



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.



Image 1. Touring Cheyenne and Arapaho soil health pasture demonstration farm in El Reno, OK (photo credit: Clay Pope).

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.

Southern Plains Climate Hub

Looking Ahead



Image 2. Field day participants at Redlands Community College soil health demonstration farm (photo credit: Clay Pope).



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.

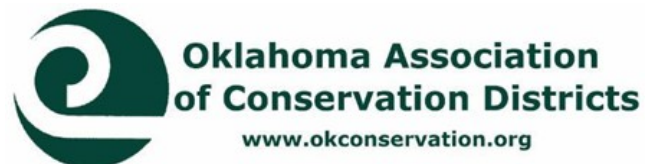
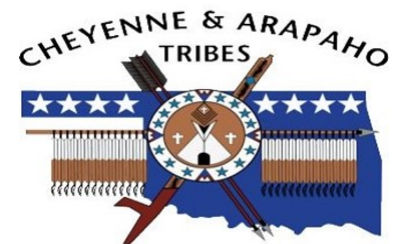
The USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub continues to work with local, state, and regional partners to utilize soil health demonstration farms as a way to showcase how land treatment practices can help farmers and ranchers adapt to extreme weather events, while also building capacity against long-term climate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



Climate Hub Partners

The successes and future initiatives of the Southern Plains Climate Hub in transferring management practices to land management stakeholders can only be achieved through close coordination with other federal agency, university, tribal and NGO partners.



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