

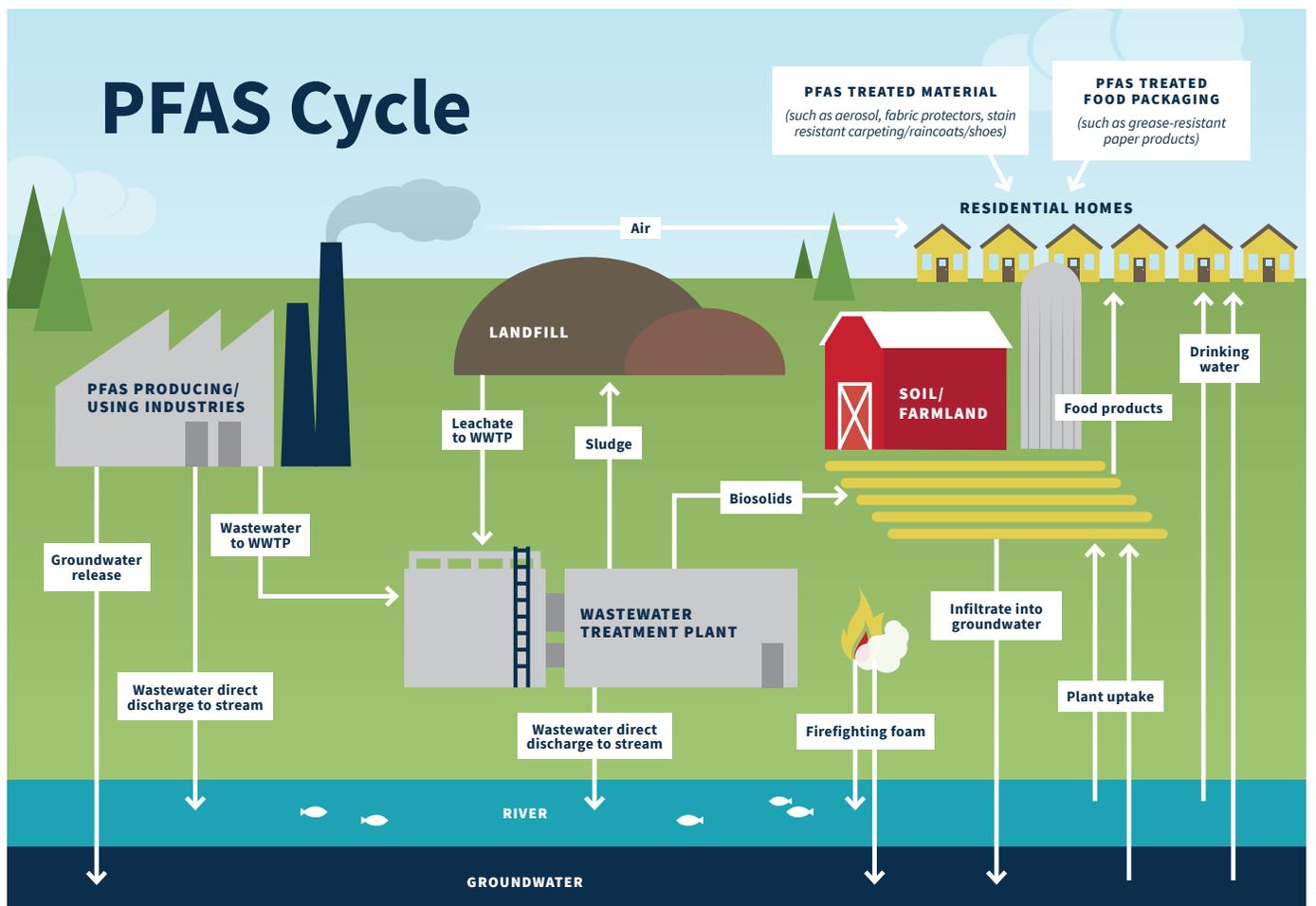
Support Farmers Impacted by PFAS Contamination

Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is a class of synthetic organofluorine compounds that includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFAS) and perfluorooctanesulfate (PFOS). There are thousands of PFAS chemicals in use in industry. There is no known way to remove PFAS from land and water that has been contaminated. PFAS are dangerous chemicals that can cause major health problems including impacts to the immune system, hormones, liver, cholesterol levels, pregnancy and fetal development, and risk of cancer.

The primary ways that PFAS get into water and soil are from manufacturing industries, transportation, public safety, and military sectors, especially where firefighting foams are used. PFAS contamination

on farmlands is often due to the historic spreading of municipal wastewater sludge as a fertilizer by farmers who were unaware it was contaminated. The majority of PFAS testing has been on water, and very little soil testing has been done globally. Few labs test for PFAS in soil, and there are no standards, thresholds, or guidelines yet established regarding safety thresholds for PFAS in agricultural soils.

With PFAS increasingly being detected in water on a growing number of farms in New England, it is imperative that measures are put in place to improve access to soil testing for PFAS, assist farmers in cases of contamination in their area, and ramp up research efforts into how different crops uptake PFAS from soils and water. States will also need to configure how



This diagram demonstrates the life cycle of PFAS chemicals and how they have come to contaminate farmland soils.

to establish safe PFAS consumption levels for people and livestock and develop effective soil remediation approaches. This will include developing guidelines for best land use approaches for farmland found to have PFAS contamination above future safety thresholds established by state or federal agencies.

Priorities

- ▶ Financial Assistance
 - Improve financial and technical assistance for farmers who have suffered losses or incurred costs resulting from confirmed or suspected presence of PFAS in soil, water, or products.
 - Establish PFAS relief funds to be spent on direct financial assistance for farmers, testing assistance/public infrastructure, farmer health, and farmland remediation.
 - Set aside funds for PFAS testing on urban farms and for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color producers.
- ▶ Exempt land removed from agriculture due to contamination from conveyance or rollback tax associated with the states' current use law.

- ▶ Require testing for PFAS of all biosolids used for land application, including those transported from composting facilities.
- ▶ Create transparency around PFAS contamination of compost, fertilizer sources, and locations where PFAS has historically been applied.
- ▶ Increase state-sponsored research on plant uptake of PFAS from both soil and irrigation water contamination, differences in concentration of PFAS in agricultural products (ex: milk vs. fruits vs. leafy greens), and trials into remediation methodology.
- ▶ Develop pilot programs based off trial-promising strategies for reducing leaching of PFAS contamination from soil, such as utilization of biochar amendments, and approaches to soil remediation and reduction of crop transfer risk from PFAS contamination.

Relevant New England Programming

- ▶ [New England Climate and Agriculture Program](#)