

FROM YOUR LAND TO OUR DRINKING WATER

Safeguard our drinking water with septic tank management and smart farming practices

After rains or snowmelt, stormwater flows over fields, driveways, roofs, patios, lawns, sidewalks and streets. Along the way, stormwater picks up fertilizer, pesticides, animal and human waste, carrying those pollutants to our waterways.

Managing the pollutants on your property can help prevent stormwater pollution from reaching our drinking water supplies.

The US EPA estimates that pollutants carried by rainwater runoff account for 70% of all water pollution.

SEPTIC TANK MANAGEMENT

Septic systems are designed to provide long-term, effective treatment of household waste when operated and maintained properly. Most systems that fail prematurely are due to improper maintenance.

MAINTENANCE AND PREVENTION

If your system has been properly designed, sited, and installed, maintenance and prevention can keep it in working order.

1. Inspect your system annually and pump as needed (usually every 3-5 years).
2. Avoid excess water use. Too much water may back up into your house or overload the drainfield.
3. Watch what you put down the drain and flush down the toilet. Many materials that are poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet do not decompose and remain in the septic tank. Don't pour grease, fats, and oils down the drain and keep chemicals out of your system!

FAILING SEPTIC TANKS CAN CONTAMINATE WELLS, STREAMS AND LAKES

A failing septic system doesn't adequately treat waste. Untreated effluent (liquid sewage) is a health hazard and can cause many human diseases.

Once this untreated effluent enters the groundwater, you and your neighbor's wells can be contaminated. If this sewage reaches nearby streams or water bodies, recreational swimming areas and drinking water may also be jeopardized.

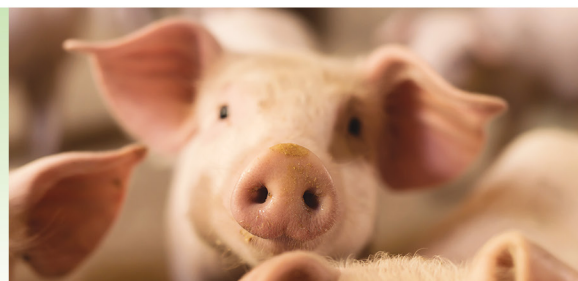


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SMART FARMING PRACTICES

Animal manure, excess fertilizer applied to crops and fields and soil erosion make agriculture one of the largest sources of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in the country. It is this overabundance of nutrients making its way into the watershed that primarily fuels harmful algal blooms.



PROTECT WATER QUALITY WITH SMART FARMING PRACTICES

There are many ways that farmers can reduce pollution from their operations and even save money in the long run.

1. The most prevalent source of agricultural water pollution is soil that is washed off fields. The solution? Apply only the right amount of fertilizer in a targeted way at the appropriate time exactly where it can do the most good for crops and have the least likelihood of simply running off in the rain.
2. Plant trees, shrubs and grasses along the edges of fields; especially fields that border water bodies. Planted buffers can help prevent nutrient loss from fields by absorbing or filtering out nutrients before they reach a water body.
3. Install fence along streams, rivers and lakes to block animals from accessing water bodies. This will help restore stream banks and prevent excess nutrients from entering the water.



ALGAL BLOOMS

Algal blooms are problematic because they lower oxygen levels in water bodies. Blue-green algae or cyanobacteria can release toxins that can hurt marine life and are harmful to humans.



Water moves through the environment into our waterways and is treated by our water treatment plants. Protecting the quality of this source water protects our future drinking water.

