



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

October 6, 2011

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA440-12-1

SUBJECT: PGM – PROGRAM INITIATIVES

PURPOSE: To direct field office staff to support initiatives with producers on cooperative projects with Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) and the Iowa Soybean Association in MRBI watersheds through their contacts with producers.

EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2013

Recently the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) entered into two (2) agreements that are intended to accelerate the adoption of sound nutrient management in the prairie pothole region of Iowa. One is with Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA), an organization of fertilizer retailers in the Raccoon and Des Moines River Watersheds. This agreement was funded through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) for targeted sub-watershed efforts in the North Raccoon and Boone River focus areas. The second is with the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) to promote and demonstrate adaptive management.

In the agreement with the ACWA, NRCS agrees to implement and administer Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and/or Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to the extent possible to address identified CCPI project natural resource concerns. This assistance will include recommendations from ACWA for evaluation and ranking of program applications. It also includes the timely obligation of approved contracts for eligible farmers for work within the project area. In the case of CSP, NRCS will use the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) for evaluating and ranking program applicants. The partnering ACWA fertilizer retailers agree to encourage farmers with corn in their rotation in targeted sub-watersheds to adopt nutrient management technology enhancements to maximize nutrient use efficiency and help protect targeted watershed surface and ground water quality. ACWA and participating members will communicate the availability of NRCS CCPI funds for eligible farmers, provide the information they need to successfully qualify for the EQIP funds and provide the necessary tools needed to complete nutrient management plans. ACWA also intends to collaborate with assessment and evaluation of the proposed work. For more information on the ACWA, visit <http://www.acwa-rrws.org/>

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The agreement with ISA is focused on the Boone River, North Raccoon River and Upper Cedar River Watersheds. This agreement provides funding to ISA to conduct guided stalk testing, provide producer education on nutrient management, conduct strip trials, and provide technical training to both NRCS employees and retail agronomists in the project area. The stalk nitrate test is one of the most utilized enhancements in CSP. However, the stalk nitrate test is only one of the tools that make up adaptive management. As you work with producers, make them aware of the other tools used in the On-Farm Network. To improve your knowledge of the On-Farm Network, visit <http://isafarmnet.com/tools.html>.

Training on both of these projects will be provided during area meetings for selected offices. Public information for these projects is also being prepared by the State Office Public Affairs staff. It is important that NRCS employees working in these project areas be informed about and supportive of these projects. Both have the potential to improve nutrient management and help improve water quality.

/s/Jon Hubbert, Acting
Richard Sims
State Conservationist