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Ag Suppliers Agree to Fall Nitrogen Code of Practice

October 10, 2008 (Urbandale, IA) — An organization of farm retailers in the Raccoon and Des Moines River watersheds called *Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance* (ACWA) has been researching the agronomic and environmental issues tied to nitrogen application for the past eight years. One of the things ACWA has done was establish a Fall Nitrogen Code of Practice.

The ACWA Fall Nitrogen Code of Practice is a formal agreement among the retailers that they will not distribute anhydrous ammonia for fall application until soil temperatures reach 50 degrees F at a depth of four inches (60 degrees F with use of a nitrification inhibitor) with a forecast of cooling soil temperatures.

On October 10th, 2008, soil temperatures across the state ranged from the high to mid-50's. County-by-county soil temperature maps are available from Iowa State University at <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/>.

The commitment of ACWA to the Fall Nitrogen Code of Practice has received good reviews from the public, regulators, farmers and dealers alike. ACWA members have held to their commitment in the past, even in the face of unfavorable market conditions, projected equipment shortages in spring, and many other unknowns shared by dealers and their farming customers. The Agribusiness Association of Iowa (AAI) also adopted the Code of Practice, and ag retailers throughout the state are being encouraged to follow it.

Dave Coppess from Heartland Co-op is President of ACWA. Coppess says that the Code of Practice is one way the industry is working hard to be environmentally proactive. "To be a viable enterprise in the long-term, we are going to have to demonstrate that we operate to the highest environmental performance standards possible. With ACWA, we're on our way to reaching that goal."

ACWA invests in and supports water quality monitoring and nutrient management on farms. Coppess says that the goal is to let data determine what management practices are most effective for both farmers and the environment. "Just as data has always been at the foundation of proving agronomic performance, so will it be the foundation of proving environmental performance."

Coppess says that ACWA and its research partners — organizations like the Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) and the National Soil Tilth Laboratory — are making significant findings in their monitoring program. "We're seeing that, the more we study water quality issues in Iowa, the more we understand that water quality is the result of a very complex system. Examining fall fertilization guidelines is just part of an ongoing evolution in agronomy practices in Iowa. And the

more we learn, the more we find that good agronomic performance can be linked to good environmental practices.”

ACWA membership consists of leading ag retailers in the Raccoon River and Des Moines River watersheds. The group’s mission is to establish reasonable and practice guidelines for fall nitrogen fertilization so to reduce nitrate loss from farm fields entering the Des Moines and Raccoon River and connecting tributaries.

Iowa State University observations show soil temperatures below 50 F on varying dates during the past few years:

- 2007 — Nov. 1st
- 2006 — Nov. 29th
- 2005 — Nov. 14th
- 2004 — Nov. 21st
- 2003 — Oct. 28th (with periods of warming until Nov. 21st)
- 2002 — Oct. 22nd
- 2001 — Nov. 21st
- 2000 — Nov. 3rd

Contact an ACWA Member Locally

Albert City — Ag Partners, LLC — Troy Upah | 712-843-2291
Cherokee — First Coop Association — Jim Carlson | 712-225-5400
Dedham — Dedham Cooperative Association — Roger Shaw | 712-683-5515
Farnhamville — Farmers Cooperative — Roger Koppen | 515-817-2100
Fort Dodge — New Coop, Inc. — Brent Bunte | 515-955-2040
Gilmore City — Pro Coop — Jim Day | 515-373-6532
Ralston — West Central — Harry Ahrenholtz | 712-667-3200
Webster City — Van Diest Supply — John Van Diest | 800-779-2424
West Des Moines — Heartland Co-op — Dave Coppess | 515-225-1334
Goldfield — Gold-Eagle Cooperative — Stu Pannkuk | 515-825-3732
Wall Lake — UAP — Duane Petersen | 712-664-2444
West Des Moines — Helena Chemical Company — John McKinney | 515-309-3461
Roland — Heart of Iowa Coop — Jim Penney | 515-388-4341