

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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April 10, 2024

Committee Members:

My name is Michael Schmitt. I serve as Associate Dean in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences and with University of Minnesota Extension. I am responsible for implementing the University's land grant mission of aligning our research efforts to serve Minnesota. A significant issue in recent years has been Minnesota's water quality and the connection to nitrogen fertilizer management.

The Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) program has been a **game-changer** in making a difference for Minnesota. It has been a catalyst for nitrogen research regarding best management practices for crop producers and agricultural professionals and its subsequent direct impact on water quality across the state.

Research and education programs led by Drs. Fabian Fernandez, Carl Rosen, Melissa Wilson, Dan Kaiser, Lindsay Pease, Vasudha Sharma, and others have been significant, timely, and effective due to competitive funding from the AFREC program. The AFREC website houses research reports on several recent projects dealing with [soil health and water quality](#).

Funding for nitrogen research and educational programs was a limiting factor in the rate of change that we could expect before AFREC came into existence. AFREC has resulted in improved nitrogen fertilizer recommendations, refined nitrogen best management practices, effective education programs and a stronger connection between fertilizer practices and water quality state-wide.

Bottomline, AFREC has allowed the University of Minnesota to significantly increase our capacity, reach, and access to fertilizer research and education for Minnesotans.

AFREC's goals focus on nutrient management to optimize agronomic, economic and environmental outcomes. The University of Minnesota has been an efficient and effective steward of AFREC funding over the past 15+ years and looks forward to partnering with the AFREC program to meet future goals.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Schmitt, Ph.D., Associate Dean  
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