



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 8, 2021

CONTACT: STAR Coordinator, E: info@starfreetool.com

STAR Unveils New Web App for 2021 Crop Year

STAR opens enrollment for the 2021 Crop Year; STAR Web App assists farmers, landowners, and conservation professionals simplify their conservation planning

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. – Today, [STAR \(Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources\)](http://www.starfreetool.com), an initiative developed by farmers for farmers, is excited to announce open enrollment for the 2021 Crop Year with a new Web App that provides results from field evaluation forms in real-time. The STAR Web App offers farmers and landowners an efficient way to automate data entry for multiple fields seamlessly on their phones, desktops, or tablets. The updated 2021 Field Form for Illinois can also be accessed directly on the STAR website, just like in previous years. The goal of STAR is to encourage the continued adoption of conservation practices and recognize farmers for their commitment to nutrient loss reduction and soil health.

“In early 2020, several key partners of STAR wanted to create a reliable and engaging online platform to encourage enrollment and simplify field form scoring and tracking,” mentions Erin Gundy, Resource Conservationist for Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District. “The new STAR Web App will allow users to create customized field improvement plans, connect with local resources and technical assistance, and share their STAR Ratings with their online communities with a few simple clicks.”

The STAR evaluation system assigns points for management activities on an annual basis. Scores are converted to a STAR rating of 1 to 5 STARs, with 5 STARs indicating commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health and water quality. For farmers and landowners, the STAR initiative provides a clear roadmap to increased farm resiliency and improved soil health, helping users show their stewardship, while providing conservation professionals a benchmark to assess progress toward local conservation goals. STAR uses a science committee of industry experts, university researchers and farmers to ensure the field forms accurately address local resource concerns.

How to get started: visit www.starfreetool.com to receive your STAR Ratings or directly call [\(217\) 352-3536](tel:2173523536) ext. 3! Crop Year 2021 Field Forms will be collected through January 2022.

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STAR was created by the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2017 to meet agricultural goals in the Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy plan. STAR offers farm operators and landowners a simple, free, and confidential tool to evaluate their conservation and land management practices. The goal of STAR is to encourage the continued adoption of conservation practices and recognize farmers for their commitment to sustainability. The STAR evaluation system assigns points for management activities on an annual basis. Scores are converted to a STAR rating of 1 to 5 STARs, with 5 STARs indicating commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health and water quality.