



April - June Update Summary

ADDRESSING NITRATE IN SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

This document summarizes work Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) completed between April through June and is based on the [April - June 2025 Report](#).

Phase II: Public Health Intervention

Note: MDH and MDA have completed Phase I work. Agencies have fully transitioned into Phases II and III.

Private Well Testing

Well test kits are available at no cost to any private well user in the eight-county area (Olmsted, Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Wabasha, and Winona counties) through Southeastern Minnesota Water Analysis Laboratory (SEM WAL). Well users in that area can [request a private well test kit](#) online. Since the beginning of the response – June 30, 2025:

- **1,733 eligible households requested** a test kit.
- **1003 households who received test kits returned them and received water test results.**
- Approximately **9 percent** of wells tested had a nitrate concentration of 10 mg/L or more (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of private wells above the action level for each contaminant (all time).

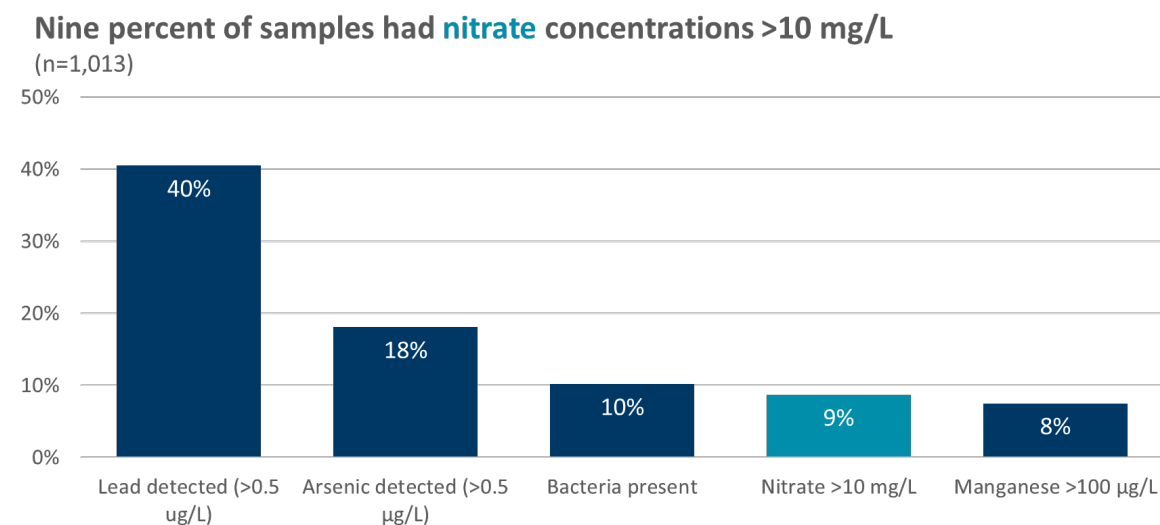


Table 1: Sample kits analyzed by county (all time).

County	Dodge	Fillmore	Goodhue	Houston	Mower	Olmsted	Wabasha	Winona	Grand Total
Kits Tested	53	57	74	51	86	239	165	275	1003

Mitigation

MDA along with Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), is providing reverse osmosis (RO) systems at no cost for eligible households in southeast Minnesota. Households may apply if they have a valid nitrate-nitrogen test result from a certified laboratory above the Health Risk Limit of 10 mg/L (ppm). As of June 30, 2025:

- **200 RO systems installed.**

Table 2. Reverse osmosis Installations by county (all time)

County	Dodge	Fillmore	Goodhue	Houston	Mower	Olmsted	Wabasha	Winona	Total
ROs Installed	10	30	32	27	10	12	27	52	200

Well inventory

MDH is continuing to work with each county individually to develop strategies and contracts to complete the well inventory that meet each county's needs. This work is being done strategically in a phased approach to address differing funding and capacity at each county. All eight counties expressed interest in a grant to increase the number of wells in the well inventory, Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, and Wabasha County partners have developed workplans, and Dodge and Fillmore Counties have an approved contract and can start work.

- **167 wells have been identified** for addition to the County Well Index.

Outreach

MDH continued education and outreach including free private well testing outreach through local partners, fulfilled educational materials requests, and engaged with Tap-In, SEMWAL, Petitioners/NGOs, and other concerned citizens. A notable example of these outreach efforts was a campaign led by Tap-In, which partnered with the advertising agency Townsquare Media to produce and distribute promotional content. This campaign included advertisements on YouTube and Facebook, as well as television commercials. MDH is continuing work with a marketing firm [MP+G](#). Many deliverables from this work will be developed in Fall 2025.

Phase III: Long-Term Nitrate Goals and Strategies

Phase III work is done by MPCA and MDA and is focused on developing relationships and strategies. Notable accomplishments this quarter include:

- The **nitrate task force**, made up of a variety of local partners to address nitrate in southeast Minnesota continued to meet monthly. The group has finalized the [Report of Recommendations: Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Work Group](#).
- All content for the 2025 **Nutrient Reduction Strategy** (NRS) updates was completed and shared with external contractors for editing and formatting at the end of June. The final document consists of eight chapters and an executive summary documenting the progress in nutrient reduction across Minnesota since 2014, evaluation of where more work is needed to meet nutrient reduction goals, and a prioritization of the best methods to implement to achieve water quality goals.
- The Request for Comment (RFC) period for the MPCA's legal notice of its intent to begin **feedlot rulemaking** is open through July 22, 2025. During the month of June, the MPCA hosted 13 outreach meetings across Minnesota to notify and engage interested persons in the rulemaking process, explaining why the MPCA is considering revisions to the rules.
- MDA has accelerated the implementation of the **nitrogen fertilizer management plan** in southeast Minnesota. Two high nitrate townships (Preble Township in Fillmore County and Spring Grove Township in Houston County) were the focus of initial outreach and field work this spring. Those efforts resulted in the development of over 20 conservation projects, most of which are in the process of applying for federal EQIP dollars to assist with implementation. MDA staff also worked with producers to evaluate their nitrogen use. Those producers were given advice on how to adjust their fertilizer programs and fine tune their nitrogen use to match the University of Minnesota's nitrogen recommendations for corn in SE MN. MDA staff has also started work in four additional Houston County townships that had 10% or more of the tested wells above the health risk limit of 10 mg/L. Education and outreach will continue in these four townships throughout 2025 and into 2026.

Additional Resources

[April – June 2025 Update](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/waterquality/nitrm202507.pdf)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/waterquality/nitrm202507.pdf>)

[Request a Private Well Test Kit](https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=3Hnk8H3N33TTR479)

(<https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=3Hnk8H3N33TTR479>)

[MP+G \(https://www.mpgmarketingsolutions.com\)](https://www.mpgmarketingsolutions.com)

[Report of Recommendations: Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Strategies Collaborative Work Group \(https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-gen1-19.pdf\)](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-gen1-19.pdf)

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