

SOIL HEALTH IS IN CRISIS – AND FARMERS ARE PAYING THE PRICE

Across the Midwest, more and more farmers are feeling the squeeze. Input costs keep rising, margins keep shrinking, and the pressure to “do more with less” grows heavier every season. According to ProfitProAG founder and president Jim Ladlie, this isn’t just a tough year – it’s a breaking point.

“We’re at a crisis right now in agriculture,” Ladlie says. “There’s a lot of farmers out here that aren’t making money. And every year expenses are going up because they are following this industrial ag complex program.”

For decades, the dominant system has pushed higher inputs, heavier tillage, and a narrow focus on yield. But Ladlie argues that this approach has come at a steep cost – one that’s now impossible to ignore.

The Hidden Cost of Industrial Ag

In a recent segment on the Farm to Fork podcast, Ladlie explained how the last 40–50 years of industrial agriculture have quietly eroded the foundation of farming itself: soil health.

“What we’ve done in the industrial ag movement is we’ve destroyed soil health,” he says. “And what it has led to is more diseases, insects, and weeds because we destroyed the natural balance and the nutritional quality and energy of food.”

When soil biology breaks down, everything else follows – crop resilience, nutrient density, livestock health, and ultimately, farm profitability.

Why Regenerative Agriculture Matters Now More Than Ever

Ladlie believes the path forward is clear: rebuild soil health through regenerative practices that restore balance instead of fighting nature.

“Soil health is really the foundation of everything we do in agriculture, both crop and livestock,” he says. “We’ve got to have healthy soils to have healthy food and healthy feed.”

A regenerative approach focuses on:

- Strengthening soil biology
- Reducing dependency on synthetic inputs
- Improving nutrient cycling
- Increasing resilience against pests, disease, and weather extremes
- Building long-term profitability

It’s not a trend – it’s a return to what works.

A Chance to Learn More This Winter

ProfitProAG will be diving deeper into these challenges and solutions at its upcoming Winter Conference in late February. Farmers, agronomists, and livestock producers will have the chance to explore regenerative strategies that improve both soil health and the bottom line.

For growers looking to break free from the industrial ag treadmill, this is a timely opportunity to rethink what’s possible.

