

**Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council**

2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



DEAR MINNESOTA CORN FARMERS,

We hope you had a happy new year. As we begin 2025, we want to thank you for your support of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Minnesota corn checkoff. Thanks to your investment, Minnesota Corn funds research, programming, and grassroots advocacy that increases market opportunities for corn farmers and rural economies while enhancing quality of life. We appreciate your continued contributions to Minnesota Corn, and we feel lucky to work alongside you on efforts to support Minnesota farmers.

For MCGA and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), 2024 was another successful year of building market opportunities for corn and ethanol while developing vibrant rural communities. It was also a productive year of advocating for resources in St. Paul and Washington, D.C., investing in on-farm research, and supporting the next generation of farmers and agricultural leaders. We're proud of all these efforts and would briefly like to highlight several here.

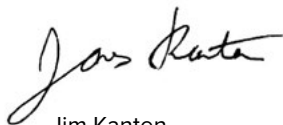
At the State Capitol, MCGA farmer-leaders supported efforts to address nitrate concerns in southeast Minnesota drinking water while safeguarding the necessary tools to productively raise a corn crop. Thanks in part to this support, the State Legislature allocated \$10 million to voluntary efforts, including additional funding to the Minnesota Department of Health for well testing, well inventory, and education. In Washington, D.C., MCGA farmer-leaders advocated for a new

Farm Bill that protects crop insurance and bolsters the farm safety net along with economic relief for growers. We also advocated for the permanent removal of a barrier to year-round Unleaded 88/E15 sales nationwide and supported a trade agenda that would create meaningful market access for farmers.

On the market development front, Minnesota Corn invested checkoff funds in efforts to increase Unleaded 88 availability and promote biofuels to Minnesota drivers. Thanks in part to these initiatives, Minnesota reached a new milestone for Unleaded 88 in November when the 500th station in the state began offering the fuel. Additionally, Minnesota Corn continued efforts to develop the sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) industry, joining the Minnesota SAF Hub and advocating for tax credit guidelines that allow corn ethanol to play a role in decarbonizing air travel. We also supported third-party, science-based research focused on enhancing water quality and soil health, exploring innovative uses for corn, and maximizing the value of every bushel of corn grown in Minnesota.

Once again, we'd like to thank you for your support of MCGA and the Minnesota corn checkoff and your efforts on behalf of family farmers in the state. We're grateful for your work to increase opportunities for farmers and rural economies and look forward to working with you in 2025 to ensure a bright future for our state's agriculture industry.

Sincerely,



Jim Kanten
MCGA President



Duane Epland
MCR&PC Chair

2024 Minnesota Corn Production



Acres planted	8.2 million	- 4.7%
Yield*	174 bushels/acre	- 5.9%
Total production*	1.3 billion bushels	- 11.1%

2024 National Corn Production



Acres planted	90.6 million	- 4.3%
Yield*	179.3 bushels/acre	+ 1.1%
Total production*	14.9 billion bushels	- 3.1%

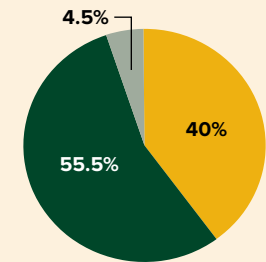
About the Minnesota Corn Growers Association

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
- Advocacy
- Education and Promotion

Total: \$534,115



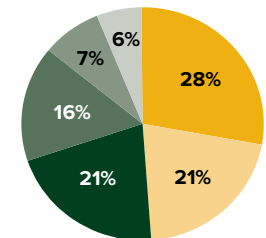
About the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council

The MCR&PC oversees the Minnesota corn checkoff, funds that are used to increase opportunities for corn farmers in the state. The council invests checkoff 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 Checkoff Investment Allocation

- Research and Utilization
- National Corn Growers Association
- Membership and Consumer Engagement
- Education, Outreach, and Promotion
- Export Programs
- Operations and Administration

Total: \$11,238,515



A central mission of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association is advocating for corn farmers in St. Paul and Washington, D.C. Below is a recap of those efforts in 2024.

Federal advocacy

Farm Bill/economic and disaster assistance

Throughout the year, MCGA advocated for Congress to pass a new Farm Bill that protects crop insurance and bolsters the farm safety net. A highlight of these efforts came in July, when Dana Allen-Tully testified during a U.S. House Agriculture Committee hearing titled “Financial Conditions in Farm



Dana Allen-Tully testifies in front of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee in July 2024

Country.” Allen-Tully said farmers faced significant economic headwinds that might not be fully appreciated until 2025 when they try to get loans but are unable to do so because they cannot demonstrate the ability to cash flow.

Without a new five-year Farm Bill, in December, MCGA farmer-leaders successfully advocated for passage of a continuing

resolution that extended the Farm Bill by a year and provided \$31 billion in economic and disaster relief to farmers. MCGA appreciates the work of Minnesota’s congressional delegation, including Senators Klobuchar and Smith and Representatives Craig, Finstad, Fischbach, Emmer, and Stauber, on efforts to support family farmers economically and looks forward to working with them in 2025 to pass a new five-year Farm Bill that protects crop insurance and strengthens the farm safety net.

Biofuels: E15 and SAF

MCGA farmer-leaders continued efforts to ensure the availability of E15 sales in the summer months. The organization successfully advocated for the EPA’s approval in February of a petition by eight Midwestern governors, including Minnesota Governor Walz, to allow permanent year-round E15 sales in their states beginning in 2025. The organization also successfully advocated for another one-year waiver by the Biden administration to allow for summertime sales. Farmer-leaders continue to urge passage of a permanent nationwide E15 fix at the federal level.

Additionally, MCGA farmer-leaders successfully advocated for use of the GREET model in the 40B sustainable aviation fuel blenders tax credit guidelines published by the U.S. Treasury Department. Farmer-leaders also advocated for a more tailored and accessible approach to climate smart agriculture practices within the 45Z clean fuel production tax credit. The 40B GREET model

took a bundled approach to CSA practices, which adds layers of complexity and cost that many farmers cannot handle.

Farmer-leaders also advocated for the use of validated models and aggregated non-public farm-level data by qualified third parties to measure reductions in feedstock carbon intensity for 45Z. For example, in 2022 and 2023, Minnesota Corn partnered with Eocene Environmental Group

to evaluate the soil, water and carbon impacts of the crop production practices of our board of directors. About 37,000 acres were assessed in 2022, and 39,000 were assessed in 2023. Eocene also ran the 2023 data through the GREET feedstock CI calculator. The analysis found that for corn acres in the assessment, the feedstock practices reduced the carbon intensity by 31% compared to the GREET U.S. average values in the model.



Nick Peterson (middle) and Dana Allen-Tully (second from right) participate in a water quality panel with Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Assistant Commissioner Dana Vanderbosch moderated by Brad Carlson.

State advocacy

Throughout 2024, Minnesota Corn farmer-leaders highlighted the proactive steps the organization was taking to address nitrate contamination in southeast Minnesota drinking water. This focus came after the EPA sustained a petition by environmental groups calling for additional action to address the issue.

For example, in a January panel discussion with Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Assistant Commissioner Dana Vanderbosch, Nick Peterson and Dana Allen-Tully said that Minnesota Corn invests corn checkoff funds each year in research focused on nitrogen management. They also said MCGA farmer-leaders support public policy, based on accepted science, that will protect groundwater by incentivizing farmers to speed up acceptance of new practices. Additionally, they said Minnesota Corn helps farmers adopt

and scale financially viable BMPs proven to protect groundwater and believes that solutions will be achieved faster and with better outcomes if interested parties work together.

During the legislative session, MCGA farmer-leaders supported efforts to increase voluntary adoption of BMPs and fund nitrate home water treatment, well testing, well inventory and education. This support contributed to the Legislature’s \$10 million allocation to address the issues.

MCGA farmer-leaders continued to advocate for corn farmers after the legislative session ended. In the fall, Allen-Tully hosted Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan for a farm visit to highlight the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program and conservation efforts by farmers. She said her farm is proud to be water quality certified and that farmers support the use of conservation practices.

Get involved! Help MCGA advocate on behalf of family corn farmers.

Learn more at mncorn.org/takeaction.

In 2024, Minnesota Corn sponsored dozens of programs and initiatives that engaged grassroots farmers, increased member awareness, and shaped consumer perceptions of the organizations, including:

County corn grower associations

Through its new County Sponsorship Program, Minnesota Corn supported the state's 52 county corn grower associations

as they held plot days, member events, golf tournaments, fuel promotion events, and more.



A scene from the Nobles County Corn & Soybean Growers Association golf outing.



Listening to speakers at the Renville County Corn & Soybean Growers Association annual meeting.

Minnesota Corn scholarship

Luke Gordon of Worthington, Kyle Hagen of Glencoe, Sarah Hagenow of Rio, Wisconsin, and Rena Johnson of Buffalo were the recipients of Minnesota Corn's

2024 young adult scholarships. Minnesota Corn will announce the 2025 winners in the spring.



Sarah Hagenow



Rena Johnson



Luke Gordon



Kyle Hagen

Twin Cities Road Crew programming

On behalf of Minnesota Corn, Twin Cities Road Crew held 30 in-person school assemblies and 10 digital programs, reaching 12,000 students with fun and engaging messages about corn and agriculture. The

agency also facilitated three stage shows at the Minnesota State Fair, created video content focused on kid friendly products using field corn, and ran a social media campaign on YouTube.

CommonGround Minnesota

In 2024, CommonGround Minnesota experienced an exciting year filled with new initiatives: a revamped website, a fresh newsletter, engaging events, and enthusiastic volunteers. Highlights of the year included a state conference, three food and farming trivia events, a CommonGround night out in Minneapolis, a farm dinner, and a virtual book club.



The CommonGround Night Out event in July featured a talk by Minneapolis restaurateur Ann Kim, pictured here.

Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership (MARL)

MARL graduated 23 farmers and agriculture professionals from the program in 2024 and began a new two-year class with 30 participants. The program held seminars for the new class in Austin and at Itasca State Park. Minnesota Corn has sponsored MARL since its inception in 2000.



MARL participants engage in a communication exercise during their seminar in December.

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom reached over 149,000 students in 2024, with schools in all 87 counties using its resources. The organization provided free curriculum, educational resources, grants, outreach and professional development opportunities to educators across the state to increase ag literacy through K-12 education, thanks in part to Minnesota Corn's support.

4-H

Thanks in part to Minnesota Corn, the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Plant & Soil Sciences Program had an eventful year in 2024. Activities included distributing crop/plant science kits for youth statewide, continuing its monthly webinar series for youth, hosting an "Explorers in Ag" program, and holding a statewide 4-H/FFA crop scouting contest.



Students identify corn growth stages during the Minnesota 4-H and FFA Crop Scouting Competition.

FFA

In 2024, more than 16,000 Minnesota students participated in FFA activities such as Career Development Events, conferences, and the state FFA convention, thanks in part to Minnesota Corn's support of the organization.

In 2024, Minnesota Corn invested more than \$2 million in 24 primary research projects and 10 Innovation Grant research projects. The organization also invested in efforts to commercialize new uses for corn and ethanol, develop markets for biofuels, and build export markets. The following is a snapshot of these projects. Learn more at mncorn.org/research.



Professor Tim Griffis gives a tour of the University of Minnesota mesocosm facility.

Mitigating Cold and Warm Season Nitrogen Losses from Corn Systems

Principal investigator: Tim Griffis, Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Soil, Water, and Climate

Summary: The study evaluated how spring freeze-thaw cycles influence reactive nitrogen losses and whether winter rye cover

crops and enhanced efficiency fertilizers can mitigate those losses, especially in the context of warmer growing seasons. The research has been conducted in indoor growing chambers called mesocosms.

Is Fixed Ammonium a Part of Nitrogen Cycling in Soils?

Principal investigator: Daniel Kaiser, Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Soil, Water, and Climate

Summary: This project assessed how corn responds to nitrogen at various levels of potassium fertilization. The projects aimed to determine how much fixed ammonium is present in soils, how fixed ammonium could be impacted by fixed potassium and vice versa, and ultimately whether fixed ammonium relates to the amount of nitrate present in the soil.

Direct Conversion of Corn-Derived Carbohydrates to Ether-Based Products

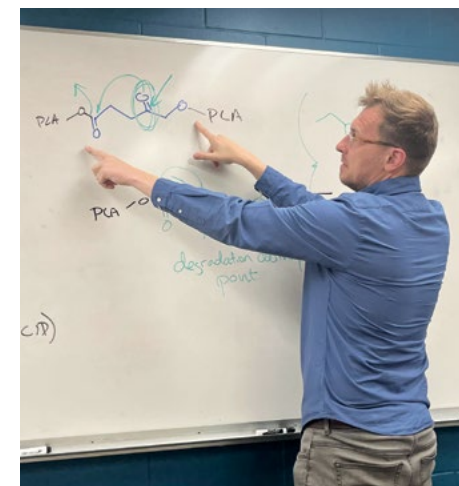
Principal investigator: Paul Dauenhauer, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering & Materials Science, University of Minnesota

Summary: The study assessed the potential of a chemical process to convert corn to methanol and/or dimethyl-ether (DME), a chemical feedstock to produce sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and materials such as polymers.

Engineering Degradability into Corn-based Plastics

Principal investigator: Thomas R. Hoye, Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Chemistry

Summary: Through this project, researchers aimed to develop a new strategy to incorporate degradable chemical entities into the backbones of polyesters, leading to more easily degraded versions of polylactide and other bioderived polyesters. The resulting smaller polyester fragments could then be more easily consumed by microbes in natural settings of soil and water or in inoculated environments of sewage treatment plants and industrial composting facilities.



Professor Ian Tonks gives an overview of the designer monomer that researchers are studying in the project.

Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center Education Program

Project lead: Warren Formo, Executive Director, Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center

Summary: The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center (MAWRC) is a research and education organization dedicated to increasing awareness of

water-related issues within the agricultural community and enhancing communication and research efforts to help farmers address water-related issues. MAWRC also conducts targeted outreach through its Discovery Farms program to inform non-farmers of the significant and extensive conservation efforts of Minnesota corn farmers, building positive perceptions toward corn farmers.

Optimization for the Production of Mevalonate from Corn

Project lead: Valerian Materials

Summary: With support from Minnesota Corn, Valerian Materials accelerated its production of mevalonate, the precursor material of its bio-based monomer, Nuvone. Nuvone can be used to make a polymer called methyl-1,5-pentanediol (MPD), which is used in adhesives, sealants, and other polyurethane products.

Minnesota Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Hub

Project lead: GREATER MSP

Summary: The Minnesota SAF Hub is a partnership led by the organization GREATER MSP in conjunction with leading corporations such as Delta Airlines, Ecolab, and Xcel Energy. The goal is to scale the production and use of SAF in Minnesota. Minnesota Corn joined the Hub as part of its goal of decarbonizing air transportation using renewable fuels, including corn ethanol-based SAF.

Dialing in the Most Corn-Profitable and Environmentally Responsible Nitrogen Rate

Principal investigator: Fabian Fernandez, Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Soil, Water, and Climate

Summary: The study used the common approach to calculate economic optimum nitrogen rates by establishing several nitrogen rates from zero to well above where a corn response was expected. In addition, the researchers integrated a comprehensive measurement of response curves for nitrogen loss pathways (nitrate leaching, nitrous oxide emissions, and ammonia volatilization).



Graduate student Zac Aanerud collects nitrate water samples from tile drainage.

Nitrogen Smart Online/ Advancing Nitrogen Smart

Project lead: Brad Carlson, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Water Resources Center

Summary: Nitrogen Smart is an educational program for producers that presents fundamentals and advanced topics for maximizing economic return on nitrogen

investments while minimizing nitrogen losses. Topics are offered online as self-guided courses, and University of Minnesota Extension also offers periodic in-person courses. In 2024, University of Minnesota Extension adopted a multimedia approach to Nitrogen Smart to reach a broad audience. This included digital content such as podcasts and short videos.

Biofuel Promotion

Project lead: Growth Energy, Nebraska Corn, Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association

Summary: Minnesota Corn invested in two comprehensive biofuel promotion campaigns in 2024: the “Unleaded88: Engine Smart. Earth Kind” campaign on the Big Ten Network and Growth Energy’s “Get Biofuel” campaign. Led by Nebraska Corn and supported by 12 commodity groups, the “Unleaded88” campaign was aired across BTN games and was the presenting sponsor of 2:30 p.m. football games and all women’s volleyball games. Meanwhile, the “Get Biofuel” campaign included ads

touting the benefits of Unleaded 88 on the apps GasBuddy and Waze, partnerships with fuel stations across the Midwest, and posts by social media influencers on the benefits of Unleaded 88. Thanks to the campaign’s success at reaching consumers in 2023, it expanded in 2024 into new markets, including Rochester and Mankato. Additionally, through its partnership with the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association, Minnesota Corn supported fuel promotion events, digital marketing efforts, and technical assistance and training for fuel retailers. Thanks in part to these efforts, Minnesota was on track to break a new record for annual Unleaded 88 sales in 2024.

Ethanol Education and Technical Support

Project lead: MEG Corp

Summary: On behalf of Minnesota Corn, MEG Corp conducted ethanol education for 380 post-secondary students throughout the state. That included for students studying to become automotive technicians, small engine technicians, and powersports technicians. The company also updated and promoted a high school ethanol education lesson package and provided education as requested to fleets, fuel distributors, and auto techs/salespeople.



MEG Corp’s Hoon Ge presents at an ethanol workshop for high school students

Export Market Development

Project lead: U.S. Grains Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Ag Marketing & Development Division

Summary: The U.S. Grains Council continued its efforts in 2024 to develop lasting partnerships with international customers and end-users that result in stronger, more dynamic markets. The council also worked with partners like Minnesota Corn to present U.S. farmers with opportunities for export growth. For example, in August, the council collaborated with Minnesota Corn on a trade mission for Taiwanese grain producers, taking the group to the farm of Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion

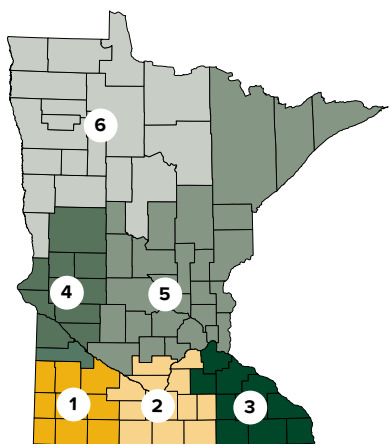
Council Member Jim O’Connor for a visit. The organization also enlisted O’Connor to present at its 2023-24 *Corn Harvest Quality Report* event in South Korea and included council member John Mages on its annual Grain Export Mission to Southeast Asia.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation carried out market development activities in more than 95 countries in 2024, using funds from Minnesota Corn for market development programs for U.S. beef in Japan and South Korea. Meanwhile, Minnesota Corn continued to support an in-market representative in Taiwan through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Ag Marketing & Development Division in 2024.





















Jim O’Connor speaks during the U.S. Grains Council’s 2023-24 *Corn Harvest Quality Report* event in South Korea.

Minnesota Corn Growers Association Board of Directors, 2024-25

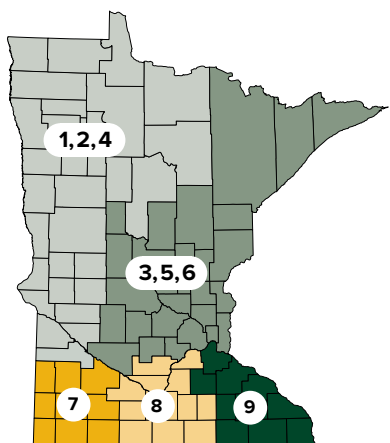


MCCA District Map













<p>Jim Kanten <i>President</i> Milan At Large</p> 	<p>Rob Tate <i>Secretary</i> Cannon Falls District 3</p> 	<p>Angela Guentzel Kasota At Large</p> 	<p>Clayton Johnson Pipestone District 1</p> 	<p>Nick Peterson Clear Lake District 5</p> 	<p>Brian Thalmann Plato District 5</p> 
<p>Wesley Beck <i>First Vice President</i> St. James At Large</p> 	<p>Dana Allen-Tully <i>Past President/ Chair of the Board</i> Eyota District 3</p> 	<p>Tom Haag Eden Valley At Large</p> 	<p>Brad Neumann Wabasso District 1</p> 	<p>John Swanson Mentor District 6</p> 	<p>David (D.J.) VanKlompenburg Montevideo At Large</p> 
<p>Todd Wentzel <i>Treasurer</i> Murdock District 4</p> 	<p>Bryan Biegler Lake Wilson At Large</p> 	<p>Blair Hoseth Mahnomen District 6</p> 	<p>Ellyn Oelfke Glencoe District 2</p> 	<p>Richard Syverson Clontarf District 4</p> 	<p>Harold Wolle Jr.* Madelia District 2</p> 

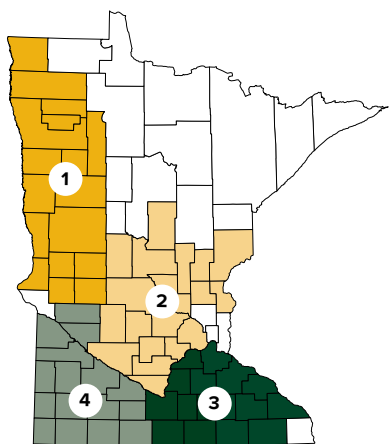
*NCGA Board member

Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council, 2024-25



MCR&PC District Map

<p>Duane Epland <i>Chair</i> Twin Lakes District 8</p> 	<p>Jordan Goblish <i>Treasurer</i> Vesta District 7</p> 	<p>Doug Albin Clarkfield District 1,2,4</p> 	<p>Rodney Moe Waltham District 9</p> 	<p>Gary Prescher Delavan District 8</p> 	<p>Chad Willis Willmar District 3,5,6</p> 
<p>John Mages <i>Vice Chair</i> Belgrade District 3,5,6</p> 	<p>Scott Winslow <i>Secretary</i> Fountain District 9</p> 	<p>Brandon Fast Mountain Lake District 7</p> 	<p>James O'Connor Blooming Prairie District 8</p> 	<p>David Vipond Mahnomen District 1,2,4</p> 	<p>Thom Petersen Ex-Officio Minnesota Department of Agriculture</p> 



District Field Manager Coverage Areas

Dr. Adam Birr
Executive Director, CEO

Amanda Bilek
Senior Public Policy Director

Emily Burns
District Field Manager (District 2)

Missy Gilbertson
Director of Grower Services and Operations

Nate Gotlieb
Communications Director

Sherrie Graves
Office Manager

Luke Haggerty
District Field Manager (District 1)

Devin Hoffarth
Market Development & Industry Relations Director

Jan Horstmann
Membership & Compliance Manager

Macy Kahler
District Field Manager (District 4)

Dr. Maciej Kazula
Research Director

Wuraola Oyebamiji, CPA
Senior Finance Director

Kelly Stanek
Program Manager

Alex Trunnell
Public Policy Manager

Kaylee Wendt
District Field Manager (District 3)



Grassroots led. Results driven.

Each year, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council invests corn checkoff funds in dozens of research, promotion, and outreach efforts aimed at increasing opportunities for corn farmers while enhancing quality of life. Similarly, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Board of Directors leads grassroots advocacy in St. Paul and Washington, D.C., on behalf of the organization's 6,700 members around the state. MCGA farmer-leaders build relationships with policymakers, testify about the potential impact of legislation, and rally support in their communities for policies that benefit rural economies.

So, how do farmer-leaders decide where to place their efforts?

It all starts with feedback from the state's corn farmers. Each year, Minnesota Corn farmer-leaders have multiple touch points with farmers across the state through surveys, county meetings, and events such as MN Ag Expo and Farmfest, helping to shape their priorities for the year. They also meet within small focus teams of farmer-leaders to set priorities. (Focus teams include both MCR&PC and MCGA board members.) The Discovery & Development Team sets research priorities. The Membership & Consumer Engagement Team sets agriculture education, community and member engagement, and public outreach goals. And the Utilization Team sets priorities for biofuels, export market development, and new uses commercialization.

After that, board and council members update Minnesota Corn's strategic plan with the latest priorities for research, market development, and community outreach. Finally, they develop and finalize a budget that gives the organization resources and support to meet its goals through a wide breadth of investments.

Then, the focus teams get to work, seeking and evaluating proposals from researchers and community organizations aimed at accomplishing their goals. They make recommendations for project funding to the full board and council, giving the council the resources it needs to evaluate checkoff investments.

Meanwhile, the MCGA Government Relations Committee reviews legislation and other initiatives for consideration by the full MCGA board. The committee utilizes the MCGA Resolutions Book, which is finalized by delegates to the organization's annual meeting at MN Ag Expo, as a guide for its work.

Learn more about Minnesota Corn's grassroots-driven investment process and read updates on the latest checkoff-funded projects at our website, mncorn.org. Learn more about the benefits of MCGA membership and how it powers MCGA's grassroots advocacy at mncorn.org/join. We'd love to have you join us!

2024 Annual Report

**Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council**

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