



Cover Crops: Funding and Initiatives

MDA's Involvement with Cover Crops

Main goal: support growers interested in integrating cover crops

MDA aids growers through:

- **Research**
- **Demonstration Plots**
- **Grants**
 - Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program
 - Agri Crop Research Grants
- **Low Interest Loans**
 - Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Loan Program

MDA's Cover Crop Projects are Supported with Clean Water Funds

On November 4th 2008, Minnesota voters approved the **Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment** to the state constitution

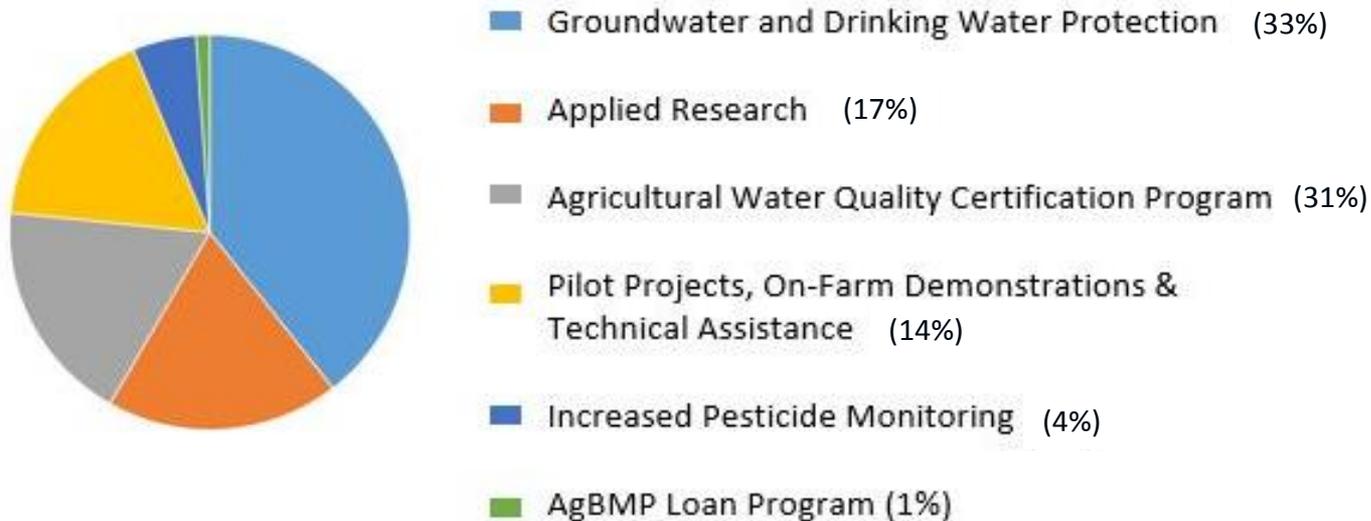
The Amendment:

- increases the sales and use tax rate by 3/8th of 1%
- is in affect July 1, 2009 through 2034
- dedicates dollars to four funds
 - Outdoor Heritage Fund
 - Parks and Trails Fund
 - Cultural Heritage Fund
 - Clean Water Fund



Clean Water Funds Allocated to MDA

MDA Use of 2016-2017 Clean Water Funds



The MDA received a total of \$16.17 million from the Clean Water Fund in fiscal years 2016-2017.



Agricultural Research and Evaluation Program



5 research studies related to cover crops

- Dual-purpose cover crops and onsite retention of water and nutrients
- Improvement of field pennycress germplasm for use as a winter annual cover and oilseed crop
- Optimizing establishment of corn in cover crops and living mulches to maintain yield while reducing nitrate losses
- Water quality enhancements in corn cropping systems through optimization of cover crop establishment technologies
- Winter rye cover cropping to improve water quality in corn-based cropping systems



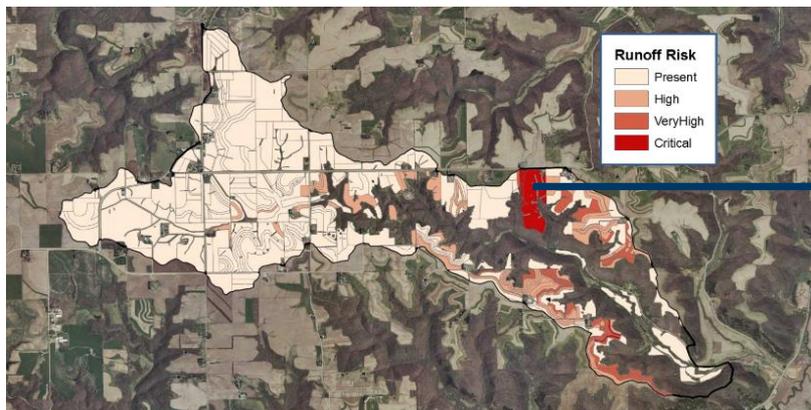
Root River Field to Stream Partnership (RRFSP)

10-year watershed scale project to better understand how agricultural practices affect the health of rivers and streams in southeast Minnesota

- Phase I: Intensive water quality monitoring at multiple locations in Root River watershed
- Phase II: Working with local farmers to implement additional conservation practices

❖ Cover crops planted as part of the RRFSP

- Nearly 200 acres of cover crops planted by farmers in the project watersheds over the past two years
- 74 acres of conservation reserve program (CRP) pollinator habitat (CP42) were seeded in the fall of 2017 and 25 acres of highly erodible land was enrolled at another location



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

A voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

In 2017, the program certified 124,000 acres with plans for:

- 11,000 acres of cover crops
- 430 acres of conservation cover
- More than 100,000 feet of field borders and filter strips

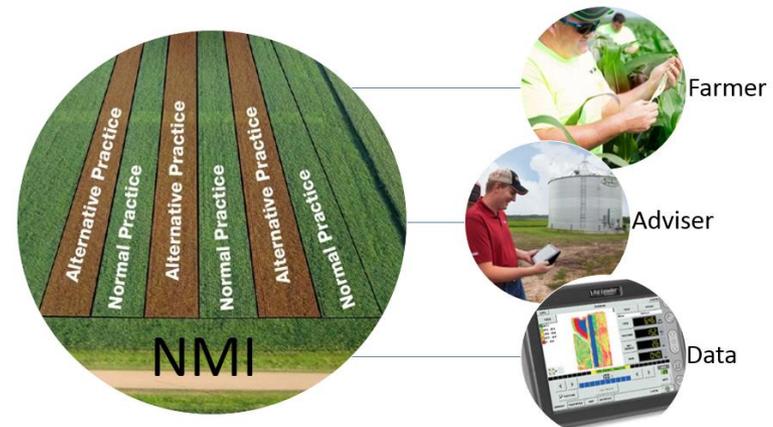


Nutrient Management Initiative



Farmers and crop advisers compare management practices using the farmer's actual field conditions.

- Great participation and program enrollment fills up each year
 - Approximately, 130 on-farm trials per year
- Currently focus on nitrogen management



- ❖ **The NMI program could be expanded to include cover crops.** The structure of the program would be similar and build on the success of the existing initiative.
- ❖ One goal is to support conversations between farmers and crop advisers, a critical step toward increased cover crop implementation since advisers are a trusted and reliable source of information.

Thank you!

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