

CROPS

Study shows good stewardship leads to cleaner groundwater

FOR years Missouri corn growers have been working hard to be good environmental stewards of the land they farm. A recent study released by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources confirms that stewardship works, and it assures consumers that groundwater pollution is not an issue.

The study, "Results of Monitoring Shallow Groundwater in Missouri for Four Agricultural Pesticides," consisted of taking a total of 351 samples from 190 wells around the state and testing each sample for eight different pesticides. Of the wells analyzed, 98% reported no pesticides. Only four wells tested positive, yet those levels were still below the Environmental Protection Agency's standards for safe drinking water.

"Farmers are being good stewards of the land," says Gary Marshall, chief executive officer with the Missouri Corn Growers Association. "They are lowering the usage of pesticides, utilizing safe biotechnology products, and closely managing their nutrient and pesticide uses to make sure they stay in the fields."

Due to the efforts of Missouri corn growers and industry partners, Missouri has implemented procedures that have resulted in continually improving sur-

Key Points

- DNR groundwater study has positive news for corn growers.
- Study shows 98% of wells analyzed had no pesticides.
- Next, Stewardship Implementation Project will monitor nitrogen and phosphorus.

face-water quality over the past 10 years. These practices evolved from the Watershed Research, Assessment and Stewardship Project undertaken by MCGA, DNR, EPA and Syngenta Crop Protection.

The Watershed Research, Assessment and Stewardship Project, or WRASP, began in 1998 with the purpose of collecting scientific information on pesticide management and successfully concluded in 2005. With sound research in hand and best management practices in place, every lake and stream in the program exhibited an average decline in herbicide and nutrient concentrations.

SIP now at work

Just as WRASP collected needed data for the best methodology of managing atrazine, the next step, the Stewardship Implementation Project, is doing the same for nitrogen and phosphorus.



Managed by MCGA's sister organization, the Environmental Resources Coalition, farmers' participation in SIP significantly reduces the loss of herbicides and fertilizer into nearby surface water sources.

"These latest results indicate that herbicide use is no problem at all in wells, paralleling the results we have seen in surface water," MCGA's Marshall says. "Thanks to projects such as WRASP and SIP, we have already seen a decline of herbicide residue in lakes and streams."

FYI

For more information, call the Environmental Resources Coalition, Jefferson City, at 573-634-7078, or visit www.erc-env.org or www.mocorn.org.

3 Missourians earn Garst scholarships

JOHN Gill of Richmond, Ashley Hampson of Pleasant Hope and Shane Kinne of Eagleville have each earned \$1,000 scholarships from Garst Seed Co. The FFA members were among 26 students awarded scholarships in 2007. They will pursue college degrees in the field of agriculture.

Garst committed \$75,000 to the FFA Collegiate Scholarship Program in 2005 as part of its 75th anniversary celebration and pledged to award 75 \$1,000 scholarships over a three-year period. "Our company understands that today's FFA students are tomorrow's ag leaders who will help shape the future of our industry," says Lori Thomas, communications manager for Garst. "We're thrilled to help these students begin their careers in agriculture and know we'll see a return on our investment in the years to come."

Garst distributes a unique, hands-on classroom curriculum to FFA instructors to help them teach students about the importance of marketing and promoting agriculture. The 2007 curriculum is available for instructors to download, free of charge, on the Garst Web site, www.garstseed.com.

This year's curriculum theme is "Technologies of the Future." Students are asked to develop ideas and marketing plans for a seed company about to launch an innovative new seed product such as ultra-low-linolenic soybeans or drought-tolerant corn.

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