

AGRI-BUSINESS STEWARDSHIP

NEWSLETTER

*Brought to you by the Michigan Agri-Business Association
through a grant from the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program.*

April 2015

The objective of this document is to provide you with current and helpful information regarding water protection, and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

Water Quality Concerns Elevated as 2015 Growing Season Begins

In the Great Lakes region, all eyes are on water quality in 2015 and agriculture is front and center in that conversation. Water quality concerns have amplified over the past year throughout the Great Lakes region, highlighted by last fall's shutdown of the Toledo drinking water supply as a result of a harmful algae bloom in Lake Erie.

While many factors played a role in that event – invasive species, malfunctioning septic and sewage systems, and climate change – agriculture also plays a role. With today's modern methods and advanced practices, farmers and agribusinesses are well-positioned with a suite of tools to protect water quality.

As farmers plan for the year ahead and begin planting, now is the time to consider how those tools might be put to use.

Precision agriculture and site-specific techniques, such as grid soil sampling, enable our industry to protect water quality and show a commitment to healthy waters throughout Michigan. They also make sense from an economic perspective, increasing efficiency, and boosting yields.

For several years, the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Program has provided a baseline for farmers and agribusinesses to maximize nutrient efficiency. The 4R program focuses on proper planning and application to ensure the right nutrient source at the right rate, at the right time and in the right place.

And surface conservation practices, such as cover crops and buffer strips, are proven to contribute to long-term improvements in water quality.

By utilizing advanced agronomy practices, carefully planning the use of nutrients and implementing voluntary water conservation measures, producers are in a strong long-term position to continue growing more and increasing income, while leading the way on Great Lakes water quality.



**Developed and Paid for by
Nitrogen and Pesticide Fees.**

Distributed by the Michigan Agri-Business Association

