



## Regional and Local Pesticide and Ground Water Monitoring Results, 2019

ISDA Technical Summary #60

Curtis A. Cooper, PhD

March 2020

### Abstract

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Ground Water Program implements the Idaho Pesticide Management Plan (PMP) (2001), and the Rules Governing Pesticide Management Plans for Ground Water Protection (IDAPA 02.03.01) (Idaho PMP Rule). The Idaho PMP Rule requires the ISDA to conduct monitoring and response actions associated with pesticide detections in Idaho ground water, and to help prevent further contamination that may result in exceeding drinking water standards. ISDA staff collected samples from 255 wells from major aquifers throughout Idaho in 2019. These wells are primarily used for domestic drinking water. ISDA submitted ground water samples to be tested for more than 100 pesticides or their breakdown components at the Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory (IFQAL), Twin Falls, ID. The testing methods at IFQAL allow pesticides to be detected at low levels; these pesticides detected in drinking water do not indicate a health risk until reference points are exceeded. A sub-set of select wells was also tested for 82 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC).

There were measurable detections of pesticides in 93 of the 255 monitored wells. On average, at wells with pesticides detected, the concentrations were at 3% of the reference point, which falls into the Level 1 response category. Over 98% of the wells tested fall into or below the Level 1 response category of the Idaho PMP Rule, these detections should be at levels protective of human health. Five wells, and three different pesticides, were found with pesticide concentrations above the Level 1 response category. One well, near Greencreek, ID had detectable pesticide concentrations that were greater than half the recommended levels (Level 3 category) for the measured Triallate concentrations. There were 4 detections at the Level 2 category. One of the Level 2 detections was for a well in the Lewiston, ID area with Desethyl atrazine at 33% of the reference point. Two of Level 2 category detections were for Dacthal concentrations near Homedale, ID, both at 20% of the reference point. One well with measured concentrations of the herbicide Triallate near Ashton, ID was at 20% of the reference point or a Level 2 response category. There were decreases in 2019 in most of these wells/pesticides since 2017. All of these wells are discussed in more detail below and in Annual Technical Summaries. Other wells near these locations do not have these pesticide concentrations, indicating that these are isolated problems. No well monitored in 2019 exceeded a drinking water standard or reference level.

In eastern Idaho, the project developed and initiated in 2015 changed into a long-term project to monitor for Methyl bromide and its breakdown components and the potential ground water impacts at wells near locations within the Pale Cyst Nematode Eradication Program Area. There were no measured pesticides or their breakdown products associated with the nematode eradication program in these wells. Baseline data collection was initiated in 2019 in the Upper Teton Valley and near Juliaetta, ID. No pesticide concentrations of concern were identified in the first year of monitoring in these baseline project areas.

Currently, there are no indications that appropriate and widespread application of pesticides are leading to contamination of the aquifers or impacts to beneficial uses. However, there are widespread detections of pesticides in both shallow and deep wells throughout the State of Idaho. Additionally, data from 2017 & 2018 suggest that there may be residual reservoirs of pesticides in the soil column. It is unknown to what extent or magnitude might be in these potential pesticide reservoirs and what their effects might be on the ground water quality. Long-term monitoring is required to ensure that the current application and management practices are effective.

## Introduction

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Ground Water Program implements the Idaho Pesticide Management Plan (PMP) (2001), and the Rules Governing Pesticide Management Plans for Ground Water Protection (IDAPA 02.03.01) (Idaho PMP Rule). The Idaho PMP Rule requires ISDA to conduct monitoring and response actions associated with pesticide detections in Idaho ground water, and to promote preventative actions that will minimize ground water contamination that may result in drinking water exceedances. Regional and local pesticide ground water monitoring has been conducted throughout numerous aquifers in Idaho. Monitoring of over two hundred wells occurred in 2019 in the following counties: Ada, Bingham, Bonneville, Canyon, Caribou, Cassia, Elmore, Franklin, Fremont, Gem, Gooding, Idaho, Jefferson, Jerome, Kootenai, Latah, Lewis, Madison, Minidoka, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Payette, Teton, Twin Falls, Washington.

The goal of the monitoring is to statistically determine the potential impacts to ground water and to conduct response monitoring in areas where there have been frequent and elevated detections. Each project is designed to capture representative samples and data for that specific area. The response monitoring to implement the PMP rule has been accomplished to develop a better understanding of the impacts from registered active ingredients that have been detected in Idaho, in addition to protecting the drinking water of the citizens of Idaho.

The samples collected from 255 wells were tested for 107 pesticides at the Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory (IFQAL) in Twin Falls, ID. ISDA has worked with the IFQAL to create a specialized list of analytes that are registered for use in Idaho and have potential to reach ground water. A 29 well subset was tested for 82 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) at the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) in Boise, ID. This VOC test suite is not limited to pesticides, but also includes other chemicals in the standard request. None of those identified non-pesticide chemicals (if any) are discussed in this document. ISDA has water samples tested for a variety of pesticides; the term pesticides is used in a general sense and is inclusive of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.

The project instituted in 2015 in the Idaho Falls/Shelley Pale Cyst Nematode area was continued in response to concerns of Methyl bromide application to eradicate the pale cyst nematode. ISDA is monitoring the ground water in wells near the application areas. Samples were submitted to IFQAL to analyze the pesticide suite and to the IBL for analysis for VOCs and various anions (bromide, chloride and sulfate). This is a United States Department of Agriculture led eradication program and ISDA's involvement is to monitor the ground water to ensure Rules Governing Pesticide Management Plans for Ground Water Protection (IDAPA 02.03.01) (Idaho PMP Rule) are being met. A new project was developed in the Upper Teton Valley (807), and the Latah Regional Project was expanded into the Juliaetta, ID area. No significant pesticides were detected in either of these projects. Monitoring will continue to develop long-term baseline monitoring.

## Background

The Division of Agricultural Resources Ground Water Program is responsible for a variety of programs, laws and rules for protection of ground water from pesticides. ISDA has a cooperative agreement with US EPA to implement the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

The Idaho PMP and the Idaho PMP Rule require the state to respond to pesticide detections in Idaho ground water. The state response, as outlined in these two documents, is based on four distinct levels established by pesticide detection concentrations as they relate to a percentage of a reference point. A reference point is based on a health standard, such as a maximum contaminant level (MCL), lifetime health advisory level (HAL), drinking water equivalent level (DWEL), human health benchmark for pesticides (HHBP), or reference dose (RfD). Idaho has adopted the EPA's MCLs in the Idaho Ground Water Quality Rule (1997). An MCL is defined by US EPA as the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water and is an enforceable standard. Appendix A details the reference point selection and sources used by ISDA.

The Idaho PMP Rule divides pesticide detections into the following levels:

**Level 1:** Detection above the laboratory detection limit to less than 20% of the reference point.

**Level 2:** Detection at 20% to less than 50% of the reference point.

**Level 3:** Detection at 50% to less than 100% of the reference point.

**Level 4:** Detection at or greater than 100% of the reference point.

ISDA response actions increase and become more comprehensive as the detection level increases. The majority of the detections are lower in concentration, therefore most response efforts are related to education and promoting Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to proper pesticide use, storage, disposal and protection of ground water quality. This report describes the monitoring results and the associated concentrations through time.

## Regional and Local Pesticide Monitoring Results by Project

Regional and local pesticide ground water monitoring has been conducted throughout numerous aquifers in Idaho. There are currently 30 Project areas (Table 1). Two-hundred fifty-five (255) wells were monitored in the following 25 counties in 2019: Ada, Bingham, Bonneville, Canyon, Caribou, Cassia, Elmore, Franklin, Fremont, Gem, Gooding, Idaho, Jefferson, Jerome, Kootenai, Latah, Lewis, Madison, Minidoka, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Payette, Teton, Twin Falls, and Washington counties. Pesticide concentrations were at measurable levels in the following 20 counties: Ada, Bingham, Bonneville, Canyon, Caribou, Cassia, Elmore, Franklin, Fremont, Gooding, Idaho, Jefferson, Jerome, Latah, Minidoka, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, and Washington counties.

**Table 1. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Sampling of ISDA Regional Projects (255 total wells).**

Project Number and Name	Number of Wells Sampled
220: Lower Boise Regional Project	10*
223: Roswell Local Project	1*
300: Latah Regional Project	16
310: Owyhee County Local Project	7
320: Ashton Area Local Project	2
330: Nez Perce County Local Project	1
340: Fruitland Area Local Project	4
460: Preston Regional Project	3
490: Grace Regional Project	3
530: Eagle Area Local Project	5
710: Washington and Payette Counties Regional Project	14
730: Minidoka County Shallow Aquifer Regional Project	15
740: Minidoka County Deep Aquifer Regional Project	7
750: Jerome-Gooding-Lincoln Counties Regional Project	7
770: Payette and Gem Counties Regional Project	7
780: Twin Falls County Regional Project	13
790: Cassia County Regional Project	15
805: Middle Henry's Fork Central Basin Regional Project	9
807: Teton River Subbasin Project	16
810: Elmore County Local Project	5
820: Rathdrum Prairie Regional Project	10
830: Mud Lake Regional Project	5
840: Bonneville Regional Project	13
842: Idaho Falls/Shelley PCN Project	18*
845: Blackfoot-American Falls Regional Project	11
860: North Owyhee County Regional Project	6
865: Grand View and Bruneau Areas Regional Project	5
870: Northern Gooding County (Bliss) Regional Project	5
890: Hammett and Glenns Ferry Areas Regional Project	5
950: Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project	17

\* Volatile Organic Compounds also collected in this project area, EPA 532.2, Idaho Bureau of Laboratories.

## Water Quality Findings

In 2019, 255 wells were tested for pesticides in regional and local project areas. Ninety-three (93) wells out of the 255 wells sampled had positive detections. There were 26 different pesticides, metabolites or breakdown products or VOCs detected in 2019 (Table 2).

Twenty-six different types of pesticides, their metabolites or other toxins were detected at IFQAL, or in the VOC samples tested at IBL (Table 2 and Figure 1). There were 155 pesticide detections (and 1 other toxin) in those 93 wells. Of the 93 wells found with measurable pesticide concentrations, 54 wells had 1 measurable pesticide. There were 25 wells that had 2 measurable pesticide concentrations, 9 wells with 3 measurable pesticide concentrations, 4 wells with 4 measurable pesticide concentrations, and 1 well with 9 measurable pesticide concentrations (Figure 2).

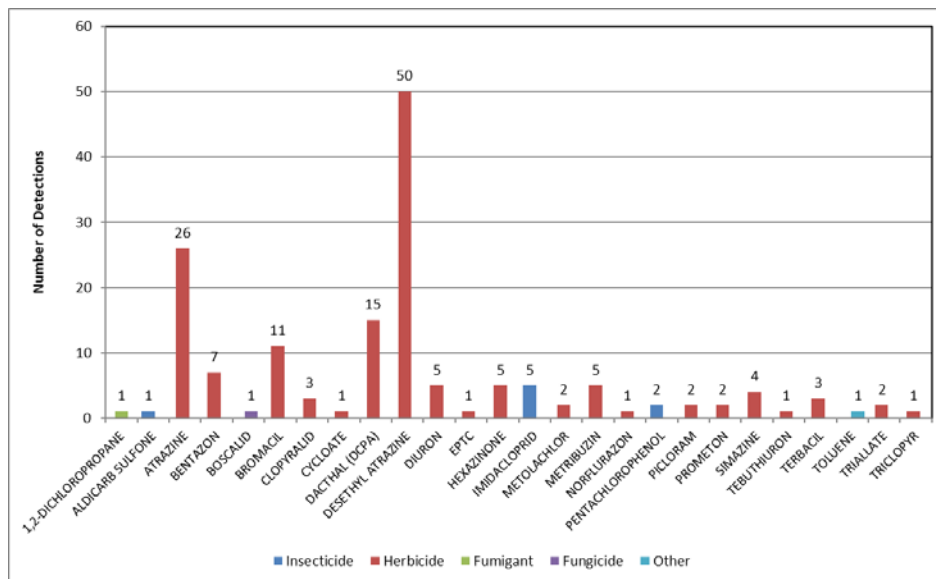


Figure 1. Breakdown of pesticide detections and type in Idaho's ground water.

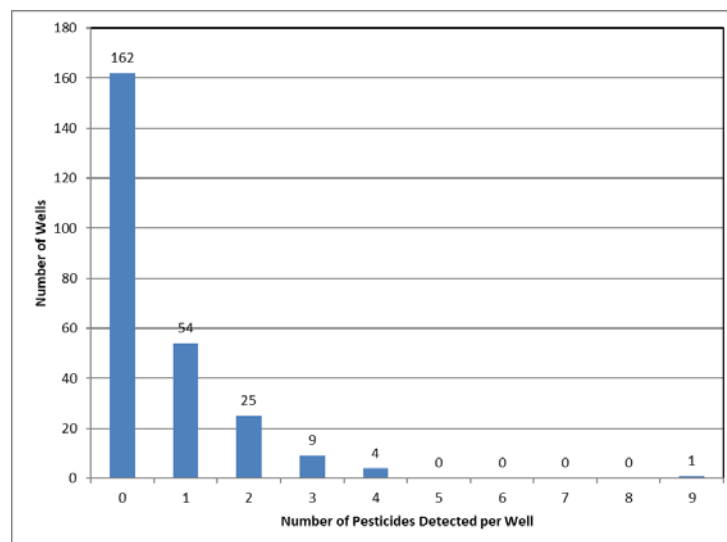


Figure 2. Number of pesticides detected in the 255 wells monitored in 2019.

**Table 2. Summary of Pesticide Detections from ISDA Regional Projects in 2019.**

Pesticide	Number of Detections	Maximum (µg/L)	Average (µg/L)	Minimum Detection Limit (µg/L)	Reference Point (µg/L) and Source	County with Detection and Number
1,2-Dichloropropane	1	0.640	0.640	5	5 -- MCL	Canyon (1)
Aldicarb sulfone	1	0.063	0.063	2	2 -- MCL	Ada (1)
Atrazine	26	0.110	0.057	3	3 -- MCL	Canyon (2), Cassia (6), Elmore (2), Fremont (1), Gooding (1), Jefferson (1), Minidoka (3), Nez Perce (2), Owyhee (1), Payette (2), Twin Falls (5)
Atrazine (sum of products) *	54	1.088	0.126	---	---**	---
Bentazon	7	0.530	0.203	200	200 -- HAL	Minidoka (1), Owyhee (1), Payette (3), Washington (2)
Boscalid	1	0.200	0.200	1400	1400 -- HHBP	Caribou (1)
Bromacil	11	6.000	0.848	70	70 -- DWEL	Cassia (1), Elmore (3), Minidoka (2), Payette (1), Twin Falls (2), Washington (2)
Clopyralid	3	0.560	0.287	960	960 -- HHBP	Caribou (1), Fremont (1), Idaho (1)
Cycloate	1	1.000	1.000	30	30 -- HHBP	Minidoka (1)
Dacthal (DCPA)	13	14.000	5.107	70	70 -- HAL	Canyon (2), Owyhee (10), Payette (1)
Desethyl atrazine	50	1.000	0.107	3	3 -- MCL	Ada (4), Canyon (3), Cassia (6), Elmore (3), Franklin (1), Fremont (1), Gooding (1), Jefferson (1), Jerome (1), Minidoka (3), Nez Perce (2), Owyhee (5), Payette (5), Twin Falls (8), Washington (6)
Diuron	5	0.140	0.060	100	100 -- DWEL	Elmore (1), Minidoka (2), Nez Perce (1), Bingham (1)
EPTC	1	1.300	1.300	300	300 -- HHBP	Minidoka (1)
Hexazinone	5	6.500	1.349	400	400 -- HAL	Ada (2), Cassia (1), Minidoka (2)
Imidacloprid	5	0.065	0.042	360	360 -- HHBP	Caribou (1), Cassia (1), Jefferson (1), Minidoka (1), Bingham (1)
Metolachlor	2	0.300	0.194	700	700 -- HAL	Caribou (1), Minidoka (1)
Metribuzin	5	2.800	0.624	70	70 -- HAL	Ada (1), Jefferson (2), Minidoka (1), Bonneville (1)
Norflurazon	1	0.040	0.040	96	96 -- HHBP	Elmore (1)
Pentachlorophenol	2	0.120	0.108	1	1 -- MCL	Idaho (1), Minidoka (1)
Picloram	2	4.200	2.275	500	500 -- MCL	Owyhee (1), Latah (1)
Prometon	2	0.310	0.173	400	400 -- HAL	Franklin (1), Minidoka (1)
Simazine	4	0.110	0.062	4	4 -- MCL	Cassia (1), Minidoka (3)
Tebuthiuron	1	0.065	0.065	500	500 -- HAL	Fremont (1)
Terbacil	3	0.240	0.137	90	90 -- HAL	Ada (3)
Toluene***	1	0.630	0.630	N/A	N/A	Bonneville (1)
Triallate	2	3.700	2.295	4.46	4.46 -- HHBP	Fremont (1), Idaho (1)
Triclopyr	1	0.170	0.170	300	300 -- HHBP	Latah (1)

\*Summation of Atrazine, Desethyl atrazine and Deisopropyl atrazine. All three are not always detected together.

\*\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

\*\*\*Not a pesticide, but identified during VOC test.

The Idaho PMP Rule outlines processes to protect ground water from pesticides and defines pesticide detections based on the concentration of the detection compared to a reference point. The reference points used by ISDA to implement the PMP Rule, and referred to throughout this document, are discussed in more detail in Appendix A. The PMP Rule divides the pesticide detections into detection levels as a percent of reference points. The majority of the detections can be classified into the Level 1 category (Table 3). Level 2 detections were identified for Desethyl atrazine, Dacthal and Triallate (Table 3). The summation of the Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine did not change the response levels in any wells. There was one (1) Level 3 detection identified for Triallate (Table 3). The 2018 Level 2 detection of Dinoseb was below the detection limit in 2019. Atrazine and the Atrazine degradates (Deisopropyl atrazine and Desethyl atrazine) have similar toxicological effects. When they are identified in the same well, the detections can be combined together to determine health risk. The combined concentration of these pesticides should be below 3 µg/L to be under the reference point and be protective of human health. There were no Level 4 detections identified in 2019 (Table 3).

**Table 3. Pesticide detected relative to concentration levels as a percent of Reference Points.**

Ground Water Pesticide Concentration Level	Pesticides
Level 4 (> 100% of Reference Point)	<i>No measured pesticides at this level</i>
Level 3 (50% to < 100% of Reference Point)	Triallate
Level 2 (20 to < 50% of Reference Point)	Desethyl atrazine <sup>1</sup> , Dacthal (DCPA), Triallate
Level 1 (< 20% of Reference Point)	1,2-Dichloropropane, Aldicarb sulfone, Atrazine, Bentazon, Boscalid, Bromacil, Clopyralid, Cycloate, Dacthal (DCPA), Desethyl atrazine, Diuron, EPTC, Hexazinone, Imidacloprid, Metolachlor, Metribuzin, Norflurazon, Pentachlorophenol, Picloram, Prometon, Simazine, Tebuthiuron, Terbacil, Triclopyr

<sup>1</sup> Summation of the Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine, also as a Level 3 category for that well

## Pesticide Monitoring Results by Project

### Idaho Falls/Shelley Pale Cyst Nematode Project (842)

In 2015, a project was established south of Idaho Falls in response to concerns from the application of Methyl bromide to control Pale Cyst Nematodes. Ground water quality monitoring was instituted to determine if identifiable concentrations of Methyl bromide or its breakdown products reached the ground water. Results from the IFQAL pesticide analyte suite and the IBL VOC analyte standard suite indicate that there were no measurable concentrations of pesticides known as being used to control the Pale Cyst Nematode (Methyl Bromide or cis-1,3-Dichloropropene [Telone II]). Nor were there any detections of bromide. However, natural concentrations of bromide have been identified in nearby wells. These natural sources will need to be accounted for if bromide is ever measured in the ground water samples and wells associated within the Idaho Falls/Shelley Pale Cyst Nematode Project. In 2019, there were two low-level pesticide detections of Imidacloprid and Metribuzin.

### Elmore County Local Project (810)

Five (5) wells were sampled for pesticides in the Elmore County Local Project. All detections were below any health standards set by the US EPA or other reference points; none were above the Level 1 category. The pesticides detected were Atrazine, Bromacil, Desethyl atrazine, Diuron and Norflurazon. (Table 4). One of the five wells had no measurable levels of pesticides identified in the sample in 2019.

**Table 4. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Elmore County Local Project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Atrazine	1 (20%)	0.03	0.030	0.025	3 -- MCL
Bromacil	3 (60%)	0.74	0.450	0.050	70 -- DWEL
Desethyl atrazine*	2 (40%)	0.23	0.153	0.025	3 -- MCL
Diuron	1 (20%)	0.037	0.037	0.025	100 -- DWEL
Norflurazon	1 (20%)	0.04	0.04	0.025	96 -- HHBP

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

### Eagle Area Local Project (530)

Six (6) wells in the Eagle Area Local Project were sampled for pesticides. There were no Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) submitted in 2019, monitoring for VOCs area expected to resume on an every-other year basis to monitor for changes. The VOCs were tested due to historic detections of 1,2-Dichloropropane (1,2-DCP) and 1,2,3-Trichloropropane (1,2,3-TCP), which are breakdown products from an old formulation of a soil fumigant used in the area. Desethyl atrazine was detected in two wells in 2019, as was Hexazinone, however, Terbacil was detected in three wells in 2019 (Table 5). All pesticide detections were within the Level 1 category established by the Idaho PMP Rule and below health standards set by the EPA.

**Table 5. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Eagle Local Project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Desethyl atrazine*	2 (40%)	0.035	0.030	0.025	3 -- MCL
Hexazinone	2 (40%)	0.039	0.036	0.025	400 -- HAL
Metribuzin	1 (20%)	0.081	0.081	0.050	70 -- HAL
Terbacil	3 (60%)	0.24	0.137	0.050	90 -- HAL
Aldicarb sulfone	1 (20%)	0.063	0.063	0.050	2 -- MCL

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

### Ashton Area Local Project (320) and Middle Henry's Fork Central Basin Regional Project (805)

The Ashton Area Local Project (320) and Middle Henry's Fork Central Basin Regional Project (805) were developed to monitor baseline conditions in the ground water. However, the elevated concentrations of Triallate in one well east of Ashton led to the development of the Fremont County sub-project. Another well had detections with elevated concentrations of Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine requiring continued monitoring. Several wells in the area were selected in order to characterize the extent of elevated Triallate and Atrazine concentrations in the ground water.

Eleven (11) wells were sampled for pesticides in 2017 and three wells had positive detections (Table 6). All of the detections were below the health standards/reference points, and all but one detection was within the Level 1 category. Triallate was again detected in a well that had no detections between 2011 and 2016. In 2017 the Triallate concentration was in the Level 3 category, and in and 2018 the Triallate concentration decreased to the Level 2 category. The Triallate level remained in the Level 2 Category in 2019, as the concentration was at 20% of the reference point. However, Triallate decreased from 31% of the reference point in 2018 to 20% in 2019, after spiking at 56% in 2017. Atrazine and its breakdown product, Desethyl atrazine decreased from the Level 2 category in 2018 to Level 1 in 2019. The combined Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentration was at 12% in 2019 down from 21% in 2018. Both of these wells had historic concerns



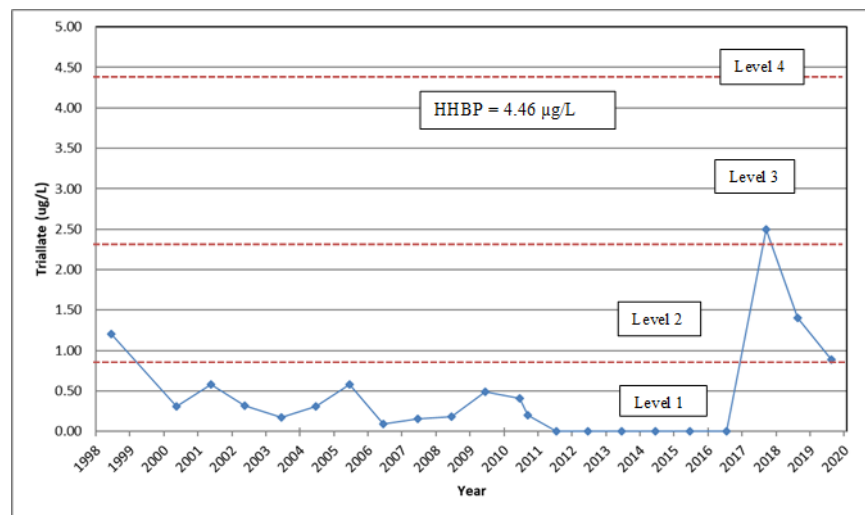
for these pesticides. A summary of the pesticide detections from the 2019 monitoring effort is presented in Table 6, and details of the two wells being specifically observed follow.

**Table 6. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Fremont County sub-project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Atrazine	1 (11%)	0.100	0.100	0.025	3 -- MCL
Clopyralid	1 (11%)	0.560	0.560	0.1	960 -- HHBP
Desethyl atrazine*	1 (11%)	0.250	0.250	0.025	3 -- MCL
Tebuthiuron	1 (11%)	0.065	0.065	0.025	500 -- HAL
Triallate	1 (50%)	0.890	0.890	0.05	4.46 -- HHBP

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

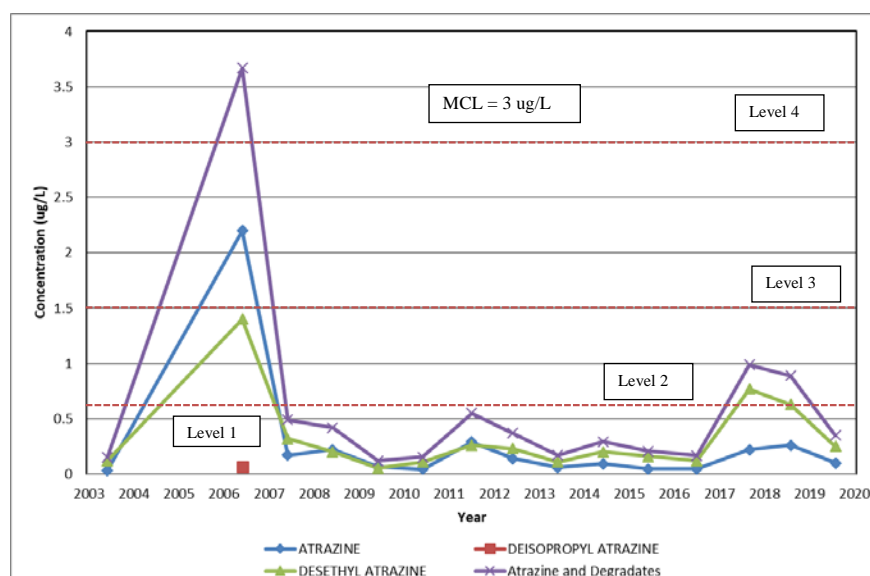
The time series data for Triallate in well 3200101 are displayed in Figure 3. Triallate is a commonly used herbicide for grain crops in eastern Idaho. Triallate had not been detected between 2011 through 2016 after being elevated since the first sampling in 1998. There is not a Drinking Water Standard (or known as the Maximum Contaminant Level [MCL]) for Triallate. The reference level is based on its carcinogenic properties; each state can determine their acceptable risk factor between  $10^{-6}$  and  $10^{-4}$ . Idaho has selected to use a  $10^{-5}$  risk factor for carcinogens. The  $10^{-5}$  risk factor would lead to a HHBP reference level of 4.46 µg/L. More information about the Triallate reference point is included in Appendix A.



**Figure 3. Time series for Triallate in well 3200101 east of Ashton, Idaho, 2019.**

Atrazine, Desethyl atrazine and Deisopropyl atrazine were first detected in well 8053501 in 2003, east of Ashton, ID (Figure 4). The original detections were considered Level 1 detections. In 2006, the concentrations detected were Level 3 Atrazine and Level 2 Desethyl atrazine detections. The combined concentrations were Level 4 concentrations. The concentrations were found to be lower in 2007 and were Level 1 detections. The concentrations were Level 1 between 2007 and 2016. In previous years, other pesticides have been detected, including Monuron and 2,4-D. In 2019, in addition to the Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine there was also a low-level detection of Clopyralid. The Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentrations are displayed in Figure 4.





**Figure 4. Time series for Atrazine, Desethyl atrazine, Deisopropyl atrazine and combined concentrations in well 8053501, east of Ashton, Idaho through 2019.**

### Fruitland Area Local Project (340)

Four wells were sampled for pesticides for the Fruitland Area Local Project in 2019. Previous elevated detections of Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine have been of concern. All four wells had positive detections of pesticides in 2019. Two wells studied through time, and monitored in 2019, continue to have Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine detections at low concentrations within the Level 1 category (Table 7). Access to wells in the 340 project have been variable, leading to inconsistent data collection.

**Table 7. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from sampling five wells for the Fruitland Area Local Project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Atrazine	2 (50%)	0.041	0.036	0.025	3 -- MCL
Bentazon	1 (25%)	0.090	0.090	0.05	200 -- HAL
Bromacil	1 (25%)	0.210	0.210	0.05	70 -- DWEL
Dacthal (DCPA)	1 (25%)	6.4	6.4	0.08	70 -- HAL
Desethyl atrazine*	3 (75%)	0.051	0.039	0.025	3 -- MCL

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

The Atrazine (Figure 5) and Desethyl atrazine (Figure 6) concentrations in wells 3400101, 3400501 and 3400801 have been tracked through time to determine if the concentrations have decreased. Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentrations in all three wells have decreased into the Level 1 category in 2008 and 2009 and have stayed at Level 1 since 2010. Atrazine, Desethyl atrazine, Deisopropyl atrazine (when present) and the summation of the Atrazine and degradates/breakdown products are presented for well 3400101 in Figure 7 and for well 3400501 in Figure 8. Well 3400101 was not monitored in 2017 and 2018, and Well 3400501 was not sampled in 2019. Well 3400801 data are presented in Figure 9. Access was limited at well 3400801 in 2015 and 2016, but was monitored in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

In general, a similar pattern of degradation and decrease in concentration has been observed for the three wells. There is not sufficient evidence to determine if this is a statistical decreasing trend using a Mann-Kendall Trend Test. The area is vulnerable to pesticide leaching due to sandy and sandy loam soils and shallow ground water.

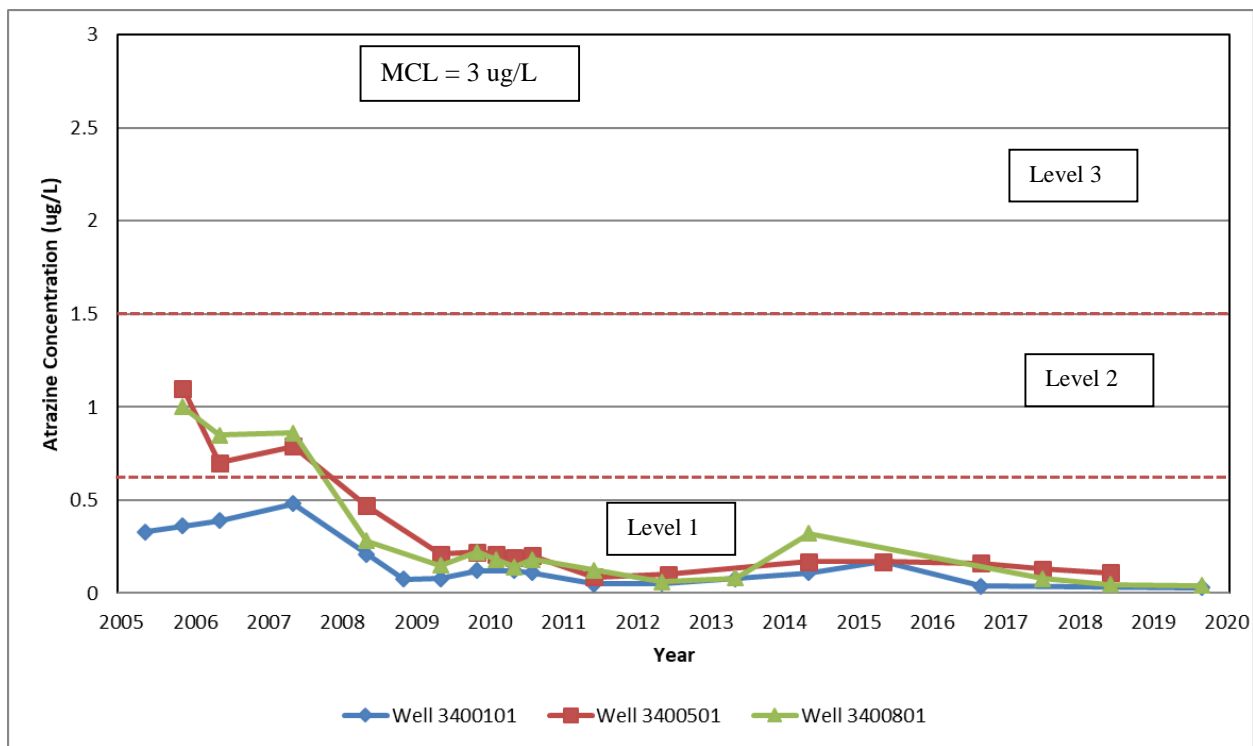


Figure 5. Time series for Atrazine in three wells sampled over time near Fruitland, Idaho.

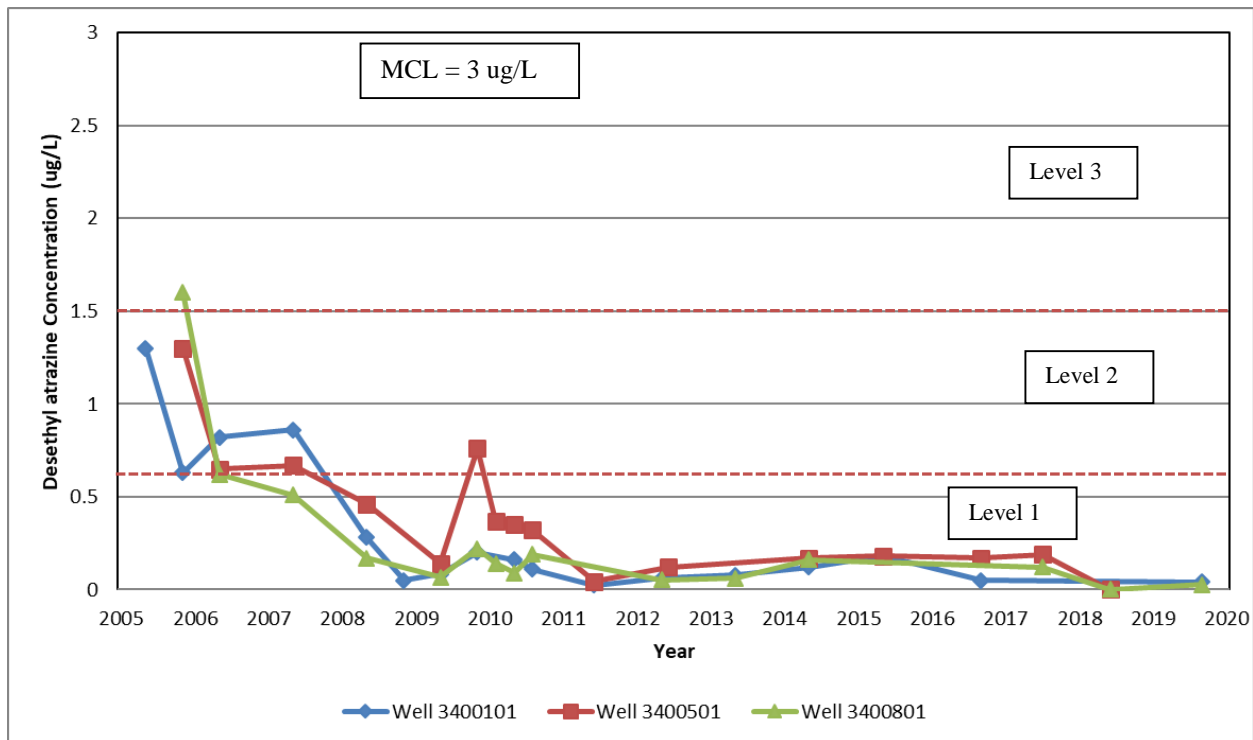


Figure 6. Time series for Desethyl atrazine in three wells sampled over time near Fruitland, Idaho.

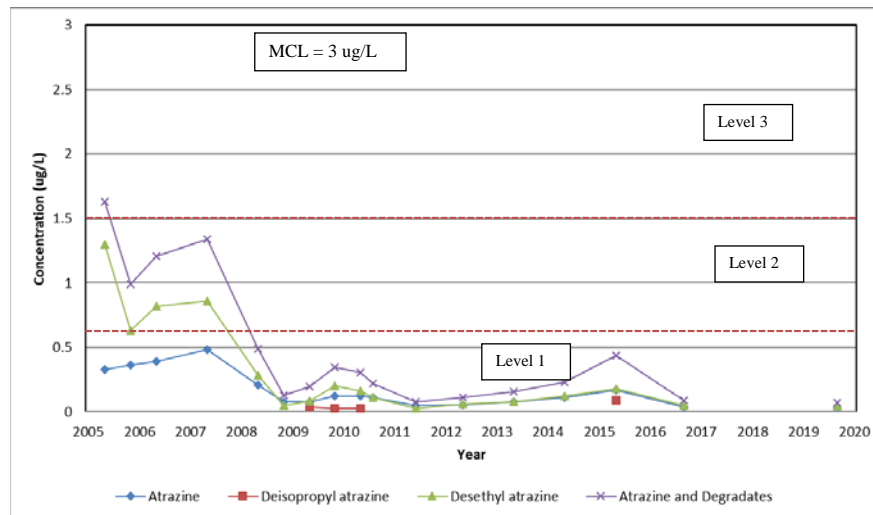


Figure 7. Time series for Atrazine and breakdown products for well 3400101 near Fruitland, Idaho.

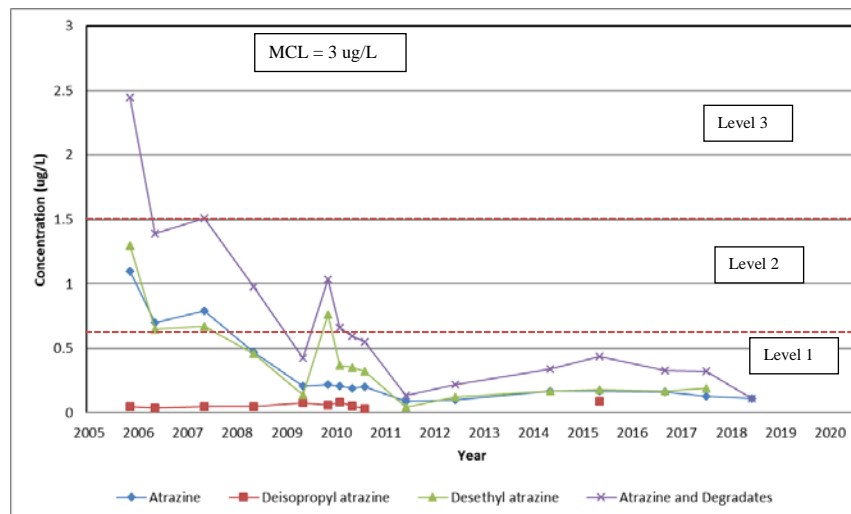


Figure 8. Time series for Atrazine and breakdown products for well 3400501 near Fruitland, Idaho.

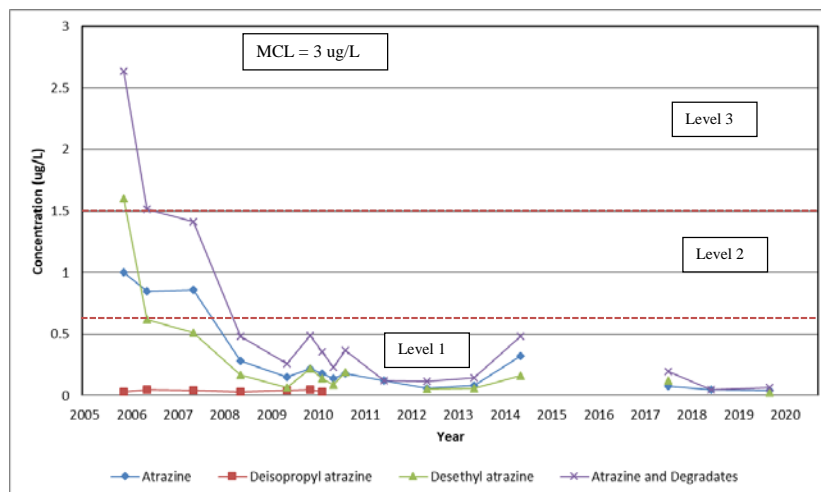


Figure 9. Time series for Atrazine and breakdown products for well 3400801 near Fruitland, Idaho.

## Washington County and Payette County Project (710)

The project is located in both Washington County and Payette County and designed to evaluate well water quality in the shallow ground water. Six of the 14 wells monitored were found to have some level of Atrazine or the breakdown product of Desethyl atrazine. All detections were below reference points (Table 8). There were detections in 7 of the 14 wells monitored. The well with 6 detections in 2018 (7100901), including the Dinoseb detection at 27% of the MCL, had only 3 pesticides detected and the Dinoseb was below the detection limit in 2019. Dinoseb has been detected sporadically in this well since 2009.

**Table 8. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from sampling wells for the Washington/Payette Project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Bentazon	2 (14%)	0.160	0.150	0.05	200 -- HAL
Bromacil	2 (14%)	0.200	0.150	0.05	70 -- DWEL
Desethyl atrazine*	6 (43%)	0.120	0.057	0.025	3 -- MCL

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

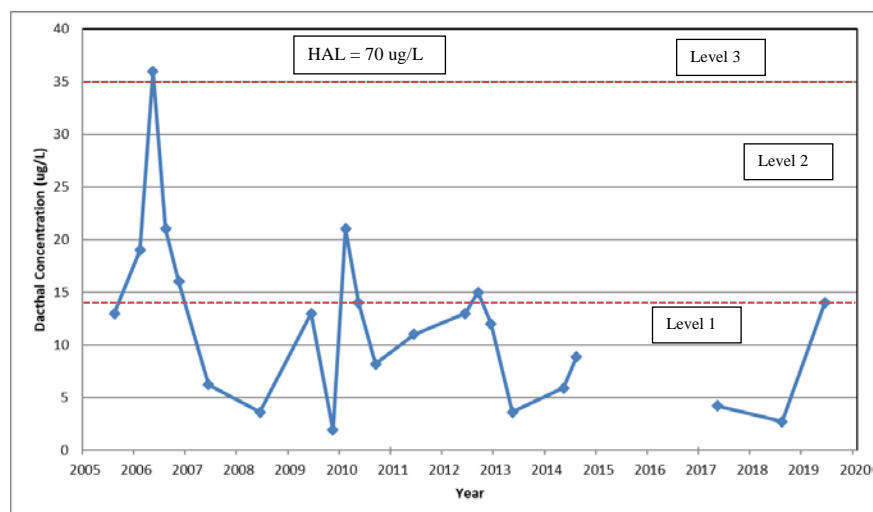
## Owyhee Local Project (310) and North Owyhee County Regional Project (860)

The projects located in northwest Owyhee County are designed to evaluate well water quality; specifically Dacthal (DCPA) concentrations through time. This area is associated with the evaluation region for the Dacthal (DCPA) PMP restricted use area that was established in 2007. Wells southwest of Homedale have been sampled in response to the elevated detections of Dacthal (Figure 10). Dacthal was prohibited from use in an area south of Homedale, near well 8601101 (Figure 11). In the Dacthal restriction area, monitoring results were inconclusive in 2015 and 2016, however monitoring in 2017, 2018 and 2019 confirmed that the identifiable Dacthal chemical form has degraded into the di-acid form. Therefore, recent monitoring results are for a Total Dacthal form, which includes the original product and the various metabolites/break-down products.

Seven wells were monitored in the Owyhee Local Project (310), four of those wells had detectable levels of Dacthal. All but one of the detections were below 20% of the reference point. The greatest detection was at 14 µg/L, which is at 20% of the reference point of 70 µg/L (Table 9 and Figure 10) and falls into the Level 2 response category. This 14 µg/L is less than the historic maximum and is within the historic variability.

**Table 9. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Owyhee Local Project (310).**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Bentazon	1 (14%)	0.53	0.530	0.05	200 -- HAL
Dacthal (DCPA)	4 (57%)	14.0	3.803	0.08	70 -- HAL
Picloram	1 (14%)	0.35	0.350	0.15	500 -- MCL

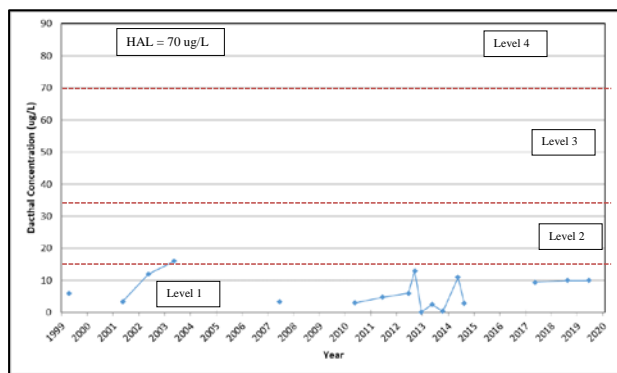
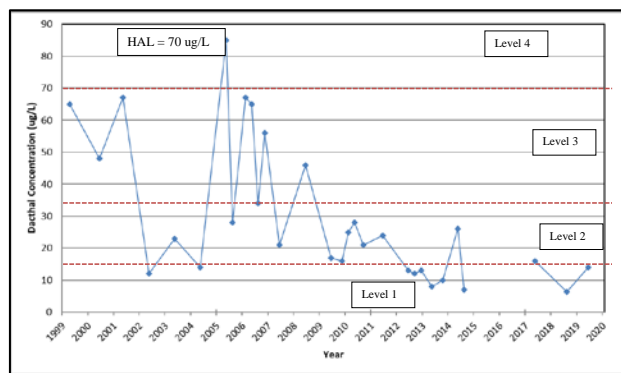


**Figure 10. Time series of Dacthal (DCPA) concentrations in well 3100201 southwest of Homedale, Idaho.**

Six wells were monitored in the North Owyhee County Regional Project (860); all six of those wells had detectable levels of Dacthal. All but one of the detections were below 20% of the reference point. The greatest Dacthal detection in Project 860 was at 14  $\mu\text{g/L}$ , which is at 20% of the reference point of 70  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (Table 10 and Figure 11), which falls into the Level 2 response category. This 14  $\mu\text{g/L}$  is less than the historic maximum and is within the historic variability. Well 8601101 has the greatest Dacthal detection in 2019 with an increase from 6.3  $\mu\text{g/L}$  in 2018, but lower than the 16  $\mu\text{g/L}$  in 2017. This 14  $\mu\text{g/L}$  Dacthal detection was in well 8601101, and is compared to well 8602001 in Figure 11.

**Table 10. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Owyhee County Regional Project (860).**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ )	Average Concentration ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ )	Lowest Detectable Concentration ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ )	Reference Point
Dacthal (DCPA)	6 (100%)	14.0	7.0	0.08	70 -- HAL



**Figure 11. Time series of Dacthal (DCPA) concentrations in well 8601101 and 8602001 southwest of Homedale, Idaho.**

## Nez Perce County Local Project (330)/Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950)

The Nez Perce County Local Project (330)/Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950) have wells interspersed from near Lewiston, ID to Grangeville, ID. The vast majority of these wells have not had measurable levels of pesticides. In 2019, 1 well was tested in the Nez Perce Local Project (330) and 17 wells were tested in the Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950). There were no pesticides identified with measurable concentrations in the well associated with the Nez Perce County Local Project (330). Four wells in the Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950) were identified with pesticide residues (Table 11).

**Table 11. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950).**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Atrazine	2 (12%)	0.088	0.057	0.025	3 -- MCL
Clopyralid	1 (6%)	0.170	0.170	0.1	960 -- HHBP
Desethyl atrazine*	2 (12%)	1.000	0.528	0.025	3 -- MCL
Diuron	1 (6%)	0.038	0.038	0.025	100 -- DWEL
Pentachlorophenol	1 (6%)	0.120	0.120	0.05	1 -- MCL
Triallate	1 (6%)	3.700	3.700	0.05	4.46 -- HHBP

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

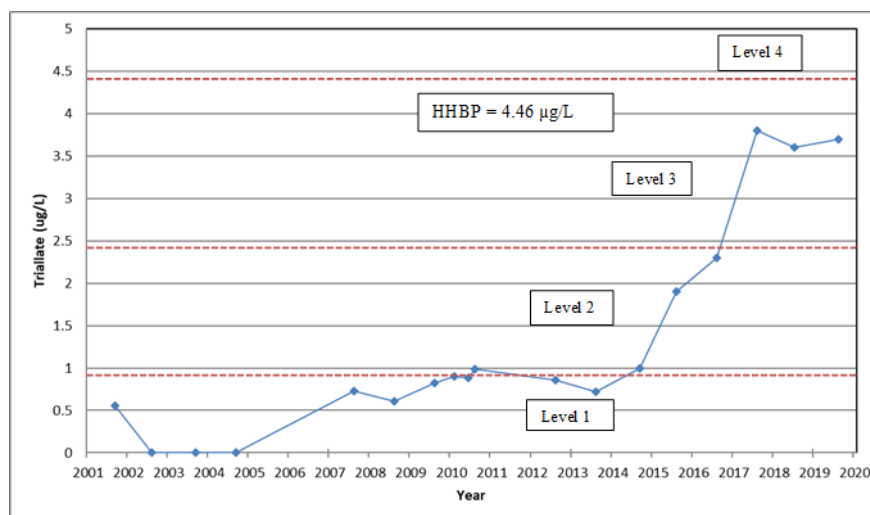
### *Greencreek Triallate sub-project*

The wells in the Greencreek Triallate sub-project are a sub-set of the Clearwater Plateau Regional Project and are specific to concerns surrounding well 9501401. Four wells north of Greencreek were sampled for pesticides in 2019 as part of the Greencreek Triallate sub-project. The Triallate detection in well 9501401 was at a Level 3 detection (a detection below the reference point). Pentachlorophenol, which was also detected previously, increased to a Level 2 detection in 2017 but decreased to a Level 1 detection in 2018 and 2019. The 2019 monitoring results for this well are presented in Table 12. It has not been concluded if these detections are due to an isolated contamination source to the ground water located near the well. Triallate has not been detected in the other wells sampled in the near vicinity and along the same road.

**Table 12. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Greencreek Triallate sub-project.**

Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Pentachlorophenol	1 (25 %)	0.120	0.120	0.050	1 -- MCL (µg/L)
Triallate	1 (25 %)	3.70	3.700	0.050	4.46 -- HHBP (µg/L)

The Triallate time series plot since July 2001 is displayed in Figure 12. The concentrations were not detected for two years after the new well was completed in 2002. However, since 2004, the Triallate concentration increased to over 1 µg/L, then decreased to less than 0.8 µg/L in 2013, and then increased to near 4 µg/L in 2017 (Figure 12). This is considered a Level 3 detection, which does not exceed the recommended levels, but concentrations have been increasing. Triallate is listed by the US EPA as a potential carcinogen; however, these are only recommended levels. It should be noted that the reference point chosen for this assessment, 4.46 µg/L, is based on a carcinogenic risk factor of  $10^{-5}$ . This updated risk factor is based upon data from the Human Health Benchmarks for Pesticides.



**Figure 12. Time-series plot of Triallate concentrations detected in well 9501401.**

### *Nez Perce County Atrazine sub-project*

The Nez Perce County Atrazine sub-project area is located south of Lewiston, ID along Waha Road. The project was initiated in response to elevated detections of Atrazine in a well from the Clearwater Plateau Regional Project. Multiple wells were sampled in this area in 2019 including well 9501901 (formerly 3300101), which historically has had elevated Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentrations. Wells up or down gradient were not identified with pesticide concentrations near those found in well 9501901. Diuron was also identified in well 9501901, but was not detected at a concentration near the reference point (Table 13).

**Table 13. Summary of 2019 Pesticide Results from the Clearwater Plateau Aquifer Regional Project (950).**

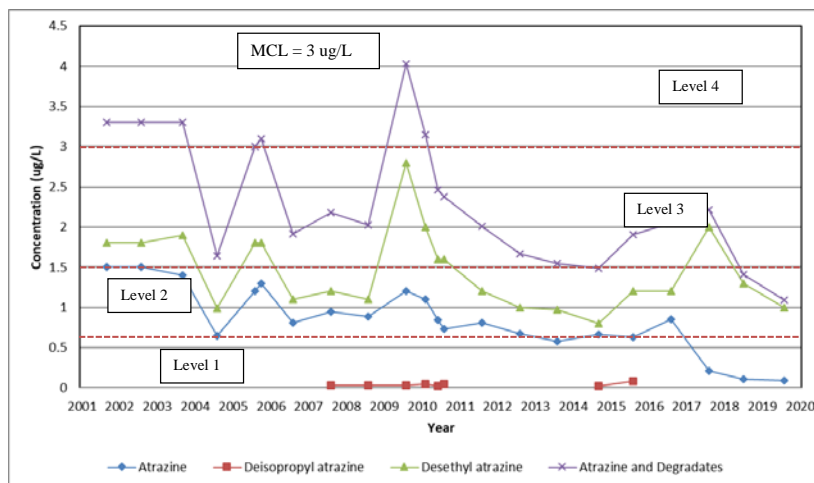
Pesticide	Detection Count (%)	Maximum Concentration (µg/L)	Average Concentration (µg/L)	Lowest Detectable Concentration (µg/L)	Reference Point
Atrazine	2 (67 %)	0.090	0.060	0.025	3 – MCL (µg/L)
Desethyl atrazine*	2 (67 %)	1.00	0.530	0.025	3 – MCL (µg/L) *
Diuron	1 (33 %)	0.040	0.040	0.025	100 – DWEL (µg/L)

\*Breakdown product of Atrazine. No reference point available, MCL for Atrazine of 3 µg/L is used.

Atrazine and its breakdown products are known to persist in ground water significantly longer than in surface water, which may account for some of these long-term concentrations. Atrazine, and the Atrazine breakdown products (Deisopropyl atrazine and Desethyl atrazine) have similar toxicological effects. When they are found in the same well, the detections can be combined together to determine health risk. The combined concentration of these pesticides should be below 3 µg/L to be under the MCL reference point to be protective of human health. Individually in 2019, Atrazine is a Level 1 category and Desethyl atrazine has decreased to a Level 2 detection, and the combined 2019 concentrations are in the Level 2 category (Figure 13). In 2016, both Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine were in the Level 2 category, with a combined concentration in the Level 3 category. In 2010, the combined concentrations were in the Level 4 category but have decreased since that time (Figure 13). Long-term data collection is required to determine if recent increases in concentrations persist. There is annual monitoring of this well, but the surrounding well data suggest that these concentrations are from an isolated source that remains unidentified. At this time the water quality does not exceed the drinking water standard. If concentrations increase, there is concern that this water may no longer be a suitable drinking water source and an alternate drinking water source should be



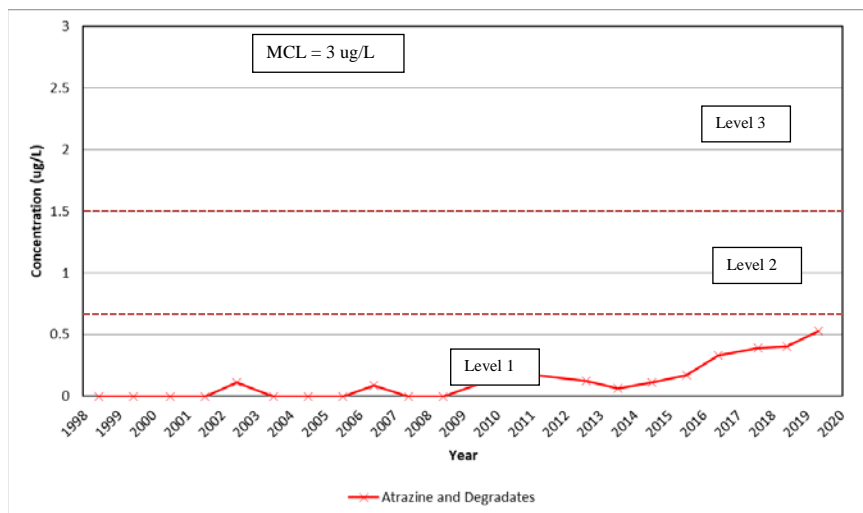
identified. However, Atrazine can be removed from drinking water by using Granular Activated Carbon systems.



**Figure 13. Time-series plot of Atrazine, Deisopropyl atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentrations detected in well 9501901.**

### **Twin Falls County Project (780) Castleford area**

In 2019 there was one well in the Castleford, ID area that was identified as having increasing concentrations of Atrazine and/or metabolites (Figure 14). The 2019 combined atrazine concentrations were measured at 0.53  $\mu\text{g/L}$  at 18% of the 3  $\mu\text{g/L}$  MCL and were all in the form of Desethyl atrazine, which is the primary form historically found in the well. Most of the detected atrazine has been in the form of Desethyl atrazine and other forms are not displayed in Figure 14. This percentage of the reference point is in Level 1. It is unknown if the increasing concentrations of atrazine and/or metabolites are more widespread and not currently being identified. There is a proposal to increase the monitoring in the Castleford, ID area in 2020 to determine the extent of the atrazine presence in the ground water. Proposed increased monitoring near to this well are precautionary, but necessary to determine the extent of the atrazine and metabolite concentrations nearby.



**Figure 14. Time-series plot of Atrazine and Desethyl atrazine concentrations detected in well 7803601 near Castleford, ID.**

## Summary

The ISDA Ground Water Program implemented a wide variety of ground water monitoring projects and protection activities related to agriculture for the State of Idaho during 2019. There are numerous distinct and active ground water projects ongoing across the state, including regional monitoring projects, local monitoring projects and Pesticide Management Plan (PMP) response monitoring projects. ISDA follows the Idaho PMP Rule to determine response actions following detections. Idaho Code requires ISDA to monitor and respond to any pesticide concentrations identified in the ground waters of Idaho, with response actions related to the percentage of the drinking water standards or reference points. Most response actions based on the identified pesticide levels are to continue monitoring, inform the homeowner and educate the public.

Of the 255 monitored wells in 2019, there were no measurable detections of pesticide residues in 162 wells, there were low-level detections in 88 wells, whereas an additional 5 wells had pesticide concentrations at concerning levels. Testing of regional, local and PMP projects resulted in detections of pesticides in ground water throughout Idaho. Frequent detections of pesticides occur from sampling domestic wells, especially in vulnerable aquifer areas. As previously discussed, the herbicide Triallate was the only pesticides detected over 50% of a health-based reference point. Triallate, Atrazine-breakdown products and Dacthal were detected at or above 20% of a reference point. ISDA is responding to those situations with education, use inspections, promotion of management techniques, and locally intensive monitoring.

There were 26 different pesticides, metabolites/breakdown products, or VOCs detected in 2019. Most were detected at low concentrations. Several pesticides appear to have increasing concentrations, such as Atrazine, in multiple wells across the state, but long-term monitoring is required to determine the magnitude and longevity of those increases. However, several wells identified in 2017 with significant increases had concentrations decrease in 2018 and 2019. Statewide response processes have been implemented, primarily consisting of educational outreach and continued monitoring. Except for the five wells with pesticide concentrations at levels of concern, pesticide concentrations are significantly below drinking water standards and recommendations. These pesticide detection data may be used to make regulatory and/or voluntary changes related to applications of pesticides.

Testing of regional, local and PMP projects resulted in detections of pesticides in ground water throughout Idaho. Frequent detections of pesticides occur from sampling domestic wells, especially in vulnerable aquifer areas. The most frequent detections occur in the shallow alluvial and basalt aquifers in Ada, Cassia, Elmore, Fremont, Idaho, Minidoka, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls and Washington Counties. There were numerous wells with multiple low level detections of pesticides. There are concerns in certain areas where multiple low level pesticides are detected in individual wells. Some wells also have detections of multiple active ingredients and breakdown products that may have similar, but unknown human health toxicological effects in their combination.

Currently, there are no indications that appropriate and widespread application of pesticides are leading to pesticide residue accumulation and contamination of the aquifers or impacts to beneficial uses. However, there are widespread detections of pesticides in both shallow and deep wells throughout the State of Idaho. Additionally, data from 2017, and the high snowpack winter and spring flooding, followed by increases in pesticide concentrations in many wells, and the subsequent decreases suggest that there may be residual reservoirs of pesticides in the soil column. It is unknown to what extent or magnitude might be in these potential pesticide reservoirs and what their effects might be on the ground water quality. Long-term monitoring is required to ensure that the current application and management practices are effective.

ISDA is conducting annual evaluations of pesticides to determine which pesticides are of greatest concern. ISDA utilizes the monitoring data, the pesticide evaluation process and the Idaho PMP Rule to determine response measures. ISDA utilizes the US EPA POINTs data assessment process during the implementation and education planning phases. Monitoring results are provided to the various state coordination committees and are being formatted for entry in the Idaho Department of Water Resources Environmental Data Management System and the US EPA STORET databases.

## **Recommendations**

ISDA will respond to the pesticide detections from this project in accordance with the response section of IDAPA 02.03.01 Rules Governing Pesticide Management Plans for Ground Water Protection. ISDA will continue to follow-up and conduct monitoring in 2020. ISDA personnel will continue to educate the pesticide applicators on the importance of adhering to label requirements and to apply all pesticides according to federal and state laws. ISDA personnel will continue to educate home and well owners. ISDA shares our data with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), US EPA, our cooperators and inspectors. ISDA will continue to monitor ground water and aquifers throughout the State of Idaho.

## **Water Program Notes**

Several project areas are being condensed, therefore there may be slight variations in the manner data are reported, but there are no alterations to the underlying data.

## **Acknowledgments**

ISDA Water Program staff would like to thank the homeowners in the Project areas who allowed us to access and sample their wells. Without their participation and cooperation, these Projects would not be possible. Prevention is the key to protecting Idaho's aquifers and maintaining pesticide registrations and uses in Idaho. We would also like to recognize the United States Environmental Protection Agency and our various grant supporters, without whose contribution, these reports would not be possible.

The program also thanks the pesticide organizations, applicators, UICES, Sherman Takatori (ISDA), ISDA enforcement staff, DEQ, SWCDs, USGS, IDWR, Idaho Water Users Association and other groups for participating in and supporting the program. We appreciate the opportunity to directly participate in educational sessions with applicators, dealers and others in the pesticide industry. Prevention is the key to protecting Idaho's aquifers and maintaining pesticide registrations and uses in Idaho.

A very special thank you goes to the ISDA Field Staff and to IFQAL staff, all of whom went above and beyond to work with the ISDA Division of Agricultural Resources staff to meet project goals. The author would like to thank Ginger Goodman of ISDA for editorial review of this document.

## Appendix A. Reference Points

Reference Points are used to determine level of concern with detected pesticides found in the ground waters. A pesticide detection is not necessarily detrimental to the use of that water for domestic and drinking water uses, depending on how those concentrations compare to the drinking water standard or a determined reference point. ISDA uses a variety of sources to determine reference points as not all pesticides (or their breakdown products) have drinking water standards, or a maximum contaminant level (MCL). An MCL is defined by the US EPA as the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water and is an enforceable standard (US EPA, 2018).

Where no MCL exists, the ISDA will use US EPA Lifetime Health Advisories (HAL), if they exist. A Health Advisory is defined by US EPA as an estimate of acceptable drinking water levels for a chemical substance based on health effects information and is not a legally enforceable standard. The Lifetime Health Advisory (HAL) is the concentration of a chemical in drinking water that is not expected to cause any adverse noncarcinogenic effects for a lifetime of exposure (based on a 70kg-adult consuming two liters of water per day) (EPA, 2018).

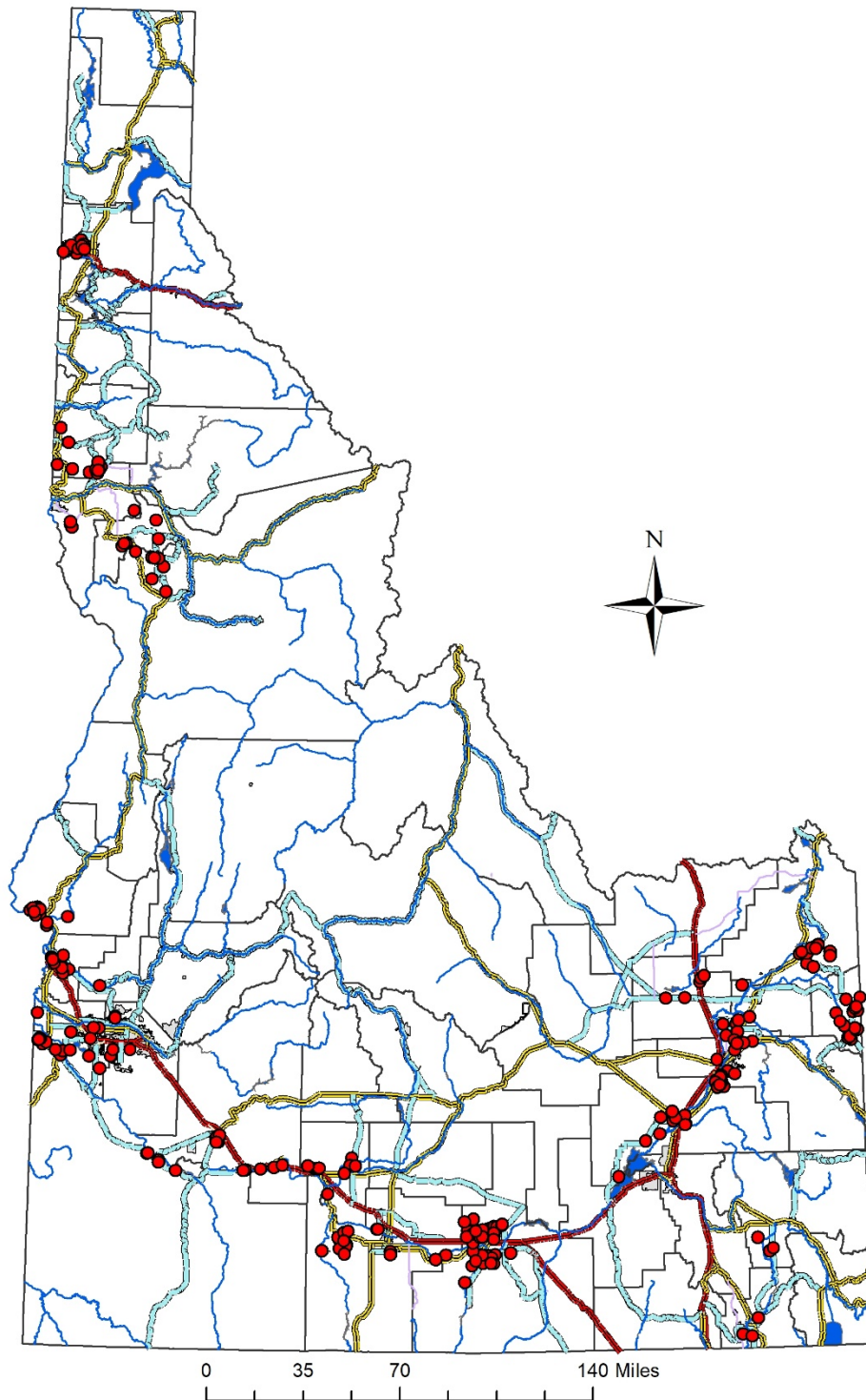
If the HAL does not exist then a US EPA Drinking Water Equivalent Level (DWEL) will be used, which assumes that over a lifetime the only exposure is from the drinking water. If the DWEL does not exist, then the Human Health Benchmark for Pesticides (HHBP), will be referred to for a reference point. If a HHBP does not exist, then a US EPA Reference Dose (RfD) number is used. The US EPA defines a RfD as an estimate (with uncertainty spanning perhaps an order of magnitude) of daily oral exposure to the human population that is likely to be without an appreciable risk of deleterious effects during a lifetime (EPA, 2018). Reference points can be found in numerous documents.

Historically, ISDA examined Triallate data using the Food Quality Protection Act Drinking Water Level of Comparison (FQPA DWLOC) reference point listed in the 2001 US EPA RED. However, based on the more recent HHBP values, Triallate is listed as having a carcinogenic drinking water level recommendation between 0.446 and 44.6 µg/L depending on the acceptable carcinogenic risk level between  $10^{-6}$  and  $10^{-4}$ . Currently the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality has a proposed  $10^{-5}$  level. Therefore, Triallate data are now being compared against a 4.46 µg/L reference point. In order to be protective of human health, the carcinogenic drinking water level is used as the reference point as it is small than the chronic or lifetime Human Health Benchmark of Triallate in drinking water.

Primary sources of information include:

- US EPA 2018 Edition of the Drinking Water Standards and Health Advisories (<https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/2018-drinking-water-standards-and-advisory-tables>)
- Human Health Benchmarks for Pesticides (<https://iaspub.epa.gov/apex/pesticides/f?p=HHBP:home>).

## Appendix B. Idaho Map of 2019 Monitoring Wells



## Appendix C. Abbreviations

BMP – Best Management Practice

DCPA – Dacthal or the chemical name: Dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate

DEQ – Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

DWEL – EPA Drinking Water Equivalent Level

FIFRA – Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act

FQPA DWLOC – Food Quality Protection Act Drinking Water Level of Comparison

HAL – EPA Lifetime Health Advisory

HHBP – Human Health Benchmarks for Pesticides

IBL – Idaho Bureau of Laboratory

IFQAL – Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory

ISDA – The Idaho State Department of Agriculture

MCL – EPA Maximum Contaminant Level

PMP – Idaho Pesticide Management Plan (PMP)

RfD – Reference Dose

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

US EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency

VOC – Volatile Organic Compounds

µg/L or microgram per liter is approximately equivalent to parts per billion

*For additional information about this program or projects, please contact  
Curtis Cooper, Idaho State Department of Agriculture at  
(208) 332-8597 or email at [WaterQuality@isda.idaho.gov](mailto:WaterQuality@isda.idaho.gov)*