



North Central Climate Collaborative (NC3)

Providing the Foundation for Lasting Climate Education in the North Central Region

Background

Our climate is changing and changes in climate have been a defining factor in agriculture and water quality within the North Central Region. Extreme weather events have the capacity to drastically impact our waterways, and climate variability creates shifts in crops, cropping seasons, and plant hardiness zones. Moreover, the farm management practices that coincide with these changes greatly influence water quality and management.

Extension professionals play a key role in supporting farmers by providing education, resources, and research to strengthen decision-making. Changes in climate continue to present challenges for both farmers and extension professionals alike and research shows that both groups need additional education on climate science and guidance on climate change adaptation practices.

There is a need within extension to build core competencies in the area of climate science, climate change, and its impacts on agriculture in order for educators to engage farmers in discussing the realities of a changing climate and the adaptation strategies that need to be employed to ensure success.

Addressing the Challenge

The North Central Climate Collaborative (NC3) is comprised of individuals with expertise in climate science, agronomy, stormwater management, and other disciplines who are working to increase the flow and usability of climate information for extension, farmers, and farm advisors. The team is working to increase the adoption of climate-smart practices, improving water management, while maintaining profitability.

Specifically, NC3 aims to serve as points of contact with each state/land-grant university on climate change and adaptation, provide climate-related professional development opportunities to extension personnel, and organize and train professionals in climate change topics that affect agriculture and natural resources.

Progress Made

Since the North Central Climate Collaborative formed in 2015, the team has made substantial progress toward their goals. To date the NC3 team has:

- Convened as a group to set research, outreach and resource priorities.
- Produced a regional needs assessment summarizing current extension expertise on meteorology and climatology and addressing current climate education issues.
- Initiated a dialogue with the US Drought Monitor (USDMD) and other partners allowing strategic information to be shared linking Extension personnel, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and USDMD.
- Developed six webinars exploring the connection between climate, agriculture, and water resources. Three months following the final webinar 100% of survey respondents noted an increase in understanding of how climate change could affect water quality and quantity in the region. The webinars have been viewed by nearly 300 individuals to date.
- Held three webinars on climate-related tools and resources, including Midwest Regional Climate Center tools, grain storage calculations, the Drought

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Impact Reporter, and the Community Collaborative Rain and the Snow and Hail Network.

- Established partnerships with the USDA Climate Hubs and Drought Early Warning Systems, in both the Missouri River Basin and Midwest Region to broaden the team's reach and success

Moving Forward

Looking towards 2018 and 2019, NC3 is dedicated to providing professional development for extension professionals through a variety of methods including:

- Sub-regional workshops to further integrate research and extension and assist in addressing water, climate and agriculture topics specific to local areas
- Bi-monthly webinars to broaden awareness and understanding of climate-related issues and potential solutions in the research and extension community
- Videos demonstrating the utility of the successful Useful to Usable decision-support tools
- Providing financial support for local education and extension programming including field days, demonstration projects, workshops, and farmer-led groups

How Can You Help?

To continue on their path to ensuring adequate education and professional development for extension professionals on climate-related topics, the NC3 team would

like to ask for your help. To get involved, you can:

- Join the NC3 email list to find out about new professional development opportunities and help grow NC3 participation in the extension community
- Attend NC3 webinars or workshops to learn about the complex connections between water, climate and agriculture and how to address these issues within the agricultural community moving forward
- Apply for funding from the NC3 for a local initiative helping to educate and motivate key decision makers to adopt of climate-smart practices improving water management
- Share NC3 information within your professional network to help increase the team's impact and ensure extension educators, farmers, and farm advisors have access to vital climate resources

CONTACTS

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GET IN TOUCH

Email kgehl@ksu.edu to join the NC3 email list

The North Central Region Water Network comprises 12 Land-grant colleges and universities:

