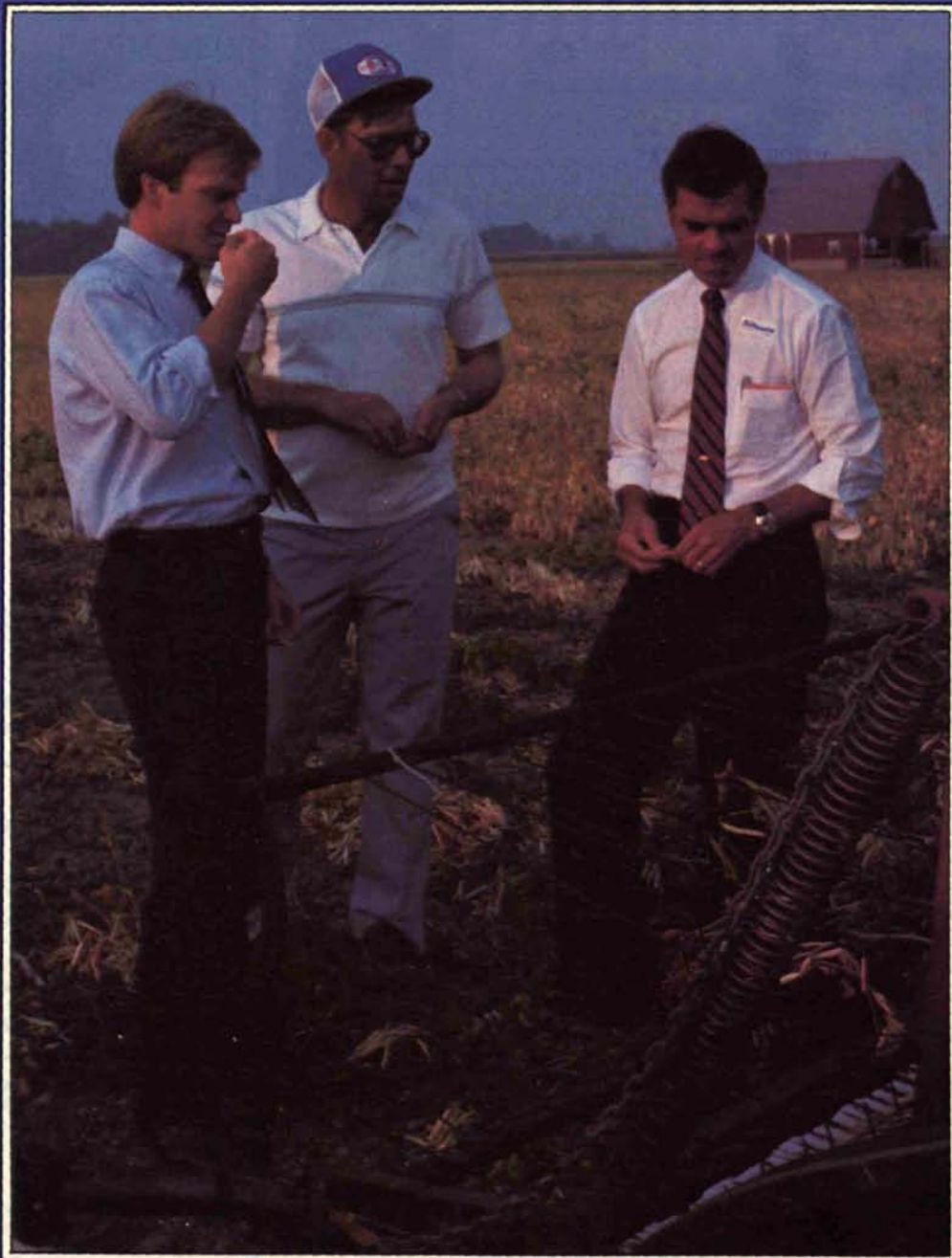


Michigan Farm News

# RURAL LIVING



**Block on Campaign Trail for  
“Friends of Agriculture”**

A Publication of the Michigan Farm Bureau • October 1984

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®37106	\$4.70	4 x 1 1/4 x 5/8	15,000	C24
37115	\$2.11	4-1/2 x 3/16 x 7/8	13,300	A24R
37116		4-1/2 x 3/16 x 7/8	13,300	A24R
37117		4-1/2 x 3/16 x 7/8	13,300	C24R
37118		4-1/2 x 3/16 x 7/8	13,300	C24R
®37156	\$2.11	4-1/2 x 1/8 x 7/8	13,300	A24
®37157		4-1/2 x 1/8 x 7/8	13,300	A24
37125	\$2.14	5 x 1/4 x 7/8	12,000	A30S
37126		5 x 1/4 x 7/8	12,000	A30S
37127		5 x 1/4 x 7/8	12,000	C24P
37128		5 x 1/4 x 7/8	12,000	A30S
37129		5 x 1/8 x 7/8	12,000	C24P

# RURAL LIVING

## FARM NEWS

A publication  
of the  
Michigan  
Farm Bureau

### Michigan Farm News RURAL LIVING



Block on Campaign Trail for  
"Friends of Agriculture"

OCTOBER 1984  
VOL. 63 NO. 10

#### THE COVER

USDA Secretary John Block visited Rex Crumbaugh's Gratiot County farm in August to campaign for "Friend of Agriculture" Bill Schuette.

Cover photo by Cathy Kirvan

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## Be a Pridgeon Campaigner

In a few weeks, in the privacy of the voting booth, you'll be making some crucial decisions. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of farmer members who serve on AgriPac and the county candidate evaluation committees, you'll be better prepared to make those decisions than most voters.

The average voter has neither the time nor the opportunity to review the voting records of candidates, interview them to surface their philosophies, look beyond their political smiles and hearty handshakes, and analyze whether their campaign promises are rhetoric or sincere. That job has been done for you by volunteers who contributed long hours of study and discussion. You can take the "Friends of Agriculture" listing (on page 31) into the voting booth with you with the assurance that these candidates passed a tough test to earn the title of friend.

There is one candidate on the listing of "Friends of Agriculture" that AgriPac doesn't have to "sell" to farmers, especially Farm Bureau members. Dean Pridgeon, candidate for MSU's Board of Trustees, is known and respected by farmers throughout the state as a progressive farmer and as a statesman.

During the 13 years he served as vice president of the Michi-



Promoting agriculture whether to fairgoers (left), the state Legislature or customers overseas, has always been a top priority for Dean Pridgeon.

gan Farm Bureau, he earned a reputation as an effective, dynamic agricultural leader. That leadership was recognized when he became the first farmer ever appointed to the Natural Resources Commission and later when his fellow commissioners selected him to chair that body.

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**Every farmer knows the vital importance of having agricultural representation on the governing board of our land grant university.**

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His years of service as director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture provided him with the opportunity to fully utilize his leadership and administrative skills, as well as his agricultural spokesperson talents.

Every farmer knows the vital importance of having agricultural representation on the governing board of our land grant university. As a result of Tom Reed's election in 1980, agricultural programs at MSU

have benefited significantly, but he is currently the only person on the MSU board with an agricultural background. With Dean Pridgeon to help him, Michigan agricultural industry, and the total economy it impacts, will benefit.

Too few voters recognize the importance of this political office or study the qualifications of the candidates. **You** know the importance of agricultural representation on MSU's Board of Trustees and **you** know Dean Pridgeon is the person for that job. Share that knowledge with a voter who may not know.

If I were limited to one word to describe Dean — as a farm business person and throughout his years of public service — it would be integrity. It is that integrity that can cross political lines and make him the people's choice for this important role.

Become an active "Pridgeon for MSU Board of Trustees" campaigner. Integrity isn't hard to sell!

*Elton R. Smith*

Elton R. Smith, President  
Michigan Farm Bureau

# Serious Business, But — Have Fun Doing It!

By Donna Wilber

"It's easy for people to forget all the many member benefits when it comes time for them to pay their dues, but when they see a group of people having fun together, they don't forget that!"

That quote from Monroe County FB leader Jim Van Buskirk (see page 18) brought back memories of past membership campaigns that, in retrospect, seemed to be more fun than they are today. I recalled the year that, during a membership contest with our neighbors from Ohio, FB Center (then located on North Grand River Avenue) was "bombed" by an airplane dropping messages avowing certain victory over Michigan.

I'm too young to remember the time Michigan's delegation disrupted the AFBF annual meeting proceedings with a wild, yet inspirational, membership demonstration, but I am old enough to remember Chubby Chicken who perched from trees and outbuildings all over the state to crow about the benefits of belonging to Farm Bureau.

We've become pretty sophisticated in the way we operate this organization of ours, following the suit of modern day agriculture, so it was good to find that in Monroe County and other counties, too, I'm sure, they haven't become too sophisticated to have fun.

Jim talked about another benefit that I could relate to — the opportunity people have to grow through Farm Bureau. I've seen it happen over and over again, yet witnessing the personal leadership potential of an individual first bud, then blossom and finally flourish, never ceases to delight me. Not the least of those individuals has been Dean Pridgeon.

Dean was just a name on the county presidents' list when I first came to Farm Bureau, but since 1964 — because he just kept on growing — I've had many opportunities to write about him and get to know him as a person and not just a topic. He grew to be vice president of the state's largest farm organization, then went on to become the first farmer ever named to the Natural Resources Commission, and later distinguished himself as director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Now Dean and Mary are in the Farmers' Hall of Fame (see page 22), a well-deserved honor, and Dean is AgriPac's choice for the MSU Board of Trustees. What a living illustration of Farm Bureau building leaders for agriculture!

Dean is just one example. Look at any list of influential ag leaders, at any level, and you'd be hard put to find one who didn't have his or her growth roots in Farm Bureau soil. Look at the cover of this magazine and the farmer who has the undivided attention of the U.S. secretary of agriculture who, in turn, has the ear of the president of the United States.

the ear of the president of the United States.

Influence, the power to make it happen — whether it's solving a local problem like bridges, a state issue like taxation, a national challenge like Farm Bill '85, or an election year objective of getting "Friends of Agriculture" in office — has got to be one of the key reasons why so many farmers provide their dues and human resource support to Farm Bureau. The organization's unique grass-roots policy development/policy execution process gives it its power, as Jack Laurie so articulately states in the "policy harvest" story on page 13.

Fun and fellowship, growth opportunities, political influence — each one in itself reason enough to join Farm Bureau and we haven't even touched the long list of economic member benefits yet. I guess that's what Jim Van Buskirk was saying.

We're asking a lot of you in this issue: attend your county annual meeting and get involved in setting FB's policies, get in gear for the membership campaign, join a Community Action Group or form a new one, campaign and vote for "Friends of Agriculture" in the upcoming election, support co-ops. We're not going to apologize for that because it will all be to your benefit. In fact, we're going to ask one more thing of you . . .

Have fun while you're doing it!

## WASHINGTON

**Farm Export Commission** — President Reagan has signed legislation, supported by FB, to create a U.S. farm export commission. As Senate Finance Committee chairperson, Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) will be one of 12 congressional committee chairpersons and ranking minority members to serve on the commission.

The 35-member commission will also include three members from the executive branch and 20 from the private sector.

Dole said the commission must complete an interim report by next March in order to allow legislators writing 1985 farm program legislation time to consider the role of exports and potential impact of proposed legislation. The commission's final report, due in 1986, should serve as a blueprint for direction in trade policies through the rest of the century.

**Agricultural Trading Options** — With the proper approval, Oct. 31 will be opening day on the Chicago Board of Trade for trading in options on soybean futures. Options on ag commodity futures are to be traded under a pilot program established by Congress last year. Under the program, each futures exchange is allowed to trade in two option contracts.

The Board of Trade plans to offer corn future options next spring. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange will offer option contracts on finished cattle and

market hogs; the Kansas City Board of Trade will handle hard red winter wheat options; and the Minneapolis Grain Exchange will handle spring wheat. Cotton trading options will be handled on the New York Cotton Exchange.

**Grain Grading** — The USDA's proposal to delete moisture as a grading factor for corn, sorghum and soybeans should be adopted and implemented in 1985, according to the department's Federal Grain Inspection Service. Under the proposal, the maximum allowable moisture levels as a grade determining factor would be eliminated although moisture content would still be shown on all official certificates.

FB supported the elimination of moisture level in grade determination in order to eliminate the possibility of a farmer being double-discounted at an elevator for excess moisture in terms of storability. Originally the proposal called for implementation before this year's harvest, however, the rule will go into effect for next year's harvest.

**Health Insurance Tax Deduction** — FB reached its goal of obtaining 150 House co-sponsors of H.R. 3487, the bill that would permit a self-employed person to deduct one-half of his or her health insurance premiums as a business expense. S. 2353, an identical bill, has gained one additional Senate co-sponsor for a total of nine.

**Campaign '84** — More than half of the county FBs in the country are actively preparing for the November elections.

Some 1,438 county FBs in 46 states have held various projects to identify and register farm voters, surface candidates or to learn candidates' philosophies. However, surveys show that 14.8% of the FB membership is not registered to vote.

## LANSING

At its Sept. 6 meeting, the MFB board of directors considered the three constitutional amendments that will be on the Nov. 6 general election ballot. The ballot questions and board recommendations follow.

**Administrative Rules** — This constitutional amendment was placed on the ballot by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. It will be Proposal A. If approved by voters it will take effect 45 days after the election.

Proposal A would amend the constitution to assure that the present Joint Committee on Administrative Rules of the Michigan Legislature can continue to monitor and approve or disapprove rules and regulations promulgated by the various state departments and state agencies.

This is necessary because of a June 1983 U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring that congressional veto of federal rules is unconstitutional (*INS vs Chadla*). This decision is not binding on the states; however, it is likely that each state having a similar procedure will be challenged. Michigan has already been challenged (Bond DNR, Chippewa County).

**FB Position:** The board strongly supports Proposal A. There have been many instances where agencies have developed rules to implement statutes

which are not consistent with the statute. The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules provides a most important method of curbing deficient or unnecessary rules which have the force of law. This has been helpful on many farm issues.

**Land Trust Fund** — The Legislature, by a two-thirds approval of both the House and Senate, placed this constitutional amendment on the ballot. It will be Proposal B. If approved by voters, it will take effect 45 days after the election.

Proposal B would provide constitutional protection for the state's Land Acquisition Trust Fund which is funded from the royalties and other monies received by the state under leases permitting the extraction of minerals, coal, oil, gas and other non-renewable resources from state owned lands.

The amendment would:

- Name the fund the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- Prohibit the use of monies in the fund for the state's general fund.
- Place a \$200 million cap on the principle in the fund (subject to change by a three-fifths vote of future legislatures).
- Limit the amount spent on public recreation facilities to 25% of the annual expenditure from the trust fund.
- Specify that no less than 25% of the yearly expenditures should be used for land acquisition.

**FB Position:** The board took a "no position" stand on Proposal B and stated that information on the question should be provided to members to help them cast informed votes.

The trust fund ballot question was considered to have minimal, if any, impact on agriculture.

# COOPERATIVES: People Helping People



October is Co-op Month and members of the Michigan Association of Farmer Cooperatives are being encouraged to plan activities to promote public awareness and appreciation of the benefits of co-ops.

More than 60 million Americans belong to cooperatives, ranging from day care facilities to credit unions, from group health care to rural electric and

telephone services.

For Michigan farmers, agricultural supply and service co-ops, farm marketing, purchasing and credit service cooperatives have been an integral part of their business operations for many years.

Gov. Blanchard is expected to sign a proclamation designating October as Co-op Month in Michigan.

**Voter's Choice** — This amendment was placed on the ballot by initiative petition. More than 304,001 signatures were necessary to place the question before the voters on Nov. 6. It will be Proposal C. If approved by voters, it will take effect 45 days after the election.

Proposal C would amend the constitution to:

- Require a popular vote on the adoption of any new tax or any legislative change in the base or rate of a state or local tax that would result in an increase in revenue.
- Require that increases in state or local fees, licenses, permits, etc., be approved either by a four-fifths vote (80%) of the appropriate governing body or by a majority of the voters in an election.

- Make the above requirements retroactive to Dec. 31, 1981.

- Prohibit local non-resident income tax rates of more than .5%.

- Require that ballot proposals on tax questions must state the total anticipated revenue, the intended use of the revenue and the expiration date.

**FB Position:** The board unanimously opposed the voter's choice ballot question.

The probable effects of voter's choice include:

- The voters would likely be going to the polls quite often to determine the taxes and other revenues to support state and local government.

- State tax revenues would be

cut by \$1 billion to \$1.6 billion unless reinstated by statewide vote.

- Some local property tax revenues would likely have to have voter approval, such as where millage had been rolled back under the 1982 "Truth in Taxation" law, and where there had been millage increases within authorized limits. For example, if the voters had authorized a maximum of 35 mills for school operation in 1981 but only 31 mills were needed and levied in 1982, the four mills between 31 and 35 would have to be reauthorized by the voters before being used. If the extra four mills had been used they would probably be rolled back.

- Borrowing and interest costs for all units of government could be expected to rise because of a greater risk for repayment.

- Taxes on businesses are more likely to be approved because business cannot vote, thereby further harming Michigan's image with the business community.

- Twenty or more state tax laws passed since Dec. 31, 1981 would be subject to rollback and require voter approval or a four-fifths (80%) vote of the Legislature within the 90-day period. These include the income tax increase which is already phasing out, cigarette and liquor taxes, horse betting, gas and weight taxes which are earmarked for roads and special registration fees for certain farm vehicles.

- Several pieces of legislation have passed since Dec. 31, 1981 increasing or enacting fees, licenses and permits. Local governments have thousands of such fees (e.g., animal licenses, golf fees, occupational licenses, garbage, water and sewer charges, parking, library, tuition, building, etc.). One large local unit of government has 618 building fees in a 35-page schedule.

- Some of the lost state revenue could be made up by eliminating the present property tax credit system including the homestead credit ("circuit breaker") and P.A. 116 credits along with several others. The total would be between \$650 million and \$700 million.

- Another way the state could handle the revenue loss would be by cutting the general fund state aid to schools. The schools have the property tax as another source of revenue which presently requires a vote of the people. This has been done many times through the years to meet budgeting problems.

- The extraordinary approval requirement of a four-fifths vote (80%) by a legislative body to adopt any new fees, license user fee, permit or increase the revenue from such existing sources would place extraordinary power in the hands of a minority.

A similar amendment was rejected by the voters in Ohio last year. Voter's choice is the fifth and most severe of the so-called tax cutting proposals to appear on the Michigan ballot in the last eight years.

#### **Ag Commission Opposes Voter's Choice**

— The five-member Michigan Agriculture Commission is very concerned with the voter's choice amendment (Proposal C) that will be on the Nov. 6 ballot. At its August meeting, the commission unanimously adopted a resolution strongly opposing the proposal. They said it would "severely impact on the essential services that are provided to the people of Michigan by state and local government and (particularly) the Michigan Department of Agriculture."

"The voter's choice initiative, if adopted, would further erode our ability to perform the basic functions needed to protect the state's food supply and sell

Michigan products," said commission chairperson Robert Chaffin, a farmer from Ithaca.

The resolution stated further that "if voter's choice is adopted, the program to replace silos contaminated with PCBs would be eliminated. Inspections of dairy farms, grocery stores and other retail food outlets would be severely curtailed as would marketing efforts which increase the sale of Michigan agricultural products in other states and overseas."

"We cannot afford another jolt like voter's choice just as our state's economy is stabilizing," said commissioner David Diehl, a farmer from Dansville.

**MDA Budget** — FB leaders and staff attended a meeting of agricultural leaders recently at the Department of Agriculture to discuss the 1985-86 budget. While the 1984-85 budget just took effect, the 1985-86 budget is already in process. It appears it will again be a difficult issue due to continued cutbacks. FB was effective in supporting the \$2 million increase this year which reinstated the weights and measures program, animal health and inspection programs, etc.

MDA has scheduled meetings around the state to fully explain the details of the budget needs to local agricultural leaders. Meetings were held during September in Lansing, Benton Harbor, Grand Rapids and Saginaw. Local FB leaders were present at all the meetings.

Meetings are scheduled for the Southfield Holiday Inn, Oct. 3; the Escanaba Terrace Motor Inn, Oct. 4; and the Traverse City Holiday Inn, Oct. 5. These meetings are extremely important in helping farm leaders understand the entire MDA budget and the programs that are essential to the farming community.



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largest district east of the Mississippi; 10% of the 250,000 constituents represent agricultural enterprises; and the congressional incumbent is a Democrat.

"The main purpose of my visit here is to help Bill Schuette's campaign," Block emphasized at the outset of his speech. "It is vitally important that we have his kind of leadership in the Congress. We need those who have a philosophy consistent with the president's and consistent with the people in the district. Bill Schuette can and will support this administration," he said.

Significant among those policies put forward by the administration, Block said, is stability for the general economy and for the agricultural community.

"Four years ago, the U.S. economy was a 'basket case,'" he said. "Interest rates were 21% and rising, there was a trade embargo in place and there was widespread unemployment. . . . Under this administration, inflation that plagued the nation at the end of the decade is now under control; employment has improved and the economy is strengthening.

"Interest rates, while no longer at the 21% peak are still too high, particularly for the agricultural sector," Block acknowledged, and added that "the basic cause of continued high interest rates is government spending that continues to exceed revenues."

Both the president and vice president, he reported, are aggressively seeking a constitutional reform that will give the president authority for line item veto in the budget — "an important step in reducing spending."

Despite the strengthening economy, he said, there is still distress in agriculture but advised that agriculture is not going to get out of the hole with spending measures. The president is concerned about inter-



**The Crumbaugh family proudly greeted Secretary of Agriculture John Block and Bill Schuette, candidate for the 10th congressional district who has earned AgriPac's endorsement as a "Friend of Agriculture."**

est rates and the need for a balanced budget.

"Cuts are needed in all government spending and agriculture will have to take cuts along with the rest. But what are the long term effects?" he asked, rhetorically. "If we get adjustments in interest rates, and reduce farm debt. . . that's the best farm program we can have."

Block promised that under Reagan policies the administration would move aggressively to write a new farm bill. . . one with more market orientation, but which also recognizes that agriculture cannot go "cold turkey."

"In agriculture we need flexibility in farm programs so that government and producers are not locked into a program. We need an industry that is in business to produce. The agricultural plant in the U.S. should not be backing away from sales and production. Growth in the agricultural economy means jobs for the country and a better economy for small towns in rural America."

Recalling the consumer-oriented policies of the Carter administration in the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

Block reiterated this administration's, and the USDA's, commitment to a department that supports and stands behind production agriculture. A healthy, productive agriculture is what consumers need, he said. "Decisions must be made with an appreciation of the importance of agriculture and keeping it as free as it can be and as strong as it can be."



**Rex Crumbaugh (left) showed USDA Secretary Block (right) and candidate Bill Schuette the condition of a soybean field on his Gratiot County farm.**



## Block on Campaign Trail for 'Friends of Agriculture'

By Connie Turbin

August heat flattened itself above parched bean fields, and along the route to the Crumbaugh farm in Gratiot County, row after row of corn stood silent as sentinels in the windless late afternoon haze.

While most residents of this central Michigan community were taking shelter in air conditioned homes and workplaces, Rex and Kathy Crumbaugh of St. Louis and four other Gratiot County families were stoking up fires beneath boiling kettles for fresh sweet corn and a dedicated crew sweltered near the radiating heat of an outdoor cooker.

In little more than an hour, the long rows of tables and

chairs would be filled with over 500 people there to support Bill Schuette's congressional campaign and to hear U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block; the FFA members lolling against the fender of a Chevy truck would be directing cars to the "parking area" cleared out of three rows of corn on either side of Madison Road.

The drawing card for the Aug. 29 fundraiser/hog roast for Schuette, an MFB AgriPac "Friend of Agriculture" running against Don Albosta in the 10th congressional district, was the appearance by USDA Secretary Block. Block was in the state campaigning for Republican candidates Schuette and Phil Thompson (another AgriPac

"Friend" who is running against Francis Spaniola for the state House). He also appeared as a guest speaker in Lansing Aug. 30 before a gathering of farm and agribusiness people.

Although he accepts a mere 2% to 3% of the invitations he receives from agricultural groups and Republican candidates, the secretary has been an active campaigner in the agricultural community, devoting 8 to 10 days a month to the re-election of Ronald Reagan and the support of Republican candidates, particularly candidates in rural areas.

Michigan's predominantly conservative 10th district fills the bill on four counts: The district encompasses all or part of 20 counties; it is the second

largest district east of the Mississippi; 10% of the 250,000 constituents represent agricultural enterprises; and the congressional incumbent is a Democrat.

"The main purpose of my visit here is to help Bill Schuette's campaign," Block emphasized at the outset of his speech. "It is vitally important that we have his kind of leadership in the Congress. We need those who have a philosophy consistent with the president's and consistent with the people in the district. Bill Schuette can and will support this administration," he said.

Significant among those policies put forward by the administration, Block said, is stability for the general economy and for the agricultural community.

"Four years ago, the U.S. economy was a 'basket case,'" he said. "Interest rates were 21% and rising, there was a trade embargo in place and there was widespread unemployment. . . . Under this administration, inflation that plagued the nation at the end of the decade is now under control; employment has improved and the economy is strengthening.

"Interest rates, while no longer at the 21% peak are still too high, particularly for the agricultural sector," Block acknowledged, and added that "the basic cause of continued high interest rates is government spending that continues to exceed revenues."

Both the president and vice president, he reported, are aggressively seeking a constitutional reform that will give the president authority for line item veto in the budget — "an important step in reducing spending."

Despite the strengthening economy, he said, there is still distress in agriculture but advised that agriculture is not going to get out of the hole with spending measures. The president is concerned about inter-



**The Crumbaugh family proudly greeted Secretary of Agriculture John Block and Bill Schuette, candidate for the 10th congressional district who has earned AgriPac's endorsement as a "Friend of Agriculture."**

est rates and the need for a balanced budget.

"Cuts are needed in all government spending and agriculture will have to take cuts along with the rest. But what are the long term effects?" he asked, rhetorically. "If we get adjustments in interest rates, and reduce farm debt. . . that's the best farm program we can have."

Block promised that under Reagan policies the administration would move aggressively to write a new farm bill. . . one with more market orientation, but which also recognizes that agriculture cannot go "cold turkey."

"In agriculture we need flexibility in farm programs so that government and producers are not locked into a program. We need an industry that is in business to produce. The agricultural plant in the U.S. should not be backing away from sales and production. Growth in the agricultural economy means jobs for the country and a better economy for small towns in rural America."

Recalling the consumer-oriented policies of the Carter administration in the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

Block reiterated this administration's, and the USDA's, commitment to a department that supports and stands behind production agriculture. A healthy, productive agriculture is what consumers need, he said. "Decisions must be made with an appreciation of the importance of agriculture and keeping it as free as it can be and as strong as it can be."



**Rex Crumbaugh (left) showed USDA Secretary Block (right) and candidate Bill Schuette the condition of a soybean field on his Gratiot County farm.**

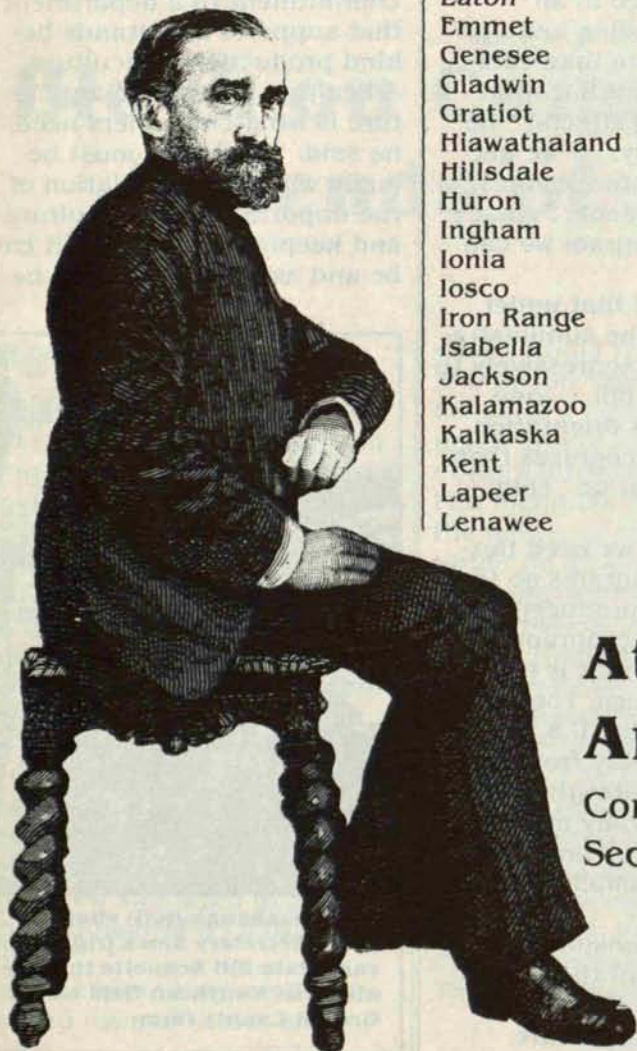
# Good Ideas Get Better When They're Shared

— 1984 County Annual Meeting Dates —

Alcona Oct. 22  
Allegan Oct. 11  
Alpena Oct. 11  
Antrim Oct. 8

Arenac Oct. 8  
Barry Oct. 16  
Bay held Aug. 5  
Benzie Oct. 15  
Berrien Oct. 24  
Branch held Sept. 17  
Calhoun Oct. 2  
Cass Nov. 6  
Charlevoix Oct. 3  
Cheboygan Oct. 16  
Chippewa Oct. 1  
Clare Oct. 18  
Clinton held Sept. 18  
Copper Country Oct. 10  
Eaton Oct. 13  
Emmet held Sept. 28  
Genesee Oct. 26  
Gladwin Oct. 2  
Gratiot held Aug. 24  
Hiawathaland Oct. 12  
Hillsdale Oct. 15  
Huron held Sept. 27  
Ingham Oct. 17  
Ionia Oct. 1  
Iosco Oct. 18  
Iron Range held Sept. 15  
Isabella Oct. 17  
Jackson held Sept. 27  
Kalamazoo Oct. 23  
Kalkaska Oct. 9  
Kent held Sept. 25  
Lapeer Oct. 4  
Lenawee held Sept. 17

Livingston Oct. 23  
Mac-Luce Oct. 2  
Macomb Oct. 4  
Manistee Oct. 22  
Mason Oct. 2  
Mecosta Oct. 1  
Menominee Oct. 11  
Midland held Sept. 11  
Missaukee Oct. 4  
Monroe held Sept. 11  
Montcalm Oct. 24  
Montmorency Oct. 4  
Muskegon Oct. 20  
Newaygo Oct. 11  
NW Michigan Oct. 10  
Oakland Oct. 11  
Oceana Oct. 22  
Ogemaw Oct. 25  
Osceola Oct. 16  
Otsego held Sept. 27  
Ottawa Oct. 9  
Presque Isle Oct. 2  
Saginaw Oct. 4  
St. Clair held Sept. 25  
St. Joseph Oct. 27  
Sanilac Oct. 3  
Shiawassee Oct. 6  
Tuscola held Sept. 22  
Van Buren Oct. 25  
Washtenaw held Sept. 27  
Wayne Oct. 9  
Wexford Oct. 9



## Attend Your County Annual Meeting

Contact the County FB  
Secretary for Details

# Annual Policy Harvest Keeps Farm Bureau Strong

By Cathy J. Kirvan

The annual harvest of policy ideas is underway throughout the state. County annual meetings, where members determine the policy of their organization, started in August and continue through early November. Most will be held this month. By now you've probably received the official notice but, you might ask, who needs one more meeting? Why should you miss your favorite TV show or your bowling night or your son's football game. . . .

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**If there's one area that stimulates people to take part more than anything else, it's the opportunity to have a say in something they are involved in every day.**

---

Jack Laurie, vice president of Michigan Farm Bureau and chairperson of the MFB Policy Development Committee, tells why attending the county Farm Bureau annual meeting should be at the top of every farmer member's priority list.

"Farm Bureau is truly a grass-roots organization," Laurie said. "The members actually set policy. Your county's elected leadership needs you to attend to help determine next year's activities.

"The county annual is the place to review the financial position of your organization and discuss some of the policies that effect it internally,"

Laurie said. "What are your plans and your goals for membership? Who should your members be? What do you plan to do with your program money? What activities do you have planned for next year?"

"It's also an appropriate time to give some awards and recognize members for things they've done through the year, and to recognize people outside of your organization who have helped you out.

"But really," he said, "the key to the whole thing is discussing and formulating policy. The membership discusses issues ranging from the federal farm program to expansion of county offices."

As chairperson of MFB's Policy Development Committee, Laurie has seen an increase in the last few years in the number of policies dealing with local issues.

"If there's one area that stimulates people to take part more than anything else, it's the opportunity to have a say in

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**Each of us claims to be interested in agriculture and if we really are, we ought to accept that responsibility and go ahead and have input into what Farm Bill '85 ought to be.**

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something that they see every day or are involved in every day or read about in their own local paper," Laurie said.



**JACK LAURIE, CHAIRPERSON  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

"Consequently, there have been a lot of policies that pertain to such things as local bridges, upgrading local roads, education problems, millages, community college concerns, and a whole host of things that are local in nature.

"The county annual meeting is your opportunity to play an influential role in helping to develop this type of policy."

Regarding issues of national concern, Laurie sees Farm Bill '85 as the top priority. "We do have the responsibility as farmers of developing a farm bill," he said. "I like to look at it that way — as a responsibility rather than a job or chore. Each of us claims to be interested in agriculture and if we really are, we ought to accept that responsibility and go ahead and have



At the Gratiot County annual meeting, members took action on such local issues as solid waste management and control of weeds in drainage ditches.

input into what that farm bill ought to be.

"It's difficult to select anything on the national level that doesn't in some way tie back into the farm bill," Laurie said, "whether it be expanding our export abilities through some type of program to the opposite end of the scale, restricting imports through domestic content. Each will play a role in the development of Farm Bill '85."

The following are state and local issues he predicts will be addressed at resolutions sessions during county annual meetings this fall:

**Taxation** — Laurie expects several resolutions dealing with taxation. "Part of that will be stimulated by the voter's choice proposal which would require a vote of the people to increase taxes," Laurie said. "I think there will be a lot of concern in rural communities, centering around what will happen to the Department of Agriculture, Extension Service and some of the programs that we've gotten to

appreciate as a fact of rural life if that proposal passes.

"We all are too familiar with what's happened to school millages when they go to the public. If we get a situation like voter's choice it could have that same effect only on a much broader scale."

**Education** — Laurie also expects several resolutions on education, particularly the quality of education. "Part of this is due to the impact of the president's council on education report that said we have to do some things to improve our education system.

"People out in the country seem to be more aware that changes are needed to improve the quality of education," he said. "Farmers and Farm Bureau people have a greater appreciation for education than most others do."

**School Finances** — Members of the Gladwin County PD committee are concerned about both taxes and education. "We are questioning whether property taxes are an equitable method of financing the schools," PD chairperson Paul Pennock said. They are considering such alternatives as lowering property taxes while raising income taxes or reinstating the sales tax on food.

"In a rural area, farmers — even with the circuit breaker — are paying a disproportionate share of school financing be-

cause they pay property taxes as a manufacturer and an employee whereas a person working in a factory, for example, is paying property taxes on his home or as rent on his house or apartment," Pennock said.

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**There will be a resolution on an issue that someone had a special interest in that no one had even thought of — that's what Farm Bureau is all about. . . . That's what makes a strong Farm Bureau.**

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The Gladwin County PD committee will draft a resolution addressing the issue and present it to the organization's membership at the Oct. 2 annual meeting.

**Highway Safety** — Another issue of concern in Gladwin County this year is highway safety. "We have a large number of Amish families who, because of their religious beliefs, are not using the Slow Moving Vehicle emblem as required by state statute," said Pennock. "There have been several near accidents because their gray reflective strips do not show up

*(continued on page 28)*



Resolutions prepared by county PD committees are discussed and voted on by members at county annual meetings. Above, Bay County members get in a little socializing before the resolutions session began.

**Five county FBs have won a free trip to the AFBF annual meeting in Hawaii** next January as a result of achieving the highest percent of target in their respective membership categories. The counties winning the trips for membership achievement are: Category I — Menominee, Category II — Presque Isle, Category III — Muskegon, Category IV — Branch, and Category V — Ottawa.

**By achieving a gain in membership over last year's figures, 44 counties are eligible to compete in the 1984 star awards program and thus have another chance to win a trip to the AFBF annual meeting in Hawaii.** During the state annual meeting, a drawing will be held by membership categories for five more Hawaii trips. To be eligible for the drawing, counties must have received gold stars in at least two of the 11 categories. Entries are due Oct. 1. Counties achieving gain include Allegan, Antrim, Bay, Barry, Benzie, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Cheboygan, Copper Country, Genesee, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Iosco, Isabella, Kalkaska, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Mecosta, Menominee, Midland, Missaukee, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, St. Clair, Saginaw, Sanilac, Tuscola, Van Buren, Wayne and Wexford.

**MFB closed its 1984 membership year at 99.03% of goal and 100.03% of target.** In addition to the 44 county FBs achieving a gain in membership, 27 made their 1984 goal and 36 reached target. Four regions and three districts also attained 1984 membership goal.

**Director's Key Club awards are being presented to nearly 200 people at county annual meetings this fall.** The Key Club awards were instituted last year to recognize volunteers, county secretaries and FBIG agents who signed at least five new regular members during the membership campaign. Almost 90 people are being honored for the first time this year and nearly 100 are receiving the award for the second consecutive year.

**At its September meeting, the MFB Board of Directors accepted the resignation of Max D. Dean,** treasurer and chief financial officer for MFB and its affiliate companies, to be effective later this year. Dean has devoted 32 years of service to Farm Bureau, serving in various financial positions with Farm Bureau Services, Inc. before joining MFB nearly 10 years ago.

Upon Dean's retirement, Matthew Butzin, vice president/corporate controller of Agra Land, Inc. and Farmers Petroleum Cooperative, Inc., will assume the position of treasurer and chief financial officer of MFB and affiliate companies.

**MFB's political action committee, AgriPac, met on Sept. 11 to make additional endorsements for the Nov. 6 general election.** A partial list of "Friends of Agriculture" is on page 31. Any additional endorsements will be announced in Rural Leader and the November issue of Rural Living.

**Nearly 160 men and women attended the State Leader Conference,** sponsored by the MFB Women's Committee in late September. Workshops conducted during the two-day conference included information on marketing, public speaking, computers, legislative education and health issues. Activities also included an AgriPac auction to raise funds to help elect "Friends of Agriculture."

**Five public hearings will be held in October seeking the public's ideas and suggestions on rebuilding Michigan's aging infrastructure.** Two hearings were already held in Marquette and Grayling. Ideas and suggestions are needed regarding new sources of revenue for infrastructure projects, techniques of cost-benefit analysis, innovations in design, creation of short- and long-term capital budgets and development of annual infrastructure budgets.

The locations and dates of the hearings are: Detroit, Oct. 2, City-County Bldg., 13th Floor Auditorium; Warren, Oct. 3, Macomb Community College, 12 Mile at Hayes; Saginaw, Oct. 10, Saginaw Armory, 1800 S. Outer Drive; Grand Rapids, Oct. 17, Grand Valley Armory, 1200 44th St. SW, Wyoming; Lansing, Oct. 25, Law Building Auditorium, 525 W. Ottawa.



## Politicians Treated to Cherry Sundaes

Over 3,000 congressmen and their staff members escaped from the muggy August heat in Washington, D.C., to enjoy a cherry and ice cream treat. The reception is sponsored each year by MACMA to promote Michigan's famed red tart cherries.

The politicians and bureaucrats consumed over 50 cases of cherry pie filling and 150 gallons of ice cream which were contributed by Wilderness Foods, Lucky Leaf and the American Dairy Association of Michigan.

National Cherry Queen Kimberlee Broome of Gaylord greeted the political leaders and their staffs. She and others involved in the cherry industry met with officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to discuss cherry marketing opportunities.

## FB Organization: Use It

"Farm Bureau doesn't do anything for me!" is a common complaint heard throughout the state. Well, your FB membership card is like a bus ticket: If you don't get on the bus and go somewhere that ticket isn't of much value.

The Farm Bureau organiza-



## Happy Anniversary!

A 1949 Oldsmobile, on loan from the Oldsmobile Division of GM, helped commemorate the 35th anniversary of Farm Bureau Mutual. The vintage car dates from the year Farm Bureau Mutual began operations as the first insurance affiliate of Michigan Farm Bureau.

Pictured with the classic car in front of Farm Bureau Center in Lansing are (left to right): Robert Wiseman, executive vice president of Farm Bureau Insurance Group; MFB President Elton R. Smith; and Don Bradshaw, vice president and general manager of Farm Bureau Mutual.

tion, like the bus, is a vehicle to get from here to there; to change the status quo of agriculture. Now that you have paid for your ticket, use it; use the Farm Bureau organization.

FB policy and direction comes from its members by way of ideas, concerns and resolutions submitted through the county policy development committees. So, now is the time to begin communicating those

ideas and concerns that will provide a map of the route you want FB to take through 1984 and beyond.

Share your concerns with the chairperson of your county's PD committee. Your county president is also willing to listen. Every now and then an organization should make sure that the lines of communication are intact and open.

*Ralph Lundberg, President  
Mason County Farm Bureau*

# FARMERS OF THE WEEK

The Farmer of the Week program, co-sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance Group and the Michigan Farm Radio Network, honors farmers for their contributions to the community and the ag industry. Four farmers were honored in August 1984:

**Aug. 6 — Jerry Hartenburg, 43,** of Eaton Rapids operates an 850-acre cash crop, beef and hog farm. He is active in township government, serving as a trustee and member of township committees. He has long been involved in the Eaton County Farm Bureau.

**Aug. 13 — Douglas Darling, 24,** a cash crop and dairy farmer from Maybee, farms 1,200 acres in partnership with his father. He is a youth leader in his church, 4-H leader, past state FFA officer, member and past board member of the Monroe County Farm Bureau, vice chairperson of the MFB Young Farmers and a member of the MFB AgriPac and state policy development committees.

**Aug. 20 — Paul Swartzendruber, 29,** is a cash crop and swine farmer

from Pigeon. He is active in the Huron County Pork Producers and participates in pork promotion projects around the state. He is active in his church, a Huron County Farm Bureau member and active in the Young Farmers, and former vice president of the local FFA chapter.

**Aug. 27 — Dallas Seiler, 58,** of Marshall, raises cash crops on 325 acres. He is active in St. Mary's Church in Marshall, the local United Way drive and Toastmasters Club; is a former officer on the Mar-Lee School Board; and former township zoning inspector.

## Michigan AGRICULTURE PRODUCES



Consumers attending the State Fair learned about what Michigan agriculture produces by watching this ferris wheel revolve. The display is available to county FBs. Contact MFB's Information Division for more information.

### 'Unskilled' Laborer Prefers Farm Life

Over the past three years, I've enjoyed your magazine very much. But I especially enjoyed the article about farm women. Having been raised on a dairy

farm, I have tremendous respect for farmers and their wives. However, there are many other kinds of farm women.

I am a commercial mohair raiser. I may not rise at 4 a.m. to milk, but I sure do other things. (I also own and operate a fiber arts shop — an arm of the farm). "Chores" on our farm are about like a sheep farm. I also raise sheep, angora rabbits and a few dairy goats for milk, cheese and meat.

Twice a year things get a bit crazier. January through April is kidding season. You want to catch each one of the does, partly because they will twin and number two will be twisted or backwards, and partly because the little ones can weigh from two to five pounds and those little wet things need that heat lamp with our weather! September is breeding season. You've got to make sure those does and bucks are in top condition.

In April and September it's time to shear and, yes, I do that too. It takes me about 10 to 15 minutes per animal (providing I don't have one of my three kids pulling on me). That's about

twice the time an experienced shearer would take.

I also shear small herds of sheep and goats for hire so I have to plan well to get my own done. The extra money helps with feed costs.

Yes, there truly is an option for women today. I don't feel forced into the "work force" any more. The best job I could get out there is being a waitress because, on the job market, I am "unskilled."

*Deb Lemmer, Shelbyville Shaggy Shagbark Acres*

*P.S. Please, farmers and ettes, let's give the Michigan mohair raisers the recognition we deserve! I know some of the first goats brought to Michigan weren't the best. Many raisers were "ripped-off" and there was the scare about blue-tongue disease, but the blue-tongue tests are now legitimate. Please give us a chance and some support. Our warehouse (the company that sells our hair for us) would like to start a warehouse in Michigan! We need some support. We are bringing a new kind of agriculture into Michigan. Help us out, Farm Bureau and members!*

### RURAL RASCALS



"You know, mom, I've been thinking about Farm Bill '85....," eight-week-old Anthony Young said to his mother, Gayle, of Lapeer County.



"Attending this meeting in Frankenmuth has really helped me understand the situation. I'd like to share my thoughts with dad," Anthony said.



"Anthony, those were interesting ideas but you're too young for anyone to take you seriously," said Anthony's father, Robert Young, a member of the MFB Policy Development Committee.



"Wait!" said Elton Smith, MFB president. "I overheard those ideas and I'd like to congratulate you on your insight." To which Anthony replied, "Wow! They really want input from everybody!"

# You Can Sell Farm Bureau's Fun and Fellowship Benefits

By Donna Wilber

Insurance, group health coverage, car discounts, buyers' service, group purchasing, legislative clout, information and education, sociability. . .

Sociability? Can the opportunities Farm Bureau offers for sociability be listed as a member benefit? Will a farmer pay dues for the chance to interact with other farmers with the same interests and concerns? Are the social aspects of Farm Bureau so overshadowed by the long list of economic benefits that they're seldom even mentioned by membership workers?

Jim and Janet Van Buskirk of Monroe County answer those questions with an unqualified "yes" and they've proved their point with affirmative action. During last year's membership campaign, they signed up eight new regular members using sociability as their key selling pitch. Then, they followed up by forming a Community Action Group made up of those new members.

Their "sign 'em up — get 'em involved" formula has worked not only to the benefit of the Monroe County Farm Bureau, but also to the new members who were sold on the social benefits of the organization.

## Don't Just Gripe — Do It!

Jim and Janet and their four children, Darlene, 19, a student at MSU majoring in dairy science; Deanne, 16; David, 14; and Denise, 9, live on a centennial farm outside Carleton that's been in the family for al-

most 150 years. They operate their 80 acres and 150 registered Jersey herd enterprise with very little outside help.

Just running that operation and fulfilling all the parental obligations that come with children involved in 4-H, sports and other activities keeps their schedules full. But they've "made the time" for Farm Bureau involvement.

Jim has served on the Monroe County FB board for the past six years and has been vice president for three of those years. He also chairs the Community Action Group Committee and works on the membership campaign.

He was also a member of a state study committee appointed in 1982 to review and make recommendations on the organization's policy dealing with the acquisition of new members and the dues structure. Jim admits that during his service on that committee, he often got on the soap box regarding the importance of regular members contacting regular member prospects.

"I decided I shouldn't just gripe about it; I ought to go out and do it!" he said. He did just that and now the regular members he and Janet signed up last year are an important part



**The Van Buskirks believe the social aspects of Farm Bureau can be used to sell memberships. They signed up eight new regular members during the 1983-84 campaign and formed a new Community Action Group made up of those members.**

of the county Farm Bureau. "It's well worth the time getting them involved," he said.

### **Community Action Groups — Farm Bureau's 'Backbone'**

The new group the Van Buskirks formed is known as "The Country Road Bunch" (deciding on the name was the toughest part, Jim said). They've been meeting since the first of the year and potluck dinners, with lots of fellowship, have become a regular part of their monthly sessions. They follow the regular community group format with a business meeting, the discussion topic and no real structured effort for "fun" activities. That just happens naturally, according to the Van Buskirks.

"It's easy for people to forget all the many member benefits when it comes time for them to pay their dues," Jim said, "but when they see a group of people having fun together, they don't forget that."

Community Action Groups are the "backbone" of the organization, but many county FB boards aren't using them as such, Jim said. "They fail to see them as another tool to get things accomplished and as an effective way to get a lot of people involved."

Lack of recognition of the program as a viable part of the county organization is part of the problem, he thinks, and the Monroe County FB is addressing that problem through an incentive program. Through a point system, groups can earn up to 10 paid memberships and the title of "Best Community Action Group in the County."

"There ought to be more recognition of Community Action Groups in the state awards program, too," Jim said. "They are just as important as the FB Women or the Young Farmers."

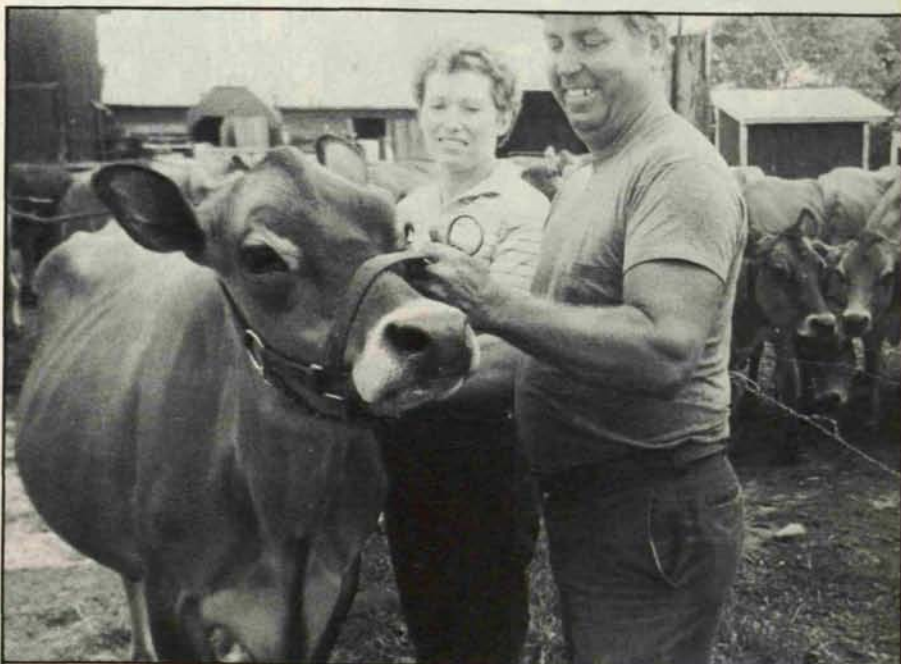
### **Personal Growth Opportunities Unlimited**

Getting new members involved in a Community Action Group leads to broader involvement in the organization, the Van Buskirks believe. They can prove that point, too, as several members of the Country Road Bunch have taken on other county committee activities. They're especially proud that one of their group members will run for a county board seat this year.

Jim thinks this opportunity for leadership development makes Farm Bureau unique.

The Van Buskirks think it's important that county leaders help young farmers form new community groups rather than making them part of older groups. It's not a matter of age discrimination, they explain, but rather of interests.

Farmers with growing families, struggling with the financial challenges of their businesses, just don't have the same concerns and interests as well-established or retired farmers. Mixing the two can dilute the social interaction that's so important, they said.



**Jim and Janet Van Buskirk are proud of Gladys Beauty of J.V.B. who won the \$500 first prize at the Michigan State Fair for Michigan Jersey Futurity Award.**

"I've talked to young farmers in other organizations who are frustrated because there's no hope of growing into leadership roles or having any kind of impact. In Farm Bureau, a young farmer can be president. Just look at our president," he said, pointing with pride to Monroe County FB President Jerry Heck, a Young Farmer who grew through the organization to become an effective, respected leader.

### **First in the State for Goal This Year?**

Rather than resting on the laurels of last year's success, Jim and Janet are looking ahead to the challenges of this year's membership campaign.

Monroe County, according to Jim, has the advantage of a strong membership team that includes "great insurance  
(continued on page 29)

## Michigan's Farm Markets Offer Quality, Fresh Produce...



U-pick tomatoes and a wide variety of peppers are among the attractions at Pineview Meadows Farm Market off M-60 near Union City. The market opened four years ago in the family's garage and expanded to a new "rustic look" market.



Macomb County has many farm markets including these two on Van Dyke Road, Romeo. Verellen Orchards (above) displays produce at the open windows. Inside are many



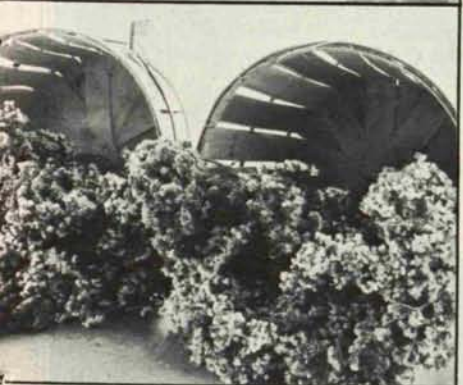
Erwin Farms has two farm markets a few miles apart in Oakland County. The one pictured here is just off I-96 in Novi.



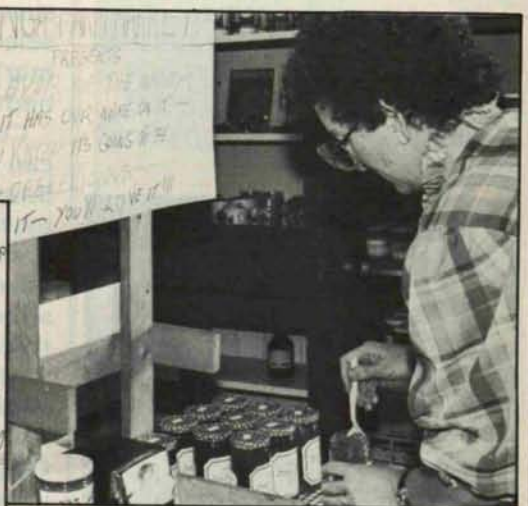
# ... Unique Taste Treats and Creative Displays



An attractive wagon displayed outside draws the customers in to Hoxie's Farm Market on M-72 in Grand Traverse County. In addition to its own fresh produce, the market carries a good selection of local wines.



attractive displays including dried flowers, which are grown locally. At Westview Orchards (below), buyers can refer to the guide prepared by variety when purchasing apples.



Besides the fresh fruit and vegetables, attractions at Elzinga Farm Market on M-31, 10 miles south of Charlevoix includes bakery products, free samples of jams and jellies and a small restaurant featuring sandwiches and freshly baked pies.

# Michigan Farmers' Hall of Fame Inducts Seven Couples

"When tillage begins, the arts will follow. Farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization and prosperity." These words of tribute offered by Daniel Webster in 1840 were echoed during ceremonies honoring seven Michigan farm couples as inductees to the Michigan Farmers' Hall of Fame on Sept. 4 in Prairieville.

Among those honored were the former director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Dean Pridgeon, and his wife, Mary. The couple are fifth generation farmers on the family's Branch County farm established in the mid-1800s. Today, the Pridgeon family farms 2,200 acres, specializing in corn, soy-

beans and wheat. Ten thousand market hogs are raised on the farm each year.

A commitment to production agriculture and public service is reflected in Pridgeon's leadership roles. At the local level, he has served as Branch County Farm Bureau president, township supervisor, school board member, and has chaired the Branch County Republican Party, county planning commission and county zoning commission. His appointment to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission in 1974, and subsequent selection as chairperson, marked the first time a farmer had served on the commission.

Currently one of two Republican Party nominees for the MSU Board of Trustees and endorsed by MFB's AgriPac, Pridgeon hopes to continue his role as advocate for environmental stewardship, agricultural research and education.

Also inducted were Walter Wightman and his wife, Gladys Atwater Wightman, of Allegan County. Hall of Fame honors were given posthumously to Wightman's first wife, Alice, who farmed with him until 1975.

Highlights of Wightman's career in service to agriculture include five years of service

(1958-63) as Michigan Farm Bureau president and American Farm Bureau board member and service for 19 years on the Central Michigan University Board of Trustees.



**ALICE & WALTER WIGHTMAN**



**MARY & DEAN PRIDGEON**



**VIVAH & DALE WEBSTER**



In addition to the Hall of Fame designation, he has received numerous awards throughout his farming career including the 1962 MSU Distinguished Service to Agriculture



**MARY & CHARLES BEAL**



**MARGUERTE & FAY OWENS**

award and the 1965 state Soil Conservation award, and awards from the Federal Land Bank and the Soil Conservation Society of America.

Wightman has now retired on the family's centennial farm near Fennville.

Other Hall of Fame designees were Charles and Mary Beal of St. Joseph County, Lawrence and Hildred Chase of Barry County, Roscoe and Frances Hewlett of Lenawee County, William and Marguerite Owens of Calhoun County, and Dale and Vivah Webster of Kalamazoo County.

Each couple received a framed letter of recognition signed by President Reagan; framed copies of a special legislative tribute, passed jointly by Sen. Nick Smith and Rep. Michael Nye and signed by the governor; an achievement resolution from the Michigan Department of Agriculture; and specially designed and imprinted name badges from the Michigan Farm Bureau in cooperation with the Michigan Office of State Farm Insurance companies.

The Michigan Farmers' Hall of Fame was incorporated in November 1982 as a non-profit organization for the purpose of identifying, recognizing and honoring outstanding farm couples who have made a sig-

nificant contribution to Michigan agriculture. Twenty-two Michigan farm couples have been inducted into the Hall of Fame since 1982.

Official location for the Michigan Farmers' Hall of Fame will be at the corner of Burroughs and Milo roads near Delton, Mich. The building is under construction.



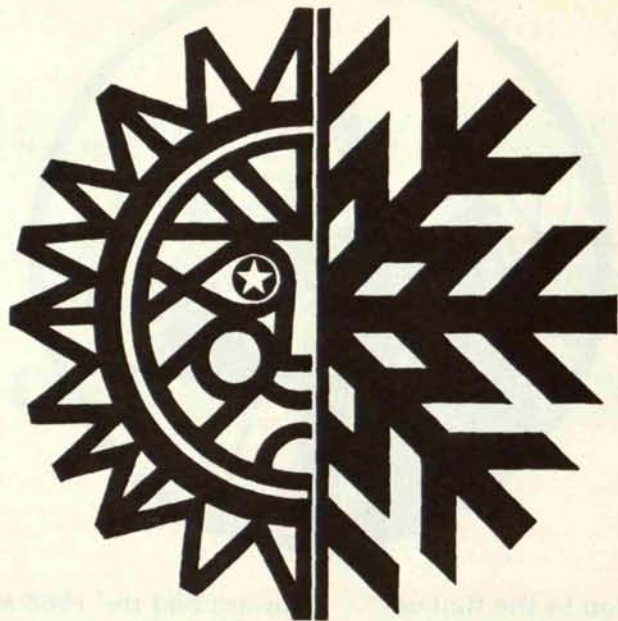
**HILDRED & LAWRENCE CHASE**



**FRANCES & ROSCOE HEWLETT**



## Agricultural Weather Services: Critical Farm Management Tool



Agricultural producers are concerned about repeated recommendations to eliminate funding for agricultural weather services, including fruit frost alerts. Funding unreliability continues to jeopardize the quality of the agriculture weather program. Furthermore, no other single factor has more of an impact on year-to-year changes in food production and energy usage than weather.

The importance of weather, especially for agriculture and the entire food production system, was again demonstrated during the summer of 1983 and the winter of 1983-84 when extreme weather conditions caused grain and soybean prices to move up rapidly during the summer drought, and orange juice and other citrus prices to move rapidly during the repeated freezes in Florida.

In 1983, approximately \$1.5 million was budgeted by the National Weather Service to provide farmers in over 40 states with information needed to plant, irrigate, fertilize, spray, protect and harvest crops at the optimal time.

For the past two years, the Reagan administration has proposed eliminating all agricultural weather services based on the idea that these services are aimed at narrow interest groups and could be provided by the private sector. Congress has re-

stored the agriculture weather program funds each year because of widespread user support for this program. This funding unreliability continues to jeopardize the quality of the agriculture weather program.

An agriculture weather system permits information to be substituted for scarce natural and economic resources in the production of agricultural goods and services. For example, farmers using rainfall, temperature and other forecasted weather parameters can make management decisions that reduce weather related crop damage; schedule water, pesticide, fertilizer and labor resources more economically and effectively; minimize pesticide and fertilizer pollution of our drinking water supplies; and provide many other benefits to both farmers and consumers.

In addition, there are serious questions of whether the private sector has the skilled personnel and technical hardware to replace the agricultural weather service program without a potentially disastrous gap in service. Expert witnesses in related congressional hearings in 1983 explained that the benefits to farmers and consumers from the agricultural

weather service far outweigh the relatively minor cost of the program to the taxpayer.

In response to the various structural programs, the Agriculture Research Institute's Panel of Meteorology (of which FB is a member) published a report in January 1984 on a proposed agriculture, forestry and natural resources weather and climate system. This report examines the existing agriculture weather activities in the USDA and the National Weather Service. The report's objective is to integrate these existing agriculture weather programs into one dynamic, coordinated system with a goal of maintaining the competitive superiority of U.S. agriculture.

On June 27-28, 1984, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Department Operations, Research and Foreign Agriculture, and the House Science and Technology Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment conducted a joint oversight hearing on a national agriculture weather operation. It is the goal of these hearings to provide an opportunity for representatives

from government, private sector weather forecasters and users, academia and others to discuss why such a comprehensive system does not exist under the present structure; if there is interest and support for a national agriculture weather system; and if so, what the role of the federal government should be.

For several decades, the main thrust of agricultural advancements have concentrated on increasing production by technological advances rather than intensive management. These technological advances brought an increased reliance on mechanization, energy, high quality seed, fertilizer and many others. Costs increased, but so did production, more than offsetting the increases in capital outlay.

Since weather is a dominant factor in the efficiency and effectiveness of many farm operations (such as planting, chemical applications and harvesting), it is reasonable to assume that improved weather information leading to better management will increase farmers' potential for reducing production overhead costs. Agriculture weather forecasts then must necessarily form the first steps in the staircase of an essential weather information system to be provided to producers for use in making sound farm management decisions.

Michigan farmers benefit from the agricultural weather advisory services provided jointly by Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Agriculture. MSU and MDA also provide information about the meaning of each forecast parameter, the degree of accuracy for each parameter, and how they relate to actual on-farm conditions. An interdisciplinary group of meteorologists and agriculturalists is required and has been provided through the National Agricultural Weather Services.

Examples of the day-to-day weather parameters included in these agricultural weather forecasts and advisories include expected heat/cold stress severity for livestock and poultry; frost/freeze warnings for fruits, vegetables and field crops; soil temperatures for seed germination and planting day decisions; precipitation probabilities for pesticide and fertilization applications and irrigation scheduling; wind speed and direction for spray operations; and temperatures and humidities for disease management.

These topics will emanate from the agricultural weather forecast and the knowledge of currently ongoing field operations and crop status as gained from agricultural experts for specific crops and livestock.

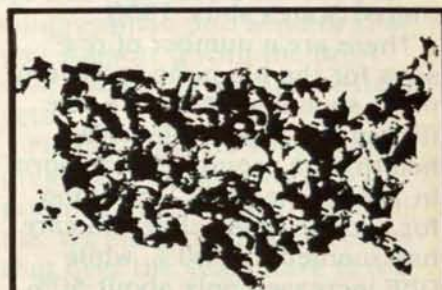
The educational component is particularly critical for farmers in dealing with these early forecasts and agricultural advisories. The structure of the Cooperative Extension Service is well suited to carry out this aspect and certainly their education mission can easily incorporate such a project. However, new communication systems reaching farmers are being developed and the incorporation of agriculture weather education material is important.

There are several ways that farmers may receive weather information. The alternatives range from NOAA weather radio broadcasts to an on-demand retrieval system where subscribers to MFB's AgriCom program, using their own on-farm computers, can access the weather forecast and the agricultural advisory as a menu item. MSU also has host computers (COMNET and PMEX) that may be utilized to retrieve weather information. Between these extremes exist such methods as

audio taped products accessed by phone, cable television systems, mail, newspapers and weekly, bi-weekly and even monthly publications.

### Questions to Consider

- Does present FB policy address the issue of a coordinated national agricultural weather service for farmers?
- What other alternatives, especially in the private sector, are available to provide farmers with reliable agricultural weather forecasts and advisories?



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The Discussion Topic is used by Community Action Groups for monthly policy discussions.

# The Federal Deficit

There's no doubt about it. The number one cause of high federal deficits is excessive government spending. As indicated in the accompanying chart, federal outlays have taken a larger and larger proportion of the Gross National Product (the output of goods and services) of the United States since 1950.

There are a number of reasons for the big jump in government spending. Medicare, the first of the massive federal health care programs, was born in 1965. Since then, spending for various types of health care has zoomed up 900%, while GNP increased only about 50%.

Social Security costs have also increased steadily. Since 1950 they've gone up 3,800%, far outstripping the GNP gain of 230% during the same period.

Spending for other income security (which includes railroad retirement, federal civilian retirement, unemployment compensation, housing assistance, food assistance and other programs) went up 525% since 1950. Again, that's compared to a GNP increase of only 230%.

Certainly defense is a big part of federal spending. But defense spending has gone up and down sharply since 1950. It went up during the Korean War, remained flat until Vietnam, increased sharply during that war and then declined steadily between 1968 and 1978. It's important to note that "real" (adjusted for inflation) defense spending in 1984 is at a level only a little higher than it was in 1968, while other categories of federal spending have continued to spiral ever upward.

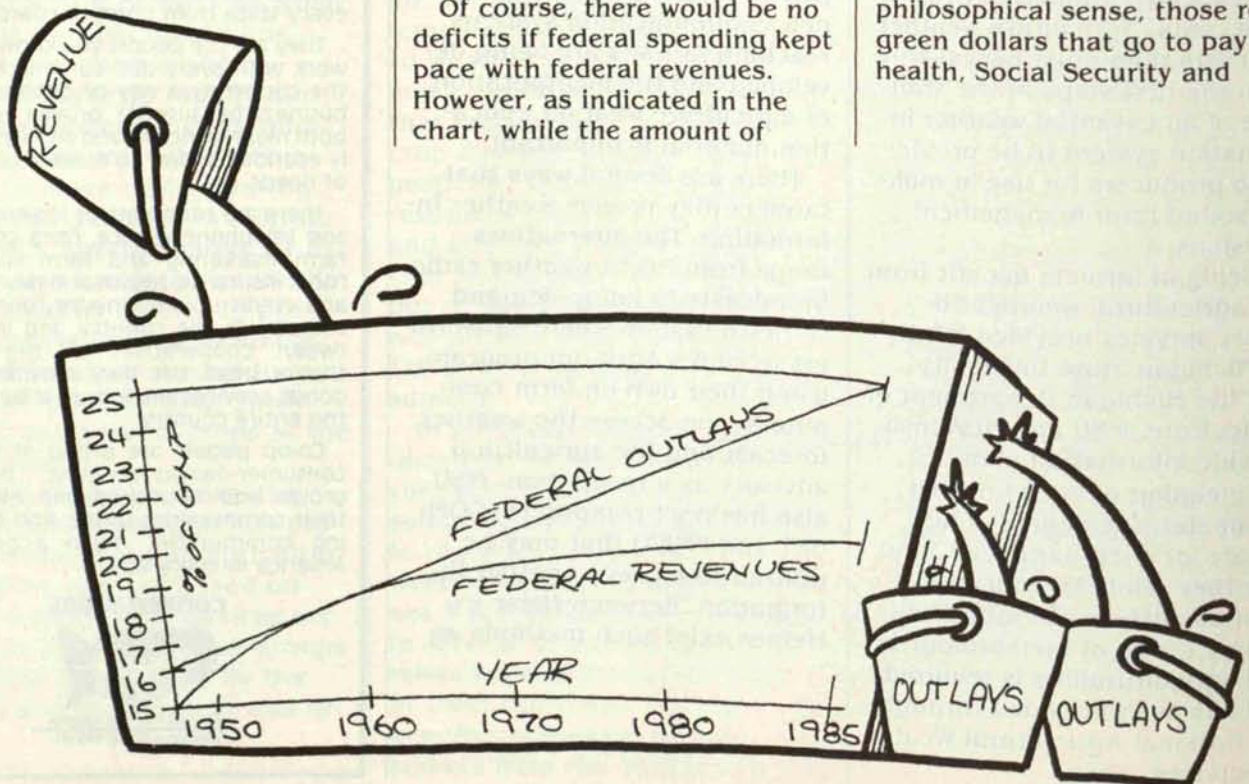
Of course, there would be no deficits if federal spending kept pace with federal revenues. However, as indicated in the chart, while the amount of

money the government takes in as a percentage of GNP has gone up, federal outlays have gone up even faster.

Imagine that the federal budget works like a watering trough with a drain in the bottom. For every gallon of water drained out, taxpayers poured a gallon in the top. But then, two drains were put in the bottom so two gallons gushed out at once. Even with taxpayers pouring a gallon and a half in the top, we still couldn't keep up. Maybe that's the origin of the phrase, "Spending money like it was water!"

## What A High Federal Deficit Means

It would be easy to say that deficits don't matter because we're only owing the money to ourselves. While that's true in a philosophical sense, those real green dollars that go to pay for health, Social Security and



other programs have to come from somewhere.

The federal treasury has two options for financing federal deficits. One is to print more money. This is known as "monetizing" the debt. But printing more money encourages inflation by boosting the amount of money in circulation and reducing the value of money already there.

The other option is to borrow money from the private credit market — banks and other financial institutions. But this can increase interest rates for everyone as the government competes with the private sector for financing. Remember, too, that if the government has to borrow \$150 billion to \$200 billion every year, just the interest payments on the national debt will become a very significant part of government spending.

### **How Can Deficits be Reduced?**

If deficits are caused by too much government spending compared to the amount of money coming in, there is an obvious solution: increase taxes.

But 20 years of tax and spend policies have subverted this "easy" solution. Since 1964, taxes as a percentage of GNP increased, but federal spending increased even faster. Going back to our watering trough example, it does no good to pour water faster into the trough at the same time that you cut more and more drains in the bottom.

Besides, "supply-side" economics explains that increasing taxes puts a drag on the economy by taking money away from

the private sector and discouraging savings and investment.

That puts us back to cutting government spending as a way to reduce deficits.

The politics of the modern age are the politics of well organized, vocal interest groups clamoring for more and more money. These groups have far more influence and pull on congressmen than do poorly organized taxpayers. That's why Farm Bureau believes there are only two viable options for cutting federal spending — a balanced budget amendment and line-item veto power for the president.

The balanced budget amendment to the constitution would require Congress to balance the budget except in times of national emergency. While many people feel that congressmen will find a way to wriggle out from under this restriction, it will still be an important brake on the tax and spend mentality.

The line-item veto would allow the president to strike particular items from the federal budget bill. Right now the president can only veto the entire spending plan. It's not likely that Congress will be eager to give up any of its spending power, but many states (including Michigan) allow their governors the use of a line-item veto. This tool would be a big and persuasive club that a president could use to enforce fiscal responsibility.

### **What Can Individual Farm Bureau Members Do?**

FB members can take action as individuals to help. Call or write your representative in the Michigan House and ask him or her to support Senate-passed legislation that directs Congress to call a constitutional convention for the purpose of

considering a balanced budget amendment. Thirty-two states have already passed such legislation, and many observers feel that Montana will soon approve such a measure. If that happens, Michigan will be in the national spotlight as the state that could push the total to 34, the number needed to force Congress to call a convention.

But Congress may act before that happens by approving a balanced budget amendment to be presented to the states. Contact your U.S. representative this fall and urge him to vote for this measure. Also tell your congressman and senator that you support giving the president the power of the line-item veto.

Finally, you can support congressional candidates who promise to be fiscally responsible. We elected the Congresses that over the years have taxed and spent, taxed and spent. We can elect a Congress that will bring spending under control.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Where can government spending be reduced?
- Are there services that the federal government now provides that could be done by the private sector?
- Should government spending for agriculture be cut to reduce the deficit? If so, which areas could be cut?

*Vote for*  
**"Friends of  
Agriculture"**  
**Nov. 6**

*See Page 31  
for listing*

## Policy Harvest

(continued from page 14)

very well and their small kerosene lanterns appear further away than they actually are."

### Solid and Hazardous Waste Disposal

— Like many others, Gratiot County FB members are concerned about disposal of solid and hazardous wastes.

"The landfill in our county will probably be closing next spring, so disposal of wastes will be a real problem," said Gratiot PD chairperson Doug Kostal. "People don't realize how hard it is becoming to get rid of trash. Nobody wants a landfill next to their property but the cost of trucking trash to other landfills is high."

At the Aug. 24 annual meeting, Gratiot County FB members adopted a local policy calling for the county board of commissioners to develop a plan, in conjunction with adjacent counties, for disposal of solid

wastes. The policy also called for recognition of the impact those plans would have on agriculture in the area.

### Contaminated Ground and Surface Water

— In Ingham County, members are concerned about ground and surface water that has become contaminated from existing landfills, runoff and improper disposal of chemicals. The PD committee is considering whether cost/benefit analysis should be applied to clean up when contaminated water is discovered. A resolution on the issue is expected at the annual meeting on Oct. 17.

**Animal Care** — The Ingham County PD committee is also preparing a resolution on the animal care issue. "This issue is very pertinent in our county right now," said PD chairperson Vivian Lott. "The board of commissioners has discussed the issue several times as it relates to the humane society's disposal of animals."

**Agricultural Drainage** — Drainage is a very controversial, but extremely important, issue in Michigan. Over 50% of our present human development and over 70% of our agricultural production depends on constructed watercourses for existence. Many of the watercourses were constructed and have been maintained in accordance with the Michigan Drain Code.

The drain code evolves from various drainage laws enacted as early as 1819. The last major revision of the drain code occurred in 1956 — 27 years ago. The current drain code reflects a piecemeal compilation having many cross references, exceptions and hidden intricacies. The result is a statute that is interpreted and applied in widely varying degrees.

Also, increasing populations and accompanying pressures on land use appear to be irreversible trends. Requirements

for drainage change as the use of land changes from the growth of society. The drain code should be revised to protect agricultural drainage needs of the 1980s and beyond.

**Water Rights** — The Legislature currently has a bill pending that would implement a recommendation of the MFB Water Rights Task Force that clarifies that commercial agricultural irrigation for food and fiber production is in the public interest and is a reasonable use of water.

H.B. 4198, known as the Michigan Farmers Right to Water Act, would clarify common law riparian doctrine by writing into law that a riparian farm operation shall have the right to use a reasonable amount of water for production of farm products. However, the water usage must conform with generally accepted agricultural and management practices as determined in rules development by the Department of Agriculture.

Opposition to H.B. 4198 is intense. Opponents include the Department of Natural Resources, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the Department of Public Health and the Michigan section of the American Water Works Association. The primary argument raised by opponents is that agriculture should not be singled out for recognition in statutory law that it has a right to use water.

Supporters of H.B. 4198 include MFB and the Michiana Irrigation Association. The supporters argue that the act is necessary because other users of water have statutory recognition that their use is recognized as in the public interest. Supporters also point out that farmers are being taken to court even before they use water by persons who claim their use of water is unreasonable, and believe that a person should not be considered guilty

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of unreasonable use of water when the first drop has not yet been used.

Demand for water from the three largest sectors of Michigan's economy — industry, agriculture and tourism — is expected to continue to increase sharply during the 1980s.

**Surprises** — Jack Laurie also expects the unexpected when the state PD committee starts getting resolutions that were passed at the county level.

"There's always a surprise when those resolutions start coming in," he said. "There will be a resolution on an issue that someone had a special interest in that no one had even thought of — that's what Farm Bureau is all about. You see those come along and others look at it and say, 'Well, you know, that person's right — we really ought to talk about that.'"

"That's what makes a strong Farm Bureau."

## Fun and Fellowship

(continued from page 19)

agents, an efficient secretary who is a tremendous help, and a seasoned campaign manager," Alvin Gaertner, who's taken his share of membership "stars" in the past several years.

Associate members are important to the growth of Farm Bureau, too, Jim believes, and there should be programs aimed at attracting and maintaining their dues support. He lists MACMA's member-to-member sales as a good benefit for both regular and associate members. That program is strengthened in Monroe County, he said, "by a super active Young Farmer Committee."

Monroe will use a \$3 rebate incentive on the Christmas or spring member-to-member sales for those who pay their mem-

berships by Dec. 31. It's a good selling tool, Jim said, "because when you call to remind them to pay their dues, you're offering them an opportunity instead of making a pressure call."

Jim confidently predicts, "We'll be the first county in the state to make goal this year."

## Community Groups and Young Farmers — 'A Natural'

"I certainly agree with Jim that Community Action Groups are the backbone of Farm Bureau," said Michael Kovacic, MFB Young Farmer Department manager and coordinator of the Community Action Group program. "We really need to get them more into the mainstream of county FB activities and recognized as a vital part of our policy development/policy execution process."

Mike also agrees with Jim's observation that the social aspects of Farm Bureau are often undersold. "Part of the reason Community Groups were originally organized was to fill the social needs of members. We should recognize that this need still exists today."

Recently assigned the dual responsibility for the Young Farmer and Community Action Groups programs, Mike believes that the two are extremely compatible.

"Community Action Groups are a logical 'next step' for the leadership development of young farmers," he said. "I'm concerned that too many young farmers, after they've illustrated their leadership potential through Discussion Meets, Distinguished Young Farmer and Outstanding Young Farmer Woman contests are 'fading away' from the Farm Bureau scene. Involvement in Community Action Groups is an excellent way for them to keep growing."

"Young Farmers and Community Action Groups — it's a natural!"

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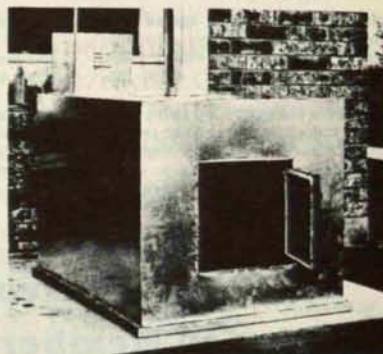
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## LIVESTOCK

**Arabian Auction** — Saturday, Oct. 27, 1 p.m. Forty head stallions, mares and 84 foals. Walnut Manor Arena, 8304 E. ML Ave., 1/2 mile south, 2 miles west of I-94 exit 85. Dale & Ruth Kirklm. For catalogues, phone 616-381-2774. (10-40p)

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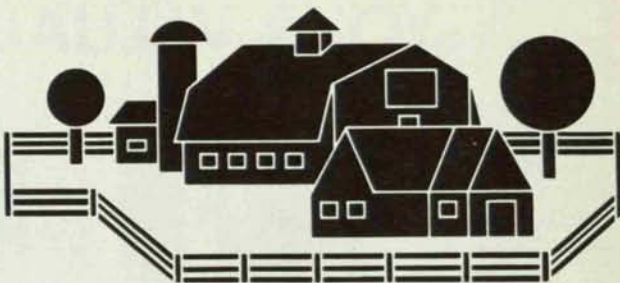
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3rd Matthew McNeely (D)  
5th Teola Hunter (D)  
7th Nelson Saunders (D)  
8th Carolyn Kilpatrick (D)  
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12th Curtis Hertel (D)  
13th William Bryant Jr. (R)  
14th Joseph Young Sr. (D)  
15th Joseph Young Jr. (D)

18th Sidney Ouwinga (R)  
19th Don Van Singel (R)  
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23rd Phil Hoffman (R)  
27th Vincent Porreca (D)  
28th Robert DeMars (D)  
36th Gerald Law (R)  
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76th James Docherty (D)  
77th Dick Allen (R)  
78th Keith Muxlow (R)  
79th John Cherry Jr. (D)

80th Floyd Clack (D)  
83rd Charles Mueller (R)  
84th John Strand (R)  
86th Lewis Dodak (D)  
87th Phillip Thompson (R)  
88th Robert Bender (R)  
89th Gary Randall (R)  
90th Victor Krause (R)  
92nd Thomas Mathieu (D)  
93rd Vernon Ehlers (R)  
94th Jelt Sietsema (D)  
97th Ed Geerlings (R)  
98th Ed Giese (R)  
99th Colleen Engler (R)  
100th J. Michael Busch (R)  
101st Tom Hickner (D)  
102nd Mike Hayes (R)  
105th Tom Alley (D)  
106th John Pridnia (R)  
107th Pat Gagliardi (D)  
109th Tom Elegeert (D)  
110th Donald Koivisto (D)

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*Watch for an interview with U.S. Senate candidate  
Jack Lousma in next month's Rural Living.*



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