



SIEMER-STAR PRODUCER REWARD PAYMENT PROGRAM



What Is The Siemer & STAR Reward Program?

The Siemer-STAR Producer Reward Payment Program is a partnership between Siemer Milling Company and STAR that rewards farmers for implementing conservation practices that improve soil health and water quality. Instead of paying for specific practices, the program uses a field's **STAR Rating (1–5 STARS)** to determine eligibility and payments. With a \$10,000 cap per farmer and an \$75,000 cap overall, it is expected to go quickly, so make sure to apply early and before the **August 31st** deadline.

Eligibility Criteria

SMC customers' corn, soybean, and wheat fields are eligible to participate. If you have sold wheat to SMC in the past five years (including this year), you must also submit a SMC Grower Agreement **AND** use the STAR Tool to get a STAR Rating on the fields listed in the Grower Agreement. STAR provides each field a confidential rating of 1 to 5 STARS. Until 400 acre cap is reached, producers receive payment for:

1. Receiving and maintaining a 5-STAR Rating (the highest rating) **OR**
2. Demonstrating improvement in initial STAR rating over a two-year period.

Example

Year 1: A field's STAR rating is a 1
Year 2: A field's STAR rating is a 2
Because of the rating improvement, the farmer will collect \$10/acre up to the acreage cap (400 acres/grower/year). Compensation is tied to acres, not bushels.

What Is STAR?

STAR was developed by farmers, for farmers. Farmers deserve recognition for their commitment to land stewardship and soil health. STAR allows farmers to evaluate their current production system, identify areas for improved management, document their progress and share their successes. STAR was created by two farmer board members from the Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District. Farmers get their confidential STAR Ratings through the [STAR Web Tool](#). The staff and navigators also direct farmers to expert technical conservation assistance that can help them adopt new practices that may raise their STAR Ratings.



Steve Stierwalt and Joe Rothermel, farmers in Champaign County, Ill., developed the STAR tool in 2017.

STAR Rating Scale & Compensation Levels



How To Apply

Step 1: Get a STAR rating for each field at www.startool.ag

- Make sure you complete a STAR field form for **ALL FIELDS** that you would like to submit

Step 2: Contact your SMC representative to receive and complete a Grower Agreement with all fields listed for consideration.

- **New this year**– STAR Tool Field ID numbers **MUST** be included in application

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What Does STAR Do With The Data?

Personal information, email addresses, management plans, operational details and results are for growers' use only. STAR will not share this information with any third party unless growers specifically agree to a data-sharing option. Aggregate information may be used and shared by STAR and authorized third parties to improve conservation management services and tools, and to promote the understanding and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices.

Refer to STAR's full [Terms of Use and Privacy Policy](#) on the Illinois STAR website. Feel free to contact STAR at admin@IllinoisSTAR.org or by phone [217-766-3934](tel:217-766-3934) for any questions or concerns.

If a field is accepted in STAR's Producer Reward Payment Program, STAR will share aggregated, NOT field-level, data with Siemer Milling Company.

The Fine Print

1. Siemer customers' corn, soybean and wheat fields are eligible to participate (must have been a Siemer Milling Company customer (delivered wheat) within the last 5 years or in 2026). There is a 400 acres/grower/year cap.
2. Prioritization (if needed) will be first come, first served, using the date the signed Grower Agreement is received.
3. STAR encourages stack ability of payment programs to fully cover producers' cost of practice implementation. Other private carbon market programs may have restrictions that prohibit additional producer payments for fields that are enrolled. Producers should check the rules of any other program they are participating in before committing to this program. Fields enrolled in publicly eligible programs, like USDA- or state-based conservation programs, are eligible.
4. A small subset of STAR fields is randomly selected each year for verification and quality control. Verification will occur in late 2025. If a field that is participating in this program is randomly selected, the grower will be notified by a STAR representative.
5. No backsliding: In subsequent years of STAR's Producer Reward Payment Program, fields will not be eligible for a payment if they were previously rewarded for a certain STAR Rating Improvement. For example, in the image below, Field A received a payment for achieving an improvement from 2 to 3 STARS; this same field would NOT be eligible to receive a payment if the field went back down to a 2-STAR rating and went back up to a 3-STAR rating. It would only be eligible for another incentive payment when it achieved a 4-STAR rating, or the flat payment for a 5-STAR rating.