

# Organic pest management solutions through the New Agriculture Network

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## The New Agriculture Network

Farmers, researchers and educators teaming up for sustainable and organic ag solutions in the Great Lakes Region

The New Agriculture Network (NAN), [www.new-ag.msu.edu](http://www.new-ag.msu.edu), was established in 2004. This three-state network (Michigan, Indiana and Illinois) enables farmers, land grant universities (Michigan State University, Purdue and University of Illinois) and Extension educators to address organic vegetable and field crop issues. A community of practice was formed, supporting organic and transitioning farmers through cooperative inquiry for systematic learning about organic nutrition and pest control in Midwest field crop and vegetable systems.

Similar to growers, Extension educators and university researchers interested in organic options find limited resources for scientifically-based advice that is scattered among universities and grower groups. NAN provides timely information for Midwest conditions through its stakeholder forum.

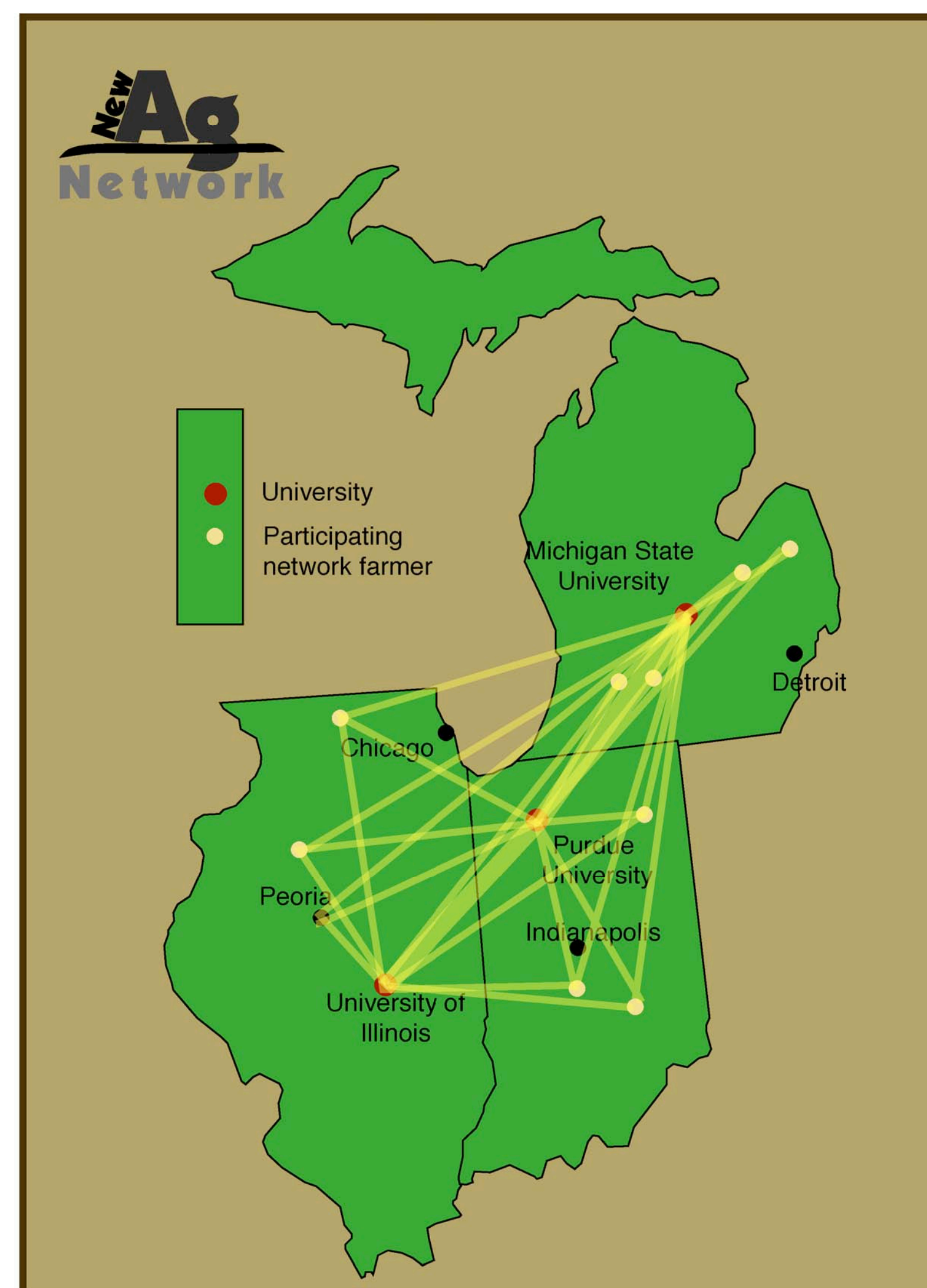
Bimonthly conference calls are conducted for field crop and vegetable organic farmers connecting farmers as advisors with researchers and educators. Each conference call is followed with production of an on-line newsletter. It includes timely articles written by researchers along with farmer reports from each state.

As a result of farmer/researcher interactions, on the New Ag Network, several spinoff grants have been written to answer pertinent questions raised by organic producers.

Illinois: NCR-SARE Research/ Education grant (submitted)

Indiana: NCR-SARE Producer grant (submitted)

Michigan: USDA/CSREES Integrated Organic Program grant (awarded)



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**Reports from organic growers**

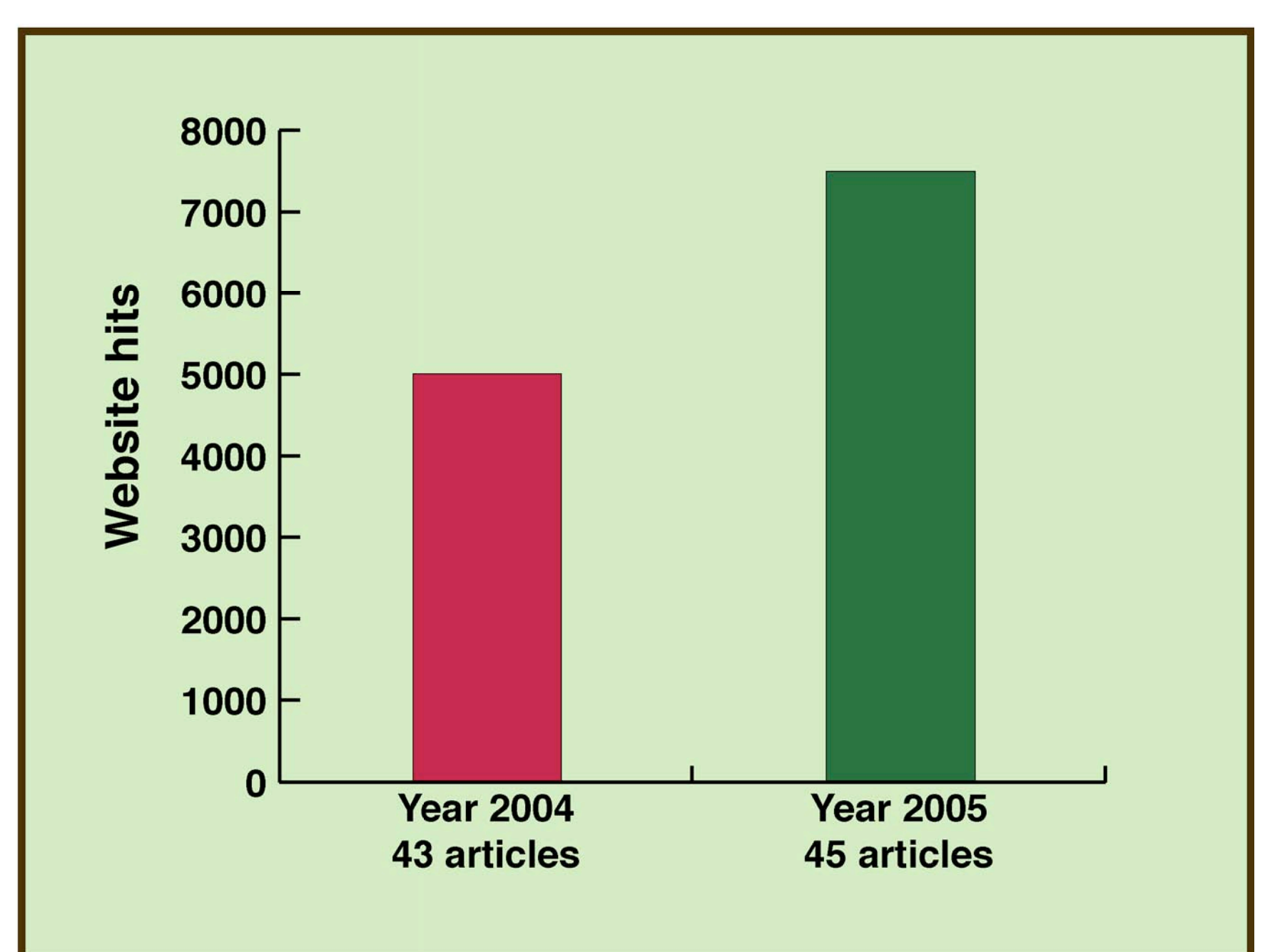
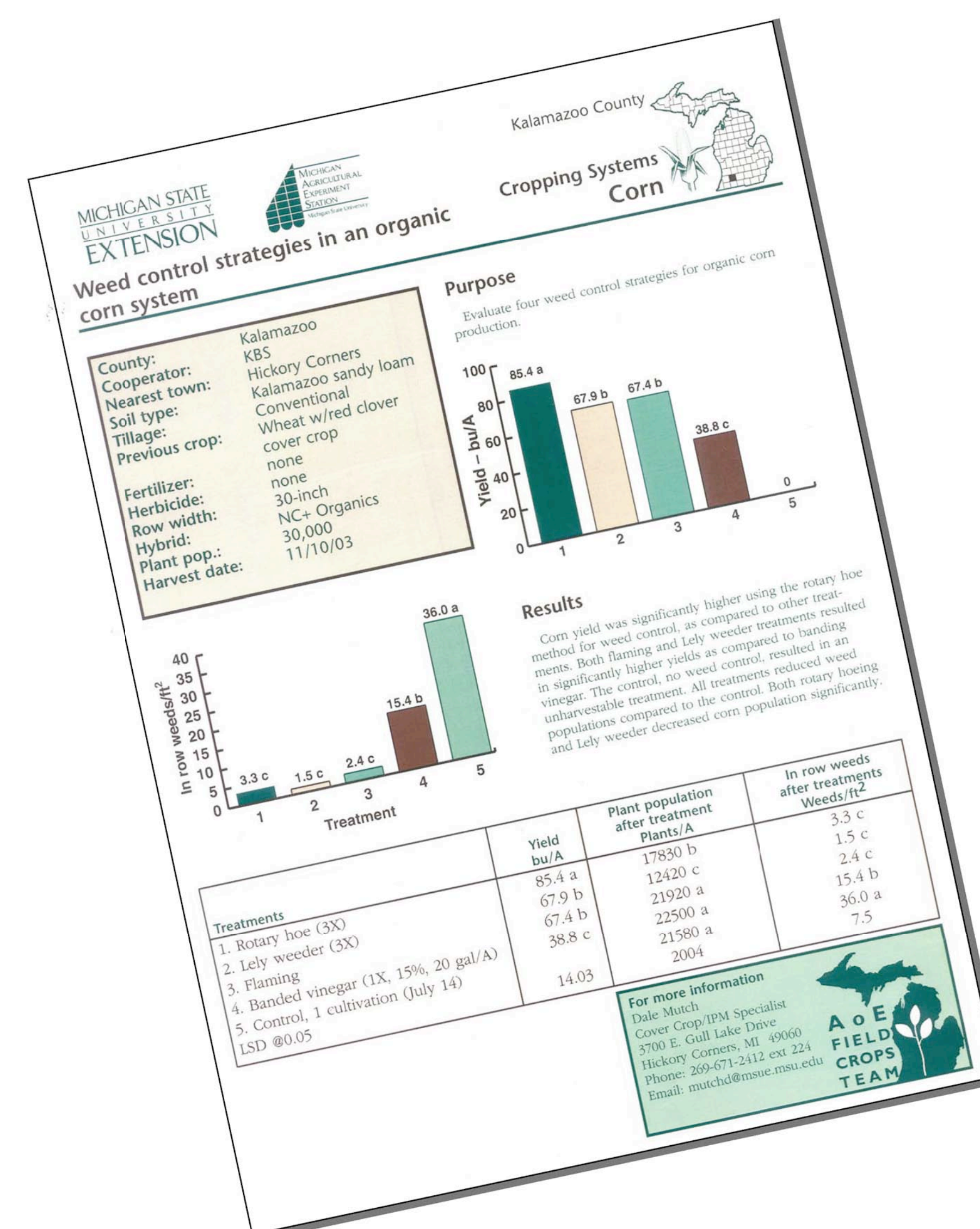
**Michigan**  
*Southeast Michigan – John Simmons*  
Wet spell has spared weeds on great heights (crops too), but not allowed weed control activities. Currently row cultivating corn, soybeans and sunflowers, as well as flailing corn and sunflowers. In the next two weeks I'll be row cultivating corn, sunflowers and soybeans, prepare for small grain harvest and go to the 4th of July parade.  
Question: Soy aphid control update and rust report?

**Indiana**  
*South Central Indiana – Dale Rhoads*  
Every rain this spring but one has been hard and heavy. This has caused a series of ups and downs in moisture. The past two weeks have been on the dry side. We are doing consistent, but not yet heavy, watering with everything but sweet corn. All new plantings are watered on a consistent basis to ensure germination and growth of juvenile plants. Temperatures started out very hot, highs in the 90s, then moderate—a nice cool phase of 60-80 degrees, and now starting to warm back up now. We put shade cloths over salad greens this week. Chard is starting to get leaf spots and go down in quality. I'm trying weekly applications of copper hydroxide.  
Currently harvesting salad greens, cilantro, kales, chard and baby squash. Finishing up with head lettuce this week. Spinach is gone now. We have been tying up tomato plants, weeding parsley plantings, watering, mulching, tilling and preparing bed for baby lettuce succession, killing weeds in sweet corn and weeding salad greens. Some insects are starting to show on lacinated kale, curly is staying worm-free from beneficial wasps. Potatoes have been treated with pyrethrin and rotenone for potato bugs successfully.  
I'll be doing much of the same in the next two weeks. Still in the weeding-up-spring and getting-into-summer phase. Doing a little mowing around.

**Illinois**  
*Northern Illinois – Dave Campbell*  
We've had only one-quarter inch of rain (that includes a few sprinkle episodes) since May 19. Every month this year since January we've received below normal precipitation. Crops are showing some stress, but not as much as my conventional neighbors, whose row crops were planted earlier. My last field of soybeans has not been planted due to extreme dryness, along with clover due to spring plowing of this field, which is partly clay. Baling small amounts of first cutting hay has just been completed. Most of this hay was harvested off my waterways. First cutting hay across northern Illinois has yielded well and is also of good quality. It has been ideal hay-making weather. No need to listen to the forecast. Cultivating corn for the second time, cultivating beans for the first time and hoeing thistles out of oats fields. In the next two weeks, I will hopefully plant the last field of soybeans soon (if we receive a decent rain). Otherwise, I will plant this field to buckwheat. Mowing and hand-cutting thistles around fermented. Will cultivate corn for the third and final time and will cultivate beans for the second time. Plan to field-cultivate my Cananda thistle experimental field to destroy another flush of thistles.  
Question: Was wondering if others were going to take any preventative measures in regards to addressing potential Asian rust concerns in soybeans?

**Iowa**  
*Northwest Iowa – Paul Mudge*  
We finally got a week with no rain and hot temperatures. It allowed me to cultivate the corn for the first time and I've gotten most of the beans done. I will try to finish cultivating the beans today. I have waterways to mow and a little flail mulch on the corn before it gets too big. In the next two weeks I will need to ridge the corn as it is now growing very fast since it warmed up. I also need to re-cultivate the beans. The weeds were so big that I didn't get all of them the first time. I have to bale waterways and grass headlands. I have pigs to move and a hoop hoghouse to clean out.  
Question: Is there any cover crop that I can seed after my fall triticale (harvested in mid-July) to get significant nitrogen production from in a couple months and that will start early in mid-summer? Does anyone know about turn hemp (crabgrass lanceol), cowpeas, black eye peas, or ryegrass?  
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Funding to initiate this network was provided by the American Farmland Trust and EPA Region 5. Web site is hosted by the MSU IPM Program.



In 2004, university specialists wrote 41 articles and the site received 5,009 hits. In 2005, specialists produced 43 articles and more than 7,500 hits occurred.

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