



# MERIT myth

PARTNER BRIEF



Engaging with South Dakota producers,  
scientists and conservationists to  
gain a better understanding of healthy,  
functioning soils.

# OUR MISSION



**T**he Merit or Myth project was established to provide additional support to the SD-NRCS' ongoing soil health initiative. While SD-NRCS has made great strides in the promotion of soil health principles and practices, many producers are concerned that these ideas won't work for them. These concerns are primarily management issues that include planting into too much residue, low soil temperatures, too much soil moisture in spring, weed concerns and basic economics. At Merit or Myth, we are engaging with producers, scientists and conservationists across the Mount Rushmore State to address these specific concerns.



# OUR MISSION (continued)



Our primary medium is video which we plan to promote through diverse social media channels. As of the end of August, we have made two trips to South Dakota, and we have met with nine farmers six scientists and a number of conservationists. Based on the information we have gleaned so far, we believe that the original “Myths” can be addressed through SD scientist and farmer testimonials. Nevertheless, we’re aware that there is so much more that these folks are communicating in terms of the way that they think which may be considered holistic, or integrated or systems thinking. In this sense, we feel that much more of the material goes “beyond the myth”, and leads to a much broader view of thinking of agroecosystems. After initial review to date, we feel the main content we still lack is to answer the question, “how exactly do I make the change?” and “where would I go to if I wanted to talk about changing?”. We are excited about moving this project forward and being an integrated part of the SD-NRCS’s soil health strategy!



# INTERVIEWS (PRODUCERS & SCIENTISTS)

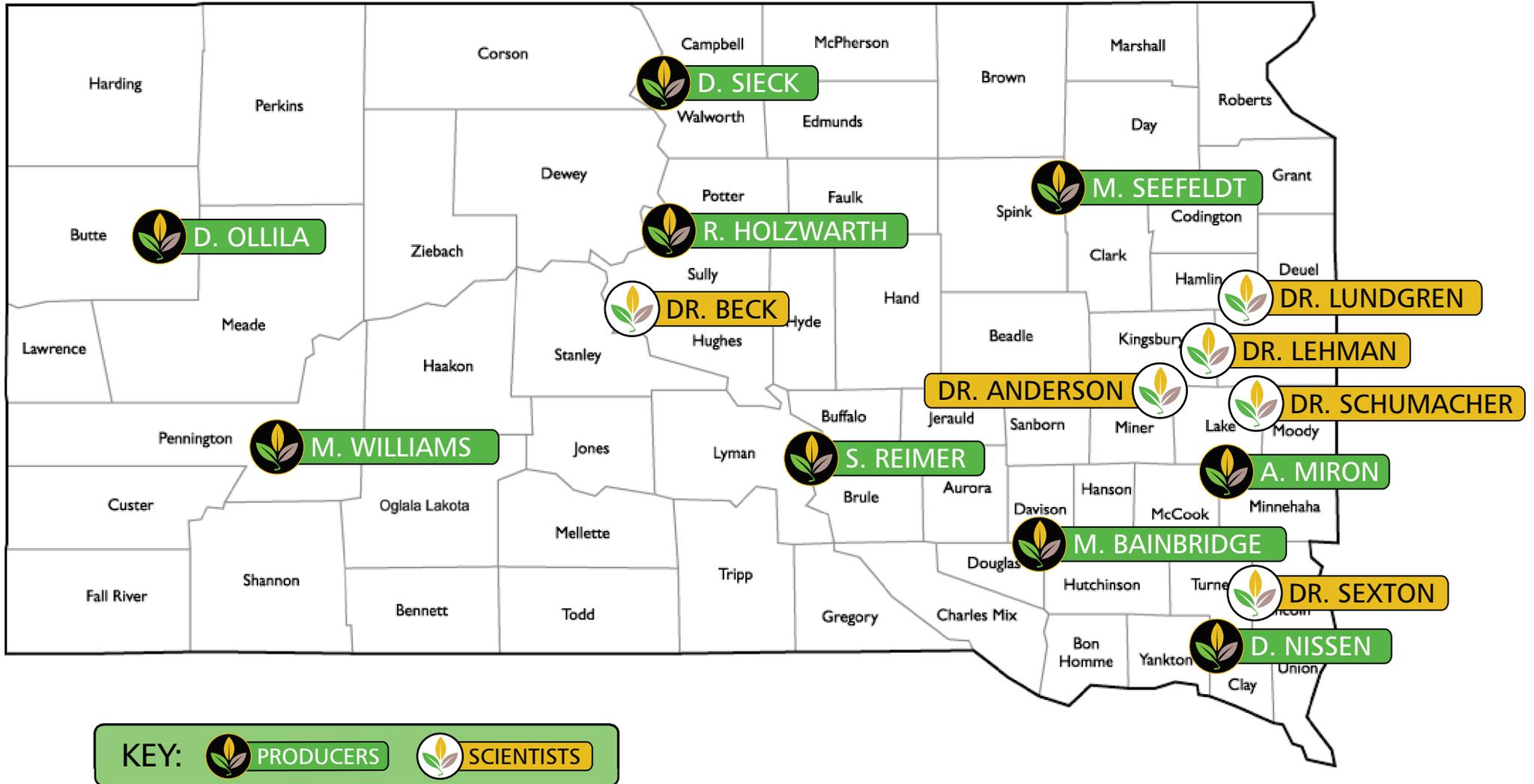


**F**armers and ranchers we have met with (from West River to East River) include Dave Ollila - Butte Co., Monty Williams - Pennington Co., Doug Sieck - Walworth Co, Ralph Holzwarth - Potter Co., Steve Reimer - Brule Co., Matt Bainbridge - Davison Co., Mike Seefeldt - Clark Co., Al Miron - Minnehaha Co., and Dick Nissen - Clay Co. There are still a number of producers we still want to visit with including Dan Forgey and Bryan Jorgensen. Note that we have farmers going from extremely dry to typically very moist conditions, and part of that idea is to counter the idea that “soil health doesn’t work here!”.

**O**ur scientists include Dr. Randy Anderson, Dr. Mike Lehman, Dr. Tom Schumacher, Dr. Dwayne Beck, Dr. Jon Lundgren and Dr. Pete Sexton. We also have material from our conservationists including Jeff Zimprich, Jason Miller and Jeff Hemenway.



# PRODUCERS & SCIENTISTS MAP





**MERIT|myth**