

# **Proposal for Market Research for Corn Marketing Program of Michigan**

**from**

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This proposal is a response to the April 26, 2000 “Request for Proposal for Corn Marketing Program of Michigan” sent to Kirk Heinze/Murari Suvedi by Beth Ann Stuever.

## **Introduction**

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) is requesting proposals for market research in order to set a baseline of current activities and facilitate strategic planning sessions that will take place in December 2000. The CMPM is the state checkoff program that funds education, promotion, research, market development and industry communications.

This proposal is to conduct a survey of Michigan Corn Growers Association members as well as growers who are not members. There are nearly 16,000 corn growers in Michigan. Of the nearly 16,000 corn growers in Michigan, less than 500 are association members.

The purpose of this survey is to solicit the perceptions and opinions of Michigan corn growers regarding their educational and informational needs. Specifically, this survey will:

- Assess the reasons people choose to become member of Michigan Corn Growers Association. (The flip side, of course, is to assess why others have not joined the association.)
- Determine the best method(s) of communicating association news and checkoff-related project information to the farmer audience.
- Determine members and non-members perceptions of the most important issues facing the industry.
- Assess growers’ feelings about the checkoff and how it impacts their farm.

## **Proposed Approach**

Our methodology to develop survey instrument will combine literature review and a focus group interview process. Survey questions will be designed after a careful review of related literature. In addition, a focus group interview will be conducted. The purpose of the focus group would be to gather and explore perceptions, thoughts, opinions and feelings about the CMPM. With the help of CMPM staff, we will invite selected members of the present and past Michigan Corn Growers Association and related industry personnel participate in the focus group. These participants are involved in and knowledgeable about CMPM, and will represent a balance of farmers, researchers, extensionists, and industry representatives. The purpose of the focus group will be to seek the group’s input into the CMPM programs and activities. The findings of the literature review and the inputs from the focus group interview will be synthesized to develop the survey questionnaire.

### **Data Collection**

ANRECS Center for Evaluative Studies will draw a proportionate random sample of Michigan corn growers from the list of both members and non-members of Michigan Corn Growers Association. It is estimated that the survey will be mailed to about 1000 farmers (300 members and 700 non-members). Before mailing the survey, CMPM will publish about the upcoming marketing survey in their newsletter (if one is being mailed at that time). The cover letter for the mail survey will be signed by the CMPM representative and the surveys will be mailed from ANRECS office. The return envelopes will be addressed to ANRECS Center for Evaluative Studies. A follow up post card reminder will be mailed after about 10 days of the first mailing, and a second follow up will be made to non-respondents only after three weeks.

### **Statistical Analysis**

All data will be analyzed by the ANRECS Center for Evaluative Studies utilizing the SPSS PC+ program. Descriptive (mean, standard deviation, range, frequency, and percentage) and inferential statistical tests like correlations, regressions, Chi-square and ANOVA as appropriate, will be used to present findings. A preliminary report written in non-technical terms will be presented to the CMPM officials. Comments and suggestions will be incorporated in the final report. Two copies of the final report will be submitted to Beth Ann Stuever on or before December 1, 2000.

### **Proposed Staff**

This survey will be conducted under the leadership of Dr. Kirk Heinze and Dr. Murari Suvedi. Dr. Heinze and Dr. Suvedi have several years of experience in conducting market research. Both of them have a strong agriculture background. Dr. Heinze is currently involved in the marketing of Michigan apple and has conducted several studies related to agricultural marketing. Dr. Suvedi has developed evaluation frameworks for and conducted evaluations of numerous projects and programs. Some of the recent studies include: The evaluation of the NCR-SARE Producer Grant Program; farmers' perspectives of Michigan State University Extension; evaluation of the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network's zebra mussel outreach activities for industrial and municipal water users; an evaluation of ABC in Science, an agriculturally-based curriculum in Sanilac, Michigan; evaluation of the Groundwater Education Teams providing Groundwater Education in Michigan, (GET-GEM); evaluation of the Water Quality Awareness Program of the Cooperative Extension System; W.K. Kellogg Foundation's International Study Grants Program; an assessment of the utilization of Michigan Extension pesticide educational materials and programs; and the provision of leadership for the evaluation component of the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program as well as the implementation of baseline and formative evaluation studies for this program.

### **Estimation of Time-line:**

May 2000	Receive notification from Corn Marketing Program of Michigan of the award of market research funding to Center for Evaluative Studies. Identify 12-15 individuals representing the diversity of Michigan corn growers and invite them to participate in a focus group. Review literature to identify potential survey questions.
June-July 2000	Conduct focus group in a central location. Use results of literature review and focus group to prepare initial survey questions.
August 2000	Finalize survey instruments. Finalize sampling frames, determine sample size (estimated at 300 Michigan Corn Grower Association members and 700 non-members), Prepare mailing labels, cover letters, etc
September 2000	Mailing surveys to the sample.
October 2000	Mail follow-up post card and the second follow-up of questionnaire. Begin computer data entry.
November 2000	Submit final report with an executive summary to CMPM.

## Budget

Personnel	
Salary for .5 months of time of project leaders	3,100
Fringes (\$3100*0.318)	985.80
Undergraduate student assistance (prepare mailings, enter data, etc.). 1 students @20 hours/week for 20 weeks @ \$8/hour; 1*20*20*8= \$3200	3,200
Travel to conduct focus group interviews: room and meals	500
Questionnaire Printing, Supplies and Mailing	
1,800 surveys	540
1,000 reminder post cards	40
Supplies:	
1,700 envelopes	130
1,700 return envelopes	90
5,000 labels	50
Mailing:	
1 <sup>st</sup> mailing	
1,000 (outgoing) @ .77	770
1,000 (returns) @ .55	550
2 <sup>nd</sup> mailing	
1,000 postcards @ .20	200
3 <sup>rd</sup> mailing	
750 (outgoing) @ .77	577.50
750 (returns) @ .55	412.50
Telephone 6 months @ \$50 = \$300	300
Sub Total	11,445.80
Center's Overhead (10%)	1,144.50
Grand Total	12,590.30

**Note: The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan will provide the sampling frame of both the Michigan Corn Growers Association members and non-members.**

Funds will be handled via checks. Fifty percent of the budgeted cost will be paid upon signing the memorandum of understanding, and the remaining will be paid upon submission of the final evaluation report. The person at the cooperating agency to be contacted regarding transfer of funds is Beth Ann Stuever.

### Final Report

Two copies of the final report with an executive summary will be prepared and submitted to Beth Ann Stuever by December 1, 2000.



May 12, 2000

Beth Ann Stuever  
Purple Cow Communication  
419 North Gordon  
Marshall, MI 49068

Fax: 616-789-2333

Dear Beth:

Thank you for inviting us to submit a proposal to conduct market research for the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. Attached is our proposal.

Please note that the Corn Marketing Program office will provide the mailing labels, in electronic format, of all 16,000 Michigan corn growers from which we can draw a random sample.

Please me a call if you have questions or need further information about our proposal.

Sincerely,

Kirk Heinze, Acting Chair  
ANR Education & Communication Systems