

International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA)

Strategic Plan 2014-2016 **August 2016, Progress Report**

ICCA Mission

The International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) Program validates the credentials of professional crop advisers by upholding standards for knowledge, experience, ethics and continuing education.

ICCA Vision

The International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) Program is the globally recognized certification held by professional crop advisers establishing their leadership role in the responsible management of agricultural production systems.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES for 2014-2016

GOAL 1:

Increase the value of CCA Certification.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase value of ICCA program to stakeholders.
 - Establish relationships with food industry. (Field through Fork).
 - Seek recognition of the CCA role, in writing from at least 10 major food chain suppliers in their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and/or sustainability programs.
 - Expand relationships with Agri-business Industry.
 - Seek recognition of the CCA role by 10 new major Agri-business employers (including Manufacturers and Retailers) incorporating written statements about employing CCAs.

2014: ICCA staff have connected with Field to Market where several food chain suppliers and agribusiness employers are involved around sustainability. The ICCA program has been asked to be involved with the group and that should lead to CCAs being recognized within the companies' sustainability and quality control programs including employment standards.

2015: ICCA joined Field to Market in 2015. A sustainability specialty certification and education programs are being launched. Food companies/agri-businesses are supporting the efforts.

2016: ASA and ICCA hosted a sustainability panel discussion at the ASA meetings in Minneapolis, 9 food/retail/agribusiness companies

participated. Indicating that it is what needs to be done, it won't go away and CCAs have a major part to play at the farm level. Engage now was the recommendation. A communications plan is being developed to connect with individual food and agri-business companies. (this should be a continuing objective for the 2017-19 plan)

- Establish relationships with government agencies, legislators, educators, professional and scientific organizations.
 - Explore potential opportunities for incorporating CCAs in local, regional or national level regulatory or non-regulatory programs. Be actively engaged in the development and implementation of public and private policy.

2014: March 2014 six CCAs along with the ICCA executive committee participated in the ASA's Congressional Visits Day. This will be an annual opportunity to engage with national legislators. The same should be done at the state/provincial levels.

2015: March 2015 nine CCAs including the ICCA executive committee along with three Greenfield Scholars participated in ASA's Congressional Visits Day. Funding was provided for travel through a reinvest ASA grant. Greenfield will be expanded up to 10 awards in 2015 and they will be invited to attend the CVD in 2016.

State/Provincial Regulatory: nutrient management related regulations mentioning or requiring CCAs to do the plans, laws have changed around how manure is classified in WI – it is now a pollutant so it unintentionally is changing how farm liability insurance is being written. An insurance company that provides environmental liability coverage is writing a new policy that requires the NM plan be written by a CCA. Although this is starting in WI, it may go nationally. The insurance company is treating it as national in scope.

2016: 13 CCAs participated in CVD. Largest group to date. US-EPA and USDA are actively involved with the program. The ASA science policy office represents the ICCA Program in DC. (this is an on-going activity)

- Develop and implement effective promotional efforts directed towards:
 - Producers
 - Future CCAs (current students and new professionals)

2014: an ICCA program marketing plan has been developed and implemented, web site has been redesigned, market analysis has been conducted, and continuation of the cost share, ambassador, and university exam use programs

2015: continuation of the marketing programs, change in staffing

2016: Lesson learned between 2014 and 2015 - level of ASA staff involvement with the local board determines level of activities being implemented and results achieved. Marketing kit was sent to all CCAs in January. Rethinking marketing – local level still best impact, ASA staff could offer to implement programs at the local level working with the local board and be reimbursed.

(this is an ongoing activity, marketing is something we should all do all the time targeting the best impact approach)

2. Increase value of ICCA program to CCAs.

- Engage CCAs in processes to provide assurance of environmental quality to consumers and the general public.

2014: new specialty certifications are being developed on 4R nutrient management and Sustainability along with several others being considered on Cover Crops, IPM, Soybean Production

2015: 4R NMP was developed and first exam given in August, Sustainability Specialty will be released in November with the first exam in February 2016, IPM is underdevelopment with the first exam targeted for February 2017, Cover Crops was focused on continuing education not a specialty, Soybean Production Specialty was tabled, Agroforestry is being explored

2016: there are now 100 4R NMS, SSp and RMS exams will be available for the first time in August 2016. 3 specialties are in place – Examinees: 200 4R NMS; 65 SSp; 30 RMS

- Create opportunities to engage active CCAs who are retired from employment.
- Education campaign directed to CCAs about the value of certification and the importance of and how to self-promote their certification and skills.

2015: a CCA self-promotion packet is being developed for release in the winter of 2015-16

2016: each CCA received the self-promotion packet in January, follow up will be initiated in late 2016 to gage impact

(this project was completed, evaluation needs to take place)

- Promote the importance of the CCA Code of Ethics and the responsibility to uphold it.

2015: Ethics webinar and in person program conducted that reviews the code of ethics, how the complaint process works and examples to encourage compliance. This could be repeated at local board training programs.

2016: Code and complaint procedures were reviewed and updated.

GOAL 2:

Improve relevance, quality and delivery of continuing education and life-long learning as the foundation and strength of the ICCA Program.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain and expand relevant educational standards for continuing education.

2014: the CEU requirements task force met in 2014 to evaluate the requirements along with survey data and program data. They are recommending some changes that will improve the CEU standards along with tracking and reporting processes. Their report is part of the 2014 meeting.

2015: the Board approved some of the recommendations from the task force and those were implemented in 2015, all CCAs and CPAs were notified of the changes, staff received positive responses about the changes

2016: impact of changes was monitored, insignificant difference between old and new standards on those renewing (this is an on-going activity)

2. Broaden the use of emerging information delivery technologies.

2014: updates to the certification data management system at ASA have taken place in 2014 – CEU application 2.0 and will continue in 2015 – tracking and reporting CEUs, the renewal process including the generation of certificates. Authorize, exam development and tracking software, is being implemented for all ICCA exams.

2015: first full year for the new CEU application – positive responses from administrators and vendors – much more user friendly than previous version, webinar/on-line learning management systems were implemented by ASA

2016: the database was updated to allow CCAs to print their own certificates, a promotional plan will be developed to increase the use of the CCA app to report CEUs, exam development (Authorwise) and delivery technology is being implemented (this is a continuous improvement area)

3. Expand overall opportunities for obtaining CEU's.

2015: ASA has expanded its online webinar offerings of CCA CEUs, USB is financially supporting the development of the Sustainability Specialty that also includes webinar modules for continuing education

2016: ASA developed and delivered 101 webinars in 2015, the online library now has more opportunities than it ever had, self-study CEUs (articles) were also expanded in Crops and Soils magazine resulting in double the number of quizzes being completed (this is an on-going activity)

4. Continue to work with American Society of Agronomy (ASA) communities, publications and education programs to ensure CCAs remain current in agronomy science.

2014: 4 new communities were formed, one for each of the 4 competency modules that allow CCAs who are not members of ASA to still join one of the communities to increase interactions between agronomists in the field, lab, classroom and public policy arenas. These communities will also help foster continuing education opportunities.

2015: the communities are being re-evaluated and organized with a focus on continuing education

2016: the communities are planning the live streaming education around the new specialties for the ASA meetings in Phoenix, there will be half day sessions on each specialty area and a full day session on sustainability involving all four areas

GOAL 3:

Increase and improve standardization of the ICCA Program.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve the standardization of program fees and governance structure for local boards.

2015: a task force needs to be identified to review the current standards for local boards, fall/winter 2015/16 to do this review

2016: the task force needs to be formed to do work in the fall/winter of 2016/2017.

2. Continually improve the standardization of continuing education requirements.

2014: the CEU requirements task force met in 2014 to evaluate the requirements along with survey data and program data. They are recommending some changes that will improve the CEU standards along with tracking and reporting processes. Their report is part of the 2014 meeting.

2015: the CEU changes were implemented in 2015.

2016: the impact of the CEU changes is being evaluated but now significant changes were noticed between the old and new requirements on renewing

3. Continually improve the standardization of the examination process.

2014: the ICCA exam and procedures committee is implementing improved standards for exam development, scoring and delivery. This is a 3 year process that includes evaluation of all local board exams to ensure they are meeting the standards. ASA staff will assist local board exam committees to achieve this goal. The process will culminate with computer delivery of exams in 2017.

2015: ASA staff are working with local boards to update their POs and exams. Each exam is being placed in Authorwise the exam development software, local board exam committees are being reorganized.

2016: the review and update process for local board exams takes more time than original anticipated, there are 36 CCA exams – 3 new exams were created (SSp, RMS, ON 4R NMS), 12 local exams were updated with 4 in process, investigation of computer delivery of exams continues with two pilot tests planned for February 2017 (this is an on-going activity)

4. Maintain and enforce the policies for use of the CCA logo.

2015: policies and procedures were reviewed and continue to be enforced

5. Continually improve and effectively enforce the CCA Code of Ethics.

2014: An Ethics Review Task Force is being formed in the fall of 2014 with plans to complete their work by early 2015. They will review the code of ethics, complaint procedures and the logo use policies.

2015: the ethics review task force did not get formed so this project will be delayed to the fall/winter of 2015/16.

2016: the task force completed its work with recommendations to the board for their September meeting

6. Work towards ANSI/ISO accreditation.

GOAL 4:

Effectively and efficiently administer the ICCA Program.

(this is an on-going activity, 2014-16 saw targeted component reviews that needs to continue for the remaining areas)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain financial accountability to CCAs and the organization.

2014: annual budget reports are submitted and evaluated quarterly by the executive committee. Currently there is a \$2.2 million (~\$1.2 ICCA) combined reserve for the ICCA Program.

2015: continuation of the financial reporting process, reserves remain strong. [\$2.33 million (~\$1.26 ICCA) combined reserve for the ICCA Program]

2016: ICCA finished 2015 with a \$174,000 profit, combined local boards finished with a \$167,000 profit, revenue was higher on exams than expected and overall expenses were lower, ICCA reserves total \$1.43 million and combined local boards \$1.24 million for a program total of \$2.67 million.

2. Maintain self-supporting cost-effective structure.

2015: continuing to be accomplished

3. Continue to look for quality improvement opportunities.

2015: CEU requirements and application were improved, CCAs and CPAGs can now download and print their certificate from the web, continuing to

evaluate upgrades to the data base so the credential application can be done electronically also investigating computer delivery of exams for 2017 as Authorwise (exam development software) is implemented across the program

2016: this is an on-going activity

5. Ensure that budget projections reflect new goals and objectives.

2015: budgets are updated annually to reflect goals and objectives

2016: on-going activity

5. Provide guidance and direction to assist local and regional boards in staying operationally sustainable.

2015: marketing and promotions was a focus for 2014 and 2015 but need suggestions on how best to do this? Should there be an annual or every other year audit process to identify ways to make improvements? ASA staff and local board members and staff could work together in a continuous improvement approach

2016: a plan needs to be developed on how best to do this, should be part of the governance review

GOAL 5:

Increase participation of the next generation of CCAs in local, national and international boards and committee activities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Enforce Board structural policies including term limits and the out of compliance consequences to keep local boards and their representation to the CCA – National Boards and CCA – International Council current and open the way for newer CCAs' involvement.

2015: task forces need to be formed to evaluate the ethics and board structure/policy areas

2016: ethics review was completed, structure/policies task force needs to be formed to conduct work in fall/winter 2016/17

2. Incentivize local boards to nominate qualified board members to participate on committees or task forces.

2015: CCA – NA board meeting – what would be appropriate incentives for local boards to nominate and participate on these groups?

2016: task force needs to be formed on how best to do this

3. Use the Rapid Response Teams and ASA/CCA communities to find and encourage participation by passionate, knowledgeable CCA's outside board participation.

2014: teams and communities were formed in the summer of 2014.

2015: need to motivate the ASA communities to participate in this area

2016: ASA communities have not been active though they represent a potential resource moving forward, over 500 members in each community

4. Put a packet together for employers of talented CCA's explaining the cost/benefit of allowing their employee to participate in the larger organization of ICCA.

2015: need suggestions on what to include or form a task force to work on this project, it would help to have employers on the task force to hear their perspective and what they have experienced

2016: need to form a task force to evaluate what should be included

Implementation and Review Process:

The ICCA Program strategic plan will be distributed to all local boards. Each goal will be assigned to an appropriate committee or task force who will be responsible for its implementation.

The ICCA Program Executive Committee will review progress quarterly and the CCA – National Boards and CCA – International Council will review progress annually.

The strategic plan will be reviewed and revised by a strategic planning task force in 2016 and every 3 years following.