

Pretty Much What Everyone Knew

December 28, 2018



One more finger pointing to the main nitrate polluters in Florida, which are first agriculture and second septic tanks. Hopefully the new think tank at Mote Marine will be able to figure this out. When we all agree to recognize the cause, maybe someone will have the “whatever” to actually do something instead of just talk about it and study it.

Read the original article from [RadioIowa](#).

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-

Oceanographer says farm runoff contributes to red tide in Gulf of Mexico

December 27, 2018 By [Radio Iowa Contributor](#)

A federal researcher says farm runoff from the Mississippi River is a factor in damaging algae blooms in the Gulf of Mexico.

This year Florida saw one of its worst algae blooms on record, called a red tide. The massive event killed dolphins, sea turtles and thousands of fish, sending their carcasses onshore.

Oceanographer Rick Stumpf, with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, says Midwestern farm runoff contributes to red tides, flowing into the Mississippi and on to the Gulf. "Somewhat higher levels of nitrogen are found in the lower salinity water which follows with the Mississippi," Stumpf says. Added nitrogen in the Mississippi River can spark the blooms, but Stumpf says there are many other factors at play.

"So that is another potential source," he says. "It's not the only source of nitrogen, I should emphasize that, but it is one." The microscopic organisms thrive on nitrogen and Stumpf says nutrient runoff from farm fields in the Midwest is certainly contributing to the deadly blooms.

"From one year to another, it might be a little more of factor if there's a little stronger eastward transport," he says. "So a huge part of this is going to be, what are the prevailing winds doing." Stumpf says other major factors in the algae blooms include runoff from Florida farms and wastewater facilities, as well as some naturally-occurring sources.

(Thanks to Kate Payne, Iowa Public Radio)