

# Frequently Asked Questions

## MAEAP Technician Resources Website

### TECHNICAL

#### Wells & Isolation Distance

1. How can backflow be integrated into the system for older livestock facilities?  
Use a simple air gap where the gap is  $2xD$ . D=the diameter of the fill pipe. See the MSU bulletin E-2349, Protect Your Water Supply From Agricultural Chemical Backflow, posted on the MAEAP Technicians Resources website.
2. What if there is no well record for the farm you are working on (for isolation purposes)?  
Use a nearby well from the DEQ web resources for site features: groundwater flow direction, confining materials, and well depth.
3. What if the well has no above ground well casing?  
This kind of well construction presents a risk to drinking water and the aquifer. A licensed well contractor could upgrade the well with a casing that is  $\geq 12$  inches above grade. Often the well is old and a better alternative is to close the well and install a new well.
4. If a farm with employees does not allow employees access to the water, is it still a public well?  
Yes this would be a public well. "Public water supply" means a waterworks system that provides water for drinking or household purposes to persons other than the supplier of the water.
5. If a farm has employees, or is a dairy and has multiple wells, are they all considered public wells? If that well is only used to water the cows in the dry cow barn, is it considered a public well?  
All wells used on a dairy farm are considered a public well.
6. What appropriate security measures would allow a producer to store their pesticides closer than 200 feet from a public well?  
Secondary containment.
7. What constitutes secondary containment for pesticides storage (for isolation purposes)?  
A watertight structure that prevents the discharge of pesticides into the environment.

#### Fuel

1. What are the valid options for a fueling pad (other than concrete)?  
None at this time. Other materials, such as clay and asphalt, are not impervious surfaces or are not compatible with the fuel if spilled.

Because the fuel is refined crude oil, they are incompatible with asphalt pavement. Consequently, fuel spills and oil-based leaks cause softening of the asphalt binder that in turn causes deterioration of the asphalt pavement surface and is therefore not a viable option.

While clay is adequate for secondary containment if it has a coefficient of permeability of no less than  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/sec, it does not make a suitable surface for a fuel pad where it would come in to contact with vehicular traffic.

2. Is a fuelling pad required for fuel tanks that are directly plumbed to a heater or otherwise not used for farm vehicle fueling?

Fueling pads for home heating fuel tanks are not required. Additionally, home fueling tanks are required to have some form of spill containment at the fill connection for tanks installed since 2003 if they are larger than 660 gallons. If the tank is less than that, it is recommended, but not required.

3. Fuel facility standards – What is needed for Farmstead Verification? What size concrete fill pad is needed for the fueling area?

Please reference MSU Extension Bulletin WQ-59, On-Farm Fuel Storage, posted on the MAEAP Technician Resources website for additional information on the fuel facility standards. The fuel storage pad should extend a minimum of two feet beyond each side of the fuel tanks.

4. What is the length and width that a fuel storage pad needs to be?

The fuel storage pad should extend a minimum of 2 feet beyond each side of the fuel tanks.

5. Farm Fuel Storage book states there can be no more than 3 fuel tanks at one site. Is that any type/size fuel tank or can you have more than 3 fuel tanks at one site if they are double walled or in containment?

For tanks that are 1,100 gallons or less, no more than 3 fuel tanks may be located at one site. A farm may have more than one fueling site if they are located more than 100 feet from each other. These requirements are due to tanks having less stringent requirements and posing a higher risk.

However, for tanks greater than 1,100 gallons, there is no limit to how many tanks can be placed in the same area. For example, 4 – 4,000 gallon tanks could be sited together, no matter single or double wall, since all tanks are required to have secondary containment or be in secondary containment. You could also site 2 – 4,000 gallon tanks and 2 – 1,100 gallon tanks together if the smaller tanks meet the more stringent requirements for tanks greater than 1,100 gallons.

## **Emergency Planning**

1. What items should be present in a spill kit?

See the Emergency Planning Bulletin E-2575 for a list of recommended materials.

2. How do I know what to consider an extremely hazardous substance? Is there a list?

EHS are designated by the USEPA. See the Emergency Planning Bulletin E-2575 for a list of EHS used on the farm.

## GENERAL

1. What features would be considered waters of the state?

Waters of the state are defined as: groundwaters, lakes, rivers and streams, and all other watercourses and waters, including the Great Lakes, within the jurisdiction of this state. Additional examples include bogs, catch basins, creeks, drainage ditches, drainage wells, ponds, sewer drains, storm drains, surface risers, swamps, and wetlands. A manure discharge to a conveyance to waters of the state should also be reported to the Pollution Emergency Assistance System within 15 minutes of the discharge.

2. What does direct presence mean (for fertilizer to pesticides or fuel)?

Direct presence means that if a spill or discharge occurs, the products could mix and be difficult to recycle or to be properly disposed.

3. What is a mercury manometer?

Milking systems have vacuum lines that remove and transport milk from cows udders to a bulk tank. As part of this system, vacuum gauges, or manometers, measure pressure in the vacuum line. Mercury manometers are rarely seen any more due to health, environmental, and liability issues.

4. Is an outhouse ok?

When allowed by the local health department, outhouses or privies should normally be located at least 50 feet from private wells and 75 feet from type III public wells.

5. When is a farm divided by a road considered two separate farms?

The farm is considered to be one farm if the property on both sides of the road is owned by the same owner, or the property of both "farms" is contiguous. The land bases of two farms must be separated by a parcel of land not owned by the same landowner. A farm may have one land base for their Livestock and Cropping Verifications, but two for Farmstead if the two farmsteads are separated geographically.

6. How must a farm be defined to be MAEAP verified?

MAEAP recognizes the agricultural diversity of Michigan, both in commodities and in farm size. Generally, a farm interested in MAEAP verification produces a product that is sold. But there are exceptions such as a horse boarding stable that is selling/renting the space for boarding the horses and has associated pastures, dirt lots, manure storage, etc. Another exception is the farm associated with an educational organization such as an MSU research farm or a high school career center greenhouse. However, target farms are not retail establishments that do not produce their own product - like the greenhouse area of a Wal-Mart where plants are purchased and resold, or an auction barn where the livestock is not owned and does not reside on site and is just "moved through". A personal garden would not be a target for MAEAP; however a Community Garden, where crops are grown and sold, could be, even if small. Many small size "farms" develop into larger farms. Beginning farmers often expand their operations. We want all of these groups to use sound environmental practices. The "mix" of large and small farms should not be a determination made solely by a technician. The strategy for working with local farms

should be a component of the resource concerns identified by the conservation district and the goals established by the conservation district board of directors.

## **Pesticides**

1. What components should a drift management plan have?

The plan should comply with MDARD Regulation 637. See the MAEAP Technician Resources website for a Drift Management Plan template or see MSU Bulletin E-2342, Recordkeeping System for Crop Production.

## **Livestock**

1. Is a livestock pen inside a barn considered a lot?

No. Livestock system question 5.06 addresses buildings with bedded manure packs. The livestock pens are generally a lower risk than a dirt lot because they have a roof that prevents runoff and leaching of manure nutrients.

2. Is the non-vegetated area around a livestock waterer in a pasture considered a lot?

No. Livestock question 7.05 addresses water tank and feeding areas in pasture. They should be rotated to different areas of the pasture or permanent areas should have manure removed to prevent concentration of nutrients.

3. What constitutes roof runoff?

Roof runoff is precipitation that falls on the roof of a building. This water is considered clean unless it flows through an area that contains manure or other potential environmental contaminants. Clean water can be diverted and disposed of in any manner that works for the producer. Roof runoff water that comes in contact with a potential contaminant must be stored or sent to some sort of treatment such as a filter strip or cropped area depending on the volume of water and the concentration of nutrients. Roof water runoff that has become contaminated must never be discharged to surface waters, flow onto a neighboring property, or run to a low area and pond.

## **PROGRAM**

1. How does Safe Food A Syst relate to MAEAP?

A slight overlap exists between the Safe Food A Syst and MAEAP environmental risk assessments, especially if the farmer is using manure. An even greater overlap exists with some of the third party audits that look closer at pesticides and associated practices and record keeping. By addressing these risk concerns through the Safe Food A Syst, a farmer has already begun addressing environmental risks and may be an interested candidate for eventual MAEAP verification. In many counties, access to growers of direct market fruits and vegetables is an introduction to a segment of local agriculture not traditionally involved with local conservation districts. Working with the Safe Food A Syst, and the associated interest in locally grown foods and the food system, can be a “foot in the door” to introduce MAEAP.

2. Who do I contact for new copies of the ASyst tools?

Contact Stacy Smith via email at [smiths58@michigan.gov](mailto:smiths58@michigan.gov). In Stacy’s absence, contact Heather Casteel at [casteelh@michigan.gov](mailto:casteelh@michigan.gov).

3. Who do I contact for RUP credit information and application?  
For RUP credit and application information for completing Farm and/or Crop A Syst(s), go to the MAEAP Technician tab at the bottom of the [www.macd.org](http://www.macd.org) website home page. You can find the information under both the Farmstead and the Cropping tabs. The MAEAP verifiers complete the application form for RUUP credits associated with MAEAP verification.
4. How does MAEAP benefit the farm? Most farmers don't fully understand Right to Farm, GAAMP's, how MAEAP ties it together, and how MAEAP can protect them. Both the [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org) and the [www.macd.org](http://www.macd.org) MAEAP Technician areas contain information regarding how MAEAP benefits farms. At [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org), go to the Get Verified tab, and then click on Verification Pays. Also check out the Newsroom for several promotional pieces that will help you speak to the MAEAP advantages. At [www.macd.org](http://www.macd.org), you can find information under the Marketing & Outreach tab. For your specific question regarding Right to Farm, MAEAP verified farms are minimally in conformance with the Right to Farm (RTF) Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). The RTF program is a complaint/response program. MAEAP is a proactive environmental assurance program.
5. Who do I contact for MAEAP supplies?  
Contact Heather Casteel via email at [CasteelH@michigan.gov](mailto:CasteelH@michigan.gov).
6. Who do we send marketing materials to so that they can be posted to the MACD website?  
Send the request and associated materials to Stacy Smith at [SmithS58@michigan.gov](mailto:SmithS58@michigan.gov). In Stacy's absence, send to Jan Wilford at [wilfordj9@michigan.gov](mailto:wilfordj9@michigan.gov).
7. What are the Lake Erie Algae Bloom concerns?  
There are several concerns with the algal blooms that have been appearing over the last several years in Lake Erie. The major concern is about the long term degradation of the water quality in the lake. After approximately 20 years of continued improvement in the health of the lake, the rise of soluble phosphorous in the lake shows a reverse trend, and thus is a concern. This has an effect on the entire ecosystem, and is creating a hypoxic zone (low oxygen area) that is altering the biomass of the lake, affecting everything from the beginning of the food chain all the way up to the largest predators.

In the short term, the algal blooms, which can last for weeks or in excess of a month create health concerns for bathers due to potential toxicity issues with the blooms as well as rendering the lake practically unusable for other recreational activities including boating, fishing, diving, and other water sports. Since these occur during some of the recreational peak time periods, it is having an impact estimated into the billions on the overall lakeside economies of the area.