



MICHIGAN
CROP IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION™

Michigan Seed Bulletin

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Wheat Findings

CHRIS TIEDJE

Grain production and quality are functions of seasonal environments, the spring of 2023 was certainly a unique one for Michigan. May set records for dry weather in Michigan. May and early June are critical times for wheat development and pollination, with the immediate concern being lower yields. The dry conditions are likened to that of the western wheat production where durum and hard wheat are produced. As harvest approached, inspectors noted some heads with kernels which appeared to be vitreous or hard just like what would be found in western wheat production. Although this is not the norm, it is a sign of the dynamics affecting the Michigan wheat crop.

Vitreous wheat is defined as glassy or translucent in appearance when dissected in contrast to that which might be white and fluffy. The term



Field with “sooty mold” on wheat head

vitreous usually goes hand in hand with “hard” and if you were to bite a hard, vitreous kernel and a soft one you would experience the terminology first hand. Vitreosity is caused by the tightly packed endosperm structure with air spaces in the protein matrix. It is desirable in durum and hard wheat for pasta and bread. It is not desirable in soft wheat used for cakes and pastries.

Luckily, seed quality is not a function of wheat hardness or vitreosity. Seed germination is related to the embryo and not the wheat flour or endosperm. The seed lab has seen some seed lots showing vitreous kernels, but black tip may be the more



Hard vitreous red wheat kernels on the left with a normal lot of red wheat seed on the right.

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The President's Post

BY CHRIS SCHMIDT, MCIA PRESIDENT



All of us know that someday we'll plant our last field and harvest our last crop. We hope that the

finish line is in the far, distant future and should be of no concern to any of us at the present time. But occasionally one of us is called home prematurely, unexpectedly, and sometimes tragically. Such was the case recently when our good friend and fellow seedsman, Dave Penzien, was called home without warning on June 28.

Dave was a second-generation seedsman taking over the seed business when his father, Harry, turned the reins over to Dave in 1995, 28 years ago. Farming and seed were a common bond for Dave and Harry. Their centennial family farm's first foray in seed production was produc-

ing a wheat variety called Avon in 1966. Over the years, Dave expanded the seed crops grown on the Penzien family farm to include blacks, small reds, oats, barley, wheat and soybeans in the Attica and Imlay City area.

Dave and I talked frequently during each growing season, and he'd give me his opinion of everything new he was trying on his farm. Oats and dry beans were our most common topics, and he would make amazingly minute observations throughout the season on the attributes or shortcomings of each variety in production. It was always great intel as well as a sharing of stories and tales between two old farmers who had survived the ups and downs of the seed business well into our 60's.

Dave was never merely a passenger on the train ride of life – he lived each day to its max. During the 20+ years we had known each other, Dave was always thinking about the next run, the next church choir practice, and the next variety of seed he planned on

sowing. Like many of us seedsmen, Dave served on the Michigan Crop Improvement Association Board of Directors. His 3 terms spanned from 2004 through 2013, during which time, Dave selflessly served as BOD president during the last few years of his 3rd term. We served as directors together for a number of years and during the time I sat next to Dave in board meetings I was always impressed that his focus was never on what was best for Dave, but what was best for all. That's just the way Dave was – humble, steady, and reliable. He was guided by his Christian faith that greater things can be accomplished when we're all striving for a similar, though unattainable, pinnacle.

I will sincerely miss Dave, as will his family of 3 sons, his father, brother, and especially his wife, Sharon. God bless you Dave and keep an eye on all of us from up there.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Schmidt".

In Pursuit of Excellence

CHRIS TIEDJE

In today's world everything is becoming more and more specialized. Seed testing is no different. Training is necessary to be proficient in current testing procedures. The Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST) and Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) are organizations of official professionals in the seed testing industry. The groups have high standards for members within their organizations. This includes education, work experience, training, mentorship, and proficiency – proven

by a rigorous examination.

Lauren Mezo, now Lauren Bogi, has achieved two great accomplishments this year; first, a celebration of marriage, and second, becoming a Certified Viability Technologist (CVT). As a CVT, Lauren is now an official member of the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists, an elite group of those skilled and proficient in seed germination testing. This includes additional information about seeds such as quality, disease, and vigor. We are happy to have her expertise. Congratulations Lauren!



Manager's Minute

BY C. JAMES PALMER, MCIA MANAGER



David Penzien Passes Away

MCIA Seedsman David Penzien, age 67, of Attica, Michigan died suddenly as a result of a tragic auto-pedestrian accident Wednesday, June 28, 2023 in Imlay City, Michigan. David James Penzien was born November 2, 1955 in Lapeer, MI. David grew up on the family's Centennial Farm and worked land around Attica, Capac, and Imlay City all of his life. He was still an active seed grower, raising private label soybean seed as well as certified wheat, oat and dry bean seed. David was a past president of the MCIA Board of Directors where he served three terms from 2004 to 2013. David is survived by his wife Sharon, his three sons and his father. He will be greatly missed.



Timeless Wisdom

One of the most influential people in my life was my Grandpa McGuire. He was a lifelong crop farmer who also had a small dairy herd until the 1970's when he transitioned to black angus beef cattle. He kept them until the day he passed away in 1999. While almost 25 years has elapsed since he died, I still remember many of the things he taught me. One thing he would frequently say was "Jimmy, if you're out of farming for more than a day you're a has been". I have always remembered that particular quote, as it seems to have relevance in most things, especially in the fast-paced world today. As a younger person, I didn't appreciate the wisdom he was attempting to pass on to me. He was telling me that if a person doesn't keep up with change, new innovations and ideas will emerge so rapidly you will eventually be "left in the dust." As I grew older and realized the meaning of his quote, I have always tried to incorporate his way of thinking into my life, as well as my time here at MCIA.

At MCIA we also know how fast the world is changing. Staying relevant in the seed industry takes foresight, intuitiveness, and willingness to adopt new ideas and technologies. In attempts to prevent MCIA from becoming "left in the dust", we have recently added a state-of-the-art color sorter to our seed plant. This magnificent machine has infrared capabilities to improve the quality of the seed and seed sorting services we provide our customers. In the seed lab we have added ELISA testing to confirm genetic purity as well as new variations of cold testing in soybean and corn seed. These new tests will provide our customers with the services and information they need to help them thrive. Our field services team, under the leadership of Chris Tiedje, has expanded our inspection offerings to the seed corn companies who utilize our expertise to assist them in producing a superior product. These are just a few examples of identifying customer needs and appropriately meeting our customers' demands to stay indispensable.

Grandpa McGuire knew what it took to be successful on the farm and the spirit of his message lives on today. As the world turns, we will continue to critically look at how we do things. We will keep an eye out for new opportunities and be quick to respond to the needs of our membership. Keeping the words of a wise old farmer alive has helped us continue to be an important contributor to the seed industry. What will you do to prevent you or your operation from becoming a "has been?"



Dr. Doug Buhler serves 18 Years on MCIA Board

At the June board meeting Dr. Doug Buhler was recognized for his commitment to MCIA and the Board of Directors. Dr. Buhler has been the willing MSU Representative for 18 years and agreed to serve another three-year term. A big thanks to Dr. Buhler for all his insight and wisdom over the past two decades!

Fun Fact

In 1974 a child-bearing stork was introduced as the mascot for the Vlasic Pickle Co., merging the stork baby mythology with the notion that pregnant women

have an above average appetite for pickles. The Vlasic brand, now owned by Conagra Foods, still operates a plant in Imlay City, Mi where it produces over 150 million jars of pickles annually!





Michigan Crop Improvement Association
PO Box 21008
Lansing, MI 48909

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common reason for concern. Inspectors also noted sooty mold in fields. Some fields seemed to have a darker cast as they ripened as a result. Sooty mold can progress to a blackening of the embryo tip of the wheat kernels called black point or black tip. If severe, the black tip fungus can affect seed germination. In most cases seed treatment should provide good pro-

tection and restore germination.

The next question is sprouting. Pre-harvest sprout is often a risk in Michigan and this year is no exception. Delayed harvest due to rain is a double threat to wheat quality. Wheat seed is one which wants to grow. When conditions are right it will start to germinate whether it is planted in the ground or if it is still in the head. If conditions are right it can go straight from physiological

maturity to germination. Most other crops have a husk or pod which provides a little better protection from rain adsorption. Pre-harvest sprouting is progressive. There is no one consistent level of development in a field. Have questions about the viability of your seed? A TZ or AA test is best to determine the level of deterioration. Send us your samples and we will gladly ascertain the quality of your seed.

Contact Us

Phone: (517) 332-3546

Email: info@michcrop.com

Website: www.michcrop.com

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Michigan Crop Improvement Association

Calendar of Events 2023

August 15

**Soybean and Dry Bean Applications Due
Final Orders for Wheat Seed Stock Due**

MCIA Office

September 4

Labor Day

MCIA Offices Closed

November 30

Wheat Royalties Due

MCIA Office