



THE NEWSBEET

Game Plan 2020

*Maximizing RWST and Increasing
Efficiencies During Harvest,
Delivery and Processing*



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

ANNUAL EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS HIGHLIGHTS

MEET MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY'S NEW VP OF OPERATIONS

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED AND SUGAR QUEEN CROWNED

COMMUNITY CORNER: LET'S GO TO THE COUNTY FAIR!



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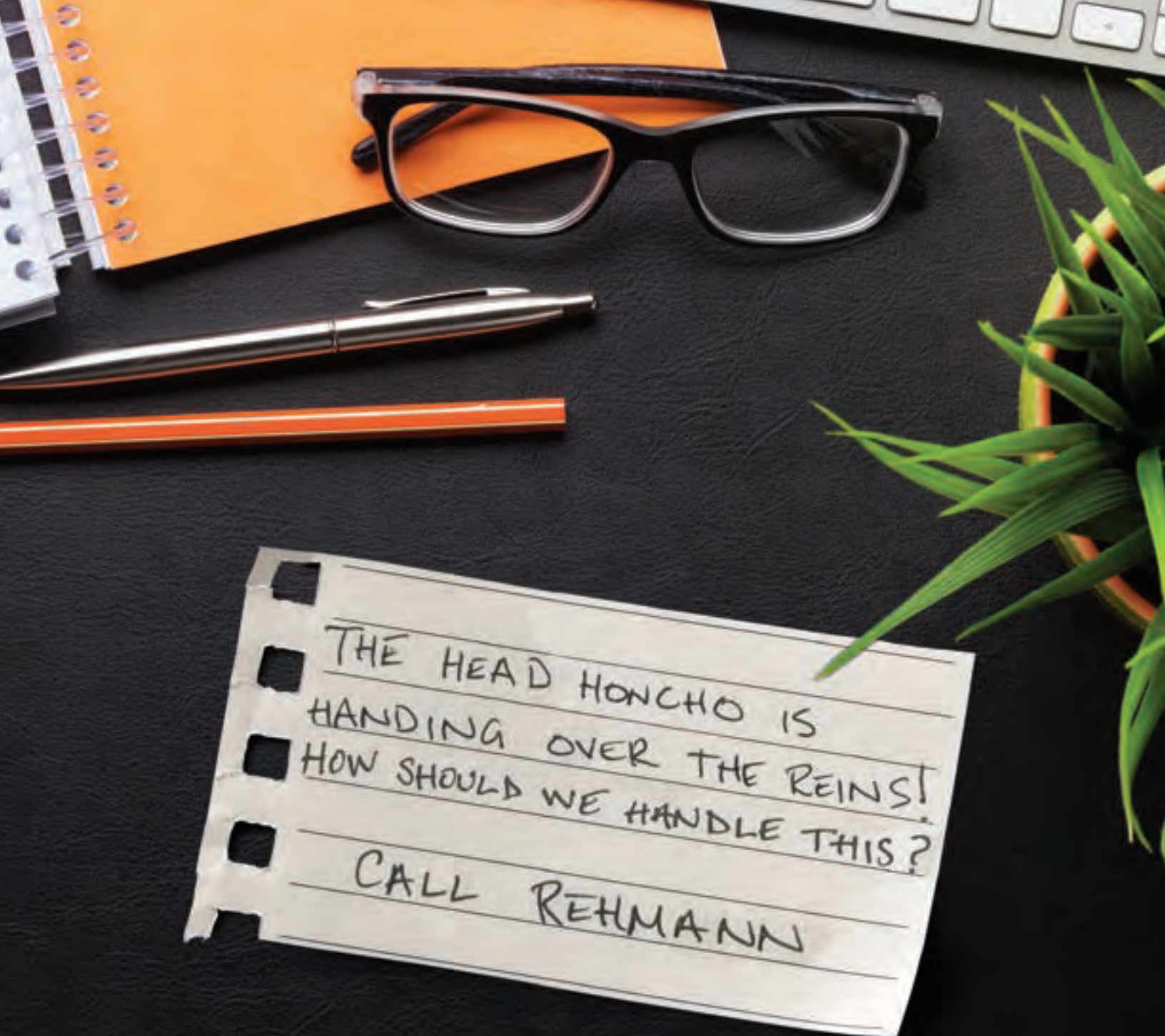
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ROOT OF THE BUSINESS

By Mark Flegenheimer, President and Chief Executive Officer

LOOKING BACK AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As we approach another harvest season, we look back at the challenges Mother Nature threw at us during the wet, cold spring and realize despite the best laid plans we do not fully control the destiny of our crop. Since we are not in full control of the outcome of the yield and quality of the sugarbeet crop, does that mean we should not make ambitious, far-reaching plans? I think the opposite is true — since we cannot control the weather, we must precisely use every agronomic tool and operations tactic available to minimize the negative impacts from adverse weather and maximize the positives.

In this issue of *The Newsbeet*, we focus on ways to maximize recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) as this is the single biggest economic driver of our beet payment (other than sugar price). When looking at the economics of the sugarbeet business, it is important to remember we sell sugar, not sugarbeets. We have a goal of increasing the RWST to 300 pounds while maintaining at 30-ton yield. While this may be a lofty target, it will drive the right behavior to make our co-op a success.

Also, in this issue, we introduce Jason Lowry, our new Vice President of Operations. Jason's wide range of experiences in both the beet and cane industries will help our cooperative achieve world-class factory performance.

With higher RWST, we see lower costs per unit of production (sugar). All costs, including harvesting and trucking, beet receiving, factory labor, chemicals and operating supplies are lowered on a per-hundredweight

basis when RWST increases. As these costs go down, the beet payment goes up.

Our co-op's agronomy and research teams work tirelessly to advise growers on what, when and how fungicides should be applied, which varieties should be planted in each field, and how much and which nutrients should be applied and when. The co-op's ag group does not sell any products; their job is to give, unbiased, expert advice so our shareholders can grow a profitable crop of sugarbeets.

In today's world, where seed varieties are constantly improving, and diseases and weeds are evolving rapidly, it is critically important that we respond quickly. This can be very challenging, but in order to maximize RWST and the beet payment, we must stay on the cutting edge of these new and improving techniques and varieties.

This issue of *The Newsbeet* also highlights the younger members of our co-op family, as well as some of our very dedicated and talented employees. These stories give me the confidence that our co-op will be in very good hands as these folks become our future shareholders and leaders. In 10 or 20 years, some of these younger people will look back and laugh at our goal of 300 pounds RWST and 30-ton yields as they harvest crops that have greatly surpassed these targets.

Good luck with the 2019 crop. I hope you have a safe and bountiful harvest. ■

“Since we are not in full control of the outcome of the yield and quality of the sugarbeet crop, does that mean we should not make ambitious, far-reaching plans?”

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IN THE FIELD: CREATING A GAME PLAN FOR 2020 AND BEYOND



By James Ruhlman, Executive Vice President

As we look ahead five years at Michigan's sugar industry, we find ourselves in a state of recalibration with hope and help on the horizon. It is interesting to see that the same core drivers of sugar content, volume, sales price and recovery that existed 100 years ago, remain the driving forces that determine the financial viability for our cooperative today. These factors, along with harvest efficiency, will be our focus as we enter the 2020s.

Volume and Sugar Content: Before the last several years, we had seen a rather steady climb on our yield charts with sugars holding firm, and for the most part disease was held in check. The paradigm shift in 2008, where Roundup Ready seed was available for production, was a game changer for us and it still is. Unfortunately, many of those seed varieties had a disease package that was sufficient back then, but not under the tremendous leafspot pressures that exist in our growing region today. New seed varieties with

stronger disease packages are becoming available, but they are perhaps not as strong on yield as some of the racehorse varieties we have seen in the past. Our focus remains on recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST), and that starts with a seed with high sugar potential and a strong disease package. Agronomy and research efforts will also be intensified as we look for an improved raw material entering our factories. How we care for and store the crop plays a huge part, but it all starts with seed and we expect varieties with high sugar and stronger disease packages to develop further over the next five years.

The recalibration part of our business relates to yield expectations. While a 32 tons-per-acre company average might be achievable over the next five years, a 30 tons-per-acre average might be more realistic. This leads to the question: from where will the needed volume for our factories come? When the upgrades to the Croswell expansion are complete, our daily slice capacity will increase by 2,000 tons per day. At a 30 tons-per-acre average and an increase in slice capacity, we will need to plant 100 percent of our shares in order to operate our factories at full capacity.

Recovery: Some look at our extraction rates and view that as our measurement of recovery, but several other factors play into "recovery" as well. Pile shrink, respiration and sugar loss all are factors that need continued focus. Slicing more

tons per day (as will be achieved through the Croswell upgrades) helps us slice more beets earlier in the year, which helps with recovery; however, more focus going forward will be on storage and a reduction of losses overall. We will do this through technology, new procedures, partnerships and added research manpower.

Harvest Efficiency: With the unemployment rates at extremely low levels and the cost of capital for trucks at extremely high levels, we have begun to look at ways for increased harvest efficiencies at the piling grounds and at the field level for our shareholders. Turnaround times at the yards will be a major focus area combined with an effort to receive more beets at the non-peak delivery times. There is an increased interest in field piling combined with MAUS operations, and there seems to be a possibility that more beets could be delivered at night through custom trucking. An ad-hoc committee has been formed to study the various possibilities.

As we enter into the future, it feels like we have had to take a step back before we could move forward. It still feels like we are on the right road; it has just been a little rougher than "normal" over the past few years. ■



Political Pulse Points of Lansing & Washington

By John Boothroyd, Manager of Government Relations

A LOOK AT LANSING

FIXING THE ROADS In January, Michigan inaugurated a new governor, Democrat Gretchen Whitmer. Gov. Whitmer's campaign focused on one signature issue: "fix the damn roads." She wasted no time in releasing a proposal to increase road funding, a 45-cent gas tax increase designed to raise an additional \$2 billion for road repairs and maintenance. This would be a 171% increase from the current gas tax, which sits at 26.3 cents, and gives Michigan the highest gas tax in the country. The proposal received push back, especially from farmers and agribusiness companies who use a disproportionate amount of gas and diesel, but do not frequently use the state's most-travelled roads (mainly in metro Detroit) where the bulk of the funding would go. The agriculture community also was alarmed by the governor seemingly coming out in favor of lower truck weights during an interview earlier this year.



The Democrats and Republicans in the legislature have released competing road funding proposals. The House Republicans released a plan to phase in an additional \$542.5 million in road funding by redirecting the state sales tax on gasoline to roads. House Democrats released a counterproposal that would increase road funding by \$2 billion by upping the 4.25% small businesses tax and the 6% corporate tax to 8%. Since neither of these proposals features a gas tax increase or a change in truck weights, it appears that Gov. Whitmer's proposal is, for now, dead in the water. However, Whitmer has stated she will not sign a budget that does not include a \$2 billion increase in road funding, setting up a potential confrontation between her and the legislature as we get closer to the end of the fiscal year.

BEET JUICE LEGISLATION While the state government's focus on road conditions has led to some potentially troubling proposals, there also are opportunities. Every winter, the Michigan Department of Transportation and local municipalities spread millions of pounds of salt on the roads to prevent ice buildup. Salt causes roads to deteriorate, damages cars and hurts water quality. Products derived from beet molasses – known in the industry as "beet juice," – however, not only have none of those negative consequences, but would prevent ice from forming on the roads at considerably lower temperatures than salt. While some municipalities are already utilizing beet juice, Michigan Sugar hopes this byproduct can become part of the solution to Michigan's road problem. State Sen. Roger Victory, R-Hudsonville, and State Rep. Brian Elder, D-Bay City, both have introduced bills that would direct MDOT to launch a pilot study into using beet juice as a road deicer. The passage of this legislation would be a win for Michigan Sugar, road conditions and water quality throughout the state.



WHAT'S UP IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

In spite of the unprecedented 100-vote defeat of their amendment to gut the sugar program during the Farm Bill debate last year, opponents of the sugar program are at it again. U.S. Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pennsylvania, introduced two amendments to the annual agriculture appropriations legislation that would have effectively ended the sugar program. While these amendments were ruled out of order and did not receive a vote, they serve as a stark reminder that our opponents will continue their attempts to destroy the domestic sugar industry. ■



John Boothroyd is Michigan Sugar Company's Manager of Government Relations. He joined the company in 2018 after working four years for U.S. Representative John Moolenaar.



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FROM THE AG DEPARTMENT PLAYBOOK:

Maximizing RWST

By Corey Guza, Ph.D., Director of Agronomy

Maximizing recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) is a critical component to optimizing Michigan Sugar Company factory efficiency and the grower beet payment

Recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) is dependent on many factors. Planting date, harvest date, variety, nitrogen management, pest control, nutrient management, harvest quality, storage conditions and weather are some of the key components to optimizing RWST. Some of these factors are easier to manage than others. Weather is out of our control and it can influence all of the other factors. The important thing is to achieve the best possible results with the conditions we are given. Ten pounds of RWST can have a huge impact on factory efficiency regardless if company average RWST is 250 or 300.

Much discussion has centered around the harvest date component of RWST. Clearly, a later harvest results in a higher RWST. If later harvest results in increased RWST why harvest beets early? Unfortunately, Michigan Sugar Company and its grower-owners do not have the ability to bring in all of the beets in a one-week window late in October. Both volume of beets (tons) and RWST are important to maximize the factory assets, which is also important to the beet payment. This is also where storage comes into play. The concept of later harvest and improved storage techniques are opportunities for Michigan Sugar Company and many ideas are being tried and tested. Improvements to the Sebewaing hoop building and concepts such as late harvest beets are examples of innovative ideas that have been tried and implemented.

VARIETIES

New varieties are coming into market that have acceptable tonnage at high levels of RWST. HM-9908 was the highest ranking RWST variety in the Michigan Sugar Company Official Variety Testing trials in 2018 and had an average tonnage yield from four locations of 34 tons per acre. SX-1264 was the highest ranking RWST variety in the Sugarbeet Advancement trials in 2018 and had an average ton-per-acre yield from six locations of 34.7 tons per acre. While variety selection should not be made based on RWST and tonnage alone, these results indicate that high RWST varieties do not have the “yield drag” from low tonnage as they had in the past. Seed companies are continuing to work on new varieties like C-G675 and B-1703 that have a balance of good RWST and high tonnage. The next few years will continue to bring some exciting new varieties to the Michigan Sugar Company growing region.

NITROGEN MANAGEMENT

Nitrogen rates are one of the most debated topics among growers, researchers and Michigan Sugar Company agricultural staff. Growers are applying as little as 20 to 40 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre and some as high as 200 pounds per acre. University and Michigan Sugar Company research indicate that 120 to 160 pounds of nitrogen per acre is plenty to maximize tons per acre. This begs the question: why is there such a range in rates applied by growers?

MANURE Growers are using manure as a source of nitrogen, other nutrients and organic matter. The main other nutrient growers get from manure is phosphorus. Nitrogen availability from manure can be variable. Type, time of application and time between application and incorporation into the soil all have an influence on the amount of nitrogen available to the crop. It is best to have manure tested to know the nutrient content. Fields may have thousands of gallons of manure applied the fall before and growers believe they should have more than sufficient nitrogen based on levels in the manure, but yet the sugarbeets are deficient in the spring. This can be due to nitrogen loss from a delay between application and incorporation. A delay in incorporation by as much as one day can result in a significant loss of nitrogen (Table 1). Mineralization rate of nitrogen can also affect availability. Cold springs can result in less release of nitrogen from the soil than warm springs. Applying a low rate of starter fertilizer can help mitigate this situation.

NITROGEN APPLICATION Growers typically apply commercial nitrogen in the following ways: Broadcast pre-plant, two by two, side-dress, foliar or a combination of the methods. Nitrogen rate can be highly influenced by these methods of application. For example, if a grower applies all of their nitrogen broadcast pre-plant, either as urea or 28% urea-ammonium nitrate (UAN), and the growing region experiences heavy rain events like the spring of 2019, a larger amount of nitrogen can be lost, due to leaching, than a year with more normal spring rainfall. Growers also may experience lower nitrogen use efficiency from side-dress nitrogen applications when July and August are drier than normal as was the case in 2018.

NITROGEN TYPE The majority of nitrogen in the Michigan Sugar Company growing region is either applied as Urea or 28% UAN. Both types are good for supplying nitrogen to the sugarbeet crop. The use or lack of use of stabilizers can affect nitrogen availability and utilization. With Urea, typically nitrogen is

TABLE 1: Nitrogen Volatilization Loss From Manure Application (%)

METHOD OF APPLICATION	WEATHER CONDITIONS				
	AVERAGE	COOL WET	COOL DRY	WARM WET	WARM DRY
Injected	0	0	0	0	0
Incorporated 1 day	25	10	15	25	50
Incorporated 2 day	30	13	19	31	57
Incorporated 3 day	35	15	22	38	65
Incorporated 4 day	40	17	26	44	72
Incorporated 5 day	45	20	30	50	80
Not Incorporated	66	40	50	75	100
Irrigated	Above +10%	Above +10%	Above +10%	Above +10%	Above +10%
Standing/Cover Crop/Stubble	35	25	25	40	50

Method of manure application and weather condition after application can influence nitrogen loss.

TABLE 2: Nitrogen Application To Deficient Beets Mid-Season

								TRIAL QUALITY: GOOD		
TREATMENT	RATE/ACRE	LBS N/A	\$/ACRE*	RWSA	RWST	TONS/ACRE	% SUC	% CJP	AMINO N	COLOR**
Coron (25-0-0)	10 qt	6.2	1129	8633	308	28	20.2	96	3.4	5.7
N Pact (26-0-0) NIS	10 qt 0.25%	6.5	1125	8598	309	27.9	20.3	96	3	5.3
28% N	10 gal	30	1122	8575	305	28.1	20.3	95.4	3.9	5.8
28% N	20 gal	60	1109	8482	297	28.6	19.8	95.2	5.4	6.7
Untreated		0	1078	8243	309	26.7	20.3	96	3.7	4.8
Average			1097	8506	305.4	27.9	20.2	95.8	3.9	5.7
LSD (P=.05)			86	657	11.7	2.3	0.5	0.8	1.3	0.8
CV%			4.2	4.1	2	4.5	1.4	0.5	17.4	7.1

*Return per acre minus nitrogen product cost **The higher the number the more "green" the sugarbeet tops look.

stabilized using Environmentally Smart Nitrogen (ESN) or SUPERU. Environmentally Smart Nitrogen utilizes a polymer coating that allows nitrogen to diffuse out and into the crop when conditions are right. SUPERU contains urease and nitrification inhibitors that guard against denitrification, leaching and volatilization. Agrotain Plus, Agrotain Ultra and Limus are three products used with 28% UAN. Agrotain Plus works like SUPERU to reduce above and in-ground nitrogen loss. Agrotain Ultra and Limus are urease inhibitors that reduce volatilization loss only. Each of these products can each be utilized to effectively maximize nitrogen use and efficiency which can result in the highest possible RWST.

Since nitrogen from ESN is not readily available due to the polymer coating, it should be mixed at a ¼ to ⅓ ratio with Urea to have some nitrogen readily available for crop use. This is especially important if all of the nitrogen is applied pre-plant. With SUPERU the ratio mixed with other nitrogen product can be higher, for example, ½ or greater since the ammonium portion of

SUPERU can still be taken up by the plants. With 28% UAN, the Agrotain products and Limus can be mixed with all of the nitrogen for the same reasons SUPERU can be used as a higher percentage of applied nitrogen.

Foliar nitrogen products are great for correcting nitrogen deficiency and optimizing tonnage and RWST. There are a number of products that are considered slow-release nitrogen. These products are typically applied at a rate of one gallon of product per acre. Also fitting into this category is 20-20-20, which is typically applied at 2 to 5 pounds of product per acre. In 2019, growers may be more interested in foliar nitrogen applications due to the increased risk of loss with the higher-than-normal rainfall this spring. On-farm research conducted by Michigan Sugar Company in 2009 indicated that a slow-release nitrogen applied at 2.5 gallons per acre foliar improved tonnage and maintained sugar content, whereas 28% UAN applied foliar at higher rates improved tonnage but increased risk for RWST decline in the sugarbeets (Table 2).

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Dr. Corey Guza is the Director of Agronomy at Michigan Sugar Company. He works with staff to identify research opportunities, evaluate data and assists field consultants and growers with educational training and support. Corey rejoined the company in 2016.

PEST CONTROL

Leafspot management (both *Alternaria* and *Cercospora*) is the first thing that growers think about when maximizing RWST. Leaves are the photosynthetic factories for the sugarbeet plant so they need to be healthy to optimize sugar production. Protecting leaves early has been the key to success when managing the leafspot complex. With early protection, it is possible to keep leaves healthy all season long. This season-long protection will result in higher RWST. Michigan Sugar Company's crop records illustrate the value of a strong spray program for maximizing RWST (Figure 1).

Root health also is important for RWST as *Rhizoctonia* Crown Rot and *Aphanomyces* are two root diseases that can be strong yield robbers. A Sugarbeet Advancement study indicated the impact *Rhizoctonia* can have on a sugarbeet crop can be severe to both RWST and tonnage (Table 3). For this reason, many growers are using a three-step strategy when managing *Rhizoctonia*: planting resistant varieties, Quadris applied in-furrow and Quadris applied at the 4- to 8-leaf stage. It is important to manage *Rhizoctonia* preventatively. Once *Rhizoctonia* starts in a field it can be difficult to stop.

Aphanomyces is another root disease that can cause significant damage to the crop. Fortunately, *Aphanomyces* has been less of an issue in recent years. Some of the reasons for less injury are: planting early, sugarbeet seedling growth in cooler weather reduces *Aphanomyces* disease risk, adopting the use of Tach 20 (Tachigaren seed treatment at the 20-gram-per-unit rate) as a standard seed treatment, and planting more tolerant varieties.

Applying sugarbeet lime also helps reduce sugarbeet root disease. While sugarbeet lime helps with plant nutrition, multiple research studies have documented the value of lime applications in reducing root disease. Dr. Carol Windels, Ph.D., from the University of Minnesota, conducted several studies in the 2000s documenting the value of beet lime. Lime application rates, in her studies, ranged from 5 to 30 tons per acre. Those rates all showed a benefit to reducing disease and improving yield. Local data in the Michigan Sugar growing region also shows a benefit from beet lime reducing disease (Table 4).

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Nitrogen is the big nutrient generally talked about when maximizing RWST but balancing all nutrients is important for RWST optimization. Global Positioning System — or GPS — soil sampling and tissue testing are a couple of tools that can be used to help balance nutrition.

Sugarbeets are high users of potassium. Crop removal rates are as high as 7 pounds of actual potassium per ton of sugarbeet produced that is 466 pounds of potash per acre on a 40-ton sugarbeet crop. Sugarbeets also may luxury consume potassium. This can be an issue late in the year when harvest nears as potassium also can be an impurity. Michigan Sugar Company is investigating ways to improve the understanding of the role potassium plays in maximizing RWST.

Sulfur is a nutrient that growers did not need to be concerned about a few years ago. Due to increased use of clean coal, sulfur deposition from the atmosphere has decreased and now sulfur deficiency is starting to increase in all crops. Nitrogen and potassium uptake and utilization are dependent upon sulfur. If sulfur levels are too low in plants, additional nitrogen and potassium applications may not have the desired effect of improving sugarbeet yield (Figure 2).

continued on page 14

FIGURE 1: 2018 Crop Records, Spray Applications

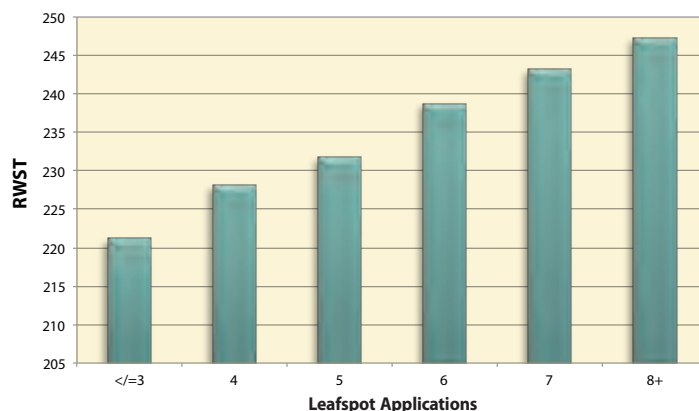


TABLE 3: Rhizoctonia Control with Quadris

TREATMENT	RWST	T/A	DEAD BEETS/ 1,200 FT
In-furrow + 6-8 Lf	265	29.8	40
In-furrow	263	26.5	179
2-4 Lf	255	23.8	394
Check	245	22.8	587

Susceptible variety B-18RR4N; Strong Rhizoctonia present; Quadris was applied at standard rates

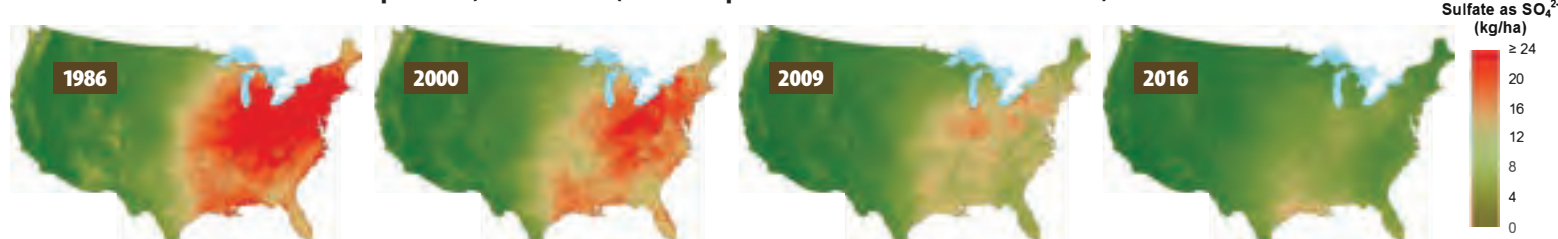
TABLE 4: Lime Trial, Bay City

LIME RATE (TONS/A)	*DEAD BEETS/ 1,200 FT	**APH (0-5)
0	81	2.63
2	79	2.31
4	73	1.88
6	72	1.81

**Rhizoctonia Dead/Dying Beets per 1,200 foot of row*

***Aphanomyces 0 = no symptoms 5 = severe damage*

FIGURE 2: Sulfate Ion Wet Deposition, 1986-2016 (Sulfur deposition has decreased over time)



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Boron is a nutrient that “sets up” the ability to move sugars throughout the plant. Boron is important in building phloem tube structure. The phloem tubes are straw-like structures that transport sugars from the source (for sugar, the source is the leaves) to the root that is considered the sink. While Boron is often termed the “sugar moving” nutrient, that is technically not the case. Boron actually facilitates the movement of sugar in the plants by allowing the plant to maintain “healthy straws” that allows sugars to easily move from the leaves to the roots. The reason Boron is termed the “sugar mover” is that studies have shown increases in RWST when Boron is applied to the crop (Table 5). Boron is mobile in the soil like nitrogen. Boron is a part of organic matter and will be available as organic matter breaks down. Practices that favor organic matter buildup in the soil will help improve Boron nutrition such as planting cover crops and manure application. Boron can become temporarily unavailable in the soil during times of low moisture availability. Low amounts of applied Boron can correct deficiency. These are some of the reasons foliar applications of Boron are effective. Some growers are also including Boron in 2X2 starter fertilizer applications.

TABLE 5: Foliar Boron Applications

TREATMENT	TIMING**	RWST	TONS/A	LOCATION**
Boron*	6 lf + 21 days	277	24.3	SVREC
Check		265	23.5	SVREC
Boron*	July 22 + 21 days	264	29.7	Sandusky
Check		255	30	Sandusky

*Boron applied was Max-In Boron at 1 pt/A **2 Foliar applications where made.
SVREC study was conducted by MSU research at the Saginaw Valley Research and Education Center.

Sugarbeet growth and development is optimized when soil pH is 7.0 or slightly above. This is different than corn and soybeans which are optimized with a pH of 6.8 to 7.0. It is better for sugarbeet production to have a little “too much” lime than not enough. The main risk of over-liming for any crop is potential lack of micro-nutrient availability particularly, Manganese, Zinc, and Boron (Chart 1). The lack of micro-nutrient availability with these three elements can be overcome by applying the nutrients in starter fertilizer, 2x2 or broadcast applications, or foliar applications or both. The Calcium in lime can also be utilized for improving plant cell wall structure. Improved cell wall structure can help the plant ward off foliar leaf disease.

HARVEST QUALITY

Topping quality can have a strong impact on RWST. Leaves and petioles contain a high percentage of the nutrients that become impurities when sugar extraction is occurring. Michigan Sugar Company harvest studies illustrate the impact that topping quality can have on RWST (Charts 2, 3). The challenge with tops and RWST, unfortunately, extends into storage as well. The loss of RWST from poor topping can be compounded in storage (Chart 4, Photo 1 and 2).

CHART 1: Relation Between Nutrient Availability and pH

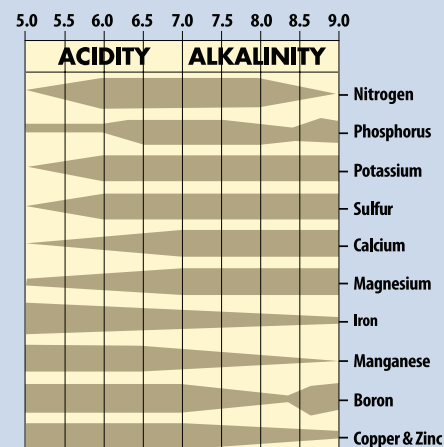


CHART 2: RWST Effect on Payment

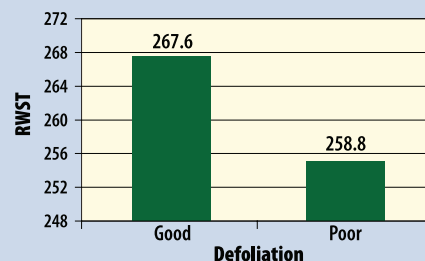


CHART 3: \$ / Ton Payment

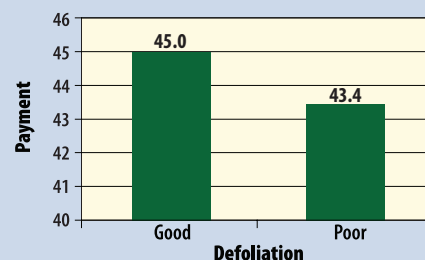
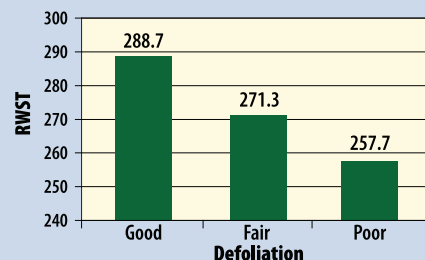


CHART 4: RWST After Storage



Examples of beets used in the RWST after-storage defoliation study.

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Beet Logistics

By Riley Olsen, Agricultural Supply Chain Manager

Ways to increase efficiency and quality when harvesting and delivering your sugarbeets

The agricultural supply chain at Michigan Sugar Company is a set of activities and resources that enable our beet crop to be harvested and delivered to the factory for production. A key performance indicator of the supply chain is commonly referred to as efficiency. Efficiency is the amount of output in relation to the total input in harvesting and delivering the crop. By thinking efficiently as a co-op, we can fully utilize our labor, equipment, time and energy. Another key performance indicator in the agricultural supply chain is quality. The overall goal when focusing on quality is to prevent sugar loss and provide a beet that is suitable for the factory. When working toward an efficient and high-quality supply chain, numerous constraints are present.

TABLE 1. PERCENTAGE OF SUGARBEETS SLICED BY LOCATION

FACTORY	PERCENTAGE SLICED
BAY CITY	39%
CARO	18%
CROSWELL	19%
SEBEWAING	24%

First and foremost, variable factory capacities dictate where the crop needs to be delivered. This constraint is responsible for some added freight mileage and costs that cannot be avoided. In the most recent campaign, we saw the slice variance between factories (Table 1). There currently are efforts being made to reduce this inefficiency; Croswell is currently working through enhancements to increase the slice rate that will decrease the added costs of long hauls to one of the other three factories.

Another constraint that reduces efficiency in the supply chain is delivery timing. When planning your deliveries this upcoming year, consider delivering outside of the peak delivery times. The recent freight study conducted by the consultants, enVista, LLC, determined that 45% of

deliveries occurred between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. If deliveries are planned outside of this peak window, you can expect increased efficiencies in the harvest and delivery process. The greatest impact of delivering outside of peak hours will be a reduction in the time spent waiting.

Next, as we look at the quality side of the supply chain there are a few points of emphasis that will ensure a high-quality beet going into the factory. The first step in the process that is critical to quality is the topping function. Although this is not a new concept, it is one that is important to keep the factories running smoothly. As we get closer to harvest, please take time to ensure toppers are in good condition and suitable to clear foliage. This past campaign we had numerous occasions where the factory slice rates were slowed due to excess foliage.

The second area of focus within quality is the harvest process itself. According to a British Sugar 2015 harvest assessment, root breakage was responsible for 1.13 tons per acre of loss during the harvest process. Working to mitigate losses during harvest could yield strong results as a co-op. At the end of the day, the goal is to deliver as much of the (sugar) crop to the factories as we can. To further increase the quality of the crop, take caution when loading the beets for delivery. Minimizing breakage in this stage can further reduce sugar losses during the harvest and transportation stages.

Each of these constraints presents a unique challenge and at the end of the day can impact the bottom line. As we get closer to the start of this upcoming campaign, consider ways to mitigate the constraints on efficiency and quality. It is my goal to enhance the harvest and delivery function of the supply chain at Michigan Sugar Company and I look forward to working with each member of our cooperative. ■



Riley Olsen is the Agricultural Supply Chain Manager at Michigan Sugar Company. He is responsible for Maus operations across the growing area, managing beet tonnage requirements, and other supply chain and logistics-related tasks. He joined the company in May 2019.



CROP INSURANCE

How to Handle a Federal Claim

By Scott Herndon, JD, VP and General Counsel, American Sugarbeet Growers Association

By far, most farmers who grow sugarbeets in America use Federal Crop Insurance Corp. insurance to protect against the economic harm of crop loss, and the American Sugarbeet Growers Association (ASGA) has worked closely with the United States Department of Agriculture to improve their sugarbeet coverage. But FCIC rules are strict because taxpayer and private company money is involved, so farmers need to know how to navigate sometimes-complicated procedures to avoid losing a valid claim.

For starters, if you suffer crop damage during the growing season, you must notify your insurance company or agent within 72 hours of your initial discovery of damage or lost production. If you simply call your agent by phone, you must follow up in writing within 15 days.

DO NOT ignore or delay. If your failure to provide timely notice ends up preventing your insurance company from being able to properly adjust the claim, you may be denied coverage.

Next, once you provide notice, you are required to work with your insurance company to investigate the claim, providing them information and access to your field. Before you destroy or abandon the crop or put the land to another use, you must get the insurance company's consent. In some cases, you'll be asked to leave representative strips of the crop to be examined later.

Once the loss adjustor finishes their work, they usually will give you a production worksheet (different companies sometimes use different names for this) calculating the exact amount of your claim. If you disagree with the calculation, you can decline to sign it, which triggers an internal review by the company under the "controversial claim procedure" (Loss Adjustment Manual, part 1204). To bolster your claim, you may need outside experts such as local agronomists to support your position.

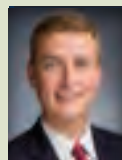
In the end, if your insurance company decides to deny the claim, you have two primary ways to challenge: If the insurance company agrees, you can enter mediation and try to negotiate a settlement. If not, you can file a case in arbitration within one year. Arbitration can be complicated and expensive, so contact a qualified lawyer early in the process, at least to get on objective opinion on whether you have a strong case.

Finally, if your claim is denied by action of the government, FCIC or USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), then you must challenge RMA directly before the USDA National Appeals Division (NAD). Appeals to the NAD must be filed within 30 days of the RMA adverse action.

Much about the FCIC sugarbeet policy in 2019 is new, and ASGA plans to track closely how USDA and insurance companies implement it around the country this year. If problems come up, please let us know so we can get involved in appropriate ways, including intervening with RMA where we see patterns.

The best way to protect yourself: Keep good records, ask lots of questions, and follow good farming practices. ■

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this article does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content and materials are for general informational purposes only.



Scott Herndon is the Vice President and General Counsel of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association (ASGA). The ASGA represents the entire United States sugarbeet industry which includes 10,000 family farmers in 11 producing states (California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming). He is licensed to practice law by the Supreme Court of the United States, the District of Columbia Bar and the Florida Bar.

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 - **2019 Sanilac County \$1,250 - \$40/acre**
 - **2019 Tuscola County \$1,350 - \$38/acre**

Source: Sahr Crop Insurance



After 20 years, Director of Research Jim Stewart prepares to say goodbye to 'the perfect job'

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations



The way Jim Stewart sees it, he has "the perfect job."

A self-described, shy introvert, the Nampa, Idaho, native says he was never cut out to work in an office or laboratory where interacting with a lot of other people is commonplace. He prefers the great outdoors and spending his time in sugarbeet research plots.

"Plants don't talk back," jokes Stewart, the Director of Research for Michigan Sugar Company. "I'm better at this than I would be at other things. I'm good at this."

Now, after 20 years with the company, Stewart is planning to retire in the coming months. At age 69, he says he's looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Pam, and their five children and nine grandchildren. He says he will likely spend more time camping and fishing — two of his favorite hobbies — and he and his wife have a month-long trip to Europe planned next year.

"Really, nothing big," he says in his humorous, yet under-the-radar way. "Probably sleep more."

A lifetime of experience

The son of a career sugar man, Stewart came to Michigan Sugar Company in 1999, bringing with him a lifetime of experience in agricultural study that started as a boy on his family farm in Idaho, where sugarbeets were among the crops grown.

"Sugarbeets have been in my life since the day I was born," said Stewart, who is one of four children of Jack and Wilda Stewart. "I remember weeding beets by hand in the 1960s. My dad ... if there was a weed, someone had better go out and get it"

Jack Stewart worked most of his career for Amalgamated Sugar Co. before rising to become Vice President of Operations for American Crystal Sugar Co. Jim's brother, Ron, also worked for Amalgamated and his brother Ken worked for BASF selling

products to sugar factories across the country. Jim Stewart said it wasn't long before he realized where his professional life may take him.

"Just being around the industry, I'd see seed salesmen and fertilizer salesmen come in and I soon discovered that being some kind of fieldman appealed to me," said Stewart.

After graduating from Twin Falls High School in Idaho in 1968, Stewart attended community college for two years at the College of Southern Idaho, studying chemistry.

"My dad was a chemist," explained Stewart.

Jim and Pam Stewart were married in 1970 and moved back to his family's farm in Nampa. He said it was then he realized a career as an agronomist would be most fulfilling. He earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Brigham Young University in 1974 and his master's degree in agronomy from North Dakota State University in 1978.

While at NDSU, he worked as a research assistant for Alan G. Dexter, a leading expert in weed control and herbicide use in sugarbeets in North America. Stewart calls Dexter one of his greatest mentors.

"He really encouraged me through my research and guided me down the right path to a career," said Stewart.

Upon graduating, Stewart went to work as an Ag Extension Agent for University of Idaho Extension and later joined Norton Chemical Process Products working to help make field recommendations for sugarbeet herbicides being developed by the company. Through several corporate name changes, that job took him from North Dakota to California to Arkansas and back to Idaho.

"The company kept changing names through mergers and each time there was a negative impact," said Stewart. At the urging of his father, Stewart applied for a job as Chief Agronomist at Michigan Sugar Company in 1999.

JIM REMEMBERS

My father died on my very first day of work at Michigan Sugar.

He had been sick, but nobody knew he was near death. Bob Braem was showing me around when I got the news and he took me back to the office. I was very much in shock. Julie Perry went into Mark Flegenheimer's office and came out and told me they were flying me home and told me to take the time I needed. I knew then that this was going to be a very good company for which to work.

The thing I have enjoyed most about this job has been working on a team that discovers new ways of improving sugarbeet yields and sugar content. It seems every couple of years there is a new disease or problem that needs to be solved. We have worked on methods for controlling root aphids, rhizomania, rhizoctonia, nematodes, aphanomyces, cercospora and just recently alternaria.

Agronomic research has demonstrated the advantages of proper planting dates,

harvest dates, plant populations, fertility and row spacing. We have also helped to improve stand establishment with priming and seed treatment trials.

I have worked with great people here at Michigan Sugar Company, including Bob Braem, Brian Groulx, Corey Guza, Dennis Bischer, Elizabeth Taylor, Sherri Adams, Steve Poindexter, Rich Sylvester, Rick Gerstenberger and Jim Ruhlman. I appreciate the support they have provided. I am also thankful for the support of Mark

Flegenheimer and the Board of Directors for supporting us with state-of-the-art equipment like trucks, tractors, planters, sprayers and harvesting equipment.

My father always told me that the best way to please my bosses was to make them money. It has been extremely satisfying to be a part of an organization that helps to improve the profitability of growers and sustainability for the cooperative.

— Jim Stewart

LEFT Michigan Sugar Company Director of Research Jim Stewart holds up a sugarbeet pulled from a research plot of sugarbeets at the cooperative's piling station in Blumfield Township on July 29, 2019. Stewart joined Michigan Sugar Company in 1999 and plans to retire in the coming months.

"After the interview, it was determined I would be a better fit as Manager of Research," said Stewart. "The company moved Teresa Crook to Chief Agronomist and I became the research manager."

Stewart would eventually be named Director of Research. Crook, who now serves on Michigan Sugar Company's 13-member Board of Directors, left the company in 2003 and now works for GreenStone Farm Credit Services. Today, Corey Guza serves as Director of Agronomy for Michigan Sugar Company.

"It's been a good company to work for," said Stewart. "From the very first day, I had a good feeling about it."

RESEARCH EVOLUTION

Stewart says he has enjoyed watching the evolution of sugarbeet seed over the years as the research being undertaken by Michigan Sugar Company has led to significant improvements. He specifically mentions work done to address Rhizomania, nematodes and leafspot.

"From the year 2000 to the present, we have seen a 10-tons-per-acre increase in yield," said Stewart. "Since 2008 alone, when Roundup Ready beets were introduced, we have seen a 6- to 8-ton increase. Roundup alone has resulted in 2 tons more.

"Yield quality has really improved tremendously over this period of time."

Jim Ruhlman, Executive Vice President at Michigan Sugar Company, attributes much of that success to the work done by Stewart.

"Jim Stewart has made his mark on the Michigan Sugar industry through his diligence and his humbleness. Almost unwilling to take credit for his stellar work, Jim has gained the respect from all of us here through his credible work and his appreciation and devotion to our grower shareholders," said Ruhlman. "Jim has always had a passion for finding a solution to our most pressing agricultural threat. Whether it be a disease, pest or weed infestation, Jim was bound and determined to find a cure."

Ruhlman also praised Stewart for the relationships he has developed in the industry.

"His relationships with seed companies and agribusiness grew stronger and stronger through the years and through his leadership, our research department has become known nationally for our planning, our execution and our trustworthy results."

Working out of Michigan Sugar Company's Research Center on Mackinaw Road in Bay County's Monitor Township, Stewart says most of his days involve evaluating field trials and conducting agronomic research.

"We are constantly looking at how to best treat beets ... and seeing what technologies will work best," said Stewart. "This year, we have 47 different seed varieties in eight locations. We are really hammering on leafspot."

Guza, Michigan Sugar Company's Director of Agronomy, calls Stewart "one of the most kind and generous people" he has ever met and said it was Stewart who took the cooperative's research to the next level by standardizing procedures and making research more accurate and efficient.

"Jim has many concepts and ideas that he doesn't understand how to implement exactly but knows what the end result needs to be," said Guza. "He is constantly coming up with new and innovative ideas that may or may not be able to be implemented. Jim believes no problem is too challenging to solve if people just will work at it."

Guza said Stewart was a strong believer in increasing recoverable white sugar per acre and recoverable white sugar per ton with variety approval.

"His ideas for variety approval helped result in some of the best years for Michigan Sugar Company financially," he said.

Even after all these years, Stewart says he is still motivated by the work he and his team are doing.

"Every year, when we wrap up in the winter and look at yield quality and see where we have improved, it's very satisfying," he said. "We're doing our part to move things along and keep the growers profitable and if we can find ways to grow stronger sugarbeets, it helps us remain a strong company." ■



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Rob Clark is Director of Communications and Community Relations for Michigan Sugar Company. He is a 1995 graduate of Knox College and worked for 22 years as a journalist before joining Michigan Sugar Company in 2018. He and his wife Claire have four sons.



Michigan Sugar Company Croswell factory dates back to 1902

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

This construction photo taken in 1902, shows the southwest corner of the main building of the Sanilac Sugar Refining Company, now known as Michigan Sugar Company's Croswell factory. This crew of iron workers and painters was hard at work that day. Among the work, was hoisting filter press frames into place.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are excited to introduce a new feature in this edition of Newsbeet called Our Sweet History. It is a companion piece to the "Throwback Thursday" feature we launched earlier this year on the Michigan Sugar Company Facebook page. It features photos and stories from the past as we celebrate our company's history. Be sure to like our Facebook page and check in on Thursday mornings to take a trip down memory lane.

CROSWELL, MICHIGAN – The Sanilac Sugar Refining Company was organized by Charles Bemick of Detroit in 1901 with a factory constructed in Croswell in 1902 by the Oxnard Construction Co. A.P. Cooper and S.W. Sinsheimer served as construction engineers for the \$600,000 project.

Upon opening, the factory could process 600 tons of sugar-beets per day. Though the inaugural campaign saw 5 million pounds of sugar produced, the factory ended the year more than \$100,000 in the red.

Michigan Sugar Company took over the factory in 1906 and continues operating the plant today. This past campaign, the factory sliced more than 831,000 tons of beets and produced 179 million pounds of sugar. The company is in the midst of a five-year, \$65 million capital upgrades project at the Croswell factory. When it is complete, the factory's daily sugar-beet slicing capacity will go from 4,000 tons per day to 6,000 tons per day. ■

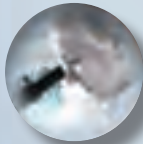


This 1902 photo shows a crew of workers helping build the Sanilac Sugar Refining Company factory in Croswell. Among the group is S.W. Sinsheimer, third from left with a white collar and tie, who was one of the construction engineers for the Oxnard Construction Co.

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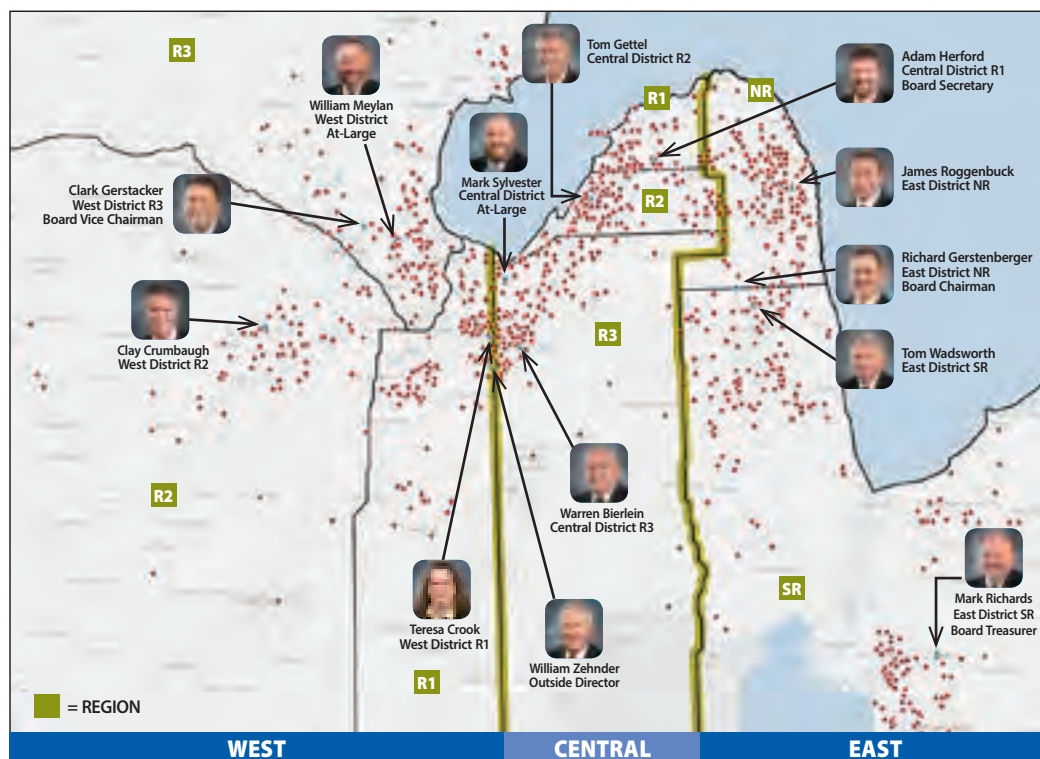
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How Our Cooperative Organization Works

By Julie Perry, Executive Assistant of Administration



Newsbeet Graphic | Riley Olsen, Karen Gerhardt and Julie Perry

When Michigan Sugar Company's cooperative was formed in 2002, bylaws were established so grower directors would represent a wide geographic area that covered our growing areas. In 2004, with the acquisition and merger of Monitor Sugar into the cooperative, the bylaws were updated and shareholders approved the current regions for a dispersed representation of all shareholders.

Michigan Sugar Company's growing region is divided into three districts, based on acreage distribution: West, Central and East (see map). Each fall, the district's nominating committees are busy seeking eligible, prospective candidates from its nearly 900 voting members to run for the Michigan Sugar Company Board of Directors ("Co-op Board") and district boards. Nominating committees have an important role for elections. They look for candidates with past board experience and leadership qualities. Co-op Board positions can be very time-consuming, due to board and committee meeting attendance and travel. On average, a Co-op Board Director will attend more than 20 meetings per year.

The Co-op Board is comprised of 13 directors elected by its members (Diagram 1). Terms of service are four years (except for outside directors, who serve up to

two-year terms). Co-op Board Directors may not serve more than four consecutive terms.

Some of the primary duties of the Co-op Board are to set the cooperative's strategic objectives, make financial decisions, hire auditors and develop policies. They also have a fiduciary duty to hire the Chief Executive Officer to run the day-to-day operations.

Growers in the three districts also elect members to serve on their district boards, according to their bylaws. These individuals participate on various committees and often act as the nominating committee. The West and Central district boards each have nine members (three from each region within those districts) and the East District has six (three from its two regions; North and South). The South Region of the East District includes a director from Ontario (per its bylaws). District board terms are three years. Canadian shareholders also are members of the Ontario Sugarbeet Growers Association (OSGA) to deal with Canadian-specific issues. The OSGA has its own Board of Directors.

There are many working parts to our cooperative that bring to mind a quote by Steve Jobs, "Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people." ■

COMMITTEES

There are numerous committees that review, in depth, various aspects of our business. Directors from the Co-op Board and district boards serve on various committees. The function, or role, of these committees is to ensure input and representation from all parts of our growing region. Members then make recommendations to the Co-op Board for consideration.

Seed Committee

- Reviews and discusses the variety approval system to ensure long-term viability of all stakeholders of the Cooperative. They then make recommendations on seed approval to the Co-op Board.

Grower Relations Committee

- Reviews and discusses the Grower Agreement, beet freight agreements, and cooperative policies and programs affecting sugarbeet production, harvest and delivery, as referred to the committee by the Co-op Board. After their review, the committee submits recommended changes to such agreements, policies and programs to the Co-op Board for approval.
- At the request of the Co-op Board, the Grower Relations Committee reviews and discusses violations of the Grower Agreement or cooperative policies by members and submits its recommendation to the Co-op Board.

Youth Advisory Committee

- This committee falls under the Michigan Sugar Company Growers Association (the "Trade Association") and is responsible for organizing youth activities to promote understanding of the sugarbeet industry.

Michigan Sugar Company Growers Political Action Committee (PAC)

- Provides the opportunity for individuals interested in the promotion of good government and the protection, preservation and furtherance of the private enterprise system to contribute to support beneficial ballot proposals and worthy candidates who believe and have demonstrated their beliefs in the principles to which the Trade Association is dedicated.

Research and Education Advisory Council (REACH)

- Provides a central trusted source of information for the grower-owners and staff of the Michigan Sugar Company, as well as advocates and participates in the advancement of the industry as a whole. The goal of the Council is to promote and assemble research projects and agronomy information from a wide range of sources, and to facilitate educational efforts that increase productivity and profitability for all stakeholders.

FLOW OF LEADERSHIP

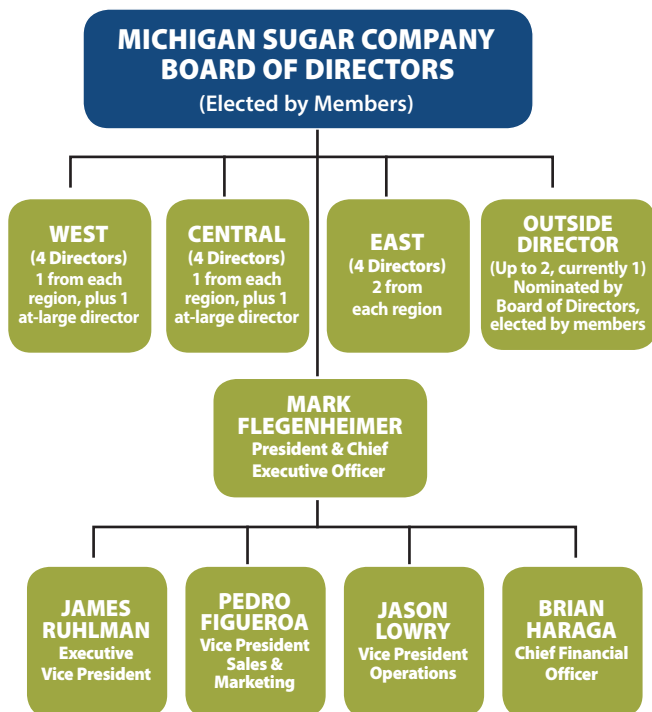


DIAGRAM 1

MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY DISTRICT BOARDS		
WEST DISTRICT (Region/Term End)	CENTRAL DISTRICT (Region/Term End)	EAST DISTRICT (Region/Term End)
Dean Haubenstricker District President (R1, 2019)	Clint Hagen District President (R2, 2019)	Jacob Maurer District President (N, 2020)
Peter Maxwell District Vice President (R3, 2020)	Tom Ziel District Vice President (R1, 2020)	Chris Guza District Vice President (N, 2021)
Kurt Hrabal District Secretary (R2, 2019)	Mark Zimmer District Secretary (R2, 2021)	Charles Lewis District Secretary (S, 2019)
David Trombley District Treasurer (R1, 2021)	Ryan Kohl District Treasurer (R3, 2021)	Dennis Gardner District Treasurer (S, 2021)
Ben Chaffin District Director (R2, 2021)	Joel Gremel District Director (R2, 2020)	Darrin Siemen District Director (N, 2019)
Dan Keenan District Director (R2, 2020)	Mark Jacoby District Director (R3, 2019)	David VanDamme (Ontario) District Director (S, 2020)
Paul Knoerr District Director (R3, 2021)	John Mossner District Director (R3, 2020)	
Terry Schindler District Director (R3, 2019)	Mike Richmond District Director (R1, 2019)	
Joe Spero District Director (R1, 2020)	Troy Schuette District Director (R1, 2021)	



Julie Perry is the Executive Assistant of Administration at Michigan Sugar Company. She worked as a paralegal prior to hiring into the Information Technology Department at Michigan Sugar Company as a help desk analyst in 1997 and began her current position in the Administration Department ten months later. She is also Editor of The Newsbeet magazine.

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Seventy-five Michigan Sugar Company employees had their milestone work anniversaries noted on May 1 during the company's annual Employee Service Awards program. Here, many of those honored pose for a photo following the event. (Photo by Rick Moreau | Moreau Visuals)

The Mastery of Self

Michigan Sugar Company employees honored for years of service

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

KOCHVILLE TOWNSHIP – An avid follower of Michigan Sugar Company's Facebook page, Roger Hallead is known for a signature one-word comment he leaves on many posts: "Awesome."



You might use the same word to describe Hallead's Michigan Sugar career that was planted more than four decades ago. He continues working today in the Agriculture Department in Caro and is one of more than 120 Michigan Sugar Company employees honored this year for milestone

work anniversaries. Seventy-five of those employees — including Hallead — chose to be recognized Wednesday, May 1, at Michigan Sugar Company's annual Employee Service Awards ceremony at Saginaw Valley State University.

With 45 years of service to company, Hallead's milestone topped this year's list, which also included 25 anniversaries of 20 years or more.

Asked how he felt about being honored for his years of service to the company, Hallead responded in typical fashion: "Awesome."

Whether it is five or 45 years, Michigan Sugar Company looks forward each year to honoring its employees. This year's program drew particular attention not only to those being honored, but to the entire Michigan Sugar workforce, which totals 930 year-round employees and an additional 1,100 seasonal workers.

"The most important asset at your company isn't something you can put your hands on. It isn't equipment or the physical plant, and it isn't data, technology or intellectual property," said Michigan Sugar Company President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer, quoting a May 2015 article in the Harvard Business Review. "The most valuable part of your company is the people — the human capital."

Organized by Michigan Sugar Company's Executive Vice President Jim Ruhlman, the theme of this year's awards program was "The Mastery of Self." The keynote speaker was Don Miguel Ruiz Jr., a Mexican author of Toltec spiritualist and neoshamanistic texts focused on ancient teachings as a means to achieve spiritual enlightenment.

Here is a look at the employees recognized during the event. To all of you, thank you for your service!

Tricia DeGroat honored with 2019 Ernest Flegenheimer Award

Senior Customer Service Representative started with Michigan Sugar Company in 1988

As she listened to Michigan Sugar Company Executive Vice President Jim Ruhlman give the introduction of this year's Ernest Flegenheimer Award winner, Tricia DeGroat's nerves began to tingle. When he mentioned this year's winner works closely on Michigan Sugar's accounts with Sam's and Walmart, she knew what was about to happen.

"When he said that, my stomach went up to here," said DeGroat, a Senior Customer Service Representative for the company, raising her hand to her throat.

The award is given each year during Michigan Sugar's Employee Service Awards program. It honors employees for their wisdom, integrity and character, the same qualities that Ernest Flegenheimer brought to Michigan Sugar as President and CEO from 1963 to 1993.

"I'm surprised and humbled," said DeGroat, who planted her career with Michigan Sugar Company in 1988 and returned to the company in 2008 after taking off 10 years to raise her children. "When I hired in, Mr. Flegenheimer was the president, so this is truly an honor. I can't get over that my name would even be mentioned for this award."

DeGroat and her husband, Ed, live in Saginaw Township and have three children — Emily, 25; Adam, 23; and Cassie, 20.

"Winning this award has certainly made my year," said DeGroat. "Really, it's made my whole career."



RECOGNITION BY DEPARTMENT & YEARS OF SERVICE

Ernest Flegenheimer Award Winners from 2006-2019

The following employees have received the prestigious Ernest Flegenheimer Award in recognition of their wisdom, integrity and character while serving Michigan Sugar Company:

2006 – John Wyett

2007 – Jim Martin

2008 – Chris Dunham

2009 – Robert Arnold

2010 – Keith Kalso

2011 – Carol Kunitzer

2012 – Julie Perry

2013 – Eugene Stewart

2014 – Rick List

2015 – George Painter

2016 – Gerald Sorenson

2017 – Ann Kovacs

2018 – Tanya Richard

2019 – Tricia DeGroat

Tricia DeGroat, Senior Customer Service Representative at Michigan Sugar Company, stands with (from left) President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer (son of Ernest Flegenheimer), Executive Vice President Jim Ruhlman and Board Chairman Richard Gerstenberger after receiving the 2019 Ernest Flegenheimer Award on Wednesday, May 1, at the company's Employee Service Awards. (Photo by Rob Clark)

5 YEARS

Cassie Sneller	Agriculture	Sebewaing
James Graves	Operations	Caro
Kinnan Justice	Operations	Caro
Roger Yates	Operations	Caro
Adam Gennrich	Operations	Sebewaing
Stephanie Wolf	Operations	Sebewaing
Brian Jolley	Operations	Croswell
Adam Tarzwell	Operations	Croswell
Jason Watkins	Operations	Croswell
Christopher Exo	Operations	Bay City
Nancy Glover	Operations	Bay City
John McLaughlin	Operations	Bay City
Nicholas Mulders	Operations	Bay City
Jesse Pinson	Operations	Bay City
William Wood	P&W	Sebewaing
April Clement	P&W	Bay City
Matthew Dezelsky	P&W	Bay City
Raphael Enser	P&W	Bay City
Shaunda Ferrel	P&W	Bay City
Antonio Jimenez Garcia	P&W	Bay City
Roby Killey Jr.	P&W	Bay City
Michael Lewis	P&W	Bay City
Craig Sieja	P&W	Bay City
Robert Taylor	P&W	Bay City

10 YEARS

Brian Groulx	Agriculture	Corporate
Tammy Karpuk	Agriculture	Corporate
Richard Radick	Operations	Caro
Kevin Romzek	Operations	Caro
Kenneth Krueger	Operations	Sebewaing
Patrick Kerbyson	Operations	Croswell
Michael Chase	Operations	Bay City
Keith Kunkel	Operations	Bay City
Nick Klein	Operations	Bay City
Allen Volz	P&W	Sebewaing
Noe Almaguer	P&W	Bay City
Crystal Basner	P&W	Bay City
Jeffery Baur	P&W	Bay City
Edward Elbers	P&W	Bay City
Jerry Escobedo	P&W	Bay City
Brian Gaeth	P&W	Bay City
Jennifer Taylor	P&W	Bay City
James Wyzkiewicz	P&W	Bay City
Chris Haller	IT	Corporate
Mike Weiss	IT	Corporate

15 YEARS

Elenora Lounsbury	Operations	Caro
Carl Nizzola	Operations	Sebewaing
James O'Hare	Operations	Sebewaing
Brian Emerson	Operations	Croswell
Kathy Morse	Accounting	Corporate

20 YEARS

David Bailey	Agriculture	Bay City
David Czapla	Operations	Caro
Richard Matuszak	Operations	Caro
Charles Noah	Operations	Caro
Terry Dressler	Operations	Sebewaing
John Volz	Operations	Sebewaing
Lance Middleton	Operations	Bay City
Joseph Monville	Operations	Bay City
Sofia Lutz	P&W	Sebewaing
Herschel Burnell III	P&W	Bay City
Keith Cooper	P&W	Bay City
Cindy Garwick	P&W	Bay City
John Marko	P&W	Bay City
Benjamin Williams Jr.	P&W	Bay City
Jim Stewart	Ag. Admin.	Corporate
Rodney Brocke	Operations	Corporate

25 YEARS

Greg Ashmore	Operations	Caro
Gerald Sorenson	Operations	Caro
Mark Wiesenauer	P&W	Bay City
Mark Flegenheimer	Executive	Corporate

30 YEARS

David Ganton	Agriculture	Bay City
Kelly Kerbyson	Operations	Croswell

35 YEARS

Robert Ondrajka	Operations	Sebewaing
Daniel Junga	Operations	Croswell
James Todd	Operations	Croswell

45 YEARS

Roger Hallead	Agriculture	Caro
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Roger Hallead, center, who has worked for Michigan Sugar Company for 45 years, was honored on May 1 during the company's annual Employee Service Awards program at Saginaw Valley State University. He is joined here by President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer, left, and Executive Vice President Jim Ruhlman. (Photo by Rob Clark)



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Jason Lowry Michigan Sugar Company's New Vice President of Operations

Michigan Sugar Company's Vice President of Operations Jason Lowry stands outside the cooperative's sugarbeet processing factory in Sebewaing in this photo taken January 24, 2019, shortly after he joined the Michigan Sugar team. (Photo by Rob Clark)

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

***From Big Sky Country,
to the land of corn to the
land down under — Jason
Lowry's journey to Michigan
Sugar Company has taken
him around the world.***

Lowry was hired earlier this year as Michigan Sugar's new Vice President of Operations. His duties include overseeing the cooperative's sugarbeet processing facilities in Bay City, Caro, Croswell and Sebewaing.

A native of Polson, Montana, Lowry earned his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Montana State University in 1997. He went on to earn his master's degree in business administration from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, in 2001.

Lowry began his career with Cargill working as a project engineer and production supervisor in Eddyville, Iowa, and Blair, Nebraska, where the company made high fructose corn syrup and ethanol. From 2003 to 2006, he served as operations manager for Sidney Sugars Inc. in Sidney, Montana, and he went on to work as Director of Factory Operations for American Crystal Sugar Co. in Moorhead, Minn., from 2006 to 2012.

And then, he headed down under.

"If anyone but Michigan Sugar Company had called, I wouldn't have come back... There is a real impetus for change and growth here," Lowry said. "It's very exciting."

From 2012 to 2018, Lowry worked for Mackay Sugar in Queensland, Australia, first as the General Manager of Operations and then as Chief Executive Officer from 2015 to 2018. Before coming to Michigan Sugar Company, he was working for Leaf Resources in Brisbane, Australia, a company converting non-food plant biomass into cellulosic sugars that have the potential to replace petroleum-derived materials used in manufacturing.

"Leaf was exciting, but not my passion," said Lowry. "My passion has always been working with sweeteners in operations."

While working at American Crystal, Lowry said he was always cognizant of the competition and held Michigan Sugar in high regard.

"If anyone but Michigan Sugar Company had called, I wouldn't have come back," he said, noting a history of stable operations and the \$65 million capital upgrades project underway at the Croswell factory that will result in a 50-percent increase in production there.

"There is a real impetus for change and growth here," Lowry said. "It's very exciting."

Michigan Sugar Company President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer said the cooperative is fortunate to have Lowry as part of its team.

"Jason brings a vast and unique set of skills to our co-op having worked in both the sugarbeet and sugar cane processing sectors," said Flegenheimer. "We are fortunate to have Jason join our management team."

Lowry and his wife Heather have three children — Aidan, 18; Keenan, 16; and Kiefer, 15. The family has purchased a home in Bay City and is transitioning back to the United States. In his free time, Lowry says a enjoys camping, gardening and reef fishing." ■



Michigan Sugar Company
Vice President of Operations
Jason Lowry. (Photo by Rick
Moreau | Moreau Visuals)



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THE INSIDE STORY: **FACTORY UPDATES**



BAY CITY

By Nick Klein, Factory Manager

Noticeable improvements during the 2018-2019 campaign include minimized downtime from the slicers and steam dryer. The addition of the third slicer allowed for lower rotations per minute (RPMs), improved cossette quality and reduced knife usage by nearly 40%.

Fiber screenings from the flume clarifier were rerouted to a bunker and disposed of rather than being blended back in with pressed pulp. This diversion reduced the amount of sand and gravel to the steam dryer resulting in significantly less equipment wear and a dryer uptime of 92%.



The Eberhardt lime kiln is being relined with new refractory.

One of the key capital projects taking place is inside the Eberhardt lime kiln which is being relined with new refractory. The existing refractory has been in service for 17 years and is where a combined 80,000 ton of coal, coke and limestone are burned in the kiln each campaign to generate calcium hydroxide "milk of lime" and carbon dioxide gas for the purification process. The 1 million pounds of new refractory is also 100% chrome-free, eliminating an environmental impact with hazardous waste for future repair and replacement.

Major upgrades to the aeration ponds include addition of two Aerzen turbo blowers spinning at 20,000 RPMs harnessed with more than 150 new diffusers to effectively treat biological oxygen demand and achieve the required



dissolved oxygen content. Piping throughout the ponds is being updated for process control improvements and a previously capped pond is being recommissioned for further water treatment.

Other capital projects include concrete replacement in the pressed



This new roadway allow trucks previously staged on South Euclid Avenue to relocate to inside the property.

pulp loadout area for feed safety purpose and construction of a new internal roadway. The new roadway will relocate trucks staged on Euclid Avenue to a location inside the property and will include a new scalehouse, as well as rumble strips to aid in cleaning truck tires before exiting the site.

The workforce made excellent progress with inter-campaign maintenance, attending annual safety trainings and implementing projects aimed to drive further process improvement while readying the factory for the next campaign. ■



LEFT Major upgrades to the aeration ponds include the addition of two Aerzen turbo blowers spinning at 20,000 RPMs.



CARO

By Jay Roszatycki, Factory Manager

Caro initiated a number of projects this inter-campaign in the factory. These projects include the installation of a new beet washer shaft, new slacker drum, diffuser bullgear, No. 4 boiler re-tube, high raw and new white pan re-tube, and granulator replacement.



Caro beet washer shaft.

After taking some significant downtime during the 2018-2019 campaign, the engineering department and factory management looked at ways to improve the reliability of the beet washer shaft. The new shaft will have a reduction of 23 lifters that will reduce the overall weight of the new shaft by almost 1,700 pounds. In addition to the paddle reduction, the placement of the paddles has been designed in a helical pattern to move the beets through the washer more efficiently. The discharge section of the beet washer has been modified to clear the beets out of the washer more effectively. This will allow the facility to run at higher water levels in the beet washer and reduce the torque needed to push the paddles on the shaft through the beets.



In November of 2018, it was discovered that many areas of our slacker drum had worn thin to the point beyond repair. We were able to patch the drum during campaign without taking downtime but needed to completely replace it this summer.

During the 2018 inter-campaign, it was discovered that two teeth were damaged on the diffusion tower bullgear. Due to long lead times, the repair could not be made last year and Caro was forced to run all campaign with the damaged gear. The old gear has been removed and the new gear is now in position. ■

RIGHT, BELOW A damaged diffusion tower bullgear was removed and a new bullgear was installed this summer.



LEFT A new slacker drum was installed this summer. The old drum had worn too thin to be repaired and work efficiently.



THE INSIDE STORY: **FACTORY UPDATES**



CROSWELL

By Robert Powers, Factory Manager

Michigan Sugar Company's Board of Directors agreed to invest in the Croswell Factory to increase slicing capacity by 50%.

Why improve the Croswell facility? The East District harvests, on average, about 1.7 million tons of beets per year. A 10-year average slice at Croswell is in the area of 4,100 tons per day, depending on a number of factors, including sugar content and quality. Based on this average slice, it would take Croswell 414 days to process all 1.7 million tons at the Croswell facility alone. Taking into account the cost of transferring beets to other locations, validates the decision to improve the Croswell facility.

The engineering department worked diligently with facility management to decide what was to be improved. Consideration was based on improving the overall capacity of the facility and its efficiencies. For example, improving slice capacity at the slicers will not increase how much juice can flow through the carbonation system or the evaporators. It also does not increase the amount of sugar that can be spun through the centrifugals; therefore, several areas of the facility needed to be upgraded to increase overall capacity and efficiencies.

The project began in 2016 with the installation of two carbonation systems, a white centrifugal station replacement, and the first steps of a multi-year process of updating process controls. The new carbonation system provided an immediate increase in juice purification and immediate reduction of limestone rock used by a half percent during the 2017 campaign. Five vintage white centrifugals were removed and replaced by three state-of-the-art machines, increasing production capacity to 15,000 cwt. per day.

Work in 2017 included updating the diffuser tower bullgear, installation of a juice softening system, addition of a plate sugar cooler and a soda ash delivery system.

The diffuser tower had one huge gear (bullgear) run by several motors that stirs the hot juice in the diffuser. If a section of the gear broke or wore down, the whole bullgear would need to be replaced causing two weeks of downtime and maintenance costs. Replacing this gear with a segmented gear (pieced like a pie) allows only the outside damaged edge to be replaced. Reducing downtime from weeks to hours.

Installation of a juice softening system required the addition of an automated bulk soda ash delivery system. Utilizing this system resulted in the correct amount of soda ash added to the juice, which efficiently removes calcium.

Following the soda ash system, the softening system eliminates the number of times evaporators need to be boiled out. The evaporators, before softening, would accumulate a buildup of calcium on the inside of the tanks that would immensely hinder the efficiency of the evaporator. The

evaporators routinely would need to be emptied of the juice and filled with water and chemicals, to remove the calcium.

Replacement of the sugar cooler in 2017 resulted in higher quality, conditioned sugar to the bins at Croswell. Additionally, this provides the extra capacity for cooling sugar at the future rates of throughput. The new sugar cooler resembles a set of plates that the sugar travels through while cooling water takes up the heat of the sugar compared to the older style rotating drum cooler that was in place previously. Work in 2018 included replacement of the older slicers with a larger capacity, newer technology by Putsch. These new slicers are the same design as those installed at both Bay City and Sebewaing. Along with this system, an automated knife filing system was installed.

Thick juice storage also was installed in 2018 and 2019. This included foundation, piping controls and a pump house for controlling the flow of juice out to and back from the tank. The tank has a capacity of 3 million gallons, or half of the capacity installed in Sebewaing. Addition of juice tanks allows for greater flexibility in the factory through storing juice when the beet end can outrun the sugar end and operating the sugar at higher rates if the beet end is down or reduced.



The current year's installation focuses on work at the beet end and the evaporators. Addition of a clarifier tank and associated support equipment will allow for cleaner flume water and reduction in loading to the wastewater pond system. This also provides a clean enough water source to allow for installation and operation of a roller spray table in place of the older style tub washer in future phases. In this first year of operation, the factory should benefit from cleaner water recirculating in the flume.

Modification of the No. 1 evaporator to a falling film orientation will allow for more surface area, lower pressure drop and more efficient use of steam for any given throughput. ■



ABOVE New support equipment will allow for cleaner flume water and reduce loading to wastewater pond system.



SEBEWAING

By Kelly Scheffler, Factory Manager

Sebewaing enhanced its sugar cooling capacity this inter-campaign by replacing the chiller unit on the newer Solex sugar cooler. Additional modifications to the sugar lifters in the granulator should allow the factory to cool the sugar at full capacity. Sugar must be cooled to below 30° C to be stored properly.

The lime kiln in Sebewaing was installed in the 1980s with regular maintenance occurring every year. Over the past 30 years, wear and tear on the kiln has required a staged approach to major maintenance on the kiln. This year, we have replaced sections of the shell as well as cladded additional sections (welded steel plates over existing weakened sections) for improved integrity of the system.

Other activities that took place during the inter-campaign period:

Michigan Sugar Company has a well-rounded, diverse, yet talented workforce. The facilities have rules and regulations that we are required to abide by that requires a significant amount of training and retraining. This annual training is companywide and focuses on personnel safety and food safety. The mandatory training consists of our toolbox meetings that cover 15 different subjects, as well as Safe Quality Food (SQF) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) training that we accomplish in one eight-hour day. Other mandatory training is LOTO (lockout/tagout), PIT (powered industrial trucks) and bloodborne pathogens, that are done annually.

Additionally, there are training courses that are not statutory, but still necessary for the safe operation of our factory. Due to the types of chemicals that are used at each facility, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPR) training is done. This is a 24-hour training course that educates and prepares employees in case there is a release of the chemicals. An additional 16-hour class prepares employees for the rescue of an employee who might be hurt or become ill while working in a confined space. The first aid/CPR class is an eight-hour training that everyone on the rescue team needs to attend. All in all, there are approximately 60 hours of training for about 30% of our employees and 16 hours of training for 100% of our employees. This training ensures that we provide a safe work environment for our employees and safe products for our customers. ■



RIGHT

Annual training is completed companywide and focuses on personnel safety and food safety. It includes Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPR), specialized rescue training, and a first aid/CPR class.

Students Awarded Annual Scholarships

ALBERT FLEGENHEIMER SCHOLARSHIP

Andrew Smith of Bay Port is the recipient of the *Albert Flegenheimer Memorial Scholarship*. He is the son of Jeff and Sandi Smith. Andrew plans to attend Michigan State University to pursue a degree in Agricultural Policy.

NEXT GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP

Rylyn Hrabal of Breckenridge is the recipient of the *Next Generation Scholarship*. She is the daughter of Kurt and Cynthia Hrabal. Rylyn plans to attend Saginaw Valley State University to pursue a degree in nursing.

GUY BEALS SCHOLARSHIP

Adam Weber of Ubly is the recipient of the *Guy Beals Scholarship*. He is the son of Randy and Angie Weber. Adam plans to attend Michigan State University to pursue a degree in Livestock Nutrition.

CENTRAL DISTRICT SCHOLARSHIP

Andrew Smith and **Mitchell Richmond** are the recipients of the Central District Scholarship. Smith also received the Albert Flegenheimer Scholarship. Richmond is a 2019 graduate of Laker High School in Pigeon and plans to attend Saginaw Valley State University to pursue a degree in business with a minor in agriculture. Richmond is the son of Mike and Kelly Richmond.

MICHIGAN SUGAR EMPLOYEE SCHOLARSHIPS

CORPORATE: Chloe Haynes of Bay City – Chloe is the daughter of Don and Kristin Haynes. She graduated from Valley Lutheran High School and plans to attend Saginaw Valley State University this fall, pursuing a degree in finance. She hopes to become a financial manager.

CORPORATE: Sydney Deutsch of Hemlock – Sydney is the daughter of Brian Deutsch. She graduated from Valley Lutheran High School and plans to attend Concordia University-Ann Arbor this fall, majoring in nursing and minoring in music. She hopes to become a neo-natal Registered Nurse.

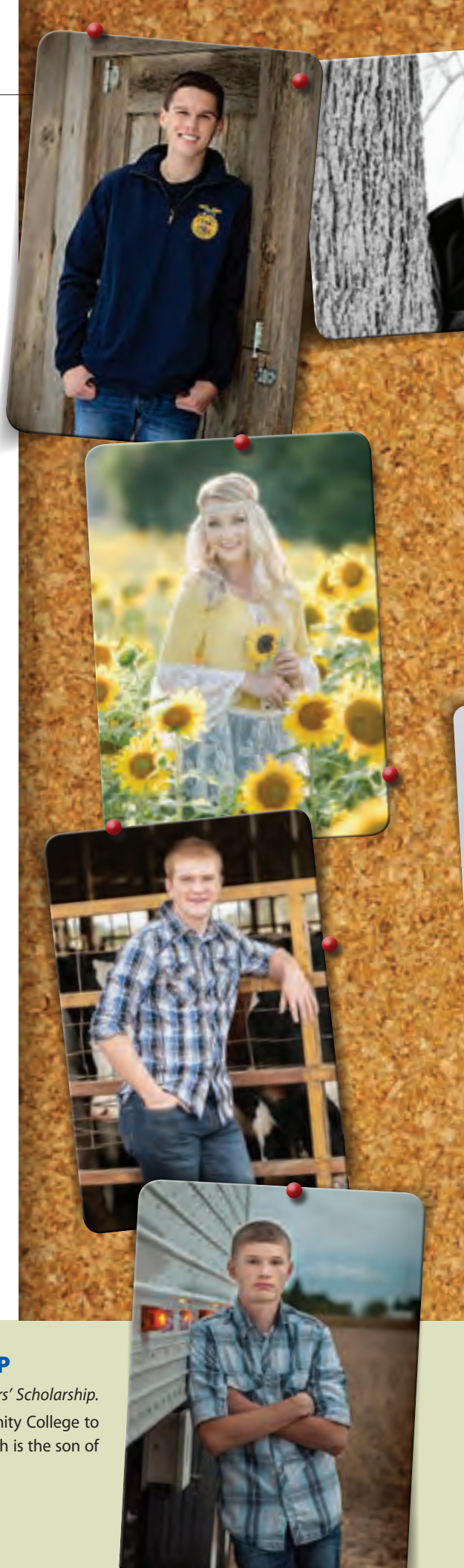
BAY CITY: James Hax of Saginaw – James is the son of Troy Enciso. He graduated from Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy and attends Michigan Technological University where he is pursuing a degree in computer network and system administration. He hopes to work as a system or network administrator.

BAY CITY: Rachel Diehl of Auburn – Rachel is the daughter of Laura and Andy Diehl. She graduated from Valley Lutheran High School in 2018 and attends Delta College. She hopes to one day work in the health services field.

SEBEWAING: Brianna Sting of Unionville – Brianna is the daughter of Matt and Michelle Sting. She graduated from Valley Lutheran High School in 2018 and attends Saginaw Valley State University with a major in chemistry. She hopes to work in a crime lab one day to help make the world a safer place.

LOREN HUMM MEMORIAL SUGAR BEET GROWER'S SCHOLARSHIP

Elijah Stoneman of Breckenridge is the recipient of the *Loren Humm Memorial Sugar Beet Growers' Scholarship*. Elijah is a 2019 graduate of Breckenridge High School and plans to attend Mid Michigan Community College to earn his associate's degree in business. He hopes to pursue a career in agriculture and trucking. Elijah is the son of Justin and Jamie Stoneman.





**PICTURED, CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT:**

Andrew Smith, Mitchell Richmond,
Chloe Haynes, Sydney Deutsch,
James Hax, Rachel Diehl,
Brianna Sting, Elijah Stoneman,
Adam Weber and Rylyn Hrabal.



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It's Been a Very Busy Summer for Youth Sugarbeet Project Members

By Elizabeth Taylor, Ag Relations & Communications Manager

SUMMER TRIP 2019

On Thursday, June 27, nearly 100 Youth Sugarbeet Project participants and parents visited the town of Frankenmuth for the 2019 Summer Trip. The morning was spent at the Frankenmuth Aerial Park, where the kids were able to ride a zipline and climb through a variety of obstacles. Afterward they headed to Zehnder's Splash Village to have lunch and cool off for the afternoon.

YOUTH SUGARBEET PROJECT FIELD DAY

The annual Field Day for the Youth Sugarbeet Project was held on Thursday, July 11, at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center (SVREC) in Frankenmuth. The day focused on safety, so in addition to our sugarbeet education stations we also had a station for first aid, a grain bin simulator and a presentation from Thumb Electric on electrical safety. The kids also made their own ice cream at the Kids in the Kitchen station. There were almost 100 kids in attendance, as well as agricultural staff, board members and parents who volunteered their time to make it such a fun and educational day.

TALL SHIPS WELCOME EVENT

On Thursday, July 18, more than 120 Youth Sugarbeet Project kids and parents gathered in Wenonah Park to help welcome the tall ships to Bay City. After spending some time in the park, they headed to Uptown to get ice cream from the soon-to-open Cream & Sugar Ice Cream Company! ■



1



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PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS 1-4, Summer Trip to Frankenmuth; 5-8, Youth Sugarbeet Project Field Day; 9 & 10, Tall Ship Celebration Welcome Event and a visit to the Cream & Sugar Ice Cream Co. pop-up.



Elizabeth Taylor is the Ag Relations & Communications Manager at Michigan Sugar Company. She joined the company in 2016, and works closely with the Agronomy Department to create and share meaningful information with its growers.



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Channon Turrell Crowned Michigan Sugar Queen 2019

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

SEBEWAING – For the second year in a row, a Spartan has been crowned Michigan Sugar Queen.

Channon Turrell, of Imlay City, received the crown during opening ceremonies for the 55th annual Michigan Sugar Festival held Friday, June 14, in Sebewaing. Turrell, 20, is a 2017 graduate of Imlay City High School and attends Michigan State University where she is pursuing a degree in accounting with a minor in agribusiness management. She is the daughter of Carlene and Larry Turrell.

“Being selected the 2019 Michigan Sugar Queen fills me with great joy and excitement for this upcoming year. It is a great honor to be selected to represent such a ‘sweet’ industry,” said Turrell, who is a former state officer for the Michigan FFA Association and earned the prestigious Michigan FFA Glassbrook Scholarship. “Over this next year I am excited to not only represent Michigan Sugar Company at various public and social events but also interact with industry representatives and government officials. Being a woman in agriculture and having the opportunity like this, I hope to advocate for not only the sugar industry but the agricultural field as a whole.

“Specifically, I look forward to talking with youth of all ages about what exactly Michigan Sugar Company does, the impact it has on our great state and future opportunities for them within the sugar industry.”

Turrell is following in the footsteps of 2018 Michigan Sugar Queen Paige Lupcke, who also attends Michigan State University.

Also crowned during the June 14 ceremony at Sebewaing Village Park were 1st Attendant Linde Bolle, of Midland, and 2nd Attendant Emily Jaremba, of Saginaw. They, too, are serving as ambassadors for Michigan Sugar Company for the next year. They are following 2018 1st Attendant Rachel Phillips and 2nd Attendant Ashley Gibbs.

Bolle, 20, is a 2017 graduate of Sacred Heart Academy in Mount Pleasant and attends Albion College where she is pursuing a degree in kinesiology. She is the daughter of Jennifer West and Mark Bolle.

Jaremba, 18, is a 2019 graduate of Carrollton High School and plans to study biochemistry at Saginaw Valley State University beginning this fall. She is the daughter of Jill and David Jaremba.

The new Queen and Court Attendants jumped right into their year of service, appearing Saturday, June 15, in the annual Michigan Sugar Festival Grand Parade and helping hand out free bags of Pioneer Sugar and cotton candy at the festival grounds in Sebewaing.

This year, Michigan Sugar Company received 22 applications through its Michigan Sugar Queen Scholarship Program with 15 selected as finalists: Linde Bolle, Madelyn Day, Amanda Errer, Morgan Fiedler, Jennifer Gibbs, Faith Haener, Emily Jaremba, Nailah Kelley, Grace Kendziorski, Maddy Lamm, Breanna Moore, Hannah Newsom, Allyson Simmons, Channon Turrell and Kendyl Wilson.

Through the Michigan Sugar Queen Scholarship Program, a Queen and two Attendants are chosen to serve for one year as ambassadors for Michigan Sugar Company. Their duties include public appearances, community service projects, interaction with lawmakers and agriculture leaders and helping to represent Michigan Sugar Company throughout the state.



TOP Channon Turrell, 20, of Imlay City, was crowned the 2019 Michigan Sugar Queen on Friday, June 14, during opening ceremonies for the 55th annual Michigan Sugar Festival in Sebewaing. Channon is a former state officer for the Michigan FFA Association and is pursuing a degree in accounting from Michigan State University.

BOTTOM The 2019 Michigan Sugar Queen and Court are, from left: 2nd Attendant Emily Jaremba of Saginaw, Michigan Sugar Queen Channon Turrell of Imlay City, and 1st Attendant Linde Bolle of Midland. (Photos by Karen Gerhardt)

After completing the requirements of the program, the Queen receives a \$2,000 scholarship and each attendant a \$1,000 scholarship to be used to help pay for college.

“Once again, Michigan Sugar Company is fortunate to have found three young women who we know will be excellent representatives and ambassadors for our company,” said Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations for Michigan Sugar. “I am always in awe of the level of knowledge our Michigan Sugar Queen and Attendants demonstrate in the areas of our company and agriculture in general. I’m even more impressed by the quality of their character, which shined through during the selection process. We are looking forward to a great year with Channon as the Michigan Sugar Queen and Linde and Emily as members of the Queen’s Court.” ■

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Michigan Sugar Company Goes to the County Fair

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

In the summer of 2000 (my first in Michigan), while working as a journalist for *The Bay City Times*, I decided to visit the annual Bay County Fair & Youth Exposition. I figured I would do a story about the fair for the next day's newspaper and be done with it.

I ended up spending almost the entire week at the fairgrounds uncovering wonderful stories about kids, families, volunteers and 4-H.

I was most struck by the kids. Some were very young — Cloverbuds as they call them. Others — those approaching their 20th birthday — were spending their final year participating in the fair. One thing about all these kids was the same: they had confident handshakes, looked you in the eye when they talked to you, were well spoken and were quirky and cool. And, holy cow, they were smart.

I remember being particularly amazed by the 8-year-old girl who led a 1,200-pound steer around a show ring like it was nothing; the 12-year-old boy who carved a bench out of a single log; the 18-year-old young lady who could get her horse to obey her every command; and the 10-year-old boy who needed no help from mom or dad in shearing his sheep out back behind the livestock barn.

I fell in love with fair kids that week and that admiration continues today.

That is why in 2018, after coming to work for Michigan Sugar Company, I made a commitment not only to sponsor six county fairs — those in Bay, Huron, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac and Tuscola counties — but also to show up to those fairs and photograph some of these amazing young people and their projects. I was back at it again this year, visiting the Tuscola County Fair the week of July 21; followed by the Saginaw County and Huron Community fairs the week of July 28; the Bay County Fair and Sanilac County 4-H Fair the next week and the Midland County Fair the week of August 11.

Every mile traveled was worth it.

And guess what? The kids have not changed a bit. It is a new generation, but the handshakes, eye contact and conversations remain blue-ribbon material.

I recently had the privilege of attending a conference and sitting in on a session about today's youth led by Andrew McPeak, Director of Program Excellence at Growing Leaders, a Georgia-based nonprofit organization focused on youth leadership development. As a father of four (ages 8-15), one of the things he

said about today's kids has stayed with me: "Youth today are over-exposed to information and under-exposed to real life experiences. The current generation is very social ... they're just not necessarily good with people."

Theirs is a world filled with speed, convenience, entertainment and entitlement, he said.

I thought about these things as I hit the road this summer and found myself in places like Bad Axe, Bay City, Caro, Chesaning, Midland and Sandusky. I put these words up against what I was seeing in show rings, exhibit halls and barn stalls. For these kids — the fair kids — theirs is a world of patience, hard work, sweat, determination and earning your rewards.

Sure, they have information at their fingertips like most young people, but those phones only come out after the hogs have been fed, the cages have been cleaned, the horses have been watered, the poop has been scooped and all the other boxes on the list of chores have been checked.

Even then, most of these kids are hanging with their friends. They are romping around the fairgrounds. They are experiencing human interaction. It is beautiful to watch.

And so, Michigan Sugar Company will continue to support county fairs and fair kids.

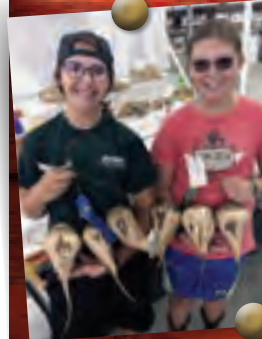
We will be glad we did, because something tells me these kids will be the leaders of tomorrow. ■

BELOW Members of the Vermeersch family are, from left, Memphis, Cash, Copper, Myles, Reid, Cole, Luke and Ella. They are the grandchildren of Roger and Gerry Vermeersch of Unionville who operate Vermeersch Family Farms and grow about 420 acres of sugarbeets. This photo was captured during the 2018 Huron Community Fair in Bad Axe.



Sydney Richmond, 16, of Bayport, shows off Chaco at the 2019 Huron Community Fair. Richmond's family operates Richmond Bros. Farms and grows 790 acres of sugarbeets for Michigan Sugar Company.

Kenton Stoutenburg, of Sandusky, shows off his giant sugarbeet at the 2018 Sanilac County 4-H Fair. Weighing in at 17 pounds, 3 ounces, the beet was the winner of the Largest Beet Contest at last year's fair. Kenton is a member of the Moonlite Riders 4-H Club.



Emma Wendland, 14, and Sophia Wendland, 11, of Reese, show off their first place and fifth place sugarbeets, respectively, at the 2019 Saginaw County Fair. The sisters are part of AMK Farms, which grows 800 acres of sugarbeets.

Jeremy Hecht, 20, of Saginaw, poses for a photo with his hog, Oreo, during the 2019 Saginaw County Fair. Jeremy is the son of Gloria and Tim Hecht. The other hog in the pen is named Cookie Dough.



Dustin Richmond, 13, of Pigeon, shows off his animal at the 2019 Huron Community Fair. Dustin is from John C. Richmond and Sons farm which grows 260 acres of sugarbeets for Michigan Sugar Company.

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