



Operator Opportunities

In Sherburne County

April 2026

Nutrient Management Initiative

The Minnesota Nutrient Management Initiative (NMI) assists farmers and crop advisers in evaluating nutrient management practices on their own fields.

It is a simple tool that can lead to improved fertilizer efficiency and improved water quality.

Each participating farmer can work with a crop adviser to set up field trials on their farms. After completing plot harvest and submitting the required forms, farmers and crop advisers are reimbursed for their time and receive a summary and analysis of their results.

Compensation

Farmers and crop advisers are compensated for each field trial. The rate of compensation is higher for those that participate in the Advanced Rate Trial. Due to State contracting policies, individual participant payments are paid in two equal installments (June & December).

Farmer Compensation

Trial Type	Payment Per Trial	Maximum Number of Trials
Field Trial	\$1,300	1
Advanced Rate Trial	\$1,500	1

Advisor Compensation

Trial Type	Payment Per Trial	Maximum Number of Trials
Field Trial	\$600	10
Advanced Rate Trial	\$700	10

Example trials include:

- Nitrogen rate trial
- Nitrogen rate following manure trial
- Nitrogen stabilizer product trial
- Nitrogen application timing trial
- Nitrogen source trial

Field trial design requirements for all trials:

Traditional field trial design:

- Corn grown and harvested for grain only.
- Field length strips preferred, minimum of 30 feet wide by 600 feet in length.
- Account for all nitrogen sources including manure, alfalfa, legume credits in addition to starter, MAP and DAP.
- Rate trials should maintain a minimum 30 lb. N/acre rate separation for comparison. Dealer nitrogen program comparisons are also acceptable.
- Keep all other factors consistent across field trial area (hybrid/variety, other nutrients, rates, soils, field history, drainage, topography, equipment)
- Crop adviser submits information to verify accuracy (If a farmer does not have a crop adviser, please contact closest NMI representative for assistance).

See: www.mda.state.mn.us/nmiguidelines for a complete listing of field trial requirements.

Contact these MDA Soil Scientists for more information:

Ryan Lemickson - 612-209-9181 - Ryan.Lemickson@state.mn.us - Glenwood

Dawn Bernau - 507-206-2881 - Dawn.Bernau@state.mn.us - Rochester

Kevin Hauth - 507-822-4175 - Kevin.Hauth@state.mn.us - Lamberton

MAWQCP Financial Assistance

Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program Financial Assistance

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) offers farmers and landowners a voluntary pathway to protect our state's water resources. By adopting conservation practices that safeguard rivers, lakes, and drinking water, participants strengthen the resilience of their operations while contributing to long-term environmental stewardship.

- Provides up to \$5,000 for adopting agricultural best management practices
- Covers up to 75% of implementation costs after other public funds are applied
- Available to producers who are certified or actively pursuing certification
- Applications accepted year-round; awards made on a first-come basis until funds are depleted
- Apply through your local area certification specialist or online
- For more information see:
www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/financial-assistance



Region	Certifier	Organization	Email Address	Phone Number
Northwest	Glen Kajewski	East Polk SWCD	Glen.kajewskieastpolk@gmail.com	218-689-1502
North Central	Jim Lahn	East Otter Tail SWCD	James.lahn@eot.mnswcd.org	218-457-0250
Northeast	Ryan Clark	Carlton SWCD	Ryan.clark@carltonswcd.org	218-451-6118
West Central	Grant Pearson	Stearns SWCD	Grant.pearson@mn.nacdnet.net	320-428-4274
South Central	Herman Bartsch	Cottonwood SWCD	Hermanbartsch@outlook.com	507-380-9134
Southwest	Danielle Evers	Pipestone SWCD	Danielle.evers@pipestonecounty.gov	507-825-1199
Southeast	Greg Klinger	Olmsted SWCD	Gregory.klinger@olmstedcounty.gov	507-910-8942
North Metro	Clarissa Levi	MDA, St. Paul	Clarissa.levi@state.mn.us	651-503-8695
South Metro	Ellen Friedrich	MDA, St. Paul	Ellen.friedrich@state.mn.us	651-728-3663

Comedy Corner

What kind of shoes do frogs wear when Spring comes?



Open-toed

General CRP Signup

USDA Opens General Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment for 2026

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the enrollment periods for agricultural producers and landowners to submit offers for the General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for General CRP from March 9, 2026, through April 17, 2026. FSA will announce dates for Grassland CRP signup in the near future.

CRP is USDA's flagship conservation program, providing financial and technical support to agricultural producers and landowners who place unproductive or marginal cropland under contract for 10-15 years and who agree to voluntarily convert the land to beneficial vegetative cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and support wildlife habitat. The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026, extends FSA's authority to administer CRP through Sept. 30, 2026.

General CRP (Signup 66)

General CRP offers are submitted through a competitive bid process. After the enrollment period closes, General CRP offers are ranked and scored by FSA, using nationally established environmental benefits criteria. USDA will announce accepted offers once ranking and scoring for all offers is completed. In addition to annual rental payments, approved General CRP participants may also be eligible for cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative cover.

Producers and landowners interested in participating in CRP should contact their local FSA county office.

More information can be found on the NRCS webpage for the pilot program, and the FAQ webpage: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>

Upcoming Events



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Cover Crops for Gardeners

5-7:30 p.m.

April 16th Sherburne History Center 10775 27 th Ave SE Becker, MN	May 7th Stearns Service Center 3301 Co Rd 138 Waite Park, MN
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Questions?
Quincy Sadowski
quincy@umn.edu

Get started with cover crops for vegetable farms and home gardens.



SWCD TREE SALE

Spreading roots to promote a greener Sherburne County

New ORDER ONLINE

www.sherburneswcd.org

Visit our Tree Sale Store

Alfalfa Scissor-Cut and Harvest Alert

Looking to get more out of your alfalfa?

By monitoring the Relative Feed Value, or RFV, of your forage, you can optimize your harvest timing to bring in the highest yield at your target quality. The University of Minnesota Alfalfa Scissor-Cut program helps alfalfa growers gauge the RFV of their forage. Samples are collected from cooperating farms across central Minnesota two days per week and submitted to a lab for nutrient testing. The results are shared with the public to help inform harvest decisions.

RFV represents the quality of a forage relative to full bloom alfalfa and indicates how well the forage will be consumed and digested by animals. For milking dairy herds, the University of Minnesota recommends forage quality around 150 RFV. For heifers, stockers, or lactating beef cows, the University recommends an RFV around 120 or 130. Even under the best harvest conditions, hay will lose at least 15% of its value during harvesting. This means that forage should be cut when its RFV is 15-25 points above what's desired.

Collecting your own samples will provide the most accurate information for your field. If you follow along on our dashboard or receive our email reports, you can follow fields that are in your area and estimate when your fields might be nearing harvest quality, allowing you to reduce the number of times you forage sample. To sign up for twice weekly email reports in May, visit z.umn.edu/QuadCountySignUp and check the Alfalfa Scissor-Cut and Harvest Alert box. Other ways to receive alfalfa scissor cut updates include visiting the dashboard at z.umn.edu/AlfalfaHarvestAlert, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, or following the University of Minnesota Extension Crop News.



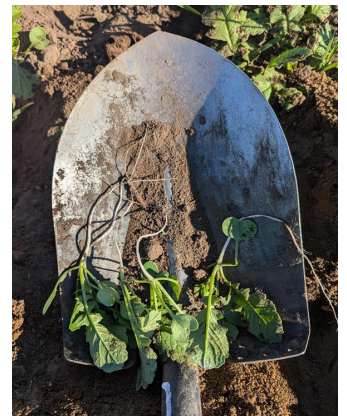
Soil Health System Technical Assistance

Assistance Available for Soil Health

Cover Crops – Residue Management – Conservation Cover – Filter Strips – Field Borders
Tillage killing your organic matter? Manage your residue differently this fall, feed your soils with cover crops this growing season. Build up soil biology to help break down that pesky crop residue. Interseed winter kill cover crop mixes, eligible for cost share today!

Questions about residue breakdown?

Explore what other options are available to you to manage different challenges in adopting a soil health system. Call the office to set up an on-farm soil health assessment, we can assist in identifying resource concerns: compaction, organic matter depletion, wind and water erosion, and others. We can then look at options to address these using a soil health system approach. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Soil Health Funding available to implement these practices.



For more information, contact Matt Preis at:

mpreis@sherburneswcd.org

763-220-3434 x 107



Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

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