

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update March 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](#)
- [Weather Update](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [MSU Extension Digest Briefs](#)

HISPANOHABLANTES: Sign up to receive SW MI irrigation and crop updates in Spanish



Please share with Spanish speakers you know who work in agriculture. This regular newsletter will contain event updates, RUP information, access to resources, farm safety, irrigation tips, and field crop information—all in Spanish! To receive the newsletter, [join the Whatsapp group through this link](#) or by scanning the QR code with the Whatsapp camera. Every three years, the MSU Extension field crops team sends out a needs assessment. **This is a statewide survey, and I want SW MI to be justly represented, so PLEASE share your honest feedback, both positive and negative!** Share the survey with everyone you know who grows or works with field crops. Just copy and paste this link into a text or email to share with others (and click on it to take the survey): https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1ZDVTS01EGJlflG.

IRRIGATORS: Take this survey and/or join the irrigation mailing list

A flyer for the "Agriculture Water Users Needs Assessment" survey. The background is a green field with a large irrigation system. The text is white and green. It includes a QR code, contact information, and a call to action. The Michigan State University Extension logo is in the top right corner.

Your input matters!

Fill out the Agriculture Water Users Needs Assessment

Help us identify challenges and develop programs tailored to your needs.

Anonymous and confidential

Questions? Contact us!

gradizme@msu.edu
canr.msu.edu/irrigation/

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MSU Extension is committed to helping irrigators optimize water use efficiency while maintaining productivity. To better understand your needs, we invite you to complete the [Agricultural Water Use Needs Assessment survey](#), which takes 10-15 minutes. Your feedback will guide the creation of effective programs and resources tailored to your needs and challenges. All responses are anonymous and used solely for research and education. If you have questions or wish to stay informed about our irrigation resources, [join our mailing list](#) or visit the [MSU Irrigation Team website](#).

Science for Success Webinar Feb 28 and March 14

FREE webinars from soybean researchers: Climate Challenges in Soybean Production Feb 28 and Economic Insights for Uncertain Times March 14. Register online at SoybeanScienceForSuccess.org.

Filing is back on under the Corporate Transparency Act

You may have heard that the injunction on the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) was stayed in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision earlier this year. This means that reporting of beneficial ownership information (BOI) is once again REQUIRED and MANDATORY for reporting companies. See this [article](#) and related resources to determine if you have a reporting company. See this [recorded webinar](#) for tips on filing BOI and navigating the FinCEN website.

The deadline for reporting has been extended by FinCEN to March 21, 2025 for most filers. See the [guidance](#) they put out recently on their website. Note that FinCEN is planning to eventually work on ways to make the regulations less burdensome (maybe things like address updates will be made less onerous in the end). But for now, the CTA is back on in full force, which means that civil and criminal penalties will apply for those that have not filed by their reporting date, March 21 for most companies. File now and don't wait until the last minute. Please contact Chris Bardenhagen with any questions, bardeh1@msu.edu or 231-866-1959.

Let me scout your field to test a satellite data enhanced scouting tool

Dr. Manni Singh is evaluating a tool that uses satellite imagery to calculate NDVI to guide precision scouting throughout the growing season. Just grow your field like you normally would. I'll scout your field every 2-3 weeks, and at the end of the season, you would provide yield monitor data and answer a survey about the field's management. Contact me (Nicolle Ritchie, ritchi67@msu.edu; 269-858-8739) or Manni Singh (msingh@msu.edu; 517-353-0226) with field coordinates by March 3 or to learn more.

The Crops Don't Stop (at State Lines)



The Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference will be held in Goshen on March 5. This will NOT be held at the Blue Gate as in years past (but don't worry-a delicious lunch is still included with registration). The Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference will be held on March 5 at the Elkhart County Fairgrounds Ag Hall in Goshen, IN, on March 5 with registration starting at 8:30 am. Check out [this article](#) for more information. Registration for the conference is \$35 for those registered after February 25. Contact me (Nicolle Ritchie, ritchi67@msu.edu or 269-858-8739) for help registering.

EPA Bulletins Live Two Drop-in "Office Hours"

Before you apply any pesticides in 2025, it is a legal requirement to check for endangered species use limitations through the EPA Bulletins Live! Two website. Bulletins should be checked no more than 6 months prior to application. Currently there are limitations on dicamba, cyantraniliprole, and methoxyfenozide in southwest Michigan, and more active ingredients are in the process of being added.

Stop by with questions or to print a bulletin at the Van Buren County office on March 4, the Branch County office on March 13, the St. Joseph County office on March 17, or the Calhoun county office on March 27. In April, there will be a

full-length training and pesticide planning session on Bulletins Live! Two at the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center in Berrien County.



Pesticide labels now require applicators to check Bulletins Live! Two (BLT) within six months of application. Need help checking and planning for this? We can help! Come by the listed drop-in locations from 8:30am-4:30pm for a cup of coffee and help with BLT.

March 4th	Van Buren County Extension 57418 CR 681, Suite A, Hartford, MI
March 13th	Branch County Extension 570 Marshall Road #C Coldwater, MI
March 17th	St. Joseph County Extension 612 E. Main St. Centreville, MI
March 27th	Calhoun County Extension (9am start) 315 West Green St. Marshall, MI

Looking for a different day? Contact the Berrien County office (269-927-5674) for info on their April workshop.

For more info. contact Nicolle Ritchie
(269) 858-8739 (C) or ritchi67@msu.edu

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SW MI Farm Bureau Chili Cook-Off & Young Farmer Discussion Meet

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU
CHILI COOK-OFF
+ YOUNG FARMER DISCUSSION MEET

Enjoy the evening sampling chili recipes, networking with other Farm Bureau members from the area, and raising money for Harvest for All to support food security in our local communities. Held on March 22 at 4 pm at Griner Farms, 13120 Born St, Jones, MI. \$10/person donation will be accepted at the door. Ages 10/under are free. The District Young Farmer Discussion Meet will be held in conjunction with the chili cook-off. RSVP by March 14 to the Kalamazoo County Farm Bureau: (269) 342-0212 or KalamazooCounty@ctyfb.com.

VAN BUREN COUNTY: Farming for the Future Conference March 12th

Please join the Van Buren Conservation District on March 12th from 9 AM-3:00 PM at the Lawrence Conference Center. We have a fantastic program scheduled this year and you won't want to miss it. This program is free and lunch will be provided. Registration is required and space is limited, so sign up today!

Our Keynote speaker is Jeremy Sweeten, a consultant from "Understanding Ag". Jeremy has first-hand experience switching his farm over from yield-driven to a profit building farm model. He will speak on the 6 principles of regenerative agriculture practices that any farm can adopt in this next growing season. Along with Jeremy we have invited a great list of speakers to come and share practical, innovative and conservation-focused topics to our conference. We'll have three breakout tracks this year including a Grain, Livestock and Perennial track.

Please RSVP for this event so we can plan accordingly for lunch. There are many ways to register for this event:

- Email Colleen Forestieri at agconservation@vanburencd.org
- Call the district at 269-657-4030 x 3093
- Sign up online: https://vanburencd.org/mc-events/farming-for-the-future-2025/?mc_id=253



Farming for the Future offers an opportunity for farmers and ag professionals to come together to learn and discuss how conservation practices on farmland can improve productivity, profit, and our natural resources.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER JEREMY SWEETEN
"CREATING OPTIMISM & PROFIT ON THE FARM"

Jeremy Sweeten is a first generation farmer from the Upper Peninsula. He has seen first hand how regenerative farming practices can improve soils, livestock and profitability. Jeremy will talk about his journey of shifting his attitude and farm from yield-driven to profit-building.



As a consultant for "Understanding Ag," Jeremy is passionate about helping farmers solve problems through his practical experience and education.

AGENDA

8:30 AM	Registration & Refreshments
9:00 AM	Welcome & Introductions
9:35 AM	Keynote Address
10:40 AM	Breakout Sessions
11:40 AM	Lunch
12:50 PM	Breakout Sessions
2:00 PM	Breakout Sessions
3:00 PM	End

MARCH 12, 2025
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
FREE EVENT - LUNCH INCLUDED
VAN BUREN CONFERENCE CENTER
490 S PAW PAW ST.
LAWRENCE, MI 49064

RUP Credits
MAEAP Phase 1 Credit

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

	GRAIN	PERENNIAL	LIVESTOCK
10:40 AM	Slugs in High Residue Systems John Tooker, Penn State University	Managing Invasives on Your Farm and Forest Abbie Bristol, VBCD	Grass -Finishing Livestock Jeremy Sweeten, Understanding Ag
12:50 PM	Managing Low Profitability Zones on the Farm Jason Stegink, Wide Angle Agriculture	Regenerative Ag for Specialty Crops Jeremy Sweeten, Understanding Ag	Diversified Markets & Sheep Rotational Grazing Kalli & Matt Hensley, Hoddinott Acres Farms
2:00 PM	Farmer Perspective: Profitable Conservation Marc Hasenick, Hasenick Farms	Converting Unproductive Ground into Pollinator Habitat Brook Wilke, KBS LTAR	Starting from Scratch: A Grass-Fed Beef Journey Bob and Rob Egly, Egly Land and Cattle

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, MARCH 12, 2025
REGISTER ONLINE: [VANBURENCD.ORG/FFF-2025](https://vanburencd.org/FFF-2025)
QUESTIONS? CALL 269-657-4030 x3093

Welcome Korede Olugbenle to SE MI!

Although this newsletter focuses on SW MI, I know there are many of you from all over the state, including the southeast. Korede (pronounced Kora-day) is our newest Michigan State University Extension conservation agronomist educator based out of the Lenawee County Extension Office. He obtained his M.S. degree in Agroecology and PhD in Agronomy at University of Wisconsin-Madison, researching practices to agronomically manage intermediate wheatgrass. Korede's background focused on promoting continuous living cover via perennials, intercropping with legumes, and sustainable crop production. He is “excited to get to know and work with you all going forward” and is “thrilled about having a more hands-on approach to things now!” He likes reading, ice skating, and watching Arsenal play football. Learn more about him [through this article](#). Korede can be reached at 517-264-5306 (office) and/or olugbenl@msu.edu.



On-Farm Research



How do you know if a product or a practice works for your operation? At the Michigan Wheat Program annual meeting this week, farmer Mark Stubbs (winner of the 2023 UK YEN with 243 ish bushels/acre) shared the practices that have led to his success. Something he emphasized was the importance of trying out new things and leaving check strips to compare results. Some products or practices will work for your location and field conditions, and others won't. Whether through a split field or a check strip, many growers conduct informal trials of some sort on their farms. Collaborative formal research between growers, commodity groups, [Michigan State University](#), and [MSU Extension](#) has been an important part of establishing local best management practices throughout the years. On-farm research helps keep management recommendations and best practices relevant to local needs.

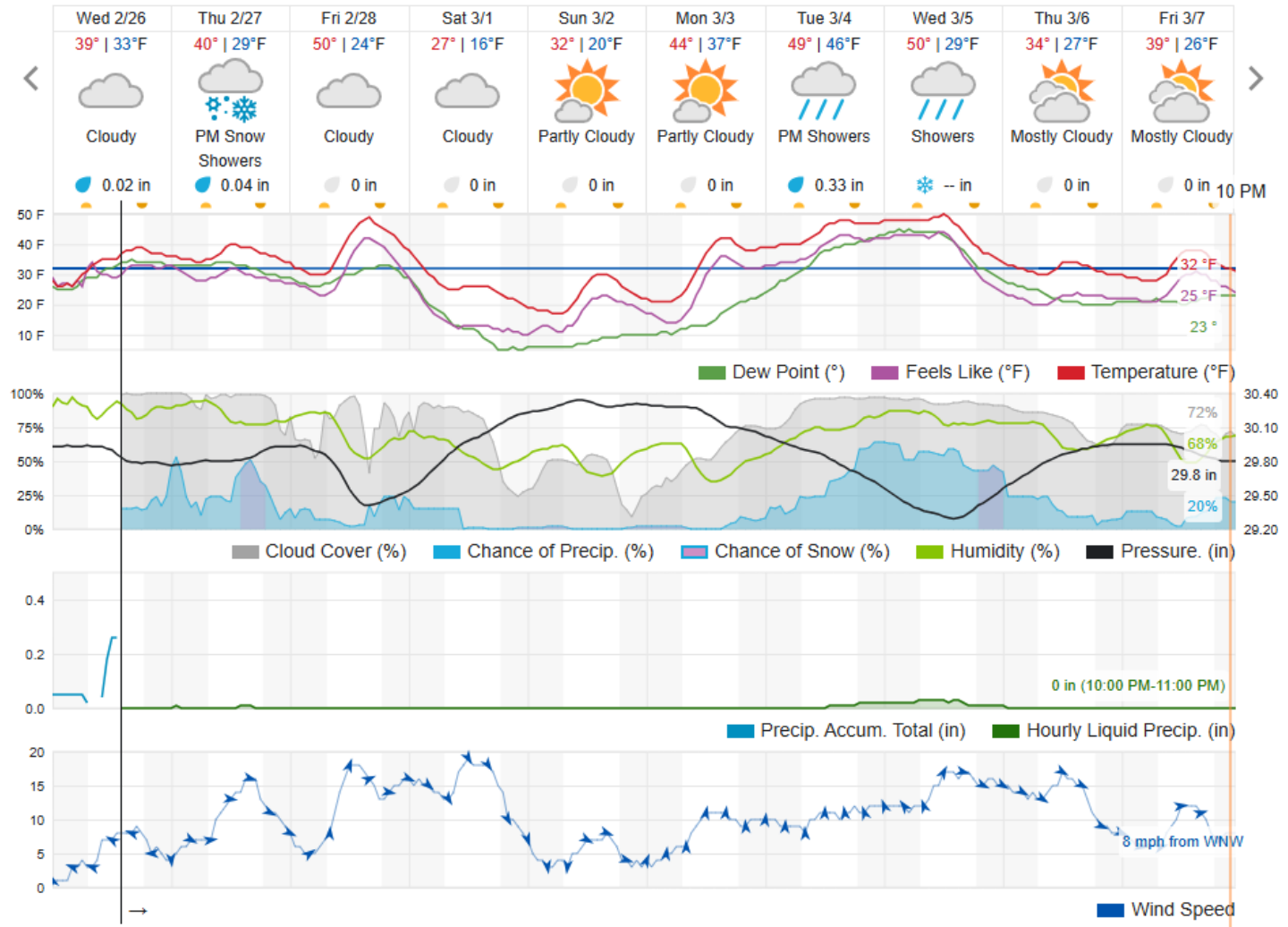
There are many resources for farmers interested in trying something new, from financial support to logistical support. The Michigan Soybean Committee works with MSU Extension to do 12 different on-farm research projects every year. The project is designed and laid out by Michigan Soybean and MSU Extension, and farmers who participate follow an established protocol, which may range from broadcasting fertilizer pre-plant to applying a product at a specific crop stage. Yield results are collected through a weigh wagon or yield monitor and then analyzed by MSU Extension and presented to growers the January following the trial. They are also available online and in the [On-Farm Research Report](#). Projects spearheaded by research groups at MSU can have varying levels of involvement for farmers. Some good ones for farmers to start out with include low-input projects like scouting (done by MSU Extension) to test out a scouting app or tool. For a low-input project like that, the grower only needs to share yield data and management data at the end of the growing season.

If you're interested in doing your own on-farm research, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) offers [farmer rancher grants](#) for sustainability-related projects and the bulletin [How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#), which walks you step-by-step through designing, developing, and analyzing an on-farm research project and shares success stories from other farmers. While not necessarily replicated research, even something like splitting a field or using check strips when trying out a product is still informative and can provide you with an idea of its profitability for your farm.

If you would like to be involved in on-farm research with MSU Extension this year or would like to know what kind of projects are going on, you can reach out to me (Nicolle, 269-858-8739; ritchi67@msu.edu) or any other MSU Extension educator.

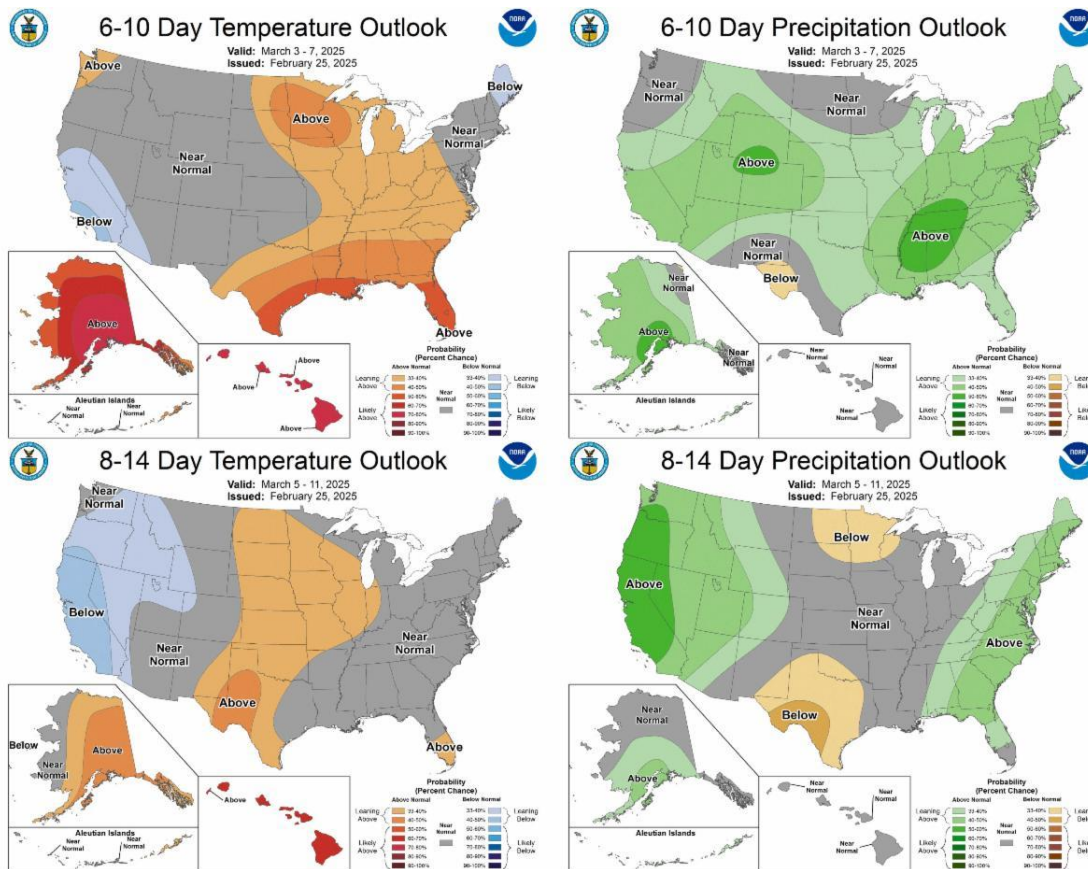
Weather Update

Warmer weather recently resulted in wet and slushy fields. A drop in temperature this weekend will slow down the melting temporarily, but early next week is supposed to be warm with highs in the 40s.



Ten-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to www.wunderground.com.

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – March 2025 - 7



The 6-10 day (March 3-7, top) and 8-14 day March 5-11, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

- Mar 3 [Field Crops Webinar: Soil Structure/Tillage](#). 7-8 pm. Hear from Ian McDonald, crop innovation specialist at Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), and Alex Barrie, soil management engineer at OMAFRA, about reducing and repairing soil damage. Cost: \$20 for entire series. **1 RUP, 1 CCA**
- Mar 4 [Hay Production 101: Cost of Production & Marketing](#). 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. Hay Production 101 is designed for participants to build a foundation of knowledge about growing hay. Online via Zoom. Cost: \$85 for the entire series.
- Mar 4-6 [2025 Drainage Workshop](#). Farall Ag Engineering Hall, East Lansing. Understand drainage with user-friendly online tools and hands-on exercises. Learn to make contour maps with the QGIS free user-friendly software and export the contours to your GPS design and machine software. View a live demonstration of properly connecting a lateral to a main pipe. And more! Cost is \$210 by Feb 10 or \$300 after.
- Mar 5 [Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference](#). 8am-4pm. Elkhart County Fairgrounds Ag Hall, 17746 County Rd 34, Goshen, IN. This conference will address water use and its effect on nutrient, weed and disease management in corn and soybeans for growers around the Michigan-Indiana state line. Cost: \$25 if registered by Feb 25, otherwise \$35. **3 Michigan RUP, 4.5 CCA**
- Mar 6 [MI Ag Ideas Field Crops Sessions](#). 8am-12pm. Online via Zoom. Join us for field sleuthing stories and crop diagnostics. Spoiler: not all mysteries can be solved. Free.
- Mar 10 [Field Crops Webinar: New Technologies and Trends in Weed Control](#). 7-8 pm. Hear from Christy Sprague, MSU professor of weed science, and Bryan Young, Purdue weed science professor, about ways to minimize off-target herbicide application. Cost: \$20 for entire series. **1 CCA**

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – March 2025 - 8

- Mar 12 [Farming for the Future 2025](#). 9 am-3 pm. Van Buren Conference Center. Farming for the Future is an annual educational event for local farmers and is a great opportunity to learn from agricultural specialists, educators, researchers, businesses, and other farmers. This event is free but pre-registration is required, and space is limited. Please register by March 7.
- Mar 14 [Science for Success: Economic Insights for Uncertain Times](#). 1 pm. Science for Success is hosting a free two-part webinar series, *Soybean Resilience Blueprint: Adapting to Climate, Cost, and Change*. Free. Online via Zoom.
- Mar 17 [Field Crops Webinar: Grain Marketing](#). 7-8 pm. Hear from Molly Sears, assistant professor in the MSU Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, and John LaPorte, MSU Extension farm management educator, about grain marketing. Cost: \$20 for entire series. **1 RUP, 1 CCA**
- Mar 20 [Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management Training 2](#). 9am-3pm. Clinton County Smith Hall OR online via Zoom. Last year, the first Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management Training kicked off with the basics. This second training will go more in-depth on soil fertility and nutrient management. Anyone who has a solid grasp of soil fertility and nutrients is welcome to attend. \$50/person. **5 CCA**
- Mar 22 SW MI Farm Bureau Chili Cook-Off. 4pm. Griner Farms in Jones. Enjoy the evening sampling chili recipes, networking with other Farm Bureau members from the area, and raising money for Harvest for All to support food security in our local communities. \$10/person.
- Mar 24 [Field Crops Webinar: Disease Update](#). 7-8 pm. Hear from Marty Chilvers, MSU associate professor in field crop pathology, and a mystery guest about what's new in field crops diseases. Cost: \$20 for entire series. **1 RUP, 1 CCA**
- Mar 26 [Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing](#). 8am-5pm. GreenMark Equipment, Three Rivers. 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**
- Apr 11 [Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing](#). 8am-5pm. Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, Benton Harbor. 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**
- 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**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Published on February 26, 2025

- [Legacy Phosphorus: The Enduring Hidden Driver of Tile Drainage Loss](#) - Phosphorus loss is dominated by legacy P while new P (recently applied fertilizer) has a minor role. We can make a big impact on Lake Erie's Water Quality only if we tackle both legacy P and new P.
- [2025 Tariffs and Considerations for Grain Markets](#) - The imposition of tariffs early in 2025 could affect commodity markets and producers economically.

Published on February 20, 2025

- [How to access water withdrawal information post-2008 from the MIWATT \(Michigan's Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool\) website](#) - Michigan's Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool (MIWATT) data can be helpful when looking at nearby withdrawals or checking on a withdrawals status is unknown.

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – March 2025 - 9

- [Season wrap-up for Farm Policy & Risk Management Series](#) - Session recordings on managing production and marketing risk now available.

Published on February 19, 2025

- [MSU Extension welcomes new field crops educator in Southern Michigan](#) - Korede Olugbenle will be based in the Lenawee County MSU Extension office in Adrian.

Published on February 13, 2025

- [Guidelines to assist growers with immigration preparedness on the farm: Part 1](#) - Introductory information to help growers and farm workers take initial steps for potential immigration actions.

Published on February 10, 2025

- [Final Call to Register for 2025 Drainage Workshop offering tips to increase profit](#) - Register early for a 30% discount at the Michigan Drainage Workshop.

Published on February 07, 2025

- [How do I know if a pesticide is safe for bees? Five steps to protect bees from pesticides](#) - How to protect bees while managing pests.
- [Precision Agriculture: Making your data work for you](#) - Data is a broad term, yet in the context of precision agriculture, it is critically important. When utilized properly, data can reduce risk by driving practical, targeted solutions addressing challenges of modern farming.
- [MSU Extension Field Crops Scouting School returns for second year](#) - This scouting school is designed for interns or entry-level scouts to teach the basics of identification, walking patterns, scouting tools, etc.

Published on January 15, 2025

- [Price checking your grain market strategies](#) - Have you reviewed your market strategies and are they keeping up with changes in the market environment?

Published on January 29, 2025

- [Branch County Farmers Day February 17](#) - The Branch County Farmers Day will feature two simultaneous but separate events: field crops educational sessions and in-person pesticide applicator testing. RUP and CCA credits available.
- [The deadly mix of substance use and farm machinery](#) - Content warning: This article includes discussions of substance use, injuries, and violent deaths, which may be distressing to some readers. Additionally, some cited sources contain graphic descriptions; readers are encouraged to proceed with caution.

Published on January 27, 2025

- [Fifth annual MI Ag Ideas to Grow With virtual conference focuses on food and animal production](#) - A virtual experience offering 40 educational sessions with knowledge and resources for farmers, landowners and those interested in food and agricultural production.

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