

## From the Executive Director:

### A Beautiful Bounty

## Gathering Harvest Data

I can't believe it's already October! We just celebrated National Farmer Day, which gave me time to reflect on how a small percentage of people in the country ensure that we are all fed. Beyond gratitude for the work of so many, it's quite something to wrap my head around when I think of how agricultural production has evolved and our ability to grow so much productively.

Sometimes, it is easy to take this for granted and overlook the intense efforts of a few that allow the rest of us to be so comfortably fed. And in the U.S., our farmers not only feed us, but also much of the rest of the world, since we are net exporters. Just as we have been leaders in ag production, we continue to be leaders in moving the needle on effective practices to manage our lands.

Harvest is underway, with it being wrapped up already in many areas. Our team has been working closely with the SHP farmers to gather the harvest data. By December, we should have a full data set for 2018. This is our first year that we have a statistically significant number of farms (over 80) with year-over-year data. That means it's the first year we can share insights on how the fields are changing over time! We are excited about this and will be revealing some insights in December (ideally, an early Christmas present!), and more fully at our January Soil Health Summit.

Speaking of the Summit, this is the first year that we are open to the public! We have a fantastic slate of speakers and topics. Our registration just opened and we encourage you to register soon.

Besides digging into our data, we will provide updates on several topics. We've had a lot of interest in our Associate program. Our goal is for this program to broaden our data set and insights while allowing more farmers to enroll in the SHP program. Details on the Associate program will be released by the end of November. We will delve into that further during the Summit so keep your eyes open for those details.

I always welcome your thoughts. SHP has benefited from the efforts of and input from all of you, so please keep sharing. Enjoy the rest of your autumn and have a Fang-tastic Halloween!

Regards,

Shefali



*Shefali Mehta, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Soil Health Partnership*

## If You've **GOT IT**, HAUNT IT: Take our FieldRise Assessment in November

Have you ever wondered how your farm practices compare to your neighbors', or others growing the same crops? Do you want the public to know more about the efforts to protect land, water and air taking place on farms like yours?

The Soil Health Partnership has teamed up with FieldRise to develop a new farm sustainability assessment tool – and we're asking all of our enrolled farmers and associate sites to take the assessment in November. The more responses we have, the better the insights will be for each of you.

The assessment will take you about as much time as a slow cup of coffee. There are several benefits to your farm:

- A customized grower report will show you how your farm practices compare to other farmers, including specific recommendations on ways to boost your score.
- A benchmark for future assessments, documenting positive growth and helping you know you are moving your operation in the right direction.
- You will be contributing to a large, organized effort of measuring farm sustainability in a way that makes agronomic sense and puts farm success first.
- It gives you a voice in agricultural sustainability efforts, rather than outside interests acting alone.
- Your participation will help us show partners, industry and the general public what farmers are successfully doing to protect the environment and improve sustainability.

"Our farmers participating in this assessment will help us gain more insight into what Best Management Practices are being used in specific geographic areas where there are environmental concerns, and it will maximize the impact of the research network we have developed," said Shefali Mehta, SHP executive director. "This will be important to SHP and our network into the future as we provide recommendations and document all of the amazing work of farmers."

Get started at [SoilHealthPartnership.org/fieldrise](http://SoilHealthPartnership.org/fieldrise)



## Sharing our Spooktacular Soil Smarts

The Soil Health Partnership launched its #SoilSmart social media campaign on August 1, thanks to a generous grant from the Walton Family Foundation. The campaign will run through January, and is utilizing social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. The purpose of the campaign is to educate and engage farmers and others in the importance of soil health, and reduce barriers to practices that improve soil health.

In only its first two months, the campaign has been overwhelmingly successful! How do we measure "success?" One way is through an increase in followers or page likes. When the campaign began, the Soil Health Partnership boasted 3,006 page followers on two channels—Facebook and Twitter. The SHP is now at an impressive 5,338 followers, and a presence on two new channels – Instagram and LinkedIn!

Another way to measure success on social media is how many times a post is liked, shared, or link clicked. Across all channels, SHP posts in the #SoilSmart campaign have had an impressive 63,335 engagements.



### Want to check out the campaign?

Visit our Facebook page [@soilhealthpartnership](https://www.facebook.com/soilhealthpartnership)  
Twitter [@SoilPartners](https://twitter.com/SoilPartners) | Instagram [@soilpartners](https://www.instagram.com/soilpartners)  
LinkedIn [company/soil-health-partnership](https://www.linkedin.com/company/soil-health-partnership)  
Please like our pages, and share the content!



## A Frightfully Good Listen Subscribe to our New Podcast!

The Soil Health Partnership has launched a new podcast, produced by Brownfield Ag News. Subscribe to it today to hear from your peers, and keep getting #SoilSmart with each new episode! From iTunes or Google Play, search “Soil Health Partnership” and subscribe. You can also find them on Brownfield’s brownfieldagnews.com/soilsmart/.

## Soil Health Summit

*Continued from Cover*

As an enrolled farmer in the Soil Health Partnership, we look forward to seeing you in St. Louis on January 15-16, 2019. Your registration to the summit is complimentary—and SHP covers your travel, food and lodging expenses for the event. We are excited to extend this great opportunity for collaboration, important program updates, education and networking to you!

Registration is simple. Visit [www.soilhealthpartnership.org/summit/](http://www.soilhealthpartnership.org/summit/) for all the details on breakout sessions, hotels, and travel. When you are ready to register, choose FARMER as your Registration Type. **To register for your hotel, use the link on your Summit confirmation page. You will be required to enter your credit card information to hold your room, but room billing and tax (not including incidentals) will come to us.**

After filling out your personal information, you will move to the Item Selection page to choose the meals and the sessions you wish to attend. You will then be directed to the Summary page to review that all your information has been entered correctly. Finally, you will land on the Payment page to enter your Discount Code.

**YOU MUST ENTER FARM19 for your room and registration fees to be paid by SHP. Deadline for Summit registration is Tuesday, December 18.**

This year’s event will be held at the Hyatt Regency—St. Louis at the Arch. There will be plenty of time for peer-networking, alongside high-energy sessions and enhanced breakouts on the latest soil health strategies and more. Here are just a few of the sessions:

- Game of Drones: Putting Aerial Imagery to Work for You
- Herbicide Considerations for Cover Crop Control
- The Down & Dirty on Soil Testing
- From the Hill to the Home: Understanding New Federal Policy and Regulation
- Are You #SocialMediaSmart? Using Social Media to Take Your Business up a Notch

In addition to all the great content at the Summit, we’re excited to host this in vibrant downtown St. Louis. The Gateway Arch National Park has recently undergone a 5-year extensive renovation! The Arch itself and fully revamped museum are all indoors. See you in St. Louis!



## Can’t Stand our Corny Headlines? Oct. 30 is National Candy Corn Day!

A mere 24 hours before Trick-or-Treaters come a-knockin’, it’s National Candy Corn Day! People seem to have incredibly strong feelings about the fall treat—it is either loved or hated. Whether you like this festive treat, or think it’s akin to candle wax, fear not! No matter what costumes they wear, when the Halloween candy comes out, everyone is a goblin! Just save some room for the l-scream.

Have a safe and happy Halloween—from your friends at the Soil Health Partnership!



## SHP Gets a ‘Scream-Out’ in the New York Times

We are honored to be mentioned in this New York Times article, thanks to a shout-out from our supporters at The Nature Conservancy. Great to see soil health among the factors considered important to mitigating climate change.

**Read the article:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/21/climate/climate-change-groups.html>

## SHP’s Newest Ghou-friend: Meet Stacey Stiens

Please join us in welcoming Stacey Stiens to the Soil Health Partnership as our new program coordinator. Stacey now organizes and oversees the partnership’s many events, assists with program communication and supports customer relationship management.



Stacey’s education and career have been centered in the St. Louis area. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English, Cum Laude distinction from the University of Missouri—St. Louis.

With twelve years involvement in planning and implementing educational activities, programs and events, Stacey’s professional experience ranges from a direct support provider with Resources for Human Development, volunteer for Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri and site director for YMCA of Greater St. Louis childcare program. Additionally, she was a middle school language arts teacher in the West St. Francois County R-IV School District.

A native of Hazelwood, Missouri, Stacey and her husband have two children—plus two coonhounds adopted from the local humane society. She enjoys camping with her family and visiting Missouri’s state parks. Welcome aboard, Stacey!

You already received this via email. If you’d prefer to only receive via email, please email us at [soilhealth@ncga.com](mailto:soilhealth@ncga.com).

National Corn Growers Association  
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Chesterfield, MO 63005



## Newsletter



### **A Ghoulishly Great Time: Register for the 2019 Soil Health Summit!**

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Read more inside.

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