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### **Modern Agriculture Good for Environment**

LANSING, MICH. – Farmers have long known the importance of preserving our natural resources; their very livelihood depends upon the health and success of their land. Often called the original environmentalists, today’s farmers follow good management practices and take every precaution to ensure that our land, air and water will be as pristine tomorrow as they are today. With countless years of dedication to the land, it came as no surprise to Michigan’s corn growers when a recently released peer-reviewed study from Stanford University found that modern agriculture has slowed the pace of global warming.

“We have long known our growers are committed to farming in a sustainable fashion and growing more with less, and this is welcome evidence of it,” said Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) president and National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Corn Board member Clark Gerstacker, a corn farmer from Midland. “So many of our farms are multigenerational and we honor the value of preserving our farms for future generations. Our constant work to improve modern agriculture helps to reduce impacts across the globe while growing more corn per acre.”

The research, led by two scientists from Stanford University, found that high-yield agriculture has prevented large amounts of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere, the equivalent of 590 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide. A Stanford news release stated that, if not for increased yields, additional greenhouse gas emissions from clearing land for farming would have been equal to as much as a third of the world's total output of greenhouse gases since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in 1850. This study will soon be published online by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

In addition to this latest research on the ecological sustainability of corn farming, the NCGA has also worked with the Field to Market Keystone Alliance on Sustainable Agriculture to highlight the environmental progress of our country’s corn farmers. The Field to Market Alliance brings together a diverse group of grower organizations, agribusinesses, food companies, conservation groups, universities, and agency partners to focus on defining and measuring the sustainability of food and fiber production throughout various sectors of agriculture.

In its 2009 report, Field to Market tracked progress according to five sustainability measures, and found that overall efficiency of resources has improved over the past decade due to gains in productivity. When it comes to corn production, the following progress was reported between 1987 and 2007:

- Corn's productivity gains have allowed for a 37 percent reduction in the land needed to produce one bushel.
- When combined with productivity advances, soil loss per bushel of corn produced has decreased by 69 percent.

**(more)**

- Factoring in improved yields, the energy used to produce a bushel of corn has decreased by 37 percent.
- Corn has seen a 30 percent decrease in emissions per bushel.

“We are grateful to see research that backs up what we have always known,” stated Gerstacker. “Our farmers are on the front line working to improve our environment. We depend on the quality of the soil and water to grow more food, feed and fuel each year, and we’re doing it in the most innovative and environmentally-friendly ways possible.”

Headquartered in Lansing, the CPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. The CPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state’s corn grower’s political interests since the 1970’s. 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 more than 309 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CPM at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org).

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