

Subject Agriculture
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Overview

This bill would establish a new program administered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to award grants of up to \$10,000 to eligible agricultural production businesses that hire adult interns who are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture and have no more than five years of agricultural work experience.

A participating agricultural business would be required to pay the interns at least the state minimum wage (generally \$10.59 per hour for employers with gross revenue in excess of \$500,000, and \$8.63 for smaller employers). The business would use grant dollars received from MDA to raise the intern's hourly wage to \$15 per hour.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Next generation farmer development program.
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Establishes the program, including eligibility criteria and mandatory program elements.

Subd. 1. Establishment. Establishes the program and defines key terms.

Subd. 2. Competitive grants and targeted development activities. Directs MDA to award grants of up to \$10,000 to each participating agricultural business to provide work opportunities to qualified interns. Requires the program (via the agricultural business) to provide qualified interns with specified experiences and knowledge.

Subd. 3. General terms and conditions of grants. Requires a qualified agricultural business to pay the intern no less than the applicable state minimum wage (i.e., \$10.59/hour for employers with \$500,000 or more in gross receipts per year; \$8.63/hour for employers with less than \$500,000). Limits grants to 50 percent

Section **Description**

of the intern’s total wages. Specifies that the grant must cover the difference between minimum wage and \$15 per hour. Limits grant terms to seven months and provides that an intern may receive grant funding no more than twice in any five-year period, while a business may not receive more than four years of internship grant assistance in any five-year period.

Subd. 4. Application procedures. Specifies information that agricultural business applicants must submit to MDA. Authorizes MDA to require additional reasonable information.

Subd. 5. Application review; approval; notification. Specifies criteria MDA must use to weigh and compare applications in light of available funds.

Subd. 6. Monitoring and review. Requires grantees to keep certain records and to make certain documents and practices available to MDA for examination during normal business hours.

Subd. 7. Final report. Requires grantees to return all unexpended funds and submit a final report no later than 60 days after termination of the grant contract. Specifies information the report must include.

Subd. 8. Biennial report required. Requires MDA to report program outcomes and recommendations to legislative agriculture committees no later than March 15 of each odd-numbered year.

Subd. 9. Citation. Declares that this act may be cited as the “Next Generation Minnesota Farmer Act.”

2 Appropriation.

Appropriates \$250,000 per year to MDA for purpose of the Next Generation Minnesota Farmer Act.



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