

# Expanded Corn Checkoff Will Provide Needed Resources

JEFFERSON CITY, MO.

In a strong show of support, Missouri's corn growers have voted to increase the state corn checkoff rate from one-half cent to one cent per bushel in a referendum conducted by the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

The corn checkoff, established in 1984, funds the Missouri Corn Merchandising Council (MCMC), an organization of corn growers dedicated to the profitability of corn production by investing checkoff dollars in the research, development and expansion of corn markets as well as facilitating communication with customers and growers. This summer, the MCMC board of directors voted unanimously to ask growers to raise the corn checkoff rate to continue to effectively expand and promote new markets for corn farmers.

"Passing the referendum was vital to the future of Missouri's corn industry," said Gary Marshall, MCMC CEO. "Over the last two decades, MCMC grower-leaders and staff have been diligently working to grow, nurture and protect Missouri's corn and ethanol industries. While we have established a proven track record, much like farming, these duties take more resources today than when the Missouri corn checkoff was created 25 years ago."

By leveraging checkoff dollars, MCMC has cultivated a strong list of accomplishments, including funding market research for corn-based plastic, providing sound science for the re-registration of atrazine, helping establish Missouri's farmer-owned ethanol industry and

educating consumers on food and fuel facts.

"It is more important than ever that we work hard to expand and protect our markets," said Keith Witt, MCMC chairman and farmer from Warrenton, Mo. "Constant attacks from corn and ethanol detractors and the struggling economy mean farmers have to fight harder than ever to stay competitive in today's market. The Missouri Corn Merchandising Council is their partner in that fight."

According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the checkoff increase passed with approximately 75 percent of corn farmers in favor, with over 65 percent of the registered voters weighing in. Ballots had to be postmarked by Dec. 15 to be eligible. The new checkoff rate, which goes into effect July 1, 2009, will provide additional resources for research, education and continued market development of Missouri's corn industry.

"We are grateful for this strong vote of support from our farmers," said Witt. "This is the first checkoff rate increase since the Council was formed in 1984. If you think in terms of equipment, a John Deere 4050 tractor cost \$35,000 in 1984. Today, a similar model costs \$65,000. The cost of doing business has nearly doubled. We commend our growers for having the foresight to invest in research and development to improve yields, enhance efficiencies and maintain profitability for the future of our industry."

To learn more about the Missouri Corn Merchandising Council, visit [www.mocorn.org](http://www.mocorn.org). Δ



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