

Feature Story



New tech, smarter ag

If you were to chart a curve of innovation in agriculture, today's data point would plot on the near-vertical line of exponential growth. The rate of new developments in ag tech has never been faster. As growers pursue higher yields, the industry has felt intense demand to improve available tools and technology. The results continue to be smarter ways to farm.

BASF is on the forefront of advancing agricultural solutions. Presently, the company is investing in technology to help predict disease and inform fungicide application decisions.

Currently under development and testing, the tool is aimed at analyzing plant health and disease by looking at a variety of factors. Key predictors like present disease inoculum, weather, planting date, topography, resistance and other stresses can be analyzed to help predict the likelihood of a plant health or disease response. The tool helps navigate the complexity of disease potential and offers alerts to impending issues, helping growers nurture a healthy crop in a smarter, simpler way.

Additional tools are available for the first time this season to help grow smart. The BASF rainfall tool, available online at www.basfrainfalltool.com, shows compiled historical rainfall data by specific geography, enabling growers to choose the right herbicides for their individual growing conditions.

This knowledge is important because timely, adequate rainfall is essential for activating herbicides and delivering needed weed control efficacy. The BASF rainfall tool can be used to show how likely a region is to receive a quarter-inch of rain, rather than one inch, during key application windows.

The rainfall tool is the first of many innovations from BASF that leverages the capabilities of ZedX, Inc., a leader in the development of digital agricultural intelligence. Recently acquired by BASF, ZedX products and solutions will soon be available to all key markets.

Big Data, great potential

The examples above illustrate a growing trend in agriculture —the importance of digital farming.

'Smart agriculture' in this digital landscape is fueled by the industry's increasing contributions to the Internet of Things (IoT). Connected devices have ruled consumer markets for years, with Smart TVs and internet-accessing refrigerators often commonplace in U.S. households. But IoT in agriculture means a boom in farm data collection and potential for analytics. Farm equipment connected to the internet, for example, can capture real-time information from the field and share it between other IoT devices, helping growers learn about their operations and improve decision-making.

Before any data-driven decisions can happen, however, the data must first be digested.

In 2016, BASF launched Maglis™ Custom Navigator, a tool that helps BASF advisors and farmers jointly create farm- or field-specific crop plans and recommendations using agronomic insights. The tailored plans consider crop growth stages and the grower's

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individual cropping priorities, such as yield optimization, risk reduction and efficiency improvements. With the insights and perspectives made possible with Maglis, growers and their advisors can better understand farm data and the needs of the business.

The future is bright with opportunities for technology to improve agriculture. The cutting-edge of innovation evolves quickly, so keep an eye out. A new breakthrough may be just around the corner.

Always read and follow label directions.

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