Weather takes its toll on Michigan wheat crop

Michigan's severe winter has ravaged the state's winter wheat crop. Preparing for the onslaught of wheat damage claims, the state's Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently held a training session in northeast Kent County. All state FSA field examiners were brought up to speed on how to evaluate wheat stands and settle claims.

Clinton administration announces steps to halt drop in beef prices

The Clinton administration recently announced several moves designed to help cattle producers, including an immediate $50 million beef buy for the National School Lunch Program and expanded Conservation Reserve Program land leasing and grazing.

Following a meeting between Clinton, a bipartisan group of lawmakers and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, Glickman announced a five-point plan to address the problems facing the cattle industry. According to the White House, these steps are designed to help relieve these pressures and assist in ensuring a stable, affordable supply of beef for American consumers.

The plan includes:
- Permit the nation's livestock producers to graze cattle, and, effective July 1, cut hay on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), except the most environmentally sensitive land, through Sept. 30. Farmers who take advantage of this new option will have to forgo 5 percent of their annual CRP rental payments for each month they use the land for grazing.
- Use all the tools at the Secretary's disposal, including eating short- and medium-term export credit guarantees, to promote the export of American beef. Work with the United States Trade Representative to press for resolution of the complaint that the U.S. has filed with the World Trade Organization against the European Union's ban on U.S. beef produced with hormones.
- Start USDA's beef purchase program for the 1996-97 school year by beginning immediately to make purchases of up to $50 million and consider further purchases later if market conditions warrant them.
- Survey the credit needs of livestock producers and report back to the president with any recommendations on the need for flexibility within 30 days.
- Meet with livestock producers, industry representatives and others to monitor the impact of the announcement.

Glickman said he did not anticipate the beef buy to have a "major" impact on the market, but that the move would help keep the markets from falling further. He said he hoped some of the proposals would help keep cattle herds from facing large-scale liquidation.

"Allowing haying and grazing on CRP acres is necessary to alleviate the high feed costs that have caused substantial economic hardships for many producers," said Chuck Gribb (R-Iowa). "And a large beef purchase by the U.S. government, $50 million and more if needed, should help turn the tide in sagging markets."

While the National Cattlemen's Beef Association had been urging USDA to make the extra beef purchases for several weeks, many critics are calling the moves "token efforts in an election year designed to look good to key voting groups."
Another CRP early-out

U.S. Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced on April 15, 1996, that in order to implement the newly signed Farm Bill, certain CRP contracts would be eligible immediately for early termination. The new Notice of Solicitation, which replaces the early release requirements in Notice CRP 246, is the specific sign-up period for early termination. It will be an offer one-year extension at that time.\footnote{The provisions of the 1996 FSA Act authorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enter into CRP contracts for land that have been in agricultural production for at least 5 years. The USDA has the authority to terminate CRP contracts if the participant requests to terminate the contract.}

Antiehalth bill

Eyes, Randy Tate (R-Wash) and Sam Gibbons (D-Fla.) have introduced legislation to repeal the generic drug patent tax. Tate said that the tax credit, "one of the most egregious examples of corporate welfare" would cease to exist.

Agriculture Department spokesperson Tom Young said the plan would "call the bill 'repeal of the Tobacco and Ethanol Welfare Act of 1996' and has some support in the House. Tate's effort is similar to a failed attempt earlier this year (H.R. 19)." He is calling his bill a safety measure that will further stifle the coffers of the Highway Trust Fund with money otherwise set aside for the tax credit.

ADM to cut ethanol production further

A decision by the American Horse Council, which has announced a cutback in ethanol production at the beginning of April due to $4 corn, says it plans to reduce production by more than 50%.

This is a much bigger cutback than the one announced earlier at ADM's Cedar, Ill., plant. The company says the current cutback has reduced national corn consumption by about 29 million bushels per month.

That compares with a cutback of only eight cents per month in the earlier announcement concerning the Cedar Rapids plant.

Clinton sweet on saving Everglades

Clinton accepts an offer of protection from the sugar industry during a campaign swing through Florida recently, as his support for a proposed penny-a-pound tax on sugar showed signs of crumbling.

The campaign is serious by agreement of a successful challenge by a Florida-based Joseph Gallo Farms filed a lawsuit against the state of Florida and the Brown sugar commission, charging that the lawsuit is aimed at protecting the sugar industry from price competition.

Checkoff lawsuit

California-based Joseph Gallo Farms filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging a checkoff on California dairies to pay 15 cents per hundredweight on the milk they produce.

Gallo said although the dairy promotion dollars are used by the industry to support marketed products, and to gain market share, he charged that the milk is virtually to the growth of cheese producers.

Growers urged to recycle pesticide containers

Farmers should recycle pesticide containers, not burn them or send them to the landfill," said Jim Byrum, President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association. Normal pesticide containers, which hold more than 500 pounds of milk per year, that the farmer would have to pay for. This is a legal requirement that has been changed by a recent successful challenge by almond growers to a similar checkoff on their crops.

Pork prices pick up

The Agriculture Department said the number of U.S. sows farrowing will be lower this year, leading to a 3 to 5 percent decline in domestic pork production. Those lower numbers will likely equate to slightly higher market prices for producers — in the range of about $5.00 per pound. The season will end near $5.00 per cent, this summer and the back to the mid-$60s this fall.

For consumers, USDA projects the composite retail price to average near $2.50 per pound compared to $1.92 per pound last year and $2.01 in 1994. Although the season is expected to be lower during the later part of the year, USDA said those prices will still be average of 5 percent above 1995.

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Contracting to work free up FMHA loans

The proposal is intended to remain a part of a key pork export - last year was the first time in history the U.S. exported more pork than it imported. The department said exports last year’s 771 million tons of pork were in this country. In 1995, the U.S. exported 771 million pounds of pork.

The proposal took effect immediately with the April 4 signing of the farm bill, shutting off an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 farm families nationwide who report income from animal planting.

Lawmakers say they never intended to block farmers who had already submitted applications but have since returned the farm bill provision that denies FMHA loans to farmers who had previous experience in this area.

The provision took effect immediately with the April 4 signing of the farm bill, shutting off an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 farm families nationwide who report income from animal planting.

 Именно поэтому, несмотря на отсутствие решения этого вопроса, дальнейшая практика использования этих продуктов обещает быть чрезвычайно сложной.

U.S. challenging Canadian tariffs

Canadian tariffs on dairy products, poultry and eggs are reaching as high as 51 percent — are being challenged by the U.S. government, which claims the tariffs violate a 1967 commitment that was supposed to phase out all tariffs within 10 years.

Canadian officials maintain the tariff, set last year, are necessary to protect the country’s agricultural rural community. The United States says the tariffs are a direct violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). If the Canadian officials dispute this claim, stating that Canada and the United States agreed to limited rather than unlimited market access for dairy, poultry and egg products. The Canadian officials have gone through dispute settlement to what they get from negotiations through NAFTA talks.

CDR early-out ongoing permanent policy, according to Jim Porter-tent request to terminate is received by FSA. Watchgrowers to an similar checkoff on their crops. • will be offered one-yearextensionsat that time. • agedby a recent successful challenge by almond California-based Joseph Gallo Farms filed a law-suit against the state of Florida and the Brown sugar commission, charging that the lawsuit is aimed at protecting the sugar industry from price competition. Checkoff lawsuit California-based Joseph Gallo Farms filed a law-suit in federal court challenging a checkoff on California dairies to pay 15 cents per hundredweight on the milk they produce. Gallo said although the dairy promotion dollars are used by the industry to support marketed products, and to gain market share, he charged that the milk is virtually to the growth of cheese producers. Growers urged to recycle pesticide containers Farmers should recycle pesticide containers, not burn them or send them to the landfill,” said Jim Byrum, President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association. Normal pesticide containers, which hold more than 500 pounds of milk per year, that the farmer would have to pay for. This is a legal requirement that has been changed by a recent successful challenge by almond growers to a similar checkoff on their crops. Pork prices pick up The Agriculture Department said the number of U.S. sows farrowing will be lower this year, leading to a 3 to 5 percent decline in domestic pork production. Those lower numbers will likely equate to slightly higher market prices for producers — in the range of about $5.00 per pound. The season will end near $5.00 per cent, this summer and the back to the mid-$60s this fall. For consumers, USDA projects the composite retail price to average near $2.50 per pound compared to $1.92 per pound last year and $2.01 in 1994. Although the season is expected to be lower during the later part of the year, USDA said those prices will still be average of 5 percent above 1995. The proposal is intended to remain a part of a key pork export — last year was the first time in history the U.S. exported more pork than it imported. The department said exports last year’s 771 million tons of pork were in this country. In 1995, the U.S. exported 771 million pounds of pork. The provision took effect immediately with the April 4 signing of the farm bill, shutting off an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 farm families nationwide who report income from animal planting. Lawmakers say they never intended to block farmers who had already submitted applications but have since returned the farm bill provision that denies FMHA loans to farmers who had previous experience in this area. The provision took effect immediately with the April 4 signing of the farm bill, shutting off an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 farm families nationwide who report income from animal planting. Canadian tariffs on dairy products, poultry and eggs are reaching as high as 51 percent — are being challenged by the U.S. government, which claims the tariffs violate a 1967 commitment that was supposed to phase out all tariffs within 10 years. Canadian officials maintain the tariff, set last year, are necessary to protect the country’s agricultural rural community. The United States says the tariffs are a direct violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). If the Canadian officials dispute this claim, stating that Canada and the United States agreed to limited rather than unlimited market access for dairy, poultry and egg products. The Canadian officials have gone through dispute settlement to what they get from negotiations through NAFTA talks.
Amendments to Farmland and Open Space Protection Act, P.A. 116 of 1974

The definition of agriculture was clarified and updated to reflect the diversity of Michigan's agriculture and expanded to include berries, hoths, flowers, seeds, grasses, nursery stock and other agriculture products.

The bill describes the procedures for determining the productivity of the land.

The State Land Use Agency (DNS) is required to notify owners seven years before the expiration and of the options for claiming credits in the remaining seven years.

The conclusion of the operation.

The landlord may appeal to the DNS if the recipient for claiming credits in the remaining seven years.

The landlord may appeal to the DNS if the recipient for claiming credits in the remaining seven years.

One-halfof the cost of the crops, livestock or products and is actively involved with the operation.

The total amount applied was added to the list of individual essential to the operation.

The bill removes, for example, the requirement of the DNS to provide for a building site up to two acres for individuals essential to the operation.

The DNS is required to provide a 30-day notice prior to placing a lien on the property at the time of the lien.
Herbicide decisions on replanted wheat fields

The past winter's severe weather conditions had serious consequences on much of the state's wheat crop, especially in fields planted in late October. Growers faced the decision of whether to keep the wheat crop or replant it with another crop in the following spring, as reported by Dr. Jim Kells, valuable in considering alternatives.

**Crop Selection**

Alternative crop can be planted with or without tillage. Kells says what's important is that re-planting wheat to be avoided with competition from other crops. Secondary tillage can effectively kill the over-wintered wheat. In general, the smaller the wheat, the easier it will be to kill, advises Kells.

A good rule of thumb would be to till a field, a following day with later with a disk or a field cultivator to kill the wheat that may have survived the initial tillage. Kells said, "If areas of the field have larger healthy wintered wheat, an application of Roundup Ultra three or more days before tillage will warranty a weed kill.

In situations where no-till will be used, Kells said wheat killing with a herbicide, preferably Roundup Ultra, is absolutely essential. "Be sure that the sur- viving wheat has recovered to the extent that it is actively growing with green leaves to intercept the herbicide.

The following table can be used as a guideline for Roundup Ultra to kill overwintered wheat.

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**Wheat Height Applied Alone Tank-Mixed**

Wheat crop, especially in fields planted in late October, will require a 3- to 5-inch soil depth, says Kells. "In general, the smaller the wheat, the easier it will be to kill, advises Kells.

**Herbicide**

Roundup Ultra, if applied immediately, can still provide anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of winter wheat, according to Kells. However, if Roundup Ultra is applied three or more days before tillage, it will be ineffective.

**Weed control**

"If you want to use base figures, 14 plants per foot of a 7-inch row, or 24 plants per square foot, you've got good growers who are experiencing a poor crop as well. So the sooner you react to the situation, the better off you're going to be!"

**Stand Evaluation**

Minimum acceptable plant populations depend on several factors, including the current price on wheat and the current crop on the alternative crop. Under ideal conditions, the best yields will be achieved with stands of 3.9 million plants per acre, according to Kells. In addition, 26 plants per foot of a 7-inch row.

"If you want to use base figures, 14 plants per foot of a 7-inch row, or 24 plants per square foot, you've got good growers as well. So the sooner you react to the situation, the better off you're going to be!"

**Factors to consider for destroying wheat fields**

1. Determine if plant population is adequate.
2. Presence of stand — every thin or spindly plant counts.
3. Fall growth on wheat — early-planted wheat yields better than late-planted wheat.
4. Ability to control weeds in this stand last harvest.
5. Value of wheat crop per basket and per acre.
6. Value of alternative crop to be planted, if wheat is destroyed.
7. Impact already applied to wheat, such as nitrogen.
8. Is the wheat already contracted?
9. Does the wheat have a good cracking stem?

For more information on deciding what to do with marginal growing wheat, contact your MSU Extension office or Steve Poindexter at (517) 799-2235.

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**54’ x 13’ x 80’ Deluxe Machinery Storage**

- **Floor Plan**
  - 23’ x 17’ x 10’ (4 Wide) x (5 Deep)
  - 18’ x 21’ x 8’ (3 Wide) x (5 Deep)

- **Building Features**
  - Steel Framing
  - Insulated Roof
  - Insulated Walls
  - Insulated Floors
  - Steel Siding
  - Steel Roof
  - Steel Trim
  - Steel Posts
  - Steel Beams
  - Steel Connectors
  - Steel Brackets
  - Steel Girts
  - Steel Purlins
  - Steel Flashing
  - Steel Fire Sprinkler System
  - Steel Windows
  - Steel Doors
  - Steel Entry Systems
  - Steel Exterior Finishes
  - Steel Interior Finishes
  - Steel Electrical Systems
  - Steel Mechanical Systems
  - Steel Plumbing Systems
  - Steel Heating Systems
  - Steel Cooling Systems
  - Steel Ventilation Systems

- **Building Specifications**
  - Steel Building fabric: 18 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building framing: 16 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building insulation: R-19
  - Steel Building sheathing: 29 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building roof: 26 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building siding: 29 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building trim: 29 gauge Galvalume
  - Steel Building doors: 8’ x 8’ (2 Wide) x (5 Deep)
  - Steel Building windows: 3’ x 3’ (2 Wide) x (5 Deep)

- **Building Dimensions**
  - Length: 54’
  - Width: 13’
  - Height: 80’

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May 15, 1996

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That’s on top of any other national Dodge cash back offer.* All you need to do is get a certificate from your state’s Farm Bureau validating that you’ve been a member for at least thirty days. Then stop by your Dodge dealer. Where you’ll discover it pays to be in the Farm Bureau.

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**Market Outlook**

_by Dr. Jim Hilker, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University_

**CORN**

Volatility continues to be the key word in the corn market. We will likely continue to see several days of sharp increases followed by sharp decreases. With the extremely tight stocks, this pattern could continue into August. The two main factors that the market will be trying to gauge are remaining of demand and yields.

It is not clear whether or not the corn price has gone high enough to curb use, and we probably will not know for sure until after the fact. Soy and corn cattle are up significantly from last year, but that will only help on the margin through this marketing year and will hurt demand for the 1996-97 marketing year.

Cattle slaughter weights have cut back to year-ago levels. The USDA has announced that some CRP land will be open up for grazing, which will mean some more cattle will go to grass versus the feedlots. Inland plants are cutting back sharply, but not enough to save them there to alleviate the problem. Corn export sales are running 16 percent lower through last year at this time. The forecast is that they will be up 4 percent. That means some sharp corns in the fourth quarter. Corn export sales show some signs of slowing up.

If the weather cooperates, we will probably plant 126 million more acres of corn than the farmers projected in March. It will take that and those yield trends to replenish stocks to more normal levels, unless corn prices continue to stay higher and cut sharply. With the late spring and soft conditions, it will not take much of a weather scare to send price up sharply, and it will not take a lot of weather to send them back down. Consider pricing most remaining old crop if we can stay no higher and/or by the end of pollination. Consider pricing up to 30-50 percent of new crop in the nearterm if you have not already done so. Prices may go higher, but you will want to protect yourself from the downside risk. Consider pricing more as we reach new highs. This next year should act more like a short crop if yields are down much below trend. That is, we will likely see better returns to corn early in the year versus later.

**WHEAT**

A first glance, the wheat story looks much like the corn — tight stocks and weather concerns. However, there is one very big difference — the potential for a good U.S. wheat yield is not there! The hard red wheat crop in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas will be very poor, at best. The soft red wheat crop in the lower Corn Belt looks poor. Good growing conditions from this point out will definitely help the wheat crop, but the time for a stocks-building crop has passed. Prices will be good for wheat for this harvest year. The most important question is, how much will a producer need to sell?

On the demand side for this 1996-97 crop we may have some completion. Wheat acres in Europe are up and conditions to this point are okay. Wheat acres in Canada are up 4 million acres, for a whopping 16 percent increase. The increase in world acres may put a lot on prices this summer, but they will not mean low prices for this marketing year. However, this doesn't mean high wheat prices for several years, we have enough acres that a good yield could still rebuild stocks in the 1997-98 crop year.

Consider having some of your new crop priced at this point. If the weather cooperates from this point on, prices could drop some. Have a plan to price more as you learn more about your crop and on new sales. Since we will not really know how hard the crop might be, consider hedging off pricing all at it until harvest. At that time, we will both know more and can determine if it may pay to store.

**SOYBEANS**

Soybeans are yet another story, except for extreme price volatility as we go through the growing season. We have good prices and low stocks despite having a decent crop last year. We will continue to have tight stocks and good prices in the 1996-97 crop year even with trend yields. Does that mean we cannot drop below? No. Does that mean we have opportunities to lock in good prices? Yes.

Consider pricing our next couple of years will be able to rebuild stocks. But for this 1996-97 crop, corn, and wheat had higher for the acres and not a lot of interest came into production of soybeans. On top of that, Canada cut back canola acres by 4 million (33 percent), which is where their increase came from.

Export shipments are running at a rate below what it would be to need USDA protection for prices in the near-term. However, all that means that prices are high enough to ration supply. If we are sure of a good crop this fall, we know better than to hang on to this point.

Consider pricing most of your remaining old crop if we get near their previous highs. Be a market watcher to price more of your new crop. I assume you have some at prices those very good prices we are seeing now.

**DHOGS**

Pork production was down around 3 percent in April. The March Hogs and Pig report suggested that it would be about the same as the previous year. However, we are seeing a decrease in the difference and fewer hogs available for market account for the other half. Put strong demand on top of this and we are seeing prices much higher than expected. Can it last? Yes. Will it last? Maybe. Can you lock in good prices now? Yes. Seriously consider locking in some of next year's production if you are already ready.

Sow slaughter was up 11 percent and 21 percent of the first 2 weeks of April. This increase is due to high feed prices and good sow prices. And, with what that slow drop with the last surge in hog prices, it will probably mean a slow-down in supply sometime next year. Reports are for some to open strong. If corn prices drop by and domestic demand stays good, so will we return in the hog sector. Another question is there plenty of slaughter capacity, unlike a year and a half ago.

**CATTLE**

Beef production was up 6-8 percent in April compared to the previous year. With these large numbers, along with speculative demand, the market took a blood bath. Record high feed prices, along with feed cattle prices lower than the mid-80s hit, have meant horrible returns despite what seemed like low feeder prices when prices were set in November. However, this is an indication that the gilt coming to market will slow by the end of May. However, this does not mean the huge supply of feeder cattle will go away. The USDA, as mentioned, is opening UFR prices that is not highly elastic for purse and tending from July 1 to Sept. 30. This should help keep feeders from feeding for a bit. This will help keep feeders from feeding for a bit. But we will still need feed prices to drop sharply to pull the cattle industry out of the tailspin. We can't cut prices much below the 1997 call crop.

**Dairy Outlook**

by Larry G. Hamm

Milk prices are on the way up. Unfortunately, they are still not as high as producer costs; therefore, profit margins will continue to be squeezed.

On April 19, the wholesale dairy markets surged upward. There were bids for one carload of each of the three grades (A, B, and C) of butter traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CMX). Since no butter was supplied at the bid prices, the bids prices became the market quote. Over the past two weeks, Grade A butter prices surged to above the 60 cent-per-pound support price that it had been trading for since Feb. 1, 1996. The wholesale butter prices have surged by $0.40-0.60 per pound as the dairy product markets and is also a major component in generating dollars on producer paychecks.

At the same time, butter markets were strengthening, the wholesale cheese markets were also strengthening. The price for 40 pound blocks on the National Cheese Exchange (NCE) rose 10 cents per pound. However, the CMX, actual products did trade on the NCE. In total, 35 carats of block cheese were traded on the two trading days of April 19 and 20. In the same period, 40 carats of barrel cheese were also traded. In recent years, the NCE has increasingly been a market where cheese is actually traded.

In the past, when cheese markets went up, market analysis would point to movements that would happen to the Minnesota-Wisconsin (M-W.) The first anniversary of the demise of the M-W. has here. Analysts have a hard time even predicting the level of the Basic Formula Price (BFP) as they did with the old M-W. Clearly, the rising cheese and butter markets will lift the BFP. The cheese market jump suggests that the BFP will go up around $1 per cwt. However, this one crop will not happen. The new BFP will go up to perhaps $0.20 to $0.30 per cwt. What happens during May to the dairy product markets will help determine whether we will go to $1.00 per cwt or make it through to producer prices.

In any event, milk prices are moving in the right direction. Hopefully the market will show some more market strength to generate the supply of milk currently called for by market demand. Unfortunately, the milk price forecasts are not running fast enough to offset the current critical shortage for Michigan and U.S. dairy industries.

**EGGS**

by Henry Lanzelere

Egg prices near the April end were about 16 cents above last year. In contrast, prices were 20 cents a dozen above the early part of the month. Partially responsible for the higher egg prices was feed ingredient prices were almost 12 cents a dozen eggs above last year.

Prices at wholesale in New York for Grade A eggs in cartons will likely average in the low 80s, the usual seasonal low per price time of the year. During the July/August period, egg production is squeezed. With the low prices, however, egg production will probably go up to the upper 80s or low 90s. There have been small increases in hens and pullets on farms and in production since the first of the year. Furthermore, the hatchery reports have shown increases in the egger chickens. In fact in the first three months of the year. Apparently, the relatively high egg prices have encouraged the expansion of laying flocks in spite of the current uncertainty in the farm sector.

We need to watch the current planting season for the flock situation. Also, the hatchery reports will be made for the months of May. If the May hatch are usually months in which the largest hatch occur for potential expansion of the laying flocks.

**BROILERS**

by Henry Lanzelere

It is pertinent to consider the broiler situation at this time. As we approach summer, we will notice the movement of the weeks. As we move into summer, we will see the movement of the weeks. As we move into the weeks that are not meaningful. More broiler meat can be sold at given prices in the summer than at other times of the year. It has been predicted earlier that about 6 percent more broilers would be produced in 1996 than in 1995. So, for the first three months of 1996, about 2 percent more broilers would be produced than a year earlier. At the same time, prices were about 6 percent above the same period in 1995. If broiler production increases about 1 percent above the previous year, prices will about 1 cent a pound higher than last year.

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**DTN buys Broadcast Partners**

The Transmission Network Corp. (DTN) reports that it acquired substantially all assets of Broadcast Partners for $63.5 million and assumed certain liabilities estimated to be $9.5 million.

DTN will receive about 15,000 agricultural subscribers, according to Reuters news service.

The acquisition will bring the total DTN subscribers in the agricultural industry to more than 155,000, and the total Data Transmission subscribers for all services to more than 140,000.

The company will not convert FarmData systems to DTN's data transmission equipment and will continue to market the services under the FarmData name, according to Reuters.

Broadcast Partners was a partnership formed in 1990 by Farmers Industries Inc., Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. and 1M Communications Co., Reuters reports.
Special thanks to Jim Monroe, FSA Ag Credit, Traverse City
All Borrowers of Farm Service Agency (formerly FmHA), Effective Immediately:
- Direct Farm Loan Funds Cannot Be Used For:
  a. Any existing (non-agency) debt refinancing — guaranteed farm loan ownerships (guaranteed by FSA), but financed by another commercial lender, will be ineligible for refinancing.
  b. Relocation assistance or pollution control — not eligible for direct or guaranteed FSA loans.
  c. "Farm" enterprises — cannot be directly financed or guaranteed by FSA.

Market-basket survey detects increase in grocery prices

American consumers paid $1.36 more for a sample market basket of groceries during the first quarter of 1996 than they did during the last quarter of 1995, according to the latest informal national survey of retail food prices conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF). During the first quarter of this year, consumers paid an average of $31.67 for 16 food items. The average for the fourth quarter of 1995 was $30.31. This year's first quarter average is also higher compared with a year ago — the first quarter of 1995 — when the average was $30.22.

AFBF conducts its informal quarterly market-basket survey to help track retail food prices to ensure they are in line with prices received by the nation's farmers and ranchers. While grocery prices are up this quarter, the farmers' and ranchers' share remains steady. The farm value of each food dollar spent in the United States is approximately 22 cents. The largest component of the consumer's food dollar is labor at about 36 cents.

Compared to last quarter, overall retail food prices remained fairly steady, but increases were noted in many items. The largest increase was for a five-pound bag of flour, which increased by 23 cents over the previous quarter, for a national average of $1.31. A related item, a 20-ounce loaf of bread, increased 12 cents to $1.11.

According to Terry Franl, a senior economist for AFBF, a factor in those price increases is higher wheat prices, which are currently about 45 percent above a year ago. Excess added, however, wheat prices are a comparatively small factor, considering the typical farm-to-retail price spread for wheat.

"For cereals and bakery products, typically the farm value is less than 8 percent of the retail cost," he said. "But whenever wheat prices are up, we often encounter retail price increases for those products in a magnitude beyond that dictated by the wheat price alone."

Joining flour and bread as items with higher prices this quarter were: bacon, $1.08 per pound, up 18 cents; potatoes, $1.68 per five pounds, up 17 cents; apples, 97 cents per pound, up 14 cents; whole milk, $1.39 per gallon, up 15 cents; skin-on top roast, $2.72 per 11 pounds, up 11 cents; breakfast cereal, $2.59 per 10-ounce box, up 10 cents.

Items with increases of less than 10 cents were: eggs, $1.06 per dozen, up 8 cents; cheddar cheese, $2.50 per pound, up 8 cents; pork chops, $1.34 per pound, up 5 cents; whole frozen, 93 cents per pound, up 4 cents; cooking oil, $2.39 per 32 ounces, up 1 cent; and mayonnaise, 72 cents per 32 ounces, up 1 cent.

Only two items on the list had lower prices this quarter: A 32-ounce container of shortening was $2.21, down 3 cents, and ground chuck was $1.61 per pound, down 2 cents.
Weather Outlook

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

N orthwesterly jet stream flow and cold temperatures persisted across Michigan during much of April, with average monthly temperatures remaining 3.6 degrees below normal and above-normal precipitation.

New Climate Prediction Center new long lead outlooks for the coming months continue to be vague, calling for near equal probabilities of above-, near- and below normal temperatures and precipitation for May into the early summer. Beyond that, normal to above normal temperatures are favored into the mid summer, with normal to below normal temperatures possible by early fall. Near equal odds of all three precipitation categories are forecast through early fall.

With the loss of National Weather Service agricultural products and services last year, the MSU Ag. Weather Office has begun to run the specific minimum temperature forecast for 25 agricultural locations around the state.

The forecast, a 12-24 hour estimate of minimum temperature based on numerical computer guidance combined with the cloud and wind forecasts adjusted by climatological data at each of the sites. The forecasts are generally more accurate than the regular zone forecasts alone.

The forecast is available for the upcoming evening/morning by 2:45 p.m. each day. It is currently available to those who have Internet access, on the MSU Ag. Weather Office home page, located at http://cumulus.geo.msu.edu/~manager/. Please call the Ag Weather Office at 517/355-0231 for further details.

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For more information, call your county Farm Bureau office, contact your nearest Farm Bureau Insurance agent, or call 800-292-2680, ext. 3240 or 3239.
Weed control update for 1996

**Table 1 - New tank-mix partners for Accent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tank-mix herbicide</th>
<th>Application rate</th>
<th>Additives</th>
<th>Maximum corn height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceed</td>
<td>0.5 oz/A</td>
<td>Surfactant (1%/2)</td>
<td>24&quot; or 6-collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1 pouch/5 A)</td>
<td>Oil Conc. (1%) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>4.68 lb/A</td>
<td>Crop Oil Conc. (1%) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
<td>24&quot; or 6-collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scorpion III</td>
<td>0.25 lb/A</td>
<td>Surfactant (1%/2) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
<td>9&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 - New tank-mix partners for Basis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tank-mix herbicide</th>
<th>Application rate</th>
<th>Additives</th>
<th>Maximum corn height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atrazine</td>
<td>1.6 lb 90 DE/A</td>
<td>Crop Oil Conc. (1%) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustermark</td>
<td>1 pt/A</td>
<td>Crop Oil Conc. (1%) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scorpion III</td>
<td>0.25 lb/A</td>
<td>Surfactant (1%/2) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protil</td>
<td>1.85 pt/A</td>
<td>Surfactant (1%/2) + 28% N (2-4 q/A) or AMS (2-4 A/B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr. Karen Renner and Dr. Jim Kelty, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, Michigan State University

This article provides an update for weed control in field crops since the 1995 Weed Control Guide for Field Crops was published in December.

**Stellar**

Stellar is now registered for use in soybeans. Stellar is a premixed mixture of Cobra and Reax. If a farmer applies 5 ounces/Acre of Stellar it is equal to a tank mixture of 4 ounces/Acre of Reax and 6 ounces/Acre of Cobra. Always add crop oil concentrate to Stellar at 1% (this is equal to 4-5 pints of crop oil in 100 gal. of spray solution). If spray gallonage is less than 25 gal. of water per acre, keep crop oil concentrate at a minimum of 1 pint/Acre. Stellar will control many broadleaf weeds since it contains both Reax and Cobra. Broadleaf weeds controlled include velvetleaf, common and giant ragweed, pigweed, and eastern black nightshade. The label states that Stellar will control common lambsquarters and cocklebur but Michigan State University data shows regrowth of common lambsquarters and cocklebur following Stellar application. Smartweed will not be controlled by Stellar.

Apply Stellar in 30 to 30 gal. of water per acre at 30 to 60 psi. This is a contact herbicide so thorough coverage is important. Stellar can be tank mixed with Select for postemergence grass control. Spray pressure should be minimum of 40 psi. Some grass antagonsist may occur, so a separate application is suggested for control of quackgrass and other difficult-to-control grasses.

The rain-free period for Stellar is one hour. Do not apply Stellar within 90 days of harvest or after podset. The field cannot be grazed and the straw and hay cannot be used for feed or bedding.

**Steel**

Steel is a premixed mixture of Prestige Plus (premixed mixture of Protil and Pursuit) and Scorpion. Steel will be sold as a co-pack double jug in 1996 and a premixed co-pack, Herbicide CG (Scorpion) is applied at 3 pt/A and Herbicide CG (Pursuit) is applied at 2.5 pt/A. Steel will provide better cocklebur and common prostrate control than Pursuit Plus because of the addition of Scorpion. Crop rotation restrictions are: Field corn and wheat 6 months, wheat - 4 months, rye - 18 months, potatoes - 26 months, sugarbeets - 40 months.

**Prestige**

Prestige is a formulation of Basagran or Laddok. Application rates are the same as for Prestige Plus. Do not mix tank-mix Prestige with Pursuit, because there will be no grass activity from the Prestige; the grass control that will occur is only from Pursuit.

**Command 3MH**

Command 3MH is a new formulation of Command available in a limited supply in 1996. This is a microencapsulated formulation of Command that will allow Command to be applied preemergence. Setoxica from sensitive areas are still required. These include: 1,200 feet from towns, hospital areas, schools, and commercial buildings, and 500 feet from desirable plants.

**Roundup Ultra**

Roundup Ultra is a new formulation of Roundup. Roundup Ultra contains surfactants. No additional surfactants, additives containing surfactants, pH adjusting agents or buffers should be added. Nitrogen additives are allowed such as ammonium sulfate. The rain-free requirement is 1-2 hours. The application rates for Roundup Ultra are the same as Roundup.
Mexico to import more dry beans; prices begin tojump

Corn and soybeans have held the market spotlight of late, but dry beans have seen some interest recently. However, announced sales of dry beans to Mexico and the threat of continuing island weather have brought dry beans into the bidding war for corn and soybeans.

In recent weeks, SECOF, the Mexican government's Ministry of Commerce, has announced the auction of import license permits for 100,000 metric tons, the first 100,000 metric tons from a direct sale between U.S. and Mexico on May 25 and the second 100,000 from an open auction between all of Mexico's trading partners in early June. Puerto Rico has come to realize that they really don't have the volume of high-quality dry beans to meet domestic needs there, stated MPE's Commodities' Manager Bob Kuenzli. This is occurring during some drought conditions in their major dry bean production areas, forcing them to go international markets seeking to secure supplies.

"There's some concern with the way their economy is right now that they might need to be some credits offered through the GSM102 credit farm bill," states Boehm. "Drybeans are considered an economy is right now that there may need to be an available food item in Mexico, along with milk and corn, so it's going to be a very high priority to make sure that there are dry bean stock available on the shelves in Mexico.

NAFTA has gotten us the regime to have the import license auction," explains Boehm. "That makes it easy to reduce their tariffs quickly. NAFTA opened the door and created the mechanism to where they could possibly ease difficulty or a charge from the original 55,000 metric ton auction to these last 100,000.

"For dry beans, NAFTA has still been a very good option," stated Dale Kueckel, executive director of Michigan Bean Commission. On top of Mexican demands the largest crop report indicates Michigan will plant 40,000 fewer acres of dry beans this spring compared to last year, further raising bean marketing prices and adding to the speculation about the dry bean market.

According to Kueckel, farmers' intentions to plant has shown an increase from 390,000 acres last year to 590,000 acres.

"I believe with volatile grain prices and ever-increasing values of corn, wheat and soybeans, that we probably have lost another 25,000 acres since the report came out," Kueckel explains. Increasing bean prices may also confuse bean growers, states Kueckel. He attributes the majority of some problems in Mexico and Latin American countries to not having prices playing in the United States. For example, prices between use of Michigan's dry bean crops, have increased in price by almost 50 percent in the last few weeks. Black beans have also seen a sizable increase at the elbow during the past month, while the "Michigan black bean prices were extremely stable for the last several months," said Boehm.

Recently, we've seen a rise of $7 to $8 per $100 pounds, which is starting to get some interest on the part of growers. I think there's also some realization that with the high corn and soybean prices, there's going to be a need to bid up prices to get enough acreage in," he adds. Which growers have already made their decision that they're going to plant the grains," Kueckel remarks. "Whether or not they do in beans, I anticipate that it will hold better for them than it looked like a month ago.

Over the course of the last two planting seasons, price fluctuations have pushed bean prices as high as $850 in 1995 to the $550 range last year, according to Kueckel. An average yield of 14 of approximately 1,350 pounds per acre, compared to 1,200 last year, he adds, contributed to the price movement.

Spring planting weather will have a major influence on ultimate planted acreage," states Boehm. "But certainly the price run up here in the last few weeks in dry beans, whether they're navy or black beans, is going to make planting dry beans a more palatable option.

C:

| Mexico to import more dry beans; prices begin to

| Tractors among the 

| great safety risks on

| the farm

In spite of the safety features built into tractors, they are among the riskiest pieces of equipment used on the farm. They are responsible for an estimated 560 deaths and 123,000 non-fatal injuries to farmers, contributing to about 25 percent of all fatal accidents, according to New York Times reports. Though death by tractor can occur at any time of the year, most accidents occur in June, July and August, mostly because people are using tractors more often during those months. Doss says that rushing to get things done, fatigue and overcrowding on the farm are among the causes of tractor-related deaths.

Many deaths occur, however, because tractor operators did not understand the hazards of tractor operation and became involved in accidents that, to them, were unexpected.

One reason that most row-crop tractors are deadly is that they are comprised of high gravity.

They make them prone to tip over even on flat ground if the operator attempts a turn at too high a speed or turns the steering wheel too quickly.

Using tractors for the job for which they are intended can reduce the potential for death and injury. Using them properly includes avoiding sudden, sharp turns, driving too close to ditches banks and road edges or up or along steep slopes, and hitching to loadstoo heavy for the size of the tractor used, Doss says. Also avoid starting off in low gear with a high engine speed, engaging the engine too quickly or accelerating quickly, especially when traveling uphill or pulling a heavy load.

A tractor driver or an object that isn't meant to be pulled, such as a tree stump or a fence post. Essentially, if the load isn't hitched to the three-point hitch, it isn't meant to be pulled. The load doesn't have wheels, it isn't meant to be pulled by the typical farm tractor, Doss says.

"If a tractor is not meant to carry the weight, in the presence where as it is apt to tip over sideways or flip backward, chances are it will go over so quickly—in about 1.5 seconds—that the operator won't have time to think," Doss says.

Doss says that all operators, including those who will be working on the farm for the summer, should familiarize themselves with the basic requirements of tractor operation before the field work schedule becomes hectic.

Among the basics are:

- Lock brake pedals together before driving at transport speeds, such as when hauling hay or grain.

- Restrict tractor speed according to operating conditions. Always watch back for bumps, rocks, holes, roots that could cause the tractor to tip sideways.

- Don't let the tractor bounce. This causes loss of steering control, and loss of steering control can mean a tip-over.

- Drive slowly where traction is questionable, such as on loose ground, rain-slicked backhoes or mud. If in doubt, slow down slowly.

- Match the tractor to the weight of the load to be pulled. If you drive into a turn too fast or through a ledge when trying to stop, you may lose the load and also lose control of the tractor. Stare at safe speeds. If the load begins to shift, it's probably better to go a little fast or the hitch is not correct for the load.

- Slow down, using both brakes, before making turns, and turn as wide as possible to reduce centrifugal force, which can tip a tractor over.

- One engine brake when going downhill. If in doubt, lock in the lowest gear and downshift before letting up the engine brake, then use the engine speed to help control the downhill and idle the engine speed back down. Do not change the engine while going downhill.

- Under no circumstances allow a rider on the tractor. It is against federal and state law to allow anyone under 16 years old to ride on a 20 PTO horsepower tractor.

Statistics show that people between 25- and 44-years-old have 57 percent of the fatal accidents and that people between 5 and 24 make up 34 percent. 

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Michigan potato growers control late blight

A decade can make a great difference. In the mid-1980s, potato acres in Michigan had fallen to an estimated 40,000 when processing plants closed. This led to less need to plant different crops. Today, the picture appears very different. New processing plants have sparked a sharp increase in potato acreage. Almost 80,000 potato acres were planted to potatoes in 1995. Unfortunately, there has been another increase that makes growers even more enthusiastic about potato production—late blight.

"Late blight incidence reached a peak in 1994," says Don Smucker, Extension agent for Montcalm County. "Nearly every grower in the county was affected. Yields were down as growers had to kill many fields in late August to control the disease."

Late blight blighted us in 1994," confirms Dr. Mel Lacy, (recently retired) plant pathologist at Michigan State University (MSU). "The potential for disease had as concerned heading into 1995, but we were much better prepared. Our off-season educational efforts paid dividends. Although the conditions were very conducive for disease, growers in all four potato-growing regions where late blight occurred (Montcalm, Presque Isle, Bay and St. Joseph counties) kept it in check."

Lacy adds that the newer A2/US8 late blight genotype brings new challenges to Michigan growers. However, as the disease changes, so must growers. They have to adjust their programs accordingly.

Growers must still pay attention to cultural practices—seed selection, rotation and destruction of culled potatoes. Lacy encourages growers to pay attention to some other practices because late blight can begin anywhere from weeds in the field edges to culls swept on rockpiles. Also, reducing the amount of potatoes that have certified seed does not necessarily ensure that it is completely free of late blight.

Certified seed guidelines allow a 1 percent infection of late blight, which is enough to cause trouble, Lacy warns. "Growers should make sure they have a solid relationship with their seed producers to ensure that the seed they buy is clean."

However, the biggest adaptations must be made to fungicide programs. "Growers have learned that they must spray fungicides early and often," says Smucker. "We shortened spray intervals to five days when the disease conditions were most severe as indicated by blight forecasting programs. We also encouraged growers to do everything possible to ensure complete spray coverage. This strategy worked. Of the 14,000 acres in Montcalm County, we had only 10 late blight findings—usually on the edges of fields near irrigation pivots where spray coverage was inadequate."

Bob Walker grows 4,000 acres of potatoes for shipping and french fries near Clare, Mich. His late blight philosophy is simple—prevent the disease from getting a hold. His plan, however, takes commitment. He grows his own seed to make sure he is planting clean seed, maintains his rotation and makes sure all the culled potatoes are destroyed.

Walker has heeded his own spray program, too. He applies protectant fungicides (Brow®/Bend®) on a five-to-seven-day interval. He also makes two applications of Ridomil®M27 to control storage rots (Pythium leach, pink rot) and to help with late blight control.

"You can't cut corners with your fungicide program," Walker cautions. "Late blight is a major challenge to the industry, but with proper attention it can be controlled. Last year, we continually took samples but found no disease incidence. Our commitment to prevention was the key."

Gha Crop Protection's Plant Pathologist Dr. Bulby Banu says, with the new Phomopsis strain growers can't wait until they see late blight develop and expect to eliminate it. "Studies show that preventative use of Ridomil®/Prepax plus protectant fungicides is very effective," he says. "When alternated with protectant fungicides, metalar (the active ingredient in Ridomil) works to stop late blight. But applications have to begin before infection—when foliage uniformity meets within the row across the field."

Dr. Marty Wieglesworth, Gha research specialist, conducted two Ridomil/Prepax trials in Michigan in 1994 in the presence of the A-2 late blight strain. Those trials showed Wyperfen control, with a 20 percent increase in yields vs. protectants alone. Banu says that additional tests in Wisconsin, Minnesota, New York and Florida, in areas where the A-2 strain was present, confirm that the preventive, additive effect of both fungicides (metalar and protectant) also leads to yield increases, delays disease onset and reduces disease severity.

Growers should not expect late blight to go away anytime soon. But heading into next season, there seems reason to be optimistic. Smucker says that seed-producing areas have not experienced as much late blight in 1995, so inoculum sources should be cleaner. Plus, with continued good control programs, there should be less inoculum left over for next season, "We learned a lot the past few seasons," says Smucker. "Last year we learned that late blight can be controlled. There are many practices and products that growers can implement to combat the late blight outbreak. That should give growers the confidence they need for next season."
Timing spring alfalfa harvest

by Mike Allen, Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University

vigation in weather makes it difficult to time alfalfa harvest for optimum quality. Finding a window of dry weather for cutting, drying and baling is not always easy, particularly in the spring. If alfalfa is harvested too early, the fiber content will be too low and the protein content will be too high. If alfalfa is harvested too late, energy and protein contents will be low, increasing the cost of supplements, and low fiber digestibility may decrease energy intake.

Beginning harvest at 40 percent neutral detergent fiber (NDF) will get you a good window of time for complete harvest. Filling horizontal silos with layers of increasing maturity will allow harvest to begin a little earlier at about 38 percent NDF because the layers of alfalfa are blended as the alfalfa is removed from the silo.

Although growing degree days (GDD) is not precisely related to NDF content of alfalfa, it can be used to help predict when to start cutting. Using GDD, we can predict NDF content within 1 percent using 60 percent of the time. Thus, if you are using GDD (base 41°F) to begin cutting alfalfa at 40 percent NDF, in nearly seven out of 10 years the alfalfa will be between 37 and 43 percent NDF.

For an initial NDF content of 46 percent, start cutting at 750 GDD, base 41°F. It will take about 220 additional GDD to reach 45 percent NDF at 970 GDD, base 41°F. If you are storing the alfalfa in a horizontal silo or are feeding it in a diet with a high NDF, low protein forage, start cutting at 685 GDD, base 41°F, which corresponds to 38 percent NDF. Growing degree days is calculated many ways. It is important to make sure GDD is calculated using the same formula that was used to establish the relationship for these recommendations. Average the maximum and minimum temperature for each day (24-hour period) beginning March 1, subtract the base temperature (41°F) and sum the growing degrees for all days that have positive numbers.

For example, if the maximum and minimum temperatures for one day are 75°F and 39°F, respectively, the average is 57 [(75 + 39)/2] and the growing degrees for this day are 16 [(75 - 41)]. If the average is less than the base temperature, the difference will be negative and the number should not be included in the sum.

The growing degree days calculated in the weekly MSU Extension Crop Advisor Alert cannot be used at this time. Even though one uses a base temperature of 41°F, it is calculated using a different method, and there is no way to convert growing degree days calculated by one method to another.

For increased accuracy, it is best to measure the minimum and maximum temperatures as close to the alfalfa field as possible. We can use an inexpensive minimum/maximum thermometer and read it every day, or you can purchase a datalogger that records temperature automatically.

When the weekly GDD accumulation reaches around 550, begin measuring it on the farm daily until the correct growing degree days is reached. If you choose to use this method, remember that it isn't perfect, but it is probably better than what you have used in the past.

Predicting alfalfa NDF using this simple method should be avoided when there is adequate soil moisture during the growing season because growing degree days accumulate with little or no response in plant growth. Because of this, growing degree days is highly related to quality only for growing alfalfa in areas with adequate rainfall and not for subsequent cuttings.

Be the thieves in the night, consummated on corn plants mostly after dark. Failure to spot the early signs of damage can mean severe losses later. Clear fields are less likely to encounter cutting than fields that were wetly when tilled or planted. Watch for moth flights, and note the number of growing degree days (GDD). About 300 (base 50°F) GDD after a flight, scout fields for damage. Begin looking for extremely small holes in leaves. If you don't have moth flight information, start checking plants as soon as they emerge. As the larvae grow, they will cut the plant close to the soil surface and cause wilting and death. A rescue treatment may be needed, especially to control younger, actively feeding larvae. Year-old larvae can feed on plants for several days and cause extensive damage before they pupate and become adult moths.

Purple corn syndrome often occurs during a cold, wet spring, but can be caused by several interesting factors. In some cases, fields are generally prone to produce more of the purple pigment anthocyanin. Different hybrids under equal stress may be more susceptible to the development of purple discoloration. Other factors that contribute to purpling are deficient phosphorus levels in the plant; slow early growth; and insufficient root development due to soil compaction and cool, wet soil conditions; root injury from starter fertilizers or herbicides; and insect feeding. A careful examination of the rows shows the condition is the key to diagnosing possible causes and remedies.

Plan for good safety routines for farm kids

Blame the planting season becomes too hectic for some serious prevention planning, talk with farm youngsters and take steps to minimize their potential for injury. Adults can substantially reduce the child's risk of serious injury or death if they educate their children about the hazards associated with farming, says Howard Doss, Michigan State University Extension agricultural safety specialist. Nationally, about 300 children are killed and 40,000 injured, about 5,000 of whom are injured for life by farm accidents.

Statistics show that 42 percent of the accidents are caused by kids getting caught in grain augers, 25 percent by tractor accidents, 11 percent by power-related shaft entanglement and 4 percent by getting caught in conveyor belts. Kids are most apt to be involved in a farm accident when they are age 4 to 14.

The former age group, according to Doss, is at risk because it is the time of their life when they are apt to do the most mobile and inquisitive and do not fully comprehend the hazards that surround them. The high accident rate among 14-year-olds is attributed to their beginning to do more adult chores on the farm and lack of experience in risk reduction.

Do yours parents should take time now to develop child safety plans and teach their kids how to avoid accidents. He recommends the following:

- Do not allow children to ride on tractors, implement or other equipment. Bare riders can easily tumble from equipment and fall into the path of tractors. Don't allow play on farm equipment. Pull key, set the parking brake and lock equipment to ensure that children cannot accidentally start engines.
- Know where children are at all times. Do not allow children near operating equipment. Establish "safety zones" from which children can still watch but out of the way of tractors, implements and other equipment.
- Fencing to play areas may be useful in keeping kids out of dangerous areas.
- Give children age-appropriate chores. Children are not small adults and they may make decisions that put them at risk. Only a parent knows when a child is mature enough to learn and safely handle a new task. Make sure a child is competent to do the job safely.
- Make sure children receive safety training before the onset of each new farm-related activity. Each child that the safe way is the only way and reinforce safety each time a child does the task. Children learn their ABC's by hearing them spaced out. Teaching them "over and over" approach to teaching farm safety and remember that setting a good example is the best teaching tool a parent has.
- Train children during low- or non-production activities. Don't try to train a youth on a new job when there is pressure to complete a task on time. Wait until the work schedule allows time for a thorough training period so emphasis can be placed on a positive learning experience.
- Taking time for proper training allows the parent time to tell the child how to do the job, and demonstrates the skills needed, and gives the parent an opportunity to provide positive feedback on the youth's performance. Pointers on improving performance and efficiency can also be offered.
- Supervision of youth in farm work activities is critical. Part of the parent's responsibility is to manage the child with the correct work methods and to follow up with visual checks and supervision aimed at encouraging the child to adopt good safe work habits. Remember that work breaks are important for youth as well as adults.
- Inspect the farm for safety hazards. Get down on your child's level and look at the farm from their perspective. For example, put yourself in the barnyard wall can fall on an unsuspecting child. Opening between gate posts and fences may be too small for livestock to escape but just the right size for a child to enter.

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Purple corn syndrome

Purples corn syndrome often occurs during a cold, wet spring, but can be caused by several interesting factors. In some cases, fields are generally prone to produce more of the purple pigment anthocyanin. Different hybrids under equal stress may be more susceptible to the development of purple discoloration. Other factors that contribute to purpling are deficient phosphorus levels in the plant; slow early growth; and insufficient root development due to soil compaction and cool, wet soil conditions; root injury from starter fertilizers or herbicides; and insect feeding. A careful examination of the rows shows the condition is the key to diagnosing possible causes and remedies.
F
t Farm Bureau has strong policy encouraging members to get actively involved in the election process on the local, state and national level. For a variety of reasons, the election process could be pivotal for the agricultural community.

First of all, many issues of crucial importance to farmers such as farmland preservation, transportation funding may not be acted upon until the next legislature is elected. Secondly, a local or state legislator may not be acting upon important legislation that he may want to see passed during his term, or may even go to the polls and vote. Automatic voter registration is a bigger opportunity and challenge than people might think," said Almy. "The real test is, do these newly registered people get to the polls and vote?"

That's where farmers have an edge. "A high percentage of farmers are not only registered, they also reliably vote. We estimate that 75 percent or more Farm Bureau members turn out to vote any year," Almy said. "It's not at all unlikely that people who are not registered will go to the polls if they see their name on the ballot."

There's another important reason to pay close attention to not only local races in 1995, but legislative contests as well, according to Almy. There are about 1600 state representatives who are not seeking re-election this year - leaders like Paul Bills, Gary Randall and Carl Grodke: "Assuming the candidates elected in 1995 are re-elected, vacan-
cies will seek re-election in 1996, and having served one two-year term already, they will already have one opinion of the process and important issues," Almy said.

"It's not at all unlikely that these so-called veterans will stand as a line for committees, chairmanship, maybe even House leadership positions. The people you elect this year may be House leaders in 1996. Therefore, in those races for open state House seats this year, Farm Bureau members should go through the same evaluation and thought process as they will do with local races," he said.

Term limits are not the only change affecting the state's political process this year. Community Action Group members have probably heard about the federally mandated "motor voter law," which will undoubtedly result in more Michigan citizens registered to vote. But that's only half the formula. People still have to go to polls and vote. "Automatic voter registration is a bigger opportunity and challenge than people might think," said Almy. "The real test is, do these newly registered people get to the polls and vote?"

That's where farmers have an edge. "A high percentage of farmers are not only registered, they also reliably vote. We estimate that 75 percent or more Farm Bureau members turn out to vote any year. That's why participation in the election process is one of the reasons the agricultural community has been so politically effective. It's not just voter registration - it's how you make your participation in the election cycle count. It's how many people vote," Almy said.

"That voting by mail Oregon recently received nationwide publicity for its successful use of mail ballots during a special election to fill the U.S. Senate seat when Mr. Steinberg stepped down. Is such a system a viable possibility for Michigan? Farm Bureau policy opposes vote-by-mail except for those who qualify for absentee ballots. We oppose vote by mail because it opens up the opportunity for some misrepresentation and elec-
tion irregularities," said Almy. "We think there's more accountability and visibility in our present system, where people have to go to a polling place, identify themselves and vote."

In June, Farm Bureau will conduct its annual Young People's Citizenship Seminar at Alma College. Over 250 of the state's top high school juniors and seniors, selected and sponsored by your county Farm Bureau, will participate in a week of inter-
active, motivational activities designed to encourage their participation in the political process. Farm Bureau serves as role models for these young people. Participate in political campaigns, your visibility in supporting 'Friends of Agriculture,' and your presence at your local polling place for the election, Aug. 6, is extremely valuable. The 50 general election is crucial to your industry and community."

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does involvement in election-year politics make a difference?
2. In what ways do term limits bring about more responsibility in state government?
3. In what specific ways has your Community Action Group been active in past elections?
4. In what ways will your group be active in the 1995 elections?
5. In what ways has your group been active in providing input to your county candidate evaluation process?
Michigan Farm News Classifieds

May 15, 1996

03 Farm Commodities
QUALITY ALFAFRA and mixed hay: Almont, Michigan. Ferguson Farms. 1-810-398-7912

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BONNIE Angus Cattle

ShangriLa, Michigan. 1-810-595-4693

REGISTERED LIMOUSIN BULLS, breeding age. Also registered heifers and bulls and heifers, breeding age.

J & L Cattle Farms. Evenings, 1-810-668-3611

REGISTERED POLLED HOLLAND POLLED cattle for sale, also A+ heifers and cows. Rockford, Michigan.

Sims, Michigan. 1-810-590-3005

REGISTERED SCOTTISH HIGHLAND CATTLE, breeding stock and semen for sale. Selections welcome! Call 1-313-543-7329 evenings or weekends, Charlotte, Michigan.

10 Business Opportunities


AUTO TECH: 2nd shift, must be state certified. Have own shop. Excellent references. Call 1-616-754-9510, The Auto Clinic of Greenville.

10 Real Estate

6 ACRES, ROLLING HILLS, Macomb County, (about 28 miles northwest of metro Detroit, tile) older 2+ bedroom home, double 12x12 bedroom, total 2800 square feet, $85,500. 1-610-242-6038.

DAMN SITE-UP 6 ACRES, 2 bed. 2 bath, nice home, very good condition. 1-810-996-9304.

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HUNTING LEASE WANTED: Ethical and responsible bull hunter wishes to lease hunting rights to some Michigan farm on your terms, references available. Call 1-313-791-2059.

WANTED: Farms and land throughout Michigan, agricultural and recreational. Large parcels preferred. We will buy! Call Farm Real Estate Advisor, 1-517-563-8666.


18 General


DANNY'S ANTELOPE: St. Peter's Antelope Co., 1-810-979-4540.

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Circulation over 46,000 in State of Michigan.
Yellow nutsedge finally meets its match

Mark Vanderhyde, Sparta, Mich., holds the remains of a yellow nutsedge plant that was controlled with Permit, a new postemergence corn herbicide. Vanderhyde says the herbicide also handled velvetleaf and was safe to the crop.

Based on past experience, Vanderhyde figured he was in for a battle just to keep the weed suppressed.

Instead, he was able to get almost complete control of the weed with Permit®, a postemergence herbicide introduced by Monsanto® Co. in 1995. The herbicide primarily controls a wide range of broadleaf weeds, including velvetleaf, cocklebur and common ragweed. It has the added benefit of handling yellow nutsedge.

"Nothing has been very effective on nutsedge in the past," says Vanderhyde. "Permit did an excellent job. When we sprayed the corn, the yellow nutsedge was dead. Permit did a good job on velvetleaf, too."

Vanderhyde's experience with Permit was mirrored in Michigan State University (MSU) research last year.

A single application of the herbicide controlled 86 to 84 percent of yellow nutsedge in MSU trials in 1995. The next best postemergence herbicide provided about 50 percent control.

"Control from Permit on yellow nutsedge was impressive," says Jim Kells, MSU Extension weed scientist. "It is clearly the strongest herbicide for yellow nutsedge in corn. Permit will become the product of choice for nutsedge in corn."

Addis Allen Ping, of Clarksdale, Mich., says he's glad to have found a solution.

"The corn was knee-high or better when we sprayed the Permit, and it was extremely safe to the corn. I like its ease of handling with water-soluble packaging, too."

Permit® is a registered trademark of and used under license from, Monsanto Chemical Industries Inc. Bayer® is a registered trademark of BASF Corporation.

Practice safety to reduce manure pit hazards

Spring is the time of year when many farmers use livestock waste pits to house and feed cows, resulting in many manure-related accidents and injuries.

Manure pit hazards are a major risk to humans and livestock. Manure pit gases are classified as suffocants. They either displace or deplete oxygen. When sufficiently concentrated in a confined area, such as a manure pit, these gases can kill an unprotected person by suffocation in seconds.

Manure pit gases are dangerous because the gases tend to hover near the surface of the manure when it is agitated prior to pumping. Moreover, the gases can linger in lethal concentrations in the pit after it is partially or completely emptied.

Manure pit gases include hydrogen sulfide, methane, carbon dioxide and ammonia. These gases either deplete or displace oxygen. When sufficiently concentrated in a confined area, such as a manure pit, these gases can kill an unprotected person by suffocation in seconds.

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