



THE

MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY / SUMMER 2022 / VOLUME 36 • ISSUE 1

NEWSBEET

ALWAYS MOVING FORWARD

*How Ag Research
is Planting Seeds
for Our Future*



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Meet Michigan Sugar Company's Newest Directors

2021 High Sugar Producers for West, Central, and East Districts

Amity

TECHNOLOGY



MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY • SUMMER 2022 • VOLUME 36, ISSUE 1

ON THE COVER Michigan Sugar Company's ag research team plants sugarbeets in a field near Minden City in Sanilac County on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. This past spring, the team planted agronomic and variety trials to test 47 seed varieties.

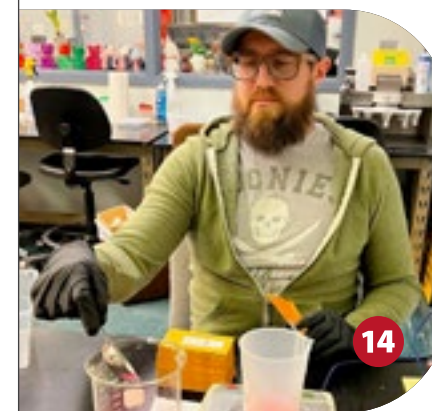
Photo by Ben Tierney



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Welcome to another edition of *The Newsbeet*!

To all our grower-owners, I hope you had a safe and successful planting season and I wish you all the best as you care for this year's crop and work toward a bountiful harvest.

On behalf of our entire Newsbeet team, I am pleased to let you know that earlier this month, for the third consecutive year, *The Newsbeet* earned a first-place award for Best Member Publication in the Cooperative Communicators Association's (CCA) annual Communications Contest.

The CCA is a national organization made up of communications employees who work for cooperatives of all sizes. The annual awards program is quite competitive and annually features a substantial number of entries.

We are always humbled to be recognized, but also understand the level of quality we must continue to meet and exceed to stay on top.

I'd also like to take a moment to say thank you and congratulations to Julie Perry, Michigan Sugar Company's Executive Assistant to the President and CEO, who plans to retire this year and recently handed over the reins of this magazine after serving as editor for many years.

Julie's tireless efforts and dedication to *The Newsbeet* were instrumental in helping it become an award-winning publication of which we all can be proud.

— Rob Clark

Publisher: Mark Flegenheimer
Senior Advisor: James Ruhlman
Editor: Rob Clark
Contributing Editor: Julie Perry
Agricultural Editor: Elizabeth Taylor
Creative Director: Karen Gerhardt
Circulation & Advertising: Jessica Carter

Editor, *The Newsbeet*
122 Uptown Drive, Suite 300, Bay City, MI 48708
editor.newsbeet@michigansugar.com

Dennis Bischer	Jason Lowry
John Boothroyd	Adam Maurer
Rob Clark	Maki Petter
Mark Flegenheimer	James Ruhlman
Brian Groulx	Elizabeth Taylor
Corey Guza	Ben Wickerham
Amanda Harden	Tom Wiggins

Jessica Carter, *The Newsbeet*
122 Uptown Drive, Suite 300, Bay City, MI 48708
jessica.carter@michigansugar.com



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The trial was conducted by Corey Guza, Ph.D., Director of Research and Agronomy at Michigan Sugar Company. He compared various fungicide program and adjuvant combinations. Images are used with permission from Corey Guza.



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ROOT OF THE BUSINESS

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY

By Mark Fleggenheimer, President and CEO

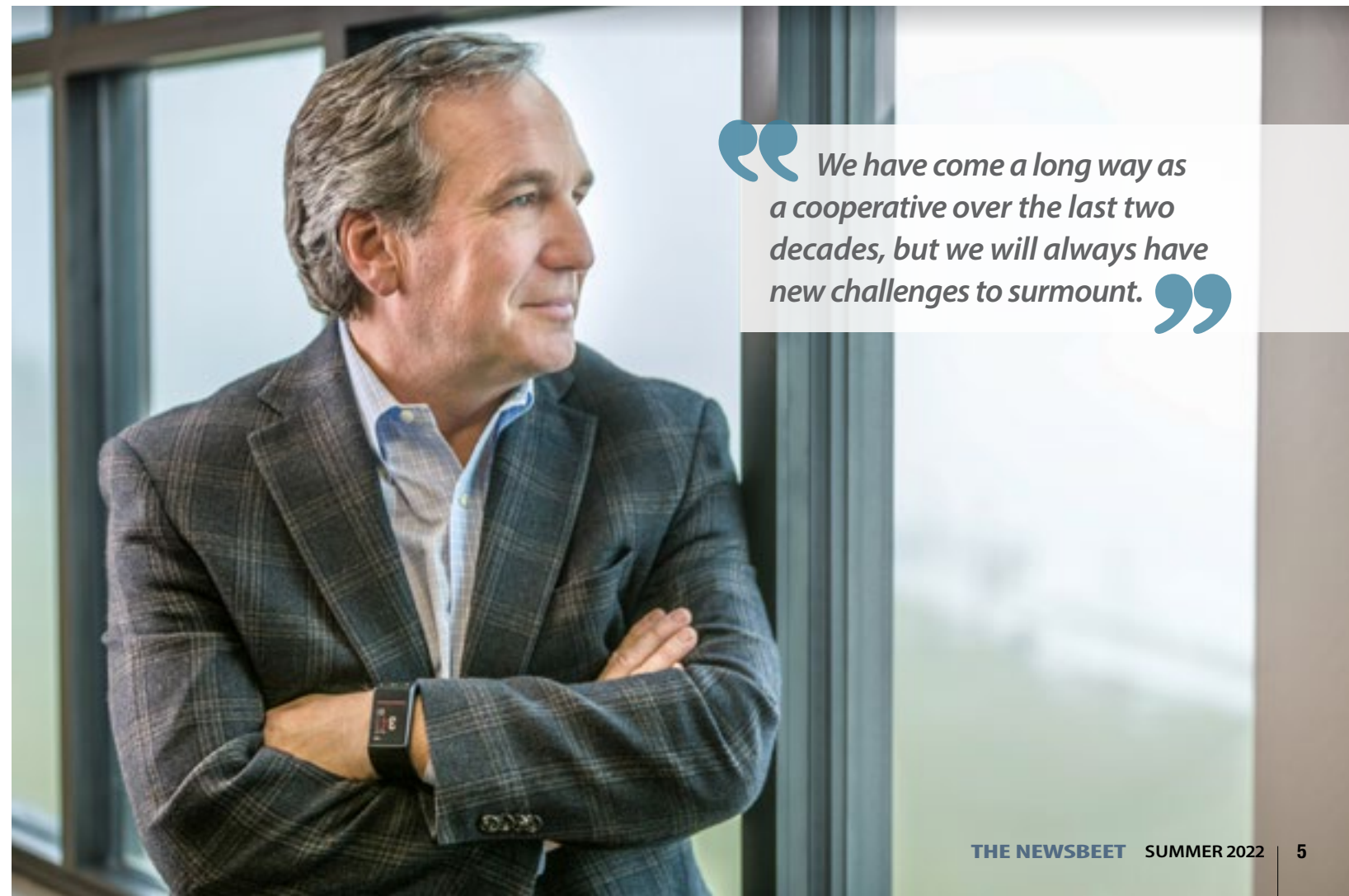
As growers begin another season and work toward harvest in the fall, we are reminded that each year presents unique challenges. While it is easy to get caught up in what went “right” and what went “wrong” last year, it is important to take a step back and look at the progress the cooperative has made over the last five, 10, and 20 years. While each year we learn lessons and make improvements, oftentimes it is hard to see progress in a single year. Last year, we were blessed and challenged with record tonnage; yields far eclipsed previous records and the massive number of beets created unique issues that we, as a cooperative, had to overcome. The factories ran into late April, processing beets for nearly 250 days. The extraordinarily long campaign was taxing on our employees and our equipment. This inter-campaign period is being spent repairing the facilities and recharging employees’ batteries for next campaign.

This past year was disappointing from a sugar production perspective, but from a beets-received and a beets-processed standpoint, they were both record breakers. Our growers and ag operations teams worked together to harvest, receive and pile more than 5.5 million tons. That simply would not have been possible five years ago. Major investments have been made in piling equipment and beet harvesters/field-loading

operations that allowed the cooperative to take in this record crop. The factories processed more than 4.7 million tons, an accomplishment that was unthinkable when the growers bought the company 20 years ago and we were processing 2.3 million tons of beets over a 146-day campaign.

We have come a long way as a cooperative over the last two decades, but we will always have new challenges to surmount. The amount of sugar in each ton of beets needs to increase as costs on the farm and in our factories continually increase. We have a goal of achieving 300 pounds of recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) for permanently piled beets. This drives the revenues (sugar sales) and costs (trucking, harvesting, receiving, and processing) more than any other factor in our business. In the years ahead, we will look back at this 300 RWST goal and take great pride that it has been surpassed like so many other milestones we have achieved as a cooperative.

The sugarbeet business will always be full of challenges, but with a long-term vision and plan, plus a strong dose of faith and trust, we will accomplish great things for years to come. ■



“ We have come a long way as a cooperative over the last two decades, but we will always have new challenges to surmount. ”

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AG VIEW

WE MUST PLANT SEEDS OR THERE IS NO ROOM FOR GROWTH

By James Ruhlman, Executive Vice President

As we sow seeds for the 2022 crop, it feels a little more difficult this year to understand what we might reap. Coming from last year's crop where we shattered previous yield records, we enter a state of wonderment about yield potential going forward. Was it truly the weather last year that allowed for such abundance, or are current seed varieties that much better than varieties of the past? Perhaps both played a part in the blessing of our record tonnage last year.

We talk about tonnage in depth because it has a tremendous impact on when we start our processing season and when it might end. As we strive to have just enough beet supply for processing season, we know we might be long or we might be short, but we also know that we need to be close to a crop of 5 million tons based on our processing and storage thresholds.

What we really want to reap when we sow a sugarbeet seed is recoverable white sugar. Our strategy of a sugarbeet crop that averages 300 pounds of recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) is a tangible goal, but reachable only through technology, research, sound agronomic practices, and grace from Mother Nature. This is a goal of excellence

rather than perfection. It is goal of combined talent, combined soil quality, and combined weather conditions across our vast growing region. May our 2022 crop reap abundance in sugar.

Within our cooperative boundaries and beyond, we sow seeds with each other and reap abundance from each other every day. It might be an idea planted from a co-worker that turns into a magnificent payback to our growers. It might be a discovery from our research department that becomes rooted in practice that allows for a huge jump in sugar content. It might be a kind word instilled in someone that allows them to perform at a more confident and exceptional level. One thing is for sure: if we do not plant seeds there is no chance to reap.

When planting seeds, depth is important. In the case of a sugarbeet seed, it needs moisture to begin to grow. In most cases, we rely on existing soil moisture to jump-start the fertility process, which means we may need to plant seeds deeper in dry conditions. If the environment has rain on the horizon, perhaps we plant the seed at a shallower depth. It is a delicate happening when you plant a seed. We do not want to plant it too deep and not have it emerge, yet it needs to be planted deep enough for growth to begin.

The other realization when planting seeds is that not all seeds grow. Some grow and do not bear fruit. Some do bear fruit, but the reward of the fruit is less than what was expected. Sometimes the best seed planted is rejected by the environment. Sometimes the most thoughtful idea is rejected by another person. Sometimes the caring compliment is ignored. Does it mean that we should stop sowing seeds? Does it mean that we give up? Or does it mean that we need to understand that we are not in control of the receiver of the seed?

Within our cooperative boundaries and beyond, we sow seeds with each other and reap abundance from each other every day.

Sometimes outside factors deter the growth and opportunity for a seed to mature. Sometimes a seed takes the form of a plant and dies before bearing fruit. Sometimes the receiver of the idea cannot open their mind and get rid of practices of the past.

As we move into growing season and closer to harvest, let us be reminded that we need to plant seeds or there is no chance for growth. Let us also be reminded that a seed planted, whether it is a sugarbeet seed or an idea, needs the right environment and the right receiver to take shape. Reaping is for the planter, but reaping only occurs through an open mind, a fertile field, and a spirit of caring for the planted seed. The caring for the seed planted comes from two sources, the planter and a much higher source who is in ultimate control of what planted seeds will reap. ■



WORK TO CRAFT NEXT FARM BILL KICKS OFF IN MICHIGAN

By John Boothroyd, Manager of Government Relations

To many of us, it may feel like only yesterday we were working on crafting the current Farm Bill. It might feel like the next Farm Bill is a long way off. In reality, work already has begun to craft the next version of this vital piece of legislation.

The process for writing the 2023 Farm Bill was officially kicked off on April 29, 2022, during a hearing hosted at Michigan State University by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), who serves as Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman, and Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), Ranking Member on the ag committee.

Over the course of the event, 17 witnesses gave testimony about various aspects of the Farm Bill and answered questions posed by the senators.

Michigan Sugar Company grower-owner Allyson Maxwell represented the sugar industry and spoke about the importance of the Sugar Program to her family's farm, which she co-owns with her husband Peter Maxwell in Beaverton. Allyson did an excellent job representing us at the event and I want to personally thank her for her time and efforts.

Following the hearing, the senators, along with agriculture leaders from across Michigan, attended a luncheon hosted by Michigan State University President Samuel Stanley. This more intimate atmosphere provided an excellent opportunity to give the senators additional feedback on the state of the farm economy and potential changes to the Farm Bill.

Overall, the 2023 Farm Bill process could not have gotten off to a better start for the sugar industry and Michigan Agriculture in general. Now is the time to put our foot on the gas, continue to invest in our political action committee (PAC), and ramp up our lobbying efforts.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

You have probably heard that the state of Michigan approved \$2.5 million for the reconstruction of South Euclid Avenue in front of our Bay City factory. I am happy to report that construction is underway. While the Bay County Road Commission is confident that construction will be completed before the start of permanent pile, we are very aware that, with global supply chain issues continuing, on-time completion of projects has become extremely rare.

With that in mind, we are working to ensure that access to the factory will not be overly inconvenient should the project go unexpectedly long. Despite the potential headaches regarding construction, Michigan Sugar Company officials have been working to get this project on the books for more than a decade and we are excited that it is finally happening. The end result will be a benefit not only to our company, but to residents of the area. ■



John Boothroyd is Michigan Sugar Company's Manager of Government Relations. He joined the company in 2018 after working four years for U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar. He and his wife Katherine have two children and live in Midland.



MSC GROWER-OWNER ALLYSON MAXWELL NAMED 'FARMER ENVOY'

Michigan Sugar Company grower-owner Allyson Maxwell recently was named one of eight "farmer envoys" for Solutions from the Land (SfL), an organization working to advance land-based solutions to global challenges like food and nutrition security, energy security, sustainable livelihoods, and climate change.

Allyson and her husband Peter live in Beaverton with their sons Mason, Calvin, and Boone. They operate Peter Maxwell Farms, a 1,250-acre operation where 175 acres of sugarbeets are grown, along with corn, soybeans, and wheat. They also operate Maxwell's Pumpkin Farm in Beaverton, where they sell pumpkins, squash, ornamental corn, and other treats to the public.

Allyson serves as a board member for the Michigan Corn Growers Association and is a biotechnology spokeswoman for Michigan Sugar and the American Sugarbeet Growers Association.

"We are thrilled to welcome these outstanding farmer leaders to our envoy team," said SfL President Ernie Shea in a media release. "We look forward to helping them share their insight and experiences producing food, feed, fiber, clean energy, and a wide range of high-value ecosystem services with decision makers and agricultural stakeholders across the world."

In her role as a farmer envoy, Allyson will engage United Nations' agencies and conventions, introducing and engaging in conversations on new approaches that include circular-systems agriculture, a way of going forward that focuses on reducing external inputs, closing nutrient loops, regenerating soils, and minimizing agriculture's impact on the environment. Envoys also will promote Climate Smart Agriculture and whole-system technologies that enable the sector to help successfully achieve sustainable development goals.

"I'm honored to be chosen for the 2022 farmer envoy class," said Allyson. "For me, it will be another vein in which to share all of the tools that we as farmers employ in order to make sure that we take the best care of our soil and the environment."

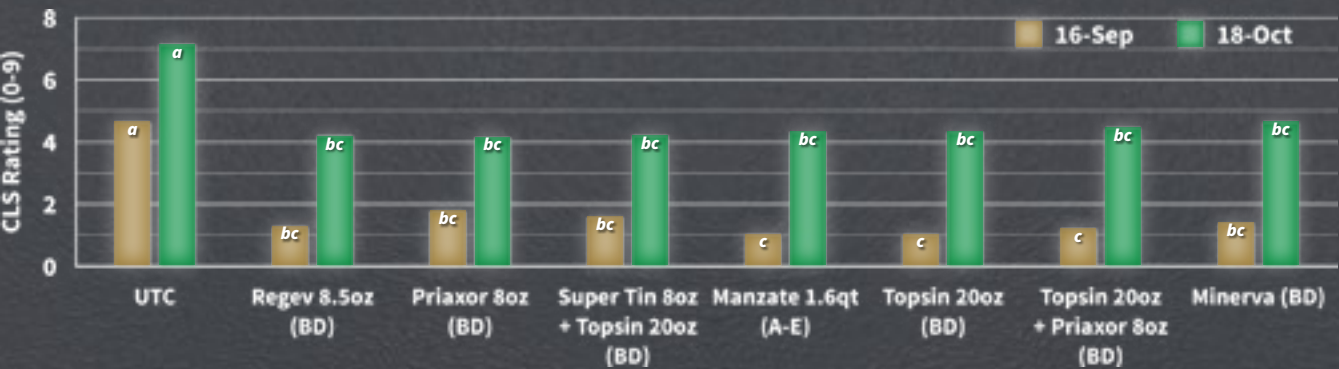
Allyson said she is specifically interested in sharing information about the use of biotechnology and the scope of sustainability it gives farmers, especially sugarbeet growers.

"I'm also interested in promoting the use of biofuels like ethanol. Our oil markets have really changed in recent months, and we need to call on our government to boost the amount of ethanol that can be blended into gasoline, year-round," she said. "Being an envoy will help me bring a global voice to these issues and others, broadening the scope of with whom I can share my message."

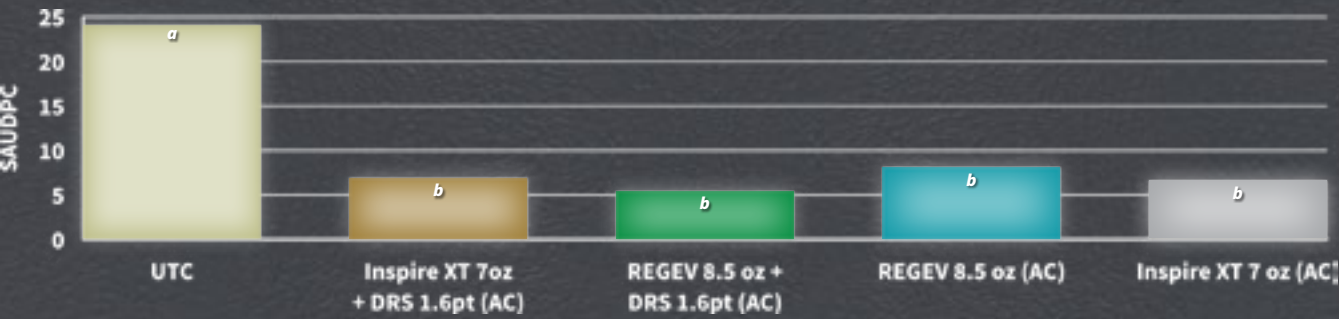
— Rob Clark

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Michigan Sugar Company | 2021 | Apps. on 29-Jun, 14-Jul, 4-Aug, 18-Aug, 8-Sep | All programs included Manzate 1.6qt (A-E) & MasterLock 6.4oz (A-E)



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SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

New Program Aims to Promote Strip Tillage

Michigan Sugar Company forges partnership with The Nature Conservancy

By Ben Wickerham, Saginaw Bay Projects Manager, The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is proud to be partnering with Michigan Sugar Company to help bolster the sustainability of sugarbeet production in Michigan. One way we are working together is to give Saginaw Valley farmers the opportunity to try strip tillage, which can improve soil health and reduce soil erosion with less potential financial risk.

Strip tillage is an under-utilized method of farming that provides significant soil savings over conventional tillage methods but can often be perceived as cost prohibitive or too risky to growers. In October, the United States Department of Agriculture awarded \$1.9 million to the Saginaw Bay Accessing Subsidized Strip-Till Equipment Trial

(ASSET) Program, a partnership program of Michigan Sugar, TNC, Blue Water Conservation District, and Environmental Tillage Systems.

The goal of this program is to develop and deliver a strip till assistance package to Saginaw Valley sugarbeet producers comprised of financial assistance, enhanced technical assistance, peer learning networks and assistance in acquiring specialized equipment to mitigate the farmers' risks of investing in strip tillage.

Sugarbeet growers in the Saginaw Bay watershed have identified financial and technical risks as leading barriers to long-term conservation adoption. This program seeks to catalyze the purchase of 10 new strip till implements

within the watershed, thus helping at least 10 sugarbeet farms move toward a more conservation-friendly mode of farming.

Our work in this partnership will achieve 5,000 to 10,000 acres of direct conservation and holds the potential for lasting and far-reaching "indirect" conservation demonstration across all the acres of sugarbeets grown in Michigan.

Our partnership, however, does not just stop with the ASSET program. We also are exploring ways to incorporate more climate-smart farming practices on the various crop rotations of sugarbeets across the Saginaw Valley. We look forward to sharing more about this with you in the future. ■

BELOW A Saginaw Valley sugarbeet field interseeded with cover crops.
Photos by Jason Whalen, Fauna Creative



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Ben Wickerham joined The Nature Conservancy in August 2015 and serves as Project Manager for the Saginaw Bay Watershed Conservation Initiative. Before joining TNC, he spent two years as a watershed technician for the Gratiot Conservation District, implementing a sediment-reduction project in the upper Saginaw Bay watershed.

Keeping Ahead of the Curve when Inflation Soars

By Tom Wiggins, MSM, CFP, CPFA, Rehmann

Over the past couple years, the pandemic has been a catalyst for countless sudden changes to everyday life, including impacts to both our physical and financial health and well-being. In more recent time, as economic disruptions continue in the United States and unfold around the world, inflation has become another pandemic-related issue and it's affecting everyone, from consumers to business owners.

As a grower, you're no doubt feeling inflationary pressure with the growing season underway and expenses continuing to rise. The cost of fertilizer, for example, is up 62% across all industries. Also impacting costs: the largest global exporter of fertilizer is Russia, which continues to wage war in Ukraine. Supply chain issues also are a big concern, of course, particularly as harvesting machinery likely won't be as readily available this fall to those farmers seeking upgrades.

To temporarily slow inflation, the federal reserve has started raising interest rates. Yet, to truly diminish the direct impact of inflation, businesses and consumers could consider making changes on their own.

The key to staying ahead of the curve is planning. Planning for inflation means more than just planning for increased consumer goods prices and tax rates; what makes the most significant positive change is actively taking steps to combat inflation through strategic wealth management — which can include altering retirement funds, extending leases, and investing strategies.

WHAT IS INFLATION?

Inflation is the general rise in prices in an economy over a specified period. The Federal Reserve typically targets a low and stable rate of inflation of about 2% that can signify a growing economy. But inflation can creep into the double digits due to economic shocks.

Inflation has fluctuated over the course of history. During the 1970s and 1980s, prices increased 10% to 15% in some years. Since then, inflation has cooled off. In the 2000s, inflation rates fluctuated between 2% and 5%, while in the 2010s, inflation hovered between 0% and 2%. In other words, prices have been remarkably stable in the recent past compared to other times in history. Recently, however, inflation has re-entered the conversation. For the 12 months that ended in February 2022, inflation was 7.8%, one of the highest rates in many years.

POWER OF PLANNING

For businesses, there are a few options to keep in mind to remain financially sound and retain/grow business.

- Staying ahead of interest rates is so important. Businesses must monitor their cash flow and manage debt closely.
- Planning for these additional costs is paramount, as inflation typically causes an increase in cost of goods, which can in turn affect customer pricing and relationships. By keeping in mind additional expenses caused by inflation, business owners can anticipate customer responses, and even address them directly to customers to mitigate negative reactions.
- Equally crucial is looking at which contracts and leases may provide an opportunity to fix your costs over a longer timeline. These factors can help reduce stressors linked to inflation and keep your business thriving — not just surviving — during unprecedented times.

Individuals should consider several ways inflation impacts their financial situation, especially when it comes to their retirement plans. The value of 401 (k)s, IRAs, ROTH IRAs, HSAs, and other savings and retirement accounts decreases as the value of purchasing power decreases. Adjusting the contributions that go into these accounts every month could make an astronomical difference when tapping into those resources years from now when they are needed. If you haven't started putting money away for retirement, now is the time to do so.

Another way to keep ahead of the curve is to invest, especially into inflation-hedged investments. These investments, like Treasury Inflation

Protected Securities (TIPS) and I Bonds, plan for and may help protect you from inflation. Nonetheless, investing is key; staying in the market and keeping your investments diversified remains the best strategy regardless of inflation rates.

Ultimately, most individuals can minimize inflation's effects through diligent planning and making even the smallest of changes. It is very important that you take inflation into consideration in all your plans — no different than tax impact and adjustments in ROI or interest rates. Consider the value of the dollar in future years and evaluate options that will account for both your financial present and future in meeting your goals and objectives. ■



Understanding Inflation

TYPES OF INFLATION

There are three main types of inflation:

- **Demand-pull inflation:** This happens when demand outweighs production capacity. Put another way, there is more demand for goods than the current supply can meet. As a result, prices increase.
- **Cost-push inflation:** This occurs when production costs make it more expensive for companies to produce the same goods. As a result, market prices rise to reflect the increased cost of inputs.
- **Built-in inflation:** This occurs when workers demand higher wages to combat rising living costs. This type of inflation can cause a feedback effect wherein companies must raise prices continuously to meet the increasing cost of labor.

PROS & CONS OF INFLATION

PROS

- Low and stable inflation can be an indicator of a growing economy.
- It benefits holders of fixed-rate debt, such as mortgages.
- It encourages consumption today rather than later.

CONS

- Inflation reduces purchasing power since each dollar buys fewer goods.
- Higher prices throughout the economy hurt retail consumers.
- It harms retirees living on fixed incomes.
- It prompts action by the Federal Reserve.

Even at 3% annual inflation, in 20 years you would need \$181 to match what \$100 buys today.

FARMING & INFLATION

From a farming perspective, inflation causes increases in input costs such as fertilizer, crop protection chemicals, land, fuel, labor, and transportation. The following Key Performance Indicators (KPI) can be monitored to potentially help reduce these input costs:

- Commodity pricing.
- Working capital.
- Debt to asset ratio.
- Assets turnover ratio (how efficiently your assets are generating value, the higher, the better).
- Price of goods in region.

In addition, inflation can impact the supply chain. For example, manufacturers may not be able to build farm equipment due to supply shortages and increased demand.

PERSONAL INVESTMENTS AND INFLATION

From a personal investment portfolio perspective, historically the following types of investments have been more favorable than others during an inflationary period:

- **Cash** – Since money market interest rates rise with the general market, you won't have to face the loss of market value that plagues fixed-rate investments during times of inflation.
- **Short Term Bonds** – If rising inflation leads to higher interest rates, short-term bonds are more resilient whereas long-term bonds will suffer losses.
- **Avoid Long Term Fixed Income Investments** – When interest rates rise, the value of the underlying security falls as investors flee the security in favor of higher-yielding alternatives. A 30-year bond that's paying 3% could decline in value by as much as 40%, should interest rates on newly issued 30-year bonds rise to 5%.
- **Real Estate** – Often sees its greatest price appreciation during periods of high inflation. This is especially true because, as rents rise, people become increasingly interested in owning as a way of getting the tax benefits that help offset the general level of inflation.
- **Treasury Inflation Protected Securities (TIPS)** – Government bonds that mirror the rise and fall of inflation. So, when inflation goes up, the interest rate paid does, too. And when deflation occurs, interest rates fall.
- **Stocks** – Can rise as companies pass increased costs to consumers and increase profits.
- **Commodities** – Certain hard assets have traditionally been favored by inflation. Precious metals, particularly gold and silver.

You don't want to make dramatic changes to your investment portfolio based on current inflation or market conditions since most of us are still long-term investors. ■



Tom Wiggins, a principal with Rehmann, develops creative strategies that help clients work toward meeting their financial goals, integrating asset management, retirement planning, family CFO and succession planning services with overall business and financial plans. He works with a cross-functional Rehmann team to proactively guide each client, considering tax law and efficiencies, estate planning, and accounting needs along the way.

Always Moving Forward

By Corey Guza, Ph.D., Director of Research and Agronomy, and Elizabeth Taylor, Ag Relations and Communications Manager

HOW MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY'S AG RESEARCH TEAM IS PLANTING SEEDS FOR OUR FUTURE

Jason Hagle grabs a small, manilla-colored envelope from a stack of countless others, gives it a little squeeze to create an opening at the top and drops in a precise amount of sugarbeet seeds that soon will be planted within a six-county region as part of Michigan Sugar Company's annual variety trials.

It's March in the lab at Michigan Sugar's Agricultural Research Center, located on Valley Center Drive in Bay County's Monitor Township, and as is the case every year at this time, research team members have been tasked with measuring and packing upward of 13,000 envelopes with seeds, all organized by variety, trial location, and research parameters.

At times, Hagle's work can be monotonous; that's why you'll often hear him listening to one of his favorite podcasts, "Stuff You Should Know," while he measures out exact seed weights — 2.06 grams in this envelope, 2.18 grams in the next ... and so on. But make no mistake: Hagle understands the importance of the work.

"Everything must be exact," says Hagle, a Saginaw native who graduated from Grace Baptist School, earned an associate degree in accounting from Delta College and is pursuing another degree from Delta in cardiac stenography. "We fill each packet so we can assure proper documentation and that our research is sound. This is all about helping the company's grower-owners produce the best beets."

Hagle has been a seasonal research employee at Michigan Sugar Company the past six years and has been helping fill seed envelopes the past three years. Each year as April approaches, there is an energy in the air at the research center. As seed envelopes are filled, others are busy working on equipment, ensuring everything is ready when it's "go-time." Still others are reviewing protocols, measuring chemicals, organizing supplies, or mapping out plans for the upcoming planting season.

Soon ... very soon ... the research team members will be back in their outdoor office — working in the fertile fields of mid-Michigan.

"You know what you have to get done and you do it," says Hagle. "It's something I have come to really enjoy."

RESEARCH ROADMAP

Though variety trial seed packets are prepared in March and planting typically takes place in April and May, the research team's year begins in December, when members are working with Michigan Sugar Company's grower-owners to map out trial locations and research topics for the coming year.

Deciding what to research each year is critical, with topics typically ranging from seed varieties and planting specifications to spraying programs and storage techniques. Research on other topics like plant nutrition, diseases, and weeds historically has been based more upon opportunities and challenges. As new diseases become threats to the sugarbeet industry or new technologies such as Roundup Ready sugarbeets become available, the Michigan Sugar Company research team designs strategies to evaluate the impact on growers.

Each year, Michigan Sugar's research team also works with an average of 30 industry groups — ranging from collegiate organizations to chemical and seed companies — to conduct requested research topics. The team also considers the focus area of the REACh team that includes Sugarbeet Advancement, Michigan State University, University of Guelph, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) when deciding where to focus its research efforts.

In the end, creating the research plan becomes a bit like putting together a puzzle.

Planting season is followed by summer tasks like stand counting, plot thinning, spraying, and plot rating — activities that are time consuming and tedious in that data must be carefully collected to ensure accuracy.

Plot measuring and disease rating takes place in August and September, and harvest usually

LEFT Members of the Michigan Sugar Company agriculture research team plant variety and agronomic trials near the cooperative's Blumfield Township Piling Station on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. *Photo by Ben Tierney*

BELOW In preparation for 2022 trial planting, Michigan Sugar Company seasonal research employee Jason Hagle measures sugarbeet seed before placing it in an envelope that eventually will end up in a container on the back of a planter. Each year, the Michigan Sugar research team prepares roughly 13,000 envelopes for use in its variety trials.



begins around the second week of September. Again, harvest is a slow, tedious, and labor-intensive task. Each trial is carefully harvested, sorted, and recorded to ensure accurate data and analysis that hopefully is useful in drawing conclusions that lead to application strategies that can be used by Michigan Sugar's grower-owners.

OFFICIAL VARIETY TRIALS

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on genetics testing and studying improvements in yield, sugar content, disease tolerance, and storage techniques.

The Official Variety Trials — or OVTs — are the largest component of genetics testing in terms of the number of varieties and number

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RIGHT More than 13,000 envelopes were packaged with sugarbeet seeds and organized by trial in preparation for this year's research trials being conducted by the Michigan Sugar Company research team. Here, the envelopes are stored at Michigan Sugar's Agricultural Research Center located in Bay County's Monitor Township.

of field locations. Official Variety Trials also provide the most important data used by Michigan Sugar Company's Seed Committee to make variety recommendations to the co-op Board of Directors.

Related to genetics testing, preliminary OVTs are conducted for individual seed companies so they have a better idea which varieties they should submit for the regular OVTs and attempt to take to market.

Michigan Sugar Company also conducts plant-to-stand trials that are different from OVTs in that the beets involved are not thinned. Official Variety Trials are designed to measure true genetic potential of varieties as the beets involved are both thinned and kept disease free. Plant-to-stand trials allow emergence to be more of a factor in determining yield and sugar content and can provide valuable data when selecting the best varieties for growers to plant.

Sugarbeet growers face continuous challenges in Michigan and Ontario, and they need solutions as quickly as possible. The research team is always looking at both short-term and long-term threats that could cause hardships for growers. Sugarbeet pests seem to occur in cycles and leaf disease, root disease, nematodes, and resistant weeds can each be major problems. Unfortunately, sometimes the issues coalesce and understanding the interaction becomes important.

One of the key roles Michigan Sugar Company plays in trying to address any issue is working as a bridge between solution providers and the company's grower-owners. This includes designing plant health trials with companies that have new and innovative products, and working with established companies like Bayer CropScience, BASF, Corteva, FMC, Syngenta, UPL, and Valent as they develop new products.



'BEST OF THE BEST'

The quantity of research being conducted each year isn't possible without cooperators — Michigan Sugar's grower-owners — who always are willing to partner and offer plot locations. The goal is to have a good regional spread of variety trials to capture any differences in weather, soil type, and disease pressure.

The cooperators have found many benefits in working with the research team.

"It's interesting to see how the different varieties perform on our different fields, and when we work with the Michigan Sugar research team, we get to see how many different varieties react on our farm," said

Mark Sylvester, a fifth generation sugarbeet grower from Fairgrove and Treasurer of Michigan Sugar's Co-op Board. "It helps us make variety decisions for next year, and our neighbors use data from the trials on our farm to help them make decisions, too."

Sylvester Farms has hosted research trials since before 1997.

"I'm always surprised at the amount of work that goes into each trial. The research group is in our field trials every week, and there is a lot of thought and precision that goes into each trial to get accurate and valuable data in the end," said Sylvester. "We also see a lot of people outside of Michigan Sugar Company walking our field trials — seed

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ABOVE Screens aboard a Michigan Sugar Company planter are used to monitor the planting of sugarbeet seeds on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, in a Sanilac County field near Minden City.

and chemical company representatives, Michigan State University researchers, and other industry groups that are interested in what Michigan Sugar is doing.”

Sylvester uses the trials on his farm, as well as input from his Michigan Sugar Company field consultant, to help make variety selections, but also to help him decide on fungicide strategies, make product and surfactant decisions, and even population choices during planting.

“It’s great to see our research team’s findings being presented and used nationally across the sugarbeet industry,” he said. “We have the best of the best right here in Michigan, and it has really helped our whole cooperative grow a better crop.”

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As members of Michigan Sugar Company’s research team make their way through the year, they always are keeping an eye on the future and what’s next in terms of the types of research they conduct. Over the years, with additional people, technology, and ideas, the team has been able to continuously move faster and pivot strategies quickly.

Already, some of these future strategies are coming into focus.

Last year, Michigan Sugar Company forged a partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Tillage Systems, and Blue Water Conservation District to begin studying how strip tilling might improve sugarbeet farming practices. Dubbed the “Accessing Subsidized

Strip-Till Equipment Trial” — or ASSET — the program will develop and deliver to Michigan sugarbeet producers a competitive “incentive” package comprised of financial assistance, enhanced technical assistance, peer learning networks and assistance in acquiring specialized equipment to mitigate the farmers’ risks of investing in strip tillage.

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BELOW Members of Michigan Sugar Company’s agriculture research team plant sugarbeet seeds in a Sanilac County field near Minden City on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. Each year, Michigan Sugar conducts trials across mid-Michigan, working with its grower-owners to find suitable locations for conducting research throughout the summer and into the fall harvest season. *Photos by Ben Tierney*



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By the Numbers...

90 ACRES used in 2022 for Michigan Sugar Company **RESEARCH TRIALS.**

14 Research **TRIAL LOCATIONS** = ●

6 MICHIGAN COUNTIES where research trials are being conducted in 2022.

5-15 RESEARCH TRIALS in each county.

250+ Different **VARIETIES** being tested.

45-50 AGRONOMIC TRIALS, resulting in **500+ DIFFERENT** agronomic treatments.

MEET THE TEAM

Introducing 10 members of Michigan Sugar Company's agriculture research team, who have a combined 154 years of experience:



NAME: John Karpuk
TITLE: Research Technician
YEARS AT MSC: 31

ABOUT: John is a truck and tractor operator, he does general trial maintenance, and maintains equipment in the winter. He also operates the piler leveler when receiving is complete.



NAME: Joe Hodder
TITLE: Research Technician
YEARS AT MSC: 10

ABOUT: Joe operates trucks and tractors, applies pesticides, fabricates equipment, and assists with research publications.



NAME: David Kern
TITLE: Research Technician
YEARS AT MSC: 14

ABOUT: Dave's main responsibilities are small plot pesticide spraying and operating Michigan Sugar Company's six-row plot harvester.



NAME: Brian Groulx
TITLE: Research Manager
YEARS AT MSC: 14

ABOUT: Brian oversees the daily operations of the Research Department. His main responsibility is overseeing the Variety Trial Program, but he assists in all aspects of the research program.



NAME: Corey Guza, Ph.D.
TITLE: Director of Research and Agronomy
YEARS AT MSC: 13

ABOUT: Corey works with staff to identify research opportunities, evaluate data, and assist field consultants and growers with educational training and support.



NAME: Tammy Karpuk
TITLE: Research Data Analyst
YEARS AT MSC: 17

ABOUT: Tammy coordinates trials, prepares protocols, and helps collect data from trials. She assists with preparation for the annual Breeder's Tour and coordinates data collection for harvest. Tammy analyzes yield and sugar data and formats trials for research publications.



NAME: Amanda Harden
TITLE: Research Scientist
YEARS AT MSC: 1

ABOUT: Amanda works on strategies to improve storage quality, as well as agronomic strategies to improve sugar quality and tonnage.



NAME: Mark Anderson
TITLE: Research Applicator
YEARS AT MSC: 31

ABOUT: Mark's main responsibilities are applying bulk pesticides to trials for maintenance. He also assists with pile leveling in the fall.



NAME: Anna Payk
TITLE: Research Data Analyst
YEARS AT MSC: 11

ABOUT: Anna coordinates trials, prepares protocols, and collects data from agronomy trials. She assists with planting and maintains spray schedules and prepares pesticides for application. Anna also does data analysis and editing for research publications.



NAME: Ryan Gilman
TITLE: Research Technician
YEARS AT MSC: 12

ABOUT: Ryan operates trucks and tractors. He is a Certified Welder, and he maintains and fabricates equipment. He also applies pesticides during the growing season and operates a harvester during harvest.

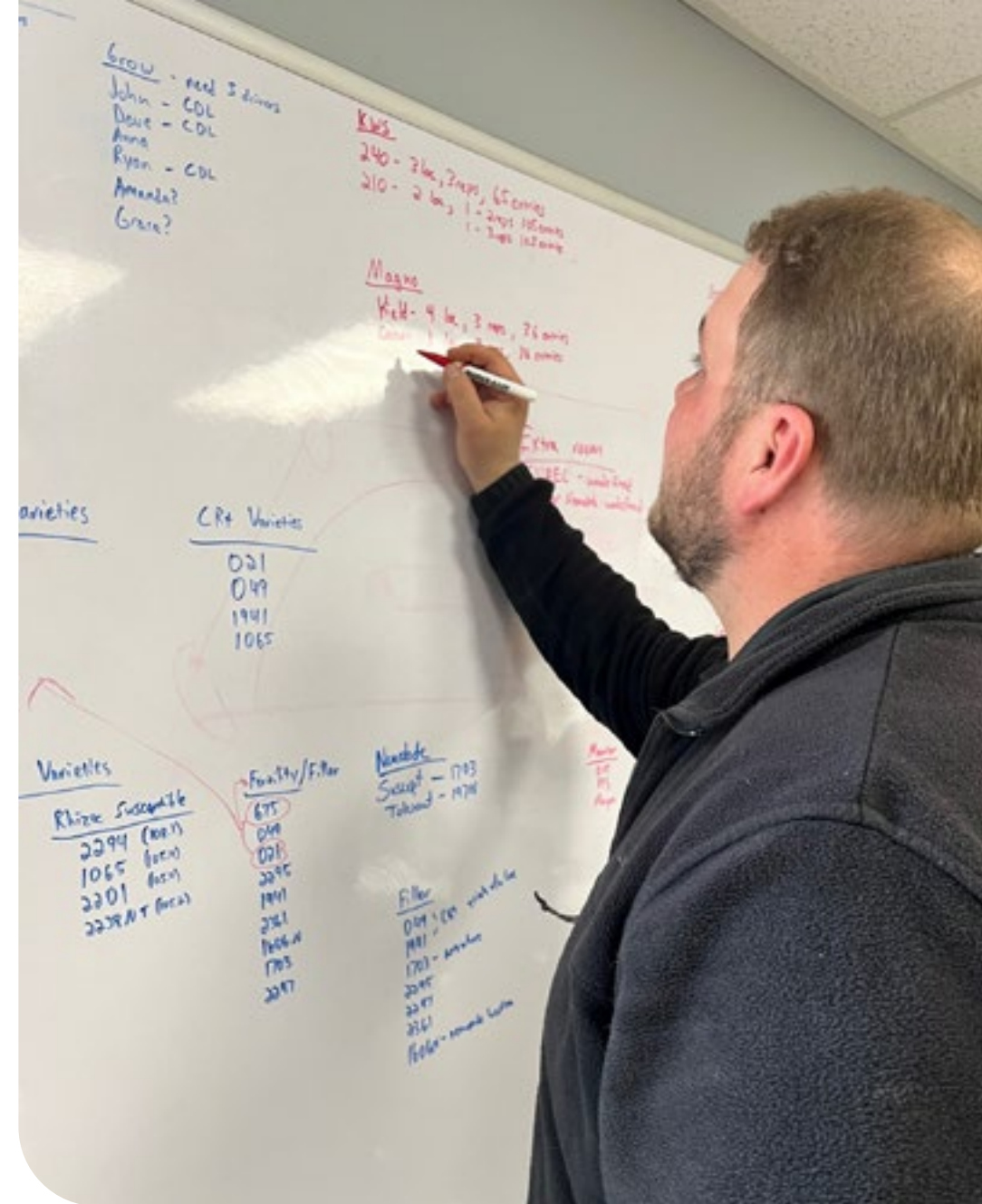
RIGHT Each year when spring rolls around, you'll find Michigan Sugar Company Research Manager Brian Groulx at his white board mapping out research trial plans for the 2022 crop. Groulx works out of Michigan Sugar's Agricultural Research Center located in Bay County's Monitor Township.

Michigan Sugar Company research is unique in that the primary focus is to serve the growers. No project is too large or too small, if a grower would like to find an answer to a question.

Strip tillage is an underutilized method of farming that provides significant soil savings over conventional tillage methods but can often be perceived as cost prohibitive or too risky to growers. The USDA awarded \$1.9 million for the project and that amount was matched by project partners like The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Sugar, and Cook Family, C.S. Mott, and Meijer foundations.

"As a grower-owned cooperative, Michigan Sugar Company is always researching ways to operate more sustainably and this initiative adds another important resource for our shareholders who annually plant, grow, and harvest our sugarbeets," said James Ruhlman, Executive Vice President at Michigan Sugar Company. "In producing our world-class crop, we want to continue to be good stewards of our land and water and this program gives our farmers the opportunity to see, first-hand, how this particular conservation practice works and impacts their operations."

Other future research opportunities may lie in the topics of application equipment, planters, and storage facilities, as well as different testing strategies and improved data analysis, both of which may require new types of equipment and data analysis software. It may also require working with research partners — universities, government institutions, other sugar companies, or industry partners — in new ways.



HERE TO SERVE THE GROWERS

Michigan Sugar Company research is unique in that the primary focus is to serve the growers. No project is too large or too small, if a grower would like to find an answer to a question.

Many times, researchers at universities and public institutions need to conduct research that is more basic versus applied to satisfy tenure requirements. They also may be required to seek out major grant opportunities to fund their research programs and institutions. While these projects may be helpful to the sugarbeet industry in general and be very helpful in solving industry issues, growers often are interested in things that can directly benefit their farms.

This is what Michigan Sugar Company is focused on providing. ■



Corey Guza, Ph.D., is Director of Research and Agronomy at Michigan Sugar Company. He works with staff to identify research opportunities, evaluate data, and assist field consultants and growers with educational training and support.



Elizabeth Taylor is 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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RIGHT Michigan Sugar Company agriculture research team members Joe Hodder, foreground, and Joal Loughner work to plant an Official Variety Trial on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, in a Sanilac County field near Minden City.

2022 Official Variety Trials Off to Good Start

By Brian Groulx, Research Manager

MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY TESTING 47 SEED VARIETIES IN SIX COUNTIES

Thanks to favorable weather conditions, Michigan Sugar Company's Official Variety Trials are off to a good start with a late-spring combination of moisture and warmth resulting in rapid growth and excellent stands.

This year, Michigan Sugar Company planted 47 seed varieties that were submitted for testing, including 21 varieties that currently are approved, eight varieties that are in their second year of testing, and 18 varieties that are being tested for the first time.

Although the start date was delayed until April 20 due to unfavorable mid-spring weather, all eight Official Variety Trials — or OVTs — were planted by May 13. The final *Cercospora* leafspot nursery was planted May 20. This year, three OVTs were planted in Huron County and one each was planted in Bay, Gratiot, Sanilac, Saginaw, and Tuscola counties. Michigan Sugar Company's agriculture research team reported that as of early June, disease pressure was low, and herbicide and fungicide applications had begun.

Michigan Sugar Company is approximately halfway through its five-year approval plan

that started in 2020 and company officials expect more new varieties to meet approval standards each year as the company moves toward a goal of producing a crop that averages 30 tons per acre with recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) of 300 pounds.

A LOOK BACK AT 2021

In contrast to this year, Michigan Sugar Company kicked off its 2021 Official Variety Trial planting season on April 6, with the planting of a trial in Tuscola County. Initial planting wrapped up on April 30 with the planting of *Cercospora* and *Rhizoctonia* Nurseries at the Blumfield Research Station.

Official Variety Trial locations in Huron and Gratiot counties experienced difficulties with emergence due to a combination of soil crusting and frost/freeze events. The decision was made to replant those trials on May 13 and May 17, respectively. Both replants were successful.

Growing conditions were relatively good for the first several weeks after planting. Slightly drier-than-normal conditions were present, but moisture was adequate to keep trials moving forward. All locations received mean-

ingful rainfall through the months of June and early July. Several locations, especially those in northern Huron County, experienced very dry conditions in late July and August. Growth was slowed at those locations, but dry conditions aided in controlling leafspot. Rainfall amounts at all locations increased in amount and frequency in September and promoted rapid root growth. Root and leaf diseases were kept under control in 2021 and no variety trials experienced disease levels severe enough to cause economic damage.

During the first full week of September, plant breeders from each of the participating seed companies traveled to Michigan for the annual Plant Breeder's Tour. Participants toured 17 different trial locations including Michigan Sugar Company OVT yield trials and disease nurseries, as well as Sugarbeet Advancement Strip Trials. Breeders wrapped up their week in Michigan meeting with the Seed Committee to discuss observations and impressions of the trials. Feedback from plant breeders was positive, and all were optimistic about new variety performance in the 2021 trials.

Official Variety Trial harvest began on Sept. 20. Two OVTs were harvested in September, five

in October, and the final OVT was harvested on Nov. 5. The 2021 harvest was challenging due to both wet weather and several equipment breakdowns.

Roots from three OVTs harvested during permanent pile were sorted and placed into Michigan Sugar Company's storage room at the Agricultural Research Center for observation and storage quality comparisons. All eight variety trials were of high enough quality to be used for Variety Approval in 2021. Yield and quality results for all trials were published in the 2021 Variety Trial Results book, and also are available on Michigan Sugar Company's website at www.michigansugar.com.

Root yields in variety trials, as well as those experienced by growers, exceeded expectations and broke records. Sugar accumulation was on a good pace through early September, but then frequent rains and warmer-than-average temperatures promoted root growth rather than sugar production. When sugar began to accumulate again in late October, it was too late to realize RWST goals.

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LEFT Sugarbeet seeds are planted on Wednesday, May 11, in a Sanilac County field near Minden City as part of Michigan Sugar Company's 2022 Official Variety Trials. This year, Michigan Sugar's Agriculture Research team planted 47 seed varieties submitted for testing. *Photos by Ben Tierney*

BELOW Members of Michigan Sugar Company's Agriculture Research team plant sugarbeet seeds on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, in a Sanilac County field near Minden City.



READ THE RESULTS

Check out the 2021 Variety Trial Results book online at www.michigansugar.com. Once there, click on the "Growing and Production" tab and scroll to the bottom to access the book.

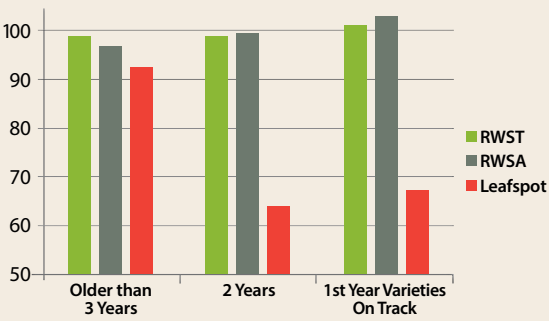


AGRONOMY



PICTURED In this aerial photo taken Wednesday, May 11, 2022, the containers holding different packets of sugarbeet seeds are visible on the planter. As the planter moves across the field, members of Michigan Sugar Company's agriculture research team open different packets of seed for planting as part of the company's Official Variety Trials. *Photo by Ben Tierney*

Compare Older vs. Newer Varieties



Higher value is better for RWST, RWSA; lower value is better for Leafspot. Values are averages of the varieties in each age range.

2022 SEED VARIETIES

Although 2021 RWST was lower than desired, a wide range of RWST levels exist within the available varieties for 2022.

There are 29 varieties approved to be sold in Michigan and Ontario for 2022 with varying levels of yield, sugar content, and disease tolerance. Of the five varieties first available to be sold in 2022, one has recoverable sugar per acre (RWSA) level above 100 percent of check, three have RWST levels above 100 percent of check, and all five have a Cercospora leafspot level below 95 percent of check. Higher percent of check levels are better for RWSA and RWST while lower levels are better for Cercospora leafspot.

Four CR+ varieties with excellent Cercospora leafspot tolerance are available in 2022. New Variety Approval standards went into effect for varieties beginning with testing in 2020. Five new varieties first tested in 2021 are on track to meet the new approval standards with average RWSA of 103 percent of check, RWST of 100 percent of check, and Cercospora leafspot 67 percent of check.

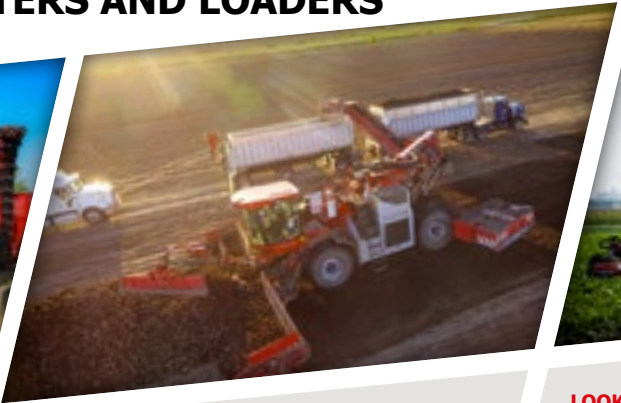
Variety approval standards continue to direct seed companies to produce varieties with improved RWSA, RWST, and Cercospora tolerance compared to current varieties. ■

See the seed variety charts on pages 29 and 30.



Brian Groulx is Research Manager for Michigan Sugar Company. He joined the company in 2009 and is responsible for managing the Variety Program, as well as daily activities in the Research Department.

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AGRONOMY

Approved Varieties for 2022

2020 and 2021 Data

	VARIETY	\$/A	ALL VALUES ARE % OF CHECK																
			RWSA	RWST	T/A	Emer- gence	Cercos- pora	Rhizoc- tonia	Root Aphid	Apha- nomyces	Fusarium	Rhizo- mania							
FULLY APPROVED	*C-G675	\$2,466	103.4	99.7	103.6	109.1	G+	93.9	G	101.4	F+	108.1	G	108.4	F	105.9	F	88.9	G+
	*SX-2296N	\$2,391	100.3	102.6	97.9	95.2	F	105.3	F-	99.0	G	97.5	G	94.4	G	108.9	F	114.7	F
	C-G932NT	\$2,383	99.9	99.0	101.1	108.0	G+	105.5	F-	98.1	G	60.2	G+	83.6	G+	70.9	G+	100.5	F+
	*HIL-9865	\$2,373	99.3	101.2	97.9	96.0	F	99.5	F	99.0	G	101.6	G	104.5	F+	117.4	P	99.5	G
	SX-2294	\$2,372	99.5	100.3	99.4	97.5	F	89.4	G	108.1	F	170.9	F+	87.2	G+	98.2	G	113.2	F
	BTS-197N	\$2,346	98.2	98.3	100.1	99.5	F+	110.8	P	97.8	G	72.8	G+	85.9	G+	79.2	G	97.3	G
	BTS-1703	\$2,343	98.3	99.4	99.0	103.7	G	80.3	G+	100.8	F+	69.3	G+	92.2	G	105.2	F	102.3	F+
	SX-2283	\$2,343	98.1	100.5	97.8	97.3	F	91.6	G	102.5	F+	144.1	F+	100.0	F+	102.4	F+	116.2	F
	HIL-2332NT	\$2,335	98.1	102.9	95.5	97.1	F	107.0	P	94.9	G+	70.6	G+	113.4	F	121.2	P	113.0	F
	*C-G752NT	\$2,313	96.9	96.4	100.5	99.6	F+	101.4	F	100.5	F+	92.8	G	92.7	G	67.7	G+	96.9	G
	SX-1278N	\$2,306	96.6	99.0	97.8	105.0	G	109.8	P	104.7	F+	222.4	F	96.7	G	104.1	F	100.1	F+
	C-G919	\$2,299	96.4	97.4	99.2	106.1	G	72.5	G+	100.5	F+	145.1	F+	95.4	G	80.2	G	98.2	G
	HIL-2238NT	\$2,286	95.6	96.9	98.6	102.3	G	94.7	G	105.2	F	151.4	F+	122.3	F-	118.7	P	89.8	G+
	MA-814	\$2,261	94.8	97.8	97.1	106.0	G	93.2	G	100.1	F+	81.7	G	108.7	F	117.1	P	110.0	F
MA-709	\$2,251	94.3	98.1	96.4	93.1	F	90.2	G	96.7	G	254.5	F	115.5	F-	113.6	F-	106.5	F+	
MA-813NT	\$2,053	86.0	97.7	88.5	99.8	F+	85.7	G	104.1	F+	177.3	F+	115.7	F-	113.3	F-	136.0	F	
LIMITED AP PROVAL	C-G021	\$2,388	99.9	99.5	100.7	104.5	G	43.0	E	96.5	G	236.4	F	93.7	G	68.2	G+	87.9	G+
	SX-2295	\$2,372	99.3	101.5	97.9	99.1	F+	92.1	G	98.0	G	144.7	F+	96.4	G	100.2	F+	126.5	F
	HIL-2361	\$2,353	98.7	101.7	96.9	102.3	G	91.6	G	92.1	G+	113.7	G	100.4	F+	107.0	F	117.5	F
	SX-2201	\$2,309	96.9	99.5	97.6	96.5	F	85.9	G	105.4	F	77.5	G+	92.0	G	107.8	F	108.3	F+
	SX-2297	\$2,286	95.9	102.1	94.2	91.9	F	90.3	G	93.9	G+	162.0	F+	98.9	G	108.9	F	122.2	F
SPECIAL APPROVAL	C-G049	\$2,443	102.4	97.8	105.1	109.0	G+	49.2	E	97.0	G	64.9	G+	87.3	G+	63.7	G+	93.9	G
	BTS-1065	\$2,369	99.3	96.7	102.7	107.6	G+	49.0	E	105.4	F	130.0	F+	102.7	F+	48.4	G+	86.1	G+
	BTS-1941	\$2,361	98.7	95.5	103.7	104.1	G	41.1	E	101.0	F+	109.6	G	87.9	G+	74.2	G+	88.3	G+
	BTS-1606N	\$2,343	98.4	96.9	101.7	100.9	G	98.5	F+	101.0	F+	58.9	G+	104.7	F+	76.9	G+	85.9	G+

A lower value is better for Cercospora, Rhizoctonia, Root Aphid, Aphanomyces, Fusarium and Rhizomania

\$/A: Gross dollars per acre calculated using early delivery adjustment where necessary, and a per pound payment of \$0.1767 for 2021, and \$0.165 for 2020.

*Check Variety

Seeds Available for 2022



ACH Seeds

FULL APPROVAL

C-G675 – Fair supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Good overall disease traits. No. 1 Variety on average of two years data ranked by RWSA.

C-G752NT – Good supply

Below average RWSA and RWST nematode tolerant variety. Good overall disease traits.

C-G919 – Fair supply

Below average RWSA and RWST. Best non-CR+ variety for leafspot tolerance. Very well-rounded disease traits.

C-G932NT – Good supply

Above average RWSA and average RWST. Good root rot tolerance package but slightly weak on Cercospora. No. 5 variety on average of two years data ranked by RWSA.

LIMITED APPROVAL (10%)

C-G021 – Very good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. CR+ variety for excellent Cercospora tolerance. Nursery trials show slight susceptibility to root aphids but meets approval standards. Good overall disease traits. No. 4 variety on average of two years data ranked by RWSA.

SPECIAL APPROVAL

C-G049 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and below average RWST. CR+ variety for excellent Cercospora tolerance. Very good overall disease traits. No. 2 variety on average of two years data ranked by RWSA.

APPROVED AT 5%.

Betaseed

FULL APPROVAL

BTS-1703 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Very good tolerance to Cercospora and Alternaria. Good overall disease traits.

BTS-197N – Limited supply

Above average RWSA and below average RWST. Good root rot tolerance but weak on Cercospora.

SPECIAL APPROVAL

BTS-1606 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and below average RWST. Good overall disease traits.

BTS-1941 – Very good supply

Above average RWSA and below average RWST. CR+ variety with the best Cercospora tolerance of all varieties tested. Good overall disease traits.

BTS-1065 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and below average RWST. CR+ variety for excellent Cercospora tolerance. Slightly weak on Rhizoctonia.

Hilleshög

FULL APPROVAL

HIL-9879NT – Low supply

Below average RWSA and average RWST nematode tolerant variety. Very good Cercospora tolerance. Weak on root diseases.

HIL-9865 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Weak on Fusarium, but otherwise good disease traits.

HIL-9908 – Low supply

Below average RWSA and above average RWST. Very good leafspot tolerance. Weak on Aphanomyces and Fusarium.

HIL-2240 – Low supply

Below average RWSA and RWST. Very good Cercospora tolerance. Weak on Rhizoctonia and Fusarium.

HIL-2238NT – Good supply

Below average RWSA and RWST. Good Cercospora tolerance. Weak on Aphanomyces and Fusarium.

HIL-2332NT – Good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Best RWST of all varieties tested. Weak on Cercospora and Fusarium.

LIMITED APPROVAL (10%)

HIL-2361 – Good Supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Very good Rhizoctonia tolerance and well-rounded disease traits.

PICTURED Flags mark where different seed plots begin and end in a Sanilac County field near Minden City that is the site of a Michigan Sugar Company Official Variety Trial for 2022.
Photo by Ben Tierney

Maribou

FULL APPROVAL

MA 709 – Fair supply

Below average RWSA and RWST. Good Cercospora and Rhizoctonia tolerance. Weak on Aphanomyces and Fusarium.

MA 813NT – Fair supply

Below average RWSA and RWST. Best Cercospora tolerance of nematode-tolerant varieties tested in 2021. Weak on Aphanomyces and Fusarium.

MA 814 – Fair supply

Below Average RWSA and RWST. Good Cercospora and Rhizoctonia tolerance. Weak on Fusarium.

Seedex

FULL APPROVAL

SX RR1264 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Good Cercospora tolerance and well-rounded disease traits.

SX RR1278N – Good supply

Below average RWSA and average RWST. Weak on Cercospora and Root Aphid. Otherwise, fair disease traits.

SX 2283 – Good supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Good Cercospora tolerance. Weak on Rhizoctonia, but otherwise good disease traits.

SX-2294 – Limited supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Good overall disease traits.

SX-2296N – Limited supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Weak on Cercospora but otherwise good disease traits. No. 3 variety on average of two years data ranked by RWSA.

LIMITED APPROVAL (10%)

SX-2295 – Limited supply

Above average RWSA and RWST. Good overall disease traits.

SX-2297 – Limited supply

Below average RWSA and above average RWST. Very good Rhizoctonia tolerance. Well-rounded disease traits.

SX-2201 – Limited supply

Below average RWSA and above



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Maximize Sugar Potential with a Plan to Combat Cercospora and Alternaria Leafspot

FUNGICIDE APPLICATIONS SHOULD START EARLY FOR BOTH STANDARD AND CR+ VARIETIES

By Dennis Bischer, Director of Agronomy

Cercospora and Alternaria leafspot can cause significant economic impact to sugarbeet growers and Michigan Sugar Company. These foliar diseases cause similar crop damage and will result in both tonnage and sugar losses if left uncontrolled.

Although challenging, leafspot can be managed. Planting varieties with strong genetic tolerance to leafspot is the first step in a leafspot control program. Once varieties are selected to plant, developing an effective fungicide program is essential. The combination of planting varieties with good tolerance to leafspot and a solid fungicide program creates a high likelihood of successfully controlling leafspot.

The 2021 growing season saw the introduction of CR+ leafspot tolerant varieties being planted in the fields of Michigan Sugar Company's nearly 900 grower-owners. For the 2022 growing season the adoption of CR+ has expanded and

approximately 30% of the acres have been planted to the new highly tolerant CR+ varieties. These varieties require fewer fungicide applications for season-long disease control. Different but similar fungicide programs will need to be used for these varieties. This requires spray programs for "standard" varieties and a program for CR+ varieties.

STANDARD VARIETIES

Start Early – Fungicides for leafspot control are preventative and must be applied before disease is present to provide control. Therefore, it is important to begin fungicide applications early in the growing season before foliar symptoms are present. Generally, fungicide applications should begin in late-June, however actual start date is dependent on the growing season and environmental conditions.

Respray Intervals – Fungicide applications need to occur every 14 days or less depend-

ing on the products applied, and weather conditions since the last fungicide application. EBDC and copper when applied alone have a 7- to 10-day re-application interval, while most other tank mixes have a 14-day re-application interval.

FUNGICIDE APPLICATION INTERVAL

FUNGICIDE	APPLICATION INTERVAL(DAYS)
EBDC	7-10 days
Copper	7-10 days
Copper + EBDC	10-14 days
Triazole + EBDC	14 days
Tin + EBDC	14 days
Priaxor + Topsin + EBDC	14 days

Triazoles: Delaro, Domark, Eminent, Enable, Inspire XT, Minerva, Provysol, Proline, Propulse, Regev

PHOTO 1, LEFT: On the left is a traditional variety that is resistant to leafspot and on the right is a highly tolerant CR+ variety in the 2021 Michigan Sugar Company Cercospora nursery.



Coverage – To increase levels of disease control from fungicide applications, thorough coverage of the leaves must occur. This is especially true with protectant products such as EBDC, copper, and tin as these classes of chemistry are not systemic within the plant.

To optimize spray coverage, fungicides should be applied with 20 gallons of water per acre or more. Nozzles and application pressures that produce a medium to fine droplet size should be utilized. Adjuvants that increase coverage, deposition, and adhesion to the leaf also are important to optimize fungicide performance.

Season-Long Control – While starting fungicide applications early in the season is critical, it also is important that fungicide applications continue late enough to provide season-long disease control. How late in the season fungicide applications need to occur is dependent on weather, disease control, and genetic tolerance to leafspot.

Varieties that are genetically tolerant will need fungicide protection until at least mid-September. Varieties that are moderately tolerant to leafspot will need protection until late-September, and varieties that are susceptible to leafspot will need protection through late-September and possibly into October.

To determine the duration of fungicide applications in the fall, scouting should occur to observe levels of disease.



PHOTOS 2 & 3: Photo 2 shows a susceptible leafspot variety that received six fungicide applications while photo 3 shows the same susceptible variety that received seven fungicide applications in the 2021 Michigan Sugar BEETcast trial. Applying fungicides more frequently and making an additional fungicide application prevented economic loss to leafspot in the photo 3 sugarbeets.

Decisions can then be made on further fungicide applications based on disease severity, genetic leafspot tolerance, and current and forecasted environmental conditions.

CR+ VARIETIES

Due to their increased genetic tolerance to leafspot, CR+ varieties require fewer fungicide applications for season-long disease control. While fewer fungicides are required with these varieties, other leafspot-control practices remain the same.

Fungicide applications for CR+ varieties should begin early in the season before disease development can occur. In these varieties, coverage is crucial as well to maximize fungicide performance. Finally, season-long control is needed to prevent economic loss to leafspot. The same basic leafspot control strategies occur in both traditional and CR+ varieties; however, CR+ varieties require fewer fungicide applications.

For the 2022 growing season, the Agriculture Research team at Michigan Sugar Company has developed leafspot control strategies for CR+. First, start fungicide applications with an EBDC in late June. Follow the late-June EBDC application with a tank-mix application in early-July. Then make another fungicide tank-mix application in early August and a final tank-mix application in early September.

We have referred to this strategy as "The first, the first, and the first" where a fungicide is applied on approximately the first of July, the first of August, and the first of September.

EXAMPLE SPRAY PROGRAMS

STANDARD		CR+	
DATE	PRODUCT	DATE	PRODUCT
June 25	EBDC	June 25	EBDC
July 5	Triazole + EBDC	July 5	Triazole + EBDC
July 19	Tin+EBDC		
Aug. 2	Priaxor+Topsin+EBDC	Aug. 2	Priaxor+Topsin+EBDC
Aug. 16	Triazole + EBDC		
Sept. 1	Tin+EBDC	Sept. 1	Tin+EBDC
Sept. 15	Copper+EBDC		

Leafspot recommendations for the 2022 growing season are like recommendations from 2021. This growing season does add some complexity as many growers who are planting CR+ varieties also are planting traditional varieties. For those who are planting both, good record keeping must take place so all varieties are being sprayed properly and maximum sugar production can be achieved on all fields. ■



Dennis Bischer is Director of Agronomy for Michigan Sugar Company's Central and East districts. He began his career at Michigan Sugar in 2017.

RESEARCH: Nitrogen and Potassium Relationship Key to Improving Tonnage, Sugar Content

By Amanda Harden, Research Scientist and Corey Guza, Ph.D., Director of Research & Agronomy

Balancing nitrogen input rates with potassium is a reliable strategy to improve sugarbeet tonnage and positively impact sugar content at harvest.

The elected ratio will impact nutrient partitioning to above-ground biomass and below-ground root development. With adequate nitrogen (N) availability, potassium (K) inputs at planting improve early season canopy development and plant photosynthetic capacity while simultaneously improving early season, below-ground growth (Hadir et al., 2021). When N availability is high relative to K, the nutrient balance typically delivers increased tonnage with more impurities and decreased sugar content. The objective of this research is to identify N:K input strategies that improve both tonnage and sugar content/quality.

The initial protocol included three N rates (0-, 80-, and 160-pound actual N) each combined with three potassium rates (0-, 150-, and 300-pound actual K) for a total of nine treatments with 0 pound N x 0 pound K serving as the untreated check. A relationship between N and K was demonstrated in the 2020 research. As expected, tonnage and recoverable white sugar per acre (RWSA) generally increased as N rate increased (Table 1),

and the impact of K was observed within N rates (see RWSA treatments four-six, for example). There was a potential trend in recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST); however, the results lacked resolution and were not statistically different.

The trial was replicated in 2021 with the addition of a 200 pounds per acre N rate with each K rate (0-, 150-, and 300-pound

K) to expand the view of the N and K relationship. Potassium was applied as potash and incorporated before planting. Nitrogen was applied as 28% UAN. Conversion and application details are included below Table 1. Plots were six rows wide with 22-inch spacing x 30-foot length. The trial included four field replicates in a randomized complete block design.

TABLE 1. 2020 AND 2021 YIELD AND QUALITY RESULTS

TRT #	K RATE ^a (LBS/A)	N RATE ^{b,c} (LBS/A)	2020 RWST	T/A	RWSA	2021 RWST	T/A	RWSA
1			269	17.2	4,630	269	36.0	9,693
2	150		268	17.2	4,649	270	39.8	10,734
3	300		290	17.0	4,882	273	38.7	10,573
4		80	283	24.0	6,794	260	43.9	11,403
5	150	80	286	24.3	6,941	261	45.5	11,889
6	300	80	296	23.6	6,982	266	44.8	11,934
7		160	275	28.4	7,811	252	44.6	11,232
8	150	160	292	26.0	7,554	260	46.8	12,172
9	300	160	292	26.8	7,808	251	46.6	11,719
10		200				233	45.8	10,691
11	150	200				254	47.1	11,983
12	300	200				243	47.2	11,477
LSD 5% ^d			19.5	3.7	1,080	17	3.3	1,114

a. 150 lbs actual K (250 lbs potash), 300 lbs actual K (500 lbs potash)
b. Total N Rate = 40 lb N applied 2x2 + Remainder side dress at 6-lf (40 lb, 120 lb, or 160 lb)
c. 40 lbs actual N (13 gal/A UAN 28%), 60 lbs N (20 gal/A UAN 28%), 120 lbs N (40 gal/A UAN 28%), 160 lbs N (53 gal/A UAN 28%)
d. Bold values are not statistically different from the top-ranking treatment per column.



Research in 2021 expanded our understanding of the N and K relationship. Replication in 2022 will show how these patterns flex with a differentiated growing environment.

TABLE 2. 2021 ROI

TRT #	K RATE (LBS/A)	N RATE ^{b,c} (LBS/A)	2020 RWST
1			\$0
2	150		\$111
3	300		\$28
4		80	\$256
5	150	80	\$275
6	300	80	\$226
7		160	\$212
8	150	160	\$306
9	300	160	\$175
10		200	\$115
11	150	200	\$267
12	300	200	\$127
LSD 5% ^d			19.5

a. 2021 Return on Investment (ROI) was calculated in comparison to the Untreated Check treatment with a per lb payment of \$0.165. Base application: PPI (\$5), 2x2 + side dress (\$11), PPI + 2x2 + side dress (\$16). Fertilizer: 28% UAN (\$385/ton), Potash (\$450/ton).
b. Bold values represent highest returning treatments.

The untreated check and K-only treatments (150 pound or 300 pound) had the lowest tons per acre and RWSA in each year (Table 1). Tonnage increased at the 200-pound N rate when K was included though RWST decreased. Higher N rates that included K tended to have higher RWSA typically because of increased tonnage as opposed to increased sugar. Highest RWSA did not always equate to highest return on investment (ROI) with input costs considered (Table 2).

Potassium applied at 150 pounds per acre with N at 80 pounds or 160 pounds per acre (treatments five and eight) had the highest ROI, and RWST was significantly greater than the 200-pound N application rate which had higher tonnage. Late-season precipitation was unprecedented in 2021. In addition to daily accumulations, the consistency and range resulted in reduced sugar content for much of the Michigan

sugarbeet growing region. As moisture content equilibrated between crop and soil, this source-sink dilution functioned to the decline of sugar content. Reduced late-season precipitation may result in greater separation of RWST between N:K strategies for the replication of this research in 2022.

Research in 2021 expanded our understanding of the N and K relationship. Replication in 2022 will show how these patterns flex with a differentiated growing environment. Data thus far explains that K applications with adequate N availability can improve sugarbeet tons per acre, sugar content, and return on investment. ■



Amanda Harden is the Research Scientist at Michigan Sugar Company. She is interested in strategies to improve storage quality, as well as agronomic strategies to improve sugar quality and tonnage. She joined Michigan Sugar in 2021.

COMING SOON... THE MICHIGAN SUGAR BEET SUMMIT

By Elizabeth Taylor, Ag Relations and Communications Manager

With growth, there is change.
And to change, you must grow.

So far in my time with Michigan Sugar Company, I have learned that one of the biggest constants in our industry is change. A change in the weather. A change in process or policy. A change in thinking.

For the last few years, our winter agronomy meetings have served us well in bringing valuable information and general application strategies to our growers. We've had great attendance, even during the pandemic when many meetings were held virtually. We've shared relevant data, and helped growers produce a higher quality, healthier sugarbeet crop.

With those successes, naturally, our group started to think, "What's next? How can we take things to the next level?" From these discussions, an idea was hatched to host a Michigan Sugar Beet Summit — a one-

day event where growers are brought together for education on a variety of sugarbeet-related topics.

I'm pleased to report the first Michigan Sugar Beet Summit takes place Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023, at Saginaw Valley State University.

This event is being designed to take the place of our traditional winter agronomy meetings, and we are so excited to bring growers from all areas together for a new purpose.

The morning keynote session will include presentations from Corey Guza, Ph.D., Director of Research and Agronomy at Michigan Sugar Company, and Dennis Bischer, Director of Agronomy for Michigan Sugar's Central and East districts. Like the winter agronomy meetings, this session will cover 2022 research results, trends, and application strategies for the upcoming crop.

The rest of the day will feature breakout sessions ranging from 30 minutes to an hour and likely focusing on topics such as harvest group/MAUS group structure, crop insurance maximization, farm financial structuring, succession planning, and nutrient management.


Watch for registration to open in mid-December, and a full agenda to be posted in January. You will be able to register for sessions ahead of time to plan your day.


One of our goals we have in the Ag Department is to continually bring valuable information to our growers. The Michigan Sugar Beet Summit will have the ability to grow and change with us as a cooperative — each year will be focused on relevant, timely topics and discussions.

We can't wait to see you there! ■



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The Sweet Life ... On the Road

**MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY EXPECTING
UPWARD OF 300 SEASONAL, TRAVELING
WORKAMPERS THIS YEAR**

By Elizabeth Taylor, Ag Relations and Communications Manager

You aren't a true workamper if you haven't worked a sugarbeet harvest."

So says Alyssa Kaste, General Manager of Express Services, a staffing agency that has partnered with Michigan Sugar Company since 2018 to help recruit seasonal employees to work the cooperative's sugarbeet harvest. For decades, Express Services has focused on attracting people known in the industry as workampers (or work campers): "Adventuresome individuals, couples, and families who have chosen a wonderful lifestyle that combines any kind of part-time or full-time work with RV camping," according to the website www.workamper.com.

"If you work as an employee, operate a business, or donate your time as a volunteer, and you sleep in an RV, you are a workamper," the website reads.

The idea to recruit recreational vehicle enthusiasts to fill seasonal jobs came to Chris Greenberg in the middle of the night — literally. Chris and his wife Sonya opened the Grand Forks, North Dakota, office of Express Services in 1997 and American Crystal Sugar Company is one of their clients. One night, Chris Greenberg saw a commercial from RV Magazine promoting "Living Life on the Road." He quickly realized there may be an opportunity to attract skilled, short-term employees from the RV community to help American Crystal during beet harvest. He was right and since that time, hiring workampers has been a specialty of their branch.

What started as a relatively small community of mostly retired couples looking to travel the United States in an RV, has developed into a huge and still growing, diverse community of people from all walks of life — young families, young people, retired couples, and everything in between. These folks live and travel in a variety of vehicles



ABOVE This group of workampers, who called themselves a "family," came to Michigan Sugar Company to work the 2020 sugarbeet harvest. They are, from left: Back row-David Flemming of Montreal, Canada; Lew Stoner of Knoxville, Tennessee; Alan Gilbert of Fort Ogelthorpe, Georgia; Jackie Clark of Randallstown, Maryland; and Dave Melcher of Elizabeth, Indiana. Front row-Michelle Pallozzi of San Diego; KT Ambosius of Appleton, Wisconsin; and Joe Breheny of St. Petersburg, Florida. They are pictured here inside the hoop building at Michigan Sugar Company's Sebewaing factory the morning of Friday, Oct. 16, 2020.

— everything from decked out motor-homes to renovated school buses.

Over the years, Express Services has built strong relationships with its workampers.

"We know their families, their children, and grandchildren, when there are weddings and also funerals," said Kaste, who manages the branch in Grand Forks. "It's not just about getting people up here to work. It's about building relationships and respecting them. And we choose to work with clients that align with those same values."

In 2018, Michigan Sugar Company was looking for a solution to its seasonal labor

shortage, which was becoming a larger problem each year. Through the company's relationship with American Crystal, a partnership was forged with Express Services. Express began recruiting RVers in April 2018. It was a slow start with only 3 workampers joining Michigan Sugar for harvest that year. Since then, the program has steadily grown. This year, Michigan Sugar officials expect to bring as many as 300 workampers during harvest.

Of course, bringing in that size of seasonal workforce is no small task. For Express Services, recruiting starts in January and continues through the fall. The company's

RIGHT A team of workampers stands on top of a sugarbeet pile at Michigan Sugar Company's Meade Piling Station in Kinde at the end of the 2021 harvest.

Photo by Rick Moreau/Moreau Visuals



FAR LEFT Michelle Pallozzi, a workamper who said she lives "wherever the wind takes her," operates a sugarbeet piler at Michigan Sugar Company's Sebewaing factory the morning of Friday, Oct. 16, 2020.

LEFT Dave Clarke, of Sault Ste. Marie, shows off two sugarbeets delivered to Michigan Sugar Company's factory in Caro the morning of Friday, Oct. 16, 2020. Dave is a workamper who has worked sugarbeet harvests for multiple years. He came to Michigan Sugar Company for the first time in 2020.

team of recruiters contact employees every 30-45 days from January to when they arrive to work. That's one of the reasons they are so successful and have a high retention rate: almost 60% of Express' workamper employees return each year.

One of the biggest challenges to bringing in seasonal workampers is finding places for them to park their vehicles. Express Services and Michigan Sugar have worked tirelessly to build relationships with many local campgrounds, securing campsites close in proximity to piling ground and factory locations where workampers spend their days.

In many cases, campgrounds that typically close as the weather turns colder are now staying open for Michigan Sugar's workampers. That's thanks to strong relationships that have been built and some in-kind donations made by the company to improve campground amenities, not only for workampers, but for others who use the campgrounds.

Looking ahead, Michigan Sugar Company is excited about the upcoming harvest and welcoming back many workampers who have become friends with year-round employees, other workampers, and even the locals.

"If you haven't yet talked with one of Michigan Sugar Company's workampers, we encourage you to take a few minutes this year to introduce yourself," said James Ruhlman, Michigan Sugar Company's Executive Vice President. "Their culture as a community is one of inclusivity, kindness, and openness. They are committed to each job they arrive at, and very much feel like a part of our cooperative." ■

LIFE IS A HIGHWAY FOR WORKAMPER COUPLE

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

MEET CRYSTAL AND ANTHONY BARNETT

Crystal Barnett calls herself a city girl who, until just a few years ago, never owned a pair of work boots and certainly didn't imagine she'd be living a life on the road and sleeping in a travel trailer. Anthony Barnett, her husband of 14 years, says he always has had an adventurous spirit, so leaving corporate America for a job that has taken the couple to 36 states in four and a half years made perfect sense.

The Barnetts, in 2018, became workampers, bouncing from seasonal job to seasonal job at places like bed and breakfasts and parks, and even providing a grocery delivery service, something popular among workampers.

This fall will be the Barnett's third year working a Michigan Sugar Company beet harvest, Anthony as a leader helping oversee harvest in the East District and Crystal as a project manager overseeing the entire Michigan harvest. After spending more than four years on the road, the couple has taken a little bit of a break from traveling and both now work for Express Services, the company with which Michigan Sugar partners to help bring in seasonal employees each year.

We recently hopped on Zoom with the couple to ask them about their workamping experiences over the past several years.

Q: WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Crystal: Columbus, Ohio.
Anthony: Indianapolis, Indiana.

Q: WHAT DID YOU DO FOR A LIVING BEFORE BECOMING WORKAMPERS?

Crystal: I worked as a dental hygienist and then when we got married, I became a mother of seven. Anthony had four children and I had three.
Anthony: I was working as a health insurance appeals analyst for Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. I was the last guy to review an appeal before it went to lawyers.

Q: WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO WORKAMPING?

Crystal: I was missing my kids and because they were in the military, and dispersed from Florida to Cincinnati to Japan for a while, this was an opportunity to travel and see them.
Anthony: I'm the hiker, kayaker, canoer, outside-in-a-camp, give-me-a-tarp-and-a-blanket-and-I'll-be-fine kind of guy. I introduced workamping as a way to make money, get on the road, and see the kids.

Q: IN WHAT TYPE OF VEHICLE DO YOU TRAVEL AND LIVE?

Anthony: We have a 2010 Toyota Tundra that tows our travel trailer — a remodeled 2004 Palomino Puma. It sleeps four, including the fold-out couch.

Q: HOW DID YOU END UP WORKING SUGARBEET HARVESTS?

Crystal: In 2020, through Express Services, we did the harvest in North Dakota for American Crystal Sugar Company and then we came to Caro to work the harvest for Michigan Sugar. Anthony was a piler operator and I worked the grounds.
Anthony: I was trained on the piler at American Crystal and when we got to Michigan they asked if anyone could run a piler and Crystal said, "he has." I loved the feeling of being able to run this monster machine.

Crystal: Working a sugarbeet harvest was the thing that snagged us. I'm a city girl. It surprised me. I connected with Michigan and the people there and the staff with Michigan Sugar. I definitely fell in love with the whole process.

Q: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE WORKAMPING EXPERIENCE?

Crystal: I love the community. I didn't always love the job; getting dirty and all that jazz wasn't always my thing. But what I love is people, the community.

Anthony: There are not too many people out here getting rich, but we are sustaining life, making money, and we get to travel.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR MOST NERVE-WRACKING EXPERIENCE ON THE ROAD?

Crystal: We were on our way to New Hampshire when we encountered bad weather. We were in a blizzard and had to pull off the road and find a hotel. The hotel had a hill that was iced over and when we started up, we started sliding down. Behind us was nothing but a drop off. Thankfully, our back tire literally hit a curb and stopped us. Otherwise, our house was ready to go over a cliff.

Anthony: As your house goes down the road, it basically goes through a small earthquake every time. There's always something to fix. Sometimes things just shake loose, or it's that one thing you forget to tie down.

Q: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AS YOU RETURN TO MICHIGAN THIS FALL?

Crystal: It's going to be a great harvest. We've got a great group of workampers coming. This is a great partnership between Michigan Sugar Company and Express. Workampers appreciate the ability to come in and make money and some lifetime friends.
Anthony: We're hoping to hit Traverse City this year. We've never been there. ■

BELOW Anthony and Crystal Barnett, who work for Express Services, also spent time as workampers, moving around to different parts of the country for seasonal work. They are pictured here at Michigan Sugar Company's piling ground outside its factory in Sebewaing in 2021. *Photo by Rick Moreau/Moreau Visuals*



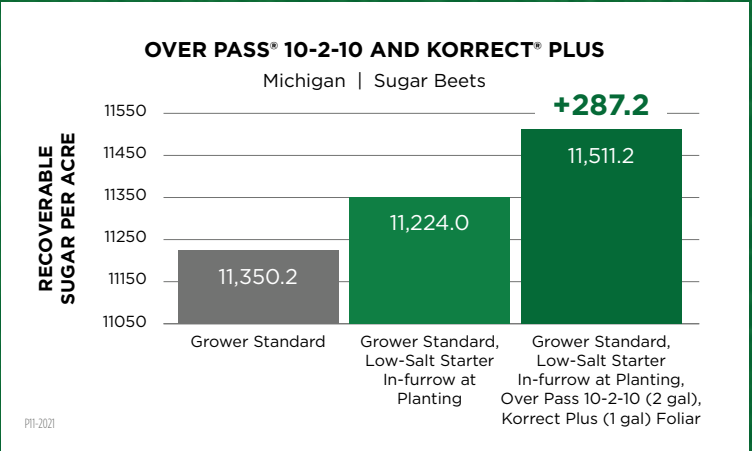
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THE INSIDE STORY: FACTORIES

Bay City

By Jason Lowry, Vice President of Operations

The 2021-2022 sugarbeet slicing campaign wrapped up at Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City factory at 1:50 p.m. on Saturday, April 23, bringing an end to the longest season in company history.

A record setting 1,861,149 tons of sugarbeets were sliced during the campaign and nearly 438 million pounds of sugar from beets was produced. The incoming sugar content averaged 15.21% for the campaign. Factory staff worked as a team to maximize production despite having between 20 and 50 positions unfilled throughout the campaign. The last of the vented beets strained the factory purification system while the hoop building beets transferred from Croswell allowed quality sugar production and rate increases at the end.

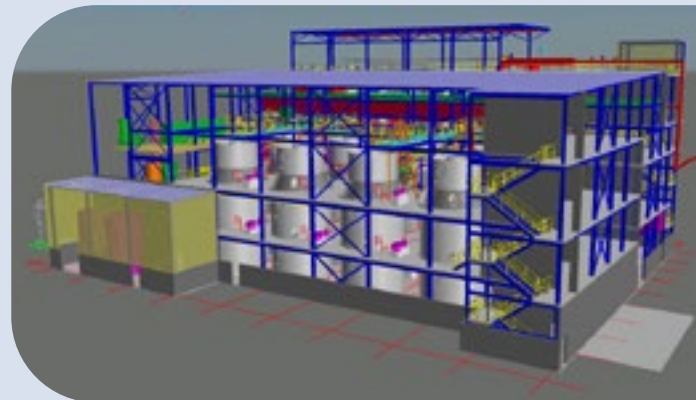
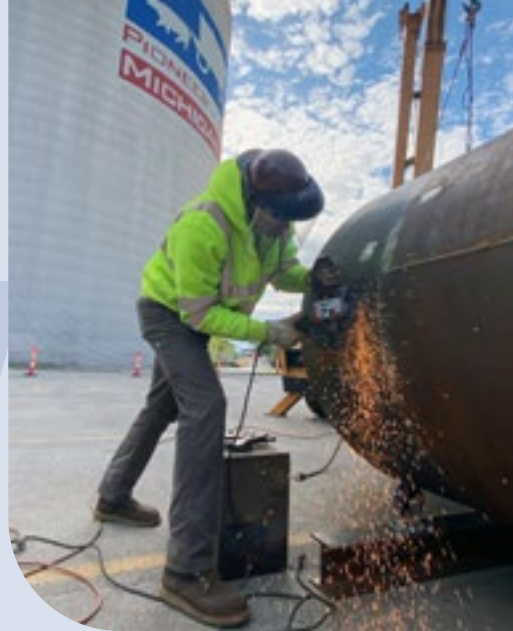
Factory staff are hard at work inspecting and repairing equipment in anticipation of next year's crop. Significant work also is underway on a \$75+ million molasses desugarization project that will be spread out over the next two summers with an anticipated start-up in fall 2023. The project will allow Michigan Sugar to process 100% of the molasses it produces, extracting up to 80 million additional pounds of sugar annually without planting any additional acres of sugarbeets. The return to Michigan Sugar's grower-owners is expected to be \$10 million to \$15 million annually.

Additionally, a \$6.6 million project is underway right outside the gate of the Bay City factory. The Bay County Road Commission is overseeing the total reconstruction of a 1-mile stretch of South Euclid Avenue from Salzburg to Hotchkiss roads. There will be short-term pain as we work around the construction zone, but it will all be worth it in the longer term as the roadway and entry to our factory grounds is transformed. ■



ABOVE A crew from L.A. Construction Corp. of Flushing works to rip up the northbound lane of South Euclid Avenue in front of Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City factory. A 1-mile stretch of the roadway, from Salzburg Avenue to Hotchkiss Road, is undergoing a complete reconstruction this summer.

RIGHT Eric Kochs of Monarch Welding & Engineering of Bay City and a member of UA Local 85 Plumbers, Steamfitters & HVACR, works to prepare a 56-inch vacuum pipe for installation at Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City factory.



ABOVE This is a computer rendering of Michigan Sugar Company's new molasses desugarization facility that is being built at the company's Bay City factory with start-up scheduled for fall 2023. The facility will allow Michigan Sugar to produce up to an additional 80 million pounds of sugar annually.



ABOVE A giant crane is used to lift a new section of 56-inch vacuum pipe into place at Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City factory. The new pipe is replacing similar pipe that collapsed earlier this year.

Caro

CARO BY THE NUMBERS

Days of Campaign: **249***

Total Tons Sliced: **834,378***

Sugar Produced: **201,012,200 pounds**

Molasses Produced: **36,040 tons**

**New Record*

BELOW Here is a look at the new high-pressure water blasting equipment recently installed at Michigan Sugar Company's Caro factory. This system will allow Michigan Sugar to complete more equipment cleaning inside the factory without hiring outside contractors.



Michigan Sugar Company's Caro factory sliced the last sugarbeet of its 2021-2022 processing campaign at 12:35 a.m. on Friday, April 22, closing the door on the longest campaign in factory history.

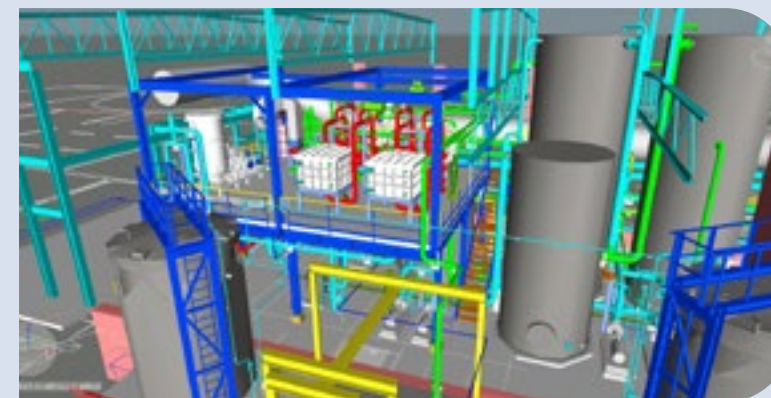
The Caro factory sliced 834,378 tons during the campaign, the most ever processed by the factory in a single season. The factory produced more than 201 million pounds of sugar for the campaign, limited by the incoming factory sugar content of 15.02%.

Factory staff worked together to resolve several issues over the season that contributed to the higher throughput including expansion of the main liming reaction time that significantly reduced the need to take evaporators offline to boil out scale. Many of the employees at the Caro factory worked long hours and multiple positions to ensure that the beets

were processed in a timely manner given the abundant crop our growers and Mother Nature afforded us.

Inter-campaign work is well underway at Caro to return the assets to prime operating condition. Additionally, the factory is installing a juice softening station this summer that will have immediate impacts on operation, but also set the stage for softened molasses fed into the molasses desugarization project at Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City factory that is scheduled to go online in the fall of 2023.

An additional project being completed this summer in Caro is the installation of a compressed water cleaning system. Traditionally, the factory has hired outside services to water blast our process piping and equipment, and this would allow us to bring that work in house at a cost savings. ■



ABOVE This is a computer rendering of new juice softening equipment being installed this summer at Michigan Sugar Company's factory in Caro. Juice softening contributes to soft molasses generation for the new molasses desugarization facility in Bay City.

RIGHT Inside Michigan Sugar Company's Caro factory, workers make way for new juice softening equipment being installed this summer. Here, a contractor removes coal-fired boiler equipment that no longer was being used at the factory.



Jason Lowry is Michigan Sugar Company's Vice President of Operations. In this role, he provides leadership and direction to the areas of factory operations, engineering, asset management, environmental compliance, and quality for the company. Jason has worked in the global sugar industry in both beet and cane sugar milling and refining. He joined Michigan Sugar in 2019.

CROSWELL BY THE NUMBERS

Days of Campaign: **213**

Total Tons Sliced: **756,114**

Sugar Produced: **143,202,800** pounds

Molasses Produced: **38,284** tons

Michigan Sugar Company halted its 2021-2022 sugarbeet slicing campaign at its Croswell factory at around 3 p.m. on March 29, bringing an end to a very challenging season.

The Croswell factory processed 756,114 tons of beets with an average sugar content of 14.29%. The campaign lasted 213 days and saw the production of more than 143 million pounds of sugar. Close to 13 million pounds of sugar remain in thick juice storage and will be processed just before the commencement of slice in the coming campaign.

Employees in Croswell are taking advantage of the longer maintenance period by completing all inspections and outlining the work needed to get the factory back in order. That work is through the planning and scheduling processes and is underway. Investments in wastewater treatment assets are expected to take place over the inter-campaign that will allow for more efficient and timely treatment of the wastewater on site.

Labor shortages have affected all factories in recent years, and most hard hit has been the Croswell factory. The company is investing in training efforts for many of its critical operational roles to give those employees the skills and knowledge normally obtained over many years in the positions at the factory. Through this effort, we are bringing employees together to discuss current operating strategies and educate and challenge the teams on how to achieve higher results in the coming years.

This is expected to result in better operation in the coming years, as well as more open communication between shifts and positions. ■



ABOVE Here is a look inside the new 2-million-gallon molasses tank being constructed this summer at Michigan Sugar Company's Croswell facility.



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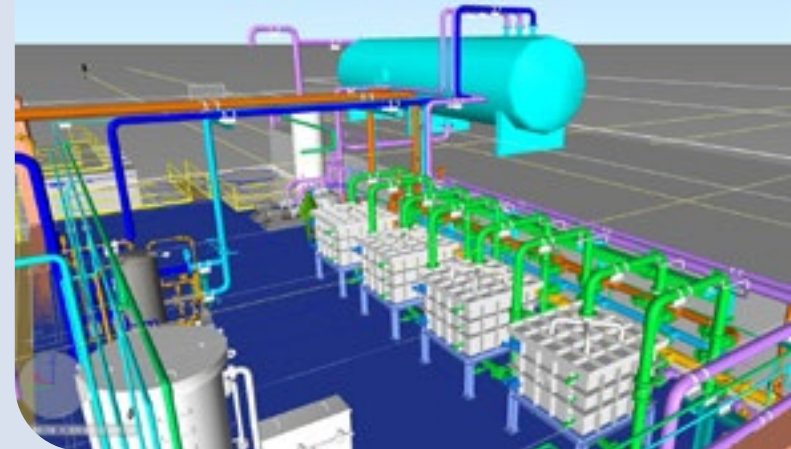
Good Things Come From Common Ground™

Michigan Sugar Company's Sebawaing factory closed out its 2021-2022 campaign by slicing the last sugarbeet of the season at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, April 24.

The Sebawaing factory surpassed previous records for beets sliced in a campaign with 1,260,060 tons. The incoming sugar content of 15.71% allowed for nearly 300 million pounds of sugar to be extracted from the beets. The site teams welcomed Factory Manager Kevin Romzek to Sebawaing, and together they averaged more than 5,000 tons per day of slice during a 248-day campaign.

Following the successful juice run, staff turned their attention to inter-campaign maintenance. Inspections have been completed with some areas needing more attention than anticipated and others in pretty good shape. Significant infections in the front end of the factory resulted in sugar loss, and two new chemicals were successfully tested for use as a biocide. Sebawaing employees also trialed new instruments and automation on the sugar end with a goal of improving crystallization of sugar.

The Sebawaing factory will see significant capital investments completed during this inter-campaign. A pulp press overhaul is underway involving two outdated presses being replaced with a larger, more efficient press. A project in the boilerhouse will change the coal feeders, as well as improve the overfire air addition to ensure a clean and efficient burn of solid fuel, and a new heating control process will be added to the pressed water circuit to combat microbial infections. Juice softening cells will be installed for immediate benefit to the process and in anticipation of the molasses desugarization expansion in Bay City, scheduled to come online in fall 2023. ■



ABOVE Here is a computer rendering of new juice softening equipment being installed this summer at Michigan Sugar Company's factory in Sebawaing. Juice softening contributes to soft molasses generation for the new molasses desugarization facility in Bay City.



ABOVE This aerial view shows a 114,700-square-foot section of the sugarbeet transfer slab at Michigan Sugar Company's Sebawaing factory where new concrete is being poured this summer. The concrete poured will measure 10 inches in thickness.



ABOVE Here is a look inside the pulp press building at Michigan Sugar Company's Sebawaing factory. The roof of the building has been removed to allow for installation of several pieces of equipment, including a new pulp press, juice softening storage tanks, and a press water infection control system.

SEBEWAING BY THE NUMBERS

Days of Campaign: **248***

Total Tons Sliced: **1,260,060***

Sugar Produced: **299,269,400** pounds

Molasses Produced: **51,471** tons

*New Record

Sweet Success: High Sugar Producers 2021



LEFT Troy Gingrich, right, of Gingrich Farms LLC in Bad Axe, accepts the 2021 Central District High Sugar Producer award from Central District President Clint Hagen.

GINGRICH FARMS EARNS HONORS IN CENTRAL DISTRICT

By Adam Maurer, Field Consultant

The Central District 2021 High Sugar Producer Award was earned by Gingrich Farms LLC of Bad Axe. The winning field had recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) of 294.04 and 19.261% sugar.

Troy and Linda Gingrich operate the farm, as well as Gingrich Farms Transport. Troy Gingrich started farming with his dad Mel, who still helps in the spring and fall, along with Troy's brother Todd and full-time employee Ben. On the farm, sugarbeets, corn, dry beans, soybeans, and wheat are grown.

The winning sugarbeet field was planted in a stale seedbed on May 8, 2021, with seed variety Crystal 919. The year before, the field was soil sampled after corn was harvested, variable rate spread, then worked before a rye cover crop was applied.

This was Gingrich's first year growing beets on 20-inch rows, but not his first time using a variable rate seeding process. The field was planted into four different zones that accounted for soil type, topography, and Gingrich's experience with getting crops to thrive on this farm.

A 2x0x2 starter fertilizer was put down at planting along with a 6-26-

6 pop-up fertilizer and Quadris. Streaming his 28% to get the remainder of his nitrogen on the field, Gingrich then moved to leafspot control rotating triazoles, strobis, and tins along with his tank mix partners.

Gingrich harvested the field in November with his ROPA Tiger harvester. As part of a MAUS group, the beets were then loaded and delivered to Michigan Sugar Company's Sebewaing factory. ■

CENTRAL DISTRICT 2021 HIGH SUGAR PRODUCERS

NAME	RWST
Gingrich Farms LLC	294.04
Vader and Son LLC	293.27
Richmond Bros. Farms LLC	285.61
KTwo Farms LLC	283.83
Timothy Kubacki	282.84
Donald Heleski	282.13
Randall Sturm	280.99
Steve Gayari	280.86
Gingrich Farms LLC	280.26
Richmond Bros. Farms LLC	279.46

HELENA CATTLE COMPANY IS TOPS IN EAST DISTRICT

By Dennis Bischer, Director of Agronomy

Helena Cattle Company, operated by Doug and Debbie Roggenbuck along with their children Sean and Krista, and Helena Farms, operated by Jim and Stacey Roggenbuck along with their children Kade and Colin, is the winner of the 2021 East District High Sugar Producer Award. On the farm, located in Harbor Beach, sugarbeets, corn, dry beans, and wheat are grown, and beef cattle are raised.

The winning 189-acre field was planted in 20-inch rows on April 20, 2021, in northeast Huron County to B-1703 using variable rate seeding. Quadris was applied in a t-band at planting to prevent and control rhizoctonia root rot. Just before planting, dry fertilizer was broadcast containing 140 pounds per acre of nitrogen, along with phosphorus, sulfur, manganese, and boron. Global Positioning System – or GPS – soil sampling occurred in 2020 and lime, potash, phosphorus, and K-Mag were variable rate applied in the fall of 2020 to address nutrient requirements for the 2021 sugarbeet crop.

Weed control consisted of glyphosate for broad spectrum weed control. The herbicide program also included Stinger to control glyphosate-resistant marestail and Dual Magnum to prevent the introduction of glyphosate resistant pigweed species.

Multiple fungicide applications starting in June, along with timely follow-up applications and strong genetic tolerance to leafspot, resulted in excellent leafspot control and maximum sugar accumulation.



LEFT Michigan Sugar Company Board Chairman Jim Roggenbuck, left, of Helena Cattle Company in Harbor Beach, accepts Michigan Sugar Company's 2021 East District High Sugar Producer award from Michigan Sugar President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer.

RIGHT Diane Lynch and her son Cole Lynch of Lynch Farms in Au Gres were honored with the 2021 West District High Sugar Producer Award.



WEST DISTRICT AWARD GOES TO LYNCH FARMS OF AU GRES

By Maki Petter, Field Consultant

The 2021 High Sugar Producer Award in Michigan Sugar Company's West District went to Lynch Farms in the Arenac County community of Au Gres. The winning field was harvested Nov. 1-3, 2021, and registered 37.34 tons per acre with recoverable white sugar per ton (RWST) of 280.83.

Diane Lynch and her son Cole Lynch work together to make things happen on the farm. Diane does all the bookkeeping and Cole handles all the on-farm duties. Lynch Farms is a fourth-generation farm that was established in 1925 in Munger. The Lynch family bought land in Au Gres and for a period time farmed in both locations until a decision was made to rent the farm in Munger. Today, the family farms full time in Au Gres, growing sugarbeets, corn, soybeans, wheat, dry beans, and oats.

The winning 58-acre field was planted on April 23, 2021, with the seed variety Hilleshög 9865. The Lynches said they chose this variety because of its sugar and disease package coupled with its performance in trials.

"It doesn't always have the highest tons, but it seems to always have the sugar," said Cole Lynch, who planted the field at a population of 52,000 with his custom precision planter in 28-inch row spacing. Fertilizer at planting was applied through the planter's 3x1 Conceal with Quadris and Mustang applied in-furrow. Roundup and Warrant was applied post.

When it comes to fertility, the Lynches believe in the importance of applying lime in the fall every year before they plant sugarbeets. In addition, fall potash is applied with a spring split application of UREA/AMS. Cole Lynch believes the addition of the AMS has aided in his successes on the farm with sugarbeets. It's something his grandfather did and seems to be paying off for him, too. Leafspot sprays were a rotation of Super Tin and triazoles with EBDC used on each pass.

The Lynches said they were "pleasantly surprised" to earn the High Sugar Producer Award and added they believe the climate in the Au Gres area has allowed for higher sugars than other growing regions in the last few years. ■

WEST DISTRICT 2021 HIGH SUGAR PRODUCERS

NAME	RWST
Diane M. Lynch	280.83
Larry A. Prohaska	280.50
McKimmy Farms LLC	275.46
Edward Pincik	273.97
Edward Pincik	272.73
Dwight & Marvin Selle Inc.	271.86
Bender Farms LLC	271.19
Dwight & Marvin Selle Inc.	270.75
Brent Selle	270.36
Stockmeyer Family Farms	270.11



Adam Maurer is a Michigan Sugar Company Field Consultant serving growers in the Ruth and Verona areas. He joined Michigan Sugar in 2019.



Maki Petter is a Michigan Sugar Company Field Consultant in the West District serving growers in the Bay City, Au Gres, and Hope areas. She joined Michigan Sugar in 2020 and is passionate about agriculture technology.

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BELOW Scott Smith on his Oliver Row Crop 77 tractor at Smith Family Farms in Pigeon. Established in 1876, today sugarbeets, corn, soybeans, wheat, and dry beans are grown on the 2,300-acre farm. The Oliver Row Crop 77 tractors were manufactured from 1948 to 1954.

‘I am a Farmer at Heart’

MEET NEW MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY DIRECTOR SCOTT SMITH

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

JUST THE FACTS

- AGE:** 60
- EDUCATION:**
- Laker High School, 1979.
 - Earned his associate degree in agriculture technology from Michigan State University in 1982.

- ALL IN THE FAMILY:**
- 5TH GENERATION**
- Scott and Nancy Smith
- Jason, of Williamston, a professor of engineering at MSU.
 - Sara Katt (Adam), of Kawkawlin, a 5th grade teacher at Standish-Sterling Elementary School.
 - Katie Verhaar (Nick), of Bad Axe, a stay-at-home mom.
 - Six grandchildren
 - Labrador retriever mix named Rusty.

- 4TH GENERATION**
- Sid and Kay Smith
- Dean
 - Scott
 - Todd
 - Jeff (farms with Scott)
 - Mari Kay West (d. 2011)

- 3RD GENERATION**
- Jim and Grace Smith

- 2ND GENERATION**
- James and Margaret Smith

- 1ST GENERATION**
- George and Anna Smith
- Immigrated from England and worked in the coal mines in Pennsylvania. Saw an opportunity to lumber in Saginaw. Established the first 160 acres of farmland on Caseville Road, 3 miles north of Pigeon.



ABOVE Scott and Nancy Smith, right, with their dog Rusty, a 6-year-old Labrador retriever mix, along with Scott’s brother Jeff Smith, left, and their parents Sid and Kay Smith at Smith Family Farms in Pigeon.

In 1985, while cruising to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, on their honeymoon, Nancy Smith got a clear understanding of just what her husband Scott means when he says, “I am a farmer at heart.”

As the cruise ship pulled into port, Scott and Nancy found themselves standing on the deck taking in the sights.

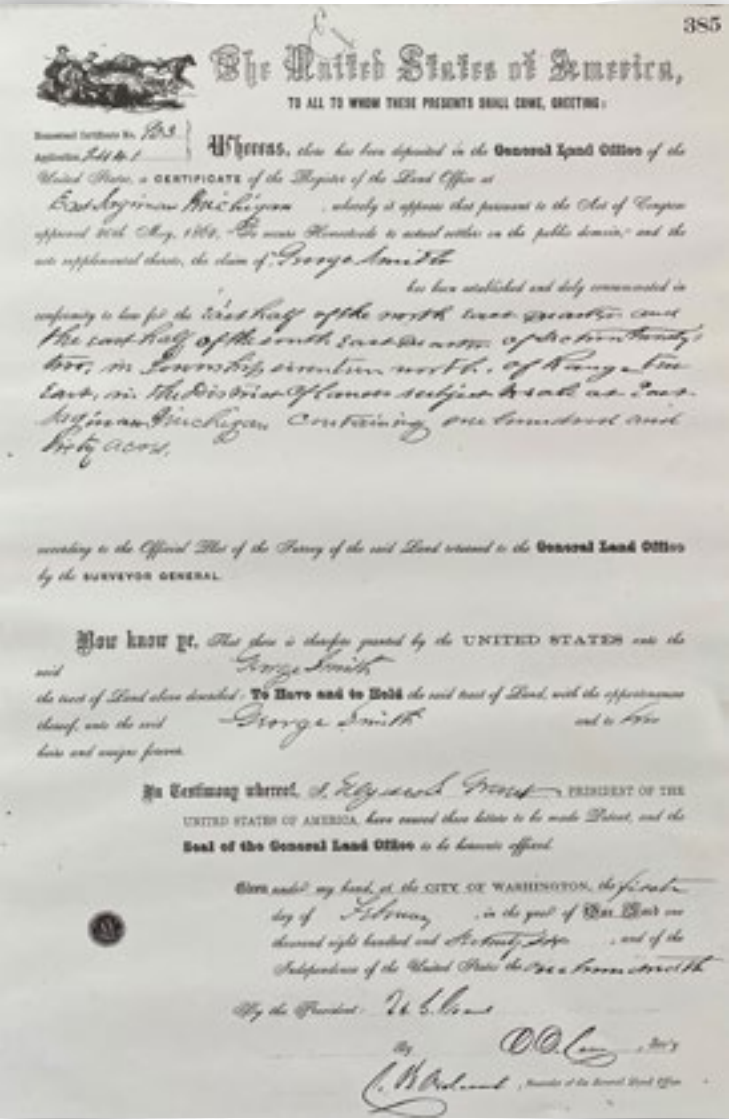
“I’m looking out at these beautiful views and all of a sudden I hear Scott say, ‘Hey, there’s a John Deere dealership,’” said Nancy. “Our time in port was limited ... so we ended up at the John Deere dealership. Who needs to walk on the beach on your honeymoon anyway?”

To this day, that experience has become a beloved memory of the couple, who play off each other with humor and ease when telling stories of their life together.

“Tell him about the plane trip home,” Scott says with a gleam in his eye that suggests, “You’re really going to want to hear this story.”

RIGHT Scott Smith climbs into the cab of a Smith Family Farms truck. J&S are the initials of Scott and his brother Jeff who are the fifth generation of the family to operate the farm.

BELOW Here is a copy of the land grant signed by President Ulysses S. Grant, given to George Smith in 1876 for the original 160 acres of farmland on Caseville Road, 3 miles north of Pigeon.



“Oh yah,” says Nancy, “On the plane trip home I found myself seated between Scott and a pig farmer. They talked the whole time.”

Scott Smith was elected to serve a four-year term on Michigan Sugar Company’s Board of Directors in January 2022. Read on to learn more about one of the cooperative’s newest leaders. ■



ABOVE Scott Smith checks on one of the cows at Smith Family Farms in Pigeon.

FARM FACTS

- Smith Family Farms, Pigeon
- Established 1876
- 2,300 acres in Huron County
- 475 acres of sugarbeets
 - Corn
 - Soybeans
 - Wheat
 - Dry Beans
 - Feeder Steer

• Scott Smith farms with his brother Jeff Smith and gives a shoutout to long-time employee Jeremy Kretzschmer, who has worked at the farm since 1996.

What Do You Love About Sugarbeets?

“We’ve been growing sugarbeets on a farm for close to 100 years. I love putting them in the ground and seeing them grow. At harvest time, I love to see the accomplishment of the whole year.”

Tell Us a Favorite Farm Memory

“I’ve always wanted to farm. I remember being at recess as a kid watching a farmer plowing in his field where Scheurer Hospital is now.”

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- FAVORITE MUSICIAN:**
Elton John and The Beatles.
- FAVORITE BOOK:**
“Killing” series by Bill O’Reilly.
- FAVORITE PLACE IN MICHIGAN:**
Sand Point/Caseville.
- FAVORITE PLACE YOU’VE TRAVELED:**
Alaska (Nancy’s sister lives in Anchorage).
- WHAT COLOR ARE YOUR TRACTORS:** Green.
- FAVORITE DESSERT MADE WITH PIONEER SUGAR:**
Chocolate Sheet Cake.

HOW DID YOU & NANCY MEET?
They first met in 1979 during a church youth rally at Adrian College. Scott had just played for the state basketball championship in Ann Arbor and had attended the state FFA met in Lansing. “I was feeling pretty good,” he said. “This girl comes up to me and says, ‘You don’t know who I am, do you?’ I didn’t lie and said, ‘no.’”

They made small talk that day and then parted ways.

Three years later, they ran into each other at the graduation ceremony of Scott’s brother Todd Smith. Nancy was there to see others graduate. By the end of the day, she had invited Scott to her own graduation party in Caseville. Scott accepted the invitation. On the day of the party, Scott arrived before Nancy. When Nancy finally arrived, she was greeted by her mother who said, “You’ve got to meet someone.”

The rest, they say, is history.

ON BOARD: DIRECTORS

RIGHT Clint Stoutenburg poses for a photo in front of the shed at Stoutenburg Farms in Sandusky. In addition to 2,200 acres of sugarbeets, corn, soybeans, and dry beans are grown on the farm that was established in 1901.



JUST THE FACTS

- AGE:** 48
- EDUCATION:**
- Sandusky High School, 1993.
 - Earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Central Michigan University in 1997

ALL IN THE FAMILY:
4TH & 5TH GENERATIONS

- Clint and Carolyn Stoutenburg**
- Kenton, 20, attends Michigan State University studying agribusiness management.
 - Isabella, 17, a senior at Sandusky High School.
 - Yellow Labrador retriever named Rusty.

- 3RD GENERATION**
- Al and Joanne Stoutenburg**
- They had two children – Clint and Angie

- 2ND GENERATION**
- Hank and Ardith Stoutenburg**
- They farmed about 150 acres.

- 1ST GENERATION**
- Ab and Laura Stoutenburg**
- They bought the farm's first 80 acres with money Ab raised by playing fiddle in Carsonville.

Mr. Sandusky

MEET NEW MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY DIRECTOR CLINT STOUTENBURG



ABOVE Clint and Carolyn Stoutenburg with their children Kenton and Isabella. *Courtesy Photo*

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

Clint Stoutenburg is a busy guy. And a guy who is proud of his hometown and working hard to preserve it and help it prosper.

“Sandusky is a great place to live and raise a family,” said Stoutenburg, the fourth generation of his family to run the 120-year-old Stoutenburg Farms in this Sanilac County community with a population of about 2,800.

But farming is only one of his business interests. Hop in the passenger seat of his pickup truck and he'll gladly take you to see the pallet-making company he bought in 2008, or the concrete and supply company he purchased in 2019, or his car wash, or some of the buildings he's owned in town that now have been repurposed.

“Here's the thing,” he says with conviction. “When these places were put up for sale, they could have easily been closed. And if they close, those jobs leave our community. And if those jobs leave our community, our community is less strong.

“I understand how communities work. It's a domino effect.”

Stoutenburg was elected to serve a four-year term on Michigan Sugar Company's Board of Directors in January 2022. Read on to learn more about one of the cooperative's newest leaders. ■

RIGHT Clint Stoutenburg checks on a herd of beef cattle at Stoutenburg Farms in Sandusky. The farm has about 275 head of beef cattle, in addition to cash crops.



“I love the smell of dirt in the spring and at harvest. It's definitely a way of life.”

LEFT Clint Stoutenburg checks out his planter at Stoutenburg Farms in Sandusky.

BELOW Clint Stoutenburg is the fourth generation of his family to farm in Sanilac County. He poses here with new grain silos erected in recent years at the farm.

Taking Care of Business

In addition to being a grower-owner of Michigan Sugar Company and a member of the Bayside Best Beans cooperative in Sebawaing, Clint Stoutenburg owns the following businesses in Sandusky:

- Breiten Lumber, a pallet-making company located at 121 Campbell Road.
- Sandusky Concrete & Supply Co., located at 376 Sanilac Road.
- Sandusky Car Wash, located near the intersection of M-19 and Stoutenburg Road.

What Do You Love About Sugarbeets?

“We've been growing them for as long as the farm has been around. They are challenging and historically have been a revenue-producing crop.”



Why Do You Do What You Do?

“Everybody needs to eat. We have the safest, most sustainable agriculture in the world. But we must educate people. If you ask a person from Chicago where a bag of sugar comes from, they'll say ‘Walmart.’ When my grandfather was a farmer, everyone had a tie to agriculture. When my dad graduated from high school, 80% of the kids had a tie to agriculture. When I graduated, it was 40%. And when my son graduated in 2020, three kids had a tie to agriculture in Sandusky. So, how are we going to tell our story?”

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

FAVORITE MUSICIAN:
I love country and rock 'n' roll, everything from Kenny Chesney to Kid Rock.

FAVORITE PLACE IN MICHIGAN:
Charlevoix.

FAVORITE PLACE YOU'VE TRAVELED:
Cancun, Mexico.

WHAT COLOR ARE YOUR TRACTORS: Green.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU LOVE TO DO: Attend auctions.

WHEN DID YOU BUY YOUR FIRST FARMLAND:
1991, as a high school junior.

FAVORITE DESSERT MADE WITH PIONEER SUGAR:
Chocolate Upside-down Cake.

FARM FACTS

- Stoutenburg Farms, Sandusky**
Sanilac County
Established 1901
- 2,200 acres of sugarbeets
 - Corn
 - Soybeans
 - Dry Beans
 - 275 head of beef cattle
 - Sandusky Dairy was operated on the farm from 1931 to 1961



ABOVE Sandusky Dairy operated at Stoutenburg Farms from 1931 to 1962. To this day, you can still find some of the old milk bottles at the farm.

Family Tree Runs Deep for Lover of the Great Outdoors

MEET NEW MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY DIRECTOR BEN WILSON

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

Spend a little time with Ben Wilson on his family’s Centennial Farm near Carson City, and you’ll quickly pick up on a couple things. The first, is that although Wilson has spent considerable time traveling and exploring the world, there is no place he’d rather be than in Gratiot County, Michigan.

“There was a time in my life when I needed to see what’s out there,” said Wilson, who spent about eight years working as a fishing guide in Alaska, among other adventures. “But eventually,

I needed to come home and do what I was meant to do. I was meant to be a farmer, to live with discipline and dedication while working hard to produce fruit. I don’t have to do this ... I get to do this.”

The other thing you notice is that every time a member of the farm family goes by, in person or in a farm vehicle, Wilson’s head turns to see who it is, and he waves. Every time.

“I’m trying to foster an atmosphere that hopefully will be an

“I’m an adventurous and entrepreneurial person. I just love life.”

opportunity for the next generation,” he said.

Wilson was elected to serve a four-year term on Michigan Sugar Company’s Board of Directors in January 2022. Read on to learn more about one of the cooperative’s newest leaders. ■

BELOW Ben Wilson stands at a pond located on his family’s farm property in Gratiot County’s North Shade Township, just outside Carson City. Wilson is the sixth generation of his family to operate Wilson Centennial Farms.

JUST THE FACTS

- AGE:** 43
- EDUCATION:**
- Carson City Crystal High School, 1997.
 - Attended Colorado State University. Earned his bachelor’s degree in business management, with a minor in computer science and Biblical studies from Colorado Christian University in 2002.
- AFFILIATIONS:**
- Carson City United Methodist Church member.
 - Youth sports coach.
 - Past Director for Gratiot County Farm Bureau.
 - Division Agronomist in Michigan for Helena Agri-Enterprises.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- FAVORITE MUSICIAN:** George Strait.
- FAVORITE BOOK:** The Bible.
- FAVORITE PLACE IN MICHIGAN:** On a river in the western Upper Peninsula.
- OH, THE PLACES YOU’VE BEEN:**
- Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska.
 - Maasai Mara, Kenya, Africa.
 - Southern Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico.
 - Amazon River, South America.
 - Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia.
- COOLEST FISH YOU’VE CAUGHT:** 31-inch Wild Alaskan Rainbow Trout.
- FAVORITE DESSERT MADE WITH PIONEER SUGAR:** Mom’s Raspberry Cream Pie.

RIGHT Ben Wilson checks on the dairy cows at Wilson Centennial Farms. In addition to growing sugarbeets, corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa, the farm milks about 1,000 dairy cows.



LEFT Ben Wilson stands inside the 6812 8-row, 30-inch Artsway sugarbeet harvester at Wilson Centennial Farms in North Shade Township near Carson City.

BELOW Ben Wilson, left, with his parents Brent and Nancy Wilson.



5TH GENERATION
Brent and Nancy Wilson

- Ben
- Tyler (Carrie)
- Tara Butler (Chuck)

4TH GENERATION
Carleton and Margery Wilson

3RD GENERATION
Fred and Laura Wilson

2ND GENERATION
Theodore and Alice Wilson

1ST GENERATION
Truman and Wealtha Wilson
Truman’s father David Wilson also was a farmer in Ohio.

WILSON CENTENNIAL FARM
North Shade Township,
near Carson City
Gratiot County
Established 1851

FARM FACTS

- 5,000 acres**
- Corn
 - Soybeans
 - Wheat
 - Alfalfa
 - 400 acres of sugarbeets
 - 1,000 dairy cows



ABOVE Ben and Toni Wilson with their children Grant, Wyndor, and Bristol.
Courtesy Photo

A Platinum Anniversary

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY CELEBRATES 20TH YEAR AS A COOPERATIVE

The formation of the Michigan Sugar Company cooperative began with a quail hunt.

The date was Friday, Jan. 22, 2000, shortly after the start of a new millennium. A group of Michigan Sugar Company growers — Richard Maurer, Tom Zimmer, Wayne Hecht, and Loren Humm — along with Mark Flegenheimer, James Ruhlman, and Bob Braem from Michigan Sugar Company and Dick Leach from the Great Lakes Sugar Beet Growers Association, gathered with executives from Imperial Sugar Company at a hunting lodge just outside the small, Southwest Texas town of Hebbronville.

Imperial had invited the group not only to go quail hunting, but to make a pitch for Michigan Sugar's growers to form a cooperative and purchase the company.

Though a few shots found their mark during the weekend of hunting, plenty missed their mark, as the representatives from Michigan Sugar now had more important business on their minds.

One week after the hunt, Imperial Sugar President and CEO Jim Kempner was asked to put a proposal in writing. He did, setting off a journey of hard-fought negotiations during which time Imperial filed for bankruptcy, the cooperative secured a \$5 million loan from the state of Michigan, \$25 million worth of shares in the cooperative were sold and more than 129,000 acres were secured for planting.

It took more than 80 meetings and conference calls, hundreds of phone calls, and countless hours to get the deal done.

RIGHT The resolution signed by members of Michigan Sugar Company's founding Co-op Board of Directors on Feb. 12, 2002.



On Feb. 12, 2002, the \$63.5 million sale of the company was completed with the co-op's founding Board of Directors and company executives signing their way through a mountain of paperwork before hosting a media event in Carrollton to announce the acquisition and later celebrating two years of tireless work with a champagne toast.

A resolution consummating the sale was signed by the 13 members of the founding board — Richard Maurer, Chairman; Tom Zimmer, Vice Chairman; Wayne Hecht, Secretary/Treasurer; Directors Carl Bednarski, Jack Tagget, Loren Humm, Lee Butts, Charlie Bauer, Jeff Gulick, Bill Herford, Ken Wadsworth, Bob Lutz, and Chris Grekowicz, and Executive Secretary Dick Leach.

In purchasing the company, Michigan Sugar's growers saved the sugarbeet industry in Michigan and ensured their children and grandchildren would be able to follow in their footsteps.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Michigan Sugar Company cooperative, we honor the growers' commitment, courage, faith, and foresight. At the same time, we honor all the Michigan Sugar Company employees who for the past two decades have been the backbone of the company, working to maintain factories and facilities and produce our world-class Pioneer Sugar, as well as our byproducts. ■

BELOW Members of Michigan Sugar Company's founding Co-op Board of Directors, pictured in February 2002, are, from left: FRONT ROW – Tom Zimmer, Richard Maurer, and Wayne Hecht. MIDDLE ROW – Dick Leach, Lee Butts, Chris Grekowicz, and Ken Wadsworth. BACK ROW – Bob Lutz, Charlie Bauer, Loren Humm, Jack Tagget, Bill Herford, Carl Bednarski, and Jeff Gulick.



ABOVE, TOP Michigan Sugar Company President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer and Executive Vice President James Ruhlman pop the corks on bottles of champagne on Feb. 12, 2002, after the completion of the sale of Michigan Sugar Company from Imperial Sugar Company to a cooperative owned by Michigan Sugar's growers. **BOTTOM** Attorney Randon Wilson pumps his fist, as members of Michigan Sugar Company's founding Co-op Board of Directors raise a glass to toast the sale.



ABOVE Attorney Randon Wilson carefully watches over Richard Maurer, Chairman of the Michigan Sugar Company founding Co-op Board of Directors as he signs one of the numerous documents in the acquisition of Michigan Sugar Company on Feb. 12, 2002. The photo appeared on the cover of the Spring 2002 edition of the Pioneer Newsbeet magazine, now known as *The Newsbeet*.



ABOVE Attorneys gather with representatives from Michigan Sugar Company and Imperial Sugar Company on Feb. 12, 2002, to sign documents transferring ownership of Michigan Sugar from Imperial to a cooperative owned by Michigan Sugar's growers. It took hours to get through the mountains of paperwork and legal documents.



ABOVE Michigan Sugar Company President and CEO Mark Flegenheimer is pictured here in January 2000 on a quail hunt in Texas during which time, Imperial Sugar Company asked if Michigan Sugar Company's growers would consider forming a cooperative to purchase the company.



ABOVE A garden of pinwheels was planted outside Michigan Sugar Company's Agriculture Research Center in Bay County's Monitor Township on Sunday, April 3, 2022. This is one of more than a dozen pinwheel gardens planted at Michigan Sugar facilities in Arenac, Bay, Huron, and Saginaw counties through a partnership with the CAN Council and in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Many of the gardens also featured signs explaining the campaign.

Planting Pinwheels and Making Life Sweeter...for Kids



ABOVE Noah Carter, the 18-month-old son of Jessica and Mitch Carter, who live near Munger, plays with some pinwheels planted by his family in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Jessica works as the Ag Relations and Communications Coordinator for Michigan Sugar Company and was one of more than a dozen employees who planted pinwheels in April as part of the company's partnership with CAN Council.

By Rob Clark, Director of Communications and Community Relations

MICHIGAN SUGAR COMPANY PARTNERS WITH CAN COUNCIL TO SHINE LIGHT ON CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

When April rolls around, it's never surprising to see Michigan Sugar Company's nearly 900 grower-owners out in their fields planting sugarbeets as another growing season begins.

But this spring, Michigan Sugar did some planting of a different kind.

In partnership with the CAN Council, and to help support the organization's mission, Michigan Sugar Company signed on as the sponsor of the nonprofit's Child Abuse Prevention Month activities in April, the centerpiece of which was the planting of 10,000 pinwheels throughout Arenac, Bay, Huron, and Saginaw counties.

Headquartered in Saginaw, the CAN Council provides prevention and intervention programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect. The

nonprofit services the same four counties where pinwheels were planted. Michigan Sugar Company planted about 3,000 pinwheels on its own, placing them at its facilities in the four counties, including the factories in Bay City and Sebewaing. In addition, more than a dozen grower-owners established pinwheel gardens throughout the countryside and another dozen employees planted small gardens at their homes.

"Our purpose at Michigan Sugar is 'Making Life Sweeter,' and there is no better way to accomplish that than by doing all we can to ensure children live in a world free from abuse," said Rob Clark, Michigan Sugar Company's Director of Communications and Community Relations. "We were particularly excited about helping to plant thousands of pinwheels. We hope when



ABOVE A garden of pinwheels was planted outside Michigan Sugar Company's Bay City facility on Sunday, April 3, 2022. The pinwheels were planted throughout Arenac, Bay, Huron, and Saginaw counties as part of Michigan Sugar's partnership with the CAN Council in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.



ABOVE Michigan Sugar Company Sebewaing Office Manager Chris Dutcher plants pinwheels in front of the cooperative's Sebewaing facility on Friday, April 1, 2022.

people saw them, they took a moment to think about the impact of child abuse and what we can do to prevent it."

Clark said he found himself doing just that when he drove past a pinwheel garden on M-25 near Sebewaing in mid-April.

"It was an amazing feeling to see those pinwheels spinning in the wind," he said. "In that moment, I felt a huge sense of pride for the small role Michigan Sugar played in supporting this year's Child Abuse Prevention Month campaign. In that moment, I was grateful for the work being done everyday by the CAN Council.

"And in that moment, I understood the true power of the pinwheel."

In addition to pinwheel planting, the CAN Council's Child Abuse Prevention Month activities included classes on parenting and childcare, and pinwheel planting ceremonies in Saginaw, Bay City, and Bad Axe on Thursday, April 21.

"Each child in our community deserves a healthy and safe childhood full of love. Securing such an outcome truly does require our entire community uniting around this goal," said Emily Yeager, President and CEO of the CAN Council. "Michigan Sugar is a leader in this effort, and we encourage all local businesses, churches, and community members to participate in our Child Abuse Prevention Month activities, volunteer with our CAN Council, or contribute to our organization at cancouncil.org.

"Together, we'll create the brightest futures for our children." ■



ABOVE A garden of pinwheels was planted outside Michigan Sugar Company's Carrollton packaging and warehouse facility. Each April, the CAN Council plants 10,000 pinwheels in Arenac, Bay, Huron, and Saginaw counties in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year, the pinwheels were sponsored by Michigan Sugar and each one came with a card featuring the company logo, Pioneer Sugar logo and the tag line, "Making Life Sweeter ... For Kids."

Join Michigan Sugar Company's Legion of Followers

CONNECT WITH US THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

If you had to venture a guess, how many people would you say are following Michigan Sugar Company's Facebook page? Five years ago, the number was below 4,000.

Today, nearly 22,000 people are following the page, which is just one way our cooperative works to tell our story.

Did you know, we also have a Pioneer Sugar Facebook page? That one has nearly 6,000 followers.

You'll also find us on Instagram, where our Michigan Sugar page is being followed by more than 1,200 fans and our Pioneer Sugar page is being followed by nearly 500 fans.

If LinkedIn is your thing, we're there, too, being followed by more than 2,500 people.

From time to time, you'll also find our content on Twitter and YouTube. And, we have two great websites packed with information about our company and Pioneer Sugar brand.

We invite you to join in to see what all the excitement is about. Be sure to click the "Like" and "Follow" buttons and comment on our posts.

We'll see you online!

—Rob Clark

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