OVERVIEW

The State Legislature finalized a $52 billion state budget during a June special session, including increased funding for agriculture, investment in broadband infrastructure and key tax relief. Over the past 18 months, Minnesota’s part-time legislature met continuously to address the impacts of COVID-19, the influx of federal assistance and ultimately passage of the state budget. Your Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation Public Policy team has been engaged every step of the way to work with elected officials, agency representatives and the governor’s office, on the issues most important to Farm Bureau members in Minnesota based on grassroots policy.

When it comes to advocacy, your voice is stronger when you are a part of Farm Bureau.
2021 PRIORITY ISSUE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BROADBAND

MFBF successfully advocated for $70 million in funding to the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program, administered by the Office of Broadband Development, to increase broadband infrastructure throughout the state. The funding is the largest investment in the program’s history.
- Access to reliable high-speed broadband is a necessary tool for precision agriculture, education and running a business. The expanded investment is a significant step towards increased broadband connectivity for every Minnesotan.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MFBF supported legislation and testified before lawmakers, alongside our agriculture partners, on the important role renewable fuels can play in an immediate reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Six million dollars was included in the agriculture budget for the next two years with additional funding in FY2024-2025.
- Minnesota's farmers and ranchers want to do their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Further investment in renewable fuels infrastructure will help ensure Minnesota remains a leader in use of renewable fuels.

FOOD SUPPLY

MFBF supported those involved with growing, processing, packaging, transporting and retailing food by advocating for important investments in meat and livestock processing.
- The Agriculture Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Program included in the agriculture budget is an innovative way to provide grant opportunities to those involved in the food supply chain to ensure a secure food supply for everyone.

HEALTHCARE

Your MFBF Public Policy team continues to advocate for affordable and accessible health insurance. MFBF supports the continuation of the reinsurance program, which has successfully kept premium costs down and stabilized the individual health insurance market. The program was put in place in 2017 and will continue for an additional year.
- Mental Health – $100,000 was appropriated for mental health outreach and support for farmers and others in the agriculture community, including a 24-hour hotline and other educational offerings.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A $7.27 billion transportation bill will fund local bridge improvements, increased funding for town roads, assistance for small cities and, most notably, no tax increases such as a gas tax indexed to inflation.

TAX POLICY

Key tax priorities of the MFBF were included in the $900 million one-time and ongoing tax relief bill for Minnesotans. Full state tax exclusion for the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, final fixes to Section 179 of the state tax code and continuation of the Ag2Schools tax credit.
- Ag2Schools–The school building bond agriculture credit increased to 55 percent for property taxes payable in 2021. The credit will increase incrementally until it reaches 70 percent in tax year 2023.

WORKFORCE

A strong workforce is vital to agriculture and rural communities MFBF supported new investments in the workforce through the design and creation of a meat cutting and butchery training program at two-year colleges in the Minnesota State Colleges and University system. The program will address processing shortages in the livestock industry and workforce shortages, which were further exacerbated by COVID-19. In addition, MFBF continued to support funding for farm safety grants and outreach efforts.
- Farm Safety - $200,000 in FY2023-24 was appropriated for farm safety grants and outreach programs.