

corn talk

Official Publication of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association • November 2019

Inside:

- ▣ Gov. Walz announces council to promote the use of biofuels in Minnesota
- ▣ The latest in the fight to end ethanol demand destruction
- ▣ 2020 Innovation Grant Program now accepting proposals

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The voice of Minnesota's corn farmers is more important than ever as we work to build a more sustainable future on the farm. That's why it is vital to stay connected on the issues that are impacting the state's 24,000 corn farmers.

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To easily participate in calls-to-action around policy in Minnesota and Washington D.C., text "MCGA" to 50457 and get text alerts and instructions to make your voice heard.



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Corn Talk Advisory Committee:

- Adam Birr
- Les Anderson
- Scott Winslow
- Tim Waibel
- Jim O'Connor
- Editor: Brent Renneke

About the cover

Gov. Walz traveled to the farm of MCGA Chairman Brian Thalmann to announce the establishment of the Governor's Biofuel Council. Learn more on page 5.

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MCGA will continue to fight federal actions destroying ethanol demand.

EPA continues to undermine the Renewable Fuel Standard

In early October, the Trump administration announced a biofuels package that was widely regarded as a positive first step in stopping actions by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that undermine the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

While many details were unknown, the package included a number of approaches to stop the EPA's ethanol demand destruction. Since early 2018, EPA has granted 85 RFS exemptions to refineries, which effectively reduced the blending of biofuels by 4.04 billion ethanol-equivalent gallons. Refinery exemptions under the Trump administration have totaled nearly six times more gallons than those under the previous administration.

One of the most vital parts of the package was supplemental 2020 RFS rulemaking that would account for the volume waived by the exemptions on the front end, ensuring the EPA meets the 15 billion gallons of biofuels that are mandated by the RFS.

When the supplemental rulemaking was announced two weeks later, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and all biofuel advocates were extremely disappointed in how it was stated the EPA would handle small refinery waivers.

The supplemental proposal states the EPA will account for future exemptions based only on recommendations by the Department of Energy (DOE), not the actual number of gallons waived under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

The EPA has consistently waived nearly double the gallons the DOE recommended. Recent history suggests this approach means the EPA is

likely to continue shortchanging the RFS statute that provides for 15 billion gallons of ethanol to be blended. Without assurances the EPA will account for each waiver issued, the proposal falls short of ensuring the integrity of the RFS will be maintained.

As part of the rulemaking, a 30-day comment period began on Oct. 30, running through Nov. 29. MCGA released a call-to-action to its membership asking they contact the EPA and their local U.S. representative demanding actual gallons waived are accounted for in the 2020 RVO. MCGA thanks its membership for once again making their voices heard in the continued effort to restore the vital ethanol market.

Along with comments from members, MCGA Chairman Brian Thalmann traveled to Ypsilanti, Mich., for an EPA hearing on the supplemental rulemaking. Thalmann provided testimony on behalf of the National Corn Growers Association stressing the need for a clear process to accurately account for waivers that does not allow the EPA to once again circumvent the law set by the RFS.

"The EPA has correctly proposed to project waived gallons in the 2020 RFS volumes and future years, fulfilling the law's obligation to ensure RFS volumes are met," Thalmann said in his testimony. "The problem, however, is EPA's projection for waived gallons, which does not reflect EPA's recent track record on waivers. Good intentions without a binding methodology won't provide certainty. This rule gives EPA free rein to change direction any time."

Corn growers have until Nov. 29 to comment on the rule. For more information on how to take action, visit mncorn.org. ■

Waivers attack ethanol industry and corn farmers' bottom line

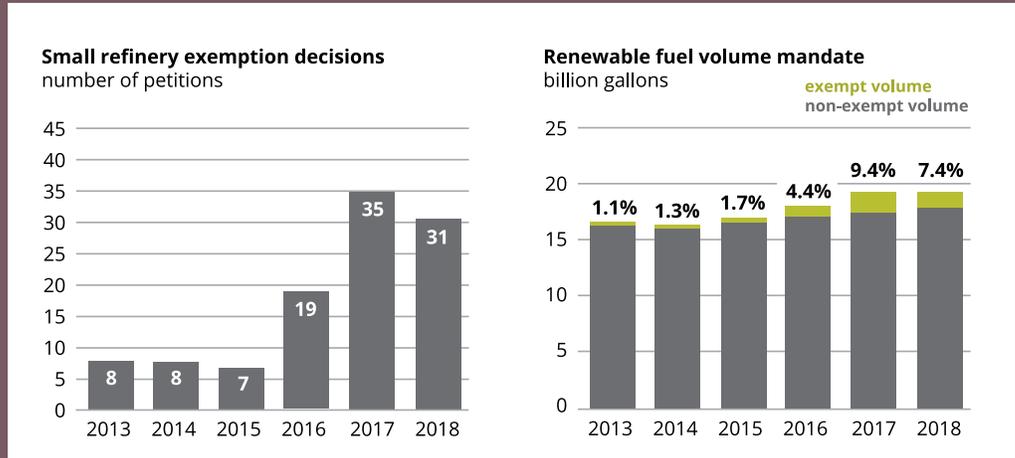
Since early 2018, EPA has granted 85 Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) exemptions to refineries, totaling 4.04 billion ethanol-equivalent gallons of renewable fuel. The waivers issued under the Trump administration, which include exemptions dating back to 2016, greatly outnumber prior years.

Because the waivers have removed a significant amount of gallons from the nation's fuel supply, the biofuel volumes set by the RFS have not been met.

The ethanol demand destruction has had a significant impact on the ethanol industry. The Renewable Fuels Association estimated the demand loss led to the layoff or

furlough of more than 700 workers in the ethanol industry while affecting more than 2,800 full-time jobs in related industries and sectors.

More than 5 billion bushels of corn go to ethanol production each year. The 85 approved exemptions for 4 billion gallons of renewable fuels ended demand for approximately 1.4 billion bushels of corn, nearly equal to total corn production in Minnesota last year, with a gross value of \$2.8 billion. ■



Source U.S. Energy Information Administration

Fuel promotion events bring ethanol benefits to the masses

County organizations stepped up across Minnesota to promote the benefits of ethanol-blended fuels and offer discounts on E85 and E15.

In all, more than 30 fuel promotion events were held over the last six months, resulting in nearly 7,000 gallons of E15 and more than 13,000 gallons of E85 pumped. Each event was a great opportunity to raise awareness of lower-priced, homegrown options at the pump and speak directly with consumers about the many benefits of ethanol-blended fuels.

To drive traffic to each event, county organizations spread the word through advertising and direct-mail campaigns to flex fuel vehicle owners. Food discounts were also a popular incentive for area residents to stop by on their commutes.

The American Lung Association was on-hand at events to promote the clean air benefits of ethanol-blended fuels. Twin Cities Road Crew, who has long partnered with the Minnesota Corn Growers Association to promote corn farming at metro schools and special events, also helped answer questions from consumers about E15 and E85.

More fuel promotion events were held in Minnesota this year than ever before, reaching thousands of drivers in Greater Minnesota communities.

Learn more about ethanol fuels and stay up to date on future station events and promotions at mnfuels.com. ■



Fuel promotion events led to nearly 7,000 gallons of E15 pumped in 2019.

Biofuels Council established to promote renewable fuels in Minnesota

Gov. Tim Walz visited the farm of Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Chairman Brian Thalmann in mid-September to announce an executive order establishing the Governor's Council on Biofuels. The announcement was a first step to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality through renewable fuels, helping Minnesota reach its environmental goals while benefiting rural communities.

The 15-member council will be tasked with recommending actions to foster growth in the production and use of biofuels. Gov. Walz, Agriculture Commissioner Thom Peterson, Heartland Corn Products CEO Gary Anderson and Thalmann each spoke at the media event about the important role biofuels will play in Minnesota's future.

Minnesota's collaborative approach to promote renewable fuel production and infrastructure have made the state a national leader in biofuels. The

establishment of the biofuels council is another example of state agencies working with key stakeholders to form a strategy that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions benefitting all Minnesotans.

"As farmers and renewable fuels continue to face challenges on the federal level, I couldn't be more proud of our state," Thalmann said. "Minnesota has long been a national leader in renewable fuels, and we have a tremendous opportunity to again be an example for the rest of our country to follow to meet the environmental goals we all deeply value while maintaining a strong rural economy."

Shortly after the announcement, the Minnesota Department of Transportation released the "Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation in Minnesota" report, which focuses on recommendations that reduce carbon emissions in the state. The biofuels council will focus on growing renewable fuels to help meet these goals.

MCGA looks forward to working with Gov. Walz and state agencies to promote the important role ethanol-blended fuels should play as the state works to reduce emissions. Ethanol-blended fuels reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 45 percent, which is equivalent to removing 11.4 million cars from the road for an entire year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ■



Gov. Walz signed the executive order on Thalmann's farm in September while Heartland CEO Gary Anderson, MCGA Chairman Brian Thalmann and MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen (left to right) look on.

The work at home to grow relationships abroad

Representatives from more than 60 countries made the trip to Washington, D.C., in mid-October to learn more about ethanol and the role it could play back home. The Global Ethanol Summit was the latest example of the growing excitement and subsequent demand for ethanol around the world.

Last year, the U.S. Grains Council (USGC) reported a record year for ethanol exports—1.70 billion gallons of U.S. ethanol were exported to more than 80 countries. That total is equivalent to 574 million bushels of corn. And, good news for America’s corn farmers, the current global environment points to potential for growth in the years ahead.

The global ethanol market has grown from more the 4.5 billion gallons in 2000 to more than 26 billion gallons in 2017. Brian Healy, director of global ethanol market development at USGC, believes the continued growth stems from a couple different factors.

First, more countries around the globe have adopted an ethanol requirement as part of their efforts to meet environmental goals. For example, countries that signed on to the Paris Climate Agreement now have goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these

countries have insufficient infrastructure or feedstock capacity to start their own ethanol industry, making importing ethanol the best option.

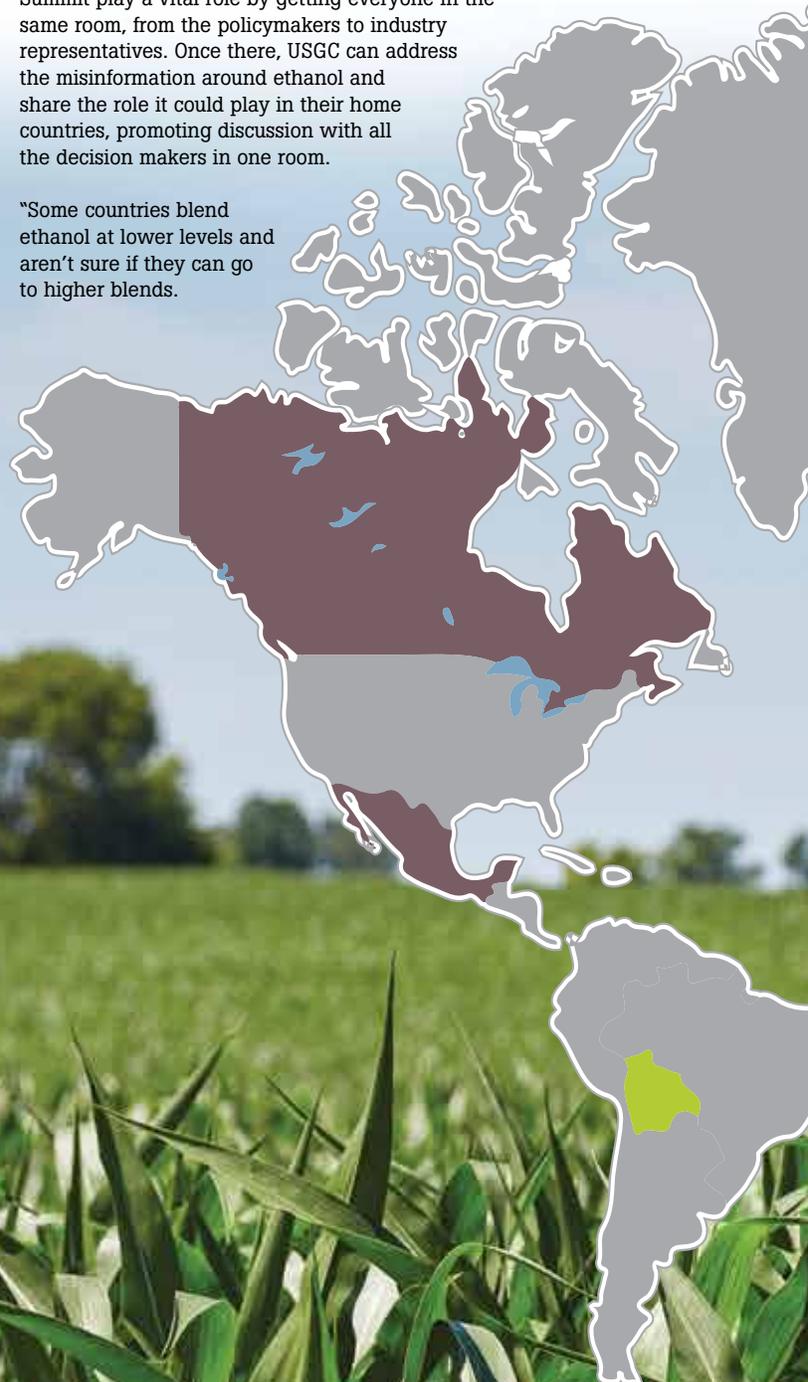
Another main factor for the globe’s embrace of ethanol comes down to octane economics. Reaching a suitable fuel octane number is crucial, and ethanol is a less expensive, environmentally friendly option to get there. Alternatives like MTBE not only cost more, but also come with human health risks by potentially contaminating groundwater.

The environmental benefits mixed with the favorable economics make a compelling case for ethanol, according to Healy.

“What turns out to be a much better solution than its alternatives also comes at a cost discount,” Healy said. “Not only are you getting air quality improvements, you are also getting a greenhouse gas reduction. Ethanol will remain a major player in reaching those environmental goals.”

To promote these benefits, Healy said conferences like the Global Ethanol Summit play a vital role by getting everyone in the same room, from the policymakers to industry representatives. Once there, USGC can address the misinformation around ethanol and share the role it could play in their home countries, promoting discussion with all the decision makers in one room.

“Some countries blend ethanol at lower levels and aren’t sure if they can go to higher blends.”



Countries expanding ethanol markets

Expanding to E10

- Canada
- Mexico
- China
- Vietnam
- Ireland

Expanding to E25

- Bolivia

Pro-ethanol policy shifts

- Japan
- European Union
- India

Some specific interest groups may not understand how to use ethanol. Others may think there is a great cost involved," Healy said. "This allows us to counter that misinformation and address it with technical resources."

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) also works with USGC to bring visiting countries on tours that show the ethanol industry up close. In October, 16 Middle Eastern and African officials came to Minnesota to tour the full scope of Minnesota-made ethanol, from the corn field to the plant to the blending site and fuel retailer.

In addition to showing them all that goes into ethanol production, it gives delegations an up close look at an American farm, which is often very different from what they have at home.

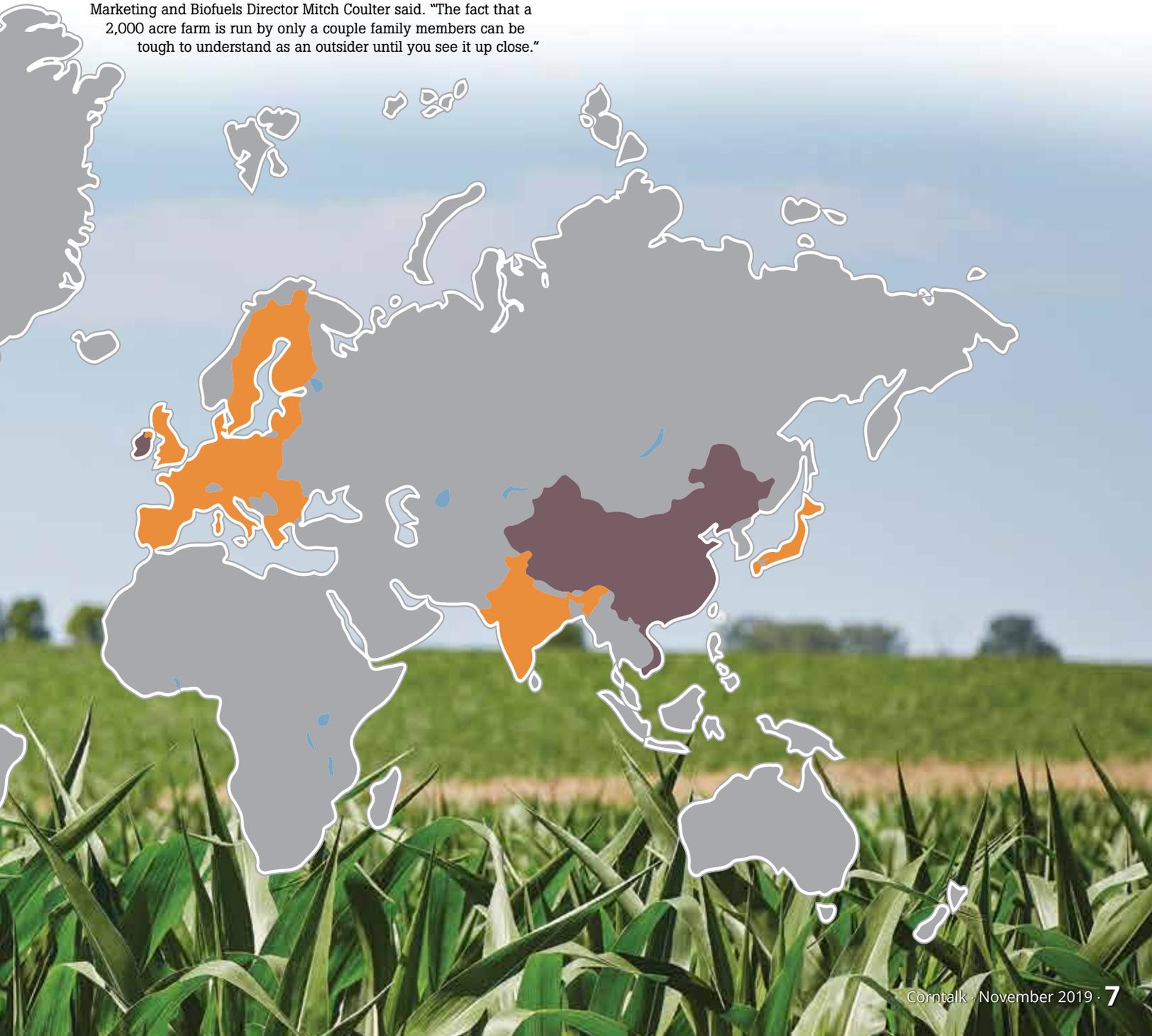
"There are a lot of misconceptions about American agriculture abroad, so it is always a great opportunity to get these delegations on a farm and show them the many sustainable practices in place," MCGA Commodity Marketing and Biofuels Director Mitch Coulter said. "The fact that a 2,000 acre farm is run by only a couple family members can be tough to understand as an outsider until you see it up close."

Each opportunity for Minnesota's ethanol industry to promote its product is certainly welcomed, according to Doug Punke, CEO of Renewable Products Marketing Group, which markets ethanol for biofuel plants in Minnesota. With ethanol-blended fuels having inelastic demand, the opportunities for increased demand are limited.

"Excluding additional demand of E15, exports are what has to grow in order for Minnesota's ethanol industry to be able to maintain and grow production," Punke said.

The momentum behind ethanol exports and the potential for American ethanol is evident, but Healy emphasized more needs to be done to change the mindset on ethanol abroad.

"[The global mindset around ethanol] is shifting, but the shifting isn't over. We need to continue to capture that momentum and thrust it forward," Healy said. "There is still a lot of misinformation, which means there is still a lot of work to be done." ■



Apply today to the 2020 Innovation Grant Program

Minnesota corn farmers once again have the opportunity to put their innovative conservation ideas into action through the Minnesota Corn Innovation Grant Program. Proposals are being accepted through Dec. 31.

In its fifth year, the Innovation Grant Program has widened its focus for innovative projects on the farm. Last year, the program expanded to accept solutions to prevent both nitrogen and phosphorous loss to ground and surface water. This year, the program also seeks innovative ideas in nutrient use efficiency, tillage, economics and management, and production practices that enhance water quality.

To date, the program has invested nearly \$600,000 in more than 50 farmer-led research projects that bring novel solutions to nutrient management and water quality protection.

In 2020, farmers are eligible for up to \$7,000 per year in funding dependent on the cost to carry out each farmer-led project involving ideas on environmental and/or economic sustainability. Replicated trials may also be funded at up to \$30,000 per year, but they must include a statistical design and analysis protocol in the proposal. Criteria and expectations for each of the proposal levels are available within the request for proposal (RFP). Projects must be applied for and conducted by an active Minnesota corn farmer subject to the Minnesota corn check-off.

Visit mncorn.org/research to download the 2020 RFP. Complete the application online before 3 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2019. ▀



Cover crop strategies are one of many focal points in the 2020 Innovation Grant Program.



Alford is now able to plant cover crops as he applies nitrogen.

innovation grant spotlight

Matt Alford in Blue Earth

Blue Earth farmer Matt Alford is in his second year of the Innovation Grant Program, which funds farmer-led research focused on conservation practices. Alford's focus is finding the optimal window for planting cover crops.

His preliminary results showed the ideal planting timing was when he would normally be topping off the nitrogen with a side-dressing pass. With the corn around 12–18 inches tall, he planted his blend of annual rye grass and buckwheat, along with smaller amounts of turnip and rapeseed. In corn-on-corn rotations, he plants a light rate of annual rye grass, with hairy vetch, red clover and turnip.

With funds through the Innovation Grant Program, Alford was able to retrofit his side-dress nitrogen machine with a seed delivery box, with outlets and fans to blow the seed down into the delivery units. The action of the applicator mixes fertilizer and cover crop seed together and lightly incorporates it in the soil.

Once he nailed down the right rate of pre-emergent, Alford has seen savings in his herbicide cost because the cover crop has essentially eliminated the need for a post-emergence herbicide application. Alford has saved \$15 an acre through the combination of increased yield and reduction in his herbicide application. ▀

Positive trade developments from the Far East



Stabilizing export markets for American corn continues to be a top priority in Washington.

With harvest coming to an end, ensuring stable export markets for corn farmers continues to be a major focus for the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA). Recently, some positive news has come from the world of trade.

In October, a trade agreement was signed between the United States and Japan, bringing stability to the second largest export market for corn farmers. Japan purchased more than \$2 billion in corn produced in the last marketing year. Japan is also a high-value market for the livestock industry, therefore, also a major purchaser of U.S. corn through exported meats.

The agreement is one phase in a two phase process that focuses on market access. MCGA eagerly awaits the second phase of negotiations, which is expected to be more comprehensive and provide clarification on trade rules that are also important to corn farmers.

The Trump administration also recently announced it would not increase tariffs on Chinese products as expected on Oct. 15. The administration also reported China agreed to a large purchase of U.S. agricultural products; however, no additional details have been released.

On the other side of the pond, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) still awaits ratification in Congress. MCGA will continue to work with the National Corn Growers Association to stress the importance of finalizing the agreement by the end of the year. ■

Les Anderson begins term as MCGA president

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors elected Les Anderson as its president for 2019–2020. His term began on Oct. 1.

Anderson farms corn and soybeans in Cannon Falls. He was first elected to the MCGA board in 2012 and has previously served as vice president and treasurer. Anderson is also a member of the National Corn Growers Association Market Access Action Team, where he works with corn growers from around the country on building export markets. He and his wife, Jeanne, have three daughters.



Anderson was elected to the MCGA board in 2012.

“As president of MCGA, I am honored to represent Minnesota’s 24,000 corn growers as we work to build a more sustainable future on the farm,” Anderson said. “I look forward to advocating on their behalf to address the challenges we see today, while continuing to promote the opportunities ahead.”

Anderson’s term will run through Sept. 30, 2020. ■

Soil Health Partnership names new director

An initiative of the National Corn Growers Association, the Soil Health Partnership (SHP) named John Mesko to lead the organization as senior director. Mesko will work to advance its mission to build soil health, while creating a sustainable future for farming and food.

Previously a development director with SHP, Mesko brings a diverse career in agriculture, including experience in sales, marketing, research, business development, farm management, university extension and nonprofit management.

As the leader of SHP, Mesko advances the organization’s mission to unite nonprofit, government and commercial interests, in support of sustainable practices shown to improve soil health on the farm. Currently, SHP’s network spans over 16 states and 100 partner organizations at the federal, state and county levels.

Minnesota’s corn organizations currently provide support for two farm sites participating in SHP, with two additional sites to be added in 2020. At each location, farmers implement practices shown to improve soil health and measure their impact. By combining that research with other farm sites around the country, Minnesota farmers are helping quantify the impact of soil health-promoting practices. ■



Mesko previously served as SHP’s development director.

Minnesota United bring soccer skills to MN farm country

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) teamed up with the Minnesota United to host a sold-out youth soccer clinic in Minnesota farm country last month. Held at Farmington High School, the event brought together Greater Minnesota youth and United professional staff for an afternoon of building soccer skills.

In addition to the team's trainers, United midfielder Lawrence Olum attended the clinic to chat with the kids in attendance about his career as a professional soccer player. Attendees, ranging in age from seven to 12, were excited to hear about Olum's path to Major League Soccer from his birthplace in Kenya.

The Farmington soccer clinic was one of many ways MCGA partnered with the Minnesota United this season to connect with the team's young, enthusiastic fan base.

At each home match, fans had the opportunity to learn more about the state's corn farmers via in-stadium signage, in-game announcements and more. Earlier this year, MCGA Night with the Minnesota United shined a spotlight on the state's corn farmers during a nationally televised game. ■



United Midfielder Lawrence Olum was a hit with the many kids in attendance.



Big Iron is a great opportunity to connect with northern Minnesota farmers.

MCGA returns to Big Iron Farm Show

In mid-September, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) returned to the Big Iron Farm Show in Fargo. MCGA staff, directors and county leaders were on-hand throughout the event, chatting with attendees about the latest from the world of corn.

Attendees who stopped by could learn more about the many ways Minnesota corn farmers are driving growth in the state, including record-setting sales of ethanol-blended fuels, research investments building a more sustainable future on the farm, and advocacy around issues impacting rural Minnesotans.

Attendees who signed up or renewed their MCGA membership also received an MCGA-branded headlamp as a thank you for their commitment to MCGA's grassroots efforts. ■

Minnesota 4-H introduces youth to the wonders of agronomy

Minnesota 4-H launched its agronomy program in 2018 to connect Minnesota youth to the many crops grown throughout the state and the career opportunities available in crop production. Initially only available in five counties, the program will be available statewide in 2020.

Supported by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, the agronomy program consists of different learning opportunities that offer kids, primarily those in fourth through sixth grade, a variety of hands-on experiences with Minnesota crops.

A primary part of the agronomy program is providing youth with starter kits to grow their own field crop. In the first year, youth received a kit to grow three varieties of corn. Participants only have to provide the soil, making each kit accessible for all, according to University of Minnesota Extension Educator Brian McNeill, who runs the program.

"We developed these kits so no matter where you live, whether it is in an apartment or on acreage, you would be able to grow something," he said.

More than 110 kids signed up for more than 250 project kits in 2018, when it was only available in five counties. Available to 20 counties in 2019, the kits grew in variety—now offering opportunities to grow

soybeans and potatoes—and popularity, with more than 280 kids requesting nearly 500 kits this year. Starter kits will be available statewide in 2020.

With the agronomy program growing in popularity, crops grown using the starter kits have started to appear in competitions at county fairs, with some even moving on to the Minnesota State Fair.

The 4-H Agronomy Program also introduced a second phase where it invited participants on an agronomy tour with the first held at Riverview Dairy in Morris. Since, tours have included opportunities to see corn and soybean plots, as well as hands-on experiences with drones, soils and weed identification.

The third phase of the program is introducing kids to the many different college experiences in agronomy. Last March, more than 100 youth signed up for a day-long visit to Ridgewater College. The experience provided a look at the opportunities participants have to grow their agronomy expertise at the college level.

Through each phase of the agronomy program, McNeill said youth participants have come from a wide variety of backgrounds, with the majority having no prior agricultural experience. With financial help from the state's corn growers, McNeill said they've been able to hire summer staff to carry out the program, reaching more kids than ever.

MCGA is a proud supporter of the 4-H Agronomy Program as part of its mission to connect youth to agriculture. ▀



Program participants are able to see agriculture up close with hands-on tours.

Registration is open for MN Ag EXPO 2020



MN Ag EXPO returns to Mankato Jan. 22-23.

MN Ag EXPO 2020, hosted by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, returns to Mankato Jan. 22-23.

Registration is now officially open for one of the state's premier agricultural trade shows. MN Ag EXPO is free to attend; however, pre-registration is required to ensure meal tickets during the two-day trade show.

This year will again feature an excellent list of exhibitors and an engaging lineup of speakers.

University of Florida professor Dr. Kevin Folta will detail his efforts to dispel the many myths around GMOs with critics and foes nationwide in the opening keynote speech. The closing keynote will be delivered by Dr. Cindra Kamphoff, a psychologist who has helped professional sports teams and Fortune 500 companies master their mindset to reach their full potential.

MCGA will be sharing the many ways the state's corn farmers are building a brighter future for Minnesota agriculture. From policy efforts to research investments, the booth will be a can't-miss stop on the exhibitor floor. And if you aren't already an MCGA member, you can sign up at the booth and receive a fun incentive as a thank you for strengthening our grassroots efforts.

MCGA will also be holding its PAC breakfast, delegate session, and annual meeting at EXPO on Thursday, Jan. 23. Stay tuned to the MCGA blog at mncorn.org as more details are announced.

Visit MNAgEXPO.com to register and for more speaker announcements in the coming weeks. ■

Scholarships available to students pursuing career in agriculture

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is again providing two statewide scholarships for college students aspiring to become future agricultural leaders.

For the second year, MCGA will offer a \$5,000 scholarship to two students who are currently enrolled or will be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student during the fall 2020 semester. The deadline to apply for the statewide scholarship is Jan. 31, 2020.

MCGA scholarship applicants must be a Young Adult Member of MCGA who is working toward a degree in an agriculture-related field. The Young Adult Membership, available to ages 16-24, was launched for future agricultural leaders who would like to participate in grassroots advocacy today. Young Adult Members enjoy reduced member dues and stay current on the latest news in Minnesota's corn sector, as well as have access to great networking and leadership opportunities. Join today at mncorn.org/join.

Applicants can apply for the MCGA scholarship and scholarships offered by local county corn grower organizations at mncorn.org/scholarships.

To stay in-the-know on all future scholarship opportunities, subscribe to the Ag Insider at info.mncorn.org/Ag-Insider, a monthly e-newsletter created specifically for young adults. The free e-newsletter delivers the news future leaders need to know from the world of agriculture as they work towards their career. ■



Become a Young Adult Member and apply for the MCGA scholarship by Jan. 31.

7th Annual Ag & Food Day takes over Gopher tailgate

In early October, the 7th Annual Ag & Food Day put agriculture in the spotlight prior to the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers football win over the Nebraska Cornhuskers. The tailgate tradition at TCF Bank Stadium again brought together Minnesota's ag and food sector for a celebration of its impact on the state.

On a day honoring all things agriculture, the matchup appropriately featured schools from two of the top four corn-producing states in the nation. Prior to kickoff, Ag & Food Day festivities brought tailgate fun, delicious samples, giveaways and more to fans outside TCF Bank Stadium.

A number of agribusinesses and commodity organizations representing the state's food and ag sector were part of the festivities in the Gopher Garden tailgate area. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) handed out samples of delicious popcorn to highlight the different varieties of corn grown in the state. Adding to the corn theme, the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Sciences handed out sweet corn ice cream.

Promotion of Minnesota's ag and food sector continued at the game. During the second quarter, a video highlighting its impact featured University of Minnesota alumnus and MCGA Chairman

Brian Thalmann discussing the important role the University plays in building a more sustainable future in agriculture. Fun facts and trivia also raised awareness of the importance of ag throughout the game.

MCGA is a participating sponsor of Ag & Food Day as part of its efforts to raise awareness of our state's ag sector with Gopher fans who may not have a connection to the farm. ■



Despite the cold weather, Gopher and Cornhusker fans stopped by for samples of popcorn during Ag & Food Day.

Accuracy in grain moisture testing



Farmers concerned with the accuracy of their moisture test should send a sample to USDA for analysis.

Grain moisture testing at Minnesota grain elevators is performed with an instrument that measures changes in electrical conductance when a grain sample is placed within the instrument, between two conducting surfaces. The device then measures the change in electrical conductance because of the grain sample, and uses predictive algorithms to estimate the moisture level in the grain.

While this process is fast and quite accurate, farmers may have some questions about its reliability.

As with any instrument, several factors influence the accuracy of its measurement, including relative humidity, cleanliness of equipment, type of grain, ambient temperature and grain temperature.

Up-to-date calibration of equipment is also vital to ensure accurate moisture readings. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has resources that provide the most recent calibration files, as well as directives for updating the equipment.

Farmers who have concerns about the moisture readings at their elevator are encouraged to have an official USDA sample taken and sent off for lab testing or USDA analysis.

More information on that process can be found at ams.usda.gov. ■

county highlights

County corn organizations fuel the grassroots advocacy efforts of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA), while helping promote the importance of corn farming in Minnesota. Throughout the year, county organizations 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, MCGA is highlighting counties' many successes in each issue of Corn Talk.



More than 115 kids made the field trip to learn more about modern farming practices.

Benton/Sherburne County Corn Growers

In late September, the Benton/Sherburne County Corn Growers helped host Ag Careers Field Day in Santiago at Centra Sota Cooperative. More than 115 students from three schools were in attendance to learn about modern farming. Ten stations were set up for students to learn about advancements in ag and ag technology, including drone technology, auto steering, soil health and more.

Todd County Corn and Soybean Growers

Todd County Corn & Soybean Growers helped to sponsor Envirofest, an annual on-farm event meant to show kids how the environment is tied into their everyday lives. Todd County provided each of the 300 students with pollinator packets to take what they learned back home. Envirofest was another valuable opportunity to teach future generations about corn farmers' commitment to conservation, including promoting pollinator habitat.

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



The Nobles County tour was an opportunity for students to learn about agriculture in their home county.

Nobles County Corn and Soybean Growers

Nobles County growers hosted nearly 500 middle schoolers in October on two farms located north of Worthington. With many students experiencing agriculture for the first time, the tour was a dive into all that happens on a modern Minnesota farm. Stops included learning about a variety of livestock and discussing all that goes into the development of livestock. The students also learned about crops, including everything from the growth cycle to ethanol.

Blue Earth County Corn and Soybean Growers

The Blue Earth County Corn and Soybean Growers wrapped up a terrific year promoting ethanol-blended fuels at fuel promotion events. Growers were on hand at the Mankato Kwik Trip, along with representatives from the American Lung Association in Minnesota, chatting with drivers as they filled their tanks with discounted E85 and E15.

County Scholarships

County corn organizations across the state support future agricultural leaders in their area through scholarships for current or future students pursuing a degree in agriculture. Learn about each scholarship available at mncorn.org/scholarships. Visitors can pick their home county and see what is available.

MCGA strives to more effectively promote scholarships offered at the county level and streamline the application process for students. County organizations are encouraged to contact their district field manager to have their scholarship featured on the MCGA website or to update their existing online application. ■

Mental health resources are available

For farmers experiencing farm-related stress, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture launched MinnesotaFarmStress.com to provide farmers with resources to help navigate financial, emotional, legal, family and other challenges on the farm.

Resources include the Farm & Rural Helpline (833-600-2670), which is answered 24/7 by staff who are trained to help farmers struggling with stress or depression. ■



Join our grassroots mission today

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) depends on its members to fuel its grassroots mission to build a brighter future on the farm. In the ever-changing agricultural landscape, 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 within the last 12 months qualify for a three-year MCGA membership. ■

Join MCGA today
at mncorn.org/join.

thanks to our allied partners

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738 FIRST AVENUE EAST · SHAKOPEE · MN 55379
P) 952.233.0333 · F) 952.233.0420 · W) MNCORN.ORG

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calendar of events

november
28-29 MCGA office closed
for Thanksgiving

december
3-4 MCGA
Pre-resolutions meeting,
Willmar

december
6-8 MN Lamb and Wool
Producers Convention,
St. Cloud

december
11-13 Prairie Grains
Conference,
Grand Forks

december
12-15 MN Cattleman's
Conference,
Willmar

december
17-18 Conservation
Tillage Conference,
St. Cloud

december
23-25 MCGA office closed
for Christmas

dec/jan
31-1 MCGA office closed
for New Years

january
8 MCGA/MCR&PC
Joint Board Meeting,
Shakopee

january
22-23 MN Ag EXPO,
Mankato

january
28-29 Pork Congress,
Minneapolis

**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.