

OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE NETWORK – GCAN

BACKGROUND

- Conservation Agriculture (CA) has been adopted by innovative farmers around the world for its economic and environmental attributes. Once practises have shifted from Conventional to CA further economic and social benefits are accrued (lower capital investment costs, increased education and knowledge, community leadership).
- CA has grown across more than 55 countries to a current (in 2013) level of 157 million hectares. FAO has played a key leadership role in this achievement.
- To meet the need for new research results, applicable and relevant information along with community of practise support, CA farmer organizations have emerged in many countries. Their continued search for knowledge, practical experiences and new insights have precipitated the formation of regional federations as well as a World Congress every two years under the sponsorship of FAO and other supporters.
- The concurrent emergence of environmental interests/concerns such as biodiversity, Millenium Assessment, Sustainable Development Goals, climate change vulnerability and resilience have underlined the desirable attributes of CA and the correct direction of mainstreaming efforts of adoption.
- Food security is better addressed through CA via greater diversity of crops and less climate vulnerability to both intense weather (intense storms) and climate variations (drought). Diversity of CA applications can also extend to integrated crop-livestock and crop-livestock-forestry systems.
- In 2015 communication amongst CA enthusiasts and organizations resulted in a collaboration to ensure CA and Agriculture content is before participants at COP21. This organization adopted the name, Global Conservation Agriculture Network – GCAN.
- GCAN is intended to be a collaborative network not to replace any CA organization but to augment and support all of them and most importantly to help link them so that the transfer of knowledge, innovation and support can be catalyzed.
- National and regional organizations have their hands full serving their farmer membership and very little capacity remains to reach out across the globe. GCAN volunteers intend to help develop the linkages, transfer of knowledge and facilitate leadership through global community support.
- Agriculture production is becoming more systems orientated than ever before. The integration of resource sustainability, environment and climate concerns make those systems even more complex and increasingly foreign or difficult for non-agriculture organizations to understand and communicate with.
- As the agriculture population remains steady and population and interests in tangential areas increases, there will be an increasing need for agriculture practitioners to have the skills to reach out and bridge across societal interests.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- GCAN and CA organizations fill the voids between governments, research organizations, and NGOs. They provide the pragmatism for informing effective and efficient policy and research.
- GCAN is a group of experienced, knowledgeable and well-connected individuals volunteering their time and expertise for CA growth.