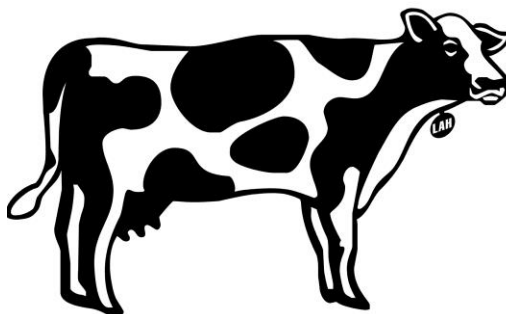


Nitrates

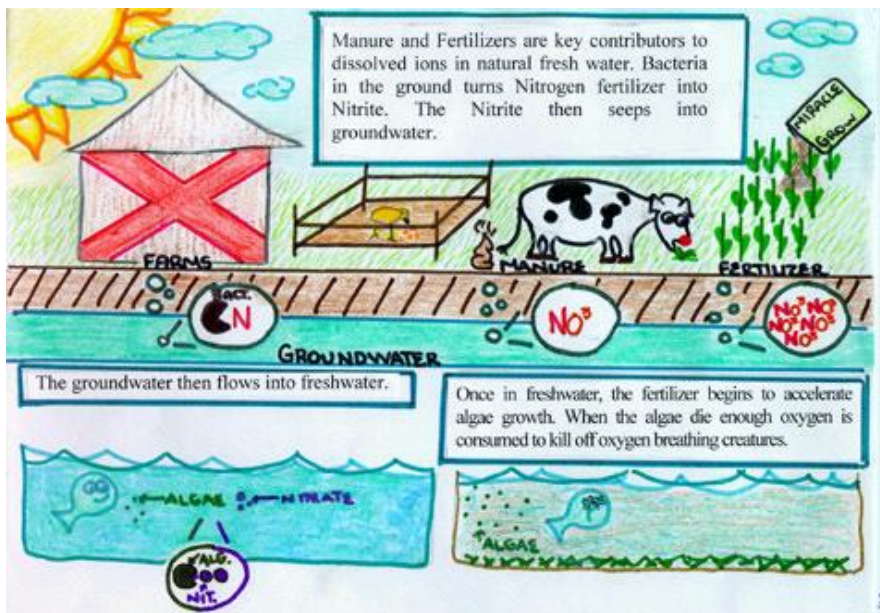
Where do nitrates come from?

Nitrates may come from fertilizers or from human or farm animal wastes. In some cases, house septic systems in rural areas leak waste into the ground. This waste should be filtered by the soil around the septic system. However, this does not always happen. Therefore, groundwater can become polluted by nitrates in the wastewater. High levels of nitrates may make some people sick, especially young babies. This can happen to people when they drink directly from groundwater wells where the water has too many nitrates.



What happens when nitrates enter the water system?

Because nitrates are nutrients like phosphorous, the effects of nitrates on water are almost the same. Like phosphorous, extra nitrates in water lead to rapid plant growth. The tiny plants grow quickly and then die. They sink to the bottom of the water where bacteria decompose them. This process is called eutrophication. This uses up oxygen and creates a biochemical oxygen demand (B.O.D.).



What are nitrates?

Nitrates are some of the most common elements in the world. All living plants and animals need it to build proteins. Nitrates and phosphorous are nutrients. They can be found in plant fertilizers.

