

STAR Program Overview

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S.T.A.R.

S aving

T omorrow's

A gricultural

R esources







What is STAR?

- Soil Health program for Colorado began as a grassroots movement in 2019
- Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg made healthy soils a leading strategy for achieving the CDA mission to promote responsible natural resource stewardship
- The original STAR program was implemented in Illinois. Colorado partners worked together to adapt that framework to meet our needs.
- Basic concept is a free and voluntary tool:
  - Producers fill out assessment forms and scoring sheets
  - Points are assigned for soil health practices
  - Producers then receive a rating of 1 to 5 stars to show how well they are promoting soil health practices and upholding the 5 principles of soil health.
  - This gives them a starting point to further improve practices if needed

5 Soil Health Principles

1. Soil Armor
2. Minimize disturbance
3. Plant diversity
4. Continual living root
5. Integration of livestock



Land Stewardship Project



Prairie Ecologist



Development Assistance for Rural Education



Dr Pia Benaud



University of Nebraska-Lincoln

★ **1 Star** (Average)
A field with practices similar to what 80% of fields of that type are doing in that region.

★★ **2 Stars** (Above Average)
A field beginning to implement soil health principles.

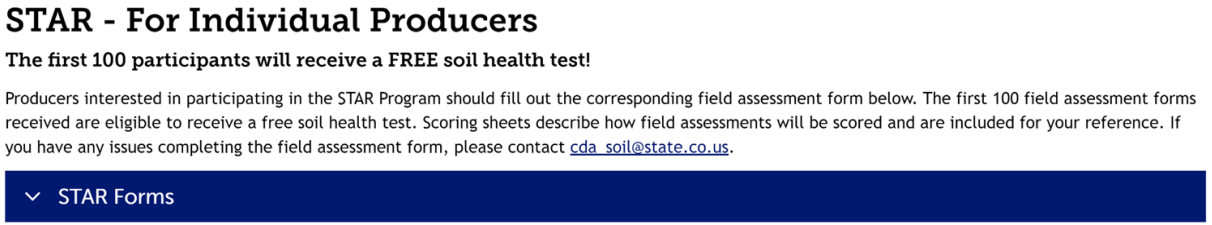
★★★ **3 Stars** (Great)
A field implementing multiple soil health principles.

★★★★ **4 Stars** (Excellent)
A field implementing several soil health principles.

★★★★★ **5 Stars** (Ideal)
A field implementing all five soil health principles.

STAR (for Individual Producers)

- Fill out forms through CDA's Soil Health Program Website
- First 100 to sign up get a free soil health test
- Form is assessed by CDA Soil Health Specialist and feedback returned to producer
- Field sign received



STAR Plus

- 3-year program with funds provided through the CDA
- Administered through 17 conservation districts and 3 eligible entities
- CD's and EE's receive capacity building payments of 20k upfront and 2k per producer for each year for 4 years AND $25k each for equipment purchases
- Producers receive $75/acre for soil health practice
  - Min of $1000 and Max of $5,000 with a 100% match required by producers
  - Covered practices are flexible
- Producers receive technical assistance
- Soil health testing + soil moisture probes
- There will be edge of field monitoring on specific sites

Background

- HB21-1181: Creates a voluntary soil health program in CDA funded by gifts, grants, & donations + a State Soil Health Advisory Committee (effective September 6, 2021)
- Strict producer privacy protections
- SB21-235: Gives CDA $2M for voluntary soil health practices



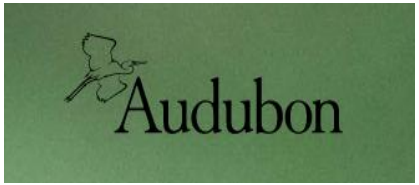
HOUSE BILL 21-1181

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) McCormick and Will, Amabile, Bernett, Bird, Esgar, Froelich, Hooton, McCluskie, Michaelson Jenet, Titone, Cutter, Duran, Gray, Jodeh, Lontine, Mullica, Ricks, Snyder, Valdez D.;
also SENATOR(S) Simpson and Winter, Bridges, Buckner, Coram, Fenberg, Ginal, Gonzales, Jaquez Lewis, Kolker, Moreno, Pettersen, Priola, Sonnenberg, Garcia.

CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A VOLUNTARY SOIL HEALTH PROGRAM, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Partnerships



















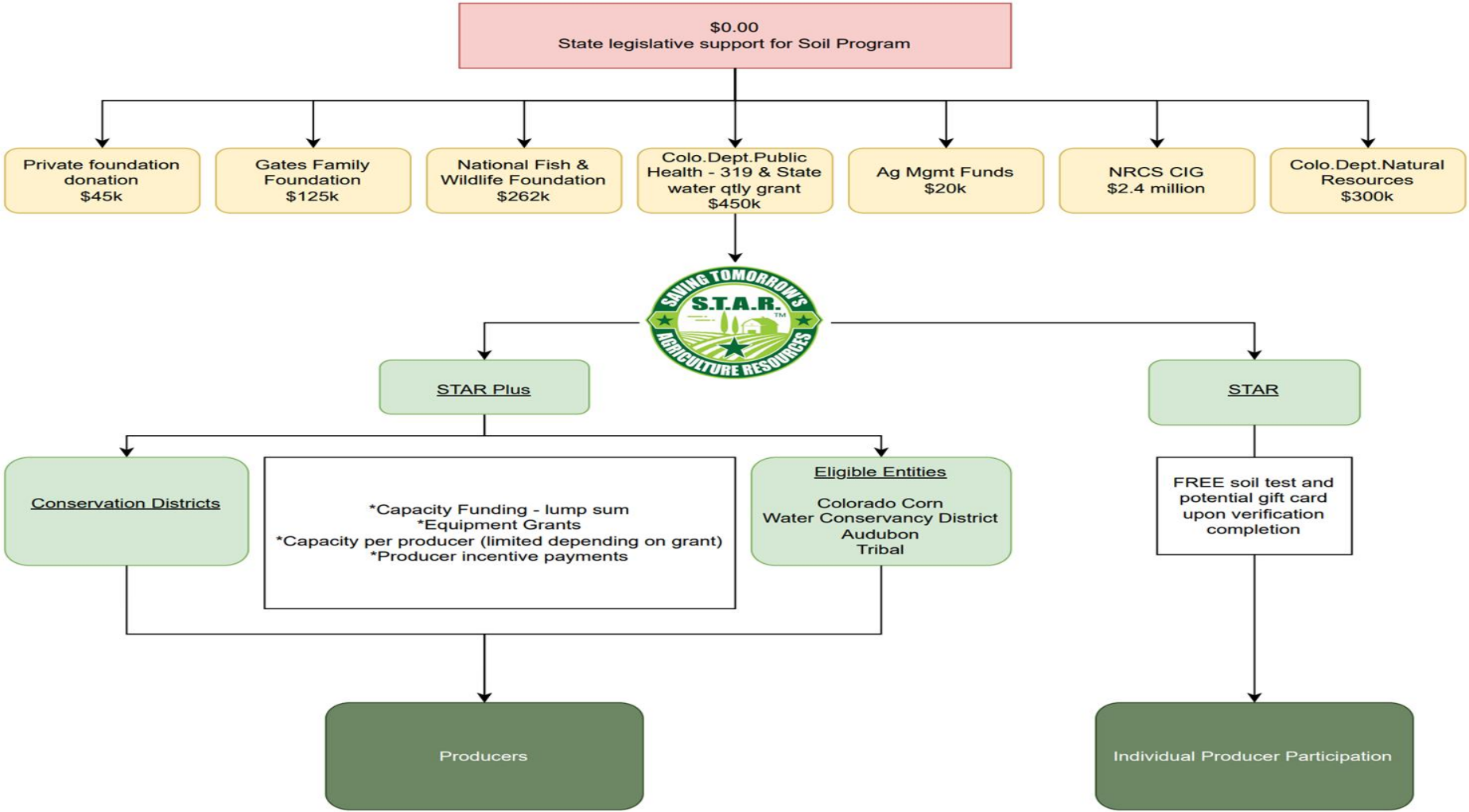






Program Future and CSC Grant

- The program is expanding! Our immediate goal is to get 50 entities working with 500 participants.
- Partnering with CSU for soil water, soil health, and soil carbon studies across program and research fields.
- Peer-to-peer learning and pay for performance pilots as well as adding capacity to CDA to run the program.
- Program will develop a regional network of research fields and will help to develop the STAR rating for other western states.


$0.00
State legislative support for Soil Program
Private foundation donation $45k
Gates Family Foundation $125k
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation $262k
Colo.Dept.Public Health - 319 & State water qtly grant $450k
Ag Mgmt Funds $20k
NRCS CIG $2.4 million
Colo.Dept.Natural Resources $300k
SAVING TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURE RESOURCES
S.T.A.R.
STAR Plus
STAR
Conservation Districts
*Capacity Funding - lump sum
*Equipment Grants
*Capacity per producer (limited depending on grant)
*Producer incentive payments
Eligible Entities
Colorado Corn
Water Conservancy District
Audubon
Tribal
FREE soil test and potential gift card upon verification completion
Producers
Individual Producer Participation