

# Annual Report

## Fiscal Year 2026

MINNESOTA
BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

# Board Members

**Erica Sawatzke** – President of the Board and Poultry Producer, Kensington
(Replaced by Jessica Westbrock, Poultry Producer, Richmond, in May 2026)

**Peggy Anne Hawkins** – Vice President of the Board and Veterinarian, Northfield

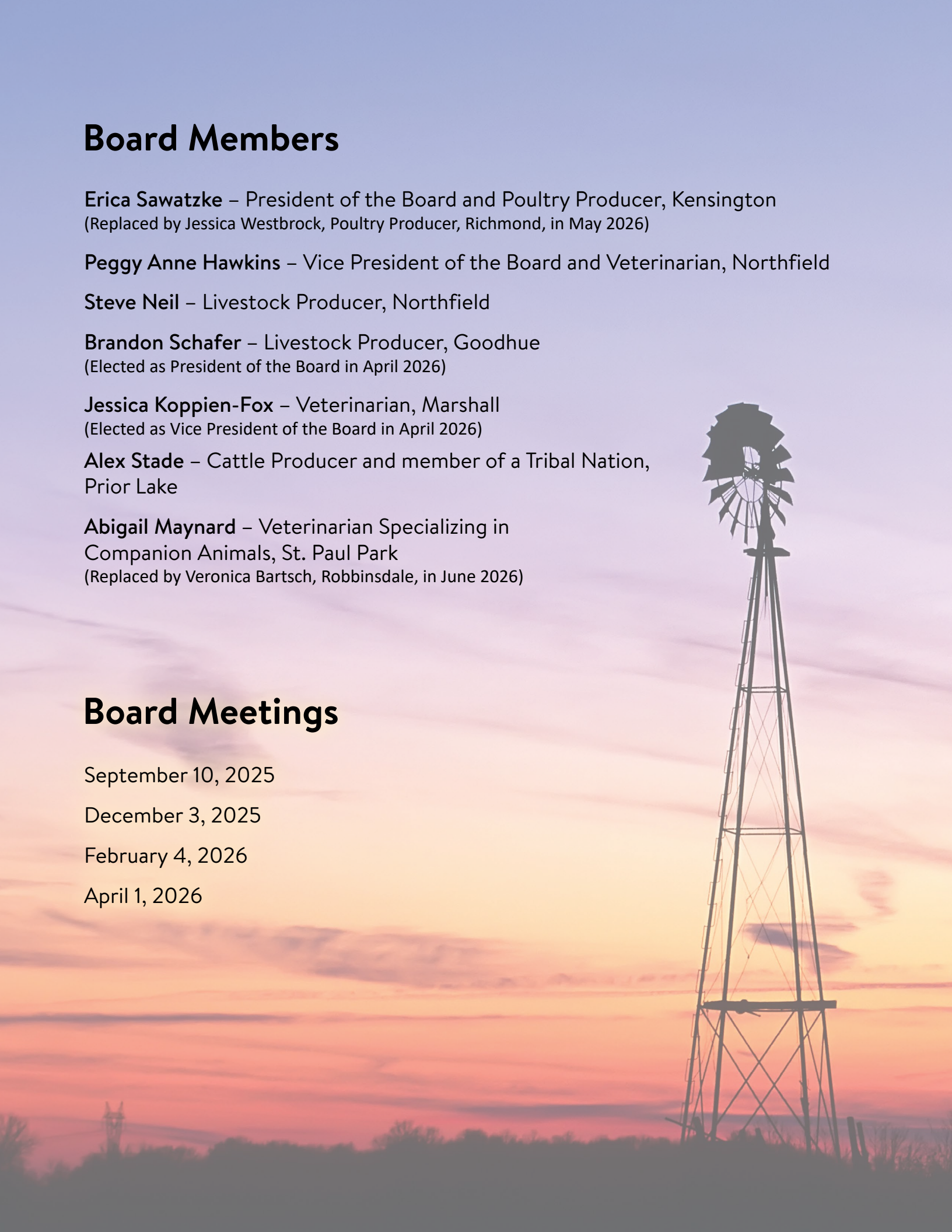
**Steve Neil** – Livestock Producer, Northfield

**Brandon Schafer** – Livestock Producer, Goodhue
(Elected as President of the Board in April 2026)

**Jessica Koppien-Fox** – Veterinarian, Marshall
(Elected as Vice President of the Board in April 2026)

**Alex Stade** – Cattle Producer and member of a Tribal Nation, Prior Lake

**Abigail Maynard** – Veterinarian Specializing in Companion Animals, St. Paul Park
(Replaced by Veronica Bartsch, Robbinsdale, in June 2026)



# Board Meetings

September 10, 2025

December 3, 2025

February 4, 2026

April 1, 2026

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The Annual Report of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health is published in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes.

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# Letter from the State Veterinarian



The state fiscal year begins and ends with a lot of people, pets and livestock out and about during Minnesota's second season: road construction, also known as summer. This time of year is often challenging to look back at what we've accomplished because we typically have so much going on in the moment, which is the case yet again this year. This annual letter is never an exhaustive drilldown into every aspect of our work accomplished each year; rather, it's a high-level overview of some milestones along the way.

I'm starting to sound like a broken record bringing up highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) each year. However, each year our response follows the evolution of the virus and its impact on our poultry flocks since it first landed in 2022. The past fiscal year has been an exercise in keeping our focus sharply on individual cases as they appeared so we could trigger a rapid response to curtail the virus on each positive farm before it had a chance to spread to additional farms. We've been aided along the way with advances in biosecurity tools and generous funding from the legislature to support producers in purchasing equipment like barn lasers to deter wild birds. Old-fashioned boots on the ground have also been pivotal as many poultry premises took advantage of the federal Wildlife Services biosecurity site assessments to identify any weak points on their farms to button up and reduce risk. Read more in the poultry section.

Unfortunately, our forecasts and expectations of New World Screwworm's (NWS) eventual arrival in the United States turned out to be true. It was confirmed in Texas and New Mexico at the end of the fiscal year and has thankfully remained contained to those states. However, we aren't without our concerns that the persistent fly and its namesake maggots may leapfrog their way up to Minnesota via a livestock or companion animal import. This is where our established relationships with veterinarians and producers become the spotlight in our campaign to keep NWS out. Since last fiscal year, we've been conducting education and outreach to support our veterinarians and producers in preventing, suspecting and reporting any concerns about NWS. Read more in the cattle and companion animal sections.

With all the diseases on our radar, one case is too many. This is especially true with the highly contagious and consequential canine brucellosis. While it isn't natively established in Minnesota yet, it is an imported threat, and each incoming dog carrying the disease brings increased risk for our pets and people. We continually work to educate both new animal owners and veterinarians about the benefits of researching a dog's health and movement history. Do your homework before welcoming a new pet into your home and know the specific health risks of importing animals. Find additional canine brucellosis details in our companion animal section.

Next year will be better. We'll get an upper hand on HPAI, we'll continue to rebuff NWS from entering Minnesota, and we'll polish our preparedness for other emerging animal disease threats. Keeping our focus positive is imperative as we handle marathon responses to some diseases and remain flexible to pivot to new threats each year. We look forward to another productive year of engaging with our partners and collaborating to protect animal health in Minnesota.

Brian Hoefs, DVM
*State Veterinarian and Executive Director*

# Swine

## U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (US SHIP)

The U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (US SHIP) is a cooperative State-Federal-industry program designed to improve the health and marketability of U.S. swine and pork products. Participants in this national pilot program can apply for disease-specific certifications recognized across participating states. The voluntary program encompasses biosecurity plans, animal traceability and disease surveillance. Minnesota is one of 38 states participating in the voluntary program.

## Minnesota SHIP participation:

There are 72 active swine companies participating in the program.

- 4 Boar Stud farms with a total of 1,114 animals.
- 100 Breeding farms with a total of 316,001 animals.
- 91 Farrow-Feeder-Finish farms with a total of 205,250 animals.
- 1,444 Growing Pig farms with a total of 4,698,009 animals.
- 5 Non-Commercial farms with a total of 85 animals.
- 1 Packing Plant with a capacity for 7,000 swine.
- 16 Small Holding farms (sites with between 100 – 1,000 animals) with a total of 10,944 animals.
- 7 Live Animal Marketing Operations with a total of 5,724 animals.



## Certified Swine Sample Collector Trainings

Minnesota actively participates in the Certified Swine Sample Collector program at the national level. In the event of a large-scale foreign animal disease outbreak, such as African Swine Fever, we will need trained sample collectors to help federal and state animal health officials determine where disease is present and to support the permitted movement of animals. The Certified Swine Sample Collector Training Program benefits from the oversight of USDA Category II accredited veterinarians and will significantly increase the number of qualified people who can correctly collect, package and submit samples so we have confidence in the results. This training program was funded by USDA's National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, which fosters collaboration with animal health partners to implement high-value projects that enhance our ability to prevent, detect, prepare and respond to foreign animal diseases.

## Feral Swine

Minnesota continues to maintain a "feral swine free" status. Jurisdiction over feral swine falls under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Board works closely with the DNR to monitor and follow up on all reports of potential feral swine that are reported to officials.

## Feeding Food Waste to Livestock

The Board oversees and licenses two types of permits for feeding food waste to livestock. Class A permits are for operators that feed food waste that contains meat or has been in contact with meat. Class B permits are for all others feeding food waste that neither contains meat nor has been in contact with meat. Minnesota currently has five Class A permit holders and 11 Class B permits.

# Farmed Cervidae

The Board of Animal Health continues to oversee the regulation of non-white-tailed deer farmed Cervidae and assists the DNR with the farmed white-tailed deer program as needed. Farmed cervid producers are required to test all animals that die or are harvested from their herd for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). This fiscal year, Minnesota non-white-tailed deer farmed cervid producers tested 345 animals for CWD with no positive test results. The most recent detection of CWD in a Minnesota farmed Cervidae herd was in a white-tailed deer herd in Winona County on July 10, 2022, when the Board still oversaw white-tailed deer. The herd was depopulated as required by state statute; fencing remains in place. CWD detections in wild deer have resulted in an increased number of designated endemic areas across the state.

The number of registered non-white-tailed deer farmed cervid herds continued to decline in 2025, though at a slower rate than the year before, when legislation requiring the addition of exclusionary fencing went into effect. As the CWD endemic areas across Minnesota increased, the Board of Animal Health continued a longstanding collaboration with researchers at the University of Minnesota who are working on identifying biosecurity risk factors for the spread of CWD. This may help producers identify management changes, such as feeder type and frequency of feeding grain, that could lower the risk of spread to their herds.

Reducing an animal's susceptibility to disease is another way to prevent the spread of CWD. Genetic testing to predict the susceptibility of CWD infection for individual animals is now available for elk. Nineteen Minnesota elk producers participated in a project to determine the genetic estimated breeding value of the animals in their herds, funded in part by a cooperative agreement from the USDA in 2025. The results of this project will help producers make breeding decisions with their herds to decrease their genetic susceptibility to CWD in future generations, similar to the way Scrapie, a prion disease of sheep, has been nearly eradicated in the United States. The Minnesota farmed cervid industry continues to collaborate to slow the spread of CWD.

## Herd Totals by Fiscal Year:

2026: 63
2025: 68
2024: 87
2023: 209
2022: 227
2021: 259
2020: 291
2019: 360
2018: 395
2017: 421

## Total Head per Species

| Species | Head |
|---|---|
| Elk | 2,001 |
| Red Deer | 156 |
| Fallow Deer | 51 |
| Reindeer | 42 |
| Sika | 39 |
| Muntjac | 22 |
| Moose | 3 |
| Caribou | 2 |
| Tufted Deer | 2 |

## Herd breakdown by Head

| Herd Type | Number of herds | Head |
|---|---|---|
| Elk only | 39 | 1,693 |
| Reindeer only | 7 | 36 |
| Red Deer only | 0 | 0 |
| Muntjac only | 0 | 0 |
| Fallow Deer only | 1 | 13 |
| Mixed herds without WTD | 6 | 380 |
| Mixed herds with WTD | 10 | 199 |

# Horses

West Nile virus (WNV) continues to be the most common vaccine preventable disease to plague Minnesota horses. Six of the nine horses that tested positive for WNV last year died of the disease. All nine horses were unvaccinated, which is nearly always the case with severely affected horses. WNV is an encephalitis disease that cycles between birds and mosquitoes and can infect most mammals, though humans and horses are most likely to show symptoms. Affected horses experience inflammation in the brain and spinal cord, which causes neurologic symptoms such as weakness, stumbling, and muscle twitching. Multiple highly effective WNV vaccines are widely available to horse owners, with annual boosters strongly recommended. Fully vaccinated horses rarely show clinical signs and will typically fully recover with supportive care if they become ill.

### Equine Disease Cases, Fiscal Year 2026:

West Nile Virus: 9

Eastern Equine Encephalitis: 0

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA): 0

Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy (EHM): 1

A national outbreak of Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM) in the fall of 2025 resulted in the quarantine of 14 premises in Minnesota with horses that were exposed to positive animals at equine events in Oklahoma and Texas. Nationally, there were 47 EHM positive horses in seven states tied to the outbreak. Thankfully, none of the exposed Minnesota horses developed symptoms during quarantine. Though Minnesota did have one EHM positive horse in 2025, it was unrelated to the national outbreak and fully recovered.

EHM is an uncommon neurologic disease of horses caused by Equine Herpes Viruses (EHV-1 and EHV-4), also known as Rhinopneumonitis, infecting the nervous system. EHV-1 and EHV-4 typically cause mild respiratory disease and can also cause abortion in pregnant mares. When the virus infects the nervous system, it causes clinical signs similar to other encephalitis diseases like WNV. Hindlimb weakness, toe dragging, and ataxia are the most common symptoms, with severely affected animals becoming recumbent and unable to rise. While vaccines are available for EHV-1 and EHV-4, protection only lasts for a few months and is not completely effective against the neurologic form of the disease. Swift isolation and quarantine of affected horses and practicing good biosecurity help prevent spread of EHM.



# Companion Animals

## Commercial Breeders

The Board licenses and inspects dog and cat breeders with 10 or more intact animals that produce six or more litters of puppies or kittens in a year. This year, one commercial breeder participated in the Breeder of Excellence program. This voluntary program recognizes commercial breeders exceeding state-required standards in the following areas of care: facilities management, behavior and socialization, continuing education, health screening, and canine brucellosis or feline leukemia/FIV screening. The current commercial dog and cat breeder law was first passed in 2014. Work continues at the Small Animal Welfare Committee of the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) on proposed updates to current companion animal statutes in conjunction with other legislative initiatives. The Board looks forward to continuing to work with the MVMA and stakeholders to ensure continued safety and well-being of Minnesota's companion animal population.



## Companion Animal Imports:

We continue to see a large number of companion animal imports, particularly by shelters and rescues. We continue to work with veterinarians issuing Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs) at the site of origin to make sure they are following our import requirements and working through any non-compliance issues we may find. The Board continues to work with and educate Minnesota-based importers to address any shortcomings with documentation. The Board has also been working with the USDA to deal with veterinarians who are routinely non-compliant.

## Kennels:

The Board licenses and inspects facilities that accept impounded, stray, abandoned or owner-surrendered cats and dogs. This includes humane societies, rescue organizations and impound facilities. The Board does not currently license training and boarding facilities, animal day care facilities, groomers or foster sites. Lack of oversight of foster-based rescues continues to be a concern of the public and veterinarians. The Board is working with the MVMA as it proposes legislation requiring these entities to obtain a license from the Board.

## Brucellosis:

Canine brucellosis, a zoonotic disease transmissible to humans, continues to be a concern in companion animals due to its health effects and contagious nature in dogs. The Board continues to partner with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to investigate all non-negative test results for canine brucellosis. The Board also continues to monitor dogs that previously tested positive and are under quarantine. There were 12 cases of canine brucellosis detected in Fiscal Year 2026. The Board and MDH are committed to preventing the spread of this disease by educating the public, canine businesses, rescue organizations, and veterinarians about the importance of surveillance and reporting. Given the increased number of cases attributed to importation of dogs from higher risk areas, the Board has developed a communication and outreach plan to increase awareness of brucellosis. With sponsorship from the MVMA, the Board and MDH co-hosted a brucellosis webinar for

veterinarians. The Board has made updates to the brucellosis section of its website and produced social media content to reach the public, and in the next fiscal year, the Board will be holding a webinar targeting rescues and shelters.

### Tularemia:

The number of tularemia cases continues to climb year after year, with the first part of 2026 showing a large jump in the number of positive cases. In 2025, there were 33 cases of tularemia reported in companion animals, as compared to 27 cases in 2024. The Board, and our partners at MDH, continue to work to inform and educate veterinarians and the public about the disease. Timely alerts of new cases through social media and emails, as well as routinely answering questions from veterinarians and the public, are part of our efforts to try and control the spread of the disease.

### New World Screwworm (NWS):

Due to the large number of dogs imported from states with known NWS infestation, the Board implemented new import requirements for dogs and cats coming from these areas. These new requirements include an examination within 72 hours vs. 10 days and reducing the length of time the CVI is valid from 30 days to 10. The Board held a webinar for veterinarians to discuss NWS, clinical signs, what to watch for, how to report cases, and our new import requirements.

### Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) Audit:

At the time of this writing, the Companion Animal Program is in the middle of a state audit. We have been working with the OLA to provide information regarding the programs we oversee, such as inspections and investigations, compliance procedures, staff hours spent performing Companion Animal Program-related tasks, and more. We anticipate the data gathering portion of the audit and final publication to happen in the next fiscal year.

## Companion Animals, Fiscal Year 2026:

### Commercial Dog and Cat Breeders (CDCBs):

78 Licensed CDCBs

3 New CDCBs Licensed

1 Participant in Breeder Excellence Program (all badges earned)

### Kennels:

92 Licensed Kennels

5 New Kennels Licensed

### Canine Brucellosis:

36 Investigations

34 Total dogs tested

12 Positive detections

28 Negative detections

### Tularemia:

40 Feline cases

3 Canine cases

1 Rabbit case

### Canine influenza:

0 Canine influenza positives

0 Suspects (treated as positives)

0 Counties affected

0 Quarantines issued

# Poultry

## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) continues to be a disease threat that weighs heavily on the poultry producers of Minnesota. A total of 36 premises were infected with HPAI from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. The USDA now requires premises previously infected with HPAI to complete additional regulatory actions before restocking to maintain eligibility for indemnity. The USDA Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program (BCAP) is a more extensive auditing process than previously required, warranting additional details for site-specific biosecurity plans and policies, inspection of the documentation for employee training logs, visitor sign-in sheets, mortality logs and vehicle and equipment movement records. Audits must be conducted by trained personnel and reviewed by a USDA audit reviewer. Infected premises must undergo auditing every six months until the state is declared free of HPAI.

### HPAI infections, Fiscal Year 2026

- 21 Commercial turkey meat bird flocks
- 9 Commercial turkey breeder flocks
- 0 Commercial chicken table-egg layer flocks
- 0 Commercial broiler flocks
- 6 Backyard flocks

## Avian Metapneumovirus (aMPV)

The poultry industry continues to be challenged with Avian Metapneumovirus (aMPV), an infectious respiratory viral disease of poultry characterized by coughing, swollen sinuses, nasal discharge, lowered feed and water consumption, and a decrease in egg production. The disease is highly contagious, and the infection rates within a flock can reach 100-percent. This year, more aMPV vaccines became available for use at hatcheries and on farms. While the vaccines appear to be helping many flocks reduce the impacts associated with aMPV infections, the disease continues to challenge flocks, with clinical signs and mortality worsening when faced with other infectious diseases or environmental stressors.

## Salmonella

Every year, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Board of Animal Health (the Board) investigate human infections of Salmonella linked to contact with backyard poultry. Backyard poultry, such as chickens and ducks, can carry Salmonella germs even if they look healthy and clean. People can get sick from touching poultry or anything in their environment and then touching their mouth or food.

As part of these investigations, MDH staff work with sick people to gather more information about the birds they had contact with and offers to test those birds for Salmonella. Board staff work with poultry dealers to confirm the poultry purchase information provided by the ill persons. That information is then shared with the hatcheries that produced the birds so they can evaluate biosecurity practices and source flocks. However, in many situations, the original source of Salmonella in the poultry is difficult to figure out because birds from different sources may have been mixed prior to sale or the ill person may have had contact with multiple types of poultry. The Board has been partnering with the MDH, the University of Minnesota (UMN) and select poultry dealers in Minnesota to collect samples from chick papers lining the boxes that baby poultry are shipped in from the hatchery. Those samples are tested by the UMN to see what strains of Salmonella are being carried by birds from the hatchery sources to feed stores, and then possibly to people.

In the spring of 2026, the chick paper sampling project worked with nine stores across seven counties to collect and submit chick papers for testing. MDH and Board staff collected 117 chick paper samples from the shipment of birds from six different hatcheries across the country over a three-week period. The UMN Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center cultured the samples and reported a 21% Salmonella positivity rate. Isolates were sent to the MDH lab for further sequencing, which identified seven Salmonella serotypes. This project helped identify 23 chick papers that were closely related to human isolates that reported live poultry contact and were part of a national outbreak. Collaborations like this highlight the importance of a One Health approach to keeping people and animals healthy.

## National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Program Participants, Fiscal Year 2026

| NPIP Program Type | Participants |
|---|---|
| Commercial Breeding Flock Facilities | 69 |
| Commercial Egg Layer Facilities | 32 |
| Commercial Hatcheries | 9 |
| Commercial Slaughter Plants | 6 |
| Live Bird Markets | 3 |
| Poultry Dealers | 230 |
| Subpart J - Gamebirds | 16 |
| WEGBY Facilities | 72 |



## Number of NPIP Participating Flocks

| NPIP Program Type | Participants | Number of Birds |
|---|---|---|
| Commercial Egg-Type Chicken Breeders | 1 | 35,000 |
| Commercial Meat-Type Chicken Breeders | 59 | 817,200 |
| Commercial Turkey Breeders | 72 | 1,034,550 |
| Commercial Egg-Type Chicken | 151 | 18,015,605 |
| Commercial Meat-Type Chicken | 1,187 | 71,371,500 |
| Commercial Meat-Type Turkeys | 1,398 | 35,664,027 |
| Subpart J - Gamebirds | 16 | 165,826 |
| WEGBY Facilities | 72 | 12,880 |

# Cattle

## New World Screwworm

The Board of Animal Health monitored the spread of New World Screwworm (NWS) as it moved north through Mexico and was detected in the U.S. in Texas on June 3, 2026. NWS is a fly larva that feeds on living tissue in wounds and was previously eradicated in the U.S. NWS can affect all warm-blooded animals, but the international movement of cattle has received significant attention for control efforts. The southern U.S. ports were closed to imports of cattle, bison, and horses, and export restrictions to Mexico have been placed on those and other susceptible species. The Board is continuing to assess risks associated with livestock movements to prevent NWS from entering the state. Due to our cold winters, NWS would be unable to establish a population in Minnesota but could still have serious economic implications in cattle and other livestock industries.

## Electronic Identification (EID) Distribution

The USDA has reinstated its no-cost radio frequency identification (RFID) EID distribution program. This is to assist producers in complying with the rule that went into effect November 5, 2024, “Use of Electronic Identification Eartags as Official Identification in Cattle and Bison” requiring identification for cattle and bison contain both a visual and electronic component to be considered official. The Board applied these parameters on the same effective date for intrastate requirements for identification applied on or after November 5, 2024. The USDA distributed tags in two phases for federal Fiscal Year 2025 (ending September 30, 2025), and Minnesota was allocated 121,000 for the first phase and 146,000 in the second phase. All tags were claimed shortly after being made available and were distributed to producers and veterinarians. Livestock auction markets were able to access the no-cost RFID by trading in visual metal tags. Minnesota is awaiting allocation from the USDA for federal Fiscal Year 2026 and will strive to distribute tags effectively and equitably when available.



# Sheep and Goats

Sheep and goats have become increasingly popular with Minnesota producers over the last several years due in part to families becoming interested in raising their own animals for meat as well as consumer demand. A total of 282 new sheep and goat herds were registered with the Board this year. Each new producer is given information on animal identification requirements and the National Scrapie Eradication Program. Scrapie is a fatal degenerative prion disease of sheep and goats that affects the central nervous system. Affected animals show a variety of clinical signs including behavior changes like constant scratching and rubbing, tremors, weakness and incoordination that progresses to recumbency and death. Minnesota continues to collaborate with the USDA on regular slaughter surveillance sampling to work towards achieving Scrapie Free status for the United States.

## Q fever

Minnesota continues to see sporadic detections of Q fever in sheep and goats. Q fever is a zoonotic disease of sheep, goats and cattle caused by Coxiella burnetii, an intracellular gram-negative bacterium that can exist in the environment for many years and is easily spread long distances on dust particles in the wind. Sheep, goats and cattle can serve as reservoirs for the disease, shedding bacteria in urine, feces and other bodily fluids. Bacteria can concentrate in the placenta of newly infected pregnant animals, often resulting in abortion, which may be the only symptom of disease. Tissues and fluids from Q fever abortions are particularly infectious due to the high bacterial loads, though humans are more commonly infected from inhaling contaminated dust. Flocks can be screened with blood tests to determine if they have been exposed to Q fever, though they are of limited value to identify acute infection and bacterial shedding versus previous exposure. There is no vaccine available for Q fever and once found in an environment it should be considered endemic. Q fever is a reportable disease in Minnesota. The Board also informs the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) of any positive Q fever tests so they can follow up with potential human exposures.



# Rabies

The Board is tasked with monitoring and tracking new cases of rabies in wild and domestic animals. The Board is also responsible for evaluating potential domestic animal exposure to either confirmed or suspected cases of rabies in wild animals and issuing quarantines when required. We work with our partners at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to help keep Minnesota's animal and human populations safe.

## Support for rabies vaccination law

Rabies vaccination of dogs and cats is an important tool in rabies control and prevention. Vaccinated dogs and cats are much less likely to become infected with rabies if they are bitten by another positive animal. This not only protects the health of the animals but public health as well. Bites by dogs and cats continue to be an issue in many communities in Minnesota and primarily affect children and other vulnerable people. Although vaccination would not prevent a bite, it would reduce the potential of human infection with a deadly virus. The Board supports legislation to require all dogs and cats over 16 weeks of age be vaccinated against rabies.

## Rabies Cases, Fiscal Year 2026

Bats: 27

Skunks: 2

Cat: 0

Dog: 0

Cattle: 0

Fox: 0

**Total: 29 positive cases**



# Emergency Preparedness

The Board of Animal Health engages in various drills and exercises annually. In Fiscal Year 2026, we took part in the Hostile Action Base Drill and Exercise for the Monticello Nuclear Power Plant on August 12, 2025. We are integrated into the State Emergency Operations Center during nuclear exercises, which prepares us for potential incidents involving either of Minnesota's nuclear power plants: the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant in Monticello and the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant in Red Wing. Additionally, this enables us to support the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) if they require our assistance during a nuclear response.

In March, we supported MDA in delivering presentations for a National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program grant award on what to expect during a foreign animal disease outbreak, specifically for county emergency managers and public health teams. It was a pleasure to collaborate with MDA and to be available to address the questions raised by attendees during these presentations.

We also took part in a large-scale Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Vaccination Exercise this year codenamed "Firebreak," which involved three participating states: Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas. Additionally, 13 other states participated virtually by receiving updates and requesting vaccinations. The exercise occurred June 23-25, 2026. Throughout the year, we held numerous planning meetings and preparation drills, with preplanning beginning in January 2026.

Firebreak enabled us to review our existing response plans and enhance those strategies. We successfully built up our vaccination plan to complement our ongoing FMD plan. During the process, we identified areas that required additional detail, aspects we may have previously overlooked, and gaps that needed to be addressed. Exercises are crucial to facilitate collaboration among multiple state and federal agencies as a unified command, while also allowing us to observe how other states may respond to large-scale incidents. The exercise also provided valuable insights into Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and its application in modeling the types of animals present across various regions in Minnesota.

## Foreign Animal Disease Investigations (FADIs) by Species, Fiscal Year 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| Bovine: 2 | Sheep: 0 |
| Goats: 0 | Swine: 25 |
| Equine: 1 | Rabbit: 0 |
| Poultry: 127 | **Total: 155 FADIs** |

# Compliance

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health's approach to compliance is embedded in our mission, to educate and to protect the health of domesticated animals in Minnesota. Two of the most crucial components of compliance are education and accountability. Without them, we do a disservice to both our constituents and our agency. Our program and field staff use various methods to educate the public by providing program rules and regulations related to animal health within the Board's jurisdiction. Examples of this work include one-on-one field training, industry meetings, webinars and written communications. Accountability happens through our inspections and investigations, when our field staff compare their observations to the state rules and regulations. When there are discrepancies, non-compliant items or violations, our compliance team will take one or more of the following actions:

- Educational Warning
- Notice of Violation Correction Order
- Civil or Administrative Penalty
- Compliance Agreement
- Revocation of License or Registration (requires Board of Directors approval)
- Legal Action (Court orders, Subpoenas, Misdemeanors, etc.)

We have two goals with compliance actions: first, to prevent violations through education; and second, to hold violators accountable and provide opportunity for the violations to be corrected in a timely manner. Civil or Administrative penalties, revocation of license or registration and legal action occur when violations have a bigger risk to animal health or when the violation is a repeat offense.

## Compliance Actions, Fiscal Year 2026

| Program | Educational Warning | Notice of Violation, Correction Order | Civil Penalty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Animal Disease Traceability | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Canine Brucellosis | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Carcass Disposal | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Commercial Dog and Cat Breeders | 10 | 15 | 9 |
| Dealers | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Exhibitions | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Farmed Cervidae | 6 | 32 | 18 |
| Food Waste to Livestock | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Import/Intrastate Movement | 18 | 13 | 3 |
| Kennels | 22 | 11 | 5 |
| Markets | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Poultry | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Rabies | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sales | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Scrapie | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Testing Authorization/Certification | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tuberculosis | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Veterinary Accreditation | 0 | 0 | 0 |

# Animal Movements/Traceability

## Transition to Electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs)

The Board phased out paper CVIs in favor of electronic ones. This reduces agency costs in mailing and payroll hours while improving data accuracy and efficiency. Minnesota's eCVI initiatives align with national progress to improve traceability through electronic records. The Board stopped providing paper CVIs on January 1, 2025. Paper CVIs were no longer considered official for exports from Minnesota starting January 1, 2026, and for imports on July 1, 2026. Since the discontinuation of paper CVI distribution, we have seen increased eCVI usage. Last year 61.7% of export eCVIs were electronic versus 93% this year.

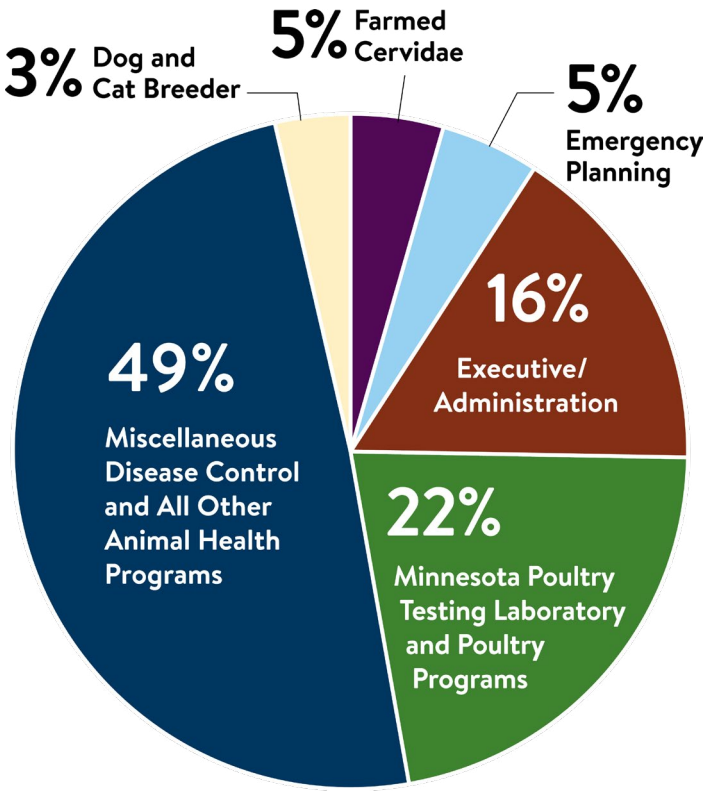



## CVIs issued by Minnesota Veterinarians by Species, Fiscal Year 2026

| Species | Number of CVIs issued | Electronic | Paper |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bison | 22 | 100% | 0% |
| Bovine | 8,503 | 93.8% | 6.2% |
| Cats | 415 | 82.4% | 17.6% |
| Dogs | 3,171 | 85.6% | 14.4% |
| Equine | 5,522 | 93.6% | 6.4% |
| Farmed Cervidae | 113 | 83.2% | 16.8% |
| Goats | 493 | 88.0% | 12.0% |
| Regulated animals | 15 | 100% | 0% |
| Sheep | 773 | 83.4% | 16.6% |
| Swine | 4,087 | 98.8% | 1.2% |
| Swine Semen | 731 | 99.9% | 0.1% |
| Other (other than species listed) | 192 | 92.7% | 7.3% |
| **Grand Total** | **24,037** | **93.0%** | **7.0%** |

# Board of Animal Health Budget

## Board Expenses by Program, Fiscal Year 2026
## Total Expenses: $7,490,614

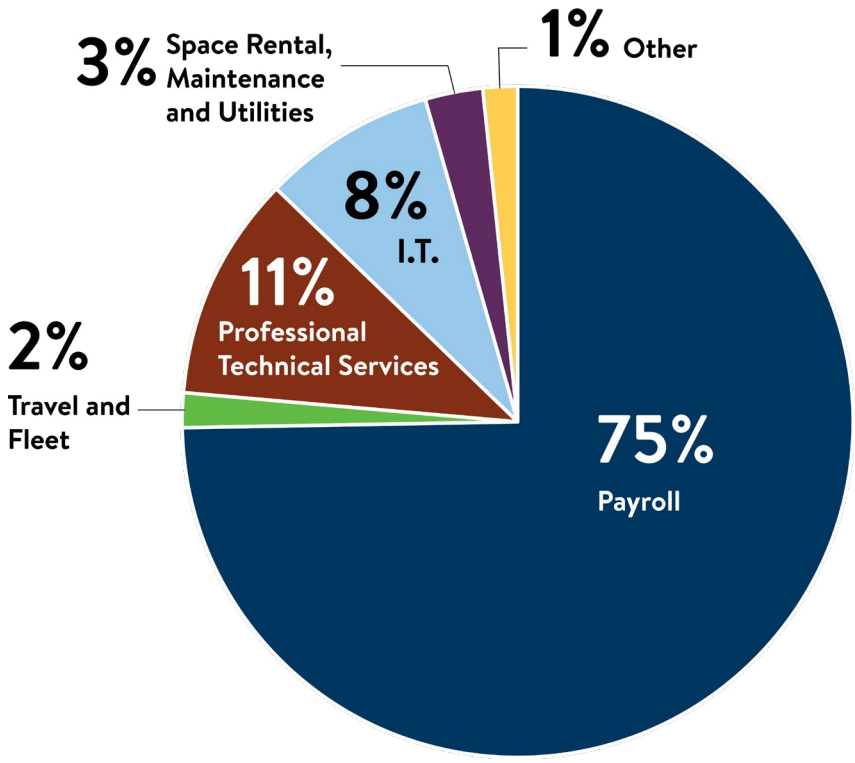



| Program and Percent of Budget | Expense |
|---|---|
| Miscellaneous Disease Control and All Other Animal Health Programs (49%) | $3,692,620 |
| Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory and Poultry Programs (22%) | $1,644,010 |
| Executive/Administration (16%) | $1,198,720 |
| Emergency Planning (5%) | $352,189 |
| Farmed Cervidae (5%) | $345,304 |
| Dog and Cat Breeder (3%) | $257,771 |

## Expenses Charged to Revenue Source, Fiscal Year 2026

| Source of Funds | Fiscal Year 2026 Expenditures |
|---|---|
| State - General Appropiation | $6,311,671 |
| State - Emergency Planning and Preparedeness | $352,189 |
| Federal | $788,961 |
| Restricted Miscellaneous Special Revenue | $37,793 |
| **Total** | **$7,490,614** |

## Board Expenses by Category, Fiscal Year 2026
## Total Expenses: $7,490,614




| Category and Percentage of Budget | Expense |
|---|---|
| Payroll (75%) | $5,608,494 |
| Professional Technical Services (11%) | $813,186 |
| Information Technology (8%) | $610,836 |
| Space Rental, Maintenance and Utilities (3%) | $211,085 |
| Travel and Fleet (2%) | $128,556 |
| Other (1%) | $118,457 |

## Legislative Update

For Fiscal Year 2027, the Board was allotted $6,800,000 in general appropriation funding. The next legislative session will begin in January 2027, where legislators will begin the process of deciding what the Board's allotted biennium general appropriation will be for fiscal years 2028 and 2029.

# Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

As Minnesota's only AAVLD-accredited facilities, the Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) and Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) deliver critical diagnostics, disease surveillance, research, and education. Both hold Level 1 USDA-NAHLN memberships and belong to the FDA Vet-LIRN network.

- VDL (St. Paul Campus): Specializes in companion animal, livestock, and wildlife diagnostics.
- MPTL (Willmar): Focuses on poultry diagnostics and flock health surveillance.

## FY26 Executive Highlights and Accomplishments

### Faculty Appointments and Promotions

- New Hires: Dr. Carlos Lopez Figueroa (Assistant Professor/Food Animal Diagnostician) and Dr. Varvara Semenova (Assistant Professor/Poultry Diagnostician).



- Promotion: Dr. Erin Royster (Promoted to Associate Professor and named Vice Chair of Educational Programs and Partnerships).

### Faculty and Staff Honors

- Career Achievement: Dr. Rob Porter (AAAP Hall of Honor induction) and Karen Olsen (Inaugural AAVLD Giles-Scientific Excellence in Technical Veterinary Microbiology Award).
- Research Excellence: Dr. Arno Wuenschmann, Michele Leiferman, et al. (David Thompson Foundation Journal Award) and Dr. Talita Resende (Swine Disease Eradication Center Research Award).
- Teaching and Operational Service: Dr. Joanna Echenique (VPM Excellence in Clinical/Diagnostic Teaching Award); Tracy Otterson (UMN Research Technical Staff Award).

## Diagnostic Infrastructure and Technology

- Tissue Digester: Fully operational in FY26.
- MALDI-TOF-MS (Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization-Time of Flight Mass Spectrometry) (Bacteriology): Acquired and fully operational in May 2026.

## New Diagnostic Tests Developed

- Real-time PCR for Subtype H5 Clade 2.3.4.4 detection (NAHLN Protocol)
- Bovine Coronavirus Fast Viral real-time PCR
- Porcine Hemagglutinating Encephalomyelitis Virus Fast Viral real-time PCR
- Canine and Feline Parvovirus real-time PCR
- Endogenous control for PCMV real-time PCR
- Encephalomyocarditis Virus Fast Viral real-time PCR
- Porcine Endogenous Retrovirus C Variant real-time PCR
- Miniaturized Porcine Circovirus-2 quantitative PCR
- Chlamydia Differentiation Multiplex real-time PCR
- Ruminant Pregnancy ELISA Test

## Research Initiatives

### Dr. Albert Rovira

- Swine Disease Genomics and Testing: Collaborated with swine group researchers (Drs. VanderWaal, Herrera, Kikuti, Pamornchainavakul, Corzo, and Paploski) on PEDV genomics, alternative PRRSV sampling strategies, and emerging PRRSV variants.
- Aerosol Transmission: Partnered with Dr. Torremorell to investigate the aerosol detection of swine viruses.

- Influenza Surveillance: Co-investigated animal and wildlife influenza with Dr. Bender under the Minnesota Pathogen Genomics Center of Excellence grant.

### Lab of Udder Health (LUH) Team

Diagnostic and Capacity Expansion: Advancing development of a Mycoplasma mastitis PCR test while preparing to integrate a new Masterclave to expand production capacity in the Media Lab.

### Dr. Talita Resende

Porcine Sapovirus: Investigating the detection of porcine sapovirus in naturally infected pigs and its association with co-occurring pathogens.

Calendar Year 2026 Competitive Grants and Agreements (VDL PI/ PD and Co-Is)

## Awarded Grants

- Target-Enriched Long-read Sequencing of Viruses in Aerosols: Towards Continuous Monitoring of Virus Aerosol Transmission and Emerging Pathogens
  - USDA Agricultural Biosecurity ($1M over 3 years). Dr. Torremorell (PI), Dr. Albert Rovira (Co-I).
- Development of Broadly Protective Vaccines Against HPAI Viruses.
  - USDA HPAI Challenge Grant ($2M over 3 years). Dr. Liang and Dr. Ly (PIs), Dr. Hemant Naikare (Co-I).
- UMN VDL Testing Capacity
  - Federal FY26 CDS ($1M for 1 year). Dr. Hemant Naikare (PI).
- PRRSV Immunization.
  - National Pork Board (NPB). Dr. Pamornchainavakul and Dr. VanderWaal (PIs), Dr. Albert Rovira (Co-I).

## Pending Proposals

(Total Known Funding Requested: $20,550,000 ($7,550,000 allocated to UMN).

- USDA-NIFA-SAS – Residencies and Internship Workforce Capacity.
  - Requested: $10M over 5 years ($5M allocated to UMN). Dr. Hemant Naikare (PD).
- USDA-NIFA-SAS – AI-Based SERS-ML POCT Diagnosis.
  - Requested: $10M over 5 years ($2M allocated to UMN). Dr. Hemant Naikare (Co-PD).
- USDA-VSGP – Food Animal Residency.
  - Requested: $300K over 3 years. Dr. Carlos Lopez (PD).
- SHIC – Rapid, Non-Invasive Diagnostic Method for Pen-Side H5N1 Detection in Swine.
  - Requested: $250K for 1 year. Dr. Hemant Naikare (PD).
- VetLIRN Equipment Grant – PCR Capability Improvements. Dr. Albert Rovira (PI).
- VetLIRN Capacity Grant – Sequencing Priority Bacterial Isolates. Dr. Albert Rovira (PI).
- USDA Grant – Near Real-Time PRRSV Variant Surveillance. Dr. Kikuti (PI), Dr. Albert Rovira (Co-I).

## Unfunded Proposals (Total: $3,830,000)

- USDA-APHIS – NWS Surveillance ($2.23M over 2 years; Dr. Hemant Naikare, Co-PD).
- USDA-APHIS – NWS Diagnostics ($1.6M over 2 years; Dr. Hemant Naikare, PD).



# Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Data, Fiscal Year 2026

## Procedures by Laboratory

| Laboratory | Procedures |
|---|---|
| Bacteriology | 26,229 |
| Clinical Pathology | 175 |
| Histology | 29,679 |
| Immunohistochemistry | 2,563 |
| MN Poultry Testing Lab (MPTL) | 204,788 |
| MPTL - State | 108,118 |
| MPTL - Federal | 7,430 |
| Molecular Diagnostics | 286,449 |
| Necropsy | 8,909 |

| Laboratory | Procedures |
|---|---|
| Necropsy/Histopathology Only | 6,901 |
| Non-Accredited Research Lab | 438 |
| Outsourced Lab Service | 8,805 |
| Parasitology | 6,329 |
| Receiving, Reporting and Admin | 485 |
| Serology | 103,029 |
| Udder Health | 87,210 |
| Virology | 8,595 |

## Animals Submitted

| Species | Number |
|---|---|
| Amphibian | 35 |
| Avian, Chicken | 35,194 |
| Avian, Miscellaneous | 4,677 |
| Avian, Turkey | 166,716 |
| Bovine | 95,652 |
| Camelid | 94 |
| Canine | 2,205 |
| Caprine | 2,607 |
| Cervidae | 2,710 |

| Species | Number |
|---|---|
| Equine | 3,044 |
| Feline | 1,129 |
| Fish | 3,271 |
| Miscellaneous Mammals | 4,350 |
| Non-Animal Submissions | 220 |
| Non-Human Primates | 38 |
| Ovine | 1,778 |
| Porcine | 166,928 |
| Reptile | 37 |

## Procedures by Species

| Species | Procedures |
|---|---|
| Amphibian | 420 |
| Avian, Chicken | 53,026 |
| Avian, Miscellaneous | 8,799 |
| Avian, Turkey | 279,299 |
| Bovine | 133,133 |
| Camelid | 789 |
| Canine | 10,450 |
| Caprine | 4,041 |
| Cervidae | 6,411 |

| Species | Procedures |
|---|---|
| Equine | 4,117 |
| Feline | 4,732 |
| Fish | 6,032 |
| Miscellaneous Mammals | 8,701 |
| Non-Animal Submissions | 404 |
| Non-Human Primates | 307 |
| Ovine | 3,332 |
| Porcine | 371,707 |
| Reptile | 432 |

MINNESOTA
BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

**Healthy animals** for healthy people and communities.

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October 2026