

Transformation, Renewal and Regeneration

An AcresUSA update

BY LYDIA LAZAR, ACRES USA MANAGING DIRECTOR



This has been a year of transformation for the AcresUSA family, and I am pleased to share news of renewal and reinvigoration as we contemplate turning the calendar page to 2024.

All around us we see a burgeoning regenerative agriculture movement that has brought new energy, new people and new ideas to the space that we have lived in for more than 50 years. As the USDA Climate Smart Commodities' grants begin to percolate across the country, more and more people are turning to AcresUSA as their trusted source for reliable information on organic- and soil-health-focused practical advice to help transition their conventional operations to something more environmentally and economically sustainable. Charles Walters and William Albrecht's approach to eco-agriculture has never looked so prescient as now, when the world is finally realizing that conventional approaches to food production are actually contrib-

uting to the global food and climate crisis, do not offer durable solutions to world hunger, and are not economically sustainable for producers in this country or elsewhere.

We see opportunity everywhere to share the insights from our books, this magazine and the informed and accessible speakers at our conferences and on-farm events.

This year we continued our partnership with the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Soil Health Program, delivering two amazing learning events and connecting with hundreds of Colorado farmers through the publication and distribution of 12 soil health primers.

As part of the USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program, we contracted with OCIA (the Organic Crop Improvement Association) to deliver educational materials and events, reaching producers both digitally and with on-farm events in Oklahoma and North Dakota. This work continues, and we are excited to help OCIA expand its TOPP programming across the six states of the Plains region (North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado). We continue to develop new partnerships to connect our insightful resources with new audiences of soil-health-focused practitioners, and we welcome your suggestions for organizations where we can offer useful support.

As a veritable institution in agriculture, we must be both stalwart and innovative as we navigate the

debates over what is best for producers and their families and as the world discovers and labels age-old soil health practices as "regenerative agriculture." We must hold true to our guiding principles and focus on how ecological practices make economic sense to the farmer, how support for fair and transparent regenerative supply chains will benefit our farming communities, and how ecologically grown and raised food and animals will be healthier for everyone in our communities.

Institutions are defined by the actions and words of the people who speak on their behalf, and while some definitions may be changing — or may in fact be debatable — one thing that is not debatable is that for more than half a century, AcresUSA has offered reasoned discussions of agricultural terms and practices. In this moment of rampant "greenwashing," we are proud of the integrity and credibility of the voices we feature.

Finally, this was also a year for some staffing changes: we said goodbye to Hannah Fields, Chad Kuskie and Jessica Smith as they moved on to new challenges; we welcomed Cary Bergeron and Caleigh Payne to the team to lead our bookstore and events, respectively; and Rebecca Gerwig is taking on more responsibilities with clients and customers.

More changes and more innovation are surely in our future as we grow to meet the challenges of this newly invigorated and regenerative era. **ACRES.**