

**For Immediate Release:**

**Contact:**

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**Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program  
Technical Assistance with:  
Emergency Planning for the Farm**

**Portage, Michigan:** Linda Zabik, the Groundwater Technician with the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, would like to see more Michigan Emergency Tubes available to first responders at Kalamazoo County farmsteads. The message is simple: The more information that response crews have when arriving on the scene of an emergency, the better they can protect the safety of humans, animals, and the environment.

Most farm chemical users are knowledgeable in the safe use and handling of chemicals, but few are prepared to manage an accidental pesticide or fertilizer spill, release or fire. Incidents involving farm chemicals may range from a few leaking containers to vehicle accidents, fires or large spills. You must know your responsibilities, your options for action, and the laws and guidelines governing a spill or release.

One tool available to farmers is the Michigan Emergency Tube to assist emergency crews if they need to be on your farm. Inside the Michigan Emergency Tube is a detailed plan describing your building locations, chemical/fertilizer storage, sources of water, location of livestock and machinery, electrical breakers, land features, and fire concerns such as fuel tanks and compressed gas. The weather resistant tube must be clearly visible to emergency crews entering your farmstead. The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program distributes the Michigan Emergency Tube and provides the technical assistance necessary to ensure that all of the required information is provided on the plan. In addition, coordination of the location of the tube is determined by local officials to ensure that the first responders entering onto the property are familiar with the Michigan Emergency Tube and its contents.

Developing an emergency plan for your farm has many benefits: You will learn more about your farm chemicals and how to handle accidents involving them. Even if you are not present, others will be able to follow the plan to manage a situation. By keeping a copy of the plan in the Michigan Emergency Tube, you will be providing critical information for your local emergency first responders. The emergency plan can also help meet your obligations under SARA Title III. Not only large farm operations should complete emergency planning but small hobby farms could also benefit and should have an emergency plan if hazardous materials are on site.

Emergency planning on farms is an important addition to services provided by the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship agriculture program. It's the kind of thing we should all be involved with, it benefits everyone involved. If you live in Kalamazoo County and would like more information on emergency planning, please call Linda Zabik at the Kalamazoo Conservation District office at (269) 327-1258 ext. 4 or email [linda.zabik@mi.nacdnet.net](mailto:linda.zabik@mi.nacdnet.net).