

Best Education Practices (BEPs) for Water Outreach Professionals
Defining BEPs, Refining New Resources and Recommending Future Actions

RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION

Presenter(s): Patricia Farrell, Michigan State University

Title: Evaluating the Impact of Farmstead Assessments: Providing Information, Educating and Changing Environmental Stewardship Behaviors of Michigan Farmers

Abstract: This presentation will focus on the evaluation process of the farmstead system (F*A*S) over the past few years, including three mail surveys to different target populations, to determine impact of the F*A*S program on environmental stewardship practices. The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies to provide confidential information, assessment tools, and technical assistance to pesticide and nitrogen fertilizer users to identify and lower risks to groundwater. The F*A*S is voluntary and is required for the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program's farmstead system. Evaluation of the program utilizes environmental education theories to drive the development of the surveys. Evaluation findings conclude that Michigan producers are becoming aware of and changing the high risks to groundwater on their farms. Fifty-percent of producers during the past year changed their environmental stewardship practices or structures. A few of the key practices that have been changed: 1) wells—closing abandoned wells (79.8%), testing well water (53.2%), and 2) pesticide storage and handling—changed storage structures (37.6%), created a drift management plan (52.7%), and created an emergency plan (56.1%). and when compared to non-F*A*S participants, F*A*S participants were found to be better stewards of the land through their management operations.

Target Audience(s): Agricultural commodity groups, farmers, local decision and policy makers, agency partners, soil and water conservation districts, and landowners

Educational Purpose: Information

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