



Strengthening Sustainability through Continuous Improvement

Sound conservation practices enable farmers and ranchers to attain their individual goals while contributing to the needs of many, now and into the future.

Administered by the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center, the Green Star Farms Initiative is a voluntary, farmer-led educational program designed to raise awareness among farmers about water quality issues; recognize the conservation practices that are already being employed by many farmers and ranchers that contribute to improved water quality, reduced soil erosion, enhanced soil health and increased wildlife habitat; and accelerate the adoption of sound conservation practices where needed to improve water quality.

The Green Star Farms Initiative begins with an environmental assessment process that farmers can use as a simple self-evaluation and management tool. The results of the self-assessment guide farmers to sources of additional information and resources to address environmental concerns. Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to involve their crop consultant or other advisors who play a role in management decisions in completion of the worksheet.

The Green Star Farms Initiative allows reporting of the aggregated environmental assessment performance of participating farmers who agree to have their worksheet included in summary reports. By aggregating assessments across a watershed or industry sector, farm organizations can report the extent to which good conservation practices are applied on Minnesota farms and ranches. In order to protect privacy, only reports that generate a composite score based on a minimum number of worksheets are reported, and individual farm information is not shared.

Aggregated environmental assessment information also provides valuable information for farm organizations, University of Minnesota Extension, USDA-NRCS and others in identification of topical areas for research, education and conservation programs.

Participation in the Green Star Farms Initiative demonstrates the commitment of individual farmers and ranchers to protect water quality and highlights the collective actions being taken by the agriculture sector to enhance sustainability through continuous improvement.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center is a non-profit research and education organization dedicated to assisting Minnesota farmers in addressing water quality concerns. Our members and supporters include agricultural organizations representing more than 50,000 farmers and those who advise them. Our network of Agricultural Watershed Councils allows farmers to lead discussions about water quality issues and solutions within their communities

