When you support Extension, farmers learn best management practices that improve water quality.

Contact:
Agriculture and Natural Resources
N-122 Agricultural Science Building North
Lexington, KY 40546-0091
(859) 257-1846

http://www2.ca.uky.edu/anr/about_us.htm

Filter strips are one BMP for water quality at the James Farm in Fayette County. “As farmers, it is our responsibility to be stewards of the land and make sure it is there for the future.” John James, Fayette County Producer


Producers create and implement individualized water quality plans according to their operation that include the farmstead, crops and livestock, streams, forest, and pesticide use and storage.
The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act was passed in 1994 and requires farms 10 acres or greater in size to have a water quality plan developed and implemented to protect water resources. Despite the law being in place for more than 20 years, many farmers are not aware of the requirement. Specialists from Agriculture Extension Programs and Agricultural Communications developed and produced three promotional videos encouraging farmers to develop and implement water quality plans. The videos feature Kentucky farmers who successfully balance water quality plan implementation with production agriculture, and leave the viewer with information on how to develop a plan for his/her farm.

Mark Turner, Ohio County, includes wildlife borders, filter strips, waterways, and sediment control basins in his diverse farming operation. He has plans that involve his farmstead, crops and livestock, stream, forested areas, and pesticide use and storage. He accesses state and federal financial assistance to protect water resources, improve water and soil quality, and save time and money. https://youtu.be/mwih_Zurlko

The James Farm, Fayette County, implemented cover crops to increase his yields, improve soil organic matter, and reduce water runoff. Despite initial cost for cover crops, the farm has improved the economic bottom line by reducing fertilizer costs, improved water infiltration rates, and reduced runoff. https://youtu.be/AxUbTFmXiO0

Jim Morse, Franklin County, transitioned to beef cattle production after the tobacco buyout. He uses rotational grazing, protected stream crossings, and limited livestock access to water bodies as best management practices to protect water quality and enhance production. He has used local, state, and federal financial assistance programs to install practices on his farm. https://youtu.be/sHZ_SEBPR5k

Videos were widely distributed via social media to educate farmers/landowners about the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act. Combined social media contacts include 5,175 views over six months. The videos were also distributed to county Extension agents, watershed coordinators, agency personnel, and other agriculture professionals for use in their respective educational programs. Videos will continue to be utilized by the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Authority as part of an on-going, statewide educational effort to bring Kentucky farms into compliance with the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.

Farmers often perceive water quality protection practices as added work to their already limited schedules. The farmers in these videos explain how they were able to balance production agriculture with conservation practices for a win-win on their farms. These videos spread good practices through social media to expand the reach of Extension.

“We do everything we can to keep the water quality good. We are at the top [of the hill], everything rolls downhill from here. Anything that I can do to keep the soil and water here is only going to be to my benefit.” Jim Morse, Franklin County Producer

“The Ag Water Quality Act has six parts to it, so it addresses different situations on your farm. Conservation is really high on our list here. We do not have that much land, and we are getting more people, so we need to take better care of the land we have. I think I can do my part to save the soil I have.” Mark Turner, Ohio County Producer