



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Alliance Goes Statewide to Improve Resource, Conservation Management**

**ANKENY** – An alliance of ag retailers, companies and organizations that are aligned and dedicated to helping farmers reduce nutrient loss, build healthier soils and improve Iowa's water is going statewide.

Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance's (ACWA) was launched in 1999 to serve farmers in the Raccoon River and Des Moines River Watersheds. The expansion of its programming and membership to all 99 counties was approved by the ACWA board this spring and formally announced June 11.

"Iowa farmers rely directly on ag retail for products, services and technical advice to be successful," Roger Wolf, Executive Director of ACWA said. "ACWA's expansion across Iowa furthers Agriculture's commitment by providing leadership and support to farmers as they adopt practices that improve soil and water quality."

During its more than two decades of service, ACWA's member ag retailers had grown to service nearly 75 percent of the state. Thomas Fawcett, director of environmental resources and precision ag for West Des Moines-based Heartland Coop Fawcett said expanding its footprint statewide was a practical evolution.

"Farmers have a strong desire to improve soil health and water quality – they are the first conservationists," he said. "What they need are partners to help mitigate risk when trying new production practices. ACWA fulfills that need by providing technical expertise backed by data and access to funding to move from concept to implementation."

ACWA is respected nationally for integrating conservation and production to enhance soybean yields in tandem with measurable improvements in soil and water quality. Activities include extensive water quality monitoring, and data acquisition and deploying conservation agronomists within its ag retail partners.

Harry Ahrenholtz, ACWA board chairman, said teamwork, partnerships, know-how and financial resources are critical to advancing progress on the state's nutrient reduction strategy. Tangible progress is also best realized when farmers have the opportunity to adopt practices voluntarily based on their specific needs, farm goals and location.

"Solving challenges by way of a voluntary, proactive efforts have proven to be most efficient and effective," he said. "ACWA is a model of this approach. Farmers are on the front line but increasingly networking with their ag retailers and urban partners to make progress.

"Now with a statewide presence, ACWA and its member retailers can be of even greater assistance in driving progress through innovative, thoughtful and proven programming."

One example is work in the Elk Run Watershed. What began as a project implementing practices impacting 15,000 acres has expanded nearly ten-fold. That model is being replicated in other parts of the state.

It's progress like this that makes Wolf, who is also a 30-year plus veteran of the farm and environmental industries, excited about the future of ACWA and additional progress on water and soil health improvements across the state.

"I couldn't be more optimistic about the level of engagement on issues related to on-farm productivity and conservation," Wolf said. "Corporations and municipalities are increasingly talking about sustainability, but it must transcend discussion and be implemented.

"ACWA is that trusted partner and catalyst to make sense of the science and practices and work hand-in-hand to make progress happen."

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***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. [www.acwa-rrws.org/](http://www.acwa-rrws.org/)