

Nutrient Pollution

Eutrophication (n): the process by which a body of water becomes enriched by excessive nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus.

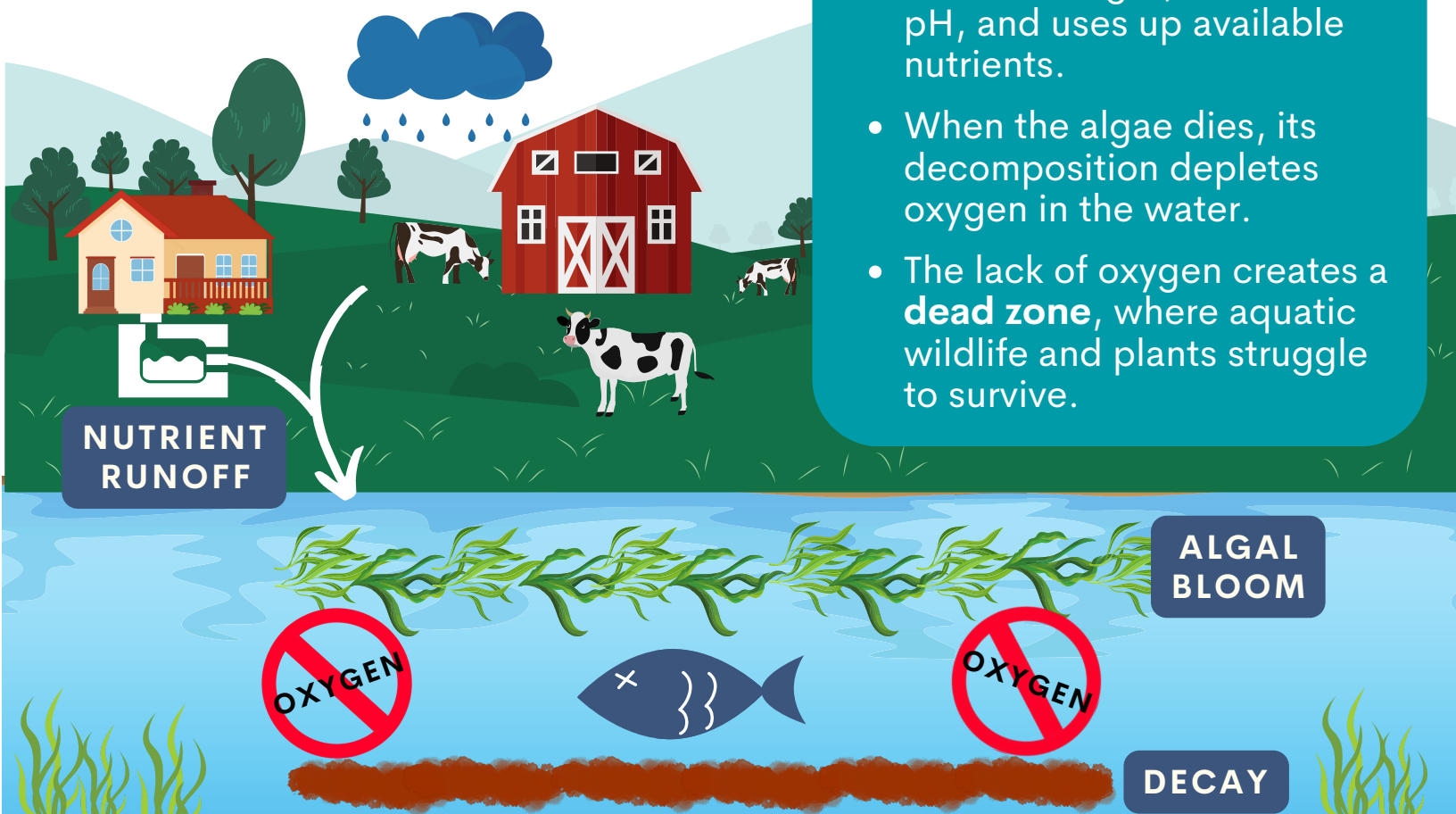
Causes:

Eutrophication is caused by **nutrient pollution** which may come from agricultural runoff, wastewater discharge, industrial operations, or stormwater.

Effects:

Nutrient pollution sets off a cascade of ecological effects, illustrated below.

- A nutrient influx encourages the rapid growth of algae.
- The resulting **algal bloom** blocks sunlight, lowers the pH, and uses up available nutrients.
- When the algae dies, its decomposition depletes oxygen in the water.
- The lack of oxygen creates a **dead zone**, where aquatic wildlife and plants struggle to survive.



Want to learn more about nitrate pollution near you?
Visit nitratewatch.org to request your free nitrate test kit!