Farming’s Footprint in Drinking Water
Remarks by Brett Lorenzen
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Iowa’s Drinking Water: Could Flint Happen Here?
June 17, 2016
Row crops define Iowa’s landscape
Very productive, very vulnerable

What Iowa looks like 4 months of the year.

What Iowa looks like 8 months of the year.
Increasingly vulnerable
Disinfection By Products 2004-2008

EWG Troubled Waters - 2012
Cyanotoxins: Iowa Lake Survey 2006-2009-2010

EWG Troubled Waters - 2012
Great News: Effective and feasible solutions are readily available
USDA - $3 billion to get practices in place

• Plus other federal and state spending
Why not more progress?

• Poor targeting.
  – Popular practices often not the most effective ones.
  – Political imperative for everybody and every county to get a shot at the money.
• Volunteers often not the landowners that most need to improve their operations.
• No accountability.
• FATAL FLAW: Changes in land use and management are not lasting.
Buffer Gain

EWG *Fooling Ourselves*
Buffer Loss

EWG Fooling Ourselves
Waterway Gain

EWG Fooling Ourselves
Waterway Gain

EWG Fooling Ourselves
Losses wipe out gains
Basic standard of care

• Don’t want every farmer to have an EPA or state permit.
• Do want to restrict activities are disproportionately damaging – and for which conventional conservation practices can solve the problem.
• Practices many, if not most, farmers could agree are just bad business and bad for agriculture’s brand.
• Foundation on which voluntary programs and market-based approaches can rest.
EWG top four mandatory standards
Thank you.

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http://www.ewg.org/key-issues/midwest