

Process questioned on Dayton pollinator order

Gov. Mark Dayton announced during the Minnesota State Fair his administration's intent to reverse perceived pollinator decline and to restore pollinator health in Minnesota. His Aug. 25 executive order declared pollinator decline serious and in need of attention to ensure the sustainability of food production systems; to avoid economic impact on farmers and rural communities; and to protect Minnesota's environment.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff discussed the order at a recent Cooperative Network Farm Supply, Grain and Energy Committee meeting in Brainerd. Attendees expressed policy and process concerns regarding the action, particularly the lack of consultation with key stakeholders. Cooperative Network staff will attend a Sept. 13 House Agriculture Policy Committee hearing on the executive order.

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Possible special session vies with election season

A recent meeting between Gov. Mark Dayton and House Speaker Kurt Daudt (R-Crown) has Capitol observers wondering if lawmakers will reconvene in St. Paul before the Nov. 8 elections—despite Dayton's August announcement there would be no special session.

With the GOP-led House opposed to additional Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) funding and the DFL's insistence

that state aid be included in a special session, party leaders had been unable to overcome the impasse for a special session. At stake were three major pieces of legislation left unresolved when the regular session ended in May—the tax, bonding, and transportation finance bills. The Metropolitan Council and Counties Transit Improvement Board have since

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Legislators visit Land O'Lakes headquarters



Cooperative Network staff assisted Land O'Lakes in hosting a state legislator tour and meeting with its executive leadership team Aug. 10. Pictured (l-r): Land O'Lakes' Dana Brooks; Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake); Cooperative Network President and CEO Tom Liebe; House Speaker Kurt Daudt (R-Crown); Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck); Sen. Bev Scalze (DFL-Little Canada); Rep. Barb Yarusso (DFL-Shoreview); House legislative staff Nick Lunneborg; and Cooperative Network's Patrick Murray. Cooperative Network presented a legislative update to the Land O'Lakes Policies and Resolutions Committee at a separate meeting the following week in Minneapolis.

Students receive co-op leadership scholarship

The Minnesota Cooperative Education Foundation (MCEF), the nonprofit arm of Cooperative Network, has awarded the 2016 Edward Slettom Cooperative Leadership Scholarship to five Minnesota students interested in pursuing careers in cooperatives. The awards range from \$500 to \$1,000.

"It was nearly a record year for applicants," said Tom Liebe, MCEF president. "We are proud to support students who reflect the future employees, members, and leadership of tomorrow's cooperatives."

The high school recipients were Nicholas Malecek of Morgan and Samantha Ykema of Jasper. Malecek is attending Southwest Minnesota State University, and Ykema will be studying at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

The college awardees were Joshua Fast of Bingham Lake and Ransom Dykema of Sacred Heart. Fast is currently studying agriculture and biosystems engineering at South Dakota State University. Dykema is in his second year of college majoring in accounting at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

The post-graduate recipient was Megan Roberts of Madelia. Roberts is seeking her doctorate in agricultural education at the schools of Texas A&M University and Texas Tech.

The Slettom Scholarship is awarded based on scholastic achievement, leadership, and an ability to contribute to cooperatives in the future. Find out more at mcef.coop.

Emmer addresses electric cooperative leaders



Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN) delivers remarks at Cooperative Network's Aug. 9 Electric Sector Committee meeting in St. Cloud. He focused on American energy policy and how it relates to costs, regulations, taxes, and the various modes of transportation used to move energy commodities. Emmer also discussed rural broadband and the role he plays as a member of the Rural Broadband Caucus. Other presenters included Brian McClung and Katharine Tinucci from MZA+Co, who provided an update on state and national elections.

Dayton declares "Year of Water Action"

Gov. Mark Dayton recently kicked off a "Year of Water Action" in Minnesota, urging businesses, the agricultural industry, outdoor enthusiasts, communities, and families to conserve and improve water quality.

The Dayton administration plans to visit farms, classrooms, water treatment facilities, and research institutions to encourage Minnesotans to learn about the state's water challenges. Dayton has indicated

that more than 40 percent of Minnesota's waters are listed as impaired or polluted. He said locally-led efforts of soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, civic groups, and individual landowners are essential to protecting and conserving water quality.

Information and resources for farmers, landowners, and more are available online at mn.gov/governor/issues/wateraction.

Pollinators

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Dayton's order states that over the past decade, there has been a decline in pollinators due to pressures such as habitat loss, pesticides, diseases, and parasites. The order creates the Governor's Committee on Pollinator Policy to promote statewide collaboration on protection efforts; raise public awareness of pollinator issues; review and comment on agency pollinator programs, reports and recommendations; and identify and support opportunities for local and public-private partnerships. The executive order also requires state contracts to accommodate the purchasing of neonicotinoid-free plants and pesticides. Dayton directed the Environmental Quality Board to form the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team of agency leadership and Minnesotans to develop statewide goals and metrics and annually report on progress.

Despite not knowing future implications of the order, legislation is expected next session that would amplify its impact on Minnesota's agriculture community.

Special session

indicated they would provide the funding needed to keep the SWLRT project on track to receive matching federal funds. The move has reopened the door to the possibility of a special session that doesn't include the SWLRT project.

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Political candidates are now balancing a likely special session and their campaign efforts. All 201 Minnesota legislative seats are up for election. The DFL needs seven additional seats to gain control of the GOP-led House of Representatives (73-61), and the Senate GOP needs six seats to gain control of the DFL-led Senate (39-28). Control of legislative bodies has seen a fair amount of fluctuation in recent years. Minnesota does not have a gubernatorial election again until 2018.

At the federal level, all eight Minnesota U.S. House seats are up for election this year; the U.S. Senate seats are not. Among many questions on Minnesota voters' minds is how the presidential election will impact state elections.

Cooperative Network Dispatch

Prepared and distributed to provide timely information on matters pertaining to Minnesota's member-owned cooperatives.

Cooperative Network
145 University Avenue, Suite 450
St. Paul, MN 55103-2044
(651) 228-0213 fax: (651) 228-1184
www.cooperativenetwork.coop

Upcoming Events

October 19

Employment Law Update

Discuss pressing employment law issues, case studies, new federal requirements for overtime pay, personal vs. employer liability, and workplace appearance. Early registration ends Sept. 21. Details are online at cooperativenetwork.coop.

November 14–16

Cooperative Network Annual Meeting

"Cooperatives Build" is the theme of the 2016 Cooperative Network annual meeting in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Registration opens soon. Stay tuned to cooperativesbuild2016.com.

Liebe, officials attend CHS terminal reopening

Cooperative Network President and CEO Tom Liebe joined CHS leadership, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson, U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), House Agriculture Policy Committee Chair Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck), City of St. Paul Deputy Mayor Kristin Beckmann, and other officials at an Aug. 22 open house for the rebuilt CHS St. Paul fertilizer terminal and warehouse. Facility improvements will ensure safe operations and timely deliveries, as well as protect the riverfront ecosystem. The terminal is a strategic facility for CHS customers, member-owners, and area farmers.

Co-op Calendar

Sept. 21—Minnesota Credit Issues Conference, St. Cloud, Minn.

Oct. 19—Employment Law Update, Eau Claire, Wis.

Nov. 14–16—Cooperative Network Annual Meeting, Stevens Point, Wis.

For more information about these events, call (651) 228-0213 or go to www.cooperativenetwork.coop.