

Michigan Wheat Program October 2012 Article

The Michigan Wheat Program (MWP) provides an update on harvest, planting and activities.

Harvest seemed to go very well and now the numbers from National and Michigan Ag Statistics are available to verify the crop information. Average wheat yield for Michigan set another record at 76 bushels per acre, which was up one bushel from 2011's record setting crop. However, harvested acres were down 140,000 acres from 2011 putting total production at 41.04 million bushels, down 20 percent from last year.

Wheat planting went well across the state this fall with the early harvest, followed by late rains that brought the planting season to a halt. The higher prices along with the potential for increased yields and an early harvest seem to work well for increased wheat acreage. As growers look to the spring, there may be additional options for wheat as the livestock industry will need additional feed sources through the summer, especially given the smaller corn crop.

As the MWP looks ahead, the wheat industry has a lot to look forward to. The MWP board of directors has been able to provide input to Michigan State University on their process of hiring a new wheat breeder. This position has been accepted and the new wheat breeder is expected to begin in May of 2013. With the filling of this position comes the opportunity to shape the future of Michigan's wheat industry and focus on issues of concern for growers including increasing yield and quality issues.

To continue the focus on research, this winter will be very busy for the MWP board. The board has already funded some research to ensure wheat was planted this fall to meet growers' research needs. In addition to that funding, the Michigan Wheat Program has partnered with industry to help fund the initial three years of the new wheat breeder's salary.

The involvement of the MWP with the wheat breeder and the wheat research program are critical elements for a strong wheat industry in Michigan. The MWP's involvement showcases the industry's strong support for both red and white wheat production.

With some research funded, the MWP is working to find additional projects to round out the research portfolio. Currently, the full request for proposals is in process and the plan is to release it the first of the year. It will be sent to other universities, research institutions and those interested in furthering the wheat industry in Michigan. The MWP is also working on an agreement with Michigan State University regarding the projects already funded.

In addition to research, the MWP is also involved in production and grower issues. The MWP board made their nominations to Governor Snyder regarding the wheat position on the Farm Produce Insurance Act (FPIA) board. Mark Metz of Ida has been appointed to that position for a two-year term by Governor Snyder. That position became available

through amendments made to the program earlier this year that included the addition of the wheat position to the FPIA board. The FPIA board oversees the FPIA program, which is a producer security program, that looks out for the growers' economic interests after they deliver their crop.

For more information on the MWP please visit the newly launched website at www.miwheat.org or call toll free at 1-888-(943-2801) WHEAT01.