

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 1051
Version: First engrossment

DATE: March 12, 2015

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Subject: Agriculture, agricultural education

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Overview

H.F. 1051 takes a number of steps to support existing agricultural education programs and encourage Minnesotans to become licensed agricultural educators.

- Extends the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program until June 30, 2025.
- Appropriates money to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) to create and provide online agriculture courses.
- Appropriates money to the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council to increase awareness of the online agriculture courses among high school students who could take them under the postsecondary enrollment option (PSEO). Appropriates additional money to ensure that PSEO students can participate in FFA.
- Establishes a grant program within the Agricultural Education Leadership Council to reimburse agricultural educators for expenses not paid by their employers.
- Appropriates money to the University of Minnesota and MnSCU to develop new teacher preparation programs for licensed agricultural educators.

Section

- 1** **Sunset.** Extends the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation program sunset date by ten years, to June 30, 2025. The AGRI program is administered by the Minnesota

Section

Department of Agriculture and supports agriculture, bioenergy, and rural development initiatives.

- 2 Appropriation; online course creation.** Appropriates \$100,000 in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to the Board of Trustees of MnSCU to develop online agriculture courses taught by farm business management instructors. Institutions are required to develop courses that are introductory in nature.

Postsecondary institutions that receive funds to develop courses must coordinate with one another to avoid offering duplicative courses. Institutions that receive funds under this section must have one course developed and ready for student enrollment within a year of receiving funds.

- 3 Appropriation; Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council.** Appropriates \$1,000,000 in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council for two purposes:

1. Increase awareness of the online courses created under section 2 of this bill amongst high school students eligible to take the courses through the postsecondary enrollment option (PSEO).
2. Establish a “regional agriculture educator advisor program” to serve as an in-person contact for students participating in PSEO to ensure that they are eligible for FFA participation.

These appropriations are added to the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council’s base.

- 4 Appropriation; agriculture educator grants.** Appropriates \$1,500,000 in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council to develop a new grant program. Under the program, the council will award grants to agriculture educators for activities that advance the agricultural education of students but for which an educator is not compensated. This appropriation is added to the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council’s base.

- 5 Appropriation; college agricultural education programs.** Appropriates \$500,000 in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota and the Board of Trustees of MnSCU for the creation of agricultural education teacher licensure programs. The University of Minnesota appropriation is for the creation of an agricultural education licensure program at the Crookston campus, and the MnSCU appropriation is for the creation of such a program at Southwest Minnesota State in Marshall.

Institutions receiving funds under this appropriation must submit reports to the committees of the Minnesota House and Senate with jurisdiction over agriculture policy, K-12 education policy, and higher education policy. In these reports, an institution must report its progress in developing the licensure program and increasing the number of students receiving a license in agricultural education. The institution must submit such reports by February 15, 2016, and February 15, 2017.

- 6 Farm business management tuition scholarships.** Appropriates \$1,000,000 from the general fund to the commissioner of agriculture for need-based farm business management tuition scholarships.

Section

7 **Appropriation; farm business management supplement.** Appropriates \$4.8 million from the general fund to the commissioner of agriculture for grants to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system for additional farm business management programming. As a condition of receiving a grant, MnSCU must certify that it will maintain total funding for farm business management at no less than state fiscal year 2015 levels and that the grant will supplement, not supplant, existing program resources. MnSCU would be required to allocate a portion of grant funding for services to beginning farmers, veteran farmers, urban farmers, recent immigrant farmers, and farmers who are members of a protected group, as defined as “females, persons with disabilities, and members of the following minorities: Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan native” (Minn. Stat. § 43A.02, subd. 33).