

## **New ACWA Member – FCA/Vision Ag LLC**

ACWA is pleased to announce that [FCA/Vision Ag LLC](#) has joined ACWA. The ag retailer has been operating since 1935 and are at nine locations in four southeast Iowa counties. The member-owned cooperative offers expertise in nutrient management plans so farmers can apply them efficiently and at the right time to minimize runoff and improve soil fertility. They also offer soil testing, integrated pest management, and encourage conservation practices such as cover crops. Welcome aboard!

## **White Paper released from ‘Making Retail Conservation Real’ meeting**

A white paper, “[Conservation Agronomy in Agricultural Retail: Current State and Future Trends](#),” is the initial outcome from the **Making Retail Conservation Real** national meeting, held in Des Moines in February. The event brought together more than 100 leaders in ag retail and conservation from across the country to advance conservation agronomy in the private sector.

The white paper includes insights that emerged from the two-day meeting as well as outcomes from qualitative research through ag retailer interviews. It offers valuable perspectives on the conservation agronomy business model, which originally emerged from ACWA water quality initiatives. The white paper includes opportunities and strengths of the conservation agronomy business model, as well as the challenges it may take to implement. The paper provides a glimpse into possible avenues for successful growth of this professional position for the farmer and landowner, the ag retailer, and ultimately, improved soil and water quality.

We encourage you to download and share the white paper with staff and your customers.

## **Conservation Agronomy Begins to Flourish**

ACWA Associate Members **The Mosaic Company** and **Truterra** are implementing measures to scale up agricultural conservation in Iowa and beyond. Both companies are employing conservation agronomists but through different means.

### **Mosaic helping farmers in Northwest Iowa**

Mosaic is partnering with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to provide technical support in the Iowa Great Lakes region. TNC received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) and are in the process of hiring a project manager/conservation agronomist (CA). This person will help farmers in northwest Iowa, focusing on the watersheds that encompass Spirit Lake and Five Island Lake. The CA will work with farmers, agency staff and other key partners in the region to navigate new conservation practices, cost-share resources, and the paperwork needed for adoption.

“Lake quality in the region is threatened by excess nutrient runoff from a variety of sources, including agriculture,” says project manager Paige Frautschy with TNC. “Supporting farmer-led efforts to increase

practice adoption to reduce the amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus getting into the lakes through runoff and sediment loss is critical to ensure water quality for recreation and wildlife habitat.”

The project officially gets underway this fall and Frautschy hopes to have a CA in place soon so they can begin to identify farmer leaders and cultivate farmer-led networks for more practice adoption in the area.

“Right now, we have historical levels of funding for conservation practices in this country,” says Adam Herges with Mosaic. “To achieve successful implementation, we need more technical assistance to support farm families and their operations. This program is another catalyst in the Iowa Great Lakes region to support Iowa farmers and their conservation journey, keeping soil in place and advancing Iowa’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy.”

In addition to the NFWF grant, the project is supported by matching funds from Mosaic and an additional grant from the Wright Foundation for Sustainability and Innovation. If you’re interested in learning more or applying for the CA position, contact Frautschy at: [paige.frautschy@tnc.org](mailto:paige.frautschy@tnc.org).

### **Truterra adding CAs Across the Country**

Truterra is beefing up staff at their retailers across the country, [adding conservation agronomists](#) to their retailer employee rosters. Truterra, the sustainability division of Land O’Lakes, was awarded a \$90 million federal Climate Smart grant and is using a portion of the dollars to fund these positions.

“We’ve reviewed applications and awarded 11 conservation agronomist positions who are going into our retailers,” says Brent Hall, account manager for Truterra. “Our goal is to hire up to 30 conservation agronomist positions. The CAs will be in our retail network across the U.S., and the majority will be located in the Corn Belt.”

Truterra retailers are in the process of a second round of applications and they are waiting for the USDA to finalize the sub-awards on the first 11 positions so the new CAs can begin work.

### **ACWA participates at Tech Hub Live conference**

ACWA waded into new waters at the Tech Hub Live conference held in Des Moines, July 29-31. The national conference, launched in 2021, is aimed at “ag professionals who are developing and deploying the latest ag technologies to advance agribusiness,” as stated on their website.

ACWA Executive Director Roger Wolf was part of the conference “tech talks” and presented information about ACWA and Making Retail Conservation Real to an audience of approximately 700 attendees. ACWA also had an exhibit booth as part of the conference’s expo. Staff and conservation agronomists talked with attendees about ACWA’s impact and scalable conservation in Iowa and beyond.

Attendees heard presentations covering an array of topics including artificial intelligence (AI), data science for soil management, crops, carbon markets, and more. The keynote speaker was Ted McKinney, CEO of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), who talked about the impact of advanced technologies such as AI and precision farming.

## Upcoming events:

### **Farm Progress Show**

**August 27-29**

**Boone, Iowa**

ACWA will be at the Farm Progress Show as part of the Iowa Soybean Association exhibit. The ISA group will be in the main varied industries building. Stop in and visit with us!

### **ACWA Board Meeting and Education Session**

**Thursday, September 12**

***Iowa Soybean Association, 1255 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny***

10:00 am-12:00 pm – ACWA Board Meeting

12:00-1:00 pm – Lunch

**1:00-3:00 pm – Education Session (CCA credit available)**

#### **Pilot Program Opportunities and Scalable Conservation**

Discover current programming opportunities where conservation agronomy technical assistance are needed and how to encourage engagement. Learn best practice methods through processes and procedures, gain insight into farmer adoption and partner collaboration to achieve your goals in scalable conservation.

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*Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) is a non-profit association whose mission is identifying and advancing solutions that reduce nutrient loss, build healthier soils, and improve Iowa's waters. ACWA is recognized for its ability to build upon its members' extensive relationship with farmers across Iowa.*

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