

4R Plus Program Message Document

Supporters are encouraged to incorporate this key message and supporting messages into their communication about 4R Plus.

Key message:

- Using precise **4R nutrient stewardship and conservation practices** is critical to building and protecting the **health of my soil** to achieve a **more productive crop now and in the future**.

Supporting messages:

- Following the **4R nutrient stewardship practices** means you are optimizing the nutrients that you apply for the crop to maximize its uptake and minimize its loss from the field.
 - Right source. Matches fertilizer type to crop needs.
 - Right rate. Matches amount of fertilizer type to crop needs.
 - Right time. Makes nutrients available when crops need them.
 - Right place. Keeps nutrients where crops can use them.
- The **“Plus”** relates to **in-field and edge-of-field conservation practices** that increase the resiliency of soil and improve water quality. These practices help build up the organic matter and soil organisms, improving the overall health of soil, so it remains productive, even under variable weather conditions.
 - “Plus” practices help retain moisture, soil and nutrients, and reduce erosion and runoff. The end result is healthier soil.
 - Popular in-field/edge-of-field practices include: cover crops, grass waterways, no-till, strip-till, prairie strips and stream buffers. Many other conservation practices also help improve soil health and water quality.

- 4R Plus makes agronomic and economic sense.
 - When you improve soil health, you enhance crop growth and increase soil productivity, which can boost your yield potential and return on investment.
 - ✓ Practices like no-till mean fewer trips across the field
 - ✓ 4R fertilizer practices increase nutrient uptake and reduce nutrient losses
 - ✓ Soils with better structure hold more water and nutrients
 - ✓ Cover crops reduce erosion and increase organic matter
 - ✓ Healthy soils allow crops to better withstand weather extremes
- It will take 4R Plus – a combination of nutrient management and conservation practices – to meet the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS) nonpoint goals of reducing nitrogen and phosphorus loading into Iowa waters by 41 and 29 percent, respectively.
- Implementing 4R Plus practices will help safeguard and improve the health of Iowa soil and water for generations to come.
- Soil health is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans.
- Farmers can increase their soil organic matter in as few as three years with 4R Plus practices.
- Farmers have many state, federal and other financial and technical assistance programs available for implementing 4R Plus practices. Check with your county Soil and Water Conservation District office for information on these programs.