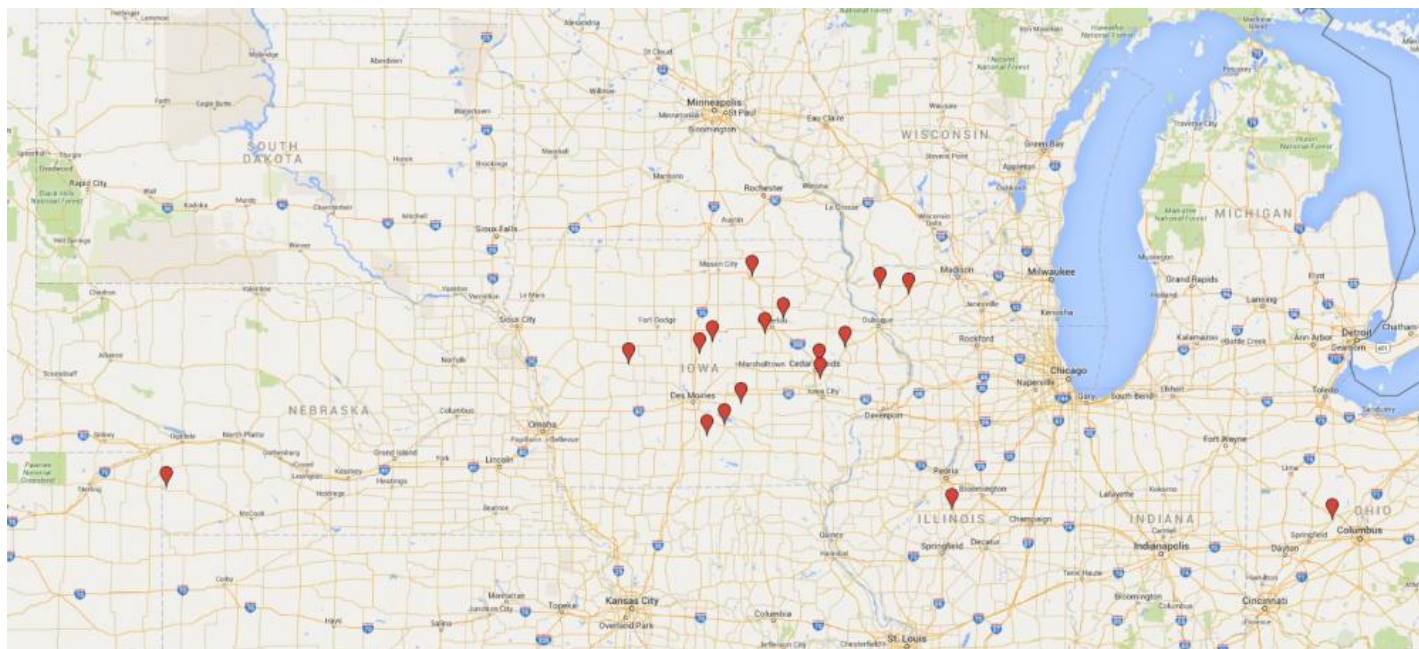


Corn+Soybean Digest.



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Corn and soybean producers find retailer who supports sustainable farming

Retailer supports sustainable farming

Lynn Betts 1 | Jul 21, 2016

United Suppliers, a company formed to provide services and products to 600 independent and co-operative owners with nearly 2,800 retail locations across the U.S. and Canada, launched Sustain in July of 2014.

The South Central Co-op was one of a dozen retail owners in Iowa to buy into the company's Sustainability program in 2015. Agronomy Manager Brent Hall was part of a pilot group testing how the new Sustain platform could be used to help growers use field-tested tools and new technologies to improve nutrient use efficiency, soil health, and productivity.

Hall and the South Central Co-op decided to use Adapt-N as the cornerstone of Sustain.

“We require every grower in Sustain to use Adapt-N. We think it’s the best in-season, web-based nitrogen management decision support tool available,” Hall says. “In addition, growers in the program choose from two or more other best management practices like no-till, cover crops, or use of nutrient efficiency products. The goal is to maintain or improve crop efficiencies while minimizing potential negative impacts of fertilizers.”

Yield results favor multiple applications

Sustain account manager Brian Perry at United Suppliers says helping retailers work with growers to switch to two or three split applications of nitrogen instead of a single application is a critical step in realizing that goal. “Growers really see the benefit of managing nitrogen rates and risks with multiple applications instead of one application preplant. The yield results are dramatic in favor of multiple applications,” Perry says.

The improved nutrient use efficiency also helps United Suppliers reach Sustainability goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions and improve water quality by reducing nitrates, sediment, phosphorus and other pollutants that reach water from farm fields. United Suppliers made a pledge to Walmart to have 10 million acres enrolled in the Sustain platform by 2020.

“We’re here for our retail owners, to help them work more effectively with their farmer customers,” says Stan Buman, a soil and water management specialist and one of five United Suppliers employees devoting all his time to the Sustainability program. Buman and other members of the Sustain team provide training, communications, advertising and other support to participating retail owners.

Buman says the program will expand in the future. United Suppliers is a Field to Market member, and also works very closely with the Environmental Defense Fund.

“The EDF has close ties to food groups and understands consumer demands for how food is produced,” Buman says. “We communicate with them several times a week, and have bi-weekly conference calls. The practices we promote the most all go through the EDF NutrientStar program www.nutrientstar.org . That adds legitimacy to the positive impact that Sustain will have on the environment and sustainability overall.”

United Suppliers recently merged its seed and crop protection business with Land O’Lakes, Inc., under the new WinField US banner, giving United Suppliers additional size and scale, more product offerings, services, tools and technologies. See more on United Suppliers’ Sustain program online at www.Sustain.ag

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