

Subject Farmers
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Overview

This bill would establish a new program administered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to award grants to eligible agricultural production businesses that hire adult interns who are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture and have no more than five years of agricultural work experience. A participating agricultural business would be required to pay the interns at least the state minimum wage (generally \$9.86 per hour). The business would use grant dollars received from MDA to raise the intern's hourly wage to \$15 per hour.

Summary

Section	Description
1	<p>Next generation farmer development program. Establishes the program, including eligibility criteria and program elements.</p> <p>Subd. 1. Establishment. Establishes the program and defines key terms.</p> <p>Subd. 2. Competitive grants and targeted development activities. Directs MDA to award grants of up to \$10,000 to each participating agricultural business to provide work opportunities to qualified interns. Requires the program to provide qualified interns with specified experiences and knowledge.</p> <p>Subd. 3. General terms and conditions of grants. Requires a qualified agricultural business to pay the intern no less than the applicable state minimum wage (i.e., \$9.86/hour for employers with \$500,000 or more in gross receipts per year; \$8.04/hour for employers with less than \$500,000). Limits grants to 50 percent of the intern's total wages. Specifies that the grant must cover the difference between minimum wage and \$15 per hour. Limits grant terms to seven months and provides that an intern may receive grant funding no more than twice in any five-year period, while a business may not receive more than four years of internship grant assistance in any five-year period.</p> <p>Subd. 4. Application procedures. Specifies information that agricultural business applicants must submit to MDA. Authorizes MDA to require additional reasonable information.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>Subd. 5. Application review; approval; notification. Specifies criteria MDA must use to weigh and compare applications in light of available funds.</p> <p>Subd. 6. Monitoring and review. Requires grantees to keep certain records and to make certain documents and practices available to MDA for examination during normal business hours.</p> <p>Subd. 7. Final report. Requires grantees to return all unexpended funds and submit a final report no later than 60 days after termination of the grant contract. Specifies information the report must include.</p> <p>Subd. 8. Biennial report required. Requires MDA to report program outcomes and recommendations to legislative agriculture committees no later than March 15 of each odd-numbered year.</p> <p>Subd. 9. Citation. Declares that this act may be cited as the “Next Generation Minnesota Farmer Act.”</p>
2	<p>Appropriation. Appropriates \$250,000 each year to award grants to participating agricultural businesses.</p>



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