

## Timeline of DACF PFAS Response Efforts

**2016:** Discovery of a dairy farm in Arundel, Maine with PFOS contamination in milk.

**2017:** DACF coordinated with Maine CDC to establish an Action Level for PFOS in milk.

**2019:** Governor Mills takes office and creates PFAS Task Force; DACF Commissioner a member.

- Task Force makes recommendations regarding safe drinking water and food and the need to identify and investigate PFAS in the environment.
- DACF conducts its first round of retail milk testing – no concerns identified.

**2020:** DACF conducts a second round of retail milk testing.

- Identifies dairy farm with high PFOS in Fairfield, Maine. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) begins local site investigations, and a third dairy farm is identified with high PFOS.
- DACF's staff at the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources (BAFRR) begins assisting both farms.
- DACF coordinated with Maine CDC to establish an Action Level for PFOS in beef.
- DACF begins ongoing dialogue with Maine's Congressional offices, state legislators, and state and federal stakeholders regarding need for federal support, research, etc.

**2021:** DACF gains knowledge working with impacted farms; Legislative budgetary support.

- BAFRR staff continue to work with impacted dairies: gathering data, providing technical assistance with Maine Centers for Disease Control (CDC) input, covering testing costs, and providing other financial assistance based on producer needs and input.
- The Legislature approves significant funding to support DACF's and DEP's existing and future response efforts.
- The Legislature passes LD 1600, requiring DEP to conduct groundwater and soil testing at historically licensed sludge and septage sites in Maine by the end of 2025.

**2022:** DACF hires PFAS personnel, expands assistance to commercial farms, and begins building the new PFAS Fund.

- BAFRR hires five full-time PFAS Response staff and two part-time contractors to provide in-field and administrative assistance.

- Staff provide comprehensive testing to identify the source(s) of contamination and levels of PFAS in soil, water, vegetable, and animal tissue, etc. Staff assess results and create plans to reduce contamination at farms.
- Based on direct feedback from impacted producers, DACF enhances financial assistance programs for farms (income replacement, viability support, water filters, etc.) and collaborates with agricultural service providers to ensure timely support.
- The Legislature creates a new PFAS Fund, included in the Governor’s budget, that is designed to provide a range of supports.
- DACF hires the Director of the Fund in September. The PFAS Fund Advisory Committee meets for the first time in November 2022.

**2023:** PFAS Fund Buildout by DACF and ongoing PFAS Response Support

- PFAS Fund Advisory Committee adopts Final Plan for Administration in July 2023. Farmers and agricultural service provider partners serve as Advisory Committee or subcommittee members.
- The [PFAS Fund implementation plan](#) includes strategies to expand DACF’s financial support to commercial farms, strategies to purchase PFAS-impacted agricultural land from willing sellers, and support for research and health initiatives.
- With the PFAS Fund under development, BAFRR provides over \$3.2 million dollars in financial support (through early April 2024):
  - Income Replacement, \$1,906,227.53
  - Farm infrastructure and viability, \$977,129.31
  - Water Filtration: \$96,059.06
  - Depopulation Compensation: \$265,683.90
- BAFRR hires two additional staff members for the PFAS Response Program.
- DACF receives a \$5 million grant from USDA to advance its PFAS response work.
- Governor Mills submits [Farm Bill priorities](#) to Congress, including advocating to support the Relief for Farmers Hit with PFAS Act and ensuring that existing USDA programs continue to serve farmers dealing with PFAS contamination.
- DACF continues to meet with Maine congressional staff to update and discuss the need to address PFAS contamination in Maine

**2024:** PFAS Fund Implementation and ongoing PFAS Response Support

- The [rules](#) implementing the PFAS Fund plan became effective in March 2024.
- The PFAS Fund begins accepting applications for financial assistance and land purchases on March 18, 2024.
- As of July 1, 2024, the PFAS Fund had approved:

- 13 administrative cost grants,
  - 4 income replacement payments,
  - 3 requests for professional services, and
  - is pursuing 3 real estate purchases.
- PFAS Fund and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s Maine Agricultural Mediation Program launched the PFAS Navigator Program on July 1 to provide one-on-one assistance and connect farmers with critical technical, financial, and social assistance programs. At the same time, the [PFAS Response Kit](#), a comprehensive guidance document, was posted on DACF’s website and distributed to PFAS-impacted farms.
  - BAFRR’s PFAS Response Program provides repeated monitoring of products or additional testing services for certain farms. New locations are identified in continuation of DEP’s LD1600 groundwater and soil investigation, working on what are considered “Tier 3” locations. (For more about DEP’s tiered investigation, visit [PFAS and Maine DEP, Maine Department of Environmental Protection](#).) As anticipated, these “Tier 3” sites prove to have lower levels of contamination, on average, than the “Tier 2” or “Tier 1” locations tested in earlier years. The majority of farms assessed by BAFRR to date continue to be viable.
  - BAFRR’s PFAS Response Program continues to provide financial assistance to producers, including maintenance of water filtration systems, clean feed purchases, equipment purchases to enable management transitions, etc.

**2025:** Ongoing PFAS Fund and PFAS Response Support

- The PFAS Fund closed on its first land acquisition in February 2025. The property consists of forest and a moderately contaminated hay field. The PFAS Fund’s goal is to return the field to an appropriate agricultural use.
- In April 2025, the PFAS Fund awarded \$3 million in grants to academic institutions to investigate detection of PFAS in soil and other media, uptake by animals and plants, and soil remediation. The results will help to further understanding of how PFAS moves through agricultural systems and, therefore, how to effectively and efficiently mitigate their impact and improve the odds for farmers to remain in business.
- The PFAS Fund continues to provide financial assistance to producers, including administrative cost grants, income replacement payments, and grants for professional services.
- BAFRR’s PFAS Response Program continues to assess new locations in support of DEP’s LD1600 groundwater and soil testing investigation, focused on remaining “Tier 3” locations, and maintains ongoing technical support for several farms. Financial support continues to be offered, including equipment purchases or

infrastructure investments to enable management transitions, water filtration system maintenance, etc.

- The Legislature passed LD 130, An Act to Establish the PFAS Response Program and to Modify the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination. This bill effectively codifies the existing PFAS Response Program and its activities that were first authorized through prior budget processes. It also provides DACF the opportunity to engage in rule-making to more effectively administer the program; public input will be sought in late 2025.
- In coordination with Maine CDC, DACF established an Action Level for chicken eggs, based upon modifications to the existing beef Action Level.