

2022 POLICY GUIDES

Water Quality

ISSUE

An issue that is becoming more and more prevalent and that does not seem to be dissipating is levels of chemicals in groundwater and drinking water from herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. The University of Nebraska has recently conducted research projects with the purpose of finding agriculturally based chemicals in the water and attributing negative affects to those chemicals. This has included nitrates and atrazine. While initial research has found some instances of increased content of these chemicals, any ties to negative health impacts have been assumptions.

The issue with these types of studies is that media outlets are quick to run them without the entire picture, including other possible causes of negative effects, agricultural efforts and technologies to address the issue, and the reason for use of chemicals in the first place which often include recommendations by the University and extension system.

FARM BUREAU POLICY

CONTAMINATION LIABILITY (2018). We oppose any legislation that would place civil or criminal liability on farmers and ranchers for following generally accepted agricultural practices. We recommend that compliance with state or federally approved label instructions should absolve farmers from environmental contamination liability claims. The burden of proof for non-compliance with label instructions should rest on the person or persons questioning the compliance. We support absolving landowners of liability for petroleum products, chemical, and fertilizer contamination caused by prior owners.

QUESTIONS

1. Should additional testing be done on crop protection products to determine any negative health impacts prior to any proposed ban?
2. Should the University of Nebraska be responsible for this research?