The American Society of Agronomy has a set of core values that communicate what we value and what drives our day-to-day decision-making. One of those values is Transfer of Knowledge. We do not develop new understanding in order to hoard it. We share our knowledge to solve practical problems in soil and crop production and to minimize the environmental impacts of agriculture.

We often think of knowledge transfer as top-down communication. Professors transfer knowledge to students. Scientists transfer knowledge to farmers. But there is a better way! When respect goes both ways, and all parties share their knowledge and work together, then problem-solving can be optimized. In my 21 years as an Extension specialist, I learned that there are often very good reasons why farmers don’t do what scientists recommend. Scientists must listen to fully understand the realities on the ground to better design research that actually provides farmers with knowledge they can utilize in their decision-making and to achieve their goals.

I was in Madison, WI at the ASA headquarters in May for our annual board meeting (we meet monthly via conference call and face-to-face twice per year, once at our annual conference and once in Madison). The volunteer board members that you elected were in Madison to learn about what headquarters staff do and how they do it, what progress has been made against our strategic plan, and to develop our ideas and goals for the future in partnership with staff. We have very knowledgeable, productive staff there in Madison! I am grateful that they share their knowledge with us to move the Society forward.

Thank you all for developing new knowledge and sharing it with one another through publications, presentations, and one-on-one interactions. Together, by sharing knowledge, we move agronomy forward!

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Transfer of Knowledge