

AGRI LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT GRANT 2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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AGRI LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT GRANT 2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Grant Summary

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the 2019 Agriculture Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Livestock Investment Grant Program. Grant funds are available for equipment purchases, physical improvements, and acquisition of facilities used to help start, improve, or expand livestock operations in the state of Minnesota.

Application and Award Details

The MDA anticipates awarding up to \$2 million in this round using a competitive review process. Grants can reimburse up to 10% of eligible project costs. No more than \$25,000 will be awarded per project proposal.

The MDA must receive your proposal no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on Saturday, December 15, 2018 to be considered.

We encourage you to use our [online application](#). The application is accessed through a link on the [AGRI Livestock Investment Grant website](#).

Contact Information

Direct questions about the grant program, completing the application, or additional accommodations to:

The MDA Grants Line at 651-201-6500

or

Michael Greene

Michael.Greene@state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street N
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538

Eligibility and Application Instructions

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must:

- Be the principal operator of a livestock operation
- Be a resident of the state of Minnesota or be a business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota (see below)
- Have not already received the lifetime maximum \$50,000 in grant awards
- Hold an appropriate feedlot registration when applicable
- Be in good standing with the state of Minnesota (no back taxes)
- Not be an employee of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Who is a principal operator?

A principal operator is the 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, and/or a partner.

What business entities need authorization to farm in Minnesota?

[Minnesota Statute §500.24](#) requires that all pension or investment funds, corporations, 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 webpage](#).

How do I know if I need a feedlot registration?

For feedlot registration rules, please contact your local feedlot officer or visit the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website](#).

Eligible Projects

For the purposes of this grant, livestock include beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, bison, sheep, horses, farmed *Cervidae* (deer, elk), *Ratitae* (flightless birds including emu), and llamas. If the MDA accepts your proposal, we will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. You will have to submit documentation, like invoices and proof of payment. You must be invoiced and pay for all project materials and services between January 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. Any expenses incurred outside this timeframe are not eligible for reimbursement.

This grant program funds **only** the following activities:

1. Acquisition, construction, or improvement of buildings or facilities for the production of livestock or livestock products
2. Development of pasture for use by livestock including, but not limited to, the acquisition, development, or improvement of:
 - A. Lanes used by livestock that connect pastures to a central location
 - B. Watering systems for livestock on pasture including water lines, booster pumps, and well installations
 - C. Livestock stream crossing stabilization
 - D. Fences

3. Acquisition of equipment for livestock housing, confinement, feeding, and waste management including, but not limited to, the following:
 - A. Freestall barns
 - B. Watering facilities
 - C. Feed storage and handling equipment
 - D. Milking parlors
 - E. Robotic equipment
 - F. Scales
 - G. Milk storage and cooling facilities
 - H. Bulk tanks
 - I. Computer hardware and software and associated equipment used to monitor the productivity and feeding of livestock
 - J. Manure pumping and storage facilities
 - K. Swine farrowing facilities
 - L. Swine and cattle finishing barns
 - M. Calving facilities
 - N. Digesters
 - O. Equipment used to produce energy
 - P. On-farm processing facilities equipment
 - Q. Fences
 - R. Livestock pens and corrals and sorting, restraining, and loading chutes

Grant funds **may not** be used to buy or rent:

1. General purpose equipment (e.g. skid steer loaders, combines, tractors)
2. Animal feed or crop seed
3. Crop production equipment (except specialized forage/hay harvesting and handling equipment such as mowing equipment, tedding equipment, and hay balers)
4. Crop or pasture land
5. Livestock
6. Purchase of more than 10 acres of land used to construct livestock buildings or facilities
7. Rent-to-own lease agreements where property purchase is optional
8. Refinancing existing debt
9. Late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
10. Items that are not allowed to be capitalized and deducted under either section 167 or 179 of the Internal Revenue Code in computing federal taxable income

Funding Availability

The MDA anticipates awarding 80-100 grants totaling \$2 million. Applicants may apply for up to 10% of their project's total cost with a minimum expense of \$4,000 and a maximum expense of \$250,000; grant awards can range in size from \$400 to \$25,000.

Each livestock operation is eligible to receive a lifetime maximum of \$50,000 from this grant program. The \$50,000 maximum for livestock operations applies at the entity level for partnerships, S corporations, C corporations, trusts, estates, and individuals (a married couple is also limited to \$50,000 for their livestock operation). Only one grant can be awarded per project.

Application Instructions

We strongly encourage you to use our [online application](#). The application is accessed through a link on the [MDA AGRI Livestock Investment Grant website](#).

If you cannot apply online, you can submit an application by email or mail by answering the questions at the end of this RFP. Answer each question to the best of your ability. Remember that reviewers have livestock expertise. It is important that you provide clear responses.

All applications **must** be received by the MDA no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on December 15, 2018. Late applications **will not** be considered. Applicants must pay any costs incurred in responding to this RFP. The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems; it is your responsibility to ensure that we receive your submission before the deadline.

Application Review Process and Timeline

A committee of livestock experts evaluates all eligible applications received by the deadline using the application scoring profile found on page 8. The Commissioner of Agriculture will review the committee's recommendations and makes the final award decisions. The review committee and Commissioner may use rural/urban and geographic diversity when making their recommendations and decisions. We will notify all applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing regarding the outcome of their application.

RFP posted on the MDA website	September 15, 2018
Questions due no later than 4:00 pm CST	December 7, 2018
Applications due no later than 4:00 pm CST	December 15, 2018
Committee begins review of applications	December 17, 2018
Committee recommendations submitted to commissioner for review	January 28, 2019
Notification of Award Status	February 1, 2019

Questions About the Application

You can submit questions using the MDA Grants Line at 651-201-6500 or by emailing Michael.Greene@state.mn.us. You must submit your questions by 4:00 p.m. CST on December 7, 2018. We post all questions and answers on the [MDA AGRI Livestock Investment Grant webpage](#).

Requirements for Projects Receiving Grant Funds

Grant Award Agreement and Payments

If your grant proposal is accepted, you will have to:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form
- Sign a Grant Award Agreement

Grant award agreements **must** be signed (by the applicant or authorized representative) and returned to the MDA within 30 days of receipt. If you fail to submit the signed agreement on time, you may lose your grant. The MDA also reserves the right to verify Veteran status by requesting your discharge form (DD214).

Requests for reimbursement can only include items that appear in your budget (which will be part of your grant agreement). Grant program staff members compare all requests for reimbursement against the grant agreement and the grant expenditures to-date before approving payment. You must submit proof of purchase and proof of payment with each request for reimbursement. Grantees will receive additional information regarding what qualifies as a proof of purchase and proof of payment.

Site Visits and Follow-ups

The grant agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The MDA conducts site visits with all grantees who have awards of \$25,000 or more before we approve final payment. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA. We also conduct follow-up surveys to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grants we award. Grantees may receive surveys for up to two years after the contract has ended.

Grantee Bidding Requirements

All funded applicants must follow the State's bidding requirements for purchases larger than \$10,000. A detailed list of the state's bidding requirements can be found on [MDA's bidding requirements website](#).

Audits of Project

Per [Minnesota Statute §16B.98 Subdivision 8](#), 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 granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. 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.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Policy

Grantees must agree 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. [Minnesota Statute §363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons 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.

Public Data

Per **Minnesota Statute §13.599**

- Names and addresses of grant applicants become public data once the MDA receives your application.
- Application responses (except social security numbers **Minnesota Statute §13.355** and trade secret data as defined and classified in **Minnesota Statute §13.37**) as well as data created by the MDA become public data after the grant agreements have been fully executed.

Conflicts of Interest

The MDA takes steps to prevent conflicts of interest with regard to both applicants and reviewers.

(**Minnesota Statute §16B.98** and the **Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making**).

Conflicts of interest can occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render 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. The MDA may disqualify applicants from consideration or terminate grant agreements.

Voter Registration Requirement

The grantee will comply with **Minnesota Statute §201.162** by providing voter registration services for its employees.

AGRI Background and Program Goals

The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries **Minnesota Statute §41A.12**. This program focuses on areas of greatest opportunity and potential economic impact to create agricultural jobs and profitable businesses in the areas of livestock investment, value-added businesses and market development, and renewable energy. The AGRI Livestock Investment Grant is intended to encourage long-term industry development for Minnesota livestock producers by encouraging investments in the infrastructure and the equipment of livestock operations **Minnesota Statute §17.118**. It promotes economic growth as well as environmentally sound practices in Minnesota's \$7 billion livestock industry. The program encourages new farmers and generational transitions in order to sustain and to grow the livestock industry in the state.

Application Scoring Profile

Criteria	Strong (10-8 pts)	Average (7-4 pts)	Weak (3-1)	No Points	Maximum Score
New Farmer	Farmer has been the principal operator for 3 years or less	Farmer has been principal operator between 4 and 7 years	Farmer has been principal operator between 7 and 10 years	Farmer has been principal operator greater than 10 years	10
Generational Transition	Generation transition completed in the next year	Generation transition part of near-term business plan	Generation transition part of long-term business plan	Not mentioned	10
Responding to Natural Disaster	Project primarily repairs damage caused by natural disaster	Part of the project repairs damage caused by natural disaster	A small part of the project repairs damage caused by natural disaster	Not mentioned	10
Farm Management Plans and Programs	Project greatly contributes to the implementation of a plan or program	Project partially contributes to the implementation of a plan or program	Project marginally contributes to the implementation of a plan or program	Not mentioned	10
Accessibility Improvements for Disabilities or Physical Conditions	Project fully addresses accessibility needs of farmer or employees	Project partially addresses accessibility needs of farmer or employees	Project begins to address the accessibility needs of farmer or employees	Not mentioned	10
Economic Outcomes	Efficiency and/or profitability significantly improved	Efficiency and/or profitability slightly improved	Efficiency and/or profitability maintained	Not mentioned	10
Farm Employment	Project will result in hiring one or more permanent and five or more seasonal/temporary employees	Project will result in hiring one permanent and several seasonal/temporary employees	Project will result in hiring several seasonal/temporary employees	Estimate not realistic or not mentioned	10
Diversity and Inclusion	Farm staff and ownership have a plan to address hiring inequities. There is also evidence the plan has been successfully implemented.	Farm staff and ownership have a plan to address hiring inequities. There may be some evidence the plan has been implemented.	Farm staff and ownership have a plan to address hiring inequities.	Not mentioned	10
Environmental Impact	Project fully addresses compliance issues with feedlot rules and/or provides significant environmental benefits	Project partially addresses compliance issues with feedlot rules and/or provides some environmental benefits	Project provides minor environmental benefits	Not mentioned	10
Completeness of Application	Complete, detailed, and instructions followed	Problems are minor and do not detract greatly from application	Problems are serious and detract from application	Application not readable or instructions ignored	10
Total					100

AGRI LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT GRANT 2019 APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Personal Information – must be the principal operator

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone Number _____ Cell Phone Number _____

Email _____

Applicant Age *(check one)*

under 25 25–35 36–45 46–55 56–65 over 65

Spouse Personal Information

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

 Mailing Address *(if different from applicant)* _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone Number _____ Cell Phone Number _____

Email _____

Farm Operation

Name of Farm (if applicable) _____

County	Township Name	Township Number (25-71 or 100-168)	Range Number (1-51)	Section Number (1--36)	Quarter Section (NW, NE, SW, SE)	Quarter Quarter Section (NW, NE, SW, SE)

(If applicable) What is your feedlot registration number? _____

Organizational structure

 Sole Proprietorship Partnership LLP LLC Corporation
 Estate Trust Other _____

How did you hear about the Livestock Investment Grant?

Newspaper Radio Word of Mouth Other _____

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Check all that apply. *Note: To be awarded a grant, all of the following must apply.*

- I am in good standing with the State of Minnesota (no back taxes)
- I am a current Minnesota resident or business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota
- I am a principal operator of the farm (person most actively involved in the operation of the farm)
- I hold a feedlot registration (if applicable)
- I certify that expenses for this project will be incurred between January 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Project Summary

Describe your project including how it fits into your business plan and the vision of your livestock operation. Include timelines for project construction or equipment purchase dates. (3000 characters, including spaces)

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New Farmers

Does this project support the startup of a new livestock operation? Yes No

If yes, please explain. (1500 characters, including spaces)

How many years have you farmed? _____

(Only count years where over 25% of the applicant's income came from farming)

Generational Transitions

Does this project support the generational transition of an existing livestock operation? Yes No

If yes, please explain, including how soon the transition is expected to occur. (1500 characters, including spaces)

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Economic Outcomes

How do you expect this project will improve the efficiency or profitability of your farm? Please note that your operation does not need to be profitable currently. It is important that you provide a clear description of how this project will change the viability and economic health of your farm operation. (1500 characters, including spaces)

Farm Employment Opportunities

Will this project create employment opportunities? Yes No

If yes, briefly list and describe the positions related to farm operation that will be created. (1500 characters, including spaces)

Construction Workers

(Anticipated; During Project):

Full-time _____ Part-time _____

New Farm Employees (Anticipated; After Project):

Permanent, Full-time _____ Temporary or Seasonal, Full-time _____

Permanent, Part-time _____ Temporary or Seasonal, Part-time _____

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Farm Management Plans and Programs

Have you completed or do you plan on completing a conservation or management plan for your farm? Yes No
(see examples below)

If yes, please identify the plans/programs and describe how your proposed project relates to those plans or programs.
(1500 characters, including spaces)

Examples of farm management plans and programs

Examples of farm management plans and programs

- Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program
- Pork Quality Assurance
- Annual Nutrient Management Plan
- Regular Soil Testing
- Farm Energy Audits
- Green Star Farm Initiative
- Farmers Assuring Responsible Management™ (FARM)
- Environmental Quality Assurance (EQA)
- Organic System Plan
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Other

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Environmental Impact

Please explain how this project will help bring your operation into compliance or keep it compliant with feedlot rules.

(1500 characters, including spaces)

Will this project have other positive effects on the environment? Yes No

If yes, describe them. (1500 characters, including spaces)

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Responding to Natural Disasters

Are you rebuilding after a natural disaster that happened within the last two years? Yes No

If yes, please describe the natural disaster and the damage it caused. Indicate which parts of the project are related to repairing the damage. (1500 characters, including spaces)

Diversity and Inclusion

Provide a summary of how your farm operation addresses diversity and inclusion through hiring veterans, people with disabilities or physical conditions, people of color, and Native Americans. Include how your farm operation's staff and ownership reflect these communities. (1500 characters, including spaces)

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Accessibility Improvements

Does this project provide accessibility improvements for farmers or employees with disabilities and/or physical conditions? Yes No

If yes, please describe the improvements and how they improve accessibility for these individuals.
(1500 characters, including spaces)

Previous Funding

Has your livestock operation previously received an AGRI Livestock Investment Grant? Yes No

If yes, briefly describe the previous project(s) funded by the grant awards, including the amount awarded.
(800 characters, including spaces)

AGRI LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT GRANT 2019 APPLICATION

Number of Livestock

Use the following table to provide an estimate of the number of livestock on your operation. This is one way that the MDA measures the impact of this grant program. Please note that increasing the number or types of livestock on your operation is not required. The estimated number of livestock will not grant award decisions.

Livestock Type	Current Number (Before Project)	Estimated Number (After Project)
Beef Cattle		
Dairy Cattle		
Swine		
Sheep/Goats		
Poultry		
Horses		
Bison		
Other		

Optional documentation

You may attach up to three letters of support from someone other than yourself to enhance your application. (e.g. Lender, Farm Business Management, Extension Educator, Consultant, etc.)

Each letter can be no longer than two pages in length.

AGRI LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT GRANT 2019 APPLICATION

Applicant certifies that:

1. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application is true and correct and supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the MDA for its review.
2. I understand that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application may result in the applicant being found ineligible for financial assistance under the Livestock Investment Grant Program. I further understand that receiving public funds as a consequence of false representations constitutes an act of fraud.
3. I understand that MDA may conduct audits, check references, and conduct site inspections after grants are awarded and prior to dollars being disbursed.
4. I understand application data is private or nonpublic data until grants are awarded. Names, addresses and requested amounts then become public information. An entire application becomes public when an agency has completed negotiating the grant agreement with a grantee. You do not have to provide the information requested on the application form. However, if you do not, we will not be able to consider your grant request. The only people who will have access to your data during the time that it is protected are those permitted access by law, by your written consent, by a court order, or by department employees whose job duties require access.
5. I verify that all information supplied in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Typing your name and the date means that you have read and agree with the statements above.