

Corn Talk

Inside:

Spring 2026

- MCGA advocates for farmer-focused solutions to address record fertilizer costs
- MCGA highlights strengths of Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule
- RAPP program supports agricultural export growth in emerging markets

Official Publication of Minnesota Corn





U.S. sets new records for corn, ethanol exports in 2025 market year

 Each year, as part of its mission to develop markets for farmers, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council invests corn checkoff funds in the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC).

Recently, USGBC published its 2025 annual report, in which it highlighted how the U.S. set new records for corn and ethanol exports during the 2024-25 marketing year (MY25). The following is a summary of the record-breaking year for corn and ethanol. You can learn more about USGBC programming at grains.org.

Corn: Exports up nearly 27% in MY25

The U.S. exported 72.5 million metric tons (MMT)—equivalent to 2.855 billion bushels—in MY25, an amount valued at more than \$16.35 billion.

Mexico was the top U.S. corn buyer, accounting for 35% of all U.S. corn exports—more than 25.5 MMT (1 billion bushels). It was followed by Japan at 13.3 MMT (524 million bushels) and

Colombia at 7.6 MMT (299 million bushels).

South Korea and the European Union rounded out the top five. Those two markets were notable because of how much more U.S. corn they imported in MY25 than in MY24. South Korea increased its U.S. corn imports by 161.6% year over year, and the European Union increased them by 266%.

Taiwan (2.3 MMT/92 million bushels), Guatemala (1.6 MMT/66 million bushels), Canada (1.5 MMT/59 million bushels), Vietnam (1MMT/43 million bushels), and Honduras (1 MMT/42 million bushels) made up the rest of the top 10 markets of the year.

In a statement, USGBC Vice President Cary Sifferath said there’s a lot to be excited about with the MY25 statistics, which show U.S. corn’s ability to continue making a difference for consumers around the world.

“The Council takes pride in connecting U.S. producers to international customers and providing transparent information through resources like its

corn harvest quality and corn export cargo quality reports, adding to growers’ bottom lines each year,” he said.

Ethanol: Exports up 23.3% in MY25

The U.S. exported a record 2.1 billion gallons in MY25, an amount valued at more than \$4.6 billion.

Canada remained the top market for U.S. ethanol, purchasing 757 million gallons (\$1.6 billion worth), a 16.8% increase from MY24. The European Union was the second-largest market, purchasing 317.2 million gallons. The United Kingdom (214 million gallons), India (210.5 million gallons), and Colombia (131 million gallons) rounded out the top five.

The Philippines nearly doubled its imports of U.S. ethanol to almost 108 million gallons, making it the sixth largest export market. South Korea (91.2 million gallons), Mexico (81.1 million gallons, a new country record), Peru (61.3 million gallons) and Brazil

continued on page 13

Spring by the numbers

1.2 BILLION

Amount allocated by USDA in 2023 to the Regional Agriculture Promotion Program (RAPP), which aims to diversify and expand market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products beyond the traditional top customers. The Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council has invested checkoff funds in a handful of RAPP-funded U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council initiatives in 2026.

\$150,000

Total amount in scholarships awarded to 30 MCGA young-adult members since 2019. In March, Minnesota Corn announced the six recipients of its 2026 scholarships.



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

Follow us on social media:

-  x.com/mncorn
-  facebook.com/MinnesotaCorn
-  instagram.com/MinnesotaCorn
-  youtube.com/MNCornVids

MCGA legislative priorities highlighted during Day on the Hill event

Preserving access to crop protection tools. Ensuring local government input on utility-scale solar projects. Increasing driver access to higher ethanol blends.

Those were just some of the policy priorities farmer-leaders highlighted during the Minnesota Corn Growers Association's annual Day on the Hill event in March.

Held at the State Capitol, the event included over 25 meetings between farmer-leaders and elected officials from both political parties. It was followed by MCGA's legislative reception, which was held in conjunction with the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association.

During meetings, farmer-leaders urged lawmakers to protect tools that allow farmers to productively raise their crops and implement soil health practices. They noted how Minnesota Corn shares the goal of proactively protecting the state's drinking water and is committed to addressing nitrogen challenges through research, partnerships, reasonable policy solutions, and achievable on-farm practices. They also noted MCGA's support of the state Soil Health Financial Assistance Program and how the Minnesota corn checkoff invests in research that increases productivity, improves nutrient use efficiency, and protects soil and water resources.

Additionally, farmer-leaders urged legislators to support bipartisan legislation that would increase the ability of local governments to play a role in site selection for utility-scale

solar projects. Currently, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has ultimate authority over permitting and site selection.

Farmer-leaders also asked lawmakers to support a bipartisan bill that would create compatibility between the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the State Fire Code, which could allow more retailers to offer higher ethanol blends. They also voiced support for legislation that would create an E15 financial incentive program and continue biofuel infrastructure grants.

Other priorities included:

- Bipartisan legislation that would provide additional funding for Minnesota's sustainable aviation fuel tax credit. Corn-based ethanol is a good fit for SAF production given its affordability, abundance, and existing infrastructure across Minnesota.
- Making changes to Minnesota's tax code to bring the state in line with the federal tax code, which was updated as part of the reconciliation bill in summer 2025.
- Lifting the funding cap on the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit to ensure new and beginning farmers are eligible to qualify.

MCGA thanks lawmakers from both parties for taking time to learn more about corn farmers and rural communities. Learn more about MCGA's grassroots advocacy efforts at mncorn.org.



The Minnesota Corn team, MDA Commissioner's Office, and Governor Walz.



The Minnesota Corn team and Speaker of the House Lisa Demuth.



Farmer-leaders and State Senator Gary Dahms.



Farmer-leaders and House Agriculture Committee Co-Chair Paul Anderson.



Meeting with Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Aric Putnam.

MCGA fly-in highlights key priorities for MN corn farmers

In March, Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) farmer-leaders traveled to Washington, D.C., for the organization's annual spring fly-in, where they met with members of Congress from both parties and administration officials to advocate for priorities important to Minnesota corn farmers.

During the visit, farmer-leaders thanked federal policymakers for approving economic assistance for the 2024 crop, strengthening the farm safety net through updates to the Farm Bill and federal crop insurance, and permanently extending agricultural tax relief that will help farm families invest in their operations and plan for the next generation.

They also emphasized the difficult economic conditions facing farm country, including low crop prices, high input costs, elevated interest rates,

tighter credit conditions, trade deficits, and weakened farm income. Against that backdrop, they noted that the projected breakeven yield for corn in 2026 is 278 bushels per acre — far above Minnesota's record statewide average yield of 201 bushels per acre in 2025.

MCGA farmer-leaders urged lawmakers to pass legislation allowing permanent, year-round sales of E15. In addition to creating demand for corn, E15 lowers fuel costs for drivers, supports jobs, strengthens rural economies, reduces emissions, and bolsters U.S. energy security.

They also called for strong Renewable Fuel Standard volumes for 2026 and 2027, along with fair implementation of the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit so that home-grown biofuels can compete in the sustainable aviation fuel market.



The Minnesota Corn team meets with U.S. Representative Angie Craig.



Farmer-leaders and U.S. Representative Michelle Fischbach.

Other priorities discussed during the fly-in included protecting and growing export opportunities in Mexico and Canada during the USMCA renewal process, advancing new trade agreements for U.S. agriculture, and supporting action to reduce fertilizer costs.

MCGA thanks Minnesota's congressional delegation and

administration officials for meeting with farmer-leaders and for their continued engagement on issues affecting farmers and rural communities. Learn more about MCGA's grassroots advocacy at mncorn.org/advocacy.

Minnesota Corn co-hosts trade academy event in Southern MN



Rebecca Starrett, Manager of Industry Relations at the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, explains the importance of global trade to attendees of the March 18 Trade Policy Academy.



On March 18, Minnesota Corn partnered with the National Corn Growers Association and the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC) to host a trade policy academy event in Austin, Minnesota.

The event highlighted to farmers and students current trade agreements, tariffs, the history of trade policy, and what it all means for U.S. grains. It also spotlighted the

importance of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the Canadian and Mexican markets, and how grain moves globally.

In the U.S., approximately one-third of the value of each bushel of corn is derived from exports. That's not only through the export of corn grain to other countries but also through exports of dried distillers grains (DDGs), ethanol, and corn-fed meat.

MN farmer-leader joins USGBC events in Saudi Arabia



This winter, a Minnesota Corn farmer-leader joined a U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC) mission to Saudi Arabia aimed at highlighting U.S. corn and dried distillers grains (DDGS) to buyers in the region.

Duane Epland, a member of the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC), was part of the delegation that presented the council's 2025/2026 Corn Harvest Quality Report in Saudi Arabia.

The delegation presented the report at three events. One was a half-day seminar in the Saudi capital of Riyadh that was attended by 20 importers, feed millers, and end users. The other two were sessions in the port city of Jeddah attended by buyers from nine Middle Eastern and North African countries.

The delegation included representatives from The Andersons, CHS, TransGlobe, POET, Bunge, STONE X, and CM Navigator, and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.



Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council Member Duane Epland highlights the 2025 Minnesota corn crop during the event.

Epland provided the buyers and end-users with a first-hand farmer perspective of the 2025 U.S. corn crop.

He said attendees were grateful to hear about the 2025 crop directly from a U.S. farmer, noting that it provided a different perspective than hearing from a third-party source.

USGBC has been active in the Saudi market for many years, most recently developing a storage program to facilitate smoother logistics at ports. The council has also worked to transparently compare U.S. corn's performance and financial added value compared to corn of competing origins.

Mohamed Salah Bouthour, USGBC deputy regional director for Africa, said the

Saudi market offers substantial opportunities for U.S. feed grains and co-products as it expands its livestock, poultry, and aquaculture sectors to improve protein self-sufficiency.

"These corn quality rollout events and other Council programming reinforce the U.S. agricultural community's commitment to supporting regional industry growth through reliable access to high-quality U.S. feed grains, co-products and value-added services," he said.

Each year, Minnesota Corn invests checkoff funds in the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council as part of its mission to increase market opportunities for corn farmers. Learn more about the Council's work in Saudi Arabia at grains.org.

In 2023, the country exported nearly \$29 billion in grain and grain products, according to USGBC. Every \$1 worth of grain and grain products purchased by international buyers supported nearly

\$3 of additional domestic economic activity.

Minnesota exported nearly \$2.3 billion worth of corn and corn products in 2023, including \$1.3 billion in corn, and \$303 million in ethanol.

Those exports were responsible for 16,804 jobs.

Each year, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council invests corn checkoff funds in market development initiatives at USGBC as part of its mission

to create sustained market demand for corn farmers. The council also invests checkoff funds in the U.S. Meat Export Federation and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Taiwan office.

Learn more about checkoff-supported export development efforts at checkoffdelivers.org.



Starrett asks Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council members Jim O'Connor and Scott Winslow a question during a farmer panel as part of the event.

MCGA advocates for farmer-focused solutions to address record fertilizer costs

Even before fertilizer price and supply issues escalated due to the conflict in the Middle East, Minnesota's corn farmers had been struggling with stubbornly high input prices, especially fertilizer.

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) has a history of advocating for long-term, permanent solutions to address record fertilizer costs, but the Middle East conflict has accelerated efforts. Economic relief will not be realized overnight, but recent announcements from legislators should build a foundation for addressing fertilizer price volatility.

In March, Senator Amy Klobuchar – working with colleagues across the aisle – introduced two bills focused on fertilizer issues. First, the Fertilizer Transparency Act, S.4152 (Thune-Klobuchar), would create a mandatory price reporting system to offer market participants of all sizes with comparable levels of market information on fertilizer components. This bill is also cosponsored by Senators Grassley and Baldwin.

In 2023, under a report requested by Senators Thune and Klobuchar, the Agriculture Food and Policy Center at Texas A&M identified a lack of competition in the fertilizer market and suggested mandatory price reporting as a tool to increase transparency. The Fertilizer Transparency Act, if it were to become law, would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program of fertilizer and fertilizer product price information weekly reporting for manufacturers and wholesalers and cover all applicable fertilizer products for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.



Before the end of March, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the companion bill led by Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and co-sponsored by Representatives Brad Finstad (R-MN), Mariannette Miller-Meeke (R-IA), Randy Feenstra (R-IA), Zach Nunn (R-IA), Angie Craig (D-MN), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL), Josh Riley (D-NY), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), and Sharice Davids (D-MO).

Second, the Homegrown Fertilizer Act (Klobuchar-Marshall) would create a grant and loan program to expand domestic fertilizer production and improve fertilizer storage capacity. The Homegrown Fertilizer Act would invest in American manufacturing, support innovation in agricultural inputs, and put more options in farmers' hands to source fertilizer for crop needs.

At the state level, MCGA is supportive of a green-ammonia project proposed for southern Minnesota, and seeking funds from the Minnesota Legislature to help support project development. The proposed ammonia project would use a system of modular production systems to convert electricity, air, and water to produce roughly 12,000 tons annually of green anhydrous ammonia and is a

joint project of Central Farm Service and TalusAg. If successful, it would be Minnesota's first commercially available supply of green ammonia.

MCGA issued a joint support letter with Minnesota Farmers Union when the project was recently before the Senate Energy, Utilities and Climate Committee seeking funding from the Renewable Development Account. This is an example of a domestic fertilizer production project that could also be supported through the federal Homegrown Fertilizer Act, if it were to become law.

Tariffs have received substantial attention in the last year, as the Trump administration works to address new trade agreements and the U.S. trade deficit. Tariffs levied as a result of anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations have received less attention but also adversely impacts fertilizer affordability.

At the request of manufacturers of phosphate fertilizer, the International Trade Commission has levied countervailing duties (CVDs) on phosphate fertilizer imports from Russia and Morocco. These two countries combined account for approximately 17 percent of the global

supply of phosphate. MCGA was part of a national and state group coalition asking the U.S. Department of Commerce to revoke those duties in a letter citing challenging economic conditions for U.S. farmers, and the current CVDs are constraining the supply of phosphate fertilizer.

In a separate letter, state associations for corn and soybean farmers and national agriculture groups took their ask directly to The Mosaic Company and J.R. Simplot to renounce their support for CVDs on phosphate fertilizer and to work with end-customers to allow additional supplies of phosphates to enter the U.S. at an affordable price.

Unfortunately, there are no immediate or silver bullet solutions to the fertilizer price challenge. It will likely take several approaches to address the intractable problem of fertilizer cost and supply. MCGA is working on solutions at both the state and federal level to increase options for fertilizer choices, market competition, and transparency with the goal to alleviate supply and price demands in the future.

MCGA highlights strengths of Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule

In January, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) opened a public comment period on the adequacy of the state's Groundwater Protection Rule. The action was in line with a court-approved stipulation agreement between the plaintiffs (a coalition of environmental groups) and the defendants (Attorney General/MDA and a Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) led coalition of farmer organizations).

As part of its mission to ensure corn farmers have the tools they need to productively and efficiently raise a crop, MCGA submitted comments to MDA on the rule. The following is a summary of those comments.

The Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule (GPR) provides a strong, targeted framework for limiting nitrate-nitrogen impacts from commercial fertilizer to groundwater. The rule emphasizes local collaboration, adoption of best management practices (BMPs), and includes meaningful escalatory steps when nitrate-nitrogen levels are elevated.

Because groundwater moves slowly through aquifers, near-term nitrate-nitrogen monitoring observations often reflect historical conditions. As a result, the rule should be evaluated over its full implementation cycle, and additional restrictions are unnecessary.

The GPR is correct to take a targeted approach to nitrate-nitrogen mitigation. More than 99% of Minnesota's community public water systems comply with the federal nitrate-nitrogen standard of 10 mg NO₃-N per liter, and 93% have average source-water nitrate-nitrogen concentrations within the normal background range of 0–3 mg NO₃-N per liter. Statewide ground and surface water monitoring data do not show widespread statistically significant increasing trends in nitrate-nitrogen concentrations.

The GPR consists of two parts comprised of separate criteria and associated requirements. Part 1 of the GPR restricts the application of nitrogen fertilizer in the fall and on frozen soils if you farm in 1) an area with vulnerable groundwater or 2)



those protection areas around a municipal public well, known as a drinking water supply management area (DWSMAs), with high nitrate-nitrogen concentrations. To see if you farm in a vulnerable groundwater area, view the vulnerable groundwater areas map online: bit.ly/GPRMap.

If nitrate-nitrogen concentrations in a DWSMA are already elevated, the rule has a robust sliding scale process for mitigating leaching to groundwater within the DWSMA. The process consists of four mitigation levels beginning with a suite of active monitoring, outreach, and voluntary adoption of nitrogen management practices. If nitrate-nitrogen conditions are higher, it includes the formation of local advisory teams (LATs) consisting of producers, agronomists, public water suppliers, SWCD staff, technical experts, and other local representatives. Those teams must publish site-specific BMPs tailored to the DWSMA.

The rule requires those identified BMPs to be implemented on at least 80% of cropland (excluding soybeans) within three growing seasons. It also allows for regulatory actions if BMPs are not adopted or if nitrate-nitrogen concentrations within the DWSMA increase.

In the 25 DWSMAs designated as Mitigation Level 2, 18 have local advisory teams, and 12 have published BMP lists. In several instances, collaboration among water suppliers, conservation agencies, and producers has already led to measurable BMP adoption. For example, in the Goodhue DWSMA, implementation efforts supported conservation practice implementation on more than 1,500 acres by 2025—approximately three-quarters of the contributing area—to both reduce nitrogen leaching and improve soil health.

The GPR also accounts for the complex nature of groundwater movement, notably the fact that measured nitrate-nitrogen

concentrations from the aquifer are a lagging indicator of BMP effectiveness. In most landscapes, groundwater moves slowly through layers of soil and rock with monitoring reflecting land management practices from previous decades. As a result, early progress under the rule is best evaluated through BMP implementation alongside longer-term groundwater monitoring over the rule's full implementation cycle.

Defending farmers' crop production tools

For years, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) has worked to ensure corn farmers are represented in discussions around fertilizer regulations. The organization was actively involved in shaping the Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule when it was adopted in 2019.

More recently, MCGA has been engaged as environmental groups petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to impose additional regulations on manure and fertilizer use in Southeast Minnesota. In January 2025, several of those groups filed a lawsuit against the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) seeking further state regulation of commercial fertilizer and manure application, respectively. In response, MCGA led a coalition of nine farmer organizations in a

continued on page 13

Promotion, infrastructure investments drive record Unleaded 88 sales in 2025



Aided by corn checkoff investments in biofuel promotion

and infrastructure, Minnesota reached a new annual high for Unleaded 88 (E15) sales in 2025. Minnesota fuel stations sold 144.34 million gallons of the biofuel blend in 2025, topping the previous record of 142.89 million gallons set in 2024. It also marked the fourth straight year that annual Unleaded 88 sales in Minnesota exceeded 100 million gallons.

Minnesota Corn has played a key role in driving the state's growth in Unleaded 88 sales since the fuel was first introduced in Minnesota.

In 2015, the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council (MCR&PC) invested \$1.1 million in a USDA grant program that helped fuel stations purchase equipment needed to offer higher ethanol blends. In 2021, the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) successfully advocated for a state biofuels infrastructure grant program, and the council committed another \$1 million to support it. Lawmakers later approved \$6.75 million for biofuel infrastructure for the 2024-25 biennium and another \$5.5 million for the 2026-27 biennium.

According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the state biofuel infrastructure grant program has awarded more than \$12.77 million for 80 projects statewide. Minnesota now has 550-plus stations offering Unleaded 88.

Minnesota Corn has also helped increase consumer awareness of Unleaded 88 through advertising

and grassroots outreach. Those efforts include a partnership with the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association (MBA) that supports radio advertising and consumer fuel-promotion events. MBA also maintains an online station finder and provides technical assistance to fuel retailers. 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 annual events.

Additional promotion has included ads highlighting Unleaded 88's savings and clean-air benefits through the Minnesota Twins Radio Network, along with grassroots events hosted by county corn grower associations.

Minnesota Corn also supports the national "Reasons to Choose" campaign, led by Nebraska Corn, which highlights that Unleaded 88 is approved for use in more than 95% of the cars on the road, saves drivers money at the pump, and supports U.S. farmers.

Outdated regulation continues to limit E15 sales

The record sales come despite continued regulatory uncertainty from Washington, D.C., over Unleaded 88. An outdated federal regulation unrelated to the fuel's safety or quality still prevents year-round Unleaded 88 sales in much of the country. Minnesota and six other Midwestern states have taken steps to ensure year-round access in their markets, but a nationwide legislative fix remains the best long-term solution.



The Minnesota Corn-supported "Reasons to Choose" campaign highlights the many reasons why drivers should consider filling up with Unleaded 88.

Unleaded 88 | Minnesota 2025

144.4

Million gallons sold

\$19.3

Million saved vs. E10
(13 cents/gallon average)

553

Fuel stations offering Unleaded 88
(26.8% of all public retail stations)

12.7

Million record monthly sales
(July 2025)

This winter, lawmakers established a new E15 Rural Domestic Energy Council and tasked it with developing legislative solutions to "address the crisis facing our nation's farmers and refiners." MCGA was disappointed Congress missed a self-imposed deadline of Feb. 25 to consider E15 legislation. The organization appreciates the continued advocacy of our congressional champions on the issue, including Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith and Representatives Angie Craig, Tom Emmer, Brad Finstad, and Michelle Fischbach.

Unleaded 88, often referred to as E15, is a gasoline blend consisting of 15 percent ethanol. In 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Unleaded 88 for use in all light-duty vehicles model year 2001 and newer.

BP became the latest brand to offer Unleaded 88 in Minnesota last year, joining Amoco, ARCO, Casey's, Cenex, Holiday, Hy-Vee, Kwik Trip, Little Dukes, Love's, Marathon, Minnoco and Speedway. To find an Unleaded 88 retailer near you, visit mnfuels.com.

USDA's RAPP program supports agricultural export growth in emerging markets



In 2023, in response to a bipartisan request from the U.S. Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, USDA launched the \$1.2 billion Regional Agriculture Promotion Program (RAPP).

RAPP aims to diversify and expand market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products beyond the traditional top customers. It focuses on enhancing U.S. exports to new markets in parts of the world—including South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and others—where the middle class is growing and the desire for high-quality food and farm products is increasing.

“Gaining market share in these diverse and dynamic markets will help U.S. exporters better weather global shocks and better compete in an increasingly volatile global marketplace,” USDA says on its website.

USDA made RAPP funds available to U.S. agricultural trade organizations, state regional trade groups, agricultural cooperatives, and state agencies that conduct approved market development activities. In 2024, the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council (USGBC) received \$33 million through the program to help promote U.S. corn, ethanol, DDGs, and corn-fed meat in dozens of markets.

The Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council has long supported USGBC's market development work as part of its mission to increase demand for U.S. corn. But recognizing the importance of these new markets, the Council decided for 2026 to invest additional

checkoff funds in USGBC's RAPP initiatives.

“This is a really exciting opportunity for Minnesota corn farmers,” Council Chair John Mages said. “With a growing international middle class, more consumers worldwide are asking for high-quality food and farm products. Programs like RAPP help ensure that U.S. corn is well positioned to capture that additional market share.”

The following is an overview of the RAPP-funded USGBC initiatives that the Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council is supporting. You can learn more about these projects at mncorn.org.

Sustainable Agriculture Diplomacy: Promoting GMO Awareness

Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama have attempted to implement additional regulations to control the use or approval of genetically modified organisms in their countries. So far, those attempts have failed but have caused concerns among feed grains users and importers who understand the relevance of avoiding any restriction to access affordable grains that allow their industries' growth.

USGBC is identifying opportunities to prepare domestic allies to counteract the efforts made by those promoting the restrictions in these markets and any other country in the LTA region where those initiatives may appear.

Ethanol Promotion in the Middle East/Africa

The Council will host the African and Middle Eastern refinery

personnel, most notably within Nigeria, for technical training in all aspects of ethanol refining, blending, and distribution as part of it embracing an ethanol blending program during refinery and blending programs start-up. In addition, the Council will host trade teams to and from the region as needed to address technical education around ethanol blending and distribution, particularly in Nigeria, as an immediate goal is to ensure a smooth startup of the new Dangote refinery ethanol blending program.

such as win-win agricultural engagement in the dairy sector, which will lead to increased feed adoption and raw material consumption.

Development of Feed Grain Markets in North Africa

The Council is exploring several strategies that highlight the U.S. export advantages to regain U.S. market share of corn and corn co-product imports by encouraging the main feed grain importers to consider

“This is a really exciting opportunity for Minnesota corn farmers. With a growing international middle class, more consumers worldwide are asking for high-quality food and farm products. Programs like RAPP help ensure that U.S. corn is well positioned to capture that additional market share.”

– John Mages, Chair, Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council

Increase U.S. Ethanol Exports to India via Cookstoves

The Council's South Asia office is the newest office to open, beginning operations in 2023. Insufficient funding exists in the MAP and FMD funding to fully engage in South Asia. As a result, the RAPP program funds will allow the Council to expand its footprint and engagement in the South Asia region. Specifically in India, the Council sees opportunities to expand demand and create market opportunities for industrial and fuel grade ethanol, increase coalitions, provide support for GM feed grain adoption, and support USDA FAS initiatives,

combination shipments of different ingredients, joint cargos amongst themselves or with importers from neighboring countries.

Over the last two years, the Council has successfully demonstrated in North Africa that U.S. corn provides higher starch yields than other origins for the industrial starch sector; the Council will build on this program to try and capture 1 million metric tons of imports by the regional poultry and starch sectors. The Council will also provide training in grain storage management to reduce issues with U.S. corn storage in hot climatic conditions.

continued on page 13

Minnesota Corn welcomes nine new research projects



By Luke Haggerty,
Minnesota Corn Research &
Field Manager



Every year Minnesota corn farmers invest in research with a focus on results that improve efficiency, productivity and long-term farm stability. As part of this process this year, researchers first pitched their ideas to the Discovery & Development Team and after feedback submitted their full proposals. The idea behind this two-step approach was to help the researchers refine their projects to align with farmer priorities.

We are excited to announce that nine new projects have been selected and added to Minnesota Corn's research portfolio. Each project is focused on delivering value on the farm and also future market opportunities.

Production and Stewardship Research:

Increasing Maximum Return-to-Nitrogen Rates and Alternatives to Fall Nitrogen Applications

Dr. Fabian Fernandez (UMN)

Current trends show nitrogen rate recommendations increasing across Minnesota, adding to the concerns of efficiency

and environmental impact. Fernandez's project will investigate these changes with a close look at the shift from anhydrous ammonia to urea, and evaluate alternative fertilizer sources and placement strategies. The project goal is to refine nitrogen recommendations and provide corn growers with practical options that maintain profitability while improving N use efficiency.

A-Maize-ing Microbes: Double Duty against Root Rot and Growth Woes of Corn

Dr. Devanshi Khokhani (UMN)

This project will evaluate beneficial soil microbes as a natural alternative to traditional fungicide seed treatments. By targeting early season diseases like Root Rot while also promoting

as a carrier to deliver nitrogen more efficiently. By improving how nitrogen is retained in the soil and absorbed by plants, this approach has the potential to reduce leaching and improve yields. If effective, the method could open the door to novel fertilizer technology.

Resistance Management of Waterhemp and Giant Ragweed Industry Programs in a Corn/Soybean Rotation

Jenna Whitmore (Next Gen Ag LLC)

Herbicide-resistant weeds continue to challenge corn production. This project delivers a side-by-side comparison of industry herbicide programs targeting Waterhemp and Giant Ragweed. Evaluating both efficacy and cost, the research will help farmers make more informed decisions and encourage strategies that reduce resistance pressure.

Revisiting nitrogen rate recommendations for Northwest Minnesota

Dr. Lindsay Pease (UMN)

Northwest Minnesota presents unique challenges that require region specific data. This project focuses on refining nitrogen rate recommendations specifically for Northwest Minnesota by expanding field trials across the many soil types in the region. Having improved guidelines will help farmers optimize costs and better align nitrogen use with local and environmental conditions.



With support from the Minnesota corn checkoff, University of Minnesota Professor Fabian Fernandez is studying nitrogen application practices with the goal of fine-tuning nitrogen recommendations.

Advancing Nitrogen Management for Short-Stature Corn

Dr. Jeffrey Coulter (UMN)

Short-stature corn varieties are gaining interest due to their improved standability and higher planting populations. This project evaluates how these hybrids respond to nitrogen compared to traditional corn, focusing on impacts to yield, nitrogen efficiency, and economic return. Results will help us better understand the fertility needs of this new generation of hybrids.

plant growth, the research aims to improve stand establishment and early growth. If successful, these microbes would reduce reliance on fungicide inputs and support healthier soils.

Clinic to Cornfield: Harnessing Liposomes to Improve Nitrogen Use Efficiency of Minnesota Corn

Dr. Walid Sadok (UMN)

Using technology from the medical field, this project explores the use of liposomes



Corn-based plastics (pictured here) could be made to break down more quickly in the environment thanks to research by Dr. Christopher Ellison.

Expanded Uses Research:

Tailoring Accelerated Biodegradation of Corn-Derived Polymers and their Blends

Dr. Christopher Ellison (UMN)

This project advances corn-based plastics by improving how quickly and effectively they can break down in real world environments. By developing new polymer blends and additives, this research will overcome current biodegradable limitations. Advancements in the area could greatly expand demand for corn as a renewable feedstock while addressing growing concerns around plastic waste.

Developing High-Efficiency Catalysts for Corn Oil-to-Fuel Conversions

Dr. Gwendolyn Bailey (UMN)

Interest in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) continues to grow, and improving conversion efficiency is found to be critical. This project focuses on developing next-generation catalysts that can more effectively

convert distillers corn oil into fuel. By increasing yield and reducing processing cost, this project could strengthen the role of corn in emerging energy markets.

Designer Biocrude: A High-Density Blendstock for 100% Drop-in Sustainable Aviation Fuel from Corn

Dr. Seung Hwan Lee (UMN)

This project takes a biological approach to fuel production, using engineered microbes to convert corn sugars into high-density “designer biocrude.” This biocrude is designed to overcome current limitations in the SAF pathways, including blending constraints. If successful, the project could enable higher renewable fuel content and position corn as a critical feedstock in the future of aviation energy.

From field-level improvements to future market opportunities, these projects reflect a strong and balanced investment in the future of Minnesota corn. We look forward to sharing updates and these projects move forward.

USDA Launches ‘One Farmer, One File’ to streamline farmer reporting

This winter, USDA began its “One Farmer, One File” modernization initiative by having farmers create **login.gov** accounts for the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) program. This first step demonstrates how the initiative will eventually let farmers maintain a single, unified record for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA), reducing duplication and simplifying program delivery.

The goal of One Farmer, One File is to save time for both farmers and USDA staff, improve program efficiency, and consolidate multiple legacy systems. By creating a single, centralized record, information entered once can be used across all participating agencies, reducing errors and repetitive paperwork.

Currently, farmers often submit overlapping information — like acreage, crop types, and ownership details — separately to each agency. One Farmer, One File will allow that information to be entered once and shared automatically, saving time and reducing errors.

Farmers can still work with local USDA county offices for help, but the new system will reduce repetitive data entry for both producers and staff.

One Farmer, One File is part of a broader USDA modernization effort that also includes streamlining conservation program applications and making it easier for farmers to access federal programs online. USDA began developing the system in 2025, expects major progress in 2026, and anticipates full completion by 2028.

“Every single day at USDA, our focus is on making life easier, more profitable and more rewarding for the American farmer,” Secretary Brooke Rollins said in a statement. “Our government for the people by the people should be modern, efficient, and respect taxpayer dollars. This modernization of old, duplicative, wasteful systems has one goal in mind, improve our customer service so the people we serve are able to farm and feed America and the world. ‘One Farmer, One File’ prevents our farmers from duplicating tasks while increases their productivity and time in the field.”



Mulder wins national recruiter award

by Jonathan Eisenthal

Connie Mulder has lived and breathed agriculture her whole life. She and husband, Gerald, now of blessed memory, raised cattle, corn, and soybeans over a fifty-year career. She was honored Monday, March 16, with the NCGA *Walter Goepfinger Recruiter Hall of Fame Award*, in recognition of her lifetime total of 765 recruits since 2010.

Recruiting was another thing she and Gerald did together.

She fondly recalled, "There was a time when we would get in the car or the pickup in the evening and drive around the country and visit neighbors and socialize and then visit with them about membership."

"A big part of what MCGA leaders do is to sit down with elected officials to share our story. ... And they know that not only Renville County is big in MCGA membership, but that Minnesota is one of the top three states for Corn Grower membership. Those numbers matter."

— Connie Mulder

They also worked as a tag team at Renville County Fair every August.

"He would go out and circulate on the fairgrounds and remind people to go back to the booth and see Connie. When they came to me, I would check on the status of their membership, and I either could sign them up or renew them, so that worked really well that way."

Numerous family turned out to help celebrate the award, which was announced at the annual meeting of the Renville County Corn and Soybean Growers Association. Andrea (daughter) and husband David Daugherty of Renville; Corrie Guggisberg

(daughter) of Northfield; David Mulder (son) of Bloomington; Tyler Daugherty (grandson) and wife Heather of Renville; and Nick Daugherty (grandson) and wife Alannah of Sacred Heart all cheered Connie on as she accepted the award.

Connie laughed about how feeding people always seemed like a key to success in recruiting. At the county fair, she worked with Doug Toreen, who would recruit for the Soybean Growers, while she worked in her role for Minnesota Corn. She had coupons for a free malted milkshake and Toreen had coupons for a pork sandwich.

"If you signed up for both, you got a full meal," Mulder chuckled.

Her day job off the farm provided yet another forum for recruitment, though Mulder says she was never the hard sell sort. For 37 years, she worked at K&M Manufacturing (now a part of Great Northern Tool), which sold after-market parts for tractors.

"When the farmers came in to buy stuff, I could catch up and talk to them about their membership, too," Mulder said.

Gerald served on the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Board of Directors for nine years and he and Connie often talked about the

importance of membership.

"A big part of what MCGA leaders do is to sit down with elected officials to share our story. Jerry would say, You know, a single voice, they don't listen to too well, but when we go to the State Capitol and walk into the legislator's rooms, or we go to Washington, D.C., and we walk into the senator's rooms, and they look at us and they say, 'Oh, this is Renville County.' Right away you can see them thinking, click, click, click. They're thinking numbers. And they know that not only is Renville County big in MCGA membership, but also the state of Minnesota is one of the top three states for Corn Grower membership. Those numbers matter. They pay attention to a group with strong membership." She recalls that right around the year 2000, MCGA decided that farm women and young adult children had a right to their own individual memberships, so that everyone could be included appropriately. Another long-term recruitment strategy has emerged in recent years. "We are now concentrating on our FFA groups, too," Mulder said. "We talk to the advisors, and we encourage the kids to



Connie Mulder smiles with her grandson Nick Daugherty at the Renville County Corn and Soybean Growers Annual meeting on March 16 after accepting the NCGA Walter Goepfinger Recruiter Hall of Fame Award.



Mulder poses with her award and Minnesota Corn Executive Director and CEO Dr. Adam Birr.

take a youth membership form. Our county group will pay their \$20 membership if they join as a student, so it's no cost to them."

Mulder notes that young people who join as students, especially if they join agricultural companies, or remain in farming, are already accustomed to membership and understand its benefit to all farmers.

"I'm mentoring now," Mulder said, reflecting on the need to not only recruit members, but also leaders. "My grandson, Nick Daugherty, is on our

Farmers encouraged to review acetochlor BMPs

As planting season gets underway, University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture encourage farmers to review best management practices (BMPs) for acetochlor before applying the herbicide later this spring.

The use of BMPs can help protect Minnesota's water quality and tackle high surface water detections of acetochlor, which can disrupt aquatic ecosystems. BMPs for acetochlor include:

- Rotate acetochlor with other herbicides or use more non-acetochlor herbicides. Talk to your dealer or agronomist to find the best non-acetochlor options for your farm.

- Use non-acetochlor herbicides early in the season when acetochlor runoff risks are high, and save acetochlor for later, especially for early post-crop emergence applications. Be sure to follow label guidelines for crop growth stage or height restrictions.
- Avoid applying acetochlor before rain events that could cause runoff. Specifically, refrain from applications when rainfall is expected within the next 48 hours.
- Maintain vegetative buffers along waterways, including in areas where rainwater and runoff collect before

flowing into nearby surface waters like lakes, rivers, and streams.

- Consider acetochlor premixes over standalone acetochlor products when possible. Premixes usually contain less acetochlor, reducing the overall amount applied.

Found in products like Tripleflex, SureStart, Warrant, and Harness, acetochlor is widely used in Minnesota to control weeds in crops like corn and soybeans, according to UMN Extension. As sales continue to rise, acetochlor is increasingly detected at levels above the state's chronic water quality standard (about 3.6 parts per

Scan for a full list of acetochlor BMPs



billion) in many southern rivers and streams.

If acetochlor levels repeatedly exceed the state's chronic water quality standard, the waterbody may be designated as impaired. This triggers the development of a response plan to promote responsible pesticide use and may lead to restrictions on acetochlor use. Currently, Silver Creek in Carver County is the only waterway impaired for acetochlor.

county board, and I would really like him to see him take an active position on the state level, and I think in time he will. Right now, he has three young children, and there are a lot of demands on his time."

Mulder believes she'll continue her recruiting activities even though she's no longer growing corn.

"It's always fun to be at the Corn and Soybean booth at the county fair, to meet new people and talk to them," Mulder said. "Wherever I go people know they can talk to me about membership. Just the other day, I was at a local concert in Redwood Falls and then when I went to a restaurant afterwards, I had two or three people walk up to me. We visited and they said, 'Okay, we'll see you Monday night at the annual meeting and you can sign us up then.'"

Exports

continued from page 2

(41.4 million gallons) made up the rest of the top 10.

In a statement, Alicia Koch, USGBC's director of global ethanol export development, said U.S. ethanol producers once again showed in MY25 that they can supply the world's biofuel needs. She noted that 80 countries imported U.S. ethanol and that opportunities for expansion continue to develop.

"Several countries have committed to expanding their biofuel integration in the past year, meaning greater demand for U.S. producers and even more exciting years to come across the industry," she said.

Groundwater

continued from page 7

request to intervene in the case.

In September, the parties in the lawsuit reached an agreement requiring MDA to evaluate whether the Groundwater Protection Rule adequately limits nitrate-nitrogen impacts from commercial fertilizer to groundwater. As part of that review, MDA opened a public comment period in January.

Earlier in 2025, MCGA also participated in the MPCA's public comment process on proposed updates to the state's feedlot and manure management rules (Minnesota Rule 7020).

RAPP

continued from page 9

African Poultry Industry Development

The vision of the Council's engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa is to expand U.S. feed exports to the region by improving the size, commercial viability, and efficiency of the poultry sector to meet the ever-growing regional demand for poultry products. In order to accomplish this, the Council proposes to utilize the Center for Excellence as a training platform to engage the leading commercial poultry producers in West Africa. Ultimately, as the poultry sector begins to grow and expand in West Africa, the need to import inputs, feed ingredients along with poultry production equipment will increase. This will open the doors for U.S. grain and equipment exports to the region.

Minnesota Corn announces 2026 scholarship recipients



Minnesota Corn has announced the recipients of its 2026 scholarships. Cameron Addington, Wyatt Glessing, Carson Lee, Luke McCrea, Eden Messerli, and Sven Storbakken will each receive \$5,000 to further their pursuit of a degree in agriculture.

Since 2019, Minnesota Corn has provided young-adult MCGA members with scholarships as part of its mission to build opportunities for the next generation of agricultural leaders. To date, the organization has awarded \$150,000 in scholarships to 30 students across the state.

Typically, Minnesota Corn offers four scholarships to young adult members each year. But this year, the organization received a deep pool of tremendous applications, leading farmer-leaders to offer two additional awards.

In addition to the Minnesota Corn scholarship program, some of the state's 52 county corn organizations also offer scholarships. The National Corn Growers Association also offers scholarships to ag students. More information about all these opportunities can be found at mncorn.org/scholarships.

The following is more information on the 2026 Minnesota Corn scholarship recipients.



Cameron Addington

A freshman at Iowa State University, Addington didn't grow up on a farm but became interested in a career in agriculture as an active member of 4-H and FFA. Additionally, his experience working for four years as a vineyard laborer and one summer on a diversified corn, soybean, and cow/calf operation solidified his plans to pursue a career in agriculture.

Addington plans to major in agronomy and pursue a seed sales representative position with Pioneer Hi-Bred International after graduating. He's a member of the Agronomy and Block & Bridle clubs at Iowa State and is also serving as Minnesota State FFA president this year.



Wyatt Glessing

Glessing, a sophomore at South Dakota State, grew up on his family's dairy and crop farm in Waverly. He's majoring in precision agriculture with minors in dairy industry, agronomy, and political science, and his post-graduation goal is to operate the family farm alongside his dad and brothers.

At SDSU, Glessing has been active in the Dairy Club, the Agronomy and Precision Ag Club, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and Little International. He also works as an agricultural laborer for a farm near the SDSU campus.



Carson Lee

Lee is a senior at Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop High School who will enroll at SDSU next fall, with plans to major in agricultural business. His goal is to eventually take over his family's farm, where he has already worked for several years.

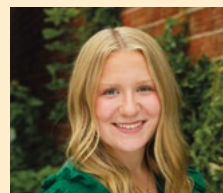
At GFW, Lee has served as a leader in both his local 4-H and FFA chapters. He has also volunteered with the Renville County Corn & Soybean Growers Association and participated in activities such as National Honors Society, trapshooting, and golf team.



Luke McCrea

A senior at Bethlehem Academy prep school in Faribault, McCrea plans to enroll next fall at Iowa State and pursue a degree in agricultural business. He hopes to one day take over his family farming operation while also working in agricultural communications to help bridge gaps between farmers and consumers.

While in high school, McCrea has served as a FFA region president, an FFA in the USA reporter, a 4-H state agricultural ambassador, and a Youth In Government Speaker of the House. He is also a National Merit Commended Scholar.



Eden Messerli

Messerli is a freshman at SDSU who's studying agricultural business. After graduating, Messerli plans to pursue a career managing an agricultural financial services business.

While in high school, Messerli was a leader in her 4-H and FFA chapters and president of her student council. At SDSU, she has been a member of the Collegiate FFA, the Agricultural Education Club, the Economic Club, Agriculture Communicators of Tomorrow, and more.



Sven Storbakken

Storbakken is a senior at Princeton High School, where he has served as 4-H and FFA chapter president and been a member of the symphonic band and the National Honors Society. Next fall, he will enroll at the North Dakota State College of Science to pursue a degree in agricultural diesel mechanics. His career goal is to become a CASE IH diesel technician.

In addition to his extracurricular involvement, Storbakken has gained hands-on experience by taking apart and repairing engines at a local service shop and working on his grandparent's farm. He has lined up an internship with Arnold's Inc. during college.

Thanks to our allied partners





Follow the basic steps for stewardship of treated seed

As planting season begins across the country, Minnesota Corn reminds farmers to follow the basic steps for stewardship of treated seed:

- 1) Follow label directions on seed containers;
- 2) Eliminate flowering plants and weeds in the field prior to planting;
- 3) Minimize dust by using advanced seed flow lubricants;
- 4) “BeeAware” of honeybees and hives located near the field;

5) Ensure that any spilled seeds are removed or covered by soil to protect wildlife and the environment; and

6) Remove all treated seed left in containers and equipment.

Seed treatments help protect the developing seed during its most vulnerable time – at planting and germination. Their highly targeted, precise application means less impact on the surrounding environment. This is one of the many valuable and innovative tools that enable

America’s farmers to be more productive, while using resources more efficiently and protecting their seed investment. It’s important to always follow label directions on seed containers for proper handling, storage, planting, and disposal to minimize risk to applicators, wildlife, and the environment.

For more information, visit seed-treatment-guide.com. Join the conversation online using #Plant26. The Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship is a partnership between the American Seed Trade Association

and CropLife America, with support from: Agricultural Retailers Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers Association, National Cotton Council, National Association of Wheat Growers; and National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Additional information is available at: www.growingmatters.com. For more information about treated seed benefits and safety, visit: www.betterseed.org/treated-seeds.

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

Mark Enninga of Fulda
763-656-9459

Angela Guentzel of Kasota
507-317-4372

Blair Hoseth of Mahnomen
701-261-3574

Shayne Isane of Badger
218-689-2025

James Johnstad of Beltrami
218-280-8695

Adam Jones of Lake Crystal
507-276-9027

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.) VanKlompensburg
of Montevideo
320-212-2748

Tim Waibel of Courtland
507-276-1476

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

Another busy season for Minnesota's county corn organizations

Even with spring approaching, Minnesota's 52 affiliated county organizations have been busy holding events and being active in their local communities. Minnesota Corn thanks these grassroots organizations for their continued efforts on behalf of corn farmers.

Interested in getting involved in your local county corn organization? Reach out to your local district field manager. Their contact information can be found at mncorn.org/county-resources.



Minnesota Corn Executive Director and CEO Adam Birr gives an update at the Renville County meeting in March.



MCGA First Vice President Todd Wentzel gives an update at the Swift County meeting in March.



Members of the Blue Earth County organization socialize at their social hour event in March.



The Lincoln County board smiles for a photo at their annual meeting in February.



Minnesota Corn Research & Promotion Council member Brandon Fast gives an update at the Cottonwood County Corn and Soybean Growers Annual Meeting in March.



MCGA Senior Public Policy Director Amanda Bilek gives an update at the Wright-Hennepin annual meeting in March.