

associations to jointly coordinate policy. A unified crop sector voice can have more impact with policymakers.

In Rosaasen's experience, it's not unusual for policymakers in the agriculture sphere to have relatively little understanding of crop production. A deep supply of credible data is essential to advocacy. Constructive working relationships add the final element of APG's approach to environmental research and policy.

Rosaasen, who has a rare combination of degrees in Agronomy and International Trade, comfortably spans the worlds of farming and policy.

"It's a difficult task when you're trying to relay science to policymakers, because not everybody is as scientifically literate as farmers or agronomists," he said. "My job is to explain the best practices and technologies that we're adopting, and connect the contributions being made by farmers to the goal of sustainability."

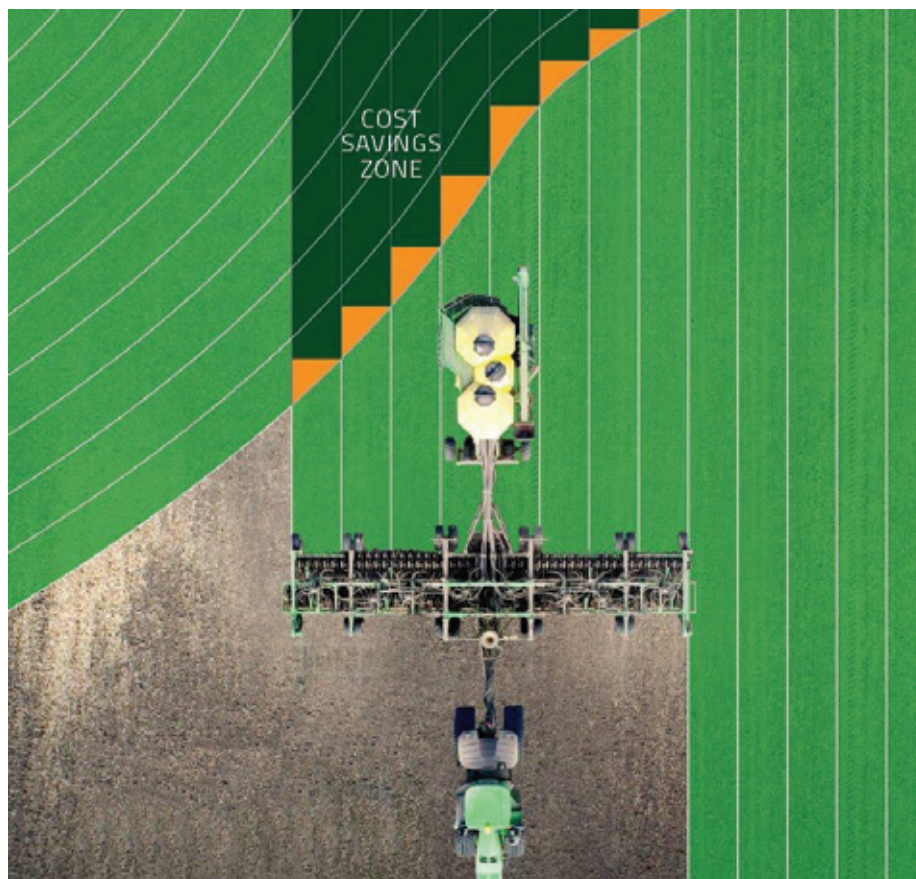


Photo: John Deere

This diagram shows the reduction in seeding overlap that sectional control technology provides.

REDUCING FIELD OVERLAP A TRIPLE WIN

It's sometimes thought that better environmental stewardship will increase operating costs for farmers. In fact, it is possible for environmental performance to improve at the same time as operating costs go down.

To illustrate this point, APG Policy & Program Specialist Nevin Rosaasen in partnership with Team Alberta colleagues took aim at an issue where the environmental and financial stakes are both high. He led a two-year study funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to evaluate the impact of sectional control technologies. These automatic 'shutoff' systems can reduce input overlap when farmers are seeding or fertilizing.

Start with the financial impact. When growing large green lentils in the brown soil zone, cutting overlap from 10% to 1% can save more than \$1,000 on a 160-acre field. When growing peas in the black soil zone, savings for a 160-acre field could be \$1,500.

Environmentally, reducing overlap in applying nitrogen fertilizer delivers significant benefits. It reduces emissions of nitrous oxide, which has a greenhouse gas warming potential 298 times that of carbon dioxide.

"Whenever there is an overlap, and nitrogen is not applied, it also avoids crops being too thick, potentially lodging and causing grade reductions due to poorer crop quality," Rosaasen said. "It is a win-win-win situation."