Environmental Initiative builds partnerships to develop collaborative solutions to Minnesota’s environmental problems.
What are we trying to fix?

Three Problems

• Water quality

• Untraceable commodity crop supply chains

• Declining resources for conservation
Problem 1  Water Quality

- 40% of MN waters don’t meet basic standards
- Concentrated in agricultural areas of state
- Nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment major factors

Credit: David Montgomery, Pioneer Press, 2015
Problem 2  Untraceable Supply Chains
Problem 3  Declining Resources
Growing Clean Water Together

• Scalable approach to protecting water quality on agricultural lands

• Cost-effective supply chain sustainability

• Creates a financial incentive for farmers to protect water quality
How it Works: The Offset Approach

Traditional Grower

Corn & Soy Market

Food Company

Field Stewards Grower

Certificate Market

Revenue

Crops

Product

Revenue

Food Product

Revenue
How it Works: Third Party Certified

- Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program
- Whole farm, consistent, fair
- Flexible standard for all types of farming systems
The Process

1. Buyer and Field Stewards agree to acre commitment
2. Field Stewards enrolls acres
3. Buyer pays Field Stewards
4. Field Stewards pays farmers
5. Report provided to buyer
6. Buyer makes claim
The Process: Calculating the Offset

How do you get from food product to commodity crop acres?

Averages are calculated using public data sets and industry standards for feed conversion and processing. Goal is transparency and replicability.
Field Stewards in Practice: 2016

- Offsetting Just BARE chicken
- Enrolling about 5,000 corn/soy acres
- Learning from trying, evaluating, and modifying the system
Stearns County, MN

- Middle Sauk River
- Upper Mississippi River Basin
- Just BARE chicken
Field Stewards in Practice: 2017

- Expansion in central Minnesota
- Add new MN region with additional buyer
- Continued buyer recruitment
- Planning for multi-state expansion
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