

Michigan Farmer Column for June 2020 edition

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The Michigan Wheat Program has been moving forward on behalf of the state's wheat farmers throughout the last several weeks.

Some of what's new can be found on our website at www.miwheat.org. Take a look:

- By the time this column reaches your doorstep, our **June Summer Field Day at the Saginaw Valley Research & Extension Center** will be complete, but not in the usual manner we are used to. We will have our usual videos and handouts on the website showcasing the researchers work with recommendations, but we won't have actually walked through the research plots ourselves. The agenda and research reports will be posted on the website under the Education and Previous Events tabs for your review. (You can also view videos and reports from our prior events.)
- New research reports are popping up regularly under the Research tab. You may particularly want to look for:

- **Dr. Kim Cassida's** report on **Using Cover Crops after Wheat to Improve Soil Health**. This report covers Michigan Wheat Program-sponsored research on the impacts of a cover crop during the fallow period between wheat harvest and corn planting in Michigan crop rotations. This is a prime opportunity for double-cropping with a cover crop to improve soil quality, fix nitrogen and provide harvest-able forage. However, many growers believe that harvesting a cover crop will negatively affect future crop productivity. For years, the industry has lacked information on which cover crops are most appropriate for this situation.

Cassida's study looked at nine cover crop species, planted in two sites for two consecutive years. All cover crops provided weed suppression over the late summer compared to the experimental control. Some crop species established poorly and are not recommended to follow wheat. Check out the website to see the full report and recommendations.

- **Dean Baas's** study **Using Cover Crops with Wheat to Improve Rotational Profitability**. This project evaluated (1) continuous corn, (2) continuous soybeans, (3) corn/soybean and (4) corn/soybean/wheat rotations with and without cover crops at two locations.

Agronomic performance and soil health changes were measured over three years with the goal of evaluating the effects of rotational diversity, types of cover crops, and the combination of diversity and cover crops. The full final report is available on line.

Besides being busy in-state there is a lot of involvement going on out of state. Michigan has our first national President.

Michigan Wheat Program long-time chairman becomes National Association of Wheat Growers President! In a first for the state of Michigan, Cass City wheat farmer Dave Milligan was elected president of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG).

Milligan is no stranger to leadership positions. He has also served as the first and only chair of the Michigan Wheat Program since its inception in 2011, and was Michigan's first representative on the NAWG board. Milligan has previously served as chairman of the National Dry Bean Board and has been involved in Farm Bureau's commodity committees both on the state and national levels.

At NAWG, Milligan has served on virtually all of its committees and has been working his way up through the officer chain. Dave has brought back ideas to Michigan, and kept Michigan's issues and challenges front and center on the national level.

With the new Farm Bill in place and the MCA approved, Milligan says his focus will turn to global trade practices, new technology and disease control through cutting-edge research. Having the Michigan Wheat Program agenda well represented in the national program, where possible, is very important to wheat producers in the state.

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