

Corn Talk

Inside:

- Analysis: Checkoff delivers strong return on investment
- Investigating a new, more efficient path from corn to energy
- Minnesota Corn-supported programs develop future ag leaders

Official Publication of Minnesota Corn



Checkoff Delivers

How the Minnesota corn checkoff builds markets, increases on-farm productivity, and provides opportunities for communities.





Dear Minnesota corn farmers,

We hope you had a safe and healthy harvest season and are preparing to enjoy well-deserved time off with loved ones. As we head into winter, we want to acknowledge the financial realities many of you are facing. Weak crop prices, high input costs, and limited market opportunities continue to create economic challenges across farm country. Recent reports from the Minneapolis Fed and others reflect that reality, showing declining income, rising debt, and stagnant working capital.

These challenges underscore why our work matters more than ever. Minnesota corn farmers need targeted investments in promising new markets, science-based research that helps farmers get more from every input, and meaningful access to international markets built on sound policy and strong partnerships.

That's where Minnesota Corn comes in.

In this issue of Corn Talk, you'll read how Minnesota corn checkoff investments are laying the groundwork for new market opportunities while improving quality of life across the state. This message anchors our new "Checkoff Delivers" outreach campaign, which launched statewide this fall. We hope it's clear that Checkoff Delivers isn't just a slogan—it's the foundation of our work to identify and promote opportunities for corn farmers.

This work is possible because of the strong collaboration between our two organizations—the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), which recently celebrated its 35th anniversary. Together, we work hand-in-hand on your behalf—meeting jointly to evaluate projects and ensure farmer dollars deliver measurable results. And without the hard work of MCGA's public policy team, many of those checkoff investments that create opportunities for farmers simply wouldn't be possible.

To close, we remain deeply grateful for your partnership in building a stronger future for Minnesota agriculture. We know challenges lie ahead, but with hard work, humility, and ingenuity, we'll continue delivering the opportunities that ensure a prosperous, sustainable future for farmers everywhere.

With gratitude.

Wes Beck
President, Minnesota
Corn Growers Association



John Mages
Chair, Minnesota Corn Research &
Promotion Council



Look for this icon in this issue to learn about research, promotion and outreach efforts fueled by farmers' investment in the Minnesota corn checkoff.

Corn Talk

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 2025
Editor: Nate Gottlieb

Fall by the numbers

35

Years since the creation of
the Minnesota Corn Research
& Promotion Council, deliver-
ing measurable returns
for farmers.

69.5

 MILLION

Gallons of E15 sold in
Minnesota in the first six
months of 2025 — a pace that
underscores consumer de-
mand for higher biofuel blends.

50%

Potential fuel yield increase
from new catalyst-driven
methanol research supported
by Minnesota Corn.

Follow us on social media:



Analysis:

Corn checkoff delivers strong ROI

Minnesota corn farmers have long asked: What return do we get from our checkoff investment? A new analysis from Decision Innovation Solutions helps answer that question — and the results show that Minnesota's checkoff continues to deliver powerful returns. This analysis looks at how strategic investments in research, market development, and promotional efforts from 2005 to 2024 have benefited corn farmers across Minnesota.

Market Development

One of the standout findings indicates that a 1% increase in market development expenditures—amounting to approximately \$23,499—could lead to a notable 0.06% rise in overall corn usage in Minnesota. This translates to an additional 468,003 bushels in corn demand, valued at \$2.04 million. This suggests a multiplier effect of 87:1 for overall market development expenditures.

Specific market development initiatives

Since 2005, Minnesota Corn has invested more than \$38 million towards domestic and global market development and research activities for ethanol and coproducts.

Ethanol

Ethanol production, a significant driver of corn demand, is illustrated in the modeling to have an even greater ROI. A 1% increase in marketing efforts is projected to yield approximately 631,992 extra bushels, valued at \$2.75 million. This results in a leveraged multiplier effect of

117:1, showcasing the effectiveness of the council's initiatives in boosting the biofuel sector.

DDGS

A 1% increase in market development expenditures is anticipated to generate an additional 15,799 tons of

exports. Had there not been any U.S. corn export promotion expenditures during the 2000-2024 period, U.S. corn exports would have been 15% lower than they were over that period. The study estimated that for every additional \$1 million invested in corn export promotion, Minnesota could

Nitrogen Research and Education Initiative

Minnesota Corn's nitrogen initiative promotes best practices for nitrogen management in Minnesota corn production. Funding has been allocated to areas such as education, primary research, innovation grants, and sponsorship for a range of topics, including water and air quality, soil fertility, agronomy, plant genetics, and corn utilization. The stability of the nitrogen use efficiency ratio at levels fluctuating around 0.76 is a strong indicator that nitrogen applied for corn production is being used quite efficiently and effectively.

Trendline corn yields have increased 21% since 2006, while nitrogen use efficiency has held steady — proof that farmers are producing more with the same nutrients. Every \$1,000 invested in the initiative leads to an estimated 14 tons of nitrogen retained statewide.

Looking forward

The modeling highlights the importance of sustained investment in market development and research to maximize the economic benefits of corn production. As the MCR&PC continues to identify and promote opportunities for growth in the corn sector, these findings underscore the vital role of the checkoff program in supporting Minnesota's agricultural economy and helping farmers optimize their operations.



By the numbers Minnesota corn checkoff analysis

87:1

Multiplier effect of market development expenses through the Minnesota corn checkoff

117:1

Multiplier effect of ethanol market development expenses through the checkoff

14

Tons of nitrogen retained for each \$1,000 invested through Minnesota Corn's nitrogen initiative

15%

Share of U.S. corn exports between 2000 and 2024 linked to U.S. export promotion efforts, including work by the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council



DDGS usage, valued at approximately \$2.45 million—a multiplier effect of 104:1.

Exports

U.S. corn export promotion, funded through the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council and supported by Minnesota Corn, had a positive and statistically significant impact on U.S. corn

see an increase of 8.63 million bushels in corn exports, resulting in an average annual value of approximately \$32.4 million. Notably, the elasticity of demand for ethanol and DDGS exports suggests that without these efforts, exports could have been reduced by 20% and 37% respectively.

Checkoff Research Powering Progress

by Luke Haggerty
Minnesota Corn Research &
District Field Manager



This season has tested Minnesota farmers' resilience. Yet even in a challenging year, new ideas, technology, and farmer-driven research are paving the way for stronger, more sustainable farms, new uses, and greater efficiencies ahead. Your checkoff dollars are working to keep nutrients in the field, improve profitability, and open doors to new markets for Minnesota corn.

From soil to sky, farmer-funded research continues to deliver new solutions that strengthen farming today and open opportunities for the next generation.

At the University of Minnesota, Dr. Dan Kaiser and Dr. Fabian Fernandez have refined



Luke Haggerty

nitrogen rate guidelines to help farmers apply fertilizer more efficiently—with the goal of maximizing profitability. Their work, supported by the Minnesota corn checkoff, adds new data from the 2022–2024 growing seasons to the state's long-term dataset, resulting in updated recommendations and new tools, including the revised Fertilizing Corn in Minnesota publication and the Corn Nitrogen Rate Calculator.

Together, these resources help farmers make informed decisions that boost both economic and environmental performance across Minnesota's corn acres.

In another area of innovation, Dr. Marc Hillmyer is tackling a challenge that blends productivity with stewardship by creating biodegradable fertilizer coatings that control nutrient release without leaving microplastic residues. "We are excited to continue our work on innocuous degradable fertilizer coatings," Hillmyer said. "This addresses a key concern of plastic and microplastic waste with incumbent technologies." This slow nitrogen-release technology could feed crops throughout the entire growing season, helping farmers get more from every pound of fertilizer.

Together, these projects showcase how Minnesota corn checkoff investments are helping farmers lead the way—driving progress that's good for the land, good for the economy, and good for the future of agriculture.

As the 2025 season comes to a close, our farmer-led Discovery & Development Team will begin reviewing research proposals, seeking projects that are close to commercialization, make substantial use of corn, and deliver practical tools farmers can use right here in Minnesota to stay competitive and profitable.

Thank you for making this work possible. Stay tuned for updates on the 2026 research proposals; the next wave of innovation starts with you.

Innovation Grants drive on-farm results

From variable-rate fertility trials to on-farm soil health demonstrations, Minnesota Corn's Innovation Grant program puts farmer ideas to work across the state. In 2024, participating farmers hosted field days and shared results with more than 125 growers, agronomists, and local partners. These farmer-led projects, supported by university and agency collaborators, combine practical experience with scientific analysis to test new tools, practices, and technologies.

- **Peter Anthony (Anthony Farms, Nicollet County)** – Partnered with Dr. Yuxin Miao (UMN) to evaluate variable-rate nitrogen management in manure-applied corn fields, finding that precision N strategies improved profitability by up to 15% and boosted nitrogen-use efficiency while reducing overall fertilizer rates.
- **Les Anderson (Goodhue County)** – Tested Pivot Bio as a nitrogen replacement in corn production, seeing a 4–12 bushel yield advantage across multiple fields, especially under wet conditions that favored nitrogen retention.
- **Dr. Kirk Stueve (Stueve Ag Enterprises, Traverse County, MN)** – Partnered with Dr. Yuxin Miao (UMN) to evaluate variable-rate sulfur application across multiple on-farm sites, identifying site-specific yield and profit gains and demonstrating the value of precision sulfur management for improving efficiency.

- **Blair Hoseth (Mahnommen County)** – Compared manure and commercial fertilizer treatments in corn production, finding comparable yields with lower input costs—saving up to \$70 per acre on manure-applied ground. Hoseth also hosted a field day to share results and discuss opportunities for farmers to improve nutrient efficiency.
- **Vance Johnson (Wilkin County)** – Completed the fifth year of on-farm tillage comparisons evaluating conventional, strip-till, and no-till systems. Despite weather extremes, the site continues to show improving soil structure and infiltration under reduced tillage. The team hosted their fourth annual field day featuring live demos, farmer panels, and hands-on soil health tests.
- **Mikayla Tabert (Trinity Creek Ranch, Red Lake County)** – Completed a six-year Innovation Grant study on long-term cover cropping, tracking soil health and economics across a corn–soybean–wheat–sunflower rotation. Results showed limited yield benefits and higher seed costs, but soil tests revealed greater microbial activity and potential \$4 per acre nitrogen savings from improved nutrient cycling.

We extend appreciation to the farmers, researchers, and local partners who made these projects possible. Their willingness to test new ideas and share results continues to drive progress for Minnesota corn growers.

Advocacy Efforts Go Deeper than Congress or the State Legislature

by Amanda Bilek
Senior Public Policy Director

When most people hear the word advocacy, they probably associate images of the halls of Congress in Washington D.C. or the corridors of the State Legislature in St. Paul. Although grassroots and direct lobbying efforts are fundamental to our advocacy efforts, the various efforts our public policy team and farmer-leaders are engaged with on a daily basis extend far beyond the hallowed halls of D.C. or St. Paul. A lot of our advocacy efforts, especially at the state or federal agency level might not be the most glamorous and moored in dry comment letters on regulatory actions, but these regulatory decisions can have just as big of an impact—or sometimes greater—on the long-term profitability of Minnesota corn farmers as legislative proposals enacted into law. It is also these technical comment letters that utilize key insights from research funded by the Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council to bring to bear the real-world impact of a regulatory decision on individual corn farming operations.

A recent example of our regulatory advocacy approach is contained in extensive organizational comments to the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on an updated draft to the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS). MN Corn's take home message is the updated draft NRS needs additional fine-tuning to meet the state's 2024 nutrient reduction goals while ensuring the viability of corn farmers.

Our comments covered several areas but perhaps the most significant comment related to the baseline assumptions.



Amanda Bilek

The updated NRS includes baseline assumptions on the effectiveness of nitrogen removal

Minnesota Corn represents the interests of corn farmers at the regulatory, administrative, and legal level in addition to direct and grassroots advocacy in St. Paul and Washington D.C.

practices— which underpin MPCA's modeling for reaching 2040 goals—that have limited application to Minnesota's corn farmers. Many of the suggested practices are based on data gathered from research conducted outside of Minnesota. Given the state's unique soils, climate, and cropping system, the effectiveness of nitrogen removal practices are different in Minnesota than in other states. Instead, more research should be done to quantify the effectiveness of nitrogen removal practices in Minnesota and to leverage the research work at the University of Minnesota, which Minnesota corn farmers have invested in through the Minnesota Corn Checkoff. You can read our full summary and comment letter at www.mncorn.org. A final draft NRS is due in early 2026 where we will be able to assess if our regulatory advocacy efforts made an impact in the final document.

Another tool in our advocacy toolbox is litigation-related efforts. These efforts are entirely funded and supported by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) since checkoff funds are not permitted for litigation activities. If you are a member of MCGA, thank you! In the past several months your membership has enabled us to defend corn farmers' freedom to operate by intervening on two separate lawsuits brought by environmental activists against

The activist groups started these lawsuits to try to insert the courts into the normal administrative rulemaking process to influence administrative agencies to adopt rules that the activist groups promote. The primary reason we are intervening is to fight back against efforts to weaponize the courts in the rulemaking process and to ensure that the rulemaking process is left to the administrative agencies where it belongs. If you are not an MCGA member, now is a great time to join because we expect litigation pressure to increase.

Look for future articles and stories that dive a little deeper into our advocacy efforts and how the MCGA and the MCR&PC work together to identify and promote opportunities for corn growers while enhancing quality of life.

Minnesota agencies seeking to increase regulation on feedlots, commercial fertilizer, and pesticide-treated seed.

Minnesota Corn celebrates farm safety week



The third week of September was recognized as National Farm Safety and Health Week 2025, and Minnesota Corn participated in an event to recognize the importance of farm safety. We joined University of Minnesota Extension, state legislators, and Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen at the Krekelberg family farm to honor the event. You can find farm safety resources on our website.



U.S. corn, ethanol exports increase with one month of reporting remaining



In market year 2024/2025, global demand for ethanol has seen significant growth. The increasing push for biofuel blending by various countries, along with strong industrial demand from India, has driven up ethanol sales.

Recent data on ethanol exports indicates noteworthy year-over-year changes among the top five markets in the first 11 months of FY25:

- Canada: Up 15%
- EU-27: Up an impressive 116%
- UK: Down 3%
- India: Up 40%
- Colombia: Up 3%

Additionally, Mexico remains the primary destination for U.S. corn exports, which have increased by 13.5%. Notably, all five of the top export markets for U.S. corn recorded year-over-year increases.

Meanwhile, exports of DDGS (Dried Distillers Grains with Solubles) have remained stable, despite some fluctuations in specific markets.

In Canada, which is Minnesota's primary export destination for corn and corn products, there have been significant declines in U.S. corn exports, with DDGS exports also experiencing a slight decrease.

In collaboration with the U.S. Grains and Bioproducts

Council, the U.S. Meat Export Federation, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Corn uses corn checkoff funds to develop global markets. To learn more about Minnesota Corn's market development initiatives, visit mncorn.org.

Exporting U.S. Corn in all forms

Market year 24/25 (September-July)

Product	Quantity (bu)	Value (\$)	% Change
Corn	2,602,818,469		▲ 26.9%
		\$14,952,889,154	
DDGS	1,372,016,412		▼ -0.4%
		\$2,561,075,922	
Pork + pork products	488,206,780		▼ -0.9%
		\$7,754,353,355	
Poultry meat + products	260,281,886		▼ -7.9%
		\$5,087,862,027	
Ethanol	229,279,468		▲ 23.1%
		\$4,198,478,959	
Beef + beef products	126,491,589		▼ -3.6%
		\$9,157,800,909	
Corn gluten feed/meal	43,974,843		▲ 2.7%
		\$524,584,644	
ALL	5,123,069,448		▲ 12.4%
		\$44,237,044,970	

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data; Feed conversions from FAS/OGA

South Korea crop delegation visits MN



Tim Waibel shows the South Korean delegation the equipment in his shop during a farm visit in September.

Standing in front of his corn crop, Courtland farmer Tim Waibel explained to a group of South Korean grain buyers the importance of moisture levels when deciding when it's time for harvest.

"When you start harvesting corn that is 18% moisture, it is easy to get it over-dry," he said. "And if it's too wet, it takes too much money in gas and electricity to [dry] it."

Waibel's comments came at the end of a two-day tour the South Korean group took of agricultural sites around south-central Minnesota in September. The group also visited the CHS river terminal in Savage, the UFC shuttle terminal in Brown-ton, CHS headquarters, and the Minnesota Corn office.

The tour was organized by U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council with in-state support from Minnesota Corn. The goal was to increase confidence among South Korean buyers in U.S. corn, which the council says could lead them to purchase more American corn and corn coproducts.

South Korea has one of the world's 15 largest economies but is limited in its agriculture production by the fact that about 70% of its land is mountainous, according to USDA. Much of its agricultural land is dedicated to rice production, meaning that the country depends on imports almost all its grains.

The feed industry is South Korea's primary user of grains, and typically, about 65% of the country's feed supply is comprised of corn. (Wheat also is used for feed in South Korea, depending on price.) In total, South Korea uses approximately 11.5 million metric tons of corn annually, which is equivalent to 453 million bushels.

Before 2020, the U.S. had approximately 30% to 40% of the annual market share of grains in South Korea. U.S. corn exports to the country dipped to almost zero because of a 2019 regulatory change, but they have rebounded this year back to about 25%, driven by abundant U.S. supplies at competitive prices.

How Minnesota Corn Builds Consumer Demand for Biofuels

Strategic partnerships, targeted outreach underpin the strategy



Standing outside Huntington Bank Stadium on a Saturday morning in

September, members of the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association (MBA) staff spoke with Gopher football fans about the many benefits of Unleaded 88. Minnesota Corn supports MBA's efforts to reach consumers with positive, fact-based information about biofuel blends.

Unleaded 88 costs less than regular unleaded and can be used in vehicles model year 2001 and newer, they noted. They also distributed Unleaded 88 brochures and branded T-shirts to fans.

The effort was emblematic of Minnesota Corn's approach to increasing driver demand for Unleaded 88, E85, and other biofuel blends. Each year, Minnesota Corn invests in strategic partnerships and targeted outreach campaigns that reach consumers where they are. The organization also builds support for ethanol through educational programming and investments in biofuel infrastructure.

It's part of Minnesota Corn's broader, checkoff-supported market development strategy—ensuring that every investment delivers measurable returns in expanded ethanol use and stronger markets for Minnesota corn.

"Every gallon of Unleaded 88 sold helps strengthen demand for our crop," Minnesota Corn Growers Association President Wes Beck said. "That's why we invest in these partnerships—they connect the work we do on the farm to the drivers fueling up every day."

Consumer outreach

Promoting Unleaded 88 to Minnesota drivers has been a core tenet of Minnesota Corn's work since the fuel was approved for sale by the EPA in 2011. In recent years, the organization has promoted Unleaded 88 through the Better Fuel Initiative and spokesperson Chris Hawkey.

Beginning in 2024, Minnesota Corn partnered with MBA to increase consumer awareness of the higher-ethanol blend. With Minnesota Corn's support, MBA has promoted Unleaded 88 to Twin Cities drivers through radio advertising and on-site fuel promotion events, reaching hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans with positive messages about the fuel. MBA also maintains an online biofuel station finder tool and offers technical assistance to fuel stations.

New in 2025, MBA partnered with KS95 to promote Unleaded 88 at the Minnesota State Fair—bringing the message to one of the state's largest events.



Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association staff pose with Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen at their Unleaded 88 table at the State Fair. Minnesota Corn has been partnering with MBA this year to promote Unleaded 88 to consumers.

Minnesota Corn also continues to support the national "Reasons to Choose" campaign, led by Nebraska Corn, which highlights how Unleaded 88 is approved for more than 95% of cars on the road, saves drivers money at the pump, and supports U.S. farmers. New this year, the campaign is airing ads on ESPN.

In addition, county corn grower associations continue to host community fuel promotions statewide—meeting drivers face-to-face and helping them understand the value of choosing higher-ethanol blends.

Thanks in part to these efforts, reported Unleaded 88 sales in Minnesota have nearly doubled since 2020. More than 520 fuel stations across the state now offer the blend—up from just 90 in 2015.

Educational opportunities

Along with consumer outreach, Minnesota Corn supports partnerships that educate key stakeholders about ethanol and biofuel blends. The organization is a longtime supporter of MEG Corp, a fuel consulting firm that addresses myths about ethanol among young auto technicians. With support from Minnesota Corn, MEG Corp has developed an ethanol lesson plan and holds workshops with students to promote the benefits of the fuel.

Beyond Minnesota, Minnesota Corn is supporting the Renewable Fuels Association's program to help California fuel retailers prepare to sell E15. The initiative provides technical guidance, training, and outreach to station operators as they upgrade infrastructure and prepare for consumer adoption. The timing is significant: Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed AB 30 into law, officially approving E15 sales statewide while environmental review is finalized. With California representing the nation's largest fuel market, this development opens enormous new demand potential—and Minnesota Corn's investment ensures that Minnesota farmers have a seat at the table as that market grows.

Minnesota Corn also supports RFA's partnership with Girls Auto Clinic, a Philadelphia-based organization that equips women with the knowledge and confidence to take charge of their automotive experiences. RFA sponsors the group's "Car Care" program, which helps broaden understanding of ethanol's role in fueling a sustainable future.

Read more about Minnesota Corn's approach to biofuel promotion at mncorn.org/utilization.

The crop is innovation:

University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable Polymers

by Jonathan Eisenthal



At the University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable

Polymers, research-

ers are reimagining how everyday materials are made — using feedstocks like corn instead of petroleum. For more than a decade, Minnesota Corn has supported this work, helping build a new generation of chemists focused on renewable, recyclable materials.

The university launched CSP in 2009, anticipating that its mission and its resources would attract the attention and support of both the scientific community and private industries looking for answers to real-world problems.

The Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) added its support to CSP at a critical juncture, in 2014. CSP had just been granted a long-term funding stream from the National Science Foundation's Chemical Centers of Innovation (CCI) program. The council's awarding of funds from the checkoff allowed CSP to extend and fully fund research ideas that have wrought a series of revolutionary processes and products that use corn as a feedstock.

Chad and Krista Willis are Willmar-area farmers that have been active in promoting the uses of corn for more than two decades. Krista volunteers with CommonGround Minnesota, an organization that brings farm women and social influencers together to help communicate how farming and food production are really done and why farmers make the choices they do. Chad Willis has been

actively involved in corn grower organizations, including serving in leadership roles in MCR&PC and the U.S. Grains Council. Chad and Krista both support investing in scientific research that pursues the environmental benefits to using corn as feedstock.

"The Corn Council funds research that will hopefully benefit farmers in the future," Willis said. "When you make an investment, you don't know if it's going to pay off or not. That's why they call it research. The whole world has gone to more renewables for plastics and other products. So why not make it from corn?"

Why it matters: Corn-based polymers

Increasing the utility of corn-based chemicals could create new demand for corn while improving the sustainability of consumer products.

They both feel that consumers drive this equation that favors renewables, and the research at the Center for Sustainable Polymers is a very efficient investment in pursuit of demonstrating that corn=environmental benefit.

Krista said, "We need to keep corn in front of them—science and industry—to help them see it as the multi-tool with excellent applications in food, fuel, and energy."

CSP's growing stable of spinoff companies prove the concept: Låkril Technologies, Valerian Materials, Phoam Labs, and Loop CO2 have all been born at CSP, and use corn to make plastics and other industrial

materials. Phoam Labs offers a new take on a ubiquitous product—the hard foam used to make floral arrangements. Their version is biobased and much more earth friendly. LoopCO2 has created a bioplastic that features accelerated decomposition when composted. In 2022, Valerian Materials became the leader of a federal program called BioMADE, which included 9 new projects, and won \$20.6 million in federal funding. All these companies that originated with CSP research promise a future where we won't see massive islands of plastic swirling in the middle of the world's oceans.

Watts offered her personal outlook: "For me, I would say that I want to solve problems that are important to the future of our world without doing harm. And so, the concept of doing research and gaining a deep understanding of how to do chemical research, with the overarching concept of sustainability: how we make materials, where we get those materials from, how we process them, how we might use them and where they end up—this is all critically important."

"Minnesota Corn Growers and Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council really have focused on supporting the research projects that fall under the umbrella that CSP cares about," Watts said.

Chad Willis says farmers fund science in "pursuit of more grind." More uses for those corn kernels. Ethanol fuel is the model for success, showing how a new use can support markets and improve farmer prosperity, while also improving environmental outcomes. Working in partnership with both industry and science is fundamental to the ethanol industry, and it is proving to be key to the development of the next corn-based energy use — sustainable aviation fuel.

"We're following that same playbook of funding sound science in pursuit of goals driven, ultimately, by consumers," he said.

That kind of innovation and success has created a national reputation for the Center for Sustainable Polymers. CSP's beacon drew Annabelle Watts, who pursued her graduate and post graduate research here from 2013 to 2018. Seeking to continue to serve its mission, Watts took on the role of managing director of the center.

"Many chemists have come here to the University of Minnesota because of CSP's reputation," said Watts. She believes that one of the center's most important assets is its "ecosystem"—an environment in which scientists learn from one another and boost their power to solve problems exponentially.

From microbes to metal catalysts

Investigating a new, more efficient path from corn-to-energy

by Jonathan Eisenthal



Modern corn ethanol is a marvel of clean fuel production, harnessing the

energy of the sun to make a single seed into 600 or more kernels, and then rendering the glucose polymers in the grain into an alcohol fuel. Modern production efficiency renders nearly three gallons of fuel from every bushel.

Making alcohol is a biological catalytic process as old as civilization, but, even with the latest refinements, the biology in the process requires the sacrifice of about a third of the glucose molecules in the lifecycle of the yeast catalyst, producing CO₂ along with the alcohol.

Paul Dauenhauer, a University of Minnesota Professor of Chemical Engineering, asks, what if there were a process that could utilize 100 percent of the corn glucose polymers to make fuel? He believes an inorganic catalyst could turn all those molecules into another form of alcohol, called methanol.

In a project funded by the Minnesota corn checkoff, Dauenhauer is testing a series of metal catalysts, to see which could produce the highest yield at the greatest economic efficiency.

“Methanol has a universality to it,” Dauenhauer said. “Using existing technology you can make methanol into jet fuel. You can also make clean burning diesel fuel, and you can make polyethylene polymers—plastics.”

The jet fuel made this way achieves a major reduction of carbon emissions, and so

qualifies as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)—corn-based methanol could potentially supply that entire American SAF market, he said.

He believes this new process will yield 50 percent more fuel, while still leaving the corn fiber, protein and oil for coproducts like distillers grains animal feed.

“In 2022, the USA produced about 14 billion bushels of corn (~360 million tonnes of corn, source: USDA),” Dauenhauer wrote in his research proposal. “(That same year), the USA consumed about 145 million tonnes of diesel fuel (source: EIA). Using about half of the annually produced corn would

time. The benefit of using dimethyl ether in a diesel engine versus conventional diesel is it burns really cleanly. All the problems you have with exhaust with a conventional diesel engine, you would not have with methanol-based diesel.”

Between now and 2028, Dauenhauer’s team plan to refine the process of turning corn into methanol using inorganic catalysis.

The vision for this technology, according to Dauenhauer, is that existing ethanol plants could make the switch and reap all these benefits. The final year of the project will include an economic assessment to judge

Why it matters: Corn to methanol

Methanol is a versatile, low-carbon fuel used in marine, aviation, and industrial applications. Developing a viable corn-to-methanol pathway could create new revenue opportunities for farmers and ethanol plants while meeting growing demand across global energy and manufacturing sectors.

provide the renewable carbon required to manufacture all of the country’s current jet fuel consumption.”

The “universality” of the methanol molecule will allow biorefineries to respond to the various markets and direct production into different amounts of jet fuel, diesel, or plastic, depending on demand, Dauenhauer said.

Methanol-based diesel also offers a huge environmental benefit.

Dauenhauer said, “You manufacture a molecule called dimethyl ether...People have been talking about it for a long

the feasibility of making that changeover, and in particular, it would focus on the economics of producing methanol for SAF jet fuel market.

Additional ethanol uses

Minnesota Corn is also supporting several other efforts to expand ethanol’s utility beyond the passenger vehicle. For example, the organization is supporting research out of Marquette University that aims to adapt diesel engines to run on higher ethanol blends, including E98. Backed by the U.S. Department of Energy,



Paul Dauenhauer

John Deere, and others, the researchers are testing an “actively fueled pre-chamber” that allows a standard diesel engine to run on high-ethanol blends without losing torque or performance.

Additionally, the organization is supporting research at the University of Minnesota, led by Dr. Will Northrop, that is modeling how to produce SAF by combining corn ethanol with captured CO₂. Traditional ethanol-to-jet processes ignore CO₂, but this project uses ethanol dry reforming to turn ethanol and CO₂ into syngas, which can be converted to SAF and other fuels.

The team is using Aspen Plus simulations and machine learning to analyze energy use, capital costs, and emissions. Early results suggest this pathway could lower costs, cut greenhouse gases, and strengthen ethanol’s role in future SAF production.



The 2025 Farm Dinner, hosted by Elyn and Jacob Oelfke, saw the largest attendance of any event in recent years and featured our youngest ever Q&A panelist—Elyn’s niece, Savannah. Pictured from left to right: A.J. Popp, Elyn Oelfke, Savannah Flygare, Barb Liebenstein, Sarah Kern, and Emily Ponwith.

Fifteen Years of CommonGround Minnesota

Building Trust, One Conversation at a Time



This month, CommonGround Minnesota celebrates its 15th anniversary—a milestone that’s

equal parts celebration and reflection. Debuted nationally by the National Corn Growers Association and United Soybean Board, CommonGround was designed to connect women farmers with consumers concerned about GMOs and other agricultural practices. Over the next 15 years, 20 states launched programs with over 200 farm women volunteering their time to talk all things food and farming with consumers. Supported by the Minnesota corn checkoff, CommonGround also took root in Minnesota.

Farmers First

CommonGround Minnesota’s volunteers aren’t communications professionals or marketing

experts- they are farmers who believe the story of modern agriculture is best told by those who live it.

Volunteers are the heartbeat of the organization. Today’s volunteers range from first-generation farmers to those from multi-generational operations. They include row crop, livestock, and specialty producers- and often, a farmer is all three! Each new volunteer brings a fresh perspective, and together their voices strengthen the message.

These volunteers meet consumers where they are: at kitchen tables, in classrooms, at events, and online. Through it all, the organization remains steadfast in its mission: helping consumers understand modern agriculture by hearing directly from the people who live it every day.

Finding Common Ground

Perhaps the most unique aspect of CommonGround’s approach is its focus on **shared values**. Before diving into facts and figures, volunteers start by finding common ground-shared priorities like food safety, family health, or caring for the environment. Once those connections are established, conversations become more meaningful and respectful, even when discussing complex or controversial topics. The information shared resonates more strongly because it’s grounded in empathy and experience.

Fifteen years in, CommonGround Minnesota has proven that open, honest dialogue can change minds and strengthen the reputation of agriculture.

Evolving Topics, Lasting Values

The topics that dominate conversations have evolved over the years. Core themes like food safety, animal welfare, and environmental stewardship remain constant, but new questions have emerged around PFAS, soil health, sustainability, biofuels, land use, and water quality.

These subjects hit close to home for Minnesota’s corn farmers. CommonGround volunteers explain how technology allows them to use fewer inputs more efficiently, protect water and soil, and care for their land for future generations. They show consumers that today’s farmers blend innovation, stewardship, and family tradition in every decision they make.



While change is inevitable, some methods of storytelling have stood the test of time. Lauren Biegler (left) shows consumers some pictures of her farm on her phone at the 2017 Farm Dinner. Gail Donkers (right) does the same at CommonGround Night Out in 2024.



Volunteers are truly what make CommonGround successful. Bekah Gustafson, shown in 2015 (left) and 2024 (right) has been a long-time volunteer and advocate for agriculture.

From Hashtags to Harvest

Connection methods have evolved too. Social media now plays a bigger role in reaching consumers, but getting people out on the farm is still one of the most powerful experiences for a consumer.

Annual farm dinners have become a signature event that are popular and impactful for both volunteers and guests. For metro consumers, stepping onto a working farm helps them see beyond headlines and gain firsthand understanding of what a modern farm looks like. Consumers can see farming for what it really is — a mix of science, stewardship, and heart. For Minnesota’s corn farmers, these moments matter.

Looking Ahead

As CommonGround Minnesota looks to the next 15 years, the playbook remains familiar but flexible: keep showing up, keep learning, and keep inviting people into conversation.

If the last decade and a half are any indication, CommonGround Minnesota will continue to be a place where both farmers and consumers walk away with something valuable- clearer information, greater trust, and stronger connections.

For an organization built on a simple idea: that real people talking over a shared table can build understanding, 15 years in is both a celebration and an invitation to keep the conversations going.



Food is a great bridge between farmer and consumer. Barb Liebenstein talks with a chef at Cooks of Crocus Hill about some of the decisions she makes each day as a farmer.



Want to stay connected to CommonGround?

Sign up for our newsletter on the CommonGround Minnesota website!

Developing future ag leaders

Through investments in MARL and MN Ag in the Classroom, Minnesota Corn helps build vibrant agricultural communities



On a windy afternoon in Austin last December, laughter filled the Ruby

Rupner Auditorium as members of the Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership (MARL) Class XIII—30 farmers and agriculture professionals from across the state—shared fictional backstories about stock photos they'd been handed.

After a few minutes, Program Manager Toby Spanier asked the group to swap photos, find new partners, and retell the stories they had just heard. Laughter filled the room again as participants tried to recall details—often with mixed success.

Spanier had them repeat the process one final time before gathering for a debrief.

Lighthearted on the surface, the exercise carried a deeper purpose: priming the group for a discussion on active listening. Over the next hour, Spanier led participants through conversations about nonverbal communication and the kinds of questions that foster genuine connection. The class wrapped up with a listening activity designed to help participants engage more thoughtfully with one another.

The session reflected MARL's broader approach to leadership development—engaging



MARL Class XIII participants share stories during a photo-sharing exercise aimed at strengthening listening and communication skills during a December session in Austin.

participants in reflective, hands-on experiences that help them grow as communicators and community leaders. Minnesota Corn farmer-leaders say that approach is one reason the organization has proudly supported the program since its inception in 2000.

Each year, Minnesota Corn invests checkoff dollars in programs that invest in people—programs like MARL, 4-H, and FFA that strengthen the fabric of rural communities. Those investments have helped countless young people and professionals build the skills

and confidence to lead in agriculture and beyond.

Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council Chair John Mages said that's an investment that pays off far beyond individual participants.

"Investing in leadership development might not increase yields, but it's still one of the best investments we can make," Mages said. "It's what sets us up for long-term success—both in our industry and our communities."

Mages said programs like MARL, FFA, and 4-H equip

MARL Class XIII spotlight: Emily Alm



Class XIII participant Emily Alm (center) with Shari Lamke of Pioneer PBS and fellow classmates Dustin Johnson, Emily Dehn, and Katie Saterbak (pictured from left to right).

Emily Alm is inspired, curious, passionate. She's optimistic about the future of rural Minnesota.

Leadership is something she has witnessed up close—her father, Todd Wentzel, is First Vice President at Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

For a decade Alm has worked for WinField United, the crop inputs division of Land O'Lakes, Inc. Her current role is innovation experience project manager in West Central Minnesota. To be effective, Alm has avidly pursued training and development programs. But when she thought about the next logical step in her career, and education beckoned, she didn't see an MBA or Public Policy program as her path.

"I needed to step outside of the company to expand the horizons and broaden my network right here in rural Minnesota, and that's why I

chose the MARL program," Alm explained.

While MARL's 30 members of Class XIII represent the best and brightest from across the state, the program also established regional groups—Alm joined three other classmates who call West Central Minnesota home, to have a more granular focus on the local scene. Each group was tasked with taking a deep dive into a community in their local area, to learn what makes the place tick, and present that information to the entire class.

"We chose Granite Falls, and we spent a full day, we made

students and farmers with communication, collaboration, and decision-making skills that directly strengthen agricultural leadership at both the local and state levels.

Many alumni go on to serve on commodity boards, county associations, co-ops, and civic organizations, he noted. They also become better advocates for agriculture by improving their ability to tell their stories, build relationships, and engage on broader public issues.

“These experiences allow participants to connect with consumers, policymakers, and media in ways that build trust and understanding of modern farming,” he said.

Helping more Minnesotans understand agriculture

In addition to developing leaders within agriculture, Minnesota Corn also invests checkoff funds in programs that build greater understanding of farming

among the nonfarming public. That includes Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC), a statewide program that increases agricultural literacy among K–12 students by integrating agriculture into core subjects like science, social studies, math, and language arts.

Founded 40 years ago, MAITC provides educators with agriculture-focused lessons, professional development, and classroom materials. It’s housed within the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and operates in partnership with the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, a nonprofit that coordinates private-sector and commodity-group support—including from Minnesota Corn, which has partnered with the organization for more than 35 years.

MCGA board member Angela Guentzel said she’s confident the organization’s investment in MAITC is money well spent.

“Our mission at Minnesota Corn is to promote the farmers themselves, but also to promote the story of agriculture,” she said. “Minnesota Ag in the Classroom is always a top choice because they’re making a difference.”

In 2025, MAITC has engaged more than 158,000 students in 88% of Minnesota school districts through its programs and resources, including over 107,000 students via its AgMag magazine series. It also reaches students through virtual field trips, online curriculum, and the Farm Camp Minnesota program—a three-part experience that includes a farm visit and a discussion of agricultural careers.

More than 1,000 students in 21 counties have participated in Farm Camp Minnesota this year, according to program director Brandi Wulkan.

Beyond student engagement, MAITC also provides teachers with professional-development

opportunities such as the Summer Teacher Tours, which give educators firsthand exposure to farms and agricultural businesses across the state. New in 2025, MAITC launched its “25-for-2025” cohort in conjunction with the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference held in Minneapolis. The 25 Minnesota teachers selected received scholarships to attend the conference and will gather three times this year for seminars exploring key issues facing Minnesota farmers.

Together, programs like MARL and MAITC reflect Minnesota Corn’s long-term commitment to people—developing leaders, deepening understanding, and strengthening the future of agriculture across the state.

Learn more about Minnesota Corn’s support of agricultural education and rural communities at mncorn.org/outreach.

the contacts and set up the tours and the whole schedule” said Alm. “We met the leaders who run businesses, organizations, and nonprofits. They do great work in their local community. The process allowed us to see what makes the community flourish. It was a lot of fun to see an area in a different light, and it gave us all inspiration for our communities back home.”

MARL is set up as a series of seminars conducted over the course of two years, and Class XIII has now finished its first year. Its seminar on state government took them to St. Paul where they made contact with lawmakers and saw the process in motion. Upcoming in November, the class will spend



Members of MARL Class XIII gathered in Duluth this fall for a seminar exploring leadership and the region’s natural resources.

a week in Washington, DC, further examining how federal government impacts our state. Next year, they will conclude their travels with a trip to Vietnam, to have a firsthand look at a locale that is at once a

key trading partner, and a culture very different from our own.

“I am very excited for all of these experiences,” Alm said. “And as a member of Minnesota Corn Growers Association, I’m very grateful they awarded a

scholarship to me that put MARL within reach.”

Applications for MARL Class XIV will be open January 1-March 31, 2026. More information can be found at marlprogram.org.

Running for Minnesota's corn boards:

What you need to know

This fall, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) released their 2026 candidate forms. Submission of the candidate application form is highly encouraged for those interested in running for the MCGA board. Candidates for the MCR&PC are required to submit the candidate information and certification forms.

Here's what you need to know about running for a seat on the MCGA board or the MCR&PC.

What is MCGA, and what is the MCR&PC?

MCGA is Minnesota's grass-roots corn growers association.

Founded in 1978, MCGA advocates on behalf of corn farmers, supports county corn growers associations, and works closely with the MCR&PC to fund research, promotion, and outreach aimed at increasing opportunities for corn farmers. MCGA currently has more than 6,700 members.

The MCR&PC oversees the Minnesota corn checkoff—the fund 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.

Who can run for the MCGA board? Who can run for the MCR&PC?

You must be an MCGA member to serve on the MCGA board. Joining is easy. If you have sold at least 7,500 bushels of corn in the past year and paid into the Minnesota corn checkoff, you may qualify for a one-year membership to MCGA at no cost. Otherwise, a one-year MCGA membership is \$75. Learn more at mncorn.org/join.

To serve on the MCR&PC, farmers must be at least 18 years old, grow corn in Minnesota, and pay into the Minnesota corn checkoff. A

link to the state statute that provides full information on eligibility can be found at mncorn.org/about/about-mcrpc.

What are the obligations when serving on the board or the council?

Board and council members are expected to attend MCR&PC and MCGA board meetings. The MCR&PC and MCGA board hold joint meetings five times a year. Board and council members are also asked to join one of the Minnesota Corn focus teams: Membership & Consumer Engagement, Utilization, or Discovery & Development. The teams meet four times a year.

MCGA Board Members

President

Wesley Beck of St. James
507-630-1471

First Vice President

Todd Wentzel of Murdock
320-760-1347

Treasurer

Rob Tate of Cannon Falls
507-298-0308

Secretary

Nick Peterson of Clear Lake
320-293-5823

Past President/ Chair of the Board

Jim Kanten of Milan
320-297-0375

Dana Allen-Tully of Eyota
507-951-5597

Bryan Biegler of Lake Wilson
507-920-8186

Angela Guentzel of Kasota
507-317-4372

Blair Hoseth of Mahnomen
701-261-3574

Clayton Johnson of Pipestone
507-215-0427

James Johnstad of Beltrami
218-280-8695

Gregg Muehler of Moorhead
218-443-2561

Brad Neumann of Wabasso
507-822-6951

Nathan Serbus of Renville
320-522-4828

Richard Syverson of Clontarf
320-760-6719

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

Tim Waibel of Courtland
507-276-1476

Harold Wolle Jr. of Madelia
507-236-2181

MCR&PC Board Members

Chair

John Mages of Belgrade
320-248-1908

Vice Chair

Jordan Goblisch of Vesta
507-829-1589

Treasurer

Scott Winslow of Fountain
507-951-0363

Secretary

David Vipond of Mahnomen
218-556-9780

Doug Albin of Clarkfield
320-383-2338

Duane Epland of Twin Lakes
507-852-3485

Brandon Fast of Mountain Lake
507-220-8275

Rodney Moe of Waltham
952-237-9808

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

Gary Prescher of Delavan
507-525-7671

Chad Willis of Willmar
320-235-4452

Ex-Officio

Thom Petersen
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture
651-201-6219

How long are terms on the board and the council? Can I serve on both?

Board and council terms are three years long. You can only serve on one at a time. The MCGA board has a limit of three consecutive terms, and MCR&PC has no term limits.

How many board and council seats are up for election in 2026?

Eight MCGA board seats and four MCR&PC seats are up for election in 2026.

To ensure statewide representation, both the MCGA board and the MCR&PC elect farmers from specific districts of Minnesota. The districts are numbered differently for the board and the council, though they cover similar geographic boundaries.

MCGA elections will be held in District 1 (southwestern

Minnesota), District 2 (south-central Minnesota), District 4 (west-central Minnesota), and District 5 (east-central Minnesota). There will also be three at-large elections, which can be filled by farmers from any part of the state.

MCR&PC elections will be held in Districts 1/2/4 (northwestern Minnesota), District 7 (southwestern Minnesota), and District 8 (south-central Minnesota).

I'm interested. Now what?

The next step is to fill out the candidate forms for the board or the council. The forms are online at mncorn.org/forms.

For the MCR&PC, growers must complete the candidate certification form and the candidate information form. The certification form affirms that you meet the qualifications to run

for the council. The information form asks candidates to explain why they want to serve on the council. Farmers will not be allowed to run for election to the MCR&PC unless they complete both forms. Council candidate forms are due by **January 24, 2026**.

For MCGA, growers are asked to fill out the candidate application form and return it to MCGA staff by **December 31, 2025**.

What happens after I submit the candidate forms?

For MCR&PC, candidates who submit the required forms will be placed on the election ballot. In March 2026, ballots will be mailed to farmers who participated in past MCR&PC elections. Corn farmers who did not vote in previous elections can request a ballot by contacting the Minnesota Corn office at **(952) 233-0333**.

Ballots include only the candidates running to represent your district. Election results will be announced in the spring.

For MCGA, elections will be held during the MCGA Annual Meeting on the morning of January 21, 2026, at MN Ag Expo in Mankato. While candidates are encouraged to submit the application form ahead of time, MCGA members may also run from the floor at the meeting. All voting for district seats is conducted by delegates within the corresponding district.

Learn more

Learn more about the Minnesota Corn Growers Association at mncorn.org/about/about-mcga and the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council at mncorn.org/about/about-mcrpc.

Minnesota Corn 2026 scholarship program opens for applications

The Minnesota Corn scholarship program, which provides up to four college students with \$5,000 each to pursue a degree and/or career in agriculture, has opened for 2026 applications.

Now through Jan. 4, college students can apply for a scholarship online at mncorn.org/scholarships. Minnesota Corn will notify applicants about scholarship decisions in March and provide recipients with the award for the fall 2026 semester.

Each year since 2019, as part of its mission to increase opportunities for promising leaders in agriculture, Minnesota Corn has offered \$5,000 scholarships to student-members.

Over the past seven years, Minnesota Corn has provided 24 students with a combined \$120,000 in scholarships. Many of these students have already begun successful careers in agriculture.

To apply, students must answer a series of short essay questions

and submit a resume. Students must also join the Minnesota Corn Growers Association to qualify. A young adult MCGA membership is \$20 and can be purchased at mncorn.org/join.

If students have any questions about the Minnesota Corn scholarship or the application, please contact Director of Grower Services and Operations Missy Gilbertson at gilbertson@mncorn.org.

Minnesota Corn isn't the only corn grower association to offer

scholarships to promising agriculture students. The National Corn Growers Association also operates scholarship programs as do many of Minnesota's 52 county corn grower associations. You can learn more about those programs on the Minnesota Corn scholarship website, mncorn.org/scholarships.

Thanks to our allied partners



Join Minnesota Corn at MN Ag Expo 2026

Registration remains open for this winter's edition of MN Ag Expo, the annual event hosted by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association (MSGA). This year's event is set for Jan. 20-21 at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center in Mankato.

Farmers can register online at mngagexpo.com for the free event. Online registration is encouraged to ensure enough boxed lunches are available for all attendees. Complimentary

lunches will be provided on both days.

MN Ag Expo features a trade show, educational sessions, networking opportunities, keynote speakers, research presentations, and more. For the first time since moving to the civic center more than a decade ago, the trade show will expand into the event center's hockey arena—adding 100 new booths.

MSGA will hold its annual meeting on Jan. 20, while MCGA will host its resolutions session and annual meeting on Jan. 21. A welcome reception



A scene from Minnesota Corn's 2025 annual meeting at MN Ag Expo

for attendees and exhibitors will take place the evening of Jan. 19.

John Harrington—longtime Minnesota State University, Mankato women's hockey coach and member of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team—will headline the dinner keynote

on Jan. 20. Professional speaker Steve Fredlund will deliver the lunch keynote on Jan. 21.

Attendees planning to stay overnight are encouraged to book lodging early. Several Mankato hotels offer discounted MN Ag Expo rates.

An eventful fall for Minnesota Corn and county organizations

Even as field work got under way this fall, Minnesota Corn and its 52 county organizations stayed busy promoting corn and soybeans, meeting with elected officials, and creating opportunities in their communities. The following is a snapshot of those efforts. Find the latest updates from your local county organization at mncorn.org/events.



Above: County corn organizations take pride in giving back to their communities. Left, Todd County Corn Growers members Karen Williamson and Deb Durheim help out at the organization's grocery giveaway event. Right: members of the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Association Board pose with the 605 pounds of food they donated to the McLeod Food Shelf.

Right: A longtime Minnesota Corn tradition, district field managers deliver harvest snacks each fall to county board members in their regions. Here, local county leaders smile with their snack bags—a small gesture of appreciation during a busy season.

