

Soil Health Workshop

A Soil Health Workshop is planned for August 29, 2017 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Family Life Center, Evangel United Methodist Church, 227 Pennsylvania, Holton, KS. A plot tour will follow at 3:30 p.m. at Shane New's farm, 11760 254th Road, Holton. The featured speakers are David Brandt of Fairfield County, Ohio who farms 1,150 acres in central Ohio. He began no-till farming in 1971 and has been using cover crops since 1978. David has participated in yield plots for corn, soybeans and wheat into various covers. This information has been used by seed growers as well as county agents and universities to encourage other farmers to adapt no-till practices in their farming operations. He has also been planting various blends of cover crops to find out what benefits they provide to improve soil. At present David is working with Ohio State University's Randall Reeder and Rafiq Islam on reducing input costs of fertilizers and herbicides using various cover crops, which improve soil health. He is also working with the regional NRCS soils lab in Greensboro, N.C., on the benefits of cover crops to improve soil health.

Abe Collins of Winooski, Vermont is a grazier and consultant who works with land-managers to grow topsoil, livestock and crops and design and build water secure agricultural landscapes. He is co-founder of LandStream, a startup building a collaboration-platform for achieving deep-topsoil watersheds with full ecological accounting and quantification of watershed-services demand and supply. Abe believes in the power of watershed citizens to collaborate, plan and achieve deep-topsoil watersheds and regeneration economics. Farmers and ranchers have developed sound means of growing topsoil, biodiversity and water security. The time has come to scale and quantify this capacity, leading to new wealth, security and opportunity in the countryside and the city. Abe has grazed sheep, beef, and dairy cattle and worked throughout his life to develop practical means of accelerating topsoil-formation. Over the last decade he has worked with scientific and industry partners to develop the New Scale, an environmental monitoring and modeling platform that quantifies agricultural production of watershed-services like flooding-reduction, groundwater-recharge and landscape-scale water-purification.

The agenda will include the following topics: Cover Crops as an anchor of a diverse crop rotation, continuous no-till system to increase organic matter, sharply reduce fertilizer costs, eliminate soil compaction and increase water infiltration. Discuss tools and potential benefits, challenges and scenarios in which farmers' incomes are increased and cities' costs are decreased when policy and infrastructure can support payment to farmers for the quantified provision of watershed services like flooding-reduction, groundwater recharge and

purification of ground and surface-water. Discuss the New Soil Matrix, a thinking-aid for managing grazing and cropping to grow new topsoil.

The workshop will conclude with a Question and Answer Session. The noon meal is free compliments of Arbor Sod & Seeding, the Jackson County Conservation District and local sponsors. Call (785)364-3329, ext. 136 by August 23, 2017 to reserve your meal and seating. Sponsors for the event include: Jackson County Conservation District, NRCS, Arbor Sod & Seeding, SARE and the KDA-DOC.