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**For Immediate Release**

**First Agricultural Fertilizer Offset Transaction Rewards Michigan Farmer and Reduces Emissions**

**CHICAGO, Ill. (June 19, 2014)** – Delta Institute CEO Jean Pogge today announced that the first nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions offsets transaction has been completed through the Delta Nitrogen Credit Program, rewarding farmer Myron Ortner for voluntarily reducing nitrogen fertilizer use on a 40-acre field he farms in Reese, Michigan. The transaction demonstrates that through careful adjustments in nitrogen fertilizer application, participating farmers can generate revenue while maintaining crop yields and reducing the harmful impact of nitrous oxide emissions.



*Delta Institute's Ryan Anderson presents a payment to Myron Ortner on his Michigan farm*

“Delta Institute is thrilled to have completed the first-ever nitrous oxide offsets transaction in partnership with The Climate Trust,” said Pogge. “This program works because it combines the latest agricultural research with market forces to provide an incentive for farmers to reduce environmental impacts. By aggregating offsets from multiple fields, we can show how individual farmers can help to mitigate the growing risks associated with climate change, and pay them for those contributions.”

“The agriculture sector is a major area of focus for The Climate Trust because of its potential to achieve large-scale greenhouse gas emission reductions,” said Sean Penrith, Executive Director for The

Climate Trust. “By working hand-in-hand with Delta Institute through their innovative Nitrogen Credit Program, we will be able to directly connect the agriculture industry with offset markets—providing a new source of income for farmers, and tapping into the huge potential of this sector.”

To calculate how reductions in nitrogen fertilizer use translate to reductions in N<sub>2</sub>O emissions on participating farms, the Delta Nitrogen Credit Program uses a methodology developed by researchers at Michigan State University (MSU), with financial support from the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

“I wanted an accurate picture of what was happening on my farm, and now we’ve got good scientific data established,” said Ortner. “It’s been a good learning experience. I’ve committed one of my fields to this project, and I want to be part of the program for a while.”

Launched in February 2014, the Delta Nitrogen Credit Program is enrolling corn farmers across the North Central Region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) to optimize their nitrogen fertilizer practices. The program results from three years of work funded by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant program.

"The completion of this NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant demonstrates an opportunity to get more conservation on our nation's landscape," said NRCS Chief Jason Weller. "The environmental marketplace recognizes the value of ecosystem services provided by our nation's farms, ranches and forested lands. Partners like the Delta Institute and the Climate Trust work with USDA to help producers cope with climate change challenges and meet conservation goals by compensating those who are voluntarily reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas with approximately 300 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), largely originates from the breakdown of excess agricultural fertilizer in the soil. According to the 2014 National Climate Assessment<sup>1</sup>, the agriculture industry has accounted for most of the atmospheric rise in N<sub>2</sub>O. Roughly 60% of agricultural N<sub>2</sub>O derives from emissions resulting from the disproportionate use of nitrogen fertilizer, which means there is tremendous potential for the agriculture industry to reduce emissions. Optimizing nitrogen fertilizer application will reduce harmful nitrous oxide emissions that increase risks associated with climate change.

For more information on the Nitrogen Credit Program and how to participate, please contact Delta Institute or visit: [www.deltanitrogen.org](http://www.deltanitrogen.org).

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**About Delta Institute:** *Delta Institute is a catalyst for environmental sustainability and economic development throughout the Great Lakes region. Delta works in partnership with business, government and communities in the Great Lakes region to create and implement innovative, market-driven solutions that build environmental resilience, economic vitality and healthy communities. Additional information at [www.delta-institute.org](http://www.delta-institute.org) | @DeltaGreatLakes | [facebook.com/DeltaGreatLakes](https://www.facebook.com/DeltaGreatLakes)*

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<sup>1</sup> White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. *National Climate Assessment*, by U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2014. Online: <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>.