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**Speakers Bureau Policy & Guidelines**

***Background:*** The Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) strives to be a valuable resource and partner for soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and local groups for speakers and assistance in promoting and organizing quality events for soil health and conservation cropping systems. We will continue to serve in this role, so please do not hesitate to send us ideas and/or request assistance on regional or statewide events.

***What:*** With input from SWCDs and the CCSI Hub Teams, we have sought and received funding for the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) Speakers Bureau. This is intended to be a “go-to”/”one-stop” shop to help find quality presenters and provide a pool of funding that is available to the Indiana Conservation Partnership to help offset speaker costs associated with workshop and fields days where soil health (i.e. cover crops, soil health basics, no-till, precision management, nutrient management, etc.) is a primary topic.

***Justification:*** Budgetary constraints often prohibit training event organizers from compensating speakers and/or reimbursement of their travel expenses. Many in-state speakers from universities and agencies usually cover their own travel and do not require additional compensation. However, it is not reasonable to expect farmer-educators and consultants (whether in-state or out-of-state) to speak or host a tour without reimbursement for expenses or compensation for their time. Other representatives from private industry and/or other organizations may also require compensation. The Speakers Bureau can be used to help subsidize these costs, allowing event organizers to bring in experts to give presentations, demonstrations, or host events.

***Guidelines:***

* CCSI will help find quality speakers and/or event organizers may propose appropriate speakers.
* Event organizers may request funds to help offset a speaker’s honorarium fee and/or travel/lodging fees.
* The maximum CCSI can provide per event (one request per year from organizer) is 50% of their honorarium, up to $250, plus mileage and lodging (up to $120/night) fees. If lodging is paid for, receipts must be included. Mileage is paid at the current Federal rate; see <http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>.
* If the costs associated with the speaker are greater than listed above, the event organizer must be able to cover those charges or may submit a proposal to CCSI for consideration of a waiver along with a full explanation\*(see below) .
* The request for the reimbursement must come from the event organizer, but can be paid directly to the speaker or to the event organizer.
* Only a finite amount of funding is available on a yearly basis. Funding decisions are contingent on CCSI approval; funding is not guaranteed. Once the maximum has been met for any given year, no more requests can be filled until the next round of funding is available.

***Criteria:***

* Targeting multi-county (at least 2) and multi-partner (SWCD, Extension, NRCS, ISDA, etc.) events.
* Events should focus on reaching new audiences (i.e. landowners, agriculture retailers, lenders, land managers, as well as farmers integrating manure management, advanced drainage water management, adaptive management of nutrients, and complex crop rotations and cover crop mixes to their cropping systems, etc.)
* Requests meeting the purpose, guidelines and criteria are filled on a first come, first serve basis.
* Request must be made at least 3 months in advance of the event. Requests will be responded to within 10 working days to the best of CCSI abilities.
* Events must list CCSI as a sponsor.

***\*Waiver criteria:***

* Fully explain the speaker involved, background, why needed for the event; other collaborators on the event; potential sponsors, potential to share travel expenses with other events, and total costs.

***Additional Information:***

* Please contact Ashley Hammac at [ahammac@purdue.edu](mailto:ahammac@purdue.edu) or (765) 496-0503 (office) or   
  (251) 259-7614 (cell) **BEFORE** final selection of your event speakers for whom you wish to request reimbursement.
* All reimbursement forms must be sent to IASWCD at 225 East St., Ste. 740, Indianapolis, IN 46202 or emailed to [Jennifer-boyle@iaswcd.org](mailto:Jennifer-boyle@iaswcd.org) along with documentation that event was approved for reimbursement.