



Where To Learn More

Learn more about how agriculture practices can affect the environment and play a role in conservation at: nrcs.usda.gov* and extension.org*

Find out about EPA's Agricultural Assistance Center: epa.gov/agriculture

Learn more about protecting drinking water sources at: epa.gov/safewater/sourcewater and protectdrinkingwater.org*

Learn more about effective weed and pest management at: ipminstitute.org*

Get quick facts about water, play interactive games, and test your water knowledge with the US Geological Survey's site: ga.water.usgs.gov/edu*

Learn about conservation tillage, buffer strips, nutrient management plans and more at conservationinformation.org*

Find teaching resources at epa.gov/teachers

Try this interactive learning center, covering all aspects of agriculture education: agedlearning.org*

Take a peek at what one agricultural state has to say to farmers about keeping their water clean: egov.oregon.gov/OPSW/partners/tenthings/farmers.pdf*

A basic how-to guide and action plan for protecting your source water, addressing what you can do: cleanwaterfund.org/sourcewater/pdf/sourceguide.pdf*

Learn about how groundwater is contaminated and what you and your community can do to help protect this vital resource: groundwater.org/gi/docs/GWBASICS2.pdf*

Find out more about septic system care at: http://www.epa.gov/owm/septic/pubs/homeowner_guide_long.pdf

* Not EPA websites

The Next Generation Agriculture Project

Several organizations are jointly developing an educational program aimed at over one million high school Ag Science students. The Next Generation Agriculture Project is an instructional initiative that will educate future agricultural leaders about the importance of protecting drinking water sources. These seven advisory members have banded together:

- United States Department of Education
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
(Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water and Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds)
- The Groundwater Foundation
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- National FFA Organization
- United States Department of Agriculture
- United States Geological Survey

Office of Water (4606M) EPA 816-F-08-129 (October 2008)
www.epa.gov/safewater



Your Water. Your Decision.



A brief guide for tomorrow's agricultural leaders.



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From field to faucet: Your water. Your decision.

In agriculture, how you work affects what you drink. From fertilizer applications to livestock management, decisions in the field can affect the water in your faucet. That's why every generation in agriculture tries to improve on the last — better practices for better water quality and irrigation for years to come. Learn today's best practices now, and you and your neighbors can drink in the results tomorrow.

Why learn more?

- ▶ **You can save money.** Practices that protect the environment not only make farms more sustainable (such as protecting soil quality), they also tend to be more cost effective.
- ▶ **You can make a difference.** You can protect your community's drinking water by reducing agricultural runoff, a leading source of sediment and nutrient pollution.
- ▶ **You can get help.** Loans and grants may be available to help. (Find a USDA service center at nrcs.usda.gov and see grants.gov for some possibilities).

Precise Fertilizer Use

More is not necessarily better when it comes to fertilizer. To reduce the spreading of excess nutrients that damage streams, rivers, lakes and even oceans, use a soil test to determine how much fertilizer is needed and time your fertilizer applications to avoid spreading just before a rain or snow.

Conservation Buffers

Planting trees, shrubs and grass around fields, especially those that border water bodies, helps filter pollutants before they reach sources of drinking water. Also, two-stage ditches with mini-flood plains can reduce water pollution from tile drains.

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Conservation Tillage

Reducing tillage preserves the land's natural ability to filter pollutants and allows for easier plant growth. It also reduces erosion and soil compaction (plow pan), and builds soil organic matter to increase soil structure and the soil's moisture-holding capacity.

Good Livestock Management

Keeping animals and their waste out of streams, rivers, and lakes keeps the associated pollutants out of the water supply. Consider fencing off or bridging streams, applying and storing manure according to a comprehensive nutrient management plan, and managing grazing to maintain plant cover.

Integrated Pest Management

Using natural systems and careful planning for pest control — what's known as Integrated Pest Management — limits pesticide use to protect the environment and improve financial returns.

Consider a four-tier approach: Set a reasonable threshold for action that may allow for some pests; carefully monitor and identify pests so you can react appropriately; prevent potential problems by managing what, when and where crops are grown; and evaluate the return on your investment in pest control, both in terms of costs and associated risks.

Intelligent Irrigation

Think and plan before adding water. To save water and develop the most efficient and effective irrigation strategy, determine when and how much to irrigate by measuring soil moisture, calculating crop water use, and making decisions based on the weather forecast. Also, consider investing in more efficient technology, such as drip irrigation.

Smart Septic Tanks

Regularly pumping and inspecting septic tanks can prevent surface and ground water contamination. Depending on your type of septic system, experts recommend professional inspections every one to three years, and having your tank pumped every three to five years. Hazardous waste is another concern. Even small amounts of paints, thinners, oil, pesticides, and other chemicals can destroy helpful bacteria and the biological digestion in a septic system. These chemicals also pollute the ground water.

Attention to Ground Water

Where you mix, store and apply chemicals, such as pesticides, can pose a risk to your well and the groundwater in general. Monitor underground storage tanks and keep a distance between chemicals or waste and your well. Prevent contaminants from seeping into valuable underground water sources.

Find links to more information at: www.FieldtoFaucet.org

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