

Moving from **GREEN** to **CLEAN**

VOLUNTARY, COLLABRATIVE, FARM PROGRAMS

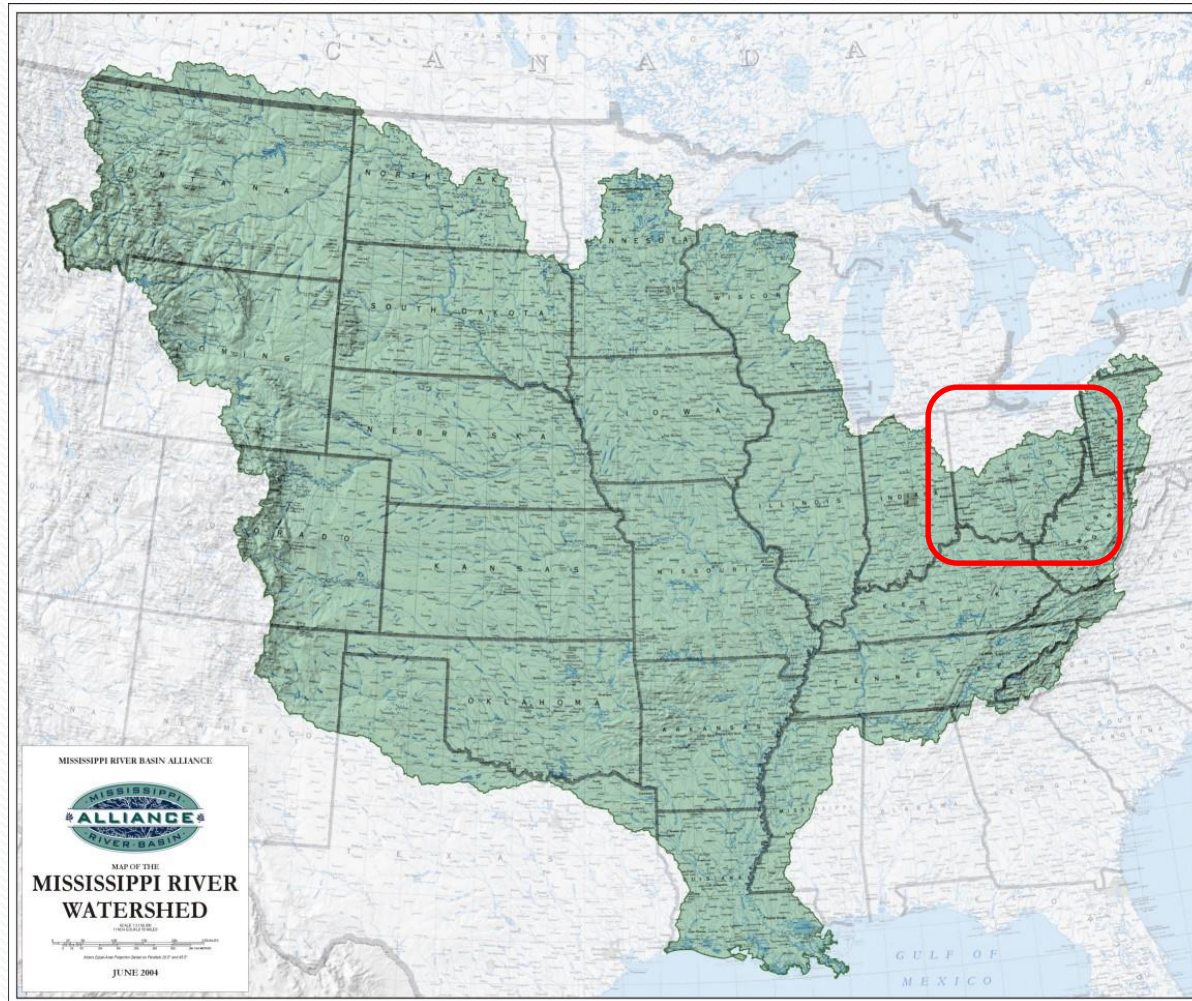
“...Clean water cannot come at the expense of food production, nor can farming trump the need for clean water. Fortunately, we can have both. One is not exclusive of the other...” -- OFBF testimony, 2015

Adam J. Sharp, OFBF Vice President, Public Policy



Ohio's Water Resources

A Statewide/National Challenge



LAKES WITH HEALTH WARNINGS

After the discovery of toxic blue-green algae at Grand Lake St. Marys this past summer, state officials issued algae health warnings for additional public lakes and reservoirs. Though farm pollutants are the suspected cause of algae issues at Grand Lake Erie, the source of pollutants for the other bodies of water has not yet been identified.



Wake up Call!



Why the Concern?

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

- Taste and Odor – Drinking Water
- Foul Beaches
- Reduce Dissolved Oxygen
- Toxins (Nerve, Liver, Skin)



New Legislation

SB 1

Only Applies to Farmers In The Western
Lake Erie Basin



SB 150

Statewide Fertilizer Applicator
Certification



Over 6000 certified



The Letter

Voluntary

Ramp up in 2012

Unprecedented
collaboration

Must do our part

Launch 4R efforts

Start research

Dear friend,

As a farmer in Ohio you have a significant challenge bearing down quickly. Government, special interest groups, the media and the public all expect you to help clean up the state's water resources.

If farmers don't do this on their own, there will be federal and state laws and regulations that will mandate how you farm.

That is why you're receiving this letter signed by nearly all of Ohio's agricultural organizations – to make it clear that farmers must take seriously their responsibility to manage nutrients.

This isn't just an issue around Grand Lake St. Marys or the western basin of Lake Erie. This affects livestock and crop farmers and those who apply manure or use fertilizer in every Ohio county. The harmful algal blooms that are driving public demands for solutions should not be blamed on farmers alone. Municipalities, homeowners and other industries will be expected to do their share to address the problems. But so, too, will agriculture.

There is still a lot of research to be done on exactly how we can best protect water quality while still farming economically. But the public, lawmakers and regulators won't wait for years of research. They're demanding action now, and we're obliged to deliver. Agriculture must begin immediately to reduce nutrient runoff in a manner that can be documented. If this can't be accomplished voluntarily, it will be imposed mandatorily.

A starting point is to commit to the principles of "4R Nutrient Stewardship," which means using the right fertilizer source, at the right rate, at the right time and with the right placement.

In coming weeks and months you will have opportunities to attend meetings, read articles and otherwise learn about the "4Rs" and other responses to the challenges agriculture is facing. Your agricultural organizations encourage you to actively seek out information, advice and training.

Farmers must proactively solve this challenge. There's more at risk than higher costs of regulation. Unless farmers make significant reductions in nutrient runoff, they will increasingly take the blame for phosphorus loading and toxic algae.

As an industry committed to doing what's right, agriculture should lead the way in accepting responsibility and acting responsibly.

Sincerely,

Ohio's agriculture community



The Ohio State University



BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014 | VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 1

Extraordinary commitment

\$1 million part of OFBF water quality action plan

Ohio Farm Bureau is investing \$1 million in a comprehensive water quality action plan that is an unprecedented private sector undertaking to improve the state's water.

"Preserving Ohio's water quality is a serious issue, and this is a serious response," said Ohio Farm Bureau Executive Vice President Jack Fisher. "There are few quick fixes and no inexpensive answers but we have to start now."

"We know there are municipal overflow issues, residential and commercial runoff, treatment problems and other infrastructure issues, invasive species and weather events and a long list of challenges," Fisher said. "We have to find solutions that protect our water, preserve our ability to grow food and help our state's businesses and communities. Farmers are willing to do their fair share, and Farm Bureau is committed to that effort."

Ohio Farm Bureau's board of trustees voted during a special meeting to commit significant resources to address agriculture's role in Ohio's water quality challenges. The decision was made in the wake of a two-day drinking water ban for Toledo residents in early August because of harmful algal blooms on Lake Erie. The board placed special emphasis on the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB).

The plan includes two aggressive goals: Farm Bureau will help all

qualifying farmers in the Western Lake Erie Basin obtain required fertilizer certification by Earth Day 2015. This April 22 target date will bring farmers into regulatory compliance a full 29 months ahead of the state required deadline.

Further, Farm Bureau will help farmers in the watershed create nutrient management plans, which detail responsible fertilizer use, by Earth Day 2016. These plans exceed state legal requirements.

With thousands of farms in the WLEB, reaching these aggressive goals will require a high degree of cooperation and collaboration with farmers. The Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences are providing regulatory and educational oversight to the fertilizer certification program.

OFBF plans to hire a second staff member to specialize in water quality and nutrient management and expand OFBF's outreach and programming efforts. Fifteen years ago, OFBF set a national precedent by hiring a doctorate level expert to work with farmers on these issues.

Other Farm Bureau action steps announced in the plan include:

- Partnering with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service



Photo by Lynn Snyder

Ohio Farm Bureau's investment is supporting farmers' efforts to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to doing their part to protect water quality in Ohio.

and various state agencies to establish a network of demonstration farms, which will assist in farmer training and show the public how viable farming and resource protection go hand in hand;

- Working to gain additional funding for on-farm research projects and dissemination of the study

See **COMMITMENT**, pg 2

Upcoming fertilizer certification classes

Senate Bill 150 requires anyone who plans to apply fertilizer on more than 50 acres to be certified by 2017. The first training class was held Sept. 12 in Archbold and two more will be held this month in northwest Ohio:

Sept. 25 – The Lighthouse Banquet Facility, 10055 W. US Rt. 224, Findlay, Ohio 45840

Sept. 26 – OSU Extension Office, 503 Fairgrounds Dr., Paulding, Ohio 45879

To register, visit <http://go.osu.edu/fertilizer>.

Voluntary

Voluntary: OSU Coordination

- “Field to Facet” - OSU, Soy, Corn, OABA, OFBF coordinating water research and programming
- Fund faculty and students to implement fertilizer training
- Update Soil Fertility Recommendations, fertilizer placement, education, outreach, 4R, and more



Voluntary: Research

P Index & Edge of Field Research & Promotion

- OSU and USDA-ARS
- \$2 million + effort
- 3 year baseline setting
- 3 years of measures practices and results
- Corn, Soy, OABA, OFBF, others
- Results could be demo'ed at Blanchard River sites



Voluntary: NMP Project

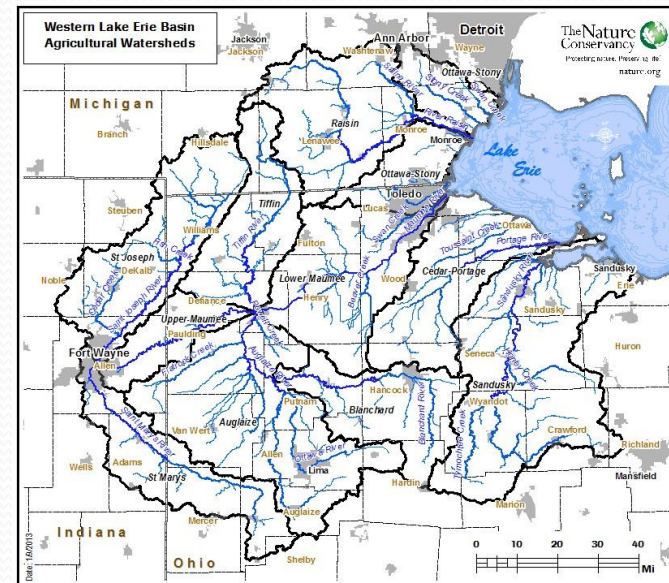
Nutrient Management Plans Development & 4R

- 4 New OSU staff to work with farmers to develop NMP's in WLEB for 3 years
- Provide tech support for private NMP development providers
- Plans will meet “affirmative defense” under 150
- 1 New OSU staff to work with retailer 4R certification
- Partners: OFBF, OSU, Nat. Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Soy, Corn, OABA



Voluntary: RCPP

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- \$17.5 million
- 70% to Ohio
- On-ground conservation practices for sediment and nutrient management
- OFBF – Education and Outreach
- 60+ partners total: includes Ohio, Indiana and Michigan FB's
- First sign-up complete in Ohio



Voluntary: Demo Farms

- **NRCS Collaboration**
 - 5 year project
 - Sites along Blanchard River
 - Farmer, policymaker, public, media education
 - Research sites
 - Full time employee

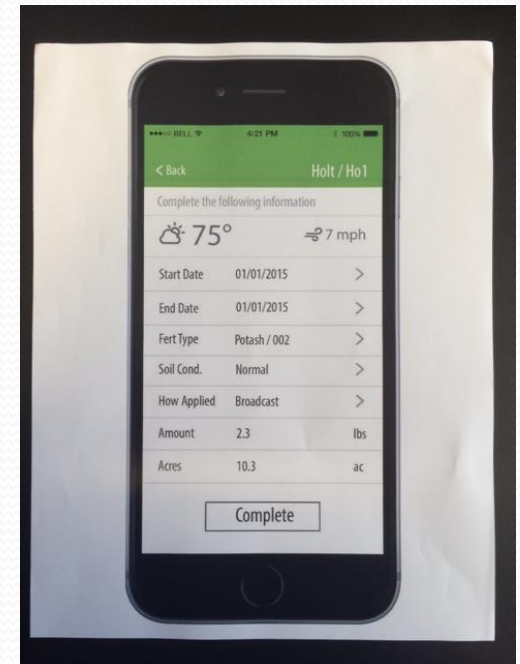


Voluntary: Farmer Road Trip! Policy Development



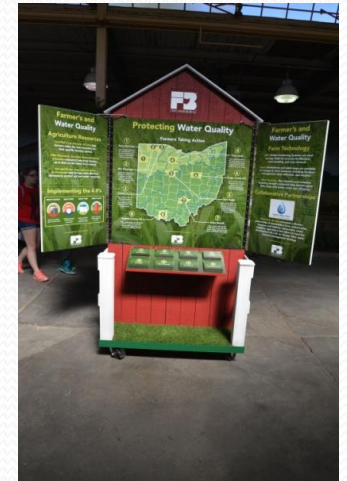
Voluntary: County Programs

- \$140,000 in county grants - collaborative



Voluntary: Additional Items

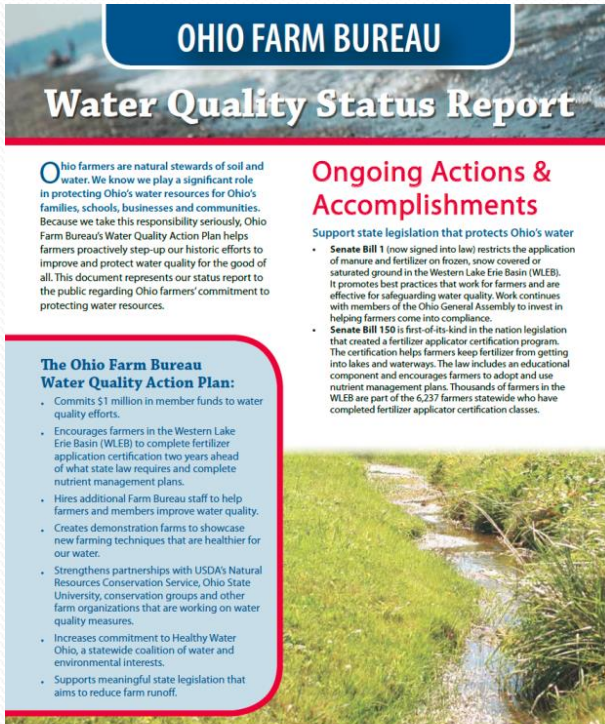
- Educational Displays –
Special Thanks to The Fertilizer Institute
- 4R promotion statewide
Right Fertz, Rate, Time, Place
- Compliance Assistance brochures
- State budget bill –
Ag Loan: Ag-LINK Expansion



Media Campaign

Water Quality Status Report

Radio
Print
Online



OHIO FARM BUREAU

Water Quality Status Report

Ohio farmers are natural stewards of soil and water. We know we play a significant role in protecting Ohio's water resources for Ohio's families, schools, businesses and communities. Because we take this responsibility seriously, Ohio Farm Bureau's Water Quality Action Plan helps farmers proactively step-up our historic efforts to improve and protect water quality for the good of all. This document represents our status report to the public regarding Ohio farmers' commitment to protecting water resources.

Ongoing Actions & Accomplishments

Support state legislation that protects Ohio's water

- **Senate Bill 1** (now signed into law) restricts the application of manure and fertilizer on frozen, snow covered or saturated ground in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). It promotes best practices that work for farmers and are effective for safeguarding water quality. Work continues with members of the Ohio General Assembly to invest in helping farmers come into compliance.
- **Senate Bill 150** is first-of-its-kind in the nation legislation that created a fertilizer applicator certification program. The certification helps farmers keep fertilizer from getting into lakes and waterways. The law includes an educational component and encourages farmers to adopt and use nutrient management plans. Thousands of farmers in the WLEB are part of the 6,237 farmers statewide who have completed fertilizer applicator certification classes.

The Ohio Farm Bureau Water Quality Action Plan:

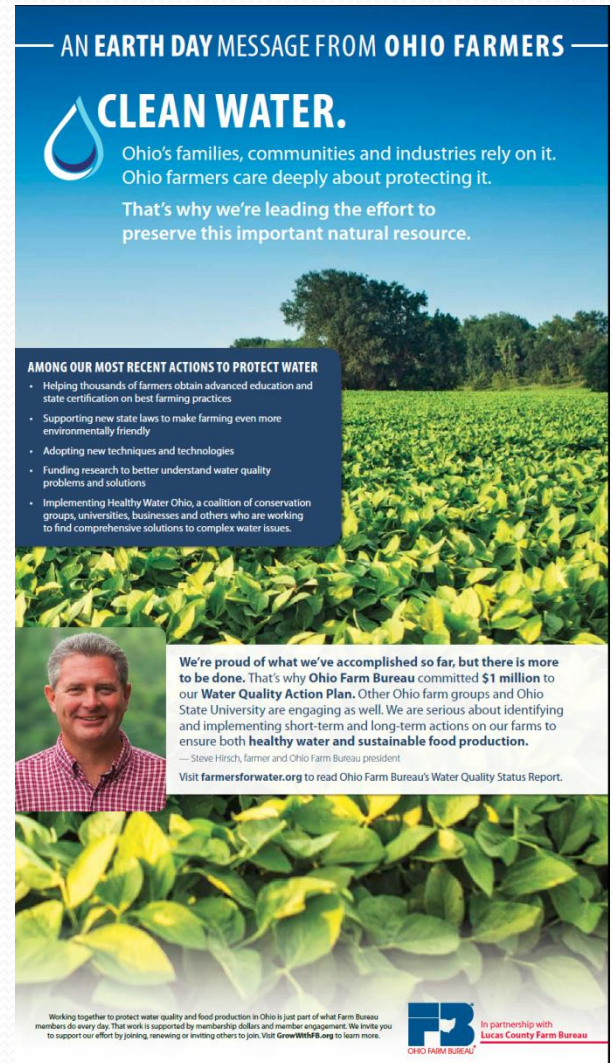
- Commits \$1 million in member funds to water quality efforts.
- Encourages farmers in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) to complete fertilizer application certification two years ahead of what state law requires and complete nutrient management plans.
- Hires additional Farm Bureau staff to help farmers and members improve water quality.
- Creates demonstration farms to showcase new farming techniques that are healthier for our water.
- Strengthens partnerships with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ohio State University, conservation groups and other farm organizations that are working on water quality measures.
- Increases commitment to Healthy Water Ohio, a statewide coalition of water and environmental interests.
- Supports meaningful state legislation that aims to reduce farm runoff.

FARMERSFORWATER.ORG

April-May 2015
www.ofbf.org



“We Care”
“Proud of
what we have
accomplished
so far,
more to do”




AN EARTH DAY MESSAGE FROM OHIO FARMERS

CLEAN WATER.

Ohio's families, communities and industries rely on it. Ohio farmers care deeply about protecting it. That's why we're leading the effort to preserve this important natural resource.

AMONG OUR MOST RECENT ACTIONS TO PROTECT WATER

- Helping thousands of farmers obtain advanced education and state certification on best farming practices
- Supporting new state laws to make farming even more environmentally friendly
- Adopting new techniques and technologies
- Funding research to better understand water quality problems and solutions
- Implementing Healthy Water Ohio, a coalition of conservation groups, universities, businesses and others who are working to find comprehensive solutions to complex water issues.




We're proud of what we've accomplished so far, but there is more to be done. That's why Ohio Farm Bureau committed \$1 million to our **Water Quality Action Plan**. Other Ohio farm groups and Ohio State University are engaging as well. We are serious about identifying and implementing short-term and long-term actions on our farms to ensure both **healthy water and sustainable food production**.

— Steve Hirsch, farmer and Ohio Farm Bureau president

Visit farmersforwater.org to read Ohio Farm Bureau's Water Quality Status Report.

Working together to protect water quality and food production in Ohio is just part of what Farm Bureau members do every day. That work is supported by membership dollars and member engagement. We invite you to support our effort by joining, renewing or inviting others to join. Visit www.fb.org to learn more.



In partnership with
Lucas County Farm Bureau

<http://www.farmersforwater.org/>

Media Campaign

Food Dialogues: WATER

Toledo, Ohio, May 2015

USFRA Sponsored Event: Toledo Tourism Director , Manager of Water Treatment Plant Lead Local Environmentalist, Farmers, OSU, TNC



Voluntary

Healthy Water Ohio

A STRATEGY FOR WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



A diverse partnership of stakeholders who are developing a 20- to 30-year water resource management strategy for Ohio.

Report released September 2015

Ohio Water Trust and Bonding \$\$\$



Steering Committee

- **Business and industry** (Anheuser-Busch)
- **Conservation and environmental advocacy** (LCV, TNC)
- **Finance** (Farm Credit Mid-America)
- **Food and farming** (OFBF, Commodities)
- **Lawn, horticultural, turf** (Scott Miracle-Gro)
- **Municipal water systems** (Village of Ottawa)
- **Public health** (Assoc. of Ohio Health Commissioners)
- **Recreation and tourism** (Lake Erie Shores & Islands)
- **Research, education and outreach** (OSU)



Why Ohio Farmers' Progressive Approach?

- Right thing to do
- Must do our part
- CWA and U.S. EPA
- Lawsuits
- State Politics
- State's 40% Reduction Goals



Nutrient Management

Sharp Brothers Farms, LLC



- GPS Mapped
- Grid Sampling
- Variable Rate Appl.
- Cover crops
- Spring /Su . appl. vs. Fall
- Buffers and filters
- Covered Manure Storage



Questions



Adam Sharp
Vice President, Public Policy
Ohio Farm Bureau
asharp@ofbf.org