



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Farmer-led Movement for Soil Health Receives \$4 Million Boost**

*Funding will accelerate Soil Health Partnership's efforts to show farmers economic benefits of sound agriculture practices*

(BOONE, Iowa) – A revolutionary effort to support on-farm conservation has added a new partner representing major agricultural companies, food companies and environmental groups. The new collaboration will accelerate the [Soil Health Partnership's](#) leadership in helping farmers adopt practices that protect natural resources while potentially increasing profits.

At the Farm Progress Show in Boone, Iowa, the industry-leading companies and environmental organizations today announced the launch of the [Midwest Row Crop Collaborative](#). Its goal is to support, enhance, and accelerate the use of environmentally preferable agricultural practices.

The Midwest Row Crop Collaborative's founding members include Cargill, the Environmental Defense Fund, General Mills, Kellogg Company, Monsanto, PepsiCo, The Nature Conservancy, Walmart, and the World Wildlife Fund. The overall shared goal is to help achieve a 45 percent nutrient loss reduction by 2035 across the Upper Mississippi River Basin — chiefly nitrogen and phosphorus.

As part of this effort, the Collaborative has committed to raise \$4 million over five years to augment the Soil Health Partnership, a farmer-led initiative of the National Corn Growers Association established in 2014.

With more than 65 farm sites already enrolled in nine Midwestern states, the new funding commitment recognizes SHP as the leader in field-scale testing and measuring of management practices that improve soil health. These practices include:

- Growing cover crops to prevent erosion and nutrient losses,
- Implementing conservation tillage like no-till or strip-till, and
- Using advanced, science-based nutrient management techniques to reduce nutrient loss.

"Through healthy soil, farmers can play a major role protecting water quality and the environment— while also optimizing their crop yields and economic returns," said Nick Goeser, director of the SHP. "We're honored to welcome the Midwest Row Crop Collaborative to our program. Their support will amplify our research and communications efforts in helping farmers find practices that work best for them."

*(more)*

The new alliance will help SHP achieve the goal of enrolling 100 farms a full two years earlier than planned. It also underscores SHP's key milestones and early vision, a vision advanced by initial and continuing funding from Monsanto, Walton Family Foundation, NCGA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These early supporters helped form SHP's operating and data collection structure, while recognizing common goals.

"As a farmer, I am committed to soil health because I know we have to constantly improve how we care for our land and how we farm it," said Roger Zylstra, a farmer in Lynnville, Iowa enrolled in the SHP. "This funding commitment is significant to me because now we have more support from the large food and ag companies as well as environmental groups pushing for change. They're showing us we don't have to do it alone."

### **About the Soil Health Partnership**

The Soil Health Partnership brings together diverse partner organizations including commodity groups, federal agencies, universities and environmental groups to work toward the common goal of improving soil health. Over a period of at least 10 years, the SHP will identify, test and measure farm management practices that improve soil health and benefit farmers. We believe the results of this farmer-led project will provide a platform for sharing peer-to-peer information, and lend resources to benefit agricultural sustainability and profitability. An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, we provide the spark for greater understanding and implementation of agricultural best practices to protect resources for future generations. For more, visit [soilhealthpartnership.org](http://soilhealthpartnership.org).

### **About Midwest Row Crop Collaborative**

The Midwest Row Crop Collaborative is a diverse partnership working to scale agricultural solutions that protect air and water quality and enhance soil health while remaining committed to producing enough food to feed the growing global population. These leading companies and conservation groups are all committed to building a broad partnership in three pilot states: Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. This group will measure and deliver improved environmental outcomes through cross-sector collaboration and continuous improvement throughout the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

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