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**Progress Report**

PROJECT TITLE: *Expanding and Maintaining Soil Health Research and Collaborations in Minnesota*

PROJECT NUMBER: 4147-19SP

REPORTING PERIOD: 1st Quarter: April 1, 2019 - June 30, 2019

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Shefali Mehta

ORGANIZATION: Soil Health Partnership

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1.) PROJECT ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. (*Describe project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the project workplan.*)

During this period, the Soil Health Partnership has been undertaking soil sampling across all of our test trials within Minnesota. This Spring has proven difficult for our growers with very wet conditions delaying soil sampling, but the growers persevered and were able to get the sampling completed. Reports are returned back to the growers as soon as they are received. Field Manager Maddy Rabenhorst has scouted several of the Minnesota fields utilizing our pilot agronomic protocols. We are excited for the additional support our Field Managers will be able to provide to the growers with these protocols. Shefali also visited the Ryberg family on their farm, and we held a photoshoot with Shefali and Brian Ryberg to showcase what they are doing on their farm. This photoshoot will promote the work being done in Minnesota and across our network. It also gave Shefali a chance to get feedback on what Minnesota farmers would like from SHP. Shefali just finalized the agreement with the University of Minnesota so that UMN will now store and back up all SHP data. They will also help streamline the back end data collection. We will also have a chance to collaborate with other Minnesota projects, ideally to increase the power and impact of the current SHP information in Minnesota.

Also during this period, Research and Development Manager Tricia Verville met with the Minnesota Office of Soil Health to discuss what each organization has been doing in Minnesota and how we can learn from each other.

Jack has hired the full-time Minnesota field manager. She will start at the end of August once her Masters degree has been defended. We will make sure to introduce you closer to the date. In the meantime, Jack has continued to speak with farmers and we should be close to finalizing the final two to enroll.

2.) IDENTIFY ANY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT TO DATE.

With the very wet Spring, we have had to do some learning to adapt our research protocols to farms that have prevent planted acres. We have not had this be so prevalent across our network until this year, and our goal is to be adaptive to what growers are facing on their farms. To help grower in this area, we have worked with our Science Advisory Committee to make sure that our protocols can take this into account, and we can provide support properly to growers in this area. We are currently very hard at work on our data analysis, and we are excited to be able to present our growers the most robust analyses yet during our Summer Research Meetings in August.

3.) CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED. (*Describe any challenges that you encountered related to project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the project workplan.*)

The biggest challenge has been the wet Spring. It has delayed our normal soil sampling season, which then delays scheduling field days and getting out into the field for scouting. Also during this quarter, we have been working to fill the open position of Minnesota Field Manager. It took several tries and delayed when we were hoping to have someone on board, but we are looking for to the individual joining our team soon. Once this individual is on board, we will be able to enroll additional growers in Minnesota and provide consistent support to the growers in the state.

4.) FINANCIAL INFORMATION (*Describe any budget challenges and provide specific reasons for deviations from the projected project spending.*)

Spending for this quarter was $21,445.23. This is reflective of not having the additional growers enrolled in the state. Spending for the quarter was broken down by the following categories:

Soil Sampling and Analysis - $3,560.08

Travel - $2,978.65

Personnel for time spent on MN project - $10,604

Fringe Benefits for time spent on MN project - $2,502.50

Yield Analytics - $1,800

5.) EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITES. *(Describe any conferences, workshops, field days, etc attended, number of contacts at each event, and/or publications developed to disseminate project results.)*

We have not held any events in Minnesota this quarter, but we have several planned for the next quarter. On a national scale, we have participated in a number of events. We have, however, added the webinar and blogs that allow us to reach more farmers across the U.S. and will continue to increase our education and outreach. The Minnesota Field Manager is a soil scientist and a science communications specialist so she will be working with us to continue to build this out. She will also be working to find ways to increase our impact in Minnesota.

Below is a summary of some of those events.

C-AGG Meeting in Sacramento, CA

Meeting of the NCGA 11-State Water Quality Working Group

Wrangler Soil Health Conference

NCGA State & National Staff Meeting

Davos on the Delta

2019 4R Summit

Beneficial Ag 2019

Field to Market Plenary

SAI Platform Conference

General Mills Foremost Farms Dairy Roundtable