

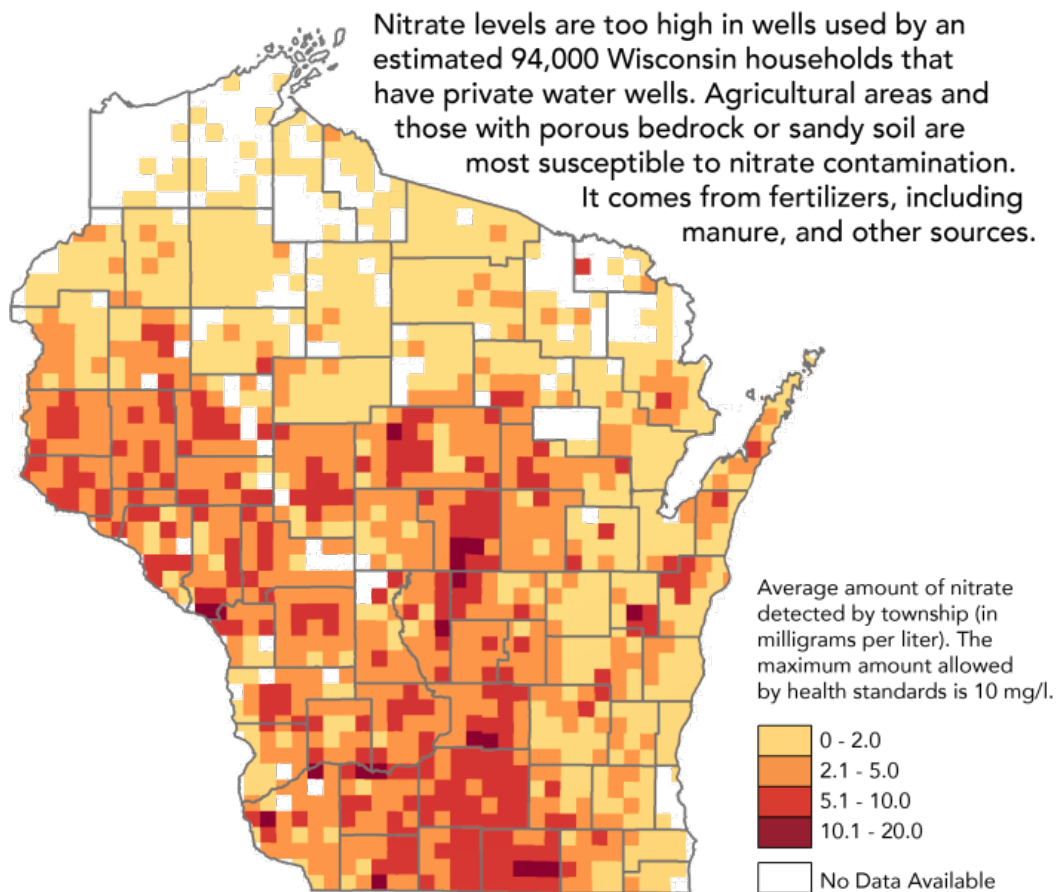


WELL WATER QUALITY

ENSURING CLEAN WATER FOR ALL WISCONSINITES

An estimated 1.8 million Wisconsin residents — over 30% — rely on well water as their primary drinking water source. Unfortunately, from a quarter to a half of those wells do not meet safe drinking water standards due to excess bacteria or nitrates. Bacteria such as *E. coli* and *Cryptosporidium* can sicken humans and livestock. Nitrates can cause spontaneous abortions in cattle and “blue baby syndrome” in infants.

Nitrate in drinking water around Wisconsin



CREDIT: Katie Kowalsky/Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

SOURCE: Well Water Quality Viewer, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Center for Watershed Science and Education. Private Drinking Water Quality in Rural Wisconsin, Journal of Environmental Health, 2013.

For too long, rural residents have been presented with a false choice between the economy and clean water.

Wisconsin Farmers Union believes that it is possible to have both clean water and thriving rural economies. Urban dwellers do not have to choose between their livelihoods and safe drinking water. Rural residents should not have to do so either.

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PROTECTING OUR GROUNDWATER WHAT CAN THE STATE DO?

Governor Evers declared 2019 the year of clean drinking water during his state of the state address. In January, Speaker Vos announced a Water Quality Task Force. The ultimate goal of these initiatives should be to ensure that ALL Wisconsinites can drink clean, safe water straight from their tap; a goal that requires an ambitious long-term plan to transform our approach to water protection in Wisconsin.

The following are modest steps forward for improving well water quality for Wisconsin's farm and rural families:

↑ Private Well Testing and Compensation – AB-21 (Shankland): This bill would create a fund to make private well testing more affordable, increase the number of households eligible to participate in the Well Compensation Grant Program for contaminated wells, and allow well owners to seek compensation from the fund for wells contaminated with nitrate, even if the well is not used for livestock.



Farmers for Tomorrow Producer-led Watershed Group, 2018.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support Governor Evers' \$70 million bonding measure to fund clean water initiatives through DNR and DATCP.
- Fund regularly updated county-by-county groundwater maps so that water policies can be backed by science.
 - Add 1 position (\$150,000 - \$200,000 per year) at the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey to conduct mapping activities.
 - Provide \$2.5 million per year in grants to counties to support their mapping and groundwater studies.
- Continue funding the Producer-Led Watershed Grant Program at \$750,000 per year.
- Adequately staff and increase funding for CAFO permitting and oversight functions at the DNR.
- Fully fund staffing grants for county-based land and conservation staff at \$12.4 million per year.

