

# Water Testing for Nitrate Levels

## Free, confidential water testing!

Henry, Mercer and Rock Island counties are offering free, confidential water testing for private landowners and farm operators.

- Sample containers should be clean and free of any residual chemicals or detergents
- Samples need to be at least 8 ounces
- Samples should be taken as close to the testing time as possible (preferably within 48 hours) and be kept refrigerated if not being tested immediately
- Samples can be frozen if testing will take place after 48 hours
- An estimate of the flow will allow additional calculations (load in lbs. /day) – simply record the seconds it takes to fill up a 2 gallon bucket. **Limited supply of 2 gallon buckets are available at each office.**

Water to be tested can be collected from field tiles, streams or ponds. The testing and results are for private land owners or operators only. **This test is free and confidential; we will not keep your results.** We will provide the results along with a sheet you may use to keep track of your results on.

## Test Your Farm's Water

This program was designed to engage farmers in the nutrient and water quality issues facing agriculture by providing information on possible nutrient losses from their production operations. The sensors are being provided in part by IL Corn Growers Association and the Zea Mays Foundation. They are meant to provide a way for farmers and landowners to confidentially test their water (tile, ditch, and stream) for nitrate nitrogen. By comparing their own water testing results to other known concentrations and research results, farmers can begin to understand their own impact on water quality and consider management practices which may reduce their losses. These results are simply a snapshot in time of ambient nutrient levels in water collected from tile drainage, surface runoff or nearby streams. Nutrient levels in runoff water can vary greatly depending on the time of year, temperature, rainfall and in-field practices. A measurement of flow (the volume of water leaving a site) would also be needed to determine the total nutrient loading into a waterbody and a measurement of acreage being drained would be needed to know the pounds per acre leaving the field. These test results are just a starting point for learning and for discussion of the practices available for farmers to reduce their nutrient losses.



## Where and When to Go

### Henry County

#### Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

301 East North Street  
Cambridge, Illinois 61238  
Contact Alley  
309-937-3377 ext 113

### Rock Island County

#### Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday

3020 First Ave E.  
Milan, IL 61264  
Contact Rich  
309-764-1486 ext 3

### Mercer County

#### Every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday

308 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Aledo, IL 61231  
Contact Carman  
309-582-5153 ext 101