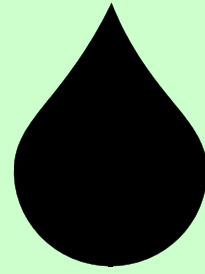


Groundwater

AGRI-BUSINESS STEWARDSHIP

*Brought to you by the Michigan Agri-Business Association
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The objective of this document is to provide you with current and helpful information regarding water protection, and the Michigan Water Stewardship Program (MWSP).

Goals and best practices: Lessons from Delmarva

At the Michigan Agri-Business Association's 77th annual Winter Conference in Lansing in January, one of the key topics was lessons learned from the situation in the Delaware-Maryland-Virginia (or Delmarva) peninsula and the relationship between agriculture and water quality there. What's going on in Delmarva provides crucial lessons going forward for Michigan agriculture and our efforts to protect groundwater.

It should be noted that key parties in the Delmarva region agree that losing farms and forests is not in the best interests of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Making sure that agriculture is both healthy and sustainable is a crucial component in protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay, with two clear and equal goals: Clean water and economically viable, thriving farms and strong communities.

Some recommendations for moving forward in Delmarva, which could also be applicable to Michigan, include the following:

- Focusing on the highest priority watersheds
 - Geographically targeting resources to the most agriculturally impaired watersheds
 - Targeting outreach and funding to high-impact, cost-effective programs
 - Targeting farms with the greatest potential to impact natural resources
- Accelerating conservation adoption and development of new conservation technologies
 - Greater collaboration and innovation among all stakeholders, from farmers to government to local communities, is the key
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified potential benchmark criteria for conservation programs, such as superior environmental performance, flexibility, innovation, feasibility, evaluation and a balanced risk burden.
- Implementing a sound accountability system

As the parties in the Delmarva region often state, agriculture can be a part of the solution to water management issues, and farmers, landowners and agriculture businesses must increase their commitment to water and air quality. These farmers, businesses and landowners can only be part of the solution if they remain regionally competitive and prosper. By becoming part of the policy process and understanding their roles and responsibilities, agriculture can continue to protect our groundwater for generations to come.

For questions, contact your nutrient management consultant. For additional contacts and resources, visit the Michigan Agri-Business Association's Web site at www.miagbiz.org

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