

Subject Agriculture and Broadband Finance and Policy

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Overview

This bill would appropriate funding in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Board of Animal Health (BAH), the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), and the Broadband Development Office in the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

This bill also cancels a fiscal year 2024 appropriation to green fertilizer grants, appropriates and transfers money for fiscal year 2025, modifies farm down payment assistance grants, establishes the biofertilizer innovation and efficiency program, establishes eligibility for county agricultural inspector grants, and modifies underground telecommunications installation requirements.

Article 1: Appropriations

This article appropriates money to MDA, BAH, and AURI in fiscal years 2026 and 2027. It cancels a fiscal year 2024 appropriation to green fertilizer grants, appropriates and transfers money for fiscal year 2025, modifies farm down payment assistance grants, establishes the biofertilizer innovation and efficiency program, clarifies the eligibility criteria for the advanced biofuel production incentive program, and establishes eligibility for county agricultural inspector grants.

Section	Description – Article 1: Appropriations
1	Agriculture appropriations. Inserts boilerplate language regarding the appropriations format and terminology used in this article.
2	Department of Agriculture. Appropriates general fund and remediation money to the MDA for specified purposes.

Section Description – Article 1: Appropriations

Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Totals the entire amount of money, by fund, appropriated to MDA in this bill.

Subd. 2. Protection services. Appropriates general fund and remediation money for MDA's regulatory programs and inspection services. This subdivision provides funding for the following MDA divisions: Pesticide and Fertilizer Management, Laboratory Services, Plant Protection, Dairy and Meat Inspection, and Food and Feed Safety.

Subd. 3. Agricultural marketing and development. Appropriates general fund money to MDA's Agricultural Marketing and Development Division.

Subd. 4. Administration and financial assistance. Appropriates general fund money for agency administration and specified pass-through grants.

3 Board of Animal Health.

Appropriates general fund money to the Board of Animal Health.

4 Agricultural Utilization Research Institute.

Appropriates general fund money to the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute.

5 Transfers.

Transfers general fund money to MDA accounts in the agricultural fund and special revenue fund and specifies purposes for the money transferred.

6 Cancellation.

Cancels \$3,000,000 of the fiscal year 2024 appropriation for green fertilizer grants.

7 Fiscal year 2025 appropriations.

Appropriates general fund money to MDA for depredation compensation payments for fiscal year 2025.

8 Fiscal year 2025 transfer.

Transfers general fund money to the agricultural emergency account for fiscal year 2025.

9 Farm down payment assistance grants.

Modifies the farm down payment assistance grant program to increase the grant award amount from the current cap of \$15,000 up to \$30,000 for eligible farmers purchasing 80 acres or more of farmland.

Section Description – Article 1: Appropriations

- 10 **Commercial nitrogen fertilizer definition.**
Adds definition of commercial nitrogen fertilizer for purposes of the biofertilizer innovation and efficiency program.
- 11 **Biofertilizer innovation and efficiency program.**
Establishes the biofertilizer innovation and efficiency program that provides payments to qualified farmers who reduce their use of commercial nitrogen fertilizers. Requires the commissioner to review the program, including the reduction rate and qualifying products, and conduct rulemaking.
- 12 **Advanced biofuel production incentive.**
Clarifies the eligibility criteria for the advanced biofuel production incentive program applies to the defined term “advanced biofuel” and not just “biofuel.” “Advanced biofuel” is defined as a renewable fuel, other than ethanol derived from corn starch, with lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions that are at least 50% less than baseline lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.
- 13 **County agricultural inspectors.**
Establishes eligibility requirements for county agricultural inspector grants.

Article 2: Broadband

This article appropriates money to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 and modifies the underground telecommunications installation requirements and certification.

Section Description – Article 2: Broadband

- 1 **Broadband development appropriations.**
Inserts boilerplate language regarding the appropriations format and terminology used in this article.
- 2 **Department of Employment and Economic Development.**
Appropriates general fund dollars to DEED to operate the Office of Broadband Development.
- 3 **Underground telecommunications installation requirements.**
Modifies the requirements for installing underground telecommunications infrastructure, including removing the requirement that two safety-qualified installers be present at all times, and eliminating 2025 deadline for compliance.

Section Description – Article 2: Broadband

- 4 Underground telecommunications installation certification requirements.**
Reduces the length of training for underground telecommunications installer certification from 40 hours to 10 hours.



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