



# Operational Decisioning in Agriculture:

A Modern Playbook  
for Margin, Growth &  
Risk Performance

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## Executive Summary: Leading Through Agriculture's New Reality

The era of growth, stability, and abundance in agriculture has shifted. Today, producers, retailers, grain buyers, and processors face relentless margin pressure, supply chain disruptions, regulatory demands, and evolving sustainability expectations. Traditional operating models can't keep pace.

**This playbook offers an agriculture-focused decisioning framework to help leaders:**

- Diagnose operational obstacles unique to agribusiness
- Align decisions with growth, margin, and risk priorities
- Translate insight into action with modernized workflows
- See how DTN Ag Hub enables smarter, faster, more confident agricultural decisions

DTN brings together real-time visibility, AI-powered intelligence, and trusted neutrality—designed for just this moment.

## Margins Under Siege

Median farm income for U.S. farm households was **-\$1,830** in 2024 and is forecast to remain negative in 2025 (USDA ERS, 2025).

Traditional operating models cannot absorb this volatility. AI-powered decision-making is essential.

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## A New Operating Reality in Agriculture

Agribusinesses are confronting a new operating reality:

- **Demand volatility** from global shocks, consumer shifts, and climate impacts
- **Geopolitical and regulatory complexity** reshaping trade flows and sustainability mandates
- **Legacy tools** that cannot anticipate or adapt, leading to reactive decisions

The competitive divide is growing: those who modernize with operational decisioning and those who fall behind.

For ag retailers and grain buyers, this means procurement cycles are riskier, grower engagement is harder to time, and sustainability reporting is unavoidable.

**The gap is widening...**

## Volatility Is the New Normal

U.S. farm production expenses reached

**\$455 billion in 2025,**

up sharply from pre-pandemic levels (USDA ERS). Costs remain elevated, putting additional pressure on margins.



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## The Competitive Divide in Agriculture

Traditional tools rely on lagging data, siloed workflows, and guesswork—making them unsuitable for today's fast-changing ag landscape.

### Effects of falling behind include:

- Missed margin opportunities from slow pricing or procurement adjustments
- Inventory risks from misjudged supply and demand
- Compliance headaches tied to Scope 3 and sustainability reporting
- Poor grower engagement due to lack of trusted insights

The divide between leaders and laggards is accelerating, as modernized operations move faster, anticipate risk, and capture growth.

### Legacy Operating Model

- Invest in more assets
- Siloed grower and market data
- Manual Scope 3 compliance
- Decisions in days or weeks
- Company-only optimization

VS

### What Today's Ag Leaders Need

- Invest in intelligence + innovation
- Decision-Grade Data + AI foresight
- Built-in sustainability workflows
- Micro-decisions in minutes or hours
- Ecosystem-wide optimization

Closing the divide requires a new playbook for Ag leaders.

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## A New Playbook for Agricultural Decision Leadership

Success in agriculture now requires a new operating model built around five core requirements:

**1**

### Verticalization

Purpose-built hub for agriculture's realities — grain trading, procurement, sustainability, and grower engagement.

**2**

### Data Superiority

Farm-level intelligence and market data covering 95% of U.S. producers, plus exclusive cash bids and yield insights.

**3**

### AI-Driven Insight

Scenario modeling for yield, pricing, sourcing, and sustainability outcomes.

**4**

### Decision Velocity

Automated workflows across sales, procurement, trading, and compliance to move from weeks to minutes.

**5**

### Trust and Neutrality

Transparent data stewardship across the agricultural ecosystem, ensuring confidence for retailers, grain buyers, and producers alike.

## Trust Matters in Agriculture

Family farms account for

**98%**  
**of all U.S. farms**

and 86% of production value (USDA ERS, 2024). As production concentrates in larger operations, neutral, trusted intelligence is critical to support both family farms and global supply chains.



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## How to Operationalize the New Ag Model

Ag leaders can start turning the playbook into action through five steps:

### Step 1

Identify agriculture-specific decision friction points

### Step 2

Tie improvements to margin, sourcing, and sustainability outcomes

### Step 3

Deploy real-time producer, grain, and market intelligence

### Step 4

Activate AI-driven workflows for pricing, procurement, and Scope 3 reporting

### Step 5

Govern a trusted intelligence layer across partners and roles

## Where should you start?

Use the checklist to test your readiness.

### Is Your Operation Decision-Ready?

Do you have real-time visibility into producer, market, and supply chain data?

Can you run scenarios for pricing, sourcing, and sustainability fast enough to act?

Are sales and procurement aligned around shared intelligence?

Do you have the ability to measure and report Scope 3 emissions?

Can you rely on neutral, trusted intelligence accepted across your value chain?

If you answered "no" to any of these, your decisioning may not be ready for the new realities.

Keep reading to learn more about DTN Ag Hub and its operational decisioning capabilities.

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## Agriculture Outcomes in Action

Operational decisioning translates into measurable outcomes across agriculture.



### Market Strategy & Sales

Grower segmentation, lead scoring, and personalized outreach to optimize input sales

**For Sales Leaders:** Target the right growers at the right time using segmentation and lead scoring.



### Producer Insights

Farm-level intelligence and agronomic data for more targeted engagement.

**For Commercial/Trading Roles:** Use market intelligence and arbitrage insights to capture margin opportunities quickly.



### Procurement & Trading

Real-time visibility into supply/demand trends, cash bids, and arbitrage opportunities

**For Procurement Leaders:** Gain visibility into real-time cash bids and sourcing trends to protect margins.



### Sustainability

Scope 3 footprinting, integration into sustainability marketplaces, and verified outcomes purchasing.

**For COOs:** Balance risk across sourcing, sustainability, and compliance with Decision-Grade Data.

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## The DTN Agriculture Decisioning Difference

DTN empowers agriculture decisioning with a combination of tools, data, and neutrality unmatched in the industry:



**Dedicated Ag Hub:** A purpose-built platform for agriculture's real workflows, from sales and sourcing to sustainability.



**Decision-Grade Data:** Proprietary, normalized data covering 95% of U.S. farms, ready for operational use and AI modeling.



**Integrated Execution Layer:** Connects insights directly into sales, procurement, trading, and compliance workflows.



**Ecosystem Integration:** Designed to plug into ERPs, CRMs, and trading platforms so intelligence is connected, not siloed.



**Neutral Enterprise Backbone:** Transparent stewardship of data, ensuring trust across the value chain.

## Why DTN?

Purpose-built  
agriculture  
intelligence

+

Decision-  
Grade Data

+

Trusted  
neutrality

=

A new  
frontier for  
operational  
performance.



## Next Steps for Ag Leaders

DTN is the Operational Decisioning company for agriculture. With unmatched data depth, AI-driven insights, and ecosystem stewardship, we help ag retailers and grain buyers act faster and smarter.

### **Your route to transformation:**

- Diagnose where decision latency is costing growth or increasing risk
- Deploy DTN live market, farm, and sustainability intelligence
- Pilot faster procurement, sales, or sustainability workflows

The future of agriculture belongs to those who modernize decisioning. Now is the time to act.

## Looking Ahead

What's next in agricultural decisioning: predictive procurement strategies, AI-enabled sustainability trading, and digital twin adoption at scale. Leaders who prepare today will outpace tomorrow's volatility.

## Are you ready?

Take the next step

