



Our Mission: To promote and implement the 4Rs of nutrient stewardship (right source, right place, right time, right rate) to minimize environmental impact, optimize harvest yield and maximize nutrient utilization.

The IFCA 4R Code of Practice - Take the Pledge

The IFCA Agronomy Committee and Board of Directors has developed a 4R Code of Practice that outlines principles that reinforce our industry's on-going commitment to provide leadership in Illinois on reducing nutrient losses, assuring profitability for our customers, protecting the environment and avoiding unnecessary regulations.

Included with this newsletter is the IFCA 4R Code of Practice and a "STOP" Poster to hang in your facilities to spur conversation on 4R nutrient stewardship practices with your farmer customers to avoid regulations in Illinois.

We are also launching a special website: www.Keepit4RCrop.org where retailers who take the 4R pledge will be listed and featured, along with 4R tools, stories of retailers in action and information for our industry and the public.

IFCA asks you to review the 4R Code with your employees and when you are prepared to make the commitment, go to the Keepit4RCrop website and click on the "Take the Pledge" icon. You will be directed to a form to list your company and names of employees within your organization who will promote the 4R Code of Practice. All who take the pledge will be visible on the website. If you would like to order additional "STOP" posters for your facilities, send us an email at jeanp@ifca.com and we'll provide them to you. **Please take the pledge before September 30, 2015:** IFCA is launching a public relations campaign to highlight the proactive actions of our industry so help us highlight your hard work and commitment!

Ag Retailers in Action: *Regan Wear, CHS-Shipman & IFCA Board Member*

Regan Wear has been managing the agronomy department, and working with the certified crop adviser sales team at Shipman Elevator (now CHS-Shipman) since 1986. Over that period he has seen tremendous changes in production and technology in the Corn Belt. "We still use some of the gold standard procedures for nutrient planning, and it all starts with a good soil test program where we look at variability of nutrients in the soil and also correct PH" said Regan.



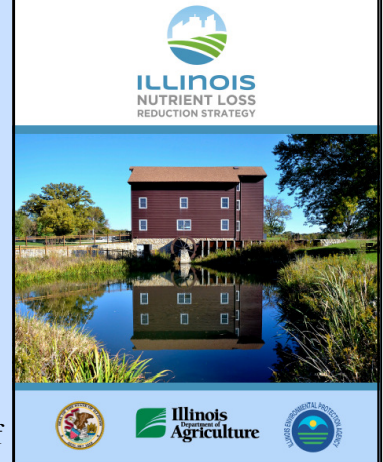
"I use 4R strategies with my customers to care for the both the crops and the environment. These practices are evolving from the days of just spreading 200 lbs of DAP and 200 lbs of potash every other year, to VRT prescriptions based on multiple year yield analysis of crop removals. With these techniques they can put the right rate of the right product at the right place at the right time in the field. While this requires spending a lot of time with customers collecting, cleaning and analyzing their data to prepare the P&K prescriptions, after we create the nutrient application maps we can develop a variable rate seeding prescription working with the customer and his seed supplier if he chooses to go that way. We also have seen a good increase in farmers splitting up their nitrogen applications for corn. These systems also include variable rate nitrogen on some or all of the trips if needed. This technology shows promise in more efficiently using up the nutrients that we are applying for the crops and not leaving nutrients behind that can get into unintended areas. I'm proud of my customers who have adopted the 4Rs—they clearly see the need for research on fertilizer technologies and techniques that help us grow a robust healthy crop while making sure the plant uses all nutrients that is intended for it.

As an IFCA Board Member, I am taking the 4R Pledge and I encourage all retail members to do the same.

Illinois agriculture must reduce nutrient losses and if we all do our part and adopt a 4R approach on every acre, we can avoid regulations and litigation like we are seeing in other states. Because IFCA has been so proactive, Illinois has been one of the few states to avoid nutrient regulation or litigation. Let's keep it that way: **Take the Pledge!"**

IEPA Releases Final Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy

The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (INLRS) is official! The 163 page document, released on July 21, 2015 explains the science behind the nutrient and water quality issues in Illinois, and contains chapters exploring how agriculture, the point source community (wastewater treatment plants), urban areas and government and private sector programs can work together to reduce nutrient losses to the Gulf of Mexico and also improve water quality in Illinois rivers, lakes and streams. To see the full strategy document, executive summary, factsheet and press release, go to www.ifca.com for a link to the IEPA website. We recommend everyone read chapters 3 and 6 to understand the science behind the strategy and what agriculture's responsibilities are to reduce nutrient losses. We can do this now, voluntarily, or face regulations if we fail to make progress.



IFCA was an integral partner in working with IEPA and other nutrient stakeholders in the development of the document. The activities recommended for agriculture include 4R approaches along with conservation practices such as increasing buffer strips, planting cover crops and looking at technologies such as bioreactors and perennial cropping systems. All of the activities listed in the document had to be based upon published, peer reviewed scientific articles. Knowing that there are other practices (namely more 4R practices) that can help reduce losses while assuring profitability for farmers, the Illinois Nutrient Research & Education Council (NREC) is actively conducting research in these areas. To see the NREC projects underway, go to www.illinoisnrec.org.

IFCA led the charge to create NREC and Dan Schaefer, IFCA's Director of Nutrient Stewardship is engaged with universities and IFCA members to drive on-farm research and discover practical ways to reduce nutrient losses. For example, we know that properly applied fall anhydrous ammonia in central and northern Illinois can be a solid 4R practice within an overall nitrogen management system, but we need the data to prove it, and that research is actively underway showing great results. Illinois agriculture must reduce Nitrogen losses by approximately 225 million pounds and Phosphorus losses by 18 million pounds. These are big numbers, but with 4R approaches on every acre, we are committed to making progress. Take the Pledge to support the 4R Code of Practice and let's prove we can do it!



Jean Payne (IFCA), Jennifer Tirey (IL Pork), Lauren Lurkins (IL Farm Bureau), Caroline Wade & Dr. Laura Gentry (IL Corn) spoke at meetings throughout Illinois on the INLRS. This was a meeting in McLean County.

IFCA Partners with Farm Organizations to Educate Growers on the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy

During the month of June, the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices (of which IFCA is a member) hosted 11 meetings throughout the state to educate farmers on the INLRS, and gave examples of practices that farmers can adopt to reduce nutrient losses. Over 1,100 farmers attended along with many IFCA members, farm managers, soil & water conservation districts and staff from IEPA and IDA. While the challenges are great, the message was upbeat, proactive and well received by the farmers in attendance. All acknowledged that ag retailers and CCAs hold the key to discussing nutrient stewardship with the thousands of farmers you interact with every day.

4R CCA Certification Underway in Illinois: IFCA & IL CCA Working on Training Program

NREC provided a grant to the IL CCA Program to work with IFCA to promote the 4R Code of Practice and design a training program to help certified crop advisers prepare for the 4R Certification Exam. An initial exam was offered in early August, but we recommend that most CCAs participate in the training this winter and prepare for the exam offered in February 2016. The 4R Code of Practice encourages CCAs to get 4R Certified. Illinois has more CCAs than any other state—wouldn't it be awesome to have the most 4R certified CCAs too! It's another way for our industry to demonstrate leadership and ownership of nutrient management to keep regulations away. **Stay tuned for more info on 4R CCA Certification.**

