

Sustainability Programming for Ag Retailers & Certified Crop Advisors



Donnie Taylor – VP
Agricultural Retailers
Association





Sustainability Programing for Ag Retailers and CCAs - SPARC

Donnie Taylor

VP Member Services & Corporate Relationships
Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA)



- Educate, Advocate, Influence
- Networking & Services
- Freedom to Operate
- Over 5,000 outlets and ~85% of crop input sales
- Suppliers, State Associations



“...the recognized voice of the retail/distribution sector by advancing, advocating and representing the interests of those who provide agronomic products or services used to enhance the production of agricultural crops in a competitive global environment.”

ARA Vision Statement



Consumer Mindset Training Program

Presented by The Center for Food Integrity

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How to use the SPARC resources

PLANNING YOUR TRAINING

Setting the stage for success

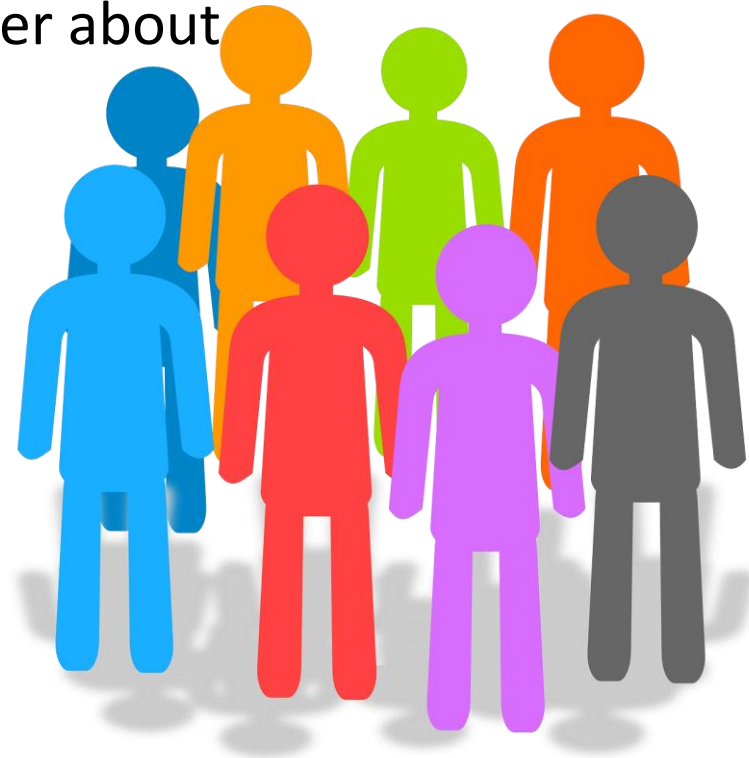
Communicate with staff to clarify

- training goals
- requirements and expectations, including who should attend and timeline for completion
- any incentives as appropriate



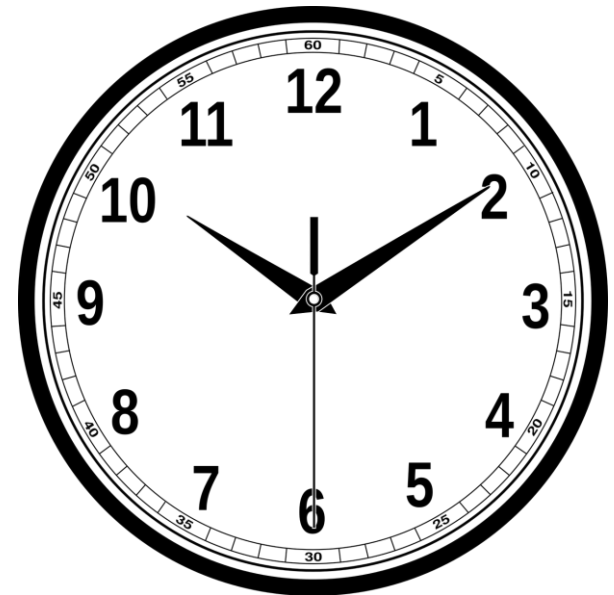
Plan your training – who should participate?

- Managers with decision-making power about at least one of these:
 - Agronomic products and services
 - Company business structure
 - Employee incentives and bonuses
- Farmer-facing staff
 - Sales
 - Agronomists
 - Customer service



Plan your training – which modules to include and budgeting staff time

- You may not need to include every module, based on your staff's existing sustainability knowledge and company goals.
- The time required to adequately address each topic depends on prior staff knowledge and the desired level of detail.



Plan your training – which modules to include?

Sustainability 101

- **What it covers:** defines sustainability, explains the growing demand for sustainably-sourced products and explores how sustainability can create business opportunities for ag retailers and their farmer-clientele
- **Who should take it:** anyone that needs the understand the basics of sustainability or could use a refresher
- **Minimum time required:** 20 minutes



Plan your training – which modules to include?

Environmental Sustainability Metrics

- **What it covers:** explains the eight sustainability outcomes measured by the Fieldprint[®] Platform and how these outcomes affect corporate decision making in the supply chain
- **Who should take it:** all staff and managers
- **Minimum time required:** 45 minutes



Plan your training – which modules to include?

Practices & Services Supporting Sustainable Agronomy

- **What it covers:** relates the environmental metrics to some widespread practices and products that drive continuous improvement.
- **Who should take it:** staff and managers that need to understand how agronomic practices relate to sustainable agriculture
- **Minimum time required:** 45 minutes



Plan your training – which modules to include?

Measuring Sustainability Success

- **What it covers:** explores how to measure environmental outcomes of the sustainability services provided to farmer customers; and the value that ag retailers can derive by helping farmers and the supply chain collect and manage sustainability data
- **Who should take it:** managers that decide what software the company uses and farmer-facing staff that understand what farm management or precision software their customers use
- **Minimum time required:** 30 minutes



Plan your training – which modules to include?

The Farmer Business Case for Sustainability

- **What it covers:** highlights real farmers that have implemented sustainable practices in their operations and achieved economic benefits
- **Who should take it:** managers and farmer-facing staff that could benefit from a greater understanding of the economic impacts of implementing agronomic change on growers
- **Minimum time required:** 30 minutes



Plan your training – which modules to include?

Developing a Sustainability Program

- **What it covers:** explores the benefits to an ag retailer of developing a comprehensive sustainability program and offers ideas to communicate the value of the program to employees and customers.
- **Who should take it:** ag retail managers
- **Minimum time required:** 60 minutes



Plan your training

Determine how you and your staff members will go through the modules

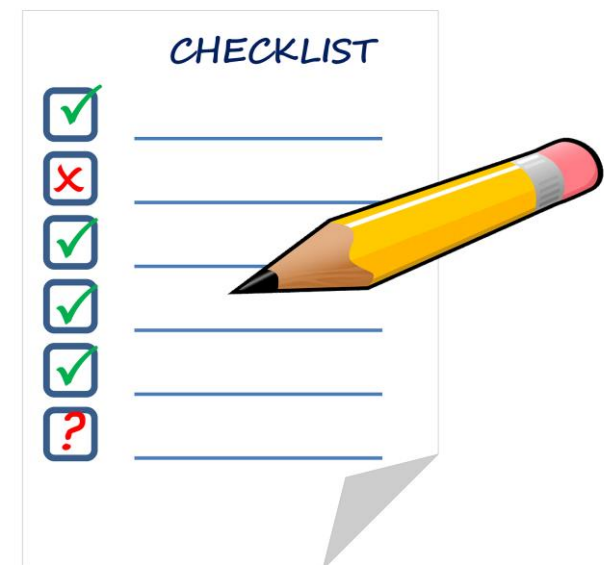
- As a team
- Individually
- Hybrid of team and individual



Plan your training – determine needed resources

For team and hybrid training–

- access to company strategic planning, and communications documentation
- a room with adequate seating, writing surfaces and white boards
- audio-visual equipment



ACCESSING TRAINING MATERIALS

Download the Sustainability Training Manual

- Companion to the online modules to train staff on sustainability
- Encourages teams to examine the concepts more deeply
- Offers opportunity to consider the perspectives of customers, staff agronomists and management

Download the manual:



DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM:

A Manual for Ag
Retailers and CCAs



Segment 1 (Encountering the Term)

SUMMARY. We hear the word “sustainability” from a variety of sources. This module will help us define sustainability and show its importance to you and your customers, describe how sustainability can create business opportunities for you and your grower, and offer resources for you to learn about sustainable crop production.

THINK ABOUT IT. When was the last time you heard the word sustainability used? What was the context?



WATCH THE SEGMENT.

QUESTION(S).

What are some synonyms for sustainability as you understand it?

Why might different people have different definitions?

Segment 2 (Challenge of a Growing Human Population)

SUMMARY. Although technology has brought greater yields to field crop production, growing human populations and increased demand on natural resources will require a systems-level approach to meeting our demands for food, fiber and fuel.

THINK ABOUT IT. What limits yields in commodity crop production?



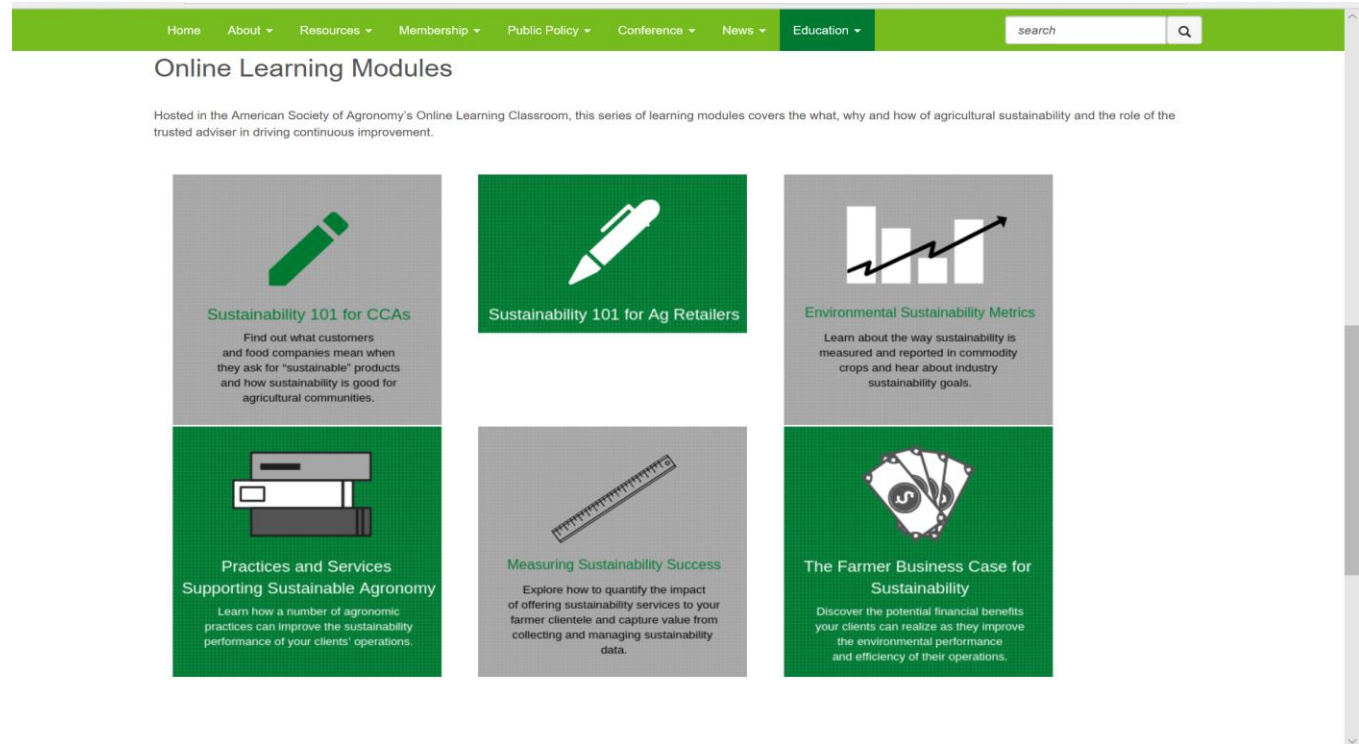
WATCH THE SEGMENT.

QUESTION(S).

What are three technological advances that have allowed greater yields in the past 50 years?

How does growing demand for meat worldwide affect natural resources?

How to access the online modules



- Go to the ARA Website www.aradc.org go to Education tab or “search” SPARC <https://www.aradc.org/trainingconferences/sparc>
- Select the SPARC modules Where You Wish to Start

How to access the online modules



- Go to the CCA Classroom on the American Society of Agronomy website <https://www.certifiedcropadviser.org/education/classroom/classes/666>
- Once you have a username and password, log in to the website.
- Select each of the SPARC modules and add it to your cart

**AFTER THE MODULES: WHAT'S
NEXT?**

Go forward!

Once your staff completes the SPARC modules, continue to engage staff about how the company will and strengthen your sustainability work.



Download the Know the Issues Guides

Customize the guides to include your company logo, and encourage your agronomists to keep copies of those resources with them when they visit with farmers. The guides can be a useful aid to discussions about how to contribute to improved water quality, reduced soil erosion, or other resource issues.

Download the factsheets



IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE AND BUILD RESILIENCE

With razor-thin profit margins, saving money through greater efficiency is a must for every producer. Reducing energy use can lead to significant cost savings for your operation and help you remain competitive in a challenging economic climate. However, reducing fuel usage is one of the easiest ways to decrease carbon dioxide emissions from your operation. Working together, we can help you.

- Save Money**
Improving your energy use efficiency is one of the fastest and easiest ways to improve your profitability.
- Build Resilience in Your Operation**
Reducing reliance on fossil fuels buffers your operation from the uncertainty of fluctuating availability and costs.
- Demonstrate Your Stewardship**
Learn to tell the story of how you farm with an eye toward the future.

UNCOVER AND REDUCE HIDDEN ENERGY COSTS

Not all the ways energy is used in crop production are obvious. We can help you understand the total amount of energy your operation uses to grow a crop. From pre-planting to first point of sale or delivery at the processing facility. Our team will work with you to identify solutions to reduce energy consumption and costs by considering:

- Efficiency Gains**
Explore ways to reduce energy use by focusing on high-energy input areas. Investigate opportunities to reduce energy inputs by changing practices or using the same operation more efficiently.
- Embedded Energy**
Optimizing inputs can reduce energy use embedded in production of fertilizer and crop protectants.
- Irrigation Management**
Improve pump efficiency to reduce electricity or diesel consumption. More efficient irrigation pumping can also lead to increased water flow rates. And more timely irrigation and improved crop yield can result from assessment of in-field irrigation as part of this process.
- Tillage Management**
Moving from conventional till to no-till methods can cut fuel costs by up to 67%.

EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY

RISK	POTENTIAL CAUSES	SOLUTIONS TO CONSIDER
INEFFICIENT CROP PROTECTANT AND NUTRIENT APPLICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize crop nutrient uptake by following the principles of 4R nutrient stewardship Improve efficacy of herbicide applications for weed management, for cover crop termination and to aid harvest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil and foliar testing to tailor application rates of crop protectants or fertilizers Nutrient management plans Variable rate technology Harvest aid and plant protectant formulations and adjuvants Spot spraying Automatic section control on sprayer
HIGH DIRECT ENERGY USED ON THE FARM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate equipment passes across the field Tighten up irrigation application efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper equipment sizing Increase rows planted or fertilized per pass Renewable energy sources for irrigation pumping Irrigation scheduling technology Soil moisture sensors
OVERDRYING OF GRAIN AND PEANUTS BEYOND THE OPTIMAL MOISTURE LEVEL FOR STORAGE AND HAULING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine heat and air drying So grain to avoid over-drying Track crop dry-down to avoid high-moisture harvest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moisture and temperature sensors Efficient dryers Airflow systems Balance planting and maturity groups across all your fields to stagger harvest operations

DOCUMENT AND DEMONSTRATE YOUR STEWARDSHIP

Now more than ever, it's crucial for producers to share their stories about how they are working to protect natural resources. Demonstrate your commitment to conserving energy by documenting how your management efforts deliver results using tools like the sustainability metrics of the Fieldprint Platform, a pioneering assessment framework offered by Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture.

Supported by commodity organizations, conservation groups, agribusiness, universities, and downstream brands and retailers alike, this industry-aligned tool helps you benchmark your sustainability performance and concretely demonstrate how you reduced energy use in your operation. Learn more about the Fieldprint Platform at www.fieldprintmarket.org/platform.

Want to learn more about opportunities to steward biodiversity on your farm?
Contact COMPANY NAME to learn more.
First Lastname (555) 555-5555 email@email.com

* <https://www.eia.gov/energytoday/2017/11/30/saving-money-time-and-soil-economics-no-till-farming>

Connect with others in your area or supply chain to further your sustainability support.

That might include

- Commodity groups
- Agribusiness associations and other ag retailers
- State agencies, Extension, NRCS, SWCD
- Conservation groups
- Food companies and other CPGs
- Independent consultants



Who to contact for more information on SPARC

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* Can help you design a custom training for your staff.

Thank you!

Sustainability Programming for Ag Retailers and CCAs (SPARC)

A COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE
BROUGHT TO YOU BY



WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MIDWEST ROW CROP COLLABORATIVE