



News Release

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Ag Retail Group Reaffirms Commitment to Improved Water Quality

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance aligns with Iowa's 4R Plus program to help boost crop yields, while improving soil health and water quality in the state

Des Moines, Iowa — Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) reaffirmed its commitment to improving Iowa water quality with the approval of the organization's 2018 work plan during its March board of directors meeting. ACWA is comprised of 11 agricultural retailers and five associate members with business operations in the Des Moines River and Raccoon River watersheds in Iowa. ACWA aligned with the [4R Plus program](#) as one of the key elements of their work plan, especially for the purposes of training agronomy teams on conservation practices.

4R Plus is a nutrient management and conservation program to better inform farmers, crop advisers and other stakeholders of the benefits of the 4Rs of nutrient stewardship—applying the right nutrient source, at the right rate and right time, and in the right place—and “Plus” in-field and edge-of-field conservation practices to bolster production, build soil health and improve water quality.

The 4R Plus program is coordinated by The Nature Conservancy and is guided and supported by more than 30 organizations, including agribusinesses, conservation organizations, commodity groups and trade associations, government agencies and academic institutions. The program is two-pronged with one element being an on-the-ground outreach effort to provide information about 4R nutrient stewardship and conservation practices to farmers, agronomists, watershed coordinators, Soil and Water Conservation District personnel and others. The second element is a statewide awareness campaign to promote the benefits of 4R Plus practices through radio spots and agriculture publications.

“The ACWA members believe that success takes sound nutrient management and conservation practices working together to make progress toward the goals of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy,” said ACWA Chair Harry Ahrenholtz. “It makes sense to align with the 4R Plus

program to help inform our members and customers about the nutrient and conservation options that are available to them.”

Greg Wandrey, agriculture program director for The Nature Conservancy in Iowa and coordinator of the 4R Plus program, believes it takes everyone working together to help Iowa farmers achieve success, and finding the right 4R Plus practices for a field or farm is key. He said that aligning with ACWA is an important step in the right direction.

“We are pleased that ACWA is integrating 4R Plus information into their members’ toolboxes. 4R Plus materials will be used in training sessions, farmer meetings, field days and other venues to help inform farmers of the suite of practices that are available to them,” Wandrey said.

“ACWA members influence many acres across the state and aligning with 4R Plus is another sign of their commitment to practices that have multiple benefits.”

“Ag retailers and agronomists are trusted resources for farmers,” Wandrey continued. “They provide sound agronomic advice for crop inputs. They can play an important role to help their customers adopt the best nutrient management and conservation practices for their operations and starting with the principles of 4R Plus is a good way to have those conversations.”

Brent Low, with Ag Partners and ACWA secretary/treasurer said, “We hope our customers can increase productivity and enhance soil health, while reducing soil and nutrient losses and improving water quality. The 4R Plus program lays a solid foundation of information about nutrient stewardship and conservation practices critical to help Iowa farmers continue to improve their operations economically, agronomically and environmentally.”

For more information about 4R Plus, visit 4rplus.org.

For more information about the ACWA, visit www.acwa-rrws.org.

-30-

Agriculture’s Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) is an association consisting of ag retailers, associate members and other partners in the Des Moines River and Raccoon River basins. ACWA focuses on creating a better understanding of how water, weather, landscape and farm management interrelate. Its work on direct, targeted watershed projects create a baseline for current conditions and enable measured evaluation of new practices or implementation changes. Since 1999, ACWA has invested more than \$1.5 million for water quality monitoring in the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers and their largest tributaries.

4R Plus is a nutrient management and conservation program to make farmers aware of practices that bolster production, build soil health and improve water quality in Iowa. The program is guided by a coalition of more than 30 organizations, including agribusinesses, conservation organizations, commodity and trade associations, government agencies and academic institutions. To learn more, visit www.4RPlus.org.