

## Protecting source water: planning is everything

The *Clean Water Act* allows the development of a community-based Source Protection Plan. This plan is designed to protect the quality and quantity of water sources by preventing contamination in the first place. Source protection plans are developed on a watershed-by-watershed basis and are tailored to the unique circumstances of each community.

### *A community effort*

One key to designing a successful source water protection plan is to involve all the local leaders and members in the watershed community. Stakeholders might include town and county governments, industry and business leaders, environmental groups, farmers, planners, academics, First Nations and just about anyone interested in maintaining the long term quality and quantity of a community's source water. For more information, or to get involved in your community planning call your local conservation authority or go online: [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)



Photo: Telfer Wegg

## Greenbelt Protection Plan

Ontario has set aside 1.8 million acres of environmentally sensitive land including agricultural areas in the Golden Horseshoe. One of the key goals of the Greenbelt Protection Plan is to protect and preserve the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater used by millions of Ontarians. The Greenbelt will provide a buffer against development, protecting farming and ecological features such as wetlands, forests and rivers.

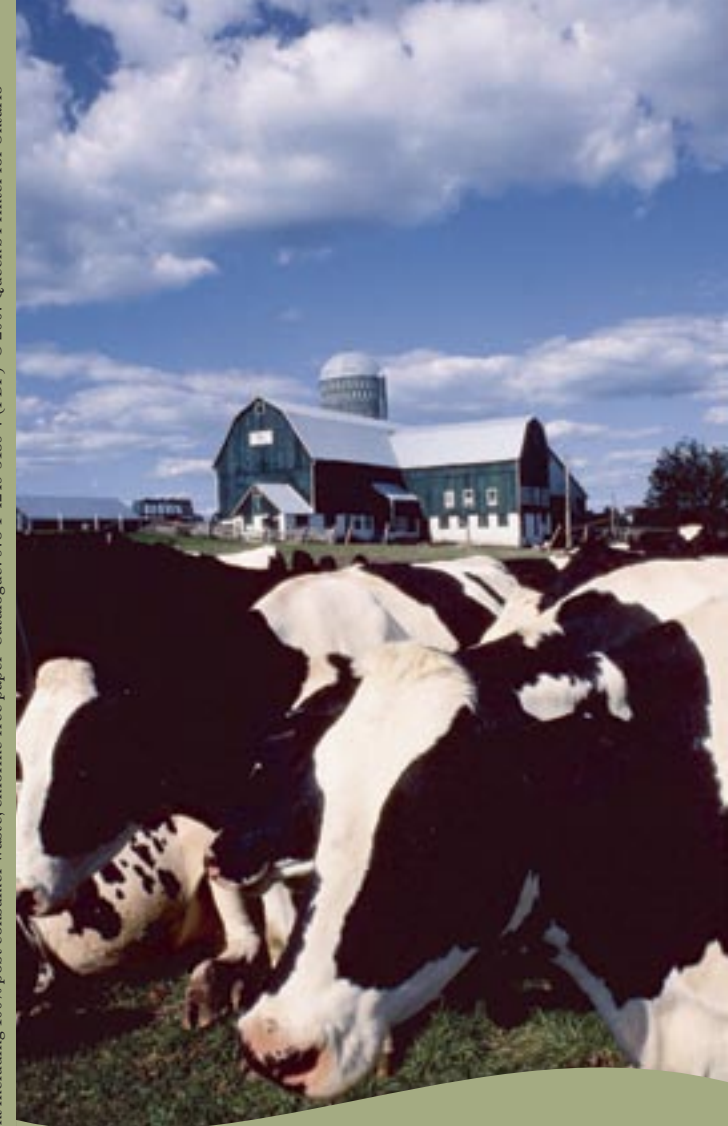
For more information  
about protecting and preserving  
Ontario's source water visit:

[www.ene.gov.on.ca/water](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/water)

or call

1-800-565-4923

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## Keeping water clean in rural Ontario

Protecting our environment.



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## We are all part of the water cycle

Thousands of small towns, farms and rural businesses depend on clean, safe water every day. In communities where drinking water comes from your own well and waste is handled by septic systems, people have a personal stake in keeping their water safe. The province of Ontario is working with farmers, property owners and businesses to protect water quality in rural Ontario.



## Keeping water safe down on the farm

Farmers are good stewards of the environment. More and more agricultural operations are implementing Best Management Practices to find viable ways to protect water sources.

Some Best Management Practices include:

- maintain a wide vegetative cover along streams, ditches and runoff channels to prevent erosion, and to filter nutrients and sediment
- prevent livestock from entering ponds, rivers, etc. and provide them with an alternative water supply
- properly manage confined animal facilities and manure storage sites
- implement appropriate waste management systems to prevent runoff from major sources of animal wastes
- properly apply biosolids and other nutrients to fields
- implement Integrated Pest Management techniques



## Wells and septic systems: small scale infrastructure

Private well owners have a responsibility to understand basic well maintenance and operation. That includes taking necessary steps to keep our wells safe and operating properly.

Keep contaminants away from the wellhead, including chemicals and petroleum products, fertilizers or pesticides and pet wastes.

Keep the wellhead free of debris and brush. Check the well cap regularly for damage and ensure the sanitary seal is secure and watertight. Maintain the well casing by checking for structural defects and use backflow prevention devices.

For your own health and safety, test well water at least three times a year for bacteria. Always test water after major plumbing work or after a flooding.

Septic systems also require special attention. If a septic system isn't maintained properly it can create contamination problems. Septic systems should be located a safe distance from wells and pumped out regularly. Don't pour toxic chemicals into your system; dispose of them at a hazardous waste depot in your area.

Disposal options for septage from septic beds and holding tanks include sewage treatment plants and land application. The Ministry of the Environment is working with municipalities and the private sector to develop treatment technologies and capacity to safely treat and dispose of septage.