

Pesticide Management Plan Proposed Revisions Summary

July 2025

Background

- In December 2019, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) began the process of revising the state [Pesticide Management Plan \(PMP\)](#).
- The PMP is a guidance document developed by the MDA to protect the state's water resources from pesticide contamination. The MDA Commissioner was mandated under [Minn. Stat. Chapter 18B](#) to develop a pesticide management plan in 1989. The PMP was originally published in 1996 and was last revised in 2007.
- The MDA has implemented the PMP for over 25 years. The PMP provides an effective approach to implement statute and prevent, evaluate, and mitigate pesticide contamination in both groundwaters and surface waters throughout Minnesota.
- The MDA published a notice in the State Register ([44 SR 773](#)) in December of 2019 announcing its intent to revise the PMP to correct outdated information, elaborate on certain protocols, and improve the overall clarity of the document. Revisions were not intended to alter the core content or approach of the original plan.
- In 2019-2020, the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) conducted a review of the MDA's pesticide programs and evaluated current pesticide regulation activities. One recommendation of the [2020 OLA report](#) was that "the Department of Agriculture should review the Minnesota Pesticide Management on a regular basis (such as every five years), and revise it when necessary."
- The MDA coordinated with Tribes to gather feedback on the proposed revisions in 2024.
- The MDA has completed a draft of proposed revisions to the PMP and is now soliciting public comment on the revisions. The final revised PMP will be published following public comment.

Summary of Revisions

Revisions focused on updating the PMP to reflect changes to programs and resources since the last revisions in 2007. Technical references were also reviewed and updated, and text throughout was edited to improve clarity and incorporate plain language.

In revising the PMP, care was taken to preserve the core content and intent of the original plan. While substantial changes to the plan were limited, notable edits included:

- Adding new language and sections to reflect the consultation and collaboration process state government supports with Tribes throughout the PMP
- Rewriting large sections of Chapter 6, "Statewide Water Quality Monitoring," to reflect the current network design and monitoring practices, which have changed substantially since 2007

- Clarifying definitions and use of water quality standards in Chapter 7, “Water Quality Standards and Rules,” and highlighting that the MDA may consider other available guidance values to implement PMP actions, if standards are not available
- Updating the “Common Detection Status” designation section and adding a subsection outlining a newly developed process for removal from common detection status (Chapter 9)
- Updating the “Surface Water Pesticide of Concern” designation section and adding a subsection outlining a newly developed process for removal from surface water pesticide of concern status (Chapter 9)

A detailed list of revisions to the full document and to each chapter is provided below.

Full Document

- Reviewed and updated Minnesota Statute and Rule text
- Revised text, as necessary, to improve clarity and use of plain language
- Moved text within or between chapters to improve flow and removed redundant text
- Formatted document to comply with ADA accessibility standards
- Included new language and sections to reflect the consultation and collaboration process state government supports with Tribes
- Included new language to better reflect the MDA’s mission statement, “The MDA’s mission is to enhance Minnesotans’ quality of life by ensuring the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength of our agricultural economy.”
- Reviewed all language to ensure it was inclusive and respectful of diverse people

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to the Minnesota Pesticide Management Plan

- Added description of most recent revisions and recommendations from 2020 OLA Report to “Introduction”
- Edited prevention, evaluation, and mitigation goals and approaches to improve clarity and align with content in the respective PMP chapters (8, 9, and 10)
- Added “Minnesota PMP and Federally Mandated State Management Plans” section (moved from Chapter 2 and updated)

CHAPTER 2: Minnesota’s Philosophy, Goals and Approaches for Protecting Water Resources

- Revised section headings to improve the structure and clarity
 - o New structure keeps groundwater and surface water separate (same as original) and creates a subsection under each for “Philosophy and Goals” and “Approaches”
- Expanded “Approach” subsections to better address the use of generic Best Management Practices (BMPs) in initial prevention efforts and the use of pesticide-specific BMPs for mitigation

CHAPTER 3: Minnesota’s Natural Setting, Pesticide Use Patterns, and Information Sources

- Updated resources referenced in text (e.g., web soil surveys)
- Updated Figure 2 (Minnesota major basins and watersheds) and Figure 3 (agroecoregions)
- Updated “Pesticide Use in Minnesota” section to reflect changes in how surveys are conducted (e.g., Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service no longer a division of MDA)
- Revised “Physical and Chemical Properties of Pesticides”
 - o Added information about volatility and expanded solubility and persistence descriptions
 - o Added mention of treated seeds and movement of contaminated dust as a potential pathway to water and potential movement of residues through drain tiles

CHAPTER 4: Coordination and Stakeholder Involvement

- Retitled chapter (previously “State Agency Coordination and Public Involvement; Roles and Responsibilities”)
- Updated details of Environmental Quality Board’s reporting responsibilities based on [Minn. Stat. 103A.43](#)
- Added acknowledgment of Tribal governments to conduct pesticide pollution prevention activities
- Added Tribal governments to list of others outside of the MDA that may conduct pesticide pollution prevention activities
- Added a description of MDA’s coordination with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in determination of impaired waters
- Updated “Compliance Inspection,” “Enforcement” and “Environmental Analysis” subsections and noted use of Clean Water Act funding to purchase equipment
- Added subsection on “Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program”

CHAPTER 5: Introduction to the Pesticide Management Process

- Updated Figures outlining the MDA’s general processes for groundwater and surface water decisions (Figures 4 and 5)

CHAPTER 6: Statewide Water Quality Monitoring

****Major revisions and updates were required throughout chapter to reflect current network design and monitoring practices**

- Added table of Pesticide Monitoring Region (PMR) descriptions and characteristics (Table 1) and updated the PMR map (same boundaries, new graphics)
- Included text acknowledging collaborative monitoring work with Tribes

CHAPTER 7: Water Quality Standards and Rules

- Updated Health Risk Limit (HRL) and Health Based Value (HBV) descriptions to align with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) [definitions](#)
- Added statement that MDA may consider the use of other guidance values in situations where the MDH is unable to adopt an HRL, emergency HRL, or develop an HBV and noted examples of other health-based guidance values
- Added description of MDA’s coordination with MPCA to list waterbodies as impaired and develop response plans
- Added statement that MDA may consider using alternate guidance values, such as aquatic life benchmarks, if the MPCA is unable to adopt a standard, or develop a criterion or advisory value

CHAPTER 8: Prevention

- Rephrased prevention goal for clarity and consistency
- Simplified description of the MDA’s approach to prevention and revised objectives to better align with the goal
- Updated “Soil Sensitivity Criteria” section to describe the Windows Pesticide Screening Tool and added appropriate references and links
- Changed wording in “Pesticide-Specific Best Management Practices” section to allow more flexibility in the development process
 - o Providing registrants and other groups the opportunity to propose BMPs now optional
 - o MDA will seek comment on proposed BMPs from *primary* companies that register/manufacture the pesticide (previously all companies)

- Added “groups representing or working with emerging farmers” to list of potential groups the MDA may use to promote BMPs
- Updated integrated pest management (IPM) section to include a clear definition of IPM and revised description of MDA’s statutory requirements related to IPM

CHAPTER 9: Evaluation

- Added requirement for the Pesticide Management Plan Committee to include a Tribal representative
- Updated “Common Detection in Groundwater” section
 - o Clarified definition of “common detection status”
 - o Added figure outlining the designation process and edited text describing process
 - o Added “Removal from Common Detection Status” subsection outlining newly developed process
- Updated “Surface Water Pesticide of Concern” section
 - o Rearranged text and edited to improve clarity
 - o Added figure outlining the designation process and edited text describing process
 - o Added “Removal from Surface Water Pesticide of Concern Status” subsection outlining newly developed process
- Revised and updated “Pesticide Management Areas and BMP Promotion Areas” section
- Clarified the application of Roger’s diffusion theory in the “Evaluation of BMP Adoption” section and added the appropriate reference
- Added statement that MDA can conduct field audits through a variety of means and provided examples

CHAPTER 10: Mitigation

- Clarified and provided additional information on recommended actions
- Revised text in “Need for Water Resource Protection Requirements” section to be less repetitive

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

- Added manage and facilitate the Pesticide Management Plan Committee and Education and Promotion Team, help develop/support/promote IPM, and coordinate with other agencies to list of roles and responsibilities
- Updated resources funding information
- Expanded list of technical expertise
- Updated roles and responsibilities for individual agencies/organizations

Appendix B: Records and Reporting

No major edits

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