

## 6-2-23 Ask the Operator Q&A and Discussion

- what percentage of soils in your regions are still "managed" with full tillage
- Outstanding work by our "retired" supporters! Thank you all!
- What is wrong with pointing fingers? Beating around the bush and not addressing the elephant in the room for the past several decades led us to this crash, and will probably lead to another.
- No one farmer is the problem. But farmers think as individuals, not a community of connected fields. How do you change a community of wind erosion prevention BMPs?
- Beyond legislation, is there threat of civil litigation in IL — vs farmer and/or landowner with deeper pockets?
- Rick K., explain the type of person the farmer is in terms of character. HE could be an ally?
- What is the profile of the typical farmer that still uses conventional tillage? Age? Land tenure? Full vs part time?
- Don't pass laws...but pay farmers to do the "right" thing? Why should John Q Public pay for that...why??
- we can inspire the change
- We've been doing what we call Regenerative Resource Management for several decades. It has increased our infiltration 6 fold and reduced our out of pocket non-land costs by 2 to 3 hundred dollars per acre. When we try to explain that to other farmers they can't understand how that's possible. So we must be full of bull. We've had much better presenting this to non-farmers
- And we can't get in to talk and share. The issue of law is broken into legislative and case law. One by government bodies, the other by judges. Is something isn't addressed legislatively, then it will be addressed in case law. Judges verses a legislative body --- two entirely different processes and potential outcomes. Civil lawsuits will write law on this issue if ignored.
- How much does our tax code impact all of this? Isn't buying machinery and fuel a tax write off?
- I appreciate this discussion and insights. As someone who works for a university and is helping implement a subsidy program to promote cover crop usage, I am becoming aware of all the USDA/NRCS documentation required by farmers. Has anyone had an easy or difficult process enrolling in subsidy programs? If so, do you have any suggestions to make it easier for farmers to enroll and receive payments? Thank you for your time!
- What is the public getting for the investments made to date? Isn't it reasonable for the public to expect that natural resources (whether it is soil, water, or the spotted owl) be protected in exchange for their investment?
- this is why the public should care and pay with their tax dollars towards federal crop subsidies. Their tax dollars go to help spread the risk that farmers take in growing FOOD for the population. This is how the public gets involved in their food system
- Teaching does work in Kansas many groups worked to improve water quality for people in Wichita, Kansas, was the Cheney Watershed area. was started in the early 2000's and

has been a success and changed farmer's on protecting environment and having clean water.

- Was more having field days to show how to make the change and be more profitable."
- I would answer that question by saying that farm program payments like EQIP and CSP are short-lived and are meant to develop good habits. I've participated in both programs, am no longer in those programs, but still using the practices I learned while enrolled in those programs.
- the funds need to go to like Rick said. Those doing conservation practices, I agree with that
- As far as education, I think the key is getting to the high school and universities. I know the local university agronomy degree feeds right into conventional practices. Do any of the panelists know of a coordinated effort for this?
- Will threat of litigation cause the landowner to reconsider the practices of the farmers they rent their land to?
- 45-46 counties in WISC have county lead groups per Tony Peirick. This works out to 5 of 6 of non forested counties.
- Wisconsin has good collaboration between NRCS, state ag Department (DACP), and DNR. They have a tool SNAP+ to plan nutrient use and soil loss. What would be wrong with developing a national tool to use to conservation plan combined with NMP?
- And we want our Ag to stay in America - we don't want to rely on another country to provide us with our food, fuel, fiber and forage. Ag is one of our best Defense mechanisms.
- If a farmer is concerned about soil health, and we know that soil health improves crop/plant health, we need create a market that will reward the farmer that cares about the quality of the product. Currently I am paid the same as the guy who is based on efficiency and not quality of product. I don't know how to get that done though, Not pushing others down but want to create a better market that will be nutrient enriched. That is what I am trying to prioritize. Don't know to do that on a large scale though
- If the panel's approach of being friendly and leading with a hopeful olive branch is correct, what's the realistic expected passage of time of rapidly scaling operations becoming curious enough to stop in to learn how to farm different where it becomes meaningful % on a national acreage basis? and what is the coinciding opportunity cost of lost soil/water quality in the interim. And is the "hope floats" group think complicit in that time value/cost?
- In Indiana, we have worked really really hard to move the needle on conservation....and yet we are stuck at about 25-30% of acreage in a high residue planting (no-till / strip-till)....and we have worked really hard and are up to about 10% of acres that get a cover crop each year. What are the next step(s) to help move the needle(s)?
- Bill Gates might be wise to start paying attention to farmers and practices of those he rents his rapidly increasing landownings to — lawyers will find him
- UC Davis, Chico State and CAI Poly SLO in Calif:  
["https://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/mentor-network/](https://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/mentor-network/)
- someone said farmers like to hear from other farmers, in South Dakota there is a mentor network to help educate producers.

- Thank you for including training for all USDA employees. I think it should involve employees from not just NRCS, but also employees from FSA and RMA as well in their respective counties and state training. Most colleges are dropping Agronomy degrees and going towards Natural Resources or Environmental Science Degrees.
- Hi. Do we know what the cost of the practice changes are (cover crop seed, new equipment for no till) for the farmers in the area where the wind erosion occurred in Illinois? We are transitioning growers to regenerative ag practices in the U.K. and help farmers model the costs and benefits and line up the financing for them. Contact me at [srace@crop-performance.com](mailto:srace@crop-performance.com) (415) 582-3989. Regards, Stephanie Race"
- Zach Johnson has a million followers on YouTube. In my opinion, this group actively supporting him would scale things far faster than any other activity. Are any of you working with him?
- Thank you all - keep up the great work! It is all very appreciated.
- Thanks for the discussion. Good job.