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Michigan Corn Growers take on National Leadership Roles

LANSING, MICH. – Michigan’s corn growers were well represented at the recent National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) action team meetings. Seven national grower-led action teams met to discuss issues and set the direction for the NCGA in the upcoming year.

The seven action teams and committees include the Biotechnology Working Group, Ethanol Committee, Grower Services Action Team, Production and Stewardship Action Team, Public Policy Action Team, Research and Business Development Action Team, and the Joint Trade Policy A-Team. State and national corn grower members involved with the organization are encouraged to apply for a position on the action teams in mid summer and teams are selected in the fall. The teams met recently in St. Louis, Mo. for the first of three meetings they will hold this year. Also meeting in St. Louis was the National Corn Board.

Jeff Sandborn, a corn grower from Portland, serves on the NCGA Ethanol Committee. The Ethanol Committee ensures that corn growers continue to take a leadership role in the production of ethanol as well as to advocate for the increased production of domestic energy resources. “Reducing our nation’s dependence on foreign oil with renewable domestic transportation fuels is an achievable goal. The U.S. ethanol industry is the strongest weapon we have to combat this growing problem,” said Sandborn. “However, the industry is facing some unique challenges that the Ethanol Committee is working to help correct. The on-going food versus fuel debate, the current cap and trade legislation and the renewal of the volumetric ethanol excise tax credit are all important issues that will directly affect the future of ethanol as a renewable energy source.”

Clark Gerstacker, a Midland corn grower, is starting his second term as a member of the NCGA Corn Board. NCGA Corn Board members are charged with representing the corn industry as it moves toward increasing the value of the U.S. corn crop. Gerstacker was recently reappointed as chairman of the Association Relations Committee. The Association Relations Committee is one of four National Corn Board committees and is tasked with ensuring that a strong and productive working relationship exists between the individual state associations and the NCGA.

“This is such an exciting time to be a part of the U.S. corn industry. The advancements made now will impact, not only corn growers, but consumers all over the world,” said Gerstacker. “There are still a lot of opportunities for corn, and Michigan growers are playing a big role by having a voice on the national level.”

Headquartered in Lansing, the CMPM 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 CMPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state’s corn grower’s political interests. For more information on the CMPM and the MCGA, visit the web site at www.micorn.org.