



PFMD UPDATE

A BULLETIN FROM THE PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

OCTOBER 2025

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Director's Notes Why the Public Sees Value in Licensure

Joshua Stamper

Director, Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division

As the state lead agency for the enforcement of federal pesticide laws, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has always viewed education as the most important leg of the three-legged stool that is pesticide regulation. The other two legs are regulation and registration, but both are dependent on education. In Minnesota we have always pursued firm and fair enforcement of laws. We do not do "gotcha" enforcement. Instead, we want everyone working with agricultural chemicals to know what the rules are, and we offer nonregulatory compliance assistance visits to answer questions and bring folks into compliance.

Pesticide licensure is the seat at the table for folks seeking education about how to safely use pesticides to protect crops, livestock, buildings, public health, and drinking water from disease-causing pests and pathogens. While it often seems that pesticides are in the crosshairs, the fact that there are more than 50,000 licensed or certified applicators is a reflection that pesticides are an important tool for all Minnesotans.

The industry and farmers have expressed challenges finding qualified people to become licensed applicators, the recent changes to the federal certification and training plan has added to these challenges. In addition to commercial applicators, any individual handling an opened restricted use pesticide (RUP) must now hold a pesticide license.

The MDA is committed to working with the industry to resolve these issues. However, the long-term answer is getting more people licensed, not fewer. We appreciate the efforts of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association for offering to reimburse the cost of licensure to get more folks licensed. We need to reassure the public that licensed applicators and handlers are well-trained and responsible stewards of agricultural chemicals.



Solutions Available to Improve Our Soil Health

Commissioner Thom Petersen

It's simple: Without healthy soil, agriculture can struggle. It's the base of every harvest and the measure of a farm's long-term productivity. Healthy soil is a balanced system of minerals, organic matter, and living organisms that holds water, delivers nutrients, and sustains crops through changing conditions.

Strong soil structure and adequate organic matter reduce the effects of drought and flooding. They support beneficial organisms that protect plants from disease and help maintain

consistent yields. In this condition, soil becomes a resilient, low-cost asset that requires fewer inputs to remain productive.

Healthy soil builds slowly, but damage can come quickly. Over-tilling, erosion, compaction, and chemical overuse strip away fertility and weaken structure. Globally, an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost each year—far faster than it can naturally regenerate. Once degraded, recovery can take decades, leading to smaller harvests, higher input costs, and less secure food supplies.

The good news is that proven solutions are available. Cover crops prevent erosion and return nutrients. Reduced tillage preserves structure and life within the soil. Crop rotation and integrating livestock improve biodiversity and add organic matter. Applied consistently, these practices rebuild soil and provide a stable foundation for long-term productivity.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of soil health, limited resources are available to maintain or improve it. The MDA's Soil Health Financial Assistance Program is a step in the right direction. Established to advance soil health across the state's agricultural sector, it stands out among financial assistance programs because it allows individual producers, producer groups, and local governments to purchase or retrofit soil health equipment—such as no-till drills, air seeders, and strip-tillage units.

FY	Applications	Awards	\$ Awarded	\$ Requested	Affected Acres (annually)
2023 (Pilot)	238	16	\$478,192.68	\$6.5 million	34,998
2024	284	81	\$2,358,861.51	\$8.4 million	141,741
2025	309	90	\$2,796,447.69	\$9.6 million	132,332

FY26: 282 applications received for total of \$9,017,761. Review in progress. Decisions announced by January.

Soil Health

(continued)

Still, more is needed.

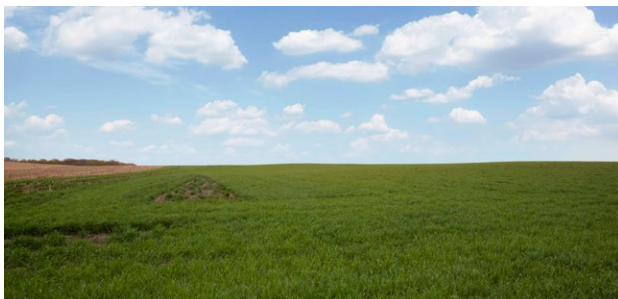
The program's goal is to help producers implement soil health practices by offsetting the cost of specialized equipment. But as in past years, funding requests far exceeded available resources—leaving many applicants without support. Applications for Fiscal Year 2026 closed on Aug. 31, with 282 applicants requesting just more than \$9 million in grants—nearly matching last year's totals.

The stakes extend well beyond individual farms. Healthy soil stores carbon, filters and replenishes groundwater, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. These ecological services are essential to achieving both agricultural and environmental goals.

Responsibility for protecting soil health is shared. Farmers manage the land directly, but its value extends across supply chains and communities. Markets that reward sustainable practices, conservation programs that support adoption, and science-based policies all play a role in keeping soil productive.

Soil health is not an abstract ideal. It is the foundation of the food supply and a safeguard for future harvests. Every acre preserved today strengthens farmland's ability to feed communities, support local economies, and withstand the pressures of a changing climate.

Protecting it demands consistent effort, practical methods, and policies that match the scale of the challenge—because once good soil is gone, it may be gone for good.



PFMD Update

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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.



mda.state.mn.us/chemicals/pfmdupdate

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Martin County ditch #28 nutrient treatment wetland outlet weir structure

Instrumentation Added to Treatment Wetland to Evaluate Effectiveness

Scott Matteson, Hydrologist

The MDA is monitoring a newly constructed water quality treatment system in Martin County. Construction of the wetland and two-stage ditch on County Ditch 28 was paid for using Clean Water Funds from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The two practices operate in succession to reduce nitrate, phosphorus, and sediment loading to a series of lakes. The third lake in the series is the source of drinking water for the city of Fairmont. The source water lake exceeded the nitrate maximum contaminant level for drinking water in May 2016.

MDA staff have instrumented continuous flow and nitrate monitoring equipment at the inlet and outlet of the nutrient treatment wetland to assess the effectiveness of nitrate removal. The information gained from this monitoring will allow for a better understanding of the effectiveness of this type of water quality treatment system to improve water quality. The MDA is conducting the monitoring in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Martin Soil and Water Conservation District.

More information on the nutrient treatment train is available on a Storymap developed by ISG Inc, the project engineer, "[ISG Martin County Ditch No. 28 Nutrient Treatment Train](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/253fc3cc2a084c1f8738e5d9596da107)" (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/253fc3cc2a084c1f8738e5d9596da107>).

For more information, please contact Scott Matteson at 507-344-3201 or Scott.Matteson@state.mn.us.

How Soon Will You Operate a UAV to Apply Pesticides?

Kyle Nilsestuen, Ag Chemical Inspector, and Christine Wicks, Inspection Unit Supervisor

The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones to commercially apply pesticides on crops is rising. A recent survey in CropLife reported that the number of retailers offering crop inputs applied by a UAV or drone will increase from 27% to 37% within the next three years. Before applicators begin applying pesticides, they must comply with a multitude of regulation by various state and federal agencies, including passing the MDA pesticide applicator exams in at least three categories:

- **Category A (Core):** General pesticide application principles and regulations
- **Category B (General Aerial):** Pesticide application by a fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter, or UAV
- **Site Specific Category:** i.e. **Category C** (Field Crops Pest Management)

Recording UAV applications is required. Using a record template increases compliance. See the MDA's list of [Pesticide Applicator Record Templates](https://mda.state.mn.us/licensing/licensetypes/pesticideapplicator/pestrecords) (mda.state.mn.us/licensing/licensetypes/pesticideapplicator/pestrecords)



Inspections of commercial drone applications will occur soon. Currently, PFMD provides compliance assistance to UAV applicators increasing awareness of the laws related to licensing, recordkeeping, handling, application, worker protection standards, and pesticide storage, among issues. Ag Chem Inspector Kyle Nilsestuen is leading this program and can offer assistance. For more information see the resources below or contact Kyle at 507-458-4810 or Kyle.Nilsestuen@state.mn.us.

Getting Started

[Minnesota Crop News – UAVs: blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2025/04/getting-started-with-uavs-for-pesticide.html](https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2025/04/getting-started-with-uavs-for-pesticide.html)

[UAV registration and pilot license-Minnesota Department of Transportation \(MNDOT\): www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/drones/commercial.html](https://www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/drones/commercial.html)

Minnesota Ag Weather Network Expansion Continues

Stefan Bischof, Hydrologist

The MDA and local partners now operate 39 weather stations in the Minnesota Ag Weather Network (MAWN). Another 24 stations in the state are owned and operated by the North Dakota Ag Weather Network (NDAWN), a vital partner in the project. The network goal is to have a weather station within 20 miles of all agricultural areas of the state.

MAWN weather stations provide an array of real-time environmental data:

- Rainfall
- Air temperature
- Wind speed and direction
- Dew point temperature
- Soil temperature (to 7.5 feet)
- Soil moisture (to 40 inches)
- Solar radiation
- Snow depth and snow water equivalent

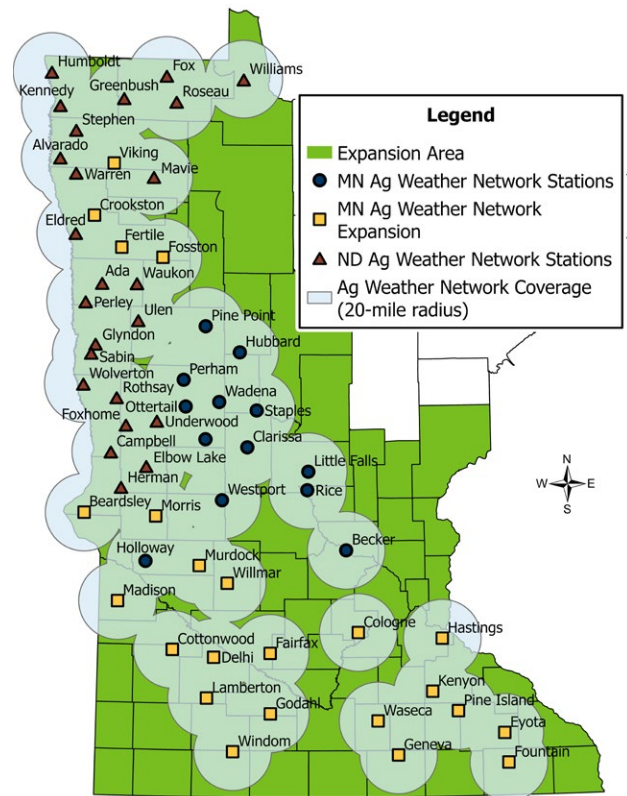
In addition, the network offers tools and modeling resources, including:

- Daily estimated crop water use
- Disease risk forecasts
- Irrigation scheduling recommendations
- Runoff risk predictions

Information gathered at each site is integrated into NDAWN, which developed tools and applications to make the data readily and freely accessible to the public. Data from Minnesota stations can be accessed through the NDAWN Inversion App, the [North Dakota Ag Weather Network](#), and the [NDAWN Central Minnesota Weather Network](#).



In 2023, the MDA received \$3 million from Minnesota's Clean Water Fund to expand the reach of MAWN. This investment supports the installation of about 40 new weather stations over three years, developed in collaboration with local partners.



Map of current weather stations in Minnesota

The MDA installed 17 new stations in 2025, located near:

- Cologne (Carver County)
- Elkton (Mower County)
- Eyota (Olmsted County)
- Fairfax (Renville County)
- Foston (Polk County)
- Geneva (Freeborn County)
- Godahl (Brown County)
- Hastings (Dakota County)
- Kenyon (Goodhue County)
- Leota (Roch County)
- Luverne (Rock County)
- Madison (Lac qui Parle County)
- Murdock (Swift County)
- Pine Island (Dodge County)
- Viking (Marshall County)
- Willmar (Kandiyohi County)
- Windom (Jackson County)

Visit [MAWN](#), to apply to host a MAWN station on your property, or to view real-time weather data (mda.state.mn.us/minnesota-ag-weather-network).

For more information, please contact Stefan Bischof at 218-396-0720 or Stefan.Bischof@state.mn.us

Open House Celebration for the Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Work Group

Mike Cruse, Soil Scientist

The Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Work Group officially concluded its work on July 9 with a public open house in Lanesboro. Convened by the State of Minnesota, the mission of this group was to bring together individuals with diverse viewpoints and areas of expertise to develop recommendations for strengthening long-term nitrate reduction strategies in Southeast Minnesota.



In addition to the public event, the work group also produced a report that gives context for the work group, provides background information on nitrate in drinking water in Southeast Minnesota, as well as offers the work group's recommendations. The four primary focus areas for the work group recommendations are:

- More living roots in the ground for longer periods
- Support alternative crops and land uses
- Support and increase implementation of nitrogen best management practices
- Education and outreach

The final work group report as well as details on the work group itself can be found on the [MPCA's Addressing nitrate in southeastern Minnesota](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/addressing-nitrate-in-southeastern-minnesota) webpage (www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/addressing-nitrate-in-southeastern-minnesota).

The MDA would like to thank all work group members, contributing organizations, and sister agencies for their time and efforts that contributed to its success. Nitrate in drinking water is a complex and challenging issue, and this work group can serve as a model for others on how to address challenging topics.

Ag Water Quality Certification Online Merch Store

Ellen Friedrich, Certification & Assessment Coordinator

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) now has an online store for MAWQCP-branded clothing and merchandise. MAWQCP-branded merchandise can be a great way for a farmer to show off their certification status, and for individuals to promote and support the certification program.

We are extremely proud of and thankful for the work that Minnesota's certified farms are doing to protect and promote water quality, and we want to show it (and we think you might too). Check out the [online store](https://bonfire.com/store/mawqcp) (bonfire.com/store/mawqcp).

Let's show some Water Quality Certified Farm pride and support!

For additional information contact Ellen Friedrich at 651-728-3663 or Ellen.Friedrich@mn.state.us.

Reverse Osmosis Private Well Mitigation Program Update

Nikol Ross, Hydrologist

The MDA, in collaboration with Olmsted County, is continuing to provide water filtration systems for eligible well owners in Southeast Minnesota. Reverse osmosis (RO) systems are installed, at no cost, for households that have elevated nitrate or cyanazine in their drinking water well. As of June 30, a total of 200 RO systems were installed throughout the eight-county area. Most RO systems were installed for nitrate mitigation. There were 19 ROs installed at sites with cyanazine exceedances, however, 14 of those also had a nitrate exceedance.

County	Dodge	Fillmore	Goodhue	Houston	Mower	Olmsted	Wabasha	Winona	Total
ROs Installed	10	30	32	27	10	12	27	52	200

The mitigation program prioritizes households with a vulnerable population (pregnant persons or infants), and low-income households (below 300% of the federal poverty level). Just less than 10% of the households were in a vulnerable population, 31% were low-income, and 4% met both criteria.

After RO installations are completed, follow-up sampling occurs to test the effectiveness of the treatment system. All post-treatment nitrate samples have been below 10 mg/L and all post-treatment cyanazine samples have shown 100% removal of the pesticide.

This program is ongoing, and eligible private well owners are encouraged to sign up.

For more information, please contact Nikol Ross at 651-392-5027 or Nikol.Ross@state.mn.us.

Visit [TAP-IN, Safe Drinking Water for SE Minnesota](#) to learn more (safe-drinking-water-for-private-well-users-gis-olmsted.hub.arcgis.com/pages/tap-in-application)

What should I do if my private well water tests above 10 mg/L nitrate?

Free Water Treatment System Program

Private well users in Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties are eligible for a water treatment system.

The program pays for:

- ☒ Full cost of a water treatment system installation at your kitchen tap
- ☒ Free water analysis to confirm proper functioning of unit after installation
- ☒ One year follow-up site visit by water treatment company

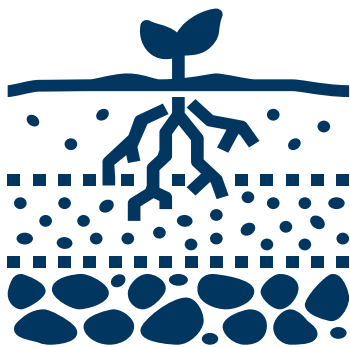
<https://bit.ly/TAPINTreatmentApplication>
healthyhomes@olmstedcounty.gov



PFMD: Safeguarding Minnesota's water, soil, and agricultural future

The MDA's Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division (PFMD) delivered measurable progress across its mission over the last year. PFMD safeguarded water, advanced soil health, modernized compliance tools, and strengthened oversight—all in service of protecting public health, supporting farmers, and ensuring the long-term vitality of Minnesota agriculture.

The Division's work was rooted in science, carried out through strong partnerships, and shaped by responsive regulation. Together, these efforts helped keep communities safe, natural resources protected, and agriculture thriving.



Soil Health Financial Assistance Program

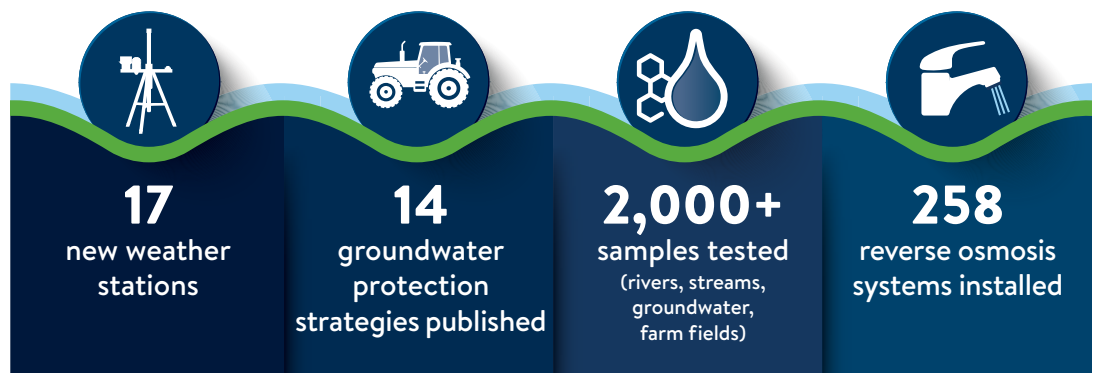
Funded equipment purchases for 90 producers, groups, and agencies to boost sustainability practices on 130,000+ acres.

Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council

Funded research to improve nutrient efficiency, strengthen fertilizer management, and advance conservation practices benefiting growers and the environment.

Water Protection

providing tools, data, and strategies to farmers and the public



STRONG STEWARDSHIP, LASTING PROGRESS

Minnesota's Waters, Responsibly Managed

Water protection remained central to the MDA's work in 2025. Sample collection ensured that pesticides and nitrates stayed within safe limits. New monitoring projects in Nicollet, Goodhue, and Martin counties evaluated the effectiveness of cover crops and treatment wetlands in reducing nutrient runoff and sediment loss.

Nitrate testing clinics were expanded, and targeted well sampling continued in Southeast Minnesota. In support of the Groundwater Protection Rule, the MDA worked alongside Local Advisory Teams in areas that public water supplies have elevated nitrogen levels in their community drinking water. The current focus is on promoting and adopting the listed practices within the drinking water supply management areas near those wells.

The MDA also expanded implementation of the state's Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan (NFMP). Local advisory teams were started in two additional townships, while on-farm walkovers began in another to assess high-risk areas. In Central and Southeastern Minnesota, the MDA collaborated with industry partners and crop retailers to support conservation efforts in townships identified for NFMP implementation.

Irrigation with Care and Compliance

The MDA and project partners were awarded \$11.16 million to expand conservation measures on irrigated land. The money is available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and will fund a five-year project focused on 25 counties across the state. The program provides

financial and technical support to irrigators looking to use precision irrigation technology and nitrogen management practices to help optimize irrigation water management and protect Minnesota's water resources.

Chemigation activity again rose in 2025, with 103 permits issued, up from 77 in 2024. Backflow prevention devices required for chemigation under Minnesota law protect water sources from ag chemical contamination.

Precision That Powers Innovation

The MDA and local partners now operate 39 weather stations in the Minnesota Ag Weather Network (MAWN). Another 24 stations in the state are owned and operated by the North Dakota Ag Weather Network (NDAWN), a vital partner in the project. The project aims to provide accurate, detailed weather data within 20 miles of agricultural areas statewide. Up to 80 total stations may be necessary to achieve this goal.

Digital tools also advanced compliance, conservation, and faster testing and processing. Nearly 70% of registrants adopted the new online pesticide sales reporting portal in its first year, demonstrating strong industry demand for efficient systems. The Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program launched its Risk Assessment and Planning Tool (RAPT), streamlining certification and enabling more producers to engage in whole-farm risk assessment and mitigation.

Interactive StoryMaps were launched to visualize decades of pesticide and water quality data. The MDA submitted its legislative report on PFAS in



pesticides, implemented a new data collection system to meet state PFAS requirements, released a revised Pesticide Management Plan for public input, and developed updated guidance to help applicators meet Endangered Species Act requirements.

Partnerships That Strengthen Protections

MDA staff member Kevin Kuehner published an important paper on lag time and groundwater age in Southeast Minnesota, earning the 2025 Larson Allmaras Award at the University of Minnesota. His work complements other MDA resources explaining groundwater movement in the region and is shaping how communities approach long-term drinking water protection.

A 20-member panel of soil health experts reviewed FY26 grant submissions, reflecting broad collaboration across universities, agencies, commodity groups, and industry. Partnerships with private agronomists and conservation planners—including CentraSota Coop, Anez Consulting, and Kanati Land Management—also expanded the reach of the Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program to producers not typically engaged with traditional partners.

Safety as a Core Commitment

Worker safety advanced under the Worker Protection Standard (WPS), which requires training, protective equipment, and restricted entry intervals after pesticide applications. The MDA developed a new recordkeeping template, updated inspection forms, trained Authorized Certification Instructors, and reviewed inspections from 2024. The Enforcement Program continued applying administrative and civil remedies, issuing

penalties tied to inspections completed in 2023 and 2024.

Oversight with Integrity

Agricultural Chemical Inspectors supported sites in meeting safety requirements, including compliance with Incident Response Plans (IRPs). During inspections, 30 facilities—nearly half—were found out of compliance for not conducting the required annual IRP reviews with employees, underscoring the need for continued attention to training and documentation.

Field-erected tanks received increased attention in 2025. MDA staff inspected 47 tanks, which together hold more than 28.6 million gallons of bulk liquid fertilizer. Many of these tanks have been in service for more than two decades. Depending on tank condition, permit holders are moving forward with soundness testing, repairs, or decommissioning.

Oversight of anhydrous ammonia facilities also remained a key focus. In 2025, there were 192 active permits. Based on current deactivations and pending applications, the number is expected to adjust to 183. About 70 facilities received inspections during the year.

Results That Reflect Responsibility

PFMD's 2025 accomplishments reflect a unified commitment to protecting the land and water that sustain our state while strengthening the future of agriculture. These achievements lay a strong foundation for continued progress, ensuring agriculture remains safe, resilient, and sustainable for generations to come.



Waste Pesticide Collection

- 100% of counties collect household waste pesticides, most accept ag waste
- From 2018 to 2024 600,000+ pounds collected

Awarded \$10+ million

in contracts & grants



Looking forward, the Division will continue to innovate, build partnerships, and uphold the trust of Minnesotans. With every effort, PFMD is working to secure a future where clean water, healthy soil, and thriving communities remain at the heart of its work.

Select MDA Pesticide & Fertilizer Management Division Enforcement Actions

Jack Gute, Enforcement Specialist

Glenwood

An agricultural facility paid a \$4,500 penalty for Worker Protection Standard violations, including not centrally displaying pesticide safety information, failing to keep application records and hazard information, failing to provide handler training to employees, and failing to provide personal protective equipment.

Bemidji

An agricultural facility paid a \$1,700 penalty for Worker Protection Standard violations, including not centrally displaying pesticide safety information, failing to keep application records and hazard information, failing to provide worker and handler training to employees, and failing to provide personal protective equipment.

Hartland

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

Eagle Lake

A lawncare facility paid a \$500 penalty for making structural pesticide applications for hire without a Minnesota structural pesticide control company license and Minnesota structural pest control applicator license.

Maple Grove

A lawn care facility paid a \$250 penalty for making custom applications of fertilizer without an MDA fertilizer license.

Arlington

A water service facility with a Minnesota private pesticide applicator paid a \$250 penalty for applying a pesticide for hire without a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator license.

Brandon

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

Tracy

An agricultural facility with an MDA fertilizer license and Minnesota bulk pesticide/fertilizer storage permit paid a \$1,250 penalty for failing to maintain fertilizer storage tanks from corrosion and failing to maintain safeguards in a manner to prevent the escape of any liquid fertilizer from the facility.

Battle Lake

An agricultural facility paid a \$2,500 penalty for storing pesticide mini-bulk containers without secondary containment.

Saint Peter

A lawncare facility paid a \$750 penalty for applying a pesticide for hire without a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator license and a repeat violation of applying a pesticide to a site that was not requested, ordered, contracted for, or permitted.

Hazleton

A vegetation management facility paid a \$2,250 penalty for applying pesticides for hire without Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator license.

Fisher

An agricultural facility paid a \$500 penalty for applying pesticides for hire without a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator license.

Parkers Prairie

An agricultural operator paid a \$250 penalty for using a restricted use pesticide without a valid license or certification.

Moorhead

A lawn care facility paid a \$250 penalty for applying pesticides for hire without a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator license.

Glyndon

A landscape facility paid a \$200 penalty for applying pesticides for hire without commercial applicator licenses for the appropriate use categories.

Lime Springs, IA

An agricultural facility with a Minnesota commercial pesticide applicator paid a \$750 penalty for applying a pesticide inconsistent with the label resulting in drift.

New Pesticide Label Language: Supporting Endangered Species Protections

Jamison Scholer, Research Scientist

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed new strategies for how it handles obligations under the [Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#) ([fws.gov/law/endangered-species-act](https://www.fws.gov/law/endangered-species-act)).

Mandatory Spray Drift Management

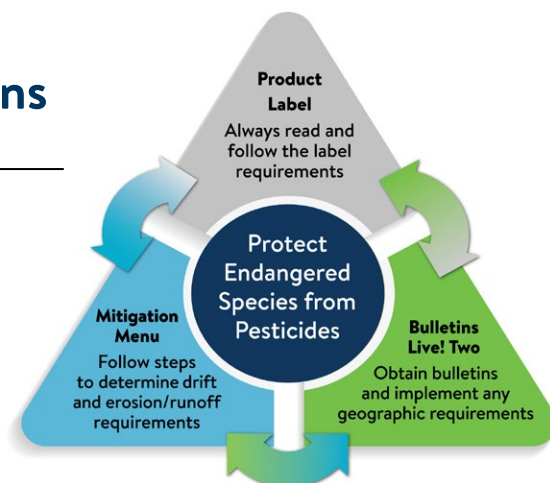
Products with ESA language will contain new drift mitigation requirements and downwind buffers based on the product's potential for non-target population-level impacts. The label will require applicators to visit the EPA [Mitigation Menu](#) website (epa.gov/pesticides/mitigation-menu) to determine if a site requires drift mitigation or if mitigation options are available to reduce spray drift buffers.

Mandatory Runoff Mitigation

To address potential non-target population-level impacts due to pesticide exposures from erosion and runoff, the label will require applicators to visit the EPA Mitigation Menu website. This website provides steps to determine if a field requires mitigation, and a picklist of actions to achieve the label specified point requirements.

Pesticide Use Limitation Areas

Pesticide products with new ESA label language will require applicators to check [Bulletins Live! Two](#) (BLT) (epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins) before using the product. Applicators will need to use the BLT website to determine if there are any Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs)



ESA protections triangle

present at the intended application site and, if so, obtain the Endangered Species Bulletin and implement any additional restrictions from the Bulletin before or while using the product.

New ESA requirements will be found on any new or re-registered pesticide products. For more information and resources visit the [MDA's ESA webpage](#) (mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/pesticides-endangered-species-act) or contact Jamison Scholer at 651-201-6303, Jamison.Scholer@state.mn.us.

Getting Water Quality Certified by Private Sector Partner Centra Sota

Will Bomier, Certification Specialist

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program has teamed up with Centra Sota Cooperative to make certification more accessible.

Producers can now elect to work with a Centra Sota Area Certification Specialist to complete the Certification Process. Here's what this means:

Free Support: Producers can work with a Centra Sota Area Certification Specialist at no cost.

Expert Guidance: Centra Sota brings deep experience in conservation agronomy, nutrient management, and irrigation water management.

Access to all the Certification Benefits:

- Financial resources (grants, scholarships)
- Regulatory certainty
- Branding, marketing, recognition
- Priority review for permitting

This collaboration makes it easier for farmers to implement best practices that protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and groundwater—while also improving their farm's sustainability and resilience.

To get started or explore the benefits, contact Carolyn Remer (Cokato & Watkins) at 763-204-5115 or Dana Ash (Little Falls, St. Martin & Santiago) at 320-630-3930.

Centra Sota & MDA

Ag Water Quality Certification Partnership (January–August)

15,200 Certified Acres

28 Certified Farms

14 In-Process Farms

14 Endorsements

17 Counties

17 Watersheds

63 Subwatersheds

Mini-Bulk Storage Requirements

Matt Parins, Agricultural Chemical Consultant

Listed below are key definitions and storage requirements for pesticides stored in mini-bulk containers. A “mini-bulk pesticide” is a liquid pesticide held in an individual container that is at least 56 U.S. gallons but not greater than 499 U.S. gallons.

Mini-bulk containers are “bulk” containers. All requirements pertaining to bulk pesticides also apply to mini-bulk pesticides.

- If a mini-bulk pesticide container is located at a bulk pesticide storage facility for more than 10 consecutive days, it must be stored in secondary containment (a protective area to catch leaks or spills)
- The secondary containment area must hold:
 - At least 110% of the largest container’s volume if the area is covered (roofed storage).
 - At least 125% if the area is uncovered (unroofed storage).



Mini-bulk containers

- Containers must be placed at least 1 foot from the secondary containment wall or curb. The secondary containment area cannot have drains or openings. If there are any, they must be permanently plugged to prevent leaks or spills.
- You do not need a permit to build secondary containment for mini-bulk containers, but it must still meet all requirements of the rule.
- You must use a designated load area when transferring pesticides from a mini-bulk container to:
 - Mix with fertilizer (impregnate)
 - Fill application equipment
 - Or fill another bulk container
- Load areas for liquid bulk pesticide transfers must have:
 - A curb at least 3 inches high, no matter the size.
 - For tanks holding 56-249 U.S. gallons, the load area must hold at least 250 gallons.
 - For tanks holding 250-499 gallons, the load area must hold at least 500 U.S. gallons.

For additional information on pesticide mini-bulk storage please contact Matthew Parins 651-201-6587, Matthew.Parins@state.mn.us or visit [mini-bulk pesticide storage requirements](https://mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/mini-bulk-pesticide-storage-requirements) (mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/mini-bulk-pesticide-storage-requirements)

24c Special Local Need Registrations

Haley Johnson, Pesticide Management Unit Supervisor

Section 24(c) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) allows for the registration of a pesticide product as a Special Local Need (SLN). These registrations allow for the use of a pesticide outside its typical use. For example, changes to a pesticide’s use may include a new method or timing of application, new crop/new site, new pest, changed rate, application in particular soil type, new product/different formulation, and products useful in managing pesticide resistance in a particular crop.

For a SLN to be granted, the applicant must establish that there is an existing or imminent pest problem within Minnesota for which the MDA has determined an appropriate federally registered pesticide product is not sufficiently available.

The state of Minnesota has 12 active SLN registrations. Two of these registrations were granted this year: Hulk Herbicide for use in cultivated wild rice and Spin-Aid Herbicide for use in sugarbeets. Minnesota also cancelled six SLN registrations this year, all of which contained chlorothalonil as an active ingredient for use on potato. These cancellations were due to changes in the federal Section 3 label that made the SLN labels no longer legal for use.

Visit [24c registrations](https://mda.state.mn.us/fifra-section-24c-special-local-need) for the most up to date information (mda.state.mn.us/fifra-section-24c-special-local-need).

If you have questions, please contact Haley Johnson at 651-201-6440 or Haley.Johnson@state.mn.us.

The MDA Releases its Annual Pesticide Water Quality Monitoring Report

Dave Tollefson, Monitoring Section Manager

The Pesticide Management Plan directs the MDA to monitor water resources to determine any impact from the routine use of pesticides.

For more than 30 years, the MDA has used long-term, well-established monitoring networks in areas with vulnerable water resources and where pesticides are being used.

The MDA relies on the Minnesota Department of Health for drinking water reference values and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for surface water quality standards to assess the risk to aquatic life whenever a detection of a pesticide occurs.

In 2024, the MDA analyzed for 185 pesticide chemicals in water. Fifty-five pesticide chemicals were detected in groundwater and 81 were detected in surface water.

The only detections above a drinking water reference value included nine detections of a breakdown of chlorothalonil (4hydroxychlorothalonil) in Central



Wells in MDA's groundwater monitoring network

Minnesota and one detection of cyanazine breakdown chemicals in Dakota County. In surface water, 90% of the detections above a numeric reference value were the result of two insecticides: clothianidin and imidacloprid.

The report includes all pesticide data, including which pesticides were not detected.

The MDA uses this information to manage the use of pesticides in Minnesota while protecting our water resources. The 2024 Annual Report is available on the [Water Monitoring Reports and Resources](https://mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-monitoring-reports) webpage (mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-monitoring-reports).

For more information, please contact Dave Tollefson at 507-206-2882, or David.Tollefson@state.mn.us.



Test Your Private Well

Megan Moland – Conservation Program Administrator

Private well owners are responsible for regularly testing the water they use for cooking and drinking to ensure it's safe. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends testing water from a faucet used for these purposes to check for potential contaminants. Various organizations and local governments offer resources to test private wells and offset the costs of testing annually.

[Tap-In Safe Drinking Water for SE MN](#): Free testing for private well users in Southeast Minnesota on a first-come, first-served basis while funding is available. Visit their website for upcoming nitrate screenings and eligibility details for free water testing kits (<https://bit.ly/4mLUNt9>).

[Minnesota Department of Health](#): Resources and guidance on how and where to get private wells tested (health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/waterquality/tips.html).

[Dakota County](#): Financial assistance for well repairs, treatment systems, and free water test kits for eligible Dakota County residents. (co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/WaterResources/WellsDrinkingWater/Pages/safe-drinking-water-grant.aspx).

[Minnesota Well Owners Organization](#): Well testing clinics across the state. Visit their website for a list of upcoming events. For questions on private well testing, please email the MDH Well Management Section at health.wells@state.mn.us. (mnwoo.org/order-water-tests/)

Protect your health!

Test your water for:



Testing is even more important if young children drink the water.