



## Media Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### *Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center Announces Green Star Farms Initiative*

#### **Initiative demonstrates commitment of farmers and ranchers to improve water quality**

Saint Paul, MN August 6, 2013: The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center (MAWRC) has launched the *Green Star Farms Initiative*, a voluntary education program that raises awareness regarding water quality issues and conservation practices utilized by farmers and ranchers.

Administered by MAWRC, the *Green Star Farms Initiative* provides an environmental assessment tool designed to assist farmers and ranchers in evaluating their agricultural practices – either on their own or with guidance from the MAWRC’s field staff.

“Farmers and ranchers want to do the right thing in safeguarding their land and our natural resources and the entire country benefits from the water-quality practices they are using,” said Duane Alberts, MAWRC Chairman. “Sound conservation practices are already being employed by many farmers and ranchers, protecting water quality, reducing soil erosion, and providing wildlife habitat. *The Green Star Initiative* will help us inventory the good practices already in place and accelerate the adoption of advanced stewardship practices.”

The centerpiece of the *Green Star Farms Initiative* is a web-based assessment worksheet that can be utilized by farmers and ranchers to identify and assess their conservation practices. The primary objective is to gather “real world” conservation practice information – providing credible, site-specific information regarding agricultural management practices.

The results of the self-assessment will provide farmers with additional information and resources to address environmental concerns. When completing the worksheet, farmers and ranchers are encouraged to involve their crop consultant or other advisors who play a role in management decisions.

The *Green Star Farms Initiative* allows for the reporting of aggregated environmental assessment performance of participating farmers who agree to have their information included in summary reports. Aggregating assessments across a watershed or industry sector provides a measure of the extent to which good conservation practices are applied on Minnesota farms and ranches.

Aggregated environmental assessment information also provides guidance for future research and education programs.

Additional information regarding the *Green Star Farms Initiative* can be found at [GREENSTARFARMS.ORG](http://GREENSTARFARMS.ORG).

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*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 eighteen agricultural organizations representing more than 50,000 farmers and those who advise them. The leadership and participation of Minnesota’s producer associations truly reflects Minnesota agriculture’s commitment to protecting the state’s water resources.*

*Additional information regarding the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center can be accessed by visiting [MAWRC.ORG](http://MAWRC.ORG)*