

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New institute launched to help improve soil health

Staff writer

With more than 1 million

organisms in a single teaspoon of earth, soil is the starting point for plant, animal and human life. It is the foundation for society, providing the basis for food production, healthy families and economies.

To ensure that soil continues to be a vital natural resource for generations to come, The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation and Farm Foundation, NFP, announced the formation of the Soil Health Institute on Dec. 3, 2015. The announcement coincides with World Soil Day (Dec. 5) and celebrates the 2015 International Year of Soils.

The Soil Health Institute's mission is to safeguard and enhance the vitality and productivity of the soil. It will work directly with conventional and organic farmers and ranchers, public- and private-sector researchers, academia, policymakers, government agencies, industry, environmental groups and consumers – everyone who benefits from healthy soils.

The organization will serve as the primary resource for soil health information, working to set soil health standards and measurement, build knowledge about the economics of soil health, offer educational programs, and coordinate research in all aspects of soil and soil health.



SOIL HEALTH

— INSTITUTE —

UNIFY. RESTORE. PROTECT.

“Leonardo DaVinci once mused ‘We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot,’” said Bill Buckner, president and chief executive officer, Noble Foundation. “Hundreds of years later that sentiment is just as accurate. The Soil Health Institute will provide much needed research funding so we can better understand our soil. We will make that research publicly available, so we can work together to provide solutions for improving our soil and protecting it for our children and grandchildren.”

The Soil Health Institute is an evolution of the Soil Renaissance, an initiative established in 2013 by the Noble Foundation and Farm Foundation to advance soil health and make it the cornerstone of land use management decisions. The Soil Renaissance brought farmers, ranchers, soil scientists, economists, environmental interests, agribusinesses, NGOs and government agencies together to examine the role of soil health in a

vibrant, profitable, sustainable natural ecosystem. Their work identified the need for a national organization to serve as a hub for measurement standards, economic data and coordinated research.

“There are many short-term initiatives in progress that are regionally focused or examining only selected elements of soil and soil health,” said Neil Conklin, president, Farm Foundation. “The Soil Health Institute will be a permanent organization that will coordinate the long-term work needed in this area.”

The Noble Foundation will continue to provide financial support for the new institute. Next steps will be to broaden the base of involvement with both private and public entities to provide necessary funding for the Soil Health Institute's activities.

How Can You Help?

For more information about the Soil Health Institute, visit www.soilhealthinstitute.org. ■