

## Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update May 7, 2026

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates - whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed - please send an email or call the St. Joseph County Extension office.

### Contents:

- Announcements
- Crop and Pest Update
- Irrigation and Water Use Update
- [Weather Update](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [MSU Extension Digest Briefs](#)

## Cover Crop Grazing and Variety Trial Field Day May 12 at Kellogg Biological Station

To test a prototype of a new app for real-time biomass estimation; rate different cover crops traits in the National Cover Crop Variety Trial plots; and see cover crop grazing in action along with more in-depth grazing conversation. Thanks to generous support from the Midwest Cover Crops Council, we're able to offer a **free lunch from 12:30-1:30pm** for additional networking and discussion.

Register here: <https://forms.gle/u7QZaRSxLPnVuqgr9>

### Cover Crop Grazing & Variety Trial Field Day

3 CCA CEUs

May 12, 2026  
9:00am-12:30pm

Kellogg Biological Station  
9693 N 40th St.,  
Hickory Corners, MI 49060

Help your clients take their cover crop management to the next level!

Topics covered

- Tour cover crop variety plots
- Grazing cover crops
- App for in-field measure cover crop biomass

Training intended for farmer advisors and farmers

This cover crop training is intended to build on the October 2025 event at KBS, though previous attendance is not required.

**REGISTER BY MAY 4**  
Registration is free but please preregister  
Lunch included!  
[tinyurl.com/4drzb9wb](https://tinyurl.com/4drzb9wb)



## Scouting School 2026 to be held in Frankenmuth

Do you have field crop scouts working for you this summer? Consider sending them to field crops Scouting School. Spread out across three days (May 21, June 18, and July 16), this group will be a cohort for all sessions. Enrollment is limited to 30 participants to ensure hands-on participation. Learn more and register here.

## MI Farm Link Webinar May 28 from 12 pm to 1 pm

The MSU Extension Farm Business Management Team is hosting an upcoming lunch-and-learn [webinar](#) “Presenting MI Farm Link: Connecting Farmers to Farmland”, May 28 from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. During this webinar, Koffi Kapchavi will give us an update on the relatively new [MI Farm Link](#) organization and how its resources can help people who are seeking farmland to connect with those that have it. Koffi is the northwest Michigan regional contact for MI Farm Link, and he will explain how it operates, including how to use the website to set up listings and requests for land. Register at <https://pears.io/events/msuext/6791/> today! The webinar will be recorded and put up on the MSU Extension website afterwards for viewing anytime. For more information on MI Farm Link see their website at <https://mifarmlink.org/>.

## Free Soil Testing Opportunity as Part of a Project

Help us learn how your crop management practices, including forages, help improve the resilience of farming systems. See the attached flyer for a QR code that leads you to a survey of your farming practices. We also ask that you submit a soil sample, for which instructions will be supplied at the end of the survey. Participants who complete all steps receive a gift card for their time.



### FARM NETWORK RECRUITMENT

#### Soil Health Assessment in Resilient Ecosystems

Farmers or ranchers are welcome to participate, whether you have row crops, forages, vegetables, fruits, livestock, agroforestry, etc.  
To qualify, you must sell at least \$1000 or more of agricultural product annually.

#### Participation requirements

- ✓ Complete a detailed questionnaire about 2024 farm practices, yields, and inputs (your time: estimated 1-2 hours).
- ✓ Sample your best field in spring 2026 and send to our partner testing lab. Free testing kit, pre-paid mailer, and instructions will be sent to participants after completion of survey (your time: estimated 1 hour).
- ✓ All participation remains strictly confidential.
- ✓ Survey will **close** when maximum participation has been reached.

#### Benefits of joining the network

- ✓ Visa gift card for your time and expertise
- ✓ Free soil testing report
- ✓ Contribute to improving agricultural practices

#### For more information

Kim Cassida  
Michigan State University | Email: [cassida@msu.edu](mailto:cassida@msu.edu)

To participate, follow the QR code or go to the link below to start your survey.  
<https://tinyurl.com/RCAPNorth>



RCAP website:  
<https://ag-resilience.org/>  
Find us on Facebook: Ag Resilience

# Food-Grade Grains Field Day June 17 at Kellogg Biological Station

**What:** Food-grade Grains Field Day: Highlighting the Steps from Field to Mug, Spoon & Jug

**When:** Wednesday, June 17, 2026 from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (lunch included at noon; optional field tour & discussion on canola from 1-3pm)

**Where:** MSU's Kellogg Biological Station, 9693 N 40th St., Hickory Corners, MI 49060

**Registration:** Required, no fee. Registration closes June 3 or up to 100 participants. Register here.

**Credits:** RUP & CCA credits are pending approval.

**Food:** is catered from Zingerman's Bakehouse and Field & Fire



## INTERESTED IN GROWING CANOLA?

Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Food Grade Grains Field Day, hear from the experts on what they have learned so far about growing winter canola in Michigan.



**KELLOGG BIOLOGICAL STATION**  
9693 N 40th St., Hickory Corners, MI



**JUNE 17, 2026**  
**12:00PM - 3:00PM**  
Lunch 12 - 1pm, field tour 1 - 3pm

## REGISTER BY JUNE 3

This link takes you to the Food Grade Grains field day registration. Select any of the sessions you would like to attend.

[forms.gle/5UvvyvUkeCiAicK48](https://forms.gle/5UvvyvUkeCiAicK48)



## Event Highlights

**Canola agronomy** ◀  
with Brain Caldbeck (Rubisco Seed) and Brook Wilke (MSU)

**Market update** ◀  
from ADM

**Farmer perspective** ◀  
Hear from canola farmers



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



Contact Christine Charles with questions at [char122@msu.edu](mailto:char122@msu.edu)

## SJCCD Native Plant Sale

This year's sale features regionally native species that support pollinators, wildlife, and healthy, beautiful local landscapes! Order pickup dates are May 28 and 29 from 9 am to 4 pm. Reach out to Kaitlin Renehan ([kaitlin.renehan@macd.org](mailto:kaitlin.renehan@macd.org)) with questions or to place an order.



### 2026 Native Plant Sale

Hosted by the

**St. Joseph County Conservation District  
& SMIST CISMA**

Prices listed on the attached Order Form

**Order Pickup Dates:**  
Thursday, May 28th & Friday, May 29th  
9am - 4pm

*\*Species availability subject to change.*

To place an order or request additional information

Email: [kaitlin.renehan@macd.org](mailto:kaitlin.renehan@macd.org)

Call: (269) 467-6336 ext.5

Visit: 693 E. Main Street, Centerville MI



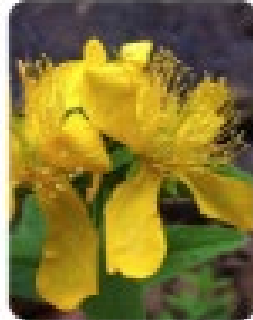
**Rough Blazing Star**  
*Lintris aspera*



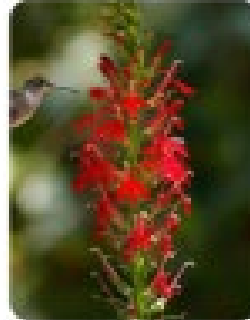
**Culver's Root**  
*Veronicastrum virginicum*



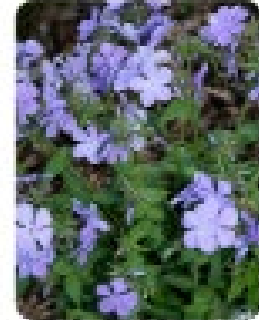
**Canada Anemone**  
*Anemone canadensis*



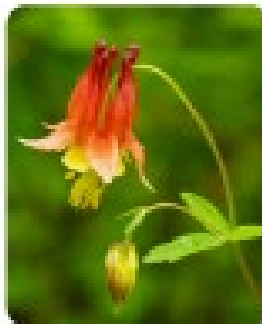
**Giant St. John's Wort**  
*Hypericum ascyron*



**Cardinal Flower**  
*Lobelia cardinalis*



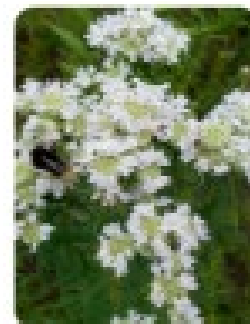
**Woodland Phlox**  
*Phlox divaricata*



**Wild Columbine**  
*Aquilegia canadensis*



**Indian Grass**  
*Sorghastrum nutans*



**Mountain-Mint**  
*Pycnanthemum virginianum*



**Yellow Coneflower**  
*Ratibida pinnata*

*\*Additional native plants grown from seed by The District may be offered at time of pick up.*

## Crop and Pest Update

**Corn** and **soybean** planting continued as weather permitted, and early-planted soybeans began to emerge. Other fieldwork that occurred included tillage, herbicide applications and fertilizer and manure spreading.



Bucket traps in Berrien (near Berrien Springs), St. Joseph (Centreville) and Van Buren (Lawrence) Counties have caught the following:

### True Armyworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/20	34	37	9
4/27	35	53	35
5/4	1	9	5

### Black Cutworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/20	9	6	2
4/27	6	6	4
5/4	5	6	0

**Winter wheat** is mainly at Feekes 9 (flag leaf ligule visible) or very late Feekes 8. Some flag leaf fungicide applications and late nitrogen applications went out over the past week. The flag leaf contributes greatly to photosynthesis in wheat—more than any other leaf— so it is important to keep it free of disease and defoliation. Insects such as **aphids** are present in fields at low levels and do not pose any economic concern so far. Scout wheat for **true armyworm** feeding damage and small larvae by shaking plants and checking the ground.



**Potatoes** started to emerge last week, just in time to get nipped by frost. The plants will grow out of it, but it does set them back temporarily. Planting operations continued, although precipitation slowed them down.



**Alfalfa weevil** continues to feed on **alfalfa**. Even though the defoliation may seem alarming, alfalfa can tolerate significant feeding damage from alfalfa weevil before it becomes economic to treat. Waiting until the economic threshold is reached is an important aspect of resistance management. There are very few chemical modes of action for managing alfalfa weevils, so avoid applying insecticides earlier and more frequently than necessary. Avoid treating for weevils chemically unless the field meets the following criteria (taken from the article Weevils are popping in alfalfa fields):

- The alfalfa is 9 inches tall and has more than 50% of stem tips with feeding damage and has more than one larva per stem.
- The alfalfa is 12 inches tall and has more than 75% of stem tips with feeding damage and has more than two larvae.



## Irrigation and Water Use

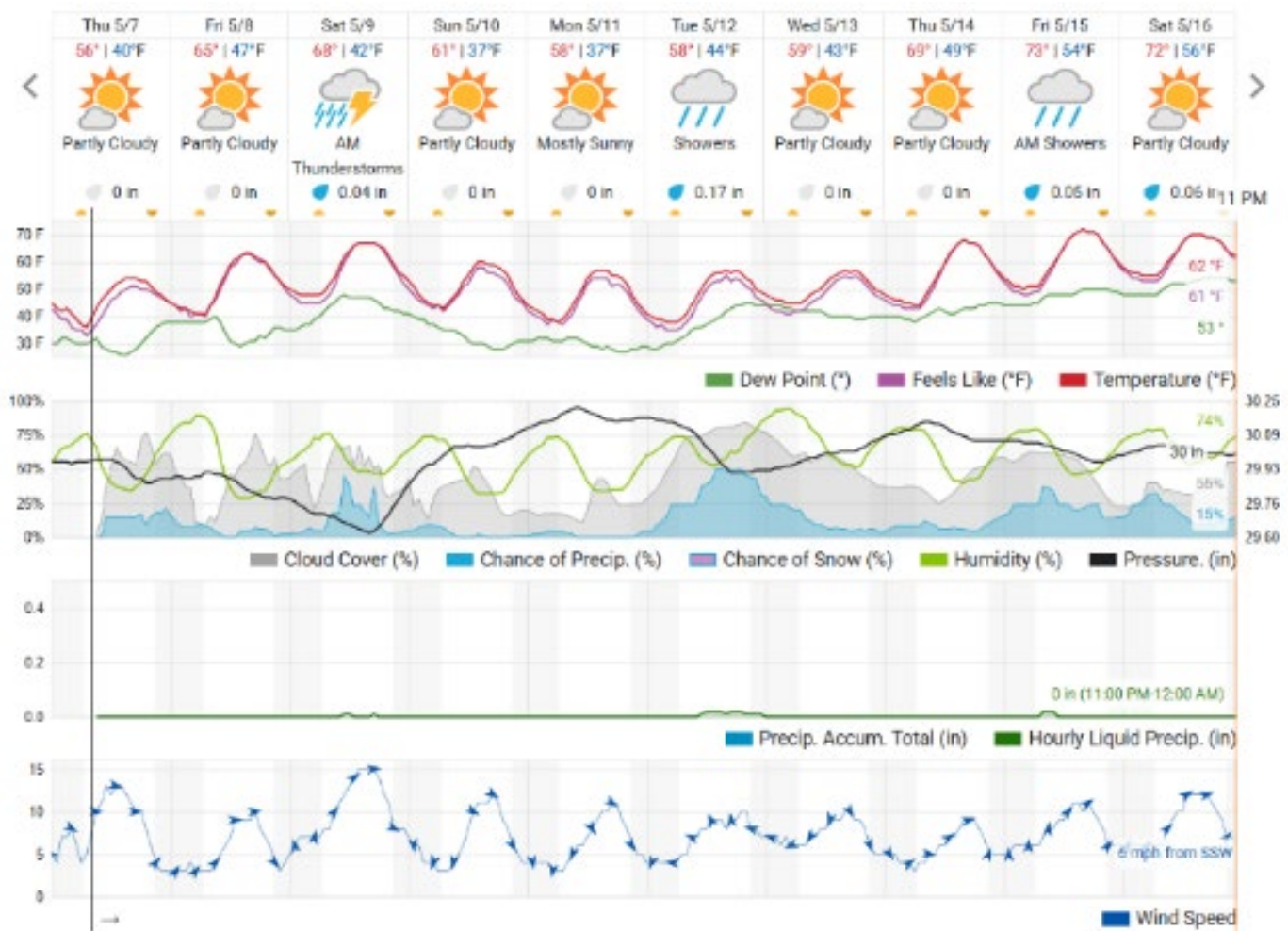
As the irrigation season begins, don't forget to prepare your irrigation scheduling tools as well. Having a plan in place ahead of time can save valuable time during the season and improve the accuracy of scheduling tools by allowing you to enter important information early, such as the exact crop emergence date.

[Michigan State University Extension](#) provides several free [irrigation scheduling tools](#) designed to help growers manage water more efficiently. More information about these tools can be found in this [factsheet](#). If you would like one-on-one training or guidance on using irrigation scheduling tools, please contact Angie Gradiz at [gradizme@msu.edu](mailto:gradizme@msu.edu).

This year, [weekly crop water use updates](#) will continue to be shared through the SW MI Crop Updates, and for added convenience, updates will also be sent through direct email and text messages. Sign up [here](#).

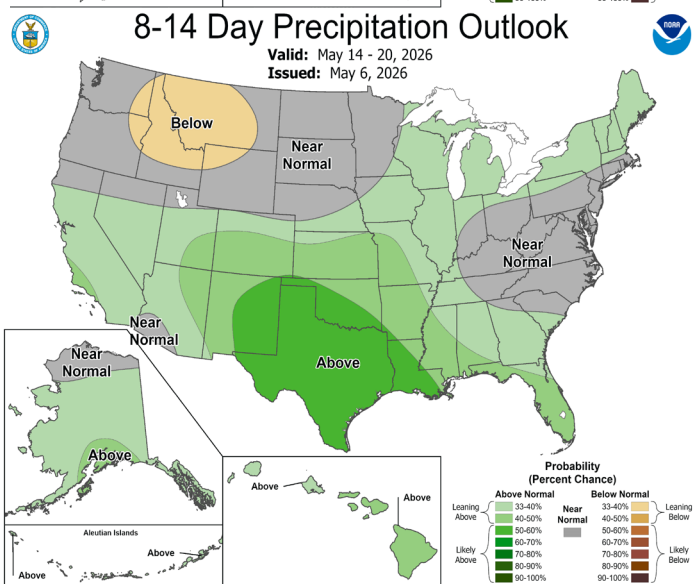
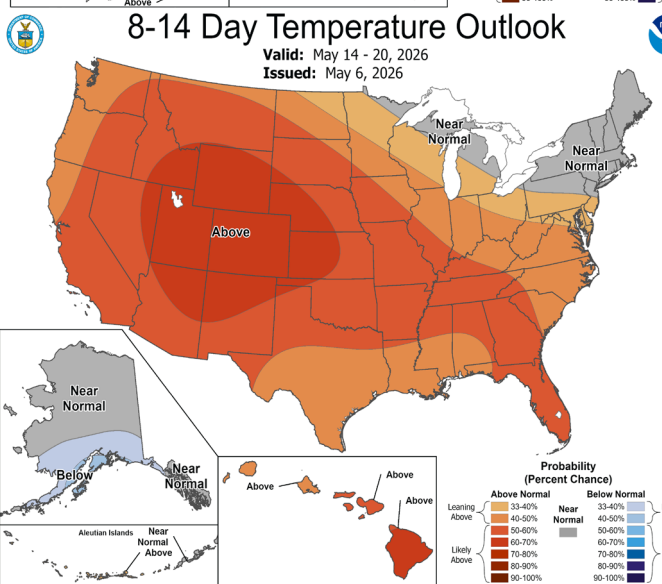
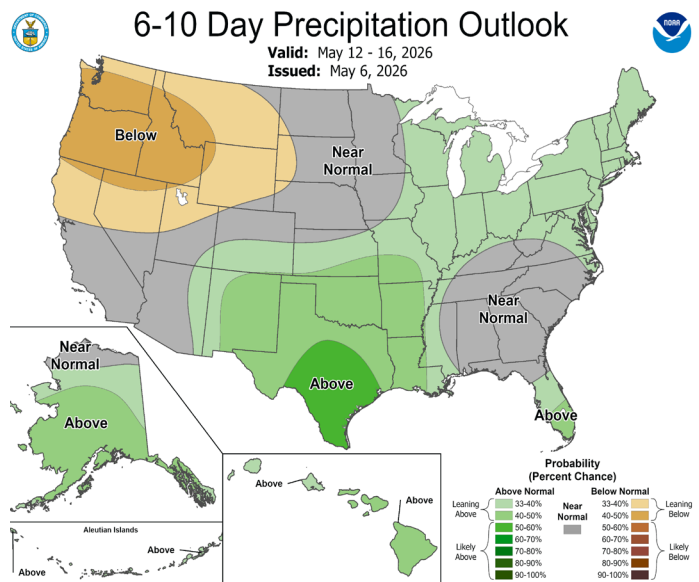
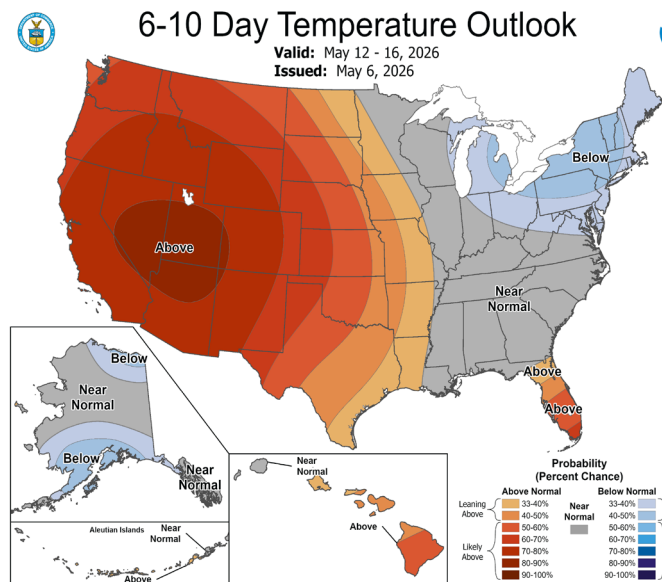
## Weather Update

Much of the past week was cool and cloudy or rainy, with at least one frost throughout the region and several days at frost risk. Unlike the rest of the state, southern Michigan received significant precipitation. The forecast for the upcoming week is promising, however, with only light showers and highs around 60 F.



Ten-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to wunderground.com.

# Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – May 8, 2026 - 8



The 6-10 day (May 12-16, top) and 8-14 day (May 14-20, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

## Calendar

[Note: Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined.]

- May 12** [Cover Crop Grazing and Variety Trial Field Day](#). 9am-12:30pm. Kellogg Biological Station. Participants will test a prototype of a new app for real-time biomass estimation; rate different cover crop traits in the National Cover Crop Variety Trial plots; and see cover crop grazing in action along with more in-depth grazing conversation. Free.
- May 14** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Post Weed Control](#). 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 15** [Spanish Pesticide and Irrigation Safety Workshop](#). 8 am – 12 pm. St. Joseph County MSU Extension Office (612 E Main St., Centreville, MI 49032). This workshop will cover pesticide and irrigation safety, including how to reduce drift and leaching. Free. Lunch not included. **4 RUP**

## Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – May 8, 2026 - 9

- May 21**      **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Wheat Scouting and Management Considerations](#)**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- May 28**      **[Presenting MI Farm Link: Connecting Farmers to Farmland](#)**. 12-1pm. During this webinar, Koffi Kapchavi will present MI Farm Link, which has resources that can help people seeking farmland connect with those that have it. He will explain how to use the website to set up listings and requests for land.
- May 28**      **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Michigan Dry Bean Update](#)**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Jun 4**        **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Integrated Pest Management in Sugar Beets](#)**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Jun 11**      **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Herbicide Resistance Update](#)**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season. **1 RUP**
- Jun 17**      **[Food Grade Grains Field Day](#)**. 9am-1pm. Kellogg Biological Station. This event will touch on relevant information for farmers, millers, maltsters, food manufacturers, brewers, distillers, CPGs, researchers, and those invested in improving food-grade grain production and processing in the Upper Midwest. Free, but **registration capped at 100 participants. Register by June 3. RUP/CCA**
- Jun 17**      **[Canola Crop Walk \(Part of Food Grade Grains Day\)](#)**. 1-3pm. Kellogg Biological Station. As part of the Food Grade Grains Day, the Canola Crop Walk will feature canola agronomy, market update, and perspectives from canola farmers. Free, but **registration capped at 100 participants. Register by June 3.**

## MSU Extension Digest Briefs

### **[Optimizing Corn Hybrid Maturity Selection for Maximum Yield and Profit in Michigan and Northern Regions](#)**

**Published on May 7, 2026**

The goal of this bulletin is to provide resources on how to optimize hybrid relative maturity selection based on planting date to maximize yield, profits, kernel dry down, and fall cover crops establishment.

### **[Postemergence weed control in field crops](#)**

**Published on May 6, 2026**

The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series continues May 14 with an important discussion on postemergence weed control options for field crop production.

### **[The importance of monitoring water pressure in your irrigation system](#)**

**Published on May 6, 2026**

Monitoring water pressure helps your system work properly, apply water evenly, and catch problems early.

## Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – May 8, 2026 - 10

### [MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program offers Core Review training for pesticide applicators](#)

**Published on May 5, 2026**

New pesticide safety training service offers 4-hour Core Review sessions to support pesticide applicator certification preparation and provide up to 4 RUP recertification credits.

### [First Fast Fonz Facts of the 2026 field crops season](#)

**Published on May 5, 2026**

In this addition of “what is eating my row crop field now?” learn about the risk of alfalfa weevil, seed corn maggot, slugs, true armyworm and black cutworm.

### [Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report available now](#)

**Published on May 4, 2026**

To raise awareness of pesticides currently impacted by the new EPA Bulletins Live! Two pesticide label directive, Michigan State University Extension will be generating a Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report twice a month.

### [Don't miss out on the 2026 Field Crops Scouting School](#)

**Published on May 4, 2026**

Held in Frankenmuth, the Field Crops Scouting School is designed for interns and entry level scouts to learn the basics of identification, walking patterns, scouting tools and more.

### [Plant identification? There's an app for that—actually several!](#)

**Published on May 4, 2026**

2026 update: three AI platforms added! Plant identification apps for smartphones have seen significant improvements over the past several years. Now AI offers to take a photo and get an instant identification, but are they reliable?

### [Wheat Watchers Week of April 27, 2026](#)

**Published on April 30, 2026**

See how the wheat crop is progressing across Michigan this week.

### [MSU Pesticide Safety Education Program launches new self-paced Field Crop Pest Management course](#)

**Published on April 30, 2026**

MSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program has launched a new self-paced online Field Crop Pest Management course to help Michigan pesticide applicators earn RUP recertification credits or prepare for the Category 1A certification exam.

### [Southwest Michigan field crops update – April 30, 2026](#)

**Published on April 30, 2026**

Wheat is at Feekes 8 (flag leaf emerging) and 9 (flag leaf ligule visible). Corn and soybean planting has started.

### [Start thinking now about holding your soil in place](#)

**Published on April 29, 2026**

It is not too late to consider which cover crops can reduce snirt.

### [Counseling services for Michigan agricultural workers resume with federal support](#)

**Published on April 28, 2026**

Counseling services for Michigan's agricultural community have been restored following a lapse in funding that left many without support.

### [Wheat Watchers Week of April 20, 2026](#)

**Published on April 23, 2026**

See how the wheat crop is progressing across Michigan this week.

## Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – May 8, 2026 - 11

### Southwest Michigan field crops update – April 23, 2026

**Published on April 23, 2026**

Wheat is at Feekes 7 (two nodes). Alfalfa weevil damage is starting in alfalfa. Some fieldwork occurred between pockets of rainfall.

### Wet springs, nitrogen loss and what it means for winter wheat

**Published on April 22, 2026**

Whether you applied nitrogen before the rain or got delayed, here's how spring timing impacts your winter wheat.

### Precision agriculture: Artificial intelligence as a tool helping farmers

**Published on April 17, 2026**

Using artificial intelligence in our daily lives may feel like it comes from a science fiction novel, but with precision agriculture, AI is another tool to help farmers manage their operations.

### Farmers and motorists can work together to prevent traffic collisions involving farm equipment

**Published on April 17, 2026**

Motorists and farmers can use these practical recommendations to avoid traffic collisions involving farm equipment.

### When flooding hits, MSU Extension is here to help

**Published on April 17, 2026**

Whether you're a homeowner, farmer, parent or concerned community leader, MSU Extension offers trusted support during severe weather.

### Winter canola greens up in Michigan

**Published on April 16, 2026**

Spring has sprung, so how can you make sure your winter canola is on the right track?



*Nicolle Ritchie*

*Michigan State University Extension  
Field Crops Educator - St. Joseph County  
612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032  
(269) 858-8739 (Cell)  
(269) 467-5510 (Extension Office)  
[ritchi67@msu.edu](mailto:ritchi67@msu.edu)  
Facebook : [MSUEFieldCropsSMMI](#)*



*Angie Gradiz*

*Michigan State University Extension  
Agriculture Water Use Efficiency Educator  
570 Marshall Road #C, Coldwater, MI  
49036  
Office: (517) 279 - 4311  
Cell: (531) 249 - 4956  
[gradizme@msu.edu](mailto:gradizme@msu.edu)*