

## Cooperators Report

- 1. Cooperators are greatly disturbed with the way the last reorganization (s)? were handled by the NCSS leadership and the lack of opportunity for input or feedback. Conversely, we need some better and timely guidance from NRCS in developing and updating our curricula in order to provide the proper training to our students and prepare them for careers compatible with the priorities set by the CSS program.**

**Recommendation to establish an official cooperators committee to serve continuously as an advisory council to the cooperative soil survey program and coordinate planning priorities and directions with other cooperators. We envision this committee to consist of two members from each region elected during the regional NCSS Conferences to serve on a 3-year term.**

- 2. Some states in our region and possibly others do not have active participation in soil survey activities either by not having an officially designated representative to the CSS program or by not enjoying a productive relationship between cooperators.**

**Recommendation to increase efforts to improve active participation and involvement of more cooperator representatives in CSS activities including participation in regional and national CSS Conferences. One way to help in that direction is by communicating the importance of soil survey activities to their institution leaders (letters to the Deans from USDA leadership expressing this sentiment along with thanks for the support). In other cases having the MO leaders taking initiatives in cultivating better relationships between state soil scientists and cooperators.**

**Communicate to the cooperator representatives that their active involvement should be continuous and not just for the annual conferences.**

**Explore options to include more cooperator participants in the NCSS program and not only the officially designated representatives, particularly addressing new technology research initiatives.**

- 3. Emphasize the importance of sustaining the funding provided by the National Soil Survey Center for projects of regional interest addressing soil-landscape relationships at different scales and their impact on improving soil use and management interpretations. These projects provide critical seed or matching money for pursuing extramural funding from other agencies for projects with expanded objectives.**

**Encourage the Soil Survey Center to expand these funding initiatives for projects of national significance similar to the establishment of a comprehensive national soil data base (benchmark soils, others)**

- 4. Emphasize the importance of maintaining continuous funding support through MOU's to the cooperators' soil characterization Laboratories contributing analytical services in support of the cooperative soil survey program on a MLRA basis.**
- 5. Increase efforts to improve communication channels (increasing web site accessibility?) between NRCS and cooperators on new developments, changes, on-going issues relevant to the CSS program etc. (Soil Taxonomy revisions, soil interpretation changes, new technology initiatives, soil survey priorities). Encourage cooperators to have more active participation by providing direct comments and suggestions on issues under consideration and keep them informed of their status .**