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Cattle Report Steady, Global Meat Outlook Signals Shifting Supplies

By Jason Vance

An April snapshot of the U.S. cattle industry shows steady, expected trends, while a broader global outlook points to tightening beef supplies and modest growth in competing proteins, according to Livestock Marketing Information Center Director Tyler Cousins.

Cousins said the latest Cattle on Feed report delivered few surprises but reinforced ongoing supply patterns across the industry.

As of April 1, cattle on feed totaled just under 11.6 million head, down about 0.5% from a year ago and largely in line with pre-report expectations. Placements came in at just over 1.7 million head, a decline of more than 7% year-over-year, while marketings were slightly above 1.6 million head, down about 5.5%.

"By and large, the report was in line with what analysts were expecting," Cousins said. "There really weren't any major surprises."

He noted that reduced cattle place-

ments continue to reflect limited feeder cattle supplies, a trend partly tied to restricted cattle movement from Mexico as border closures persist.

The quarterly breakdown of the report also offered insight into herd dynamics. Heifers on feed totaled just over 4.3 million head, representing 37.3% of total cattle on feed—nearly unchanged from a year ago.

That figure is closely watched for signs of herd rebuilding, but Cousins said the latest data does not yet indicate significant retention.

"We're not seeing a clear signal of heifer retention for herd rebuilding," he said, adding that drought conditions in parts of the western U.S. could still influence those decisions in the months ahead.

Beyond feedlots, cow slaughter trends are also shaping the supply outlook. Total cow slaughter through March reached nearly 1.2 million head, down about 5% from last year. Beef cow slaughter has dropped sharply—down 17%—while dairy cow

slaughter has increased about 7%.

The net effect is a decline in overall cow slaughter, which, combined with strong consumer demand for ground beef, is expected to support prices.

"Demand for ground beef remains strong, especially as we head into grilling season," Cousins said. "That should help support slaughter cow values through 2026."

Global Outlook: Less Beef, More Pork and Chicken

On the global stage, Cousins pointed to the latest report from USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, which projects shifting meat supplies in 2026.

Global beef production is forecast to decline by just over 1% to 61.6 million metric tons. Lower output in major producers such as Brazil, the United States, China and the European Union is expected to outweigh gains in countries like India, Mexico and New Zealand.

Despite a projected 2% decline, Brazil is expected to remain the world's

largest beef producer following a record year in 2025.

Global beef exports are also forecast to dip slightly, with reduced shipments from key exporters offsetting increases elsewhere. Meanwhile, China is expected to remain the world's largest beef importer, even as its imports decline significantly due to tariff-rate quotas.

In contrast, global pork production is expected to increase slightly in 2026, reaching just over 120 million metric tons. Growth in the United States, Brazil, China and Canada is anticipated to offset declines in the European Union.

Pork exports are also projected to edge higher, supported by stronger shipments from the Americas.

Chicken production is forecast to see the most notable growth, rising about 2.5% globally. Exports are expected to climb 3.5%, led by Brazil and China, as poultry continues to offer a

CATTLE See Page 3

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Market Signals Ahead

Taken together, Cousins said the data points to a live-stock sector balancing tight cattle supplies with stable demand and increasing competition from other proteins.

"Tighter global beef supplies alongside growing pork and chicken production will keep trade flows dynamic," he said.

For U.S. producers, much will depend on weather conditions, feed costs and whether herd rebuilding gains traction later this year. Until then, the cattle market appears to be holding a steady, if constrained, course.



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Strategic Farming: Let's talk crops! session talks whether foliar diseases of corn will continue to threaten Minnesota's yield potential

University of Minnesota Extension

On March 4, Dean Malvick, UMN Extension corn and soybean plant pathologist and Ryan Miller, UMN Extension crops educator joined UMN Extension crops educator Liz Stahl to talk about whether the foliar disease pressure experienced by the 2025 Minnesota corn crop is a 'new normal'. This was an episode of the 2026 Strategic Farming: Let's talk crops! webinar series.

Fungal diseases of corn made considerable news in southern Minnesota in 2025, with tar spot and southern rust epidemics occurring in fields. While the fungus that causes tar spot is now endemic to many re-

CORN See Page 5



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gions of Minnesota, the fungus that causes southern rust cannot survive the winter. Spores from southern rust epidemics to the South need to travel into Minnesota early enough for yield potential to be at risk. With the orange rust pustules (an eruption of spores through a leaf's epidermis) on upper leaf surfaces characteristic of southern rust evident as early as mid-July, the periodic rains, warm temperatures and high humidity combined to create a southern rust epidemic in southern Minnesota, resulting in significant yield losses in some fields.

While tools have been developed to help predict tar spot risk using weather data, ground-truthing has found that models can overestimate risk in Minnesota. Malvick shared that although considerable effort has gone in to understanding and learning to manage tar spot since its arrival in Minnesota in 2019, "we still have a lot to learn about the specific conditions needed for tar spot to develop." This and the fact that both tar spot and southern rust fungi can cause multiple cycles of infection throughout a growing season mean that there is no substitution for scouting corn fields and making a timely fungicide application should one be warranted.

Working in southeast Minnesota

where tar spot has become an endemic risk to corn production, Miller worked over the last three growing seasons with a local hybrid seed company (Wyffels) to research corn fungicide timing for tar spot (and in 2025, southern rust) management. Hybrid selection is helpful for tar spot management tactics as well. Miller found that even in a lower tar spot-pressure year, a foliar fungicide application at tasseling to one of the hybrids resulted in significantly higher yield compared to untreated corn. Finding that the combination of scouting and a fungicide application at tasseling when disease is present can protect yield potential, Miller identified additional risks that come with later timed or sequential applications, "4 to 5 percentage points higher grain moisture and the additional expense that comes with two applications; it adds risk."

The benefit to attending Strategic Farming webinars live is that the presenters answer audience questions. For those that missed this session, it is now available to view on YouTube at z.umn.edu/StrategicFarmingRecordings. For more information and to register to attend other weekly session through the end of March, visit z.umn.edu/strategic-farming.

Minnesota farm finances show resilience in 2025, but pressure points remain

University of Minnesota Extension

Minnesota farmers experienced a modest financial rebound in 2025, as net farm incomes improved from the extremely low profit levels recorded in 2024. According to newly released data from the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the median net farm income for Minnesota farms increased to \$66,518 in 2025.

While this income level remains below the long-term average for the past century, it represents a meaningful improvement over the previous year. Improved profitability allowed the average Minnesota farm to make modest gains in working capital and net-worth growth during 2025. Strong livestock earnings, above-trend crop yields, and government assistance programs all contributed to improved financial performance.

This analysis represents approximately 10 percent of Minnesota farms with gross incomes exceeding \$250,000 annually and includes data from 2,289 participants in the Minnesota State Farm Business Management (FBM) programs, along with 114 members of the Southwest Minnesota Farm Business Management Association (SWMFBMA). The dataset is compiled through FINBIN, a nationally recognized farm financial database providing farm-level financial records, enterprise analysis and peer benchmarking tools.

"We expected farms to experience improved profitability during 2025," said Pauline Van Nurden, Extension economist with the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management. "Weather conditions provided much better growing environments across most of the state, and livestock producers benefited from higher commodity prices and lower feed costs. These factors play a critical role in farm profitability across Minnesota."

Government assistance programs also served as an important safety net in 2025, providing disaster relief and price support for select commodities facing market challenges. However, government assistance remained a relatively small share of overall income, accounting for 7 percent of total gross farm income for the average Minnesota producer.

Crop producers face severe financial challenges

Despite improved yields, crop producers continue to face significant financial pressure due to persistently high input costs and low commodity prices. In 2025, strong yields helped offset some of these stresses. Corn and soybean yields averaged approximately 10 percent above the 10-year state average, partially shielding producers from market pressures.

Still, profitability remained elusive for many crop farms. Garen Paulson, University of Minnesota Extension educator with SWMFBMA, noted that "even with excellent yields and government support, the average corn producer lost money on rented land in 2025, and soybean producers generally broke even. This is a sobering reality for crop producers at this time."

Some crop sectors face even steeper challenges. Sugar beet producers experienced especially difficult conditions in 2025. According to Josh Tjosaas, FBM instructor at Northland Community and Technical College, "sugar prices have fallen by roughly 75 percent over the past year, while input costs remain elevated. The average sugar beet producer lost nearly \$500 per acre in 2025, and the outlook is not expected to improve in 2026."

Livestock producers see stronger profitability

In contrast, livestock producers ex-

FARM FINANCES See Page 6

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perienced continued financial recovery in 2025. Hog, dairy and beef operations all posted improved profitability, driven by higher livestock prices and lower feed costs. The rebound provided producers with opportunities to recover losses from prior years, rebuild liquidity reserves and address deferred repairs and capital investments.

Minnesota beef cow-calf producers had their best year on record last year. High prices for calves and cull cows, along with stable costs for feed and other expenses, meant producers made strong profits. On average, they earned more than \$600 per cow — more money than they had made combined over the previous 20 years.

Prospects for 2026

The outlook for Minneso-

ta farm profitability in 2026 remains uncertain. Farmers and consumers alike share concerns related to ongoing geopolitical conflict, trade disruptions and broader economic volatility. Although commodity prices have shown some recent improvement, input costs, including fuel, fertilizer and supplies, remain unpredictable, contributing to heightened financial stress for producers.

Periods of financial uncertainty can significantly impact farmers' well-being. Producers are encouraged to seek support when needed by contacting the Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline at 833-600-2670 or farmstress@state.mn.us for assistance navigating mental health challenges during times of stress.



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Winners Announced for 2026 Cream of the Crop Awards

Hutchinson Public Schools takes top honors as School District of the Year

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is proud to announce the winners of the 2026 Minnesota Grown Cream of the Crop Awards. This contest recognizes K-12 school districts and early care centers that show outstanding leadership in promoting and serving Minnesota grown and raised foods.

This year's winners have earned the title of Cream of the Crop in their respective categories:

School District of the Year: Hutchinson Public Schools

Family Daycare of the Year: Young Family Childcare (Hutchinson, MN)

"Currently we purchase local foods from 31 farms and businesses—everything from fresh produce to grains and meats," said Child Nutrition Director with Hutchinson Public Schools, Lesli Mueller. "The use of local foods really comes to life in the scratch meals we prepare for students throughout each month." In addition to featuring local food in meals, the district also has indoor hydroponic growing systems in

two schools, as well as a school farm with an acre dedicated to vegetable production, featuring a newly added high tunnel to extend the growing season.

At Young Family Childcare in Hutchinson, owner Jillayne Young incorporates hands-on learning through gardening, with children helping to plant, water, and harvest fresh produce. Their local food sourcing efforts are supported by the MDA's Local Tots Cost-Share program, which helps offset the cost of purchasing Minnesota-grown foods. "We were able to purchase a large amount of locally raised ground beef from just 10 miles away for our weekly meals," said Young. "The kids' favorite ways to enjoy it are meatballs, sloppy joes, lasagna, tacos, meatloaf, and beef stroganoff."

In addition to the top awards, several schools and daycare providers were recognized with Outstanding in the Field Honors at three levels:

Golden Drumstick Honors

Morris Area Schools
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Northwestern Minnesota Juvenile Center (Bemidji, MN)
Roseville Area Schools
Cannon Falls Area Schools
Little Skeeters Daycare (Bagley, MN)
Silver Squash Honors
St. Croix Preparatory Academy (Stillwater, MN)
Becker Public Schools
Holdingford Public Schools
New Ulm Area Catholic Schools
Brandy's Daycare (Marshall, MN)
Bronze Berry Honors
Columbia Heights Public Schools
Robbinsdale Area Schools
"These schools and childcare providers should be proud of the work they're doing. Not only are they serving great food but they're helping kids understand where it comes from, building stronger connections to Minnesota ag-

WINNERS See Page 9

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riculture every day,” said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. “We’re seeing firsthand how farm to school is creating new opportunities for Minnesota farmers, from produce to locally raised proteins like beef and turkey. That’s a win for our farmers, our kids, and our communities.”

New this year, applicants had the opportunity to nominate a Minnesota Grown producer that has been an outstanding partner in their farm to kids efforts. From those nominations, Country Blossom Farm was selected as the 2026 Producer Appreciation Pick. In her nomination, Jeanine Bowman, Food Service Director at Morris Area Schools, highlighting their strong partnership. “Troy and Tracy Heald are so easy to work with and produce fantastic apples,” said Bowman. “Our second graders visit their farm every October and bring apples back for our Great Apple Crunch Day. The students are so excited knowing they picked the apples themselves.

Country Blossom Farm is just great to partner with, and I look forward to many years working with them.”

Cream of the Crop Awardees were selected based on their demonstrated commitment to local sourcing, including how they incorporate Minnesota-grown foods into meals, educate students about where their food comes from, and engage families and communities through hands-on learning and events. Learn more about the Cream of the Crop Awards on the contest website.

Minnesota Grown is a program of the MDA that promotes products grown and raised in Minnesota. The program has connected consumers with local farmers, farmers’ markets, and other producers of agricultural products for over 40 years. Development of the Minnesota Grown Cream of the Crop Awards was supported by a Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant from the USDA.



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Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI)

Value-Added and Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk Processing (MPPEM) Grants. These reimbursement grant programs provide funding for eligible applicants to invest in equipment and physical improvement projects that support expanding processing capacity, market diversification, and market access for Minnesota agricultural products.

The MDA expects to award up to \$2.25 million through these reimbursement programs. Individu-



al awards will range from \$1,000 to \$150,000 and require a cash match. Reimbursement grants mean that awardees receive funds after project expenses are paid and documented.

"I've visited grant recipients across Minnesota and have seen firsthand how these investments help businesses expand, innovate, and reach new markets," said Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. "Thanks to the support of the Minnesota Legislature, these

grants continue to deliver strong returns by building a more diverse and resilient agricultural economy in our state."

The scoring criteria of this grant program include priority points for projects that increase food safety, hemp fiber processing capacity, and access to kosher or halal markets. Applicants with projects that are led by, impact, or serve Native American

GRANTS See Page 11



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Creamery or milk product processing equipment

Egg sanitizing, candling, drying, and grading equipment

Equipment that helps to maintain product identity and traceability

Full eligibility requirements and application details are available on the AGRI Value-Added and AGRI MPEM Grant webpages. Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Wednesday June 17, 2026.

Funding for the Value-Added and MPEM grants is made available through the MDA's AGRI Program, which administers grants to farmers, agribusinesses, schools, and more



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Master Gardener returns to hometown to plant trees — and memories — with students

University of Minnesota Extension

The time between recess and science class was short but loud with the clanging together of shovels and children’s exuberance. “I love Arbor Day so much I’m going to marry Arbor Day!” a boy in a Marvel T-shirt cheered after taking a turn at digging in the soil.

John Nordlund attended elementary school in Gibbon, where one Arbor Day a visitor came to plant two crabapple trees with his class. Now a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer in Anoka County, as well as a certified arborist,

he had an idea.

“I’ve always remembered that,” he said. “Those crabapple trees are still there at my old school and I thought it would be good to do the same thing there.”

His school, however, recently moved into a new building and now serves Fairfax, Winthrop and Gibbon. With a lot of bare ground and plans to teach more agriculture, the principal and teachers liked the idea of an Arbor Day planting for two third-grade classes.

GARDENER See Page 13



Many hands made light work when watering the hawthorn tree from a five-gallon jug.

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Growing conservation knowledge
 “It is so wonderful to give kids the chance to plant trees at our new school,” said Jennifer Thompson, GFW Schools principal for elementary grades. “I hope these kids will come by when they are grown up, remember today and say, ‘Hey, I helped plant those trees.’”

A student held the linden tree in place for straight planting. Also pictured: Dee Baloug, Master Gardener in Sibley County, where Gibbon is located.

Nordlund and the students, along with Dee Balough, a Master Gardener in Sibley County, planted two trees. Bailey Nurseries donated a linden tree, which Nordlund told the students may grow as tall as the school in 20 years. His employer, the City of Columbia Heights Parks, donated a hawthorn.

A student read aloud about Arbor Day, which began in 1872 in Nebraska. Holidays and festivals are now

GARDENER See Page 15



A child holds a tree in place while two Master Gardeners fill the hole.



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Anhydrous Safety Should Be a Top Priority This Spring

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

As spring fieldwork ramps up across Minnesota, many farmers and applicators will soon begin applying anhydrous ammonia (NH₃). With tight weather windows and increasing pressure to get into fields, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) urges everyone who handles NH₃ to make safety their top priority. Accidents involving anhydrous ammonia can result in severe, life-threatening injuries when proper precautions are not followed.

"Spring fieldwork moves quickly, and we know farmers and applicators are working hard to make the most of every weather window," said Thom

Petersen, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture. "Taking a few extra minutes to check equipment, wear proper protective gear, and slow down can prevent serious injuries. We want every farmer and applicator to get home safe at the end of the day."

The MDA offers the following safety reminders for farmers, applicators and those performing equipment maintenance:

Always wear appropriate goggles and gloves; never wear contact lenses around NH₃.

Keep at least 5 gallons of clean emergency water easily accessible at all times.

Assume all hoses and lines contain



product and use caution when connecting or disconnecting.

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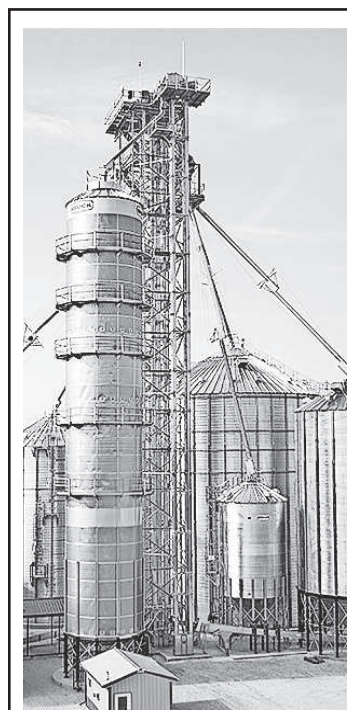
When stopping work or disconnecting equipment, close valves, bleed lines, disconnect, and secure hoses.

ANHYDROUS See Page 17

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John Nordlund and the crabapple trees he helped plant at Gibbon Elementary when he was a student.



GFW Schools students wasted no time taking action with John Nordlund to prepare the ground for planting.

held around the world, honoring trees for providing shade, habitat, and good air to breathe among other benefits.

As an arborist, Nordlund naturally focuses many Master Gardener volunteer hours on trees and getting the public involved in conservation, but he has been interested in plants since the days of his 4-H flower gardening and potato projects. Baloug focuses her volunteership on a variety of community projects and ornamental plants.

A new class of accomplished tree stewards

When Nordlund told the students they could all help dig the first hole, he may not have expected them to all step up. The teachers quickly managed a rotation of groups so everyone could have a chance to dig the two holes.

They then took turns holding trees in place, filling the holes and scattering mulch. The final moment of accomplishment happened when four students helped carry a five-gallon jug over to the trees and poured them a nice big drink of water.

Once planted, the two trees may not have looked like much. As Nordlund explained, they were kept dormant in cool spaces all winter.

“But as the tree settles in you can start to look for leaves and buds to form,” he told the students. “Warm weather, rain and any needed watering will get them growing.”



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USDA Addresses Producer Questions on Farm Safety Net Changes in New Legislation

By Jason Vance

Farmers across the country are seeking clarity as new provisions tied to the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” re-shape key elements of the federal farm safety net. USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Richard Fordyce says the department is working to provide answers—particularly on base acres, program timelines, and payment limitation rules.

One of the most discussed changes is the addition of 30 million base acres used to calculate payments under Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)

and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). While the increase itself has been widely welcomed, producers have raised concerns about how those acres will be distributed.

Fordyce emphasized that the process will be handled evenly nationwide, not on a first-come, first-served basis.

“We are able to equally disperse those acres across the country,” Fordyce said. “If we find a situation where there is going to be more than 30 million base acres requested, then we will simply prorate those across

the country.”

That approach, he said, should ease concerns among producers who feared they might need to rush to local Farm Service Agency offices to secure a share.

Once the redistribution of base acres is complete, producers will then be able to make their ARC and PLC program elections. However, Fordyce acknowledged that the timeline for 2026 will differ significantly from the traditional schedule.

Because of the work required to re-allocate base acres, enrollment deci-

sions are expected to occur later than usual—potentially in late summer or early fall. In some cases, producers may not finalize their elections until crops are well into the growing season or even nearing harvest.

“This is not a traditional timeline,” Fordyce said, noting that the delay is necessary to ensure the base acre process is completed accurately.

In addition to program timing, USDA officials are fielding questions about changes to payment limitation

USDA See Page 20



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More information on anhydrous ammonia safety, storage, and transportation is available on the MDA website.

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A cool way growers maintain veggie freshness

University of Minnesota Extension

An on-farm produce cooler can mean the difference between a crunchy carrot or a rubbery one, or sugar snap peas that actually snap.

Maintaining produce quality and safety matters deeply to growers; it's good for customers and for business. Having a walk-in cooler also benefits the bottomline by opening up wholesale markets and reducing food waste. For those who sell at farmers markets, a cooler provides valuable flexibility to harvest timing, so they don't have to do all their picking the night before the farmers market.

But the upfront cost of a new, traditional produce cooler can be prohibitive — in the range of \$15,000.

"That price is overwhelming for

many farmers," said Annalisa Hultberg, University of Minnesota Extension educator in on-farm food safety. And some of these systems can be difficult to repair if something breaks down because they require electricians or HVAC professionals to make house calls.

But there is a less expensive option: buying used cooler panels, adding a standard window-unit air conditioner and attaching a tool called a CoolBot. The CoolBot was created by a farmer, and it works by plugging into the AC unit and "tricking" it to cool to a lower temperature. This can lower the cost of a produce cooler dramatically — to about \$1,500. And troubleshooting is

GARDENER See Page 19



Hultberg steps out of the almost-completed cooler.

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much easier on one's own.

University of Minnesota Extension hosted its first hands-on workshop to walk farmers through how to build a produce cooler themselves this spring. Used cooler panels are frequently found on Facebook Marketplace, and this workshop helps farmers understand what to look for, whether they come across an assembled or disassembled cooler unit, to make a cost-effective decision.

"The goal is to do this cheap, but cheap can become expensive if we don't know what we're doing," said Ariel Pressman, the principal consultant of Whole Farm Strategies who co-lead the workshop with Hultberg.

New life for used cooler panels

Thanks to an MDA Specialty Crop Block grant, Hultberg and Pressman purchased cooler panels from a local Subway restaurant that was closing. The scattered pieces become a puzzle for students to work together to build (and build again in future workshops). Which pieces are the ceiling, floor, walls, corners or door?

With work gloves, tape measures and Allen wrenches, the participants eagerly got to work putting the panels together and cheered when the cooler was assembled. They turned on the AC unit fitted with a CoolBot. After lunch, they got to walk in and feel 38-degree temperature.

Building confidence

"I always see [used cooler panels for sale] on Facebook. You have to take it apart. I don't know how, so I don't purchase it. Now I know how," said



Participants examined the cooler panels as Pressman described what to look for when purchasing used panels.

participant Xor McCray of Sun Kissed Farm.

The workshop included checklists on what to look for when shopping for cooler panels and troubleshooting tips such as considering vegetable respiration rates and how tightly to pack boxes in the cooler.

"Seeing it makes a big difference. Once we see it, it becomes practical," said Callin Bosire of Lisaviola Farm in Medina. "This way of teaching farmers — it's the best."

Hands-on learning.



Participants installed the CoolBot to the AC unit.



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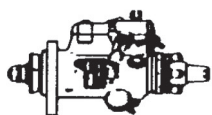
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rules, particularly those affecting qualified business entities.

Under the updated provisions, a broader range of entities—including partnerships, S corporations, limited liability companies (LLCs), joint ventures, and general partnerships—will now be treated equally when it comes to payment limitations. Previously, only general partnerships were exempt from certain limits.

Fordyce said the change allows farms to better align their business structures with program benefits.

To accommodate the transition, USDA will waive the traditional June

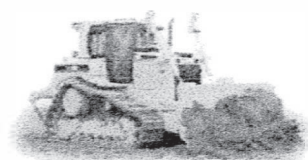
1 deadline for making entity changes. This gives producers additional time to restructure their operations in a way that maximizes eligibility for the 2026 crop year.

The Farm Service Agency is continuing to implement the new provisions, and officials say more detailed guidance will be made available as the process moves forward.

For now, Fordyce's message to producers is straightforward: the system is being designed to be fair, and there is no advantage to rushing the process.

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Grants Available to Expand E15 Access Across Minnesota

MDA offering \$4.7 million for fuel infrastructure upgrades to strengthen Minnesota's biofuels industry

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Growth,

Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Biofuels Infrastructure Program. This grant provides matching funds for Minnesota fuel retailers to upgrade their stations to offer gasoline blended with at least 15% ethanol at the pump.

The MDA may award up to \$4.7 million through a competitive review process. The AGRI Biofuels Infrastructure Program is funded through an appropriation by the Minnesota Legislature to the AGRI Program, along with additional financial support from Minnesota Corn. Applicants may request between \$5,000 and \$199,000 per project and must commit at least 35% of the total project cost as a cash match.

Applicants must be retail petro-

MDA See Page 23



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Ben Stoterau Photography

leum dispensers in Minnesota with no more than 20 retail fuel dispensing sites and be actively operating and dispensing fuel to the public at the time of application. The scoring criteria of this grant program prioritizes retailers that do not currently offer higher blends of ethanol, those that plan to offer higher blends at every petroleum dispenser, and projects that support equitable distribution across the state.

“With growing momentum around year-round E15 at the national level, this is an important moment for Minnesota to continue investing in the infrastructure that makes higher ethanol blends more accessible to consumers,” said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. “These investments support Minnesota corn growers, ensure retailers are ready to meet increasing demand for biofuels, and deliver more affordable, lower-emission options for Minnesotans at the pump.”

Eligible expenses include, but are

not limited to, equipment such as tanks and dispensers; supplies such as electrical, plumbing, and concrete; and construction costs directly related to projects that upgrade or replace equipment that currently cannot be certified as compatible with E25 or higher blends. This funding round is expected to support approximately 20 to 30 grants, though the final number will be determined through the proposal review process.

Full grant eligibility requirements and application details are available on the AGRI Biofuels Infrastructure Program webpage. Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, June 2, 2026.

Funding for the AGRI Biofuels Infrastructure Program 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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