

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update **April 2, 2026**

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.

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Restricted Use Pesticide Review and Testing in English AND SPANISH April 7 in Kalamazoo



An in-person review and testing will be offered in both English and Spanish on April 7 at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center. The morning review is mandatory to take the restricted use pesticide applicator exam in the afternoon. The cost is \$25, and lunch is included. Both commercial and private core exams are available, as well as the fumigation and aerial standards. Category exams will NOT be offered. Learn more and/or sign up here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026pesttest/>

REMINDER: 2,4-D Restriction in Grape Growing Areas **Apr 1 through Oct 1**

Full notice included at the bottom of the newsletter.

Seedcorn Maggot Project for 2026

This project will validate the accuracy of degree day flight models for determining seedcorn maggot risk. We are looking for soybean fields (bonus points if planted early or has had SCM in the past) to place SCM traps and check them regularly. It is not necessary to have a history of SCM to participate in this project. Contact me directly (ritchi67@msu.edu or 269-858-8739) if you're interested!

Conservation Easements Within Succession Planning Webinar Recording Available

The recording of the March webinar “Conservation Easements within Farm Succession Planning” is now up on the MSU Extension [website](#). Farmland conservation experts Kim Hayes and Will Manty provide details about when and how conservation easements can be set up for farmland. They describe how easements can fit within a larger succession plan, discussing both the benefits and challenges that can occur. View the video at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/videos/conservation-easements-within-farm-succession-planning-recorded-webinar>.

2026 Soybean On-Farm Research Projects Revealed!

Every year, the Michigan Soybean Committee partners with MSU Extension to conduct on-farm research throughout the state. The projects for this year are as follows. If you are interested in hosting a trial or would like to know more, contact me (ritchi67@msu.edu or 269-858-8739) or Eric Anderson (269-359-0565 or eander32@msu.edu).

1. **Pre-plant sulfur fertilizer.** This project will evaluate the impact of sulfur fertilizer applied just prior to planting on soybean yield and income. Choose sites with light-textured soils and low organic matter.
2. **Planter box treatment.** This project will determine the yield and income benefits of applying BioBoost Soy planter box treatment. **Product provided.**
3. **Planting date x seeding rate.** This project will provide farmers with the optimum planting date (PD) and seeding rate (SR) for a given field as determined by Agrooptimizer, a model developed at UW-Madison from a large nationwide database.
4. **Planting date x maturity group.** This project will measure the effect that planting date (PD) and maturity group (MG) have on soybean yield and income.
5. **Seeding rate.** This project will identify the optimum agronomic and economic seeding rate for a given planting scenario. Ideally, this will be done with a planting prescription using numerous seeding rates—we will provide you with a prescription .shp file once a field is selected.
6. **Deer repellent.** This project will determine the efficacy of two applications of M-Pede as a deterrent to deer feeding in soybean and their effect on yield and profitability. The ideal trial field will have good yield potential, a history of moderate deer feeding and the possibility of a trial layout that could be fair to test product performance. **Product provided.**
7. **Residual herbicide.** This project will evaluate the effect of a residual herbicide applied preemergence (PRE) or postemergence (POST) on soybean yield and income. This trial is especially beneficial to producers who 1) do not plan to apply a residual herbicide prior to soybean emergence (PRE) or 2) will apply a PRE residual herbicide but do not plan to include a residual with their POST herbicide application (layered residual), particularly in fields with late-season flushes of grass and Amaranth (pigweed) species. **Product provided.**
8. **Nexta supply foliar.** This project will evaluate the impact on yield and income from an application of Nexta Supply which contains a bacteria that colonizes the plant and converts atmospheric nitrogen (N) into ammonium that can be metabolized by the crop when existing N supplies are depleted. This product has been found to be most beneficial in soybean crops that exceed 65 bushels per acre (bu/A). **Product provided.**
9. **Micronutrient foliar.** This project will evaluate the effect of MicroStrike Bean, a micronutrient product (2.25% B, 2.25% Zn, 0.75% Mg, 1.25% Mn) on soybean yield and profitability. **Product provided.**
10. **Cobra herbicide for white mold.** This project will evaluate the effect of a single foliar application of Cobra herbicide on soybean yield and income when applied to fields having a history of white mold. **Product provided.**

Fungicide for high yield. This project will evaluate the effect of a single foliar application of an inexpensive fungicide—Trevor TRZ DRV from Innvictis Crop Care, LLC—on soybean yield and income when applied in environments with no specific expected disease pressure. **Product provided.**

SJCCD Native Plant Sale

This year's sale features regionally native species that support pollinators, wildlife, and healthy, beautiful local landscapes! Order pickup dates are May 28 and 29 from 9 am to 4 pm. Reach out to Kaitlin Renehan (kaitlin.renehan@macd.org) with questions or to place an order.



2026 Native Plant Sale



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

Prices listed on the attached Order Form

Order Pickup Dates:
Thursday, May 28th & Friday, May 29th
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.5

Visit: 693 E. Main Street, Centreville MI



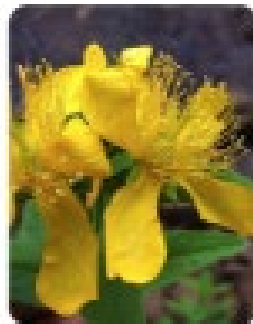
Rough Blazing Star
Liatris aspera



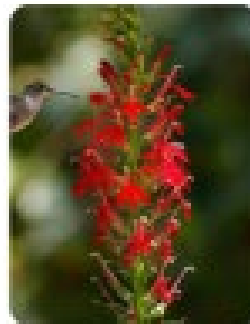
Culver's Root
Veronicastrum virginicum



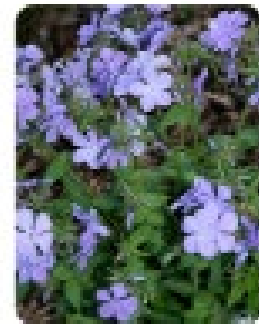
Canada Anemone
Anemone canadensis



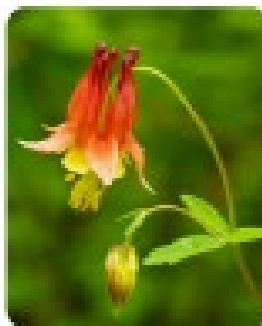
Giant St. John's Wort
Hypericum ascyron



Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis



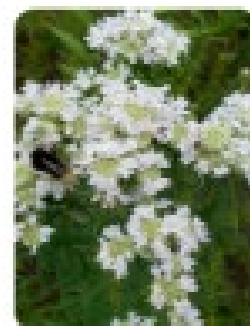
Woodland Phlox
Phlox divaricata



Wild Columbine
Aquilegia canadensis



Indian Grass
Sorghastrum nutans



Mountain-Mint
Pycnanthemum virginianum



Yellow Coneflower
Ratibida pinnata

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

It's Not Too late to Join the Great Lakes Cover Crops Project and Make \$50/Field

If you are growing any overwintering cover crop in the 2025-2026 season, consider joining the Great Lakes Cover Crops Project! What we need from you: fill out an online management survey (~20 minutes) and submit cover crop photos and heights in the spring. You will receive \$50/field and a personalized cover crop report with biomass and nutrient estimates. Scan the QR code or follow the link to join the network of over 150 farmers:

<https://forms.gle/YK91afHdpYusLUaw5>

Scouting School 2026 to be held in Frankenmuth

Do you have field crop scouts working for you this summer? Consider sending them to field crops Scouting School. Spread out across three days (May 21, June 18, and July 16), this group will be a cohort for all sessions. Enrollment is limited to 30 participants to ensure hands-on participation. Learn more and register [here](#).

How does irrigation affect yield under drought conditions?

This year, Michigan has seen wide variability in precipitation; some areas had enough rain, while others have struggled with drought. To better understand how irrigation affects yield under these conditions, **the [Michigan State University Extension irrigation team](#) is looking for cooperators willing to share yield data from irrigated fields and non-irrigated areas.**

Participants will need to provide:

- Yield data for both irrigated and non-irrigated areas, such as dry corners.
- Estimates of rainfall amounts and irrigation applied.

This information will be used strictly for research purposes. If you'd like to participate or get more information, please fill out this [form](#) or contact [Angie Gradiz](#).

Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day coming to SW MI!

Save the date! [Learn more here.](#)



Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026

Michigan State University's Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center

Benton Harbor, MI

Weeding Machines for Vegetables & Row Crops

- See quality field demos of many weeding tools in corn and vegetables and learn from company reps
- See before you buy, and learn how to adjust tools in the field from experts
- See cultivators of all scales - modern hand tools, two-wheel tractors, cultivating tractors, and all manner of cultivators for small grains and row-crops
- Meet farmers from all over the country
- Connect with tool companies and other ag suppliers at the trade show
- Hear from national experts on weeding tools and techniques, cover crops, and soil health at the education sessions, connect with your MSU extension specialist and latest research

Register online to get your ticket or over the phone by calling Crystal at 217-840-2128 x.730. Scan the QR code to register or visit <https://www.the-lane-connection.org/event/2026-mwccd/>



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

THE LANE CONNECTION



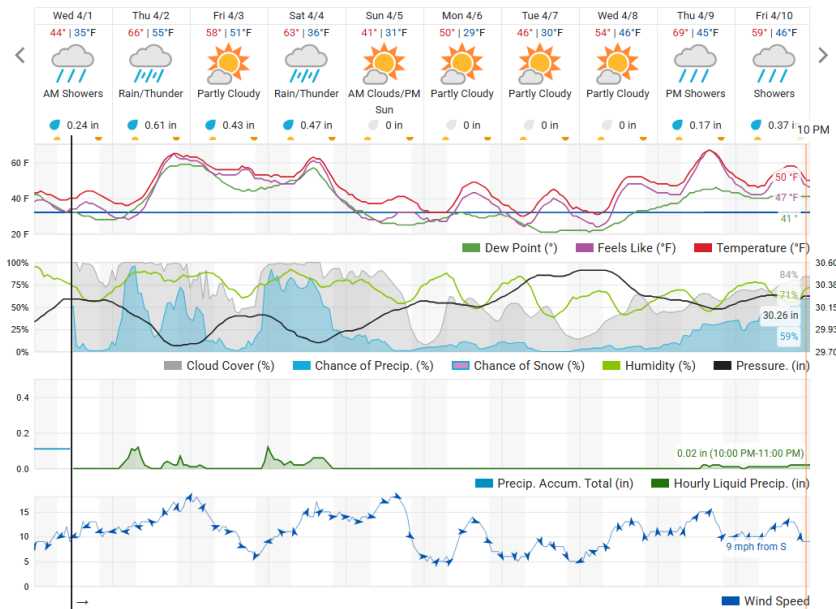
Crop and Pest Update



While **corn** and **soybean** planting has not started yet, plenty of fieldwork has been ongoing, including cover crop burndown, fertilizer spreading, and field cultivation. **Winter wheat** is at Feekes 3 and 4. The variable temperatures over the past month have contributed to frost damage in some stands (pictured below). This is found mainly on leaf tips, and the wheat is expected to grow out of it. **Potato** planting started in late March.

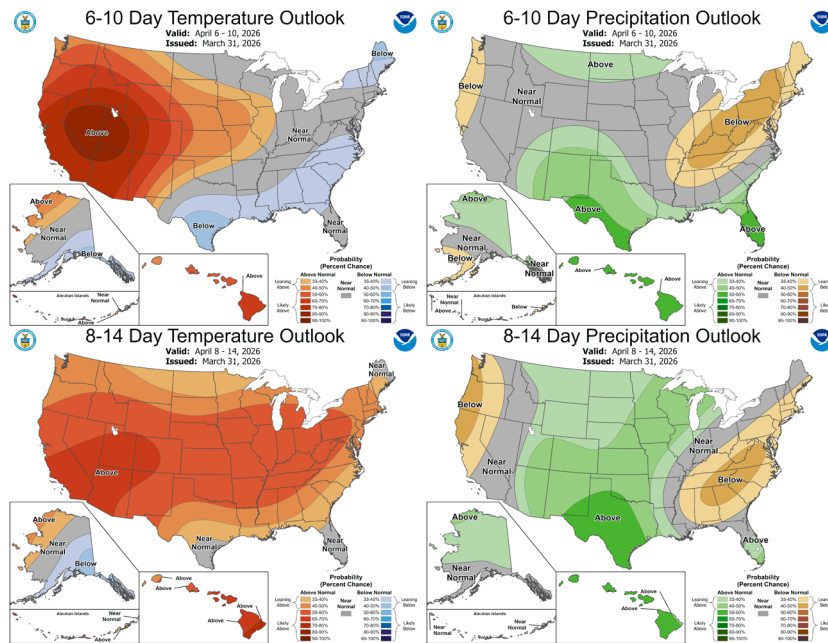
Weather Update

The weather has been variable this spring. Several inches of rain are predicted in most of southwest Michigan for this week, while next week is supposed to be mostly clear and with highs consistently in the high 40s/low 50s.



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

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

Calendar

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

- Apr 7** [Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing - Kalamazoo](#). 8:30 am-12:30 pm. Kalamazoo County Expo Center. English and Spanish reviews of the Pesticide Applicators Core Manual to prepare for the MDARD Pesticide Applicators Certification Exam in the afternoon. REVIEW IS MANDATORY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IN-PERSON TESTING. \$25/person. Lunch included. **4 RUP** for those with a current active pesticide license.
- Apr 8** [MSU Spring Spray Drone Fly-In](#). 9 am-5 pm. Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center (1791 Hillandale Rd Benton Harbor, MI 49022). Refine your spray drone skills at Michigan’s premier hands-on workshop.
- Apr 9** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Corn and Soybean Planting Considerations](#). 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Apr 16** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Soil Fertility Considerations in a Down Market](#). 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season.
- Apr 23** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Optimizing Alfalfa Harvesting Schedules](#). 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season.

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- Apr 30** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Early Season Pest Control.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 7** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Post Weed Control.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 14** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Disease Management in Wheat.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 15** **[Spanish Pesticide and Irrigation Safety Workshop.](#)** 8 am – 12 pm. St. Joseph County MSU Extension Office (612 E Main St., Centreville, MI 49032). This workshop will cover pesticide and irrigation safety, including how to reduce drift and leaching. Free. Lunch not included. **4 RUP**
- May 21** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Wheat Scouting and Management Considerations.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 28** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Michigan Dry Bean Update.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Jun 4** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Integrated Pest Management in Sugar Beets.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Jun 11** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Herbicide Resistance Update.](#)** 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

[Projected Cost of Production for Soybeans tool for 2026 available](#)

Published on April 1, 2026

A new cost of production Excel-based tool for soybeans is now freely available online for the 2026 growing season.

[Register for the 2026 MSU Spring Spray Drone Fly-In](#)

Published on April 1, 2026

Refine your spray drone skills at Michigan's premier hands-on workshop on April 8 and earn Michigan RUP credits.

[MSU Extension Virtual Breakfast series continues April 9 with corn and soybean planting considerations](#)

Published on March 31, 2026

The 2026 Field Crops Virtual Breakfast series continues with MSU Extension cropping systems agronomist Manni Singh discussing planting considerations for corn and soybeans.

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2026 Soybean Projected Cost of Production

Published on March 26, 2026

The MSU Extension 2026 Projected Cost of Production for Soybeans tool is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions on both expected income and expenses for individual farms.

Take the certified applicator exam in English or Spanish in Kalamazoo County on April 7

Published on March 26, 2026

The core review and exam to become a certified restricted use pesticide (RUP) applicator will be held in both English and Spanish on April 7 in Kalamazoo. Four RUP credits are available to those with a current license who attend the review.

Presente el examen para la certificación de aplicadores de plaguicidas en inglés o en español en el condado de Kalamazoo el 7 de abril

Published on March 26, 2026

La clase de repaso y el examen para la certificación de aplicadores de plaguicidas se ofrecerá en inglés y en español el 7 de abril en Kalamazoo.

Winter wheat greenup and management decisions

Published on March 26, 2026

What is greenup of winter wheat and what management should you be considering at this point?

Control weeds early to spring into successful weed management

Published on March 26, 2026

The 2026 Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series continues on April 2 with guest speaker Christy Sprague, a weeds specialist at Michigan State University.

Impact of the War in Iran on the Agri-Food System

Published on March 25, 2026

This brief paper outlines the impact of the war on agricultural and input markets, particularly fertilizers, diesel, and interest rates.

Michigan soybean on-farm research trials for 2026

Published on March 25, 2026

Several different trials are being conducted on farms across the state to address issues soybean farmers ranked as important to their farms.

Registration is open for beginning farmer field days

Published on March 24, 2026

A three-part beginning farmer field day series will provide new and beginning farmers with foundational knowledge in numerous topics, plus resources.

Should you prioritize planting soybean or corn?

Published on March 24, 2026

Prioritize soybean over corn under early planting dates when field conditions might not be ideal.

Thinking about managing risk when planting soybeans early?

Published on March 23, 2026

Research provides several recommendations to maximize yield potential and minimize risk when planting soybeans early.

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[Long-term cover cropping can clear the way for earlier corn planting](#)

Published on March 23, 2026

Remote sensing data reveals connection between long-term cover crop use and timely planting in Michigan.

[Using conservation easements within farm succession planning](#)

Published on March 20, 2026

Join our webinar to learn from land conservancy experts about using conservation easements.

[Does your insurance cover damage to irrigation systems?](#)

Published on March 16, 2026

Understanding coverage options, filing a claim, and whether your policy covers your farm needs.

[Elevate your market prices with Grain Gains](#)

Published on March 16, 2026

Grain Gains: An Introduction to Grain Marketing is a new online course from MSU Extension.

[Field days, workshops and webinars for farmers transitioning to organic](#)

Published on March 16, 2026

Sign up now to learn from organic farmers.

[Making spring input purchases in times of volatile markets](#)

Published on March 9, 2026

Navigating market opportunities relies on understanding market conditions and maximizing available cash.

[MSU releases Margin Goal Worksheet for Grain Marketing](#)

Published on March 5, 2026

The Margin Goal Worksheet helps to identify a crop's profit margins and margin goals.

[Understanding the corn-soybean ratio and its uses](#)

Published on March 5, 2026

How the corn-soybean ratio can influence your planting intentions.

[Current status of chlorothalonil labels impacting Michigan potato production](#)

Published on March 3, 2026

Updates for the 2026 season regarding chlorothalonil product labels following the EPA Interim Decision.

[SARE professional development and graduate student grants now open](#)

Published on March 3, 2026

Professional development grants up to \$120,000 for train-the-trainer projects and \$20,000 graduate student grants both fund sustainable and regenerative agriculture in Michigan and the North Central U.S.

[Pesticide label changes coming to a shelf near you](#)

Published on March 2, 2026

Agricultural pesticide applicators need to carefully review labels for changes related to the Endangered Species Act.

[MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program releases educational videos to support pesticide training](#)

Published on March 2, 2026

The Michigan State University Extension Pesticide Safety Education Program has a new series of educational videos to support pesticide safety training efforts across Michigan.

Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report available now

Published on March 2, 2026

To raise awareness of pesticides currently impacted by the new EPA Bulletins Live! Two pesticide label directive, Michigan State University Extension will be generating a Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report twice a month.

REMINDER: 2,4-D Restriction in Grape Growing Areas Apr 1 through Oct 1 (cont.)

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

NOTICE

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, 2026, unless a petition for modification or rescission 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, Alma 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, 2026, 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 2, 2026



Nicolle Ritchie

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