



# Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Program

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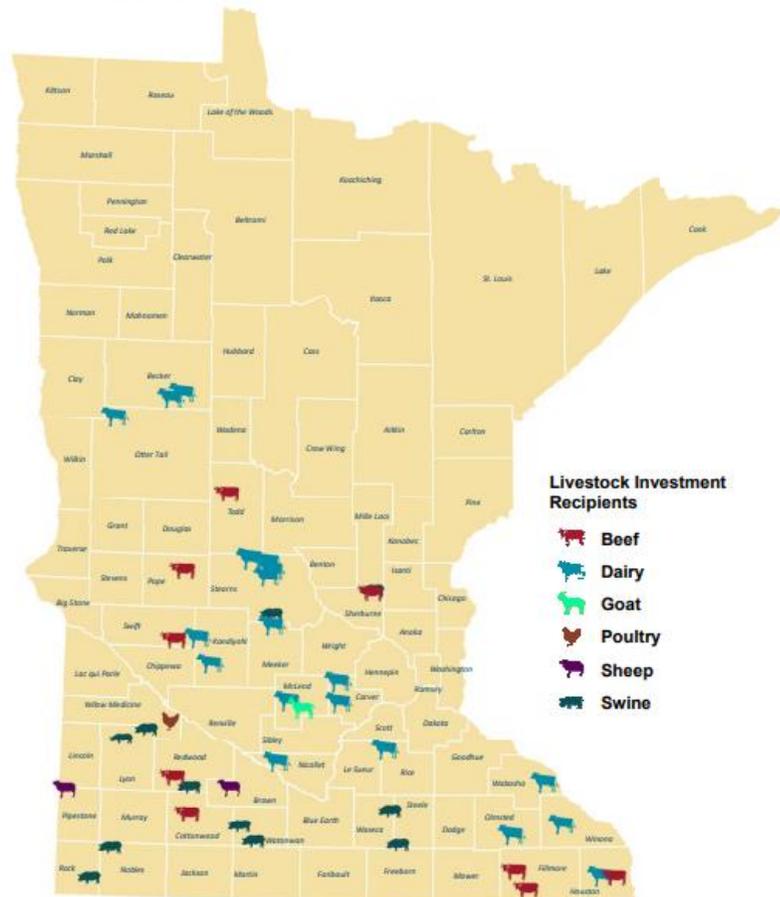
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<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/agri>

# Report Overview

## Livestock Investment Grants by County Fiscal Year 2021



## Value-Added Grant Recipients

Legislative District	County	Business Name	City
01B	Polk	Vertical Malt	Invest in ten-ton malting system.
02B	Mahnomen	Benson + Turner Foods, Inc.	Construct USDA-inspected meat processing plant and purchase equipment.
03A	Saint Louis	Zup's Market-Babbitt	Buy sausage stuffer and linker to expand product line.
03B	Lake	Love Creamery	Remodel production facility and support ice cream production.
07B	Saint Louis	Duluth Cider	Expand cider production with new equipment.
08B	Otter Tail	Midwest Meat, LLC	Open custom exempt meat processing facility.
09B	Morrison	Foothills Orchard	Complete fruit product lineup with equipment purchases.
12B	Stearns	Harry's Frozen Foods	Automate cheese application for frozen pizza.
12B	Stearns	MN Meats and Markets (Schaefer's Market)	Build meat processing and sausage production facility.
13A	Stearns	Milk and Honey Ciders	Enhance shelf stabilization with beverage equipment purchase.
13A	Stearns	Stickney Hill Dairy	Increase milk processing with reverse osmosis/ultra filtration equipment.
15A	Mille Lacs	Backroad Meats	Increase productivity of bacon with processing and packaging equipment.
15A	Mille Lacs	ForageScape Farm, LLC	Increase egg production with purchase of automated egg washing/candling equipment.
15B	Benton	Foley Locker, Inc.	Purchase grinder, tumbler, and sanitizing equipment.
15B	Sherburne	Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed	Build out meat processing room and purchase equipment to grind, portion, and package fresh grass-fed beef.
16B	Renville	Lower Sioux Indian Community	Buy hemp processing equipment to process hemp hurd and make hempcrete.
18B	McLeod	Schwarzrock Meat Market, Inc.	Convert building for slaughter and hog processing, and purchase walk-in carcass cooler, refrigerated delivery truck, and other equipment.
21A	Goodhue	Lorentz Etc., Inc. (Lorentz Meats)	Build hide processing building and dry good packaging storage building, and purchase equipment.
21B	Winona	Big River Beverage Company, LLC	Increase production with purchase of brew kettle, keg washer, sanke kegs, and additional cold storage.
22B	Nobles	Austin Williams	Acquire equipment for new meat processing center.
23B	Waseca	Morgan's Meat Market	Upgrade production equipment, purchase new smokehouse, and replace production room floor.
24B	Renville	Prairie Meats, Inc.	Start second production line and resurface floor in processing, slaughter, and retail area.

# 2022 – 2023 Biennium New/One-time/Increased Programs

**Meat, Poultry, Egg and Milk Processing:** \$750,000/year

**Biofuels Infrastructure:** \$3 million/year

**Livestock Investment:** \$1.4 million/year

**Incentive Payments (41A.16, 41A.17, 41A.18 and 41A.20):** Increased from \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million/year

**Farm to School:** Increased from up to \$400,000 → up to \$800,000/year

**Urban Ag:** Increased from up to \$300,000 → up to \$600,000/year

**Good Food Access:** Increased from up to \$300,000 → up to \$450,000/year

**Awarded:** Farm Business Management Scholarships, Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk, Livestock Investment, Crop Research, Sustainable Ag Demo, Incentive Payments, Farm to School, Urban Agriculture, County Fairs

**Under Review:** Biofuels Infrastructure, Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Equipment/Physical Improvement, GFAP Technical Assistance (all closed 3/17)

**Accepting Applications:** Value-Added (3/24), Livestock Investment (4/5), GAP Cost-Share (5/31), New Markets Cost-Share (7/9)

# Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk Processing

- Facilitates the start-up, modernization, or expansion of meat, poultry, egg, and milk processing businesses through investments in equipment and physical infrastructure
- Builds off the standard Value-Added Grant
- FY 2022 Budget: Applications received from 67 applications requesting \$3.2 million. Awarded \$709,235 to 15 grantees.

# AGRI Farm to School Grants

- Aim to help schools purchase and serve more Minnesota grown and raised products in their school meal programs.
  - First Bite: for schools that have little to no experience with local procurement
  - Full Tray: for schools that want to grow their Farm to School programming and expand local procurement
  - Equipment: available to both First Bite and Full Tray applicants
- FY 2022: Awarded \$741,619 to 46 schools. Applications received from 68 applicants requesting \$1.297 million.



# AGRI Urban Agriculture Grants

- Encourages urban youth agricultural education and urban agriculture community development within city limits of urban or peri-urban areas.
- Prioritizes projects that demonstrate a commitment to positive environmental impacts, economic justice, and projects that are in or serve BIPOC communities.
- FY 2022: Awarded \$551,000 to 14 grantees. Requests totaled \$2.3 million from 53 applicants.



# Third-party Evaluation

- Hired Transform LLC, supported by A<sup>2</sup> Marketing Research and OneAirSpace to evaluate key AGRI programs
- Focused on five AGRI programs between Fiscal Years 2015-2019
- Included both quantitative and qualitative impacts with recipients and stakeholders

## AGRICULTURAL GROWTH, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION (AGRI) PROGRAM ASSESSMENT (2015 – 2019)

### A Comprehensive Assessment of Five Programs



Prepared for MDA AGRI by  
Transform LLC  
With support of A<sup>2</sup> Marketing Research and OneAirSpace

[www.transformcrisis.com](http://www.transformcrisis.com)

February 28, 2021

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# Third-party Evaluation Results

The evaluation confirmed that AGRI is making a difference in the lives of Minnesota farmers, food producers, and processors.

- 99% reported that the grant or cost-share positively impacted their organization
- 89% increased their gross revenue (not applicable to the Crop Research Grant)
- 42% of these grantees/participants increased the number of people employed as a result of their AGRI grant or cost-share (either full-time or part-time, seasonally or permanently)

“Simple, my small business did not have enough assets or capital to do the expansion that was required to be up to code for USDA inspections. With the grant funding, my local bank was willing to fund the rest of the project.”

Jeremy Johnson, Conger Meat Market

# Grants Staff



**Courtney VanderMey**

Livestock Investment



**Emily Mehr**

Good Food Access

Farm to School

Urban Agriculture

Sustainable Agriculture

Farmers Market Nutrition  
Programs



**Sonya Borgeson-Bethke**

Biofuels Infrastructure

Incentive Payments

# Grants Staff



**Ann Kuzj**

Specialty Crop Block Grant  
Crop Research Grant



**Ian Kushner**

Specialty Crop Block Grant  
Crop Research Grant



**Eric Nooker**

Value-Added  
Meat, Poultry, Egg & Milk  
Sustainable Agriculture



**Dacia Hinkhouse**  
*begins March 30*

County Fairs

# Third-party Evaluation Results

- 95% said the program met or exceeded their expectations
- 90% reported that the application process was “very easy” or “fairly easy”

“Before receiving this grant, I worked part-time on the family farm and had a full-time off farm job. This grant helped me to expand the farm to the point that I could come home to farm full-time alongside my dad and help with the transition of our family hog farm.”

Jason Fischer, Fischer Farms

# Thank you!

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