Fire Blight Plagues Michigan Fruit Producers

Michigan fruit growers have been hammered by the worst outbreak of fire blight infection in 25 years. The bacterial disease, which severely damages woody plant parts, blossoms, stems and leaves, has been most virulent in southwest and west Michigan. However, experts said the disease has affected farmers to some extent all across the state.

To address the problem, Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association (MACMA) on Sept. 25 sponsored a meeting with Robert Gast, director of the Agriculture Experiment Station (AES), and his staff. They reviewed AES activities as well as possible options for future fire blight research. Farm Bureau requested assistance on short term cultural practices, control recommendations and emergency funding. Over the long term, help was requested in resistance management, new control product registration, economic models to assist growers in determining the viability of severely infected blocks of trees and economic loss projections to assist in potential emergency funding programs for growers.

"Fire blight commonly affects only Jonathan and Ida Red varieties of apples, but this outbreak has affected every apple variety," said Craig Anderson, assistant manager of the Michigan Processing Apple Growers Division of MACMA. "Of particular concern to fruit producers is that fire blight has the potential this year to affect other fruit crops, not just apples. It could even impact the nursery industry."

This concern was echoed by Charles Kesner, Northwest district horticulture and marketing agent. He indicated that the impact by other fruit crops in addition to apples are susceptible to bacterial diseases. Kesner stated that many other fruit crops in addition to apples are susceptible to bacterial diseases. Research into control measures of bacterial diseases in general would be very beneficial to growers of pears, peaches, apricots and sweet cherries, according to Kesner.

The Cooperative Extension Service estimates the disease will cost apple growers in southwest Michigan over $3.8 million this year. That includes yield loss on producing trees, future yield and crop loss, a loss of 33,000 trees killed by the disease and additional spray and pruning costs to farmers, according to Mike Thomas, district horticulture and marketing agent. He indicated that farmers are also concerned that fire blight may kill additional trees as it affects the trees, and that some trees may not make it through the winter.

Eighty percent of fruit growers in the central "ridge" area of west Michigan have some fire blight damage, with ten percent of the farmers experiencing spots of severe damage, according to Phil Schwaller, District Extension Horticulture and Marketing Agent. He said the disease caused over $1 million in damage to this year's and next year's apple crop. "If we have a normal cold winter, that will help reduce the overwinter infection. Such a winter would go a long way toward reducing the overwinter infection for next year and help control the disease," he said. "On the other hand, if we have a mild winter, we could have more damage next year than we had this year."

Industry experts said conditions were nearly perfect for a severe outbreak of fire blight this year. Fog and rain, combined with temperatures in the mid-30s, were ideal for bacterial growth and infection late in the bloom period on apples, an extended bloom period, possibly associated with an early freeze that weakened flower buds, extended the period that trees were vulnerable to infection.

Streptomycin is the treatment of choice for fire blight, according to Alan L. Jones, a Cooperative Extension Service and Botany & Plant Pathology Department fruit disease expert. However, because streptomycin-resistant fire blight strains have been found in some orchards, the fruit industry was granted a temporary emergency exemption by the Environmental Protection Agency to use Mycoshield Agricultural Terramycin in 1991.

See "Fireblight" cont. on page 12

Wetlands Manual Revisions - Agricultural Support Critical

Strong opposition against wetland delineation manual revisions, as announced by Pres. Bush is being organized by the government agencies responsible for regulating wetlands and by environmental groups, according to MFB Public Affairs Director AI Almy.

Large volumes of mail have been arriving in Washington, D.C., opposing the wetland manual revisions, and Almy says the final outcome will be won or lost based on public response to the proposed manual.

"Without a strong showing of support for the revisions to the manual, they will be withdrawn," said Almy. "Such a withdrawal will likely mean that thousands of acres of farmland once again will be identified as wetlands subject to federal regulations."

The revisions, if successful, are seen as a major step forward in protecting further erosion of private property rights and establishes wetlands identification guidelines that all enforcing agencies would be required to follow. The proposed manual revisions include the following:

- Three specific wetland criteria must all be present. The criteria are: (1) hydric soils, (2) vegetation that grows in water-saturated soil, and (3) the presence of water.
- Hydric soils must be identified by field visits of agency personnel rather than office interpretation of soil maps.
- The presence of water stained leaves, trunks and stems will no longer be used to determine if an area is a wetland.
- Growing season is the period 3 weeks before the last killing frost in the spring until 3 weeks after the first killing frost in the fall. Local weather records will determine these dates.
- Mannmade wetlands such as irrigation ponds and livestock ponds will not be considered wetlands.
- A system to classify wetlands based on their function, value, and scarcity or abundance will be developed.

According to Almy, Farm Bureau is encouraging support of the proposed definition of a wetland, which includes the requirement of standing water for 15 consecutive days or saturation at the surface for 21 consecutive days during the growing season.

Farm Bureau is also supporting the requirement that hydric soils, water loving plants and water must all be present for an area to be a wetland, as well as the requirement of agency personnel visits instead of relying on soil maps for determinations.

One major area of contention, according to Almy, is the definition of a growing season. "Growing season should be limited to the frost-free period for each county determined by local weather records," he said.

Where to Write

At press time, American Farm Bureau received word that the comment period has been extended beyond the original Oct. 15 deadline.

There's still time to direct your comments regarding wetlands delineation manual revisions to:

Mr. Gregory Peck
Wetlands and Aquatic Resources Regulatory Branch
Mail Code (A-104F)
EPA
401 M. Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460
Meaningful Insurance Reform It Needs More Than a Band-aid Approach

It is important that the Michigan Legislature take prompt action to reform Michigan's No-Fault Automobile Insurance Law. As an important first step, the Essential Insurance sunset provisions must be repealed. If these provisions are allowed to expire on December 31, 1991, it will re-erect territory restrictions, causing rural and suburban drivers to pay higher rates than urban drivers. Improper territorial rating constraints, regardless of shape or form, does not in any way deal with the problems which are causing automobile insurance costs to rise. And, it will not produce overall cost savings for Michigan insurance consumers.

Michigan Farm Bureau continues to support reforms which will reduce the cost of automobile insurance, and we stand firmly opposed to rate subsidies and premium rollbacks. Farm Bureau believes insurance consumers will benefit most from a free and open market place, where insurer competition controls prices. Premium rollbacks are an ineffective, temporary "band-aid" approach to the problem.

Michigan Farm Bureau is interested in improving the no-fault system and controlling insurance costs. We actively participated in the legislative efforts to reform no-fault and have closely examined proposals from all interested parties. Many of these proposals only mask the problem, while we believe our Michigan Farm Bureau policy gets to the source of the real cost issue.

Under Michigan's Automobile No-Fault Law, insurance companies pay high medical and wage loss expenses, regardless of who caused the accident, in exchange for limiting the right to sue. The objective of the system is to eliminate the delays and costs of lawsuits, make more prompt claim payment and return a larger percentage of premium dollars to injured persons. The law which restricts lawsuits has been greatly diluted, causing insurance companies to not only pay high medical benefits, but also continue to deal with lawsuits.

We believe the following improvements to the no-fault law need to be adopted:
1) Allow drivers to select medical coverage limits they need and can afford. Under the present no-fault law, all drivers are required to carry unlimited medical coverage on each insured vehicle. This mandated coverage has proven to be very costly and is not always needed. Many drivers have other health care protection which supplements their auto medical protection. Other drivers simply can't afford the unlimited protection. There is evidence that these drivers are, in many cases, driving without any insurance coverage.
2) Reverse the DiFranco court decision to allow a judge, not a jury, to determine whether a case is serious enough to require a lawsuit.
3) Adopt a modified comparative negligence law, which disallows a lawsuit when the plaintiff is 50 percent or more at fault.
4) Adopt cost containment measures which would control medical expenses. Today auto insurers pay more for the same medical service than is paid by Medicare, Medicaid and health insurers.

If allowed to operate properly, Michigan's no-fault system can continue to provide Michigan consumers with extensive benefits at reasonable cost. But the Legislature must enact these critically important reforms, and it must enact them soon.

In Brief...

USDA Announces a 5 Percent ARP

Corn farmers will be required to idle 5 percent of their acres in 1992 to qualify for government farm program payments. The required 5 percent for this year's crop and the lowest level in a decade, according to the USDA.

A 5 percent acreage reduction program (ARP) was announced for corn, grain sorghum and barley. The oats acreage reduction program was set a zero percent as required by the 1990 farm law for 1991-95. USDA did not announce loan rates for 1992 crop feed grains at this time.

The announcement follows weeks of industry debate over the appropriate size of the 1992 set-aside program. The National Corn Growers Association had called for a 7.5 percent set-aside, but major grain farmers, fearing inadequate export supplies, urged a zero percent set-aside. In announcing the set-aside levels, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman emphasized that the department could later revise the program if conditions warrant. USDA has until Nov. 15 to announce any changes.

"World and U.S. 1991-92 ending stocks of feed grains are historically low, which makes the initial ARP announcement subject to adjustment, particularly in light of uncertainties around the world," Madigan said.

September Farm Prices Same as a Year Ago

The index of prices received by U.S. farmers for their products in September was up .07 percent from the August levels, according to the latest data released by the USDA. Corn, soybeans, cotton and sugar were the major crops losing value, while feed grains held steady. The index of prices received for all products was up .14 percent from August.

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Sheep Producers Approve Continuation of Checkoff

All 48 contiguous states have passed the 1991 sheep industry referendum by both total producer votes and sheep numbers, according to USDA's release of the results, providing continuation of the checkoff program through 1997.

Of voting producers, 70.4 percent owning 74.6 percent of sheep in the U.S. voted yes in the referendum conducted Aug. 19-30. In Michigan, 371 producers, representing approximately 72 percent of the growers and 67.5 percent of total sheep production, voted yes in the referendum. A total of 142 Michigan producers voted against the measure.

In approving the referendum, sheep producers will continue deductions from their wool incentive payments to support national prodictions for lamb and wool. The deductions, currently at 6 cents per pound of wool, could be increased to 7 cents per pound for the 1991 marketing year if producer leaders and USDA secretary decide the increase is warranted. During the life of the program, increases cannot exceed one cent per year or ever total more than 11 cents per pound of wool.

During 1990, the American Sheep Industry Association spent approximately $6.4 million on promotional and educational programs and has budgeted $6.9 million for its 1991 program. The promotions include advertising, merchandising and education, with a majority of lamb promotions conducted in high lamb-consuming areas.

AgriPac Endorses Gernaat for House Seat

AgriPAC, the political action arm of the Michigan Farm Bureau, has endorsed John Gernaat of McCallin to fill the 18th District seat of recently-deceased Rep. Sidney Owings. According to Faye Adam of Snower, who chairs the nine-member bi-partisan committee, AgriPAC's endorsement of Gernaat was based upon the recommendations of the county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees in the 18th District, his position on key agricultural issues, and his strong agriculture background.

Gernaat is a lifetime dairy, beef and cash crop farmer, with 15 years experience in agricultural farm machinery sales. He has served as a bank loan officer and director, and was on the Michigan Bankers Agriculture Committee for five years. He serves as treasurer of Owings' campaign committee and also was a member of Congressman Dave Camp's and former Congressman Bill Schuette's agricultural committees.

Adam said that all Farm Bureau members in the 18th District will be urged to give their full support to Gernaat's campaign. Other members of AgriPAC are David Allabough, Calhoun County; Ed Cagney, Kalamazoo County; Bruce Carey, Mecosta; Tom Guthrie, Barry; Sally Knepper, Leelanau; John Kromper, Chippewa; Mike Oliver, Emmet; and Tim Suey, Kent. Ex officio members (without votes) are MFB Public Affairs Director Al Almy, who serves as secretary, and MFB Administrative Director Charles Burkett, who serves as treasurer.
Saginaw Bay National Watershed Initiative Pilot Program

Status: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources have announced a National Watershed Protection Initiative Program, modeled after the National Estuary Program, has been approved for the Saginaw Bay Watershed. The Saginaw project provides for the formation of a management conference composed of representatives from industry, agriculture, government, academia and other resources of the 22 county area within the Saginaw Bay watershed. Subcommittees will deal with various technical aspects of developing implementation strategies and public educational activities to heighten awareness of environmental issues in the region.

Congressman Bob Traxler (D-Bay City) chairs the appropriations subcommittee that allocated funding for this project, which was requested earlier this year by Gov. John Engler to protect and restore the Saginaw Bay.

Farm Bureau Position: Farm Bureau is working to ensure adequate agricultural representation on the management conference as well as the subcommittees in developing implementation strategies for the watershed project.

Farm Bureau Contact: Vicki Pontz, Extension 2046

Local Wetlands Ordinances

Status: Senator Paul Wartner (R-Portage) is sponsoring legislation designed to prohibit local units of government from enacting or enforcing any ordinance relating to the development or use of wetlands. The bill recognizes the need for a reasonable compromise in the regulation of wetlands, and a need to ensure that wetlands regulations don't unreasonably restrict private property rights.

Farm Bureau Position: Farm Bureau policy supports uniform statewide standards for wetlands determination and regulation.

Farm Bureau Contact: Vicki Pontz, Extension 2046

MIOSHA

Status: Senate Bill 459, now P.A. 105 cleared both the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Engler. Michigan will retain its MIOSHA program and enforcement of federal regulations. In addition, future state regulations can't exceed federal regulations unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Approval will be needed by either the director of the department of labor and/or health, and at least one of three MIOSHA commissions.

Unfortunately, agricultural field sanitation standards are stricter than those faced in other industries, and applies to employers with one or more employees. However, the language makes the standards easier to comply with including a requirement that all employers must provide, at no cost, water at a location that is available to all employees and that a toilet and handwashing facility is either provided or available.

Farm Bureau Position: Farm Bureau is generally supportive of the measure with the exception of the stricter field sanitation standards. Maintaining MIOSHA will allow employers to work with Michigan regulators and enforcement personnel.

Farm Bureau Contact: Howard Kelly, Extension 2044

Irish Professionals Studying U.S. Agri-Business Via MSU

A delegation of 16 professionals in education and the agricultural industry in Ireland are participating in a 10-week work-study tour of the Midwest.

The project, the Ireland-United States Agribusiness Enterprise Development Programme, co-sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Extension Education (AE) at Michigan State University.

Other co-sponsors include Teagasc (the Irish equivalent of the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service), the Agricultural and Food Development Authority of the Republic of Ireland, and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

The observation and sometimes "hand-on" program will run through the end of November. The participants have been in the United States since Sept. 21.

The students are adult professionals who work in some aspect of food marketing or processing, rural economic development or agricultural education in Ireland, explains Frank Brewer, AE project coordinator.

Each of the participants will split his/her time between MSU and private industry to learn more about the technology or marketing practices associated with his/her particular interest in U.S. agribusiness.

One of the participants, Patrick McGinn with the Macra na Feime, an organization similar to Farm Bureau, will be spending two weeks at Michigan Farm Bureau learning more about the Young Farmer program's activities, structure, and objectives, as well as developing an overall understanding of the organization.

Dennis Quigley, assistant manager of Dooley's Agricultural Merchants, will work with the Michigan Agricultural and Food Producers' Association at Novi and Michigan Dairy at Livonia.

He will also spend a week with the Clinton County Cooperative Extension Service, talking with farmers and participating in Extension education activities.

Sonia Dickson, a food technologist with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, will focus on the U.S. on food safety standards at the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan Milk Producers' Association at Novi and Michigan Dairy at Livonia.

Other professionals will be studying and working with businesses in Lansing, Grand Rapids, Zeeland, Bay City, and Frankenmuth, and in Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Arkansas and Indiana, or with scientists and educators at MSU.

Brewer says the aim of the project is to introduce the participants to technology that may not be available in Ireland and to augment what is hoped will be a national development plan for all of Ireland.

MACMA General Manager Randy Harman, at left, and Seamus Bergin of Ireland share thoughts during a reception at the Michigan Farm Bureau Center. Bergin, who works in rural development for the Northwestern Cattle Breeding Society, will be studying electronic marketing and computer applications. In addition, he'll spend two weeks at MACMA with managers of the Feeder Pig, Apparagus, Apple, Plum, and Onion Division, as well as three days on the road with MACMA Area Representative Jerry Campbell.
Weather in Michigan during September could be best described as highly variable. The month began with above normal temperatures which decreased through the 16th. A major change in the jet stream brought much cooler Canadian air into the state for much of the second half of the month, bringing average mean temperatures to normal for the first time in many months. The outlook for cooler air also brought most interior sections of the Lower Peninsula the first freezing temperatures of the fall season, generally from 1 to 3 weeks earlier than the normal dates of first freeze.

Following the lead of temperature, precipitation was also highly variable, ranging from over 150 percent of normal in the Upper Peninsula to less than half of normal in the central and southern Lower Peninsula. The below normal temperatures late in the month caused some of the precipitation to fall as light snow or flurries in the Upper and northern Lower Peninsulas. Combined with cooler than normal temperatures, a significant portion of that precipitation could be in the form of snow in northern sections.

On the longer term, the 90-day outlook calls for somewhat of a reversal during the late fall, with temperatures for the period of that precipitation expected to continue for much of October statewide. Precipitation is expected to continue for much of October statewide. Precipitation is expected to be near normal, ranging from less than 2.5 inches in the Eastern Lower and western Upper Peninsulas to just over 3 inches in the western Lower and eastern Upper Peninsulas. Combined with cooler than normal temperatures, a significant portion of that precipitation could be in the form of snow in northern sections.

Jeff Andrensen, Ag Meteorologist, MSU
Lower Set-Aside Means Higher Incomes Under New ARP

Editors Note: This article was written by David Miller, director of the AFBF Feed Grains, Soybeans and Wheat Department.

The 1990 farm act changed the calculation formula for set-aside acres from the percentage of planted acres to a percentage of the crop acreage base. This subtle change produces surprising impacts. Consider a 20 percent APR on a farm with 100 base acres under the old rules and the new rules.

Under the old method of calculating set-aside requirements (prior to 1991), allowable planted acres were calculated by multiplying the base acres times a set-aside factor (one divided by one plus the APR percentage). Using that pre-1991 formula, a farm with 100 base acres and a 20 percent APR would actually have 83.33 planted acres (1 divided by 1.20 = .8333 x 100 = 83.33 acres). The set-aside acres were calculated by multiplying the planted acres by the ARP percentage (83.33 acres x 20 percent), which equals 16.67 acres of set-aside requirement.

The new rules do away with the set-aside factor and simply calculate set-aside acres by multiplying the ARP percentage times the crop acreage base. Thus, today, a 20 percent APR applied to a farm with 100 base acres requires 20 acres of set-aside (100 x .20 = 20 acres), and only the remaining 80 acres can be planted.

The bottom line is, today, the same ARP percentage results in more land out of production when compared to calculation methods used before 1991.

A second factor creating the new economics of set-aside acres is "flex acres." This farm program provision, which removes 15 percent of your crop acreage base from deficiency payment eligibility, multiplies the effect of increases or decreases in ARP percentages on net farm profits.

It does so by changing pay acres (those acres eligible for deficiency payments) by a higher percentage than the stated change in the ARP percentage.

For example on 100 base acres, an ARP of 5 percent results in 80 pay acres (100 base acres - 5 ACR acres - 15 flex acres). If the ARP is increased to 15 percent, the "pay acres" drop to 70 acres (100 base acres - 15 ACR - 15 flex acres).

The principle of today's set-aside analysis is that a farmer's financial bottom line is bigger when the ARP is lower. This is illustrated by comparing the effects on net farm income of 100 base acres under 5 percent, 10 percent, and 20 percent ARPs.

With a 5 percent ARP, net farm profit (income over direct costs) is $18,275 per 100 base acres. As the ARP percentage increases to 10 percent, the net profit drops to $17,473, a decline of $752.56 per acre. An ARP of 20 percent causes projected net profit to drop to $13,923 per 100 acres, a decline of nearly $23,03 per acre compared to the 5 percent ARP situation.

The profit declines result because as ARP increases, revenue generated from crop sales and deficiency payments drop faster than crop expenses.

For a farm with 500 base acres of corn, USDA's setting the ARP at 5 percent could drop $3,760 more profit than if the ARP is set at 10 percent. Similar results are seen when analyzing grain sorghum, barley and wheat programs. On a national basis, the impacts are quite impressive. A 10 percent decline in the wheat ARP means nearly $650 million more net farm profit for wheat farmers.

The choice of a 5 percent ARP for food grains, rather than a 7.5 percent ARP, should result in nearly $300 million more net farm profit for feed grain producers nationwide.

Table: Impact of ARP percentage on net farm income of 100 base-acre CORN FARM

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Vosburgs Recognized - "Good Earth Families"

Jan and Nellie Lou Vosburg of Kalamaoo County have been recognized by the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation as one of the top 10 "Good Earth Families" in national competition with the other 50 state winners.

"All of the farmers and ranchers who won statewide awards are excellent operators," said Gary Bork, "but those who our panel of judges felt had a special knack for making good stewardship good business." The Vosburgs farm 1500 acres near Climax, Mich., in a family farm operation, with nearly 400 acres under irrigation. In addition to raising corn, seed corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa, the Vosburgs also market 1,000 head of finished beef and another 4,500 fat hogs from their farrow-to-finish operation.

Considered innovators of no-till in Kalamazoo County, the Vosburgs were the first to try no-tilling alfalfa in 1986. They followed that successful project up by being the first to use no-till in commercial seed corn production in 1989, after having converted the entire planting operation over to no-till in the previous year.

"The no-till concept increases water infiltration rates, helps immensely in stopping erosion, and utilizes a higher percentage of the water's capacity to control nitrogen loss and run-off. Irrigation scheduling helps control nutrient leaching and yet provides adequate amounts of water. The principle of today's set-aside analysis is that a farmer's financial bottom line is bigger when the ARP is lower. This is illustrated by comparing the effects on net farm income of 100 base acres under 5 percent, 10 percent, and 20 percent ARPs.

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**Seasonal Commodity Price Trends (long term)**

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**FARM BUSINESS OUTLOOK**

**Dry Bean Commission Seeks Assessment Increase**

At an Oct. 2 meeting in Bay City, the Michigan Bean Commission decided to ask dry bean growers to increase the dry bean assessment from the current $0.50 per hundredweight to $1.00 per hundred. "This revenue will primarily be used to expand our international marketing program," said Kendall English, a Gratiot County farmer and chair of the commission.

In the past, the commission has worked with the Bean Shippers Association, National Dry Bean Council and United States Department of Agriculture’s Market Promotion Program and export programs. "Unfortunately, these programs involve every production area in the country," English continued, "We have the ability to tap these markets and help Michigan growers compete more aggressively in the world market."

**EC Farm Ministers Stumble on Overproduction Cures**

EC farm ministers took a "businesslike" and "realistic" approach to discussing proposed farm reforms during two days of recent talks, according to EC Farm Commissioner Ray MacSharry. "The strong fundamental reform has been agreed by all delegations," he said after the meeting ended. "They all also agreed that (farm) output has to be reduced."

In both cases, France, backed up by other countries, argued that proposed cuts in guaranteed commodity prices over three years in return for direct income support for farmers, were too much, too fast to ask farmers to accept, EC officials said. Under MacSharry’s plan, the EC would move away from its surplus-producer price-support system of guaranteed prices toward a system of income support paid on a per-hectare basis.

Under the scheme, guaranteed cereals prices would fall 35 percent over three years, beef prices would fall 15 percent, milk prices would drop 10 percent and milk quotes 4 percent.

**Farmer Mac Takes "Major" Step to Secondary Market**

The Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corp., also known as Farmer Mac, has announced a "major" step toward creation of a secondary market for U.S. agricultural loans. Prudential Agricultural Credit Inc., an insurance-company affiliate with an active agricultural-lending division, will help introduce both its own and others’ agricultural loans and then issue securities backed by those loans.

"The certification of Pru Ag, the first insurance-company affiliate to seek Farmer Mac pooler status, represents a significant step forward,” said Farmer Mac President Henry Edelman in a statement. "The action dramatically increases the prospects for the formation of the first Farmer Mac pool."

The firm is the third "pooler" to be certified for the secondary-market program. Once operational, Farmer Mac will guarantee the timely payment of principal and interest on senior securities backed by the pools.

**Soybeans**

The soybean stock number of 329 million bushels was slightly above expectations but within the range. While this is a substantial carry, when added to a smaller crop, our total supply would only be deemed as adequate relative to anticipated demand. Check the October Crop Report, released Oct. 10, for surprises. Were yields in the eastern Corn Belt better or worse than expected? Was the Iowa Minnesota frost damage near expectations?

While the fundamentals are not as strong for soyas as corn, the odds are that on-farm storage of soybeans will pay. And, if the number one crop in South America that will be down will be again in Brazil and up less in Argentina, we might reasonably expect in Argentina to better expected returns from other crops, storage will definitely pay. Consider carrying some of your soybean crop into the winter and perhaps into the spring. However, watch for earlier than expected rallies and basis tightening.

**Wheat**

Wheat stocks one quarter into the wheat marketing year were lower than expected, indicating that summer wheat feeding was quite heavy. The question of the Soviet Union’s expected purchases continues to be one of the biggest market factors. While there is still room for price improvement, be ready to pull the trigger. Always keep a watch for possible carryovers from last year.

**Cattle**

Total cattle slaughter is expected to be down slightly in the fourth quarter from last year’s level. The federal slaughter is expected to be up. This, along with heavier cattle, means total production is expected to be one of the biggest market factors. While there is still room for price improvement, be ready to pull the trigger. Always keep a watch for possible carryovers from last year.

**Hogs**

The Sept. 1 Hogs and Pigs Report, released Sept. 27, confirmed the June report that expansion is well underway and is expected to continue. The total inventory of hogs and pigs was 106 percent of a year ago, and those kept for market were also up 6 percent. This indicates that hog slaughter will run 6 percent above last year through the winter. On top of that, the survey showed that farrowing intentions through February would be 7-8 percent above last year. This would indicate an average price four thousand dollars per head in mid-April and around $600 during this winter. Next spring prices could dip below $40/cwt. Consider locking in prices on portions of your total hog production over the next year on ralles for risk management considerations.

**Table Egg Market Conditions**

Table egg prices at the end of September were about 12 cents a dozen below year ago levels. Egg prices have been flat since early August when they declined substantially mid the mid 75 cent range (Grade A, white, cartoned, to volume buyers in New York). Layer feed costs are about a cent per dozen higher as both corn and soybean meal prices have increased relative to year ago levels. The feed ingredient and export situation is unclear.

Egg prices should increase seasonally into December, but the advances will be modest. Egg prices are expected to average 80 cents per dozen, well below the 88.5 cents realized during this time period last year.

**St. Paul/St. Louis Farm Credit Banks Agree, In Principle, to Merge**

Directors of the Farm Credit Banks of St. Paul, Minn., has been announced that they have agreed in principle to merge effective as of July 1, 1992. The proposed merger, dependent upon an affirmative vote by stockholders of the two banks as well as necessary regulatory approval.

C.T. Frederickson, who now serves as president of the St. Louis Farm Credit Bank, has been designated as CEO of the new merged institution by an interim board consisting of the present board of directors from the two merging banks.

The new bank, to be located in St. Paul, Minn., will provide loan funds to Farm Credit Banks of Minnesota and other Farm Credit associations in the states of Arkansas, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Together these local associations serve more than 130,000 farmers and rural residents in the seven-state region. The combined assets of the new bank and existing associations will total $10.6 billion.

Bruce Bolsmahn, chairman of the board of Farm Credit Bank of St. Paul, pointed out that the new bank should enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Farm Credit system in the combined district. "At the local level, our customers will be able to rely on their Farm Credit Services as they always have," said Bolsmahn. "We believe the merger will allow us to provide a Farm Credit Services with improved loan products and bank services."

**Mulholland Appointed to FCIC Board**

Montcalm county farmer L. Charles Mulholland of Coral, Mich., was appointed by USDA Secretary Edwin Madigan to the six-member board of directors of the Federal Crop Insurance Corp. In addition to Mulholland, Aram Kisonian, a California farmer, and Hal Mander, an Iowa farmer, were also appointed. By law, the FCIC board must include at least six of the three active farmers, one person experienced in the crop insurance business, the under secretary of agriculture for small business and rural development and the FCIC manager.
New Two-Drill Hitch Available

A new easy-to-use two-drill hitch - the 2000 series - is now available from Baker Mfg. of Alva, Okla.

The unit operates from road to field position in seconds by using a single tractor hydraulic lever to control dual cylinders from the tractor cab. No ropes or pins are used. When in the field, the design of the Baker 2200 hitch allows the tractor to pull from the center, reducing the effects of drafting. The center pull design also gives producers the option of drifiting in clockwise or counter-clockwise direction.

The Baker 2000 Two-Drill Hitch uses a unique 4" by 3/8" wall tube frame design. An exclusive tube-bending processing eliminates numerous welds which could develop stress lines. The 2200 hitch also incorporates a closed hydraulic cylinder system, giving maximum strength when the hitch's cylinders are fully closed in the field position. Tires are 11L x 15, 6-bolt. All hitches are equipped with a stabilizer bar to eliminate sway and side draft for superior field and road stability.

The Baker 2000 series two-drill hitch was originally designed and manufactured for farm tractor to pull from the center, reducing the effects of drafting. The center pull design also gives producers the option of drilling in clockwise or counter-clockwise direction.

John Story, meat buyer for Fairway Foods, Inc., said he was enthusiastic about the program and with the packer.

The program also could encourage packers and feeders to work out a standard way of paying for each carcass, based on the most desirable traits from the retailers' standpoint, according to Jeff Savell of Texas A&M's Department of Animal Sciences. Once the current system is changed, increased demand could translate into more cattle being fed and more beef moving through the pipeline.

Eventually, it could change the genetic makeup of cattle being fed for slaughter. As feeders try to feed for a more precise carcass type, they could alter their buying patterns toward cattle that have a higher chance of meeting those goals.

Beef Checkoff Supports Exports and Price

Export markets for U.S. beef products in 1990 accounted for $87.33 per head, or more than 10 percent of the animal's total value at slaughter, according to a recent study by CF Resources, Inc., Englewood, Colorado.

Of this amount, the study attributed $47.28 per head to beef and variety meat exports. It credited the remaining $40.59 per head to hide exports.

Comparisons with 1989 data are difficult to make due to overstated numbers in USDA's export statistics for that year. The study noted, however, the equivalent value of beef exports per head in 1990 was up 72 percent compared to 1988 export figures.

The study defined equivalent value as the percent of total U.S. production sold in foreign markets multiplied by the average value of that product in 1990. Beef exports in 1990 were 4.4 percent of total production, and beef variety meat exports accounted for 40.0 percent of total U.S. production.

Excluding beef variety meats, beef exports in 1990 reached a record $1.6 billion. This was equivalent to 1,477 million cattle slaughtered, the study points out. Given production levels and demand for beef in the U.S. in 1990, CF Resources estimated the impact of exports on fed cattle price was $4.75/cwt in 1990. A similar calculation for 700-pound yearling feeder steers was $7.06/cwt and $10.13 for 450-pound calves.

Managed by the U.S. Meat Export Federation, checkoff-funded activities are underway in more than 20 different foreign countries to stimulate demand for U.S. beef and veal. In the first half of 1991, U.S. beef and veal exports, including variety meats, were up 21 percent in volume over the same period in 1991 and were valued at $1.06 billion.

While you're busy farming, Farm Bureau is on the job in Lansing and Washington, D.C., protecting your interests. Our experienced and highly respected team of lobbyists are there working for you.

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Farm Bureau - always there and proven effective...
Practice Grain Storage Safety On Your Farm

The potential for serious accidents around grain storage facilities on the farm has increased significantly in recent years. There are several reasons, including:

- An increase in shelled corn harvesting and handling.
- Larger amounts of grain in storage six to eight months of the year or more.
- Mechanization means more operators are working alone.
- Misconceptions of how grain flows.

Metal storage bins account for nearly 43 percent of grain flow entrapments and suffocations. Overhead bins and silos account for another 16 percent, according to studies.

Grain flow accidents happen when a person enters a bin that is being unloaded and becomes trapped in the flow of grain. A person may also become trapped or buried in a bin by falling through a crust of spoiled grain or the collapse of a large vertical column of moldy grain.

Another type of storage bin accident occurs when someone slips and falls from the bin roof or ladder, especially when mud, ice, and snow create poor conditions.

Here are recommendations for bin safety:

- Follow manufacturers' instructions and observe safety signs on the equipment.
- If you must enter a bin, stop the flow and shut off all automatic equipment and the electricity.
- If you get trapped, but not buried, stay near the outside wall and walk around the bin as the grain moves downward.
- Don't enter a bin without telling someone what you're doing.
- Make sure all storage bins are equipped with interior ladders. Ropes, chains, and pipe ladders suspended from the bin roof may also prove helpful.
- When entering a bin, have two people standing by on the outside if possible—one to go for help and one to help you in case of emergency.
- Stay clear of molded vertical piles of grain.
- When working in a storage bin, make sure it is well ventilated.
- Lock out the power supply when recommended by the manufacturer for servicing, inspection, or repair.
- Repair loose, worn, or otherwise damaged rungs and handrails on storage bin ladders. Keep bin ladders free of mud, ice, snow, and other debris that could make climbing hazardous.
- Discuss safety with your employees, your family, and your neighbors. Keep children away from grain centers.

Dry Bean Stocks Up

Commercial elevators in Michigan held 660,000 hundredweight (cwt.) of dry beans in storage as of Aug. 31, according to the Michigan Agricultural Statistics. The year's carryover is the highest at this time of the year since 1988, when 1,450,000 cwt. was in storage. Carry-over stocks account for all beans in commercial off-farm storage and included a small portion of non-Michigan grown product. The quantity on hand included 500,000 cwt. of navy beans, and 160,000 cwt. of all other classes. Stocks on hand August of 1990 totaled 150,000 cwt. and included 125,000 cwt. of navy beans and 25,000 cwt. of all other classes.

Ending stocks were high in 1988 due in part to price speculation caused by a drought induced short crop. However, in 1991, we're entering the marketing season with above average supplies, and just completed a near-record harvest. This combination has pressured prices lower. On a positive note, this year's abundant crop will provide opportunities for new long-term market development.

Grower bids for navies are ranging $13 to $13.50, for Black Turtles $14 to $15, for Pintos $12 to $12.50, Light Red Kidneys $26, Dark Red Kidneys $22.50, and Cranberries $19.
Lyme Disease Bacteria Can Survive in Un-Pasteurized Milk

Add the Lyme disease bacterium to the list of disease germs that can live in milk. A study at the University of Wisconsin - Madison's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has shown that Borrelia Burgdorferi, which causes Lyme disease, can live for more than six weeks in refrigerated milk. Pasteurization kills the organism, so milk from the supermarket poses no threat.

A few studies have suggested that Lyme bacteria can show up in milk from infected cows. In other studies, experimental animals became infected after drinking milk containing Lyme bacteria. It's not known if humans can contract the Lyme disease from raw milk, but the evidence provides one more reason to avoid raw milk, advises E.H. Marth, emeritus professor of food science and bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

Foodborne illness involves four events: the pathogen must get into the food; unless it produces a poison, it must survive until someone eats the food; it usually must multiply in the food to infectious levels; and the person who eats the food must be susceptible to those levels. Marth and his associates tested whether Lyme bacteria could survive or multiply in whole, low-fat, skin and protein fortified skim milk. Their numbers fell, but some bacteria lived for at least 46 days in milk kept at 41 degrees F, suggesting that contamination probably wouldn't reach levels that could cause problems if left untreated.

Lyme bacteria for this study, and natural contamination probably wouldn't reach similar levels. However, evidence suggests that only a few Lyme bacteria in an infected host can produce Lyme disease, he notes.

Lyme disease produces a variety of symptoms, ranging from headaches, rashes and flu-like symptoms to joint and heart problems if left untreated. It is treatable with antibiotics. Early symptoms include fatigue, stiff neck, chills, and "generally not feeling good." However, the first stage of the disease may produce no symptoms at all.

An up-close look at the deer tick, ixodes dammini, a carrier of the Lyme disease.
Intensive Grazing - An Untapped Resource for Livestock Producers?

Alpena County dairyman Fred Wegmeyer avoided green chopping hay or turning on a silo unloader, or hauling manure from his dairy cows for almost six months this past summer. No - he didn't sell his cows.

Instead, Fred took the plunge and tried a full-scale intensive grazing program this year for his 60 to 70 head on 30 acres of 50/50 alfalfa/grasses and a clover/grass pasture. The 30 acres were split into three acre parcels, which were portions of the smaller one acre parcels. Cows were advanced one acre a day, never spending more than three days on any three acre parcel.

According to Wegmeyer, the results were pleasing as well as profitable. "You wouldn't think it would work with that many cows," he said. "But we actually increased production with the feed quality. Our lowest protein level was 18 percent but we averaged in the 23 to 24 percent range.

The only other sources of feed included a 13 percent protein grain ration fed in the parlor and a 1,000 pound round bale of hay daily.

According to Alpena County Extension Director Jack Middleton, the secret to high quality forage in an intensive grazing program is maintaining forage height in the 3 to 12 inch stage. "If you whittle those forages down below three inches, you lose leaf surface for photosynthesis, with all the growth having to come from the roots," explained Middleton. "Over 12 inches, forages go into a reproductive state or a seed head develops. It basically stops growing."

Wegmeyer plans on utilizing the same system next year and then eventually expand the grazing acreage another 15 to 20 acres. "With additional acreage, we would be able to put them on by the 5th of May and keep them in the system until at least mid-Oct.," he said.

Ruminant of days gone by; this scene could become a familiar sight as more Michigan dairymen realize the benefits of intensive grazing.

**Forage Sample Analysis**

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<th>Ibs/ Acre</th>
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Source: Alpena County SCS's forage analysis and Alpena County CEB.

University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers are finding that lupines grow well even in soils low in phosphorus. "Phosphorus is one of the three major essential nutrients needed by plants," said Helmke. "We ought to be putting gain on cattle using these roughages that are of lower cost rather than continually trying to make them hops."

According to Gould, rotational grazing generally involves a larger paddock of 8 to 25 acres, with more time allowed for livestock to move around before moving to the next paddock, but it is intensive in terms of the number of cattle grazing at a given time.

We've got thousands and thousands of acres that could be used in grazing programs to produce the 350-pound calf," said Gould. "Our goal is to reduce phosphorus fertilizer needs.""}

Lupin seeds excrete citric acid and possibly other compounds that alter the phosphorus uptake by lupines. "We feel very strongly that the time is right for lupines to be utilized in rotation programs," said Gould. "We can't change the whole system, but we can perhaps improve the production."

"If we can develop lupines that can respond to added phosphorus fertilizer, it will be a major step forward," said Gould.

Lupines are a diverse group of plants that grow throughout the world and are known for their ability to fix nitrogen from the air. Lupines have been proposed as a potential alternative to traditional nitrogen fertilizers due to their ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen. They are also known for their ability to reduce soil acidity and improve soil structure.

"We're very excited about the potential of lupines as a nitrogen-fixing crop," said Gould. "We've been conducting research on lupines for several years and have found that they can fix nitrogen in a variety of soils."

Lupines have been found to be effective in improving soil fertility, especially in acidic soils. They are also known for their ability to improve soil structure and increase water infiltration.
Finding Better Plants For Our Environment

Jim Newman, director of ecological sciences, Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D.C., told over 300 people who attended dedication ceremonies for new facilities at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center near East Lansing, about the role of plants in soil and water conservation programs.

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center is one of 26 plant materials centers operated by the USDA Soil Conservation Service, and serves Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan, is focused on the needs of the Great Lakes region.

"Vegetative solutions for environmental problems is our objective," said Homer R. Hilner in his opening remarks. Hilner, state conservationist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Michigan, was master of ceremonies for the event.

Bill Richards, chief of the Soil Conservation Service, before leaving for an afternoon appointment in Washington, D.C., reviewed the importance of the plant materials program in the agency's works to control soil erosion and protect water quality.

Jim Newman, director of ecological sciences, Soil Conservation Service, and Paul Kobe, owner of Kobe Nursery, told the conservationists about the role of plants in soil and water conservation, and public benefits of the program.

"Indigo" Silky Dogwood, one of several plants released by the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, was selected and released for windbreaks in fields where center-pivot irrigation systems require the removal of tall windbreaks. Without interfering with needed irrigation equipment, the low-growing windbreaks control wind erosion.

Service, and Paul Kobe, owner of Kobe Nursery, told the conservationists about the role of plants in soil and water conservation, and public benefits of the program.

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center was established in 1957, on a 40-acre site in the Rose Lake Wildlife Research Center, to find better plants for gully and ditchbank stabilization. As needs change, the program was expanded to include wind erosion control, shoreline stabilization and, most recently, water quality. The new headquarters and greenhouse building, dedicated at the grand opening program, replaces the old farmhouse used for the center's headquarters since the center opened in 1957.

Seven plants have been released to nurseries for propagation and sale. They include: "Mackinaw" Birdsfoot Trefoil; "Rosedown" Sargent Crabapple; "Imperial" Carolina Poplar; "Indigo" Silky Dogwood; "Lancer" Perennial Pea; "Redwing" Autumn Olive; and "Magenta" Hybrid Crabapple. The plant materials program is one of several programs conducted by the SCS to control soil erosion, protect water quality and protect our environment.

First Genetically Engineered Corn Harvested

Seed corn companies scrambling to perfect genetically engineered corn took another step forward this year, harvesting the first samples grown outside of the laboratory. The goal is to produce corn that is more resistant to disease and insects.

Scientists say it will be several years before they are able to get new genes into commercial strains of corn, then several more years before enough can be produced to actually sell seed to farmers. John Howard, director of biotechnology for Pioneer Hy-Bred International, estimates that genetically engineered corn won't reach the farmers until 1998.

Firms racing to get genetically altered corn on the market include Biotechnica International, which harvested the first naturally grown plots, Pioneer Hy-Bred International, DeKalb Genetics Corp., and Ciba Geigy Corp., according to the Wall Street Journal.

Cancun, the Jewel of the Caribbean

Cost: $569 per person.

Cancun is a great warm weather destination because of it's 14 miles of beautiful beaches and the friendliest people in the world. The Playa De Oro Hotel has a great special starting January 1 through January 24th, 1992. This package includes round trip airfare from Detroit, hotel for 7 days, airport transfers, baggage and handling service, hotel tax and a Welcome reception. This hotel is known for it's great location on the beach. Cancun is the perfect get-a-way for anyone seeking the sun and relaxation.

Disney World, It's Everyone's Favorite Vacation!

This package includes anything that you prefer at a member only discount. You can pick the number of nights you want to stay, you can stay on the Disney grounds or off premise, and you have the option to fly or drive. Farm Bureau has admission tickets available. Customize your Disney Vacation just the way you want, and still get a great discount!

For more information on how to book your GETAWAY CALL 1-800-354-4272

Michigan Farm News
At Farmers Petroleum Cooperative, Inc., we know that your diesel equipment is an expensive investment that you must protect. The rigorous operation of farming takes their toll on your equipment and you shouldn't need to worry about engine failure.

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The Brent CPC 2000 cuts through crop residues with adjustable disk gangs and then penetrates with deep-fill shoes. Bringing up the rear is a second gang of angled, adjustable disks to cover the ridges and evenly distribute the remaining crop residue.

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The Brent CPC 2000 is the perfect prescription for conservation compliance and top performance from your cropping program. So take a little time to think about what it can do for your operation; then call us in the morning at 1-800-322-6301.

"Fire Blight" continued from page 1

"Normally, Mycoshield is approved only for use on pears," said Jones. "Michigan State University is conducting residue studies of Mycoshield on apples this fall in order to support a registration request to the EPA for 1992."

Jones said there are few viable treatment alternatives. "We have copper fungicides available, but they are not particularly effective and they often cause some rusting on the fruit. Allot (a Rhone-Poulenc fungicide) is a new compound, and the data I've seen indicates that it is not effective. Certainly, it has not provided the consistency of control that streptomycin provided when it was being developed. Also, it can only be used on nonbearing apple trees. The fire blight problem is much more severe on bearing trees," Jones said.

Fire blight has been an economic disaster for Herb Techman, owner of Tree-Mendous Fruit Farm in Eau Claire. The disease devastated his 80 acres of apples, wiping out 60 percent of his fall apple harvest revenue.

"Occasionally we'll find five or six apples on a tree, but the rest is dead wood," he said. "It's a lot to ask a U-pick customer to go into an orchard that looks so bad. I'm afraid customers won't return next year."

He is especially concerned about fire blight damage to his 'museum orchard' of 200 unusual and seldom-grown apple varieties. "We'll nurse these the best we can, because they are one-of-a-kind. If I lose any, I'll have to trace back a new source," he said.

Teichman said he believes the fire blight spread because fruit growers were reluctant to do the chemical spraying necessary to control the disease. "Society expects farmers not to spray their crops as much as before, so we feel guilty about spraying," he said.

Michigan Farm Bureau will continue to monitor this issue in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station. If you have specific questions regarding fire blight, please contact your District Extension Horticulture and Marketing Agent.