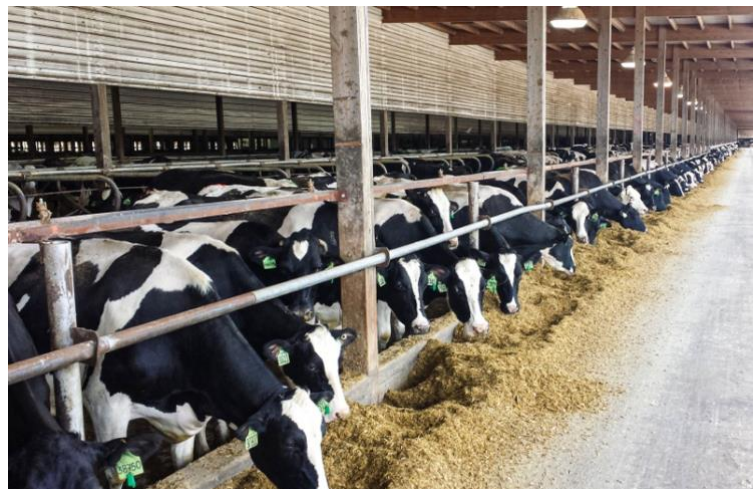


Support water protection work by Minnesota counties

Increasing pass-through funding for county programs will prevent water quality degradation from feedlots and septic systems.

Challenge

Minnesota counties are important partners with state agencies in regulating feedlots and septic systems so that lakes, rivers, and groundwater are protected from untreated or improperly managed manure or sewage. In both the feedlot and subsurface sewage treatment programs, the MPCA has delegated part of its authority to Minnesota counties. Counties are required to administer subsurface sewage treatment (SSTS, also called septic system) programs that enforce rules, review plans, approve permits, and conduct inspections. In most of the state's livestock-dense counties, local county feedlot staff conduct inspections, manage permitting, and respond to complaints for most facilities with fewer than 1,000 animal units.



Funding for counties to implement both the septic system and feedlot programs have stagnated; funding levels have not changed since the FY2012-FY2013 biennium for feedlots and since the FY2014-FY2015 biennium for septic systems. This funding is no longer sufficient to support the counties' work.

Proposal

Governor Walz is proposing a \$1 million appropriation from the General Fund in FY2024 and each subsequent year to support counties that administer county feedlot programs.

The Governor is also proposing a \$221,00 appropriation from the Environmental Fund for FY2024 and each subsequent year to support county septic system programs.

In other 2023 proposals, the Governor is also requesting:

- \$700,000 from the Environmental Fund for FY2024 and each subsequent year, part of which will fund one FTE for the MPCA's SSTS program.
- \$7.1 million from the Clean Water Fund for FY2024-FY2025 to support county septic system administrators and low-income homeowners in need of septic system upgrades or replacements.

Why it's important

Counties are responsible for protecting water quality and serving the needs of businesses, homeowners, and service professionals in septic system and feedlot industries. Fifty counties participate in the feedlot program and collectively serve 80% of more than 18,000 registered feedlots in Minnesota

All counties in the state administer subsurface sewage treatment system programs. The number of septic systems installed per year in the state rose by 20% between 2017 and 2021. The increased activity has increased the workload for local SSTS programs. Local governments need adequate funding to help prevent harm to water quality from feedlots and septic systems, at thousands of sites around the state.

For more information

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