

SPOTLIGHT - Savanna Institute's Tree Crop Commercialization Program

What's holding back agroforestry adoption in the Midwest? Whether it's designing a new mechanical harvester, helping hazelnut farmers aggregate, or designing a mobile processing hub for elderberries, the Savanna Institute's Tree Crop Commercialization Program focuses on identifying bottlenecks to agroforestry adoption and finding solutions to those limits.

Savanna Institute's staff dig deep into the best research around individual tree crops and then journey throughout the Midwest talking with farmers and others within the value chain to understand the assets and challenges facing the industry. Each year they produce an impact investment report focused on a different crop and use these reports to try to catalyze investment in tree crop industries. For example:

Impact investing in the Midwest hazelnut industry. In the face of climate change, we need transformative solutions that transcend the fundamental challenges of annual crops. Perennial staple crops are one solution. Hazelnuts, in particular, present a timely economic and environmental strategy in the Midwest U.S. While the existing \$7 billion global market for hazelnuts is on track to double this decade, this crop's latent potential lies in its ability to supplant soybeans as a staple source of protein and oil.



Credit: American Hazelnut Company

If adopted broadly, hazelnuts could help reverse agriculture's role in climate change. Over 1,500 Mt carbon (~30% of annual U.S. carbon dioxide emissions) could be sequestered in woody biomass alone if hazelnuts replaced the existing 84 million acres of soybeans across the Midwest.⁶