



News release

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CONTACT: Heather Lilienthal, 515-334-1016 | hlilienthal@iasoybeans.com

ACWA program, funding supports farmers' water quality protection, conservation efforts *Farmers in Dallas, Greene, Hamilton, Webster, Wright counties eligible for cost share funds*

Ankeny, Iowa – Iowa farmers in eligible watersheds in Dallas, Greene, Hamilton, Webster and Wright counties have until Feb. 21 to apply for funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist with water quality protection and nutrient management techniques.

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) has requested \$340,000 in cost share funding for farmers located in specific watersheds within this five-county area who sign up for the program by Feb. 21. The program is in its fourth and final year and is offered through ACWA's support of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). The funding is offered by the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and its Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The project focuses helping farmers adopt practices that work to prevent, control and trap nutrient runoff.

This year, two new practices are available to farmers through the ACWA CCPI: cover crops and bioreactors. When paired with nutrient management planning, this suite of practices can result in significant reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus loss from farm fields. All three practices are identified in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy as practices that will help Iowans achieve water quality goals.

"The final EQIP signup period for ACWA's CCPI project is currently underway. This is our last opportunity for farmers to enroll in this program and make use of this special funding provided through NRCS," said Harry Ahrenholtz, ACWA president. "This funding is critical in helping farmers adopt these practices that are in line with those outlined in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. ACWA member cooperatives are instrumental in sharing information about these funding opportunities and implementing such conservation practices on their customers' farms."

To apply farmers must contact the local USDA Service Center.

For more information farmers can contact their ACWA member agronomist. ACWA members partnering with this project include:

- Farmers Cooperative Company
- Heartland Co-op
- West Central
- New Cooperative, Inc
- Gold-Eagle Cooperative
- Van Diest Supply

Learn more about this opportunity and review maps of the eligible watersheds at www.acwa-rws.org/initiatives/ccpi.html.

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The ACWA is an association consisting of 12 ag retailers and three associate members operating in the Des Moines and Raccoon River basins. Since 1999, ACWA members have invested more than \$1 million in funding for water quality monitoring in the Raccoon River and, since 2008, in the Des Moines River and their largest tributaries. More than 10,000 water samples have been collected by more than 200 certified and automated samplers. ACWA also funded the first successful real-time nitrate analyzer in Iowa in the Raccoon River.