

## ***Illinois Farm Bureau***

The Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) continues to set environmental action as an organizational priority, following through by committing significant resources to do the job. Since 2015, IFB has contributed to the NLRS. Through leadership and participation from our farmer members and County Farm Bureaus (CFBs) across the state, IFB's NLRS efforts have made sizable strides in four priority areas: 1) education and outreach to farmers, landowners and the general public; 2) supporting research of best management practices to reduce nutrient loss from agricultural fields; 3) supporting farmer implementation efforts across the state; and 4) demonstrating progress toward the long-term goals of the NLRS.

By working together with numerous partners, IFB has been able to make significant strides in supporting farmer-led, local projects addressing nutrient loss, water quality, and soil health. From 2016 to present, IFB has committed \$2 million of its own funding to build and maintain its nutrient stewardship programs.

### **Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program**

The Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program is one example of how IFB is making lasting impacts in nutrient stewardship. The program is a cornerstone of the wide range of projects that IFB supports, providing farmers with the opportunity to develop grassroots efforts in their local communities. Since 2015, the IFB Board of Directors has committed over \$700,000 to this program, funding 100 projects in 70 counties across Illinois. IFB committed \$150,000 to the program in 2019, and once again in 2020. Through this program, IFB takes on an active role to support County Farm Bureaus (CFBs) and local partners to develop projects that address farmer needs for research, education and outreach, and implementing best management practices for nutrient loss reduction.

### **2019 Nutrient Stewardship Grant Projects**

In 2019, IFB worked with 30 CFBs and numerous local partners working together on 18 unique projects across the state. These projects showed active collaboration and action in all categories of the NLRS (education and outreach, research, implementation and documentation). Through this wide range of unique projects, farmers across Illinois demonstrated that they care about nutrient loss and management.

#### **Bureau**

Bureau CFB farmers continued to promote the '4Rs' of nutrient stewardship by practicing year-round weekly water sample tests, as well as hosting a summer field day to share their research and the grassroots impact of this project.

### Champaign

Through a series of seminars and field days, Champaign CFB educated area landowners and farmers about many topics related to nutrient management, including conservation practices on working farms.

### Clinton

Clinton CFB and their many partners, including Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), expanded their work on comparing cropping systems. This project included planting cover crops, offering ongoing manure nutrient testing and a Nutrient Management Planning workshop, hosting two field days and numerous additional outreach efforts.

### Edwards, Crawford, Hamilton, Gallatin, Richland, Lawrence, Wabash, Wayne & White

Through an active collaboration, these counties provided education on the NLRs, as well as shared information on precision agriculture and cover crops, including leading a discussion on farm profitability.

### Franklin

Franklin CFB partnered with conservation agencies and the U of I Extension to perform soil testing, collecting field-level data and compare local common fertilizer practices with research-based application rates on farmers' fields.

### Fulton

Through a partnership with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), Fulton CFB hosted a field day to showcase research of various agricultural nutrient best management practices.

### Henry, Mercer, Rock Island

Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island CFBs worked together to host a seminar, featuring speakers on cover crops, soil health and livestock management as topics. Additional topics included basic education on the Clean Water Act, conservation practices, and livestock nutrient management.

### Jo Daviess

Jo Daviess CFB extended their work with soil testing and cover crops in order to determine nitrogen levels in the soil as well as impact of soil types, cover crops, and other factors on nitrogen utilization. The county also hosted two field days to educate local farmers and share results of ongoing research.

### Knox

Knox CFB continued to work with one farmer per township to plant 20 acres of cover crops, as well as conduct soil samples throughout the season to learn how cover crops impacted soil properties.

#### LaSalle

Through work with several collaborators, LaSalle CFB held a field day to expose local elected officials to the NLRS and farming practices that mitigate agricultural runoff as well as the impacts of flooding, including sharing results of U of I on-farm struvite research.

#### Mason, Cass-Morgan, Tazewell

These counties kicked off a large-scale, multi-year study to characterize fate and transport of nutrients, as well as investigate management solutions on irrigated land.

#### McLean

McLean CFB hosted a field day which focused on increasing awareness of the NLRS, in addition to sharing science-based information on nutrient loss reduction and resources for farmers to implement conservation practices on their farms.

#### Menard

Through a field day, Menard CFB educated community and legislative attendees on practices that could control soil erosion as well as monitor nutrient loss at an SIUC on-farm research site. Special conversations included the secondary benefits of WASCOBs, including soil quality, nutrient runoff, and crop yields.

#### Winnebago-Boone

Winnebago-Boone CFB hosted a field day to share findings from a nitrogen trial, including demonstrating how nitrogen sources perform in terms of yields and losses.

### **2020 Nutrient Stewardship Grant Projects**

For 2020, IFB committed over \$150,000 with over \$88,000 in-kind matches to the Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program. 28 counties will be working together on 14 projects throughout the state, in order to help “move the needle” on NLRS implementation.

In 2020, projects included planting test plots of cover crops, water testing, watershed planning, and hosting education and outreach activities. Farmers across Illinois have once again showed that they actively care about conservation of both land and water.

#### Bureau

Bureau CFB continued to collect water samples and several additional points of data. They also started analyzing results and developing a model based on three years of data.

### Clinton

Clinton CFB offered free manure testing to local producers. While they had to cancel all in-person events, including two field days and a manure management workshop, they were able to host a Virtual Field Day which focused on the results of cover crop and manure application research plots in the county.

### Crawford, Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland

Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, partners across 11 counties in the Embarras River Watershed (ERW) hosted nine watershed planning meetings to gather farmer and landowner feedback for an updated ERW Plan.

### Fulton

Instead of hosting an in-person event, Fulton CFB worked with MWRD to share a video tour of the research site and research white paper, as well as host a virtual farmer focus group to provide farmers an opportunity to share meaningful feedback on continued research at the site.

### Hancock, Warren-Henderson, Mercer, Henry, Knox

Although these counties had to cancel their in-person meetings, they pivoted their focus to collect letters of support from CFBs, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), and state and federal lawmakers for an IEPA 319 Grant Application.

### Jo Daviess

Jo Daviess CFB continued a cover crop research project and surface water runoff testing, as well as hosting a Virtual Field Day. Researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville also provided rainfall simulator demonstrations.

### Knox

Through a project designed by the Knox CFB Young Farmers committee, Knox CFB planted 20 acre cover crop plots across each of the 20 townships in the county, totaling over 400 acres of cover crops planted in 2020.

### LaSalle

LaSalle CFB pivoted from hosting an elected officials and government staff education event, and hosted a Virtual Field Day. The Virtual Field Day included conservation education, as well as updates on University of Illinois on-farm research taking place in the county.

### Mason, Cass-Morgan, Tazewell

These CFBs continued their multi-year study to characterize fate and transport of nutrients, as well as investigate management solutions on irrigated land.

### McHenry

Through an active collaboration, McHenry CFB installed a woodchip bioreactor on McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) property and hosted a Virtual Field Day. This will provide partners an opportunity to highlight the environmental efforts to area farmers, environmentalists, and the general public.

### Shelby

Shelby CFB hosted a Virtual Field Day to share preliminary results of ongoing Drainage Water Management (DWM) research taking place on a local Shelby county farm.

### St. Clair

The CFB worked to host a Virtual Field Day at the CFB President's farm to share Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) on-farm research concerning flue gas desulfurization gypsum and its effects on phosphorous loss.

Warren-Henderson – This group hosted a Virtual Field Day to share results of a nitrogen strip trial focusing on two of the 4Rs of nutrient management – source and rate of nitrogen application.

Wayne – Wayne CFB continued to sponsor a Nutrient Loss Inhibitor Demonstration (NLID) plot to demonstrate fertilizer efficiency and economics. They also hosted a Virtual Field Day to share results with their members.