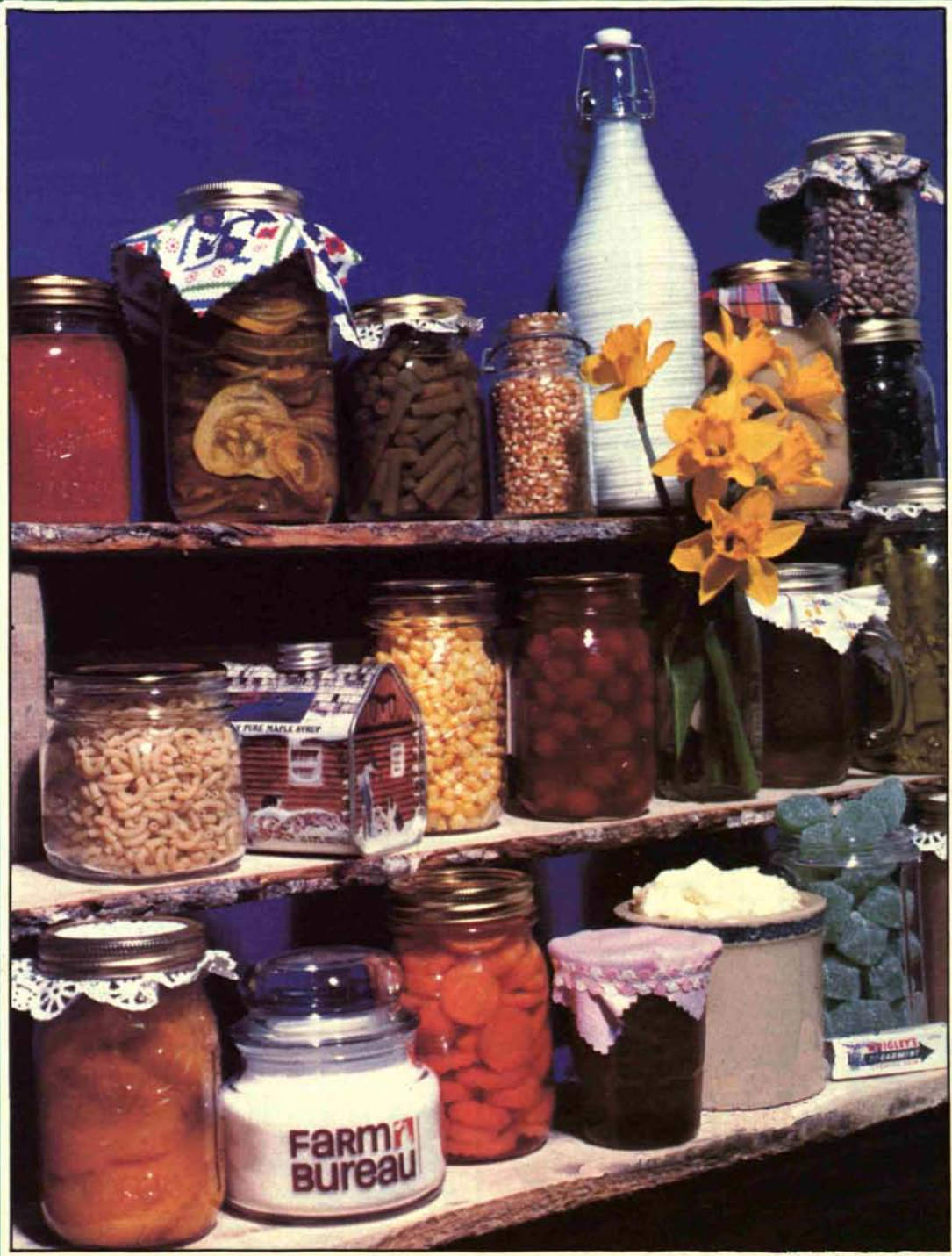


# RURAL LIVING



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**March 20, 1986**

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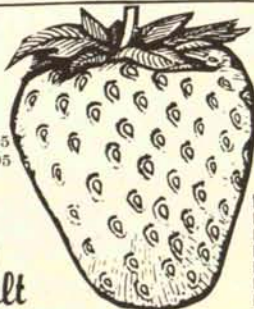
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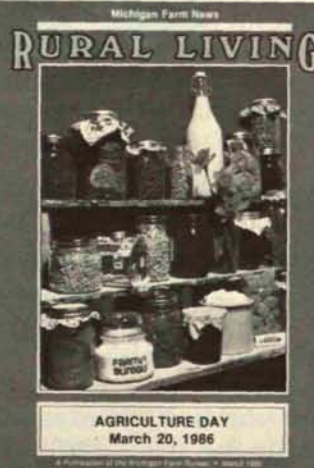
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# RURAL LIVING

## FARM NEWS

A publication  
of the  
Michigan  
Farm Bureau



MARCH 1986  
VOL. 65 NO. 3

### THE COVER

Preserving our agricultural heritage is only one facet of Ag Day observances. Ag Day organizers promote understanding of the industry's role in keeping America economically healthy.

Photo By Marcia Ditchie

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## Communicating for Agriculture



Among the policies adopted at our MFB annual meeting in December was one dealing with "Communicating for Agriculture." In that policy statement, delegates recognized that effective communications with the non-farm public must be an ongoing process if farmers are to have an influence on the decisions that impact their industry.

"We urge Farm Bureau members and leaders to continue to take every opportunity to reinforce broad public appreciation of the important contributions agriculture makes to the state's economic, environmental and social well-being," the policy states.

Members across the state will be involved in various activities to execute that policy this month as the nation celebrates Agriculture Day on the first day of spring. They will likely find, among their various audiences, more than the usual degree of interest in our industry and particularly in the people who are part of agriculture.

With all the gloom and doom about our industry fed to the public in such large portions by the major news media these days, farmers who are communicating for agriculture may well be asked: "What in the world do you have to celebrate about?"

This kind of public attitude certainly presents some challenges, but it also creates op-

portunities. I hope each of you involved in agriculture understanding promotions this month — and throughout the year — will take advantage of those opportunities.

Imagine an average city consumer who has just read a newspaper article headlined, "Crisis Haunts Countryside," entering a shopping mall and encountering a group of people from the countryside who, according to the article, are haunted by crisis.

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**"Agriculture — America's Heartbeat" is the theme of Ag Day 1986. Agriculture has been America's "heartbeat" since 1776, it still is today and will always be. That is why we celebrate.**

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Your industry is suffering from a "sick" public image right now and these personal interactions provide you with opportunities to change that image.

There may be curiosity and even a degree of pity mixed in with that consumer's interest but, nevertheless, it gives you an opportunity to set the record straight on some things.

It gives you a chance to say, yes, my industry has some problems, but it is not going

down the drain; yes, we do have challenges, but we'll meet those challenges with your understanding and support; yes, agriculture is going through the painful process of change, but farmers are determined to manage that change; yes, some farmers are going out of business, but the majority will survive and thrive.

It gives you a chance to share what is needed to allow agriculture to regain its health and grow again. It gives you a chance to restore some of the pride and confidence that consumers once shared with you about your industry. Optimism and enthusiasm are contagious and should be spread to all your publics.

Few people can be convinced to invest in a failing venture. Make sure the people you communicate with know that their understanding and support is an investment in an industry that has a bright future.

"Agriculture — America's Heartbeat" is the theme of Ag Day, 1986. Agriculture has been America's "heartbeat" since 1776, it still is today and will always be. That is why we celebrate.

*Elton R. Smith*

*Elton R. Smith, President  
Michigan Farm Bureau*

**"Farm Families: A Time of Transition"** is the theme of a series of three workshops to be presented in March at Western Michigan University. The March 13 workshop will focus on marketing farm related skills, the March 20 session will address farmers and the law and the final workshop, March 27, will cover estate planning for farmers. Cost of the workshops series, which is open to the public, is \$12 per person or \$20 per couple. Reservations can be made by calling the Center for Women's Services, 616-383-6097. The workshops are co-sponsored by the Kalamazoo County FB Women, Kalamazoo County Cooperative Extension Service, Women for the Survival of Agriculture in Michigan and the WMU Center for Women's Services.

**MFB's statewide Commodity Conference will be held March 13** at Stouffer's Hotel, Battle Creek. Members of both MFB commodity advisory committees and county FB commodity committees are invited. General session topics include farm credit, national farm programs, state and national legislative updates, plus workshops on the USDA whole herd buyout program, taxing forestland owners, prompt payment for horticultural crops and the USDA egg marketing order. Cost of the conference is \$25 per person and includes registration, lunch and dinner.

**MFB's Campaign Management Training Seminar will provide members interested in running for elected office with a "professional edge."** The three-day seminar will be held at the Clarion Hotel in Lansing, March 25-27. Course lecture, participation and computerized campaign "model" are patterned after training programs of the major political parties. For more information on the seminar, contact Ron Gaskill, MFB Public Affairs Division, 517-323-7000, ext. 559. Cost is \$150 per person. Registration deadline is March 14.

**A series of Farm Employer Recordkeeping Workshops will be held in western Michigan** during the week of March 17. The workshops will be from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on March 17 at the Berrien County FB office in Berrien Springs, March 19 at the Van Buren County FB office in Paw Paw and March 20 at the Kent County FB office in Comstock Park. Grand Rapids attorney Richard VanOrden and MFB Local Affairs Specialist Ron Gaskill will conduct the workshops. The registration fee will be \$50 per person and enrollment will be limited. For more information, contact the MFB Public Affairs Division, 517-323-7000, ext. 559.

**The 1986 Michigan Certified Farm Markets and Farm Markets Cooperative annual meeting** will be held in conjunction with MSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week. For further information on the annual meeting, which will be held March 18-19, contact Michigan Certified Farm Markets at 517-323-7000, ext. 700.

**Over 100 county and state FB leaders will be in the nation's capital April 15-18 for the 26th annual Washington Legislative Seminar,** sponsored by the MFB Women. County FBs are in the process now of selecting legislative leaders to share Farm Bureau's new national policies with their U.S. representatives and senators.

**MSU has received a job training grant to assist dislocated farm family members and farm employees in finding off-farm employment.** Cooperative Extension Service offices and the EMAT teams will act as the major outreach, eligibility verification and referral agency. MSU officials project that over 1,000 farm clientele will receive information on farm/off-farm employment alternatives through workshops and 175 men and women will be placed in unsubsidized employment primarily concentrated in the mechanical, construction, operative, computer, bookkeeping, clerical, managerial, ag tech and entrepreneurial areas.

**The fifth annual Dairy Promotion Profiles seminar will be held March 4-5** at the Lansing Sheraton Inn. Participants will include specialists from the restaurant, communications and political arenas in addition to nearly 200 farmers. Dairy producers will share their promotion know-how in "Cultivating the Market," one of three workshops offered during the conference. Representatives of Michigan's leading industries will also participate in the conference: Rep. Debbie Stabenow, assistant majority floor leader in the Michigan House of Representatives; Ernest St. Pierre, Hobie's, Inc.; and Bonnie Knutson, professor of marketing, MSU.

## AFBF Goes to Work on Priority Issues

### WASHINGTON

**AFBF Directors Identify Priority Issues** — AFBF board members have reviewed and identified 11 priority issues for the organization during the second session of the 99th Congress. They include agricultural credit, 1985 farm bill implementation, federal budget, immigration reform, health insurance tax deduction, international trade, tax reform, use of federal lands, waterways and port improvement, environmental concerns and grain standards.

**USDA Secretary Appointment** — An Antrim County Farm Bureau member has been appointed secretary of agriculture. The new secretary, Richard Lyng, was selected by President Reagan to fill the post formerly held by John R. Block, who re-

signed. Lyng, who was USDA deputy secretary for the first four years of the Reagan administration, joined the Michigan Farm Bureau at the invitation of an Antrim County FB member during the 1982 Washington Legislative Seminar.

A Modesto, Calif., native, Lyng began his ag career in a family seed business. He was the state's director of agriculture when Reagan was governor. He also served as an assistant secretary under President Nixon and was head of the American Meat Institute.

**Farm Bill Implementation** — See details of farm program sign up periods on pages 12 and 13 of this issue. Changes in regulations regarding cross compliance, calculation of base acreage and planting non-program crops on program acreage may occur before the sign up period. At this writing,

changes are still being debated in Congress.

**FmHA Delinquent Loan Letters** — A flood of protests in response to the announcement that all FmHA delinquent accounts would be contacted by mail prompted a change in the agency's approach. A reduction from 65,000 to 27,000 "intent" letters has been made. Letters will go only to those three or more years delinquent, or who have failed to properly account for secured property. Other delinquent borrowers will get letters requiring them to work out their loan problems with the FmHA county supervisors.

**1987 Federal Budget Proposal** — In his budget message to Congress Feb. 5, President Reagan said the philosophy underlying his fiscal 1987  
(continued on page 22)

## Farmer Support Needed for Ethanol Production Plan

**Gasohol Plant Facilities** — Discussions on proposals (S.B. 593 and S.B. 630) to provide ethanol production incentives for Michigan continue to make sporadic progress. With appropriate incentives, ethanol production could be undertaken thus providing additional markets for Michigan corn.

There is a great deal of opposition from some big oil companies, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Treasury and several organizations representing various oil

and gas interest. This opposition is deterring potential support in the Legislature.

If farmers want this potential new market here they must make it clear to their state legislators that they support this legislative proposal.

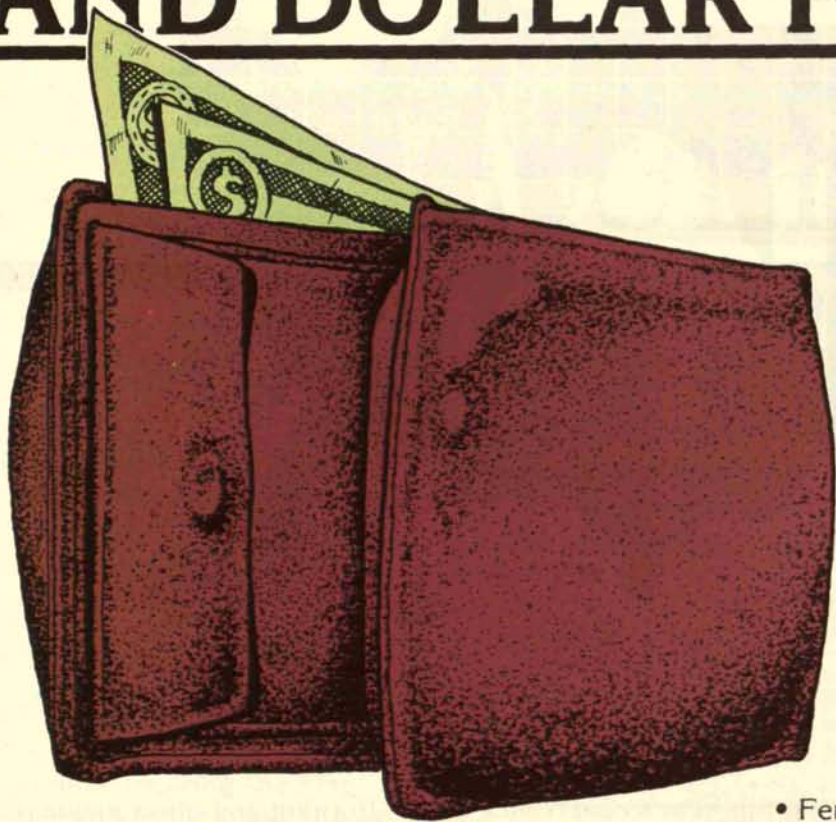
**Great Lakes Water Resources Planning Commission** — This newly-appointed commission has held two public meetings. The first dealt strictly with organization and structure; the second was dedicated to planning and evaluation. The commission plans to establish a

subcommittee structure to study and make in-depth recommendations on various facets of the issue.

### LANSING

In related developments, S.B. 629, which would add an agricultural representative to the commission, has passed the Senate and is under consideration by the House. The proposal, introduced by Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison), quickly  
(continued on page 22)

# DON'T BE PENNY WISE AND DOLLAR FOOLISH.



It is fine to talk about cutting costs, but you better be sure it doesn't cut higher yields that generate profits. We understand and can relate to the belt-tightening in today's agribusiness community. However, the individual farmer can do far more about yield levels than about crop prices.

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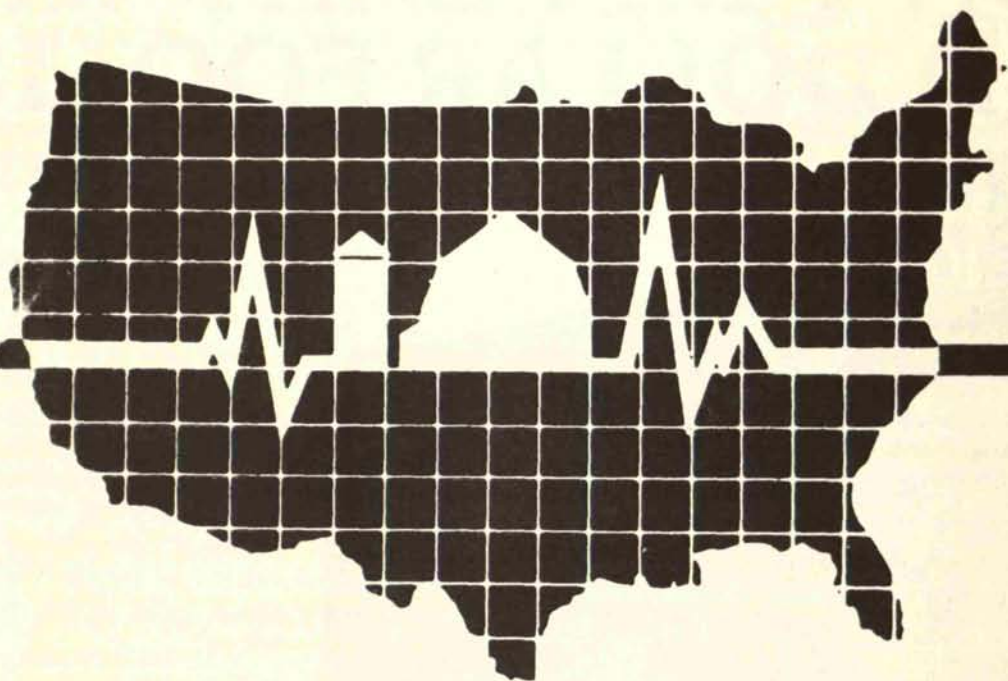
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*"Setting The Standards"*



**Countrymark**  
INCORPORATED



By Donna Wilber

Farm Bureau Women are shaking the dust off the sheet music of a song popular back in the 1940s as they gear up for their traditional role as leaders in the organization's annual Ag Understanding Week activities. It's the tone, not the tune, of that old song that they're bringing out for a "revival."

It goes something like this: "You've gotta accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, don't mess with Mr. In-Between. To illustrate my last remark . . . Jonah in the whale, Noah in the ark. . . ."

With public attention focused on the depressed farm economy

during this year's observance of National Agriculture Day, March 20, the women will emphasize the need for accentuating the positives of their industry to show the public that like Jonah and Noah, agriculture will survive — with faith — what may seem like insurmountable challenges.

"Farming is near and dear to our hearts, so naturally we're very concerned about the problems our industry is experiencing. But we also have a lot of faith in its future and I think it's important for us to communicate that faith to others. And nobody can do that better than farmers themselves," said Diane Horning, Washtenaw County dairy farmer who chairs the MFB Women's Committee.

Horning and other members of the state Women's Committee will spend a day at the capitol "accentuating the positive" during visits to the offices of every Michigan representative and senator. Each state legislator will receive a mug that reminds them that "Agriculture is America's Heartbeat." The blue and metallic gold mugs bear the Ag Day logo of a barn and silo superimposed on an electrocardiogram map of the United States.

Some county women's committees will also be making the Ag Day mug presentations to local dignitaries. In Washtenaw County, the FB Women will present mugs to local radio station



# AGRICULTURE

## America's Heartbeat

personalities, including the popular Bob Taylor of WJR, Detroit. "We hope these mugs will be a positive reminder that agriculture is a good topic for them," Horning said.

Many counties will continue their "Agriculture Day Baby" programs, honoring the first child born on March 20. The Ag Day baby and its parents receive a "booty bag" of Michigan grown and processed products which have been contributed by the county women's committee and area agribusinesses.

Other counties will sponsor Ag Day breakfasts or luncheons with farmers hosting urban guests and sharing the story of agriculture. Table tents and posters proclaiming "Agriculture — America's Heartbeat" will be placed by FB members in high-traffic public areas such as restaurants and businesses.

Agriculture Day proclamations will be signed by President Reagan, Gov. Blanchard, city mayors and local officials throughout the state and na-

tion. The proclamations will encourage all citizens to pay tribute to the 24 million men and women in the U.S. who are links in the food chain — a human chain — that feeds our people and those in many other nations.

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**"When you consider that farmers are less than 3% of the population, that really makes us a minority and we need the understanding and support of the other 97%."**

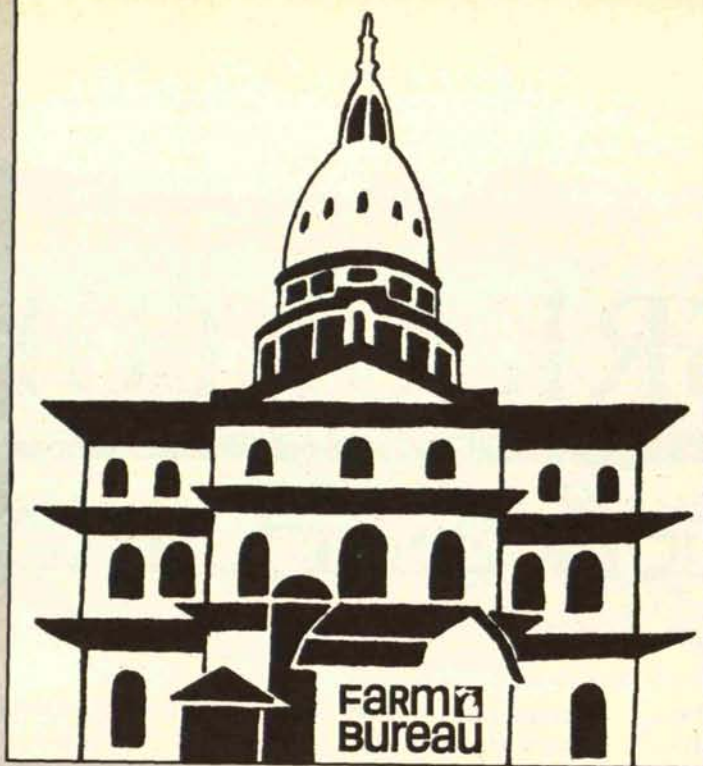
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Agriculture understanding activities sponsored by county FBs are not limited to one week a year. Mall displays, agriculture in the classroom projects, rural-urban meetings, farm tours, in-store commodity pro-

motions and fair exhibits are ongoing projects.

"All of these activities provide members with opportunities to promote understanding, support and appreciation for our industry by the non-farm public," Horning said. "We think that's pretty important. When you consider that we farmers are less than 3% of the population, that really makes us a minority and we need the understanding and support of the other 97%.

"To achieve that goal, we need to project a positive image of agriculture. In spite of these current challenging times, I'm confident we can do that. There are still a lot of positives in agriculture, especially here in our state, and focusing on those positives will show our publics that we are confident about the future of our industry," she said.



## Seminar Series Provides Policy Forum

By Cathy J. Kirvan

The issues have been surfaced, the resolutions discussed and amended. The committees have done their job and the delegates theirs. Now it is time to put into action the policies adopted by the state's largest farm organization.

Several regional legislative seminars are held each year to assist Farm Bureau members in the policy execution process. Members are invited to come to Lansing to learn what issues will be "hot" in the Legislature in the new session and then explain how those issues affect them to their state representatives and senators at a luncheon meeting.

Two seminars were held in February and four more are scheduled for March: Southeast/Southwest Regions — March 4, South/Central Regions — March 5, Thumb Region — March 6 and West/West Central Regions — March 12.

The issues that will be discussed at every seminar include water rights, tax reform, alcohol fuels, insurance reform and tort issues, "Right to Know" and the proposed state budget. The other issues vary by region.

"The whole reason for this exercise is for the individual member to convey to their legislator their concerns as to how these issues affect them," said Ron Nelson, MFB legislative counsel. "Legislators enjoy hearing first hand from their constituents — they're bombarded by lobbyists on a daily basis — and here's an opportunity for them to hear directly from 'real' people."

One legislator who seldom misses FB's annual luncheon is Rep. Lewis Dodak (D-Montrose), the House majority floor leader.

"The way Farm Bureau sets policy is extremely important," he said. Getting involvement at the grassroots level is "the way to get the understanding and the position of the membership.

Of all the organizations down here (in Lansing), Farm Bureau is one that probably has more input from individual members than any other group or association that we deal with in the legislative process.

"I don't always agree with Farm Bureau's policies, but overall I think they have their finger on the pulse of Michigan agriculture."

Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison) also attends the annual luncheon regularly.

"One of the aspects of the Farm Bureau seminar that has always impressed me is that it is truly local people from the local communities giving their personal concerns," Smith said.

"If Farm Bureau is going to continue to be successful at what is a good, strong philosophical idea of bringing ideas up from the bottom, there needs to be an aggressive effort at the local level. . . to assure that those concerns are expressed at the state organization and national organization."

## The Night Before the Blizzard

By Rose A. Sodergren, Gilman, Il.

'Twas the night before the blizzard, and  
all through the house,  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a  
mouse.  
The boots all stood by the door in a row,  
'Cause tomorrow sure as shootin' it was  
gonna snow.  
The children were nestled all snug in  
their beds,  
Dreaming of belly-flopping on their  
brand-new sleds.  
They planned and they prayed, and they  
hoped against hope  
That this year, just maybe, they'd find a  
good slope.  
And I in my night gown and Dad in  
his shorts  
Had just settled down to hear the  
weather reports.  
When out in the driveway there arose  
such a clatter,  
We sprang from the couch to see what  
was the matter.  
Forgetting about how little he wore,  
Dad grabbed the handle and opened the  
door.  
It was a cold, dark, cloudy night,  
So Dad turned on the outside light.

When what to our wondering eyes  
should appear,  
But some nut out riding on his big John  
Deere!  
He spoke not a word but went straight  
to his work  
And he drove up the driveway, then  
turned with a jerk.  
He headed across our newly laid sod,  
(Dad was about ready to kill the clod!)  
'If he drives into our toolshed,  
I'll break all his bones then crack his  
head!"  
"Now calm down dear," was my reply,  
But still I couldn't figure out this guy.  
With a roar of his motor and a grinding  
of gears,  
(The noise was so loud we covered our  
ears!)  
He plowed up the earth into a gigantic  
hill,  
And when he was done it was eerily  
still.  
But we heard him exclaim as he drove  
out of sight,  
"Happy sledding to all, and to all a  
goodnight!"

## Exchange Student Impressed With Delegate Session

In December I was fortunate enough to attend the 66th annual Michigan Farm Bureau convention. Being a farm exchange student from England, it was indeed a great experience to see close hand how Farm Bureau decides upon its policies.

The quality of discussion was high. The ability to modify each others amendments, to put forward a resolution that did not discriminate against specialized areas of agriculture, was achieved.

The unity of Farm Bureau is paramount in putting forward one voice to present farming to politicians. Politicians will then not be confused at the aims and political requirements of agriculture. This clarity may improve the representation of the farming community in national government.

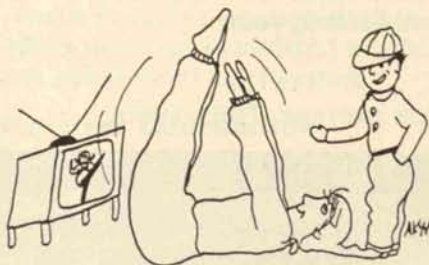
Michigan Farm Bureau members demonstrated such unity

at the close of the 66th annual meeting, with their decision on a resolution concerning the dairy farmers. With such unity, together you will win.

Alice Simpson, St. Joseph  
Berrien County

## FARMETTE

By Andrea Hofmeister  
Tuscola County



"I think it's great that you're watching 'Shape Up for Swimsuits,' mom. But who's going to cultivate beans next summer while you're at the beach?"

## RURAL RASCALS



**ANY DOOR PRIZES LEFT?** Amber Chellis came home with lots of souvenirs from last year's Antrim County Farm Bureau annual meeting. She is the daughter of Steve and Thelma Chellis of Ellsworth.



**READY DAD?** Washtenaw County "young farmer" Cindy Grau is ready to help her dad milk the cows. She is the daughter of Dan and Kathy Grau of Chelsea. Her proud grandpa, Harold Trinkle, is president of the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau.



**VETERAN COMPETITORS:** As the weather turns just a little warmer, these young ladies are starting to make plans for this year's Antrim County Fair. Collecting ribbons last year were Jamie Wieland (left) and her goat Lila, and Stephanie Rubingh and her goat Diamond. Proud parents are Joni & Dan Wieland and Glen & Gail Rubingh, all of Ellsworth.

# Farm Program Sign Up

*Congress was still in the process of grappling with farm bill provisions as Rural Living went to press — and as program sign up deadlines neared. Farmers are urged to study this latest available information and then contact their local ASCS office for further provision announcements and updated program changes.*

## Dairy Herd Buyout

The sign up period is Feb. 10 through March 7. Dairy farmers who started after Dec. 31, 1984 are not eligible for the herd buyout program (except for transfer of a herd as a result of a gift or the death of a family member).

The producer and his or her facility will be required to stay out of dairying for five years. The producer will be paid for *one 12-month production year*. A production year will be the lesser of milk marketings for the 12-month period beginning July 1984 or January 1985.

### Background Information for Placing Bids

- Size and composition of dairy herd, such as cows, heifers and calves on Jan. 1, 1985; Jan. 1, 1986; and on date bid is submitted.
- Monthly records of milk marketings from July 1984 through December 1985.

## Wheat and Feedgrains

The sign up time for this program is March 3 through April 11, 1986. The mandatory acreage reduction for corn is 20%; for wheat it is 25%.

### Diversion Payment

- Paid portion of acreage diversion — 2.5%.
- 100% paid after April 30, 1986, at 73¢ per bu. for corn and \$1.10 per bu. for wheat. All payments are subject to the \$50,000 maximum allowable payment.

### Deficiency Payment

- Payment estimated at \$1.03 per bu. for corn and \$1.83 for wheat. Approximately 63¢ for corn and \$1.38 for wheat is subject to the \$50,000 payment limitation.
- 40% paid upon sign up; 75% of initial payment paid in cash, 25% of initial payment paid in commodity certificates available May 1, 1986. The balance subject to payment limitation paid after the first five months of the new marketing year. The balance not subject to the payment limitation paid after the new marketing year.

### Base Acres

- Calculated on a simple five-year average (1981-1985).

## Program Yield

This will be established by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, rather than proven by the producer.

## Commodity Certificates

- Grower can request issuance of certificates May 1 through Sept. 30, 1986.
- Certificates may be sold but can only be redeemed for CCC commodities.
- Certificates will be issued as a dollar value rather than bushels.
- Producers holding commodities pledged as loan collateral at sign up must redeem the loan to satisfy their payment in kind.
- Commodity certificates value will be determined by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

## Cross Compliance

The current farm bill makes cross compliance mandatory. Producers who participate in an acreage reduction program for wheat or feed grains may not plant acreage exceeding the crop acreage base of another commodity for which there is an acreage reduction program in effect.

Bids may be submitted one time for any or all of the buyout periods — April 1, 1986-Aug. 31, 1986; Sept. 1, 1986-Feb. 28, 1987; March 1, 1987-Aug. 31, 1987.

Acceptance will be determined by secretary of agriculture.

#### **Payment Schedule (Options)**

Receive up to 80% payment the first year and then equal annual payments the remaining four years.

Alternative payment in the first year; second year up to 80% payment and then three equal annual payments.

Payments cannot be altered by Gramm-Rudman-Doyle balanced budget law provisions.

#### **Penalty**

Civil penalties of not more than \$5,000 per cow or calf to those who violate the program as

described in the statements below. Violators also receive 20,000 lb. penalty for cows, heifers and female calves sold for dairying since Jan. 1, 1986.

- Persons making false statement when bid is submitted.
- Persons who make false statements as to the number of dairy cattle that were sold since Jan. 1, 1986.
- Persons buying cows that were from a farm that has signed a contract to participate in the herd buyout program.

#### **Future Use of Farming Facilities**

- Not to be used for any milk production for five years.
- Not to be used to raise helpers for neighbors for five years.
- May be used to raise other livestock including dairy male offspring.

### **Non-Program Crops Planted on Program Acreage**

If less than 50% of the permitted acreage is planted to the program crop, the deficiency payment will be made on the acreage planted to the program crop.

If greater than 50%, but 92% or less, of the permitted acreage is planted to the program crop and the producer has qualifying acres planted to non-program crops or conserving uses which may be credited to program crop, the deficiency payment will be made on the acres credited to the program crop (not to exceed 92% of the permitted acreage).

If greater than 92% of the permitted acreage is planted to the program crop, the deficiency payment will be made on the acreage planted to the program crop.

### **Conservation Reserve Program**

This program is designed to take *highly erodible land* out of farming for *10 years* and place it into trees or other permanent vegetative cover. The sign up time is *March 3 through March 14, 1986*.

The Soil Conservation Service will determine the erodibility of land. If the cropping requirements are met all classes 6, 7 and 8 are eligible. Classes 2, 3, 4 and 5 eroding at three times the tolerance level are also eligible if the cropping requirements are met.

State forestry agencies will help prepare and approve tree planting plans. The reserve may not exceed 25% of crop land in county.

#### **Background Information for Placing Bids**

- Producer *must* provide a cropping history from 1981 through 1985 and land *must have been planted* or considered planted to an annual crop in at least two of the last five years.
- Set aside or diverted acres for the 1986 Production Adjustment Program are *not* eligible.
- Bids must be submitted to ASCS for annual rental payments at the time of application.

#### **Payment Information**

- 50% cost sharing on cost of planting an approved perennial cover crop.
- \$50,000 per person *per year limit* on rental portion; *does not* apply to cost share portion.
- Payment in *cash* or *negotiable* commodity certificates.
- Rental payment as soon as practical after Oct. 1 of each calendar year.

# At the Center of Farm Bureau Action

By Cathy J. Kirvan

To many Farm Bureau members — especially those not currently in a leadership position — the county secretary is the county Farm Bureau. They call her whenever they have a question about their membership or for more information about any of their member benefits.

The important role the county secretary plays in the organization is recognized in the title she is given during the membership blitz campaign. She's the "center" on the "team." When the other players return to their farms following a successful season, the secretary is still there — at the center of things — servicing the membership year-round.

"My most important job is to portray a friendly, informative image of Farm Bureau to the members who come through the door," says Cleo Dutkiewicz, Livingston County FB secretary.

Marilyn Batkie, Sanilac County FB secretary, agrees. She cites public relations and providing services and information to the committees and members as her most important role.

"I feel our office has an excellent rapport with our members," Batkie says. "We're a source of more than just information about Farm Bureau. People often call here to ask where to call for agricultural information. We're known as the people who will help."

Providing personal, concerned service to members who subscribe to health care plans through the FB group is another important role of county FB secretaries.

"Most of my contact with health insurance subscribers is when they first sign up or if there is a problem," Dutkiewicz says. "Health insurance is something that most people don't really understand until they have a problem with it."

The Livingston FB secretary encourages members to call the Blue Cross Blue Shield direct line when they have questions about their coverage.

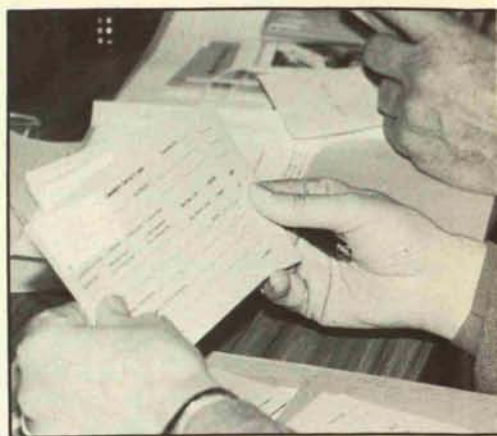
"It's a lot better when Blue Cross representatives interpret their coverage," she says. "But I tell the subscribers to call me if they're still in doubt after they call Blue Cross. I think it's important that we keep an open line so that they can always come back (to the county FB) and get more help if they need it."

Sanilac FB secretary Batkie sees another role for county secretaries.

"It's an informal procedure, but a lot of times you get a feel for what new members are interested in by the kinds of questions they ask when they fill out the membership applications," she says. "I try to keep that in mind as a need arises. We try to include those people on committees and in programs."

While this year's membership blitz activities are winding down, county secretaries are just gearing up for another successful season of service. And when the next membership blitz rolls around in January 1987, they'll be ready — they will have been practicing their "center" position on the county FB "team" all year.

## MFB Blitz P



# ays Run Success Pattern



## Building on Success

By Marcia Ditchie

The 1985 membership campaign was, without a doubt, one of the most successful drives in the history of the Michigan Farm Bureau. Lending to the extraordinary achievement of the campaign was the team involvement of the entire Farm Bureau family — volunteer membership workers, county secretaries, FBIG agents and MFB home office personnel.

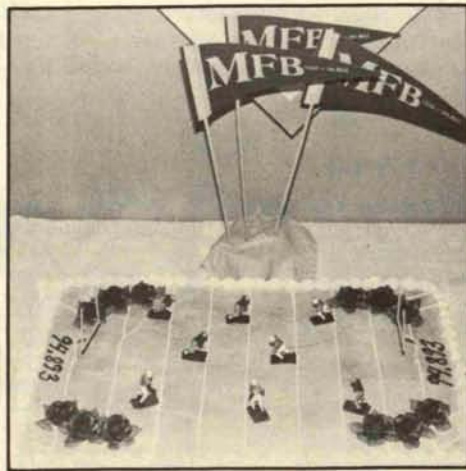
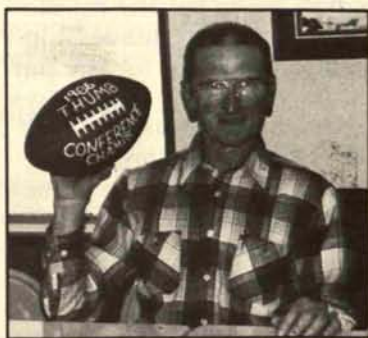
A football theme was developed for the 1985 campaign to inject a winning attitude and spirit of competition in the annual effort. The combination of the theme and team involvement, plus a 10-day membership blitz, proved to be the winning formula as MFB attained an all-time membership high.

"This outstanding membership achievement came about through the commitment and hard work of membership workers," said MFB President Elton R. Smith during the Presidents' & Campaign Managers' / Membership Kick-Off Banquet at the 1985 MFB annual meeting. "The most successful counties had an attitude that they had a job to do — achieve membership — and they pursued that job with energy and enthusiasm."

The exceptional success of the 1985 campaign led to the adoption of the same winning formula for this year's membership campaign.

In kicking off the 1986 campaign, Smith said, "I feel very confident about this year's effort because success encourages and fosters more success. Our membership blitz is Jan. 27 through Feb. 7. I challenge you to lay a solid groundwork now to fuel an all out effort during that time, an effort that will

*(continued on page 21)*



A flurry of activity was evident across the state as county Farm Bureaus drew strategy plans which would carry them toward the goal line during the 1986 membership blitz. The "play book" was successful for 17 counties that made membership gain by the end of the blitz, and for Benzie County, the only one to reach target. In addition, 14 counties achieved goal before the blitz ended. They included, in order of reporting, Wayne, Muskegon, Kent, Kalamazoo, Bay, Monroe, Oakland, Midland, Washtenaw, Livingston, Macomb, Ogemaw, Ottawa and Mackinac-Luce. As the last second ticked off the 12-day blitz clock, MFB had achieved 94.87% of goal.

# Women's and Young Farmer Committees Combine Resources for Annual Conference

By Connie Turbin

"Together We Win," Michigan Farm Bureau's 1986 membership campaign and program theme, has struck home with the leadership of the state organization's Women's and Young Farmer Committees who are sponsoring their first joint leadership conference this month. The conference will take place March 5-7 at the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center, Lansing.

Gary Skinner, MFB Young Farmer chairperson, explains the change from individual conferences for the two groups to a joint conference.

"Our committees reasoned that Young Farmers and FB Women work together on a lot of projects in the counties, so we thought, 'why not work together on one leaders' con-

ference?' By combining our financial and leadership resources for conference planning, we've been able to provide better speakers and more sessions."

## Just the Best

"Both of these conferences have had really terrific reputations for providing leadership motivation and fun for the participants year after year," says Diane Horning, chairperson of the MFB Women's Committee. "Last summer when the state Women's Committee and the Young Farmers were considering this change to a joint conference, there was a lot of discussion about how to keep the best of the two conferences. I feel very good about how the committees have worked together to identify workshop

topics and general session subjects that will appeal to both groups."

Skinner agrees. "In fact, just a look at these workshop titles really shows how similar the interest areas are between these two groups. I'm really expecting a lot of interaction among the participants in all of the sessions."

The three-day agenda does offer the conferees an impressive range of subjects. Twelve workshops are scheduled: farm management and financial planning, computer aided financial planning, farm safety, beginning and advanced estate planning, legislative updates, exports and commodities, Farm Bureau involvement, new concepts in crop production, teamwork, leadership skills, the Young Farmer program, and the FB

**"It's a chance for young farmers and women in the county Farm Bureaus to get to know each other, find out what's going on in other counties and to learn what kinds of leadership styles are working in the county programs . . . ."**

— Gary Skinner, Gratiot County  
MFB Young Farmer Committee Chairperson





**"I feel very good about how the committees have worked together to identify workshop topics and general session subjects that will appeal to both groups."**

**— Diane Horning, Washtenaw County  
MFB Women's Committee Chairperson**

Women's program. General sessions include discussions on family farm partnerships and a motivational speech by former Miss America Donna Axum.

### **Personal Leadership Styles**

Horning stresses that this conference is not exclusively for the officers of the two committees. "With the leaders' conference we want to reach new leaders — members who are interested in becoming part of these Farm Bureau programs, whether it's one, or in the case of young farm women, both. We hear time and time again that the leader conference was the first step to motivating volunteer involvement at the county or state level."

"It's a chance for young farmers and women in the county Farm Bureau to get to know

each other, find out what's going on in other counties and to learn what kinds of leadership styles are working in the county programs around the state," says Skinner. "Our county (Gratiot) has traditionally used the leaders' conference to motivate and acquaint potential young farmer leaders about Farm Bureau, the state staff and other young farmers."

### **More of the Same**

"Looking into the future, I think we may see several other conferences combined," says Skinner. "Joint conferences encourage better interaction between the committees back in the county. They also recognize that county Farm Bureau budgets are limited."

Last fall, the MFB Women took the first step toward a joint

conference by replacing their regular September leader conference with one-day workshops on the Agriculture in the Classroom program. The workshops, held at two Michigan locations, provided training and information to the Ag in the Classroom teams. "We're planning to continue the fall workshops to maintain trained leadership in this project," promises Horning.

County FB Women and Young Farmer Committee chairpersons have also combined their orientation and information programs in the Executive Club Conference for two years.

"We've had really good cooperative interaction at the Executive Club Conference. The FB Women and Young Farmers have mixed very well there. I'm really excited to see how this will work in a full three-day conference situation," Horning says.



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*"Setting The Standards"*



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

## "And If I Am Elected . . ."

From the whistle-stop campaign speeches of yesteryear to the multimedia barrage of our technological age, the political campaigns and the election process are uniquely American in their tradition and character.

The very sophistication of present day campaign "styles," which utilize every available medium, population demographics and various sociological measurements further complicate the election process. Today's campaigns involve a large number of people, are often very complex and cost a lot of money.

To adjust to this change, federal and state laws designed to provide reasonable controls on the amount and type of contributions that individuals could make to a political campaign were passed in 1976.

For the first time, corporations, associations and special interest coalitions were authorized to establish political action committees (PACs). Through this structure, supporters of the PAC can voluntarily raise money and provide support for political candidates who represent their interests and those of their group.

That's exactly why Michigan Farm Bureau's Political Action Committee, known as AgriPac, was established. FB leaders saw that candidates and elected in-

cumbents valued campaign endorsements and contributions by PACs. But before they acted to form a Farm Bureau PAC, a survey of county FB boards of directors, Community Action Groups and individual members was conducted to determine whether FB members would support this new direction in political involvement by the organization. The response from these sources was an overwhelming "yes."

The results of the survey were presented to the MFB Policy Development Committee which, after thorough discussion, drafted a proposed policy to create an MFB PAC for consideration by voting delegates at the 1977 MFB annual meeting. Voting delegates approved the policy and MFB's AgriPac was born.

Currently there are 4,009 federal PACs. Nearly 300 PACs are established in Michigan. PACs operate under a strict set of regulations and reporting requirements. They are required to register with the Federal Elections Commission if involved with federal elections and with the Michigan Campaign Finance Division if involved with state elections.

Since AgriPac is involved with both federal and state elections, it is registered at both levels. Periodic reports are filed showing AgriPac activities, specifying candidates who re-

ceive support, revealing how much support was given and the source of contributions. These reports are open to the public for review.

PACs provide a variety of services to their founding organizations and to candidates seeking election. For example, AgriPac does a thorough job of researching the backgrounds and records of candidates. This information is helpful to members in evaluating the overall performance of their legislators.

AgriPac also provides name recognition for candidates who receive the "Friend of Agriculture" endorsement, and gives broad publicity to such candidates throughout the organization. AgriPac funds, generated through voluntary contributions and fundraising events, are used to help endorsed candidates conduct effective campaigns.

Some opponents say that PACs jeopardize our representative system of government. They assert that political favor for narrow, special interests is bought and sold with PAC contributions and political support. These misleading statements warrant a closer look.

It is true that election campaigns cost a lot of money. Indeed, a typical campaign for a seat in the U.S. House of Repre-

*(continued on next page)*



## Discussion Topic

(continued from previous page)

sentatives can easily cost \$300,000, while a candidate for the U.S. Senate could spend \$2 million or more to win that office. To meet these anticipated expenses, candidates look to contributions by individuals and PACs.

Comparatively, contributions by individuals continue to far outstrip PAC contributions to meet campaign expenses. For example, in the 1984 elections contributions from PACs to congressional candidates accounted for about 25% of the total contributions they received. This means 75% of the contributions given to congressional candidates came directly to them from individuals.

In addition, rules and regulations governing PACs mean that neither dues money paid by members to an organization or association, nor corporate funds can be routed through a PAC to candidates.

MFB AgriPac is highly respected among PACs for its op-

erating policies. The AgriPac Committee is composed of nine voting farmer members appointed by the MFB president and approved by the MFB board. Staff assistance is provided by Al Almy, director of the Public Affairs Division who serves as secretary, and Robert Braden, MFB administrative director who serves as treasurer.

It is the policy of AgriPac to influence the nomination and election of qualified candidates who have demonstrated basic beliefs and/or actions which are consistent with MFB policy regardless of their political affiliation.

Criteria used by AgriPac in endorsing candidates are as follows.

### Criteria for Endorsing Incumbents

- County Farm Bureau input: This input is obtained from county FB Candidate Evaluation Committees appointed by county FB boards.

- Voting record on major issues affecting agriculture: This may include votes on final passage of a bill as well as significant amendments prior to final consideration. Political factors associated with votes on specific issues must be recognized.

- Degree of special effort to introduce, support or oppose legislation in accordance with the position of Farm Bureau: This involves willingness to not only introduce legislation, but work effectively to support its enactment. Also, efforts to oppose legislation damaging to agriculture must be recognized.

- Overall support of FB policy: This involves contacts with FB personnel to inquire about policy positions and subsequent efforts to reflect the policy position in actions on legislation.

- Special factors: This includes, but is not limited to, attendance at FB sponsored

meetings, communications with farmers on legislative issues and liaison with FB personnel on legislative development.

### Criteria for Endorsing Non-Incumbents

- Results of input from county FB Candidate Evaluation Committees.

- Recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economy.

- Demonstrated interest in agricultural issues and possible solutions to such issues.

- Position on agricultural issues.

- Integrity and dedication to the campaign.

- Involvement of agricultural persons in the campaign.

Finally, AgriPac makes contributions to candidates based solely on need. If a candidate has been endorsed and faces a tough election campaign against the opposition, a financial contribution will probably be made. However, if an endorsed candidate does not have any opposition or minimal opposition at best, no contribution will be made.

AgriPac believes the best use of contributions received from members is to help those candidates with a genuine need.

### Discussion Questions

- What is the view of PACs by members of your Community Action Group?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve the criteria used by AgriPac in selecting candidates to endorse?

*This month's discussion topic was prepared by the Michigan Farm Bureau Public Affairs Division.*

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## Building on Success

(continued from page 15)

propel your county Farm Bureau to even greater heights of membership glory."

That challenge was accepted by county Farm Bureaus across the state with new membership records set during the 12-day blitz.

Wayne County was the first to report 1986 membership goal, even before the blitz officially began. Membership chairperson John Bokon credits the success of last year's campaign in helping the county to achieve the prestigious "first goal county" honors this year.

"Last year was a turn-around year for us," he said. "Through the efforts of the county board

of directors we did really well during the membership blitz and made the Fabulous Fifteen, which provided us with an incentive to do better this year.

"We never let up on membership last year even after we made goal. Through the summer we contacted farmers, especially at the Eastern Market (in Detroit), asking them to join Farm Bureau and we just rolled into gear this year. We used last year's successful campaign as a foundation for this year," he said.

"It was the positive attitude from last year and the combined efforts of the county board of directors, our Regional Representative Susan Garner, and Dick Smith and his insurance agents that helped us make goal early this year," Bokon said.

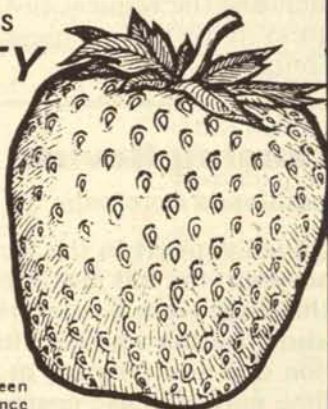
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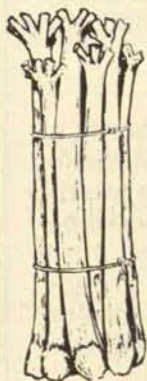
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## Washington Review

(continued from page 6)

budget was that deficit reduction must be pursued by narrowing government activities to provide only necessary and essential services. The budget he presented projects a declining deficit in each of the next three years, just below the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings targets for each year, and leading to a surplus in 1991. Expenditures in the proposed budget of \$944 billion would outstrip revenues by \$143.6 billion — \$400 million below the deficit target in the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings amendment.

The proposed fiscal 1987 outlay for USDA commodity price support programs is estimated at \$16.3 billion. The administration's budget legislation will propose to reduce outlays for price supports and related programs over the next three years by \$140 million (1987), \$275 million (1988), and \$411 million (1989). The budget documents state the administration's plans to fully use its authority under the new farm bill to set price support loan rates at market clearing levels and to reduce incentives to overproduce. Further, a phase down in target prices in the later years of the five-year act, combined with an expected increase in U.S. farm exports, is projected to significantly reduce budget outlays for price supports after 1989.

Other agricultural sections of the budget document delivered to Congress addressed: instituting user fees and premiums for some inspection programs and for certain federal loan guarantees; placing crop insurance services in the private sector with a five-year government phase out; and continuing the administration's move toward guaranteed loans under the FmHA and away from direct loans.

## CCC Extension Request —

The Reagan administration approved a request to extend the Commodity Credit Corporation borrowing authority by \$7.95 billion in 1986. The USDA confirmed that the CCC has nearly reached the limit of its \$25 billion authority for making crop payments to farmers. CCC officials explained that the shortage occurred sooner than expected because of increased loan activity. President Reagan included the request to Congress in his budget message to Congress in February.

## Lansing Review

(continued from page 6)

gained support in the Senate, however, the bill may face a challenge from House members who question whether the addition of a new member at this time may increase costs and delay action by the commission.

The original law also provided for agricultural representation but those making the appointments (the governor, speaker of the House and Senate majority leader) failed to coordinate their appointments.

**Bottle Deposit —** The Michigan Liquor Control Commission currently is considering whether a 10¢ bottle deposit should be required on wine coolers. A ruling by the commission to support the deposit would then be reviewed by the Legislature's Joint Rules Committee.

Like the original bottle deposit question, this issue is very controversial and is vigorously opposed by bottlers and handlers. FB policy supports a wine cooler deposit.

**Grain Dealers' Insurance —** Legislation is being considered to address the continuing prob-

lem of elevator closings due to insolvency or bankruptcy. Being discussed is a proposal to establish an insurance program funded by a check-off on grain. The issue is expected to be debated in the Legislature early this spring.

A related proposal would provide additional protection for holders of scale tickets. Warehouse receipts are protected by law. Recent amendments to the Grain Dealers' Act gave additional protection to price later agreements.

**State Budget —** Debate on the 1986-87 budget has begun. In general, the budget proposed by Gov. Blanchard would hold the line on spending. The impact of this budget approach is that less actual dollars are available to the various departments and institutions due to inflation and general cost increases.

The governor's recommendations also include continued reductions in state employment, which directly impacts some agriculture related agencies and programs including some critical consumer areas such as food inspection.

**Manufacturing and Fluid Milk Act —** S.B. 534 and S.B. 535 (Sen. Nick Smith, R-Addison) would amend the Manufacturing and Fluid Milk Act to change the penalty for antibiotics in raw milk from a criminal to a civil violation. This does not change the amount of the fine, but amends the act to establish civil fines for the first three violations. Failure to pay the fine would result in a criminal violation.

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