

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

MICHIGAN'S ONLY STATEWIDE FARM NEWSPAPER

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU



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1996 Farm Bill — Sign Up to Begin

Karnal bunt quarantine and concern grows

Shortly after the USDA announced a three-state quarantine, obstructing interstate movement of wheat and other related articles to contain the spread of the karnal bunt wheat fungus, speculation was growing that a contaminated lot of wheat seed may have been shipped to California.

The affected states are Arizona, New Mexico (Dona Ana, Hidalgo, Luna and Sierra counties) and Texas (El Paso and Hudspeth counties). The fungus, first detected in Arizona in early March, was later found in three seedlots that were grown in that state but then shipped to New Mexico and Texas.

A shipment of durum wheat seeds possibly contaminated with the karnal bunt fungus was shipped to California, leading to fears that the fungus may have spread to that state as well.

"We'll take the proper regulatory action once we've determined what's happened with the shipment, whether it's in the ground or in storage," said Ed Curtlett, USDA Karnal Bunt Task Force spokesman.

USDA also said that additional funds are being secured to fight fungus infestation under a "declaration of emergency" signed by Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, effective March 26.

At this point, the total number of bushels affected by the fungus is not known. However, USDA and industry groups are meeting to determine how to compensate wheat farmers if their crops need to be destroyed, Curtlett said.

USDA has also ordered the destruction of 4,000 acres of fungus-infected wheat in Texas and New Mexico. "These plow down orders are necessary to prevent the spread of karnal bunt into non-infected areas of the U.S. and to help protect our export markets," says Don Husnik, with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

According to Husnik, plans for Arizona, where karnal bunt was originally discovered, have not yet been announced. "We're still evaluating the situation in Arizona and will make a decision shortly," he said.

Texas and New Mexico farmers who plow down their wheat crops may be eligible to receive compensation at the rate of \$275 per acre, plus \$25 per acre for plowing, according to USDA. However, such compensation may make producers ineligible for compensation from crop insurance.

Meanwhile, Canada has banned the import of U.S. durum wheat and restricted the entry of other wheat varieties from Arizona, New Mexico and Texas — sites quarantined by the USDA to contain the spread of karnal bunt. The quarantine could be in place until the end of the year, Curtlett said.



As planting season starts across the United States, Congress, the secretary of agriculture and the president felt the pressure to get this year's farm programs in place, culminating with the April 4 signing of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 by President Clinton. Additional acreage may be available for spring planting due to further changes in CRP early-out provisions just announced.

MFB Washington Legislative Seminar action packed

MFB's 36th annual Washington Legislative Seminar was a quick-paced event that couldn't have been timed better for producers to discuss farm bill concerns. The conference committee appointed to develop the compromise package that was eventually passed by both the House and Senate started their discussions the same week that 112 Michigan Farm Bureau members from across the state were in town to address a number of issues, according to MFB Public Affairs Director Al Almy.

"Many of the participants had one-on-one opportunities with their respective representatives and Sens. Carl Levin and Spencer Abraham on the farm bill debate as well as estate taxes, health insurance deductions, Delaney clause and minor use pesticide reform, immigration reform, private property rights and regulatory reform," Almy explained.

While Levin and Abraham had differing views on how to address the budget deficit, both agreed that regulatory reform should be a top priority. During a breakfast meeting with MFB members, Abraham said that a Senate filibuster that's prohibiting regulatory reform is just two votes short of being broken. "What breaking the filibuster would do is allow us to have good, common sense, honest science and honest risk analysis of new regulations," he said.

Sen. Levin also called for reducing the regulatory burden in a sensible manner. "What we're aiming at is to try and make sure that before federal agencies impose regulations that they take into consideration the costs and the benefits of that regulation and that



Genesee County Farm Bureau member William Hunt covers the bases with Rep. James Barcia (D-Bay City) on a host of issues including the farm bill.

the benefits justify the costs," Levin said. Turning to budget issues, Levin praised the
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COVER STORY

The debate is over, votes are cast, conference committee work is complete and finally what started out as the 1995 farm bill became the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIR) with a stroke of the pen by President Clinton on April 4.

Under the new law, USDA will hold a "one-time" enrollment for the new seven-year farm program, beginning sometime in mid- to late-May and concluding about 60 days later.

According to Chris White, Michigan's acting state executive director for the Farm Services Agency (FSA), all county FSA personnel will be going for training the first two weeks of May.

"All indications are that sign up will begin May 20," explains White. "Farmers should be contacting their FSA office with farm changes and to be sure their records are up-to-date, even if it means calling the office and saying, 'This is what I currently have, is this what you have?'"

According to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Pres. Clinton signed the bill despite his continued concern that the legislation imperils the traditional "safety net" function of federal farm programs.

"With the completion of global and regional trade agreements and the explosive growth in international trade of ag commodities, it's difficult to imagine a better time to transition U.S. agriculture to a more market-oriented system," stated MFB President Jack Laurie.

The FAIR Act of 1996 eliminates annual acreage set-aside programs, target prices and deficiency payments and replaces these income support

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News in Brief

Imig resignation effective July 1

After serving five years as Director of MSU Extension, Gail Imig has announced her intention to step down from her position effective July 1 to assume a new position as Associate Vice Provost working with youth-related leadership programming. In a prepared announcement, Imig said that Dr. Arlen Leholm will serve as Interim Extension Director.

Tighter rules planned for cattle feed

As part of its "mad-cow" counter-efforts, the federal Food and Drug Administration intends to tighten rules on the manufacture of animal feed, banning the use of rendered sheep and cattle parts, Reuters reports.

The new rules will apply to "ruminant-to-ruminant" feed, meaning cattle and sheep parts cannot be fed to other cattle and sheep.

Even before the rule is made official, some feed processors are expected to institute the ban voluntarily in an effort to quell consumer concern about mad-cow disease.

Britain banned the practice several years ago, after scientists concluded that use of cattle and sheep offal may have contributed to the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Although BSE has captured public concern in Britain due to a possible link with a similar human condition, the number of BSE cases in Britain have dropped since the new feed rules were instituted.

U.S. renderers currently observe a voluntary ban on using sheep in animal feed, due to scrapie—a sheep disease similar to BSE and which is present in the United States. British scientists theorize that BSE could have spread to cattle through sheep brains used in feed in the mid-1980s.

No BSE cases have been found in the United States, perhaps due to a shortage of British imports. According to Reuters, no British beef has been imported into the U.S. since 1985 and no British cattle since 1989.

The new feed rule was rumored last week in livestock and feed circles, leading to higher prices for soybean and millfeed.

At the same time, it's estimated that cattle values will drop about \$1 per head due to the lower value of offal.

Farm Bureau scholarship winners recognized

At the spring College of Agriculture and Natural Resources awards banquet, Michigan Farm Bureau recognized the winners of its scholarships sponsored by the Marge Karker and Young Farmer Trust Funds.

The Marge Karker scholarship, worth \$1,500, was awarded to a Michigan State University (MSU) student enrolled in the two-year Institute of Agricultural Technology program. This year's winner is **Brian Devine** from West Branch, a first-year agricultural business student.

The Young Farmer Trust fund scholarship is worth \$3,000 and was awarded to MSU senior **Mike Prelesnik**, an agriscience major who plans on becoming a high school agriscience teacher and FFA advisor.

Wheat crop

Recent cold weather in the High Plains probably will not kill young winter wheat, but will likely damage plant leaves and slow spring growth, scientists predict. The change in weather, which fell from 80 degree temperatures to single-digit temperatures within a week, could prevent wheat from producing additional tillers, which would restrict the crop's yield potential.

"This will delay maturity and probably won't do any good as far as the yields are concerned," said Gary Paulsen, professor of agronomy at Kansas State University.

Mycogen guarantees market for Bt corn

Mycogen Seeds, marketer of genetically engineered Bt corn seed, says it will provide farmers with a written guarantee that it will buy their crop if it can't be sold through normal channels.

Mycogen says it is making the offer in response to reports that some elevators may not accept corn produced from Bt seed, which gives the plants resistance to corn borers.

Bt seed is genetically altered with the Bt protein (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) to protect against European corn borers.

Mycogen doesn't expect farmers to have trouble marketing corn from Bt seed. The company notes that the federal Environmental Protection Agency has given Mycogen a Tolerance Exemption approving grain from Bt corn plants for use in food products and as animal feed.

In addition, the company notes that Bt proteins have been used for more than 30 years in foliar sprays to selectively control crop pests without harming animals, humans or beneficial insects.

But EPA approval does not extend to foreign markets, and merchandisers are worried that genetically altered crops may be banned from some countries. For example, Japan and the European Union have yet to approve importation of soybeans grown with the "Roundup-Ready" gene, which gives the plant more tolerance to Roundup herbicide.

And, according to Mycogen, Europe and Japan have not yet approved Bt corn.

"Although there is no scientific basis for concern about possible harmful effects of Bt protein, this particular corn hybrid was engineered with tissue-specific promoters to produce Bt protein only in green tissue and pollen, not in the grain," says Carl Eibl, president of Mycogen Corp., the California biotechnology firm that owns Wisconsin-based Mycogen Seeds.

"Bt seed corn has been approved for sale in this country after exhaustive regulatory review, and we expect it to be approved by regulatory authorities in Europe and Japan during the current growing season," says Eibl.

Michigan producer named to National Potato Promotion Board

USDA Secretary Dan Glickman has announced that Montcalm County Farm Bureau member and potato producer, Thomas Hansen, of Greenville, is one of 23 new appointments to the National Potato Promotion board. The board, authorized under the 1971 Potato Research and Promotion Act, administers industry-funded national research and promotion programs to increase U.S. exports and domestic potato consumption. Each state is entitled to at least one producer member, who must be nominated at local and state levels for the position.

Worker shortage fears growing

MFB is very concerned about the recent defeat of an effort in the U.S. House to add a pilot H2-temporary alien agricultural worker program to the immigration reform bill, according to MFB Public Affairs Director Al Almy. He says that an H2 program is vitally needed by Michigan producers.

"The opponents of an H2 program, who argued against it in Congress, maintained that domestic workers were available and that farmers only had to go into the major cities of Michigan and invite those people to come out and work on their farms," Almy explained. "The reality is that while there are unemployed people in many of Michigan's cities, they are not willing to come out and do the hard work necessary in the growth of labor-intensive agricultural crops."

Almy said Farm Bureau will continue to ask Congress for programs that ensure farmers will have an adequate labor supply necessary for crops such as apples, peaches, strawberries, asparagus and cucumbers.

CAT crop insurance deadline extended to May 2

Under terms of the new farm bill signed by President Clinton, producers now have until May 2 to sign up for the minimum level of catastrophic (CAT) crop insurance to make sure they are not excluded from disaster protection, according to MFB Commodity Specialist Bob Boehm.

"Although the requirements linking crop insurance to several other farm programs has been dropped under the new farm bill, the net result is, if you do not sign up for the minimum CAT level of crop insurance coverage, you will forfeit your rights to any crop disaster relief, including access to emergency loans," Boehm explained.

The CAT policies can be obtained from any private crop insurance agent. While producers can also elect to cancel their CAT coverage until May 2, Boehm cautions that the CAT policies will be the only remaining crop disaster safety net producers will have in the event of a weather-related crop disaster.

"Producers choosing to cancel their coverage will have to sign a waiver acknowledging that they understand they will not be eligible for any disaster assistance for any insurable crop," Boehm explained.

400-pound weight provision lifted from Rumensin® label

Elanco Animal Health, a division of Eli Lilly and Company, announced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has removed the 400 pound weight provision for increased rate of weight gain in pasture cattle from the Rumensin label. While previously approved for feed efficiency as well as prevention and control of coccidiosis at all weights in confined cattle, Rumensin is now indicated for increased rate of weight gain in pasture cattle of all sizes (slaughter, stocker, feeder, dairy and beef replacement heifers) without any weight stipulations.

Rumensin, the industry's proven ionophore, can now improve cattle performance from start to finish in stocker and fed cattle as well as dairy and beef replacement heifers. The chart below illustrates clearances for all market classes.

Claim	Cattle Description	Weight Provision
Improved feed efficiency	Confined for slaughter	None
Coccidiosis prevention and control	Confined/semi-confined	None
Increased rate of weight gain	All market classes	None

Ruth Farmers Elevator/Cooperative Elevator Company merger approved

Merger plans will get underway this month for implementation of a merger plan approved by members of the Ruth Farmers Elevator and the Cooperative Elevator Company. The former Ruth Elevator will now be known as Cooperative Elevator of Ruth. The resulting merger will serve over 1,350 members and create total sales of \$100 million for the Cooperative Elevator Company.

Lawsuit settlement reaches \$8.5 million

A Wisconsin jury has ordered farmer-equipment manufacturer Case Corp. to pay \$6.5 million in compensatory damages and \$2 million in punitive damages to an Oregon man who lost both arms in a 1992 farm accident, according to a Reuters News report. The award must still be approved by a judge, which is expected sometime in mid-May. Case has said it plans to appeal.

The lawsuit involves Steven Sharp of Richland, Ore., who was 17 years old at the time of the accident in 1992, when he was clearing hay away from the front of a baler. He says the PTO on his Case 970 diesel tractor self-started, pulling both of his arms into the baler. One arm was severed above the elbow, the other just below the elbow.

Sharp's lawyer argued that Case had known since 1972 about the problems of the PTO engaging itself. The company had implemented a series of redesigns, but farmers continued to complain about the problem, both before and after Sharp's accident, the lawyers argued.

U.S. beef production nears record

Beef production for the first quarter of 1996 is projected to fall just shy of the record of \$6.49 billion set in 1976 despite 18 percent fewer cattle slaughtered in 1996 compared to 20 years ago.

The Agriculture Department said, despite the drastically lower number of head slaughtered, cattle average carcass dressed weight has risen 110 pounds over the last 20 years.

First-quarter choice steer prices averaged about \$8 below the 1995 level of \$73.11 per hundredweight, and USDA said they could drop again in late summer. U.S. beef supplies are expected to reach record levels this year, pushing prices down to the lowest level in nearly 10 years, USDA said.

Along the same lines, pork prices for the first quarter are expected to be about 1.5 percent below last year's levels, despite cash hog prices averaging nearly 15 percent higher. The composite retail prices of pork rose 8 cents a pound last month, due mainly to a 32-cent increase in the price of bone-in hams.

Michigan corn and potato chemical usage findings released

Atrazine was the most commonly used herbicide in Michigan, with application made to over 69 percent of the state's corn acreage in 1995. Metolachlor and cyanazine followed with 38 and 24 percent, respectively, according to the Michigan Ag Statistics Service. Herbicides were applied to 100 percent of the corn acres, while just 18 percent of the acres were treated with insecticides.

Of the 2,450,000 acres planted to corn last year, 99 percent of the acres received an application of nitrogen at an average rate of 127 pounds per acre for the year. Phosphate was applied to 85 percent of the corn acreage at the rate of 51 pounds per acre. Potash was also used on 85 percent of the acreage at the rate of 104 pounds per acre for the year.

Nitrogen and potash fertilizers were also used on all of the state's 55,000 acres of potatoes last year, while phosphate was used on 98 percent of the acres. Herbicides were used on 85 percent of the acres, with linuron applied to 75 percent of those acres, followed closely by metolachlor on 72 percent of the treated acreage.

Insecticides were used on 100 percent of the acreage, with Imidacloprid the insecticide of choice on 78 percent of the acreage. Chlorothalonil was the most commonly used fungicide on 85 percent of the total acreage. Diquat, used for plant dry down at harvest, was used on 60 percent of the total potato acreage.



MFB State Promotion and Education Committee Chair Brigitte Leach presents Brian Devine with the Marge Karker Scholarship award.

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Capitol Corner

For more information on legislative topics in the Michigan Farm News, call 800-292-2680.

STATE ISSUE

Transportation reform

Sen. Philip Hoffman has introduced the following transportation reform package:

- SJR V would amend the Michigan Constitution to eliminate the State Transportation Commission. This amendment would be a statewide ballot question for voters to decide. In effect, it would eliminate a public forum for discussion on state transportation issues before MDOT.
- S.B. 873 would repeal Public Act 51 of 1951. This

Act provides for the current distribution of the \$1.4 billion Michigan Transportation Fund. There is no proposal to replace this formula.

- S.B. 874 and S.B. 875 would allow county boards to dissolve county road commissions.
 - S.B. 876 would allow countywide local gas taxes.
- MFB Position:** Farm Bureau opposes this package of bills.

MFB Contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048. ■

STATE ISSUE

Workers' compensation insurance fraud

S.B. 895 defines a workers' compensation fraudulent act to mean an act by someone who purposely provides fraudulent information in order to "injure, defraud, or deceive." The bill makes workers' compensation fraud a felony. It provides immunity from liability to individuals and companies that furnish information regarding fraudulent acts to an authorized agency or the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

In addition, the legislation reverses the Michigan Supreme Court's decision in *Gardner vs. Van Buren Public Schools*, which allows an employee to obtain workers' compensation benefits for stress, anxiety, personality conflicts, misperceptions of stimuli or events that over time resulted in a "hypersensitive" reaction.

MFB Position: MFB supports S.B. 895.
MFB Contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048. ■

STATE ISSUE

Tourist-oriented directional signs

H.B. 4770 would create the Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign Act. This bill would allow approved applicants to obtain a permit for a tourist-oriented directional sign on a state highway. The size, location, design and arrangement of each sign will be subject to approval by the Michigan

Department of Transportation (MDOT). A vote is expected soon.

MFB Position: MFB testified before the House Transportation Committee in support of this legislation.

MFB Contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048. ■

STATE ISSUE

Environmental audits

S.B. 728 has been signed by the Governor with immediate effect, and will allow companies and farms that have a historical environmental problem to voluntarily come forward to develop a privileged environmental evaluation. Once the

evaluation is completed and a cleanup plan of action is developed, the individual is exempt from any local, state or federal environmental law.

MFB Position: MFB supported the bill.
MFB Contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046. ■

STATE ISSUE

Private Property Preservation Act

H.B. 4433 has also been signed by the Governor with immediate effect and requires the Attorney General to develop guidelines to be considered by state government entities prior to implementing a regulation or decision on a permit that may cause a taking of private property. Currently there are five

other bills soon to be introduced by Rep. Ken Sikkema (R-Grandville) to address additional problems with regulating private property.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supported H.B. 4433.
MFB Contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046. ■

STATE ISSUE

Land Division Act

One hearing has been held on S.B. 112, the Land Division Act. A major part of the legislation is the proposed change to close the unlimited 10.1 acre land division exemption to platting. The legislation calls for the following:

- All land divisions have to be approved and surveyed before sale.
- Two divisions per the first 10 acres or fraction thereof contained in the parent parcel or parent tract, plus one division for each additional whole 10 acres.
- Locals can offer up to two more divisions total with shared driveways or clustering in accordance with an adopted local ordinance.
- Total maximum divisions: nine under Land Division Act or 11 with local approval.
- All parcels created must have approved access

and if access is afforded by easement, not more than two parcels may be served by the same easement, unless the local ordinance allows otherwise.

- A maximum parcel size of 2.5 acres, unless a larger lot is permitted by local ordinance.
- A depth-to-width ratio of not more than 4:1. If municipal or county ordinance prescribes a smaller maximum depth-to-width ratio, the municipal or county ordinance controls the depth to width ratio. A municipality or county may grant a waiver from any applicable depth-to-width ratio.

Also within the proposed Land Division Act is a requirement to notify land buyers of the potential of agricultural operations doing business under the Right-to-Farm guidelines.

MFB Contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046. ■

STATE ISSUE

Michigan Aquaculture Development Act

Rep. Mike Green (R-Mayville) has introduced legislation to provide for the establishment, regulation and protection of aquaculture as follows:

- The Department of Agriculture is the lead agency and clarifies that aquaculture is an agricultural enterprise.
- The raising, breeding, transporting and sale of fish and aquaculture products are regulated by the Department of Agriculture and specifically states that these activities take place in private waters, not in the public waters.
- Research on species that are not indigenous to Michigan may be permitted. The bill provides a list of approved species for aquaculture production.

Species qualifying for inclusion on the list are under the following criteria:

- Were naturally indigenous within "the waters of the state," which includes groundwater, lakes, streams and all other waters within the state including the Great Lakes.
- Were naturalized within those waters.
- Could not perpetuate in the waters of the state.
- Were confined in a research facility for the purpose of determining whether they should be added to the approved list.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supports H.B. 5555.
MFB Contact: Ron Nelson, ext. 2043. ■

STATE ISSUE

Amendments to P.A. 232

H.B. 5362, sponsored by Rep. Kim Rhead (R-Sandusky), is expanded to allow additional commodities to organize under P.A. 232, including nursery stock and aquaculture. The bill contains a clarifying amendment for soybeans, which is organized under a national checkoff to allow the waiving of the five-year referendum if a periodic review is provided for. There is provision in the national program for a periodic review.

The bill also provides that royalties that are

collected because of funding of projects will be shared in by the program. This amendment was initiated by the corn producers. Provisions are made for the borrowing of funds by commodity programs with the approval of the Director of the Department of Agriculture and with strict limits on the amount of funds borrowed and the payback provisions.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supports the bill.
MFB Contact: Ron Nelson, ext. 2043. ■

STATE ISSUE

Primary seat belt bill

H.B. 5000, sponsored by Rep. Fitzgerald is now on the House floor calendar where it has been since Feb. 1, 1996 awaiting second reading. Recently Gov. Engler have endorsed this bill and has tied it to an increase in the highway speed limits. Both actions by the Governor has increased the probability of enactment, contrary to Farm Bureau's policy. Action on the bill is being delayed because there aren't sufficient votes for passage.

The bill would make seat belt violations a "primary offense" instead of a secondary violation, allowing law enforcement officials to stop motorists for seat belt violations.

MFB Position: MFB policy position is that we oppose further expansion of police powers such as the primary seat belt proposals.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

STATE ISSUE

Affirmative action

Legislation has been introduced to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act that would prohibit employers, employment agencies, and educational institutions from adjusting test scores, using different cut-off scores, or otherwise altering the results of a test based upon the religion, race, color, national origin, or sex of the person taking the test.

The bill would also bar educational institutions from changing tests or scores used to determine class rank or status, eligibility for admission,

eligibility to participate in any program offered by the institution, or eligibility for a grant of financial assistance. It also includes state employees covered by the Civil Service Commission.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau opposes any legislation that would directly or indirectly result in employers implementing hiring quotas as a defense against allegations of discriminatory hiring practices.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

STATE ISSUE

SARA Title III

Many counties have now reached the point where they have approved emergency plans from industry and business and now are aggressively turning their attention to the farm community, seeking compliance with required planning by farms that qualify under the law. Many farmers have already complied with the reporting portion of the law, but now will move to the next phase which is the development of an emergency plan for their "facility", (farm).

The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), in each county will be contacting farmers,

explaining and helping them to develop an emergency plan for their operation. MFB policy encourages members to become informed about and comply with the Right-to-Know laws in an effort to develop a safer workplace for employees and farm family members. MFB also supports the use of a uniform instrument for reporting generic information to the local fire district and endorsed the site specific simplified form approved by the state Emergency Response Commission for reporting by individual farms.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

STATE ISSUE

Governor signs ag exemption legislation

The Michigan Vehicle Code requires someone who operates a vehicle transporting agricultural commodities "in the normal operation of a farm" to ensure that the contents of the vehicle cannot escape from the vehicle while in transport, although such persons are exempt from a requirement that their vehicles either be covered or that the contents be securely fastened to the vehicle.

The bill amends the act to include the transport of "other materials necessary" in the normal operation of a farm to the exemption described above. The act also permits someone to operate a

"truck and semitrailer or trailer" for transporting saw logs, pulpwood, and tree length poles as long as the entire vehicle, including the load, does not exceed 70 feet in length. The bill would expand the type of vehicles that could be used for this purpose to include a "truck tractor and semitrailer or trailer," subject to the same length restrictions.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supported the bill and Gov. Engler signed the bill on March 21, 1996 making it Public Act 136 of 1995.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

STATE ISSUE

Migrant Camp Licensing responsibilities transferred to MDA

The Michigan Department of Public Health has transferred its Migrant Camp Licensing duties to the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Farm Bureau requested the section be housed in the Michigan Department of Agriculture where it was felt the administration would be more aware of and

receptive to the input of farmers on camp licensing issues. Governor Engler signed the Executive Order on March 15, 1996 transferring this section to the Michigan Department of Agriculture which will take place within 60 days.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

NATIONAL ISSUE

Legal Services Corporation

Efforts to obtain significant reform of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) have experienced setbacks in the Senate. The setbacks occurred when the Senate approved an increase in funding for LSC from \$278 million to \$300 million and removed lobbying restrictions against legal aid grantees.

However, there is no indication of softness in the House to reforming the LSC, especially the issue of increased funding.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau opposed the Senate actions.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040. ■



NATIONAL ISSUE

Health care

The House has passed the Health Care Coverage Availability and Affordability Act of 1996. The legislation contains provisions on portability which would allow employees to take health insurance with them when they change jobs and provisions on pre-existing conditions which limits ability of insurance companies to exclude people from health insurance coverage.

The bill contains two measures supported by Farm Bureau. The self-employed health insurance deduction would be increased from 30 percent to 50 percent by 2003. The types of insurance that are deductible would be expanded to include the cost

of long-term care insurance.

The second measure would allow persons who buy high-deductible health insurance plans to make tax deductible contributions to special medical savings accounts to pay for medical expenses.

The bill also allows the terminally ill to receive life insurance benefits while alive without paying tax. Malpractice changes are made limiting pain and suffering awards to \$250,000 per case. Insurers would be given greater protection against punitive damage awards that often run into the millions of dollars.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, ext 2040. ■

OSHA tightens grain safety rules

Walking down grain will no longer be permitted at grain elevators after April 8, says the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

OSHA has published a final rule prohibiting the practice of "walking down" grain to make it flow better.

OSHA's new rule follows a 1993 death of a 19-year-old Florida man who was walking across a corn storage facility when he was pulled down and suffocated, Reuters reports.

The new ruling requires a harness with a life-line or a boatswain's chair to provide protection whenever an employee walks or stands on grain at a depth that "poses an engulfment hazard."

If this is not possible, the employer must provide an alternative means to prevent the employee from sinking further than waist-deep into the grain.

While the previous rule protected workers from hazards while walking on or underneath accumulated grain, it did not apply to workers entering "flat storage buildings or tanks" unless entry is made from the top of the structure, Reuters reports.

The new rule also requires that all mechanical, electrical and pneumatic equipment that presents a danger to employees inside grain storage structures shall be stopped by effective means or methods, Reuters reports. ■

Food disparagement laws on the rise

Food disparagement laws, written to protect agribusiness from false, negative claims about its products, are gaining popularity in the states. To date, 12 states, including Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Texas, have enacted such legislation.

Four other states — Maryland, Nebraska, Vermont and Wisconsin — are currently debating the issue, with the Maryland state legislature slated to vote on disparagement legislation sometime during the next two weeks. A Supreme Court decision is expected in April on a food disparagement case.

The need for these laws, according to agricultural groups, is the potential massive income loss caused by consumer boycotts of the products attacked. One example of this is the \$75 million lost by Washington state apple producers in 1989 due to the Alar scare.

"You've got to let science decide these things," said John Keeling, associate director of the American Farm Bureau Federation's Washington, D.C., office. "There needs to be some constraint. What you ingest is a very important thing; the problem is standing up in a crowded theater and screaming fire." ■

NATIONAL ISSUE

Private property rights

S. 605, the Omnibus Property Rights Act, has been scheduled for consideration by the Senate when it returns from Easter recess in mid-April. The bill requires compensation for private property if, because of federal government action:

- Private property has been physically taken for public use.
- All or substantially all economic value of the land has been lost.
- The affected property is devalued by 33 percent.
- Any circumstance occurs that is considered a taking under the 5th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Prior to issuing any regulation that is likely to result in a taking, a federal agency must submit a takings impact analysis to the Office of Management and Budget outlining the likelihood that the action would provoke a taking, alternatives to the proposed regulation that would ease the impact of the taking, and an estimate of the cost of compensation. The takings impact analysis must be made public and given to owners of affected property.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau strongly supports S. 605.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040. ■

NATIONAL ISSUE

Immigration reform

The House has passed H.R. 2202, which reforms immigration law. The bill focuses primarily on illegal immigrants and contains the following major provisions:

- States are authorized to deny public education to children who are illegal immigrants.
- Illegal immigrants are barred from receiving state and federal welfare benefits. If within seven years of arrival an illegal immigrant receives 12 months of benefits under major state or federal welfare programs, he/she could be deported. However, they could receive certain public health and nutrition programs, emergency medical care and short-term emergency relief.
- Sponsors of illegal immigrants would be required to assume greater financial responsibility for the immigrants they bring to the United States. Prospective sponsors would have to show they could support themselves and the sponsored immigrant(s) at a minimum of twice the federal poverty level.
- 1,000 additional border patrol agents per year for five years would be authorized. This would double the size of the border force to about 10,000 agents.
- Law enforcement agencies would be given increased powers to investigate and prosecute smuggling of illegal immigrants and the production of fraudulent documents. Penalties for these activities would be increased.
- Measures to block illegal immigrants from finding jobs would be strengthened, such as hiring 500 new inspectors to enforce laws against hiring illegal immigrants. The number of documents that can be used to establish work eligibility would be reduced from 29 to six.
- A new telephone confirmation system would be tested for employers to verify that a new employee is legally eligible to work. The pilot program would be conducted for three years in five states with large populations of illegal immigrants. In

those states, employers would have the option of calling into the system for each new employee instead of checking specified paper documents as is currently required. The pilot program would end in October 1999 and a subsequent vote by Congress would be required to expand the program nationwide.

Rules for deporting illegal immigrants would be streamlined. Persons entering the United States illegally would be permanently barred from receiving legal immigrant status.

The H-1B temporary visa program for foreign workers with specialized job skills would be revised. Employers with a small number of H-1B workers would be exempted from certain existing regulations. Employers who replace a U.S. worker with a temporary foreign worker would have to pay the new employee at least 110 percent of the U.S. worker's wage.

During consideration of the bill, a temporary agriculture worker program amendment was offered. The amendment would have created a 3-year pilot program enabling employers to hire temporary and seasonal workers for periods of not longer than 10 months and required employers to give preference to available American workers. Farm Bureau supported the amendment but the House rejected it by a 180-242 vote. The Michigan Congressional Delegation voted straight party line on the amendment with all Republicans supporting it and all Democrats opposing it.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has approved a similar immigration reform bill. The bill also requires Immigration and Naturalization Service agents to obtain permission of property owners or obtain a search warrant prior to entering open fields being used for agricultural purposes to search for illegal immigrants. The Senate is expected to consider the bill about mid-April.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040. ■



Serving Michigan Farm Families is Our Only Business

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	11:50 am
WATZ	Alpena	1450	5:30 am	11:30 am
WTKA	Ann Arbor	1050	6:05 am	12:05 pm
WLEW	Bad Axe	1340	6:30 am	12:50 pm
WHFB	Benton Harbor			12:30 pm
WKYO	Caro	1360	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WKJF	Cadillac	1370	5:55 am	11:20 am
WTVB	Coldwater	1590	5:45 am	12:20 pm
WDOW	Dowagiac	1440	6:05 am	12:15 pm
WGHN	Grand Haven	1370/92.1	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WPLB	Greenville	1380	6:15 am	11:45am
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	5:15 am	
WLSP	Lapeer	1530	7:20 am	11:50 am
WOAP	Owosso	1080	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WHAK	Rogers City	960		12:15 pm
WSJ	St. Johns	1580	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WMLM	St. Louis	1540	6:05 am	12:20 pm
WSGW	Saginaw	790	5:55 am	12:20 pm
WMIC	Sandusky	660	6:15 am	12:45 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	11:20 am

* Station signs on at different times during the year. Morning farm times change with the sign-on times.
 ** Station airs various farm reports between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m.
 *** Station airs various farm reports between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.

Some stations carry additional market reports throughout the market day.

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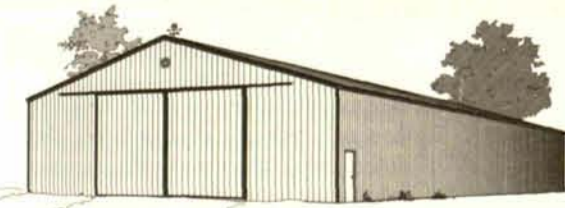
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- 1- 9' Lite T300 Walkdoor
- 1- 4' x 3' 9" Lite Window w/ Shutters
- 8 Skylites

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- 1' Vented Sidewall Overhangs
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Market Outlook



by Dr. Jim Hilker,
Department of
Agricultural Eco-
nomics, Michigan
State University

CORN

The March 1 *Quarterly Corn Stocks Report*, released by USDA on March 29, showed that we are using corn at both a faster rate than we thought, and at a rate faster than we can sustain. The *Planting Intentions Report*, while showing corn acres up sharply from a year ago, showed fewer acres than expected and barely enough to replenish stocks to a tolerable level. The bottom line is, we are facing an explosive situation this spring and summer if we have any problems with the corn crop and/or we don't cut future usage.

This situation is laid out in Table 1, the Corn Supply/Demand Balance Sheet. Look at the ending stocks number for 1995-96, the second column. The 362 million bushels is probably lower than realistically possible, but where do you cut use to get a higher number?

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Corn	↔ ↑
Soybeans	↔ ↑
Wheat	↔ ↑
Hogs	↔ ↓
Cattle	↔ ↓

Index: ↔ = stable prices; ↑ = higher prices; ↓ = lower prices; TP = topping; BT = bottoming; ? = unsure

The *Stocks Report* indicates that feed use should be closer to 4,800 million bushels versus the 4,700 I show here. Exports, at this point, look like they will be closer to 2,250 than my 2,200 estimate below. Why do I have them lower? Because something will have to give, and my guess is prices will go up sharply enough to cut feed use and/or export projections back significantly.

There are some signs of cutbacks on the livestock side, but not to the levels needed to ease the market's mind. As will be discussed below, hog numbers and cattle-on-feed numbers are down some and there have been rumblings out of the broiler industry. But how much can you cut back livestock at this point? There are few alternative feeds around. Are we going to feed high-priced wheat this summer to pull us through?

The other item that may up the situation a bit is pulling back 1996 production into the 1995-96 marketing year. Acres are up significantly in the South in order to get more August harvested corn. While this will not be able to offset weather problems, it may help on the margin if Mother Nature cooperates.

The *Planting Intentions Report* showed that 79.9 million acres of corn will be planted this spring, on the low end of the estimates which ranged from 80-83. While this number can still change, it is unlikely that it will increase over the midpoint of the range.

Some analysts argue that the nearly 80 million acres do not fully account for 0/85 and CRP acres that will come back into production. And, even if we gain 1-2 million more acres, weather will overshadow the extra acres. Michigan is expected to plant 2.7 million acres of corn, up 10 percent from last year.

In column 3 of Table 1 are estimates for the 1996-97 crop year. As you can see, ending stocks will remain tight unless we have a 1994 type yield. Using trends yields and the *Intention Report's* acreage figure, average corn prices will be around \$2.75. If yields are off even 5-10 bushels per acre, we could stay over \$3.00 for the year.

Things to consider — nothing here is a sure bet. Hold any remaining on-farm corn until there are signs this rally is weakening, but probably not later than sometime in May. Hold off pricing more

new crop corn until we get into May, unless you haven't priced any yet, then price some now. Be ready to lock in some very good new crop prices in May, June and July.

WHEAT

The *Wheat Planting Intentions Report* and the *Wheat Stocks Report* were very close to expectations. Does that mean the wheat market will be calm? Absolutely not. We have significant moisture problems in the Plains that will keep the markets guessing for a while. One thing is clear — we will have high prices, if you consider \$4.00 and up high, over the next year.

The *Stocks Report* showed we have been using wheat at expected levels after 3/4 of the year and ending stocks should be near the level shown in column 2 of Table 2. While this is very tight, it is manageable. It is new crop concerns that may still force old crop prices up.

The *Planting Intentions Report* showed we planted a little more than 3 million more acres of winter wheat and intend to plant over a half million more spring wheat acres. This accounts for the almost 4 million more acres of wheat planted in 1996-97 shown in column 3 of Table 2.

At this point, I am using 37 bushels per acre, which is 3 bushels below trend, but if the situation in Kansas has not improved, that number will have to be lowered. Michigan planted 700,000 acres of wheat, up 11 percent from a year ago.

Projected ending stocks are tight for 1996-97, given the situation presented in Table 3. If growing conditions don't improve, or more is needed for livestock feed this summer, we could get in an even tighter situation. However, there is some reason to believe that prices may peak between now and harvest. The rest of the world is also increasing their wheat acres. And, if they have normal yields, it will take some of the pressure off prices.

SOYBEANS

It now appears soybean ending stocks will be as low for the 1996-97 marketing year as they will be for the 1995-96 marketing year we are now in, even with optimistic trend yields. Once again,

weather market here we come. And that includes both bad weather rallies and good weather dips.

The *Soybean Stocks Report* and the *Soybean Planting Intentions Report* were close to expectations. For the 1995-96 crop year shown in column 2 of Table 3 that means ending stocks will probably be very close to the figure shown. While this is quite tight, we won't run out; however, like wheat, it is the new crop situation that will drive the market.

The *Planting Intentions Report* indicated that farmers will plant 62.5 million acres of soybeans this spring, nearly the same as a year ago. Michigan intends to plant 1.55 million acres of soybeans, up 3 percent. And, while this gets us some increase in production given a trend yield, total supply will likely be down due to lower beginning stocks. Assuming demand will be near this year's level, ending stocks will probably remain tight.

Does this mean that prices cannot go down? No, look at 1994-95. We came in with about the same level of beginning stocks and fewer acres, and prices were in the mid \$5.00s. Can we get that level of yield again? Yes. On the other hand, if we get last year's yield, which tied for the third highest on record, we could see prices significantly above this year's levels.

What does this mean? It means you should consider pricing a significant amount of new crop soybeans between now and June. Does that mean you will hit the high? No. But prices we see now are quite good and I am quite confident that you will still have some left to price if the market continues up through July.

HOGS

It now appears that the hog sector is beginning to adjust to the high feed prices, according to the March 1 USDA *Quarterly Hogs and Pigs Report* released March 29. And after studying changes to the Dec. 1 report, the adjustment may have begun earlier than previously thought. However, one pattern remains: not everyone is cutting back, some have still been in rapid expansion over the past year.

All hogs on March 1 were equal to a year earlier, which was on the low side of expectations. Numbers kept for market were equal to a year earlier, slightly below expectations. The real surprise was the kept-for-breeding numbers. The low sow slaughter over the past 6 months had led analysts to project the breeding herd would be up 1-3 percent. However, the report showed that the breeding herd was down 1 percent from a year ago.

Does this mean a lot less hogs coming to market? The answer is no. Hogs over 180 pounds, the one's that have been coming to market over the past month, were down 1 percent, although slaughter was down 2 percent the last three weeks of March. Hogs 120-179 pounds, as of March, were listed as up 1 percent, which means slaughter should be increasing soon. Hogs 60-119 pounds were listed as equal to the same period last year. Pigs under 60 pounds were up 1 percent. December-February farrowings were down 1 percent, but pigs per litter were up 2 percent.

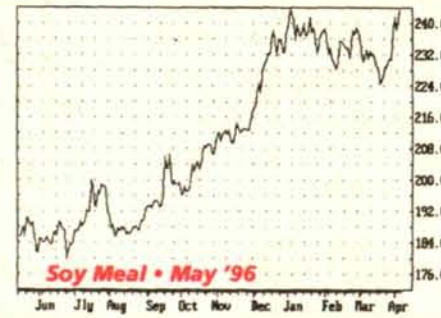
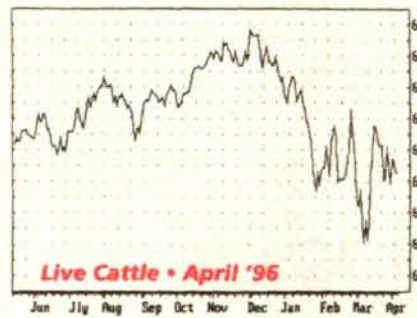
March-May farrowing intentions were listed as down 1 percent, which, when put with an expected 1-2 percent increase in litter size, means a few more hogs coming to market next fall than this past fall. June-August farrowing intentions are 100 percent of this past summer, so we will likely have more hogs next winter. Hopefully, we will have more corn.

Michigan's breeding herd on March 1 was 155,000 head, equal to a year ago. There were large decreases in the breeding herd in many states — Illinois, the third largest hog state, was down 10 percent, 70,000 fewer sows; Missouri, which had been growing, was down 5 percent; Nebraska was down 8 percent; South Dakota and Wisconsin were down 19 and 14 percent. There were also some large increases with North Carolina's breeding herd growing another 17 percent, 135,000 head; Oklahoma up 33 percent, 40,000 head; and Ohio up 19 percent, 40,000 head. In the biggest hog state, Iowa, the breeding herd held even with a year ago.

What does all this mean? Usually I feel the market does a good job of projecting future prices, but this time it must know something I haven't figured out. The market was nearly limit up the first trading day after the report and they were higher than my fundamentals would suggest already. How can we have about as many hogs as the same period the previous year and have a lot higher prices, even given strong demand? If futures prices have not fallen off much after the initial rally, it looks to me like they are giving us excellent forward pricing opportunities into 1997.

Continued on page 10

COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS



COMMODITY SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE SHEETS

(Million acres)	Projected 1994-1995	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1995-1996	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1996-1997
Acres set-aside/diverted	2.4	6.2	
Acres planted	79.2	71.2	79.9
Acres harvested	72.9	65.0	73.7
Bu./harvested acre	138.6	113.5	128.0
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	850	1,558	362
Production	10,103	7,374	9,433
Imports	10	15	15
Total supply	10,963	8,947	9,810
Use:			
Feed and residual	5,535	4,700	4,900
Food/seed & Ind. uses	1,693	1,685	1,725
Total domestic	7,228	6,385	6,625
Exports	2,177	2,200	2,275
Total use	9,405	8,585	8,900
Ending stocks	1,558	362	910
Ending stocks, % of use	16.6	4.2	10.2
Regular loan rate	\$1.89	\$1.89	
U.S. season average			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$2.26	\$3.25	\$2.75

(Million acres)	Projected 1994-1995	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1995-1996	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1996-1997
Acres set-aside & diverted	5.2	5.2	
Acres planted	70.3	69.2	73.1
Acres harvested	61.8	61.0	64.1
Bu./harvested acre	37.6	35.8	37
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	568	507	346
Production	2,321	2,185	2,372
Imports	92	70	82
Total supply	2,981	2,762	2,800
Use:			
Food	852	860	870
Seed	89	106	110
Feed	345	175	200
Total domestic	1,286	1,141	1,180
Exports	1,188	1,275	1,225
Total use	2,474	2,416	2,405
Ending stocks	507	346	395
Ending stocks, % of use	20.5	14.3	16.4
Regular loan rate	\$2.58	\$2.58	
U.S. season average			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$3.45	\$4.45	\$4.25

(Million acres)	Projected 1994-1995	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1995-1996	Projected Hilker's Proj. 1996-1997
Acres planted	61.7	62.6	62.5
Acres harvested	60.9	61.6	61.7
Bu./harvested acre	41.4	34.9	36.5
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	209	335	200
Production	2,517	2,152	2,252
Imports	5	5	8
Total supply	2,731	2,492	2,460
Use:			
Crushings	1,405	1,370	1,360
Exports	838	810	800
Seed, feed & residuals	153	112	100
Total use	2,396	2,292	2,260
Ending stocks	335	200	200
Ending stocks, % of use	14.0	8.7	8.8
Regular loan rate	\$4.92	\$4.92	
U.S. season average			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$5.48	\$6.85	\$6.85

Source: Knight Ridder Financial

Business Strategies



Sherrill Nott, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University

Ever wonder how your profits and cash flow last year compared to your neighbor's? Table 1 can answer that question. In Column 1, the 25 percent of farmers with the highest net cash farm income averaged \$206,338 per farm. This includes all farm related income. The expenses include cash interest paid, but ignores depreciation.

Look at the summary of your 1995 records, or your income tax returns, to calculate your net cash farm income. Draw a line through the closest number in Column 1 to see where your farm ranks.

Column 1 was built by taking 136 farms that had completed a year-end analysis with their Michigan State University Extension agent using Finpack software. These farms were of all types, from beef to vegetables. If the analysis was complete, the results were tossed into the pool. The net cash income was listed from high to low (better to poorer).

1995 profits and cash flows on Michigan farms

The 34 farms (25 percent) that were lowest on the list averaged a (\$6,097) loss for 1995.

Cash Flow

For most farms, debt is a major consideration in cash flow. Principal repayments are in Column 5. Money borrowed during the year is shown in Column 6. Think columns 5 and 6 should be flip flopped? I thought the ability to repay lots of principal was good, so big debt payments were in the top 25 percent. The need to borrow even more money is not good, so the listing had the smallest borrowings on top. Remember, each column in Table 1 was sorted separately.

Many farmers struggled to provide us the principal flows in Columns 5 and 6 when doing the analyses. It takes a quality financial records system to track this information. And, the bookkeeper has to be conscientious. Of course, if you're among those who don't borrow money, you don't have the problem of tracking principal flows.

Net cash income, minus principal payments, plus principal borrowed during the year, shows the amount of cash left for family living and reinvestment in machinery or buildings.

Other Profit Measures

Net farm income, Column 2, was adjusted for inventory changes and depreciation. These are both noncash items. Despite higher crop prices, most farms had more depreciation than they had inventory increases. To figure your value for Column 2, you'll need beginning and ending inventories for 1995. The market at the top of several of Table 1 columns means the calculation was done using market value, not cost basis, balance sheets.

The numbers have to be sliced and diced a bit

more to get Column 3. A noncash value for unpaid owner and family labor is estimated. For most of these 136 farms, this value ranged from \$30,000 to \$40,000. This value is subtracted from net farm income. The result is divided by average assets. This is converted to a percentage.

Column 3 can be compared to what might have been earned if your assets had been sitting in a savings account. In 1995, the lower 2 quartiles of farms might have made more money on their assets if they had been converted to bank deposits.

Balance Sheets

Net worth is assets minus debts, which are shown on a balance sheet or financial statement. How much net worth changes from year to year is a good measure of financial progress. The lowest 25 percent of the farms when ranked by change in net worth, Column 4, tended to go backwards during the year. Their assets were worth less, and/or, their debts were greater, at the end of 1995.

The farm debt to asset ratio in Column 7 compares total debts to total assets. This item is often given as a decimal number; .68 would give the same message as the 68 percent at the bottom. Debts add

up to 68 percent of the assets on the lowest 25 percent of the farms. Many feel 70 percent is a critical point; ratios over 70 percent means there will be difficulty in generating enough cash to meet principal payments and other needs.

Summary

Good managers have goals that deal with profitability. One might be to have net farm income of \$30,000 or more. You might select 2 or 3 of the measures in Table 1 and develop goals using them. At the end of the year, calculate the profit measure and see whether you met your goal.

The next step would be to compare your farm's performance with Table 1. If you discover you are in the lower 25 percent, and you don't like it, what can you do about it? Your dislike becomes a focal point for getting into problem solving.

Most Michigan State University Extension agents have Finpack software on their computers. If you'd like help in doing an analysis that results in calculating the factors in Table 1, plus several others, contact us. It's a 2 to 4 hour process. The software works for all types of farms. It's a good way to fine tune your financial management skills. ■

Table 1 — Farm Management Chart
All Columns Sorted Individually, 136 Michigan Farms, All Types, 1995

Column	Net Cash Farm Income	Net Farm Income (market)	% Return on Assets (market)	Change in Net Worth (market)	Total Debt to Principal Payments	Total Money Borrowed	Farm Debt to Asset % (market)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Top 25%	206,338	226,681	15	221,416	473,928	1,943	6
Upper 25%	88,982	87,860	7	69,475	123,871	43,322	30
Lower 25%	39,457	35,286	2	19,959	55,595	127,862	46
Lowest 25%	(6,097)	(19,145)	(5)	(28,081)	8,443	512,602	68

DHIA top producers recognized

Dairy farm families from Saranac and Sebawa were among those honored recently at the Michigan Dairy Herd Improvement Association's (DHIA) annual meeting. Jim and John Hardy of Saranac were awarded the DHIA Progressive Dairyman of the Year, while the MSU Department of Animal Science Dairy Farmer of the Year honors went to Harold and Lillian Gremel.

The three top DHIA awards — high dollar value, highest milk average, and the highest individual producing cow — were all won by Donald and Pam VanderMeer of Lake Odessa.

The Hardy operation consists of a 320-cow Holstein herd that had a rolling herd average of 27,394 pounds of milk with 959 pounds of butterfat and 823 pounds of protein. The DHIA's Progressive Dairyman award recognized the operation's milk production improvement, which included an increase of 10,808 pounds of milk per cow per year in the past five years, and a reduction in the heifer calving interval to 24 months which is two months below the state average. The operation plans to increase herd size to 1,300 cows.

Harold and Lillian Gremel were cited for their competent farm management and outstanding service to Michigan's dairy industry and their local community. The couple started Starward Farms in 1954, which has grown to its present day size of a 1,050-acre cash crop farm and 78-head registered dairy herd with a rolling herd average of 24,161 pounds of milk, 960 pounds of butterfat, and 747 pounds of protein. The operation's cropping rotation includes alfalfa, dry edible beans, sugar beets, oats, corn and wheat.

Harold serves on the board of directors for the Michigan Milk Producers Association, the Pigeon Cooperative Elevator, the Thumb Area Community Bank, Huron Sires, and Thumb Sires and in several community civic organizations. Lillian has served as 4-H youth leader at the local and state level and is actively involved with the Huron County Farm Bureau, Huron County Dairy Promotions, the Huron County Dairy Diplomats, and the Immanuel Lutheran Church.



Pam VanderMeer (left) of Lake Odessa accepts the top three DHIA awards from Leslie Campbell, Area 2 DHIA field rep.

The VanderMeers began assembling their herd in 1989 with the goal of being one of the state's highest producing herds within five years. Their 56-cow herd has a rolling herd average of 30,600 pounds of milk, 991 pounds of butterfat and 954 pounds of protein. The herd sports a per-cow value of \$3,736.

The VanderMeers also have an 85-month old cow that received the highest individual production level in the state last year with a 46,717 pounds of milk, 1,675 pounds of butterfat, and 1,348 pounds of protein during her last lactation. Total dollar value for the animal was pegged at \$5,770.

The VanderMeers were also among the seven producers winning the DHIA's Gold Club award for the highest rolling herd average over the last five years. Other winners included Carlos and Doug Long, of Clayton; Jeff Alexander, of Hanover; Steve Benthem, of McBain; Earl and Jeff Horning, of Manchester; Kevin and Sheila Kurtz, of Laingsburg; and Del Fostic and Sons, of Applegate. Rolling herd averages ranged from 25,720 pounds to 26,753 pounds of milk. ■



MSU Animal Science Chairperson Maynard Hogberg (right) presents Lillian and Harold Gremel with the prestigious 1996 Dairy Farmer of the Year award.



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Students should be proud to represent their school and the Farm Bureau organization, and be willing to discuss their experiences with groups following the seminar.



Weed Strategies

by Dr. James J. Kells
& Dr. Karen Renner,
Department of
Crop and Soil
Sciences, Michigan
State University



Crop producers have several herbicide — options for grass control with soil-applied herbicides. These herbicides differ in several characteristics. This article will summarize some of the most significant comparisons between the following herbicides: Micro-Tech/Partner, Harness/Surpass, Dual/Dual II, Frontier, and Prowl.

Chemistry/Mode of Action

All of the herbicides listed above, except Prowl, are acid amide herbicides. They are absorbed primarily by the emerging shoot and affect shoot growth and development. This results in malformed leaves that do not unroll properly or seedlings that leaf out underground. Prowl is a dinitroaniline. It is absorbed primarily by the roots and inhibits cell division in the root. This results in inhibited root growth, swollen root tips, and stunted plants.

Crops

All of the herbicides listed above are labeled on commercial field corn. All of the herbicides, except Prowl, can be applied either preplant incor-

Soil-applied herbicides for grass control

porated or preemergence. Prowl must be applied after planting on the soil surface without incorporation. Crop safety with Prowl is based on preventing exposure of the corn roots to the herbicide.

All of the herbicides except Harness/Surpass are labelled on soybeans. They are labelled preplant incorporated or preemergence. Avoid surface application of Prowl on sandy soils with less than 1 percent organic matter.

Micro-Tech/Partner, Dual/Dual II, and Prowl are registered for use in dry edible beans. Frontier recently received a label for application to dry edible beans as well.

Crop Safety

Severe corn injury from any of these herbicides is not common when the herbicide is applied according to the label. Therefore, corn injury is not a major issue for commercial field corn in Michigan. Injury to corn inbreds is a greater concern due to greater herbicide sensitivity in many inbred lines. In a 1995 MSU trial on hybrid corn, normal application rates caused no corn injury. With high rates (above label) some injury was observed from all herbicides tested except Dual II.

Soybean tolerance to Micro-Tech/Partner, Frontier, and Dual/Dual II is very good. Soybean tolerance to Prowl is good on medium and heavy textured soils. On sandy soils, Prowl should not be applied preemergence because soybeans can become brittle at the base of the stem.

Prowl and Micro-Tech should be incorporated on dry edible beans. Dual and Frontier can be applied preplant incorporated or preemergence. Dry bean tolerance to Dual is greater when preplant incorporated; tolerance to Frontier is greater preemergence. Some navy and black bean varieties are more tolerant to Dual than to Frontier.

Weed Spectrum

With adequate, timely rainfall for herbicide activation, all of these herbicides provide very good control of common annual grasses. The herbicides vary in their activity on broadleaved weeds and yellow nutsedge. For pigweed control, each of the herbicides except Prowl is rated good. Prowl is rated fair.

For common lambsquarters control (including triazine resistant lambsquarters), Prowl is good, Harness/Surpass is fair, and the others are poor. Harness/Surpass is rated fair due to inconsistent results on lambsquarters.

For common ragweed, Harness/Surpass is fair and the others are poor. For velvetleaf, Prowl will provide some control and is rated fair. The other herbicides have little activity on velvetleaf. Dual, Harness/Surpass, and Frontier are good on yellow nutsedge. Micro-Tech/Partner is less effective. Prowl has no activity on yellow nutsedge. Details of the effectiveness of these herbicides are available in the 1996 Weed Control Guide, MSU Extension Bulletin E-434.

Rainfall for Activation

MSU research has demonstrated differences in the relative amount of rainfall required to "activate" these herbicides. The actual amount of rainfall required to obtain weed control in any specific field is dependent on several factors; however, the relative rainfall requirement is useful information.

The herbicide requiring the most rainfall is Prowl. The herbicide requiring the least rainfall is Harness/Surpass. The relative ranking is as follows (rainfall requirement): Harness/Surpass < Frontier < Dual/Dual II = Micro-Tech/Partner < Prowl.

Mobility in Soil

Herbicide mobility in soil is affected by several complex processes. Two factors that affect mobility

are water solubility and binding to soil particles. The following table summarizes the water solubility and soil binding (adsorption) of these herbicides to soil.

Herbicide	Water solubility (ppm)	Adsorptivity to soil
Prowl	0.28	very strong
Dual/Dual II	488	strong
Micro-Tech/Partner	200	strong
Harness/Surpass	223	moderate
Frontier	1174	moderate

Prowl is very immobile in soil. Harness/Surpass and Frontier are less tightly bound to soil. Dual/Dual II and Micro-Tech/Partner are intermediate in terms of soil binding.

Persistence in Soil

Prowl is the most persistent herbicide of this group and can cause carryover problems to sugar beets and, at high rates, no-till or reduced tillage corn. The other four herbicides do not present any carryover concerns. Research in 1995 at the University of Illinois showed that Dual II was more persistent than Frontier or Topnotch (microencapsulated Surpass).

Is longer persistence important? With early preplant applications and in seed corn production, longer soil persistence may result in better weed control. If late season grasses in corn are a problem, longer persistence is important. However, with at-planting applications in commercial field corn or soybeans, herbicide failures due to inadequate herbicide persistence are rare with any of these herbicides.

When selecting one of these herbicides, consider the specific characteristics of each herbicide. Determine which herbicide or herbicides fit your specific situation, then consider cost in making your final decision. ■

When should I reseed alfalfa?

by O.B. Hesterman, Department of
Crop and Soil Sciences, Michigan State
University

When should I replant my old alfalfa stand? To answer this question, you need to take into account several factors including age of stand, stand uniformity, plant density, weediness and potential productivity. But the answer to this question should be based on economics and this article will assist you in deciding whether to replant an alfalfa stand.

Age of stand

Most alfalfa stands, if seeded properly with a good, hardy variety on a well-drained soil, if fertilized and limed adequately, and if not cut too intensively should produce respectable yields for five to seven years. But age of stand isn't a good guideline for deciding when to replant. In alfalfa variety trials conducted at Michigan State University, many varieties were still producing yields of 7.5 tons per acre or more after 10 years. On the other hand, we all have seen three-year old alfalfa stands that should be taken out of production.

Plant density

When alfalfa is seeded at 12 pounds viable seed per acre, you are seeding approximately 60 seeds per square foot. It is not uncommon to have 30 to 40 plants per square foot in the fall of the seeding year. The question is asked: What is the minimum number

of plants per square foot before I should reseed? High yields of alfalfa can be produced with as few as five plants per square foot in older stands and in at least one case, a 10-year old stand of plant density of only 1.9 plants per square foot.

Admittedly, this stand was managed with sound practices of fertilization, insect control, adequate drained, and optimum pH, and the variety had a high level of disease resistance. This example shows, however, that plant density alone is not a good indication of the need to reseed alfalfa.

Stand uniformity

A uniform stand is probably more important than stand density per se. If there are large spots in a field with only a few plants, but the remainder of the fields have uniform stands of two to five plants per square foot, it may be possible to reseed those low-producing spots rather than the entire field. If an alfalfa stand has many areas with few or no plants, even if the average plant density is adequate, reseeding is advisable.

Weediness

As an alfalfa stand thins out, alfalfa plants are often replaced with weeds. Research has shown that many of the common weeds in alfalfa are just as palatable and nutritious to animals as the alfalfa, when harvested at the proper maturity and if weeds are not the predominant part of the hay. As the proportion of weeds in an alfalfa stand increases;

however, total dry matter production tends to decrease. An additional problem arises because some weeds are past their optimum maturity when alfalfa is at the proper maturity for harvest.

In many cases, the best way to get rid of a weedy alfalfa stand is to reseed, using clear seeding techniques with herbicides.

Potential productivity

The best way to decide whether or not to reseed an alfalfa stand is to assess the potential productivity of the existing stand and compare this to the anticipated costs and productivity of a new seeding. By expressing the two situations (i.e., keeping the remaining stand another year vs. re-seeding) in terms of economics, the most profitable decision can be made. This decision can be based on average yearly hay yield and economic return from the new stand or it can be based on the net present value of the new stand, taking into account

the fact that extra money earned on a new stand in future years is not worth as much as the money earned this year. ■

Row Width	Length of Row Equal to 1 ft./sq.	Plants/ Square Foot	% Stand	% Yield Potential
7"	20.6"	30-35	100	100
7.5"	19.2"	24-28	80	100
8"	18.0"	18-21	60	90-95
10"	14.4"	15-18	50	75-80
		12-14	40	60-70
		6-7	20	40-50

Year Seeded	Viable Plants per Square Foot							
	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-9	10-15	>15
	percent of potential yield							
Last Year	15	25	30	40	50	65	80	100
2 Years Ago	30	50	60	70	85	100	100	100
3 Years Ago	30	65	70	85	100	100	100	100
4 Years Ago	50	70	85	100	100	100	100	100
>4 Years Ago	75	90	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Michigan State University Extension Bulletin E-2310

New agribusiness leader formed from merger of Ciba, Sandoz

Two Switzerland-based leaders in agribusiness and pharmaceuticals, Ciba and Sandoz, March 7, 1996, announced the decision to merge and form a new company called Novartis. The new company will serve its customers as the largest worldwide marketer of crop protection chemicals and become the second-largest company in seeds and animal health. Total consolidated agribusiness sales of the two companies in 1995 were nearly \$6 billion.

Finalization of the merger will be subject to approval by both boards of directors, scheduled to meet next month, as well as regulatory approval in some countries.

In crop protection, Novartis will have a leadership position in four key areas: weed control, especially in corn, soybeans and cereals; disease control in cereals, vegetables, vineyards and orchards; insect control in a variety of crops; and seed treatment. Novartis will have the world's largest research

and development investment in the crop protection business. Currently, 15 new compounds are in an advanced stage of development, mainly in the weed control, disease control and insect control markets.

In seeds, Novartis will produce varieties for growers of corn, oilseeds, sugar beets, vegetables and flowers. The company will have one of the largest biotechnology research programs in the industry, focusing on enhancing disease and insect resistance while improving yields.

Novartis will also be a major force in the animal health business, with a variety of disease treatment and prevention products.

Outside the agribusiness sector, the merger creates the second-largest pharmaceuticals company in the world, with combined sales of nearly \$13 billion.

In the agribusiness and health markets, Ciba produces such familiar brands as AAtrex®, Dual® II, Bicep® II, Exceed®, Beacon®, Tilt®,

Princep®, Ridomil®, Orbit®, Agree®, Cotoran®, Curacron®, Amber®, Design®, Supracide®, Program®, Interceptor®, Fasinex®, and Ciba Seeds. Sandoz brands include Banvel®, Clarity®, Marksman®, Frontier® and Zorial®.

Ciba's Dr. Alex Krauer will be chairman of Novartis, and Dr. Daniel Vasella of Sandoz will be president and head of the executive committee. Dr. Wolfgang Samo of Ciba will be one of eight members of the Novartis executive committee, representing the agribusiness sector.

Krauer said, "To combine two strong and successful companies into an even stronger and more successful new entity represents a fascinating vision, indeed. I personally consider this bold move as the future-oriented response to the challenges in the global markets where we do business."

Integration teams will be formed immediately to initiate and carry out what is expected to be a

rapid merger implementation process. Benefits of the merger will include higher critical mass for key investments such as research and development, more efficient and broader marketing and distribution of products, lower cost of financing, increased liquidity, and leaner organizational structures.

The new company will be releasing additional information as it becomes available. ■

ciba
SANDOZ

Gear your trucks up for spring work

Truck regulations apply to all Michigan farmers

Last fall, Eaton County Farm Bureau member John Howell innocently volunteered two of his trucks for a safety inspection day, looking to learn about all of the rules that applied to his set of trucking circumstances, but found himself two months later being audited by Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Enforcement.

What pushed Howell over the regulatory edge was a fuel truck with a capacity greater than 119 gallons and a driver that did not have the needed Commercial Driver License (CDL) endorsement. To make matters worse, Howell's commercial electrical contracting company's truck fleet traveled more than 150 air miles from his principal place of business requiring all truck drivers to carry a CDL.

Although Howell may not be your typical central Michigan farmer, operating a sizable electrical contracting business throughout the state, he is quick to point out to other farmers that they need to be aware of trucking regulations they may not even know of.

"Every farmer's vehicle in Michigan is going to be impacted (by this trucking regulation)," explains Howell. "You're going to have to go through an annual inspection on that farm truck — on the complete truck. Our farm trucks are going to be in better shape than they've ever been before. They're going to get pulled over and checked at scales and weigh stops just to make sure they are in shape. The farmer with the old grain truck isn't going to be out there any longer."

"If we're over 119 gallons of diesel fuel, that truck will be placarded," continues Howell. "Four placards, all four directions on the truck, visible from four directions. And you better be showing the right symbols on the farm chemical truck, which is a water truck with chemicals on it. You may even need to have more than one set of placards, because you're carrying more than one set of hazard classes on there at one time."

According to Assistant Division Commander Bill Mohr, with Michigan State Police's Motor Carrier Division, Howell is correct about the capacity limitation on farm fuel trucks being exempt from hazardous material regulation. Once the capacity of a fuel tank or any other type of tank exceeds 119 gallons the regulatory levels change. "Then we introduce them to another whole dictionary of hazardous material regulations."

"If you have two or more tanks or 'mini-bulks' with total combined capacity greater than 119 gallons," explains Craig Anderson, manager of the Regulatory Compliance Assistance Program (RCAP), "you should check with your chemical dealer regarding potential placarding because the combination of the two or more farm chemicals may require you to do so."

Commercial Driver Licenses

Another regulatory avenue that opened up because of Howell's CDL requirement, as it would with anyone required to carry one, is the need to regularly test drivers for drugs and alcohol, thanks to a new law that went into effect Jan. 1, 1996.

The drug and alcohol testing provisions apply to all persons who operate commercial motor vehicles and are required to have a Commercial Driver License (CDL) including interstate and intrastate drivers of:

- Commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more
- Commercial motor vehicles with a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more including a towed vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or more;
- Motor vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver;
- Motor vehicles of any size transporting hazardous materials (including pesticides and fertilizers) in amounts requiring placarding.

A narrow exception exists for some farm drivers in Michigan. Drivers who are eligible for and are properly operating an otherwise covered vehicle and possess an "F" endorsement on their license are exempt from the drug and alcohol testing provisions.

Howell enlisted the services of Fleet Compliance Group located in Grandville to assist him in bringing his fleet of drivers into compliance with the CDL drug and alcohol guidelines, as well as other regulations that apply to his commercial



If your farm fuel truck carries a tank with capacity greater than 119 gallons, then you need to be sure to placard your load accordingly. The same applies to "mini-bulks" used to transport farm chemicals

fleet of trucks, including pre- and post-trip safety inspections and log books.

Farmers are exempt from needing a CDL if

they are operating their vehicles within a 150 mile radius of their farm and do not truck commercially for other people. Farmers do need either an "F"

endorsement or full CDL when operating a combination of vehicles whose towing vehicle has a GVWR of 26,001 lbs. or more, according to Anderson.

"Once you truck for a fee, you then are a commercial trucker and become covered by commercial trucking standards," explains Anderson.

"If the rig stays under 26,000 GVWR, we have basic provisions as long as they do it with small equipment that they don't need a CDL," elaborates Mohr. "Once the power unit gets over 26,000 GVWR, then you're talking full CDL for a placarded load of hazardous material."

Shipping Papers

According to Mohr, shipping papers are required for almost all hazardous materials, regardless of quantity. The basic elements of a legal shipping paper are the proper shipping name, hazard class, identification number, packing group, total quantity transported, shipper certification, emergency response information and emergency telephone number.

Although that may sound like a lot of information, fertilizer/chemical dealers should be supplying their customers with the necessary paperwork to get farmers back home legally, according to Anderson. But he warns that farmers still need to keep track of what they are carrying when they travel from field-to-field and be sure to update the quantities as they are used.

Continued on page 15

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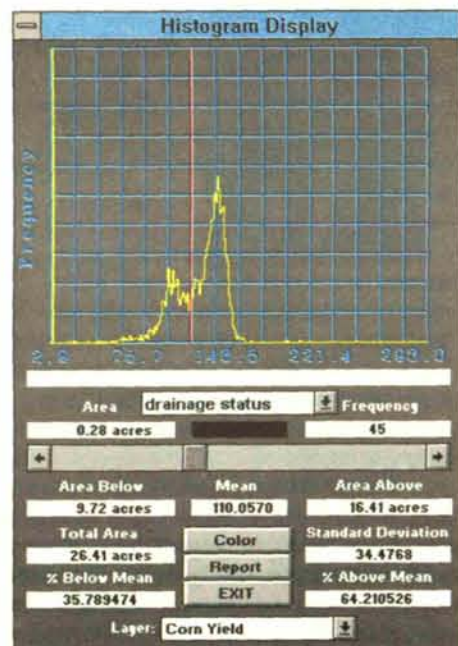
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Critical issues for site specific management in Michigan

by Neil R. Miller

Open any agricultural trade magazine these days and articles on site specific management virtually spill out on your lap. The impression one gets from reading these



A true GIS can go beyond printing maps to analyzing relationships within and between map layers.

articles is that farmers will soon need to become computer jockeys in order to run the equipment that plants, sprays and harvests their crops.

Computers and satellite (GPS) systems will undoubtedly play an important role in farming of the 21st century. But the farms of our children may not look as foreign as much of the media hype indicates. In fact, much of the new technology is based on principles which have been part of agriculture for centuries.

In the coming months, I will examine current trends in site specific management in order to clarify how they fit into the context of Michigan agriculture. Here's a quick preview of several critical issues that I believe farmers in the state need to be aware of in order to keep abreast of this emerging technology.

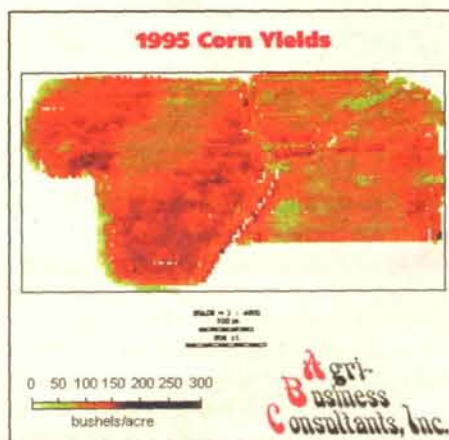
Effective site specific management (SSM) is possible now with little or no cash investment. Farmers have practiced SSM for years, whenever they varied spreader or planter rates, spot-applied herbicides, etc. Although improving these practices may require adapting current equipment, the critical factor in conventional SSM is investing the time to develop good management practices. We will look at the effectiveness and the limitations of conventional SSM. We will also examine how GPS-based SSM can increase the precision and efficiency of many of these same practices.

Yield monitoring will be the first GPS-based

technology to benefit many Michigan farmers. Yield monitoring, can provide both immediate and long-term benefits by helping farmers improve management practices. We will examine these benefits in detail, and discuss how yield monitoring will impact other SSM activities. We will also compare the various equipment and software options available to farmers in the coming year.

Variable rate (VRT) fertilizer application using GPS will begin in Michigan in 1996. The economic payback of variable rate fertilizer application has been difficult to demonstrate in the Midwest. Custom applicators in Michigan have learned from these observations, and have waited to purchase VRT equipment. However, in 1996, several suppliers will offer VRT services beginning with lime and potash application. We will look at the economic and agronomic implications of these practices and discuss the pros and cons of grid soil sampling versus soil-based sampling approaches.

Most other GPS-based technologies are still in their infancy. We will discuss planters that vary rates and varieties on the go, sprayers that identify weeds and apply appropriate herbicides, and equipment that analyzes soil nutrients and instantaneously applies proper fertilizers. It will be years before most of these technologies can function reliably on a farm scale. Furthermore, in many cases, we lack the agronomic and economic data to determine where and to what degree the inputs should be varied.

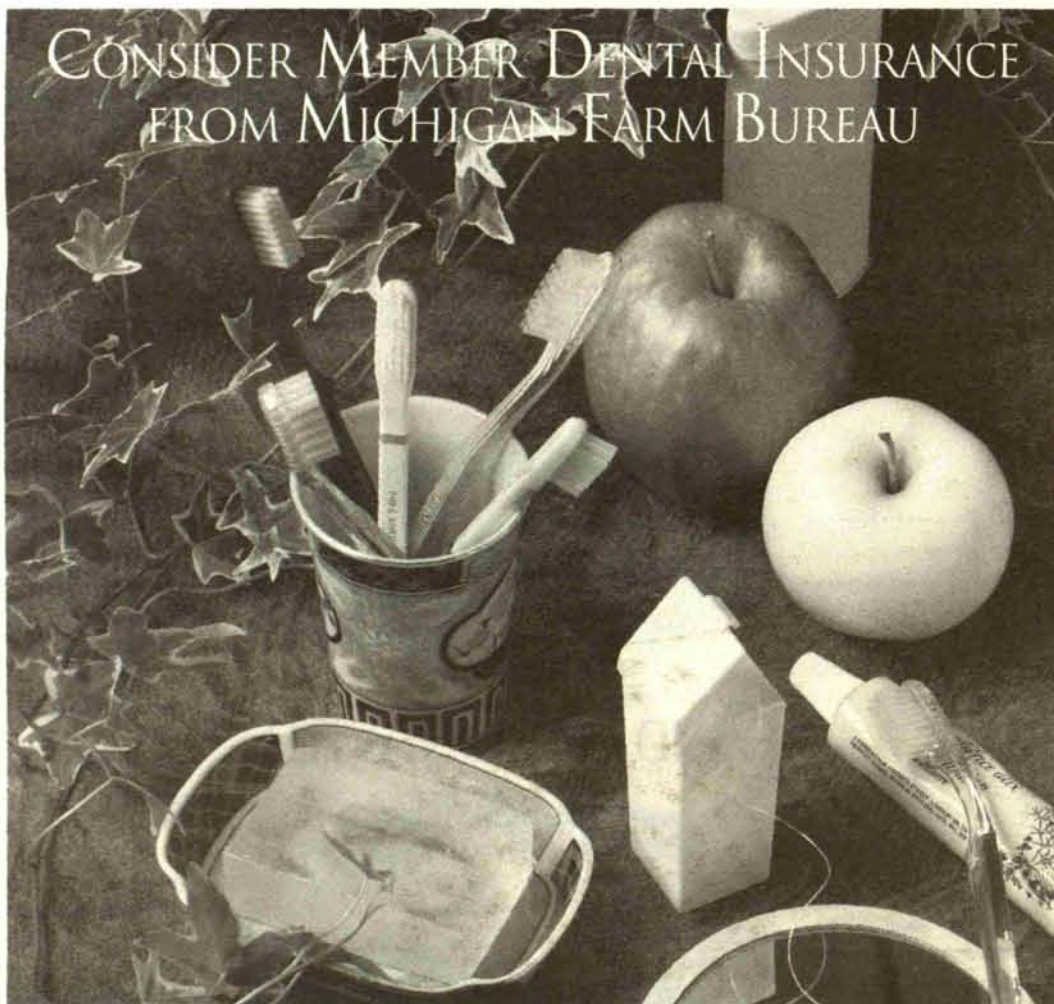


Yield monitoring will be the first GPS-based technology to benefit many Michigan farmers.

Understanding these trends and issues will be critical to continue farming profitably into the 21st century. Let me know if there are further issues which you feel I should address. Hopefully, through this dialogue, the combine of the future will seem more like the equipment in your toolshed and less like the Starship Enterprise.

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Market Outlook

Continued from page 6

CATTLE

This is one sector where we may soon see some cutback in feed use. The March *Cattle-on-Feed Report* showed total numbers on feed down 1 percent, February placements down 6 percent, and marketings in February up 12 percent. These numbers reflect the hurt in the cattle sector. While there are still plenty of feeders available, feedlots are not in a hurry to put them in the lots, even at very discounted prices.

The marketing number shows we are current. Weights are slightly above year ago levels. Even higher feed prices will likely bring cattle to market quicker and others will likely be put to grass. This means less beef in the near-term, less feed use, and possibly more beef late this year and into next year.

At this point, there is little to do other than keep current. However, keep an eye on futures — if the markets rally enough to lock in cash prices this summer over \$62, you may want to take a look at it.

EGGS

by Henry Larzelere

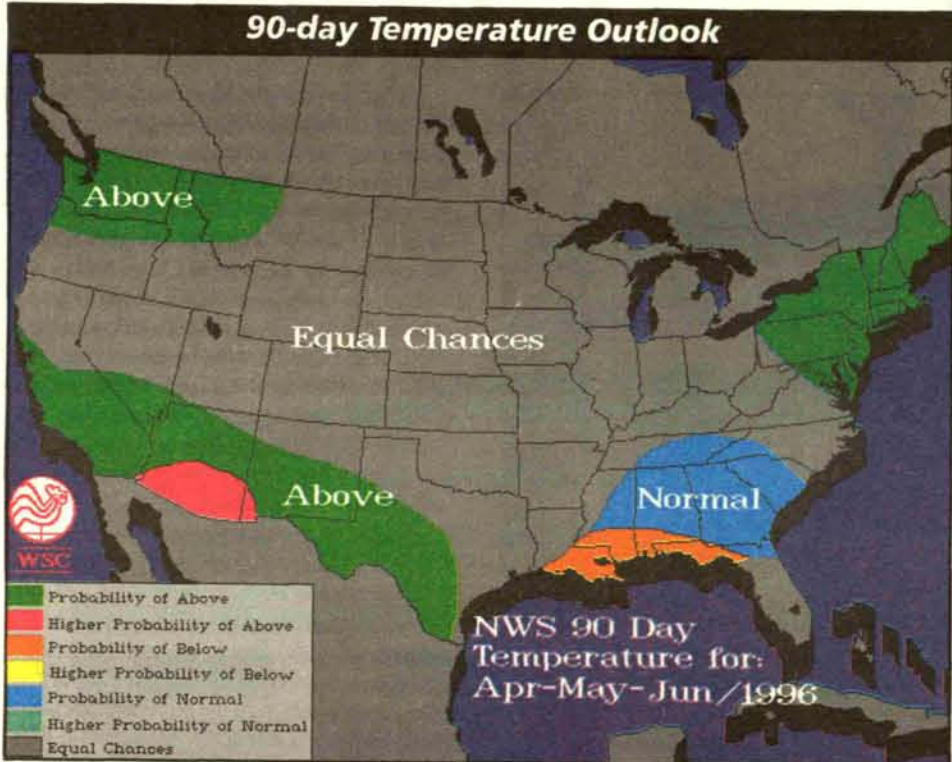
Egg prices at the end of March were about 26 cents a dozen above year ago levels. These higher prices were partially offset by feed ingredient costs 10-11 cents a dozen eggs above last year.

It is likely that wholesale egg prices in New York for Grade A large white eggs in cartons will average in the low to mid-80s during the April-May-June quarter. This quarter seasonally shows the lowest prices of the year, however, the demand factors of strong usage in shell eggs, export and egg products still exist. The data in terms of the number of layers and egg production are slightly above last year.

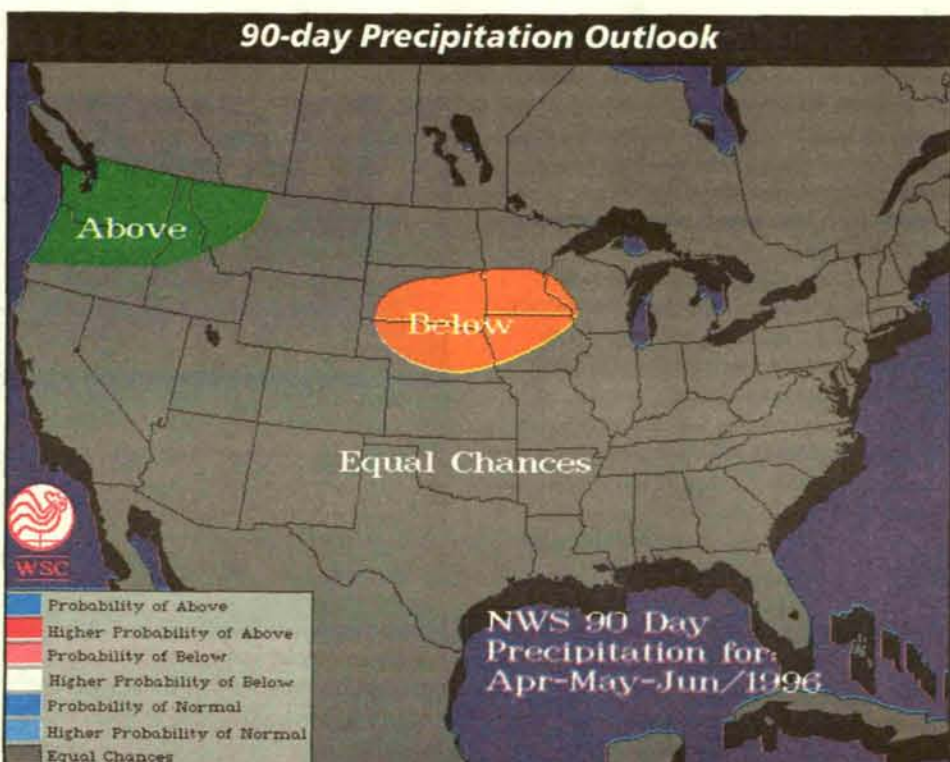
The egg-type chicks hatched and the layer-type eggs in incubators show modest increases that may indicate further increased production potential in the last half of the year.

The incentives for increased egg production will be moderated by the relatively high feed ingredient prices that seem to be expected even with bumper crops and weather in the last part of the year. However, in the past, when egg prices have been relatively strong in the first 3 months of the year as has been the case in 1996, the egg-type chick hatch in the major hatch season has been strong leading to high production levels and lower prices.

90-day Temperature Outlook



90-day Precipitation Outlook



Weather Outlook

by Dr. Jeff Andresen, agricultural meteorologist, Department of Geography, Michigan State University

March was significantly colder and drier than normal across nearly all of Michigan, courtesy of a persistent northwesterly jet stream. With the exception of March 19-21, when a major snowstorm accompanied by strong winds buried southeastern sections of the state, weather patterns were fairly benign. While the cold weather made a seemingly long winter even longer for most humans, it also kept most overwintering crops from breaking dormancy and becoming vulnerable to future cold outbreaks.

While the long-term outlooks for Michigan during the upcoming couple of months continue to be vague (i.e., near equal probabilities of below-, near-, and above-normal temperatures and precipitation), a few private meteorologists have called for drier than normal conditions across sections of the

Great Plains and Cornbelt region this spring and summer. The reasoning: 1) a La Niña event with associated cooler than normal ocean surface temperatures currently in the equatorial Pacific, and 2) a statistical association of droughts shortly following years with little or no sunspot activity (such as past droughts in 1936, 1956 and 1976). National Weather

Service outlooks for April through June also call for odds to favor a drier than normal precipitation scenario for sections of South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. Even with such forecasts, remember that the skill of such outlooks is very low and that drought occurs over sections of the Corn Belt regions about once every 6 years or so statistically (it

occurred over eastern sections of the region last season). One thing remains much more likely; watch for strong commodity price moves during the upcoming weeks as the market reacts to changes to or persistence of current weather trends (especially dryness in the southern Great Plains) and the potential impacts (real or perceived).

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Convinced?

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Michigan Weather Summary

3/1/96 to 3/31/96	Temperature Observed mean	Dev. from normal	Precipitation Actual (inch)	Normal (inch)
Houghton	20.0	-3.6	2.41	1.94
Marquette	20.4	-2.7	3.12	1.94
Escanaba	21.5	-5.1	0.91	1.93
Sault Ste. Marie	20.2	-3.8	1.56	1.93
Lake City	24.1	-3.4	1.68	1.83
Pellston	24.2	-0.8	1.44	1.83
Traverse City	26.9	-2.6	1.21	1.83
Alpena	25.7	-2.1	0.49	1.87
Houghton Lake	26.7	-2.0	0.77	1.87
Muskegon	29.8	-3.1	1.22	2.25
Vestaburg	27.5	-5.1	0.96	2.16
Bad Axe	26.8	-4.8	0.99	2.04
Saginaw	29.3	-3.2	0.73	2.04
Grand Rapids	29.6	-4.0	0.99	2.48
South Bend	32.0	-4.1	0.89	2.48
Coldwater	30.2	-5.3	0.96	2.26
Lansing	29.6	-3.3	0.89	2.26
Detroit	31.5	-3.5	1.62	2.32
Flint	28.8	-4.0	1.83	2.32
Toledo	32.0	-3.7	2.73	2.32

Observed totals are accumulated from April 1. Normals are based on district averages.

Researchers find natural plant defenses

Australian researchers and scientists have found a chemical trigger that helps plants boost their own natural defenses against disease by as much as 85 percent. The chemical "activator" benzothiadiazole stimulates plants to produce increased amounts of proteins that help boost the plant's immune response to disease. The researchers said the discovery of this activator "promises to slash the use of chemicals in food production."

The treatment works best on rice and wheat and, in test plots in Australia, has helped bump yields by as much as 10 percent. But, researchers said further work is needed to stimulate plants to defend themselves against insects and viral diseases—although work in that area has "also been promising."

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Losing farmland to development isn't inevitable

\$1 million Michigan farmland protection fund to be created from historic estate of late Kalamazoo County supervisor and farmer
Largest such fund ever created by American Farmland Trust

The former chairman of the Kalamazoo County Board of Supervisors, characterized in life as a quiet hero who cared deeply about his community, has in death just as quietly left behind a legacy of a lifetime.

A mere day before he suddenly was felled by the illness that took his life, Owen Love, 84, signed an agreement deeding his historic 660-acre farm to the national farmland conservation group, American Farmland Trust (AFT), as part of its farm legacy program.

The agreement sets the stage for the creation of a \$1 million Michigan farmland protection fund and ensures Love's Climax Township farm, midway between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, stays in agriculture.

Owen's wife of 58 years, Ellen Love, said that despite attractive offers from developers, her husband always had remained committed to protecting the farm. A member of several prominent Michigan farm organizations, he disdained the impact on nearby farms from surging residential and commercial development in Kalamazoo and surrounding counties. Transferring ownership of the family farm



to a farmland conservation group, Mrs. Love said, was simply his way of leaving a lasting legacy and a model for farmers in Michigan and other states to emulate.

"It just sickened him when prime farmland such as ours was turned over for development," remembered Mrs. Love, who also signed the agreement with AFT. "He wanted to set a good example and be sure our farm would never be used for anything but agriculture. It seemed to settle his mind when all of that had finally been taken care of."

The Love farm lies in an area previously designated by AFT as one of the nation's most threatened agricultural regions. According to a recent study on Michigan agriculture, the state is now losing 10 acres of farmland every hour to non-farm development. The Loves began farming in the area 45 years ago. The couple purchased the land in stages, acquiring the historic Eldred House at one point. The house was built two years before Michigan statehood and played host to the first Climax Township meeting in 1838.

Over the years, the Loves raised beef and hogs or produced milk. Their farm also proved popular to migrating Sandhill cranes and other wildlife. Since the late 1970s, when the Loves retired from active farming and their children moved on to other careers, the land has been rented to other families, most recently the Vosburgs, of Climax. For Jan Vosburg, the family patriarch, it has been a homecoming of sorts. Vosburg was born and spent the first 12 years of his life in the Love farmhouse.

"Were it not for Owen Love, there might have been blacktop and houses on that farm today," said Vosburg. "Lots of people talk about protecting their farms. He's one of the very few that did something about it."

Under the Loves' agreement with AFT, the Vosburgs will continue to farm the property. Mrs. Love will maintain her residence there as well and receive an annual income. Upon her death, the Vosburgs or another farm family will be given the opportunity to purchase the farm from AFT at a reduced price, subject to the protective agricultural conservation easement placed on the land in 1990.

Sale proceeds will be used to establish the Owen and Ellen Love Family Farmland Protection Fund for Michigan. To be managed by AFT, the Love family fund will give the organization a permanent source of capital for its farmland protection work in Michigan. Dennis Bidwell, AFT director of land protection, urged Michigan state and local governments to follow Owen Love's lead and create farmland protection programs of their own.

"Individual acts of leadership such as the Loves' remind us that losing farmland to development isn't inevitable," said Bidwell, who, along with AFT Counsel Jeff Winegard, crafted the agreement with the Loves. "If we have a shared vision, we can protect the way of life that farm families represent."

American Farmland Trust is a private, nonprofit, membership organization working to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Its farm legacy program assists families in making their permanently protected farmland available to other farm families at an affordable price. Program participants continue to enjoy use of the land and income during their lifetimes and benefit from the income and estate tax benefits of making a gift to a nonprofit, tax-exempt farmland conservation organization. AFT's national office is at 1920 N. Street, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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<input type="checkbox"/> Own (Free and Clear)		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe)		
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Employer or DBA			Years There	Mos.
Position		Business Phone ()		
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Total Annual Income				
<small>(Income from Alimony, child support, or separate maintenance payments need not be revealed if you do not wish to have it as a basis for repaying this obligation.)</small>				
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Nearest Relative (not living with you)			Phone ()	

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X / /
 Applicant's Signature Date

X / /
 Co-Applicant's Signature Date

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MMPA returns \$1.9 million in patronage refunds to members

In February, Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) returned \$1.9 million to its dairy farmer members. This cash allocation represents 30 percent of the \$6.4 million earnings generated by the cooperative in fiscal year 1994-95. The cash patronage returned includes 100 percent of the farm supply earnings and 25 percent of the milk marketing earnings. All members who marketed milk through MMPA during the past year will be receiving a portion of the \$1.9 million.

"We are proud to be able to send these earnings back to the members," said MMPA President Elwood Kirkpatrick. "Our strong financial standing and sound management enables us to return these earnings as well as the retirement of other equities which will be sent later this year."

Over the last three years, MMPA has returned more than \$17.5 million to its members in the form of cash patronage refunds, cash equity retirements and cash estate payments.

Cash patronage refunds and equity allocations are based on the amount of milk each individual member marketed and on the supplies purchased through the cooperative during the year in which earnings were achieved. The allocated certificate of equity for the 1994-95 earnings will be revolved back to the members in approximately 10 years.

Since 1987, MMPA has operated without an equity capital retained, relying on the association's plant operations, milk marketing and member dues to fund the cooperative. MMPA has generated record-breaking earnings the past three fiscal years.

"Cash refunds and equity retirements are one of the greatest advantages of marketing your milk through a successful cooperative," Kirkpatrick adds. "They are proof that the profits MMPA earns are returned to the members."

MMPA is owned and controlled by over 3,200 dairy farmers located in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan.

Annual Percentage Rate	Variable Rate Information	Balance Calculation Method	Annual Fee	Grace Period
9.8% introductory APR on cash advances and balance transfers for the first six months, 15.65% variable APR on Gold MasterCard and 17.15% variable APR on Scenic VISA thereafter.	Your annual percentage rate may vary monthly. The rate is determined by adding 6.9 percentage points for the Gold MasterCard and 8.4 percentage points for the Scenic VISA to the highest Prime Rate published in the "Wall Street Journal" on the first day of your monthly billing cycle.	1-Cycle Average Daily Balance (including new purchases)	None	For repayment of the balance for new purchases, 25 Days, starting with the billing date on the statement.

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Over Limit Fee — \$0-\$12 (varies by state). Dishonored Check Fee — \$15.

Minimum household income required for a credit line of \$5,000 is \$35,000, subject to verification. If your income is less, we will consider you for a Scenic VISA with a lower line of credit and an APR of 17.15%.

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The information about the cards described in this application is current as of 12/95. This information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, call us at 1-800-423-3883, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

Notice to California Residents: If you are married, you may apply for a separate account. **Notice to New York Residents:** Consumer credit reports may be obtained in connection with this application for credit. Upon your request, the Bank will inform you whether such reports were obtained and if so, of the names and addresses of the consumer reporting agencies. **Notice to Ohio Residents:** The Ohio laws against discrimination require that all creditors make credit equally available to all creditworthy customers, and that credit reporting agencies maintain separate histories on each individual upon request. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission administers compliance with this law. **Notice to Wisconsin Residents:** No provision of a marital property agreement, a unilateral statement under Wis. Stat. Ann. Section § 766.59 or a court decree under Wis. Stat. Ann. Section § 766.70 adversely affects the interest of the creditor unless the creditor, prior to the time credit is granted, is furnished a copy of the agreement, statement or decree or has actual knowledge of the adverse obligation when the obligation to the creditor is incurred.

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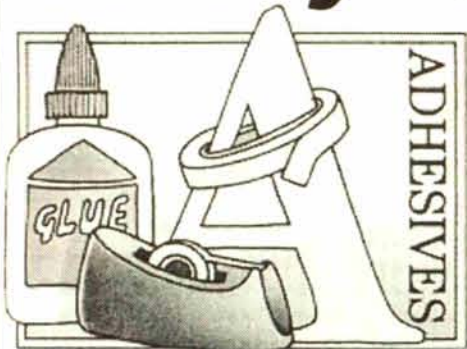
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The New Dodge

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Soybean producers taking the soybean back to school



Fourth- and fifth-graders across the state could soon be learning more about the soybean, thanks to a three-week series of teaching lessons being developed through a contract by the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee (MSPC). According to Nanine Fleischmann, MSPC administration and finance director, the lesson plans have been designed to meet Michigan's Essential Goals and Objectives for Science Education and Michigan's core curriculum.

"As a result, these lessons help students master essential science outcomes," Fleischmann explained. "Activities are specifically targeted at outcomes outlined in the 'Organization of Living Things' and 'Ecosystems' sections for both elementary and middle school curriculums. All assessments

model the format found on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test."

The lesson plans were written by Sharon Caldwell, elementary agriscience consultant, of East Lansing; Rebecca Josepson, elementary science curriculum specialist, Sanilac County Science and Math Center; and Cary Trexler, graduate student, Michigan State University, Department of Agriculture and Extension Education under a contract with the MSPC.

Once fully developed, the program will provide a way for soybean producers to get their message into the classroom, via the teachers, while making the lesson plans beneficial for the teachers as well. Each of the lesson plans comes with a checklist of specific goals and objectives being met by the lesson plan for quick and easy reference, Fleischmann says.

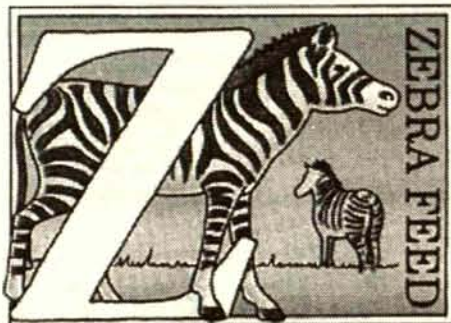
Thus far, over 30 teachers have requested material for the lesson plans, most of which are science-based in nature, but also include some social studies as well. Fleischmann says the lesson plans will work equally well in both public and parochial schools, and that the lesson plans can either be used as a series or as individual lessons.

As part of the MSPC program, the lesson plans will also include hands-on samples of soy-based products, such as Environ, and samples of soy ink.

Students will also receive a newsletter called "Soy News" that contains several different articles on soy diesel and other soy-based products, as well as a test for checking the student's reading skills.

Fleischmann says that the program will target primarily fourth- and fifth-graders, since the students are still in a single classroom setting and the teachers don't necessarily have to be limited to just science teachers.

So, what's the next step in getting these lesson plans into your local school? Fleischmann suggests checking with your local teacher and/or principal to see if they're interested. "If they are, then either the teacher or the parents can call our office and we'll take it from there," she explained. To learn more about the MSPC lesson plans, either fill out the coupon below, or call (517) 652-3294. ■



MFB Washington Legislative Seminar action packed

Continued from front page

progress made in reducing the federal budget deficit from \$300 billion annually to \$150 billion annually, and called current Republican efforts to balance the budget in seven years irresponsible. "I think if we're serious about deficit reduction and elimination, we should reach certain milestones in actual budget deficit reductions before initiating any tax cuts," he said. Levin also suggested that, compared to other industrialized nations, the U.S. budget deficit and national debt weren't that abnormally high.

Abraham, on the other hand, warned that with an aging baby boomer generation that will soon be drawing Social Security and a growing national debt, time is quickly running out for the country to get its financial house in order. "Within 15 years, there will not be any dollars available for any programs other than entitlement programs (Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare) and interest on the national debt if we don't get the budget balanced," he said. "That's why this debate goes far beyond the political rhetoric that you usually hear."

USDA meeting — U.S. ag export pace accelerating

U.S. agricultural exports reached a \$40 billion surplus last year, thanks to the GATT and NAFTA trade agreements combined with an average 8 percent increase in income in the Pacific Rim, according to USDA Trade Specialist Paul Drazek. In comments to MFB members, Drazek said that the agricultural trade surplus is expected to hit \$60 billion in 1996.

Drazek predicts that U.S. ag exports will continue to set new records for several years as the tariff reductions called for in NAFTA and GATT continue to be implemented. Increased meat consumption in the Asian sector, particularly in China, has made that country a corn importer instead of a corn exporter in just two years. That means continued strong demand and prices for U.S. producers. "Even with a good crop this year, the price of corn and beans will stay high for the next several years," Drazek suggested.

U.S. agricultural exports to China were up 175 percent in 1995, with over \$2.4 billion in sales. Drazek said that producers have a great deal at risk in the future of China's "most favored nation" trading status, saying that if it's revoked, as some are calling for, it would obviously cut into agricultural exports.

In the European arena, Drazek claimed that the continued meat hormone ban is costing U.S. cattle producers at least \$100 million annually in lost sales. He said that if the ban isn't revoked voluntarily, the U.S. will begin the formal appeals process allowed under GATT. "We could very well be exporting more than \$100 million in beef each year," he said. "We're going to be very aggressive on this issue and we're going to win."

The European Community's recent agreement to accept Roundup-Ready soybeans was termed a mixed blessing by Drazek. The agreement will allow shipment of the new soybeans, but it requires that the beans be labeled. Drazek warned that biotechnology could play a larger role in future trade disputes. "We think we're in pretty good shape on the Roundup-Ready soybean, but we're just getting started with Bt corn, for example," he explained.

Drazek also assured producers that fears of a trade embargo are unwarranted, and that the Clinton administration is committed to not allowing enactment of any export embargo. "The previous trade embargoes were a horrible mistake; we literally shot ourselves in the foot," he said.

Japanese Embassy visit — U.S. counterparts facing many of the same issues

Farmland preservation, the average age of producers and getting young farmers started in farming ranked high on the list of issues and concerns of Kaoru Yoshimura, counselor for agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, during comments to MFB members. With a farmland base roughly equal to the state of Michigan, Japan loses nearly 50,000 acres every year to development. Additionally, over 50 percent of Japan's producers are 60 years old or older.

Embassy officials anticipate those trends will continue, resulting in additional export growth for U.S. ag products, namely beef, pork, and processed fruits and vegetables. Although rice still plays a predominant role in the Japanese diet, its position is quickly slipping and being replaced by U.S. ag products.

Although officials had high praise for the quality of U.S.-produced beef, the quality of wheat was often a concern and considered inferior to Australian-produced wheat. ■

Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers

Are you interested in receiving a series of lesson plans about soybeans? The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee is in the last stages of developing soybean curriculum for fourth and fifth grades. These lessons are aligned with Michigan's core curriculum and will be infused with activities in science, social studies, math and reading. The kit will include hands-on materials and supplies.

Why Soybeans?

How are plants used in our lives?

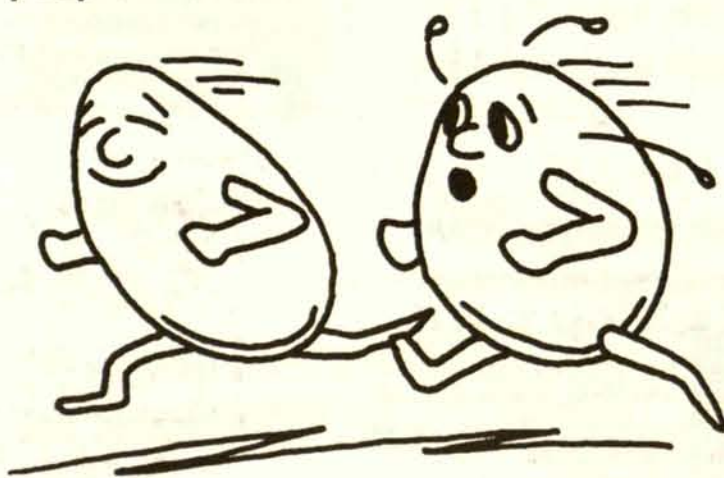
- Analyze food packaging labels
- Examine common product labels containing soybeans (paints, soy ink, fish food, cosmetics)



From Tofu to Diesel — The Soybean Grows Up

How have soybeans been used by people in different lands?

- Trace the movement of soybeans to the U.S.
- Examine the diets of foreign countries
- Cooking and eating foods of many cultures
- Report on pioneers in soy research: G.W. Carver



Racey Soys

How do soybeans grow?

- Germinate and grow soybeans
- Maintain and care for growing plants
- Measure, record and interpret data on growth

Can the Golden Bean be "Green?"

How are soybeans used to protect the environment?

- Examine alternatives to petroleum-based fuels
- Examine an alternative to using petroleum-based inks

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

Name _____

Phone _____

School _____

Grade _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Return to Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee,
P.O. Box 287, Frankenmuth, MI 48734-0287



Safety Strategies

Spring farm safety management

Anhydrous ammonia

Anhydrous ammonia (NH₃) is a chemical made up of one part nitrogen and three parts hydrogen. The properties of this fertilizer make it one of the most potentially dangerous chemicals used in agriculture. Anhydrous means without water. Consequently, when anhydrous ammonia contacts moisture, it rapidly combines with the moisture. When it is injected into the soil, the liquid ammonia expands into a gas and is readily absorbed by the soil moisture.

Similarly, the liquid or gas that contacts the body tissue — especially the eyes, skin and respiratory tract — will cause dehydration, cell destruction and severe chemical burns. Victims exposed to even small amounts of ammonia require immediate treatment to avoid permanent injury.

Anhydrous ammonia is a colorless gas that has a built-in safety factor because of its sharp, penetrating odor — you "can't stand to breathe it." No one can voluntarily remain in a concentration of anhydrous ammonia gas that is strong enough to damage the nose, throat, lungs, eyes or skin. When people receive burns or eye damage from the product, it is because of a sudden release of it where the victim is unprotected and cannot escape.

Accident situations

The accidental release of anhydrous ammonia can create a dangerous situation for both the handler and bystanders. The following situations are dangerous:

- Over-filling the tank
- Handling hose by valve handle or hand wheel
- Faulty valves and deteriorated or out-of-date hoses
- Not using personal protective equipment
- Failure to bleed pressurized NH₃ from the hose before connecting or disconnecting
- Not enough water available
- Overturning an applicator tank
- External overheating of the storage container

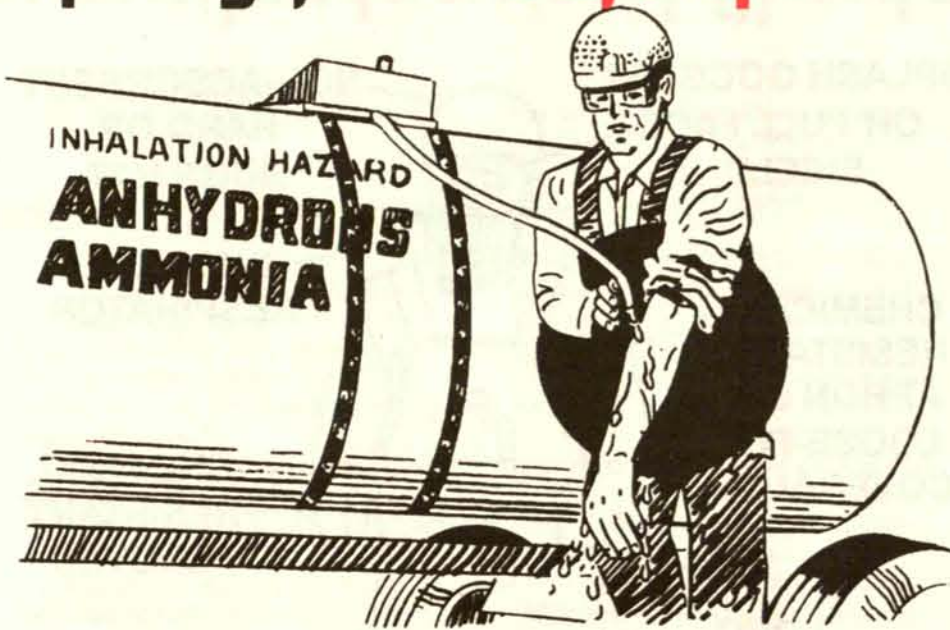
An estimated 80 percent of reported accidents result from improper procedure, lack of knowledge or training, and failure to follow proper safety precautions. Accidents can be reduced if all individuals follow safety rules and maintain the equipment properly. It is essential that all equipment be in good operating condition. Only trained individuals should handle and apply anhydrous ammonia.

Operator protection

Even with the best precautions, you may be involved with the accidental release of ammonia. Simple protection can prevent serious injury if used consistently.

Proper-fitting face shield or goggles, rubber gloves and heavy-duty, long-sleeved shirts are recommended as minimum protection for operators routinely handling ammonia. Wear rubber gloves and eye protection whenever you are handling hoses or working on or operating anhydrous equipment.

Regular glasses do not provide adequate protection. Never wear contact lenses when working with ammonia. The chemical might get under the



Even a little anhydrous ammonia causes major injuries. Flush with water at once.

lenses and cause permanent eye damage before you can remove the lenses and flush your eyes with water. The lenses also can trap the gas, causing them to freeze onto your eye.

Loose-fitting rubber gloves with an extended cuff are recommended for handling anhydrous ammonia. Turn the extended cuff down so anhydrous ammonia doesn't run down your sleeve when you raise your arms. You can remove gloves that fit loosely in case of an emergency.

You can further protect your arms from splashes by wearing heavy-duty clothing, such as coveralls or work shirts that cover your arms. Thin dress shirts or short sleeves do not provide satisfactory protection.

First aid = water + water + water

Seconds are critical when someone is sprayed with liquid ammonia or engulfed in concentrated

vapors. Exposure to anhydrous ammonia can be harmful if it contacts the skin and eyes or if it is inhaled or swallowed. When ammonia contacts the skin or eyes, tissue damage occurs rapidly. Immediate use of water to flush the exposed body area(s) is crucial.

Water must be available for flushing the eyes and skin in case of exposure. Each vehicle used for anhydrous ammonia must carry a 5-gallon (19 L) container of clean water. Anyone handling NH₃ should carry a 6- to 8-ounce (170 to 226g) squeeze bottle of water in their shirt pocket for rapid emergency access.

Washing with fresh, clean water is the only emergency measure to use when skin or eyes are exposed to anhydrous ammonia. Time is important! Get fresh water onto the exposed area of the skin or eyes immediately and flush for at least 15 minutes. Contaminated clothing should be removed by running water over it before attempting removal. Wash the affected skin area with abundant amounts of water and do not apply anything except water for the first 24 hours. Stay warm and get to a physician immediately.

Container and system requirements

The specially fabricated and designed pressurized equipment should meet the guidelines provided by the American National Standards Institute in standard "K61.1-1981, Safety Requirements For Storage and Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia." All parts and contact surfaces must be able to withstand a minimum working pressure of 250 psi. This includes pressure welds, safety valves, gauges, fittings, hoses and metering devices.

Ammonia is corrosive to certain metals and their alloys, such as copper and zinc. Galvanized pipe and brass fittings must not be used with

equipment used for storing or applying ammonia. Containers should be made of high-strength steel or other suitable materials, and fittings should be made of black iron.

All containers used for storing ammonia must be painted white or silver. Light colors reflect heat and this helps keep the temperature and pressure down inside the tank during warm weather.

Labels, markings and safety signs

Nurse tanks must be labeled ANHYDROUS AMMONIA in 4-inch letters, on contrasting background, on the sides and rear of the tank. Federal DOT regulations require that the words INHALATION HAZARD, in association with the anhydrous ammonia label, be placed on both sides of the tank in 3-inch lettering. A Non-Flammable Gas placard with the numbers 1005 (identifying it as anhydrous ammonia) must be located on both sides and both ends of the tank.

A Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem must be prominently displayed on the rear of the tank with the bottom of the sign at least 2 and not more than 6 feet from the ground. The valves must be appropriately labeled by color or legend as vapor (Safety Yellow) or liquid (Omaha Orange). The letters of the legend must be at least 2 inches high on contrasting background and within 12 inches of the valves.

Care, maintenance of NH₃ equipment

Anhydrous ammonia can be handled and used safely. It is imperative that all equipment is properly maintained and checked daily. A regular, scheduled maintenance program will ensure that all the valves and the tank are safe for handling the high pressure liquid and its vapor form.

Daily inspection

Each day give the tank and hoses a brief inspection:

- Hoses — Look for cuts, soft spots, bulges, kinking, flattening or slipping at the coupler.
- Tires — Inspect for proper inflation, cuts, weathering, wear and tightness of lug bolts on wheels.
- Refill the emergency water tank with fresh, clean water.

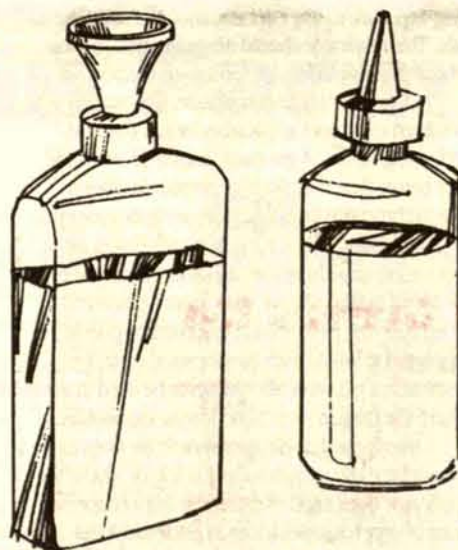
Each time you fill the nurse tank, check the liquid level gauge and pressure gauge. The gauges should be working properly and be consistent in their readings. Don't use nurse tanks with faulty gauges.

Close all hand valves by hand only. Do not use a wrench, because you could break the stem of the valve or damage the seal. Either damage could allow ammonia to escape.

Immediate inspections

Several situations are cause for immediate repair or replacement. Any leak in a liquid or vapor shutoff valve requires immediate repair or

Continued on page 17



Keep a container of water in your pocket to flush ammonia from eyes.

Gear your trucks up for spring work

Continued from page 9

"Generally, if you're out there and just going between fields, it's usually within a couple of miles and you could move to the next field without having to make out a new set of shipping papers on quantity or just draw a line through it and change the number," relates Mohr. "It's for the protection of anybody who would have to approach that vehicle should there be a problem. Any emergency first-responder who would come up to a vehicle and see a little marker on a container that is hazardous material needs to know what they're going to have to deal with."

Placarding

"There is a regulated quantity of material that needs to be placarded," explains Mohr. "It's not always the same, but the rule of thumb is 1,000 pounds of something before you start talking placards."

According to Mohr and Anderson, you may not necessarily have to placard the load you are hauling to the field, but it is still necessary to carry the shipping papers.

Other New Regulations

According to Mohr, there are some other regulations that farmers need to become informed about. "If you're pulling vehicles without brakes on

them, you have to stay under 25 mph," said Mohr. "Implements of husbandry, including some modified pickup trucks, are all included under that same regulation and have to stay under 25 mph."

What to expect from the Motor Carrier Division of the Michigan State Police

"We conduct inspections on the roadside," explains Mohr. "We have a walk-around inspection, where you would just look down at the tires and check the lights, and not get a creeper out and go underneath and check for brake lines and proper adjustment. There are five levels of inspection that can be conducted."

"In the spring, when farmers are hauling fertilizer, anhydrous, and planting equipment," Mohr adds, "they have an awful lot of exposure going from field-to-field."

Howell believes the steps he has taken will ensure that he will pass inspection when he is audited again, but he still advises other farmers to watch how they obey strict trucking regulations. "The farmer's going to have to meet all those requirements," he said. "He can do a lot of it himself, but the records of compliance are key here, for any size operation." ■

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Safety Strategies

Spring farm safety management

Personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) consists of clothing and devices that are worn to protect the human body from contact with pesticides and their residues. Personal protective equipment includes such items as coveralls, protective suits or aprons, footwear, gloves, respirators, eyewear and headgear.

Ordinary shirts, pants, shoes and other regular work clothing usually are not considered personal protective equipment, although the pesticide label may require you to wear specific items of work clothing.

Pesticide labeling lists the minimum personal protective equipment you must wear while handling or applying the pesticide. Sometimes the label lists different requirements for different activities. For example, more personal protective equipment may be required for mixing and loading than for application.

Exposure to pesticides can cause harmful effects. To prevent or reduce exposure, you need to wear correct, clean, properly fitted personal protective equipment. You are legally required to follow all personal protective equipment instructions that appear on the label or labeling.

Gloves — Always wear unlined, elbow length, chemical-resistant (liquid-proof) gloves when handling any pesticide concentrate or chemicals that carry the signal words Danger-Poison or Warning. When spraying overhead, wear shirt sleeves inside gloves. At all other times, wear shirt sleeves on the outside to prevent chemicals from entering gloves at the cuff. Pay special attention to labels when determining what type of chemical-resistant gloves to wear, since some fumigants and pesticides are absorbed or trapped readily by the gloves.

Never wear cotton or leather gloves. They absorb the pesticide and provide constant dermal exposure to the chemical, which can be more hazardous than not wearing gloves at all.

Always check gloves carefully for leaks before wearing them. Fill the gloves with water and squeeze. If leaks appear, discard the gloves. Before removing the gloves, wash them with detergent and water to prevent contaminating your hands.

Boots — When handling or applying chemicals, wear unlined, lightweight rubber vinyl boots that cover your ankles. Wear trouser legs on the outside so pesticides cannot drain down into the boots. The boots should be washed daily and dried thoroughly inside and out to remove pesticide residues. As with gloves, especially check the label to determine what types of shoes or boots can be worn when using fumigants.

Goggles or face shields — Wear tight-fitting, non-fogging chemical splash goggles or a full face shield when pouring, mixing or applying pesticides. Clean the equipment often and make sure the sweatband on the face shield is cleaned, since some materials used in face shield sweatbands absorb and hold chemicals. If possible, wear the sweatband under the head covering. Eyewear should meet or exceed the current requirements of ANSI (American National Standards Institute; Z87.1, 1968).

Head and neck coverings — The hair and skin on your neck and head should be protected.

SPLASH GOGGLES
OR FULL FACE
SHIELD

NON-ABSORBENT
HARD OR
BUMP HAT

CHEMICAL
RESISTANT
APRON OR
LOOSE-FIT
COVERALLS

CHEMICAL
RESPIRATOR

CHEMICAL
RESISTANT
GLOVES

LONG
SLEEVES

CHEMICAL
RESISTANT
BOOTS



Use personal protective equipment when working with pesticides.

Several available types of head gear, such as waterproof rain hats or washable, wide-brimmed hard or bump hats or caps can be used. Waterproof or repellent parkas will protect the neck and head at the same time. The headgear, including the sweatband, should be cleaned often to remove any chemical residues. Avoid cotton or felt hats since they also will absorb pesticides.

Respirators — Correct, properly fitted respirators prevent inhalation of toxic chemicals. Wear a respirator when the label calls for it. Respirators are especially necessary when handling concentrated, highly toxic pesticides.

Specific cartridges and canisters protect against specific chemical gases and vapors. Be sure to choose the type made to protect you against the pesticides you will use. The respirator must properly fit to ensure a good seal. Long sideburns, a beard, or glasses may prevent a good seal.

Chemical cartridge respirators — Usually recommended: a half-face mask, containing one or two cartridges, which covers the nose and mouth only.

Full face-piece respirators provide both eye and respiratory protection for the applicator. The inhaled air that enters the cartridge is pulled through a filter pad and a filtering medium such as activated charcoal. Use chemical cartridge respirators either for relatively short periods of exposure

to high concentrations of toxic chemicals or for long exposure to low concentrations of toxic chemicals. This respirator should never be used in areas where the oxygen level is too low to support life.

Chemical canister respirators (gas masks) are designed to protect applicators longer than cartridge respirators. A gas mask usually protects the face better than the cartridge respirator since it covers the entire face (that is, it protects your eyes, nose and mouth). Use a gas mask when you are exposed to toxic fumes in high concentrations or for a long period of time. Also, wear a gas mask when applying pesticides in enclosed or poorly ventilated areas. As with the chemical cartridge respirator, a gas mask should never be used in areas where the oxygen level is too low to support life.

Air-supplied respirators should be worn in areas where the oxygen supply is low or where the applicator is exposed to extremely high concentrations of very toxic pesticides in enclosed areas. Fresh air is pumped by a blower through a hose to the face mask from an uncontaminated area or from a backpack carried by the applicator.

Care and maintenance of respirator — If breathing becomes difficult during spraying, get to fresh, clean air and change the respirator cartridges or canisters. Cartridges should be changed after eight hours of use or sooner if you detect pesticide odor while wearing the respirator.

The face-piece should be washed with soap and water, rinsed, dried with a clean cloth and stored in a clean, dry place away from pesticides. A tightly closed plastic bag works well for storage. The manufacturer's instructions on the use and care of a respirator and its parts should be read carefully before the respirator is used. Use only respirators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) or the Bureau of Mines.

General care

Wear clean clothing each day you spray pesticides. If pesticide solutions get on your clothing, change immediately.

Do not store or wash contaminated clothing with the family laundry because your pesticide-contaminated clothing could contaminate theirs. Additionally, contaminated clothing may require special attention to assure that it is thoroughly cleaned.

If your clothes have been heavily contaminated by pesticides, discard them. You may not be able to clean and safely wear them again.

All personal protective equipment should be washed daily with soap and water, rinsed, dried with a clean cloth and stored in a clean, dry place away from all pesticides.

Manure gases

Gases are often given off when animal manure is stored. The most common gases given off from liquid manure are: ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane and hydrogen sulfide.

A person can suffocate in a manure building or pit because of gases given off by manure. The gases displace air until there is no oxygen to breathe.

Hydrogen sulfide is released rapidly, and is most dangerous when liquid manure is first agitated. It has a foul odor, similar to rotten eggs. It causes headaches, dizziness and nausea, in concentrations as low as 0.5 percent. Exposure to a 1 percent concentration can result in unconsciousness or death. Although you can smell very low levels of hydrogen sulfide, continued exposure dulls your sense of smell and you may not know that you're in danger. Several deaths have been attributed to this gas.

Carbon dioxide is an odorless gas that is a normal part of the air we breathe. However, it exists in the air at a very low concentration (about 0.03 percent). When it's present in higher concentrations, it displaces the air so that less oxygen is available. Concentrations of 3 to 6 percent can cause heavy, labored breathing, drowsiness and headaches. A 30 percent concentration can cause death by suffocation.

Methane gas is nontoxic. Concentrations as high as 50 percent only cause headaches. However, methane is highly flammable. It ignites readily, and methane-air mixtures can explode.

Here are just a few of the safety precautions.

- Know the effects of each of the gases described above. Any time you detect one or more of the symptoms, get to fresh air immediately. A delay could be fatal.
- Do not rely totally on smell to detect the presence of hydrogen sulfide gas. It may be present in hazardous concentrations even though you can't smell it.
- Provide maximum ventilation to keep gases away from people and animals whenever a tank is pumped or agitated. If a power failure has occurred and lasted for several hours, open all windows and doors and get all people and livestock out of the building before they suffocate. It is best to have an emergency generator.
- Don't allow any smoking or other fire source in or around the liquid manure tank. Methane-air mixtures are explosive. Keep unauthorized people away.
- Only a trained person, equipped with proper breathing apparatus, should enter a liquid manure transport tank or slurry storage silo. Have the local fire or sheriff's department come to the site. You can't "hold your breath" and rescue someone. Keep rescue equipment (rope, harness, respirator) near manure storage.

Manure drowning

People can also drown in liquid manure. Thick crusts on top of liquid manure in storage can appear solid, but a person will break through into the liquid. Sometimes a person just slips and falls into the liquid. That's one more reason to keep rescue equipment near liquid manure storage, and to have others at the site if you must enter the storage.

Working around liquid manure storage can be hazardous. For more information on safety or its storage and removal, contact the state safety Extension specialist at your land grant university, or your county Cooperative Extension office. Contact OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) for regulations affecting employees entering and working in confined air spaces.



Only a trained person with breathing apparatus should enter liquid manure storage.



Personal protective equipment can be hot to work in. Use caution — avoid heat stress.

Michigan Farm News Classified

19
General

BINS FOR SALE: Martin smooth wall drying and storage bins, 10,000 bushel and 6,000 bushel, gas dryer. **Hatfield Farms, 11632 10th Avenue, Remus, MI 49340. 1-517-967-3547.**

FISH FOR STOCKING: Giant Hybrid Bluegills, Rainbow Trout, Walleye, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Perch, Fat-head Minnows. **Laggis' Fish Farm, Inc., 08988 35th Street, Gobles, Michigan. 1-616-628-2056. Evenings, 1-616-624-6215.**

FLY CONTROL: Safe, effective, no chemicals. Prevent flies from hatching. Information prices, call or write: **Useful Farm Items, 3540 76th, Caledonia, MI 49316. 1-800-635-5262.**

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Denny's Antenna Sales

20
Wanted to Buy

SOFTWOOD WANTED: Sawlogs and pulpwood. White, Red, Jack, Austrian and Scotch pines. Also, Balsam, Spruce and Hemlock. Especially White Pine sawlogs; standing or roadside. Lower Peninsula only!
Northern Timberlands, Inc. in business over 35 years! Call 1-517-356-9759 for pricing and specifications.

TRAVERSE CITY: If you wish to buy or sell farm or recreational property in north-west Michigan, we can help. Call Ron McGregor, **Northwestern Michigan Land Brokers, 1-616-929-1515, 1-616-943-7709.**

WANTED: Old motorcycles, snowmobile and off road vehicles. 1965 and older. Call JD at 1-517-678-0583.

20
Wanted to Buy

CASH PAID FOR old fishing tackle, rods, reels, spears, gaffs. One piece or entire collection! Also, antique hunting/golf memorabilia. Paying up to \$300. 1-517-427-5881.

CASH: Old steel animal traps in excellent condition. Advise size, make, type and price excluding victors. **Norm Burtraw, 1112 Chris J, Lansing, MI 48917. 1-517-323-4365.**

OLD GLASS NEGATIVES from late 1800's to early 1900's. Willing to pay top prices for certain negatives. Call Joe at 1-616-945-5536 or leave message.

WANTED TO BUY: Standing timber of all kinds. Call **R. H. Rehkopf Big Rapids, Michigan 1-800-725-7861**

WANTED, STANDING TIMBER: Buyers of timber of all types. Cash in advance! 1-517-875-4565, ask for Tim. **Maple Rapids Lumber Mill, Inc. St. Johns, MI**

WANTED: 2"-8" used aluminum irrigation tubing. Buy, Sell or Trade! Call **Rain Control 1-800-339-9350**

WANTED: BUYING OLDER printed matter. Pre-1960's magazine, sheet music, newspapers, postcards, catalogs, etc. Richard Harris, 715 Luce, Fremont, 49412. 1-616-924-6788. Save this ad.

WANTED: CHERRY PITTER, 1-616-944-1457.

21
Special Events

Fourth Annual Top of the Flock Club Lamb Sale. Many winning lambs have come from these four flocks in the past. The lambs look even better this year! Saturday, April 20, sale at 2:30pm, 10456 Bath Road, Byron, MI. Contact Bobby Clements 1-810-266-5109 or Mike Fleming 1-810-798-3775.

LET THE SNAKE LADY do your parties, birthday, store openings, fund raisers, company picnics, pet shows. Call Linda Mae 1-810-360-2046 or fax 1-810-539-0773

22
Recreation

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23
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25
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26
Lawn And Garden

NUT TREES: Carpathian and Hazelnut. 3' to 5' tall, \$6 each. Add \$10 for shipping. **Frank Radosa, 4084 Kane, Merrill, MI 48637. Call 1-517-643-7592.**

29
Vehicles

1960 CHEVY PICKUP FOR SALE. Restorable, \$2500, 305, primer. Call Linda Mae 1-810-360-2046 or fax 1-810-539-0773

1973 International Scout: 4WD, automatic, Texas truck. \$2500 or best offer. Call 1-616-754-1463.

1985 FORD F-350 pickup. One ton, 6.9L, diesel, 2WD. Loaded! 160,000 miles. Always starts. Great hauler. One owner! Asking \$4000. 1-517-689-4160.

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5. Livestock	14. Real Estate	24. Investors Wanted.
6. Poultry	15. Real Estate Wanted	25. Buildings
7. Dogs and Puppies	16. Estate Sales	26. Lawn And Garden
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COVER STORY

Continued from front page

programs with production flexibility contracts (PFC) covering the seven-year period from now until 2002.

In regard to other farm bill commodities, the final agreement reauthorizes the dairy price support program, with a \$.15 annual reduction in the support price from the current \$10.35/cwt. to \$9.90/cwt. in 1999. Federal Milk Marketing Orders will decrease from 33 to a minimum of 10, but no more than 14 within three years. The sugar program will be extended for seven years, keeping their structure largely intact, except for the elimination of the domestic marketing allotments established under the 1990 farm bill.

CRP Early Out Provision Enhanced

According to Knight-Ridder, the USDA said it will immediately implement a provision that allows farmers to end any of their CRP contracts on "less environmentally sensitive lands" with 60 days notice to USDA. Such land must also have been in the program for at least five years. Previously, USDA had planned to let only farmers with CRP contracts expiring in fiscal year 1996 take land early out of the program.

"If it's for the '96 spring planted crop, they can plant as soon as the acreage is approved for early termination," explains White. "But we don't have anything on how quickly after the producer comes in and signs the request we will be doing the approval."



The following producers and/or owners may enter eligible land into production flexibility contracts:

Eligible owners

- An owner of eligible land who assumes all or part of the risk of producing a crop, (i.e. owner-operator, crop share lease, variable cash-rent lease, etc.)
- An owner who cash rents eligible land (lease expires prior to Sept. 30, 2002) to a tenant who declines to enter into a PFC. Contract payments to the owner would not begin until the lease held by the tenant expires.

Eligible producers

- Crop-share lease producers, regardless of length of the lease, if the owner also enters into a contract.
- Cash-rent producers with a lease which expires on or after Sept. 30, 2002.

- Cash rent producers with a lease which expires prior to Sept. 30, 2002. In this case, the owner may also enter into the same contract. However, payments to the owner would not become effective until after the expiration of the lease agreement. A producer with a cash-rent lease which expires prior to Sept. 30, 2002, who seeks to enroll less than 100 percent of eligible cropland must have the consent of the owner.

Contract Payments

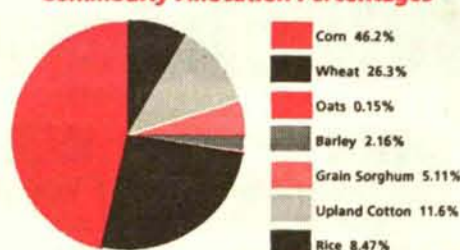
The following amounts (see bar chart) have been authorized for contract payments in fiscal years 1996-2002 and will be allocated by commodity according to the percentages (see pie chart):

Advance Payments

A 50 percent advance payment will be available to producers within 30 days of sign up with the remainder of the 1996 payment due by Sept. 30, 1996. Payments in subsequent years would be made on Sept. 30, with producers having the option of receiving half of their annual payment in advance, either on Dec. 15 or Jan. 15, according to AFBE.

There are certainly numerous other questions that need to be answered about program participation, including sign up details and planting flexibility provisions. Look for the April 30 issue of the *Michigan Farm News* to go into greater depth on all of the issues surrounding the new farm bill, including worksheets and examples to assist in making decisions about program participation.

Commodity Allocation Percentages



How They Voted - Farm Bill

Adoption of the conference report on the bill to reauthorize and provide about \$47 billion through 2002 for all major federal farm programs, replacing current price-support programs with a system of fixed annual payments to farmers that would decline over the next seven years while granting them more flexibility in deciding what to plant. The bill would also scale back some provisions of the sugar and peanut support programs; phase out price supports for butter, dry milk and cheese over four years; reauthorize the food stamp program for two years; expand conservation and rural development programs; and retain permanent farm law established in 1938 and 1949 after 2002.

MICHIGAN SENATORS

Name	Vote
Levin C (D)	N
Abraham S (R)	Y

MICHIGAN REPRESENTATIVES

District/Name	Vote
1 Stupak B (D)	Y
2 Hoekstra P (R)	Y
3 Ehlers V (R)	Y
4 Camp D (R)	Y
5 Barcia J (D)	Y
6 Upton F (R)	Y
7 Smith N (R)	Y
8 Chrysler D (R)	Y
9 Kildee D (D)	Y
10 Bonior D (D)	N
11 Knollenberg J (R)	Y
12 Levin S (D)	N
13 Rivers L (D)	N
14 Conyers J (D)	N
15 Collins B (D)	N
16 Dingell J (D)	Y

State winning FFA contestants

At the recent state FFA convention held the first week in March, hundreds of FFA members competed in nine contests and tryouts for national talent contests. Here is a brief rundown of all the winners — congratulations to everyone!

Public Speaking: Teresa Swamba, Capac

Extemporaneous Public Speaking: Rachel Beckers, Standish-Sterling

Parliamentary Procedure: Team from Cassopolis consisting of Beth Smego, Barbie Hartsell, Katie Ruth, Sara Brossman, Dennis Peterson, Sara Radtke and Jesse Bement

Agricultural Forum: Team from Corunna consisting of Kandi Kuchar, Matt Gooding, Amy Tribley, Jason Eicher, Adam Wentz, Nick Nielson and Amanda Kurney

Demonstration Contest: Team from Whittemore-PreScott consisting of Luke Guoan, Derek Oliver and Noel Logan

Job Interview: Mark Roose, Capac

Greenhand Public Speaking: Shannon Finnegan, Lowell

Greenhand Conduct of Meetings: Team from Montague consisting of Todd Courtland, Rick Ramthun, Erica Anderson, Joe Ladegast, Amber Wackernegel, William Schmidt and Sunshine Moore.

Junior High Greenhand Conduct of Meetings: Team from Cassopolis consisting of Nicole Smego, Leyna Dussel, Amy Abrams, Alan Peterson, Lori Owen, Eric Ruth and Elizabeth Deubner.

Top-Ranked Candidates for National FFA Band:

- Katie Coffey, Vicksburg
- Emily Green, Ovid-Elsie
- Jeff Kenyon, Hillman
- Jennifer Leininger, Waldron
- Sarah Martz, Marshall
- Shirley Pavlin, Montague
- Lori Preston, Branch Area Career Center
- Slacy Reagle, Homer

Top-Ranked Candidates for National FFA Chorus:

- Joy Eisenga, McBain
- Michelle McPherson, Montague
- Christina Papworth, Ogemaw Heights
- Jacob Washburn, Marshall

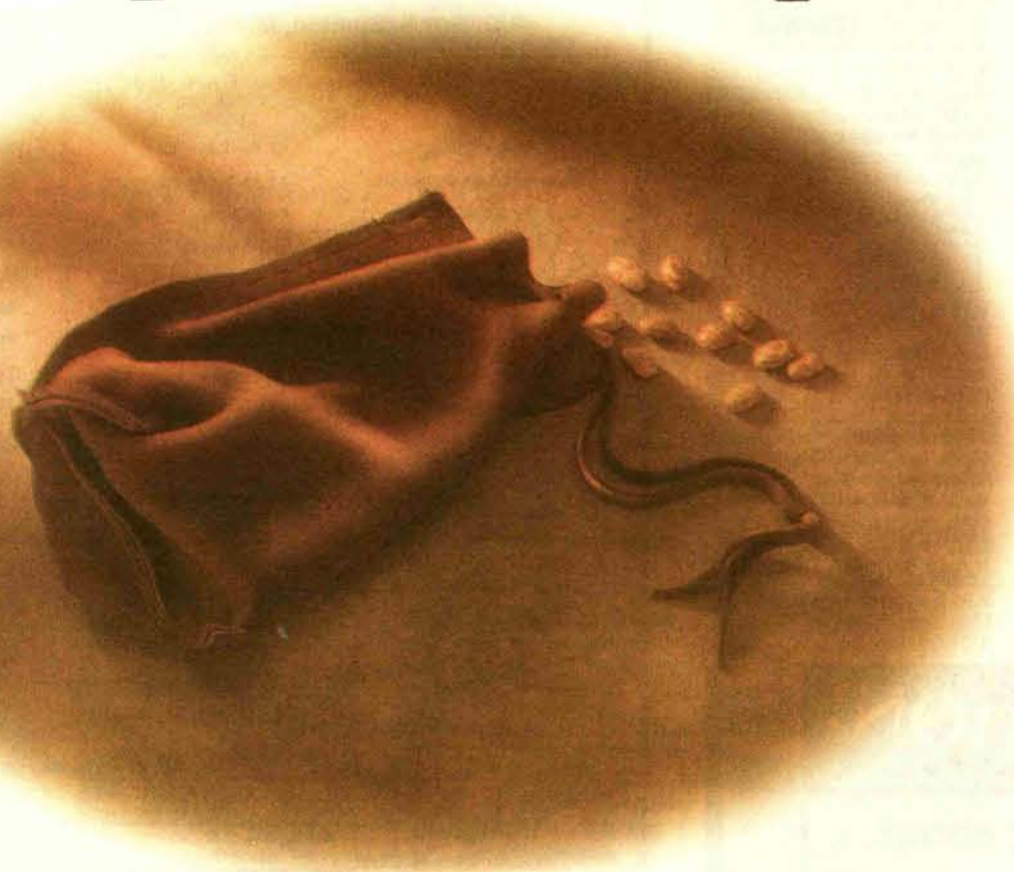
Top-Ranked Candidates for National FFA Talent:

- Gretta Barrie, Hillman
- Brandee Davis, Hopkin

Newly Elected State FFA officers are:

- President: Teresa Swamba, Capac
- Vice President: Kevin Nugent, Lowell
- Secretary: Kristin Prelesnik, Mason
- Treasurer: Gabe Camp, Homer
- Reporter: Kerry Ackerman, North Adams
- Sentinel: Jack Schut, Hopkins
- Region 1 Vice President: Anelyce Jones, Vicksburg
- Region 2 Vice President: Carrie Grant, Sand Creek
- Region 3 Vice President: Kyle Fiebig, USA
- Region 4 Vice President: Kelly Wizner, Laingsburg
- Region 5 Vice President: Melanie Endres, Saranac
- Region 6 Vice President: Stephanie Sumerix, Hillman

Your name doesn't have to be Jack and you don't need magical beans to have a spectacular crop.



Good beans are the product of good management, not magic. One of the best tools you can use to produce an outstanding crop is EPTAM® herbicide. It provides an unbeatable foundation for a good weed control program by eliminating more than 40 troublesome weeds. Plus EPTAM makes a great tankmix partner for an even broader spectrum of protection.

And, for a cleaner and faster harvest, depend on GRAMOXONE® EXTRA herbicide to burn

down any late-germinating weeds and dry down your beans.

This year, don't trust your beans to fairy tale claims, depend on products that are proven to perform — EPTAM and GRAMOXONE EXTRA.



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