$1 million raised for Michigan FFA Foundation

More than 180 FFA members recently attended the Michigan Association of FFA's Made For Excellence workshop, sponsored by Detroit Edison. At the conference, the Michigan FFA Foundation announced it had successfully matched a $500,000 grant issued to them from the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA). The particular part about the $1 million raised is that the final $1.6 million was raised completely during the month of September.

"Vision2000 has been an initiative of Gov. Engler and MDA," explains Bob Craig, MDA Office of Agriculture Development director. "When we looked at the site and realized there was an opportunity to do economic development for Michigan County, while maintaining productive farmland, Skjaerlund added, even to add value to that land from the standpoint of the county as an alternative to an industrial park that wouldn't wipe out probably the best site in Michigan for cranberry production.

"The site has very sandy soils that are naturally low in pH with a high water table," explained Skjaerlund. "These are ideal conditions for growing cranberries — a flat topography that's currently being farmed, which means that there's zero state or federal wetland permits needed."

According to Skjaerlund, the initial report by the steering committee was the beginning of a decision to bring cranberries to Muskegon County. Before the first phase of dirt is moved for the cranberry beds, detailed analysis of the lake's water is needed. We put together a feasibility proposal and submitted it to the FFA Foundation to help fund the project."

MUSKEGON COUNTY LOOKS TO SQUEEZE PROFITS FROM CRANBERRY PRODUCTION

County commissioners support further investigation into a large-scale cranberry-growing and processing operation

F

ormaly, a creek running through southern Muskegon County is named Cranberry Creek. Why? Because it runs through the site where a team of experts have formulated a plan to produce 1,000 acres of cranberries and eventually construct a processing plant on property located at the Muskegon Wastewater Treatment Facility. As part of its long range plan to add further profitability to the land base surrounding its wastewater treatment facilities, the Muskegon County Commissioners began searching for a suitable use for the more than 1,600 acres of Mayor Creek.

"This one site was being proposed as part of an industrial park," explained Dr. David Skjaerlund, executive director of the Rural Development Council of Michigan. "The Muskegon County commissioners wanted to increase jobs and to look at an industrial process. Some three of that industrial park would've taken this 1,800-acre site."

"It does have certain complications that would have to be overcome before we'd actually do it," explained Tim Westermann, Muskegon Wastewater treatment facilities manager. "But it doesn't mean there will be application of wastewater to grow cranberries."

According to Skjaerlund, there is sufficient water through the county drain system for use in the cranberry beds. We're not using any water that comes out of the wastewater facility — that all surface water from other ditches, drainage ditches in the area that come from other areas of the county. The water that actually would be required to replenish the reservoir would not even come from water that came off Foss fields."

Economic development possibilities

"We got looking at the site and realized there was an opportunity to do economic development for Muskegon County, while maintaining productive farmland, Skjaerlund added, even to add value to that land from the standpoint of the county as an alternative to an industrial park that wouldn't wipe out probably the best site in Michigan for cranberry production."

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At the Sept. 25 meeting of the county commissioners Community Development and Strategic Planning Committee, they enthusiastically endorsed the idea of proceeding with the further research into the site and its feasibility for cranberry production. Eventually, planners would like erect a processing plant on the site to handle the estimated 1,000 acres of cranberry production.

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Continued on page 4

Cover Story

Fund-raising drive gives FFA a million-dollar boost

Vision2000 is no longer a vision... it is reality, thanks to all small part to the state of Michigan and the generous support of Michigan industry and individuals.

In a historical move, the Michigan FFA Foundation raised enough money in its Vision2000 campaign to match a special $500,000 grant issued to them from the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA). The particular part about the $1 million raised is that the final $1.6 million was raised completely during the month of September.

"Vision2000 has been an initiative of Gov. Engler and MDA," explains Bob Craig, MDA Office of Agriculture Development director. "When we looked at the site and realized there was an opportunity to do economic development for Michigan County, while maintaining productive farmland, Skjaerlund added, even to add value to that land from the standpoint of the county as an alternative to an industrial park that wouldn't wipe out probably the best site in Michigan for cranberry production."

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Continued on page 4

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Sell products and services in the Michigan Farm News classifieds—Page 18
Reagan's ranch may become park

F

ter President Ronald Reagan's ranch in Rancho del Cielo, Calif., which was put on the market more than a year ago, may be sold for $5 million to the Interior Department. The BLM then might give the property to the state of California for use as a state park.

Under the proposal, California would operate and maintain the ranch with $4 million in private money being raised by the state's Gov. Pete Wilson (R).

"This is a great place...I can see why (Reagan) loved this. It's beautiful up here," Wilson said while touring the ranch. "It would be a shame if this wasn't made available to the public," he added, "so I'm going to say a hell of a lot about Ronald Reagan."

"I can't envision any opposition," said House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), whose panel is expected to approve a grant for the purchase soon. "I think President Clinton and the Congress will be very supportive."

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White powder anchors farmland soil

R

igmentation water coming down farmland fences takes little if any topsoil if it is applied as a powder known as a polycyclic-am-ide or PAN to the water.

The idea is not new, but extensive outdoor tests by scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) were instrumental in gaining regulatory approval for PAN. For the past three years, 13 western states have okayed farm use of water soluble, negatively charged polycyclicamides.

Tests by ARS scientists Robert E. Solska and Recklandt D. Lenz at Kimberly, Idaho, have shown that it can prevent erosion of farmlands and lend them a "newness" that isn't there after a few years of cultivation. In addition, the technique has been employed successfully to anchor irrigation water in fields in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado.

Enviro groups challenge genetically altered crops

The American Farm Bureau Federation board of directors has disclosed its support behind legislation allowing fast-track trade negotiations. "We are satisfied that both the administration and the key committees in Congress have improved the fast-track legis- lation by addressing specific concerns we have raised," said ARFB President Dean Metcalf.

Those concerns, he said, include the need to reduce foreign competitors' tariffs and subsidies, prevent barriers to biotechnology, to reform state-trading enterprises; to eliminate unjustified sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions; and to improve dispute settlement procedures, especially as they relate to perishable commodities.

"The legislation being considered by committees in both houses is not perfect but improvements have been made since its introduction. We will work carefully with mem- bers of Congress to ensure that the EPA and the Environmental Protection Agency are not bound by unnecessary restrictions," Kleckner asserted.

Agriculture's concerns are discussed by the ARFB board before it voted to support fast-track legislation, which would streamline the process of the safety of the microbial fumigant used to protect crops. The groups also threatened to seek relief from the courts if the EPA doesn't comply. The Clinton administration is a strong proponent of genetically altered crops.

Farm Bureau to support fast-track legislation

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CAPITOL CORNER

NATIONAL

Animal Agriculture Reform Act

As is now known as the Animal Agriculture Reform Act is being introduced by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). The bill is designed to set minimum national environmental standards for the handling of animal waste from livestock feeding operations. Major provisions of the bill are as follows:

**Require animal waste management plan**
The requirement for a plan applies to all operations that produce 3,200 market hogs annually or comparable amounts of other livestock or poultry. These livestock and poultry operations must operate under a plan submitted to USDA for approval. The management plan will include:
- Specified methods of minimizing soil loss, water pollution and odors
- Practices for operation, monitoring, maintenance and inspection of animal waste storage facilities
- Procedures for the handling, transportation, application and treatment of animal waste
- Technical specifications for the design and construction of containment systems
- Contingency measures to contain accidental waste spills

**Require strict standards for earthen manure lagoons**

All new lagoons must meet strict technical standards to prevent leaks and spillage of animal waste. Existing earthen manure lagoons would be given a phase-in period to meet appropriate standards.

**Prohibit nutrient overloading of soils**

Under an approved management plan, nutrient may be applied to land only if nitrogen or phosphorus levels in the soil following the application of the animal waste would not be in excess of the levels necessary to obtain optimum yields for the crop or cover grown on the land. All sources of nutrients, including commercial fertilizers, must be taken into account when determining the maximum amount of animal waste that may be applied.

Hold animal owners responsible for waste

Animal owners and operators of livestock and poultry operations over the bill's threshold are responsible for compliance with the management plan. An animal owner whose animals are raised in multiple operations is also covered by the program if the total number of animals is above the threshold. In addition, constructing or similar arrangements will not exempt animal owners from the requirements of the bill.

**Require treatment of excess waste**

Animal waste that cannot be applied to cropland in accordance with the bill's environmental requirements, or otherwise practiced in an approved manner, must be treated in accordance with federal and state human waste treatment standards.

**Farm Borough opposes the bill**

The Farm Borough opposes the bill because it would add another layer of federal bureaucracy to existing federal/state water regulations, which would place Congress in the business of managing farm production practices, and would redirect valuable USDA resources away from providing technical expertise to policing environmental standards.

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

ERGONOMICS ISSUE

Lack of last year's efforts by the House of Representatives failed to continue a ban on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) proposal to govern workplace practices that may lead to "ergonomic injuries." Ergonomics, refers to any workplace factor relating to repetitive motion, working in hot or cold conditions, excessive force, gripping objects, lifting objects, climbing, stooping or bending, or working in awkward positions. Increasingly, the use of vibrating tools or any number of other conditions that might be encountered in farm workplaces.

The ergonomic standards drafted by OSHA in 1995 and 1996 were very vague in comparison with the production practices, and would redirect valuable USDA resources away from providing technical expertise to policing environmental standards.

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

STEVE

Production expenses

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed changes in the current regulations (UNICAP) rules that apply to the tax treatment of farmers and farm corporations. The regulations define what kinds of expenses are deductible and how they are treated in the income tax return. The changes in the draft proposed by IRS would require farmers to keep records of expenses associated with producing crops or raising livestock, and to include these expenses in their income tax return. The regulations are being proposed to make the tax laws more consistent with other federal laws and regulations. The regulations would also make it easier for farmers to claim tax deductions for expenses associated with producing crops or raising livestock.

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

STATE

Reduction of truck weights

Op. Burton Leland (D-Detroit) has sponsored H.B. 4615, which would reduce truck weights from the current truck weight standard of 146,000 pounds to 80,000 pounds gross vehicle weight. Rep. Leland recently completed statewide hearings on this bill and will introduce the bill to the House Transportation Committee.

Any reduction in truck weights would substantially increase production costs for farmers. In addition, research from such groups as the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute indicates that heavier trucks do not cause more damage than 80,000-pound trucks. No research to support a reduction in truck weight has been presented.

MFB position: MFB opposes H.B. 4615.

MFB contact: Tom Goodheart, ext. 2048.

STATE

Passengers in the back of a pickup

Op. Deb Cherry (D-Bates) has introduced H.B. 5103, which would ban the riding of people in the back of pickups for purposes of emergencies, parades and other activities. The bill would impose a fine of $250 for anyone who violates the ban. The ban would be enforced by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and local law enforcement agencies.

MFB position: Farm Bureau opposes. Action needed: None.

MFB contact: Ron Nelson, ext. 2040.

PETOSKEY BYPASS

Sponsored by Sen. Gary George (R-Benton Harbor) and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield (R-Kinsman), S.B. 251 ($02) which, as substituted, would provide an exception from the minimum capitalization requirement for the tax treatment of certain partnerships and LLCs. The bill was introduced to provide tax incentives for certain types of businesses, such as agricultural and forestry businesses, that are not currently eligible for the minimum capitalization requirement.

MFB position: MFB supports.

MFB contact: Tom Goodheart, ext. 2048.

STATE AGRICULTURE

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 serving agriculture is shared by 27 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:
Drain Code correction

The following is a synopsis of Drain Code amendments and changes positions:

1. Requires an evaluation of natural resources impacts that identifies appropriate provisions and guidelines.
2. Farm Bureau will support this change. Farm Bureau policy supports reducing adverse impacts in the natural resources.
3. A mentor program to improve or enhance natural resources which may include additional assessment guidelines.
4. The mentor program will support this change.

Drain Code public hearings

The House Agriculture Committee will hold a series of public hearings around the state to take testimony on proposed revisions to the Drain Code. (HB 3352) Agricultural interests, county drain commissioners, state officials and others have been working to update the code, which is a vital tool for protecting watersheds and construction and maintenance of drains, sewers, pumping equipment, bridges, culverts, roads and other infrastructure.

The hearings are scheduled for:

- 6 p.m., Thursday, October 16, Vienna Township Hall, 3600 W. Vienna, Clifton.
- 6-9 p.m., Monday, October 21, Farmington Township Hall, 2744 Vernon Road, Montere.
- Noon, Friday, October 25, Saginaw County Conference Room, 37 Austin, Saginaw.
- 6 p.m., Friday, November 6, Tawas Township Hall, 203 W. Tawas, Tawas.
- 5 p.m., Monday, November 9, Marcon Township Hall, 534 N. 4th Street, Marcon.

MFB contact: Scott Evert, ext. 2046.

$1 million raised for Michigan FFA Foundation

Commented on page 1, the Michigan FFA Foundation and Michigan FFA alumni, “Once they made the challenge, the only slight twist was that we needed to match it.”

“I’m just so amazed and impressed that the private sector not only rose to the challenge,” adds Craig. “But came up with dollars and actually exceeded the $500,000, which is great news and in such a short time— that’s just incredible to be able to do that.”

The Farm Bureau's strong support from the agricultural community for the FFA Foundation and all the programs and services that are going to be funded, he adds. “It’s an endowment fund, as opposed to the annual operating dollars, it’s really an endowment fund to provide security for the financial future.”

According to LaBoe, Vision 2000 is based on the belief that every citizen should have a minimum level of knowledge of the food and fiber segment of Michigan’s economy. A generation equal is attracting and educating the human resources needed to assure the continued growth and vitality of the agricultural and natural resource industries.

“The $1 million will be used in terms of communicating with the young people about the importance of the food and ag industry,” Craig adds. “There needs to be leadership development for FFA students, and we hope it will also increase the understanding of agriculture. There are a lot of jobs in the future, that people need to have the right training and skills to be employed in the food, ag and natural resource industries.

The continuing challenge

“We’re not done raising money by a long shot.”

According to Skjaerlund, the fundraising hasn’t finished with the $1 million goal being met. “We need to look at what we do to continue to raise funds to do the ongoing FFA awards.

All the leadership contests, the skills activities,” he adds, “those awards need to continue to be funded, we’re going to continue to need some contributions to that operating fund as well.”

During the Sept. 25 meeting of the Muskegon County Commissioner’s Community Development and Strategic Planning Committee, county Administrator Frank Bednarke and Economic Development Director Doug Buekens (right) and the first person to advocate cranberry production at the site Pein and Newkoh, Engineer Bruce Kedzban (center) look on.

Muskegon County looks to squeeze profits from cranberry production

Continued from page 1, “but all this is just a great site,” he adds. “We’re not done raising money by a long shot...”

“Having this base here,” he continues, “is a huge advantage. We can just take all of that island and develop it.”

“By doing this, we’re going to have the ability to take this island and develop it,” he explains. “It will give us an investor strategy.”

“The $500,000 job is just associated with the production and the processing side,” adds Bill Johnson, site area manager for Consumers Energy. “That doesn’t include the multiplier effect of new businesses and suppliers that would come into the area.”

“The bottom line will be more cleaners and labor. Economic development has a generous payback at times, but it’s usually long-term. We have a lot of partnerships with the communities which we serve and grow and some new opportunities, some business opportunities that line there is going to be a bigger electrically sold to this vast audience.”

According to Skjaerlund, the cranberry market has exponentially increased during the last 20 years, outpacing domestic supply. “While the production of cranberries has doubled since 1975, the price of cranberries has increased in excess of four-fold,” he adds.

The industry is cur- rently worth 61 million pounds short and has seen prices as high as 50 percent more than growers were paid two years ago.

Skjaerlund adds that the cranberry industry estimates another 6,000 acres are needed through the year 2000 to meet current demand alone.

“Cranberry production is a very viable and profitable industry,” Skjaerlund adds. “It’s also very capital-intensive even though you can get $12,000 to $15,000 an acre in income, you need about $25,000 to start for each acre of cranberries. The market is great, it takes money and investment to do it up from there.”

The December steering committee outlined three important steps for the county commissioners to take in order to move ahead with the cranberry project, including:

1. Establish a cranberry steering committee of commissioners to work on the project.
2. Participate in a two-day Wisconsin cranberry tour to visit production beds and processing plants during harvest this month.
3. Request for proposals to complete a second phase feasibility study, site design and layout for presentation as a proposal to potential investors.

“Tn our opinion, the project is so promising that we can’t afford to not go forward with it. We think the economy here will support it.”

According to Skjaerlund, the cranberry industry is one of the most important issues.

Currently, the Muskegon wastewater facility uses its treated water to irrigate hundreds of acres of alfalfa, soybeans and corn.

Introducing the Weldy Family of Products

Welcome to the Weldy family of products. Find out what we stand for: sturdy, well-built equipment that lasts. No Tore weathered friends these, but instead products that quietly perform in and in and out. Indiana based, we know about sleet and heat, manure and mud — all the things that challenge farmers and equipment alike. Our product lines are all manufactured with this philosophy in mind: dedication to details that make a difference, providing top of the line dependable equipment and parts inventory to keep you operating.

Weldy products are available through your local dealer (dealer inquiries also welcome)

Billed as "The Original Energy Free Waterer," MiraFount® is just that. Over 180,000 are in use... from the two hole, 20 gallon model to the six hole, 100 gallon model. You are certain to find one that fits your operation and personal standards. It is not only the most dependable people and parts inventory to keep you operating.

Comfort joints are an excellent choice for raising and saving healthy calves. Practically indestructible and maintenance-free, these features a thermomolded opaque material which maintains natural temperature availability. They are lightweight, so they can easily be moved for cleaning and they don't freeze to the ground like wooden or fiberglass hutchs.
MMPA President Emeritus Lake passes away at age 82

October 15, 1997

Lake passed away at age 82.

Renaissance Fund, call the Michigan Jobs Commission. Recover more of the cherry's natural sugars, the nutrients and improve Michigan's overall business climate.

Grand Rapids City Commission, to assist Gray & Company's funding of a new process for rinsing cherries. Gray & Company is one of the world's largest producers of cherry products. The company processes over 10 million pounds of cherries annually and currently serves 80 percent of the top grocery wholesalers and retailers.

The grant, funded through the Michigan Renaissance Fund, will be used to implement electrode technology in its rinsing process. Electrode technology is a way of rinsing cherries with electricity instead of water, and it offers the company several benefits by using this new process, developed by Michigan Technology Institute (MTI) International of Lansing, the processing plant will not discharge as much wastewater into the city of Hart's wastewater treatment system. The electrode technology will also allow for more recovery of the natural sugars that are lost when the cherries are rinsed with water prior to processing. Because Gray & Company will recover more of the cherry's natural sugars, the company will not have to purchase as much corn sweetness as it does now.

MDA director presents Hart with infrastructure grant

During his time as MDA president, he faced obstacles such as milk strikes, acquisitions and mergers, membership unrest and a growing and changing dairy industry. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s the Michigan dairy industry was enduring great growing pains. As the diversified small farm grew to a more specialized dairy farm, the membership needs and concerns also grew. Gray was able to successfully lead the cooperative members through these changing times. It was his combined sense empathy for the small farmer and his realistic view of the future that garnered respect from the MMPA members and the dairy industry as a whole.

Lake served as president of the National Milk Producers Federation from 1960-1976. Serving as president of MMPA and MMPF simultaneously gave Lake a broad view of the dairy industry. Through his leadership both organizations were able to set precedents in terms of dairy policy and milk marketing. Lake was also instrumental in the formation of the United Dairy Industry Association, a national organization providing nutritional information regarding dairy products to consumers. He was the first president of this organization and served in this position for 13 years.

MDA director presents Hart with infrastructure grant to assist Gray & Company innovation

Recently, Dan Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), presented a MDA economic development infrastructure grant to the city of Hart, Michigan, on behalf of the Michigan Jobs Commission, to assist Gray & Company's funding of a new process for rinsing cherries. Gray & Company is one of the world's largest producers of cherry products. The company processes over 10 million pounds of cherries annually and currently serves 80 percent of the top grocery wholesalers and retailers.

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Innovation and technological advances, such as electrode technology, will help pave the way as the agricultural industry moves into the 21st century said Wyant. "MDA is pleased to partner with Michigan Jobs Commission, MTI International, Gray & Company and the city of Hart in this cutting edge process." The total cost of the project is $2.5 million. In addition to the state grant, the city of Hart will be contributing $80,000 and Gray & Company will be expending $1,500,000 over the next two years on capital improvements. This project is expected to create 75 new jobs.

This is a project that was first brought to our attention by representatives from the Michigan Department of Agriculture. We have worked extensively with the department and representatives from the city of Hart and Gray & Company. We are pleased to be able to help support this innovative technology which will result in job opportunities for Michigan residents," said Doug Rothwell, Chief Executive Officer and Department Director of the Michigan Jobs Commission.


Proven performance in the field

Since 1990 DDR soybeans have generated over 600 top ten finishes in University trials. In 1996, Dairyland's DDS/STS herbicide tolerant varieties had 21 top ten finishes alone. Whether you're looking for STS tolerance, Roundup Ready soybeans, or just plain old fashioned high yielding genetics, the DDR lineup delivers.

Contact your local Dairyland representative to learn how you can obtain top yields with Dairyland soybeans.
**Market Outlook**

By Dr. Jim Hilker
Department of Agricultural Economics
Michigan State University

**COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS**

**COMMODITY SUPPLY/Demand BALANCE SHEETS**

**WHEAT**

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**SOYBEANS**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres harvested</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1,235</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,193</td>
<td>1,235</td>
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**CORN**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>period</th>
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<th>1996-97</th>
<th>1997-98</th>
<th>Estimated</th>
<th>Projected</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$/bu.</td>
<td>$/bu.</td>
<td>$/bu.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres planted</td>
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<td>46.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>46.0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvested</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>46.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stocks (million bushels)</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td></td>
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**SCALE**

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<th>1996-97</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>$/bu.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>62.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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**EGGS**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$/bu.</td>
<td>$/bu.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres planted</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres harvested</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvested</td>
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<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stocks (million bushels)</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Beginning stocks</td>
<td>1,280</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ending stocks</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each day we light the way for you and other farmers across the state — providing the power that keeps you in business. But our commitment to you doesn't stop there.

We have a 24-hour, toll-free number to answer your energy service questions. Plus, we've established a dedicated, toll-free number so we can respond to your questions about animal contact current. And, with 39 Customer Service Centers state-wide, we're ready to serve you.

We're also working with key agricultural organizations like Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan FFA on issues that impact your productivity and profitability.

We're proud to serve 20,000 farms — more farms than any other utility in the state — and we're committed to helping you succeed every step of the way.

For questions about animal contact current, call 1-800-252-8658.

For other service questions, call 1-800-477-5050.
Neighbors unite in time of need

Since a farming accident in early August, Clinton County dairy farmer Mel Pohland and his wife Pam have had many challenges. Thanks to the generosity of nearly 20 Fowler-area farmers, however, harvesting their corn silage wasn't one of them. A fleet of tractors and dump wagons, and two self-propelled forage harvesters put away nearly 2,100 tons of corn silage in Mel's bunker silo in just 20 hours. In addition to volunteers providing time and equipment, a local fuel vendor supplied all of the necessary fuel to keep everything running. The event was organized by neighboring dairy farmers Ken Halfman and Cliff Thelen.

Pohland, who was injured attempting to start a tractor from the ground when it was in gear, spent two weeks at the Detroit Medical Center to repair the damage to his pelvic area. Although he returned home, Pohland now gets around with the aid of a walker, while he continues another six months of rehabilitation at home.

The modest volunteers received a great deal of media attention for helping their neighbor in time of need, including a front-page story in the Lansing State Journal, and a story on WINS TV-6, which named the entire work crew their "Unsung Heroes" during their evening news program.

It took neighbors a little more than two days to fill Mel Pohland's 12' x 60' x 100' bunker silo. It took two packing tractors (left) to keep up with the constant flow of dump wagons and corn silage harvested with self-propelled forage harvesters (lower left). Two different crews worked each day to complete the job in record time. There was also time for a little camaraderie between neighbors (below) at the end of the job. As one farmer put it, "This is what community is all about!"

Get Connected and Save

Cash in on long-distance savings with The Farm Bureau Connection

- 8.5¢ per minute for all in-state calls, 11.9¢ per minute for all calls anywhere else in the United States, 24 hours a day
- Charges are based on six-second increments; if you talk for one minute and six seconds, you pay for one minute and six seconds, not for two minutes as you would with some other companies
- Dial-one service with easy access
- Free calling cards
- Personal SOD-numbers are available
- Low monthly access fee of $1.50

LETTER OF AGENCY

I, [Signature], a member of The Farm Bureau (营业执照 #), authorize The Farm Bureau Connection (营业执照 #) to act as my agent by notifying my local telephone company of this choice. I certify that I am legally responsible for the payment of charges incurred on the telephone number(s) listed below and that I have the authority to change the prescribed long-distance service currently providing service to these telephone number(s).

I understand that I can have only one primary long-distance service for a given telephone number that I will no longer be pre-subscribed to my current long-distance carrier's service and that my local telephone company may impose a charge for this and any later change. I also understand that The Farm Bureau Connection (营业执照 #) will not be billed for the pre-subscribed long-distance service.

I understand that my signature will result in my terminating (where applicable), terminating my long-distance telecommunications service, terminating and reinstating being provided by The Farm Bureau Connection (营业执照 #).

Michigan Farm Bureau
Membership Services Department
PO Box 30960 • Lansing, MI 48909-9934
RIGHT NOW, PERENNIAL WEEDS ARE PREPARING FOR WINTER. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN INTERRUPT THEIR PLANS.

It's simple: use Roundup Ultra™ herbicide. Perennial weeds like quackgrass, Canada thistle, field bindweed, hemp dogbane, orchardgrass and johnsongrass are now loading up on nutrients to make it through the long winter months ahead. It's also the perfect time for weeds to take in Roundup Ultra. Thanks to its TransSorb™ technology, Roundup Ultra quickly translocates within the plant, moving to the roots, and shutting down the plant completely. So you can look forward to clean fields instead of perennials next spring.

Don't let opportunity pass you by. Use Roundup Ultra after harvest. It's the perfect time for the best control.
Financial measures vary on Michigan swine farms

Sherrill B. Nott
Department of Agricultural Economics
Michigan State University

At least 20 percent of the pigs are sold at the local sale to provide farmers with cash to meet their farm expenses. The following are some of the financial measures that have been used to assess the profitability of the farming operations.

**Financial Guidelines Measures, 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michigan Swine Farms (Farms sorted by Net Farm Income)</th>
<th>Average for all Farms</th>
<th>Average for low 26%</th>
<th>Average for high 36%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUMBER OF FARMS</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOD</strong></td>
<td>$864,979</td>
<td>$675,705</td>
<td>$1,847,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Farm Sales</td>
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<td>$911,104</td>
<td>$1,239,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Farm Assets</td>
<td>$1,239,904</td>
<td>$911,904</td>
<td>$1,239,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Sows</td>
<td>1,239,904</td>
<td>911,904</td>
<td>1,239,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Swine</td>
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<td>911,904</td>
<td>1,239,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIQUIDITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Ratio</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Capital</td>
<td>$3,491</td>
<td>$5,825</td>
<td>$8,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solvency</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Debt to Asset Ratio</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Equity to Asset Ratio</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Debt to Equity Ratio</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROFITABILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of Return on Farm Assets</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of Return on Farm Equity</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Profit Margin</td>
<td>$4,023,000</td>
<td>$4,023,000</td>
<td>$4,023,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REPAYMENT CAPABILITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Debt Coverage Ratio</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Replacement Marginal</td>
<td>$59,001</td>
<td>$59,001</td>
<td>$59,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFICIENCY</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Turnover Rate (market)</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Expense Ratio</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Gross Margin</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Expense Ratio</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Farm Income</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By using these financial measures, farmers can evaluate their farm operations and make informed decisions about their future. The measures are based on the assumption that a farm operation is financially sound if all the ratios fall within the acceptable range. Financial ratios are used in conjunction with other financial measures to assess the financial health of a farm operation.

**Additional Data about These Swine Farms**

Additional data about these swine farms, broken into size groups, can be found in Agricultural Economics through Michigan State University Extension.

**North Korea on brink of “massive mortality”**

The United Nations report warned in mid-1995 that a risk of “massive mortality” exists in North Korea following a severe winter. The report said of farmers and their use of electricity: “For instance, a dairy farmer who milked two or three times a day is probably going to see a spike in the electric usage.”

**North Korea, which has been hesitant to accept outside help, faces a grain shortage of 1.9 million tons over the next year. Reports say between 500,000 and 2 million North Koreans have starved to death.”

**Grain officials call for river water**

Grain producers and shippers in the Midwest are expressing concern about the condition of the Mississippi River’s lock and dam system. In 1995, 82 percent of the corn and soybeans moved down the river, and almost all that grain went to the export market, according to the Midwest Area River Coalition.

Coalition President Christopher Bercia says 85 percent of the river system is more than 50 years old and needs replacing and upgrading, which would cost $750 million to $1 billion. Al Anderson of Harvest States Cooperative says without the barges to move the grain, farmers would have to pay $1 billion in extra freight costs. One barge can carry as much grain as 15 rail cars or 80 semi-trailers.
Common contagious infections and how to deal with them

Hey Mom! Look what I brought home from school!

C reepy, crawly things—enough to send a shudder through any parent. Add to that skin infections and eye infections. Your child frequently is at risk from them while at a place you normally consider safe: the daycare center or elementary school. Infectious diseases like head lice and ringworm, contagious diseases like impetigo and pink eye—all are commonly found in environments where they can be easily transmitted by direct contact among children.

These diseases also tend to carry a bit of social stigma. Parents typically react with horror when they realize their child is infected: “How could my child have head lice? We keep her so clean!”

Parents needn’t worry about their children’s cleanliness, according to Kathy Trczinski, RN, MSN, CRNP, a nurse practitioner at the duPont Hospital for Children. These diseases are quite common among all socioeconomic groups and are transmitted simply because children are together in close quarters, which increases the exchange of germs. If your child becomes infected, don’t worry about how or from whom she got it. Concentrate on getting her well. Here Trczinski gives you the scoop on some unpleasant (but curable!) infections your child may bring home from school or daycare.

Ringworm (Tinea corporis)

What it is: A fungal infection that usually appears on the skin of exposed areas such as the face, upper extremities and trunk as reddish patches, often scaly or blistered. Ringworm on the scalp can cause destruction of the hair shaft, resulting in bald patches.

Causes: Most often transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, or the sharing of combs, brushes, towels, etc.; animals also transmit ringworm, though rarely.

Treatment: Prolonged use of an antifungal cream is usually completely effective. Some of these creams are over-the-counter, others by prescription. Your doctor or pharmacist can advise you. The cream will not produce immediate results; treat for up to three continuous weeks. Make sure the child tubs thoroughly with soap and water and dries of completely since fungal disease is most areas if the scalp is affected, oral medication will be required—and treatment is rather prolonged—many weeks, in fact. Your physician can prescribe an appropriate antifungal medication.

Return to day care/school: 24 hours after treatment begins.

Head lice

What it is: A grayish, wingless, flat parasite that lives on the host’s blood. The lice hatch eggs (nits) that attach to the shafts of hair on the head, eyebrows and even lashes. Lice are hard to notice unless you look closely. If your child seems to be scratching his head vigorously, make an inspection.

Causes: Transmitted by sharing of combs, brushes, hats, ponytail holders, barrettes, etc. Lice can also live for one to two days on a couch or chair.

Treatment: To get rid of the lice, the eggs (nits) must be removed. There are a number of over-the-counter shampoo treatments that work well. Ask your pharmacist for a recommendation. Most kits also contain a fine-tooth comb used to comb the dead nits out of the hair after shampooing. In reading the package information, be sure the shampoo kills both eggs and lice.

Return to day care/school: After treatment, the child can go to school the next day.

Impetigo

What it is: A contagious skin inflammation caused by streptococcal or staphylococcal infection. Impetigo usually results when the skin is broken by a bite, scrape, burn or scratch. It is marked by blisters that become pus-filled, crusty and form yellow crusts.

Causes: Direct contact with the moist discharge of the lesions.

Treatment: The infection, if mild, may usually be controlled successfully with topical antibiotic ointment, which your physician can prescribe. Keep the skin around the lesions clean and expose the skin to the air to encourage drying. If the infection is widespread, severe or near the mouth where the antibiotic cream could be licked off, an oral antibiotic will be prescribed.

Return to day care/school: Usually 24 hours after treatment has begun.

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)

What it is: Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the transparent mucous membrane (the conjunctiva) lining the eyelids and eyelids. It is either a viral or bacterial infection, an allergic reaction or—in newborns—caused by tear ducts that don’t completely open. When it’s bacterial or viral, it’s dubbed “pinkeye” and may be highly contagious. The infection results in red, watery, often itchy eyes, which ooze secretions that crust and can cause the eyelids to stick together.

Causes: Colds and poor hand washing habits, sharing of eye makeup in adolescents.

Treatment: Your physician can prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment.

Return to day care/school: Once the infection has subsided, usually after a day or two, the child can return to school.
A better way to check your weight

Knowing what you weigh is one thing, but getting a reasonable idea of how much of your weight is body fat ranks as a better gauge of your risk of health problems. One body fat measure frequently used by researchers is the body mass index (BMI). This number is an estimate of whether your body fat is high enough to put you at risk for such chronic conditions as heart disease and diabetes. BMI is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. But to save you the trouble of getting out your calculator, the following chart allows you to find your BMI at a glance.

Scientists differ in their opinions of what makes the exact cut-off point for an unhealthily high BMI. In general, most agree that a BMI of 19 to 25 is fine. From 26 to 27 is pushing the envelope, while BMIs greater than 27 indicate that a person is overweight.

To be sure, BMI is just one measure, and some people with high BMIs may not be "fat." A bodybuilder whose weight is mostly muscle may score high on BMI charts even though his proportion of actual body fat is low. In addition, where on the body a person carries fat plays a role in health risk. Fat deposited around the abdomen, creating an "apple" body shape, is more detrimental to health than fat carried around the hips and thighs, making a "pear" shape.

![BMI chart]

Source: Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter
Use antibiotics wisely
Misusing antibiotics promotes the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which pose a danger to both the user and the public. To minimize the risk:
• Don't take antibiotics for a viral infection such as a cold, flu, or minor respiratory illness; antibiotics don't work against viruses.
• When your doctor diagnoses a bacterial infection ask for an antibiotic that specifically targets the likely strain, rather than a "broad-spectrum" drug. Taking a bacterial culture of the infected tissue or fluid can further improve the match between the drug and the bug.
• Take the full course of antibiotics that your doctor prescribes, since stopping prematurely can encourage the development of resistant bacteria. Failure to long-term treatment can also promote resistance; so ask your doctor whether a shorter course might eradicate the infection.

Is it only heartburn?

HEALTHY HARVEST

Low-fat common sense
In a nutrition study, when people were told that the lunch they were eating was "low-fat," they consumed more calories than those who thought it was "normal" lunch. Some researchers believe that the "ick" effect may be due to a reduction in the satiety signal that "wick" away moisture. If you use a high-profile diet plan, you can get nowhere. Next best thing is to wear a sandal. When you wear shoes, wear clean socks, preferably ones that "wick" away moisture. At your feet being worn - don't wear the same pair day in, day out. Powder or even a spray antiperspirant can help keep dry feet. If you already have athlete's foot, try an over-the-counter antifungal product.

Prevent athlete's foot
Keep your feet clean and dry, especially in hot weather. Wash, dry properly and sponge, and wear shoes that provide a breathable ground for the fungus that cause athlete's foot. Daily washing with soap and water is a good idea, but be sure to dry thoroughly, especially between the toes. You can get athlete's foot even when you take a shower. When you shower, wear clean socks, probably ones that "wick" away moisture. At your feet being worn - don't wear the same pair day in, day out. Powder or even a spray antiperspirant can help keep dry feet. If you already have athlete's foot, try an over-the-counter antifungal product.

Injecting insulin through clothing
People with diabetes who use the "neuro" practice of injecting insulin through their clothes are not necessarily risking safety, according to a study in Diabetes Care. Michigan researchers asked 42 diabetic patients to inject insulin through their clothes. Although the researchers did not exactly know the number of injections, they observed around 30 weeks of injections through a single layer of clothing with no skin penetration. There were no infections or other complications reported with the method, and the study concluded that saving time and sparing the need for extra equipment was the most important benefit.

Is it true that people really should eat breakfast?

Nutritionists might disagree on a lot of things, but this isn't one of them. We've heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a dietitian who disagrees with that. Why? Because people generally don't eat when they're fast asleep. It may not seem this way when you get late-afternoon hangovers, but the longest period between any two meals is from dinner to breakfast. By the time you wake up, your blood sugar is low. It should be restored to give you the energy you need for your mind and body to get moving. If you don't eat breakfast on a regular basis, your body's tendency to use the food it has in storage much more efficiently. In this case, being that efficient isn't necessarily a good thing. It means your metabolism slows down, and your body gets a lot better at storing fat. Many nutritionists believe that skipping breakfast is a sure-fire way to thwart any diet plans you might have.
Cardiologists develop new laser surgery for angina

For people disabled by the crushing chest pain of angina despite repeated angioplasty or bypass surgery, drilling a series of tiny holes into the heart with a laser may bring surprising relief. The procedure, called transmyocardial revascularization or TMR, is still considered experimental, but several reports presented at the American Cardiology meeting in March suggest that it may provide a promising new alternative for patients who have exhausted other treatment options.

Angina occurs when the hard-working heart muscle doesn't receive enough oxygen-rich blood. Most often, this reduced blood flow, called ischemia, results from cholesterol-laden plaque narrowing the coronary arteries. The pain of angina usually comes on during exercise or as a result of emotional stress, although it can also occur with routine activity.

In TMR, a surgeon uses a computer-controlled laser to drill 20 to 40 channels in the wall of the heart's main pumping chamber, the left ventricle (see illustration). The computer synchronizes the laser's pulses to fire between heartbeats, hitting the left ventricle when it is engorged with blood. The holes, about a millimeter in diameter (about the size of a toothpick), allow blood to flow into the channels, bringing oxygen to the tissues. The holes on the heart's surface seal shut with clotted blood in minutes and heal within days, but research is still needed to determine how long the channels stay open.

Asshown by this latest study, TMR does offer several advantages over conventional treatments. Unlike bypass surgery, which requires stopping the heart and relying on a heart-lung machine to pump the patient's blood during the procedure, TMR is performed with the heart still beating. In addition to TMR, surgeons reach the heart through a four-inch incision between the patient's ribs, rather than by splitting the breastbone as in so-called "open-heart" procedures. This means that recovery time is quicker, and the surgery costs about a third as much as bypass.

In one study of 160 patients presented at the cardiology meeting, researchers from 12 US medical centers compared treatment with the laser to treatment with traditional medications for angina. All of the patients had previously undergone angioplasty or bypass. After six months, 71 percent of those who underwent TMR saw improvement in their angina, compared with none of the patients on medication.

For now, no one knows exactly why TMR works, and it is still considered investigational by the Food and Drug Administration. But when more hospitals begin using the laser, which is anticipated to receive FDA approval later this year, this procedure is sure to gain wider attention.

The physician's perspective

Currently, the treatment options available to people suffering from angina include medication, angioplasty, and bypass surgery. While medication primarily works by reducing the heart's need for oxygen, angioplasty and bypass surgery create new pathways for blood to be delivered to the heart by going through or around the clogged coronary arteries. Unfortunately, none of these treatments is perfect. People who undergo angioplasty frequently need repeat procedures to keep blood vessels open. Bypass surgery is limited by its greater risk of complications, longer recovery period and higher cost. In addition, some people have other health problems that make them poor candidates for bypass.

Physicians usually recommend that patients start with medication, and then move on to angioplasty or surgery if symptoms persist.

The different tactics offered by transmyocardial laser revascularization might sound like an ideal alternative for improving blood flow to the heart, based on research results to date. But many cardiologists are wary because the mechanism by which it works is not at all clear.

Animal studies and some human studies now show that most of the laser-drilled channels in the heart muscle wall actually close soon after surgery. So how does the procedure help blood to move from inside the ventricle to the heart muscle? One possible explanation is that the short-lived flow of blood through the channels, or perhaps the laser energy itself, may stimulate the growth of new blood vessels, capable of carrying oxygen-rich blood to the deficient areas of the heart. In fact, several recent studies have demonstrated that blood flow to the heart does improve after TMR, despite closure of the laser-induced channels.

As shown by this latest study, TMR does seem to relieve angina better than medication.

And some research suggests that TMR may be most useful as an adjunct to traditional bypass surgery, particularly in areas of the heart where the arteries are too small for the surgeon to sew in a bypass graft.

Cardiologists have several concerns about the widespread use of TMR, however. Some of the short-term benefits seem so far to be due to a placebo effect rather than the laser channels themselves. That is, people may feel better simply because they have had some sort of treatment, regardless of whether it actually works. In addition, no studies have followed patients for more than one year after surgery, so no one knows how long the angina relief may last. And unlike bypass surgery, which has been carefully studied in thousands of patients over decades, the effect of this technique on life expectancy is unknown. Lastly, lasers are sexy, and many hospitals are taking advantage of this to market themselves aggressively to their communities.

What should you do if you continue to suffer from angina despite treatment with medication? First, consult your doctor about your suitability for angioplasty or bypass surgery. If you are not a good candidate for these proven therapies, or your angina persists despite treatment, TMR may be an option. For now, the procedure is available only through clinical trials at FDA-approved sites. And you should keep in mind that TMR is experimental and that the long-term benefits are still unknown. ☟
A great deal of research has been conducted in both controlled trials and farmers’ fields that has shown the many advantages of wheat in maximizing yields when used in field crop rotations, especially following soybeans and before corn. If good farmers use suitable hybrids, good fertility and other cultural practices, making the soybean corn cycle will increase corn yields as much as wheat in the rotation. Just rotating corn with wheat can increase corn yields by as much as 15 percent. When wheat is followed by a cover crop, increased yields in Michigan have never been less than 15 percent, and usually average 17.4 percent.

This increase in corn yields occurs as low as 100%-bushel level and as high as 180-190 bushel per acre. The reasons for such yield increases are not yet entirely clear. However, one reason is that wheat is usually preceded by soybeans, which have a major impact on corn yield from one year to the next. This usually increases yields by about 10 percent. The impact of the second year is somewhat less. So the total impact of wheat is due not only to the effects of wheat on factors that affect the yield of the soybeans, but also the effects of the soybean crop that preceded it. There are added benefits from wheat beyond that due to the expected increased yields.

**Breaking the interrupted yield decline**

Recently, a published article in the Agronomy Journal reported that “interrupted yield decline” of monocots of both grasses and legumes. Other scientific literature shows both soybean and wheat yield declines associated with monocots. On the positive side, the yield enhancement, at least on sandy soils, is expected to last two years. Yield enhancements last up to two years. Based on evidence to date, the answer is not clear because the basis for the yield response has still completely understood.

**Nutrient replenishment or nutrient availability**

Agricultural economics have expressed this response in terms of nutrient replenishment, implying that the wheat is contributing something back to the soil. However, the real reason for the enhancement of nutrients in the soil following wheat. Thus, part of yield increase may be due to the release of nutrients from the wheat and the mobilization of nutrients in the soil following wheat. This provides an excellent supply of soil nutrients to the soybean which follows wheat or, when the soil is depleted by corn production. Increased soil quality

Some of the improvement is due to the deep, long-term, and thorough cultivation of the soil. More effective use of nitrogen in the soil, leaves more for the next crop. Thus, part of the value of wheat is in the improvement of corn yield over soybeans. The value of soil left from wheat to the corn is obvious. Since wheat is a grain that follows soybeans, wheat is considered to be a good “companion” crop.

**Passive soil management**

When wheat is rotated with a type of “passive soil management”, the wheat is excellent for controlling the effect of root deterioration in the winter following wheat. This provides an excellent supply of soil nutrients to the soybean which follows wheat or, when the soil is depleted by corn production. Increased soil quality

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AS FARMERS MONITOR THEIR SUCCESS IN CORN, ONE NUMBER KEEPS COMING UP.

RX601 beat the best from DeKalb, Novartis and Pioneer — for three years straight.* It does it with strong emergence and early vigor, good leaf disease and stress tolerance, and good stalks and roots to support its top yield. On top of all that, RX601 is a unique, great-looking plant that turns heads all season long. All of which is why it's become a very important hybrid for a whole lot of growers.

Fifteen years ago, Asgrow made a commitment to build a corn line on par with anyone's. Today, proprietary hybrids like RX601 are the result. So put Asgrow corn in your lineup. Then watch your yield numbers start going up.

*For proof of Asgrow corn success, call 1.800.815.4545. Asgrow Seed Company, Des Moines, Iowa.
Weather

by Dr. Jeff Andresen, Agricultural Meteorologist, Dept. of Geography, Michigan State University

Ung in late September, jet stream steering currents in the upper atmosphere shifted to a more typical west-to-east configuration. This resulted in some late summer warmth and much-needed growing degree day accumulations in many areas of the state. While killing frosts conditions ended the growing season for much of the Upper and interior northern Lower Peninsulas, crops continued to develop in central and southern sections of the state and greatly benefited from the recent warm temperatures.

For September, mean temperatures ranged from 1.5°F above normal in the Upper Peninsula to 1.5°F below normal in central and southern lower Michigan. For some southern sections of the state, it was the sixth consecutive month of below normal temperatures since April. Base 50°F growing degree day seasonal accumulations at the end of the month generally ranged from 10 to as much as 20 percent below normal, with largest departures from normal occurring in central and southern sections of the state. Precipitation for the month was variable, but generally ranged from below normal in northern areas of the state to above normal in the south.

With a strong El Niño event in full swing across the equatorial Pacific Ocean, NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center outlooks are calling for near equal probabilities of below, near, and above-normal temperatures for the month of October and the 90-day October-December period. Warmer-than-normal temperatures are favored for western and central sections of the Upper Peninsula for the 90-Day period. The outlook calls for increased odds of above-normal precipitation in the October-December period, with near equal probabilities of all three scenarios indicated for the month of October.

Democrats still viewed as the “green party”

A recent survey of registered voters revealed that 51 percent of Americans believe the Democratic Party would do a better job of protecting the environment than would the Republicans. Only 12 percent viewed the Republican party as guardians of the environment. Nineteen percent said both parties would perform about the same. Another 11 percent selected neither party.

The 39-point margin is wider than the 28-point advantage Democrats enjoyed in May 1996. With the economy in apparently good health, environmental issues could take center stage in next year’s off-year election, according to experts. “Environmental groups...are telling politicians, that with economic issues off the table, such causes as clean air, water and ozone protection gain prominence,” according to the Wall Street Journal.

The Penny Check-Off: A Great Investment for Michigan’s Corn Producers

Corn Marketing Program of Michigan

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Herb Smith
Corn Farmer, Traverse, MI

The penny per bushel corn check-off has been a wonderful investment for the Michigan corn grower. Who says so? Michigan corn growers!

Pooling our monies has meant that collectively every penny per bushel corn check-off has been a wonderful investment for the Michigan corn grower. Who says so?

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan when everyone contributes just one penny, the results really add up.

Developments like that not only benefit farmers, but society as well.

The penny check-off has also provided money for developing new strains of disease-resistant corn and new farming techniques that will further increase quality yields.

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The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, when everyone contributes just one penny, the results really add up.
The Michigan Cattlemen's Association (MCA) bestowed its 1997 Member of the Year award presented at round-up to Bill and Linda Hinga, of Climax, in June at this organization and any like it is what every member needs to be involved in," Linda Hinga explained about their involvement with the MCA. For more information on the MCA's member awards or any MCA program, please contact the MCA office at (517) 336-6780 or write P.O. Box 24641, Lansing, MI 48909.

Member of the Year award presented at round-up

Site-specific agriculture: environmental friend or foe?

Site-specific agriculture has been an important subject in recent years, particularly as farmers seek to improve their crop yields while minimizing environmental impacts. The concept of site-specific management, which involves applying different inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides based on specific soil characteristics, is gaining popularity among farmers.

For example, consider a field of corn that has been divided into smaller areas based on soil type and nutrient levels. Using precision agriculture technologies, farmers can apply fertilizers and pesticides only where they are needed, potentially reducing the overall amount of inputs required and minimizing environmental impacts.

However, the implementation of site-specific management often requires significant investments in technology and infrastructure. This can be a barrier for smaller farmers who may not have the resources to adopt these practices. Additionally, there are concerns about the potential for increased costs and complexity in management.

Despite these challenges, site-specific agriculture offers the potential for increased efficiency and environmental sustainability. As such, it remains an area of ongoing research and development, with new technologies and practices continually emerging.
Weed Strategies
Winter weed control meetings

by Dr. Jim Kells and Karen Renner
Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University

Tentative schedule for the Michigan State University winter weed control meetings has been set. We are planning a total of 14 meetings that will be held in January and February. The meetings will be located throughout southern and central Michigan and will be broadcasted across a multi-county area. The major weed control topics that we plan to present are:

- Predicting yield losses from weeds
- Managing weeds with herbicide-resistant crops
- Herbicide recommendation updates

The following table lists the meeting dates, locations, and speakers at each meeting. Detailed agendas will be developed by the hosting County Extension office later this fall. For more information on the meetings, please contact the Michigan State University Extension office in the county hosting the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weed Control Meeting Schedule</th>
<th>County(ies)</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Saginaw, Shiawassee*</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>Sanilac</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 3</td>
<td>Tuscola</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>Ionia*, Eaton, Barry</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>Bay, Arenac*</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>Benzie, Cass, VanBuren</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Lenawee*, Monroe</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Ingham</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Grooti, Clinton*</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Calhoun*, Branch, Hillsdale, Jackson</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Kalamazoo, St. Joseph*</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>Lapeer*, Oakland, Genesee, St. Clair</td>
<td>Karen Renner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Midland, Clare, Iabella*, Gladwin</td>
<td>Jim Kells</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*hosting county

New voluntary wildlife habitat plan announced by USDA

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently announced a new program that will help farmers and other landowners protect critically important wildlife habitat. USDA's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a land management — rather than a land retirement — program.

WHIP provides both technical assistance and cost-share payments to landowners to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. In addition, if the landowner agrees, cooperating state wildlife agencies and nonprofit or private organizations may provide expertise or additional funding to help landowners complete a project.

There were plenty of good reasons:

- It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
- It is a major component in acid rain.
- It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
- Accidental inhalation can kill you.
- It has been found in tumors of cancer patients.

Glickman said, "WHIP will help the nation's landowners voluntarily develop habitat for wildlife on private lands that comprise over 70 percent of the land in this country." WHIP also offers farmers and ranchers an opportunity to meet their production needs in ways that are compatible with providing fish and wildlife habitat.

Under the 1996 Farm Bill, WHIP provides cost-share assistance up to 75 percent of the cost of installing wildlife habitat practices. Cost-share payments may be used to establish new practices or replace practices that fail for reasons beyond the landowner's control. The total cost-share amount cannot exceed $10,000 per agreement.

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While the first lease payment is usually due at closing, the same as a down payment would be, Farm Credit Services has developed several payment plans for farmers. For example, the Harvest Lease Plan allows a grower to lease a combine in September, and not make the first lease payment until December after a partial payment of 10 percent of the asset cost. Smith said. Many times, leases are also available on used equipment, making them an even lower cost option.

Recently, leasing has become an attractive option offered to farmers by both equipment dealers and ag lenders. Farmers are deciding to lease equipment for several reasons, for Tom Smith, Farm Credit Services' leasing specialist explained. One reason leasing is an attractive option is the up-front cost. "The first lease payment is almost always less than the standard 25 percent down payment required when a farmer purchases equipment," Smith said.

Mark Gettel of Gettel and Company, a four-state John Deere dealership serving the north­ern Saginaw Bay area, agrees with Smith. "As farmers strive to grow their operation in size and profit," Gettel explained, "they need more capital sooner than what their profits normally can provide. Farmers need the efficiency provided by the quality and capacity of the latest technology. The challenge is in determining how much capital should be spent on an appreciable asset such as land and how much capital should be spent on more efficient, productive equipment, which is a depreciable asset."

"Many farmers lease equipment with the plan to purchase the item at the end of the lease," explained Jason Kocher, another FCS leasing specialist. "In a lot of cases, the farmer's total out of pocket cost is within a few dollars of the cost for conventional financing over the same time period as the lease. Leasing is no longer high cost financing," said Kocher.

Farmers need to be especially careful that a lease meets the requirements of a true operating lease before they use the lease payment(s) as an expense deduction on their taxes. True operating leases have a purchase option at the end of the contract, which should be exactly that, an option. True operating leases also don't spell out an interest rate in the contract, and they shouldn't have a very low cost purchase option. One test to determine if the lease is a true operating lease is if the residual value or purchase option price is the same as the equipment's true market value, Tobin said.

"Leases can also be used as an estate planning tool," Smith explained. A farmer nearing retirement, but with plans to pass the farm on to the next generation, can lease a piece of equipment. At the end of the lease, whoever is taking over the farm can exercise the purchase option on the equipment with the lessor's approval. In this scenario, the equipment can be passed on to the next generation, but at a low cost that doesn't have any implications to the retiring farmer's estate. These men admit that leasing isn't for everyone. But they emphasize it is a management option that should be considered by all farmers before they decide to acquire any more new or used equipment.

**Equipment leasing offers advantages**
Tips for making it a successful hunt

- Make sure you know who you grant permission to. Get Associate Legislative Counsel Scott Everen. He knows problems.
- Hunt well a head of opening day, is key to avoiding excessive crop damage in years to come. "The ball is now in the court of the landowners and the sportsmen," Laurie said. "These management strategies give us new tools to help reduce the deer herd. The crucial link rests between farmers providing access if and when possible, and sportsmen taking the initiative to seek access now, not the day before the start of these new seasons. Hunters also need to be willing to take antlerless deer."
- Rick Jamieson, executive director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, agreed, adding that hunters need to be aware of and respect trespass and poaching laws as well as honor specific landowner requests. He predicts that more than 750,000 firearm deer hunters will take to the woods and fields this fall during the firearm deer season. "How hunters pursue their sport is more important than how many deer they bag," Jamieson said. "We should all practice and demand zero tolerance on poaching and trespassing."
- According to K.L. Cool, director of MDNR, the new management strategies are the result of growing public concern, as evidenced by increased discussions about white-tailed deer accidents, winter-feeding when deer populations exceed carrying capacity of local areas, and agricultural crop damage.
- "By working together, we believe we have developed a strategy to address each of these critical areas in the upcoming season," Cool said. "Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologists have identified the Deer Management Units where white-tailed populations are above specific population objectives and have determined how many antlerless deer need to be removed," Cool explained. In addition to helping reduce crop damage and the number of deer accidents, Dan Wyant, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture expects the anticipated reduction in the deer population to improve overall deer herd health and quality.
- "I'm very pleased with the special hunting opportunities and innovative deer management tools that were passed by the NRC," Wyant said. "This effort will maximize the understanding harvest this season, which is crucial to reducing our state's deer herd."

For the Landowner

- Make sure you know who you grant permission to. Get the name and address of everyone who has permission to hunt your property.
- Explain in detail which fields can and, more importantly, which fields cannot be hunted. No one wants a newly seeded wheat field to be trampled by a group of hunters working their way to their blinds.
- Note which gates are used for access to the permitted hunting areas.
- Explain which species can be harvested during the appropriate hunting seasons. Do you only want antlerless deer taken from your fields? Can pheasants only be hunted in areas outside of land adjacent to the farm? This is your opportunity to set the parameters for use of your farmland during the hunting season.
- Decide if you want them to stop by the farm after they hunt to let you know they are gone.
- Decide where you want permitted hunters to park. Be sure to request license plate numbers of these vehicles to ensure only permitted hunters park there.
- If there is not enough room for granting hunter access during the regular archery and firearm seasons, invite hunters back for the special antlerless season Dec. 20 through Jan. 4. 1998.
- For the hunter
- Ask for permission well in advance of the hunting season. Plan your visit to the farm right after hunt or early in the evening when the farmer most likely is less busy.
- Offer to take antlerless deer only, and offer to hunt the special antlerless-only seasons.
- Ask for permission even if the land isn't posted against hunting or trespassing.
- When asking for permission, be polite and don't be off-putted if a farmer does not grant permission to hunt on his property. Remember, he or she may already have others who have asked to hunt there. Get their opinion on other farmers or landowners to request access.
- When asking permission, ask for yourself or with one other person. Don't take a large group up to the door and do not take your gun with you when asking.
- If permission is only for you to hunt, don't show up with additional friends or relatives looking to hunt.
- Ask for specific directions to fields available to be hunted. Be sure to find out if there are any crop fields that should not be hunted.
- Be sure to leave the gate the way you found them. If the gate is open, it is open for a reason, either for livestock or machinery access.
- Maintain a minimum distance of 40 feet from buildings.
- Be sure to obtain written permission from the landowner.
- Do not set up hunting stands or bait on the landowner's property without specifically getting permission for it.
- Leave the area you hunt as you left it — that means picking up any litter, especially spent shells, from the property.
- After the hunt, be sure to thank the landowner for the use of their property. Offer the farmer a portion of the game you harvested on his property — that opens doors for next year's hunt.

Hunter access — tips to ensure success this season

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In agriculture, the teams are made up of Extension specialists, agents, researchers and stakeholders centered around a particular commodity. AoE teams help farmers with more specialized expertise in specific fields, such as dairy, field crops or swine. Paul Wylie, Allegan County Extension agriculture agent, devotes about 50 percent of his time to Area of Expertise responsibilities. He is the field crops AoE agent in Allegan, Ottawa and Barry counties. He spends the other half of his time serving as a general agent in Allegan County.

“The Area of Expertise teams evolved from field scouts — county agents. They saw changes in the needs of farmers,” Wylie said. “They wanted to talk to someone on a local basis that had a higher level of expertise. The farmers that are left tend to be pretty sophisticated and, in many cases, know more about what they were doing than the county ag agents did.”

Thus the Area of Expertise idea was born. Beginning in the summer of 1994, agents were allowed to choose their areas of expertise.

Some agents, who were used to covering general agriculture such as one county, were asked to cover a specific commodity in a few counties. Some Extension agents have no AoE responsibilities at all. Dairy agents, on the other hand, are required to cover all dairy in a given county, often over more than one county. The Animal Industry Advisory Board added another kind of area of expertise, about seven years ago.

“Most county ag agents had developed an area of expertise — something they were proficient in and could speak authoritatively on,” Wylie said. “Extension just wanted to formalize it.”

According to Wylie, having AoE teams can better serve the needs of farmers.

“There’s a need for some specialization — to be on the cutting edge of a certain field,” Wylie said. “There’s also a need to have some general knowledge, so farmers and ag professionals can call with almost any kind of question.”

“Ther’s at least somebody in each county that has an agricultural assignment,” Wylie said. And for assistance with specific areas, farmers can find resources without looking too far away, the Michigan State University Extension. “There’s somebody in a county or two away that has cutting-edge knowledge,” he continued.

Carrie Andrich, Huron County Extension agriculture agent, said having an area to focus on helps her provide better service to farmers. “I think it allows the person in the position to be more effective in their job,” she said.

Andrich began her Extension career in 1995 and was hired in as a field crops Area of Expertise agent.

“It’s still hard to know everything about every crop because Michigan is so diverse,” Andrich said. “Up here, we cover six or seven crops, so it’s not necessarily about knowing all the answers, but finding the resources farmers need.”

Discussion Questions
1. How is your county’s agricultural Extension office organized around AoE teams? Does a district livestock agent or an AoE agent in a specific commodity cover your area?
2. Has anyone in your group had contact with an Area of Expertise team member? Did that person provide you with the specialized service you needed?
3. Is this step in the right direction for Extension? Why or why not? How might your county’s agriculture industry be better served by Extension?

New waste management video available: Farm Waste Management Makes Sense

A nine-minute video, Farm Waste Management Makes Sense, provides an overview of serious economic questions surrounding agricultural waste disposal and offers suggestions for effective waste management. Farmers have traditionally disposed of farm household waste by maintaining small dumps and by burning combustible materials on site. Waste oil, pesticides, used batteries, and other potential contaminants, as well as containers, plastics, and paper have been disposed of in these ways. Under the pressures of greater numbers of support neighbors, wider use of plastics that add to the problem of agricultural waste, and stricter environmental regulation, continued on-site burning and dumping may jeopardize the viability of some farms. In addition, farm livestock are concerned about the impact of environmental degradation on long-term collateral value.

Seeking deeper awareness of waste management issues as a key to the financial success of farms in New York and across the country, the Cornell Waste Management Institute produced Farm Waste Management Makes Sense for audiences in a variety of settings.

Farm Waste Management Makes Sense, NRAS-111, is available for $21 per copy (plus shipping and handling from NRAS, Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Rob Hall, Ithaca, NY 14850-7851). The shipping and handling charge is $5.00 for a single copy or for a free publications catalog, contact NRAS by phone at (607) 255-7564, by fax at (607) 254-8770, or by e-mail at nraes@cornell.edu.

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Traditionally, the Michigan wheat acreage has been about 70-75 percent soft white vs. 25-30 percent soft red. Michigan's reputation as a soft white wheat state and a strong wheat breeding program at MSU, plus the vigorous and dynamic Michigan Millers Association, have combined to keep white wheat production strong and healthy. Thus, Michigan, along with the Pacific Northwest and the Canadian province of Ontario, has supplied most of the soft white wheat in North America, with smaller amounts grown in New York and Pennsylvania.

Out of 10 varieties developed and released from MSU since 1968, seven have been soft white varieties and three soft red varieties. The MSU breeding program has received major support from the Michigan Millers Association, which depends largely on soft white varieties to keep their market base for supplying flour for cakes, cookies and pastries, and bread used in the breakfast food industry. A smaller market exists for thickening agents and other special uses.

The strong support of the milling industry, along with strong support from the certified seed industry for MSU wheat breeding has enabled the development of a string of successful varieties bred especially for Michigan's climatological and soil environment. The pinnacle of breeding success occurred in 1980 with the release of Augusta and Frankenmuth varietiy, which for the next 10 years dominated the wheat picture in Michigan and most of Ontario in Canada and production.

The traditional transition area between red wheat varieties in the South and white varieties in the Central, Thumb, and Northern areas has been somewhere near an east-west line between Grand Rapids and Lansing, however, the Central, Thumb, and Northern areas has supplied most of the soft white wheat throughout the entire Eastern United States and has been the potential for seed sales, almost all private varieties have been soft red. Thus, the total number of red varieties currently available to Michigan wheat producers outnumber those for white varieties substantially. This preponderance in red wheat varieties has resulted in increased availability and visibility of soft red wheat. This, along with the excellent performance of available varieties, has enabled the emergence of soft red wheat in Michigan, including areas historically dominated by white wheat.

In the past, most elevators in the traditionally white or red wheat areas have been unwilling to receive both classes of wheat. However, with recent changes, most elevators today accept both classes in most areas, especially the larger areas with good handling facilities. The relative price of the two classes has traditionally fluctuated. In years when the price favors red wheat, enterprising growers, even in Central and Northern Michigan, typically transport their wheat to Southern Michigan or Toledo markets to take advantage of better prices.

Most Michigan wheat producers are familiar with the historical factors cited above, although they may sometimes be confused by the array of factors that influence their variety of class choices. It is clear that the trade-off between white and red wheat in Michigan is changing because of choices that individual growers are making. It is also clear that Michigan wheat producers increasingly feel that production of red varieties is to their advantage.

The purpose of the following discussion is to help clarify some of the factors involved concerning white and red wheats, and in growers' choices about which variety and class to produce.

Advantages of red varieties
1. Greater number of varieties. One factor already noted is the greater number of soft red wheats available compared to that for soft white wheats. The reason for this is clear. Probably as many as 10 different public institutions throughout the Eastern United States have wheat breeding programs and all but two Michigan (and New York) concentrate on red wheat varieties.

2. Greater sprout tolerance. Though both soft red and soft white wheats will sprout under prolonged wet weather, red wheats are substantially more resistant to sprouting. Thus, they tolerate more successive days of wet weather before sprouting occurs. Consequently, sprouting is only infrequently a significant problem. However, red wheats are not resistant to sprouting and will eventually be affected.

Advantages of white varieties
1. Uniqueness to Michigan. This must be considered as an advantage, first to the milling industry, and then to growers as well. Though Michigan is not the only white wheat area, it does have a well-earned reputation for producing a unique product that fills an important niche, especially in providing white bran for the breakfast food industry. Early Michigan millers had the vision and market wisdom to understand that they could not compete with larger wheat areas throughout the Eastern United States by being "also-rans" in the marketplace. They had the vision to develop their future on uniqueness and in filling a niche market by which they could sustain their industry, and with it, profitability to Michigan wheat producers.

The success of the Michigan white wheat milling industry has exemplified and underlined the entire Michigan wheat industry by maintaining profitability for the entire wheat industry and to a large extent, Michigan agriculture. It has enabled the milling industry to average near $100 million per year in farm gate receipts and an added value of $1.5 billion, in large part because of soft white wheat.

2. Varieties bred and developed for Michigan conditions. This has been part of the strength of Michigan white wheat varieties. They were largely developed at the Michigan State University for Michigan conditions. This has been considered to be an advantage over soft red wheats, which were largely developed for other areas. In the past, it has been thought that soft wheats varieties were more winter hardy because of this reason.

Shared attributes and yield potential
White and red wheats share much more in common than the small differences that exist between them. Except for the unique features of the bran for cereals and breakfast foods, the value of both classes is similar. The flour of both is of equal use for cake, cookie and pastry flour. The management of both types is essentially the same in terms of planting, fertilization, performance and yield potential. During the record year for Michigan wheat yields in 1995, 10 white wheat varieties entered in the MSU state performance trials yielded 70.68, compared to 71.2 for the 10 white varieties entered in the MSU state performance trials yielded 70.68, compared to 71.2 for the 10 red wheats entered.

Production choices — market choices
Both white and red wheats are well adapted to Michigan and both have a place in the total wheat picture. Regardless of the class produced, growers should choose the best varieties of each on the basis of statewide performance and market potential in their area. In the end, most growers will probably be influenced by relative price and profitability in their immediate area. However, it is very important to the total wheat industry that Michigan stay competitive in wheat and understand that the key to competitiveness includes the continued production of white wheat.

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