

# Issue Update

## Transparency Evaluator Answers Farmer Questions on Big Data

| By **Beverly Paul**

The growth of precision agriculture solutions, the wealth of data those solutions generate and the application of those data is touted as the next “game changer” for farmers. As this technology becomes more widely adopted and more farmers integrate farm data products into their operations, many have significant questions about the privacy, security and stewardship of the data they are collecting. A recent survey found that an overwhelming number of farmers do not know what happens to their data when they use these new technologies.

The Ag Data Transparency Evaluator aims to help producers understand where their data is going and who has access and control over it. Created by a partnership among major farm organizations, commodity groups and agriculture technology providers (ATPs), the Transparency Evaluator requires participating ATPs to answer 10 key questions about their technology product’s use and control of farmer data. A third party administrator then reviews the answers and determines whether

the products meet the standards of transparency set by the Privacy and Security Principles for Farm Data (Data Principles).

Products that meet standards will receive the “Ag Data Transparent” seal to be displayed on promotional materials and product pages. Additionally, farmers can go to the Transparency Evaluator website to see and compare all the products and services that have undergone the evaluation.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) is one of the founding members of the coalition behind the Ag Data Transparency Evaluator (ADTE). ASA now provides access to the ADTE prominently on the ASA home page at [www.soygrowers.org](http://www.soygrowers.org).

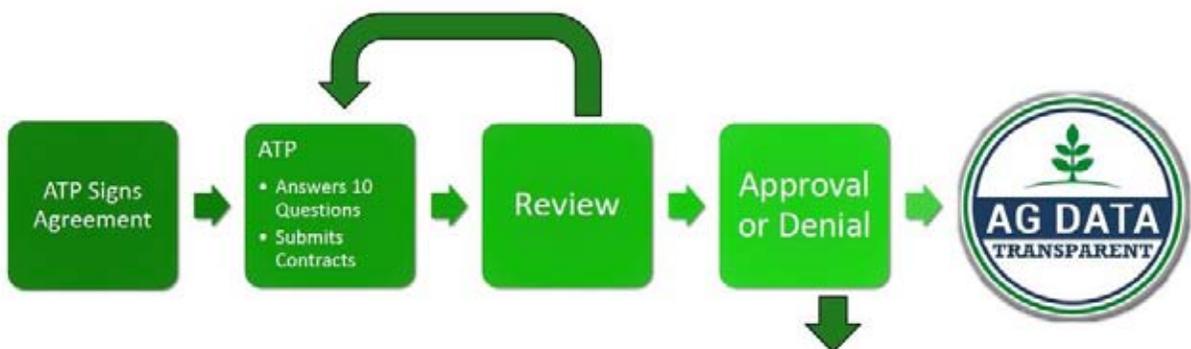
“Data security is on the top of everyone’s minds,” said Davie Stephens, a farmer from Wingo, Ky., who serves as ASA Secretary and chair of the Association’s Research, Precision Ag and Ag Data Advocacy Team. “Information that is understandable and easy for farmers to access is key to helping us profit

from the data we’re all collecting.”

Some of the 10 questions addressed by the Evaluator include: What categories of data does the product or service collect from the farmer?; Will the ATP obtain the farmer’s consent before providing other companies with access to the data?; and Will the ATP notify the farmer if a breach of data security occurs that causes disclosure of the farmer’s data to an outside party?

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The Ag Data Transparency Evaluator is a non-profit corporation governed by a board of directors from the participating organizations. The corporate bylaws require that all actions be approved by the farmer-led organizations, making the Evaluator truly a farmer-driven initiative not controlled by the ATPs whose products are reviewed. ■



**HOW DO YOU GET THE AG DATA TRANSPARENT SEAL?**