

# Talking Soil Health: Sources for Disseminating Soil Health Information to Kansas Producers

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**Table 1**  
*Landowner/operators' perceived trustworthiness of sources for obtaining soil health information*

Source	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Natural Resources Conservation Service	3.99	1.03	Trustworthy
Extension agents	3.87	1.06	Trustworthy
Family and friends	3.84	1.01	Trustworthy
Universities	3.80	1.12	Trustworthy
Crop Consultants	3.76	.97	Trustworthy
Scientists/Researchers	3.75	1.03	Trustworthy
Farm Service Agency	3.66	1.17	Trustworthy
Seed Distributors	3.32	.95	Neither
Trade Organizations	3.05	.97	Neither
Non-government organizations	2.98	1.08	Untrustworthy
Food Manufacturers	2.34	1.00	Untrustworthy
News Media	2.27	1.07	Untrustworthy

*Note:* Real Limits: 1.00 to 1.49 = *Very untrustworthy*; 1.50 to 2.49 = *Untrustworthy*; 2.50 to 3.49 = *Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy*; 3.50 to 4.49 = *Trustworthy*; 4.50 to 5.00 = *Very trustworthy*.

## Introduction

- Adoption of conservation practices by agricultural producers is improved when producers have a positive attitude and awareness of conservation practices (Prokopy et al., 2019).
- Agricultural communicators need to provide content that is current with issues and information important to landowners making decisions about soil health practices (Meyers et al., 2015).
- The purpose of this study was to describe the communication channels utilized by Kansas landowner/operators to learn about soil health.

## Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study was diffusion of innovations. The theory originated in communication to explain how an idea gains momentum and diffuses through a social system (Rogers, 2003).

## Methodology

A quantitative researcher-developed digital and paper survey was used to randomly sample Kansas agricultural producers following the recommendations of Dillman et al. (2009).

## Results

- Respondents ( $n = 194$ ) perceived trustworthiness of sources of soil health information is displayed in Table 1.
- When asked how often respondents talk to their friends and colleagues about soil health practices, respondents on average fall in between the two ends of the spectrum ( $M = 3.25, SD = 1.22$ ).
- Landowner/operators were asked about how much information they give when speaking with friends and colleagues about soil health practices. Respondents reported perceiving themselves as giving a neutral amount of information ( $M = 3.08, SD = 1.12$ ).
- Landowner/operators perceive themselves as sources of advice for their friends and family sometimes ( $M = 2.85, SD = 1.22$ ).

## Conclusions

- Findings point agricultural communicators toward utilizing sources with expertise in soil health when communicating with Kansas landowner/operators.
- Interpersonal relationships are just a part of the larger social system landowner/operators use to discuss soil health practices.

## Recommendations

- We recommend organizations wanting to communicate soil health information consider utilizing the sources considered trustworthy by this study.
- Additional analysis is needed to determine what makes a source trustworthy to a Kansas landowner/operator.

## References

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