



Advocating for Ohio agribusinesses by creating a sustainable business climate through collaborative policy leadership, continuous education and effective communication.

**Ohio House of Representatives
Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources**

**Testimony by Chris Henney, President and CEO
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
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Good afternoon Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Ohio House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources.

I am Chris Henney, president and CEO for the Ohio AgriBusiness Association. I'm here today to support OSU's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Dean, Cathann Kress, and the incredible work done by CFAES faculty, researchers, Extension personnel and others in the college. But first, I'd like to provide a bit more background on OABA. Our membership includes the manufacturers and suppliers of fertilizer and plant protection materials, the grain warehousing and marketing industry, the feed and seed industry, as well as companies providing equipment, financing, insurance, consulting, and other products and services for Ohio's number one industry, agriculture. In other words, we represent the companies that provide services and supplies to Ohio's farmers.

I'm proud of OABA's reputation as a collaborator and partner. One of our strongest and oldest partnerships is with the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University and OSU Extension. I'd like to take a few minutes this afternoon to share my perspective on the importance of their work and a couple examples of the impactful projects resulting from our public/private partnerships.

Ohio's agricultural community has been working for many years now on reducing nutrient loss and improving our state's water quality, with special attention on one of our crown jewels; Lake Erie. As I mentioned before, OABA represents the fertilizer industry. Our companies, often referred to as agricultural retailers, provide multiple services to farmers. These services, aligned with the 4R Nutrient Stewardship principles, include soil sampling, fertility analysis and nutrient recommendations. Ag retailers also sell and, in some cases, apply the fertilizer for their farmer customers, often using precision application technologies.

Whenever I can share the good work Ohio agriculture is doing regarding nutrient management, I include the need for ongoing research. Don't get me wrong, we need action to improve Lake



Erie and Ohio's other water resources. But as conditions evolve there must be continued research to identify the impact of new and evolving agricultural practices. OSU-CFAES, our trusted land grant partner, is best positioned to lead that work. Here are a couple examples:

OABA is currently partnering on a USDA funded project, led by CFAES faculty Dr. Jay Martin. This project brings \$5 million dollars to Ohio and establishes a public – private partnership to identify farm fields in northwest Ohio with high phosphorus loss risk profiles and, subsequently, develop conservation plans that have the greatest potential to reduce phosphorus losses in a cost effective and predictable way.

Establishing a public – private partnership allows the private entities to maintain proprietary data while assisting the public entities in identifying farm fields at a higher risk for nutrient loss, particularly phosphorus. The private entities – farmers and their ag retailers – best know their field characteristics and can facilitate the identification of high phosphorus loss risk profiles and implementation of conservation plans that are likely to be effective.

The second example I'd like to share is a partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, OSU Extension and OABA. This project provided resources for nutrient management plan development and 4R adoption in the Lake Erie watershed. Under the leadership of Greg LaBarge, an OSU Extension field specialist for agronomic systems, the project leveraged funds to increase the number of individuals qualified to help develop nutrient management plans for farmers. The partnership also provided funding to expand outreach capacity for the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification program for agricultural retailers. This program, developed by OABA, The Nature Conservancy and other partners was established on science-based research provided by OSU-CFAES with field level knowledge and experience provided by OSU Extension.

As you consider and deliberate on the best allocation of the state's revenues, including Gov. DeWine's H2Ohio Fund, it is important to remember the important role OSU-CFAES plays in providing unbiased, science-based research in accordance with its land grant mission. It is also important to note, that the beauty of their mission is that they don't stop at research, but through OSU Extension they are able to apply those research findings to make a real difference in our communities.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our support for the work Dean Kress and her incredible team are doing to support water quality in Ohio. Thank you for your time Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'd be happy to answer any questions.