



MICHIGAN
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ASSOCIATION™

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Change

CHRIS TIEDJE

Some changes happen quickly like a storm rolling in. Some changes happen slowly like an early to mid-April planted corn crop. Some change is foreseeable and planned. Some change is a surprise. But we all know that change is inevitable. The only choice we have is how we react to it. There is one change at MCIA occurring May 1. I will be retiring.

It is hard to believe it has been 40 years since I began my career at Michigan Foundation Seed and then Michigan Crop Improvement. To say the least, there have been many changes over the years both personally and with MCIA in the seed industry. It has been rewarding serving in the different roles over the years. My career began as a seed processor at MFSA and then continued at MCIA with responsibilities in quality control, promotion, seed testing, field inspection, inspection coordination, and inspection staffing. One of the beautiful things of working in a small organization is the variety of tasks to be performed. Similarly, it has been nice working with the many interdependent organizations in the seed industry.

One thing which has not changed is people. People still make the world go around. People still make decisions. People still plant and harvest a crop. People make things happen. It has been a joy working with those in the seed and Ag industry. There are too



many to mention. There have been mentors in the past and hopefully I have been able to do the same for others in return. Mary Kay Ash once said, "A company is only as good as the people it keeps." It has been great working with the MCIA staff. They are capable, knowledgeable, and dedicated.

In the theme of change there is a quote from Will Rogers, "You've got to go out on a limb sometimes, because that's where the fruit is." Many of us experience this when we plant seed in the ground each spring. We don't know what the season will bring, but we trust in a provision of a good crop. Each of us have times in life to bravely make that choice.

So as my choice enfolds, I am grateful for all the support, encouragement, life examples, patience, friendship, and hospitality that all have given over the years. It is hard to measure the impact a kind act will make. I will miss all of those I have worked with and for over the past four decades but will remember you all with fond memories.

The President's Post

BY JEFF MARTUS, MCIA PRESIDENT



It's an honor to introduce myself as the new president of the MCIA Board of Directors. While I may not yet possess the same depth of experience as my predecessor, Chris Schmidt, I bring over 20 years in Michigan's agricultural industry and a deep-rooted passion for serving this community. It's truly a privilege to represent the industry on the MCIA board — and now to serve as your president.

My journey in agriculture began on a small dairy farm and led me to Michigan State University, where I soon realized that my future wouldn't be in dairy farming. In May 2002, I accepted a summer job at Star of the West Milling Company in Richville. I started in the warehouse, where I became fascinated with the foundational chemistry of agriculture, which was rapidly disappearing with the rise of the Roundup Ready trait. A wet spring in 2003 opened the door to operating a row crop sprayer, a role I continued through the summer of 2004. By the winter of 2005, I had completed my degree in Crop and Soil Sciences and joined Star of the West full-time as a sales agronomist. For 13 years in this role I worked (and still am) to master "conventional" crops such as wheat, dry beans, and non-GMO soybeans, while also supporting operations, including dispatching sprayers. In 2018, I stepped into a new challenge as operations lead for the Elevator and Plant Food Division in Richville. This role introduced me to the certified seed side of the business, where I began sourcing non-GMO soybeans and dry bean seed, as well as contracting certified soft white wheat seed acres for Star of the West. I'm also a Certified Crop Advisor and have served on both the Michigan CCA Board and the CCA Exam Committee.

Enough about me. Spring planting is well underway, and our wheat crop is off to an excellent start, showing strong potential for a robust certified seed supply this fall. I'm especially eager to see how Charro pinto beans, Kona black beans, and Black Pearl black beans perform this year, as seed availability expands, and we get a full-scale view of their performance across the state. As your board president, I'm committed to representing and advocating for the best interests of our certified seed growers. I intend to support your success through sound leadership, collaboration, and a focus on continued innovation and opportunity for the association.

Here's to favorable weather and a safe and successful Spring.



William Irrer Receives MCIA Honorary Membership award

The Michigan Crop Improvement Association Board of Directors was delighted to present William (Bill) Irrer as the 2024/2025 MCIA Honorary Membership Award recipient. This award is given annually to an individual who has made considerable positive impacts on both the Association and the Certified seed industry. This well-deserved recognition is a testament to Bill's significant contributions to both. Congratulations to Bill!



Chris Schmidt (right) presents 2024/2025 Honorary Membership Award to William Irrer.

2025 MCIA Scholarship Recipients Named

Each year MCIA awards 10 \$2000 scholarships to MSU students studying Crop and Soil Sciences. The following students were chosen in 2025: Ryan Henne, North Branch; Brielle Herner, Bay City; Emma Kuhl, Hanover; Audrey Martin, Bay City; Sydney Masserant, Newport; Tori Maynard, Elsie; Andrew Morr, South Lyon; Elijah Terpening, Yale; Caden Wade, Wheatland, WY; and Morgan Zurek, Huron County.

The Scott Judd Memorial scholarship goes to two students planning to attend MSU with interest in science, technology, engineering, or math. This scholarship was originally set up in honor of long time manager Randy Judd's son, Scott, who passed away at an early age from cancer. The recipients this year are Kortney Osborn and Lucas Latimer.

Two Board of Directors re-elected, and officers selected at 2024/2025 MCIA Annual Meeting

At the MCIA Annual meeting held on February 27, 2025, at the Eagle Eye Banquet Center in Bath, Michigan, Matt Lutz was re-elected and Alan Peters we elected to the MCIA Board both for three-year terms. Officers of the Board were also set. Toby Brown was chosen as Secretary/Treasurer, Jeff Dreher was picked as Vice President and Jeff Martus was selected as the President. A big thanks go out to these officers and the remainder of the Board of Directors for their time and effort in guiding the Association.

Manager's Minute

BY C. JAMES PALMER, MCIA MANAGER



Chris Tiedje retires after 37 years at MCIA

It is not every day we have the chance to celebrate the career of an individual who has truly been a cornerstone of our organization. Someone who has stood the test of time and has earned a respected voice in the Seed Industry. After an incredible 37 years, of dedicated service to

MCIA, in May of 2025, Chris Tiedje will be retiring.

When Chris joined MCIA in 1988, after three years with Michigan Foundation Seed, he had many things to learn about agriculture. Not a traditional “farm kid”, Chris used his curiosity and thirst for knowledge to help him grow and thrive throughout the years. Starting as a field inspector Chris steadily expanded his role and influence at MCIA. By the end of his career, he was not only the Director of Field Services where he supervised over 50 part-time staff annually, but also the Lab Supervisor where he demonstrated his expertise in all aspects of seed on a daily basis. Chris was a valued authority and highly respected figure in seed corn production, had a keen eye for off-types in wheat and was a bird dog when it came to identifying dry bean disease in the field. Chris was also a Registered Seed technologist, and was instrumental in the hiring, mentoring and training of his replacement in the seed laboratory, Lauren Bogi, R.S.T.

What stands out to me the most about Chris isn't the work he did, but the spirit he brought to it. His excitement and passion, when it came to seeds, were second to none. Chris was always generous with his time and eager to share his knowledge, helping to build the positive culture we currently enjoy as a staff at MCIA. His perspective was unique, and he often compelled others to think about things in new and unconventional ways. Beyond MCIA, Chris built and maintained strong relationships with many leaders in Michigan Agriculture and played a key role in many important industry decisions. Most recently Chris led the collaboration with MDARD to revise minimum purity standards for Spring and Fall seeded grains, providing important benefits to MCIA seed growers.

Although it is difficult to imagine MCIA without Chris' smiling face and positive energy each day, we are excited to see what the next chapter holds for him. No doubt he will continue to work in his tree business cleaning up properties with the same enthusiasm and commitment he brought to MCIA on a daily basis. We will celebrate Chris' last day with a staff luncheon at “Joe's on Jolly”, where we will reflect on his outstanding career and reminisce about days gone by and send him off with our best wishes. On behalf of MCIA, I'd like to congratulate Chris on his magnificent career and thank him for all his efforts which helped make MCIA the success it is today. We hope Chris will pop in from time to time, just to say “Hi” and keep us updated on his latest adventures! Chris will always be part of the MCIA family. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and well-deserved retirement!

Exciting Updates Coming to Our Lab Workflow — Starting June 1, 2025

We're excited to announce our new lab application designed to streamline operations and improve the way we deliver results to customers.

We're rolling out a 'new-to-us' barcode system to streamline how we handle seed samples in the lab! As samples are logged in, a QR barcode will be generated while still maintaining our previous lab numbering system. For every test requested, a barcode sticker will be printed and will follow the sample from planting all the way to read-out, ensuring accuracy and tracking throughout the process. When it's time for read-out, results will be entered directly into the application using iPads, speeding up data entry and reducing redundant paperwork.

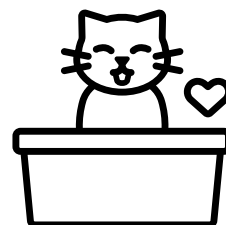
Customers will have the option to receive an auto-updating Excel spreadsheet that reflects test progress in real time. As we input and complete results in the lab, customers will be able to see updates immediately—no more waiting around for final reports!

We're also giving our “Report of Analysis” a bit of a facelift! While all the critical information will still be there, the layout will be cleaner, more organized, and easier to read. This new system goes live June 1, 2025, aligning with our crop year (June 1–May 31).

Customers who prefer traditional mail will still have the option to receive printed reports. However, to further improve our efficiency and service, we will begin delivering lab reports to customers via email as the default method. This will provide customers with faster and more convenient access to results. Stay tuned!

Fun Fact

In 1947, Edward Lowe, a Cassopolis, Michigan businessman, accidentally invented kitty litter. Lowe, who sold absorbents for industrial use, gave his neighbor Kay Draper some clay granules instead of sand when she asked for litter box filler. Draper found the clay absorbent and odor-controlling, leading Lowe to market it as Kitty Litter.





Michigan Crop Improvement Association
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Calendar of Events 2025

May 26 MCIA Office Closed
Memorial Day

June 1 MCIA Office
Small Grains Application Due

June 6-12 Missoula, MT
AOSA/SCST Annual Meeting

June 15-19 Kansas City, KS
AOSCA Annual Meeting

July 4 MCIA Office Closed
Independence Day

August 15 MCIA Office
Soybean and Dry
Bean Applications Due

Final Order for
Wheat Seed Stock Due

Mechanical Damage

Some of our growers are witnessing language on their lab reports that includes “mechanical damage”. The definition of this term from the AOSA Rules for Testing Seeds is as follows:

Mechanical breakage of seeds may occur during harvesting, threshing, loading, hauling, unloading, and cleaning operations.

Large-seeded legumes such as field and garden beans, lima beans, soybeans and peas are especially susceptible to threshing or combine damage. Seed that has been mechanically damaged may produce seedlings with damaged primary roots, hypocotyls or epicotyls, or broken or detached cotyledons. Bruised areas are usually necrotic or decayed.

Soybeans are highly susceptible to

injury because their embryo is on the outside of the seed. In the lab we often see seedling abnormalities relating to the dryness of the seed during harvest, the drier the seed, the more fragile. The more times the seed is handled, the more opportunities you have for seed breakage.

In seed laboratory practice, germination is the emergence and development of the essential structures of the seed embryo that, for the kind of seed in question, are indicative of the ability to produce a normal plant under favorable conditions.

Once the injury has occurred to the seed, none of our lab practices will be able to correct the injury. ie: seed treatment, sand, or soil germ.

In conclusion: know your seed and be aware of your harvest conditions and how they relate to seed vigor.

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Michigan Crop Improvement Association