

FARMER STORY: UPPER MACOUPIN CREEK WATERSHED

Stewardship Success

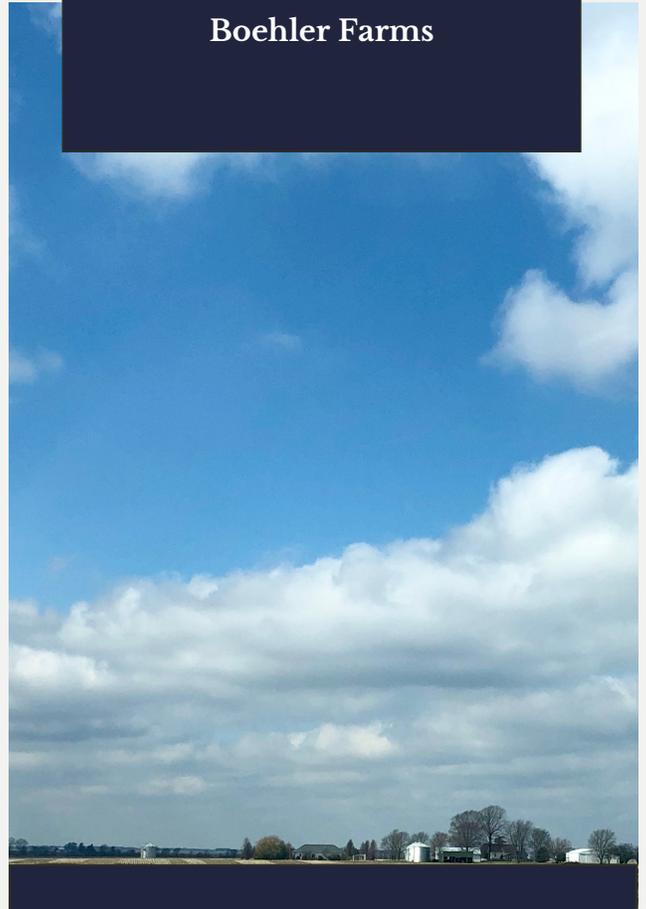
ILLINOIS NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION STRATEGY

Father and son, Joe and Jason Boehler, farm corn and soybeans in Macoupin County, Illinois. Most of their fields lay in the Upper Macoupin Creek (UMC) Watershed, a 137,700-acre watershed that contributes significantly to Illinois's nutrient loading problem. Identified as a top-three watershed for phosphorus losses in the state's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, some impactful soil health practices were needed to reduce nutrient losses and improve water quality. American Farmland Trust (AFT) partnered with local organizations to provide technical and financial assistance in the watershed.



JOE & JASON
BOEHLER

Boehler Farms



PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION

When Jason bought a farm in 2017 that wouldn't grow a corn crop, he experimented with cover crops in 2018 to "help the soil out." The spring of 2019 was the wettest Jason had ever experienced, forcing the Boehlers to no-till every acre. They had such good luck with no-till that it stuck! Now, they no-till soybeans, strip till corn, and utilize cover crops before soybeans every year.

Watershed Partnership



PRACTICE SUCCESSES

Joe saw Jason's initial success with cover crops and decided to implement them on his own acreage. They've both noticed that "wet holes are getting smaller, erosion is not as bad, the ground holds more water, and yields are increasing, too!" Even Jason's problem field is almost yielding its full potential based on soil type and nearby farms. Plus, we estimate that the Boehlers are saving 346 pounds of phosphorus, 109 pounds of nitrogen, and 87 tons of sediment from leaving their fields and entering local waterways annually.

AFT'S PRESENCE

The Boehlers benefitted from financial and technical assistance available through the UMC project. EQIP and MRBI programs provided cost-share for no-till and structural practices on over 300 of Joe and Jason's acres. Financial support through federal and state programs helps offset initial risks and aids farmers through the learning curve.

INVOLVEMENT

Jason, a retailer in the watershed, shared his knowledge at UMC field days. Joe attended winter meetings and field days alike to further his learning. Both mentioned that events like field days helped them to learn what others are trying to do, "so you can work out what to do on your own operation."



American Farmland Trust

For over 40 years, the mission of American Farmland Trust has been to protect farmland, promote sound farming practices, and keep farmers on the land. AFT is a leader in working side-by-side with farmers and landowners to accelerate adoption of conservation practices.

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT:

www.farmland.org