



# SOIL CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF CANADA CONSEIL CANADIEN DE CONSERVATION DES SOLS

*The face and voice of soil conservation in Canada  
Le visage et la voix de la conservation des sols au Canada*

## Summit on Canadian Soil Health

### Getting the topic of soil health higher in the queue

The Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC) wishes to thank all sponsors, speakers and participants at our Summit on Canadian Soil Health held in Calgary on December 1st. From the very start, the message was “the job is not done” in terms of securing the sustainability of Canada’s soil resource.

Keynote speaker Dr. David Montgomery made a clear case that we must heed the lessons of past civilizations who failed because they mismanaged their soil. He then pointed out that soil is not lost because we farm but because of how we farm and that soil health is an outcome of soil biological protection.

Challenge Speaker Fran Burr supported the position that the “job is not done”. She sees the sustainability movement in Canada as a place where soil health and conservation needs to be if a rejuvenation of interest is to happen.

*“Soil degradation is the greatest silent catastrophe facing civilization today.”*

*– Dr. David Montgomery*

A panel of farmers, scientists and industry leaders contributed their experience and knowledge to begin building the “Path Forward” for Canadian Soil Health. Some of the key elements in building that path will be:

- Gaining a better understanding of how to manage soil biota to enhance soil health
- Renewal of interest that healthy soils is fundamental to ensuring



L-R: Dr. David Montgomery, Dr. David Lobb, Garth Whyte, Tim Nerbas, Shawn McRae, Dr. Denis Angers, Fran Burr, Bill Buckner, Alan Kruszel, Moderator.

*“The Summit got soil health back on the map as a critically important – and too long neglected – dimension of sustainable agriculture.” – Lorne Hepworth, Genome Canada*

a healthy, productive society

- Building on ancient and recent lessons on soil conservation and health
- Highlight all the sources of soil loss and degradation, not just the obvious symptoms like dust storms.
- Improving our understanding of the economics of soil health as both motivators and deterrents.
- Higher productivity from our soils are required to feed a growing world population. Sustainable production systems including nutrient management systems like 4R will be essential.
- Canada is well equipped with a strong science community to develop solutions for new and emerging threats to Canadian soil health.
- Managing for soil health has both economic and social benefits to farmers and society, such as carbon storage.
- Globally, the United Nations declaration of 2015 as the Year of Soils emphasized Canada’s opportunity to be part of

international efforts and partnership opportunities to collaborate on science, solutions and actions to address our needs in soil health and conservation.

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SCCC

#### Soil Health 2020

Alan Kruszel, Vice Chair of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada shared SCCC’s plan for Soil Health 2020. “We see this as an emerging framework that can focus the interest, commitment and the resources of stakeholders on the agricultural landscape. This will provide direction for action in responding to the challenges of the future. It can be the meeting place for science, awareness and action for Soil Health in Canada.”

SCCC will be reaching out to stakeholders to seek their help, input and commitment to the ongoing development of Soil Health 2020. To become a part of Soil Health 2020, visit [soilcc.ca](http://soilcc.ca) for more information.