

WaterSense labeling helps consumers find water savings
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The Grand Valley DRIP participants are always trying to find new ideas and practices to promote water conservation and encourage using our existing water supply water more efficiently and effectively. One of the new ideas that have come along is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense Partnership Program.

The WaterSense Program seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs and practices. The WaterSense Program will help consumers identify water-efficient products and programs. If you've ever heard of the EPA's Energy Star Program, where consumers are provided energy saving and use information regarding the performance of electrical and electronic goods, it's a similar idea. By seeing the WaterSense label, consumers will have the knowledge and assurance that these products and programs meet measurable water efficiency and performance criteria. WaterSense labeled products will perform well, help save money and encourage innovation in manufacturing.

Additionally, WaterSense is partnering with irrigation professionals and irrigation certification programs to promote water-efficient landscape irrigation practices. WaterSense is also partnering with manufacturers, distributors and utilities to bring WaterSense products to the marketplace and make it easy to purchase high-performing, water-efficient products. Consumers will know that products or service providers that exhibit the Water Sense label have met specific, stringent requirements in meeting verifiable claims of water efficiency and performance.

WaterSense has adopted a set of program principles that determine who can use the label.

According to the WaterSense web site, the products must:

- Perform as well as, or better than, their less-efficient counterparts.
- Be about 20 percent more water-efficient than average products in that category.
- Realize water savings on a national level.
- Provide measureable results.
- Achieve water efficiency through several technology options.
- Be effectively differentiated by the WaterSense label.
- Be independently verified.

The last item is the most important component of the labeling program from a consumer's standpoint. Third-party outside performance verification assures consumers that water savings and efficiency claims are true and not some marketing claim to "jump on the bandwagon" like everyone else.

So when you are planning a kitchen or bath remodel or constructing a new house, look for the WaterSense label on appliances and fixtures. If the label is there, you can be certain that the product will deliver at least a 20 percent savings in water use over those products without the label. You can even find rebates for some WaterSense approved products. It just makes sense to build in water savings and efficiencies without even trying! For more information on the EPA's WaterSense Program, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.