

The Michigan Onion Promotion and Development Program was established in February 1977. This PA232 program required a vote of the onion growers in Michigan to be established and requires a vote every 5 years to continue the program. The purpose of the program is to improve the economic position of Michigan onion growers by creating greater marketing opportunities for their product.



Michigan Onion Committee

Your Quarterly News & Updates

April 2017

In this Newsletter: FSMA Training Sessions; MOC Governor Appointees; Research Reports

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From Your Executive Director

Hello Michigan Onion Growers:



I hope you are finding enjoyment in the lengthening days and anticipation of an excellent crop season.

The Onion Committee met February 6th, at Greenstone Farm Credit services in East Lansing and were presented with updates on research (more information is in this newsletter). Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Commodity Specialist Heather Throne provided information on the Agriculture Summit and informed us that nominations for exporter of the year are being solicited.

The Food Safety and Modernization Act impacts onion growers. This link contains general information about the [FSMA](#). Attending a training session will be beneficial for you and your growing operation.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visits with many of you on March 16 and look forward to visiting with the rest of you in the next couple months. I will give you a call soon to schedule a time. And if you are in Lansing, please feel free to visit the Onion office at 235 N. Pine St., Lansing, MI 48933.

Cheers!
Spring is here!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Val Vail-Shirey".

Val Vail-Shirey, Executive Director

Gov. Rick Snyder makes appointments, reappointment to the Michigan Onion Committee

Friday, April 21, 2017

LANSING, Mich. - Gov. Rick Snyder today announced the appointments Kristin Oomen of Scottville and Dan Steenwyk of Dorr, as well as the reappointment of Eric Schreur of Hudsonville to the Michigan Onion Committee.

The five-member committee prepares and oversees the onion marketing program budget and makes amendment recommendations to the marketing program, which supports the advancement of Michigan's onion industry.

"I thank these individuals for their commitment to Michigan's onion industry," said Snyder.

Appointments:

Oomen is a sales and product development representative for Bejo Seeds, Inc. where she plans and executes field research trials for new germplasm and crop advancement decisions with more than 15 different vegetables. Oomen holds a bachelor's degree of science from Michigan State University. She will replace Mark Nail.

Steenwyck has been an onion grower with C. Steenwyck and Sons Farms since 2000. He also works for Hearty Fresh, an onion growing and shipping company. Steenwyk holds a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Davenport University. He will replace Mike Meyer.

Reappointment:

Schreur is a field manager for Schreur Farms, Inc. where he grows onions and celery. He has farmed for more than 22 years. Schreur holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Michigan State University.

Appointees will serve three-year terms expiring August 16, 2019.

MSU Research Updates

Michigan State University researchers attended the Onion Committee Board of Directors meeting and provided updates on their projects, we have links to their reports below. This research is a collaboration with the Michigan Onion Committee and MSU Researchers via the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, MSU's Project GREEN, and the Michigan Check-Off program.

[Weed Control](#)

Bernard Zandstra and Colin Phillippo

Preemergence and postemergence onion weed control experiments were conducted on muck soil in a grower field in 2016. A mineral soil experiment was conducted at another grower farm. The primary objectives for the 2016 onion research were: 1. Develop data and a use pattern for registration of pyroxasulfone (Zidua) on onion. 2. Develop data and a use pattern for use of bicyclopyrone (BIR) on onion. 3. Test currently registered and potential onion herbicides to find more effective methods for use on onion. 4. Obtain crop safety data for registration of clopyralid (Stinger) postemergence on onion. Please click on the above title to read the report.

[Investigating Onion Diseases: New and Old](#)

Beth Brisco-McCann, Prissana Wiriyaajitsomboon, and Mary K. Hausbeck

Bacterial leaf blight, caused by *Pantoea agglomerans* has been a limiting factor for Michigan onion growers in recent years. The bacterium was isolated from onion plants in Ottawa County in 2011 and was the first documented case of this pathogen occurring in Michigan. More expansive studies have been conducted since 2014 confirming that *P. agglomerans* affected onion fields in Allegan, Calhoun, Eaton, Ingham, Newaygo, and Ottawa Counties. Please click on the above title to read the report.

[Assessing the relationship between onion thrips and bacterial leaf blight in Michigan onion fields](#)

Ari Grode, Prissana Wiriyajitsonboom, Elizabeth Brisco-McCann, Mary K. Hausbeck, Zsofia Szendrei

Onion thrips is an important pest of onions and many other crops. They feed on leaf tissue, removing chlorophyll, thus reducing photosynthesis, and ultimately causing yield losses. In Michigan, onion thrips are the main insect pest of onions, affecting an industry that produces just over 100 million pounds of onions a year. This insect has also been associated with the transmission of several onion pathogens, emphasizing the need for its effective management. Please click on the above title to read the report.

Onion Trials

Darryl Warncke

The 2016 trials had 23 yellow varieties and four red varieties. Observations were made and recorded throughout the growing period and Darryl, MSU extension educators and seed companies were present at the twilight to discuss their findings, varieties and answer questions from growers. The bulbs were harvested and on display at the Great Lakes Expo in December. A Michigan mild onion was developed at MSU and they will continue to work to market a "Michigan Sweet Onion".

Vegetable Technology in the News

Nate Kitch for POLITICO

"...It might seem strange to think about vegetables as a technology, but they are. The average supermarket produce aisle represents decades, if not centuries, of agricultural research and development. But in the United States, big-league commodity crops like corn and soy, as well as meat, gobble up most of the agricultural research investment from both the public and private sectors. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's dietary guidelines tell us to fill half our plate with fruits and vegetables to maintain a healthy diet, but its research priorities are far different. So-called "specialty crops"-the government's name for the category that includes, essentially, all fruits, vegetables and nuts-received just 15 percent of the federal research budget over much of the past three decades..."

[Read more here...](#)

SAVE THE DATE

Onion Twilight * Tuesday, August 29



The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is transforming the nation's food safety system into one that is based on the prevention of foodborne illnesses. It will be a system in which the food industry systematically puts in place measures proven effective in preventing contamination.

Keeping food safe to eat is paramount, no matter where it is produced, whether conventional or organic, whether the operation is small, medium or large, whether it's produce or processed foods.

The FDA has finalized the foundational rules that will implement FSMA, including the Preventive Controls rules for Human and Animal Food, the Produce Safety rule, and the Foreign Supplier Verification Programs (FSVP) rule. There will be extensive outreach to industry to help ensure that everyone who seeks to comply with these rules, whether legally required to or not, understands the new requirements. The compliance dates vary, in part, according to the size of the business.

Food industry training will be an important component of successful implementation. The Produce Safety Rule and the Preventive Controls rules all have training components, although they are not the same for each rule. There will be ample time for farmers and food producers to come into compliance. Compliance dates for the rules are staggered according to the size of the business.

While members of the food industry are ultimately responsible for getting the training they need to comply with the FSMA rules, the FDA recognizes the importance of its role in facilitating that training. For the agency, this means joining with public and private partners in state, federal, tribal and international governments, industry, and academia in the development and delivery of training.

One size doesn't fit all. The most important goal that the FDA expects of any training program is the outcome—that it advances knowledge among the food industry to meet FSMA requirements. There is more than one way to get there and there will be a variety of training options and delivery formats.

The following is a description of the evolving training strategy. There is a glossary of frequently used terms and a listing of some of the FDA's training partners at the end.

Summary of the Major Components of the Training Strategy

The FDA is striving for transparency as this multi-faceted training plan for the food industry, outlined below, takes shape.

[FSMA Training](#)

President Trump Signs of Waters of the US (WOTUS) Executive Order

On February 28, 2017, President Trump signed the "Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the *Waters of the United States* Rule." It directs the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to review the *WOTUS rule* for consistency with the policy of promoting economic growth and minimizing regulatory uncertainty. The Federal Register will publish for notice and comment a proposed rule rescinding or revising the rule, as appropriate and consistent with law.

For the complete Executive Order published in the Federal Register please click [here](#).
