



February 4, 2021

From the Executive Director...

I have been waiting to write the 2020 review, to make sure it was actually gone. 2020 was the year that turned everything upside down and added stress to every part of our lives. Last year was a busy year for MGGC as we tried to make sure the greenhouse industry was not negatively affected by the COVID-19 virus and the closing of almost everything. Our retail outlets were closed for a while by the Governor and that is when MGGC went to work with a communications plan to put pressure on the state to allow the sales of greenhouse goods and products. Thanks to the hard work of our members around the state on TV, radio, and newspapers telling their plans of how to operate and still keep employees and customers safe, we were able to get our retail businesses open within 3 days! The response from the public was tremendous and most of the MGGC members were able to have a very good year.

The Michigan Department of Treasury was trying to charge sales tax to one of our members for a new greenhouse structure, so we went to work to educate the department on what the law says about this. MGGC hired an attorney to fight the Michigan Department of Treasury for our members and establish once and for all that greenhouse structures are agriculture and are not subject to sales tax. Our attorney reminded the Department of Treasury what the law states and they dropped their request for sales tax to be paid. Another big win for the greenhouse industry!

When the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans were offered by the Federal government, MGGC made sure all of our members were kept up to speed on what was being offered and how to participate in the forgivable loans for their business.

I was able to work directly with Senator Stabenow's office to make sure that greenhouses were added to the specialty crops in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), as they were not listed in the original CFAP legislation. We were successful in getting greenhouses added within a month, so the dollars were available to be applied for by our members. This was an opportunity for greenhouses to make up some of the added costs for the PPE protections they had to supply to their workers. MGGC was also able to help our members find PPE when it was getting difficult to access enough supplies for their workers.

The discussion about a possible greenhouse crop insurance is on-going. This is the study that was in the 2018 Farm Bill and MGGC is working with many associations around the nation to find a solution that works for the industry. Watts and Associates has hosted several virtual conversations to gather information and form a report for the RMA. They are trying to put something together that is cost effective and gives coverage in case of a government ordered destruction of your crops. Information about a couple of options discussed will be coming out soon - your opinion will be welcome.

Make sure you check out the Grower to Grower Marketplace on our website. You can list items for sale which you no longer need or are long on. You may also find something useful for your business that someone else no longer needs. Remember that as a MGGC member you have many benefits available to you through your free SBAM membership. Log in to www.SBAM.org to see if any of them work for your business.

We welcome all the new members who joined MGGC this past year! Your support is appreciated. If you have not become a member yet or know someone who would be interested in becoming a member of MGGC – The only greenhouse specific association in the state, please let Cindy or me know and we will send out some information on membership.



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Young Plant Supply Disruptions Averted for Now

Craig Regelbrugge

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Monday, January 25 was the hard deadline on which USDA-APHIS began requiring electronic submission of all the data necessary to clear imports, including cuttings and young plants. Part of a multi-year, government-wide initiative to take trade transactions into a paperless 21st century, the system has been set up since 2016, but voluntary.



AmericanHort has been busy reaching out to offshore producers, brokers, and U.S. customers to help the industry prepare. We were worried about potentially serious disruptions during what is the peak season for unrooted cutting and young plant imports that are a critical part of the industry's supply chain. And, we warned APHIS of the potential consequences.

Fortunately, APHIS heard our concerns and shifted to a "soft launch" where electronic filing is now mandatory, but errors will trigger warnings rather than outright rejections that stop shipments in their tracks. Given our perishability and the peak season timing, this is a big relief. The soft-launch phase will be in place until March 15.

Incoming Chairwoman Stabenow Announces Agriculture Committee Agenda for the Beginning of the 117th Congress

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), incoming Chairwoman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, today announced her agenda for the beginning of the 117th Congress.

"From the ongoing pandemic to the devastating climate crisis – our farmers, families, and rural communities need help," said incoming Chairwoman Stabenow. "My vision for the Committee revitalizes our food and farm economy to grow new opportunities in American agriculture and provide access to healthy food for American families."

Incoming Chairwoman Stabenow will pursue an aggressive start to the new term to address the many challenges facing our food and agriculture system and promote policies that create jobs and economic opportunities for farmers, families, and rural communities. The Committee will build on past bipartisan achievements to strengthen the diversity of American agriculture, support the millions of jobs at the root of our farm and food economy, protect our land and water, strengthen small towns and rural communities, and support families working hard to make ends meet.

For details about the agenda

visit: <https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/dem/press/release/incoming-chairwoman-stabenow-announces-agriculture-committee-agenda-for-the-beginning-of-the-117th-congress>

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