



PFMD UPDATE

A BULLETIN FROM THE PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

APRIL 2024

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Director's Notes

Joshua Stamper, Director, Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division

Pesticides that are applied to seeds are an important and precise way for growers to protect their significant seed investment. Seed treatments are nothing new in the seed industry. Fungicides have been applied to seeds for many years, and they fit neatly into the Treated Article exemption in the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). This article exempts the “treating pesticide” regulation as a pesticide because the application is intended to protect the treated article (the seed). Another example of this is the use of pesticides in anti-fouling paints. Questions regarding the use of seed treatments, however, have been raised as we have measured a significant increase in exceedances of surface water quality standards for certain neonicotinoids used as seed treatments.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently requested comments on pesticide treated seeds and paints that fall under the Treated Article exemption. There has been significant public debate around whether seeds treated with systemic pesticides contribute to unreasonable adverse effects to human health or the environment. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) submitted comments to the EPA that can be summarized in the points below.

- A comparison of 21-day average concentrations of widely used neonicotinoid pesticides for seed treatments in Minnesota’s surface waters suggests that treated seed may be contributing to the neonicotinoid detections in Minnesota’s surface waters, thus supporting the need for additional research and data.
- The sale and use of treated seed products are not tracked through any federal or state regulatory requirements. Therefore, the environmental load of pesticides used as seed treatments and potential associated risks, including their impact on pollinators, are reasonably unmeasurable in Minnesota.
- The MDA supports the creation of federal registration and reporting requirements to better understand treated seed use and its impact on the environment and human health in Minnesota.

The MDA understands the value that seed treatments present to growers. However, we have no idea how many millions of acres are receiving seed that is treated with neonicotinoid insecticides. We know that we are increasingly finding neonicotinoid pesticides at levels that are unsafe for aquatic life, potentially causing unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.



A Message from Commissioner Thom Petersen

Nitrate Reduction Work Continues in Southeast Minnesota

Nitrate-nitrogen is one of the most common contaminants in Minnesota's groundwater, and there are unique geologic features in southeast Minnesota that make the groundwater more vulnerable to nitrate contamination.

Last November, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requested Minnesota develop a plan and provide education and outreach, as well as alternative drinking water, to residents with water above the federal and state drinking water standard for nitrate – 10 mg/L.

The MDA is concerned about nitrate in groundwater. That's why we've taken significant actions over the past decade, and work is ongoing in the eight southeast counties of Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona. Here are some examples.

The Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan is designed to reduce nitrate levels in areas with vulnerable groundwater. This strategy outlines an approach to assessing agricultural practices and working with the agricultural community to select, adopt, and implement recommended best practices in the most vulnerable areas of the state. An important outcome of the plan, which was revised in 2014, was the MDA's Township Testing Program.

The Township Testing Program offered 21,801 residents in the eight counties a free nitrate test for their drinking water. Of the 8,714 that submitted a sample, 12.1% (1,058 wells) were greater than 10 mg/L. The program has provided foundational scientific information to help identify areas of concern and prioritize work for state and local partners.

Another outcome of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan was the Groundwater Protection Rule. Since 2019, the MDA has implemented the rule, prohibiting fall application of commercial fertilizer on 71% of cropland (approximately 1.1 million acres) in southeast Minnesota and over 9 million acres statewide. The MDA has also convened local advisory teams and is working with farmers to adopt practices to address local groundwater problems.

Nitrate reduction work is also happening in southeast Minnesota with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership, AgBMP Loan Program, and more.

The MDA is committed to working with farmers, landowners, and well owners in southeast Minnesota, in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Health and Pollution Control Agency, on the issue to mitigate nitrate contamination in groundwater. The MDA's efforts rely on active participation by local farmers and crop retailers; we encourage you to get involved. To learn more about our nitrate reduction work, visit our website at www.mda.state.mn.us/nitrate.

PFMD Update

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Supervising Editor

Margaret Wagner
Fertilizer Non-Point Source
Section Manager

Margaret.Wagner@state.mn.us

Editor

Jen Schaust
Environmental Outreach Coordinator

Jen.Schaust@state.mn.us

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide comprehensive, accurate information about the MDA Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division's events, programs, policies and regulations. No endorsement is intended or implied of products or companies mentioned within. Printing and postage is paid for by the Pesticide Regulatory Account.

The PFMD Update is, and will continue, to be mailed to all licensed pesticide and fertilizer applicators. Use the QR Code to sign up to receive electronic copies of the PFMD Update newsletter.



www.mda.state.mn.us/chemicals/pfmdupdate

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711.

Groundwater Protection Rule Maps updated on January 15 each year

Margaret Wagner, Fertilizer Non-Point Source Manager

The MDA has issued an updated map that will help farmers across the state comply with the Groundwater Protection Rule. The rule restricts fall application of nitrogen fertilizer in areas vulnerable to groundwater contamination, and it outlines steps to reduce the severity of contamination in areas where nitrate-nitrogen is already elevated in public water supply wells.

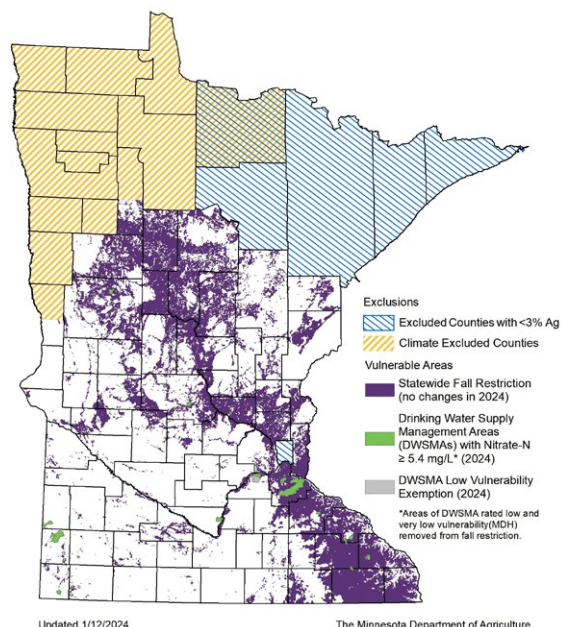
The MDA has made changes to the Fall Nitrogen Fertilizer Restrictions Map which is accessible on the MDA website. Three Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) were removed from the map, and none were added. Two of the DWSMAs removed (Balaton and Moose Lake) were found to have non-agricultural sources of nitrate, while the third

(Milaca) was removed after further sampling data indicated the nitrate levels were below the threshold for inclusion. The restriction of fall application of nitrogen fertilizer on these acres will begin September 1, 2024. Farmers are encouraged to check the new map prior to fall 2024 to determine if their fields are subject to these restrictions. Additional information on the fall application restrictions and exceptions to the restrictions can be found at www.mda.state.mn.us/part-1-groundwater-protection-rule.

Each year, the MDA reviews Minnesota Department of Health monitoring data for public water supply wells and determines if any new communities meet criteria in the Rule. Mitigation Level 1 are communities with a nitrate level of 5.4 to less than 8 mg/L and Mitigation Level 2 are communities with a nitrate level equal to or greater than of 8 mg/L. New communities listed in 2024 include two non-municipal systems, Bethany Water Company (Winona County) and Sunsruds Court Mobile Home Park (Hubbard County), and one municipal system, Milan. For more information and to view an updated map, please visit

www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/mitigation-level-determination.

Fall Restrictions Map 2024



Chlorpyrifos use in Minnesota

Trisha Leaf, Pesticide Unit Supervisor

On January 1, 2022, the MDA cancelled 34 chlorpyrifos products containing food and feed uses. This action was taken because of the EPA's decision to revoke all food and feed tolerances for chlorpyrifos that was set to take place on February 28, 2022. On November 4, 2023, the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals stated that the EPA should have considered modification of tolerances in addition to complete revocation and noted that the agency had "identified 11 specific candidates" of food and feed crop uses whose tolerances could be so modified in a Preliminary Interim Decision EPA issued in 2020.

Following the ruling, food and feed tolerances for chlorpyrifos were reinstated. While some chlorpyrifos products were cancelled at the federal level, certain products remain federally active and can be registered in Minnesota as well. The MDA has conditionally registered chlorpyrifos products with food and feed uses after registrants submitted their applications. Conditions of the registration include: The registration is for 2024 only, and a copy of the Water Quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) for chlorpyrifos must accompany the sale of each chlorpyrifos product. The BMPs can be found on the MDA's webpage: www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/pesticide-best-management-practices.

The sale and use of chlorpyrifos products remains restricted to products currently registered in Minnesota. Please check the MDA's product search page to find products currently registered in Minnesota.

www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/lis/productsdefault.jsp

Use of products that are not actively registered in Minnesota may result in enforcement action by the MDA.

For more information, please contact Trisha Leaf at 651-201-6588 or Trisha.Leaf@state.mn.us.

Restrictions to remember when using dicamba

Larry VanLieshout, Research Scientist

The MDA announced restrictions for applying dicamba to dicamba-tolerant (DT) soybeans in 2024. The restrictions apply to Engenia, Tavium, and XtendiMax herbicides. These are the only dicamba products labeled for use on DT soybeans. These restrictions are intended to reduce dicamba volatilization, off-site movement, and plant injury.



The 2024 dicamba restrictions for Minnesota are:

- **APPLICATION DATE CUTOFF:** No application south of Interstate 94 after June 12, 2024. North of Interstate 94, use is prohibited after June 30, 2024.
- **TEMPERATURE CUTOFF:** Do not apply if the air temperature of the field at the time of application is over 85 degrees Fahrenheit or if the National Weather Service's forecasted high temperature for the nearest available location for the day exceeds 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

Additionally, applicators must follow all other label instructions including attending dicamba-specific training. On February 6, federal Engenia, Tavium, and XtendiMax registrations were vacated by the U.S. District Court of Arizona due to their off-site drift and injury to non-target plants. This court action would prevent the use of these products in 2024. However, the EPA issued an order allowing use of product already in grower possession and limited sale and distribution of these dicamba products that are in the channels of trade.

For more information, please contact Larry VanLieshout at 651-201-6115 or Larry.VanLieshout@state.mn.us.

Bee-Smart: Protecting pollinators from pesticides

Jamison Scholer, Research Scientist



Spring is here! With the warming weather many plants and animals calling Minnesota home are preparing for their first appearance of the new year. As many of us begin planning our garden or field planting schedules, it's a good time to review best practices for pesticide use. When it comes to our beneficial insect allies, including pollinators, the safest pesticide applications are those where pesticide exposure is minimized or avoided. Use pesticides only when needed.

The MDA has developed best management practices (BMPs) to help applicators keep our insect allies alive and thriving in different settings.

View the BMPs at www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/best-management-practices-pollinators-their-habitat

Additional practices to consider:

- When selecting a pesticide product consider its toxicity to bees. Ask yourself if there are other active ingredients or formulations that minimize exposure or toxicity while still providing the desired control.
- Be aware of pesticide residual toxicity. Cooler temperatures and higher humidity can extend the duration of a pesticide's toxicity.
- Pay attention to wind speed, droplet size, and use drift reduction technology whenever possible.
- Use pesticide label setbacks and buffers to intentionally create a pollinator friendly zone along cultivated edges.
- Maintain hedgerows to reduce pesticide drift, erosion, and act as a pollinator corridor.
- Collaborate with adjacent landowners to protect uncultivated lands from pesticides.

For more information, please contact Jamison Scholer at 651-201-6303 or Jamison.Scholer@state.mn.us.

Bulletins Live! Two: Pesticide label requirements for vulnerable lands

Jamison Scholer, Research Scientist

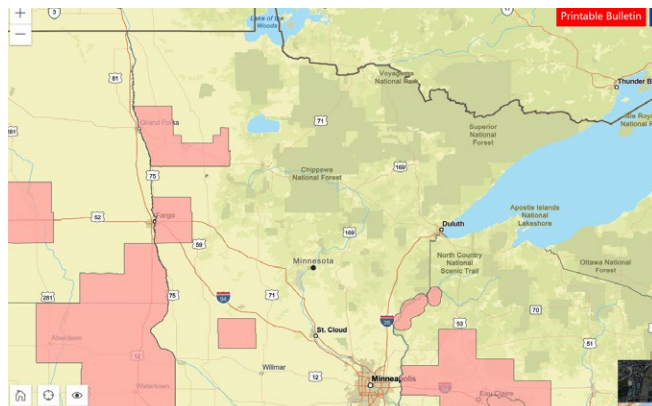
Threatened and endangered (listed) species label changes are coming to a pesticide product near you. To better comply with Endangered Species Act obligations the EPA is revising its approach to evaluate effects of pesticides to listed species and their habitat. This new approach will speed up evaluation activities by grouping assessments for similar pesticides, implementing listed species protection earlier, and incorporating site specific label requirements for vulnerable lands.

Pesticide products with listed species concerns will direct users to the EPA's Bulletins Live! Two (BLT) website where they can check listed species bulletins for location specific use limitations (www.epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins). When using a product that directs you to the BLT website, verify that either the application site lies outside of the pesticide use limitation area (PULA) or that geographic specific use limitations are in place before the product is used.

Applicators need to know:

- Only a few pesticide product labels include listed species updates in 2024.
- BLT website restrictions are considered an extension of the label.
- Applicators will be required to check BLT within 6 months of an application.
- Label amendments will help reduce runoff, erosion, and spray drift.

For more information, please contact Jamison Scholer at 651-201-6303 or Jamison.Scholer@state.mn.us.



Screenshot of the "Bulletins Live! Two" interactive map. Example Pesticide Use Limitation Areas shown

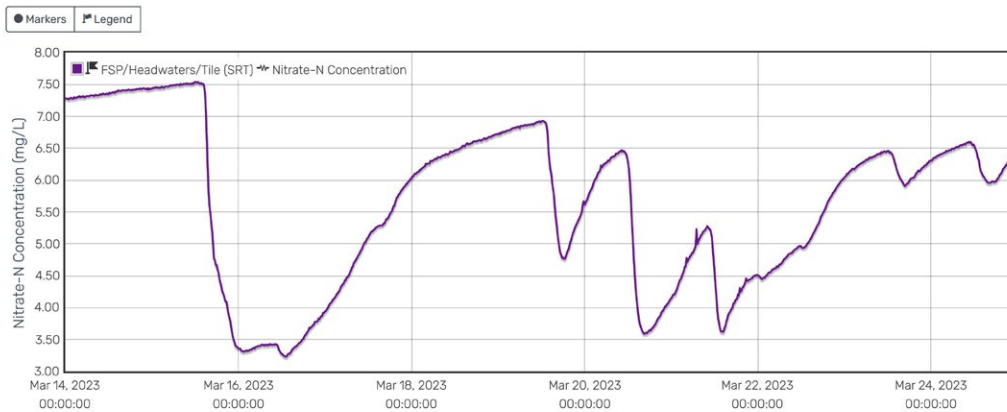
Accessing near-real time MDA water monitoring data online

Matt Ribikawskis, Hydrologist

The MDA has a website that allows near-real time access to rainfall, soil temperature and moisture, and water monitoring variables, including nitrate levels, water levels, and tile flow. This information is collected to further our understanding of the impact agriculture has on water quality and to inform pesticide and fertilizer management decision making.

Information can be accessed at mda.onerain.com, and data are updated every 30 minutes. The user-friendly platform allows for easy navigation based on the area of interest. Statewide data can be viewed under the **Map** option, and users can drag and zoom to different areas of the state. Individual Sites can be selected to access site-specific information and to graph the data with the click of a button.

Dashboards provide a collection of information and data for unique MDA monitoring projects. Current research projects include river/stream pesticide monitoring, evaluating nitrate level changes with cover crops, saturated buffers and controlled drainage, and how nitrate interacts between groundwater and surface water.



The figure shows nitrate concentrations in a Mower County tile during 2023 snowmelt. Continuous sensors allow researchers to capture rapid changes in water levels, water temperature and turbidity, and nitrate levels.

For more information, please contact Matt Ribikawskis at 507-316-4650 or

Matt.Ribikawskis@state.mn.us.

Nitrate concentrations in a Mower County tile during 2023 snowmelt.

Clean Water Fund investments and outcomes

Jen Schaust, Environmental Outreach Coordinator

The Clean Water Fund Performance Report summarizes the statewide Clean Water Fund initiatives that protect and restore drinking water sources, lakes, streams, and groundwater. The biannual report, released in February, is a joint effort between seven Minnesota water agencies that coordinate their Clean Water Fund activities. Minnesota voters established the Clean Water Fund in 2008 through passage of the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment.

The report tracks water activities, trends, and outcomes across key initiatives and details investments in watersheds and communities statewide. According to the report, each dollar in Clean Water Fund spending leveraged another \$1.06 in additional funding between fiscal years 2010-2023, increasing the impact of state investments, which accelerates our progress towards meeting water quality goals. While the report shows encouraging trends and local progress, some statewide challenges remain.

“There are many examples where making one-time structural changes on the land create a timely fix. However, to meet our goals we need to support and encourage Minnesotans to make changes that protect our waters, from how they apply de-icer on parking lots to how they fertilize their corn crop, and that takes time,” remarked Clean Water Council Administrator Paul Gardner.

You can view the report at www.legacy.mn.gov/clean-water-fund-performance-reports. For more information, please contact Jen Schaust at 651-201-6322 or Jen.Schaust@state.mn.us.



FARMAMERICA Discovery Farms water quality monitoring update

Katie Rassmussen and Scott Matteson, Hydrologists

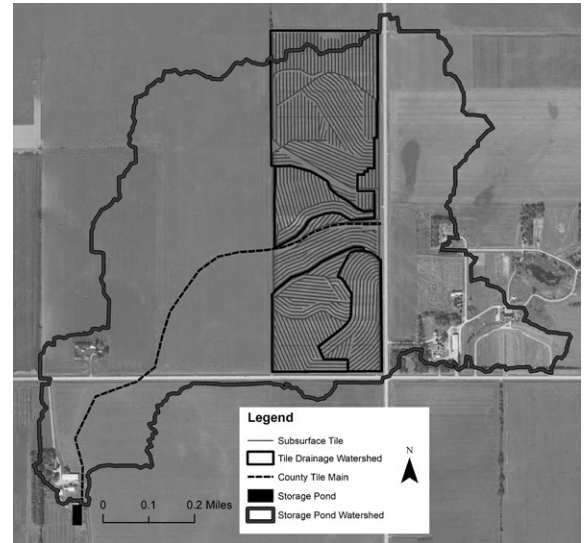
Newly installed subsurface drainage tile provides an opportunity for research at Farmamerica near Waseca. The 120-acre field is in a corn-soybean rotation and was divided into four drainage regions to compare drainage water management approaches. After monitoring the drainage conditions without any changes, two regions will be managed with controlled drainage while two will maintain free (conventional) drainage. Nitrate concentrations, water volume, and nitrate load will be compared in each region.

Beginning this spring, a 1.2-acre, 3-foot-deep storage pond, located downstream from Farmamerica, will be instrumented with continuous nitrate probes and flow gauging equipment. This will measure the amount of water and nitrate-nitrogen that enters and leaves the pond. The pond was constructed in 2021 and receives water from a county tile main that drains 432 acres, including the field at Farmamerica. The goal will be to quantify peak flow reduction and nitrate treatment in the pond.

All raw real-time data from the Farmamerica stations and the downstream storage pond will be available at mda.onerain.com (click on Dashboards, then FARMAMERICA Discovery Farms Minnesota).

Research projects like these allow for an evaluation of how controlled drainage and water storage may be used to reduce flows and loads of nitrate-nitrogen in rivers.

For more information, please contact Katie Rassmussen at Katie.Rassmussen@state.mn.us or Scott Matteson at Scott.Matteson@state.mn.us and visit www.discoveryfarmsmn.org.



FARMAMERICA Drainage Water Management Project

PFAS in Pesticides Interim Legislative Report

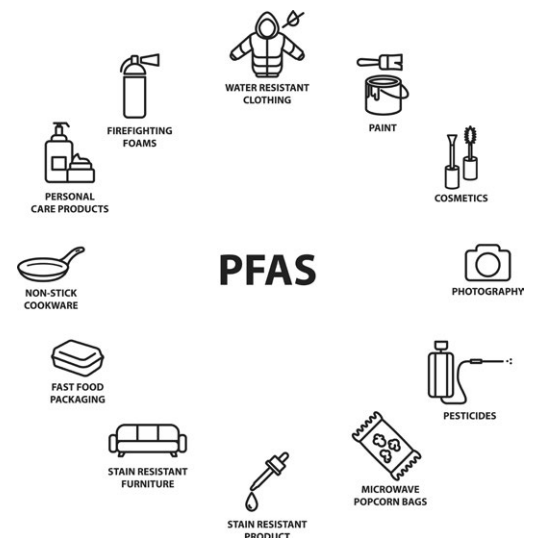
Claire Hartwig Alberg, Research Scientist

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as forever chemicals, take a long time to break down and are used in many every day products, including nonstick cookware and waterproof clothing. Because PFAS are persistent, they can accumulate in the environment and in humans. This has led to a growing concern about PFAS risk to human health and the environment, and an increase in regulatory attention. As part of a law passed in 2023, the MDA was directed to conduct a review of published literature and other available information on the presence of PFAS in pesticides used in Minnesota and prepare a legislative report.

The interim legislative report is available online and can be accessed using the web address below. The report includes information about the regulation and risk of PFAS in pesticides; pesticidal active ingredients considered to be PFAS; and considerations necessary to determine the risks of, and need for PFAS in pesticide products used in Minnesota.

For more information, please contact Claire Hartwig Alberg at 651-201-6178 or Claire.HartwigAlberg@state.mn.us.

www.lrl.mn.gov/docs/2024/mandated/240221.pdf



Select MDA Pesticide & Fertilizer Management Division enforcement actions

Corinne du Preez, Agricultural Consultant

Mapleton, MN

An agricultural facility with an MDA fertilizer license and anhydrous ammonia (NH₃) permit paid a \$250 penalty for failing to immediately report a transportation incident involving NH₃ to the Minnesota Duty Officer or the MDA.

Spring Grove, MN

An agricultural facility with an MDA fertilizer license and anhydrous ammonia permit paid a \$2,700 penalty for NH₃ equipment and storage violations, including failing to adequately lock riser hose end valves.

Osage, IA

An aerial applicator company with a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator paid a \$1,250 penalty for directing a pesticide onto property beyond the boundaries of the target site and aerially applying pesticides without a valid commercial applicator license for the appropriate use categories.

Saint Louis Park, MN

A structural pest control facility with a structural pest control company license paid a \$15,000 penalty for multiple infractions. The company knowingly falsified pesticide application records and multiple individuals knowingly made multiple structural pest control applications and full yard pesticide applications without Minnesota Structural Pesticide Control Applicator Licenses.

Melville, NY

A pesticide registrant with a Minnesota pesticide registration license paid a \$750 penalty for distributing pesticide in Minnesota prior to registering the pesticides. Pesticides are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and must be registered with the state of Minnesota before they can be sold or used in the state.

Comstock, MN

An agricultural facility with a Minnesota pesticide dealer license paid a \$750 penalty for selling Restricted Use Pesticides to unlicensed or non-certified applicators.

Sabin, MN

An aerial applicator company with a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator paid a \$750 penalty for applying pesticides inconsistent with the label, resulting in pesticide drift.

Gaylord, MN

An agricultural operation with a Minnesota certified pesticide applicator paid a \$2,250 penalty for applying Tavium herbicide inconsistent with the label, by failing to complete dicamba-specific training on an annual basis, applying when the wind was blowing toward a sensitive crop, failing to measure wind speed at boom height, and an incomplete application record.

Wolverton, MN

An agricultural operator paid a \$250 penalty for applying Restricted Use Pesticides without a valid license or certification.

Arlington, MN

An agricultural operation with a Minnesota certified pesticide applicator paid a \$3,600 penalty for applying Engenia herbicide inconsistent with the label, by failing to measure wind speed at boom height, using an unapproved spray nozzle type, and incomplete application records.

Well setback distances from pesticide loading areas

Matthew Parins, Agricultural Chemical Consultant

Over the past year the MDA has received questions about setback distances from water supply wells and load pad requirements for small package pesticide mixing. According to the Water-Supply Well Distances from Contamination Rule (MN Rule 4725.4450), the setback from a well must be 150 feet for a tank or container holding 25 gallons or more (or 100 pounds or more dry weight) of an agricultural chemical, or an area used to fill or clean agricultural chemical application equipment with these quantities that is not protected with safeguards. The setback requirement also applies when mixing batch ready solutions into spray tanks. Although a pesticide load pad area is not required for mixing from pesticide containers of 55 gallons or less, the well setback isolation distance is reduced to 100 feet when a safeguarded load area is used. If the safeguarded load area is covered with a permanent watertight roof, the minimum well setback is reduced to 50 feet. The MDA recommends the use of a covered load pad area anytime pesticides are being mixed or transferred even if setback distances from the well are met. Please refer to www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/bulk-pesticide-storage-requirements for pesticide mixing and load area requirements for pesticide container sizes 56 gallons or greater.

For more information, please contact Matthew Parins at 651-201-6587 or Matthew.Parins@state.mn.us.

Incident Response Plans: Worth every ounce of effort

Matt Jorgenson, Inspection Unit Supervisor

When spills occur, they have an impact on your business, the community you live in, and natural resources we all rely on. Having an effective response plan can help you save time, money, and your reputation when spills do happen.



Unaddressed pesticide spills can compromise dike integrity



A leaky fitting caused pooling of fertilizer in a rock bed

The MDA conducts inspections with licensed and permitted companies,

and we frequently encounter violations related to their required Incident Response Plans (IRP). In 2023, 40% of inspected facilities had at least one IRP violation, with over half of those having multiple violations.

If you have a pesticide- or fertilizer-related license or any bulk storage permit from the MDA, you are required to develop an IRP for your business.

Steps for IRP compliance:

1. Document (sign and date) that you update your IRP at least every three years.
2. Document that you've provided a copy of that update to your local first responder.
3. Document that you provide training to your staff every year on the IRP – many companies have it as part of other annual trainings they provide to employees.

Statutory reference:

www.revisor.mn.gov/statutescite/18B.37#stat.18B.37.4

For more information, please contact your local Ag Chemical Inspector (ACI).

A map and list of ACIs can be found at

www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/agricultural-chemical-regulation-inspection-enforcement.

1 million acres certified for water quality

Danielle Isaacson, MAWQCP Operations Coordinator

In 2023, Minnesota farmers and landowners achieved the milestone of one million acres enrolled in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). Governor Tim Walz made the announcement at the farm of Eric Heins in Altura. Heins represents one of the 1,400 farmers who've become certified since the program began in 2014.



The MAWQCP is a voluntary program for farmers and landowners that protects the state's water resources. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and, in turn, obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years. The program is available to farmers and landowners statewide.

"We're excited to hit this million-acre milestone and recognize all the farmers and landowners that have stepped up to become part of the Ag Water Quality Certification Program," said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. "This is a unique program that allows farmers to highlight their conservation work, get access to funding assistance, and ensure they are compliant with the latest regulations. I encourage farmers and landowners to look into the advantages of certifying their land."



Governor Tim Walz and Eric Heins in Altura at Eric's farm

pounds of phosphorous on farms, reduce nitrogen loss up to 49%, and cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50,000 tons.

Farmers and landowners interested in becoming water quality certified can contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District or visit MyLandMyLegacy.com.

Water Quality Certified farms have added over 2,760 new conservation practices that protect Minnesota's waters. Every year, those new practices keep 47,000 tons of sediment out of Minnesota rivers, save 141,000 tons of soil and 59,000

New requirements to pesticide application recordkeeping

Robyn Frederick, Recertification Project Manager and Gurinderbir (G) Chahal, Licensing and Certification Unit Supervisor

The EPA approved Minnesota's revised certification plan in 2023. As part of the implementation of the revised certification plan, the MDA is required to add some additional requirements to their pesticide application recordkeeping. These new requirements are:

1. Size of treated area;
2. Total amount of **Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP)** applied/application; and
3. Crop, commodity, stored product, animals, or sites to which **RUP** was applied.

The MDA's recordkeeping templates have been revised to reflect these new requirements. View the individual licensing category templates at www.mda.state.mn.us/licensing/licensetypes/pesticideapplicator/pestrecords

If the pesticide product label has specific application recordkeeping requirements, those requirements must be followed in addition to the MDA requirements.

As a reminder, a new pesticide application record is required if one of the following factors changes:

1. The customer
2. The date
3. The tank-mix

For more information, please contact Robyn Frederick at 651-201-6548 or Robyn.Frederick@state.mn.us.

Chemigation permits

Kari Mastin, Chemigation Program Consultant

Chemigation permits are issued by the MDA to operators who apply fertilizer and/or pesticide through an irrigation system connected to any type of water source. A source of water may be a single well, group of wells, dug pit, lake, river, stream, etc. To obtain a chemigation permit, the operator must submit a permit application to the MDA, pay the required fee, and meet the permit requirements including the installation of the required antipollution device(s).

Antipollution devices are also known as main line check valves in center pivot chemigation systems. When only applying fertilizer, a single MDA-approved main line check valve is required. When applying a pesticide or pesticide and fertilizer mixture, two MDA-approved check valves must be installed in series. A check valve must also be installed on the injection pump or line. The fertilizer and/or pesticide must be injected into the irrigation stream after the main line check valve(s).

Visit www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/erenewal/apply.jsp to apply for a permit online. Fees are \$50 for a fertilizer-only permit and \$250 for a pesticide-only or combination pesticide/fertilizer permit.

For more information or for a list of MDA-approved check valves, please contact the MDA Chemigation Permit Line at 651-201-6057 or visit www.mda.state.mn.us/chemigation-permit-program.



Chemigation supply well and fertilizer supply tank greater than 20 feet from well

AFREC is scheduled to sunset without legislative action

Margaret Wagner, Fertilizer Non-Point Source Manager

The Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) has had a rich and productive history since its establishment 15 years ago in 2008. Over \$13 million has been carefully invested in soil fertility research and evaluation programs. The outcomes have been numerous, including updated fertilizer guidelines, updated Irrigation BMPs, precision ag tools, and support for the Nitrogen and Nutrient Management Conferences. Results from these projects are included in the University of Minnesota's extensive communication and outreach efforts. AFREC funds research projects on a variety of agricultural systems, including crops such as corn, soybean, wheat, sugarbeet, dry beans, wild rice, alfalfa, sweet corn, peas, potatoes, rye, and cover crops.

AFREC is funded by a 40 cents per ton fee on fertilizer sales, which is collected by the MDA (MN Statute 18C.425). This authority is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2024. Associated council functions (established in MN Statutes 18C.70,71&80) are scheduled to sunset June 30, 2025. It requires legislative action to extend the MDA's authorities to administer this program and to continue to support this important work. The Minnesota agriculture community has expressed support for AFREC and is advocating for the fee and overall structure to stay the same and the program be extended. It is important that soil fertility research continues to advance to keep pace with the ever-changing world.

Stay tuned this legislative session as this extension is discussed at the Capitol. For more information, please contact AFREC Chair Grant Anderson at andersongrant.ga@gmail.com or AFREC Research Coordinator Bruce Montgomery at afrecmonty@comcast.net.

More information about the program is available at mnsoilfertility.com.

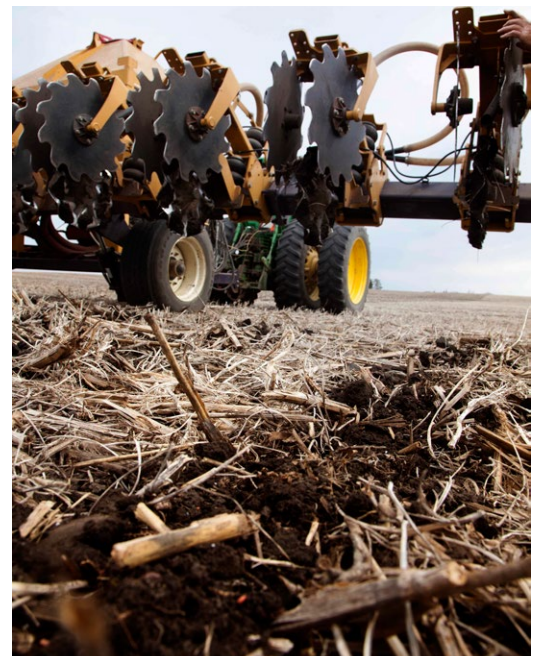
The MDA's new Soil Health Equipment Grant

Danielle Isaacson, MAWQCP Operations Coordinator

The MDA's Soil Health Financial Assistance Grant provides cost-share for the purchase and retrofit of soil health equipment. Adopting soil health practices often requires expensive and specific pieces of equipment, creating a need for a cost-share opportunity to offset those costs. This is one of the first and only programs to reimburse for equipment. Grant awards range from \$500-\$50,000 with up to 50% cost-share.

Grant applications must be for the purchase of equipment that will be used to establish, improve, or accelerate soil health. Examples of eligible new or used equipment include, but are not limited to, no-till drills, air seeders, retrofit projects to allow no-till planting, and more. Parts and materials used to retrofit existing equipment are also eligible. Prioritization points will be awarded to applicants who belong to historically underserved communities, if an operation is actively certified or assessed and working towards certification in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, and/or the equipment will be used to implement an NRCS Resource Management System (RMS) plan.

The next round of funding for this grant is expected to be announced in late summer. For more information, please contact Danielle Isaacson at 651-201-6283 or Danielle.Isaacson@state.mn.us.



An example of a no-till drill