

WATER QUALITY IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD— DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS?



Economic challenges continue to loom large for crop advisers and producers involved in nutrient management. Water quality challenges have also increased as we better understand the interactions among land and water and other resources and the effects of specific management activities where we live.

Many have scaled the learning curves associated with soil testing and plant tissue and manure analyses to become more proficient in providing optimum plant nutrition for crops that clothe, shelter, and nourish our society. Fewer of us have invested the time...or found the infor-

mation in an understandable or “user-friendly” format...to expand our knowledge base and to become more conversant about practical and desirable water quality.

In the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is usually considered the lead agency...but other federal, state, and some local agencies are also engaged in monitoring and regulating water quality. To protect and improve water resources, these agencies are also charged with the burden to identify certain criteria as guidance in adopting standards. We all would like to see these criteria based on rigorous biological evaluations, assessing cause and effect relationships.

A logical question to ask is: “Do I have any say in the process of developing water quality criteria and standards?” The answer is yes, you can have a voice.

To have a voice in the processes which shape the fate of many involved in the management of our natural resources, each of us can commit to learning more about water quality in the future. We might start by asking the most important question: Do you know the water quality in your own backyard, or your own watershed? That is the starting point in being able to represent your interests.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clifford S. Snyder". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Cliff Snyder
PPI Southeast U.S. Director

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