



KANSAS
Soil Health
ALLIANCE

September 2026

Improving and protecting Kansas soils while serving as a trusted partner and valuable soil health resource for Kansas growers.

UPCOMING EVENTS



EVENTS CALENDAR

It's back-to-school time! And while the kids are hitting the books, they aren't the only ones with opportunities to learn. We know farmers are plenty busy, but if you happen to get a rain delay (hopefully), be sure to look at our upcoming events. We're always adding new opportunities to the calendar, including virtual events you can join from wherever you are. So grab your coffee, take a break, and tune in--you can learn something new without even leaving the farm or ranch!

Do you know of an event that isn't listed? Contact Joanna to get it added.

You can view the full list of events on our website.



WHERE TO FIND US

Board members and advisors will be speaking at or involved with these events:

- **September 16-17** - Our First Soil Health School! - Axtell (pg. 2)
- **September 24** - Soil Health Partnership Webinar - Virtual (pg. 3)
- **October 29** - Soil Health Partnership Webinar - Virtual (pg. 3)

We are also working with American Farmland Trust to plan several events in Northwest and Southwest Kansas this fall. Stay tuned!



UPCOMING EVENTS

SOIL HEALTH SCHOOL- DIG INTO THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOIL HEALTH

We're hosting our first Soil Health School! Join the Kansas Soil Health Alliance for two days of hands-on soil health education and networking for beginners. This school is aimed at producers who are less than 10 years into a soil health management system, and will offer practical tools and support to help guide the next steps for your farm and/or livestock operation. Space is limited. Register by September 8th on our website: kssoilhealth.org

Kansas Soil Health School

BS Farms
Axtell, KS

September 16
9am - 9pm
September 17
8am - 5pm

Speakers

- Bill Buessing
- Dave Kohake
- Candy Thomas
- Doug Spencer
- Ryan O'Neill
- Michael Thompson
- Dennis Anderson
- Caleb Yoder
- Brice Custer
- Josh Lloyd
- Paul Jasa

Topics

- Soils of Kansas
- Soil Biology
- Livestock Integration
- Farming in a Soil Health System
- Grazing Tour & Demonstration
- Woody Encroachment
- Soil & Plant Testing
- Economics Panel
- Setting Equipment for No-Till Success

Lodging

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Altenhofen Inn in Seneca under the KS Soil Health block.
785-336-3663

\$100 Registration
Lodging not included

Go to www.kssoilhealth.org
Call Jennifer at 785-545-5628
Registration is limited to 25 attendees.

Scan QR Code

UPCOMING EVENTS

KANSAS SOIL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP WEBINAR

Join us for our monthly one-hour webinar series featuring farmers, ranchers, educators, and ag professionals. Speakers will provide insightful views and personal experiences on how they are working to improve and protect Kansas' soils. The webinar will be held on the last Thursday of the month.

September 24th

The Relationship Between Flickner Innovation Farm and NASA Acres

Ray Flickner is a 5th generation farmer. He is also the owner and operator of Flickner Innovation Farm in Moundridge, Kansas. Ray will give a presentation describing the



partnership between the farm and NASA Acres, as well as his experience being part of the NASA Acres Farm Innovation Ambassador Team (FIAT).

Economic Case Studies of Kansas Graziers

October 29th

Kinzie Reiss and Brandi McCoy work for American Farmland Trust where they have conducted economic case studies on three Kansas graziers. They will present those studies on our webinar this month.



If you have a speaker or topic suggestion, please contact us.

You can find all of the 2025 webinar recordings in the [Resources Section](#) of our website.

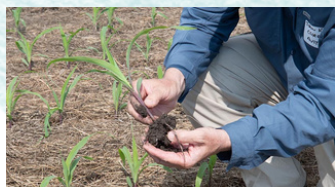
REGISTER HERE



Please note- We have updated the link for the new year, so be sure to register again for 2026.

SOIL HEALTH NEWS

K-State Agricultural Economist Says Soil Health Practices May Go Hand-in-hand With Farm Profitability



As more Kansas farmers consider practices like no-till and cover crops, a common question

remains: Do soil health practices pay off?

Research presented by Kansas State University agricultural policy specialist Jennifer Ifft at a soil health field day suggests the answer may depend less on how many practices are adopted, and more on how well those practices fit a farm's unique conditions — especially location.

To read the full article, visit the [Global Agriculture website](#).

For more information about the survey, agricultural economics, or agricultural policy, make sure you're registered for our monthly webinar. Jennifer Ifft will be a presenter on the Kansas Soil Health Partnership Webinar in 2027.

How is Soil Health Different From Soil Fertility?

Understanding your soil is the foundation of good farm management. Soil testing gives farmers, agronomists, and landowners the data needed to assess and improve their soil's physical, chemical, and biological properties, supporting better decisions that enhance productivity and long-term sustainability. But not all soil tests tell the same story.

There are two different approaches - soil fertility testing and soil health testing - and understanding the difference between them is key to getting the most out of your farming operation. Here's what each test measures and why using both gives you the fullest picture of your soil.

Soil fertility is the measure of a soil's capacity to supply essential nutrients for crop growth. It's assessed through routine soil tests that quantify nutrient levels (like phosphorus and potassium), which have been researched and calibrated over decades to optimize crop yield responses and guide fertilizer and lime application rates.

Soil health is really about how alive and well your soil is. It's not just about nutrients. It reflects the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of soil working together to hold water, support the tiny organisms that cycle nutrients, and bounce back from stress. Because these properties can shift over time in response to management, soil health is both a snapshot of how well your soil functions today and a long-term measure of whether your practices are sustaining the land for the future.

While soil fertility testing tells you what nutrients your soil has and what to add, soil health testing tells you how well your soil is functioning as a living system. Used together, fertility testing optimizes what you apply today, while soil health testing helps you understand whether your broader management practices (tillage, cover crops, and rotations) are moving the soil in the right direction over time.

The bottom line: Soil health testing is not a replacement for regular soil fertility testing and vice versa; they are complementary and each is needed to get a full picture of your soil's condition.



For more information, visit the [Soil Health Institute website](#).

You can also download the [printable fact sheet](#), a resource developed through the Farmers for Soil Health partnership.

SOIL HEALTH NEWS

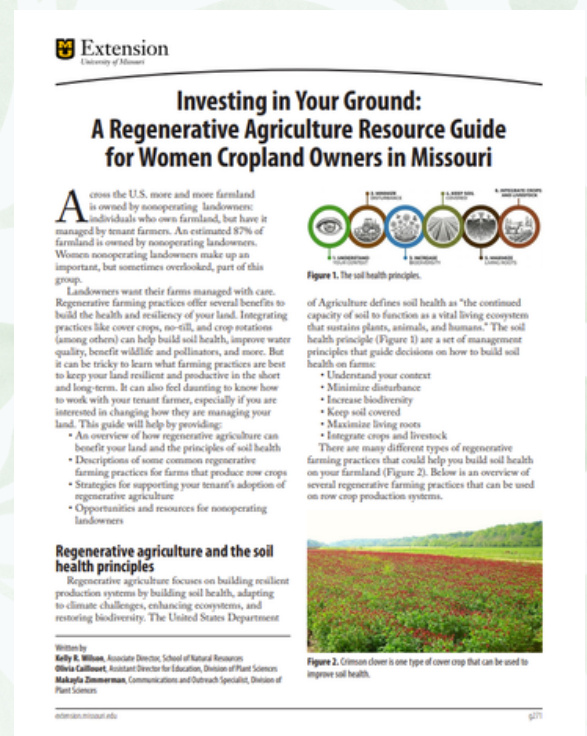
INVESTING IN YOUR GROUND: A REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE RESOURCE GUIDE FOR WOMEN CROPLAND OWNERS IN MISSOURI

Across the U.S. more and more farmland is owned by nonoperating landowners: individuals who own farmland, but have it managed by tenant farmers. An estimated 87% of farmland is owned by nonoperating landowners. Women nonoperating landowners make up an important, but sometimes overlooked, part of this group.

Landowners want their farms managed with care. Regenerative farming practices offer several benefits to build the health and resiliency of your land. Integrating practices like cover crops, no-till, and crop rotations (among others) can help build soil health, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and pollinators, and more. But it can be tricky to learn what farming practices are best to keep your land resilient and productive in the short and long-term. It can also feel daunting to know how to work with your tenant farmer, especially if you are interested in changing how they are managing your land.

This guide will help by providing:

- An overview of how regenerative agriculture can benefit your land and the principles of soil health
- Descriptions of some common regenerative farming practices for farms that produce row crops
- Strategies for supporting your tenant's adoption of regenerative agriculture
- Opportunities and resources for nonoperating landowners



[Download the full article from the University of Missouri Extension website](#)

SOIL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES

Soil Health Assessment Protocol and Evaluation (SHAPE)



A new national effort called **Probing Our Country's Soil Health** is focused on creating a free and user-friendly tool for farmers to benchmark the soil health of their fields.

The tool is called **Soil Health Assessment Protocol and Evaluation (or SHAPE)**. The tool will also provide insights of management practices that may improve crop yields when enhancing soil health.

WHAT WILL YOU RECEIVE FOR PARTICIPATING?

- Compensation for your time (~1 hour)
- A personalized soil health report of your fields. The value of this lab work (at no cost to you) is about \$1200 per field.
- A copy of a book called "Probing Our Country's Soil Health." This will be a hard-copy photo book illustrating soil health across the country and project outcome. It will also include photos of many of the participating farmers on their own fields.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Sign up for a one-hour Zoom Meeting where a facilitator will lead you through a management survey for 2 or 3 fields. This will take about an hour.
- Grant access to fields for hand-probe soil sampling from 2 or 3 sites from each field. Normally this will happen within 3-6 months after the survey. You will be notified beforehand.
- Fields must be 10 acres or more.

PROJECT OVERVIEW VIDEO:



Click here: [Probing Our Country's Soil Health](#) or scan the code to watch a short video about the project.

HOW TO ENROLL:



Click on this [Booking Page Link](#) or scan the code to schedule a meeting time with a facilitator.



Questions? Contact us at SHAPE.probingsoilhealth@gmail.com

Farmers and landowners are invited to participate in SHAPE: Soil Health Assessment Protocol and Evaluation, a national effort focused on better understanding and improving soil health across the U.S.

By participating, you'll receive:

- Compensation for your time
- A personalized soil health report for your fields — a value of approximately \$1,200 per field
- A copy of Probing Our Country's Soil Health
- Valuable insight into your soil and management practices

What's required? Fields must be 10 acres or more, along with a one-hour management survey and access to your fields for soil sampling.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the health of your soil while contributing to a nationwide soil health project!

Interested or have questions?

Contact

SHAPE.probingsoilhealth@gmail.com.

Visit our website to view the flyers and enrollment information

Probing Our Country's Soil Health

SHAPE: Soil Health Assessment Protocol and Evaluation

SHAPE is an online tool designed to interpret soil health measurements, monitor soil health change, and offer management practice alternatives for improving soil health. An initiative has been funded by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service to work with farmers to provide a more representative dataset to support SHAPE. To do so, diverse management practices and variable soils from across the U.S. are needed.

Background



The SHAPE tool is online, publicly available, and easy-to-use to score a wide selection of soil health indicators. The outcome is effective and meaningful soil health interpretation across the different soils and landscapes of the U.S.

Partnering With People

The initiative will foster innovative partnerships that are mutually beneficial for farmers and landowners and the public. The SHAPE tool is intended to lead to improved interpretations for soil management recommendations and increased adoption of conservation management practices. These improvements can lead to positive, long-term impacts on the environment, commerce, and quality of life.

Leading Partners

This initiative partners University of Missouri and USDA to work with farmers and landowners, public, and private institutions across the U.S. (e.g., conservation districts and National Association of Conservation Districts, NRCS conservationists, commodity organizations, state extension, Certified Crop Advisors). The SHAPE tool prototype was first developed by a team of government and university scientists led by Dr. Kristen Veum at the USDA-ARS Cropping Systems and Water Quality Research Unit, Columbia MO.

SHAPE Project Goals

Probing Soil Health

Teams will collect over 13,000 soil samples across the U.S. (~6000 fields) from different soil, climate, and management conditions.

Soil Health Indicators

Expand and improve soil health measurements using SHAPE to custom-score soils for local and regional land-use interpretation.

Open Access Tool

SHAPE tool shared publicly with free web-based apps for easy soil health scoring.

Get Involved!

The SHAPE team is looking for farmers and landowners across the U.S. to collaborate with for obtaining management information and soil samples. If interested, contact Newell Kitchen at AGES.KitchenN@gmail.com.

Benefits for participation!

Soil Health Report and Project Book entitled "Probing Our Country's Soil Health"



SOIL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES

The Food System 6 EQIP Bridge Loan Program

Food System 6 (FS6)'s Bridge Loan Program helps producers overcome one of the biggest barriers to implementing EQIP projects: the upfront costs. Because EQIP reimburses producers after eligible work is completed, many farmers and ranchers must finance those costs themselves before receiving payment from NRCS.

FS6's bridge loan fund provides 0% bridge loans to help producers begin implementing their contracts immediately rather than delaying projects or taking on expensive debt. There are no fees, no interest, and no penalties. Loans are repaid when producers receive their NRCS reimbursement.

Funding is now available for producers with active EQIP contracts in all 50 states. Farmers, ranchers, and landowners can find more information about the program [here](#) and [apply here](#), or get in touch with us at equip@foodsystem6.org.

FOOD SYSTEM 6
EQIP Bridge Loan Program
Finding the capital to complete your EQIP contract can be a challenge — we'll provide your cost-share reimbursement up-front so you can begin working on your project right away. With our support, you can focus on what matters most: nurturing the land and enhancing productivity.

0% Interest rate	\$0 Loan fees	up to 100% Of award covered
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ABOUT EQIP
The USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps farmers, ranchers, and landowners implement conservation practices that improve soil health, water quality, and biodiversity. NRCS administers it as a cost-share reimbursement — but that means paying out of pocket first.

HOW THE BRIDGE LOAN PROGRAM WORKS

STEP 01 Apply & Intro Call
Submit your application. If you have a signed EQIP contract, we'll schedule a 30-min call to learn about your operation.

STEP 02 Document Review
Share your EQIP contract, project plans, and basic financial info. We take a holistic view before making any decision.

STEP 03 Approval & Funding
Once approved, funds are disbursed directly to cover your initial costs — so you can break ground without delay.

STEP 04 Easy Repayment
Repayment is tied to your NRCS reimbursements. When EQIP funds arrive, they flow directly to repay the loan.

LOAN TERMS

LOAN AMOUNT Up to \$75,000 per disbursement (up to 100% of your EQIP award)	INTEREST RATE 0%
FEES None	LOAN TERM Based on your EQIP practice installation timeline

WHO CAN APPLY
Now open to farmers, producers, and landowners in all 50 states!

- Any producer with a signed EQIP contract is welcome to apply.
- In addition to EQIP, we are also able to offer limited funding capacity to producers with signed contracts for other NRCS reimbursable grant programs, including RCPP.

Ready to begin?
Email EQIP@foodsystem6.org · Visit www.foodsystem6.org
[Submit your application →](#)

FS6
FOOD SYSTEM 6

This flyer is for informational purposes only. Does not constitute an offer, commitment, or obligation to provide any financial product or service. All loan terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements are subject to change without notice. Loan approvals are contingent upon final review; terms governed by the loan agreement.

This program is supported by the SHOT Fund, a philanthropic partnership of the Rural Climate Partnership and the Regenerative Agriculture Foundation

SOIL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES

KANSAS SOIL HEALTH ALLIANCE COACHING PROGRAM

Together with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, the Kansas Soil Health Alliance is leading a soil health coaching network that is supported through a collaborative agreement with Kansas NRCS.

The purpose of the coaching network is to match experienced soil health farmers with students who are in the early stages of incorporating soil health systems. Through the program, each student receives a farm visit from their coach plus one-on-one conversations and Q&A. Additionally, Kansas Soil Health Alliance board members serve as advanced resource specialists to help answer student or coach questions. Other benefits offered include a monthly open-discussion webinar, online discussion portal, and soil health education stipend.

If you are interested in applying to become a student in this network, follow [this link](#) to complete a short application.

Are you looking for a soil health mentor?

JOIN THE
KANSAS SOIL HEALTH ALLIANCE
COACHING PROGRAM

Program Benefits

- One-on-one coaching
- Farm visit to discuss your farm's unique context and goals
- Soil health conference registration and travel expense reimbursement
- Access to advanced soil health specialists through Kansas Soil Health Alliance network



*Complete the
short application
by scanning the
QR code.*

Jennifer - Jennifer@kssoilhealth.org
Joanna - Joanna@kssoilhealth.org



SOIL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES

SOIL HEALTH BUCKET OWNERS



We have made some updates to the instructions that accompany our Soil Health Buckets. If you would like an updated copy of the instructions to be emailed to you, contact Jennifer at Jennifer@KSsoilhealth.org.

FARMTENDER

This new service helps match farmers using regenerative practices with willing landowners. Go to www.FarmTender.us to learn more. It is free to browse, and, for a nominal annual fee, you can register and read the profiles of landowners and their land parcels, or of regenerative farmers, or post one yourself!



CONSERVATION CONNECTOR TOOL



The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) has unveiled a new tool, the *Conservation Connector*. By providing transparent access to incentive opportunities and direct contact with local support, the *Conservation Connector* (Connector.ag) aims to be a trusted, one-stop shop for producers looking to implement or expand soil health and conservation management practices.

The tool features a searchable directory that allows users to filter programs by crop type, conservation practice, and geographic region, offering a customized experience that matches producers with programs that fit their operation.

KANSAS GRAZING EXCHANGE

The Kansas Grazing Exchange helps match available forage with livestock producers for mutually beneficial grazing relationships. If you have available grazing or you're looking for grazing, consider posting a listing. It's free and easy to use. Find it on our [website](http://www.kansasgrazingexchange.com).



VOLUNTEER SURVEYS

YOUR LAND, YOUR SAY: QUAIL AND PHEASANTS ON THE KANSAS LANDSCAPE

If you've filled out your share of government surveys and paperwork, this is something different.

Researchers at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, want to hear directly from Kansas landowners and leaseholders about what helps (and what gets in the way) when it comes to managing working lands for wildlife.



At the heart of the study are bobwhite quail and pheasants—species that have long been part of Kansas farms, grasslands, hunting traditions, and rural communities. The survey asks landowners and leaseholder about their interest in managing habitat for these birds and what makes that kind of management practical on working lands. We want to understand the real-world factors behind wildlife and game bird management decisions. What motivates landowners to manage for quail and pheasants? What gets in the way? And what could make voluntary habitat conservation programs work better for Kansas landowners?

You do not need to currently manage for quail or pheasants, or participate in a conservation program, to take part. Hearing from landowners who are interested, unsure, or not interested in wildlife and game bird management is all valuable. Responses are confidential, and the findings will be used to help provide recommendations to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Have a say in what wildlife conservation looks like on Kansas working lands.

This survey is not associated with the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

Konza Prairie landscape photo credit: Bhavya Iyer

[Complete the survey here.](#)

CORNELL UNIVERSITY SURVEY ON RYE

A team of researchers at Cornell University has created a survey to understand the many ways farmers are growing and using cereal rye, including for grain, forage, and as a cover crop. Their team is also developing new rye varieties and want to understand important breeding priorities for different end uses. Participation is voluntary. At the end of this project, research results will be shared through presentations, published in peer-reviewed publications, and shared with stakeholders via a white paper and farmer/industry publications.

For more information about the research, contact the project leader, Virginia Moore at vm377@cornell.edu.

This survey is not associated with the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

[Take the survey here.](#)

DIGITAL AGRICULTURE & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR FARMERS AND PRODUCERS

Help shape the future of Kansas agriculture—farmers and producers are invited to take a short, confidential survey on digital agriculture and AI needs. The information collected will be used to develop a targeted curriculum designed specifically for the needs of Kansas Agriculture.

This survey is not associated with the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

[Click here to take the survey.](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

CONSERVATION JOBS IN KANSAS

There are various open positions at county conservation districts around the state as well as positions with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Currently, the USDA-NRCS is under a hiring freeze. Once lifted, all vacancy announcements for USDA positions can be found online at usajobs.gov.

Featured openings:

- District Manager -
 - Lane County, Linn County
 - Drill Operator - Allen County
 - Soil Conservation Technician -
 - Wilson County, Kiowa County, Ness County, Marshall County
 - DOC Soil Technician - Lyon County
 - Soil Technician - Allen County
 - Soil Conservationist/Natural Resource Specialist -
 - Wichita County, Scott County, Grant County, Ford County
- You can learn about additional positions on the [KACD website](#).

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Kansas Rural Center website features a collection of educational and career opportunities curated to suit those in Kansas interested in agriculture, ecology, and community building. Visit the [KRC website](#) for more information.
- Kansas Forest Service is hiring a Fire Protection Specialist, a Conservation Tree Assistant, as well as Student Office Assistants. Learn more at kansasforests.org.
- Kansas Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are looking for 5 Habitat Specialists to join their team. Visit <https://www.kansaspfqf.org/careers> for more information.
- Visit the [Human Resources page](#) for employment opportunities at the Kansas Department of Agriculture.
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment has several job opportunities available. Visit their [website](#) for more information.
- View current openings for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks on their [website](#).
- Missouri Department of Agriculture is hiring for several positions. Visit their [website](#) for available opportunities.

CONTACT US



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