



GETTING INVOLVED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL A GUIDE FOR CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

Mission of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Our mission is to enhance Minnesotans' quality of life by ensuring the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment and the strength of our agricultural economy.

Purpose of Fact Sheet:

This fact sheet was developed to discuss the involvement of crop and livestock producers regarding agricultural development and promotion at the local level. Crop and livestock producers can play an important role in promoting and defining the future of agricultural retention in their respective counties.

Crop and livestock producers can also be proponents of agricultural industry development and re-development, locally and on a statewide basis. While each county functions differently in regards to agricultural promotion and development, the following concepts within this factsheet can be considered to encourage crop and livestock producers to become involved at the local level.

- 1. Get involved with producer groups.** Being involved with crop and livestock producer groups will help you stay informed about a variety of agricultural issues at the local, state and federal levels. When your producer group has events, be sure to get involved. For a listing of crop and livestock producer groups, please visit the Minnesota Agri-growth Council website at the following location: <http://www.agrigrowth.org>
- 2. Get involved with local government.** Most counties have various opportunities for crop and livestock producers to get involved with local government. For example, some counties implement ordinance review committees when ordinance revisions are being developed. Other opportunities for involvement may include participation on your:
 - Local Planning Commission
 - Board of Adjustment
 - Feedlot Review Committee
 - Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan Advisory Committee

Being involved at the local level will allow you to keep informed about agricultural issues and will give you a voice for the future and vision of agriculture in your county.

- 3. Join or start an agricultural advisory committee.** A committee such as this can be developed to provide guidance to local policy makers regarding crop, livestock, feedlot and related agricultural issues. Generally, these types of committees are comprised of crop and livestock producers and individuals that represent various sectors within the agricultural community. Counties that have an agricultural advisory committee include Kandiyohi, Ottertail and Stearns Counties.
- 4. Get involved with your local chamber of commerce.** Local chambers of commerce can be a valuable asset to crop and livestock producers. Agricultural production is an important and large part of local economic engines. Being involved in your local chamber will provide opportunities for your voice to be heard as a business owner – one that contributes to the economic well being of your county and city. Click on the following weblink for more information about chambers of commerce in Minnesota: <http://www.mnchamber.com/>

Obtain Current Information:

One of the best things you can do as a producer is to always use current and accurate information when addressing boards, panels and commissions. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) can provide you with county specific agricultural data and information. Please see the following NASS website for your data needs:

<http://www.nass.usda.gov>

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5. **Become involved with your local or regional economic development commission, initiative foundation and Resource Conservation and Development (RC & D) area.** A number of opportunities exist through these types of organizations for you to become involved with local and regional economic development issues that focus on a variety of issues related to:

- Renewable Energy
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources and Water Quality
- Job Creation and Retention
- Rural Health Care
- Labor Force Issues

For more information about these organizations and how to become involved in one of these entities, click on the following weblinks:

Minnesota Regional Development Commissions:
<http://www.mrdo.org/>

Minnesota Initiative Foundations:
<http://www.greatermnnesota.net/>

Resource Conservation and Development Areas:
<http://minnesotarcd.org/>

6. **Get involved with your Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).** Being involved on an SWCD board is beneficial and can be a valuable and rewarding experience. Also, participation on local Farm Service Agency boards and Local Work Groups organized by the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the local level can provide you with direct insight into federal farm programs and conservation priorities. An SWCD can provide cost-share and technical assistance to crop and livestock producers for implementing a wide variety of conservation practices. For more information about SWCDs in Minnesota, click on the following weblink: <http://www.maswcd.org/>
7. **Get to know your local County Feedlot Officer (CFO).** The CFOs across the state are organized via the Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers. Currently there are 55 counties that are delegated to administer the state feedlot program. CFOs provide direct assistance to livestock producers in regards to feedlot permits and feedlot re-registration. If you are unsure if your county is delegated or want more information about the delegated county feedlot program, click on the following weblink for more information: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/topics/feedlots/county-feedlot-program/index.html>

Obtaining feedlot permits and re-registering your livestock operation is important. You can keep abreast of current rules and regulations by visiting with your CFO. Also, if you are a dairy, beef or pork producer, environmental quality assurance programs are in place to promote compliance with state feedlot rules.