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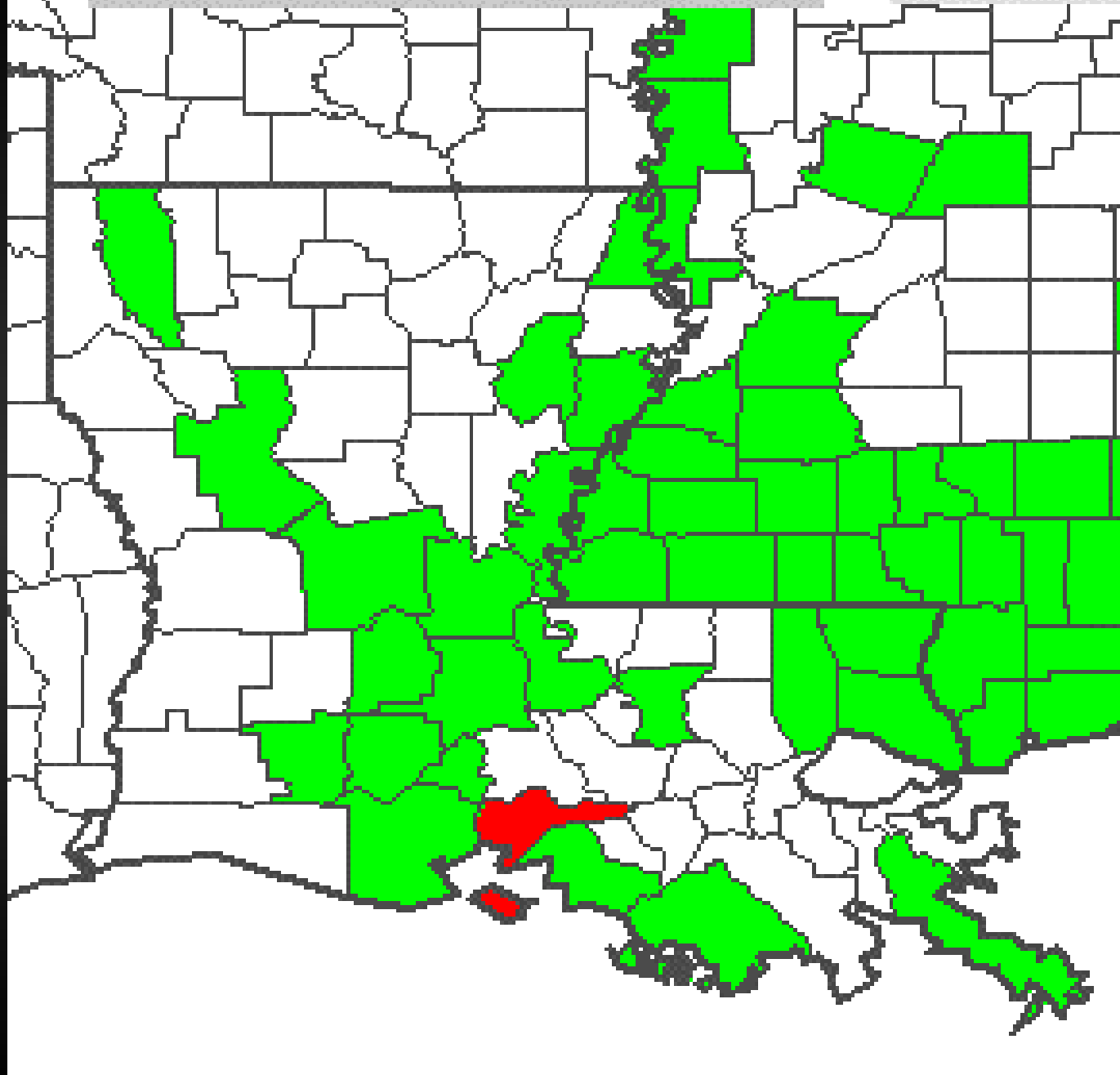
# Making Grain Crops Fit in a Sugarcane Production System

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Ronald Gonsoulin  
Ulysse Gonsoulin & Sons

SB Rust Observation - 2007-05-11

Last Update



# Ulysse Gonsoulin & Sons

- Iberia and St. Martin Parishes
- Keven and Dawn Gonsoulin
  - Also several key field managers/fabricators
- 6,000 total acres farmed in sugarcane
  - Some becoming devoted only to grains
  - Land is very scattered in comparison to other areas (14 miles as crow flies)
- Average 800 – 1500 acres soybeans/wheat annually
  - Most produced as sugarcane fallow crops







# Soybeans in Sugarcane Fallow

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- Group 3.9 – 4.5
  - Planting Window: April 15<sup>th</sup> – May 10<sup>th</sup>
- Two three cane row soybean planters (6 hoppers)
  - Recently purchased a vacuum planter
- Raised Cane Beds
  - Two drills 19-20” apart centered on top of row
  - Planters not set up to do three drills
    - Also, 68” cane beds – “eroded row shoulders” after rain
  - No window to replant, never lost a stand (yet)





























# Harvesting Soybeans

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- Earliest harvest – July 28<sup>th</sup>
  - Average: August 7<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Sugarcane harvest generally begins Sept 20<sup>th</sup>
- Managing soybean harvest and cane planting at the same time
  - Delegate the duties
- Some years bean harvest may run into sugarcane harvest
  - IMPROVISE and BE FLEXIBLE



# Harvesting Soybeans

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- Bought a used 9600 JD Combine
  - Original JD yield monitor, upgraded to Green Star 2
  - Still some problems calibrating new GS2 system
- Use a 25 foot “flex” header
  - Uneven cane rows
  - Narrow sugarcane headlands
- Grain Tender
- Plant sugarcane right behind the bean harvest
  - Work cane beds ONE time to incorporate residue
    - Do not dry out cane beds
    - “TRY” to wait a week after incorporating before planting cane



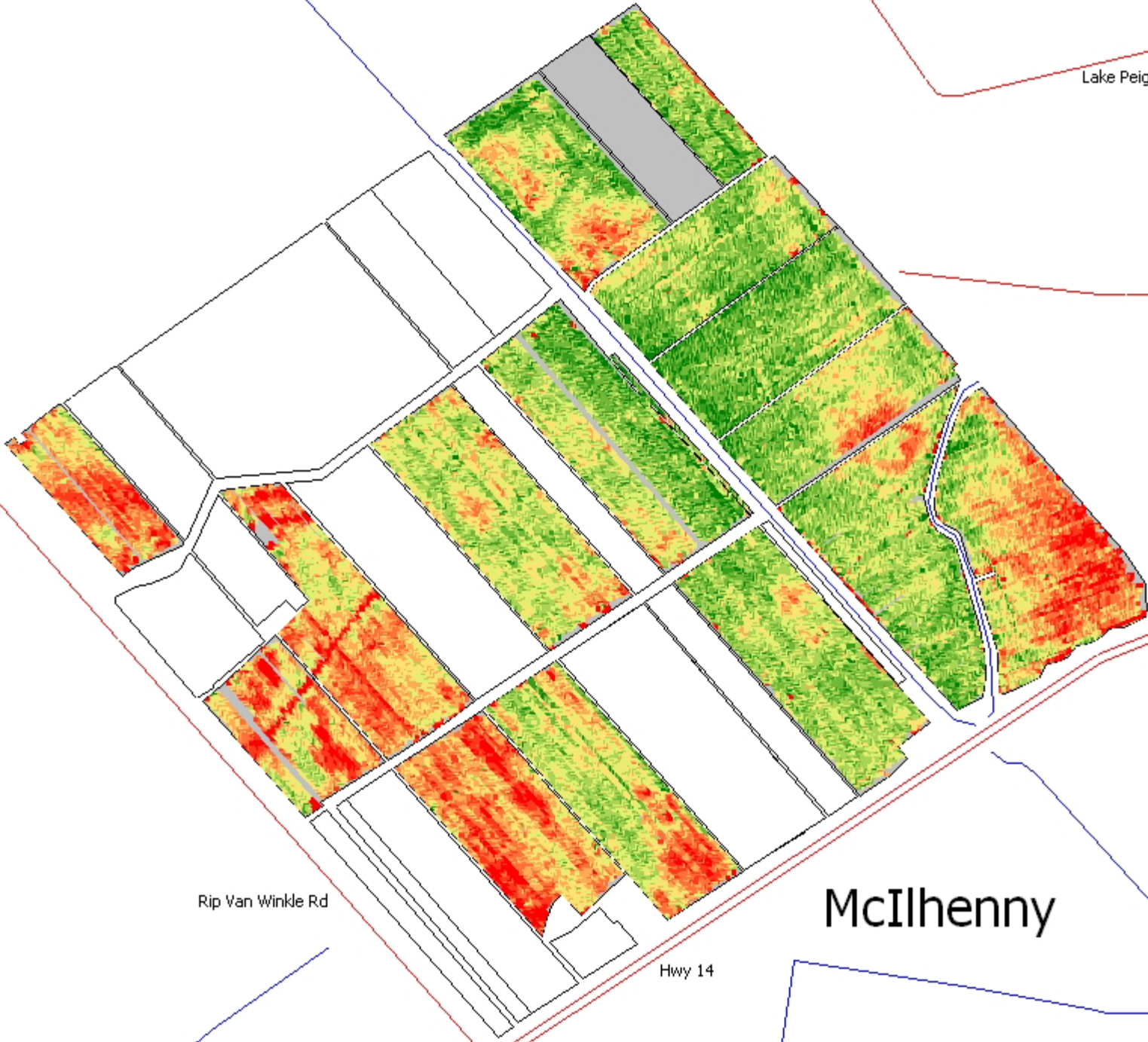


# Yield Monitor/Mapping

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- No working yield monitor in sugarcane
- Use soybeans/wheat to get yield “zones”
- Building yield zone database for soil sampling
  - Cane tends to do poor where soybeans are poor
- Crop Insurance
  - Field by field report from yield monitor critical in making claims easier
- Loading trucks easier to estimate
  - 60,000 lb load only 160 pounds different from yield monitor

Lake Peigr



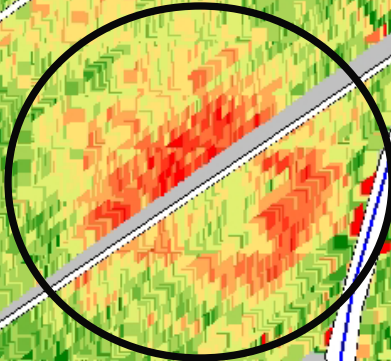
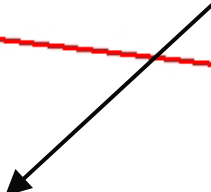
Rip Van Winkle Rd

McIlhenny

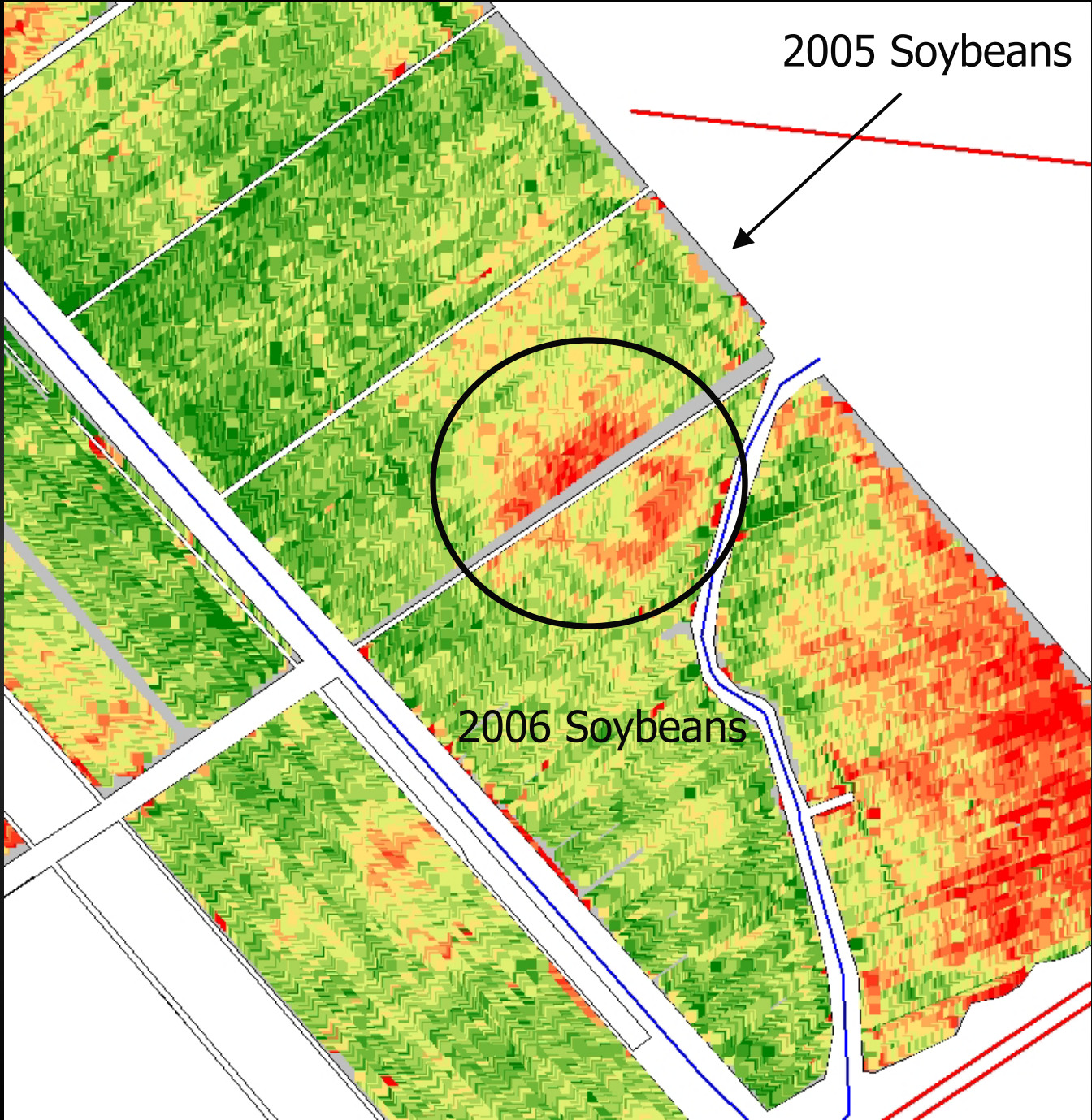
Hwy 14



2005 Soybeans



2006 Soybeans





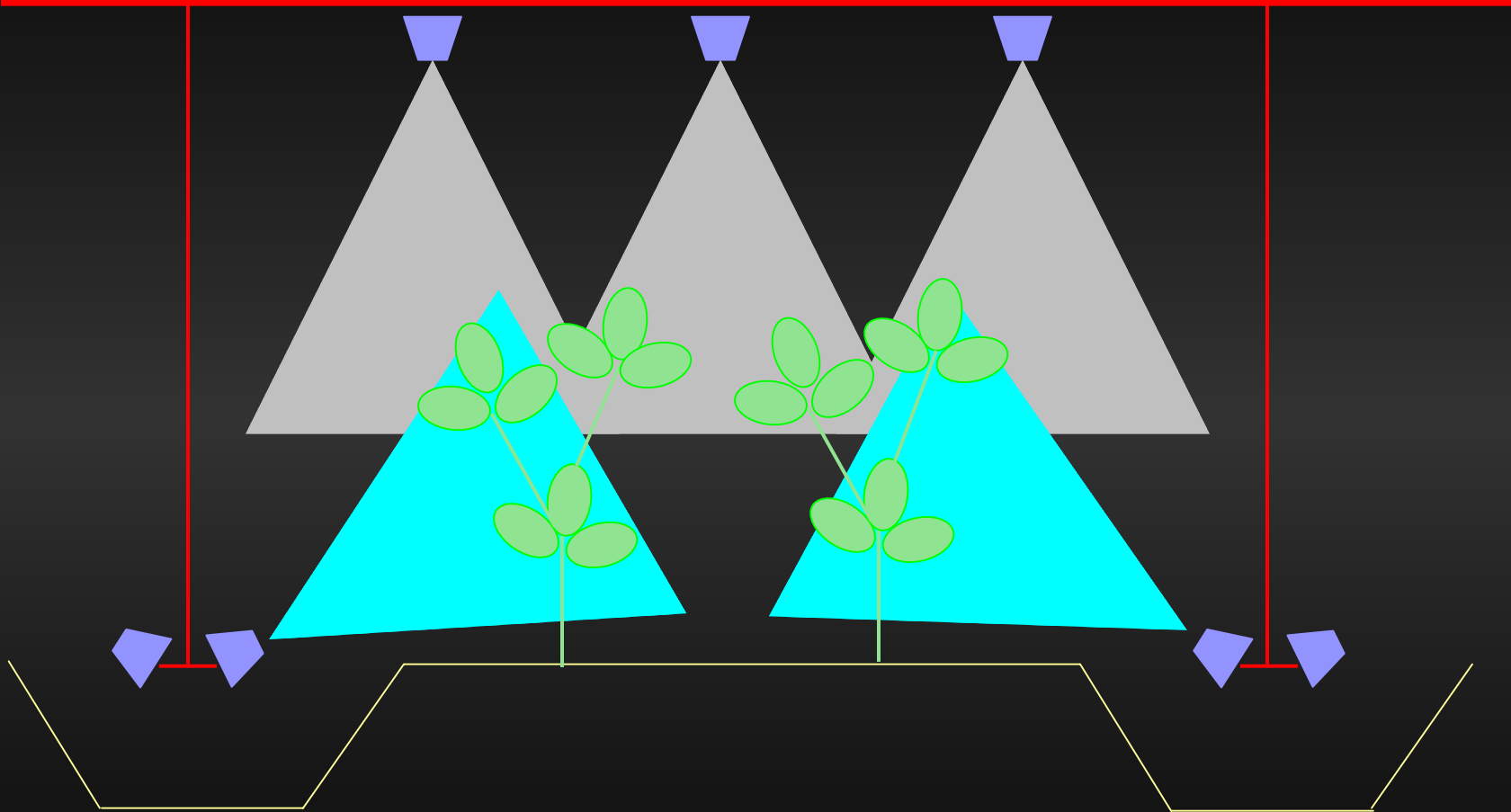
Contour Yield Points to  
Create Zones



# Chemical Application

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- Use a JD 4720 sprayer
  - Needs shields on wheels later in season
  - High pressures and output for soybeans
- Use tractor mounted 7 row sprayers when 4720 is spraying cane
- Apply aerially by helicopter when rained out
  - Big difference in damage and quality between ground and aerial application







# Red Banded Stinkbug

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Eight rows skipped by sprayer.....

Missed only one of three insecticide applications

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41% loss in bu/acre (from yield monitor)

100% loss (rejected beans)







# Wheat

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- Average 600 acres of wheat in fallow
- Similar tools used to bust out cane stubble and prepare beds
- Average harvest date: May 7<sup>th</sup>-June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Much easier to fit in a cane program
  - Two months to control bermudagrass after wheat harvest
  - Frees up land to plant while beans are harvested
- Wheat followed by beans followed by sugarcane
  - All in one year
  - Soybean yield suffers, but it can be done







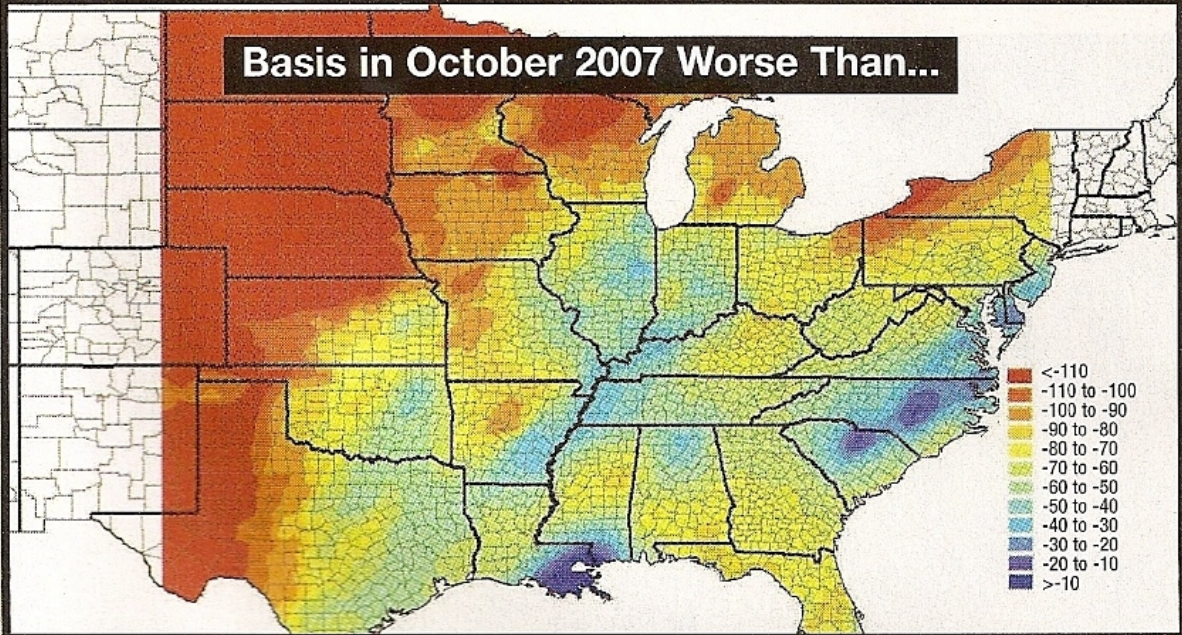




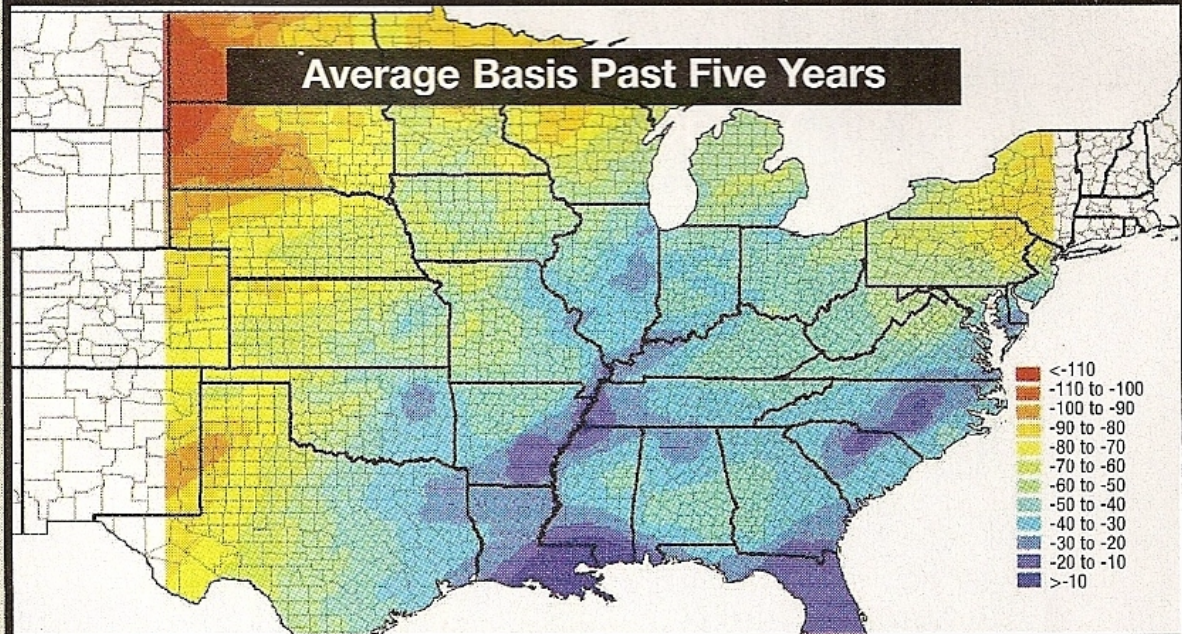




### Basis in October 2007 Worse Than...

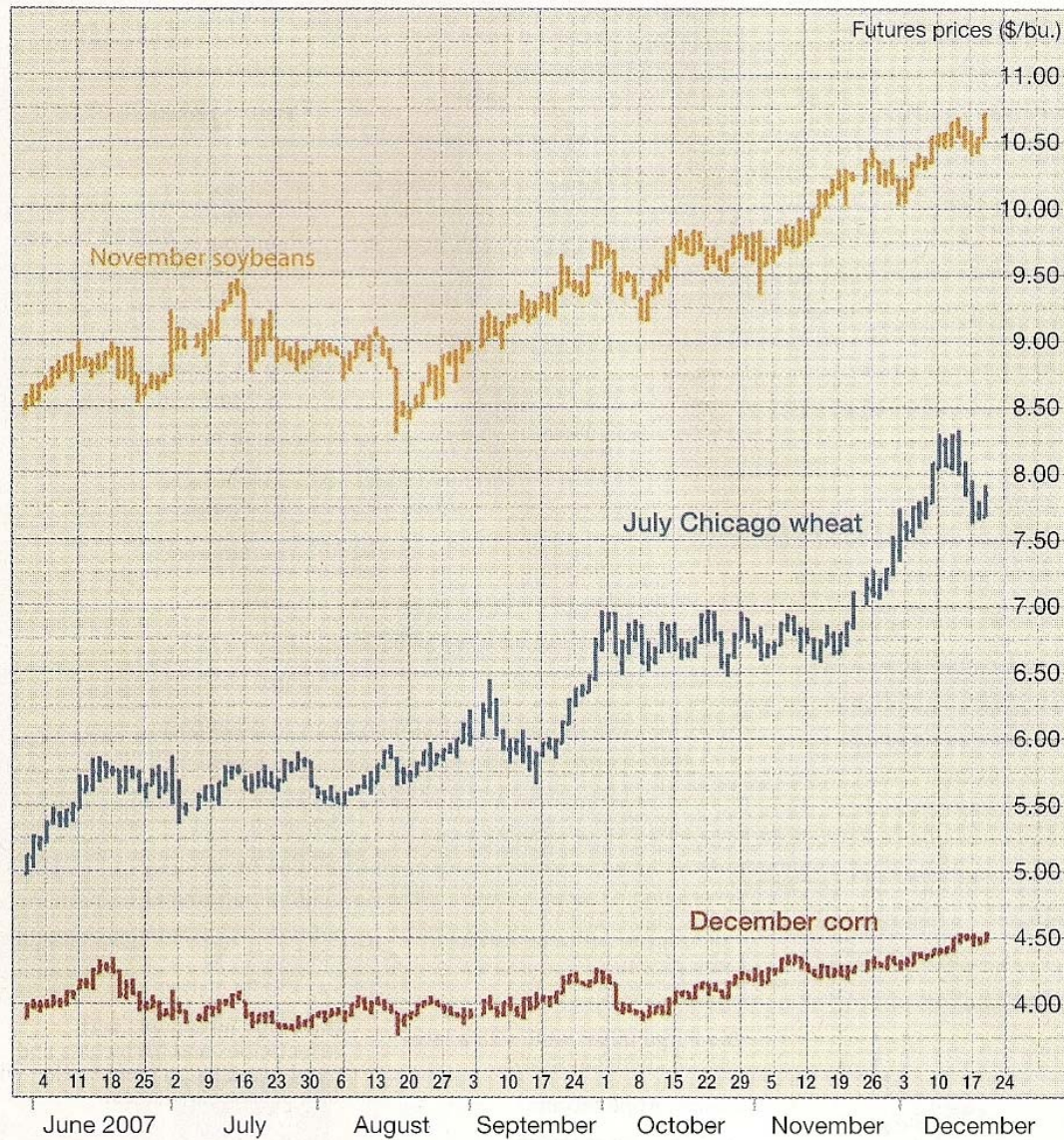


### Average Basis Past Five Years





## Still-strong Prices Stall Decision Making



With November bean futures near \$10.50 and December corn, \$4.50, the price ratio is 2.33:1, giving soybeans an edge based on historical patterns, says Chip Flory of Pro Farmer in Cedar Falls, Iowa. "Or, looking at gross revenue, 175-bu. cash corn at \$4.20/bu. has a \$185/acre advantage over 55-bu. beans at \$10. But is that enough, considering cost differences?"

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Thank You Very Much!

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Ronald Gonsoulin  
Ulysse Gonsoulin & Sons

