

Protecting Rural Minnesota

Minnesota Attorney General's Farm Fest Report
August 2026



The Office of
Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison
helping people afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect • www.ag.state.mn.us

A Message From
Attorney General Keith Ellison

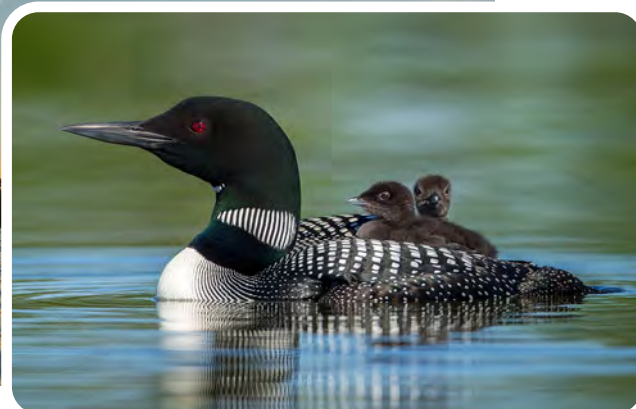


So much of Minnesota's strength is rooted in its rural communities. From family farms and Main Street businesses to local schools and volunteer fire halls, rural Minnesota embodies resilience, hard work, and neighbors helping neighbors. These communities feed our state, fuel our economy, and maintain a deep commitment to place that helps make Minnesota what it is. No matter where in Minnesota we call home, we all benefit from the vitality of rural communities.

In my travels across the state, from Ely to New Ulm and many places in between, the kind folks I've met all want the same thing: a fair economy that works for them. So, when big corporations try to rig the economy in their favor, or when the federal government oversteps its authority, my office will always be in rural Minnesota's corner.

This report focuses on the issues that impact rural areas in our state, and the work my office does to help you keep food on your table, keep your money in your pocketbook, and keep you healthy. As your Attorney General, I remain committed to ensuring everyone in rural Minnesota can afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect. You deserve no less.

Keith Ellison





Antitrust

Fair competition is the backbone of our economy. When markets don't allow for fair competition, small businesses get squeezed out, costs for consumers go up, and quality, choice, and innovation go down. With our antitrust work, the Minnesota Attorney General's Office is fighting to level the playing field in our state's agriculture sector.

Agri Stats Data Sharing

In multistate settlement, Attorney General Ellison shut down a de facto price fixing scheme that raised consumers' food costs.

Data-sharing and consulting company Agri Stats had been collecting incredibly detailed price, sales, and production information from meat processors and generating and sharing reports exclusively to the meat processors. Participating processors accounted for more than 90% of broiler chicken sales, 80% of pork sales, and 90% of turkey sales, meaning the vast majority of the American meat processing industry provided data for and received these extremely detailed reports. Meat processors then weaponized that data, leading to higher chicken, pork, and turkey prices on families across America.

Agri Stats reports were, in essence, a tool for coordination that encouraged meat processors to raise prices and even reduce supply. In 2023, Attorney General Ellison joined the DOJ and a bipartisan coalition of states in suing Agri Stats for this illegal, anti-competitive scheme. In May 2026, the coalition secured a settlement that shut down these practices, barring Agri Stats from collecting and sharing sales information, pricing details, and other sensitive data exclusively among competing meat processors and to make available more general reports to the public for purchase.



Egg Price Fixing

Attorney General Ellison and a bipartisan, multistate coalition uncovered and stopped an illegal scheme to manipulate egg prices.

AG Ellison and the multistate coalition opened an investigation into the soaring cost of egg prices and discovered that for a three-year period, leading egg producers Cal-Maine Foods, Versova/Centrum, and Hickman's Egg Ranch used secret communications to coordinate their bidding and influence daily egg price quotes published by Urner Barry, a benchmark pricing index widely used in supply contracts. By manipulating the Urner Barry benchmark, the companies artificially inflated the price of eggs paid by retailers and consumers across the nation.

June 2026 settlements put an end to this illegal, unethical collusion. Under the settlements, all three companies agree to end their illegal coordination, adopt compliance measures to prevent future violations, and fully cooperate with oversight measures.

The \$3.3 million settlements also secured 53 million eggs provided at the companies' expense to participating states—2 million of which will be donated to Minnesota food banks and nonprofit organizations.



Syngenta & Corteva Anti-Competitive Loyalty Programs

Attorney General Ellison sued pesticides manufacturers for loyalty programs designed to inflate prices.

In an ongoing lawsuit, Attorney General Ellison, the Federal Trade Commission, and 11 other state attorneys general allege that pesticide manufacturers Syngenta and Corteva used “loyalty programs” to pay distributors to block or limit sales of cheaper generic crop-protection products—suppressing competition and inflating prices for farmers and consumers.

The lawsuit accuses Syngenta and Corteva of undermining fair competition by offering incentive rebates to pesticide distributors that keep purchases of generic products below a low threshold. Nearly all leading distributors in the United States have entered into these anti-competitive rebate programs, and in turn sell products containing Syngenta's and Corteva's branded ingredients to retail outlets.

The programs reward distributors for selling Syngenta and Corteva products long after their patent and other protections have expired. In the ongoing case, AG Ellison asks the court to end the loyalty programs, and grant restitution for Minnesota farmers based on Syngenta's and Corteva's ill-gotten profits.



Federal Overreach

When the federal government breaks the law and harms the people of Minnesota, rural Minnesotans often feel that harm the most. Attorney General Ellison and his office are committed to challenging federal overreach in court, defending for the rule of law, and protecting the people of Minnesota.

Tariffs

Attorney General Ellison won two lawsuits against illegal tariffs that hurt Minnesota farmers.

President Trump has twice attempted to impose unlawful tariffs on essential goods purchased by American consumers and businesses. These tariffs have had a negative impact on Minnesota farmers, as other nations have retaliated by putting their own tariffs on the goods our farmers produce, pricing them out of many markets they rely on.

Twice, AG Ellison and a coalition of state AGs have taken the administration to court to block those tariffs—and twice they have been successful. Initially, the President's tariffs were invoked under International Emergency Economic Powers Act, but in February 2026 the Supreme Court agreed with AG Ellison and the coalition, ruling those tariffs were unlawful.

The President then imposed 10 percent tariffs on most products worldwide, supposedly in response to trade deficits. In May 2026, the U.S. Court of International Trade ruled that those tariffs are illegal, again siding with AG Ellison and a coalition of state AGs. If and when the President launches his next attempt to impose unlawful tariffs, AG Ellison stands ready to protect Minnesota farmers and the rule of law.

USAID

The Attorney General's Office is siding with Minnesota farmers against the federal government's cuts to USAID.

Starting in the first month of his second term, President Trump has worked to dismantle the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), our country's top government agency for foreign development and humanitarian aid. Through policy changes and executive orders, the administration blocked its funding, canceled grants, and shuttered buildings. This is another hit to Minnesota farmers' bottom line—Each year, the federal government's Food Aid programs buy about \$2 billion in commodities from American farmers, and the USAID Food for Peace program purchases \$70 million in Minnesota commodities.



The Attorney General's Office is backing a lawsuit to shut down the government's blockade on USAID funding, and as the case and others like it make their way through the courts, we'll be on the side of farmers every step of the way.

SNAP

As SNAP and other food benefit programs have come under attack, Attorney General Ellison has fought hard to defend them.

Food benefit programs like SNAP have been a frequent target for the President Trump, even though these programs help roughly 440,000 Minnesotans across our state keep food on the table. Cuts to SNAP benefits also harm farmers and rural communities by reducing demand for locally produced food, weakening agricultural markets, and threatening the stability of businesses that depend on food purchases.

The administration has attempted to stop paying benefits during a government shutdown, punish states for following a court order to provide them, cut off benefits for legal immigrants, and impose impossible regulatory demands on the program. Each time, Attorney General Ellison has won the fight to preserve these important benefits.

In March 2026, AG Ellison and a coalition of 21 state AGs sued to block the administration's most recent attack on SNAP—a threat to impose harsh financial penalties on states that do not comply with the administration's positions on immigration, diversity, equity and inclusion, and gender identity, none of which have anything to do with the purpose of USDA funding.





Health Care

Access to quality health care is essential to the strength of every Minnesota community, yet rural areas often face unique challenges. The Minnesota Attorney General's Office is committed to promoting fair and competitive health care markets, and helping ensure that rural Minnesotans can obtain the services they need, close to home.

Access and Affordability

Attorney General Ellison is fighting for access to affordable, high-quality health care for all of Greater Minnesota

With rising costs and drug prices, a complex health-insurance system, and recent dramatic federal changes to reimbursing care, Minnesotans are struggling to maintain access to our state's world-class healthcare system. These changes are hitting rural Minnesotans especially hard. As just one example, many Minnesota communities are now more than 100 miles from labor and delivery services.

Attorney General Ellison has been actively working to shore up and expand access to affordable healthcare in rural Minnesota.

He shepherded the 10-year agreement that secures the long-term stability of the University of Minnesota Medical School, which trains 70 percent of Minnesota doctors.

He was instrumental in the deal to prevent Hennepin County Medical Center from closing from lack of funding. HCMC serves people from every corner of Minnesota with world-class, specialized services like hyperbaric medicine and its Burn Unit and operates the busiest emergency room and Level 1 Trauma Center in Minnesota — and does so without regard to patients' ability to pay.

Thanks to a new law passed in 2023, the Minnesota Attorney General's Office reviews large healthcare transactions to determine whether they are in the public interest.

Attorney General Ellison is currently reviewing the proposed merger of South Dakota-based Sanford Health with Minnesota-based North Memorial. Sanford operates 16 hospitals and clinics in western and Northern Minnesota; North Memorial operates two Metro-area hospitals, and a Level 1 Trauma Center and the largest hospital-based air and ground ambulance system in the United States, serving every corner of Minnesota.

Attorney General Ellison is also currently reviewing the proposed merger of California-based Sutter Health with Minnesota-based Allina Health. Allina operates five hospitals, including Abbott Northwestern and United and an extensive network of clinics and emergency medical transportation in southern and central Minnesota and Wisconsin.



Affording your Life

Whether it's a rising utility bill, declining quality in a service you depend on, or challenges keeping your essential equipment in working order, there are all kinds of pressures on rural budgets in Minnesota. Helping Minnesotans afford their lives has always been AG Ellison's top priority.

Utility Rates and Service

The Attorney General's Office works to keep utility costs affordable for all Minnesotans, and helps ensure utility companies follow the law.

The Residential Utilities Division in AG Ellison's office represents residential customers and small businesses in proceedings that affect what they pay for utilities. The Office recently obtained a rate decrease for Xcel electric's small business customers that will go into effect in the next few months.

Though some rural communities are customers of investor-owned utilities like Xcel, many are serviced by electric cooperatives—typically not-for-profit, member-owned organizations. While the Attorney General's Office does not have the ability to advocate for lower electric rates for electric cooperative customers, it does make sure that these cooperatives follow Minnesota's consumer protection laws. In May 2026, AG Ellison stepped in when Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power disconnected a rural customer's power, despite their need for electricity to power life-sustaining medical equipment.

Minnesota law requires energy providers to maintain service to customers with an authorized medical necessity form to receive electric service, even if they fall behind on their bills. Minnesota Valley initially ignored this law, but restored power to the customer after AG Ellison secured a temporary restraining order against their cruel action.

Telephone Service Quality

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office advocates for residential and small business landline customers.

In our increasingly digital and mobile society, there are still many families and businesses that rely on landline telephones to communicate with loved ones, connect with customers, access health care, or call emergency services. In November 2025, AG Ellison secured a settlement agreement with CenturyLink that requires the company to maintain a high standard of customer service.

The settlement sets minimum numbers of technicians operating in Minnesota, based on the number of landline customers. It also requires CenturyLink to pay bill credits for service outages, and \$25 credits if technicians miss a repair appointment without sufficient notice. CenturyLink will also be required to create a dedicated, Minnesota-specific customer service webpage and 1-800 telephone number, allowing landline customers to connect with live customer service representatives via phone and online chat 24 hours a day.



Data Centers

The Attorney General's Office advocates for data centers to pay a fair share of their electric service under Minnesota law.

In June 2026, AG Ellison's team successfully advocated that Xcel's data center customers pay all costs attributable to them and not pass these costs on to residential and small business electric customers. This includes the additional costs they impose on Minnesota's power system, often in the form of new power plants and transmission lines that energy companies build to meet the increased demand, the costs of which are typically passed on, at least in part, to individual customers. Under the new agreement, small businesses and residential customers won't be asked to cover those capital costs through higher electric rates.



John Deere

Attorney General Ellison reached a settlement with John Deere that will help Minnesota's farmers save on repair costs.

For decades, John Deere has made it difficult for farmers and other small businesses to repair their equipment, forcing them to rely on their network of authorized repair dealers. These dealers are usually expensive, slow, and based far from where rural farmers live and work. This practice has helped John Deere boost its multi-billion-dollar profits on agricultural equipment, parts, and repair, leaving Minnesota farmers stuck with the bill. In January 2025, The Minnesota Attorney General's Office sued John Deere to end their unlawful repair monopoly.

Not only do these unfair practices drive up equipment repair costs, but they also deprive Minnesotans of the ability to make timely repairs on equipment that they rely on every day to keep their farms working. Minnesotans deserve better.

In July 2026, the AGO reached a settlement with John Deere requiring the company to make its current and future repair resources — most of which it has provided only to authorized Deere dealers — available to farmers and independent repair providers for a period of 10 years.



Connect With Us

Attorney General Ellison makes it a priority to travel all over our state to hear from Minnesotans about the issues that impact them, and share ways his office can help. Visit <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNAG/signup/50158> or use the QR code below to join our mailing list and get information on the next town hall in your area.



Join our Mailing List:

Scan the QR code or visit

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNAG/signup/50158>

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office wants to hear from you!

If you have been a victim of wage theft, want to report fraud, or need help resolving a consumer problem, file your complaint using our online complaint forms at www.ag.state.mn.us/complaint, or call us at (800) 657-3787.



File a Complaint:

If you have been a victim of wage theft, want to report fraud, or need help resolving a consumer problem go to www.ag.state.mn.us/complaint



Call Our Office:

(651) 296-3353 (Metro area)
(800) 657-3787 (Greater Minnesota)
(800) 627-3529 (Minnesota Relay)



The Office of
Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison

helping people afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect • www.ag.state.mn.us

445 Minnesota Street, Suite 600, St. Paul, MN 55101