



Department of  
Agriculture

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ODA RELEASES NEW NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

*Ohio Applicator Forecast and Agricultural Stewardship Verification Program will help all Ohioans work to improve water quality*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (May 18, 2017) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) has introduced two new nutrient management tools. The Ohio Applicator Forecast is a new online tool designed to help nutrient applicators identify times when the potential nutrient loss from a fertilizer or manure application is low. The Ohio Agricultural Stewardship Verification Program is a pilot certification for farmers who protect farmland and natural resources by implementing best management practices on their farms. ODA announced these developments at an event at Drewes Farms in Custar, Ohio on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

“ODA firmly believes science and technology must be at the forefront of all water quality issues and these new and innovative tools are impactful steps that will merge the ideas of precision farming and precision conservation,” said ODA Director David T. Daniels. “The agricultural community continues to take the necessary steps to maintain agricultural productivity, while protecting our natural resources and reducing nutrient runoff to improve water quality in Lake Erie and surrounding waterways.”

The Ohio Applicator Forecast takes data from the National Weather Service, predicting potential for runoff to occur in a given area. The forecast takes snow accumulation and melt, soil moisture content and forecast precipitation and temperatures into account, giving farmers substantial information when they are making nutrient application decisions.

“The National Weather Service is excited to work with Ohio in their efforts to help farmers reduce nutrient runoff across the Midwest,” said Brian Astifan, the Development and Operations Hydrologist with the National Weather Service Ohio River Forecast Center in Wilmington, Ohio. “We believe Ohio’s partnership with several federal agencies and educational institutions to develop this decision-support tool will benefit farmers and ultimately work towards improving Ohio’s water quality.”

The Ohio Agricultural Stewardship Verification Program will certify farmers in targeted watersheds in Henry and Wood counties who apply and meet criteria developed by ODA’s Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Criteria for the certification include developed nutrient management plans, accurate soil tests and documented best management practices, among others. The program will begin as a pilot with an intention to expand the program to all of Ohio.

“We are excited to be one of the first farms in Ohio to prove our commitment to improving water quality through this verification program,” said Tyler Drewes of Drewes Farms. “Farming as many acres as we do in the Western Lake Erie Basin region, we know we play a very important role in the long-term improvement of the lake’s water quality. We want to be part of the solution and this program will help farmers toward that goal.”



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ODA will continue to reach out to farmers and applicators in the coming months to make them aware of these new and beneficial tools. Those interested in applying for the Agricultural Stewardship Verification Program can visit their local Soil and Water Conservation District office to find out how to become involved. For the Ohio Applicator Forecast, individuals can visit <http://agri.ohio.gov/divs/plant/OhioApplicatorForecast/oaf.aspx>.

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