



## News release

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### **RETAIL AGRICULTURE GROUP RENEWS ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FOR 25TH YEAR**

**Ankeny, Iowa** — Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) members have reaffirmed their annual commitment to help safeguard Iowa's waterbodies for the 25th consecutive year.

At their recent board meeting, ACWA members agreed to the Environmental Code of Practice for Nitrogen Fertilization. It states they will delay fall anhydrous applications without a nitrification inhibitor until soil temperatures are 50 degrees Fahrenheit and trending lower, which is usually in mid to late October, depending on the region. Colder soils hinder the conversion of ammonium nitrogen to nitrate, which reduces leaching, or denitrification, and keeps ammonium in the soil. This helps reduce nitrate loading in water from farm fields before entering Iowa's rivers and streams.

"ACWA members have agreed to this Code of Practice since the organization's inception. The founders of ACWA had the foresight to have ag retailers declare this commitment as a membership requirement," said Dan Dix, NEW Cooperative general manager and ACWA president. "The Code of Practice agreement is the basis for ACWA's formation; it's what brought our members to the table 25 years ago. And we have grown over the last two decades, indicating this key action is significant."

ACWA regular membership is comprised of ag retailers statewide, as well as associate members, which are companies in the ag industry and other aligned organizations that support ag retailers and farmers. Although members are direct competitors, they are united in the mission to help farmers improve their environmental impact as well as their agronomic performance. ACWA's footprint touches 84 of Iowa's 99 counties, potentially reaching approximately 40,000 farmer customers. This enables the Code of Practice's impact on Iowa water quality to reach further geographic areas.

“The Code of Practice has changed the behavior of ACWA members. It helps us make the best recommendations to our growers,” said Thomas Fawcett, director of environmental resources and precision ag at Heartland Co-op and ACWA treasurer. “But it is just one of the many agricultural practices ACWA supports that affect the quality of our waterbodies. We encourage farmers to adopt other practices that reduce nutrients entering rivers and streams while remaining productive.”

ACWA members advocate for the use of nitrogen stabilizers, slow-release fertilizers, incorporation or injection, soil nitrate testing and other tools that minimize nitrogen loss to water. Conservation practices including reduced or no tillage, cover crops, bioreactors and saturated buffers, are also effective at keeping nutrients and soil in farm fields and out of waterbodies. All ACWA members maintain Certified Crop Advisors and several now employ a conservation agronomist to collectively help farmers and landowners implement these practices on their farmland. The ACWA members challenge other ag retailers to also support these practices for the health of Iowa’s waterways and Iowa residents.

“ACWA members are dedicated to helping farmers manage nutrients to enhance both environmental quality and crop production,” said Roger Wolf, ACWA Executive Director. “As our membership continues to expand, we are able to reach more farmers and landowners for a greater positive impact on water quality.”

ACWA also endorses 4R Plus, which focuses on nutrient stewardship using fertilizer from the Right Source, at the Right Rate, the Right Time, and the Right Place. The Plus refers to conservation farming practices for soil health and water quality improvement. 4R Plus is guided by a coalition of agricultural and conservation organizations to support farmers’ efforts to implement these practices.

For more information about the ACWA and the Code of Practice, visit [www.acwaiowa.com](http://www.acwaiowa.com)

For more information about 4R Plus, visit [4rplus.org](http://4rplus.org).

Regular ACWA members include: AgState, Central Valley Ag, FCA/Vision Ag LLC, Gold-Eagle Cooperative, Heartland Co-op, Helena Agri-Enterprises, Landus Cooperative, NEW Cooperative Inc., Nutrien Ag Solutions, Pro Cooperative, and Van Diest Supply.

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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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