



Lower Thames
**Precision Phosphorus
Reduction Program**

Lower Thames Valley **Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program**



2026 PROGRAM GUIDE

www.ltvca.ca | agriculture@ltvca.ca | 519-354-7310

Table of Contents

02	-----	Table of Contents
03	-----	Program Overview
04	-----	Region Map
05	-----	Prioritization
06	-----	Participation and Data Sharing
07	-----	Program Eligibility
08	-----	Application Process
09	-----	How to Apply
10	-----	Contact Information
11	-----	Funding Categories
12	-----	Additional Information
13	-----	Cover Crops
15	-----	Crop Planning & Soil Testing
17	-----	Alternative Phosphorus Application
20	-----	Reduced Tillage
22	-----	Erosion Control Structures
24	-----	Buffer Strips
26	-----	Windbreaks
28	-----	Innovative Practices & Projects
29	-----	Additional Reminders
30	-----	Example Map
31	-----	Crop Plan Template Example

Program Overview

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) is pleased to offer the 2026 Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program (PPRP) funded in partnership with the Canada Water Agency.

The PPRP will run through 2028 and aims to provide farmers with the knowledge and tools to reduce the loss of phosphorus to the natural environment, while recognizing the vital role it plays to crop quality and yield.

The 2026 program offers financial incentives and cost-share opportunities in eight categories of best management practices (BMPs). LTVCA aims to distribute funds across the region, expanding BMP project impact, while reaching the maximum number of acres and farm businesses.

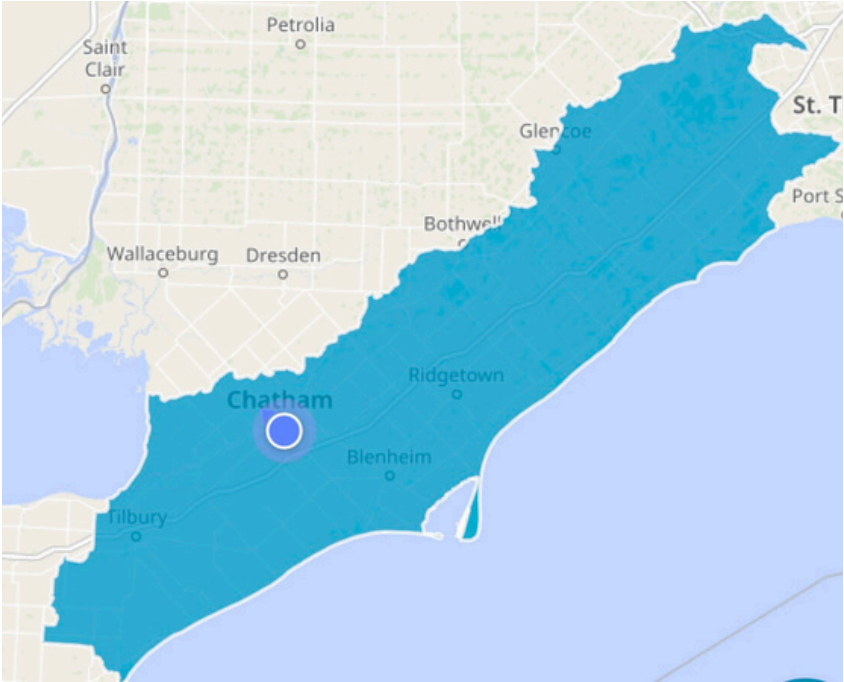


Please be advised that this guidebook, as of April 1, 2026, represents the current version.

All monetary incentives, program details and guidelines as outlined in this document are subject to change without notice to the applicant, as per the authority or funder discretion.

Region Map

Projects must be located within the Lower Thames Valley region to be eligible to apply for funding through the Lower Thames Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program.



Are you located in the Lower Thames Valley? Visit the link below to see if your property falls within the LTVCA boundary.



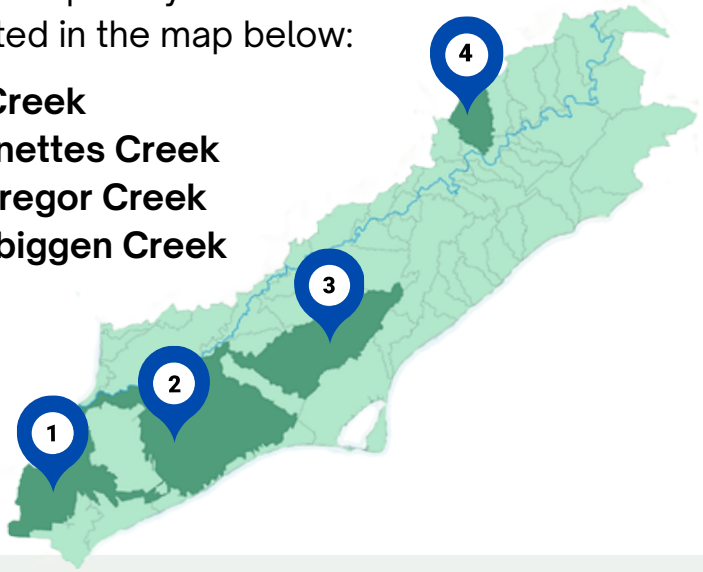
bit.ly/FindACA

Prioritization

All projects within the LTVCA watershed are eligible. To support Canada’s commitments under the Canada–U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, a targeted approach has been developed to achieve nutrient reductions in Lake Erie. **Priority will be given to the following projects:**

- Areas vulnerable to soil loss
- Areas with high soil phosphorus
- First time adopters of a BMP
- Designated priority subwatersheds highlighted in the map below:

- 1. Big Creek**
- 2. Jeannettes Creek**
- 3. McGregor Creek**
- 4. Newbiggen Creek**



Projects outside of a priority area and those who are implementing a reoccurring practice are welcome to apply. Depending on funding availability, these applications may be waitlisted.

Participation & Data Sharing

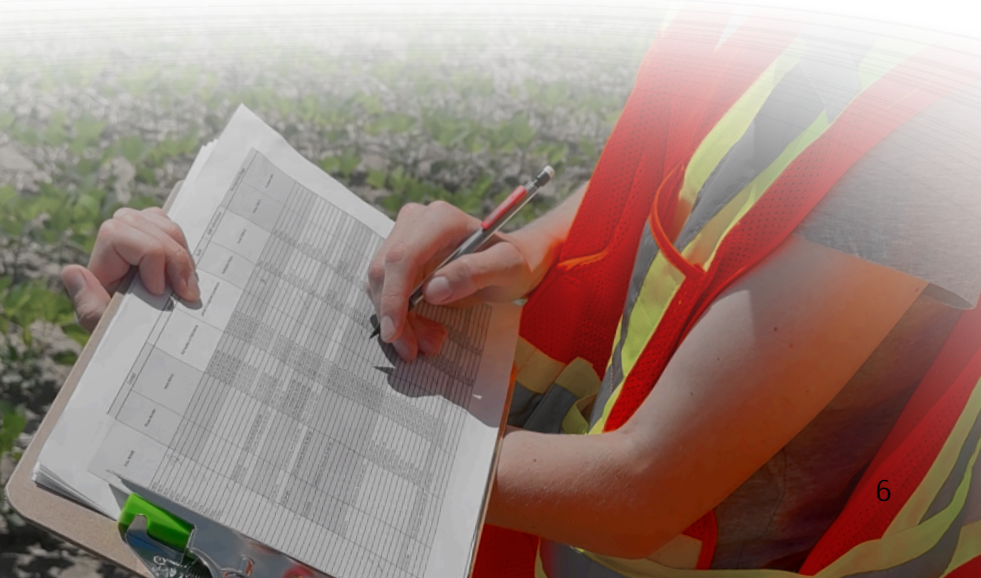
Participating farmers must be willing to provide information on their general crop production systems (crop rotation, tillage, fertility, etc.).

By applying, you consent to LTVCA:

- Collecting, managing, and sharing project cost and crop management data with public and government partners to support watershed environmental goals.
- Data will only be shared in aggregate form, without business or personal identifiers.

By participating, you acknowledge that LTVCA may:

- Collect photos and videos for social media or print use.
- You also agree to project inspections during normal business hours with reasonable notice.



Program Eligibility

- 1 Projects must be located in the LTVCA watershed and protect or improve water quality by reducing phosphorus transport to surface water.
- 2 **Projects must be implemented on property:**
 - Used for agricultural purposes.
 - Possess a risk of nutrient transport to a watercourse.
 - Land impacted by the effects of agriculture.
- 3 **Applicant must be:**
 - A resident of Ontario.
 - A registered owner of property in the LTVCA watershed or a tenant farmer using rented land for agricultural purposes.
- 4 Projects must meet all legal requirements including, but not limited to, local municipal bylaws and Provincial Acts.
- 5 To be eligible for project funding, projects must be completed and invoices must be dated between April 1, 2026 – March 01, 2027.

Application Process

Please review the outline below to understand the approval process for all submitted project applications.

Step 1: Review PPRP program guidelines.

Step 2: Submit an application.

Step 3: LTVCA staff will review your application and determine approval status. Applicants will be notified via email.

Step 4: Accepted projects will receive a Pre-Approval Letter stating your project can move forward.

Step 5: Implement your project.

Step 6: Submit required documentation by the category deadline date as outlined in audit requirements.

Step 7: The LTVCA will review project documents and/or conduct an onsite inspection.

Step 8: A Final Approval Letter will be issued after all required documentation is verified and/or ensuring site audit requirements are met.

Step 9: Payment is issued.

How to Apply?

1

To obtain an application form:

- **Online:** Visit www.ltvca.ca and navigate to the Agriculture Program page. Then, download a PDF copy.
- **Email:** Contact agriculture@ltvca.ca and LTVCA staff will provide you with a copy.

2

Complete the application form and attach all requested documents.

3

Submit application(s) within the required timeframe(s):

- **by mail or in person to LTVCA:**
100 Thames Street
Chatham, ON, N7L 2Y8
- **online to:**
agriculture@ltvca.ca



Contact Us

LTVCA staff are available to guide you through the funding program, application process and to help decide what best management practices can benefit your property.



Andrew Mickle

Ag. Stewardship Specialist
andrew.mickle@ltvca.ca
519-264-9684 ext. 342



Leah Ripley

Ag. Administrative Assistant
leah.ripley@ltvca.ca
519-354-7310 ext. 241



Project Categories

\$/Acre Project Incentives	
Project:	Grant Rates:
1. Cover Crops	\$30/acre: Overwintering \$15/acre: Harvested or grazed Maximum grant: Up to \$20,000
2. Crop Planning & Soil Testing	\$15/acre Maximum grant: Up to \$10,000
3. Alternative Phosphorus	\$20/acre Maximum grant: Up to \$10,000
4. Reduced Tillage	\$20/acre: No-Till planting of corn or soybeans \$20/acre: Fall strip-till of crop residue Maximum grant: Up to \$10,000
Cost-Share Projects	
5. Erosion Control Structures	Cost-share rate: 80% up to \$20,000 <i>Minimum 20% landowner contribution required.</i>
6. Buffer Strip	Cost-share rate: Up to 90% of \$8,000
7. Windbreaks	Cost-share rate: Up to 90% of \$8,000
8. Innovative Practices & Projects	Cost-share rate: 80% of project costs Maximum grant: Up to \$5,000

Additional Category Details

Applicants are permitted to apply to multiple categories on a single field. Category rates may vary.

Categories 1-4: Per Acre Incentives

- **Single Category Application:** The maximum amount a farm business can receive is outlined per category.
- **Applying to Multiple Categories:** A maximum combined amount a farm business can receive annually across categories 1-4 is \$20,000.

Categories 5-8: Cost-Share Projects

- Maximum cost-share funding for BMP categories 5-8 is outlined per category.

Additional Program Details:

- Funding can be stacked with other programs, as long as the other programs allow for stacking. Applicants must inform LTVCA of other funding sources.
- Cost-share funding will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.
- Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. If practices are planned for later in the season, applicants can apply now with intended acreage.

Cover Crops

Reducing soil erosion potential and the loss of phosphorus into waterways by maintaining ground cover during the non-growing season.

Applications Accepted:

- April 1, 2026 - until funds are fully allocated.

Incentive Rates:

\$15/acre: Harvested/Grazed Cover Crops

\$30/acre: Overwintering

Max: \$20,000

Requirements:

- Cover crop must provide adequate cover to the field for the non-growing season - 60% residue requirement.
- Only cover crops planted in 2026 and left over the winter are eligible.



1. The maximum funding available per farm business is \$20,000. Applicants are encouraged to indicate all eligible cover crop fields in their application. Should additional funding become available throughout the year, priority will be given to cover crop practices.
2. It is the responsibility of the applicant to communicate any practice updates to LTVCA prior to field inspections to remain eligible for category incentives.

Eligible Practices:

- Cover crops interseeded/overseeded into annual crop or seeded following the harvest of annual crop.
- Single or multispecies.
- Fall burndown of cover crops is discouraged but acceptable if adequate residue criteria is met in spring.

Ineligible Practices:

- Fall tillage is prohibited.
- Harvested cereal crops are not eligible.
- Practices from past seasons or future years will not be considered.

Audit Process:

- 1 Fields will be subject to a site visit by LTVCA staff prior to March 15, 2027 to ensure 60% residue cover and confirm species.
 - On a case-by-case basis, exceptions to the 60% requirement may be granted where cover crops are a new practice or where establishment of a late season cover crop was impacted by weather.
- 2 Fields may be subject to photography or videography from land based and/or aerial platforms.
- 3 At the time of site visit a soil test may be taken by LTVCA staff to catalogue regional soil health parameters.

Crop Planning & Soil Testing

The goal of this practice is to apply a 4R approach with the right rate, source, timing and placement of soil fertility to better manage crop input applications.

Applications Accepted:

April 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Incentive Rates:

\$15/Acre

Up to \$10,000

Eligible Practices:

- 3 Year Crop Plan with 2.5 Acre Grid Sampling.
- 3 Year Crop Plan with 2.5 Acre Zone Sampling.
- 3 Year Crop Plan with Soil Optix Sampling.

Requirements:

1. Soil sampling program:

- Minimum one sample per 2.5 acres using a site specific (grid) or smart zone approach.

OR

- Soil Optix based sampling.

2. Completion of the LTVCA 3-year crop planning template:

- A crop plan for each field applied for in this category must be prepared by a CCA, agronomist or by the applicant with assistance from LTVCA staff. *See example on Page 31.*

Ineligible Practices:

- Soil sampling for 5+ Acre Grid or Zone Sampling.
- Soil sampling without completion of a 3-year crop plan.

Audit Process:

Documentation Deadline: Grower must submit all documents prior to January 31, 2027.

- 1 PDF copy of soil test/manure results from accredited laboratory taken in 2026 with crop fertility recommendations.
- 2 PDF map of soil test showing field boundaries and locations of samples.
- 3 Copy of 3-year crop plan signed by a qualified professional.

Alternative Phosphorus Application Methods

This strategy helps limit the risk of phosphorus loss to waterways by using proper rates and placement of fertilizer.

Applications Accepted:

April 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Incentive Rates:

\$20/acre

Up to \$10,000

Eligible Practices:

- Variable rate of phosphorus from soil test.
- Variable rate application of phosphorus from crop removal/yield.
- Banded phosphorus at planting.
- Subsurface application of phosphorus through strip-till unit.
- Manure injection.

***Please Note:** Maximum of two alternative practice methods per field.*

Ineligible Practices:

- Applications of nitrogen.
- Phosphorus applications from past seasons or future years.

Requirements:

- **VRA of Phosphorus From Soil Test:** Requires an intensive soil sampling program no older than 3 years with: At least 1 sample per 2.5 acres using site specific grid, smart zone approach or soil optix based sampling.
- **VRA of Phosphorus from Crop Removal/Yield:**
 - PDF map of yield, copy of VRA and crop removal calculation.
- **Banded at Planting:** Minimum 20 lbs/acre of P2O5.
- **Strip-Till:** Minimum 20 lbs/acre of P2O5.
- **Manure Injection:** Minimum 20 lbs/acre of P2O5.
 - Applicable between April 1 – November 1, 2026.



Manure applications are expected to be injected following protocol under the Nutrient Management Act, 2022.

Audit Process:

Documentation Deadline: Grower must submit all documents prior to December 15, 2026.

1 Variable Rate Application: PDF copy of VRA map accompanied by:

- Recent soil test report from accredited laboratory with fertility recommendations.
- PDF map booklet of soil test results showing field boundaries and locations of soil samples.
- **OR** PDF crop removal by yield data.

2 Banded Phosphorus at Planting:

- Date and average rate of phosphorus application at P2O5 lbs/acre.
- Picture of applicator unit in field on day of application.
- Copy of fertilizer receipt with analysis.

3 Strip-Till:

- Date and average rate of phosphorus application at P2O5 lbs/acre.
- Copy of fertilizer receipt with analysis.
- Picture of applicator unit in field on day of application.

4 Manure Injection:

- Copy of laboratory analysis and rate of application.
- Picture of applicator unit in field on day of application.

Reduced Tillage

Reduced tillage manages soil and surface residues to minimize the danger of erosion and nutrient runoff into watercourses.

Applications Accepted:

April 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Financial Incentives:

\$20/acre: No-Till Planting of Corn or Soybeans

\$20/acre: Fall Strip-Till of Crop Residue

Up to \$10,000

Eligible Practices:

- **No-Till:** Planting of corn or soybeans.
- **Fall Strip-Till:** Crop residue strip-tilled in the fall.

Ineligible Practices:

- Fall use of disk rippers or chisel plows.
- Reduced tillage practices other than no-till equipment and strip-till equipment. Vertical tillage is not eligible.
- No-till planting of winter wheat, other cereals or forages.
- Tillage practices from past seasons or future years will not be considered.

Audit Process:

Documentation Deadline: *Grower must submit all documents prior to December 15, 2026*

- 1 Picture of no-till unit in field on day of planting.
- 2 Picture of strip-till unit and strips in the field on the day of tillage.
- 3 Fields may be subject to site visit by LTVCA staff.



It is best to apply as soon as possible. If you plan to conduct fall strip-tillage, you may submit your application now using the intended acreage.

Erosion Control Structures

Reduce phosphorus runoff and soil erosion potential through professional design and construction.

Applications Accepted:

April 1, 2026 - November 1, 2026

Cost Share Rate:

80% up to \$20,000

- Minimum of 20% landowner contribution required.

Eligible Projects:

- Grassed waterways
- Rock chutes
- Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCoB)
- Drop structures
- Streambank stabilization
- Low level stream crossing for livestock & equipment.

Requirements:

- Projects must be constructed to the standards specified in the *OMAFRA Pub. 832 Agricultural Erosion Control Structures*.
- Projects must be designed and constructed by a qualified erosion control contractor. (LTVCA can assist with the design).
- Find a list of qualified contractors here: www.bit.ly/erosioncontractors

Eligible Costs:

- Professional services and consulting fees.
- Contracted labour costs.
- Purchase of materials for eligible projects.

Ineligible Costs:

- A project that is a legal or legislative requirement.
- New tile drainage that is not part of the project.
- Permits and fees.
- Costs associated with developing engineer reports for municipal drainage projects.
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents or the applicant's business are not eligible unless approved by the LTVCA prior to any work starting.

Important Notes:

- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies prior to construction. Any work done on municipal drains requires prior approval from the municipality.
- All collected water must be taken to a sufficient, legal outlet.
- If any contaminated materials are taken off-site an approved, MOE licensed hauler must be used and materials must be taken to an approved landfill.
- Design by professional engineers may be advisable on complex and/or large projects.

Audit Process:

- 1 Site will be subject to pre-construction consultation and post-construction confirmation of completion by LTVCA staff.
- 2 Receipts for materials, consulting, design and construction must be submitted by December 01, 2026.

Buffer Strip

Buffers can safeguard watercourses from runoff by establishing permanent strips of vegetation in riparian zones, serving as a natural filter to stabilize streambanks.

Accepting Applications:

April 1, 2026 - November 1, 2026

Cost Share Rate:

Up to 90% of \$8,000

Eligible Projects:

- Buffer strips along watercourses and wetlands adjacent to either pasture or cropped land.
- Permanent retirement of floodplain.
- Permanent retirement of steeply sloped and/or erosion-prone lands.

Requirements:

- A minimum buffer width of three meters is required to be considered for funding in this category.
- Applicants are responsible for site preparation and maintenance.

Eligible Costs:

- Professional services and consulting fees.
- Purchase of native seed or shrubs.
- Contracted labour and planting costs.

Audit Process:

- 1** The project site is subject to pre-construction consultation and post-construction confirmation of completion by LTVCA staff.
- 2** Receipts for materials, consulting, design and construction are required by November 1, 2026.

Windbreaks

Planting windbreaks can prevent the effects of harsh winds to reduce soil erosion, crop damage and improve water quality.

Accepting Applications:

April 1, 2026 - November 1, 2026

Cost Share Rate:

Up to 90% of \$8,000

Eligible Projects:

- Field windbreaks to prevent wind erosion.

Requirements:

- **Landowner planting:** Minimum 50+ trees.
- **LTVCA contractor planting:** Minimum 250+ trees .
- Applicant must provide planting location, description of the project, and before and after photos.
- The landowner must review the LTVCA Tree Planting Agreement Form and agree to all terms and conditions to proceed with this project.
- Applicants are responsible for site preparation and maintenance.

Eligible Costs:

- Professional services and consulting fees.
- Purchase of native trees.
- Contracted labour and planting costs.
- Tree protection systems (guards etc.).
- Equipment rentals.

Ineligible Costs:

- Landscaping for aesthetic or privacy purposes.
- Farmstead shelterbelts to protect buildings.
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business are not eligible unless approved by LTVCA prior to any work starting.
- Must not be a legislative or legal requirement.
- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species that are commercially marketable in less than 15 years.
- Invoices not issued in the applicant's name or farm business.

Important Note:

Forestry staff have reached full capacity for Spring 2026 project plantings. LTVCA is currently accepting applications for landowners who intend to purchase trees and undertake the planting of windbreaks themselves. Technical advice from LTVCA staff will be provided.

Landowners interested in having LTVCA complete a windbreak planting can be scheduled for Spring 2027. Please indicate this preference in your application.

Audit Process:

- 1** Project site subject to pre-construction consultation and post-construction confirmation of completion by LTVCA staff.
- 2** Receipts for materials, consulting, design and construction are required by November 1, 2026.

Innovative Practices & Projects

This category is to support the agricultural industry with developing new concepts that may have the potential to reduce the loss of nutrients from the field.

Farmers must submit a brief proposal that describes the project, project cost and how the project will improve soil health and water quality within the Lower Thames Valley region.

Cost Share Rate:

80% of Eligible Project Costs

Up to \$5000

Eligible Projects:

- Farmer developed solutions / projects.
- Infrastructure and development costs.

Ineligible Costs:

- Equipment
- Maintenance costs
- In-kind land value

Additional Reminders

- 1 Projects must meet all guidelines, pass inspection and undergo document review before funds are released.
 - All required documentation must be submitted by the applicable category deadline. Applications that do not include all required documentation by the deadline will be considered incomplete and will not be eligible for funding.
- 2 All projects must be completed by March 01, 2027.
 - If a project can not be completed within the 2026/2027 fiscal year, there is no guarantee funding will be available in the following year.
- 3 All approvals and permits are the responsibility of the applicant.
- 4 Please ensure a map is submitted with your project application. See map example on page 30 and review the required features to include with your submission.

Map Example

Project maps can be hand drawn or digital submissions. Please ensure all maps include the following features:

- A clear outline of the acres the practice is implemented on.
- A field name label.
- A nearby, identifiable street, intersection or landmark.

Map is for example purposes only. Applicant maps may require more or less detail, depending on actual property boundary and landscape features.



Annual Crop Planning - Example Template

Farm Business: AIM Farms
 Field Name: Home Farm

Main Crop: soybean
 Acreage: 48

Year: _____
 Date: _____

	Grower to complete this section				Complete this section with your agronomist										Andrew Mickle	
	Seeding Crop / Cover Crop	Harvest / Termination	Tillage Type(s)	Herbicide / Fungicide	Fertilizer Product(s)	%N	%P	%K	%Ca	%Mg	%Zn	%S	%Mn	%B	Avg. Rate	Application Method
Jan/Feb																
Mar/Apr																
May	Soybean				Potash			60							100 lbs	Broadcast
					MAP	11	52						75 lbs	variable rate		
					Calcitic Lime				31					1.5 t	variable rate	
Jun																
Jul																
					Viatude											
Aug																
Sep	Soybean				MESZ	12	40			1	10			50 lbs	variable rate	
					Potash			60					75 lbs	variable rate		
					Planting Mix	10	15	8	4	2	12		150 lbs	2X2 band		
Oct	Winter Wheat															
Nov																
Dec																



This project was undertaken with the financial support of
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de



Canada
Water Agency

Agence de l'eau
du Canada

