

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS



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Weather Hampers Spring Planting and Crop Development Across Michigan and Corn Belt States

Michigan's wet and cool April weather pattern kept many tractors and planters in the shed, while farmers anxiously await the arrival of warmer and drier days. Average statewide growing degree days accumulations are behind 36 units, while rainfall has boosted moisture levels to surplus conditions in 80 percent of Michigan's fields.

According to the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service, corn planting was 1 percent complete as of May 3, compared to 10 percent on average. Sugar beet planting was significantly behind average with just 1 percent planted as compared to 50 percent on average. Oats, potatoes, and acres tilled were also well behind the five-year average as of press time.

Fruit development was behind average due to the cool, wet weather, as well. Sweet cherries and tart cherries were primarily in the dormant to green tip stages of development, as were apples and peaches. Vegetables were also lagging, with asparagus production yet to begin, and strawberries just breaking dormancy.

According to MSU entomologist Doug Landis, continued weed growth in unplanted fields could mean increased pest pressures such as seed corn maggot due to cool soil conditions. Slugs and cutworms could also be more prevalent once the corn plant has emerged due to slow growth.

"With the increased opportunity for weed growth on fields, which we know to be attractive for the egg laying of black cutworm, we might expect some higher risk of cutworm injury if there's a lot of green material in a field," explained Landis. "Having said that, however, we have not had cutworm activity in the state yet, and activity in Illinois and Indiana has been very slow as well."

Landis said that the lack of heat units has helped to keep insect pressure to a minimum thus far in Michigan and corn belt states. Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio are all reporting planting delays. Illinois has been particularly hard hit with planting reported at only 1 percent complete compared to 46 percent on average.

MSU weed specialist Jim Kells said he expects weed management practices will need little modification at this point, especially in conventional tilled fields. "If our planting is delayed much longer, the weeds could be bigger and that may require farmers to rethink their burndown approach in no-till situations," he said. "It may require higher rates, or it may require switching to a different program altogether."

Kells said the bigger issue is going to focus on hybrid selection and when a farmer

should switch to a shorter season hybrid for corn to avoid problems experienced last fall.

According to Cargill territory representative Ann Briggs, farmers should carefully analyze their own situations before making drastic hybrid changes. "Farmers need to keep in touch with their seed dealers and let them know as soon as possible if they plan on making a hybrid change," she said. "Typically, we'll exchange 10 percent of our longer day hybrids for a shorter season in a normal year, and we can usually accommodate that change given enough advance notice."

See Related Articles:

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Planter Adjustments For a Wet Spring.....page 5

When to Switch Corn Hybrids With Planting Delays.....page 12



Above, Art and Dave Duyck, of Essexville in Bay County, got a start on their three week potato planting season April 27, by planting round white potatoes using a form of conservation tillage. The potatoes are planted between rye strips which help to hold the lighter soils. The technique was developed by Groulx Farms in Munger.

Proposal A – School Finance Reform Faces June 2 Vote

The bills and the details to implement Proposal A are still being discussed and negotiated as of press time. On June 2, it will be up to Michigan voters to decide the future of school finance. Proposal A would constitutionally change the way Michigan finances its schools and would keep future legislative involvement to a minimum, according to MFB Legislative Counsel Ron Nelson.

The proposal constitutionally provides a \$4,800 per student foundation grant for those school districts which levy the 18 mills for operating. In addition, voters may approve an additional nine mills for enrichment.

"School funding as we know it today will change substantially, because most of the 60 some categoricals will no longer exist," explained Nelson. "However, there will con-

tinue to be some disincentives for those school districts not providing a core curriculum and a financial reward for those school districts which do. In general, a penalty for a lack of quality and a reward for curriculum that meets the standard will continue."

Nelson said that local school boards will have substantial responsibility in developing a budget based on the dollars available. With the \$4,800 guarantee at 18 mills, any school district below \$4,800 will be increased by a maximum of 10 percent per year up to \$4,800.

"Virtually all rural school districts will see increased funding, many at the 10 percent maximum allowed," said Nelson. "For example, if a school district is generating \$3,500 and levying 18 mills, that school district

would see a 10 percent increase, or approximately \$350 increase funding for a total of \$3,850 per pupil. This increase would continue until the school district reaches the maximum \$4,800, which will be indexed upward annually based on the revenue received by the state."

Most rural school districts will have more dollars available for each student under Proposal A. The \$4,800 foundation grant will cover many of the costs currently associated with education. The percentage and details of teacher retirement, adult education and special education are currently being negotiated.

**Continued on page 3
See "Proposal A..."**

Michigan Contributes To 50 Billionth Export Bushel

The Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) held a brief ceremony at the Farm Bureau Center in Lansing recently to send off Michigan's contribution to the commemorative 50 billionth bushel of grain exported from the United States.

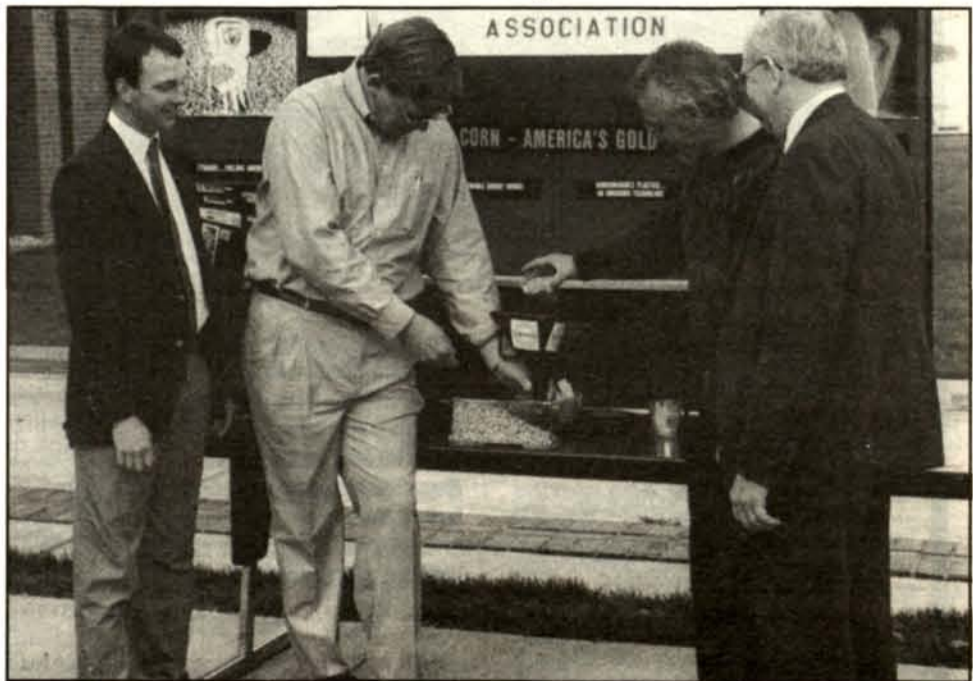
MCGA leaders mixed corn contributed from the four corners of the state. The corn was then mailed in a special container to New Orleans, where it was combined with corn from the rest of the U.S. and shipped to Japan in a national ceremony May 6.

"The export of 50 billion bushels of U.S. corn is a tribute to the entire corn industry," said Larry Nobis, of St. Johns, president of the MCGA. "Without the exports of the past 15-20 years, where would U.S. agriculture have been? Exports have definitely been a boost to our industry."

Nobis said corn is a major Michigan farm commodity, with corn exports contributing over \$200 million each year to the state's economy and providing thousands of jobs. "One of the purposes of the MCGA and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) is to develop markets like we have overseas and increase those markets in years to come. The corn industry will also continue to look for new industrial uses for our product."

The MCGA is an association of 500 Michigan corn growers and is affiliated with the NCGA. Members are interested in furthering the economic well being of corn producers in the state.

Below (l-r) Dan Putnam, chairman of the Michigan Corn Marketing Program; Larry Nobis, president of the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA); Gary Krug, Chairman of the MCGA; and MFB President Jack Laurie consolidate corn from across Michigan as a part of Michigan's contribution to the commemorative 50 billionth bushel of U.S. export corn, during ceremonies at the Farm Bureau Center in Lansing.



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In Brief...

Survey Puts MSU Ag College in Top 10 in the Nation

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University is among the top 10 schools in the nation that stand out for their general excellence, according to a survey by *Farm Futures* magazine. Results of the survey appeared in the mid-March edition of the national farm business magazine with a circulation of more than 200,000.

The article notes the past few years have been hard on the country's agricultural colleges, which have experienced budget cuts and enrollment fluctuations. The best schools, according to the magazine, "are delivering an education that's every bit as thorough as in the past, but they're doing it with fewer resources." The survey of ag deans across the nation indicated that the top schools offer programs with unusual breadth.

In citing MSU, the magazine said, "Michigan State, highly regarded for its teaching, research and Extension activities, specializes in livestock and subjects other than the traditional grain crops of many midwestern states. Blueberries, cherries, apples and other horticultural crops are among Michigan State's specialties, as are a diverse range of other crops, from Christmas trees to dry beans. With a strong international bent as well, the ag college is heavily involved with Third World development projects."

Vote Slated On Dairy Promotion

Ag Secretary Mike Espy has announced an August referendum of U.S. dairy farmers to determine whether they favor continuing their national dairy promotion and research program. The program's mandatory national checkoff funds the National Dairy Board and state and regional milk promotion programs. Details regarding the referendum will be announced later.

USDA also is seeking public comments on a proposal to establish a national fluid milk promotion and consumer education program. The program would be funded by a mandatory assessment on all fluid milk products marketed in consumer-type packages. Comments may be sent in duplicate, postmarked by May 21, to the Hearing Clerk, Room 1083-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

USDA Details Russian Food Aid Package

The details of a \$700 million dollar package released by USDA, includes \$500 million for commodity purchases and \$200 million for freight. The \$500 million commodity portion of the package will include \$433.5 million in credits to Russia and \$66.5 million in donations, according to *Knight Ridder Financial News*.

The package includes \$227.5 million for corn, \$105 million for soybean meal, \$66.5 million for butter, \$56 million for wheat, \$5 million for sugar, and \$40 million for high value products like vegetable oils, peanuts, poultry and rice.

Of the \$56 million for wheat, \$12 million consists of donations. This is part of a compromise worked out with the Russians who complained that they could otherwise buy the wheat cheaper on the world market.

Of the \$66.5 million designated for butter, a readily available surplus commodity, \$55.4 million will be donated. The U.S. will pay all freight costs for the butter. Other commodities will have to be purchased. The funds will be transferred by May 18, with shipments to begin in early June. The agreement restores large-scale grain shipments to Russia, which has been unable to buy U.S. farm goods since November, when Russia defaulted on commercial credits issued under the Bush administration. At last count, those credit defaults have exceeded \$800 million.

Keep a Close Eye on Your Alfalfa Stands

Many Michigan farmers may be in for a rude awakening as their alfalfa stands start to actively grow with warmer temperatures, according to MSU Crop and Soil Scientist, Oran Hesterman. Despite what were apparently ideal winter conditions, he says that, upon closer inspection of alfalfa stands, the damage is some of the worst he's ever seen, with possible yield reductions of 30 percent or more.

"We're seeing many fields with areas of dead plants or if the plants aren't dead, they're growing very slowly," Hesterman said. "As we dig up the roots of these plants, we're finding that they are very water logged and mushy. It does not appear to be a disease problem. It would appear the damage is due to the roots being water logged and under anaerobic conditions ever since last fall."

According to Hesterman, the damage appears to be more prevalent in the older, established stands, and in those stands that may have been exposed to additional stress, such as frequent cutting, and/or late fall cutting last year. However, the damage to fields seeded last year, either in the spring or in the summer, mysteriously appears to be minimal, he said.

Hesterman suggests that farmers monitor their alfalfa stands closely and determine if stand loss and potential yield loss is bad enough to warrant plow down to either reseed, or plant to another crop, such as corn, to meet anticipated forage needs. In severe crown injury cases, the roots will be white on the outside, with brown discoloration down the center of the root. Odds are not good that these plants will survive. In the most severe cases, the roots will be mushy and partly rotted, and the top growth will easily be pulled from the crown.

"There are clearly some fields that are not going to be worth keeping in alfalfa," Hesterman claimed. "Farmers are telling us that fields with excellent stands last year, are not worth keeping this year. Based on the number of plants per square foot, we could be looking at a 30 to 40 percent yield reduction in some of those fields that we have inspected."

Investment Tax Credit In Doubt

The Bureau of National Affairs daily tax report says members of Congress are already declaring the president's temporary incremental investment tax credit (ITC) dead. Lawmakers are casting around to find something to do with the money they hope to save by not allowing the investment tax credits, which incidentally would be money they do not have.

Some favor increased business expensing, while others favor using ITC savings to reduce Clinton's proposed increase in the corporate income tax. Still others want to scale back the Clinton proposal to increase the amount of Social Security benefits subject to tax.

Senate Working On EPA Cabinet Bill

The Senate is considering legislation (S. 171) that would elevate the Environmental Protection Agency to cabinet level, as the Department of the Environment. The measure could lead to tougher environmental regulations. Among other things, the bill would abolish the Council on Environmental Quality and transfer its responsibilities for compiling environmental statistics to a bureau within the new department.

Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) offered an amendment to require economic and employment impact statements to accompany every reported bill and every proposed regulation. The amendment would make Congress and the agencies better informed of the consequences of proposed regulations and legislation prior to implementation.

Europeans Can't Agree On Subsidies

With France leading the call for greater farm subsidies and other nations seeking a tight European Community budget, EC talks on guaranteed farm prices broke down recently. The meeting ended two days early, without compromise proposals being presented. French Farm Minister Jean Puech insisted on more subsidies for farmers or his nation would block an agreement.

Britain and the EC's executive commission said that would chip away at the commitment to restrain the EC farm budget, which is the cornerstone of the bloc's agricultural reform policy. British Agriculture Minister John Gummer said he hopes the EC's farm ministers will meet again to complete the price package at a May 24 meeting in Brussels. The package would set guaranteed prices for the EC's nine million farmers.

U.S. Firms Reach Out to Ukraine

One hundred U.S. farmers left Chicago recently for a three-week stint to help with spring planting on 1,000 private and collective farms in Ukraine, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. The effort, "Operation Farm Ukraine '93," is being coordinated by three U.S. agribusiness firms - J.I. Case, ICI Seeds and Trans-Chemical - in hopes of ultimately expanding the Ukrainian market for U.S. goods, services and technology.

About 75 percent of the participating farmers are older operators who say they have a son or neighbor to do their spring planting here, while they are helping to plant 500,000 acres in Ukraine.

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National Legislative Priorities

During the 1993 MFB Washington Legislative Seminar, the 110 farmers from throughout Michigan who traveled to Washington, D.C. talked to their Congressmen about key agricultural issues. Those key issues included private property rights, a Constitutional amendment to require a balanced federal budget, proposed lowering of the federal estate tax exemption, deduction of health insurance premiums paid by self-employed persons and registration of minor use pesticides.

Following is a summary of the issues discussed with the congressmen and their decision, as of April 22 to cosponsor the legislation.

Private Property Rights - H.R. 561

This bill would require federal agencies to establish appropriate procedures for determining whether or not their regulations might result in the taking of private property. Farm Bureau strongly supports this requirement for federal agencies to "look before they leap" on the private property rights of landowners.

Michigan congressmen who have cosponsored H.R. 561 are Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) and Dave Camp (R-Midland).

Balanced Budget - H.J.R. 103

This resolution would provide for a Constitutional amendment to require a balanced federal budget. Farm Bureau strongly supports H.J. Res. 103.

Michigan congressmen who have cosponsored H.J. Res. 103 are Jim Barcia (D-Bay City), Dave Camp (R-Midland), Paul Henry (R-Grand Rapids), Peter Hoekstra (R-Holland), Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Hills), Nick Smith (R-Addison), and Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph).

Federal Estate Tax Exemption H.C.R. 6

This resolution expresses to Congress that increasing the federal estate tax by lowering the estate tax exemption from the current \$600,000 to \$200,000 would devastate farmers, homeowners, and small business owners. Farm Bureau strongly opposes any decrease in the federal estate tax exemption and supports H. Con. Res. 6.

Agricultural Worker Protection Act

MFB Position:

Testimony supporting Rep. Gnodtke's resolution (and in opposition to H.R.-1173), was given to the House Agriculture & Forestry Committee by MFB Director Jim Miller and MFB Ag Labor Advisory Committee member Patricia Dietrich, on April 21, 1993. The committee adopted the resolution on April 28, 1993 and passed the House on April 30, 1993.

MFB Contact:
Howard Kelly, Ext. 2044

House Concurrent Resolution H.C.R. 139, FARM WORKERS, sponsored by Rep. Carl Gnodtke (R-Sawyer), urged Congress to reject proposed amendments to the Agricultural Worker Protection Act called for in H.R. 1173.

Among other things, H.R. 1173 called for radical changes in the present federal Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Labor law, by removing all references to migrant and seasonal in the law, replacing them with the words "agricultural worker."

This would've substantially broadened the law to include virtually all farmworkers, including those involved in dairy, livestock, grain production, poultry and other agricultural employment. H.R. 1173 would have also expanded the liability of growers and others to include food packers and processors.

H.C.R. 139 urged Congress to reject H.R.-1173. It also put the Michigan delegation to Congress on notice that the Legislature is aware of the severe ramifications of this proposed federal legislation on Michigan farmers and, ultimately on the farmworkers themselves.

Members of the Michigan congressional delegation who have cosponsored H. Con. Res. 6 are Jim Barcia (D-Bay City), Dave Camp (R-Midland), Peter Hoekstra (R-Holland), Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Hills), and Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph).

Health Insurance Deduction H.R. 162

H.R. 162 would extend the 25 percent federal income tax deduction self-employed persons can claim for the cost of their health insurance premiums. The bill would also increase the deduction to 100 percent of the cost of health insurance premiums paid by self-employed persons. Farm Bureau strongly supports H.R. 162.

Members of the Michigan congressional delegation who have cosponsored H.R. 162 are Jim Barcia (D-Bay City), Dave Camp (R-Midland), Barbara Rose Collins (D-Detroit), Peter Hoekstra (R-Holland), Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Hills), Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), and Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph).

Minor Use Pesticides - H.R. 967

H.R. 967 would amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to encourage the registration of pesticides that are used on crops not grown on large acreages. The streamlined registration process would not sacrifice the safety of workers or food. Farm Bureau strongly supports H.R. 967 because Michigan farmers are major growers of specialty crops such as blueberries, cucumbers, etc.

H.R. 967 has been cosponsored by Michigan congressmen Jim Barcia (D-Bay City), Dave Camp (R-Midland), Paul Henry (R-Grand Rapids), Peter Hoekstra (R-Holland), Nick Smith (R-Addison), and Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph).

Action Needed:

If your congressman has cosponsored these priority bills, please thank them for their support. A special thank you should be given to Congressman Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) and Congressman Dave Camp (R-Midland), who have cosponsored all of these priority agricultural bills.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, Ext. 2040

Inheritance Tax Repeal

MFB Position:

Michigan Farm Bureau strongly supports the repeal of the Michigan Inheritance Tax and adoption of the federal Pick-up Tax.

Action Needed:

Contact your state senator urging support for H.B. 4597

MFB Contact:

Ron Nelson, Ext. 2043

House Bill 4597, sponsored by Rep. Willis Bullard (R-Milford), was reported out of the House Committee on Business and Finance and passed the House on May 5. The bill would effectively repeal the Michigan Inheritance Tax starting Oct. 1, 1993. Michigan would adopt the federal Estate Tax as 28 other states have done. The federal tax exempts estates up to \$600,000 and provides a lower tax rate than the Michigan Inheritance Tax for those estates larger than \$600,000.

The federal Estate Tax is often referred to as the federal Pick-up Tax because the states allow the maximum credit, the same as on the federal Estate Tax return. In addition, the bill will extend the filing deadline, currently 105 days after death, to nine months after death, which is the same as the federal Estate Tax deadline.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance Reform

MFB Position:

MFB supports S.B. 2 as passed by the Senate. Michigan Farm Bureau would support amendments that reinstated provisions more closely resembling Farm Bureau policy.

MFB Contact:

Howard Kelly, Ext. 2044

The House Labor Committee met and hoped to break the deadlocked tie vote in the committee and report a House substitute for S.B. 2, sponsored by Sen. Joanne Emmons, out of committee and onto the House floor for a vote. Chairman Walter DeLange was to propose a concession deleting a provision which cuts benefits to 65 percent of after tax wages, instead of the 70 percent under current law. MFB policy supports the 65 percent figure.

Organized labor continues to call for shared sacrifice while ignoring the fact that the program is entirely an employer paid benefit. They want business to be taxed more so that the fund is more solvent.

Action Needed:

When amendments are introduced on the House floor that more closely resemble Farm Bureau policy, then calls to your representative, asking for support of S.B. 2 will be appropriate. The original bill closely followed Farm Bureau policy, but the bill that passed the Senate was a watered-down version.

Seatbelt Law Violation

MFB Position:

Members of the House were notified that MFB is supportive of law enforcement, safety rules and the wearing of seat belts, but opposes the expansion of current police powers and, therefore, MFB opposed the bill.

MFB Contact:

Howard Kelly, Ext. 2044

Rep. Dianne Byrum (D-Holt) sponsored H.B.-4511, which would make it a primary offense for not wearing a seatbelt while driving or riding in a vehicle. The proposal would enable police to stop a vehicle on suspicion that the driver was not wearing a safety belt. Currently, police may only issue a ticket if the motorist is stopped for another violation and is found to be not wearing a seatbelt.

During debate on the House floor, an amendment passed the House to change the language of the bill back to its present status as a secondary offense...a move supported by Michigan Farm Bureau. The bill was not voted on for passage over loud protests from the majority of House members. It will likely come up for a vote in early May.

Proposal A - School Finance Reform Faces June 2 Vote... (continued from page 1)

School districts will ultimately have more responsibility in developing their budget.

In a majority of Michigan's rural school districts, taxpayers will see a significant millage reduction for school operating, with some up to a 22 mill reduction from the current level. Even if the school district decides to vote additional mills (maximum of nine), they may still see a substantial reduction in operating mills.

Under the proposal, all school districts are guaranteed an increase in funds at a minimum of 3 percent, even for those school districts above the \$4,800 and many school districts will receive increased funding of 10 percent to bring them up to the foundation grant of \$4,800.

The constitution will be amended by a vote of the people to ensure that 60 percent of the current 4 cents of sales tax will be directly allocated to K-12 funding. Further, 100 percent of the additional 2 cents will go to K-12 and 100 percent of the lottery will go to K-12 funding. Currently schools do receive 60 percent of the 4 cents and do receive the lottery. However, with the June 2 vote, all of this detail will be placed in the constitution to ensure the funding continues.

"It's important to note that the \$4,800 will be indexed to state revenue and so in those

years where revenue increases, the \$4,800 will be increased to reflect the increases in state revenue," Nelson said. "Further, for those years in which there is reduced revenue, the amount received will be indexed downward. However, the constitution guarantees a minimum grant of \$4,800 per student for those school districts which levy 18 mills."

This proposal will substantially reduce the difference in funds available for K-12 education. Currently, funding per pupil ranges from approximately \$3,000 to \$10,000.

With a foundation grant of \$4,800 and the state guaranteeing a minimum of \$100 per pupil per mill for each of those additional voted nine mills, Nelson expects that schools will have more assurances and predictability of revenue available in coming years.

"The revenue will not be unlimited and there will be less need to go to the voters for additional millage, which has been capped at a total of 18 allocated plus nine voted - a maximum of 27 mills," Nelson explained. "Proposal A is a major change in funding of K-12 education. It will implement major concerns expressed in Farm Bureau policy, including more equitable funding and shifting to more dollars from state sources."

Weather

30-Day Forecast – Warmer and Wetter Than Normal. 90-Day Forecast – Cooler and Wetter Than Normal

Cool and wet weather was the rule for much of April across Michigan. The combination of below normal temperatures (generally 1 to 3 F below normal) and above normal precipitation (.5 to 1.5 inches above normal) had varied impact on spring field work.

Some areas of the state are experiencing substantial delays in spring field work and early planting to delayed initial development of overwintering crops, resulting in reduced chances for subsequent late spring frost damage. Fieldwork delays due to the wet weather are also widespread across the majority of the corn belt.

While the latest National Weather Service 30-day outlook for May calls for a change toward warmer than normal temperatures and normal to slightly above normal precipitation, the 90-day outlook is forecasting average temperatures through the end of July to be below normal, with precipitation expected to continue at near, to slightly above, normal levels.

4/1/93 to 4/30/93	Temperature		Growing Degree Days		Precipitation	
	Observed Mean	Dev. From Normal	Actual Accum.	Normal Accum.	Actual (inch.)	Normal (inch.)
Alpena	39.4	-1.1	29	64	3.12	2.52
Bad Axe	41.5	-2.7	43	108	4.07	2.55
Detroit	48.3	+0.9	129	131	2.74	3.21
Escanaba	38.4	-0.6	11	24	2.82	2.43
Flint	45.8	-0.2	99	131	4.22	3.21
Grand Rapids	44.4	-1.7	77	149	4.79	3.41
Houghton	35.7	-1.7	6	56	2.37	2.28
Houghton Lake	41.1	-1.7	48	64	3.07	2.52
Jackson	45.9	-1.4	101	146	2.38	3.19
Lansing	45.2	-0.6	92	146	4.73	3.19
Marquette	35.4	-1.4	18	56	3.94	2.28
Muskegon	43.5	-1.8	68	101	4.74	3.16
Pellston	38.6	-1.3	27	72	4.40	2.69
Saginaw	44.4	-1.0	59	108	3.47	2.55
Sault Ste. Marie	37.5	-0.5	12	24	3.74	2.43
South Bend	47.4	-1.6	118	149	3.62	3.41
Traverse City	42.0	-0.2	45	72	4.02	2.69
Vestaburg	42.4	-3.3	60	111	4.24	3.07

Observed and growing degree day totals are accumulated from March 1. Normals are based on district averages. Jeff Andresen, Ag Meteorologist, MSU

Corn Belt Planting Progress Reports

Ohio
Limited field work had been completed prior to additional rainfall which put a halt to work, according to the Ohio Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn was 4 percent planted as of May 3, compared to the five-year average of 28 percent. Soybeans were less than 1 percent planted down from the 5 percent average figure.

Oats were reported as 25 percent planted, down from the 80 percent average. Only 10 percent of the crop had emerged compared to the 40 percent average. Farmers are reportedly talking of switching oat acreage to soybeans, due to delayed planting.

Winter wheat was in generally good condition, although development remained slow. The crop was rated 13 percent excellent, 44

percent good, 33 percent fair, 8 percent poor, and 2 percent very poor.

Indiana
Unseasonably wet weather continued to stall corn planting, according to the Indiana Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn planting was 3 percent complete, compared with 32 percent on average.

Oat seeding was at 32 percent complete compared to the 82 percent average. Winter wheat was 11 percent excellent, 72 percent good, 14 percent fair and 3 percent poor.

Topsoil moisture levels were rated 71 percent surplus, 29 percent adequate, while subsoil moisture levels were rated 65 percent surplus, and 35 percent adequate.

Illinois
Corn planting in Illinois was nearly three weeks behind as of May 3, according to the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn planting stood at 1 percent complete compared with the five year average of 46 percent.

Oat seedings were 30 percent complete compared to the 93 percent average. Winter wheat was rated 4 percent excellent, 76 percent good, and 20 percent fair. Soil moisture levels were reported 11 percent adequate, and 89 percent surplus.

Iowa
Most planting activity had taken place in western portions of the state with farmers skirting around wet spots, according to the Iowa Agricultural Statistics Service. Serious oat planting delays were prompting many farmers to consider switching to other crops such as soybeans.

Oats were 32 percent planted, compared to 96 percent on average. Winter wheat was rated 4 percent excellent, 49 percent good, 42 percent fair, and 5 percent very poor.

Corn acreage planted stood at 3 percent, down from the 27 percent average as of May 3. Primary seeded preparation reached 30 percent, as compared to the 83 percent average level. Soil moisture levels were rated 31 percent adequate and 69 percent surplus.

Michigan and Major Commodity Area Extended Weather Outlook

T - Temp.	3/31.....4/15	3/31.....5/31
P - Precip.	T.....P	T.....P
Michigan	A.....A	B.....A
W. Corn Belt	N.....N	B.....N
E. Corn Belt	N.....N	B.....N
Wint. Wheat Belt	N.....N	B.....N/A
Spr. Wheat Belt	A.....N	N.....N/B
Pac. NW Wheat	N.....N	N.....N
Delta	N.....N	B.....N
Southeast	N.....N	N/N.....N/A
San Joaquin	N/A.....N	A.....N

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



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Since its beginning in 1971, Michigan Farm Radio Network's only objective has been to serve Michigan's farm families. This dedication to serve agriculture is shared by 29 local radio stations in Michigan. Through these stations, Michigan Farm Radio Network provides the latest in market analysis, weather and news to Farm Bureau members daily on the following stations:

Station	City	Frequency	Morning Farm	Noon Farm
WABJ	Adrian	1490	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WATZ	Alpena	1450	5:30 am	12:15 pm
WPZA	Ann Arbor	1050	6:15 am	12:05 pm
WLEW	Bad Axe	1340	6:30 am	12:50 pm
WHFB	Benton Harbor	1060	*	12:30 pm
WKYO	Caro	1360	6:15 am	12:45 pm
WTVB	Coldwater	1590	5:45 am	***
WDOW	Dowagiac	1440	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WACY	Fenton	1160	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WGHN	Grand Haven	1370/92.1	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WPLB	Greenville	1380	6:15 am	12:45 pm
WBCH	Hastings	1220	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WCSR	Hillsdale	1340	6:45 am	12:45 pm
WHTC	Holland	1450	*	12:15 pm
WKZO	Kalamazoo	590	**	12:15 pm
WJIM	Lansing	1250	5:05 am	12:15 pm
WWGZ	Lapeer	1530	*	12:15 pm
WNBY	Newberry	92.5	*	12:15 pm
WOAP	Owosso	1080	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WHAK	Rogers City	960	7:10 am	12:15 pm
WSJ	St. Johns	1580	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WMLM	St. Louis	1540	6:06 am	12:20 pm
WSGW	Saginaw	790	5:55 am	12:15 pm
WMIC	Sandusky	660	6:15 am	12:45 pm
WKZC	Scottville	95.9	5:45 am	12:30 pm
WCSY	South Haven	940	*	12:15 pm
WKJC	Tawas City	104.7	*	12:45 pm
WLKM	Three Rivers	1510/95.9	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WTCM	Traverse City	580	5:55 am	12:40 pm

* Station signs on at different times during the year. Morning farm times change with sign-on times.

** Station airs various farm reports between 5:50 and 6:20 pm.

*** Station airs various farm reports between 12:00 and 1:00 pm.

Some stations carry additional market reports throughout the market day.

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Wet Spring Means Planting Adjustments

Farmers will have to adjust their planting and herbicide applications around the wet spring weather, according to Peter Thomison, corn specialist at Ohio State University. He says when things dry out sufficiently for field work, farmers should get their corn crop established. Light tillage or no-till are the best alternatives this year.

1990 was a good example of how things can get fouled up by the weather. The last week in April that year was great for planting and most farmers completed their preliminary tillage. Then it rained throughout May.

"Only half of the corn crop was planted by June, because farmers couldn't get back in the field," Thomison says.

There is usually a significant yield reduction if corn is planted after May 10-15, Thomison says. Farmers can expect to lose

1 to 1.5 bushels per day if planting after the first week in May.

The wet weather will mean other changes for soybean planting. Jim Beuerlein, soybean specialist at Ohio State, says there will be more no-till soybeans this year because of the wet spring weather.

Farmers need to have their soybean seed treated to control diseases. Also, no-till soybeans are affected more by phytophthora root and stem rots. In order to guard against the disease, farmers can buy seed that is resistant to disease. Beuerlein says 15 percent of available varieties are resistant.

Other soybean varieties have some tolerance to phytophthora, but should be treated with a fungicide. Apron, a fungicide, will control the disease and can be applied to the seed. Ridomil, another fungicide that will control phytophthora, is applied in the seed furrow.

Many first-time no-till farmers plant in wet fields, Beuerlein says. A no-till field will not be ready for planting until five to seven days after a tilled field is ready.

When planting soybeans early in cold soil, the planting depth should be 1 inch to 1-1/2 inches. No-till soybean plants are usually smaller, so the crop should be planted in 15 inch rows or drilled. Beuerlein says to make sure the seed is covered for good seed-soil contact.

Nitrogen application on wheat should also be adjusted for wet weather, Beuerlein said. In most years, nitrogen should be applied between March 15 and April 15. But since wheat growth is behind this year, there should not be a yield loss if nitrogen was applied by May 10, Beuerlein says. He suggests applying one pound of nitrogen for every bushel of anticipated yield.

Weed specialist Mark Loux says herbicide programs should be adjusted for the wet spring and any consequential changes in tillage.

Farmers planting no-till corn and soybeans should use a knock-down chemical such as Roundup to control the weeds that emerged before planting. Weeds are behind schedule because of the cold and this should keep knock-down costs low.

Most farmers will be anxious to get crops planted when the soil dries and the application of pre-plant and pre-emergence herbicides may be delayed, Loux says.

As planting is delayed, farmers should consider switching from a pre-emergence to a post-emergence herbicide program. Late planting also reduces the need for a long-residual herbicide program, because many of the early weeds are removed by tillage or a knock-down herbicide.

Late planting results in a more rapid canopy closure and a shorter period of weed emergence. This will make a post-emergence program easier to implement, Loux says.

In no-till soybeans, farmers should consider using a knock-down herbicide at planting followed by post-emergence herbicides, because of the reduced population of broadleaf weeds in no-till fields.

Loux says herbicide runoff this year has been lower than might be expected. There's been minimal application so far because of the rain.

Wet Fields and Tillage Considerations

Dan Coffin, Regional Agronomist, Northrup King

What are some key ingredients to top yields and profitable corn production? Some key ingredients would include top genetics, uniform stands, nutrients, water and sunshine.

This isn't an exhaustive list, but it's enough to make a point about the damaging effects of tilling wet soil. Fields throughout Michigan have been extremely wet and April is flying by. All of us are anxious to get started and are tempted to till fields that are simply too wet.

What happens when fields are tilled too wet? Soil is compacted and structure is damaged. Cloddy seedbeds result, which enhance the probability of poor seed-to-soil contact.

Compacted seedbeds can contribute to denitrification of nitrogen, poor root growth, seedling diseases, stalk rot complex, stunted growth and reduced water availability. All of these can ultimately reduce the yields of your chosen hybrid.

Uneven emergence is likely to occur if dry conditions persist after planting. Slow emerging corn is like runt hogs. They are always behind and rarely add much to the profitability. Plus, irregular stands resulting from poor seedbeds will hurt yields.

Cloddy seedbeds can also contribute to poor weed and insect control. Compacted seedbeds can contribute to denitrification of nitrogen, poor root growth, seedling diseases, stalk rot complex, stunted growth and reduced water availability. All of these can ultimately reduce the yields of your chosen hybrid.

Many producers in 1992 were fortunate to avoid severe reductions in yields resulting from soil compaction due to ample rainfall throughout the summer.

In years with a dry summer, producers would have been hurt much worse. The poorly developed root systems were able to get all the water and nutrients needed last year. Many fields had good yields, but did not have top yields because of drowned-out spots and lack of nitrogen.

I still wonder how high the yields could have gone in Michigan if there had been some bright sunshine between the rains. We agronomists are never satisfied!

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Dr. Jim Hilker, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, MSU

Corn

With the late planting dates for corn, weather remains the big market mover. However, there is not much else I can say on that. I can build scenarios, from the late planting caused by excess moisture that could cause prices to increase, decrease, or stay the same. So, given that, we will discuss other factors in the market that, while important, could at any time be overwhelmed by weather effects.

Exports continue to be well above year ago levels. Year-to-date corn exports are 17 percent above a year ago. This is a good indication that we will meet USDA expectations of a 4 percent annual increase. However, there are a few potential roadblocks. We are exporting more each week than we are making in new sales. This means summer sales will have to pick up in order to continue the large shipments.

An impediment to new sales are the problems getting through Clinton's \$700 million aid package to Russia. And there are several. One problem is money. "Where does it come from, given our deficit?" is one question being asked. But I think we will get past that one.

A bigger problem is, "how much of the aid will be for commodities and how much for shipping?" At this point, 75 percent of the shipments must go on U.S. flag ships which costs two to four times as much as Russian ships. This presents at least two problems. One is, less of the commodity will be purchased due to higher shipping costs. And two, the Russians are not real keen on rack-

Market Outlook...

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Wheat	←→
Corn	→↑
Soybeans	←→
Hogs	↑?
Cattle	↓

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

ing up debt due to high shipping costs. The other complaint here is charges that the U.S. shipping industry just raised their rates sharply.

Strategy: The corn basis continues to narrow and is now on the wide side of an expected range. This means that while there may be more gains to basis narrowing, it could quickly be eliminated by quality deterioration as we move into warm weather. If there is any change in your stored corn problems, and the experts say there is, then move it. If you want to stay in the market for a possible scare, consider using a basis contract.

We have had a fairly sharp drop-off in new crop prices. At this point, consider holding further new crop sales. While there is downside risk, the odds are a little higher for a small rally this spring or summer. Be ready to forward price on rallies.

Wheat

The winter wheat crop is close to 80 percent good-to-excellent and only 2 percent poor. While lots of things can still happen, the odds are we will have high yields. Spring wheat plantings are running behind normal, but the moisture level is good and expectations for a good crop are high.

If production does increase from last year, we will probably need to find a home for it domestically. This means increases in feed use and/or ending stocks. A huge crop would mean significant feed use competition with corn this summer.

Soybeans

Brazil's crop looks great with their harvest well over 50 percent complete. Late corn plantings could well mean more soybean acres than indicated by the Prospective Plantings Report. But, given these two negative factors, the soybean market was holding up pretty well as of the end of April.

One factor that is helping, (but we don't know if it will last) is Brazilian producers seem to be holding on to more of their crop. They are better capitalized this year and, with lower inflation and interest rates, storage costs are lower. However, the soybeans will come to the market eventually and buyers seem to be willing to wait.

U.S. exports, both shipments and sales, continue to run at a rate which will meet the

Hogs

Hog slaughter in the last three weeks of April were above year ago levels. Perhaps the Hogs and Pigs Report will be closer to correct than first indications. This, along with heavier slaughter weights and weaker demand, put the futures markets for live hogs into a tailspin. In other words, the markets have come down closer to what fundamentals would project if the Hogs and Pigs Report is correct.

Strategy: Now that the markets have fallen, so have the good forward pricing opportunities. The next step for those who hedged future production is to decide when to lift them. At this point, there is still considerable downside risk, but be watching the market for signs that it has bottomed. For unpriced hogs, keep as current as possible. While there is potential for a seasonal upswing in cash prices, overweight hogs could erase much of it.

Dairy

Dr. Larry Hamm, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, MSU

Turmoil in the dairy products markets is once again prompting dairy analysts to ask how long the industry can stand the kind of price volatility becoming common place in the dairy markets.

Over the last two months, wholesale cheese prices on the National Cheese Exchange have exploded up \$.22 a pound. Current prices are now higher than at any time in 1992. However, in the last week of April, cheese markets stopped rising and appear poised to drop. Cheese is being offered for sale at lower prices.

The rapid run up in cheese prices is effecting the Minnesota-Wisconsin (M-W) price. Roughly 80-90 percent of the M-W price is a result of the cheese processors bidding for milk supply. Since the M-W directly impacts all the federal order minimum class prices, a volatile M-W means volatile federal order prices.

The M-W is expected to jump \$.60 to \$1 per cwt. It is possible to see a \$12 M-W for April and it is guaranteed to be \$12 for May. This is great news for producers as farm pay prices will increase dramatically over the next couple months. However, rapid increase in the dairy product (cheese) markets and the M-W play havoc with handlers and processors.

Milk processors and handlers must put out price announcements to their customers (grocery stores, food manufacturers, etc.) ahead of time. Often these customers need prices two to three months ahead of time. With highly volatile prices, processors have

Table Egg Market

Allan Rahn and Henry Larzelere
Dept. of Agricultural Economics, MSU

Egg prices in late April were trading around \$.68 per dozen (New York, Grade A, large white, in cartons, to retailers), \$.01 above the corresponding 1992 period, but \$.25 lower than their late March pre-Easter peak. Lower corn prices are currently more than offsetting slightly higher soybean meal prices, and layer feed costs are around \$.01 below a year ago.

The Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that the size of the table egg flock on April 1 (235.6 million birds) was unchanged from a year ago. Table egg production during March was also unchanged

April Farm Prices Up 2.8 Percent From Year Ago

USDA figures show that the Index of Prices Received by U.S. farmers for their products in April were up 2.1 percent from the March level and up 2.8 percent from a year earlier, according to *Knight Ridder News*. Price gains in April for lettuce, oranges, onions and tomatoes more than offset price declines for tobacco, celery, hogs and corn.

The year-to-year rise was driven by higher prices for cattle, hogs, lettuce and eggs, which more than offset price decreases for oranges, corn, wheat and apples. The quarterly index of prices paid by farmers for commodities and services, interest, taxes and farm wage rates for April was up 1.5 percent from January and up 3.1 percent from April 1992.

Cattle

On April 23, the USDA released the Monthly 7-State and the Quarterly 13-State Cattle-On-Feed Reports. While on the whole it was near expectations, there were some negative parts to it. Total on feed April 1 was up 9 percent in the 7-state report and up 8 percent in the 13-state report.

Cattle marketed in the 7-state report in March was up 2 percent and cattle marketed in the 13-state report in the first quarter was down 2 percent. Placed on feed was up 8 percent in March, but down 1 percent for the whole quarter.

The large year-to-year increase in the on feed numbers is in the 900-1,000 pounds range as of April 1. These are the cattle that will be coming to the market shortly and we

FARM BUSINESS OUTLOOK

to guess what to put on their price announcements. If they miss, they often have to change the announcement or try to make up for the change later in the year if prices move down. This price behavior is different than buyers experience with most other products in their store, which may cause buyers to discriminate against dairy items.

Another factor of rapid upward movement of the M-W is to cause the class price alignment in the federal orders to get messed up. May's Class I (fluid milk) and Class II (ice cream, soft product) prices are an example.

The Class I price for May in federal order No. 40 is \$12.77. The Class II price is \$12.93, \$.16 higher than Class I. This situation provides for incentives to dramatically alter dairy product, production schedules to take advantage at these unusual price patterns. This is not the way orderly milk marketing is supposed to work. Fortunately, the Michigan Superpool can operate to smooth out pricing problems like this.

Price volatility is a result of the price support deregulation of the U.S. dairy industry. The volatility appears almost on a yearly basis right now. Processors and producers understand this but they still don't have the tools to deal with it. The debate on how to manage the dairy industry price risk will be on-going discussion for years to come.

from year ago levels. The number of table egg-type checks hatched during March was 2 percent over year ago levels and continues the relative hatch increase trend that started in January. April 1 egg-type eggs in incubators was 8 percent above last year's count.

Egg prices in May are expected to rebound slightly from their post-Easter plunge as breakers become more active in the markets and provide a more solid price floor. Egg prices during May are likely to average around \$.70 per dozen. Prices should start to move up seasonally in June and are expected to average in the upper \$.70 range during the third quarter of 1993.

have about 23 percent more than a year ago. And while this does not mean slaughter will jump 23 percent all of a sudden, it does mean that prices will be working their way down. Keep as current as possible on ready cattle.

On feed cattle numbers in the lower weight categories are not a lot different than a year ago. This means prices are expected to stabilize this summer in the mid to low \$70/cwt. range and perhaps work their way back up a little by late fall. This does not leave us with good forward price opportunities for fed cattle using the futures.

The reports indicate that available feeders are up a little from last year, but with strong demand, feeder prices this spring are expected to hold up pretty well.

7 Dairy Profits in 1992 Down Compared to 1991

Sherrill B. Nott, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, MSU

Michigan dairy farmers faced unusual weather in 1992. The impact on profits is only recently becoming known as income taxes are filed and profit measures calculated. Preliminary results show dairy operations keeping their books with MSU's Telfarm system made less money in 1992 than in 1991. Milk price was up. But, many crop results were unfavorable. The details follow.

Data Source

The 1992 results are the averages of 75 specialized dairy farms. They are preliminary, and may change as individual farm data are corrected and expanded in the future. The 1991 results are the final averages of 203 farms. The average farm in 1991 harvested 485 acres and had 107 cows. The 1992 averages were 478 acres and 111 cows.

Profits Compared

Three profit measures are shown in Table 1. All show 1992 was less profitable than was 1991. When the whole farm is split between crops and dairy enterprises, however, the cow side made more money in 1992. The crops side was where the profit decrease occurred.

Table 1
Dairy Telfarm Profits

Income Measures		
	1991	1992
Net farm income:		
Total farm	\$43,627	\$42,546
Management income:		
Total Farm	(\$2,958)	(\$7,313)
Crops, per acre	(\$70)	(\$103)
Cows, per cow	\$302	\$398
Earnings on owned capital:		
Total farm	5.4%	4.5%
Crops, per acre	(4.5%)	(10.5%)
Cows, per cow	19.3%	24.4%

Crop Results

The major crops grown on dairy farms and their yields are given in Table 2. Corn for grain, corn silage and hay crops had noticeably lower average yields in 1992 than in 1991. The small grains of oats, barley and wheat had higher yields. The farms in 1992 averaged fewer owned acres, rented two less acres and had five fewer acres set aside or left idle. The 75 farms in 1992 harvested an average of 478 acres.

Table 2
Comparative Cropping Results

Crop Yields and Land Use		
	1991	1992
Corn grain, bu	113	98
Corn silage, ton	14.6	12.6
Hay crops, ton	4.3	3.5
Oats, bu.	53	63
Barley, bu	49	81
Wheat, bu	41	53
Tillable acres farmed:		
Owned	328	318
Rented	182	180
Less idle	-25	-20
Total Tillable Acres:	485	478

Table 3
Dairy Telfarm Crop and Cattle Changes

	Inventory Changes		
	1992 Beginning	1992 Ending	Change
Corn grain	\$31,468	\$25,712	(\$5,756)
Corn silage	11,822	13,598	1,776
Hay crops	25,677	23,785	(1,892)
Oats	425	476	51
Barley	32	249	217
Wheat	126	364	238
Crops Subtotal	\$69,550	\$64,184	(\$5,366)
Dairy Cattle	173,231	180,256	7,025
Crops and Cattle	\$242,781	\$244,440	\$1,659

The lower yields accompanied inventory losses during 1992 for corn grain and hay crops, as shown in Table 3. The net impact for all crops was a loss of \$5,366. Dairy livestock increased by enough to have an average gain of inventory of \$1,659 for crops and cattle during the year.

Feed Costs

The milk sold per cow in 1992 was over a thousand pounds less. The feed cost per cow was only \$38 less. This calculation "sells" farm-grown feed to the dairy enterprise at the year end price used to value feed inventory. The "Other feeds" in Table 4 were all purchased. They were mainly protein supplements and high energy feeds.

Table 4
Telfarm Comparative Feed Cost Per Cow

Feed Items	1991	1992
Corn grain	\$262	\$276
Corn silage	152	141
Oats	6	5
Barley	4	2
Hay Crops	297	281
Pasture	8	11
Other Feeds	470	445
Totals	\$1,199	\$1,161
Milk sold, lbs/cow	18,233	17,004

Other Costs

Table 5 is a list of selected cash expenses put on a per cow basis. This is an easy way to compare your farm to the averages, even though it may seem strange to think of fertilizer or seed per cow.

It avoids the bookkeeping problem of allocating costs between crops or cows. Depreciation, land taxes and fuel took less per cow in 1992 than in 1991. Other items like seed and repairs went up.

Table 5
Selected Dairy Expense Items

Expenses Per Cow		
Expense Items	1991	1992
Hired Labor	337	339
Repairs	226	235
Fuel, Oil	74	67
Insurance	37	34
Fertilizer and Lime	119	117
Seeds and Plants	57	68
Crop Chemicals	54	57
Semen, Breeding	27	24
Vet and Medicine	66	70
Livestock Mktng.	137	143
Livestock Supplies	101	95
Land Taxes	91	76
Utilities	68	67
Depreciation	249	220
Total	1643	1612

Management Income

Table 6 explains the dairy management income calculation. Milk per cow was down, but the price received was high enough to make the 1992 gross milk income higher than it was in 1991. The sale of cull cows, calves, steers and inventory change was

less per cow in 1992. Both the feed costs and nonfeed costs were down slightly. The net result for the cow enterprise was \$96 higher in 1992 despite the unusual weather.

Table 6
Management Income Calculation

Management Income per Cow		
	1991	1992
Milk sold/cow	\$18,233	\$17,004
Milk price/cwt	12.27	13.61
Gross milk income	\$2,237	\$2,314
Cows, calves, inventory change	346	319
Gross income	\$2,583	\$2,633
Feed cost	\$1,199	\$1,161
Non-feed cost	1,082	1,074
Management Income	\$302	\$398

Discussion of Data Source

The Telfarm system is not a random data source. It may be representative of the bigger, and better managed farms in Michigan. The 1991 averages were from the final report of 203 farms after all farmer correc-

FARM BUSINESS OUTLOOK

tions were completed. The 1992 averages were preliminary results of only 75 farms.

The 75 farms in 1992 may or may not have been among the 203 farms selected in 1991. The 1992 farms were computer checked to ensure several factors were within set ranges. Some of the farms may have had incomplete records.

The final report on 1992 farms will be out in late summer; the individual items are expected to differ a bit from these preliminary results. More details on the preliminary results can be obtained from the author by asking for Staff Paper No. 93-19.



Neal, Kelly, Pat, Harold and Marty Travis operate North Valley Farms, a 300-cow dairy operation at Shepherd, MI. The four brothers farm with their parents, Pat and Evelyn Travis. The farm has a 20,500-lb. milk RHA and produces 1,000 acres of hay and corn.

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8 Use Common Sense to Prevent Falls From Ladders

Falls from ladders may not happen on the farm every day – but when they do, the likelihood of serious injury is very high.

Such falls usually involve either an equipment failure or poor judgment. Sometimes a rung, step, or side rail fails. Or a ladder may be set at the wrong angle. Or it may be set on a soft, uneven, or slick surface.

Problems also result when users try to climb with heavy or awkward loads. Overreaching, working in strong winds, and climbing all the way to the ladder top are other unsafe practices. And it's possible that someone climbing a ladder might simply slip, get dizzy, or become disoriented.

Here are tips for preventing ladder falls:

- Choose a ladder long enough and strong enough for the job. Don't climb beyond the third rung from the top of a straight or extension ladder, or the second step from the top of a stepladder. When planning to exit a ladder to a roof, extend the ladder at least three feet beyond the roof line.

- Be sure your ladder is in good condition before you start climbing. Make needed repairs, or replace it.
- Don't lean a ladder against a weak surface.
- Set the base of a straight or extension ladder out one foot from the building or tree for every four feet up. Doing so ensures the proper angle for best stability.
- Stay off high ladders in high winds or threatening weather.
- Set the ladder on firm, level footing. Use planks if the ground is soft. On uneven surfaces, block the low-side leg. Before climbing past the lower rungs or steps, make certain the ladder is stable and won't slide out or tip sideways. Long ladders can be lashed at the top for added safety.
- Watch for overhead power lines when erecting or repositioning ladders. Use only wooden or nonconductive ladders near electrical wires or installations.
- Face the ladder when going up or coming down, and grasp the rungs or rails with both hands. Carry tools and supplies in a tool holster or shoulder sack – or transport them by rope and bucket.
- Wear comfortable shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles. Clean them before climbing. If you need gloves, choose a pair that will give a good grip. Plant each foot securely on the rung or step before putting your weight on it. Don't hurry. Take time to be safe.
- Keep a hand on a rung or rail while working, or lock an arm around the rail. If you need to work with both hands, lock a leg around a rung.
- Keep your belt buckle between the rails. Don't overreach or lunge for that last inch. It's much safer to come down and move the ladder.



From Farm Bureau Insurance

- Climb down – don't jump – from elevated levels.
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10-24 25 and over

Handling Corn May Add to the Risk of Potential Respiratory Problems

Handling this year's corn as it comes out of storage may pose potentially serious respiratory risks for workers associated with the task.

Mold, broken, and fine material commonly found in the corn may create working conditions that could lead to farmer's lung disease, says Howard Doss, MSU Extension agricultural safety specialist.

Doss says that Farmer's Lung is among the more serious respiratory ailments associated with Michigan agriculture.

A current report by MSU's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health estimates that at least 15 Michigan farm workers will be afflicted this year by work-related lung diseases, including Farmer's Lung, Doss says.

"It is an illness that may develop as the result of inhaling dust containing bacterial or fungal proteins," Doss says. "The disease typically occurs among farm workers who handle silage, grain or animal bedding that is dusty or contains mold."

Farmer's Lung symptoms include tightness in the chest, muscle aches, chills, shortness of breath and sometimes, a dry cough. These symptoms often develop several hours after exposure. If the symptoms persist, seek medical attention, he advises.

"Sometimes the symptoms disappear if the exposure was brief, but continued exposure to dust-laden conditions can reduce normal respiratory capacity and cause permanent damage," Doss says.

Doss recommends that all farm workers wear disposable dust masks (not painter's masks) or respirators whenever they are working around dusty conditions in the barn or in other confined working spaces and especially when they are handling this year's corn and corn silage.

At minimum, the dust mask or respirator should be capable of filtering mold spores. An example would be the 3M brand 8710 or equivalent (this is not a product endorsement).

Select a respirator appropriate to the severity of working conditions, he advises, and make sure it is properly fitted and used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and state limitations. Respirator misuse may result in sickness or death, Doss says.

"Anyone wearing a dust mask or respirator must remember that they are designed to filter only dust and mold spores – they do not supply oxygen," he adds.

Masks should be disposed of or the filters replaced when normal breathing becomes noticeably difficult.

"It is important to know under what circumstances these masks or respirators can be used safely," Doss says. "When they're matched to the working conditions, this type of personal protection can significantly reduce respiratory health risk associated with contaminated working conditions."

9 How Can an MDA Inspection Benefit You?

Did you know that MDA conducts inspections that are aimed at keeping farmers out of trouble with state and federal regulatory agencies?

The Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division (PPPMD) of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) operates under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that gives MDA primary authority over pesticide use issues.

One of the requirements of the cooperative agreement is to conduct proactive inspections, called planned use inspections, in order to identify and resolve problems at an early stage. The inspections are also intended to derive information about general industry trends and issues in order to focus resources on these areas before they become problems.

In an effort to become more familiar with the farming community, the form contains questions on required and anticipated regulations, in addition to suggested management techniques. The latter two pieces of information, however, are intended as information dissemination only, with no enforcement action intended.

PPPMD conducts 170 planned use inspections each year, with 85 inspections focused on commercial pesticide applicators and 85 on private pesticide applicators (farmers). PPPMD has been conducting planned use inspections since 1982.

The inspections are not intended to be a basis for enforcement actions, but rather provide assistance to applicators in understanding and adhering to laws and regulations related to pesticide use. Even when violations are found, applicators will be given sufficient time to resolve the problems unless they pose an immediate threat to human health or the environment.

What can you expect when an inspector calls on you for a planned use inspection? Inspectors will attempt to inconvenience you as little as possible by scheduling an appointment with you.

Approximately one to two hours will normally be required, however, that time may vary depending upon a number of factors. Inspectors will utilize a checklist-type form to review on-farm procedures in a number of pesticide areas including: pesticide storage, recordkeeping, applicator training, transportation, protective clothing and equipment, pesticide disposal, mixing and loading practices, and application equipment. Inspectors may also ask to observe a scheduled application.

EPA Rule Focuses On Farmworker Safety

The Environmental Protection Agency recently published a rule on Worker Protection Standards for farms, nurseries, greenhouses, and forestry operations that use pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and fumigants.

The rule will be phased in over the next year, with full implementation to be in effect by April 1994, says Mark Landmark, rural health and safety director for the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Not all provisions of the rule apply to family farm operations, Landmark said, but if anyone outside the immediate family is employed on a particular operation, it is classed as an employer and must comply with all the rules.

Strictly family farms must provide personal protection equipment, including safety gear which must be worn by workers according to label instructions. They also must observe restricted-entry intervals when pesticides are applied to a field, when required on the label of the material applied.

Other rules that apply to employers include, notification of employees when pesticides are to be applied and field-posting with signs; decontamination facilities available to field workers; transportation provided in medical emergencies; worker training programs; and certain information posted and available to workers, according to Landmark.

The purpose of reviewing the above areas of operation is to ensure that:

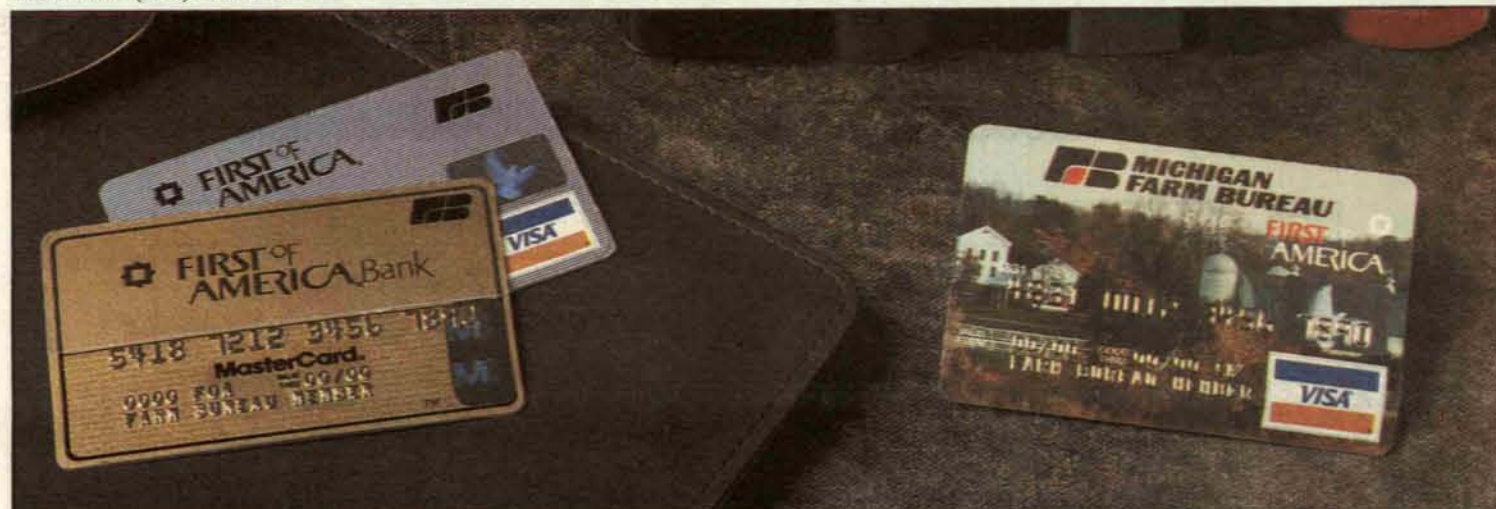
- 1) farmers are aware of the current laws and regulations that impact them;
- 2) any problems or areas of confusion are resolved at an early stage, and;
- 3) farmers are informed of new laws that may be affecting them in the near future.

As stated earlier, MDA will not initiate enforcement actions as a result of planned use inspections unless there appears to be an immediate threat to human health or the environment. In the absence of such a threat, MDA will work cooperatively with farmers and provide sufficient time to resolve any outstanding problems.

According to MDA Director Bill Schuette, "MDA believes that farmers are responsible stewards of the land and take their responsibility as pesticide applicators seriously. We will continue to work with you to make sure that the tools you need to produce your crop continue to be available."

If you have any questions or concerns regarding pesticide planned use inspections, please contact your local MDA office or call (517) 335-6838.

Inspectors will utilize a checklist-type form to review on-farm procedures in a number of pesticide areas including applicator training, transportation, protective clothing and equipment, pesticide disposal, mixing and loading practices, and application equipment.



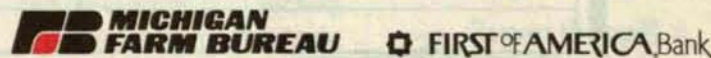
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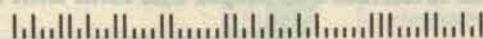
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10

AFBF Recommends Zero Acreage Reduction For 1994 Wheat

Citing decreased year-end wheat supplies and negative impacts on farm income that would result from a large wheat acreage reduction program (ARP), the American Farm Bureau Federation has recommended that the 1994 wheat ARP be set at zero percent.

In a letter to the Grains Analysis Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the nation's largest farm organization also requested that the loan rate for the 1994 wheat price support program be set at the basic formula rate as outlined by the Food, Agricultural, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990.

An ARP higher than zero percent also would have serious impact on net farm income, Farm Bureau stated. AFBF analysis indicates that for each 1 percent increase in the ARP, net farm income for the average wheat producer will decline by 1.1 percent. This relationship tends to hold true for all classes of wheat.

A 5 percent ARP would reduce net farm income for the average hard red winter

wheat producer by \$445 for every 100 acres of production. Soft red winter wheat producers would see an income drop of \$662 per 100 acres of production, and producers of irrigated wheat in the Pacific Northwest could see income reductions of \$1,360 per 100 acres.

This trend would be compounded by the imposition of a 15 percent ARP, Farm Bureau stated.

Farm Bureau based its requests on several factors. Despite very good yields in most wheat-producing areas last year, current supply and usage analysis indicates the stocks-to-use ratio will remain under 30 percent. USDA analysis indicates that stocks are not likely to build to burdensome levels in the 1993-94 marketing year. USDA also predicts that with a 5 percent ARP, ending stocks from the 1994 wheat crop would likely drop by 50 million bushels. Under a 15 percent ARP, those stocks would drop by 158 million bushels.

AFBF analysis indicates that even with a zero percent ARP, ending stocks are likely

to decline by 10 million bushels. "An ARP level higher than zero could lead to lower than desired stocks, leaving no buffer for weather-related, crop production problems," Farm Bureau's letter stated.

According to David Miller, AFBF grains commodity specialist, a significant amount of wheat acreage is already diverted from production. "Nearly 11 million acres of wheat base are enrolled in the conservation reserve program," Miller said. Another 4.5 million acres will likely be signed up for the 0/92 program, and producers will probably plant another 2.5 million non-payment wheat acres to other crops under the flex program.

"In total, even with a zero percent ARP, nearly 23 percent of the wheat base will not be used for wheat production," Miller said. "Increasing the ARP above zero would reduce the competitiveness of U.S. wheat in world export markets."

According to Farm Bureau, each 5 percent increase in the ARP percentage would fur-

ther reduce U.S. wheat exports by approximately 2 percent.

"The United States has fought hard to stop the slide of U.S. market share of world wheat markets," Farm Bureau's letter stated. "Foregoing nearly 23 percent of our production through CRP, 0/92, and flex acres, it would be counterproductive to further reduce the presence of U.S. wheat in international markets by imposing additional set aside requirements with an ARP."

Furthermore, Farm Bureau believes that farmers should not bear a disproportionate share of the costs resulting from unsuccessful world trade negotiations. As long as marketing loan provisions are in effect due to a stalemate in trade talks, the organization said it would support the use of basic loan rates for wheat and feed grains price support programs.

Wheat Residue Effective Against Costly Soybean Pest

University of Kentucky research shows planting no-till soybeans into standing wheat stubble significantly suppresses development of soybean cyst nematode (SCN), a pest that causes growers millions of dollars in losses each year.

"We proved wheat residue reduces SCN development 60 to 75 percent by the end of a soybean growing season," says Don Hershman, Extension plant pathologist at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton.

Hershman says the research results mean that producers who double-crop soybeans behind wheat might be able to use a shorter crop rotation cycle, and perhaps reduce dependence on resistant soybean varieties, to manage SCN effectively.

During the three-year project, soybeans were planted in residue and no-residue plots and the impact of tillage on these plots was studied.

"The presence of wheat residue, not tillage per se, appears to be the primary influence on season-end cyst levels," says Hershman, who notes tillage appears to be important relative to disturbing wheat residue. Disturbed residue apparently is less effective in keeping SCN at low levels.

The project found:

- Wheat-residue plots had significantly fewer cysts at season's end than no-residue plots - regardless of tillage practice.
- In residue plots, no tillage resulted in lower SCN levels than minimum tillage two out of three years.
- Wheat residue had no impact on yields.
- A 1992 study indicated that both wheat roots/crowns and straw must be present for maximum effect. The effect of only one residue was significantly less than when both were present.

Hershman doesn't know why the wheat residue suppresses SCN populations during the growing season. He's ruled out possible explanations, but plans to expand research into other areas.

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Employer's Telephone Number	Position	Time at Present Employment Yrs. Mos.		Gross Income from Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	
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11

Calibration and Maintenance of Spray Equipment

Most of the practices we can adopt to help safeguard water quality from contamination by crop protection chemicals are common sense: protecting wellheads from spills, rinsing containers, use of soil conservation farming methods, etc.

Common sense, however, takes a backseat to mathematics and engineering when it's time to calibrate and maintain spray equipment. This is because of the inconvenience of formulas, charts and conversion factors. As a result, farmers may not calibrate as often or as accurately as they should.

Recent studies in several states have found that as many as one out of every three sprayers is miscalibrated by as much as 30 percent. Wrong pressure, wrong ground speed and worn or damaged spray tips are common.

Calibration errors add excess chemical costs, reduced yield due to pests if the chemical is under applied, crop damage if the chemical is over applied and increased potential for water contamination. What farmers need is a simple, accurate method to calibrate their sprayers as often as needed, or at least once a year.

Calibration Made Simple

Below are simplified calibration and maintenance procedures for the ag chemical sprayers generally used in farming. Just follow these ten easy steps:

1. Fill your sprayer tank with water. Only use clean water to calibrate.
2. Measure the distance between the nozzles on your spray boom.
3. Choose the Test Course Length (in feet) from the chart below which corresponds to your nozzle spacing. For directed and band rigs, use the row spacing of the field you plan to spray. Carefully measure the appropriate course distance in the field and mark for easy visibility.

Nozzle Spacing (inches)	Test Course Length (feet)
14	291
16	255
18	227
20	204
22	185
24	170
26	157
28	146
30	136
32	127
34	120
36	113
38	107
40	102

4. Drive the test course at your normal spraying speed. Be sure to operate all equipment. Record the seconds required to drive the measured distance. For greatest accuracy, do the speed check with the spray tank half full. Be sure to take a "running start" at the starting flag so that your tractor/sprayer reaches the desired spraying speed before you begin timing.

5. Park your tractor/sprayer, but keep the engine rpm at the same setting used to drive the test course.

6. Set the desired pressure on your sprayer (this will vary with the type of spray tips you use and the gallons per minute you wish to spray through them. Consult the spray chart for the tips you have chosen).

7. Using a plastic container marked in ounces (a baby bottle or measuring cup works fine), collect the water sprayed from one nozzle during the same amount of time that it took you to drive between the flags on your test course.

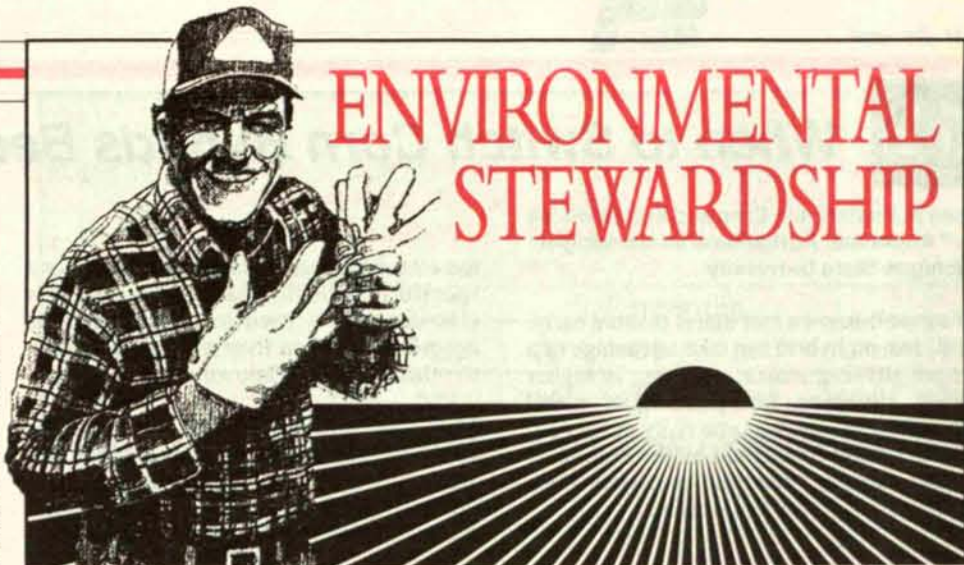
8. Measure the flow of each nozzle on the boom to assure uniform distribution. If the flow rate of any tip is 10 percent greater or less than that of the others, replace it. If two or more are faulty, replace all tips on the entire boom. At about \$3 each, the total cost is small compared to the avoided problems and dollars you will be saving by replacing defective tips. Whatever type of spray tip you choose, be sure to use all the same type of your boom.

9. The amount of water collected in ounces per nozzle equals gallons per acre applied. Vary the sprayer pressure slightly to fine tune your overall sprayer output.

10. Be sure to read the product label for proper application information.

Maintenance Tips

Getting your sprayer ready for spring spraying generally involves three steps: cleaning



strainers, examining the pump and valves, and checking for leaks.

1. Clean the line strainer and all tip strainers, and examine the tips for obvious signs of clogging or damage. Use only a soft bristled tooth brush to clean the tips, a wooden tooth pick or paper clip can severely damage the finely machined thin edges around the spray tip orifice. It's a good idea to replace all spray tips about every two years, or more frequently if you grow crops requiring frequent sprays.

2. Check the casing of the centrifugal pump for cracks caused by freezing of water left in the pump over winter. While the pump is running, check the throttling valves. The pressure gauge should move as you turn the throttling valve if it is working properly.

3. Check the hoses and hose clamps for splits and leaks by running the pump with various combinations of valves closed or partially closed to increase the line pressure.

Looking Out For The Environment

Proper Cleanup of Pesticide Spills Protects Water Supplies

Spills when handling, transporting or using pesticides are a concern for every producer. But by knowing what to do if a spill occurs, whether it's on your property or on the road, you can help minimize the risk and prevent ground water and surface water contamination.

Control the spill as quickly as possible by restoring the container to its upright position, closing a leaking valve or hose or putting a secondary container in place to catch the leaking solution. Of course,



appropriate personal safety equipment should be used, such as rubber gloves, rubber boots and eye protection.

Call your retailer for advice on cleanup of their chemical. They will also give you special safety advice and other information.



Contain the spread of the spill when the leak has been stopped by creating soil dams in the path of the spilled liquid. It may be most important to first divert a spill away from a nearby pond or

stream and then attempt to stop the leak or spill. This is a judgement call that only you can make.

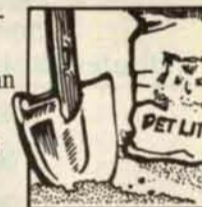


Begin cleanup as soon as the situation has been stabilized.

Quick action on your part to clean up a spill is not only required in many states, but will prevent the chemical from leaching or washing away in a rainstorm.



Use absorbent materials on pavement or concrete to capture the spilled liquids. They can then be shoveled or swept. Non-chlorinated pet litter is an excellent, inexpensive absorbent material to keep on hand for such purposes.



Properly dispose of the drenched soil or absorbent material. This will depend on what and how much was spilled and the rules for disposal in your state. Contact state or local officials or your retailer for legally acceptable disposal options.



Report the spill, if required, before it threatens public health or the environment. If the spill is large or enters a waterway, you'll need to call the local EPA office, the local emergency planning office or the state health department. The reporting criteria vary with the chemical spilled, however, so ask your dealer to check the Material Safety Data Sheet or call the manufacturer for further details.

This information is provided by the Alliance for a Clean Rural Environment, a non-profit, non-political organization encouraging environmental stewardship and protection of water quality, supported by the makers of crop protection chemicals.

Who To Call:	EPA Regional Offices
EPA Hazardous Waste Hotline 800-424-9346	Atlanta 404-347-3004 Boston 617-565-3420
EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline 800-426-4791	Chicago 312-353-2000 Dallas 214-655-6444
National Pesticides Telecommunications Network 800-858-7378	Denver 303-293-1603 Kansas City 913-551-7000
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12 When to Switch Corn Hybrids Because of Planting Delays

Oran B. Hesterman, Crop and Soil Sciences
 Jeff Andresen, Agricultural Meteorologist
 Michigan State University

It's a well-known fact that if planted early, a full season hybrid can take advantage of a longer growing season, resulting in higher yields. However, late planting of a full season hybrid can become risky at harvest, since a killing frost could hit the crop prior to full maturity, resulting in higher grain moisture and lower test weights.

What is a Full Season Hybrid?

No hybrid can be considered full-season irrespective of where it's grown. In general, a full season hybrid is one that uses or requires the entire growing season available at a particular location to reach full maturity prior to the first killing frost.

A full season hybrid for a particular location will depend obviously on air temperature patterns throughout the growing season.

It's important to understand that the days designation used to identify a maturity group of hybrids may not be reflective of

the actual number of days that it takes for a specific hybrid to reach maturity. This classification is used to classify hybrids according to when they mature in relation to other hybrids of known maturity.

Mid, short and ultra-short season hybrids could be considered as those which are approximately 5, 15, and 20 days relative maturity (RM) respectively, earlier than a full season hybrid for a given location.

For example, a 95-day RM hybrid does not necessarily mature in 95 days. However, under similar climatic conditions and cultural practices, a 95-day RM hybrid should mature approximately 10 days earlier than a 105 day RM hybrid.

Table 1 gives approximate RM for full to ultra short season hybrids for four different regions in Michigan.

Adjustments would need to be made due to local climatic conditions and cultural practices. These estimates are based on a planting date of early May.

Table 1
 Approximate relative maturities (RM) for full- to ultra-short-season hybrids for four different regions in Michigan.

Hybrid Maturity	Michigan Location			
	Southern* LP	Central LP	Northern LP	UP
	-----relative maturity days-----			
Full-season	100 - 110	100 - 105	90 - 100	80 - 90
Mid-season	95 - 105	95 - 100	85 - 95	75 - 85
Short-season	85 - 95	83 - 95	75 - 85	70 - 75
Ultra-short-season	80 - 90	75 - 85	70 - 80	----

* Southern LP (Lower Peninsula) refers to the lower three tiers of counties. Northern LP is the area parallel to Isabella County and north. The Central LP is the remaining counties, including the Thumb.

What are Growing Degree Days?

A growing degree day unit (GDD) is a representative index of accumulated heat, normally derived from air temperatures at a given location. GDDs are calculated on a

daily basis and summed for all or a portion of the growing season.

The most common way of calculating GDDs for corn is known as the '86-50 cutoff' method. If the day's minimum temperature is less than 50 F, it's raised to 50 F. If the day's temperature is higher than 86 F, it's lowered to 86 F. This is because corn growth doesn't begin until temperatures are at least 50 F, and growth actually begins to slow at temperatures in excess of 86 F.

Next, calculate the average for the day by dividing the sum of the maximum and minimum by two. Finally, subtract the base temperature of 50 F from this average to get your GDDs for the day.

$$GDD = \{ \text{Maximum Temperature } 86 + \text{Minimum Temperature } 50 \text{ divided by } 2 \} - 50$$

Seasonal GDD Accumulations in Michigan

The growing season in a climate such as Michigan is normally defined as the number of days between the last occurrence of 32 F in the spring and the first occurrence of 32 F in the fall. For purposes of this report, GDD day accumulations for various spring planting dates and the first occurrence of a killing frost of 30 F in the fall were used.

Twenty representative stations were chosen from corn producing areas of Michigan for calculation of GDD statistics for the period of 1961 to 1990. Percentile statistics of seasonal GDD accumulations are given in tables 2 and 3 for different hypothetical planting dates of May 20 and June 1.

In reading the data from these tables, seven numbers representing different percentages of seasonal GDD accumulation statistics are given for each station. In short, the numbers in the tables represent the minimum number of GDDs accumulated for the given percentage of years in the study.

For example, the 30th percentile GDD accumulation for a May 20 planting date in Allegan (Table 2) is 2488. This means that for the period 1961 - 1990, Allegan accumulated 2488 GDDs or more in 30 percent of the seasons (given a May 20 planting date).

Timewise, seasonal totals decrease only slightly, from April 20 to May 10, but fall rapidly thereafter, following the rapid seasonal rise in temperatures during May. This underscores the importance of early planting in Michigan, as potential accumulated GDDs lost by planting after early May become increasingly difficult to make up later in the season.

Using GDD information to Select Corn Hybrids

Some seed companies collect information on the required number of GDDs for a specific hybrid to reach specific stages of development such as silking and black layer. If this information is available, you

Continued...next page

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13 When to Switch Corn Hybrids Because of Planting Delays...(continued from page 12)

Table 2
Seasonal accumulations of base 50°F growing degree days (calculated with the '86-50' cutoff method) based on a planting date of May 20th for the period 1961-1990.

Station	Percentile						
	95	90	70	50	30	10	5
Allegan	2228	2271	2362	2425	2488	2579	2622
Alma	2098	2174	2322	2414	2498	2605	2652
Alpena	1609	1654	1746	1811	1875	1967	2012
Bad Axe	1993	2049	2177	2269	2362	2492	2553
Caro	2160	2182	2236	2283	2338	2440	2500
Chatham	1540	1581	1677	1745	1814	1911	1957
Cheboygan	1672	1728	1853	1944	2036	2167	2229
Coldwater	2223	2259	2340	2396	2451	2528	2563
Eau Claire	2504	2551	2650	2718	2786	2884	2932
Grand Rapids	2226	2285	2397	2463	2522	2594	2625
Hesperia	1918	1960	2049	2110	2172	2261	2303
Iron Mountain	1649	1695	1792	1859	1926	2022	2068
Lake City	1645	1696	1803	1875	1943	2034	2075
Lansing	2166	2203	2287	2347	2408	2494	2534
Lapeer	2123	2175	2283	2357	2432	2540	2592
Monroe	2502	2574	2704	2781	2848	2931	2966
Saginaw	2078	2139	2268	2355	2439	2552	2603
Sandusky	2051	2103	2221	2306	2390	2508	2563
Stephenson	1691	1731	1821	1886	1949	2037	2078
Traverse City	1861	1918	2037	2120	2203	2322	2379

may want to use it to match the normal GDD accumulation for your location, given your anticipated planting date, with hybrid requirements.

Normally, if a hybrid reaches full maturity prior to the first killing freeze in the fall, there will still be adequate drying weather to harvest the crop as grain with a minimum need for artificial drying.

It's common for seed companies to provide information on relative maturities (in days) and there may be cases in which you would like to estimate GDD requirements from this information.

One of your best sources of information is your seed company technical representative. However, Table 4 provides estimates of the relationship between GDD requirements and relative maturity indexes for corn hybrids.

When to Switch Hybrids in Relation to Planting Date

The information on GDD accumulations at progressive planting dates (Tables 2 and 3) can be used as a guide when facing the decision of when to switch to a shorter season hybrid as planting dates are delayed.

If, for example, you farmed in the Caro area and you originally intended to plant a hybrid with a RM of 105 days, you would need 2500 to 2700 GDDs (Table 4) for the crop to mature prior to the first killing frost.

If planting was delayed until May 20 (Table 2), the normal GDDs (50th percentile) available would be 2283. In this case, the 105 RM hybrid would likely not mature prior to frost, and you may want to consider switching to a 95 day RM hybrid (Table 4). The decision of when to switch to shorter season corn hybrids as planting is delayed will depend on:

- the extent of the delay
- your particular location
- availability of seed
- your individual assessment of the "odds"
- your desired or anticipated harvest schedule.

Remember, the tables and figures are long-term averages and likely will not correspond precisely to any individual year. However, they can be of great value if you are willing to manage your corn hybrid selection according to the long-term average climate for your location rather than according to your own guess of what the next growing season is likely to offer.

Table 3
Seasonal accumulations of base 50°F growing degree days (calculated with the '86-50' cutoff method) based on a planting date of June 1st for the period 1961-1990.

Station	Percentile						
	95	90	70	50	30	10	5
Allegan	2085	2116	2196	2260	2330	2435	2487
Alma	1953	2021	2162	2255	2343	2460	2511
Alpena	1515	1545	1623	1685	1752	1854	1904
Bad Axe	1869	1919	2037	2127	2218	2350	2413
Caro	1981	2011	2084	2139	2195	2278	2317
Chatham	1422	1464	1560	1628	1696	1791	1836
Cheboygan	1567	1618	1742	1836	1932	2071	2138
Coldwater	2068	2106	2186	2241	2297	2377	2415
Eau Claire	2335	2374	2471	2546	2624	2738	2793
Grand Rapids	2076	2127	2233	2303	2368	2456	2494
Hesperia	1781	1817	1901	1964	2028	2120	2164
Iron Mountain	1522	1567	1660	1725	1790	1883	1928
Lake City	1526	1573	1672	1740	1808	1906	1954
Lansing	2018	2056	2142	2201	2259	2338	2375
Lapeer	1965	2017	2126	2202	2277	2386	2438
Monroe	2353	2418	2541	2616	2682	2766	2801
Saginaw	1924	1988	2123	2214	2301	2417	2469
Sandusky	1908	1960	2078	2164	2250	2371	2428
Stephenson	1568	1607	1692	1752	1810	1891	1927
Traverse City	1746	1800	1912	1990	2068	2180	2234

Table 4
Estimates of the relationship between relative maturities (RM) of corn hybrids and growing degree days.

Relative Maturity (days)	GDD requirements (planting to physiological maturity)
70 - 80	1800 - 2000
80 - 90	2000 - 2300
90 - 100	2300 - 2500
100 - 110	2500 - 2700
110 - 120	2700 - 2800



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May 1993 Discussion Topic: Battling the "BTU Tax"

15

Because agriculture is such an energy intensive industry, farmers are deeply concerned about the impact of President Clinton's proposed BTU energy tax.

Reflecting that concern, Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie testified in Washington, D.C., on March 23 before a House Agriculture Subcommittee on the impact of the tax on the agricultural industry. "This tax would impose added costs on individual producers who cannot pass those costs on," he told the congressmen. "Increases in transportation and processing costs will simply make our products less competitive in world markets."

According to Farm Bureau estimates, the energy tax will mean farmers will incur \$1 billion in additional production costs, about two percent of U.S. net farm income. Half the \$1 billion hit would come from direct fuel costs; the other half would come from indirect costs resulting from price hikes for inputs like fertilizer and pesticides.

Laurie also told the congressmen that the tax will cause farm prices to decline, since many farmers receive the market price established in commodity markets minus the transportation and handling costs, which would be higher because of an energy tax.

According to an AFBF analysis, the proposed BTU tax on the heat content of various fuels would result in tax increases



Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie presented Farm Bureau's views on the impact of President Clinton's economic package before a House Agriculture panel during hearings in Washington, D.C. in late March

of 7.5 cents per gallon for gasoline, 8.3 cents for diesel and 2.3 cents for propane.

The new levies would affect all aspects of agricultural production, from running combines, to heating barns and greenhouses, to operating irrigation systems.

AFBF provided Clinton with several examples of how the energy tax would affect various kinds of farming operations nationwide. A 2,100-acre Kansas farm producing corn, soybeans, milo and wheat would be hit with \$1,513 in added costs. A greenhouse nursery operation in New Jersey would face \$1,469 in added costs because of the tax. A 1,200-acre farm with 600 acres of tomatoes in California's San Joaquin Valley would face \$3,486 in added fuel-costs.

Farm Bureau pointed out that another problem with the energy tax is that it will disproportionately increase the cost of living for rural people who must drive farther than urban and suburban residents to work, shop, see a doctor or take children to school.

Another major concern of farmers is that ethanol would be subject to the new tax. In March, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen announced that the Clinton Administration would exempt ethanol, methanol and gasoline additives from the energy tax. But during debate over the fiscal 1994 budget resolution, the U.S. Senate rejected that exemption.

The Senate also defeated a Farm Bureau-supported non-binding amendment to exempt off-road use of motor fuel from the tax. The amendment was defeated even though senators had earlier passed a non-binding resolution stating that the BTU tax is unfair to agriculture.

The energy tax is highly regressive — it hits everyone regardless of their ability to pay. Unless the tax plan is altered, agricultural producers will find themselves getting a double-barreled blast of one of the biggest tax hikes in history — a tax increase that could have a profound impact on farm prices and profitability.

Discussion Questions:

1. What alternatives will farmers use to adjust for the extra cost of a BTU tax?
2. What other industries will be adversely affected by the proposed BTU tax?
3. Which industries will affect the bottom line of agriculture the most?
4. What can Farm Bureau do to convey a message about the effects of the proposed BTU tax on agriculture?

Michigan Medical Malpractice Reform Nears Reality

The House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 270 (H-2), sponsored by Sen. Dan DeGrow (R-Port Huron), by a vote of 72-29. This bill was passed with only two substantive changes from the originally drafted Griffin-Bandstra substitute.

Language stating the intent of the Legislature in passing this bill, was removed. While it had no effect on tort reform, Farm Bureau supported it, feeling it could help in thwarting anticipated lawsuits challenging the enactment of this law, by leaving little doubt as to the intent of the Legislature.

The lower tier of the cap on non-economic damages was also raised to \$280,000 from \$250,000, to take inflation into account since the enactment of the current cap.

This has been a significant effort by members of the House of Representatives. In past years, a Medical Malpractice Liability bill could not even make it out of the House Judiciary Committee.

This time, through the efforts of the two co-chairs of the House Judiciary Committee, Reps. Tom Mathieu (D-Grand Rapids) and Mike Nye (R-Litchfield), a substitute bill S.B. 270 (H-1) was reported out by a unanimous vote. While their substitute was not enacted, it did break the logjam in that committee.

The bill has now been returned to the Senate, where they will vote on accepting or rejecting the changes to the bill that originally passed the Senate. If the Senate concurs with the language as passed by the

House, it would be sent to the Governor for his anticipated signature.

A coalition, which MFB is a member of, will work with the original sponsor of the bill, Sen. Dan DeGrow, as the Senate makes its final decision. The bill could possibly be finalized by the date of this publication.

MFB POSITION:

Supports the Griffin - Bandstra substitute S.B.-270 (H-2).

Farm Bureau Health policy excerpt:

Farm Bureau members have a real concern for their family's good health. Adequate health care is becoming unaffordable for many Americans and is virtually nonexistent in many rural areas. The American public perceives the health care/health insurance system to be in a crisis.

We support:

- * A cap on malpractice settlements.
- * Elimination of pain and suffering settlements.
- * Tort reform.

ACTION NEEDED:

Continue to keep this issue on your legislator's mind. Thank the 72 members of the House of Representatives that passed this Medical Malpractice bill and the senators who voted for the original Senate Bill 270. Encourage them to keep the momentum going and put a bill on the governor's desk soon.

MFB CONTACT:

Howard Kelly, Ext. 2044

Aquaculture — Expect a Brighter Future!

Per-capita seafood consumption may have slipped by about 1.5 pounds in the late 1980s, but there's good news for the growing aquaculture business. Consumption of farm-raised fish is up. That's good news for the Midwest, where fish farming is starting to pick up steam.


Researchers at Ohio State and elsewhere are developing production systems that capitalize on coldwater fish. That means growth away from the catfish business that has dominated American aquaculture. Bass, trout and a few other varieties look promising. The new production couldn't come at a more opportune time. Experts indicate the wild catch is declining in most areas and farm-raised fish will be needed to meet both U.S. domestic and export demand.

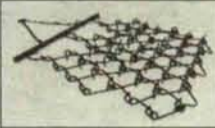
Farm-raised fish and other aquatic species are a growing portion of total U.S. seafood consumption, according to USDA. Since consumers still want the health benefits expected from eating fish, producers should have little problem on the demand side. The major remaining problems for the industry are in the policy area. Some troublesome questions about food safety and inspection remain for fish and other food catches.

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Drug Residues - Risking the Dairy Beef Investment

Suzanne N. Gibbons, DVM, Michigan State University

The Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance program has increased producers' and veterinarians' awareness of the importance in maintaining a quality product. Of the many topics discussed during local quality assurance programs, the issue of drug residues has been foremost.

The importance in marketing "clean" milk and the financial consequences when violations occur are well-recognized, but the substantial contribution beef sales of culls and calves can play in a dairy farm's economic picture isn't always as apparent.

Beef prices have remained steady over the recent months and more producers are finding themselves depending on the beef market to supplement fluctuating milk prices.

It's important to guard dairy beef revenue by being aware of the potential loss and regulatory action taken due to drug residue in those animals. In 1991 nearly 2.8 million dairy cows and 515,465 calves less than three weeks of age were slaughtered in the U.S., representing 9.1 percent and 1.6 percent respectively of the total number of cattle marketed.

Even though they constitute only 10.7 percent of the marketed cattle, dairy cows and calves were responsible for the vast majority of the residues found by the National Residue

Program. There are two groups of testing: monitor testing is the random selection of healthy looking animals; and surveillance testing which focuses on the suspect or unhealthy animals that are more likely to have received recent antibiotic treatments.

The monitor testing program indicated that the predominant tissue residue violations in cull cows were from gentamicin and streptomycin. However, the surveillance program indicated penicillin, streptomycin and oxytetracycline to be the most predominant tissue residues.

The monitor program for calves indicated streptomycin and neomycin to be most prevalent. The surveillance test, used to identify most of the calf residue violations, detects antibiotics and sulfas without providing a breakdown of specific drugs.

Ivermectin residues in cull cows highlights the occurrence of residues from drugs used in a preventive capacity. A majority of drugs found were the antibiotics and sulfas most commonly used in dairy cattle.

To many, it isn't surprising that cull cows would have a higher incidence of residues than the other classes of cattle. After all why are cows culled? Many are culled because of health problems such as mastitis, or

Despite cautions to provide drug-residue free milk, statistics show that a disproportionate amount of dairy cull cows and calves were responsible for the vast majority of the residues found by the National Residue Program.

Photo: Michigan Milk Producers Association



pneumonia that required drug use, while others are culled because of infertility, genetics, or low production.

It's common for dairy farms to sell their bull calves at two weeks of age. What some producers don't realize is that those calves don't all go to a commercial feedlot. Many will be bought as bob veal and slaughtered shortly after purchase.

This abbreviated time doesn't allow for an adequate withdrawal period after the use of most drugs. The most common way a calf can acquire residue, besides direct treatment, is through consumption of colostrum milk from recently treated dry cows, or milk from treated cows.

Some cows treated during their dry period freshen before the proper withdrawal time has passed. Colostrum from those cows should be fed only to calves that will be kept on the farm for an extended period of time.

The immature system of a calf is often unable to metabolize drugs as rapidly as an adult. In young calves, all drugs should be used with caution and preferably under the direction of a veterinarian.

Once the potential for drug residues is recognized on a farm, it becomes imperative to implement preventative measures. The best way to avoid future residue problems is to have a good working relationship with your veterinarian.

This relationship should include preventative herd health management, as well as prompt treatment of sick animals. The goal of a herd health program should be to increase production efficiency while reducing disease and consequently the need to treat sick animals.

When faced with a sick animal, a decision concerning the value of that animal must be often made to determine if treatment is economically justified. That decision can only be made by the producer. With the help of a veterinarian, however, an informed decision is more likely.

Though a perfect, high producing, disease farm is the ultimate goal, there are few farms that can boast such a feat. Therefore, knowing that medical treatment of animals is a necessity, management improvements can allow a farm to avoid drug residue violations.

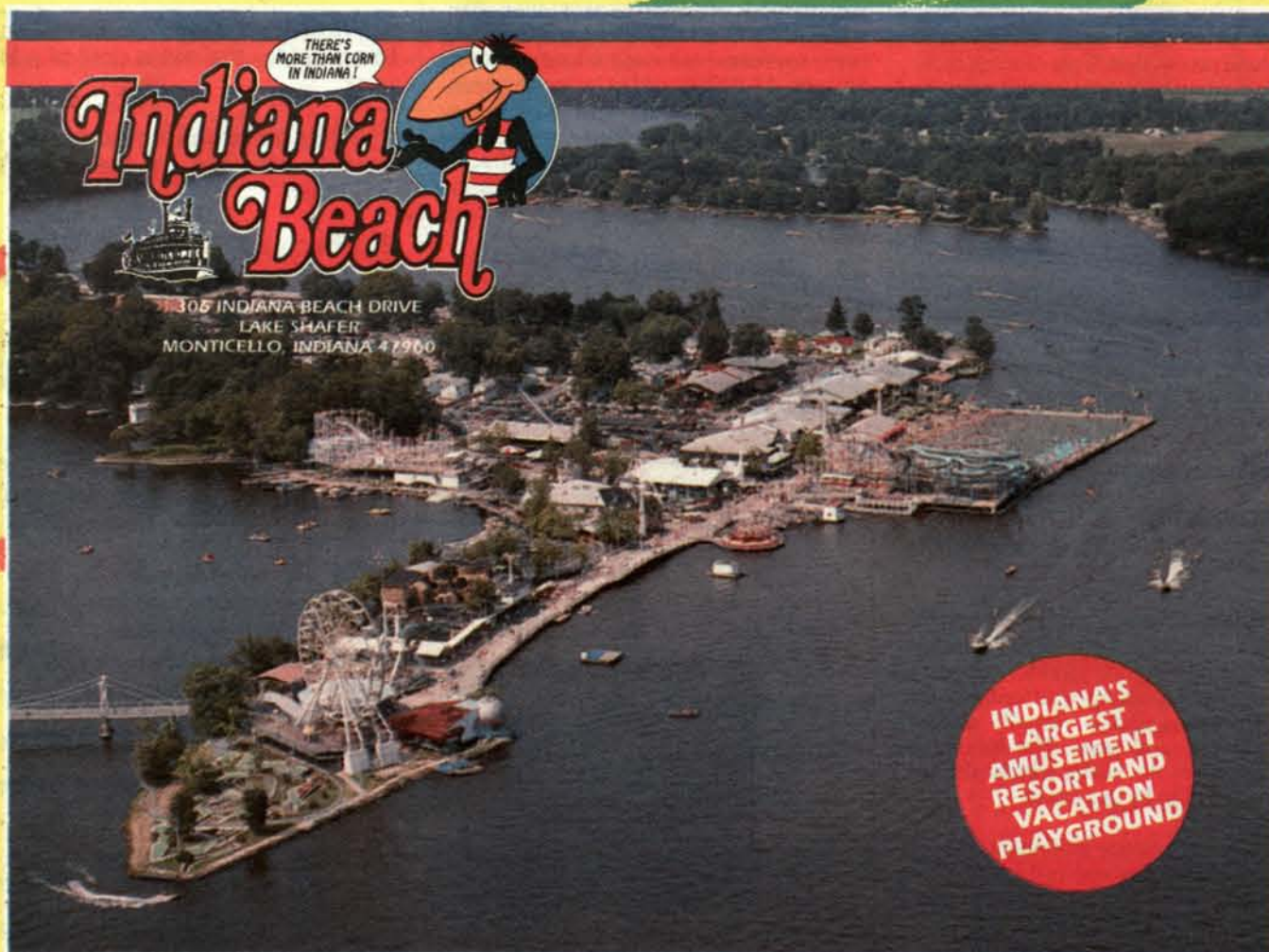
It's essential that each animal have its own unique identification and that accurate records are kept pertaining to drug use. The most common and avoidable cause of drug residue violations is failure to observe adequate withdrawal times. It should be remembered that meat withdrawals are often 10 times longer than those for milk.

Also label withdrawal times for both milk and meat are established on healthy, adult animals. These may or may not be adequate for sick or immature cattle.

With calves, a farm may not have the luxury of time for withdrawal periods, so precautions should be taken to ensure that calves don't receive contaminated milk. Several blood and urine tests are now available to test for residues and as technology is improved, their use will become more widely accepted.

As awareness of potential drug residues in dairy beef increases, more producers will find it advantageous to exhibit the same diligence for meat residue avoidance as milk residue avoidance.

Implementing a preventative herd health program with a veterinarian will improve a producer's ability to assess and reduce the potential for drug residue violations. This will help to safeguard an area of economic potential for your dairy farm.



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