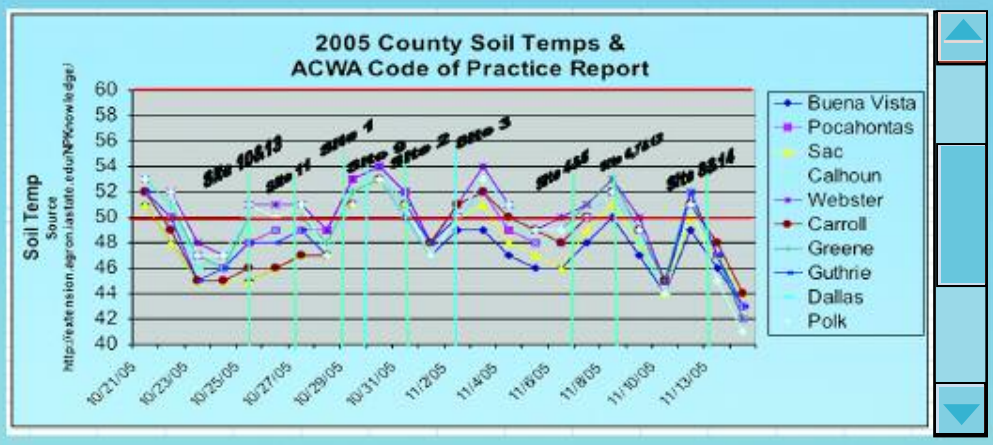

Reported Dates of First Application

ACWA Reaffirms Fall Nitrogen Application Code of Practice in 2005

http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/IWIRB.htm.
In October 2005, the members of ACWA agreed to reaffirm their fall nitrogen application Code of Practice and publicized the decision in a news release. The Code of Practice was created to address water quality concerns that have been long associated with the practice.

The Code of Practice is an agreement between fertilizer dealers in and around the Raccoon River watershed area that they will wait to apply nitrogen until soil temperatures reach 50 degrees F at a depth of 4 inches (or 60 degrees F with use of a nitrification inhibitor), with a forecast of cooling soil temperatures.

Over the years, the ACWA Code of Practice has received good reviews from the public, regulators, farmers and dealers alike. But in 2005, a quick harvest and a very clouded nitrogen outlook complicated the issue. Hurricane Katrina and the resulting increased petroleum costs contributed to fertilizer price hikes in fall and led to rumors of doubling prices, fertilizer shortages, or simply no product available come spring. To a farmer thinking about how to get their next crop, those concerns are compelling, and ACWA members were put on the 'hot seat' by some of their customers.

It's important for all stakeholders in the watershed to understand that ACWA members made and kept their commitment, even in the face of extreme market conditions and many unknowns. ACWA members maintained their pledge to not sell nitrogen fertilizer in the area until soil temperatures went down.