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**Farmers and Scientists Discuss Creating a Climate Resilient
Response in Corn Belt Crops
Conference to Kick-off with Press Conference with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack**

AMES, IA - What can be done to help farmers address risks associated with highly variable and unpredictable weather and long term changing climate conditions? How can the sustainability and resilience of corn-based cropping systems be increased? These are the questions being discussed in Ames, Iowa, today at a conference for Corn Belt farmers and crop advisors, sponsored by the USDA's Sustainable Corn Project and the 25x'25 Alliance.

Corn is the major cereal crop of U.S. agriculture. Eighty-eight million acres were planted in 2013 producing the highest ever total crop at 13.9 billion bushels and valued at \$63 billion. Seventy to eighty percent of corn production occurs in the Upper Midwest. The US exports 20 percent of the corn crop. In 2013, soybean, part of the corn rotation, was planted on 76 million acres with a total production at 3.3 billion bushels valued at \$41 billion.

“When it comes to corn-based cropping systems, creating a resilient response to excess rainfall and droughts and an increasingly highly variable climate is critical, if we are to sustain yields and protect soil and water resources,” said Lois Wright Morton, the Project's director and a social scientist at Iowa State University. The Sustainable Corn Project is a USDA-funded project, with scientists at 10 land-grant universities and one agricultural research station gathering data from 35 field sites and thousands of farmers in 9 Midwestern states.

At the conference, Sustainable Corn Project scientists will share their research findings and a panel of farmers from four different states in the Midwest will talk about what they have done on their farms to build resiliency into their operations. Farmers and others also will participate in hands-on activities in the field to increase their understanding of the practices being researched and to learn how to use new decision support tools.

USDA Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack will speak at a news conference the morning of the conference. Fred Yoder, a corn and soybean farmer in Central Ohio and former National Corn Growers Association president will also speak.

WHAT: Press Conference and national conference for farmers

WHEN: Press conference begins August 5th, 10:30 AM, CST

National conference begins at 1:00 PM, CST

WHERE: Gateway Conference Center
(Airing live at www.extension.iastate.edu/broadcasts/ResilientAg)
2100 Green Hills Drive
Ames, Iowa

More about the conference at www.sustainablecorn.org.

The Sustainable Corn Project's goal is to create a suite of practices for corn-based systems that;

- retain and enhance soil organic matter and nutrient and carbon stocks
- reduce off-field nitrogen losses that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution
- better withstand droughts and floods
- ensure productivity under different climatic conditions

Through the Extension and Education aspects of this project, we are working with farmers, teachers and students to connect them with project analyses and promote collaborative learning.

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