

Restoring soil, profits, farms and futures

Understanding Ag's team of world-class consultants help our clients successfully implement practices that restore soil health and ecosystem function, which reduces dependency on expensive inputs and leads to sustained profitability.



Meet Brian Dougherty

Brian Dougherty grew up on a family dairy farm near Waukon, Iowa. After attending community college for farm management, he returned home and took over the farm in a partnership with his brother, remaining there for 17 years managing the dairy herd and raising corn, oats, alfalfa, and cereal rye.

In 2011, Brian's life took him in a new direction and he returned to school to study the principles behind agroecosystem functions. In 2016, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in ecological engineering at Oregon State University with minors in chemistry and bioenergy. While at OSU, Brian researched the effects of biochar for odor control and nutrient sorption from livestock manure. He then returned to Iowa where he enrolled in a Master of Science program in agricultural and biosystems engineering at Iowa State University. His research focused on the effects of crop management on soil health, carbon cycling, and nutrient losses to subsurface drainage water.

In 2018, Brian received a Nuffield Farming Scholarship and was able to travel the world studying the intersection of soil health, water quality, nutrient management and related global efforts to regenerate soils. He then started working with a diverse range of farmers on nutrient management, soil health, water

Our mission

Understanding Ag is a regenerative agricultural consulting company that provides the support and confidence to help our clients reduce input costs, generate actual profits and ensure family farming futures. We accomplish this by educating and mentoring farmers, ranchers, landowners, businesses, and communities in the principles and practices needed to restore, repair, rebuild, regenerate their farming and ranching ecosystems.

Who we are

Understanding Ag's consultants are real farmers and ranchers who combine decades of experience to help our clients successfully implement regenerative agricultural and ecological principles that replace the input-intensive, agricultural model to enable sustained profitable farming and ranching operations. Understanding Ag, LLC also offers consulting and planning services for multi-enterprise systems, businesses, organizations and communities.

Meet Brian Dougherty

quality, composting, farm drainage, and livestock facility management as a field agricultural engineer for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach where he also assisted with soil health workshops and studied the effects of various cover crop practices on soil and water quality in corn-soybean systems. In 2021, Brian was accepted into the first CREATE regenerative agriculture coaching program put on by Nicole Masters and the Integrity Soils team, learning with others from around the U.S. and Canada about the context and unique challenges in their local environments.

Your partner in regenerative agriculture

During my decade-plus learning journey I came to realize how little I knew about soil function when I was farming and how many mistakes I had made. I also came to realize that our educational institutions have done a poor job teaching students and farmers what they really need to know about how healthy soil functions and how to leverage that knowledge to improve their soils and boost profits. I credit much of what I learned along the way to pioneers like Gabe Brown, Ray Archuleta, David Montgomery, John Kempf, Nicole Masters and others too numerous to mention that lit the path of learning for me.

As a consultant for Understanding Ag, I am excited to work with farmers and ranchers to help them discover what is possible when they break free from the constraints of chemistry-based farming and embrace the power of biology on their journey to a regenerative future for their farms and families.



Contact us today

Begin your journey to greater profitability by visiting understandingag.com, by calling (256) 996-3142, or by e-mailing kathy@UnderstandingAg.com.

Your first 30-minute phone consultation is free and without obligation.