



STATE OF MINNESOTA  
*L'Étoile du Nord*

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton & Lt. Governor Tina Smith

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 25, 2016

**Governor's Office Contact: Matt Swenson**

651-201-3445 office

763-464-0042 cell

[matt.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:matt.swenson@state.mn.us)

**Land O'Lakes, Inc. Contact: Abbey Shilling**

651-375-3128 office

651-242-1503 cell

### **Governor Dayton and Land O'Lakes, Inc. Announce Public-Private Partnership to Improve Water Quality in Minnesota**

*Public-private partnership positions Minnesota as a national leader, helps more farmers improve water quality across Minnesota*

*Governor Dayton thanks Land O'Lakes for their tremendous leadership and calls on all Minnesotans to take action to improve water quality in Minnesota*

ARDEN HILLS, MN – Governor Mark Dayton and Land O'Lakes, Inc. President and CEO Chris Policinski today announced a new public-private partnership to protect and improve water quality across Minnesota. This new partnership is the first of its kind in the nation, partnering the State of Minnesota with Land O' Lakes and local farmers across Minnesota to improve water quality stewardship standards on their farms.

**“I thank Land O'Lakes for their leadership in improving the quality of water in Minnesota,”** said Governor Dayton. **“By working together, we can improve the quality of our water for future generations of Minnesotans. I urge businesses, farmers, and landowners across Minnesota to follow this model of responsible stewardship.”**

The [Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program](#) is a voluntary program for farmers and landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect and improve the state's water resources. Since its inception in 2014, the program has certified over 150 farms totaling more than 83,000 acres. Together, the program keeps over 6.5 million pounds of sediment out of our rivers, while saving nearly 9 million pounds of soil and 4,500 pounds of phosphorous on farms, each year.

Now, through a groundbreaking public-private partnership with Land O' Lakes, announced today, the agricultural cooperative company will work to expand participation in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program through their ag retail network across Minnesota.

Altogether, Land O' Lakes' seed and crop protection business, Winfield US, serves nearly 1,300 independently owned and operated agricultural retailers that operate thousands of retail locations across the United States, with approximately 300,000 farmers in their system representing close to 100 million acres. The company's leadership and participation in this nation-leading conservation effort will make a positive and significant difference toward improving the quality of water in Minnesota for generations to come.

**“Water is a finite resource, and we are pleased to partner with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the State of Minnesota on this first-of-its-kind public-private partnership to protect and enhance water quality across the state,”** said Chris Policinski, President & CEO, Land O'Lakes, Inc. **“Through our tools, insights and technology, we work to enable prudent management of water resources in our operations, on our member farms and through partnerships such as this to ensure a sustainable future for food and agriculture.”**

Over the past year, Governor Dayton has made improving water quality in Minnesota a top priority. This session, Governor Dayton proposed a [\\$220 million proposal](#) to ensure safe, clean, and affordable water for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. And Governor Dayton has been highlighting the serious challenges facing Minnesota's water supplies, convening the first-ever [Governor's Water Summit](#) in February, hosting [Water Action Week](#) in Minnesota last month, and calling for a [Year of Safe Water Action](#) beginning this summer, to inform Minnesotans about our water challenges and gather input and ideas to bring to the legislature in 2017.

**“We are pleased to partner with Land O'Lakes. This important partnership will be critical to expanding conservation and water quality protections to more farms across the state,”** said Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson. **“The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program has already demonstrated the ability to achieve improved water quality outcomes, and this partnership will only continue to enhance those efforts.”**

### **About The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program**

The [Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program](#) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years. After a successful pilot phase in 2014-2015, the program is now available to farmers and landowners statewide. To date, the program has certified over 150 farms totaling more than 83,000 acres. More information is available at [MyLandMyLegacy.com](#).

### **About Land O'Lakes**

Land O'Lakes, Inc., one of America's premier agribusiness and food companies, is a member-owned cooperative with industry-leading operations that span the spectrum from agricultural production to consumer foods. With 2015 annual sales of \$13 billion, Land O'Lakes is one of the nation's largest cooperatives, ranking 203 on the Fortune 500. Building on a legacy of more than 94 years of operation, Land O'Lakes today operates some of the most respected brands in agribusiness and food production including LAND O LAKES® Dairy Foods, Purina Animal Nutrition and Winfield US. The company does business in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. Land O'Lakes, Inc. corporate headquarters are located in Arden Hills, Minn.

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**Office of the Governor & Lt. Governor, Communications Department**  
116 Veterans Service Building, 20 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul, MN 55155  
T: 651-201-3400 | E: [Dayton.Media@state.mn.us](mailto:Dayton.Media@state.mn.us)