



Maine PFAS Response Program Update

Committee On Environment and Natural Resources
January 22, 2025

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Agenda

- PFAS Response Program Update
 - Timeline
 - Status
 - PFAS response works
 - Financial assistance
- PFAS Fund
- Beyond Maine
- LD 130

Timeline

2016

- Discovery of impacted dairy farm
- Creation of milk PFOS action level (210 ppt)

2019

- Governor Mills creates PFAS Task Force
- Recommendations regarding safe drinking water, food, and identifying/investigating PFAS in the environment

2020

- DACF retail milk testing identifies second, then third, impacted dairy farm
- Creation of beef PFOS action level (3.4 ppb)

2021

- Legislature approves budget for multi-agency response and passes *Public Law 2021, Chapter 478: An Act To Investigate PFAS Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater*
- PFAS Fund established

2022

- DACF hires PFAS Response Program staff and Fund Director
- Ban on Land Application of Sludge
- Tier I site investigations conducted

2023

- Finalize PFAS Fund Plan (\$60 M)
- Tier II site investigations conducted

2024

- PFAS Response continues. PFAS Fund begins land acquisition and PFAS research efforts
- Tier III site investigation started

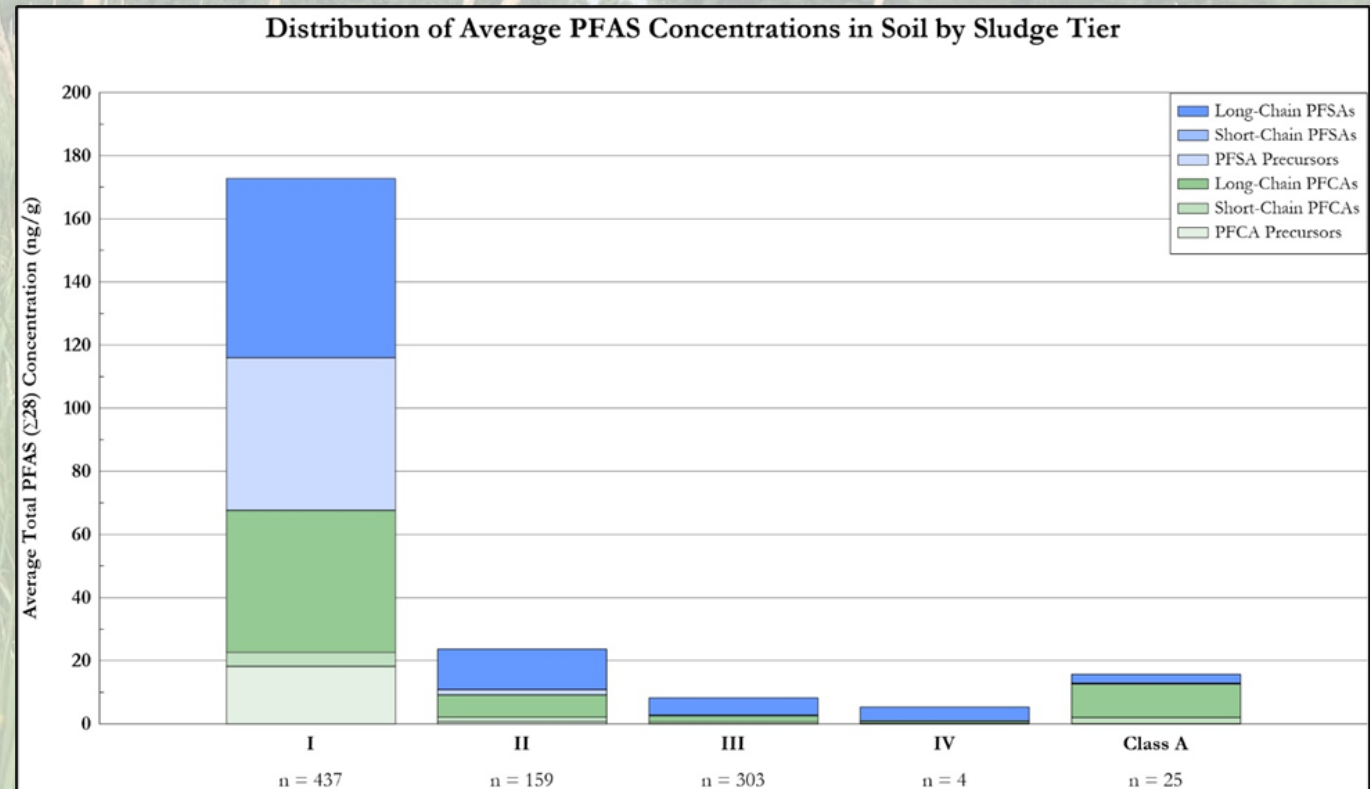
2025

- Tier III site investigations continue
- Pursue codification of PFAS Response Program in MRSA

Status ~5 Years In

- Highest levels of contamination found 2020-2022.
- Currently finding **lower levels** of contamination – more sites, but **most farms remaining in production**
 - ✓ Tier 1 (> 10,000 CY sludge applied/industrial sources)
 - ✓ Tier 2 (5,000 – 10,000 CY sludge)
 - Tier 3 (< 5,000 CY sludge)
 - Tier 4 (Permit issued but not confirmed)

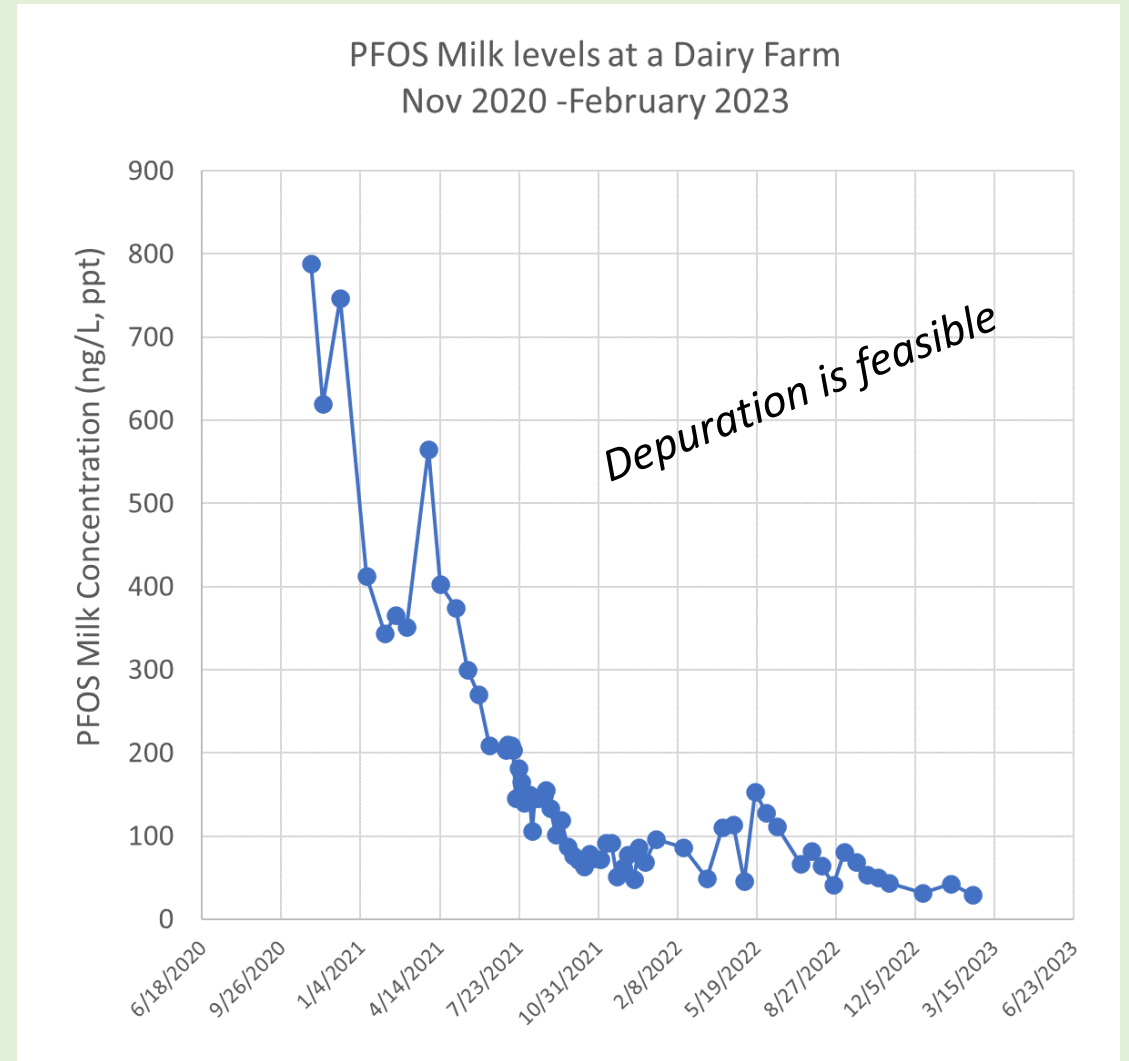
- 82 farms w/ varying levels of contamination
- 5 closures
- 3 reduced operations
- Most have remained viable
- ***Impacts are different for every farm***



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

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



Recommendation Examples

- **Every farm is different.** We provide individualized recommendations to producers.
- > *Some common themes:*
 - Identify and label feed sources.
 - Store feed in cross sections to avoid hot spots.
 - Provide the cleanest feed to animals in the months prior to processing. This may allow continued utilization of more fields.
 - Focus production on plants with lower uptake or ornamental crops.



Financial Assistance – PFAS Response

Testing and Monitoring

Clean Feed Assistance

Water Filters for Ag Water

Equipment and Input Costs

- Equipment and related input costs to allow a commercial farm to convert its operations to accommodate new/modified products and production methods.

Infrastructure (Less than \$150,000)

- Permanent physical assets and structures that will help a commercial farm transition to new products and production methods.

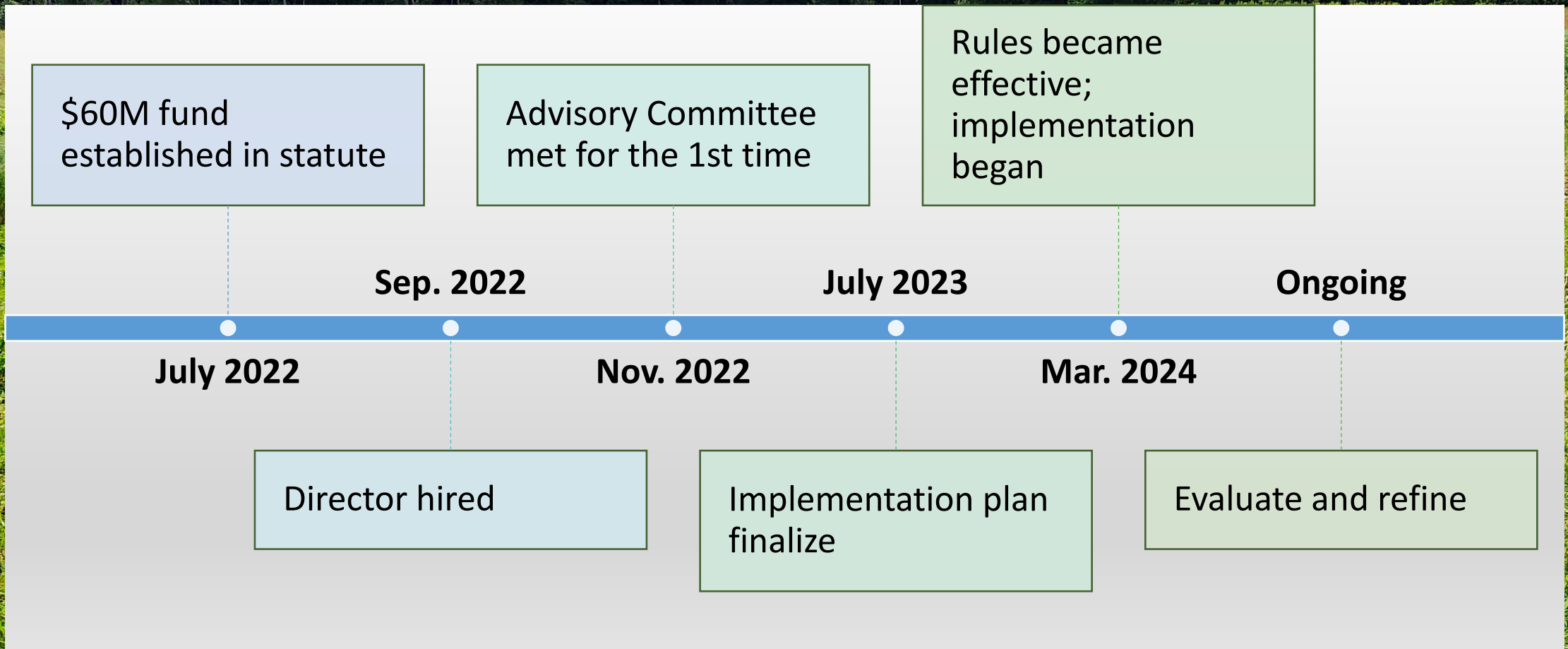
Debt Service on Existing Loans

- Payment of loans directly related to farm infrastructure built/installed prior to the discovery of PFAS contamination (e.g., high-tunnel, greenhouse, farm store).

~\$3.1 M since 2022

Critical support also from:
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
& Maine Farmland Trust

PFAS Fund



Financial Assistance – PFAS Fund

- Projected budget: \$70M/5 years (2023-2028)
 - \$60M committed by Maine legislature
 - \$5M from USDA
- Coordinated systems of support:
 - Direct assistance to impacted farms (\$30.3M) **~\$2.28M since March 2024**
 - Business Planning, Income Replacement (up to 2 years), etc.
 - Land acquisition & management (\$21.4M)
 - Three farms pursuing sales
 - Research to support on-farm decision-making (\$11.2M)
 - First call for research grants underway
 - Health initiatives (\$7.3M)
 - Blood testing and mental health resources in 2025

As Maine Goes...

- Maine is leading the nation. We are not alone, just out ahead.
- Contamination sources (biosolids, AFFF) not unique to Maine.
- Other states grappling with potential PFAS policies/responses.
- UMaine research of public perception and PFAS: support for farms.
- Priority for National Assoc. of State Departments of Ag. (NASDA)
- Continuing to advocate for coordinated Federal response.

BECOME A MEMBER



PFAS Shut Maine Farms Down. Now, Some Are Rebounding.

In the aftermath of state testing that revealed dangerous levels of forever chemicals on some Maine farms in 2021, organizations, farmers, and Indigenous communities are creating blueprints for recovery.

BY KIRSTEN LIE-NIELSEN • OCTOBER 2, 2023

LD 130

- 2021 biennial budget authorized DACF and DEP to respond to PFAS.
- Program has since matured.
- DACF submitted LD 130 to establish the Program framework in the Maine Revised Statutes.
- LD 130 also makes updates to PFAS Fund.

Thank You!



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