

# How groundwater gets contaminated

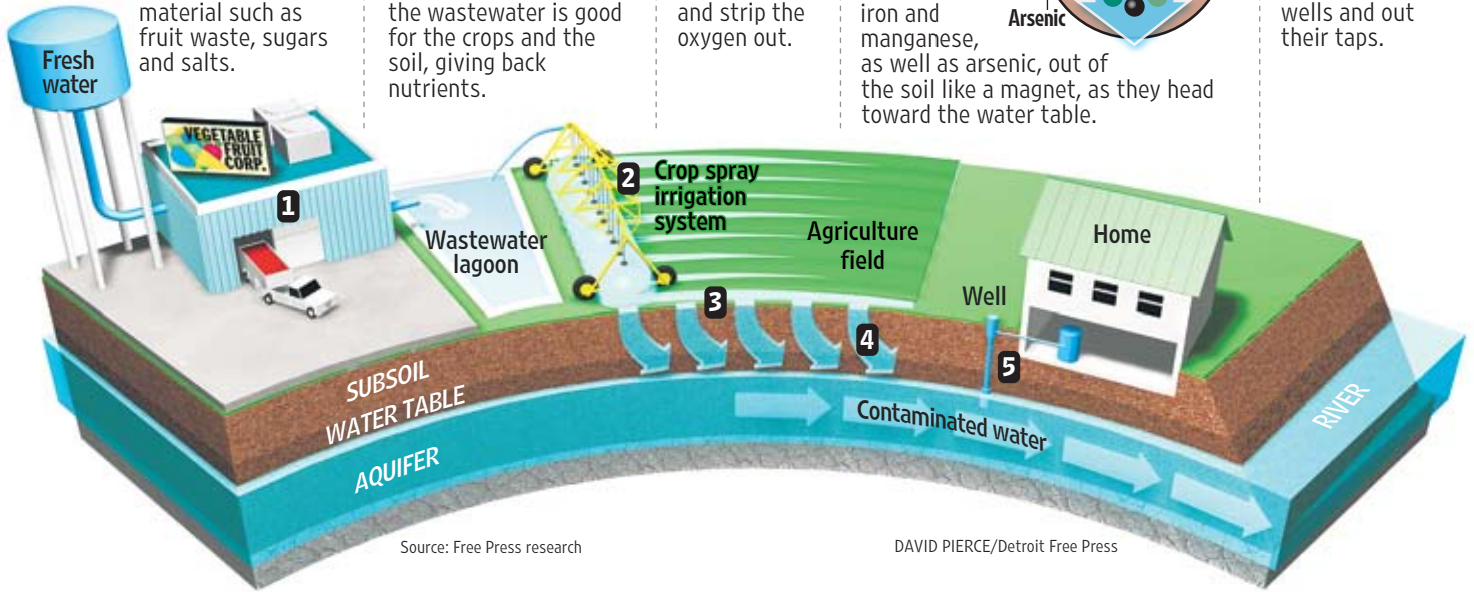
**1** Food processors wash vegetables or fruit, creating wastewater containing organic material such as fruit waste, sugars and salts.

**2** The wastewater is pumped into pipes and then sprayed onto fields the processors rent or buy. The theory is that the wastewater is good for the crops and the soil, giving back nutrients.

**3** Scientists have found that bacteria thrive in the wastewater and strip the oxygen out.

**4** The oxygen-depleted water pulls naturally occurring metals, such as iron and manganese, as well as arsenic, out of the soil like a magnet, as they head toward the water table.

**5** The groundwater with metals and arsenic flows into people's wells and out their taps.



Source: Free Press research

DAVID PIERCE/Detroit Free Press