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# Bill Vogel Honored as 2025 Outstanding Conservationist

## Brown Soil & Water Conservation District

The Brown Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recognizes Bill Vogel as the Outstanding Conservationist for 2025 in Brown County.

Bill and his wife Melanie live south of Springfield in Stateley Township with their children Lydia, Will, and June. He is a third-generation farmer who believes he should be taking the next step in conservation and has found his own way to do so over the years.

In 2012, Bill started farming with a small group of steers, and over time, the operation has grown to several hundred head of cattle and cropland acres. From the beginning of his farming career, he has chosen to implement conservation-minded practices working in cooperation with the local SWCD and NRCS offices for technical guidance and funding assistance. He currently utilizes no-till and strip-till practices on almost all acres annually, doing only minimal tillage when needed for manure management. Bill plants cover crops on all of his tillable acres and grows some of his own small grains for cover crop use. On the highly erodible acres he plants alfalfa. He also manages acreage that is enrolled in the CRP and RIM conservation easement programs.

Bill is a Minnesota Agricultural



Water Quality Certified Producer, with endorsements in Wildlife, Climate Smart, and Soil Health. Through the process of becoming certified, he installed a grassed waterway on one field to mitigate soil erosion concerns. He maintains buffer strips and has adapted management practices to protect his land from erosion and nutrient loss.

By utilizing all of these conser-

vation practices and making good management choices, he has seen a positive impact in the soil structure over time, along with the added benefit of knowing his soil is protected from wind and water erosion. Additionally, he has been able to implement all of these practices and management techniques without seeing any yield loss. Bill believes that no-till and cover crops together just make sense and plans

to continue implementing conservation practices as needed within his operation.

Along with other Outstanding Conservationists from across the entire state, Bill will be recognized at the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Convention in Bloomington this December.



# Conservationists to be honored at annual convention

## Farm Progress

One of eight finalists will be awarded the Outstanding Conservationist Award at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' convention Dec. 1-3.

Conservation work by state farmers will be recognized during the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts' annual convention Dec. 1-3.

More than 700 MASWCD officials, resource professionals, landowners, conservation leaders, industry professionals and agency representatives will congregate for the 89th convention at the Double-Tree in Bloomington.

The convention has had a long and winding 89-year history. Sheila Vanney, MASWCD assistant director, says that a group of delegates from most of the local associations in southeast Minnesota met in February 1936. The first state convention was held in 1941 in Plainview. What was the Southeastern Minnesota Soil Conservation Association became the Minnesota Soil Conservation Association at that meeting. Further name changes followed in later years to incorporate "districts" and

"water" to the name.

The Burns-Homer-Pleasant district was the state's first SWCD. Later renamed the Winona SWCD, its creation in 1938 was in response to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Districts were subsequently developed across the country to encourage landowners to alter their farming techniques to more wisely use state soil and water resources.

Recognizing those who carry on conservation practices is a key part of convention festivities, says LeAnn Buck, MASWCD executive director. Eight area Outstanding Conservationist Award finalists will be honored during an awards ceremony Dec. 3, and an overall winner will be announced. The Farmer magazine sponsors the Outstanding Conservationist Award.

### This year's finalists are:

**Area 1:** Blue Line Farm; Tom, Tyler and MArgaret Trieglaff, and Char Putnam of Frazee in Becker County

**Area 2:** Kevin Lundebrek of Starbuck in Pope County

**Area 3:** Maple Grove Farm; Jon and Carin Stevens of Rush City in Pine County

**Area 4:** Oldenburg and Brabec

Farms LLC; Belle Plaine in Scott County

**Area 5:** Lower Sioux Indian Community; Joey Goodthunder, Deb Dirlam and Robert Prescott of Morton in Redwood County

**Area 6:** Scott Haase of Blue Earth in Faribault County

**Area 7:** Claire Bender and Sue Ramthun of Chatfield in Winona County

**Area 8:** Flying W Ranch; Pequot Lakes in Cass County

The Farmer's involvement with the MASWCD annual convention dates back to 1961, and sponsorship of the Outstanding Conservationist Award began sometime after 1969. The award initially recognized the work of individual districts but has since transitioned to highlighting the work of the farmers.

In addition to recognizing the outstanding conservationists, honors will also be given to:

MASWCD/Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Community Conservationist

MASWCD/Department of Natural Resources Outstanding Forest Steward

MASWCD/Pheasants Forever

Wildlife Habitat Steward  
DNR Ecological & Water Resources Appreciation Award

Minnesota Department of Health Drinking Water Protection Award  
MASWCD Teacher Award

Outstanding District Administrator by Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Soil and Water Conservation District Field Staff Award by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

MASWCD Outstanding SWCD Supervisor and SWCD of the Year

Retiring and deceased MASWCD supervisors and employees will also be recognized.

Throughout the three days, there are also workshops and seminars for SWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel, as well as programs for all attendees.

"Our convention combines networking opportunities with impactful sessions designed to inspire leaders, invite collaboration and improve conservation delivery throughout the state," Buck says. "It's also an important annual business meeting, where we advance grassroots policy ideas from our members."

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# MDA Launches New AGRI Works Grant Program

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture**  
*Competitive grant aims to support local agriculture organizations*

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Works Grant Program. This new grant opportunity supports organizations and institutions that help strengthen Minnesota agriculture, horti-

culture, and rural communities through development, education, research, or marketing.

The MDA expects to award between five and 15 grants totaling about \$485,625 through a competitive review process. Grant awards will range from \$5,000 to \$75,000 and require a 50% match from the grantee. Grantees must be in good standing with the State of Minnesota and may choose to apply in collaboration with other organizations. This grant program will prioritize legislatively created entities and organizations and projects that are not eligible for other MDA grant opportunities.

“The AGRI Works Grant will help fund innovative projects that advance Minnesota agriculture through a thoughtful and transparent review process,” said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. “We’re excited to see how partners across the state use this funding to support farmers and rural communities. I want to thank the state legislature for funding this program and for their continued commitment to investing in our state’s agricultural economy.”

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, employee salaries and fringe benefits, contracted services, and equipment and

supplies necessary to complete project objectives. Full grant eligibility requirements and application details are available on the AGRI Works Grant webpage. Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. CT on Tuesday, December 16, 2025. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by mid-February 2026.

Funding for the AGRI Works Grant is made available through the MDA’s AGRI Program, which administers grants to farmers, agribusinesses, schools, and more throughout Minnesota to advance the state’s agricultural and renewable energy sectors.



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# MDA Opens Green Fertilizer Grant Program

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture**  
*\$3.8M available to support renewable fertilizer production in Minnesota*

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting

applications for the Green Fertilizer Grant Program. The program will support agricultural and rural electric cooperatives registered as 308A or 308B within the state of Minnesota so they can invest in green fertilizer manufacturing.

Green fertilizers are nitrogen-based fertilizers produced from water, air, and renewable energy and have significant climate and sustainability benefits compared to

fossil-fuel derived nitrogen-based fertilizers. Production and use of green fertilizers are one strategy to reduce upstream greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture sector.

The MDA expects to award up to \$3.8 million for business-ready and shovel-ready projects. Applicants may request between \$250,000 and \$3.8 million. Applications are due by Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025.

“Local production of renewable

fertilizer can help stabilize costs and ensure farmers have reliable access to the inputs they need,” said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. “Supporting innovation in this space helps our farmers, our economy, and our environment.”

For full eligibility requirements and details of the application process, review the request for proposal found on the Green Fertilizer Program Grant webpage.

## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) update

**University of Minnesota Extension**

On September 16, 2025, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was confirmed in a Redwood County, Minnesota, commercial turkey flock of 28,000 birds. This is the first detection of HPAI in poultry since April 23, 2025, despite animal health officials and industry working to eliminate the virus from the state. Additional cases have since emerged in Minnesota, as well as in other states.

This fall, University of Minnesota Extension livestock and poultry experts anticipate numerous cases of HPAI. Increased rainfall this year has caused widespread

### *Fall bird migration brings new cases to Minnesota poultry farms*

ponding, including in areas that would normally be dry, such as crop fields. This means migrating birds are more spread out, increasing the risk of potential infection in poultry.

Stay up to date

- The Minnesota Board of Animal Health is the official source of information for Minnesota’s response to HPAI, with cases posted on the board’s outbreak dashboard and information page.

- The Minnesota DNR and the

University of Minnesota Raptor Center are closely monitoring local wildlife populations for positive cases of avian influenza in collaboration with other organizations.

- The Minnesota Department of Health monitors the health and guidance for people who have direct contact with infected animals or their environment to help reduce the risk of infection.

Actions to reduce avian flu

- Practice biosecurity. Extension offers in-depth poultry biosecurity

expertise, including biosecurity information for large commercial farms, small and pastured operations and urban poultry owners.

- Minimize, prevent and eliminate any contact you or your birds have with wild waterfowl.

- Homeowners feeding songbirds can use feeders if they are cleaned regularly. Songbirds still are not known to be reservoirs of avian influenza. Follow best practices outlined by the Minnesota DNR.

Reporting sick birds (farmed or wild)

- Report sick domestic or wild birds by calling the Minnesota Avian Influenza Hotline at 833-454-0156. Those reporting sick domes-

See **HPAI** on next page

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HPAI continued from page 6

tic or farmed birds can fill out an online form.

- Report dead waterfowl (five or more birds in one place) to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at 888-646-6367.

- Report injured or sick raptors to the University of Minnesota Raptor Center.

Steps the University is taking

Educators, faculty and staff at University of Minnesota Extension, the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), and the School of Public Health have been at the forefront of disease surveillance and research efforts in response to avian flu outbreaks.

Other efforts to combat the disease include conducting more than 100,000 tests since July 2023 at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory.

The CVM is collaborating with the Department of Agriculture to understand disease transmission to dairy herds and the broader agricultural industry. Other CVM researchers are working to address the threat of avian flu to Minnesota wildlife in partnership with the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.



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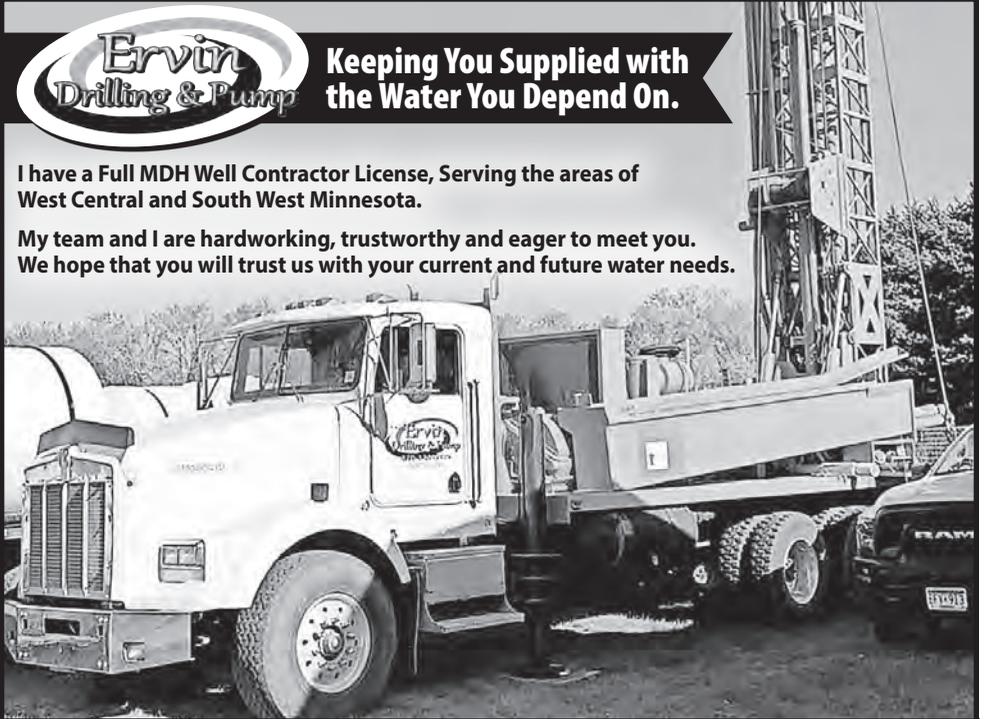
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# Melissa Pietig recognized for contributions to dairy industry

**Katie Roiger**

Sleepy Eye native Melissa Pietig was singled out as a notable woman in dairy by Dairy Star this past August. The Midwest-based publication published a feature story on Pietig's agricultural work and her contributions toward expanding the Lax-Pietig Family Farms.

Dairy Star's article is part of an ongoing series about women in dairy. Pietig said that being acknowledged as a woman in the industry was deeply meaningful to her.

"I think women bring a unique perspective to the table," she said. "We're good at paying attention to the little things because the little things can become the big things."

The seeds of Pietig's career were planted in early childhood, when she would regularly help her par-

ents and her three older brothers with everything from feeding calves and milking to driving a skid steer.

"My dad always joked that dirt washes off girls the same as it does the boys," Pietig said with a laugh, adding that the expectation in her family was that she could do anything her brothers could do. Today, Pietig's daughter and oldest son also pitch in to help with daily farming duties.

After earning her four-year degree at South Dakota State University, Pietig spent five years working for a local dairy before returning to work on her parents' farm with her husband. Lax-Pietig Family Farms have around 975 dairy cows, two swine nutrition research barns that house Schwartz Farms hogs, and corn, alfalfa and soybean crop fields.

Pietig's current focus is the re-



Melissa Pietig at the Lax-Pietig swine research barns.

## Alltech

search barns, where the swines' nutrition data is tracked for Hubbard Feed.

"At any given time, we'll have 7,000 to 10,000 pigs on feed," Pietig said. "It's fun to see how the trials turn out."

Although Pietig was the subject

of Dairy Star's article, she emphasized the contributions of her fellow employees and the support of the local community.

"We have quite a few area people who work with us, and it's fun to see the community involvement," said Pietig. "It's always humbling."

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# Overcoming barriers for emerging farmers

## University of Minnesota

Minnesota farmers—a vital part of the state’s economy—are facing mounting challenges such as climate change, increasing cost of production, and more. According to United States Department of Agriculture data, the number of Minnesota farms from 2007-2022 decreased roughly 19%.

To address this, University of Minnesota Extension works state-

wide to provide research, education, and outreach to help farmers thrive.

Emerging farmers—those who traditionally face barriers to the education and resources needed to build profitable agricultural businesses—are one of those groups.

A lifeblood of rural communities

Minnesota emerging farmers tend to be younger, first generation, or immigrants. They often manage small vegetable farms be-



Annalisa Hultberg teaches emerging farmers about wash tanks for fruits and vegetables.

cause they can be profitable, and starting one requires less land and capital than growing row crops like corn and soybeans.

“It’s important to work with them because even if they’re small in scale, they’re people directly feeding their community and supporting vitality,” says Natalie Hoidal, an Extension vegetable crops educator.

Hoidal searches for ways the University can help mitigate personal risk for farmers. Some of these include finding common production challenges, providing hands-on educational opportunities, and sharing research-based information about topics like nutrient management, crop planning, soil health, and climate adaptation.

Exposing Minnesotans to new cultures through growing African crops like ugu or chinsaga—that benefitted from soil health and nutrient management research conducted by Extension—are another

enriching aspect of investing in these farmers.

Adapting to a new environment

In addition to being underresourced, many of these farmers are not familiar with some agricultural best practices in Minnesota.

Annalisa Hultberg, regional Extension educator in food safety, educates 3,000 fruit and vegetable farmers statewide to reduce the potential for contamination that can cause foodborne illness so their farms prosper.

“If [the farmers] have not sold to larger customers before, they might not know how to meet the food safety requirements of markets like schools, hospitals, and restaurants,” says Hultberg. “Our program helps them learn how to cool, wash, and pack the produce because wholesale buyers expect consistently high-quality products that have been grown using food safety best practices.”

Some of these farmers are also

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trying to grow organically so they are limited in what they can use to deter pests in Minnesota like cabbage loopers—inch worms that can destroy cabbage, collards, and brussel sprouts—they haven't faced before. Another member of the Extension vegetable team, Marissa Schuh, teaches farmers about ways to manage insects like cabbage looper holistically, including the safe and responsible use of organic pesticide options.

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Some of these farmers are also trying to grow organically so they are limited in what they can use to deter pests in Minnesota like cabbage loopers—inch worms that can destroy cabbage, collards, and brussel sprouts—they haven't faced before. Another member of the Extension vegetable team, Marissa Schuh, teaches farmers about ways to manage insects like cabbage looper holistically, including the safe and responsible use of organic pesticide options. A resource for all

Extension is not only a resource for Minnesotans, but also for the University faculty and researchers who want to work with various communities.

"Extension connects science- and evidence-based research to our communities," says Hultberg. "So if people are getting grants and projects that involve communities, consider working with Extension. We have long-standing relationships that have taken years to build."



Natalie Hoidal worked with local seed companies in a green pumpkin trial to find pumpkin varieties that grow soft leaves that many Kenyan and other East African communities will saute.

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# Southwest Minnesota farmers talk about this year's crops

## University of Minnesota Extension

This summer, Extension spent time visiting with members of the Southwest Minnesota Farm Business Management Association across the region. These conversations offered a candid look at the current season—its ups, downs, and the decisions farmers are grappling with.

Here is a summary of what we heard.

### Crop conditions are better than in recent years

In general, crops look better than they have in the past few seasons. Many reported a crop that performed above the trend line, which is a noticeable improvement after years of weather-related setbacks.

While not universal, the outlook for harvest is more positive than it has been in some time.

### Weed control is still a battle

Weed pressure remains a significant issue, particularly in soybeans. Farmers noted that additional passes were necessary to manage weeds, which added to both labor and input costs.

Some experimented with flame weeders, while others returned to row cultivation and bean walking. These methods reflect the ongoing need to adapt to evolving weed challenges.

A tough summer for grain markets

Grain markets have been difficult to navigate. Prices peaked early in the year and steadily declined into August.

Many farmers had hoped to sell at or above their cost of production, but the market did not cooperate. Without a strong spring rally, some struggled to decide when to make sales, and the absence of a clear exit strategy proved costly.

### Land purchases: a complex equation

Interest in purchasing farmland remains high, but current prices make it hard to justify economically. Without factoring in long-term appreciation, many said the numbers simply do not work.

Land acquisition often requires significant financial sacrifice, and for some, it is a goal that demands buy-in from the entire farming family.

Cost control requires a careful balance

Managing costs remains a significant challenge. Farmers are trying to avoid cuts that would hurt

productivity, but many are looking for small efficiencies—aiming for a 5% reduction across various areas.

While not easy, incremental savings can add up over time if approached thoughtfully.

Determining the value of fungicide and aphid treatments

Many farmers raised questions about whether to apply fungicides or treat aphids, particularly given the current low prices for corn and soybeans.

With tighter margins, the decision to treat becomes more complex. It is important to carefully evaluate whether the potential yield protection or improvement will exceed the cost of treatment.

These are not easy calls, and they require close attention to crop conditions, pest pressure, and market realities.

### Thanks to those who shared their thoughts

These visits provided a clearer picture of the reality that farmers are facing this season. While there are some encouraging signs, there is also a fair amount of uncertainty and pressure.

We appreciate the openness of those who shared their experiences and look forward to continuing these conversations as the season progresses.



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# Minnesota Organic Conference Returns to St. Cloud in 2026

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

*Registration now open for MDA's annual event featuring Dr. Joel Gruver and a farmer-led panel on the future of organic agriculture*

Registration is now open for the Minnesota Organic Conference, taking place January 8-9, 2026, at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. Hosted annually by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the conference features more than 30 educational breakout sessions and an 80-booth trade show highlighting the latest in organic production, marketing, and research.

The 2026 conference will feature a keynote address by Dr. Joel Gru-

ver, Professor of Soil Science and Sustainable Agriculture at Western Illinois University's Allison Farm. Dr. Gruver brings decades of hands-on experience integrating no-till and organic methods to improve soil health and farm resilience. He will explore how organic farmers can unlock untapped potential by evaluating their current operations and identify opportunities for growth. Drawing from his own experiences in farming, teaching, and research; he will share strategies to enhance ecological sustainability, profitability, and quality of life on the farm.

New this year, the conference will replace its traditional second keynote with a panel discussion moderated by Meg Moynihan, an organic dairy farmer and Senior Advisor on Strategy and Partnerships for the MDA. The panel will feature three members of the Organic Advisory Task Force: Caroline Hegstrom of The Boreal Farm in Duluth, Ruth Buck, an organic dairy farmer in Goodhue, and Ben Penner of Penner Farms in Belle Plaine. These experienced organic

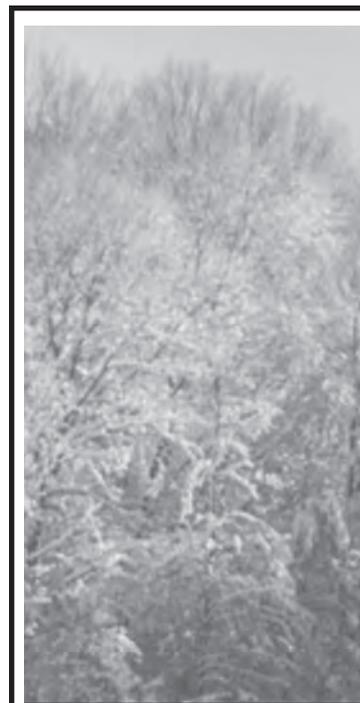
farmers will share their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing Minnesota's organic sector today.

"This panel promises a grounded, farmer-led conversation that reflects the diversity, innovation, and resilience of Minnesota's organic community." Says Cassie Dahl, Organic Specialist for the MDA.

The Minnesota Organic Conference offers a wide range of educational opportunities covering organic crop production, dairy, livestock, fruits and vegetables, marketing, and business management. Alongside the trade show

where attendees can explore new products and services, there will also be an opportunity to network during the Thursday evening reception and social hour, sponsored by the Minnesota Farmers Union.

Early-bird rates start at \$135 for both days, with special discounted rates available for students. The early-bird registration period ends December 1. For more information, including the conference schedule and updates, visit the Minnesota Organic Conference website or call Cassie Dahl at 651-201-6134. To register directly, visit the conference registration page.



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# Grants Available to Improve Safety on Minnesota Farms

## Minnesota Department of Agriculture Funding Supports Grain Bin Upgrades and Tractor Rollover Protection

In recognition of National Farm Safety and Health Week that happened Sept. 21-27, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced that farmers can apply for funding through two key safety programs. The Grain Storage Facility Safety Grant and the Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) Rebate programs help farmers add critical safety equipment to on-farm grain storage facilities and retrofit older tractors

with lifesaving rollover protection.

“The risks grain farmers face every day are very real,” said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. “The Grain Storage Facility Safety Grant helps farmers make critical upgrades that protect themselves, their families, and their employees. Taking steps now to improve the safety of corn, soybean, and small grain storage facilities is one of the most effective ways to prevent accidents and save lives.”

Examples of eligible safety equipment include, but are not limited to:

- Fall protection systems;
- Engineering controls that prevent contact with an auger or other moving parts;

- Dust collection systems that minimize explosion hazards;

- Personal protective equipment that increases the likelihood of surviving a grain-bin-related emergency;

- Grain silo air quality monitoring equipment;

- Other grain storage facility safety equipment with prior approval from the MDA.

The program reimburses up to 75% of the cost to purchase and install eligible safety equipment for on-farm grain bins or silos. Applicants are eligible to receive up to \$400 per bin or silo, with a limit of \$2,400 per farm per year. Grant funding comes from a legislative appropriation of \$75,000 for both the Grain Storage Facility Safety Grant and the Rollover

Protective Structure (ROPS) Rebate programs.

The ROPS program helps farmers retrofit older tractors with rollover protection equipment. Tractor rollovers remain one of the leading causes of preventable farm fatalities. Rollover protective structures combined with a seatbelt are 99% effective in preventing death or serious injury.

The MDA is accepting grant applications for both programs through June 30, 2027, or until all funds are exhausted. Funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information and to apply, visit the MDA’s Grain Storage Facility Safety Grant and Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) Rebate Program webpages.

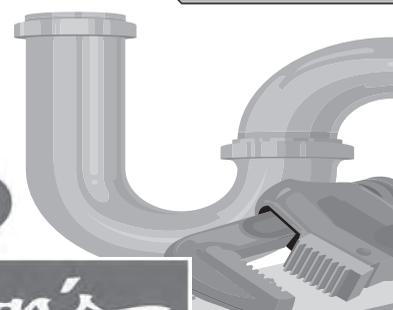
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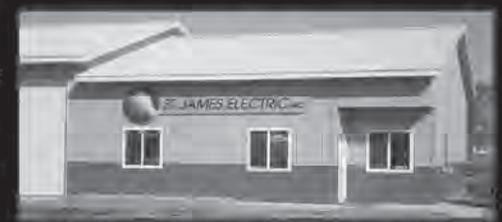
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# Help Shape the Future of Sustainable Farming in Minnesota

## Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant. These grants support on-farm research and demonstrations that help farmers improve profitability and use resources more efficiently.

Projects must take place on Minnesota farms, and grantees are required to share their results with others through final reports published in the MDA's annual Greenbook. The Greenbook highlights creative, farmer-led projects and provides practical technical information, including management tips and personal observations from participants.

Minnesota farmers, educational institu-

## *Sustainable ag demonstration grant supports farmer-led research and innovation*

tions, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Applicants must be Minnesota residents, with priority given to projects that are farmer-led. Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025.

The MDA anticipates awarding up to \$350,000 through this program. Applicants may request up to \$50,000 per project. The

first \$25,000 does not need to be matched. For requests between \$25,000 and \$50,000, applicants must provide a dollar-for-dollar match on the amount above \$25,000.

Previous grantees have explored a wide range of sustainable practices including farm diversification; cover crops and crop rotation; non-chemical pest control; livestock grazing for invasive plant management; and more. Projects don't need to be brand new but should be innovative to Minnesota or uncommon in the region where they're proposed. You explore past projects online here.

Funding for the Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant is made available through the MDA's AGRI Program, which administers grants to farmers, agribusinesses, schools, and more throughout Minnesota to advance the state's agricultural and renewable energy sectors.



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# MDA Expands Ag Weather Network with Three New Stations

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture**  
*Installations enhance coverage areas, local data for Minnesota farmers*

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is expanding its Minnesota Ag Weather Network (MAWN) with the launch of three new weather stations spanning Southern Minnesota—a critical step in strengthening data coverage for producers statewide.

This strategic expansion helps MAWN move closer to its goal of providing real-time, hyper-local environmental data within a 20-

mile radius of all agricultural land across the state. By closing coverage gaps, the network empowers producers with more accurate, site-specific information to guide decisions about irrigation, crop health, soil management, and water conservation.

Two of the new stations are in Southwest Minnesota, near Leota and Luverne in Rock County, the third is to the east, between Elkton and Adams in Mower County.

“These stations give farmers access to the weather data they’ve been missing,” said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. “It’s about providing tools that help producers protect their land, use water wisely, and adapt quickly to changing conditions.”

Each MAWN station captures a wide range of real-time weather and soil data critical to farming



operations:

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

In addition to raw data, the network provides science-based decision tools, including:

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

MAWN is integrated into the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) to make all weather data and agronomic tools publicly available. Minnesota-based data can be accessed through the NDAWN Inversion App, or online at the North Dakota Ag Weather Net-

work and NDAWN Central Minnesota Weather Network.

In 2023, the MDA received \$3 million from Minnesota’s Clean Water Fund to significantly expand the MAWN network. This funding supports the installation of about 40 new weather stations over three years in partnership with weather station hosts, local soil and water conservation districts, the University of Minnesota, and NDAWN. Nearly 20 new stations were added this year.

The MDA mapped out critical coverage areas for weather station locations but relies upon landowners willing to provide access to a small area of land for site placement. Landowners interested in hosting a weather station can learn more and complete the Minnesota Ag Weather Station Host application at [www.mda.state.mn.us/weather-station-host](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/weather-station-host).

To view real-time weather data or learn more about the Minnesota Ag Weather Network, visit: [www.mda.state.mn.us/minnesota-ag-weather-network](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/minnesota-ag-weather-network).

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