



Developing a Sustainability Program

Learning Objectives

- Articulate demand for sustainability
- Review products product lineup
- Assemble a suite of products and services
- Build an internal communication strategy
- Summarize accomplishments
- Promote sustainability services to producers and the community



The Demand for Sustainable Agricultural Products

Chapter 1

Growing Demand for Sustainability

Consumers are increasingly:

- Critical of ag production method
- Demanding transparency
- Seeking out products that align with their values



Growing Demand for Sustainability

People born after 1981 make up 25% of the population and are increasingly asking questions about where and how their food is produced.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT = QUALITY

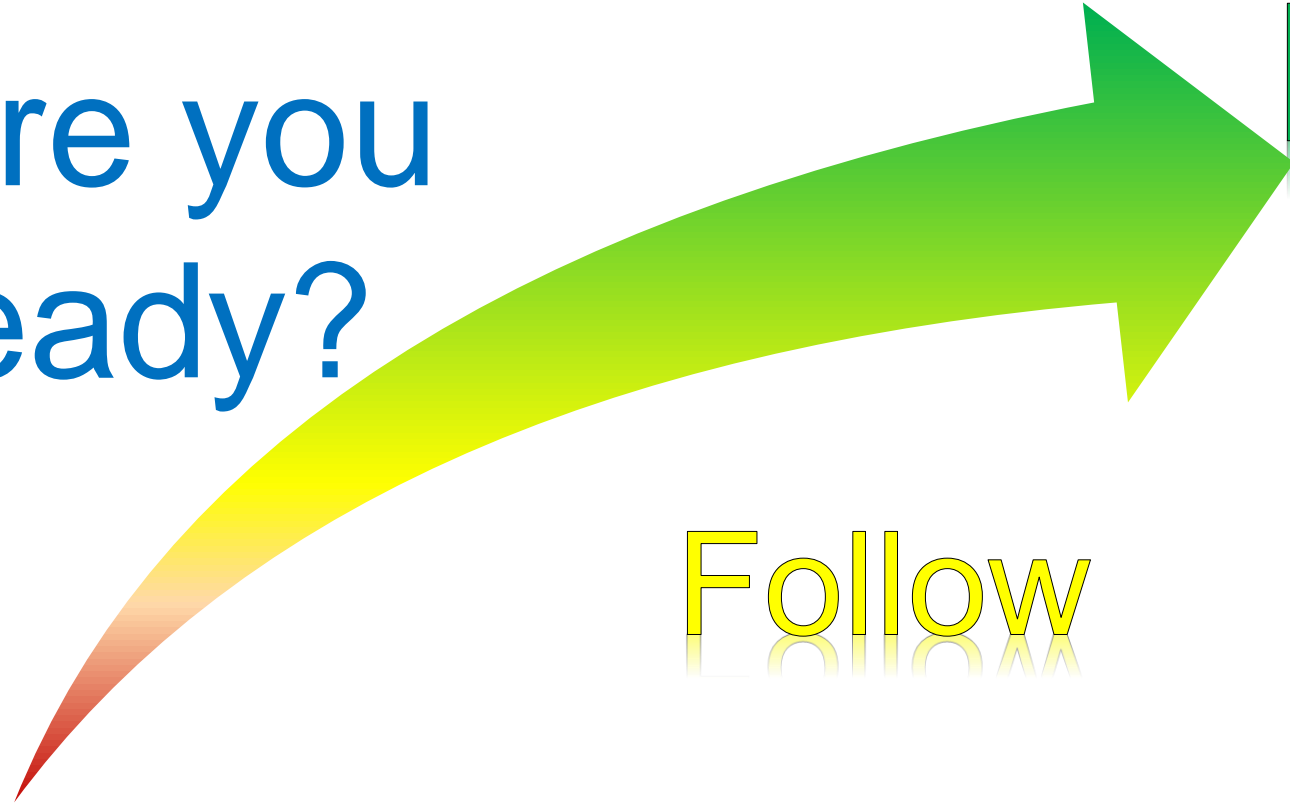


Food manufacturer sustainability goals

- Reducing environmental impact
- Sustainably sourcing raw agricultural materials
- Reducing water use
- Reducing greenhouse gases



Are you
ready?



Lead

Follow

Get left behind

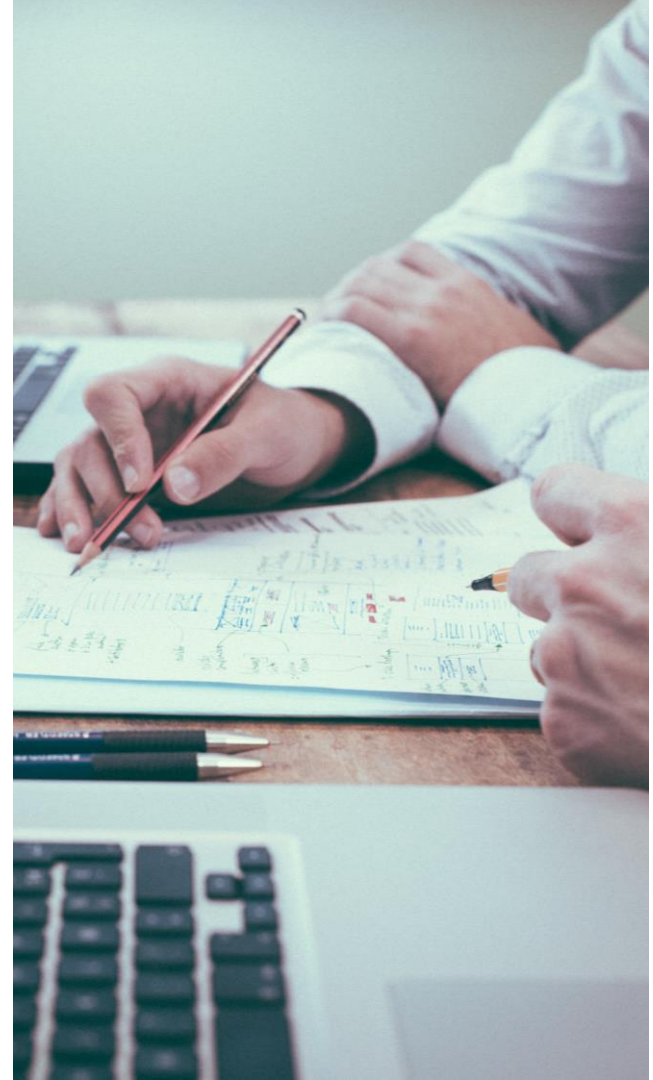
Discussion

Getting Started Developing a Sustainability Program

Chapter 2

Getting Started

- Make the decision
- Review organizational mission and vision
- Inventory menu of services and products
- Assess employee knowledge, skills and abilities
- Develop a communication plan



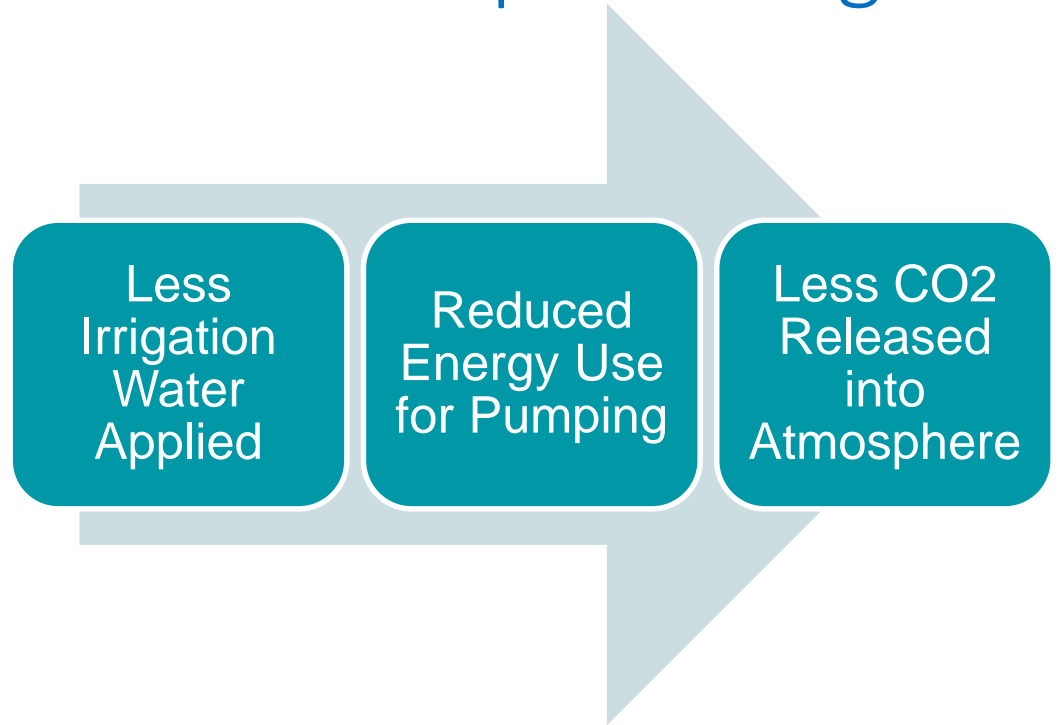
Ag Inputs Impact the Environment

- Biodiversity
- Energy Use
- Greenhouse Gases
- Irrigation Water Use
- Land Use
- Soil Carbon
- Soil Conservation
- Water Quality

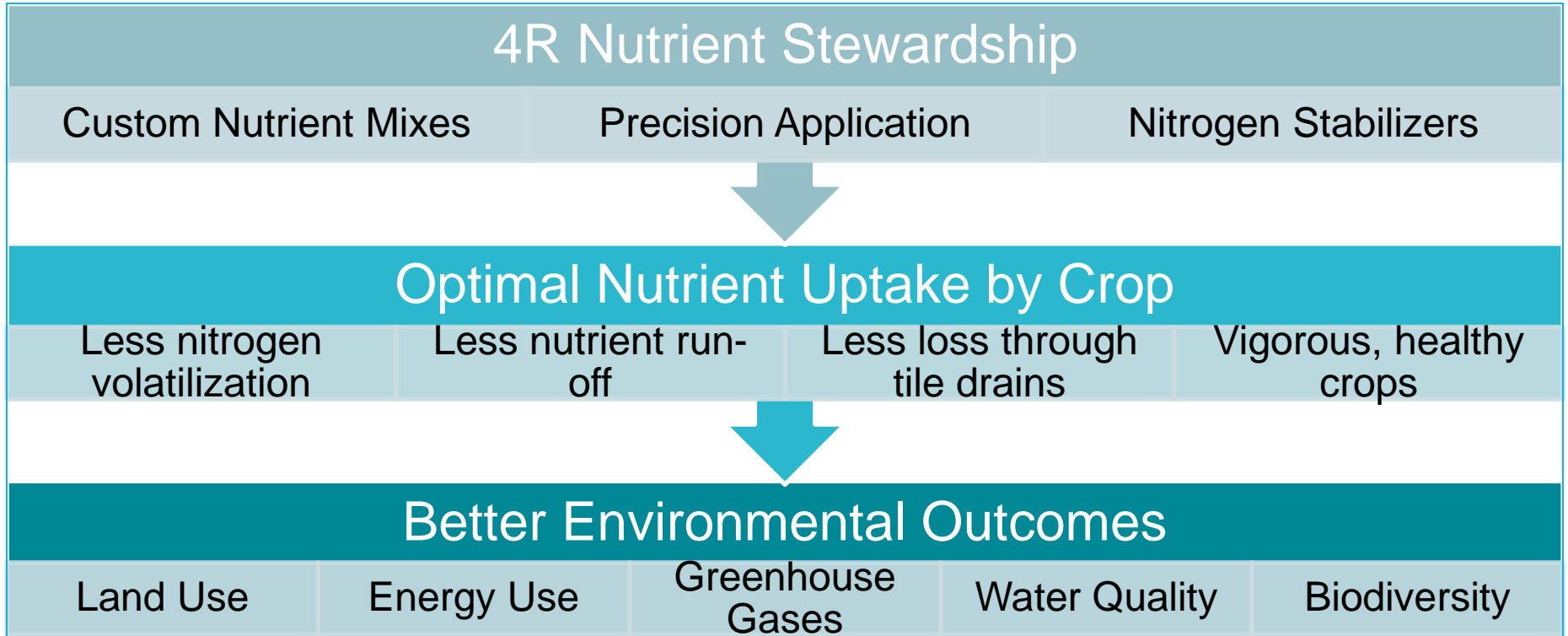


Connecting Products and Services to Environmental Outcomes Example 1: Irrigation

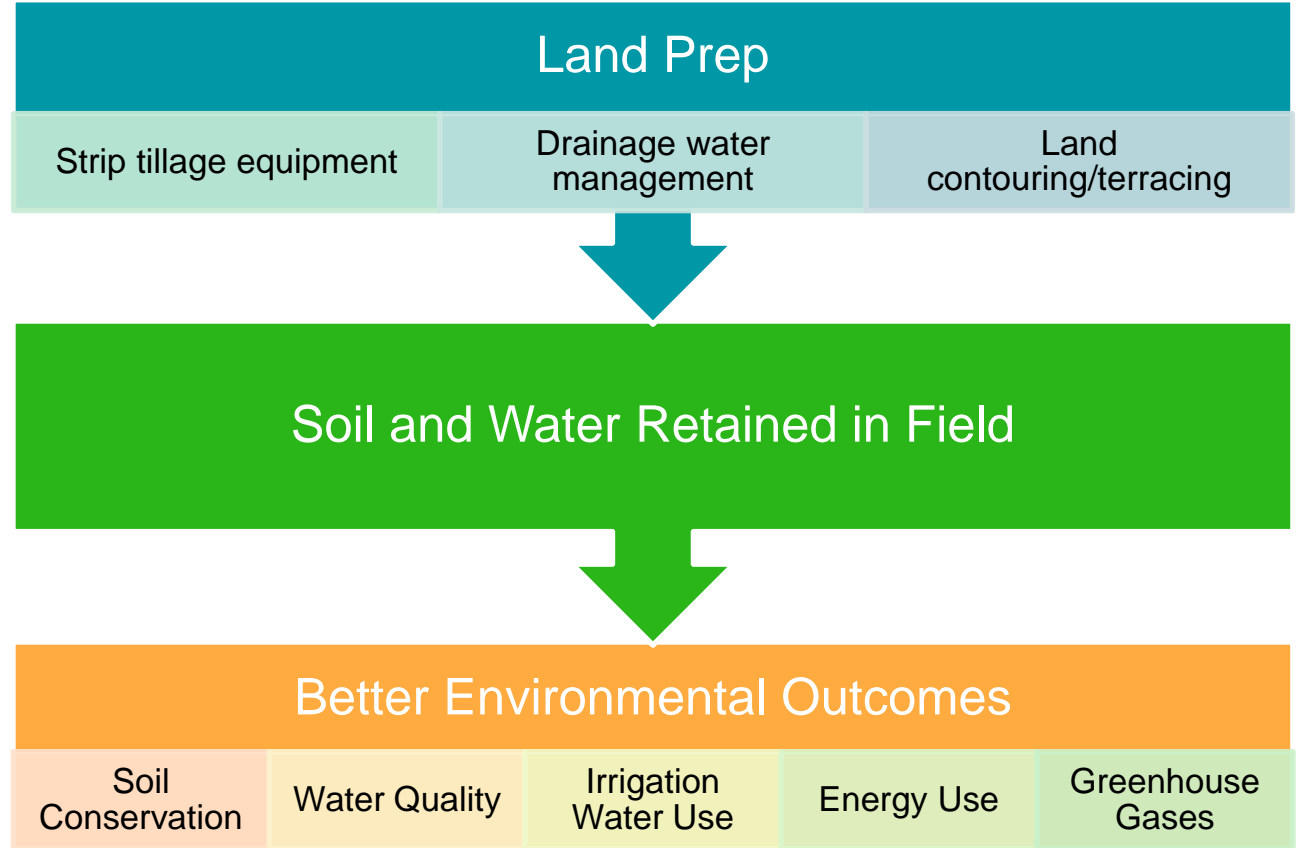
- irrigation audit
- flow meters
- soil moisture sensors
- scheduling software
- delivery systems



Connecting to Environmental Outcomes Example 2: Crop Nutrition and 4R Nutrient Stewardship



Connecting
Products and
Services to
Environmental
Outcomes



Better
Outcomes

- Biodiversity
- Land Use
- Soil Conservation
- Water Quality
- Irrigation Water Use
- Energy Use
- Greenhouse Gases

Integrated Pest
Management

Crop Protection Services

- Crop Scouting
- Pathology Testing
- Soft Chemistries

Connecting
Products and
Services to
Environmental
Outcomes

Nutrients

Crop
Protection

Digital
Solutions

Irrigation

Precision
Technology

Application

Seeds

Land Prep

Post
Harvest

Drainage

Harvest

Exercise

Discussion

Building an Internal Communication Strategy

Chapter 3

Build an Internal Communication Strategy

- Align with company values, mission, and vision
- Address why and how it will work
- Include all business units from the start



Assess Staff Expertise and Interest

- ✓ Cover crops
- ✓ Irrigation technology
- ✓ Precision ag
- ✓ Data management
- ✓ Soil Health
- ✓ Water Quality



Staff Professional
Development and
Continuing
Education



SPECIALIZED
CONFERENCE

Discussion

Summarize Sustainability Accomplishments

Chapter 4

Summarize Accomplishments with Measurement Tools

Measure, document,
demonstrate environmental
outcomes



Summarize Accomplishments with Customer Testimonials

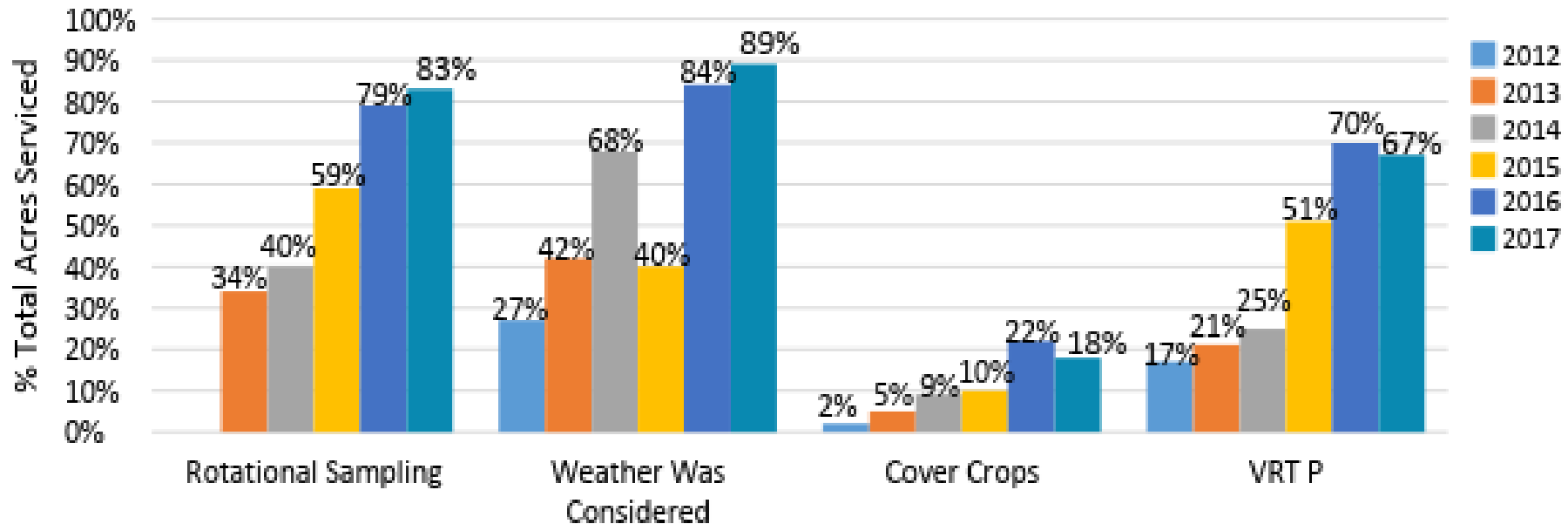
- Create buy-in
- Growers like to hear from other growers
- Collect success stories
- Ask permission to cite them



“My CCA helped me stop rill erosion on my hilly fields. As a result, I’m saving \$500 on repairs alone every spring.”

Summarize Accomplishments by Tracking Practice Adoption

Major Product and Service Trends 2012-2017 in the Sandusky River Watershed



Track Accomplishments by Offering Evidence of Environmental Benefits

Product/Service	Total P loss reduction (lbs/acre)
Cover crops	0.63
Soil tests/apply at Extension recs	0.53
Variable rate P applications	0.59
Custom banding	0.39
Apply in rooting zone (strip till)	0.68
Notify farmers after P applications to lightly incorporate (2-3")	1.04
Apply for following crop only	0.10

Summarize Accomplishments by Making the Economic Case

Use local data

Data sources:

- Extension
- USDA-ARS
- Customer surveys

TABLE 6. 2016 Changes in Income Attributed to Cover Crops, Diaz Farm, \$/acre

Category	\$/acre
Planting	-27.91
Termination	1.28
Fertilizer Application	0.00
Erosion-Related Repairs	16.33
Learning Activities	-6.40
Additional Scouting	-2.00
Change in Corn Yield	37.70
2016 NET CHANGE IN INCOME	19.00

From Datu Research Case Study: Diaz Farm

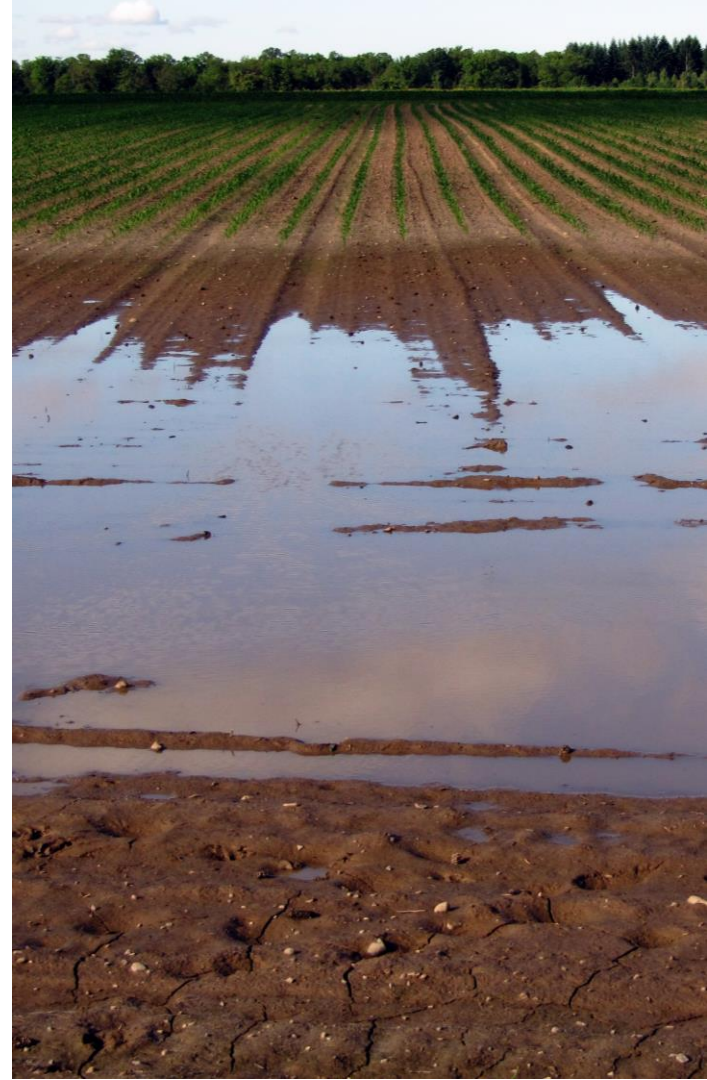
Discussion

External Communications and Marketing

Chapter 5

Base Approach on Customer Perspective

- Beliefs, opinions and assumptions about sustainability
- Existing knowledge and previous experiences
- Personal values and top-priority concerns



Select Appropriate Format

- Brochures
- Grower meetings
- Roundtable discussions
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Local conferences
- Social media
- Videos



Photo: NRCS



Develop Printed Marketing Materials

- Direct benefits to grower
- Steps for adoption
- Resources for support
- Shared responsibility

**DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP
THROUGH SERVICE**



Photo: NRCS

Video Farmer Testimonial: Equipment



Video Testimonial: Cover Crop Seed



Video Testimonial: Nitrogen Stabilizer



Discussion

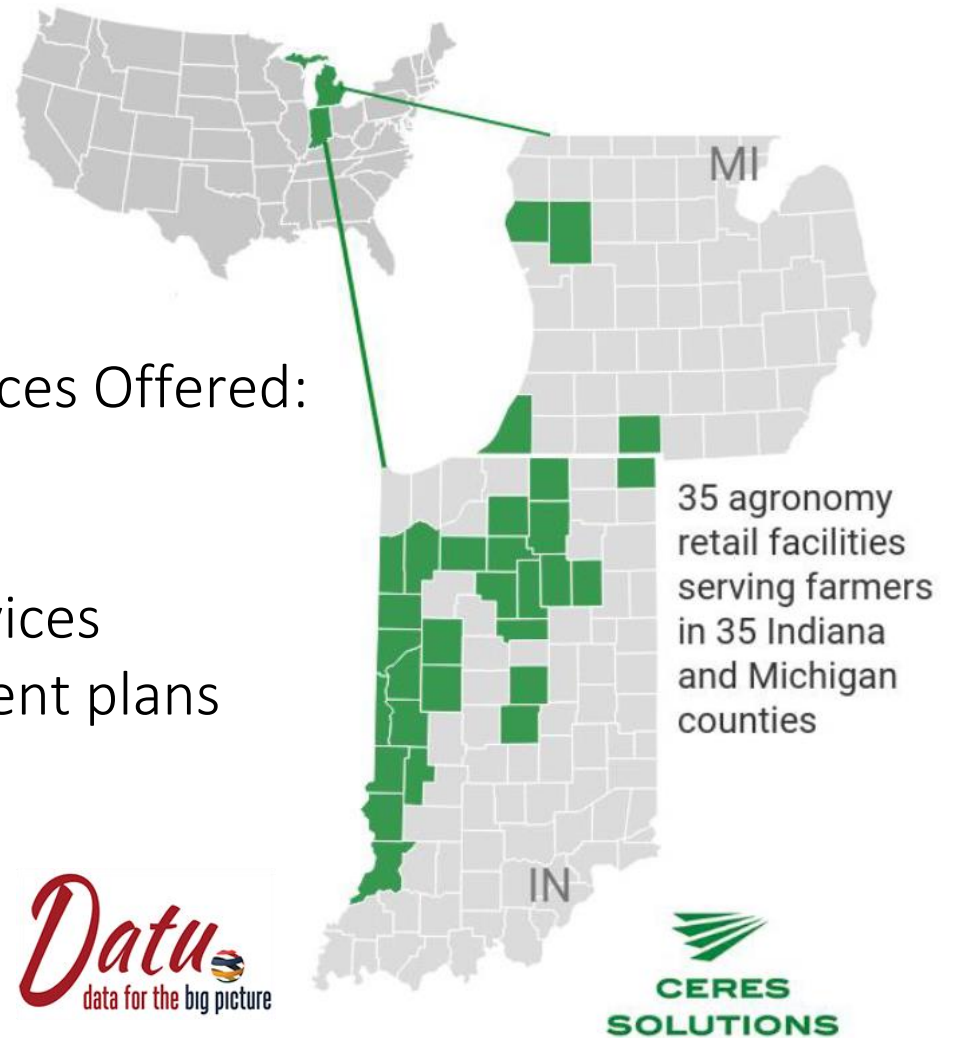
Ag Retailer Case Studies

Chapter 6

Case Study: Ceres Solutions

Cover Crops Products and Services Offered:

- Advising services
- Selling cover crop seeds
- Seeding and termination services
- Adjusting nutrient management plans
- Soil sampling



Case Study: Ceres Solutions

Keys to Success:

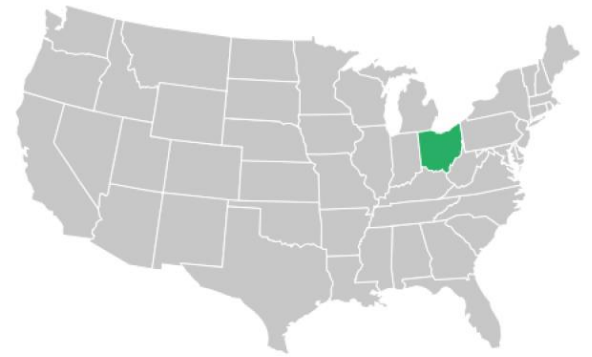
- Train staff
- Market the program
- Offer decision support
- Build partnerships



Centered on you.

Case Study: Sunrise Cooperative, Inc.

- Cover crop seeds
- Management and termination
- Research
- Grower meetings
- Online videos



Farmer owned ag, grain,
feed, crop insurance and
energy coop

Sunrise

COOPERATIVE
Success grows here.

Case Study: Sunrise Cooperative, Inc. and Cover Crops

- Make no promises
- Understand customer goals
- Communicate with local NRCS
- Educate growers



Sunrise
COOPERATIVE
Success grows here.

Discussion

Review

- Increasing consumer demand for sustainable products
- Added value for growers and input providers
- Shift - not total overhaul
- Engage staff from the beginning



Thank you!

Sustainability Programming for Ag Retailers and CCAs (SPARC)



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