



Science
Societies

Engaging in Advocacy: The Importance of the Congressional Visits Day Program

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Congressional Visits Day participants meet with Rep. GT Thompson (PA).

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) have been long-term leaders in advocating for food, agriculture, and natural resources research along with the professions we represent. Each year, our organizations provide an invaluable opportunity for our members—scientists, students, and certified professionals alike—to participate in the Congressional Visits Day (CVD) program in Washington, DC. This program is not just a chance to visit the nation's capital; it's a unique event where participants advocate for the importance of agricultural research and education, influencing policy decisions that impact CCAs and CPSS's and the future of food security, environmental sustainability, and rural development.

The Role of CCAs, CPSS's, and Scientists in Advocacy

In an age where policy decisions are increasingly driven by data and scientific evidence, the role of scientists and those who implement the science with landowners—CCAs and CPSS's—in advocacy has never been more crucial. The CVD program allows Society members, students, CCAs, and CPSS's to step out of their laboratories, classrooms, and work environment to engage directly with policymakers. This direct engagement is essential because it brings the voice of the Societies' communities into the legislative process, ensuring that policies related to agriculture, climate change, and natural resources are informed by the latest research, technological advancements, and practical applications.



Congressional Visits Day attendees pose for a group photo near the U.S. Capitol in March. They represented 23 states and conducted 63 meetings with congressional offices.

For many of our members and certified professionals, the idea of stepping into the political arena can be daunting. However, it is essential to recognize that science and policy are deeply interconnected. Policy decisions often determine funding for research, the direction of scientific inquiry, and the implementation of technologies that can solve pressing global challenges. All CVD participants receive communication and advocacy training to prepare them to share their message with policymakers in the most effective and accessible way possible. By participating in the CVD program, Society members, CCAs, and CPSS's have the opportunity to advocate for increased research funding, support for agricultural innovation, and the promotion of science-based policies that can lead to a more sustainable and resilient future.

Empowering CCAs and CPSS's:

Involvement in Advocacy

One of the most significant aspects of the CVD program is the inclusion of CCAs and CPSS's. For many, this is their first foray into the world of policy and advocacy, providing a unique experience. To complement our scientists and students, CCAs and CPSS's bring on-the-ground experiences and perspectives into the policy discussions. Our best discussions with policymakers are conducted when our team has a scientist, a student, and a CCA or CPSS involved. It provides the full perspective covering lab through classroom to field, and policymakers appreciate that. Congressional Visits Day also serves as an invaluable occasion for networking with a diverse group of members and practicing professionals. The opportunity to connect with [Society executives](#), scientists at universities, and leaders in industry often leads to new relationships and even job opportunities.





Before Congressional Visits Day, Society members, Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs), and staff attend a well-planned training day to learn about effective advocacy strategies.

Encouraging Participation: Apply for the CVD Program

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are committed to fostering a culture of advocacy and engagement among our members and practicing professionals. Each year, CCAs and CPSS's participate in CVD along with Society members. The next CVD will be held on Feb. 25 and 26, 2025. For those who want to learn more about the intersection of science and policy, please email Luther Smith at [Send Message](#). Participating in the CVD program is a step towards making a meaningful impact.

Whether you are a seasoned professional or just getting started, your voice is needed in

the ongoing dialogue about the future of agriculture and environmental stewardship.

The annual CVD program is more than just a trip to Washington, DC; it is an essential platform for scientists, students, and certified professionals to advocate for the future of their fields. By participating in this program, you can help shape policies that support scientific research, promote innovation, and address the global challenges of our time. Don't miss the chance to be a part of this important advocacy effort.

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