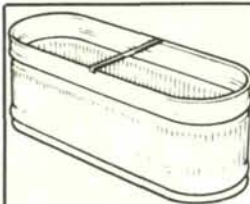




Michigan Farm News

# Rural Living

April 1982

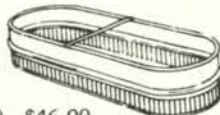


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## SHEEP TANKS



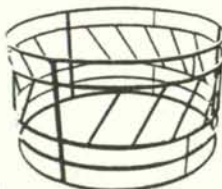
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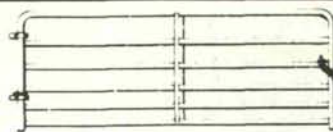
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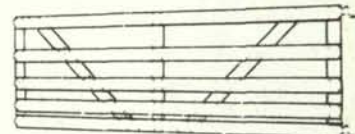
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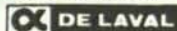
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# Rural Living

A Publication of the Michigan Farm Bureau

April 1982  
Volume 61, Number 4

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 10 Make a Plan - Work It

Good planning will be a key to surviving in the troubled farm economy.

### 12 Farm Bureau - The Leader Builder

County presidents and young farmers match their leadership skills to the Farm Bureau super stars.

### 19 Agriculture: It's Your Heartbeat, Michigan

Farmers take their story to the heart of the city on Agriculture Day.

### 21 Clearing Away the Debris

Changes and improvements in the state's Drain Code are in the works this legislative session.

### 24 Threat to Future of Gasohol

A proposal to rescind tax incentives on gasohol would damage Michigan's infant industry.

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4 Rural Route
- 5 Donna
- 6 Lansing Review
- 8 Washington Report
- 16 County Newsletter
- 26 Agrinomic Update
- 28 Discussion Topic
- 31 Market Place

### Michigan Farm News RURAL LIVING (ISSN 0026-2161)

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# Rural Route

## Reagan Praises Farm Bureau Efforts

Dear Mr. Smith:

*I want to thank you for your message and for your kind words about the programs my administration has established to bring about the economic recovery all Americans seek. Your friendship and encouragement mean a great deal to me.*

*I believe that many in Washington, over the years, have been more dedicated to making needy people government-dependent rather than independent. A new kind of bondage has been created. Regardless of how honest the intent of many of these programs may have been in the beginning, those who are meant to be the beneficiaries soon become clients essential to the well-being of those who administer the programs.*

*I am convinced that the economic package we have put into place will move our nation back toward economic freedom. We can break the cycle of dependency and deprivation and create a climate in which opportunity, and the sense of self-worth that goes along with it, is available to all. I believe that this administration came to office because the American people expected no less of their leaders. Hearing from concerned citizens like you reinforces my determination to finish the job that we have started.*

*With heartfelt appreciation and best wishes, sincerely,*

**Ronald Reagan**

I share this letter with you because it is in response, not simply to my message to the president, but for the efforts of Farm Bureau members throughout Michigan who supported his economic recovery program. He is well aware that it took grassroots action to convince Congress to accept his program



and I am very proud of the individual farmers who took the time to contact their legislators in Washington on this crucial issue.

Our job, however, is far from finished. And we must approach that job as though our economic lives depended on it - because they do!

As you read this, state and county Farm Bureau legislative leaders are in our nation's capital participating in the 22nd annual Washington Legislative Seminar. Our top priority there was to reaffirm our support of the president's economic recovery program and convince our congressmen that we were serious when we sent those anti-spending messages at the voting booths.

I urge you to review the various articles in this issue regarding the farm income situation and follow up the action of your legislative leaders by contacting your congressmen.

As your president, I have worked with several administrations in attempts to gain acceptance of our farmer-developed policies. I can assure you that this administration has the courage of its convictions regarding inflation and government spending, and

that those convictions closely parallel our Farm Bureau policies. Other administrations may have agreed, in principle, with our positions - but when the going got tough, they've buckled under political pressures.

This administration, I'm convinced, will not buckle, but there are many congressmen who, for fear of their political lives, may heed the pleadings of short-sighted, economically-illiterate people unwilling to break the cycle of dependency on government to solve their problems.

Farmers are hurting right now. There's one farm organization distributing kits on how to declare bankruptcy; there's another demanding profit for farmers from Washington. Your farm organization, on the other hand, is asking for less government "help" and urging the administration to "hang tough" against an easy monetary policy which could temporarily reduce interest rates - but would make farmers the big losers if input costs shoot up.

This far-sighted, economically astute position will make us the target of those who seek an easier - if only temporary - way out. You may be called upon to defend the farmer-developed policies of your organization, as well as shore up the defenses of congressmen against those who would abort the anti-inflation fight.

This requires no apologies - only pride and good, economic sense.

*Eileen R. Smith*

President  
Michigan Farm Bureau

*If you have a question or opinion that you would like to share in Rural Route, send it to Rural Living Magazine, Michigan Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909.*

# And the Lions Roared

"Boy, are you going to have a fun afternoon, Granny!"

I looked behind me to see who the circus ticket-taker might be addressing. Just three fleeting years ago, Santa Claus thought I was the mother of that lively, obviously-loved (though likely an afterthought), two-year-old. And just a year ago, a photographer looked just slightly puzzled (and sympathetic) when she told the wild 18-month-old to sit on his "Mom's" lap for just one moment. But there was no one behind me who bore the slightest resemblance to Granny when I, with 5- and 2-year-old grandsons in tow, entered the circus arena. It was I who was Granny.

Not that I mind; that role has been the light of my life. It's just that it came as a jolt that it was so obvious (and that was before I paid \$4 for an airplane balloon on a stick - who else but a doting grandparent would pay that?).

The lions roared... but I kept thinking: it shouldn't have been such a jolt because of the indicators I've been getting lately when the conversation turns to The Great Depression. I hasten to clarify that I don't remember the Wall Street crash, but I do remember the aftermath. I didn't know why my folks packed up our belongings and left our ranch in South Dakota for a "better life" in Michigan.

It wasn't until much later that I realized the toll it took on my Dad to give up and take a job as a herdsman for a dairy farmer here in Michigan and later live out his life as a cottage cheese maker in a milk plant.

There's a lot of farmers who recognize, more than I, the price he paid on behalf of his family's welfare. The price was not monetary. The price was the loss of pride in admitting there was no way he could make it. The price was the loss of independence, of having to follow someone else's directives and having little part of the decision-making process.

The price was giving up the daily battle with Mother Nature - sometimes winning, sometimes losing, but always the warrior (and the lions roared) - for the "protection" of four, firm, suffocating walls of a building. The price was giving up the title and power of "boss" for a steady, weekly paycheck to feed his family and pay the bills.

There are some farmers today who may be forced to pay the same price my Dad did. My heart goes out to them. But so does my reassurance. If my Dad hadn't made the decision he did, I wouldn't even be in Michigan, let alone writing this column. He's not here to read this, but somehow I know that he knows that a decision he made a long time ago did have a positive impact on down the line.

That belief keeps me striving to stay worthy of the sacrifices me made. He lived as a farmer; he didn't die as one - but I'll build on the heritage he gave me. I'll serve the farmer he always wanted to be, but gave up being - for me.

Donna Wilber is a contributing editor to Rural Living.

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**Workers' Compensation:** S.B. 715 has been introduced by Sen. Mowat at Farm Bureau's request. It is an effort to solve a serious problem several farmers have had by clarifying the meaning of "self-employed" and "contractor."

Many farmers who cut wood and logs in the winter find that most mills will not buy the product. Other farmers have had similar experiences in having to pay premiums on contracted work by self-employed people for such things as excavating, bulldozing, trucking, etc. Another example: a person owning his own combine and doing custom work for other farmers was injured and is now claiming the farmer owning the crop is liable for Workers' Compensation.

It has been a difficult problem because farmers and other self-employed people cannot buy workers' compensation on themselves. The wording for such an amendment is proving to be complex due to a 1972 Supreme Court decision.

**Payment for Milk:** S.B. 111 and S.B. 338 have finally passed the Senate after the bills were rewritten. These bills are also designed to help prevent bankruptcies of milk buyers and assure farmers payment to the extent possible. The key is financial reports that provide information on the ability to pay. This is accomplished by stricter licensing requirements. The bills are in the House Ag Committee.

**Payments for Fruits and Vegetables:** S.B. 113 has been the most controversial of the "prompt payment" bills. The bill is still in the Senate Ag Committee. It is minimal legislation requiring the buyer to pay the grower within 30 days after acceptance of the fruit and vegetables or provide a signed, written contract stating the date on or before which payment will be made in full. Other provisions provide for procedures for complaints.

**Grain Dealers Act:** S.B. 112 has passed and is expected to be signed by the governor. This legislation requires

the licensing of all grain dealers, requires financial audits, changes requirements for price later agreements, plus makes several other major changes. It should be helpful in preventing grain dealer bankruptcies.

**Farmer Highway Signs:** The State Highway Commission has reversed an administrative law judge's decision on a case involving a farmer who has a farm market on his premises and was denied a license to put a sign on his own property. The judge maintained that the land was not "contiguous" because it was bisected by a local road.

Sen. Allen and Farm Bureau prepared material to refute the decision. A letter from Farm Bureau was read into the record. The commission voted unanimously to reverse the administrative law judge. This was the first time the commission has reversed a law judge's decision.

**Right to Farm Guidelines:** New guidelines were formulated by the MDA as a result of public hearings held throughout the state by local Soil Conservation Districts. Farm Bureau has met with the department and a representative of the attorney general's office on the final draft and recommended additional changes. All were accepted. The guidelines are in good shape now and will be helpful to the implementation of the Right to Farm legislation. About eight cases are presently pending in which the legislation may be useful.

**Summer Tax Collection (H.B. 4150):** This controversial legislation has passed the House and is now in the Senate. Farm Bureau policy opposes the summer tax collection because many farmers spend large amounts of money and borrow funds at high interest and may well have to borrow additional money to pay summer taxes. On the other hand, schools have a serious problem of borrowing money for opening of schools.

Another bill (H.B. 5405) is still in the House. It would permit farmers to delay a summer tax until the regular time. It has not been acted upon.

Summer tax collection would not be automatic as the school would have to request that one-half of the school taxes be collected at that time. *Any one concerned with this issue should contact their state senator immediately as it may be acted upon soon.*

**Buckle Up the Babies:** Beginning April 1, a new law requires all motorists to insure that children up to age four be safely secured in the car. Children under one year of age must be carried in safety seats. Those between one and four must be secured in a safety seat if they are riding in the front seat; however they may be secured in a safety belt when riding in the back seat. It is claimed that 90% of child deaths in auto accidents can be prevented.

**Capital Punishment:** Petitions are being circulated to put the issue of capital punishment on the ballot for next November's election. Michigan's constitution prohibits the use of the death penalty. Any change must be made by a vote of the people.

In the past few weeks there have been two horrible mass murders of entire families in rural areas. A state trooper was murdered when he stopped a car on a simple traffic charge. Other police officers have been murdered as well as several elderly people.

L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County prosecutor, is leading the petition drive. Farm Bureau has sent petitions to community action groups for circulation if they desire. Petitions can also be obtained by writing Michigan Farm Bureau in Lansing.

**State's Budget Problems Worsen:** Gov. Milliken has recommended a program to further cut the budget by \$450 million, eliminate state employees' pay raises for 1983 (as this is written the unions have refused concessions), and increase the state income tax from the present 4.6% to 5.32%. The increased tax will generate \$160 million in additional revenue to be used to restore the General Fund and

make it possible to borrow \$500 million to meet state bills.

Beginning Jan. 1, 1983, .3% of the additional income tax would go to the transportation fund for roads and other transportation, .2% for schools and .2% to the General Fund and cash restoration.

While there would not be an increase in gas taxes and license fees for cars, there would be an increase in commercial vehicle license fees of 85%. The proposal would shift funding away from the traditional "user taxes" for roads. One problem this creates is that money from the income tax and General Fund would not be guaranteed for roads, as it is from the "user taxes," and therefore, could not be bonded against for road projects.

Farm Bureau policy, as passed by the delegate body, supports the "user tax" revenue because the constitution guarantees that 90% of the revenue will be used for roads. The average driver is paying \$5 to \$10 less toward roads than he did in 1978. This is due to less driving and more fuel efficient cars.

The state work force has been reduced by 10,000 people in less than two years. Property tax rebates to homeowners and farmers are continuing upward from \$500 million; they are expected to be \$800 million this year. Farmers are signing up in P.A. 116 at a record rate and due to low incomes are receiving a greater share of their property taxes refunded.

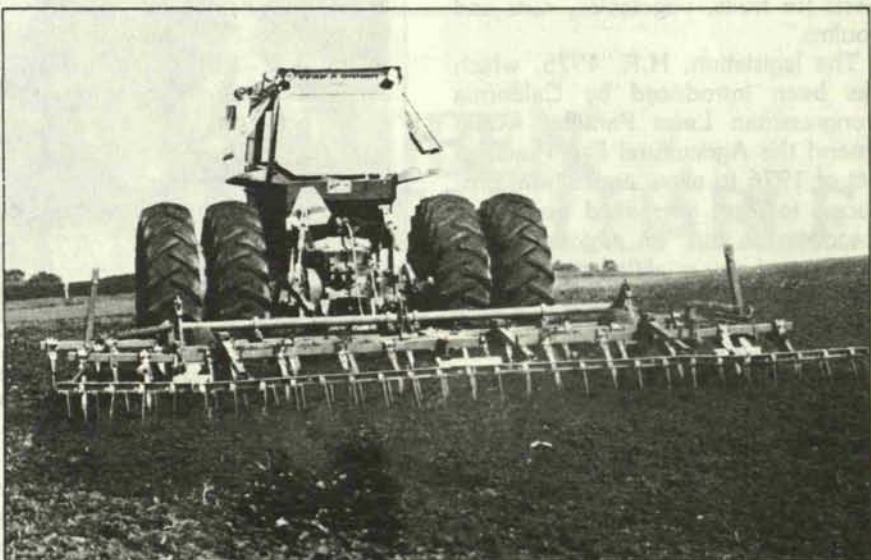
Contrary to general belief, total state revenue, as a percent of personal income, is the lowest in 10 years, almost 7.4% compared to 8.2% in 1979 and previous to that as high as 18%. Inflation, however, has dropped from a high of 15.7% in 1980 to 6% in 1982 and 8% is expected in 1983.

Federal cuts to Michigan have totaled over \$1 billion; however, federal income tax cuts to take effect this coming year will mean \$2 billion less for Michigan citizens to pay.

*Lansing Review is prepared by Robert E. Smith, MFB senior legislative counsel.*



Gov. Milliken, in his last appearance at the traditional Farmers' Week "Breakfast with the Governor," was presented with a "Right to Farm" Permit No. 1, a Farm Credit Service straw hat and bib overalls. With the governor is Larry DeVuyst, Gratiot County hog producer who serves as president of "Republican Farmers for Better Government," sponsors of the breakfast.



## Look ahead this spring



Chances are you'll be farther ahead in the long run if you'll spend more time planning and less time doing things you're used to doing, even at planting and harvest.

But humans are creatures of habit, who tend to do things they're used to doing and avoid things they ought to do, even when the payoff can be so much greater.

Look ahead this spring. Make sure your plans are in order and your course is set. You'll be a much more effective manager that way.

Look to PCA for help. A line of credit from PCA makes money available when you need it so you can concentrate more on farming and less on borrowing. The payoff is usually much greater that way.

**Production Credit Associations of Michigan**

## Members Seek "Fair Play" Legislation

### FB Seeks Bargaining Legislation

Michigan Farm Bureau members in Washington, D.C., March 29 through April 1, are telling their national representatives that producers of perishable agricultural commodities need enabling legislation that would require processors and handlers to bargain in good faith with producers for terms and conditions of sales contracts for fruits, vegetables, nuts and poultry.

The legislation, H.R. 4975, which has been introduced by California Congressman Leon Panetta, would amend the Agricultural Fair Practices Act of 1976 to allow agricultural producers to form accredited bargaining associations and to negotiate with handlers of any qualified commodity. It would also make it illegal for the handler to refuse to bargain with such an accredited bargaining unit.

Other provisions of the amending legislation would make it illegal for a handler to:

- Coerce or induce any producer from joining an association of producers or to refuse to deal with a producer because of his membership in a bargaining association.

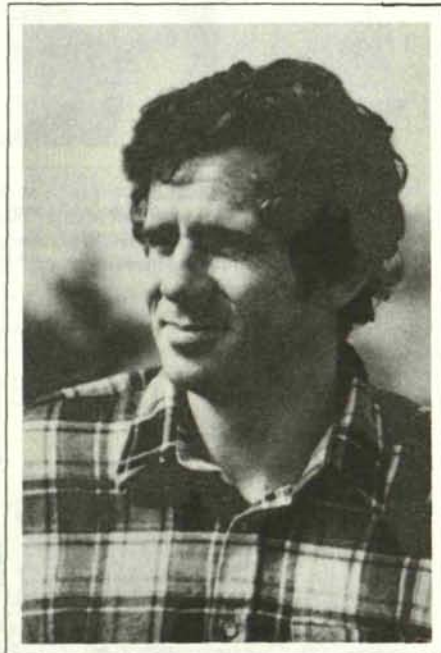
- Make false reports about the finances, management or activities of associations of producers.

- Discriminate against any producer with respect to price, quantity, quality or other terms of purchase, acquisition, or other handling because of his membership in a producer association.

The legislation would also authorize civil and criminal penalties for violations. Civil fines of up to \$100,000 may be levied and criminal penalties of up to \$25,000 or one year in prison are provided in the amending legislation.

Recently, Congressman Jim Dunn of East Lansing added his name as a co-sponsor of the legislation.

Dunn, who attended a breakfast meeting of Michigan congressmen and MFB Washington Seminar participants on March 31, told the group that "during these difficult economic times,



Michigan Congressman Jim Dunn (D-East Lansing) has added his name as co-sponsor to bargaining legislation.

we must assure that markets run in a smooth and fair manner. If we do not, farmers will remain in an unfair position in their negotiations with large handlers, who control the market.

"To see to it that guidelines are established to protect farmers, we must secure passage of marketing and bargaining legislation," Dunn said.

### Cure for Tax Inequity

Farm Bureau members are prescribing a cure for a tax inequity that has self-employed persons digging deeper into their pockets to pay for health care insurance premiums than taxpayers employed by others.

Washington Legislative Seminar participants reminded Michigan congressmen that self-employed persons are paying increasingly higher health care insurance premiums; reflecting the higher costs for hospital care, doctor fees and prescription drugs. While costs for service benefits are spread among the insured members of the group or health care plan, the cost for

self-employed persons is greater since they must bear the full cost of the premium, they said.

On the other hand, employment related health care coverage is often provided to an employee as a fringe benefit at no cost, or for a substantially reduced premium. In addition, employees are not taxed for this fringe benefit by either state or federal governments.

For the self-employed person, the tax system operates differently. Under current law, a self-employed person who itemizes expenses is permitted to deduct up to half of the amount paid for health insurance premiums to a maximum of \$150. The balance of the premium amount can sometimes be deducted when added to the taxpayer's medical expenses. In that case, only the amount of medical expense that is more than 3 percent of the adjusted gross income is deductible. Further, the self-employed person must pay income tax on the money used to purchase health insurance.

Two options have been suggested to correct the tax inequity that exists between health insurance costs for self-employed persons and employees.

First, legislation could be enacted to tax the value of health insurance premiums employees receive as a fringe benefit. No such legislation has been introduced.

The second solution, which has the support of Farm Bureau, would allow the self-employed taxpayer, as well as employees, to deduct all health insurance premiums without limit, regardless of whether or not the taxpayer itemizes deductions.

Legislation which would establish this tax equity has been introduced by Ohio Congressman Bob McEwen. The bill, H.R. 3777, is pending in the House Ways and Means Committee. Two Michigan congressmen, Guy VanderJagt (R-Luther) and William Brodhead (D-Detroit), are members of this committee.



# Evaluation Committees Looking for "Friends"

As politicians consider campaign strategies, AgriPac, the political action arm of the Michigan Farm Bureau, is also gearing up for the 1982 elections.

Fundraising activities conducted at several Farm Bureau functions have brought MFB's political action committee more than halfway to its goal of \$35,000. At the county level, Farm Bureau boards of directors are appointing bi-partisan Candidate Evaluation Committees from their memberships to help AgriPac select "Friends of Agriculture." Formation of these committees was called for by voting delegates at the 1981 MFB annual meeting.

"The committees will be asked to evaluate their legislators on the job they have done during their terms of office," said Al Almy, director of the MFB Public Affairs Division and AgriPac secretary. "The committees will also be asked to evaluate new candidates running in districts where the incumbents are retiring."

Political offices to be evaluated include state representative and senator, governor and U.S. representative and senator.

County Farm Bureau boards will review committee recommendations and send the results to AgriPac.

"AgriPac will utilize local evaluations with other factors before naming 'Friends of Agriculture' prior to the Aug. 3 Primary Election," Almy said.

## "Friend of Ag" Criteria

"Candidates make a real effort to seek the 'Friend of Agriculture' designation. It means a great deal to them," Almy said. "They appreciate the publicity surrounding our endorsement. They feel it is a reward for the job they have done to help our industry."

Criteria for the "Friend of Agriculture" designation for incumbents include:

- Voting record on major issues affecting agriculture.
- Degree of special effort to introduce, support or oppose legislation in accordance with the position of agriculture.
- Overall support of Farm Bureau policy.
- And special factors, including attend-

ance at Farm Bureau sponsored meetings, communications with farmers on legislative issues, liaison with Farm Bureau personnel on legislative developments and results of AgriPac contacts with county Farm Bureaus.

Criteria for non-incumbents include:

- Recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economy.
- Demonstrated interest in agricultural issues and possible solutions to such issues.
- Position on agricultural issues.

- Integrity and dedication to the campaign.
- Involvement of agricultural persons in the campaign.
- Results of AgriPac contacts with county Farm Bureaus.

## Many Fundraisers Held

Not all candidates who are named "Friends of Agriculture" receive financial support from AgriPac. Only those who are facing a tough election and can show financial need receive funds.

(continued on page 27)

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**Farm Bureau Services, Inc.**



# Make A Plan - Work It

By Connie Turbin

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# Good planning will be a key to surviving in the troubled agricultural economy

Make a plan and work it, is the advice for producers in the 1982 crop year from MFB agricultural economist Robert Craig. He says that producers who plan to stay in business will use every possible alternative to control their costs and minimize their losses during this critical year for farmers.

Like most Americans, farmers and ranchers find themselves in serious economic difficulty. Net farm income in real terms is expected to fall during 1982 to the lowest level since the Depression of the 30s. Agricultural indebtedness is at an all time high of \$200 billion and high interest rates have forced farmers into a severe cash flow crisis.

Interest charges on farm debts were approximately \$19 billion in 1981, an increase of 20 percent from the previous year. Commodity prices continue a downward trend due to excess supplies and the deflation that is underway in the farm economy.

"This is clearly not a time when producers of cash crops will be looking for big profits," says Craig. "For most, the best strategy will be to protect their equity and hope to break even. For others, the best management plan will anticipate a loss situation and those farmers will be working out a marketing plan to control losses at projected levels for their farm business."

## Set-Aside Program Helps

Although the USDA reduced acreage program does not offer the cash incentives suggested by Farm Bureau, he recommends farmers sign up. A decision to participate can be made later depending upon field and weather conditions, as well as market outlook.

"Agriculture cannot afford to allow production to go unchecked," Craig says, "If farmers over produce again this year, it will drive corn prices down even further and by the spring of 1983, we will see serious hemorrhaging throughout the farm economy."

Craig says he understands the hesitant response from farmers for the set-aside program. "Traditionally, farmers are pretty independent and would

much rather take their chances in the marketplace, but assuming normal weather and yields and a low participation in the set-aside, the market is just not going to support that kind of decision.

"On the other hand, if farmers sign up in the set-aside, they've locked in \$3.15 to \$3.30 per bushel corn, and that's a lot better than the \$2.00 to \$2.50 we're predicting during the next year.

"The set-aside is clearly a defensive move that will allow the farmer to protect his investment."

April 16 is the deadline for producers to sign up for the 1982 acreage reduction program for grain. Secretary Block has declared that only those who sign up and reduce the required acres will be eligible for deficiency payments, CCC loan, and/or the farmer-held reserve program. Signing up for the program does not commit producers to reduce acreage. Dates for certifying compliance will be announced later.

If 40 percent of corn producers comply, the USDA predicts that production will be reduced by about 300 million bushels and cash prices for 1982-83 should improve 40 to 50 cents per bushel.

If 25 percent of the wheat producers comply, the 1982 supply will be cut by over 100 million bushels with an estimated improvement of 20 cents per bushel in wheat prices.

Even at this level of participation, USDA is anticipating deficiency payments on wheat and corn at the rate of 30 cents and 15 cents, respectively.

## Interest Rates Devastating to Ag

Oversupply and reduced demand are crippling commodity prices but, Craig says, it's high interest rates that are killing farmers right now and stalling U.S. business in general.

"We've already seen a lowering in the inflation rate and that is a very positive move toward interest rates," he says. "At the present levels, we'll experience about a 6 percent inflation rate this year, and generally, interest

rates drop when you have lowered inflation."

Why then haven't interest rates begun to fall?

Craig attributes the sluggish response to the influence of huge federal deficit projections and poor management of the money supply by the Federal Reserve Board (Fed).

"This is really a key to the economic recovery phase," Craig says. "We're not going to see any significant recovery in our nation's economy, and consequently the farm economy, until those interest rates fall. If you listen to the key policymakers in the Fed, you realize that they've set the condition that if Congress and the president can work out a budget package that would significantly reduce the deficit, then the Fed would manage the money supply such that interest rates would fall substantially."

## Reagan's Plan Can Work

That's the fiscal and monetary policy that farmers have supported ever since they cast their vote for Reagan and his programs in 1980.

Farm Bureau continues to be one of the administration's strongest supporters for the implementation of the recovery program, and while Farm Bureau leaders have expressed alarm over the deficit projections in the federal budget, they have not withdrawn their backing from the program's basic principles.

In fact, support for the recovery program is a major component of the organization's recently announced 12-point program to improve farm incomes.

The policy statement, announced by American Farm Bureau President Robert Delano following meetings with administration leaders and officials in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, establishes short-term, intermediate- and long-term solutions for improving agriculture's economic future.

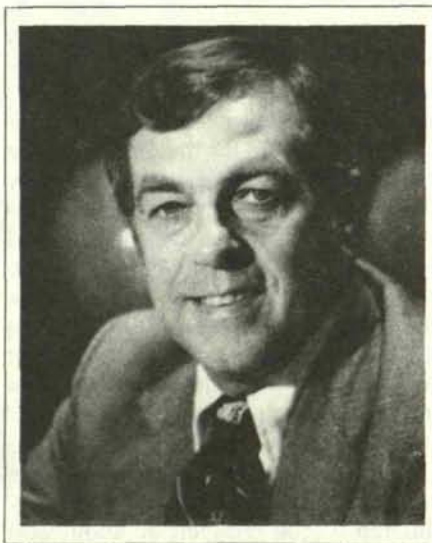
The program's short-term goals call for a change in the wheat and feed grain set-aside program to include a cash incentive for participation and for

(continued on page 27)

# Farm Bureau: The Leader Builder



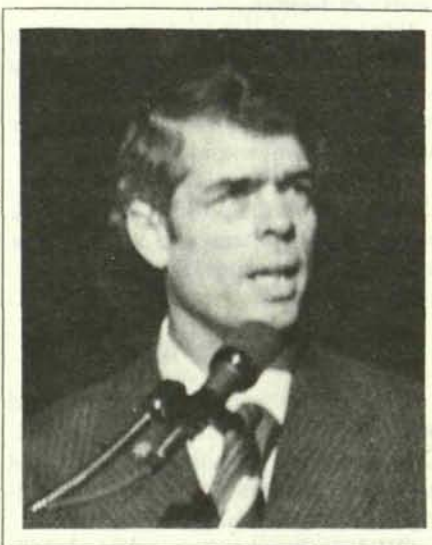
ELTON R. SMITH



ROBERT DELANO



DEAN PRIDGEON



JOHN BLOCK

Yesterday, a discussion leader in a community group; today, president of the Michigan Farm Bureau and vice president of the nation's most powerful farm organization. Yesterday, a county Farm Bureau president; today, a director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Yesterday, founder of a county Farm Bureau in Virginia; today, AFBF president, named by *U.S. News and World Report* as the most influential, non-governmental figure in U.S. agriculture. Yesterday, a member of the Illinois Farm Bureau Young Farmer Committee; today, the U.S. secretary of agriculture.

With these prestigious products of Farm Bureau's leadership training ground as illustrations, the message of "it could happen to you" was woven throughout two recent Michigan Farm Bureau leadership activities - the Presidents' Conference and the Young Farmer Leaders Conference.

## How Does Your Leadership Measure Up?

County Farm Bureau executive committees were invited to this year's Presidents' Conference, held Feb. 24-25 at Flint's new Hyatt Regency, where participants were challenged to consider: "How does your leadership measure up?"

The 162 conferees took a step toward answering that question during a special workshop on "Leadership Styles for Positive Results," conducted by Ginger Evans, president of Dynamic Concepts, Inc., and John VanderMolen, manager of MFB's Member Services Department. Participants learned how to determine the best leadership style in a given situation and how to increase their leadership effectiveness.

Other topics on the two-day agenda included an interchange with members of the state Membership Study Committee, and with Newton Allen, executive vice president and chief executive officer of Farm Bureau Services and Farmers Petroleum Cooper-

ative, who challenged the county leadership to "grow food - not just corn" in a discussion on vertical integration.

A highlight of the conference was the appearance of Robert Delano, AFBF president. Delano told the county leaders that "people like you are keeping Farm Bureau alive and growing in Michigan."

Delano stressed that "Farm Bureau families and county Farm Bureaus can do just about anything they set their minds to do, no matter how important and complicated it is - and much of the solution to large problems lies right here with you.

"That is why it is so important that you have a committed membership that is informed and has the backing of strong county Farm Bureau organizations," Delano said. "Sometimes it may be hard to see the relationship between starting a meeting on time - or having a sound county Farm Bureau budget - or having a good committee structure - and something like passing a national marketing and bargaining law.

"But the work, the finances and organizational principles that make a county Farm Bureau effective are the exact same forces that make the Michigan Farm Bureau or the American Farm Bureau most effective.

"Farm Bureau involvement is a form of continuing education. It keeps you sharp by keeping you informed on actions and issues that affect your income and your life.

"Farm Bureau encourages you to speak for yourself and to become effective in expressing your ideas. There is a lot of personal satisfaction in speaking for yourself as part of an organization that gets things done! Success in almost anything requires skill in picking the right options. Farm Bureau work lets you know what the options are - and helps you examine them.

"Your leadership as a county Farm Bureau officer or board member al-



Newaygo President Fred Folkema and his wife, Faye, were among the leaders who took a look at their leadership styles during a workshop at the 1982 Presidents' Conference.

lows you to pick the best options and to take the best action. Membership numbers provide the strength to do what needs to be done," Delano said.

Members of Congress who still do not understand the anti-spending message voters sent them in the 1980 elections "must be shown that we mean what we say in the elections this fall. In this election year, a strong and active county and state Farm Bureau membership will make all the difference," he said.

President Delano discussed the possibility of a constitutional convention to restrict federal spending authority, and recalled Michigan Farm Bureau's experience in dealing with a "con-con" on the state level.

"There are plenty of responsible people available who can - and will - come up with a practical amendment that contains workable spending limits to guide future actions of Congress. The thing is to find them, and get them elected as delegates," he said.

Chances for a constitutional amendment continue to improve, Delano said, and when it happens, Farm Bureau members must become fully involved.

"As occurred here in Michigan ahead of your state constitutional con-

vention, Farm Bureau members must devote a very great amount of time and effort to electing good delegates and through them writing an acceptable amendment.

"This could be our most important Farm Bureau project of the decade. Farm people could do the most to assure that the amendment process stays on track - as you did here in Michigan," he concluded.

### **Young Farmers Committed to Their Industry, Destiny**

"The young farmers at this conference, as well as young farmers across the state, have a solid belief in their industry," said Vic Verchereau, MFB Young Farmer Department manager, of the 185 young farmers who attended the MFB Young Farmer Leaders Conference in Midland in early March.

"They've made a commitment not only financially, but also physically and mentally, to be a part of agriculture throughout the state and it is my hope that they will continue to grow," Verchereau said.

"It is a trying time and a difficult situation for farmers and yet because of these circumstances it gives them an opportunity to grow and to progress and to be those successful types of

# Young Farmers Take Time to Get Involved

people which agriculture needs," he said.

To provide the young leaders with a means to address some of those problems, the 1982 leader conference focused on tax breaks and income savers, partnerships in farming operations, legislative issues effecting farmers, farming for profit, - not for price, and stress management.

The pressure caused by the size of today's farming operations, financial responsibilities and the risks involved in agriculture necessitate farmers being able to take control of stress and to use it positively.

"Stress can be a positive energizer or the extra push you need to get through a difficult task or situation," an expert in human resource development told the young farmers in a stress management session.

Donna Sweeny, who has conducted workshops for many farm groups in her work with the MSU Extension Service, cautioned that too much stress can hurt an individual's performance, health or relationships.

"Begin by becoming aware of what is causing your stressful feelings," she advised the young farmers and asked those attending the conference to identify major areas of stress. The audience agreed that the weather was the most stressful factor for farmers and that today's uncertain economic

conditions generated a tremendous amount of stress, especially for young farmers.

Sweeny said that to deal with stress individuals need to be very much in touch with themselves and suggested four general techniques for coping with stress: talk to someone you trust, temporarily get away from the situation causing the stress, think positively and volunteer to help someone else.

## Young Farmers Are Special

Even with the uncertainties and challenges facing farmers today, Glenn Preston, chairperson of the state Young Farmer Committee, feels that young farmers still remain optimistic about their future.

"Farmers are the most optimistic people I've ever met. My association with farmers in my local area and through Farm Bureau has given me this optimism and I'm sure that it is the main reason most of these participants are here," he said.

Preston said that those who do not take the time to get involved when they are young will never get involved. "In farming, there are a lot of demands on our time and when our businesses are young and our families are young, it is hard to pull away; but through their commitment to agriculture, their farms and to their destinies, young farmers are special," he said.

## Agricultural Leaders Honored

Four Michigan agricultural leaders received Michigan State University's Distinguished Service to Agriculture award during Farmers' Week and Natural Resources Days.

David Farley of Albion, Grant Nichol of Saginaw and Wallace and Laura Heuser of Hartford were presented with the awards by James Anderson, dean of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, during the President's Luncheon on March 25.

Farley, the owner of one of the largest landscape plant nursery operations in the Midwest, was cited for being a leader in many community organizations, as well as being a successful businessman. In addition to being president of the nursery, he has also formed a new company which operates wholesale landscape plant centers in major metropolitan areas. Farley, a member of the Calhoun County Farm Bureau, has provided leadership to the nursery industry by cooperating in valuable research projects.

Nichol, a former vice president of the Monitor Sugar Company, was recognized for his dedicated service to Michigan's sugar industry. His contributions to the state's sugar industry include the development of spacing in sugar beets, seed production and promotion of herbicide use.

The Heusers were cited for their work in developing one of the largest fruit tree industries in the world, which specializes in controlled dwarf rootstocks. As a result of their work, Michigan fruit tree technology is being duplicated around the world. They have successfully developed one of the largest fruit tree nurseries in the world, along with managing one of the largest producing orchards in Michigan. The Heusers are Van Buren County Farm Bureau members.

Two Farm Bureau members were honored during the Michigan dairy awards luncheon during Farmers' Week.

The DHIA Progressive Dairyman of the Year award went to Mel Stofer of Leslie. Frank Lepinski of Buckley, an MMPA board member, received the MSU Dairy Science Department Dairyman of the Year award.



"I don't know where you're from, but you've come," were the words of the theme song of a slide-tape presentation honoring the young farmers who came from all parts of the state to the 1982 Leader Conference.

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# Front and Center

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**Capitol Bean Dean**, co-sponsored by the Michigan Bean Commission, the Gratiot County FB Women, and the Fairgrove-Labor Day Bean Festival Committee, will be held on May 18 on the lawn of the Michigan capitol. Multiple bean dishes including dips, salads, desserts and baked beans, and bean soup from a giant soup kettle, will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

According to Jim Byrum, executive secretary of the Michigan Bean Commission, the objectives of the event are to reinforce the importance of the state's dry edible bean industry to Michigan legislators and policy makers, plus increase the awareness of dry beans and bean dishes with consumers of the Lansing area.

**AFBF farmer trade missions to Japan and the European Economic Community**, scheduled for April and May, will aim at removing barriers to trade expansion with U.S. agriculture's two largest customers. MFB President Elton R. Smith, in his role as AFBF vice president, will accompany the group of state FB presidents who will be arriving in Tokyo April 18. The farmer effort will back up U.S. government trade representatives in their current negotiations with Japan for greater market access. The other mission will be an attempt to stop EEC's use of export subsidies that disrupt U.S. markets with other nations, and other practices that deny access to the EEC market for U.S. agriculture.

**FB supports adequate funding for ag weather services:** The AFBF board of directors recently took the position that private forecasting be encouraged in areas where it is needed; that AFBF will work to ensure that the National Weather Service be retained and made available to private forecasters, and that weather needs of producers be determined and conveyed to the National Weather Service.

**State Police are warning farmers** that they could become victims in a suspected farm buildings fraud operating in rural Michigan and Ohio. After paying a sizeable down payment for construction and materials, the farm building is never erected and the purchaser's letters are unanswered. If you suspect that you have been a victim of such a scheme, contact State Police authorities, they suggest.

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## Farmers of the Week

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The Farmer of the Week program, co-sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance Group and the Michigan Farm Radio Network, honors Michigan farmers for their contributions to the community and the agriculture industry. February 1982 recipients were:

**Feb. 1** - James Robinette, 54, grows apples, cherries and peaches on 125 acres near Grand Rapids. His farm also includes a cider mill. He is an elder in his church, president of the Farm Markets Cooperative of Michigan Certified Farm Markets, township trustee, member and past president of the Kent County FB, and past director of the Michigan Horticultural Society.

**Feb. 8** - Phillip Sommerfeldt, 32, a dairy and livestock farmer from Custer, farms 680 acres with his brothers and father. He is a community committeeman for ASCS; an FBS advisory board member; and an active member his church, the Mason County FB and the MMPA.

**Feb. 15** - James Lundquist, 30, a fruit and grain farmer, farms 700 acres near Kent City, raising apples, corn, wheat and pickles. He is a Kent County FB member and an officer in the Kent City FB, past member of his church board, Lions Club member, served on the local ASCS board, and

was named Outstanding Young Farmer by the Sparta Jaycess in 1979.

**Feb. 22** - Jerry Grobbel, 39, a vegetable grower and marketer from Richmond, farms 200 acres and, with his two brothers, runs an operation that includes a retail farm market and vegetable wholesaling. He is a member and past officer of the Macomb County FB, including two years as president; served as Macomb County Young Farmers chairperson; served six years on the County Soil Conservation Board; served on various committees for the preservation of farmland; and is a member of the Knights of Columbus.



# County Newsletter

The county Farm Bureau newsletter is published monthly by the Michigan Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909. Subscription price to members, \$1.25 per year, included in the annual membership dues.

## Dances Attract Young, Not-So-Young



Berrien County Junior Farm Bureau members remember square dances and other fundraising events they conducted to finance the county's Youth Memorial Building. An alumni dance is planned for April 17.

Young Farmers and some not-so-young farmers in Gratiot, Bay and Berrien counties are welcoming spring by kicking up their heels at county Farm Bureau sponsored dances.

Dances in Gratiot and Bay counties were sponsored by the Young Farmer groups, where 450 tickets were sold out in early March. The Gratiot County Young Farmer dance boasted a country-western band and door prizes for their March 6 celebration. The Bay County dance was held March 19.

Still coming up is a square dance April 17 at the Youth Memorial Building at Berrien Springs. The dance is a special reunion for all alumni of the Junior Farm Bureau and their friends.

The Junior Farm Bureau group in Berrien County was organized during the early 40s as an organization dedicated to developing leadership of young people in agriculture.

The Junior Farm Bureau members in Berrien County initiated the planning and building of the Youth

Memorial Building at the Berrien Springs fairgrounds. The group sponsored many fundraising activities to finance the building construction, which was completed in 1953.

The planning committee for the alumni event includes Alton & Mildred Wendzel of Watervliet, James & Charlene Walter of Coloma, Verlin & Elda Mae Dillman of Niles, James & Jeanne Harroff of Niles, Edward & Barbra Kolm of Berrien Springs and Jack & Martha Roberts of Galien.

Alumni Square Dance tickets are available for \$5.00 a couple in advance or \$3.00 per person at the door. Contact any committee member or purchase tickets at any of the following locations: Greg Orchards and Produce, Millburg; Berrien County Youth Fair office, Berrien Springs; Farm Bureau Oil Co., Eau Claire; or Radewald Farms, Niles.

Dance proceeds will be donated to the Youth Memorial Building Maintenance Fund.

## Set-Aside Sign-Up Due By April 16

Farmers who wish to participate in the 1982 reduced acreage programs for wheat and feed grains (barley, oats, corn, grain sorghum) may sign up until April 16, 1982.

The program is voluntary and only farmers who participate in the program will be eligible for program benefits such as government price support loans and target price protection and the farmer-owned grain reserve and deficiency payments.

Deficiency payments will be the amount the applicable target price exceeds the higher of the national average market price or the national loan rate, times the established yields, times the acres planted.

To be eligible to receive program benefits, feed grain producers must reduce their acreage planted to feed grains (barley, oats, corn, grain sorghum) by at least 10 percent from an established base. There are two bases - corn/sorghum and oats/barley. Those who plant wheat must reduce their acreage by 15 percent to participate.

The bases were determined by taking the higher of 1981 or the average of 1980-81 crop acreages. However, if the producer has a definite crop rotation, the base should reflect it.

The farmer can change his mind anytime up until he certifies his acreage about participating in the program.

In 1981 the deficiency payment for wheat was 15 cents and barley was 11 cents - there was no payment for corn or sorghum.

The notice of bases will be mailed soon and producers have 15 days from the date on the notice to appeal their bases and their yields - appeals must be in writing and addressed to the county committee.

If you are interested in the program or have any questions, contact your county ASCS office.



## FB Members Complete First Year of Agricultural Leadership Program

Several Farm Bureau members have completed a year with the Michigan Agricultural Leadership Program. The participants recently visited Washington, D.C., and traveled to the southeast United States, exploring farm and economic policies in those areas.

Thirty farmers, 25 to 35 years old (including four women), were selected for this program from nominations by county Extension agents in 1980. The purpose is to help develop the knowledge and skills of the farmers with an eye toward more and better decision

making for agriculture in the state. Areas of emphasis are political, economic and social.

This leadership program, now under the direction of MSU Ag Economist Dr. Gene Trotter, is an outgrowth of the Kellogg Foundation program of the sixties.

Today the program is funded one-third by the participants and two-thirds by such organizations as the Federal Land Bank, Michigan Horticultural Society, Michigan Farm Bureau, Pacesetter Bank and the Production Credit Association.

## Township Program Proposed

If and when President Reagan's "New Federalism" becomes a reality, county Farm Bureaus in Michigan may have already taken a giant step toward being a dominant force in their local governments, according to Charles Burkett, director of MFB's Field Operations Division.

In a presentation before county Farm Bureau executive committees at the recent Presidents' Conference, Burkett outlined a proposed program to build member participation based on township boundaries.

Scheduled to begin on a pilot basis in three to five counties this spring, the township concept would involve key county Farm Bureau leadership who would be responsible for planning and executing approximately four township meetings per year. The township meetings would consist of discussion and action courses dealing mainly with local township or county issues.

"Townships are usually the smallest unit of government in rural Michigan - a unit that, if current trends continue, will become increasingly important to the people residing within its boundaries," Burkett said. "Farmers will be particularly impacted by township government in the future and this structure would allow them opportunities to be actively involved in solving problems that affect them.

"Under this system, county Farm Bureau boards would probably deal with more local issues and they could well become recognized as effective problem-solvers and power centers within their counties."

The program would involve the counties' Community Action Groups and Local Affairs Committees in surfacing concerns and action to resolve local problems, he said.

Vic Verchereau, Young Farmer Department manager, has been designated the project leader. An advisory committee consists of four MFB regional representatives - Bernie Bishop, Thumb Region; Becky Jeppesen, Saginaw Valley; Don Nadeau, South; and Jim Westbrook, West; and Ron Gaskill, MFB's local affairs specialist.

Pilot counties will be selected and announced in the near future.

## A Parting Message from Old Man Winter

From Sanilac County  
Farm Bureau Newsletter



Dear Friends,

I realize that, considering the last several weeks, we may not be on the friendliest of terms with one another, but I truly am here now with the hopes that I may be helpful with my off-season all but upon me.

I'd like to patch things up between us - at least for a while - with some time-honored advice, the kind that will no doubt prove valuable as my acquaintance, Ms. Spring, gears up, then yields to that "whiz kid" with the sunglasses who calls himself Summer.

You see, I'd like to point you in the right direction if you're in the market for supplies with which to tune-up or refresh your tractors, trucks, cars... well, just about anything with tires and an engine. Your Safemark dealer has

a top selection of tires and batteries on hand. Whether you're preparing for spring planting, or merely want to pump some life into a tired family auto, chances are a dose of quality Safemark goods will fill the bill.

Heck, they may even have lawn-mower batteries in stock, and you know what warm weather and rain can do to your lawn!

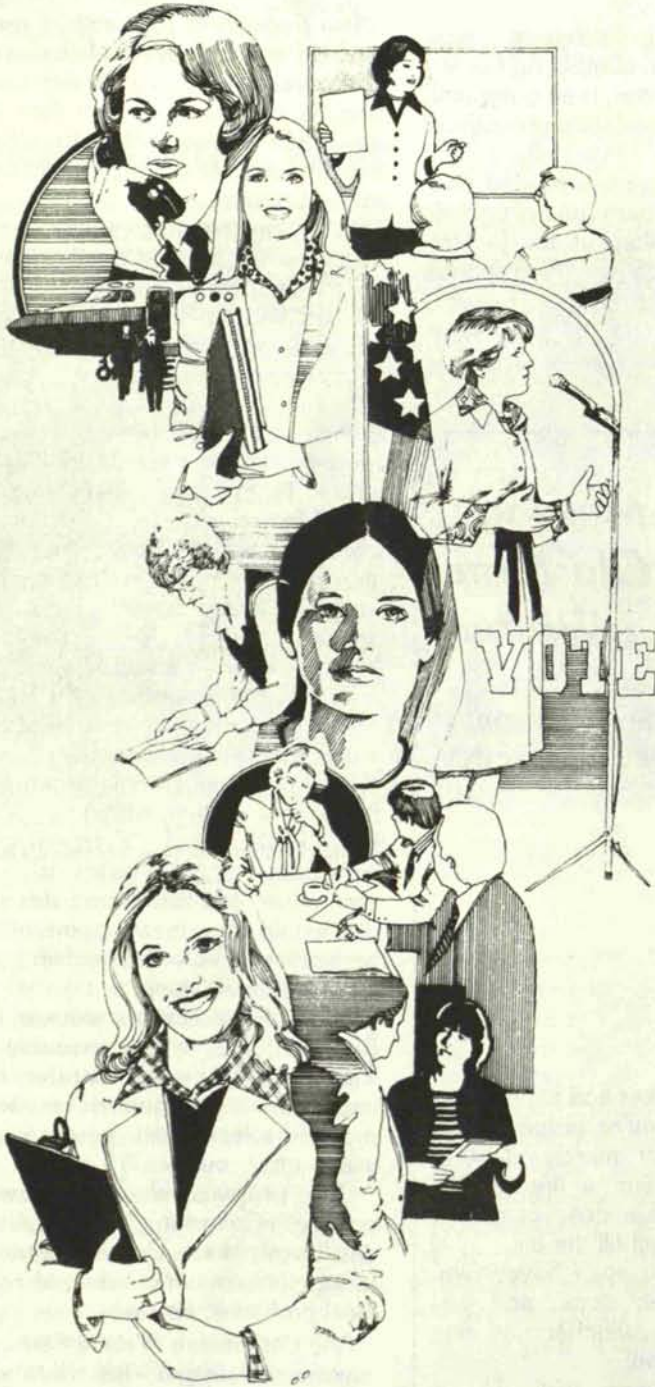
As for next year, well, I'll be frank... I cannot promise that I'll loosen my grip at all, though I'll encourage those darn meteorologists to talk less about that "wind chill."

In the meantime, stop in and see your Safemark dealer.

It'll help you forget that my show returns in just eight months!

Affectionately... Old Man Winter

# Farm Bureau Women



## They Make a Difference

- In Legislative and Political Action
- Leadership Development
- Ag Understanding
- Health and Safety

***You can make a difference, too!***

Contact your Farm Bureau office for further information.

## Agriculture:

# It's Your Heartbeat, Michigan

Members of the Michigan Farm Bureau Women's and Young Farmer committees, state board representatives, and resource people from Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, went to the heart of Detroit March 18 to celebrate National Agriculture Day with the city's key opinion leaders.

City guests at the Ag Day activity held at Detroit's Fisher Building included representatives from the Detroit-Wayne County Port Authority, SEMCOG, Ford Tractor, Detroit Farmers Club, Detroit Edison, the AFL-CIO, Parity Economics, the State Fair board, Building Trades Council, Detroit Public Schools, and a Detroit legislator. Media guests included WJR radio, WDIV radio, the *Detroit Free Press*, Channel 7-Detroit, and the Michigan Farm Radio Network.

In her welcome to the city guests, Women's Committee Chairperson Vivian Lott said, "It's difficult, during these economic hard times, to be positive about the future. It's difficult for auto workers and small business people, and it's hard for farmers, too.

"Each year, at this time, we're asked to make an act of faith in the future . . .," she said. "It takes faith and hope, labor and money, to plant seeds in the spring, seeds that will sprout, ripen and mature into commodities that will be processed for your consumption. There are many unknowns when we plant those seeds - weather, supply, demand, market fluctuations, the costs involved in planting, the prices we will receive at harvest - so it does, indeed, take an act of faith.

"Farmers are producers, but they are also consumers . . . consumers of large quantities of products produced in this city. You, our guests, are consumers of the products we require in the 'food from farm to you' process.

"It is our sincere hope that this meeting with you will represent a dif-



Joyce Foster, Presque Isle County, and member of the state Women's Committee, exchanged ideas and concerns with Detroit Public Schools representative Norman McRae.

ferent kind of planting . . . that we will plant seeds of commitment to our mutual growth, that our industries will find ways to complement each other and build a cooperation that will lead to a revitalization of Michigan," Lott said.

Guest speaker Dean Pridgeon, MDA director, told the audience that even though farmers face some of their most serious economic problems in 40 years, he remains optimistic about the future. "You have to be an optimist if you're going to be a farmer," he said. "Otherwise, you'd just get out of the business and find some other way to make a living."

The director reviewed the Governor's Conference on Agriculture, held a year ago, and said that although many of the recommendations that resulted have not been implemented yet, he believes most of the proposals will be operational within the next few years. Those proposals include development of a hard cheese plant, a soy-

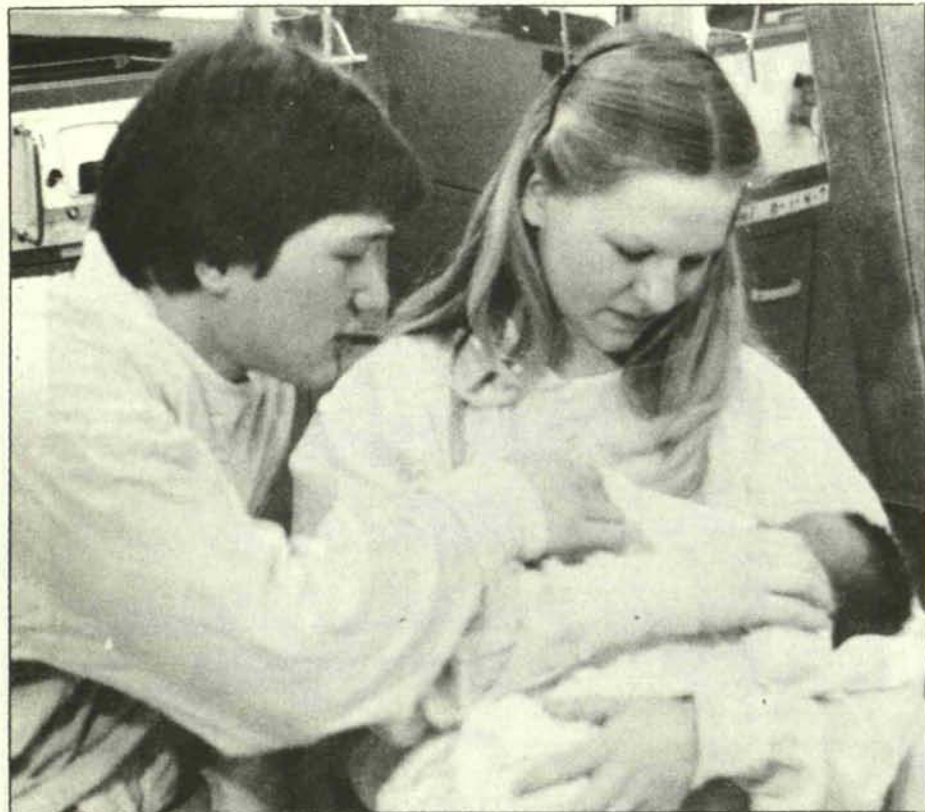
bean processing plant, and expansion of the livestock and broiler industries in Michigan.

He listed passage of a Right to Farm law, Lt. Gov. Brickley's regulatory review task force, a more reasonable approach to occupational safety and health standards, and changes in the Workers' Compensation laws as positive results from the ag conference.

"There are a lot of good things growing in Michigan," Pridgeon said. "Michigan's agricultural diversity can be credited in large measure to the variety of soils we have here, to our climate which is moderated by the Great Lakes, and especially to the abundance of water with which this state is blessed.

"Situated as we are, with major cities within easy transportation, from the East Coast to Chicago and the Midwest, I believe that Michigan can become the 'agricultural supermarket' for a significant portion of the United States."

# Bountiful Welcome for "Ag Day Baby"



Ryan Joseph, first-born son of Mary & Jim West, Grand Rapids, was named Ag Day Baby in honor of National Agriculture Day by co-sponsors Kent County Farm Bureau Women and Women for the Survival of Agriculture in Michigan (WSAM).

Dr. S. Leon Whitney, pastor of a Detroit church and chairperson of the Michigan Agriculture Commission, presented the governor's declaration of Agriculture Day in Michigan to MFB President Elton R. Smith. Whitney said that of all economic groups, farmers are the most resilient and most likely to bounce back from economic hard times.

In addition to information on how the agricultural industry impacts the state's economy, the city guests received "Good Things Growing in Michigan" bags filled with Michigan-grown products.

Besides the Detroit luncheon, many county activities were conducted throughout the state in celebration of Agriculture Day.

In Clinton County, a luncheon was held with 50 members of the St. Johns Chamber of Commerce in attendance.

In Kent County, the first baby born on Agriculture Day was named Ag

Day Baby, and the proud parents were presented with a special basket of a variety of West Central Michigan farm products.

A surprised shopper at a grocery store in Gratiot County found a gracious county delegation that paid for food items in her grocery cart.

The Bay City Chamber of Commerce honored area farmers with a breakfast on Ag Day. Also, Herb Schmidt, a long-time Bay County Farm Bureau leader and farm broadcaster, was recently appointed to the Bay City Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

A mall display at the Muskegon Mall the two days following Ag Day also told the story of agriculture to urban people. The display was sponsored by the Oceana, Muskegon and Newaygo County Farm Bureau Women.

Many other counties are planning activities later this spring to help create a better understanding of agriculture among city dwellers.

## Governor's Ag Conference Update Held March 22

Determined that the recommendations from the Governor's Conference on Agriculture would not "fall victim to complacency and become just another report on the shelf," conference coordinators and steering committee members have kept the momentum for Michigan's ag industry expansion going for almost a year.

The enthusiasm that reigned during the two-day conference held in Lansing last April was still high during a reunion of participants at Farmers' Week at MSU's Kellogg Center on March 22.

In the words of Dr. Paul Kindinger of MSU's Cooperative Extension Service and one of the conference coordinators, the update meeting was called to "bridge the time gap" since last April and inform the agricultural community of what has happened to the recommendations, what has not yet happened, and to surface new considerations in view of the current economic situation.

Agricultural leaders opened the session by listing the positive things brought about by the Governor's Conference on Agriculture.

James Anderson, dean of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said the governor's conference had brought "total agriculture together speaking loud and clear with a unified voice." Since the conference, Anderson said, the priorities identified by the governor and the Legislature had eased the erosion of the Extension and research budgets.

*(continued on page 30)*



DEAN ANDERSON

# Clearing Away the Debris

**Changes and improvements in the state's drain code are in the works during this legislative session**

*By Connie Turbin*

Would you stand by and watch your money go down the drain? Of course not, but thanks to an outmoded and cumbersome state drain code, that's just what property owners in Michigan communities are doing.

Outlays for major construction of drain projects are literally going down the drain after several years, because those drainage projects are not on a regular program of maintenance, says Rep. J. Michael Busch of Saginaw.

He acknowledges that the current drain code does provide for maintenance of drains somewhere in its 25 cross-referenced and amended chapters, but he points out that no drain maintenance fund is established to provide monies for the maintenance services required, and local administrative offices often lack adequate staff to carry out regular inspections.

Steps for correcting these inadequacies are just part of a comprehensive revision of the Michigan Drain Code he has introduced in the Legislature this year. Busch says the bill, H.R. 5424, is designed to outline practices and procedures to protect the state's multi-million dollar investment in drainage projects and ensure their wise and efficient use.

Revision of the drain code has been under study for several years and, says Busch, this legislation to revise the code is the result of nearly two years of work by a special task force on drains and consultation with the departments of agriculture, public health and natural resources. The proposal reduces the current 25 chapters of the code to 10.



**The Michigan Drain Code affects 50 percent of the state's urban population and 70 percent of the agricultural lands**

# Improper Drainage Affects Yields

"It's been 25 years since the 1819 law (Act 40 of 1956 as amended) was last overhauled," Busch says. "In the meantime, Michigan's agricultural industry has grown to an estimated \$12 billion annually, while 68 percent of our cropland has drainage needs or problems. The code also pertains to cities and counties across the state, many of which also have drainage problems."

## Drain Inventory Planned

The first steps toward a more cost-effective system of drain maintenance and needs assessment is a requirement for an inventory and summary of all drains in every county and the establishment of a revolving fund for the on-going maintenance of drainage projects," Busch says.

"We have fairly good, accurate records of drain projects completed in the last five years," he says, "and these could immediately be placed on a maintenance and inspection program to keep them operating effectively. But the real problem is that we have no solid, accurate, broad-based information about drains constructed prior to that time. We don't really know what's out there and what condition those drains are in."

"Between the years of 1972 and 1977, it has been conservatively estimated that more than \$219 million was assessed for drainage improvements around the state."

"But that figure doesn't even take into account the money spent on private farm ditching, or tiling, municipal drainage projects or road drainage."

"Money in this state is simply in too short supply to repair and rebuild drains that aren't well maintained in the first place. Nor can we afford the loss of crops that are ruined by a build up of sediment from old drains," Busch says.

Without an inventory and evaluation of the existing projects, the state's drain commissioners and landowners will too often learn about a damaged or poorly functioning drain the hard way - when water problems cause flood damage to property or cropland.

Norman J. Brown, Michigan Department of Agriculture deputy director and chairperson of the Governor's Task Force on Drains, points out that most Michigan land suitable for agricultural purposes has already been drained.

"Unfortunately," he says, "it has been the practice to construct a drain and let it remain in operation until a reconstruction project is petitioned."



REP. J. MICHAEL BUSCH

Much of the fault for this practice lies with the provisions of current law. It is a basic requirement in the existing law that there be a petition before corrective or reconstructive work on a project can be done.

"This is both costly and preventable," Brown says. "For the majority of constructed drains a maintenance program would assure its proper functioning almost indefinitely. With costs of construction for drainage projects on the rise, a maintenance program is the landowner's best hedge against a large dollar outlay for future reconstruction."

## Positive Impact for Agriculture

The drain code affects 50 percent of the state's urban population and 70 percent of agricultural land.

In many areas of the state, particularly in the southeastern quadrant, proper drainage is essential. That land area was once the Huron Lake bed and, says Brown, for farmers in those counties, drainage is the next major capital investment after purchase of farmland.

Drainage also plays a significant role in keeping land in production. Land that is improperly drained can mean lower yields and soil erosion. "If production drops off, very often this will open the way for other non-farm development," Brown cautions.

"Everyone wants maintenance (of drains)," he says, "and the inventory is the only feasible way to look at every drain and evaluate the condition of our state drainage system. Every drain that is operating properly or needs minor work will go on maintenance. The inventory will also identify which aren't working properly."

It will take at least a year for all counties to complete this inventory, according to Rep. Busch. He says that his proposal allows the drain commissioner to delegate a portion of the responsibility for the inventory and involve the Soil Conservation Districts, for instance, to compile the data required.

Under Busch's proposed legislation, once the inventory is completed and the information is evaluated, operating drains will go on to a maintenance program. As work needs to be done and as a cost factor is established for doing the work, a percentage of the cost will be assessed for that purpose.

Mindful that taxpayers are wary of additional assessments, Busch emphasizes that assessments will not be tagged to any drain that is working properly. Assessments will be made only when a problem has been identified and constructive work is required to reinstate the proper functioning of the drain project, he says.

Another significant change proposed in the code revision would allow local units of government to assess the state for the benefit it receives from a drainage project. In the past, state lands have been exempted from the benefit apportionment costs and the local government and taxpayers have shared the cost.

"In some areas, this change in the benefit assessment process can have a very positive impact. There are townships in Michigan where virtually half of the lands are state owned. If the

*(continued on page 30)*

# MASA Meeting Focuses on Labor Issues

Farmers were advised to be astute in their employment practices or pay the consequences by speakers at a Farm Labor Conference held during the 16th annual meeting of the Michigan Agricultural Services Association on March 17 in Grand Rapids.

They also heard an overview of agricultural issues being debated in Washington from Chuck Fields, assistant director of national affairs for the American Farm Bureau Federation.

**•Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act:** "We've been working with the new administration, trying to draft a bill that will be agreed to by both labor and farm employers. It appears we are fairly close to reaching agreement on it," Fields said. Under the revised act, not all seasonal workers would be classified as migrants.

**•Immigration Reform:** Proposed legislation, H.R. 4795, would place criminal sanctions against employers who knowingly employ illegal aliens. "If this passes," Fields told the group, "then we have to have a workable temporary foreign worker or guest worker program so that we can bring foreign workers in on a legal basis for temporary periods to get the crops harvested."

**•Minimum Wage:** Fields explained that no action on youth exemptions from the minimum wage is expected because of fears that attempts will be made to increase the wage if debate on the act is opened.

**•National Labor Relations Act:** Farm Bureau wants the agricultural exemption removed from the act, but favors creating special provisions in the act for ag labor, including the formation of an agricultural council. "Farm workers should have the right to organize, but farm employers should provide conditions so there is no incentive to organize," Fields said.

**•Farm Employment:** "This is a period in agricultural reform when Congress and state legislatures are gradually bringing farm workers under the same social programs as other workers," Fields said.

"Ag employers need to be better managers of labor," he advised. "Farmers who want to employ people

are going to have to learn to compete in the labor market. They need to recruit good people and then work out good programs to make them more a part of the farming operation and to get better productivity from them."

Patty Newman, a California journalist known for her investigation of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union, also had some advice for farm employers.

"Find out what is going on. Don't be above it. Learn what's bothering your workers and do what you can to better the situation," she said.

Newman also discussed the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. "We have a law in California like nobody has," Newman said. "Absolutely nobody. It's called CALRA. It allows the unions to indulge in secondary boycotts and to have access to fields during a strike."

She said the act also requires the growers to pay back wages and benefits if they are found guilty of unfair

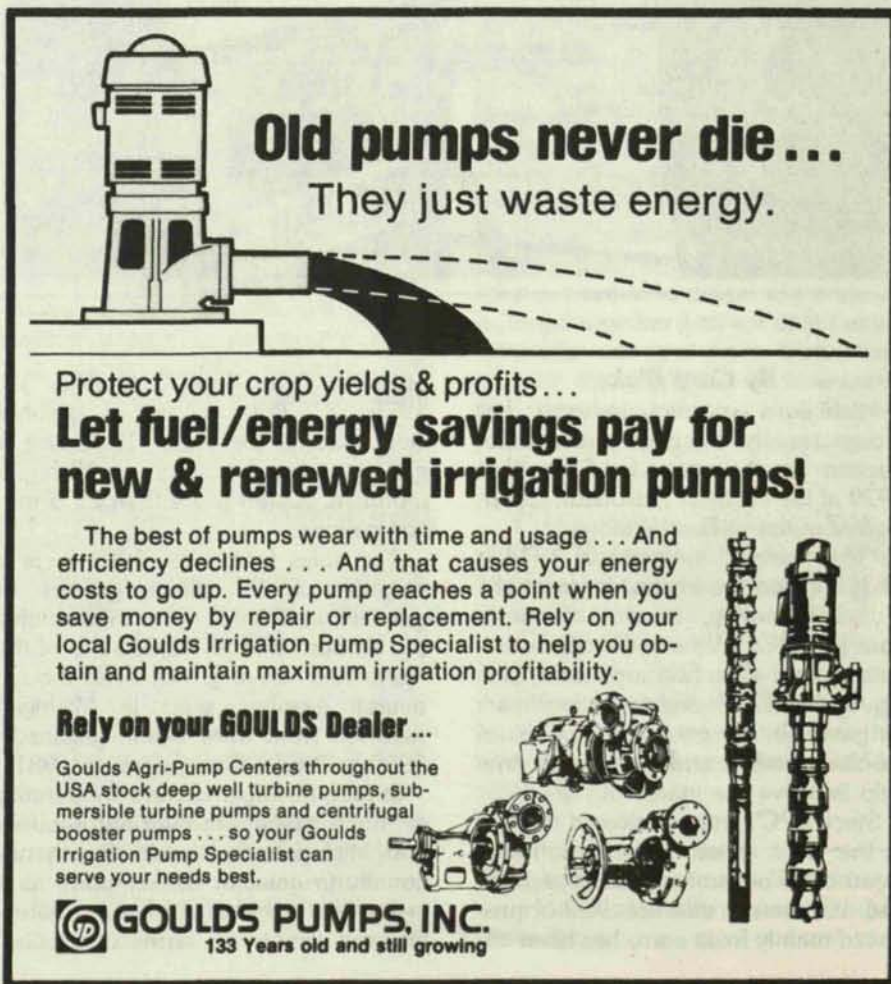
labor practice charges filed by the union.

Newman warned the Michigan farmers to watch for attempts to get similar legislation passed at the state or national level.

"I don't think I have ever met any group of more smug, more know-it-all, more complacent people, in my entire life, than the agricultural growers in California" prior to passage of CALRA, Newman said.

"The importance of Cesar Chavez is not so much his UFW union as it is his power to get legislation passed, or to keep it from getting passed," she said.

MACMA General Manager Noel Stuckman reviewed Michigan prompt payment legislation for producers of grain, dairy, potatoes and fruit and vegetables that would help reduce farmers' losses from processors' slow pay practices. But he said changes in the Federal Bankruptcy Code to guarantee growers priority as creditors is the ultimate remedy.



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# Removing Incentives Would Pose



**By Cary Blake**

Michigan's gasohol industry has grown rapidly since gasohol's introduction to the state in September 1979 at the Farmers Petroleum Cooperative outlet in Breckenridge.

"The Arab oil embargo of 1974 is what initiated the interest in gasohol," says Bill Rockey, director of operations for FPC. "We saw the opportunity to extend short fuel supplies by selling Agrihol (FPC's registered trademark for gasohol). We could sell a premium gasoline product and at the same time help improve the market for grain."

Since FPC's introduction of the fuel in the state, sales of the gasohol, a blend of 90 percent unleaded gasoline and 10 percent ethanol alcohol produced mainly from corn, has been im-

pressive. From Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, 1979, 275,000 gallons of gasohol were sold in the state. 1980 was a growing year for sales as Michigan motorists bought more than 29.5 million gallons.

The sales figures for 1981 were a surprise: 66.2 million gallons of gasohol were sold, more than double the amount sold in 1980. Sales of the "farm fuel" have grown even though overall gasoline sales in Michigan declined from 3.94 billion gallons in 1980 to 3.67 billion gallons in 1981.

In fact, Michigan drivers are burning so much gasohol in their automobiles that Michigan now ranks fourth nationally in gasohol consumption as a motor fuel right behind Iowa, California and Illinois. In terms of gasohol

sales growth, Michigan ranks second only to California.

Many of the producers involved in Michigan's gasohol industry believe that gasohol is a partial answer to our country's energy woes.

Ken Nye, energy specialist with Michigan Farm Bureau, believes that agricultural and forest commodities converted into alcohol for gasohol can play an important role in meeting our country's future energy needs. "Gasohol can be one of several answers we'll have," Nye says, "and we certainly have to look at a number of different ways to replace those energy sources which are not renewable."

Harold Lietzke, vice president of Michigan Agri Fuels Inc., says "gasohol, wood and solar are all parts of the energy puzzle." Lietzke and his 17 business partners in Michigan Agri Fuels will be opening an 8 million gallon a year ethanol production plant (the state's largest alcohol plant) this summer in Alma.

Why are so many people buying gasohol? Rockey believes that people who bought gasohol during the fuel crunch were so impressed by gasohol's performance in their automobile's engine that they continued to buy the fuel even after gasoline supplies were abundant again.

"Gasohol is a quality product," Rockey says. "It enhances starting, eliminates much of the dieseling in engines, increases the octane, and some people claim gasohol delivers better gas mileage."

Another key to gasohol's popularity is tax incentives. The Michigan Legislature passed legislation in 1980 which lowered the gas tax by five cents a gallon on gasohol, from 11 cents a gallon to six cents. Prior to the reduction, gasohol had sold for about five to seven cents a gallon more than the standard grade of unleaded gasoline. With the reduction, gasohol became much more competitive and sales increased accordingly.

The five cent reduction is scheduled to be phased out by 1985. For the remainder of 1982, the five cent exemption will remain intact. However, in 1983, the state gas tax on gasohol will



# Threat to Future of Gasohol

climb from six cents to eight cents, from eight to nine cents in 1984, and back to its regular tax rate of eleven cents a gallon in 1985.

There is an effort to delay the entire gasohol gas tax phase-out period, according to Vince Parris, energy coordinator with the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Parris says the Michigan

11 cents per gallon to 11 percent per gallon, in an effort to increase road revenues for road and bridge repair.

"Whatever happens with the gas tax on gasohol, Michigan is not alone on the gas tax exemption of gasohol," Parris says. "Thirty-seven other states have reduced the gasohol tax. Only Maryland has repealed its rate reduction for the fuel."

There are two other major incentives in the complex gasohol picture. The first is the current exemption of gasohol from the four cent a gallon federal excise tax. The second incentive, which is for alcohol producers, allows a ten percent energy investment credit for those people who construct alcohol fuel plants.

The two latter incentives are now under fire by the U.S. Treasury Department. In an effort to pump up federal revenue, the Treasury Department has recommended that Congress phase out these two tax incentive programs. Energy Department officials estimate that the plan could increase revenue by nearly 2 billion dollars in five years, although Treasury Department officials say the amount may be substantially less.

News of these federal proposals has angered Lietzke, who views the proposals as short sighted. Lietzke says that "the tax incentives were made so that an alcohol industry could develop, and now they want to change the rules." The federal gasohol program, says Lietzke, "is based on credits which are no different than the credits that go to roads, airlines, and railroads." In some respects, he says, the gasohol credits are subsidizing the consumer by giving them a quality fuel.

How would the 8 million gallon alcohol plant in Alma be affected if the two federal gasohol incentives are eliminated? "In the short term, it would create serious problems," Lietzke says. "The price we have planned to sell our alcohol is based on those credits."

Rockey believes that the elimination of the investment tax credits could very well have an effect on whether an alcohol plant is built or not. "If the four cent excise tax is eliminated, it puts an

altogether different picture on the economics of gasohol," Rocky says. "If it is eliminated, gasohol would not be competitive."

Michigan has one large scale alcohol production plant (above 500,000 gallons a year) in operation. Food and Energy Incorporated, Litchfield, produces about 1.5 million gallons of ethanol alcohol a year. However, with an estimated production capacity of 8 million gallons of ethanol a year, the Michigan Agri Fuels plant will become a large volume producer when it goes into operation this summer.

There are currently seven alcohol production plants being developed in our state. Key to their final development is the question of whether the two federal gasohol credits will be adopted.

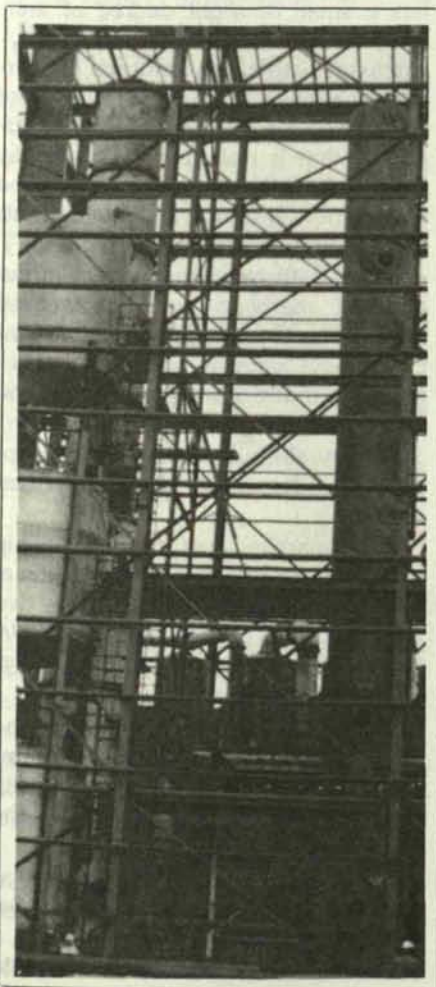
What are the chances that the two gasohol cuts will be enacted?

"The impression that I get from Washington is that they will not pass," says Parris. "There is a letter in the House Ways and Means Committee that calls for the dismissal of the proposed cuts. The letter is sponsored by committee members Cecil Heftel of Hawaii and Joseph Duncan of Tennessee. Congressman Guy VanderJagt is on that committee."

John Graykowski, legislative assistant to Sen. Don Riegler, says that what is needed to defeat the proposal is "to get together with a number of the influential senators from farm states and let them tell the administration that the revenue savings from the proposed cuts cannot be large enough to justify losing our viable gasohol industry."

"I don't believe the cuts will fly," predicts Parris, "but the damage will have been done in terms of the time it will take to defeat the proposal, in terms of the financial community feeling a lot more hesitant about investing money into an alcohol fuel project and because of the uncertainty that has been raised again in this infant industry."

*Cary Blake works in the Broadcast Services Department of the Michigan Farm Bureau.*



The Michigan Agri Fuels plant at Alma, with an estimated capacity of 8 million gallons of ethanol, is expected to go into operation this summer.

Alcohol Fuels Association wants to move the whole phase-out time frame back two years.

Another area, Parris says, which could change the current gas tax on gasoline, including gasohol, is the package of bills in the Legislature sponsored by Rep. Mary Brown of Kalamazoo. One of the bills, Parris explains, would change the gas tax from

## New Beef Grade Standards Proposed

Proposed changes in the official U.S. beef grade standards would allow leaner beef to qualify for Prime and Choice cuts, but according to the USDA, these changes would not significantly lower the palatability of either grade. Beef in the Good grade would be leaner and, it is believed, would have lower palatability.

Recent production and consumer preference studies have shown that a leaner beef product would be more acceptable and beneficial to consumers, processors and producers. The proposals for revising the existing standards reflect this research and the current consumer trends. The existing U.S. grading standards for carcass beef and slaughter cattle were last revised in 1976.

The USDA proposal currently under consideration would provide that:

- The minimum marbling requirements for animals in the "A maturity" (cattle up to approximately 30 months of age) would be reduced. Marbling requirements for the Prime grade would be "minimum moderate," the Choice grade "typical slight," and the Good grade would be "minimum traces." All young beef not meeting minimum requirements for the Good grade would be graded Utility, thus eliminating the Standard grade.

- The rate of increase in marbling requirements in the "B maturity" (cattle about 30 to 42 months of age) would be doubled.

- Quality grade requirements for bullock beef also would be changed so they would still be the same as those for steer, heifer and cow beef in the "A maturity." Bullock beef would still be identified for class.

- The related standards for grades of slaughter cattle would be changed to reflect changes made for grades of carcass beef and no changes would be made in yield grade standards.

The National Cattleman's Association has given considerable study to

this matter and also supports a change in grade standards.

NCA supported research that shows that fat thickness is the best indicator that cattle have been fed grain. It has an impact on palatability. Research shows that exterior fat tends to result in greater edibility and palatability than marbling.

The Iowa Cattleman's Association also has a proposal that would continue the same marbling requirements that are now in effect for the Prime grade; tighten the Choice grade; and create a new grade between Choice and Good.

The USDA proposal does not recognize the NCA recommendation that "A maturity" carcasses with slight amounts of marbling be graded Choice if they have at least 0.3 inches of fat thickness over the 12th rib and external fat that is not more than slightly yellow.

The USDA did not include these items in its proposal because it believes the additional criteria would be difficult for graders to quickly determine and would slow up the grading process. However, USDA admits that fat thickness is determined in yield grading.

American Farm Bureau policy for 1982 concerning beef grades is as follows: "We support amending U.S. beef grade standards to modernize the grades according to the latest research data to provide a leaner, more acceptable product that will benefit consumers, processors and producers."

At a recent meeting of the AFBF board, directors voted to support the USDA's proposed changes in U.S. beef grade standards with the following minor revisions:

- Prime grade would remain the same as the present standards. (This should satisfy the restaurant trade which has expressed concern that the USDA proposal will lower the quality of Prime causing dissatisfied customers.)

- Narrow the marbling in the Choice grade to include only beef with a

moderate to modest degree of marbling. (This would provide consumers with more consistent quality in the Choice grade than the present standards).

- Provide a new grade for beef that has a small or slight degree of marbling. (It would include "A maturity" carcasses with slight amounts of marbling that have at least .3 inches of fat thickness over the 12th rib and external fat that is not more than slightly yellow. It has been suggested by the Community Nutrition Institute that this grade could be called "USDA light.")

- Beef with traces or practically devoid of marbling would be called Good. This Good grade would also include beef with a slight degree of marbling that does not qualify for the proposed new grade.

- Utility should continue to be applied to older cattle. This will prevent confusion.

- The marbling-maturity relationship should be set for "B maturity" cattle at a one for one ratio. It is believed a two for one ratio as proposed by the USDA would work a hardship on heifer feeders and packers.

AFBF also supports retention of the present USDA yield grading system. Beef in the proposed new quality grade should also be yield graded, the board said.

Michigan Farm Bureau has submitted comments to the USDA which support the AFBF position. After a series of hearings which were held across the country during February and review of the written comments, USDA officials will review and analyze this material and make a decision regarding the proposed changes.

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*Agrinomic Update is prepared monthly by members of the Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity Activities and Research Department, Robert Craig, manager.*

# Member Efforts Boost AgriPac

(continued from page 9)

Funding for AgriPac comes not from Farm Bureau members' dues, but from individual contributions by members and through various fundraising drives.

At the 62nd MFB annual meeting last December, 246 members paid \$15 each to attend the annual AgriPac Breakfast. They heard a distant relative of Abraham Lincoln's mother, Bruce Hanks, who closely resembles Lincoln, give a moving speech entitled "Lincoln Speaks Today."

In January, Washtenaw County Farm Bureau Women held an auction and raised \$410.

More recently, \$2,001 was raised during an AgriPac Auction at the 1982 Young Farmer Leaders Conference in early March. Conference participants purchased "Bogus Bucks," which were worth 100 times the cash paid, to bid on donated items ranging from pie filling to toy trucks to an electric heater.

During an exciting bidding contest, auctioneer Don E. Wegner of Free-

land got a final bid of \$10,900 (\$109) for a toy International Harvester 2 + 2.

Another high bidder paid \$18,500 (\$185) for the sign from last year's Young Farmer AgriPac Auction because "it is for a good cause."

The state Young Farmer Committee, which surpassed its AgriPac fundraising goal by \$1.00, has challenged the state Women's Committee to raise more than \$2,001 during the Farm Bureau Women's Leader Conference to be held in September.

District 6 Farm Bureau Women held an AgriPac fundraiser at their district rally on March 11. The women raised \$415 at a bazaar; items sold included baked goods and many handmade items.

Individual Farm Bureau members are also encouraged to contribute to AgriPac. So far, members have donated \$6,141.21 by adding a contribution when paying their dues.

Members who donate \$200 or more are given an AgriPac Ambassador pin and special recognition at the annual



Items on display at the Farm Bureau Women's District 6 Rally were donated by county Farm Bureau Women for an AgriPac Bazaar.

AgriPac Breakfast. Members who donate \$100 to \$199 receive an AgriPac Diplomat pin. Those who give \$50 to \$99 earn an AgriPac Supporter card.

## Program Aims for Improved Farm Income

(continued from page 10)

assurances that the farmer-held reserve will be used as an orderly marketing tool, not a quasi-government storage program to limit market price opportunities for farmers.

Intermediate actions that call for cooperation of producers and government include:

- Support of the economic recovery program. Farm Bureau members in Washington, D.C., March 29 through April 1 are expected to tell their elected representatives that farmers are beginning to see some of the results of the fight against inflation. Input costs are expected to rise only 5 to 8 percent this year, compared to 8 to 10 percent in 1981 and 15 percent in 1979-80. They will also call for a reduction of about \$50 billion from the projected 1983 budget deficit of \$92 billion.

- Guaranteed grain delivery. The organization will work for passage of leg-

islation guaranteeing that grain purchased by foreign buyers scheduled for delivery within 120 days will not be embargoed for any reason short of war.

- Funding of the Commodity Credit Corporation's export revolving fund will help U.S. grain compete in world markets and expand new markets.

- Agriculture is asking for a "fair share" of Export-Import Bank financing for agricultural imports. At present, farm exports represent 25 percent of the U.S. export trade. Proposed legislation (H.R. 4510 and S. 1852) would mandate that a share of Export-Import Bank resources be devoted to financing export of ag commodities based on the ratio of agricultural exports to total exports.

- Over production and long-term storage should not be encouraged by a subsidized storage program. Farmers should be encouraged to properly use storage as an essential tool for profit-

able marketing. If the USDA farm storage loan program is continued, Farm Bureau proposes, the costs should not be subsidized.

- Farmers need information and resources that will demonstrate the need to keep production in line with demand.

- Cutting the costs of production and marketing is still important for improving farm income. Farmers, and those who serve them, should be watching for every cost cutting opportunity at the farm level.

Long-term goals would end the farmer-held reserve and encourage developing nations to build storage facilities in order to take advantage of abundant supplies and favorable price situations. In addition Farm Bureau has called upon government and U.S. farm groups to work cooperatively to expand international markets, with particular emphasis on those developing countries that have rapidly rising per capita incomes.

## Acid Rain an Environmental Question

There's something in the air... it falls on fields and gardens, on buildings and statues. Where it came from is difficult to determine. What effect it will have on the future is elusive.

This thing is acid rain, which may become the environmental issue of the decade. Common everyday rain, which nourishes us and other plant forms, is accused of affecting water, killing fish and vegetation. Reportedly, there is also acid snow, acid smog, acid fog and dry acidic particles which settle to the earth.

Unfortunately, the subject of acid rain is an issue on which scientists, reports, studies and individuals tend to take opposite sides. This article may illuminate the issue sufficiently to provide you with a general understanding of the subject.

The term "acid rain" implies a naturalness and danger. It creates fear in many people. The term conjures up images of destruction and damage beyond anything documented to date, but a closer look at this natural phenomenon shows that much of the new "evidence" is controversial and considered by many to be speculative.

We cannot ignore the possibility that there may be environmental and ecological damage due to the cumulative effects of acid rainfall over many years, but neither should we be ready to acknowledge yet another "menace" without careful and reasonable scientific study.

Acidification of air, earth and water occurs continuously, rain or shine. Acid fallout results when sulfur and nitrogen oxides combine with water to form sulfuric and nitric acids. Major sources in various parts of the country are reported to be coal-burning industries, but smelters, factories and motor vehicles also contribute in certain areas.

Chemists use pH as the system for expressing the acidity of water solutions in terms of the concentration of hydrogen ions. The lower the pH, the greater the acidity. Acid rain is generally defined as rain whose pH level is lower than 5.6. This reading is com-

pared to a pH of 7.0 which is neutral, being neither acid nor alkaline.

Chemicals are part of every living plant and animal, and many of these chemicals are acidic. In our vocabulary "acid" often implies unpleasantness. But acids are not necessarily undesirable or a hazard to life.

Amino acids are the building blocks from which the human body makes protein and other tissues. Ascorbic acid, better known as Vitamin C, is one of the dietary essentials. Citric acid gives oranges, lemons and limes their familiar tang. Malic acid gives apples their characteristic taste.

Tomatoes are acidic, but most people are surprised to learn that a pear can be more acidic than a tomato or that bananas and carrots are nearly as acidic. All of these have pH values well in the range of acid rain.

Designating pH 5.6 as the divider between acid and clean rain does not always appear to be realistic. It does not take into account chemically active materials naturally found in the atmosphere. Observations from researchers in many parts of the world show that the acidity in rain varies widely. Most reported readings were below pH 5.6. Recent analysis of the ice pack in Antarctica shows the precipitation there has not varied much from a value of pH 4.8 over the last 380 years.

Chemists have several ways to measure the acidity of solutions. Some of these methods can get different results. Furthermore, for some of the simpler methods, there is evidence that the pH values from different laboratories do not always agree with each other. Consequently, comparing reports from different sources using different methods can lead to erroneous conclusions about trends in acid precipitation.

Recent research indicates that the average precipitation in most states east of the Mississippi has a pH reading of between 4.0 and 5.0 with some storms having pH values lower than this. But it must be remembered that a thunderstorm is a familiar example of acid rain as a natural phenome-



non which has been going on for a very long time. Lightning's contribution to the acidity of rain has been calculated by several investigators and ranges from 4 to 50 pounds of nitric acid per lightning stroke.

Research indicates that the major components of acid rain are sulphuric acid and nitric acid. These components, in excessive amounts, could have an effect on seed germination and reproductive cycles. Agricultural productivity has been said to be harmed by acid rain. But, the evidence supporting these claims are from experiments with artificially high levels of acidity.

The most important aspect of climate in estimating the potential effects of acid rain is the amount and frequency of precipitation. The make-up of the earth's surface soils, from bedrock to depth of the soil, can make a difference in the amount of run-off. The location and depth of bodies of water can determine the effect of high acidity.

The type of plants and trees in an area, their height, and whether they are deciduous or evergreen, can have a part in the potential effect of acid rain. But there is no confirmed evidence that the acidity of rainfall in the natural environment has a detectable impact on trees or plants.

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acid rain focuses on the effect of acidity on lakes and streams and the fish they contain. As the acidity of water increases, the fertility of fish eggs is impaired, followed by reduced ability of the eggs to hatch. But it is not known if acidity alone is the primary factor in having a healthy fish population. Studies point to calcium content of the water as important for fish survival, possibly even more important than pH levels.

Research is being conducted by private industry, governmental agencies and international agencies in an attempt to unravel the puzzle surrounding acid rain. The research effort is massive and expensive. Despite the professional optimism of scientists and administrators, no one expects the answers soon. Many now believe it will take another five years of collecting and analyzing data before there is enough information and enough understanding of acid rain to permit the writing of intelligent, effective new laws and recommendations.

International relations are also affected by the acid rain controversy. The U.S. and Canadian governments have embarked on a joint effort to stave off disputes over the significance of emissions from Midwestern power plants and rain which falls on the Canadian provinces along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The two nations are working toward a bilateral agreement designed to "develop measures to control transboundary pollution," with acid rain as a major item in those negotiations.

It is too early to predict that the feared consequences of acid rain are unusual and will never be proven, but it is also too early to resort to corrective actions without evidence of their probable effectiveness.

### Discussion Questions

- From where should the funds come to research the effect of acid rain?
- To your knowledge, has there been any effect of acid rain in your area?
- What corrective measures should be taken if acid rain is indeed a hazard?

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# Much Work Ahead on Drain Code Revision

(continued from page 22)

state can be assessed for its share of the benefit from a drain project and for maintenance costs, then it will reduce the dollar burden to the local unit," Busch says.

## Appeals Process Improvements

Major drain construction projects cause concern among citizens and these concerns and objections often result in court cases. In the proposed revision, any of the of the parties involved have the opportunity for appeal of any substantive or procedural grievance to a state Board of Drainage Appeals.

"Just from a practical standpoint," Busch says, "the establishment of an appeals mechanism should serve two purposes: It should speed up the process because under the present system of appeal through the courts, a project can be delayed by litigation for years. In fact, it has been used many times as a delaying tactic by the parties involved in a dispute.

"The second benefit would be in substantial cost savings to the persons involved because the minute you file a petition in court, you're talking about securing expert witnesses, attorneys and other costs that the landowner

would have to bear as a result of his petition to intervene."

There is also a provision in the proposed appeals system that requires the petitioner to post an appeal bond.

"I think this is only fair," Busch says. "Public officials seem to spend an inordinate amount of time providing testimony, whether it's for a legitimate purpose or on the whim of others. This requirement for a bond would stop some of these frivolous claims."

Busch expects good support for the proposal, but he says that any legislation proposing revision of a major body of enacted law will not be approved overnight.

"First, we have to build an awareness of the problems in the existing law and educate the public and their representatives in the Legislature about the steps our proposal will establish to correct these problems," he says.

The task force chairperson agrees. Brown advises farm people to become aware of the issues involved in revising the drain code and to look at the legislative proposal for the benefits it provides and at what it takes away.

"What we have is a working document for change. Now is the time for interested persons to analyze this

legislation without the pressure of an impending legislative vote and to make their needs and concerns known to their elected representatives."

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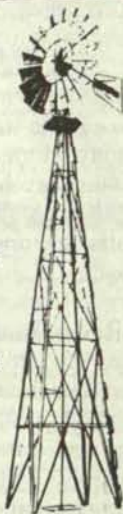
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# Ag Conference "Update"

(continued from page 20)

Dean Pridgeon, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, reported that attitude changes on the part of the governor, the Legislature, chambers of commerce, investors, and the general public, have been a major benefit of the governor's conference for the MDA. There has also been a recognition by other state government agencies that agriculture is a viable industry, making for a closer working relationship and bringing about "a unity that will pay great dividends," Pridgeon said.

Rep. Lewis Dodak, chairperson of the House Agriculture Committee, said passage of some bills, and others currently in the legislative hopper, could be directly related to the governor's conference. Development of the Right to Farm bill, for example, began

in 1978, and if it had not been for the governor's conference, he said, "we would have had a much tougher time getting it passed."

Rep. Gary Randall and Sen. Dick Allen reported on a local pilot project in Gratiot County, where committees of farmers and business people are actively investigating the expansion of agriculture and agribusiness in that area. A slide-tape presentation is being developed by the group, highlighting the agricultural industry in Gratiot County, and will be made available to the public in the near future.

Individual committee meetings were held for updates and input on recommendations dealing with cash crops, dairy, agricultural technology, forestry, horses, horticulture/ornamentals/turf, livestock and poultry, and processing and food distribution.

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