

# MN Irrigator

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Publication of the Irrigators Association of Minnesota • Spring 2025

Irrigators Association of Minnesota  
1010 W. Saint Germain St.  
Saint Cloud, MN 56301-3002

## Comments from the IAM President

### Thanks for all who attended our 50th!

By Jake Wildman, IAM President  
320-424-0713 • jakewildman@outlook.com

Greetings IAM members,  
I hope everybody is having a great spring.  
As I type this, we are currently in a winter storm warning and we are receiving some much-needed moisture. Just wish it wouldn't be coming in the form of snow.



I want to first start out by thanking everybody who attended IAM's 50th annual meeting and convention back in February. We were really happy on how the event turned out and it was a great opportunity to celebrate 50 years of this great organization. At our last meeting, the board voted to host next year's event at the same venue in Waite Park. So mark your calendars for Feb. 19, 2026, and please plan on joining us for IAM's 51st annual convention at the Park Center in Waite Park.

I want to make sure to give everybody a quick update on some legislative items that IAM has been working on. Many of

**PRESIDENT continued on Page 2**

## Celebrating IAM's 50th

Annual Convention & Expo celebrated IAM's 50-year  
commitment to irrigated agriculture in Minnesota

In a landmark event that brought together over 175 dedicated members, the Irrigators Association of Minnesota (IAM) celebrated its 50th Annual Meeting and Celebratory Banquet at the Park Event Center. The day was packed with insightful sessions, historical reflections, and forward-thinking discussions that highlighted IAM's enduring commitment to irrigated agriculture in Minnesota.

### A Day of Insight and Inspiration

Doors for the event opened at 12:30 p.m., setting the stage for a day of networking and knowledge sharing. At 1 p.m., IAM President Jake Wildman kicked off the program with a warm welcome and an organizational update, followed by an engaging update from IAM's state lobby team.

### Connecting Across Capitol Hill

Members were treated to recorded video messages from key legislative leaders, including:

- Senator Amy Klobuchar
- Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach
- Congressman Brad Finstad
- Majority Whip in the United States House of Representatives and Minnesota Congressman Tom Emmer



L to R: IAM President, Jake Wildman; Motivational Speaker, Dallin Cooper; IAM Vice President, Anna Bregier



Blois Olsen, Fluence Media, delivers the keynote speech during IAM's 50th annual meeting.

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## Welcome to our spring newsletter

By Jerry Wright, IAM Membership Secretary

This newsletter comes to you thanks to the support of advertisers, current IAM members, Industry Sponsors and Extra Mile Members listed on page 5.

Your Directors on the IAM Board welcome and strongly encourage you to renewal your membership if you have not already joined. Last year we ended up with 545 members. Currently renewal 2025 membership is at 412.

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 at IAM's webpage at <https://mnirrigators.org/>. As a member, you are also placed on the IAM email alert list if you submit a email address.

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

## President *from Page 1*

you are aware that IAM has been working on drafting some language during this legislative session. I am happy to announce that a bill with four of our priorities was introduced in both the house and the senate on March 20. Rep. Paul Anderson, Co-Chair of the House Ag. Committee, introduced the bill in the house and Senator Judy Seeberger, member of the Senate Ag committee, introduced our bill in the senate. The bill number in the house is HF 2613 and the bill number in the senate is SF 2793. If you are interested in reading the actual language within the bill, you can find it using the following link: [https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/status\\_search.php?body=House](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/status_search.php?body=House)

As I write this, we have not received a hearing yet and, to be completely upfront with everybody, we may not before this session is over, but that doesn't mean all is wasted. Because of the timing of when the bill was introduced, we may run out of time this session -- but these bills will be good for next year's session as well. So when that starts, we can be off and running and we won't have to allocate the time to draft any

language. In the meantime, IAM would really appreciate if you would reach out to your local Representative and Senator asking for their support of the bill. It will have a much greater impact if you as a constitute have that conversation, rather than myself or others who are not a constitute.

Another item I want to make sure everybody is aware of: Agri-Growth, an organization that IAM is a member of, have been working on bill to help with the permit process that we as irrigators go through when we apply for a permit with the MN DNR. Agri-Growth is planning to host a meeting with the DNR to have a discussion around the groundwater supply situation throughout the state. The meeting is scheduled for April 18, starting at 10 a.m. I have included the registration link: <https://form.jotform.com/250824548578065>.

I know some of us might be doing spring fieldwork at this time, but I just encourage to join if your schedule allows. It is important that we have good representation so the DNR understands that there is a need for reforms within the permit process.

The last legislative item I want to mention -- within the Governor's budget, the DNR is proposing a slight increase in permit fees. The current permit fee structure is \$140 per permit for existing permits and \$150 for new permit applications. The propose increase would be \$200 per permit for existing permits and \$600 for new permit applications. IAM has had multiple conversations with the DNR about this and we will continue to have conversations moving forward. IAM's current stance is we do not want to see any permit fee increases if the DNR does not support some

of the priorities that we have put forward.

To give everybody an idea of what the additional cost would be if these permit fees were approved by the legislature, we developed a calculator that allows you to put in your specific number of permits, along with your acres, and from that it will give you what the additional cost would be for your operation on a per acre basis.



The 50th Annual Meeting & Convention at Park Center in Waite Park, Minn.

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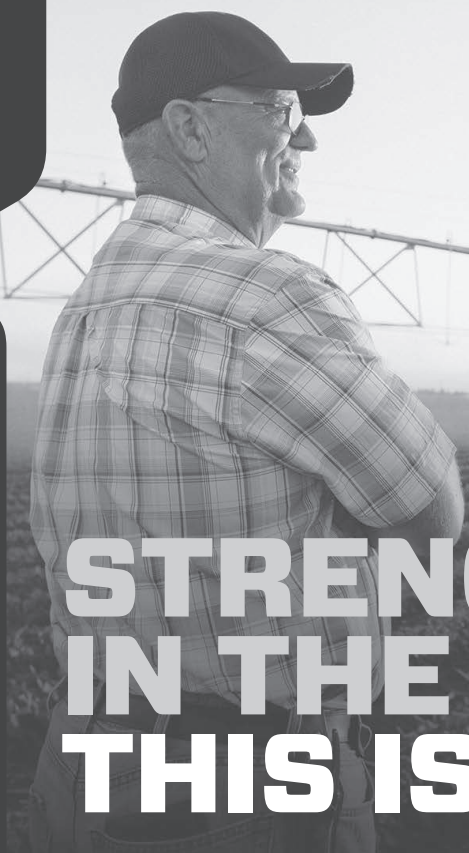
This calculator will be available on our website, [www.mnirrigator.org](http://www.mnirrigator.org).

IAM will continue to do our best to keep the website up to date with the most current information in regards to these legislative items as well as the different issues IAM has been working on. That being said, I just encourage you to check in to the website from time to time so you have the most up dated and recent information.

With that, I just want to say thank you again for your support of IAM. We appreciate each and every one of you and we could not do what we do without the support of you as members. I wish everybody a safe and successful spring and we'll talk later this summer.

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Convention from Page 1

These messages reinforced the vital role of advocacy in shaping agricultural policy and ensuring that the voices of Minnesota’s irrigators are heard. You can watch all these videos on IAM website: IAM 50th Annual Convention & Expo Legislator Videos. <https://mnirrigators.org/minnesota-irrigator-news/>

Keynote Highlights

A highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the keynote session led by Blois Olson, owner of Fluence Media and political commentator. In his insightful presentation, “Communicating with Both Sides of the Aisle,” Blois examined the status of Minnesota politics following the 2024 election.

He discussed how shifting demographics, and generational trends influenced the election results and offered actionable strategies for Minnesota irrigators to effectively navigate the evolving political landscape. His session sparked thoughtful discussions and provided clear guidance on the steps the community can take moving forward.

Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future

*A Glimpse into IAM’s Legacy*  
Long-time membership secretary Jerry Wright, alongside President Jake Wildman, delivered a moving historical review of IAM’s journey.



IAM President, Jake Wildman address the 50th annual meeting attendees.

Their presentation not only celebrated past milestones but also welcomed Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen, who presented special member recognition and awards.

Evening Banquet & Motivation

At 6 p.m., the celebratory banquet began, filling the room with camaraderie and excitement. The evening reached its peak with motivational speaker Dallin Cooper, whose talk, “They Might Not Be Crazy: Working With People You Disagree With,” captivated the audience. Dallin shared his take on embracing disagreements, illustrated perfectly by the fierce showdown between a grizzly bear and a bison — and reminded us that healthy debates and diverse perspectives can spark innovation and strengthen our community.

A Hub of Innovation

The event was further enriched by the presence of more than 30 vendors who showcased the latest in irrigation and agricultural equipment, as well as engineering and



IAM Membership Secretary, Jerry Wright, speaks on IAM’s 50 years of history.



Dallin Cooper speaks to attendees at IAM’s 50th annual convention & expo at The Park Event Center in Waite Park, MN.

Convention continued on Page 4

**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).**

**Please note we have a new publishing company, Palmer Creation out of Glenwood, MN, who will manage the advertising space, editing, printings, and mailing. Our previous publisher, Crow River Press-Hutchinson closed down shortly after our spring newspaper last year.**

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consulting services. Their exhibits provided attendees with a firsthand look at industry advancements, fueling ideas and discussions that promise to shape the future of Minnesota agriculture.

About IAM

Established in 1975, the Irrigators Association of Minnesota is the sole statewide association dedicated exclusively to irrigated agriculture. With a membership exceeding 700, IAM

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A few scenes from the 50th Annual Convention and Expo, depicting various vendors showcasing their latest innovations, as well as networking by those in attendance.

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# Past leadership officers, families honored

At the IAM 50th Anniversary Convention & Expo, President Jake Wildman had the privilege of recognizing and celebrating the legacy of our past leadership! In a heartfelt ceremony, we recognized the former presidents or their living family members whose vision and dedication have helped shape IAM over the years.

They were also all honored in a special moment captured with Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner, Thom Petersen.

Wildman also proudly showcased the contributions of key IAM figures:

- Fred Bergsrud – Served as IAM 1st Executive Secretary during the 70’s and early 80’s.
- Norm Krause – Led as Executive Director from 1990-1995.
- Jerry Wright – Membership Secretary since 2001.

Wildman, on-behalf of IAM, gave a “Thank You” to all who have built our legacy and continue to inspire us. Together, we celebrate our past, embrace our present, and look forward to a bright future!



Back Row L-R: Nick Peterson accepting for his father Alan (president 2002 – 2018); Brian Roth accepting for his father Maurice (1st IAM president in 1975); Tim Hughs (1996); Ryan Peterson (son of Alan Peterson); John Anderson (1993) son of Jack Anderson (1978) and brother of Jim Anderson (1998 & 1999)); 2nd Row :Ag Commissioner Thom Petersen; Jack Kaschmitter (1997 and son of Otto Kaschmitter (1982); Front Row: Dave Kolb accepting for his father John Kohl (2000 & 2001).



Left to right: Norm Krause served as IAM Executive Director from 1990-1995; Thom Petersen, MN Ag Commissioner; Jerry Wright, IAM membership secretary since 2002;“ Fred Bergsrud served as IAM 1st Executive Secretary during the 70’s and early 80’s.

# THANK YOU IAM Member Supporters 2025 Convention

(as of Mar. 28)

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## WE WELCOME YOUR IAM STORIES OR PICTURES

Please share your stories and pictures with Jerry Wright, IAM Membership Secretary at [jerrywright1970@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywright1970@gmail.com) or 490 2nd St NE Glenwood, MN 56334

Convention from Page 4

supports over 400,000 acres of irrigated land across the state. The organization is committed to advancing science-based research on irrigation management and advocating for the rights of farmers to effectively manage Minnesota’s valuable land and water resources.

A Day to Remember

The 50th Annual Meeting and Celebratory Banquet was more than just an event—it was a celebration of IAM’s rich history, a showcase of innovation, and a testament to the strong community that continues to drive Minnesota’s agricultural success. As IAM looks toward the future, the legacy of the past and the energy of today merge to inspire a new era of growth and collaboration.

Thank you to all who participated and helped make this milestone event a resounding success!



Scenes from the 50th Annual Convention and Expo, depicting various vendors showcasing their latest innovations, as well as networking by those in attendance.



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Thank you to IAM Vice President Anna Bregier and technical staff at Central Lakes College for creating the Facebook page and upgrading and organizing the IAM website layout.





Coffee break and networking at the 50th Annual Meeting & Convention.

# THANK YOU

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# Celebrating a lifetime of dedication

## Jerry Wright receives IAM Lifetime Achievement Award

By Tyler Grunewald, *minirrigators.org* blog posted Feb. 28, 2025

On February 20, at the IAM 50th Convention Anniversary & EXPO celebration, longtime IAM Membership Secretary Jerry Wright was honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. Presented by IAM President Jake Wildman, this award recognized Jerry’s outstanding commitment and decades of service to the Irrigators Association of Minnesota.

**A Storied Career in Minnesota**  
Jerry Wright’s journey in Minnesota began in 1976 when he joined the University of Minnesota as an Area Extension Irrigation Engineer and assistant professor housed in Brooten, Minnesota.

For nearly 34 years, until his retirement in January 2010, Jerry dedicated himself to advancing the fields of Irrigation Water Management via agricultural engineering and extension education and research. His expertise and passion for agriculture have left a lasting impact on countless farmers, consultants and industry contractors.

**Decades of Service with IAM**  
In the early 80s, Jerry started to contribute articles to the IAM



Jerry Wright with his newly awarded IAM Lifetime Achievement Award.

newsletters from his new office at the West Central Experiment Station in Morris. In 1999, he became co-editor of the newsletter assisting the IAM Executive Director and the printing company editor.

Since 2001, Jerry has served as IAM’s Membership Secretary, managing the newsletter’s 2,700 mailing list with unwavering dedication. In this role, he has not only demonstrated his commitment to the organization but also played a key role in ensuring timely membership renewals. His meticulous work in tracking irrigated acres by county from DNR’s annual water permit data and organizing data by county and crop types —has been instrumental in supporting IAM’s initiatives and ensuring that the agricultural community has access to reliable, detailed information.

**A Heartfelt Thank You**  
Jerry’s lifetime of service stands as a testament to his dedication to Minnesota’s agricultural community. His work has not only enriched IAM but has also helped shape the future of irrigation and agriculture in our state. On behalf of everyone at the Irrigators Association of Minnesota, we extend our deepest gratitude to Jerry for his decades of service and relentless commitment.

Thank you, Jerry, for everything you have done and continue to do. Your legacy of excellence and innovation will inspire us for many years to come.

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# Can variable rate irrigation combat groundwater issues in Minnesota?

By: Taylor Becker, Extension educator & Vasu Sharma, Extension irrigation specialist

Did you know that more than 25% of groundwater in Minnesota is pumped for agricultural crops? This makes irrigation the second-largest user of groundwater in the state. Can variable rate irrigation (VRI) technology help Minnesota farmers save water without sacrificing yield?

### Minnesota’s Central Sands region

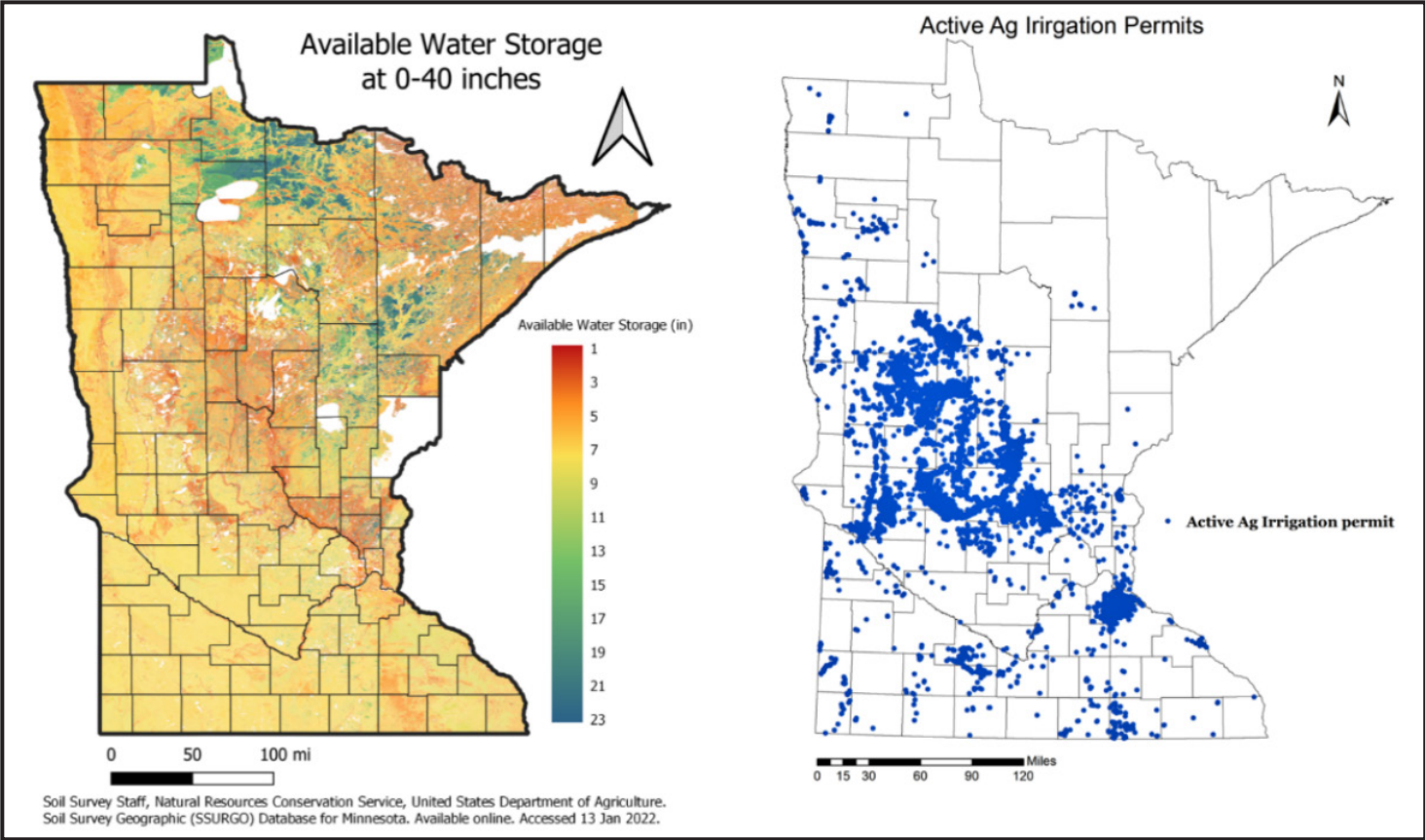
Minnesota has over 600,000 acres of irrigated cropland, and many of these irrigated acres are in the state’s Central Sands region. The coarse-textured or sandy nature of the region’s soils means that they do not hold large quantities of water and have a rapid drainage rate to groundwater compared to high clay soils.

These soils present challenges in agricultural irrigation and nutrient management. It takes less precipitation to saturate these soils and they hold less plant-available water than loams. Low

organic matter levels also mean that less nitrogen is provided by these soils and higher rates of nitrogen fertilizer are required. Attaining economically viable yields requires careful irrigation and well-timed fertilizer applications.

1. Maintenance of groundwater quality: Water percolates through the soil profile quickly in coarse-textured soils, taking some agricultural nutrients from applied fertilizers with it. In particular, leached nitrogen poses environmental, human health, and economic risks to communities that use groundwater for drinking.

Nutrient loss also represents a financial loss to the farmer as some of the nutrients they paid for are lost beyond the root zone.  
2. Overall availability of groundwater: High groundwater withdrawals during the crop growing season can temporarily reduce the discharge of groundwater into nearby streams and lakes, impacting aquatic life and recreational activities on waterways, and leading to water



### Groundwater issues

At the same time, many communities in this region depend on groundwater as their drinking water source. Balancing agriculture’s economic needs while protecting rural drinking water supplies leads to two critical challenges in agricultural watershed management:

supply shortages for nearby private and municipal wells.

### Variable rate irrigation on-farm study

A meaningful way to address these issues is by

**Groundwater Issues**  
continued on **Page 10**

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Table 1. 2021 on-farm study results comparing URI and VRI (Stearns County, Minnesota)

	Uniform rate irrigation (avg)	Variable rate irrigation (avg)
Irrigation (inches)	11.6	6.6
Yield (bu/ac)	257.7	242.4
Irrigation water productivity (bu/ac-in)	22.2	36.7

Groundwater Issues from Page 9

implementing proven advanced irrigation management techniques and technologies such as variable rate irrigation (VRI). With funding from the AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), we are currently evaluating the ability of precision irrigation technology

to address both groundwater quality and water quantity issues. The study is being conducted on a grower’s field in Stearns County. The project focuses on evaluating the impact of VRI technology on water savings, corn yield, and nitrogen (N) leaching in comparison to uniform water management. VRI technology

addresses the reality that soil physical properties can vary significantly within a single field — from rapidly draining sandy soils to poorly drained clays. Uniform rate irrigation (URI) does not account for this variability, leading to potential over- or under-application of irrigation water and subsequent negative impacts on crop yields.

By addressing in-field variability with VRI, we can optimize irrigation, maximize crop growth, and minimize negative environmental consequences. For this project, management zones for VRI management were created based on soil electrical conductivity (EC), soil type, elevation, and previous yield. An irrigation rate of 100% was applied across the entire URI plots regardless of the soil variability.

2021 study results

After a single year of the project, we found some interesting results. Overall, because of very dry conditions during the 2021 growing season, greater irrigation in URI plots did not cause any significant grain yield loss as the water use by the crop was high. However, if precipitation had been in the normal range, we would have expected higher yields in VRI plots and lower yield in URI. On average, the VRI treatment used 43% less water compared to URI while still producing very high corn yields. The water savings achieved with VRI amounted to 16 million gallons of water (5 inches of water per acre on a 120 acre irrigated field), a substantial environmental impact. The URI treatment produced an average of 258 bu/ac and VRI produced 242 bu/ac while using 11.6 inches and 6.6 inches water respectively. These results indicate that VRI could be beneficial in terms of saving water and reducing nutrient loss.

Groundwater Issues continued on Page 11

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One of the booths at the 50th Annual Meeting & Convention was Farm-Tech

Groundwater Issues from Page 10

Analysis of soil water samples did not show a statistically significant difference between the nitrate-N concentrations in the VRI and URI zones. Averaged across the entire season, soil water in the VRI treatment contained 59 ppm while the URI treatment contained 54 ppm

nitrate-N. Although the nitrate concentrations in the VRI zones were slightly higher, this could be explained by the fact that the VRI zones received less irrigation than the URI zones. Since the nitrate levels are a concentration measurement, less water entering a system with the same

amount of nitrogen in the soil would be expected to have higher concentrations of nitrate in the water leaving that system. The volume of water percolating through the soil in the URI system is much higher and might have a reduced concentration of nitrate, but the net nitrate loss would be higher under URI.

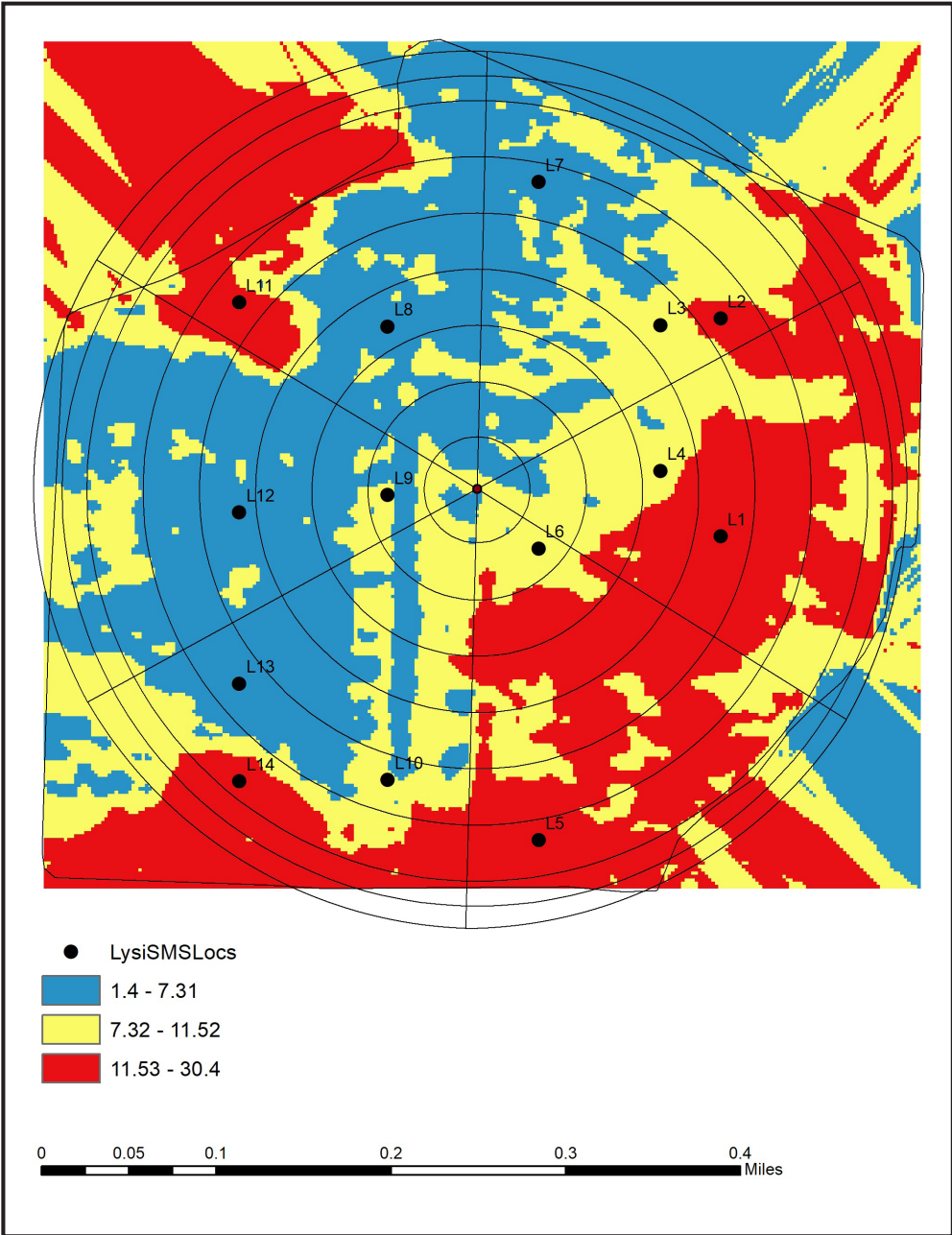
We look forward to continuing this work

in 2022. Special thanks to the AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant and MDA for funding this research and to our farmer cooperator for collaborating on this project.

*If you're interested in learning more about irrigation best management practices in Minnesota and improving efficiency of your irrigation practices in Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Extension offers each spring the Minnesota Irrigator Program (MIP) to provide you with the latest research information you need to make irrigation decisions. Learn more about this event: [z.umn.edu/Irrigator/Program](https://z.umn.edu/Irrigator/Program)*

*For the latest nutrient management information, subscribe to the Nutrient Management Podcast Minnesota Crop News daily or weekly email newsletter, or by visiting the website: <https://blog-crop-news-extension.umn.edu/search/label/Irrigation>*

*A version of this article was originally published by the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center.*





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## After wet year, Field Notes focused on irrigation, drainage

August 19, 2024

Claire LaCanne, Extension Educator, Vasudha Sharma, Extension Irrigation Water Management Specialist, and Lindsay Pease, Extension Nutrient and Water Management Specialist, [extension.umn.edu/](http://extension.umn.edu/)

After several years of drought, excessive rain in many parts of the state this growing season has caused farmers to think about their strategies for irrigation and drainage management. To discuss management and considerations for the future, Vasudha Sharma, Extension Irrigation Water Management Specialist, and Lindsay Pease, Extension Nutrient and Water Management Specialist, joined moderator Anthony Hanson, Extension educator - IPM, in the August 14 session of Strategic Farming: Field Notes.

### Irrigation considerations

*What is different about irrigation in a wet year?* Although farmers ran irrigators pretty intensely throughout the crop growing seasons the past 3 years (2021 - 2023) due to drought, they are generally not needing to use them as much this year. To demonstrate the difference this year, at one site at the research station in Becker, there were about 9 inches of rain from May to mid-August last year, and this year at the same site, there have been more than 20 inches in that same amount of time.

Getting rain doesn't mean we do not need to irrigate. Regardless of the higher precipitation, areas are still irrigating fields because sandy soils still need that water during any dry periods, but there have been far fewer irrigation events than in the

last several years. For example, at a site in the central sands' region, there have been one to two irrigation events this year versus eight or nine by this time last year.

Coarse, sandy soils that require irrigation generally still need it, even during wet years. There was an instance where a site in the central sands region received four inches of rain last week, but the high spots with coarse, sandy soil may still need additional water this week because those areas are starting to show signs of stress. These sandy soils dry out quickly because water moves rapidly through the soil, but again, we are seeing less frequent irrigation needed in general with the rain events that we have been having. When is the cutoff for when you don't have to worry about irrigation/water anymore? Usually, at this time of the year, where crops are in the reproductive stage, water is still critical but not as intensely critical as June and July. Farmers might need a few more irrigation events for corn this year if it's dry and hot, maybe for other crops as well. If it happens to become really dry, we may need to irrigate in September, even though crops should be in the later stages of reproduction that do not need much water.

### Look to in-field data for decision making

Although there have been plenty of rain events throughout the state, they are not uniform and vary greatly by location. Even fields on the same farm may get different amounts of rain in the same storm, so be sure to use rain gauges and soil moisture sensors to give you reliable, field-specific data. It is a good idea to not rely on the

local weather station alone, but rather monitor individual fields to best manage soil moisture and irrigation needs.

### What are some things on the horizon for irrigation management?

*Precision irrigation technology and variable rate irrigation*

Variable rate irrigation (VRI) is a precision agriculture tool that allows farmers to apply different amounts of water to different areas of a field based on the field's characteristics. VRI can help farmers improve irrigation scheduling, which is beneficial for many reasons. It can also help farmers avoid irrigating non-farmed areas like waterways, wetlands, and roadways.

The Crop News article on Page 9 "Can variable rate irrigation combat groundwater issues in Minnesota?" touches on how VRI might combat groundwater issues in Minnesota.

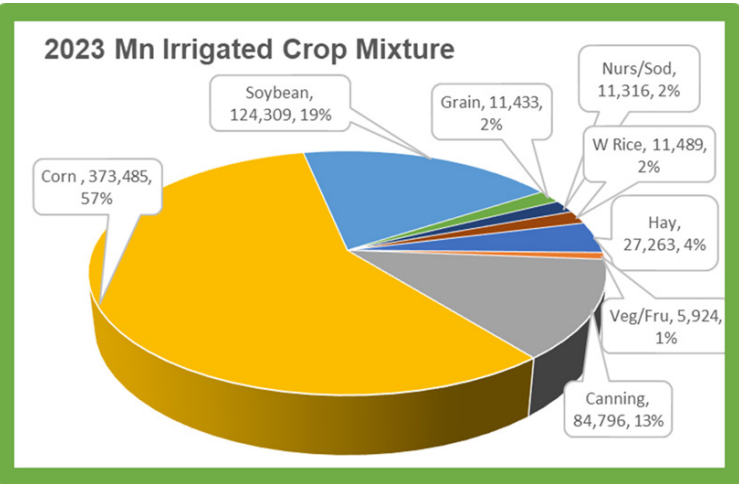
VRI is perhaps most applicable in years like this, where we have plenty of rain but may have variation in the field such as slope, different soil types. VRI can pay off when there's lots of rain and lots of leaching; you can save your nitrogen water by applying water only at the locations within a field where you really need it.

Considerations about drainage during a wet year Full discussion on the drainage field notes can be found on the Crop News Extension website <https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2024/08/field-notes-focused-on-irrigation-and.html>

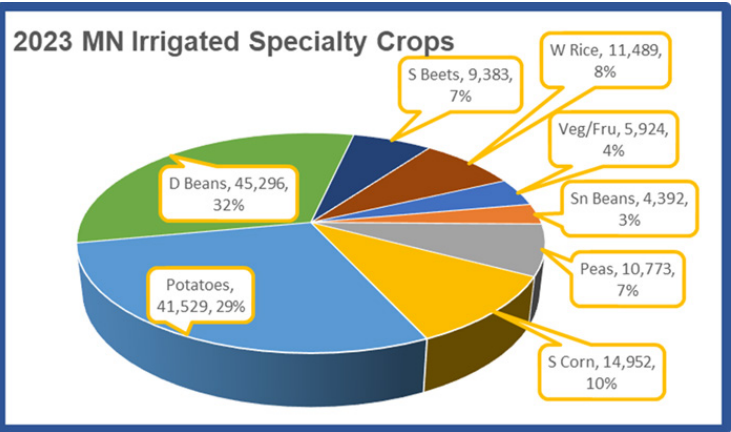
# Annual MN Irrigated Crop Acres Update and Summarized in various Graphic Formats

by Jerry Wright, Retired Extension Engineer  
University of Minnesota, March 28, 2025

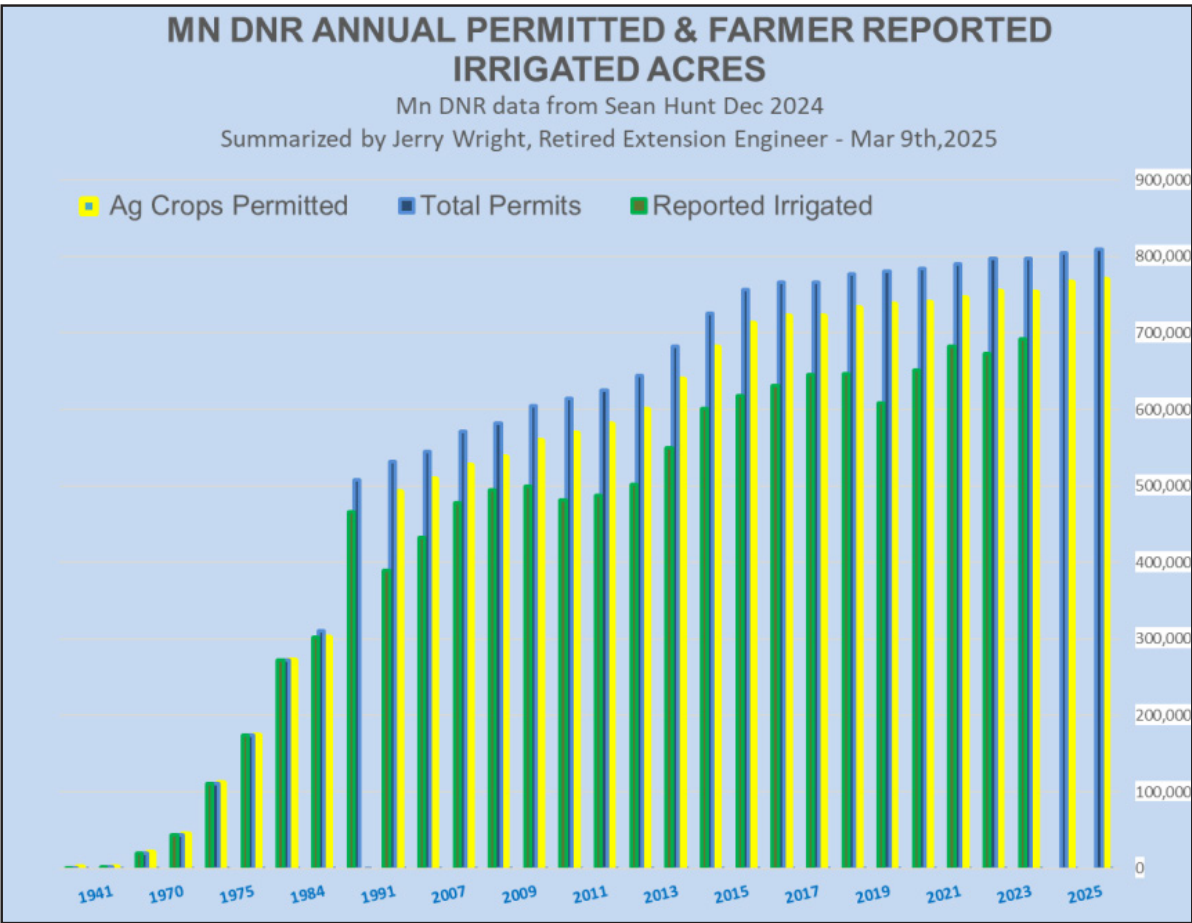
Permitted irrigated agricultural crops in Minnesota continue to grow each year. The blue bar graph gives a historical presentation of permitted irrigated acre growth over several selected years between 1960 and 2025. The green bars show the reported annual irrigated acres, and they have grown at a similar rate each year, some years show a slight variation from the mean depending on the weather temperature and rainfall conditions and irrigation needs.



Viewing the mixture of Minnesota irrigated crops via the 1st pie chart shows that irrigated corn and soybeans are the two most popular crops in the mixture of several specialty crops and some minor Ag crops during the 2023 growing season based on the reported 691,545 acres by MN irrigating farmers to the Mn DNR after the season ended. The 2nd pie chart shows the percentage mixture of just the specialty crops irrigated in 2023.



Comparing the USDA 2023 Minnesota Farmer Reported Crop acreage to the Minnesota DNR irrigating farmer reported irrigated corn acres in 2023 it shows that 4.5 % of the reported Minnesota harvested corn acres were irrigated. While Irrigated soybeans was much less at 1.7% of the state harvested acres. Combining the acreage of irrigated corn and soybeans shows that these two crops only represent 3.2% of the total state corn/soybean harvested crop in 2023. For some of the MIN Irrigated specialty crops like irrigated sweet corn acreage represents 18.5% of total harvested acres; 40.1% of the harvest green beans were irrigated; 96.6% of the potatoes were irrigated and 2.2 % of the sugar beets.



\*\*1970 - 1978 data gathered by Extension County Agents & collated by Extension Ag Engineer, Roger Machmeier

	2023 MN DNR IRRIGATED ACRES REPORTED by PERMITTEES by COUNTY AND CROP TYPE																
	Data from MDNR Sean Hunt Dec 2024 and Summarized by Jerry Wright March 9th 2025																
				Sorted by Greatest County Acres											GRAND		
County	Alf	Veg	S Beans	Peas	S Corn	Corn	Soybean	D Beans	Potato	S Beets	Grain	Fru/Orc	Nurs	Sod	W Rice	TOTAL	
Otter Tail	4,985	41	402		6	50,724	18,278	10251	8,031	275	2,341	3	54			95,391	
Dakota	1,260	581	909	3,226	4,940	38,033	12,318		865	48	164	129	1,392	1,633		65,498	
Steams	4,952	305	47	1,533	2,104	37,775	10,747	2161	476	1,662	1,025	15		131		62,930	
Pope	1,691	504	229	1,552	2,145	33,808	7,808	3620	1,550	2,401	173					55,481	
Sherburne	229	389	741		146	21,537	8,683	180	7,594		407	138	70	484		40,598	
Swift	179	972	408		670	21,745	9,833	3770		1,283	1,140					40,000	
Morrison	2,338	5	261	1,675	70	21,308	4,763	1900	2,528		149		8			35,005	
Wadena	1,252	2	140			10,501	7,656	4052	4,250		1,080			296		29,228	
Hubbard	2,176	1		60	2	9,271	1,741	5296	4,472		1,234	5	80			24,338	
Todd	1,875					11,333	6,104	478	1,137		423					21,350	
Becker	767					7,472	2,000	4166	3,340		1,356			28		19,129	
Stevens	983	20	80			11,708	2,741	2,463		799						18,793	
Benton	1,087	664	145	584	89	8,409	1,847	2909	2,364		55	65	44			18,261	
Kandiyohi	772	115		771	1,222	8,866	2,079	1337		160	41					15,363	
Meeker	287	72	40	436	952	5,896	2,710	196			30					10,618	
Douglas	283		90			4,941	1,891	400	106	1,490	50	8.1				9,259	
Mower	120		120	203	302	5,929	2,454									9,127	
Goodhue	131		292	497	592	4,413	1,359				14			89		7,387	
Wright	105	87			219	4,261	1,603		237		101	68		30		6,711	
Brown	118			72	540	4,428	1,142				77			5		6,382	
Watonwan	11		266		384	4,242	1,426									6,329	
Cass	33		160		8	3,101	446	1168	1,263		125	2.25				6,306	
Grant	135					4,702	1,465									6,302	
Polk						1,988	1,252	68	912	500	434		0		759	5,913	
Clay						2,097	2,562			315	256					5,230	

The table below lists the top 25 largest Minnesota Counties in 2023 reporting irrigated acres by crop type after the end of the growing season. A full listing of all counties in a pdf file can be downloaded from the Irrigators Association of Minnesota (IAM) webpage at <http://mnirrigators.org>

Summary of DNR Permitted & Reported Irrigated Acres per Season							
YEAR	Permitted Sod/Nurs/Fruit - Irrig		Permitted Ag Crops - Irrig		Permitted Wild Rice - Irrig		IRRIGATED
2025	13,699		769,196		26,416		809,311
2024	13,531		766,035		29,690		803,868
2023	14,615	12,103	752,611	667,911	29,568	11,489	796,794 691,545
2022	14,620	12,171	753,136	645,418	29,568	13,920	797,324 673,379
2021	15,376	12,764	745,822	656,013	30,008	11,603	790,062 682,324
2020	14,958	8,552	739,692	629,924	30,008	10,319	784,658 650,870
2015	14,664	5,344	711,559	596,905	30,037	15,224	756,260 617,473
2010	14,351	4,787	568,114	469,646	31,819	11,623	614,284 481,269
2000	8,665	8,164	508,186	407,203	27,814	17,521	544,665 432,888
1991	6,062		491,761		34,283		532,106 389,970
1984				301,755			310,432 301,755
1978				272,119			272,119 272,119
1975				174,094			174,094 174,094

The Minnesota DNR Permitted Irrigated acreage totals shown in the Table above lists out the actual permitted and irrigated acreage over the past five years plus the previous 5/10 year intervals back to 1975 for Agricultural Crops, along with domestic Wild Rice and the grouping of Sod, Nursery and Fruit.

# Rainfall Monitoring Network seeks volunteers

*Participants provide important data about precipitation, climate trends*

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ State Climatology Office is seeking rainfall monitors for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. The network includes more than 20,000 volunteers nationwide who measure precipitation in their backyards using a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge. Participants submit their precipitation reports online. The data from backyard rain gauges are a critical source of information and it’s beneficial to add more volunteer weather observers each year, even in areas where there are already volunteers.

“Rainfall and snowfall amounts can vary widely over a short distance, so a variety of reports is helpful in the same community or area,” State Climatologist Luigi Romolo said. “We have some areas in greater Minnesota that have very few reporting stations. The more we have across the state, the better information we all have.” Volunteers are particularly needed outside the immediate Twin Cities metro area. Volunteers receive training on how to observe weather trends and how to submit their precipitation and weather event reports. All training material is available

online. Participants must purchase or provide a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge (available at discount through CoCoRaHS) and have internet access to submit reports.

“Over time, as more volunteer reports make our precipitation maps more accurate, these observations provide critical guidance on Minnesota’s changing climate,” Romolo said. “This is also a great educational activity for families with kids and a rewarding hobby for anyone interested in weather or climate.” For the past five years, Minnesota has won the “CoCoRaHS Cup” for recruiting the most new volunteers of any state during the March national recruiting drive.

“Year after year, Minnesotans are the best in the nation at stepping up and joining this important effort. Let’s keep the cup in Minnesota as we continue to improve our state’s precipitation recording,” Romolo said.

To sign up or for more information, visit the CoCoRaHS website <https://www.cocorahs.org/> or contact Luigi Romolo in MDNR at [luigi.romolo@state.mn.us](mailto:luigi.romolo@state.mn.us)



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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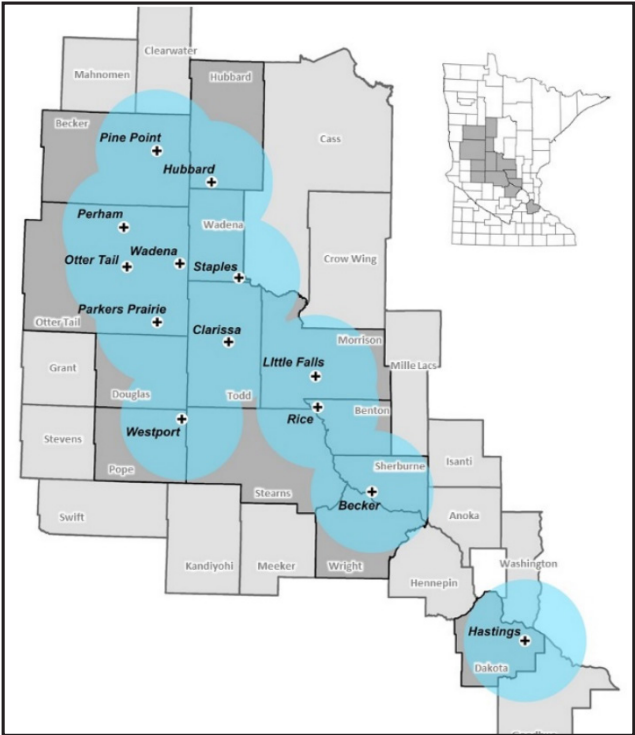
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# Minnesota regional access to local weather data and Crop ET



Daily crop water use data (also known as “ET” 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. 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.

Daily crop water use (ET) estimates for a particular field can be viewed online with this Irrigation Management Assistant. <https://ima.respec.com/> IMA has consolidated into a single statewide system. Contact your local SWCD office for more local assistance.

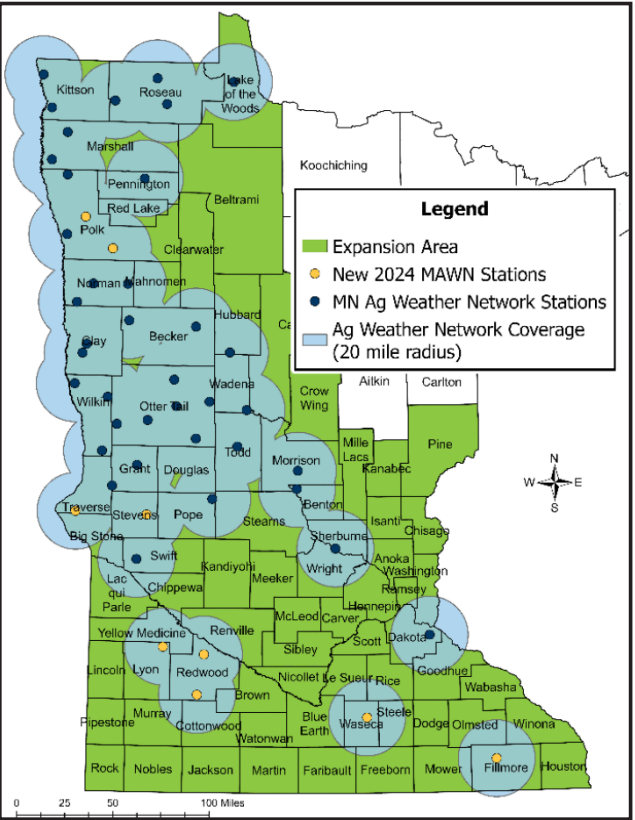
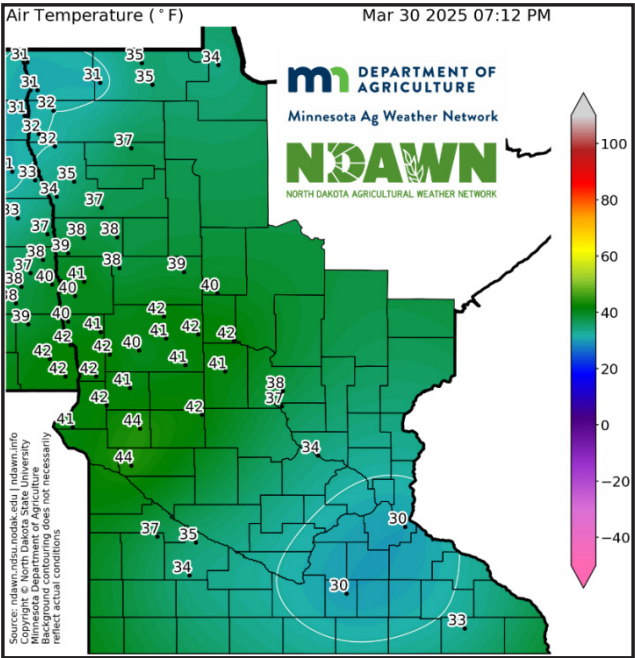
### Additional Weather Stations

Through a partnership with the North Dakota Ag Weather Network (NDAWN), these central Minnesota 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 <https://ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu/> 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).

Across Minnesota there are now 38 NDAWN and MDA weather stations across Central and northwestern Minnesota. The MDA installed and managed 14 stations, while NDAWN has installed and manages 24.

**Planned Expansion**  
The map below highlights the targeted expansion area. 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.



## Daily Crop “ET” Information Available

**Central MN Ag Weather Network**  
[www.mda.state.mn.us/central-minnesota-ag-weather-network](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/central-minnesota-ag-weather-network)

**North Dakota Ag Weather & ET**  
(Includes Central & NW MN Counties)  
<https://ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu/>

**Benton SWCD**  
<http://www.soilandwater.org/>  
320 968 5300 ext 3

**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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**Sherburne SWCD**  
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**Wisconsin Daily Crop ET Potential**  
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Visit **www.mnirrigators.org** to renew your membership.

# Membership can be renewed on IAM website

If you have not visited the NEW IAM website ([www.mnirrigators.org](http://www.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, provide updates and events also via our Facebook page.

The website also allows you to join/renew your membership online with credit card as well as make other donations to IAM proj-

ects.

"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

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.

## IAM MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION – WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

JOIN ONLINE AT [HTTPS://MNIRRIGATORS.ORG](https://mnirrigators.org)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE COMPLETE)

**IRRIGATOR** ☐ Ag crop ☐ Horticulture ☐ Wild Rice

**IRRIGATION INDUSTRY**

☐ Irrigation equipment dealer, well driller, etc.

☐ Agribusiness — seed, fertilizer, financial, etc.

☐ Educational/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**IAM ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Individual Annual Dues - \$100 or \$275 for 3 Years .....	\$ _____
Platinum Circle Membership - \$1,000 or more. ....	\$ _____
Presidential Membership - \$500 or more. ....	\$ _____
GOLD Membership - \$350 .....	\$ _____
Silver Membership - \$250 .....	\$ _____
Bronze Membership - \$150 .....	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b> .....	\$ _____

Please mail this form and a check payable to "IAM" to:  
**Irrigators Association of Minnesota**  
Attn: Fletcher J. Syltie, IAM Treasurer, 24 S Edquist St, Appleton, MN 56208



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