MICHIGAN CORN
BETWEEN THE ROWS
The Joint Magazine of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan and the Michigan Corn Growers Association

The History of U.S. Trade Policy and Tariffs

FALL 2020

MICHIGAN CORN

BETWEEN THE ROWS

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Corn Marketing Program of Michigan Elects Officers

LANSING – The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan elected a new slate of officers to lead the organization during its June board meeting. The following board members were elected to serve terms as officers:

Matt Holysz from Vicksburg was elected to serve as President.

Scott Miller from Elsie was elected to serve as Vice President.

Brett Brink from Hamilton was elected to serve as Treasurer.

Ned Wyse from Camden was elected to serve as Secretary.

Headquartered in Lansing, the CMPM is a farmer-funded, legislatively-established, statewide program that invests in research, education and market development to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. For more information, visit the Michigan Corn website at www.micorn.org.

Michigan Corn Growers Association Elects Officers

The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) elected a slate of officers to lead the organization during its June board meeting. The following board members were elected to serve two-year terms as officers:

Matthew Frostic from Applegate was reelected to serve as President.

Philip Gordon from Saline was reelected to serve as Vice President.

Waylon Smolinski from Lachine was reelected to serve as Secretary/Treasurer.

MCGA is a grassroots organization of grower members dedicated to increasing the profitability of corn production. MCGA board members are all corn growers and must be active regular members of MCGA.

National Corn Growers Association Highlights Successes in Mid-year Report

Despite marketing and economic challenges and a pandemic, farmer leaders of National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) continue to advocate and work to improve the lot of the nation's family corn farmers. If you are a member of the Michigan Corn Growers Association, you are also a member of NCGA. To keep you up-to-date on the efforts of your national organization, we have included some highlights from NCGA's 2020 mid-year report. The full report covers NCGA's work on market development, ethanol, sustainability and consumer trust. You can read it online at www.NCGA.com.

Work Continues to Bring High-Octane Low-Carbon Fuel to Consumers

NCGA continues driving future ethanol demand by positively impacting corn farmers by advocating for Low Carbon Octane Standard (LCOS) legislation. Corn ethanol is uniquely positioned to improve performance in auto engines by meeting consumer demand for efficient, environmentally friendly, and safe motor fuel. Studies have shown to optimize the performance of future engines, a high-octane, low-carbon fuel could utilize between 20-40 percent ethanol compared to the 10-15 percent blends standard across the United States today. The move toward higher octane, lower carbon fuels will not occur overnight, and NCGA is moving swiftly to plan for future ethanol demand positively impacting farmers for the future. A high-octane low-carbon fuel in the marketplace could increase annual ethanol usage by 5 billion gallons or more. That's 1.8 billion bushels of corn annually, nearly the same amount of forecasted corn carryout from 2019.

Defending Access to Farm Inputs

It is no secret that grower access to farm inputs remains an ongoing battle. NCGA proudly represents all corn growers to ensure continued and long-term availability of the many products used in corn production today. For example, as EPA considered the reregistration of atrazine, NCGA and state corn organizations mobilized to drive farmer comments to the agency compelling them to reregister atrazine. NCGA's mobilization resulted in more than 2,771 individual farmer comments being sent to the EPA, in addition to NCGA's comments. NCGA also submitted comments on behalf of corn growers to maintain access to products like glyphosate, metolachlor and several neonicotinoids.

USMCA Moves Forward

Passing USMCA was NCGA's top legislative priority for 2019. Following overwhelming Congressional support for the trade deal, the new USMCA legislation was signed by the President in January 2020. USMCA delivers a big win to American agriculture by securing and building upon the relationship with Mexico and Canada, the U.S. corn industry's largest, most reliable market. Kevin Ross attended the White House signing along with Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association President Patty Mann, Minnesota Corn Growers Association President Les Anderson, and Wisconsin Corn Growers Association President Doug Rebout. 21.4 million metric tons of corn and corn co-products, valued at $4.56 billion, were exported to Mexico and Canada in 2018.

Now Accepting Applications!

MICENT

Corn Education
Networking
Training

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan is seeking applications for the fourth class of the Michigan Corn Education, Networking and Training Program (MI CENT). This program is designed to provide educational opportunities for the next generation of Michigan corn farmers. Topics include agronomy, technology, farm management, the work of the National Corn Growers Association and one topic picked by the class. There will also be plenty of time provided for networking and an optional international tour (for an additional fee).

The program consists of five sessions. The four sessions in Michigan will begin with an evening reception followed by 1.5 days of educational presentations. The session in Washington, DC will be approximately 3 days.

Details for the optional international trip will be provided to the class at a later date. The material will be in-depth, challenging and rewarding.

Participants may be nominated by their peers or they may nominate themselves. Upon nomination an individual will be notified and sent an application form. Applications are also available online at www.micorn.org. Applications are due October 9, 2020. Application review will take place in October and participants will be notified in November. Primary selection criteria includes the applicants' desire and ability to participate. Diversity among farm size, geographic location and agronomy background will be sought as well.

DATES, TOPICS & LOCATIONS

Session 1
Agronomy
January 5-7, 2021 • Lansing

Session 2
Technology
February 2-4, 2021 • Lansing

Session 3
Farm Management
March 9-11, 2021 • Lansing

Session 4
You Pick
June 22-24, 2021 • Lansing

Session 5
National Corn Growers Association Work
July 2021 • Washington, DC

International Tour (Optional)
2022 • Location TBD

Registration fee: $300 - optional international session is extra
Lodging and meals will be provided.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

Nominate your peers or yourself.

Please send all nominations to Claire White and they will be sent an application and more details about the program.

Applications due October 9.

CONTACT INFO

Refer questions to Claire White at 517-668-2676
or cwhite@micorn.org

For more information, visit www.micorn.org

CORN MARKETING PROGRAM
CMPM
OF MICHIGAN

Congratulations to This Year's Michigan Corn Growers Association Scholarship Winners

Addy Battel – Michigan State University

Addy is enrolled as a Freshman at Michigan State University where she is pursuing environmental studies and sustainability with a focus on agriculture. Addy is a member of the National FFA Organization, 4-H, and co-founder of a nationally recognized hunger relief nonprofit called Meating the Need for Our Village. Addy has found a passion for speaking to anyone who will listen about carbon sequestration through healthy soils, youth empowerment and food insecurity.

Madelyn Cary – Michigan State University

Madelyn recently graduated from Alma High School. Her love for agriculture began with her family's cash-crop, feedlot, and elevator operation. In high school she was actively involved in FFA and 4-H where she served in many leadership positions and showed cattle around Michigan. She was also involved in student council, soccer, cheer, and the National Honor Society. She will be attending Michigan State University, majoring in agribusiness management. Over the next year, she will serve as a Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT Ambassador and continue working at Bader and Sons Co. After college, she hopes to land a career in the agriculture industry and help around the family farm.

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Ethan Gilder – Saginaw Valley State University

Ethan graduated from Hopkins High School in Hopkins, MI. He is attending Saginaw Valley State University to study political science and agriculture science. He hopes to go on to law school upon finishing at SVSU. He grew up helping his grandpa on his small crop farm and joined the Hopkins FFA chapter in 7th grade. He enjoyed the opportunities to grow his leadership skills in FFA, was involved in multiple contests, and was chapter president his junior and senior year. He was also a part of the Hopkins football and wrestling teams and had the honor of serving as a captain in both during his senior year. He looks forward to having an impact on the agricultural industry and is honored to be awarded this scholarship.

Caitlin Henne – Michigan State University

Cait is an agricultural business and agronomy student at Michigan State University. She is a 2018 graduate of Springport High School where she was heavily involved in varsity athletics and student organizations. She served Region II FFA and the Michigan FFA Association as an officer and credits FFA for helping her develop leadership skills. Her passion for agriculture began at an early age on her family farm and has expanded as she developed a business selling competitive show lambs to 4-H and FFA members across the country. At MSU, she is involved in Block and Bridle, Hall Government, Running Club, Dairy Club, and Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Education Club. She intends to pursue a master's degree in agronomy. If she could give a message to the world, it would be "What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world, is and remains immortal."

Darren Kulicamp – Michigan State University

Darren is a senior at Michigan State University and plans to graduate in the spring of 2021 with a bachelor's degree in agribusiness management. He grew up on a row crop and cattle operation in Coopersville, Michigan and enjoyed exhibiting livestock and participating in livestock judging through his years in 4-H and FFA. At MSU he has been active with the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) club and the Block and Bridle club, participating in the NAMA product marketing contest and serving as the vice president of the Block and Bridle club. Upon graduation he hopes to begin a career in the crop protection industry to serve his friends and neighbors in their agricultural endeavors.

Apply Now for the Frank Lipinski Scholarship from the Michigan Corn Growers Association

The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) board of directors is pleased to announce that the Frank Lipinski Scholarship application is now available. This scholarship is geared towards full-time college students who don't come from an agricultural or farm background. Participation in either the 4-H or FFA organization does not disqualify a student.

Frank was deeply passionate about reaching out to young adults with non-agricultural backgrounds. He made it a priority to assist those wanting to enter our industry and educate young people about the various opportunities available in the agricultural industry.

This scholarship will be awarded for the 2021 spring semester with applications due November 2, 2020. For more information or to apply for the Frank Lipinski Memorial scholarship contact Michigan Corn by calling (517) 668-CORN (2676) or online at www.micorn.org.

The Soil Health Partnership in Michigan

By: Kristin Poley, Michigan Research Manager, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan

If you're not yet familiar with the Soil Health Partnership's efforts in Michigan, you will be soon! The Soil Health Partnership (SHP) is an initiative of the National Corn Growers Association that aims to increase wide-scale adoption of soil health practices across the United States for economic and environmental benefit. SHP partners with farmers as they try new sustainable agriculture practices. Nearly 80% of trials in the SHP network are cover crop trials, but reduced tillage or nutrient management trials are also options.

The SHP network currently spans more than 220 farms in 17 states, including 4 trials in Michigan. Research trial types are split into two categories: strip trials and side-by-side trials; each comes with their own set of advantages. Strip trials are more intensive in their data collection and soil sampling, have replicated strips across the field, and allow for examination of complex agronomic and soil health relationships. Side-by-side trials are well-suited for understanding soil health within a livestock system or for investigating research questions that have an economic focus. Here in Michigan, there are currently 3 side-by-side trials and 1 strip trial.

As Michigan Research Manager for both the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan and the Soil Health Partnership, I have the unique opportunity to connect CMPM's network of farmers and partners with SHP's long-term dataset and national perspective. My responsibilities within SHP include trialing and implementing data collection platforms used across the network and helping to manage the data as it comes back into our database from the field.

SHP collects both agronomic and economic data on an annual basis. As we approach 2020 harvest and cover crop planting, let's take a look at some of the yield and cover crop data collected across the network in 2019.

YIELD ACROSS THE SHP NETWORK IN 2019

- Average yields across the SHP Network in 2019
  - Corn: 209.7 bu/acre
  - Soybeans: 64.4 bu/acre
  - Wheat: 63.9 bu/acre
- SHP average yields for corn and soybeans higher than USDA average yields
- Yield difference between cover crop and control strips not statistically significant in 2019

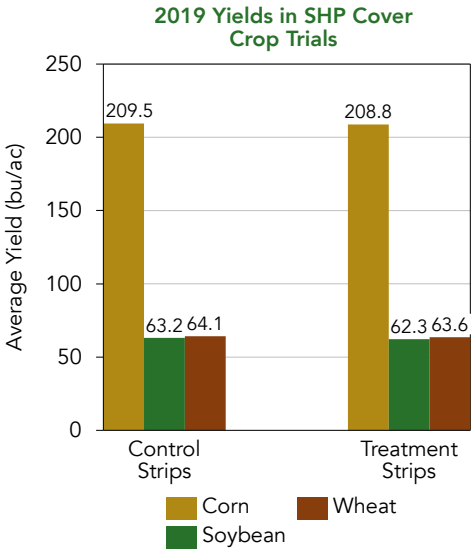


Figure 1. Preliminary average corn, soybean and wheat yield across the SHP network in 2019 (preliminary analysis). The Treatment Strips had a cover crop on them in the Fall/Spring before the cash crop was planted.

TIMING

When did SHP farmers plant their cover crops?

More than half of farmers planted between September 15 and November 3, but almost 40% of farmers planted before or after these dates. Planting time depends on region, cash crop rotation, and species. Due to labor constraints or higher latitudes. 25% of farmers interseeded or overseeded cover crops into a standing cash crop. Of those planting a cover crop, 31% report contracting someone outside of their operation to plant it.

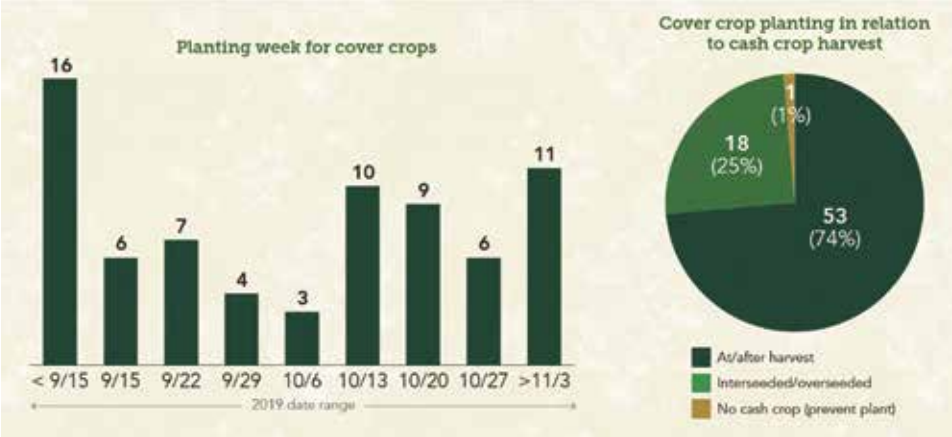


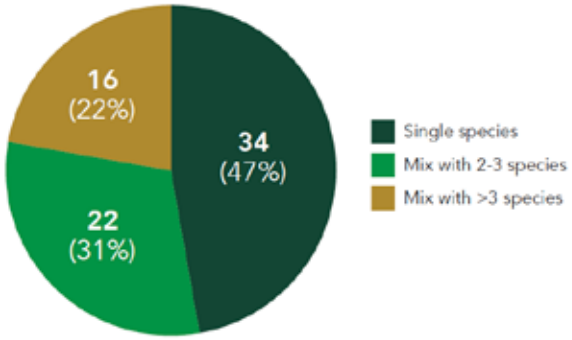
Figure 2. The timing of cover crop planting across the SHP network in 2019.

Of all of SHP's data, crop yield is possibly the most relatable to every farmer. Yield data is collected from each trial site, each year. In cover crop trials from last year, we saw average corn yields at 209.5 bu/acre on the non-cover crop strips, and 208.8 bu/acre on the cover crop strips (Figure 1). While this difference

SPECIES

What are SHP farmers planting?

53% of farmers reported planting a cover crop mix of 2 or more species



Most common species in mixes

Species	% of mixes containing
Cereal rye	50%
Oats	42%
Rapeseed	45%
Radish	37%
Clover	29%
Peas	21%
Barley	13%
Annual ryegrass	11%

Figure 3. The cover crop species that farmers in the SHP network reported planting in 2019

is not statistically significant, both values are higher than the USDA average value for corn yields in 2019.

This yield data provides no evidence of a yield drag for either corn or soybeans, but also no evidence for a consistent yield boost. What we hope to see over time is greater resilience in yield year over year. It's also important to consider that, while yield is an important thing to measure, yield is not the only factor that impacts profitability. Even without an increase in yield each year, soil health management practices have the potential to improve profitability by reducing input use over time.

Recently, SHP published the results of a cover crop survey completed in fall of 2019. One of the goals of this dataset is to examine how cover crops impact soil health, agronomic outcomes and farmer profitability. The timing of cover crop planting and the species that were planted are just two of the valuable pieces of information we can pull from this report.

The timing of cover crop planting varied across the network depending on region, cash crop, and cover crop species (Figure 2). More than half of farmers planted between the middle of September and the beginning of November, with 74% of farmers planting at or after cash crop harvest.

The most widely planted cover crop species was cereal rye. Of the farmers who planted a single species cover crop, 80% planted cereal rye, and it was also present in 50% of cover crop mixes (Figure 3). Of the four Michigan sites, one site planted a mix containing cereal rye, one planted radishes as a single species, and the final two planted a grass forage mix with triticale as the primary species.

As SHP continues to expand across the country, Michigan has become a focal point for new research sites. Together with the Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy SHP plans on adding three strip trial sites, starting with additions in the Saginaw Bay region. These sites will build upon the existing SHP dataset but will include Michigan-specific examples of soil health that Michigan farmers can relate to.

For more information, or to download the full 2019 Cover Crop Report, visit soilhealthpartnership.org or contact kpoley@micorn.org.

A Brief History of U.S. Trade Policy and Tariffs

Starting in the previous edition of Between the Rows, we began sharing a series of excerpts from The Essential Guide to U.S. Trade, a backgrounder that was written by Andrea Durkin for the U.S. Grains Council and National Corn Growers Association. To read the whole backgrounder, visit our website at www.micorn.org/trade-101.

The United States was founded as a trading nation.

Trade has been essential to the United States' economy since before we became the United States. The Declaration of Independence lists grievances against King George III. We usually remember taxation without consent, but often forget that listed right before taxation was our grievance that England was "cutting off our trade from the rest of the world." In the prelude to the Revolution, Bostonians had thrown shipments of British tea into the harbor to protest the King's Tea Act of 1773, which required the purchase of British tea and imposed yet another (export) tax on goods shipped to the colonies.

For a time after the American Revolution, before the United States Constitution went into effect, the American states tried imposing their own duties on foreign goods and on goods moving among the states. States with ports along the East Coast, from Massachusetts to Georgia, levied different tariffs on British goods and fees on British vessels. But without a single American tariff code, British traders simply avoided the highest duties by engaging in arbitrage, entering their goods through the cheapest ports.

Congress derives its tariff powers from the Constitution.

The experience of an uncoordinated tariff regime helped convince states to grant Congress the power to impose and collect import duties and to regulate commerce with foreign nations on their behalf. The first seven sections of the Constitution lay out how Congress will operate. Congress' first real order of business in Section 8 of the Constitution is laying and collecting import duties:

> **SECTION. 8.** The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises…but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States

Congress moved swiftly to exercise this power. The Tariff Act of 1789 was the first major law passed in the United States. It had two purposes: first, to generate revenue to support the new federal government, enabling the Congress to also pay down debts incurred during the Revolution, and, second, to "encourage and protect" the manufacturing of goods in the United States.

Some debates never change.

The debate over the impacts high tariffs were having on the fledgling American economy mirrors some of the debate we're having today.

Tariffs and excise taxes were practically the only sources of federal revenue until the passage of the 16th Amendment in 1913, which enabled Congress to impose income taxes. Congress also quickly realized tariffs could be used to shelter domestic producers from competition from imported products - at a cost to other American importers and exporters.

Agricultural-producing states viewed high duties as primarily benefiting manufacturing states, to which James Madison responded that the rest of the nation would inevitably "shoulder a disproportionate share of the financial burden." Alexander Hamilton warned that setting tariffs too high would be tantamount to economic warfare with Great Britain, which would cause trade to decline and reduce revenues needed to run the government and finance the national debt.

How much tariff is enough?

Tradesmen in Baltimore petitioned the First Congress to impose "such duties as will give a just and decided preference to their [domestic] labors" on "all foreign articles, which can be made in America." Attached to the petition was a list of items that were, or could be, manufactured in America "on moderate terms."

But - in a scenario repeated over the course of the history of trade politics - protected domestic interests were not satisfied with the extent of protection Congress granted. Some sought more protection, including on goods considered essential, particularly military supplies (think about the justification for steel tariffs today!). In 1791, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton issued a seminal report arguing the necessity of protecting domestic manufacturing for economic and national security reasons, while conceding in the same report that free international trade would be preferable.

The next 140 years of American trade history saw U. S. tariffs rise and fall in response to the domestic preoccupation with the politics of protection, regardless of the consequences to our relations with other economies or the impact to those economies. And so it went - until raising tariffs went too far. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 raised average duties to their highest levels in American history to that date, a move that is largely thought to have hastened the spread and deepened the impact of the global depression that followed.

Keep reading at: www.micorn.org/trade-101

THE FIRST 150 YEARS OF

AMERICAN TARIFFS

For much of early American history, party politics dictated tariff levels.

When **Democrats** were in power, **tariffs went down**. When **Republicans** were in power **tariffs went up**. Here are selected milestones.

1781-1789

Under the original **Articles of Confederation**, states could tax both foreign goods and those entering from other states (*e.g.*, the **1785 Pennsylvania Tariff**)

1789-1791

The **Constitution** is ratified. Section 8 Article 1 grants power to Congress to lay and collect tariffs. Congress' first legislation is **The Tariff Act of 1789**.

1913

President Wilson cut tariffs from an average **40% to 12%** To make up for lost federal review, he instituted the income and estate taxes. .

1922

Congress passes the **Fordney-McCumber Act**, which restored or **raised tariffs above 1913 levels**.

1930

President Hoover signs **The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act** which raised nearly 900 tariffs. It is widely thought to have sparked retaliatory global tariffs that **depressed global trade by 66%** by 1934. .

1934

The Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act sets U.S. trade policy on the footing of liberalization. The President is authorized to negotiate trade deals with nations that agree to reciprocal tariff reductions.

BACKGROUNDER: The Essential Guide To U.S. Trade as of July 1, 2019

Your Friends of Corn PAC Needs You!

You might be asking yourself, "What is the Friends of Corn PAC and why should I contribute to it?" The PAC is a non-partisan political action committee which provides support for political candidates. Our PAC is an important tool in our advocacy efforts and an investment that helps protect you from laws, policies and regulations that can cost your business thousands of dollars annually.

This is a very important election year and we need to be able to influence lawmakers on issues that affect us. With your support we can work to elect legislators who understand and support our issues and concerns. In order to effectively convey our message, we must have a well-funded PAC. Having a strong and respectful relationship with our legislators is crucial to ensuring that Michigan's corn farmers' interests are properly represented in the state and national political arena.

Now is the time – we need your support! As the saying goes, "If you are not at the table you can end up on the table." Let's stay AT the table with legislators that support us. Please donate today!

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: (___)___-____ Email: _____ City, State, Zip Code: _____

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Note: Friends of Corn-PAC can only accept personal checks or credit cards
NO corporate contributions accepted.

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If you are sending a personal check please make payable to **Friends of Corn-PAC**

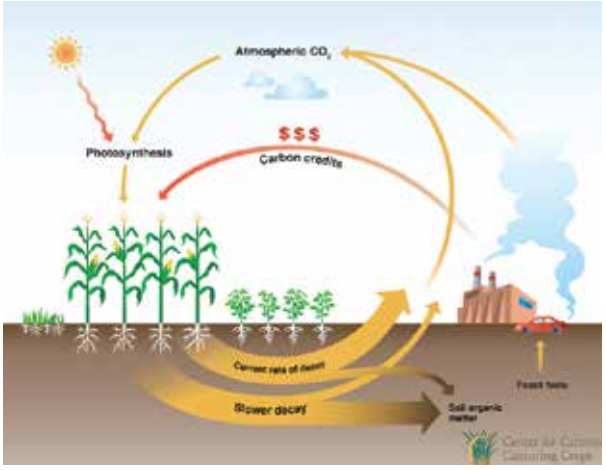
Corn and Carbon, Part 1

By: Kristin Poley, Michigan Research Manager

Across the country, farmers are constantly under scrutiny for their perceived impacts on the environment. Producers are facing increasing pressure for net-carbon or zero-carbon production. The economic incentive to do so could lie in a carbon credit system that would make climate-smart practices more profitable but calculating carbon on the farm is challenging. In part 1 of this series, we will look at the role of corn production in the carbon cycle.

To be carbon-neutral, corn producers must return at least as much carbon to the soil as what is released into the atmosphere during production. There are many factors that influence the ability of an area to capture and store carbon, which makes the carbon calculation complex. The diagram below outlines the carbon cycle as it relates to corn production.

Production inputs such as fertilizer have an impact on the overall carbon balance, and each fertilizer product or component will have a different impact. For example, if fertilizer use efficiency is 0.96 pounds of nitrogen per bushel of corn, then the total greenhouse gas emissions from the production and use of that nitrogen will be 4,324 metric tons of CO2e (metric tons of CO2 equivalent to other greenhouse gasses) per pound of nitrogen. On the output side, the total greenhouse gas emissions from one bushel of corn produced are 4,151 metric tons of CO2e (Argonne National Laboratory, U.S. DOE). Considering just nitrogen and yield, the equation balances in favor of corn production.



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While fertilizer production and use seem to give corn production a carbon advantage, other factors may chip away at the amount of captured carbon. Tillage intensity, soil erosion and decomposition will all release carbon back into the atmosphere. Even some factors that farmers cannot control will have an impact such as weather patterns; less carbon will be stored during drought periods.

Further, the dominant soil type of a field will influence how much carbon can be stored. Fields that are a higher percent clay or with high organic matter are going to have greater carbon storage capacity. Other properties like soil aggregate stability will help to protect the soil, and the carbon stored within soil aggregates, from release due to microbial activity.

Estimates of the total amount of carbon captured by corn vary widely due to these complex factors, but experts put the value between 5.9 and 8 tons of carbon captured per acre each season. These values are strongly tied to crop yield. Gradually increasing corn yields, as has been the case for the last 70 years, while reducing tillage intensity can increase the potential for organic carbon to be stored in the soil.

Calculating carbon on the farm can be a complicated process, but with sustainable agriculture practices and a good understanding of the carbon cycle, it is possible for corn production to come out on top. In part 2 of this series, we will look at biofuels, particularly corn ethanol, and their role in the carbon cycle.

Jim Zook Appointed to EPA Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee

In June, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the appointment of thirty-three members to the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee (FRRCC), including Jim Zook from the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. Established in 2008, the FRRCC provides independent policy advice, information, and recommendations to the EPA administrator on a range of environmental issues and policies that are of importance to agriculture and rural communities.

"One of my priorities for EPA has been to restore trust for our agency among agricultural stakeholders and rural communities," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "President Trump has been clear about the Administration's commitment to agriculture and rural America, and as part of that commitment, I am excited to reinstate the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee in 2020 with full membership. This committee will provide valuable input on how EPA's decisions impact rural America, and I look forward to receiving the committee's recommendations."

"Across the Great Lakes region, farmers are working together to find innovative solutions to address environmental issues. In addition to the partnerships and collaboration we are fostering with the agricultural sector in our Region, the FRRCC is another way for farmers and rural communities to provide input to EPA, so that future decisions better reflect the challenges the agriculture community is facing," said EPA Region 5 Administrator Kurt Thiede. "We are thrilled to welcome Jim Zook along with representatives from Illinois and Indiana to the committee and look forward to their contributions."

"I am honored to be appointed to the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee," said Jim Zook, executive director of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. "It is critically important to include the voice of farmers and agriculture industry experts when making regulatory decisions that affect our growers' livelihoods. I thank EPA for the opportunity to serve on this committee and look forward to representing Michigan's corn farmers."

For further information on the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee, visit www.epa.gov/faca/frrcc.

Outgoing Intern Andrew Smith Reflects on Internship with Michigan Corn

By: Andrew Smith

As an individual aspiring to work in agricultural policy, the Michigan Corn Growers Association was the perfect place to intern this summer and to take my first step into my eventual career. Beyond my initial goal of getting experience and knowledge in agricultural policy and the corn industry, this internship has provided me with something much more valuable: a reconnection to the "why" of my goals. That "why" is my love for the diverse people within the agriculture community. Meeting and forming relationships with these passionate and hardworking individuals has been the real gem of my experience interning at Michigan Corn.

This recognition of my "why" came through working on my summer social media campaign: #FarmVlogFriday. When I was first tasked with creating my campaign, I decided that creating videos spotlighting farmers and their operations was the perfect way to provide unique and valuable content to our Facebook page, as well as share with our audience the diversity, history, and passions of our state's farmers. Furthermore, it fulfilled my desire to make new connections, travel across the state, learn more about our industry, and stretch my creative muscles outside my comfort zone.

Travelling to these farms has enlightened me on a variety of agricultural practices that, prior to this internship, I had only learned about in the classroom. From getting my hands dirty working on an irrigation traveler to observing a large dairy operation in action, I now have more knowledge and a greater appreciation for different agricultural practices and commodities grown throughout our state. With this firsthand experience and better understanding, I feel much more confident in my abilities to advocate for our industry. Yet, these vlogs have made me realize that diversity in agriculture goes far beyond the commodities we grow - it is the people that make us diverse. Getting to know all these people, their struggles and joys of farming, their rich history as family operations, and their perspective on industry trends has made me more inspired than ever to represent and serve them in the future. I want to protect the legacy of our state's farmers, enhance their passions, mitigate their challenges, and serve their operations by making connections at a personal level. I am honored that I have been able to start my journey of advocacy through these vlogs. I could have never predicted how well they would be received, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share these families' stories.

Throughout the past three months, I was also able to explore my interest in agricultural policy, government, and elections. I participated in discussions and scoring candidates for our Friends of Corn PAC for the upcoming elections, attended policy webinars with elected officials and other agriculture stakeholders, and took part in the 2020 Corn Congress. I also attended the Corn Ambassadors Program, which taught me specific techniques to use when advocating for the corn industry. I now have a greater knowledge of the behind the scenes operations of advocacy organizations, as well as a better understanding of the issues that the industry is currently facing.

As my internship comes to a close, I am so thankful that I was able to work for MCGA this summer. I have learned so much about the corn industry, agricultural policy, our state's farmers, and myself during my tenure as an intern. I want to thank my co-workers for all their support and guidance, as well as their efforts to tailor my internship towards my personal aspirations. Additionally, thank you to all the members for joining me in my journey. I cannot wait to work further with Michigan Corn, Michigan farmers, and the agricultural industry in my future.

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