



# Michigan Seed Bulletin

PUBLISHED BY THE MICHIGAN CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
The Official Seed Certifying Agency

FALL ISSUE | NOVEMBER 2021

## Board of Directors

**Chris Schmidt**  
PRESIDENT

Northern Region  
Auburn, MI

**Mark Vollmar**  
VICE PRESIDENT

Thumb Region  
Caro, MI

**Toby Brown**  
SECRETARY/TREASURER

South Western Region  
Three Rivers, MI

**Dr. Doug Buhler**  
MSU REPRESENTATIVE

East Lansing, MI

**Paul Varner**  
INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Freeland, MI

**Michael Philip**  
MDA REPRESENTATIVE

Lansing, MI

**Jeff Dreher**  
Upper Thumb Region  
Minden City, MI

**Alan Moore**  
Central Region  
Elsie, MI

**Carl Wagner III**  
South Western Region  
Niles, MI

## Wake Up Your Seeds with Coffee

BY CHRIS TIEDJE

It has been said that hot coffee is a substitute for bleach in a seed test which can be used to measure seed coat damage which can relate to seed germination. It is sometimes referred to as the "Clorox Bleach Test." In this test, seeds are soaked in a weak solution of bleach and water. Bleach is highly reactive and corrosive to some things. It will react with biological tissue and cause protein denaturation.

When seeds are soaked in bleach, they will quickly deteriorate. Seeds with strong intact seed coats will be protected from the harsh chemical. Seeds with weak seed coats from: disease, environment, or mechanical damage, will allow the chemical to rapidly progress to internal tissue causing swelling and dislocation of the seed coat.

Seeds can be evaluated and categorized into different levels of deterioration.

Seeds with intact seed coats have little or no damage and are considered high quality. Seeds with some wrinkling may have some deterioration from weathering or disease. Swollen seeds have significant

damage and have a good correlation to being non-viable.

So the next time you have a cup of coffee – think about seed quality.

As of October 21st there has not been a killing frost. In fact, we have had many 75 degree humid days since the beginning of soybean harvest. It is a strong statement to see emerging soybeans in harvested soybean stubble as in the photo. This is generally not good for seed quality. Late soybean field inspections by inspectors noted some pod and stem blight but also anthracnose - a relatively unheard of soybean disease. Both these diseases can reduce seed germination.

The seed lab is just beginning to unveil the seed quality for the season but the only way to know is to test. Both pod and stem blight

[Continued on page 3 »](#)



# The President's Post

BY CHRIS SCHMIDT, MCIA PRESIDENT



Here it is..... fall harvest of 2021 is firmly upon us. After all the winter planning and spring revisions to the plan, harvest and planting season are all piled on top of each other. And for most of us old enough to remember Bill Murray's classic movie, 'Ground Hog Day', pretty much every day is the same. In the Saginaw Valley where I

make my home, every day seems to have been the same with the forecast for rain – lots of rain since the first part of October.

We got rained out of the fields this year on October 2nd after some of the best September harvest weather we've seen in years and so far we've accumulated well over 8" of precipitation in the past 2 weeks. That's tough to take when the first half of October is supposed to be the most productive time of the year. Now we're looking at salvaging the soybean seed crop instead of celebrating it and winter wheat planting is probably going to end up far short of the acres we'd intended to plant. And so it goes...life as a farmer with absolutely no control over Mother Nature.

But in spite of the nasty weather-related turn of events here in October there's still plenty to be thankful for this season. Our summer small grains harvest was pretty respectable and we managed to dodge the frequent hail storms that moved through our area this summer. The corn crop looks to be one of the best in recent memory, despite a severe case of tar spot, and what little soybeans we've managed to get in the bin between the substantial rains have been spectacular. And most importantly, the family remains healthy which means a lot to Grand Dad who enjoys nothing more than having the grand kids sitting next to him in the combine.

So as we approach this Thanksgiving holiday season, please take a few moments to consider the bright lights in our lives and not dwell on the overcast skies, the sodden fields or the promise of what might have been had Mother Nature looked a wee bit more favorably upon us this fall. At the end-of-the-day, all we have is each other and sunny skies will eventually return as they always do.

## Foundation Wheat Sales

Overall Foundation and Parent winter wheat sales were down from last year with white wheat sales decreasing 39% and red wheat sales increasing 8%. The following is a summary of wheat seed sales for the past two seasons.

### White Wheat Units Sold

	2020	2021
AC Mountain	619	560
Jupiter	1827	1578
E 6012	120	0
MCIA Moonlight	272	572
MI 16W0133	0	15
Whitetail	7779	3723
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,617</b>	<b>6,448</b>

### Red Wheat Units Sold

	2020	2021
Hopewell	17	0
MCIA Flipper	1103	1334
MCIA Harpoon	40	65
MCIA Red Devil	440	0
MCIA Red Dragon	1361	1130
MCIA Jonah	658	600
MCIA Whale	836	531
MCIA Wharf	539	1443
MCIA Marlin	150	670
Starburst	270	250
Sunburst	1091	985
MI 17R0357	0	94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,495</b>	<b>7,102</b>

# Manager's Minute

BY C. JAMES PALMER, MCIA MANAGER



In June of 2021, the MCIA seed plant installed a new Q-Sage air screen cleaner to replace the fifty plus year old Crippen 354 which had been in place since 1972. The old seed cleaner had gotten to a point where weekly repairs were needed just to keep it properly functioning. These interruptions to production often came at the worst times

possible and began to threaten the ability of the seed plant to meet its deadlines. The old cleaner was a good piece of equipment for a long time at MCIA, I suspect it cleaned over 300 million pounds of product in its lifetime. It had been an important and dependable piece of equipment in the Foundation seed plant for decades.

After installation, the Q-Sage mill has performed flawlessly. It is a smooth running, precision machine which purred through tens of thousands of bushels of wheat seed this year, with ease and zero breakdowns. As I reflected on the replacement, I was pleased with the decision to change out the equipment and thought to

myself how nice it was to have a reliable machine with no “in-season” breakdowns. I also, thought about all of the history the “old mill” had experienced over its life.

The Crippen mill was installed as part of the building in 1972, in fact, I believe the building was actually built around it. It outlasted two gravity mills, four managers, numerous plant breeders and countless leg, belts and conveyers. It witnessed the ag boom of the 70's, the farm crisis in the 80's and the resurgence of the ag economy in the 2000's. It was part of the many “fad crops” in Michigan agriculture including grass seed, canola, malting barley and hemp. It saw the adoption of home computers, the microwave oven, cell-phones and the self driving car. It withstood the test of time and faithfully operated daily, with just a little coaxing at the end of its life.

At the time the original installation of the Crippen, like me, I assume the Manager was eager to improve the efficiency, quality and timeliness of the seed produced. I can also assume the Manger had no idea what the next fifty years would bring the Association and the world. The old saying goes “if walls could talk...” I'm sure the Old Crippen could tell us some stories, just as the Q-Sage will in another 50 years! Any guess on what it will say?

## Continued from page 1 »

(phomopsis) and anthracnose are fungi. Fungi at this time of year and stage of production are usually in a dormant spore stage. Growth, development, and infection do not occur until the right conditions are met. In this case, it is a similar environment as that for seed germination. When germination is initiated, infection occurs and the viable seedling is overtaken by the developing fungus.

Fungal pressure is hard to measure. It can be very obvious from moldy or shriveled seeds. It can also be present and unseen. Testing is always the only way to know. Multiple tests can be performed on the seed lot to give a more

complete assessment of quality. It is often thought that germination is an indication of if the seed is alive (or viable). But there are times when a seed may be viable, but dormant, and other times it might be viable, but overcome by a more aggressive disease. A germination test may not be giving you the whole story. Under high disease pressures a sand test may be helpful to suppress some of the mold or fungal development. A TZ test may give a good indication of viability and mechanical damage. A cold test may be a good comparison where seed imbibition occurs at lower temperatures giving the seedling a head start on fungal development. When in doubt – test.





Michigan Crop Improvement Association  
PO Box 21008  
Lansing, MI 48909

## Calendar of Events

### **Nov 25-26, 2021**

MCIA Office Closed for  
Thanksgiving

### **Dec 24, 2021 –Jan 3, 2022**

MCIA Office Closed for  
Holiday Season

### **Feb 15, 2022**

Early Foundation Seed  
Orders Due

### **Mar 8, 2022**

MCIA Annual Membership Meeting  
*Eagle Eye Banquet Center | Bath, MI*

## Contact Us

Phone: (517) 332-3546  
Email: [info@michcrop.com](mailto:info@michcrop.com)  
Website: [www.michcrop.com](http://www.michcrop.com)

## Let's get social!

Find us on Facebook at:  
**Michigan Crop  
Improvement Association**

## Fun Fact

Michigan is credited with  
building the world's largest  
snowball measuring  
33 feet in circumference.

It was built by the  
students from Michigan  
Technical University in  
Houghton, Michigan  
on March 29, 2013.

