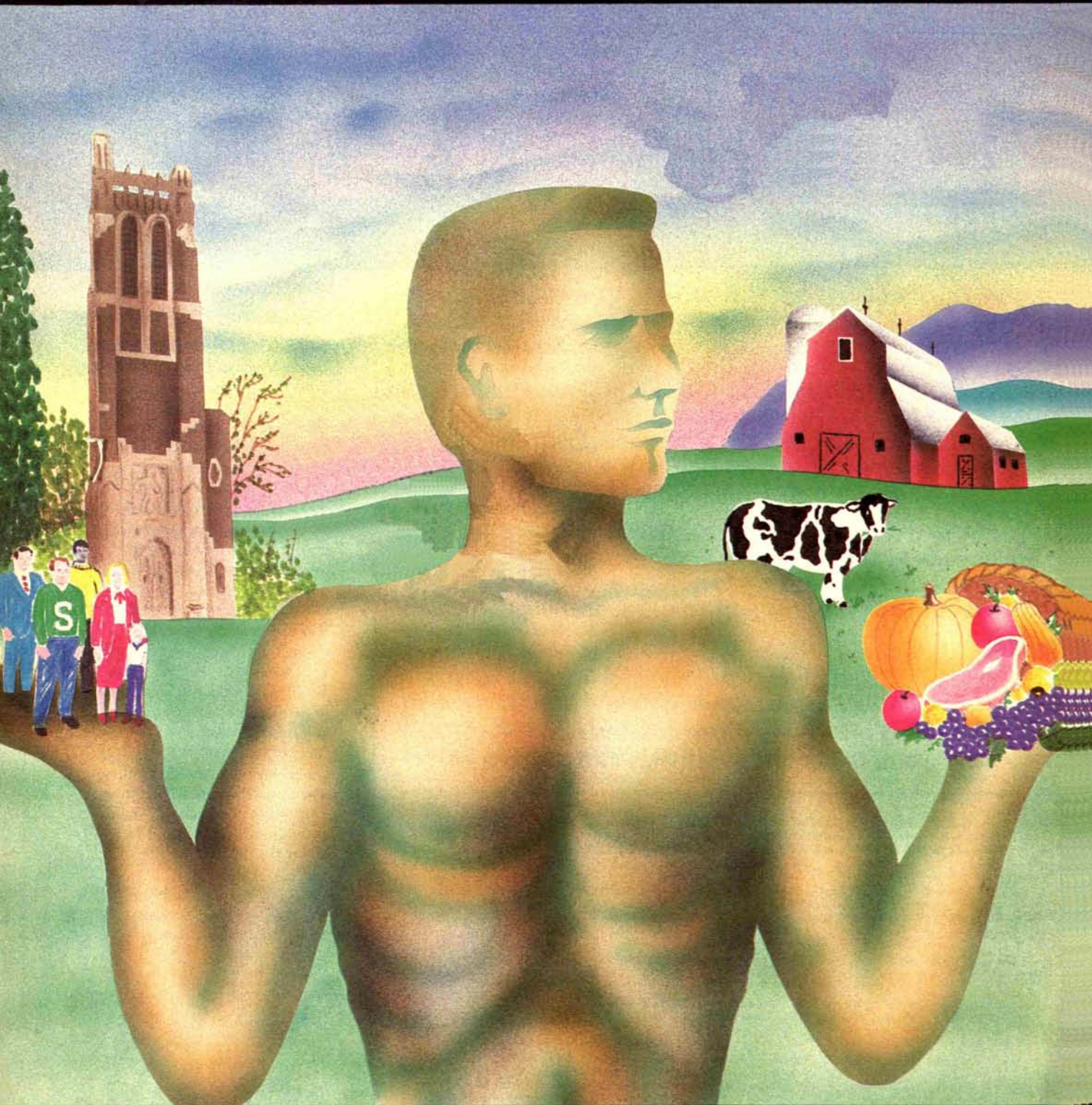


# RURAL LIVING

M I C H I G A N F A R M N E W S



MSU Land grant-don't take it for granted

Spring '89



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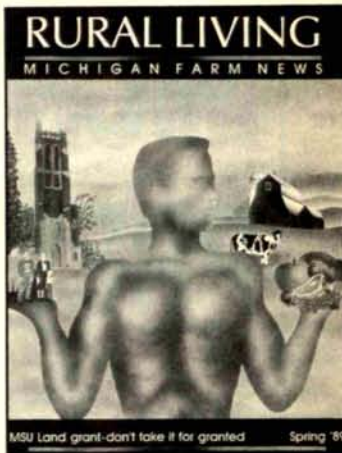
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## About the Cover

*MSU's Sparty illustrates the relationship between the consuming public and farmers, and their shared stake in the future direction of our land-grant university. Cover design by artist Ray Hilton, Hilton Graphics, Lansing.*

## Of Special Interest

**Research: Basic to the Mission of the Land-Grant University** Research is the key factor in helping American farmers produce a nutritious and abundant supply of food...page 10

**Resources: The Bricks and Mortar of Education, Research Today, MSU is a multi-school university with significant successes in many of its 17 colleges, but there are some concerns that more resources are needed to maintain quality education and research...page 13**

**Revitalization: Building for the Future of All Citizens** Recognition that MSU's current resources are inadequate to serve Michigan agriculture and develop student talent for the industry has led to revitalization efforts...page 17

**Rural Leader Newsletter** Read this special section of news and information about issues that affect Farm Bureau and the families who make their living in the state's second largest industry -- agriculture.

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## **School Finance and Education Quality Bills Proposed**

### **School Finance Reform**

House Joint Resolution "B" introduced by Rep. Michael Nye, R-Litchfield, and Rep. Glenn Oxender, R-Sturgis, is a comprehensive school finance reform program. It is a constitutional amendment which must be passed by a two-thirds vote of both houses, would go on a special election ballot in May.

It would, to the degree possible, equalize the differences between school districts on local property tax rates for school operations and state aid per pupil.

The proposal would:

- Cancel all previous school operating millage.
- Set new charter millage (basically 17 mills for residence, farms and timber cutover, and 22 mills for industrial, commercial, utility and developmental).
- 9 mills of the 17 would be statewide millage.
- 14 mills of the 22 would be statewide.
- 8 mills would be local property millage.
- 4 additional mills could be voted if necessary.
- A local income tax option of 1/2 percent for school with voter approval.
- Limit additional votes to twice yearly.
- Reduce county allocation of 15 or 18 mills by the school allocation amount.
- Does not change 50 mill limitation.
- Increase sales and use tax 2 percent for a constitutional trust fund called the State Account For Education (SAFE). The trust also includes the lottery revenues and various other revenues.
- About 75 percent of all schools property tax would be capped at 17 mills, a

*few schools now levy less than 17 mills.*

School districts which currently levy below the cap would be brought up to 17 mills. Others would also have a tax cut but would range between 18 and 29 mills, depending on various factors. For example, one school presently raising less than 7 mills would have to raise 17 mills. Another presently raising 34 mills would be cut to 17 mills. Another raising 41 mills would be cut to 23 mills. The differences result from a formula based on present spending, valuation, etc. All schools would receive additional aid.

The average school operating tax cut for residential and agricultural property would be 12.3 mills or 37 percent. The average business property tax cut would be 7.3 mills or 22 percent from current levels.

### **Special Note**

As *Rural Living* goes to press, the House passed HJR "B" but it failed in the Senate three times. The Senate then offered a somewhat different plan. No vote was taken, instead a meeting was to be held with the governor, Senate and House leaders and others to work out the numerous differences. A Spring vote is not likely.

### **Governor Urges: Improve Education Quality**

Gov. Blanchard's position has been that before any school financing proposal passes providing more money for schools, it is essential that legislation assuring quality education should be on the books. Several legislative leaders agree that the school system must assume a greater responsibility to ensure a quality education for every student.

Last year, the Senate passed several "quality" bills, but they were not considered in the House.

The Senate reintroduced these bills this session and has already passed some of them.

### **Twelve Senate Education Quality Bills Introduced**

There are 12 Senate bills on quality education, all are expected to pass. They include:

S. 123, passed 25-9, provides for schools to administer a competency and employability skills test to all students in the 10th grade. The test would determine a pupil's competency in English, math, science and employability skills as defined by the State Board of Education.

S. 39, passed 28-5, would require local school districts to develop their own core curriculum. Local districts can either develop their own or use one developed by the State Board of Education.

S. 40 and 43, passed 28-5, would respectively require local schools boards to prepare an annual educational report and adopt and implement a three-to-five year school improvement plan for each school within a district.

Other Senate bills include S. 38 on class size, S. 41 on school accreditation, and S. 51 on schools of choice.

### **Related Legislative Proposals**

House Bill 4009 -- includes several reforms including an Annual Educational Report to be distributed for each school on the status of school accreditation, core curriculum adopted; students' achievement based on

*(Continued on page 27)*



## Land - Grant, Don't Take it for Granted

All too often we tend to take for granted those things which seem commonplace, yet play an important role in our day to day living.

One of those important things is our land-grant university system. When Michigan Agricultural College was opened in 1855, it began an era of public supported education for agriculture, a development which since then has had a positive impact on the life of every U.S. citizen.

The land-grant system provided agriculture with an educational, research and information program second to none. The end result: A population has been able to enjoy an abundant supply of high quality food.

All of us in agriculture are aware of how Michigan State, our land-grant university, touches our lives in some way. In recognition of that, our 1989 Michigan Farm Bureau policy book makes reference 12 times to Michigan State University, the Cooperative Extension Service, the Agricultural Experiment Station and other important programs (see inset).

Thanks to the land-grant system, we have an agricultural in-

dustry in our country that surpasses all other nations in productivity and technology.

So, why are we choosing this time to remind everyone of the importance of research and education in agriculture?

We are focusing on it because perhaps never before has our industry faced so many challenges, so many issues which must be addressed by extensive research projects.

These projects include groundwater quality, the efficient use of chemicals in production agriculture, market development and new methods of packaging and distribution.

Highly qualified and trained individuals are needed to carry out this research, and to implement information and communications programs that take the research results not only to users, but to the general public as well.

But this research must have adequate funding. Funding that can provide state-of-the-art facilities. Funding that can be used to hire top-notch research and teaching personnel. Funding that will enable us to have a land-grant university that can continue to be a leader in the future.

Competition for education and research dollars comes from many areas. Michigan has three major tax-supported medical schools. We have several highly qualified engineering schools and many liberal arts colleges, all publicly financed.

But, we have only one university dedicated to agriculture, the industry which not only provides our food supply, but directly or indirectly employs nearly 25 percent of our country's workforce.

So talk to your friends and neighbors. Help them understand the crucial importance of providing sufficient funding to our premier education, research and Extension facility, Michigan State University.

Land grant - don't take it for granted.

*Jack Laurie*

Jack Laurie, President  
Michigan Farm Bureau

## MFB's Policy Demonstrates Commitment to MSU/CES/AES

Policy references in the 1989 Michigan Farm Bureau Policy book include:

**Research** -- To improve care and management for livestock and poultry; to develop more effective human and veterinary medical practices (p. 7).

**Seed Breeding** -- (p. 10).

**Dry Bean Research** (p. 11).

**Bee Industry** -- Cooperative Extension Service (CES) coordinate spraying to protect bee industry (p. 13).

**Agricultural Resource Management** -- CES to develop an educational program to inform farmers and rural residents of environmental challenges (p. 19).

**Management Practices** -- MSU be responsible for defining generally acceptable and good management practices for agriculture (p. 20).

**Chemical Disposal** -- Support for Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) research on methods for farm disposal of mixed chemicals (p. 29).

**Agricultural Experiment Station** -- Support for ongoing research in natural resources management; protection from pests and disease; new product development; new plant/seed varieties; more efficient production, processing and storage methods; and better human nutrition (p. 41).

**Extension Service** -- Support and recognition for education, training and information programs, EMAT program, and financial management training (p. 41).

**Right to Know** -- Commending CES education/information efforts (p. 49).

**Agricultural Safety** -- Support for MSU study on agricultural accident injuries (p. 66).

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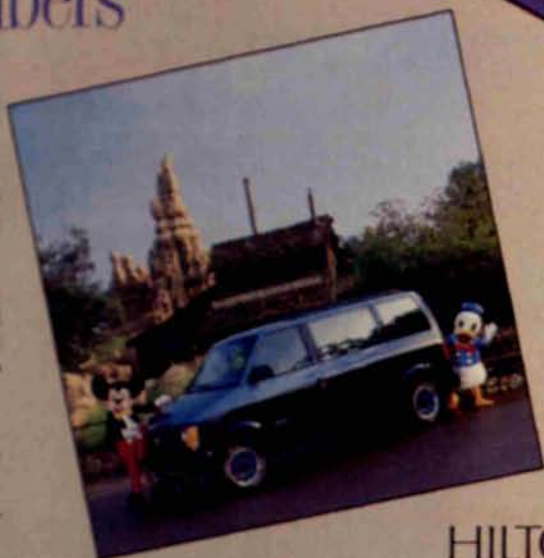
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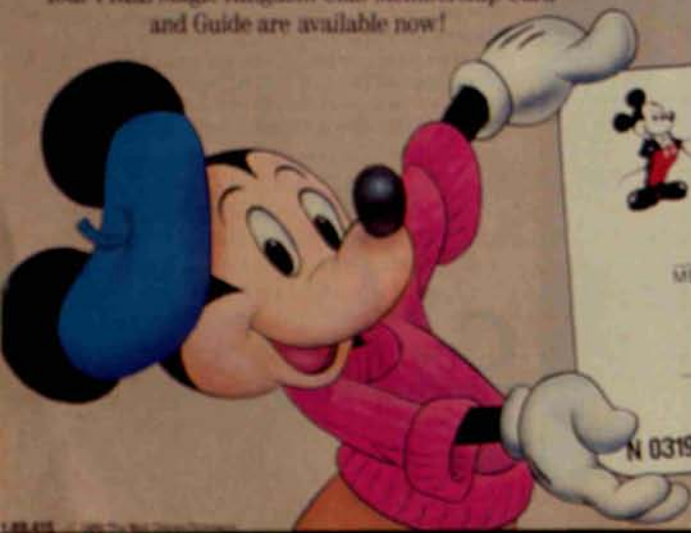
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## Double Feature for Disney Magic Kingdom Club Members

Two of the biggest names in the travel industry, National Car Rental and Hilton Hotels, offer Magic Kingdom Club members two great benefits.

At most Hiltons throughout the United States, club members now receive a 10 percent discount off regular rates. At most National Car Rental locations nationwide, club members are entitled to a 23 percent discount on a daily counter rate and a 10 percent discount on already low weekend, holiday and weekly rates.

Over the past 60 years, the name Hilton has come to symbolize the finest in lodging, dining, location and, above all, service. And now as the "Official Hotel of Walt Disney's Magic Kingdom Club," Hilton has also become the vacation address of Magic Kingdom Club members.

When one thinks of Hilton Hotels, the first things that come to mind are quality and elegance. However, Hiltons are very affordable, especially with the 10 percent discount available exclusively to club members.

This discount is good at most Hiltons throughout the United States, including Hilton's luxurious hotels at Walt Disney World in Florida, Anaheim, New York, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco and Hawaii.

Advance reservations are recommended and can be made by calling 1-800-HILTONS. To be eligible for the 10 percent discount on nightly accommodations, you must present a valid Magic Kingdom Club membership card upon check-in.

Club members deserve National attention and that's exactly what they get at National Car Rental, the "Official Car Rental Company of the Magic Kingdom Club." Club members can simply present their club membership card at most National Car Rental locations across the U.S. and drive away with a 23 percent discount on National's daily counter rate and a 10 percent discount on already low weekend, holiday and weekly rates.

For reservations, club members should call 1-800-CAR-RENT. National Car Rental features GM cars, like the Chevy Beretta.

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## FB Travel Services Honored

Farm Bureau Travel Services, headed by president Charles DeVries, was named to the American Express Travel Hall of Fame for its outstanding record in providing quality service to its contributions to the travel industry.

"Being inducted into the Travel Hall of Fame is an honor reserved for those who have delivered on the American Express promise of superior customer service in a manner that has exceeded even the high expectations of American Express customers," said Jack Mannix, vice president of the American Express representative Network of travel offices. "Chuck DeVries and Farm Bureau Travel have taken a leadership role in setting new standards for quality service to the travelers."

Learn more about current travel offerings through FB Travel Service by turning to page 39 of this issue.

## ENTER A WORLD OF DISNEY MAGIC!

The latest advantage to your Farm Bureau membership is the availability of **Walt Disney's Magic Kingdom Club**. Enrollment is free and benefits include discount on admission to Disney facilities and Disney stores as well as discount at leading car rentals and hotels. **Send for your free Magic Kingdom Club card and enter a world of Disney fun and fantasy that includes:**

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These benefits and services are available exclusively to Magic Kingdom Club members. For a complete list of Club benefits and programs, obtain a Club membership card by sending a note with your name and address to: **Michigan Farm Bureau, ATTN: Membership Services MKC, P.O. Box 30960, 7373 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing, MI 48909.**

# Research: Basic to the Mission of the Land Grant University

A shiny red apple, defaced by the poison symbol of skull and crossbones, served as a powerful graphic on the CBS program, "60 Minutes," aired Feb. 26. In a segment called "A is for Apple," the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) charged that the use of Alar in apple production would eventually cause cancer in many children.

Other news media followed suit and within days, the question of food safety was posed on the front pages of major newspapers, and on radio and TV news and talk shows. Mothers and Others for Pesticide Limits, a project of the NRDC, created public service announcements for airing on major TV stations and opened a hotline to provide parents with information on how to protect their children from pesticide residues.

It wasn't only concerned consumers, members of the apple industry, and government agencies responsible for protecting the public from potential health hazards who were jolted by the NRDC charges. The entire agricultural community recognized that while this particular controversy would eventually lose its lead-story position to other events of the day, the challenge of responding to the growing concerns of health-conscious consumers still lay ahead of them.

How could American farmers continue to produce a safe, nutritious, abundant supply of food for our nation and much of the world if panic-stricken consumers, victims of unscientific

scare tactics, demanded an end to the use of many of their important production inputs? Reassurances from the farm and scientific communities and government agencies would not be enough. The answer, of course, lies in research.

## **MSU Researchers Rising to the Challenge**

Researchers in MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources are well aware of the growing consumer demand for food produced with a minimum of chemicals, and a growing realization on the part of farmers of the economic and environment benefits of reducing chemical inputs. They are working on numerous research projects related to what they call sustainable agriculture, seeking alternatives and/or supplements to commercial inputs of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other chemicals. These include integrated pest management (IPM), various tillage systems, cover crops and better manure management.

"Such techniques can help farmers reduce their reliance on sometimes expensive inputs while, at the same time, make it easier to conserve soil and avoid environmental pollution," said Bob Craig, manager of MFB's Commodity Activities and Research Department. "In conventional agriculture, commercial fertilizers are used to provide the nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and other elements that

crops need to grow. Partially because of these fertilizers, farmers have been able to push production levels higher and higher each year. Yet concerns over the use of pesticides and commercial fertilizers have been expressed that there can be too much of a good thing.

"For several years, MSU's Agricultural Experiment Station looked for ways to manage harmful insects without harming ourselves and our environment. The IPM program in Michigan was one of the first of its kind designed to tackle agricultural insect problems within the broader context of environmental and ecological systems," he said.

For example, MSU entomologist Dean Haynes recently completed several years of research on the Colorado potato beetle, a pest that became resistant to all sorts of chemicals.

"In a four-year period in research plots at Gull Lake, we grew 15 crop sequences with no pesticides, no damage and no reduction in yield," Haynes said. "We used a 60-day variety of potatoes instead of the traditional 90-day varieties. With that, we were able to change our planting times to avoid times when the Colorado potato beetle is active.

"We discovered a connection to horsenettle, a weed that was growing in corn plots nearby. It's a host to a different potato beetle and that potato beetle had its own natural parasites. Those parasites moved from the wild potato beetle to the Colorado potato beetle on our crops. Some farmers would have killed off

that weed in the first place, but to do that would put you back on the pesticides treadmill," he said.

Haynes says that MSU researchers are confident that similar scenarios can be worked out for other insect pests.

In the area of field crops, fruits and vegetables, a major MSU research focus is on using sources of nitrogen other than solely commercial fertilizer, while still maintaining or increasing production levels. Those sources include leguminous crops such as alfalfa, soybeans, vetch and animal manure.

Lee Jacobs of MSU's Crop and Soil Sciences Department is helping farmers, as part of the Michigan Energy Conservation Program, recognize they have a rich source of nutrients in manures -- and they will have potential pollution problems if they mismanage them.

"We're getting farmers to look at manure in a positive way, as having a resource value, instead of as a negative aspect of animal agriculture," Jacobs said.

He doesn't tell farmers they will save a fortune by substituting manures for fertilizers. "The important thing for farmers to realize is there are other costs involved besides their fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and tractor

fuel bills. Excessive use or misuse of chemicals can cause environmental damage, which could get you in trouble with your neighbors or the government and end up costing you a lot more money," he said.

### Selecting the Best

Agricultural Experiment Station plant breeders are concerned with forests as well as fields and orchards. MSU helped the state's forests recover from heavy logging at the turn of the century, establishing the country's first forestry teaching program in 1903. In the mid-1950s, MSU scientists discovered they could breed trees and develop new species which would mature quicker, resist diseases and insects better, and adapt to Michigan's growing conditions. AES breeders work to perfect animals as well as plants. They have spent years evaluating individual animals for desired traits, selecting the best animals to breed, and monitoring the progeny in efforts to genetically improve the state's cattle herds.

Researchers developed new techniques and refined procedures that made the job of genetically improving dairy cattle

easier and more reliable. Today, breeders can generate more offspring from genetically superior animals with artificial insemination, multiple ovulation and embryo transfers.

### The Value of Biotechnology

By using biotechnology to unlock nature's secrets, MSU scientists are helping build biologically sophisticated agricultural production systems that could lessen our dependence on costly synthetic fuels and chemicals. Such biology-based systems would have distinct economic and environmental advantages, according to Eldor Paul, chairperson of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences.

"Critics are saying the present U.S. agricultural system is non-viable," Paul said. "They say we can't compete in world markets and that we're ruining the environment. In the long run, biotechnology has major possibilities for developing alternative agricultural systems and a cleaner environment."

The complex genetic structure of major agricultural crops pose a particular challenge to the scientists who seek to understand them, Paul said. But,



Photos courtesy of MSU Alumni Magazine

biotechnology is leading to breakthroughs that would not be possible with traditional plant breeding processes. Agricultural Experiment Station scientists are using biotechnology to understand and eventually manipulate the way plants respond to cold, resist disease, produce valuable oils and enzymes, and the way animals fight diseases and reproduce.

### *Research for all Citizens*

Research projects at MSU are widespread and diverse, from fighting against cancer with the cyclotron and biomedical breakthroughs to biotechnology applications for cornstarch, from searching for answers to livestock waste resource problems to addressing the water quality concerns shared by rural and urban citizens.

Thanks to a \$2 million endowment from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint, MSU will increase its focus on balancing agricultural and environmental practices. Of the \$2 million, \$1.5 million will endow the Charles Stewart Mott Distinguished Professorship in Sustainable Agriculture. The remaining \$500,000 will endow four Charles Stewart Mott Fellowships in the same area.

With the Mott Foundation gift, MSU achieved \$94 million, or 59 percent, of its \$160 million capital goal of the campaign known as MSU 2000: Access to Opportunity. The Elton R. Smith Chair for Food and Agricultural Policy is a part of MSU 2000, and has received the commitment of financial support from FB families, employees, agribusinesses and corporations throughout the state who recognize the need for such a vital resource.

*(Contributors to this article were Donna Wilber, MFB Information & Public Relations Division; Bob Craig, MFB Commodity Activities and Research Department; and Futures, AES publication.)*

*Photo courtesy of MSU Alumni Magazine*



# Resources: The Bricks and Mortar of Education, Research

By Donna Wilber



Photos courtesy of MSU Alumni Magazine

When the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan was founded in 1855, there was no question about its mission. As the first land-grant college in the nation, it was created specifically for the teaching of scientific agriculture. In fact, the condition for the land it received from the federal government to build a college was that it offer instruction in agriculture and the mechanical arts.

Michigan State University has had six names during its 134-year history, but it was not until 1963, when the name was changed to Michigan State University in the new constitution, that the word agriculture was dropped. Between its original Agricultural College of the State of Michigan to today's Michigan State University, there were State Agricultural College, Michigan Agricultural College, Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, and Michigan State University of Agriculture and Applied Science.

The omission of "agriculture" from its name reflected the socioeconomic changes that had taken place. With those changes came a shift in emphasis at the land-grant university from agriculture to a much broader base.

It's been a lot of years since MSU has been jokingly referred to as "Moo U" by its Big Ten op-

ponents. Today, MSU is a multi-school university with significant successes in many of its 17 colleges. While its growth and national recognition are a source of pride to students, faculty, alumni, state leadership, and most Michigan citizens, there are some concerns that MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and particularly Extension and research, do not have the resources necessary to maintain the leadership position MSU has held, not just in the United States, but worldwide.

## Still the Finest of All

In a videotaped message to county FB board members attending cabinet meetings throughout the state in March, MSU President John DiBiaggio recognized that there are resource problems, but said MSU is "still the finest of all land-grant universities," and that it is meeting the objectives of a land-grant institution.



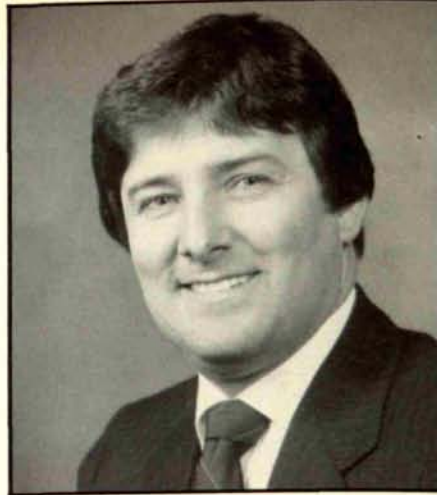
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*"I want us to maintain that commitment to the land-grant mission....I can't do that without help from our agricultural leaders..."*  
*John DiBiaggio, MSU President*

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*John DiBiaggio, President  
Michigan State University*



*Tom Reed, Member  
MSU Board of Trustees*

"The problem that it faces is that its resources are simply inadequate for it to meet all the demands placed upon it," DiBiaggio told the county leaders.

There are problems, too, he said, because along with the change in economy over the years, the appreciation for the importance of agriculture diminished among political leaders at the state and federal levels. This has had a negative impact on the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES).

"Their dollars come, in great part, from the federal government where there have been reductions over the last several years," he said. "Increases in state funding have been very, very modest, through no fault of anyone -- the governor, the Legislature, or anyone else -- because the economy has been very fragile."

CES and AES only get the dollars which the federal and state government awards them. They get no share of the dollars that come from student tuition and fees.

"The rest of the university can share those dollars and so, in essence, CES and AES get a little shortchanged from the rest of the university," DiBiaggio said. "Nobody is receiving all the money they need at this time and these two components receive somewhat less. We have made the argument before the

Legislature on more than one occasion that special consideration has to be given to these two components of the university."

The president told the county leaders that the fragmentation in Michigan's diversified agriculture keeps the industry from being as unified as it should be in forwarding the cause in which every segment has a stake. "I hope that the awareness is growing that through unity, through a joining of forces of all the agricultural components, we will be more successful in gaining the kind of support that agricultural education and research genuinely require in order to remain competitive," he said.

"I want us to maintain that commitment to the land-grant mission....I can't do that without help from our agricultural leaders," he concluded.

### ***Destiny is in Farmers' Hands***

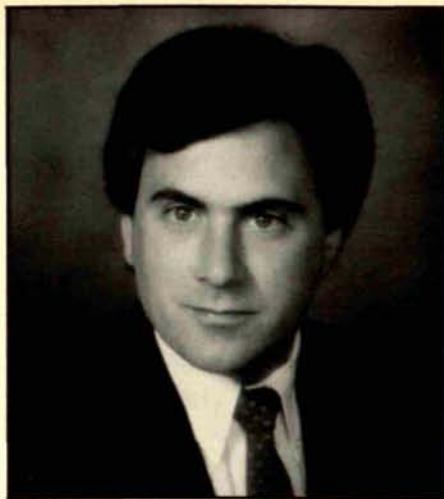
Sen. Nick Smith, who chairs the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, believes that because of its fresh water supply and its manufacturing base, Michigan will see an expansion of part-time farming and an overall expansion of production agriculture.

"Because of that, I think it is vital to the total economy of Michigan that we continue to have a strong agricultural college at Michigan State University, the

oldest land-grant college in the nation, and a strong agricultural consideration in all of our laws. I think it's important that our research and Extension efforts don't get sidetracked from production agriculture," he said.

Smith said, for a time, it was considered a little old fashioned to be so concerned with production agriculture, and that attitude did create a shift toward more urban-oriented programs. "But the bottom line is production agriculture is the key to a strong economic future in the total realm of agriculture and natural resources. Whether it's packaging, marketing or agribusiness, if we let down our efforts on production agriculture, we're going to lose in all phases," he said.

"What happens at Michigan State University in research is going to partially determine the economic success of Michigan farmers in years to come. If we can have innovative kinds of research that's applicable to Michigan, maybe even a little more so than it's applicable to other areas of the United States, and if we can have a Cooperative Extension Service that gets information to the state's agricultural producers quicker and more effectively than other information systems in other states, Michigan is not only going to start holding its own, we're going to start surging ahead in terms of agriculture's contribution to the total Michigan economy and



*Rep. Tom Hickner, Chair  
House Agriculture Committee*



*Sen. Nick Smith, Chair  
Senate Agriculture Committee*

agriculture's expansion in our state compared to other states.

"Farmers have got to understand that the destiny of what happens is in their hands. They have got to be active with their own Extension Service in their counties. They must communicate their concerns to their legislators, both state and federal. They must communicate their concerns to the administration of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station.

"Nothing will happen unless they make it happen," he said.

### **Time for Critical Examination**

Rep. Tom Hickner, who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, calls MSU the premier agricultural land-grant university in America, providing important basic and applied research in agricultural related projects. Research and education, he believes, will be particularly important to agriculture in meeting the challenges of the 1990s. He also believes in timely reassessments by institutions like MSU.

"I think every institution from time to time needs to reassess what its principle mission is, as well as the goals and objectives to accomplish that mission," he said. "That applies to virtually every institution in government, at every level of government, and that certainly ought to apply to

the university. I think it is appropriate, as we enter the 1990s, that Michigan State University examine what its historical involvement in agriculture has been, as well as its involvement in other areas outside of agriculture.

"Given that we're dealing with a world of reduced resources, or at least constrained resources, the university over the long haul will probably have difficulty, like our other major institutions, in being able to meet all of the demands that are being placed on it.

"However, I do think it is timely that leaders within the university, the faculty and staff, the MSU Board of Trustees, along with the agricultural community, take a look at the current priorities they have in the university, both in terms of the big picture as well as within the different aspects of agriculture and examine whether or not those fit the economic realities of the next decade," he said.

Hickner said he supports the efforts of the Cooperative Extension Service to do a critical examination of what it is doing and what it needs to do.

"I would hope that the Legislature would also do a critical examination of what we're doing and what we want to do. I would hope that the Legislature would maintain and expand its level of support to the university. We have one of the best resources in the country, if not in the world, sitting right here in Michigan for Michigan agriculture. We need to

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**"Agriculture is the key to a strong economic future in the total realm of agriculture and natural resources."**

**Sen. Nick Smith, Chair  
Senate Agriculture Committee**

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support that institution if we're going to be able to assist our farmers in meeting the challenges of the next century," he said.

### **The Farmer is the Key**

During the eight years that Tom Reed has served on the MSU Board of Trustees, he's been an outspoken standard-bearer for agriculture, the land-grant philosophy, quality education at affordable costs, and fiscal responsibility. He's proud of his alma mater and is determined to keep it on the cutting edge, a leader in agricultural research and education.

"If we want to stay viable in the agricultural industry, then we'd better stay on the cutting edge and be the leaders of that industry and its technology. That can't happen without a strong agricultural college and without an Extension Service that's extremely capable of disseminating information daily," Reed said. "We have been the leader in the nation. If the time does come when we're not the leader, whoever takes that role over will leave us sitting in the dust. It's foolishness for us not to be on top, in control, and that happens from the grassroots up.

"It happens with producers saying -- we need more from this institution -- not saying it isn't working so let's scrap it. Producers themselves need to get active, get involved, and work towards strong Extension and re-



search. There are very few farmers out there who do not get a call or a letter from their politician asking for help at election time. I don't think it's inappropriate at all to ask that favor to be returned. Staple a note on your contribution check saying 'I will be getting back to you because we need support for agriculture at MSU.' Then put a reminder on your calendar to call them when budget time comes around. It will make a difference," he said.

Reed spent seven years as a county Extension agent under a director who believed that the work got done in the field -- not in the office. "They gave me a two-way radio and I bought a pickup truck, and the director told me not to come back to the office until I'd met every farmer in the county. He also told me there would be some farmers who didn't want to talk to me and I'd have to go back a couple of times before I convinced them I was worth talking to, but not to sit in the office," he recalls.

"It got to where farmers knew I was out in the county somewhere and probably close enough to them so I could swing in and look at their problem. I did not have answers to all of them, but I did have the radio hooked to a telephone patch so I could call and get the answer while I was standing right there in the field. If I didn't get the answer, I could get a specialist in a car headed that way.

"I've heard farmers complain the turnaround time isn't immediate today, the system just isn't as responsive. The reason it

isn't responsive is because the farm community hasn't demanded that response. Farmers have a responsibility to be a lot more supportive of the system we currently have. Get involved with it. If it needs changing, give it some direction. Ask the Extension agent to come to your farm; walk him through your field or your milking parlor, ask him -- or her -- to help you solve a problem.

"If the system works right, the agent in the field is disseminating information to the farmers as it comes down the pipe from the experiment stations, but he or she is also taking the problems back from the farm community to the university. There is a resource, a wealth of information on campus. But if the specialists don't get calls, they sit in their offices wondering why nobody cares about them and what they have to offer.

"I'm concerned about the young farmers. There's a generation out there now, if they have not had an active agent in their county, they really have no idea of the resources that are available to them.

"I think the key to changing direction is the farmer out in the field. He doesn't have to do it with placards and marches on the campus. He has to do it with communication and involvement, and recognition that he

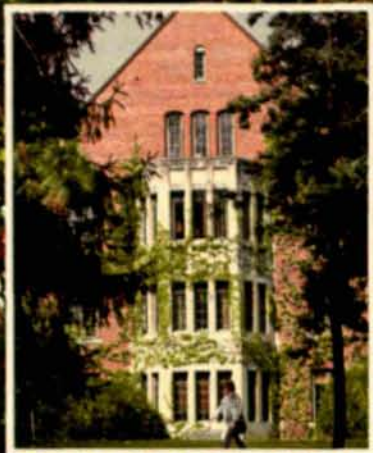
has a responsibility in the close relationship that should exist between the farmer, the Extension agent, and the specialists.

"It can happen. I'm optimistic that it will happen. But it can't happen without the active involvement of farmers making it happen," Reed said.



*Photos courtesy of MSU Alumni Magazine*





Photos courtesy of MSU Alumni Magazine

## Revitalization: Building for the Future of All Citizens

There is no better time for students to begin a rewarding career in agriculture. It promises a lifetime of challenge and contribution. But we cannot adequately prepare students for the societal and economic demands of an integrated and competitive world market in agriculture using out-of-date facilities and reduced faculty, said James Anderson, dean of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR).

"World technology and competitive talent in other countries is already eroding this nation's ability to maintain its power in agricultural trade. As much as this university needs realistic facilities to continue serving Michigan agriculture, it needs to develop the student talent that will help assure the economic strength of American agriculture during the decades ahead," he said.

Dean Anderson's recognition that MSU's current resources are inadequate to serve Michigan agriculture and develop student talent for the industry -- recognition that is shared by the agricultural community -- has led to

revitalization efforts within the CANR. Three revitalization task force/study committees -- undergraduate education, animal agriculture, and the future of Extension -- are in various stages of their assignments.

### Major Curricula Overhaul Proposed

After a year of extensive deliberation, the 13-member Task Force for Curricular Revitalization (TCR), under the leadership of agricultural economics professor Larry Connor, released its preliminary recommendations. The TCR's preliminary report contains 113 recommendations covering such areas as curriculum, recruitment, admissions, teaching and non-formal education. Before drafting its report, the task force met with students, alumni, faculty, university administrators and employer groups. Connor said many of the recommendations resulted directly from those meetings.

Connor believes that if the recommendations are imple-

mented, it would constitute the most significant changes in the college's undergraduate curricula in over a quarter century.

"It is very important to note that the preliminary report does not emphasize just department curricular revitalization," he said. "Rather, we have consistently emphasized a college-wide, cooperative approach to curricular revision."

Dean Anderson said CANR's undergraduate programs must not merely keep pace with change, but anticipate change.

"By proposing a major overhaul of our undergraduate curricula, the TCR is responding to the anticipated needs of our graduates as they move into state, national and international employment arenas," he said.

Those anticipated needs are reflected in recommendations that all graduates of CANR undergraduate programs have at least nine credits in communications courses; 15 credits in mathematics, statistics and computer usage courses; at least six credits in each of the natural, social and business science areas; and foreign language require-

ments if the faculty judge that skills in reading and writing a foreign language are necessary.

The task force also dealt with student recruitment and identified image and understanding as the most serious recruitment problems facing CANR. There is a low awareness level of the technological developments and scientific advances which have reshaped modern agriculture and its role in contemporary society, the TCR said, and a "basic ignorance" of the multiplicity of professional opportunities available in agriculture.

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*There is no better time for students to begin a rewarding career in agriculture. It promises a lifetime of challenge and contribution. But we cannot adequately prepare students for the societal and economic demands of an integrated and competitive world market in agriculture using out-of-date facilities and reduced faculty.*

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"Perhaps even worse, the tendency to equate undergraduate training in agriculture with farming necessarily links the perception of agricultural careers to the fluctuating economic conditions in production agriculture," the report states. "It is widely assumed, for example, that because farmers are experiencing difficult times, the entire agricultural industry is in severe economic straits. Surprisingly enough, this view is as widespread in rural America as in the cities and suburbs."

The report calls for a number of recruitment strategies, ranging from direct mail activities to high school visitations. A major shortcoming in current recruitment efforts is CANR's failure to draw on the resources of organizations such as Farm Bureau, it noted.

"The TCR found little evidence that Farm Bureau, the state's various commodity groups, the Soil Conservation Service, the Michigan United Conservation Club or other potential cooperators were involved in the CANR's recruitment effort. Such support groups should be involved in enhancing the image of careers in agriculture and natural resources. They could introduce potential MSU students to the various career opportunities available in agriculture and natural resources and even provide the college recruitment office with names of such individuals. Further, these organizations could develop and/or expand scholarship/financial assistance programs to help attract top-caliber students to the CANR," the task force said.

In April, following a series of meetings with the CANR faculty, students and alumni, the TCR will submit its final recommendations to Dean Anderson. That document will also include specific strategies for implementing the recommendations.

### **Revitalizing Michigan's Animal Agriculture**

"I believe that 1989 can be the year when Michigan State University, Michigan agriculture and state government join forces to begin the process of revitalizing the state's animal agriculture. It is do-able!" That's the opinion of CANR Dean Anderson, who set the wheels in motion for that to happen by appointing a six-member Animal Agriculture Revitalization Committee, headed by Agricultural Experiment Station Director Bob Gast.

Anderson said while there is great potential for expansion of animal agriculture in Michigan, the industry is being threatened by a broad range of factors. Those factors, according to Anderson, include increased global competition, the need for increased food processing within the state, environmental concerns, recent weather extremes, health considerations, dated teaching and research facilities,

and a decreasing availability of faculty and staff at MSU.

The committee targeted renovation and expansion of the dairy plant, the meat laboratory, Anthony Hall, a swine research facility, horse training and teaching facility, swine farrowing and nursery facilities and the Livestock Pavilion as the areas of greatest need.

"While remodeling and upgrading facilities is a critical element in the process of revitalizing animal agriculture, bricks and mortar are not the whole answer," Anderson said. "Additional faculty and staff are needed as well. Faculty positions, Extension field staff and support technicians as well as the availability of increased operating dollars are all part of the equation."

Anderson said it will take the support of all of agriculture to make it happen.

"Some years ago, the agricultural community gave its endorsement to initiatives in support of the plant and soil sciences. As a result, old and dilapidated classrooms and laboratories have been replaced by an up-to-date functional plant and soil science building. It didn't happen overnight and it didn't happen without the support of the entire agricultural establishment. But it did happen. Now it's time to focus the support of all agriculture on initiatives to strengthen animal agriculture. It, too, will take time, but we must make a start. We must begin the process," he said.

The process has started. Committee proposals will receive feedback from industry leaders and others, priorities will be set, and plans developed. Anderson hopes all this can happen by the summer of 1989.

### **CES Study Committee Appointed**

This year, the 75-year-old Michigan Cooperative Extension Service (MCES) will have its "pulse" taken by a 14-member study committee appointed by Dean Anderson and chaired by John Cantlon. Two former MFB

board members, Vivian Lott of Ingham County and Mike Pridgeon of Branch County, are members of the committee charged with reviewing the MCES and making recommendations for its revitalization.

In the beginning, MCES activities were devoted almost exclusively to agriculture, forestry, home economics and related areas. Today, MCES is not only concerned about these areas, but also to improving the quality of life in small towns and rural villages through a variety of programs. Youth development and human nutrition programs have been extended to Michigan's inner cities.

"Agriculture, the nature of technology, the economics and social structure of rural and urban Michigan, have all undergone profound changes since MCES took on its present form," said Dean Anderson. "Now is an appropriate time to make an in-depth study of the MCES. We need to examine the agenda and priorities for serving the people of Michigan, establish new and productive relationships with other segments of the university,

other organizations beyond the university, and outline the professional needs of the MCES. We need to examine alternatives for restructuring the organization so as to enhance its effectiveness, minimize administrative overhead, and reaffirm our commitment to serving people."

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*Today, Michigan  
Cooperative Extension  
Service is not only  
concerned about  
agriculture and forestry,  
but also to improving the  
quality of life in small  
towns and rural villages  
through a variety of  
programs.*

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The study committee is charged to review and make recommendations in a number of areas including: What should be the agenda and priorities of the MCES at the turn of the century and beyond? What special

resources will be required and how should they be allocated to properly address this agenda? What is the optimum organizational structure of the MCES to maximize effectiveness and minimize organizational conflict? How should the MCES delivery programs be organized to make maximum use of MSU's rapid information delivery systems and other present or emerging networks? Is MCES adequately and appropriately reaching minority audiences and employing appropriate numbers of minorities and protected classes?

In giving the committee members their charge, Anderson told them, "The revitalization of rural Michigan, the improvement of the quality of life and the expectations of our people necessitate that we make accessible the resources of this university to a broad spectrum of the public in the most efficient manner possible -- while keeping our research and development support commitments to the agricultural and natural resources sectors of the state."

## ***ANR Week, March 18-25, Designed to Help People Improve Environments***

Over 100 agriculture and natural resource activities took place in March on the campus of Michigan State University during ANR Week. In keeping with the land-grant tradition, the content of ANR Week changes with the times to meet people's information needs and interests. This year's program focused on the recognition, improvement and management of human and natural resources.

Among the week's agricultural sessions were on intensive use of forages, more effective handling of pesticides to reduce environmental contamination risk and, because of drought, reducing farm business risk. Other agricultural sessions included a special program about sustainable agriculture and a day-long discussion about direct marketing for farmers.

A wide variety of programs focused on improving the outdoor environment. These included day-long meetings and discussions on such topics as the expanded use of wildflowers and herbs in Michigan, water quality management, the improvement of packaging to help reduce solid waste, and improving communities under the recently approved state environmental bond proposals.

Special emphasis is also placed on Michigan's young people during ANR Week. More than 1,000 high school students participated in the state FFA convention, and an education competition was offered to grade school and high school students who are involved with the Coturnix science project.

Students also learned about the range of good career opportunities now available in agriculture and natural resources. Times have never been better for careers in these two areas, which range from managing a floral shop to doing research in biotechnology. For example, the food processing industry will need more than 20,000 agricultural engineers each year for the foresee-

# The Spark of Leadership

There is boisterous applause and cheers when their "Farm Bureau Jeopardy" team scores. With only a moment's hesitation, they offer differing views on marketing, farm economics and they listen carefully as consultant Mike Salisbury shares the "secrets" of better farm financial management. They are fully involved in every general session, round table discussion, workshop and social activity. They are Farm Bureau Young Farmers, whose spark of leadership charged the three-day Leaders' Conference, Mar. 2-4, in Midland.

According to Pat Albright, this year's chairperson and MFB board representative for the Young Farmer program, the annual conference is the program's cornerstone event for surfacing new leadership. "This conference gives young farmers and Young Farmer leaders the opportunity to go off to an excellent conference, away from the farm, and learn more about Farm Bureau. We give them a Young Farmers' view of what Farm Bureau is all about in addition to workshops on finances, working with the Legislature and Congress, farm policy and so on," he said.

Team competitions in the Farm Bureau Jeopardy game serve as a just for fun quiz on organization history, services and identity. Jeopardy answers like "Where belonging makes a difference," prompts the question, "What is the Farm Bureau logo...er...slogan?"

"The FB Jeopardy game is great fun with any Farm Bureau group," said Mike Kovacic, MFB Information Division director, who adapted the popular TV game show using Farm Bureau categories. "But young farmers really get into the game show spirit! They get totally involved in the contest and they're learning about Farm Bureau."

Such spirit carries the conference to a successful conclusion each year although the program is by no means a "cookie cutter" event, vows Albright. "We had just an excellent, excellent conference in 1988. The committee was really charged up in our next meeting. Out in the counties, Young Farmers were ready to go to work. New county Young Farmer groups were springing up almost immediately. Everyone was so energized by the success, we really went to work to make this year's even better."

Eight workshops and general sessions conducted by consultants and organization resource people included: farm labor; aiming your farm at the future; news media - creating a positive image; congressional insight; Farm Bureau and you; bucks, banking and you; agriculture 1990: a look ahead; and building better working relationships in farm families. Each young farmer participant attended two workshops in addition to general sessions.



*Farm Bureau Jeopardy is fun and informative as anyone who has played it will attest. The game was designed around the topics of the FB organization's history, services and identity.*



Pat Albright, State Young Farmer Committee Chairperson.

Albright attributes the recent higher attendance to a scheduling change which opens the conference on Thursday afternoon and runs through mid-afternoon on Saturday. "Particularly for young farmers this is a very important scheduling change. With one or both partners working at a second job off the farm, the change from mid-week conference to the end of the week makes it easier to attend."

One element of the program that always brings success is the chance to meet and talk with other young farmers. "Being with other young farmers like myself is probably the biggest thing that got me fired up about Farm Bureau, but also seeing how the state Young Farmer Committee works to develop programs such as the Discussion Meet, Outstanding Young Farm Woman and Distinguished Young Farmer," Albright said. "That was eight years ago. Since then I have met so many wonderful people."

Albright said he is grateful to Farm Bureau for the opportunities that have been offered to him through involvement and leadership development. Even though he came from a staunch Farm Bureau family in Branch County, Albright says that it was not until he returned from Michigan State University and attended the YF Leader Conference that he began to see where he fit

into the picture. "I was able to see all the work and effort and what Farm Bureau can do as an organization. Until then I probably tended to think of Farm Bureau as the county board of directors and the insurance people. After the conference I said, 'here's something I can gain from.'"

Young Farmers also represent a very broad spectrum of agriculture. Albright points out for example, that in addition to dairy, swine and cash crop farmers, the Young Farmer Committee is also comprised of producers of specialty crops or stock such as turkeys, ducks, bedding plants, and fruit and vegetables. "In Michigan we have so much diversity, but around my farm, there aren't bedding plant operations. Working with these other young farmers gives me the chance to understand what we have in

common and what their unique concerns are."

State Young Farmer Committee members, who may volunteer as many as 20 to 30 days a year to Young Farmer programs, carry much of the responsibility for developing new Young Farmer groups in their counties. "We try to have a good working relationship with the county Young Farmers. The district Young Farmer representative is really the best resource for the local program. He or she can give ideas and help with information about possible projects, what's been tried, and what has been successful for others. In the counties our input and support really has more meaning. After all, we're farming and going to meetings -- finding the time to be involved."

### **Laurie Reminds Young Farmers: You Have a Stake in the Future of MSU!**

**M**ichigan State University, the nation's oldest land-grant university should not be taken for granted, MFB President Jack Laurie told a crowd of nearly 200 young farmers in Midland attending the annual Young Farmers Leaders' Conference.

"Michigan State University has played a vital role in making American agriculture the envy of the world," Laurie said. "Farmers have benefited directly from the research conducted by MSU, but it is consumers who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the safest, most wholesome, cheapest food supply in the world."

Laurie told the young farmers that they have a stake in ensuring MSU's continued commitment to agriculture.

"We have got to be sure that our voices are heard in support of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, its Cooperative Extension Service, the Agricultural Experiment Station and the veterinary school," he said.

He urged the young farmers to become involved with their county Cooperative Extension Service programs, to take advantage of the information opportunities offered by CES and "visibly demonstrate support of the land-grant university to our legislators."



# Gail Rubingh

## MFB Outstanding Young Farm Woman

**W**alking up the road the neighbor's dairy farm to feed the calves or help with the milking, nine-year-old Gail Powell fixed her future on a farm of her very own with cows and corn and kids -- 12 of them. The neighbors, glad of her bright interest and cheerful help, welcomed the little girl from town and encouraged her dreams of farming life.

"Now I look back and I just want to laugh," says Gail Powell Rubingh of Antrim County, who did marry a farmer, lives on a dairy farm and still loves the country life she chose. "Well, I went to college for two years. Then one summer I met Glenn through a friend in Ellsworth and it went from there."

Gail admits that helping out on the neighbor's farm didn't prepare her for full-time farming, but she credits family, friends, Extension personnel and Farm Bureau with giving her "on the job training."

"The first year we were married, the county Farm Bureau sent us to the (Young Farmer) Leader Conference. After that we went three or four times. I just grabbed hold of it and said to myself, 'This is great!' I didn't have a farming background so it helped me to adjust to a lot of things," says Gail.

Involvement in Farm Bureau has continued to play an important role in her life. Last December, she was selected the Michigan Farm Bureau Outstanding Young Farm Woman. The award recognizes Gail's involvement and support for the

family farm, community, and Farm Bureau. Her Farm Bureau activities include organizing county rural-urban events, presenting Agriculture in the Classroom lessons and conducting farm tours for school children, and fundraising for the Elton R. Smith Endowed Chair for Food and Agricultural Policy at Michigan State University.

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*Walking up the road the neighbor's dairy farm to feed the calves or help with the milking, nine-year-old Gail Powell fixed her future on a farm of her very own with cows and corn and kids -- 12 of them. The neighbors, glad of her bright interest and cheerful help, welcomed the little girl from town and encouraged her dreams of farming life.*

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Getting involved in a leadership role, whether with Farm Bureau or MSU/Extension, is just the first step to taking advantage of everything offered. "I don't know what we'd do without either one," she says. "With Farm Bureau the first thing that comes to my mind is legislation. The farmer can't leave and go to Lansing and Washington every time some issue comes up. With Extension, that's a lot closer to home. There's 4-H, and the fair,

and DHIA, leadership classes, and our (Extension) agent."

With the birth of a second child in March and spring work just ahead, Gail will be busy with her young family, but that suits her just fine. "Right now my goal is to be a good parent. There are so many sad situations that we hear about now, I want to be there for my kids. I want to see the farm prosper and I want to be a part of that."

Gail and Glenn farm in partnership with his brother in Ellsworth, Antrim County.

"Glenn is pretty much the herdsman and his brother does the field work and raises the feed."

The Rubinghs have also been honored as 1987 Outstanding Young Dairy Couple for District 12 of the Michigan Milk Producers' Association.

The couple is active in their local church, school activities, and 4-H dairy youth program.

Michigan Farm Bureau's Outstanding Young Farm Woman is sharing the enthusiasm about agriculture she discovered as a young girl with others through the Agriculture in the Classroom program. "We're helping show third and fourth graders that milk doesn't just come from the grocery store. We're also there for career day at the high school to show teenagers what's available in agriculture. At least we help them see what percentage of jobs really come from different types of agriculture."

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State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL—

**10  
PLANTS  
ONLY  
\$1.95**

25 plants \$ 3.95  
50 plants \$ 6.95  
100 plants \$11.95  
200 plants \$20.95

## GIANT QUINAULT, EVERBEARING

## STRAWBERRIES

BEARS  
ALL  
SEASON

The biggest most luscious-tasting strawberries you've ever tasted. Heavy-bearers, they grow big as tea cups! They're firm, deep red and a mouth-watering delight for deserts, preserves, freezing and eating fresh.

PLANT 4-Season  
Beauty Now!

## PERIWINKLE



**25  
for  
\$1.98**

50 sq. ft.  
( 50 for \$2.98 —  
100 sq. ft.  
(100 for \$4.98 —  
200 sq. ft.  
(Reg. 10 for \$1.00)

Shade-loving, wide-spreading Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) thrives under hedges, on slopes, in rock gardens, in poor soil — places where grass won't grow. Dainty lavender-blue flowers in the spring. Green foliage all winter! One plant will fill two square feet. Nicely rooted, ready to transplant.

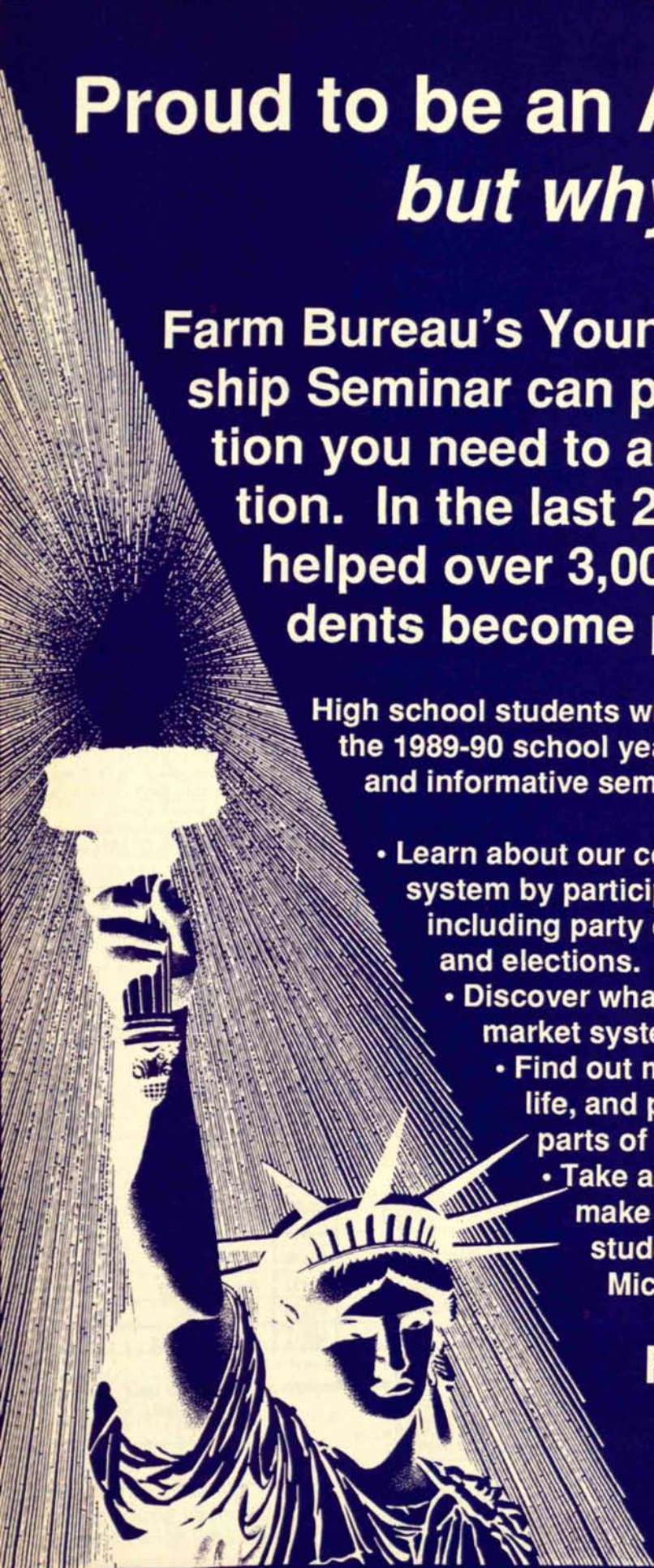
# **Proud to be an American... *but why?***

**Farm Bureau's Young People's Citizenship Seminar can provide the information you need to answer this question. In the last 25 years we have helped over 3,000 high school students become prouder Americans.**

High school students who will be juniors and seniors in the 1989-90 school year are eligible to attend this fun and informative seminar.

- Learn about our country's democratic political system by participating in a mock election -- including party caucuses, campaign planning, and elections.
- Discover what the American free enterprise market system is all about.
- Find out more about the American way of life, and people and governments in other parts of the world.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to make new friends with over 100 other students from all over the state of Michigan.

**For more information contact your county Farm Bureau office.**





# County Leaders Plant Seeds of FB Policy

**Perhaps as important as the seed that will go into the ground this Spring are the seeds of FB policy sown by FB leaders in Washington, D.C., during the 1989 Washington Legislative Seminar**

*May the road rise up to meet you. May the winds be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.*  
An Irish Blessing

Arriving in the nation's capital with a balmy March breeze at their back, luggage in tow, and the promise of at least one sunny afternoon, it seemed that Michigan Farm Bureau's Washington Legislative Seminar participants had been blessed with the luck of the Irish. During their three-day stay, March 14-17, luck -- Irish or otherwise -- would be needed as the group of 125 Michigan farmers made the rounds of congressional offices, USDA, and meetings to promote the MFB legislative agenda for 1989. Priority issues were FB's No to More Taxes campaign, farm market advertising, reclassification of anhydrous ammonia, pesticide legislation, and country of origin labeling for fruit juices.

Convincing their U.S. senators and representatives to resist new tax initiatives was the first order of business for the MFB legislative leaders. They cut through the blarney of tax talk, reminding the congressmen that for the past eight years, federal revenue has grown by an average of \$47.9 billion each year. If these increased revenues had been used, even in part, by Congress to reduce the deficit instead of financing new programs, there would be little, if any deficit today. But luckily, they told the lawmakers, the deficit can still be defeated without new taxes. The Office of Management and Budget estimates federal tax receipts will increase by \$61 billion for this fiscal year, \$80 billion in 1990, and \$78 billion in 1991. Another estimate by the Congressional Budget Office has federal tax receipts increasing by \$72 billion this fiscal year. Using these government figures, the farmers made their case for a budget freeze which would result in a balanced national budget by 1994; the first since 1961.

MFB and county FB legislative leaders delivered their message at breakfast meetings on Wednesday morning with their U.S. representatives and Thursday morning with U.S. Senators Riegle and Levin. The group also hosted Michigan Congressman Bill Schuette at a Friday morning breakfast. Schuette is a member of the House Agriculture Committee.

Seminar organizers made certain that bright red apples were distributed to legislators, giving the farmers an opportunity to press for support of country of origin labeling. Today over 65 percent of the apple juice being consumed does not come from apples produced in the United States. Yet consumers have no way of knowing they are consuming a product produced with foreign ingredients. Recently U.S. Customs issued proposed rules to require processors to list the source of major supplier if 75 percent or more of the fruit con-





*U.S. Sen. Carl Levin met with the FB legislative leaders Thursday morning, Mar. 16.*

centrate for juice is imported from another country, or alternatively replace the major supplier marking requirement with true country of origin marking, listing all suppliers. The farmers asked their representatives in Congress to write to Customs to support the country of origin marking rules.

On behalf of farm marketers, the Michigan legislative leaders also sought cosponsors in the House and Senate for legislation that would amend the Highway



*U.S. Sen. Don Riegle visits with Allegan Co. FB member Jim Loew before taking the podium at the Mar. 16 meeting with FB legislative leaders.*

Beautification Act to allow signs and display advertising for the direct sale of produce by farmers. A key to the success of these direct marketing operations is advertising to inform consumers of the market location and products available, and is especially important to markets located along the interstate and other highways heavily used by tourists.

Veterans of the 1988 Washington Legislative Seminar found themselves battling once again to oppose the reclassification of anhydrous ammonia from non-flammable gas to poisonous gas.

The reclassification effort was thwarted in 1988, due in part to Farm Bureau action, but renewed efforts by the U.S. Department of Transportation brought opposition again from farmers and Farm Bureau.

Reclassification of anhydrous ammonia to poisonous gas would dramatically impact the costs of shipping insurance, safety and availability of the fertilizer.



*U.S. Rep. Bill Schuette, who is a member of the House Agriculture and Budget committees, received a warm welcome from the FB group.*

The farmer lobbyists encouraged Senators Riegle and Levin and their U.S. Representatives to co-sponsor new legislation which would prevent reclassification as a poisonous gas. Farm Bureau policy supports, if necessary, reclassification of anhydrous ammonia as a corrosive gas.

### **Media Coverage Boosts Seminar Effectiveness**

One of the problems faced by state Farm Bureaus when they go to Washington, D.C., for their annual lobbying missions has been getting television coverage by stations back home. Few TV stations will agree to use video provided by any group, including FB, preferring to do such interviews themselves. But most stations don't have the budgets to send a crew to Washington to cover the legislative seminar.

That problem was solved this year with a revolutionary new concept called a "satellite media tour." MFB purchased an hour of satellite time between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. during the first day of the seminar and offered five minute segments, free of charge, to Michigan TV stations for use during their evening newscasts.

Television news anchors back home in Michigan had their choice of talking live to MFB President Jack Laurie, or to their local farmers involved in the seminar, from near the capitol building.

"We want media coverage of our Washington Legislative Seminar to get our message across to the non-farm public," said President Laurie, "and Michigan television stations want to cover us. But up until now, the distances involved have been a problem. Satellite technology has solved that problem."

TV stations from across Michigan took part in the satellite media tour, asking questions on everything from FB's "No to More Taxes" campaign to how the FB members were enjoying their trip to the nation's capital.



*Live television interviews with MFB President Jack Laurie and county FB members drew the interest of seven Michigan TV stations during the satellite media tour from Washington, D.C.*

Other media activities held in conjunction with the 1989 Washington Legislative Seminar included a live satellite radio news conference and a news briefing with members of the Washington press corps who service Michigan media.

## Legislative Update

(Continued from page 5)

provement plan including classroom management, involvement of building administrators, teachers students, parents, etc. The plan would be updated annually and kept on file by the intermediate school district. The State Board of Education would annually review a random sample of the plans and report to the Senate and House education committees.

**Core Curriculum** -- to be determined by the local board to be based on the "Michigan K-12 program standards of quality." Required courses could be available within the district or by a consortium of districts.

**Skills Tests** -- A basic and employability skills test could be taken in the 10th grade and would be required before graduating from high school.

**Farm Bureau Policy** -- As determined by the policy development process and voted on by the delegates at the 1988 MFB annual meeting states in part: "While school finance is a most complex issue. We believe the following should be considered:

Significant decrease of school property taxes.

Reduce the current 50 mill limitation.

Share a portion of industrial, commercial and utility valuations for education.

Increase the sales tax and earmark it for school aid.

Equalize per pupil spending.

Permit local districts by vote to use the income tax to replace a portion of the property tax (could be collected by the state and returned to the district).

Full funding of transportation for students.

All state aid formulas must be fully funded. There also must be full funding for state mandated programs."

*Legislative topics are prepared by the staff of the MFB Public Affairs Division*

## FB Employees and Agents Raise \$9,157 for Special Adoption Program

Four children with special needs will soon have permanent homes, thanks to the efforts of several Farm Bureau employees and Farm Bureau Insurance agents.

Through a home office and agency force campaign called HUGS (Help Us Give Security), employees and agents helped raise \$9,157 -- enough to match at least four hard-to-place children with adoptive families.

The money was presented to AASK-Midwest (Aid to the Adoption of Special Kids), which will use the money specifically to benefit Michigan children and Michigan families.

Contributions came from many sources in the Farm Bureau Family. Many agents and employees made personal donations. Several fundraising events, organized by home office volunteers, helped raise thousands of dollars (a home office bake sale made \$740 in one and a half hours!).

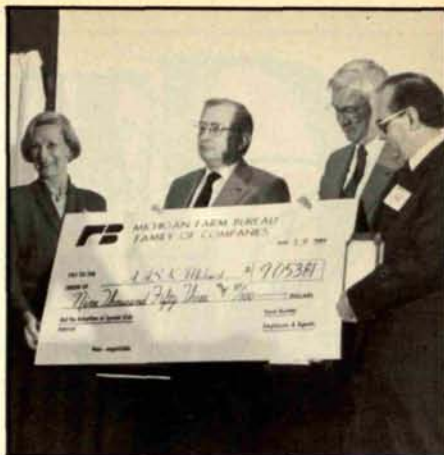
Agents also helped raise money whenever they sold life insurance, since FB Insurance added cash to the HUGS total when agents reached certain sales levels.

Through this combined effort, the Farm Bureau Family was able to present a significant contribution to the AASK adoption program. The check was presented to AASK at the 1989 FB Insurance convention in Grand Rapids.

Accepting the check on behalf of AASK were humanitarians Bob and Dorothy DeBolt, who raised 20 children, 14 of whom were adopted.

Their adopted children included those who were paralyzed, blind, orphaned, abandoned, war-wounded, limbless, emotionally disturbed, or victims of abuse.

The DeBolts founded AASK America, the country's first national adoption program for children with special needs.



Bob and Dorothy DeBolt, founders of AASK, accept a check for \$9,157 to support their national adoption program from MFB President Jack Laurie

Over 5,000 special needs children have found permanent, loving adoptive homes through the DeBolts' efforts.

As the keynote speakers of the 1989 FB Insurance sales convention, the DeBolts related stories of triumphs in raising their large family of special needs children.

"We learned more from our kids about the power of attitude, about untapped human potential, and about what is important in life than we ever did from college, from any seminar or book, or from any adult," Dorothy DeBolt said. "Over the years, we've seen these physically-challenged kids handle more obstacles and more challenges and overcome all of them. These kids aren't handicapped."

She also spoke about a valuable lesson her children taught her: "What these children have taught us over and over is that it isn't circumstances that shape our lives; it's our attitudes toward those circumstances. These children made us so aware of all the blessings that we all take for granted. When was the last time that you thought about the fact that your legs work, that your children's legs work? We are all so lucky."



# WHY MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS SHOULD BE ON YOUR TABLE

## 1. ASPARAGUS IS NUTRITIOUS.

- It's wealth of nutrients, fiber, and very low sodium and calorie contents makes asparagus a nutritionally wise choice for today's health-conscious consumers.

## 2. ASPARAGUS IS GOOD FOR THE WAISTLINE.

- Only 20 calories per 5.3 ounce serving.

## 3. ASPARAGUS IS DELICIOUS.

- Nothing tastes better than a freshly cooked serving of Michigan Asparagus.

## 4. ASPARAGUS IS ELEGANT.

- Professional chefs know putting fresh asparagus on the plate adds beauty.

## 5. ASPARAGUS IS EASY TO PREPARE.

- Steam or stir-fry, microwave, or use in a recipe.

## 6. ASPARAGUS IS A TIME SAVER.

- Cooks in 5-8 minutes on a conventional stovetop, 4-7 minutes in the microwave.

## 7. ASPARAGUS IS VERSATILE.

- Breakfast to dinner, in salads or breads, and main courses too, asparagus can be used in a variety of ways.

## 8. ASPARAGUS IS COMPLIMENTARY.

- Its long, graceful spears enhance the appearance of any dish.

## 9. MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS IS ALL GREEN.

- It's all useable.

## 10. ASPARAGUS IS GOOD FOR THE BLOOD.

- Highest vegetable source of folic acid, which promotes blood cell formation; and rutin, which strengthens capillary walls.

For recipes, or tips on storage, selection and cooking, write: Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board, P.O. Box 23218, Lansing, MI 48909.

Michigan asparagus is available through MACMA's Michigan Farm Best Sale. Call 1-800-292-2680 for more information.

# RURAL LEADER

Volume 8 Number 4 April 1989

## FB President Urges FDA to Reassure Consumers

The program segment on "60 Minutes" which focused on the use of Alar in apple production was a "gross injustice to the U.S. apple industry specifically and the safety of our food supply in general," according to Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie. In a letter to Frank Young, commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Laurie urged the agency to use "whatever means are necessary" to reassure consumers about the safety of their food supply.

"The impact of the CBS program resulted in confusion

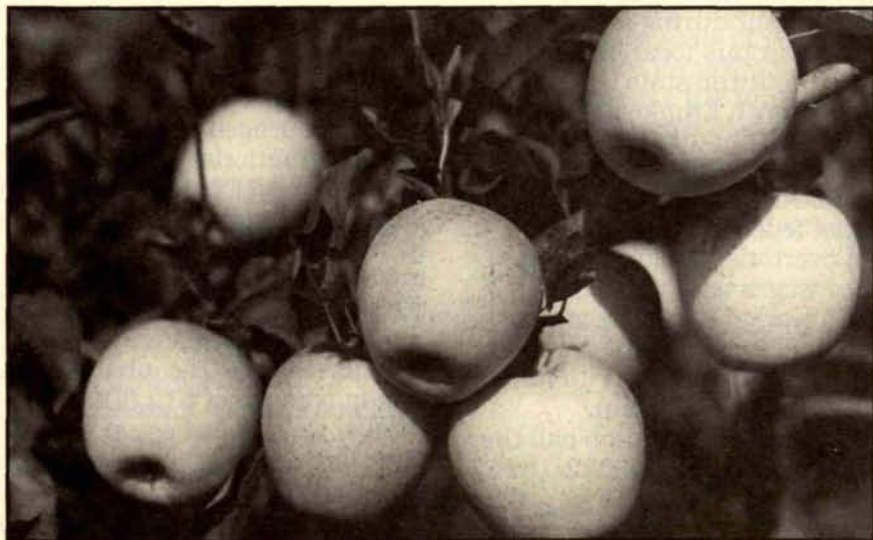
among consumers about the safety of apples, apple products and the overall food supply," Laurie said. "Producers are losing markets and consumer confidence in the safety of their food has been shaken.

"It is tragic that the people featured in the program were allowed by CBS to make severe and damaging comments about food products. In the case of apples and apple products, it portrayed near total contamination with Alar. Such misrepresentation is not supported by either common sense or scientific fact. For example, less than 5 percent of the nation's apple crop is treated with Alar.

"In Michigan, producers are very aware of their responsibility to use chemicals in accordance with label instructions established by the Environmental

Protection Agency. They fully realize the necessity of using chemicals safely because their families eat the same food products that are produced, processed and sold to consumers. American farmers go to great expense and effort to produce a safe, nutritious, abundant supply of food for our nation and much of the world," he said.

Laurie said as commissioner of the FDA, Young is responsible for the protection of the public from potential health hazards presented by contaminated and mislabeled foods. "This major responsibility provides you with a unique opportunity to put aside consumer concerns caused by the CBS program," Laurie told the commissioner.



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## Declining Use of Alar

On the basis of results from still ongoing animal studies of potential carcinogenicity, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced that it plans to halt use of the product.

Once used on 40 percent of apples to increase their firmness, enhance color and extend storage life, Alar currently is applied to perhaps 5 percent of the apple crop. After questions were raised about Alar's use on apples,

major baby food manufacturers two years ago required their suppliers to abstain from its use.

Analyses of fruit samples, including applesauce and apple juice for children, show either no Alar residues or levels well within EPA tolerances. For example, when Alar's use was more widespread, the FDA in 1986 analyzed apples, applesauce, apple juice and other products for Alar. None of the apple product samples exceeded 1 ppm alar. The EPA tolerance for Alar is 20 ppm for apples and apple products. At the same time canned cherries tested had a level of 5.9 ppm Alar and the tolerance for that product is 55 ppm.

The FDA's monitoring programs are continually modified to expand coverage, reflect new pesticide use patterns or answer newly raised questions.

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## Riegle Urges USDA to Speed Detection Process of Alar

Michigan Senator Donald Riegle, urged the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assist in the development of fast and accurate testing for the chemical known as Alar.

In a letter to the USDA, Riegle also urged the approval of a grant application submitted by Neogen, Inc., of Lansing, to develop an on-the-spot test to detect Alar. The test would quickly detect the level of Alar present in apples or apple products. Current testing procedures require extensive lab work and time to complete.

Alar is a growth regulator used by apple producers to improve the size, color and quality of fruit. This product prevents premature fruit, specifically apples, from dropping off the trees before they have reached full

size. Alar is also used in peanut farming and by some cherry producers in states other than Michigan.

The Michigan Processing Apple Growers Division of MACMA reported Michigan apple processors no longer accept fruit treated with the chemical. However, 50 percent of the country's apple juice comes from foreign countries, many of which may still use Alar.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not yet banned the use of Alar, however, the agency is recommending that fruit farmers not use this chemical. The EPA is currently in the process of conducting a series of tests to determine the level of danger associated with Alar.

Riegle said, "I hope the USDA moves quickly on our request. We have to get some answers on Alar, and if there is a serious problem, we're going to act on it. Accurate information is important to use from both a health perspective and because we're dealing with one of Michigan's major agricultural products."

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## Youth Employment Seminar Offered

The Michigan Department of Labor is conducting a series of training sessions on youth employment during April and May at various locations throughout the state.

The Youth Employment Standards Act, child labor provisions under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and the application of federal minimum wage and overtime, Michigan minimum wages as it applies to youth workers, and vocational technical services are on the agenda. The program runs from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

For more information call the department at 1-517-322-1825.

## Legal Defense Fund Growing

Farmers can't always go it alone in court and if the court's legal decision would set a significant precedent on a question of common concern to Michigan farmers, they can turn to the Michigan Farm Bureau Legal Defense Fund for help.

The fund has been in operation for several years and FB members have realized the importance of this fund for gaining favorable court decisions on issues that affect the Michigan agricultural community.



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The Legal Defense Fund may be used to initiate or continue legal proceedings in questions involving agricultural issues of concern to Michigan farmers. Emphasis is placed upon those issues where legal precedence could be established. Further emphasis is placed on issues that support MFB policies.

The voting delegates of the 1988 MFB annual meeting passed a recommendation that county FBs contribute 5 cents per member, based on prior year membership, to the fund and were encouraged to make additional discretionary contributions whenever possible. Since January, county contributions have totaled over \$3,519, bringing the total fund up to over \$26,885.

The delegates also recommended that MFB contribute, up to a maximum of \$12,500 annually, an amount equal to that contributed by the county FBs.

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## Covered Load Exemption

Rep. Van Singel, R-Grant, sponsored House Bill 4316 which clarifies agriculture's exemption for covering of loads. The law, which takes effect April 1, was unclear and did not provide agriculture with an equitable exemption. As written, the law provided an exemption when a farmer was operating a truck but if the truck were operated by someone else, the exemption would not apply.

In addition, the bill, as reported out of the House Transportation Committee, clarifies the exemption. The load does not have to be covered, but if the commodity being transported could blow off, it would have to be loaded at least six inches below the top of the truck. This exemption is important because certain commodities deteriorate rapidly when covered.

The bill does not change the law, which specifies that both the driver of the truck and the individual responsible for loading the truck may be fined up to \$500 and ninety days in jail if the load is not properly loaded and secured. Thus, it is the responsibility of the driver and the individual loading to make sure the commodities are properly loaded to minimize any risk of a commodity leaking or otherwise escaping from the vehicle.

## Former MACMA Employee Rejoins Staff

Rick Olsen was recently appointed to the position of manager of the MACMA Red Tart Cherry Division. He was employed by MACMA from 1973-1975 as an area representative working in membership acquisition and maintenance and as an

agricultural economist conducting price and market analysis.

In his new position, Olsen will work with the red tart cherry industry to restore profitability to the production of cherries.

Before accepting the MACMA position, Olsen, and his family, were living in Washington where he was an attorney with the Washington House of Representatives and did consulting work with various state agencies.

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## MACMA Spring Sale Deadline May 3

Some of the year's first fresh Michigan produce is available through the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association Direct Marketing Division's spring sale.

Don't miss the May 3 deadline to order Michigan's best available asparagus, proudly bearing the new Michigan Premium Seal

of Quality. This fresh Michigan asparagus is hand-snapped, hydro-cooled and packed with uniform quality. It can be ordered in one pound bunches, or in the economical 10 and 20 pound bulk boxes.

Other new items on the spring sale order form are Florida's Best Southern Style Peanut Butter, in smooth or crunchy. In order to provide the freshest product possible, the peanut butter will be ground after Michigan's order is placed. This cholesterol-free product contains no artificial flavors or preservatives and is packed in a three-pound reusable pail. Also available from Florida is hydro-cooled, frozen sweet corn and 100 percent pure Florida orange juice, made only from Florida oranges.

For more information contact your county Farm Bureau, or phone 1-800-292-2680 extension 2305 or 2306. Deliveries will be made the week of May 22-26.

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## Order Your MFB and AFBF 1989 Policy Books

Literally hundreds of hours have been dedicated to developing, debating and formulating Farm Bureau policy for our state and national organization. Be informed and be involved in promoting the policy goals of your organization. Order your *free* copies of these two important books.

Complete the form below and mail to: Michigan Farm Bureau, Public Affairs Division, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909.

Please send me a copy of the 1989 policy book for:  
Michigan Farm Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
American Farm Bureau Federation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## April Discussion Topic **Land – Grant, Don't Take It For Granted**

As farmers around the world adopt new methods and production techniques, Michigan producers need to stay on the cutting edge by taking full advantage of technological innovations.

At the same time, farmers and their families need opportunities for leadership development, assistance with time and stress management, financial and estate planning, even dietary and nutrition information.

All of these education and information needs are met in a large part by a vital component of our land grant system: the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Declining levels of federal support make county funding of Extension activities more important than ever before. In many instances county Farm Bureau involvement made the difference between having a merely adequate county Extension program and having an outstanding one.

County Extension offices in the state at a minimum have a county director (who sometimes doubles as the agricultural agent), a home economics agent and a youth development coordinator. These staff people are financed by federal and state funds. County commissions appropriate money to fund facilities, clerical assistance and supplies.

Strong FB support helps Saginaw County's Extension Service maintain four district agricultural agents. "We've had a good working relationship with the county Farm Bureau," said Saginaw County Extension Director Jim Thews.

Although the four agents are state funded, Thews said "it's critical to have agricultural support for funding of the local office. And I think looking into the future it's important to focus on local funding for specific issues

such as horticulture, water quality and solid waste."

In Genesee County local funding not only pays for the county office but also covers all of the cost of a horticultural agent and a third of the cost of John Leech, the agricultural agent.

"The county Farm Bureau has been very supportive of our funding," he said. "In addition, they have assisted in the effort to keep our office from being relocated from the west edge of Flint to the downtown, which would be very inconvenient for farmers."

In Wayne County, FB has fought the elimination of all county funding for the Extension Service. In 1987, Wayne County FB President Walter Rochowiak organized agricultural interests to save county funding for Extension activities that benefited everyone from greenhouse growers to sod farmers. County FBs also take responsibility for helping to initiate programs. In 1986, the Gratiot County FB worked with their local Extension service to form "Positive People for Gratiot," a self-help program to promote communications and understanding in the wake of that year's devastating flood.

Bob and Sue Chaffin, members of the Gratiot County Sod-busters Community Action Group, were among 11 couples who volunteered to form support groups for farm neighbors and friends.

Genesee Extension staff work with the county FB on Ag in the Classroom projects. Agricultural agents in Genesee, Ingham and other counties even serve on county Promotion and Education committees.

Michigan agriculture can be proud of its Extension program. But county FB members have to take an interest and responsibility in assisting local staff to meet the needs of local people.

This year the Extension Service celebrates its 75th anniversary. Consider using the anniversary as an opportunity to invite local Extension staff to your Community Action Group meeting this month, to discuss your group's ideas and concerns.

## Discussion Questions:

1) What local Extension projects or meetings have your members been involved with in the past year?

2) What additional needs in your county could be met through cooperative county FB and Extension efforts?

3) Has your county FB passed resolutions in support of local Extension programs?

4) Have these resolutions been forwarded by your county board of directors or Community Activities Committee to your county board of commissioners?

5) How can your group become more involved in local Extension programs?

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## January Discussion Topic Responses:

### Conservation Compliance

The following is the percent of group members who feel they have cropland on their farms which is considered to be highly erodible: *Yes 65% No 35%*.

When group members were asked if accurate, up-to-date soil maps were available for their county, their responses were: *Yes 90% No 10%*.

The following is the percentage of group members who feel that their local SCS office has adequate resources to help them develop a conservation plan: *Yes 94% No 6%*.

When group members were asked if they had contacted the SCS to develop a conservation plan, their responses were: *Yes 73% No 27%*.

The following is the percentage of group members who have filed completed plans with their county SCS office: *Yes 53% No 47%*.

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## Rural Spotlight Available at County Office

Community Action Groups are especially encouraged this month to watch the April Rural Spotlight video, available at their county office. The show contains the "Land Grant - Don't Take It For Granted" discussion topic, as well as an overview of the Washington Legislative Seminar, a feature on the importance of the Young Farmer program, and a profile of a top-notch county membership team.

## Videos Available for FB Members

April will be the last month until September for the Rural Spotlight Community Action Group videos. But if you'd like a video for your CAG meeting this summer, just contact the Broadcast and Audio/Visual Services Department at the Farm Bureau Center in Lansing.

Dozens of dynamic video programs are available, from "The Winner's Attitude" by Zig Ziglar, to "Promotion and Education...Opportunities Unlimited", to "The Farmer's Stake in Groundwater Quality." The videos are free to use, but there may be a small charge for shipping.

And don't forget: if you missed any of this year's Rural Spotlight programs, they should still be on file at your county FB office.

## New Action Groups Forming

The drive to form new Community Action Groups is still going. Counties were given the goal last year to form two new groups, the counties which achieved that goal were given a

new goal this year to form one new group. Macomb County was the first to reach their goal this year of one new group, they have yet to pick a name.

Eaton County was the second county to achieve this year's goal of forming one new group. They call themselves the Eaton Mostly Lamb Gang.

Across the state six other new groups have formed since the first of the year.

CAGs are the grassroots base which makes Michigan Farm Bureau the strongest voice for agriculture in this state. Best wishes to the new, and seasoned, groups.

## New Ag Career Programs

The American Farm Bureau Federation has created "The Choice is Yours," a classroom learning kit to inform students making career choices of opportunities available in agriculture.

The data base includes approximately 260 career titles with brief descriptions, educational or training requirements and salary ranges. "The careers are broad-based with a heavy emphasis on agriculture and agribusiness, especially in the areas of science and biotechnology," said Julie Chamberlain, manager, MFB Promotion and Education program.

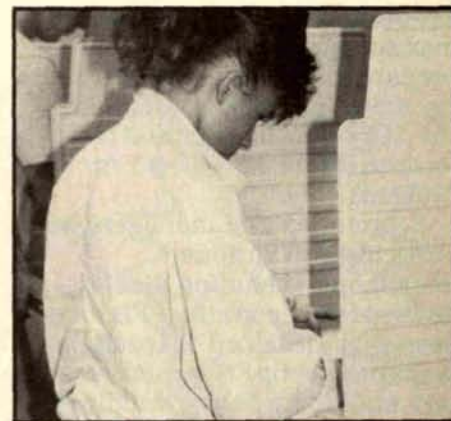
The material is designed for students in grades 7-9. Kits include a computer software program (Apple-compatible only), teacher's guides, four in-class activities for students, and a wall chart for display in the classroom. Cost for the kit is \$15, and is available by contacting Chamberlain at 1-517-323-7000, extension 3213.

Also available is a new ag career video from Michigan State University, Michigan Farm Bureau and your local Cooperative Extension Service office.

"Change My Life," is a nine-minute, fast-paced video for junior high and high school students. All young people should have a chance to see this video and learn about the exciting career opportunities in agriculture, said Chamberlain.

## Citizenship Seminar Planned for June

Over 200 Michigan high school junior and seniors will be selected in the coming months to attend the annual Michigan Farm Bureau Young People's Citizenship Seminar, June 19-23 at Olivet College. The seminar will help students better understand their responsibilities as U.S. citizens.



The seminar focuses on four topics: our country's democratic political system, the American free enterprise market system, the American way of life, and people and governments around the world. Students are exposed to a variety of viewpoints from political, motivational and patriotic speakers.

The students are involved in political activities where they can run for a state or county office, or help a candidate campaign. All students participate in party rallies, caucuses and conventions. They also learn to vote using paper ballot, voting machine and computer punch card methods.

Participating county FB's are encouraged to contact area high school counselors and social science teachers to identify students who would benefit from the experience. A video is available to use for promotion of the program.

This year's special banquet speaker is Greg Barton, originally from Homer, Mich., who earned two gold medals in canoeing/kayaking during the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. He is the first American to ever win a solo gold medal in kayaking.

For more information contact your county Farm Bureau or seminar coordinator Julie Chamberlain, 1-517-323-7000, extension 3213.

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## Facing the 1990s

County secretaries and office managers will learn how to prepare for the challenges which lay ahead for Farm Bureau in the 1990s at their annual conference set for May 10-11 in Traverse City.

Secretaries and managers will participate in various workshops, including FCII automated accounting, FB Jeopardy (designed to teach participants about FB structure, history and philosophy), building teamwork within the office, insurance office service, how to help build leadership, understanding and dealing with different personalities, and learning how to handle confrontation and conflict.

Also planned are two award recognition programs. Twenty secretaries will be recognized for their outstanding service to Michigan Farm Bureau Blue Cross/Blue Shield subscribers during the BC/BS recognition banquet. Five secretaries will receive recognition awards for their efforts in membership at the membership excellence awards program.



*The Michigan Farm Bureau Center in Lansing has a newly constructed, updated sign proudly displaying the new logo and identifying the fact that the building is the home of the family of Farm Bureau companies. Amid the many recently constructed buildings near the center, the new sign stands out so visitors will be able to easily find the MFB Family of Companies Center.*

## Membership Drive Pushes Closer to Goal

The annual statewide membership drive continues to move towards the 1989 goal of 100,000 members. As of mid-March, total membership was 92,211. Only 7,789 short of the goal.

"County achievements continue to mount with several reaching milestones this past month," said Doug Fleming, manager Member Services Department. "Mecosta County, the first county in the state to

report target, also became the first county to reach 1989 county gain. Mecosta has since been followed by Shiawassee and Emmet counties in reporting 1989 county gain. In addition, Hiawathaland in the Upper Peninsula and Eaton County, from the central region, have reported their 1989 target.

"There still remain several slots in the Fabulous 15 statewide contest and the race for the first goal county was still unclaimed as of mid-March."

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## Rural Leader Available to MFB Associate Membership

Each issue of *Rural Living* magazine contains a special *Rural Leader* section. *Rural Leader* topics are those which are of interest to Farm Bureau families involved in production agriculture or organization activities.

If you are not currently receiving the monthly *Rural Leader* newsletter and are interested in having monthly updates on organization activities or events, please send your name and address to Michigan Farm Bureau, Member Communications Department, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Michigan 48909, and request to be added to the mailing list. Your request subscription will be in effect until Dec. 31, 1989.

## Rus Gardner Repeats as Top FB Agent of the Year

Rus Gardner, FB Insurance agent in the Novi area of Oakland County, earned the 1988 Distinguished Sales Award, recognizing him as the top FB agent in the state.

This is the second year in a row Gardner earned the award, which is presented annually to the company's top agent in Michigan, based on outstanding sales achievements and client service.

Gardner, a former teacher and coach in the Novi schools, has a history of being the best in the field. As a wrestling coach, he was named Coach of the Year in Michigan three times.

Gardner, an agent since 1983, received the Distinguished Sales Award during the recent FB Insurance sales convention in Grand Rapids.

Also at the convention, Ed Williams, agency manager for the Livingston and Oakland counties, received the Distinguished Management Award as the top agency manager in the state.

Williams earned the award for his agency's outstanding sales and service achievements during 1988 and for his outstanding record of recruiting and developing new agents.

Williams, who added five new agents in 1988, heads 23 agents serving Livingston and Oakland counties.

In another major award presentation, Richard Smith, personal producing agency manager in Wayne County, received the 1988 Elton R. Smith Award. The award, named in honor of the past MFB president, was presented to Richard Smith for his contributions to the success of his community and the entire MFB organization.

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## MACMA/MFB Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Conference Stresses Consumer Needs

Food marketers will have to meet consumer needs to profit in today's marketplace, said Tom Pierson, of Michigan State University Department of Agricultural Economics.

Pierson gave his views on food marketing for the fruit and vegetable industries at a Michigan Farm Bureau and MACMA sponsored fruit and vegetable industry marketing conference, held Feb. 28 in Grand Rapids.

"There has never been such a drastic change in consumer demographics as there has been in the last twenty years," said Pierson. "There are new patterns in housekeeping, shopping and eating." Pierson indicated the food industry cannot turn a deaf ear to those changes. "We must understand the needs of the consumer, and change to meet those needs," he said.

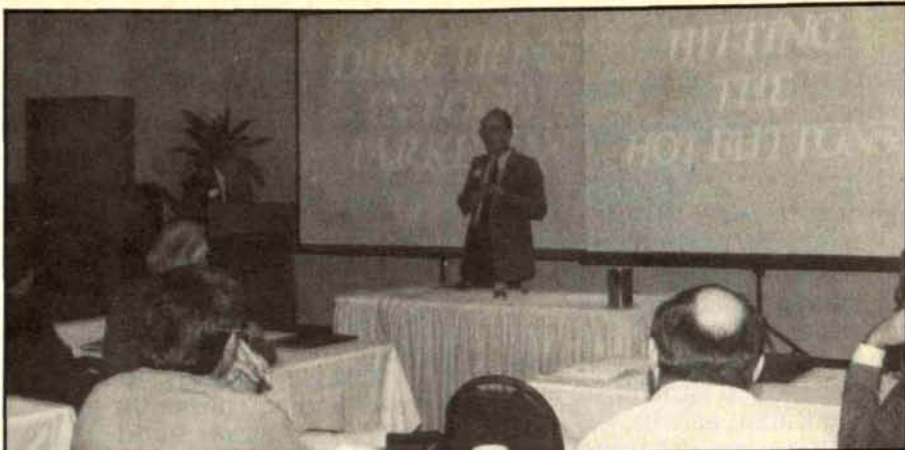
Pierson indicated that to many consumers, convenience has become more important than price.

"Poverty of time is more important than poverty of what's in the pocket," he said. According to Pierson, 55 percent of today's consumers are in one person or two people households. "These people want to be in and out of the store in a few minutes, and have dinner on the table in less than a half an hour."

However, consumers do not want to sacrifice quality for convenience.

"Size, color and condition of produce items are essential to supermarket operators," said Pierson.

"Produce buyers price the hardest on low-value produce, but they will pay top dollar for high quality, value-added items. They know they can sell the higher value items at a substantial mark-up." The key to a grocery produce section's success is in its consistency of quality, because, according to Pierson, "We will all buy a batch of rubbish once, but we won't come back again."



Giving his views on food marketing for the fruit and vegetable industries to a group of 90 people at the recent MFB and MACMA sponsored marketing conference is Tom Pierson, of MSU's Department of Agricultural Economics.

Pierson termed aisles of boxes and jars the "death valley" of supermarkets. He indicated that processed product marketers can improve their sales by adding variety and excitement to their marketing plans.

"Food processors are moving away from the image of the tin can," said Pierson. "Microwaveable and individual serving packaging has become a trade standard."

Processors have also added zing to their existing product lines by including new variations. Pierson used recently introduced Cajun-style stewed tomatoes and pineapple blend applesauce as examples. He said these new products do not compete with the existing product, but attract new audiences, expanding sales.

Pierson said consumer desire for nutritious food products is a trend, not a fad. He cited the demand for low sodium, low cholesterol, low sugar, low fat, low calorie, and high fiber items. He also added that people like to "fall off of the wagon" occasionally, and when they do, they want to do it to the extreme; explaining the popularity of "Hagen Das" ice cream and "Dove" ice cream bars.

"Price is still important to consumers," said Pierson, "but only as a component of perceived value. It isn't the selling point it was years ago."

According to Pierson, the fastest growing segment of the food system is in fresh, prepared

foods, which includes foods sold from fast food restaurants, take out from regular restaurants, home delivered foods, and fully-prepared and cooked foods sold from supermarkets and convenience stores. "This segment of the food system is growing at 18 percent per year, and currently makes up 10 percent to 15 percent of the food market," he said. He predicted that by the early 1990s, 25 percent of all meals eaten at home will be prepared elsewhere.

### Farmers Should Devise "Plan B" to Find Labor

In another session, the 90 conference participants were told to prepare for a tight migrant labor market in 1989. Howard Kelly, MFB legislative counsel, said because of the tightening legislation to control illegal immigration from Mexico, there will be more open jobs in the border states. To fill those jobs, border state employers will be offering better compensation to the legal migrant force, many of which normally travel to Michigan and other states each spring.

"You don't know the enticements these workers will get from their Texas employers before they get up here," said Kelly. As a result, without adequate planning, many Michigan farmers may find themselves short of labor during the harvest season.

In the event a farmer is faced with a labor shortage, he may go to his local Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) office. MESC can put in a labor request to another state or county. Under another option, the H2A program, foreign nationals may be brought in. In that case, all transportation, and a wage of \$4.22 per hour, must be paid by the employer. Before using the H2A program and the MESC, the employer must first make every effort to find domestic workers.

According to Kelly, the H2A program has only been applied

to meet supply through opening new markets and promotion.

### **Processing Apple Picture is Bright**

"Michigan is becoming a more important part of the nation's apple processing industry," said Tom Butler, manager of the MACMA Processing Apple Growers Division. New applesauce product blends, individual snack size applesauce containers, and a heightened demand for juice all means good news for processing apple growers. "Michigan's

been pushing for legislation to have country of origin labeling put on apple juice to identify juices made from foreign concentrate. If this legislation is passed, it is hoped that it would encourage the use of domestic apple juice. Butler said he would like to see another juice processor or juice concentrator in Michigan. "Concentrate from Michigan would compete with top of the line imported concentrate, in terms of price, and would be of superior taste and overall quality," said Butler.

### **Cautious Optimism for Asparagus**

"Asparagus will hold its own for the next few years," said Harry Foster, manager of the MACMA Asparagus Division. "The asparagus price to processors was agreed upon last year at 57 cents per pound," he said. Eighty-five percent to 90 percent of Michigan's asparagus crop is processed each year, but there is a limited amount of room for more processing and asparagus unless new products and uses are developed. "The fresh market is one release valve for the Michigan asparagus industry's production, and will become more important in future years," said Foster.

Some programs being planned to promote Michigan asparagus include the naming of May as National Asparagus Month, involvement in the Michigan Premium Seal of Quality program, a food editor's tour to be held during the asparagus season, and a cooperative promotion of fresh asparagus with Kraft Food Service and the Washington Asparagus Growers.

According to Foster, asparagus acreage increased about 5,000 acres over the last 10 years. He expects acreage to increase another 5,000 acres in the next 10 years. "In the future," said Foster, "there will probably be fewer, but larger and more intense, and, hopefully, successful growers."



*Attendance and interest were high at the recent MFB and MACMA sponsored fruit and vegetable marketing conference as 90 people gathered in Grand Rapids to learn and share ideas and problems.*

for once in Michigan and denied. He does not anticipate that it will be used very much by Michigan farmers. "The MESC will have to play a large part in helping to solve the problem," said Kelly.

### **Michigan Cherry Holdings Remain High**

"The cherry industry is faced with a large inventory of product," reported Bob Craig, MFB Commodity Activities and Research Department manager. "However there is optimism in the fact that demand for cherries is increasing by about 4 percent per year," Craig said. MACMA Cherry Division Manager Rick Olsen said in the short run, passage of a federal marketing order may help ease the cherry industry's over-supply problem, but in the long run, demand has

processing capacity is greater than ever before," said Butler. We have been able to sell the crop with very little carry over for the past 10 years." Sixty percent to 65 percent of Michigan's apple crop is sold for processing.

Butler has a few concerns for the industry. "There has been an increase in Washington of Granny Smith apples being put into slices," said Butler. He also said that new processing equipment has been developed so that red delicious apples can be made into sauce without being peeled.

"Because of their shape, they could not be peeled before, and weren't used in sauce. If the machine is put into wide use in Washington, it could drastically change the processing apple market in Michigan."

The Michigan Processing Apple Growers Committee has





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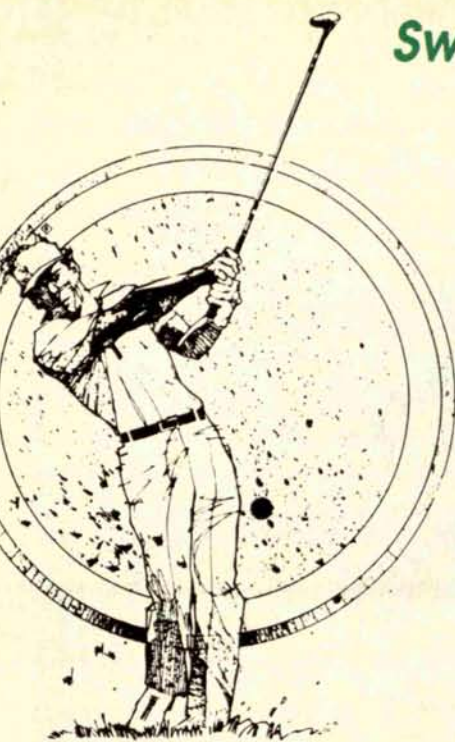
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