

Soil Health Case Study Tool Kit: Criteria for Selecting “Soil Health Successful” Producers (to feature in a soil health case study) Updated: May 30, 2024

1. **Types of producers:**
 - Row crop farmers: barley, canola, corn grain, corn silage, ensilage, forage, flaxseed, grain sorghum, hay, mustard seed, oats, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sugar beets, sunflower seed, soybeans, triticale, and wheat
 - Almond, pistachio and walnut growers
2. **Criteria for success:**
 - **At least 4 or more years** of good experiences with one or more soil health practices is expected before improvements in soil health can be observed.
 - **Having adopted these:**
 - **Row crop soil health practices:** no-till, reduced tillage / strip-till, cover crops, nutrient management, and/or conservation crop rotation
 - **Tree nut soil health practices:** conservation cover / cover crops, nutrient management, mulching, and/or compost application.
 - **(Note:** Almond, pistachio and walnut trees must have been at least five to seven years old (i.e., full-bearing age) **BEFORE** the grower adopted these soil health practices in order to separate natural tree growth and those soil health practice benefits on tree health.)
 - Initiation of the practices was no **more than 15 years** ago. Practices in use longer than this are considered baseline rather than a change in operation and are, therefore, not appropriate for a partial budget analysis
 - Implementation of soil health practice(s) occurs on majority of the producer’s operation (e.g., a producer that only uses cover crops on 40 acres out of a 500-acre operation is not an ideal candidate)
 - The producer has great economic success stories they attribute to their use of soil health practices
3. **Willingness:**
 - To share their economic success stories and current and historic crop production data*
 - To be featured, analyzed, written about, and photographed
4. **Ideally:**
 - Not overly featured already (awards, write-ups, etc.) but if so, outcomes quantification has not been conducted
 - Good speakers to be able to present their case study findings themselves at educational events with other fellow producers
5. **Assurances:**
 - The R-SHEC Tool uses average prices if farmers do not want to provide their own prices.



*Although not required, having crop production records handy will help the producer provide the data needed for economic and environmental analysis. Basic crop details include crop rotation, tillage, fertilizer application, irrigation, planting date, harvest date, and structural practices that may or may not be in the field, etc.