

Agricultural BMPs

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are management measures used in agricultural areas to prevent water pollution caused by nutrients, animal wastes, toxics and sediment.

BMPs are an effective, preferred and practical approach to managing non-point source pollutants and are designed to reduce the quantities of pollutants that are washed into nearby surface waters, such as lakes, creeks, streams, rivers and estuaries by rain.

Agricultural pollution can be effectively managed considering the following management strategies:

- **Revegetate riparian areas along waterways.** Lack of vegetation on stream banks can lead to erosion.
- **Control soil erosion.** Overgrazed pastures and unprotected croplands can contribute excessive amounts of sediment to local water bodies. Protect fragile topsoil to prevent erosion and consequent sediment pollution.
- **Limit use of fertilizer and pesticides.** Excess fertilizers and pesticides can poison aquatic animals and lead to destructive algae blooms. Apply fertilizers and pesticides according to the label instructions, and save money and minimize pollution.
- **Control manure.** Livestock in streams can contaminate waterways with bacteria, making them unsafe for human contact. Keep the livestock away from stream banks and provide them a water source away from water bodies. Manage animal manures carefully.
- **Precision irrigation.** Manage irrigation to prevent flushing sediment, nutrients and chemicals into surface waters.

Other agricultural BMPs include strip cropping, terracing, contour stripping, grass waterways, ponds, minimal tillage, and grass and naturally vegetated filter strips.

Management solutions and practices are in place for most facilities, businesses and activities. Commercial facilities have management practices to control dirt, debris and oil that collect in parking lots and paved areas. Construction areas use BMPs to control erosion and sediment, and to limit the amount of water flow or change the direction it travels.

Remember: what you do affects the quality and quantity of the water you drink and use. By using these practices to reduce pollutants from entering your water resources, you are helping protect water now and in the future. Help save Texas water and make every drop count.

