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Michigan Corn Grower Attends National Leadership Academy

DEWITT, MICH. – Twenty of the nearly 35,000 National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) members were chosen to attend a leadership academy organized by the NCGA. The three-day program, *Leadership at its Best*, was held in Washington, D.C. and was sponsored by Syngenta. This meeting focused on interaction with legislators, coalition building, and devising effective grassroots legislative strategies. Matt Cary, a corn grower from Alma and a board member of the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) attended the academy.

“The leadership academy is an excellent opportunity for Michigan growers,” said Jody Pollok-Newsom, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) and MCGA executive director. “At the academy, participants hone their leadership skills and bring knowledge back to implement in their own states.”

The Washington, D.C. portion of the academy provided attendees with information on the ins and outs of policy making on Capitol Hill. The program’s goal was to build knowledge and skills in order to help corn growers educate legislators about key issues facing our nation’s corn industry. Attendees were updated by the NCGA on legislative issues and were educated on the importance of building coalitions. Participants also made congressional visits with their state’s legislators to talk about pressing issues in the agricultural industry. This final session built off the first session, where participants attended classes on association management, public speaking, presentations, media training and etiquette.

“Many of the attendees at the academy are already great leaders within their own state organizations and this academy is set up to encourage increased participation at the state and national levels within the NCGA such as action teams, committees, the corn board and elected-officer positions,” said Pollok-Newsom.

“Becoming a stronger leader means not only increasing your own involvement, but also encouraging and recruiting others to become leaders as well,” said Cary. “Increasing the involvement of others within an organization, as well as bringing political leaders on board to support vital legislation will help strengthen the corn industry. This academy has helped to build better leaders and build stronger organizations at both the state and national levels.”

The attendees have now returned to their states with additional leadership skills that will be put into practice as they continue to serve the corn industry.

Headquartered in DeWitt, the MCGA is a grassroots-membership association representing the state’s corn growers’ political interests. Since the 1970s, the MCGA has been looking out for the state’s corn growers and working to keep them on the cutting edge. The MCGA works cooperatively with the CMPM a legislatively-established program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold and invests in research, education, market development, and new uses. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at www.micorn.org.