RURAL Living

Spring 1991:

- Bonnymill Bed & Breakfast
- Bees Mean Business
- Wetland Construction
- Spring Lawn Tips
Protecting Private Property Rights – Everyone Benefits

For over a half century, agriculture has played a major role in addressing environmental concerns through the use of proper conservation, the development of erosion control structures, the planting of windbreaks, the proper use of chemicals and pesticides, conservation reserve programs, the planting of cover crops, and many other techniques. Farmers devote their own effort as well as a good deal of their financial resources into accomplishing these positive environmental projects.

They do this for one reason: the property that they are improving is theirs, and the benefits that accrue from proper environmental programs will benefit not only the environment, but them personally, by enhancing their property and making it better for the next generation. No farmer that I'm acquainted with will deny agriculture's major role in the future of a clean environment in our country.

Disturbingly, a new school of thought entertains the idea that farm land should not remain in the control of farmers when it comes to developing sound environmental practices and procedures. The thought is that the land belongs to everyone and that, consequently, the government should have the responsibility for determining what cultural and environmental practices are best for that land.

This philosophy is beginning to show itself in a number of areas, most notably in the legislative and regulatory arena. Legislation, like the current federal farm program, mandates that farmers will comply with certain environmental restrictions, such as developing a conservation plan for farms with highly erodible land, before they can become eligible for participation in the benefits of the federal farm programs. This is an example of a government program which tends to start out meaningful, but in the end is a forced method of taking private property rights away from the landowner.

Even something as seemingly straight-forward as the Right To Farm Guidelines that have been adopted by Michigan State University, the Department of Agriculture, and farmers in general across this state, are now being perceived by some as an opportunity to be turned into rules and regulations that infringe on the private property rights of farmers.

Private property rights is a major issue with your Farm Bureau organization and a focus of our recent Washington, D.C. Legislative Seminar. It is an issue that we will continue to closely monitor so that you, the Farm Bureau member, can share with your elected officials the importance of maintaining private ownership of property in this country.

We need to continue to remind ourselves and others that the right of private ownership of land, is a right that many people around the world are giving their lives to achieve. So if there is ever a time that we need to not take something for granted, that time is now and the issue is the private ownership of property.

Jack Laurie, President
Michigan Farm Bureau

USDA Grants Target Michigan Waters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved a $3,318,000 grant to study and reduce surface water run-off due to agricultural practices in two Michigan regions. Beginning in 1991, the money will be used in the Saginaw Bay area and in Lenawee County to reach farmers via educational programs, demonstrations, technical assistance and, under certain circumstances, cost sharing projects.

The USDA grant for the Saginaw Bay area project totals $2,058,000 to be used through 1995 for introducing new and innovative water quality management technology to farmers. The project includes 535,000 acres in portions of Bay, Tuscola, Saginaw and Huron counties, 95 percent of which is farmed.

In Lenawee County, $1,260,000 is to be used through 1995 to encourage farmers to adopt existing water quality management practices for their operations. The program will focus on the Wolf Creek Watershed, which consists of about 48,000 acres in the north-central portion of the county, about 58 percent of which is cropland.

The activities will be administered through a joint effort by the Michigan Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service, with assistance provided by MSU’s Agricultural Experiment Station and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, according to Mark Hansen, MSU Extension agriculture and marketing program leader.

Hansen says the projects will focus on "Best Management Practices (BMPs)" for farmers with recommendations including broader use of Integrated Pest Management, no-till and other practices that help reduce soil erosion, improved handling and storage of practices of fertilizers and chemicals, soil testing, and improved methods for overhead and sub-irrigation practices.
MACMA Spring Sale

NEW
• U-Bake Croissants
• Melon Chunks
• Citrus Salad (fresh chilled sections)

DID YOU KNOW?
• 88¢ per pound So Long Hot Dogs
• 79¢ per pound Asparagus Spears hydrocooled
• U-Bake Croissants almost 1/2 the cost of previously offered pre-baked

Cover:
Holland's Tulip Time Festival kicks off May 8th running through May 18th, as millions of tulips blossom over thousands of acres. Against this background, klompen (wooden shoe) dancers perform and three parades and nine musical and variety shows are staged. The 62-year-old Tulip Time Festival is the fifth largest festival in the United States. Take time to enjoy all of Michigan's agricultural bounty as you make your vacation and travel plans. For more Tulip Time Festival information call the Holland Convention and Visitors Bureau at (616) 396-4221.

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Conversion of an outdated grainmill into a bed and breakfast operation gives the Ebenhoes and the town of Chesaning great pride.

For more details and a full list of products, contact your county Farm Bureau or call 1-800-292-2680 ext. 2305.

Rural Living spring 1991
Scientists believe a meteorite exploded over mid-Michigan early on the morning of Dec. 7, 1990. And now, rural people are being asked to contribute to our scientific understanding of meteorites by keeping an eye out for fragments of the object that may be laying in fields or woodlots.

Racing through space at a blinding speed, the UFO sliced into the thick atmosphere of an ocean-blue planet. As friction heated the object to a red hot blaze, it exploded into a shower of fiery fragments that came to rest somewhere on the surface of the alien world.

That’s not the plot from the latest science-fiction flick in the video store. The alien world is Earth, and the UFO is actually a large meteorite.

"This spring and summer, farmers and other rural people should look for an unusual or misplaced rock or group of rocks that looks like concrete with a darkened outer part," said Doug Murphy, a meteorite-hunter on the staff of Abrams Planetarium at Michigan State University. "The rock would be on top of the ground, and there may be some disturbed earth around it."

Murphy says the meteorite, according to several witnesses, exploded about 12-15 miles from the ground over the Tecumseh area. "But I think the object may have broken apart before it got over Michigan, so we ended up with a stream of flying objects over the south central part of the state and Ohio. I wouldn’t be surprised if we have material spread over a much larger area than just around Tecumseh."

Finding one of the elusive fragments can contribute to our understanding of how the solar system was formed, according to Murphy. "Pieces of a meteorite tell us something about the bodies we call 'asteroids' that circle the sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. So every piece we find is actually a piece of space, a piece of material that formed millions of miles away," he said. "It can tell us what the other planets are made of and what we as humans are made of. Instead of spending billions of dollars to send a spacecraft to this region of our solar system, a piece of it came to us in the form of the meteorite. It’s up to us now to try and find the pieces."

If aiding science isn’t enough to send you into a rock-hunting frenzy, how does a $1,000 reward sound?

"Ron Farrell, a meteorite collector from Connecticut, has offered to pay $1,000 for the first piece of the meteorite that is found," Murphy said. "These objects have some value to collectors, although we certainly hope that anyone finding pieces will consider donating them to us for their scientific value." If you think you’ve found a fragment of the mysterious interstellar visitor, contact Murphy at Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing (517-355-4676).
Getaway
with Member Travel Services

APRIL TOURS
Las Vegas Weekend
From $399 per person, based on double occupancy.
Experience life in the fast lane with a four day, three night get-away in Vegas! Package includes roundtrip charter air from Detroit, hotel accommodations, round-trip airport/hotel transfers, baggage handling, tax and a Las Vegas discount book.
Departure Friday and return on Monday.

MAY TOURS
Holland Tulip Festival – Thursday, May 16
Cost: $61 per person.
The festival will be in full swing today as we visit Windmill Island and Dutch Village. We will view the parade from our comfortable lawn chairs, enjoy our included dinner at the Old School House and much more. A memorable spring day!

Washington, D.C. and Gettysburg –
May 16-20, 1991
Cost: $369 per person.
Enjoy American history and beauty via deluxe motorcoach with the services of an experienced travel escort. Also included are hotel accommodations, baggage handling, taxes & some meals.

JUNE TOURS
Steamboat Charm
Cost: From $699 per person, based on double occupancy.
Enjoy steamboating and the splendor of The Old South for four days and three nights on the DELTA QUEEN. Your trip includes roundtrip airfare from Detroit, accommodations on the boat, sailing from New Orleans, all meals, entertainment and activities while aboard. Ports of call include Nottoway Plantation and Rosedown Plantation in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Optional pre or post hotel stopovers available in New Orleans. Departure on Friday, return Monday.

Mackinaw Island Lilac Festival Time –
Monday, June 12, 13, 14
Cost: $280 per person.
Experience the magic that is Michigan on Mackinaw Island. Enjoy spectacular accommodations at Mission Point, the largest resort property on the Island, located on the southeastern shore. This specially designed mini vacation includes a host of interesting stops, along with outstanding lakeview accommodations, daily breakfast, one dinner with full choice of the menu, a carriage tour of the island and much more! Also included are hotel accommodations, guided tour, baggage handling, taxes and some meals.

JULY TOURS
Murder Mystery Train
Cost: $97.50 per person, one-day trip
Enjoy dining and detecting aboard the Murder Mystery Train! Depart from Detroit's Amtrak Station to begin your odyssey of intrigue. Solve clues on a seven hour tour of Michigan and conclude with dinner when the murderer and motives are revealed! Private parties provide excellent entertainment for any occasion. Available at $309.50 per person for weekend excursion.

Deadwood Ramblin' and Gamblin'
Cost: From $694 per person, based on double occupancy
Explore the exciting history of South Dakota during Mt. Rushmore's 50th anniversary. Price includes roundtrip motorcoach tour from Chicago, five nights hotel accommodations, five dinners, Deadwood gaming halls, Boot Hill, Black Hills Passion Play, Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park jeep tour and Badlands National Park. Departures in June and August as well.

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

Note: All packages are subject to availability. Prices are subject to change or variation for 1991. Airport/pier transfers not included in New Orleans.

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU
Outstanding high school students eligible to attend the Michigan Farm Bureau Young People's Citizenship Seminar, June 17-21, at Olivet College, will be participating in one of the finest programs for young people in our state. YPCS "graduates" return to their communities with the knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm for participating in our democratic way of life.

Eligible students are: high school juniors and seniors in the 1991-92 school year; interested in government, social and economic issues, and/or politics; potential leaders or those who participate well in large group settings; articulate and willing to speak to groups after the seminar; and from either a farm or non-farm background.

During the conference, over 200 young men and women will participate in mock voter registration, political party conventions, campaigns, and voting. Dynamic speakers who are recognized experts in the fields of economics, world cultures and governments, and personal growth will background the students on their role as citizens of the United States and the world.

The selection process varies, according to program coordinator Julie Chamberlain. "Some students may be asked to prepare a written essay or take part in a personal interview."

County Farm Bureaus pay registration fees with support of local businesses, leaving only transportation costs to be covered by the students.

For application and program information, contact your county Farm Bureau office. But hurry! Registration deadline is May 1, 1991.

Summer Institute For Educators
Implementing Agriculture in School Curriculums

Michigan teachers have a unique opportunity to learn how to implement agricultural facts into their existing teaching curriculums for kindergarten through the 12th grade. The second annual "Summer Institute For Educators" is scheduled for June 19-28, 1991, at Kinawa Middle School in Okemos, near Michigan State University campus.

Twelve urban and rural K-12 teachers attended the first Summer Institute for Educators, piloted in 1990, from Lansing, Gaylord, Kalamazoo, Saginaw and other schools.

According to MFB Promotion and Education Department Manager Julie Chamberlain, educators attending the institute learn how to use real life examples from the food and fiber system to teach science, social studies, economics, math, language arts and a host of other subjects.

"The institute, offered by Michigan State University, is a three credit course that can be counted as undergraduate, graduate or continuing education credits for teachers," says Chamberlain. "All lessons correspond to science and social studies M.E.A.P. (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) objectives."

Lansing Northwestern Elementary teacher, Mary Schultz, attended the first institute last year and developed an exciting curriculum for her 4th grade class. The agriculture in the classroom experience even included a class trip to Green Meadows dairy farm, where students witnessed a calf being born, cows being milked and fed.

"The children have enjoyed everything we've presented from the institute," says Schultz. "The institute gave me lots of good ideas to bring back and incorporate into the classroom this past year." Schultz and her 28 students were honored recently during the state Future Farmers of America convention at MSU, for their "Ag in the Classroom" experience. During the convention, class members presented Gov. John Engler with an autographed, inflated cow that had hung in their classroom this past year.

Interested teachers need to get an enrollment form from Julie Chamberlain at Michigan Farm Bureau by calling 1-800-292-2680, ext. 3213, or by calling the instructor, Dr. Eddie Moore, Professor, Department of Agriculture and Extension Education, at (517) 355-6580. Enrollments are limited and should be made soon to ensure a spot in the class.

"This program has demonstrated a way to put agriculture back into the school system on a year-around basis, but teacher awareness is crucial to the success of this program," says Chamberlain.

Institute Topics
- National Public Education Goals
- Global/International education
- Gifted and talented student programs
- International trade
- Food and fiber system economics
- Classroom activities that work
- Michigan's food and fiber system
- New career opportunities
- Michigan's natural resources
- Decision-making and choices
Farm Bureau Insurance-MHSAA
Winter Scholar-Athletes Named

Sarah Louise VandenBout, Grand Rapids Northview High School, and Dean E. Woolcock, Stockbridge High School, were selected by a panel of educators as recipients of the Winter Michigan High School Athletic Association Scholar-Athlete Award, a $1,000 scholarship sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. Sarah and Dean competed against 153 applicants (78 women and 75 men), divided among eight geographic regions in Michigan.

"We're committed to the communities and people in Michigan and the future of our state rests on the education of our young people," said Larry W. Thomas, executive vice president of Farm Bureau Insurance. "Time can take away the ability or opportunity to compete on the athletic field. Education, however, is forever.

VandenBout lettered and co-captained in both volleyball and softball. She's a member of the student council, National Honor Society, Women's Chorus, Spanish Club, Students Against Drunk Driving, and her church youth group. Sarah maintains a 4.0 grade point average and plans to pursue a teaching career.

Woolcock co-captained the basketball and golf teams and was chosen most valuable player in baseball, while also lettering in track. He's active in student government, band, scouting, and 4-H and will graduate class salutatorian. Dean looks forward to studying math or science in college.

"We continue to be extremely impressed with the achievements of the student-athletes applying for this award," said John E. Roberts, executive director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. "The finalists are the true cream of the crop and epitomize the meaning of scholar-athlete."

Applications for scholar athletes are provided through MHSAA to member school principals and through Farm Bureau Insurance agents.

Larry Thomas of Farm Bureau Insurance (left) and Jack Roberts of MHSAA (right) presented Woolcock and VandenBout their awards during half-time ceremonies at the Class B Boys' Basketball Championship game at The Palace of Auburn Hills on March 23.

Wanted - Agricultural Professionals

A critical need in agriculture and natural resource areas is to attract and educate professionals for scientific and technical needs, says a USDA report developed at Purdue University. College students looking for a career choice should not overlook preparing for scientific and technical careers in agriculture. There's a steady and growing need for such jobs.

Charles Hess, USDA assistant secretary for science and education, said the report is not surprising since there is a projected annual shortfall of 11 percent in highly trained people to fill agri-science and agri-business positions.

"Highly skilled professionals are required to address concerns on food safety, environmental quality, natural resource conservation and economic competitiveness, all high priority interests among the American public," Hess said.

Jane Coulter, deputy administrator for higher education of the Cooperative State Research Service, USDA, said "We aren't talking about the next 10 to 20 years. We have a shortage now, and with the growing strategic importance of our food, agricultural and natural resource system, the problem is critical."

Other finalists

Joseph J. Gerry .... White Pine
Pamela J. Kangas .... Hancock
Brian M. Eyth ......... West Branch
Amy Erin Portenga .... Traverse City
Chris D. Jensen .... Cedar City
Jared Boss .... Saginaw Heritage
Kristina R. Kreger ..... Dryden
Derek Fleck .......... Richard-Gull Lake
Tamara L. Gardner ... Bangor
Jennifer Voigt ..... Jackson
Michael E. Valentine .... Grosse Ile
Lisa Kay Riley ...... Grosse Ile
Karl White ....... St. Clair Shores
Ann Lillie .......... Birmingham-Seaholm

Rural Living Spring 1991
A restored grain elevator, the Bonnymill offers a Victorian atmosphere with the charm of a bed and breakfast. Located on the boulevard in Chesaning, the Bonnymill is locally owned and operated by its founders the Ebenhoeh family.

Located in the small rural town of Chesaning in southwest Saginaw County, the Bonnymill Inn is the ultimate bed and breakfast experience. Once a grain mill owned by Farm Bureau Services and facing demolition, the structure was salvaged by Farm Bureau members Howard and Bonnie Ebenhoeh, who own a 525 acre cash crop farm near Chesaning which is operated by a son. Today, the converted grain mill offers 24 rooms and suites with five more under construction.

Why did the Ebenhoehs renovate the grain mill? Why not bulldoze it down and start anew? Converting a nearby apartment house or one of several other local homes into a bed and breakfast facility would certainly have been easier. It was for sentimental reasons that the unanimous family decision was made to purchase the mill and tackle the huge task of transforming it into the showcase it is today.

The village of Chesaning was founded as a result of the lumber industry boom in that area. Then agriculture prospered and became the community’s economic mainstay. Grain mills and elevators were built to serve the area’s successful farmers. "This mill was where farmers delivered their grain. We brought our grain here," said Bonnie. "This building has been part of our lives and we wanted to preserve it."

Howard agrees that sentimental ties saved the dilapidated structure. "This mill was a cooperative and as a member, I owned part of it. When the original mill burned in 1932, my father put in $100 to rebuild it. That was quite an effort during the Depression, especially since he was raising 13 kids," he said.

"We could have just leveled this place," said Howard. "That’s what happened to the elevator across the street. But we wanted to preserve as much of the mill and its contents as possible." The Ebenhoehs held an auction and successfully sold the mill equipment to other grain elevator owners. Once the financing was approved, the renovation process began.

"We did almost all of the work ourselves," boasts Bonnie. "If it took 20 hours a day to finish a job, then we worked 20 hours. The only licensed people we hired were an electrician and plumber. The rest of the work we did ourselves."

Six months later, the Bonnymill officially opened its doors on Nov. 9, 1989, to a crowd of local wellwishers who toured the inn and marveled at its beauty, many of them noting their own contributions to the restoration process. "This was a proud moment for the entire town," said Bonnie. "We are proud to be part of a community that rallied together to preserve a local landmark. The fact that it took only six months to complete was a miracle that only community spirit could foster. If we had hired contractors, it would have taken a lot longer to finish."

Today, the Bonnymill Inn is the ultimate getaway experience. Each of the 24 rooms (18 rooms and six suites) is decorated differently in either country or Victorian decor (with one art deco) and each is named after members of the Ebenhoeh family including suites named for Bonnie’s and Howard’s parents. Handmade bedspreads, pillow shams and curtains grace the rooms. A beautiful oak staircase takes guests to rooms on the second floor. Each of the suites has a Jacuzzi.

A fireplace generates heat and light for those who gather around the tables in the lobby for brunch or simply to enjoy the friendly atmosphere. Scrapbooks on the coffee table contain pictures of the old mill and the restoration process. Above the
It took the Ebenhoehs a year to convince their banker to loan them the money for their ambitious conversion plans. In the meantime, the entire Ebenhoeh family and their many friends began the tedious task of removing old mill equipment. After six months of dedicated work, the transformation was complete.

Some of the ceiling beams are the original braces from the mill, a few with names of farmers from the past carved in the wood. Sections of the original mill floor add to the nostalgic flavor of the Bonnymill lobby.

registration desk are cherished artifacts including an old butter churn. Warm, cheerful employees like the Ebenhoeh's daughter Carol, who manages the inn, are always there to help make the stay of guests an unforgettable experience.

Spreading the Good Word

Informing potential bed and breakfast customers of a new facility is always the ultimate challenge for inn owners, so when the opportunity came along to be featured in the national "Country" magazine, the Ebenhoehs took advantage of it with some reluctance. The writer who was assigned to do a series of articles on bed and breakfast inns across the country and rank them for the magazine's readers asked if she could visit the Bonnymill. "I was apprehensive at first," said Bonnie. "Here we were only open for two and a half months and we were going to be critiqued in a major, national magazine. But we needed the exposure, so I accepted her offer."

The Bonnymill not only passed the writer's critique for being featured, but also scored three and one half points out of a possible four in the rankings. "After the article was published, we started receiving phone calls from all over the country," said Bonnie.

A Positive Impact

The transformation from an old grain mill to a unique bed and breakfast facility has been a boost for the local economy, according to Chamber of Commerce President Brian Bila. "I've seen an economic improvement in the Chesaning economy since the Bonnymill came on board," he said. "Chesaning is a revitalized, rural town due to many tourist related businesses. The Bonnymill is indeed a major attraction that will bring even more tourists into this area."

Chesaning is perhaps best known for "Showboat," a week-long festival that attracts music lovers from everywhere offering such past musical acts as Pat Boone and The Osmonds while traveling down the Shiawassee River on a riverboat. Comedienne Phyllis Dillar was a big hit last year, and she stayed that week at the Bonnymill. "Our tourism industry builds off of each other. Every tourism dollar generates seven dollars in our community. The Bonnymill will be good for us and we will be good for them," said Bila.

Bed and Breakfast Directory Available

More than 400 bed and breakfast inns are located in the Great Lakes state, mostly in the southwest and northwest areas. There are also a number of inns across the Upper Peninsula.

A Michigan bed and breakfast directory has been developed through a joint effort by the state of Michigan and the Lake-to-Lake Bed and Breakfast Association.

For your free copy, call the Michigan Travel Bureau at 1-800-543-2YES or write to: Michigan Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 30226, Lansing, MI 48909, or call the Bed and Breakfast Association at 616-228-7014 or write to: Lake-to-Lake Bed and Breakfast Association, Rt. 2, Box 183, Cedar, MI 49621.

Rural Living Spring 1991
Bees Mean Business!

Busy as bees...Mind your own beeswax...Sweet as honey...Familiar phrases with a ring of truth, for honey bees intent on supplying their honey-filled combs have little interest in more than collecting pollen and nectar and making a beeline straight for their hive. Left undisturbed, the honey bee’s instinctive search for blossoms in field or orchard occupies its daylight hours from the first warm days of spring through early fall. That instinctive search pollinates countless acres of Michigan agricultural commodities from apples to zucchini.

Unlike wild or feral bee colonies such as wasps, hornets, and bumble bees, the honey bee hive generally survives the winter with as many as 20,000 bees. In the wild, only the queen survives the winter and must establish the new colony each year. Little wonder that by early summer, the beekeeper’s colonies house upwards of 50,000 honey bees, while the hive of wild bees may reach only 20,000 or so during the entire summer.

Since most of us are not bee lovers, our response to the dismal annual propagation of wild bees is something sympathetic like "Gee, that’s really too bad......" But the lower seasonal population combined with an infestation by two mite varieties which kill both wild and domestic bees, could mean fewer bees to pollinate fruits, vegetables and flowers and a greater reliance on domestic bee colonies.

According to a February 1991 report written by Roger Hoopingarner, Ph.D., of Michigan State University’s Department of Entomology, for the Michigan Great Lakes Pollination News, "Feral (wild) colonies have been a vast overlooked resource. Estimates have indicated that 50 percent or more of the pollinating bees have come from feral colonies. That ratio may be changing fast because of the influx of two parasitic mites affecting the honey bee populations."

The mites, the tracheal mite and varroa mite, threaten to wipe out wild bees entirely. Beekeeper Ray Montague of Ovid, says that while the apiarist can treat domestic colonies using such natural products as menthol crystals and vegetable oil strips to offer some protection for the bees, wild bees remain completely unprotected.

If the feral population continues to decline, says Hoopingarner, the pollinator population in Michigan may not be large enough without increasing the number of hives or colonies set into the orchards.
Montague, who manages over 800 bee colonies on his central Michigan farm, is one of the state's commercial pollinator services and also harvests honey from the operation. While renting his colonies in the spring brings in added income -- the average rate is $30 per acre -- Montague says it brings long hours of work early in the season with honey harvest still ahead.

"The major part of my business is honey production. That's probably about five times the pollinating income," he says. "Pollinating means working long night hours moving the colonies in and out of the orchards. When the grower wants the colonies setting in the orchard, he wants them then. And when it's time for the spray schedule, the grower wants those colonies moved out."

Weather is an important factor in good pollination, too, says Montague. If the weather is warm, he says, the bees may be flying all day and visiting many flowers. In this case, fewer bees are needed. On the other hand, a Michigan spring can mean cold days and the bees may fly only one or two hours a day.

Montague, who manages over 800 bee colonies on his central Michigan farm, is one of the state's commercial pollinator services and also harvests honey from the operation.

Harvesting the honey crop generally begins in June, after the blueberry pollination. Until that time, the honey bee colony is intent on expanding the brood of young bees. Nurturing the 2,000 or more eggs laid each day by the queen bee requires much of the pollen, nectar and water collected by the bees. The rule of thumb, says Montague, is that each developing bee larva requires one honeycomb cell of honey and pollen to nourish it.

By July the bees are producing well and there's a good supply of pollen and nectar available from wildflowers and clovers. Because of the number of colonies he manages with little hired help, Montague says that he takes off honey from the hives only once a season and is sometimes working to process the honey into late fall. Average honey production per colony in Michigan is 80 pounds, but Montague averages 100 pounds from his hives.

Unheated honey, taken directly from the extractor in Montague's "honey house," is popular with some customers who come directly to the farm in the fall. This unheated honey product has good flavor and retains some of the natural oils, says Montague, but it granulates more quickly.

The honey products familiar to most consumers are heated and refined to extract even fine grains of honeycomb and pollen, giving a much clearer liquid and longer shelf life. Although only a few producers in Michigan market cut honeycomb, the unheated, natural product is still available. Harvesting and market preparation for cut honeycomb is very labor intensive, says Montague, since the comb and honey must be carefully cut from the honey frames taken from hives.

For Ray Montague, the honey business hasn't always been sweet, requiring long hours and filled with the frustrations of running a small business. Nevertheless, he says that he enjoys working with bees and doesn't regret his decision to expand his hobby and part-time enterprise to a full-time business some 30 years ago.

While beekeeping is not for everyone, Montague says, "It's a nice hobby or sideline business. You can get into it as a hobbyist for about $150 for one hive." Supplies are minimal and include the honeycomb foundations of wax, deep and shallow wood hive frames, a smoker gun to quiet the bees when handling them, and, of course, the bees. Bees and the very necessary queen bee are available in packages from suppliers in the southern states. Or if you've really got a bee in your bonnet and can't wait to get started, Montague says you can just go to a beekeeper and buy a hive. Beekeepers are pretty honest folk, he says, and you won't have to worry about getting stung.

**Michigan Honey Facts**

Honey production in Michigan during 1990 totaled eight million pounds -- a 12 percent increase over the previous year.

The production statistics from the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service includes only honey taken by producers with five or more hives in production. Producers with five or more colonies had a total of 100,000 colonies in production during the same period; 2,000 less than in 1989.
Safety First on Rural Roads

National figures indicate that approximately twice as many people are killed on rural highways and roads as on city streets and expressways. In Michigan, reports from the State Police reveal that motorists and slow-moving farm equipment become involved in accidents on public roads at the rate of almost one per day.

Here are some statewide figures from 1989:

- Most accidents occurred on dry roads during daylight.
- Most two-vehicle accidents were rear-end collisions. Keep in mind that a motorist traveling 55 mph on a rural road who sees a tractor 400 feet ahead traveling at 15 mph has only seven seconds to slow down and avoid a crash.

- In urban areas, a third of the people killed in motor vehicle accidents are pedestrians. In most rural fatal accidents, by contrast, the victims are in the vehicle. And while impaired driving and failure to wear safety belts are major concerns in both urban and rural areas, high speeds and unsafe road conditions escalate the death rate in the countryside.

Here are tips for safe driving in the country:

- Although rural backroads and highways may not be heavily patrolled by law enforcement officers, they are not race tracks. Obey posted speed limit signs and drive more slowly when road and weather conditions become unsafe. Rural roads may be rough, narrow, and have abrupt curves, hills, and valleys. Dust and snow can make travel hazardous.
- Traffic signs at rural intersections may be missing, damaged, or hidden by vegetation. Always slow and be prepared to stop at intersections, narrow bridges, and all rural railroad crossings.
- Be alert for slow-moving farm vehicles. Most slow vehicles will display a red-and-orange slow-moving vehicle sign along with flashing lights. When approaching a farm vehicle, reduce your speed and be prepared to stop. Before passing, check for oncoming traffic and also check your rearview mirror to see if someone is trying to pass you.
- Watch for loose farm or wild animals on the road. When traveling through deer country, be alert to deer crossing warnings.
- Watch for pedestrians. If necessary, tap your horn to alert them -- but don’t frighten them by blasting your horn.

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Omaha, NE 68106

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BY MAIL
Send the labels from the medication you are now taking, or send all the information from that label.

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REFILLS
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FIELD GENERIC PRICES ARE IN BLUE

CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-228-3353
ASK FOR FREE CATALOG!
### BRAND PRICE

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TO ORDER CALL TOLL FREE TODAY 1-800-228-3353

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Health care coverage isn't simple anymore. The bottom line, however, remains the same: everybody wants the best possible coverage at the lowest possible rates. This is where Farm Bureau has good news for small business owners.

With over 40 years of experience in providing individual health care plans, Farm Bureau is now offering six Blue Cross Blue Shield plans and two Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO plans specially designed for groups with 2 to 99 employees. All plans have no medical underwriting and carry no pre-existing condition clauses. Prescription, dental and vision coverage options are also available to qualified groups.

If you're a small business owner who is dissatisfied with your present employee health care plan — or a small business owner who is ready to initiate your first employee health care plan — contact your local Farm Bureau office. We'll listen to your health care coverage needs, tailor a package to suit your preferences, and then cut to the bottom line.

Farm Bureau, specialists in all business insurance needs, can be depended on to protect the interests of small business because we understand the interests of small business.

What matters to you matters to us.

For further information, call 1-800-292-2680 or contact your local Farm Bureau office.

WHERE BELONGING MAKES A DIFFERENCE.
**Planting for the Future**

For the dedicated nurturer of tender plants, or for the frugal and patient cultivator of garden and field, seeds and seedlings are a money saving way to bring outdoor beauty to the landscape. And if you know the right places to buy, you can get hundreds of seedling trees for pennies a piece.

You could say that Michigan's Soil Conservation District offices are "seedling central" each spring as the local SCDS raise funds and assist landowners with tree planting and reforestation projects. According to Murray Stall, SCD technician in Eaton County, the program has been operating at least since 1950. In 1990, more than 200,000 tree seedlings were distributed in Eaton County alone, he reported.

Order periods vary by several weeks around the state but generally counties take prepaid orders during the first three months of the year. Deliveries are generally scheduled for the second week in April and in some areas of the state, may extend into May.

Varieties available in Eaton County include white pine, scotch pine, red pine, Austrian pine, white spruce, Norway spruce, Colorado spruce, douglas fir, black walnut, hybrid poplar, autumn olive, butternut, English walnut, and American chestnut. Selections are tailored to the landowners, special requests and the growing area.

When the seedlings arrive from the growers, the trees are generally broken down into bundles of 25, 100, 500, and 1,000 for distribution. Sizes range from four to ten inches for most conifers and up to five feet for some deciduous trees.

According to Robert Baetsen, district conservationist, trees can be purchased at any SCD since there is no residence requirement to participate nor do the trees need to be planted in the county where they are purchased.

He added that SCD personnel can also provide key information to assist the landowner in selecting the best varieties and to offer planting tips.

Soil maps of the county give the SCD staff the kind of information about what types of trees, optimum spacing and other information that will meet the landowner's needs and ensure that seedlings have a better chance of maturing on the site. Most of the SCDS "customers" are using the trees for one of four major environmental goals: developing a windbreak, creating a wildlife habitat, preventing soil erosion, or reforesting open land.

An illustrated brochure distributed with the seedlings provides good general information about site preparation, weed control, care of seedlings, planting, and maintenance of the plantings.

The Eaton County SCD staff suggest that if you missed the annual tree planting seedling sale through your local Soil Conservation District, be sure to watch for announcements in January or February. Or plan to call the county SCD to find out their ordering procedures and discuss a reforestation project on your property.

**Property Tax Reform? Anyone's Guess!**

There are five different property tax cutting proposals ranging from a 20 percent cut on school operating to total elimination of property tax. A package of bills has cleared the Senate and basically encompasses Gov. Engler's proposal. The Headlee Rollback petition is being verified for valid signatures. Sen. Virgil Smith's proposal offers substantial cuts for residential property tax, while the Nye-Oxender proposal calls for total property tax elimination. Consensus has not been reached on how to fund property tax reforms and reductions. There appears to be little support for increased or new taxes, but a property tax cut will likely mean increases in taxes elsewhere.

Farm Bureau policy supports state revenues paying a greater portion of school operating funds and reducing the reliance on property taxes to finance schools.

**Turn A New Leaf**

You can turn a new leaf in your neighborhood, too. Join me and plant a tree. For your free booklet, write: Tree City USA, The National Arbor Day Foundation, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

The Eaton County SCD staff suggest that if you missed the annual tree planting seedling sale through your local Soil Conservation District, be sure to watch for announcements in January or February. Or plan to call the county SCD to find out their ordering procedures and discuss a reforestation project on your property.

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Solar Greenhouses for the Home

Hobby greenhouses are an excellent way to extend the growing season for fruits, vegetables, or herbs, or to provide additional room for house plants. Solar Greenhouses for the Home, NRAES 2, from the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service (NRAES), provides information on all types of hobby greenhouses from seasonal extenders for gardens, to window greenhouses, to free standing greenhouses.

Solar Greenhouses for the Home is an extensively illustrated bulletin that can be used to choose the type of greenhouse that best suits your needs. The design and construction procedures provide guidance on choosing a size, on selected glazings or covering materials, on building frames and foundations, and on greenhouse kits. Thirteen pages of plans for greenhouses and equipment are included.

The bulletin also includes information on solar heating and energy conservation. The principles of solar heating are discussed as well as methods to take advantage of solar energy in design. The energy conservation section discusses how to effectively heat greenhouses and methods to hold in heat when the sun goes down.

Solar Greenhouse for the Home is available for $3.25 from NRAES, 152 Riley Robb Hall, Cooperative Extension Service, Ithaca, NY 14853. Postage and handling are included for U.S. orders. Make checks payable to NRAES or call (607) 255-7654 for more information or a free publication catalog.

Farming Tips

Q. Last year I tried growing flower and vegetable seedlings in my basement for the first time. They grew well at first, then some suddenly wilted, fell over and died. The stems were all black and shriveled-looking. What caused this and how can I prevent it from happening again?

A. The problem is damping-off, a fungal disease of seedlings caused by common soil fungi. Damping-off can also cause seeds to rot and seedlings to die even before they emerge from the soil. To prevent it, grow seedlings in a sterile growing medium, such as a commercial peat-vermiculite mix, in sanitized containers. Water to keep the growing medium moist but not soaked. The high humidity and warm temperatures often used to speed germination can contribute to damping-off, so can deep planting, overcrowding, over-watering and over-fertilizing. Once established, damping-off can spread through seed flats very quickly. Discard affected plants immediately.

Q. Making raised beds in the flower or vegetable garden sounds like a lot of work. What makes it worthwhile?

A. Constructing raised beds is one way to garden in spite of poorly drained or compacted soils. Soils in raised beds drain faster and warm up quicker, so you can plant earlier and have fewer problems with root rot and other diseases related to poor drainage. Unless you build beds so wide that you can’t reach the middle to plant or weed, you won’t have to step in them, so soil compaction won’t occur. Use wood treated with copper naphthenate to prevent rot, and your raised beds will last for years. Fill the frames with a mixture of sand, soil and compost for good drainage and nutrient-holding capacity.

Source: Michigan State University, Cooperative Extension Service.
Wetland Construction

The small wetland restoration program is generally focused on the development of shallow wetland areas of small acreage. Since 1989, 202 small wetland areas in Michigan have been restored, representing 543 acres. These 18-inch to three-feet deep areas of open water in which emergent vegetation will grow, attract migratory and nesting waterfowl and other forms of wildlife.

Ever considered establishing a wildlife refuge for waterfowl on your country property? Now thanks to a program offered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, you can do just that and the government pays the tab.

The Small Wetlands Restoration program is separate from the programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has as its primary focus private non-farm landowners or non-traditional farmers with land areas of a half acre or larger that can be restored to a wetland.

According to Len Schumann, U.S. Department of Interior Senior Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Assistance Office, the restoration project could be constructed on land that was previously tilled or drained. "We're not talking about creating deep pond areas of six to eight feet for fishing, etc. We frequently get calls from private landowners requesting information about dredging wetlands or excavating ponds, but the department doesn't fund these activities," said Schumann.

To gain the benefits of wetlands for wildlife and water quality, a half acre is a good starting point, suggested Schumann, and he added that small wetlands probably offer optimum benefits. He pointed out that on larger wetland areas the birds and wildlife may establish territories, while smaller wetlands may serve as "home" to several pairs of waterfowl and provide ample nesting area without territorial competition.

In the wetlands restoration effort, both the department and the landowner see the benefits develop quickly to attract wildlife. There are other significant benefits which are not so readily visible as pairs of blue-winged teal and mallards or Canadian geese:

- Wetlands play an important role in the storage of flood water.
- By storing one acre-foot of water, wetlands prevent approximately 330,000 gallons of water going downstream to cause someone else additional grief during periods of high water or flooding.
- By holding water in place, wetlands help improve water quality by acting as nutrient and sediment traps and permitting pollutants to be absorbed by plants and also contribute to groundwater recharge for wells.

Schumann recommends that landowners submit a copy of the wetlands contract to their local tax assessor. Although the local unit is under no obligation to provide a tax abatement, it may be viewed favorably and result in some tax savings, particularly where the restored wetland area was previously tilled.

How can interested landowners identify acreage with potential for wetlands restoration? Although there are many factors that will be evaluated by the Department of Interior representatives, interested landowners should look for depressional areas in the field which may or may not have been previously tilled.

In evaluating restoration potential, Fish and Wildlife personnel also prefer a site with a buffer area for nesting wildlife. In the initial contact, department personnel
Landowners may initiate the restoration process at any time during the year by contacting one of the four zones in Michigan established by the department:

- Seney National Wildlife Refuge (zone 1), 906-586-9851
- Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (zone 2), 517-777-6590
- Ecological Services Field Office (zone 3), 517-337-6650
- Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (zone 4), 419-898-0014

will discuss the proposed wetland site with the landowner and, if that interview indicates that the area has potential for restoration, a site evaluation will be performed. The landowner is always encouraged to be present and to be a part of the planning.

The program is continuous, said Schumann, but the optimum time for site evaluation and planning the restoration is mid-March through April with the construction season for restoration projects running from May through mid-October.

If it appears, as a result of the preliminary interview, that the area is suitable for restoration, an on-site evaluation and planning appointment will be arranged. If approved, the landowner will be asked to sign a ten-year agreement to dedicate the acreage to wetland for the length of the contract. No easements are required. The department then schedules engineering and construction.

The Department of Interior works closely with the Soil Conservation Service to ensure that the project will not affect drainage on adjoining farmland or neighboring properties.

"The entire process can take as little as three or four days," says Schumann. "We pride ourselves on being able to respond and get the wetland construction done quickly. If we make a promise, we want to get it done."

The average cost for wetland restoration is about $300, but may go as high as $4,000. There are no charges to the landowner nor to the project for consulting and planning services by department personnel. The department will pay for all construction costs, arrange for equipment and labor and reseeding disturbed land and dams surrounding the wetland. A possible exception, cautioned Schumann, would be in the restoration of a huge wetland area, very complex construction, or the incorporation of special features or additions by the landowner. Annual inspection and follow-up by the department should be expected to monitor for damage to the dams or tile break, etc., to determine wildlife use and to check for the presence of aquatic vegetation.

Schumann noted that the Fish and Wildlife Service prefers to work with properties where exemptions or variations in permit for the land use, drainage, etc. would not be required. The site evaluation by department personnel will include a review of any permits or restrictions that may apply.

In 1991, the department has the goal of restoring 150 wetlands, although thanks to the involvement of citizen volunteers and a donation of $60,000, the possibility exists for much higher participation. Volunteers in 45 lower Michigan counties will assist in conducting initial interviews and obtaining contract signatures, where appropriate. The engineering, planning, and construction will be carried out through the department.
Golden Arches Leaning

Move over Tower of Pisa, McDonald's Golden Arches soon may become the hottest architectural attraction on earth that has anything to do with a lean. In McDonald's case, the lean is its new low-fat hamburger -- the McLean Deluxe.

After only four months of test marketing, McDonald's has announced a nationwide rollout of McLean Deluxe, a quarter-pounder burger with less than half the fat of the chain's regular Quarter-Pounder. Meat for the new burger is selected from leaner cuts and the fat content is further reduced by a new process using a common food additive made from seaweed, permitting the removal of most fat.

The additive, carrageen, holds the meat together with water, allowing the fat to be removed without losing the flavor or texture of the product, according to industry officials. The McLean Deluxe's cost is expected to be $1.79 to $1.84 -- on the pricier end of McDonald's menu.

Retail food prices are at the high end of the 2 to 5 percent range predicted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture for 1991, thus far. Higher priced items include ground chuck, sirloin tip roast, pork chops, bacon, apples, cereal and bread.

Look for price increases on such items as fryers, and the more desirable, tender "mid-section" steaks now that the outdoor grilling season has arrived. Bacon prices usually increase seasonally as we move into the bacon-lettuce-tomato sandwich season.

The California drought can't help but increase the prices of a number of fresh fruits and vegetables normally purchased by Michigan consumers. Head lettuce is an item purchased, by both the household and institutional consumer, from California and Arizona throughout the year. One can use a variety of other greens or use cole slaw, but head lettuce is the old dependable that’s difficult to replace, especially if it's for a salad bar or packaged salad.

One way to keep a lid on food prices is to limit food purchases or even omit items for which one can find suitable substitutes. Often this doesn’t greatly alter your eating; it may even improve it. For example, Florida is the chief source of grapefruit from October through March, when citrus products are at their peak supply and prices are generally reasonable.

California, on the other hand, becomes the the source of grapefruit during the spring and summer. In the best of years, these grapefruit are inferior and high-priced. But why eat fresh grapefruit in June or July anyway? By then, we have other fresh fruits from Michigan and nearby states which offer a nice change from the citrus we’ve been eating throughout the winter.

Another related example is bananas, which are at record high prices due to an unusual confluence of bad weather, new markets in the Pacific Rim and overall high demand. The wholesale prices are up 50 percent from a year ago and are expected to increase further -- reportedly retail price levels of a $1 per pound or more.

Consumers don’t need to buy bananas much longer, regardless of price, as Michigan’s homegrown fresh fruits and vegetables will soon be available (see Availability Guide on page 20). There’s a strategy for getting the best value with these purchases also. Plan your big fresh fruit and vegetable purchases during the peak season. Remember: during peak harvest, quality and quantity are the highest, while the prices are the lowest.

The Michigan Availability Guide is set up for a normal year, so become informed as to the progress of the current season. Then all you have to do is look at the guide and make the necessary adjustment. Now there’s no acceptable excuses for missing the blueberry or peach season!

For those of you wanting to hold onto summer by freezing, canning or otherwise preserving our excellent Michigan produce, help is literally right around the corner. Each county Cooperative Extension office has at least one home economist who can supply you with the needed know-how to safely preserve food. Look under "County" in the white pages for the office nearest you.

Most consumers preserve food today for uniqueness of flavor rather than to save money, but savings can be realized if you grow or pick your own produce.
Market Basket up 6 Percent

Retail food prices rose 6 percent in the first quarter of 1991, according to Farm Bureau's price check of 16 frequently purchased foods. The survey, conducted by volunteers in 23 states, shows an average cost of $31.05 for the typical market basket compared to $29.22 for the last quarter of 1990.

Higher reported prices for ground chuck, sirloin tip roast, pork chops, bacon, apples, potatoes, cereal, bread and mayonnaise contributed to the price increase. The survey reflected lower prices for whole fryers, eggs, milk, cheddar cheese, flour and cooking oil. The February price hike reverses a 6.5 percent drop recorded the last quarter of 1990. Compared with one year ago, the February 1991 report represents an overall 4 percent increase in food prices. The survey is conducted during February, May, August and November.

Price Gouging on MILK?

Milk prices which have plummeted to farmers are going down much more slowly in retail outlets. Dairy processors contend the higher margins are needed to make up for losses when milk prices escalated in 1989 and the first part of 1990, and to cover higher costs such as transportation.

Kevin Kirk, livestock specialist at MFB, said farm prices of milk have dropped by 32 percent from December of 1989 to December of 1990. He echoed farmer concerns at the widening spread between farm and retail prices of milk and dairy products.

A study of possible price gouging at the retail level is currently underway, as required in the 1990 farm bill, by the USDA. American Farm Bureau is calling for a congressional study of the relationship between farm and retail milk prices.

Low Fat Beef Goes To School

Producer funded research to develop low fat ground beef has resulted in the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA to announce the special purchase of 237,600 pounds of beef patties for use in the national school lunch program. The pilot purchase of low-fat ground beef is part of a program designed to find a low-fat beef patty with acceptable flavor, tenderness, juiciness and texture.

Daniel D. Haley, Administrator of AMS, said five companies submitted a total of 13 technical proposals in response to USDA's solicitation. Of the 13 proposals, six from three different firms were found acceptable. Product submitted by two of the three acceptable firms was funded by research monies from producer checkoffs.

The selected patties were shipped to specified schools, with an evaluation to follow. If those results prove favorable, a decision will be made on additional purchases of low-fat ground beef patties for the 1991-92 school year.

Diet and Health

Myth: The risk of death from heart disease and other diseases can be greatly reduced if a person avoids eating a meat-centered diet.

Fact: Lean beef is regarded by leading health organizations and agencies as a valuable and appropriate part of American diets. The American Dietetic Association, the American Heart Association, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, and other organizations generally recommend 5 to 7 oz. of lean, trimmed meat daily. Nutrition authorities point out that trimmed beef provides large amounts of essential nutrients - such as iron, zinc, vitamin B-12 and balanced protein.

Background: Excess fat, from any source, can contribute to development of illness. But beef and fat aren't necessarily synonymous. Trimmed beef has been part of diets which have contributed to improved health and to continuing increases in the longevity of Americans. Government statistics show that red meat alone provides 28 percent of the protein, 23 percent of the iron, 36 percent of the zinc and 52 percent of the vitamin B-12 which Americans consume. It's a nutrient-dense food, supplying large shares of essential nutrients in relation to the calories it supplies.

Research on fatty acids shows that, on average, only 27 percent of the total fat in a serving of beef has the potential to elevate blood cholesterol levels. In fact, beef has no more cholesterol than chicken. The amounts of fat, saturated fats and cholesterol in lean, trimmed beef are low enough that beef is included in low-fat diets.

Source: National Cattlemen's Association

Rural Living Spring 1991
Availability Guide For Michigan Grown Fruits & Vegetables

This chart is a buying guide for fruits, vegetables and other food and horticultural products grown in Michigan. It shows a range of availability because the season for fruits and vegetables vary from year to year, and from one area of the state to another.

The solid bars in the chart refer to the peak periods of availability. These dates are longer than the actual harvest dates when a significant portion of the crop is stored and marketed after harvest. Usual peak harvest dates are shown within the bar.

To take full advantage of Michigan's bountiful growing season, be sure to order a copy of the Michigan Department of Agriculture's "Farm Market and U-Pick Directory," by calling (517) 373-1058. The directory, with over 300 listings of farm markets and U-pick operations, is available at no charge.
EVERYBODY'S Really Excited...

Because...

Your Michigan Farm Bureau membership entitles you to discounts at the following major theme parks in the Midwest and Florida:

- Universal Studios
- Disney World/Epcot/MGM
- Disney Land
- Busch Gardens
- Sea World
- Cypress Gardens
- Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village
- Cedar Point
- Kings Island
- Detroit Zoo
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Tickets to Cedar Point, Kings Island, Detroit Zoo and Pleasure Island available 5/26/91 in participating counties.
Is Your Lawn Ready For Summer?

Submitted by: Tim Doppel, President Atwood Lawn-Care, Inc.

April showers are underway and in a few weeks, summer will be in full force. One of the things that's considered to be a real joy of summer is the feel of a beautiful lawn underfoot during those hot, steamy evenings. But if you don't act quickly, you may have to keep your sneakers on, instead of barefootin' it.

For the do-it-yourselfer, there are just a couple of things you'll want to remember.

Fertilizer Needs
You'll want to help Mother Nature keep your lawn looking good. Fertilizer will be needed from time to time for optimum health of the lawn. Look at the numbers on the bag of fertilizer and choose one that comes closest to a 4-1-2 ratio. Then check the fine print to see if there is any "W.I.N." included. This is what gives fertilizer a controlled release nature as opposed to an entirely quick release. Anything in the 15-30 percent range is really nice.

When you find one that meets these needs, buy the cheapest bag you can find. The grass plant won't know the difference between an expensive or a cheaper brand.

Weed Control
When weeds appear, use a selective broadleaf weed control product, available at your garden center. Spray the weed so that it just gets wet. It does not need to be drenched. Also, remember one important thing, please. Read the label and follow the directions. If it says one ounce, two ounces will NOT work twice as well. If you don't understand what the label means, ask someone for help. The materials available on the market today can be used safely, providing you follow the directions.

If you get really confused about weed control, insect or disease control or fertilizing, just call a lawn care professional and they'll handle that entire part for you. But when you do, question the company about its insurance, its license and the training the employees receive. If you are not satisfied with the answers, look for another company. There is a big difference between lawn care companies, and look beyond price; differences run much deeper than that.

Proper Cutting Heights
The next most important part of caring for your lawn is to cut it at the correct height. Wouldn't it be nice if every lawn looked like a golf course; closely mowed, grass perked up and evenly green? The difference is that you are most likely growing Kentucky Bluegrass. The good Lord meant for Kentucky Bluegrass to be at least two inches tall.

Watering
If you are unable, or unwilling, to keep a lawn properly watered during the entire growing season, the effectiveness of any other control measures will be greatly diminished and the overall quality will suffer.

So what is proper watering? You may be a little surprised to learn that the deep, infrequent soakings that have been recommended for so many years is being seriously questioned. Current research at Michigan State University, as well as the experience of lawn care professionals across the state, have shown that more frequent, but light, waterings gives better results and uses less water at the same time.

The overall best schedule to follow is to water in the late morning for 30-45 minutes per section. And you want to do this at least every other day or every day in really hot weather.

This allows the most water possible, to be below the surface and, therefore, readily available to the plant as it enters the hottest part of the day.

So to have that nice, healthy lawn for YOUR first day of summer, you'll want to start putting in a couple of hours of work. Start watering, cut it right and put a little fertilizer down. You'll be looking out over a lawn that will be a great source of pride and pleasure.

An easy rule of thumb is to set your lawn mower at the highest or next to highest setting it has and leave it there. Your lawn will thank you for it.
New For the Yard & Garden

Deutz-Allis Lawn and Garden Equipment’s new 10-horsepower riding mower with mulching deck, cuts clippings into fine pieces, recycling them back into the lawn to decompose. A specially designed, single blade holds the clippings in the cutting chamber to cut and recut clippings before depositing them down into the lawn. Operators can remove a discharge cover to convert the unit to broadcast clippings, or add collection systems. The model is equipped with a 10-hp Briggs & Stratton Industrial/Commercial engine.

Deutz-Allis’s new 1600 Series lawn tractors are highly maneuverable around trees and other obstacles with a 16-inch turning radius (upper right). There’s a 12.5-hp gear and hydrostatic unit and a 16-hp hydrostatic unit to choose from. The 38-inch or 44-inch cutting decks accelerate airflow and evenly broadcast clippings. Cutting heights are infinitely adjustable from 1 to 3-1/2 inches. A Quick-Hitch system allows decks to be removed in less than 30 seconds without tools.

For the commercial operators, Deutz-Allis introduces the 3000 Series with six front-cut riding mowers. Ride-on units with steering wheel control feature a patented hydrosteering design that allows units to pivot in a full circle around either drive wheel and are also available with lever steering design. Decks are available in 46, 54, 60 and 66 inch widths. Dual tail wheels and 30-gallon or 60-gallon grass catchers are available.

Introducing the Scoop-N-Haul

KNESS MFG. Company’s Scoop-N-Haul is the kind of tool that simplifies a variety of around the yard tasks including loading and unloading feed, seed, fertilizer, hauling wood and fencing material, packing dirt or sand and gravel.

Scoop-N-Haul adjusts to meet the demands of any task with a three-point hydraulic lift, which engages automatically when lowered. Its patented trip mechanism makes unloading cargo safe and easy. Scoop-N-Haul is attractive for its ease of use and durability, which is constructed of 16 and 12 gauge hot rolled steel.

Available in eight models, the Scoop-N-Haul offers a wide range of capacity, from five to 36 cubic feet, which makes it suitable for any size operation and will fit most lawn and garden tractors. For pricing and delivery information, contact KNESS toll-free at 1-800-247-5062.

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Rus Gardner
1990 Distinguished Sales Award
Oakland County agent Rus Gardner has reached a level of production unmatched in company history. For the fourth year in a row, he has earned the Distinguished Sales Award, recognizing him as the top agent in the state. The award, the highest honor bestowed by Farm Bureau Insurance, recognizes Rus for his record-breaking sales and outstanding client service.

Richard Smith
1990 Distinguished Management Award
This prestigious award recognizes Richard Smith as the top agency manager in Michigan. He earned the award for his agency's outstanding sales and service achievements, and for his development of new agents. Dickman manages 24 agents serving Wayne and Monroe Counties. He is recognized around the state as a leader, motivator, and dedicated friend of the Farm Bureau Family.

Ben Landheer
1990 Elton R. Smith Award
Newaygo County agent Ben Landheer received this important award for his outstanding contributions to his profession, his community, and Michigan Farm Bureau. The annual award, introduced by Farm Bureau Insurance in 1987, is named in honor of retired MFB president Elton Smith. Ben, one of Farm Bureau's most honored agents, is a highly-regarded leader in the MFB Family.

Ron Zandbergen
Michigan Farm Bureau Membership Award
Ottawa County agent Ron Zandbergen is dedicated to MFB membership growth, as recognized by this major award. Presented by Farm Bureau Insurance, the award honors the agent who produced the most new MFB members in the prior membership year. As our top membership producer of 1990, Ron signed up 204 new members last year, an outstanding effort from an outstanding agent.

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