



Minnesota State Bar Association
February 15, 2021

Thom Petersen | Commissioner

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)

- **1,006** certified producers
- **713,169** certified acres
 - 2,048 new practices
 - 110,255 tons of soil saved per year
 - 38,446 tons of sediment reduced per year
 - 48,565 pounds of P prevented per year
 - As much as 49% reduction in nitrogen loss
- GHG accounting via MPCA estimates:
 - 39,455 CO₂-equivalent tons reduced per year



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program Legislative Report



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Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

FY22-23 Proposed Funding = \$6 Million



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

MAWQCP-certified farms are more profitable. Minnesota State Agricultural Centers of Excellence and AgCentric financial analysis of Farm Business Management Program participating farms: MAWQCP certified farms had **26% higher net income** than non-certified farms.



MAWQCP supplemental grant (max \$5000; 75% cost-share)

MAWQCP Financial Assistance Grant

FY	Total \$\$	# of Grants
2017	106,502.83	30
2018	214,763.23	52
2019	325,320.50	81
2020	311,547.33	83
2021*	317,034.89	81
	1,275,168.78	327

• Top 5 activities funded:

Cover Crop	493,357.15
Grassed Waterway	84,046.37
Water & Sediment Control Basin	83,103.38
Fence	68,963.26
Prescribed Grazing	61,480.00

Endorsements

Capture co-benefits and categories of conservation excellence.

• Climate Smart Farms Project



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program



Climate Smart Farms Project

Helping Minnesota farmers implement proven climate-smart practices

- Minnesota farmers are an essential part of our climate solution. Governor Walz proposes \$500,000 to establish the Climate Smart Farms Project to quantify and incentivize proven climate supportive practices in agriculture.
- Certified farmers will be eligible to earn climate payments for implemented climate-smart practices and management.

Carbon Trading

Improving farmland soil health by accelerating cover crops usage

- Governor Walz recommends \$5.5 million to accelerate the use of cover crops on Minnesota's farmlands.
- One of the most effective ways to improve soil health and store carbon is to keep farmland covered with vegetation for much of the year.
- More than 20 million acres of agricultural land in Minnesota could incorporate cover crop practices and capture more than 4 million tons of carbon each year



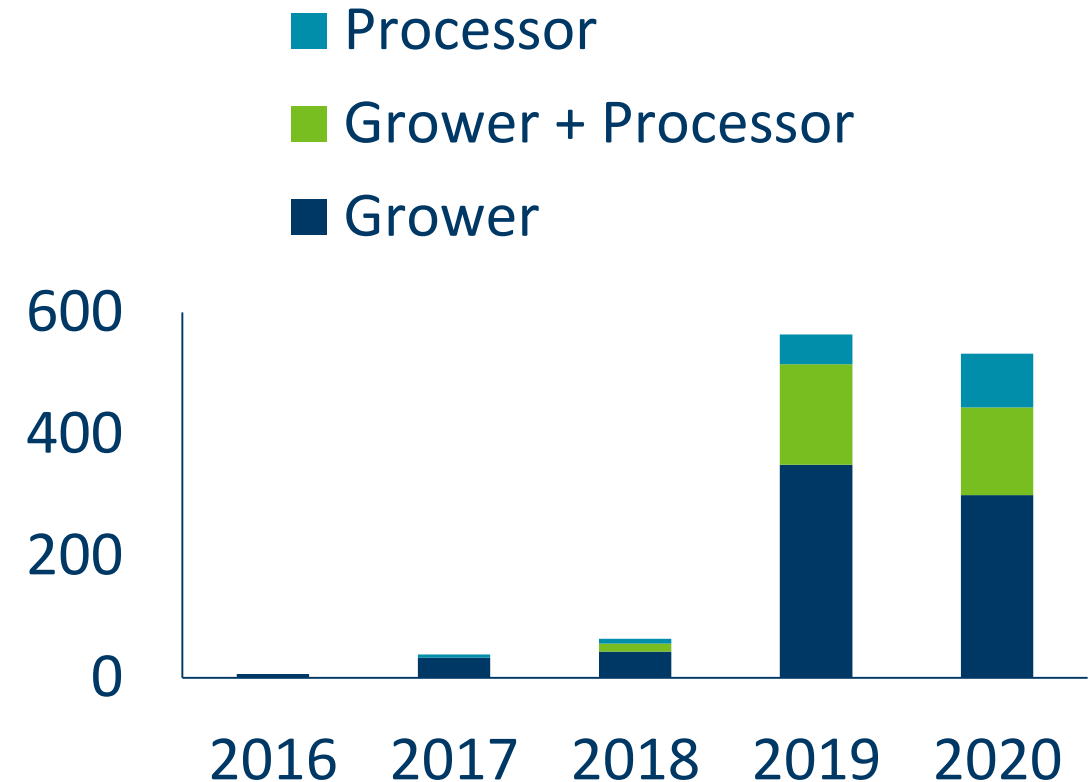
Investing in cleaner biofuels, farmers and rural communities

- Minnesota's farmers and rural communities have been a national leader in biofuels production and technology.
- Governor Walz recommends \$4 million to establish a biofuels infrastructure grant program to increase the use of ethanol and biodiesel.
- These grants would help service stations install the fuel-dispensing equipment needed to ramp up use of higher blends of biofuels.
- Smart investments in Minnesota biofuels will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide opportunities for farmers and Greater Minnesota communities.



MDA Pilot Program began with the 2016 growing season

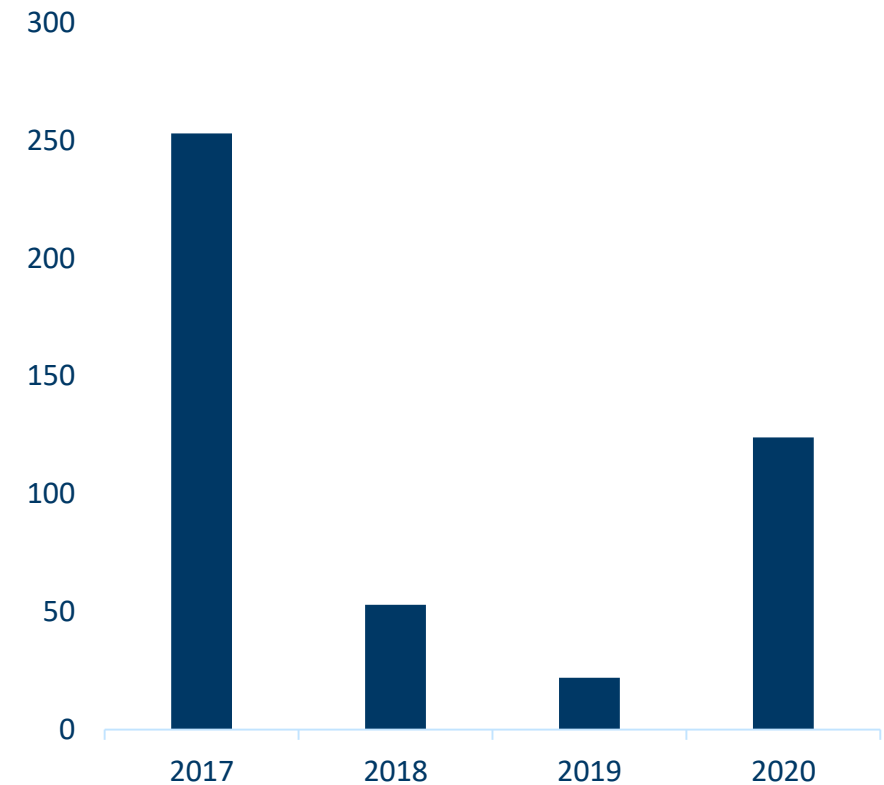
- Growers and processors must be licensed by the MDA
- Interest increased dramatically due to CBD (cannabinoid) market opportunities and federal legalization in 2018
- Pilot Program ended Dec. 31, 2020 and the Minnesota Hemp Program began operation under USDA oversight on Jan. 1, 2021
 - Amended and improved federal rule was published in Jan. 2021
 - Sampling requirements are more practical and failure rates may be reduced
- 230+ applications for 2021 – Deadline April 30



Dicamba is used to control weeds in soybeans genetically engineered to tolerate over-the-top use of the herbicide

- The chemical is highly volatile and can damage non-target plants
- Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals vacated EPA's registration of three products on June 30, 2020
- EPA approved new five-year registrations on Oct. 7, 2020 including:
 - June 30 cut-off date
 - Volatility reducing agent
 - Buffer zones
 - Additional recordkeeping
- The MDA is also requiring education and training of applicators and more Minnesota-specific data

Dicamba Complaints



Thank you!

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