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.
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.