

## Michigan Wheat Program July 2012 Article

We are very excited to be able to provide you updates through the *Farmer's Advance* on the newest check-off program, the Michigan Wheat Program (MWP).

The MWP was approved by the state's wheat farmers in July 2011. The program will benefit the state's 8,000 wheat farmers residing in more than 50 counties who annually plant 600,000 to 700,000 acres. Those acres produce a 40 million bushel crop with cash farm receipts of more than 180 million. In total the wheat industry has an annual \$2.7 billion economic impact.

The board was appointed by Governor Snyder in November 2011. The board is comprised of David Milligan, Chair, Cass City; Art Loeffler, Vice Chair, Star of the West, Frankenmuth; Chris Schmidt, Secretary, Auburn; Scott Heussner, Treasurer, Marlette; Gerald Heck, Monroe; William Hunt, Davison; Dean Kantola, Ravenna; Carl Sparks, Cassopolis; and Frank Vyskocil, New Lothrop. They held their first monthly meeting in December 2011. Jody Pollok-Newsom began full time April 3<sup>rd</sup> with the MWP as their executive director. For the past 13 years, Pollok-Newsom was with the Michigan Corn Growers Association and Corn Marketing Program of Michigan organizations. One of the first projects for Pollok-Newsom was to make sure assessment collection was ready to begin on May 1.

The funds collected through the MWP will be used for research, production issues, education, market development and promotion of Michigan wheat. All wheat and seed wheat grown in Michigan and sold is to be assessed. The assessment rate is set annually by the board and for 2012 Wheat is to be assessed at the rate of one half of one percent (.005) of the net value of the wheat, which works out to be about 2 cents for every \$4.00 bushel.

Another of our first projects is working on the discrepancy between crop insurance payments and the deduction taken by the first purchaser regarding falling numbers and wheat quality. We have been working on this issue with Michigan Farm Bureau and other industry partners to share real data and information with the Risk Management Agency, so they can review the situation and review possible adjustments.

One of the priorities of the MWP is grower communications and education. We have been at plot tours held across the state and appreciate the strong grower turn out at those. The feedback from growers is important as the board moves ahead this fall to develop long range plans for the organization.

Also as you can see, we have worked to develop our logo for our communications pieces. In the future make sure you look for our logo to see where we are involved and what we are supporting.

We will keep you posted on other projects through these updates and other communication. If you have questions or information to share with us, please contact the MWP at 1-888-(943-2801) WHEAT01.