

Environmental Leadership from Ag Retailers



The issue that brought ACWA together was water quality. When we formed ACWA as Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance in 1999, the presence of nitrate in the Raccoon River watershed was becoming a bigger issue every day. And fingers were being pointed in our direction because we supply nitrogen to farmers.

It became clear to us that the business of agriculture was going to be increasingly evaluated on the environmental performance of farmers and on our ability to respond to environmental challenges.

Historically, our primary mission as ag suppliers has been to help our farming clients do the best they can in terms of agronomic performance. Our customers have always rated our success on our ability to help farmers with production.

As we look into the future, we see that we need to internalize and implement a dual mission: helping farmers achieve agronomic performance in the field while supporting environmental performance beyond the field edge.

Which is something that we can do as suppliers and consultants. Farmers trust us and we have tremendous influence over their decisions, because we have strong relationships with them. Through those relationships, ACWA members are fostering an environmentally-responsible culture, helping our farming clients understand and support what we're trying to accomplish.

We also wanted to get something done about the environment and water quality. We felt that the best way to start working was to take a proactive approach. So we started working cooperatively to collect water samples and accumulate data about what is really going on in the water.

The answers to our environmental questions rest in science. Once we have a large enough data set, we can begin to look at the information objectively.

There are some great partners helping us with that — the Des Moines Water Works and the National Soil Tilth Laboratory are analyzing the data we collect. We hope that scientists will be able to see and explain the relationships between what happens on the land and what happens in the water.

Understanding those relationships is going to be the key to moving forward and uncovering solutions that will work.

Dave Coppess, Heartland Coop
President, ACWA

ACWA Members

Farmers Cooperative Company | Farnhamville, Iowa

Ag Partners, LLC | Albert City, Iowa

New Co-op, Inc. | Fort Dodge, Iowa

UAP | Wall Lake, Iowa

Heartland Co-op | West Des Moines, Iowa

Dedham Cooperative Association | Dedham, Iowa

Van Diest Supply | Webster City, Iowa

West Central | Ralston, Iowa

First Co-op Association | Cherokee, Iowa

Pro Co-op | Gilmore City, Iowa

