**Global CA-CoP CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

***for sustainable agriculture, land and ecosystem management***

Dear Subscribers,

This is my last communication with you all this year on the Global CA-CoP.

2020 has been a particularly difficult year due to the Covid pandemic, one of the many symptoms of the multiple interconnected crises we are facing globally.

However, the members of the Global CA-CoP and the CA farming world have been very busy. In addition to everyone’s regular work in all the different areas that support the promotion and practice of CA systems and innovations in different parts of the world, the Global CA-CoP members and our colleagues engaged in supporting the planning and organizing of the 8th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (8WCCA) which was to be held in Bern, Switzerland in June-July 2020. Despite the forced adjournment of the 8WCCA to June 2021 because of the Covid pandemic, everyone continued to offer full support to the 8WCCA process.

To sustain the enthusiasm for the 8WCCA, ECAF and FAO with support from the Global CA-CoP members organized and implemented the [‘The Road to the 8WCCA’ series of five webinars on the main theme and four sub-themes of the 8WCCA](https://8wcca.org/multimedia/). They also organized and moderated five regional round-table meetings. The regions covered were Eurasia; North Africa and West Asia; South, Southeast and East Asia; Sub-Saharan Africa; and South and Central America. The outputs of the webinars and round-table meetings, as well as other outputs such as CA-related videos and infographics, will add value to the 8WCCA process and follow-up CA activities globally.

In addition, based on what I have observed, there are many 2020 highlights that are worth mentioning including:

1. The global area of CA cropland systems continued to expand towards the 200 Mha mark, with more than 90 countries reporting on CA adoption and related service provisioning, extension, research, education and government support. Low-income regions made significant gains in the adoption of CA systems and laying foundation for future growth, particularly Africa and Asia. At the same time, CA cropland systems in the frontline countries in the South and the North continued to become more diversified with greater use of cover crops in rotations and associations.
2. More CA area under irrigated systems was reported including with rice systems. Also, more activities, both research and practice, in the development of organic and biological forms of CA systems were reported. Similarly, more area under perennial CA systems (crops with trees, orchards, plantations, pastures and rangelands) were reported in all continents.
3. During 2018 and 2019, more than 150 CA-CoP members worldwide participated in preparing a three-volume book on CA entitled ‘Advances in Conservation Agriculture’ of which two volumes: [Science and Systems (Volume 1); and Practice and Benefits (Volume 2)](https://www.dropbox.com/s/xu2ddh66e00klxk/Conservation%20Agriculture%20-%20Vol%201%20%26%202%20LeafletR.pdf?dl=0) were published in February 2020. The third volume on Adoption and Spread will be published in 2021.
4. CA development efforts continued to make inroads at the global and regional governance level as well as at the practice level worldwide. There were significant advances in communicating to a range of audiences and practitioners the important strategic role of CA in Smallholder Agriculture Development, particularly in Africa and Asia; Climate Smart Agriculture; Climate Change Mitigation; Soil Health and Carbon Sequestration; Watershed Management; Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization; Land Degradation Mitigation and Restoration; Global, Regional and National Farmer Networks; Education and Research, and Public-Private Partnerships for Service Provisioning.
5. Development investment in CA-based sustainable agriculture programmes continued to expand through support from FAO, IFAD, AfDB, international and regional organizations as well as national governments in many low-income countries. One common area of interest driving this increased investment was Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization which is poised to expand across the low-income regions in the future.
6. The role of CA in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was more widely expressed.
7. Regenerative Agriculture as an umbrella term achieved greater popularity, but much of the definition and description of how regeneration can be achieved was based on the application of the three interlinked CA principles. The use of the term Regenerative Agriculture also became popular across a large number of activities that feel compelled to make a claim that their activity is regenerative or restorative, an area of global need in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
8. CA reached greater visibility in the debates and social movements dealing with the global burden of chronic interconnected crises. The role of CA was highlighted in a broader global agenda dealing with: ethics and values, natural resource degradation; environmental pollution; sustainable diets and human health; food sovereignty and localization; climate breakdown; destruction of biodiversity and mass extermination of species; animal rights; and farmer-driven innovation and change towards sustainable and regenerative biological production systems. In this context the new book [Rethinking Food and Agriculture: New Ways Forward](https://www.dropbox.com/s/819imjp736d689c/Rethinking%20Food%20%26%20Ag%20flyer.pdf?dl=0) is particularly relevant.

A massive thank you to all Global CA-CoP members and colleagues who have worked so hard to promote CA globally and to illustrate the full scope of the philosophy and science underpinning the ecological foundations of CA as an alternate sustainable and regenerative system for the future.

I wish you all seasons greetings and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Let's hope that 2021 will be a better year than 2020.

**Kassam**

**Moderator**

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*Conservation Agriculture is an ecological approach to regenerative sustainable agriculture and ecosystem management based on the practical application of context-specific and locally adapted three interlinked principles of: (i) Continuous no or minimum mechanical soil disturbance (no-till seeding/planting and weeding, and minimum soil disturbance with all other farm operations including harvesting);  (ii) permanent maintenance of soil mulch cover (crop biomass, stubble and cover crops); and (iii) diversification of cropping system (economically, environmentally and socially adapted rotations and/or sequences and/or associations involving annuals and/or perennials, including legumes and cover crops).* *These practices are complemented with other good agricultural production and land management practices.* *Conservation Agriculture systems are present in all continents, involving rainfed and irrigated systems including annual cropland systems, perennial systems, orchards and plantation systems, agroforestry systems, crop-livestock systems, pasture and rangeland systems, organic production systems and rice-based systems. Conservation Agriculture systems operate regeneratively at multiple levels to harness a range of productivity, economic, environmental and social benefits as well as address local and global concerns related to food and water security, climate change, land degradation, biodiversity and smallholder agricultural development.* *Conservation Tillage, Reduced Tillage and Minimum Tillage are not Conservation Agriculture, and nor is No-Till on its own* (more at: <http://www.fao.org/conservation-agriculture>).

Latest (2015/16) CA area information available from: **[Global spread of Conservation Agriculture. By A. Kassam et al. International Journal of Environmental Studies. Published Online (2018).](https://www.dropbox.com/s/zfpkexyerbcs9n5/Global%20spread%20of%20C%20paper%20Corrected%20GENV_A_1494927_O.pdf?dl=0)**

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