

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association works year-round to advocate for policies that benefit corn farmers, rural communities, and all Minnesotans. Below is a recap of those efforts in 2023.

Connecting with policymakers

In 2023, MCGA grower-leaders hosted multiple state and federal lawmakers for farm visits throughout the state. They included U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), State Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Aric Putnam (DFL-St. Cloud), State Senate Agriculture Committee Vice Chair Rob Kupec (DFL-Moorhead), and State House Minority Leader Lisa Demuth (R-Cold Spring).



U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (second from right) tours the family farm of MCGA grower-leader Bryan Biegler (right).

Bierman (DFL-Apply Valley), Gov. Tim Walz’s agriculture policy advisor, and a House GOP research consultant, among other state government staff members.

In Washington, D.C., grower-leaders met with U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D) and Tina Smith (D) and U.S. Reps. Brad Finstad (R), Angie Craig (D), Tom Emmer (R), Michelle Fischbach (R), and Pete Stauber (R) from Minnesota’s congressional delegation. The meetings were held during Corn Congress and MCGA’s annual spring fly-in.

Grower-leaders also met with staff of U.S. Reps. Ilhan Omar (D) and Betty McCollum (D) from Minnesota; House Agriculture Committee Chair G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.) and Ranking Member David Scott (D-Ga.); and Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Ranking Member John Boozman (R-Ark.).



Minnesota Corn grower-leaders talk with House Minority Leader Lisa Demuth (right).



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

Advancing policy priorities

During the 2023 state legislative session, MCGA successfully advocated for \$4.75 million in soil health financial assistance grants and \$6.75 million in biofuel infrastructure grants. MCGA also successfully advocated for legislation requiring fuel stations to report sales of E15 and mid-level ethanol blends to the state. Other state policy successes in 2023 included the passage of tax credits for beginning farmers and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and an increase in the first-tier valuation limit for agricultural homestead property.

On the defensive front, MCGA prevented passage of a drainage registry portal, crop protection restrictions such as a verification of need, and a clean fuel standard that would have negatively affected biofuels and Minnesota farmers. The organization also prevented passage of unnecessary PFAS and treated seed monitoring at ethanol plants. No ethanol plants in Minnesota use treated seed as a feedstock.

In Washington, D.C., MCGA successfully worked with federal policymakers to advocate for an emergency waiver that ensured uninterrupted Unleaded 88/E15 sales in summer 2023. MCGA also continued advocating for its Farm Bill priorities and helped advance the Next Generation Fuels Act, a bill that would pave the way for higher blends of ethanol in the U.S. gasoline supply. The bill has co-sponsors from both political parties, including Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Reps. Angie Craig, Brad Finstad, and Michelle Fischbach from Minnesota’s congressional delegation.

Other federal policy successes included: the U.S. Commerce Department’s reduction of tariffs on Moroccan phosphate fertilizer imports; the U.S. Treasury Department’s allowance of the GREET model to determine SAF tax credit eligibility; the U.S. Trade Representative’s challenge of Mexico’s planned biotech corn ban; and the EPA’s finalization of biofuel blending requirements for 2023-25 under the Renewable Fuel Standard. In all cases, MCGA worked with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) to successfully advocate for the desired outcomes.

MCGA also continued advocating against federal proposals favoring electric vehicles over proven emissions-reductions solutions like ethanol, including proposed updates to federal fuel economy standards and a proposed vehicle emissions rule for light- and medium-duty vehicles. The organization also continued partnering with NCGA and other state corn grower organizations to oppose the EPA’s draft herbicide strategy and urge the agency to follow the best available science when regulating atrazine.

Get involved!
Help MCGA advocate on behalf of family corn farmers.
Learn more at mncorn.org/takeaction.

CORN BY THE NUMBERS

Corn by the Numbers
2023 MINNESOTA CORN PRODUCTION

Acres planted	8.6 million
Yield*	181 bushels/acre
Total production*	1.5 billion bushels

2023 NATIONAL CORN PRODUCTION

Acres planted	94.9 million
Yield*	174.9 bushels/acre
Total production*	15.2 billion bushels

*Based on USDA November estimates
Source: USDA

About the Minnesota Corn Growers Association

MCGA is Minnesota’s grassroots corn growers association. Founded in 1978, MCGA advocates on behalf of corn farmers, supports county corn growers associations, and works closely with the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council to fund research, promotion, and outreach aimed at increasing opportunities for corn farmers.

MCGA Financials

Operations and Administration - 30%
Advocacy - 59%
Education and Promotion - 11%
Total: \$422,478

About the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council

The MCR&PC oversees the Minnesota corn check-off, funds that are used to increase opportunities for corn farmers in the state. The council invests check-off dollars into research, promotion, and outreach programming aimed at developing markets for corn, increasing on-farm sustainability, and improving quality of life for corn farmers and all Minnesotans.

Corn Check-off Investment Allocation

Research and Utilization - 27%
National Corn Growers Association - 25%
Membership and Consumer Engagement - 18%
Education, Outreach, and Promotion - 18%
Export Programs - 7%
Operations and Administration - 5%
Total: \$11,742,904



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2023

ANNUAL REPORT
MINNESOTA CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION
MINNESOTA CORN RESEARCH & PROMOTION COUNCIL

DEAR MINNESOTA CORN PRODUCERS:

We hope you had a relaxing holiday season. As 2024 begins, we'd like to thank you for your continued support of the Minnesota corn check-off and Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA). Thanks to your investment, Minnesota Corn can fund the research, programming, and grassroots advocacy needed to increase opportunities for corn farmers while enhancing quality of life for all Minnesotans. It's an honor to work alongside you on these efforts, and we're grateful for your contributions. Thank you.

For MCGA and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), 2023 was another successful year of developing markets, safeguarding crop-protection tools, and increasing the efficiency and sustainability of corn production. The work wasn't always easy, but we're proud of Minnesota Corn's comprehensive approach to these efforts and effective response to the opportunities the year presented. Below are a few of our 2023 achievements.

Once again in 2023, one of Minnesota Corn's biggest successes was its effort to generate demand by developing new corn-based products and increasing biofuel use. For example, the MCR&PC continued supporting efforts by the University of Minnesota Center for Sustainable Polymers to increase the durability of corn-based plastics, which currently have limited utility because of their brittleness. Additionally, throughout the year, the MCR&PC helped generate consumer interest in Unleaded 88 and E85 by investing in the Better Fuel Initiative campaign, fuel promotion events, and Growth Energy's Get Biofuel campaign. Meanwhile, MCGA helped pave the way for increased Unleaded 88 and E85 availability in Minnesota by successfully advocating for a \$6.75 million biofuel infrastructure grant program during the state legislative session. MCGA also helped maintain existing Unleaded 88 availability—and, by extension, consumer demand—by successfully pushing for a federal emergency waiver for summertime sales in 2023.

Beyond bolstering demand for corn, Minnesota Corn in 2023 continued longstanding efforts to ensure growers can access the tools necessary to produce a successful crop. For example, during the state legislative session, MCGA successfully advocated against proposals that would have created a statewide drainage registry and required farmers to formally demonstrate a need before using pesticide-treated seed. At the federal level, MCGA partnered with other corn grower organizations to lower tariffs on phosphate fertilizers, a move the U.S. Department of Commerce made in December. Additionally, Minnesota Corn continued documenting the significant advances corn farmers have made in terms of sustainability by having grower-leaders undergo third-party assessments of their farming practices.

Once again, we want to thank you for your support of the Minnesota check-off and MCGA. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of growers across the state and look forward to a successful 2024 season.

Yours truly,



Dana Allen-Tully
DANA ALLEN-TULLY
MCGA PRESIDENT



Gary L. Prescher
GARY PRESCHER
MCR&PC CHAIR

MEMBER AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Each year, Minnesota Corn bolsters communities, increases agricultural awareness among the non-farming public, and builds consumer trust in corn farmers and agricultural products. In 2023 the organization accomplished these priorities by investing corn check-off funds in programs and initiatives such as:

County corn grower associations

By supporting more than 300 county events and initiatives, Minnesota Corn helped increase grower camaraderie, highlight the benefits of MCGA membership, and engage thousands of consumers with positive messages about corn, biofuels, and agriculture. Minnesota Corn also helped hundreds of growers statewide learn more about hybrid performance in their area through its support of county variety plots.



Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC)

Through its support of MAITC, a statewide public-private partnership, Minnesota Corn helped over 146,000 Minnesota students access positive messages about food, farming, and agriculture through field trips, curricular resources, magazines, and more. Additionally, Minnesota Corn's support helped MAITC reach hundreds of educators with training and tours of agricultural sites across the state.



School assemblies and events

Minnesota Corn reached over 12,000 Twin Cities students with fun, engaging messages about corn and agriculture through 40 educational programs, including 25 in-person assemblies. The events were held on Minnesota Corn's behalf by Twin Cities Road Crew (TCRC). Additionally, Minnesota Corn reached thousands of consumers with positive messages about biofuels and corn-based products through social media videos by TCRC.



Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership (MARL)

Minnesota Corn helped develop the leadership and communications skills of 23 Minnesota farmers and rural professionals through its support of MARL, a two-year leadership program out of Southwest Minnesota State University. The development of these skills came through seminars, tours of agricultural sites, panel discussions, and more.



RESEARCH AND UTILIZATION

Each year, Minnesota Corn works to generate demand for corn and ethanol and increase the efficiency and sustainability of corn production. In 2023, Minnesota Corn accomplished these goals through the following corn check-off investments:

University-level, on-farm research

Through check-off funding, Minnesota Corn helped advance over 20 university-level and farmer-led research projects aimed at increasing the efficiency and sustainability of corn production. These projects could help growers reduce runoff, emissions, and input use while increasing productivity.

Reducing nitrogen losses from corn production

Led by University of Minnesota Professor Tim Griffis, this project studied whether enhanced efficiency fertilizers (EEFs) reduce nitrogen losses during the soil freeze-thaw cycles of spring. The research could help growers reduce emissions and more efficiently use inputs.



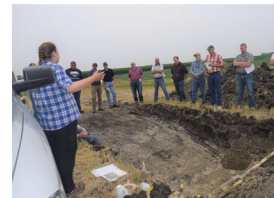
Dialing in the most profitable and environmentally responsible nitrogen rate

This project, led by University of Minnesota Professor Fabian Fernandez, studied how much nitrogen is lost to the environment when the nutrient is applied at different rates. The study will generate a one-of-a-kind dataset that could help growers optimize their nitrogen rates based on their production and environmental goals.



Wilkin SWCD soil health demonstration site

Led by grower Vance Johnson, this project continued a study of how an extended five-year crop rotation in combination with different tillage systems and cover crops affects soil properties. Johnson is conducting the research in partnership with the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District, along with a variety of public and private entities.



Learn more!

Read summaries and updates on all Minnesota Corn-funded research and results from previously funded projects at mncorn.org or scan the code.

At a Glance

In 2023, Minnesota Corn allocated more than \$3 million to research and utilization projects.



SCAN ME

Outreach on nutrient management BMPs

Through its support of university-level training programs, Minnesota Corn helped growers access science-based information on best practices for nutrient management and maximize fertilizer-use efficiency.

Nitrogen Smart programming

For the eighth straight year, Minnesota Corn funded the University of Minnesota's Nitrogen Smart course series, which provides growers with information on maximizing economic return on nitrogen investments while minimizing nitrogen losses. Over 1,000 growers have taken a Nitrogen Smart course since the program's inception, with participants reporting economic savings and increased efficiency of nitrogen use.



Discovery Farms Minnesota

Thanks to support from Minnesota Corn, Discovery Farms Minnesota collected on-farm water quality data and provided growers with best practices for increasing nutrient use efficiency. Additionally, scores of growers participated in educational events hosted by Discovery Farms Minnesota, which included annual nitrogen and nutrient management conferences.



Expanding uses for corn

Minnesota Corn helped advance efforts by start-up companies and partner organizations to create new corn-based products and develop technology that allows for increased use of corn and ethanol in existing products.

Lakril Technologies

By supporting Lakril Technologies, Minnesota Corn helped the start-up company that produces a plastic material precursor from renewable sources like field corn reach a key milestone. In January 2023, Lakril announced that it achieved yields higher than 90% when transforming lactic acid—which is derived from corn—into acrylic acid. When the conversion rate is less than 90%, there is a higher cost and more risk in producing acrylic acid from lactic acid than from petroleum, its current base material.



Center for Sustainable Polymers

The University of Minnesota-based Center for Sustainable Polymers is working to develop new biobased plastics and improve existing materials. In 2023, researchers continued focusing on improving the structure and performance of polylactic acid plastic, developing methods to generate corn-based polymers, exploring the usefulness of new biomolecules, and more.



Partnerships to develop and maintain markets

Through its investments in biofuel promotion, Minnesota Corn reached hundreds of thousands of consumers with positive messages about Unleaded 88 and E85/flex fuels. Similarly, by investing in international market development, Minnesota Corn reached international corn and ethanol buyers with positive messages about U.S. corn and biofuels, efforts that could increase sales abroad.

Unleaded 88 and E85 promotion

Minnesota Corn reached consumers statewide with positive messages about Unleaded 88 and E85 through the Better Fuel Initiative outreach campaign, which included a new ad featuring Minnesota Gophers tight end Brevyn Spann-Ford. The organization also helped reach consumers across the country with positive messages about biofuel blends through its support of Gopher Sports and Growth Energy's Get Biofuel campaign.



Japanese trade delegation

Minnesota Corn highlighted the U.S. corn production process and the many benefits of U.S. corn to a group of Japanese corn millers during a tour coordinated by the U.S. Grains Council (USGC). Overall, Minnesota Corn's continued support of USGC helps ensure that grain and grain product exports continue to play a key role in the state's economy.



USGC poultry feeding study

Minnesota Corn supported research by USGC that demonstrated how U.S. corn is a more efficient feed source for poultry than Brazilian or Argentinian corn. The study results could help the council dispel the myth that U.S. corn is less valuable than South American corn, increasing market share for American farmers.



Plug-in hybrid concept vehicle

By supporting a Renewable Fuels Association effort to retrofit a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle so it can use flex fuels, Minnesota Corn helped show how ethanol can play a key role in an electric vehicle future. The project demonstrated that E85 and electricity can jointly power vehicles today and that in some cases, vehicles operating on E85 have lower lifecycle carbon emissions than electric vehicles.

