Membership

Know Your Community: Soil Health

by Jodie Reisner

Soil health is becoming an institutional word across the U.S. and global landscape. Healthy soils are the foundation of current and future agroecosystems and are essential for long-term environmental sustainability. Producers and land managers are seeking support and guidance from the scientific community to understand and interpret soil health indicators. The Soil Health Community will be an organizing body that will bring together agronomists, crop scientists, soil scientists, producers, and others. The community will showcase the latest findings from studies of soil health and facilitate collaboration between members and nonmembers with an interest in soil health. This community will provide a venue to discuss, promote, and evaluate soil health topics while fostering information exchange and building a strong scientific basis to promote soil health across diverse management systems.

Focus

The Soil Health Community is dedicated to furthering the science behind the concept of soil health and promoting the role of soil health in understanding and improving agroecosystem productivity, efficiency, resilience, and adaptability. Assessment of soil health focuses on quantifying the relationships among soil health indicators and relevant soil functions, such as nutrient cycling and availability, water infiltration, structural integrity, and crop productivity. This community will focus issues related to soil health including:

1. Development of biological, physical, and chemical soil health indicators
2. Assessment of relationships among soil health indicators and soil functions
3. Application and interpretation of soil health indicators
4. Evaluation of the effects of agronomic practices on soil health

Ultimately, this community will support understanding of the soil health impacts of agronomic management practices and the potential benefits of adopting soil management practices in annual cropping systems and working grasslands. It will bring together agronomists, crop scientists, soil scientists, and others to find common research needs and applicability across diverse management systems.

Our Participants

The Soil Health Community is housed within the Land Management and Conservation Section of ASA. The community was established in February 2015 by Jodie Reisner and Kristen Veum. As of June 2015, we already have 222 members, including some who joined ASA solely to become part of this community! We are excited to see such an interest in the community and encourage others to join and participate. The membership is diverse and includes representatives from industry; university faculty, staff, and students; university extension; and agencies such as USDA-ARS, USDA-NRCS, and landowners. We currently have members from Canada, Australia, Denmark, USA, and Brazil and hope to engage people from across the globe.