

The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act

What is the Agriculture Water Quality Act?

The Agriculture Water Quality Act was passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1994. The act protects surface and groundwater resources from pollution from agriculture and silviculture practices.

Who is affected?

The act effects all landowners with 10 or more contiguous acres and who conduct agriculture or silviculture operations on their land.

What must be implemented?

All landowners/land users with 10 or more acres of land that is used for agriculture or silviculture operations must develop and implement a water quality plan based on guidance from the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Plan.



Are technical and financial assistance available?

For technical assistance contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or Conservation District office. These professionals are familiar with the act, the statewide plan, and the process for implementation.

Financial assistance for implementing BMPs may be available from a variety of sources. Both state and federal programs have monies available for projects that protect our water resources. Your local conservation district has information available about water quality related cost-share programs. (The lack of cost-share assistance does not relieve the landowner of the responsibility for developing and implementing a water quality protection plan.)

Do You Need a Water Quality Plan?

1. Do you own 10 contiguous acres or more of land in Kentucky?

No: You do not need an agriculture water quality plan.

Yes: Go to question 2.

2. Is your property being used for agriculture and/or silviculture operations?

No: You do not need an agriculture water quality plan.

Yes: Go to question 3.

3. Do you have a conservation plan, compliance plan, or a forest stewardship plan for your operation?

No: You will need to develop an agriculture water quality plan.

Yes: You will need to develop an agriculture water quality plan or you will need to update your conservation plan, compliance plan, or forest stewardship plan so that ground and surface water is protected from pollution from activities conducted on your property.

Questions regarding the Agriculture Water Quality Act

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What is an Agriculture Water Quality Plan?

The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Plan consists of best management practices (BMPs) from six areas: silviculture (forestry); pesticides and fertilizers; farmstead; crops; livestock; and streams and other waters. The statewide plan serves as a guide to individual landowners/land users as they develop water quality plans for their individual operations.



How does the act define agriculture and silviculture operations?

According to the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act, an “agriculture operation” is defined as any farm operation on a tract of land, including all income-producing improvements and farm dwellings, together with other farm buildings and structures incident to the operation and maintenance of the farm, situated on 10 contiguous acres or more of land used for agriculture or silviculture or devoted to meeting the requirements and qualifications for payments to agriculture programs under an agreement with the state or federal government.

Agriculture operations include, but are not limited to, production of livestock, livestock products, poultry, poultry products, milk, and milk products, or for the growing of crops such as but not limited to tobacco, corn, soybeans, small grains, fruits, and vegetables.

What is the process for developing and implementing an individual water quality plan?

First, landowners must assess their operations and determine if they need an agriculture water quality plan. Once the assessment is complete, the landowner must choose the appropriate BMPs for his/her operation.

Who is responsible for developing an Agriculture Water Quality Plan?

The landowner is responsible for preparing an agriculture water quality plan that best meets the needs of his/her particular farming operation. This plan belongs to the landowner and must be available in the event that water pollution occurs and is identified and traced to his/her agricultural operation. A self-certification form, can be filed with the local conservation district.

An interactive online tool is available at www.ca.uky.edu/awqa to help landowners decide which best management practices (BMPs) are needed for their farm.

For more information regarding the workbook or online computer version contact your local Conservation District office, county Extension office, or Amanda Gumbert at 859-257-6094 or amanda.gumbert@uky.edu.

