



Strengthening Links Between Crop Insurance and Conservation:

An A Gree Strategy to Drive Adoption of Conservation Practices

Farm Foundation Forum | October 8, 2015



Presentation Roadmap

1. Overview of AGree
2. AGree's Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force
 - a. Objective
 - b. Membership
 - c. Strategies
 - d. Current Efforts
3. Q&A

AGree's Key Challenges

Meet future demand for food



Strengthen farms and communities to improve livelihoods



Improve nutrition and public health



Conserve and enhance water, soil, and habitat



Three Phases of AGree

1

- Established a unique voice (diverse leaders and brand) and trusted platform for dialogue

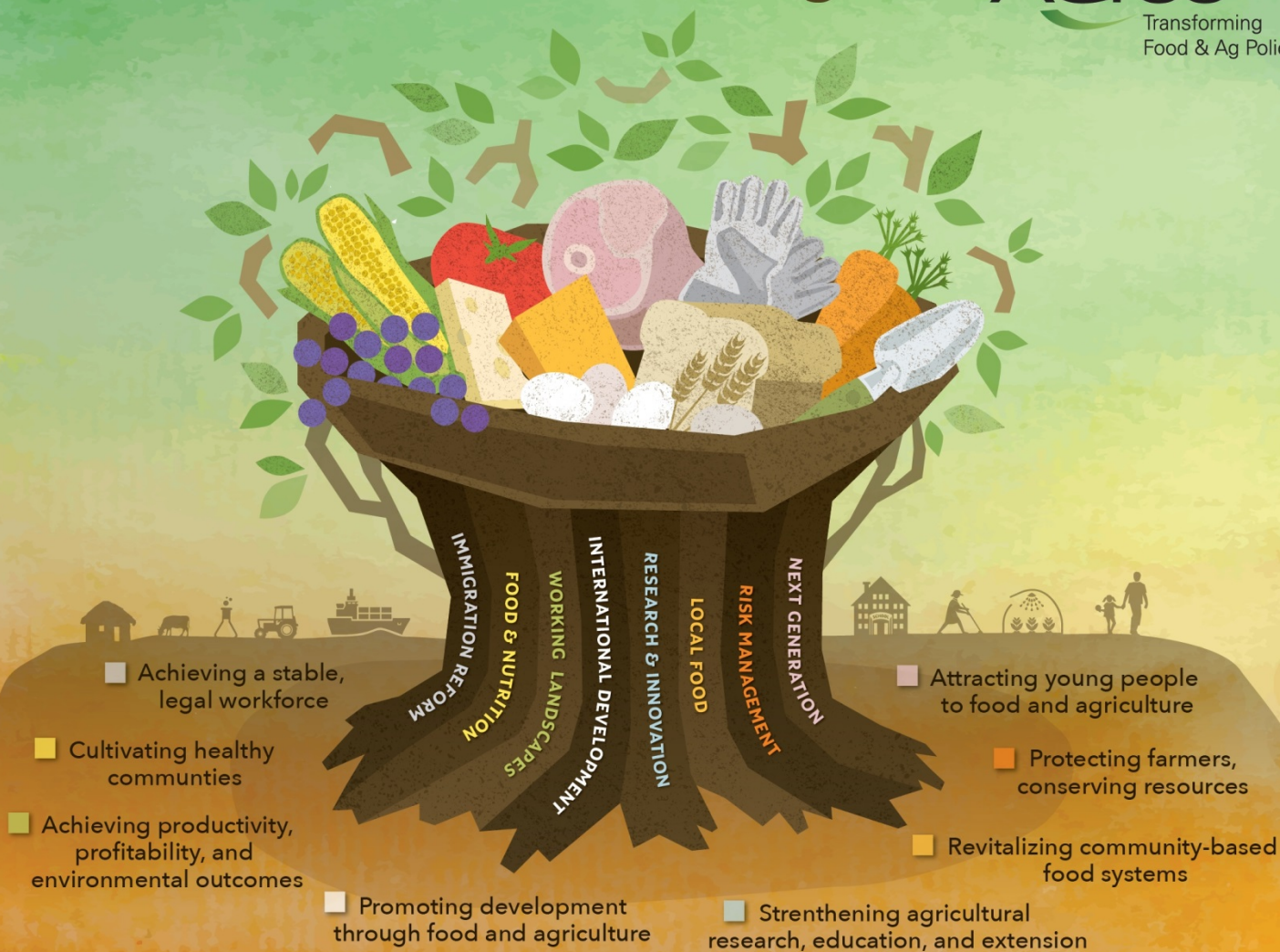
2

- Develop consensus recommendations
- Identify advocacy and action priorities
- Identify implementation partners, funders, and coalitions

3

- Support and build out coalitions, and advocate for policy change
- Catalyze and advance “proof of concept” projects
- Serve as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovative thinking

AGree Initiatives for the Future of Food and Ag



Eight Integrated Initiatives

1. Immigration Reform
- 2. Working Landscapes**
3. Food & Nutrition
4. International Development
5. Research & Innovation
6. Local Food
- 7. Risk Management**
8. Next Generation



AGree's Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force (CCITF)



CCITF Objective:

Drive broader adoption of
conservation practices
through data integration and
analysis



CCITF Members:

- **Barry Barnett:** Mississippi State University
- **Rich Bowman:** The Nature Conservancy
- **Larry Clemens:** The Nature Conservancy
- **Keith Coble:** Mississippi State University
- **Neil Conklin:** Farm Foundation
- **Craig Cox:** Environmental Working Group
- **Randy Dell:** The Nature Conservancy
- **Kristin Weeks Duncanson:** Duncanson Growers
- **Suzy Friedman:** Environmental Defense Fund
- **Viola Glenn:** Rural Advancement Foundation
- **Nick Goeser:** National Corn Growers Association, Soil Health Partnership
- **Ferd Hoefner:** National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
- **Bruce Knight:** Strategic Conservation Solutions, Former Chief of NRCS
- **Doug Lawrence:** Blackwoods Group
- **Carl Mattson:** George Mattson Farms, Inc.
- **Stephanie Mercier:** Farm Journal Foundation, Former Chief Economist for the Senate Agriculture Committee
- **Sarah Mine:** Datu Research
- **James Moseley:** AGree Co-Chair, Former Deputy Secretary of USDA
- **Rob Myers:** Midwest Regional SARE Coordinator, University of Missouri
- **James Robinson:** Rural Advancement Foundation
- **Bill Salas:** Applied GeoSolutions
- **Susan Schmidt:** Cargill Crop Insurance Agency
- **Zeke Spears:** K-COE Isom
- **Ryan Stockwell:** National Wildlife Federation
- **Wally Tyner:** Purdue University
- **Paul Wolfe:** National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
- **Josh Woodard:** Cornell University
- **Fred Yoder:** Ohio Corn Growers Association

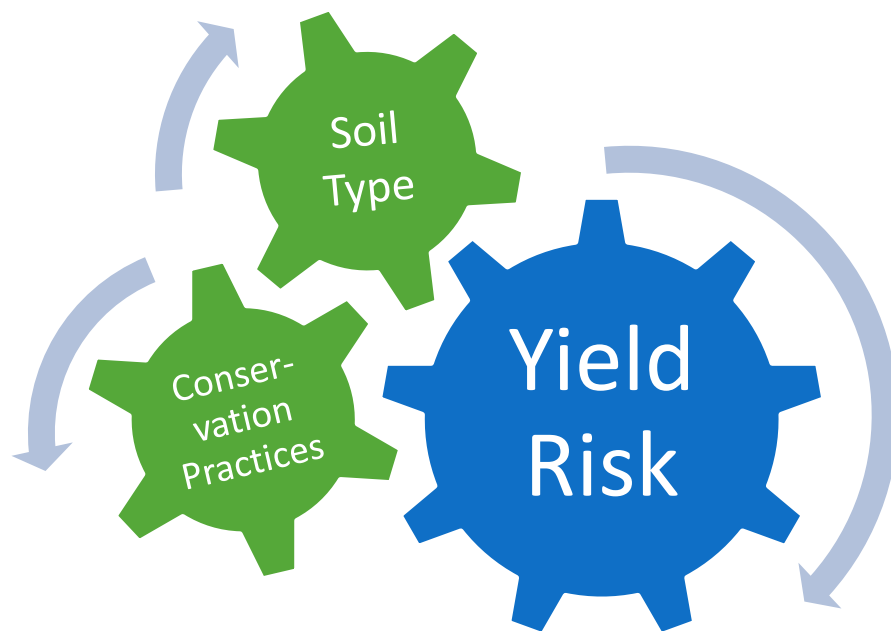
CCITF Strategies:

1. Support data integration and analysis to examine the correlations between soil type, conservation practices, and yield risk
2. Advocate for specific changes to federal crop insurance policy so that the program supports innovation and does not impede producers' willingness or ability to adopt conservation practices



CCITF Strategy 1:

1. Support the integration and analysis of USDA data to examine the correlations between soil type, conservation practices, and yield risk



CCITF Strategy 1:

If supported by data, AGree plans to advocate for **adjustments to crop insurance ratings to more accurately reflect** the correlations between soil type, conservation practices, and yield risk



Data Challenges:

Existing USDA datasets on crop insurance payment and loss history, yield, soil type, weather, and other environmental indicators **could be integrated and analyzed** to assess the impacts of soil type and conservation practices on yield risk.

This data is collected by multiple USDA agencies:

- ERS
- FSA
- NRCS
- RMA
- Others



However, the data exists in multiple databases and is collected at various temporal and spatial scales. It cannot be easily integrated for analysis.



Maintaining Data Confidentiality:

Data analysis could be facilitated while maintaining full **confidentiality** of field- and farm-level data:

- A researcher could be placed under contract or work under a cooperative agreement with one or more USDA agencies; or
- A data warehouse could enable analysts to query confidential data without the ability to view confidential, identifying information



Potential Outcomes:

Findings from a data integration and analysis effort could help support:

- Changes to the federal crop insurance program or other federal policies and programs
- The business case for producers to adopt conservation practices
- Industry supply chain sustainability standards
- Carbon and ecosystem services markets



CCITF Strategy 2:

2. Advocate for **specific changes to federal crop insurance policy** so that the program supports innovation and does not impede producers' willingness or ability to adopt conservation practices

Examples of potential policy changes:

- Eliminate cover crop termination rules
- Establish that all conservation practices as adhered to by NRCS standards meet qualifications for Good Farming Practices



Current CCITF Efforts:

1. Supporting research by Cornell University Professor Joshua Woodard to provide evidence for the correlation between soil type and risk
2. Engaging leadership and senior staff at multiple USDA agencies to facilitate the integration and analysis of existing datasets to assess the correlations between soil type, conservation practices, and yield risk
3. Developing communications and outreach strategies to advocate for specific crop insurance policy changes





Questions?

*More information on this work is available at:
foodandagpolicy.org/content/Working-Landscapes*



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