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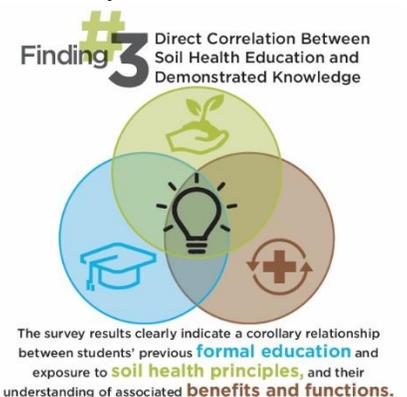
June 1, 2019

Survey Conducted To Determine How Best To Reach The Next Generation With The Soil Health Message

SOUTH DAKOTA SOIL HEALTH COALITION (SDSHC), Pierre, S.D. June 1, 2019- A recent on-line poll of South Dakota agricultural students and instructors revealed that interest and awareness of the topic of soil health and regenerative agricultural is strong. The poll was conducted by the SDSHC during the fall of 2018 as part of a Conservation Collaboration Grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The goal of the survey project was to gauge current levels of interest and awareness, in order to determine what outreach strategies and materials were needed to continue to increase the reach of the soil health message. Adoption of soil health management systems and practices has increased steadily nationally, but in order to continue to move the soil health movement into the mainstream of farming, reaching the next generation is going to be extremely important.



During the summer of 2018, an outreach plan was developed to identify technical institutes, four-year colleges, as well as FFA instructors and advisors willing to distribute the online survey. Subsequently, throughout the fall of 2018, more than 500 agricultural students attending South Dakota State University, Lake Area Technical Institute, Mitchell Technical Institute and middle and high school FFA students across the state, completed the online survey. Based on the data collected from these surveys and the responses of forty-three instructors a series of summary findings were compiled. Seven student and eight instructor summary findings, which can be found in the full report, show the continued importance of increasing soil health education efforts, ensuring future soil health information focuses on “on-farm” benefits, continuing to develop and expand soil health information and curriculum, as well as the creation of age-appropriate interactive media and teaching tools.



Two thirds or 67% of students indicated they were “interested” or “highly interested” in the topic of soil health and regenerative agriculture. Additionally, student interest in the benefits of soil health was also shown to be strong. Examined together these two

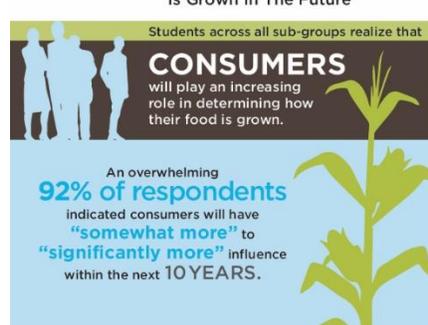
Our Mission: **Promote improved soil health**

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Finding #5 Students Overwhelmingly Believe Consumers Will Have More Influence Over How Food Is Grown In The Future

Students across all sub-groups realize that **CONSUMERS** will play an increasing role in determining how their food is grown.

An overwhelming **92% of respondents** indicated consumers will have **"somewhat more"** to **"significantly more"** influence within the next **10 YEARS**.



findings show that soil health as a mainstream topic is gaining traction with this age group and the benefits of soil health management systems may be what is drawing their attention. Two benefits were of particular interest to survey respondents “Improved soil function/fertility through managed grazing” and “Soil water holding capacity and drought resilience”. Other notable student findings included the direct correlation that was found between soil health education and demonstrated knowledge and that students overwhelmingly believe that consumers will have more influence over how food is grown in the future.

Instructor findings were centered around the role that their educational background and exposure may play in what subjects they feel most confident teaching, the value of current teaching tools provided to them, demonstrated knowledge of the Five Principles of Soil Health and related topics, as well as what teaching tools and resources they would be most interested in receiving. Instructors who participated received more formal education in the taxonomic aspects of soil science and are therefore more confident teaching them to their students than other aspects such as soil biology and soil health. This is important to note because if the full message of soil health is going to be delivered to students of all ages, education on the subject must first be received by their teachers.

Finding #1 Instructors Have Received **MORE FORMAL EDUCATION** In The Taxonomic Aspects Of Soil Science and Are **More Confident** Teaching These Aspects

In terms of rating their previous formal educational exposure to soil science and soil health, the respondents indicated they had received slightly more formal education related to the taxonomic aspects of soil science than other aspects of soil science.



Finding #6 High Interest In Soil Health Teaching Tools

MORE THAN HALF of the agricultural instructors were **"Extremely interested"** in four primary areas of assistance.

1 Age-appropriate videos — 60% (weighted mean 1.49)	2 Interactive teaching aids — 60% (weighted mean 1.51)
3 Website tools — 57% (weighted mean 1.57)	4 Lesson Plans — 52% (weighted mean 1.67)



Even without full teaching confidence in the subject, improving soil health is seen by instructors as highly important to the future of American Agriculture with 100% of instructors surveyed responding that they believe it is either “Extremely important” or “Important”. If the soil health message and adoption of soil health management systems are to continue to increase nationally, targeted outreach to the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and producers is going to continue to be extremely important. For more information, a copy of the full survey report or answers to any questions you may have regarding soil health please contact the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition at sdsoilhealth@gmail.com or (605) 280-4190.

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