



WORKSHOP'S SOIL MANAGEMENT FOCUS PROVIDES INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO WYOMING

Situation

Interest in soil health and management is growing among producers and agricultural professionals, including extension educators. Abundant information is available through universities, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and industry; however, agricultural producers and agricultural professionals in Wyoming often express the available information is not specific enough to our climate, soils, and production systems.

This educational program was developed to provide additional training opportunities, resources, and tools for agricultural professionals specific to Wyoming needs.

Washakie County extension hosted "Soil Health and Management for Ag Professionals" in May 2015. Workshop participants included eight extension educators, one agronomist, three crop advisors, and two NRCS staff.

All workshop participants received the following in a UW Extension tote bag: 1) IPNI Soil Fertility Manual published by the International Plant Nutrition Institute; 2) hard copies of extension bulletins and research articles in a three-ring binder; 3) the book Building Soils for Better Crops by Magdoff and Van Es; 4) USB drive with over 70 bulletins, articles, e-books, and other resources; and 5) set of soil infiltration rings, stopwatch, and soil thermometer.

Participants were also given access to an online Dropbox folder that contained the electronic resources on the USB drive. This folder has since been expanded to include nearly 100 soil management resources, and the link has been shared with UW Extension agriculture educators, specialists, graduate students, and others who might find the information helpful (<http://bit.ly/SoilResources>). Access to print and electronic supplemental material makes it easy for participants to find and read the information and share it with clients.

Impact

Through a pre- and post-survey, participants showed that their ability to explain the differences between pools of soil carbon increased, they learned what a disease-suppressive soil is, and they had a higher level of confidence in their abilities to help growers find the soil management information they needed.

The most relevant topics for farmers included cover crop selection and management and reduced-tillage methods and equipment.

The most relevant topics for ranchers included best management practices for using compost and manure and cover crop selection and management.

All participants agreed more educational soil management programs were needed for farmers and ranchers.

Comments from the one-month follow-up evaluation included this one:

"The hands-on exercises were great ... because they gave me a foundation for doing the same thing with landowners. The horticulture exercise at the end was great because it felt like we were walking through exactly what we could do in a workshop."



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