



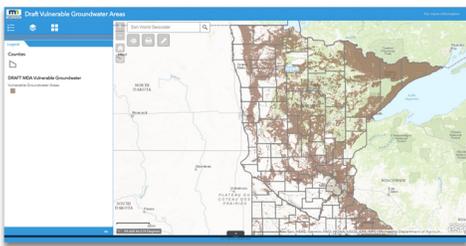
What you need to know about the draft nitrogen fertilizer rule

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has released the draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule, which is being implemented to minimize potential sources of nitrate pollution in the state's groundwater and as part of the Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan. Through Aug. 25, the public can submit comments on the draft rule, which currently contains two parts:

1. If a farm is located in a vulnerable groundwater area based on soil hydrology and geology information, nitrogen fertilizer application in the fall and on frozen soils will be restricted.
2. If a farm is located in an area that has high concentrations of nitrate in groundwater, the draft rule lays out a process for mitigation that includes the use of nitrogen fertilizer best management practices (BMPs) and alternative practices.

Here are some FAQs about the proposed rule, which is expected to go into effect next fall:

How do I know if I am in a vulnerable groundwater area and restricted from fall nitrogen application?



A vulnerable groundwater area is land where nitrate can move easily through the soil into groundwater.

The saturated hydraulic conductivity of the soil, which measure the soil's ability to transmit water, as well as if there is karst or bedrock at or near the surface determines if the area is vulnerable. To view the interactive map, go to:

www.mda.state.mn.us/chemicals/fertilizers/nutrient-mgmt/nitrogenplan/mitigation/wrpr/wrprpart1/vulnerableareamap

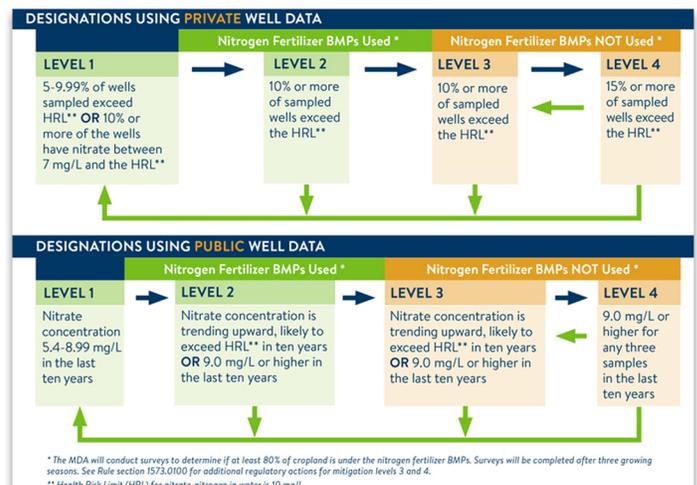
How are nitrate levels determined?

The MDA uses nitrate data from both public and private drinking wells to evaluate pollution frequency and concentration trends.

If my farm is located in an area of high nitrate concentration in groundwater, what is the mitigation process?

All areas identified with nitrate contaminated ground water will begin in mitigation level 1 or 2, depending on if it is near or over the nitrate health risk limit of 10 milligrams per liter. Nitrogen fertilizer best management practices (BMPs) and alternative practices will be promoted within these areas under the advisement of a local advisory team.

The MDA will re-evaluate the mitigation level after three growing seasons. Landowners may find themselves in level 3 and 4 if nitrogen fertilizer BMPs are not being used and nitrate groundwater levels exceed the health risk limit. Areas in these regulatory levels may be subject to specific management practices required by MDA.



How has MCGA been involved?

MCGA has been involved throughout the nitrogen fertilizer rule's revision process, including:

- Submission of comments on the overall Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in 2013
- Submission of comments on the initial proposed Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule in 2016
- MCGA representation on the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan advisory committee to provide input on the various aspects of the management plan
- Moving forward, MCGA farmer leaders will submit comments on the draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule on behalf of MCGA

What can I do?

You know your farm like nobody else does. Share your personal experiences and perspective by submitting your own comment via mail to:

Larry Gunderson
Minnesota Department of Agriculture - Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55115

Or submit a comment online at:

www.mda.state.mn.us/chemicals/fertilizers/nutrient-mgmt/nitrogenplan/mitigation/wrpr/wrprprocess/publicparticipation.aspx

MCGA encourages farmers to consider the following factors when submitting comments to MDA regarding the draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule:

- Describe how both parts 1 and 2 of the rule will impact your farm.
- Does the depiction of “vulnerable groundwater areas” seem reasonable for your farm given your knowledge of the soils and quality of drinking water in the area?
- If your farm is located within a vulnerable area as identified in part 1, and if wells in your township have been tested and are not above the 10 ppm limit, are existing farming practices already protecting groundwater?
- Should the allowance of up to 20 pounds of nitrogen associated with MAP or DAP applications of phosphorus be removed if soil tests are being used to determine phosphorus application rates?
- If you are in an area that could be affected by part 2 of the rule, are there precision agriculture technologies you are using for nitrogen applications that need to be considered in the development of mitigation strategies?
- If you are in an area that could be affected by part 2 of the rule, describe the importance of the role of the local advisory team in the mitigation process and the expertise that resides within your community to participate on this team.