

# **AGRI Protecting Livestock Grant (Protect) 2024 Request for Proposals**

**Proposals due by 4 p.m. on March 7, 2024**

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# Grant Summary

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## Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is making one-time Protecting Livestock Grants available to:

- Encourage farmers and ranchers to proactively buy and install supplies or equipment that will protect livestock from emerging diseases.
- Help producers manage disease outbreaks.
- Physically protect livestock that are not covered by existing depredation programs (e.g., protect honeybee colonies from bear predation).

## Funding availability

A total of \$500,000 from the Minnesota Agricultural Growth and Research Initiative (AGRI) is available for this program. Applicants may request up to \$10,000 per farming operation (minimum request \$500), with a 50% cash match required. We expect to award 50 to 75 grants.

We will use an expedited review process for this program.

- We will accept proposals until 4 p.m. CT on March 7, 2024.
- Proposals that address priority livestock (farmed cervids, poultry, and ratites) will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the application period. We will notify applicants as they are approved.
- After March 7, reviewers will consider applications that involve other livestock. We expect to notify these applicants no later than April 15, 2024.

Note that we issue payments on a reimbursement basis and not in advance. All purchases for eligible items must be made between July 1, 2023, and March 31, 2025.

## Eligible applicants

### Applicants must:

- Be the principal operator of a livestock operation in Minnesota.
- Be a resident of the state of Minnesota or be a business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota (see below).
- Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:
  - No back taxes owed.
  - No defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the last seven years.
  - Acceptable performance on past MDA grants.
- Not be an employee or spouse of an employee of the MDA.

### Who is a principal operator?

A principal operator is a person primarily responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farm. The principal operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant, or partner.

## What business entities need authorization to farm in Minnesota?

The statute on farming by business organizations ([MINN. STAT. 500.24](#)) requires that all pension or investment funds, corporations (including nonprofit organizations), limited partnerships, limited liability companies, and irrevocable trusts must be certified by the MDA before engaging in farming or having an interest in agricultural land.

## How do business entities get authorization to farm in Minnesota?

Applications and additional information are available at [Minnesota's Corporate Farm Report](#).

## How to apply

Apply for the Protect Grant using our [online application system](#):

- If you're a new user, first create an account.
- Once you're logged in to your account, select "AGRI Protect Grant."
- If you can't use the online application system, contact [mda.agrigrants@state.mn.us](mailto:mda.agrigrants@state.mn.us) or 651-201-6500 to request other arrangements.

The application period is open until **4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Thursday, March 7, 2024**.

- Only one application will be accepted per farm.
- We will not accept late applications.
- Apply early so there is enough time to get help with the application process if you need it.
- We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.

## How to submit questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on February 29, 2024**.
- Email [MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us) with "Protect Grant" in the subject line.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500 or
- Email [MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us) and include "Protect Grant" in the subject line.

## Application guidelines

- Use plain, easily understood language. Write for reviewers who are generally knowledgeable but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your farm.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Review the [Application Scoring Sheet](#) (included in this document) to help you score as many points as possible.

## Timeline and deadlines

**January 22–March 7, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT**..... Applications that address priority livestock are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

**February 29, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT**..... Deadline to ask grant program questions.

**March 7, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT**..... Application period closes, and review of other livestock begins.

**April 15, 2024**..... All applicants notified of grant status.

**May 1, 2024**..... Anticipated contract start date.

## Eligibility

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### Eligible species and expenses

For the purposes of this grant, livestock includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, bison, sheep, horses, farmed cervids (deer, elk), ratites (flightless birds including emu), llamas, and honeybees.

If we accept your proposal, we will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. You will have to submit documentation including invoices and proofs of payment.

#### Projects must:

- Include matching funds from personal or other non-State sources; see the [Matching Funds](#) section.
- Be completed between July 1, 2023, and March 31, 2025.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

#### Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- Legislatively compliant fencing for farmed cervid operations ([MINN. STAT. 35.155 Subd. 4](#))
- Exclusionary fencing to protect honeybee colonies from damage by bears
- Electronic animal ID systems (including readers and software)
- Livestock handling chutes
- Isolation pens
- Truck washes
- Air filtration systems
- Danish entry systems
- Exclusion systems to help keep wild birds and vermin out of livestock facilities
- Pen covers for outdoor poultry
- Inflatables (to scare wild species away from poultry operations)
- Lasers (to scare wild species away from poultry operations)
- Sound machines (to scare wild species away from poultry operations)

## Ineligible expenses

The following items are examples of expenses that are **not** eligible for reimbursement:

- Expenditures reimbursed or paid by existing deprecation programs to protect livestock
- Expenditures incurred before July 1, 2023, or after March 31, 2025
- General purpose equipment (e.g., skid steer loaders, combines, tractors)
- Owner and employee wages and benefits
- Mileage and fuel
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations

## Matching funds

The Protect Grant reimburses up to 50% of the project cost. However, to receive your grant payment, you must provide documentation showing payment for the full cost of the project.

Sources of matching funds may include cash, loans, other grants, and liquid capital assets dedicated to the project. State grant funds cannot be used for the grantee portion of the project, but non-forgivable loans from the state may be used as a match.

## Collaboration

Eligible applicants may collaborate with other livestock operations, but this is not required. If you are submitting a joint application, you must determine which business or organization will have the grant contract agreement with the MDA and will work directly with the MDA to meet grant reporting requirements. Note that this organization will receive a 1099 from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

# Application Review Policies

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## Review process

A review committee made up of MDA staff evaluates all eligible applications based on the Application Scoring Sheet. Proposals that address priority species (farmed cervids, poultry, and ratites) will be reviewed and scored on a first-come, first-served basis until the application period closes. After March 7, 2024, reviewers will score remaining applications. We expect to notify all applicants on or before April 15, 2024.

The commissioner of agriculture considers the committee's recommendations and makes award decisions. Both the review committee and commissioner may consider geographic distribution, species, applicant's history as a previous grantee, and capacity to perform the work in their decisions.

## Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures be in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making, 2022 \[Word\]](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to give impartial assistance or advice to the MDA due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

## Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

This program prioritizes:

- Projects that will reduce the number of Minnesota livestock operations affected by disease or predation, especially:
  - Cervid operations working to comply with recent changes in state fencing law (these include elk, white-tailed deer, red deer, and fallow deer).
  - Poultry and ratite operations focused on reducing the risk of contracting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.
- Applications from members of historically underserved groups, including American Indian or Alaskan Natives; members of a community of color; women; veterans; persons with disabilities; young and/or beginning farmers; and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more) farmers.

## Application Scoring Sheet

Evaluation criterion	Maximum score
Applicant is a Minnesota resident and operates a farm or ranch located in Minnesota	Yes/No
Applicant raises livestock	Yes/No
<b>Priority species</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmed cervids</li> <li>• Poultry</li> <li>• Ratites</li> </ul>	Yes/No
<b>Project need</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant clearly and compellingly describes the need for the project, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The disease risk to livestock health that the project addresses.</li> <li>○ How the project will benefit the livestock operation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	40
<b>Project impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likelihood that the project will reduce the impact of livestock disease or predation.</li> </ul>	30
<b>Budget narrative and match</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget clearly details all project costs.</li> <li>• Budget is cost effective and planned purchases are backed by quotes or other sources.</li> </ul>	25
<b>Priority points: Historically underserved applicants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant is a member of one or more of the following historically underserved groups: American Indian or Alaskan Natives; members of a community of color; women; veterans; persons with disabilities; young and/or beginning farmers; and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more) farmers.</li> </ul>	5
Recommend for funding	Yes/No
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



# Requirements for Grant Recipients

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## Accountability and reporting

We conduct follow-up surveys to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grant. Grantees must respond to requests for follow-up information for three years beyond the term of the grant agreement. Failure to respond to these promptly may affect your ability to secure future funding from the MDA.

## Grant award agreement and payments

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs](#) webpage.

All grant recipients must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, and
- Submit other required documentation within three weeks of award notification; and
- Sign a grant contract agreement indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks. The agreement also authorizes the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The grant award document must be signed within 30 days.

Note: Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. To receive grant payments, grantees must provide proof that grant project work has been done by submitting details of each purchase on receipts or invoices, and proof that the vendors have been paid. Annual progress reports and a final report are required. Grant payments will not be issued for grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

## Bidding requirements

All grantees must abide by the state's bidding requirements for items costing over \$10,000. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

## Affirmative action and non-discrimination policy

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and people with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship ([Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500](#)).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#).

## Project audits

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the MDA, the legislative auditor or the state auditor, and the commissioner of administration, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)). This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

## Voter registration requirement

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

## Data Privacy

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### Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under the AGRI Protecting Livestock Grant Program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the Minnesota Data Practices Act as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited to MDA staff and contractors who have a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per Minnesota's statute on grants ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All other data in application responses (except trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is complete (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will generally be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

Procedure for claiming protection of trade secrets:

- Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e. the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition found in statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff ([MINN STAT 270C.65, subd. 3](#)), a grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies and state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

## AGRI Background and Program Goals

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The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries ([MINN. STAT. 41A.12](#)). AGRI has made significant economic impacts by increasing productivity, improving efficiency, and assisting the development of agricultural products. The AGRI Protect Grant encourage farmers and ranchers to proactively buy and install supplies or equipment that will protect livestock from emerging diseases, help producers manage disease outbreaks, or physically protect livestock that are not covered by existing depredation programs.

# Application Questions

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## Contact information

### Applicant information

- Applicant name
- Mailing address
- Applicant telephone
- Applicant email
- County
- Minnesota Legislative House District (use the [District Finder](#) if you don't know your district.)

### Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person who will sign the Protect Grant contract agreement for this organization. This is often you or other leadership on your farm.

- Name
- Telephone
- Email

### Farm operation

- Name of farm (if applicable)
- Farm address

### Type(s) of livestock

Please select all species this project will affect.

- Beef cattle
- Bison
- Cervids (elk, farmed deer) \*
- Dairy cattle
- Honeybees
- Horses
- Llamas
- Mules
- Poultry
- Ratites (emu, ostrich)
- Sheep/goats
- Swine

\*If Cervids, are they (check all that apply):

- Elk
- Fallow deer
- Red deer
- White-tailed deer

## Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements apply to your organization.

- I do not owe the State of Minnesota any back taxes and have not defaulted on any State of Minnesota-backed financing in the last seven years. (True)
- My farming operation is in compliance with current state regulations, or this project will help my operation become compliant. (True)
- I am a current Minnesota resident or my business is authorized to farm in Minnesota. (True)
- I am a principal operator and/or have the authority to apply on behalf of the farm. (True)
- I have not been convicted of a of criminal offense — such as theft, embezzlement, or forgery — in connection with a state grant agreement. (True)
- Is any other application to this program being submitted on behalf of this farm? (No)
- Are any of the principals of the applicant an employee of the MDA or the spouse of an MDA employee? (Yes/No) If yes, briefly describe the individual's role with the MDA and their relationship to the applicant/organization.
- I understand that if my application is successful, the MDA cannot reimburse for any project expenses incurred or work performed before July 1, 2023. (Yes)

## Project summary

### Project title

- Farm name and item you're requesting; for example:
  - Petersen Farm, exclusionary fencing
  - Easy 8 Ranch, electronic ID for cattle

### Farm description

- Briefly describe your farming or ranching operation. (500 characters, including spaces)

### Risks to livestock

- Describe the risks to the health and well-being of your livestock that your project will address. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

### Project description

- Describe your project in three to five sentences — what are you going to do? Include the need for the items, how/why they will reduce the risk to your livestock, and how the project will benefit your livestock operation. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Total project cost

(number only)

## Total grant you are requesting

(number only)

The grant requires a 50% match, with a minimum grant award of \$500 and a maximum of \$10,000.

## Total amount of match you will provide

(number only)

## Match confirmation

- I confirm that no other State of Minnesota funds will be used as a match for this project. (Yes)

## Project date

Must occur between July 1, 2023, and March 31, 2025. You will have 30 days after March 31, 2025, to submit your final report and reimbursement claim. All items and services must be paid for and installed by March 31, 2025.

- When did you complete your project or when do you plan to start your project? (mm/dd/yyyy)

## Project budget

### Budget

- Create a budget using the example format below.
  - We prefer an uploaded Excel or Word file, but you may fill out the online table below if you prefer. Do NOT attach bid sheets or quotes from vendors instead of a budget table.
  - **TIP:** If you name the contractors or suppliers you plan to use in your budget, you won't need to use a formal bidding process. This can save you time and effort later.

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total estimate	Source of estimate
High tensile wire	12,000 ft	\$0.05	\$600	ABC Supply
8' fence posts	250	\$9.00	\$2,250	Peets' Posts

## Budget narrative

### Budget narrative

(2000 characters, including spaces)

- Describe the need for each item listed in your budget.
- Explain how you plan to pay for your project (financing, other grants, private investment, personal investment, organization funds, etc.). While other state grant funds cannot be used to pay for this project, non-forgivable loans from the state may be used as a match.
- How important is this grant to your ability to undertake this project? If your application is not funded, what are your alternatives for financing the project?

## **(Optional) Quotes and other sources**

- Submit quotes or estimates for equipment or services.

## **Priority groups**

### **(Optional) Historically underserved applicants**

This program prioritizes grant-making to members of groups who have historically been underserved by agricultural programs and grant opportunities. This question is optional but answering it may earn you points in the application review process.

Please mark any group(s) with which you identify:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Beginning farmer (farming 10 years or fewer)
- LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more)
- Member of a community of color
- Person with a disability
- Veteran
- Woman
- Young farmer