



NW MICHIGAN HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Message from the NORTHWEST MICHIGAN HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION BOARD

Thirty two years ago, the Northwest Michigan Research Station (NWMHRS) was founded by grower and industry efforts and donations, with a total of \$500,000 given to purchase and establish our research farm. At that time, the industry was experiencing good years of cherry production and pricing, and the industry identified the need as well as an opportunity to invest in research and education that would ensure a strong and competitive future for the fruit industry in northwest Michigan. When the NWMHRF was established, the grower founders stated that these funds would be a one-time request for farm establishment, and the development and annual funding would be provided by MSU and state sources. Today, these funding sources have been reduced or eliminated, and the state's economy alludes to further reductions in coming years.

To combat these funding shortfalls, the Foundation Board implemented the "Keep our Farmers Farming" fundraising campaign in 2006. To date, that program has raised almost \$129,000. Most recently, the Foundation Board has been working with NWMHRS staff to identify the current and future needs of research and station infrastructure. However, despite



the generous donations from the growers, processors, and industry, the Board had hoped contributors would be able to provide yearly support to help minimize the growing list of needs at the NWMHRS.

As members of the Michigan fruit industry, we encourage you to evaluate the benefits you have received from MSU and the NWMHRS in your farming operation. Personally, we can easily identify many examples where information developed at the NWMHRS has directly benefited northwest Michigan farms, businesses, and individual growers through applied research and outreach programming. In short, these on-going efforts have helped ensure our success! In the past we were fortunate enough to have Dr. Chuck Kesner, Jim Nugent and recently Dr. Nikki Rothwell as coordinators of the NWMHRS; we believe this strong leadership has enabled the northwest industry to increase efficiency, combat farm-level problems, and keep Michigan's growers on the forefront of technology, horticulture, and pest management. The cooperation among the NWMHRS

and MSU has facilitated unrivaled communication between campus, field, and industry, top-notch research and education delivery, and model collaboration to acquire external funding. We hope to continue this tradition of excellence for many years to come.

All thriving businesses invest in research to remain competitive. In our case, the many aspects of successful research require infrastructure and personnel that small businesses cannot afford individually, but the NWMHRF is one big way that Michigan fruit industry has joined together to establish an efficient and effective research and education outlet that improves our competitiveness in the now global economy. Please consider a yearly financial investment towards the NWMHRF as means for your business to change and adapt successfully into the future.

Sincerely,

Your NWMHRF Board



What's New with the New FARM Program?

Erin Lizotte, IPM and IFP Educator, NWMHRS

It is hard to believe, but it has been over two years since we kicked off the New Farm (Farmer Assistance and Resource Management) Program! Looking back, Program members have accomplished a lot, and we have also grown as a group. We have certainly seen some big changes at the farm and community levels: New FARM members have planted high density apples, started business ventures, joined new boards, and hosted agricultural forums with state and federal officials. The recognition this group has received around the state has been impressive—even Senator Stabenow requested an audience while visiting the region.

As the program winds down, participants are ramping up for the final trip to New Zealand. New Zealand was chosen for its agricultural and cultural diversity. At the end of January, 38 young farmers (and Extension staff) will travel to New Zealand to learn about agriculture on

the other side of the world. The group will tour New Zealand's vineyard and the wine industry, cherries and high density apple orchards, sheep and livestock production, kiwi industry, and a 'flat' peach orchard—a New Zealand specialty. Additionally, the group has been invited by Dr. Andrew Granger, General Manager of Science, Breeding, & Genomics at the Plant and Food Research facility, to visit one of their world-renowned research centers that focuses on breeding perennial crops. The trip will also include cultural stops, and members are particularly excited about a visit to the Abel Tasman National Park.

It is the goal of the group to return to Michigan with new agricultural knowledge that they can implement on their own farms and to share that information with the broader community. The group is looking forward to this 'once in a lifetime' trip and will surely make the

most of the opportunity. Many of you in the agricultural community have played an important role in helping this group and this program, and we thank you for your support.

Meet Our New Foundation Board Members...

Jim Laubach



I moved on to my family's farm in Benzie County in 1979. Sally, my wife, and I grow 30 acres of cherries and own HortSystems, a fruit IPM consulting business. I have enjoyed serving with fellow foundation board members for the last year and appreciate their help in getting me up to speed on foundation business. I would like to thank the staff at the research farm, Dr. Nikki Rothwell, Bill Klein, Erin Lizotte, Jackie Baase and Karen Powers for their help in maintaining and growing the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Farm into a world class agricultural research station.

Mark Meizio



As a transplant to our area, I am excited to be a part of farming in Northern Michigan. I am a manager at Cherry Bay Orchards with Don and Bob Gregory and am married to Don's youngest daughter, Emily. We have two children Luella (3) and Sam (1) with a third due in March of 2012. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the Foundation Board and to ensure the research needs of our diverse growing area are met. As a winery owner, Chateau De Leelanau, I am excited about the NWMHRS wine grape research.

Bruce Veliquette



I have grown up working on our family farm, Cherry Ke. Inc, located in Antrim County. We are a large tart cherry producer that is vertically integrated all the way from the farm to the finished product. I chose to serve on the Foundation Board because I feel that the cherry industry as well as all agriculture will need to be proactive in finding new technologies and techniques to remain viable in our ever changing markets. I feel that serving on the board will be a good way for me to contribute to the research station as well as a good learning opportunity for me as a young farmer and a great way to make new contacts with the university and research station.

Special Thanks to Peterson Farms!

Dr. Nikki Rothwell, District Horticulturist and NWMHRS Coordinator

Our latest donation to the NWMHRF's *Keep our Farmers Farming* campaign came during the busy growing season, so we would like to take time now to say thanks to

Peterson Farms! Peterson Farms donated \$5,000 to the NWMHRF this past June. Earl Peterson, CEO Peterson Farms, Inc. and Mark Doherty, Northern

Michigan Field Representative, search Station to the Michigan fruit industry:

"The team at Peterson Farms recognizes the critical role that the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station plays in our industry. The research station addresses issues related to cultural practices, food safety, and many other areas that impact us on a regular basis. Perhaps most importantly, the Research Station provides a focal point through which growers, researchers, industry

members, governmental officials, and the community at large, can interact and develop solutions to help insure the long-term viability of the fruit industry in the region."

We would like to reiterate our appreciation for Peterson Farms generous donation, for their continued support of our work here at the station, and their assistance with our New FARM Program. Thank you!



Michigan Field Representative, sent us this statement about the importance of the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Re-

New Winegrape Varieties Get a Taste

Dr. Nikki Rothwell, District Horticulturist and NWMHRS Coordinator

In 2008, 50 new winegrape cultivars were planted at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station (NWMHRS). These plantings are part of a Northeast-1020 trial, a multi-state project that evaluates winegrape cultivars and clones for suitability in regions across the eastern U.S. In total, there are 25 sites in 16 states with over 35 researchers dedicated to this project. The long-term goal of this project is to identify novel winegrape varieties that are conducive for Michigan conditions and that will produce superior quality wine. The emphasis of this research is in part

'thinking outside the box'—could we grow other winegrapes than our more traditional varieties and focus on those varieties that are suitable for our Michigan conditions?

We want to develop varieties that grow well, make high-quality wine, and can compete price-wise in a global marketplace. Many of the varieties planted at the NWMHRS are internationally renowned for high quality wine in several European countries, and we want to evaluate their characteristics under Michigan conditions. As the recent goal of the Michigan Wine Industry Council is to increase vineyard acreage to over 10,000 and to be able to produce three million cases of wine by 2024, the successful expansion

of our winegrape production will depend on the ability to grow appropriate varieties that fit Michigan's site specificity. Variety recommendations based on results from this project are crucial in developing the Michigan winegrape industry.

In 2010, grapes from the different varieties were harvested and used in wine production for sensory evaluation at Spartan Cellars at Michigan State University (MSU). The enology portion of this trial is crucial because if the vines grow well but do not make a palatable wine, they are not valuable to our Michi-



Growers, winemakers, and consultants enjoying the wine tasting event held at Spartan Cellars, MSU, in June 2011. This event showcased wine made from the new varieties planted at the NWMHRS.

gan industry. In June this year, over 80 winemakers, growers, and winegrape consultants from Michigan attended a wine tasting event that focused on wines made from these new grape varieties. This tasting was our first chance to see, taste, and better understand the characteristics and potential of these winegrape varieties. Cheers!



Pruning the winegrape variety trial in spring 2011.

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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Cover Crop Trial Continues at NWMHRS

Erin Lizotte, IPM and IFP Educator, NWMHRS

The NWMHRS staff has been conducting a cover crop trial in an area that was planted to sweet cherries for over 20 years. The objectives of this project are to help growers best utilize cover crops for particular management goals and to better understand rotational strategies. We are focusing on reducing nematode populations, providing weed control, and increasing nutrients and organic matter in the soil. The cover crops that we have planted include oats, rye, Essex rape, pearl millet, clover, peas, and mustards. Dr. Dale Mutch, a MSU expert in cover crops, has assisted in this trial. After the cover crop trial is complete, the site will be planted into sweet cherry, and the trees from our replicated plots will be compared to a fumigation standard.



Cover crop plots
planted at the
NWMHRS.

