Science Societies

# States act on nutrient management with CCA input

By Rachel K. Owen

August 25, 2022




*Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Secretary Randy Romanski spoke to local farmers and water advocates in celebration of Wisconsin Act 223 at Feltz Family Farms. Rachel Owen, Science Policy Manager for ASA, CSSA, SSSA, and ICCA, was in attendance.*

For decades, state governments across the country have been working alongside producers to implement nutrient management strategies to protect surface and groundwater resources. At the federal level, the USEPA has the authority to regulate some on-farm activities in certain settings, and nutrient management plans may also be required by some conservation programs at the USDA. However, by in large, most government-led nutrient management efforts are done by state and local authorities. Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs) have an important role to play in informing these state policies while they are being developed and in helping farmers to implement the state-led nutrient management strategies.

State governments and local authorities have the jurisdiction to make any laws and regulations that are not specifically designated to the federal government. Many of the laws that impact you every day, such as traffic speeds, school district guidelines, and sales taxes, are authorized and implemented by your state, county, or town. The same is true for agricultural production—states decide how much grain a semi can haul, how much manure can be applied to your field, and in some cases, when and where you are allowed to apply fertilizers and pesticides. During the 2021–2022 legislative session, many states across the country took up bills to support soil health, conservation practices, and nutrient stewardship. In Florida and Wisconsin, crop advisers played a big role in these conversations.

## CCAs with 4R Specialty to Advise on Florida Nutrient Application Rates

In late 2021, lawmakers in Florida's state legislature filed **S.B. 1000** aimed at updating guidelines for nutrient application rates in the state. Specifically, the bill allowed for citrus producers to tailor their recommended nitrogen and phosphorus application rates if working with a "certified professional." Also included in the bill was language to define a "certified professional" as a "Certified Crop Adviser with the 4R Nutrient

Management Specialty (4R NMS)." Mary Hartney and the Florida CCA board worked alongside lawmakers to make this happen, and the International Certified Crop Adviser leadership team submitted **a letter in support** of the bill. Ultimately, the bill passed and was signed by the governor this spring, providing a statutory opportunity for CCAs to engage with producers in their state.

## Wisconsin CCAs Have New Tools to Share with Producers

A bipartisan group of Wisconsin lawmakers have come together over the past several years to identify programs and strategies to help farmers adopt conservation practices and protect drinking water quality. This year, the state legislature passed **Wisconsin Act 223**, which established a nitrogen optimization pilot program and authorized crop insurance premium rebates for cover crops. Wisconsin crop advisers spoke out in support of the legislation and will provide key guidance to farmers this fall when the programs begin to be implemented.

At an event in July to celebrate the passing of Wisconsin Act 223, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski spoke in support of the bill. "Farmers across Wisconsin understand that our water and agricultural land are our strength and implement practices to maximize soil and water health. The DATCP team will work with producers and stakeholders to implement the nitrogen optimization pilot program."

## Opportunities for Engagement

While providing input to government decisions may seem daunting, state and local lawmakers tend to be very accessible and open to discussing issues with their constituents and key stakeholders. Certified Crop Advisers can reach out now and start to build relationships before the 2023 legislative sessions begin. Call up your state representative and senator. Ask them to visit with your farmers. Share your

experiences helping farmers to implement programs. Lawmakers and CCAs can come together to make great policies, particularly to address nutrient stewardship in your state.

**More news & perspectives**

**Back to issue**

**Back to home**

---

*Text © . The authors. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Except where otherwise noted, images are subject to copyright. Any reuse without express permission from the copyright owner is prohibited.*