

# corntalk

Official Publication of Minnesota Corn • Fall 2023

## Inside

.....

- MCGA advocates against vehicle proposal
- Minnesota Corn wraps up successful Farmfest
- Relationship between N rates, losses explored

Register for MN Ag Expo!

Registration is open for MN Ag EXPO 2024! MN Ag EXPO, hosted by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, is the premier winter event for the state’s corn and soybean farmers. The 2024 show will be held Jan. 17–18 at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center in Mankato. The event is free to attend, but preregistration is required to ensure meal tickets.

Attendees looking to stay overnight in Mankato are encouraged to book lodging as soon as possible. Both the Hilton Garden Inn and the Mankato City Center Hotel are attached via skyway to the event center. Other hotels have discounted MN Ag EXPO rates but are not connected to the event center.

Make sure to stop by the MCGA booth on the trade show floor to learn the many ways the state’s corn farmers are building a brighter future for Minnesota agriculture. MN Ag Expo will also include MCGA’s resolution session at 9 a.m. on Thursday followed immediately by MCGA’s annual meeting.

To learn more or to register for MN Ag EXPO, visit [MNAgEXPO.com](https://mnagexpo.com).

table of contents

- 3

MCGA advocates against vehicle proposal
- 4

Panel requested over Mexico corn ban
- 4

GREET model urged for SAF tax credits
- 5

Agriculture to EPA: get the science right
- 6

Grower-leaders advocate for farmers during Corn Congress
- 7

U.S. Rep. Angie Craig honored
- 8

Minnesota Corn wraps up successful Farmfest
- 11

Japanese corn trade team stops in MN
- 11

O'Connor elected to USGC board
- 12

Minnesota’s Unleaded 88 sales are strong
- 13

Relationship between N rates, losses explored
- 14

Variety Plot results available after harvest
- 10

World’s only flex fuel EV featured at Farmfest
- 14

UMN researchers seek grain samples for durability study
- 15

AgMag engages students with agriculture
- 16

Farmamerica welcomes guests
- 17

County highlights

About the cover

Corn grows on the dairy and crop farm of Daryl and Lori Patnode in Corcoran, Minnesota.



Official Publication of Minnesota Corn

Published from the MCGA/MCR&PC office:

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

Fall 2023

Corn Talk Advisory Committee:

Adam Birr  
Richard Syverson  
Gary Prescher  
Dana Allen-Tully  
Duane Epland  
Editor: Nate Gotlieb

Follow us on social media:



twitter.com/mncorn



facebook.com/MinnesotaCorn



instagram.com/MinnesotaCorn



youtube.com/MNCornVids

MCGA advocates against vehicle proposal



This past spring, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a vehicle emissions rule for light and medium vehicles that could significantly reshape the passenger vehicle market in the United States in favor of electric vehicles. Since the proposed rule fails to account for emissions related to electricity generation or emissions involved in battery mineral extraction and processing, it essentially stacks the deck in favor of electric vehicles.

Further, the rule gives no credit for emissions reductions from low carbon fuel sources, including corn ethanol. If this rule were to be finalized as proposed, EPA is forcing the hand of auto manufacturers to only produce electric vehicles in the future without giving equal treatment to all vehicle technologies that can reduce tailpipe emissions, including vehicles using higher blends of biofuels.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) activated our strong grassroots network to submit comments to EPA pointing out the proposal does not offer a level playing field for evaluating emissions reduction potential from a suite of low-carbon fuels and technologies.

Further, the proposal misses an opportunity to take advantage of ethanol’s proven potential to support sustainability in the transportation sector. Instead, EPA should focus on outcomes and opening pathways for all low carbon fuels and technologies.

Doing that enables more stringent vehicle emission standards, taking advantage of the low carbon benefits of high ethanol blends, cutting toxic emissions, and offering greater fuel efficiency and consumer costs savings. You can read the detailed comments submitted by MCGA and NCGA at [mncorn.org](https://mncorn.org).

Over the course of several weeks, corn growers stepped up and submitted nearly 3,000 comments, with 417 of those comments from Minnesota corn farmers. A call-to-action is a great way to make your voice heard and help amplify the direct impact on your operation from agency actions. It does make a difference! If you don't already receive text alerts, you can sign up by texting “COB” to 52886.

EPA is expected to finalize the multi-pollutant emissions standards for model year 2027-2032 light and medium duty vehicles rule later this year.

Find more calls-to-action at [mncorn.org/takeaction](https://mncorn.org/takeaction).

# Panel requested over Mexico corn ban

In August, the U.S. Trade Representative requested a panel formation under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement over Mexico's decision to ban imports of biotech corn used for human consumption.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association and other corn grower associations were highly supportive of the move.

"Mexico's decree, which runs counter to scientific findings and is in direct violation of USMCA, is negatively impacting American corn growers," National Corn Growers Association President Tom Haag said. "U.S. officials have exhausted every avenue trying to resolve this conflict and are left with no other choice but to turn to a third-party panel in hopes of quickly rectifying this issue. We are deeply appreciative of USTR for standing up for America's corn growers."

If USTR's request is granted, a group of objective experts will be empaneled to hear the case and make a final determination based on the commitments both parties signed as part of the free trade agreement.

The dispute stems from a 2020 decree by Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador that sought to ban imports of biotech corn beginning in January 2024. Mexico issued a revised decree in this past February that banned biotech corn for human consumption



Mexico's ban on biotech corn for human consumption directly violates USMCA and would harm American corn growers.

effective immediately and left the door open for a future ban on biotech corn for feed.

Mexico is a top market for corn, the number one agricultural export from the U.S., which has led to strong concerns over how the ban would impact U.S. farmers, rural economies, and food security for the people of Mexico.

Given the high stakes, NCGA and corn grower leaders across the country began sounding the alarm last fall and have been calling on the Biden administration to initiate a dispute settlement under USMCA. 🙌

# REET model urged for SAF tax credits

Minnesota Corn Growers Association President Richard Syverson and 15 of the nation's other top corn grower-leaders sent a letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in September encouraging her to adopt an emissions model developed by the Department of Energy to determine which biofuels lower greenhouse gas emissions enough to qualify for sustainable aviation fuel tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.

Corn growers are calling on Treasury to use an emissions standard referred to as the GREET model, which was developed by DOE, while some groups want the government to turn to a less comprehensive international standard.

"GREET is the federal government's most robust and updated model or methodology for transportation lifecycle assessment," the letter says. "It is used globally

to measure lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, and the Department of Energy has the best resources, expertise, and current ability within federal government agencies to assess lifecycle emissions accurately and scientifically."

Unlike other models, GREET considers the full environmental picture, the corn growers noted.

"The GREET model accurately accounts for on-farm carbon reduction activities and feedstock yield increases and the improved agriculture production practices that farmers have adopted over the last twenty years," the letter says. "This further solidifies GREET as the methodology Treasury and the IRS should use to determine tax credits for SAF under the IRA."

Read the full letter at [mncorn.org](https://mncorn.org). 🙌

# Agriculture to EPA: get the science right

## Independent scientific panel takes another look at atrazine

In August, Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board member Brian Thalmann was among the grower-leaders from across the country who testified before a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Scientific Advisory Panel about the importance of atrazine. His testimony came during a three-day virtual meeting during which the panel provided the EPA with feedback on its reevaluation of 11 studies that guided the agency's 2022 decision to revise its level of concern for atrazine.

"Atrazine is a critical component of weed management for Minnesota corn farmers," said Thalmann, a family farmer in Plato, Minnesota. "Responsible use of atrazine is combined with other chemical and nonchemical tactics to enhance crop competitiveness, minimize weed emergence and growth, and reduce the evolution of weed resistant genes."

Thalmann was joined by growers from Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan, as well as industry representatives from the National Corn



Brian Thalmann

Growers Association, National Sorghum Producers, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, and leaders of the Triazine Network, a diverse coalition of more than 40 state and national agricultural groups actively involved in atrazine regulatory actions. MCGA worked closely with the Triazine Network and industry partners to advocate for the SAP to clarify the science behind EPA's dramatic shifts in the 2022 "Proposed Revisions to the Atrazine Interim Registration Review Decision."

When the atrazine comment period closed last October, more than 16,000 farmers and agricultural organizations representing corn, sorghum, citrus, sugar cane, and other crops across the country united against EPA's flawed proposed revision, calling for the agency to base decisions on credible scientific evidence.

During the August SAP, speakers shared real-world implications of EPA's actions on today's sustainable farming practices. "The proposed 3.4 ppb concentration

## Atrazine Panel Hears from Ag

At the atrazine Scientific Advisory Panel meeting, farmers and ag groups explain the real-world impact of EPA's decisions saying "GET THE SCIENCE RIGHT!"



At a public hearing in August, a group of grower-leaders from across the U.S. urged the EPA to follow the best available science when making its atrazine registration decision.

equivalent is not supported by the microcosm/mesocosm weight of evidence approach, especially in light of the re-evaluation of the 11 studies in the white paper," Thalmann said. "This also raises questions about the scientific validity of the proposed mitigation measures. Extensive monitoring data in Minnesota suggests that there are other proven alternatives to ensuring surface and groundwater is protected that should also be considered."

EPA expects to receive the SAP's recommendations in late November. According to an EPA official advising the SAP, the agency will consider the panel's suggestions in recalculating the proposed revisions before moving into a court-ordered review required under the Endangered Species Act. 🙌

# Grower-leaders advocate for farmers during Corn Congress

Minnesota Corn grower-leaders met with members of Congress during the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Corn Congress this summer in Washington, D.C., to advocate for the state’s family corn farmers.

Grower-leaders joined farmers from other states and NCGA officers to meet with U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Ranking Member John Boozman (R-Ark.) and U.S. House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member David Scott (D-Ga.).

MCGA leaders met individually with U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.), Senators Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and John Hoeven (R-N.D.), House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-Minn.), U.S. Reps. Angie Craig (D-Minn.), Brad Finstad (R-Minn.), Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.), and Pete Stauber (R-Minn.), USDA Farm Service Agency Associate Administrator Steve Peterson, and staff of U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), U.S. Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), House Agriculture Committee Democrats, and Senate Agriculture Committee Republicans.

During the meetings, grower-leaders asked members of Congress to support the repeal of Mexico’s ban on biotech corn, an action that violates Mexico’s commitments under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and is not based on sound science. They also asked members of Congress to support on-time passage of a Farm Bill that strengthens crop insurance, the farm safety net, and voluntary, incentives-based conservation programs. Additionally, growers-leaders advocated for a significant role for biofuels in achieving U.S. energy independence and meeting climate objectives and reviving a U.S. trade agenda that achieves meaningful market access for U.S. agriculture.

Other policies for which growers asked for support included: clarification of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act’s preemption over state and local laws; having USDA return to its Emergency Relief Program Phase I approach to 2020-22 calendar year losses; making current estate tax exemptions permanent; and H-2A improvements to help respond to severe farm labor shortages and regulatory burdens.



Minnesota Corn grower-leaders meet with U.S. Rep. Brad Finstad of Minnesota’s First Congressional District (fourth from right).



Grower-leaders and U.S. Sen. Tina Smith of Minnesota (sixth from left).

## Policy book adopted

In addition to meeting with policymakers and administration officials during Corn Congress, grower-leaders from across the nation approved updates to NCGA’s policy and position papers. This document guides NCGA’s advocacy activities in Washington, D.C. MCGA successfully offered two proposed changes to NCGA’s policy platform during Corn Congress. One codified NCGA’s opposition to using the word “farm” to describe wind and solar energy production facilities. The other solidified NCGA’s support of ownership of U.S. agricultural land exclusively by U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens. The resolution includes an exemption for research and food processing activities that support domestic agricultural production.

Learn more about MCGA’s advocacy efforts at [mncorn.org/advocacy](https://mncorn.org/advocacy). 🌱

# U.S. Rep. Angie Craig honored



U.S. Rep. Angie Craig, who represents Minnesota’s Second Congressional District, received the NCGA President’s Award from Tom Haag.

During Corn Congress, National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) President Tom Haag, who farms in Eden Valley, Minnesota, presented U.S. Representative Angie Craig with the NCGA President’s Award. The award is given annually to a leader who has worked to advance issues important to corn growers and agriculture.

In a statement, Haag said that Representative Craig, who represents Minnesota’s Second Congressional District, has been a tireless advocate for growers and is one of NCGA’s biggest congressional allies. “She makes me proud to say I am from Minnesota,” he said.

Craig said she’s honored to represent the many corn growers of Minnesota’s Second Congressional District. “I’m proud of the bipartisan track record of results we’ve built over the years and am committed to working with members of both parties to do what’s best for Minnesota’s corn industry,” she said. “Thank you, President Haag, and to the National Corn Growers Association for this award.”

## Haag, Wolle celebrated

This fall, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is celebrating Haag and another Minnesota grower-leader for their leadership at the national level.

Haag will complete his term as NCGA president on Sept. 30, and Madelia farmer Harold Wolle will become NCGA president the next day.

Both Haag and Wolle have farmed for over 40 years and served on the MCGA board for over 10 years. Each is a thoughtful, talented leader and an effective advocate on behalf of family corn farmers.

“U.S. corn growers are lucky to have Tom and Harold in their corner,” MCGA President Richard Syverson said. “These two leaders are passionate, engaging, and care deeply about ensuring long-term prosperity for family corn farmers. We thank Tom for his steadfast leadership this past year, and look forward to working with Harold as he assumes the presidency.”

Learn more about NCGA at [ncga.com](https://ncga.com). 🌱

# Minnesota Corn wraps up successful Farmfest



Minnesota Corn grower-leaders with members of Minnesota’s congressional delegation and the U.S. House Agriculture Committee.

Minnesota Corn has wrapped up another successful Farmfest! Dozens of growers, policymakers, and farm families stopped by the Minnesota Corn tent during the three-day event near Redwood Falls. They learned how corn farmers are building a more prosperous future for all Minnesotans.

Visitors enjoyed free samples of sweet corn ice cream. New and renewing members of the Minnesota Corn

Growers Association (MCGA) received “Our family farm feeds and fuels the world” signs. New this year in the Minnesota Corn tent was a plug-in hybrid concept vehicle. The project, an initiative of the Renewable Fuels Association, shows how E85 and electricity can jointly power vehicles today.

Also during Farmfest, MCGA President Richard Syverson and First Vice President Dana Allen-Tully participated



Grower-leaders John Mages (left center) and Todd Wentzel (right center) with the 2023-24 Minnesota state FFA officer team.



Enjoying the sweet corn ice cream in the Minnesota Corn tent.



MCGA President Richard Syverson testifies during the U.S. House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill listening session at Farmfest.

in a Farm Bill listening session hosted by the U.S. House Agriculture Committee. Syverson talked about the importance of crop insurance, and Allen-Tully talked about the importance of a strong farm safety net. National Corn Growers Association President Tom Haag and First Vice President Harold Wolle, both Minnesota farmers, also talked about the importance of crop insurance and the producer safety net, as well as international market development and voluntary conservation programs.



MCGA First Vice President Dana Allen-Tully testifies during the U.S. House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill listening session at Farmfest

Minnesota Corn thanks all the grower-leaders who volunteered at Farmfest and all the elected officials and policymakers who took the time to learn about issues affecting family corn farmers. For more information on how MCGA is advocating for family farmers, visit [mncorn.org/advocacy](https://mncorn.org/advocacy).

# Flex fuel hybrid EV featured at Farmfest

## Vehicle data shows answer to demand for electric-only future

Minnesota Corn hosted a one-of-a-kind concept vehicle from the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA) at its tent during Farmfest 2023.

Robert White, RFA's vice president of industry relations, has spent the better part of the past year crisscrossing the country gathering data on the viability of combining electric vehicle power with E85 to extend the range of EVs while reducing emissions using flex fuels.

RFA retrofitted a 2022 Ford Escape plug in hybrid electric vehicle with a kit to convert it to a flex fuel vehicle. The vehicle runs on battery for 39 miles and holds 11 gallons of E85 for a total range of about 430 miles.

"We wanted to prove a point," White said. "We think going full electric in this country is not viable and it's not going to work as the only answer to transportation needs in this country."

"We wanted a soft landing for the EV crowd to be able to show them the reduced emissions and fuel economy possible with this type of technology. And we wanted to balance that with that crowd out there that says they will never drive an electric vehicle. We think this is a happy medium."

And it's not just consumers who will be swayed by the impressive data from this concept vehicle. White said RFA will share data and feedback with government agencies and auto manufacturers to show that the future of transportation is a combination of electric and E85 — true flex fuel technology that is accessible and manageable for the public.



**Robert White**  
White and the concept vehicle travel across the country where White spends time at trade shows and speaks to state and federal policymakers about the benefits of considering the combination of fuel sources instead of a one-size-fits-all fuel future. So far, he's traveled more than 16,000 miles in the hybrid vehicle, and he's seeing 38.4 miles per gallon efficiency — nearly equal to the 40 mpg the vehicle is rated on electric alone.

"It's very exciting to see," White said. "Something we hope we can convince the automakers to do, and federal regulators to recognize, is that there is a



*The concept vehicle shows the promise of integrating flex fuels and electric batteries in terms of decarbonizing transportation.*

different path to greenhouse gas emissions goals, and it doesn't have to be electric only."

Keeping a balanced view of transportation realities is important when talking about policy and regulation, White said. The access and infrastructure needs associated with an electric-only transportation option just isn't there. "And there's the cost, charging times, convenience, range anxiety, that comes with that. Only 40% of American have garages. Where are these people going to charge?"

These questions spurred Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-NE) to join forces for the Flex Fuel Fairness Act, which encourages automakers to produce more flex fuel vehicles capable of operating on low carbon ethanol flex fuels like E85, which can help meet aggressive emissions goals. Automakers can consider a future in transportation that combines electric and flex fuels and gives consumers the ability to retain the freedom of the American road and flexibility required of their transportation needs today.

To learn more about the RFA concept vehicle, check out the RFA website: **FlexFuelEV.com**.

# Japanese corn trade team stops in MN



*Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council Chair Gary Prescher hosts a Japanese corn delegation at his family farm.*

This summer, a team of Japanese corn millers toured family corn farms and other corn-production facilities in Minnesota as part of a tour organized by the U.S. Grains Council (USGC).

The goal of the visit was to educate the millers — who collectively purchase about two-thirds of their corn from the U.S. — on American corn production, said Tommy Hamamoto, USGC's Japan director.

In Minnesota, the delegation visited the Syngenta seed care facility in Stanton, the United Farmers Cooperative export elevator in Brownnton, the CHS grain terminal in Savage, and the family farms of Gary Prescher and Brian Thalmann.

When the delegation visited his farm, Thalmann, his father, and his son spoke about their farm's rich history and the evolution of farming in Minnesota. They noted improvements in farm technology and how yields have increased significantly over the past 30 years. Thalmann also described his drier system. Delegation members asked questions about the farm, sustainability, and the condition of the 2023 corn crop.

Japan is vital to U.S. corn farmers, as it imports hundreds of millions of bushels of U.S. corn annually. Hamamoto stated that although the relationship between the two countries was not always positive, it is changing and has become more friendly in recent years.

Minnesota Corn is proud to support USGC as part of its effort to maintain and develop markets for U.S. corn growers. Learn more about the council and its work at **grains.org**.



*Prescher and the team stop at the Green Giant Museum in Blue Earth.*

# O'Connor elected to USGC board



In July, Blooming Prairie farmer and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council member Jim O'Connor was elected to the U.S. Grains Council (USGC) Board of Directors. The USGC develops export markets for U.S. barley, corn, sorghum, and related products including distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS) and ethanol.

O'Connor raises corn, soybeans, and hogs on his family farm. He's a past MCR&PC chair, former USGC Western Hemisphere Team lead, and a member of the National Corn Growers Association's Ethanol Team. He's also involved in multiple businesses in and around Blooming Prairie, including the AI-Corn ethanol plant and the Blooming Prairie grain elevator.

Minnesota Corn congratulates Jim on his election to the USGC board! For more information on the council, visit **grains.org**.

# MN's Unleaded 88 sales are strong



Minnesota fuel stations are off to another great start when it comes to Unleaded 88 sales in 2023, according to the latest state data.

Between January and June 2023, the latest month for which data is available, Minnesota fuel stations reported selling 56.4 million gallons of the 15% biofuel blend, according to the state Department of Commerce. That's up 17% compared to the same period in 2022 and over 40% compared to same period in 2021.

June was a particularly strong month for Unleaded 88 sales in Minnesota, the data show, with 9.7 million gallons of reported sales — the third-highest total in state history. The month also set a record for reported per-station sales at nearly 37,200 gallons.

Overall, the data shows that consumers are enjoying the many benefits of Unleaded 88, which is approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use in cars, trucks, and SUVs model year 2001 and newer. The fuel is also known as E15, a nod to its 15% ethanol concentration.

The benefits of Unleaded 88 include reduced greenhouse gas and tailpipe emissions, increased market demand for family corn farmers, and cost savings at the pump. In 2022, Unleaded 88 in Minnesota cost on average 17 cents less per gallon than regular unleaded, according to the state Department of Commerce.

## Proudly promoting Unleaded 88

Since 2013, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council has contributed millions of dollars to grant programs that allow fuel stations to install Unleaded 88-compatible equipment. That included a \$1 million contribution to a 2021 state program that allowed 44 fuel stations to upgrade equipment.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association played a key role in advocating for the creation of the program and in securing passage of a \$6.75 million state grant program in 2023. The online application for the 2023 biofuel infrastructure grant program is now open.

Minnesota Corn has also promoted Unleaded 88 to consumers through the Better Fuel Initiative outreach campaign. Since 2021, ads featuring KFAN's Chris Hawkey that highlight Unleaded 88's benefits have played on media channels throughout the state. Additionally, Minnesota Corn has partnered with Twin



Cities Road Crew to promote Unleaded 88 during promotion events at fuel stations around the state.

Finally, this year Minnesota Corn is investing in a pair of multi-state biofuel-promotion campaigns that aim to increase consumer awareness of Unleaded 88.

One is a comprehensive campaign with the ethanol trade group Growth Energy called Get Biofuel. The campaign has included online advertisements and partnerships with fuel retailers, social influencers, and the digital fuel-price crowdsourcing company GasBuddy. It also included sponsorship of "The Green American Road Trip" by Olympic gymnast Shawn Johnson East and her family. This past spring, the East family traveled across the country, fueling up with Unleaded 88 along the way.

Minnesota Corn is also joining with other state corn groups to sponsor the "Unleaded 88 Earth Smart. Engine Kind." campaign on the Big Ten Network. Throughout the fall and winter sports seasons, look for ads touting the benefits of Unleaded 88 during football, women's volleyball, and men's and women's basketball broadcasts on the Big Ten Network.

Learn more about Unleaded 88, and find an Unleaded 88 station near you, at [BetterFuel.org](https://www.betterfuel.org).

# Research explores N rates, losses



A Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council-funded University of Minnesota study is exploring how nitrogen-application rates affect profitability and environmental nitrogen losses.

During the 2021, 2022, and 2023 growing seasons, researchers in the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate applied nitrogen to corn plots at different rates while keeping other management practices the same. They then measured environmental nitrogen losses and nitrogen-use efficiency. Plans also call for calculating yield and profit for each plot.

The plots, which are tiled drained and have been in continuous corn production for about 10 years, are located at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton.

The researchers are still analyzing results from the first two years of the study. But the data could help improve nitrogen guidelines, said Professor Fabian Fernandez, who's leading the project.

"We are not going to reduce nitrogen losses to zero. That would mean no crop production. Ever," Fernandez said. "But understanding these feedback mechanisms and what happens under given conditions can allow us to ... make better informed decisions."



Nitrogen is a vital nutrient for corn, a vital crop in our modern world, but it's generally not found in the environment at high enough levels to sustain corn production.

When applying nitrogen fertilizer to fields, farmers are careful to apply the right source of the nutrient at the correct rate, place, and time to maximize efficiency. But farmers are consistently striving for continuous improvement, which is why they invest corn check-off funds in projects that improve fertilizer use efficiency and educate themselves on best management practices.

According to Fernandez, plenty of research has been conducted on how nitrogen rates affect yields and profits, but less work has been done on how rates impact environmental losses. He said studies have been conducted on how nitrogen rates affect individual nitrogen loss pathways, whether that's leaching, volatilization, or denitrification, but not on all three at the same time.

In the study, Fernandez and graduate student Zac Aanerud applied nitrogen on corn plots at five different rates: 0, 80, 160, 240, and 320 pounds per acre.

On each plot, Fernandez and Aanerud applied nitrogen twice, both times in the form of urea: once before planting and once about 35 days after planting. During the preplant application, they used urea contained in a polymer coating, broadcasting the fertilizer and incorporating it with tillage. During the in-season application, they used a urease inhibitor to minimize volatilization losses from fertilizer left on the soil surface.

Hot and dry conditions in 2021 and 2022 dramatically affected yields, minimizing tile drainage flow and nitrate leaching, Fernandez said.

Nitrous oxide losses have been low, too, he said. Minnesota Corn will post complete results from the study on our website once they're available. Visit [mncorn.org/research](https://mncorn.org/research) to learn more.

# Variety Plot results available this fall



After harvest, visit the Minnesota Corn website to view results from 2023 Variety Plot trials managed by county corn grower associations.

Minnesota Corn, through our affiliated county corn grower associations, offers one of the few independent, farmer-managed plot systems in the country. County plot cooperators organize and manage the plots and collect the data that is provided. All information relating to hybrid names and traits is provided by cooperating county grower organizations.

As soon as a county enters the data, it can be viewed instantaneously. It is important to note that these results are not just for members. Anyone can review these results, which is a great way to aid in planning what corn and soybean varieties you may be interested in trying for the next growing season. Seed companies also like this data as it gives them a way to better track how their products are performing across the state.

Interested in participating in 2024? Counties should reach out to Macy Kahler at [mkahler@mncorn.org](mailto:mkahler@mncorn.org) or call the state Minnesota Corn office at **952-233-0333** to obtain forms and ask any additional questions they may have. Seed representatives interested in entering varieties in a county plot should also email Macy or call the Minnesota Corn office to get the current contact information for the county they would like to work with.

View 2023 Variety Plot results at [varietyplot.mncorn.org](http://varietyplot.mncorn.org).

# UMN researchers seek grain samples for durability study



A researcher studying ways to make field corn less susceptible to damage during transportation is asking farmers for grain samples from this year's crop.

Dr. Candice Hirsch, a professor in the University of Minnesota Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, is studying how growing practices, genetic variations, and physical properties of corn kernels contribute to grain durability. As part of her project, Hirsch and her team will simulate the shipping process on the samples they receive. They'll also analyze the compositional properties of the samples.

Farmers who are willing to send samples are asked to contact Hirsch at [cnhirsch@umn.edu](mailto:cnhirsch@umn.edu). Hirsch and her team will send farmers packaging materials and pay for all shipping costs. They request that farmers send information such as growing location, inputs used, and more along with the samples.

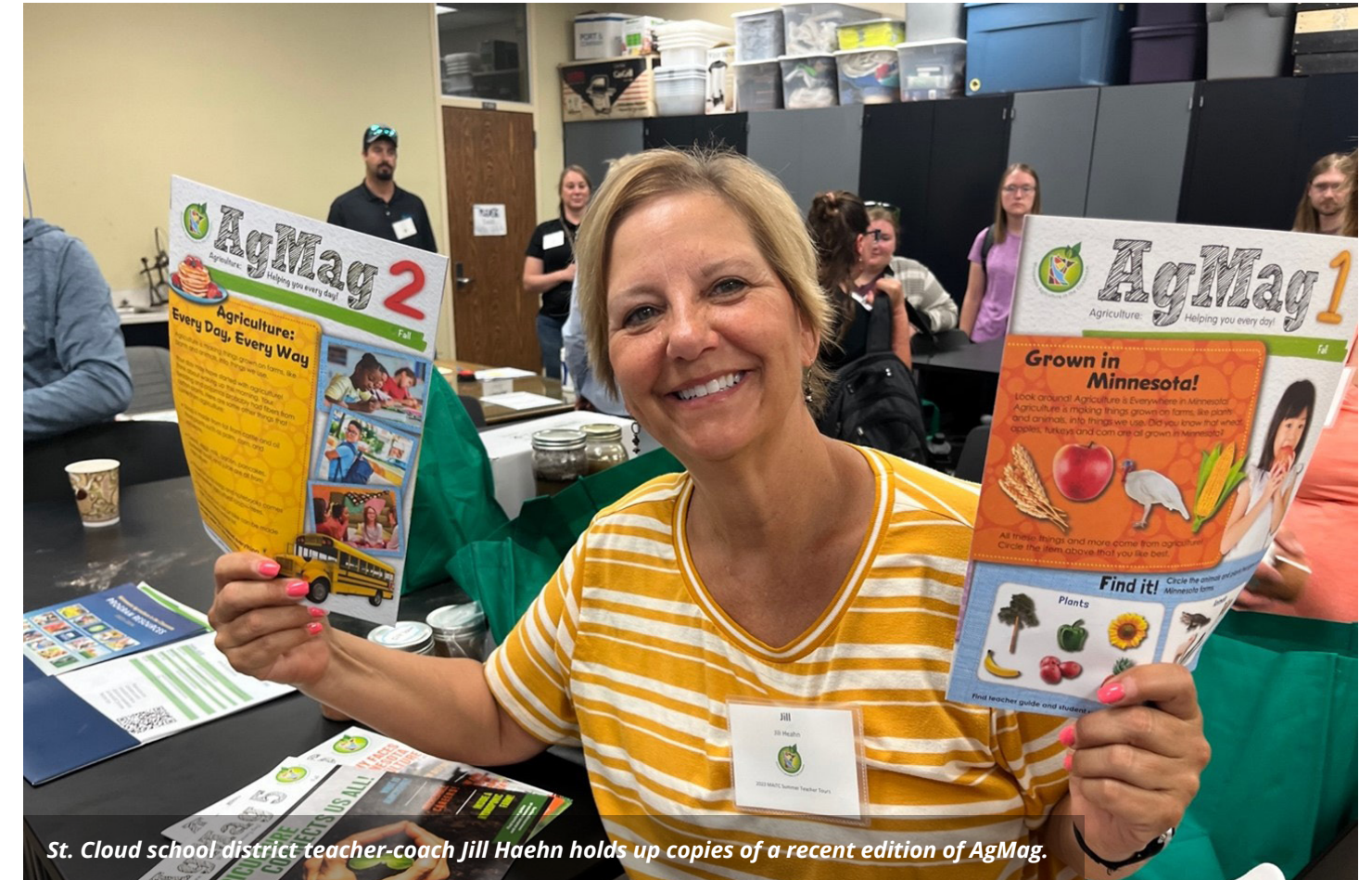
Learn more about the project at [mncorn.org/research](http://mncorn.org/research).



# AgMag engages students with ag



Written by Jonathan Eisenthal



A twice-yearly magazine published by the Minnesota Corn-supported agricultural education organization Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) is helping elementary school students learn about corn, farming, and agriculture's role in modern society.

MAITC, which provides free curriculum, educational resources, grants, outreach, and professional development opportunities to K-12 educators across the state, publishes its AgMag each fall and spring. The organization publishes seven editions of the magazine at a time — one specific to each grade level from kindergarten through sixth grade.

First published in 1986, AgMag feature stories, infographics, and photos aimed at helping students better understand modern agriculture. The magazine includes discussion prompts, word searches, and other activities designed to engage students as they read. For example, in a recent edition for fifth-graders, a map highlighted Minnesota's four growing areas —

Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast — and noted their different geographies, weather conditions, and crop profiles. Next to the map, the magazine had an activity that had students match the different areas of the state with the crops grown in each area.

Jill Haehn, a teacher-coach in the St. Cloud school district, said AgMag engages students of all abilities, including struggling and advanced students. She said that it is a good tool for helping struggling readers improve their reading skills, noting that educators can use editions of the magazine that correspond to a student's ability.

Learn more about AgMag by visiting [mnagmag.org](http://mnagmag.org).

# Farmamerica welcomes guests to renewed campus



Farmamerica uses a historic tractor to pull visitors on guided tram tours of the grounds.

Farmamerica’s fresh new look at their main visitor center received even more help earlier this year when a group of volunteers fixed up some of the historic buildings on the site. Minnesota Corn is one of two “Innovator” level donors that support the mission and work of Farmamerica, located in Waseca.

In late 2022, Farmamerica opened its refreshed and renovated visitor center where it welcomes thousands of visitors each year. As with many historical locations and interpretive centers across the country, it’s not just the welcome center that needs attention. As time and weather bear down on the structures at Farmamerica,

the wear and tear become more and more evident. And, it’s difficult to come up with the materials, people, and budget to check off everything on the maintenance list.

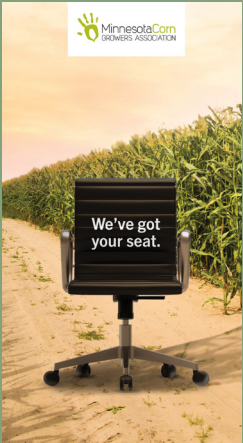
But, one group visited Farmamerica this spring to take some of that burden off the small staff. A Year to Volunteer is a nonprofit that rallies volunteers who travel in their RVs, park them on the job site, and camp out for two weeks while they give their time and talent to communities across the country.

“We were so lucky to have them with us this year,” said Jessica Rollins, executive director of Farmamerica. “They were the most kind people — just amazing. And they did amazing work!”

The volunteer group primarily repainted the buildings at the 1850s homestead, which include a main house and outbuildings. A group of agriculture communicators recently toured the Farmamerica grounds where they learned new things about agriculture history, and saw the results of A Year to Volunteer’s work.

To visit Farmamerica, book your tour online at [farmamerica.org](http://farmamerica.org).

# We know you’re busy, so we’ve got your seat



We’re excited to announce that we have a new look to promote membership in the Minnesota Corn Growers Association. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association identifies and promotes opportunities for Minnesota’s corn farmers and builds connections with the non-farming public. And with more members, the voice of Minnesota’s corn farmers can be stronger in advocating for favorable policies with state and

federal lawmakers. That means that when you’re busy raising your family, working on or off the farm, and staying involved in your community, Minnesota Corn is at the table working for you and your farm interests. And, you have a seat at that table too. But if you can’t make it, trust that Minnesota Corn is representing and advocating for you.

Check out the new membership video ad at [bit.ly/joinMNCorn2023](http://bit.ly/joinMNCorn2023).

# County Highlights

County corn organizations fuel the grassroots advocacy efforts of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association while helping promote the importance of corn farming in Minnesota. Throughout the year, county organizations host events that raise awareness of agriculture in their local communities, engage area youth with educational and scholarship opportunities, meet local legislators to discuss issues important to corn farming, and much more.

To shine a light on these initiatives throughout the year, Minnesota Corn highlights the counties’ many successes in each issue of Corn Talk. Below is a recap of county efforts during summer 2023.

## District 1 — Northwestern Minnesota

Cheeseburger Meal		
Price breakdown of the meal:		
Item:	Our Cost:	Farmer's Share:
Cheese	\$0.17 a slice	\$0.05
Burger	\$1.50 a patty	\$0.45
Bun	\$0.30 a bun	\$0.10
Pickles	\$0.10 for 5 chips	\$0.01
Ketchup	\$0.05 an oz.	\$0.01
Mustard	\$0.98 a bottle	\$0.01
Potato Chips	\$0.53 a bag	\$0.03
Bottle of Water	\$0.13 a bottle	\$0.00
Total:	\$3.76	\$0.66
Pope County Corn & Soybean Scholarship Fund		\$1.34
You Pay:	\$2.00	

Attendees of the Pope County Corn & Soybean Growers Association’s county fair dinner paid the “farmer’s share” of the meal.

Many counties provided support for county fairs, which continue to be large attractions. Funds were donated for signage at ag buildings, corn announcements at the grandstands during races, ads in local newspapers, and radio spots promoting corn.

Polk County worked with two local FFA chapters to walk the Fertile fair/parade. They handed out corn promo items and candy.

Douglas County was busy this summer with two fuel events and a pork chop feed during their fair, and

they will hold a trap shoot event/membership drive in September.

Becker/Mahnomen held a fuel event to promote the new station in Mahnomen that has Unleaded 88 gas pumps. The station received grants to put in its new pumps.

Norman County served burgers and brats to the general public the night before their fair at an event called “Dinner with a Farmer.” The board cooked the meal and mingled with the general public, talking about ag issues and answering questions.

Pope County also hosted a meal at the Glenwood Fair, serving over 370 people. The general public paid the farmer’s share of the food dollar. A Farmer’s Share sign was posted at the booth to inform the public of their cost.

Pennington/Red Lake had a booth at their fair. The board handed out water bottles with a biofuel message and coloring books to the youngsters at the fair.

Several counties supported fire departments again this summer for grain rescue equipment, including Clay/ Wilkin and Marshall. All nine fire & rescue departments in Marshall County were able to purchase grain rescue augers for their stations thanks to funding from Marshall County’s board of directors. Marshall County also donated a pedal tractor as a giveaway to youngsters at the fair.

A corn maze in East Grand Forks is supported by Polk County, which provides free tickets during a radio corn trivia giveaway. The county provides questions and answers to radio stations, and the caller that answers the corn trivia correctly gets a packet that includes two free maze tickets, corn promo items, and literature on what the county corn organization does for their community. Educational signs were displayed throughout the maze.

Counties used radio ads to promote Unleaded 88 and E85 throughout Minnesota.

Food banks continue to need donations, and several counties continued to support these in their counties.

Plot tours will finish out the summer events for District 1.

District 2 — Central Minnesota



The Stearns County Corn Growers Association raised money for an ag-related farm and safety emergency fund at its golf event.

District 2 had a busy and successful summer filled with golf outings, fuel events, and county fairs! Many of the Central Minnesota organizations also took part in their community parades. Members enjoyed handing out candy and other goodies while promoting Minnesota Corn. Stearns County had a very successful golf event again this year, raising money for scholarships and

a local community member who was injured in a farm accident. County organizations present their scholarships to one or more graduating student members that are pursuing a degree in agriculture. This is a great way for them to give back and encourage young people to stay involved.

Kandiyohi County participated in Willmar’s Rockin’ Robbins event where they gave out sweet corn ice cream and promoted agriculture. Over 7,000 people attended the event, and members were able to have great conversations with the community!

County fairs were in full swing in District 2 late in the summer, and many of the county organizations participated by having a booth or activities during their fair. Although summer seems to fly by, District 2 corn growers remained active and took part in some great events!

District 3 — Southeastern Minnesota

It was a great summer in District 3! 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 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.

New this year, the Blue Earth and Olmsted/Wabasha corn grower associations sponsored the first-ever US 14 Rivalry Series between the Mankato MoonDogs and the Rochester Honkers of the Northwoods baseball league. During games, the public address announcers read facts about corn’s importance in our modern world, and the teams included the county organizations in print and digital materials. Mankato won the season series to win the new US 14 Cup.

Additionally, throughout the summer, grower-leaders volunteered at county fairs, raised money for

scholarships through golf tournaments, held annual meetings, and more.



Members of the Faribault County Corn & Soybean Growers Association enjoy their annual golf tournament.

District 4 — Southwestern Minnesota



Jerry Ploehn fuels up at the Martin County Corn & Soybean Growers Association fuel event this summer.

What a summer it was in District 4! Southwestern Minnesota county growers associations held many events, with golf outings being a big hit. Hundreds of golfers attended seven 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. 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 2024 events soon after wrapping up this year’s harvest.👋

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/contact/staff](https://mncorn.org/contact/staff).

thanks to our allied partners



MCGA Board Members

**President**  
Richard Syverson of Clontarf  
320-760-6719

**First Vice President**  
Dana Allen-Tully of Eyota  
507-951-5597

**Treasurer** - Jim Kanten of Milan  
320-297-0375

**Secretary** - Wesley Beck of St. James  
507-630-1471

**Past President/Chairman of the Board**  
Bryan Biegler of Lake Wilson  
507-920-8186

Angela Guentzel of Kasota  
507-317-4372

Tom Haag of Eden Valley\*  
320-453-7760

Blair Hoseth of Mahanomen  
701-261-3574

Clayton Johnson of Pipestone  
507-215-0427

Brad Neumann of Wabasso  
507-822-6951

Ellyn Oelfke of Glencoe  
507-848-6160

Nick Peterson of Clear Lake  
320-293-5823

John Swanson of Mentor  
612-419-9235

Rob Tate of Cannon Falls  
507-298-0308

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** - Gary Prescher of Delavan  
507-525-7671

**Vice Chair** - Duane Epland of Twin Lakes  
641-590-0928

**Treasurer** - John Mages of Belgrade  
320-248-1908

**Secretary** - Jordan Gobligh of Vesta  
507-829-1589

Doug Albin of Clarkfield  
320-383-2338

Brandon Fast of Mountain Lake  
507-220-8275

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

# FALL 2023

# cornstalk

## calendar of events

november  
22

MCGA/MCR&PC joint board meeting,  
virtual

november  
29

MCGA pre-resolutions meeting, virtual

january  
4

MCGA/MCR&PC joint board meeting,  
Burnsville, MN

january  
17-18

MN Ag Expo, Mankato, MN

january  
18

MCGA resolutions session & annual  
meeting, Mankato, MN