



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

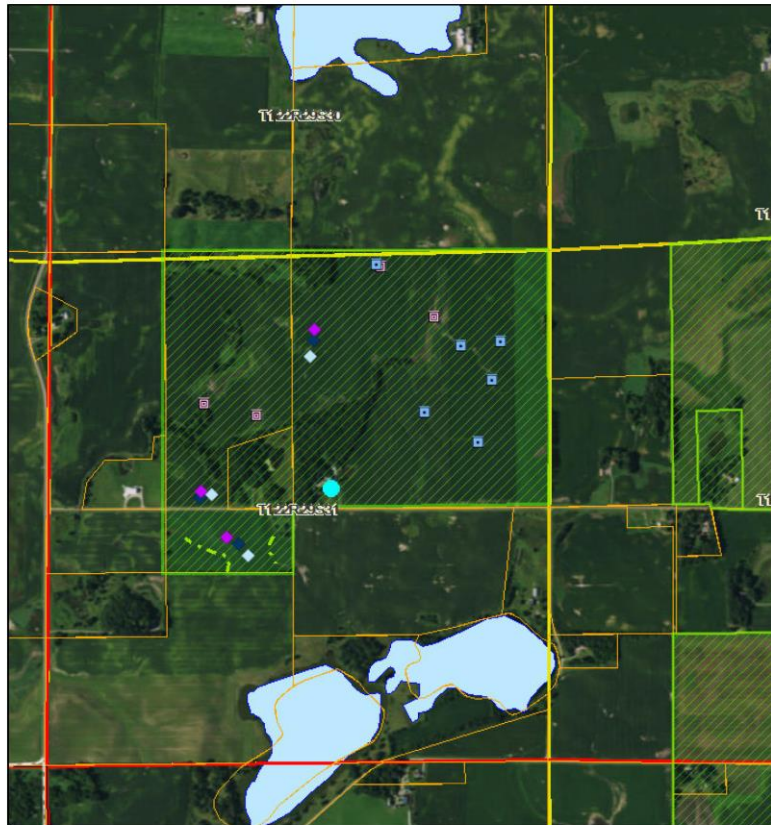
Matthew Wohlman, Deputy Commissioner

www.mda.state.mn.us

www.mylandmylegacy.com



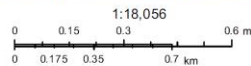
MAWQCP sample map



May 22, 2017

- Producers
 - Override 1
- New Practice Points
 - Alternative Tile Intake
 - Water and Sediment Control Basin
 - New Phosphorus BMP
 - New Tillage BMP
 - New Nitrogen BMP

- Certified Farms
- Existing Practice Lines
- Grassed Waterway
- Parcels
- Counties
- PLS Townships
- PLS Sections
- Public Waters Basins



Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User community
Sources: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Microsoft | Esri | HERE, Garmin, IPC |

- MAWQCP offers producers:
 - Recognition
 - Financial/Technical assistance
 - Regulatory certainty
 - Branding/Marketing opportunity
 - Check-up/Validation for growers
- Whole-farm planning for water quality; risk assessment of every parcel, every crop; **boots-on-the-ground** conservation
- Pairs producers with professionals to develop **site-specific** solutions for risks to water quality

- **Fundamental partnership.**
- **10 year** term of certification; amendable for land moving in or out of farming operation; and re-certification as desired.
- By law, all **data** is strictly **private**.
- **‘Certainty’** provided by contract with State of Minnesota:

“Certified farms are deemed to be in compliance with any new State water quality rules or laws and considered to be meeting their contributions to any targeted reductions of pollutants during the period of their certification.”



Created with MOU signed by Governor Mark Dayton, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

Certification Process



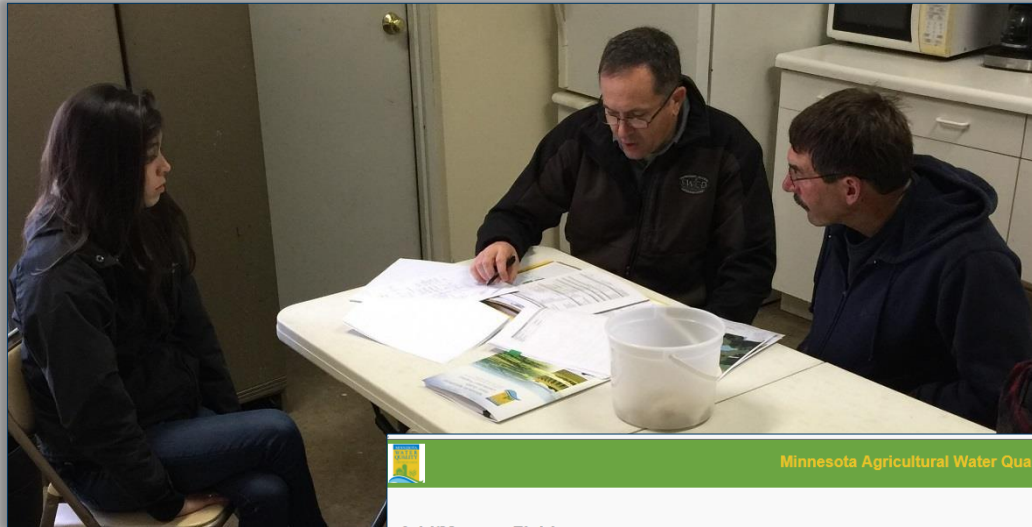
- **Baseline risk assessment of every field/parcel and every crop, including physical site inspection.**

- Physical field properties
- Nutrient management
- Tillage management
- Pest management
- Irrigation management
- Drainage management
- Conservation practices

Field	Nutr. Mgmt	Tillage	Pest Mgmt	Base Score	Irr/Dmg Adju	Final
6.69	9.49	9.00	10.00	8.74	7.68	8.73

Practice	Risk index score
Nitrogen application rate	10.00
Phosphorus application rate	9.00
Commercial fertilizer timing	10.00
Commercial fertilizer source	6.00
Commercial fertilizer placement	10.00
Manure application timing & placement	10.00

Certification Process



- With all risks mitigated, the treatments and management commitments are recorded for certification eligibility.

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Add/Manage Fields

Filter items...

ID	Field name/rotation	Acres	Mapped?	Certification	Certification status
13	Shop / Corn after Corn c-c-c-C-a-a-a-a-a	79.0	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
14	Shop / Alfalfa after Corn c-c-c-C-A-a-a-a-a	79.0	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
15	Shop / Alfalfa Production c-c-c-c-a-A-A-A-A	79.0	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
16	Shop / Corn after Alfalfa C-c-c-c-a-a-a-a-a	79.0	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
17	Town Hall / Corn after Corn c-C-C-C-a-a-a-a-a	42.1	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
18	Town Hall / Alfalfa after Corn c-c-c-C-A-a-a-a-a	42.1	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible
19	Town Hall / Alfalfa	42.1	Yes	Edit Assessment	Certification Eligible

Save Return to Welcome Screen & Restart



Certification Process

e.g. treatments.

Licensed Certifier Review and Approval:

Name: Mark Lefebvre Signature: *Mark Lefebvre* Date: 3/23/17

Minnesota Department of Agriculture Review and Approval:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification is contingent on the implementation of the following:

- Install 5 water and sediment control basins according to EQIP RCPP plan.
- Reduce Phosphorus fertilizer applications from 40% over on some grid soil samples to follow UMN guideline.
- Reduce Nitrogen fertilizer rate from 20% over to follow UMN guidelines.
- Change from conventional tillage to mulch/reduced till with STIR 31 – 80.

Certification Process

- Contract between the State of Minnesota and certified producer
- Agreement term of 10 years
- Outlines obligations of producer and responsibilities of the State
- Defines certainty and grants it to producer
- Field assessment records attached as appendix to contract

Certification Number _____



**STATE OF MINNESOTA
AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT**

This agreement is between _____ (“Producer”) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (“MDA”), which is authorized to sign on behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources pursuant to Minnesota Governor’s Executive Order 14-09.

This contract is governed by Minnesota Statutes Sections 17.9891-17.993 which outline procedures for implementing the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program. All parties agree that the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is in the public interest as it enhances the water quality of Minnesota’s rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater, as well as promotes and accelerates environmental stewardship by Minnesota’s farmers.

A. TERMS OF AGREEMENT:

Agreement start date is _____ and expires on _____.

Contract Details

“All parties agree that the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is in the public interest as it enhances the water quality of Minnesota’s rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater, as well as promotes and accelerates stewardship by Minnesota’s farmers.” — *from MAWQCP Certification Agreement (contract) preamble*



Contract Details

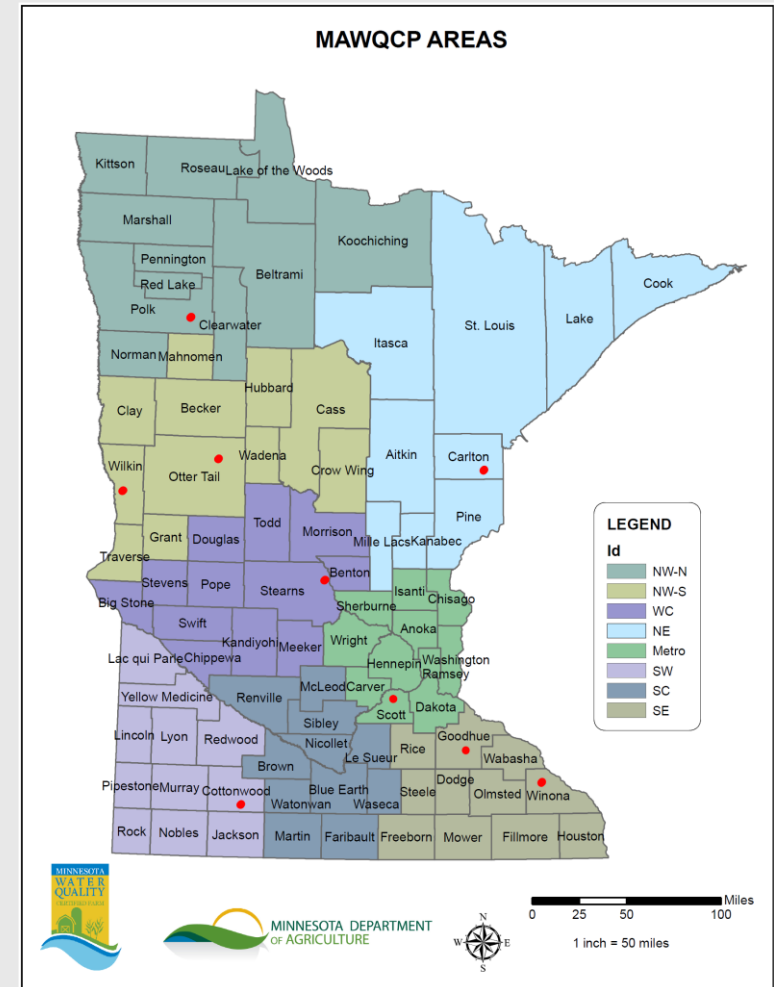


Key provisions include:

- Inability to preform
- Producer certainty
- Violations
- Amendments
- Data

Fiscal Agents manage service areas:

- **Area Certification Specialist (ACS)** full-time lead staff coordinating certification services for each Area
- MDA staffed, area-designated **Intermittent Certification Specialists**; part-time/on-call position for certification support
- A pool for reimbursement of SWCDs for staff delivery of certification services



Status as of November 6, 2017

(18 months of statewide operations)

**480 certified farms totaling
280,191 certified acres implementing
866 New Practices that have yielded:**

- 46.68 million pounds of soil saved per year,
- 21.01 million pounds sediment reduced per year,
- 12,231 pounds of phosphorus prevented from entering our waters per year,
- and reduced nitrogen loss by as much as 49 percent.

Processing approximately 390 current applications (totals provided quarterly)



Agency Partners



April 18, 2016

David Frederickson, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

Dear Commissioner Frederickson:

As you know, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is a proud supporter of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). The MAWQCP not only helps protect water quality, but enhances soil health. I want to let you know that we are making changes to our permitting program to further support and incentivize farmer participation in the MAWQCP.

The MPCA will be revising its feedlot permit application forms to allow farmers to indicate on the forms that they have obtained MAWQCP certification. This acknowledgement will move these projects to the front of the queue for permitting. Because our environmental review program uses forms that must be approved by the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), any change to those forms requires EQB approval. We will evaluate whether there are potential changes to the EQB environmental review form that would help to support the MAWQCP.

Working with your staff, staff from the MPCA Feedlot Program will be expediting approval of the online nutrient management tool developed for the MAWQCP. This will reduce the time required to prepare a manure management plan meeting the requirements found in Minnesota's Feedlot Rules, Chapter 7020, as well as the requirements found in both the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) feedlot permit and the State Disposal System (SDS) feedlot permit.

The MPCA also anticipates that the MAWQCP will benefit our environmental review program. When a farmer has a project that requires an EAW or EIS, certification under the MAWQCP will benefit our review process, because the project will include best management practices that are known and approved to protect water quality, accelerating MPCA's review process. The MAWQCP should make it easier to readily identify and evaluate the potential water quality impacts of a project under environmental review, which will assist in the MPCA's determination of whether the project has the potential for significant environmental effects to surface or groundwater quality.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program and the Minnesota Buffer Program

This agreement is between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, acting through its Commissioner and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, acting through its Executive Director.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the undersigned agencies agree to coordinate enabling the riparian buffer standards and protocols followed by the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program to be an acceptable means that landowners may employ to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.48 as alternative practices that includes structural, vegetative, and management practices as follows:

1. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program will continue to address resource concerns and ensure all riparian buffers and alternate practices implemented under the Program adhere to the standards defined in the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Field Office Technical Guide and other practices approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
2. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources affirms that all producers and landowners who have a valid Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program contract with the State of Minnesota meet the obligations of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.48, Riparian Protection and Water Quality Practices, by implementing alternative practices that include structural, vegetative, and management practices.
3. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will work in concert to develop the procedures and protocols necessary to inform the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, agricultural landowners and other stakeholders of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program's status as an acceptable means that landowners may employ to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.48 as alternative practices that include structural, vegetative, and management practices.

- BWSR: MAWQCP certification is 'approved alternative practice' for buffer law
- PCA: key strategy Nutrient Reduction Strategy; Permits & review priority
- DNR: ag land leases met MAWQCP standard, resulted in whole farm certifications.
- USDA-NRCS: Technical & financial assistance - RCPP



Exhibit B

Additional Terms

Cooperative Farming Agreement 144-033-0610

Private Partners



Precedent setting partnership agreement with Land O' Lakes, Inc.



MAWQCP certified production offset for all feed for Just BARE brand products



Ag retailer and consultant participation



Providing 12-packs to certified farms, reportedly because good beer needs good water

Unique Conservation

Conservation challenges:

- Undertaken only if, and only so long as, paid to do so.
- Single practices/prescriptions only where amenable.
- Much/Majority of cropland is rented, neither landlord nor renter may want major commitment/investment.

MAWQCP:

- 10 years of self-determined practice and management commitments apart from or beyond cost-share contracts.
- All parcels, every crop, entire inter-related farm system, addresses water quality resource concern.
- See 2) above, plus landlords in effect have professionally prepared 'conservation leases' for all their land.



Unique Integration

- Landlord certification achieves professionally prepared and packaged **conservation leases**.
- Advantage of MAWQCP risk mitigation is to address the **environmental attribute**
-- not the type of production (e.g. conventional, organic, non-gmo, grass-fed, etc)
-- enables a common standard across all systems.
- A market-valued attribute can in turn create value for providing the **mitigation services** to establish the attribute.
- A **comprehensive structure** for water quality credit or ecosystem services trading/payment mechanisms (baseline, additionality, threshold).





QUESTIONS?

mn DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

www.mda.state.mn.us
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Thank you!

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