

Yield and profitability are seldom homogeneous across a field. Some portion of most fields have lower production and therefore profitability. Factors leading to reduced production and profitability include excessive soil loss on high slopes, periodic flooding of low ground, the presence of saline seeps, poor surface or subsurface drainage and poor soil conditions. These factors can lead to operational challenges and reduced production.

The primary goal of the Stewardship Program is improving net return per acre, while simultaneously improving land stewardship. While participating in the Stewardship Program, we help you develop one or more “field plans” focused on improving production and net return on the underperforming portions of a field and understanding the affects on soil and nutrient loss, water management and land stewardship.

During our first meeting, we will gain a better understanding of your overall operation, your logistical challenges and review the fields you are considering enrolling in the Stewardship Program. Typically, we can enroll 3 to 5 fields. To help guide your decision about whether to enroll a field in the program, please bring a simple field sketch map (like the one above) for each candidate field to the first meeting. Use a marker to draw a boundary around portions of the field with similar yield, non-farmed areas, and existing resource challenges.

Label yield areas as: WAA = Well

Above Average; AA = Above Average:

A = Average; BA = Below Average; WBA = Well Below Average. You can also bring field and yield maps created by whatever management system you are using.

Whether you own or rent the field might affect your decision about whether to enroll a field. Once you’ve explored several field plan and selected one to increase production and net return, you’ll want to implement the recommendations. Implementing those recommendations may require getting agreement from the landowner if you’re renting the land.

If the focus is increasing the Stewardship Rating, we advise enrolling fields that currently lack management or structural conservation practices. Alternatively, you may want to enroll fields growing specialty crops if you’re planning to use the Stewardship Rating for branding your crops as “sustainable” in the commodity market or claiming water quality credits.

Some farmers enroll fields simply to benchmark their current operation, better understand the implications of their current operation or the consequences of changing their rotation, tillage methods, or utilizing a cover crop.

We will help you through the process of deciding which fields to enroll regardless of the reasons, during our first meeting.



Field exhibiting below average and well below average yield zones. The IWI Stewardship Program focuses on developing credible, agronomic solutions to increase profitability at the field scale. The field is a good candidate for enrolling in the Stewardship Program.

Field Selection Guidance
IWI Stewardship Program

Make a list like this of the fields you’re considering enrolling in the Stewardship Program. Bring the list and field sketch maps to the first meeting. During the first meeting we will collect additional information about these fields and enter the data into our “Field Application.”

Field Name	Farm Name	Own or Operate	Size (acres)	Twsp	Range	Section	½ Sec.	¼ Sec.	Attach field boundary map.	Candidacy (High, Moderate, Low)	Provide a brief description of the crops planted, crop rotation, tillage practices and fertilizer application methods used on this field.