



- 1           1. "Champion" means a land manager who is declared a soil  
2 health champion due to the land manager's excellence in applying and  
3 promoting soil health principles, as modeled by the Soil Health  
4 Champions Network of the National Association of Conservation  
5 Districts;
- 6           2. "Commission" means the Oklahoma Conservation Commission;
- 7           3. "Eligible entity" means a local governmental entity with  
8 proven land management capacity to support healthy soil and  
9 including conservation districts;
- 10          4. "Healthy soil" means soil that enhances its continuing  
11 capacity to function as a biological system, increases its organic  
12 matter, and improves its structure and water- and nutrient-holding  
13 capacity;
- 14          5. "Program" means the healthy soil program created in the  
15 Healthy Soil Program Act;
- 16          6. "Soil health principle" means a principle that promotes soil  
17 health in a given environment and includes:
- 18           a. keeping soil covered,  
19           b. minimizing soil disturbance on cropland and minimizing  
20           external inputs,  
21           c. maximizing biodiversity,  
22           d. maintaining a living root, or  
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1 e. integrating animals into land management, including  
2 grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects, or  
3 keystone species, such as earthworms;

4 7. "Supported method" means a method that is based upon soil  
5 health principles and is scientifically supported to promote healthy  
6 soil;

7 8. "Technical assistance" means assistance provided to a farmer  
8 or rancher to achieve the purpose of the Healthy Soil Program Act  
9 and includes outreach, education, financial assistance or assistance  
10 with project planning, project design, grant applications, project  
11 implementation or project reporting; and

12 9. "Technical assistance provider" means a local, state,  
13 federal, tribal, or educational entity with demonstrated technical  
14 expertise in designing and implementing agricultural management  
15 practices that contribute to healthy soils and includes a  
16 conservation district, the United States Natural Resources  
17 Conservation Service, the United States Forest Service, the United  
18 States Bureau of Land Management, or the state Forestry Division.

19 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
20 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-6-103 of Title 27A, unless  
21 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

22 A. There is hereby created a healthy soil program to be  
23 administered by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.  
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1 B. The purpose of the program is to promote and support farming  
2 and ranching systems and other forms of land management that  
3 increase soil organic matter, aggregate stability, microbiology and  
4 water retention to improve the health, yield, and profitability of  
5 the soils of the state.

6 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-6-104 of Title 27A, unless  
8 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. The Healthy Soil Program shall be composed of:

- 10 1. A healthy soil assessment and education program;
- 11 2. A healthy soil ~~grants~~ grant program; and
- 12 3. Other programs established by the Oklahoma Conservation  
13 Commission to accomplish the purposes of the Healthy Soil Program  
14 Act.

15 B. In administering the healthy soil assessment and education  
16 program, the Commission shall:

- 17 1. Work through technical assistance providers or eligible  
18 entities to:
  - 19 a. encourage farmers, ranchers, and land managers to  
20 undertake voluntary soil health measurements,
  - 21 b. raise awareness about desirable soil health  
22 characteristics,

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1 c. facilitate on-site, producer-led workshops and  
2 training sessions to promote and engender soil health  
3 stewardship, and

4 d. complete a baseline soil health assessment by testing  
5 the organic matter, water infiltration rate,  
6 microbiology, and aggregate stability of soils, in  
7 addition to analyzing phospholipids and monitoring  
8 soil cover;

9 2. Establish a statewide network of champions to promote soil  
10 health stewardship, offer guidance to producers and land managers,  
11 and encourage teamwork;

12 3. Create a program to provide ongoing training in soil health  
13 stewardship and workshop facilitation for champions and eligible  
14 entities;

15 4. In collaboration with technical assistance providers,  
16 sponsor soil health workshops and training sessions through  
17 conservation districts on farms throughout the state; and

18 5. Educate students and the general public about the importance  
19 of soil health stewardship.

20 C. In administering the healthy soil grant program, the  
21 Commission shall:

22 1. Award grants to eligible entities to provide technical  
23 assistance to producers and land managers in advancing soil health  
24 principles and implementing supported methods;

1           2. Develop a user-friendly grant program application and  
2 application and reporting processes;

3           3. Develop criteria for the award of grants; provided that  
4 grants shall be awarded equitably and priority may be given to  
5 eligible entities serving young producers, veterans, small farms or  
6 ranches or for projects that benefit economically or socially  
7 disadvantaged communities; and

8           4. Ensure that grant funds are only used to advance soil health  
9 and soil health stewardship.

10          D. The Commission shall encourage producer, land manager,  
11 landowner, and interagency collaboration in the management of  
12 healthy soils and shall:

13           1. Work with technical assistance providers to advance soil  
14 health stewardship across private, state, federal, and tribal land  
15 jurisdictions by fostering collaboration among producers, land  
16 managers, and landowners; and

17           2. Conduct outreach to producers and land managers to promote  
18 the program and other federal, state, or local grant opportunities  
19 that support and promote healthy soils.

20          E. In administering the program, the Commission shall support  
21 local economic growth in Oklahoma and shall:

22           1. Identify ways to increase the generation and use of compost  
23 to build healthy soils;

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1        2. To the extent permitted by statute, prioritize in-state  
2 sourcing of the resources needed for the program, including testing  
3 resources, compost, seeds, fencing supplies, and equipment; and

4        3. Support the emerging market for food grown in Oklahoma under  
5 management for healthy soils.

6        F. The Commission may adopt rules to carry out the provisions  
7 of the Heathy Soil Program Act.

8        SECTION 5.        NEW LAW        A new section of law to be codified  
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-6-105 of Title 27A, unless  
10 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11        Funds appropriated to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to  
12 administer the program may be used for:

- 13        1. The healthy soil grant program;
- 14        2. The healthy soil assessment and education program;
- 15        3. Promotion and outreach;
- 16        4. Department staffing support;
- 17        5. Capacity building for eligible entities;
- 18        6. Soil health research;
- 19        7. Travel reimbursement and per diem in accordance with the  
20 State Travel Reimbursement Act, Section 500.1 et seq. of Title 74 of  
21 the Oklahoma Statutes; and
- 22        8. Other expenditures as determined by the Commission to be  
23 necessary to support the overall effective administration of the  
24 program.

1 SECTION 6. This act shall become effective November 1, 2022.

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3 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGET, dated  
4 03/03/2022 - DO PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.  
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