



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Second Annual Soil Health Summit Awards Honor Best in Soil Health

*Five "Seeds of Change" awards given at 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit*

(ST. LOUIS) – Five dedicated leaders in soil health received “Seeds of Change” awards at the 2019 Soil Health Partnership Summit, Jan. 15-16 in St. Louis. These awards highlight those participants in the Soil Health Partnership who go above and beyond to promote soil health throughout the year.

“The Soil Health Partnership’s strength has its roots in our committed and supportive partners—especially the farmers and agronomists who play an important role in our ability to support research-based practices,” said Dr. Shefali Mehta, executive director of the Soil Health Partnership. “These five individuals exemplify the very best of our dedicated partners, and we thank them for their great work.”

The five award recipients are:

- **Super Sprout: Brian Ryberg**, Buffalo Lake, Minnesota. As a first-year member of the partnership, Ryberg has jumped right into active involvement with activities that included holding a field day. Ryberg values collaboration, according to SHP staff, and has worked with other SHP growers to gain and share knowledge. He is an advocate of cover crops and continues to seek out practices that are best for his farm. ([Download Photos](#))
- **Champion Communicator: Deb Gangwish**, Springview, Nebraska. Gangwish recognizes that her story can make an impact, and in 2018, it did! Deb participated in a story (“Grassroots Movement for Health Soil Spreads Among Farmers”) with National Public Radio that helped propel the Soil Health Partnership into the national spotlight. This story played a pivotal role in SHP achieving 1 billion media impressions in Fiscal Year 2018. Gangwish has also placed articles in her local Nebraska newspaper, served as the first farmer-guest of the SHP’s new podcast series, and continues to make herself available for media interviews. She believes passionately that farmers must tell their story to show how they are feeding the world sustainably and thoughtfully caring for the land. ([Download Photos](#))
- **Ace Agronomist: Bryce Kujawa**, Mount Vernon, Illinois. Approachable and knowledgeable agronomists are a critical link between the Soil Health Partnership and farmers when it comes to implementing and collecting data on new farming techniques. Kujawa connected SHP with a pilot Associate Program site in southern Illinois and continues to support and share information about SHP’s efforts. An educator at heart, he takes the time to teach others and ask thought-provoking questions about soil health and cover crops.
- **Data Dominator: Brian Martin**, Centralia, Missouri. Good research contains powerful information, and Martin loves to dig into the data. He is diligent about following every protocol to collect robust data

from his site, and he uses precision agriculture equipment, including drones and aerial imagery, to learn as much as he can from his fields. Understanding that soil health is a long-term process and commitment, Martin is quick to share ideas and learn from other growers in the partnership. ([Download Photos](#))

- **Exceptional Educators: John and Joan Maxwell**, Donahue, Iowa. The Maxwells take the initiative to tell the story of what's happening on their farm to anyone and everyone, from local kindergarten students to visitors from Brazil. They love to share how a successful dairy and crop farm can sustainability feed the growing population while caring for the land. John is a strong advocate for the Soil Health Partnership and has been featured in print and television news. ([Download Photos](#))

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the Soil Health Partnership is a data-driven program working to quantify the benefits of practices that support soil health from an economic as well as environmental standpoint.

*Editor's Note: More photos available upon request.*

### **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](http://SoilHealthPartnership.org).

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