



We live in the information age where technology is more available than ever. With smart phones we are able to access information in the blink of an eye, but how are you using this technology and information in your farm operation?

According to a December, 2016, survey by Corn & Soybean Digest,

the most common answer to how farmers use data was in yield documentation, boundary mapping, GPS guidance and variable rate application. There is data readily available that allows us to do a variety of different things, but what good is the technology if we aren't using this data to make practical business decisions?

In December, Craig Moritz, Vice President and Branch Manager of our Kingsley office, and I had the opportunity to attend The Ag Data Conference to learn more about technology that is available to producers to help maximize efficiency. According to Dave Muth, founder of AgSolver, there are between two and three million acres that are planted each year with an expected loss. With margins in agriculture as tight as they are today, in many operations this can be the difference between making and losing money each year. In fact, Muth believes in nearly every field there is 20% of the area that is predictably and consistently not profitable.

There is a variety of software available that helps farmers to be above profitability. Each program can offer valuable information to users and it is up to the user to find the software that best fits their needs. Some of the software focuses on agronomics and maximizing plant health, while others bring more of a financial application to the data. This software can

help farmers identify specific areas that are less profitable in a field so decisions can be made to improve total profitability.

A lot of times we view each field as one unit. By using technology that is available, we can further segregate a field and treat each acre separately. We can then identify unique 'businesses' within each field and better manage performance. Using data, we can focus more on Return on Investment (ROI) and manage each zone of a field to maximize profitability which can sometimes be different than maximizing yields. Not only can agronomy and operation decisions then be made on where to spend more resources within a field, but in certain situations the data may show that producers need to be more focused on land improvement (like improving draining) or using precision management to maximize yields while minimizing cost. In extreme cases where profitability is in doubt, alternative low cost revenues (like CRP) can be explored. Technology can help make these decisions based on data to focus on maximizing ROI.

Many times your equipment may already be set up to provide the data needed to make these decisions, but it can be easy to be overloaded with information. Much of the time it comes down to interpreting what information is available. The key is to turn Precision Ag into Decision Ag to maximize profitability. Find trusted advisors that can help with data interpretation. At United Bank of Iowa, your lender wants to be on your management team. Find out why "The Difference is Here" at United Bank of Iowa by visiting with your lender about how to use the data that is available in your operation.

Jake Schaben
V.P. Branch Manager, Dunlap Office

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UBI Hosts Ag Seminar with Dr. Brent Gloy

Ag customers of UBI recently had the opportunity to listen to well-known ag economist Dr. Brent Gloy when UBI hosted an Ag Outlook and Trends Seminar. The seminar was presented in Denison, Holstein, and Rockwell City on February 7 and 8. Dr. Gloy also presented a training session for all the UBI ag lenders.

