

MICHIGAN CORN

# Between THE ROWS

THE JOINT MAGAZINE OF THE CORN MARKETING PROGRAM OF MICHIGAN AND THE MICHIGAN CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2026

FROM FARM TO FUEL

**Building Michigan's Sustainable  
Fuels Economy**

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## MEET OUR NEW INTERN

# Bree Tomlinson

**M**ichigan Corn is excited to welcome Bree Tomlinson, a Junior at Michigan State University studying Agribusiness Management with a minor in Agronomy. Bree grew up on a cash crop farm raising corn, soybeans, and small grain in Caro, Michigan, giving her a strong foundation and passion for agriculture from an early age.

At MSU, Bree is an active member of Sigma Alpha Professional Agricultural Sorority, where she serves as the sorority's Membership Director. Through this she has developed her leadership and professional skills while building connections throughout the

agricultural community. She has also gained hands-on experience in the seed industry through her work with ACH Seeds, learning about seed sales, variety trials, crop scouting, and field research.

Bree also had the honor of serving as the 77<sup>th</sup> Michigan Bean Queen, representing Michigan's dry bean industry at festivals, parades, and agricultural events across the state. Through this experience, she enjoyed connecting with growers and industry professionals while



promoting Michigan agriculture and encouraging others to "Eat more Beans!"

Bree is excited to bring her agricultural background, enthusiasm, work-ethic and passion for agriculture to Michigan Corn. Her goal is to continue learning from Michigan's corn growers and industry leaders while building the knowledge, relationships, and experience needed to make a meaningful impact in agriculture and advocate for those farmers who help feed and support our communities.



# MI Corn Has a Successful Week on Capitol Hill

**M**ichigan Corn wrapped up a strong week in Washington, D.C., from July 13 through 16, 2026. Growers split into two groups and met face-to-face with many of the state's congressional delegation offices, including Representatives Walberg, Huizenga, Scholten, Thanedar, Bergman, Dingell, Moolenaar, McDonald Rivet, and Senator Slotkin. The delegation also met with the Embassy of Japan for a trade discussion and attended briefings at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),

where they met with Undersecretary Richard Fordyce and representatives from NCRS and RMA.

Every conversation started with the same hard reality: corn is forecast to post the fourth straight year of losses. Against that backdrop, growers carried five asks to the Hill. They thanked House members for supporting year-round E15 and urged the Senate to pass H.R. 1346. They pushed the Senate to finish Farm Bill 2.0 before the extension expires on September 30.

They asked Michigan senators to protect agricultural market access in the USMCA, given that Canada and Mexico buy roughly 40 percent of U.S. corn exports. They called for passage of the Fertilizer Transparency Act and a permanent end to the Moroccan phosphate duties. Finally, they made the case for the Biobased Materials Investment and Production Act (H.R. 8137) to create new industrial demand for corn. The key points all week was simple: growers are losing money on every bushel, and these policies are the tools to help change that.



E A R S   I N   W A S H I N G T O N

# Fighting for Our Corn Growers

By Rep. Randy Feenstra  
*Guest Columnist*

**S**ince our country's founding, corn farmers have fed our families, fueled our economies, and strengthened our nation's security. Representing the largest corn-producing district in the nation is more than just an honor—it's a responsibility to ensure our commodity is in the best position possible to feed and fuel the world. That's why I was deeply humbled this summer to receive the National Corn Growers Association's President's Award, one of the organization's highest honors, in recognition of our hard work on behalf of corn growers across this country.

This award belongs to the farmers as much as it does to me. Corn growers have never wavered on their commitment to delivering commonsense policies that expand markets, strengthen rural economies, and provide certainty for our producers. Their strong advocacy helped make one of the biggest



victories this Congress possible: House passage of year-round, nationwide E15.

After more than a decade of Washington gridlock and temporary waivers, the House has finally taken action to permanently authorize year-round E15 sales nationwide. When I was appointed as co-chair of the Rural Domestic Energy Council, it was essential to work alongside farmers, ethanol producers, refiners, fuel retailers, and my colleagues in Congress to build the broad and strong coalition necessary to get this legislation across the finish line in the House. It's simple: year-round E15 is a victory for all Americans. It creates a stable and strong market for our corn growers, lowers fuel costs for working families, and accelerates American energy independence instead of relying on foreign energy sources.

While this victory is significant, it is only the start. I am committed to working alongside my Senate colleagues to get this bill passed and

sent to President Trump's desk, so that farmers and rural communities can finally receive the relief they have asked for years to achieve.

Our farmers continue to face rising input costs, tight commodity prices, and increasing uncertainty. Farmers and producers are the backbone of our country—they deserve opportunity instead of obstacles. Whether it's expanding demand for corn through year-round E15, strengthening the farm safety net or opening new markets for American agriculture, I remain committed to ensuring our producers have the tools they need to succeed.

I will fight every single day to be a strong voice for Iowa's hardworking farmers. America's corn growers deserve nothing less, and I look forward to continuing to work together to build a strong and promising future for Iowa agriculture and rural America.

*Feenstra is the U.S. Congressman representing Iowa's 4<sup>th</sup> District.*

# Corn Farmers Need Congress to Deliver a Win...

## T I M E I S R U N N I N G O U T

By Lesly McNitt

**T**here's nothing like expecting to learn the outcome of a summer cliffhanger in September only to find you may have to wait until later in the year before the story is resolved. Yet, that's where we are this month when it comes to ethanol legislation important to the nation's corn growers.

In early August, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held a vote on the renewal of the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026. The legislation was particularly important to corn growers because it contained language that would eliminate an antiquated regulatory clause that prevents the summertime sale of fuels with a 15% ethanol blend, also known as E15 or Unleaded 88.

The committee vote came on the heels of the May 13 passage in the House of Representatives of a standalone E15 bill. There appeared to be momentum, but then the Senate hit a snag: A disagreement in the committee along party lines prevented the legislation from advancing.

Our expectation was that committee members would negotiate to consider a compromise version of the legislation after its summer recess. NCGA spent the better part of August preparing to push hard for passage of legislation when it resurfaced this month. As of this writing, it's still uncertain whether the vote will take place and whether it will have a different outcome.

Adding to the uncertainty is the countdown clock to the end of this

Congress. The Senate is in session for only a few weeks this month. Senators will then head home for the month of October, as the mid-term elections approach, leaving unresolved business to be addressed later in the year.

While NCGA's policy team is following all these twists and turns and political candidates are out campaigning, it is not lost on us that corn growers are in the field harvesting and getting the job done. When Members of Congress return to Washington, they will need to act with the same intensity to deliver wins for farmers.

The time is now. And that is why corn growers are taking time away from their fields and families mid-September to come to Washington, D.C., to make their voices heard and to ensure that House and Senate Members are harvesting wins before time runs out.

Not everyone can take the time away from their fields and families to make the trek east, but if you are able, I encourage you to look for opportunities to advocate closer to home when your elected officials are on the campaign trail. It's a good reminder that your support must be earned with more than promises.

Here is a list of key wins that must be harvested this year to help corn farmers:

- Pass year-round E15 legislation into law.

- Pass a bipartisan Farm Bill.
- Support the Biobased Materials Investment and Production Act.
- Pass legislation to tackle high input costs by restoring transparency, fairness and diversified supply to fertilizer markets.

Bottom line is farmers need wins that expand market opportunities and inject more stability into the economics of farming. The added benefit of many of these solutions is that they deliver benefits far beyond the farm gate. Cheaper gasoline, cleaner ingredients for industrial and household products, rural jobs and stronger food supply chains are wins that touch the lives of many Americans. So, let's get down to work and get those wins in the bin!



*McNitt is vice president of public policy at the National Corn Growers Association.*



# Between the Rows 2026

**M**ichigan Corn's 2026 Between the Rows Tour wrapped up after seven stops across the state, connecting corn growers with agricultural businesses, industry experts and elected officials ahead of harvest.

The annual tour visited farms from Rosebush to Mendon,

providing growers with updates on crop conditions, markets, agronomy and other issues affecting Michigan agriculture.

The tour began at McDonald Farms in Rosebush and concluded at Golden View Farms in Mendon. Other stops included Holbrook Farms in Ubly, Miller Family Farms in Elsie, Sulkowski & Sons Farms in Wales, Bakerlads Farms in Clayton and Heasley Seeds in Byron Center.

Each stop paired local growers with agricultural businesses and organizations that work directly with Michigan farmers. Presenters throughout the tour included Crop Performance LLC, Zeeland Farm Services, Michigan Agricultural Commodities, Nutrien Ag Solutions Michigan, Gerald Grain Center, Pioneer Seeds, The Andersons, GAPS FS, POET-Caro and the USDA Farm Service Agency.

The Sanilac FFA Chapter also participated in the Ubly stop, completing yield checks as part of this year's tour.

Several state and federal elected officials or their representatives attended stops along the route,



including state Reps. Jerry Neyer, Gregory Alexander, Julie Brixie, Veronica Paiz, Nancy Jenkins-Arno and Steve Carra, as well as Sens. Chedrick Greene and Joe Bellino. Cole Wood attended the Ubly stop on behalf of U.S. Rep. Lisa McClain.

Their participation gave growers an opportunity to talk directly with policymakers about conditions on Michigan farms and the issues affecting the agriculture industry.

The tour is designed to bring information directly to growers while creating opportunities for conversations among farmers, agricultural businesses and policymakers in communities across the state.

Michigan Corn thanked the farms that hosted this year's events, the businesses and organizations that provided presentations and the growers who participated throughout the seven-stop tour.

With the 2026 tour complete, attention now turns to harvest across Michigan.





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## MEET THE RESEARCHER

# Dr. Angela Chen

**M**SU researcher Dr. Angela Chen is exploring how corn-derived nanoparticles could facilitate the next generation of sustainable crop protection products. Supported by CPM, her work combines chemical engineering, plant biology, and RNA technology to improve disease management while creating new value from corn and corn byproducts.

“ A nanoparticle acts like a protective package around that RNA. By encapsulating it, we hope to shield it from those environmental stresses so it remains active longer. If rainfall occurs shortly after an application, for example, the nanoparticle may help prevent the RNA from simply washing away. ”

**Kristin Poley:** Your background is in chemical engineering, but today your work is focused on agriculture. How did that transition happen?

**Dr. Angela Chen:** My training is entirely in chemical engineering. During my Ph.D., I worked on sustainability projects that used engineered bacteria and microbes for applications like bioremediation. But over time, I became convinced that plants represent one of our greatest opportunities to address future challenges.

Growing up in rural Ohio surrounded by cornfields gave me an appreciation for agriculture and the importance of our food system. I wanted to apply my engineering background to problems that could have a direct impact on the food system.

**Poley:** As you think about eventually moving this technology into the field, what characteristics are you trying to optimize?

**Chen:** One of our biggest goals is understanding how the source material influences the nanoparticles

themselves. A nanoparticle isolated from a corn kernel may behave differently than one produced from a corn cob or stover.

We're studying properties like particle size, electrical charge, and long-term stability because those factors ultimately determine whether this technology is practical for agriculture.

**Poley:** Right now, you're focusing on RNA as the cargo inside these nanoparticles. But it seems like this delivery system could have applications well beyond RNA.

**Chen:** Absolutely. That's one of the things that makes this research so exciting. Plant-derived nanoparticles have several advantages. They're naturally biodegradable, biocompatible, and can be produced from renewable plant materials. From a consumer perspective, they're also very approachable. People are already comfortable with corn as part of their everyday lives, which is very different from asking them to accept synthetic or metal-based nanoparticles.

From our perspective, the real opportunity is creating a flexible delivery platform. Today we're optimizing it for RNA, but in the future these same nanoparticles could potentially deliver peptides, biological products, or even conventional crop protection materials. Ultimately, the nanoparticle is simply the vehicle. What changes from one application to another is the cargo it carries.

**Poley:** There are already RNA-based crop protection products entering the marketplace. What advantage does adding a nanoparticle provide?

**Chen:** The biggest advantage is protection. RNA is a naturally occurring molecule, but it's also fragile. When it's sprayed onto a plant, it's immediately exposed to sunlight, rainfall, temperature changes and microorganisms in the environment that begin breaking it down.

A nanoparticle acts like a protective package around that RNA. By encapsulating it, we hope to shield it from those environmental stresses so it remains active longer. If rainfall occurs shortly after an application, for example, the nanoparticle may help prevent the RNA from simply washing away.

Ultimately, extending that window of protection could make RNA technologies much more practical for agriculture.

**Poley:** One of the challenges with mycotoxin management is timing. Infection often occurs during pollination, so would these nanoparticles be applied earlier in the season and remain active until then?

**Chen:** That's one of the questions we're trying to answer. Much of today's RNA research focuses on preventative applications—you

apply the treatment before disease develops and provide protection during the period when infection is most likely.

Our goal is to understand how long that protection can realistically last and whether nanoparticles can extend that timeframe.

There are also some exciting studies suggesting RNA may have curative potential in certain situations. Researchers have shown that plants already infected with specific pathogens could recover after receiving RNA treatment. While that's still an emerging area of research, it demonstrates that these technologies may eventually offer more flexibility than simply preventing disease.

**Poley:** As this project moves forward, what do you envision as the next phase of the research?

**Chen:** There are a number of exciting directions we could take. I'm interested in looking beyond RNA altogether. While RNA is our current focus, these nanoparticles could potentially carry other types of cargo, creating opportunities for entirely different agricultural applications. Another possibility is combining this technology with conventional crop protection products. Rather than replacing traditional fungicides, nanoparticles could make them work more effectively.

For example, they might allow lower application rates while maintaining disease control, helping reduce input costs and slow the development of fungicide resistance. They could also make it possible to combine products that currently can't be tank-mixed because of compatibility issues.

Those are all exciting directions for future research, but right now our focus is building the scientific foundation that will make those possibilities achievable.

**Poley:** That's really where the value is for growers. Input costs continue to be one of the biggest challenges farmers face. If research like this can improve the performance of existing products while reducing the amount that's needed, it has the potential to create meaningful value on the farm.

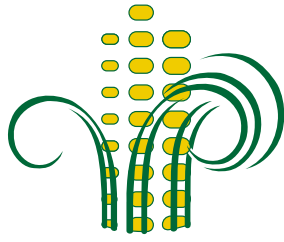
**Chen:** Exactly. That's one of the things that motivates me. The goal isn't simply to create new technology—it's to develop solutions that are practical, economically realistic, and genuinely useful for growers.

**Poley:** We've spent a lot of time talking about this specific project, but what excites you most as a researcher?

**Chen:** At the end of the day, I became an engineer because I wanted to solve problems. Working with organizations like CMPM allows me to talk directly with growers, commodity groups and industry partners. Instead of wondering whether our research will eventually matter, I hear firsthand about the challenges farmers are facing today.

That means we're developing research with a clear purpose from the very beginning.

*Dr. Angela Chen joined Michigan State University in 2025 as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. Her research focuses on developing sustainable nanoparticle technologies for agriculture, including corn-derived delivery systems for RNA-based crop protection. Her current work is supported by the Michigan Corn Research Program.*



## 2027 FRANK LIPINSKI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

13750 S. Sedona Parkway, Suite 5  
Lansing, MI 48906  
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[www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org)

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The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors created this scholarship in memory of former board member, Frank Lipinski. Frank was passionate about helping people with a non-agriculture background enter into the industry and he educated many young people on the career opportunities available in agriculture.

### Qualifications

- Applicants must be enrolled as a full-time student at a post-secondary educational institution pursuing an agricultural degree during the spring 2027 semester.
- Applicants must come from a non-agriculture/farm background. (Being a member of FFA, 4-H or any other related organization does not disqualify you from applying).
- Applicants cannot come from a family farm.

The Frank Lipinski Memorial Scholarship is awarded to one student. Up to \$2,000 will be awarded. The award will be applied to the 2027 spring semester.

Students are only eligible to receive the Frank Lipinski Memorial Scholarship once. Students may also apply for the Michigan Corn Growers Association scholarship but will not be awarded both in one calendar year.

**All applications must be received via email by the Michigan Corn office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Monday, November 2, 2026. Send the completed application to [corninfo@micorn.org](mailto:corninfo@micorn.org).**

### Application Checklist

Please make sure all of the items below are enclosed in your scholarship application. Only complete applications will be considered for evaluation.

- ☐ Completed application
- ☐ Career plans
- ☐ 500 word essay
- ☐ Activities, awards and honors
- ☐ At least two letters of recommendation from non-family members
- ☐ Resume
- ☐ Copy of most recent transcript

Applications for the 2027 Frank Lipinski Memorial scholarship can be obtained online at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org).



# Matt Frostic

## TO CHAIR NATIONAL CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

**T**he National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) has welcomed Michigan corn grower Matt Frostic, of Applegate, as its next president on October 1, 2026.

Frostic has served as NCGA's first vice president over the past year and has been active in the organization's national leadership.

"Matt has spent years working on behalf of corn growers in Michigan and across the country, and we're proud to see him step into this

national leadership role," said Scott Piggott, executive director of Michigan Corn. "He understands the challenges farmers are facing because he lives them every day. Matt will bring a strong Michigan voice to the table while staying focused on expanding markets, strengthening the farm economy and creating opportunities for corn growers nationwide."

Frostic farms 1,000 acres of corn, soybeans, edible beans and sugar

beets in east-central Michigan. His operation also includes approximately 550 head of beef cattle on feed.

Frostic has served on the NCGA Corn Board since 2022 and previously served as president and chair of the Michigan Corn Growers Association.

As Frostic begins his term as president, the immediate past President, Jed Bower, of Ohio, will become chair of the Corn Board.



FROM FARM TO FUEL

# Building Michigan's Sustainable Fuels Economy

**M**ichigan-grown and processed corn could one day fuel your next flight across the country or power a freighter carrying goods across the globe, if Michigan makes the right investments in infrastructure and market development.

That opportunity was a central theme of the Great Lakes Sustainable Fuels Symposium, hosted by the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan at The Henry Hotel and Conference Center in Dearborn on September 2 and 3, 2026.

"What we have is a special opportunity, with the only international port in the Midwest, and throw on top of that, 30 miles away, one of the largest airports in the United States," Piggott says. "That one airport utilizes 1.6 million gallons of fuel every day."

The first day of the symposium featured Juan Sacoto of S&P Global delivering the opening keynote, "Fueling Agriculture: Biofuels as the Catalyst," drawing from recent S&P Global research on the future of biofuels. His presentation examined the growing opportunities

surrounding sustainable aviation fuel, maritime fuel and other renewable fuels, while highlighting the important roles agriculture, manufacturing, energy, water and carbon management will play in developing those markets.

"What I am here to tell you is that the story is now not meeting food demand, we all know we can do that, it's how do you meet what farmers can do? How do you keep farmers farming?" Sacoto said. "It's no longer about meeting food demand. It's about finding markets."



From there, the discussion shifted from the potential market to the companies and industries that could drive demand.

John Delmotte, president of the Michigan Corn Growers Association, moderated a panel featuring Yvonne Domeier of Delta Air Lines, Mark Schrupp of the Detroit Port Authority and Chris Bliley of Growth Energy. The conversation explored demand for biofuels from aviation, maritime transportation and the broader transportation fuel market.

Domeier highlighted Delta Air Lines' commitment to increasing its use of sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF. The airline procured 23 million gallons of SAF in 2025, an 80 percent increase over 2024.

Agriculture's ability to supply those emerging markets was the focus of a second panel moderated by Tom Woelmer of the Michigan Soybean

Association. Ben Steyer of the Michigan Soybean Association, Scott Piggott of Michigan Corn and Doug Berven of POET discussed the role corn, soybeans and existing biofuel producers could play as sustainable fuel production expands.

The day concluded with a closer look at what will be needed to turn opportunity into investment and production. Michigan State University researchers Dr. Bruno Basso and Dr. Shashank Priya joined Michael R. Smith of Invest Detroit for a fireside conversation moderated by Maggie Pallone of Public Sector Consultants. Their discussion focused on innovation, investment and the barriers that must be addressed to move projects from promising ideas to commercial reality.

Across the day's conversations, one theme remained consistent: Michigan already has many of the pieces needed to compete in

the sustainable fuels economy, including a strong agricultural sector, world-class research institutions, manufacturing expertise and access to major transportation networks.

The next challenge, and the focus of small-group discussions on day two, is connecting those assets and building the partnerships and infrastructure needed to create a sustainable fuels industry in Michigan.

For corn growers, that opportunity could mean something especially important: new, long-term markets for Michigan-grown crops.

If the state can connect its farms, fuel producers, researchers, manufacturers, ports and transportation companies, sustainable fuels could become another way Michigan agriculture helps power both the state's economy and the world beyond it.



# M I C H I G A N   H O S T S

# Nourish the Future Workshop

# F O R   S C I E N C E   E D U C A T O R S

**T**wenty-eight science educators participated in “Feeding and Fueling the World”, a workshop hosted at Michigan State University this summer, experiencing firsthand how agricultural research connects to classroom learning. The two-day experience, supported by Michigan corn farmers through the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, connected educators with cutting-edge agricultural research and real-world farming operations.

The middle and high school teachers came from suburban (42%), urban (29%), and rural (25%) school districts

and explored how modern agriculture can enhance their science curriculum. The workshop is part of Nourish the Future, a national education initiative sponsored by the National Corn Growers Association, with Michigan-specific support from CMPM and the Michigan Wheat Program.

“It was great to learn about science through agriculture and all the industries and roles involved,” one participant commented. “Being able to bring that back to students to expose them to all the careers available in agriculture - even for city kids - was such a positive experience.”

Teachers experienced hands-on laboratory investigations including biofuel production from plant oils, soil nutrient testing, DNA extraction, and data analysis exercises. They also toured MSU’s Agronomy farm to learn how agriculture research is translated into practical solutions for Michigan farms.

A highlight was the evening at Zeeb Farms in Clinton County, where teachers witnessed active farming operations and heard from local corn farmers Pat and Jill Zeeb and Andrea Polverento about modern agricultural practices.

“We thoroughly enjoyed hosting the team from Nourish the Future on our farm. The opportunity to provide a firsthand experience to teachers learning how to incorporate agriculture into their science curriculum will surely help them make meaningful connections in the classroom,” said Andrea Polverento. “It’s rewarding for us to know that by sharing our farm and experiences, we can play a small role in inspiring the next generation to better understand agriculture, and where their food comes from.”

The investment of Michigan corn farmer checkoff dollars directly supports this workforce development initiative. Traditional agriculture programs only reach 4% of students nationally, but 96% of students take biology. Nourish the Future targets these general science classrooms where a broader

audience of students will begin to consider their STEM career options and start seeing themselves in roles that will take on the challenges of feeding and fueling the world.

Since 2023, Nourish the Future’s Michigan workshop has reached 97 STEM educators. If all 97 educators implement the lessons provided to them by Nourish the Future for the average lesson shelf-life of 8.3 years, 175,711 students will be reached with critical agriculture examples in their science classrooms.

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan’s Director of Research, Kristin Poley, attended day one of the workshop and introduced participants to the work that the corn checkoff does for the state’s farmers.

“Engaging middle and high school teachers will have a downstream effect on their students at a critical

time when students are starting to make decisions about their interests and career paths”, Poley said about the program. “The hands-on workshop format and accompanying resources make it easy for teachers to take the concepts back to their classrooms.”

“It was so refreshing to practice the actual lessons and be provided lessons and materials free of charge. I learned a lot and had fun and feel way more prepared for high-quality, interactive labs and instruction in agriculture science now.” Teachers received \$300 worth of classroom supplies and continuing education hours, along with NGSS-aligned curriculum materials they can implement immediately. The program emphasizes practical applications that help students understand how science connects to feeding and fueling the world.



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# Michigan House Approves Tax Credit for E15, E85 Retailers

**LANSING, Mich. — Michigan lawmakers are looking to put more homegrown fuel at the pump.**

If signed into law, House Bill 5359, already approved by the Michigan House, would give fuel retailers a refundable tax credit for selling E15 and E85. The credit would total 5 cents per gallon for E15 and 8.5 cents per gallon for E85 for tax years 2026 through 2030.

Sponsored by State Rep. Matt Bierlein, the bill is designed to help offset the cost of offering higher-ethanol fuels and encourage more stations to make them available.

The Michigan Corn Growers Association supports the legislation that would expand the market for Michigan corn while giving drivers more fuel choices.

“Michigan grows the corn, Michigan makes the ethanol, and Michigan drivers should benefit from it,” said John Delmotte, a Monroe County corn grower and president of MCGA. “House Bill 5359 gives retailers a reason to offer drivers more choices while building a stronger market for a product we make right here at home.”

Michigan produces roughly 350 million bushels of corn each year and is home to four ethanol plants,

tying the state’s farm economy directly to its fuel market.

But expanding ethanol use depends on getting more retailers on board.

“If we want drivers to have the option to choose E15 or E85, retailers have to be willing to put it at the pump,” Delmotte said. “This credit helps make that investment worthwhile.”

More ethanol demand also means more economic activity for Michigan ethanol plants, grain elevators and farms.

House Bill 5359 now heads to the Michigan Senate.

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 **MICHIGAN SOYBEAN COMMITTEE**



# HOW TO Join the Board

The future of Michigan's corn industry will be shaped by the growers who are willing to step up and lead.

**W**hether it is advocating for agriculture in Lansing or Washington, D.C., investing in new markets or helping set Michigan Corn's priorities, strong grower leadership matters. Our organization works best when farmers from across the state bring their experience, perspective and ideas to the table.

## Are You Qualified to Serve?

A lot of growers hesitate to run for the board because they think they do not know enough. You do not have to be an expert on every issue to be a good board member.

If you farm, listen before you speak, ask good questions and are willing to think beyond your own operation, you are qualified to serve.

Good board members bring integrity, curiosity and commitment. They are willing to learn, have thoughtful conversations and represent Michigan corn growers well. Most importantly, they understand that leadership means looking beyond this year's crop and thinking about where the industry needs to be five, 10 or 20 years from now.

Experienced directors offered one piece of advice again and again:

"You don't have to know everything. You just have to be willing to learn."

## What Does Serving on the Board Require?

Board members are expected to attend four meetings each year, participate in committee work and help guide the association's advocacy and priorities on behalf of Michigan corn growers.

Directors may also have opportunities to represent Michigan growers at regional and national meetings, meet with policymakers and learn more about the issues shaping agriculture beyond their own farms.

For many directors, serving on the board changes the way they look at the industry. It gives them a broader view of agriculture, a stronger understanding of the decisions affecting their farms and a greater opportunity to help shape what comes next.

Michigan Corn needs growers who are willing to be part of those conversations. You do not need to have all the answers. You just need to be willing to step forward.

## MCGA Districts Up for Election in 2027

MCGA will be accepting nominations for the following districts in 2027:

- **District 3** – Huron, Saginaw, Sanilac and Tuscola counties
- **District 6** – Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties
- **District 8** – Lenawee, Monroe and Washtenaw counties
- **At-Large** – Serving all of Michigan

Eligible candidates must be MCGA members in good standing who are actively engaged in corn production in Michigan. Directors are elected to three-year terms.

If you've ever thought about becoming more involved—or if you know a grower who would make an outstanding representative—we encourage you to start the conversation.



## The Future Needs Growers Who Are Willing to Lead

For more information about serving on the MCGA Board of Directors or the nomination process, contact **Penni Sweeney** at **517-668-2676** or **psweeney@micorn.org**.

# 2026 Harvest Ride Along



## Host a legislator for a ride along during harvest season.

Hosting a legislator in your combine will give them a firsthand look at the latest technology being used to optimize production and protect Michigan's environment. This is an important opportunity to build relationships and educate those who make policy decisions that impact your farm.



**Please reach out to Matt at Michigan Corn if you are willing to host a legislator.**  
**(517) 668-2676 [msmego@micorn.org](mailto:msmego@micorn.org)**

# NCGA Corn Congress Sets Policy Direction



**M**CGA members joined delegates from other state corn grower associations on July 15 to review and set national policy direction. This process occurs twice a year and gives corn growers the ability to provide grassroots influence on their policy direction. Among the topics of discussion were updates to Farm Bill commodity program base acres and clarification of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission's (CFTC) role as the federal agency with regulatory jurisdiction over U.S. commodity markets. This has been spurred by the influence of prediction markets on commodity markets.

Read the NCGA policy position papers at <https://www.ncga.com/action-center/policy-book>

## Growing Through Experience: A Summer with Michigan Corn

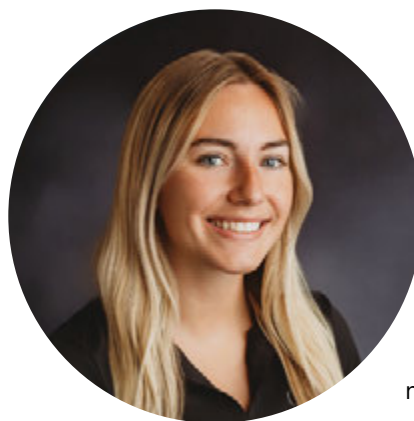
**Olivia Hall,**  
*MSU Animal Science Undergraduate*

This summer internship with Michigan Corn was an incredible opportunity to grow both personally and professionally while gaining a deeper understanding of Michigan's agriculture and its impact beyond our state. One of the highlights of my summer was helping with the Between the Rows Tour, which saw record participation across Michigan. Being a part of an event that connected people with agriculture and educated corn farmers in Michigan, was an experience I will not forget.

I also had the opportunity to assist with the Central and Thumb Golf Outings, which allowed me to strengthen my event planning and communication skills while building relationships with farmers, industry

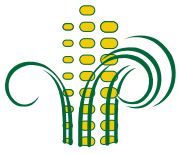
partners, and community members. Another unforgettable experience was traveling to Washington, D.C., where I met with legislators, toured the U.S. Capitol, and gained a greater understanding of how agriculture influences policy and communities across the United States. This experience gave me a new perspective on the importance of advocacy and the role agriculture plays on a national level.

Throughout the summer, I also helped with several community events focused on sharing knowledge about



corn and agriculture with people of all ages and backgrounds. These experiences showed me the importance of education and connecting with multiple generations.

Most importantly, I learned so much from my team and the people I had the opportunity to work alongside. This internship challenged me to develop my communication, leadership, organization, and professional skills while providing valuable networking opportunities. I am incredibly grateful for the experiences, relationships, and lessons I will carry with me throughout my career.



Corn Marketing Program of Michigan  
13750 S. Sedona Parkway, Suite 5  
Lansing, MI 48906

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## Corn Marketing Program of Michigan Board Members

**Matt Holysz, Vicksburg** – District 1  
**Stephanie Smith, Waldron** – District 2  
**Phil Gordon, Saline** – District 3  
**Brett Brink, Hamilton (Treasurer)** – District 4

**Kory Brodbeck, Woodland (Secretary)** – District 5  
**Scott Miller, Elsie (President)** – District 6  
**David Rupprecht, Vassar (Vice President)** – District 7

**Dan Keenan, Merrill** – District 8  
**Mark McDonald, Mt. Pleasant** – District 9  
**CMPM Ex-Officio Members:**  
**Nick Reigler** – Michigan Agri-Business Association

**John Delmotte** – Michigan Corn Growers Association  
**Jeff Haarer** – Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development  
**Dr. James Averill** – Michigan State University



## Michigan Corn Growers Association Board Members

**Jake Zwagerman, Fountain** – District 1  
**Jed Welder, Sheridan** – District 2  
**Nick Stone, Sandusky** – District 3  
**Jay Parr, Brown City (Vice President)** – District 3  
**Ross Meyer, Grand Ledge (Secretary/Treasurer)** – District 4  
**Erik Krieger, Belding** – District 4  
**Mike Opificius, Capac** – District 5

**Randy Poll, Hamilton (Chair)** – District 6  
**Cade Klein, Marcellus** – District 6  
**Gerrit deGlee, Horton** – District 7  
**Adam Blonde, Litchfield** – District 7  
**Andrew Rebottaro, Tecumseh** – District 8  
**John Delmotte, Ida (President)** – District 8  
**Carlton Blough, Lowell** – At-Large  
**Russell Braun, Ovid** – At-Large  
**Morgan Beattie, Marshall** – At-Large

**County Presidents:**  
**Josh Miller, Elsie** – Clinton County  
**Mark Kies, Allen** – Hillsdale County  
**Tom Ziel, Pigeon** – Huron County  
**Brian Kreps, Lasalle** – Monroe County  
**Chad Bauer, Reese** – Saginaw County  
**Jason McConnachie, Deckerville** – Sanilac County

**Ex-Officio Members:**  
**Matt Frostic** – National Corn Growers Association  
**Scott Miller** – Corn Marketing Program Of Michigan  
**Scott Lonier** – Mi Corn PAC  
**Keith Leighton** – CHS, Inc.  
**Amy Allen** – Renk Seeds

## Michigan Corn Office Staff

**Scott Piggott** – Executive Director  
**Tera Havard** – Manager of Finance and Administration

**Kristin Poley** – Director of Research  
**Erica Ledesma** – Administrative Specialist

**Penni Sweeney** – Director of Grower Relations  
**Matt Smego** – Senior Policy Director