



## Protecting Groundwater Quality Focus of Ag Week TV Special

How agriculture is working to protect our nation's most valuable resource – water – is the subject of the ninth annual National Agriculture Week television special.

"American Farmers . . . Guarding our Groundwater" airs on 118 stations March 18 to 24, National Agriculture Week. National Agriculture Day is Tuesday, March 20. The TV special is presented by DowElanco.

"The groundwater quality issue has received considerable attention," says John Hagaman, president, DowElanco. "It's not too hard to point out potential and real problems. What's harder is to investigate and show what's being done about it. And there is a great deal being done. In addition to being our largest industry, agriculture is one of our most responsible industries. DowElanco wants to show that."

The TV special includes interviews with farmers, scientists, extension agents, legislators, medical doctors and chemical industry representatives. While both sides of the sometimes emotional issue are presented, viewers will likely come away with these conclusions:

- Groundwater contamination is, as yet, a problem limited to a relatively small number of underground wells.
- It is a problem that must be studied, monitored, resolved.
- All segments of agriculture are working together to do just that before a major problem erupts.

Following several segments that introduce and explain the groundwater quality issue, the TV special presents the proactive response of agriculture.

Rep. David Osterberg, chairman, Iowa House Agriculture Committee, explains an education effort in his state promoting

conservation tillage, crop rotation and applying precise amounts of fertilizer.

Agronomists Jerry Mannering and Lloyd Owens discuss the importance of stabilizing nitrogen to prevent runoff and make more nutrient available to the growing plant.

Two farmer-inventors from Illinois demonstrate their invention, the "soil doctor," a computer-guided nitrogen applicator that applies the precise amount of fertilizer the soil needs, no more.

In a final segment, Bob Thornberg, Iowa State University, discusses a biotech solution for the longer term: insect, viral and pest resistant plants, which will cut down on the need for pesticides.

National Association of Farm Broadcasters president and program narrator Lynn Ketelsen concludes: "Our most precious resource.. water certainly is. No one knows that better than the American farmer, who relies on water for his crops, who drinks it right out of the well, right from the land.

"Is the use of agricultural chemicals environmentally sound? Most of those in agriculture and science believe it is, if used correctly. Others are not so certain. The debate will go on.

"But as we've seen, it is those in agriculture, industry and farming itself who are taking the initiative to use chemicals more selectively, more carefully – and with a deeper regard than ever for our most precious resource.

"Each year, during National Agriculture Week, we say 'hats off to the men and women who make up our biggest industry, American agriculture. They work hard to be productive, yes, but just as importantly, work hard guarding our groundwater."

Farm broadcasters featured in the pro-

gram include Wade Wagner, KGAN, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Dix Harper, WRAL, Raleigh, N.C.; Ed Johnson, Agri-Broadcasting Network, Columbus, Ohio; and Colleen Callahan, WMBD, Peoria, Ill.

Check local listings for the time and channel in your area.

