



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE &  
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

# **2025 Annual Report**

## AG DIVERSIFICATION & MARKET DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

**Overview:** The Ag Diversification and Market Development Bureau assists producers with marketing opportunities for diversified agricultural products, manages valued added food and renewable energy programs – as well as covering and reporting on commodity sales. Programs include an organic certification program; local food programs including Farm to School, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program; administration of the state’s Renewable Fuel Infrastructure Program; livestock auction reports; and daily cash grain reports.

*Highlighted programs:*

**The Iowa Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program (RFIP)** This grant incentives program helps retail operators of motor fuel dispensing sites – as well as biodiesel terminals - to convert their equipment to allow the expanded use of ethanol and biodiesel in Iowa. Utilizing new opportunities available through Iowa’s 2022 Biofuels Act, the 11-member board of directors awarded almost \$11,500,000 in grants in fiscal year 2025. This amount is more than double the previous record of \$5.3 million awarded in fiscal year 2023.

**The Iowa Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)** This program provides vouchers to lower-income seniors and participants in the state’s WIC Program for the purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets and farmstands throughout Iowa. In 2023 the program raised the dollar amount available to Senior recipients from \$30 to \$50. In 2024, Iowa FMNP introduced a streamlined process for paying farmers. Instead of depositing vouchers at a bank, farmers now scan them via a smartphone app and receive direct deposits. This method is more efficient and reduces potential voucher misuse. Due to reductions in federal funding for 2025, fewer food dollars were utilized in 2025 than in 2024. Senior FMNP benefit redemptions fell from \$536,360 in 2024 to \$393,185 in 2025 (- \$143,175, -26.7%). WIC FMNP benefit redemptions fell from \$327,050 in 2024 to \$194,370 in 2025 (- \$132,680, -40.6%). In 2025, IDALS also piloted technology solutions to streamline Senior FMNP application and intake workflows, improving program efficiency and reducing administrative burden. These improvements will be scaled up in 2026.

**Organic Certification Program** The Organic Certification Program is accredited by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA)/National Organic Program (NOP) and has been since 2002, when the NOP was first implemented. The program staff works with some 300 clients in three certification scopes: organic crops, livestock production, and processing. In early 2024, the USDA’s new rulemaking, “Strengthening Organic Enforcement,” went into effect and the state program staff have been implementing the new rules into program policies.

**Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG)** This program allocates funds (approximately \$360,000 annually) each year to support Iowa’s specialty crops. The funding will be distributed to support projects that raise awareness about, drive demand for, or create new markets benefiting Iowa’s specialty crops. The grant dollars are made available through a partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and are funded through the Farm Bill. Applications are available on our website in January each year.

**Iowa Farm to School Program** The Iowa Farm to School program links schools with Iowa farmers. In turn, participating farmers provide schools with fresh, minimally processed, Iowa-grown food for inclusion in

school meals and snacks and offer ways for children to develop healthy eating habits. The program also often includes hands-on learning activities related to local agriculture.

## ANIMAL INDUSTRY DIVISION

**Overview:** The Animal Industry Division oversees multiple programs to protect animal health and the public, plus the licensing of veterinarians and veterinary technicians. This includes the licensing, inspection and regulation of commercial establishments (animal breeders, shelters, and kennels), auction markets, and dealers. The Division also regulates the importation of animals and animal movement within the state — as well as the investigation, control, and eradication of diseases.

**Foreign Animal Disease** The \$15.8 billion Iowa animal industry has seen significant growth in recent years. The industry employs thousands of Iowans and adds value to Iowa grown corn and soybeans. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Animal Industry Division supports this important and growing industry. Iowa's livestock farmers are always finding new ways to responsibly raise their animals while guarding against devastating diseases. They do this to ensure a nutritious and affordable protein-packed product can be on a family's dinner table. We have many dedicated professionals in the department working with our industry partners and farmers to protect animal health and ensure that we are prepared for any foreign animal disease threat. Whether it is Foot and Mouth Disease or African Swine Fever or Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, we must be prepared. Unfortunately, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) hit our state again this year, affecting our turkey farmers and egg producers. In 2025, 10 farms were impacted (compared to 11 in 2024; 21 in 2023, and 30 in 2022) far fewer than the 77 farms in 2015. In 2025, there were no cases of HPAI confirmed in dairy cattle herds in Iowa, compared to 13 in 2024, and the state reached unaffected status as part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Milk Testing Strategy. Many lessons have been learned since 2015 and in working with affected producers and USDA, we implemented many improvements to our coordinated response. Moving ahead, we will continue to refine and reassess our response and available resources to ensure we are prepared to confront the potential threats ahead.

Department and Division leaders participate in various national working groups with industry partners and the USDA.

## CHOOSE IOWA

### CHOOSE IOWA

**Overview:** Choose Iowa is the state's signature branding and marketing program promoting Iowa-grown, Iowa-made and Iowa-raised food, beverages and ag products. The program was initiated by Secretary Mike Naig and is administered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The Choose Iowa program continues growing rapidly, surpassing 300 members in 86 counties in 2025. This valuable program helps strengthen the local food system by connecting Iowa farmers with consumers, restaurants, retailers, schools and food banks. Choose Iowa members report increased product sales,

and that revenue helps support family farms and small businesses and drives the economies of our rural communities. In addition to offering networking and promotional opportunities for members, Choose Iowa also administers cost-share grants to identify, evaluate, and financially support programs and services that add value to agricultural products, enable new technologies, and support alternative marketing strategies benefiting Iowa farmers.

	RECIPIENTS (in 2025)	APPROPRIATED FUNDING AWARDED	TOTAL INVESTMENT WITH PRIVATE MATCH (combined project budget values)
Choose Iowa Promotional (Brand) Program	300+ members	\$813,000.00	
Butchery Innovation Grant*	9	\$355,000.00	\$1,940,000.00
Dairy Innovation Grant	15	\$750,000.00	\$4,127,863.81
Value-Added Grant	33	\$463,000.00	\$1,325,710.05
Farms to Food Banks**	7	\$200,000.00	\$480,948.04
Food Purchasing Pilot-Schools	34	\$70,000.00	TBD (purchasing underway)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>\$2,651,000.00</b>	<b>\$7,874,521.90</b>

\*Appropriated funds for Butchery Innovation grants were combined from FY2025 and FY2026 and awarded to 9 recipients to enable greater impact on sizeable projects.

\*\*Appropriated funds for the Food Purchasing Pilot Program for Schools were designated in the FY2025 budget, however the school portion of the pilot is being conducted during the 2025-2026 school year.

*Highlighted program:*

**The Choose Iowa Passport**

The Choose Iowa Passport is a free, interactive digital platform designed to help Iowans and visitors find farms and farm stands, orchards, you-pick opportunities, farm-to-table dining and restaurants, farmers markets, and even boutique shops featuring locally sourced Iowa products including Iowa raised meats. This innovative marketing initiative, a collaboration between Choose Iowa and Travel Iowa, promotes unique agritourism experiences and encourages visitors to enjoy Iowa grown, raised and made food, beverages and agricultural products. Since the passport launched in May 2025, 99 Choose Iowa members have enrolled in the program, more than 3,800 people have signed up for the passport, and users have logged more than 2,300 check-ins at participating member locations.

**CLIMATOLOGY BUREAU**

**Overview:** The primary emphasis of the Bureau is the collection, quality control, summation, and archiving of Iowa weather records. The weather section of the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) "Iowa Crops and Weather" is written by the State Climatologist each week from the beginning of April through the end of November. The Bureau issues a summary of the state's weather and climate within the first week of the month in the "Iowa Preliminary Monthly Weather Summary." A

final version of this report is available after quality control is completed. The State Climatologist provides expert weather and climate testimony in court cases and certifies weather observations for public and private litigation. Additional responsibilities include providing weather and climate data to state and federal agencies including the Iowa DNR and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Climatology Bureau also provides input each week to the U.S. Drought Monitor and offers detailed weather records to support pesticide drift investigations conducted by the Department's Pesticide Bureau. The *Iowa Drought Plan*, which was finished in early 2023, gives the State Climatologist additional responsibilities as the State Drought Coordinator.

## COMMERCIAL FEED AND FERTILIZER BUREAU

**Overview:** The Commercial Feed and Fertilizer Bureau licenses feed mills and commercial feed manufacturing facilities. This bureau also registers pet foods, collects commercial feed tonnage fees, inspects medicated feed in accordance with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules and regulations and responds to consumer complaints related to feed. Industry cooperates with this bureau to obtain licenses and register fertilizer plants and products. Additionally, the Bureau collects, compiles, and distributes data on plant food consumption. Other duties include collecting commercial fertilizer tonnage fees, groundwater protection fees and regulating all fertilizer and soil conditioner installations in the state. The bureau oversees both feed and fertilizer-related matters in addition to being responsible for regulating, licensing and inspecting limestone quarries and egg handlers.

### *Highlighted program:*

**Feed contract** The State of Iowa is under contract with FDA to perform eight (8) various types of feed inspections. This contract also includes collection of various types of feed samples. This contract allows the Bureau of Feed and Fertilizer to fulfill the Iowa Code requirements regarding inspections and samples with some of the costs covered by the FDA.

## DAIRY PRODUCTS CONTROL BUREAU

**Overview:** The Dairy Products Control Bureau (DPCB) administers programs to protect the health of the public and the dairy industry's ability to participate in interstate commerce. The Dairy Products Control Bureau oversees permitting for Grade A and Manufacturing Milk plants, Receiving-Transfer Stations, Wash Stations, and Single Service facilities as well as Grade A and B farms. The DPCB oversees licensing for Hauler/ graders, Intake/Receivers, Samplers, Field Representatives and Milk Truck/Tankers per Iowa Code and rules. The DPCB also administers programs for Certified Industry Resellers and Certified Industry Tanker Inspectors. Additionally, the DPCB conducts surveillance work as part of the State-

PHS/FDA Cooperative Agreement program of National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments, a program participated in by all fifty (50) States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Trust Territories.

*Highlighted program:*

**Dairy Entity Inspections:** The DPCB Field Staff inspects dairy farms a minimum of twice per year, dairy plants a minimum of four times per year, Hauler/graders biannually, and milk truck/tankers once per year. Additionally, staff perform thousands of pasteurization inspections, equipment tests, and product samplings each year.

## ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT SCIENCE BUREAU

**Overview:** The Entomology & Plant Science Bureau is responsible for implementing laws on pests, weeds, seed, and bees. Duties include listing plants, insects, and disease pests and carrying out control, annually inspecting nursery stock (hardy woody perennials) and inspecting and certifying plant products destined for sale outside of Iowa, including foreign destination (phytosanitary certificates). The Bureau is also charged with establishing the labeling requirements for agricultural and vegetable seeds, establishing the required tests for sale of agricultural and vegetable seed, and issuing seed permits.

## FIELD SERVICES (SOIL AND WATER) BUREAU

**Overview:** The Field Services Bureau provides technical support for Iowa's 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and the 500 elected SWCD commissioners. Staff within the bureau work very closely with many partners. However, the core partnership between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) is the foundation for the success of this bureau's programs. The cooperative working agreement has provisions in which NRCS provides office space, employee training, equipment, and vehicles for field staff employees and SWCD employees. In exchange, staff assist with federal workload implementation. The Bureau also administers cost share programs and low and no-interest loan programs.

*Highlighted program:*

**Soil Conservation Cost Share Program**

**2024 report attached**

## GRAIN WAREHOUSE BUREAU

**Overview:** The Grain Warehouse Bureau licenses and regulates warehouse operators and grain dealers. The Bureau regulates warehouse operators to protect individuals and businesses who hold title to the grain stored in the warehouse operator's facilities. The Bureau enforces laws to protect producers who sell grain to licensed grain dealers. Grain inventories are checked for quantity and quality to verify that they are sufficient to cover the grain obligations on the licensee's records as required by law.

The Bureau is also charged with the administration of the Grain Indemnity Fund. This fund provides coverage for grain stored in a warehouse licensed by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The fund also provides coverage for grain sold and delivered to a grain dealer licensed by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The coverage is 90% of a loss up to a maximum of \$300,000 per claimant. Grain sold on credit sale contracts is not covered. Beginning September 1, 2023, the Bureau began collecting fees to replenish the fund after three recent warehouse/grain dealer failures. Fees are assessed to Iowa licensed warehouses and grain dealers. The per-bushel assessment may be passed on to the seller. The fees will be in effect one full year from implementation and will continue until the fund reaches the level outlined by legislation.

The Bureau also completes audits for the corn and soybean promotion boards. These audits certify that the correct assessments are received from the producer and then correctly paid to the respective corn and soybean promotion boards.

## IOWA LABORATORY BUREAU

**Overview:** The Iowa Laboratory Bureau works on issues related to food safety, economic assurance, and the environment. Testing focuses on label guarantees, pathogens in food products, and misuse of agricultural products. There are several laboratories within the Laboratory Bureau that focus on specific products and work closely with other bureaus. Inspectors from the Dairy Products Control Bureau, the Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau, the Pesticide Bureau, and the Commercial Feed and Fertilizer Bureau collect and submit samples for testing. Samples entering the Laboratory are considered official samples and viable for regulatory actions. The Laboratory is strictly regulatory in nature and does not perform testing for the public or for industry on a fee-basis. The laboratories use verified methods and participate in accreditation testing and/or "check sample" programs to verify that methods, staff, and equipment are performing well. When the testing is completed, the results are provided to the associated bureau.

*Highlighted program:*

### **CIS Program**

The Iowa Laboratory Bureau, along with the Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau, maintains a Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The CIS program allows small, state-inspected meat and poultry processing facilities to broaden their customer base by allowing them to ship products outside of Iowa. The role of the laboratory in this program is to provide laboratory testing "same as" federal FSIS laboratories. In addition to audits from FSIS, the laboratory must also maintain ISO 17025 accreditation for all microbiological and chemical food testing methods. Iowa is one of ten states to be a part of the CIS program.

## MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTIONS BUREAU

**Overview:** The Iowa Meat and Poultry Inspections Bureau assures a safe, wholesome, and truthfully labeled supply of meat and poultry products from the establishments under the Bureau's inspection. The Bureau enforces, Iowa Code Chapter 189A, the Meat and Poultry Inspection Act. This Chapter's objective is "to provide for meat and poultry products inspection programs that will impose and enforce requirements with respect to intrastate operations and commerce that are at least equal to those imposed and enforced under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act". To this end, the Bureau has adopted Federal meat and poultry inspection regulations for the administration of the mandatory inspection requirements in the state inspected establishments. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) completes ongoing oversight through self-assessments and on-site reviews to ensure that the state program provides a system of inspection that is at least "equal to" the provisions found in the Federal Acts. The Bureau also cooperates with industry, academia, government, and the citizens of Iowa to enhance their knowledge of safe food production and handling practices at all levels in the food chain.

*Highlighted program:*

**Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program** In 2019, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship established a Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Agreement with USDA-FSIS. The CIS program allows participating state-inspected meat and poultry establishments with less than 22 full-time employees to ship products across state lines. There are now a total of 32 CIS establishments. Overall, there are 155 total establishments (74 official-inspected, 81 custom inspected).

## **MINES AND MINERALS BUREAU**

**Overview:** The Mines and Minerals Bureau is responsible for licensing mining operations in the state, enforcing appropriate environmental regulations during extraction and reclamation, and performing reclamation of coal mine locations. The goal is to ensure that extraction occurs in a manner that is environmentally safe and restores the landscape following mining to appropriate standards of reclamation and soil productivity.

*Highlighted program:*

**Iowa Minerals Program:** In the State of Iowa, there exists a robust mineral industry, comprising of just under 1,000 registered sites operated by 179 licensed companies, across 96 counties. These sites yield essential minerals such as limestone, sand, gravel, gypsum, and clay, with the limestone sector contributing significantly to the construction industry by producing an impressive 33-35 million tons of stone annually.

Beginning in 1968, to maintain the integrity of these operations, the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality licenses each mining company, ensuring compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 208. A dedicated inspector oversees all sites statewide, guaranteeing adherence to standards and confirming the adequacy of reclamation bonds in case of operator default. The Division conducts inspections prompted by citizen inquiries or complaints, striving to address concerns promptly.

Operators must observe specified setbacks from buildings, dwellings, property lines and public rights-of-way. They must also employ measures to stabilize and vegetate overburden piles, preventing any offsite damage resulting from mining activities. Moreover, final reclamation requires the removal of debris, with disturbed overburden requiring grading, smoothing and vegetation before the bond release is sanctioned.

Notably, air and water quality concerns at these mine sites fall under the purview of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, while mine safety and health standards have been the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government since 1973. Matters related to blasting and site location, including zoning regulations rest within the jurisdiction of local county authorities and are beyond the scope of the Divisions authority. This comprehensive framework ensures the responsible and sustainable management of Iowa's mineral resources, fostering both economic growth and environmental conservation.

## PESTICIDE BUREAU

**Overview:** The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Pesticide Bureau facilitates the judicious sale, distribution, and use of pesticides through state regulatory programs, education, and outreach to protect human health and the environment and to ensure access to safe, effective pest control measures. Regulatory programs administered by the Bureau are mandated under the Pesticide Act of Iowa found in Chapter 206, Iowa Code, including primary enforcement responsibility for pesticide use/misuse violations under sections 26 and 27 of the Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide and Fungicide Act (FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. §136). Established regulatory programs involve a state/federal/public relationship to meet federal requirements for enforcement and applicator certification programs (7 U.S.C. §136). These programs are supported by state and federal funds through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

*Highlighted program:*

### **Pesticide product registration**

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Pesticide Bureau registers pesticide products for sale and distribution in a manner to safeguard human health, plants, crops, food, feed, water and other environmental resources of Iowa's citizens, farmers, and industry workers.

### **Certifications and licensing**

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Pesticide Bureau oversees licensing for pesticide dealers, commercial pesticide applicators, aerial applicators, and registration for consultants. The Pesticide Bureau also collaborates with Iowa State University Extension, which offers private and commercial applicator certification training through the University.

The Pesticide Bureau is also charged with crafting the joint State of Iowa-EPA plan for pesticide compliance. Certification exams and review of training programs offered by Iowa State University Extension and industry also fall within the purview of the Pesticide Bureau.

The Pesticide Bureau is responsible for responding to complaints and helping protect citizens from misuse of pesticide products. In addition, education and testing on the safe use of pesticides is administered to all licensed pesticide applicators in conjunction with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The Department's pesticide investigator gathers information by providing notification of inspection, conducting interviews, obtaining statements, reviewing application records and pesticide labels, taking photographs and making on site assessments. The information gathered helps document whether a violation of state and/or federal pesticide law occurred.

## WATER RESOURCES BUREAU

**Overview:** The Water Resources Bureau is responsible for implementation of several programs and initiatives, including support for special projects, wetlands and water quality improvement initiatives, watershed planning and projects, agricultural drainage well closures, and programs that are not explicitly carried out through field offices or Iowa Financial Incentives cost-share. Much of the current work of the bureau is connected to the Water Quality Initiative and a series of state-federal partnerships. Additionally, Water Resources Bureau staff serve on various intergovernmental working groups and provide technical and administrative support to the Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI).

### *Highlighted programs:*

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program** The Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was initiated in 2001 and is a joint effort of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the USDA Farm Service Agency to protect Iowa drinking water and reduce hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. It is a highly targeted water quality program focusing on the reduction of nitrate loads to surface waters through the restoration of strategically located and designed wetlands that intercept tile-drainage water from upper-lying cropland. Research and monitoring by Iowa State University has shown that CREP wetlands remove 40-90% of the nitrate in tile-drainage water. In addition, these wetlands provide high quality wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

### **Water Quality Initiative Report Attached**

## WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BUREAU

**Overview:** This Bureau inspects and licenses for commercial use all weights and measures or weighing and measuring devices, which includes many consumer-facing devices used to measure everything from petroleum products (e.g., fuel pumps) to food (e.g., commercial food scales). Additionally, this bureau

conducts petroleum product sampling and testing, tests and certifies antifreeze, and conducts random package and labeling inspections of products offered for sale.

The Weights and Measures Bureau registers and licenses all service agencies and people who service or repair commercial measuring devices and approves blueprints for new scale installations. The Bureau follows the rules and regulations of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and uses weights and measures standards that are traceable to NIST. The Bureau facilitates increased production and consumption of products made from Iowa's agricultural commodities by encouraging the production and use of renewable fuels and coproducts.

*Highlighted program:*

**Fuel Pump Inspections** Iowa currently has over 55,000 fuel meters, which is up from 39,811 meters in 2016. During such inspections, experts examine the functionality of pumps to ensure that the display readings consumers view correspond accurately with the quantity of product actually dispensed. Inspectors also examine the technical and physical integrity of pump components. Additionally, pump examiners have been briefed on how to look for credit card “skimmers,” which are devices thieves use to steal personal information from unsuspecting customers. Local law enforcement partners with inspectors and investigates if fuel pump payment system tampering is suspected. Have also started the inspection of Electric Vehicle charging stations. There are 1042 EV charging stations with 4,168 meters to test.



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE &  
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

# **SOIL CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY 2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Accelerating Iowa's Soil Conservation and Water Quality Progress**

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## UPDATE FROM SECRETARY MIKE NAIG

Iowa's hardworking farmers lead the nation in corn, egg, pork and biofuels production. Did you know they're also conservation leaders, adding more buffer and filter strips, grassed waterways, water quality wetlands, conservation tillage, bioreactors, pollinator habitat, terraces and saturated buffers than any other state?

Because of the dedicated and sustained funding from the Iowa Legislature, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Iowa State University (ISU) have been working alongside nearly 450 public and private partners since 2013 to continue implementing the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS). The INRS outlines a suite of tools farmers and landowners can use to right-size crop inputs and reduce nitrogen and phosphorus losses to capture valuable nutrients in the fields and filter them before reaching our lakes, rivers and streams.

Implementing the INRS takes financial, engineering and construction resources, as well as farmers and landowners who are willing to make long-term changes to their fields. The boots-on-the-ground work is hard, the process takes time and there's no silver bullet. It took decades to achieve Iowa's phosphorus-reduction progress, but that's how we know a farmer-led approach to conservation can work in Iowa. Now we're focused on deploying nitrogen-reducing practices. There is still work to do but we are making progress.

Momentum continues to build across the state. We saw strong adoption of conservation practices in 2025 and successfully completed both rural and urban water quality projects. We supported more than \$34.3 million in soil and water cost-share, nearly \$7.2 million more than last year's record. We processed more than 7,300 completed project cost-share claims – 630 more than last year, and 1,800 more than five years ago.

We saw record demand for the state's cover crop cost-share program, and Iowa farmers are now planting nearly four million acres of cover crops. We initiated 26 wetland projects in 2025, the most in a single year. We expanded the cattle and conservation working lands project to eight counties, and we have active batch and build agreements in 28 counties.

In FY2026, we're allocating even more financial and staffing resources to accelerate work upstream of the Des Moines, Raccoon and Middle Cedar Rivers. I introduced a \$3 million streamside buffer pilot project which encourages farmers and landowners in these priority watersheds to add perennial buffer strips at the edge of their fields to filter water before it enters neighboring creeks.

We hit exciting conservation milestones this year, and we battled very real challenges along the way. The federal government shutdown closed field offices during the peak conservation planning and enrollment period. IDALS continued pushing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to roll back regulatory red tape that slows the pace and increases the cost of constructing water quality wetlands. And yet we continued to make progress because farmers said yes to conservation, even in a challenging ag economy.

There are conversations happening about water quality, and in many cases you're only hearing one side of the story. If you have questions about the Water Quality Initiative, please reach out to my staff. We'd be happy to introduce you to people who come to work every day to help farmers and landowners implement water quality solutions, and we need even more partners to get involved. As you talk to constituents in your districts, please encourage them to join us and help make a meaningful impact on Iowa's source water quality.

Thank you for your continued support of Iowa's Water Quality Initiative.



# ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR CONSERVATION

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), working with Iowa’s 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA–NRCS, Iowa State University and many other partners, once again shattered a record for conservation and water quality practice adoption within Iowa during FY2025. The pace of adoption continues to accelerate as more farmers, landowners, partners, practices, people and resources are added. While these results are encouraging and we are making progress, there is much more work to do.

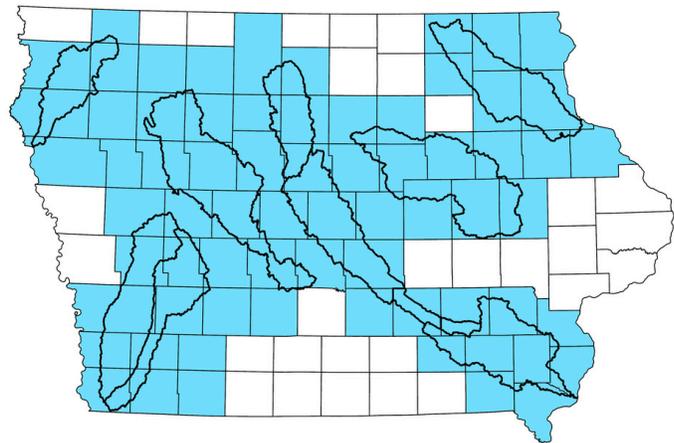
## WATER QUALITY & SOIL CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

<b>\$77.2M</b> IDALS DIVISION EXPENDITURES	<b>COVER CROP ACRES</b> <b>3.8M</b> (*2024 INREC SURVEY)
<b>\$34.3M</b> STATE COST-SHARE INVESTMENT	<b>WETLANDS</b> <b>147</b> COMPLETED <b>94</b> IN DEVELOPMENT
<b>\$47M</b> ESTIMATED FARMER AND OTHER PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS	<b>SATURATED BUFFERS AND BIOREACTORS</b> <b>484</b> COMPLETED <b>200+</b> IN DEVELOPMENT
<b>8,000+</b> FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS	

## WQI PROJECT AREAS

Though we target much of our water quality and soil conservation investments into priority watersheds, impactful work is happening across the state.

-  **Priority HUC-8 Watersheds**
-  **Counties with existing WQI projects**

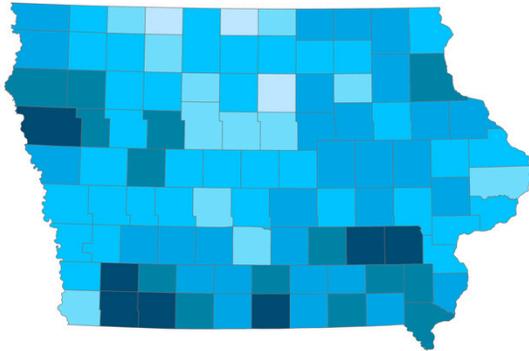


## LEVERAGING STATE FUNDS

<b>\$3.3M</b> EPA GULF OF AMERICA	<b>\$1.05M</b> PRIVATE /NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS
<b>\$34.7M</b> NRCS MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN	<b>\$25M</b> CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM
<b>\$122.8M</b> NRCS REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS	<b>\$4.17M</b> GULF HYPOXIA PROGRAM

*Note: Summary is the total amount received since the start of the WQI and directly tied to WQI activities. Many of these projects are multi-year and are in various stages of their project term. These totals do not include investments made by individual farmers or landowners.*

# INCENTIVES FOR CONSERVATION ADOPTION PROVIDED TO IOWA FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS



## FY2025 COST-SHARE DOLLARS EXPENDED BY DISTRICT

- < \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$500,000
- \$500,000 - \$750,000
- \$750,000 +

Diverse landforms across Iowa directly affect the cost and type of conservation practices best suited for each field and impact the funding each county needs and receives.

### PERMANENT STRUCTURES PROVIDE ONGOING BENEFITS

<b>342</b> Terrace projects covering <b>859,900 feet</b> (162.8 miles)
<b>116</b> Grade stabilization structure projects
<b>89</b> Water and sediment control basin projects
<b>91</b> Grassed waterway projects

TONS OF SOIL SAVED PER YEAR

<b>18,984</b>
<b>25,038</b>
<b>8,966</b>
<b>9,424</b>

### DID YOU KNOW? THAT'S EQUAL TO

<b>= 1,356</b>
<b>= 1,788</b>
<b>= 640</b>
<b>= 673</b>



## PRACTICE EXAMPLES



TERRACES



COVER CROPS



GRASSED WATERWAYS



WATER AND SEDIMENT CONTROL BASINS



GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURES

## HOW COST-SHARE WORKS



Legislature appropriates funding



IDALS allocates funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)



Farmers and landowners apply for cost-share at SWCD offices



SWCD Commissioners approve cost-share applications



Local contractors install conservation practices

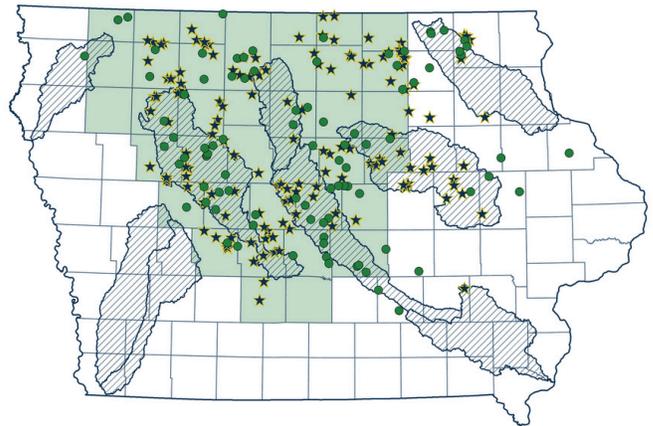


Conservation practices improve soil health and water quality

# WATER QUALITY WETLANDS

Water quality wetlands act like filters, removing nutrients from stormwater before it reaches our rivers, lakes and streams. In FY2025, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) initiated 26 wetland projects – the most ever in one year.

In addition to water quality benefits, these beautiful wetlands provide important habitat for wildlife and pollinators, flood mitigation and much more. Research and ongoing monitoring by Iowa State University have demonstrated that strategically sited and designed nutrient reduction wetlands remove an average of 40-70% of nitrates from cropland drainage waters, providing a high return on investment for this efficient and effective permanent practice. To date, 147 wetlands have been built with dozens more in the design process.



★ COMPLETE (147)  
● IN PROGRESS (94)  
▨ PRIORITY HUC8 WATERSHEDS  
■ CREP-ELIGIBLE COUNTIES

**147**

WATER QUALITY WETLANDS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED

**280M**

EST. POUNDS OF NITROGEN WILL BE REMOVED BY WETLANDS OVER THEIR LIFETIMES

**1.87M**

POUNDS OF NITROGEN REMOVED BY WETLANDS ANNUALLY

**\$0.27**

AVERAGE COST TO REMOVE ONE POUND OF NITROGEN USING WATER QUALITY WETLANDS

**167K+**

WATERSHED ACRES PROTECTED BY 1,367 ACRES OF WETLANDS

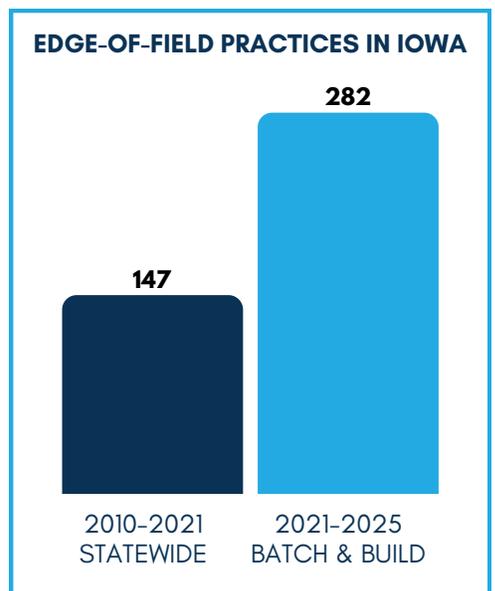
## INNOVATIVE “BATCH AND BUILD” MODEL RAMPS UP

The “Batch and Build” model modernizes and streamlines the project management process by installing batches of edge-of-field conservation practices on multiple farms at once, making it easier for farmers to say yes to conservation and accelerating the rate of adoption. The model is used to install edge-of-field infrastructure, which filters and denitrifies water as it leaves the farm field before it enters our waterways.

- IDALS deployed this model in 2020.
- **11** active Batch and Build agreements in place, installing practices in **28** different counties.
- Additional agreements with local partners are in the planning stages.

### PARTICIPATING COUNTIES

Benton	Cedar	Hancock	Marshall	Story
Black Hawk	Dallas	Hardin	Muscatine	Tama
Boone	Franklin	Humboldt	Pocahontas	Webster
Buchanan	Greene	Jasper	Polk	Wright
Buena Vista	Grundy	Johnson	Poweshiek	
Calhoun	Hamilton	Linn	Sac	



# MEASURING PROGRESS

The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS) is a science and technology-based framework developed by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Iowa State University (ISU) to guide state-led efforts and investments aimed at reducing nutrients in surface water in a scientific, reasonable and cost-effective way. In 2025, the INRS was updated to reflect new research, conservation practices, public and private partnerships and funding sources that have emerged since the original strategy was finalized in 2013.

ISU leads the INRS’s ongoing measurement and reporting efforts using an online dashboard. The dashboard is updated regularly as data is collected from a variety of sources and public and private partners. Each update focuses on one of the “measurable indicators of desirable change” – inputs, human, land and water – that guide the INRS. The dashboard is available at [nrtracking.cals.iastate.edu](http://nrtracking.cals.iastate.edu).

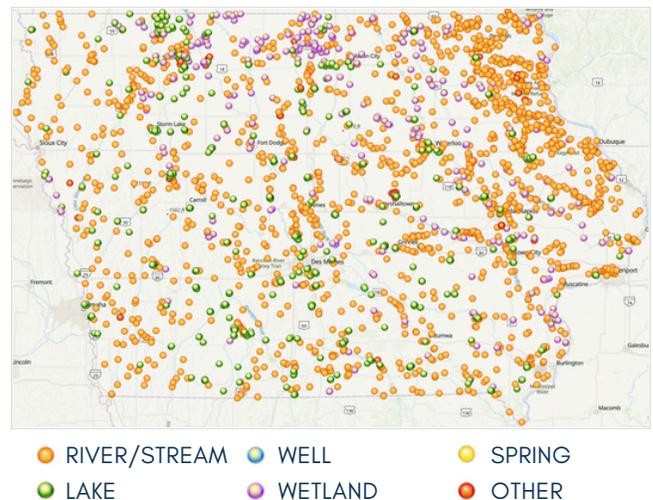


*The Logic Model of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy is guided by measurable indicators of desirable change*



# WATER QUALITY MONITORING

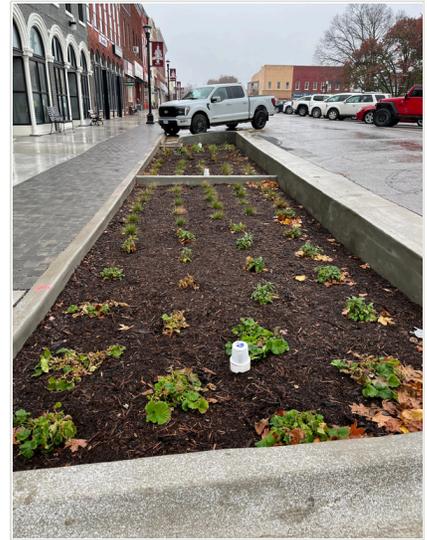
The State of Iowa invests nearly \$3 million per year to support a statewide water quality monitoring network, which includes 60 stream and 185 lake locations. The Iowa DNR collects water samples at 18 long-term, pre-determined monitoring stations every month, all year long to monitor nitrogen and phosphorous loads, in addition to other water quality parameters like bacteria, pH and temperature. This is the data used to report statewide nutrient load reductions, evaluate long-term water quality trends, and measure progress towards the goals outlined in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. The monitoring data is available online at the DNR’s AQUa portal, [programs.iowadnr.gov/aqu/a/](http://programs.iowadnr.gov/aqu/a/).



# URBAN CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

## BLOOMFIELD

Bloomfield has finished major upgrades to its historic downtown square to fix failing sidewalks, resolve chronic drainage issues and improve local water quality. The original sidewalks had cracked and settled, causing stormwater to pool against buildings, leak into basements and carry pollutants into storm drains, nearby streams and the Fox River. With \$366,250 in support from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and additional resources from the State Revolving Fund Sponsored Project program (administered by the Iowa DNR and Iowa Finance Authority,) the city replaced three sides of the square with permeable pavers and installed four bioretention cells. These practices filter and slowly release stormwater, reducing suspended solids, nitrogen and phosphorus while capturing runoff from nearby streets. With the Iowa DOT completing the final side, Bloomfield now has a fully updated downtown that better manages stormwater and flooding, and protects local waterways.



## URBAN CONSERVATION SNAPSHOT

*Includes WQI and other funding sources*

	PROJECTS	ALLOCATED FUNDS	LEVERAGED FROM APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS
<b>IN 2025</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$2.68M</b>	<b>\$3M</b>
<b>SINCE 2015</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>\$17.39M</b>	<b>\$51.57M</b>

## PERRY

Perry has completed a new stormwater wetland that improves water quality, manages runoff and offers a hands-on educational space for the community. The project includes two hydraulically-connected, constructed wetlands – six acres and three acres in size – that now treat stormwater from about 315 acres of agricultural land, industrial park property and low-density residential areas. Visitors will park on permeable pavers that infiltrate stormwater and reduce peak flows. IDALS supported the work with two Urban Water Quality Initiative awards totaling \$500,000, including \$250,000 specifically for the wetland. Additional partners contributed to Perry’s broader stormwater improvements, including \$500,000 from the Iowa Finance Authority for Frog Creek and \$1.6 million in an Iowa DNR and Iowa Finance Authority State Revolving Fund Sponsored Project.



## SECRETARY NAIG LAUNCHES STREAMSIDE BUFFER INITIATIVE IN PRIORITY WATERSHEDS

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig launched the Streamside Buffer Initiative in August, a new state-funded pilot project supporting farmers and landowners in priority watersheds, including those upstream of Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. The initiative promotes establishing perennial buffers or prairie habitat along streambanks to reduce nutrient loss, improve soil health and protect critical source water areas. The effort is part of the ongoing implementation of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is investing \$3 million from the Water Quality Initiative (WQI), which is made possible through continued funding provided by the Iowa Legislature.

The pilot provides flexible, state-led cost-share assistance to install 30 to 100-foot buffers on row-cropped acres in the North Raccoon, Boone, Middle Cedar and Turkey watersheds, and in Dubuque County. Participants receive one-time payments to cover establishment costs and foregone income, with higher payments available for non-harvested buffers. The initiative is designed to accelerate conservation adoption, complement federal programs, and deliver measurable water-quality benefits in key source water areas.



*Before streamside buffer installation*



*After streamside buffer installation*

## NEW TOOL HELPS FARMERS OPTIMIZE NITROGEN USE

The Iowa Nitrogen Initiative (INI) reached a major milestone in 2025 with the launch of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Application Consultation Tool (N-FACT), a new resource that provides Iowa farmers with customized, field-level nitrogen recommendations. Developed by Iowa State University leveraging funding from the Iowa Legislature and IDALS, N-FACT helps farmers improve productivity, reduce input costs and support the goals of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy.



This investment enabled INI to significantly expand its research base in 2025, completing 600 on-farm trials and building a dataset that now supports more than 21,000 possible nitrogen-rate scenarios. More than 6,000 farmers used N-FACT in its first year. Free to use at [N-Fact.Ag](https://www.nfact.ag), the tool incorporates weather, soil nitrogen, field location, planting dates and market conditions to recommend optimal rates. Based on INI field trials, farmers save, on average, \$34 per acre by applying the N-FACT rate instead of the legacy MRTN recommendation, yielding positive financial and environmental outcomes. The INI and its partners will continue expanding both farmer adoption and the tool's capabilities as additional field research and data become available.