

New Funding to Help Farmers Protect Water Quality

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Governor, DATCP announce \$1.6 million for commercial nitrogen optimization and \$800,000 for the cover crop insurance premium rebate program.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), and State Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point), this week celebrated the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) releasing \$1.6 million in funding for the commercial nitrogen optimization pilot program and \$800,000 for the cover crop insurance premium rebate program earlier this week.



“Our farmers have been the backbone of our economy for generations, and they’ve been leaders in our conservation efforts because they know firsthand the value of our land and water because our farmers and producers depend on it every day for their success,” said Gov. Evers. “Thanks to the bipartisan work of so many, these two programs will enable farmers to utilize innovative practices to protect water quality while protecting the bottom line of their farms.”

These programs were created under [2021 Wisconsin Act 223](#), legislation co-authored by Rep. Shankland through the Water Quality Task Force and [signed into law](#) by Gov. Evers in April.

“I am thrilled that our new programs to support farmers in reducing nitrate contamination, advancing soil health, and improving water quality have received the necessary funding for implementation,” said Rep. Shankland. “Communities across Wisconsin, including my own in Portage County, have struggled with contaminated water for years. These newly funded

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programs will promote and incentivize preventative measures, strengthen farm resiliency, and provide our farmers with support to enact conservation practices and make meaningful progress towards ensuring everyone has access to safe, clean drinking water. These programs are a testament to the progress and change we can make when we support farmers in their conservation efforts and work together towards a common goal of safe, clean water for all.”

The funding approved this week for the new commercial nitrogen optimization pilot program will enable DATCP to award grants to producer projects that optimize the application of commercial nitrogen, while the cover crop insurance rebate program will assist farmers with rebates of \$5 per acre of a cover crop planted for crop insurance premiums paid on those acres. These two initiatives will work in tandem to further conservation efforts of Wisconsin’s soil and water resources. Now that the funding has been released, the program will be implemented by DATCP.

“Agriculture is one of our state’s greatest assets and, given the right tools, farmers can feed their communities and the world,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “Governor Tony Evers is committed to making sure farmers have the tools available so they can innovate and prosper. The commercial nitrogen optimization pilot and cover crop insurance premium rebate programs are critical steps in the right direction for Wisconsin agriculture. The action by the Joint Committee on Finance to release funds for these initiatives paves the way for DATCP to put those funds to good use.”