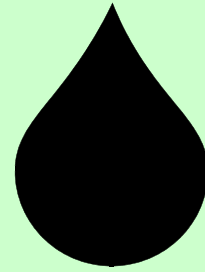


Groundwater

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).

Groundwater strategies: Learning from others' mistakes

At the Michigan Agri-Business Association's 77th annual Winter Conference in Lansing in early January, experts delivered presentations on groundwater policies and strategies. Pollution in the Chesapeake Bay waters around the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia peninsula (also called Delmarva for short) and agriculture's role in water quality issues there was one example studied. It offers some important lessons for what's happening in Michigan and agriculture's efforts to protect and safeguard our groundwater for generations to come.

Experts who study water policies and agriculture consider the Delmarva case a worst-case scenario, where a complete breakdown between agriculture, regulators, local communities and others made a difficult situation even more problematic. In the Delmarva case, large agriculture businesses, especially poultry farms, faced a regional regulatory system that often appeared ill-equipped to handle realities on the ground. This resulted in a total break in partnership between agriculture and government, and as a result, water quality and agricultural progress were compromised.

The Delmarva controversy offers important lessons for Michigan. In comparison, Michigan and our support for comprehensive nutrient management plans puts us light years ahead, making us far more progressive when it comes to protecting our groundwater. In Delmarva, there was little or no rapport or communication between agriculture and the regulatory system.

In contrast, Michigan agriculture has an open and ongoing partnership with regulators, and often works hand in glove on important issues, including water protection and nutrient management. Nevertheless, we must continue to be proactive and partner with government to make sure regulations are current, relevant, effective and fair. At the same time, Michigan agriculture must continue telling our positive stories when it comes to groundwater protection. And Michigan agriculture must continue using best-practices and encourage strong nutrient management plans, including at the individual farm level, to ensure agriculture protects itself and continues doing the right things to protect our groundwater.

MABA's ongoing pro-active commitment to the MWSP and our early and continued partnership in MAEAP mirror Michigan agriculture's proactive stance on water and nutrient management issues, and our partnership with regulators remains strong. Together, we can keep it that way.

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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