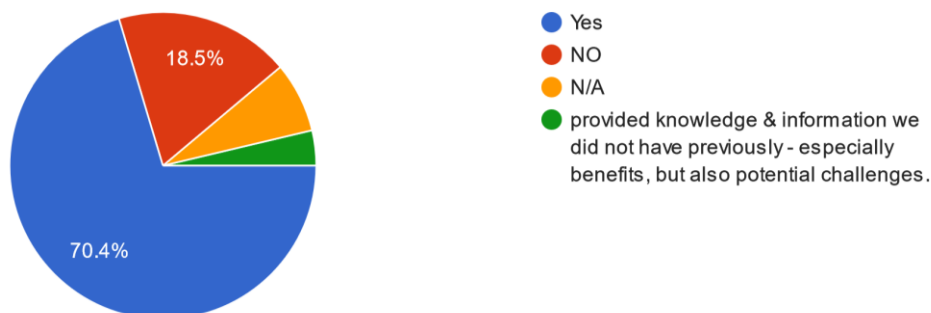


## 2020 YEAR-END EVALUATION OF CSSHP BY PARTICIPATING GROWERS

27 of our 46 CSSHP growers answered our survey evaluating what they have learned and what they want next. Here are their responses.

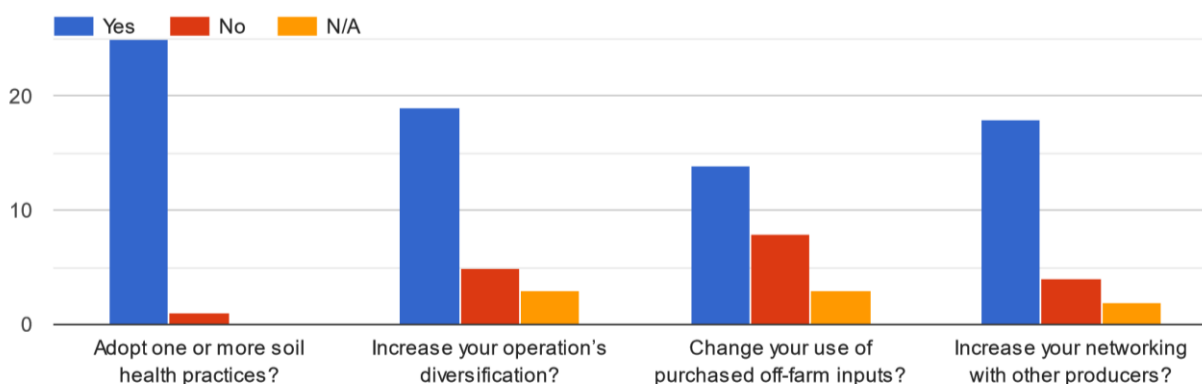
- **We asked our growers whether the information on cover crops presented at our annual Zoom meeting by Dale Strickler of Green Cover Seed and our CSSHP panelists was useful. 70% of our growers said that it was.**



- **Here is what our growers said that they learned from our Zoom session on cover crops.**

- It is possible to use cover crops successfully by timing planting and crop mix
- There is always something to learn. Wildlife affect all of us on cover crops.
- Not to be impatient with results
- I enjoyed learning about a few specific cover crops & what they do for the different microbes and fungi in the soil. I also liked learning about how cover crops with deep roots create sort of a pre-drilled hole for following crops to easily sink their roots into. I guess the thing I didn't learn is what to do to more successfully get my cover crops growing.
- I learned that grazing grasses too low can be toxic to livestock, because of the stalk and the high nitrate content. I learned that an air seeder into an existing stubble is the preferred way to plant a cover crop. Yes, my opinion on grain vs forage has been modified.
- Different options for seeding cover crops.
- More about the fun facts
- New info for me on root exudates. Also gained ideas of good mulch plants.
- New varieties of cover crops.
- Learned about the various cover crops that might be suitable should I need to revitalize my pastures.
- Think about alternatives to dryland wheat production
- New thoughts on cover crop selection and use of ruminants.
- More information about cover crops and what others are doing. Learned more about drought tolerance by having residue.
- I think this was the first time that someone has succinctly said that cover crop as a practice are not going to make up for violating soil health principles (tillage).
- Enjoyed hearing about other people's experiences.
- Details about specific cover crops and their applications
- Really reinforced needing to figure out how to reduce or eliminate tillage.
- I need to go back and re-watch as there was a big disruption in my house, but I am sure I will learn something from all of the talks.
- Gained more knowledge about cover crops and their use
- Cover crops can be a very useful tool but not always the easiest tool to implement because oftentimes success is dependent upon things which you have no control
- Fungus is good
- Was interested to see some of the new varieties he suggested
- Which crops would do well in my soil.

- **We asked our growers whether they would use some aspect of the CSSHP in the next year to adopt one or more soil health practices, increase their operations' diversification, change their use of purchased off-farm inputs, and increase their networking with other producers. Here are their responses.**



- **We asked our growers how they are going to share some aspect of the CSSHP with others.**

- We help friends with garden cover crops
- Keep trying things and asking questions
- Encourage participation. Demonstration of cover cropping.
- I have a neighbor with a horse pasture who is interested in improving her pasture. We are discussing a joint project so we can learn together. Also, we have a community project in Gold Hill focused on water retention and pollinator habitat where I believe I can contribute based on what I have learned.
- I meet regularly with local growers through our Larimer County Farmers Alliance and look forward to sharing information with them.
- By teaching it in the greenhouse to everyone that visits
- We sell our beef to friends and I will brag that we have some of the healthiest soil in the area because of how we manage the cattle.
- Carbon farming, the latest buzz word, comes up in conversation from time to time. This is a great opportunity to talk more about the related issues like no to minimal till, crop/plant diversity, rebuilding soil, voting at the register and local offerings.
- Yes - son and son-in-law. Both are avid home gardeners, and are interested in improving soil and suppressing weeds.
- Randomly.
- Public reports
- I often have chances to discuss what we are doing and how it is working. We are hoping for a more normal fall season where we can use displays to show some soil health principals
- Show people result from the practices I'm going to apply. Might take more than a year.
- Yes I have already let the City of Boulder know.
- Will be sharing our soil testing results with our interns and staff as well as our fertility program based on those results and comparing them with the quality of our forages.
- Use signage with cover crops, talk with visitors and show photos on our website and/or Google listing.
- I always share info from the CSSHP with our farming interns.
- We plan to work directly with our Larimer County ag tenants to begin implementing cover cropping
- Throughout the year we get questions about our pastures and always tell people that we participate in CSSHP, that we are trying to improve our soils and give them a brief explanation of what that means
- Talk about the study
- Our working members are all very keen on cover-cropping strategies.
- Apply for seed cover grant and share findings.

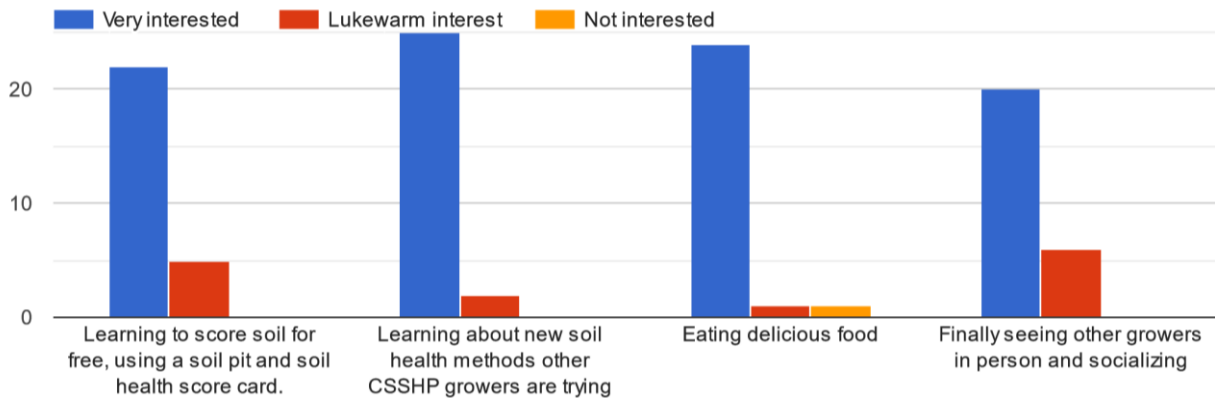
➤ **We asked our growers how they will incorporate their soil health test results into 2021 planning for their operations. Here are their answers.**

- We have learned where certain soil amendments have produced healthier soil and will broaden use of these practices
- Modify some fertility, and planting plans on the shoulder seasons.
- Incorporation with grazing
- I'm excited to see if doing a winter sowing of cover crop seed will be more successful this year. If so, I would like to be a little more targeted with which cover crops to grow for different areas and different purposes.
- Nutrient management and mineralization for a more balanced soil.
- Modify my amendments and practices.
- Amendments and crop rotation
- "Smaller parcel" rotational grazing and irrigation
- Cover crop and gardening efforts. Potentially reaching out to other producers for advice.
- I have a high PH score and a very high phosphorus score. I'd like to lower the PH score (however temporary), and will try to use more nitrogen rich inputs (maybe some alfalfa pellets). I have two horses, and six next door, which encourages my use of horse manure and the high phosphorus score. I'll use the manure on the pasture and less in my garden. I would also like to produce some fungal-rich compost, but I don't know if I can get that done this year.
- I've already added sulfur to my fields base on a significant increase in pH (probably due to the drought).
- Decrease P inputs. Try to mitigate excessive P. Get organic material under landscape fabric.
- Since our soil health decreased in most areas I am currently studying what changes can be made for this year. Our winter covers are struggling due to lack of moisture and pressure from geese in one field. Spring plans will be affected by final health of the covers in May.
- Apply compost as needed, hopefully cut down on synthetic fertilizer. Introduce fungi, molasses, and cows.
- Address nutrient deficiencies.
- I talk with my fertilizer rep about my samples
- We will be cross referencing the results with our results from International Ag Labs and using them to plan our fertility program. We will be trying to figure out how to feed and improve our microbial life without consuming the soil organic matter.
- Going to increase the legumes and decrease the cereal grains in our cover crop mix to try to reduce or at least not increase our phosphorus.
- Working to build fertility through cover cropping. Fewer amendments that add more P and K.
- We will use what we learned in 2020 to hopefully improve soil health in 2021
- On one hay pasture we are planning to use only compost as soil amendment (change from fertilizer), on another pasture we are inter seeding legumes. Remaining pastures will remain status quo for now.
- Attempt to increase soil organic matter.
- When we saw the phosphorus was low, we used the government stimulus check to purchase compost from a local maker.
- Start a new plot with similar high standards and cover seeds.

➤ **We asked our growers how we can improve the CSSHP. Here are their answers.**

- More information about \$ impacts of practices listed on our reports.
- Ability to see what others are doing without huge intrusion on them.
- Shorten questionnaire. Solicit growers to speak at Farm Field Day.
- A video about soil sampling -- perhaps that would explain some of the swings in results from 2019 to 2020?
- Parsing out 'using' soil health practices vs successful implementation
- Tips and tricks on soil sampling, especially in dry soils.
- How to increase animals
- Seed Swap

➤ We asked our growers about their level of interest in a Farm Field Day in October of this year. The most popular activity was learning about new soil health methods other CSSHP growers are trying, followed by eating delicious food, learning to score soil for free, and socializing with other growers, in that order.



➤ Finally, we asked our growers what topic they wanted to address at our next annual meeting in February 2022. The topic chosen by the most growers was “Maximizing Water Yield: Getting the most out of every drop.”

