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Iowa Waste Reduction Center Newsletter, July 2021

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What is PFAS and How Does it Affect the Environment?

“PFAS” is a buzz word that you may have begun to hear in recent years, but what are these substances and chemicals all about? Are they actually harmful to humans and to the environment? PFAS, or Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances is a synthetic chemical that persistently remains in the environment and can be toxic to the human body. Unfortunately, PFAS is found widely in a number of products that many consumers use daily such as pizza boxes and other food packaging items, non-stick pots and pans, and stain and water repellent fabrics. The good news, however, is that the United States has stopped the manufacturing of these products. Unfortunately, they do continue to be imported into the country from other places.

The main issue with PFAS arises when it begins to break down within these products leading to the PFAS chemical being released into the air, water, and environment. This chemical can make its way into our landfills, plants, animal tissues, and drinking water, which may go on to be consumed by humans ultimately causing those substances and chemicals to enter the body. PFAS is both persistent and toxic to the human body and can cause high cholesterol, thyroid disease, decreased fertility, low birth weight, hypertension during pregnancy, and can impact liver function and immune systems. PFAS can remain in the body even after exposure stops which is what makes the substance so dangerous.

According to the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#), the vast majority of Americans have been exposed to and store these chemicals in their blood, and the [Environmental Working Group \(EWG\)](#) estimates that 110 million Americans are potentially drinking PFAS-contaminated water every day. With statistics such as these, it is incredibly important that action be taken to reduce the amount of PFAS in products that consumers use.

The IWRC is taking action to help divert waste from the landfills in one effort to prevent PFAS from entering our water and food sources. To learn more about PFAS or about what you can do, visit our [website](#).

Discover this and others blogs on our website [HERE](#).



Iowa Craft Brew Festival Sat. August 7 12pm - 4pm | [Des Moines](#)

Iowa Recycling Association Wed. August 18 10am - 11am | [Webinar](#)

Iowa Recycling and Solid Waste Conference October 4 - 6 | [Cedar Rapids](#)

IWRC NEWS

IWRC's STAR4D Program Awarded New Contract

Recently, the IWRC's Spray Technique Analysis and Research for Defense program (STAR4D) was awarded a new contract with the U.S. Department for Defense to support the Center for Aircraft Structural Life Extension at the U.S. Air Force Academy. With this contract, STAR4D will provide painter training to 16 military painting facilities in the U.S. and establish four new STAR4D satellite sites to train instructors.

"We are excited for this opportunity and to continue to provide a valuable service to the DoD community," says Chris Lampe, STAR4D Program Manager.

This painter training helps to promote a positive environmental impact and reduce the amount of paint wasted during the application process. In fact, this part year STAR4D was able to save taxpayers over \$500,000 with their techniques. To learn more about STAR4D and the environmental impacts the painter training has, visit <https://iwrc.uni.edu/star4d>.

Food, Recycling and PFAS Program Awarded Funding

The Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC) at the University of Northern Iowa was recently awarded a grant from Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture to implement the Community Waste Diversion Project. The goal of the project is to decrease the amount of food waste and recyclable materials in the landfill but also to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and potential contamination.

Assistance will be provided in the Upper Midwest in seven communities via workshops and training events with each participating community receiving a final customized report that identifies current infrastructure and deficits as well as recommendations to build more robust diversion programs as well as address and prevent PFAS contamination. 

To learn more about this grant and access the training materials visit our [website](#).

INDUSTRY NEWS

| Recycling |

[UI Engineers Receive Nealy \\$1 Million Dollars to Develop New Methods to Recycle Paper](#)
(University of Iowa)

| Food Waste |

[Can Bumble Bee and Nestle Hook the World on Fishless Fish](#)
(GreenBiz)

| Air Quality |

[Four Safety Tips to Enjoy Fireworks, Protect Sensitive People](#)
(Iowa DNR)

| Sustainability |

[How Aluminum Can Help You Have a More Sustainable Summer](#)
(Waste 360)



This material is based upon work supported under a grant by the Rural Utilities Service United States Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in the material are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Rural Utilities Service.

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