



## **REACHING FOR EXCELLENCE: 2018 Applicants**

### **Missouri – SHP Field Day (Seed Grant Application)**

Missouri Corn, along with Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and Soil Health Partnership (SHP) hosted a soil health field day. The goal of the field day was to bring together the farming and regulatory community to discuss challenges facing the industry and showcase the innovative, voluntary farming practices utilized to reduce nutrient runoff and soil erosion, improve soil health and protect the air, land and water.

We were able to facilitate a meeting/field day where farmers and ag retail could interact with governmental agencies to discuss these voluntary, proactive efforts on-farm. With a mid-harvest field day, we exceeded our expectations on number of attendees and hope to duplicate these efforts in the future.

### **Texas – Ag Science Educator Scholarship**

The Texas Corn Producers Association's (TCPA) scholarship program was established to help agriculture, food, and natural resource (AFNR) educators during their student teaching assignment. Each semester, TCPA awards two students from each participating university a \$500 scholarship to alleviate additional costs associated with student teaching semesters.

The need for agricultural educators is greater than ever before, and this scholarship program can help strengthen the efforts of institutions to generate viable and capable young teachers. Through financial assistance during required external educational experiences of student teaching –TCPA can help do their part in supporting these vocational agricultural programs.

### **Indiana – Ethanol Forum**

It is important for the ICGA to recognize the partners within our state who are helping to make our industry strong and to encourage its growth. ICGA hosted this program in order to highlight how ethanol production has helped improved economic prosperity for farmers, rural communities and the state of Indiana. The collaboration between farmers, ethanol producers, fuel retailers, and local government is strong in Indiana and needs to be acknowledged.

After lunch we recognized one retailer and one Indiana city for their dedication to promoting ethanol throughout the state. We also honored 9 ethanol plants that have been in production in Indiana for at least 10 years. Representatives from each plant were presented with a statue commemorating their accomplishment. We then turned the podium over to the Indiana State Director of Agriculture for his remarks on the importance of growing the ethanol industry in Indiana. We wrapped up the day with a panel discussion on biofuels sustainability.

### **Nebraska – Leadership Mission (Washington, DC)**

The Washington DC Leadership Mission is a week-long opportunity for members of the association who are looking to become more involved or are moving into a leadership position within their local association. Each year we take about 15 attendees, which includes growers and their spouses. This mission is at no cost to attendees, including spouses if they choose to participate.

Many current board members have received their start in leadership on the Washington DC Leadership Mission. The 2018 mission yielded two new state board members, four new committee members, and multiple new local association board members.

### **Nebraska – Collegiate Ambassador Program**

The Corn and Soybean Collegiate Ambassador Program is a joint effort between the NeCGA & the Nebraska Soybean Association. The ambassador program is a year-long scholarship program for college students in the state that begins in January and concludes in December. Students must fill out an application and submit a resume to be considered for the program. Up to 10 students are accepted each year.

Participants in the program attend three sessions throughout the year and participate in a summer agribusiness industry tour. Policy and advocacy are important parts of the associations and it is crucial that students understand that. The second session focuses on the role of checkoffs. The final session is focused on life after college (job search and resume help). The summer industry tour gives students a chance to explore different agribusiness companies in the state as well as visit about potential internship and job opportunities.

### **Minnesota – “MN Corn Grows MN” initiative**

MCGA launched the “MN Corn Grows MN” initiative with the purpose of sharing how corn and corn farming impacts Minnesota and to highlight the pivotal role of growers and their families.

Minnesota resident surveys also continue to highlight a growing disconnect with agriculture with only 38% of respondents saying they personally know a farmer. “MN Corn Grows MN” integrated all of Minnesota Corn’s program areas into one initiative that highlighted the environmental, economic, and sustainable impacts that corn has on the state. The result of the initiative was that both policymakers and citizens of Minnesota are better informed and MCGA is well positioned to help shape state policy that will impact corn growers.

## **Kansas - STEM Program**

Kansas Corn, with the help from Kansas teachers, are collaborating to bring agriculture to the classroom in innovative ways. The Kansas Corn STEM program focuses on hands-on, inquiry-based learning methods to encourage students to think about how science and corn fit into their lives. KS Corn created specific curriculum for teachers for grades K-12.

In order to create the comprehensive program we have today, we conducted teacher focus groups, met with several organizations, research education programs available and created a Kansas teacher advisory board. As a result, Kansas Corn identified “the gap” to be filled for Kansas teachers.

## **Missouri – Common Ground Framers Table Wine Trail**

Missouri Common Ground and the Hermann Wine Trail welcomed a sold-out crowd of 750 food and wine enthusiasts to The Farmers’ Table Wine Trail. Providing participants with the chance to meet farmers as they sipped and tasted their way along the wine trail.

The first objective was to utilize existing framework for a wine trail event to connect consumers with farmers and answer questions about how today’s food is produced. Secondary objectives included raising visibility for the Common Ground program, shifting consumers to use farmers as a resource when food questions arise, engage producers across various agriculture fields to communicate and interact with consumers and identify potential future Missouri Common Ground volunteers.

## **Iowa - Iowa Corn Educational Awareness Program**

Seven teams were assigned to cover the targeted areas of Butler and Cerro Gordo counties. Pre-work was completed sorting out the grower and plat data across the two counties to most effectively utilize our time through quality grower visits. The teams stopped at 161 farms and had quality conversations with 108 farmers across the two counties. We secured 21 new memberships and generated an additional 32 follow up prospective member conversations. We had an approximate a 49 % membership conversion success rate. We also had seven growers tell us after hearing our “story” they would stop refunding their checkoff dollars.