

ACWA CCPI Project: Adoption of Nutrient Management Technologies in Targeted Iowa Watersheds

ACWA joined with NRCS in a four-year project entitled “Adoption of Nutrient Management Technology Enhancements in Targeted Iowa Watersheds.” This Mississippi River Basin Initiative-Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (MRBI-CCPI) project focused on the adoption of nutrient management technology enhancements assisting producers in applying nutrient management practices that help prevent, control and trap nutrient runoff from agricultural land.

NRCS set aside \$800,000 in EQIP dollars specifically for farmers in the targeted watersheds. Harry Ahrenholtz said that although this was a new initiative for them, members have been aware of the issues surrounding the Mississippi River Basin Watershed, such as the Gulf hypoxia, for some time.

"This agreement gives us new opportunities to join with government agencies to implement and measure conservation strategies with our producers," said Ahrenholtz. "The goal is to find ways we can contribute to a positive impact on nitrogen management."

Dave Coppess, vice president of Heartland Cooperative in West Des Moines, said they are excited to participate in the MRBI-CCPI, as they view this as an opportunity to grow their relationship with NRCS and utilize their local CCA's to engage in the delicate balance between production agriculture and environmental stewardship. "Our objective is to help farmers put together crop nutrient plans that optimize their yields and manage crop nutrients for optimal results, working to keep crop nutrients in the field and out of our streams and rivers," Coppess said.

"This program helps users expand the interest and participation in nutrient management efforts by farmers across the watershed," Coppess said. "It takes our CCA's beyond just being agronomists and engages their abilities as business managers to utilize effective government resources that help our farmers produce and market profitably with environmental balance. Long term sustainability is everyone's responsibility."

The project area is located in portions of Calhoun, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie, Hamilton, Webster and Wright Counties.