The Soil Health & Resilience Program Supports Healthy Food, Profitable Farms, and a Better Environment

Advanced research and education provide a framework for collaboration and communication

Soils sustain terrestrial life and are the foundation of our food system. Farmers and other stakeholders increasingly recognize the importance of soil, and innovative research and outreach are needed to help build soil resilience and organic carbon. Advancing soil health management in New York is critical to achieving sustainable agriculture and meeting the state’s climate mitigation and water quality goals. Cornell University is a recognized world leader and innovator in soil health research and education.

Empowering farmers to make informed decisions and meet food and climate goals through better management

The NY Soil Health Team works with farmers, educators, and service providers in rural and urban areas to overcome barriers that prevent greater adoption of regenerative soil health management practices. Our field research on cover cropping, tillage, and carbon management, as well as new techniques for assessing soil health, help position NYS farmers as leaders in regenerative agriculture. We coordinate outreach activities and training events across the state that support knowledge-based programs and services.

Key Accomplishments and Plans for 2022

- **Partnerships and outreach.** Since 2017, the NYSH Team has been involved in over 137 events across the state, reaching more than 7,200 ag professionals, farmers and other stakeholders. 50 professionals were trained as soil health specialists to support programs around the state.

- **Publications.** The Team developed several publications including a manual on *Organic No-till Planted Soybean Production*, a new edition of the handbook *Building Soils for Better Crops*, and the *Characterization of Soil Health in New York State*, a report based on the analysis of an expansive NYS soil health database.

In 2022, the Team will conduct advanced research, create farmer-focused technical resources, and facilitate training on soil health practices.

- **Strengthen partnerships and outreach.** The Team will continue to lead a state-wide soil health working group, run soil health training programs, and host a Soil Health and Climate Resilient Farming Center at field days across the state.

- **Soil health management practices.** Regenerate soils and increase organic matter storage by developing practical tools and strategies to help farmers integrate cover crops, reduce soil tillage, and improve carbon and nutrient cycling.

- **Climate resilience and water quality.** Integrate soil health programming with climate change and water quality education and management.

- **Perennial and urban agriculture.** Enhance soil health programs in perennial fruit systems and urban environments.

- **Soil health assessment.** Develop new and cost-effective approaches for evaluating and monitoring soil health.

For more information: newyorksoilhealth.org