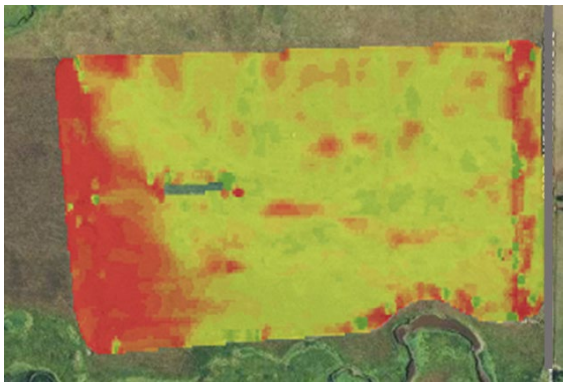
Host Notes on Precision Ag & Conservation Handout

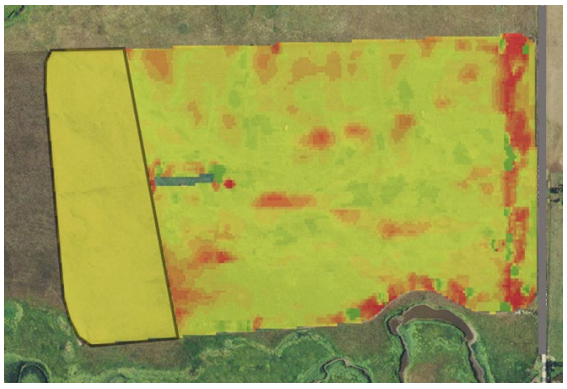
The goal of this handout is to demonstrate with a real-world example that conservation can help increase farm profitability. For operators, this example can break down misconceptions that conservation adoption comes at a cost to farm profits. The photos in the handout provide a visualization of this concept. The example crop is corn.

Photo talking points

Aerial Image: Draw attention to the left side of the field. You can see visually, there are lighter brown areas on that edge of the field compared to other parts of the field. This indicated the crop is not doing as well as in other areas of the field. A first indicator that something may be going on in this area.



Profitability Map: Using the farmers own data, such as yield data and crop budgets we have created a profitability map. Red is profit loss, in this example, up to a $500 per acre loss. This loss of profits can be caused by a multitude of factors, such as excess water, lack of water or soil type. You could try to increase yield in this area of the field, but that likely means an increase in input cost. Looking at this from a business perspective, increasing inputs and associated costs, would not have increased yields up past the break even point for profitability.



Unprofitable Acres into Habitat: Rather than continuing to farm this area of the field, that has consistently lost this farmer money, they decided to enroll the left side of the field, 12 acres, into a habitat program. Not only did that program offer cost-share to establish habitat but had a small incentive payment. Combined with the reduction in inputs, this part of the field no longer cost the farmer each year and allowed for the whole field to move into the black.

Conservation Options for Unprofitable Acres Include:

1) CRP or other programs (EQIP, CSP)
2) Pollinator Habitat
3) Forage (Hay, Pasture)
4) Cover Crops
5) Public Access (where available)