

# The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Township Testing Program



## Township Testing Program will determine current nitrate concentrations in private wells

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) in cooperation with local partners is offering drinking water nitrate testing to private well owners in townships where groundwater is vulnerable to contamination. Since 2013, nitrate testing has been conducted in 166 townships with the goal of providing nitrate testing in approximately 250-300 vulnerable townships by 2019. It is anticipated that over 70,000 private wells will be offered nitrate testing through the program, at no cost to the homeowner (actual number of tests completed will depend on homeowner response). This testing is funded by the Clean Water Fund.

## Homeowner participation is critical

Homeowners in the identified townships will receive a sampling kit in the mail. The water sample will be collected by the homeowner and sent to the certified lab (in a prepaid envelope). If nitrate is detected in the water sample, the homeowner will be offered a subsequent test for pesticides and a follow-up nitrate test, at no cost to the homeowner. Program participant information (name, address and phone number) will remain confidential.

## The MDA works with local partners

The MDA develops joint power agreements with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)/counties to coordinate the testing program in the identified townships. Funding is available to help implement the program. Priority will be given to SWCDs/counties that exhibit the ability and enthusiasm to participate and complete the work.

## The Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan outlines how the MDA will respond to elevated levels of nitrate

The Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan outlines how the MDA will work with local communities to respond to and address areas with elevated nitrate in groundwater. The MDA will work in partnership with farmers, crop consultants, local advisory teams and other community members to address local groundwater concerns.

More information about the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan is available at: [www.mda.state.mn.us/nfmp](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/nfmp) and more information on the Township Testing Program is available at: [www.mda.state.mn.us/townshiptesting](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/townshiptesting)

