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Ag Day at the Capitol Brings Michigan Commodity Groups and Legislators Together

LANSING, MICH. – Organizations representing Michigan’s agricultural commodities, including the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM), gathered at the State Capitol on Thursday, March 17 for the Ag Day at the Capitol celebration. The event gave farmers and agricultural organizations the opportunity to offer state lawmakers real food for thought by filling the Capitol with food and facts to stress the importance of agriculture in the Great Lakes State.

The seventh annual Ag Day at the Capitol united commodities who gathered to educate state lawmakers on how agriculture contributes \$71.3 billion to Michigan's economy and supports more than 900,000 jobs. Currently, agriculture is Michigan’s second leading industry and one in four of jobs are agriculture-related. Corn alone, adds nearly \$1.1 billion to Michigan’s economy annually while Michigan’s corn ethanol industry adds nearly \$600 million.

“As members of the MCGA, it is important that we inform our lawmakers on issues affecting the corn industry,” said Ed Breitmeyer, MCGA president and a corn grower from Buckley. “This is our opportunity to provide information regarding the vast potential for corn, not only through livestock feed, but through industrial uses including plastics, pharmaceuticals, clothing, heating and fuel. In an economy that has quickly become bio-based, it is imperative that corn remains on the cutting edge of the industry and that we inform our lawmakers of our capabilities.”

Each year, Ag Day at the Capitol brings together growers from across the state to discuss current agricultural issues with the state’s lawmakers and to stress the impact of the agricultural industry on Michigan’s economy. In addition to providing information to lawmakers, participating organizations treated legislators to products emphasizing each commodity's individual contribution to Michigan's economy. “This allowed legislators to truly get a taste of what agriculture offers this state,” added Breitmeyer.

“Events such as Ag Day at the Capitol allow our grassroots organization to excel. Across the state, farmers belonging to the commodity organizations are asked to personally deliver the united message of agriculture’s importance to lawmakers in Lansing,” said Jody Pollok-Newsom, MCGA and CMPM executive director. “This event gives our growers the opportunity to discuss critical issues and opportunities with the state’s lawmakers.”

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 2010, Michigan’s corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of more than 315 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at www.micorn.org.

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