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Minnesota Crop Production Retailers

INPUTS

Executive Director's Report

Hello MCPR members,

The recent legislative session was one of the more difficult in my over 30 years of lobbying at the Capitol. The physical lack of access to the legislators in the House of Representatives because the Capitol Building was closed, frustrated many and created road blocks to communicating during critical decisions. However, a bigger road block was the Minneapolis/St. Paul attempt to dominate the decision making through demands such as the SW Light Rail Transit funding which totaled nearly \$2 billion federal, state, and local dollars. The Senate Majority and Governor Dayton actually held up what could have been productive legislation and compromise to insist this and other projects get funded. In my opinion, the SW Light Rail Transit project is an outdated technology addressing a corridor of travel served well

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Capitol Update

The legislative session ended (or didn't) with Governor Dayton's pocket veto of the tax bill which passed on the last hours of the session. Dayton allowed the tax cut bill to die without his signature he said because of a wording error that would have cost the state \$100 million over the next three years and then immediately attempted to dictate his terms of the special session he wanted. Legislative leaders said the wording mistake could have been fixed easily without a special session. Many suspected Dayton was attempting to get legislators to approve a package of new spending in a special session. The tax bill also included a property tax write-off sought by the developers of a new professional soccer stadium in St. Paul which has created real pain for metro sports boosters. Dayton and the leaders of the Legislature's various caucuses all say they are still open to negotiating a special session, and House Speaker Daudt has said he's not closing the door on Dayton's list of conditions but indicated the bigger the agenda gets, the harder it is to reach a compromise. MCPR members were disappointed that the Minnesota Senate leadership's rejected at the final hours of the session MCPR's engineered compromise to preserve a portion of the 1992 property tax exemption for Ag chemical containment facilities. However, in a curious twist of



fate if there is no special session, the original 1992 property tax exemption provision in law remains in effect so MCPR members will receive the full exemption according to the 2015 MN Department of Revenue guidance (see previous MCPR newsletters or contact the MCPR office for details).

The legislative session also ended with the legislature failing to pass a transportation or bonding bill. Ag leaders were disappointed that the tax bill was not passed as it included important agriculture and business property tax relief and had strong bipartisan legislative support, and funding for an update in the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. Of course, Minnesota's agriculture sector depends on safe and efficient roads, bridges and infrastructure. With the Minnesota Senate and House Democrats demanding the nearly \$2 billion dollar southwest light rail funding or no deal and the Governor also making this item on his

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Save the Date!



The 2016 CPM Short Course and MCPR Trade Show will be December 6th – 8th at the Minneapolis Convention Center and headquarter hotel at the Hilton Minneapolis. Watch your email and upcoming newsletters for further details

News Notes

WOTUS Would Impact Food Costs

The Waters of the U.S. became the law of the land nearly a year ago, but it has been stalled in the courts. National Pork Producers Council President John Weber says this rule would have a significant impact on costs. "It's going to add significant costs to food production." NPPC legal counsel Michael Formica voiced concern about WOTUS enforcement. As an example, a blatant environmental violation would face a fine of \$37,500. That same fine would impact paperwork errors. "You're filling out one of the multiple sheets of paper and you get one of your mathematical calculations wrong or in a place where you are supposed to spell it out, you perhaps, initialize. That is a violation of the Clean Water Act. That is also \$37,500. The activist groups know that and they know there is an error rate within all of these documents and EPA knows that. The vast majority of enforcement actions aren't for people who do some newsworthy environmental crime, it's for mere paperwork errors." Formica said there is also a citizen lawsuit enforcement provision, which would be a windfall for activist groups. (RRFN)

Zika Spray

More than 100 farm and crop organizations have sent a letter urging House and Senate conferees to support the inclusion of the Zika Vector Control Act in any final conference agreement for the Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. This would clarify congressional intent that federal law does not require NPDES permits for already regulated pesticide applications. (RRFN)



Federal GMO Compromise Legislation Update

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives president and CEO Chuck Conner and Grocery Manufacturers Association president and CEO Pam Bailey are ready to support a deal on federal GMO labeling legislation, and are confident such a bill can get 60 votes in the Senate. Conner says time is running out. "My patience and the patience of farmers across the country wore thin about three months ago, but right now, we are down to the absolute deadline here as the Vermont law is due to go into effect in about three weeks," says Conner. "I think they are pretty close, but obviously in legislative negotiations that final inch is a difficult inch, but they are very close. They have to get it done." Some believe Senate Ag Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow is intentionally running out the clock for the GMO labeling bill negotiations. There is also some frustration from other members of Congress with Senator Stabenow. Senate Democrats insist that GMO information must be immediately visible to consumers on food labels. Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley says he's spoken with the Senators involved in the negotiations. "I had several discussions with Senators. I see it very difficult to get a compromise at this point," said Grassley. "I hope that something would get developed this week that we can get something passed. Frankly, I doubt it." (RRFN)

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**Minnesota Crop
Production Retailers**

Executive Director's Report

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by other modes and fails to address the real stubborn twin cities congestion we all experience when travelling to or through the metro area. Actually, the \$1.7 billion price tag for the SW LRT is three times more than MNDOT plans to spend on congestion relief over the next 10 years!

Several have pointed out that Governor Dayton's executive staff should have been engaged and communicating throughout the legislative session to enable legislative leaders of both political stripes to know what he wanted and could tolerate and learn the same from legislators. As a former gubernatorial staff I can attest to the critical role the Governor's staff play in successfully getting through difficult and controversial political pressures to make good public policy. The Governor is not getting this job done and deserves some blame for the failure to get more done this year legislatively.

One shout out, please. Many know Glen Moe, G.M. of Farmers Union Oil Co. in Montevideo, MN. Glen has been an active MCPR and Ag leader his entire career. Glen is retiring this month, but he almost did not make it to his own retirement party. This last April, Glen was working to knock down a urea bridge on a loader when the fertilizer broke loose, slamming the loader nearly 12 feet with Glen getting buried. Fortunately, Glen was rescued by six workers, barely breathing, but still alive. After healthcare treatment, Glen is recovering and will be able to attend his own retirement party. Glen wanted his experience and close call to be a reminder to all MCPR members to be very, very careful out there. Have a great retirement, Glen! ✨

Until next time,

Bill Bond
Bill Bond



Save the Date!

The annual MCPR Golf Event will be Thursday, September 8th at the beautiful Little Crow Country Club in Spicer, MN. Registration information will be provided in the next newsletter and will be posted online soon. We hope you'll mark your calendars now for a great day of golf!



News Notes (continued from page 2)

Responsible Ag Update – 93 MCPR Members are Participating

The Responsible Ag program (RA) is endorsed by MCPR and is a voluntary stewardship and compliance program designed to help Ag retailers ensure they are in compliance with all federal regulations pertaining to the storage and handling of agrichemicals and fertilizers. When you sign up for the program, you pay a \$150 fee to register. If you have anhydrous ammonia or ammonium nitrate at your location, within 3 years you will receive a notification from RA about scheduling a compliance assessment for your facility. RA will put you in touch with a qualified RA inspector and you can select the auditor of your choice and negotiate the visit and fee for your compliance assessment. Or, you can have one of your own employees become a certified RA auditor by attending the auditor training course in Owensboro, KY. The next round of auditor training will be offered on September 13-16, 2016 at the Ford West Responsible Ag Training Center in Owensboro, KY.

Facilities that join RA enjoy other benefits as well, including free access to the Process Safety Management and RMP Program Level 3 compliance tools provided by the Asmark Institute. Your PSM or RMP information will be automatically saved by the program and enable you to update your facility information easily as changes occur at your facility. To see the list of the

companies participating from Minnesota, visit: <https://www.responsibleag.org/ParticipantList.cgi>. Nationwide, there are approximately 2,000 facilities that have registered for the program. To learn more about ResponsibleAg, go to: www.responsibleag.org. (RA)

State Of Precision Ag 2016: Gut Check Time for Value

There's no denying that precision technologies and practices are more vibrant than ever. Equipment manufacturers have fine-tuned the hardware for guidance, auto steering, and application control. Wireless, internet and Cloud resources are making precision tasks quicker and easier. Data collection and analysis is getting more refined and useful. And corporations are offering powerful new resources for monitoring crop variables. But low commodity prices have cast a long shadow over farm budgets. Growers and retailers are feeling the pinch. For this annual report, *CropLife*® got input from just over 200 managers at cooperatives, independent dealerships and national/regional retail chains. All participants shared some concerns about decreased precision spending. About 8% of survey contacts reporting a significant negative impact on interest in precision services. Forty-one percent saw a modest negative impact, while 27% saw no detectable effect. A number of respondents

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Craig's View

Hello MCPR Members,

Here we are in the middle of June and what looked like a fast early planting season has prolonged the workload for many Ag retailers. The wet conditions in the southwest part of the state has now moved pretty well across the whole State making post applications a struggle for everyone. The most encouraging part of this growing season is the increase of split application of nitrogen in the corn belt of Minnesota. It's great to see retailers making nutrient plans with their growers that include the split application of nitrogen. It is our duty as retailers to follow the BMP's and use the tools of nutrient planning.

We hope in the next six months the MCPR will be presenting our Nutrient Index program that will help retailers move forward in the process of making nutrient plans that include the BMP's for their growers. I very happy with the progress we have made on this program. We are challenged by many other programs in this area but we hope to provide an index that fits our growers to follow the BMP's. I am thrilled with the amount of time and effort that many people have given in the last year to help make this program a reality. Thank you for your support! ✨

Craig Maurer

Craig Maurer
MCPR Board Chair





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Capitol Update

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"must have list", a special session will be hard to achieve any time soon. Stay tuned MCPR members.

Because the entire 201 Minnesota legislature faces an election vote this fall, MCPR members and customers should be very aware that no matter what your politics, the Minnesota Senate's controlling majority is being pushed hard by Minneapolis based Governor Dayton and other legislators to favor big city Minneapolis/St. Paul positions like the wasteful, outdated transportation technology of the SW rail transit and extremist environmental policies which hurt rural Minnesota and agriculture. I suspect rural Minnesota will vote with their pocket book this November. ✂

News Notes

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described how sales of certain items have actually gone up, and many expect a decisive upturn once grower incomes rise. The clear message for 2016: Growers are pinpointing and supporting the precision strategies that bring clear value to their operations today. (CLA) ✂

