



National Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture

NISA Update and Highlights – June 2014

NISA has engaged new partners and worked with growers and their associations to complete entry-level assessments that highlight on-farm advancements. Recent successes include:

- ❖ *Sustainability assessments completed on over 1.15 million acres with on-going programs currently collecting data in 7 states.*
 - ✓ Potatoes grown in Wisconsin: assessed 57,000 acres (90% of industry), equivalent to 200,000 whole farm acres, sponsored by the WPVGA.
 - ✓ Soybeans grown in the Midwest: 274,000 soybean acres, 700,000 whole farm acres, sponsored by the USB and WI and IL Soybean Boards.
 - ✓ Soybeans in Arkansas: assessed 87,800 soybean acres and over 138,500 farmed acres, sponsored by the USB.
 - ✓ Soybeans in Virginia: assessed 21,000 soybean acres and over 43,300 acres of farmland, sponsored by USB.
 - ✓ Processing sweet corn and green beans in Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota: assessed 45,000 acres of both crops, sponsored by the MWFPA.
 - ✓ Cranberries in Wisconsin: assessed 14,000 acres (70% of industry), completed for Ocean Spray and WI Cranberry Board. This effort subsequently expanded to all North America.
 - ✓ Mint in Wisconsin: assessed 11,000 acres for the WI Mint Growers Association.
 - ✓ U-Pick Strawberries in Wisconsin: assessed over 600 acres for the WI Berry Growers Association.
- ❖ *We maintain Producer Board engagement via annual in-person Board meetings and monthly conference calls, ensuring that the producer voice drives decision-making.*

We are moving forward with new opportunities.

- ❖ *We continue to expand assessment programs nationally for a diversity of commodities:*
 - ✓ Arkansas rice assessment program developed and implemented; currently gathering on-farm data.
 - ✓ Kansas corn module developed and implemented in April with grower assessments occurring on-line during the summer of 2014.
 - ✓ New York snap (green) bean assessments currently underway with growers and processors. Program began early in 2014 and will be completed this summer.



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- ✓ Specialty crop growers in Wisconsin and national supply chain processors have banded together to work on assessments for 7 small-acreage crops: including onions, carrots, cucumbers and peppers for pickling, cabbage for kraut, red beets and kidney beans. Program starts this summer.
- ✓ Finalizing whole farm animal modules, as well as beef, pork, dairy and poultry draft assessment tools. We are working with animal producer associations to implement assessments in 2014.
- ❖ *We have recently streamlined the Frontiers of Sustainability™ analysis to gain significant time efficiency, and we are working to implement Grower Scorecards™ that will drive continuous improvement.*
- ❖ *We are formalizing a public/private partnership model to further expand NISA nationally.*
 - ✓ Next steps will include implementation of a formalized business model, pursuit of paid leadership and implementation of the NISA bylaws developed by producers and advisors.
- ❖ *We engaged a professional marketing and communications team to develop a portfolio of tools to expand NISA's reach. A strong marketing launch strategy will be implemented over the next few months.*
- ❖ *We are reaching out to other national sustainability programs to look for synergistic opportunities that enhance our tier-based approach, where NISA's entry-level assessments could partner with outcome-based systems to provide holistic sustainability solutions.*
- ❖ *We continue to receive funding from diverse sources, ranging from fee-for-service contracts to conduct regional entry-level sustainability assessments with producer associations, to larger grants that support development of new and innovative assessment tools. Additional funding opportunities are currently being pursued.*