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 Hypoxia Task Force Meeting

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**Valley Pike Farm, Inc.** 








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## Announcing USDA investments totaling \$56.4 M available to producers for improving water quality

This year NRCS is continuing landscape level efforts through the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Water Initiative (MRBI) and the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI).



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## MRBI investments

- \$17.5 M to producers in 13 states:  
Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin
- Utilizes Farm Bill programs such as EQIP and ACEP
- Specifically supports nutrient loss reduction strategies of HTF member states.
- Since its launch, MRBI has:
  - ✓ 2010-2019, \$307 M obligated to MRBI projects through contracts
  - ✓ Helped producers implement conservation on nearly 1.5 million acres
  - ✓ Reduced sediment loss by 2.1 million tons
  - ✓ Reduced phosphorous loss by 4.1 million pounds
  - ✓ Reduced nitrogen loss by 16 million pounds.



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## Iowa working lands benefit from federal and state partnership investments

- MRBI and Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI) – one year initiative
- \$2 M in MRBI funding made available to support eight WQI identified watersheds.
- Conservation practices focused on water quality in these watersheds included:
  - ✓ Cover crops
  - ✓ Grassed waterways
  - ✓ Terraces
  - ✓ Prescribed grazing
- Outcomes and metrics are being assessed



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## NWQI Investments

- NRCS will make available \$38.9 M to producers across the nation
- Partnership with NRCS, EPA and state water quality agencies to address impaired water bodies
- Targeted funding for financial and technical assistance in small watersheds
- Also targets ground and surface sources of drinking water
- Since its launch 8 years ago, NWQI has:
  - ✓ Invested \$64 M to implement conservation practices within HTF states.
  - ✓ Helped producers implement conservation on 825,000 acres.
  - ✓ Reduced sediment loss by 850,000 tons.
  - ✓ Reduced phosphorous loss by 2 million pounds.
  - ✓ Reduced nitrogen loss by 9.6 million pounds.



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## NWQI Success Stories



- ✓ A 2019 *Vermont Clean Water Initiative* report revealed promising phosphorus reductions in Vermont's impaired Lake Champlain.
- ✓ Working with NRCS and the partners of Vermont's Agricultural Water Quality Partnership, farmers in that state have installed conservation practices which are making a positive impact on water quality.
- ✓ **Agricultural improvements overall are responsible for 97% of the total phosphorus reductions to Lake Champlain** that were reported in fiscal year 2019, and **VT NRCS efforts contributed to 66% of that work.**
- ✓ As a result of the outstanding work by the Vermont Ag Water Quality Partnership, and the farmers themselves, agriculture has already reduced agricultural phosphorus by 11% of the total required by the Lake Champlain TMDL by 2038 (**15.89 metric tons**).



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## 2018 Farm Bill NRCS Conservation Programs



- Demonstrates strong congressional support
- \$4.3 Billion annually for CTA and FB programs
- EQIP, CSP, ACEP, RCPP
- Helps streamline, target and simplify NRCS programs
- Developing rules that will be ready for FY20 signups
- 10% source water protection



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## Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)

- NRCS recently deployed a new conservation planning tool CART.
- CART assists conservation planners as they assess site vulnerability, existing conditions, and potential resource concerns.
- CART will rank/score farmer needs against all potential funding sources
- CART will improve customer services.
- CART integrates closely with the Conservation Desktop (CD) tool.
- CART training sessions are ongoing with agency employees across the U.S.



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## Thank You

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