

Delta's Ryan Anderson awards payment to Michigan farmer Myron Ortner for reducing his emissions through the Nitrogen Credit Program.

SPURRING INNOVATION IN CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

NEW APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

Our nation's agriculture industry is a major economic driver, and is also on the front lines of climate change. At Delta Institute, we see opportunities to reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture while maintaining crop yields. By linking farmers and agricultural producers with environmental markets, new models for agricultural production, and market-based tools, we believe we can create a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector.

WORK WITH DELTA INSTITUTE TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Delta Institute works to achieve landscape-level impacts through its agriculture and water quality programs. We do this by working in partnership with farmers, agricultural retailers, local and national nonprofits, conservation districts, and state and federal partners. In these partnerships, Delta offers a number of services, including:

- data analyst and modeler
- stakeholder facilitator
- technical advisor
- environmental market specialist

WITH PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, RECENT EFFORTS INCLUDE:

Delta Nitrogen Credit Program (NCP): Launched in 2014 to reduce agricultural nitrous oxide emissions, the NCP packages farmers' nitrous oxide reductions into nitrogen credits that are purchased on the American Carbon Registry, returning profits to participating farmers.

Supply-chain drivers to improve nutrient management: In partnership with national nonprofits, agricultural retailers and associations, private industry, and university researchers, Delta is providing technical support to evaluate quantification methods and monetize benefits from reducing nitrous oxide emissions throughout the agricultural supply chain.

Pay-for-performance conservation agriculture: These projects mark a shift from the pay-for-activities model to a cost-effective approach that yields measurable water quality improvements. This approach pays participating farmers in the Milwaukee River watershed in Wisconsin and Saginaw Bay watershed in Michigan, according to the quantified environmental outcomes of their conservation activities.

Catalyzing impact investment in sustainable agriculture: In partnership with Farmland LP and Earth Economics, Delta is developing tools for quantifying, monitoring and reporting on the social and ecological impacts of farm-scale sustainable management practices, evaluating financial impacts of enhanced ecosystem services to the asset value, and catalyzing private investment.



About Delta Institute

Delta Institute is a nonprofit organization that builds a more resilient Great Lakes environment and economy through sustainable solutions.

For more information on how you can work with us, visit us online at www.delta-institute.org or contact Ryan Smith, rsmith@delta-institute.org, 312-651-0313.

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Program Design & Research

Through innovative research and program design, we create data-driven solutions and models for impact to improve water and environmental quality. The Delta Nitrogen Credit Program was recognized with a 2014 Innovation Award by the American Carbon Registry.

Tools & Implementation

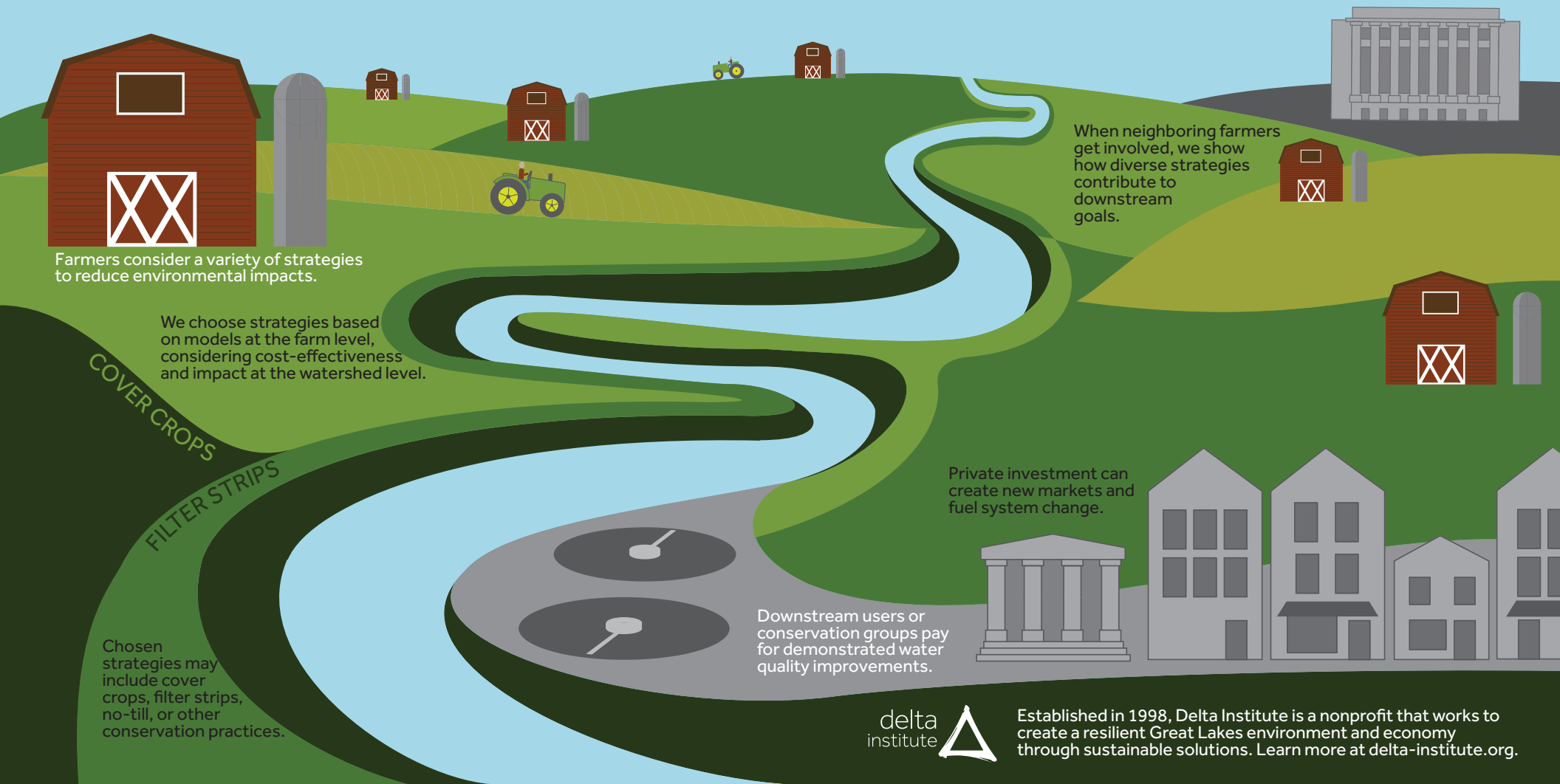
We link new tools, ideas, and strategies to inform on-the-ground implementation. In partnership with Great Lakes Protection Fund, Winrock International, and Sand County Foundation, we're testing a pay-for-performance approach to agricultural conservation in Wisconsin's Milwaukee River Watershed.

Scaling & Replicating

We create new programs and tools that can be shared with peers and partners, scaled, and replicated to achieve landscape-level change. We're working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy to replicate its performance-based conservation approach in Michigan's Saginaw Bay watershed to reduce non-point source pollution.

Policy & Systems Change

Our research and program models influence positive change at the federal policy and system level. In 2015, USDA Secretary Vilsack called Delta's Nitrogen Credit Program "a model for a new kind of nutrient management program throughout the Corn Belt - one that brings farmers, research institutions, nonprofits, government and business together."



Farmers consider a variety of strategies to reduce environmental impacts.

We choose strategies based on models at the farm level, considering cost-effectiveness and impact at the watershed level.

COVER CROPS
FILTER STRIPS

Chosen strategies may include cover crops, filter strips, no-till, or other conservation practices.

When neighboring farmers get involved, we show how diverse strategies contribute to downstream goals.

Private investment can create new markets and fuel system change.

Downstream users or conservation groups pay for demonstrated water quality improvements.