

North America Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance Adaptive Capacity Platform

CONTEXT

An increasingly variable climate poses unprecedented risks to the sustainability of North America agriculture. To mitigate these risks, a diverse group of agricultural leaders and organizations across the continent have joined together to form the North America Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (NACCSAA). NACCSAA is a platform for inspiring, educating, and equipping agricultural partners to innovate effective local adaptations that sustain productivity, enhance climate resilience, and contribute to the local and global goals for sustainable development.

THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



The Alliance is producer-led and focused on utilizing climate-smart agriculture (CSA) strategies to enhance the adaptive capacity of North America agriculture. Adaptive management involves responses taken by producers and the value chain to reduce risks and capture opportunities created by changing conditions. These actions range from minor adjustments in existing production systems to major changes in production and marketing practices.

NACCSAA has three complementing strategies: 1) sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and livelihoods (i.e. sustainable intensification); 2) enhancing adaptive capacity and improving resilience; and 3) delivering ecosystem services, sequestering carbon, and reducing and/or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions.

OBJECTIVES

Alliance partners have set forth four objectives to guide the Alliance:

- **Inspire** agricultural and forest sector leaders to become leaders in the broader discussion of climate change, including adaptation and mitigation;
- **Educate** agricultural and forestry leaders on the potential impacts of climate change in ways relevant to their daily lives;
- **Equip** leaders and producers with the tools and knowledge they need to make informed decisions and manage new risks under changing conditions; and
- **Mobilize** thought leaders to advocate for needed changes in land use practices, research, education and policy.

PRIORITY ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF OBJECTIVES¹

NACSAA works with and through its members to build and strengthen adaptive capacity at the local level and create national and global networks of mutual benefit. Activities will include:

- Recruit and equip CSA Champions and service providers;
- Support the development of cropping/production systems as well as commodity specific action platforms and networks for achieving CSA outcomes;
- Create and facilitate a framework and discovery process that champions can use to help their members assess conditions and risks, as well as identify barriers and design solution sets that address their own unique (regional, commodity, organizational) needs and challenges;
- Develop a system to curate and share innovative CSA strategies and results;
- Design and support a platform for education, training and knowledge sharing within and across sectors;
- Identify, aggregate and help members advocate for needed enabling policies, infrastructure upgrades, research programs, risk management and decision support tools;
- Build and maintain a toolbox that members can use to achieve CSA goals they set;
- Provide a bridge to USDA Climate Hubs and other centers of knowledge/learning; and
- Recognize and celebrate CSA leadership by farmers and retailers/service providers.

HOW WE DEFINE SUCCESS

Indicators that knowledge sharing is occurring, that farmers are motivated and enabled to adaptively manage their production systems, and partners are effectively advocating for solutions are:

- NACSAA member organizations and their members are assessing risks; and identifying and prioritizing needed practices and services; and reporting results congruent with CSA;
- An inspired, locally based constituency advances CSA national outcomes to meet local needs, champions CSA solutions, embraces multi-stakeholder collaboration and peer-to-peer learning about climate science, and utilizes CSA technologies and practices;
- Policies and programs that assist producers in implementing locally appropriate climate-smart agriculture systems and practices are proposed, informed by science and vetted by local collaborations, as well as supported by national leaders;
- Farmers and their partners identify and implement CSA practices in ways that allow landscapes to produce the full range of climate-smart ecosystem services;
- Producer and service provider innovations are unleashed at the local, national, and global levels, they are then collected, curated, widely distributed and made easily accessible to producers and their partners; and
- Productivity is increasing and year-to-year variability is decreasing, production systems are becoming more resilient, and farmers are delivering near-term, high-value, climate solutions.

¹ NACSAA will continuously update and revise the Priority Actions as necessary recognizing that the process of establishing outcomes is iterative and new actions will be identified as the alliance evolves.