



Soil Health Demonstration Farms

By Clay Pope, Coordinator, USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub

Since 2014, the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub has worked in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), academic institutions, local conservation districts, and Native American Tribes to establish soil health demonstration farms in Oklahoma and Texas. Milestones of this effort include:

- The first Tribal soil health demonstration farm in the U.S.;
- The first soil health demonstration farm established with an 1890 Land Grant Institution;
- Over 20 field days and producer workshops at demonstration farm locations since 2014.



Improving Soil Health

- Soil health practices, such as minimizing tillage, planting multi-species cover crops, incorporating livestock, and improving pasture management, can help farmers and ranchers build resilience to extreme weather events such as droughts and floods.
- Less than 30% of crop land in the Southern Plains is estimated to be farmed using no-till, cover crops, and other soil health practices.
- Farmers and ranchers often want to see new production practices first-hand before they consider adopting them in their own operations.
- Demonstration farms give agriculture producers a chance to see soil health practices on the land for themselves, and to talk with fellow producers about their experiences.

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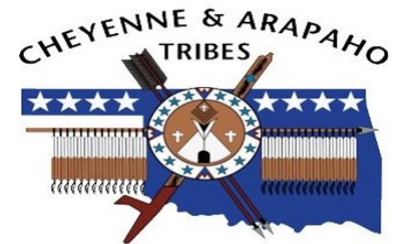
Looking Ahead

The USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub continues to work with local, state, and regional partners to utilize soil health demonstration farms as a way to showcase how land treatment practices can help farmers and ranchers adapt to extreme weather events, while also building capacity against long-term climate change. While addressing some of the root causes of climate change.

Future initiatives include establishing demonstration farms focused on land formally in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), pollinator habitat as part of a regenerative agriculture system, and additional support and training opportunities for USDA NRCS, cooperative extension, and conservation partnership personnel on climate change and extreme weather adaptation.



Partners



Oklahoma Association
of Conservation Districts

www.okconservation.org

 Southern Plains Climate Hub
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For more information on the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub soil health initiatives, contact our office at (405) 262-5291 or visit the website below.



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For more information on the Southern Plains Climate Hub, please visit:
<https://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/hubs/southern-plains>