

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update

May 1, 2025

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates - whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed - please send an email or call the St. Joseph County Extension office.

Contents:

- Announcements
- Field Crops Update
- Irrigation and Water Use Update
- [Weather Update](#)
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HISPANOHIBLANTES: Spanish Irrigation And Pesticide Safety Workshop May 16

This free workshop offered in Spanish will feature hands-on learning on a variety of pesticide and irrigation related themes. It will be held from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office. Four (4) RUP credits have been requested. No pre-registration required (although if you plan to send or bring a large group, please RSVP to me, Nicolle Ritchie: 269-858-8739 or ritchi67@msu.edu). [Learn more here.](#)

Last Call for Scouting School!

MSU Extension Scouting School will be held at the Kellogg Biological Station (3700 E Gull Lake Dr, Hickory Corners) in 2025. Enrollment is limited to 30 participants to ensure hands-on participation. Cost is \$150/person, which includes lunch on the first day and materials. For more information or to register, [click here](#). Reach out to me (Nicolle Ritchie, ritchi67@msu.edu or 269-858-8739) with questions.

Reminder that 2,4-D or MCPA is Restricted in Grape Growing Areas May 1 to October 1

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 30017, 525 West Allegan, 6th Floor
Lansing, Michigan 48909

N O T I C E

Restriction of Use of 2,4-D or MCPA in Grape Growing Areas

In accordance with Act No. 6 of the Public Acts of 1959, as amended, notice is hereby given that orders heretofore issued on April 16, 1963, subsequent to public hearings and publication, shall continue in effect during the period from May 1 to October 1, 2025, unless a petition for modification or revision of the order, signed by 10 or more grape growers or 50 or more persons not grape growers in the affected area, is filed with the Director of Agriculture on or before April 15.

The grape growing areas affected by the orders are described as follows:

Order No. 1

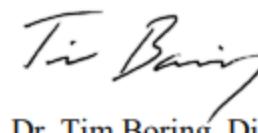
All of Antwerp, Paw Paw, and Porter Townships; Sections 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36, Waverly Township; Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 36, Lawrence Township; Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, and 36, Decatur Township; Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36, Almena Township; and Sections 24 and 25, Hamilton Township; Van Buren County, Michigan; all of Texas Township; and Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, Oshtemo Township; Kalamazoo County, Michigan.

Order No. 2

All of the land contained in Hagar, Benton, Bainbridge, Coloma, Watervliet, Sodus,

Pipestone, Berrien, Oronoko, Royalton, St. Joseph, Lincoln, Lake, Baroda, and Chikaming Townships; Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33, Weesaw Township; Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 24, Buchanan Township; Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18, Niles Township; Berrien County; Sections 6, 7, 18, 19, 30, and 31, Pokagon Township; Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, and 18, Silver Creek Township; Cass County; Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, Keeler Township; Sections 17, 22, 23, and 28, Hartford Township; Sections 14, 23, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, Covert Township; and Section 36 West of Covert Township; Van Buren County; all part of the State of Michigan.

It is ordered that pursuant to the authority granted the Director of Agriculture by Act No. 6 of the Public Acts of 1959, as amended, any and all persons shall cease and desist from the use of the volatile ester forms of 2,4-D and MCPA within the above described areas during the period of May 1 to October 1, 2025, and that the amine forms of 2,4-D and MCPA be applied at sprayer pressures not to exceed forty pounds and that sprayer booms be operated over crops at a height not greater than 25 inches.



Dr. Tim Boring, Director

March 3, 2025

Interested in Soil Moisture Sensors? Contact Angie Gradiz and/or Read This Factsheet

As you prepare for the season, don't forget to include your irrigation scheduling tools to ensure crops receive the right amount of water at the right time. If you're thinking about upgrading to more advanced tools like soil moisture sensors, the new factsheet "[Utilizing Soil Moisture Sensors for Efficient Irrigation Management](#)" can help guide your decision. It covers key considerations such as cost, sensor types, and best-use recommendations to help you choose the right tool for your operation. For more tools, please visit MSU Extension [Irrigation Scheduling Tools](#) or contact [Angie Gradiz](#) at gradizme@msu.edu or 517-279-4311 ext. 6418.

Branch County Conservation District Summer Field Day: Root to Sprout, June 25

The Branch County Conservation District will host its annual summer field day, *Root to Sprout*, on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, beginning at 10 a.m. at 189 W Colon Rd in Coldwater, Michigan. This year's event will highlight the importance of soil health and irrigation management in improving yields and conserving resources. The program will include educational sessions and opportunities to connect with professionals. Lunch will be provided, and attendees are eligible to receive RUP credits and one MAEAP Phase 1 credit. To reserve your spot, please RSVP by June 1 at branchcd.org or call 517-278-2725 ext. 113.



The Branch County Conservation District
is proud to host
Root to Sprout

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOIL HEALTH AND IRRIGATION
FOR BETTER YIELDS.

JUNE 25, 2025 @10AM

 Huff Farms; 189 W Colon Rd, Coldwater MI 49036

Angie Gradi (MSU Extension) – Center Pivot Uniformity
Brad Love (Ag Spectrum) – Nutrient Management/Plant Health
Dr. Brian Gardener (Ag Spectrum) – Mitigating Heat & Drought Stress
Dr. Younsuk Dong (MSU)/ Abraham Rai (MSU Student) – Enhancing irrigation efficiency and water conservation in potato fields


BRANCH COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

RSVP By June 1, 2025
Online (branchcd.org)
Or by phone (517-278-2725) ext.113

Lunch is provided!

THIS PRESENTATION SATISFIES ONE MAEAP PHASE 1 CREDIT/RUP CREDITS AVAILABLE



Grain Bin and Manure Pit Safety Training June 26 at Albright Farms

All are welcome to attend a grain bin and manure pit safety demonstration in the afternoon on June 26 in Branch County. In the evening, training specific to first responders will be provided and is limited to 30 people. More details to come.

Seed Treatment Webinar series every Tuesday in August, in-person workshop August 18

Category 4 RUP Credits Available
More information to come

**SAVE THE DATE!
SEED TREATMENT
WORKSHOP
AUGUST 18**

Van Buren County
MSU Extension Office
57418 CR 681, Suite A, Hartford MI 49057

Nicolle Ritchie (269-858-8739)  Extension

Michiana Native Plant Sale hosted by SJCCD and SMIST CISMA

Plugs for these native plants are \$3 each. Order pickup is 5/29 and 5/30 from 9 am to 4 pm, and orders can be placed up until the last day of order pickup. Contact Kaitlin Renehan (kaitlin.renehan@macd.org or 269-467-6336 ext 5) for more information or to place an order.



2025 Native Plant Sale



Hosted by the
**St. Joseph County Conservation District
& SMIST CISMA**

Plugs: \$3 each

Order Pickup Dates:

Thursday, May 29th & Friday, May 30th
9am - 4pm

*Species availability subject to change.

To place an order or request additional information:
Email: kaitlin.renehan@macd.org
Call: (269) 467-6336 ext. 3
Visit: 633 E. Main Street, Centreville MI



Nodding Wild Onion
(Allium cernuum)



Turtlehead
(Chelone glabra)



Columbine
(Aquilegia canadensis)



False Sunflower
(Helianthus laevis)



Cardinal Flower
(Lobelia cardinalis)



Wild Petunia
(Ruellia humilis)



Sweet Joe-Pye Weed
(Eutrochium purpureum)



Spiderwort
(Tradescantia chiensis)



Purple Love Grass
(Eragrostis spectabilis)



Wild Senna
(Senna hebecarpa)

* Additional native plants grown from seed by The District may be additionally offered at time of pickup.

Field Crops Update

Soybean and **corn** (both **seed** and **commercial**) planting are in earnest throughout southwest Michigan. Fields that were planted into decaying residues around April 18 are at high risk of **seed corn maggot** damage. Cultivation and herbicide applications are other common field activities from over the past week. **Black cutworm** moths are at low populations but have been present in St. Joseph County for the past couple weeks. Fields planted into heavy broadleaf weeds or cover crop residues are at higher risk of black cutworm damage. Waiting to plant until about 10–14 days after burndown will help mitigate this.

Bucket traps in Berrien (near Berrien Springs), St. Joseph (Centreville) and Van Buren (Lawrence) Counties have caught the following:

True Armyworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/14	0	0	2
4/21	0	6	0
4/28	0	1	0

Black Cutworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/14	0	0	0
4/21	7	15	0
4/28	5	8	0

Most winter wheat is at Feekes 7 (two nodes on the stem). Rapid growth is occurring, and so is water uptake. Powdery mildew and low levels of septoria are present in southwest Michigan. This past week saw some fungicide applications, particularly to fields with powdery mildew. Cereal leaf beetle adults were found this week, and aphids are also starting to enter fields.



According to the April 30 Michigan Potatoes Industry Update, potatoes are about 75% planted in southern Michigan. Early planted acres are close to emerging. Alfalfa weevil populations continue to build in alfalfa. Forage systems have many arthropod natural enemies, which provide free insect control. Try to conserve those populations by spraying only when alfalfa weevil has reached action thresholds. Although the damage looks bad, wait to spray for alfalfa weevil until

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the crop has met the following conditions: if about 9" tall, with larvae in sweeps, 50% or more of stem tips have feeding damage, *and* there is an average of one larva per stem, an insecticide application is recommended to manage alfalfa weevil. If the alfalfa is about 12" tall, with larvae in sweeps, 75% or more of stem tips have feeding damage, *and* there is an average of two larvae per stem, an insecticide application is recommended. For more information, refer to the article "[Weevils are popping in alfalfa fields.](#)" If you are in southwest Michigan and feel uncertain about the time and/or procedure for scouting alfalfa weevil, contact Nicolle Ritchie (269-858-8739 or ritchi67@msu.edu), for in-field help rather than spraying too early or unnecessarily.



Irrigation and Crop Water Use

Early season crop water use for both corn and soybeans remains relatively low across all three regions. During these initial growth stages, plants have a smaller canopy and limited root development, which means their daily water demand is minimal. Most locations are reporting potential evapotranspiration values below 0.4 inches per week. As a result, current soil moisture and rainfall may be sufficient to support early crop development without the need for irrigation. However, it's important to continue monitoring local weather conditions and soil moisture to adjust management as the season progresses.

For wheat, crop water use begins to increase during jointing stages (Feekes 6 – 8). At this point, it is important to carefully evaluate whether irrigation is necessary based on recent rainfall and soil moisture levels. To support your irrigation management decisions, consider using [Irrigation Scheduling Tools](#), which can help estimate crop water needs and decide timing and application.

Estimated weekly crop water use for field crops in Michigan (in/week)				
Week of April 28 - May 4				
Crop	Growth stage	Constantine	Entrican	Hart
Wheat	Leaf Elongation	0.38	0.36	0.35
	Jointing	0.55	0.52	0.50
	Boot / Heading / Flowering / Grain fill	0.74	0.70	0.68

The table above presents estimated crop water use for various field crops across three locations in Michigan. This data helps irrigation management decisions by showcasing potential crop evapotranspiration, calculated based on reference

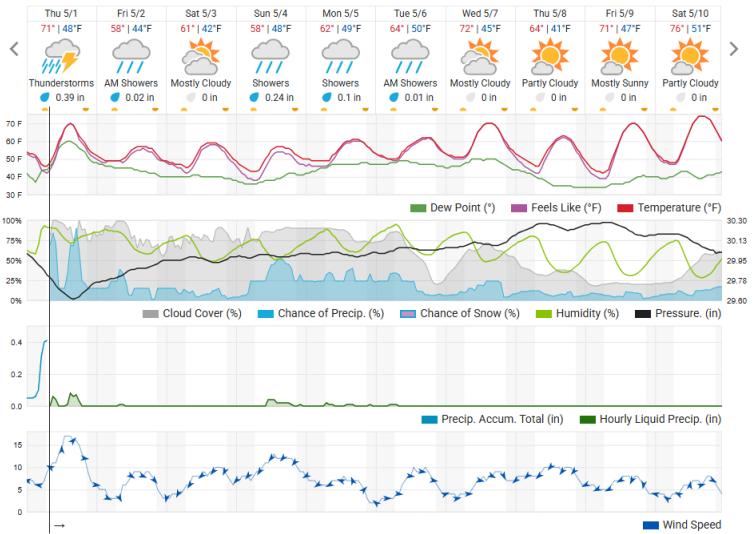
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evapotranspiration and crop coefficients for each crop growth stage. It is crucial to note that crop water use values vary across regions due to differences in weather conditions, growth stages, agronomic practices and soil properties. When using these values for irrigation scheduling, be mindful that they assume all applied irrigation water will be utilized by the plants without any loss. Additionally, these values do not account for any precipitation that may occur during the week of calculation. For more tools and information on irrigation scheduling tools, please refer to: [Irrigation Scheduling Tools](#).

Reference evapotranspiration data was obtained from Enviroweather, which also offers a model for determining potential crop evapotranspiration. To access this tool, visit [Enviroweather](#), click on "Crops," select your crop and use the potential evapotranspiration tool by choosing your nearest weather station, the latest date of interest and other crop information.

Weather Update

This past week was warmer than normal and quite dry, which resulted in a flurry of fieldwork activity. Today (May 1, 2025) started with some early rain. Significant rainfall is expected today and into early tomorrow and again on Sunday. Temperatures are cooling for the weekend, but next week's outlook is warm and dry for most of the week.

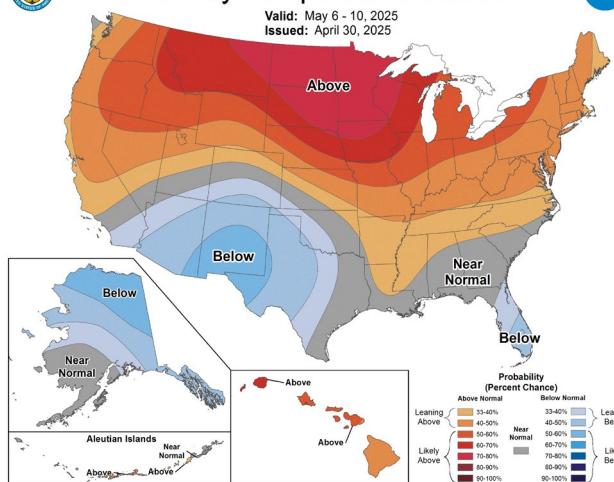


Ten-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to [wunderground.com](#).

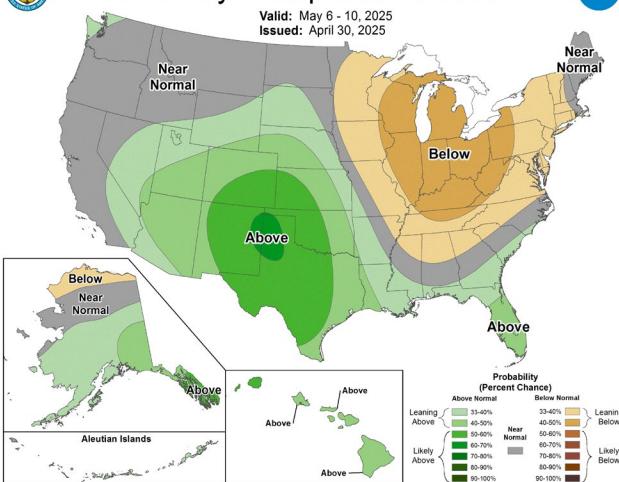
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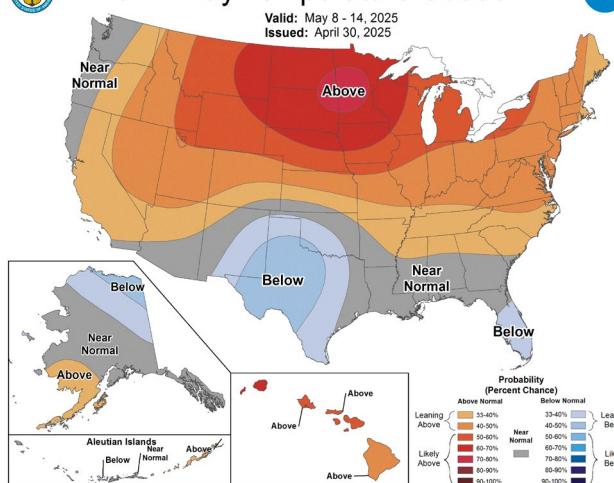
6-10 Day Temperature Outlook



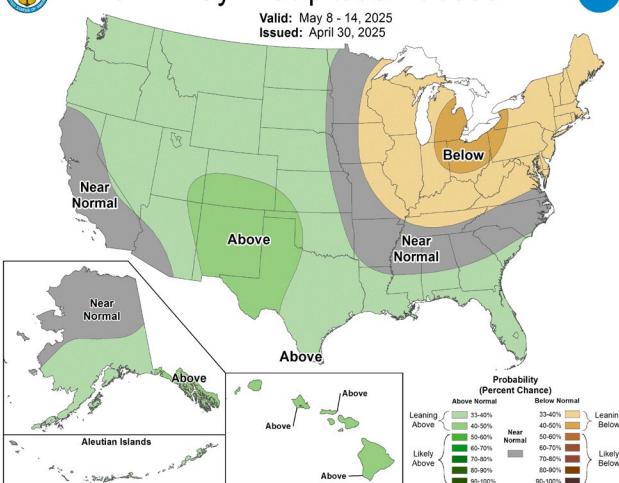
6-10 Day Precipitation Outlook



8-14 Day Temperature Outlook



8-14 Day Precipitation Outlook



The 6-10 day (May 6-10, top) and 8-14 day (May 8-14, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

[Note: Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined.]

May 2 [SJCCD Tree Sale Order Pickup](#). 9am – 6pm. Barn #28 at the St. Joseph County Fairgrounds.

May 3 [SJCCD Tree Sale Order Pickup](#). 9am – 12pm. Barn #28 at the St. Joseph County Fairgrounds.

May 8 [Virtual Breakfast: Disease Management in Wheat](#). 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. [RUP/CCA](#)

May 8 [Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing](#). 8am-5pm. MSU Extension office, Hillsdale. Cost is \$25 for morning training payable to MSU, cost for testing dependent on license type. Morning training session is required before afternoon testing, only core and standards exams (no commercial categories) offered. Other locations and dates available. Register online. 4 RUP

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May 14 [Scouting School Day 1.](#) 8:30am-3:30pm. Scouting School is spread across three dates. The first day, May 14th, will start with scouting basics, including weed ID, scouting patterns, and more. Participants will also be provided with reference materials. In the afternoon, they will move into the field for hands-on scouting.

May 15 [Virtual Breakfast: Post Weed Control.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. **RUP/CCA**

May 15 [Land Access Workshop for Beginning Farmers.](#) 5:30-8:30pm. KVCC Food Innovation Center. Kalamazoo Valley Community College will be hosting a series of workshops for beginning farmers based on new curricula developed by a team of beginning farmer educators across Michigan. Free.

May 16 [Spanish Pesticide and Irrigation Safety Workshop.](#) 8:30am-12:30pm. St. Joseph County MSU Extension Office. This workshop offered in Spanish will feature hands-on learning about pesticide and irrigation safety best practices. **4 RUP**

May 22 [Virtual Breakfast: Heat Stress and Wheat.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. **CCA only**

May 15 [Urban Agriculture and Policy Workshop for Beginning Farmers.](#) 5:30-8:30pm. KVCC Food Innovation Center. Kalamazoo Valley Community College will be hosting a series of workshops for beginning farmers based on new curricula developed by a team of beginning farmer educators across Michigan. Free.

May 29 [Virtual Breakfast: Dry Bean Management.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. **RUP/CCA**

May 29 [Native Plant Sale Order Pickup.](#) 9am – 4pm. 693 E Main Street, Centreville, MI 49032.

May 30 [Native Plant Sale Order Pickup.](#) 9am – 4pm. 693 E Main Street, Centreville, MI 49032.

June 5 [Virtual Breakfast: Wheat Fungicide.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**

June 12 [Virtual Breakfast: Cercospora for Sugar Beets.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**

June 18 [Scouting School Day 2.](#) 8:30am-12pm. Scouting School is spread across three dates. Day two will be held in the morning and will consist of hands-on scouting in the field for diseases and insects present. It will also include covering anything else discovered while in the field.

June 19 [Virtual Breakfast: Legacy Phosphorus.](#) 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **CCA only**

June 25 [Root to Sprout: Branch County CD Field Day.](#) 10am. This year's event will highlight the importance of soil health and irrigation management in improving yields and conserving resources. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP. **RUP**

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June 26 **Virtual Breakfast: Irrigation Management.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **CCA only**

June 26 **Grain Bin and Manure Pit Safety Training.** The afternoon will feature trainings and information for all. The evening will feature trainings specific to first responders. More details to come.

July 16 **Scouting School Day 3.** 8:30am-12pm. Scouting School is spread across three dates. The final day will be a morning session and include scouting in the field doing hands-on inspection for any insects present and signs of insect damage and diseases present. It will also include covering anything else discovered while in the field.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SELL GRAIN?

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 30, 2025

Market trend data may hold the key to maximizing sales.

AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES ARE UNDERGOING SIGNIFICANT LABEL CHANGES THAT GROWERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 25, 2025

An ever-increasing number of pesticide labels require applicators to utilize the Bulletins Live! Two system to check for additional use limitations to protect endangered species and their habitat.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIELD CROPS UPDATE – APRIL 24, 2025

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 24, 2025

Thanks to a stretch of dry weather, this week was good for field work. Alfalfa weevil is present in alfalfa, but wait and follow established scouting and threshold information before treating.

WHEAT WATCHERS WEEK OF APRIL 21, 2025

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 24, 2025

See how the wheat crop is progressing across the state this week.

REGIONAL WHEAT FIELD DAYS OFFERED IN MAY 2025

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 23, 2025

Join MSU Extension and Michigan Wheat Program for a small regional wheat field day near you.

FREE TRAININGS FOR EDUCATORS WORKING WITH BEGINNING FARMERS OFFERED THIS SPRING AND SUMMER

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 23, 2025

Join us for an engaging, hands-on train-the-trainer workshop designed for educators working with beginning farmers!

SCOUT, SCOUT, LET IT ALL OUT

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 22, 2025

When it comes to pest management, a robust scouting program is one of the things you can't do without. Join Scouting School in Barry County this year!

UTILIZING SOIL MOISTURE SENSORS FOR EFFICIENT IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 22, 2025

Effective irrigation management is essential for sustainable agriculture and improving yields, water efficiency, and returns on investment.

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IRRIGATION AND HERBICIDES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 21, 2025

Applying irrigation water can bring many benefits to growers, but it also has environmental risks to watch out for.

GUIDELINES TO ASSIST GROWERS WITH THE H-2A PROGRAM AND IMMIGRATION PREPAREDNESS ON THE FARM: PART 2

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 18, 2025

Information to help community members and growers understand the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers program and steps for worker safety.

2025 STATUS OF HERBICIDE-RESISTANT WEEDS IN MICHIGAN

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 17, 2025

Each year, new herbicide resistance cases are confirmed by MSU Plant & Pest Diagnostics.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND MICHIGAN POTATO INDUSTRY COMMISSION POTATO SEED SPACING AND DEPTH RESEARCH

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 17, 2025

MSU Extension, in partnership with the Michigan Potato Industry Commission, conducts potato seed spacing and depth research with published factsheets highlighting year one research.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIELD CROPS UPDATE – APRIL 17, 2025

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 17, 2025

A break in the rain resulted in fertilizer spreading, cultivating and even planting. Wheat is at Feekes 4-5, and powdery mildew started in lush stands.

WHEAT WATCHERS WEEK OF APRIL 14, 2025

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 17, 2025

See how the wheat crop is progressing across the state this week.



Nicolle Ritchie

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Angie Gradiz

Michigan State University Extension

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