



## OSHI OBJECTIVES

- Build a broad-based coalition of farmers and stakeholders committed to healthy soils policy
- Develop a proposal to advance positive soil health outcomes based on sound principles and the adoption of validated healthy soil practices and work toward enactment and implementation of a state-wide healthy soil policy/program to meet these objectives

## HEALTHY SOILS

- **Hold More Water** – Healthy soils act as a sponge, providing reserves in times when precipitation is low and a sink to soak up excess when it is high. A one percent increase in soil organic matter on just one acre enables the land to hold an additional 20,000 gallons of water.[1]
- **Reduce Run-Off and Protect Water Quality** – That same sponge-like nature allows healthy soils to retain fertility, reducing downstream pollution, which can lead to dangerous algal blooms, contaminated drinking water, and other biological disruptions.
- **Require Less Fertilizer** – Abundant life in healthy soils provide much of the nutritional needs for crops, reducing input costs. Fungi and bacteria co-evolved with plants to provide essential nutrients in exchange for carbon extracted from the atmosphere.
- **Result in Better, Healthier Crops** – Healthy soils provide a steady supply of fertility and moisture. Healthy plants are able to photosynthesize more effectively and produce the necessary metabolites that defend them from disease and pests. In short, healthy soils grow healthier plants, which reduce the need for pesticide use.
- **Provide Positive Return on Investment** – Soil health practices save money in reduced input costs, fewer field passes, and reduced weed pressure, all while maintaining strong yields. Healthy soil with high organic matter holds on to applied nutrients, giving the crop a chance to absorb them, making the application more effective, and improving farmer return on investment.
- **Sequester Carbon** – Healthy soils help mitigate harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

As the science of soil health has evolved, it has become more integral to the work of our state and federal agencies. These agencies, service providers, farm service organizations, and associations, as well as farmers themselves, know that healthy soils are the foundation for a resilient food and agriculture system. States across the country are taking proactive measures to help farmers realize these soil health benefits.

OSHI is organized by the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA). Founded in 1979, OEFFA cultivates a future in which sustainable and organic farmers thrive, local food nourishes our communities, and agricultural practices protect and enhance our environment. If you are interested in working with the growing list of OSHI partners, contact us today.

[1] <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/climate-ready-soil-appendix.pdf>