

Budget for One Minnesota



AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Agriculture is a major contributor to Minnesota’s economy, creating \$112 billion in economic activity and more than 430,000 jobs. However, our farmers are facing a number of challenges. Low commodity prices, unstable international markets, and invasive plants, pests, and diseases are threatening family livelihoods and the state’s financial footing.

By investing in Minnesota’s agricultural economy, we can support our farmers and ensure our rural communities prosper. The Walz-Flanagan budget supports new marketing opportunities for our farm products, protects our ag industry against current and emerging threats, and ensures the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is equipped to respond to agricultural emergencies.

EXPANDING MARKETS

Increase International Trade and Domestic Market Opportunities



Minnesota farmers and food companies rely on local and global sales for their success. \$500,000 in funding would ensure that Minnesota can continue to develop international trade and domestic markets through education, trade missions, and relationship-building efforts. These market opportunities would build on current investments in trade shows that already provide a \$60 return to Minnesota companies on every dollar spent.

Invest in Emerging Industrial Hemp Industry



Governor Walz’s budget would invest \$600,000 to ensure that Minnesota farmers and businesses can grow, process, and market industrial hemp. The 2018 Federal Farm Bill permitted the production of hemp across the United States. This funding allows the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to follow through on federal licensing and testing requirements, and assist growers as they enter this emerging crop industry.

Provide Timely Meat Inspections



Small, local, and specialty meat processors rely on inspections from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in order to sell products in the state. A budget increase of \$500,000 would provide additional staff, supplies, and equipment to make sure inspections are done in a timely manner. These inspections ensure food safety standards are met and that meat processors can continue their work. This funding would also generate \$500,000 in matching federal money over the biennium.

PROTECTING AGRICULTURE



Battle Invasive and Noxious Weeds

If the invasive plant Palmer amaranth establishes itself in Minnesota, farmers could spend an estimated \$3 billion annually to manage the weed. Palmer amaranth is just one of many examples of destructive weeds that threaten the state. A \$1.8 million investment in the MDA's Noxious Weed Program would support grants that enable local governments to battle noxious weeds, and the funding would provide needed resources to manage or eradicate those weeds, like Palmer amaranth, that have already found their way into Minnesota. This funding helps protect Minnesota's ag industry and natural resources.



Prepare for Agricultural Emergencies

Minnesota must be prepared for the growing threat of an agricultural emergency. As we experienced in 2015, a disease like avian influenza can devastate farm operations. This budget will restore funding to the state's Agricultural Emergency Account and support work at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Board of Animal Health to train and prepare for the next disease or invasive species. This work includes collaboration with ag industries, governments, and academic institutions so Minnesota is best equipped to manage the next potential emergency.



Support Work to Detect Plant Insects and Diseases

Detecting and identifying new plant insects and diseases is critical to protecting Minnesota's agricultural, horticultural, and natural resources. A \$500,000 continuing investment would ensure the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has staff and equipment that can defend our crops and plants from outside threats and confirm Minnesota products shipped overseas are free of pests and diseases. Governor Walz's budget would also provide consistent funding that replaces unpredictable, short-term federal grants.



Establish Laboratory Equipment Replacement Fund

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's world-class laboratory provides critical services that protect public safety, the environment, and the ag economy. Governor Walz's budget would establish a Capital Equipment Replacement Fund to allow for the regular replacement of needed equipment. The \$2.1 million fund provides for a consistent evaluation of equipment and a plan for needed replacement. This approach can save money on postponed maintenance or deferred replacement.