

Lee Helgen

Minnesota Crop Production Retailers (MCPR) Comment on Draft Nutrient Reduction Strategy

On behalf of the Minnesota Crop Production Retailers, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Our members share the state's commitment to improving water quality while maintaining farm profitability. We believe the most effective path forward is through voluntary, incentive-based approaches that encourage continuous improvement.

We respectfully offer the following points for consideration:

1. Recognize Farmer Progress – Many farmers are already implementing split applications, cover crops, reduced tillage, precision nutrient technologies, and improved nutrient timing. Recognizing this progress helps build trust, confidence, and momentum for future adoption.
2. Promote Flexibility – Nutrient management must remain adaptable to soils, weather patterns, and crop rotations. Flexibility allows farmers and retailers to tailor practices to local conditions and maximize both environmental and agronomic outcomes.
3. Invest in Research and Demonstration – Minnesota-based research and on-farm trials are essential to refine recommendations. Ag retailers are willing partners in hosting demonstrations and helping transfer results directly to farmers.
4. Partner with Ag Retailers – Retailers are the trusted first point of contact for most farmers. Explicitly involving them in education, technical support, and BMP adoption can help scale conservation practices more effectively and rapidly.
5. Expand Incentives and Risk Protection – Programs that reduce economic risk, such as cost-share opportunities, crop insurance flexibility, and indemnity options, will encourage broader and faster adoption of nutrient management practices.
6. Encourage Continuous Improvement – The strategy should reward progress and innovation over time rather than relying on one-size-fits-all requirements. A collaborative, incentive-based approach will deliver better results than additional regulation.

In closing, agricultural retailers stand ready to partner with the state, farmers, and conservation organizations to advance best management practices and achieve nutrient reduction goals. With the right tools, incentives, and collaborative framework, Minnesota can continue to make measurable progress while sustaining profitable farming systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.