ACWA

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance

2026 WATER QUALITY IMPACT REPORT

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance
and Iowa Soybean Association

Water Monitoring Partnership

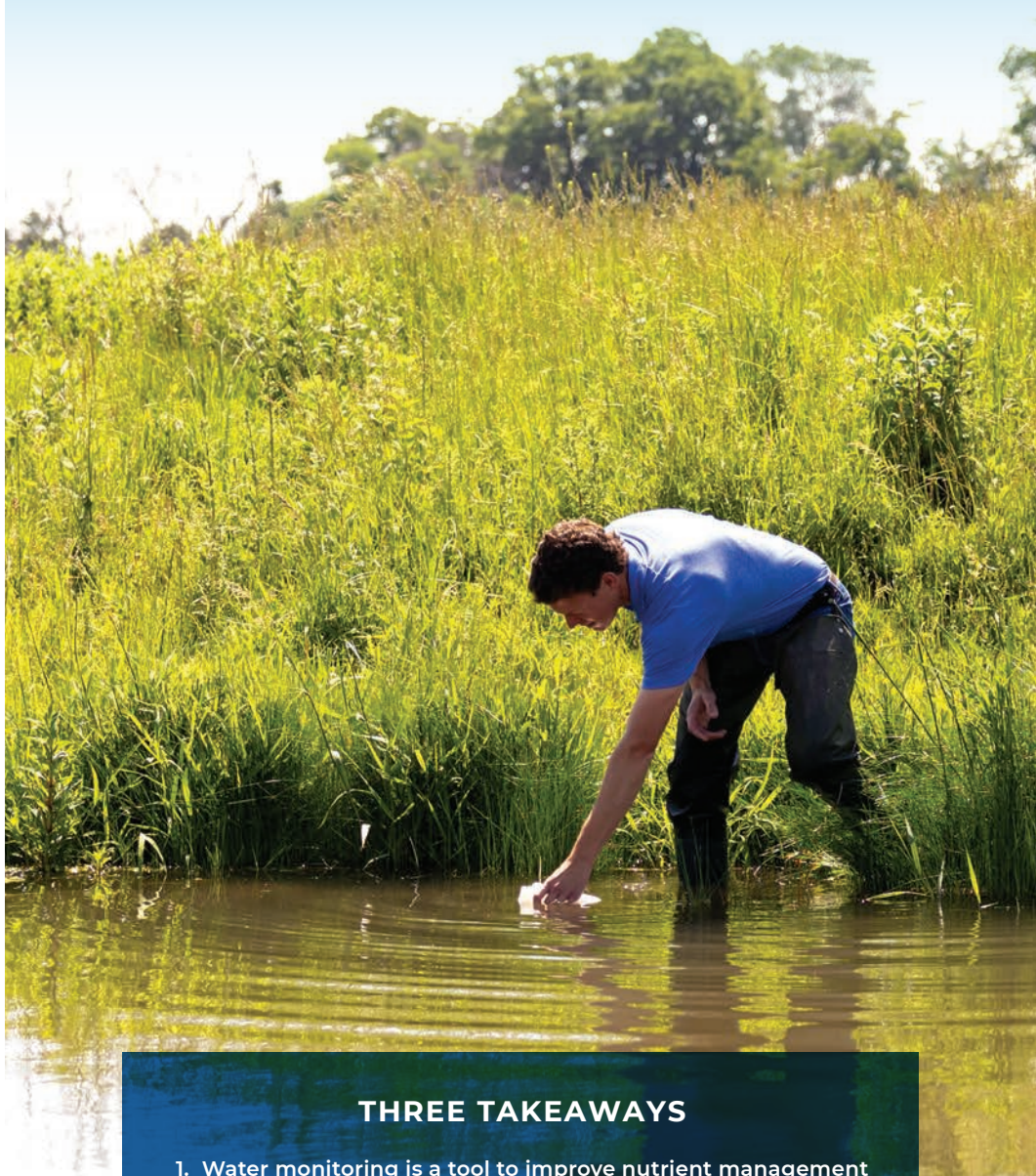
Since its founding in 1999, the Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) has played a leading role in improving water quality in Iowa's Raccoon River and beyond. ACWA was created to address rising nitrate levels in waterways and has worked closely with farmers, cooperatives and partners to reduce nutrient loss from farm fields. ACWA and Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) have built one of the most comprehensive water monitoring programs in the state, ensuring decisions are guided by real-world data through education, voluntary practices and science-based solutions.

This data has been critical in identifying nutrient "hot spots," understanding the impact of land use changes and shaping strategies like the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. ACWA's monitoring efforts have also helped secure millions of dollars in federal, state and private funding for conservation practices, including cover crops, wetlands and innovative technologies like bioreactors.

Today, ACWA's work is recognized as a model for collaborative, science-driven conservation. Continued investment in water monitoring is essential to maintain this progress, guide future improvements and protect Iowa's rivers for generations to come. ACWA's success shows that when agriculture, science and community come together, meaningful change is possible.

Water monitoring can change how a farmer thinks about nutrient applications and their impact beyond the farm gate. It often leads to interest in in-field and edge-of-field practices that help minimize nutrient loss. Those practices look different on every farm, but many can be cost-shared through existing programs. When monitoring is paired with the right management changes, it creates a synergistic effect that improves profitability while reducing nutrients leaving the farm."

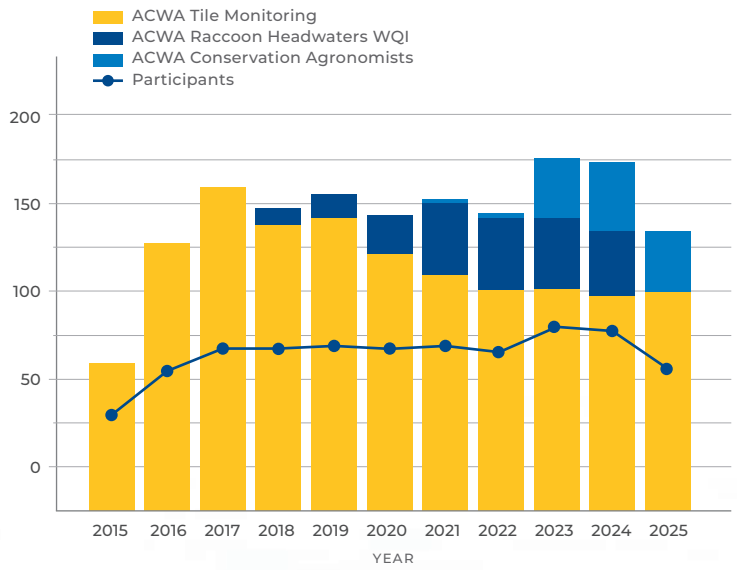
ZACH TIMM
Landus technical agronomist – conservation specialist



THREE TAKEAWAYS

1. Water monitoring is a tool to improve nutrient management and ROI for farmers.
2. Cover crops show a consistent benefit in reducing tile water nitrate across the landscape, and measurable changes for farms implementing these practices.
3. ACWA investment in monitoring has led to larger projects and research, bringing in additional resources to ACWA and their customers.

ACWA Tile Monitoring Sites and Participants



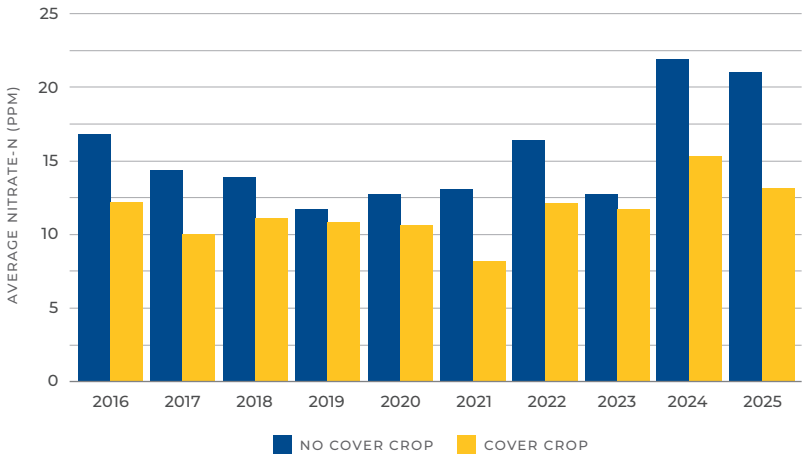
ACWA tile monitoring sites and farmer/landowner participants from 2015-2025. The tile monitoring program began in 2015 with 29 farmers and 56 sites. In 2025, ACWA collected water samples at more than 125 sites. Partnering with local projects and conservation agronomists has provided opportunities for continued expansion.

> Knowing what is coming out of our tile water is educational. The changes do take a while, so I'm anxious to keep monitoring and see improvements in my water quality. Every year is different, and by monitoring for multiple years, a farmer can see the benefits of environmentally friendly practices."
>
> **KEITH LOVRIEN**
> *Clarksville, Butler County*

> We've done water monitoring since 2015. Anything you are measuring, you are managing, and seeing the numbers in real time helps us think about what more we can do and keeps our eyes on that ball, and water monitoring has been very eye-opening."
>
> **JAKE GEISLER**
> *Callender, Webster County*

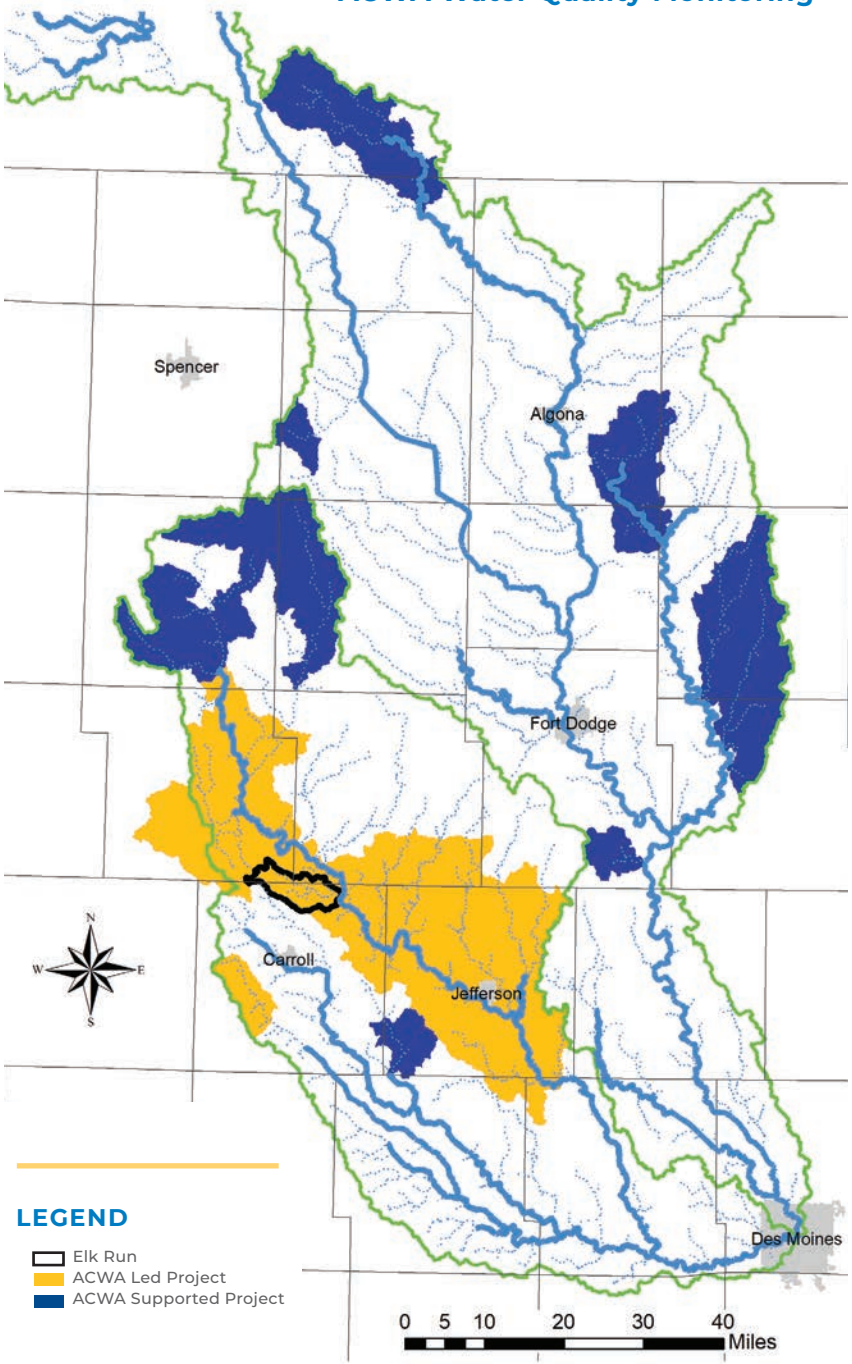
Fields with cover crops have nitrate concentrations that average 28% lower compared to fields without cover crops.

Average Tile Nitrate-N Concentrations



What started as a simple collaboration with Des Moines Water Works to continue sampling tributaries of the Raccoon River for nitrate has expanded and evolved into a multi-scale water monitoring program assisting improvement efforts statewide. ACWA stream data has supported partners and stakeholders from initial targeting assessments and project proposals through watershed planning and implementation, helping draw financial and technical assistance to farmers and enabling continued monitoring to assess impacts over time. In key locations like the Raccoon and Des Moines River watersheds, ACWA has taken a leadership role to address specific issues. It has also supported and led projects in the areas highlighted on the map on the next page.

ACWA Water Quality Monitoring

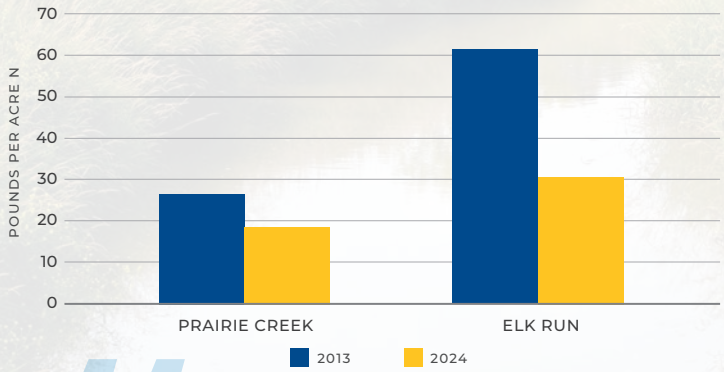


Elk Run Farm to River

Proven Results from Targeting to Continued Implementation

ACWA's flagship Farm to River Partnership demonstrates how a targeted watershed approach can have a significant impact on nitrogen loss. When the Elk Run watershed was identified as a hotspot, ACWA and ISA secured state funding to plan and implement in-field and edge of field conservation practices through a local conservation agronomist. Continued water monitoring showed a 51% reduction in pounds of nitrogen lost in Elk Run from 2013-2024 while a nearby watershed that was not targeted and used as a control was only 29% lower. The continued success has led to two expansions of the Farm to River Water Quality Initiative project area.

Estimated Nitrate-N Yield (April-July)



Water monitoring helps you learn more about what's happening in that tile system. It can be part of a more comprehensive soil health plan that informs how farmland is managed across a watershed, rather than relying on a single data point that doesn't tell the full story. When it's done over time and paired with other practices, it becomes a useful tool for improving both farm management and water quality."

BRENT LARSON *Fort Dodge, Webster County*

There is no substitute for real world data from your farm to understand and address water quality issues. Tools like water and soil sampling can help make your operation be more efficient with nutrients and make sure they end up in the crops and not in the river.

Contact Tony Seeman to get involved in monitoring efforts at 515-334-1042 or aseeman@iasoybeans.com

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