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Adoption of Best Management Practices in the Lake Bloomington Watershed in Illinois.

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Abstract:

Lake Bloomington is located north of the city of Bloomington in central Illinois. The watershed contains 43,000 acres; 84% of those acres are in production agriculture. The lake serves as the primary drinking source for the city of Bloomington and has been listed on Illinois Environmental Protection Agency 303(d) list since 1994. In 2007 Lake Bloomington received a TMDL for both nitrogen/nitrate and phosphorus.

The Illinois Council on Best Management Practices (C-BMP), in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, obtained funding from the Sand County Foundation to implement a nutrient management incentive-based program for Lake Bloomington watershed. The three-year program began in 2006 and places an emphasis on nitrogen management.

Producers enrolled in the program develop a four-year nutrient management plan following University of Illinois Agronomy Handbook recommendations. A payment of \$2.00 per acre is provided to the Technical Service Provider (TSP) who writes the plan.

Upon implementation, producers receive a payment for best management practices including: soil tests, proper timing of nitrogen application, use of a nitrification inhibitor, spring application and splitting nitrogen application between fall and spring. Marketing for the program is done primarily by fertilizer dealers. A direct mailing is sent to all producers and landowners in the watershed annually.

Impact Statement:

Enrollment in year one exceeded 12,000 acres, or 68% of eligible land. Year two enrollment topped 14,500 acres. Preliminary reports indicate nitrogen application was reduced by 10,000 lbs (an average of 0.9 lbs/acre) and phosphorus application decreased 140,000 lbs (14 lbs/acre). None of the acres enrolled had an existing nutrient management plan.

Category: Agricultural BMPs

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