Many of the components that would be considered good agronomy for nutrient management are contained in the ICCA and Local Board Performance Objectives. Reference is also made to the 4R standards as this was added to the ICCA POs when nutrient management was updated in 2013.

The need still exists to expand and further develop what a CCA should know about nutrient, soil and water management. There is increasing pressure at the state/provincial level for improved water quality and agriculture’s role in it. Differing versions are forming of CCAs’ involvement and how they will be qualified. The ICCA Program needs to help ensure that CCAs are fully qualified and viewed as a partner to help implement solutions for water quality issues. Not all CCAs focus on nutrient management and the current POs meet their needs. CCAs that do focus on nutrient management will be better served and positioned by having a voluntary specialty that allows CCAs and CPAGs to further strengthen their knowledge and skills in this area. At the same time, making them much more visible to the public and greatly enhance the ICCA Program’s efforts.

This project relates to the ICCA strategic plan:

**Goal 2. Increase value of ICCA program to CCAs.**
- Engage CCAs in processes to provide assurance of environmental quality to consumers and the general public.

This specialty will begin as a pilot project in Illinois and Iowa but is open to all local boards. After the pilot project in 2015 and 2016, the specialty’s success will be evaluated to further expand nationally/internationally. The specialty’s POs will probably have to be regionalized due to the nature of the content but that will be determined by the subject matter experts on the development team.

**Title:** 4R Nutrient Management Specialist (4RNM)

4R Specialty Development:

1. Applicant must be a CCA in good standing before and while holding the specialty.

2. It is anticipated that 200 CCAs will earn the 4R specialty by the end of 2016.

3. Performance Objectives will be developed. They will not duplicate what is already contained in the ICCA and/or Local Board POs but be in addition to or advanced skills and knowledge. A core team of specialists will evaluate the POs and determine what is needed to be a 4R specialist.

4. Educational programs will be developed and identified that meet the POs’ requirements. Specific programs may need to be completed to earn the specialty
and will contain quizzes. ASA already has an online course titled, “4R’s nutrient management approach to water quality” that is currently being revised for release in early 2015.

5. A 50 question exam may be developed that needs to be passed to earn the specialty. The online courses would have quizzes contained in them to measure mastery of the content but this exam would be similar to the CCA credentialing exams and not specific to anyone course.

Note: 4 and 5 say “may” because it still needs to be determined whether educational programs and/or a credentialing exam will be required. In either case, educational programs will be developed but they may not be required to earn the specialty.

6. CEUs – Nutrient Management and Soil and Water Management CEUs will need to be earned to renew. Potentially raising the minimum in each category from 5 to 7.

7. Fees:
   a. Educational programs will have appropriate fees
   b. Exam – if an exam is required, then a fee structure will be set:
      i. ICCA exam fee minimum for a specialty is $50
      ii. Local Boards may add a portion on top of this fee depending on their involvement to meet the regionalization necessity
   c. Renewal – an annual renewal fee will be required in addition to meeting the CEU requirements in #6:
      i. ICCA - $25
      ii. Local Board - $10

8. The ICCA office in Madison will adapt the current record keeping system to manage the 4R specialty certification.