DJ May:

Welcome to the Decode 6 Podcast, where we take your questions about carbon and ecosystem services and match them to the experts with the answers. I'm your host, DJ May. Now, you may be wondering what is the story behind Decode 6? And I'm very excited to introduce Dr. Chris Boomsma, the Director of Science & Strategy for Decode 6. He is here to talk with me about why the project started, how Decode 6 got its interesting name, and what you can expect to see from us here on the podcast and on decode6.org. So Chris, welcome. It's great to have you here.

Chris Boomsma:

Thanks, DJ. Glad to be here and to chat with you today.

DJ May:

Perfect. Well, we're going to start with the big question. So what started this whole thing? Where did the idea of Decode 6 come from?

Chris Boomsma:

Yeah, the idea for Decode 6 came from comments we were hearing from farmers, certified crop advisors, other people working in the field, that they just did not understand carbon and ecosystem services markets. They didn't know the basics and they certainly didn't know how to deal with the science around those basics.

And so we said, "Hey, there's got to be an education platform devoted to this," and so we approached our three scientific societies, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America, pitched the idea to them. They liked it, and so here we go. We're off to the races now with this platform.

DJ May:

Great. So how did you go from that idea to creating Decode 6?

Chris Boomsma:

Well, we spent a lot of time chatting with a lot of different people from various organizations. Some of those audiences that I mentioned before that are intended to be receiving the education content from this platform, well, we talked with them. We talked with various commodity groups, AG input providers. Again, some farmers. We talked with the government, some other non-profits, and we got feedback from all of them, and they really gave us sound guidance on what to develop with this education platform. What it looks like, what should be on it, who it should be addressing, and how we can reach some underserved communities we haven't talked to before.

And we also chatted a lot internally here at our organization, got some great ideas on how to build this website out and how to make it accessible for all. So after doing some of those initial interviews and chatting with those folks, we got ourselves a consultant who helped us with web design and building out the website, and we got us a lot of content providers. We've got a lot of folks who volunteered to help build content for this website. All science-based, all bite-sized, all unbiased, all easily digestible for our intended audience.

DJ May:

Excellent. Yeah, that is a huge advantage of the membership of the societies and the folks we're working with. So we had the concept, so how did you move from that to the name Decode 6? What's the name about?

Chris Boomsma:

Yeah, Decode 6, that's right, it's an interesting name. It's very unconventional. Usually in the sciences we build out descriptive names, names that really, by their nature, speak to what that thing is. This is more of a distinct name.

Decode, obviously, the word is pretty obvious. We're trying to decode carbon and ecosystem services in the respective markets. But 6, an interesting play here. It's the atomic number for carbon, and also there are 6 main areas that we're trying to focus on, mainly 6 ecosystem services: water, carbon, which I've mentioned before, markets and economics, fertilizer, habitat, and climate. So those are the 6 main thrusts or topics that we're going to tackle on this education platform. It's pretty diverse.

We'll start off mainly on carbon and some ally things, and then eventually with time we'll broaden into some other stuff. So you can look for material coming out on carbon, water, fertilizer, some in markets and economics, and then with time we'll get more into Habitat and climate.

But to be honest with you, all this stuff starts blending together in some cases, so I think our listeners, our readers, our viewers, will get some of this education content from all these categories relatively early on.

DJ May:

Yeah. Yeah, there's definitely some overlap. So what can everyone expect to see from the podcast and the website? What are some qualities everything's going to have?

Chris Boomsma:

Well, I think everything is going to have, for folks, a very unified look. You should know that this is Decode 6 just by how it looks. And we're going to make sure that it has its own identity and that it delivers what I said before. Everything is science-based.

So first of all, everything that you see is going to be focused on the science, it's going to be focused on the facts. It's not going to be about opinions or commercials. You can expect that to be the case. You can also expect it to be unbiased. Again, we don't want this to be a commercial.

Nobody's making a pitch here. We're just trying to give you freely-accessible content that is completely unbiased.

Next, they can expect everything to be free. Everything that is on this site will be free of charge. So articles, podcasts, videos, maybe some infographics, anything else that shows up, it should be free to all. And if that isn't the case, you know you're not at Decode 6.

It's all going to be bite-sized. A lot of stuff that we see is long and maybe a little bit tough to digest, but this is going to be small bite-sized content, rapid digestion, just a few minutes. You'll hear a short podcast. A few minutes, you can watch a short video. And just a few minutes is all it takes to read a short article with everything answering one specific question.

DJ May:

So that's the story behind Decode 6. You've heard what we're all about and it's bite-sized, unbiased, science-based content that answers your questions about carbon and ecosystem services. The website officially launches on Monday, November 7th, so come check us out at decode6.org. You can sign up for our monthly content roundup, find us on social media, and don't forget to subscribe to get the podcast.

We will have new podcast episodes with extras, answering your questions about carbon and ecosystem services on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, and a constant stream of new content coming out on decode6.org.

Also, if you're going to be in Baltimore, the Decode 6 team will be at the ASA-CSSA-SSSA annual meeting. We have a special symposium on Monday afternoon to talk about the future of carbon and ecosystem services. It starts at 1:30 PM and afterward there's a reception for the Decode 6 launch. It would be a great networking event. You can come meet the Decode 6 team, you can say hi to Chris and to me, and do some networking. We would love to see you there.

And finally, I just want to take a second to thank my colleagues, the advisory team members who provided us with the input to build the site, and the boards of the Agronomy, Crop, and Ssoil science societies, as well as the Agronomic Science Foundation for all of their support. It's been really fantastic to have everyone's help, and we could not have put Decode 6 together without all of you. So come visit us at decode6.org, subscribe to the podcast, and find us on socials. We can't wait to decode carbon and ecosystem services with you.