

ADVANCING PRACTICE ADOPTION IN THE UPPER SANGAMON RIVER



Project Facts

TIMELINE



Status: **ONGOING**

COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

Cargill PepsiCo
Kellogg The Nature
Company Conservancy

FUNDED PARTNERS

Illinois Corn Growers Association
Precision Conservation
Management
(PCM)

OTHER PARTNERS

Mars Petcare
Nestle Purina
Illinois Council on Best
Management Practices
Bunge
Walton Family Foundation

PROJECT SUMMARY

SYSTEMS CHANGE PATHWAY(S)

- + **De-risking Practice Adoption**
- + **Engaging Agricultural Retailers**
- + **Demand for Commodities Produced Using Good Farming Practices**

GOALS

- + Enroll at least 100,000 acres in nutrient management, tillage, and cover crops
- + Build Precision Conservation Management (PCM) capacity to demonstrate improved performance and provide agronomic advice
- + Build business case for good farming practices and share learning

APPROACH

- +PepsiCo and Bunge recruit farmers, PCM enrolls farmers gathers data, provides data compilation, economic analysis options, and agronomic advice. PepsiCo provides cover crop cost share.
- +Address the need in Illinois to increase the number of farmers, retailers, Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs), and conservation practitioners who understand the science of soil health and the interrelated set of production management changes required to transition to this new system.

ACTIVITIES

- + Lead and motivate local partners to coordinate action at the watershed and state level
- + Develop relationships with growers
- + Develop conservation programs and incentives
- + Outreach to grower groups & local agencies
- + PCM measures environmental outcomes, such as improved water quality and GHG reductions, while providing farmers with an analysis of how implementing sustainable agricultural practices impacts profitability.
- + Provided intensive, hands-on training for farmer advisors, retailers, and conservation practitioners about soil health practices, such as cover crops and reduced tillage, and management strategies for shifting production to soil health system.
- + Offered 12,000 acres of cover crop cost share for PCM participants in fall of 2018

KEY OUTCOMES

- + Enrolled 30 farmer participants in year one, scaling to 50 in year two with farmer uptake of cover cropping and a variety of reduced tillage practices
- + 3 new counties, 27 farmers entered program
- + Expanded Advanced Soil Health Training, with 25 farmers completing
- + Created sister program: Advanced Conservation Drainage Program, with 45 farmers and drainage industry reps completing training

Project Insights

- + Agronomic and economic advice is critical alongside data gathering
- + Farmer to Farmer networks could use better definition in what works and where to grow
- + Many local implementers need to remain nutrient management agnostic

ABOUT THE MIDWEST ROW CROP COLLABORATIVE

The Midwest Row Crop Collaborative is an innovative partnership aligned to drive positive environmental change in the upper Mississippi River Basin. It is comprised of leading businesses and nonprofits that span the full food and agriculture value chain, working together to catalyze and implement joint, systemic projects and initiatives that accelerate sustainable agricultural solutions.

ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

Environmental Initiative is a nonprofit organization that works with business, nonprofit and government leaders to develop collaborative solutions to environmental problems. In 2019, Environmental Initiative became the administrator of the Midwest Row Crop Collaborative.