Vision
Improve the world through crop science.

Mission
Discover and apply plant science solutions to improve the human condition and protect the planet.

Grand Challenge
Drive soil–plant–water–environment systems solutions for healthy people on a healthy planet in a rapidly changing climate.
Preface

The human population inhabits this fragile planet on the grace of natural resources. Among these are food, water, air, and soil. For centuries crop scientists have worked at the forefront of the management of these resources, developing efficient and widespread food production and distribution systems around the world. But climate change, population growth, vast migration of populations, and widespread misuse of soil, water, air, and natural resources have placed a new urgency on sustainable crop production. The solutions to resource scarcity and destruction could be many, but it is a fact that crop scientists will be in the first line of defense and action: to feed the growing world population in increasingly harsh conditions in which to produce crops.

Crop Science is the production of crops for human use. This includes crops we directly eat, and those used for forage and grain to feed animals, fuel, clothing, construction, medicine, and recreation or wellbeing. Crop scientists breed these crops, protect them from pests, diseases and weeds, study how to produce and maintain them while protecting water, air, and soil, and in general manipulate crops for improved nutrition, health and wellbeing of humans and animals. This is Crop Science, and the people that do this are scientists, producers and educators living and maintaining crops all over the world. Crop Scientists feed the world.

But Crop Scientists feed the world while protecting our natural resources, and with positive impacts on our environment. Clear-cutting, tillage without cover, inefficient (or excessive) use of water resources: all are examples of activities that could be used to produce food, but would ultimately negatively affect our soil, water, and air resources.

Strategies

Aspirational statements of CSSA focal areas to achieve internal and external outcomes.

Engage

To do that requires a collaborative team spirit between crop breeders and crop management experts, developing and managing crops that will thrive under a changing climate — one of increased soil and water salinity, higher temperatures, and poor soil health. It also means working to ameliorate and rebuild degraded natural resources and systems through crop science solutions to improve soil health, decrease soil salinity, sequester carbon and produce crops with smaller carbon and water footprints. This can be done through innovations in crop science, as managed and developed by crop scientists.

Promote

Work in Crop Science covers the world, and its denizens inhabit laboratories, greenhouses, farms, fields, landscapes and communities. Opportunities to lift economies and people are many, and affect those in both direct and non-direct aspects of crop production. Examples include employment maintaining recreational crops, the production of a medicinal crop, or using crops to raise animals for food, labor, and livelihood. Crop scientists are the first step of that food, recreation and environmental journey that leads to an improved quality of life on this planet. The scientists of the Crop Science Society of America pledge to continue to Feed the World, and to do so in ways that enhance biodiversity and save this planet from climate change and endangered resources.

Influence

Partnership

Therefore, the Strategic Goal of the Crop Science Society of America is to develop crop production systems that feed an ever-growing world population, while protecting our soil, water and air.

Engage

Engage to create impact and awareness for crop science, and to advance global connections and social justice.

Promote

Promote member work on sustainable productivity and nutrition; connect relevant participants and sectors to advance the future of agricultural science through multidisciplinary and systems approaches.

Influence

Provide leadership to influence public perceptions, policies and actions to create a more sustainable and equitable global society.

Partnership

Emphasize partnership with organizations across the globe to support resilient and diverse cropping systems, improve human nutrition, address climate change, and promote quality of life and enhance livelihoods.
CSSA-Specific Objectives

Specific, measurable, action-oriented and time-sensitive actions to support CSSA strategies.

**Broaden external engagement** by securing collaboration, partnership or participation from 10 nontraditional stakeholder groups and increase number of groups in each current stakeholder category by 50%.

**Increase external engagements** to advance crop science with growers, producers and trade associations, public-private partnerships, and non-scientific organizations by 5 organizations and existing scientific and academic sectors by 3 organizations.

**Build a crop science brand** to enhance promotional gain by 500%.

**Enhance positive visibility** and awareness among public and social and print media by 500%.

**Grand Challenge**: build a movement: Work jointly to create or support at least 6 new collaborations or partnerships with other organizations for implementing shared solutions for our grand challenges.

**Membership needs and services** - improve membership service offerings, customer health scoring and engagement.

**Grow membership by 25%** over the timeframe of the strategic plan and through disciplinary diversification and growth, and engagement and inclusion of under-represented people and groups.

**Inclusion and diversity** - launch 2 new initiatives to increase recognition and participation of under-represented individuals.

**Fully include under-represented people** within our society through increasing resources 100% annually to take dedicated, inclusive actions.

**Enhance disciplinary diversity** in membership and services offered to people working in fields outside of our traditional core disciplines.
CSSA Values

Crops that sustain society

Honesty and integrity

Ethical behavior with people and data

Science-based decision making

Embracing diversity and inclusivity

Economic, social, and environmental sustainability

Life-long professional growth

Cooperation and collaboration

Cross-society objective

Publications - position publications to embrace open science by enhancing marketing and editorial processes to increase publications exposure by 2-3%, journal usage by 3-4%, and ensuring that each ACS journal is considered a "top tier" journal in its respective discipline.

Enhance flagship journals (Crop Science and The Plant Genome) impact factor and alternative metrics by 5-7% annually.

Increase marketing efforts and reach for societies’ minor and new journals by 500%.

Increase accessibility, impact and long-term utility of publications through new data acquisition, data use, repository and synthesis services.
The CSSA organizational strategic plan was developed with input from members, elected Board representatives, and research into operational landscape trends. All 4000+ CSSA members were invited to participate in the development and review of the strategic plan to address the key factors affecting CSSA into the next three years. External partners, collaborators and key stakeholders were invited to provide input into this plan to provide a diversity of perspectives on creating impact and connectivity to the latest advances in crop science.

The CSSA strategic plan provides the strategic framework for the next three years. This framework is focused on delivering internal and external outcomes to enhance inclusivity and diversity, recognition and awareness, and impacts to agricultural and environmental outcomes — while increasing the value of crop science to the general public. The strategies and objectives provided in this plan set strong direction for the organization — and provide flexibility based upon internal and external analysis, review and opportunities.

Key factors that will affect the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) are the need and opportunity to maintain and grow membership, enhance publication of high-quality journals to disseminate our science and support our business model, and a goal to broaden diversity including underrepresented groups, disciplinary breadth, and extending impact beyond scientific inquiry.

Figure 1: Opportunities and challenges in creating further impact through CSSA strategic plan implementation.
Identify Your Sustainable/Competitive Advantage

Identify the unique role(s) CSSA plays in the current and future state of agronomy, crop science, soil science and environmental science. The opportunities are bigger than the current role as an association of scientists with limited stakeholder awareness, relevance and value to other industry sectors.

Adjust Your Business Model

Develop a clear, concise and comprehensive business plan that evolves your structure, value capture, function and strategic alliances to bring your sustainable competitive advantage to life, while leveraging your core competencies and staying true to your membership, mission and values.

Increase Stakeholder Engagement

Develop and execute a clear, concise and comprehensive engagement and partnership plan while establishing CSSA as a more relevant thought leader in shaping and addressing the critical issues of our time — climate change, farm resilience, soil health, water quality and quantity, etc. This involves more than words. It will require internal assessments of resource allocations, competencies and deliverables.

CSSA Strategic Vision

There are great opportunities for CSSA growth through intellectual exchange, collaboration, research and networking connections to develop services and recruit new members from academic and other sectors. To optimize growth, CSSA must identify the unique roles in the current and future state of crop science. Adjustments to the CSSA business model must come from a clear, concise and comprehensive business plan that evolves the structure, value capture and strategic alliances to bring the CSSA sustainable competitive advantage to reality. A comprehensive engagement and partnership plan are necessary — along with marketing initiatives to position CSSA as a relevant thought leader in shaping critical issues. The resulting effort can scale to enhance awareness, recognition and support of the importance of crop scientists to daily life.
Appendix A

Strategic planning process and timeline
Plan Development Process

Appendix B

Crop Science Society of America Board members contributing to this strategic plan:

Shawn M. Kaeppler, CSSA President, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Elizabeth A. Guertal, CSSA Past President, Auburn University
P.V. Vara Prasad, CSSA President-Elect, Kansas State University
Maria Balota, Div. C-2 Board Representative, Virginia Tech
Mariosi Berri, Div. C-6 Board Representative, North Dakota State University
Aron Carter, Div. C-7 Board Representative, Washington State University
Jeffrey A. Coulter, Div. C-3 Board Representative, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Michelle DaCosta, Div. C-5 Board Representative, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Melanie L. Harrison, Div. C-8 Board Representative, USDA-ARS, Griffin, GA
Stephen R. Malone, Div. C-4 Board Representative, USDA-AMS-S&T, Gastonia, NC
Carlos D. Messina, Industry Board Representative, Corteva Agriscience, Johnston, IA
Eeswaran Rasu, Graduate Student Representative, Michigan State University
Mark E. Sorrells, Div. C-1 Board Representative, Cornell University
Lee Tarpley, Division C-9 Board Representative, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
Thomas Chastrain, Budget and Finance Committee Chair (Member, ex officio)
Nicholas J. Gooser, Chief Executive Officer (Member, ex officio)
Michael A. Grusak, Program Planning Officer (Member, ex officio)
Seth Murray, ASF Board of Trustees Chair (Member, ex officio)
C. Wayne Smith, CSSA Editor-in-Chief (Member, ex officio)