

# corntalk

Official Publication of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association • September 2022



## Inside:

- California cars decision and potential MN impact
- Corn Congress visit in Washington, D.C.
- Willis wraps up year as USGC chairman

# There's strength in numbers



**W**hen corn farmers come together, we can be effective advocates for state and federal policies that benefit rural communities and farm families. We can also positively impact communities through local programming and by offering opportunities to young people, such as college scholarships.

That stronger-together philosophy is the foundation of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA). It's why we'd love to have you join us. When we collectively advocate for policies and priorities that allow for a more prosperous future, we're more effective than when we embark on these efforts alone.

Throughout this issue of Corn Talk, you'll read about the many ways corn grower-leaders have been advocating for their fellow farmers this summer. From countless meetings with our state's top elected officials to hosting county events at the local level, MCGA has continued to work to build opportunities for farm families and rural communities.

Join us today. Visit [mncorn.org/join](http://mncorn.org/join) or call our office at 952-233-0333 to learn more.

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## About the cover

Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council member Brandon Fast drives a sprayer to one of his farm fields in Mountain Lake.



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

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# MCGA concerned about impact in MN from California new cars decision

**O**n Aug. 25, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted to approve new rules governing emissions that effectively result in banning the sale of new internal combustion engine vehicles beginning in 2035, requiring all new cars sold in the state to meet a Zero Emission Vehicle standard.

The National Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and ethanol trade associations submitted public comments documenting the clean air, climate, and economic benefits of increasing ethanol blends in passenger vehicles, which can have immediate and long-term benefits. Despite that, CARB is moving ahead with an electric vehicle transportation mandate and missing an opportunity for more innovation and to broaden low- and zero-emission solutions, in addition to electric vehicles.

Federal law allows other states to either follow federal clean air standards or adopt California's stringent standards. When California adopts significant changes to its standards, most states that follow California's standards must decide to continue to follow the California standards or to follow federal standards.

Minnesota adopted California's vehicle emissions standards in 2021, after undergoing a state-level rulemaking initiated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) as part of their Clean Cars program initiative. In comments at that time to the MN Senate Environment Finance and Environment Policy committees, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) clearly outlined our significant concerns that future California rules would eliminate sales of flex fuel vehicles or passenger vehicles using mid-level ethanol blends.

Now, Minnesota policymakers must decide whether to adopt the new restrictive California standards, ultimately impacting the livelihoods of Minnesota family farmers. The adoption of California's new standard is not automatically applied in Minnesota.



**MCGA encourages state policymakers to reject California's restrictive new standard in favor of supporting Minnesota farmer families and the biofuel industry.**

The Low Emission Vehicle and Zero Emission Vehicle standards that Minnesota adopted in 2021 are set to be effective for model year 2025. These standards were part of California's original Advanced Clean Cars program. The standards adopted Aug. 25 replace those original standards. The standards adopted by CARB will apply to vehicles beginning in model year 2026 and phase to a full zero emission vehicle requirement beginning in 2035.

"Ethanol and biofuels are proven to reduce carbon emissions," MCGA President Bryan Biegler said. "California's decision is not the right direction for Minnesota, which has a significant biofuels production sector and an agricultural economy that is vital to the economic health of the state. We advocate strongly for ethanol and biofuels, and for the farmer families in Minnesota who support the biofuels industry." ■

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## Growers encouraged to help protect atrazine

**I**n the coming months, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will consider a proposal that would dramatically hamper farmers' ability to use atrazine, a critical crop-protection tool. Before then, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is continuing to ask farmers for help ensuring EPA understands the importance of atrazine to operations across the state.



**Farmers are encouraged to submit a comment to the EPA about how important atrazine is to their operations at [ncga.ws/atrazine](https://ncga.ws/atrazine).**

Through Oct. 7, growers are encouraged to go online to [ncga.ws/atrazine](https://ncga.ws/atrazine) and submit a letter to the EPA about how atrazine helps farmers maximize efficiency. It's important that the agency hear from growers firsthand about how this proposal could harm family farmers across the U.S., including in Minnesota.

The webpage through which growers can submit letters to the EPA was developed by the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), which has been encouraging farmers across the country to submit comments this summer.

The page includes a pre-written letter about the importance of atrazine to farmers. Growers are welcome to submit that letter if they are so inclined. However, MCGA would be most appreciative if growers could personalize the letter with a few sentences about how atrazine is used on their farms.

Atrazine is a vital tool for farmers across the nation, especially those who implement conservation tillage or no-till farming. By applying this safe, well-studied and effective herbicide, farmers can reduce the number of tillage passes they must make, decreasing erosion and increasing carbon savings.

"A little bit of atrazine helps other herbicides be more effective so that we can use lower rates," said Harold Wolle Jr. He sits on the board of directors for both the NCGA and MCGA. "It's very important that we have atrazine in our toolbox."

Submit a letter today at [ncga.ws/atrazine](https://ncga.ws/atrazine). ■





The urban ag tour stops at the CLUES community garden in St. Paul.

## Growers visit urban ag sites in St. Paul

This summer, several members of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Board of Directors visited a handful of urban farm sites on the east side of St. Paul, connecting with groups working to expand agriculture in the Twin Cities. The visit was coordinated in partnership with state Sen. Foung Hawj, who represents portions of eastern St. Paul, and the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation.

First, the group visited Metro State University's GROW-IT Center, a year-round hub for urban agriculture, food production and more. Then the group visited a few community gardens run by the nonprofit Urban Roots. Each year, about 75 Urban Roots youth participate in the organization's summer internship program, learning valuable skills such as financial literacy and food production.

Afterward, the group stopped at the community garden run by the nonprofit CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio — Spanish for: Latino Communities United in Service), which allows community members to grow their own produce. This year, the garden had space for 35 families and 10 community plots. Our delegation talked with several of the community gardeners about their experience. The tour also included a stop at the Urban Roots Rivoli Bluff Farm and restoration site.

The delegation concluded the tour at the Hmong Village shopping center, where they had lunch and learned more about efforts to grow opportunities for Hmong farmers.

Overall, the tour was a great chance for MCGA to learn about the many efforts to develop farming initiatives in St. Paul and to connect with communities engaged in this work. As MCGA advocates on behalf of corn farmers in Minnesota, we know it's important to develop relationships with multiple groups, individuals and communities involved in agriculture.

"Agriculture takes many forms, and we're appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about food production in the Twin Cities," MCGA President Bryan Biegler said in a statement. "We also appreciate the partnership with Senator Hawj to facilitate this exchange and look forward to bringing new ideas back to our farms and communities."

MCGA will continue its relationships with urban ag partners and hopes to host a farm visit in the fall. Stay up to date with all of our partnerships and community efforts at [mncorn.org](https://mncorn.org). ■



# MCGA pleased with rejection of UAN tariffs

**T**hanks in part to grassroots advocacy by corn farmers across the U.S., a proposed tariff on urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) imports from Russia and Trinidad and Tobago has been rejected.

In July, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) decided against imposing the tariff, which would have raised already high prices on nitrogen.

In May and June, over 950 corn farmers across the U.S., including about 150 from Minnesota, submitted comments to the USDA about how rising input costs have affected their farming operations.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) came out strongly against the tariffs. NCGA was the only commodity group to testify at the trade commission's public hearing, highlighting the potential negative effects of the tariffs. Meanwhile, both MCGA and NCGA amplified a study by Texas A&M that showed how UAN tariffs would increase prices for farmers. MCGA and 20 other state corn grower associations financially supported the study.

"This comes as a welcome relief," NCGA President Chris Edgington said in a statement. "We have been sounding the alarms and telling the ITC commissioners that tariffs will drive up input prices to even more unaffordable levels for farmers and cripple our supply. I am so glad they listened."

The decision came after CF Industries filed a petition with ITC in late 2021, requesting that the commission place tariffs on UAN, which is used in liquid fertilizers. Shortages and prices have since increased exponentially.

To learn more about how MCGA is advocating for farmers' interests, visit [mncorn.org/advocacy](https://mncorn.org/advocacy). ▀



In July, the U.S. International Trade Commission decided against imposing tariffs on urea ammonium nitrate, a decision that was a welcome relief for farmers.

## Promising federal legislation passes

**T**his summer, federal legislation that holds promise in terms of getting agricultural products to international markets more quickly, increasing biofuels access, and allowing for wider adoption of conservation practices was signed into law.

In June, President Joe Biden signed the Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022, a bill that will help level the playing field for American exporters.

Introduced by U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, the bill will make it harder for ocean carriers to arbitrarily turn away goods at ports that are ready to be shipped abroad. It will also shift the burden of proof regarding demurrage and detention charges from the invoiced party to the ocean carrier and bolster the ability of the Federal Maritime Commission to oversee international ocean carriers.

Meanwhile, another bill that President Biden signed into law this summer, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, includes \$19.5 billion for agricultural conservation. Most of these funds will go to existing farm bill conservation programs that provide financial and technical assistance to private landowners who voluntarily implement conservation practices on agricultural land.

The law also includes \$500 million for cost-share grants for fueling stations to install equipment compatible with higher biofuels blends.

Additionally, in July, a bill that would set the U.S. on a course toward increased use of E25 (fuel with 25% ethanol) and E30 (fuel with 30% ethanol) was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Klobuchar. Previously introduced in the U.S. House, the bipartisan Next Generation Fuels Act would require that new cars beginning in model year 2026 be optimized to run on high-octane fuels. This would allow automakers to meet stricter emissions standards and improve vehicle efficiency.

Ethanol has a higher octane rating than gasoline and is used to boost octane. Octane-boosting additives used in fuels would need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% compared to gasoline. Because corn ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 50% compared to gasoline, it would be primed for increased use.

The bill would also require new cars to be compatible with E25 by model year 2026 and with E30 by model year 2031.

MCGA thanks Sen. Klobuchar for introducing the Next Generation Fuels Act and for U.S. Reps. Angie Craig and Michelle Fischbach of Minnesota for cosponsoring the bill in the U.S. House. More information about the bill can be found at the National Corn Growers Association website, [ncca.com](https://ncca.com). ▀



feature story .....

## ***MCGA reps advocate for MN Corn Growers during Congress visit***

**T**his summer, as part of our mission to achieve public policy outcomes that support corn farmers, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) has been busy meeting with members of Congress and

congressional candidates. The visits have been part of our Minnesota Corn Grows MN campaign, which aims to build connections between corn farmers and policymakers.

During Corn Congress in July, MCGA grower-leaders met with almost all members of Minnesota's congressional delegation or their staffs. Later in the month, MCGA First Vice President Richard Syverson and Secretary Jim Kanten spoke at a 2023 farm bill listening session in Northfield. The meeting was chaired by U.S. Rep. Cheri Bustos of Illinois and hosted by U.S. Rep. Angie Craig of Minnesota.

Also in July, MCGA board members hosted Brad Finstad and Jeff Ettinger for farm visits before the two squared off in a special election to fill the vacancy in southern Minnesota's First Congressional District. (Finstad won the special election and will serve out the remaining months of the late Jim Hagedorn's term, before facing Ettinger again in November.)



MCGA grower-leaders meet with Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar during Corn Congress.



First Congressional District candidate Jeff Ettinger (right) speaks with grower-leaders during a visit to the Wolle family farm in St. James.





Finstad visited the Eyota farm of MCGA Treasurer Dana Allen-Tully, and Ettinger visited the St. James farm of board member Harold Wolle Jr.

Finally, in early August, MCGA hosted U.S. Rep. Michelle Fischbach, who represents western Minnesota's seventh district, at the family farm of board member Brad Neumann in Wabasso.

During the various visits and meetings, grower-leaders highlighted key messages important to corn farmers and their families, such as how:

- biofuels like E15 are a solution to high fuel prices, greenhouse gas emissions and U.S. dependence on foreign energy
- crop insurance helps farmers recover from losses, secure loans, improve crop marketing and make needed investments in the farm
- farmers can help to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions through voluntary, incentives-based programs
- crop-protection products and a decentralized, affordable supply of domestic fertilizer are critical to farmers



MCGA First Vice President Richard Syverson testifies during a 2023 farm bill listening session in Northfield.

Grower-leaders also reiterated legislative and policy priorities, such as the Next Generation Fuels Act, nixing proposed restrictions on atrazine and ensuring tax fairness in future bills.

Stay up to date with policy coverage, legislative impacts, and what they can mean for you through Corn Talk and on our blog.

To learn more about MCGA's work advocating for policy outcomes that benefit corn farmers and their families, visit [mncorn.org/advocacy](https://mncorn.org/advocacy).



MCGA Treasurer Dana Allen-Tully speaks with Congressman Brad Finstad during a visit to her family farm in Eyota.



Grower-leaders wrap up a meeting with U.S. Rep. Michelle Fischbach of Minnesota (fourth from right) at the family farm of board member Brad Neumann in Wabasso.



# Willis wraps up busy year as USGC chairman

Exports are critical to Minnesota corn growers, accounting for billions in revenue and helping ensure the profitability of family farms. To help facilitate international sales, Minnesota Corn supports the U.S. Grains Council (USGC), an organization dedicated to growing export markets.

In 2021-22, Chad Willis, a longtime member of the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), served as chairman of USGC's Board of Directors. He concluded his term at the organization's annual meeting in July in Sacramento, California. Willis farms in Willmar with his wife, Krista.

Founded in 1960, USGC is a grain-export organization comprised of agribusinesses, farm organizations, and corn check-off councils, including both MCR&PC and the Minnesota Corn Growers Association. USGC focuses on developing markets for barely, corn, sorghum, and related products, such as ethanol and dried distillers grains with solubles.

The council has a full-time presence in 28 countries and operates programs in more than 50 countries and the European Union. That international footprint allows USGC to effectively work with local buyers to find new opportunities, mitigate trade constraints, and run programs that increase demand over time.

"They [USGC] are bringing us out to meetings all around the world, to make sure the quality of our corn is known to grain buyers [and to] help people understand the value of ethanol," Willis said. "The result is a lot of happy customers — more every year — lining up to buy our products."

In 2021, approximately 16% of the U.S. corn crop was exported, according to the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA). Additionally, a 2018 study commissioned by USGC placed the value of Minnesota's corn exports at \$1.2 billion. It also concluded that corn exports support 9,123 jobs in the state.

## Highlights from Willis' term

To bolster exports, USGC leaders travel around the world to make the case for American grains. For Willis, who was first elected to the USGC Board of Directors in 2017, that has included trips to Dubai, London, Morocco and Tunisia, and South Korea over the past year.

In South Korea — his first trip as chairman — Willis was part of a USGC delegation that met with the country's leading grain-buying organizations, U.S. Embassy personnel, and the council's in-country staff.

He and Jim Raben, the 2020-21 USGC chairman, told groups that the 2021 U.S. corn crop was among the best they have seen.

"My crop [in fall 2021] was the best test weight I have ever gotten," Willis said. "Jim Raben said he got 60-pound [per bushel] corn. Best crop he's ever had."

Soon after traveling to South Korea, Willis helped present the annual USGC corn-quality survey to regional grain importers, feed manufacturers, and feed users at a meeting in Dubai. He also led a joint USGC-NCGA to Morocco and Tunisia.

USGC has been active in Tunisia for 25 years, and it has supported training programs for poultry workers in Morocco since 2017. Production and supply chain inefficiencies in sub-Saharan Africa are challenging producers' ability to meet increasing consumer demand for poultry, according to USGC. Poultry is a top user of corn.

"This model could be used in lots of countries and really has the potential to economically benefit the whole continent," Willis said.

Most recently, Willis was part of a delegation that traveled to Japan to learn more about ethanol's role in the local market and highlight ethanol's environmental benefits.

Even while traveling, Willis continued promoting the importance of grain exports to his fellow Minnesotans.

During his trip to Dubai, he and USGC President and CEO Ryan LeGrand talked to the agriculture committee of the Willmar Area Chamber of Commerce about the council. It was 1 p.m. in Willmar — 10 p.m. in Dubai — when they joined the meeting.

"A lot of people are unaware of the role of the U.S. Grains Council," Willis said.

*Minnesota Corn thanks Chad for his leadership at USGC over the past year. Read more about his experience leading the council at [mncorn.org/blog](https://mncorn.org/blog).* ■



In his capacity as chair of the U.S. Grains Council, Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council member Chad Willis (fourth from the left) attended the International Grains Conference this summer in London.



# Analysis: Meat exports provide value to MN corn producers

**B**eef and pork exports continue to provide significant value to Minnesota's corn farmers, according to a new analysis commissioned by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

In 2021, beef and pork exports accounted for 49.6 million bushels of Minnesota corn use and 3.4 million tons of dried distillers grains (DDGS). In total, beef and pork exports represented approximately 12% of the value of each bushel of corn.

At an average price of \$5.48 per bushel, beef and pork exports accounted for 66 cents of the value of each Minnesota bushel produced in 2021.

"The analysis validates the red meat industry's collaborative approach to export market development," USMEF Chair-elect Dean Meyer, an Iowa crop and livestock farmer, said in a statement. "Beef and pork exports drive value directly back to my farm, and this study helps confirm the return on this investment for all corn and soybean producers."

Nationally, beef and pork exports accounted for 537 million bushels of corn use in 2021, equating to \$2.9 billion at an average corn price of \$5.48 a bushel, according to USMEF.

Beef and pork exports accounted for 3.4 million tons of DDGS usage, equating to \$716 million at an average price of \$209.92 a ton.

"The industry-wide collaboration to promote value-added U.S. red meat in international markets works to the benefit of the entire red meat industry," USMEF executive committee member Mark Legan said in a statement. "Red meat export growth results in greater demand for feed inputs and added value at every step of the supply chain. This study demonstrates the significance of global trade to the bottom line of American farmers and ranchers."



Exports are important to Minnesota's corn farmers. In 2018, 25% of the value of Minnesota's corn crop was derived from exports, according to a study commissioned by the U.S. Grains Council.

Each year, as part of its mission to identify and promote opportunities for the state's corn farmers, Minnesota's corn organizations invest in groups that work to boost exports, such as USMEF and the U.S. Grains Council. The efforts appear to be getting results. Between 1977 and 2019, programs aimed at helping U.S. farmers build markets overseas boosted agricultural exports by an average of \$9.6 billion annually, increasing export revenues by 13.7% and returning \$24.50 for every dollar invested.

To learn more about Minnesota Corn's efforts to increase exports, visit [mncorn.org/utilization](https://mncorn.org/utilization). ■

## Corn-sponsored education initiatives reach teachers

**W**ith support through the Minnesota Corn check-off, two science and agriculture education organizations helped Minnesota and North Dakota teachers bolster their ag teaching skills this summer.



In June, the Nourish the Future initiative held an "Exploring Biotech and Biofuels" workshop for high school science teachers in Fargo, North Dakota.

Teachers created and tested biofuels, learned about plant science and pollination, examined GMO facts, myths, and modern methods of breed planting, and worked through a bioinformatics case study. They also visited an ethanol plant and interacted with industry experts to learn more about modern agriculture and its connections to biotech and biofuels.

"We help teachers see themselves teaching units like 'making ethanol' or 'making biodiesel,'" said Jane Hunt, director of education at the organization Education Projects. The organization partners with the National Corn Growers Association and the United Soybean Board on Nourish the Future. "We give teachers the materials and the tools they need."

Throughout the summer, the educational initiative Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) held a series of summer teacher tours to help educators observe and experience agricultural production, processing, and distribution techniques. Participants also received standards-based agriculture-themed lesson plans and resources.

MAITC held five teacher tours this summer. During one, participants stopped at the farm of Minnesota Corn Growers Association and National Corn Growers Association board member Brian Thalmann in Plato. There, they learned about the latest in crop production, conservation, and seed development.

They also visited a grain terminal and barge loading terminal that day, learning how corn and soybeans grown in Minnesota are transported internationally. During other tours, teachers visited a winery, a produce farm, a dairy farm, and Pearson's Candy Company in St. Paul.

To learn more about Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom, visit [minnesota.agclassroom.org](https://minnesota.agclassroom.org). To learn more about Nourish the Future, visit [nourishthefuture.org](https://nourishthefuture.org). Learn more about Minnesota Corn's support of agriculture education at [mncorn.org/outreach](https://mncorn.org/outreach). ■



Educators participate in this summer's workshop, "Exploring Biotech and Biofuels," led by Nourish the Future in Fargo, North Dakota.



# MCGA announces staffing updates

**T**he Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is pleased to announce several staffing updates.

Barbara Boelk has joined the organization as senior communications director. In the role, Boelk will set and execute strategy for communications, marketing and public relations that furthers the mission and strategic goals of Minnesota Corn.



**Barbara Boelk**

A native of Maryland, Boelk earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland, College Park, and her master's degree in public administration from Capella University. She began her career as a print journalist before moving into public relations and communications for Girl Scouts, Fairview Hospitals and the Better Business Bureau. From there, she joined Great Clips, Inc., before leading communications at Taco John's International, Inc.

Meanwhile, Devin Hoffarth has transitioned from the role of district field manager (DFM) to market development and industry relations director. In the new position, Hoffarth will lead Minnesota Corn's efforts to develop markets, identify commercialization opportunities for new uses of corn, and coordinate with the biofuels and bio-based products sectors in the state.



**Devin Hoffarth**

A native of northeastern North Dakota, Hoffarth earned his bachelor's degree from Mayville State University and his master's degree in business

administration with a project management concentration from the University of Mary. He worked at Langdon Implement in Langdon, N.D., for seven years before joining MCGA in summer 2021.

"It's an exciting time for the corn industry, with much of our research and investments coming to fruition," he said. "I am excited to continue working for Minnesota's corn farmers in this new capacity!"

Additionally, MCGA is excited to announce that our DFM for northwestern Minnesota, Marlene Dufault, has transitioned from a contract role to a full-time position with the organization. Dufault has worked as a DFM since 2013 and has been instrumental in expanding MCGA's presence in northwestern Minnesota.



**Marlene Dufault**

MCGA is also announcing a reconfiguration of its coverage areas for DFMs. Dufault's northwestern Minnesota coverage area has expanded to include Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens and Traverse counties. The central Minnesota DFM territory has expanded to include Kandiyohi, Meeker, Stearns and Todd counties. This position is held by Kennedy Janssen.

The southwestern Minnesota DFM territory has expanded to include Chippewa, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley and Swift counties. This position is held by Macy Kahler. And, the southeastern Minnesota DFM territory has expanded to include Dakota, Le Sueur, Rice and Scott counties. This position is held by Tanner Sanborn.

Since 2017, MCGA has employed full-time district field managers to lead our grassroots outreach, membership and business development efforts. DFMs aim to engage people in issues important to corn farmers and increase understanding of Minnesota Corn's work on behalf of growers.

To learn more about MCGA's staff, visit [mncorn.org](https://mncorn.org). ■

## MCGA Director Brian Thalmann re-elected to National Corn Board

**T**he Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) offers a hearty congratulations to Brian Thalmann for his re-election to the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Corn Board.

Thalmann, who farms in Plato, was re-elected this summer at Corn Congress in Washington, D.C., and will serve a two-year term. In a speech to delegates before the vote, he said serving on the Corn Board has deepened his passion for agriculture and farming.

"I continue to be energized by this work and am grateful for the opportunity to serve with such a dedicated group of growers," he said.

An MCGA board member since 2012, Thalmann was first elected to the Corn Board in 2020. He said his top priorities during a second term will be adding value to corn, highlighting the environmental successes of corn and corn farmers, and building on the grassroots work of state grower associations.

Thalmann is one of three MCGA board members serving on the Corn Board. Eden Valley farmer Tom Haag has been on the Corn Board since 2016 and is NCGA's first vice president in 2021-22. Harold Wolle Jr., who farms in Madelia, has been on the Corn Board since 2018 and will serve as first vice president in 2022-23.

The NCGA Corn Board represents the organization on all matters while directing both policy and supervising day-to-day operations. Board members represent the federation of state organizations, supervise the affairs and activities of NCGA in partnership with the chief executive officer, and implement NCGA policy established by the Corn Congress. Members also act as spokespeople for NCGA and enhance the organization's public standing on all organizational and policy issues. ■



**Brian Thalmann**



# Welcome to MCGA's new members

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) welcomes the 188 people and businesses who joined the organization in August and the 443 people and businesses who renewed their membership during the month. We're excited to have you aboard!

We'd also like to recognize members of the MCGA Board of Directors and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council who participated in our board and council summer member drive. MCR&PC member John Mages, who farms in Belgrade, took first place by recruiting 43 members. He was followed by MCGA board members Todd Wentzel (20 members recruited), Rob Tate (16 members recruited), and Dave Vipond (16 members recruited).

With over 6,500 members, MCGA works to build a more sustainable future for the state's corn growers by making a difference in the community, at the state Capitol, and in Washington, D.C. MCGA cultivates connections with elected officials and thought leaders to foster conversations and better understanding of issues important to corn farmers. We also work to set the stage for long-term profitability and a sustainable future for corn farmers and their families.

If you have sold at least 7,500 bushels of corn in the past year, and paid into the Minnesota Corn check-off, you may qualify for a one-year membership to MCGA at no cost. If you have sold 20,000 bushels and paid into the check-off, you may qualify for a three-year membership at no cost.

Learn more about membership at [mncorn.org/join](http://mncorn.org/join). ■

Name	Membership County	Name	Membership County	Name	Membership County	Name	Membership County
Lyndsay Ampe	Stearns	Randy Gehling	Olmsted	Joan Kuefler	Stearns	Dannielle Peters	Martin
Tony Ampe	Stearns	Cody Georges	Todd	Leon Kuefler	Stearns	Tony Peters	Martin
Blane Amundson	Faribault	Corey Georges	Todd	Andrew Kuhn	Dakota	James Reddemann	Le Sueur
Kara Amundson	Lincoln	Wayne Gertz	Rock	Clark Lamb	Renville	Michael Reese	Pope
Richard Anacker	Cottonwood	LeRoy Gondringer	Stearns	Carol Larson	Todd	Sam Robinson	Renville
Glenn Anderson	Redwood	Larry Goranowski	Wright	Ralph Laumann	Carver	Rock-Nobles	
Brian Arends	Rock	Edward Graff	Rice	Mike Lebrun	Nobles	Cattlemen	Nobles
Steven Bailey	Olmsted	Jill Grams	Renville	Daniel Lee	Dakota	Alan Roering	Todd
Nathan Bakke	Fillmore	Wade Gronau	Redwood	Thomas Lexvold	Goodhue	Alan Roering	Stearns
David Barkve	Norman	Conrad Gruber	Stearns	Jason Lohmann	Goodhue	William Rogotzke	Redwood
Linnea Beckman Lund	Kanabec	Don Grussing	Chippewa	Adam Lonerger	Mower	Duane Russenberger	Martin
Mark Benson	Polk	Floyd Hanson	Norman	Gerard Lorentz	Nicollet	John Salentiny	Murray
Christy Bercheit	Todd	Randy Hartong	Stearns	Richard Maday	Martin	Keith Sayles	Mower
Anton Berg	Brown	Joan Harvey	Todd	Darwin Marcus	Kandiyohi	Jeff Schaap	Murray
Tom Berscheit	Todd	Derek Heideman	Freeborn	Karen Marcus	Renville	Colby Schnell	Todd
David Bierman	Cottonwood	Gregg Hendrickson	Todd	Sherry Melberg	Renville	Mike Schoolmeester	Murray
Travis Bjerketvedt	Otter Tail	Jarett Herder	Murray	Lance Messner	Sibley	Joel Schroeder	Houston
Barry Bondhus	Cottonwood	Steve Hesse	Lincoln	David Meyer	Stearns	John Serbus	Renville
Carolyn Bot	Lyon	Hietbrink Repair LLC	Nobles	JoAnn Meyer	Stearns	Louisa Serbus	Renville
Rick Bot	Lyon	Donald Hoekman	Murray	Tom Meyer	Faribault	Tracy Skaar	Freeborn
Steve Bousema	Nobles	Peter Hoffman	Brown	Mitchel Middendorf	Todd	Jerry Smude	Morrison
JoAnn Braegelman	Stearns	Mitch Hoffmann	Nicollet	Gerald Mikkelsen	Todd	David Soderholm	Nobles
Steve Breegemann	Scott	Chris Hokanson	Goodhue	Nicholas Miller	Martin	Patrick Spindler	Steele
Cindy Brown	Stearns	Jeremy Holmquist	Todd	Paul Miller	Martin	Charles Sprenger	Todd
Loren Bruns	Nicollet	Tiffany Holmquist	Todd	Todd Miller	Brown	Jordan Stickle	Mower
Roger Bruns	Nicollet	Wyatt Holst	Mower	Jacob Munsterman	Yellow	Samuel Sullivan	Renville
David Buck	Goodhue	Emily Hoseth	Norman		Medicine	Trevor Swanson	Stearns
Buffalo Ridge Concrete	Nobles	David Huebert	McLeod	Laura Munsterman	Yellow	Paul Swenson	Kandiyohi
Ron Bussman	Todd	Justin Hvezda	Douglas		Medicine	Nicholas Syverson	Norman
C & B Ops., LLC	Out of State	Adam Imdiek	Stearns	Curtis Nachreiner	Renville	Val-Jean Syverson	Norman
Olivia Carlson	Norman	Tyler Janski	Stearns	Pete Neigebauer	Nicollet	Corey Theis	Stearns
Karla Carr	Faribault	Dan Jensen	Mille Lacs	Eric Nelson	Fillmore	Dennis Thull	Stearns
Marie Carr	Faribault	Ben Johnson	Swift	Josh Nelson	Redwood	Bob Tilstra	Rock
Bradley Cervenka	Rice	Derrick Johnson	Kandiyohi	Karl Nesse	McLeod	Gerald VanHeuvelen	Murray
Morgan Chisholm	Norman	Kelly Johnson	Chippewa	Dave Neuenfeldt	Dakota	Gary Weckwerth	Sibley
Ross Christensen	Brown	Levi Johnson	Todd	Brian Nicolai	Dakota	Jim Welle	Stearns
CHS	Nobles	Ryan Johnson	Renville	Ally Nielsen	Kanabec	Kathy Welle	Stearns
Marc Collins	Swift	Chris Kalass	Goodhue	Darek Nielsen	Kanabec	Brenda Weller	Stearns
Crop Revenue Cnslts.	Dakota	Melvin Kalthoff	Stearns	Michael Obermeyer	Faribault	Greg Weller	Stearns
Alannah Daugherty	Renville	Brian Keck	Steele	Paul Obermeyer	Faribault	Jackie Weller	Stearns
Paul Dobis	Stearns	Jason Keck	Steele	Jay Otte	Dakota	Melissa Westerberg	Todd
Kolin Drietz	Yellow	Glen Klaphake	Stearns	Scott Otte	Dakota	John Woehler	Sibley
	Medicine	Brad Kluver	Dakota	Loren Overgaard	Rock	David Wohletz	Stearns
Tyler Edwards	Lyon	Katie Kluver	Dakota	Mark Overgaard	Rock	Worthington Tax & Business Solutions	Nobles
Paul Eilertson	Faribault	Robby Kluver	Dakota	Matt Overgaard	Rock	Kevin Zetah	Todd
Adam Eversman	Martin	Tes Kluver	Dakota	Nick Overgaard	Rock	Steve Zetah	Todd
Brad Felten	Houston	Chuck Koopmeiners	Todd	Scott Pehrson	Nicollet		
Tracy Fey	Murray	Samantha Krause	Todd				
Fey Farms Inc.	Murray	Nick Kubesh	Renville				
		Shayna Kubesh	Renville				



# Farmfest 2022 was a success

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) has wrapped up another successful Farmfest. Grower-leaders engaged with policymakers about issues important to corn farmers and highlighted the value of our state's corn check-off program.

MCGA once again was featured prominently at the annual agricultural trade show outside Redwood Falls. Scores of farmers and policymakers stopped by our tent during the three-day event, enjoying free samples of sweet corn ice cream and learning about how Minnesota corn powers our state.

Grower-leaders also participated in a multitude of media interviews throughout the week. MCGA was the official sponsor of WCCO News Radio's Farmfest coverage and the gubernatorial candidate forum, moderated by WCCO's Blois Olson.

A welcome addition to Farmfest this year was the participation of ClearFlame Engine Technologies. The Minnesota Corn-supported start-up is aiming to develop an ethanol-powered diesel engine for long-haul trucking. ClearFlame was featured as an exhibitor at the trade show and displayed a prototype of their truck.

MCGA proudly participates in multiple trade shows each year, including Farmfest, as part of our mission to engage with members and policymakers. We thank all the grower-leaders who volunteered their time to participate in the event and the elected officials who stopped by our tent. ■



Grower-leaders John Mages (left) and Doug Albin (center) talk with Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Dr. Scott Jensen.



MCGA President Bryan Biegler, his wife Lauren, and their son Wes, talk with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.



Grower leaders Richard Syverson (left), Brandon Fast (second from left) and Chad Willis (light blue shirt) along with MCGA Executive Director and CEO Adam Birr (right) stand beside BJ Johnson and his big rig that runs on Clear Flame Technology.



# CommonGround MN participates in national conference

It has been a spring and summer packed with exciting activities for CommonGround Minnesota, with even more events ahead this fall. One of the highlights from the summer was attending the National CommonGround Conference in June.

Fifty CommonGround state staff and volunteers from around the U.S. gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, for three days of networking



CommonGround Minnesota's Alyssa O'Sullivan (left), Lauren Biegler (left center), and Kennedy Janssen (right) with Jackie Joyner-Kersee.

and brainstorming about the future of CommonGround.

From Minnesota, the two state staff members, Kennedy Janssen and Alyssa O'Sullivan, and volunteer Lauren Biegler made the trip.

The few days in St. Louis had a full agenda and included everything from brainstorming sessions to panels.

The Monday they arrived, staff spent the evening attending a panel featuring four inspirational women from diverse backgrounds who talked about their pathways and plans for the future. These women, who represented the agriculture, culinary, STEM, and athletic sectors, shared obstacles they have faced, how they continue to persevere, and how they have adapted to make their dreams come true.

The audience left feeling inspired by the panel members' stories and encouraged to share their own passions in life.



After the panel concluded, the attendees were treated to impeccable cuisine from Balkan Treat Box, a food truck and restaurant owned by one of the panelists. It was a beautiful evening of developing connections and relationships among the panelists, volunteers and staff and reflecting upon how the panelists' advice can apply to CommonGround.

Another highlight for attendees was touring the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center, a hub for youth programming run by the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation. Joyner-Kersee, a six-time Olympic track and field medalist, was part of the Monday panel, and she graciously allowed the group into her center. The CommonGround staff and volunteers learned about the foundation and what Joyner-Kersee is striving to achieve. They were privileged to have the opportunity to read books about food and host panel discussions about agriculture with the students at the center.

"It was an incredibly impactful couple of days spent surrounded by strong, powerful, resilient, creative women looking to make a difference and share information about food and agriculture," O'Sullivan said. "With inspirational panels, an eye-opening community activity, and conversations with like-minded women, we left feeling inspired for what's to come for CommonGround."

Volunteers and staff members are looking forward to the next National CommonGround Conference, set for January 2023.

To learn more about CommonGround Minnesota, visit [commongroundminnesota.com](http://commongroundminnesota.com).

## MN Corn Podcast highlights research, education investments

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

This summer, the podcast has featured a variety of researchers, educators, farmers and industry partners. That has included:

- University of Minnesota Assistant Extension Professor Angie Peltier. She talked about the Minnesota Corn-funded Digital Crop Doc tool that can help farmers diagnose crop diseases in real time.
- University of Minnesota Associate Professor Candice Hirsch. She discussed her check-off-funded research project that aims to identify variations in the oil content of different corn hybrids.
- John Hinners, senior vice president of industry relations for the U.S. Meat Export Federation USMEF. He highlighted a recent analysis on the value of red meat exports to Minnesota's corn farmers. (Minnesota

Corn supports USMEF, as part of our mission to expand international sales of corn and corn co-products.)

- University of Minnesota Associate Professor Melissa Wilson. She recapped her Minnesota Corn-funded project that explored best practices for integrating cover crops and manure.

To learn more about the Minnesota Corn Podcast, or to download the latest episodes, visit [tinyurl.com/mncornpodcast](http://tinyurl.com/mncornpodcast).





# county highlights.....

**M**innesota doesn't just have a statewide corn growers association. We're also one of two states — the other being Iowa — with local growers associations. Almost all Minnesota counties with significant corn production have one. Most are joint corn-soybean organizations, and in total, there are 52 of them in the state.

Led by farmer boards, these corn and soybean growers associations participate in community events, support local programming, provide scholarships to ag students, and host golf tournaments, plot days, fuel events and more. Minnesota Corn provides financial support to county growers associations through the corn check-off and staff support to them through our district field manager (DFM) program.

Below is a recap of summer activities by the county organizations, as written by our DFMs. To learn more about Minnesota's county corn grower associations, contact the DFM for your county at [mncorn.org/contact/staff](http://mncorn.org/contact/staff).

## Northwestern Minnesota

By Marlene Dufault



**A Marshall County Fair giveaway.**

to the public the night before its fair at an event called "Dinner with a Farmer." The board mingled with attendees and talked about ag issues.

Many northwestern Minnesota county growers associations provided support for county fairs, which continue to be popular attractions. Funds were donated for signage at ag buildings, corn-related announcements at the grandstands during races, picnic tables engraved with the Minnesota Corn logo, livestock pens in 4-H buildings, and ads in local newspapers and radio promoting corn.

The Marshall County Corn and Soybean Growers Association donated a pedal tractor as a giveaway to youngsters at the Marshall County Fair. The Norman County Corn and Soybean Growers Association served burgers and brats



**A donation to a NW MN food pantry.**

tickets that have been used as prizes in a corn trivia contest on a local radio station. The maze has also been displaying corn-related educational signage.

District 1 county organizations also used radio ads to promote ethanol use and year-round E15. In addition, they supported food banks and provided local fire departments with funding to purchase grain rescue equipment, such as harness straps, augers, and tubes.

The Pennington/Red Lake County Corn and Soybean Growers Association funded the 2022 Minnesota Leadership Conference for FFA students at the University of Minnesota Crookston. The Polk County Corn and Soybean Growers Association supported a corn maze in East Grand Forks, purchasing

## Southeastern Minnesota

By Tanner Sanborn

The Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Mower, and Olmsted/Wabasha corn and soybean growers associations continued their sponsorship of the annual Tasseldega Nights racing event at Deer Creek Speedway. This year, the



**Southeastern Minnesota growers enjoy Tasseldega Nights.**

organizations provided free entry to all fans and focused their efforts on promoting the clean-air and cost benefits of Unleaded 88 and higher ethanol blends.

The Olmsted/Wabasha County Corn and Soybean Growers Association sponsored the Rochester Honkers Northwoods League baseball team, focusing on ethanol awareness and general ag education. The organization's sponsorship included a contest in which fans participated in challenges with a set of branded cornhole boards. Contest winners were awarded a prize donated by the organization. Sponsoring the Honkers allowed the Olmsted/Wabasha Growers to reach an audience with whom growers associations don't usually interact.



**Olmsted/Wabasha growers drive the corn cob float in the Mazeppa Daze Parade.**

Olmsted/Wabasha, along with the corn and soybean growers associations of Dodge and Goodhue counties, have also begun sponsoring the Rochester Grizzlies junior hockey team for the 2022-23 season. As part of their sponsorship, the organizations are advertising on the rinkside boards, sponsoring a "chuck-a-puck" competition, and hosting a title night dedicated to ethanol and general ag awareness.

The Waseca County Corn and Soybean Growers Association held an annual meeting recently, inviting the public to learn more about agriculture and participate in an annual cornhole tournament. Winners received prizes and ethanol gas cards. The meeting was followed by a social hour, pizza and drinks from a local brewery.

Golf outings continued to be great fundraisers for District 2 county organizations. Dodge County and the Freeborn County Corn and Soybean Growers Association directed proceeds from their golf events to scholarships. The Faribault County Corn and Soybean Growers Association had 167 participants in its golf outing.



Parades have also made a resurgence in the past few years. Faribault County participated in its local parade featuring a float with Maizey, Minnesota Corn's official mascot. Olmsted/Wabasha Growers pulled a giant corn cob through the Mazeppa Daze parade for the first time.

## Central Minnesota

By Kennedy Janssen



Steve Schmitt (left) and Tom Haag at the Meeker County picnic.

From food shelf drives to golf outings and fuel events, it was a busy summer in District 3. Golf outings, picnics and other community-engagement events were a success. Membership numbers are continuing to rise, and attendance at golf events continued to climb.

District 3 associations donated over \$15,000 in scholarships to high school and college students this summer. Multiple county organizations also planned fuel station events, given the positive impact one-on-one conversations can have when it comes to building awareness around Unleaded 88. As of late August, events had been planned for Glencoe, St. Peter, Lakeville, Faribault, and Long Prairie.

We want to hear from you. Send photos and brief descriptions of your county events to your district field manager. Find your DFM on our maps at [mncorn.org/staff](http://mncorn.org/staff).

At the Benton County Fair, the Benton/Sherburne Corn Growers Association hosted its annual Corn Drive, working with local 4-H students to distribute over 1,000 ears of corn. The organization also honored the winners of its \$2,500 college scholarships. The Dakota/Rice Corn and Soybean Growers Association and the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Associations were also involved in their county fairs.

With some usual in-town meeting spots changing their hours, some county associations met at farms instead. One county even met in a renovated grain bin. Overall, it was great to have everyone together at multiple events this summer before the rush of harvest.

## Southwestern Minnesota

By Macy Kahler

What a summer it was in District 4! Southwestern Minnesota county growers associations held many events, with golf outings being a big hit. Over 400 golfers attended six golf events in the district, enjoying a free round and a post-round meal. Many counties use golf outings to show appreciation to their members and sponsors.

A few counties also held fueling events to promote the benefits of ethanol blends, some of which set records for gallons pumped and saw record lines of cars waiting to fill up. Ethanol education is very important in District 4, and fuel events are just one of the bigger ways counties can promote this renewable fuel. Many other counties choose to promote ethanol through radio ads, billboards, and promotional items.

Other counties promoted corn through parades and fairs, working at booths, creating floats and providing giveaway items. District 4 counties will start planning for summer 2023 events soon after wrapping up this year's harvest. ■

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\*NCGA Board member

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thanks to our allied partners

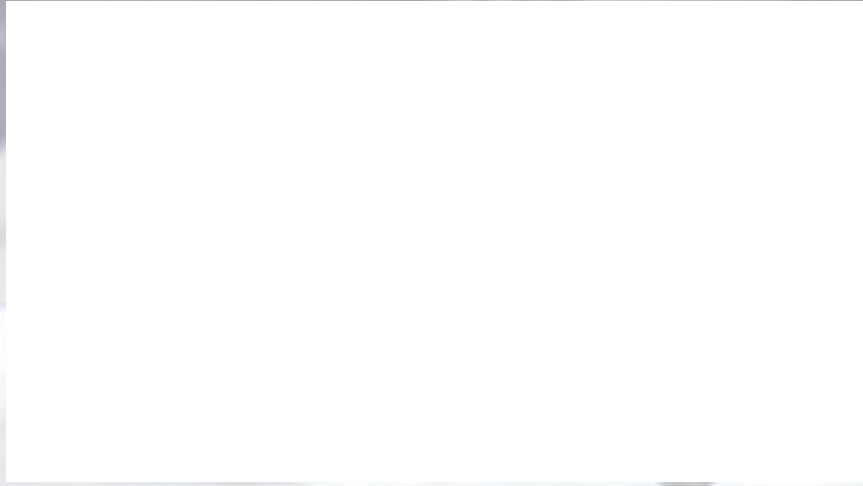




september 2022

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## calendar of events

- nov  
17-19 MN Farm Bureau  
Annual Meeting & Convention,  
Bloomington
- nov  
18-20 MN Farmers Union  
Annual Convention,  
Minneapolis
- nov  
24-25 MCGA offices closed  
for Thanksgiving Holiday
- dec  
1 MCGA Pre-resolutions meeting
- dec  
9-10 State Cattlemen's Convention,  
Willmar

