

# Minnesota Irrigator

PUBLICATION OF THE IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA WINTER 2024



## Comments by the IAM President

Jake Wildman

Hello everyone,

I hope everybody had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I would like to first start out by inviting everyone to IAM's annual meeting/convention coming up here in February. The event this year will again take place at the Freeport Community Center in Freeport MN on Thursday, February 15th starting at 9am. I am looking forward to the event and am excited about this year's lineup of speakers. This year's keynote speaker will be Blois Olson and after he presents, he will be moderating a panel that will include individuals from other ag organizations, discussing issues affecting ag in the state of Minnesota. You can pre-register for the event on IAM's website or on the day of the event. I encourage you to attend this year's event if you can and I look forward to seeing many of you on the 15th.

Moving on to some other topics. If you recall during this past legislative session, there was a change in the language to water permit violations and the DNR's authority with Administrative Penalty Orders (APO). During the legislative session, IAM tried to get some language included within the

PRESIDENT continued on page 2

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## 49th Anniversary ANNUAL CONVENTION Thursday, February 15, 2024

Freeport Community Center  
Freeport, MN

(\$30 at the Door (\$25 pre-registration) – includes noon lunch.  
Pre-registration & Membership Renewal back page  
or @ <https://mnirrigators.org/>

-- 8:30 a.m. Doors open for visiting Exhibitors and refreshments --

### 9:00 a.m. Welcome & Introductions

Jake Wildman, IAM President

### Annual Business Meeting

State of Minnesota Agriculture - Commissioner Thom Petersen, MDA  
News from the Capital – Tony Kwilas, IAM's Lobbyist

### 9:30 - Break to Visit Exhibitors

### 10:00 a.m. Program

Emcee Grant Anderson

- MN Aquifer Health, Larry Kramka, The Foth Company
  - Available RCCP Grants, Jeppe Kjaersgaard, MDA
- Irrigation Research Update, Dr. Vasu Sharma, UMN Extension
  - APO Language, Katie Smith, MN DNR

### Noon Buffet & Visit Exhibitors

IAM Service Award Announcement

### 1:15 p.m. Program

KEYNOTE TOPIC - Agriculture

Blois Olson, Fluence Media and political commentator

### 1:45 Commodity Leadership Panel

Moderated by Blois Olson

Panel: IAM President Jake Wildman,  
Mn Corn, Northarvest, MN Farm Bureau

### ≈ 3:00 p.m. Cash & Vendor Drawings ≈

"Must be present to Win!"

\$250 & \$100 and Vendor Door Prizes  
Socializing with Neighbors and Exhibitors

## IAM KEYNOTE SPEAKER: "MR. MINNESOTA," BLOIS OLSON FROM FLUENCE MEDIA!

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calendars! Don't miss out on  
this incredible gathering at the  
IAM Annual Meeting!



Prepare for an enlightening  
and inspiring session as Blois  
Olson takes the stage. With his  
wealth of expertise and insights,  
Blois promises to invigorate and  
guide attendees through the ever-  
evolving landscape of agriculture.

Blois Olson will not only grace  
the stage as our main speaker  
but will also lead a dynamic  
commodity leadership panel,  
fostering discussions among  
influential leaders across various  
segments of the agricultural  
industry.

Commodity Leadership  
Panel Moderated by Blois  
Olson: Engage in compelling

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## Welcome to the MN Irrigator's Fall Newsletter

Jerry Wright, IAM Membership Secretary

This newsletter comes to you thanks to  
the support of advertisers, current IAM  
members, Industry Sponsors listed on  
page 9.

Your Directors on the IAM Board welcome and strongly  
encourage you to renew your membership if you have  
not already joined. Last year we ended up with only 546  
members.

Everyone benefits from each other's ideas, experiences,

and partnership in IAM activities this year including  
keeping a watchful eye on MN Irrigators Water Rights;  
telling personal stories about benefits of irrigation  
with Legislators as well as representing the interests of  
irrigation practices across the state.

To become a member, simply return the signup form  
included on the last page of this newsletter or signup and  
paid thru the IAM webpage at <https://mnirrigators.org/>  
As a member, you can also be placed on the IAM email  
alert list if you submit your email address.

statute that would help protect some of our interests. Unfortunately, we were not able to get any of our language included, but since then we have been working closely with the DNR to get some of that language into the guidance document of the APO that the DNR is working on. Back in November, myself, Vice President Anna and other individuals from different groups participated in a meeting with the DNR. During the meeting, we had the opportunity to provide input on the language that we would like to see included and overall, we felt it was a very productive meeting. The DNR is currently making revisions to this guidance document and we will be meeting with them over the next month or so to go over those revisions.

Another situation that IAM is moderating very closely are a couple concerning issues that are going on in the Northwest part of the state. At this point I won't get into too many details, but I can assure you we are keeping a very close eye on it. One thing I will say, there is currently a LCCMR funded project taking place that is very concerning to IAM and its members. The project is a 3-year study looking at surface and ground water quantity and quality in the Straight River area. IAM, along with the Central Minnesota Irrigators Association, is following the project very close and we will try and update the membership as best we can as this project progresses. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the

project, feel free to reach out to myself or another board member and we would more than happy to discuss the issues.

The last thing I will mention and this is something I am personally excited about. IAM has hired a 3rd party consultant to look at groundwater level trends throughout the irrigated areas of the state. Larry Kramka is the consultant we hired, which might be a familiar name to some. Larry and his group have been gathering data and are currently developing a report that IAM is looking forward to sharing members. We as board feel it will be a nice tool in the toolbox and a very good piece of information to have when there is an opportunity to provide education about

irrigation in the state of Minnesota. The report should be out sometime this month and we have asked Larry to come a present on it at the annual meeting, so I am looking forward to that.

As always, thank you for your support in IAM. As members, we appreciate each and everyone of you. We would not be able to fight these issues without your support, so again thank you. We will do our best to keep you up to date as we work through some these issues and I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual meeting on February 15th in Freeport.

Jake Wildman  
320-424-0713  
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If you are not interested in receiving future newsletters from Irrigators Association of Minnesota (IAM), please send a note to [wrightsj@charter.net](mailto:wrightsj@charter.net) or IAM, 24 S. Edquist St., Appleton, MN 56208

If you have a topic that you would like to see discussed in a future issue, drop a note to IAM president, Jake Wildman at [jakewildman@outlook.com](mailto:jakewildman@outlook.com). Articles for the newsletter are solicited and gathered by the IAM officers and Membership Secretary, Jerry Wright who can be contacted at [jerrywright1970@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywright1970@gmail.com).

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The Difficulty of Change

By Monica Kramer McConkey, LPC  
Rural Behavioral Health Counselor & Consultant



Change is hard! Whether it is a personal change like eating differently to lose weight or getting into an exercise routine, or if it is a change in our farming operation like making a transition plan, or implementing a new procedure, it is all hard!

Why is change so hard? We as humans typically gravitate to the known, the stable, and the secure. Change can disrupt what we’ve known and done for years. It can mean moving into uncharted territory with unknown results. And that is a little (or a lot) scary.

Let’s explore the three things that need to be in alignment for change to take place. First, we need to feel like the change is important. If we don’t view it

as important, chances are we will not put our time and effort into making it happen.

Second, we need to feel confident in our ability to make change happen. This is tough. I’ve worked with farmers who APPEAR to be resistant and controlling when it comes to planning and implementing steps to transition the farm. However, below that was really apprehension of how, or if, it would work out. Fear is often at the core of this barrier to change.

Third, we need to feel ready to make the change happen. If we aren’t ready, there may be feeble attempts or half-hearted gestures but again, we won’t fully commit.

Some questions to ask to help move toward change include:  
It sounds like things can’t stay the same as they are.

- What do you think you might do?
- What changes were you thinking about making?
- Where do we go from here?
- What do you want to do at this point?
- How would you like things to turn out?
- After reviewing all of this, what’s the next step for you?

Finally, instead of viewing the change as something to be avoided or feared, look at it as an opportunity to grow and learn. My guess is that your farming operation doesn’t look the same as it did 100 years ago or even 50 years ago. Much change has happened which has led you to where you are. Now it is time to think about where you want to be and embrace the change that will get you there!

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[minnesota-ag-weather-network](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/central-minnesota-ag-weather-network)

### North Dakota Ag Weather & ET

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### Benton SWCD

<http://www.soilandwater.org/>

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### East Ottertail SWCD

<http://www.eotswcd.org/>

218-346-4260 ext 3

### Dakota County SWCD

<http://ima.respec.com/dakota/>

651-480-7781

### Pope County SWCD

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320-634-5327

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763 241 1170 ext3

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## USDA 2023 Irrigation and Water Management Survey now accepting responses

*Edited By: Luke Reynolds*

*December 11, 2023*

**USDA's 2023 Irrigation and Water Management Survey seeks nationwide farmer participation to shape efficient irrigation practices and water resource management policies.**

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Washington, D.C., has opened the 2023 Irrigation and Water Management Survey, a component of the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide\\_to\\_NASS\\_Surveys/Farm\\_and\\_Ranch\\_Irrigation/](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Farm_and_Ranch_Irrigation/)

Growers will receive a paper survey at the beginning of 2024 or can go online now to respond to the survey: <https://portal.agcounts.usda.gov/portal/s/>.

"I strongly encourage all farmers, no matter how large or small their operation, to promptly complete and return their questionnaire. This is your opportunity to share your voice, uplift

the value and showcase the uniqueness of American agriculture," says NASS administrator Hubert Hamer. The survey is crucial in assembling comprehensive data on U.S. irrigation activities and water usage across American farms, ranches, and horticultural operations and targets a sample of irrigators nationwide.

"Water is arguably the most important resource for agriculture and horticulture operations," says Hamer. "This survey is an opportunity to provide data that will influence policy decisions that have a tremendous impact on the industry for years to come."

This survey provides the only comprehensive information on irrigation activities and water use.

In responding to the survey, producers provide information on topics such as water sources and amount of water used, acres irrigated by type of system, irrigation by crop, and system investments and energy costs.

The information collected will inform policies fostering irrigation practices and water resource sustainability.

The response deadline for the survey is Feb. 15, 2024.

The results will be publicly available on Nov. 14, 2024.

Irrigation practices are often impacted by drought conditions, and the U.S. Drought Monitor and other maps on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website are useful references at <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/Drought/>.

The 2023 Irrigation and Water Management Survey (formerly called the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey) is a follow-on to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. This survey provides the only comprehensive information on irrigation activities and water use across American farms, ranches, and horticultural operations.

In responding to the survey, producers provide information on topics such as water sources and amount of water used, acres irrigated by type of system, irrigation by crop, and system investments and energy costs.

2023 Irrigation and Water Management Survey key dates:

• **November 17, 2023**

Online-only reporting period.

• **January 3, 2024**

Questionnaire mailing.

• **February 15, 2024**

Deadline for completing your survey.

• **November 14, 2024**

Data Release



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## Research Illuminates Value of Combining Variable Rate Irrigation, Nitrogen

Like the Irrigators Association of Minnesota, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) supports science-based research aimed at improving on-farm practices. These research efforts include seeking ways to boost corn farm productivity, including projects that aim to compare irrigation methods and scheduling.

Minnesota Corn has funded projects to test precision agriculture methodologies in irrigation in an effort to help farmers adopt precision agriculture practices while protecting high crop yields. Currently, Minnesota Corn is funding a project that examines the impact of variable rate irrigation (VRI) and variable rate nitrogen (VRN) management compared to conventional uniform rate management for irrigation and nitrogen.

outline ways irrigation fits into the sustainability of Minnesota's corn crop.

Minnesota Corn has also supported research in the past by Dr. Sharma and her team at the univer-

sity's Sand Plain Research Farm in Becker, Minnesota, where they completed a multi-year study on irrigation and its impact on nitrate leaching and crop yield. That study compared four irrigation

*Continued on Page 8*

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Dr. Vasudha Sharma's latest study at the University of Minnesota is in its second year, with the objective to refine nitrogen (N) and irrigation management for corn at the farm scale, harness-

ing the power of remote sensing. Results so far suggest that in-season remotely sensed data could help farmers combine VRI and VRN managements without significant negative impacts on corn productivity. Dr. Sharma's study continues in the coming growing season and the findings could further



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER continued from pg 1

conversations and gain invaluable perspectives as Blois Olson moderates a panel comprising influential leaders across diverse segments of the agricultural industry. Explore the challenges, opportunities, and future prospects in this dynamic session.

Blois Olson has been called “Mr. Minnesota” for his ability to read the mood of the state’s residents and the political dynamics and economic trends. He has moderated hundreds of conversations across the state including political debates, economic discussions, and business forums.

His influential newsletters and commentaries are read by thousands daily as part of Fluence Media. From the MN Orchestra lockout to Punch Pizza at the State of the Union he’s influenced news and information three decades throughout the country.

His insights and perspective are

sought regularly by business, civic and political leaders across the state and country.

Named one of 100 Minnesotans you should know for 2023, he was recognized as a “Top Marketer” by Minnesota Business magazine in 2012 and named one of “200 Minnesotan’s You Should Know” by Twin Cities Business magazine in 2011.

He has been on-air host and contributor to WCCO Radio since 1998.

Outside of radio, Blois has built a handful of successful businesses in media and public relations/public affairs, his current company Fluence Media is the leading source of information for Minnesota’s business and political elite.

He lives in St. Louis Park, has two adult children, and enjoys pickleball, golf and wine.

## DNR Water Use, Conservation and Efficiency Reporting

By Claudia Hochstein, Water Conservation Consultant, DNR

Since 2021, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Water Conservation Reporting System has been open to irrigators and live-stock operators to track their water conservation efforts. You should have recently received information from the DNR about reporting your 2023 conservation activities.

The optional report allows you to make an inventory of conservation practices you’re implementing and to get ideas about other options to save time, money, and water. Additionally, you can share success stories to highlight your conservation accomplishments.

For the DNR, knowing how and where water conservation practices are deployed across the state gives us information that will help state agencies develop and deliver better opportunities to assist water users and recognize leaders in the field.

The reporting system opens in November each year and closes on March 30 of the following year. Filling out your report will take only about 10-15 minutes. We encourage you to visit <https://tinyurl.com/DNRWater> for more information, or contact Claudia Hochstein, DNR water conservation consultant, at [claudia.hochstein@state.mn.us](mailto:claudia.hochstein@state.mn.us) or 651-259-5034 if you have questions or can’t find the report invitation in your email.

Remember, water appropriation permit-required use reporting is



Continued on Page 13



# DNR Water Appropriation Permitting and Reporting

By: Josh Prososki, DNR Groundwater Appropriation Hydrologist, Northwest Region 1, Fergus Falls Office

As you begin plans for the upcoming growing season, we have a few reminders for a smooth DNR water appropriation permitting experience. To avoid miscommunications and extra permitting fees, please make sure to share these commonly missed items with DNR water appropriation hydrologists when they occur:

- **Change in landowner or tenant:**

- o Are you planning to buy or sell a property that involves a DNR water appropriation permit?
- o Are you renting new land, letting a lease expire, or do you have a new renter who will be responsible for the annual water use report and/or fee?

Contact your local water appropriation hydrologist early, to ensure that the DNR is sending communications about these permit and water management responsibilities to the correct people. It is the new landowner's responsibility to request a water appropriation permit transfer within 90 days of closing on a property.

- **Adding or replacing a well:** DNR water appropriation permits authorize pumping water from a specific source, whether from a surface water or groundwater. If you had a well fail or added a new well to your system, you need to request an amendment to your permit prior to pumping from a new well or surface water pump.

- **Increasing irrigated area:**

- o Did you purchase a cornering system?
- o Did you clear trees or debris?
- o Did you reconfigure your irrigation system?

Contact your local DNR water appropriation hydrologist or area hydrologist to request an amendment to your permit. Your DNR water appropriation permit authorizes irrigation for a specific field size. Your permit must reflect any changes you make to your irrigation system. Your annual volume can also be adjusted at this time if, for example, you are irrigating a larger area and need to use additional water.

- **Changing pumps or nozzles:** Water appropriation permits specify your system's pumping rate. If you've changed pumps or installed a different nozzle package, you may need to request an amendment if the new pumping rate is different than what's on the existing permit. Contact your local DNR water appropriation hydrologist or area hydrologist to see if your permit needs to be amended.

- **Cover crops:** Thinking of using cover crops but concerned about whether you have enough water authorized on your permit? Talk with your DNR water appropriation hydrologist or area hydrologist about your plan. Providing information about your type of cover crop, water needs, and the irrigation cycles needed for germination will determine the amount of water needed for both your primary crop types and the cover crop.



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scheduling tools on corn yields and their impact on both nitrate leaching and crop yield. The final results suggest that nitrate leaching losses can be significantly reduced by altering the rate and frequency of irrigation. A reduction in nitrate leaching of 62% was reported at one of the sites when using the lowest irrigation method, resulting in a small grain yield loss compared to the highest irrigation method.

“These types of studies show real-world effects that using precision agriculture technologies and tools can have on Minnesota’s corn farmers,” Dr. Sharma said. “While there are variable factors like weather and geology, farmers across Minnesota can take the initial findings here to find the best

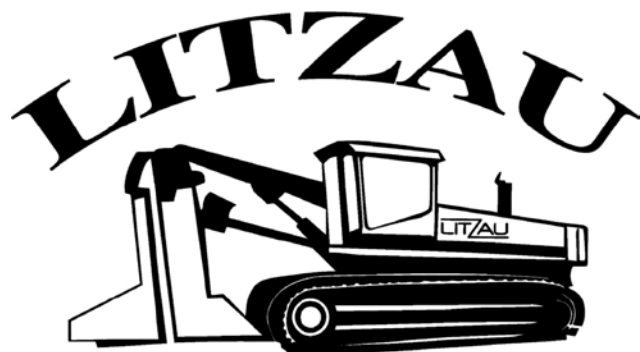
rates of irrigation in combination with other inputs to result in the highest grain yield possible for their area.”

Each year, Minnesota Corn invests approximately \$2 million into research that ensures a strong, scientifically based approach to best management practices for sustainable corn farming. In addition, Minnesota Corn contributes funding to such vital programs as 4-H, FFA, and Waseca-based Farmamerica, among other organizations. Educational resources and professional development for teachers are also key priorities, and the Minnesota Corn partnership with Minnesota Agricultural in the Classroom delivers free curriculum and resources to students and teachers across the state.

Like the Irrigators Association of Minnesota, Minnesota Corn’s strength lies in its grassroots membership. By joining MCGA, you help support year-round advocacy at the state Capitol and in Washington, D.C., aimed at protecting the tools farmers need to continue feeding and fueling the world while developing sustainability practices that will continue preserve the benefits of farming into the future. To learn more, visit [mncorn.org](http://mncorn.org).

Submitted by Minnesota Corn Growers Association, a grassroots organization with nearly 7,000 members across the state. Barbara Boelk, Sr. Director of Communications, Minnesota Corn, [bboelk@mncorn.org](mailto:bboelk@mncorn.org)

**If involved with a domestic - DNR Well Interference “Complaint”  
Contact your IAM Local Representative  
or IAM President - Jake Wildman  
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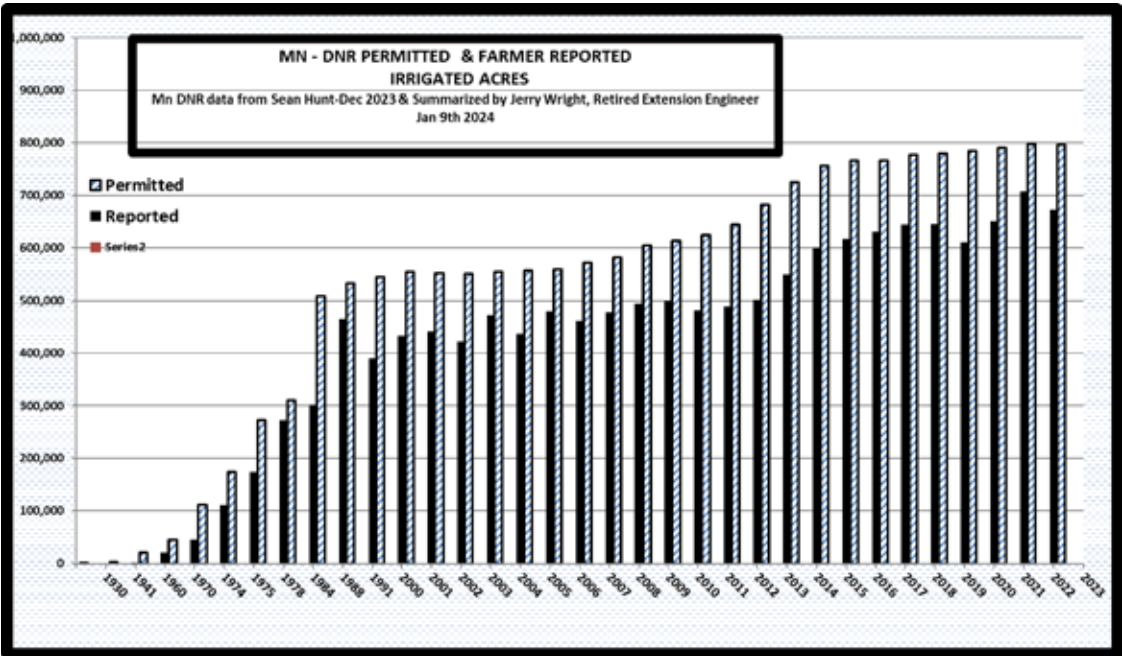
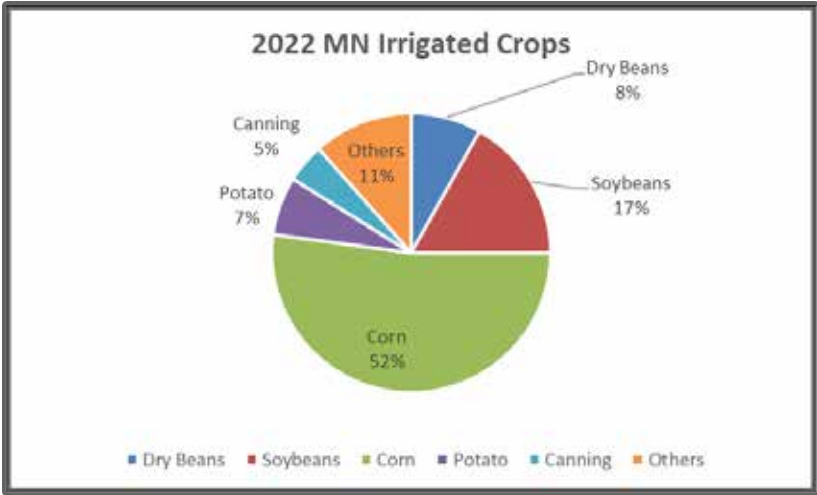
MN Irrigated Acres Report

By: Jerry Wright, Jan. 9, 2024

The pie graph to the right shows the mixture of 2022 MN irrigated crop types by percentage based on 673,222 acres reported by irrigating farmers to the MDNR in Feb 2023.

In 2021, MN irrigators reported applying water to 707,316 acres preceded in 2020 with 650,870 acres and 610,841 in 2019.

Annual permitted and reported irrigated acres since 1960s are shown in the lower graph.



Per USDA Minnesota Crops report for 2020, farmers reported irrigated corn harvested acres only represented 3.4 % and irrigated soybeans 1.8% of total crop acreage for a combined irrigated corn/ soybeans acreage that represents 2.7% of the total state crop acreage.

For information contact Jerry Wright at [jerrywright1970@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywright1970@gmail.com), retired University of Minnesota Extension Irrigation Engineer. A complete table of irrigated crop acres by type in 2022 listed by county can be found on the IAM webpage < [mnirrigators.org](http://mnirrigators.org) >

■ Mark your Calendars ■

2024 Annual IAM Convention

Community Center  
Freeport, MN

Thursday - February 15th

Located just south of the Freeport exit along Interstate 94 and the Freeport City Water Tower

For more information contact  
IAM president Jake Wildman  
[jakewildman@outlook.com](mailto:jakewildman@outlook.com)

or

Jerry Wright - [jerrywright1970@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywright1970@gmail.com)



Thank You  
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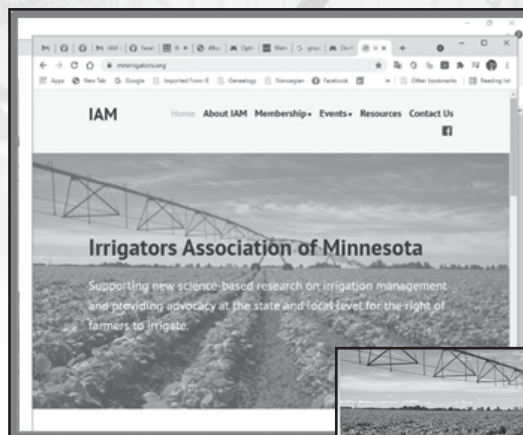


## FROM PIVOT POINT TO END GUN THE PACKAGE IS COMPLETE



## RENEW MEMBERSHIP ON THE IAM WEB PAGE

If you have not visited the NEW IAM website <https://mnirrigators.org/> and Facebook page recently it's time you do so! At IAM, our mission is to "support new science-based research on irrigation management and provide advocacy at the state and local level for the right of farmers to irrigate." This website highlights our work in this area, and we'll provide updates and events via our Facebook page.



The website also allows you to join/renew your membership online with credit card as well as register for the 2024 Convention and make other donations to IAM projects.

There is also a place for farmers to find irrigation resources from research farms across the state and access the latest copy of IAM's Minnesota Irrigator newsletter.



"The impact of irrigation on Minnesota's economy not just to the farmer, but also the rural communities where irrigation takes place in Minnesota is significant. IAM wants to spread the message that farmers who irrigate are working hard to be good stewards of our natural resources."

- ALAN PETERSON, FORMER IAM PRESIDENT



CHECK OUT THE IAM FACEBOOK PAGE and BECOME A FOLLOWER!!!



Thanks to IAM Board member Anna Bregier and technical staff at Central Lakes College for upgrading and organizing the website layout and creating a Facebook page.



# Nitrogen: Minnesota’s Grand Challenge & Compelling Opportunity 10th Annual Conference

University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center’s 10th annual Nitrogen: Minnesota's Grand Challenge and Compelling Opportunity Conference brings experts together to focus entirely on this valuable input. Current topics in crop production and environmental stewardship will be relevant and informative for today's agricultural producers and professionals and anyone else who appreciates high-quality, research-based information.

Certified crop advisers (CCA) can earn continuing education credits (CEUs) in soil and water and nutrient management by attending the conference.

**EVENT INFORMATION: Cost \$20 (for either in-person or virtual attendance)**

**Registration Online:** <https://extension.umn.edu/event/nitrogen-minnesotas-grand-challenge-compelling-opportunity-conference-0>

**Date:** Tuesday, February 13, 2024  
8:00 a.m. - 3:40 p.m.

**Location:** Holiday Inn and Suites  
75 37th Avenue South St. Cloud, MN 56301

**Contacts:** **Fabian Fernandez**, U of M Ext. nutrient management specialist  
fabiangf@umn.edu or 612-625-7460

**Warren Formo**, Executive director, MAWRC  
warren@mawrc.org or 952-237-9822

**Agenda Tom Rothman, Moderator**  
**Innovation in Nitrogen Management**

- 8:10 a.m. - Alan Blaylock, Nutrien - Enhanced efficiency fertilizers and new horizons in nitrogen sources
- 8:50 a.m. - Tyler Nigon, Sentera - Conducting your own on-farm studies.
- 9:30 a.m. - Will Bomier, Minnesota Department of Agriculture - Funding opportunities for implementation of innovative practices in nitrogen management

10:10 a.m. - Break

**Nitrogen Management and Crop Production**

- 10:20 a.m. - David Franzen, North Dakota State University - Performance of asymbiotic N-fixing products in the North Central Region
- 11 a.m. - Chryseis Modderman, U of M - Nitrogen management with manure
- 11:40 a.m. - Vasudha Sharma, U of M - Variable rate irrigation and nitrogen management for corn production

12:20 p.m. - Lunch

- 1:00 p.m. - Daniel Kaiser, U of M - Nitrogen for sugarbeet production

**Nitrogen Management and the Environment**

- 1:40 p.m. - Matt Helmers, Iowa State University - Nitrogen management in and at the edge of fields to mitigate nitrate leaching.
- 2:20 p.m. - Laura Christianson, University of Minnesota - Nitrogen loss mitigation: Lessons from an exhaustive review
- 3:00 p.m. - Fabian Fernandez, U of M - Optimizing irrigated corn production along with cover crops to mitigate nitrogen losses.

3:40 p.m. - Adjourn



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due by February 15, 2024. This annual report of monthly water appropriation volumes you pumped in 2023 is due to the DNR every year and helps manage water availability and demands across the state. The method you use to calculate total volumes pumped needs to be within ten percent of the actual volume of water appropriated during the year.

The easiest and most convenient

way to report annual water use to the DNR is through the Minnesota DNR Permitting and Reporting System (MPARS). You only need an email and password to use the online permitting system and report water use, request permit changes, pay annual water use fees, and to contact your DNR water appropriation hydrologist, all within the online system.

If you've yet to use MPARS, more information is available on the DNR website <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/permits/water/index.html>.

If you have any questions on reporting water use or using MPARS, please contact the DNR at 651-259-5678 or email us at [mpars.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:mpars.dnr@state.mn.us).

## MINNESOTA IRRIGATOR PROGRAM

**2024 MIP Course**

**March 6, 13 & 20**

**in Staples**

**at Central Lakes College**

**8:30 AM - 3:30 PM each day**

*Are you an irrigator concerned about matching your irrigation with crop water use? Are you wondering how to improve water use efficiency and reduce water costs? The University of Minnesota Extension offers the Minnesota Irrigator Program (MIP) to help answer these questions.*

*Continuing education credits (CEUs) for certified crop advisors will be offered for attending the program.*

*Programming will include discussion of irrigation systems, how to use soil moisture sensors on your farm, irrigation scheduling, and special topics like variable rate irrigation and remote sensing.*

*Our mission is to provide irrigators and irrigation professionals with up-to-date information on the latest irrigation management science and methods so that they can find a solution that works for them and their operations.*

*We will be offering this program at different locations throughout the state in the coming years.*

*For more information contact:  
Vasudha Sharma, Extension  
Irrigation Specialist  
[vasudha@umn.edu](mailto:vasudha@umn.edu)  
612-626-4986*

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## Minnesota Ag Weather Network - EXPANDING

Daily crop water use data (also known as evapotranspiration) is a crucial piece of information that irrigators need to efficiently manage water. Weather station information is required to precisely estimate water use of the growing crop.

\*There is an additional weather station in Holloway, Minnesota (Swift County).



### Weather Data Collected and Uses

Weather station in a field. Through a partnership with the North Dakota Ag Weather Network (NDAWN), the MDA's weather stations are now integrated into the NDAWN crop modeling, air temperature inversion, potato blight, and mapping applications. In addition, weather information from the stations is now available in real-time (5-minute interval) via the NDAWN website and mobile application. The mobile application is called "NDAWN Inversion" and provides basic real-time weather information and air temperature inversion alerts. It is free to download at both the App Store (iOS) and Google Play (Android).

There are now 38 NDAWN and MDA weather stations in Central and northwestern Minnesota. The MDA manages 14, while NDAWN has installed and manages 24.

### Expanding Access to Local Weather Data

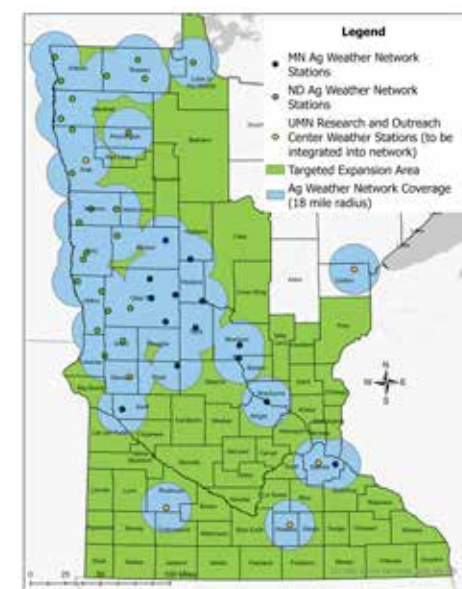
The MDA partnered with the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Wadena SWCD, Pope County SWCD, Benton County SWCD and Dakota County SWCD to install weather stations

across central Minnesota. The weather stations are placed in agricultural settings with the intent to provide data for agricultural producers and those involved with atmospheric research in this environment.

In 2023, the MDA received \$3 million from the Clean Water Fund to expand the weather station network to agricultural areas statewide. The initial expansion of approximately 40 additional weather stations will occur in cooperation with several partners over the next two to three years.

Given the climatic variability across Minnesota, accurate and detailed local weather data within 20 miles of most agricultural areas is a goal of the project. Approximately 80 stations may be necessary to achieve this goal. The full expansion of the Minnesota Ag Weather Network (MAWN) will be completed in two phases.

Map of the existing weather stations in Minnesota as part of the Minnesota Ag Weather Network (14), the North Dakota Ag Weather Network (24) and the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Centers (6).



Final weather station locations are to be determined based on weather station siting criteria. If you are interested in hosting a weather station on your land, please complete the Minnesota Ag Weather Station Host Application. If you have any questions, please reach out to Stefan Bischof at [Stefan.Bischof@state.mn.us](mailto:Stefan.Bischof@state.mn.us) or 218-396-0720.

For more information checkout MDA webpage < <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/minnesota-ag-weather-network> >



# Central Minnesota Irrigators annual meeting – Jan 18th



Dear Friends,

Another year of farming is behind us. We hope you and your families are well. May this winter season allow you to plan for the next season.

The board invites you to attend the **Central Minnesota Irrigators annual meeting at The City Hall Ballroom in New York Mills, MN on January 18, 2024.** Registration and refreshments begin at 8:30. Program speakers start at 9. A detailed agenda will be available online and at the event.

Be assured, we will continue to protect and fight for your right to irrigate. We stay abreast of, track down and challenge any proposed ordinances, rules, legislation, taxpayer and privately funded environmental studies, and state agency reports that implicate irrigated row crop agriculture as negatively impacting our rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater. Recent examples of such actions include:

- 1) Crow Wing River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Report Update, October 2023 (draft document) in which irrigated row-crop acreage is being singled out as the cause of elevated nitrate in the Straight and Shell Rivers even though several other likely sources occur,
- 2) Upper Mississippi Pineland Sands Study, a taxpayer funded study, that was recently awarded to the White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa Indians. University of Minnesota researchers are collaborating partners of the study with one of the hypotheses **claiming** that increasing temperatures, nutrients and pesticides concentrations in the Straight and Shell Rivers are due to irrigated agricultural production in the area,
- 3) An ordinance enacted May 5, 2023, by the White Earth Reservation governing body that requires farmers who irrigate or plan to irrigate their privately owned land on the reservation and within a five-mile perimeter around the reservation to apply for a tribal permit on top of applying for a MN DNR issued permit. The White Earth DNR is **claiming** “threats” to treaty-protected water rights and natural resources within the defined area from the operation of high-capacity irrigation wells and surface water pumps.

To keep up the fight, we are asking you to join or maintain your membership to Central Minnesota Irrigators. For over 50 years, memberships have held irrigators together through a meaningful connection. Together, and in numbers, we have a unified and stronger voice to challenge present and up-and-coming adversaries to irrigated agriculture. **Please join us for the days’ program, socializing with neighbors and vendors, lunch and door prizes on Thursday, January 18, 2024 in New York Mills.**

Thank you for your support and being a part of protecting the rights of irrigated agriculture throughout the central Minnesota area.

Sincerely,  
Ben Deuel , CMI President

Remit payment today or on January 18th  
Robert Keppers, CMI Treasurer  
220 Bottlemiller Dr, Wadena, MN 56482  
Phone: 218-631-7261  
Email: [centralmnirrigators@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnirrigators@gmail.com)

Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [centralmnirrigators.org](http://centralmnirrigators.org)

Cash drawings will be held at the close of the business meeting.

Central Minnesota Irrigators (CMI) Membership dues **\$40**  
Irrigators Association of Minnesota (IAM) Membership dues **\$100**  
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See page 10 for more website information

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