



For members of Michigan's Greenhouse Industry

March 2017

Michigan Greenhouse Growers Council

A message from your President:

During last December's annual meeting in Grand Rapids we voted to transition our name to the Michigan Greenhouse Growers Council (MGGC). This name better defines who we are and is more inclusive of all greenhouse owners, including those growing herbs, fruits & vegetables and venturing into new greenhouse growing alternatives. We are creating a new logo to represent the change and welcome new members into the council.



The Board of Directors met in February and welcomed Dave Mast as a new Board member. Congratulations to Dennis Crum on his re-election to the board. You will find our current list of Directors below. During our meeting, we had important discussions about migrant workers and the shortage of labor, the Worker Protection Standards (WPS), the Food Safety Modernization (FSMA) Act and the impact on the industry from imports.

A few weeks ago, many in our industry felt the impact of the "day without immigrants" during a busy time in the greenhouses. The board decided to send a letter to every congressperson and both U.S. Senators reiterating the importance of migrant workers in our industry. The recent "day without immigrants" highlighted the positive impact legal migrant workers have on our economy. MGGC stands ready to work with Congress to find a solution to this issue.

The MGGC Board has also been reviewing federal indemnity and the possibility of including greenhouse crops in federal legislation. If an unforeseen and unavoidable disaster occurs and destruction of greenhouse plants is ordered, we need to be ready. We've included information on crop insurance and indemnity below.

As the Board of Directors, we evaluated last December's annual meeting and discussed the time of year as it relates to growers. We want to try something new this year and board member Susie Raker indicated she'd be glad to host the annual meeting on June 26, 2017, at Raker Gardens, 10371 Rainey Rd # 5, Litchfield, MI 49252. Please save the date!

To protect all greenhouse growers, the MGGC monitors issues relating to water and the environment, tax policy, labor and immigration, marketing, quarantine and plant destruction. We also monitor energy, local government, and other matters identified by

MGGC members. We are the recognized voice for greenhouse growers statewide, identifying and addressing grower issues and threats to profitability. Our name may have changed, but our mission remains:

1. To promote the interests of Michigan growers of greenhouse products
2. To encourage a profitable and sustainable greenhouse industry in Michigan
3. To represent the interests of Michigan growers of greenhouse products in matters of state and national concern
4. To advance the Michigan greenhouse industry
5. To cooperate and coordinate efforts with other organizations in achieving these purposes

If you are not a member, please join us! You'll find the link to a membership application below.

Looking forward to Spring!

Sincerely,



William Tuinier, President



MGGC Member Sportel Greenhouses
are featured on the cover of [Michigan Agriculture 2017](#)

Agriculture Day at the Michigan Capitol

Wednesday, March 22, 2017, was Agriculture Day at the Capitol. MGGC was there to discuss the industry with state legislators and their staff. Our flowers made a wonderful splash, always bringing a touch of color and good cheer to our State Senators and Representatives!



Val, Olivia, and Bridget at the MGGC Booth for Ag Day at the Capitol.



Thank you, Tim Stiles, and Masterpiece Flowers for your continued support.



Flowers donated by Masterpiece Flower Co.

Become a member!

Our membership organization represents all who grow under structures, and industries that cater to growers, on legislative and regulatory issues, research needs and business activities.

We keep members informed by providing a newsletter with concise coverage of current events that affect your greenhouse businesses. We continue to work with MSU Extension, AgBio Research, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. We participate in legislative activities such as Ag Day at the Capitol; and each year as MGGC ambassadors we deliver flowering plants to state legislators.



Please consider joining our ranks to glean the benefits of our strength as we continue to put the interests of Michigan's greenhouse growers in the spotlight! The MGGC Board looks forward to another productive year in 2017 and the opportunity to serve your interests.

We invite you to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors or one of member meetings to learn more about MGGC. Please contact the MGGC office at (517) 367-2033 for meeting dates. We look forward to seeing you in 2017 and welcome your membership!

[Click here to download a membership form.](#)

Save the Date!

June 26, 2017
Annual Meeting

Raker Gardens
10371 Rainey Rd # 5
Litchfield, MI 49252

[Click here for directions.](#)

2017 Board of Directors

President, Bill Tuinier
Vice President, Dennis Crum
Sec'y/Treasurer, Mike Faber
Board Member, Don Marvaso
Board Member, Dave Mast
Board Member, Kevin Sportel
Board Member, Ken Tuinier
Board Member/Membership Chair, Susie Raker-Zimmerman
Allied Trade Member, Mike Faber
Allied Trade Member, Bud Ripberger
MDFGA Board Member, Jason Pinter
WMGA Board Member, Scott Klooster
Education Committee, Roberto Lopez, MSU Extension
Education Committee, Erik Runkle, MSU Extension

Vegetable Technology in the News

Nate Kitch for POLITICO

"...It might seem strange to think about vegetables as a technology, but they are. The average supermarket produce aisle represents decades, if not centuries, of agricultural research and development. But in the United States, big-league commodity crops like corn and soy, as well as meat, gobble up most of the agricultural research investment from both the public and private sectors. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's dietary guidelines tell us to fill half our plate with fruits and vegetables to maintain a healthy diet, but its research priorities are far different. So-called "specialty crops"-the government's name for the category that includes, essentially, all fruits, vegetables and nuts-received just 15 percent of the federal research budget over much of the past three decades..."

[Read more here...](#)

REMINDER OF INSPECTION FEE CHANGES

Gina Alessandri, Director of the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division in the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, notified growers in November 2016, that the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development approved an increase in fees charged for nursery stock, Christmas tree, export, import, and other inspections.

The hourly-based fees will increase from \$58 per hour to \$59 per hour. Annual nursery grower inspection fees, which are based on acreage, will remain unchanged at \$53 per acre for the first acre and \$32 per acre for additional acres. The fee increase becomes effective January 1, 2017 and remains in effect until December 31, 2017.

President Trump Signs of Waters of the US (WOTUS) Executive Order

On February 28, 2017, President Trump signed the "Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the Waters of the United States Rule." It directs the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to review the WOTUS rule for consistency with the policy of promoting economic growth and minimizing regulatory uncertainty. The Federal Register will publish for notice and comment a proposed rule rescinding or revising the rule, as appropriate and consistent with law.

For the complete Executive Order published in the Federal Register please click [here](#).

MGGC Met with Detroit Eastern Market Officials

On January 9th MGGC met with officials who operate the Detroit Eastern Market (DEM) and discussed options for Michigan Greenhouse Growers and how they might utilize the Eastern Market to market their products or greenhouse operations.



Bill and Jerry Tuinier and Executive Director Val Vail-Shirey attended the meeting and are excited about the prospects. On any given Saturday in the summer months, up to 30,000 people visit Detroit's market district.

Indemnity

What is Reasonable for Greenhouse Growers?



When a natural disaster devastates select agriculture commodities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture indemnifies growers up to 75 percent of fair market value for their losses under the Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Programs. When the indemnity is due to a major animal or plant health event that requires depopulation of a farm premises and can devastate an industry, a State Department of Agriculture may step in and supplement the 75 percent. For example, Michigan supplements the

livestock indemnity formula by adding 25 percent to provide 100 percent fair market value for bovine TB infected cattle herds.

The Greenhouse Growers Council reviewed indemnity, the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, and private insurance and explored how each relates to the U.S. floriculture industry. We've identified why the U.S. floriculture and greenhouse industry (using Michigan as an example) should be included on USDA's agriculture commodity list for indemnity.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for floriculture growers is administered by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) under the provisions of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. After the natural disaster event, eligible floriculture growers must apply for coverage using form CCC-471, "Application for coverage," and pay a minimal service fee at the FSA office in the county where their farm records are maintained. The application and service fee must be filed by the application closing date. It is important to note that payment is limited to \$125,000 per person - no matter the million-dollar-value of the business.

Why should indemnity as opposed to NAP be offered to the greenhouse industry? Pure and simple: indemnity reimburses the grower up to 75 percent of fair market value at no limit.

Michigan Floriculture growers have 43.5 million square feet under glass. If a pest or disease swept through these 288 greenhouse growers' structures, there could be a loss of up to \$266 million in wholesale plants in one devastating event. If 288 growers were only reimbursed by NAP it would equal \$36 million. This leaves the industry holding the bag for \$230 million. Our greenhouses would close. The industry is an important segment of the U.S. economy and if a business closes due to an Act of God the impact is far reaching. Not only are direct employees impacted, but indirect implications include, landscapers, garden center retailers and their employees, and the plastics and recycling industry.

An advanced understanding of bedding/garden plants and pests is important for greenhouse management. But many of the routine growing tasks do not require highly specialized labor. Though automation (such as automatic irrigation and fertilization, sensor sensitive heating/cooling air and lighting systems, custom packaging, bar codes and labeling) is expensive, these innovations are demanded by large companies and are now used by many greenhouse growers. These system costs must be measured. In the event of a natural disaster, growers will still be obligated to make loan payments and NAP does not take this into consideration.

Indemnity is essential:

Should a \$4.07-billion-dollar industry go unprotected? As we consider all of risks that greenhouse and floriculture growers have no control over, it is imperative that this industry receive at least 75 percent fair

market value indemnity for all loss, not the mere \$125,000 that NAP provides for growers. From seedling, to plug to retail plants, growers must be assured that their agriculture commodity is as valued as nursery corn, rye, or wheat. California, Florida, Michigan's 454 commercial growers, North Carolina, Texas - all 15 states with floriculture/greenhouse growers should be eligible for fair market value reimbursements when a natural disaster affects their crops. The U.S. Greenhouse industry deserves no less.



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