

MICHIGAN CORN

# BETWEEN THE ROWS

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

## **Record Attendance for Second Annual Great Lakes Crop Summit**







## From the Desk of the Executive Director

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

**I**t's a new year, and with it comes exciting new plans for the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan and the Michigan Corn Growers Association.

This year, we're stepping up our outreach to farmers across the state. Part of our mission is helping Michigan growers stay up to date on the latest research and on the important political and market issues that have an effect on Michigan's corn industry, and ultimately your businesses. We also want to make sure that you know about the work that CMPM and MCGA do on your behalf.

One of the ways we're doing that is through our relaunched magazine. The CMPM and the MCGA are partnering together on this expanded version of *Between the Rows*. Our new magazine will be mailed to all Michigan corn growers three times per year, in March, September and December. Our June issue will be our "Members Only" magazine that will be mailed only to members of the MCGA.

We will also be launching an online e-newsletter in the coming weeks that will keep growers in the loop on breaking news, upcoming events and calls to action when our industry is under attack. If you want to be sure to receive these important updates, email [corninfo@micorn.org](mailto:corninfo@micorn.org) and make sure we have your most up-to-date email address.

As farmers, we have to deal with an increasing level of scrutiny and pressure as public interest in food production grows, whether it's concerns about GMOs or environmentalist attacks on our practices. It's more important than ever that we stay informed and engaged to push back on attacks and make sure consumers have accurate information about what we do.

2015 is going to be another busy year, and we're looking forward to working with all of you to help grow Michigan's corn industry.

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# 2015 Brings New Challenges for CMPM

By: Dick Dobbins, President,  
*Corn Marketing Program of Michigan*

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan plays an important role in supporting and growing Michigan's agriculture industry and making sure our farmers can make a living doing what they do best. CMPM is unique, because it's the only organization that exists solely to promote our industry to policy makers, the media and consumers. Through research, promotion and education, CMPM helps expand business and grow your bottom line.

Nowadays, it's more important than ever that we stand together to tell the positive story of corn and agriculture, even as we push to expand markets for our products.

A lot has changed since CMPM was established in 1992, and we're facing new challenges that we never could have imagined.

The ethanol industry didn't exist in 1992, nor did the organized attacks on our industry being pushed by oil companies that want to stifle competition in the fuels market. We're facing new attacks from groups like PETA, the Humane Society of the United States and the Sierra Club: organizations that spread misinformation about modern agriculture and stir up unfounded fear in consumers.

On the other hand, we've seen amazing technological advancements in our industry, and our farmers are producing higher yields on the same land using fewer inputs



than ever before. This accomplishment makes it even more important that we work to find new markets for our products both domestically and overseas.

As we face these new challenges, CMPM will continue to be on the front lines, proactively promoting our industry, developing new opportunities and making sure the public has accurate information about the work our growers do to produce food, feed, fuel and fiber. As always, we couldn't do it without the hard work of Michigan's corn growers and family farmers, and I look forward to all we can accomplish together in the coming year.

## MCGA: Legislative Priorities for 2015

By: Scott Lonier, President,  
*Michigan Corn Growers Association*

The mission of the Michigan Corn Growers Association is to create new opportunities for corn growers and empower our members to seize those opportunities. Everything we do is aimed to that end, whether it's promoting the image of corn and those who produce it, supporting the development of new markets for corn, or working for governmental regulations that make sense for our industry.

For 2015 and beyond, our vision for the MCGA is designed to help build the future that we hope for.

One key issue for 2015 will be implementation of the farm bill. The passage of the farm bill in 2014 led to the creation of the Ag Risk Coverage program, or ARC. This



market-based risk management tool provides help to growers when they need it. I'm proud of MCGA's hard work on this program, and I know it will help many operations in years to come. However, farm risk is a complicated issue, and making sure the public, media and lawmakers understand will be critical in heading off any future backlash against these programs.

At the same time, our focus will be on protecting and building markets for corn, especially the top three: feed, ethanol and exports. As long as we can maintain stable and growing markets, our growing corn supply will have a home and our farms can remain economically sustainable.

The MCGA will continue working to remove roadblocks to farming and marketing of corn. Some key legislative priorities for 2015 will be:

- Clarifying EPA's WOTUS rule so that farmers can continue to do their job in a sustainable way, economically and environmentally.
- Addressing consumer concerns about biotechnology, including state and local GMO labeling initiatives.
- Creating more consistent standards for the international review of biotechnology crops so that consumers here and abroad better understand the safety of these crops.
- Protecting Michigan's ethanol industry from legislative attacks.

2015 is going to be another year full of challenges, but working together we can make sure that Michigan's corn growers have a strong voice in advocating for common-sense policies that will help our industry grow and thrive.





## New Ideas and Fresh Perspectives at Commodity Classic



**T**his February, staff and board members of the Michigan Corn Growers Association and the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan attended Commodity Classic in Phoenix, AZ.

This event was a great opportunity for us to connect with other states and industry leaders across the country, and we've all come away with some exciting new ideas that we look forward to putting some of them to work here in Michigan.

In addition to networking, members of Michigan Corn had the opportunity to check out the trade show, which highlighted some of the newest advances in equipment and seed technology. Commodity Classic also offered a host of educational opportunities, from sessions on improving yields to updates on some of the National Corn Growers Association's consumer outreach programs.

### MCGA Represents Michigan farmers at Corn Congress

As part of Commodity Classic, the National Corn Growers Association also held Corn Congress. During this meeting, each state has the chance to hold a caucus to determine our policy priorities for the coming year. Then all of the states come together to vote on those priorities.

This year's Corn Congress was less intense this year than previous years, and none of the policy recommendations were particularly controversial. After deliberation and voting, the group moved trade and exports to the top of the priority list, which represents a change from last year.

A special thank you to our board members for their input during our caucus and especially the eight individuals that served as delegates

during the meeting:

- Matt Cary
- Phil Gordon
- Alvin Ferguson
- Loren Koeman
- John Burk
- Dan Cable
- Richard P. Dobbins
- Matt Holysz

During Corn Congress, the candidates for positions on the National Corn Growers Association Board were also announced. We're pleased that one of our own, Jeff Sandborn, is running for a position on the board. Look for a profile on Jeff and more information about the upcoming election in our Summer magazine.

# Michigan Corn Growers Association 2015 Annual Meeting



*MCGA President Scott Lonier addresses a record turnout of members at the 2015 annual meeting.*

The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) held its 2015 Annual Meeting in January at the Great Lakes Crop Summit. During the meeting, the MCGA announced the results of board elections. Elections were held for four positions, and in each district the incumbent board member was reelected for an additional term. The following individuals were elected:

- District 3 – Matthew Frostic
- District 6 – Loren Koeman
- District 8 – Phil Gordon
- At-Large – Russell Braun

“We’re pleased to welcome Matthew, Loren, Phil and Russell for another

term on the Michigan Corn Growers Association Board,” said Jim Zook, executive director of MCGA. “I am confident that all of them will continue to be outstanding advocates for Michigan’s corn farmers. This will be another busy year for the MCGA and the leadership of our board will be instrumental in making sure that Michigan corn growers have a seat at the table when policymakers make decisions that affect our industry.”

This was the first year that the MCGA conducted board elections by mail-in ballot and the new method was a success, with higher MCGA member participation than any previous election in MCGA history.

## Mitch Miller Presented with “Friend of Corn Award”

This year’s Friend of Corn Award was presented to Mitch Miller, CEO and managing director of Carbon Green BioEnergy, an ethanol plant in Lake Odessa. Miller is also president of Iroquois Bio-Energy Company. He has had an extensive history in the ethanol industry dating back to 1994, when he began with Corn Plus of Winnebago, Minnesota.

Miller initiated the highly successful Yellow Hose campaign which has greatly increased E85 sales in target markets. As a part of the campaign, Mitch and Carbon Green BioEnergy worked extensively with local gas stations to keep the price of E85 at \$1.00 below regular unleaded in. Lower E85 prices throughout the state are due, in part, to his hard work and dedication to the ethanol industry. As a result of this program some stations have realized a 500% increase in E85 sales.

This is the eighth year of the MCGA Friend of Corn Award. This award honors individuals who have shown great support, leadership and dedication to the corn industry.



*Gabe Corey of CarbonGreen Bioenergy accepts the 2015 Friend of Corn Award on behalf of Mitch Miller.*



# Join the MCGA Today!



**M**CGA represents more than 1,400 farmers in Michigan and we join with more than 42,000 farmers nationwide as part of the National Corn Growers Association. MCGA works to protect existing markets for corn and promote the expansion of new ones; increase the domestic use of corn; protect and expand state and federal policies on renewable fuels; and promote trade policies that are beneficial to Michigan's corn farmers.

## What Our Members Say about MCGA Membership

“ I deeply believe that we need a united voice to speak for our industry. My family's farming operation is my responsibility and I feel confident knowing that the MCGA is representing our interests. ”

—Steve Error, *Filion*

“ I am a member of the MCGA because there is strength in numbers. Being a member of the MCGA means having a seat at the table when lawmakers make decisions that affect my industry and my business. ”

—Joel Fritz, *Bad Axe*

## A Few Exciting Member Benefits

### Discount Programs

**Agricultural Weather Advisor Program** - Receive a complimentary subscription to this email service.

**Auto Owners Insurance** - Savings of up to 10% on most policies.

**Cabela's** - A 10% discount on the purchase of Cabela's gift cards.

**Dell Products** - Significant discounts on many Dell products, including a discounted price on Dimension and Inspiron Computers when compared to the Home & Home Office pricing.

**eLegacy Connect** - An online succession planning community.

**Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Leasing** - 5% to 10% off rental fees at Enterprise. Members

can also lease or purchase vehicles from the Enterprise Fleet Management program with competitive financing and fantastic rates.

**Ford Motor Company** - Members are eligible for Ford's X-Plan vehicle pricing plan which provides reduced prices on dozens of Ford and Lincoln vehicles.

**Office Depot** - Receive 15% off on 50 office essentials and the three top-selling case paper products; and 15% off a custom list of the items you buy most often. Free next day shipping on orders over \$50.

**Worldwide Hotel Discount Program** - Savings may exceed 50% and average 10-20% below best available rates on any hotel.

## Exclusive Events

Members have access to events at no or reduced cost, such as golf outings, the Annual Meeting, and Commodity Classic.

## MCGA Membership Application

☐ First-Time Member ☐ Renewal (Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_)

Recruited By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us utilize membership dollars wisely and effectively by providing your email address.

Membership Type:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grower Lifetime (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Lifetime (\$500) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grower 3-Year (\$155)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate 3-Year (\$155)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grower 1-Year (\$60)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate 1-Year (\$60)    |
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**Grower** - Anyone who derives a portion of their income from corn production.

**Associate** - Anyone who doesn't qualify as a grower member.

**Student** - Any person enrolled as a full-time student.

# Join the MCGA and Receive a Free T-shirt!

**T**he Michigan Corn Growers Association has launched a new membership campaign. If you join now as a new member you will receive a free t-shirt. Recruit a friend or neighbor as a new member and you will both receive a free t-shirt!

Membership in the MCGA means that you are joining the only grassroots organization focused solely on promoting the interests of

Michigan's corn producers. MCGA members know that being a part of the MCGA when lawmakers are discussing the policies that affect our industry and our bottom line. As a member of the MCGA, you can be proud to support an association that is working to grow our industry and support our growers.



## MCGA Reaching Out the New Legislators

**I**t's the year after an election, and with that comes a new group of legislators joining their currently serving colleagues. It's important that our legislators have access to accurate information about our industry and our products and it's up to us to provide that. It's also important that we build and maintain these relationships so that we have a seat at the table when it comes time to develop the policies that affect our businesses.

To that end, MCGA has been proactively reaching out to our legislators across the state, making new relationships, and making sure our elected officials know about the hard work our farmers do to grow Michigan's economy and provide the food, feed, fuel and fiber that we need.



*Members of MCGA meet with incoming legislators to talk about Michigan's corn industry.*

## Upcoming MCGA Events

### Central Michigan Golf Outing

Wednesday, August 5, 2015 –  
Centennial Acres, Sunfield

### Thumb Area Golf Outing

Wednesday, August 12, 2015 – Uby Heights, Uby

### Ethanol Series Dirt Cup Racing

Summer 2015

### Annual Meeting

Wednesday, January 27, 2016





*Dr. Shawn Conley from the University of Wisconsin presents to GLCS attendees*



*Chip Bowling, President of the National Corn Growers Association talks about outlooks for exports.*

## Record Attendance for Second Annual Great Lakes Crop Summit

**M**ore than 700 farmers from across the state attended the second annual Great Lakes Crop Summit at Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort on January 28-29. The event featured an all-star cast of industry and university representatives from seven Midwest states as well as a trade show with more than 50 exhibitors.

### Highlights from this year's event included:

- Keynote addresses from nationally-acclaimed economist Dr. Mike Boehlje from Purdue University and historical climatologist Evelyn Browning-Garriss.
- A panel of national commodity export leaders, including Marpat Corbett, Marketing Manager for the U.S. Soybean Export Council; Julia Debes, Communications Consultant for U.S. Wheat Associates; and Tom Sleight, president and CEO of the U.S. Grains Council.

- A closing panel featuring national leaders from each of the commodity organizations, including Chip Bowling, National Corn Growers Association; Bob Haselwood, United Soybean Board; and Phil McLain, National Association of Wheat Growers.

Visit us online at [www.GreatLakesCropSummit.com](http://www.GreatLakesCropSummit.com) for a recap of the summit, photos, and information on next year's event. GLCS 2016 will take place January 27-28 at Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort.

The Great Lakes Crop Summit is a joint effort between the Corn Marketing Program of



*More than 50 exhibitors participated in this year's trade show.*

Michigan, the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and the Michigan Wheat Program.



# Thank You to all the Sponsors of the 2015 Great Lakes Crop Summit!

*We couldn't do it without you.*

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## Exhibitor

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The Great Lakes Crop Summit is an annual event put on by the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and the Michigan Wheat Program.



# The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan: Funding Research to Grow Your Bottom Line

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

Each year a portion of the funding that goes into the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) funds research aimed at boosting corn production, finding new markets for corn and ultimately supporting Michigan's corn growers. This year, the

CMPM received more than \$700,000 in research proposals is able to fund approximately \$400,000 in research grants.



Decisions on which projects to fund are made by the board of the CMPM, which is made up of Michigan corn growers. Research proposals are submitted on paper and select candidates are invited to present before the board and answer questions. The CMPM board has direct input and say on funding projects that are relevant to corn producers in Michigan, something that is unique to our program.



These grants help fund research to answer questions that are relevant to your corn production system. CMPM also seeks to fund projects that seek new, alternative or creative uses for corn and corn byproducts that can increase demand for our commodity now and in the near future. These sorts of projects are rarer and sometimes beyond our ability to fund, but we are always looking for new ideas that can have a real impact on Michigan's corn sector.

Research grants also serve purposes beyond the initial data generated. These projects are often smaller, start-up funds that build the base for projects that go on to be funded by larger entities. Larger funding organizations sometimes want to see local buy in on projects and the CMPM's funding helps build these partnerships and create a multiplier effect on our funds. Funded projects can also provide the incentive for networks and linkages within and between other groups and organizations. Often, university funds not only generate data but assist in funding graduate students, creating a well-trained and scientifically knowledgeable workforce in agriculture as an added benefit.

For 2015, CMPM has chosen a diverse group of projects for funding. A full list of these projects is available online at [www.micron.org/research/current](http://www.micron.org/research/current).

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# Michigan Farmers Chosen for DuPont New Leaders Program

The participants of the 2015 class of the NCGA DuPont New Leaders Program kicked off their involvement this January in Des Moines, where they learned how to better tell their ag story and got a deeper education in industry involvement.

In the program, the participants learned how to enhance communications depending on personality traits, used improv techniques to learn to communicate better, mastered top social media tools and learned the importance of conversation and dialogue from representatives of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance. They also learned about the work of sponsoring organizations NCGA and DuPont.

In July, they will travel to Wilmington, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., as the program takes more of a policy-oriented focus. They will attend NCGA's action team meetings and Corn Congress sessions, as well as take part in Capitol Hill visits with their state delegations. In the meantime, they have a myriad of opportunities to get involved at the state and national level as effective advocates



for American agriculture.

Michigan farmers Jason McConnachie and Tony Kubik, Michigan joined 30 other participants from 16 states, including: Brandon Dillard, Alabama; John Lee, Arkansas; Alex Harrell, Georgia; Jason and Kate Danner, Illinois; Colton and Jill Ringel and Christopher and Ashley Hudson, Indiana; Kyle and Jenna Ramsey and Casey

and Katie Schleusner, Iowa; Lowell and Krystale Neitzel, Kansas; Michael and Megan Buckman, Kentucky; Brian and Secely Lehman, Missouri; David and Jana Jobman, Nebraska; Michael Howlett and Carly Metzger, New York; Cody Sloan, Oklahoma; Thomas DuRant, South Carolina; Derek Giffin, Tennessee; and Jordan and Ashley Pool and Cole and Kyla Hamilton, Texas.

# MCGA Member Recognized with Master Farmer Award

Michigan Corn Growers Association member Robert "Alan" Moore of Elsie, was one of four farmers to receive the Master Farmer award from Michigan Farmer, Michigan Agri-Business Association and Michigan Farm Radio Network. He joins Richard "Dick" Lauwers of Capac and brothers Olan and Kent Humm of Breckenridge as this year's awardees.

Master Farmers are nominated by their peers and chosen by a committee of agriculture industry leaders. These leaders look at a combinations of farm management, innovation, conservation and leadership when choosing award winners.

The 2015 Master Farmers were honored at a luncheon with more than 300 guests at the Michigan Agri-Business Association's Winter Conference in Lansing on Jan. 14. Winners received a plaque, pin, Carhartt jacket courtesy of Carhartt and a \$1,000 check, sponsored by Mosaic, Greenstone Farm Credit Services and Michigan Agricultural Commodities.

## Congratulations to the Michigan winners of the 50th annual National Corn Yield Contest!

### Irrigated

Don Stall  
Charlotte - 354.3 bu/acre  
Clover Family Farms  
Ionia - 272.3 bu/acre  
Hoeve Farms  
Holland - 266.8 bu/acre

### No-Till/Strip-Till Irrigated

Phil Crawford  
Dowagiac - 233.2 bu/acre  
K&R Farms  
Carson City - 226.3 bu/acre  
Scott Jirgens  
Kalamazoo - 221.9 bu/acre

### Non-Irrigated

Jeff Briggs Farm LLC  
Willis - 269.7 bu/acre  
Tom Kern  
Saginaw - 268.8 bu/acre  
Jake Drozd  
Allegan - 264.3 bu/acre  
\*Don Stall (won in another category)  
Charlotte - 293.6 bu/acre

### No-Till/Strip-Till Non-Irrigated

Ronnie Landis  
Schoolcraft - 250.6 bu/acre  
Landis Farms  
Schoolcraft - 248 bu/acre  
Tanner's Farm  
Albion - 240.1 bu/acre

Winners receive national recognition in the NCYC Corn Yield Guide, as well as other awards from participating sponsors. Winners will be honored at the 2015 Commodity Classic during the National Corn Growers Association Awards Banquet and the NCYC State Winners Breakfast. The NCYC is in its 50th year and remains NCGA's most popular program for members. NCGA received 8,129 entries in 2014.



MICHIGAN CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION  
WWW.MICORN.ORG



# Learning to be an Advocate: AgChat National Collegiate Congress

By: Claire White, Michigan Corn Intern

In January I had a wonderful opportunity to attend the AgChat National Collegiate Congress in Indianapolis. The AgChat Foundation was created to encourage people in agriculture to be active on social media and showcase what they do with their agriculture operations.

This conference was geared specifically toward college students. The goal was to get college students more involved in telling their agriculture story on social media and teach them how to professionally respond to issues



regarding agriculture on the internet.

The conference was full of great speakers and breakout sessions. The speakers were all agriculture advocates or media specialists that shared tips and tricks about using social media and the internet to tell our own individual stories. There was time

to meet all of the attendees and network with them. It is always refreshing to see people as passionate as I am about our industry. One of the most beneficial sessions was the guest panel. The AgChat Foundation invited four

students from the local college in Indianapolis with minimal agriculture knowledge. These students talked to us about their views on farms and the agriculture industry. This was such an eye-opening experience as the students told us what they thought about agriculture. Their perceptions and views were much different than the reality of the industry.

I had a wonderful experience at this conference. It was very informative and I learned a lot about different aspects of the industry and social media. As an agriculture advocate, the speakers and the conference as a whole inspired me to become more active on social media, I have even created a blog. I hope that the AgChat Foundation continues with this conference so that more students can have this valuable experience.

## Cultivating Success One Farmer at a Time

Michigan AgrAbility provides direct services to farmers with injuries, illnesses or aging conditions so they can continue the occupation and lifestyle they love.

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Easter Seals Michigan

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## MSU Announcement: No Ag Expo in 2015 MSU Needs Your Input on 2016 Plans

A newly formed steering committee will play an instrumental role in establishing a series of agriculture education days to be hosted by Michigan State University beginning in 2016. The committee is looking for your input.

These days will be designed to offer specialized educational events held throughout the year for those in Michigan's food and agriculture industry. They will replace Ag Expo, which was held annually in mid-July.

"This change was not an easy decision and was made after consultation with many industry groups, commodity leaders and vendors," said College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) Dean Fred Poston. "This gives us an opportunity to hone in on the specific needs of the vastly

different types of commodities, crops and livestock grown in Michigan and provide that information in a way that producers have told us they want it."

The steering committee composed of commodity and industry representatives will work to ensure the needs of the industry are met, leveraging the university's resources, as they determine what these agriculture education days should look like.

The committee will work throughout this year so that a high-value experience can be offered in 2016 and beyond. One of the first steps in this process is to survey producers and industry representatives to determine topics, locations and program formats. Watch your inbox for this survey to help make this a successful endeavor.

Contact Mike Kovacic, Director of CANR Stakeholder Relations, with questions at 517-355-8469.



# Michigan Corn Works to Expand Trade Opportunities Through U.S. Grains Council

**C**MPM President Dick Dobbins, MCGA Board Member Ed Breitmeyer and Executive Director Jim Zook recently returned from a trip to Costa Rica with the U.S. Grains Council. Dick sits on the Western Hemisphere Action Team, Ed sits on the Value Added Action Team and Jim sits on the Ethanol Action Team. These meetings were productive steps toward finding and expanding new international markets for corn and corn products.



The U.S. Grains Council is unique in that the action teams, which are made up of producers and industry representatives, direct all the work of the organization. As part of these

meetings, members prioritized tasks for U.S. Grains Council staff and directed them on where to focus their efforts to increase trade in corn, distiller's grain and ethanol.

The committees decided to focus on two sets of countries. In one set, staff will initiate trying to sell ethanol into those countries this year. In the second set assessment will begin to identify barriers to ethanol and determine the viability of that market.

## USGC will focus on programs in the following countries:

- Canada
- Philippines
- Japan
- Colombia
- Mexico
- China
- European Union

## USGC will focus on assessments of the following countries:

- United Arab Emirates
- Indonesia
- India
- Caribbean
- Peru

## Corn Marketing Program of Michigan Annual Report Available Online

The 2014 Annual Report for the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan is now available online at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org). The Annual report includes financial information as well as highlights and new programs from 2014.

A decade of returning cash to members...

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# Update from the National Corn Growers Association Ethanol Committee

Adapted from Chairman Jeff Sandborn's video presentation at Corn Congress

I want to take a moment to update Michigan growers on the exciting work that the National Corn Growers and the ethanol committee have been engaged in.

First, let's take a look back at recent history. In October 2013, someone leaked an EPA proposal that would reduce the 2014 conventional requirement for blending ethanol from 14.4 billion gallons to a range of volumes with the highest volume of 13.1 billion gallons. In this proposed rule, they raised the false construct of the "blend wall" and noted that there was insufficient fuel market to absorb higher blends.

EPA officially released the proposal in December 2013 and began accepting public comments. Agriculture turned out in force on the public comments. So well done.

After the public comment period, we waited for the final number. As of November, there still was no decision. Then, EPA threw everybody a curveball and punted the rule into sometime in 2015.

So here we stand. While RFS defense remains our top legislative priority, it is a backstop, the RFS is not going to propel growth going forward.

So how will we continue to grow the ethanol market? Our plan is to continue this growth of this market over the long run. We want to create a situation where the market demands or pulls ethanol into the market.

As E15 continues to gain state approvals, we need to find a way to incentivize the retail market to offer the product to their customers.

Last spring we were approached by POET and ADM with a proposal, called "Prime the Pump" to expand the MAPCO retail model they jointly funded. Based on this model, they would make infrastructure investments in large retail chains, targeting high volume stores. In return, the retailer had to commit to market E15 for 5 years, advertise it on the street, and make it available under the canopy. This has led to E15 is being offered through flex or blender pumps, which has the additional benefit of expanding E85 availability.

Corn growers have a long history of installing pumps, but this is slightly different approach. The most recent deal under this plan is Sheetz. Sheetz is a leader in the convenience store



Jeff Sandborn, chairman of the NCGA ethanol committee

industry and serves the mid-Atlantic region. By the second quarter of 2016, all 60 Sheetz stores in North Carolina will offer E15. If this goes well, Sheetz has more than 200 additional stores in VA, MD, PA, and eastern Ohio. "Prime the Pump" has also pledged \$10 million to help defray infrastructure costs if Chicago passes the ordinance mandating all city stations offer E15.

Another effort we're working on is NCGA's "Fueling a Better America" plan. This plan is attempting to standardize all fuel dispensers coming off the assembly line as E25 compatible. In addition, this plan will design a consumer-facing program that will change perceptions about ethanol, and try and influence consumers at the pump.

NCGA along with the states, and ag industry are working with the auto manufacturers to encourage them to build engines optimized to run on higher octane ethanol blends as they build cars to meet the 2025 CAFE standards.

There's a lot in the pipeline, and we'll continue to keep you updated.

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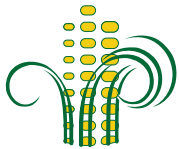
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# **BETWEEN THE ROWS**

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