



**MICHIGAN**  
CROP IMPROVEMENT  
ASSOCIATION™

# Michigan Seed Bulletin

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

WINTER ISSUE | FEBRUARY 2026

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## More Than a Requirement

TOM SILER

With as much alone time as I spend driving around the state and inspecting what sometimes feels like endless acres of seed crops, it gives me plenty of time to think. One thing I often focus on is the why. Why am I out in this field in the middle of nowhere? Who values the information provided by these inspections — or even the certification system itself?

The short answer I've come up with is: it depends. I found the most helpful mindset, for me, is to focus on the big picture, and that picture ultimately comes down to reputation.

The certification system is designed to prevent the name of a variety from being "sullied" by the actions of any one person. A simple example is this: Grower A dedicates ample time and resources to producing a high-quality, pure crop of a particular variety. Grower B, on the other hand, might cut corners and produce a poor-quality, contaminated crop of the same variety. Without a certification system in place, seed from Grower B would enter the marketplace, be sold to farmers, and result in sub-par crops. Those farmers would likely never purchase this variety again and may share their experience with others — damaging not only Grower B's reputation, but the reputation of the entire variety itself.

While some growers may view seed certification as just another hoop to jump through, it's worth considering the consequences if this system did not exist. It is designed to protect both the varieties' name and growers themselves, whether they want it or not.

For growers producing private varieties, the story is similar. Third-party field inspections can provide both growers and their customers with peace of mind when it comes to a particular seed lot or variety. The value of inspections becomes even more apparent for operations managing large acreages and/or multiple varieties, where assembling a skilled crew to inspect everything in a timely manner may not be practical. Knowing what is happening in a seed field early in the growing season is one of the simplest ways to address unintentional issues before they become larger problems. Again, this helps prevent tarnishing the reputation of both the growers and the products they offer.

Whether a field inspection is required for certification or conducted voluntarily for private varieties, it's worth asking: What do I value from these reports? Our goal in every inspection is to provide accurate, objective information that protects the reputation of the grower and the seed they offer for sale. If there is additional information you would like to see on the inspection reports, or ways we could tailor inspections to better fit into your system this upcoming growing season, please don't hesitate to reach out.

# The President's Post

BY JEFF MARTUS, MCIA PRESIDENT



The 2026 season is beginning under challenging conditions. Commodity prices remain low, while input costs refuse to acknowledge the

tough markets we are facing. Margins are tight across the board, and in many cases, profitability can feel out of reach. As a result, growers are taking a hard look at their operations to identify areas where costs can be reduced without significantly impacting yield potential. This process is never easy.

Determining which inputs can be easily trimmed or substituted for lower cost alternatives without sacrificing yield requires careful thought. Many growers are adjusting fertilizer rates lower to reflect realistic yield expectations rather than

peak yields, sometimes achieved in ideal growing seasons. Fungicide applications are being placed into an “as needed” category rather than being automatic. Equipment upgrades are being postponed, and aggressive tillage programs are being replaced by planned no-till or minimum till alternatives.

While I understand the necessity of cutting costs, seed choice is not an area where compromises should be made. As MCIA seed growers, we have a responsibility to ensure our customers understand that every successful crop begins with quality seed. I will never forget the wise words of Dr. Copeland from an undergraduate seed technology class where he said, “Buy the cheap bag of seed from the neighbor to keep him happy and then go dig a hole behind the barn and bury it.” While I don’t suggest taking those words literally the point is very clear. Saving a few dollars by planting inferior

seed can often lead to reduced stands, inconsistent emergence and ultimately reduced yield. This is a risk we cannot afford to take this year.

We have a duty to our customers to provide them with the highest quality seed of the highest performing varieties. MCIA Certified seed and MCIA Quality Assured seed remain a proven standard for quality, consistency, and performance in the field. As we head into the spring, let’s make sure our high quality MCIA Certified and Q/A seed are a part of the solution to navigating the challenges in our markets. As your MCIA president, I am fully committed to doing everything possible to help ensure a successful 2026 season for all of us.

## Lab Update

LAUREN BOGI

We are in the thick of seed testing in the lab! Joyce and I are still playing “catch up” from being gone between Christmas and New Years, however, the family time was much needed. I hope everyone had a great Holiday season.

We have received a few calls regarding customers creating accounts through our website using the “member login” button. This feature is only for existing customers who submitted seed samples that were completed before June 1, 2025. Due to a systems upgrade, seed tests completed after June 1, 2025, will not be visible under the member login any longer. Instead, customers’ results will be directly emailed as soon as they are completed. Customers who would like to check on their sample progress, please call the office and we

**CERTIFIED SEED**



**Variety:** Black Pearl Black Bean  
**Vendor:** John Doe  
**Address:** Lansing MI 48909  
**Lot No.:** C 25 11111 BPEARL25  
**Purity:** 99.70 **Wt:** 2205/1000 lbs/kg  
**Inert:** 00.29 **Tag Date:** 12/2025  
**Weeds:** 00.00 **Germination:** 90  
**Other Crop:** 00.01 **Seed Count:** 2126  
**FIELD INSP/LAB TESTED - MEETS ACT 329 REQUIREMENT**  
**ORIGIN:** MI (USA)

**MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL SEED CERTIFYING AGENCIES**

An example of a properly labeled seed tag.

can send you an auto-updating Excel spreadsheet or give you a verbal update.

Our new system is also capable of printing seed tags. It is important to know the precise type of information which needs to be on a tag. We often have questions as to the proper items

that are required to be on each label.

To address this, Tom will be speaking about tag printing at our Annual Meeting on February 26th at Eagle Eye. If you are interested in attending or receiving this presentation, please contact the office.

# Two Candidates vie for open Board Seats

Incumbent Alan Moore and Donnie Brabo are running for two open seats on the Michigan Crop Improvement Board. Each are running unopposed. A brief biography of each follows:



**Alan Moore**

Moore is a proud fifth generation farmer and third generation seedsman, who farms approximately 2500 acres of certified corn, soybean, and wheeler rye and triticale seed in Elsie, Michigan on the same ground the Moore family homesteaded in 1857. Alan's grandfather, George Moore, started in the seed industry growing certified small grains and navy beans in 1937. In 1962, Alan's father, Robert, planted the first 15 acres of seed corn and the business quickly expanded. In 1965, the Moore family joined with six other Michigan seed farms to create Great Lakes Hybrids, located in Ovid Michigan. In 1972, Alan returned to his family farm after graduating from Michigan State University, where he married his wife Phyllis (Dershem) and was able to continue to grow and expand MSF through innova-

tive partnerships and practices in and around the farm. For years, Alan and his wife Phyllis managed the farm while raising their four children, Suzzette, Ben, Becki, and Dana. In 1998, their son Ben graduated from Michigan State University and joined the partnership. Continuing his family's entrepreneurial spirit, in 2009 Moore Seed Farm joined six other seed farms to form Premier Seed Group. PSG has grown to 9 members with facilities spanning Nebraska to Michigan, offering customers quality seeds along with state-of-the-art technology and full-service customer support. Alan has served on the MCIA Board for the past three years, adding his wisdom and ideas when called upon.

**Alan is currently on the Board running unopposed for his third term in the Central Region.**



**Donnie Brabo**

Brabo was raised and educated in Akron, Michigan, attending Akron-Fairgrove Schools. Growing up, he gained extensive experience working on conventional and organic farms ranging from 1,200 to 2,400 acres, producing crops such as corn, soybeans, wheat, sugar beets, and a variety of dry beans including DRK, LRK, WK, blacks, pintos, navies, and great northern beans.

He has been in the agriculture industry for over 16 years, holding positions such as Operations Manager at food-grade processing plants (both organic and conventional) and currently serves as the General Manager of Harrington Seed LLC. His professional background provides him with deep insight into bean and seed processing, as well as valuable relationships with growers across the region.

Outside of work, Donnie enjoys spending time with his wife, three children,

and especially his two granddaughters. In his spare time, he also likes to fish, ride motorcycles and vacation in other states to observe farming practices outside Michigan.

Donnie views service on the MCIA Board as a meaningful opportunity to learn, share industry insights, and contribute to long-term decision-making that benefits both growers and the broader industry. He states:

"I believe I have extensive knowledge about dry beans, particularly regarding processing and end-user considerations. I hope to learn more about MCIA and bring value to the board in making decisions that support the long-term success of our members."

**Donnie will be running unopposed for the Upper Thumb Board seat currently held by Jeff Dreher who is term limited.**

# 2025/2026 MCIA Annual Membership Meeting

Registration is now open!

**February 26 • 8:30 A.M.**

**EAGLE EYE BANQUET CENTER  
15500 Chandler Rd. • Bath, MI 48808**

An excellent educational seminar will follow the 8:30 a.m. business meeting  
**2 RUP Credits for Core or 1A and CCA credits are available.**

PLEASE MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND!

## MCIA Annual Meeting Agenda

**8:30 a.m. Business Meeting**

### Educational Session

**9:00 a.m. Wheat Breeding Report – MSU Dr. Eric Olson**

**9:35 a.m. Dry Bean Breeding Report – MSU Dr. Valerio Villegas**

**10:10 a.m. Break**

**10:25 a.m. Dept. of Homeland Security – Threats Mr. Dan Lorenz**

**10:55 a.m. Consumers Energy – New Land Uses Mr. Allen Bacon**

**11:25 a.m. Tag Printing 101 – Law/Best Practices Mr. Tom Siler**

**11:50 a.m. Honorary Membership**

**12:00 p.m. Pesticide/CCA Credits**

**12:15 p.m. Invocation/Lunch**

## Jessica Mihlfeld joins MCIA Team!



Mihlfeld

Please join us in welcoming Jessica Mihlfeld as the new Office Manager at MCIA following the retirement of former Office Manager, Janet Policella.

Jessica brings more than 15 years of experience in office management, human resources, and business operations, with a strong commitment to organization, accuracy, and dependable support. She holds business degrees from Cleary University and values applying structured, thoughtful processes that help teams work efficiently and collaboratively. Outside of work, Jessica enjoys glamping in her RV with her family and relaxing with a good book. We are excited to have Jessica join the team at MCIA.

## Fun Fact

**Faygo was started in Detroit, Michigan in 1907 by two Russian immigrant brothers, Ben and Perry Feigenson, who originally called the company “Feigenson Brothers Bottling Works.”**

**They began making flavored sodas to compete with more expensive European sodas. Faygo originally had 16 flavors, and the “Redpop” flavor was one of the earliest hits.**



Visit [michcrop.com](http://michcrop.com) to learn more about MCIA's Annual Meeting and to register. Scan QR code to view the meeting details online.

# Manager's Minute

BY C. JAMES PALMER, MCIA MANAGER



## The Jar of Screws

An old jar of screws sits on a shelf in my basement. It came from my grandparents' house and I acquired it when my grandfather passed away a couple of decades ago. At the time, I considered throwing it out but decided to hang on to it as I knew at some point this assortment would come in handy. The contents of the jar aren't anything special, just a mix of odd size screws made with different threads

and heads, of all different lengths and sizes. Most of the time the jar sits there and collects dust. More than once, my wife has tried to throw it out, but each time I have rescued it from its imminent demise. Over the holidays I had an old wooden stool which needed repair. I was searching for a certain length and diameter screw to sturdy up the stool. The idea of driving to town on a cold winter day to buy a 30-cent screw was not appealing to me. I suddenly remembered the old jar sitting patiently in the basement waiting for me to need it. As I pulled the jar down, rummaged through its contents and found the exact screw I needed to fix my stool, the idea for this newsletter article was born.

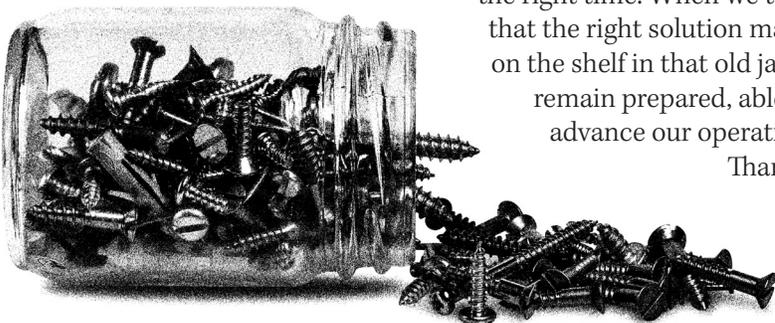
As I quickly repaired the stool, I thought about how a decision made more than 20 years earlier affected the task in front of me. I also realized how directly that lesson applies to my role as Manager of MCIA. The lesson relating to MCIA means, at certain times, items or ideas that appear outdated or unnecessary can still have value and can be critically important to keeping an organization running smoothly and progressing with the times.

In any organization, it is easy to focus only on what is new, for example, new technology, new processes, or new initiatives. Identifying and implementing these items are often important and vitally necessary for progress. However, organizations which operate effectively rarely do so by replacing everything at once or immediately giving up on a previously good idea. Success arises from not only identifying and implementing new ideas, but sometimes from knowing when to utilize something that has already proven its worth to help re-invigorate an old idea. That is to say, knowing when it is time to dig through that old jar of screws.

At MCIA, that "jar of screws" can take many forms. It may be a long-standing procedure that still works well, it may be institutional knowledge of employees gained over years of learning and experience, or it may be the relationships carefully built with customers, growers or co-operators who we utilize to help us figure out solutions to life's daily puzzles. These things may not always be appreciated, but when a problem arises, they often provide exactly what is needed to point us in the right direction and prevent problems from becoming bigger than they already are.

Much like repairing that old stool, progress is not always about replacing what is worn or starting over. More often, it comes from recognizing what is already solid, understanding its value, and strengthening it at the right time. When we take the approach that the right solution may already be sitting on the shelf in that old jar of screws we will remain prepared, able, and poised to advance our operation in this industry.

Thank you Gramps!



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 26**

**Please mark your calendar  
so you don't miss the  
2025/2026 MCIA Annual  
Membership Meeting.**

**The meeting will take place  
at the Eagle Eye Banquet  
facility in Bath, Michigan  
on February 26, 2026.**

**Hear from your Board  
President, MSU Plant  
Breeders, MCIA Staff,  
Department of Homeland  
Security and much more.**

**We will also have CCA  
and pesticide credits  
available.**

**The meeting concludes at  
noon with a delicious lunch  
to follow.**

**Register today at  
[www.michcrop.com](http://www.michcrop.com).**

**We look forward to  
seeing you there.**



Michigan Crop Improvement Association  
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## Contact Us

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## Let's get social!

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**Michigan Crop Improvement  
Association**

## Calendar of Events 2026

<b>Feb. 16</b>	<i>MCIA Office</i>
Order Changes for Spring Foundation Seed Due	
<b>Feb. 26</b>	<i>Eagle Eye Banquet Center, Bath, MI</i>
MCIA Annual Membership Meeting	
<b>April 14</b>	<i>Virtual</i>
AOSCA Regional Meeting	
<b>April 15</b>	<i>MCIA Office</i>
Year in Advance Seed Orders Due	
Membership Application Due	