

Subject Farm to School and Early Care grants

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Summary

This bill moves \$4,000,000 that was previously appropriated for Dairy Assistance, Investment, Relief Initiative (DAIRI) grants in 2024 Session Law to Farm to School and Early Care grants and modifies the eligibility for Farm to School grants. These funds will be available until June 30, 2027.

The DAIRI program provides financial assistance to small and medium-sized dairy operations that participate in the USDA Farm Service Agency's Dairy Margin Coverage Program and produced less than 16,000,000 pounds of milk in 2022.

Farm to School and Early Care provides eligible schools and early childhood education settings with grants to purchase and serve agricultural products. The 2024 appropriation to this program limited eligibility to schools and early childhood settings that participate in the national School Lunch Program or the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This bill would add additional eligibility requirements where the school or early childhood setting must also source at least 70 percent of food from within geographic boundaries of Minnesota and source at least 70 percent of food from farmers with limited market access. Limited market access means the farmer has gross sales of less than \$100,000 per year from the sale of farm products.