

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1179

Recognizing and promoting the role of demonstration farm networks in expanding the adoption of conservation farming practices that improve the health of watersheds and agricultural lands.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 15, 2022

Mr. GALLAGHER (for himself and Mr. KIND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and promoting the role of demonstration farm networks in expanding the adoption of conservation farming practices that improve the health of watersheds and agricultural lands.

Whereas one-third of the Nation's topsoil and more than 38 percent of topsoil within the Nation's Corn Belt have eroded into lakes, rivers, and streams;

Whereas excessive amounts of phosphorus and other nutrients found in the topsoil that leave the rural landscape and enter lakes, rivers, and streams fuel algal blooms and increase the potential for harmful algal blooms, hypoxia, cyanobacteria, and impaired waters;

Whereas conservation farming practices of reduced tillage, cover crops, managed grazing, and manure management allow for soils to build organic matter, which stabilizes soils and minimizes sediment loss through the erosive forces of wind and water;

Whereas conservation farming practices of cover crops, low-disturbance manure application, and buffer strips reduce runoff of sediment, phosphorus, and nutrients into waterways;

Whereas conservation farming practices of reduced tillage, cover crops, and planting into green boost the growth of soil organic matter and reduce compaction, fostering improved infiltration during a heavy rain event and resilience during a drought;

Whereas conservation farming practices support long-term sustainability for soil health and economic sustainability for producers through reduced inputs on fields;

Whereas peer-to-peer education about conservation farming practices and cost shares increases producer adoption and lessens financial risks when transitioning from conventional to conservation farming practices;

Whereas demonstration farm networks ensure growers have opportunity and resources for peer-to-peer education about conservation farming practices;

Whereas demonstration farm networks are designed to showcase and demonstrate leading-edge conservation practices that improve water quality by preventing sediment, phosphorus, and nutrients from entering freshwater sources;

Whereas the demonstration farm networks' partnerships consist of agricultural producers, agronomists, county land and water conservation staff, Department of Agriculture

and Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, and in some networks, representatives from academia and nonprofits;

Whereas such partnerships assist and enable producers to achieve success when implementing new conservation farming practices;

Whereas the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative enabled the formation of the first demonstration farm network and continues to support demonstration farm networks across the country;

Whereas the first demonstration farm network was launched in 2013 through an agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service, Brown County, Wisconsin, and 4 producers in the Lower Fox River Watershed of northeast Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District;

Whereas the number of demonstration farm networks in Wisconsin has grown to 6 networks of 33 farms spanning 16 counties, including—

(1) the Lower Fox Watershed Demonstration Farms Network, including—

- (A) Brickstead Dairy;
- (B) VandeWettering Farms;
- (C) Greg Nettekoven;
- (D) Neighborhood Dairy;
- (E) VanWychen Farms;
- (F) Larry Dufek of Dairyland Farms; and
- (G) New Horizons Dairy;

(2) the Door-Kewaunee Watershed Demonstration Farm Network, including—

- (A) Brey Cycle Farms;
- (B) Kinnard Farms;

- (C) Augustian Farms; and
- (D) Deer Run Dairy;
- (3) the Between the Lakes Demonstration Farm Network, including—
 - (A) Dallman’s East River Dairy;
 - (B) Nick Kleiber Grain Farm;
 - (C) Libertyland Farms; and
 - (D) Dale Theel;
- (4) the Upper Fox-Wolf River Demonstration Farm Network, including—
 - (A) Tauchen Harmony Valley Inc.;
 - (B) Dan Boerst;
 - (C) Erickson’s Dairy Farm;
 - (D) Hintz Farms;
 - (E) Albright Brothers;
 - (F) Gehrke Family Farms;
 - (G) Deta J Farms;
 - (H) Piney Lawn Acres;
 - (I) Pollack Vu Farm; and
 - (J) Zeb Zuehls;
- (5) the Green Bay West Shore Demonstration Farm Network, including—
 - (A) Finger Family Farm;
 - (B) Mahoney Farms;
 - (C) Brown Star Farm; and
 - (D) Wagner Farms; and
- (6) the Ozaukee Demonstration Farm Network, including—
 - (A) Lapinski Farms;
 - (B) Melichar Broad Acres;
 - (C) Redline Dairy Farm; and
 - (D) Lake Breeze Farms;

Whereas the growth and success of demonstration farm networks in Wisconsin have led the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service to replicate the model in other States, including—

(1) New York, with the Genesee River Demonstration Farms Network (established pursuant to an agreement between the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service and American Farmland Trust);

(2) Pennsylvania, with the Upper Genesee River Demonstration Farms Network (established pursuant to an agreement between the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service and Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development Council); and

(3) Ohio, with the Blanchard River Demonstration Farms Network (established pursuant to an agreement between the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service and Ohio Farm Bureau);

Whereas the growth and success of the demonstration farm networks have laid the groundwork for the formation of producer-led watershed groups and conservation farming initiatives in Wisconsin, such as Save the Bay, that promote and support education on conservation farming practices; and

Whereas conservation farming best management practices shared among demonstration farm networks, producer-led groups, and initiatives like Save the Bay have led to exponential growth of conservation farming practices across watersheds, resulting in the protection and improvement of freshwater sources and soil quality: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the support that the Great Lakes
3 Restoration Initiative provides to demonstration
4 farm networks and its subsequent contributions to
5 improving water quality and soil health;

6 (2) encourages and applauds the efforts and
7 commitment of partners involved in demonstration
8 farm networks; and

9 (3) promotes the role of demonstration farm
10 networks in expanding the adoption of conservation
11 farming practices that improve the health of water-
12 sheds and agricultural lands.

○