**Worksheet Assignment**

The worksheet (that follows) relies on two web sites to provide information and help guide your responses.

1. Soil health information developed by NRCS can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/> . This web site is maintained by the National Soil Health and Sustainability Team. Highlights of this web site include an electronic version of the Soil Biology Primer (<http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/concepts/soil_biology/biology.html>) and dozens of soil quality technical notes, information sheets, and print-ready flyers that can be used to educate employees, partners and producers.
2. The National Soil Health and Sustainability Team also manages [www.soilquality.org](http://www.soilquality.org). This web site is a collaborative effort involving several partners, including the National Soil Tilth Lab, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Iowa State University. New content for soilquality.org is provided by soil quality/soil health researchers and specialists throughout the country to achieve the partnership's goal of creating a "clearinghouse of useful soil quality/soil health information." A highlight of soilquality.org is its comprehensive overview of basic soil health concepts and soil functions.

**Respond to the following questions or statements using the information provided by the web sites or from your reading assignments.**

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| **Question/Statement** | **Your response** |
| 1. Soil health and Soil Quality are described or defined in different ways in the introductory sections of the web sites. Provide the definition or phrase of soil health that is most useful to you considering responsibilities required in your position. Briefly explain why you made this choice. |  |
| 1. Soil health is related to soil function. List the five most commonly recognized soil functions (and don't miss the various alternative function lists that have been proposed.) |  |
| 1. How well a soil functions for an intended use is evaluated using one or more soil properties. Soil properties are divided into three main categories. List the three main categories of soil properties. |  |
| 1. Several soil quality indicators are listed below. Considering your local conditions, select five indicators that you think would be most important for assessing soil quality. Briefly explain why you selected them.    1. Aggregate Stability    2. Available Water Capacity    3. Biological Diversity    4. Bulk Density    5. Electrical Conductivity    6. Infiltration    7. Slaking    8. Soil Crusting    9. Soil Nitrate & Total Nitrogen    10. Soil Reaction (pH)    11. Soil Respiration    12. Soil Structure & Macropores    13. Soil Test Phosphorus    14. Soil Organic Matter |  |
| 1. Describe the relationship between Soil Health and Conservation Cropping Systems |  |