

Rural groundwater agreement signed

Agriculture Canada has signed an agreement with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) to conduct a rural groundwater survey across Ontario.

The survey is being conducted to determine the quality and safety of farm families' drinking water, and to determine the effects of agricultural management on the quality of groundwater.

This initiative will cost about \$700,000, and is being funded by Agriculture Canada's \$1.8 million Environmental Sustainability Initiative (ESI), a component of Canada's Green Plan.

OSCIA field inspectors will test up to 1,500 farm wells for bacteria, nitrate and pesticides, and samples will be analyzed by a number of cooperating agencies.

The University of Waterloo's Centre for Groundwater Research will help identify risk areas and sites, and will play a major role in compiling and analyzing all data. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Resource Management Branch will be used to access existing land use and soil map data, and its Pesticide Residue Laboratory will conduct the pesticide analysis. The University of Guelph's Centre for Land and Water Stewardship will conduct nitrate analysis while the Ontario Ministry of Health will perform the bacterial analysis. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment will be available for consultation throughout the study.

Results from the project will be available by the summer of 1992.

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