influence a Member’s decision or position if you clearly state that you are someone who lives or works in the Member’s state or district.

2. Keep it local. Once again Members of Congress are laser focused on how issues will impact their constituents, especially issues where they are undecided. Giving an example or sharing a story that shows local impacts makes your post stand out and provides information a Member can use to make policy decisions.

3. Do your research. While social media provides a direct and instant connection to Members of Congress, survey data indicates that social media posts are unlikely to change members’ minds on issues they have already come to a decision on. If a member has already taken a public position on a certain issue, your social media post, no matter how well crafted, may not effect change.

4. Make sure your comments are timely. If you follow a member on a social media platform, and they post about a topic, survey data shows that fewer than 30 similar comments are needed to bring your issue to a member’s attention. However, the comments have to be posted within 24 to 48 hours. Wait too long to comment, and you will miss your opportunity to make an impact.

5. Have a clear ask. Even on a platform like Twitter with strict character limit, it’s helpful to have a clear request in your post or comment. Keep it simple: vote yes or no on a bill, join a caucus, or sign on to a letter. When you ask a member to do something specific, it gives them a concrete way to respond to your post.

6. Make your posts dynamic. Photos or video posts are a great way to draw attention to your social media posts. Whether you are commenting on a Member’s Facebook wall or tagging the member in a tweet, having a visual will make your post more appealing, not only to the member, but to other viewers.


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Looking Backward and Forward

Welcome to 2019 and to my first CSSA president’s column for CSA News magazine. First, a brief introduction. I’ve been a member of CSSA since 1993 with my main “home” in Division C5 (Turfgrass Science).

I started this agronomic journey in 1980, enrolling at The Ohio State University to begin working towards a degree in Agronomy. That was followed by an M.S. in Soil Science in 1988 (also at The Ohio State), and a Ph.D. in 1993 at Oklahoma State University. So far, I have spent my career teaching and conducting research in soil fertility at Auburn University in Alabama. I look forward to this coming year and to serving as the president of your Society.

Looking back, let’s review the numbers for the recent CSSA/ASA meeting that was held this past November in Baltimore. By all measures, the meeting was a success with 2,600 registrants. People were very productive with a total of 1,935 submissions, of which 999 were oral submissions and 859 were poster submissions. Added to this total were 77 “rapid” oral and poster presentations, a format that proved to be very popular. The invited speakers were compelling and inspiring, and I would like to thank them all for their time and efforts. It should be noted that these invited speakers are not possible without the funding and support that created the lectureships. The folks who had the vision and drive to develop and fund the E.T. & Vam York Distinguished ASA Lectureship, the Betty Klepper Endowed Lectureship, the Martin and Ruth Massengale Lectureship, the Ron Phillips Plant Genetics Lectureship, Calvin Sterling Memorial Biodiversity Lectureship, and the Leo M. Walsh Soil Fertility Distinguished Lectureship should all be thanked.

This month (6–9 January) in San Diego, The SSSA International Soils Meeting is being held in collaboration with the Canadian Society of Soil Science and the Mexican Society of Soil Science. Numbers for that meeting are quite good, with a total of 1,485 submissions. Of those, 891 are oral submissions and 508 are poster submissions. There are also “rapid” presentations at this meeting, and a total of 86 of those have been registered.

Looking forward, CSSA, ASA, and SSSA come back together in 2019 for our International Annual Meeting 10–13 November in San Antonio, TX. The program-planning committee is busy developing a meeting theme and selecting the keynote speakers. Your CSSA division chairs are about to get busy, and planning for the San Antonio meeting already started at the Baltimore meeting. I hope to meet a lot of new people as your president this year. If you ever wish to reach me, please feel free to email me at guertal@auburn.edu.

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do:10.2134/csa2019.64.0118