Water Quality Efforts in the WLEB from a Farm

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What a difference a year makes

- **Crop year 2019**
  - Over 1.5 million acres unplanted. Much of which was in WLEB
    - Less nutrients were applied
    - Weed suppression became an issue, more tillage was used

- **Crop Year 2020**
  - Most typical growing season in recent years
  - Smaller bloom forecast indicates the complexity of the issue
  - Again more tillage
  - Catch up applications of nutrients??
H2Ohio/OACI Participation

- Meetings with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Agriculture Conservation initiative yielded record attendance.
  - People new to conservation efforts
- More than 2,000 farmers signed up in the initial enrollment period
- Sign-up covered more than 43% of cropland in the watershed
- Why successful? Diversity of groups promoting and practices that can be embraced by all types of farming operations.
- Some farmers continued practices, even in the uncertainty of funding
- Farmers are coming back in to sign up for Crop Year 2021 practices
- Efforts will focus on Nutrient Management Planning
  - Payments will be made upon completion of NMP and practice
- Farmers are interested in participating in programs that can confidentially aggregate data
What are farmers thinking?

- Farmers are thankful for a better planting season, but we could use rain.
- Awareness and interest of conservation practices is very high.
- Conservation is becoming more of the conversation among farmers.
- Financial assistance is needed for practices that require a significant capital investment.
- Economic stress on farms continues to increase.