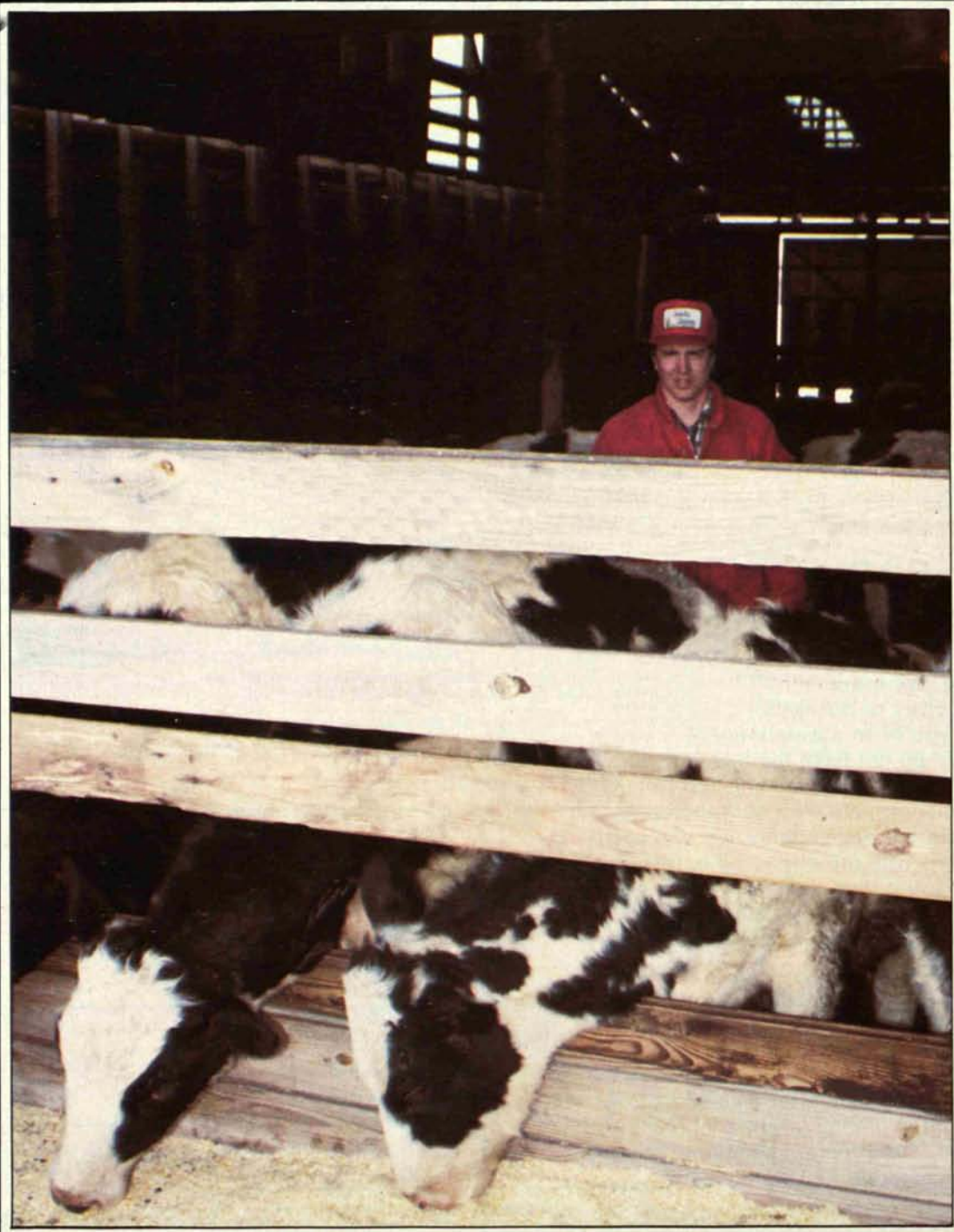


RURAL LIVING



**MFB Young Farmers
The Leader Builders**

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Lansing, MI 48909

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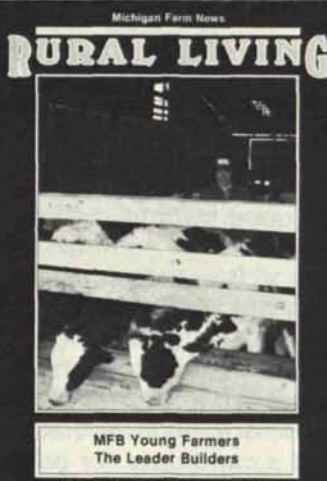
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RURAL LIVING

FARM NEWS

A publication
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Farm Bureau



MARCH 1984
VOL. 63 NO. 3

THE COVER

A commitment to farming and personal growth is typical of young farmers like Mark Smuts, who operates a cash crop and beef farm in Eaton County.

Photo by Marcia Ditchie

In this issue:

The Leader Builders

MFB Young Farmers talk about their role in state and county programs.

8

Experience, Confidence, Awareness

The two-year MALP study program offers new horizons for 30 selected Michigan farmers and agribusiness people.

13

Farm Bureau Basics

1984 Presidents' Conference focuses on FB program goals and policies.

14

Not So Ordinary People

Agriculture Week activities salute American agriculture and farm families.

20

COLUMNS

Rural Route - page 4
Country Ledger - page 5
Legislative Review - page 6
Front and Center - page 15

Farm Bureau Market Place - page 18
Rural Exchange - page 19
Agronomic Update - page 22
Discussion Topic - page 24

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Following Through on AgriPac's Commitment



The recent election of two "Friends of Agriculture" to Michigan Senate seats vacated by recalls proves that farmers, even though a small minority group, can have an impact in the political arena.

I congratulate the Macomb and Oakland County Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees for their vital input to AgriPac, a major factor in the endorsements of Rudy Nichols and Kirby Holmes. Because these committees took their responsibilities seriously, they had a positive influence on the outcome of those elections and we now have two new state senators we're confident will be supportive of our industry and our FB policies.

The Macomb and Oakland committees had an early opportunity to flex their political muscles. In so doing, they've set an example and, it is hoped, a pattern of success for all other county Candidate Evaluation Committees, whose inputs will be vital to AgriPac's success in the 1984 elections.

It was at our 1977 annual meeting that delegates decided that Michigan Farm Bureau should be involved in an "aggressive and effective" political action program. "Political decisions are made daily which affect agriculture," they said. "Farmers must be more active politically if these decisions are to be made in the best interests of agriculture. Good laws begin

where good lawmakers are elected."

Their action broke a nearly 60-year-old tradition. The 1974 and 1976 elections, when MFB endorsed a farmer for the MSU Board of Trustees, was the only time the organization had endorsed a candidate for political office.

The title "Friend of Agriculture" has become very meaningful to candidates. They know it's a title that is not passed out indiscriminately; it has to be earned.

It was time, I believe, to break that tradition. The days when nearly every legislator in Lansing and Washington, D.C., had roots on the farm and understood the unique needs of agriculture were long gone. The time had come for our organization to take the traditional individual member political involvement and blend it into a strong, organized, united effort to elect "Friends of Agriculture."

Because of the active support members have given to the program since 1978, AgriPac has scored well — an average 87% success record for the 1978, 1980 and 1982 elections. The title of "Friend of Agriculture" has become very meaningful to candidates. They know it's a title that is not passed out indiscriminately; it has to be earned.

They know, too, that FB members follow through on their commitments with active campaign support and their power at the polls. A solid farm vote for office seekers who have proven themselves worthy of the title of "Friend of Agriculture" can make a difference in the outcome of elections.

When you consider the decisions that will be made in Lansing and Washington, D.C., during the next few years — decisions that will impact on your businesses — you'll realize how important it will be to you and your industry to have those decision-makers be "Friends of Agriculture."

I strongly urge you to get geared up now to make that happen!

Elton R. Smith

President
Michigan Farm Bureau

Water: Michigan's Liquid Asset

By *Connie Turbin*

Living in a household with four teenagers, my experiences with water resources center on whether I am first or last in the shower. And, in my book, water diversion is what happens when a double sink is stopped up.

But like most Michiganders, I am becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect one of this state's greatest natural resources: Michigan's lakes and streams and groundwaters. It is an advantage in agriculture and industry, transportation and for quality of life in this state.

Planners of Farmers' Week and Natural Resources Days, March 19-24 at Michigan State University, will direct the attention of Michigan's rural and agricultural population to "Water: Michigan's Liquid Asset."

To address this issue, says program coordinator Thomas Thorburn, several nationally known individuals will speak.

Gov. James Blanchard will open the program, "Our Great Lakes: Resources for Growth and Quality," which begins at 9 a.m. Wednesday in Wells Hall. Other speakers will be S. David Freeman of the Tennessee Valley Authority and Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelly.

Lee S. Dreyfus, former governor of Wisconsin, will discuss the necessity of preventing Great Lakes water diversion when he addresses the MSU Friends of Natural Resources Banquet Wednesday evening at the Kellogg Center.

Blanchard is also the featured speaker for the Governor's Breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Thursday at Kellogg Center.

Another highlight of Farmers' Week is the annual recognition on Thursday of persons who have made outstanding contributions to Michigan agriculture. The ceremonies will take place at the President's Luncheon in Kellogg Center. This year's awards go to Carl and Edward Mantey of Fairgrove, Gerald Surbrook of Rives Junction and Claudine and Andrew Jackson of Howell.

This year's program contains about 200 sessions. With the exception of selected workshops and the luncheons and banquets, all activities are free and open to the public.

The week's educational program is roughly divided into 13 categories which include:

- Beekeeping (Tues./Weds.) — Basic information for beginners and special programs for commercial apiary managers.

- Crops and soils (Tues./Weds.) — Focus on biological agricultural systems, Michigan alfalfa production and conservation tillage.

- Dairy (Mon./Weds./Thurs.) — Looks at producing dairy cattle for the beef market (is part of the alfalfa program). There is also a session for dairy goat producers.

- Family, health and home (Mon.-Thurs.) — Classes are on rural living in Third World countries, handling pesticide contaminated clothing, dealing with family stress, handling farm accidents and keeping the farm family in good health.

- Farm management and computer workshops (Tues.-Thurs.) — Provides guidelines from marketing grains to learning how to use the computer for dairy, livestock and poultry operations. Several of the com-

puter workshops have entry fees and limited enrollment.

- Farm mechanization (Tues.-Thurs.) — Offers "hands-on" workshops ranging from calibration of pesticide sprayers to welding farm equipment. These workshops have fees and limited enrollment.

- Gardening (Weds./Thurs.) — Sessions are for flower and vegetable gardeners, for persons interested in growing fruit and nut trees, in fruit tree pruning techniques, or who are interested in historical and European gardens.

- Integrated pest management (Mon.-Fri.) — Training in pest control for farmers and commercial representatives. Advanced registration is required for these classes and there is a fee.

- Livestock and horses (Tues.-Thursday) — Classes on feeding dairy cattle for the beef market, and production guidelines for raising swine and horses.

- Natural resources (Mon.-Sat.) — Focuses on preservation and management of Michigan's water resources, expansion of tourism, management of private woodlands and preservation of Michigan's non-game wildlife.

- Diet and exercise (Tues.) — Features several nationally prominent experts in nutrition. Examines the effect of diet and exercise on physical and mental health.

- Poultry (Mon./Tues.) — Features the Michigan State Coturnix Science Fair and Olympics. There is also a session on raising pigeons.

- Rural sociology (Thurs.) — An in-depth look at the quality of drinking water and the effects of acid rain.

EDB Ruling Acceptable to Farmers

WASHINGTON

EDB Tolerance Levels —

Following the EPA's announcement of new restrictions on the pesticide ethylene dibromide, AFBF said that the tolerance levels were "acceptable and would not pose a major problem for farmers."

The new restrictions suspend the use of EDB as a fumigant for grain to be stored and shipped in the future, and establish residue levels for grain and grain-based products already in the food production chain. EPA deferred setting new residue levels on citrus products for a few weeks.

AFBF expressed the hope that the federal order would encourage conformity of EDB standards among the states.

MDA has indicated that Michigan will follow the federal guideline at this time. The EPA standard sets tolerance levels at 900 ppb (parts per billion) for raw grains, 150 ppb for intermediate/milled grains, and 30 ppb for ready to eat products.

EDB is no longer used as a soil fumigant by farmers. In Michigan, the total use of EDB for agricultural purposes was below 1,500 lbs. in 1983.

Fiscal Year 1985 Budget —

The \$30 billion cut in the 1985 federal budget deficit, proposed by President Reagan in his budget message to Congress, was termed a place from which to start really serious spending cuts by AFBF.

By projecting revenues of \$738 billion in 1985, and spending of \$925.5 billion, the proposed deficit will be roughly \$180 billion. The 1984 federal deficit projection is \$210 billion.

AFBF said that while the administration's deficit expectations are going in the right direction, they are still way above acceptable levels.

The administration and Congress should abandon talk of reducing the deficit by adding more taxes, AFBF said, and get down to the business of whittling away at those entitlement programs, which have been growing instead of shrinking for the past three years, despite all pledges to the contrary.

Health Insurance Coverage for the Unemployed —

Legislation which would provide health insurance protection for the unemployed is on the calendar for Senate consideration early in this session. The bill, H.R. 3021, which was passed by the House last year, has an estimated first year cost of \$2 billion.

As currently written, the bill would amend the Social Security Act, providing for federal/state cost sharing to provide coverage for persons whose employers do not provide health insurance as an employee benefit. For those persons who are laid off by employers who do not provide such a benefit, employers would be required to extend the same benefit for 90 days after employees are removed from their payrolls.

Several Senate bills also address the subject, and include similar provisions.

The administration has made it known that it would not approve of any bill on this subject which would increase the deficit. That means, in effect, that funding for the program would come from employers or that the public portion of the funding would require a new source of funds or cuts in other programs. Proposals for public funds include a \$2 billion cut in the general Medicaid program, and an amendment to the federal income tax law to tighten the rules on income averaging.

Farmers have an interest in this legislation. First, none of the bills exclude seasonal workers from eligibility. Second, changes in income tax averaging would mean a sizable tax increase for many farmers, whether or not they are employers.

Commission on Modern Farming Practices —

Thirty-six congressmen, including Rep. Dennis Hertel and Rep. Sander Levin, have added their names as co-sponsors of legislation which would create a commission on modern farming practices. The bill, H.R. 3170, which has the active support of the Humane Society of the United States, currently has about twice as many co-sponsors as similar legislation in the previous Congress.

FB opposes the legislation, citing the following reasons why H.R. 3170 is not necessary:

- The USDA Agriculture Research Service has made available \$380,000 to eight univer-

sity research groups and two ARS research facilities to determine if there is animal stress due to commercial agricultural practices in the U.S.; if so, quantitate it and recommend methods of removing stress. The studies were undertaken with confined swine, caged layers and dairy-veal calves.

•Congress has directed the Food and Drug Administration to undertake epidemiological studies to determine whether there is an association between the use of feed antibiotics and a reduction of antibiotic effectiveness in humans. The results of the studies should be available in 1984.

•It is premature to pass legislation before these studies are completed.

LANSING

Grain Dealers and Uniform Commercial Code — S.B. 55 and 56, sponsored by Sen. Smith, would amend the Grain Dealers Act and Uniform Commercial Code. Much time has been spent on these bills, working with the financial community, grain associations, bean shippers and others to address concerns in the bill. The bill has been assigned to a subcommittee of the House Agriculture Committee. FB supports S.B. 55 and the concept of S.B. 56.

Grain Insurance — H.B. 4319, sponsored by Rep. Spaniola, provides for a Mandatory Grain Insurance Fund. Numerous conversations with industry, finance and grain

(continued on page 29)

Legislators Do Listen

By Dawn Wilkinson
Allegan County

It was my good fortune to be able to "tag along" with MFB Legislative Counsel Ron Nelson recently to find out just what a lobbyist does. The job he and Senior Legislative Counsel Bob Smith do for us is incredible!

I began my day with Ron at 8:30 a.m. Of course, he was already into his work day having made several calls, and been through the mail. Ron's time is divided between his office at FB Center and downtown Lansing.

Today was no different. We went to the capitol where we sat in on a committee hearing on trails in Michigan. Representatives of the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources and the federal government were there. As many farmers and rural people are well aware, property can be damaged when some ski and snowmobile enthusiasts overstep their boundaries.

We were then off to Rep. Don Koivisto's office. He is chairperson of the House Agriculture and Forestry Committee. A big concern now is the handling of grain elevator bankruptcies. Ron and Koivisto traded ideas on that topic.

Next we attended the subcommittee hearing on this issue. The entire hearing was an encouragement to me, as I sat there and listened to the committee members' willingness to understand the issue. One sometimes gets skeptical, especially out on the farm, when we see urban legislators dealing with rural issues. It is good to know that they do listen.

During the hearing, which was dealing with H.B. 4319, S.B. 55 and S.B. 56, Ron explained Farm Bureau's position.

Several other stops in and out of the capitol were made before we drove back to FB Center. I asked Ron how we, as Farm Bureau members, could be more effective. He responded with three points:

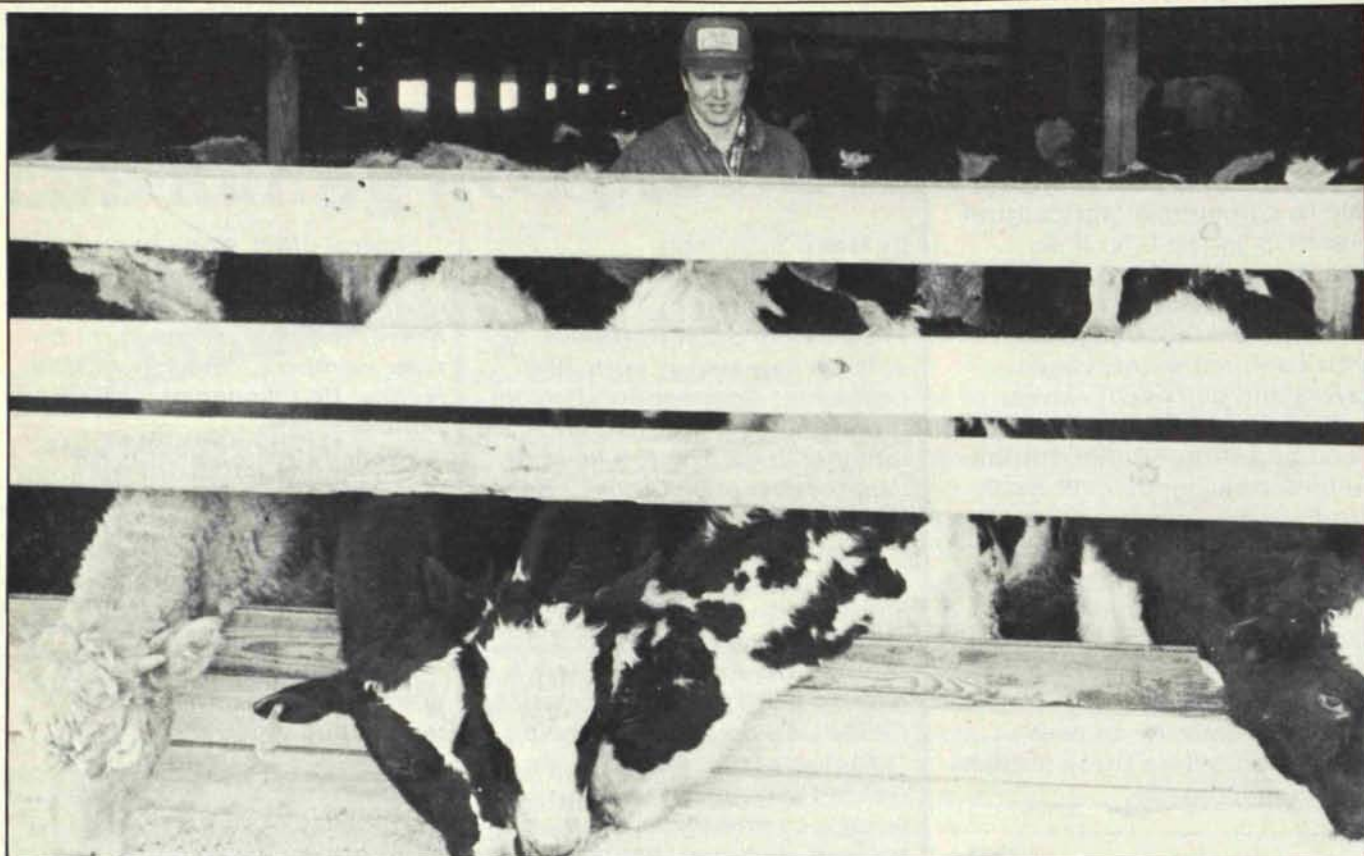
- Policy development is for real — get involved.
- MFB is a wonderful tool, use it or lose it. Ron likened the members' involvement to a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes.
- Make yourself available to your legislators. They value your input.



Dawn Wilkinson, Allegan County Information chairperson, recently spent the day with Legislative Counsel Ron Nelson and found that "legislators do listen."

In conclusion, I would like to make one very important point. Farm Bureau offers its members many benefits. Some are long-term and some are short. I was reminded of this by my day of observing one of our legislative counsels in action.

His use of MFB policy — your policy — to influence legislation can and will affect our industry for years to come in the form of laws and regulations. Hats off to Ron and his colleagues for the job they do for us!



Farming is first on the list of priorities for young farm families. Active Farm Bureau Young Farmer leader Mark Smuts operates an 1,800-acre cash crop and beef operation in Eaton County, not far from FB Center in Lansing where he volunteers his "spare" time to the statewide leadership development program.

The Leader Builders

By Cathy J. Kirvan, Marcia Ditchie & Connie Turbin

At 23, after three years of farming and two years as a Farm Bureau member, Mark Smuts was elected president of the Eaton County Farm Bureau in autumn 1977.

It wasn't until he attended the Young Farmer Leader Conference the following year, however, that he realized the full scope of the organization.

"That's where I really caught fire for what Farm Bureau has to offer and how great an organization it is," he said.

He is currently serving his second year as chairperson of the MFB Young Farmer Committee and as Young Farmer representative on the MFB board of

directors. He was recently appointed to a two-year term on the AFBF Young Farmer & Rancher Committee.

Mark is also involved in many organizations besides Farm Bureau. He serves on several local boards and advisory councils and is a township trustee.

"I'm sure that what I've been able to accomplish so far in my life is because of the leadership ability that was spawned in Farm Bureau," he said.

As state Young Farmer chairperson, Mark assists committee members in planning activities designed to surface and train other young farm leaders. One of their major projects is the annual Young Farmer Leader Conference, scheduled this year for Feb. 29-March 2 at the Lans-

ing Sheraton Inn.

The conference includes sessions on farm partnerships, marketing, the outlook for agriculture, estate planning, time management and current legislation. The Young Farmer program at the county, state and national level is also explained to conference participants.

"Our leadership conference is bringing a lot of new people into the Young Farmer program," Mark said. "We think that's great — that's what we're having it for."

The contests the Young Farmer Committee sponsors also bring new people into the Young Farmer program, surfacing potential future leaders for Farm Bureau and building

their leadership skills.

"The addition of prizes into the competition is helping stimulate some involvement," Mark said. "But almost all contestants have been somewhat involved in county programs before they agree to compete for a state title."

Discussion meets are held at the county, district and state levels. The winner of the state contest represents Michigan at the national meet during the AFBF annual meeting.

Last year's winner, Paul Jefts of Mecosta County, also received use of a Chevrolet S-10 pick-up for one year. He orders a new truck every three months from his local dealership, Franck & Wood Chevrolet of Big Rapids.

"We're very proud to have a young man of Paul's caliber in our community," said Wes Knight, sales manager at the dealership. "Paul and his dad have been buying cars and trucks from us for over 20 years, and I think it's fantastic that he won the contest — he worked hard for it and deserved to win."

The Distinguished Young Farmer contest recognizes an individual or couple for the quality of their farming operation and their degree of involvement in their community. Winners of the 1983 award, Glenn & Suzie Preston of Branch County, receive use of an Allis Chalmers tractor for a year. Allis Chalmers also sponsors the national competition, which Glenn competed in during the AFBF annual meeting.

"As a manufacturer of farm equipment, Allis Chalmers is vitally interested in the future of farming," said Sam Smith, manager of Allis Chalmers' tractor marketing and lawn and garden operations. "This Young Farmer program is designed to promote the continued involvement of young farmers in the improvement of their farm, community activities and Farm Bureau activities."

Paul & Denise Jefts (right) are driving a new Chevy S-10 truck thanks to Paul's win in the MFB Discussion Meet.

Glenn Preston (center) is awaiting delivery of the Allis Chalmers 6000 series tractor that was his prize as Distinguished Young Farmer. A miniature model sits atop his AgriCom screen where it is a daily reminder of the "prize package."

Two time winner, Laurie Isley (bottom right), says she has the best prize of all: six-month-old Alysa. Isley, who is the 1983 Outstanding Young Farm Woman, will attend the Washington Legislative Seminar next month.

"Allis Chalmers believes that this involvement by young farmers will benefit agriculture in the long term, providing progressive farmers who have demonstrated their leadership abilities through participation in the very sound Young Farmer program," Smith said.

The winner of the Outstanding Young Farm Woman contest receives an expense paid trip to the annual Washington Legislative Seminar. She also serves as a spokesperson for agriculture throughout the year. The winner of the 1983 contest, Laurie Isley of Lenawee County, also won the Discussion Meet last year.

"We expect stiff competition in 1984 for the Young Farmer contests," Mark said. "The prizes — and the expense paid trip to the AFBF annual meeting next January in Hawaii for two of the winners — are helping to stimulate interest, but we're careful that we don't lose sight of the fact that we're here to surface and develop leadership, not to give out prizes."

So far, the contests are accomplishing their objective. "The young farmers who compete in these contests tend to go into other areas of leadership in their counties," Mark said. "And of course that leadership surfaces on the state level a few years later."



The state committee also sponsors an FFA/Producers Forum and an MSU Ag Tech visitation program each year.

At the county level, Young Farmer groups are involved in a variety of other activities ranging from Ag Accident Rescue Seminars to mall displays to MACMA sales coordination.



MFB Discussion Meet winner Paul Jefts attributes his own growth to participation in the Young Farmer program and to his family. Paul and his wife, Denise, are the third generation on the family's Mecosta County farm. They are pictured here with the promising fourth generation, Karen, 6, and Carl, 2.

Award Offers New Tool for Leader Building

Paul Jefts may get a lot of young farmers to join Mecosta County Farm Bureau this year. He's got a new membership tool — it's blue and silver, has four wheels and can transport a lot of young farmers to a bonfire after a hay ride.

His new tool is the Chevrolet S-10 pick-up truck he won for a year in the 1983 MFB Discussion Meet. And what he's selling, besides membership, is the opportunity for personal development and growth.

The Mecosta County Young Farmer group has grown tremendously, both in numbers and in leadership. The group won a gold star at the state annual and had finalists in all three state contests.

Paul attributes the successes of the young farmers to their participation throughout the

Farm Bureau organization and their communities.

"The people in the Young Farmer program are involved in the county's Ag Council, on the county Farm Bureau board, on many committees and as 4-H leaders. You name it and they're involved in it," he said.

Paul attributes his own growth to participation in the Young Farmer program and to his family.

"Coming from a third generation family farm is an asset. My parents and my grandfather were very active and that helps pass down ideals."

His grandfather started farming outside Big Rapids near Clear Lake about 60 years ago. In 1953 his parents, Glenn and Marian, started a beef and cash crop operation. Glenn also worked full-time off the farm.

Paul said he had always wanted to farm and decided to

go into it full-time in 1975, after a variety of other jobs.

"We went into dairying with the plan that my father was going to help me become the future owner of the farm," Paul said. "And the best way to do it at that time was through dairy. Ten years down the road we might be hog producers or we might be cash croppers. This farm is going to change to whatever the best avenue is."

In 1980 the farm was financially stable enough for Denise to quit her job as a legal secretary and work full-time on the farm.

"I was raised in the city of Grand Rapids. It was a tough transition for a while, but I did it," she said. "Now I can't imagine doing anything else."

In 1981, Paul and Denise purchased his father's share of the dairy herd. They now lease his 360 acres of land and equipment, but will begin purchasing it soon.

The Jefts milk between 40 and 50 cows and maintain a herd of about 150. They're also considering opening a road-side vegetable stand after the success of the U-pick pumpkin patch Denise started in 1982.

Paul is very proud of his farm heritage. "The first thing I said to my dad after being named runner-up in the Distinguished Young Farmer contest, was 'look what the farm got.' It wasn't just me who did it. I didn't build all the buildings. I didn't do all the painting . . . look what the farm got for recognition."

Paul also shares the credit for his triumph in the Discussion Meet, although he admits he originally got into it as a "fluke."

"When I was 28 I agreed to participate in a district meet in order to get some younger farmers involved." Paul was one of the district winners that year and went on to the state meet.

He and Denise began preparing for the next year's competition by clipping articles on the four topics as soon as they were announced. Toward the end of the year, Paul visited with experts on the topics. Before each meet they would organize the material and prepare an outline.

In 1982 he again won at the district level and was first runner-up in the state.

"I felt fortunate, this year, that I didn't win last year," Paul said. "As always, that one more year of experience gives you the advantage."

Paul said he feels strongly that the other finalists in the state meet — first runner-up Dale Kettler of Saginaw County, Neal Sanford of Jackson County and Pat Albright of Branch County — deserve recognition for doing a good job, after putting so much time and effort into researching the topics.

"I plan to incorporate that into my speech down at the Young Farmer Leader Conference," Paul

said. "I'm hoping those guys will be there. If they're not, I'm going to suggest to the others from their counties that they pat them on the back and tell them what a good job they did. Win, lose or draw, they participated for you."

Paul was a finalist in the national competition in Orlando, Fla. "I was the only guy in the national meet finals who didn't have a college education. To me that meant a lot."

Soon after returning from Orlando, Paul picked up the first of four Chevy S-10 trucks from Franck & Wood Chevrolet in Big Rapids (he gets a new one every three months). Within a couple hours, he was using it to increase participation in Young Farmer programs.

A hog farmer who lives down the road had seen Paul in town with the truck and stopped by to visit. Paul invited the young man and his wife to attend the upcoming Young Farmer Leader Conference at the county's ex-

pense. When the man hesitated, Paul suggested that he discuss it with his wife and offered to come down in a few days to discuss it further. . . while riding in the new truck.



Jefts is the proud recipient of a new blue and silver Chevy truck. Just hours later he was using the new "tool" to recruit more young farmers into the county program.

Paul said he will continue to utilize his new membership tool — the color may change as he trades it in every three months, but the opportunities it promises will be the same.

Isley Gains Leadership Experience From Young Farmer Program

It's over 1,300 miles from Dallas to Washington, D.C., but for Laurie Isley the distance translates to two state Young Farmer titles in two years.

At the 1982 MFB annual meeting, the Lenawee County young farmer won the state Discussion Meet and the opportunity to represent Michigan in the national contest at the AFBF annual meeting in Dallas in January 1983.

Then, at the 1983 MFB annual meeting, Laurie became the first person to capture back-to-back state Young Farmer titles by being selected as the Outstanding Young Farm Woman. In that role, she will participate in the Washington Legislative

Seminar in April in the nation's capitol.

"I feel it is quite an honor to hold these two titles in consecutive years," Laurie said. "Competing in the Discussion Meet last year helped me tremendously in the Outstanding Young Farm Woman contest because I was up-to-date on a lot of agricultural subjects and both contests stressed public speaking. I'm looking forward to the Washington seminar and the opportunity to meet with my congressman, John Dingell, from whom I received a letter asking me to visit his office."

Laurie became involved in the Young Farmer program in 1981 when a friend invited her to "come and watch" a Discussion Meet. Instead of watching, she

ended up competing and went on to become first runner-up in the state contest that year.

She is now serving as chairperson of the Lenawee County Young Farmer Committee and feels that the group's purpose is to develop programs that meet the needs of the county's young farmers.

"On the state level, I think one of the best programs they have is the Young Farmer Leader Conference," Laurie said. "Both my husband, Jim, and I attended the conference a couple years ago. It was a real exciting experience for us. It gave us the chance to exchange ideas and compare problems with other

young farmers and it really got us motivated on becoming more involved in Farm Bureau."



Time out for their new daughter doesn't mean time out from farming and leadership activities for Laurie & Jim Isley. The couple is actively involved in the county Young Farmer program and operate a 300-acre farm near Palmyra in Lenawee County.

Even though the county Young Farmer Committee received a gold star for its program last year, Laurie feels they are just getting started.

"We have a small group of people who are quite involved, yet we have trouble sometimes drawing enough people to make the programs we plan run as smoothly as we'd like," she said. "I'd like to see it spread over a broader base with a smaller core group that does the planning and more people to draw on for the actual activities.

"The best thing about the Young Farmer program in our county, however, is that most of the people on our committee are also involved in other aspects of Farm Bureau," Laurie said. "A very active member of our committee is also membership chairperson this year, which helps get our group involved in membership as well as tie all the groups together."

What does the program need to become even better?

"I would like to see more participation from a broader base," she said. "Once that starts, I would like to see a transfer of leadership from those of us who

(continued on page 27)

Young Farmers Build for Ag Understanding

In the winter quiet of a warm kitchen, unhurried conversation gives the opportunity to listen beyond the interview responses of Glenn and Suzie Preston.

There is time to notice Suzie's expressive eyes and quick, bright smile as she talks about the hectic family schedule in early December when Glenn received MFB's Distinguished Young Farmer award at the state annual meeting, and the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth, just three days later. Her pride shows, though it is reserved, not boastful.

This is what we are, they seem to say — hardworking, home-based, part of the family farm. Glenn is the more reserved of the couple. He is given to careful, considered speech, and thoughtful answers.

And he admits that he is just a little uncomfortable with appearances before farm audiences. "Farmers need to talk to those outside of our industry," he says. "We need to find ways to help non-farm people relate to the similarities and differences between the business of farming and their businesses."

Finance, interest rates, cash flow and government regulation, he says, are major areas of concern to all farmers, especially to young farmers. And they are issues of concern to other business people.

"I feel more effective before a group of Rotarians or the Chamber of Commerce," Glenn says. "Public relations is important, and while I recognize that we hire competent people to communicate with these non-farm groups, nothing beats actual communication with a working farmer."



Glenn Preston says his FB involvement was as natural as marrying the girl next door — which he did. Their daughter, Elizabeth, was born three days after he received the DYF award. Glenn & Suzie also have a son, David, 4.

Glenn is well equipped to do the job of communications. At 30, he has experienced some of the best leadership training opportunities the ag industry has to offer: FFA American Farmer Degree in 1975, 1976 MFB Discussion Meet winner, county and state FB Young Farmer Committee member and state Young Farmer chairperson, Young Farmer representative to the MFB board of directors, MFB Policy Development Committee member, and Michigan Agricultural Leadership Program (MALP) participant in 1982-83.

"My involvement with Farm Bureau was as natural as marrying the girl next door (which he did)," Glenn says. "When I was young, there were community group meetings and potlucks at my parents' home. As I grew older, I saw that the successful

(continued on page 27)

Michigan Agricultural Leadership Program Goals

EXPERIENCE, CONFIDENCE

AWARENESS

By Therese Nichols

It was difficult to believe that the 30 people gathered at Michigan State University's Kellogg Center had met as a group for the first time only four days before. Their common goal seemed to bring a special cohesiveness and friendship to the group.

That common goal is building their leadership skills through the Michigan Agricultural Leadership Program (MALP). These 30 MALP participants will spend 60 days together during the next two years sharing community, state, national and international experiences that will equip them to be effective agricultural leaders.

During their first week together, Jan 16-20, they learned about leadership at the community level through guest speakers and by visiting local businesses.

"We have been looking at local and community issues and how to identify leadership in the community," MALP participant Kenneth Hofmeister of Tuscola County said.

They also had sessions to help them learn more about themselves, and discover who they are. To Hofmeister, one of the most interesting meetings was on listening. "I found out that we only retain about 25 percent of what we hear," he said.

The major objective of MALP is to "try to help the participants understand themselves and their fellow citizens," said Eugene Trotter, MALP director. "We try to help them understand the social, economic and political systems in which these people function — then use this framework to analyze complex problems facing people in agriculture and rural communities. To do all this we try our best to increase their level of confidence."

"One reason I applied was because there are so many things I don't know about Michigan, its economy and how things work," said MALP participant Bonnie Gazdag of Kalamazoo County.

"That is what I am really looking forward to learning."

The group will meet again in March to study government at the state level and continue discovering the answer to "Who am I?" During the following session, the participants will travel to Detroit for a week.

"Detroit is so different from anything they've experienced," Trotter said. The welfare system in Detroit and the different cultural groups made a lasting impression on the 1982 MALP participants, he said. "You only understand your own community when you have something to compare it to."

"I'm looking forward to seeing people of different backgrounds in Detroit such as the very poor and the very rich," Gazdag said. "It is an experience to see different people and how they live and what is acceptable, and unacceptable."

According to Trotter, plans are not definite yet where the MALP group will visit on the national and international trips. "During the last international trip in 1983, there wasn't one person who didn't come back

(continued on page 27)

Nuts & Bolts Session Focuses on Farm Bureau Basics

By Connie Turbin

"This year's Presidents' Conference was planned to be a real nuts and bolts session. And from the feedback we're getting from the participants thus far, I'd say it was appreciated," says Al Almy, chairperson of the MFB staff committee that planned and coordinated the 1984 conference for county presidents, executive committee members, and their spouses.

During the two-day conference in Lansing, Jan. 30-31, the county leaders dealt entirely with Farm Bureau issues including executive committee performance, member service programs, member participation and basic policy issues.

Participants in a Community Action Group workshop got down to the basic grassroots structure of the organization and identified some ways to strengthen and expand the program.

"Based on what we discussed in this session, our board will be taking a look at existing groups here in Gladwin County to determine their strengths and weaknesses," says County President Clay Maxwell. "That should give us some clues to ways to establish new groups, and to identify those members with the needs and potential to be involved in a community action group. It was a good session. It spurred some thinking and offered some good ideas."

Other workshop sessions focused on political action committees and the Farm Bureau Women's program.

The leaders got good background information on the philosophies and objectives of Farm Bureau at the local, state and national level, says Almy. That's important, he says, to

developing leaders who know the organization, its philosophy and programs inside and out.

"It also provided them with the opportunity to get to know one another and discuss what's going right and what's not right in the county organization," Almy says. "That's an integral part of the conference. In fact, the recommendation came from several of the county presidents that similar, less formal gatherings be held during the year to foster the exchange of ideas."

The conference also drew upon the experience and expertise of organizational leadership in other states and in AFBF.



Iowa Farm Bureau Executive Secretary Dale Nelson cautioned against "playing it safe." Farm Bureau, he said, must be willing to tackle tough issues and stay in a leadership position.

Analyzing tough economic
(continued on page 28)

Group discussion and one-to-one communication at the Presidents' Conference gave leaders a chance to question FB staff and resource persons. Pictured are: (top) Clare County Vice President Richard Kleinhardt and AFBF staffer Ross Korves; (center) Cheboygan and St. Joseph FB Presidents William Collins and Marlin Outman with MFB's Al Almy; and (bottom) MFB Women's program manager Rosemary Kartes and Paula & Keith Preston of Branch County.



An international trade forum, sponsored by AFBF March 1-2, will feature keynote speaker William Brock, U.S. trade representative. The two-day forum is designed to provide a thorough review of world market conditions, examine the U.S. position in world markets, and define what FB members and their organization can do to increase U.S. world market share. MFB President and AFBF Vice President Elton Smith will be the forum chairperson.

Sen. Nick Smith (R-19th District) is the new chairperson of the Senate Agriculture Committee. The recent election of two Republicans to seats vacated by recalls gave control of the Senate to the Republican Party, and the right to select committee chairpersons. Other changes occurring during the reorganization of the Senate will be announced later. Smith, who operates a farm near Addison in Lenawee County, served in the Michigan House from 1978 to 1982 and has served in the Senate since 1983.

Applications for the Marge Karker-Farm Bureau Scholarship are being accepted through March 9 by the MFB Women's Department. The scholarship, which was developed in 1966 to honor Marge Karker's 20 years of service as coordinator of MFB women's activities, is applied toward tuition for fall term at MSU. Two \$300 scholarships were awarded in 1983. The amount and number of scholarships for 1984 have not yet been determined. All students who qualify will be interviewed. Applications are available from county secretaries and the MFB Women's Department, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909.

Farm days mall shows sponsored by county FBs will bring the farm to the city at eight Michigan malls during March and April. In many locations, the popular event is scheduled to coincide with Agriculture Week activities. Mall show dates and locations are: March 3-4 — Copper Country Mall, Escanaba; March 15-17 — Westwood Mall, Jackson; March 16-17 — Adrian Mall; March 23-24 — Muskegon Mall; March 23-25 — Arborland Mall, Ann Arbor, and Maple Hill Mall, Kalamazoo; April 12-14 — North Kent Mall, Grand Rapids; and April 27 — Port Huron Mall. Mall shows at the Saginaw Fashion Square Mall and the Genesee Valley Mall were held during February.

"Water: Michigan's Liquid Asset" will be the theme of the 1984 Farmers' Week and Natural Resources Days March 19-24 on the MSU campus. The week-long activity features over 200 sessions including workshops, seminars, lectures, exhibits and association meetings. Details of the programs are in the free Farmers' Week and Natural Resources Days guidebook now available from county Cooperative Extension offices.

Two sessions of advanced training for planning commissioners will be offered by the Michigan Society of Planning Officials in April. The sessions, which will be held April 16 at Kellogg Center in East Lansing, and April 17 at the Grayling Holiday Inn, will address critical improvement programming. Participants will examine planning and processes for the physical expansion of public services with emphasis on appropriate locations, proper timing and sound financing. For further information or a registration form, contact: MSPO, P.O. Box 18187, Lansing, Mich. 48901; phone 517-484-3333.

"Agricultural Labor: Managing the Human Resource" will be the topic of a conference sponsored by MFB and AFBF March 14-15 in Grand Rapids. The March 14 program offers resource workshops and general sessions on agricultural labor forecasting, current and pending legislation and management training. The March 15 program is an intensive, limited-enrollment seminar for employers and supervisors of agricultural labor. The seminar will deal with selected labor management topics and human resource management skills. Conference information and registration forms are available from the MFB Public Affairs Division, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909; phone 517-323-7000, ext. 559.

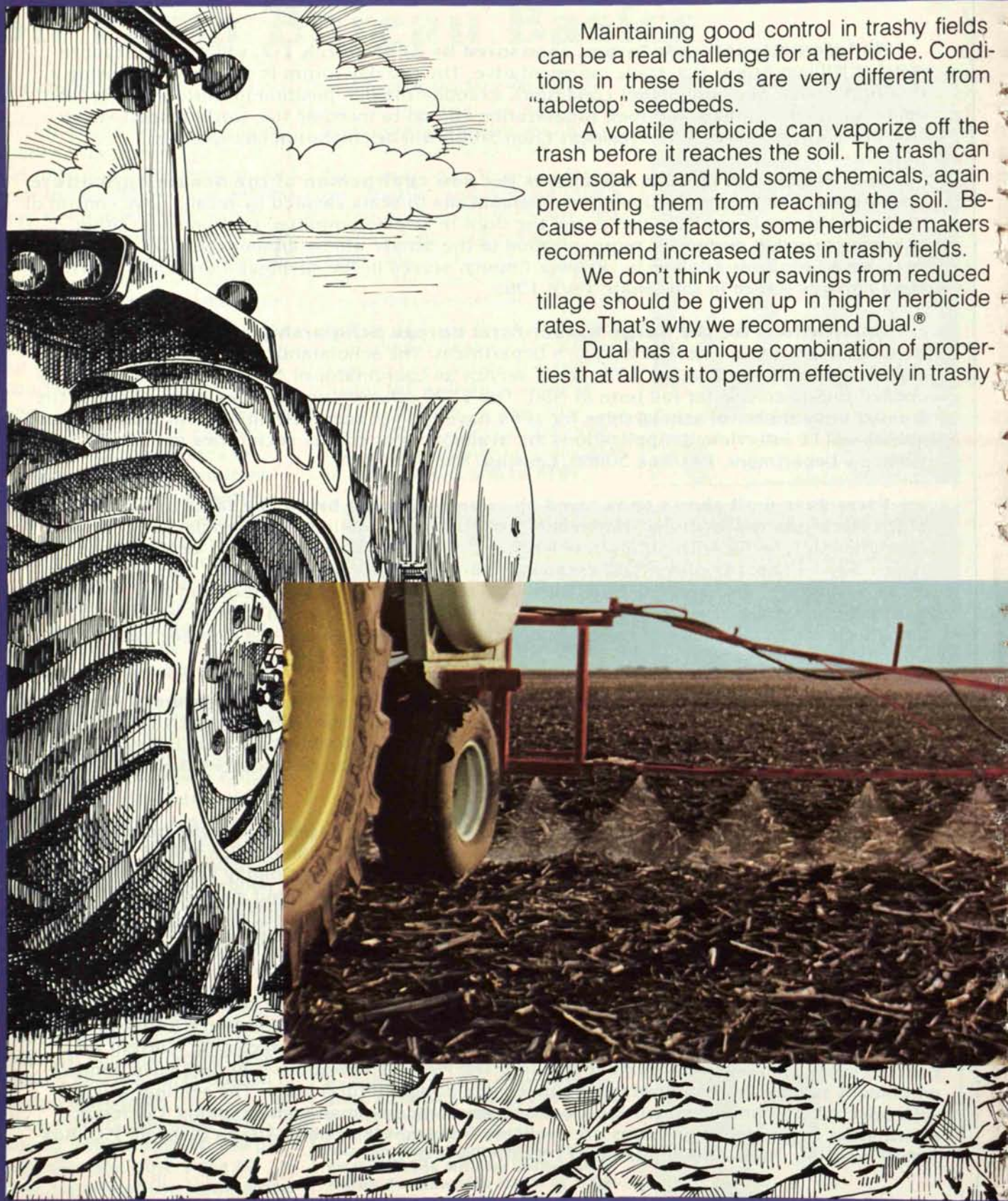
TRASHY FIELDS: HOW YOU CAN STILL

Maintaining good control in trashy fields can be a real challenge for a herbicide. Conditions in these fields are very different from "tabletop" seedbeds.

A volatile herbicide can vaporize off the trash before it reaches the soil. The trash can even soak up and hold some chemicals, again preventing them from reaching the soil. Because of these factors, some herbicide makers recommend increased rates in trashy fields.

We don't think your savings from reduced tillage should be given up in higher herbicide rates. That's why we recommend Dual.[®]

Dual has a unique combination of properties that allows it to perform effectively in trashy



GET GOOD CONTROL.

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First, Dual has the lowest volatility of any grass herbicide for corn and beans. That means virtually all of it stays where you spray it, instead of vaporizing off the trash.

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Because of its unique properties, Dual can give you a lot of flexibility. Using the same low rate, you can surface apply or incorporate

it with a single pass. Either way, Dual will deliver longer-lasting grass control. From two to four weeks longer. Increased surface trash doesn't have to mean less effective grass control or costly increased rates of herbicide. It just means that you need the right herbicide for the conditions. That's Dual.

Want to know more about conservation tillage? For an informative 68-page booklet prepared by the editors of Successful Farming magazine, write to Direct Response Dept. at the address below and request your free copy of "The Conservation Tillage Guide."

Ciba-Geigy, Ag. Div., Box 18300, Greensboro, NC 27419

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FARM BUREAU MARKET PLACE

FARM EQUIPMENT

Badger Northland equipment for sale: lagoon agitators and tanks, roller mills, ear corn mills, bale choppers, etc. Also, we rent manure tanks and agitators. Plummer Supply, 616-792-2215. (3-3t-27p)

Farrowing Stalls — All steel \$179.20. Includes feeder-waterer, top rail, rump rail. Weighs 196#. Free literature. Starr National, 219 Main, Colchester, IL 62326. (3-24p-ts)

Wanted to buy: 16 inch David Bradley silo filler, International riding horse cultivator, International No. 9 and John Deere No. 4 mowing machine, John Spezia, Leonard, Mich. 48038, phone 313-628-4147. (3-29p)

LIVESTOCK

Sheep, C & S Curtils. Reg. Suffolks and Reg. Southdowns. Helping small flock owners and 4-H'ers our special interest. 204 N. Williams, Stockbridge, Mich. 517-851-7043 — 517-851-8017. (7-12t-22p)

Paint Horses — Weanlings, yearlings, bred mares. Lawrance Baumunk, Big Rapids, Mich. 1-616-796-2346. (9-10t-12p)

CLASSIFIED AD POLICY

Members pay 10¢ per word for non-commercial ads and 15¢ per word for ads which promote a commercial business other than agriculture. All other advertisers pay 20¢ per word for one insertion and 15¢ per word for two or more consecutive insertions.

The deadline for ads is the **first Monday of the month preceding publication** and the publisher has the right to reject any advertising copy submitted. **All ads must be pre-paid** and may be pre-paid up to one year in advance. Please indicate if you are a Farm Bureau member. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to re-insert the ad on a month-by-month or year-by-year basis.

Send ads to Rural Living, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909. No ads will be taken over the phone.

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Duroc and Yorkshire boars. Ready for service. Delivery available. Mark Palmreuter, Vassar. Phone 517-823-3745. (3-5t-13p-ts)

Fast growing Cornish Cross. Over 20 varieties popular and fancy chicks. Bantams, ducks, goslings, turkeys, guineas, Pharaoh Quail. Pictured Brochure — 25¢. Cackle Hatchery, Box 529JJ, Lebanon, MO 65536. (1-8t-28b-ts)

Rare, fancy, exotic and old fashioned bantams, chicks, ducklings, turkeys, guineas, geese. Pictured brochure free. Country Hatchery, Wewoka, Oklahoma 74884. (1-6t-20p-ts)

Corriedale Sheep breeding stock. Blue ribbon fleeces. Phone 313-429-7874. (3-12t-8p)

Holstein Heifers — Two registered (Celebrity and Lester Daus) and 19 grade. AI breeding due March and April. Records to 20,841M bred to Nugget GP-Son from 23,724M 4% Dam. George Robb, Fowlerville. Phone 517-223-9462. (3-30p)

Quality Registered Angus breeding stock, reasonably priced. Delivery available. **Bordner Angus Farms**, Sturgis, Mich. 616-651-8353 evenings. (3-6t-16p)

DOGS

Collie, Border Collie, Sheltie (Miniature Collie) registered puppies, studs. Baird Farm, Lowell, 616-897-9462. (2-3t-13p)

Registered Australian Cattle Dog pups for sale. Good workers on cattle, hogs, sheep and gentle enough for horses. Great family dogs. \$150. Phone Gobles 616-628-4270. (3-24p)

MISCELLANEOUS

Unattached? Pen Pals Nationwide. Country Lovin' Singles. Details free. Box 593RL, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912. (1-5t-14p-ts)

Birthday Dolls — 10 inch cloth. \$8 p.p. Sue Teichman, 1371 S. Aiken, Owosso, Mich. 48867. (3-15p)

Heavy duty "TMT" formulas. Now we have heavy duty TMT for diesel, tractors, RVs, buses, large trucks and marine. Cuts friction, faster starts in cold weather, more useful power out of your engines. Also regular TMT for cars, pickups, lawnmower, chain saws. 10% off through this ad. Contact Howard Miller, 1732 Sheick Road, Monroe, Mich. 48161. Phone 313-587-2252. (3-56p)

Satellite antenna dealers needed — no experience required — dealer cost for complete unit as low as \$747.00 — retail \$1,395.00 — call today! 303-636-0640. (11-6t-21p-ts)

Radio Shack Computer For Sale — **MUST SELL!** Model 3, 48K. Will sell with word processing, mailing list, statistical analysis and editor/assembler programs, plus other software (all on cassette). Also includes Radio Shack computer cassette player. \$850 or best offer. Contact Joe Mielke, 3059 Biber, Apt. S-9, East Lansing, Mich. 48823. Phone 517-337-0937. (3-tf-53p)

Auctioneer Vaughn "Joe" Lewis, 3310 Paragon Road, Tipton, Mich. 49287. Phone 517-431-2571. Purebred livestock, farm machinery, estate, and antique auctions. (2-10t-18p)

Watkins Products, quality since 1868. Dealers wanted: make 25% or more. Customers wanted. For free catalog and sale-flyer, write: 2140 Utley Rd., Flint, MI 48504 or phone: 313-395-2085. (3-3t-29p)

Why die without a will? Two legal "Will Forms" and easy instructions. Only \$4... Order Today! **Guaranteed!** TY-Company, Box 1054-MF, Pryor, OK 74362. (3-6t-22p-ts)

Explosives made easily, cheaply from farm fertilizer. Blast dugouts, stumps, rocks. Instructions \$3.00. DePost, 925 Bradshaw, Prince Albert, SK, CANADA. S6V 2P3. (3-21p-ts)

Silent Motivators: Lose weight, relieve stress, improve health, children's grades or study habits. Multilevel business opportunity with no bookkeeping, inventory, or meetings. Write: Clothier Sales, Box 716, Pontiac, Mich. 48056. (2-2t-30p-ts)

Sunflower growers needed: if you're set up for corn, you're set up for sunflowers. Offers greater profit potential than corn. Contracts available. Michigan markets. Call R & R Farms, Ada, Michigan — 616-874-6784. (3-31p)

MISCELLANEOUS

Extra Income — Addressing labels. Easier than addressing envelopes. Free details. Send two stamps: LISTS, Box 90028-RR, East Point, GA 30364. (3-3t-20p-ts)

FOR HOMEMAKERS

Sausagemakers — great! German recipes, no nitrates! Frankfurters, Summer, Bologna, Headcheese, Venison and Porksausages! \$1.00. Hamiltons, Box 652-131, New Ulm, Minn. 56073. (3-20p-ts)

Pecans! Quart each halves, pieces, meal, 3 quart sampler, \$12.95. Postpaid. Canecreek Farm, Dept. MF, Cookeville, TN 38502. (7-12t-16p-ts)

Cabbage Patch-Like Dolls! Make your own! Complete instructions, patterns, Birth certificate. \$2.50. Hamiltons, Box 652-131, New Ulm, Minn. 56073. (3-20p-ts)

NURSERY STOCK

Tree Source. Quality hybrid poplar stock for: commercial energy plantations, home heating, fast growing shade trees, wind breaks. Consulting and custom tree planting services. 303 S. Veronica Ct., St. Joseph, Mich. 49085. Phone 616-983-7551. (12-7t-33p-ts)

Giant paste tomato. Origin Italy. 25 seeds \$1.00 plus SASE. Carl Jensen, 7480 Frances Road, Flushing, Mich. 48433. (2-2t-18p)

Asparagus roots — Viking KB3, inspected, high quality plants grown on virgin sandy soil. Also: Black Locust seedlings — excellent for firewood, fenceposts and land reclamation. Also: Blue Spruce transplants — great for landscaping, Christmas trees, etc. Call **Summit Nursery**, Rockford, Mich., 616-866-2044. (3-42p)

Giant ruffled gladiolus bulbets — 1,000/\$7.00 postpaid. Strawberry plants 100/\$10.00 plus \$1.50 postage. Bowman's Flowers, 10005-RL Rittman Road, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281. (3-22p-ts)

Plants for Sale: Asparagus crowns: one year old KB-3 asparagus crowns: two year old Mary Washington asparagus crowns. Phone 616-889-5594, Calvin Lutz Farms, Kaleva, Mich. 49645. (3-25p)

REAL ESTATE

40 acres on paved road, 30 tillable with pond. Nice 3 bedroom farmhouse, in-ground swimming pool. 65x45 pole building with both wood and fuel furnaces and adjoining stick building. Air compressor, buried gas and fuel tanks, fluorescent lighting, 220 electric. Hesperia, Mich. Phone 616-854-6525. (3-40p)

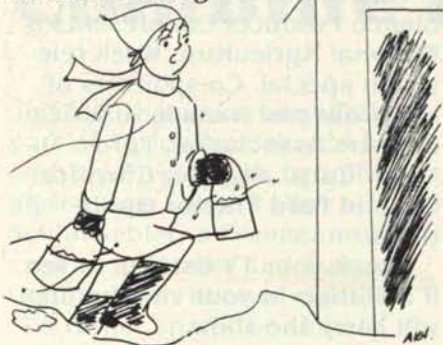
Low cost lake place: nice older trailer, full bath, septic system, good well. Shaded lot, small lake, Branch County. Will take travel trailer, motor home, etc. on trade. \$10,000. Phone 616-885-1615 or R. Briggs, N. 3 Mile Rd, Rt. 1, Mesick, Mich. 49668. (3-38p)

40 acre retirement farm. One mile off U.S. 31 freeway, 6,000 laying hens in production. Nice 6 room farmhouse. Other potentials. Write: The Egg Farm, Route 2, Hart, Mich. 49420. (1-3t-30p)

RURAL EXCHANGE

FARMETTE

By Andrea Hofmeister
Tuscola County



"We've got computerized recordkeeping, automated feeding schedules, and the latest in climate controlled facilities. You'd think we could master the problem of frozen water pipes!"

Ingham Burns Mortgage



Watching the mortgage on the Ingham County FB office building burn at the Jan. 28 open house are Stanley Fay (left), who was president when the office building was constructed, and current president Alan Awalt.



RURAL RASCALS — MFB Young Farmer Department Manager Vic Verchereau is recruiting younger and younger leaders for Farm Bureau. Sara Schmidt, 2½, seems more interested in the balloon. Sara attended the recent Presidents' Conference with her mother, Alice, and her father, Virgil, who is Arenac County FB president.

Agriculture's Public Relations Department

A friend from Chicago recently commented, "You farmers sure have lousy public relations." I'll give her a good argument against that — as soon as I think of one.

Every month, thousands of agricultural publications with sound, scientific backing are printed and mailed, many free of charge. Progressive farmers, or those who wish they were, receive at least half a dozen farm periodicals on a regular

basis.

But, we are already sold on agriculture. To what news do our non-farming friends have access? Their headlines are more apt to read: "Milk Can Harm You," "Red Meat Causes Cancer," or "Confinement Is Approved Animal Cruelty." They have little opportunity to hear the real story. Sure, we have spokespersons for our industry; we hold contests and vie for the (continued on page 26)

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. Five farmers were honored in January 1984:

Jan. 2 — Gary Fisher, 29, of Breckenridge operates a 1,400-acre cash crop farm with his father and uncle. He is Gratiot County Young Farmer chairperson, on the county's policy development and information committees, on the B & W Farmers Co-op advisory board and was named Young Farmer of the Year in 1983.

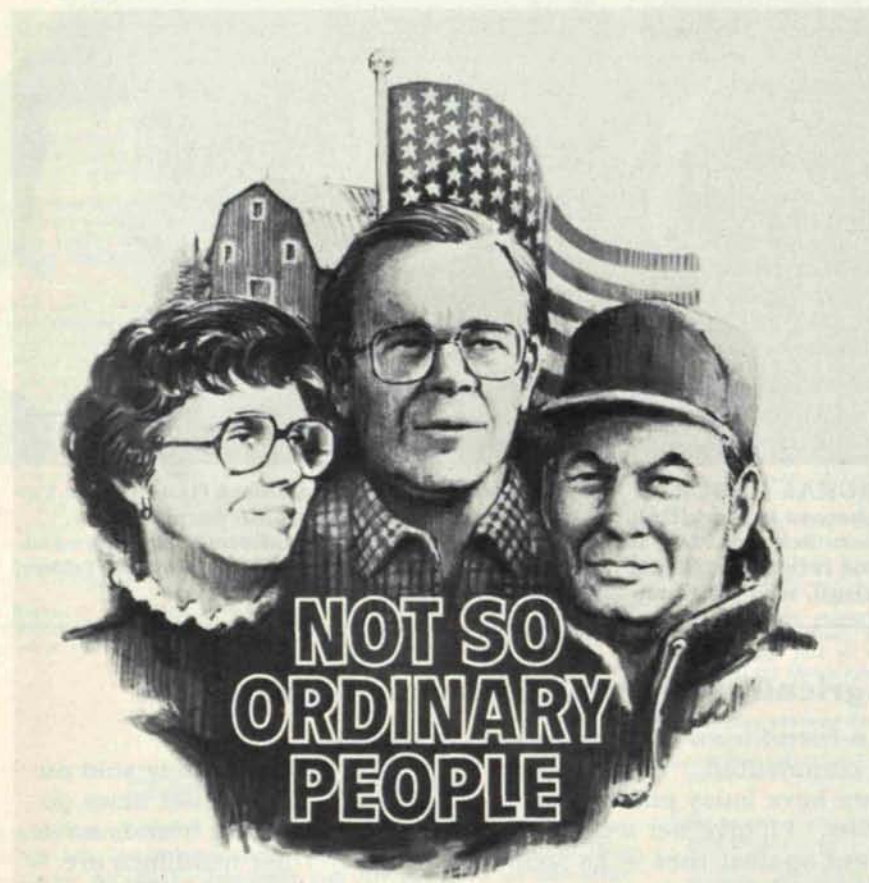
Jan. 9 — Michael Proctor, 28, farms 140 acres and milks 50 cows near Mayville. He is active in his church, on the Tuscola County FB executive and Young Farmer committees, chairperson of his Community Group and a member of DHIA and MMPA.

Jan. 16 — William Densham, 62, of Ceresco has a 500-acre cash crop and beef farm. An ASCS committeeman, he is a member of the Calhoun County FB board, the township zoning board of appeals and the Harper Creek Schools transportation committee. He is a past township supervisor, church board member, school board president and DHIA board member, and served 35 years on local planning and zoning commissions.

Jan. 23 — Richard Kleinhardt, 36, of Clare operates a 900-acre dairy farm with his father and brother. He is a board member and past president of DHIA; secretary and past president of his church board; Clare County FB vice president; and a delegate to DHIA, MMPA and Select Sires. He and his wife were named MMPA's Outstanding Young Dairy Couple in 1983.

Jan. 30 — Jerry Clark, 43, is a cash crop farmer from Alma who farms in a partnership. He is an elder and trustee at his church, president of the intermediate school advisory board, past church treasurer and Sunday school teacher, and was named Outstanding Young Man of the Year by the Jaycees.

Agriculture Week — March 16-22



By Donna Wilber

Nobody can tell the story of agriculture better than farmers and they'll be taking center stage to do just that during National Agriculture Week, March 16-22.

On the national scene, three farmers will star in a television special, "Not So Ordinary People," scheduled to be shown on some 135 TV stations across the nation. The special will focus on the three not-so-ordinary individuals who provide insights into the contributions of farmers and agriculture to the nation's economy and society.

The stars will be Doris Royal, farm wife from Springfield, Nebraska, who led a grassroots campaign to change the inheritance tax laws; Sam Washburn,

Fowler, Indiana, a farmer and businessman who travels the world as an agricultural consultant; and Robert Wilhelm, Calamus, Iowa, an immigrant from Europe who began with nothing but a dream and became a successful farmer. Washburn and Wilhelm are Farm Bureau members in their respective states.

Through the stories of these three individuals, viewers will discover that the farmers' concerns are no different than their own: the ability of people to have a significant impact on the laws of the land; an abundant, wholesome and affordable food supply; and the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families through hard work and initiative.

This will be the third year that Elanco Products Co. presents a National Agriculture Week television special. Co-sponsors of the broadcast include American Bankers Association, Ford Motor Corp., Stauffer Chemical Co. and Ford Tractor Operations.

Check your TV listings to see if a station in your viewing area will carry the show.

What Is Ag Day?

National Agriculture Day is an annual celebration, officially recognized by Congress, the president and most governors, to salute the achievements of the working men and women of agriculture in the United States who are responsible for 20% of the gross national product. That "human chain," from the miners of ores that go into tractor steel to cashiers at neighborhood restaurants, includes 23 million people involved in the nation's food chain.

"The people involved in the many steps and enterprises required to produce and deliver the hundreds of U.S. agricultural commodities form a chain of linked human hands, each with a contribution to the final goal," said Faye Adam, MFB Women's Committee chairperson.

"During various activities, National Ag Day supporters will attempt to gain public understanding that each of the links must be strong, in order to keep every other link back through the chain strong, for the benefit of all Americans."

For several years, MFB Women sponsored a separate Ag Understanding Day, but the state committee and most county committees have now tied their

(continued on page 30)

Old and New Ideas Combine for Success

"I feel that everyone who's a part of agriculture should be actively involved on behalf of agriculture," says LeRoy Schluckebier, a Frankenmuth cash crop farmer and Tuscola County Farm Bureau member. "I'd rather spare the time to participate than chance being uninformed on issues affecting my future. As farmers, we have a responsibility to the profession which is also our life."

I'd rather spare the time to participate than chance being uninformed on issues affecting my future.

In addition to farming 700 acres in Tuscola and Saginaw counties, LeRoy takes the time to participate in community, state and national organizations, most notably as chairperson of the Michigan Bean Commission. In that position, he travels extensively throughout the United States and abroad as a spokesperson for Michigan's dry bean producers.

"Farmers who say they don't have time to attend agricultural meetings are usually the first ones to call me afterward, asking 'What happened?'" he says. "Many of the practices I've instituted on my farm were first learned from people I met at committee meetings. Time well spent pays many dividends."

LeRoy considers it important to have constant exposure to new ideas. But after three decades in agriculture, the Michigan native still sees advantages to using some age-old farming methods and adapting them to blend with modern-day techniques.

When it comes to managing the farm, however, LeRoy now lets a sharp pencil take precedence over the plow as his primary farm tool. "More than ever," he says, "farming depends on key management decisions."

With this in mind, he undertook a major revision of his farming program three years ago to increase efficiency. After careful consideration, he eliminated sugar beets from his cropping schedule. "They were simply too expensive to grow

and still be profitable for me," he says. Edible beans, corn, seed oats, wheat and hay are now his principal crops.

At the same time, LeRoy decided to build an elevator to have better control over crop sale prices through more timely marketing.

Although many farmers don't look favorably on borrowing funds for expansion, LeRoy says that spending money to make or save money in the long run enables him to justify the investment. His personal storage facility, for example, has helped reduce commercial elevator charges and expedite harvesting. It also has allowed him to custom dry small grains and edible beans for seed, although this was not anticipated as a

(continued on page 26)



Respect for the land is a belief that LeRoy Schluckebier (right) strives to pass on to future generations. LeRoy spends much of his time speaking to and working with young farmers.

Ag Employment: Finding Your Way Out of the Regulation Maze

Several factors may converge during the 1984 growing season which would create a tense and potentially volatile situation for Michigan agricultural employers and the migrant work force, warns Ron Gaskill, MFB local affairs specialist.

According to Gaskill, many employers are not yet familiar with the requirements and scope of the federal Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) which went into effect last year. Still to come is the Immigration Reform and Control Act currently being debated in Congress.

Inadvertent violations of the procedures and requirements could result. In addition, he says, an earlier, larger influx of migrant labor to the state is anticipated due to the damaged harvests in freeze-affected southern states.

"It will be especially important in this growing season for agricultural employers to be in full compliance with the provisions of state and federal laws regarding housing, employment, labor contracting and so forth," he says.

In a June 1983 series of U.S. Department of Labor bulletins, the rights of migrant and seasonal workers, and responsibilities of employers, are outlined. Under the law, labor contractors are required to be certified by the U.S. Department of Labor, however, it is the responsibility of the employer to insure that the contractor has a valid certificate.

Other requirements are that the employer disclose written employment information regarding work availability,

description of crops to be harvested and employment activities, terms of payment, transportation, housing or other benefits. And, by reference, the MSPA requires the employer to meet state and federal standards for housing, vehicles, etc. Complete and accurate recordkeeping is required.

And although the impact of the proposed Immigration Reform and Control Act on Michigan's migrant and seasonal labor situation is not fully known at this time, employers

For the farm operator / employer who must rely on migrant and seasonal labor there are alternatives and precautions which can reduce labor related problems.

can be certain that additional recordkeeping and worker documentation will be required.

"This act would give legal status to some 'undocumented workers' currently in the United States," Gaskill says, "but there are no figures indicating how many are involved in agriculture. Some estimate 30% of the migrant and seasonal workforce is in the country illegally. The law imposes stiff sanctions and penalties on employers who hire illegal aliens, including felony convictions and fines."

Implementation of OSHA regulations and standards for field sanitation and first aid may further complicate problems for employers of agricultural labor.

"These standards have been in the drafting process for over a year now and could go into effect during the growing season, so employers are going to have to be alert and flexible," he says.

And there's still more to trouble the agricultural employer.

"We have migrant housing facilities in this state that have been in use for 25 years or longer," Gaskill says. "Consequently, we are seeing the number of first time inspection violations increase simply due to the fact that the housing is deteriorating because of age."

Had enough? That's likely to be the response of many agricultural labor employers who are able to convert their harvest operations to mechanization or less labor intensive crops, Gaskill says.

But for the farm operator/ employer who must rely on migrant and seasonal labor there are alternatives and precautions which can reduce labor related problems.

Gaskill suggests that employers plan their labor needs, coordinate with related agencies, and contact known workers in advance to make an agreement on the number of workers needed, housing, transportation, etc. And he emphasizes once again the importance of being in total compliance with all laws pertaining to the employment of migrant and seasonal workers.

A good place to begin planning and information gathering, he says, is at the agricultural labor conference, "Managing the Human Resource," March 14-15, which is being sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The two-day conference will offer employers/supervisors of agricultural labor a comprehensive update on existing and pending legislation, and provide labor management training and skills. Resource persons from the Michigan and U.S. Departments of Labor, the Michigan Department of Public Health, Michigan State University and the AFBF national affairs office will be on the program of workshops and general sessions.

A meeting of the Michigan Agricultural Labor Commission, open to the public and conference participants, has been scheduled to coincide with the conference.

Program information and registration forms are available by contacting Ron Gaskill, MFB Public Affairs Division, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909; phone 517-323-7000, ext. 559.

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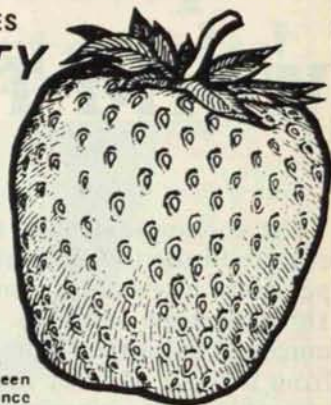
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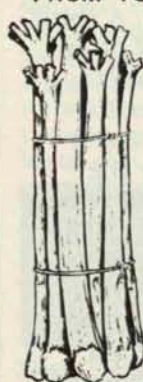
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The Discussion Topic is used by Community Action Groups for monthly policy discussions.

World Trade

The economic destiny of agriculture in the United States depends on international markets. Thirty percent of all U.S. farm output is exported. Production from two out of every five acres of cropland is exported.

In recent years, we have exported two-thirds of the wheat we produce and a similar percentage of rice. Over half of our grain sorghum and soybeans move in international markets, and a third of our corn. A third of our tobacco and half of our cotton go to foreign outlets.

Who are our customers?

Just to get an idea, take a look at export sales for the week of Jan. 13-19, 1984. Some 680,000 metric tons of wheat were exported. Principal destinations included the USSR (142,900), Morocco (106,700), Japan (100,800) and China (95,700). Some 925,200 metric tons of corn were exported. Japan (417,900) was the leading destination, followed by Mexico (129,800) and Taiwan (108,600). Some 390,200 metric tons of soybeans were shipped. Principal destinations were The Netherlands (126,900), Japan (86,800) and Spain (83,600). The week's soybean oil exports of 2,300 metric tons were mainly to Ecuador (1,000) and Trinidad (600).

No particular week is typical, but there is one important point to be made: one market exists for U.S. agricultural products, the world market, and consumers live in many different countries. Consumers living in Tokyo, Moscow and Peking are just as important to the success of U.S. farmers as consumers in Boston, Chicago and San Diego.

Prosperity for American agriculture is dependent on export markets. Neither farmers nor the nation can afford to lose farm export markets that earn \$35 to \$50 billion per year.

Farm prices and hence farmers' economic fortunes follow export demand, and in the 1970s as export demand grew at an average annual rate of 8%, U.S. agriculture experienced substantial growth, but the 1980s have begun with a downturn in exports rather than growth.

Recession, the sharp increase in the value of the dollar, and the international credit problems have caused the value and volume of exports to decline. In addition, U.S. trade relations with a number of communist countries have deteriorated in recent years, which hindered export shipments.

U.S. exports are now facing increased competition, and without much chance for an increase in domestic consumption, the export market is the only opportunity as an outlet for our increasing productive capacity.

The United States must continue to improve agriculture productivity and vigorously compete for foreign markets. To do this, we must establish a long-term trade policy with the realization that customers outside the country are just as dear to the U.S. producer as customers within.

Expanding export markets will not benefit U.S. producers unless commodity prices put U.S. products in a competitive position. Much of the wheat export business has been lost in recent years because of high

price supports and loan rates. Wheat growers, who need exports for about two-thirds of their market, must have a reduced loan rate to be competitive in the world market.

If government programs continue to price exported commodities such as wheat out of the world market, other exporting nations will continue to undersell U.S. producers.

Other domestic government policies will also affect the price competitiveness of U.S. producers. As the world's most energy intensive agriculture, taxes on imported oil and other government decisions that force up the price of energy will hurt U.S. agriculture.

Monetary policy that results in inflation will make it harder for producers to secure credit for productive investments. Regulations on things such as pesticides increase production costs. All of these activities and many more will directly impact the ability of U.S. agriculture to compete for world markets.

Increasing the volume of U.S. agricultural products moving into world trade also relies on an increase in the number of paying customers. The source of additional world demand will be the middle class of developing countries. As these countries develop, they produce goods that compete directly in world trade with products produced by developed countries.

If these new industrial producers are not allowed access to the markets of industrialized countries, including the U.S., their economies will not have the opportunity to grow and de-

mand for U.S. agricultural products will not expand. For this reason, protectionism by developed countries must be avoided so developing countries can earn foreign exchange to use to buy food.

A similar concern exists with our big customers like Japan. A protectionist measure such as a quota on Japanese auto imports could invite retaliation by the biggest customer of U.S. agricultural commodities.

Agriculture must also continue to fight other anti-competitive actions such as embargoes and restrictive trade practices.

Some feel that bilateral trade agreements, which account for roughly half the world trade in grain, make the world food system more secure. Although government to government trade agreements can benefit the United States in stabilizing normally volatile Soviet and Chinese markets, widespread use of bilateral agreements could increase world and U.S. market volatility, adding to a serious farm problem — instability.

A long-term trade policy begins with the realization that the market for food is a world market, not an individual country market.

Discussion Questions

- What can we do to improve our competitiveness in the world market?
- Do you think food should be used as a political weapon?
- Embargoes have hurt U.S. producers by labeling the U.S. as an unreliable supplier. What alternatives are there to embargoes when our government needs to wield political force?
- What can we do to improve our reputation as a world food supplier?

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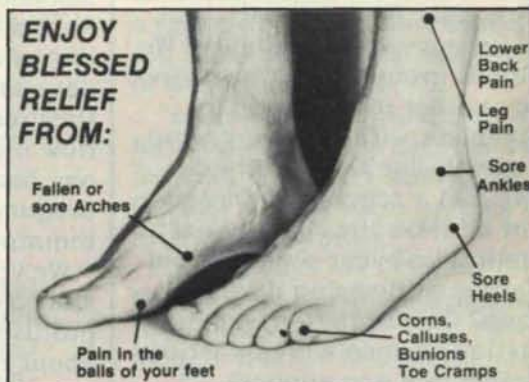


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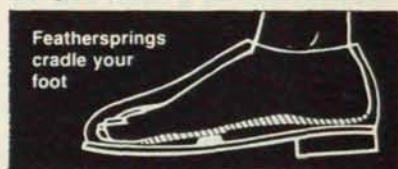
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Ag Public Relations

(continued from page 19)

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Okay, so your knees knock audibly when you speak to a group of ten or more; you can still get involved. Do you have a niece or nephew who would give anything to spend a week of summer vacation on a farm? Are you the only one in your family who farms?

Believe it or not, most city folks love to hear about agriculture. One Christmas day, my husband entertained my entire family for hours in the living

room just by answering their questions.

Don't worry if you don't know everything, they probably won't ask about trade relations with Russia. Articles about those things appear in the major city newspaper all of the time. What they really want to know is: How many sows do you put with one boar? How long is a ewe pregnant? How are canning tomatoes harvested?

We've heard many people start a question by apologizing profusely for their ignorance about hogs. We need to let them know that we weren't born with our knowledge, and that while we may be "experts" on swine, we are real beginners concerning dairy cattle or growing apples or cranberries.

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Wendy Elsey, Decatur
Cass County

cover crop not only helps minimize erosion, but also serves as a green manure crop for the next season's edible beans.

To make reduced tillage work for him, he uses herbicides on his 700 acres, an option which was not available to his predecessors. "I couldn't be growing the crops I am today without them," he says.

A few years ago, he leased some fields, intending to grow navy beans. He immediately encountered a problem with black nightshade, which he thinks was caused by the land owner's spreading manure contaminated with weed seeds. "A one-pass surface blend incorporation of Lasso using a field cultivator has enabled me to kill the majority of the nightshade located in the top two inches of the soil profile," LeRoy says.

All these management practices combined serve a two-fold purpose. One, of course, is to get the most out of his land. Equally as important, however, is the need to preserve the land for future years and future generations.

This respect for the land is a tradition LeRoy wants to pass on to the next generation of farmers, including the three part-time hands he now employs. Too many farmers, he believes, try to take too much out of the land and give too little back to it, a problem aggravated by today's economy.

"If my father and grandfather had operated our farm in that manner, there would have been very little, if anything, left for me when I started farming."

By caring for his land, through reducing tillage and maintaining soil quality, and passing his knowledge and experience along, LeRoy Schluckebier is truly involving himself to the benefit of agriculture for future generations.

LeRoy Schluckebier

(continued from page 21)

source of income when the storage system was built.

In his fields, LeRoy combines time-proven techniques with modern practices.

By fall plowing his heavier soils, he feels he can loosen the soil and make the applied potash more readily available for plant uptake the next crop season. Fall plowing often eliminates as many as three trips across the field, he says, and enables him to plant a crop with as few as two spring passes over the ground. The plowing, along with extensive tiling, also helps drain fields which had been too wet to farm in the past.

Winter erosion is a concern in the windy Saginaw Valley, and LeRoy combats the problem by planting clover. He finds the



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Laurie Isley

(continued from page 12)

are reaching our late 20s to some younger members."

From September to June, Laurie is normally found in a classroom at Blissfield Community Schools, but last fall she took a year's leave of absence to spend time with her daughter, Alysa, who was born Aug. 30, 1983. She is also looking forward to becoming more involved in the farming operation during her leave.

"I'm attempting to take over a lot of the recordkeeping of the business," she said, "and I'm really looking forward to becoming more involved in the day to day operation of our farm this spring and summer."

The Isleys raise corn, soybeans and canning tomatoes on a 300-acre farm near Palmyra.

Laurie faces a tough decision this summer — should she return to teaching or continue her active role on the farm?

"It will be a difficult decision to make," she said. "I've enjoyed the time that I have spent at home, and we'll have to see how things go this spring with me involved in the farming operation. I do like the challenge, however, of working with agricultural students."

Glenn Preston

(continued from page 12)

farmers I admired were Farm Bureau members. Then there was 4-H, FFA and back to Farm Bureau in the Young Farmer program. It was the natural progression for involvement in a farm organization."

Both Glenn and Suzie agree that the cycle of leadership growth, which begins at the county FB level, must come full circle to return the benefits of these experiences and training to the local organization. Leadership carries a "bring-along" responsibility to share

what has been learned, they believe.

Whether it's Young Farmer activities, community action group meetings, or any of the opportunities for involvement in Farm Bureau, the couple says

(continued on next page)

MALP Goals

(continued from page 13)

feeling that we have a great system in America," he said.

To be considered for the MALP program, individuals must first be nominated by Cooperative Extension staff or agribusinesses, board members of agricultural associations or people who have already been through the program.

There were over 250 people nominated for this MALP session. Out of those nominated, 60 applications were accepted; 30 were selected.

Three regional committees reviewed all applicants, interviewing them and observing their operations.

The total cost for one person to participate in MALP is \$9,000. The participants pay \$3,000 themselves and additional funding is provided by Michigan agribusinesses and organizations such as Michigan Farm Bureau.

According to Trotter, MALP program candidates must meet general eligibility criteria and have successful farming or agribusiness operations. The person also needs to be committed to continuing his or her involvement in Michigan agriculture and have demonstrated leadership abilities, Trotter said.

Of the 30 MALP participants, 26 are Farm Bureau members.

"I think being involved with Farm Bureau helped me be selected," Gazdag said. "What other farm organization is there for farm women and farmers to get active in and be an outlet for some of the energy you

have? It gets you active politically in promoting your product and farming in general. It makes you concerned about what the issues are and taking a grassroots stand and following that through the processes of Farm Bureau.

"I was born and raised on a farm and basically have always felt that is where I want to be," Gazdag said. "I want to keep on promoting farming."

The 60 days involved in MALP means a lot of time spent away from families, farms and businesses. But for Ken Hofmeister there were no second thoughts. "There was no question in my mind about affording the time," he said.

Hofmeister hopes MALP will help him "understand myself better, understand interacting with other people and learn to be a better communicator. I feel we will have a better concept of our abilities and limitations."

Gazdag admits to being concerned about being away from her family and farm. Her duties on the farm include taking care of 45 sows and feeder pigs, and she is also busy raising her five-year-old-daughter, Angie.

"My concerns about going and not going overlap," she said. "I am concerned about Angie and not being there for her, but I also think it is going to be an opportunity for my husband, Steve, to do more things with her."

After the program is over, Gazdag hopes her experiences will help her deal with her community and family better. "I hope that Angie learns that if you want to do something — you can do it," she said.

"Maybe a few people have to help out a little more here and there, but that is all a part of learning."

Therese Nichols is a senior at MSU majoring in agriculture communications. She is working as an intern in the MFB Information & Public Relations Division.

Glenn Preston

(continued from previous page)

they benefit from the association with successful farmers.

"As young farmers, we need that interaction to get ideas and reinforce the values and goals we have set for ourselves," says Glenn.

"We have made many friends through the Young Farmer program," adds Suzie. "They may have different farming operations, but we share ideas and concerns. It gives us a broader understanding of the industry we are part of."

Finally, Glenn says, there are the benefits of a united voice for agriculture. "We have seen for ourselves the impact we can have as individuals working through Farm Bureau." He offers the example of the farmland preservation law, P.A. 116.

"I'd like to think that we

helped get this law adopted by our support here at the local level. We were really convinced of the need for the program of property tax relief," he says.

That conviction has been borne out. Property taxes on Preston Farms are 20 times greater now than in 1971, and the credits from P.A. 116 enrollment have helped reduce that tax burden. "I believe that if we can get back a portion of our property tax, it is certainly worth the cost of three family memberships," he says, emphatically.

A place to grow, to learn, to share: that's how Glenn and Suzie Preston have experienced the Young Farmer program.

"It's not enough to just farm . . . farm . . . farm," says Glenn. "Today's young farmers need the kind of learning and leadership experiences that will help them adapt to change."

FB Basics

(continued from page 14)

issues and then giving farmers the information to tackle them is the full-time assignment of AFBF Research Economist Ross Korves. He got high marks from Maxwell and other conference participants for his overview of farm program and policy issues.

"Korves talked about real economic problems and how government programs and policies affect farmers. I appreciated his directness and honesty. It's tough telling people what they may not want to hear," Maxwell says. "And in a session like this, the audience shouldn't always be comfortable with what they're hearing."

There was praise and a challenge from MFB President Elton Smith for the grassroots leadership that earned eight gold stars of recognition from AFBF at the recent national annual meeting in Orlando. The awards, he said, represent a structure through which farmers solve problems that need solving, answer needs that farmers have surfaced, reach objectives that need reaching, execute policies that farmers have developed.

Smith reminded the farm leaders that improved net farm income is the "number one focus in the organization's plans for 1984." He urged them to "take off the velvet gloves, put on the work gloves, and proudly proclaim that improved net farm income is what Farm Bureau is all about."

Maxwell says he really appreciated the "back to basics" message of the conference. "It's easy to get tangled up in structure and forget that Farm Bureau's purpose is to come up with solutions to farmer's problems, and then pursue that goal. If we hold on to that, Farm Bureau will continue and be effective no matter what challenges it faces in a complex society and in a complex farm economy."

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Legislative Review

(continued from page 7)

association representatives regarding this bill continues. FB policy opposes H.B. 4319.

Beginning Farmer Loans —

The Michigan Family Farm Development Act is moving along with more and more banks co-operating. Applications currently total \$3 million with 15 loans completed (\$1.5 million), three ready for the governor's signature, and 12 more pending. However, H.R. 4170, presently before Congress, would seriously hamper the program by putting severe restrictions on the use of industrial development type bonds which make the low interest loans possible.

The congressional bill would restrict beginning farmers who own land from qualifying for a loan. It would also eliminate the use of bonds for the purchase of breeding stock and used farm equipment. However, new equipment would qualify. Used equipment is often the only way a beginning farmer can start a business.

If H.R. 4170 passes, it will be retroactive to Jan. 1. It is estimated that 35% of those buying land and 55% of those needing breeding stock and equipment could no longer qualify for the Michigan Beginning Farmer Loan Program. The legislation also affects commercial and industrial developments using similar bonding procedures.

MFB is strongly opposed to H.R. 4170 and has communicated that opposition to Michigan's congressional delegation.

Health Care Costs — Several bills have passed the House and are now in the Senate. They permit the use of "Prudent Purchaser Agreements" in Michigan.

A House subcommittee is discussing other cost containment legislation (H.B. 4735) which would put a cap on the amount that could be spent each year on hospital outlay. FB was represented on the committees that developed the PPA and cap legislation.

S.B. 467, 471 and 510, all providing some form of deduction for health insurance premiums and medical expenses, have not been acted upon.

PCB Contaminated Silos —

P.A. 220 permits the MDA to condemn contaminated silos and provides that "just compensation" is due those farmers. According to Department of Transportation appraisors, the silos will be replaced and compensation to farmers will be for the losses that they have suffered. Funding is now required.

Gov. Blanchard is supporting at least \$2 million to begin the process. FB has been active on the legislation.

Right-to-Know "Chemicals"

— This highly controversial issue (S.B. 373) is tied up in a special committee, which is supposed to develop compromise legislation. Federal regulations have been issued but are under attack as being too weak.

Co-op Legislation —

H.B. 4335 is still pending in committee. It would set up a new system for organizing consumer co-ops. FB has spent a lot of time on this issue over a period of years. Another bill, H.B. 5056, would eliminate the attorney general's opinion requiring farm co-ops to use the word "cooperative" in their name.

Subdivision Control Commission — Monthly meetings continue to be held with additional committee meetings. The report should be out soon. It has been very controversial in some areas, but in its present form will greatly simplify subdivision requirements. It includes FB policy goals.

Public Service Commission

— FB staff testified on the Consumers Power rate case in January and pointed out that agriculture is heavily dependent on electric power. FB did not take a position on the rate increase, but strongly supported the completion of the nuclear generating plants.

Forestry — H.B. 4206 has been substituted again. It is complex legislation but provides for a pilot program in the U.P. to organize a forest improvement district along with good management practices, reforestation, marketing and processing, etc. H.B. 4960, exempting wood harvesting equipment from personal property tax, is still under committee consideration.

Tax Credits and Exemptions

— The six bills (H.B. 4756-4761) which would "sunset" most tax credits and exemptions have not been acted upon. However, the subcommittee intends to look at each exemption. P.A. 116 is presently before committee, due to H.B. 4313 which would exempt P.A. 116 tax rebates from the state income tax.

Pick-up Truck Passengers

— H.B. 4964, sponsored by Rep. McGee, would limit passengers to the inside of the motor vehicle and prohibit riding on the

(continued on next page)

Legislative Review

(continued from previous page)

outside, including pick-ups unless covered or if seats and seatbelts were used. FB suggested amendments, which were accepted by the sponsor, to exempt agriculture. The bill has been defeated on the House floor, reconsidered and defeated a second time.

Commodity Promotion —

S.B. 505, sponsored by Sen. Barcia, clarifies and strengthens P.A. 232, the Agricultural Commodities Act, which allows agricultural commodity producers to decide if they want to collect funds for promotion and research. The bill has passed the Senate with several FB-supported amendments.

Right to Water — H.B. 4198, the right to water bill sponsored

by Rep. Dodak, is not scheduled before the committee at this writing. There is considerable opposition, however, it is expected that the bill may be considered in committee in early spring. FB staff continues to meet with legislators, agencies and organizations to explain the bill and urge that the bill be heard in committee.

Lansing legislative topics are prepared by MFB Public Affairs Division staff.

Agriculture Week

(continued from page 20)
activities into the national observance.

Michigan FB Women Star in Production

In Michigan, the members of the state Women's Committee

will star in a slide-tape presentation called "The Food Chain/A Human Chain." Their families will also be part of the production.

They will tell why they are proud to be vital human links in Michigan's food chain and explain how public policy decisions impact on their farm operations. Visits to the family farms are bridged together with the message: "Say Yes to the Best from Michigan Farms."

The slide-tape presentation will be used by the state Women's Committee to gain the understanding and support of key women's leaders from state government, organizations and universities. County women's committees will also use the presentation before audiences of local business people, local government officials and the non-farm public.

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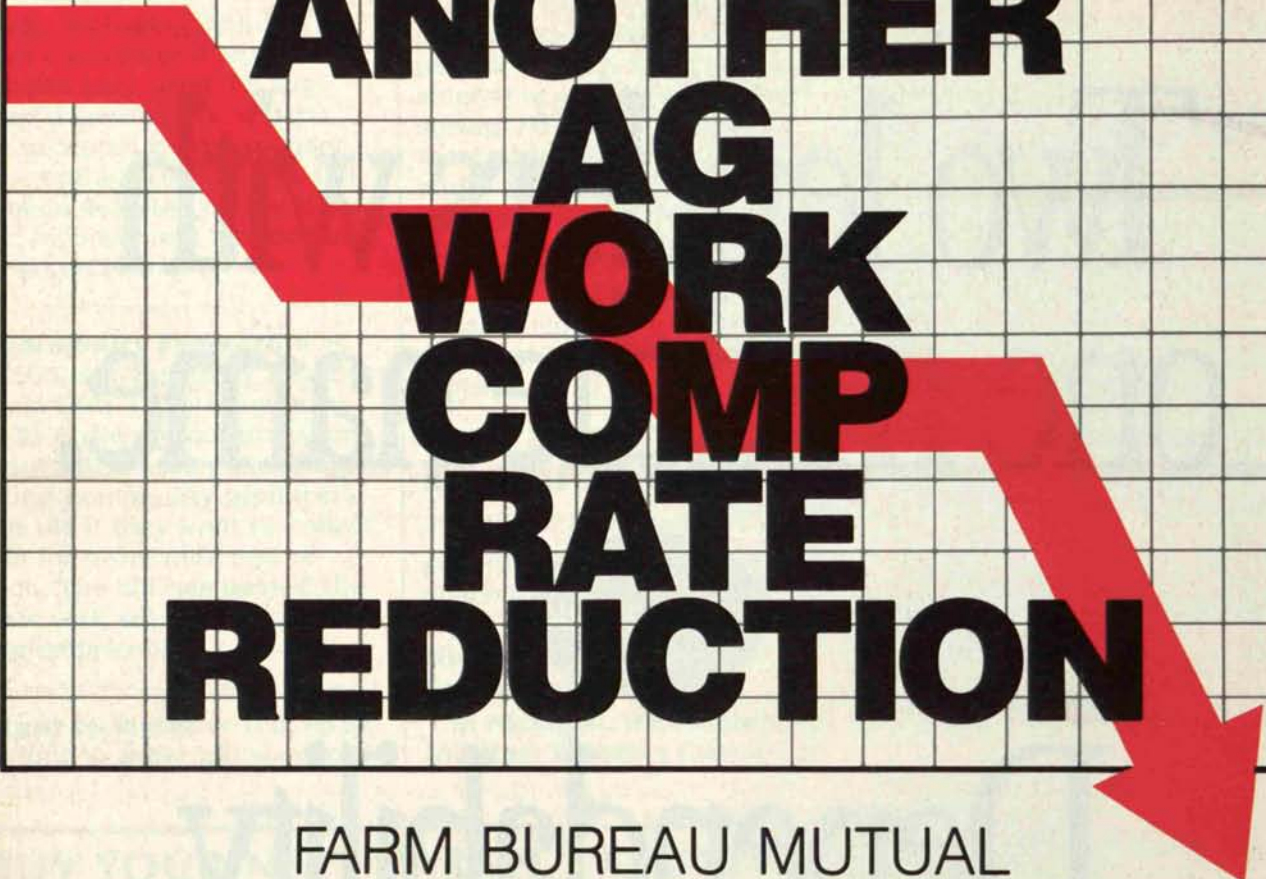
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Both are part of Farm Credit Services. Helping you harvest the success you deserve.





ANOTHER AG WORK COMP RATE REDUCTION

FARM BUREAU MUTUAL LOWERS RATES FOR 1984

Michigan farmers will pay less for agricultural workers compensation insurance in 1984. Effective Jan. 1, Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Michigan reduced its ag work comp rates for the fourth time in less than two and a half years.

Although the amount of the rate reduction may vary depending on individual farm situations, most ag work comp policyholders will experience a cut in base rates.

Farm Bureau Mutual has long been a leader in holding down ag work comp costs for Michigan farmers. We're Michigan's largest

farm insurer and one of the leading providers of ag work comp insurance.

When it comes to protecting Michigan farms and holding down costs for you, we don't play follow the leader. We're right out front with the affordable coverages you need.

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