

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Inc.

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For Immediate Release - December 19, 2016
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Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers to Inform Local Leaders *Grassroots Trade Association Publishes Water Fact Book*

[ANTIGO – DECEMBER 19, 2016] Members of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) are working every day to preserve and protect Wisconsin's water. Over the next few months growers will be presenting factual, scientific information to local governmental bodies throughout Central Wisconsin in order to keep environmental discussions focused on science and facts.

"WPVGA members are environmental stewards who are committed to working with our neighbors to advance sound, science-based policies that protect Wisconsin's groundwater," said WPVGA Executive Director Tamas Houlihan. "We welcome opportunities to develop and promote responsible water use practices that will protect the groundwater aquifer of the Central Sands and its associated streams, lakes and wetlands."

The WPVGA has compiled a *High Capacity Well Fact Book* of relevant scientific research that focuses on the actual impact irrigated agriculture has on the aquifer and surface water in areas like the Central Sands region of Wisconsin. This fact book is the basis for their member-given presentations which will take place over the next few months before the Portage, Marquette, Wood, Waushara, Adams and Waupaca County Boards.

"The fact is, studies show irrigated agriculture returns more water to the stream flow than non-irrigated agriculture or non-crop landscapes," said Houlihan. "We remain committed to finding science-based solutions to preserve and protect this precious resource and we support efforts that focus on facts, not rhetoric."

A copy of the *Fact Book* can be downloaded at WisconsinWaterFacts.com.

About the process of irrigation:

The process of irrigation lifts pumped water from the deep aquifer and deposits it on cropland via center pivot irrigation. From there, the pumped water that is not utilized by the plants infiltrates back into the same aquifer from which it was withdrawn. Thus the plants are supplied with water from the deep aquifer rather than solely from the shallower transient surface water. It is that transient water that feeds streamflow.

Materials contained within the WPVGA presentation include studies that document that the static groundwater table is not diminished by the pumping required for irrigated agriculture because of the high rate of recharge from precipitation in the region. "DNR studies show that there is greater recharge under irrigated vegetable crops than there is with alternative land covers such as coniferous trees, deciduous trees or grasslands," Houlihan said.

About Wisconsin Agriculture:

- Agriculture contributes \$88 Billion to Wisconsin's economy
- Provides employment for 827,000 people
- Each job supports 1.4 indirect positions in related industries
- Wisconsin ranks 3rd in potato production and 2nd in processed vegetables
- The Central Sands region is a key area for potato and vegetable production and food security.

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