

MICHIGAN CORN

# BETWEEN

T H E  R O W S

The Joint Magazine of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan and the Michigan Corn Growers Association

## Michigan Corn Farmers Could See Record Yields



FALL 2017

# BETWEEN THE ROWS

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# CMPM: Working with the Autos and Ethanol Industry to Grow your Markets

By: Jim Zook, Executive Director, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan and Michigan Corn Growers Association

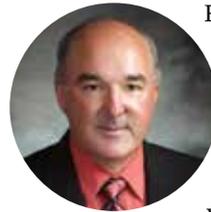
Over 5 years ago an alliance was formed called the Ag Auto Ethanol alliance with a goal to identify and overcome barriers to using higher level blends of ethanol. The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, along with 13 other state corn grower groups, six auto companies, six ethanol companies and 22 affiliated companies make up this alliance. It is a diverse group, which enables it to address all potential barriers to higher level blends of ethanol

## What are some of the barriers to selling more ethanol?

Just like farming, ethanol is also a complex issue. Some of the barriers we are working to overcome include:

Keeping the Renewable Volume Obligation number at statutory levels of 15 Billion gallons and not allowing that to backslide.

Expanding the Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) Waiver to include all ethanol levels above 10%. Currently only ethanol blends of 10% have the waiver. That means that blends of greater than 10% ethanol can only be used in a Flex Fuel vehicle from June 1 to September 15. Changes may come from a rulemaking by EPA or through Senate action.



Fuel Specification and standards have been approved by ASTM for a new test fuel of 100 Research Octane Number or ASTM D8076, thus allowing for the inclusion of higher level blends of ethanol. There will then need to be a test fuel developed to certify these vehicles with this new fuel. Work is currently in process.

We're also pushing to continue testing engines and vehicles for 25% ethanol. This will help prove that E25 and high compression engines will improve performance, emissions and fuel mileage.

Lastly, you might have noticed that Flex Fuel vehicles are not as prevalent as a few years ago. This is because the auto manufacturers lost the credits they could use to meet their CAFE standards. There is discussion happening about how that could be re-implemented for the vehicles of the future to ensure autos would build them.

This work is important and will continue to be a priority for CMPM because increasing ethanol usage will ultimately create more corn demand, putting more money in your pocket.

## Additional Activities

Increase infrastructure or the number of fuel pumps is a priority for CMPM. We have worked with other corn state to provide financial support to Wayne dispensers, one of the largest pump manufacturers, so that all of their dispensers are compatible with blends up to 25% ethanol, the current Underwriter Laboratories (UL) certification. This has been in place for the past year.

Additionally, we are currently working with UL to use these same dispensers along with another major manufacturer, Gilbarco, and test up to a 40% ethanol blends. Tests are over 50% complete with compliant results.

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*Our hosts welcoming attendees at Main Farms.*

## Michigan Corn Farmers Could See Record Yields in 2017/2018

### Corn Marketing Program of Michigan Wraps Up 2017 Between the Rows Tour

Michigan corn farmers could see record yields this year based on the findings by the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan during its 2017 Between the Rows Tour. This year, staff conducted more than 375 yield checks in 32 counties across Michigan. The data showed a statewide yield average of 177.5 bushels per acre.

“This tour provides the most comprehensive yield data available on Michigan’s corn crop,” said Tom Durand, president of CMPM. “Along with the accompanying meetings, we’re able to give our farmers valuable data as they go into harvest that can assist as they begin planning for next year.”

CMPM staff checked 10-12 fields in most of the counties listed and calculated county-by-county yield averages. The statewide average was weighted based on the percentage of harvested acres that come from each county.

As part of the tour, CMPM teamed up with Michigan Agricultural Commodities to host



*One of the ear samples pulled from a field during Between the Rows 2017.*



*Michigan Corn staff prepare to go out into the fields for yield checks.*



*Pests: Attendees examine moth traps and discuss pest pressure.*

a series of meetings across the state to share findings with local farmers, provide updates on the work of CMPM, and provide agronomic and market updates to attendees. More than 500 farmers across the state attended meetings in Elsie, Vassar, Minden City, Silverwood, Trufant, Dowagiac, Concord and Palmyra.

“Knowing that we have these yields out there reinforces how important the work of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan is when it comes to protecting and growing the market for corn,” said Jim Zook, executive director of CMPM. “The investment that our farmers make in the program expands ethanol use by installing new infrastructure in the U.S., opens new foreign markets to exports of corn, DDGS and ethanol, conducts research to boost production efficiency, and makes sure consumers have science-based information about our industry.”

Additional information about the tour, including detailed results and photos are available online at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org).

County	Yield (bushels per acre)	County	Yield (bushels per acre)
Allegan	182.1	Lapeer	186.1
Branch	173.9	Lenawee	168.3
Calhoun	164.2	Livingston	163.6
Cass	188.8	Mecosta	176.8
Clinton	174.7	Monroe	178.7
Eaton	181.3	Montcalm	139.0
Genesee	163.2	Muskegon	170.2
Gratiot	173.6	Ottawa	170.2
Hillsdale	155.8	Saginaw	188.2
Huron	193.9	Sanilac	192.3
Ingham	183.4	Shiawassee	160.8
Ionia	180.3	St. Clair	156.2
Isabella	166.2	St. Joe	163.0
Jackson	166.3	Tuscola	186.2
Kalamazoo	171.4	Van Buren	165.7
Kent	187.4	Washtenaw	168.3

# Michigan CommonGround Volunteers Encourage Consumers to “Ask a Farmer”

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan recently helped organize an event to put consumers directly in touch with Michigan farmers. Michigan CommonGround volunteers Janna Fritz (Bad Axe), Carla Schultz (Mayville), Ashley Kennedy (Bad Axe) and Jody Sharrard (Peck) participated in an “Ask a Farmer” event at Kroger in Plymouth on Saturday, June 24th. They had conversations with shoppers about everything from milk production to GMOs and sustainability. These farmers are helping to educate consumers one conversation at a time.

CommonGround is a group of farm women dedicated to having conversations about the food they grow and how they produce it. They



*CommonGround Volunteers from left Carla Schultz (Mayville), Jody Sharrard (Peck), Janna Fritz (Bad Axe), and Ashley Kennedy (Bad Axe) at Kroger in Plymouth.*

share personal experiences, as well as science and research, to help consumers sort through the myths and misinformation surrounding food and farming.

CommonGround is funded by farmers through the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the United Soybean Board. All of the women are volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include participating in events throughout Michigan as well as blogging and social media advocacy. We are always looking for women who want to tell their story. For more information or to join, please contact Tera Havard at 517-668-2676 or [thavard@micorn.org](mailto:thavard@micorn.org).



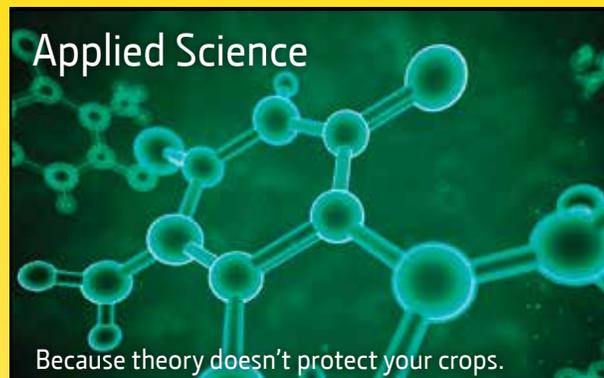
## Michigan Volunteers Receive Training at Annual CommonGround Conference

In early August, women from across the nation came together for the national CommonGround conference in St. Louis. This group included farmers and association staff from nearly 20 states.

Michigan sent two volunteers, Carla Schultz and Rita Herford, and Michigan Corn intern Amy Leitch.

Over a span of three days, they listened to presentations by industry experts and participated in workshops designed to improve presentation skills and social media presence. CommonGround focuses on grassroots activism and encourages honest and personal dialogue with consumers about food production and the story of modern agriculture.

CommonGround is a program funded by the National Corn Growers Association, the United Soybean Board and their state affiliates. The program focuses on nine areas of interest to consumers: farm ownership; GMOs; food safety; antibiotics and animal health; hormones in meat and milk; organic and local foods; food prices; and sustainability. The program will begin discussing a tenth topic next year: plant breeding innovations such as gene editing. Find out more about the program at [www.findourcommonground.com](http://www.findourcommonground.com).



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## MCGA Members Get their Golf On!

The MCGA hosted more than 200 members and their guests during this year's annual golf outings at Centennial Acres in Sunfield and Verona Hills in Bad Axe. Participants enjoyed a fun filled day of golf and a steak dinner. We were also joined by several legislators and their staff including Representatives Canfield, Lauwers, Liberati, Yanez and staff from Representative Pagen's office.

Our wonderful sponsors were provided with ample opportunities to interact with MCGA members and we greatly appreciate their continued support! Our 2017 golf outing sponsors were:

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## Market Development Spotlight: Livestock

By: Theresa Sisung, Advocacy and Outreach Director at the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan

**C**orn growers and the livestock industry have a longstanding relationship that benefits both segments of agriculture. Livestock producers need corn and corn co-products as feed, while corn growers need the market provided by livestock producers. The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan recognizes the importance of this mutually beneficial relationship and works to provide support for the livestock industry so it can remain strong and viable.

One key area that provides great potential for livestock producers, and corn growers, is meat exports. The CMPM recognizes that the largest growth potential for meat consumption is outside of the United States. That's why we're a proud member of the U.S.

Meat Export Federation (USMEF). USMEF is a nonprofit trade association working to create new opportunities and develop existing international markets for U.S. beef, pork, lamb and veal.

As demand for red meat grows overseas, producers here in the U.S. have the ability to reap the benefits of increased exports. The increase in red meat exports provides a benefit to corn growers by increasing the demand for corn and corn co-products such as DDGS which are used for feed. USMEF commissioned a study to quantify the value provided to U.S. corn growers through exports of beef, pork and lamb. The independent study was conducted by World Perspectives.

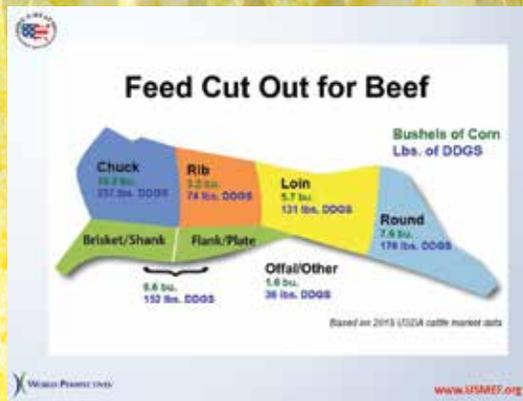
World Perspectives analyzed feed rations and U.S. livestock production practices to establish total feed use and then used beef and pork export data to determine the amount of consumption attributable to red meat exports. The photos below provide a more detailed view of the amount of corn and DDGS used for each portion of the beef and pork cutouts.

The study found that 2015 exports of beef, pork and lamb accounted for 355 million bushels (or 2.1 million acres) of corn, \$1.3 billion in value to corn, 1.48 million tons of DDGS (169 million bushel equivalent), \$205.4 million in value to DDGS and 11.7 million tons (or 3.1 million acres) of combined corn and DDGS fed.



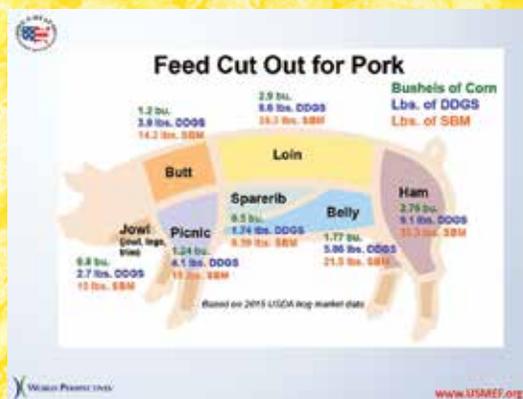
“Looking back at 2015, if there were no red meat exports at all and that corn was added to carryover stocks, instead of a season average annual price of \$3.60 per bushel, the price would have been about \$3.15 per bushel. That’s a loss of 45 cents per bushel, which would have amounted to about \$6 billion to the corn industry last year,” explained Dave Juday, World Perspectives senior analyst.

The positive impact of red meat exports on the corn sector looks even stronger in the future. The study projects that indirect exports of corn through red meat exports will grow from 355.5 million bushels in 2015 to



482.4 million bushels in 2025 – an increase of nearly one-third. Indirect exports of DDGS would jump from 1.48 million tons in 2015 to 2.14 million tons in 2025 – a 44 percent increase.

As we look towards the future and continue to see growth in corn production the work that USMEF is doing to increase red meat exports will be more important than ever to grow demand for corn and corn co-products. The CMPM is honored to partner with such an outstanding organization that helps benefit our growers for the time being and in the future.



# Congratulations to this year's MCGA Scholarship Recipients!



## Justine Fisher

Justine is going to be a junior in crop and soil sciences at Michigan State University this fall. She is actively

involved in the Agronomy Club and the Sigma Alpha Sorority. In the future, she hopes to be able to make a difference in agriculture, whether it be big or small.



## Meghan Goretski

Meghan is a recent high school graduate of North Huron High School. In the fall, she will be attending Michigan State University to major in agribusiness

management. After receiving her degree, she hopes to return to the Thumb and take over her dad's cash crop farm.



## Loren King

Loren attends Michigan State University, double majoring in non-traditional

agricultural education and public policy. He is heavily involved in 4-H and FFA and is currently serving as the Michigan FFA National Officer Candidate as well as being a finalist for the National Star in Agriscience Award.



## Devin Koroleski

Devin will be starting his second year at Saginaw Valley State

University and plans to transfer to Michigan State University in the Fall of 2018. He will be pursuing a degree in ag business management and plans to return home to continue farming with his family.



## Aaron Maust

Aaron is a recent high school graduate of Laker High School. In the fall, he will be attending Iowa State University to pursue a 4 year degree in agricultural studies. Upon

graduation, he hopes to use the knowledge and skills obtained to continue the family cash crop and hay farm.



## Keeley Pape

Keeley graduated from Madison High School with highest honors. In the fall, she will be attending Michigan

State University to study plant and soil sciences. Upon graduation she hopes to start a career with a plant protection company as a CCE specializing in greenhouses, fruits and vegetables, or row crops.



## Cassidy Polzin

Cassidy will be a sophomore attending Purdue University where she is majoring in animal science with a concentration in production. Upon

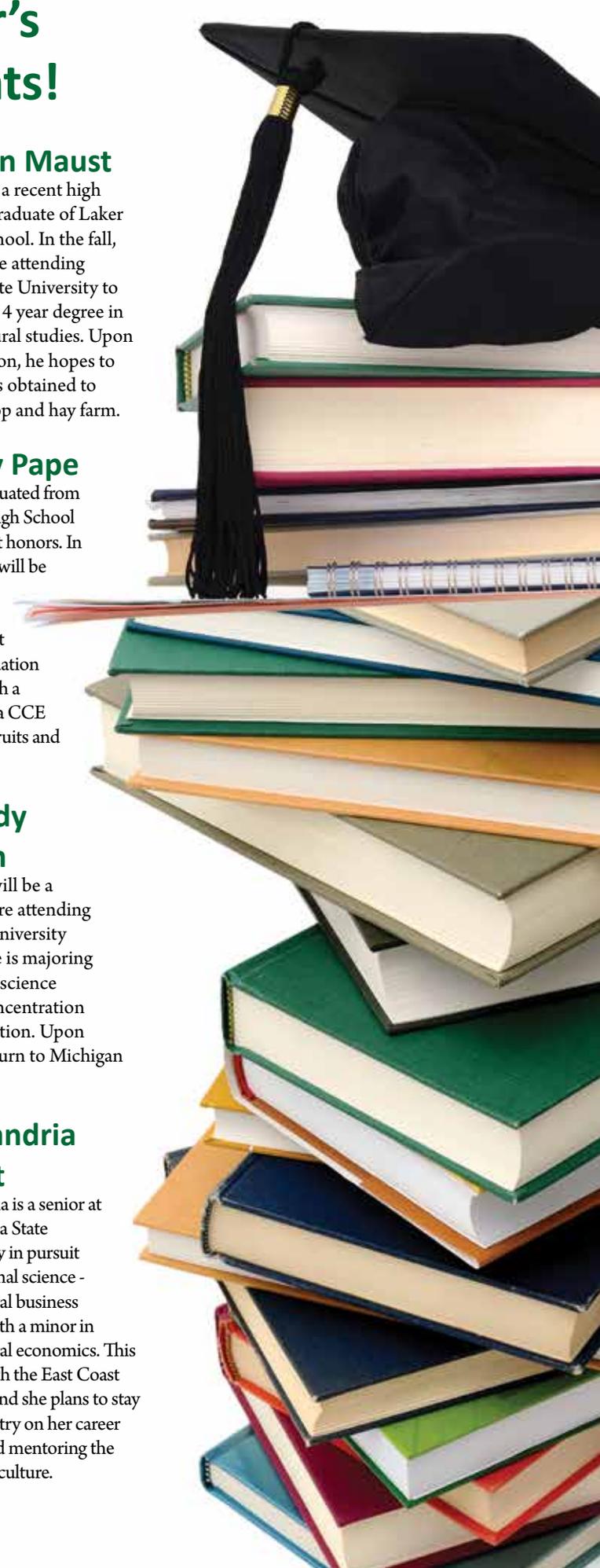
graduation, she hopes to return to Michigan to become a farm manager.



## Alexandria Schut

Alexandria is a senior at Oklahoma State University in pursuit of an animal science - agricultural business degree with a minor in agricultural economics. This

past summer she interned with the East Coast Budweiser Clydesdale team and she plans to stay active in the agriculture industry on her career front and through helping and mentoring the upcoming generations in agriculture.



# Apply Now for the Second Annual Frank Lipinski Scholarship from MCGA



The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors is pleased to announce that the second annual Frank Lipinski Scholarship application is now available. This scholarship is geared towards full-time college students who don't come from an agricultural or farm background. Participation in either the 4-H or FFA organization does not disqualify a student.

Frank was deeply passionate about reaching out to young adults with non-agricultural backgrounds. He made it a priority to assist those wanting to enter our industry and educate young people about the various opportunities available in the agricultural industry.

This new scholarship will be awarded for the 2018 spring semester with applications due Friday, November 3rd, 2017. For more information or to apply for the Frank Lipinski Memorial scholarship contact Michigan Corn by calling (517) 668-CORN (2676) or online at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org).

## MCGA Represents Michigan Farmers at Annual Corn Congress

In July, members of the MCGA traveled to Washington, D.C. to take part in the National Corn Growers Association Corn Congress meeting. Executive Director Jim Zook and Intern Amy Leitch attended along with the following board members: Brian Kreps, La Salle; Earl Collier, Allegan; Jeff Sandborn, Portland; Loren Koeman, Caledonia; Matt Holysz, Vicksburg; Phil Gordon, Saline; Russell Braun, Ovid; Tom Durand, Croswell, and Tony Igl, Mason. While in D.C., board members met with the following Congressional offices:

- Senator Gary Peters
- Senator Debbie Stabenow
- Congressman Justin Amash
- Congressman Jack Bergman
- Congressman Mike Bishop



- Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
- Congresswoman Debbie Dingell
- Congressman Bill Huizenga
- Congressman Dan Kildee
- Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence
- Congressman Sander Levin
- Congressman Paul Mitchell
- Congressman John Moolenaar
- Congressman David Trott
- Congressman Fred Upton
- Congressman Tim Walberg

The group discussed topics including the upcoming Farm Bill, the importance of trade to Michigan corn farmers, the Market Access and Foreign Market Development Programs, and the Renewable Fuel Standard. We would like to thank our board members for representing us and making sure that Michigan farmers have a strong voice in Washington, D.C. If you would like the opportunity to participate and make a difference on the legislation that affects your farm, please contact Penni at [psweeney@micorn.org](mailto:psweeney@micorn.org) or call the office at 517-668-2676.



## Farm Finances – Keeping Your Operation Going Strong

**F**armers aren't only experts at growing food, fuel and fiber for the world. They're also business owners tasked with the job of keeping their operation financially strong. We sat down with R. Warren Graeff, Senior Vice President and Agriculture Market Manager at PNC Bank to talk about sound financial planning for Michigan farmers. Following are some of the highlights from our interview.

### *Why do farmers need to make financial planning a priority?*

**Graeff:** "During my career in agriculture, I have seen more farmers encounter problems due to not managing cash flow and liquidity than for any other reason. Especially now when corn prices are at or below the break-even point – it's so important to understand your costs and ratios so you know when you need to make adjustments.

"Success isn't just determined by being a good producer and working hard anymore. Corn production and price volatility makes understanding and managing your finances the key to long term success (not just survival).

"Strategic financial management means that you see and act on profit enhancing possibilities before they become obvious to the average producer. It also means that you



*R. Warren Graeff, Senior Vice President and Agriculture Market Manager at PNC Bank*



develop "what if" scenarios and sensitivity analysis to assess what could happen if your plans don't work out.

"My advice to farmers is to get started now! Even if it seems overwhelming, you have to start somewhere. Talk to your banker or work with a farm record keeping system to help you analyze cash flow and liquidity."

### *What system should farmers use for tracking their business performance?*

**Graeff:** "To make accurate decisions, producers need to use accrual adjusted income to analyze actual business performance. Cash accounting is easy and great for tax management, but it can lag two years or more in terms of knowing what's happening, whether it's getting better or worse. You can still use cash accounting for tax management, but take the time to use accrual adjusted accounting to manage your farm finances.

"With accrual adjusted income analysis, you can track your year to year financial results and compare your operation to others. This is important so that you have a gauge of your own situation and also how you compare to other similar operations. Comparisons can be made using at least two sources:

1. If you use a record keeping system, then you can compare your operation to other operators who utilize the same record keeping system. Record keeping systems may be offered through a land grant university, private firm or CPA.
2. You can use an industry comparison tool like the Farm Financial Standards Council's farm finance scorecard."



*Janette Jacobs and Dr. Chilvers isolate pathogens and grow them out for positive identification.*

## Research Update: Defending Michigan Corn from Yield Robbing Diseases

By: Natalie Rector, Research Coordinator, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan

Corn diseases are an ever-evolving concern. New infestations can literally blow in on the winds, be ignited by weather or evolve as cropping systems change. The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan has been helping agriculture deal with these challenges by investing check off dollars in research to keep corn growers competitive, including several projects run by Dr. Marty Chilvers at Michigan State University.

As the lead corn, soybean, wheat and dry bean researcher at MSU, Chilvers oversees a team of 20 graduate students, research scientists and technicians. They are active in the lab, but also spread out over the state to serve farmers' needs.

Chilvers' crew has the daunting task of covering some of the biggest crops in our state and the crop rotations that farmers need to manage. Some diseases cross crop rotations, such as Pythium root rot and Gibberella ear mold, which are a problem in both wheat and corn. Weather, crop rotation, crop residue, drainage, insect damage and variety traits also interact to either create disease epidemics or to decrease their prevalence.

Proper disease management requires positive identification, but farmers understand how difficult it is to confidently identify a disease on

sight because many symptoms look alike and issues often overlap.

Chilvers and his colleagues work both in the field and the lab to correctly identify these diseases. In 2016, Chilvers identified the first incident of Tar Spot in corn in Michigan. The disease had been detected in Indiana and Illinois in 2015 and is believed to have landed in the Midwest from Central America and Mexico as fallout from a hurricane event. At this point, there is no reason to ring the alarm bell on this disease, but graduate students continue to confirm the disease and monitor the future.

In 2016, when Gibberella ear mold caused significant problems for farmers, Chilvers visited the fields and discussed testing procedures at the sale point. Gibberella is a difficult disease to manage because there is no single corn gene for resistance. It can be magnified by western bean cutworm damage, hybrid selection and other factors. Trials to assess the role of hybrid traits, insect pressure and fungicide spray in ear mold management are ongoing across the state in cooperation with MSU's cropping systems agronomist, Dr. Maninder Singh, and field crop entomologist Dr. Chris DiFonzo. Research on new chemistries, application timing and rates, reducing resistance and tank mix interactions are also a big part of disease management.

Disease management starts before symptoms are seen in the fields. The pathogens causing disease need to be isolated and determining which microbial strain is negatively impacting corn and what environmental conditions are necessary for plant infection can be tedious and labor intensive. MSU performs seedling infection trials in growth chambers under varying controlled climate conditions to determine which organisms are pathogens capable of causing disease. Once the specific pathogen is confirmed, trials will move on to how differing chemistries or hybrids can impact the disease. Modern technology provides DNA sequencing of pathogens which also speeds up identification.

Funding from corn check off dollars over the past few years is an important component of the MSU field crop pathology program. The funds have provided flexibility to respond to immediate concerns and as a base for leveraging larger and longer-term studies. Goss's wilt, Gibberella ear mold, tar spot, leaf disease and stalk rot disease management, seedling damping off and root rots have all been recent priorities.

For more information visit the lab website at [fieldcroppathology.msu.edu](http://fieldcroppathology.msu.edu).

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# Michigan Corn Intern Amy Leitch Bids Farewell

By: Amy Leitch

When I first walked into the Michigan Corn office in March, I entered with high hopes and anticipation, ready to get started. Today, exiting my internship, I leave with a full heart and excitement to use the skills I have gained to better the agricultural industry. Although leaving is bittersweet, I am excited to find my part in the industry. Throughout my internship, I have been able to gain knowledge in agriculture from a political and educational perspective. Although many of the projects I have been a part of will stay here at the office, this mindset will never leave me.

Thank you to the MCGA, Michigan farmers, and the staff that I worked with. MCGA goes above and beyond for the future of Michigan's farmers and agricultural industry. The passion of the staff, board members, and members



across the state is evident and incredible. Finally, the staff I worked with have not only

been impactful, but genuinely inspiring to me as an intern and young professional. They have lead by example to show what it means to work hard for someone else while being professional and working as a team. I hope to someday resemble them and their efforts in the work force.

I have enjoyed my internship and could not be more grateful for the experience I have had. Although I am sad to say goodbye, I know that this is only farewell as an intern. I am looking forward to finishing my Animal Science degree at MSU this year, and I'm very excited to see what the future holds. Again, thank you to everyone that has been part of my internship experience, from working on projects with me to spending a week in Washington, D.C., you have made it fantastic. I really mean it when I say, "thanks a bushel!"

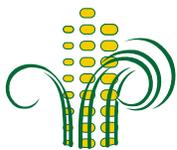


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