



NEWS RELEASE

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Soil Health Partnership hires Maria Bowman as new Lead Scientist

Dr. Bowman to lead vital science effort in state-of-the-art data collection and analysis

(ST. LOUIS) – The Soil Health Partnership has tapped Dr. Maria Bowman, a notable and experienced agricultural and resource economist, for the new position of Lead Scientist. Her role will be significant, guiding the organization in building a unique and extensive U.S. database of soil health samples from working farms, analyzing them, and drawing conclusions that could impact agriculture for decades to come.

Bowman comes to the SHP having worked as an economist for the United States Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service. In that role, she focused on the drivers of farmer adoption of soil health and conservation practices, the economics of antibiotic use in U.S. livestock production, and emerging issues related to food labeling. She holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

“The Soil Health Partnership project has the potential to create powerful change in agriculture, and our very foundation is substantive data collection and comprehensive analysis,” said Shefali Mehta, SHP executive director. “Adding a Lead Scientist is a significant step for SHP as we are now able to build a robust, internal science strategy and implement that plan. Dr. Bowman will dramatically enhance our ability to provide impactful analyses and summaries to our farmers and others.”

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the [Soil Health Partnership](#) is an innovative long-term research effort that aims to show U.S. farmers how sustainability through soil health can also lead to increased profitability. It is the largest farmer-led soil health research project of its kind, testing and measuring the impact of farm management practices such as growing cover crops, practicing conservation tillage, and using advanced, science-based nutrient management techniques to reduce nutrient loss to air and water.

Findings could lead to a better understanding of the links between soil health, farm resiliency, economic viability and environmental impact.

“As a scientist and researcher, I have watched the work of the Soil Health Partnership with great interest,” Bowman said. “I am enthusiastic to be closely involved in this unprecedented research alongside farmers and field managers. It’s truly exciting to be part of the research from start to finish—from the field, to the lab, through data analysis, and communicating results to our growers and the public.”

In addition to leading the scientific and data plan for the SHP, Bowman will provide oversight of scientific progress of various projects within the partnership.

Before her work with the USDA, Bowman served as a fellow for the Natural Resources Defense Council, and as a Program Assistant for the Woods Hole Research Center where she studied the economics of farm systems in the Brazilian Amazon. She earned her Master of Science in Forest Economics and Management from Virginia Tech, and her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science from Juniata College.

About the Soil Health Partnership

The Soil Health Partnership is a farmer-led initiative that fosters transformation in agriculture through improved soil health, benefiting both farmer profitability and the environment. With more than 140 working farms enrolled in 14 states, the SHP tests, measures and advances progressive farm management practices that will enhance sustainability and farm economics for generations to come. SHP brings together broad and diverse partners to work towards common goals. Administered by the National Corn Growers Association, the SHP's vision is driven by initial and continuing funding and guidance from NCGA, Bayer, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, The General Mills Foundation, Midwest Row Crop Collaborative, National Wheat Foundation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Pisces Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation. For more, visit SoilHealthPartnership.org.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jenna Rose
Jenna@rosemedia.biz
(573) 808-0815