



Maine PFAS Response Program Updates & What's Next

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Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

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Overview

- 1) Response Program Description & Mission
- 2) Status/Findings
- 3) 2025 Summary
- 4) What's Ahead in 2026



PFAS Response Program (PRSP)

Dedicated to assisting farms impacted by PFAS contamination, DACF's PFAS Response Program works directly with impacted producers to safeguard human health while ensuring farm viability.

Our mission is to identify PFAS contamination, pursue strategies to reduce or eliminate PFAS, and provide individualized technical and financial assistance to achieve farm sustainability.

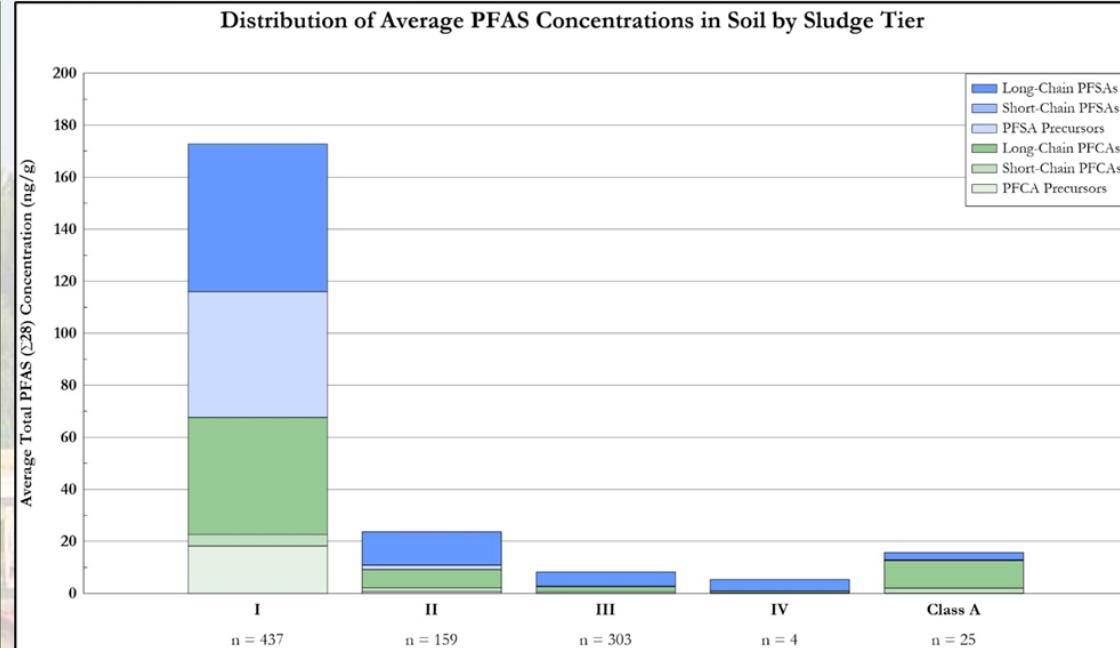
Through our efforts to date, most farms have been able to make adjustments to continue producing products safely.



Status of PFAS Sites

- Collaborate closely with Maine DEP as they execute the legislative mandate to investigate all historic licensed application sites
- Conduct soil testing using ISM & provide results interpretation in the context of agriculture
 - Drinking water determinations are made by DEP
- Able to work with farms that seek DACF support and have reason to investigate (purchased contaminated materials, Tier 4 sites, etc.)

- Highest levels of contamination found 2020-2022.
- Finding more sites, but **lower levels of contamination**
 - ✓ Tier 1 (> 10,000 CY sludge applied/industrial sources) – 60 sites
 - ✓ Tier 2 (5,000 – 10,000 CY sludge) – 46 sites
 - Tier 3 (< 5,000 CY sludge) - >400 sites -> $\sim \frac{1}{2}$ way
 - Tier 4 (Permit issued but not confirmed) - >500 sites



Graphic credit: Maine DEP



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Number of Farms – 12/31/25

111 farms that are considered impacted by PFAS.

- **22 farms** have PFAS detections that exceeded Maine's interim drinking water standard and DACF's most conservative soil screening level.
- **64 farms** exceeded DACF's most conservative soil screening level.
- **25 farms** exceeded Maine's interim drinking water standard.

*The most conservative soil screening level used by DACF at farms is 6.4 ppb for PFOS.

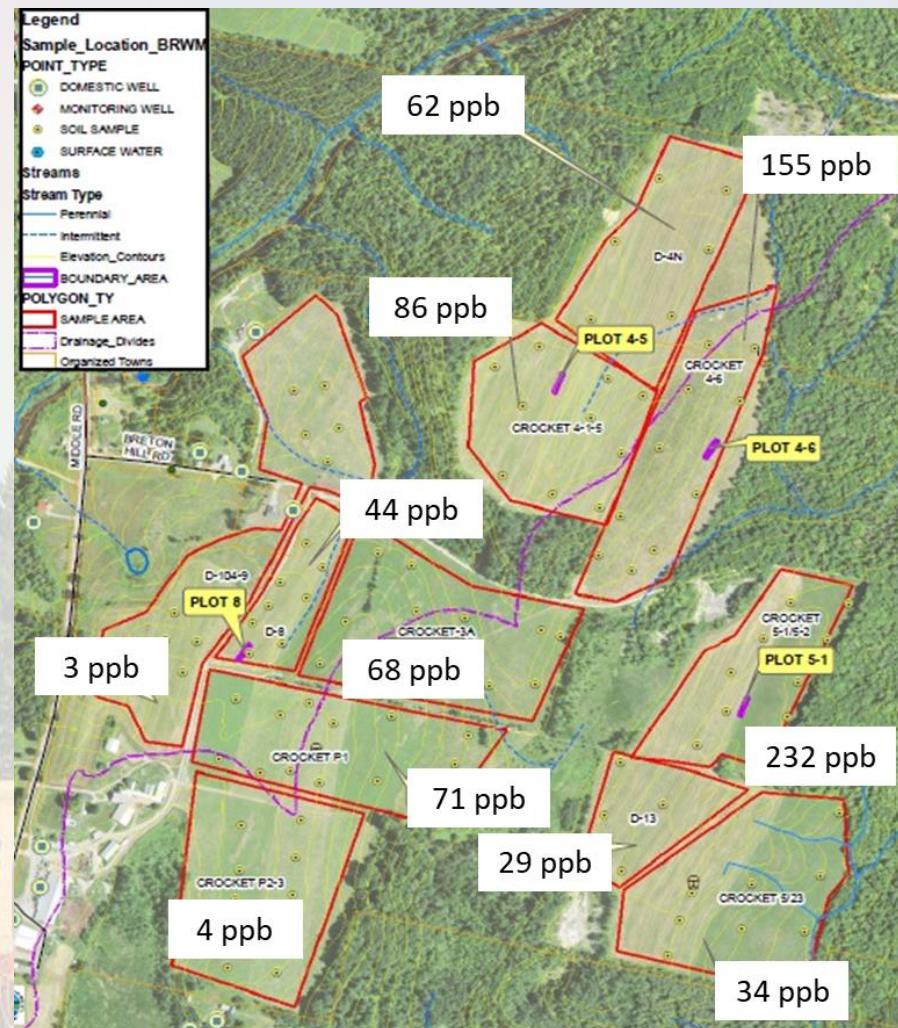
- ➔ Impacts on a farm's operations will be highly dependent on the specific product, management practices, and size of the operation.
- ➔ Many impacted farms can adjust their operations and continue to farm safely with the help of DACF's technical and financial support. To date, *6 have closed operations & 3 have significantly downsized*

Number of Farms by Tier	
Tier	Number of Farms
No Tier	12
Tier 1	52
Tier 2	12
Tier 3	181
Tier 4	4
TBD	9
TOTAL	270



In-Field Data Example

- Soil data helps map on-the-ground reality.
- Understanding field data helps drive recommendations.
- Underscores PFAS variability across fields and farms.
- Site wide investigations are critical.

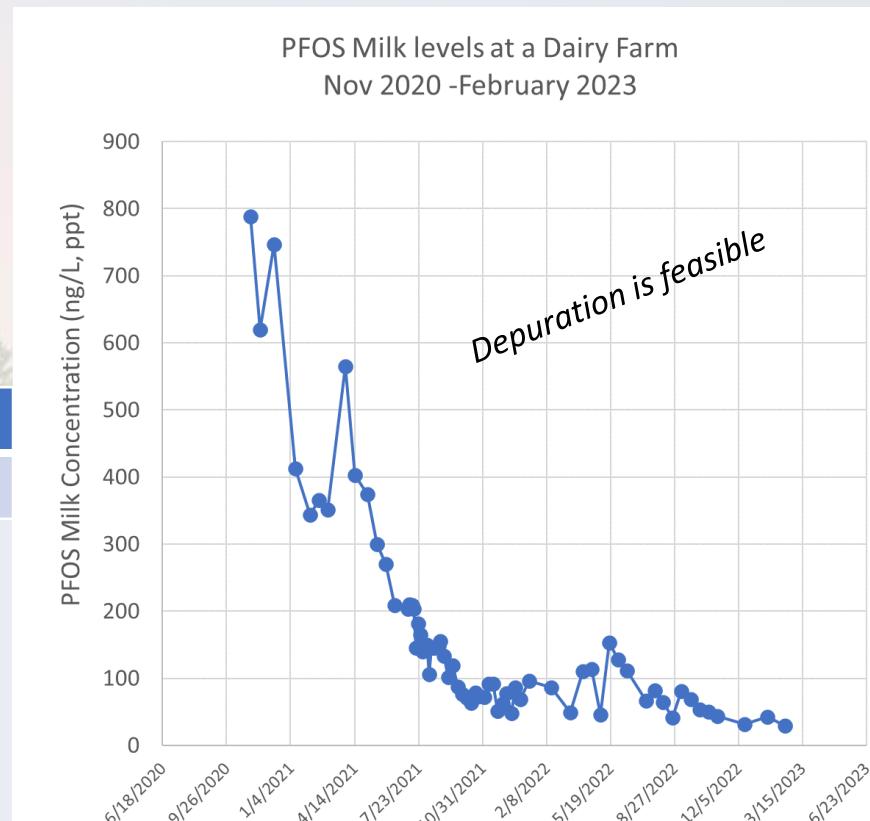


Programmatic PFAS Response Works

- Not all farms are the same
- Not all PFAS are the same
- Animals can depurate
- Some crops can grow in impacted soil
- Modeling now available for some products

Differing PFOS Uptake By Vegetables

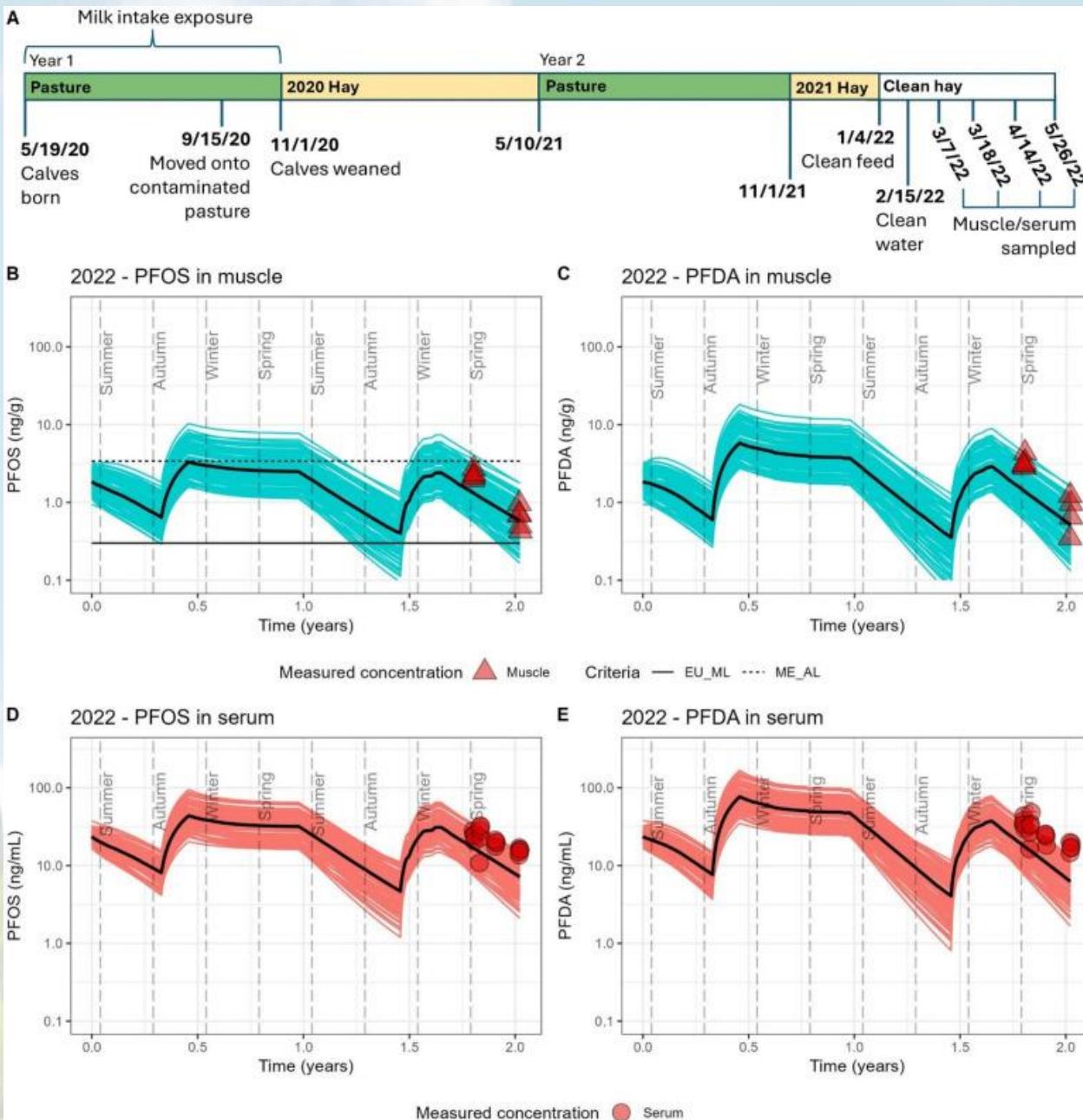
Little	Some	More
Asparagus	Arugula	Lettuce
Bok Choy	Carrots	Spinach
Corn (kernels)	Kale	
Green Beans	Swiss Chard	
Peppers		
Potatoes		
Rhubarb		
Broccoli		



2025 Summary

- Adopted a chicken egg Action Level of 4.7 ppb PFOS
 - Based on existing regulatory framework
- Dynamic beef model published
 - Senior Planner Duncan Pfaehler & contracted veterinarian Meghan Flanagan were co-authors; collaborative effort with Maine CDC, FSIS, and Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria, Australia
 - “The model was applied to simulate management strategies and complement economic analyses to demonstrate that, with modifications to management practices, it is feasible for the farm to achieve lower PFOS and PFDA levels in beef and maintain economic viability despite elevated PFAS soil levels.”
 - Based on work to support a Maine farm, which graciously allowed us to conduct this detailed work
 - Able to utilize this model to support other producers (testing to verify estimates still needed)





2025 Summary

- PFAS Response Program is now an enacted program in the Bureau of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources
 - DACF received legislative authority to create its organized response through the 2021 biennial budget (PL 2021 chs. 398, 635)
 - Budgetary authority did not formally establish the program in statute. That occurred via LD 130, passed by the 132nd Legislature in 2025.
 - Title 7, §320-AA. PFAS Response Program
- With this new authority, PRSP can formally establish parameters for the program's activities through routine rulemaking
 - Request for Stakeholder Input in advance of rulemaking was issued this fall

What's Expected in 2026

- Continued work in the field, investigating Tier 3 locations
- Rulemaking efforts underway – public process allowing transparency & allowing public to speak directly to DACF regarding their PFAS-related ideas, feedback, and concerns
 - Financial assistance programs largely unchanged
 - Technical assistance largely unchanged – eligibility criteria and certain expectations of cooperation will be codified
 - Action Levels expected to change. Important to incorporate evolving science around PFAS, while centering on achievability and farm viability



What's Expected in 2026

- The proposed rules related to maximum levels for PFAS in farm products will focus primarily on the process and the methods used to determine an Action Level.
 - This will enable PRSP to stay current with scientific advancements and develop and apply action levels to farm products as needed.
- Exact timing of rules will depend on the volume and substance of public comment received. DACF anticipates issuing drafted rules for public comment sometime in the first half of 2026.
- Our newsletter is the best way to ensure you receive relevant notifications during the process
- Producers are encouraged to work with PRSP if they are interested in pursuing strategies to prepare for the anticipated new and lower action levels



Thank You!



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<https://www.mainegov/dacf/ag/pfas/index.shtml>