

460.302 Agricultural drainage wells.

1. An owner of an agricultural drainage well shall register the well with the department of natural resources by September 30, 1988. The department of agriculture and land stewardship, in cooperation with the department of natural resources, shall adopt rules, pursuant to [chapter 17A](#), which provide for an appeals process for violations of [this subsection](#).

2. An owner of an agricultural drainage well and a landholder whose land is drained by the well or wells of another person shall develop, in consultation with the department of agriculture and land stewardship and the department of natural resources, a plan which proposes alternatives to the use of agricultural drainage wells by July 1, 1998.

a. Financial incentive moneys may be allocated from the financial incentive portion of the agriculture management account of the groundwater protection fund created in [section 455E.11](#) to implement alternatives to agricultural drainage wells.

b. An owner of an agricultural drainage well and a landholder whose land is drained by the well or wells of another person shall not be eligible for financial incentive moneys pursuant to paragraph "a" if the owner fails to register the well with the department of natural resources by September 30, 1988, or if the owner fails to develop a plan for alternatives in cooperation with the department of agriculture and land stewardship and the department of natural resources.

3. The department shall:

a. (1) On July 1, 1987, initiate a pilot demonstration and research project concerning elimination of groundwater contamination attributed to the use of agricultural chemicals and agricultural drainage wells. The project shall be established in a location in north central Iowa determined by the department to be the most appropriate. A demonstration project shall also be established in northeast Iowa to study techniques for the cleanup of sinkholes.

(2) The agricultural drainage well pilot project shall be designed to identify the environmental, economic, and social problems presented by continued use or closure of agricultural drainage wells and to monitor possible contamination caused by agriculture land management practices and agricultural chemical use relative to agricultural drainage wells.

b. Develop alternative management practices based upon the findings from the demonstration projects to reduce the infiltration of synthetic organic compounds into the groundwater through agricultural drainage wells and sinkholes.

c. Examine alternatives and the costs of implementation of alternatives to the use of agricultural drainage wells, and examine the legal, technical, and hydrological constraints for integrating alternative drainage systems into existing drainage districts.

4. Financial incentive moneys expended through the use of the financial incentive portion of the agriculture management account may be provided by the department to landowners in the project areas for employing reduced chemical farming practices and land management techniques.

5. The secretary may appoint interagency committees and groups as needed to coordinate the involvement of agencies participating in department sponsored projects. The interagency committees and groups may accept grants and funds from public and private organizations.

6. The department shall publish a report on the status and findings of the pilot demonstration projects on or before July 1, 1989, and each subsequent year of the projects. The department of agriculture and land stewardship shall develop a priority system for the elimination of chemical contamination from agricultural drainage wells and sinkholes. The priority system shall incorporate available information regarding the significance of contamination, the number of registered wells in the area, and the information derived from the report prepared pursuant to [this subsection](#). The highest priority shall be given to agricultural drainage wells for which the above criteria are best met, and the costs of necessary action are at the minimum level.

7. Beginning July 1, 1993, the department shall initiate an ongoing program to meet the goal of eliminating chemical contamination caused by the use of agricultural drainage wells by January 1, 1995, based upon the findings of the report published pursuant to [subsection 6](#).

8. Notwithstanding the prohibitions of [section 455B.267](#), [subsection 4](#), an owner of an

agricultural drainage well may make emergency repairs necessitated by damage to the drainage well to minimize surface runoff into the agricultural drainage well, upon the approval of the county board of supervisors or the board's designee of the county in which the agricultural drainage well is located. The approval shall be based upon the following conditions:

a. The well has been registered in accordance with both state and federal law.

b. The applicant will institute management practices including alternative crops, reduced application of chemicals, or other actions which will reduce the level of chemical contamination of the water which drains into the well.

c. The owner submits a written statement that approved emergency repairs are necessary and do not constitute a basis to avoid the eventual closure of the well if closure is later determined to be required. If a county board of supervisors or the board's designee approves the emergency repair of an agricultural drainage well, the county board of supervisors or the board's designee shall notify the department of natural resources of the approval within thirty days of the approval.

[87 Acts, ch 225, §303](#)

[CS87, §159.29](#)

[88 Acts, ch 1188, §1](#); [90 Acts, ch 1027, §1 – 4](#); [94 Acts, ch 1198, §32](#); [96 Acts, ch 1219, §65](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1137, §68, 71](#); [2002 Acts, 2nd Ex, ch 1003, §260, 262](#)

[C2003, §460.302](#)

[2011 Acts, ch 25, §143](#); [2021 Acts, ch 80, §293](#); [2023 Acts, ch 64, §78](#)

Referred to in [§456B.11](#), [460.204](#), [460.304](#), [558.69](#)