

SCI Key Farm Assessment Principles

1. Collaborative, Not Evaluative

- Farmer and assessor learn together
- Focus on "what do you see?" discussions
- Joint problem-solving approach

2. Visual Field Focus

- Emphasize hands-on field evaluation
- Use NRCS-inspired, proven assessment methods
- Document with photos for progress tracking
- Less paperwork, more field time

3. Dual-Purpose Efficiency

- Soil sampling and assessment conducted in a single visit
- Field tests serve both soil health monitoring and management assessment
- Coordinated photo documentation for multiple purposes

4. Seasonal Adaptation

- Early season assessment focuses on infrastructure, residue, and planned practices
- Visual scoring adapted for seasonal visibility limitations
- Emphasis on management evidence rather than fully mature practices

5. Quantitative Integration

- Use soil test results to inform assessment scoring
- Combine visual observations with measurement data
- Document both immediate observations and planned implementations

Pre-Assessment Preparation

1. **Review farmer's self-assessment** and current farm plan
2. **Pre-populate known data** (Field IDs, current Engagement Levels, SHMP locations)
3. **Plan representative field locations** that include designated SHMPs