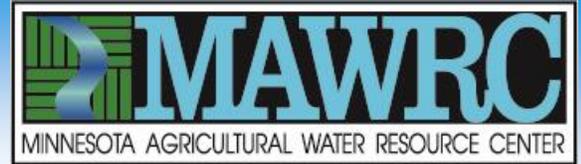


# MAWRC Monthly

- January 2017



## **USDA to Allow Early Termination of Some CRP Contracts for New Farmers**

Beginning January 9, 2017, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will offer an early termination opportunity for some CRP contracts, making it easier to transfer land to the next generation of farmers. The land eligible for this early termination must be among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

This new policy allows for early-exit from CRP for eligible acres if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer through a sale or lease with option to buy. These acres are subsequently given priority for consideration in other USDA programs such as CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program) or EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program). Landowners may wish to explore options under his new policy, especially in light of limits on CRP enrollment due to the reduced caps provided in the current farm bill. Essentially, bringing those lands with relatively higher productive potential and lower environmental risk back into production will free up cap space, allowing better targeting of program resources. This new policy may also allow renewed opportunities for enrollment for Minnesota landowners seeking to enroll buffer areas into Continuous Sign-up CRP.

For more information, talk to your local Farm Service Agency office or go to [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2016/nr\\_20161229\\_rel\\_216](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2016/nr_20161229_rel_216).

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## **Iowa Supreme Court Rules Against Des Moines Water Works**

In an opinion filed January 27, 2017, the Iowa Supreme Court has ruled against the Des Moines Water Works in its lawsuit seeking monetary damages from three counties serving as drainage districts in the Raccoon River watershed. The lawsuit also seeks to require drainage districts to be brought under permit requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act. A Federal District Court is expected to rule on that portion of the lawsuit later this year.

This ruling is the first of several expected decisions relating to the case, but is a major victory for those who produce or consume food. Environmental extremists, as expected, expressed disappointment over the decision.

The ruling states in part that “it is for the legislature to decide whether to reallocate the costs of nitrate reduction,” inviting action on the part of the Iowa legislature. You can find the court’s opinion on the Iowa Supreme Court webpage at:

[http://www.iowacourts.gov/About\\_the\\_Courts/Supreme\\_Court/Supreme\\_Court\\_Opinions/Recent\\_Opinions/20170127/16-0076.pdf](http://www.iowacourts.gov/About_the_Courts/Supreme_Court/Supreme_Court_Opinions/Recent_Opinions/20170127/16-0076.pdf).

You can also find a chronological summary of the case at the Iowa State University Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation website- <https://www.calt.iastate.edu/article/iowa-supreme-court-sides-drainage-districts>.

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## Register Now for Nutrient Management Conferences

Registration is now open for two nutrient management conference to be held in February. These events, hosted by a team including the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center (MAWRC), the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, will highlight recent advances in effective and economical nutrient management presented by researchers, fertilizer industry experts and state agency officials.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Crop Nutrient Management Conference, will be held on February 7, 2017 at the River's Edge Conference Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The conference program will focus on nitrogen and phosphorus management with significant emphasis on water quality considerations.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nitrogen: Minnesota's Grand Challenge & Compelling Opportunity Conference, will be held on February 16, 2017 at the Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato, Minnesota. This conference will focus more specifically on nitrogen management and water quality issues.

Farmers, crop advisors and other nutrient management professionals are encouraged and invited to attend. The ongoing importance of efficient use of applied crop nutrients relating to farm profitability and food production economics combines with growing interest in the environment. Topics include phosphorus and nitrogen recommendations, updates on new and emerging practices, and information related to important issues like the Des Moines Waterworks lawsuit.

Both conferences provide opportunities for Continuing Education Units for Certified Crop Advisors. More information and registration information can be found at <http://mawrc.org/events/>.

These conferences are sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota Extension, along with numerous agricultural businesses and organizations.

Thanks to the support of our sponsors, registration for each event is only \$20, which can be paid on-line at the time of registration or at the door. There is no charge for registration for students. To register by phone, or for more information, call Jerome Lensing at 507-251-9101, or Dr. Fabian Fernandez at 612-625-7460.

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## Discovery Farm Publications Available Online

Curious about the results from our on-farm water monitoring program? You can find several helpful fact sheets summarizing data collected across Minnesota and Wisconsin at [www.discoveryfarmsmn.org](http://www.discoveryfarmsmn.org) under the "resources" tab. Recently added publications cover topics relating to nutrient and sediment movement in tile lines and surface runoff. You might also find it useful to join the on-line conversation about these and other topics at [www.agwaterexchange.com](http://www.agwaterexchange.com), a blog built around the Discovery Farms programs in both states.

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The MAWRC is a non-profit research and education corporation comprised of 24 agricultural organizations working together to address water issues. For more information, go to [www.mawrc.org](http://www.mawrc.org).

