



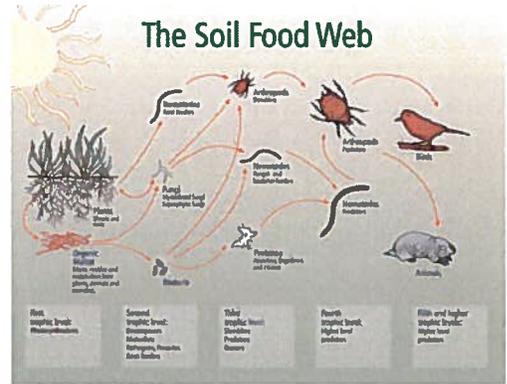
Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

**Idaho**  
**Soil Health Strategy**

*A plan to meet current and future needs in agriculture*

**Purpose:** The Idaho Natural Resources Conservation Service recognizes that healthy functioning soil is the foundation for all working lands in Idaho. Investing in conservation practices to improve soil health enhances conservation and fosters agricultural sustainability.

*Idaho NRCS works with landowners, partners, and communities to keep Idaho's working lands viable through resource conservation. To provide the best return on our nation's conservation investment, we are integrating soil health concepts into the delivery of technical and financial assistance using these goals:*



1. *Provide leadership in soil health across the state*
2. *Increase adoption of soil health practices throughout the state*
3. *Provide training to NRCS staff and partners*
4. *Inventory, share, and develop soil health technical resources*
5. *Use outreach and education to promote adoption of soil health practices*
6. *Capitalize on partnerships to expand use and technical knowledge of soil health*

**Goals:**

1. ***Provide leadership in soil health across the state***
  - a. Organization and guidance will be provided by the Soil Health Team. Team members will include producer, extension, conservation district, and soil health division representatives as well as the State Resource and Area Conservationists or their delegates, State Agronomist, State Soil Scientist and staff, PMC Manager, and others as needed.
  - b. The Soil Health Team meets with field offices and Conservation Districts to determine local needs for soil health implementation.
  - c. The Soil Health Team members collect feedback and ideas from district conservationists and producers, promote adoption strategies for soil health practices, develop and revise technical resources, assist with presentations and trainings, and collect case study information.
  - d. Soil health team meets 3 times per year (roughly January, May, October) to discuss workshops, outreach and education, in-field successes, and determine future direction.
2. ***Increase adoption of soil health conservation practices throughout state***
  - a. Evaluate practices offered within the soil health EQIP initiative as well as proposed draft practices that address soil health as a resource concern.
  - b. Provide input to state program staff on soil health funding levels and ranking issues.
  - c. Facilitate and promote formation of regional soil health forums or



## Natural Resources Conservation Service

discussion groups for producers to share local success/challenges and other soil health related information.

- d. Develop case studies with producers that are actively improving soil health on their operation and charge each division with the production of at least one soil health profile annually.
- e. Promote soil health as part of the conservation planning process by recognizing and addressing resource concerns of compaction, soil organism habitat loss, organic matter depletion, and aggregate instability, through conservation planning and technical assistance.

### ***3. Provide training to NRCS staff and partners***

- a. Document and track soil health training needs for NRCS staff.
- b. Provide needed training to NRCS and conservation partner employees to promote soil health as part of the conservation planning process.
- c. Publicize webinars and other training sources.
- d. Maintain training materials and videos for soil health presentations.
- e. Coordinate with soil health division to provide training and technical assistance consistent with division information and goals.

### ***4. Inventory, share, and develop technical resources***

- a. Identify, inventory, and promote soil health tools, including but not limited to methods for soil health assessment, cover crop and rotation planning, and others that encourage adoption of soil health practices.
- b. Incorporate soil health considerations into applicable practice standards.
- c. Research application of soil health concepts for pastureland, rangeland, and forest lands.
- d. Collect Idaho case studies and baseline data.
  - Evaluate additional information needed to document case studies
  - Determine how to portray on-site, off-site, and monetary benefits of case studies
  - Determine format for presenting case studies (videos, worksheets, etc.)

### ***5. Use outreach and education to promote adoption of soil health principles and practices***

- a. Implement dedicated no-till plots, cover crop trials, and other conservation practices in conjunction with University Extension, Aberdeen PMC, and other cooperative entities for demonstrations of technologies and/or biological management techniques that improve soil health.
- b. Encourage agricultural groups, leaders, and organizations to promote soil health.
- c. Expand use and influence of University extension network to further goals of education and outreach through workshops, bulletins, and collaborative projects.
- d. Continue ongoing work with soil health website and public affairs releases to maintain currency with technical and educational information, share videos and profiles of soil health practitioners, and provide science-based resources.

### ***6. Capitalize on partnerships to expand use of soil health conservation practices and develop technical resources***

- a. Identify and develop key partnerships with organizations, agencies, and entities



Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

to expand and develop the concepts of soil health across the state including the Idaho Association of Conservation Districts, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and others.

- b. Work with partners to create and use soil health demonstration projects as models for local producers to follow.
- c. Meet with research partners to address NRCS needs related to soil health.
- d. Facilitate awareness of research funding opportunities such as Conservation Innovation Grants and Sustainable Agriculture Research Education grants.
- e. Ensure that all conservation districts have NRCS support in presenting soil health technical information at workshops and events.

Idaho NRCS is fully engaged in this Soil Health Strategy. Farmers, ranchers, forestland owners, and our employees have seen the important difference healthy, functioning soil can make in supporting our water, air, plant, animal, and energy resources.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curtis J. Elke". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Curtis Elke, State Conservationist