you read this, we will have appointed an editorial board to assist the magazine staff with identifying story ideas and appropriate authors to write articles. The initial board will have about 10 members and be split between CCAs, industry agronomists, and research/extension agronomists. The board will also be selected to represent geographic diversity with two people charged with representing Canada and the Western, Great Plains, Midwest, and Eastern U.S. The idea is that future issues will have one or two full articles of broad interest plus a shorter article focused on each of the five geographic areas. This idea of providing more regional focus to the magazine came through loud and clear from the recent readership survey done about 18 months ago.

Communities

Many of our communities are now more than three years old and have become well-established centers for activities. We now have about 43 active, or inactive, communities. I’m really pleased to see the strong level of activity and coordination within communities that is taking place. I must admit I was a little concerned when I was first introduced to the idea of communities while attending a presentation given by 2011 ASA President Newell Kitchen at K-State during the reorganization year. After listening to his enthusiastic presentation, I thought the idea deserved a chance but wasn’t sure how well it would actually work. The results have exceeded my expectations, and I honestly believe we haven’t reached our potential yet.

This summer, the ASA board will be reviewing several applications to create new communities, including several from the CCA/certification segment of the Society. This will be a great addition to our family and will help provide a home for CCAs as active members of ASA.

The Community Oversight Committee will also be finalizing the rules for disbanding communities that fail to meet their obligations or requirements to remain active. It is likely that by the time we meet in Long Beach in November, we will have our first communities die. That’s really what the original designers of the community structure had in mind—that communities would be formed and some would be designed in such a way to be a “permanent” part of our structure while others may have a relatively short life span, built around a fleeting problem or interest that has run its course. So the mix of communities will likely always be changing in the future. Some long-standing groups, some short lived, new ones being formed, and others running their course and dying. One thing about that structure is that there will always be something new and exciting about the Society.

I hope your spring is going well for you in your home area. Here in Kansas, the drought seems to be re-establishing. I hope to be laughing at that statement come June, but it was 102°F yesterday in Wichita (4 May), and the recent annual wheat tour is forecasting the lowest wheat yield since 1996.

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Congratulations to Greg Roth, Penn State University and Richard Flavel, University of New England, Australia. Their names were drawn for $100 Amazon gift cards for participating in the ASA Social Media survey.

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