

2012 Application for the Discovery Farms Minnesota Program

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resources Center (MAWRC) is currently seeking farmers willing to participate in the Discovery Farms Minnesota program. Discovery Farms Minnesota is a producer led effort to gather field-scale information on water quality impacts from a variety of farm enterprises in Minnesota. The mission of the program is to gather water quality information under real-world conditions, providing practical, credible, site-specific information that may lead to better management decisions, supported by a better understanding of the relationships between land management and water quality.



What is a Discovery Farm?

A Discovery Farm is an operating farm that allows the systematic collection of information on water leaving the farm, along with information on farm practices, soils and weather. This information, collected over a period of several years, allows an evaluation of management strategies and practices employed on Minnesota farms.

Organization of Discovery Farms Minnesota

Discovery Farms Minnesota emphasizes farmer input and direction. A Steering Committee comprised of representatives from Minnesota farm, agribusiness and conservation organizations guides the overall direction of the program, assists in the identification of research priorities and helps in the selection of cooperators and projects.

Discovery Farm Locations in Minnesota

There are currently multiple Discovery Farms located throughout Minnesota. The network is expected to grow to better represent the diversity of agricultural enterprises and settings in Minnesota. Environmental and farm management data are collected at each Discovery Farm location. Water samples are gathered automatically at monitoring stations whenever water flows from the field through either surface runoff or drain tile flow. Samples are tested for sediment, nutrients, and other parameters, depending on conditions specific to the farm system being evaluated.

All interested farms and producers are encouraged to apply. Applications can be submitted at any time; but, those for 2012 are due **March 1, 2012**. Please contact Tim Radatz if you have any additional questions. Applications can be sent to:

Tim Radatz – MAWRC/Discovery Farms Minnesota

Address: 3080 Eagandale Place
Eagan, MN 55121
Email: radatz@mawrc.org
Phone: (608) 443-6587



What Producers Should Expect As Participants?

What is required to participate as a Discovery Farm?

1. Farmers selected as Discovery Farms will be in the program for 5 to 7 years. Collection of baseline data will occur in the first 1 to 2 years. Best management practices will be identified based on the results of the baseline monitoring and implementation of these best management practices will be monitored for the remainder of the program.
2. Must operate a functioning agricultural enterprise that is representative of the industry.
3. Must be willing to keep and share farm management records.
4. Must be willing to adopt changes in farming practices, if needed, determined by the baseline monitoring.
5. Willingness to participate in field days or meetings to discuss their experiences with other farmers.

What will participants receive?

1. A \$5,000 annual stipend for time and assistance with this project.
2. Installation of monitoring equipment to determine the level of nutrient and sediment loss.
3. Confidentiality of collected farm management data.

| | | | |
|--|--|----|----------------------------------|
| 1. Name: | | | |
| 2. Name of Farm: | | | |
| 3. Address: | | | |
| 4. Phone number: | | | |
| 5. Fax number: | | | |
| 6. Email address: | | | |
| 7. Type of farm enterprise: (dairy, beef, grain, grazing, etc.) | | | |
| 8. In what county is the farm located? | | | |
| 9. Who is involved in the operation of the farm? | Family Members: | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | Employees: (list number of employees) | | |
| | | | |
| 10. Does the farm employ consultants? | Yes | No | |
| a. Agronomist | Yes | No | |
| b. Nutritionist | Yes | No | |
| c. Veterinarian | Yes | No | |
| 11. Does the farm have a current soil conservation plan? | Yes | No | Who developed the plan and when? |
| 12. Does the farm have a current nutrient management plan? | Yes | No | Who developed the plan and when? |
| 13. Tillable acres owned: | | | |
| 14. Tillable acres rented: | | | |
| 15. Percentage of tillable acres that are tile drained: | | | |
| 16. Pasture acres used: | | | |
| 17. Acres in CRP: | | | |
| 18. Acres in woods, wetlands, other: | | | |
| 19. What are the major soil series? | | | |

