



VEGETABLE NEWS *and* VIEWS

FROM THE MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL

SERVING THE
VEGETABLE
INDUSTRY



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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.

MVC COMMUNICATIONS

6835 S Krepps Rd St. Johns, MI 48879 | 517-663-6725 | michiganvegetablecouncil.org

Like MVC on Facebook and Twitter: @michvegouncil. The MVC Youtube site has previous award winner videos, plus other content.

Some websites to checkout:

www.youtube.com/@michiganvegetablecouncil/videos

www.michiangrown.org/

www.youtube.com/user/MichiganAgCouncil/videos

2024 GREAT LAKES FRUIT, VEGETABLE, AND FARM MARKET EXPO

DEC 10-12

2024 Room Blocks at the Amway Grand, JW Marriott, Courtyard by Marriott, Hyatt Place, and Holiday Inn are open. Reserve your room at glexpo.com. Don't put off reservations as these do sell out.

An Ag Tech Symposium was held on Thursday during the 2023 Expo. The event lasted the whole morning and throughout part of the afternoon. There was a wide variety of people involved in the discussions. The outcome from the event has led to planning for more in 2024. MSU will be back with more ag tech sessions at the 2024 Expo. The Expo is committed to helping bridge ag tech here in the Great Lakes. There will be summer field days and planning is underway to partner between the field days and the Expo in December. If anyone needs to make a connection between ag tech and the Great Lakes

vegetable industry, the Michigan Vegetable Council has agreed to make those connections. Recently, an ag tech provider was in need of growers to have discussions about planting radishes and cucumbers. MVC made these connections happen.

Most likely you have been to the Expo before and you probably know that the event is well known to have one of the best specialty crop education programs. How does the education program get put together from year to year? The MSU Extension team coordinates the majority of the sessions. The MSU Extension team also speaks in quite a few of the sessions. The Michigan Vegetable Council would like to thank the MSU Extension team for all their excellent work put towards Expo education.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES

What could potentially help alleviate labor costs? Perhaps ag tech could help. At Asparagus Research Day on March 7, a company known as Muddy Machines

presented to the crowd. The company has an autonomous asparagus harvester which will have 5 prototypes working in a field in the UK in 2024. Alongside a commercial unit from abroad, locals in Oceana county are working on an autonomous unit of their own.

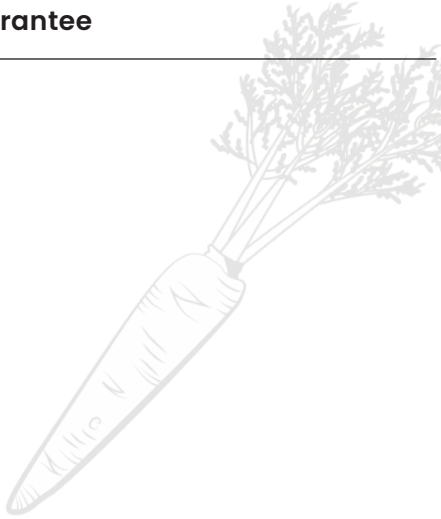
Many of you know Ben Phillips (MSU SW Extension vegetable educator) and Ben Werling (MSU West Extension vegetable educator). But, have you met the two new vegetable educators? They are Chris Galbraith (MSU SE Extension vegetable



educator) and Saltanat Mambetova (MSU East Extension vegetable educator). You can find their contact information under Experts at: www.canr.msu.edu/vegetables/.

MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL FUNDED RESEARCH GRANTS

New grant(s) in 2024:

Grant Type	Details	Grantee
SCBG and GREEN	Potential grants for 2024: 1) Phytophthora that will focus on pepper (but provide fungicide info for all susceptible crops) 2) Autonomous weeding data sets 3) Practical solutions to manage powdery mildew of squash and pumpkin 4) Understanding and Mitigating Variability in Field Uptake of Heavy Metals in Processing Carrots 5) Address white campion control in onions and Integrate herbicides and autonomous weeders for weed management in cabbage and sweet corn.	

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

Grant Type	Details	Grantee
SCBG	Getting to the Root of the Problem: Increasing Vegetable Plant Establishment and Productivity	MSU, Dr. Mary Hausbeck's lab
SCBG	Advancing Agbot and Drone Technologies for Sustainable Soil and Weed Management in Michigan Vegetables	MSU, Dr. Daniel Brainard's lab
SCBG	Testing New Ways to Monitor and Manage Cucurbit Downy Mildew	MSU, Dr. Mary Hausbeck's lab
GREEN	Improving Cucurbit Pollination in Michigan Farms	MSU, Dr. Zsofia Szendrei's lab
MVC	Developing Molecular Diagnostic Services for Root Lesion Nematode Species Identification in Vegetables	MSU, Dr. Marisol Quintanilla and Dr. Henry Chung
SCBG	Can New Cultivars be the Answer to Rhizomania, the New Table Beet Disease	MSU, Dr. Mary Hausbeck's lab

MVC Research Grant Funds Provided:

	Years	Future Grant Commitments	Funds Granted
Research Grants (SCBG, GREEN, others)	2002-2023		\$1,808,952
Research Grants (others)	2024	\$13,000	
Research Grants (SCBG)	2022-2025	\$201,500	
Grant Totals	2002-2025	\$214,500	\$1,808,952

MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIPS

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

MVC Scholarships:

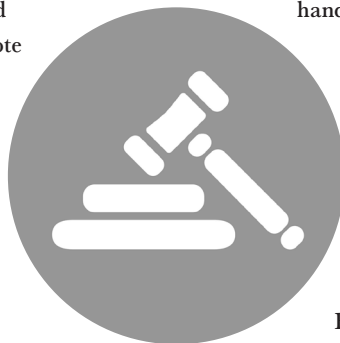
Years	Number of Scholarships	Dollars Given
2001-2022	126	\$158,300
2023	6	\$12,000
Scholarship Totals 2001-2023	132	\$170,300

LEGISLATIVE HAPPENINGS

The Michigan Vegetable Council has retained the services of Kelley Cawthorne to be the lobbying agent for the Michigan Vegetable Council and Michigan’s vegetable industry. The board decided that it is time to make a strong effort to promote advocacy for Michigan’s vegetable industry. The latest step towards improved advocacy is that the Michigan Vegetable Council is planning on hosting a legislative reception on March 20, 2024 at the offices of Kelley Cawthorne. The event will be past by the time this newsletter lands in mail and inboxes. As I write this, there are over 35 state representatives, senators, and staff on our RSVP list.

Michigan Congressman John Moolenaar introduced the Supporting Farm Operations Act (H.R. 7046), which will address the high labor costs facing Michigan farmers. The bill would freeze the wage rate for migrant farm workers, known as the Adverse Effect Wage Rate

(AEWR) at the level that was established in 2023 until end of 2025. The cost of labor remains a major issue for many vegetable crops that involve hand harvesting and hand weeding.



For this growing season, Michigan legislators deepened the state’s commitment to the long-standing Michigan Agricultural Surplus System; the new budget appropriates \$12 million for the program, compared to \$2 million a year earlier. This program is coordinated through the Food Bank. In the past the \$2 million went mostly towards purchasing surplus. The increase of 6x now means that the Food Bank will be buying more than just surplus and the prices the Food Bank can offer will be competitive. For more details on the program, reach out to: Garrett Zuver (517-899-9588 gzuver@fbcmich.org) and Natasha Tarnowsky (517-614-8539 ntarnowsky@fbcmich.org), both of the Food Bank.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN INDUSTRY NEEDS:

Industry Comparison Survey

Your Michigan agriculture industry is creating a comparison survey to get Michigan only data. Let's see what happens if more farm labor data points are collected. Do the AEW numbers represent what the 2024 NASS Farm Labor Survey actually show? What can you do?

Take the 2024 NASS Farm Labor Survey if you get it.

PLEASE TAKE the Michigan agriculture industry farm labor survey form. You should receive it if you get this newsletter.

Carnegie Mellon University is seeking growers to participate in a survey about nanotechnology adoption. The project, titled "Developing a Mental Model for Grower Agricultural Nanotechnology Adoption." Contact email Ben Therrien (btherrie@andrew.cmu.edu)

Training funds for food safety and leadership. Growers may be eligible for funding. Contact Carol Distel at West Michigan Works website with more information and application for this grant.



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