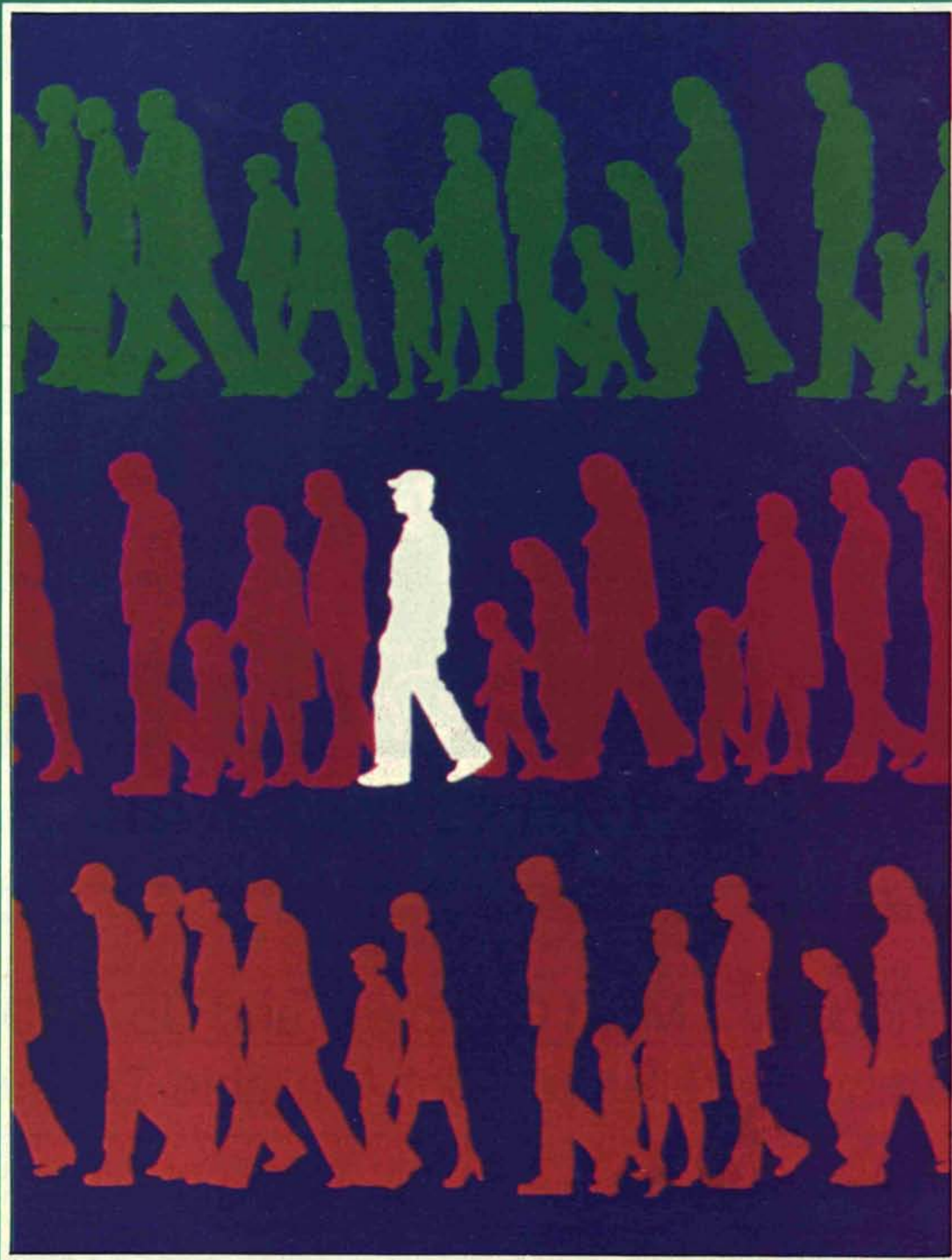
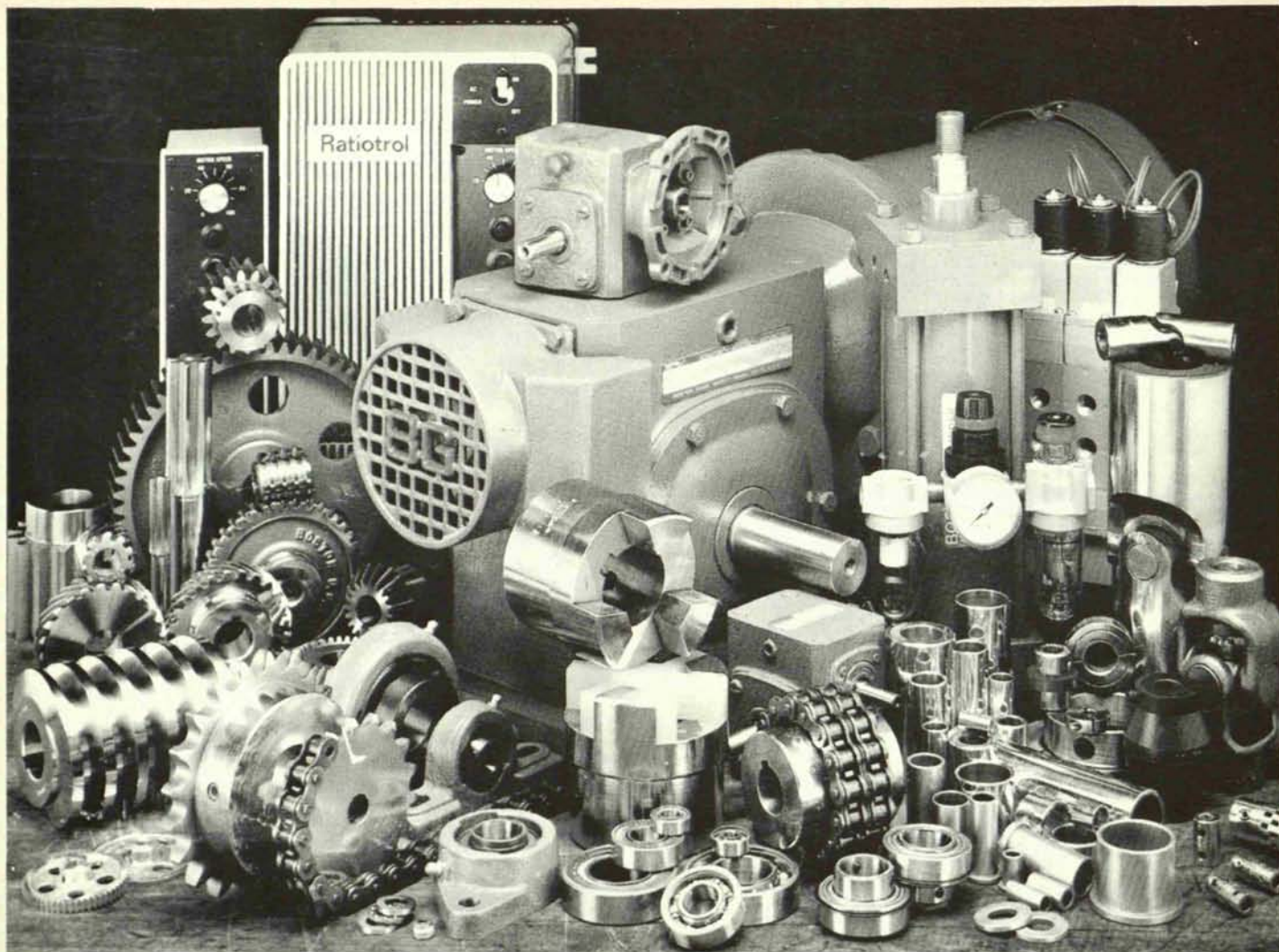


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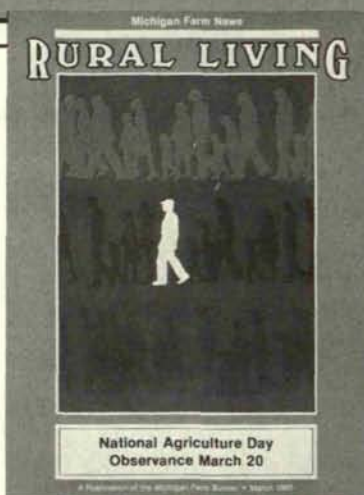
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RURAL LIVING

FARM NEWS

A publication
of the
Michigan
Farm Bureau



MARCH 1985
VOL. 64 NO. 3

THE COVER

One farmer produces enough to feed himself and 76 others. Agriculture Day salutes the efficiency of the American farmer and the industry's contributions to the economy.

In this issue:

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Classroom presentations by FB volunteers teach school children about farms and farm animals

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Turning Out Leaders for Agriculture

MFB's Young Farmer program gives leadership training for young farm men and women

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U.S. House Budget Committee Holds Regional Hearing at Lansing

FB member Mark Smuts was among the agricultural representatives who presented testimony on farm credit measures, reductions in interest costs and the proposed 1985-86 USDA budget

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Farm Groups Urge Balanced Budget to Lower Interest Rates



Nearly one million cards calling for a balanced budget were delivered in Washington by farm groups.

Amidst all the uncertainty in the farming community today, it was a good feeling to deliver a strong, certain message from grassroots America to the doorsteps of the decision-makers in Washington, D.C. The message: bring down interest rates through reduced government spending.

When the "Balanced Budget Brigade" delivered nearly one million cards with that message to the nation's capital, it was also a good feeling to share that assignment with representatives of the National Grange, National Farmers' Organization, National Corn Growers Association and American Soybean Association. I believe that, in itself, was a strong message. It told Congress and the administration that this was one issue that transcended any policy and philosophy differences between farm groups.

Certainly, raising net farm income is of crucial concern to all of us, and we all recognize that we're being crippled by the huge federal deficit and high interest rates. Each 1% increase in interest rates costs farmers \$2 billion and interest rates account for about 20% of our farm expenses.

According to Federal Reserve Board Chairperson Paul Voelker, each \$50 billion reduction in the federal deficit would reduce interest rates 1%. Eliminating the current \$200 billion deficit would reduce interest rates from 3% to 4% and put \$6 billion to \$8 billion in farmers' pockets!

What we have to guard against now is any attempt to reduce the deficit by raising taxes. New taxes would do just the opposite of what needs to be done! Any new taxes large enough to affect the deficit would surely increase interest rates and further erode farm income. Be sure you make that clear to your elected representatives!

In just a few weeks, Michigan Farm Bureau's annual Washington Legislative Seminar will take 100 farmers who have been designated as legislative leaders to the nation's capital to discuss issues of concern with our congressmen. I can't remember a time when clear direction from their farm constituents was more crucial than it will be this year. Bringing down interest rates through reduced government spending will be one of our priority messages, as will Farm Bill '85.

I strongly urge you to study the discussion topic on pages 28-29 so that you clearly understand your organization's position on Farm Bill '85. This is important not just for Community Action Group members and the legislative leaders who will be representing your county FB in Washington, D.C., later this month. It is also vital for all farmer members to understand the policy that was developed through input from thousands of members across the nation and to understand it well enough to be involved in its execution.

When the farm bill prepared by Farm Bureau is introduced in Congress, the same kind of

grassroots support the Balanced Budget Brigade received will be needed to convince our elected representatives that it is the best solution to the problems agriculture faces.

Agriculture is faced with some painful challenges today, and perhaps it's a good time to look back and remember just why Farm Bureau was formed 65 years ago. Farm prices had collapsed, farm costs had soared, taxes were high. Farmers realized they could not solve their problems alone. They needed a united "voice" that could be heard by decision-makers in Lansing and in Washington.

Farm Bureau was built to fill that need and, ever since then, farmers have been working together through their organization to solve their problems. Working through Farm Bureau has taught us that we are not helpless when things get tough. We have learned that working together through Farm Bureau, we can meet those challenges — and win!

There are some similarities in the problems farmers faced in 1919 and those we face in 1985. We have one advantage, however. We don't have to stop and build a Farm Bureau. It's already there; all we have to do is use it!

Elton R. Smith

Elton R. Smith, President
Michigan Farm Bureau

Sweet, Sweet Nostalgia

By Lillian Brake Dunckley

Along in late March or early April, when the warming sun has melted all but the deepest snowbanks, I remember maple sugar time in Michigan with a sweet nostalgia. Childhood memories take me back to the treasured four-acre woodlot on our small farm in Newaygo County, where there were perhaps 60 or 70 sugar maples to be tapped. Very few of the farmers in that area bothered to make maple syrup, but Dad took the time to do it because, he said, there wasn't too much other farm work demanding attention right then and we all enjoyed this sweet activity.

Dad would watch the weather closely for just the right time to tap the sugar maple trees — sharp, frosty nights and warm, melting days. Then early one morning, as soon as the milking was done, he would look at the buds on the trees, glance at the weather vane, test the frozen ground and say, "This is the day. We'll have new maple syrup for breakfast tomorrow."

It seemed even the horses were eager, frisking and prancing along the half mile lane to the woods, despite their load of a low stoneboat filled with buckets, spiles, pails, barrels and the black boiling pan.

Dad would bore holes in the trees and put in the spiles. Behind him we would come toting buckets to be hung on the spiles, listening all the while for the "ping" of the first drops of clear sap coming from the trees.

While Dad chopped fallen tree limbs for the fire, we would race from tree to tree, hastily gathering the gallons of sweetwater and comparing each tree's run.

The sap was poured into a large barrel that let it drip slowly into the pan over the fire. As the "boiling down" process went on, we would take turns stirring with the long-handled wooden paddle.

Each year the sugar bush tapping date was carved on a tree near the "sugar shanty." The shanty was little more than a roof, corner posts and some siding, topped off by a tall stovepipe chimney, but it was warm and deliciously scented as the maple steam mingled with the pungent wood smoke.

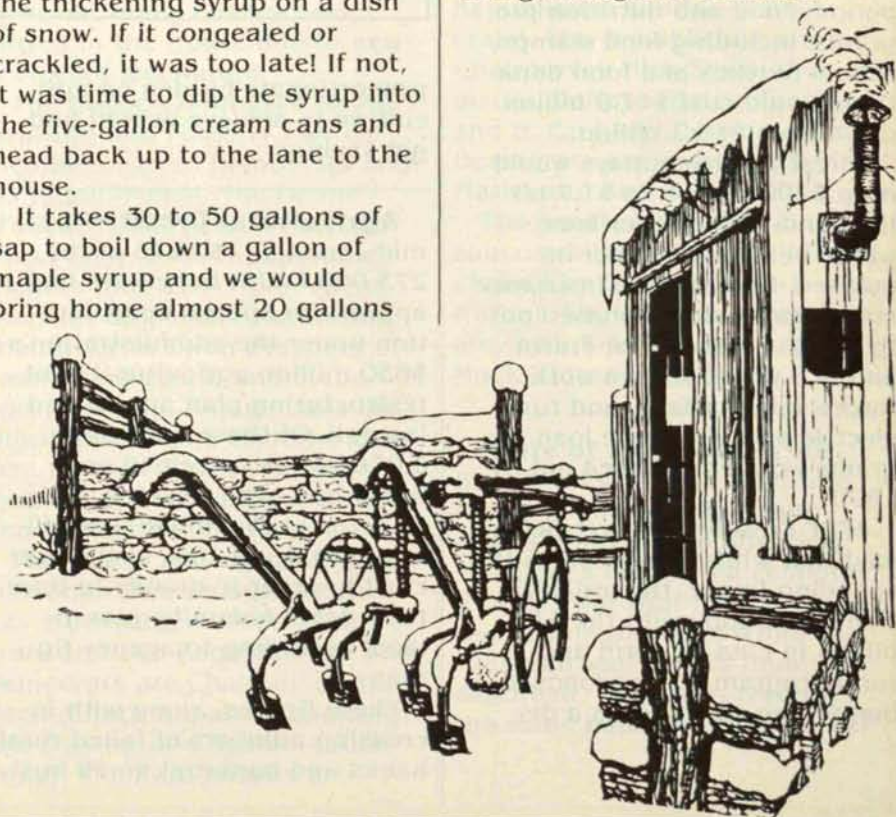
For our dinner, we would boil eggs in the steaming sap and toast homemade bread over the open fire. Then, contented and weary, we would rest against the extra logs, dreamily watching the crackling fire and the billowing steam, waiting for our "sweet treat." If there was still some clean snow, we would test the thickening syrup on a dish of snow. If it congealed or crackled, it was too late! If not, it was time to dip the syrup into the five-gallon cream cans and head back up to the lane to the house.

It takes 30 to 50 gallons of sap to boil down a gallon of maple syrup and we would bring home almost 20 gallons

of syrup — enough to take care of buckwheat pancakes for a whole year! As the weather grew warmer and the sap darkened, Mother would make crocks of "soft sugar" for frostings, pies, cookies and sweet rolls.

We shared our sugary treasure with the neighbors who would be invited some evening for a "sugar off" or "stir down." The syrup would be cooked until it would almost granulate when stirred or beaten. It was poured into small iron molds of hearts, stars, circles and squares. The kitchen would be filled with the maple steam and the laughter and love I remember of happy times on the farm.

Lillian Brake Dunckley is a native of Newaygo County's Dayton Township where her parents, David and Bertha Brake, farmed. She is currently living in Hayden, Colorado.



WASHINGTON

Federal Budget — President Reagan's \$973.7 billion budget proposal represents a 1.5% increase over the previous year's outlays, the smallest annual growth in 22 years. According to the president, the figure "reflects an absolute freeze on government spending" with a growth in debt service. However, the total results from severe cuts in agriculture and other areas while military spending benefits with a 6% increase. Reaction from Farm Bureau is that farmers have always indicated they would be willing to accept their fair share of cuts, but would like to provide some input on how much is "fair."

Under the proposal, USDA outlays of \$38.5 billion are 15% below the previous year's. Farm program costs would drop 30% to \$10.5 billion, with cuts in wheat, feed grain, rice, cotton and dairy programs to be phased-in over a five-year period. Food and nutrition programs, including food stamps, school lunches and food donations would cost \$17.9 billion, down from \$18.2 billion.

Forest Service outlays would drop \$200 million to \$1.7 billion, and various user fees would be established or increased. Federal crop insurance subsidies would be phased out by 1990. Cutbacks for FmHA and SCS would reduce work forces substantially, and rural electric and telephone loan programs would be phased out by 1990.

AFBF President Robert Delano said that while FB welcomes the spending freeze, the organization is unhappy with the \$10 billion in cuts for farm and rural programs. The proposed budget, he said, places a dis-

State Legislators Hear Testimony Regarding Farm Financial Situation



The Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee, chaired by Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison), has scheduled a series of committee hearings on the farm financial situation. The first hearing on farm taxation was held Feb. 6 in Lansing. Testimony will be given at future hearings on the scope of the problem, resources available and how the Michigan Legislature can aid in the recovery. Those testifying Feb. 6 included representatives of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University, Michigan Farm Bureau and staff from the Department of Natural Resources' Farmland and Open Spaces Program (P.A. 116).

proportionate burden on agriculture to achieve overall budget savings.

Agricultural Credit — By mid-January, 110,876 of the 273,000 FmHA borrowers had applied for special consideration under the administration's \$630 million agricultural debt restructuring plan announced last fall. Of those applicants, 3,076 had been helped and 6,974 had been rejected. Only 85 farmers found bankers willing to write-off 10% of the principal in order to qualify to have their debts federally guaranteed, according to agency figures.

These figures, along with increasing numbers of failed rural banks and bankrupt small busi-

nesses, prompted the administration to offer a new eight-point plan to give some credit relief to ailing, credit-worthy farmers.

The new measures include an interest rate write down option with a principal write down option of a maximum of 90%.

An emergency credit assistance program will also be available to farmers who were served by lending institutions that have failed. FmHA will make available to producers 90% loan guarantees for operating loans for one year.

Other measures include a farm credit coordinating group which will coordinate federal and financial regulatory agencies dealing with farm credit.

The Treasury Department will work with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the comptroller of the currency and the Federal Reserve.

USDA will also create special teams within FmHA which will set up temporary offices in areas where private banks have gone bankrupt and been liquidated. In addition, USDA will operate credit hotlines in some states to provide financial advice and information.

About \$700 million is currently available for loans and as of mid-January, only \$33.5 million had been used.

Mileage Log Requirements

— The IRS has announced plans to release proposed regulations to modify vehicle mileage log requirements, which will require "adequate contemporaneous records" and will provide four special rules for farm vehicles, no personal use, commuting and sales and service categories. Under the four special rules, requirements for record-keeping may be substantially reduced or eliminated.

The proposed IRS farm vehicle rule would make it possible for taxpayers to satisfy the record-keeping requirement in two ways: Farmers may either keep records of personal use of a vehicle, or keep no records and treat 80% of the use of a vehicle as business use and 20% as personal use. These rules are available to farmers who receive more than 70% of their gross income (excluding income from passive investment sources) from farming.

LANSING

Legislature Reorganizes —

The Michigan Legislature is still in a state of organization, with much legislation being introduced. However, action is ex-

Resolution Praises Efforts of State's Cherry Industry



Michigan Cherry Committee representatives Harry Foster (executive secretary), David Amon and Earl Peterson (chairperson) are presented with a joint House-Senate proclamation praising the committee's leadership and support for the 1984 Cherry Bowl. Sen. Harry Gast (R-St. Joseph), sponsor of the resolution, made the presentation. Also pictured is MFB Senior Legislative Counsel Robert E. Smith.

pected soon on several controversial bills.

Senate committees remain about the same as last session, however, many changes occurred in the House due to newly elected legislators.

The House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has 13 members (seven Democrats and six Republicans). The Democrats are Chairperson Koivisto (Mass City), Vice Chairperson Hickner (Bay City), Alley (West Branch), Gagliardi (Drummond Island), Lynn Owen (Maybee), Saunders (Detroit) and Stabnow (Lansing). Republicans are Ouwinga (Marion), Gnodtke (Sawyer), Randall (Elwell), Connors (Iron Mountain), Walberg (Tipton) and Bender (Middleville).

The House appropriations subcommittee on agriculture has six members (four Democrats and two Republicans). The Democrats are Chairperson Harrison (Flint), Kilpatrick (Detroit), Sitz (Taylor) and Spaniola (Corunna). The Republicans are

Allen (Fairgrove) and Muxlow (Brown City).

The Senate Agriculture Committee has five members (three Republicans and two Democrats). The Republicans are Chairperson Nick Smith (Addison), DeMaso (Battle Creek) and H. Cropsey (Decatur). The Democrats are Irwin (Sault Ste. Marie) and Barcia (Bay City).

The Senate appropriations subcommittee on agriculture is chaired by DeGrow (R-Port Huron). The other two members are Gast (R-St. Joseph) and Mack (D-Ironwood).

State of the State — Gov. Blanchard's State of the State report is 56 pages long and covers many issues affecting Michigan's diversified economy. It points out that two years ago the *Washington Post* wrote that Michigan was "on its financial deathbed," however, recently the same paper said that Michi-

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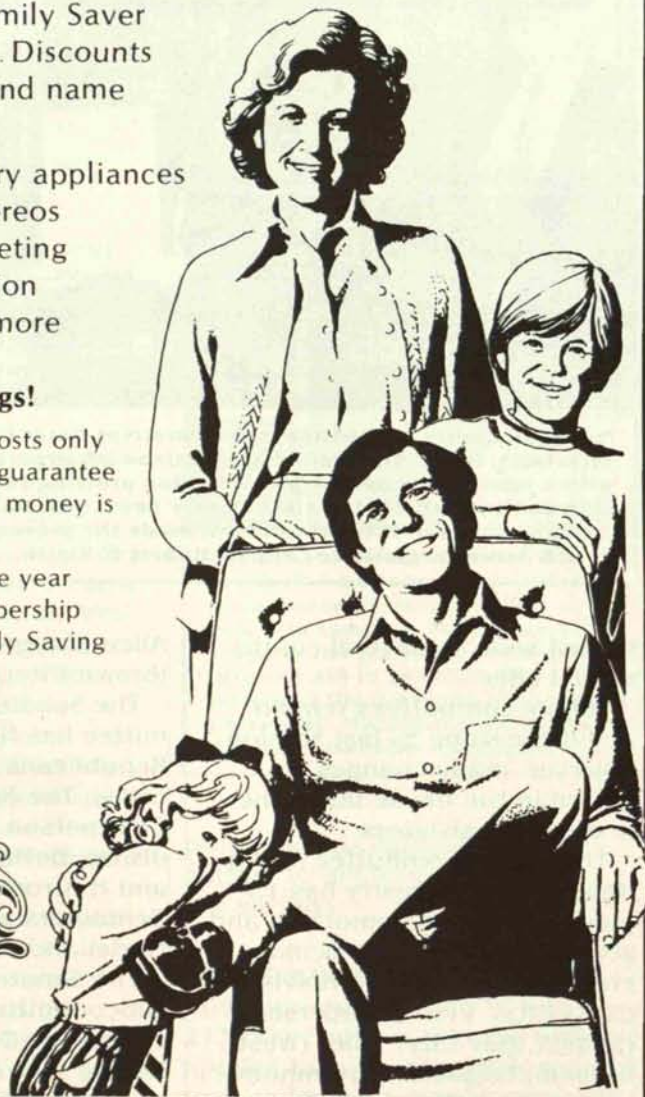
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gan is staging "a remarkable economic turn-around."

Michigan's huge \$1.7 billion debt is nearly paid off and as a result the credit rating is up with bills being paid on time. Many businesses are expanding in Michigan with new companies coming to the state.

There were several areas in the message of importance to agriculture and forestry. The governor said that the "agriculture industry must be a vital part of our overall economic development plan" and that "we have taken steps to change the view of agriculture from that of an industry Michigan took for granted to one that is dynamic, aggressive and has the potential to provide thousands of new jobs."

Blanchard called for the Department of Agriculture to convene a conference later this year to "forge a long-term agriculture action program." The importance of food processing, promotion of food products and export market development was stressed.

He supported the creation of a Grape and Wine Industry Council for use in the area of wine grape production and market promotion. This would be funded by a small wine tax increase. (This legislation was introduced by Sen. Gast last year and passed the Senate. He intends to reintroduce it this year.)

The message recognized the financial problems in agriculture and directed the "Department of Agriculture to initiate a financial survey of Michigan's farm community" to determine both "short-term and long-term needs" of family farms.

Water issues were also addressed, including drinking water protection, waste management, toxic wastes, Great Lakes water diversion, water planning, acid rain, etc. "Non-point" water pollution was pointed out as an environmental problem.

(continued on page 22)



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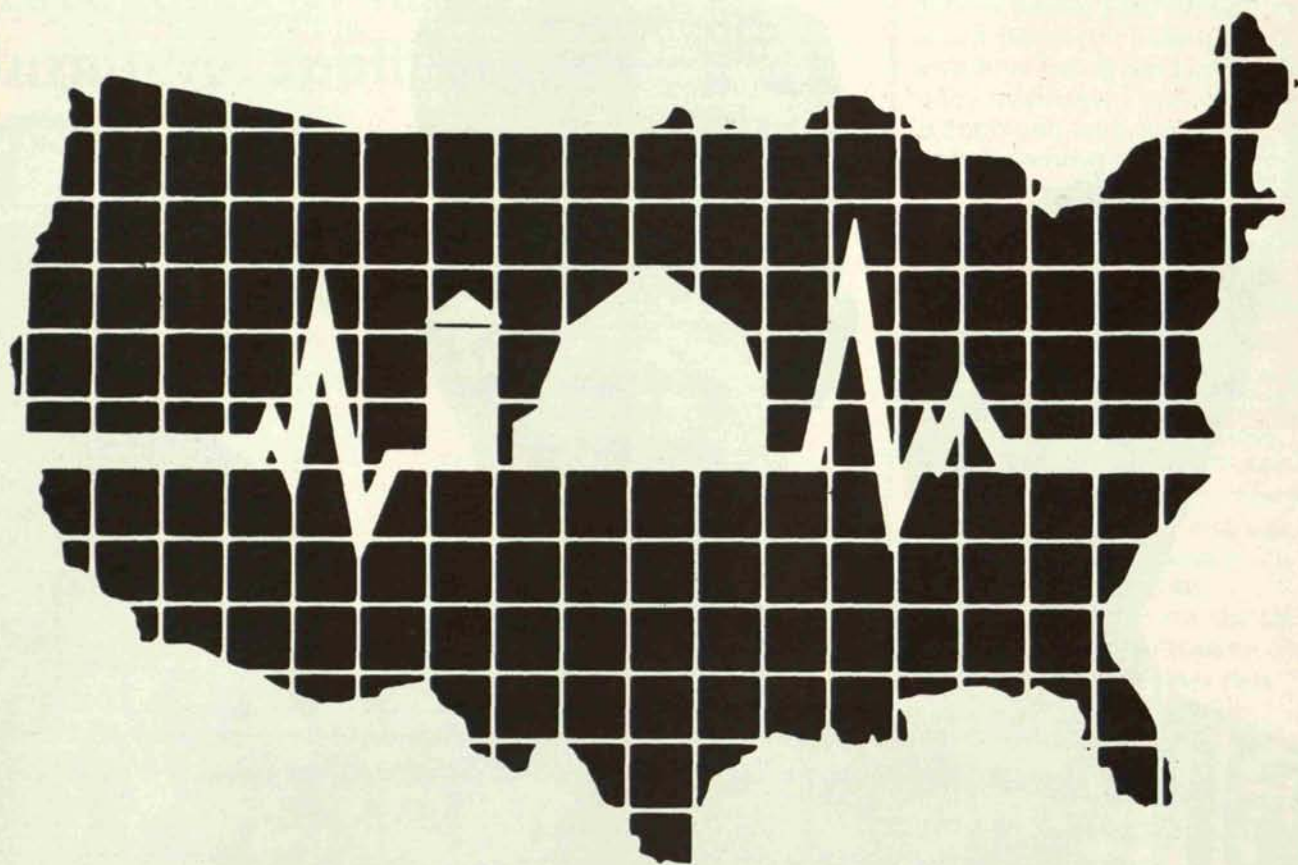
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Agriculture — America's Heartbeat National Agriculture Day March 20

By Donna Wilber

America's amber waves of grain and fruited plains are more than a musical description of the nation's landscape. Silhouetted against that panoramic scene is a human chain of nearly 24 million people involved in agriculture, the most productive, efficient industry in recorded history.

Saluting the people who make up that human chain is what National Agriculture Day, March 20, is all about. First celebrated in 1973, the day has been officially recognized by Congress, the president and many gover-

nors as a time to honor the 20% of the nation's workforce that plays a role in producing, processing and delivering food and fiber to consumers here in the United States and abroad.

Recognition that agriculture is at the heart of the U.S. economy is reflected in the national program's logo, "Agriculture: America's Heartbeat," with a barn and silo superimposed on an electrocardiogram.

In Michigan, the leadership of the Farm Bureau Women in the annual salute has become a tradition. Broadening the scope of the celebration, county FB

Women's committees have sponsored Agriculture Understanding Week activities ranging from mall displays to rural urban programs, from the placement of ag fact table tents in restaurants to honoring "Ag Day Babies."

For the past several years, the MFB Women's Committee has promoted an understanding of, and appreciation for, their industry by hosting key decision-makers and opinion leaders at an Ag Day Breakfast. This year, their target audience will include members of the Michigan Legislature, Michigan Chamber of Commerce and other state

associations, representatives from the governor's office and government agencies.

A slide-tape presentation providing an overview of some of the challenges farmers face in 1985 and beyond is being produced and will be available for purchase by county FB Women's committees.



Live animal exhibits are among the most popular at mall shows, attracting persons of all ages.

Activity Ideas

Many counties are now planning activities. Following is a list of activities suggested by the Agriculture Council of America Education Foundation.

- Ask mayors in your county to issue official proclamations for Agriculture Understanding Week.

- Serve your county board of commissioners a brown-bag lunch made from ag products grown in your county.

- Arrange appearances on local radio and TV station talk shows to highlight the importance of agriculture to your county's economy.

- Provide "Agriculture in the Classroom" presentations in local schools and/or sponsor an essay or poster contest on the importance of agriculture.

- Sponsor open houses at farms, grain elevators, equipment dealers, and any other



Activities promoting agriculture gain greater exposure through media coverage. In the Saginaw Valley and Thumb, where volunteers produce a weekly "Farm and Garden" show, filmed interviews share the coverage of the annual mall display with television viewers.

businesses connected to agriculture, with resource people at each location to explain agriculture's impact on the county's economy.

- Sponsor a contest at a local supermarket, paying for the food items in the 100th shopping cart going through a particular check-out lane, and publicize the percentage of food costs versus non-food costs on the shopper's "grocery" list.

- Set up a machinery display in a high traffic area with tags

detailing the uses, average prices, annual interest costs, useful life, etc., to dramatize the capital investment necessary to efficient modern farming.

- Sponsor a meal open to the public, charging prices based on what farmers receive for the commodities used to prepare the meal.

- Sponsor a rural-urban dinner for 76 persons, representing the number of people one farmer produces enough to feed.



Commodity displays are an excellent way to acquaint consumers with the variety of products grown on Michigan farms.

Agriculture in the Classroom

Doing, seeing, touching — the best way to learn

By Connie Turbin

For administrators, principals and teachers in Michigan elementary schools, the "Agriculture in the Classroom" program sponsored by the Michigan Farm Bureau Women is a new way to approach social studies, family life studies and local history. But for the county FB volunteers who have been involved since it was introduced back in 1975 as the "Speakers' Bureau," the program is a continuing project to gain greater understanding of agriculture among Michigan school children and educators.

The Ag in the Classroom project is now a national program of the American Farm Bureau Federation. In January, efforts of Michigan volunteers throughout the state earned MFB national recognition and a gold star award at the AFBF annual meeting in Hawaii.

According to a survey conducted by the MFB Women's Department in 1984, over 9,000 grade school children from the ages of 7 to 12 years have had the opportunity to get acquainted with farm men and women in their communities through classroom visits and farm tours, and to learn more about their "Fabulous Food Friends" through a slide/tape show produced by MFB.

In many Michigan communities, Ag in the Classroom volunteers have established working relationships with teachers and school principals, or they work through staff in the system of intermediate school districts to coordinate the program.

Volunteers in the Eaton County Farm Bureau credit the support and cooperation of the Eaton Intermediate School District (ISD) and the county extension specialist with helping the program really take off in county schools. These community based organizations proposed combining resources to bring a variety of program experiences to the county's elementary school students with funding from a Michigan humanities grant.

Through the grant program, the Eaton County ISD had \$8,000 available in 1981 and 1982 to develop and print workbooks, produce a traveling exhibit depicting rural life past and present, script and produce a slide/tape study aid entitled, "Life on the Farm," and provide transportation costs to schools for tours of Eaton County farms.

According to Chris MacGregor, communications coordinator for the district, the Eaton ISD, county extension service and

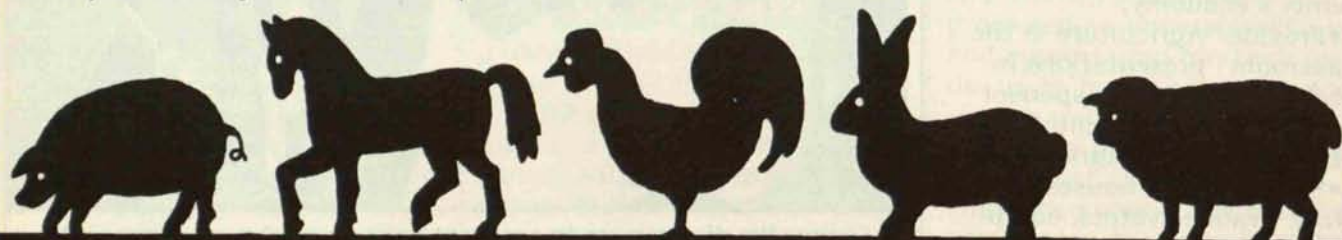
volunteers "matched" the grant with in-kind services of scheduling, staffing and program development.

"We were aware that even though most of Eaton County is considered rural agricultural, there are many children living in our small communities or in the country who don't have an understanding of how critical farming is," she says.

Although the grant expired in 1982, MacGregor says they continue to operate the program utilizing many of the materials that were developed with the grant monies.

"Fortunately, we printed enough classroom workbooks in 1981 so that we can still make them available to the schools at a charge of \$1.00 each, and the slide/tape program featuring Eaton County farms is still in use," she says. "We continue to be involved in scheduling classroom presentations by the county Farm Bureau volunteers and we arrange farm tours, but we no longer pay for the buses." Without the funding, farm tour transportation arrangements are made by the individual schools.

MacGregor is happy with the program, and the evaluation forms she receives from teachers reinforce the value of agricultural studies for Eaton



County students. Over 2,300 third grade youngsters have participated in the program since 1981. "We reached about 800 in the first year, and since then we're averaging about 500 elementary school students a year in Charlotte, Eaton Rapids, Grand Ledge, Maple Valley and Potterville schools."

Judging from comments of the teachers who conduct the agriculture study units, the Ag in the Classroom project has provided them with a better understanding of modern agriculture as well.

"Wow! I didn't realize what I didn't know about agriculture," said one teacher. Another praised the program presentation, saying, "Amazing, we learned so much by doing, seeing and touching — the best way to learn!"

That kind of response and the genuine interest of the children in farm animals and farm products is what is most gratifying



Jeaneen Smuts, Ag in the Classroom volunteer in Eaton County, shared some tips for presentation at the 1984 State Leader Conference, sponsored by the Michigan Farm Bureau Women.

for the FB volunteers, agree Denise Droscha and Jeaneen Smuts, both members of the Eaton County FB Women's Committee.



By dressing for the classroom presentation as she would to do chores, Denise Droscha has the opportunity to explain why her "work clothing" is both practical and necessary on her family's Eaton County dairy farm.

Droscha, who keeps busy on and off the family's dairy farm, says the Ag in the Classroom activity really doesn't complicate her schedule.

"Generally, the presentation only takes an hour in the classroom; a half-hour for the 'Fabulous Food Friends' and a half-hour for our part of the presentation and questions. And it's really fun."

She recommends using props that will interest the children. She loads up a plastic laundry basket with a pretty complete collection of farm toys and an unusual toy cow that "moos

and milks." Whenever possible, she also brings along a calf, medicines used in the dairy operation and a bottle for the calf.

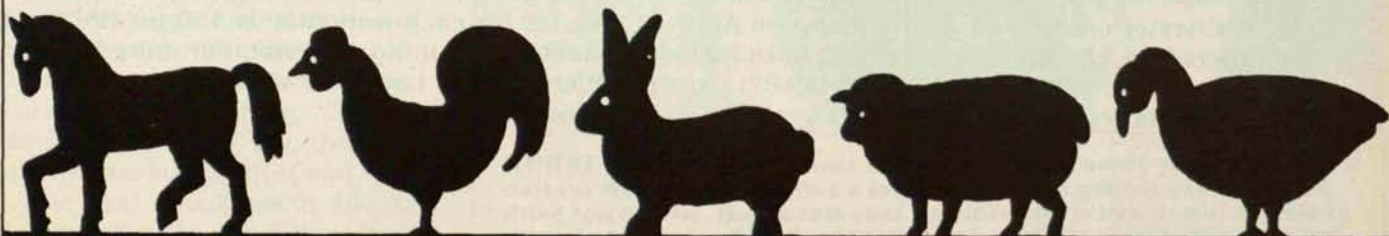
She also tries to give a realistic picture of what it's like to live and work on a farm. "I wear the kind of clothes that I would actually wear to do chores. I explain why these are practical clothes to wear when I'm working in the barn. I'm clean, but I look like I'm ready to work. The other presenter dresses like she's going to a meeting so that we don't give them the wrong idea about the roles of farm women.

"I only talk about what I know from my own experience. For me, that means dairying. I wouldn't even try to answer a question about hogs or sheep," Droscha says.

"Something you've got to remember," says Smuts, "is to give the kids something to keep their hands busy so their mouths don't go. On one side of the room we start passing jars of cream for the children to shake until it turns to butter. We send small jars or plastic bags of grains around the other way. Then they're ready to listen."

Both Droscha and Smuts agree that pairing volunteers who work well together and have "good chemistry" is important. The two don't do presentations together any longer, instead they train new volunteers by "show and tell" and encourage each experienced team member to work with someone new. They are also hoping to bring more retired farmers into the program.

(continued on page 24)



Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, March 18-23 on the campus of Michigan State University, will focus on the beneficial relationship of recreation, tourism and agriculture in diversifying Michigan's economic base. Over 200 sessions are planned covering such topics as farm computers, farm partnerships, marketing, farm credit, taxation, pest management and farm safety practices. Details of the program are available from all county MSU Cooperative Extension Service offices.

A one-day workshop covering anhydrous ammonia handling and equipment will be offered March 19, 20 and 21 during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at MSU. The workshop is designed for persons who handle or supervise anhydrous ammonia equipment. Enrollment is limited and pre-registration is required. There is a course fee of \$15.

County FBs have been asked to contribute 5 cents per member to support several projects of the MFB Women. The contributions are allocated to support legislative, health and safety projects sponsored by the committee. The fund also supports international projects such as Adventures in World Understanding and involvement in the Associated Country Women of the World.

Winners in the Michigan Certified Farm Markets award and recognition program were announced Feb. 13 at the MCFM annual meeting banquet. The award for innovative sales promotion went to Cherrywood Farms of Williamsburg, the outstanding promotional brochure award went to Wicks Orchards of Dowagiac and the award for outstanding outdoor sign went to the Country Mill Farm Market of Charlotte. Farm Markets Cooperatives recognized Erwin Farms of Novi for highest dollar volume purchased and Wolcott-Martin Orchards of Mt. Morris for highest percentage increase.

Five west Michigan county FBs will co-sponsor the area's annual agriculture display at the North Kent Mall in Grand Rapids, March 28-30. Participating counties are Kent, Barry, Allegan, Ottawa and Ionia.

The Washington Legislative Seminar, FB's grassroots lobbying activity, will take place March 26-29. Over 100 legislative leaders have been selected by county FBs to discuss FB policy with Michigan congressmen and USDA officials in the nation's capital.

Congressman Bill Schuette of the 10th District has been appointed to the House Agriculture Committee, marking the first time in many years that Michigan has had full-time representation on the committee. MFB AgriPac chairperson Jack Laurie said Schuette, who represents a largely rural population with diverse agricultural operations, would provide valuable input to the development of the 1985 farm bill. Schuette was designated an AgriPac "Friend of Agriculture" in the 1984 general election.

Another "Friend of Agriculture," Tom Reed of DeWitt, who was supported by AgriPac for election to the MSU Board of Trustees in 1980, was recently elected vice chairperson of that body.

Those who serve on planning/zoning commissions and zoning boards of appeals can sharpen the skills needed to serve in these positions at training programs conducted by the Michigan Society of Planning Officials (MSPO). Basic training workshops are scheduled for 2:45 to 9 p.m. March 4, Albion; March 5, Muskegon; March 7, Rochester; March 11, Midland; March 12, Cadillac; March 13, Mackinaw City; and March 14, L'Anse. Advanced training workshops for planning commissioners will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Grayling on April 10, Rochester on April 11 and Lansing on April 12. The fee for each workshop is \$30 for MSPO members and \$35 for non-members; both include a meal and training material. For more information contact the MSPO, P.O. Box 18187, Lansing, Mich. 48901. Late fees will be charged for registrations received less than two weeks prior to each workshop.

Your Suggestions CAN Change Things!

I am writing this as an open letter of encouragement to those who have ideas and suggestions and think no one will listen.

Since my husband and I have a hog operation, I get just as irritated at seeing imitation bacon bits on salad bars as a dairy farmer scorns non-dairy creamer served with coffee and tea.



Allegan Pizza Hut Manager Kara Blank responded positively to a suggestion from a hog farmer that "real" bacon bits replace "fake" ones on the restaurant's salad bar. Agriculture appreciates her support!

Recently while in the Allegan Pizza Hut I noticed "fake" bacon bits on the salad bar. "So what?" some might say. "What difference does it make?" To my husband and me, and our county which is one of the largest hog producing counties in Michigan, it *does* make a difference.

I've seen those "things" on a salad bar before, but this was the first time I shared my concern with the restaurant manager. Through our conversation I found that, when given the facts, manager Kara Blank was quite helpful. I told her of another nearby Pizza Hut that carried the "real thing" (and I don't mean Coke). She thanked me for the suggestion and I left.

The next time I was in Allegan, I stopped by to see if Kara had looked into it and to my surprise, *real* bacon bits were sit-

ting on the salad bar where the fake ones had once rested! I was very pleased.

I would say to all who read this that *all* suggestions are certainly not taken care of this quickly, but if you, on an individual basis, share your concerns and ideas with the public, you can make a difference!

*Dawn Wilkinson, Fennville
Allegan County*

Them Bones

A friend of mine at North Texas University at Dallas recently sent me the following information read at a university homecoming committee meeting. I believe you'll find it applies to most organizations:

"Every organization is structured from four kinds of bones. There are Jawbones. These are people who do all the talking, but little else. There are Knucklebones. They knock everything anybody does or tries to do. Third, there are Wishbones. They are not going to do anything and they wish someone else would. Finally there are

Backbones. They are the ones who keep everything going. They get under the lead and take on all jobs."

*Barb VanderMeulen, Howard City
Newaygo County*

FARMETTE

*By Andrea Hofmeister
Tuscola County*



"It's a new game called 'Farmopoly.' Everybody starts with a million dollars and the last one to lose it all wins!"



RURAL RASCALS — These two Presque Isle County youngsters can't wait for March to go out like a lamb so they can get back to that sand filled tractor tire. Maybe this year Melanie, who is now 2, will be able to climb in without asking for help from sister Julie, now 4. The girls are the children of Larry & Barbara Claus of Hawks.

GAIN COUNTIES

Macomb
 Monroe
 Oakland
 Wayne
 Kent
 Ottawa
 Kalamazoo
 St. Joseph
 Emmet
 Otsego
 Ogemaw
 Mecosta
 Muskegon
 Menominee

TARGET COUNTIES

Oakland
 St. Joseph
 Emmet
 Mecosta
 Wexford
 Menominee

TOP TWENTY

Emmet	207.20
Mecosta	203.45
Kalamazoo	203.28
Menominee	202.43
St. Joseph	200.36
Oakland	200.00
Ogemaw	199.36
Otsego	199.01
Muskegon	198.95
Ottawa	197.93
Monroe	197.75
Wayne	197.37
Kent	196.56
Macomb	196.22
Wexford	196.10
Bay	195.98
Missaukee	193.21
Washtenaw	193.18
Sanilac	192.84
Tuscola	192.69

Members Jan. 30



Membership Blitz - Feb. 8



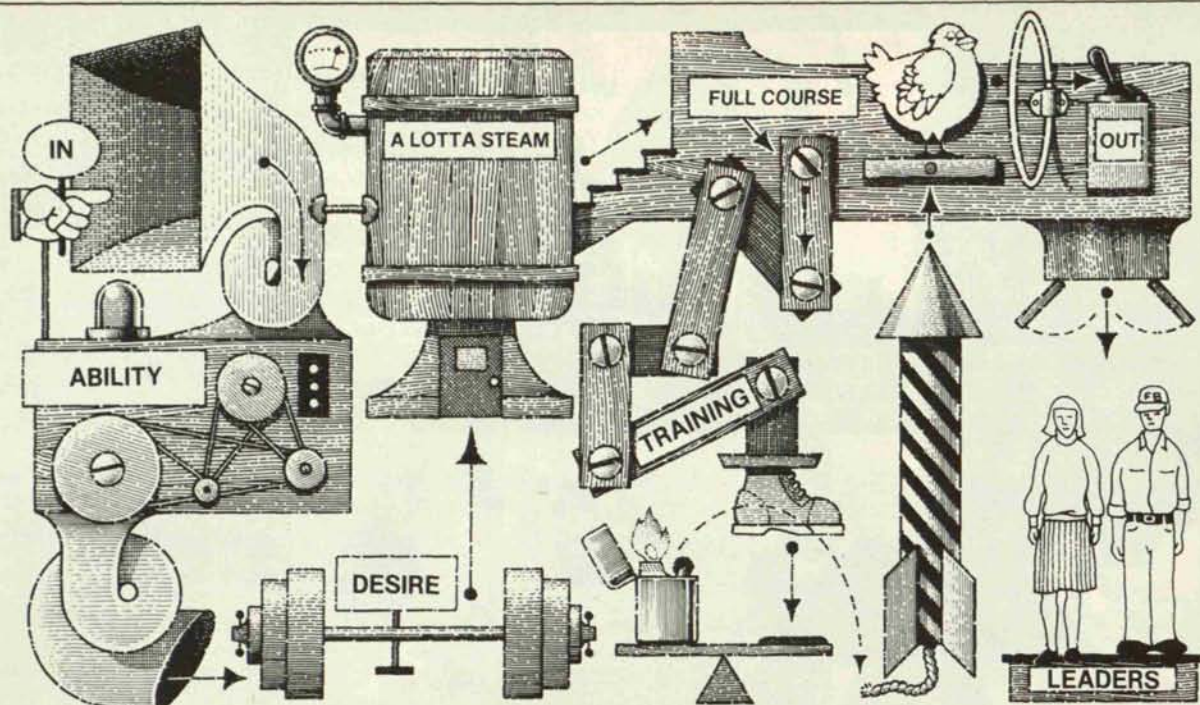
CONFERENCE CHAMPS

- Southeast — Oakland
- West — Ottawa
- Southwest — Kalamazoo
- North — Emmet
- Northeast — Ogemaw
- West Central — Mecosta
- Thumb — (in overtime)
- Saginaw Valley — (in overtime)
- Northwest — Wexford
- South — (in overtime)
- Central — (in overtime)
- Upper Peninsula — Menominee

GOAL COUNTIES

- Kalamazoo
- Emmet
- Otsego
- Ogemaw
- Menominee
- Monroe
- Wayne
- Muskegon
- Ottawa

Standings are as reported at Farm Bureau Center in Lansing Feb. 11 by county Farm Bureau call-in.



Turning Out Leadership for Agriculture

By Connie Turbin

Take a room full of young men and women with the intelligence, drive and desire to be the best in their industry and their organization. Present them with top notch workshops on farm computers, financial management, marketing, farm safety practices, estate planning, crop and livestock production, the Farm Bureau policy development process and organization building. It adds up to a Young Farmer Leader Conference, March 6-8, that will go to the top of the leadership development list.

"I'm confident that young farmers are going to find a positive challenge at this year's conference," says Mike Kovacic, Young Farmer Department manager.

"The educational and motivational sessions we've planned are breaking new ground for the program. To make that happen we are bringing in some excel-

lent workshop presentors from private business, consulting firms, Michigan State University and from within our own Farm Bureau organization."

Over 150 young farmers from 40 county FBs are expected to attend the three-day conference which opens at 10 a.m. March 6 at the Lansing Sheraton Inn. Registration and a get acquainted hour will precede the welcome luncheon, where members of the state Young Farmer Committee, who planned the conference, and the 1984 Outstanding Young Farm Woman will be introduced. Participants will caucus by district immediately after the luncheon and then at 2 p.m. workshop sessions will begin.

Leisure time isn't wasted time at this conference. Having fun and getting to know young farmers from around the state is another important facet of the conference environment. "We tried to provide varied opportunities for conference par-

ticipants to 'show their spirit,'" Kovacic says.

There is unstructured time on the first evening for dinner and entertainment in the Lansing area. On Thursday afternoon, tours of the state capitol, Fisher Body and the Michigan State Police Academy have been planned. And on Thursday evening the Young Farmer Committee will conduct its annual Agri-Pac Auction, followed by a dance.

A sure-fire highlight of the conference will be the wrap-up at the Friday luncheon where motivational humorist Charley Willey will deliver a "winning" message. Willey, who has been guest speaker at FB events around the country, calls himself a serious humorist. He brings audiences an entertaining but down-to-earth presentation that builds their self-image, a better attitude toward their work and an increased understanding of the people around them.

People-Oriented Joel Holzhausen Calls Young Farmer Program Tremendous

By Cathy J. Kirvan

Joel Holzhausen, winner of the 1984 state discussion meet, is a firm believer in the Michigan Farm Bureau Young Farmer program. "I think it's tremendous," he said. "They have an outstanding program if you want to take the time and make the effort to get involved."

Joel has definitely chosen to get involved since joining Farm Bureau just two years ago so he could attend the Young Farmer Leader Conference. "I was impressed," he said. "The conference was well organized and had good speakers and programs. And it was fun, too."

It was at that conference where Joel first learned about the discussion meet. As a "people oriented person" who enjoys speaking in front of groups, Joel has represented Midland County in the District 8 meet and gone on to the state competition for the last two years.

"I can't believe there's not more interest in the discussion meet," he said. "It's such a tremendous opportunity to hone your communication skills, to develop your potential as a spokesperson. That's why I did it."

In his first year of competition at the state level, Joel was eliminated in the preliminary meet. But he says he learned a lot that year by watching the other contestants. "This year I just kind of played it by ear. I tried to keep abreast of current affairs as they related to the topics."

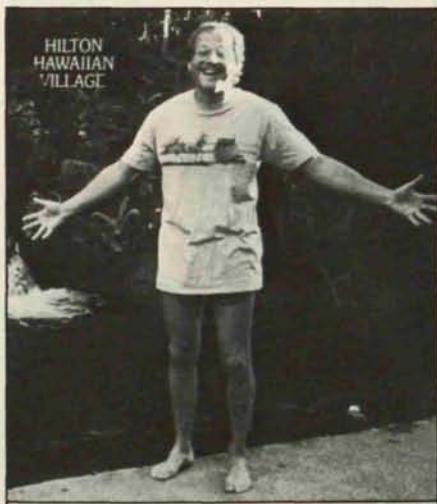
As winner of the state meet, he received an expense-paid trip to Hawaii to represent Michigan in the national competition. "It was a tremendous opportunity even though I was eliminated in the first round," Joel said. "I got to meet the

other state winners from all over the country and talk about the Young Farmer programs they have."

As state winner, he also gets the use of a Chevrolet S-10 pickup truck for one year. "The pickup truck is a nice prize and a good incentive," he said. "People are always asking if that's the pickup I won. We're going to use it to generate interest in the Young Farmer program in our county."

Joel's level of involvement in the overall Farm Bureau organization is testimony to the kind of leadership the Young Farmer program has developed.

As chairperson of the Midland County Young Farmer Committee, Joel now serves on the county board of directors. Already active on the Local Affairs Committee, he recently agreed to serve as newsletter editor. Last year he was a part of the Candidate Evaluation Committee that made recommendations to AgriPac on who should be endorsed as "Friends of Agriculture."



Although he was eliminated in the first round of the national discussion meet, Joel Holzhausen still had something to smile about. He celebrated his 25th birthday during the AFBF convention in Hawaii.



Holzhausen will have the use of a Chevrolet S-10 pickup throughout 1985 thanks to his win in the Michigan discussion meet.

He has attended two Lansing Legislative Seminars and served as a voting delegate at the state annual meeting twice. This year he'll be going to Washington, D.C., for the national legislative seminar as junior legislative leader for Midland County.

Joel, who is just 25 years old, plans to be involved in the organization for a long time to come. His current goal is to serve on the state Young Farmer Committee and to eventually chair the committee.

His goal for his farm is to make it a full-time operation. Although they live in rural Midland County, Joel's parents aren't farmers. "But farming was what I always wanted to do," Joel said. "As a kid, I would get odd jobs pulling mustard and stuff like that."

His interest in agriculture led him to three years of studying crops and soil sciences at Michigan State University. Then four
(continued on page 22)

Young Farmer Program Helped the Sanfords Set Farm & Personal Goals

By Marcia Ditchie

It was more than the snow and subzero temperatures at the Lansing airport on Jan. 11 that brought Neal and Janis Sanford back to reality after a week of Hawaii's breathtaking sunsets, white beaches and pounding surf. The balmy weather of the islands was not as warm as the welcome Michigan Farm Bureau's Distinguished Young Farmer and his wife received from their two sons, Brian, 6, and Greg, 1.

"Home is where the heart is" and returning to the "reality" of family and farm was as eagerly anticipated as their trip to



Good to get away to a sunny climate like Hawaii, agree Neal and Janis Sanford, but just as good to return home to their farm and sons, Brian, 6, and Greg, 1.

Hawaii to participate in the AFBF Distinguished Young Farmer and Rancher contest.

"Home" is the fifth generation farm near Parma in Jackson County where Neal and Janis operate a 583-acre registered Jersey dairy farm which they purchased from Neal's father in 1982. Since becoming sole proprietors, the Sanfords have made several changes to improve the operation's efficiency.

"We've added two silos for improved feed and handling. The feed room was also improved with the addition of more efficient handling equipment, bulk feed bins, a hay barn and a grain bin with full drying floor," Neal said.

They also feed a total mix ration and their animals are divided into several management groups which Neal feels has allowed for better management of the herd through improved feed efficiency, better breeding records and improved butterfat test and milk production.

Their herd has ranked as the

highest Jersey herd in the state in milk production and butterfat content for the last four years. Last year the herd placed first in the nation in its size category for butterfat production and ninth for all Jersey herds.

Neal is also proud of the contribution he has made to expanding Michigan's dairy processing industry. He was instrumental in developing a market for Jersey milk, which is high in protein, in the production of cheese. "Last October we became the first Jersey producers in Michigan to sell our milk for cheese production," he said.

Not content to rest on past laurels, the Sanfords have plans to further improve their farming operation.

"Our plans include completion of the milking parlor addition to replace the pipeline stantion facility now in use, an improved breeding program and the use of embryo transfer

(continued on page 25)



Farm Fastener Discounts Save up to 50%

Saving you money is going to make their business successful, say Ken & Bonnie McNeil of Wyoming, Mich., who own and operate the Hi-Grade Nut and Bolt Co. Hi-Grade is the business behind a new Michigan Farm Bureau discount nuts, bolts and hardware program that is beginning to catch on with members around the state.

The benefits of this program are simple: FB members can purchase a variety of farm fasteners at savings up to 50% below normal retail. The company, which has been in business 15 years and specialized in farm fasteners for 10 years, stocks hex head bolts, nuts, flat washers and lock washers available in farm pack quantities. Plow bolts, carriage bolts and special fasteners are also available. The Hi-Grade line also offers specially packaged "farm repair kits," and 18, 40 and 72 bin compartments.

"We are stocked to be a total supplier of farm fasteners for Farm Bureau members," says Ken McNeil. "In most cases, we provide UPS same day service from our warehouse. If a farmer needs a specialized piece such as an extra long bolt or fine thread, we have the sources to get it for him or her in less than a week." Freight on orders of \$50 or more is prepaid, excluding bins.

"Farm Bureau is the first organization that we have worked with to provide this kind of program. We want it to be successful for us, Farm Bureau and for the farmers who use the service, so we're making ourselves very accessible. We've been at the MFB annual meeting in November and the Hort Show, the Great Lakes Vegetable Growers Convention and we plan to exhibit at Farmers' Week and Ag Expo," McNeil says.

MFB coordinator for the program, John VanderMolen, says

awareness of the program among members is growing. "Wayne Wood, a state board member from Sanilac County, was one of the first people to use the program," VanderMolen says. "He called me after placing an order and said he was very pleased with the service and the product."

Mail order forms with product and pricing information are available from county Farm Bureaus, or can be obtained by writing or calling the MFB Member Services Department, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909, phone 517-323-7000, ext. 536.

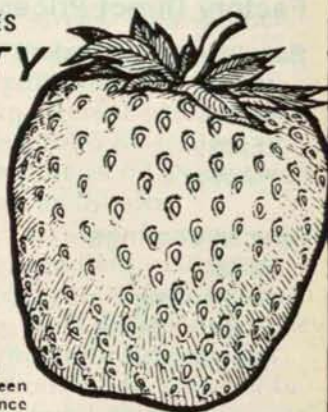
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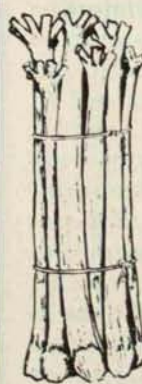
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Joel Holzhausen

(continued from page 19)

years ago he returned to his father's 40 acres and started farming part-time while working for other farmers.

Joel recently purchased a 70-acre farm and this year between owned and rented land will farm 250 acres of hay, corn, wheat and navy beans, in addition to taking care of two nearby horse farms.

Legislative Review

(continued from page 8)

Agriculture runoff is said to be the "principal cause of 'non-point' source pollution." Urban and highway runoff are implicated as well. "Nearly nine million tons of sediment from cropland erosion makes its way into our waters annually, carrying with it phosphorus, nitrogen and pesticides." The Cabinet Council on Environmental Protection is directed to submit a statewide plan by July with a final plan by September.

Other broad issues addressed by the governor included: six new prisons, economic development, business and labor issues, forest products industry, tourism, energy, international trade, transportation, environmental issues, natural resources, education, welfare, governmental efficiency, closing tax loopholes, etc.

State Budget Proposal —

Gov. Blanchard's budget for the Department of Agriculture maintains the additional \$1.5 million added last year by Sen. Gast, chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee. It increases the overall ag budget by 6.1%. The general fund portion is increased from \$24.3 million to \$25.8 million. The total Agriculture Department budget, including restricted funds and federal funds, in-

creased from \$42.9 million to \$45.5 million.

Increases include: marketing and international trade to provide for full-time ag people in the Brussels and Tokyo offices; funds for a joint program for Soil Conservation Districts and drain commissioners on soil conservation and non-point water pollution issues (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.); funds for peach virus control and abandoned orchard removal; FFA money; a cooperative program with DNR to collect data on water issues; and increases for food inspection, gypsy moth control, animal health, dairy programs and plant industry. Money is also included for a Governor's Conference on Agriculture.

The proposed budget for MSU includes about a 7.8% increase for the whole college and about a 7% increase for both the Ag Experiment Station and the Extension Service. In view of expected federal cuts, it may be necessary to try to increase state funding as much as 11%.

It is also expected that funding will be available for continuing the renovation of the Veterinarian Science building and updating its equipment in order to maintain accreditation.

In the case of K-12 schools, the recommended increase is \$132.9 million. The school aid per pupil formula will be adjusted to distribute the increase along with the various categorical. Increases in the state's share of school costs will lessen the pressure on property taxes for schools.

The governor's budget proposals are recommendations to the Legislature.

With the exception of education, the overall budget is called a "zero growth" budget meaning that the increase does not totally provide for increased costs due to inflation.

Lansing legislative topics are reviewed by Robert E. Smith, senior legislative counsel.

U.S. Budget Committee Holds Regional Hearing at Lansing



Members of the U.S. House Budget Committee panel set up regional hearing headquarters at Lansing City Hall Feb. 11.

Hearing testimony Feb. 11 addressed farm credit, interest costs and 1985-86 USDA budget

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lansing's City Hall was the site Feb. 11 of one of six regional budget hearings scheduled throughout the country by the U.S. House Budget Committee to gain input on the 1985-86 federal budget.

The Lansing hearing focused on agriculture and rural communities. Testimony was given by agriculture spokespersons from many Midwestern states. Eaton County farmer Mark Smuts represented Michigan Farm Bureau. Smuts farms cash crops and raises beef cattle on 1,800 acres in central Michigan.

The text of his testimony follows:

The agricultural economy of Michigan is experiencing difficult times. While the degree of difficulty will vary from farmer to farmer and commodity by commodity, many farmers are facing serious financial problems. The entire Farm Bureau organization at every level — county, state and national — recognizes the difficult financial problems of agriculture.

My remarks will concentrate on areas which I believe are within the jurisdiction of the

House Budget Committee to help farmers through their financial stress. This will be done in three primary areas — farm credit relief measures, reducing interest costs and the proposed 1985-86 budget for USDA. My views on these three areas are as follows:

First, Michigan farmers will be going to the field just six to eight weeks from now to begin planting their 1985 crops. They need firm commitments of money from credit sources to purchase seed, fertilizer, pesticides and other inputs well before planting time.

A recent report from a major farm credit source indicates that about 6% to 7% of all farmers are highly leveraged with debt/asset ratios of 70% or greater. If these farmers go out of business the effect will be far reaching.

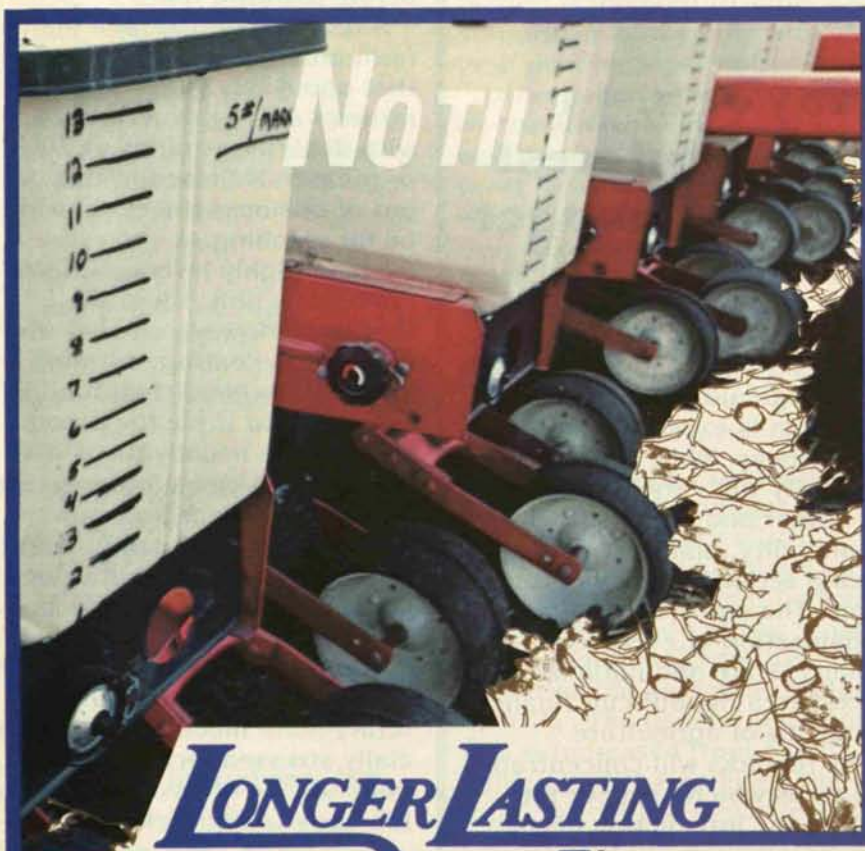
These highly leveraged farmers control only 4% of the farmland. However, if they are not able to continue farming and must sellout, their land is estimated to triple the amount of land that usually turns over each year. A three-fold increase in farmland placed on the already depressed land market would surely drive land values down further and the effects would be felt by all farmers.

The recently revised program announced by Agriculture Secretary John Block to help financially stressed farmers will hopefully be of assistance. It is too early to know exactly how
(continued on page 30)



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Ag in the Classroom

(continued from page 13)

"We could cover the whole county," says Smuts, "but that's not the object. The object is to get a lot of women (and men) involved and not have to do every school yourself." Currently, there are about 12 trained county FB volunteers participating in the program as presentors, and four or five others who assist by making telephone contacts with the schools, writing letters of confirmation and scheduling.

During March, the teams will be working throughout the county to make the "Fabulous Food Friends" presentation. This scheduling complements other Agriculture Understanding Week recognitions and promotions in March sponsored by Farm Bureau and agricultural groups across the nation.

To arrange for that optimum time, coordinating efforts begin in late January when contacts are made with MacGregor at the Eaton ISD. Then at the February Women's Committee meeting, volunteers brush up on their presentation and share tips with new volunteers. A sign-up sheet is circulated to allow each team to select convenient dates and to indicate a preferred school or schools.

MacGregor receives the sign-up sheet and makes an initial contact with the school principals in the area. From there, communication between the county volunteers and the school is conducted directly.

There may be more elaborate programs, conclude Droscha and Smuts, but this one is workable in any county and is attractive to volunteers because it doesn't put excessive demands on volunteer time or the financial resources of the county FB Women's Committee.

Neal & Janis Sanford

(continued from page 20)

to improve the genetic potential of our herd, as well as instituting our own computer program," Neal said.

He attributes much of the success of their farming operation to the experiences gained through the MFB Young Farmer program.

"Participation in the Young Farmer program has played a big role in our ability to effectively manage our farm," he said. "It has helped us analyze what our farm and personal goals are and to effectively communicate with people on a day-to-day basis."

"The Young Farmer activities that we have participated in have given us the opportunity to view the operation of other farmers in all realms of agriculture which has helped us on our own farm," Janis said. "It has also helped us from a personal standpoint because there is always the opportunity to grow as an individual at the leader conference."

In the last 11 years the Sanfords have served in a variety of Young Farmer leadership positions on the county and state levels. They've been co-chairpersons of the county committee and Janis served on the state committee from 1977 to 1981, including a term as chairperson in 1981. They have also served on several other FB committees, including membership, AgriPac candidate evaluation, MACMA sales, policy development, dairy and Safemark. In addition, Neal was Jackson County FB president for two years.

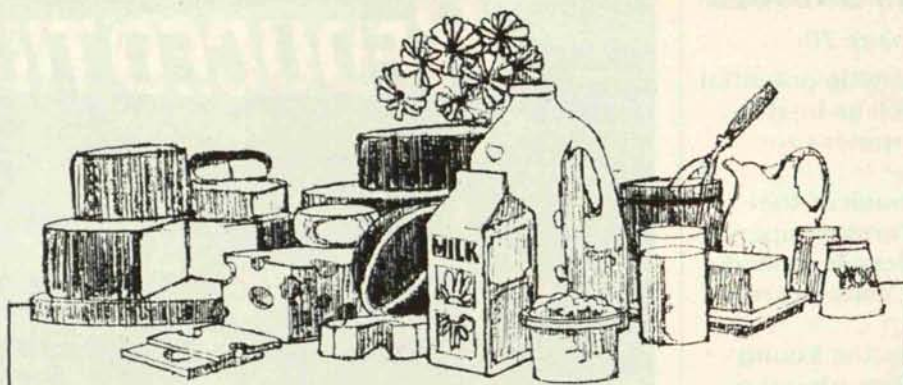
Based on their own experiences on the farm and in their personal lives, the Sanfords believe that the Young Farmer program plays a key role in the development of young farmers as agriculture's future leaders and one of the first steps is the state leader conference.



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The Canadian Milk Marketing System

The Reagan administration has proposed far reaching changes in the national dairy price support program, with the planned elimination of it. While Farm Bureau policy does not support total elimination of the program, there are several alternatives. One that is under consideration by Congress is a rigid supply-control program like that found in Canada.

The following report, which summarizes how milk is marketed in Ontario, was prepared by MFB Commodity Specialist Kevin Kirk after a visit to that Canadian province last fall. It is not meant as a preferred program in this country, but is supplied for informational purposes.

Ontario has a unique system of milk marketing — not unique in the world, but unique in North America. The milk marketing system was formed as a result of the Milk Act of 1965. All milk produced for sale on Ontario farms must be sold to one buyer and all milk bought by Ontario processors must be purchased from one seller: the Ontario Milk Marketing Board. Enforcement is ultimately traced back to the federal and provincial governments.

This board is a non-profit dairy farmer organization which represents all milk producers in Ontario and is totally financed by them. Its policies are established by a 13-member board of directors, of which 12 must be dairy farmers elected by milk producers in their respective regions for four-year terms on a rotating basis. The other member is appointed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to represent farm-separated cream producers, who have an organization of their own. The board meets between 10 and 12 days per month.

This Canadian milk marketing system authorized the establishment of milk quotas to control production, and a formula for setting milk prices based on cost of production. These production quotas are not used to maintain prices by shorting the market, but instead each month the milk marketing board looks at the milk market and determines the total amount of milk that is needed to supply all users plus a small surplus to guarantee an adequate supply. Each producer's quota is then adjusted up or down occasionally to meet the demand. The adjustment is determined as a

percentage of the total market and that percentage is applied to each farm quota.

Most farmers carry about 60% of their production as fluid milk and 40% manufacturing milk. No producer is allowed to have more than 75% of his or her production as fluid quota. Producers must fill at least 90% of their fluid quota or lose part of the quota. Manufactured milk quota is based on a yearly production and must be filled to 85% by the end of each year.

Quotas may be bought from the Ontario Milk Marketing Board or transferred within families. Fluid milk quota is currently selling at \$225 per liter, and 75 cents per liter for manufacturing milk. It calculates out to be about \$6,000 per cow to buy the quota. This is the main reason there is no great influx into the milk industry in Canada. The most profitable farms have between 40 and 100 cows with larger farms less profitable. It is important to note that as cash crop prices move up, quota values drop. (*Editor's Note: Prices are in Canadian dollars, not U.S. The current exchange rate is about 30%.*)

Canada's current gross price is \$16.50 (Canadian) per cwt. Producers must pay about 8 cents for market administration and 23 cents for promotion, compared to our 15 cents. Also, milk and herd testing and transportation adds up to a total marketing cost of 83 cents, so their net price is \$15.68 (Canadian) per cwt., compared to our current net price of about \$12.30 (U.S.). Over surplus milk is marketed through the world market and nets the Ontario producer 84 cents per cwt., compared to \$15.68 per cwt. for quota milk. Thus, farmers are not producing milk without a quota.

Farmers in Canada like their quota system and would not go back to their old open market system. Processors like the system because it guarantees them a steady supply of high quality milk at what they consider a fair price.

Quota purchase prices are often high because over formula pricing systems set milk prices at a level that allows profits in the dairy business compared to other alternatives. This is an incentive to stay in business and new producers have an incentive to get into dairying. But these new producers are faced with enormous start-up costs; most entering the business now are financially well off.

As more and more quotas are sold or transferred, these values will get built into production costs and raise the price of dairy products. This could be self-defeating because the commodity would be priced out of the market and the producers would no longer be competitive. Yet for the time being, our neighbors in Canada seem to be satisfied with this quota-type program.

Agrinomic Update is prepared monthly by MFB's Commodity Activities & Research Department.

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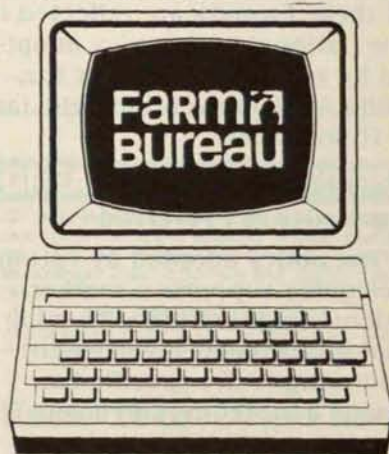
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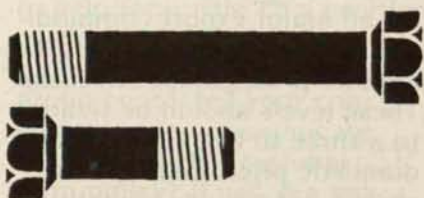
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The Discussion Topic is used by Community Action Groups for monthly policy discussions.

Farm Bill '85 Policy Direction

Washington, D.C., is a busy place these days from an agricultural standpoint. Congress is now wrestling with decisions on what type of farm bill should be enacted to replace the current farm program which will expire at the end of 1985.

What direction will Farm Bureau be taking on Farm Bill '85 when Congress tackles the key issues of target prices, price supports, payment limitations and the farmer-owned grain reserve? The answer to this question has been provided by the thousands of farmer members who participated in policy development meetings last fall. The recommendations of these farmers are reflected in the national farm policy adopted by voting delegates at the 1985 AFBF convention held Jan. 7-10 in Hawaii.

Market-Oriented Agriculture Preferred

The policy adopted by voting delegates supports a market-oriented agriculture with minimal government involvement. Following is the specific language adopted by the delegates about a market-oriented agriculture:

"We favor a market-oriented agriculture. A market-oriented agriculture means that supply and demand, rather than government action, should ultimately determine production and price. Future farm program legislation should be designed to rely less on government and more on the market. The primary objectives of a market-oriented farm policy should be to allow farmers to take maximum

advantage of market opportunities at home and abroad without government interference; encourage needed adjustments in resource use and reduce the need for future government intervention."

Support for Target Prices and Commodity Loans

The issue of target prices was decided with delegates supporting the use of target prices to help farmers adjust to a more market-oriented agriculture. The specific language on target prices adopted by delegates reads:

"We support a farm program which will provide target prices as an income supplement for farmers to help them make the adjustment to a market-responsive agriculture."

Voting delegates also gave support to the continuation of price support loans for all major export commodities such as corn, wheat and soybeans. The loan levels would be related to the three to five year average national price received by farmers for the commodity but annual adjustments in the loan level could not exceed 10%. The actual language adopted by delegates reads as follows:

"We support a farm program which will provide loan levels for all major export commodities to facilitate orderly marketing and price competitiveness. These levels should be related to a three to five year average domestic price. Loan levels should not provide incentives for production that exceeds demand in domestic and world markets. These levels should be adjusted annually by no more than 10%."

New Approach to the Grain Reserve

On the issue of the farmer-owned grain reserve the delegates decided it should be terminated because of the large volume of grain that exists in the reserve and the negative effect it has on market prices. The delegates supported replacing the grain reserve with a loan program. The specific language approved by delegates reads:

"The farmer-owned grain reserve should be terminated and replaced by loans to wheat and feed grain producers, to be made available without interest for a nine-month period. A nine-month extension should be made available which should include a charge for interest."

Deficiency Payments Limitation Approved

The delegates voted to oppose any limitations on payments to farmers under price support, acreage reduction or disaster programs. But the delegates did support a \$50,000 payment limitation on deficiency payments (target prices) to farmers. The delegate approved language is as follows:

"We do not support payment limitations under the commodity loan, acreage reduction and disaster programs. However, we support a \$50,000 limitation on deficiency payments to farmers."

Dairy Program Should React to Supply-Demand

Voting delegates gave strong support for a dairy price support program with the support level being adjusted according to the amount of net dairy products purchased by the government. The specific price support level would be determined by use of an economic formula or a moving average of the previous three years' all milk price. Delegates opposed the continuation of any assessment of dairy producers by the government. The dairy policy adopted by delegates reads in part:

"We support a dairy price support program which will bring supplies down to demand levels.

"We favor a system where the price support level would be automatically adjusted according to the amount of net dairy products purchased by the federal government and oppose any assessment of producers by the federal government as a part of any future dairy legislation.

"We support the use of an economic formula or a moving average of the previous three years' all milk price for determining the support price."

Continued Sugar Supports

Another important farm program policy of interest to Michigan farmers and adopted by delegates applies to sugar. The policy reads:

"We support a program to protect the interests of domestic sugar producers and recommend that the 1985 farm bill should include a sugar title with provisions similar to the present program."

Member Involvement Needed for Policy Execution

The key provisions of FB's 1985 national farm policy outlined above are consistent with the recommendations of voting

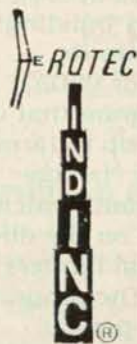
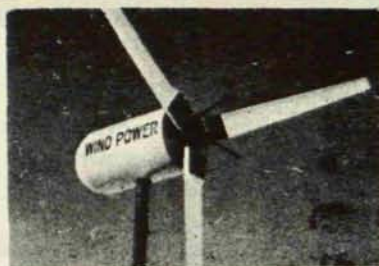
delegates at the MFB annual meeting last November. This underscores the fact that policy recommendations of members participating in their local Community Action Groups and county FBs are the very foundation of the final policies adopted by delegates at the state and national FB annual conventions.

The positions expressed in Farm Bureau's 1985 national farm policy are now being written into bill form. When the proper language has been drafted and approved, it will be taken to Congress for introduction as a bill. Farm Bureau will then work to have it considered by the House and Senate agriculture committees.

Now that hundreds of FB members in Michigan and thousands of members from throughout the nation have made their input to the final policy, what must these members do to implement the policy? Of greatest importance is for members to know and understand what FB's national farm policy is and how it was developed. Next is the need for unity and determination by every FB member to support the policy. Members can show support by urging their congressmen to support Farm Bill '85 legislation that is consistent with the national farm policy established by FB members working in unity.

Questions for Discussion

- Did your group participate in the policy execution process to help formulate FB's position on Farm Bill '85?
- Have any members of your group contacted your congressmen to communicate support for FB's national farm policy? If not, are any planning to?
- What other things can your group do to assure execution of FB's national farm policy?



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Budget Hearing

(continued from page 23)

helpful the revised program will be. However, the program will not be successful unless it is adequately funded. Michigan Farm Bureau encourages the budget committee to accommodate this need by building adequate funding into its budget resolution for USDA.

Another new program that offers considerable help to farmers is the Extension Management Assistance Teams which will focus attention on the difficulties of individual farmers and their families. The program features four to six person teams of Cooperative Extension personnel to meet with individual farm families, analyze in detail their financial problems, help organize a management plan and help the farmer obtain assistance from his or her lender to implement the plan. Early reports indicate the program is being received well by farmers. Michigan Farm Bureau urges the budget committee to consider this program and ensure that adequate funding is provided for its operation in the USDA budget resolution.

Second, interest costs account for about 20% of farm expenses. Each 1% change in the interest rate changes farm in-

terest costs \$2 billion in the same direction. It is also estimated that for each \$50 billion reduction in the federal deficit, the interest rate should decline 1%. These estimates indicate that if the more than \$200 billion federal deficit were eliminated interest rates would drop about 4% and put nearly \$8 billion to \$9 billion in the pockets of farmers.

A recent survey of Illinois farmers showed they paid an average of \$23,000 in interest costs during 1983 as compared to an average of \$19,000 for seed and fertilizer during the same period. A Michigan survey would probably show similar results. In meetings with farmers, farm credit personnel and agricultural economists one of the most frequently mentioned concerns we hear about the farm economy is interest costs.

Michigan Farm Bureau strongly urges the budget committee to do whatever is possible within its jurisdiction to reduce the federal deficit. Farmers would be major benefactors of such actions.

Third, the president has submitted his proposed 1985-86 budget to Congress. Michigan Farm Bureau is pleased that it represents a near-freeze in overall spending and a reduction of about \$42 billion in the federal deficit. However, we believe the proposed cuts in the agriculture budget are unfair when compared with proposed cuts for other programs. For example, agriculture would experience a 37% drop in funding which is the highest of any other major budget category except for the "revenue sharing and other financial assistance" category which would experience a 57.6% drop.

Michigan Farm Bureau is not opposed to agriculture being asked to accept its proportionate share of overall spending cuts. But a 37% cut is not proportionate with budget pro-



Third district Congressman Howard Wolpe and Eaton County Farm Bureau member Mark Smuts discuss the state's farm financial picture before Smuts' formal testimony.

posals for other areas of which defense is a notable example. We believe spending cuts should be spread as evenly as possible among all departments and agencies of government. We recommend the budget committee reject any budget proposals which place a disproportionate share of spending cuts on agriculture.

In closing, I have not made any reference to Farm Bill '85, which Congress must consider this year, and its role in helping to alleviate the current farm income situation. The development of Farm Bill '85 will be a primary function of the House and Senate agriculture committees rather than the budget committee. Michigan Farm Bureau will be making extensive input to the Agriculture Committees at the appropriate time on Farm Bill '85.

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