

**Minutes  
Minnesota Sunflower Council  
Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 6:00 p.m.  
Holiday Inn – Fargo, ND**

Members Present: John Swanson, Kevin Capistran, Tom Dowdle, Tom Smude, and Greg Hilgeman.  
Members Absent: None

Others Present: Tina Mittelsteadt, John Sandbakken, Rhea Messmer and Chuck Todd

The meeting was called to order by John Swanson at 6:05 p.m.

The minutes of the September 9, 2025, were reviewed – **a motion to approve the minutes was made by Tom Dowdle and seconded by Greg Hilgeman. Motion passed.**

Tina Mittelsteadt provided the financial report for December 2025. The Council collected \$3,645.26 in check-off funds and \$8.06 in interest. We paid out \$58.95 in a check-off refund and had no expenses in December. The MSC has a cash fund balance of \$60,877.23 as of December 31, 2025.

**Kevin Capistran made a motion to approve the financial report, and it was seconded by Tom Dowdle. Motion passed.**

**NSA Board Update:**

Chuck Todd provided an update to the Council on the Red Sunflower Seed Weevil in South Dakota and the limited options for control of them.

Breeding project is on hold for now, no funding allocated for 2026. Brent Hulke did not submit a grant proposal to the NSA for 2026. The hiring situation at USDA has not improved. NSA received fewer research projects for 2026 with a total of 11 projects for the Research Committee to review.

**Candidates Update:**

Tom Dowdle and Tom Smude have agreed to run for re-election. The candidate forms and bios were submitted to the MN Department of Ag along with the grower lists for regions 1 & 2 in November. Their terms will expire June 30, 2026. The election process should be completed in April.

**2025 Crop Reports:**

Kevin Capistran reported he had a sunflower field with roll-down due to windstorm, but he was able to use some pickup fingers and pans to pick up the heads to harvest. He ended up getting 1,500 pounds where damage was severe up to 2,500 pounds where the damage wasn't as bad. Lowest yield he has had, but still better than losing the field.

Tom Smude reported he desiccated his sunflowers and ended up with 2,300-pound average yield. The desiccant was applied by drones. He will continue to desiccate his sunflowers in future years to save the yield.

Greg Hilgeman stated his sunflower crop was good this year. He was short on moisture. Sunflower yield was around 3,000 pounds and 30 bushels for soybeans. Revenue on sunflowers was double that of soybeans.

Tom Dowdle reported his sunflower averaged 2,500 pounds and test weights were 33 to 34 and all mid-oleic. His sunflowers mostly go for bird food.

**Other Business:**

None

Next Meeting: Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 8:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**Motion to adjourn by Kevin Capistran and seconded by Tom Smude. Motion Carries.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

DocuSigned by:  
*John Swanson*  
Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Signed by:  
*Tom Dowdle*  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
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