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**Documenting the Economic Benefits of Soil Health Management for Farmers
Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference
Symposium Session Abstract
Greensboro, NC
July 27, 2015**

Participants

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Districts (Moderator)

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Datu Research is convening leaders in soil health for a symposium session at the upcoming [70th Annual Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference](#) in Greensboro, NC, July 26 – 29, 2015.

Soil health management provides wide-reaching economic and environmental benefits, but for adoption of practices like no-till, cover cropping, and crop rotations to increase, a fair share of these benefits must accrue to farmers. Currently, there is a lack of data on the economic returns of soil health management practices for producers.

A number of collaborative efforts to fill this data gap—via demonstration farms, case study research, and data integration and analysis—are currently underway. This symposium session will bring together major players to assess the current state of prominent, nationwide efforts. The National Corn Growers' Soil Health Partnership is identifying, testing, and measuring management practices that improve soil health and benefit farmers' bottom lines over a five-year time series. The Soil Renaissance, an initiative of the Farm Foundation, NFP and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, is evaluating measurement tools and working to quantify the effects of soil health on economic risks and returns. The National Association of Conservation Districts and global consulting firm Datu Research are exploring which soil health management practices work under various conditions, and what impact they have on producers' net revenues. To make efficient use of existing data, food and agricultural policy group AGree is engaging with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in an effort to integrate and analyze existing data within USDA on conservation practices, yield, variability, soil health, and other key indicators.

Leaders of these efforts will share preliminary findings and identify emerging gaps. What do early findings tell us about the economic benefits for farmers? What questions do we expect to have answered by the time these efforts are completed, and where will more work be needed? How can we best “divide and conquer” the remaining work to get high-quality information in farmers' hands as soon as possible? For more information, contact Sarah Mine, smine@daturesearch.com.