**National Soil Conservation Week (April 19-25, 2020) Soil Conservation Council of Canada News Release**

Date: April 17, 2020

Location: Beausejour, Manitoba

**Soil Council highlights the importance of Canada’s soils by releasing soil health report card**

Each year, Canadians from coast to coast celebrate National Soil Conservation Week (April 19-25, 2020) by paying special attention to the vital role soil plays in providing abundant food for consumers and as the foundation of our diverse ecosystems. This year, the Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC) is releasing its first ever national soil health report card to grade how soil health compares from one part of Canada to the other.

“National Soil Conservation Week is when we really like to take a step back and consider how crucial soil is to our everyday health as Canadians,” says Tim Nerbas, SCCC chair and farmer from Waseca, Sask. “We need healthy soil for almost all the food we eat. We need healthy soil for our environment as a whole. Canada is abundant with life and its our duty as stewards of the land, water and air to protect the places we call home”.

During National Soil Conservation Week and throughout the year, the SCCC highlights the important role soils play in Canadians’ lives and the need to maintain and improve soil health over time. Here are the three key items the SCCC is focused on in 2020:

**National Soil Health Report Card:** The 2020 report is here and marks the inaugural year that a national soil health report card is released by the SCCC. The report is in collaboration with University of Manitoba professors, Dr. Mario Tenuta and Dr. David Lobb. In the coming years, we will expand the team of collaborators across Canada and build on 4R nutrient management, soil carbon loss, cover crops and biodiversity to create an annual picture of soil health trends.

SCCC is excited about this collaboration to further share expertise and opinions in the coming years.

**Recognizing the importance of soil health in Canada:** We have a renewed focus on the role food plays in every Canadian’s life, the impacts of climate change and the associated pressures on soil health. The SCCC is calling for the Government of Canada to make soil health a priority and is in full support of Senator Rob Black’s proposal on allocating resources to better study, document and make recommendations to improve soil health nationally.

**Learn at home by Soiling Your Undies:** A great way to participate in National Soil Conservation Week safely at home is by doing a fun, science experiment in your own backyard with the Soil Your Undies challenge. Just get yourself a pair of white, cotton undies and get digging in your garden, flower bed or even pot of soil. After a few months, unearth them and share your findings with us. For more information, visit www.soilcc.ca.

“The SCCC is excited to celebrate National Soil Conservation week, and as the only national association dedicated exclusively to soil health in Canada, we look forward to year-round activities and programs that highlight the benefits of soil to all Canadians,” says Nerbas.

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**About the Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC):**

*The SCCC is the only national organization to concentrate on the issues of soil health and soil conservation within a broadly based landscape context. Healthy soils are the foundation of sustainable food production, enhanced biodiversity and cleaner air and water for present and future generations.*

**Media Contact:**

Jim Tokarchuk, Executive Director E: jimtokarchuk@soilcc.ca T: 204-792-2424