

# Promoting Opportunity. Empowering Innovation. Growing Markets.



# Reflection from leadership

## DEAR MINNESOTA CORN FARMERS,

As we look back on 2025, one theme stands out: Minnesota's corn farmers continued to lead with ingenuity and resilience. Despite high costs, tight margins, volatile markets, and unpredictable weather, corn farmers pushed forward—innovating on our operations, advocating for common-sense policies, and supporting local communities.

Through the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), farmers also continued to invest in a stronger future for agriculture. This year's analysis by Decision Innovation Solutions (DIS) of the return on investment (ROI) of the Minnesota corn checkoff laid out the impact of those investments. Checkoff-related market development expenses have an 87:1 multiplier effect, and ethanol market development expenses have a 117:1 multiplier effect, the analysis found. These figures underpin our new "Checkoff Delivers" outreach campaign, which highlights the value of checkoff research and programs to agricultural communities. They also underscore what Minnesota corn farmers have long known—that working together creates impact no single farm could achieve alone.



### Minnesota Corn Checkoff Delivers

In 2025, Minnesota Corn launched its new "Checkoff Delivers" outreach campaign to highlight how corn checkoff investments create opportunities for farmers and agricultural economies. Learn more about the Minnesota corn checkoff at [checkoffdelivers.org](https://checkoffdelivers.org).

Beyond the checkoff, MCGA continued its steadfast grassroots advocacy efforts in 2025. In Washington, the organization helped bolster the farm safety net and secure the extension of key tax provisions through reconciliation, supported a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, and advocated for common-sense crop protection policies. In St. Paul, MCGA worked to protect farmers in multiple regulatory arenas and helped prevent costly, unworkable proposals from advancing. Additionally, we strengthened connections with members and consumers through county associations, youth programs, events, and statewide partnerships. These efforts ensure that farmer voices are heard, that the next generation stays engaged, and that Minnesotans across the state understand the importance of modern agriculture.

As we head into 2026, we want to thank you—Minnesota's corn farmers—for your leadership, your resilience, and your continued trust. None of this work happens without your checkoff investment and your grassroots involvement. Together, we are advancing markets, championing farmers, and building a strong future for Minnesota corn.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wes Beck".

Wes Beck  
MCGA President



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Mages".

John Mages  
MCR&PC Chair

# Corn by the numbers

## 2025 Minnesota Corn Production



Acres planted	8.5 million	+ 3.7%
Yield*	193 bushels/acre	+ 10.9%
Total production*	1.62 billion bushels	+ 20.2%

## 2025 National Corn Production



Acres planted	98.7 million	+ 8.6%
Yield*	186.0 bushels/acre	+ 3.7%
Total production*	16.8 billion bushels	+ 12.5%

\*Based on USDA November estimates.

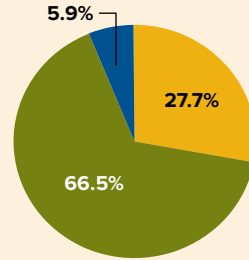
### About the Minnesota Corn Growers Association

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: \$650,443**



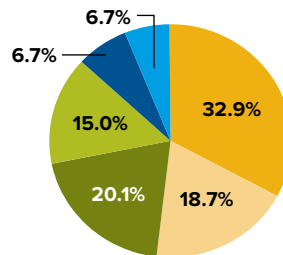
### About the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council

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: \$10,679,133**



**The Minnesota Corn Growers Association had a busy and productive year in 2025 advocating for the interests of family corn farmers at the legislative and regulatory levels. Below is a recap of those efforts.**

## Federal Priorities

### ***Reconciliation, Clean Fuel Policy, and Economic Relief***

Through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), MCGA successfully advocated for key improvements to federal farm programs and the extension of tax provisions set to expire at the end of 2025. On the farm program side, that included strengthening crop insurance and the farm safety net, increasing reference prices, doubling trade promotion funding, and maintaining funding for voluntary conservation programs. On the tax side, that included the permanent extension of the higher estate tax exemption and the Section 199A deduction, raising Section 179 small business expensing limits, and fully restoring bonus depreciation for capital investments.

Also through the OBBBA, MCGA successfully advocated for the extension of the Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit (45Z) from 2027 to 2029. The law restricts credit eligibility to fuels made from North American feedstocks and removes the penalty for emissions from indirect land use change.

MCGA also successfully advocated for the issuance of an emergency fuel waiver to allow the sale of Unleaded 88 in summer 2025, and it urged the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fully reallocate all small refinery exemption (SRE) waivers. The organization also supported the Trump administration's implementation of the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) and the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP). MCGA continues to monitor the administration's implementation of the \$12 billion Farm Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program that was announced in December.

Finally, MCGA submitted comments supporting an extension of the U.S.–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA), emphasizing the importance of stable market access as Canada and Mexico consistently represent up to 90% of Minnesota's corn, ethanol, and DDGS exports.



*MCGA farmer leaders meet with U.S. Sen. Tina Smith during the organization's D.C. Fly-in in March.*

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

## State Legislature

### **Legislative Inroads and Denial of Drainage Petition**

Thanks to advocacy by MCGA, the House and Senate tax committees heard legislation that would reduce property taxes on acreage in compliance with Minnesota's 2015 buffer law. MCGA also coalesced stakeholders around legislative language that would extend the state's SAF tax credit, and the organization secured additional funding for the state's Biofuel Infrastructure Grant Program and Soil Health Financial Assistance Program.

At the regulatory level, MCGA submitted comments to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) about its proposed updates to the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS). The organization noted that the draft document needs fine-tuning to help the state meet its nutrient reduction goals and ensure the vitality of the state's corn farmers. MCGA also joined a coalition intervening in nitrate-related litigation, resulting in an agreement to pause legal action while agencies review nitrate rules.

MCGA also welcomed several MPCA regulatory outcomes. In October, MPCA denied a rulemaking petition filed by a coalition of environmental groups urging the creation of a new regulatory system for public and private drainage systems. The rationale laid out by MPCA in its denial closely mirrored separate comments submitted by MCGA. In another win for farm groups, MPCA in November announced the withdrawal of the rulemaking process for pesticide treated seed disposal.



*Farmer-leaders meet with State Sen. Bill Weber during MCGA's annual Day on the Hill event at the State Capitol.*

## **2025 Advocacy Wins at a Glance**

### **Federal**

- Bolstered the farm safety net and secured extension of key tax provisions through reconciliation
- Strengthened Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) policy
- Secured uninterrupted Unleaded 88 sales
- Ensured economic and disaster assistance for the 2024 crop

### **State**

- Held successful legislative hearings on buffer property tax relief
- Ensured MPCA withdrawal of treated seed rulemaking and denial of drainage rulemaking petition
- Unified stakeholders on SAF policy language framework

**"Thanks to MCGA's tireless grassroots advocacy efforts, Minnesota corn farmers made substantial progress in safeguarding key production tools and developing markets in 2025.**

*— Wes Beck, MCGA President*

Learn more at [mncorn.org/takeaction](https://mncorn.org/takeaction).

## Minnesota corn farmers continue to achieve record gains in efficiency, but long-term profitability depends on growing demand as fast as production.

In 2025, MCGA and MCR&PC prioritized market development and new uses that strengthen existing markets like ethanol, exports, and livestock feed while positioning

corn for future opportunities in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), biomanufacturing, and value-added products.

### Ethanol

Minnesota Corn's checkoff investments in ethanol market development continue to deliver strong returns, with an estimated 117:1 multiplier effect for Minnesota corn farmers.

In 2025, Minnesota Corn strengthened ethanol demand through coordinated in-state and national efforts to expand access to higher-ethanol blends. The organization continued its partnership with the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association (MBA) to promote Unleaded 88 through radio advertising, on-site fuel promotions, and technical support for retailers—reaching hundreds of thousands of drivers. MBA also partnered with KS95 at the 2025 Minnesota State Fair, bringing clean-fuel messaging to one of the state's largest audiences.

County corn grower associations amplified this work by hosting fuel promotion events statewide and meeting directly with drivers to highlight the benefits of higher-ethanol blends. These combined efforts helped Minnesota reach a major milestone in November, when a Pine City station became the 550th in the state to offer Unleaded 88.

Beyond Minnesota, Minnesota Corn invested in the Renewable Fuels Association's work to help California retailers prepare for E15 following the passage of AB 30, which approved statewide sales. MN Corn also supported the national "Reasons to Choose" campaign, which expanded its reach in 2025 through ESPN placements promoting Unleaded 88's value, compatibility, and benefits for drivers and farmers.



*With support from Minnesota Corn, the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association engaged with members of the public at the State Fair this past summer.*

### Exports

Minnesota Corn's checkoff investments in export-market development remain a critical driver of long-term demand. An analysis shows that approximately 15% of all U.S. corn exports since 2000 can be traced to national export-promotion efforts—including the work of the Minnesota Corn-supported U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC).

In 2025, Minnesota Corn continued its support of USGBC and the U.S. Meat Export Federation, helping expand global demand for corn, ethanol, DDGS, and livestock products. These efforts contributed to strong international markets in 2024–25, including a 23% increase in ethanol export value and continued stability in key DDGS and meat markets—demonstrating the importance of foreign demand to Minnesota farm profitability.

## Exporting U.S. Corn in all forms

Market year 24/25 (September-August)

Product	Quantity (bu)	Value (\$)	% Change
Corn	2.9 billion		▲ 26.8%
		\$16.4 billion	
DDGS	1.5 billion		▲ 0.4%
		\$2.8 billion	
Pork + pork products	546 million		▼ -0.9%
		\$8.8 billion	
Poultry meat + products	285 million		▼ -7.3%
		\$5.6 billion	
Ethanol	252 million		▲ 23.3%
		\$4.6 billion	
Beef + beef products	136 million		▼ -4.9%
		\$9.9 billion	
Corn gluten feed/meal	47.8 million		▲ 9.6%
		\$573 million	
ALL	5.6 billion		▲ 12.5%
		\$48.6 billion	

## New Uses

Minnesota Corn invests in research and innovation that expand the uses of corn as a renewable feedstock—strengthening demand today while opening markets for tomorrow. In 2025, those investments supported advances in clean fuels, bio-based chemicals, and next-generation polymer materials.

In 2025, Minnesota Corn continued its investment in research out of Marquette University that aims to adapt diesel engines to run on high-ethanol blends, including E98. With support from the U.S. Department of Energy, John Deere, and others, the researchers are testing an “actively fueled pre-chamber” that enables a standard

diesel engine to operate on ethanol without sacrificing torque or performance—offering a potential new market for low-carbon liquid fuels.

Another Minnesota Corn-supported endeavor, Låkril Technologies out of the University of Minnesota, has pioneered a cost-effective way to convert corn-derived lactic acid into biobased acrylic acid. Acrylic acid is a key ingredient in adhesives, paints, coatings, and superabsorbent polymers—all currently derived from petroleum. A corn-based alternative would reduce greenhouse gas emissions while creating meaningful new demand for farmers.

As this annual report went to press, Låkril was nearing a major milestone: the opening of a pilot plant in Chicago to produce sample quantities of bio-acrylic acid for potential customers. The company also earned national recognition in November 2025, when *Chemical & Engineering News* named it one of the nation’s Top 10 Startups to Watch.

Låkril grew out of research at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Sustainable Polymers (CSP), which Minnesota Corn has supported with more than \$4 million in checkoff investments since 2014. CSP is transforming how biobased materials are made—improving existing applications and developing entirely new ones.

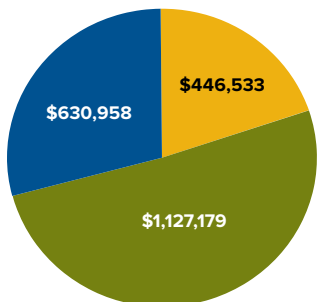
Another CSP spinout, Valerian Materials, is developing a corn-based monomer that can be used to make recyclable foams and polymers for products such as yoga mats, shoe soles, and packaging. Minnesota Corn has also supported Valerian’s development. Together, Låkril and Valerian represent the kind of breakthrough opportunities that biomanufacturing can deliver: if these technologies scale, they could open new markets capable of using more than 1 billion bushels of corn per year.

Minnesota Corn had another productive year of supporting research in 2025, investing in 33 projects focused on improving productivity, profitability, and environmental performance for corn farmers. Below is a snapshot of key studies underway this year. Additional details are available at [mncorn.org/research](https://mncorn.org/research).

## Minnesota Corn Research Program Allocations

2025

- New uses
- Production stewardship
- Education



Annual allocations	Total
2021	\$2,000,767
2022	\$2,237,740
2023	\$2,112,697
2024	\$2,252,844
2025	\$2,204,670
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,808,718</b>

## Providing Farmers With Guidance on Nitrogen Best Management Practices

**Principal investigator:** Brad Carlson, UMN Extension

**Summary:** Nitrogen Smart is a UMN Extension program providing farmers with the latest guidance on nitrogen best practices. In 2025, with support from Minnesota Corn, the program expanded its in-person sessions and online materials—including new “advanced” courses on biological products and variable-rate nitrogen application.



UMN Extension educator Brad Carlson leads Nitrogen Smart programming, helping farmers reduce input costs while improving efficiency.

## Discovery Farms Minnesota

**Principal investigator:** Warren Formo, MAWRC

**Summary:** MAWRC continued operating the Discovery Farms program and advanced a controlled-drainage demonstration at Farmamerica. The project evaluates how holding back tile drainage through control structures affects tile flow and nitrogen losses, helping farmers better understand water-quality impacts.

## Corn-to-Methanol Pathway for Jet Fuel

**Principal investigator:** Paul Dauenhauer, UMN College of Science & Engineering

**Summary:** This project evaluates a catalytic process that converts corn-derived carbohydrates into methanol, which can be upgraded to dimethyl ether—a potential sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) precursor. The research assesses catalyst design and the economics of the corn-to-fuel pathway.

## Engineering Degradability Into Corn-Based Plastics

**Principal investigator:** Thomas Hoye, professor, UMN College of Science and Engineering

**Summary:** Researchers are developing strategies to make PLA and other corn-based polyesters degrade more readily under natural conditions. This work could expand the market potential for biobased plastics while reducing environmental impacts.

## Finding Nitrogen Rates That Maximize Profit & Reduce Losses

**Principal investigator:** Fabian Fernandez, UMN Extension

**Summary:** This study examines how different nitrogen rates affect yield, profitability, nitrogen-use efficiency, volatilization, nitrate loss, and greenhouse-gas emissions. Data from 2021–2025 will help build tools that estimate yield and nitrogen loss across a range of production conditions.

## Nitrogen Mineralization in Northwest Minnesota

**Principal investigator:** Lindsay Pease, nutrient and water management specialist, UMN Extension

**Summary:** This project studies how soil texture, moisture, and nitrogen rate influence nitrogen availability in northwestern Minnesota. Researchers are analyzing soil nutrient cycling and yield responses to improve fertilizer recommendations for the region.

## Is Fixed Ammonium Part of Nitrogen Cycling in Soils?

**Principal investigator:** Dan Kaiser, UMN Extension

**Summary:** This project investigates how corn responds to nitrogen under varying potassium levels and whether fixed ammonium plays a meaningful role in nitrogen cycling. The study will determine how fixed ammonium interacts with fixed potassium and whether it contributes to soil nitrate levels.

## Does Soil Health Lower Nitrogen Requirements?

**Principal investigator:** Anna Cates, UMN Extension

**Summary:** This study evaluates whether soil health practices—such as cover crops and reduced tillage—can reduce nitrogen needs without sacrificing yield. Researchers are comparing long-term and newly adopted soil-health systems with conventional fields to measure impacts on nitrogen availability, crop uptake, and yield.

*Anna Cates (middle) is examining how soil health practices influence nitrogen needs. Photo courtesy UMN Extension.*



# Member and Consumer Engagement

In 2025, Minnesota Corn deepened its connection with both members and consumers, expanding outreach efforts that build trust, strengthen relationships, and elevate the voice of Minnesota’s corn farmers. The following is a summary of those efforts.

## County corn grower associations

Across 67 counties, Minnesota Corn supported 52 county grower associations as they held more than 300 events in 2025—from fairs and field days to clean-fuel promotions and community outreach.

These activities connect farmers with their communities, expand market awareness, and strengthen corn’s role in Minnesota’s economy and environment.



*The McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Association donated over 600 pounds of food to their local food shelf during an event in fall 2025.*



*A scene from the Nicollet / Sibley County Corn & Soybean Growers Association plot day in September 2025.*

## Minnesota Corn scholarship

Marie Carr, Natalie Clemenson, Hannah Highum, and Keeley Runge received Minnesota Corn’s 2025 young adult

scholarships. Since 2019, Minnesota Corn has awarded \$120,000 to support the next generation of agriculture professionals.



*Marie Carr*



*Natalie Clemenson*



*Hannah Highum*



*Keeley Runge*

## Minnesota 4-H

Minnesota 4-H, the state’s largest youth development organization, engages more than 40,000 young people annually. With Minnesota Corn’s sustained support, 4-H

has expanded its plant and soil science curriculum, offering firsthand learning through crop trials, soil testing, and explorations of agronomy and food systems.

## Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC)

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom has received Minnesota Corn's support for more than 35 years, helping expand access to free ag-themed curricula, classroom kits, and teacher training in all 87 counties. In 2025, MAITC reached more than 158,000 students and hundreds of educators.



*MAITC's Farm Camp program allows students to learn about various components of production agriculture through on-farm visits.*

## Minnesota FFA

Minnesota Corn sponsors the annual FFA State Convention and supports officer training programs. Statewide, FFA reaches nearly 15,000 students across 210 chapters, building agricultural knowledge, leadership, and career readiness.



*The 2025-26 Minnesota FFA officer team poses for a photo during harvest*

## CommonGround Minnesota

In 2025, CommonGround Minnesota marked its 15th anniversary of reaching Minnesotans with fact-based information about agriculture delivered by volunteers with firsthand experience in the industry. Through in-person events, dinners, and other activities, the program introduced more than 230 urban and suburban residents to Minnesota farmers in 2025, sparking conversations that build trust and understanding between urban residents and Minnesota's farm communities.



*Volunteer A.J. Popp (left) talks with a member of the public during the CommonGround Taste of Fall event in September 2025 in St. Paul.*

## Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership (MARL)

The Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) program, a two-year intensive program through Southwest Minnesota State University, has graduated 382 alumni, including 199 farmers. In 2025, 30 participants continued their leadership journey. Minnesota Corn has supported this program since its launch in 2000.



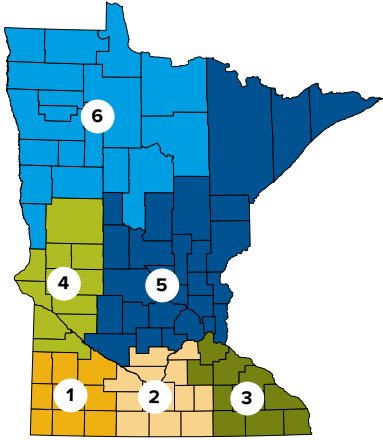
*Members of MARL Class 13 pose with the staff from the Vietnam Trade Office during their seminar in Washington, D.C.*

## Sports Sponsorships

Minnesota Corn continued its support of the Gophers, Saints, and Twins in 2025 to extend awareness of corn farming across the state. These partnerships help grow

recognition, relevance, and pride in Minnesota-grown corn among diverse audiences, reaching more than one million sports fans and creating new opportunities to connect with consumers.

# Minnesota Corn Growers Association Board of



**MCCA District Map**

**Dana Allen-Tully**  
*Government  
 Relations Chair*  
 Eyota  
 District 3

**Wesley Beck**  
*President*  
 St. James  
 At Large



**Nick Peterson**  
*Secretary*  
 Clear Lake  
 District 5



**Todd Wentzel**  
*First Vice President*  
 Murdock  
 District 4



**Jim Kanten**  
*Past President/  
 Chair of the Board*  
 Milan  
 At Large



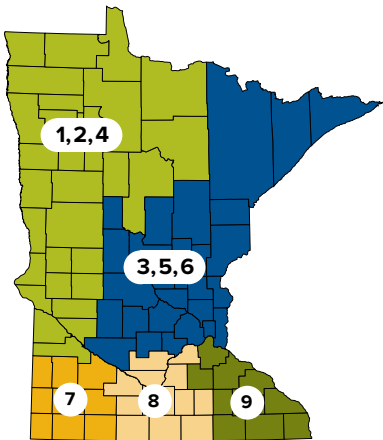
**Rob Tate**  
*Treasurer*  
 Cannon Falls  
 District 3



**Dana Allen-Tully**  
*Government  
 Relations Chair*  
 Eyota  
 District 3



# Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council,



**MCR&PC District Map**

**John Mages**  
*Chair*  
 Belgrade  
 District 3,5,6



**Scott Winslow**  
*Treasurer*  
 Fountain  
 District 9



**Jordan Goblish**  
*Vice Chair*  
 Vesta  
 District 7



**David Vipond**  
*Secretary*  
 Mahanomen  
 District 1,2,4



# Directors, 2025-26

**Bryan Biegler**

Lake Wilson  
At Large



**Clayton Johnson**

Pipestone  
District 1



**Brad Neumann**

Wabasso  
District 1



**David (D.J.) VanKlombenburg**

Montevideo  
At Large



**Angela Guentzel**

Kasota  
At Large



**James Johnstad**

Beltrami  
District 6



**Richard Syverson**

Clontarf  
District 4



**Tim Waibel**

Courtland  
District 2



**Blair Hoseth**

Mahnomen  
District 6



**Gregg Muehler**

Moorhead  
At Large



**Nathan Serbus**

Renville  
District 5



**Harold Wolle Jr.\***

Madelia  
District 2



\*NCGA Board member

# 2025-26

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Clarkfield  
District 1,2,4



**Brandon Fast**

Mountain Lake  
District 7



**James O'Connor**

Bloomington  
District 8



**Chad Willis**

Willmar  
District 3,5,6



**Duane Epland**

*Past Chair*  
Twin Lakes  
District 8



**Rodney Moe**

Waltham  
District 9



**Gary Prescher**

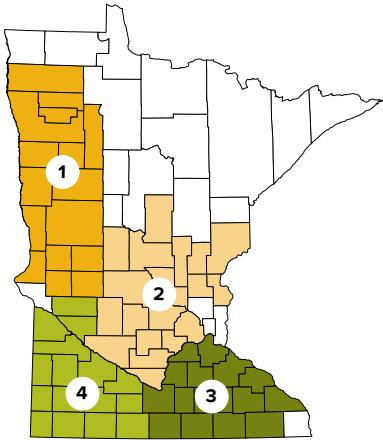
Delavan  
District 8



**Thom Petersen**

Ex-Officio  
Minnesota Department  
of Agriculture





**District Field Manager Coverage Areas**

**Dr. Adam Birr**

Executive Director, CEO



**Amanda Bilek**

Senior Public Policy Director



**Emily Burns**

District Field Manager (District 2)



**Kaylee Enderson**

District Field Manager (District 3)



**Missy Gilbertson**

Director of Grower Services and Operations



**Nate Gotlieb**

Communications Director



**Sherrie Graves**

Office Manager



**Luke Haggerty**

Research & District Field Manager (District 1)



**Devin Hoffarth**

Market Development & Industry Relations Director



**Jan Horstmann**

Membership & Compliance Manager



**Macy Kahler**

District Field Manager (District 4)



**Wuraola Oyebamiji, CPA**

Senior Finance Director



**Kelly Stanek**

Program Manager



**Alex Trunnell**

Public Policy Manager





Meeting with elected officials was key to MCGA's advocacy efforts in 2025. Here, farmer-leaders pose with U.S. Representative Michelle Fischbach during Corn Congress and Senator Amy Klobuchar at Farmfest.



Sharing the stories of Minnesota's farm families remained central to Minnesota Corn's outreach in 2025. The Wentzel family of Murdock (above) and Goblisch family of Vesta (below) helped highlight the essential contributions family farms make to our state and communities.



Members of the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers board pose for a photo with one of their 2025 scholarship recipients.

## Year in Photos

From advocacy and research to community events and farm-level innovation, 2025 showcased the strength and spirit of Minnesota's corn farmers. These photos highlight the people and partnerships that moved our industry forward throughout the year.



Right: Minnesota Corn's district field managers once again delivered harvest snacks to county board members in fall 2025. Andrew Schmidt is pictured here with his bag.



Left: In July, Minnesota Corn partnered with the University of Minnesota on a field day to showcase how they're working together to address nitrogen challenges.

Right: Tim Waibel shows off his corn crop to members of a South Korean trade mission during a September visit to Minnesota.



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

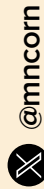
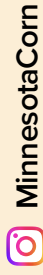
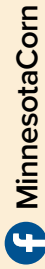
Minnesota Corn Growers Association  
Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council



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