

# Iowa Source Water Agricultural Collaborative

Scope: State

Location: Iowa

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Anthony Seeman  
[ASeeman@iasoybeans.com](mailto:ASeeman@iasoybeans.com)

Website: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Source-Water-Protection>

## SCOPE:

Provide source water protection information, education and outreach to:

- Agri-business
- Farm operators/owners
- Women landowners
- Conservation agencies, organizations and groups (local, state, federal)
- Commodity organizations
- City Administrators/City Councils/Staff
- Community Water Supplies/Rural Water Associations
- Farm Management Companies

## COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- Initiated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Source Water Protection (SWP) Program for Targeted Community Water Supplies in April 2014
- The Collaborative was launched as a result of several SWP workshops held across the state from 2010-2014
- The Collaborative is a culmination of the Iowa agriculture and conservation communities' desire to connect in an effort to bring awareness of SWP as it pertains to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Approximately 90% of Iowa's municipal wells are located in agricultural areas within crop fields and may potentially be impacted by row crop production. The need for an Agricultural Collaborative to focus on SWP was deemed valuable
- The Collaborative also provides a means for communities to discuss SWP questions and concerns with DNR

## MEMBERS:

- Iowa Soybean Association
- Iowa Corn Growers Association
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)
- Conservation Districts of Iowa
- Iowa State University
- University of Iowa
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Rural Water Association
- Iowa section of the American Water Works Association
- Iowa Environmental Council
- Agri-business Association of Iowa

- Heartland Cooperative
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Additional members included over time

## WATER CONCERNS:

- Examples of concerns identified by the Collaborative
  - Increased nitrate levels in public wells
  - Current available resources are insufficient to address and implement practices to decrease contaminant risk
  - Education and outreach efforts for SWP to the agricultural sector are needed
  - Climate variation and water quantity are beginning to be a concern

## STRATEGIES:

- Establish framework for outreach, communication, and partnerships with landowners/operators/agricultural retailers/conservation agencies and groups.
- Develop innovative and effective practices to reduce risk to susceptible public drinking water wells
- Target highly susceptible community water system (CWS) capture zones and prioritize resources to address concerns around public drinking water wells
- Target highly susceptible areas with existing watershed projects, to use project resources to support SWP
- Further connect watershed projects (local, state, federal) with the highly susceptible Community Water Systems (CWSs) on a county and/or watershed basis
- Establish partnership with Iowa State University (ISU) Extension program, IDALS, NRCS to include SWP success stories for the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy

## RESULTS:

- Planning additional SWP Informational, Educational and Outreach workshops in each quadrant of the state with assistance from a planning committee, including landowners/operators/city administrators/water operators/agri-businesses, certified crop advisors, USDA/NRCS, and others.
- Established partnership with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) to provide SWP information on their website: [www.cleanwateriowa.org](http://www.cleanwateriowa.org)
- Established partnership with the Heartland Certified Crop Advisors to provide best management practice (BMP) implementation assistance in Western Iowa's Priority SWP Projects.
- Initiated project with USDA-NRCS to develop a process that incorporates capture zone maps into conservation planning efforts
- Initiated project with landowner, Dordt College, USDA-NRCS, IDALS, SWCD, and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University to develop field trial research resulting in identifying an additional best management practice option that can decrease nitrate risk while sustaining viable farming operation
- Reduced nitrate levels in municipal well by 40% at the [Remsen](#), Iowa SWP project by converting row crops to native grasses in a priority area of the municipal well's capture zone
- Installed wetland in [Elliot](#), Iowa's municipal well capture zone, to reduce elevated nitrate levels
- Using USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant to incorporate cover crops in the [Griswold](#), Iowa municipal well capture zone, and using SWP program funds to install monitoring wells to assess results over time
- Iowa Soybean Association provided field tests kits to Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Rural Water Association for nitrate sampling

**Information current as of November 2020. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)**