

REVOLUTIONIZING CONSERVATION DELIVERY

Accurate Soil Savings Estimates Quickly, Easily

What effect would reducing tillage or adding cover crops have on the longevity of a farmer's most important asset? How much money might a farmer expect to save by cutting soil erosion?

United Suppliers with headquarters in Ames, Iowa, is helping their customers across the Midwest get answers to those questions and more with SoilCalculator, an online soil loss estimator. Stan Buman, a conservation specialist with United Suppliers, recently demonstrated the program to ag retail customer Mark Stutsman of Hills, Iowa, and two of the farmers Stutsman's serves.

Buman ran through SoilCalculator on Doug Lackender and Phil Winborn's farms to help them understand how much soil they're losing and what changes they could make in their operation to cut soil losses. SoilCalculator took soil loss one step farther to estimate how much the soil loss was costing.



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"Working with them (Stutsmans) links everything together." Phil Winborn – Johnson County Farmer

"If a farmer makes a change in his cultural practices, it's kind of neat to sit in an office and see the effects on soil loss," says Stutsman, chief operating officer at Stutsmans. "It's a really neat tool. I've not seen anything like this where you can talk to a grower about his cultural practices, things as common as contouring and strip till, and find out what effect that has on soil loss."

Speedy Answers Significant

"I've been around the soil loss equation a long time and know what it tells us—which practices are losing soil and how much," says Winborn, a Stutsman's customer who farms

Precision Conservation Practical. Smart. Fast.

Growers have limited resources to help them make cost-effective, timely decisions for managing soil and water on their farmland. Today, with the arrival of Agren's precision conservation tools, that is changing.

Precision conservation involves targeting conservation practices to places on the landscape where they will be most effective. It is applying practices in the right place, at the right time, and at the right scale, to optimize cost and benefits. Precision conservation redefines the way landscape conservation is approached and minimizes the amount of time and resources required to protect soil and water.

At Agren, we are passionate about agriculture and natural resources. Our work to discover and develop new technologies to target, plan, and apply soil and water conservation has resulted in a full-suite of conservation planning software that can be used to help farmers protect their soil and water resources and applied nutrients.

Thanks to a recent partnership between Agren and United Suppliers, Iowa growers can now take advantage of precision conservation services offered through their local ag retailer. United Suppliers' SoilVantage™ program teams an experienced conservation planner with Agren's precision conservation software to offer growers soil and water management options that are practical and smart. This makes good sense -- to the grower, to the landowner, to agriculture, and to the community.

SoilVantage™ services include soil savings plans, soil erosion and steepness data layers, and site specific plans for structural conservation practices including grassed waterways, sediment control basins, grade stabilization structures, ponds and wetlands.

For SoilVantage™ services, contact your local ag retailer or phone a United Suppliers representative directly at 712-830-7713.



640 acres of corn, soybeans and cereal rye 6 miles west of Hills. “But this program was quick and that makes it very effective. In a matter of 20 minutes to half an hour you can put your information into the program and find out which tillage systems or cropping systems are most beneficial to you.”

That impressed Stutsman as well. “Results from the program are detailed, and what’s really nice about the program is how fast you can get the answers to your questions. It’s just a matter of minutes,” Stutsman says. “I also really like the program’s simplicity. We spent about 30 minutes in the office learning how to run it. Anyone can run it and get powerful answers quickly. Any place there’s agriculture row crop and decisions to be made, this is a fantastic tool.”

Soil Savings Surprising

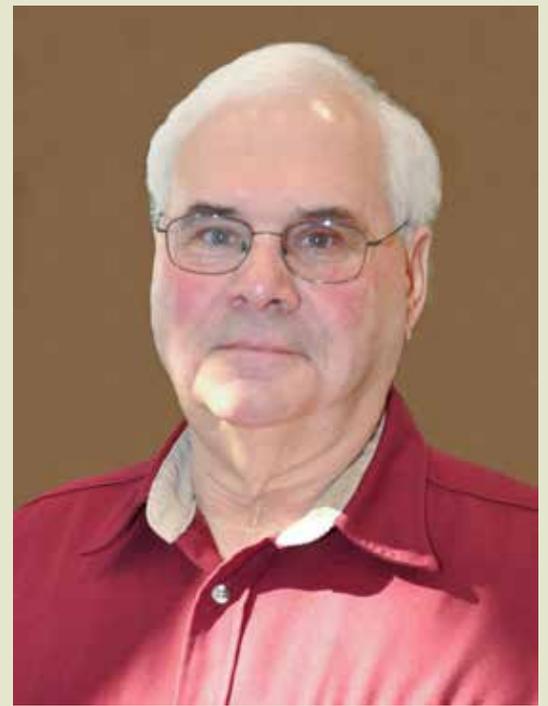
“What impressed me about the program is that you don’t have to do hardly anything as far as disturbing the soil to cause soil movement,” says Lackender, a no-till farmer who also has terraces on sloping cropland 4 miles west of Hills. “It was really surprising to me how much soil you could save—and how easy it would be in my case—just by flying on cover crops or cutting out one field operation. You could take soil loss from 2 tons an acre to practically nothing.”

SoilCalculator Fits into Ag Supplier Package

Both farmers are appreciative and not surprised Stutsman is offering the SoilCalculator tool to them. “Your ag supplier is one of the links in the chain. Stutsman has always been really progressive in this kind of thing,” Lackender says. “Working with them links everything together.” Winborn agrees. “This is part of the whole package that Stutsman’s brings to us,” Winborn says. “I think bringing

new technology to us is something that Stutsman does really well.”

“It’s another layer of value we can add for the grower,” Stutsman says. “Environmentalism is picking up some steam in the agricultural community. We know we have to do better. How do we go down that road without making mistakes? As we add layers of data in all the information farmers are collecting on their farms, this is just one more layer that helps them make good decisions.”



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Helps Farmers Validate Conservation

“If you were to try to validate what you’re doing in the field by yourself, it’d be very difficult. But this tool absolutely helps a farmer validate what effect his entire operation has on soil erosion,” Stutsman says. “With this tool, going into a new growing season, you know what your risks are if you are going to change a practice or practices, and you also know what your rewards could be for that.”

“There’s still soil loss, even with cover crops, and this program shows that,” Winborn says. “So it shows there’s room for improvement. But it also shows what I’m doing is pretty good.”

“There’s a lot of pressure here for water quality,” Stutsman explains. “We’re trying to do things correctly for the environment, and I just think this is a good path to go down. We want to show our community and our neighbors that we’re paying attention and doing the very best we can.”



P: 712.792.6248

W: www.agrentools.com