

March 9, 2015

Jennifer Ronnenberg
Fillmore SWCD Water Management Coordinator
900 Washington St. NW
Preston, MN 55965

RE: Response to request priority issues and plan expectations (One Watershed, One Plan).

Dear Root River One Watershed One Plan Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the Root River One Watershed, One Plan.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture recommends the following priorities:

- Where appropriate, coordinate targeted watershed implementation activities closely with the recently revised Nitrogen Fertilizer Management (NFMP) process.
 - The Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan is the state's blue print for helping address unsafe levels of nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water associated with agricultural activities. The primary goal of the plan is to involve the agricultural community in problem solving at the local level.
 - The plan lays out an approach for testing current nitrate levels in private wells on a township scale. Public wells are monitored by the Minnesota Department of Health.
 - Education about nitrogen best management practices (BMPs) is important for minimizing groundwater impacts.
 - The plan recognizes that it is not always possible to completely eliminate nitrate problems in the most sensitive areas where row crops are produced. The plan lays out other voluntary approaches beyond the use of BMPs. The MDA can require specific BMPs through regulation, if needed.
 - The NFMP provides a framework for how the MDA will work with local communities to respond to and address areas with elevated nitrates in groundwater. This work will be done in partnership with farmers, crop consultants, local advisory teams and other community members.
- Implement a coordinated approach to address both nutrients in groundwater and surface water. Foster new relationships with the agricultural sector, industry, crop advisors, retailers or enhance existing relations. These efforts could simultaneously address MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy goals.
- Utilize water quality data and lessons learned from the Field to Stream Partnership runoff study.
- Apply the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework developed by the USDA-Agricultural Research Service to help facilitate an advanced level of conservation planning, targeting and delivery.

Sincerely,


Kevin Kuehner