Latest research shows cover crops effective in reducing nitrogen loss

USMCA, state issues take center stage for corn farmers

The exciting future of corn-based bioplastics
Minnesota’s ethanol industry had a banner year in 2018, surpassing ethanol infrastructure milestones and obliterating previous sales records of ethanol-blended fuels.

The “Rise of Ethanol in Minnesota” e-book shares how the state’s corn growers worked with biofuel supporters on all levels to ignite the momentum we are seeing at the pump. These efforts with legislators and the general public have not only made Minnesota a national leader in ethanol, they have also built a more sustainable future for ethanol-blended fuels.

Visit info.mncorn.org/ethanol to download the free e-book.

About the cover:
Bryan Biegler, who farms with his wife, Lauren, in Lake Wilson, is an active participant in the Soil Health Partnership. The Biegler’s plant cereal rye cover crops on their farm to prevent nitrogen loss and promote soil health.
Minnesota’s legislative session ends with mixed results for corn farmers

At the time of publication, Gov. Tim Walz and legislators were still working to reach an agreement on a two-year state budget. Without the financial parameters, omnibus bills containing program and policy impacting corn farmers were stalled in conference committees.

With that, here is a look at legislation that the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will be following closely as legislators and the governor work to find common ground. Minnesota’s 91st legislative session is set to adjourn on May 20:

**Taxes**

In late April, the House approved their tax bill, which included full federal conformity on Section 179 capital equipment expensing and an increase in the Ag2School credit from 40 percent to 70 percent.

The Senate Taxes committee approved their tax bill on April 30. The bill includes full federal conformity on Section 179, allowing full deduction for the tax year that property was placed in service. The Senate provision for Section 179 is similar to the House tax bill and Governor’s budget. The Senate tax bill also includes language clarifying agricultural homestead classification for ownership and operating entities.

Neither the House nor Senate tax bill includes the buffer property tax credit. While we are disappointed to not see this provision included, we will continue to advocate for addressing this issue.

**Agriculture Finance**

Funding for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is outlined in House and Senate agriculture finance bills. The bills have many same and similar provisions and appropriations, but also a few key differences that MCGA will be watching closely.

Both bills include base funding the Agriculture Research, Education, Extension, and Technology Transfer Program (AGREETT) at the University of Minnesota at $9.3 million per year, but each bill designates some of the funds for specific purposes and will be a key issue to resolve in conference committee.

The Agriculture Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) is extended, but only for five years in the House bill and for 10 years in the Senate. MCGA supports a ten-year extension for AFREC.

**Environment Finance**

Environment finance bills include funding for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The omnibus environment bills have significant differences to resolve in conference committee on appropriations for two-year state agency budgets, in addition to some policy provisions that MCGA is watching closely.

Stay up-to-date on the latest from the Capitol by following our blog at mncorn.org/blog. You can also have updates sent directly to your inbox by subscribing to Leader Update at mncorn.org/LeaderUpdate.

MCGA directors advocate for state’s corn growers in Day on Hill

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) brought 16 grower leaders to the Minnesota State Capitol for its annual Day on the Hill in March. The group met with Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen and more than 25 legislators, including key legislative leadership and chairs of committees that are important for MCGA policy priorities.

In each meeting, growers stressed the importance of specific tax policies, including enacting federal tax conformity through Section 179, property tax relief for farmers by increasing the Ag2School Tax Credit, and buffer property tax relief. To spur ag innovation in our state, growers also asked for increased funding for the Agriculture Research, Education, Extension and Technology Transfer Program (AGREETT). Transportation funding in Greater Minnesota was also a point of emphasis for growers in each meeting.

MCGA appreciates the time that legislative leaders, key committee chairs and individual legislators took to meet with grower leaders and discuss important policy priorities for Minnesota’s corn farmers.
MCGA, NCGA work to ratify vital USMCA

In late November, it was announced the United States, Canada and Mexico reached an agreement on a new trade deal replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Since, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) has worked alongside the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) to ratify the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA).

At the time of publication, the timeline for USMCA ratification by Congress was uncertain. MCGA and NCGA continue to stress the need for this agreement, bringing much-needed stability to two pivotal markets for American corn farmers.

Mexico and Canada are the U.S. corn industry’s largest, most reliable markets. Mexico is the top buyer of American corn, purchasing 25 percent of corn exports. In 2016, more than 17.3 million metric tons of corn and corn co-products, valued at $3.2 billion, were exported to Mexico and Canada.

With that, there is a lot at stake for corn farmers in USMCA negotiations. According to a study from the U.S. Grains Council, without the free-trade agreement the United States would experience an $800 million drop in corn production and a $13 billion hit to farm sector gross domestic product.

Congressional approval of the USMCA will be crucial for agricultural producers who have greatly benefitted from free-trade agreements with Canada and Mexico. Agricultural exports to both countries in 1993, prior to NAFTA, were valued at $8 billion. Last year, more than $40 billion in agriculture products were sent to Mexico and Canada—28 percent of U.S. food and agricultural exports.

The ratification of the USMCA is expected to only accelerate that growth. Increased market access for U.S. agriculture will increase by $450 million annually, according to a study conducted by the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University.

In addition to traveling to Washington, D.C., to stress the importance of the agreement (see story at right), MCGA joined Minnesota commodity organizations in a letter addressed to each member of Minnesota’s congressional delegation in May urging USMCA approval.

Along with ratification, signees of the letter also called for ending Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum, which could dwarf any gains made by the USMCA. A study through Purdue University estimated U.S. agricultural exports to decline by $1.8 billion dollars annually if the tariffs remain in place.

As farm incomes continue to decline, reaching a 23-year low in 2018, the approval of the USMCA comes at a time when farmers statewide are in need of greater market security. MCGA will continue working with NCGA and its partners in Washington to stress the importance of bringing a new trade deal to corn farmers in the months ahead.
MCGA elevates federal priorities in nation’s capital

In late March, a group of Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) directors spent time in Washington, D.C., advocating for federal policy priorities with members of Minnesota’s congressional delegation and other key House and Senate leaders, as well as important agencies.

One of the top federal priorities for MCGA and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) is the successful congressional approval of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

MCGA farmer leaders, along with other state corn organizations and NCGA leaders, had the opportunity to participate in a meeting at the White House with the office of U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Gregg Doud. The group received an update on current trade negotiations and discussed the importance of congressional approval of the USMCA. MCGA directors then carried forward the message from Ambassador Doud in visits with members of Minnesota’s congressional delegation.

MCGA leaders also met with the agricultural advisor to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and key EPA staff. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the impending rule for year-round E15 and to learn more about the specific elements that were proposed. The meeting also provided information to bring forward in meetings with Minnesota’s members of Congress and other key House and Senate leaders.

A third federal priority discussed in meetings with policymakers was protecting the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, more commonly known as the farm bill, and the importance of the bill in providing some certainty to agriculture when net farm income has decreased about 50 percent in the last six years.

With five new members in Minnesota’s congressional delegation, the time spent by farmer leaders in Washington to build relationships with new members and strengthen relationships with returning members of the delegation is critical to MCGA advocacy efforts.

Corn growers represent Minnesota ag at Trump roundtable

President Donald Trump was in Burnsville for a roundtable focused on taxes on April 15. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) was invited to be part of the event, representing the state’s ag sector.

Though MCGA grower leaders were unable to speak directly with President Trump, the roundtable was a great opportunity for MCGA directors to discuss the importance of trade, E-15 and more with state and federal officials in attendance.

“It was an honor to represent Minnesota’s corn growers at President Trump’s roundtable on taxes and the economy, and we thank the administration for inviting us to this event,” MCGA President Brian Thalmann said. “While everyone has differing views on politics, it is important we work with those elected to create positive outcomes for corn farmers and all of agriculture. We appreciated the chance to connect with several state and national officials and discuss how we can build a brighter future.”
Cover crops are an emerging topic in agriculture, as both farmers and researchers work to identify practices that prevent nutrient loss and protect water quality. While gaining in popularity, questions related to the practicality of cover crops and their widespread effectiveness still remain.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council are investing in research that answers those questions. Primarily, how effective are cover crops in reducing nitrogen loss on the farm, how will they impact farming practices, and perhaps most importantly, will they hurt yield?

What the research concludes

An assistant professor at the University of Minnesota’s Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Axel Garcia y Garcia will soon be wrapping up a study on cover crops that assesses their impact—both positive and negative—in a variety of environments and production practices.

With test plots in Waseca, Lamberton and Grand Rapids, Garcia y Garcia measured the effectiveness of both cereal rye and an annual blend of cover crops on fields using conventional tillage, strip-till and no-till in contrasting locations.

Jeff Vetsch, also a researcher at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center, is leading a study that examines the role cover crops play in reducing nitrogen loss to surface waters through tile drainage, specifically. Over the last two years, Vetsch and his team tested the impact of no cover crops, cereal rye cover crops, and annual blend cover crops on a corn-soybean rotation using appropriate rates of N fertilizer.

Both studies have supported the purpose of cover crops: They are effectively reducing nitrogen loss and keeping the nutrient where it belongs—in the soil.

Cover crops on each of Garcia y Garcia’s test plots consistently reduced nitrate loss three years into his four-year study. By using geographically diverse plots, he also showed that cover crops work across a range of Minnesota environments. Soil also varied with each location, with Grand Rapids having sandier soil more susceptible to leeching, while Waseca and Lamberton largely feature heavier soils.

Cereal rye emerges between rows of standing corn in the study led by Garcia y Garcia.
establish, the extended growth period for cereal rye allowed more time for it to scavenge up nitrogen in the soil and added increased erosion resistance potential with living roots remaining through snow melt and rainfall in the spring.

In the study led by Vetsch, nitrate concentrations in tile drainage water averaged 2.6 parts per million (ppm) across all fertilizer rates with a cereal rye cover, compared to 6.8 ppm under a blend of annual covers and 8.8 ppm under no cover crops.

Cover crop performance was also largely unaffected by tillage practices in each study. At Garcia y Garcia’s three test sites, conventional, strip-till, and no-till had no impact on the establishment of cover crops and their nitrogen uptake capabilities.

And with Vetsch two years into his study and Garcia y Garcia more than three, neither have found a reduction in yield due to cover crops. While cover crops come with an expense, the fact that neither impacted corn production is significant for Minnesota’s corn farmers.

**Identifying what’s next for cover crop research**

Key questions have been answered related to the effectiveness of cover crops, but both Vetsch and Garcia y Garcia agree more research is needed on best management practices for cover crops. The aforementioned expense that comes with planting cover crops can be significant to farmers already facing tight margins. Additional research on best practices that help ensure the success of cover crops will be key to widespread adoption.

“We have struggled getting good cover crop establishment, especially last growing season. Those are some of the challenges that growers in northern climates will have to deal with,” Vetsch said. “Those management situations and scenarios still need to be evaluated to determine how we can make the greatest impact on water quality and soil health.”

For Garcia y Garcia, the best method to answer those remaining management questions will be to bring cover crop research to grower-led farm fields with even more geographic diversity. He hopes to work directly with farmers, giving them the freedom to choose how they incorporate cover crops, and monitor what practices are most efficiently reducing nitrate loss.

**A great return on investment**

There is more work to be done surrounding the management of cover crops, but questions related to the fundamental purpose of the conservation practice have been answered. Cover crops, specifically those that overwinter like cereal rye, effectively reduce nitrate loss on the farm.

The conclusion is welcomed by the state’s corn growers, who supported both studies as part of their mission to become the most sustainable and environmentally responsible corn farmers in the nation.

“As corn farmers, we are always looking for ways to become better stewards of the land and protect water quality statewide,” MCGA President Brian Thalmann said. “Cover crops have long been touted as an effective method for us to reach our goals, and this research only reaffirms our optimism around the practice and its potential impact on our state.”

To learn more about research funded through the corn check-off, visit mncorn.org/research or download the Research Summary (completed research) and Research Directory (ongoing research) at mncorn.org/publications for a comprehensive recap of each project.
Minnesota corn farmers partner with the University of Minnesota to research sustainable plastics

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) will be investing more than $460,000 in research at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Sustainable Polymers (CSP) focused on the development of plastics made with renewable sources.

CSP research aims to replace petroleum as a feedstock for plastics with renewable sources like corn. In doing so, the environmental impact of plastic, both in its making and disposal, would be drastically reduced. A new market for corn farmers with great potential could emerge as a result of this research.

Corn-based plastics, including Polyactic Acid (PLA) plastics, are used today, but are limited due to a number of restrictive characteristics. Research supported by the state’s corn farmers includes projects that could greatly increase how and where corn-based plastics can be used by adding toughness, strength, a higher melting point, and other characteristics during the production process.

For example, CSP researchers are developing a process that increases the ductility of PLA plastics, or the strength of the plastic when stretched. With the added pliability, grocery bags made with PLA plastics will decompose quickly, as opposed to becoming an environmental hazard. Other CSP research supported by MCGA/MCR&PC in the years ahead includes using corn to produce eco-friendly plastics and polyesters that make up everyday items, from take-home food containers to diapers and glue.

“The collaboration between Minnesota’s corn growers and the Center for Sustainable Polymers is especially exciting in its potential for both corn farmers and consumers,” MCGA President Brian Thalmann said. “While our mission is to build a more sustainable future on the farm, this research has implications that would help address a number of the major environmental concerns we are facing globally.”

As Minnesota corn farmers face consecutive years of declining farm income, new markets for the nation’s corn supply continue to be vital. By helping fund a diverse portfolio of research at CSP, the state’s corn growers are identifying a new use for Minnesota’s corn supply with tremendous environmental benefits for all.

CSP researchers attended MN Ag EXPO 2019 in January to talk about their research on sustainable plastics made of corn.
Three years in, the Agriculture Research, Education, Extension Technology Transfer Program (AGREETT) has led to several key hires at the University of Minnesota that will pay dividends for the long-term health of Minnesota agriculture.

"[AGHEETT] has been phenomenally successful," said Greg Cuomo, associate dean for research and graduate programs at the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS). "It has given the University the opportunity to fill key positions and address problems impacting agriculture in the short and long term."

Without AGREETT, Cuomo said few if any of the key hires spread across CFANS, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Extension would be made at the University of Minnesota. In a world of higher education budget constraints, each college has attracted key talent to the University who bring more than their expertise.

"What each hire has is a youthful enthusiasm and a passion for making a difference in agriculture," Cuomo said. "It is not that we were missing that passion, but you bring new thoughts and new minds and great things happen."

Each AGREETT hire is made with the focus of how he or she will contribute to the larger puzzle of building a more sustainable future for agriculture in Minnesota, according to Cuomo.

For example, an assistant professor who was hired through AGREETT to work in CFANS’ Department of Animal Science researches the microbiome of animals to improve the health and productivity of livestock, while a hire in the soil, water and climate department specializes in manure management to improve on-farm efficiencies.

“[AGREETT] has really been a terrific opportunity that has made all sorts of things possible,” Cuomo said. “I don’t look at it as only a benefit to the University, I look at how well it serves all of Minnesota agriculture. It has been a partnership that really benefits the state.”

For more information on AGREETT, visit AGREETT.umn.edu to learn about each hired faculty member and other goals of the program.
Nitrogen Smart seminar continues from the comfort of your home

Nitrogen Smart recently wrapped up its fourth year of seminars across Minnesota farm country, focused on the fundamentals of nitrogen management. For farmers unable to attend, University of Minnesota Extension launched an online version of Nitrogen Smart that farmers can now take year-round at home.

Using an identical curriculum to in-person seminars, Nitrogen Smart’s new and interactive training program creates a unique experience for producers based on their own operation and region.

The online curriculum focuses on the sources of nitrogen for crops, how to manage nitrogen in drainage systems, an update on regulations and how they impact farmers, and practices to refine nitrogen management. Participants who complete the online course receive the same certification as farmers who attend an in-person seminar.

More than 700 farmers have attended Nitrogen Smart sessions to date, with 95 percent of attendees stating they would recommend the course to a fellow farmer. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association supports the Nitrogen Smart program as part of its mission to become the most sustainable and environmentally responsible corn farmers in the country.

Find more information about Nitrogen Smart and instructions to complete the online course at z.umn.edu/nitrogensmart.

MNFuels.com brings the latest in renewable fuels with new blog

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) revamped MNFuels.com to serve as a resource for the thousands of Minnesotans topping off their tank with ethanol-blended fuels. The website features a station locator, flex fuel vehicle identifier, information on ethanol blends, and now a regularly updated blog with the latest from the world of ethanol.

As Minnesota grows as a national leader in ethanol, the blog will share great stories detailing the many benefits of ethanol-blended fuels. Drivers can also learn the latest research on ethanol and legislative updates impacting access to the cleaner-burning fuel.

Also featured on the blog, MCGA is again partnering with the American Lung Association in Minnesota and the Twin Cities Road Crew to hold station events throughout Minnesota promoting the benefits of ethanol-blended fuels. Visitors to the blog will see information on upcoming fuel station events, as well as photos and recaps from past ethanol promotions.

Visit MNFuels.com today!

MNFuels.com is your home for ethanol-related news, including station events promoting ethanol-blended fuels.
Women’s Agricultural Leadership Conference returns with a focus on change

Now in its 21st year, the Women’s Agricultural Leadership Conference returned in April with an agenda focused on better responding to the ever-evolving landscape on the farm. Held at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska, the day-long event featured quality programming, leadership development and networking—all focused on helping attendees better endure change in agriculture.

“Change seems to be the one constant in our world. Everything is always in flux,” conference co-founder Doris Mold said. “This is an opportunity to address those changes, whether it is the economy, looking at the role of technology, really the whole ‘agscape’ is what we are covering.”

Building on the “Changing the Agscape” theme for this year’s conference, each session featured thought leaders discussing the impact of increasing diversity on the farm, resiliency, navigating career change, rural policy and more.

The one common theme fueling the collaborative environment of the Women’s Agricultural Leadership Conference is a passion for agriculture.

“The conference is a great opportunity to get together with like-minded people. Especially after another tough winter, it is a great experience,” Mold said.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association is a proud supporter of the conference and its mission to promote agricultural leadership among women.

CommonGround Minnesota workshop returns June 17-18

CommonGround Minnesota will host its annual workshop June 17–18 in the Twin Cities. If you are a woman in agriculture and would like to become involved in consumer outreach activities, this is an excellent opportunity to learn how you can get involved and hear from great speakers.

The workshop is free to attend, but space is limited. Details and registration can be found at CommonGroundMinnesota.com.

Ag Awareness Day held at University of Minnesota campus

Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) district field managers joined other commodity organizations from the state at the University of Minnesota’s Northrop Mall for Ag Awareness Day, held April 16. MCGA’s presence was an opportunity to promote the impact of the state’s corn growers with students and share information about the importance of corn to our state.

In addition to discussing the many ways corn growers are building a more sustainable future for Minnesotans, Ag Awareness Day was also an opportunity to connect with students who already have a connection to agriculture. District field managers also promoted MCGA’s Young Adult Membership for students looking to engage in grassroots advocacy.

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MCGA continues summertime partnership with United FC, Saints

Enjoy fireworks, food trucks and more at MCGA Night with the St. Paul Saints on Aug. 30.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will again have a large presence with Minnesota United FC and the St. Paul Saints this summer, engaging Minnesota sports fans about corn farming.

MCGA has partnered with the Minnesota United since they became a Major League Soccer team in 2017. It continues to be a terrific opportunity for MCGA to connect with a young, enthusiastic fan base at Minnesota United matches.

Previously playing at the University of Minnesota’s TCF Bank Stadium, the United recently kicked off the season at their new home, St. Paul’s Allianz Field, which has generated tremendous excitement for the upcoming season. MCGA will gain excellent exposure during the season, as the soccer club expects to sellout the 20,000-seat stadium throughout the summer.

At each match, soccer fans in the stadium, as well as those watching on TV or listening on the radio, will have the opportunity to learn more about the state’s corn farmers. Signage, trivia, on-field promotions and more will all highlight the importance of agriculture and corn to all Minnesotans. And be sure to mark your calendar for MCGA Night at Allianz Field on Sunday, Aug. 4. Can’t make it to the game? Watch it on ESPN and catch all the action.

Fans of the St. Paul Saints have grown accustomed to MCGA being part of the ballgame experience at CHS Field in St. Paul. The “Minnesota Corn”-themed foul poles have been a staple at the ballpark since it opened in 2015, and they’ll be there once again in 2019.

Introduced last season, MCGA will continue to sponsor the “Aww-Shucks” moment of the game. For every error committed during the game, MCGA will donate $100 to the University of Minnesota Bee Lab to be used for pollinator research and education.

Fans will also want to break out their yoga mat this season. New in 2019, MCGA and the Saints will introduce the “Moment of Zen,” offering fans at the ballpark a break from the nonstop action that typically occurs at a Saints game. During a break between innings and continuing into the opposing teams’ time at the plate, the crowd will be treated to relaxing visuals and music, as well as the soothing voice of the CHS Field public address announcer. Yoga and other zen-like poses, demonstrated atop the dugout by the Saints ever-popular ‘ushertainers’, will only add to these moments of tranquility at each home game throughout the season.

Three re-elected to MCR&PC

George Goblish, Gary Prescher and Chad Willis were all re-elected to the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council in April.

Goblish, who farms in Vesta, was re-elected to represent District 7. Prescher (Delavan) was re-elected to represent District 8, and Willis (Willmar) will retain his position representing Districts 3, 5 and 6.

The MCR&PC administers the efficient and effective investment of Minnesota’s corn check-off.

MCGA Night with the Minnesota United will bring Maizey to Allianz Field on Aug. 4.
The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is proud to announce the first recipients of the MCGA Young Adult Scholarship. Brooke Hoffbeck and Emilia Melson both received $5,000 scholarships to help in their journey to become a future agricultural leader.

Hoffbeck and Melson demonstrated their passion for agriculture by submitting essays that identified why each is pursuing a career in ag and the issues they see as most important for our state’s ag community. Hoffbeck hails from Morgan and currently attends South Dakota State University. Having grown up on a farm, Hoffbeck has always had a passion for ag. She continues to be involved in her family’s farm operation and is also an active member of FFA. She is currently pursuing a degree in agronomy.

“I think the best part of being involved in agriculture is that we all have one thing in common; we are working together to feed the world! I am excited to take my passion for agriculture to the next level and make it my full-time career,” Hoffbeck wrote in her application.

Melson grew up in Trimont and currently attends the University of Minnesota where she is pursuing a degree in agricultural communications and marketing. In addition to helping on her family’s farm, Melson grew up showing pigs through her local 4-H chapter. Her time interacting with the general public as an advocate of the pork industry influenced her choice to have a career in ag communications.

“I want to be an advocate for not only the pork industry and corn growers, but agriculture as a whole. I have a passion for agriculture that I want others to have as well. I believe the best way for me to contribute to the industry will be through communicating with consumers, farmers and organizations,” Melson wrote in her application.

Announced in February, MCGA offered a $5,000 scholarship to two students pursuing a career in ag enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program during the fall 2019 semester. MCGA scholarship applicants were required to be a Young Adult member of MCGA.

For more information on scholarships from national, state and county corn organizations, visit mncorn.org/scholarships.
Our 52 county corn organizations fuel our grassroots advocacy efforts, while helping promote the importance of corn farming in Minnesota. Throughout the year, they host events that raise awareness of agriculture in their local communities, engage area youth with educational and scholarship opportunities, meet local legislators to discuss issues important to corn farming, and much more.

To shine a light on these initiatives throughout the year, we are highlighting the counties’ many successes in each issue of Corn Talk.

Polk County Corn and Soybean Growers President Kevin Krueger dropped off books at East Grand Forks’ Riverside Christian School.

Polk County Corn and Soybean Growers

The Rock County Corn & Soybean Growers teamed up with Luverne’s Take 16 Brewery to hold a community event in April that promoted agriculture in southwest Minnesota, while raising money for a great cause.

The “Farm to Pint” event served up hamburgers grilled by the Rock-Nobles Cattlemen’s Association and rib ticklers served up by the Rock County Pork Producers—all in addition to a special Take 16 beer specially brewed using corn for the event. Proceeds raised from food sales and donations went to Luverne’s Backpack Program.

The Backpack Program provides healthy food to children who may not receive proper nutrition when out of school. The funds raised during the event will help extend that assistance to the summer months by providing families in need with healthy produce from Luverne’s farmers market. About $2,000 was raised for the program at the event. The Rock County Corn & Soybean Growers will match that amount.

Rock County Corn and Soybean Growers

Pope and Murray County Corn and Soybean Growers

Both Pope County and Murray County Corn and Soybean Growers Associations celebrated their 25th anniversary as an organized county. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) thanks both organizations and their membership for their quarter-century of grassroots efforts promoting our state’s 24,000 corn farmers.

Murray County Corn and Soybean Growers celebrated their 25th year as an organized county.

Yellow Medicine Corn and Soybean Growers

MCGA launched its Young Adult Membership for students aged 16-24 who would like to get a head start on their advocacy efforts for corn farmers in our state. The Yellow Medicine Corn and Soybean Growers Association engaged its local FFA chapter to recruit students in the county who have already shown a passion for agriculture. The two organizations worked together to sponsor each student, covering his or her MCGA Young Adult Membership.

More than 40 area students are now Young Adult members of MCGA, thanks to the efforts of local county growers. MCGA looks forward to great things from these young leaders in agriculture!

Local farmers had the opportunity to promote ag with local residents, while raising money for the child nutrition program.

Polk, Pennington/Red Lake and Marshall County Corn and Soybean Growers

Each county corn organization donated agricultural education books to elementary schools across northwest Minnesota. The goal of each donation was to promote agricultural literacy with early elementary school-aged children. The books share information and tell stories about the many crops grown in the region and how they contribute to the food we eat.

Have an event that you would like featured in County Highlights? Contact your local district field manager at mncorn.org/staff.
Become a member of MCGA

Bruce Peterson, Northfield, MCGA member since 1996

As a grassroots organization, the strength of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) stems from its members. And in what is a changing landscape for agriculture, speaking up on issues that are important to Minnesota farmers is more important than ever.

Thankfully, it’s easy to join MCGA.

Prospective members can visit mncorn.org/join to learn more about member benefits and how to join, including the benefits of the Partial Refund Program. Using the program, Minnesota corn farmers can invest in an MCGA membership by using their check-off investment.

If you have sold and checked off (in Minnesota) a minimum of 7,500 bushels of corn within the last 12 months, you qualify for a one-year membership to MCGA. Farmers who have sold and checked-off a minimum of 20,000 bushels of their corn at the $.01 rate within the last 12 months qualify for a three-year MCGA membership.

And for future agricultural leaders, MCGA launched its first-ever Young Adult Membership for Minnesotans aged 16 to 24 who want to participate in grassroots advocacy today. Along with reduced member dues, Young Adult MCGA members will stay current on the latest in Minnesota’s corn sector, and become eligible to apply for the $5,000 MCGA Young Adult scholarship and great leadership opportunities.

Visit mncorn.org/join and become a member today!
Don’t toss it out – pass it along!

When you’re finished reading Corn Talk, why not pass it along to a friend, colleague or neighbor. This publication is one of the best ways to stay up to date with the news that is important to the state’s corn growers, whether it is related to policy, research or outreach to all Minnesotans.

Know someone who should be on the Corn Talk mailing list or notice an error with your subscription? Please contact us at 952-233-0333.

calendar of events

May
27
MCGA Offices Closed for Memorial Day

June
10-11
4-H Science of Ag Challenge
   St. Paul

17-18
CommonGround Minnesota Workshop
   St. Paul

18
CommonGround Minnesota 'Moms Night Out'
   St. Paul

26
MCGA/MCR&PC Joint Board Meeting
   Shakopee

July
4-5
MCGA Offices Closed for 4th of July