The Problem

Ceres Solutions is a 100% farmer owned Co-Op in Central Indiana and surrounding areas with a reputation in precision agriculture, and building their authority as a trusted advisor to their growers. In order to maintain control in their soil sampling and fertility management program, Ceres decided to move all their soil sampling in-house several years back.

Ceres prides itself on their accuracy and adoption of precision agriculture, and made the investment several years ago to purchase Kubota RTVs and a mixture of auger probes and Wintex style probes for different soil types. They wanted to maintain the control of sampling by keeping their soil sampling in-house and providing greater accountability to their fertilizer management program.

Unfortunately, Ceres struggled to find the part-time labor to accurately and reliably pull soil cores season after season. “We were always struggling to find part time labor. 90% of the time, the labor we found was new to soil sampling. The result was less accuracy and confidence in our soil sampling due to the inexperienced seasonal help, said Matt Clark, Ag Technology Manager at Ceres.

This gap came with a cost, since most of their sampling is done in the fall, and they were not able to find the quality help during their busy season.

Company Profile

Client: Ceres Solutions
Champion: Matt Clark, Ag Technology Manager
Web URL: https://www.ceres.coop/
Challenges Faced:
- Reliability
- Labor Sourcing
- Accuracy

Story Outline:
• Problem:
  - Labor Concerns
  - Soil Sampling Accuracy
• Solution:
  - Rogo Robotic soil sampling provides greater accuracy and reliability than standard soil sampling
• Results:
  - Reliability
  - Labor Sourcing
  - Ceres as a Trusted Advisor

“The biggest value that Rogo provides to Ceres is accuracy and reliability. With Rogo we are given the data to the exact core. It’s proven accuracy with the data. We can turn in acres to Rogo and we know it will be done right.”
In order to supplement their full-time soil sampling force and rely less on seasonal workers, Ceres reached out to Rogo to handle their soil sampling in the fall 2019 season. Clark expressed “The initial attraction to Rogo was that we were having a hard time finding part time labor. When we did find labor, we had concerns about accuracy. Rogo came in and filled that void that we have.”

Fall of 2019 was the first major season working with an external vendor, Rogo. As a result, Ceres did not have to hire any part time employees. “We were able to manage the full time soil sampling needs and then augment the rest with Rogo. The first fall we were able to have better turnaround time in years because the supplemental labor was not the most reliable.”

The biggest value that Rogo provides to Ceres is accuracy and reliability. “We supplement with our own full-time staff, and Rogo was able to fill that void and have quality soil sampling in the process”. The reliability has been there with Rogo and it has been a reliable source to add to our CORE Agronomics program.”

“We’ve been using Rogo’s services for three seasons now. We have not been disappointed yet. Rogo handled 100% of our soil sampling last spring. It was one of the better spring sampling seasons we had. We even looked for additional fields to move from fall to spring.”

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Ceres Solutions is a 100% farmer owned local cooperative headquartered in Crawfordsville, Indiana, that serves regions of central Indiana and Michigan. We bring our customers the very best in energy, agronomic, seed and feed products and services by providing the best value through service, stewardship and innovation.

Rogo offers robotic soil sampling services that give farmers more accurate soil data so they can make more profitable fertilizer decisions. It does this by collecting and packaging soil samples with complete depth-, pattern-, and location-consistency.

“Efficiency & Reliability
The reason Ceres keeps coming back is the labor sourcing. “We have been leery of outside labor due to the lack of control, and bad experiences with external vendors. “However, it has definitely improved our efficiency. We were even able to get caught up in the Spring and go out and shifted some fall acres to spring since we were ahead of schedule.”

The growers that have been exposed to Rogo’s technology have been very receptive and know that by working with Ceres Solutions, they are staying at the forefront of technology. There have been some growers that have even requested specifically to have Rogo sample their fields due to the confidence in the data.

Ceres as a Trusted Advisor
Like many farm service providers, Ceres positions Rogo’s technology as another tool to be the trusted advisor to their growers and retain and grow their clientele. “We pride ourselves in being on the forefront of technology and this is just another tool to add to our portfolio of agronomic technology to be a trusted advisor to our growers.”

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