

A TANK MIX FIELD GUIDE

Fields Only a Drone Can Fly

How to find them and what to charge

WHAT THIS IS

The plain version for operators done racing to the bottom on \$13 corn. How to find the wet bottoms, tall corn, odd fields and boxed-in fields a plane and a ground rig can't touch, look up who owns them and charge real money. All free tools. Ten minute read, call list by tonight.

Inside: the 4 fields, 8 free tools, the calls that book, a price guide and a worksheet you can print.

START HERE

Stop fighting over cheap acres

The easy acres are a price war. Flat, open, square corn keeps dropping. The going rate fell to about \$13 an acre in 2025, down from \$21 the year before. Every guy who bought a drone last winter is chasing the same fields.

The money is on the acres they can't reach. Wet bottoms. Tall corn at tassel. Small odd fields. Fields boxed in by houses, a creek or an organic neighbor. You can fly all of them with the drone you already own.

This guide shows you how to find these fields tonight, look up who owns them and price the job. On these fields, you are the only call.

THE TARGETS

The four fields only a drone can fly



Wet bottoms

A rig sinks and ruts for days after a rain. A plane and the farmer's own sprayer can't get in. Your drone never touches the ground.

FLY IT 2 gallons an acre, 200 to 250 micron, 10 to 15 feet up.

WHEN The 3 days after a soaking rain.



Tall corn at tassel

A rig tracks tall corn and costs 3 to 6 bushels an acre. A plane can't get spray down in the canopy. You spray top down where disease starts. Beck's measured \$27.26 back an acre and 12 more bushels.

FLY IT 2 to 3 gallons an acre, big droplet, fly across the rows.

WHEN VT to R1, around July.



Small and odd fields

A plane won't turn for an 11-acre triangle. A rig spends more time on the road than in the field. You fly it in one battery.

FLY IT Same as a normal pass. Just bill a minimum.

WHEN Any short hop between bigger jobs.



Drift-boxed fields

Next to a subdivision, a school, an organic farm or a creek, one gust off a plane is a lawsuit. Your low, slow, big-droplet spray stays on the field. Best margin you have.

FLY IT 250 micron or bigger, wind under 10 mph, never spray toward a neighbor.

WHEN Any time, but carry chemical drift coverage first.

The 8 free tools

Here is every free tool, what it shows you and the steps. Most need no login. Run them in the order under The Routine.



1. Web Soil Survey

No login

websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app

Shows you: Shows which fields turn to soup after a rain. Your wet-bottom list.

1. Open the site and click the green Start WSS button.
2. On the left, open Quick Navigation, pick Address, type a town near you and hit View.
3. Use the rectangle tool at the top of the map to draw a box around your area. That sets your Area of Interest.
4. Click the Soil Data Explorer tab. In the Search box, type drainage class and hit Search, then View Rating.
5. Poorly drained and very poorly drained is your wet-bottom ground. Run the same search for flooding frequency and ponding frequency.
6. Screenshot it or click Printable Version.



2. SoilWeb GMap

No login, works on your phone

casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap

Shows you: The fast drainage check, right from the field.

1. Open the link on your phone. Tap Menu, then Use Current Location, or type an address.
2. Tap anywhere on the map. Yellow lines mark the soil units.
3. Tap the soil name, open the details and look for Drainage class. Poorly drained is your flag.
4. Add the page to your home screen so it opens like an app.



3. CroplandCROS

No login

croplandcros.scinet.usda.gov

Shows you: Shows which fields are corn and which are beans. Your tall-corn list.

1. Open the site and search your county.
2. Set the most recent year in the Select CDL Year menu.
3. Corn is yellow, soybeans are dark green. The legend confirms it.
4. Mark the big corn blocks near you. Cross-check the wet ones in Web Soil Survey and you have the fields a rig will rut.



4. Google Earth Pro

No login

free app, or maps.google.com

Shows you: Measures a field's acres and shows you what sits next to it.

1. Type your area in the search bar.
2. Click the ruler, pick Polygon and trace the field. It shows the acreage.
3. Look at the edges. Houses mean drift risk and a reason to charge more. A creek or tree line means a plane has to give it room. A patchwork of small fields often means an organic neighbor.
4. On your phone, Google Maps satellite does the same check from the road.



5. County GIS viewer

Usually no login

search your county name plus parcel viewer

Shows you: Turns a field into a name and a phone lead.

1. Search the county name plus GIS or parcel viewer or beacon. Most use a free public one.
2. Zoom to your field or type the address, then click the parcel.
3. It shows the owner name, mailing address and acres.
4. Find the phone: search the name on Facebook or the white pages, or ask at the co-op. Now your field has a person.



6. Copernicus and Worldview

Copernicus needs a free account

browser.dataspace.copernicus.eu / worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov

Shows you: Shows fields still holding water a day or two after a storm.

1. Copernicus: make a free account, search your area, set the date to just after the rain and pick Sentinel-2.
2. Standing water shows dark. Wet ground shows darker than dry. Those are your calls.
3. Worldview is faster and needs no login. Pan to your area and set the date at the bottom to right after the storm.
4. Use Worldview for a quick regional look at where it rained and stayed wet.



7. NWS rain and radar

No login

water.noaa.gov / radar.weather.gov

Shows you: Shows where it just rained, so you call before the ground dries.

1. Open radar.weather.gov to see where it is raining now and how hard.
2. For totals, open water.noaa.gov and find the precipitation analysis, or a free radar-estimate map you can click for the last 24 hours to 5 days.
3. An inch or more on poorly drained ground means those bottoms are down for days. That is your window.



8. B4UFLY airspace

aloft.ai or autopilot.io/b4uflly

No login for the quick check

Shows you: Shows if a field near a town or airport is in controlled airspace before you promise a date.

1. Drop a pin on the field.
2. Green or clear means uncontrolled airspace. Fly up to 400 feet under the normal rules.
3. A controlled-airspace grid means you need a LAANC authorization first. Most come back in seconds.
4. Check the exact launch spot, not just the town. Your Part 107 and Part 137 rules still apply.

THE ROUTINE

Find a call list in under an hour

You don't run all eight every time. Run them in this order.

1. **CroplandCROS:** mark the corn blocks near you. (tall corn)
2. **Web Soil Survey:** map drainage over them. Mark the poorly drained ground. (wet bottoms)
3. **Google Earth Pro:** measure the odd and boxed-in fields. (odd shapes, drift-boxed)
4. **After a rain:** check radar and a rain map. See where an inch fell.
5. **A day later:** confirm standing water in Copernicus or Worldview.
6. **County GIS:** pull the owner name for each field.
7. **B4UFLY:** check any field near a town.
8. **Call.** Lead with the field, not the price.

The whole point: you are not waiting for the phone to ring. You are calling the grower about the one field nobody else will touch, the day after a rain, while the rig is stuck in the shed.

THE MONEY

Price it like the only call

On these fields you are not bidding against three other drones. Quit anchoring to \$13.

Know your numbers first. Iowa State 2026 put drone spray at \$12.50 an acre average. Missouri 2025 put owned-drone cost at \$12.27 an acre. That is your cost, not your price. Specialty crops run \$18 to \$35. Beck's 2025 measured \$27.26 back an acre on a corn fungicide pass.

How to price the uncontested fields

1. Quote above your flat-corn rate. These fields cost the competition more, or they can't do them at all.
2. Set a \$300 minimum so small fields pay. A triangle at \$300 is \$27 an acre, and the grower has no other option.
3. Charge tall-corn fungicide at a premium. You are saving 12 bushels. At \$4 corn that is \$48 an acre, so your \$18 pass is cheap.

4. Drift-boxed fields are peace of mind. Price it.

Quick price guide

Job	What to charge
Flat corn or beans	\$13 to \$16, skip the fight when you can
Wet bottom a rig can't reach	Your rate, no discount, you are the only option
Tall corn fungicide at tassel	\$16 to \$20, you are saving 12 bushels
Small or odd field	\$300 flat minimum
Drift-boxed field near houses	Premium, the value is no drift claim
Specialty crop, orchard or vineyard	\$20 to \$35

THE CALLS

The calls that book

Lead with the field and the problem. Not the price.

Wet bottom, day after a rain

"Saw you got two inches last night. That bottom on the north field won't hold a rig for a week and your window is closing. I can fly it tomorrow, no ruts, same label rate. Want me to put you on the schedule?"

Tall corn at tassel

"Your corn is past tassel. A rig is going to track it up and cost you bushels, and a plane can't get the spray down in the canopy. I fly it top down so it hits where tar spot starts. Beck's showed a drone pass paid back \$27 an acre. Want it done this week?"

Small or odd field

"That triangle behind the barn nobody wants to fly? I'll take it. Three hundred flat, done in an afternoon, no road time. Want me to swing by?"

Drift-boxed field

"Your field by the subdivision is tough for a plane, one gust and it's a problem with the neighbors. I spray low and slow with a big droplet so it stays on your ground. Want me to handle that one?"

The line that books any of them: **"Your plane guy won't touch the wet bottom and your ground guy will rut your tall corn. I can have it done this week."**

WHEN THEY PUSH BACK

What to say to the three you'll hear

THEY SAY "The plane guy is cheaper."

YOU SAY "On flat open ground, sure. But he can't put product down in your tall corn, and one gust by the subdivision is a problem. I fly the fields he can't."

THEY SAY "I'll just wait and run my own rig."

YOU SAY "On that wet bottom you'll wait a week and the window closes. And the ruts cost you bushels in tall corn. I can have it done tomorrow with no tracks."

THEY SAY "Why is it more than the going rate?"

YOU SAY "The going rate is for easy acres anybody can fly. This one a plane won't touch and a rig will rut. You're paying for it getting done right, on time, with no drift."

PRINT THIS

Field worksheet

Fill a row for each field you find. Work it top to bottom and make the calls.

Field / location	Type	Acres	Owner	Phone	Fly	Call	Book

Type: W = wet bottom, T = tall corn, O = odd shape, B = drift-boxed.

DO IT NOW

Your first 10 fields this week

- 📌 Pull up CroplandCROS and mark 5 corn blocks near you
- 📌 Run Web Soil Survey over them and flag the poorly drained ground
- 📌 Measure 5 odd or boxed-in fields in Google Earth Pro
- 📌 After the next rain, check radar and a rain map
- 📌 Confirm standing water a day later in Copernicus or Worldview
- 📌 Pull owner names from your county GIS for all 10
- 📌 Drop B4UFLY pins on any field near a town
- 📌 Make 10 calls, leading with the field not the price
- 📌 Quote above \$13 and set a \$300 minimum on the small ones
- 📌 Book the fields the rig and the plane can't touch

ALL THE LINKS

Every tool in one spot



Web Soil Survey

websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app

wet bottoms



SoilWeb GMap

casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap

drainage on your phone



CroplandCROS

croplandcros.scinet.usda.gov

corn vs beans



Google Earth Pro

earth.google.com

measure and eyeball



County GIS

search: your county + parcel viewer

find the owner



Copernicus Browser

browser.dataspace.copernicus.eu

standing water



NASA Worldview

worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov

standing water, no login



NWS radar

radar.weather.gov

where it just rained



NWS rain totals

water.noaa.gov

how much fell



B4UFLY airspace

aloft.ai

can you fly it

This guide is from Tank Mix, the weekly read for US ag drone spray operators. Real rates, decoded rules, off-season money and one good laugh.

Free every Thursday at tankmix.beehiiv.com

Find or list a verified operator at agdronedirectory.com