

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **OHIO AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT REPORT:** Upper Scioto Watershed

The Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative (OACI) is a partnership between agriculture, conservation, environmental and research communities to recognize farmers for their dedication to advancing methods that improve water quality in Ohio and increasing the number of best management practices (BMPs) being implemented on farms.

2023 HUC8 Upper Scioto Watershed Assessment

In 2023, OACI conducted a randomized sampling of crop production fields within the HUC8 Upper Scioto Watershed using a statistical approach to determine what practices are being used by farmers within this watershed to manage water and nutrients in crop year 2022. A trained Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) employee interviewed the landowner or farm manager for each field surveyed. The Ohio State University and the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology at lowa State University helped in designing the sampling strategy and data analysis.

Key Survey Results

Key findings from the survey included the following:



78% of the fields were no-tilled, minimally-tilled

64% of the fields had phosphorus (P) applied using variable-rate technology (VRT);

24% of the fields had nitrogen (N) applied using VRT.

384 crop

Commercial fertilizer nutrient source (75%)

60% of the farmland assessed was owned by the farmer and

> 40% was in a lease.

farmer for three years or longer.

92% of the fields were

managed by the

Approximately 62% of the

fields were currently enrolled in a cost share conservation both state and federal level programs.

The average size of fields surveyed was **38.9 ACRES.** (22%).

Farmers utilized fertilizer retailers and crop consultants for

85% of the fields.

Conclusion

The assessment results establish a baseline of adoption for various farming practices in the Upper Scioto Watershed, allowing for a more targeted approach to increase BMPs adoption. OACI will continue to assess more watersheds in Ohio, revisiting previously assessed watersheds in a few years to determine levels of change. OACI encourages Ohio's farmers to get involved in the OACI Farmer Certification program, H2Ohio and any other conservation focused program to learn about new practices, share information and become better stewards of the land. For more information, visit OhioACI.org.