# VEGETABLE NEWS and VIEWS

FROM THE MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL

SERVING THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY since 1964

6835 S KREPPS RD, ST JOHNS MI 48879 | PHONE & FAX: 517-663-6725 | WWW.MICHIGANVEGETABLECOUNCIL.ORG


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: @michvegcouncil. Go SUBSCRIBE to MVC on YOUTUBE: Vegetable Council Youtube Videos (https://www.youtube.com/@michiganvegetablecouncil/playlists)
If you were one of the 2,600 who watched our "Who likes watermelon" video on YouTube thank you. If you'd like to see the video: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/cjqB0i843X0 (6 years of vegetable award videos, 2023 MI Eastside flooding, and MVC mascots)
**Some websites to checkout: www.michigangrown.org | www.youtube.com/user/MichiganAgCouncil/videos**

## *2025 GREAT LAKES* FRUIT, VEGETABLE, AND FARM MARKET EXPO

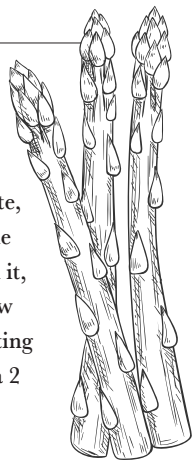
**DEC 9-11**

What did you do last Dec 11 at 5:30pm? The reason we ask is we know what a record crowd did at the Expo. The Expo Social was held in the Ambassador Ballroom of the Amway Hotel. Anyone who had an Expo badge was invited to attend the Expo Social. We had a tremendous crowd who all received a drink and food at the massive charcuterie board. The doughnuts were from Robinette's Apple Haus & Winery. The couple leftover doughnuts were saved and brought to the Grand Gallery for hungry Thursday morning participants. One of the bars had specifically selected Michigan hard ciders available. The last hour of the Social was spent honoring the industry award recipients. If you attend Expo in 2025, please plan to join us for The Expo Social.

The Expo thought we would see if we could bring some of the excitement about food trucks to the Expo. There were some crowds around the food trucks during lunch. There will be another food truck added in 2025, to give more options and decrease the lines. The trade show aisle by the river quickly became the place to be and talk with your fellow growers over some great food.

2025 Room Blocks at the Amway Grand, JW Marriott, Courtyard by Marriott, Hyatt Place, and Holiday Inn are open. (glexpo.com) **Don't put off reservations as these do sell out.**

## PROTECT OUR PRODUCE



Have you heard of PROTECTOURPRODUCE.COM? Michigan Asparagus decided it was time to actively promote Congressman Moolenaar's bill and Congressman Huizenga's letter in 2024. Thus, Michigan Asparagus formed the AEWR Coalition along with: Michigan Vegetable Council, Michigan State Horticultural Society, Michigan Agri-Business Association, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Tree Fruit Commission, Michigan Blueberry Commission, Cherry Marketing Institute, and Michigan Potatoes. The AEWR Coalition has created the Protect Our Produce Media Campaign. If you have not seen it, get out there and share it. Congressman Moolenaar has a new bill for the 2025-26 Congress and this bill is HR1624 "Supporting Farm Operations Act of 2025". HR1624 is attempting to get a 2 year pause on the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR).

# *MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL FUNDED RESEARCH GRANTS*

## Submitted proposals in 2025:

| Grant Type | Details | Grantee |
|---|---|---|
| SCBG | Southern Root Knot Nematode | MSU, Dr Marisol Quintanilla's lab |

## New grant(s) in 2024 and 2025:

| 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 |
| GREEEN | Practical solutions to manage powdery mildew of squash and pumpkin | MSU, Dr Mary Hausbeck's lab |
| GREEEN | Optimize anerobic soil disinfestation | MSU, Dr Jiyoon Yi's lab |
| GREEEN | Understanding and Mitigating Variability in Field Uptake of Heavy Metals in Processing Carrot | MSU, Dr Zack Hayden's lab |

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

| Grant Type | Details | Grantee |
|---|---|---|
| SCBG | Can New Cultivars be the Answer to Rhizomania, the New Table Beet Disease. | MSU, Dr Mary Hausbeck's lab |
| SCBG | Testing New Ways to Monitor and Manage Cucurbit Downy Mildew | MSU, Dr Mary Hausbeck's lab |

## MVC Research Grant Funds Provided:

| | Years | Future Grant Commitments | Dollars Granted |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Research Grants** (SCBG, GREEEN, others) | 2002-2023 | | $1,931,215 |
| **Research Grants** (SCBG, others) | 2024 | | $157,063 |
| **Research Grants** (SCBG) | 2025-2026 | $251,33.62 | |
| **Grant Totals** | 2002-2024 | | $2,088,278 |

## *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 |
|---|---|---|
| 2001-2023 | 132 | $170,300 |
| 2024 | 8 | $16,000 |
| Scholarship Totals 2001-2024 | 140 | $182, 300 |

# *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES*

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March is Michigan Food and Agricultural Awareness Month

https://michiganbusinessnetwork.com/mdard-state-local-officials-kick-off-ag-month-at-okemos-mcdonalds/

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=679773991054682

Not bragging but MIRS.NEWS w(Michigan's leader in state capitol news) gave quote of the day to Greg Bird for his new double pickle bbq burger suggestion.

**Update on 2023 and 2024 disasters:** There are places in Michigan that have declared disasters for floods in 2024, just like in 2023. If you have crops that were damaged by floods and you are in designated counties then you need to talk to your USDA-FSA office if you want the opportunity for federal assistance. Federal assistance can come by way of emergency loans. Occasionally, federal assistance relief funds can be available, but that is not a given and dependent on federal budget cycles. Congress directed $20 billion to assist farmers who have suffered natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 when the American Relief Act was passed on December 21, 2024. The disaster relief rollout is still TBD. $10 billion was directed as Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) for row crops and this assistance is beginning to roll out.

The Southwest Michigan vegetable grower lunch took place on March 11. 16 of us ate at Paw Paw Brewing Company. We spent several hours talking about the current state of the vegetable industry and what are the top priorities for the industry. Ben Phillips of MSU Extension helped orchestrate this lunch, and I'm hoping Ben Werling, Saltanat Mambetova, and Christoper Galbraith can help orchestrate a lunch with the Michigan Vegetable Council for their regional growers in 2026.

2023 saw the Michigan Vegetable Council host state representatives and senators at 2 pickle farms. 2025 is a non-election year so we plan to host a similar summer tour at 2 pepper and tomato farms in Southwest Michigan.

USDA is still distributing Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) Program for specialty crop growers. Many of you signed up for this in December and January. There was a total of $2.65 billion for the payments. There has been some of the funding distributed, but there is still more to be distributed. The exact timeline is not known as this is typed.

# *THE MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL PRESENTED* ***THE 2024 MICHIGAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY AWARDS*** *AT EXPO*

2024 Master Farmer: **Springdale Farms** (Hart, MI) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSihl4aKhRM
The **Master Farmer Award** is given in recognition of outstanding farming practices, as well as cooperation with Michigan State University (MSU) researchers and Extension educators and leadership roles in the vegetable industry and local community.

2024 Master Farmer Associate: **Dr. Vance Baird** (MSU) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lPgWvo3GfWw
The **Master Farmer Associate Award** is given to an individual who, while not directly involved in farming, has had a significant impact on the well-being of the vegetable industry in Michigan.

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