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Jefferson County, Oregon Broadband Planning

SWCD Board of Directors Discussion of Pilot for Soil Moisture Metering

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Broadband and Water Management

- Jefferson County Commission requested piloting of precision agriculture and remote health during SNG's broadband planning update to the Commission in December 2023
- USDA: Precision Agriculture can result in 20-50% lower water usage
- SNG will work with Jefferson County to pursue BEAD and Digital Equity funding for precision agriculture programming:
 - Soil moisture metering – water management, drought resiliency, etc.
 - Tracking farm assets
 - Other?

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Pilot Overview

- Timeline: October 2024 – January 2025?
- Participating organizations: Local farmers and SWCD
- Objectives:
 - Help farmers benefit from technology by raising awareness, coordinating device distribution, and assisting with utilization
 - Prepare and better position Jefferson County to receive BEAD and Digital Equity funding
 - Increase farm productivity, better use of limited resources, and grow the local economy

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Soil and Moisture Metering Pilot


Soil moisture metering

- How it works – distribution of sample devices for pilot
- What other metering is needed: soil temperature, ambient temperature, ambient humidity, hours of sunlight per day, soil pH?
- Time and cost savings by farmers in managing irrigation, with potential for increasing yields



Historical
Plant Metrics






Smart Plant
Care Alerts

Devices and sensors measure soil moisture, humidity, temperature, hours of light

Web-based app monitors and status reports

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Support for Local Farmers

- Pilot and coordination with Jefferson County, SWCD, SNG – others?
- Youth internships to help deploy technology and support farmers
 - Technology adept support that is local and affordable to farmers, coordinated by project team and supported by Youth Connects (COIC)
 - When farmers have realized benefits and wish to take next steps, interns are available to help
 - Creates new local youth employment opportunities that enable youth to stay in Jefferson County

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Farmer Interest in Precision Agriculture

eCheckup Participants	Contact	Interest in Pilot
Deschutes Basin Farms	Rob Gaylon	
Weigand Ranches LLC	Craig Weigand	
Dry Canyon Farms LLC		
Pratum Co-op		
Mecca Grade Estate Malt	Brad Klann Farms	
Locke Farms LLC		
Boyle Family Farms	Ryan Boyle	
Potential Participants	Contact	Interest in Pilot
Casad Family Farm		
Trevor Derstine		
Obsidian Seed Farm		
Feigner Farm		
Kevin Richards		

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Next Steps

Discussion

- How many farmers should be asked to participate?
- What is the best way to engage with them?
- What support will they need?
- Which organizations can help, or would be interested to help?
- What other precision agriculture technologies would be of interest?
- Other?

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Thank You



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