



May 2026



In loving memory of former Michigan Vegetable Council executive director: Dave Smith

<https://www.pawlakfuneralhome.com/obituaries/David-Lynn-Smith?obId=47720287>

Dave's family expressed interest that any memorial donations could be made to the Michigan Vegetable Council's endowed fund at:

https://tfacf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1526

Michigan Vegetable Council Board Member News

You receive this newsletter twice a year because you are a member of the Michigan Vegetable Council (MVC) for the year. When you attend the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo (GL Expo) if you identify yourself as a vegetable grower then your registration makes you a member of The Michigan Vegetable Council for the year. A valid email address for Expo registration is important. Our policy is to not share your email address and we limit email distractions to our yearly members.

MVC Communications

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MICHIGANVEGETABLECOUNCIL.ORG

Like MVC on Facebook: @michvegouncil

Go SUBSCRIBE to MVC on YOUTUBE: [Vegetable Council Youtube Videos](https://www.youtube.com/@michiganvegetablecouncil/playlists) (<https://www.youtube.com/@michiganvegetablecouncil/playlists>) If you were one of the 2,600 who watched our “[Who likes watermelon](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/cjqB0i843X0)” video on YouTube thank you. If you’d like to see the video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/cjqB0i843X0> (many years of vegetable award videos, 2023 MI Eastside flooding, and MVC mascots)

Some websites to checkout: <https://michigangrown.org/>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/MichiganAgCouncil/videos>

Michigan Vegetable Council Funded Research Grants

New grant(s) in 2026:

Grant Type	Details	Grantee
GREEN	Enviroweather, data modeling, and seedcorn maggots affecting vegetables	MSU, Dr Anders Huseh

Get to the Expo to find out the latest results from these current projects:

Grant Type	Details	Grantee
SCBG	Testing Integrated Solutions for Pepper Crown and Root Rot.	MSU, Dr Mary Hausbeck’s lab
SCBG	AI-based Weed Recognition for Robotic Weeding.	MSU, Dr Yuzhen Lu’s lab
SCBG	Sustainable Management of Root-Knot Nematodes in Michigan Vegetable Production Systems.	MSU, Dr Marisol Quintanilla’s lab
GREEN	Practical solutions to manage powdery mildew of squash and pumpkin.	MSU, Dr Mary Hausbeck’s lab
GREEN	Optimize anaerobic soil disinfestation.	MSU, Dr Jiyoon Yi’s lab
MVC	Food safety in cucurbits.	MSU, Dr Ahmed Abdelhamid’ lab
MVC	Cover crop for specialty crop grower.	MSU Ext, Dr Saltanat Mambetova

MVC Research Grant Funds Provided			
	Years	Future Grant Commitments	Funds Granted
Research Grants (SCBG, GREEN, others)	2002-2026		\$2,271.113
Research Grants (SCBG)	2026-2027	\$147,998.62	
Grant Total	2002-2026		\$2,271.113

Michigan Vegetable Council Scholarships

The Michigan Vegetable Council (MVC) provides student scholarships that are awarded each December at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo.

MVC Scholarships		
Years	Number of Scholarships	Dollars Given
2001-2024	140	\$186,300
2025	6	\$12,000
Scholarship Totals 2001-2025	146	\$198,300

[Complete Grant and Scholarship details found here:](#)

Executive Director's Notes

Without going into lengthy detail, Michigan's vegetable industry knows that water is vital. Getting water to irrigate crops has some challenges here in Michigan. There are some commodity and private groups that have created a solution that has been revealed. This solution will be used to improve obtaining ground water for irrigation. The details are here, take a look and be prepared to get involved if it is of interest to your farm. Keep an eye out for summer dates to educate growers on the solution. 2026 Expo will host education and discussion of these water districts. waterdistrictsolution.com

If you haven't seen the Protect Our Produce campaign, please check it out and follow it at protectourproduce.com. The Michigan IPM Alliance will be hosting EPA employees in Kalamazoo this year in early August.

Thank you Denny Farms of Saranac for opening your farm so that we could have a potential elected official stop in and learn more about Michigan's vegetable industry.



Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo

2026 Great Lakes Expo is December 8-10

What's happening at Expo 2026, check out the program when it arrives. The education tracks are going to be split differently this year. Whatever was in the General track will now be in several other tracks: Farm Business, Small and Urban Farms, and Farming Principles. The vegetable, fruit, greenhouse, and farm market tracks will continue.

The cost to put on Expo sure hasn't gone down. We realize the cost to attend Expo makes for a not so small decision to attend. The Expo hopes to keep its normal attendance for Tuesday and Wednesday. However, we would love to tell you about the new option for 2026: THURSDAY ONLY TRADE SHOW ONLY BADGES will be \$10. Our goal is to get farms to have an option to bring employees for a morning trip on Thursday.

Year #2 of the Expo Social was again successful. It's a great event to celebrate the industry with industry awards.

Great Lakes Tek Flex

FIRST ANNUAL GREAT LAKES TEK FLEX CONNECTS CUTTING EDGE LABOR SAVING TECHNOLOGIES WITH SPECIALTY CROPS GROWERS

BENTON HARBOR, MI - May 8, 2026. On September 10-11, the inaugural Great Lakes Tek Flex will be held at the Michigan State University Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center (MSU SWMREC) in Benton Harbor, MI.

Technology promises to ease labor issues and empower growers with actionable insights in ways most growers could never envision. Vegetable growers, vineyards, nursery and orchard growers throughout the Great Lakes region won't have to imagine any longer. The Tek Flex will feature the latest in weed mitigation and crop management solutions using robotics, drones and precision agriculture technology over two consecutive days..

On day 1, the event will focus on connecting growers with companies that have commercialized

advanced technologies through “In the dirt” demonstrations, allowing them to see technology in use. Growers can interact with company representatives to better understand the benefits of these technologies to their operations. A wide range of technologies will be on tap, including but not limited to “see and spray”, autonomous vehicles, AI perception tools, orchard management, planting, vegetation management, harvesting, drone spray and AI decision support. Complete lists will be updated on the www.gltekflex.org website.

On Day 2, the focus will be on removing barriers to adoption, with targeted discussions featuring governments, industry groups, and supporting industry participation, with the goal of identifying and aligning resources and activity to streamline the process of technology adoption.

The mission of the Great Lakes Tek Flex is to improve the sustainability and resiliency of Great Lakes Specialty Crop Growers by removing barriers to technology adoption.

This event is made possible by support and promotion from our partners and sponsors including: Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDARD), Michigan Vegetable Council, Michigan Grape Growers, Michigan Hort Society, The Ohio State University, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Agribusiness, Cornell University, The Ontario Ag Robotics Working Group, Cornell University, Meshcomm Engineering, with many additional sponsors expected...

Key Dates:

Demonstrator and sponsor signup: NOW through August 1.

Earlybird savings cutoff MAY 15

Public registration opens: Early June 2026. Attendee signup list open now on www.gltekflex.org

Quotes supporting the Great Lakes Tek Flex:

“We see technology transforming fields—making planting, monitoring, weed management and harvesting more precise and efficient. With these innovations, growers are building a smarter, more sustainable future for farming,” said Randy Stratton, Director of Great Lakes Tek Flex Expo and Field Days.

The use of robotics and AI is now part of agriculture’s future. We have moved past the curiosity phase and today agri-tech is on pace to change every aspect of farming and provide new tools for soil health and better management of our food supply.

“At the end of the day, it’s a simple equation—lower input costs, less labor, and higher yields. That’s the value this technology brings to farmers,” said Dominique Mégret, CEO of Ecorobotix.

“This event is the first of its kind in North America, right here in the Great Lakes region. Growers and agronomists are going to find new and proven agri-tech manufacturers demonstrating their technology and connecting with potential end users of these amazing tools,” Mike Reinke, MSU Viticulture Extension Specialist and GL Tek Flex Board Member.

“We’re excited to bring SharpShooter™ to growers across the Great Lakes because it’s built to take pressure out of the season. When labor is tight and timing matters, SharpShooter uses Aim & Apply™ Technology to treat only identified targets instead of spraying empty space, so growers can reduce hand weeding reducing the amount of materials applied while keeping crop safety first. We’re looking forward to getting into fields with growers here and proving it in real conditions.” - Curtis Garner, COO & Co-Founder Verdant Robotics.

For more information about the GL Tek Flex field day expo, go to www.gltekflex.com.

[Read full newsletter](#)

[Vegetable Council video on Youtube](#)

