



# Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance's NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

## *Making a Difference for Clean Water and Healthy Soil in Iowa*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the quarterly newsletter for Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance! You are receiving this newsletter because you are a customer of an ACWA member. This newsletter features updates and information about ACWA's efforts to improve Iowa's soil health and water quality.

### **Who is ACWA?**

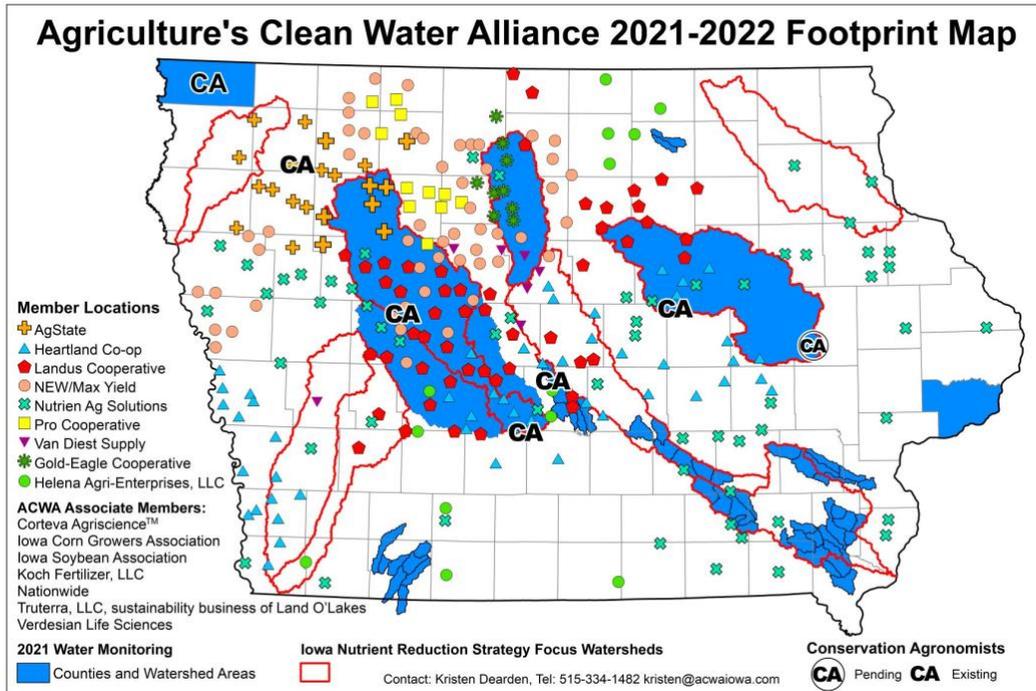
Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance is a non-profit organization of ag retailers and associate members comprised of agricultural companies who are in direct competition but have united with the mission of **"identifying and advancing solutions that reduce nutrient loss, build healthier soils, and improve Iowa's water."**

ACWA was established in 1999 with a focus on water quality improvement in the Des Moines River and Raccoon River watersheds. ACWA's water monitoring program includes testing water samples for nitrogen and phosphorus levels from these rivers, their tributaries, and private farm tile drains.

Members also agree to the [ACWA Code of Practice for Nitrogen Fertilization](#). Since 2001, all members have annually reaffirmed their commitment to delay fall anhydrous applications without a nitrification inhibitor until the soil temperature is 50 degrees (F) and trending lower. Managing nutrient applications in this way can minimize loss to surface or ground waters.

As ACWA has matured over the last 20 years, new partnerships have formed, and efforts have increased to further the mission. In late 2021, ACWA expanded their reach across the entire state beyond the original central Iowa watersheds.

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## Making a Statewide Impact

Current ACWA members have offices or branches in locations across approximately three-fourths of Iowa, so it made sense to expand ACWA outreach to the remaining geographic areas of the state in 2021.

ACWA members encourage farmers and landowners to adopt agricultural conservation practices for reduced nutrient runoff into rivers and streams, improved soil fertility, and reduced erosion. A key component of ACWA is that customers of members remain profitable while adopting practices that fit their farm management systems. Such practices include no-till or strip-tillage, and cover crops. For practices such as bioreactors, saturated buffers and more, ACWA helps to connect farmers to financial assistance programs.

Additionally, ACWA is expanding its water monitoring program to other Iowa watersheds. It is partnering with several municipalities including the City of Des Moines and City of Cedar Rapids, as well as several watershed improvement groups to collect water quality data in key watersheds that are a part of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. The ACWA water monitoring program and the importance of bringing all stakeholders to the table to improve Iowa waters will be featured in future newsletters.



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ACWA members are informing their employees and customers who reside outside the original watersheds about the importance of its mission and how they can be a part of these efforts. The organization is also seeking new membership of ag retailers and supporting companies who are in alignment with the ACWA vision.

## **Conservation Agronomists**

ACWA continues to make a statewide impact through the Conservation Agronomist model, which originated with the organization. Currently, there are seven Conservation Agronomists across Iowa. Some are full-time employees of ACWA members, others are supported by state or federal grants. However, the Conservation Agronomists are employed, they are becoming an integral part of ag retail to meet the needs of Iowa farmers and landowners.

The Conservation Agronomist works in tandem with ag retail field agronomists, helping farmers and landowners implement conservation practices that align best with their production systems and landscape. They help with cost-share funding paperwork, serve as a liaison with contractors for design and installation, and much more. These experts allow the field agronomists to focus on their responsibilities of helping customers with nutrient management, planting, and harvesting. The Conservation Agronomist model will be explored more in-depth in later newsletters.

## **Be Part of the Action**

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance is a unique organization committed to helping farmers and landowners improve crop productivity and sustainability. For more than 20 years, this group has been an advocate for agricultural conservation practices to build healthy soils and improve water quality in Iowa's rivers and streams. To learn more about the impact ACWA and their members are doing in Iowa, please visit our website, follow us on Facebook, or contact Kristen Dearden, ACWA Member and Communications Coordinator, [kristen@acwaiowa.com](mailto:kristen@acwaiowa.com), 515-334-1482.

Visit our website: [acwaiowa.com](http://acwaiowa.com)

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

*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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