

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update March 5, 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.

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“Farming Funnies”

We can all use an occasional laugh to make it through the long nights and short days of winter. If you have a funny story or picture to share, feel free to send it my way!

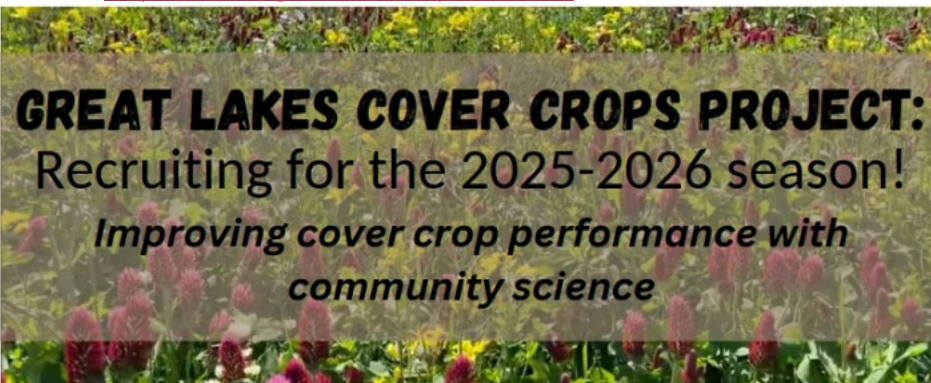


It's still too early to say what kind of spring we'll have, but something to watch out for is warm and dry conditions during burndown and post-emergence herbicide applications. Hot and dry conditions can reduce the efficacy of herbicides on emerged weeds, especially common lambsquarters. This is because of a couple factors: the plant responds by thickening its waxy cuticle to reduce water loss, and with less water loss, herbicides are not easily moved (or translocated) throughout the plant. Learn more in the article [Dry forecast: How will that impact weed control?](#) by Christy Sprague and Erin Burns.

Join the Great Lakes Cover Crops Project and Make
\$50/Field

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If you are growing any overwintering cover crop in the 2025-2026 season, consider joining the Great Lakes Cover Crops Project! What we need from you: fill out an online management survey (~20 minutes) and submit cover crop photos and heights in the spring. You will receive \$50/field and a personalized cover crop report with biomass and nutrient estimates. Scan the QR code or follow the link to join the network of over 150 farmers: <https://forms.gle/YK91afHdpYusLUaw5>



About the project: Cover crops can improve farm resilience, but their performance can also be highly variable across different growing conditions. In this project, we partner with Great Lakes farmers to:

- **Quantify cover crop performance across farm fields**
- **Identify relationships between environment, management, and cover crop performance**
 - **Develop practical and context-specific cover crop recommendations**
 - **Build learning networks through field days, webinars, and online resources**

Who can participate?

Anyone growing an overwintering cover crop for the 2025-2026 season in MI, OH, IN, IL, WI, and MN. We welcome all types of farms and cover crops!

What does it entail?

- Online management survey this winter (~20 min)
- Submit cover crop photos and heights in spring 2026 (~30 min)
- Receive \$50/field and a personalized cover crop report with biomass and nutrient estimates



Scan the QR code or follow the link below to join our network of over 150 farmers:
<https://forms.gle/YK91afHdpYusLUaw5>

Questions? Contact etiennesutton@missouri.edu

Farming for the Future March 11



The Van Buren Conservation District will host Farming for the Future on March 11, 2026, at Learn more information at VanBurenCD.org/FFF-2026.

Restricted Use Pesticide Review and Testing in English AND SPANISH April 7 in Kalamazoo

An in-person review and testing will be offered in both English and Spanish on April 7 at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center. The morning review is mandatory to take the restricted use pesticide applicator exam in the afternoon. The cost is \$25, and lunch is included. Both commercial and private core exams are available, as well as the fumigation and aerial standards. Category exams will NOT be offered. Learn more and/or sign up here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026pesttest/>

Upcoming On-Farm Research Opportunities for 2026

What kind of local on-farm research is happening in SW MI in 2026? If you're interested in learning more about or collaborating on any of these projects, please reach out to me (text/call 269-858-8739 or email ritchi67@msu.edu).

- **Seedcorn Maggot trapping in soybeans** (We will place traps and check them regularly for seedcorn maggot to validate the accuracy of degree day flight models. What I need from you: a soybean field. Bonus points if planted early or has had SCM in the past)
- **Soybean scouting project** (I will scout your soybean field every other week throughout the season to test out a scouting app. What I need from you: a soybean field to scout, yield monitor data and a survey on your management practices at the end of the season)
- The **Soybean On-Farm Research Program** will continue this year with opportunities for on-farm trialing of various products and management practices. More details to come.

NEW Insect Pest Management Guides



Hot off the press! The St. Joseph County office has a few free printed copies of the updated MSU & OSU Insect Management Guides for Field Crops. Stop in anytime the office is open, or contact me directly (text/call 269-858-8739 or email ritchi67@msu.edu) to get a copy. If you are not in St. Joseph County but are in southwest Michigan, contact me directly, and I'll get a copy out to your county for you. The guide is also **free to access online** and is downloadable at https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/insect-guides.

Follow SW MI Field Crops on Facebook

NEW: We have a Facebook page for all things corn, soybeans, wheat/small grains, hay, and commercial potato in southwest Michigan. Please follow and have your ag friends/family follow, too. [Visit Facebook](#)

How does irrigation affect yield under drought conditions?

This year, Michigan has seen wide variability in precipitation; some areas had enough rain, while others have struggled with drought. To better understand how irrigation affects yield under these conditions, [the Michigan State University Extension irrigation team](#) is looking for cooperators willing to share yield data from irrigated fields and non-irrigated areas.

Participants will need to provide:

- Yield data for both irrigated and non-irrigated areas, such as dry corners.
- Estimates of rainfall amounts and irrigation applied.

This information will be used strictly for research purposes. If you'd like to participate or get more information, please fill out this [form](#) or contact [Angie Gradiz](#).

Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day coming to SW MI!

Save the date! [Learn more here](#).



9th Annual
**Midwest
Mechanical
Weed Control
FIELD DAY**
THE PLACE TO CONNECT

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026
**Michigan State University's Southwest
Michigan Research and Extension Center**
Benton Harbor, MI

Weeding Machines for Vegetables & Row Crops

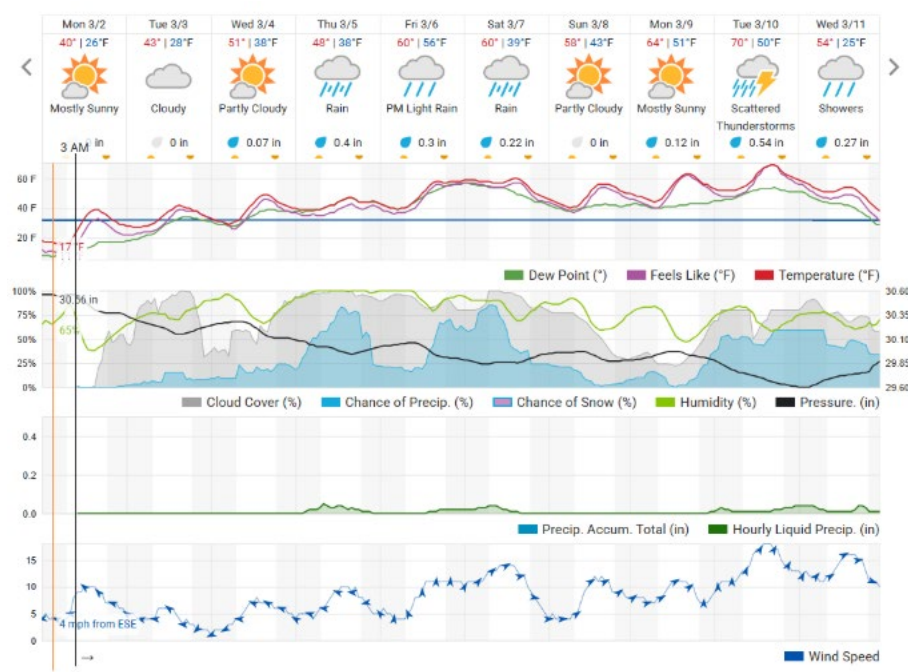
- See quality field demos of many weeding tools in corn and vegetables and learn from company reps
- See before you buy, and learn how to adjust tools in the field from experts
- See cultivators of all scales - modern hand tools, two-wheel tractors, cultivating tractors, and all manner of cultivators for small grains and row-crops
- Meet farmers from all over the country
- Connect with tool companies and other ag suppliers at the trade show
- Hear from national experts on weeding tools and techniques, cover crops, and soil health at the education sessions, connect with your MSU extension specialist and latest research

Register online to get your ticket or over the phone by calling Crystal at 217-840-2128 x 730. Scan the QR code to register or visit <https://www.theiandconnection.org/event/2026-mmwcd/>

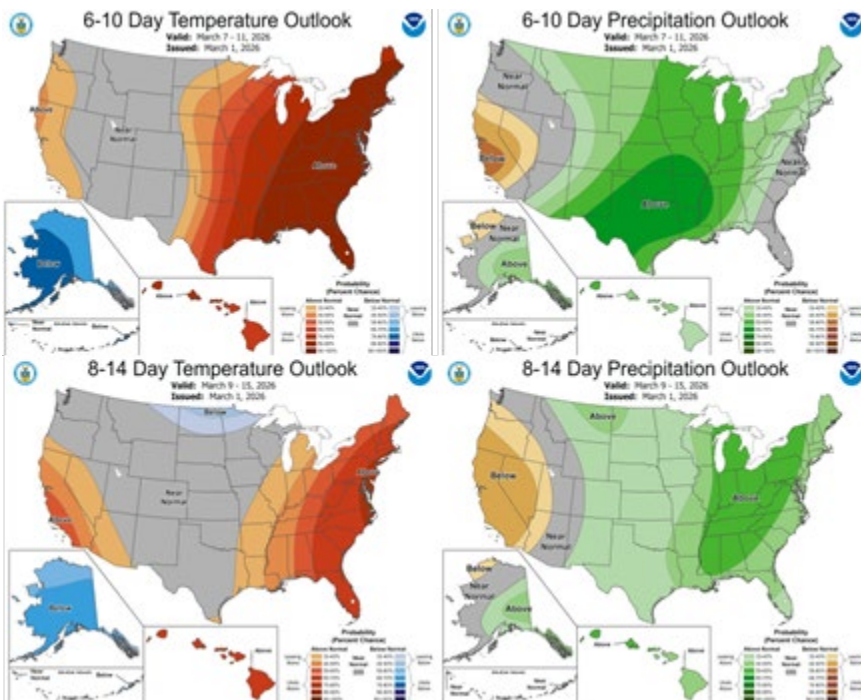


Weather Update

We had a taste of spring a couple weeks ago, and since then it's snowed again, and temperatures have dropped. The forecast for this week shows warmer temperatures and high chances of rain.



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



The 6-10 day (Mar 7-11, top) and 8-14 day (Mar 9-15, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

- Mar 4** [Pesticide Safety Webinar Series: The RUP/CCA CEU Credit Clinic](#). 10 am-12 pm; 12 pm-2 pm. Online via Zoom. MSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program offers virtual training series for applicators and ag professionals, covering pesticide safety, Endangered Species Act compliance, environmental protection and best practices in application and equipment use. **2-4 RUP**. \$17 for AM or PM session, \$30 for both **if requesting credits**.
- Mar 5** [MI Ag Ideas to Grow With Irrigation Day](#). 9 am-3 pm. Online via Zoom. Free. Covering various irrigation topics throughout the day. **6 CCA (5 SW, 1 CM)**
- Mar 9** [Field Crops Webinar Series - Weed Control](#). 7-8 pm. Online via Zoom. Join the MSU Extension Field Crops Team with agriculture experts in this series of eight webinars. \$20 for whole series or \$5 per session. **1 RUP**
- Mar 10** [Hay Production 101](#). 7-8:30 pm. Online via Zoom. Join our team of MSU Extension specialists and educators online in February and March 2026 to learn the ins and outs of growing, harvesting and marketing your hay crop. The March 10 topic is "Managing Pests: Weeds, Insects and Disease." \$85/person. **CCA**
- Mar 16** [Field Crops Webinar Series - No-Till Corn](#). 7-8 pm. Online via Zoom. Join the MSU Extension Field Crops Team with agriculture experts in this series of eight webinars. \$20 for whole series or \$5 per session. **1 RUP**
- Mar 19** [PFAS in Crops Webinar](#). 10-11 am. This is the second webinar in the '2026 PFAS in Agriculture Webinar Series'. This webinar will cover research about PFAS in crops, including both row crops and produce.
- Mar 23** [Field Crops Webinar Series - Drones](#). 7-8 pm. Online via Zoom. Join the MSU Extension Field Crops Team with agriculture experts in this series of eight webinars. \$20 for whole series or \$5 per session. **1 RUP**
- Mar 26** [Conservation Easements within Farm Succession Planning](#). 12-1 pm. Online via Zoom. Farmland conservation experts Kim Hayes and Will Manty will provide details about when and how conservation easements can be set up for farmland. They will describe how easements can fit within a larger succession plan, discussing both the benefits and challenges that can occur. Free. **1 RUP**
- Apr 7** [Pesticide Applicator Core Review and MDARD Core Testing - Kalamazoo](#). 8:30 am-12:30 pm. Kalamazoo County Expo Center. English and Spanish reviews of the Pesticide Applicators Core Manual to prepare for the MDARD Pesticide Applicators Certification Exam in the afternoon. **REVIEW IS MANDATORY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IN-PERSON TESTING**. \$25/person. Lunch included. **4 RUP** for those with a current active pesticide license.
- May 15** [Spanish Pesticide and Irrigation Safety Workshop](#). 8 am – 12 pm. Online via Zoom. This workshop will cover pesticide and irrigation safety, including how to reduce drift and leaching. Free. Lunch not included. **4 RUP**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

[Michigan State University PFAS Awareness Week](#)

Published on February 27, 2026

Join for a series of free events including an outreach table near the rock on campus, a webinar series, and a PFAS movie night.

[Michigan Rep. Luke Meerman values MSU's longstanding support of Michigan agriculture](#)

Published on February 26, 2026

From his farming roots to his role in the Michigan Legislature, Rep. Luke Meerman understands the importance of MSU research that's driven by agriculture industry priorities.

[2026 MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series to begin on March 26](#)

Published on February 25, 2026

The 2026 MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast series will kick off the growing season series on March 26. The series runs every Thursday from 7–8 a.m. through September 17.

[Still finalizing planting intentions? Focus on profit, not price](#)

Published on February 24, 2026

How profits can determine a winner in corn vs. soybeans acres.

[MSU Margin Goal Worksheet for Grain Marketing](#)

Published on February 23, 2026

The Margin Goal Worksheet for Grain Marketing helps to identify a crop's profit margins and marketing price targets.

[Is irrigation important to you and your business?](#)

Published on February 23, 2026

Water policy challenges are in the future for Michigan and Indiana. The Irrigation Day webinar series will provide three sessions explaining the competition for water and how it may affect your practices.

[Using growing degree days in making corn hybrid maturity selections](#)

Published on February 19, 2026

Growing degree day information can help better match seasonal heat accumulation for your location with corn hybrid maturity.

[The Great Lakes Forage and Grazing Conference returns for 2026](#)

Published on February 16, 2026

Designed for farmers, students and agribusiness leaders, this year's conference delivers hands-on knowledge, Michigan-based expertise and practical tools to strengthen forage operations.

[Michigan State University launches an innovative real-world farming competition](#)

Published on February 12, 2026

MSU-TAPS serves as a powerful bridge between research and practice. Researchers evaluate emerging technologies under real production conditions, while producers gain first-hand insight into how new tools perform in Michigan.

[MSU Extension offers PFAS in Agriculture Webinar Series during MSU's PFAS Awareness Week](#)

Published on February 12, 2026

A series of four webinars on PFAS in agriculture will be offered at no cost in March 2026.

[Michigan Rep. Julie Brixie touts MSU research as essential to maintaining state's agricultural diversity, identity](#)

Published on February 12, 2026

Michigan Rep. Julie Brixie, 73rd District, advocates for MSU research, outreach to boost Michigan agriculture economy.

[Does row spacing and seeding rate recommendations differ for short vs. tall corn hybrids?](#)

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Published on February 11, 2026

Planting short corn in narrow row spacings and under higher seeding rate can improve yield, dependent on the environment.

Testing for contaminants in soil, water and plants

Published on February 10, 2026

Sometimes, what you don't know can hurt you.

Using conservation easements within farm succession planning

Published on February 9, 2026

Join our webinar to learn from land conservancy experts about using conservation easements.

Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report available now

Published on February 5, 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.

Michigan Rep. Jerry Neyer says MSU agriculture research is 'a small investment with a great return'

Published on February 5, 2026

From a farming background to his role as chair of the Michigan House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Jerry Neyer is passionate about moving the agriculture industry forward.

MSU Extension releases grain market benchmarks report

Published on February 3, 2026

Market price data may hold the key to maximizing sales.



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