

cornstalk

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UNL88



UNL88 FAN
Chris Hawkey

Inside:

- ❑ Better Fuel campaign elevates Unleaded 88 statewide
- ❑ Local radio and music star Chris Hawkey joins campaign to support a "Better Fuel"
- ❑ State and federal legislative priorities in the year ahead



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Top priorities for corn farmers during MN's Legislative Session
During the 92nd Legislative Session, the top legislative priorities for MCGA include an increased biofuel standard and tax relief. [Read more.](#)



MCGA scholarship applications due Friday
The Minnesota Corn Growers Association has four \$5,000 scholarships available to future ag leaders. Jan. 8 deadline to apply. [Read more.](#)

Minnesota's legislative session is in full swing with bills that impact the state's corn farmers on the move. The best way to stay in-the-know on the latest from the Capitol is subscribing to Leader Update at mncorn.org/LeaderUpdate.

Leader Update also brings you the latest in research, ethanol and more—all fueled by farmers' investment in the Minnesota Corn check-off.

Another key way to stay connected and help fuel MCGA's grassroots advocacy efforts is subscribing to receive text alerts. Text "MCGA" to 50457 to participate in calls-to-action around policy impacting corn farmers.

Look for this sticker to learn about efforts made possible through farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off.



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15-percent biofuel standard remains top legislative priority in 2021

The Minnesota Legislature convened its 92nd Legislative Session in early January. As with many other events in the past year, the new session is running differently.

The House of Representatives is conducting most business remotely. Floor sessions have limited attendance by members, with most voting remotely, too. The Senate is conducting business with a bit of a hybrid approach. All activity at the Capitol is streamed online, and access to the capitol grounds and office buildings is generally closed to the public, unless there are changes to capitol operations later in session.

Even with these different dynamics, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is advocating for important priorities on behalf of Minnesota's corn farmers.

Minnesota legislators entered the 92nd Session with full plates and the challenge of accomplishing important work virtually. In addition to continuing the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery, the major work of the session is passing a new state budget for the next two years, referred to as a biennium.

A key focus for MCGA is the Better Fuel Initiative. Launched last year at MN Ag EXPO, the initiative aims to build a future of better transportation fuels for all Minnesotans. As part of this multi-faceted effort, the top legislative priority for the 2021 session is to increase the existing biofuel standard of 10 percent to 15 percent biofuel for the majority of gasoline sold in Minnesota.

Last session, MCGA worked with legislators to introduce a bill and move it forward, and we are back working on it again this session.

The 15-percent biofuel standard, or statewide E15, also has the support in a set of recommendations from a diverse group of stakeholders that made up the Governor's Council on Biofuels.

At the time of publication, Gov. Walz had unveiled his proposed budget, which included \$2 million per year in biofuels infrastructure funding. The ongoing investment program would be a positive development for statewide E15.

Other top priorities this session include enacting buffer property tax relief for farmers. With the passage of the buffer law in 2015, Minnesota corn farmers have invested considerable time and money to bring their farms into compliance. One issue remains with the law and that is the need to eliminate the financial penalty of continuing to impose property taxes at the highest rates on farm land that is removed from income-producing crop production when converted to conservation buffers. MCGA supports enactment of a buffer property tax exemption correcting this issue.

MCGA will also focus on protecting tax policy gains from recent years that provided much-needed economic relief to farmers.

The Ag2School Tax Credit provides farmers with an important property tax relief attributable to school bonding projects, with a phased tax credit increase starting in 2019. MCGA will need to ensure the phased increase is accounted for in the next budget for the State of Minnesota. Minnesota also fully conformed to federal tax law on Section 179 capital equipment and expensing during a 2020 special session. Minnesota tax law will continue to be in conformity with federal law, as long as no new changes are enacted during the next budget period. ■

MCGA board member Brian Thalmann spoke on his farm about the importance of E15 when Gov. Walz and Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen established the Council on Biofuels.



Federal priorities under a new administration



Protecting the ethanol market remains a top federal priority,

There is a new administration in our nation's capital, along with new policy makers and leadership in U.S. Congress. As such, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will be working with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) to build new relationships and advocate for the following priorities in Washington, D.C.:

Ethanol

Building a brighter future for ethanol while protecting the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) remains a top priority. MCGA will support NCGA efforts to pass the Next Generation Fuels Act, which would build on the success of the RFS by growing the role of low-carbon, renewable ethanol in the nation's fuel supply. Working with the Biden Administration on rulemaking that expands mid-level ethanol blends will also be a major focus.

Concurrently, MCGA will continue efforts to protect the RFS by ending the issuing of small refinery waivers, which has removed billions of gallons from the nation's fuel supply. MCGA and NCGA look forward to working with the Biden Administration in stopping this action by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

To build a future for renewable fuels, a federal investment in biofuels infrastructure is imperative. MCGA and NCGA will be working with the federal agencies and Minnesota's congressional delegation to emphasize the importance of updating aging infrastructure in Minnesota and beyond.

Trade

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the Phase One trade deal with China are vital for the future of corn exports. Continuing the implementation of USMCA and taking necessary action to protect the terms of the agreement will be a top trade priority. And as China emerges as a leading market for American corn, continuing to meet the goals through that agreement will also be a focus.

Regulatory actions

Farmers nationwide depend on crop protection tools that have proven to be safe and effective. MCGA will continue to work with NCGA and federal partners to protect these tools through coordinated comments.

The Navigable Waters Protection Rule helped bring clarity to farmers and was an upgrade over the previous Waters of the United States Rule. Another priority will be supporting the implementation of the rule in the years ahead.

Farm Bill reauthorization

While it may seem like yesterday that the current Farm Bill was signed into law, discussion and relationship building begins this year in advance of Farm Bill reauthorization in 2023. Meeting with new members of Congress and ag committee leadership will be crucial to protect critical farm programs, crop insurance, and commodity and conservation programs. ■

Encouraging year for MN biofuel sales despite pandemic

Ethanol producers weathered a rough 2020 as consumers hunkered down and stayed home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While production was down in 2020, Minnesotans continued to show why the future is bright for biofuels in the state.

Consumers pumped more than 74 million gallons of E15 last year, compared to 78.5 million gallons in 2019. The nearly flat year-over-year sales is especially encouraging, considering how many Minnesotans transitioned to working from home for most of the year and cancelled vacations, reducing demand for fuel overall. In 2018, sales were at 59.4 million gallons.

Minnesota retailers offering higher blends of ethanol-blended fuels also continued to grow in 2020, with more than 370 offering E15 statewide. The number has grown considerably since 2017, when less than 260 stations offered the cleaner-burning fuel. ■



Though driving less, consumers continued to reach for E15 at the pump.

Innovation Grant Program enters 6th year of farmer-led research



Minnesota's corn farmers take new approaches to conservation practices like cover crops through the Innovation Grant Program.

The Minnesota Corn Innovation Grant Program returns to fund farmer-led research aimed at improving on-farm conservation and sustainability. Entering the sixth year of the program, the state's corn farmers once again answered the call for unique, cutting edge ideas that rethink on-farm practices and management.

This year's proposals included everything from new uses for corn to ways to improve nutrient efficiency and water quality. The program will announce in the spring a collection of projects led by farmers that will produce results that can be replicated by farmers across the state. To date, the Innovation Grant Program has funded more than \$700,000

in projects identifying practical innovations that can be replicated by Minnesota farmers.



Each farmer will receive up to \$7,000 for a one-year study, or up to \$30,000 for replicated research. The investment in farmer-led innovation is made possible through corn farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off.

Visit mncorn.org/research in March to meet the 2021 Innovation Grant participants and learn more about their projects. ■

New ebook dispels ethanol myths and misconceptions

The latest ebook by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) offered free for download looks at the many common myths around ethanol-blended fuels that have been spread by biofuel opponents for years.

Titled "Debunking the myths around ethanol-blended fuels," the premium publication proves false 13 of the most common examples of misinformation, including everything from ethanol not having an environmental benefit to ethanol being bad for cars.

MCGA spends considerable resources pushing back on misinformation spread by Big Oil and other interests. But as a grassroots organization, we are most effective with an engaged membership. Download the ebook today and help MCGA keep consumers better informed about cleaner-burning options at the pump.

Download the ebook at info.mncorn.org/ethanolmyths. ■



Download the ebook at info.mncorn.org/ethanolmyths.

feature story

Benefits of biofuels reach the masses in 2021

Entering 2021, the desire for higher blends of ethanol-blended fuels remains evident. Nearly 75 million gallons of E15, known widely as Unleaded 88, were pumped in 2020—a 20-percent increase over sales just two years prior. The cleaner-burning fuel is also more widely accessible than ever, with more than 370 stations offering Unleaded 88 statewide and more on the way.

This year is also pivotal for the top legislative priority for the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA): Raising the state’s biofuel standard from 10 to 15 percent, which you can read more about on page 3.

To build on the momentum, MCGA will be putting Unleaded 88 front and center through the Better Fuel Initiative. It will continue to raise awareness of the higher-octane option at the pump and share why it is the “Better Fuel” choice for all Minnesotans.

MCGA launched the Better Fuel Initiative during MN Ag EXPO in 2020 as a multi-faceted approach to promoting the use of ethanol-blended fuels. The aim is to make “Better Fuel” a household phrase in 2021 using an innovative statewide advertising campaign, which launched in February and will continue through the fall.

The campaign’s message to consumers is simple: Unleaded 88 is better for your air, engine and wallet. Minnesotans are being asked to rethink how they fuel up at the pump and reach for the cleaner-burning, high-octane option, identified by the yellow 88 octane button.

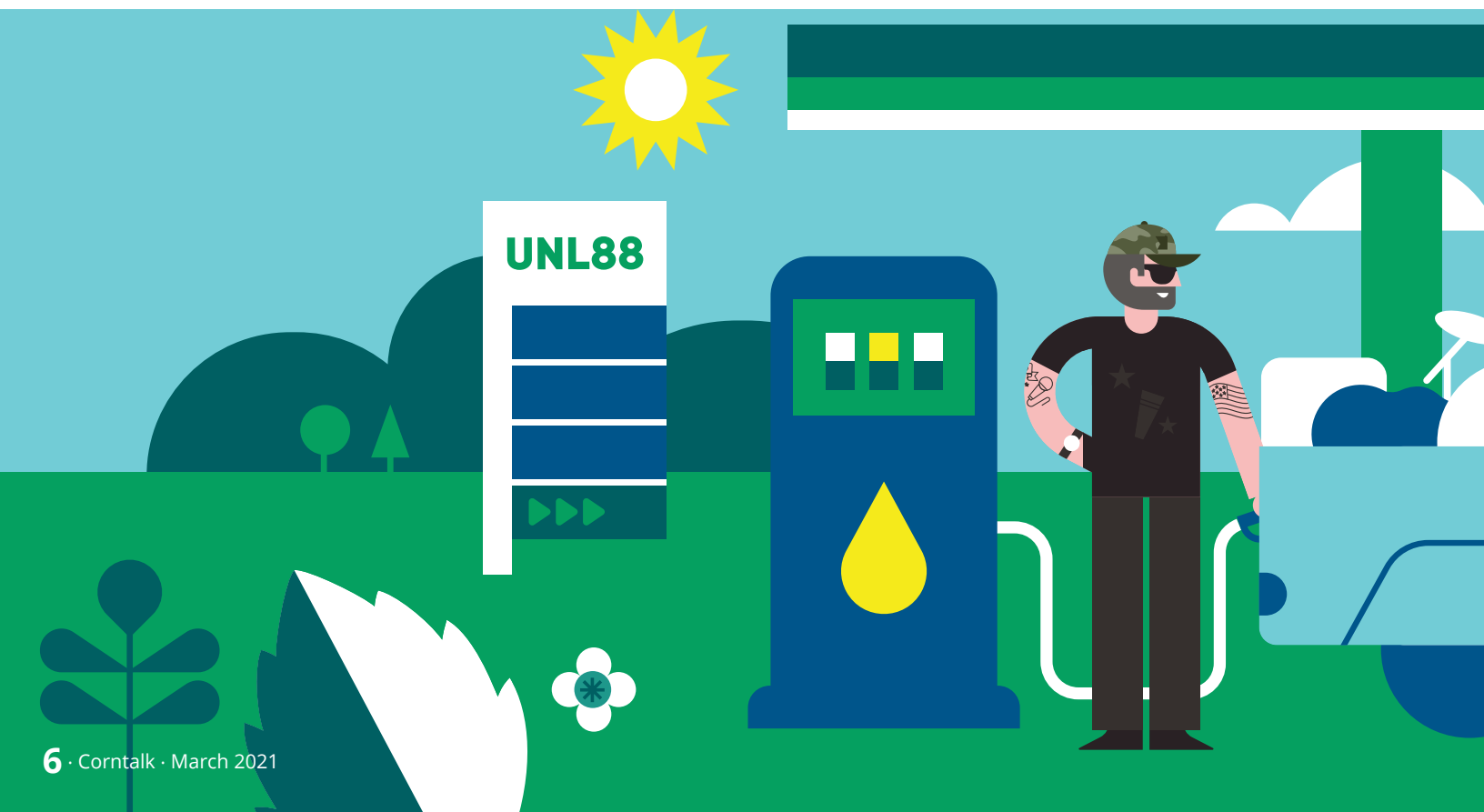
MCGA worked with a Twin Cities advertising agency to produce new TV commercials that share the many benefits of Unleaded 88. The spots use some of Minnesota’s most beloved attractions as the backdrop—from the Minneapolis skyline to Bemidji’s Babe the Blue Ox. The goal is to share why Unleaded 88 is a “Better Fuel” for all Minnesotans. The commercials will air on CBS and ABC networks through the fall.

Fans of radio station KFAN will recognize the voice on each commercial as the host of the “Power Trip Morning Show,” Chris Hawkey. In addition to hosting one of the most popular sports radio shows in the country, Hawkey is the lead singer of the Chris Hawkey Band, and a regular contributor to the Vikings Entertainment Network. Whether you are a fan of sports, country music, or just a longtime Minnesotan, Hawkey is a well-known voice to many. As a supporter of ethanol-blended fuels, Hawkey will serve as the voice behind the campaign.

Through the Better Fuel campaign, Hawkey will be heard across the metro and Greater Minnesota on iHeart Radio Stations, including KFAN. Commercials asking Minnesotans to pump the Better Fuel will run throughout the day on iHeart’s large network of radio stations.

In addition to radio and television, digital campaigns targeting Minnesotans online launched in February, carrying the same message: It’s time to rethink how we refuel our vehicles. MCGA is also sharing the benefits of ethanol-blended fuels on the sides of trucks that travel throughout the state, serving as mobile billboards.

Also new this year, consumers at the pump will see Unleaded 88 television ads through GSTV, a network of on-screen entertainment found at pumps across the state. GSTV provides a great opportunity to introduce people to Unleaded 88 at the point of purchase.



Through their investment in the Minnesota corn check-off, the state's farmers will bring Unleaded 88 to new levels of awareness and popularity, driving future sales and boosting corn demand at local ethanol plants.

"With this year's Better Fuel campaign, it is safe to say nearly all Minnesotans will hear about the benefits of Unleaded 88, and how they

can find it at the pump," MCGA President Tim Waibel said. "The case for switching to the cleaner-burning fuel is clear when you learn it is better for our air, your car and wallet, and I couldn't be more excited to broadcast those benefits statewide." ■

Q&A with Chris Hawkey



Do you have a connection to agriculture?

I grew up on the border of Indiana and Ohio, surrounded by corn and soybeans. We would rent a farm house every summer and me and my friends would go out and detassel the corn for \$3.75/hour. Each day you had to decide if you wanted to wear long sleeves and be hot or short sleeves and get ripped up by the corn stalks. While I didn't come from a farm family, I always felt connected to agriculture.

How did you learn about Unleaded 88?

I go to KwikTrip every morning on my way into work. I started wondering why Unleaded 88 is both higher octane and cheaper at the pump than regular unleaded. The more I learned about it, the more I really believed in it.

Anything that supports the farm and the farm family is going to support rural towns and that is going to help

everyone. I also can't wait to tell people that this is a fuel that is good for the environment, better for your car, and it costs less. It is an easy argument to make, and I am excited about being a part of it.

Why did you want to be part of the Better Fuel campaign?

I hate to admit that I fell victim to the negative propaganda around ethanol for years. In fact, when I first started researching Unleaded 88, the first article I read was part of the smear campaign. Then the next two articles I read discounted everything the first article said by name, which made me dive in and find out the truth.

As an American who believes in doing the right things, I found the misinformation campaign ridiculous. This product is good for everybody, and it has been smeared specifically by people who wanted to ensure the big money came into their pocket at the expense of everything else.

Since then, I have been preaching the gospel to everyone. ■



Ethanol's role in the future of heavy duty transportation

Nearly all semi-trucks on the road and tractors on the farm are powered by diesel engines. Though proven to be reliable, diesel-powered engines are a notorious contributor to the emissions that harm our environment. A new technology is replacing diesel with ethanol to reduce the environmental costs while keeping these engines running as a vital part of our economy.

Based in Illinois, ClearFlame Engine Technologies keeps nearly all of the diesel engine characteristics intact while replacing only the components that allow it to switch to ethanol. With as much as 90 percent of the original engine still intact, the engine maintains the same durable, high-power output end users depend on.

For engine manufacturers, ClearFlame is a solution that allows them to meet increasingly stringent emissions regulations without sacrificing performance, according to ClearFlame Co-Founder and CEO BJ Johnson.

"We don't have to fundamentally move away from a technology that has been around for hundreds of years," Johnson said. "The diesel engine is great, the diesel fuel is the problem."

He said ClearFlame also eliminates the need for complex catalytic reduction systems since ClearFlame technology already uses clean-burning, low-carbon ethanol fuels. ClearFlame technology is currently being tested on E88.

Johnson said ClearFlame is demonstrating its solution on a Cummins engine for long-haul trucking applications. The company is looking to work with other manufacturers to incorporate ClearFlame technology into diesel-powered farm equipment.

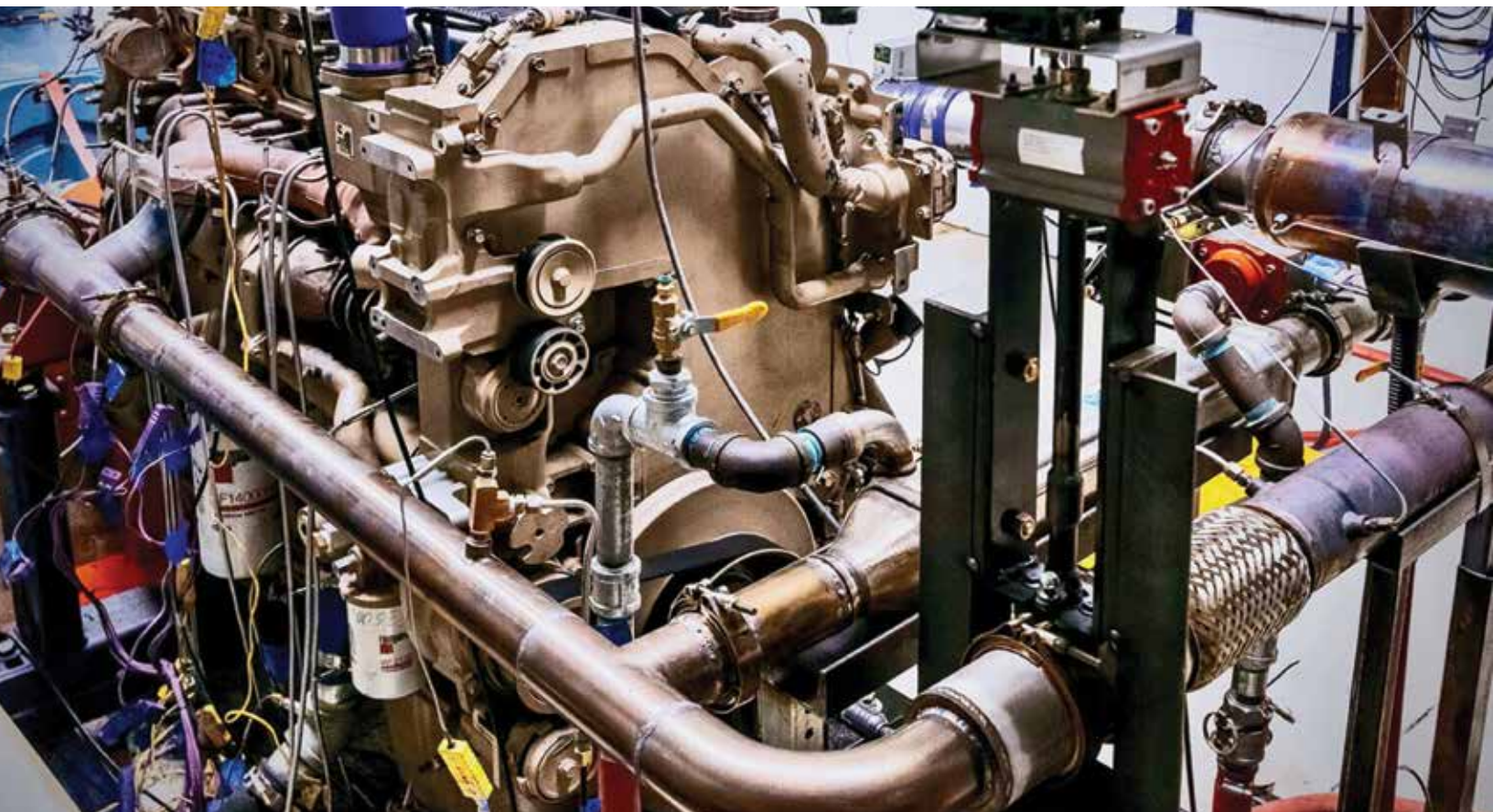
ClearFlame aims to replace diesel with ethanol, while keeping 90 percent of the engine intact.

For the future of ethanol, carving out an increased role in heavy duty transportation would greatly increase demand. If only 20 percent of the heavy duty transportation industry used ClearFlame technology, it would double ethanol demand. With that, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council partnered with ClearFlame to support and accelerate its efforts.

Johnson sees ClearFlame's technology and the role of cleaner-burning ethanol to work alongside electric, as the nation focuses on reducing emissions. Electric has proven to be an effective solution in metro areas where the commutes are shorter, but the technology is not ready for interstate travel. Ethanol is the perfect partner with electric to lower emissions on a larger scale.

"There is a narrative that we are going to have one technology that is going to kill off all the old technologies, but we can't wait for one solution to replace it all," Johnson said. "There is a lot of noise around electric, but we make 15 billion gallons of [ethanol] today and we need to take advantage of it."

Farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off is building a more sustainable future on the farm by fueling the efforts that increase profitability. Supporting ClearFlame and its mission to replace diesel with ethanol in diesel engines is one of the many ways the check-off is working on behalf of the state's corn growers. ■



Grassroots go virtual with 2021 Annual Meeting

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) announced in November that this year's annual meeting would be held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, MCGA grower leaders and staff have been hard at work ensuring the event celebrating the achievements of our grassroots organization is a valuable experience for members.

The virtual meeting was held without missing a beat on Jan. 20, with tremendous attendance and participation from members.

The event kicked off with a presentation from David Kohls, professor emeritus of agricultural finance at Virginia Tech University. He provided the latest mega-trends in agriculture as we recover from the pandemic.

The annual resolutions session once again featured engaged discussion between member delegates for the upcoming year.

Updates from MCGA and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotions Council (MCR&PC) recapped what was an eventful 2020 and looked forward to the year ahead with a number of exciting developments.

Former representative and longtime farming advocate Jeanne Poppe received the Friend of Agriculture Award for a long legislative career elevating the issues impacting farmers and their families. Former MCGA president and Northfield farmer Bruce Peterson received the Golden Kernel Award for his tremendous contributions to MCGA over nine years on the board. ▀



Former Rep. Jeanne Poppe and former MCGA President Bruce Peterson were recognized for their contributions to agriculture.

Introducing poultry to the world

Through their investment in the Minnesota corn check-off, corn farmers support the work of the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council (USAPEEC). The Georgia-based organization takes a multi-faceted approach to introduce poultry to the world and encourage its growth as a source of protein.

Increased demand for poultry abroad means more chicken, turkeys and ducks to feed stateside, increasing demand for Minnesota's corn supply.

USAPEEC's mission is to open and develop markets abroad while serving as the voice for poultry exports and policy issues. The former often boils down to introducing poultry in markets where it is not currently used as a main protein. This work is frequently centered on developing markets where there is a demand for increased protein, according to Shelby Watson, manager of allied industry relations for USAPEEC.



USA Poultry & Egg Export Council markets poultry products worldwide, including a recent turkey promotion event in Taiwan.

Take India, for example. The country has a protein deficiency issue and a growing demand for more protein. USAPEEC has launched a variety of activities that share why poultry can serve as an affordable protein that can easily be introduced into the everyday diet. USAPEEC accomplished this by branching into a variety of sectors within the market.



A major focus is working with the locals who are responsible for providing food to citizens. The food service industry is a major focus for USAPEEC. It works with professional chefs to promote poultry dishes and culinary schools to introduce poultry-specific curriculum to future chefs. Watson said they also reach out directly to consumers with virtual master classes and cooking demonstrations introducing poultry dishes.

"In a country like India where they don't historically eat a lot of meat, our marketing efforts target the consumers directly." Watson said. "Food service won't carry poultry products if the consumers won't buy it."

In countries where poultry is already a more established ingredient, USAPEEC will work directly with trade officials to promote America's poultry industry as the right partner. These often include reverse trade missions where delegations travel to the United States to see the facilities and discuss the many health and safety measures taken by American livestock producers.

Another important aspect of USAPEEC is advocating for trade policy that protects American exports. For example, USAPEEC will work with country officials that lead to more specific bans on avian influenza outbreaks. In the case of an outbreak, this outreach will help make bans more geographically specific, as opposed to a blanket ban for the entire country.

Learn more about the work of USAPEEC at www.usapeec.org. ▀

Corn exports a major driver of Minnesota's economy



Minnesota Corn hosts groups like Grupo Kowi, a Mexican pork producer visiting to learn more about Minnesota-produced dried distillers' grains.

Minnesota's corn farmers understand the importance of the export market for their commodity, with nearly one-third of corn and corn products exported out of the country. A recent study highlighted the importance of the export market for Minnesota's entire economy.

Commissioned by the National Corn Growers Association, the study found nearly 30 percent of the production value of Minnesota's corn and corn products came from exports—a \$1.7 billion value. The economic ripple effects of this export market in Minnesota created more than \$3.1 billion in economic output, \$1.1 billion in gross state product, and more than 12,700 jobs.

For every \$1 million in exports of corn, ethanol, residual milling products and the corn equivalent of meat exports, seven jobs are supported within

Minnesota. Export markets are one outlet for U.S. corn production, and they impact the entire farming value chain. Access to export markets supports jobs and economic activity in sectors including construction and maintenance, restaurants, hospitals, and retail stores, in addition to the transportation industry that is in place to handle the outflows of corn products.



Through farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) partners with organization like the U.S. Grains Council to build markets abroad for Minnesota-grown corn and ethanol. Visit mncorn.org to learn more about recent events like the Virtual Grain Exchange, one of many ways these partnerships are building a brighter future on the farm. ■

Minnesota Corn Podcast recaps a big year for corn exports

While the COVID-19 pandemic made for a 2020 to forget, one bright spot over the last year was in the export market for American corn. The emergence of China as one of the largest buyers of U.S.-grown corn played a major role in driving demand abroad.

U.S. Grains Council's Cary Sifferath recently spoke with Brownfield Ag News' Mark Dorenkamp, host of the Minnesota Corn Podcast, about the interesting year for American exports and what it means moving into 2021.

Find the Minnesota Corn Podcast on both Spotify and Apple Podcasts, or subscribe to the podcast at info.mncorn.org/podcast to have it sent directly to your inbox. ■



Subscribe to the Minnesota Corn Podcast at info.mncorn.org/podcast.

Nitrogen Smart attendees report on-farm savings



Among Nitrogen Smart attendees, 94 percent reported they would recommend the course to a fellow farmer.

University of Minnesota Extension's Nitrogen Smart program held 14 in-person classes in 2020. Now in its fifth year, the free-to-attend seminar brings the latest research and best management practices to farmers looking to increase their nitrogen use efficiency.



The Nitrogen Smart Program hosted 240 farmers in 2020. The average attendee reported a farm size of 791 acres, with 53 percent of those acres devoted to corn.

Of those who submitted a post-event evaluation, 94 percent of attendees reported a learning gain of some sort, with the same overwhelming

percentage stating they would recommend the Nitrogen Smart program to a fellow farmer.

The benefits of the program are clear to attendees. Farmers who implemented a key learning from the seminar on their farm reported a 22.5 pound/acre reduction in nitrogen use and a \$2,300 per farm savings as a result. Farmers who followed guidance to move nitrogen application from the fall to spring had an average positive impact of \$13,408 in 2019, based on published yield improvements.

Three-quarters of attendees stated they changed at least one practice as a result of attending the Nitrogen Smart seminar.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association supports the Nitrogen Smart program through farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off. The program has helped nearly 1,000 farmers to date improve their nutrient management and produce on-farm savings. ■

Interested in attending a future seminar?

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Nitrogen Smart in-person seminars have not yet been scheduled; however, you can still take the program from the safety and comfort of home.

Available at z.umn.edu/NitrogenSmart, the online Nitrogen Smart seminar 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. ■

Stay connected to MN Corn research with new website



Visit mncorn.org/research for a new look at projects supported through farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off.

Through farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) invests \$2.6 million in research annually. MCGA recently launched a revamped research page to make it easier than ever for farmers to follow ongoing projects and learn how they are building a more sustainable and profitable future on the farm.

Available at mncorn.org/research, each ongoing research project has its own landing page with an easy-to-understand summary of each project, podcast featuring the researcher leading the project, and reports on their progress.

MCGA is also in the process of building out its video library. It's bringing you behind the scenes of each research project funded through the Minnesota corn check-off, as told by the lead researcher. Visit the new research page to view the videos completed to date or head to the Minnesota Corn YouTube page at youtube.com/mncornvids. ■

MCGA adds new Biofuels and Industry Relations Director

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is excited to announce the arrival of Mackenzie Boubin as its biofuels and industry relations director. Boubin comes to MCGA from CHS where she worked as an account representative in its refined fuels division.

Boubin grew up on a fifth-generation family farm in Waseca. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Carlson School Of Management, where she majored in international business and non-profit management. Mackenzie is currently a captain in the U.S. Army Reserves' 88th Regional Division out of Fort McCoy, Wis.

Prior to her time at CHS, Boubin worked for the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association as a project coordinator.

She is excited to work alongside Minnesota's corn farmers and ethanol producers to promote the use of biofuels and build a brighter future for an industry that is vital to the state's ag sector.

"The ethanol industry within our state directly reduces harmful

greenhouse gas emissions, lowers prices at the pump for Minnesota consumers and contributes to a strong rural economy. I look forward to promoting all of these beneficial attributes and more on behalf of our grower members," Boubin said.

"Coming from an agricultural and biofuels background, this is an area I am extremely passionate about and feel so fortunate to work in. Minnesota's corn farmers are innovative problem solvers who have an incredible story to tell and product to market, and I couldn't be more excited to join this industry during a pivotal time of opportunity."

Mackenzie lives in Minneapolis with her husband, Antonin. ▀



Boubin started with the Minnesota Corn Growers in late December

Brad Neumann elected to MCGA board



Brad Neumann

Brad Neumann was elected to the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors at MCGA's annual meeting, held virtually in January.

Neumann is a corn and soybean farmer from Wabasso. He will represent District 1 on the MCGA board. He farms with his wife, Kim.

Richard Syverson of Clontarf and Blair Hoseth of Mahnomens were re-elected to represent District 4 and District 6 respectively.

MCGA board members are elected to serve three-year terms and charged with carrying out MCGA's mission to identify and promote opportunities for the state's 24,000 corn farmers. ▀

CommonGround Minnesota launches e-newsletter

CommonGround Minnesota, a group of women farmers dedicated to having one-on-one conversations with consumers about the food they grow, launched its first e-newsletter recently. The newsletter highlights CommonGround volunteer farmers and their families, farm facts, recipes, upcoming events and more.



Subscribe at the CommonGroundMinnesota.com website via the pop up, or use the form field in the website footer on the right-hand side. The newsletter will keep subscribers connected to future events for Minnesotans interested in learning more about agriculture. You can also stay connected by following CommonGround Minnesota on Instagram (@commongroundminn) or Facebook (@CommonGroundMinnesota).

Farmers support programs like CommonGround Minnesota through their investment in the Minnesota corn check-off. Fueling efforts to connect with the non-farming public is one of many ways the Minnesota check-off is working on your behalf. ▀



The CommonGround e-newsletter connects you to volunteers like Lori Patnode and her dairy farm in Corcoran, Minn.

Road Crew adapts to take corn-themed assemblies online

Minnesota Corn Growers Association has successfully transitioned efforts it supports to the virtual world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Twin Cities Road Crew is the latest partner to continue its mission by moving its curriculum online to reach metro schools with facts about corn and corn farming.



In a normal year, Twin Cities Road Crew travels to schools and holds in-person assemblies with 300-400 kids in attendance. The interactive format shares facts about corn while getting kids of various ages moving and excited about the material.

The group was hard at work last summer to take that same experience online. By the time the 2020-2021 school year began, a virtual assembly was available to schools statewide.

Twin Cities Road Crew Co-Owner Felicia Schaefer said her team worked with teachers, principals and superintendents to create a digital assembly

In-person assemblies were on-hold due to COVID-19, but Twin Cities Road Crew adapted to reach more students than ever.

that conforms to Minnesota education standards in an interactive way. Facts shared during the online presentation include the origin of corn, Minnesota's status as a top producer, the many uses of corn, varieties of corn, and the year-round work of farmers. Along the way, students remain engaged through activities.

Schaefer said the online curriculum was enthusiastically welcomed by the teachers it typically works with to hold in-person assemblies. In fact, the virtual assemblies were able to reach more students than ever.

"It is quite the undertaking to get 300-400 kids in a lunchroom during normal times, but with the virtual format they can show it right in their classroom or when kids are learning from home," Schaefer said. "Instead of 300 kids watching the program, it has been closer to 700."

Moving its assemblies to the virtual world is just one way Twin Cities Road Crew has adapted to COVID-19. The group has also brought its corn-themed entertainment to drive-in movie theatres and outdoor attractions like Sever's Fall Festival.

Through their investment in the Minnesota Corn check-off, farmers are supporting efforts by Twin Cities Road Crew and others to reach the non-farming public. ■



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 the counties' many successes in each issue of Corn Talk.

MCGA County scholarship season

County corn grower associations throughout Minnesota are offering scholarships to local students interested in a career in agriculture. With some deadlines as soon as this March, head over to mncorn.org/scholarships today to see what is available to you. Supporting future ag leaders in one of many ways our county corn growers are building a brighter future on the farm.

Norman County Corn and Soybean Growers

County corn growers in Norman County donated to the local Rural Enrichment and Counseling Headquarters (REACH) in December. The donation helped fuel the nonprofit's efforts distributing more than 120 holiday food baskets to local families who were experiencing hunger during the holidays. In addition to the food baskets, each family received a homemade quilt or blanket furnished by individual donors, and 200 children received gifts.



Norman County directors dropped off their donation with REACH prior to the holidays.

Polk County Corn and Soybean Growers

Farmers in Polk County donated 50 \$20 gift cards to its local county social services to help families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic celebrate the holiday. Social services helped distribute the gift cards to families who could use them to purchase turkeys and hams for Christmas dinner.

Dakota/Rice County Corn and Soybean Growers

Corn and soybean farmers supported the "Santa on the Farm" event in Hastings in mid-December by providing promotional materials and goodie bags that were handed out to attendees. By supporting "Santa on the Farm," the county organization was able to help advance the event's goal, collecting monetary and food donations to help families in need during the holidays.



The Santa on the Farm event combined Christmas cheer with modern agriculture.

"From the Field" series hits YouTube

MCGA district field managers have a new series detailing their adventures throughout Minnesota farm country working with county corn organizations. Go to youtube.com/mncornvids and check out the "From the Field" series to learn about the many ways our members are fueling our grassroots mission. And don't forget to subscribe to the Minnesota Corn channel before you leave.



Join MCGA District Field Managers as they work with members to fuel our grassroots efforts.

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

MCGA apparel available for a limited time

The Minnesota Stalk Shop is officially open for business, featuring Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) apparel from your favorite brands, at mnstalkshop.com.

The Stalk Shop will be open through March 14, so act fast to get your very own MCGA-branded hooded sweatshirt, full- and quarter-zip shirts, polos, pants, fun onesies for the future farmer and more. Purchasers will also have the option to personalize their apparel with a farm name or county organizations.

While the store is open for a limited time, shipping is free. We invite you to read the FAQ page for more information at mnstalkshop.com. ■



The MN Stalk Shop is open through March 14.

Become a member, strengthen our advocacy efforts

As you've read in this publication, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will be at the Capitol advocating for policy with great implications for the state's corn growers. A strong membership is what elevates our voice in St. Paul and beyond, which is why becoming a member is so important to the strength of our grassroots organization.

MCGA needs its members to stress the benefits of an increased biofuel standard, the need for buffer property tax relief, and the Ag2School credit. It's critical that legislators hear from their constituents, and that is where a strong membership statewide is vital. Thankfully, it's easy to join.

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 1-cent rate 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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calendar of events

march
15-19 MCGA Washington, D.C.
Virtual Fly-in

april
2 MCGA offices closed for
Good Friday

april
7 MCGA-MCR&PC Joint
Board Meeting
Burnsville

