



PHOSPHORUS LOAD-REDUCTION STIMULUS PROGRAM: PLUS-UP

BACKGROUND

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) is leading a new effort to pilot a phosphorus load reduction market in the Western Lake Erie Basin (Maumee, Sandusky, and Cedar-Portage watersheds, see map). Growers within the indicated watersheds are now being sought to participate in this pilot market.

The “Phosphorus Load-Reduction Stimulation Program” (PLUS-UP) payments now being offered to growers are intended to help offset their costs for the use of in-field practices—cover crops and no-till—which yield quantifiable reductions in the amount of dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) delivered to the adjacent surface water bodies that drain to Lake Erie.

CTIC’s partner in the program, Heidelberg University, will quantify the reductions for each participating grower using the Nutrient Tracking Tool (NTT) model and report this to CTIC. CTIC will then provide cash payments to the grower using funds collected from purchasers of these credits. In the pilot program, Bayer CropScience is purchasing credits at a rate of \$100 per pound of DRP. DRP runoff in the basin averages 0.3 pounds per acre; reductions are expected to be in the range of 0.05 to 0.1 pounds per acre. Based on those estimates, payments for practices in the PLUS-UP pilot program will be \$5 per acre for cover crops, \$3 per acre for no-till, or \$10 for both practices employed together.



PROGRAM FEATURES

- For this pilot, PLUS-UP payments can be made to any grower who acts to reduce DRP loss relative to a baseline of no action, regardless of their participation in any other program, and do not require EQIP eligibility.
- The grower agrees to make field management practice data available to Heidelberg University staff to run the NTT model. These data will be held confidential by Heidelberg and will not be released to any other parties, including CTIC, without the prior informed consent of the grower.
- This PLUS-UP pilot is a one-year program. We are seeking funding for future years, but no long-term commitment is necessary.
- Initial sign-ups will concentrate on the Shallow Run watershed in the Blanchard River watershed, which is extensively monitored by Heidelberg University, but farmers elsewhere within the Western Lake Erie Basin are eligible.

Growers who are potentially interested in receiving PLUS-UP payments can express their interest by completing the form on the CTIC website. Anyone with questions about the program are asked to contact CTIC’s PLUS-UP Program Director: **Hans Kok** at kok@ctic.org or **208-596-2618**



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