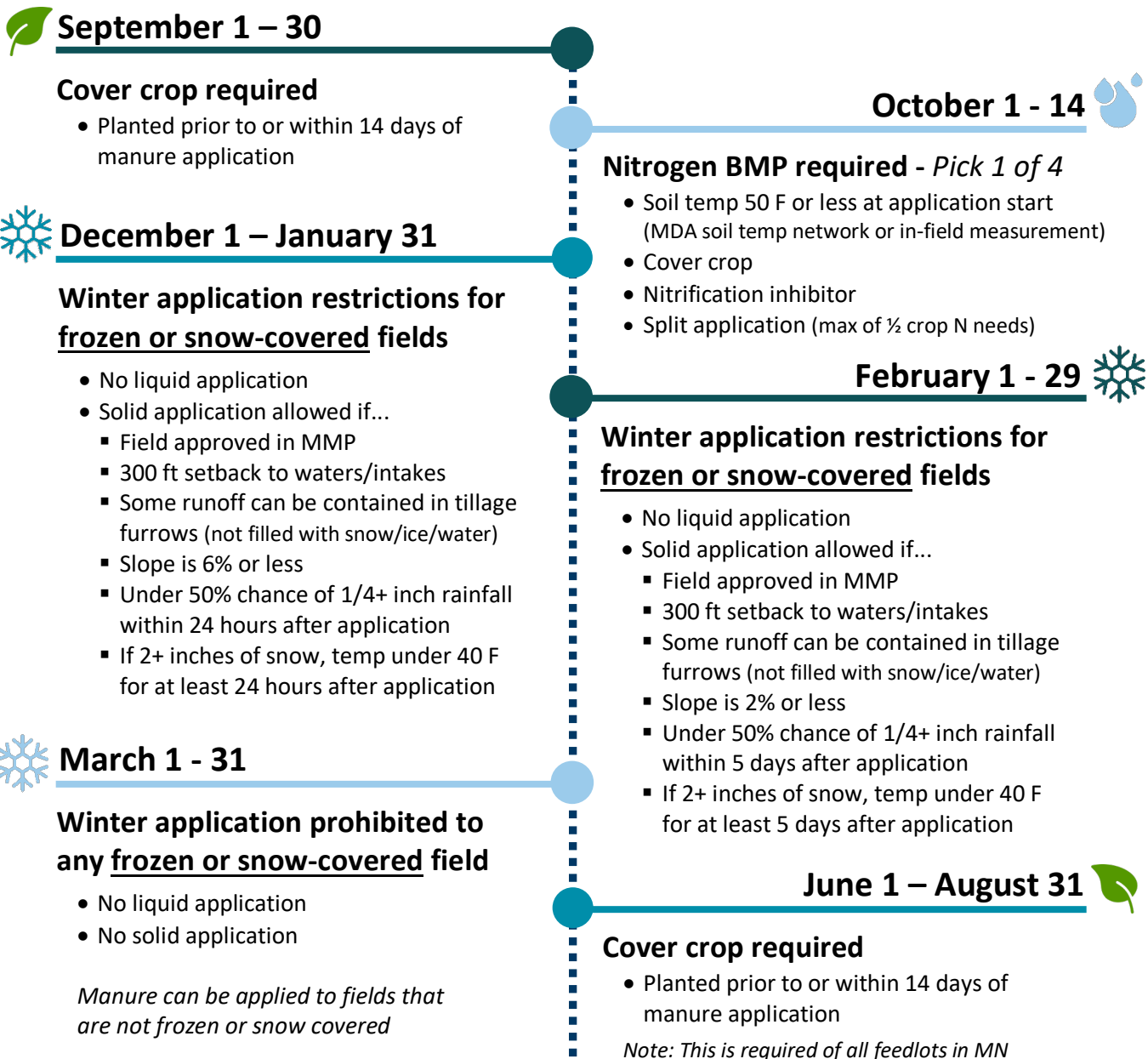


Manure application at NPDES permitted feedlots

The latest National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit for animal feedlots is effective from February 1, 2021, through January 31, 2026. In addition to the requirements to land apply at agronomic rates and observe setbacks to sensitive areas, the permit also contains requirements to address concerns over elevated nitrate levels in groundwater resources and manure contaminated runoff from winter

How manure application timing affects NPDES permitted feedlots



For more details, visit: www.pca.state.mn.us/feedlots

Frequently asked questions about the land application requirements

Winter application

- Q: Can I apply manure in March if the ground is not frozen or snow-covered?**
A: Yes – the manure application prohibition only applies when fields are frozen or snow-covered.
- Q: If we get an October/November snowfall can I land apply manure?**
A: Yes – the winter restrictions only apply to applications after November 30th.
- Q: If I can inject, can I apply liquids in early December, even if there is a light coating of snow?**
A: Yes – the winter restrictions do not apply when manure is injected below the soil surface.
- Q: What am I supposed to do if I need to remove snow from my facility in March?**
A: The permit allows land application of snow during March so long as it is...
- Applied to a pre-approved field in the MMP
 - Applied at least 300 ft from waters/intakes
 - Limited to the amount necessary to ensure animal welfare
- Q: If I have a water line break and my liquid manure storage area fills up, can I land apply in the winter?**
A: The permit allows for emergency applications in the winter. The permit has specific limitations applicable to emergency applications. You must notify the MPCA of emergency land applications.

Nitrogen BMPs

- Q: I farm up north and its colder here, why can't I apply before October 15th?**
A: You can apply manure before October 15th provided the soil temperature is 50°F or less.
- Q: Am I in violation if the soil temperature is 50° F in the morning but goes up as I land apply manure?**
A: No – the temperature at the beginning of that day's land application event is used.
- Q: How do I know what the soil temperature is?**
A: You can either take a soil thermometer reading at the land application field or utilize the nearest Minnesota Department of Agriculture soil temperate network location:
<https://app.gisdata.mn.gov/mda-soiltemp/>.

Cover crops

- Q: Am I required to plant a specific type of cover crop?**
A: There are no requirements on the type of cover crop, but plant your cover in accordance with University of Minnesota recommendations. Weeds do not meet the cover crop requirements.
- Q: Will I be penalized if my cover crop doesn't grow?**
A: Provided you made a good faith effort to plant the cover crop, lack of growth due to adverse weather conditions will not be considered a violation of the permit.
- Q: Do I need a cover crop if I apply manure to a hay/alfalfa field in September?**
A: No – the requirements for cover crops only apply to fields without an actively growing crop.

Transferred ownership

- Q: Do these requirements apply if I transfer ownership of manure?**
A: No – the requirements only apply to manure application to land owned, leased, rented, or otherwise controlled by the feedlot owner or member of the feedlot ownership entity.

More information

For specific permit requirements refer to the NPDES general permit available at:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-f3-58.pdf>.