

530 Big Tech Blocking News

#RealisticRegenAg | Have you heard about Meta (formerly known as Facebook) blocking Canadian news? They had previously warned that they would take this action if a new law was passed in Canada, and it seems they are now following through. Join me in this episode covering my monthly newsletter and I'll explain it's relevance to my business.

Welcome to Plants Dig Soil, a podcast about #RealisticRegenAg. I'm your host, Scott Gillespie, and I'm an agronomist from the western Canadian prairies specializing in climate-smart agriculture. I discuss scientifically proven practices that benefit the planet and, just as importantly, farmers' economic sustainability. Be sure to visit my website, www.plantsdigsoil.com, for resources and information about the services I offer.

Content summary links:

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/podcast/farming-with-soil-life>

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/podcast/testing-soil-health>

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/podcast/breeding-research-policy>

Transcript is available:

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/podcast/big-tech-blocking-news>

My course: Profitable From the Start: Cover Crops for the Prairies:

<https://plantsdigsoil.thinkific.com/courses/cover-crops-prairies>

My funding service offerings:

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/pricing/#paperwork>

SCAP overview: <https://youtu.be/OicitHJR2lk>

SCAP program details <https://www.alberta.ca/sustainable-cap.aspx>

My consulting packages:

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/pricing/#consulting>

Newsletter signup:

<https://mailchi.mp/plantsdigsoil/newsletter>

<https://www.linkedin.com/newsletters/6944029544697802752>

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Twitter (Company): <https://twitter.com/PlantsDigSoil>

LinkedIn (Scott): <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scottcgillespie/>

LinkedIn (Company): <https://www.linkedin.com/company/plants-dig-soil>

YouTube: (Company): <https://www.youtube.com/@scottcgillespie>

Podcast Subscription Apps: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/scottcgillespie>

Here's the official statement from Meta on the matter:

For Canadian news outlets this means:

News links and content posted by news publishers and broadcasters in Canada will no longer be viewable by people in Canada. We are identifying news outlets based on legislative definitions and guidance from the [Online News Act](#).

For international news outlets this means:

News publishers and broadcasters outside of Canada will continue to be able to post news links and content, however, that content will not be viewable by people in Canada.

For our Canadian community this means:

People in Canada will no longer be able to view or share news content on Facebook and Instagram, including news articles and audio-visual content posted by news outlets.

Source: [Facebook](#)

The reason I invest significant effort in building email lists is that email communication offers distinct advantages compared to social media.

With email, I can send messages to email addresses from any provider, as long as I have permission to do so. Once I hit "send," the email is out in the world, and I can't retract or edit it afterward. As long as you are sure to mark it as not spam, it will come through. There are no algorithms deciding how many of my subscribers get the message. I don't have to pay for them to push it out to more people. It just goes out as I send it.

Podcasts work similarly; once published, they are accessible on major platforms like Apple, Spotify, and Google, but any app that seeks the feed can find and share it. They don't block episodes. Everything goes up. I also cannot recall it once it's out. There is transparency there that once I say something the record stands.

In contrast, social media and search engines like Google operate under their own rules, determining what content can be posted or suppressed. Currently, only Meta (Facebook) enforces such control, but Google and other platforms might follow suit in the future.

While I don't think I fit the definition of "news" if a company decided that I did it could very easily block anyone from posting any of my links.

I would love to continue expanding this list. Social media platforms and even Google might block me at any time. **If you received this message through a forward, please consider subscribing.** I send updates only once a month, and I assure you that every time, I'll bring valuable information. I also share these updates on LinkedIn. While I'm aware that platforms like LinkedIn could change their policies too, I trust Microsoft more than billionaire-owned companies with questionable motives.

Thanks for continuing to support me and please forward to a friend.

Content Summaries from July

527 Farming with Soil Life

I recently had the opportunity to read and review the thought-provoking book "Farming with Soil Life" by the Xerces Society. This book is a game-changer, challenging the conventional view of killing soil life for farming and highlighting the significance of nurturing soil health for sustainable agriculture.

The book starts by exploring the geological origin of soil and how chemical and biological factors contribute to its development. Understanding this process lays the foundation for grasping what constitutes a healthy soil. Whether it's on a farm or in a forest, a healthy soil is one that serves our goals, supporting robust crop growth or a thriving ecosystem, while ensuring its preservation for future generations.

The book presents different methods to assess soil health, such as observing soil inhabitants and their activities. While conventional soil health tests are still developing, the book's emphasis on direct observation and plant response is a practical and informative approach.

One compelling argument is the need to reduce pesticide use. The book delves into the concept of sub-lethal doses, which can harm soil organisms without immediate signs of damage. I was reminded of my experiences with quinoa crops, where minimal pesticide use on organic land resulted in the most successful yields.

The book advocates for using manures and compost to improve soil health, but I raise some points about the importance of finding a balance with synthetic inputs. It's crucial to consider nutrient recycling and sustainable practices to maintain soil fertility.

Another essential aspect highlighted in the book is leaving areas for soil organisms and predators. In the past, the focus was on maximizing planting areas, neglecting the value of unplanted spaces. However, these areas play a crucial role in supporting beneficial predators that control pests naturally.

While the book provides detailed descriptions of various soil organisms, I'll admit that I'm not a taxonomist. Nevertheless, I'm committed to learning about a new soil creature each week to appreciate their roles in the larger ecosystem.

528 Testing Soil Health without Soil Health Tests

While some soil health tests are getting closer to becoming practical options, I am still not convinced that they offer enough value to justify their widespread use at this point.

In my consulting work, I continue to rely on the tried-and-true methods, which include traditional soil tests, farmer knowledge, and my own observations. These established soil tests, based on chemical analysis, have a historical advantage, allowing me to compare current results to tests conducted years ago.

The potential of new soil health tests is undeniable, and their relevance has gained prominence as farmers increasingly prioritize practices that enhance and maintain soil health. The objectives of soil health testing align with those of traditional soil testing programs, aiming to find indicators that accurately represent the soil's condition. The ideal indicators are easy to measure, compatible with other indicators, accessible, repeatable, cost-effective, and comparable across different regions.

However, the landscape of soil health testing is still evolving, and I have reservations about some of the new tests, such as organic carbon, carbon mineralization, and aggregate stability. While these tests show promise, the numbers they produce lack clear interpretation guidelines. Until thorough research establishes practical guidelines and recommendations for farmers to adjust their practices accordingly, I prefer to rely on the familiar and established methods.

To formalize and structure my soil health assessment, I follow a six-question flow chart created by Dr. Andrew McGuire. This flow chart covers essential aspects of soil health, including erosion concerns, water absorption, drainage, surface crusting, nutrient flow, and plant health. Addressing these key aspects ensures a systematic evaluation and allows for targeted improvements to enhance overall soil health.

529 Breeding, Research, and Policy

1. Genetically modified techniques are explored to make potatoes resistant to late blight, reducing the need for expensive chemical applications; potential benefits to the environment and worker safety are promising.
2. A new soybean variety containing pork protein raises ethical questions about genetic modification, with proponents seeing potential efficiency gains, but critics questioning its necessity and impact on food systems.

3. Researchers investigate the cooperative nature of plants through genome analysis to optimize breeding techniques; debate continues on whether plants are naturally cooperative or competitive in nature.
4. A shift in crop breeding focus from maximum yield to human nutrition and climate resilience is explored; a program in the United States aims to breed crops better suited for people and sustainable agriculture.
5. Challenges arise in accurately predicting nutrient release in manure and cover crops, leading to uncertainties in nutrient management and potential environmental consequences.
6. Intercropping chickpeas and flax shows promise in reducing ascochyta blight, offering a potential regenerative solution to disease management in crops.
7. A food company's interest in intercropping for climate-friendly branding raises questions about true environmental benefits and farmer compensation for implementing regenerative practices.
8. A study examines the risk of simultaneous crop failures and highlights the importance of adopting regenerative practices to build resilience against climate uncertainties.
9. The emergence of sustainability indexes and standards boards impacts agriculture, raising concerns about genuine sustainability efforts versus "greenwashing" strategies.
10. Potato growers express concerns about aligning with industry climate goals without receiving adequate benefits and advocate for a more equitable approach to adopting regenerative practices.

S-CAP = Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Many things are covered but the highlights are:

- New technology, farm security, grain handling
- Buying new or upgrading existing centre pivots,
- Installing drip irrigation
- Digging a well, developing water supplies for crops or livestock, decommissioning old wells
- Developing a food safety plan or upgrading existing ones, developing new products or markets
- Fencing in riparian areas, adding fencing (perimeter and internal)
- Increasing legumes or establishing native or tame forages
- Adding in shelterbelts, eco-buffers, and pollinator strips,
- Intercropping annuals for grain harvest
- Cocktail cover crops for green manure or forage

- Establishing or enhancing wetlands.

Profitable From the Start: Cover Crops for the Prairies

Learn when - AND WHEN NOT- to use cover crops on your farm. You'll make a Cover Crops FIRST (TM) Plan to cover the Fit, Implementation, Return-On-Investment, Species, and Termination. CCA Credits available.

Consulting Packages

Pricing reflects the independent structure of the business. You pay for the advice and that's it. I do not sell any products. I will recommend them where I see fit but I make no money from your use of anything I recommend.

We can work remotely or in-person, or a combination of the two. You are not tied to long term commitments. I give you everything and you are free to implement on your own or with another company. Of course, I always love to work with people over the long term.