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Michigan Corn Growers Association Members Fuel Up on Top Issues

LANSING, MICH. – Nearly 120 corn growers, industry leaders, legislators and aides are better informed about corn and corn-related projects for the upcoming year, thanks to the 2010 Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) Annual Meeting.

Attendees at this year's meeting had the opportunity to hear from three exceptional national speakers. First, they heard from Bart Schott, a corn farmer from Kulm, N. Dakota, who is also serving as the first vice president of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA). Bart provided attendees with an update on corn issues and priorities on the national level. Then, attendees were able to hear from Jerry Gulke, principal owner of The Gulke Group and author of the Marketing Strategies column in *Top Producer*. Jerry discussed the market outlook for corn for 2010 and how to effectively manage risk. Attendees also heard from Kip Cullers, a corn grower from Missouri and several time winner of the NCGA Corn Yield Contest. Kip discussed several production techniques he utilizes to achieve 300 bushel per acre corn. The program included a legislative update, a presentation on feral swine and sandhill cranes in Michigan, and information on the benefits available to MCGA members.

"The MCGA Annual Meeting provides Michigan's corn growers an excellent chance to discuss policy and issues that impact the corn industry," said Tom Durand, MCGA president and a corn grower from Crosswell. "By featuring top-notch speakers, we were able to have a well-rounded program to really prepare ourselves for what is on the horizon."

At the meeting, the MCGA presented the "Friend of Corn" award to two deserving individuals as a way to honor them for their support of Michigan's corn industry. This year's Friend of Corn recipients were Frank Lipinski and Bob Craig.

- Frank is a corn grower from Buckley, Mich., who sat on the Michigan Corn Growers Association board of directors for 7 years. Frank also served on the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan board of directors for 7 years. Frank hosts numerous meetings and events and is an excellent spokesperson for agriculture. He represented Michigan as part of the Corn Vision 2012, strategic planning process on the national level.
- Bob served as the Director of the Agriculture Development Division at the Michigan Department of Agriculture from 1991 to 2009. Bob also served as an ex-officio member on both the Michigan Corn Growers Association and the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan boards of directors for 4 years. Bob worked as a strong advocate of corn, specifically ethanol, helping to develop plants and E85 fueling infrastructure.

Another highlight of the meeting was the roundtable discussions growers had with legislators during lunch to discuss important issues affecting their farming operations. This gave growers an opportunity to talk with legislators about what is important and voice their concerns and wishes. "By inviting legislators and aides to participate in our annual meeting, we are enacting our grassroots strength and educating elected officials about our industry," added Durand. "The legislators were eager to talk about the corn industry, as well as hear the thoughts of the state's corn growers."

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During the Annual Business Meeting, MCGA members were asked to represent the state's corn growers by running for one of the four open seats on the MCGA Board of Directors. Board members re-elected for another term were: Jim Gillispie of Concord for District 7; Scott Lonier of Lansing to serve out-of-district and Dan Cable of Maybee for District 8; and Tom Durand of Crosswell for an at-large position. Richard Maurer Jr. of Harbor Beach, Tony Igl of Mason, and Kenneth Blaauw of Shelbyville were newly elected to serve on the board of directors representing Districts 3, 4, and 6 respectively.

The meeting also included recognition of the state's top three membership recruiters:

- First Place – Alvin Ferguson, Allenton
- Second Place – Eric Voisinet, Laingsburg
- Third Place – Charlie Briolat, Ubly

In addition, the state's 2009 Corn Yield Contest winners, farms that are environmentally verified through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), and the 2009 MCGA Scholarship recipients were also recognized.

The support of several sponsors was vital in making the event such a huge success. Sponsors for the 2010 MCGA Annual Meeting were: Agrotain International, Conklin AgroVantage Systems – Tom Warschefsky, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, Great Lakes Hybrids, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, Growth Energy, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., and Pioneer Hi-Bred – Pat Feldpausch Agency.

Headquartered in Lansing, the MCGA is a grassroots-membership association that has represented the state's corn growers' political interests since the 1970s. The MCGA works cooperatively with the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) a legislatively-established program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold and invests in research, education, new uses and market development. Michigan's corn industry adds more than one billion dollars to the state's economy annually and in 2009, Michigan's corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of nearly 311 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at www.micorn.org.

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