

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS



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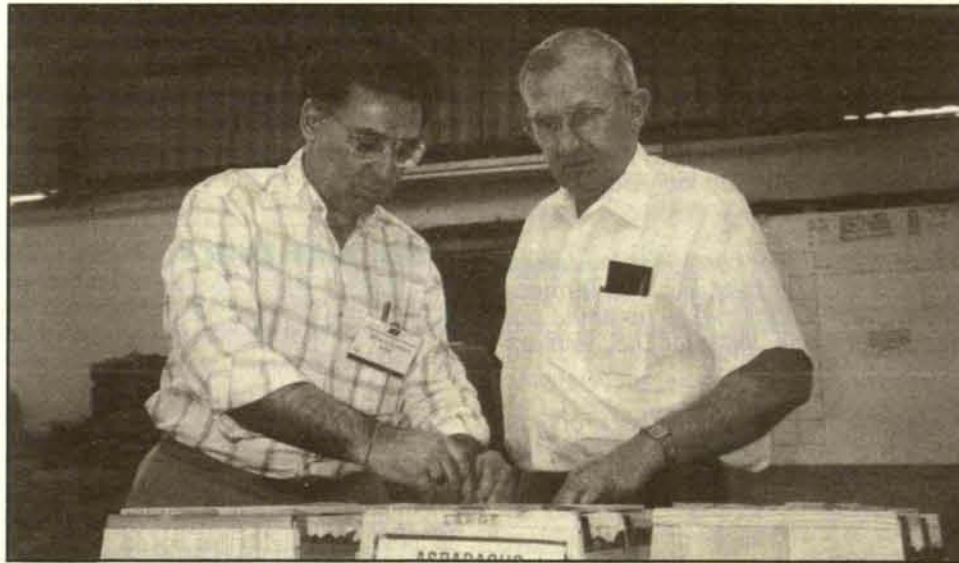
Mexican Growers Equally Nervous About Trade Agreement

MFB President Jack Laurie, a member of the AFBF's International Trade Committee, was in Mexico recently for a firsthand look at agricultural production in that country, as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks gain momentum.

Laurie said that despite fears and misconceptions, Mexican farmers share many of the same concerns as their U.S. counterparts about NAFTA. "They're afraid that the government negotiating the arrangements will tend to leave out the well-being of the individual grower and make the overall economy more of a focal point," he said. "They feel a lack of representation at the national level."

"They have the same fear that Canadians do - that this big ugly U.S. production machine is going to cover them up," Laurie said. "The sincerity of the grower here is as equally obvious as the sincerity of the Michigan grower. They're concerned about their industry and their own financial future."

Laurie witnessed what he called genuine concern by Mexican growers for adequate



American Farm Bureau Federation President Dean Kleckner, and Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie, inspect Mexican grown asparagus at a packing facility during a recent trade trip to Mexico.

sanitation at processing facilities and proper chemical use in growing and processing agricultural commodities, dispelling many

of the misunderstandings held by the U.S. agricultural industry. "It was pointed out by every grower that we visited with, that they

use chemicals in strict accordance with EPA guidelines to avoid getting caught with produce crossing the border that's chemically unsafe," said Laurie. "I was in a packing plant, using FMC equipment, that could stand side-by-side with U.S. facilities. It was extremely clean, well managed, and very efficient."

Regarding the likelihood of a NAFTA in 1992, Laurie pointed to the fact that it's an election year in the U.S. and that the Mexican government appears dedicated to an agreement, making NAFTA a done deal.

"The terms of the agreement are what we need to focus on at this point," Laurie said. "Agriculture's challenge is to assure the end result isn't an immediate implementation of an agreement that doesn't allow growers opportunity for corrections."

"What I've seen up to this point indicates there's significantly more to be gained than there is to be lost," Laurie said. "However, Farm Bureau will not support just any trade pact. The other parties must give up as much as we do, when we do."

Animal Rights Terrorists Make First Appearance in Michigan

Photo Courtesy of MSU Department of Public Safety

Animal rights terrorist activity. You read about it, you hear about it, you talk about it, but it never happens here.

That was until Friday, Feb. 28, when a fire was discovered in room 132 Anthony Hall on the Michigan State University campus. The early-morning fire totally destroyed the office of Dr. Richard Aulerich, as well as 32 years of his research data. The fire also substantially damaged three other interior offices, which serve as the center for mink research at MSU.

The East Lansing Fire Department quickly responded to the fire, preventing further damage to the rest of Anthony Hall. Damage to the offices in room 132 was estimated at between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

A breaking and entering also took place at the mink research farm located on Jolly Road east of the main campus. The building was forcibly entered by tearing off roofing

and climbing through the attic, and entering through a ceiling access door. A substance determined to be sulfuric acid was poured on all the mechanical equipment in the research facility, according to MSU's Department of Public Safety (DPS).

"From what we've seen, it appears that there was some level of planning that went into this," said DPS's Dr. Robert Benson. "It wasn't just an amateur situation where someone just walked off the street and did this. It involved a fairly high degree of sophistication."

The walls of the building were also spray painted with the initials "A.L.F." which stands for the Animal Liberation Front, and a threat that "the otters are next." Several of the mink cages were opened, but none of the animals escaped.

Destruction was confined to the office, feed mixing area, and feed storage areas of the research facility, with damage estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000.

In the words of Dr. Fred Poston, vice provost of the university and dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the activity was not only costly but senseless, since mink are extremely sensitive to abnormal activity, making them easily prone to stress and even death in severe cases.

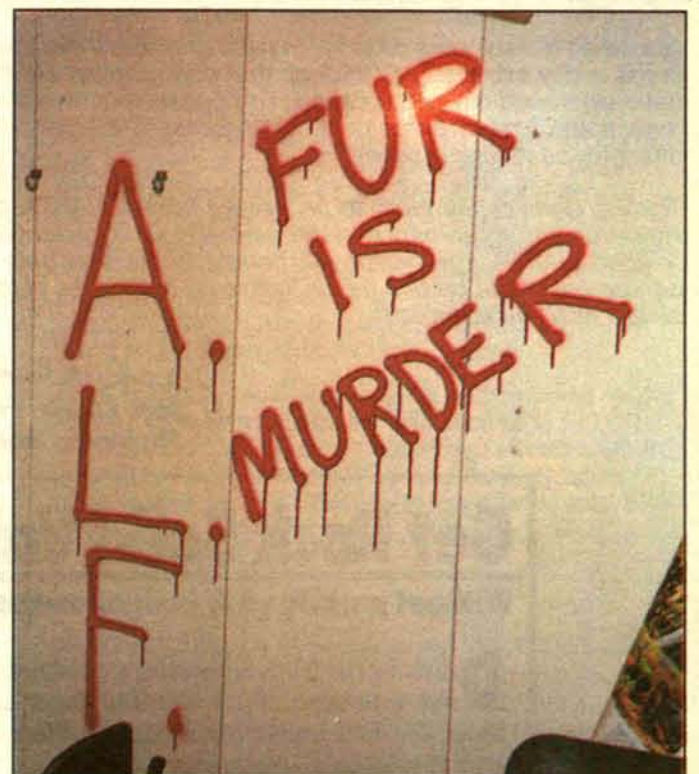
According to Poston, the research at MSU was focused on nutrition and the decline of the natural mink population. "This terrorist activity was aimed toward a long-standing research program largely geared toward helping the mink, not destroying them," said Poston. "If the goal is to help animals, it's a loss to me why one would target a research program geared toward protecting mink populations in the wild."

According to the Animal Science Department Chairman Dr. Maynard Hogberg, the mink research also assisted in projecting impact to human beings in various water-quality studies because of the mink's natural sensitivity levels to naturally occurring toxins and micro-toxins.

"Look at some of the work done with the EPA several years ago, and you'll find that a lot of the water quality standards in the United States today were the result of the work done with this research unit," Hogberg pointed out.

According to Hogberg, a current research project involving a strain of genetically deaf mink, was part of a joint research project with the University of Michigan to use the animals as a model to study deafness in humans. "This is going to be a setback to a number of current projects," he said.

Hogberg was visibly upset by the misguided efforts of the activists, contrasting their apparent lack of concern over the safety of the mink and human life with that of Dr. Aulerich's concern. "When the farm manager called to inform us of the damage at the research facility, Dr. Aulerich's first question was 'were any of the animals hurt?'" related Hogberg. "I think that shows



Walls at the mink research facility's feedroom and offices were spray painted in the early morning raid by A.L.F.

the sensitivity he has for the animals themselves."

Efforts to protect against similar occurrences in the future will be difficult, says Poston, since MSU is considered a public institution. "We keep these facilities open to the public," explained Poston. "It would not be difficult for somebody who was planning to do this type of thing to literally walk through the facility."

Story continued with additional photos ... page 5.

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North American Free Trade Agreement – a Mexico Perspective

There's nothing like standing in another farmer's field, or walking in his shoes, to really make you appreciate his point of view. That is especially true when it comes to understanding farmers from another culture and country, like Mexico.

That's why I was pleased to have had the opportunity in late February to be part of an American Farm Bureau Federation trade mission to Mexico. We were there to visit farms and find out first hand what Mexican farmers think about the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

One of the things that struck me is that they have some of the same concerns about agricultural trade that we do! They are afraid that their government, in the process of negotiating the NAFTA, will tend to neglect the interests of the individual grower in favor of the interests of the overall economy.

We often hear our U.S. growers raise the concern that labor costs less in Mexico. But the bottom line when we talk to Mexican growers is that they, like U.S. farmers, are concerned about how much labor is costing them. Labor makes up about one third of their cost of production, about the same that it does here for U.S. farmers.

Mexican farmers are also worried about competition for their agricultural products. They are worried, much as the Canadians are, about being overwhelmed by a huge U.S. "production machine." It appears to me that there is a great deal of public relations effort to be done in the grower community in all three countries before we can maximize the positive impact of a NAFTA.

It's hard to get a real understanding of these issues unless you can hear a grower, see him in his own field and watch the concern on his face when he talks about those things. The sincerity of the grower in Mexico is equally as obvious as the sincerity of the grower that we talk to back in Michigan. Just as we are, the Mexican producers are worried about their industry and their own financial future.

Farm Bureau supports a free trade agreement with Mexico, but only if such an agreement provides for fair and equal competition. Our policy states that current U.S. grades and standards should not be lowered to accommodate Mexican imports; the agreement should standardize pesticide regulations so they are uniform between the two countries; and especially important for Michigan growers: import-sensitive crops should have a longer phase-in period.

I stood on the shipping dock in Nogales and heard that they normally run 600-700 semis a day into the U.S. through that port of entry. So it's clear that we already have vigorous trade with Mexico. The question is: won't we all be better off if we have some type of agreement that addresses market demands and trade in an effective, controlled manner?

There's significantly more to be gained from a NAFTA than there is to be lost. However, any agreement must be a win-win situation for producers in both nations. A good NAFTA agreement will benefit farmers in both our countries, but the agreement has to be one that is livable on both sides of the border. One that isn't simply won't be accepted.

Jack Laurie
Jack Laurie, President
Michigan Farm Bureau

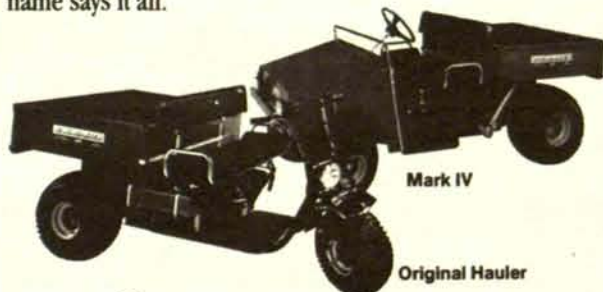
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In Brief...

February Farm Prices Up 2.9 Percent From January

The index of prices received by U.S. farmers for their products in February was up 2.9 percent from the January level but was down 1.4 percent from February 1991, USDA has announced.

Higher prices in February for cattle, hogs, wheat and tomatoes were offset by decreased prices of milk, eggs, cotton and strawberries, USDA said in its monthly Agricultural Prices Report. All feed grain prices except barley increased during February. Wheat prices were up for the seventh consecutive month. The price of rice decreased moderately.

Wet weather in Florida hampered marketing of tomatoes and contributed to reduced supplies and high prices, while milk prices drifted lower as demand for cheese and other manufactured products weakened. Lower prices for hogs, cattle and cotton were responsible for most of the decline from last year, USDA said.

Market Basket Survey Shows Stable Food Prices

A recent survey reveals that consumers paid about the same in the first quarter of 1992 for 16 popular food choices as they paid in the fourth quarter of 1991, the American Farm Bureau reports.

The market-basket of 16 items surveyed on a quarterly basis averaged \$29.58, just two cents higher than the average in the last quarterly survey in 1991. The same items averaged a total of \$30.95 in the first quarter of last year.

Compared to a year ago, meat, egg and dairy prices were generally lower. Pork chops came in three cents higher per pound, while bacon was 39 cents lower. Apples were the same price as last year and potatoes were almost a quarter cheaper. Bread and flour were both a few cents higher. Mazola and Crisco oils were substantially cheaper but mayonnaise was the same as in both the first and last quarters of 1991.

Record Feed Grain Use Projected for 1991-92

U.S. feed grain consumption is projected at a record 186.7 million tons in 1991-92, boosted by larger livestock inventories, higher wheat prices and a continued expansion of food, seed and industrial uses, according to *Knight Ridder*.

But, U.S. feed grain exports are forecast to fall to 45.7 million tons, down nearly 6 million tons from last year, "in the face of rising foreign exports and weak import prospects in some critical markets," such as the former Soviet Union, USDA said in a summary of its Feed Outlook and Situation Report.

Despite the drop in exports, total U.S. feed grain "disappearance" is forecast slightly higher than a year ago and is expected to exceed 1991 output by 14 million tons, the lowest since 1975-76, USDA said.

ANR Week Program to Discuss Farm Prices, Taxes, and Projected Land Values

The extent to which market prices for dairy, livestock and grain will change from earlier forecasts will be discussed March 24 at Michigan State University as part of the agricultural economics program during Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Week, March 21-28.

During the program, which begins at 10 a.m. in the MSU Kellogg Center, agricultural economists will focus on current and projected commodity prices and the outlook for farmland values and property taxes.

Included in the afternoon program will be discussion about changes in the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (P.A. 116) and a new Michigan land value survey. The annual farm management luncheon will be part of the program that will honor Michigan's farm managers of the year and businesses that have been patrons of MSU's Telfarm program.

The luncheon speaker will be Gordon Guyer, MSU vice president for government affairs, who will discuss the effect that a changing political system is having on the land-grant university.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$11 per person. Reservations can be made by calling Daune Powell at MSU, (517) 353-9848. More information about the day's activity can be obtained from Ralph Hepp at (517) 353-7185.

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Legal Services Corporation Reform

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) has introduced legislation known as the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Reauthorization Bill. Amendments will be offered by Rep. Bill McCollum (R-FL) and Rep. Charlie Stenholm (D-TX). Farm Bureau has gone on record opposed to the original legislation, but in support of the amendments that will be introduced by McCollum and Stenholm.

These amendments will win reform on the House floor for a bill that is compatible with the policies of the American Farm Bureau and the Michigan Farm Bureau.

The following excerpts are of a letter from John Datt, executive director of the AFBF Washington office, to Rep. Frank on the McCollum-Stenholm amendments in which farmers have particular interest, for insertion into the subcommittee hearing on this matter.

Section 3 - Theft and Fraud

We support this section and commend your strong position supporting the language. Providing the Legal Services Corporation with the authority to sanction grantees found guilty of fraud, theft and other wrongdoing is an important improvement in the LSC Act.

Section 4 - Solicitation

Farm Bureau has testified previously that inappropriate client solicitation is a frequent abuse observed by farmers. This section prohibits such solicitation by holding LSC-funded attorneys to the same ethical standard as that required of non-LSC attorneys by the ABA Model Code of Professional Responsibility. Farm Bureau does not oppose "client outreach" when it is informational in nature, but in many cases, LSC staff attorneys use these visits to inappropriately recruit clients for lawsuits and other actions against the employer.

Section 5 - Plaintiff Identification

Farm Bureau supports the requirement that LSC staff attorneys be required to identify plaintiffs and the facts in a case prior to filing a lawsuit against the employer. Farm Bureau believes that John Doe and notice pleadings, in cases which may lack valid plaintiffs, have provided a tool for "fishing expeditions" by LSC-funded attorneys bent on assembling large numbers of plaintiffs through early review of wage and hour records and other discoverable documents.

Section 6 - Lobbying

We strongly support language which closes the loophole in the present LSC statute that allows LSC-funded staff to lobby legislatures and challenge agency rule making on behalf of eligible clients. It is entirely inappropriate for taxpayer money to be used, with limited congressional or administrative oversight, to promote agendas not endorsed or enacted by Congress.

Section 7 - Timekeeping

Farm Bureau believes that increased accountability for LSC-funded staff attorneys and programs may be the most important objective of the reform effort. Requiring LSC programs and attorneys to account for their time and expenditures is key to accountability. Presently, LSC attorneys are the only attorneys whose time is unaccountable to either client or employer. Further, most LSC attorneys admit that they already keep time sheets for purposes of recovering fees in successful litigation. This information would provide an important tool for Congress, the LSC Board and grantees themselves to measure employee/program performance and client needs.

Section 8 - Local Authority

Farm Bureau believes that permitting local boards the widest possible latitude to set case priorities is important to accurately reflect real community client needs, as opposed to the staff attorneys' perceptions of needs. We believe that this will assist in reducing "impact" litigation and enhance the delivery of day-to-day legal services to the poor.

Section 9 - Regulation of Non-Public Resources

Requiring that all funds used by programs be subject to the same legal restrictions is vitally important for increased accountability and uniform performance. Placing restrictions on federal funds but permitting free license to engage in activities otherwise prohibited under the Act with private funds would render the Act meaningless.

However, Farm Bureau recognizes that new programs which do not receive any federal monies may be established to engage in activities outside the LSC Act, such as lobbying, prohibited class action litigation, union organizing and other activities. Clearly, we have no objection to the creation of such organizations so long as they are truly and completely separate from taxpayer-funded grantee structures.

Section 11 - Competition

Competitive bidding is also a key component in increasing accountability of grantees. This would assure annual review of a program's competence and effectiveness. Presently, presumptive refunding adversely affects productivity and accountability. Further, competitive bidding would enhance innovative and creative delivery of legal services.

Section 12 - Attorney's fees

Under today's legal services structures, farmers sued by LSC-funded attorneys pay as many as four times: first, through their taxes; second, to their defense attorneys and, when the case is settled or the plaintiff prevails; third, damage/settlement costs; and, fourth, attorneys' fees to the LSC grantee. This is grossly unfair.

Further, we believe that recovery of attorneys' fees by private parties which prevail should be automatic. This would act as a brake on harassing and frivolous litigation and force LSC staff attorneys to assess each case carefully on its merits rather than on its impact value.

Section 13 - Class Actions

We believe that prohibiting class action suits is an important reform. Presently, Farm Bureau and the agricultural community spend excessive amounts of resources contesting class action suits brought by LSC grantees. Such actions are more aimed at changing laws and regulations, rather than on solving the day-to-day legal problems of the poor.

MFB POSITION

Farm Bureau opposes Rep. Frank's bill, HR-2039, but supports amendments to the bill by Reps. Bill McCollum (R-FL) and Charlie Stenholm (D-TX).

ACTION NEEDED

Urge your congressman to vote for the amendments offered by Reps. Bill McCollum (R-FL) and Charlie Stenholm (D-TX).

MFB CONTACT

Howard Kelly, Ext. 2044

Scrap Tires

MFB POSITION

MFB sought the amendments to exempt scrap tires when used on a farm for securing stored feed, and supports the bill.

MFB CONTACT

Vicki Pontz, Ext. 2046

Rep. Beverly Bodem (R-Alpena) sponsored legislation, H.B. 5315, which would exempt certain users of scrap tires from various state regulations. The measure would provide the exemption for those using up to 3,000 tires on a farm for securing stored feed. The legislation is intended to address concerns with the Scrap Tire Regulatory Act which imposes restrictions on the accumulation of scrap tires such as registration, bonding, and mosquito control. The package was passed unanimously in the House, and now goes to the Senate for further action.

Local Pesticide Ordinances

MFB POSITION

Farm Bureau policy opposes local regulation of pesticides and therefore strongly supported SB 643 as introduced. However, in the spirit of compromise and in an effort to move the bill through the Legislature, Farm Bureau has agreed to support the substitute.

ACTION NEEDED

Please contact your state representative and explain how important it is to Michigan agriculture to have consistent, state-wide, comprehensive pesticide regulations.

MFB CONTACT

Vicki Pontz, Ext. 2046

Senate Bill 643, introduced by Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison), would preempt a local unit of government from enacting or enforcing an ordinance that contradicts or conflicts with the Michigan Pesticide Control Act (MPCA).

Amendments added in substitute #4 (S-4) would allow a local unit of government to pass a pesticide ordinance if unreasonable adverse effects on the public health or environment will exist within the local unit of government. The ordinance must be approved by the director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture within 90 days.

Also included in S-4:

Nothing prevents the director of MDA from contracting with a local unit of government to act as its agent for the purpose of enforcing the Michigan Pesticide Control Act.

The MDA may promulgate rules providing for notification or posting designed to inform persons entering certain public buildings or areas where pesticides have been applied.

The MDA shall develop a program on pesticide container recycling and disposal.

SB 643 (S-4) was reported out of the Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Wildlife Committee on Feb. 25 and passed the full Senate March 3, by a 28 to 10 margin. The bill will now be considered by the House of Representatives.

State Inheritance Tax

MFB POSITION

Farm Bureau supports the measure.

MFB CONTACT

Ron Nelson, Ext. 2043

Senator Nick Smith (R-Addison) has introduced legislation to phase out the Michigan Inheritance Tax. Under terms of the legislation, a \$100,000 exemption starting Oct. 1, 1994 would be granted, increasing to \$200,000 starting May 15, 1995. The measure calls for total elimination of Michigan's Inheritance Tax by Jan. 1, 1996. The Inheritance Tax payments would be due two months after death. The bill has passed the Senate and moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Legislature has expressed some concern about the potential loss of revenue which is estimated up to \$80 million. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Lansing) offered a substitute bill which would have eliminated the State Inheritance Tax for family owned business and farms only, however, that measure was defeated.

US-23 Highway Bypass

MFB POSITION

Farm Bureau supports the long bypass alternative which connects US-23 from I-75, south of Standish to the M-65/US-23 junction, near AuGres.

MFB CONTACT

Darcy Cypher, Ext. 2048

Northeast Michigan's US-23 highway north of Bay City has, for many years, been recognized as needing improvement. The present highway alignment is not able to safely accommodate the large numbers of vehicles which travel it.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has been completing research to establish the best improvement approach and is considering three alternatives:

- 1) Long bypass connecting from I-75 south of Standish to the US-23/M-65 junction, near AuGres
- 2) Short bypass around the city of Standish
- 3) Widening the present US-23 corridor through Standish.

The department has submitted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document to the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) and expects to receive approval to proceed with the project soon. After federal approval is received, the EIS will be available for public review. A public hearing dealing with the US-23 project is expected to take place sometime in April.

Improved highway access is critical to northeast Michigan's economic future and has been supported by Gov. Engler.

MFB's Public Affairs Division
(517) 323-7000

Weather

Michigan and Major Commodity Area Extended Weather Outlook

T - Temp.	3/15 3/31	3/15 5/30
P - Precip.	T P	T P
Michigan	A N/B	A N/B
W. Corn Belt	A N	A N/B
E. Corn Belt	A N	A B
Wint. Wheat Belt	A A	A N
Spr. Wheat Belt	A B	A B
Pac. NW Wheat	A B	A N/B
Delta	A A/N	A/N B/N
Southeast	A N	N N
San Joaquin	N A	A N

A-Above Average, B-Below Average, N-Normal, MA-Much Above, MB-Much Below, NP-No Precip. Source: National Weather Office

30 and 90-Day Outlook, Warm and Drier Than Normal

February ended with few weather surprises as temperatures continued much above normal. For the month, temperatures averaged from 3 - 8 degrees F above normal, following a pattern of milder than normal weather since December.

The warm weather has reduced or eliminated snow cover across much of central and southern lower Michigan, and caused abnormal early initial growth in some over-wintering crops and perennials. Precipitation for the month was generally heavier than in January, with totals ranging from above normal in the Upper Peninsula to near to below normal in the Lower Peninsula.

Michigan Weather Summary

2/1/92 to 2/29/92	Temperature		Precipitation	
	Observed Mean	Dev. From Normal	Actual (inch.)	Dev. From Norm
Alpena	23.9	+4.8	1.53	+0.09
Bad Axe	25.8	+2.9	1.48	+0.11
Detroit	31.5	+6.3	1.39	-0.19
Escanaba	23.7	+5.5	1.25	-0.27
Grand Rapids	31.0	+8.2	1.06	-0.61
Houghton Lake	25.4	+6.2	1.30	-0.14
Lansing	30.4	+7.0	1.36	-0.69
Marquette	14.8	+3.0	1.98	-0.15
Muskegon	30.2	+5.8	1.33	-0.40
Saginaw	28.5	+6.0	1.72	+0.35
Sault Ste. Marie	18.6	+3.8	1.25	-0.27
South Bend	33.6	+7.3	1.70	+0.03
Traverse City	27.1	+6.4	1.53	+0.12
Vestaburg	28.3	+5.8	1.39	0.00

The latest National Weather Service 30-day and 90-day outlook is calling for continued above normal temperatures through the month of May, thanks to the continuation of El-Nino conditions in the central and eastern Pacific.

Precipitation, which generally begins to increase in March, is expected to range in the normal to below normal categories. On the surface, this outlook definitely favors an earlier than normal start to spring fieldwork and planting. However, early warming trends may also lead to increased risk of freeze damage to crops as they begin to lose their winter hardiness prematurely. Daily risks of freezing temperatures persists into May and even into June in some locations.

Jeff Andresen, Ag Meteorologist, MSU

ACA Corn Test Plots Convincing

Contest Winners Average Yield Increases of 15.24

Winners of the 1991 Michigan ACA "See The Difference" yield contest have been announced by Grower Service Corp.

Although the statewide increase averaged 6.87 bushels per acre, our four winners averaged an increased yield of 15.24 bushels—and took home U.S. Savings Bonds worth \$500 for first place, and bonds worth \$250 for second in their region. The winners are:

Thumb Region—Ed Tschirhart, Port Hope (an increase of 24.15 bushels per acre) and Howard Rhein, Richmond (an increase of 18.78 bushels).

Southwest Region—Don Radewald, Niles (an increase of 9.70 bushels per acre) and Dale Gemmen, Allendale (an increase of 8.33 bushels).

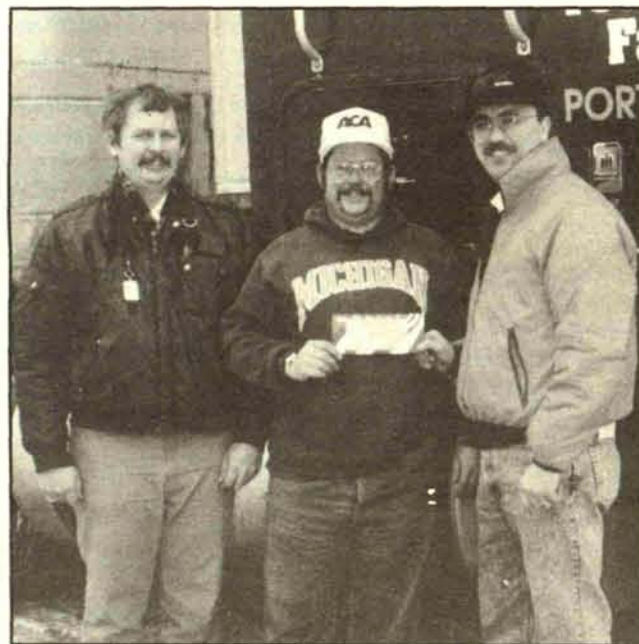
"I'm really convinced," says Tschirhart. "I could see the difference. I'm going to use it again this year." In comparing root systems not treated with ACA to those treated with the product, Tschirhart says, "It was like looking at your little finger and your thumb."

Radewald admits that results can vary from year to year, but still calls ACA "money in the bank."

Rhein, who has used ACA for about four years, says simply, "I don't know what it does, but it works."

Gemmen, who was pleased with his increased yield, says he would like to see more data on test results.

Although soil and weather conditions can affect ACA's per-acre yield increase, tests show that ACA has been proven to develop bigger and stronger root systems that seek out moisture in the soil and reduce stress to the plant on corn, wheat, soybeans and vegetables. ACA also increases standability and harvestability.



\$500 U.S. SAVINGS BOND WINNERS—Ed Tschirhart (above, middle) with Grower Service Rep John Dorman and Alan McTaggart, Thumb Farm Service, Port Hope; Dan Radewald (lower, left) and Grower Service Rep Dick Demski.



\$250 SAVINGS BOND WINNERS—(left) John Groenink, of Groenink's Elevator, Nuncia, with Dale Gemmen and Grower Service Rep Heidi Davey; (right) Kevin Borgacz, of Farmers Elevator, Richmond, with Howard Rhein and Grower Service Rep Norm Tanis.



National Forage Meeting Scheduled

The American Forage and Grassland Council's (AFGC) hay contest will give Michigan farmers the opportunity to prove they can make hay just as well as any producer during the AFGC national meeting, April 6-8 in Grand Rapids.

The competition is open to farmers who are AFGC members or AFGC affiliate members, with the winners receiving cash awards, trophies or certificates. Michigan State University agronomist John Durling is helping to coordinate convention activities, and he's hopeful Michigan producers will enter the competition.

Contest classes include: tropical or semi-tropical perennial grasses (Bermuda grasses or Bahia grasses); tropical or semi-tropical annual grasses (Sudangrass and millet); temperate perennial grasses (fescue, orchard grass or wheat grasses); temperate annual grasses (oats and annual ryegrass); first cutting alfalfa, second and later alfalfa cuttings; other legumes; and legume-grass mixtures.

Entry forms can be obtained by writing to Hay Contest, Outreach Communications, 312 Agriculture Hall, MSU East Lansing, MI 48824. The results of the competition and the winning hay samples will be on display during Tuesday and Wednesday of the convention.

The meeting is expected to attract national and international forage growers, researchers and industry experts, who will provide practical information about improved production, feeding management and marketing of forages.

A highlight of the convention will be the production and marketing roundtable discussion by five of the nation's top forage producers who grow forages for their beef and dairy operations or as a cash crop. A trade show featuring forage equipment and supply manufacturers from the U.S. and Canada will also be part of the convention.

The activities during the first day will also include tours of the Terry Smit dairy operation near Martin and the forage research facilities at the MSU Kellogg Biological Station.

Conference registration, excluding lodging, meals and tours is \$75 for all three days, or \$25 for one day. Details about the program and information about Michigan AFGC membership can be obtained from Durling at MSU by calling (517) 355-0264.

5 Animal Rights Terrorists continued...

According to DPS's Lt. William Wardwell, who is heading the investigation along with the Michigan State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the individuals responsible will be facing at least three felony counts for arson, breaking and entering, and malicious destruction, as well as possible federal charges, since the group responsible is believed to have crossed state lines.

Legislation pending at the federal level would make such incidence a federal offense for breaking into any animal research facility, and, according to MFB President Jack Laurie, is needed to curb similar future animal right terrorist activities.

"Successful passage of this legislation will send a clear signal to A.L.F. and so-called 'legal animal rights groups' that serve as their mouth piece," said Laurie. "When those responsible for this senseless, criminal

activity are caught, full restitution should be made to the university and taxpayers, and maximum criminal charges filed to remove these activist who are a threat to society."

According to Wardwell, there's an underlying message for Michigan farmers surfacing as the investigation continues. "We're finding that university people are now remembering being asked questions about the mink program," said Wardwell. "There were people asking questions about the mink program, probably two or three weeks prior to this event.

"At the time, it didn't seem that unusual to them, but now that this has happened, it appears those questions were connected somehow. Farmers should realize that these organized animal terrorist activities involve quite a bit of background work and planning," he concluded.

Below left, investigators sort through the remains of room 132 Anthony Hall to determine how the fire was started. The office housed the mink research center at MSU. Although some of the data was recovered, over 30 years of Dr. Aulerich's research data was destroyed and cannot be recovered, according to MSU personnel. Animal Science Department Chairperson, Dr. Maynard Hogberg, during a news conference (below), said the mink research program will continue, despite the setback caused by A.L.F. terrorists activities..

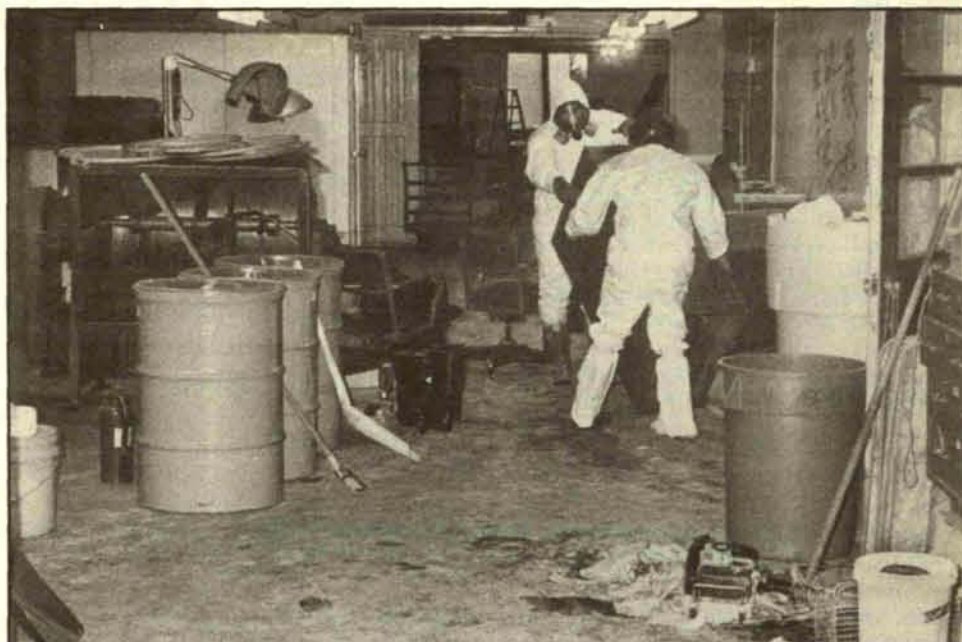
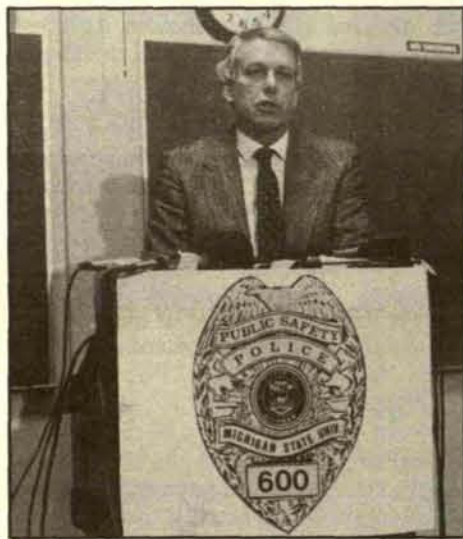
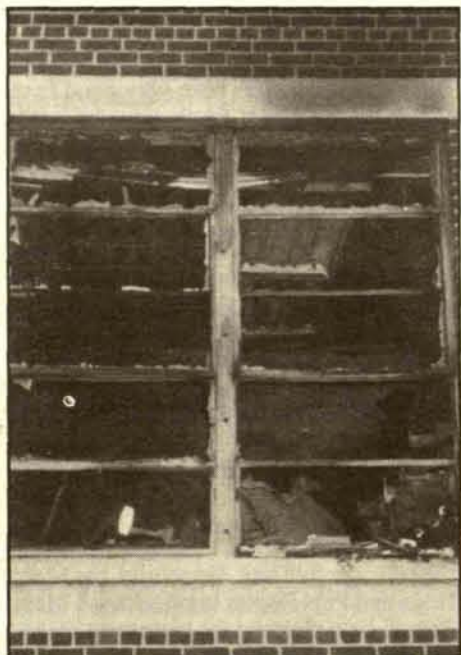
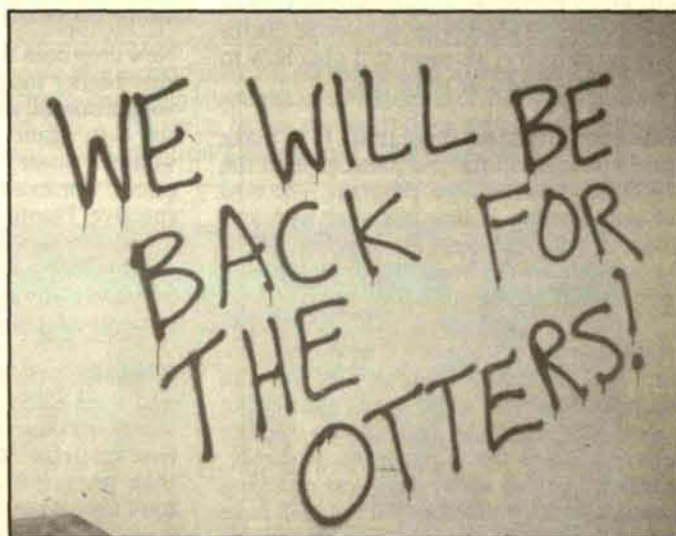


Photo Courtesy of MSU Outreach Communications

Above right, MSU workers, dressed in protective gear, spent two days cleaning up the damage caused by the sulfuric acid that was poured over feeding equipment at the mink research farm facility causing \$25,000 damage.

An ominous sign at the mink research farm (at right) suggests that the group may have future plans.



Tips to Guard Against Animal Rights Terrorists Activities on Your Farm

Recent events at Michigan State University may cause you to wonder what, if anything, you can do to protect your farmstead from a similar incidence. According to Steve Kopperud of the Animal Industry Foundation, the number of incidences in rural areas is on the rise.

"In the last six months, these types of activities have been particularly unnerving, because they're rural," explained Kopperud. "Farms typically don't have the security found at an urban bio-medical research facility, so consequently that makes those operations more vulnerable to attack."

Kopperud says there are a number of simple, quick and easy steps you can take including:

- Take a hard look at your facility and analyze what, if any, security systems you may have now.
- Install on-site security systems around livestock facilities.
- Install heavier locks on livestock facilities.
- Install motion sensors that trip on lights automatically when activated.
- Get and keep a good farm-yard watch dog.
- Be leery of strangers who may appear to be just curious urban

neighbors, who start asking questions that normally don't get asked, such as: what kind of animals are you raising, what kind of facilities do you have, what kind of drugs you use, who do you sell your animals to, etc.?

- Encourage your employees to keep an eye open for automobiles spending an extraordinary amount of time driving past your farm, or someone parked, observing your operation.
- Get to know your local police a lot better than you currently do. Express your concerns and ask for their input and ideas.
- Under no circumstances should you take the law into your own hands.

Kopperud advises that farmers shouldn't over-react, but at the same time they need to take animal rights terrorists seriously.

"They spend as much time as they need to, casing out an operation before initiating their activities," said Kopperud. "Experience has shown that groups like the Animal Liberation Front (A.L.F.) work quickly, inflict maximum damage, and then get out quickly, leaving as little physical damage as possible."

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Market Outlook

Corn

The 1992 Prospective Planting Report will be released by the USDA on March 28. Estimates are that planted corn acres will be up 2-4 million acres from last year's nearly 76 million. These extra acres will be due to lower set-aside requirements, less winter wheat planted, and a corn to soybean price ratio that favors corn. Planting weather and price changes may end up changing the final numbers, but make sure you check out the report on March 28 to check for pricing opportunities.

With the extra acres and a normal yield, the odds are that ending stocks will be larger in 1992-93 than we expected for 1991-92. This means there is a significant chance prices could be in the low \$2 range at harvest. While we will probably have prices closer to \$2.25 at harvest and have had chances to forward price at over \$2.50 for harvest delivery, we must still plan how to handle the downside price risk.

One very important thing to do is to make sure you sign up for and participate in the 1992 government corn program. The cost of participating is low this year with set-aside at only 5 percent. For a typical Michigan producer the breakeven participation price would be about \$2.60.

It still appears it could pay to continue holding some of your old crop corn into the spring. With the tight projected ending stocks, it will not take a real serious weather scare to move the markets up. However, consider making some sales now or taking some put option protection if you still have a large portion of your old crop remaining.

Dr. Jim Hilker, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends (long term)

Wheat	?
Corn	↑
Soybeans	↑ ?
Hogs	↓
Cattle	?

Index: ↑ = Higher Prices; ↓ = Lower Prices; TP= Topping; BT= Bottoming; ? = Unsure

New crop corn forward prices are considerably higher than what would be expected with a normal corn yield. While we could see even higher prices this spring with a weather scare, we may also see lower prices. For example, if the March 28 Prospective Planting Report shows over 80 million acres will be planted and we have a good planting season, prices could be significantly lower. The moisture situation looks good over the Corn Belt.

Forward pricing opportunities around and over \$2.50 per bushel for corn are worth strong consideration. Often it is best to price into an up market rather than try to hit the top with everything; too often it never reaches "the top" and it rarely stays there long.

Soybeans

Will the Prospective Planting Report show more or less than 58 million acres of soybeans planted? Last year, 59.1 million acres of soys were planted in the U.S. The corn/soybean price ratio would argue we would see a lot less soybean acreage this spring. However, the low planted winter wheat acreage and the low cotton prices would suggest there is a lot of acres to be planted to soys.

If we plant around 58 million acres this spring, I would expect prices in 1992-93 to be about the same as this year. At this point, the market is offering forward contracts for new crop beans at levels that would suggest either 1992 acreage several million acres below 1991 or is offering a large weather premium. Strongly consider some new crop soybean forward contracts.

The South American crop seems to be doing quite well. Argentina is expected to have a

Wheat

At this point, most of the wheat pricing decisions concern new crop; most or all of the old crop has been moved. As usual, there are two sides to the story in trying to forecast wheat production this year.

Given the higher prices and the low winter wheat plantings, spring wheat plantings are expected to be up 1.5-2.5 million acres, or 8-13 percent. On the other hand, the driest part of the country as of the first week in March was the spring wheat areas.

On the winter wheat side of the equation, we had fewer acres planted and a poor fall.

Hogs

Slaughter was up about 8 percent in February. While down from January, it still was considerably above the 5 percent suggested by the December Hogs and Pigs Report. The question now is what will the spring quarter bring.

The December Report showed fall farrowings up 4 percent which would mean prices in the \$38-\$43 range this spring. However, a survey done out of Missouri covering 10 states and having 93 respondents who work in the swine area suggests slaughter could be up 12 percent, which would mean prices in the low \$30s. While that is not the general consensus of the market, it does show

Cattle

The February USDA 7-State Cattle-On-Feed Report showed cattle in feedlots to be down 8 percent on Feb. 1. January placements were down 9 percent, and fed cattle marketings were up 2 percent, compared to 1991. Slaughter of all cattle has been running down 1-2 percent since mid-January.

Given these numbers, there does not seem to be any good forward pricing opportuni-

Table Egg

Allan Rahn and Henry Larzelere

Egg prices rebounded in early February into the upper 60 cent range, but have been declining since that time. Early March, table eggs (New York, Grade A, large white, in cartons, to retailers) are trading in the upper 50 cents per dozen range. In February, egg prices ranged from 7 cents to as much as 27 cents per dozen below a year ago. Higher primary feed ingredient prices -- corn and soybean meal -- also pushed egg production costs up 2 cents per dozen over last year.

Table egg production is running slightly over last year, but these market clearing price levels suggest that demand has also weakened. This is also supported by egg movement indicators. Movement of Eggs into Retail Channels Reports indicate that

FARM BUSINESS OUTLOOK

crop about the same size as last year's despite the flooded acres; Brazil is forecast to have between 100 and 140 million more bushels than last year. This will temper any weather scares this spring in the U.S. and, as we found out last year, soybeans can recover even after considerable stress.

Strong exports and the chance of some upward price movement on weather scares may still justify holding some of the old crop soys into the spring, but I would consider it quite risky to be carrying a large portion of the 91 crop.

But the moisture has been very good in the major winter wheat areas over the winter and there is the potential the poor stands last fall could recover to a large degree. The hazards now are strong winds and freezes.

The trade-offs now in pricing new crop wheat are decent contract prices now versus prices having considerable upside potential.

If your wheat crop looks good, consider some compromise, price a portion at today offerings, be ready to price some more into any weather rallies, and hold the rest to see what type of crop you have.

the considerable risk. Hopefully, the March Hogs and Pigs Report to be released March 28 will help clear up the picture.

In the meantime, consider some price protection if you cannot handle the price risk on all of your production, especially if we have any rallies before the report.

Be ready to take protection for the remainder of the year on a rally if the report is positive. Compare the numbers with the Missouri survey numbers which show about a 6-7 percent increase in third quarter slaughter and a 3-4 percent increase in slaughter the fourth quarter.

ties at this time out past April. Keep your marketings very current to take advantage of today's relatively good prices.

At this point, it appears we may dip under \$70 again late summer. Watch for rallies over \$70 to consider some forward contracting using the August futures. Fall futures also look low with a fair chance of moving back into the low \$70s.

retail movement is down 2-3 percent. This is also supported by the sharp increase in egg breaking activity that has taken place and an emerging frozen and dried egg stocks build-up trend. The number of eggs processed under federal inspection during the first six weeks of the year was 17 percent greater than during the similar 1991 period.

The seasonal demand strength that can be anticipated from the approaching Easter holiday -- April 19 -- is unlikely to materialize before mid-March. Expect egg prices in March to average in the upper 60 cent range, but are likely to decline abruptly after Easter and average around the 60 cent level during the second quarter of the year.

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Dairy Outlook – Cautiously Optimistic

Larry Hamm

Although farm prices are falling, there is good news coming out of the dairy product markets. Milk production seems to be under control so that dairy markets are stabilizing above support levels.

The recent drops in the Minnesota-Wisconsin (M-W) price assure that farm milk prices will fall the next few months. Further drops in the M-W are expected for February (announced March 5) and March (announced April 3). The M-W will likely drop another \$1 over the next couple of months. However, the M-W will not likely go below \$10.50. Last spring the M-W did not stop falling until it hit \$10.02. All indications are for prices to hold 50 cents 75 cents higher this spring over last year.

Expansion Slows

The market strength (relative to last year) is due to milk production trends. For all of 1991 milk production was unchanged from 1990. The milking herd is down 2 percent to 9.9 million cows this year over last year. The big pushers in milk production in the past have slowed down. California production is growing at a 2-4 percent increase which reflects productivity gains rather than rapid expansion. The state of Washington is in a similar position. Texas and Wisconsin production was lower in 1991 over 1990.

With cow numbers down, the momentum for big increases in milk production is not there. Milk production is following seasonal patterns. Warmer than normal weather has increased production in some areas. However, the warm weather has also increased ice cream consumption. Demand for most dairy products appears to be seasonally strong. Only butter continues to be a drag on the market.

All these conditions are leading to stronger dairy product markets. Both the cheese markets and the nonfat dry milk markets are trading above their CCC price support levels. Since October, the USDA has purchased virtually no powder or cheese surpluses. Uncommitted CCC inventories of both powder and cheese are very low. Given these market forces, the M-W cannot fall to the support price.

The industry is not out of the woods, yet. If production picks up and demand weakens, movement of excess milk to manufacturing plants will increase and could start moving the product markets lower. But, this year's situation appears positive. Because farm prices are lagging behind product prices, mailbox prices will fall the next few months. However, this year there does seem to be a brighter light at the end of the seasonal price tunnel.

Michigan Farm Bureau Membership Report

	State Status 3/6/92	
	1991/92	1990/91
New	10,668	10,840
Renewals	93,128	89,837
Total	103,796	100,677
Goal	120,000	114,500
% Goal	86.50%	87.93%
Need	16,204	13,823
Target (target is farm-member objective)	45,427	45,709
% Target	92.86%	93.12%

Martin Row Cleaner - an Answer to Planting in Heavy Residue

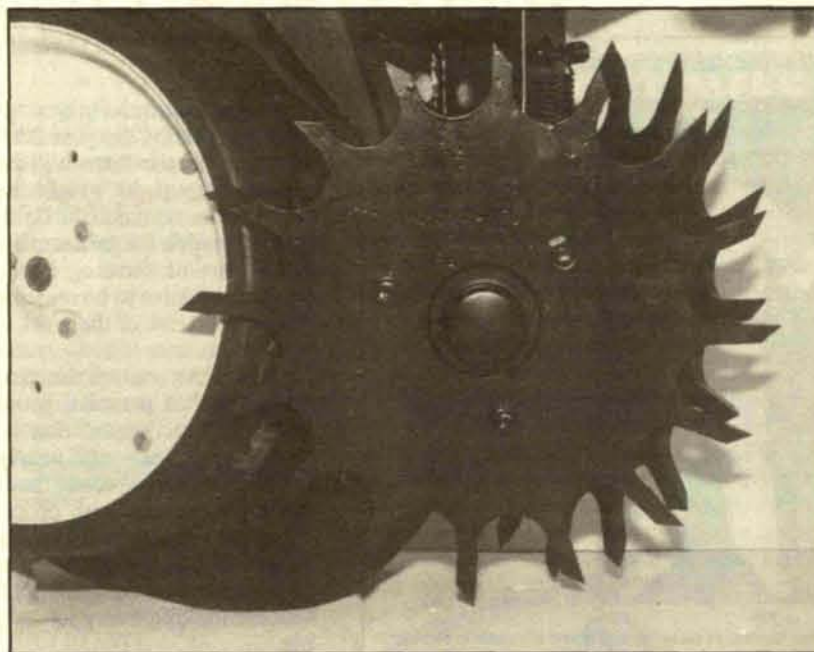
Martin Row Cleaners, a revolutionary patented device developed by Kentucky farmer John Martin, rakes away residue as it lightly tills the seed zone. The angled double-toothed wheels are designed to be mounted in tandem with seed opener discs to stretch residue and allow it to be cleanly cut.

After four years of testing and fine tuning, Martin began marketing his row cleaner, with exceptional response. There are units operating in 15 states as well as Canada just in the first year of sales. The row cleaner works in no-till, ridge-till and minimum-till conditions as well, removing trash and preparing an ideal seedbed.

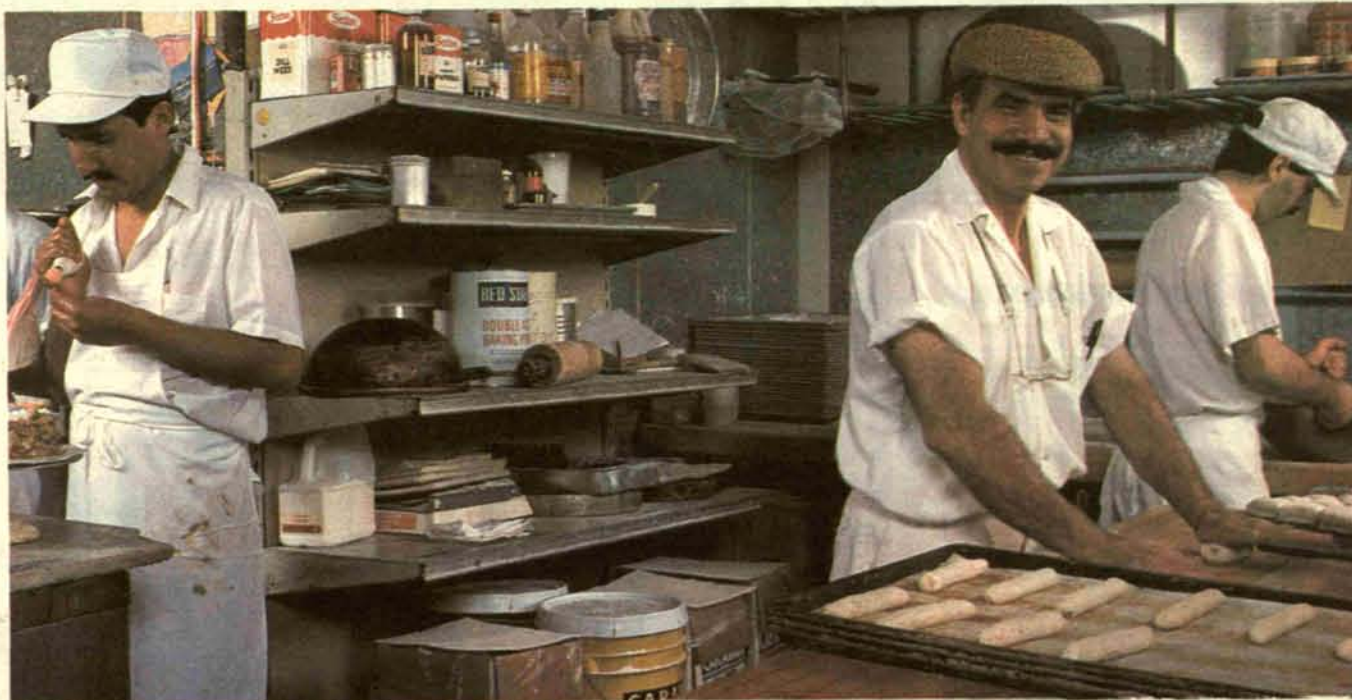
The teeth on the wheels intersect to aid in self-cleaning and also allow for complete clearing of the seed zone. The soil in the seed zone is also thoroughly worked to a depth of approximately 1/2" above where the seed is being placed. This gives loosened soil for seed covering and helps to eliminate sidewall compaction but still maintain a "true V" for the seed to rest in. Because the area loosened is wider than a coultter, the seed discs are not forced to open unloosened soil.

According to Martin, precise placement of the clearing wheels very near the front of the opener discs allows for the residue to be cut while it is being stretched. The teeth

New Product Profile



on the raking wheels also extend past the planter gauge wheel. Because the gauge wheel is actually operating inside the circumference of the raking wheel, very little material gets a chance to follow the teeth back around. For more information about the Martin Row Cleaner call 1-800-366-5817.



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.

Protecting the interests of small business by understanding the interests of small business...



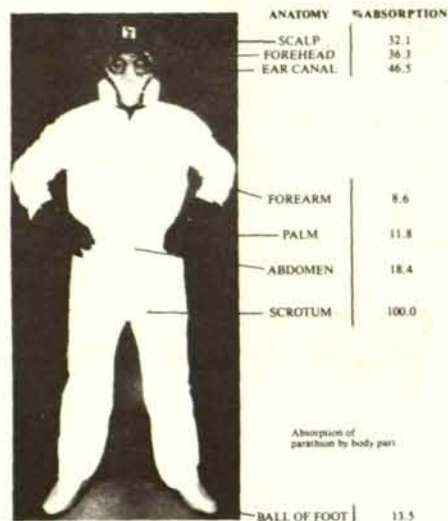
WHERE BELONGING MAKES A DIFFERENCE.



8

Prevent Injury and Illness With Personal Protective Equipment

Why you need protection from pesticides



This illustration (based on absorption of parathion by body part) shows how susceptible your body is to chemical absorption. The worst mistake made working with ag chemicals is wearing leather/cotton gloves, leather boots or fabric farm caps ... all of which absorb chemicals and re-contaminate you with the chemicals.

An agricultural futurist predicted not long ago that by the year 2000, all dangerous jobs on the farm will be handled by robots. Perhaps he's right; but until those robot-farmers take to the fields, people will be responsible for the hazardous duties that are a part of farming every day -- and people will have to be responsible for minimizing the risk of the work at hand.

One way to control the risk is to make proper use of personal protective equipment. It is estimated that nearly half of farming injuries -- and nearly all farm-related illnesses -- could be prevented or made less severe with proper protection. Agriculture needs to follow the example of other industries, which have found personal protective equipment to be their best tool for making every job as safe as possible.

What are the hazards you face on the farm? Dust, chemicals, toxic gases, flying or fall-

ing objects, hot surfaces, sharp or cutting objects, loud noise, and more. What kind of equipment will help you face those hazards? Here's a brief list:

Head protection

Wear a hard hat or bump cap when there's a risk of head injury -- any time you tackle such jobs as building construction, maintenance, or repair; tree trimming or cutting; electrical work (wearing nonconductive headgear); or any work in tight places.

Eye Protection

Wear safety goggles, safety glasses, or a face shield when operating shop equipment, spray painting, applying farm chemicals, working in heavy dust, welding, or chipping.

Hearing Protection

Wear earmuffs or ear inserts when operating noisy machinery, shooting, using power or chain saws, or when milling feed or grain. Wear them also in confinement housing when doing such chores as swine feeding.



From Farm Bureau Insurance

Lung Protection

Use a filter mask, chemical cartridge respirator, gas mask, or self-contained breathing device when applying toxic chemicals, spray painting, entering confined spaces with toxic gases or oxygen deficit, in animal confinement buildings, or in areas that contain bothersome allergens. Be sure you use the appropriate respirator for the job, and make sure it has been fit-tested for you.

Hand Protection

Use protective gloves and barrier creams when handling and applying farm chemicals, performing rough, greasy, or messy jobs, welding, or when using solvents, heavy detergents, or other chemicals. Match your protection to the hazards you're dealing with.

Skin Protection

Wear liquid-proof gear -- boots, gloves, spray suits, aprons, hats, coveralls -- when handling, mixing, and applying farm chemicals. Follow label suggestions.

Foot and Toe Protection

Wear safety shoes or boots on all jobs, but especially when operating power mowers, moving heavy parts or materials, handling animals, or operating farm equipment.

Four of Farm Bureau's Finest . . .

Rus Gardner 1991 Distinguished Sales Award



Oakland County agent Rus Gardner continues to break company records with his outstanding sales and service. For the fifth year in a row, he has earned the Distinguished Sales Award, recognizing him as our top agent in the state. He has reached levels of production that are unmatched in company history.

Charlie Elzinga 1991 Elton R. Smith Award



Charlie Elzinga, an agent in Charlevoix for over 30 years, received this important award for his dedication to his profession, his community, and Michigan Farm Bureau. The annual award, named in honor of past MFB president, Elton Smith, recognizes Charlie as a highly-regarded leader in Farm Bureau and the community.

In each generation, there are men and women who strive for excellence. Farm Bureau Insurance is fortunate to have so many of them, including the four pictured here.

They are recipients of four major awards presented at the company's 1992 sales convention, held recently in Traverse City.

These four, and our more than 400 other agents in Michigan, are a big reason why Farm Bureau Insurance is a leading insurer throughout the state.

Tom Carter, ChFC, CLU 1991 Distinguished Management Award



This prestigious award recognizes Tom Carter as our top agency manager in Michigan. Tom, who manages 21 agents in Saginaw, Bay, and Arenac Counties, also earned this top award in 1982 and 1987. Tom's quality management is reflected by his agency's outstanding sales and service, and his development of new agents.

Margaret Dziadziola 1991 Michigan Farm Bureau Membership Award



Wayne County agent Margaret Dziadziola earned this major award for her outstanding membership work last year. The award honors the agent who produced the most new Michigan Farm Bureau memberships during the past year. As our top membership producer of 1991, Margaret signed up 203 new MFB members last year.

Four award winners
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Farm Banks Outperforming Others in a Number of Categories

U.S. farm banks are "among the strongest institutions in the banking system," as measured by a number of different financial ratios, USDA announced in a summary of its Agricultural Income and Finance Report.

"Annualized mid-1991 results indicate a return on assets of 1.1 percent at farm banks, well above the low of 0.4 percent in 1986 and the current industry average of 0.6 percent," USDA said. Similarly, farm bank return on equity at mid-year was 11.4 percent, compared with small non-agricultural banks at 10.4 percent.

"Farm banks also were more highly capitalized with a capital-to-asset ratio of 10.2 percent, compared with 9.1 percent at other small banks," USDA said. "The number of farm bank failures -- 10 in 1991 -- indicates a general absence of serious financial problems among farm banks."

Loan-to-deposit ratios at farm banks were 56 percent at mid-year 1991, up one percent from a year earlier. However, farm banks "still showed ability...to extend additional credit," USDA said.

Only 2.2 percent of farm bank loans were non-performing at mid-1991. Charge-offs of farm non-real estate loans were only 0.1 percent of all such loans through mid-1991.

Dairy Refund Program Changes Announced

March 16, Deadline Quickly Approaching, for Signed Applications

Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan has announced a revision of the Dairy Refund Payment Program (DRPP) to allow additional persons to receive payment as long as there's no increase in that dairy operation's production or number of cows.

The revised policy will make those dairy operators previously ineligible for refunds, eligible under the DRPP when another person was added to or removed from the operation.

This change, Madigan said, "will make our rules simpler and more equitable for dairy-men who made a good-faith effort to hold the line on production and allow them to receive assessment refunds."

Adding or removing persons to those shown as marketing milk for commercial purposes from the dairy unit will not be considered a change in operation if the persons being added or removed do not have their own dairy cows that will be combined with or removed from the dairy cows already in the operation.

There are two exceptions:

1. A minor child of the dairy owner, who is involved in a 4-H, FFA or other educational project, may be added to the dairy unit along with a small number of dairy cows.
2. Two individual dairy producers who are married during the base or refund period may combine their dairy units and dairy

cows without it being considered a new operation.

Also, a transfer of milk marketing history will be permitted if all the dairy cattle and dairy equipment are transferred to a family member. Transfer of the land which provided feed for the dairy operation and the dairy facility is no longer a requirement for a transfer of milk marketing history to occur.

Dairy producers should contact the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office before if they have not applied or been disapproved because of previous policy. **The deadline to file a signed application is March 16, 1992.**

53 USDA County Offices Targeted For "Speedy Closure" as the Budget Axe Falls ... None in Michigan, Yet

Sen. Richard Lugar has identified 53 high-cost USDA county offices which he has recommended to be closed, and said his staff would continue to look for other USDA field operations that could either be consolidated or eliminated.

Lugar, (R-Indiana), told reporters he targeted the 53 offices because each cost more to operate than they paid out in benefits to farmers. He called upon USDA Secretary Edward Madigan to move quickly to close the offices, most of which are in North Carolina, Kentucky and West Virginia, or explain their continued operation.

"It will be difficult, under any circumstances, to justify maintaining these offices," Lugar said, in a letter to Madigan. "Absent a compelling reason to continue operating these costly offices, I recommend a speedy closure of these facilities through your administrative powers."

Lugar, the top Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee, has made reducing waste at USDA one of his top priorities this year. A lot of his motivation, he said, "comes from making sure that friends of the family do at least the first cut" on USDA's budget.

Noting the large U.S. deficit, Lugar said, it is inevitable that USDA will come under further pressure to trim fat. "If we don't do it now, people will come along later and take larger chunks," he said.

Other states with county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices that Lugar has targeted for closing are Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

In the most extreme case, the office in Leslie County, Kentucky, spends \$20 on administrative costs for each dollar in ben-

efits it pays to farmers. In the remaining 52 offices, the ratio of costs-to-benefits ranges from \$1 to \$8.50.

USDA spokesman, Roger Runningen said, Madigan was "grateful" for Lugar's interest "because it will help move the bureaucracy along in the request for information." But, he said he could not "put a timetable" on how quickly USDA would be able to respond to Lugar's recommendation.

"We have to have accurate data," before we can decide whether to close too many offices, Runningen said. An administrative effort to gather information on USDA county operations has already begun but, it is a difficult and lengthy task, he said.

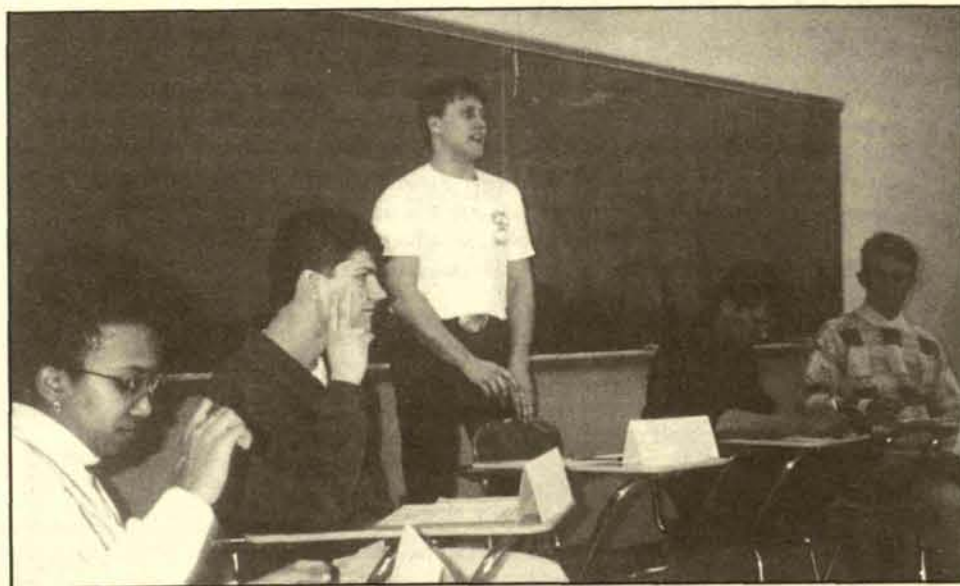
USDA has offices in 2,977 counties, or 94 percent of total U.S. counties. That includes ASCS offices, the Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration and Extension Service.

MSU/Young Farmer Discussion Meet Contest Grows

Approximately 50 Michigan State University students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources competed in the second annual MSU/MFB Young Farmer Discussion Meet.

At right, animal science major Paul Samp of Alpena County, shares his views on the impact of a growing federal deficit on American agriculture during final round competition in the four-year category. Mary Rassano, an animal science major from Ingham County went on to win first place honors.

In the two-year contest, Mike Smego, an agri-business major from Cass County, took first place honors. Smego, who also serves as the Michigan state FFA President, and seven other finalist discussed the government's role and responsibilities in education.



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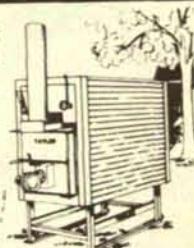
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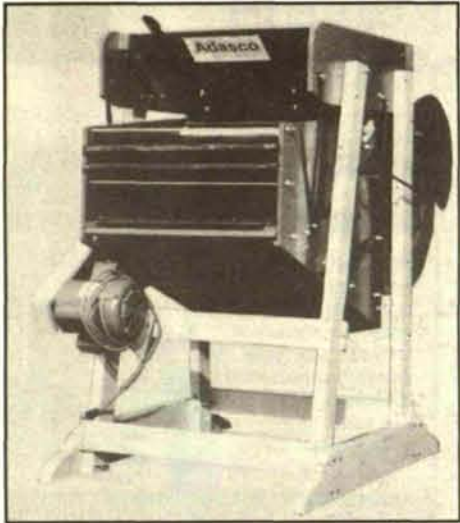
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Aspiration is provided by an air current between the upper and lower screens, with dampers to control the air flow. The screens vibrate from side to side allowing maximum exposure of seeds to the screens. All units are shipped fully assembled complete with a 1/2 h.p. motor and are ready to run. The motor is equipped with an adjustable speed pulley to provide the proper cleaning speed for all grains.

The cleaner is rated at 50 bushels per hour for seed, more or less depending on the crop being cleaned. The machine is being offered at an introductory price of \$1,495. For additional information contact ADASCO, Inc. at (612) 471-0672.

FELD Drug - High Quality Service at Discount Prices

Next time you look into your medicine chest to take stock, don't forget to get a copy of the latest FELD Drug discount catalog. It could save you quite a bit of money in the process.

"Ours has been a popular program," says Chuck Cooper, vice president of marketing for FELD Prescription Service, a pharmacy that delivers prescriptions through the mail. "We provide good pricing and convenience seven days a week."

The company has operated for nearly 30 years with its home office in Omaha, Nebraska. It currently offers discount services to two million Farm Bureau members in 25 states, including Michigan. FELD Drug has offered special rates to Michigan Farm Bureau members for nearly five years.

Not only can prescriptions and non-prescription orders be mailed to the company, but they can be called in as well on the firm's toll-free line at 1-800-228-3353.

The service may be best suited for older Farm Bureau members who may need to take regular medication, Cooper explains. "For some one who takes maintenance medication, we provide a service that helps them save money."

FELD Drug operates a retail pharmacy to serve walk-in customers, but a majority of its business is through mail orders.



Only registered pharmacist fill prescriptions through FELD Drug, ensuring accurate and professional service.



Along with the savings, every FELD Drug catalog comes complete with extra discount coupons to earn even more off the price of future orders. Not only are the prescription drugs available, but generic, non-prescription, over the counter medications, vitamins, lotions, braces, heating pads, canes, walkers and other medical devices are available as well.

Cooper states that FELD's professional service is of the highest standard. "We fill our prescription the same way your local pharmacist does - by hand with a registered pharmacist. We just fill a lot more of them." The orders are then mailed to customers in heat-sealed, tamper-proof containers.

Cooper estimates that Michigan Farm Bureau members could save from 30 to 50 percent on their generic prescription services with savings also available on all name-brand products.

To receive the latest FELD Drug catalog, call 1-800-228-3353. Cooper is sure MFB families will be pleased with the services and the savings FELD Prescription Service offers.

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James L. Schmidt,
Illinois Agricultural Assoc.
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Doug Fleming
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This unforgettable, 12-day tour of the Canadian Rockies will not only visit the great and growing cities of the northwest and majestic beauty of the Rockies, but also includes unique features designed to give it special appeal. Special attractions include the Calgary Stampede Celebration - rodeo, chuckwagon races, state show spectacular, a ride on a giant snowmobile on Athabasca Glacier, a gondola ride to the top of Sulphur Mountain, and overnight stays at the beautiful Lake Louise Chateau and Banff Springs Hotel.

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Non-Point Source Pollution - a Source of Concern

Photo Courtesy of Michigan SCS

You always read that farmers are the best managers of the land, but they are the worst. They know how to manage land for agricultural productivity, but they don't know how to manage land to protect water quality," according to Grand Valley State Biology Department Chairperson Fred Bevis.

Bevis' claims were based on a study on water pollution conducted by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission and Dr. Bevis. This study comes on the heels of growing controversy regarding non-point source pollution, especially in Ottawa County.

Ottawa County ranks in the top five counties in total farms, cattle, hogs, dairy cows and first in total hens and pullets in the state of Michigan, which alarms governmental officials because of their potential non-point pollution effect on local waterways, but area farmers have already taken steps to eliminate their effect on the watersystem.

Michigan Farm Bureau has asked Michigan State University's (MSU) Water Research Institute to review the study to verify its findings. Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa county SCS offices were also contacted to reveal that over 59 percent of 341,900 acres being used for agricultural purposes are practicing a conservation plan. There are 106 approved animal waste facilities in those three counties as well.

Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie, in response to Bevis' accusations, stated "Most farmers take their responsibility as stewards of the environment very seriously. After all, farmers, unlike factories, sewage plant or landfill owners, live and raise their families in the same environment in which they work."

According to Jack Sage, Ottawa County Soil Conservation Service, in certain areas there may be a problem and definitely potential for problems. "But, we're working a

lot with land owners to try to help solve these problems," added Sage.

The waterways of Ottawa County have been closely scrutinized lately, due to the large amounts of diluted sewage dumped into the Grand River by the Grand Rapids sewer system. Nearly 380 million gallons of chlorinated sewage were dumped into the waterway in 1991, the most since 1986. Hopefully, by late March, Grand Rapids will have a new \$35 million, 30.4 million gallon sewage retention basin on line that is expected to eliminate about 65 percent of all combined sewage overflows.

Some of the best management practices encouraged by Sage and the Ottawa SCS are developing waste management plans which aid livestock operators in measuring the amount of fertilizer a crop will use in a year. Ottawa County is starting a residue reduction program this year, working with land owners to do test scouting and soil testing in order to know when to apply pesticides or fertilizers. "It's a checkbook type effect on nutrient management, we take off what has been used by the crops and add in the amounts of nutrients needed," explained Sage.

The use of 30 to 60 foot wide strips of land between waterways and agricultural land, known as buffer strips, are becoming more common. Buffer strips are a chance for permanent vegetation on the land to naturally filter out any polluted sediment before entering the waterway.

"Some farmers are using buffer strips, but they are getting taxed for every bit of land," said Grand Rapids DNR official Janice Tompkins.

"There are programs, such as the conservation reserve, where they (farmers) can put strips along these ditches and waterways into permanent vegetation and the USDA would make payment to them for a ten year period, if they take this land out of production and stabilize it," added Sage.



Sage says the increased use of buffer strips and waterways, such as the one pictured above, help dramatically in reducing non-point source pollution



Paul Vlietstra and Jerry DeBlecourt are partners in F. Peterman Greenhouses, Portage, MI. They have 160,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse growing area and produce 100,000 units of bedding plants - annual flowers and vegetables and hanging baskets.

Develop a Diesel Fuel Protection Plan

With the cost of diesel fuel continuing to rise, it's more important than ever to protect it from water, dirt and other contaminants in storage tanks.

All above farm storage tanks should have a drain valve at the lowest point for easy draining of water and rust. In tanks where there are no drain valves and in underground storage tanks, it is absolutely necessary that a pump be used to remove water from the bottom of the tank on a regular basis.

At least twice a year, the tanks should be completely drained, flushed and refilled because, diesel fuel will deteriorate in storage. It shouldn't be stored over three months in summer or six months in winter. Painting tanks white will reflect extreme summer heat and help keep the fuel fresh longer.

Farmers Petroleum Cooperative Inc., offers these other helpful reminders for cleaner fuel.

- Nozzles should be capped or covered to keep out dirt and moisture.
- Tanks should be equipped with proper filters and hoses.
- Be certain that no dirt gets into your storage or equipment tanks during filling.

- Avoid using buckets or cans for transferring fuel as this increases chances for contamination.
- Allow as much settling time as possible before filling equipment tanks.
- Fill equipment tanks by driving equipment to your portable fuel tank.
- Fill equipment tanks at the end of each work day to avoid condensation during cooler night hours.
- Take care not to allow dust or dirt to enter system when making filter changes.

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Michigan Apples To Gain International Exposure

Are the traditional strawberries and cream at Wimbledon about to be replaced by Michigan Empire apples? Probably not. But beginning in 1992, this crisp, tasty apple will be a more common sight at British produce markets, thanks to a grant from the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).

FAS, which spends \$200 million a year to help American businesses and commodity groups expand into foreign markets, recently awarded \$208,000 to the Michigan Apple Committee (MAC). The MAC is a non-profit organization that develops advertising, promotion and publicity programs to maintain present markets and create new markets for Michigan apples. With help from scientists at Michigan State University's Agricultural Experiment Station, MAC will use the grant funds to promote Michigan Empire apples in the United Kingdom.

"Groups like the MAC don't have a lot of money to use in foreign markets - most of their dollars go into domestic promotion," said Kirk Heinze, co-author of the application that earned the grant. "A Michigan

commodity being able to compete in an international market is exciting for the whole industry. It is also exciting for MSU to be part of this global marketplace."

International experience, a strong staff and past state funding were all factors in winning the grant, according to MAC manager Mark Arney.

"The FAS looks at experience, staff and budget to determine if you are a candidate for their funds," Arney said. "Fortunately, we had some previous experience in the U.K. and had received a \$15,000 grant from the state last year."

Heinze will conduct the market research that will help the MAC direct its advertising and promotional efforts. Though the \$208,000 is a definite boost to the MAC's annual \$1 million budget, Heinze said careful spending will be essential to getting the most mileage from the money.

"There isn't a lot of room for waste," Heinze said. "We'll have to be very selective and focused in our efforts."

"About \$40,000 will be spent on market research; the rest will go to promotional activities. The market research will look specifically at the huge international importers who control what comes in," Heinze said. "We first need to assess importer attitudes and retail and wholesale attitudes toward Michigan apples."

MSU scientists are an important part of the successful promotion of Michigan apples, said Patrick O'Connor, MAC public relations director.

"Research and insight from the agricultural economists, the horticulturists and the plant pathologists have affected what we do in developing our marketing plans," O'Connor said. "We rely on MSU for insight and direction. MSU scientists have been key to the success of the apple industry in the state."

"This is an example of how AES researchers and state commodities can work hand in hand to the direct benefit of the state," Heinze said. "Proceeds from increased sales will result in increased profits for the industry."

"Michigan has planted the Empire since the 1970s," said Don Ricks, an AES agricultural economist and ex-officio member of the MAC board. "Expansion is gaining speed, and we expect it to be one of the biggest expansion varieties we have."

"They love this apple over there," Heinze said. "The British like the smaller apple, the crisper apple. The Empire has just appealed to their palates."

The Empire originated in New York and is also grown in Ontario. Western states such as Washington, the nation's leading apple producer, do not grow the Empire. That is good news for the MAC.

"We are competing with Washington in the domestic market in a number of other varieties," O'Connor said. "But they are not in the British market with this apple, so we've got an advantage in the U.K."

"We hope this will open doors for some of our 60 other specialty varieties," O'Connor said. "If we can carve a niche with one variety, that will open doors for others."

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