

corn talk

Official Publication of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association • July 2022

Inside:

.....

- ▣ Spotlight on the new state ag bill
- ▣ 2020-22 renewable fuel volumes released
- ▣ Ensuring sustainability: People, planet, profit

Follow us on social media



About the cover

The sun rises on a July morning over a corn field at the Biegler family farm in Lake Wilson.

Each day, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) makes our voice heard on social media, providing important updates to corn farmers and residents statewide. Follow us on Twitter (@**mncorn**), Facebook (@**MinnesotaCorn**) and Instagram (@**MinnesotaCorn**) for insights, news and information.

Also on social media, be sure to follow the Better Fuel Initiative, the official MCGA ethanol-outreach campaign. With ads featuring KFAN "Power Trip" morning show co-host and producer Chris Hawkey, this multimedia campaign brings the many benefits of ethanol-blended fuels to consumers statewide. Follow the Better Fuel Initiative on Twitter and Facebook (@**BetterFuel4MN**), and be sure to check out our website this summer (**betterfuel.org**) for new blog posts each week.

Finally, don't forget to follow CommonGround Minnesota, a grassroots initiative of women in farming. Dedicated to providing the most accurate, up-to-date information about food and farming to women around the state, CommonGround Minnesota volunteers have a host of recipes, first-hand farm stories and more online. Be sure to follow CommonGround Minnesota on Facebook (@**CommonGroundMinnesota**) and Instagram (@**CommonGroundMinn**).

Happy following!



Look for this sticker to learn about research, promotion and outreach efforts fueled by farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn check-off.

Official Publication of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association

Published six times a year from the state MCGA/MCR&PC office:

500 E Travelers Trail
Suite 600
Burnsville, MN 55337
P) 952-233-0333

July 2022

Corn Talk Advisory Committee:

Adam Birr
Bryan Biegler
Doug Albin
Richard Syverson
Gary Prescher
Editor: Nate Gotlieb

3 Ag bill passes state Legislature

4 Pushing for lower-volatility summer gasoline

5 2020-22 renewable fuel volumes released

5 World Trade Month celebrated

6 Ensuring sustainability: People, planet, profit

8 Variable conditions challenged farmers this spring

8 Farmers rally against fertilizer prices

9 Researchers study risk of aromatics in gasoline

9 Farmamerica nears capital campaign goal

10 Sherrie Graves honored for 25 years at MCGA

10 MCR&PC elects leadership

11 Brandon Fast reflects on past year

11 Harold Wolle elected to NCGA leadership

12 CommonGround adds fun to race

12 MN Corn Podcast recaps Innovation Grants

13 MN Corn returns to Farmfest

13 Look for MN Corn at State Fair and Big Iron

14 County highlights

15 Visit MN Corn's carbon, county resources webpages

15 Join MCGA

16 Calendar of events

Follow us on social media:



twitter.com/
mncorn



facebook.com/
MinnesotaCorn



instagram.com/
MinnesotaCorn



youtube.com/
MNCornVids

Ag bill passes state Legislature

In late May, during the waning days of the 2022 state legislative session, lawmakers approved a supplemental agriculture-finance bill that also included funding for broadband and drought relief.

The bill was one of just a handful of funding bills to pass this year. Given that lawmakers had passed a two-year state budget in 2021, there was less pressure to pass supplemental spending bills. But because of the state's historic budget surplus, lawmakers had hoped to reach agreement on a package of new spending and tax cuts.



Lawmakers approved an ag-funding bill during the final days of the 2022 legislative session.

The state's top elected officials had agreed to a budget framework for new spending bills and a tax bill the week before the session ended. But of the new spending bills, only the ag bill and a mental health bill were approved.

While the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) was disappointed at a lack of legislative action this session, particularly on a tax bill, we were pleased to see passage of an ag bill. Gov. Tim Walz signed the bill into law on May 26.

Below is a brief rundown of the ag bill.

Overview

The bill adds \$1.5 million to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's 2022 budget and \$6 million to its 2023 budget. This year, the new funding will go toward the state's Agricultural Emergency Account. In 2023, the new funding will go toward 12 different programs and initiatives, including a new soil-health financial-assistance program, which will receive \$500,000.

The soil-health financial-assistance program was developed by a coalition of agriculture groups, including MCGA. The program will provide farmers with grants for a variety of projects and enable them to implement conservation practices that work best for their operations. MCGA was pleased to see the program included in the approved bill, and we look forward to its implementation.

In addition to boosting funding for the Ag Department in 2022-23, the bill allocates an additional \$7.5 million for the department's 2024-25 budget and lays out a plan for spending those funds. Lawmakers will approve 2024-25 budgets next spring.

The bill also includes minor ag-policy changes, such as directing the department to convene members of a grain advisory group and develop recommendations to improve the state's grain licensing program. Notably, it does not include any provisions that would ban plastic-coated pesticides and fertilizer, as proposed by the DFL-controlled House. MCGA worked to ensure this misguided proposal, which would have limited farmers' access to critical crop-protection tools, did not make the final bill.

The bill also does not include a provision to direct the Department of Agriculture to develop treated-seed disposal guidelines, which already have been developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

In terms of drought relief, the bill allocates \$18.4 million to help farmers affected by last year's extremely dry weather conditions. Over 40% of those funds will go toward grants and financial assistance for livestock farmers and specialty crop producers. The bill allows individual farmers to receive up to \$7,500.

Another \$5.3 million will go to the Department of Natural Resources. Most of those funds will be used to replace seedlings killed by the drought.

On the broadband front, the bill allocates \$25 million to broadband expansion in 2023 and budgets \$25 million for the effort in 2024. The bill also gives the state's Office of Broadband direction on how to spend over \$200 million that the state has received from the federal government via the American Rescue Plan Act and the bipartisan infrastructure bill that Congress passed in 2021.

MCGA's response

As mentioned, MCGA was pleased by the inclusion of the soil-health financial-assistance program in the ag bill. Given our commitment to helping Minnesota corn farmers be among the most sustainable in the U.S., we strongly support legislation that will allow for grassroots action on conservation practices.

Under the program, financial assistance won't be limited to traditional cost-share grants. Instead, it can also include down payments on equipment, purchases or subscriptions of equipment technology for precision agriculture, low-interest loans, the purchases of seed and soil amendments, or technical assistance for conservation plans.

MCGA was also glad that the House-approved plastic-coated pesticide and fertilizer ban was not approved.

Another highlight of the session for MCGA was an April informational hearing focused on the Liquid Fuel Modernization Act. The bill would provide the resources needed to allow every fuel retailer in the state to offer higher ethanol blends within 10 years. MCGA worked with the Minnesota Petroleum Marketers Association on the bill and appreciates their efforts to advance the legislation and increase consumer access to higher ethanol blends.

To read the latest updates on legislation affecting Minnesota's corn farmers, visit mncorn.org/blog. ➡

Did you know?

The ag bill includes funding for a new soil-health financial-assistance program that will help farmers implement conservation practices.

Push for lower-volatility summer gasoline appreciated

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is pleased with a push to require the sale of lower-volatility gasoline during the summer months in nine Midwestern states, including Minnesota. Lower-volatility fuels are more stable and, therefore, less likely to evaporate and interact with sunlight – which is more abundant in the summer – to create ground-level ozone.



A push to require lower-volatility summer gasoline could allow for permanent year-round E15 sales.

This spring, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and seven other Midwestern governors asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to nullify a waiver allowing standard gasoline to deviate from stricter summertime fuel-volatility requirements. In June, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine joined this effort by submitting his own letter to EPA. (In the U.S., standard gasoline is blended with 10% ethanol.) Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA must nullify the waiver for a given state if governor-provided documentation shows that higher-volatility fuels increase air-pollution-causing emissions.

By requiring the sale of lower-volatility fuel, emissions of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds would be reduced in all nine states, according to the Renewable Fuels Association. Additionally, the move would ensure that E15, a fuel containing 15% ethanol that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants, could permanently be sold in the summer months.

Given that the existing summertime fuel-volatility waiver applies strictly to E10, no other fuels with evaporative emissions above the more stringent standard can be sold during the summer months. That's even though E15 has a lower volatility than E10.

By requiring all gasoline blends, including E10, to use a lower-volatility base blendstock, it sets the stage for the use of more renewable fuels like E15 that wouldn't otherwise meet stricter summer requirements.

MCGA thanks Gov. Walz for signing onto the letter with the other Midwestern governors, and we will be closely following the EPA's decision-making process on this waiver.

MCGA and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) also appreciate the bipartisan members of Congress who continue to support the Next Generation Fuels Act. The bill would require that automakers phase in higher levels of clean, low-carbon octane by model year 2031 and that such octane sources reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40%. Ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 50% compared to regular gasoline, according to recent studies.

Ethanol promotion continues

Meanwhile, at home, MCGA is promoting ethanol to consumers through the Better Fuel Initiative outreach campaign featuring KFAN "Power Trip" morning show co-host and producer Chris Hawkey. Watch for ads featuring Hawkey touting the many benefits of E15 and other ethanol-blended fuels on your favorite media channels throughout the summer and fall.

Thanks in no small part to this comprehensive media campaign, E15 sales have continued to surge in Minnesota, according to the state Department of Commerce.

Of the 249 fueling stations selling mid-level ethanol blends (E15 to E50) that reported data to the state in March, an average of over 30,580 gallons of E15 per station was sold. On a per-station basis, that marked a new record for E15 sales in the state.

E15 sales in Minnesota should remain strong this year, thanks to the Biden administration's lifting of the summertime restrictions on the fuel for 2022. In 2019, the federal government had taken the common-sense step to permanently lift the outdated restrictions on summertime E15 sales. But unfortunately, the restrictions were reimposed last year because of a court decision initiated by the oil industry aimed at limiting the growth of higher ethanol blends.

The administration's action ensured that consumers in Minnesota and across the U.S. would have uninterrupted access to homegrown, cleaner-burning and lower-cost ethanol blends throughout the 2022 summer driving season. That's especially noteworthy this year, with higher gas prices impacting drivers across the country.

E15, approved for use by the EPA in all vehicles model year 2001 and newer, costs 5 to 40 cents less per gallon, on average, than standard gasoline. Available at more than 420 fueling stations in Minnesota, E15 also helps reduce dependence on foreign oil, improve engine performance and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

To learn more about E15 and the benefits of ethanol-blended fuels, visit betterfuel.org.



Look for Better Fuel Initiative ads featuring Chris Hawkey on your favorite media channels throughout the summer and fall.

EPA releases final 2020-22 renewable fuel volumes

In 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is requiring refiners and oil importers to blend 15 billion gallons of conventional biofuel into gasoline, the agency announced in June.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is pleased with this final number, which the EPA is required to release each year under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). It will support access to higher blends of ethanol, saving consumers money at the pump and cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

"We thank the Biden administration for maintaining a robust renewable fuel volume in 2022," MCGA President Bryan Biegler said. "Given that gas prices are at all-time highs, it's important for federal agencies to ensure drivers have access to lower-cost, cleaner-burning fuels. This step will help reduce costs at the pump and lower harmful emissions."

Also in June, the EPA finalized renewable fuel volumes for 2020 and 2021 at 12.5 billion gallons and 13.8 billion gallons for conventional biofuel, respectively. MCGA remains disappointed by the EPA's unprecedented decision to reopen the previously finalized 2020 volumes. (In 2019, the agency had finalized the 2020 conventional biofuel volume at 15 billion gallons.)

Still, we're heartened that the finalized numbers for 2022 demonstrate the EPA is aiming to get RFS implementation back on track.

In a separate action, the EPA finalized denial of 69 pending RFS exemption petitions. Closing the books on RFS exemptions helps restore much-needed integrity to the forward-looking volumes set in June.

"MCGA looks forward to working with the EPA and other state and federal agencies to ensure that ethanol is available to more drivers," Biegler said. "Higher blends of ethanol have a host of benefits, and we're proud to advocate for these high-quality fuels."

"More ethanol in the fuel supply saves Americans money at the pump and lowers greenhouse gas emissions," National Corn Growers Association President Chris Edgington said in a statement. "Higher renewable fuel volumes for this year, which will increase and diversify our fuel supply, come at a crucial time as policymakers are working to lower fuel prices."

To learn more about ethanol, and to find a station offering higher ethanol blends near you, visit betterfuel.org.

At a glance

Conventional biofuel blending requirements, 2020-22

2020 — 12.5 billion gallons

2021 — 13.8 billion gallons

2022 — 15 billion gallons

World Trade Month celebrated

In May, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) celebrated the 84th annual World Trade Month as part of our mission to develop market opportunities for our state's corn farmers at home and abroad.

Each year, the U.S. recognizes May as World Trade Month and uses the opportunity to celebrate the importance of international trade to our nation's economy, the World Trade Month Association notes.



The U.S. exports over \$2 trillion of goods and services each year, supporting millions of jobs. In Minnesota, exports of manufactured goods, services and agricultural commodities account for \$33 billion in revenue and tens of thousands of jobs statewide, according to the state Department of Employment and Economic Development. Grain exports alone account for \$1.7 billion in revenue, a 2018 study commissioned by the U.S. Grains Council reported.

"One-third, approximately, of the grain that we are producing is exported," Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) member Jim O'Connor told Linder Farm Network in May. "If you're willing to give up one-third of your price, no matter what it is, that's how important trade is for us."

To promote the development of international markets, Minnesota Corn supports multiple organizations that work to facilitate foreign agricultural product purchases. These organizations include:

- U.S. Grains Council, a national grain-export organization dedicated to developing markets abroad
- U.S. Meat Export Federation, which promotes U.S.-grown beef and pork around the world
- USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, which helps promote U.S. poultry and eggs globally

To learn more about Minnesota Corn's efforts to develop export markets, visit mncorn.org/utilization.



Export markets are critical to Minnesota's corn farmers, accounting for hundreds of millions of dollars in sales annually.

feature story

Ensuring sustainability: People, planet, profit

To some, sustainability means renewable energy or planting methods that replenish the soil. To others, it means efforts to revitalize their communities, providing them with the resources they need to be successful. Yet to others, sustainability means ensuring profitability to build a strong foundation for future generations.



Given the global focus on sustainability in recent years, agriculture groups, including Minnesota's corn organizations, have been continuously working to ensure that such efforts are top of mind. As in past years, Minnesota Corn continues to work to sharpen all aspects of its sustainability program. Read on to learn about the comprehensive approach we're taking to sustainability — from

ensuring a healthy planet to supporting the people in our communities and ensuring that farmers can turn a profit.

People

At its core, sustainability is about ensuring prosperity for future generations. For Minnesota Corn, this strikes at the heart of our definition of sustainability — and the work we do every day.

Each year, we're investing corn check-off funds into organizations and educational programs that support rural communities and the next generation of farmers and agriculture leaders. This critical work is building a strong foundation of young people who are passionate about agriculture and are inspired to pursue careers in the field.

For example, for over 30 years, Minnesota Corn has supported Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC), a public-private partnership that aims to increase agricultural literacy through K-12 education. In 2021, MAITC reached over 132,000 Minnesota students with a positive message about food and farming, teaching valuable lessons and broadening horizons about what careers in agriculture can look like.

In addition to MAITC, Minnesota Corn is supporting the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H agronomy and horticulture program, which teaches students valuable lessons about farming and crop production. We're also continuing to support FFA, which provides over 15,000 students across Minnesota with skills needed to pursue careers in agriculture and related fields.

Beyond youth development, Minnesota Corn also supports efforts by county corn grower associations to build strong community bonds at the local level. Each year, thanks to this grassroots leadership, county corn grower associations hold community meetings, support local organizations and provide each other with the resources needed to prosper. As a state organization, we're proud to support these efforts.

Finally, Minnesota Corn is also well aware that sustainability means supporting communities beyond the farm. That's why we're proud to partner with WCCO Radio and other Minnesota-based companies each year to raise money for Second Harvest Heartland through the annual "Let's Kick Hunger" Day event. This past February, the 13th annual event raised over \$460,000 to stock food shelves around Minnesota.





Planet

Just as we're serious about investing in efforts to support the people of our state, Minnesota Corn recognizes the weighty responsibility we hold in caring for our land and water. It's a mission we don't take lightly as an organization.

To further those efforts, each year, Minnesota Corn invests over \$2 million in research aimed at boosting on-farm sustainability and profitability. Projects are led both by farmers and university-

level scientists and are subject to a rigorous vetting process.

In 2022, Minnesota Corn has allocated funding to 30 projects that address a wide array of environmental and sustainability issues. These projects could help farmers use inputs more efficiently, to optimize the adoption of conservation practices and reduce fertilizer runoff.

"All of these projects share the same goals: to increase the livelihoods of corn farmers and lessen the impacts on the environment," said Maciej Kazula, Minnesota Corn's research director.

Beyond research investments, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) advocates at the state Capitol each year for programs and policies that allow for farmer-led conservation efforts. In 2022, thanks to this grassroots advocacy, the state Legislature approved a \$500,000 soil-health financial-assistance program that will help farmers as they look to implement conservation practices (see page 3). MCGA thanks the bipartisan lawmakers who worked for passage of this program.

Off the farm, Minnesota Corn continuously supports the development of corn-based products that lessen our collective environmental footprint. In recent years, we've invested corn check-off funds in research at the University of Minnesota-based Center for Sustainable Polymers to develop corn-based plastics. We've also invested in efforts by Låkril Technologies to mass produce a corn-derived acrylic acid and ClearFlame Engine Technologies to develop an ethanol-powered engine that can be used in long-haul trucking.

We look forward to seeing the results of these initiatives come to fruition.

Profit

Without the profit to sustain an operation in the near term, sustainability becomes moot. That's why Minnesota Corn invests in efforts to ensure that farmers have constant, predictable markets for their crop.

One of our most substantial investments in recent years is our support for ethanol promotion and market development. Since 2008, Minnesota Corn has invested over \$30 million to promote and increase use of ethanol-blended fuels. That has included promoting E15 and other ethanol-blended fuels through the Better Fuel Initiative outreach campaign. It has also included two investments of at least \$1 million into state biofuel-infrastructure grant programs to help fueling stations upgrade to equipment compatible with higher ethanol blends.

These efforts by Minnesota's corn farmers are seeing results. In recent years, the number of retailers carrying E15 in Minnesota has skyrocketed, according to state data. Minnesota has also seen sales of E15 rise to record levels.

Not only is ethanol helping to ensure the vitality of Minnesota's family corn farmers, it's also helping ensure environmental sustainability. Ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by nearly half compared to gasoline, allowing us all to breathe a little easier. It also helps reduce emissions of harmful tailpipe pollutants, while costing consumers less per gallon at the pump.

Beyond ethanol, Minnesota Corn is helping to ensure the financial vitality of family corn farmers through investments in organizations that develop markets abroad, such as the U.S. Grains Council and the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council.

Sustainability: It's who we are

To summarize, sustainability is at the core of everything we do as Minnesota Corn. Whether it's supporting the next generation of farmers or investing in research or renewable products that benefit the environment, Minnesota's corn farmers are constantly looking to ensure the viability of their operations for generations to come.

It's an attitude that has made Minnesota's corn farmers successful for generations. Going forward, it will help ensure our shared prosperity well into the future. ■



Variable conditions challenged farmers this spring

Typically, Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) President Bryan Biegler likes to start planting corn between April 25 and May 1 and wrap up by the end of the first week of May. This year, his family didn't start planting corn until May 10 and didn't finish until late May. "We're not going to get optimal yields planting this late, but there is still a chance to get a decent crop out of this year," Biegler said.

It wasn't just the wetter season, but the way rains came so frequently — and in heavy bouts — that left Minnesota corn farmers like the Bieglers facing a steep challenge to get their corn crop planted this spring.

Corn in Minnesota didn't reach the 50% planted threshold until the third week in May, according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. That's about two weeks later than the five-year average. While planting eventually caught up to the five-year average, emergence remained behind the usual pace.

As of June 21, corn emergence was at 97% in Minnesota.

In Mahanomen County, Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council Member Dave Vipond reported in late May that about two-thirds of his planned corn acres had been planted.

Because of a couple additional inches of rain, he said no more corn planting would happen this year.

Harold Wolle, Jr., a St. James farmer and MCGA board member, finished planting on May 24. His family got started with planting late — the first week of May — and then rain came along just frequently enough to make it a stop-and-start affair. Finally, the longest stretch of dry weather gave them four straight days to finish.

Cannon Falls farmer and MCGA board member Rob Tate finished planting corn on May 19 and soybeans on May 24. He said soil conditions were never ideal and some soils were left with a hard crust due to heavy rains.

"I know there were a lot of rotary hoes running in our neighborhood," Tate said. Because of the late planting window, he decided to change some of his corn to earlier-maturing varieties.

"I had 106-day corn that I rolled down to a 99-day variety, but I still planted a fourth or more of my acres to a 104-day maturity hybrid," Tate said. ▀



Wet, rainy conditions led to delays in the planting of this year's corn crop.

Corn growers rally against fertilizer price increases

With input costs in 2022 significantly higher than in past years, corn farmers in Minnesota and across the U.S. have been sharing their concerns with federal officials.

In May and June, thanks to a call-to-action from the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), corn farmers told USDA how rising input costs have affected their farming operations. Over 950 corn farmers nationally had submitted comments as of late May, including about 150 from Minnesota.

The call-to-action encouraged corn growers to comment specifically on accessibility, price volatility and market competition.

This past winter, a Texas A&M economic analysis of nitrogen prices prepared for a group of state corn grower associations, including Minnesota, noted a substantial price increase over the previous year. The analysis also found that tariffs on urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) would substantially increase costs for farmers.

NCGA and the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) amplified this study as part of a push to keep prices down for corn farmers. NCGA and



Rising input costs have affected farmers across Minnesota.

MCGA have also encouraged a major producer of UAN, CF Industries, to drop a petition for tariffs on UAN imports from Russia and Trinidad and Tobago that would effectively raise prices for farmers.

To learn more about MCGA's efforts to advocate against proposed fertilizer tariffs, visit mncorn.org. ▀

Researchers study risk of aromatics in gasoline



Researchers at The Hormel Institute (University of Minnesota) and the University of Illinois Chicago Energy Resources Center are studying aromatic compounds in gasoline.

Are the petroleum-derived aromatic compounds blended into gasoline to boost octane levels more harmful than currently known? Researchers at The Hormel Institute (University of Minnesota) and the University of Illinois Chicago Energy Resources Center could soon find out.

With support from the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council, the researchers are studying whether exposure to aromatic compounds can cause tumor-suppressing genes to stop working.



Their research could pave the way for the increased substitution of ethanol in place of aromatics in gasoline. (Ethanol has the same octane-boosting properties as aromatics.)

"This could be a very simple and effective policy change that could reduce cancer risk," said Dr. Steffen Mueller, a collaborator on the study.

Aromatic compounds comprise 20% of the typical gallon of gasoline sold in the U.S, according to the researchers. The main aromatics blended into gasoline are benzene, toluene, ethylene and xylene, which are collectively known as BTEX.

The research could also impact other fuels in which aromatics are used, such as aviation fuel. Additionally, it could lead to regulatory changes in sources of aromatics emissions, like electric power plants and tires.

This research will be conducted in three phases between now and 2026 and will investigate all of these risks. Stay up to date on this research project and others supported by the Minnesota corn check-off at mncorn.org/research.

Farmamerica nears capital campaign goal

Agricultural products are all around us — in our homes, workplaces and schools. But given that farm and ranch families comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population, most people aren't too familiar with what goes into making those products.



Farmamerica: the Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center aims to change that by telling the story of agriculture in Minnesota. Thanks to the support of Minnesota's corn farmers, and other donors, they could soon broaden their efforts.

This summer, Farmamerica's three-year \$850,000 capital campaign is entering its final stretch. Three-quarters of the funds have been raised, and the campaign could wrap up in the coming months.

In 2019, Minnesota Corn announced a multiyear contribution to the campaign as part of our mission to raise awareness about farming and its impact in our state.

Thanks to the campaign, Farmamerica has already revamped its 43-year-old welcome lobby. The organization also plans to build a new interactive "Ag Around You" discovery center within its visitor center and fund permanent exhibits on GMOs and sustainable agriculture methods.

In addition, Farmamerica plans to convert its feed mill into a three-season classroom, expand programming and add an accessible playground.

"Agriculture is changing rapidly, and there's a fascinating story to tell," Farmamerica Executive Director Jessica Rollins said. "And we want to make it fun, because people learn so much better when they are having a great time and not thinking about the fact that they are learning."

Rollins said she's most excited about a planned family dinner table within the discover center. Visitors will sit down, put different food items on their plates and see videos featuring farmers who made the given product.

To learn more about the Farmamerica capital campaign, or to donate, visit farmamerica.org.



A Minnesota Corn-supported capital campaign at Farmamerica in Waseca is nearing its fundraising goal.

MCGA honors Sherrie Graves for 25 years



In May, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association celebrated Office Manager Sherrie Graves's 25-year work anniversary with MCGA. We're grateful for everything you do, Sherrie!

Since 1997, it's likely that the first person you've encountered when visiting the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) offices is Sherrie Graves. As office manager, Graves has been greeting visitors and supporting Minnesota's corn farmers for over two decades.

In May, MCGA recognized Graves for her 25 years of service.

Graves, who has helped MCGA through office and staff transitions, as well as countless events, promotions and programs, said 25 years doesn't seem real. "Everybody always calls me the veteran," she said. Graves said she didn't know much about farming when she started at MCGA in May 1997. During her job interview, she recalled being told that the stereotypical image of farmers — as men wearing overalls — wasn't in sync with reality.

"I was told that our folks are very professional," she said.

Graves has handled a variety of tasks over her 25 years, from accounts payable to working with county organizations on promotions and events. She said MCGA was largely focused on ethanol during her first few years, but that MCGA's reach has grown as the organization has expanded.

The best part of the job has been working with the farmers and building relationships with staff, Graves added. She's still close with many county grower-leaders from her time as the MCGA staff lead for the Producer Services Team. "I love what I do," Graves said. "It's a new adventure every day."

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association thanks Sherrie for her dedication to our state's corn farmers and her steadfast support over these past 25 years. We look forward to 25 more years together! ■

MCR&PC elects 2022-23 leadership

The Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), the 11-member entity responsible for managing the Minnesota corn check-off, has elected Doug Albin as its 2022-23 chair.

Albin, who grows corn and soybeans in Clarkfield, has farmed since 1976. He served on the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors from 2001-09 before being elected to the council. He was previously council chairman in 2015-16.

Albin said he's excited about the opportunity to once again serve as chairman. During his first term, he said he enjoyed tapping into the leadership capabilities of his fellow grower-leaders.

He added that he continues to be energized by the council's work, noting the strong partnership with the University of Minnesota and investments in new-use projects like ClearFlame Engine Technologies.

"What gets me excited about it is the fact that we're finding new, innovative ways to do things and sharing those with other producers," he said.

In addition to Albin, the MCR&PC elected Gary Prescher as the new vice chairman, Duane Epland as the new treasurer and John Mages as the new secretary. Prescher grows corn and soybeans in Delavan, Epland grows corn and soybeans in Twin Lakes and Mages grows corn and soybeans in Belgrade. Their terms began July 1.

Also on July 1, Vesta farmer Jordan Goblish began his term on the MCR&PC. He replaces his father, George Goblish, who served on the council for six years.



Doug Albin



Gary Prescher



Duane Epland



John Mages

To learn more about the MCR&PC, visit mncorn.org/about. ■

New-uses investments highlight Fast's term as MCR&PC chairman

In June, Mountain Lake farmer Brandon Fast wrapped up his yearlong term as chair of the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC).



Brandon Fast

Fast, who grows corn and soybeans and also operates a retail seed and chemical business, said he was heartened by the council's efforts during his term. He said he was particularly excited about investments in new-uses technologies that have the potential to increase corn grind.

Below is a brief Q&A with Fast about his time as MCR&PC chair.

What were some of the highlights of your term as chairman?

The biggest thing that stands out for me is to see a lot of the projects that we've invested in, such as Låkril

Technologies and ClearFlame Engine Technologies, really come to fruition. It was so nice to see these projects move to the next level and be able to say, "Hey, there's going to be brick and mortar and beta testing," and to hear that these companies found demand for these products. It seems like we went from treading water on some of these things to the moon.

How have your feelings about the value of the check-off to Minnesota's corn farmers changed over the past year?

It was a positive perspective going in, but seeing some of these projects go to the next level really makes you feel good.

It's important to note: if the check-off wasn't here, none of this stuff would get done. There's nobody else that would take the bull by the horns. You start thinking about what we've done and the possibilities in terms of increasing corn grind, and it's extremely rewarding from that perspective.

What was serving as chairman like from a leadership perspective?

It's always different when you're in that position and you have a large group of your peers that you're working with. Obviously, you're not there to be the boss of everybody. It's rewarding and it's a lot of fun being in that position — not only working with staff on the back side to bring things to the council. But it's also fun to be the go-to person for the rest of the council members and be open to any questions or issues that come up.

Minnesota Corn thanks Brandon for his leadership and service to the state's corn farmers. We're grateful for his hard work and look forward to seeing his continued accomplishments on the council. ■

Madelia grower-leader Harold Wolle elected to NCGA leadership

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is thrilled with the recent news that Harold Wolle has been elected first vice president of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) for 2022-23. His term will begin Oct. 1.

Wolle, who grows corn and soybeans in Madelia with his son, Matt, has served on the MCGA Board of Directors since 2012. He said in a statement that he's honored to serve America's corn farmers as an NCGA officer.



"With all the unfinished business we have in Washington right now on ethanol, trade and farm policy, it's a critical time for our industry," he said. "Expectations of what we need to get done are high, and October can't get here soon enough for me. I look forward to partnering with corn farmers on all these issues we must tackle as part of the NCGA team."

Wolle currently chairs NCGA's Finance Committee. Prior to that, he served as MCGA president and chairman of the Watonwan Farm Service/Central Farm Service Coop Board.

Wolle will join MCGA board member Tom Haag on the NCGA board's leadership team. Haag, who farms in Eden Valley, has been serving as first vice president this year.

Founded in 1957, the National Corn Growers Association represents nearly 40,000 dues-paying corn growers and the interests of more than 300,000 farmers who contribute through corn checkoff programs in their states. NCGA and its 50 affiliated state associations and checkoff organizations work together to help protect and advance corn growers' interests.



Harold Wolle

MCGA congratulates Harold on the new role. We can't wait to see all that he accomplishes in the position. ■

CommonGround adds fun to Twin Cities race

CommonGround Minnesota successfully kicked off their spring events by partnering with Twin Cities in Motion for its Women Run the Cities race on May 21. Twin Cities in Motion events have long been popular with both professional athletes and beginners. The many thousands of runners and spectators made for an exciting day, and CommonGround Minnesota used the opportunity to share information about food and farming and how our food is produced right here in our state.



Runners made mini-pollinator pots at the CommonGround booth at the Women Run the Cities race in May.

Women Run the Cities is about honoring women's physical, mental and emotional fitness. As an official partner with Twin Cities in Motion for this race, CommonGround Minnesota had the opportunity to be involved in many ways.

About a month before the race, CommonGround Minnesota was featured on Twin Cities in Motion's social channels, directing followers to blog content that was created by volunteers. This information, which focused on quick, easy, and healthy lunches,

was also featured in Twin Cities in Motion's monthly e-newsletter, "The Connection," reaching a health-conscious and active audience.

Race day went incredibly well, with CommonGround Minnesota having a presence both on the course and at the Finisher Festival. Nearly 4,000 runners and spectators saw CommonGround Minnesota's racecourse signage, which included information and facts about food and farming in Minnesota, women in agriculture, and CommonGround Minnesota as an organization. There were also signs that featured agriculturally themed puns to keep the runners' spirits high!



At the Finisher Festival, CommonGround Minnesota hosted an activation space for runners and spectators to interact with volunteers, ask questions and learn about agriculture. The booth's theme was "Bee happy. Bee confident. Bee you." and had a focus on pollinators. To make the topic a little more engaging, CommonGround Minnesota volunteers assisted visitors in planting their own mini-pollinator pots to take home — complete with a mini-pot made from a corn-based plastic. CommonGround Minnesota also handed out literature, cutting boards and reusable grocery totes.

Overall, it was a fun-filled event, for sure. Even with an early start time, the energy from the crowd, volunteers and booths at the Finisher Festival was at an all-time high.

CommonGround Minnesota looks forward to continuing its grassroots efforts to connect women who farm with those who do not. In June, a handful of CommonGround Minnesota volunteers attended the national CommonGround conference, learning more about effective strategies for meaningful engagement. CommonGround Minnesota also looks forward to continuing its partnership this summer with Twin Cities Mom Collective, a locally focused parenting resource.

To learn more about CommonGround Minnesota, visit commongroundminnesota.com. ■

MN Corn Podcast recaps 2021 Innovation Grants

As you might know, Minnesota Corn produces the biweekly Minnesota Corn Podcast. It promotes our many research and new-uses investments, educational partnerships, ethanol initiatives and more. The free podcast is hosted by Mark Dorenkamp, a reporter for Brownfield Ag News.

This summer, the podcast has been recapping Minnesota Corn's 2021 Innovation Grant projects. Since 2016, Minnesota Corn has offered farmers, students and university researchers Innovation Grants for small-scale, field-level research projects aimed at making corn farming more productive and sustainable. In 2021, Minnesota Corn allocated funding to 14 Innovation Grant projects, including a grant to Fulda farmer Mark Enninga for research into whether a planter weight-distribution system could reduce corn plant variability.

In his podcast interview, Enninga said he found there was significant variability in corn-plant emergence between the control and treatment locations, though he attributed that to last year's dry conditions. But Enninga said he did not see a statistically significant yield improvement among the rows on which the weight-distribution system was used compared to when the system was inactivated.

Still, Enninga said he thinks the technology has some merit. "If we were going into a season where we had a little bit wetter conditions, I think we could potentially see some greater differences between the treatment and the control group."



Enninga conducted the experiment on a 30-acre field. The weight-distribution system was used in six sections of the field, and it was inactive in another six.

He said the Innovation Grant program is a great opportunity for farmers who want to try a small-scale research project in their own fields.

To learn more about the Minnesota Corn Innovation Grant program, visit mncorn.org/research. ■

MN Corn returning to Farmfest

Once again, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will be front and center at Farmfest, the annual agribusiness show held each year at Gilfillan Estate near Morgan.

MCGA will be in Tent 702 at the corner of Seed Row and Seventh Street during the event, which is set for Aug. 2–4. Stop by to learn about the many ways corn growers are driving innovation, supporting rural communities and ensuring a prosperous future for farmers and their families.

Renew or sign up for an MCGA membership during Farmfest to earn a special reward. Catch up with old friends and, of course, don't forget to grab a free sample of the famous sweet corn ice cream. Made by the University of Minnesota, and hand-scooped by the dedicated MCGA staff during the event, this delicious ice cream is the perfect treat to beat the summer heat!

Each year, Farmfest aims to bring together the best in agribusiness from Minnesota and across the U.S. Visitors can network with over 400 exhibitors showcasing the latest in agriculture; participate in political forums and debates; see displays that include farm machinery, livestock equipment and thousands of ag products and services to assist your farm operation; and much more.

MCGA is proud to be present at Farmfest each year as part of our mission to engage and support corn farmers and rural communities across the state. We look forward to another successful Farmfest and can't wait to see you there!

For all Farmfest-related announcements, check out our blog at mncorn.org/blog and follow Minnesota Corn on Twitter (@mncorn) and Facebook (@Minnesota Corn). ■



No stop to Farmfest is complete without sweet corn ice cream. Stop by the MCGA tent at the corner of Seed Row and Seventh Street to grab your sample!

Look for Minnesota Corn at State Fair and Big Iron

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) will be on hand again this year at the Minnesota State Fair in St. Paul and the Big Iron Farm Show in Fargo, N.D.

At the State Fair, which runs Aug. 25 to Labor Day, Sept. 5, MCGA will continue its sponsorship of Kemps Little Farm Hands. Tailored to kids ages 3–10, the free educational exhibit gives children and their families the chance to experience Minnesota agriculture in a fun and interactive space.

Don't miss the Minnesota Corn Fairstalk at the State Fair's North End. The 24-foot-tall installation features giant LED screens that display news from the fair and fun facts about corn and farming.

At the Big Iron Farm Show, slated for Sept. 13–15, Minnesota Corn will talk with attendees about the latest news from the world of corn.

Visitors can learn about the many ways Minnesota's corn growers are supporting innovation and building prosperity for family farms. That includes investing in cutting-edge research aimed at building new markets

for corn, advocating on behalf of farm families, and supporting youth education and rural development. The booth will also be the place to sign up or renew your MCGA membership.

For updates on these and other Minnesota Corn events, visit mncorn.org throughout the summer. ■



Look for the Minnesota Corn Fairstalk at the State Fair's North End during the Great Minnesota Get-Together, which runs Aug. 25 to Labor Day, Sept. 5.

county highlights.....

County corn organizations fuel the grassroots advocacy efforts of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA), while helping to 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.

Growers help Dassel-Cokato elementary students learn about ag



Students learned about the many products field corn is found in during the Dassel-Cokato FFA Elementary Ag Day.

In early May, grower-leaders from the Wright/Hennepin Corn & Soybean Growers Association participated in an Elementary Ag Day hosted by the Dassel-Cokato FFA chapter. The 700-plus students in attendance learned about the many uses of the corn plant, from food to consumer products.

Rochester-area grower associations hit the ice, ballpark

This summer, the Dodge, Goodhue and Olmsted/Wabasha County Corn Grower Associations are front and center with two of Rochester's favorite sports teams. At Rochester Grizzlies junior hockey games, fans can look for an advertisement for the three county associations along the boards. Fans can also win prizes in a county grower association-sponsored "chuck a puck" contest. At Rochester Honkers baseball games, the Olmsted/Wabasha County Grower Association is giving away great branded prizes and sponsoring a bean bag boards set that fans can use during games. The boards will be given away to a lucky fan at the end of the year. Thanks to county grower associations for their support of local sports teams!



At Rochester Honkers baseball games this summer, fans can enjoy using an Olmsted/Wabasha County Corn & Soybean Growers Association-branded bean bag boards set.



Thanks to generous support from local county corn grower associations, attendees enjoy free admission to Deer Creek Speedway for Tasseldega Nights.

Tasseldega Nights is back at Deer Creek Speedway

The Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Mower and Olmsted/Wabasha Corn Grower Associations are proud to bring racing fans Tasseldega Nights this July at Deer Creek Speedway. The event features great racing, family fun and an excellent opportunity to promote the benefits of homegrown ethanol throughout the evening.

Norman County growers announce scholarship winners

Each year, county corn grower associations across Minnesota provide scholarships to students pursuing degrees and careers in agriculture. In June, the Norman County Soybean-Corn Growers announced that Olivia Carlson and Katrina Quick of Borup and Morgan Chisholm of Gary are the recipients of their 2022 scholarship. Each student plans to pursue a career in agriculture.



Katrina Quick, a senior at Ada-Borup West School, receives a certificate for \$500 from Grant Arends (on the left) and Corey Hanson, directors of the Norman County Soybean-Corn Growers Association.

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

Visit MCGA's new carbon, county resources webpages

Looking for information on resources that the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) offers our 52 county corn organizations? How about information on revenue opportunities if you implement practices that capture and store carbon in the soil? Look no further than the MCGA website.

A new County Resources webpage (mncorn.org/county-resources) provides information about county matching funds, fuel

station events, MCGA's county promo item program, scholarships and the Variety Plot program. There are also tool kits and a host of communications materials, from logos to advertising resources.

Meanwhile, the new Carbon Resources webpage (mncorn.org/carbon) has basic information, key terms, frequently asked questions and more about carbon markets. While we encourage you to talk with your attorney or another trusted advisor

regarding legal questions about your farm and before signing any contracts, this webpage is a great place to start.

Of course, don't forget to check out the MCGA website (mncorn.org) throughout the summer for the latest info on Minnesota Corn events, updates and programming. Or, head to our blog (mncorn.org/blog) for the stories of Minnesota's corn farmers and farming families. ■



Join MCGA today!

Just because you receive Corn Talk doesn't mean you're a member of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA). To check if you're a member, or to join, simply call our office at 952-233-0333.

As a grassroots organization, MCGA relies on members in our efforts on behalf of the state's 24,000 corn farmers. We're strong with you. Join us.

- One-year membership: \$75
- Three-year membership: \$200
- Young-adult membership: \$20 (ages 16-24)



thanks to our allied partners



MCGA Board Members

President

Bryan Biegler of Lake Wilson
507-920-8186

First Vice President

Richard Syverson of Clontarf
320-760-6719

Treasurer

Dana Allen-Tully of Eyota
507-951-5597

Secretary

Jim Kanten of Milan
320-297-0375

Past President/ Chairman of the Board

Tim Waibel of Courtland
507-359-1219

Wesley Beck of St. James
507-630-1471

Angela Guentzel of Kasota
507-317-4372

Tom Haag of Eden Valley*
320-453-7760

Paul Henning of Okabena
507-370-1688

Blair Hoseth of Mahanomen
701-261-3574

Brad Neumann of Wabasso
507-822-6951

Jocelyn Schlichting of Rice
320-333-4291

John Swanson of Mentor
612-419-9235

Rob Tate of Cannon Falls
507-218-0308

Brian Thalmann of Plato*
320-238-2481

David (D.J.) VanKlomben of Montevideo
320-212-2748

Todd Wentzel of Murdock
320-760-1347

Harold Wolle Jr. of Madelia*
507-236-2181

*NCGA Board member

MCR&PC Board Members

Chair

Doug Albin of Clarkfield
320-383-2338

Vice Chair

Gary Prescher of Delavan
507-525-7671

Treasurer

Duane Epland of Twin Lakes
641-590-0928

Secretary

John Mages of Belgrade
320-248-1908

Brandon Fast of Mountain Lake
507-220-8275

Jordan Gobligh of Vesta
507-829-1589

Rodney Moe of Waltham
952-237-9808

James O'Connor of Blooming Prairie
507-456-5330

David Vipond of Mahanomen
218-556-9780

Chad Willis of Willmar
320-235-4452

Scott Winslow of Fountain
507-951-0363

Ex-Officio Thom Petersen
Minnesota Dept. of Ag
651-201-6219

july 2022

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT #93723


cornstalk

calendar of events

aug
2-4

Farmfest,
Redwood Falls, MN

aug-sept
25-5

Minnesota State Fair,
St. Paul, MN

sept
5

MCGA offices closed for Labor Day

sept
7

MCGA/MCR&PC Joint Board Meeting,
Burnsville, MN

sept
13-15

Big Iron Farm Show,
Fargo, ND

sept
17

MCGA Night with the Saints,
St. Paul, MN