

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update

January 6, 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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“Farming Funnies”



We can all use an occasional laugh to make it through the long nights and short days of winter. If you have a funny story or picture to share, feel free to send it my way!

Whether aerially or with a ground rig (although not with an applicator standing on somebody's shoulders), a single fungicide application for controlling tar spot is most effective when applied at VT/R1 through R3. Check out [Managing tar spot in corn](#) by Marty Chilvers for more information and attend the [Crop and Pest Management Update](#) in Dowagiac on Jan 22 for the latest information on tar spot and crop diseases!

Save the Date! SW MI Crop and Pest Management Update Jan 22 in Dowagiac

The annual regional Crop and Pest Management Update will be held Jan 22, 2026, at the Dowagiac Conservation Club. The new 2026 Weed Control Guide is included in registration, and new insect field guides will be available at the meeting for free. **Four RUP credits (1A and Private) available. Lunch included.** More information and register online

here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026CropPestUpdate/> here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026CropPestUpdate/>

SW MI 2026 Crop and Pest Update

TENTATIVE AGENDA

8:30 am: Check-in/Registration
9:00 am: Welcome and commodity update
9:15 am: Pesticide Strategies, *Nicolle Ritchie*
9:45 am: Marketing, *Jon LaPorte*
10:15 am: Break
10:30 am: Weed Update for Corn, *Erin Burns*
11:15 am: Weed Update for Soybeans, *Christy Sprague*
12:00 pm: Lunch
12:45 pm: Insect Update, *Chris DiFonzo*
1:15 pm: Disease Update, *Marty Chilvers*
2:00 pm: Wheat, *Dennis Pennington*
2:45 pm: Wrap-up, evaluation and credits

Agenda may be subject to change

PROGRAM DETAILS

Date: January 22, 2026
Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm
Location: Dowagiac Conservation Club, 54551 M-51 N,
Dowagiac, MI
4 RUP and CCA credits have been requested

REGISTRATION

Cost: \$40
Pre-registration open through January 15

CONTACT

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Hay you! Do you grow or buy hay or graze? Please take this survey!



The MSU Extension Forage Team is surveying Michigan forage producers / grazers and professionals to assess industry needs. This feedback helps improve existing programs and create new ones. All responses remain confidential. bit.ly/forageneeds

Hay Production 101 will also be happening again in 2026. This is an online short course for beginner hay growers. Learn more and register at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026HayProduction101/>

Field Crops Webinar Series Will Return for February and March

Join us via Zoom on Monday nights in February and March from 7-8 pm. More details to come soon!

Register by this Friday for the MarketReady Producer Training Jan 21 in Indiana

The Market Ready program is being offered on January 21 in Marshall county, Indiana. The program has a focus on business skills needed to meet the expectations of potential buyers (chefs, grocery stores, schools,

distributors, etc). We are excited for the possibilities as Indiana producers venture into new marketing channels and learn more about product quality, food safety, insurance/managing risks, etc. The cost is \$50 per participant (lunch is included). Registration is limited to the first 30 participants. Registration is open for our upcoming session via this link: <https://cvent.me/eW0v8G> Thanks to FARMWISE Indiana for sponsoring lunch.

Follow SW MI Field Crops on Facebook

NEW: We have a Facebook page for all things corn, soybeans, wheat/small grains, hay, and commercial potato in southwest Michigan. Please follow and have your ag friends/family follow, too. [Visit Facebook](#)

How does irrigation affect yield under drought conditions?

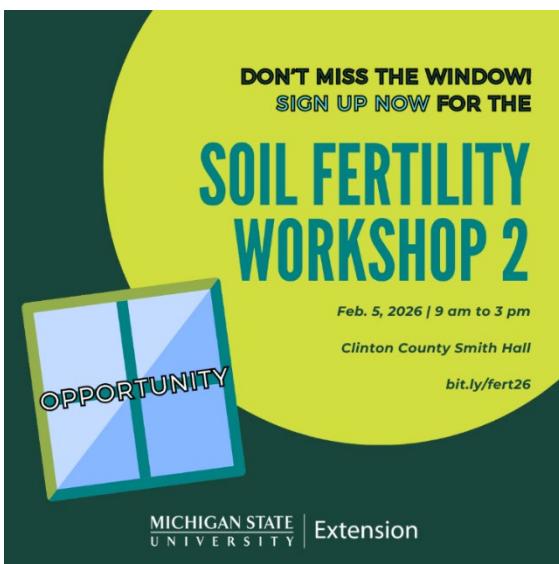
This year, Michigan has seen wide variability in precipitation; some areas had enough rain, while others have struggled with drought. To better understand how irrigation affects yield under these conditions, the [Michigan State University Extension irrigation team](#) is looking for cooperators willing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

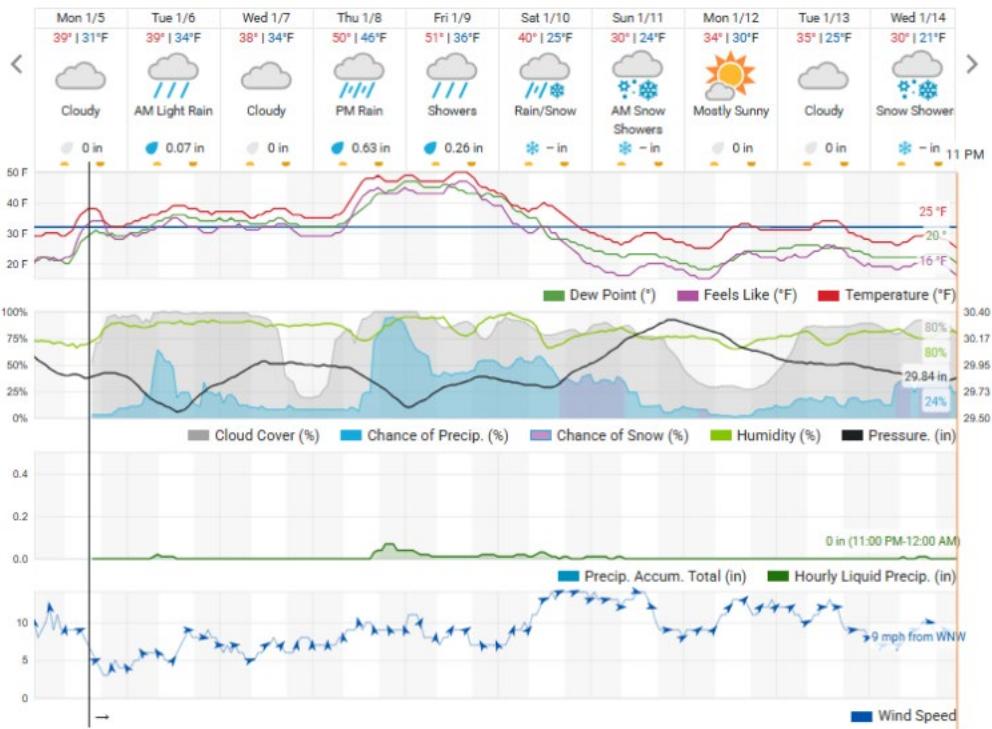
Save the Date! Soil Fertility Workshop 2 on Feb 5 in St. Johns



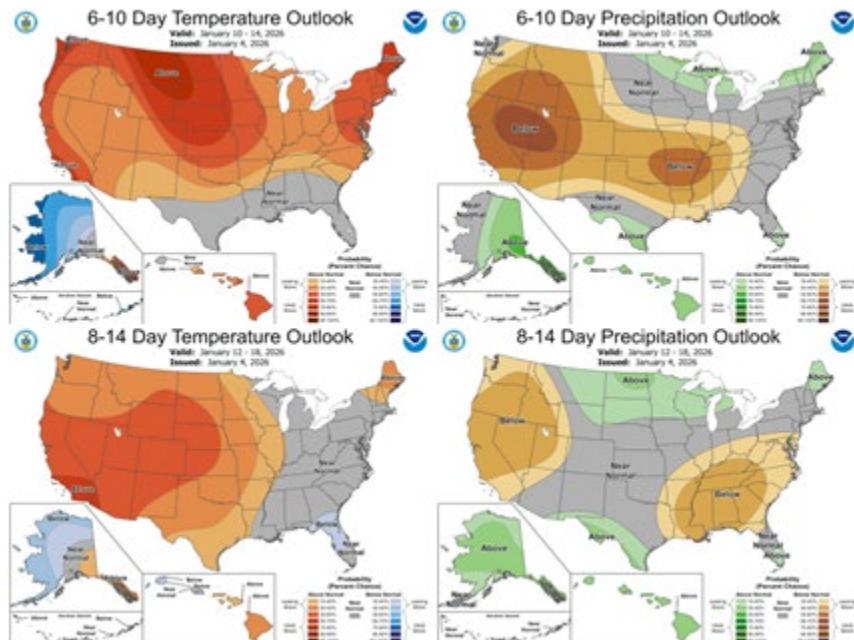
This workshop goes more in depth on soil fertility and nutrient management. It is intended for people who already understand the basics. Key topics include nitrogen, nutrient interactions, micronutrients, sulfur, economics of nitrogen, and a Q&A. Read more about it in [this article](#), or [register online here](#).

Weather Update

This past month was mostly cold and snowy, but temperatures warmed up around December 21 for about a week. Snow fell across Michigan and much of the Midwest to finish out 2025. Temperatures will stay relatively mild for the next week or so before cooling down and bringing some snow with them.



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



The 6-10 day (Jan 10-14, top) and 8-14 day (Jan 12-18, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

Jan 6 [**Michigan Soybean On-Farm Research Update 2026 - Southwest**](#). 9 am-1 pm. GreenMark Equipment, Three Rivers. Michigan Soybean Committee and Michigan State University Extension invite soybean growers and agribusinesses to attend regional meetings in January 2026 to hear results of the 2025 soybean on-farm research projects. **1 RUP**.

Jan 7 [**Michigan Soybean On-Farm Research Update 2026 - West**](#). 9 am-1 pm. Blaauw Farms, 2876 13th St, Shelbyville, MI. Michigan Soybean Committee and Michigan State University Extension invite soybean growers and agribusinesses to attend regional meetings in January 2026 to hear results of the 2025 soybean on-farm research projects. **1 RUP**.

Jan 7 [**Pesticide Safety Webinar Series: The RUP/CCA CEU Credit Clinic**](#). 10 am-12 pm; 12 pm-2 pm. Online via Zoom. MSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program offers virtual training series for applicators and ag professionals, covering pesticide safety, Endangered Species Act compliance, environmental protection and best practices in application and equipment use. **2-4 RUP**. \$17 for AM or PM session, \$30 for both **if requesting credits**.

Jan 7 [**2026 Winter Wheat-tastic Wheat Wisdom Wednesday Webinars**](#). 7-8 pm. This three-part series will focus on economics, marketing and the value of growing wheat. The Jan. 7 webinar topic is "With tight crop margins, how do you get the most "bang for your buck" from your wheat crop?"

Jan 13 [**Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing-- Hart**](#). 8:30 am-3 pm. MSU West Central Michigan Research and Extension. MSU Extension, MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program, and MDARD PPPMD are offering an in-person Core Manual review class followed by Core pesticide applicator certification testing. \$25/person.

Jan 20 [**Farm Policy and Risk Management Series-Farm Bill Commodity Programs**](#). 1-2 pm. Online via Zoom. Farm Policy and Risk Management Series will be hosting a FREE series of educational webinars online on USDA insurance programs.

Jan 21 [**2026 Winter Wheat-tastic Wheat Wisdom Wednesday Webinars**](#). 7-8 pm. This three-part series will focus on economics, marketing and the value of growing wheat. The Jan. 21 webinar topic is "Wheat marketing is essential in this climate! "

Jan 22 [**SW MI Crop and Pest Management Update**](#). 8:30 am-3 pm. Dowagiac Conservation Club. Regional meeting with latest research on crop and pest management. **4 RUP/CCA**

Jan 27 [**Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing-- Benton Harbor**](#). 8:30 am-3 pm. SW MI Research and Extension Center. MSU Extension, MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program, and MDARD PPPMD are offering an in-person Core Manual review class followed by Core pesticide applicator certification testing. \$25/person. **4 RUP**

Jan 29 [**Michigan Manure Summit**](#). 9:30 am-4 pm. Okemos Events Center. An annual educational event that provides updates on the science and best practices of manure management.

Feb 2, 4 [**Pesticide Safety Webinar Series: The RUP/CCA CEU Credit Clinic**](#). 10 am-12 pm; 12 pm-2 pm. Online via Zoom. MSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program offers virtual training series for applicators and ag professionals, covering pesticide safety, Endangered Species Act compliance, environmental protection and best practices in application and equipment use. **2-4 RUP**. \$17 for AM or PM session, \$30 for both **if requesting credits**.

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Feb 5 [**Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management Training 2.**](#) 9 am-3 pm. Clinton County Smith Hall, St. Johns or online. Intermediate soil fertility and nutrient management workshop. \$50/person. **5 CCA**

Feb 5 [**Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing-- Adrian.**](#) 8:30 am-3 pm. Lenawee County MSU Extension Office. MSU Extension, MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program, and MDARD PPPMD are offering an in-person Core Manual review class followed by Core pesticide applicator certification testing. \$25/person. **RUP**

Feb 10 [**2026 Regenerative Agriculture Winter Webinar.**](#) 6 pm. Michigan State University Extension invites farmers, landowners, conservationists, and agricultural professionals to a dynamic winter webinar series focused on Regenerative Agriculture. **RUP**

Feb 10 [**Farm Policy and Risk Management Series-Farm Bill Commodity Programs.**](#) 6:30-7:30 pm. Online via Zoom. Farm Policy and Risk Management Series will be hosting a FREE series of educational webinars online on USDA insurance programs.

Feb 16 [**Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing-- Coldwater.**](#) 8:30 am-3 pm. Branch Area Career Center. MSU Extension, MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program, and MDARD PPPMD are offering an in-person Core Manual review class followed by Core pesticide applicator certification testing. \$25/person. **RUP**

Feb 16 [**Branch County Farmers Day.**](#) 8am-12 pm. Branch Area Career Center. Join us for educational sessions. Free. **RUP**

Feb 23 [**MI Ag Ideas to Grow With Field Crops Track.**](#) 8am-1:30 pm. Online via Zoom. Learn about innovative field crops, tools, and more! Free. **RUP**

Feb 24 [**Hay Production 101.**](#) 7pm-8:30 pm. Online via Zoom. Join our team of MSU Extension specialists and educators online in February and March 2026 to learn the ins and outs of growing, harvesting and marketing your hay crop. The Feb. 24 topic is "Hay Industry Overview; Matching Hay Species to Farm Goals." \$85/person.

Feb 25 [**Great Lakes Field Crops Irrigation Meeting 2026.**](#) 9 am-4 pm. Blue Gate Theatre, Shipshewana, IN. Michigan State University Extension and Purdue Extension invite agricultural producers from Indiana and Michigan to attend an educational program that addresses issues related to producing corn and soybeans under irrigation. \$40/person if registered by Feb. 18. **3 RUP, 5 CCA**

Feb 26 [**Crop Insurance 101 for Field Crops.**](#) 12-1 pm. Online via Zoom. Prices for many farm inputs remain high compared to commodity prices. This session will review the basics of insurance and how to optimize strategies for corn, soybeans, and wheat growers. Free.

Feb 26 [**Hay Production 101.**](#) 7pm-8:30 pm. Online via Zoom. Join our team of MSU Extension specialists and educators online in February and March 2026 to learn the ins and outs of growing, harvesting and marketing your hay crop. The Feb. 26 topic is "Field Establishment & Renovation." \$85/person.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

[**Michigan Grain Market Benchmarks**](#)

Published on January 5, 2026

The Michigan Grain Market Benchmarks report is a summary of price data from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

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Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report available now

Published on January 5, 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.

SARE supports sustainable agriculture learning opportunities for Tribal communities

Published on December 23, 2025

Two programs are available through Tribal SARE. The \$5,000 mini grant supports workshops, conferences and demonstration projects on Indigenous food sovereignty, and travel funds provide \$500 for Tribal educators to attend sustainable agriculture events.

2026 winter wheat-tastic Wheat Wisdom Wednesday webinar series

Published on December 23, 2025

This three-part series will focus on economics, marketing and the value of growing wheat.

Southeast Michigan vegetable and field crop grower winter meeting to be held February 4, 2026

Published on December 19, 2025

This year's event will feature a general session in the morning and breakout vegetable and field crop sessions in the afternoon.

MSU researcher examines impact of management practices on Michigan farms

Published on December 19, 2025

Partnering with farmers across Michigan, Dr. Christine Sprunger is examining how soil health and biodiversity can be improved through land management

Earned Sick Time Act fact sheet

Published on December 18, 2025

The Earned Sick Time Act fact sheet from MSU Extension provides detailed information and frequently asked questions related to the Earned Sick Time Act in Michigan.

Start the new year in compliance with the Earned Sick Time Act

Published on December 18, 2025

The Earned Sick Time Act fact sheet from MSU Extension provides detailed information and frequently asked questions related to the Earned Sick Time Act in Michigan.

Online Hay Production 101 short course is back by popular demand in 2026

Published on December 18, 2025

Join our team of Michigan State University Extension specialists and educators online in February and March 2026 to learn the ins and outs of growing, harvesting and marketing your hay crop.

How to use this guide

Published on December 17, 2025

This publication is set up as a series of chapters with information on biology, damage, management recommendations, and insecticides related to insect pests in field crops in Michigan and Ohio.

Insect Guide for Forages

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for alfalfa and grass hay.

Insect Guide for Corn

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for corn.

Insect Guide for Soybeans

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for soybeans.

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Insect Guide for Wheat

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for wheat.

Insect Guide for Dry Beans

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for dry beans.

Insect Guide for Sugarbeets

Published on December 17, 2025

This guide covers insecticide recommendations for sugarbeets.

Hay! If you grow hay or pastures, MSU Extension needs your advice

Published on December 16, 2025

Your responses to the 2025-2026 forage needs assessment survey are anonymous and confidential.

Integrating High-Oleic Soybeans into Farm Systems: Exploring Production, Marketing and Contracts

Published on December 16, 2025

This bulletin outlines the nutritional benefits of high-oleic oil, agronomic and other production practices, marketing opportunities and contract considerations for high-oleic soybeans.

Explore regenerative agriculture webinar series

Published on December 16, 2025

This series offers practical insights and science-based strategies to help you make informed decisions about regenerative agriculture.

Year-end financial planning for farmers

Published on December 16, 2025

December and January are great months to look at farm financials. You can finish up last year's accounting, create a balance sheet and get set up to start the new year.

The Michigan Cover Crop Selector Tool has been updated

Published on December 15, 2025

Agriculture professionals and farmers came together to update the online decision-making tool including new cover crops and adjusted seeding dates.

Explaining the new H-2A Wage Rule for Michigan growers

Published on December 12, 2025

The H-2A program provides a legal pathway for U.S. agricultural employers to hire seasonal foreign workers when domestic labor is not available.

2026 MSU Custom Work Rates Report Released

Published on December 12, 2025

The 2026 report covers a wide range of field machine operations.

High-oleic, high reward: A unique opportunity for Michigan soybean farmers

Published on December 11, 2025

High-oleic soybeans offer opportunities for increased profitability not only for soybean farmers but also dairy farmers in Michigan.

2026 Bulletins Live! Two hands-on training and open houses

Published on December 10, 2025

Catch up on new compliance requirements for pesticide applicators by attending a training or open house in February and March.

MSU Extension and USDA launch new beginning farmer resource

Published on December 9, 2025

The Beginning Farmer Resource and Decision-Making Guide is now available from Michigan State University Extension and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

PFAS in Michigan agriculture

Published on December 9, 2025

Recent findings have demonstrated elevated PFAS levels in agricultural soils across the world due to inadvertent introduction through land application of materials containing high levels of PFAS.

Beginning Farmer Resource and Decision-Making Guide

Published on December 8, 2025

Beginning Farmer Resource & Decision-Making Guide main page

Integrated pest management resources at Michigan State University Extension

Published on December 8, 2025

Explore MSU Extension resources and tools to help you make pest management decisions.

Indigenous farms and soil health testing

Published on December 8, 2025

Michigan State University Extension is working to collaborate with Indigenous farms on quantifying what is living below ground.

Michigan State and Purdue Extension to host Great Lakes Field Crops Irrigation Meeting

Published on December 8, 2025

New name, same great insights. The Great Lakes Field Crops Irrigation returns February 25 with tools to increase irrigation decision-making and crop management. Attendees can earn Michigan RUP, CCA and Indiana PARP/CCH credits.

Every drop has a reason: How irrigation scheduling helps justify water use

Published on December 8, 2025

The Michiana Irrigation Association Winter Workshop returns December 12 in Elkhart, Indiana. Join us to explore tools and strategies to improve water use efficiency and productivity.

Need a farm business plan? Start here

Published on December 5, 2025

Read along for a quick overview of the what, why and how of writing a farm business plan.

Grow your expertise at the 2026 Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management Training

Published on December 4, 2025

Join MSU Extension for a one-day soil fertility and nutrient management training.

Elevate your market prices with Grain Gains

Published on December 4, 2025

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

In the Weeds podcast is back

Published on December 4, 2025

There is something for everything this season and it's not too late to catch up on the latest episodes of the In the Weeds podcast.

Get ready: Farm Policy & Risk Management Series resumes in 2026

Published on December 4, 2025

Don't miss out on information that can help protect your farm and boost your bottom line.

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