



Top reasons to work with a crop consultant

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To thrive in today's challenging environment, you need every advantage. A trusted, experienced crop consultant can connect you to the latest technology and provide insights that help save you time, yield, and money. Read on to learn how the right service provider can deliver a return on your investment.

Ability to work efficiently and effectively

A recent study by Cornell researchers found that most producers recognize the benefits that could be gained by adding new technologies to their farms. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed believe that technology can provide efficiencies and environmental benefits. Higher profits, time savings, and opportunities to reduce environmental impacts are some of the biggest motivators.

Tapping into a crop consultant, who works day-in and day-out with technology, can be a real benefit for producers.

Nearly 75 percent of producers surveyed in a recent Cornell University study believe that technology can provide efficiencies and environmental benefits.



Dorian Gatchell, founder and owner of Minnesota Agricultural Services, uses an online scouting system to access just about everything he needs to know about a particular field, in real-time, on his mobile device. This saves his clients time and money. A GPS tracking feature helps him better manage progress in a field, ensuring survey work is done efficiently and accurately.

"When a customer gets my real-time reports, they can see exactly where we were in the field, not just where we found an issue or had an observation," explained Gatchell.





Access to new technologies

Venture capital firms are betting on agricultural technology and have been investing in it at an annual rate of approximately 80 percent beginning in 2012, with investments totaling \$3 billion in 2015. Even if only a small portion of these investments produces successful technologies, the resulting wave of innovation could increase farm yields to an extent unmatched since the early days of mechanization.

With so much available technology and data, there's a lot that could make a dramatic difference for producers and those resources will continue to become more plentiful. The right data supports better-informed decisions, helping to service crops more efficiently — and ultimately creating greater value and profits.

A crop consultant can serve as an independent resource, connecting you to the right technologies for each job. They can also create a system that works best for you.



Create more value for farmers

Cornell researchers also found that even with all of the excitement surrounding new technology, many producers aren't always sure how to make use of the data.

A crop consultant can help. Gatchell said he can provide more data to his customers so they can quickly confront issues. The latest technology allows him to analyze the economic impact of a problem and its potential solutions, and recommend the best course of action for each producer and situation.

Personal touch

Almost 20 percent of producers say they have no one to help them understand and apply data to their operations. More than one-third rely on family to help make decisions. A PrecisionAg Institute survey found of producers working with a crop consultant, nearly half say it's a positive relationship.

Any consulting investment you make should lead to higher yields and more efficient, effective crop management. Choose a consultant who understands how to best use technology for your benefit, and offers meaningful insights based on data and experience.

The PrecisionAg Institute study shows that the people behind the technology are just as important as the technology. Producers identified two main themes that contribute to a positive relationship with consultants.

Experience. Consultants need knowledge and experience to interpret the data and provide expert advice. Look for a partner who clearly understands your business goals and can offer creative ideas to drive yield and profitability. It's important that they listen and support you, even when they don't agree with you.

Good partner skills. All of the data and experience in the world is no good if there isn't a good person behind it. Look at your consultant like you would a successful farm business. A partnership isn't made in a season; it needs time to build and grow into something trusted and long-term. Don't be afraid to ask your consultant about the research they've done to back up their recommendations.

The old adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts really holds true when it comes to farming. By combining a consultant's insights and experience with the latest technology, data, and resources, you get the total package, and can focus on what you do best: farm.

The PrecisionAg Institute study clearly shows that the people behind the technology are just as important as the technology and tools. There were two main themes that were identified by growers on the qualities that contribute to a positive grower/consultant relationship.

Experience. The first was that you need to have the experience and knowledge to interpret the data and provide expert counsel. Growers are looking for a partner who clearly understands their business goals and can come up with creative ideas to drive yields and profitability for them. It's important for you to listen to the grower and support his or her business goals, whether or not you agree on them.

Good partner skills. All of the great data and experience in the world is no good to a

grower if there's not a good person behind it. Growers see a relationship with you like a successful farm business. It's a partnership that isn't made in a season; it needs to build and grow into something trustworthy and long-term. You need to offer good ideas and have the research to back them up. This will instill confidence in growers with proof that you have more knowledge bringing together data and your personal agronomy experience.

The old adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts really holds true when it comes to farming. By combining your insights and experience with the latest technology, data, resources, and service providers, growers get the total package, and they can focus on what they do best: farm.

About DTN Agronomic Platform

The DTN Agronomic Platform empowers a crop consultant's best decisions. It is a comprehensive agronomic software tool that integrates precision ag technology into a single, easy-to-use interface. With it, a consultant can operate more efficiently while helping growers protect critical yields and profit margins. There are a variety of tools and functionalities available in a wide variety of packages, so there's something for just about every business. Find out more about the DTN's tools at www.dtn.com/agronomic-platform.

Resources:

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USDA, Economic Resource Service, The Fern, Successful Farmer article, <https://www.agriculture.com/news/technology/corn-farmers-lead-in-adoption-of-precision-agriculture>

Boston Consulting Group, 2016: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2016/process-industries-building-materials-strategy-lessons-frontlines-agtech-revolution.aspx>

PrecisionAg Institute: <https://www.precisionag.com/institute/9-rules-for-success-as-a-trusted-advisor/>

