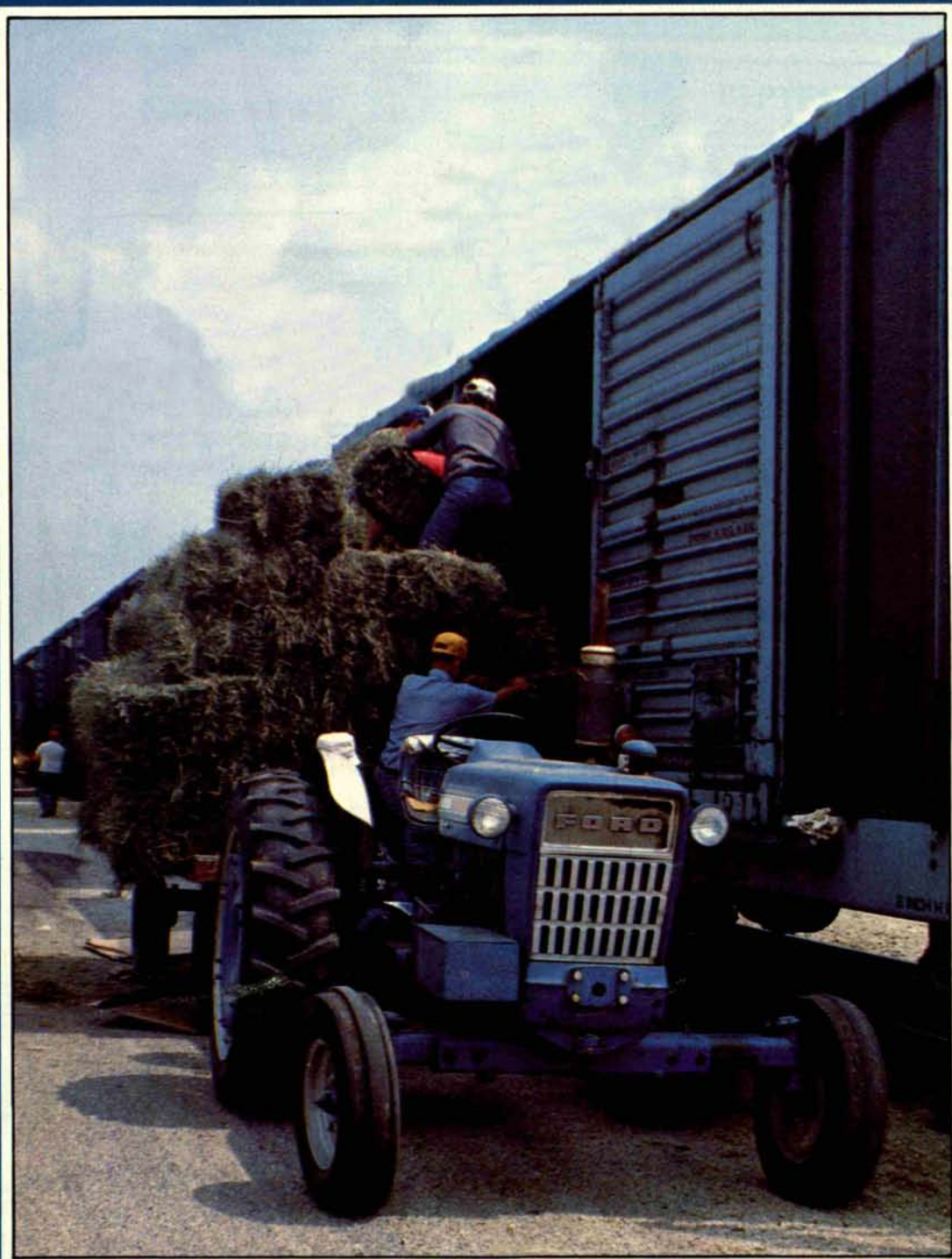


RURAL LIVING



OPERATION HAYLIFT Farmer-to-Farmer Assistance



Take Me Home and Turn Me On

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the best advice and marketing recommenda-
tions.



Marketing Advice For The Modern Farmer

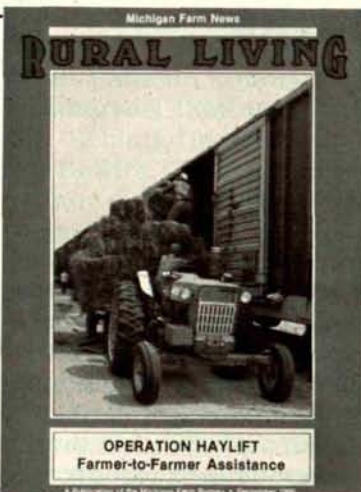
Cash in on the AgriVisor Marketing Seminar Series
September 15 — Grand Rapids, Midway Motor Inn
September 16 — Frankenmuth, Aldrich's Restaurant
September 17 — Jackson, Holiday Inn (U.S.-127/1-94)
7:30 p.m. — 10 p.m.

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RURAL LIVING

FARM NEWS

A publication
of the
Michigan
Farm Bureau



SEPTEMBER 1986
VOL. 65 NO. 8

THE COVER

Farmers throughout Michigan are donating hay and labor to fill trucks and trains bound for drought-stricken Southeastern states.

Photo by Marcia Ditchie

In this issue:

Operation Haylift

Farmer-to-farmer assistance through Operation Haylift has drawn spontaneous support from Michigan farm people. MFB member Ken Speerstra of Isabella County tells why he got involved.

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MFB 'Helping Hand' Contributions Reach \$21,000

MSU Ag Expo was the site for presentation of a third contribution to the EMAT program by MFB and members in 66 county FBs.

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Let's Talk Money!

Ag economists at Western Illinois University give FB's AgriVisor marketing advisory service top rating in their study of three national services.

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P.A. 116 Program Marks 10 Year Anniversary



For nearly 17,000 farmers, Michigan's Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act means property and income tax benefits and the assurance that their land will remain in agricultural production. For Michigan residents and the thousands of tourists who travel in our state, open spaces and land under cultivation are a natural attraction of our scenic state and often provide a buffer to the congested metropolitan centers.

This year, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program, known as P.A. 116, marks its 10th anniversary. With nearly 4.5 million acres of Michigan land enrolled in the program, it is a time to pay tribute to the success of the land preservation program and to reflect upon the role that the Michigan Farm Bureau played in finding solutions to halt the rapid and often premature conversion of lands uniquely suited for agriculture to other uses.

Further, the P.A. 116 program demonstrates how farmers, state government and Michigan Farm Bureau have cooperated to serve the public good through innovative, and mutually beneficial, legislation.

P.A. 116 is one of the great success stories for our Farm Bureau policy development process. Passage of the enabling law by our state Legisla-

ture represented many years of work by FB. Members called upon their organization to seek legislation that would reduce property tax on farmland, and establish a program to preserve the precious land resources in our state. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program answered this policy requisite 10 years ago and it continues to be supported by MFB today.

Open spaces and land under cultivation are a natural attraction of our scenic state and often provide a buffer to the congested metropolitan areas.

While we claim this program as a success for the policy development process, the true test is whether the program worked for farmers.

The answer is "YES!" During 1985, farmers received \$75 million in property tax refunds. That is an average refund check of \$4,412 for each participant in the program.

To those who administer the program in the DNR and who assist with the refunds to farmers in the Treasury Depart-

ment, the P.A. 116 enrollees and the Michigan Farm Bureau extend a special "thank you."

These professional, dedicated people have given unselfishly of their time to work with landowners in preparing P.A. 116 contracts and resolving problems whenever possible. The law has been administered fairly and the spirit of preserving farmland for property tax relief has been followed.

Preserving farmland for future generations was a challenging goal — one to which the resources of Farm Bureau members and their organization were applied successfully. The future holds many such challenges for agriculture and many such successes if Farm Bureau members use their organization to "Meet the Challenge of Change."

I urge you to identify those issues that deserve the attention and creativity of your Farm Bureau organization, and then join with others to address them through the policy development process.

*Elton R. Smith, President
Michigan Farm Bureau*

Farm Bureau's policy development process is in full swing. Three county FB annual meetings were held in August and the other 66 are scheduled for this fall. Members of the 1986 MFB Policy Development Committee have begun their task of reviewing proposed policy recommendations from county FBs. The 20-member state committee includes (by district): George C. Brossman, Cass County; Brenda Heisler, Calhoun County; Jim VanBuskirk, Monroe County; John Finkbeiner, Kent County; Jack Anderson, Clinton County; David Milligan, Tuscola County; K. Tim Bull, Muskegon County; Roger Roslund, Gratiot County; Duane Evans, Benzie County; Thomas Foltz, Emmet County; and Ed DeWitt, Chippewa County. Representing the FB Young Farmers are Ed Cagney, Kalamazoo County; Mary Kartes, Ogemaw County; and Tom Woelmer, Monroe County. Representing FB Women are Alice Happel, St. Joseph County; Kathy Kosters, Kent County; and Jeaneen Smuts, Eaton County. At-large members from the MFB board are Jack Laurie, Tuscola County; Jim Sayre, Wayne County; and Marlin Outman, St. Joseph County.

The 41st annual planning conference of the Michigan Society of Planning Officials will be held Oct. 2-4 at Boyne Mountain Lodge in Boyne Falls. Keynote speaker at the conference will be DNR Director Dr. Gordon Guyer. Workshops include: siting issues in planning, state/federal economic development assistance, the impact of water/air/hazardous wastes regulations on local planning; retaining farmland and rural open spaces, tax abatements, Michigan waterways, tax-base sharing, resource recovery, the role of sanitary landfills in solid waste management and ballot box zoning. Registration fee for the conference is \$75 for MSPO members and \$95 for non-members. For more information on the conference, write MSPO, P.O. Box 8099, Rochester, Mich. 48308-8099, or call 313-651-3339.

A new MFB radio program was launched in August over radio stations served by the Great Lakes Radio Network. "The Farm Bureau Review," a five-minute weekly program fed via satellite, focuses on FB organization news and events of specific interest to members. The program contains four minutes of news and information and space for two 30-second commercials that may be sold by the radio station. County FBs across the state are contacting Great Lakes Radio Network stations to encourage them to air the program and suggest potential sponsors for the show. Stations which have agreed to air the program so far are WPAG-Ann Arbor (1050 AM) at 6:20 a.m. on Saturdays, WBCM-Bay City (1440 AM) at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays, WTVB-Coldwater (1590 AM) at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, and WDOW-Dowagiac (1440 AM) at 6:20 a.m. on Saturdays.

The Indiana Sheep Breeders Association will hold its 10th annual replacement sale Monday, Sept. 1 at the Johnson County Fairgrounds in Franklin, Ind. The sale will start at 2 p.m. with the yearling ewes selling first, followed by the aged ewes and ewe lambs. The production tested ram lambs and yearling lambs will be the last to sell. All ewes will be available for inspection by prospective buyers until the sale starts. Along with the sale, an extensive commercial exhibit and educational program will be conducted.

Velmar Green of Clinton County is among the 113 people appointed by USDA Secretary Richard Lyng to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. The board will administer a national program designed to increase consumer awareness of beef and strengthen the position of beef in the marketplace. The program will be funded by a mandatory \$1 per head assessment on all cattle marketed in the United States, including an equivalent amount of imported cattle and beef.

Gov. Blanchard has reappointed three people to the Michigan Dairymen's Marketing Program Committee. The reappointments of Elwood Kirkpatrick, Huron County; Velmar Green, Clinton County; and Jerry Good, Kent County, expire Dec. 31, 1988 and are subject to Senate confirmation.

Congress Passes Federal Aid Package for Southeast Farmers

Drought Aid to Southeast

— Farmers in the drought-stricken Southeast will be able to recover up to half the cost of emergency feed for their livestock and poultry under provisions passed by the U.S. House and Senate. Eligible producers would be given the option of receiving commodities or certificates which could be sold to help pay for needed feed, and to receive disaster payments using commodity certificates instead of cash.

WASHINGTON

They would also become eligible to draw from some \$1.5 billion set aside to compensate for lost or damaged crops. In addition, the legislation requires the USDA to make payments to eligible livestock and poultry producers to cover the cost of emergency purchases of feed; donate government-owned stocks to relieve local feed shortages; and pay 80% of transporting hay supplies when needed.

In addition, USDA Secretary Lyng announced that farmers who lose crops in the drought will still be eligible for 1986 deficiency payments on their normal yields, if they participated in the federal farm programs. He authorized a nationwide, across-the-board increase in the 1986 advance deficiency payments to all participating farmers.

Relief measures announced previously by the USDA permit haying and grazing on set aside acres and provide that acres

designated for the conservation reserve may be planted to winter pasture with fast-growing grasses or small grains for grazing.

AFBF had urged the administration to use some of the surplus grain crops clogging storage facilities in the Midwest to provide relief to the drought areas. Designated disaster areas include parts of Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Still pending are Florida and Tennessee.

Legislation has also been introduced which would permit ag producers who donate products to take a charitable contribution based upon the wholesale market value of the product rather than the valuation at the adjusted basis which is current law. Safeguards in the existing law protect against possible abuse of the deduction.

Health Insurance Deduction

— Members of the House-Senate conference committee studying the tax reform legislation package have pared a 50% health insurance premium deduction for self-employed persons to 25%.

In response, FB called upon members to make personal contacts to urge restoration of the 50% deduction. A long-time proponent of tax equity for self-employed persons, FB claims that true equity would be achieved with a full deduction for health insurance premiums.

Grazing Fees — In a 5-4 vote, the House Rules Committee voted to allow deletion of a new grazing fee formula from the interior appropriations bill.

The new formula would have dramatically increased grazing fees over the next several years.

FB policy supports the current formula which adjusts the grazing fee according to livestock market conditions.

Grain Storage — Farmers in half of the major grain producing states are likely to be facing a significant lack of storage space this harvest season, according to USDA estimates.

In Michigan, combined on-farm and off-farm storage capacity is estimated to be 66 million bushels short of the required storage. Indiana grain producers face an anticipated storage shortfall of 220 million bushels followed by Ohio (129), Illinois (124), Missouri (106), California (91) and Arkansas (65).

LANSING

Michigan Primary Election

— Results of the Aug. 5 primary showed that 93.9% of the candidates named "Friends of Agriculture" by MFB's political action committee, AgriPac, were successful in their bid for a spot on the November ballot. Of the 116 candidates endorsed by AgriPac, 109 were winners.

The "Friends of Agriculture" endorsement was primarily based on recommendations by county FB candidate evaluation committees. The "Friend of Agriculture" endorsements will continue through the November election.

Right-to-Farm Task Force

— Task force members representing the departments of agriculture, health, natural resources, commerce, attorney general, governor's office, USDA, SCS and MSU Extension will evaluate the environmental impact from production agriculture.

The purpose is to determine whether controls and legislation are needed to assure clean air and pure water. Another issue will be to clarify the original intent of Michigan's Right-to-Farm Act.

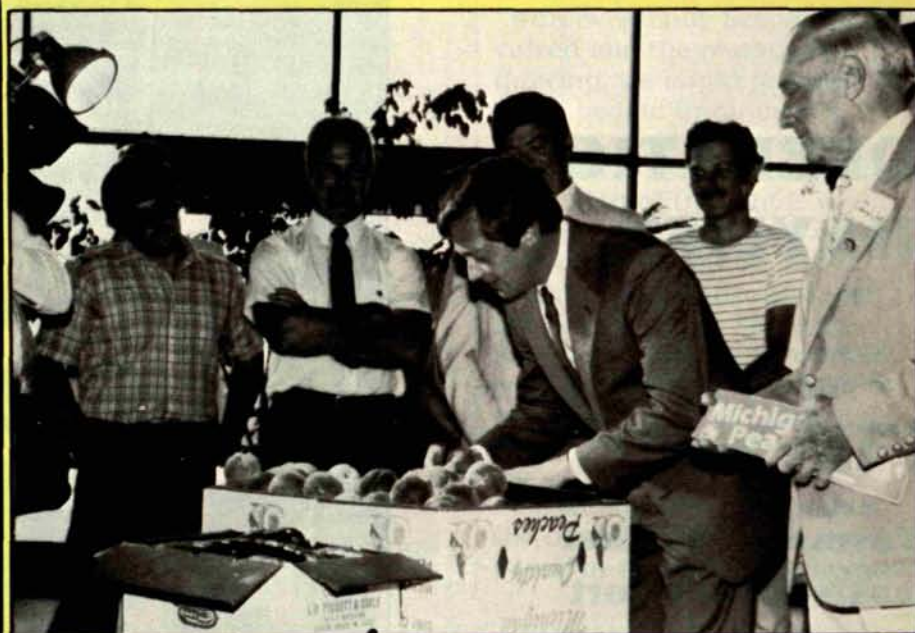
Waste Management Plan —

The Michigan Department of Agriculture has announced that there is an increasing number of complaints regarding large confined animal feeding operations in Michigan. This has led to proposed plans by MDA for the establishment of a comprehensive waste management system.

MDA would be responsible for the overall "permitting and monitoring" of the operations, with DNR assisting. The plan includes development of an "operational permit" program for livestock operations similar to the current Grade A dairy program. The permit program would include regular inspections to assure compliance with the established "best management practices."

The goal is also to establish a uniform set of specifications for planning and designing future animal waste facilities. It would also implement a system to monitor the handling of pesticides, fertilizers and other toxic substances to assure that they did not mistakenly enter the food supply. A system of penalties will be recommended for violations.

(continued on page 21)



Several ag industry leaders look on as Gov. James Blanchard signs into law S.B. 711. Pictured are, left to right: Fred Leitz Jr. III, president, Berrien County Farm Bureau; Joe Herman, president, Michigan Peach Sponsors; Gov. Blanchard; Jerry Jollay, president, Berrien County Horticulture Society; Mat Moser, farmer; and Sen. Harry Gast, chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee and sponsor of the legislation.

Funds Appropriated for Southwest Research & Extension Center

S.B. 711, the capital outlay legislation for the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center which was introduced by Sen. Harry Gast, was signed into law in late July by Gov. James Blanchard at a farm in Berrien County. One million dollars has been appropriated to purchase land and facilities to initiate the project.

Sen. Gast, with the full cooperation and support of Gov. Blanchard, has led the effort for legislative support of this important horticultural research project in southwest Michigan. A committee of growers and MSU Extension leaders is in the process of selecting a site.

A report prepared by MSU Extension at the request of Sen. Gast and Gov. Blanchard, states that the six county southwest corner harvests one-third of the fruit and one-fourth of the

vegetables grown in Michigan. The area, with its moderate "lake effect" climate, produces the most diverse agricultural mix of any location in the United States outside of California and Florida.

The purpose of the new center is to strengthen agriculture in southwest Michigan and meet the special research needs of the area's producers, including variety adaptability, introduction of new crops, pest management, biotechnology applications, irrigation systems, etc. It would also serve as a focal point for educational meetings, demonstrations, tours, practical problem-solving, etc.

Sen. Gast, chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee, is to be commended for his leadership and strong support for Michigan's agricultural economy.

OPERATION HAYLIFT

Farmer-to-farmer assistance effort draws spontaneous support



By Donna Wilber

At a time when a Michigan farmer is fighting for economic survival himself, why would he care about — let alone respond to — the plight of farmers in the Southeast who are suffering from the worst drought of the century? Those drought-stricken farmers are hundreds of miles away; he doesn't know any of them personally; he has enough problems of his own — all pretty good reasons not to "get involved."

Very simply and sincerely, Isabella County Farm Bureau member Don Speerstra answers the "why" question: "I know how those farmers feel. I've been there."

It is because he has "been there" that Don is determined to play a role in Michigan's "Operation Haylift," a farmer-to-farmer program that has

brought hundreds of thousands of bales of hay to Southeast states to save beef and dairy herds from starvation.

He's not only involved — he's become the coordinator of a generous outpouring of farmer response in Isabella and surrounding counties.

Empathy Is Motivator

It all started when Don was out in his field cutting hay. He'd heard reports of the plight of the Southeast farmers and he had empathy for them.

He remembered the dry season on his farm late in 1984 and early last year. Between the two, Mother Nature had dealt him a losing hand — no feed for his cattle. To complicate matters, Don suffered a painful back injury in an accident when the school bus he drove part-time was rear-ended. During the following four months "spent in a recliner with heat," his dairy herd production dropped.



Throughout Michigan farmers are donating hay and labor to fill trucks and trains bound for Southeastern farmers. Ken and Sharon Speerstra (above) have acted as volunteer coordinators for the Isabella County area, using their farm as an assembly and loading point. (Photos courtesy of Mt. Pleasant Morning Sun; top — James Hitchcock, above — Werner Slocum)

He came in from the field that day and told his wife, Sharon, "We need to do something to help those farmers," and Sharon responded, "Go for it!"

Don emphasizes that Sharon is as deeply involved and dedicated to "Operation Haylift" as he is. "If she had said, 'it's up to you,' I would have figured a 50% effort on her part. But when she said 'go for it,' I knew that meant we had, just between the two of us, a 200% effort."

How It Started: How It Grew

Once Sharon said, "Go for it!" the Speerstras first contacted some "city friends" who lived in South Carolina to see if things were really as bad as reported. "They put us in touch with a county Extension agent and he told us just how bad it was," Don said.

Their next step was to contact the local radio station, WCEN-Mt. Pleasant, to ask for help in spreading the word about "Operation Haylift."

"I thought if we could get maybe five loads of hay locally, it would be a nice gesture and that would be it. Well, my first call resulted in almost a semi-load and that's the way it's been going. Our average per farm donation in this area is probably about 300 bales. That's about \$428 a farm, a very conservative estimate of the value of the hay, and very generous when you consider the economic problems most of these farmers are having," Don said.

As *Rural Living* goes to press, over 5,000 square bales and 300 large round bales from 36 farms in Isabella and nearby counties have been delivered to the drought-stricken farmers in the Southeast.

"I think we're probably going to double or triple that in number of farm donors and probably triple the amount of hay," Don said.

'Raising the Level of the Ocean with a Tin Cup'

What's happening in the Speerstras' small corner of the world is also happening across the nation. Farmers who don't know whether they'll still be in their chosen vocation next year are responding to the needs of their fellow farmers. Nearly every state Farm Bureau is involved in "Operation Haylift" and farmers in the stricken area are "overwhelmed" by the response.

"It's too bad that it's taken something like this to pull us together. But that happens. Families and communities pull together in tragedy and so does

everybody else," Don said. "With everybody becoming involved and the momentum growing, we might just get those people through this tragedy."

"When I first started this project, I kind of thought it would be like raising the level of the ocean with a tin cup. But if everybody gets involved with the sincerity that has been shown by those we've worked with, we just might be able to make it so 95% of those farmers in the Southeast survive."

"If we do, that's absolutely the best thing that ever happened in this country," he said.

State Agencies Direct Donations to Areas of Greatest Need

In Michigan, "Operation Haylift" is a coordinated effort by farmer donors, county ASCS offices and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, with individuals and businesses supplying trucks and train cars for transportation.

The procedure is relatively simple and assures that contributions go to the areas of greatest need.

Farmers or others with hay or grain to donate, labor to help load trucks or trains, or land to utilize as an assembly point, should contact their county ASCS office and tell what form of assistance they would like to contribute.

The ASCS office will provide this information to the MDA where transportation will be coordinated. MDA will report transportation arrangements back to the county ASCS office and instructions will then be given to donors regarding the

scheduled assembly points and times.

On the National Level

Some drought aid measures have been taken by Congress and USDA Secretary Lyng (see page 6).

Farm Bureau has been urging the Reagan administration to use some of the surplus grain crops clogging storage in the Midwest to provide relief to the drought-stricken areas.

As *Rural Living* went to press, both the House and Senate had approved legislation directing the USDA to use surplus stocks to provide drought and other disaster assistance.

Estimates of on-farm and off-farm storage facilities indicate that half of the major grain producing states will have stocks in excess of storage capacity. Michigan is sixth on the list with a storage deficit of 66 million bushels.

MFB 'Helping Hand' Donations Reach \$21,000

MSU Ag Expo was the site for presentation of a third contribution to the EMAT program by MFB and members in 66 county FBs

*By Connie Turbin
and Donna Wilber*

The work of the Extension Management Assistance Teams is predominately a private affair, involving farm families seated at kitchen tables or in farm offices with members of one of the 14 EMAT groups. Together they plot a course of farm and family management to guide the farmers through the personal challenges of an economic transition in agriculture.

But when news of the program goes public, Michigan people — both in and outside of agriculture — have responded with caring hearts and helping hands.

For the EMAT program the publicity has been good, thanks to the track record of direct, effective help for farmers. Since the program's inception in January 1985 it is estimated that over 3,200 farmers have been helped with financial planning, computer programming and legal proceedings. Over 150 have been saved from bankruptcy. In addition, over 400 farmers have participated in the job retraining program.

FB Makes Third EMAT Contribution at Ag Expo

Ag Expo was the scene of a third Farm Bureau contribution to the program. A check for \$6,288.85 was presented by MFB President Elton R. Smith to MSU President John DiBiaggio, bringing the total contribution

to the EMAT program from MFB and 66 of the 69 county FBs to over \$21,000.

Smith said Farm Bureau has supported the EMAT program since its initiation because "it has done more to constructively respond to the challenges of this difficult transition period for Michigan agriculture than any other effort."

The first FB contribution of \$10,000 was made last February for the formation of a fourteenth team to meet the increasing demand for EMAT services by farmers who were ex-

periencing financial stress. Because of the response of county FBs throughout the state, a second check for \$5,000 was presented in March.

"County Farm Bureaus welcomed the opportunity to reach out and help their fellow farmers in a positive, constructive, immediate way," Smith said. "The contributions kept coming in, enabling us to present this third check. This financial support reflects the strong grassroots endorsement of the EMAT program by Farm Bureau members."



MSU President John DiBiaggio accepts a \$6,288.85 contribution to the EMAT program from MFB President Elton R. Smith. The voluntary contribution by the Michigan Farm Bureau tops \$21,000. MFB support was also instrumental in obtaining a special \$200,000 appropriation in the MSU budget to continue the program.



Ida Elementary School teacher Margaret Jobe took a cue from FB members and organized a week-long fundraiser to support the EMAT program. A farmers' market and activities involving the school children raised \$2,000. (Photo courtesy of Monroe Evening News)

Smith said the need for EMAT will continue because "the coming year will not be an easy one for Michigan agriculture." The farm leader expressed optimism, however, about the future of the industry.

"I am confident that our industry will emerge from this transition period even stronger than it was before. We have the resources that will enable us to do that: the human resources, our farm families and their vital support systems, our natural resources, our unique diversity, the support of leadership and legislators who recognize the importance of agriculture to the state's economy," he said.

"Not least among those resources that will enable us to emerge a stronger industry is our land grant university, which has illustrated its commitment to agriculture in so many ways

throughout its history. That commitment has never been so evident as during the past several months. The caring expertise and direction provided to Michigan farm families by the EMAT members writes a whole new chapter in Michigan State University's already proud record of service."

Spontaneous Support Appreciated

The state's largest farm organization has also supported EMAT in other ways. MFB legislative counsels worked diligently with members of the state Legislature to achieve a special MSU budget appropriation of \$200,000 for the continued operation of the EMAT program, and supported an MDA budget appropriation of \$49,600 to support the assistance hotline for farmers.

Help has also come from other sources. When Margaret Jobe, a teacher at the Ida Elementary School in Monroe County, read about Farm Bureau's support of EMAT in the April issue of *Rural Living*, she got students, parents and members of the community involved in a week-long fundraiser for the program.

A farmers' market was set up at the school, featuring produce, crafts, flowers and refreshments. With the market, entertainment and other activities, the school children raised \$2,000 for EMAT.

MSU Cooperative Extension Service Director W. J. Moline expressed appreciation for both the financial contributions and the efforts to gain funding from the state Legislature for the 1986-87 program year.

"If it hadn't been for Michigan Farm Bureau members, the Ida Elementary School, Farm Bureau legislative activities and other key supporters throughout Michigan, the EMAT program would not have been able to assist Michigan farm families in the intensive and effective way that has been possible," he said.

Farm families who have faced the anxiety and heartache of a depressed farm economy won't soon forget the "hard times." But thanks to the EMAT program and the people who extended a helping hand, there will be memories, too, of friends who were there when they needed them.



YOU RASCALS!

By gosh, they're not Oshkosh but they'll do just fine seems to be the message from Harold Borowicz, former MFB regional representative in the North Region, as he accepts a "retirement" gift from the Cheboygan County FB. The overalls will get put to good use as Harold is planning to expand his farming operation while continuing his education.

FARMETTE

By Andrea Hofmeister
Tuscola County



"We've talked it over and even though school starts tomorrow and we're dying to go, we've decided to stay home this fall and help you with the harvest."

Fellowship, Food and Fun at Manistee Jamboree



Nearly 200 people enjoyed an evening of feasting and square dancing at Manistee County FB's 5th annual Country Jamboree, Aug. 9 at the farm of county FB President John Urka and his wife, Joy.

The annual event got started when Joy suggested to the board that the county do something similar to the jamboree at the state annual meeting. Somehow it appeared in the minutes that the first annual Manistee jamboree would be held the following month.

But the Urkas didn't get nervous, they got busy. "It came off better than if we'd planned it for a year," John said.

Since then, the jamboree has gotten bigger and better. With

help from many volunteers, the Urkas' potato storage/grading facility is decorated to resemble an old-fashioned barn dance.

There's a lot of "company" in northern Michigan this time of year and FB members are encouraged to bring their "city" friends and relatives to the jamboree. "It gives those folks a chance to get acquainted with farm life," John said.

Special guests this year were "Friend of Agriculture" Rep. Ed Giese and his family.

Sweet Treat!



Gallons and gallons of cherry-apple drink were consumed by motorists at Operation Care welcome centers over the July 4 and Labor Day weekends. The drink was offered to the safety program organizers by the Michigan Cherry Committee.



RURAL RASCALS — Two-year-old Kevin Vermeesch was awed by the new born calf and big bottle his Aunt Mary was holding when he and his brother, Matthew, visited their aunt and uncle's dairy farm just 20 minutes after the arrival of a new milk producer last spring. The boys are the sons of St. Clair County FB members John and Janet Vermeesch and the nephews of county FB President Carl Vermeesch and his wife, Mary.

Good Ideas Get Better When They're Shared

Alcona — Oct. 3
Allegan — Oct. 9
Alpena — Oct. 9 (tentative)
Antrim — Oct. 15
Arenac — Oct. 13
Barry — Oct. 14
Benzie — Oct. 13
Berrien — Nov. 7
Branch — Sept. 15
Calhoun — Oct. 7
Cass — Oct. 6
Charlevoix — Oct. 11
Cheboygan — Oct. 21
Chippewa — Oct. 13
Clare — Oct. 17
Clinton — Oct. 21
Copper Country*
Eaton — Oct. 4
Emmet — Oct. 13
Genesee — Oct. 14
Gladwin — Oct. 7
Hiawathaland*
Hillsdale — Sept. 10
Huron — Sept. 25
Ingham — Oct. 18
Ionia — Oct. 6
Iosco — Oct. 17
Iron Range*
Isabella — Oct. 15
Jackson — Sept. 13
Kalamazoo — Oct. 7
Kalkaska — Oct. 16
Kent — Sept. 30
Lapeer — Oct. 2
Lenawee — Sept. 23
Livingston — Oct. 22

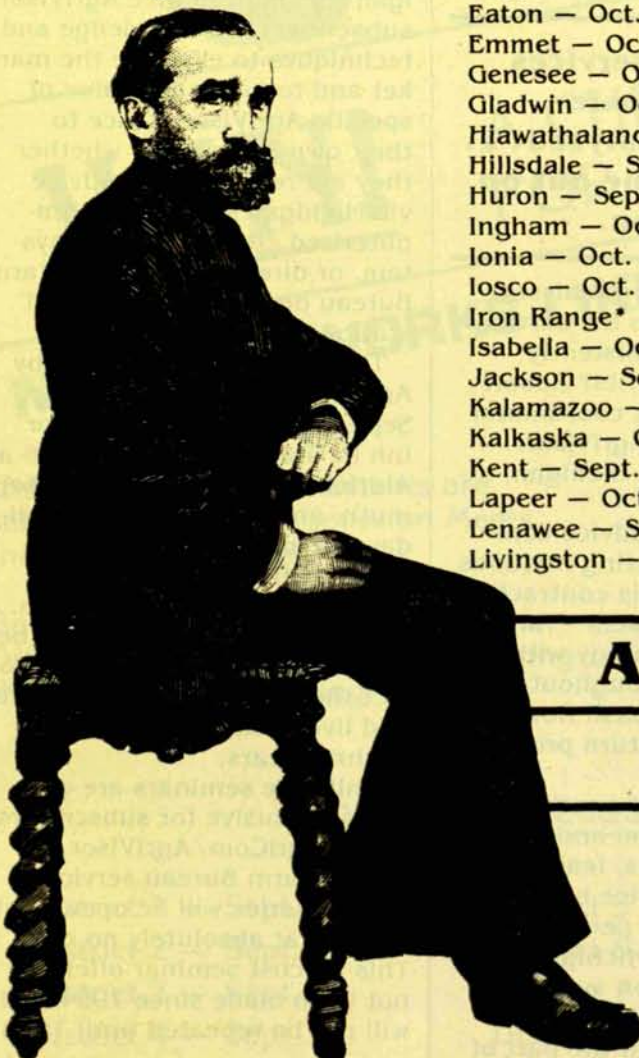
Mackinac-Luce*
Macomb — Oct. 9
Manistee — Oct. 20
Mason — Oct. 7
Mecosta — Oct. 6
Menominee — Oct. 9
Midland — Oct. 21
Missaukee — Oct. 7
Monroe — Sept. 16
Montcalm — Oct. 25
Montmorency — Oct. 2
Muskegon — Sept. 25
Newaygo — Oct. 9
Northwest Michigan — Oct. 11
Oakland — Sept. 13
Oceana — Oct. 20
Ogemaw — Oct. 23
Osceola — Oct. 21
Otsego — Oct. 22
Ottawa — Oct. 9
Presque Isle — Oct. 7
Saginaw — Aug. 28
St. Clair — Sept. 23
St. Joseph — Oct. 11
Sanilac — Sept. 6
Shiawassee — Oct. 11
Tuscola — Sept. 13
Van Buren — Oct. 23 (tentative)
Washtenaw — Oct. 8
Wayne — Oct. 14
Wexford — Oct. 14

*Date not set at press time

Counties not listed
have already held their
1986 annual meeting

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Let's Talk **MONEY!**

By Connie Turbin

While cash marketers and subscribers to other marketing advisory services count pennies of profit, farmers who followed the AgriVisor advice for corn marketings during 1980-84 averaged 32¢ more per bushel. That's what researchers Marsha Thurow and Keith Rogers at Western Illinois University reported in their study of three marketing advisory services including the Illinois Farm Bureau's AgriVisor.

According to the study results released this summer, AgriVisor consistently outperformed both the Pro Farmer and Doane's marketing advisory services in four of the five crop years studied. Profit gains from using AgriVisor's year-long marketing strategies ranged from 66¢/bu. more profit in 1981, to 77¢ in 1982, 25¢ in 1983 and 8¢ in 1984.

Thurow and Rogers concluded that "of the three services, and the six basic strategies analyzed, Illinois Farm Bureau's AgriVisor came out on top most often."

The study, reported in the July 19 issue of *Prairie Farmer* magazine, is the second independent report to rank the Illinois FB service on top. A 1984

study conducted and published by *Farm Journal* magazine boosted AgriVisor's reputation by naming it the top marketing advisory service in the nation.

Of the three services and the six basic strategies analyzed . . . AgriVisor came out on top most often.

How do AgriVisor analysts and subscribers to the service achieve these consistently higher market profits? Robert Craig, MFB project coordinator for the AgriCom/AgriVisor/ACRES services in Michigan, explains:

"The AgriVisor advice combines three marketing methods — cash sales, basis contracts and futures contracts — in a planned sales strategy with multiple sales throughout the year to maintain cash flow. The result is higher return profits at minimal risk.

"Subscribers get continuous market information and updates, prices, news, features and AgriVisor advice by FM sideband radio or personal computer tied to the Michigan Farm Bureau information system.

"It takes discipline and it takes education on the part of the farm marketer," Craig says.

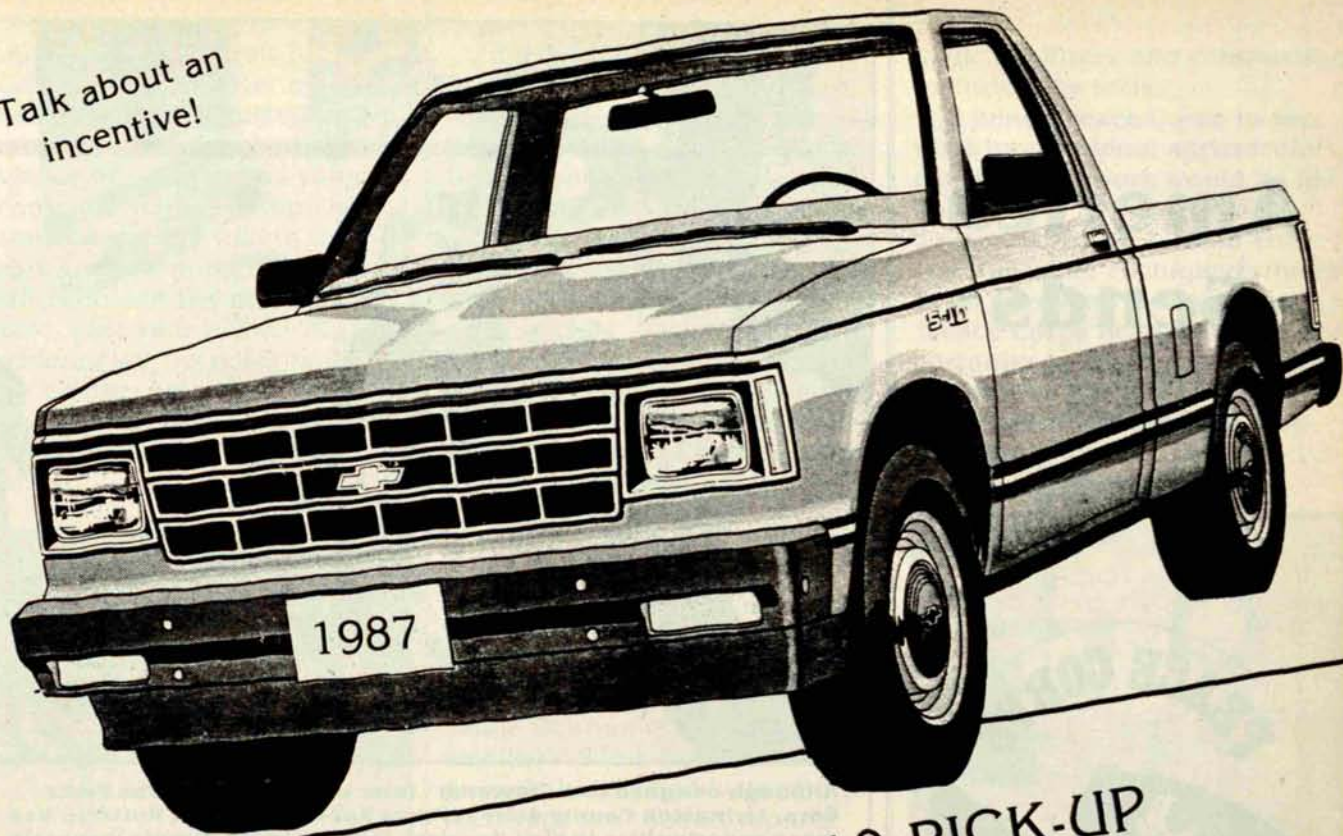
Educational Seminars Set for September

Educational seminars, such as the series scheduled in Michigan this month, give AgriVisor subscribers the knowledge and techniques to evaluate the market and to judge the value of specific AgriVisor advice to their own operations, whether they are receiving the advice via Michigan's AgriCom computerized communication system, or direct from Illinois Farm Bureau on FM radio sideband stations.

The seminars, conducted by AgriVisor analysts, are set for Sept. 15 at the Midway Motor Inn in Grand Rapids, Sept. 16 at Aldrich's Restaurant in Frankenmuth, and Sept. 17 at the Holiday Inn in Jackson (I-94/U.S. 127). Each seminar begins at 7:30 p.m. and ends at 10 p.m. AgriVisor analysts will describe current market factors and project the market trends in grains and livestock for the next two or three years.

While the seminars are ordinarily exclusive for subscribers to the AgriCom/AgriVisor/ACRES Farm Bureau services, the fall series will be open to all farmers at absolutely no cost. This no-cost seminar offer has not been made since 1984 and will not be repeated until 1988.

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MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU
YOUNG FARMER
DISCUSSION
MEET

DISTRICT DISCUSSION MEET SCHEDULE

District 1 — Sept. 8

District 2 — Sept. 9

District 3 — Sept. 3

District 4 — Sept. 17

District 5 — Sept. 4

District 6 — Aug. 27

District 7 — Sept. 23

District 8 — Aug. 26

District 9 — Sept. 10

District 10 — Sept. 11

District 11 — Sept. 14

America Sends Its Best



**Michigan Farm
Bureau members
serve in the
Peace Corps**



Although assigned to a "research" farm while serving in the Peace Corp, Livingston County dairy farmers Robert and Lydia Ruttman had many opportunities to visit Nepalese families in the remote mountain villages in the Himalayas.

By Duane J. DeBruyne

Within the 54,000 square miles of Nepal — a country slightly smaller than the state of Michigan — resides a rural population twice as large as that of the Great Lakes state. There are no Western-style skyscrapers to rival Nepal's Mt. Everest. Indeed, Western technology has only a foothold in this mountainous and primitive country, but through the work of the Peace Corps, agriculture volunteers are bringing new ways of living and farming to the people of Nepal.

If Western ways were largely unknown to the Nepalese, their lack of knowledge was matched by Peace Corps volunteers Robert and Lydia Ruttman. The Livingston County dairy couple were familiar with Nepal only through a faintly-remembered Lowell Thomas radio program they had once heard.

They knew little about growing Nepal's staple food, rice. Nor were they experienced in the care and management of water buffalo. Plowing rocky soil on steep mountain inclines with hand tools and cutting hay with old-fashioned scythes were primitive ways of farming to the Ruttmans.

Nevertheless, in 1974 Robert and Lydia left their son and daughter to operate the family farm and packed their bags for Nepal. Eleven thousand miles away new goals awaited them — goals of travel and daily life experiences in another culture, and of helping others. They became Peace Corps volunteers.

The couple returned to their Livingston County farm in 1976. Others took their place in the long line of Peace Corps volunteers who have come from Michigan since the program's inception 25 years ago. Michigan is among the top five "volunteer" states with more than 5,000 Peace Corps alumni.

According to Detroit Peace Corps Regional Center manager Alice Cooper, the Ruttmans are representative of a growing number of couples and young people in Michigan's agricultural community willing to share their farming expertise with people in the developing world. Last year 273 Michigan residents left for posts in 61 Peace Corps countries. Over 25% of those volunteers went into agriculture-related programs.



The rocky slopes of the Himalayas were a long way from the Ruttman's dairy farm, but the couple found personal enrichment through their Peace Corps assignment.

"Hungry nations need more than food," Cooper says. "They have asked for farm-experienced Americans to teach them how to manage soils, irrigate crops, improve livestock breeds and establish farmer co-ops. People overseas seek the agricultural skills that will translate into long-term solutions to hunger."

Robert Ruttman remembers well the contrasts of American and Nepalese agricultural practices. "Agriculture in Nepal is very labor oriented," he says. "The tools that are used are very primitive, like those seen in this country in the early 1800s."

As a Peace Corps volunteer, he was assigned as an advisor to a "research" farm, where livestock management and cultivation methods for water buffalo, dairy cows, chickens, pigs and goats and various crops were studied and applied.

He remembers, too, that accepting "new" farming practices was a challenge for both man and beast. Drawing on his dairy experience, Ruttman suggested the idea of building silos for grass and corn. "They had small, one animal silos but nothing larger."

While the farmers accepted the idea and built the silo, the animals turned up their noses at the "gourmet" fodder. "At first the cows didn't like the silage — when it got wet, it smelled." Soon, however, the animals became accustomed to the silage and Robert reports that "the people built a second silo shortly after we left."

Lydia Ruttman, who helped handle the paperwork at the government farm, says that Nepalese people were very friendly, but notes that working with them "takes a lot of patience because people (in Nepal) work slower than Americans. Peace Corps really gives you a chance to see how the rest of the world lives."

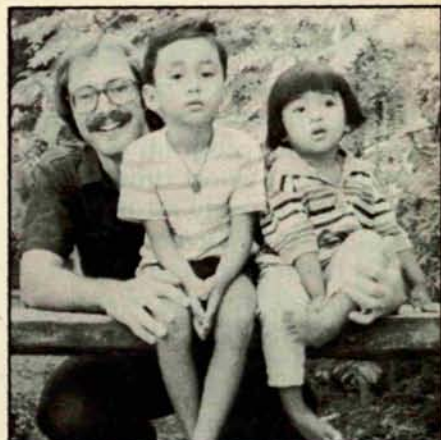
Recalling his Peace Corps stint in Thailand, Larry Yarger, son of Kalamazoo County Farm Bureau members Richard and Kathryn Yarger, shares many of the Ruttmans' impressions.

In Thailand, he found yields hampered by a lack of good soil management and proper crop rotation, through the improper use of fertilizers, and from erosion due to deforestation. Armed with a graduate degree in horticulture from Michigan State University, Larry helped Thai farmers improve both their soil and crops.

"I emphasized utilization of existing resources which were normally discarded," he says, and introduced the use of or-

ganic fertilizers and composting to enrich the soils.

"I joined Peace Corps to see what international agricultural development work would be like as a career. It was a tremendous experience. I would encourage other Michigan farmers to go overseas," Larry says. "Peace Corps is an excellent opportunity to reach out to others around the world. You learn about other cultures, the way the people live and the agriculture they use."



Larry Yarger, son of Kalamazoo FB members Richard and Kathryn Yarger, shared technology with Thai farmers, in turn they gave their friendship.

From the Great Lakes state to many countries around the world, Michigan Farm Bureau members have journeyed far beyond their own farm gates to share their farming know-how as Peace Corps volunteers. In the Western tradition of lending a helping hand — farmer-to-farmer — an international link of knowledge and understanding has been formed.

Robert Ruttman summarizes the feeling of having contributed something lasting through the Peace Corps: "Ideas you try to introduce may take hold after you've gone," he says. "You just sow the seeds."

Duane J. DeBruyne is a public information officer for the Peace Corps Regional Center in Detroit.

Dairy Farmers and Industry Leaders Seek Long-Range Solutions to Stabilize Supply and Demand

Year to year fix-it plans for the dairy industry have soured. The diversion program reduced supplies for a short time, but production quickly returned, and most dairy farmers don't expect the whole herd buyout program to eliminate over-production. So while there is no widespread agreement on exactly what measures will stabilize supply and demand, there is a growing determination among dairy farmers and industry leaders to identify a long-range solution.



On tour in Ontario with 53 Michigan dairy farmers, Bob Anderson and Blaine Johnson raise questions about the Ontario dairy marketing system.

Listed below are 11 marketing alternatives with key points about each.

• **All Class Base Proposal** — Terminates CCC purchase programs and federal milk marketing orders. Establishes an "all class base" for all producers (one third of the total milk marketed during the previous three years with a ceiling of 1 million pounds); all class base is a device for establishing deficiency payments; milk is sold on a free market with prices determined by producers and their cooperatives. Establishes a periodic target price (USDA) and makes deficiency payments to producers whenever the target price exceeds the average price to producers. Finances deficiency payments by producer assessments.

• **Dairy Quota Proposal** — Places a ceiling on milk marketings by all producers for all classes of milk. National quota is based on commercial use, minus imports, plus CCC purchases of 5 billion pounds. Producer quota, based on marketing history, is adjusted up or down to conform with national quota. Producers are paid one price for quota milk and much less for excess deliveries. Quotas may be bought and sold.

• **Deficiency Payment Program** — A producer base would be determined using recent marketing history. National base would reflect projected commercial sales plus CCC purchases. Supply would be increased or decreased by adjusting the producer base. Participants would be entitled to deficiency payments equal to the difference between the market price (M-W, basic formula price and federal order) and target price, with a maximum annual payment of \$50,000. Non-participants would receive the marketing price for all of their deliveries and would be assessed cost for handling excess production.

• **Flexible Support Price** — This was effectively used from 1949 to 1977. This program reduces excessive price variability, puts a floor under producer prices, provides an adequate milk supply, and keeps government purchases within a reasonable balance with market requirements. The support price would move up or down based on the level of CCC purchases. Use a CCC purchase goal of 5 billion pounds milk equivalent. A flexible support price is a basis of Farm Bureau's current dairy policy.

• **Freeman's Proposal** (concept proposed by former USDA Secretary Orville Freeman) —



Canadian Tom Jenkins hosted Michigan dairy tour participants for a one-day visit to his dairy farm.

Farms selling less than \$40,000 of product would get no government assistance. Farmers selling \$40,000 to \$200,000 worth of products would continue to receive some subsidy. Farms selling more than \$200,000 in sales would be eligible for loans, but no payments or subsidies.



Canadian dairy farmer Marilyn Jenkins calculates the U.S. equivalents of Canadian measures and currency to help Michigan dairy farmers translate the "bottom line."

•Marketing Contracts — Imposes market discipline through producer and industry initiatives. USDA would estimate annual supply requirements with restricted CCC purchases (5 billion pounds), and establish the support price based upon a percentage of a three year moving average price for manufacturing milk and net CCC purchases. Milk cooperatives would issue marketing contracts to meet the required supply. A contract would be attached to the farm and could not be sold separately. When a dairy farm was sold a percentage of the contract volume would be reserved for new producers.

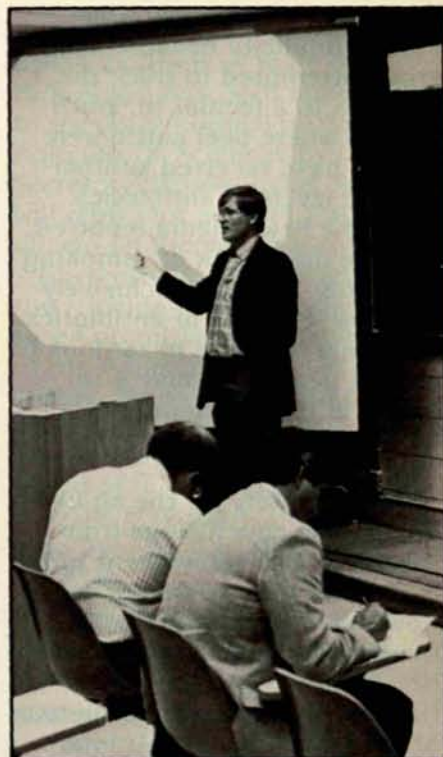
•Ontario's Dairy Program — The Ontario province in Canada uses a complex system of quotas with two classifications, the fluid quota and the industrial milk quota. A higher price is paid for fluid quota. The Ontario Milk Marketing Board manages the quota system and regulates the price. Levies are imposed to partially fund the program, including the cost of subsidy exports of any surpluses.

•Purchase Limitation — Gramm-Rudman mandates that government purchases be reduced. This program establishes where dairy production is, and projects where it will be in the future. Producers would be notified that CCC purchases would be lowered and their increased production would have to move into the market. Thus the necessary discipline to discourage excess production would be put into place.

•Self-Help Proposal — Producers would form a national organization to balance supply and demand, using 1985 as the base year. The base would be adjusted to meet commercial market demand and CCC purchases. Participation would be voluntary. Penalties for over base production could be imposed by the cooperative. A 1¢/cwt. check-off would be assessed to finance the cooperative.

•Two-Tier Supply Management Plan — USDA would estimate market requirements and establish a marketing history for all producers. Producers would receive a market price for deliveries based on the adjusted marketing history. A penalty price would be paid for marketings in excess of adjusted marketing history. The USDA secretary could adjust the marketing percentage during a marketing year.

•Voluntary Production Control Program — Establishes a production history for all producers covering a two-year period. Assesses every producer a dollar amount per hundred weight of milk marketed. Establishes the percentage of national marketings (USDA) required to supply the commercial and government needs annually. Pays back to producers who did not exceed the national percentage.



Dr. Glenn Fox, ag economist at the University of Guelph, spoke to the Michigan dairy tour group on the first day of the Ontario trip, July 8. The two-day tour combined on-farm visits with formal meetings and discussions between the Michigan and Ontario dairy program representatives.

The dairy program throughout the province is managed by the 13-member Ontario Milk Marketing Board. The program is totally financed by producer check-off and license fees.

Farmers Seek Study to Determine the Real Impact of Antibiotics in Feed

In 1984 researchers from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta linked a resistant strain of "salmonella newport" bacteria to hamburger found in the diet of 13 of 18 Midwesterners who contracted salmonellosis.

The report attracted widespread publicity because the study attempted to trace the bacteria to a feedlot in South Dakota where beef cattle were said to have received subtherapeutic levels of antibiotics. Here, the news media reported, was the direct link or "smoking gun" that proved conclusively that low level use of antibiotics in animal feed was hazardous to human health because it resulted in the development of hardy, antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Unfortunately for the ag industry, the conclusions from the study and subsequent publicity were greatly exaggerated. However, in testimony before the Food and Drug Administration in January 1985, Virgil Hays, professor and chairperson of the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Kentucky, refuted the validity of the conclusions drawn by the study. Hays has been studying the use of antibiotics in feed since 1957 and is recognized as an expert in the field.

The research, he testified, did not demonstrate that the bacteria originated in hamburger eaten by the sick people; it was not shown that the bacteria originated on the South Dakota beef farm (even if it was assumed that the bacteria came from hamburger in the first place); and most importantly, the scientists did not demon-

strate that the low level use of antibiotics in the animal feed was related in any way to the illness of the 13 people.

The controversy surrounding this case underscored the continuing concern over the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed. Antibiotics have been used by U.S. livestock and poultry producers for more than

Continuing concern over the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed prompted FB to recommend a study to determine the human health effects of subtherapeutic levels of antibiotics in animal feed.

30 years. Sick animals are treated with very large doses, but the more common use has been to put low levels, or subtherapeutic amounts, of antibiotics in animal feed to prevent or reduce the incidence of infectious diseases and to improve feed efficiency and growth.

About 80% of the poultry, 75% of the swine, 60% of the beef cattle and 75% of the dairy calves marketed or raised in the United States are estimated to have been fed antibiotics at some time in their lives. Roughly 45% of the antibiotics produced each year in the United States are administered to animals.

Doctors are usually careful when treating a human infection not to overdose a person with large amounts of anti-

biotics for a long period of time because that could lead to nearly all antibiotic-susceptible bacteria being wiped out and leaving almost nothing but a few mutant bacteria that the antibiotics could not kill. Those resistant strains would then be free to multiply, so the next time the person got an infection it would likely be caused by those resistant bacteria that would be very difficult to treat with conventional antibiotics.

While that is a valid concern when using large amounts of antibiotics to treat a disease, the controversy is over whether regular low-dosage use of antibiotics has the same effect in animals and whether any resulting resistant bacteria can then be transferred to humans through meat products.

Farmers have a special interest in the controversy for three reasons.

First, there is always a concern over any issue that affects the image of food products as wholesome and safe.

Second, since producers are exposed directly to livestock feed, they are concerned about their own health and safety.

Third, farmers and their families often eat the meat they produce on their farms.

In 1977 Farm Bureau recommended that a study be done to monitor the status of health in humans, especially with regards to bacterial infections of livestock producers exposed to animals receiving antibiotics in feed, as compared to persons who were not exposed. In addition

(continued on next page)

Discussion Topic

(continued from previous page)

tion, Farm Bureau asked that a study be done to determine the prevalence and character of bacterial infections between matched groups of meat eaters and non-meat eaters and between matched groups of workers, such as butchers, who have occupational exposure to meat, and workers who do not have such exposure.

These same studies were recommended by an expert panel which did a comprehensive evaluation of the issue for the National Academy of Sciences in 1980, and form the basis for studies currently being conducted by the American Health Institute

The most recent challenge to the use of antibiotics in feed came on Nov. 20, 1984, when the National Research Defense Council petitioned the secretary of the U.S. Health and Human Services Department to ban all sales of tetracyclines and penicillin for subtherapeutic use in animal feed as an imminent hazard to human health.

But in November 1985, Margaret Heckler, retiring Health and Human Services Department secretary, agreed with a recommendation by the Food and Drug Administration that a petition to ban the use of these antibiotics did not prove a significant adverse effect on the health of animals or humans.

Discussion Questions

- If you raise livestock, would your operation be affected if the use of low levels of antibiotics in feed was curtailed?
- Are you concerned about the impact on your health from exposure to antibiotics in feed?
- Do you believe farmers are generally aware of the concerns about the routine use of low level amounts of antibiotics in feed?

Legislative Review

(continued from page 7)

MDA and DNR will work with MSU, Soil Conservation Districts, Department of Commerce, other affected agencies and the agriculture industry to assure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the problem.

Farm Bureau's present policy strongly opposes any regulatory actions that would restrict the farmer's ability to produce poultry and livestock at an economically feasible level. FB will closely monitor the rules and regulations as they are written and provide input. However, it should be noted that there are already federal EPA requirements requiring waste water discharge permits on large livestock operations.

Current FB policy supports a quality environment and encourages farmers to become knowledgeable about pollution sources and discipline themselves not to add to the problem. FB supports additional funding for soil and water conservation programs to develop, improve and provide technical assistance for reducing non-point source pollution. Continued and expanded research is needed to determine the extent of pollution and seek solutions.

MFB's policy supports a review of the Right-to-Farm Act to clarify and strengthen the law to minimize unnecessary

legal actions. FB also supports MDA as the primary coordinator with qualified, competent people to provide inspections and establish facts in Right-to-Farm cases.

FB has serious concerns regarding MDA's request that citizens who have complaints regarding animal waste facilities file them with MDA and the DNR. This opens up the possibility of harassment of farmers who use good management practices as well as for offenders.

State Senator Appointed to USDA Council

— State Sen. Nick Smith has been appointed to the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences by USDA Secretary Richard Lyng. Smith will represent agricultural producers on the national council.

Currently he is chairperson of the Michigan Senate's Agriculture Committee and a member of the Appropriations Committee. He has served in the USDA in Washington, D.C., and is a past member of the MFB board of directors. Smith farms a 2,010 acre dairy and cash crop operation in Hillsdale County.

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

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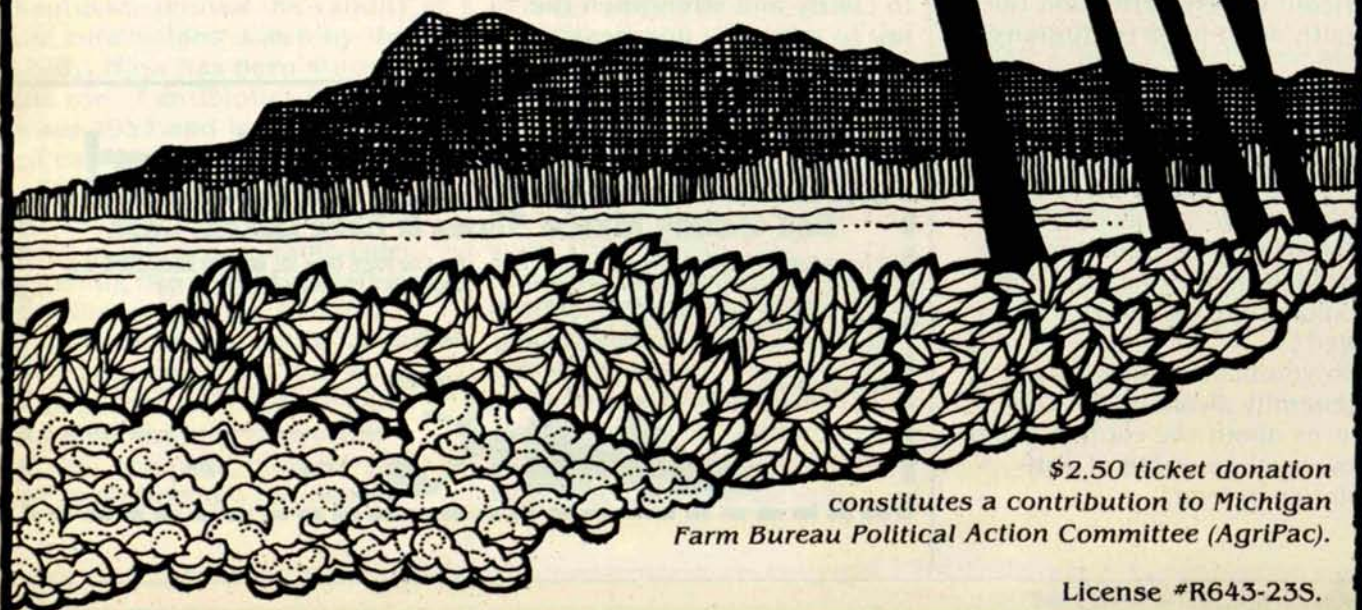
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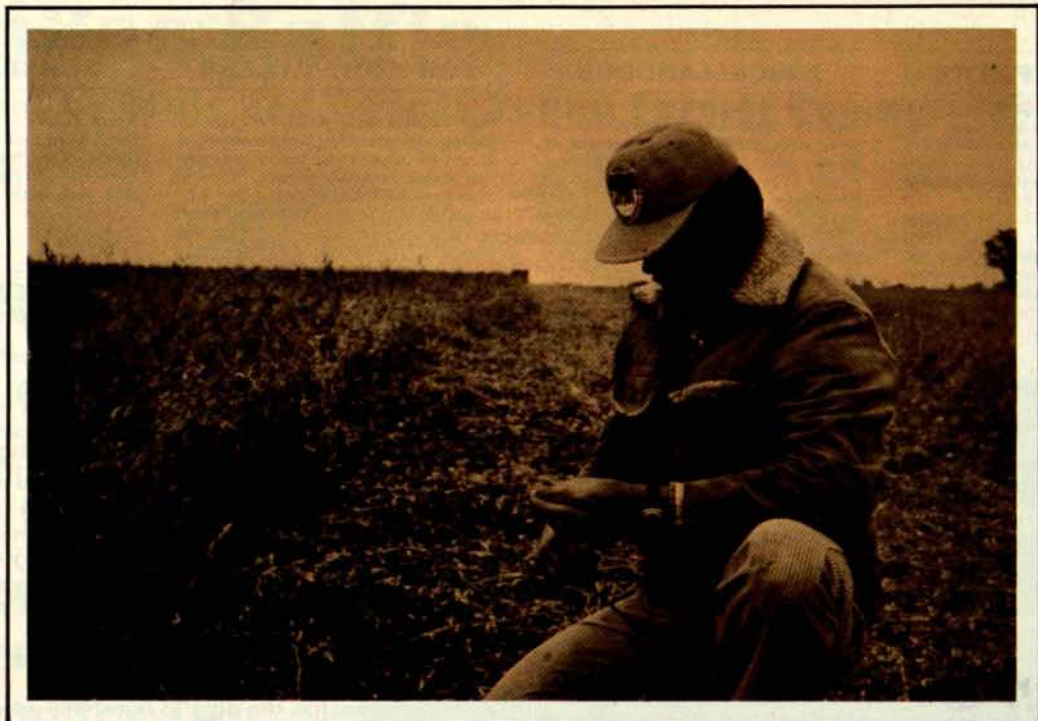
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