

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 3159 **DATE:** March 28, 2006
Version: The delete-everything amendment (H3159DE1)
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Subject: Migrant and farm workers
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Overview

This bill instructs the commissioner of health to devise a comprehensive program that provides migrant and other farm workers with information about, and protection from, agricultural chemicals. Required program components and reports to the legislature are described.

Section

1 Minnesota migrant and farm worker protection.

Subd. 1. Citation. May be cited as the Minnesota Migrant and Farm Worker Protection Act.

Subd. 2. Commissioner of health, duties. Identifies the commissioner of health as the party responsible for devising the comprehensive protection program described. Lists the procedures the commissioner must implement, including:

- identify agricultural chemicals to which migrant workers and their families are exposed;
- study the impact of agricultural chemicals on farm workers, including migrant and season workers;
- test wells and groundwater used by farm workers and their families and evaluate the presence of agricultural chemicals, focusing on areas with the greatest exposure to chemicals and those requested by farm workers;

Section

- identify immediate and long-term effects of exposure to farm workers, their families, and their unborn embryos and fetuses; and
- implement a study to track the impact of pesticide exposure over time.

Requires employers to allow farm workers reasonable time off to participate in the study and to address health care needs for themselves and their families.

Subd. 3. Application of pesticides. Requires those applying pesticides to farmland to provide 24-hour notice to farm workers residing in the area. Details what the notice must include.

Subd. 4. Form. Instructs the commissioner of health to prescribe the form and method of distribution for the notice required by subdivision 3. Instructs the commissioner to determine additional languages needed to notify farm workers and allows the commissioner to require the pesticide applicator to provide instructions farm workers can use to protect themselves and their families.

Subd. 5. Rules. Grants the commissioner the ability to adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

Subd. 6. Report to legislature. Requires the commissioner to make the following reports to the house and senate health policy committees and ranking minority members:

- By January 1, 2007, a report on the nature of agricultural chemicals and pesticide exposures;
- By January 1, 2009, a report on the preliminary findings on agricultural chemicals and pesticide exposures and health impacts;
- Every two years thereafter until 2019, a report on the exposure and health impact findings.

Subd. 7. Pilot projects. Instructs the commissioner to implement pilot projects that:

- examine whether granting farm workers the right to information about occupational chemicals reduces the incidence and severity of work-related illness and injury; and
- provide incentives and assistance that encourage farm growers to implement safer pest control methods and safer practices.