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CORNTALK

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Corn Talk Advisory Committee

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In 2016 we announced the goal to make Minnesota corn growers the most sustainable and environmentally responsible in the United States. But with farmers continuing to face a changing landscape with new obstacles to overcome, we knew accomplishing this goal would not be easy.

Overcoming today’s hurdles while becoming an example of sustainability would take a united effort by our state’s 24,000 corn growers. And as a grassroots organization, the only way to start down this path was by building connections with farmers in their communities. The regional representatives showed us the importance of having a local presence where we could hear the triumphs and concerns of farmers firsthand. But as the aspirations of the state’s growers grew, we knew our local presence had to as well.

The District Field Managers program was announced in 2017 with the hiring of three new individuals to complement two existing folks, each of whom serve growers in an assigned region. Cara, Caleb, Carrie, Heidie and Marlene have been working hard to build connections with growers and increase their involvement in leadership and advocacy efforts. Each also serves as an on-the-ground resource for farmers in their efforts to promote the state’s ag sector.

We have seen how farmers are continuously becoming better stewards of our state’s natural resources while maintaining a thriving rural economy. By building connections as we work toward these common goals, we are better equipped to handle today’s obstacles and set a new standard for sustainability and environmental responsibility nationwide.

Dr. Adam Birr, MCGA Executive Director

Myron Peterson, MCR&PC Chair

Thanks to the investment made by Minnesota corn farmers through the statewide corn check-off program, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) and its broad coalition of partners have made great strides in identifying and promoting opportunities for the state’s corn farmers.

As you will see in the pages ahead, we accomplished a lot in 2017. This progress extends to expanding ethanol infrastructure, uncovering new uses for corn, promoting sustainable conservation practices and more. Here are just a few examples:

In late 2017 we hit a crucial milestone when retail locations offering E15 surpassed 200 in Minnesota. Locations have doubled year-over-year since 2013, and now there is more competition than ever to offer the lower-priced option.

Check-off funded research even made national headlines with the unveiling of a process that replaces petroleum with molecules from corn as a key ingredient in tires. Research like this and similar work on using corn starches in plastics are increasing uses for the state’s corn supply.

We also strengthened our commitment to conservation. The Innovation Grant Program funded 23 farmer-led research projects on conservation practices, and we continued our focus on nitrogen management by funding programs like University of Minnesota Extension’s Nitrogen Smart.

Thank you to each farmer who contributed to the corn check-off, helping us become the most sustainable and environmentally responsible corn farmers in the United States.

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Kirby Hettver, MCGA President

With a tough harvest behind us and little relief from low corn prices on the horizon, it is easy to think Minnesota corn farmers may not be the most optimistic group heading into 2018. Factoring in an uncertain regulatory environment and misconceptions about agriculture held by many in the state, I know we have an uphill climb ahead of us.

But it is also crucial we never lose sight of the opportunities or the perseverance we have displayed over the years.

I think one of the best examples of this is the Innovation Grant Program. Launched in 2016, grants were given to farmers to lead a conservation-minded research project on their farm. While corn growers are constantly thinking about how they can take better care of their land while becoming more efficient, tight margins have prevented many from putting these ideas into practice. Innovation Grants made this possible, and farmers came calling.

After funding seven projects in 2016, that number grew to 23 last year. Based on the demand by farmers and the great work being accomplished, total funding available to farmers will increase from $250,000 to $300,000 in the year ahead. That growth tells the story of how corn farmers are using the resources available to become better stewards of their land while running highly productive farm operations.

The nearly 7,000 members of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association are ready to tackle the challenges we are facing head-on. With initiatives like the Innovation Grant Program and “Mn Corn Grows Mn,” which was launched to build connections with the future leaders of the state, we will be stronger than ever.
MN Ag EXPO was a great success
Over 1,000 farmers, agriculture researchers, policymakers and ag-centric businesses attended MN Ag EXPO 2017 in Mankato. This year’s attendees were treated to presentations from top ag researchers, nearly 100 vendors, and updates on key issues from business and policy experts.

Ag leaders recognized at EXPO
The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) recognized two individuals who have played an important role in advocating for Minnesota agriculture. Farmer Jerry Demmer received the Golden Kernel Award for his dedication and leadership with the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council. Jeff Strock, a professor at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center, was given the Friend of Agriculture Award for his research on developing water and nutrient management solutions for farmers.

Innovation Grant Program returns for second year
The Innovation Grant Program grew in 2017, with 23 farmer-led projects receiving $250,000 in funding from MCGA. Conservation-minded projects included methods to better manage nitrogen, protect water quality, and compare nitrogen modeling tools.

Second Annual Water Summit held with Gov. Dayton
Gov. Mark Dayton held a Town Hall Water Summit in January to discuss the complex issues facing Minnesota’s waters in both rural and urban areas. Lauren Biegler, who farms with her husband and MCGA board member Bryan Biegler in Lake Wilson, sat on a panel to discuss how farmers are working to protect water quality.

TC Road Crew brings farming fun to schools
With support from MCGA, Maizey and the team at TC Road Crew visited more than 20 Twin Cities elementary schools. During each visit, students and teachers learned about the importance of corn farming and agriculture.

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MCGA re-elects six grower leaders to board of directors

Delegates to MCGA’s annual meeting in Mankato re-elected Paul Henning (Okabena) to represent District 1; Tim Waibel (Courtland) to District 2; Chuck DeGrote (Clara City) to District 4; and Noah Hultgren (Raymond) to District 5. Bryan Biegler (Lake Wilson) and Kirby Hettver (DeGraff) were re-elected to at-large positions.

**MARCH**

**Commodity Classic 2017 draws crowds**

It was estimated that more than 9,000 individuals attended the 2017 event held in San Antonio. The total included hundreds of Minnesota farmers who enjoyed the huge trade show, educational sessions and all that Classic has to offer.

**UMN recognizes “Farm Families of the Game”**

MCGA and the UMN honored the Sievert Family (Gibbon), Novak Family (St. Hilaire), Mehrkens Family (Thief River Falls), and the Demmer Family (Clarks Grove) for their commitment to conservation. Each was honored during a UMN hockey game.

**MCGA names 2017-2018 intern**

Mariah Larson, a student at the University of Minnesota (UMN), was selected as MCGA’s 2017-2018 student intern. Larson works on behalf of Minnesota’s corn farmers, while gaining practical and hands-on experiences in agriculture.

**Legislative reception makes connections**

Corn farmers and legislators came together at an informal setting in St. Paul to discuss a variety of issues affecting Minnesota agriculture.

**Minnesota Corn urges farmers to connect during legislative spring break**

As legislators returned home for spring break, MCGA urged farmers to connect with lawmakers on important state issues through Farm families were recognized throughout the season during Gopher hockey games.

Lawmakers joined farmers to discuss ag issues.

Commodity Classic was held March 2-4.
an op-ed by MCGA President Harold Wolle and a news release. Media throughout the state covered these efforts.

**MCGA partners with Great River Greening**
Together with environmental restoration group Great River Greening, MCGA shared information with consumers on ways to help the environment. KARE 11 aired segments that offered tips on pollinator-friendly plants and trees. Each segment included a message from MCGA about the progressive strides farmers have taken to help protect water quality.

**MCGA names public relations manager**
Brent Renneke was hired as MCGA’s new public relations manager. In his role, Renneke will advance MCGA’s initiatives and tell the great stories of our state’s corn farmers.

**Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council elections**
Brandon Fast (Mountain Lake), James O’Connor (Blooming Prairie) and Brennen Toquam (Claremont) were newly elected to the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), while Dwight Mork (Bellingham) was re-elected.

**Minnesota Corn takes the pitch with MN United Soccer**
MCGA partnered with the Minnesota United to share the conservation efforts of Minnesota’s corn farmers. The season-long partnership was an opportunity to reach a new audience and included in-stadium signage, TV advertisements and other promotions.

**MAY**

**Historic Oliver Kelley Farm celebrates new visitor center**
MCGA joined others to celebrate the opening of the renovated Oliver Kelley Farm for the 2017 season. Thanks to donations from MCGA and other organizations, the museum unveiled educational displays, classrooms and more that tell the stories of modern farming.

**Joint letter to governor explains need to delay buffer law**
In an effort led by MCGA, 18 agricultural organizations and several local government officials signed a joint letter to Gov. Mark Dayton and legislative leaders that urgently requested modifications to the buffer law, along with an implementation delay.

A joint letter requesting modifications and a delay of the buffer law was sent to Gov. Dayton and legislative leaders.

continued on following page
Minnesota Corn Growers play ball throughout Twin Cities

Maizey threw out the first pitch to kick off a season-long partnership with the Minnesota Twins aimed at raising awareness of Minnesota corn growers’ commitment to conservation. On the other side of the river, fans of the St. Paul Saints were treated to corn-cob foul poles and information about the state’s corn farmers in a similar season-long partnership.

JUNE

MCGA awards scholarships to future agricultural leaders

Melissa Hall and Elizabeth Weyer from the Academy for Sciences & Agriculture High School each received a college scholarship from MCGA, which partnered with the school to help grow the next generation of leaders in agriculture.

New senior public policy director named

Amanda Bilek joined MCGA to work closely with staff and its board of directors in policy and strategy development for government affairs. Prior to joining MCGA, Bilek was the government affairs and communications director for the Great Plains Institute.

CommonGround “Field-to-Fork” dinners begin

CommonGround brought 80 food influencers to a Dundas dairy farm for dinner and conversation on modern agriculture and food. It was the first of four “Field-to-Fork” events held throughout Minnesota by CommonGround, which is a group of farm women who volunteer to share information about farming.

MCGA president joins state officials in Cuba trade mission

MCGA President Harold Wolle joined Lt. Gov. Tina Smith and agricultural leaders in a trade mission to Cuba. The goal was to develop the country as a market for commodity exports, including corn.

JULY

Kernel Nation brings rural communities together

Kernel Nation events were held at J. Carver Distillery in Waconia and Brau Brothers Brewery in Marshall to further develop relationships between Greater Minnesota residents and the corn farming community. Local chamber of commerce members, local legislators and others came out to discuss the economic impact of corn and its vast uses.

District Field Managers join MCGA team

MCGA named Cara Soukup, Caleb Krusemark, Carrie Christenson, Heidie Sloot and Marlene Dufault district field managers. Each covers an assigned district to grow corn farmers’ involvement in leadership and
advocacy efforts that are important to Minnesota corn growers.

**Corn growers head to Corn Congress**

MCGA grower leaders flew to Washington, D.C., to join delegates from across the United States for Corn Congress. At the two-day annual meeting organized by the National Corn Growers Association, corn growers met with political leaders and government officials.

**AUGUST**

Another great year at Farmfest

Farmfest 2017 was a success, as thousands stopped by the MCGA tent to learn about the great work of our state’s corn growers. This year, MCGA officially launched the “MN Corn Grows MN” campaign at Farmfest by inviting all 2018 gubernatorial candidates to a family corn farm during harvest.

State’s corn growers provide input on N rule

The farming community submitted comments to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on the latest draft of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule. To encourage comment submission, MCGA launched a social media campaign and submitted op-eds throughout the state.

Farm Camp brings modern ag to youth

MCGA intern Mariah Larson hit the road at the end of the summer to connect with youth during several farm camps. Larson shared information on the many uses of corn, including DDGS, and made fun corn “slime” with youth in grades 3-5.

MCGA awards scholarship to student using corn to create plastics

Quentoria Walton, an undergraduate researcher with the UMN’s Center for Sustainable Polymers (CSP), was the recipient of the MCGA Summer Research Fellowship. This award was given to a student who has helped advance CSP’s mission to transform how plastics are made using sources like corn.

MCR&PC member added to U.S. Grains Council board of directors

MCR&PC member Chad Willis was elected to the U.S. Grains Council board of directors, where he will help direct strategies to develop new trade markets.

Tool released to help farmers with buffer alternative practices

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources released the MCGA-funded Decision Support Tool to help farmers identify...
the best strategy to protect water quality and ensure compliance with the Minnesota
Buffer Law. The tool provides farmers with
alternative practices specific to their land
that can be used in place of the prescribed
vegetative buffer.

SEPTEMBER

The group met at the Sherburn farm of Gerald Tumbleson.

South Korea corn purchasers get up-close look at Minnesota corn
Corn purchase committee leaders from South
Korea made their way through southern
Minnesota corn operations in September. The
tour included visits to the farm of MCR&PC
member Gerald Tumbleson, a grain inspection
facility and a local co-op.

Food & Ag Day takes over UMN Gopher football game
Minnesota agriculture took center stage at
TCF Bank Stadium in September during
the Fifth Annual Ag & Food Day. Prior
to the game, MCGA staff and grower
leaders joined other agricultural
organizations outside
the stadium to chat
with fans about the
great work of our
state’s corn farmers.

National Geographic shares the stories of nation’s corn farmers
National Geographic shared the stories of
America’s corn farmers with a robust national
audience in the fall. Four farmers, including
MCGA board member Bryan Biegler,
were visited by the magazine over the
summer, and their stories were told on
NationalGeographic.com and its social
channels through November.

MCGA elects DeGraff farmer Kirby Hettver president
MCGA board of directors elected Kirby Hettver
as its new president for 2017-2018. Hettver joined the board in
2014 and previously served as vice president and secretary.

OCTOBER

Festivals bring harvest fun to all ages
Harvest festivals at the Children’s Museum
of Southern Minnesota in Mankato and
the University of Minnesota’s Landscape
Arboretum in Chaska were one-stop
celebrations, featuring fun activities for the
kids and information on farming.
Harvest off to slow start
Farmers in west central, southwest and southeastern regions of Minnesota were dealing with various levels of cold and wet weather that halted the progress of soybean harvest and pushed corn harvest off for many until mid-October.

NOVEMBER

MCGA district meetings hit Greater Minnesota
MCGA leaders heard directly from corn farmers during a series of productive district meetings that were held throughout the state.

E15 hits important milestone in the state
In November, an important milestone was hit in the world of ethanol when the number of E15 fueling stations surpassed 200. With more locations, the increased awareness of the lower-priced fuel option and subsequent demand should make adding E15 an easy decision for other major retailers.

Ecuador livestock producers come to MN for DDGS
To further explore DDGS as an alternative feed, a group of farmers from Ecuador visited Minnesota. The tour started at an ethanol plant before heading to the University of Minnesota for a short course on the nutrition of DDGS.

Renewable Fuel Standard numbers set
The EPA finalized required renewable fuel volumes under the Renewable Fuel Standard. Total renewable fuel volume as part of the 2018 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVO) was set at 19.29 billion gallons, which is relatively flat compared to 2017 volumes.

DECEMBER

Pre-resolutions meeting
Corn farmers showed grassroots engagement and leadership in action by gathering for MCGA’s annual pre-resolutions meeting. Good discussion took place on state and federal legislative policy and priorities.

Corn growers enjoy high yields
Corn growers nationwide have continued to produce high yields, helping offset another year of low corn prices. The yield estimate for the 2017 crop year was 175.4 bushels/acre. The number is a slight increase from 174.7 bushels/acre in 2016.
In October, eight Minnesota gubernatorial candidates were invited on farm tours as part of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association’s “Mn Corn Grows MN” campaign. The initiative was started to build connections with candidates for elected office and to encourage a more informed dialogue about corn farming with all Minnesotans.

Through the one-on-one farm experience, growers hoped to foster conversation about farmers’ commitment to conservation and emphasize agriculture’s significant economic impact in rural and urban communities in Minnesota.

Below is a summary of each visit:

**Erin Murphy**
State Representative Erin Murphy met with Les Anderson on his Cannon Falls farm for a tour and a ride in the combine. Murphy and Anderson ended the afternoon with a conversation on issues that are important to farmers, including healthcare.

**Keith Downey**
Former Republican Party Chairman Keith Downey made the trip to the Plato farm of Brian Thalmann for a tour that included a look at different types of conservation practices, including buffers, and a combine ride.

**Tim Walz**
U.S. Representative Tim Walz met with Harold Wolle on a rainy afternoon in Madelia. While the two were unable to get the full harvest experience, Wolle and his family were able to spend time discussing Walz’ vision for the state of Minnesota.

**Phillip Parrish**
Former Naval Research Intelligence Officer Phillip Parrish visited Harold Wolle’s farm and jumped right into harvest by joining Wolle in the combine. The two spent time discussing modern agriculture and the sustainability efforts made by farmers.
Rebecca Otto
Minnesota State Auditor Rebecca Otto met with Harold Wolle and his son, Matt, for conversation over cookies and coffee that touched on the importance of farm sustainability, modern conservation and the regulations impacting farmers.

Paul Thissen
State Representative Paul Thissen visited the Northfield farm of Bruce Peterson and his family to discuss issues that have impacted the Peterson farm operation, including property taxes. From there, the group toured buffers implemented on the farm and acres that use cover crops.

Chris Coleman
St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman visited the Anderson farm for a firsthand corn harvest experience in the combine. After a tour of the farm operation, the group moved inside for a chat on healthcare costs, improvements to the Minnesota Buffer Law, and discussion around GMOs.

Matt Dean
State Representative Matt Dean made the drive to the Raymond farm of Noah Hultgren. Dean spoke with the Hultgren family about their family farm operation and issues surrounding regulations and rising property taxes. From there, the group toured the farm operation.

Just because you receive the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Year-in-Review, it doesn’t mean you’re necessarily a member of MCGA.

To check if you are a member, or to join MCGA, simply call our office at (952) 233-0333. We make the process to join easy. Members can even use funds from Minnesota’s corn check-off to cover their membership dues.
While the Minnesota Buffer law took center stage during the spring legislative session, discussion on bills that provide property tax relief for farmers, transportation funding and health insurance also took place. On the federal level, 2018 Farm Bill discussions are ongoing, while trade became a topic of great importance to the nation’s ag sector.

STATE

Property Taxes
Legislators passed a property tax bill during the 2016 legislative session that provided property tax relief to farmers, but Gov. Mark Dayton did not sign the bill. Passing this relief in 2017 was a top priority for the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA). In the end, a bill passed that includes a 40-percent credit on farm property taxes levied for school district bonding projects. The Ag2School tax credit will save Minnesota farmers approximately $30 million over the next biennium.

Buffers
MCGA worked through the session to delay implementation of the Minnesota Buffer Law. In the end, farmers were allowed to apply for a waiver that extends the compliance deadline to July 1, 2018. County aid was also approved for buffer enforcement and compliance. To help farmers with compliance, MCGA worked with the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources to approve the Decision Support Tool. This tool helps farmers choose alternative practices they can use in place of the prescribed vegetative buffer.

Transportation
The Legislature approved a transportation-funding bill, investing more than $2 billion in road and bridge infrastructure that relies solely on existing funding. MCGA and many other ag organizations worked to make transportation a priority during the 2017 session.
Health Insurance
Spending was approved early in session to help reduce the rapidly rising cost of health insurance premiums for individual policies obtained through the private market exchange. In addition to stabilizing the individual marketplace, the law also enabled the formation of agriculture-based cooperative health plans.

Nitrogen Rule
The draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule was published last spring with a comment period that ran through August. MCGA launched a communications plan that included op-ed submissions to newspapers and a social media campaign to encourage farmers to comment on the rule. More than 800 comments were submitted. The next draft of the rule is expected in early 2018, with the rule going into effect fall 2018.

FEDERAL

Farm Bill
In 2018, the federal Farm Bill will expire and Congress will authorize a new version. MCGA leaders have already been hard at work discussing key Farm Bill provisions for Minnesota corn farmers with members of Congress. MCGA will continue to stress that the farm safety net should be protected and strengthened; no harm should be done to crop insurance; Conservation Reserve Program acres should be expanded, and funding for foreign market and export promotion programs should be increased.

Trade
The Trump administration recently began a series of trade talks that could have serious implications for the nation’s ag sector. This began in January when the United States pulled out of Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. More recently, the Trump administration has scrutinized both NAFTA and the South Korean free trade agreement, which have been vital in growing ag exports. With the help of NAFTA, Mexico is the largest importer of American corn, while South Korea grew to the third largest market for corn under its free trade agreement. MCGA will monitor ongoing negotiations of each.

Ethanol
MCGA has continued its efforts to preserve and maintain a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, particularly as we move forward with a new White House administration. MCGA submitted comments to the draft rule for 2018 Renewable Volume Obligations and continues to work with the National Corn Growers Association and agricultural partners to push back against EPA proposals that diminish the market for biofuels.
2017 INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) launched the second year of the Innovation Grant Program, investing nearly $250,000 in 23 farmer-led research projects focused on conservation. Below is a summary of each farmer’s efforts during the past year:

Dan Coffman, Nicollet County
Project: Test methods to apply cover crops and measure their impact on soil health.
Project: Develop a one-pass system for strip tillage and manure application in the fall.

Keith Hartmann, Sibley County
Project: Develop a cost-effective method to interseed cover crops in between corn rows while applying nitrogen in the same pass.

Brad Nere, Renville County
Project: Measure the soil and water improvements of strip tilling, cover crops and split application of nitrogen.

Ron Anderson, Jackson County
Project: Measure the benefits of zone tillage on water infiltration and run-off.

Michelle Hicks, Redwood/Lyon County
Project: Develop an on-farm soil testing lab and compare those results to a commercial lab.

Kyle Van Overbeke, Renville County
Project: Compare nitrogen management decision tools to fine-tune nitrogen requirements to grow cover crops.

Jason Louks, Dodge County
Project: Develop a setup that combines application of fertilizer with a new approach to applying fungicide.

Jason Gillis, Steele County
Project: Measure nitrogen management on fall manure-applied fields using grid nitrate sampling and nitrogen modeling.

Pat Smith, Steele County
Project: Measure crop response to pre-plant and pre-side-dress nitrate testing using variable rate nitrogen application.

Brian Ahrens, Steele County
Project: Measure crop response to timing of split nitrogen application based on multiple nitrogen management tools.

Doug Starks, Steele County
Project: Compare innovative nitrogen management strategies against a traditional nitrogen program.

Brian Ryberg, Renville County
Project: Develop a setup that allows for the planting of cover crops while supplemental nitrogen is applied early in the season all in one pass.

Andy Linder, Faribault County
Project: Conduct field trials to test side-dress nitrogen delivery type, time of application and rate on nitrogen use efficiency and reduced loss.
A.J. Krusemark, Martin County
Project: Compare the benefits of fall manure with side-dress nitrogen using strip and conventional tillage.

Kent Luthi, Stevens County
Project: Compare the yield and cost benefits of three different reduced-tillage practices.

Brian Velde, Yellow Medicine County
Project: Measure the benefits of below-surface drip irrigation that allows for optimal delivery rates of water and nitrogen.

Sam Peterson, Rice County
Project: Compare the yield and economic return of three variable-rate nitrogen management systems to flat-rate applications.

Matt Wiebers, McLeod County
Project: Compare the “Maximum Return to Nitrogen” method against crop modeling tools for optimized nitrogen needs on multiple farms.

Jeff Strock, University of Minnesota
Project: Test the use of a BioElectroChemical reactor for treating agricultural drainage water.

Project: Test an aqueous sensor that detects mineralizable nitrogen potential in soils without disturbance.

Satoshi Ishii, University of Minnesota
Project: Test a novel algae bioreactor for nutrient removal from subsurface drainage water.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Nitrogen Smart participants see big gain
Supported by MCGA, Nitrogen Smart seminars have been held across Minnesota to help farmers become more effective with their use of nitrogen. More than 600 farmers attended 25 sessions since 2016, and according to a follow-up survey, the sessions presented by University of Minnesota Extension have been well worth farmers’ time.

After attending Nitrogen Smart, nearly 70 percent of farmers changed their nitrogen rate. Attendees lowered their fertilizer costs by $7,181 in 2016 and $4,100 in 2017 from improved nitrogen management practices shared during the seminars. And farmers who followed guidance to move nitrogen application from the fall to spring gained an average positive impact of $15,744 in 2017 based on published yield improvements.

Bringing corn to the world of plastic
MCGA supports research from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Sustainable Polymers (CSP) to find new uses for the state’s corn supply. The investment has been promising, as findings include advances in corn as an ingredient in rubber and plastics.

Making national headlines, CSP is using a process to transform sugar molecules from corn into isoprene, which is the key molecule in tires. The process would replace petroleum as the main ingredient in car tires.

Among other studies, CSP is also working to use starch from corn to produce bioplastics that have similar or better physical properties like toughness and melting temperature when compared to traditional plastics. Bioplastics have great environmental benefits and are a large potential market for corn.

Corn starches could be a key ingredient in future plastics.
Minnesota recently surpassed 200 locations selling E15. The road to reaching this milestone began in October 2013 when the first E15 pumps were installed in Minnesota. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership (BIP) selected Minnesota as one of 22 states receiving funds to further expand infrastructure. The $8 million provided through BIP in 2013 was supplemented with more than $6 million from Minnesota partners, including the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA).

The over $14 million investment in E15 infrastructure led directly to the addition of 121 stations, 29 dispensers and 41 tanks throughout the state.

Sponsorships tout engine performance of ethanol-blended fuel
MCGA worked with the National Corn Growers Association and Growth Energy to bring ethanol to the forefront through a partnership with NASCAR. In conjunction with American Ethanol, E15-blended fuel was in every NASCAR vehicle and an American Ethanol-branded green flag started each NASCAR race.

MCGA also worked with the National Corn Growers Association and Renewable Fuels Association as a sponsor of the 2017 Crappie Masters National Championship to promote E10-blended fuel as a high-performance option for marine engines in boats.

MEG Corp battles ethanol misconceptions
MEG Corp is now in its fifth year of traveling to technical schools throughout the state to conduct ethanol educational seminars, holding as many as 20 sessions annually.

MEG Corp founder Hoon Ge shared information about ethanol.

More than 600 students studying to become auto technicians learned about the benefits and misconceptions of ethanol-blended fuels. MEG Corp is also working with MCGA on a first-of-its-kind ethanol curriculum for high school students, to be released in 2018.

American Lung Association helps spread benefits of ethanol
In partnership with MCGA, the American Lung Association launched a marketing campaign to promote the clean air benefits of ethanol. In 2017, more than 50 billboards promoted E15 and E85, along with 40 segment sponsorships on popular radio stations throughout Minnesota. On the digital side of the campaign, E15 ads ran on Pandora, and E85 and E15 were promoted on popular mobile app GasBuddy. The website mnfuels.com was also developed for customers looking for ethanol-blended fuel retailers.
E15 on KARE-11
To raise awareness of the advantages of E15, MCGA sponsored “Grow with KARE,” which aired Friday evening and Saturday morning on the NBC affiliate. Ads were aired more than 17.5 million times via TV, the show’s website and its Facebook page.

Connecting with automakers to bring E25 to the marketplace
MCGA continues to work with automakers as part of the Ag-Auto-Ethanol alliance. In 2017, E25 received ASTM certification as a 100 RON fuel, and Oak Ridge National Labs completed engine testing for 25-percent ethanol blends in high compression engines manufactured by Ford and General Motors. And, with Wayne Fueling Systems producing an E25-compatible pump system, the road has been paved for use of E25 in future vehicles.

Busy year for building new markets for corn
In 2017, MCGA hosted government officials from China, Canada, Mexico, Japan and Kazakhstan; and industry visits from Japan, Mexico, India, South Korea, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Ecuador. Each group visited corn farms, co-ops, ethanol plants, the University of Minnesota and more, learning about the production of high-quality Minnesota corn. Minnesota Corn grower leaders also went abroad. Doug Albin visited Taiwan with the U.S. Grains Council, and Harold Wolle joined Minnesota Lt. Gov. Tina Smith in Cuba.

Principles from Mexico’s second largest pork production company visited Minnesota to explore corn operations.

MID-LEVEL BLEND PUMPS IN MINNESOTA

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<th>Gallons</th>
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<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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MINNESOTA E15 SALES BY YEAR

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<th>Gallons</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5.7 million gallons</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3.1 million gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>257.855 gallons</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>42.648 gallons</td>
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AVERAGE PRICE OF E15 PER GALLON BY YEAR

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<th>Price</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$3.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are through October 2017
Source: Minnesota Department of Commerce

MCGA partnered with local county organizations and the American Lung Association to promote E15 at retailers statewide.

18
KARE-11: “Candidates lend an ear to corn growers”
The Twin Cities NBC affiliate joined us for a farm visit by gubernatorial candidate Keith Downey to cover the “MN Corn Grows MN” initiative. Local media often covered gubernatorial visits in their community.

Rochester Post-Bulletin: “Buffer compliance tools coming for farmers”
The Rochester Post-Bulletin was one of many outlets that covered the release of the Decision Support Tool developed by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and University of Minnesota to help farmers choose alternative practices to the buffer law.

Marshall Independent: “Looking for more efficient ways to grow crops”
The newspaper covered the subsurface drip irrigation system installed by area farmer Brian Velde as part of the Innovation Grant Program. Velde’s project was one of many covered by local media.

St. Cloud Times: “Farmers weigh in on fertilizer proposal”
This newspaper was one of eight outlets that published MCGA President Harold Wolle’s op-ed calling for farmers to submit comments to the draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule.

Owatonna People’s Press: “Corn farmers lobby over taxes, transportation and buffers”
The People’s Press was one of more than 20 Minnesota outlets to cover the priorities for the state’s corn growers during the 2017 legislative session.

MCGA Executive Director Adam Birr presented a check to Soil Health Partnership.
Twin Cities, to share the conservation efforts of Minnesota’s corn farmers. The season-long partnership was an opportunity to reach a young, engaged audience and included in-stadium signage, TV advertisements and other promotions.

At an April match, MCGA presented a check for $5,000 to the Soil Health Partnership (SHP) in an on-field ceremony, as an example of the corn growers’ conservation efforts.

“Field-to-Fork” dinners bring foodies to farmers
It was another successful year of “Field-to-Fork” farm dinners organized by CommonGround Minnesota, a group of farm women who volunteer to share information about food and farming. Each of the four
“Field-to-Fork” events were held throughout Minnesota. Dinners brought influencers in the food community to a Minnesota farm for a conversation on modern agriculture and food.

MCGA partners with Fluence Media
MCGA partnered with Fluence Media to become a regular content provider to the company’s various newsletters, which include AgTake. The newsletter is delivered multiple times each week to ag professionals throughout Minnesota. Overall, it is a great opportunity to raise awareness of initiatives by the state’s corn growers.

Twin Cities Road Crew brings corn fun to all
MCGA worked with the Twin Cities Road Crew this year to bring corn knowledge and entertainment to the public. The group presented corn facts during school assemblies, at sporting events and at Open Street events in Minneapolis. Twin Cities Road Crew is just one way MCGA brings a positive message about corn farming to metro area youth and their families.

Maizey joined Twin Cities Road Crew at a Minnesota United soccer game this summer.

2017 MINNESOTA CORN PRODUCTION*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres planted</th>
<th>8.1 m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Yield</td>
<td>190 bushels/acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Total production</td>
<td>1.45 billion bushels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017 NATIONAL CORN PRODUCTION*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres planted</th>
<th>90.4 m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Average yield</td>
<td>175.4 bushels/acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Total production</td>
<td>14.6 billion bushels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MCGA MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>1978</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>18 state directors, elected by their peers (directors serve 3-year terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>6,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>52 county organizations, representing 65 counties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CORN CHECK-OFF INVESTMENT ALLOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research and Stewardship</th>
<th>37%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National and World</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership and Grower Services</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Promotion</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations and Administration</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MINNESOTA CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kirby Hettver  
President  
District: At Large  
DeGraff

Brian Thalmann  
First Vice President  
District: 5  
Plato

Les Anderson  
Treasurer  
District: 3  
Cannon Falls

Tim Waibel  
Secretary  
District: 2  
Courtland

Harold Wolle  
Past President/  
District: 2  
Madelia

Bryan Biegler  
District: At Large  
Lake Wilson

Ryan Buck  
District: At Large  
Goodhue

Charles DeGrote  
District: 4  
Clara City

Zach Fore  
District: 6  
Mentor

Tom Haag  
District: At Large  
Eden Valley

Paul Henning  
District: 1  
Okabena

Noah Hultgren  
District: 5  
Willmar

Jean Knakmuhs  
District: 1  
Marshall

Gerald Mulder  
District: At Large  
Renville

Bruce Peterson  
District: 3  
Northfield

Dan Root  
District: At Large  
Racine

John Swanson  
District: 6  
Mentor

Dale Tolifson  
District: 4  
Benson

MINNESOTA CORN RESEARCH & PROMOTION COUNCIL

THANKS TO OUR ALLIED PARTNERS
MINNESOTA CORN
RESEARCH & PROMOTION COUNCIL

Myron “Mickey” Peterson
Chair
District: 3, 5, 6
Sacred Heart

Gary Prescher
Vice Chair
District: 8
Delavan

Dwight Mork
Secretary
District: 1, 2, 4
Bellingham

Scott Winslow
Treasurer
District: 9
Fountain

Doug Albin
District: 1, 2, 4
Clarkfield

Brandon Fast
District: 7
Mountain Lake

George Goblish
District: 7
Vesta

James O’Connor
District: 8
Blooming Prairie

Brennen Toquam
District: 9
Claremont

Gerald Tumbleson
District: 8
Sherburn

Chad Willis
Districts: 3, 5, 6
Willmar

MCGA AND MCR&PC STAFF

Adam Birr, Ph.D.
Executive Director, CEO

Amanda Bilek
Senior Public Policy Director

Mitch Coulter
Commodity Marketing & Biofuels Director

Meghan Doyle
Communications Director

Missy Gilbertson
Director of Grower Services

Sherrie Graves
Assistant to the CEO/ Facilities Manager

Mark Hamerlinck
Assistant Executive Director

Jan Horstmann
Membership & Compliance Associate

Paul Meints, Ph.D.
Senior Research Director

Brent Renneke
Public Relations Manager

Suzanne Swenson
Senior Finance Director