# Insights on the Economics of Soil Health on 100 Farms

NEWS RELEASE BY **THE SOIL HEALTH INSTITUTE**

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MORRISVILLE, N.C., September 14, 2021 /3BL Media/ - The Soil Health Institute (SHI), the non-profit charged with safeguarding and enhancing the vitality and productivity of soils, will release its comprehensive report on the **Economics of Soil Health on 100 Farms** in a webinar on Thursday, September 30 at 12 p.m. ET, thanks to the generous support of Cargill.

Using data collected and analyzed across 100 farms in nine states, Dr. Wayne Honeycutt, SHI's President & CEO, will share key findings that can only be gleaned at such a scale.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- A total of 100 farmers were interviewed representing 194,003 acres of cropland across Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Tennessee.
- These farmers were using no-till on 85% of their cropland and cover crops on 53% of their cropland, well above the national average of 37% for no-till and 5% for cover crops. Those farmers using no-till had been doing so for an average of 19 years, and those who grew cover crops had been doing so for an average of nine years.
- Sixty-seven percent of the farmers interviewed reported increased yield from using a soil health management system. Two percent reported decreased corn yield.
- It cost an average of $24.00/acre less to grow corn and $16.57/acre less to grow soybean using a soil health management system.
- Soil health management systems increased net income for 85% of farmers growing corn and 88% growing soybean.
- Based on standardized prices, the soil health management system increased net income for these 100 farmers by an average of $51.60/acre for corn and $44.89/acre for soybean.
- Farmers also reported additional benefits of their soil health management system, such as increased resilience to extreme weather and increased access to their fields.

The most desirable and robust information on how soil health affects profitability comes from real-world, on-farm data. This study involved interviewing farmers who have

successfully implemented a soil health management system to obtain information on their management practices, yield, and other production experiences. To evaluate their economics, SHI's Agricultural Economist used partial budget analysis to compare expenses and returns in a soil health management system compared to a conventional management system.

"Several management practices that improve soil health also increase carbon storage in soils, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce nutrient runoff and leaching," explained Dr. Honeycutt. "However, investing in new management practices is also a business decision for farmers. Until now, there hasn't been such a comprehensive study that provides the economic information farmers need when deciding whether to adopt soil health practices. By closing this knowledge gap in the nine states where 71% of the corn and 67% of the soybean are grown in the U.S., we can scale up these benefits for farmers and the environment."

Given the current adoption rates of no-till (37%) and cover crops (5%) in the U.S., the study indicates that many other farmers may improve their profitability by adopting soil health management systems.

Interested parties can register for the webinar at **https://soilhealthinstitute.org/economics/** or by visiting the link below:

**https://soilhealthinstitute-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9b2n2zxxSgu-XHFbLdQKnA**

All who register will be provided a fact sheet summarizing the results.

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**About the Soil Health Institute**

The Soil Health Institute is a global non-profit with a mission to safeguard and enhance the vitality and productivity of soil through scientific research and advancement. We bring together leaders in soil health science and the industry to help farmers, ranchers, and landowners adopt soil health systems that build drought resilience, stabilize yield, and benefit their bottom line. The Institute's team of scientists, holding doctorates in various soil science and related disciplines, has developed highly effective soil health targets and standardized measurements to quantify progress at achieving regenerative and sustainable agricultural systems, and leads the cutting-edge fields of carbon sequestration and decoding the soil microbiome. Healthy soils are the foundation for rejuvenating our land. Together, we can create a secure future for all, mitigate the effects of climate change, and help agriculture and organizations meet production and

environmental goals at scale. Visit www.soilhealthinstitute.org to learn more and follow us on **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, and **Facebook.**

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