ICHIGAN FARM N

MICHIGAN'S ONLY STATEWIDE FARM NEWSPAPER

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

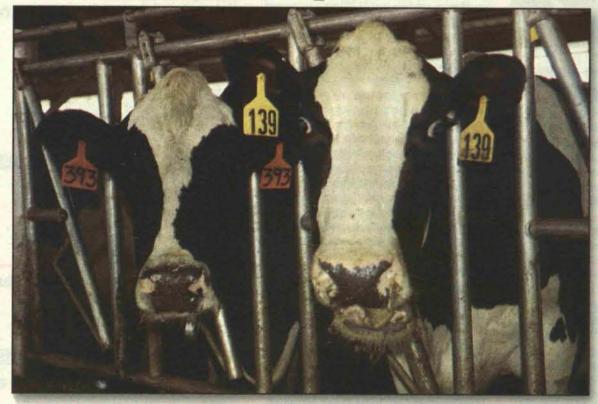


MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

November 15, 1997 Vol. 74, No. 19



Dairy superpool faces collapse Dec. 1



As of Dec. 1, the voluntary statewide milk marketing over-order premium pool, commonly known as the superpool, will no longer be in place as a mechanism to add money to the milk price paid to dairy farmers. The voluntary pool was established five years ago with every Michigan milk marketing cooperative and dairy processor participating. Recently, two milk handlers pulled out of the pool, sending the industry into a debate surrounding the need for the order.

Project GREEEN thanks Legislature for support

n late October, representatives from the bulk of Michigan's plant-based agriculture descended upon the state capitol to deliver a basket filled with Michigan-grown food products to legislators to thank them for their support of Project GREEEN.

Project GREEEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs) received a \$1 million appropriation from the Legislature earlier this year (\$500,000 recurring plus \$500,000 one-time) to fund research projects on apples, blueberries, cranberries, potatoes, wheat, sugar beets and tomatoes.

"When producers and growers thank legislators for appropriations received, it creates a great deal of curiosity," explained MFB Legislative Counsel Ron Nelson. "Typically we ask for things and fail to thank; in this case we're thanking without asking."

At the event, an aptly colored green basket filled with dry beans, tulip bulbs, apples, cranberries, corn-derived HalsoSalt, baby carrots, dried cherries, soybean crayons and sugar was delivered to key legislators who made the funding of GREEEN possible. More than 60 volunteers from all facets of Michigan agriculture assembled to deliver the baskets.

"It was an excellent representation of the diversity of Michigan agriculture, from apples to zucchinis," Nelson added. "If it weren't for the Project GREEEN initiative, we would never have been able to assemble such a large cross section, representing Michigan's plant agriculture, united as

"The idea behind Project GREEEN began more than a year ago when Michigan Farm Bureau, commodity groups and food processors asked the university to develop a plan preparing them to meet the coming century's economic and environmental challenges," said Bob Boehm, MFB field crops manager. "It's a plan to generate needed research and educational programs meeting a wide range of economic and environmental needs identified by growers and processors.

The benefits from GREEEN's plan are not only for Michigan agriculture," Boehm said, "but the opportunities in Michigan's plant industry have the potential to create more than 21,000 new jobs and add more than \$1.4 billion to the state's economy."

According to Nelson, the funding of GREEEN provided commodity groups, food processors and MSU the resources to continue their research. "Funding of GREEEN has translated into results for growers, producers addressing questions, issues and problems.

There is a need for additional funding to continue and expand those projects," Nelson added. "We have demonstrated to the Legislature and the governor that, with very limited additional funds, we have started down the road to results.

CFTC issues final order to Chicago Board of Trade on delivery specifications

he year-long battle between the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and the Chicago Board of Trade (CBT) came to a final resolution Nov. 7, as the governing agency ordered proposed changes, which includes retaining Toledo as a delivery point for soybeans, to take effect beginning in the year 2000.

The delivery changes are part of an 11-month conflict arising from the CFTC desire to improve the delivery system for grain and the CBT's proposal based solely upon delivery points along a 150-mile stretch of the Illinois River between Pekin and Chicago, Ill.

According to the CFTC, the final modifications to CBT's proposed delivery plan include soybean futures contracts retaining the current delivery locations of Toledo and St. Louis in addition to the proposed delivery locations of Chicago and the northern Illinois River, and make soybeans at the Chicago and Toledo delivery locations deliverable at par.

"This is the final rule as issued by CFTC," explained MFB Field Crops Manager Bob Boehm. "We are pleased with the retention of Toledo as a delivery point for soybeans, but disappointed that the CFTC did not require the same provision on corn contracts.

Through producer comments during the public review process we were able to modify other provisions, including basis adjustments on the 150mile stretch of the Illinois River," he added. "The CFTC had never before taken such action against a U.S. futures exchange under its jurisdiction. One of the things we were not able to prove was the need to retain Toledo as a delivery point on corn. The CFTC is bound by the provisions of the Commodity Exchange Act and apparently was unable to justify the retention of Toledo for corn contracts based on the scope of that authority. There will be continued

scrutiny over the next several years to monitor CBT corn contract operation under the revised system."

One such person upset with the loss of Toledo as a corn delivery point is Michigan Congressman John Dingell, ranking member of the House of Representatives Commerce Committee. "The CBT's proposal is short-sighted and misguided," Dingell said. "It is unfortunate that the CFTC was not stronger in its response. This proposal will benefit a few traders and hurt American farmers, producers and consumers.'

Boehm agrees that the big unknown is how volatile the corn market will be once the new delivery system is in place. "Usually with change there is added risk," he said. "In that initial period, the market will be unsure about how the new contract will perform; typically that means a wider basis to offset risk of the unknown. Hopefully, that doesn't mean a dramatic shift in price, but that's the concern.'

The CFTC also found that the lack of price differentials at all river-based delivery locations for both the corn and soybean futures contracts failed to reflect the differentials in the underlying cash markets for corn and soybeans as required by Commodity Exchange Act. The governing body therefore ordered that differided to both the corn and soybean contracts.

Two other modifications the CFTC made to the CBT proposals revolved around the reliance chiefly on a single mode of transportation on the Illinois River for delivery and elimination of the \$40 million net worth requirement of issuers of shipping certificates. "This renders the contract susceptible to significant disruptions in transportation on the Illinois River, increasing the possibility of price manipulation, market congestion, or the abnormal movement of corn and soybeans in interstate commerce," the CFTC said in a release statement.

State milk marketing order could be only way



t its Nov. 4 meeting, the five representatives comprising the Michigan Commission of Agriculture voted unanimously to support the concept of a state milk

marketing order once all other avenues for Michigan's dairy industry to keep the voluntary pool have been exhausted.

What the commission hoped to do was force the industry to the table to re-establish voluntary order," explained MFB President Jack Laurie. "If that could be done, I firmly believe it would have already happened. The effect of this will probably delay any attempt to make a decision as to whether or not we go forward with a statewide, legislated order.

"Our members have indicated very clearly that they support a volunteer-type order program such as we've had in the past, because of the equity and stability and security that a pool program brings to the whole industry," Laurie said in testimony to the commission. "Absent a volunteer program, they would then support a state-legislated program to address an over-order premium."

"This doesn't preclude them [the commission from supporting a state order," explained Michigan Milk Producers Association General Manager Walt Wosje. "Basically what it said is the industry should get together and talk it over to see if there's some unanimity of opinion. I thought we had done that and discovered there wasn't. And that's why we're at the table today."

'If the industry comes together, they can effectively resolve this," said Ken Martin, with Quality Dairy, which opposes a mandated state milk marketing order. "It has worked in the past, and I Continued on page 7

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News in Brief



From the President

IRS proposal on new capitalization rules an insult

RS bashing appears to be a favorite pastime these days among both taxpayers and Congress. A recent proposal on how farmers treat pre-productive expenses on many specialty crops such as fruit trees, asparagus, cranberries and nurseries, is yet another glowing example of why the agency is quickly falling out of favor with even its staunchest allies.

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed changes in the uniform capitalization (UNICAP) rules that apply to farmers. UNICAP rules determine if pre-productive expenses can be deducted immediately or whether the expenses have to be depreciated over the life of a plant or animal.

UNICAP rules apply to farmers who grow plants with a pre-productive cycle of more than two years and to producers of plants and animals who are required to use accrual accounting. Fortunately, they do not apply to dairy and livestock farmers, who are not required to use accrual accounting.

Under current IRS rules, affected producers must capitalize "preparatory" expenditures, which include the costs of clearing, leveling and grading land; drilling and equipping wells or acquiring irrigation systems; seeds, seedlings and budding trees; and acquiring animals.

The IRS is now proposing that affected producers also capitalize "developmental" expenditures, which include the costs of irrigating, fertilizing, spraying, cultivating, pruning, feeding, providing veterinary services, rent on land, and depreciation allowances on irrigation systems or structures.

The proposed rules also change the definition of the reproductive period of plants that have more than one crop or yield and the exception for expenses incurred when plants are destroyed by disaster.

The proposed expansion of expenses covered by UNICAP is simply an insult to producers who often have a significant investment in establishing new orchards and other high-cost crops, with little or no income for three to five years.

Cherry producers, I'm told, often have \$3,000 to \$5,000 per acre invested in establishing a new block of cherry trees. Apple producers can have more than \$7,000 per acre invested in establishing new, high-density apple orchards. Asparagus growers, likewise, can have over \$1,250 per acre invested in just rootstock alone. The IRS proposal would deal a deathblow to the state's cranberry industry, still in its infancy. Costs to establish a cranberry bog can be as high as \$25,000, not including land costs.

Without the ability to cash-expense developmental costs, or what I consider cash expenses, producers will have yet another disincentive to invest for the future, which will have a direct and detrimental impact on our state and local economies.

Consider also the bookkeeping nightmare that such a proposal would create for producers. Under this proposal, producers would have to itemize all costs and keep cash expenses for established crops separate from cash expenses for new crops.

The public comment period on this proposal faces a Nov. 20 deadline. Rest assured that Michigan Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation have voiced their opposition to this ill-conceived proposal. Let me suggest, as added insurance, that you let your U.S. congressman know what a disaster this proposal will be for Michigan agriculture, particularly for our state's \$200 million-plus fruit industry. With the second most diverse commodity mix in the country, this proposal will have a far greater impact on our agricultural industry.

Even if your farm enterprises don't include any of these specialty crops, let me suggest that you still be concerned. Other tax provisions such as income averaging and deferred payment contract provisions can and will likely receive additional IRS attention.

If there is a silver lining in this proposal, it lies in the fact that it adds one more nail in the coffin of an agency that's long overdue and ripe for reform. Let's hope our elected officials follow through on their rhetoric and make those changes reality.

Jack Laurie

New sugar beet germplasm released to breeders

sugar beet breeders can now get three new sugar beet lines that carry resistance to two diseases that cause much of the disease damage to beets worldwide. Unchecked, rhizoctonia root rot and cercospora leaf spot have the potential to nearly cripple the \$1 to \$1.2 billion domestic sugar industry.

The new sugar beets were developed by scientists in Fort Collins, Colo., at the Crops Research Laboratory, part of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). One of the new lines, known as FC725, shows excellent resistance to rhizoctonia root rot and some resistance to cercospora leaf spot. Another line, FC726, possesses superior sugar production potential

as well as excellent resistance to rhizoctonia. The third line, FC728, has potential for use as a productive hybrid parent, because the plants pass much of their genetic superiority onto the next generation. FC728 also has excellent resistance to root rot.

Individual commercial varieties may be highly resistant to one or another of the two diseases. But the new lines contain better resistance against an onslaught of both the rhizoctonia and the cercospora diseases. ARS and the Beet Sugar Development Foundation jointly released the lines after testing by ARS researchers. Commercial breeders can obtain seed from ARS.

Michigan corn growers to vote on referendum

eginning Dec. 1 and continuing through Dec. 12, all Michigan farmers who have sold \$800 worth of corn in at least one of the past three years will have the opportunity to vote on the one-cent-per-bushel checkoff.

According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture, ballots will be mailed in November to all who have qualified.

"The purpose of the Corn Marketing Program is to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn growers by providing for the growth and research that will stimulate the demand for corn," said Keith Muxlow, executive director of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. The one cent per bushel funds the activities of the Corn Marketing Program.

The checkoff applies only to corn sold. The first purchaser is responsible for collection. All kinds and varieties of corn grown in Michigan and sold as corn are included, except sweet corn, seed corn, popcorn and corn grown for silage.

"The outcome of the vote will determine if the program started in 1991 will continue," added Muxlow. "Their vision of the corn industry's future is the core of the checkoff program and its fate is, again, in the voting hands of Michigan's corn producers."

During the county Farm Bureau annual process throughout the state, 16 individual county Farm Bureaus passed resolutions in support of the continuation of the program. The Michigan Farm Bureau board of directors also passed a resolution in support of the checkoff.

If you have any questions about the referendum, call the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan office at 1-888-323-6601.

Panel: EPA overestimates atrazine risk

he Environmental Protection Agency overestimates the cancer risk posed by the widely used herbicide atrazine, an internal panel of EPA toxicologists has concluded. Agency sources say the finding could spur EPA to reassess the way it regulates atrazine.

During the past several years, environmental groups have pressured the EPA into tightening its regulation of atrazine. They claimed runoff of the chemical is a major source of drinking water contamination. But the panel's report could push the

agency to relax its current drinking water and water quality limits for atrazine.

"Traditionally, chemicals that are found to have a threshold at which there is no effect tend to be regulated with less scrutiny," said one EPA source. Another source, however, said it was too early to assume that the panel's finding will lead to relaxed regulation of atrazine.

The panel's recommendations are under review by upper level management at EPA.

Conservation tillage growing in United States

The number of acres of conservation-tilled farmland continues to grow on U.S. farmland, according to the Conservation Technology Information Center. A county-by-county survey shows 109.8 million of the nation's 292.6 million acres of crops were planted this year using conservation tillage. That's a 6-million-acre increase from last year.

"These systems not only replenish and build organic matter in the soil for improved future food productivity, but they will also protect water quality and enhance wildlife and the environment for future generations," said John Hebblethwaite, executive director of the center. "There is also growing evidence that these systems can even help us combat the potential for global warming."

Conservation tillage leaves crop residue such as stems, stalks and leaves on 30 percent or more of the soil surface from harvest time to planting. The crop residues slowly decompose to add organic matter to the soil. Such tillage practices reduce soil erosion by up to 90 percent and also provide habitat for wildlife.

ORGANIZATIONAL BRIEFS

1998 AFBF annual meeting to feature Dole

arm Bureau leaders and members will gather in Charlotte, N.C., Jan. 11-15 for their 78th annual meeting with this year's featured speaker Elizabeth

Charlotte, considered the stock car racing capital of the world, is also looked upon as a hotbed for some tasty, authentic down-home southern cooking.

Elizabeth Dole, president of the American Red Cross and wife of former senator and Republican presidential nominee Robert Dole, will deliver the keynote address Tuesday morning. Dole, a North Carolina native, held two cabinet posts during her career. She served as secretary of transportation under President Ronald Reagan, and she served President George Bush as secretary of labor.

During Dole's tenure as transportation secretary, the United States enjoyed the safest years in its history in all three major transportation areas — rail, air and highway. She led the crusade to raise the drinking age to 21 years old, directed the overhaul of the aviation safety inspection system and imposed tougher aviation security measures at U.S. airports. As labor secretary, Dole helped increase safety and health in the workplace and upgraded the skills of the American workforce.

Dole, as president of the American Red Cross, oversees nearly 30,000 staff members and more than 1.5 million volunteers who comprise the world's foremost humanitarian organization.

The Gatlin Brothers, a Grammy
Award-winning group,
will headline Tuesday
evening's entertainment.
Terri Clark, one of country music's rising female
artists, will be the opening performer.

This year's slate includes the annual



Elizabeth Dole

Young Farmer contests. Some of the top Young Farmers in the nation will participate in the Discussion Meet and the final rounds of the achievement awards.

Monday's and Tuesday's sessions will be highlighted by President Kleckner's annual address, issue and commodity conferences, and the 1998 Farm Bureau Showcase.

The 1998 AFBF annual meeting will round out the week with state Farm Bureau delegates discussing and voting on AFBF policies that will guide the organization in 1998.

For information, call Mary Jane Miller at Michigan Farm Bureau by Dec. 1 at (800) 292-2680, ext. 2201.

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Potash in short supply in some areas

ome areas of the country in need of potash this year are facing shortages due to the closing of a Canadian mine and rail car shortages caused by the swift soybean harvest.

"We have some of the lowest inventories we've seen in many years, and right now it's peak potash purchasing time," said John Douglas, a fertilizer industry consultant in Alabama.

AGRO-CULTURE

Potash supplies have been low since last spring but the closing of the Potacan mine in Canada following flooding has only enhanced the situation. Prior to closing in mid-June, Potacan annually produced 1.3 million tons and exported about half of that to the United States. The situation is expected to get even worse after a mine in New Mexico closes in December.



Capitol Corner

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

NATIONAL

Apple fireblight

here is good news to report on congressional action to appropriate money for the second year of apple fireblight research.

Earlier this year, the House and Senate approved separate agricultural appropriations bills for FY 1998, which began Oct. 1, 1997. The bills contained \$325,000 for the second year of the apple fireblight research project, which was the same amount appropriated for the first year of the research.

Because of other differences between the \$49.5 billion agricultural appropriations bills, they were referred to a joint House-Senate Conference Committee to reconcile the differences. The Conference Committee has completed its work. The good news is that the \$325,000 was increased to \$500,000!

The House of Representatives and the Senate have approved the conference report. The bill is now on its way to President Clinton for signing into law.

However, President Clinton has requested a list of projects contained in the appropriations bill that were not included in his request to Congress. The apple fireblight money was not requested by the president. There is speculation he may line-item veto some of the specific provisions in the bill that he did not request.

MFB position: Farm Bureau strongly supports the money appropriated for apple fireblight research. Fireblight is becoming resistant to streptomycin and poses a serious threat to the apple production in Michigan as well as other states.

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

NATIONAL

OSHA reform

he Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has approved S. 1237, known as the Safety Advancement for Employees Act.

The bill makes specific reforms to OSHA rather than widespread, sweeping reforms. The two reforms that could be beneficial to farmers are:

Require a scientific peer review of new OSHA standards to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences.

 Allow for OSHA safety reviews of workplaces by safety professionals, certification of workplace safety and exemption from OSHA inspections for two years. If this provision were to become law, it would be a very valuable service that could be performed by user-friendly entities such as state Farm Bureaus. state Farm Bureau Insurance companies and others not permissible under current law.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports S. 1237. MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

NATIONAL

Canadian dairy subsidies

ecent actions by U.S. Rep. Dave Camp (R-Midland) have resulted in action by the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to address Canada's violation of a milk export subsidy agreement. Canada is believed to be violating the agreement by using subsidies to artificially reduce the price of its dairy exports. The subsidies take away U.S. dairy exports to international markets.

The USTR has agreed to a petition by the U.S. dairy industry for action against Canada's milk export subsidy. The U.S. government will now prepare a case against Canada. Examples of the Canadian milk subsidy include a 717 percent increase in Canadian cheese exports to Japan in the last six months, two customers in Korea buying mozzarella cheese from U.S. companies being taken away by Canada in 1997, and the United States losing a Chinese customer to the Baskin Robbins Toronto plant.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports the action by the USTR against Canada's milk export

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

NATIONAL

Foreign trade barriers

S. Rep. Dave Camp (R-Midland) has introduced H.R. 2596, known as the Agricultural Market Access Act of 1997. The bill is designed to give the federal government an important tool to break down foreign trade barriers to U.S. farm products.

H.R. 2596 would require the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to each year designate as priority countries, those foreign countries whose unfair and illegal trade practices have the greatest adverse impact on U.S. farm products. After identifying a country as a priority country, the USTR would be

required, with limited exceptions, to initiate a streamlined case to be concluded within six months against the unfair and illegal practices.

The bill may be added to the fast-track legislation when it is voted on by the House.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports H.R. 2596. It would be a cornerstone in establishing agricultural trade priorities and removing market barriers in a timely manner.

MFB contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040.

STATE

Pipelines

S.B. 262. It has passed the House and Senate and has been presented to the governor for signing.

The bill would amend P.A. 16 of 1929, which regulates the transportation and sale of crude oil and petroleum through pipelines, to establish certain requirements for persons constructing a crude oil or petroleum pipeline or facility.

A person who conducted survey work for a proposed crude oil or petroleum pipeline would have to notify all affected property owners, in writing, before a survey crew entered the owners' property.

Any offer to a landowner for an easement for the purpose of locating, constructing, maintaining, operating and transporting crude oil or petroleum pipelines on agricultural property in Michigan would have to include all of the following information:

- The anticipated physical impact of pipeline construction on the landowner's property.
- Written assurance that any agricultural drainage tile that was damaged or removed during the construction or repair of a pipeline would be repaired or replaced to preconstruction working conditions. ("Drainage tile" would include any surface or subsurface system by which the movement of water was redirected.)
- Written assurance that topsoil that was disturbed

- due to construction or repair of a pipeline was properly separated and replaced. ("Topsoil" would mean surface soil that was presumed to be fertile, as distinguished from subsoil.)
- The method by which property will be appraised.
- For property used to produce crops prior to construction of a pipeline, an estimate of the value of the loss of the productivity based on historic yield of the site before pipeline construction. The agricultural property owner would have to provide historic crop yield values upon request
- Payment would be made for all damages incurred after construction of the pipeline due to the pipeline owner's or operator's entry upon the property to exercise easement rights, except that the owner or operator would be allowed to maintain a clear right-of-way without further compensation being due to the landowner.
- That the landowner has rights under the Uniform Condemnation Procedures Act. A copy of that act would have to be provided to the landowner.

A pipeline company would have to make a good-faith effort to minimize the physical impact and economic damage that resulted from the construction and repair of a pipeline.

> MFB position: Farm Bureau supports S.B. 262. MFB contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046.

STATE

Oversize permit fees

S.B. 613 dealing with oversized permit fees. Originally, the bill established new reporting requirements for leased vehicles. An amendment was adopted on the Senate floor to reduce the fees for oversized trucks. The fee was recently raised from \$5 to \$50 for a single trip and \$100 for multi-

ple trips. The amendment reduces the fees to \$15

for a single trip and \$30 for a multiple trip. It is estimated this cost the state \$3.5 million in lost revenue for the roads

Currently, special permit fees for the hauling of farm implements, both to and from the farm, . shall not exceed the administrative costs incurred by the jurisdictional authority in issuing the permit."

MFB contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048.

Oil and gas post-production cost update

ep. Larry DeVuyst (R-Ithaca) has introduced consecutive bills H.B. 5261 and H.B. 5262 dealing with post-production cost legislation (see Oct. 30 Michigan Farm News). The bills have been placed on the House calendar but are being delayed because of other oil- and gas-related bills being worked on by the House Forestry and Mineral

Rights Committee. The intent may be to move all oil- and gas-related legislation as a package.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports H.B. 5261 and 5262.

Action needed: Continue to call or write state representatives supporting both H.B. 5261 and 5262.

MFB contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046.



ince its beginning in 1971, Michigan Farm Radio Network's only objective has been to serve Michigan's farm families. This dedication to serve agriculture is shared by 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:

Station	City	Frequency	Morning Report	Noon Report
WABJ	Adrian	1490	5:45 am	11:05-12:00 pm
WATZ	Alpena	1450 5:30 am		11:30 am
WTKA	Ann Arbor	1050	6:05 am	12:00-1:00 pm
WLEW	Bad Axe	1340	6:30 am	12:50 pm
WKJF	Cadillac	1370	5:45 am	11:10 am
WKYO	Caro	1360	6:15 am	12:10-1:00 pm
WTVB	Coldwater	1590	5:45 am	12:00-1:00 pm
WDOW	Dowagiac	1440	6:05 am	12:15 pm
WGHN AM	Grand Haven	1370	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WGHN FM	Grand Haven	92.1	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WPLB	Greenville	1380	6:15 am	11:50 am
WBCH	Hastings	1220	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WCSR	Hillsdale	1340	6:45 am	12:45 pm
WHTC	Holland	1450		12:15 pm
WION	Ionia	1430	6:45 am	12:30-1:00 pm
WKHM	Jackson	970	5:45-6:00 am	12:30-1:00 pm
WKZO	Kalamazoo	590	5:00-6:00 am	12:00-1:00 pm
WPLB FM	Lakeview	106.3	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WOAP	Owosso	1080	7:15 am	12:40 pm
WHAK	Rogers City	960		12:15 pm
WMLM	St. Louis	1520	6:05 am	12:20 pm
WSGW	Saginaw	790	5:55 am	11:30-12:30 pm
WMIC	Sandusky	660	6:15 am	12:45 pm
WKJC FM	Tawas City	104.7		12:40 pm
WLKM	Three Rivers	1510	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WTCM	Traverse City	580	5:45 am	11:10 am

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Dairy industry leaders join forces to help producers plan for the future

airy industry leaders will be presenting educational seminars across the country for dairy producers considering expanding their current facilities or building a new facility. Bou-Matic, Five G Consulting, Agpro, Inc., and Lester Building Systems have joined forces to help dairy producers plan for the future.

"Dairy producers from around the country are very interested in this educational information," said Five G Consulting Engineer Donald Gribble. "Most county Extensions are stretched to their limit and the dairy producers planning big-dollar expansions need to educate themselves. Proper planning can help avoid costly mistakes in the future."

The special Dairy Design Seminars will educate dairy producers on planning a facility that will meet their current and future production goals. The knowledge will benefit dairy producers by helping them to develop long-term growth plans and profitability strategies.

The topics to be covered include farmstead layout, the planning process, building and remodeling options, parlor outfitting and comparisons, the complete dairy, common oversights, housing considerations, and waste management systems.

Participants will take part in technical discussions, question-and-answer session, and will hear from featured dairy producer speakers. Everyone will also receive a copy of the planning manual "Designing Today's Dairy To Meet Tomorrow's Requirements," complete with detailed information on design considerations and photos of working facilities. A nominal seminar fee will be charged.

The Dairy Design Seminars in Michigan will be held Feb. 25, 1998, in Lansing. For more information, call (800) 527-1030.

Capitol Corner

STATE

Amendments to the Recreational Trespass Act

S. B. 767, sponsored by Sen. Mat Dunaskiss (D-Lake Orion), and S.B. 768, sponsored by Sen. Loren Bennett (R-Canton), were introduced and referred to the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

The following is a summary of S.B. 767 and explanation of the key amendments being proposed to the Recreational Trespass Act:

Definition of navigable

A "navigable public stream" has historically been defined as a river, stream, creek or drain able to float a log, which in some circumstances has become a "stick" rather than a log. This definition dates back to the logging days in Michigan and is a very difficult definition to understand. The bill proposes to define water as navigable when a person can float in a vessel of the lightest nature.

The definition of navigable is important. When individuals are wading or floating in a navigable public stream for recreational activity they are allowed, under current law, without written or oral consent to enter onto the property within the clearly defined banks of the stream or walk a route as approximate to the clearly defined bank as possible to avoid a natural or artificial hazard or obstruction. The bill will continue to allow this activity without it being considered trespassing, unless damage to "farm products" takes place.

Landowners would have the ability to pursue court actions against a trespasser:

The bill would authorize a property owner to bring a cause of action in the courts against a person who violates the Recreational Trespass Act for either \$250 or actual cost of damages, whichever is greater. A landowner would no longer have to rely exclusively upon county prosecutors to bring actions against trespassers. Landowners would have

the ability to execute actions themselves either through small claims court for less than \$1,750 in damages or in circuit court for greater than \$1,750 in damages. For example, it would cost a trespasser a minimum of \$250 if found guilty of trespassing, or more if found guilty of damages more than \$250.

S.B. 767 would increase the penalties for trespassing, which would change the first offense of trespassing from not more than \$100 to not less than \$100, but not more than \$500.

Property, other than fish or animals brought onto the property of another person while committing a violation, may be seized by peace officers. Animals or fish taken while trespassing may be confiscated, with mandatory reimbursement to the state for the value of any animal or fish taken while trespassing. For example, deer would cost \$1,000, bear \$1,000, and fish under 1 pound \$10 per fish, greater than 1 pound \$10 per pound.

Second and subsequent offenses within three years of previous violation would change from not less than \$100 and not more than \$1,000 to not less than \$250 and not more than \$1,000.

If passed, the amendment would require the mandatory revocation of hunting or fishing license for not less than one and not more than three years. Current law does not mandate the revocation of the license but does allow the judge the option to revoke the license through sentencing.

The S.B. 768 amendments provide for instructions to small claims courts in order for landowners to pursue civil action against trespassers.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports S.B. 767 and S.B. 768.

MFB contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046.

Biodiesel considered, critics unhappy

the Energy Department is considering allowing the use of biodiesel fuel as an alternative fuel for government vehicles. The fuel, which is a blend of 80 percent standard diesel and 20 percent soybean-based biodiesel, has been criticized by some as a dirtier fuel than natural gas, alcohol or electricity.

Under the federal Energy Policy Act, 75 percent of all new state and federal cars and trucks, and 90 percent of all cars and trucks used by gas and electric utilities, must be fueled by alternative fuels by 2001. The law is expected to put 500,000 additional clean-burning cars on the road. Critics of the proposal to allow biodiesel into the fray say biodiesel will defeat some of the purpose of the law because biodiesel gives off pollutants similar to standard diesel fuel.

STATE

Pain management bills H.B. 4681 through H.B. 4686

six bills addressing pain management are in the House Health Policy Committee, chaired by Rep. Joseph Palamara. The issue is controversial, and meetings of the committee are likely to be held sometime this month. The bills have bipartisan support. Most of the concerns and recommendations established in Farm Bureau policy are contained in these bills.

The package of bills recognizes the evaluation and treatment of intractable pain as a fundamental component of health care and patients should have access to coverage under insurance plans. This will be opposed by many who see this as a new state mandate. Intractable pain is described as pain that is severe, persistent or recurring that is disabling, impairs activities and is incapable of being significantly reduced by reasonable treatment.

The bills expand the advisory committee on pain and symptom management to include representatives of everyone involved in pain management. This includes doctors, licensed professionals such as nurses and psychologists to insurers, health groups and the general public. It will act as a watchdog. The governor will appoint most members.

The bills recognize that the use of controlled substances is appropriate in the medical treatment of intractable pain. It provides administrative and civil immunity to physicians prescribing controlled substances for a patient who has been diagnosed

with intractable pain if all of the following are met:

- Prescription is for a legitimate and professional therapeutic purpose
- Prescribing the controlled substance is within the scope of practice of the physician
- Physician holds a valid license to prescribe controlled substances.

The bills also require insurance companies and HMOs to state clearly in their certificates that they do or do not provide coverage for evaluation and treatment of intractable pain through a pain management program.

MFB position: Farm Bureau recognizes the need and controversy surrounding the concept of pain management. Pain can be disabling and, as reported in the news, result in extreme measures (e.g., assisted suicide). Patients and family should be provided with standardized counseling and information regarding all treatments and options proposed for their particular case. This should include all aspects of pain management, e.g., the potential for addiction, other medical complications and death. Farm Bureau recommends greater emphasis on physician education in pain management and relaxing existing laws as they apply to physicians prescribing pain medication and their dosages. Physicians would be relieved of legal liabilities resulting from the prescribed pain management treatments.

MFB contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044.

STATE

Primary seat belt bill

n Oct. 28, a primary seat belt bill, H.B. 4280, sponsored by Rep. Frank Fitzgerald (R-Grand Ledge) passed the House of Representatives on a vote of 63 to 47. Farm Bureau opposed this bill. In May, an attempt to pass the same bill was defeated in the House by a vote of 56 to 47. The bill is now in the Senate Transportation and Tourism Committee, where a similar bill, S.B. 750, sponsored by Sen. Joe Conroy (D-Flint), also resides.

H.B. 4280 would expand police powers by allowing police to stop vehicles under the suspicion of a violation of not wearing a seat belt.

Farm Bureau has for the past four years opposed further expansion of police powers.

The Legislature for the past several years has consistently rejected primary seat belt bills.

On Oct. 30, the Michigan House of Representatives passed H.B. 4757, sponsored by Rep. Burton Leland (D-Detroit). This bill calls for any reductions in insurance costs as a result of increased seat belt

usage be passed on to insurance consumers. A provision in this bill would prevent insurance companies from raising insurance rates for the first police warning for not wearing a seat belt. H.B. 4757 was tie barred to the seat belt bill, H.B. 4280.

MFB contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044.

STATE

Prescribed burning update

Please refer to the Oct. 30 Michigan Farm News for a brief summary of the provisions of H.B. 4049, sponsored by Rep. David Anthony (D-Escanaba).

B. 4049 has passed the Senate Natural Resources Committee and is headed to the Senate floor.

MFB position: Farm Bureau supports H.B. 4049.

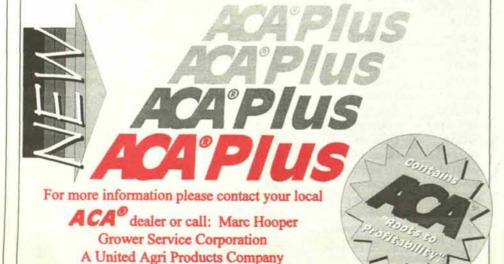
MFB contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046.

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Market Outlook

by Dr. Jim Hilker, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University

CORN

s the production numbers become known with more certainty, we switch our attention to the demand side. This isn't to say we won't get another surprise in the size of the U.S. corn crop. And, as we look at the demand for the U.S. crop, we still must remember how greatly it is affected by coarse grain production in the rest of the world. As can be seen in the Corn Balance Sheet (Table 1), my analysis still indicates that even with the larger supply this year, ending stocks will be near or below this past year.

On Nov. 10, the USDA comes out with their updated supply/demand estimates. My analysis of the situation is seen in Table 1. I have left the size of the corn crop the same as the USDA's October estimate. With expected growth in hog production at around 8 percent and broiler production at around 5 percent, I have increased year-to-year feed use by 5 percent. Beef production is expected to drop a bit. I increased feed use 15 million bushels from my previous estimate.

My optimism on exports being a lot higher than a year ago is being tempered a bit. Physical exports are about the same as last year at this time and forward sales are lagging behind. While I still see substantial growth, I have dropped the estimate 30 million bushels. I expect the growth in exports to come later in the year. China is still a wild card; they are still exporting even though it would appear they

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Corn		** 1
Soybea	ins	† 1
Wheat	***************************************	***

could use the corn sometime later this year.

While prices are still a bit lower than my analysis would indicate, the ending stocks projection has grown some and may grow more if exports don't pick up. Consider having a good portion of your crop priced or have a floor under it. Consider having another sizeable portion unpriced or have upside potential. The size of the portions should vary with the farm's ability and willingness to take risk. Those with on-farm storage should use it for their unpriced portion. Those who need to use commercial storage should consider a basis contract to eliminate most of the storage costs.

WHEAT

he wheat situation has not changed much in the past couple of weeks, other than Australia continues to get some rain. Exports and export sales continue to run just below last year's levels, and last year was a poor export year. While we expect exports to pick up a little, ending stocks are expected to grow significantly as shown in Table 2.

It's hard to get excited about holding on to any 1997 wheat. If you have some in on-farm storage, you might consider holding on to it until January if you have extra space; it appears the market is willing to pay storage. If I had a choice to use my on-farm storage space to speculate on corn versus wheat, I would use the space to speculate on corn. If you insist on speculating on wheat prices, and you are using commercial storage, consider moving to a basis contract or MPC and stop paying storage.

The 1998 U.S. wheat crop is looking quite good according to the crop progress reports. It will be interesting to see how many acres were planted. Keep an eye on the September Chicago wheat futures. If it moves over \$4, check on forward contract prices being offered for the 1998 wheat crop. You may want to start doing some forward pricing of your 1998 crop.

pricing of your 1998 crop.

SOYBEANS

he soybean market is giving us a lot of excitement just on the demand side, and that doesn't even count the added excitement we will get as we start the South American production season.

As mentioned in the section on corn, U.S. livestock needs will be growing through the year and my estimate is we will use about 5 percent, 50-60 million bushels, more bushels for meal domestically. Then, we have to estimate meal exports. Meal exports in the first two months of the marketing year are up 43 percent year-to-date. Meal export sales year-to-date, again only two months in, are up 61 percent. While these levels will not continue, it does show strong growth. Prices being offered for soybeans indicate that the trade believes meal exports will be up significantly as well.

As shown in Table 3, I have increased soybeans used for meal by 6 percent, domestic use by 5 percent and export use by 10 percent. While this estimate is above the October USDA estimate, it is below many trade estimates. There are lots of unknowns in this meal estimate number, which translates into price risk. This lowers projected ending stocks to 240 million bushels, or 9.2 percent of use. This equates to prices being in the \$6.70 range where we now are.

The market continues to say it would prefer not to pay storage, but the carry in the futures has increased. The market also continues to tell us there is both upside and downside potential, i.e., lots of risk. Consider having a big portion of your price risk covered and using a basis contract on your unpriced soybeans.

CATTLE

he cattle market continues to drift sideways and will probably continue that pattern into early winter. October marketings appeared to have been strong, which hopefully means we are current. As recent Cattle-On-Feed Reports have shown, we will have plenty of cattle for a while. However, October placements are expected to be down, confirming the September trend away from huge placements. Look at the Nov. 14 release of the November 1 USDA Cattle-On-Feed Report to help confirm or reject the above marketing and placement estimates.

At this point, it is important for the industry to keep very current into February. With the large number on feed we don't need extra pounds. February futures at \$68-69 are not real interesting, but if they jump over \$70, check out the forward pricing opportunities. Watch the April contract as well; if it reaches \$73-74, you want to consider putting a pricing plan in place.

With prices seen at some Michigan feeder auctions, some feedlots are probably going to do pretty well when those cattle are ready for market.

HOGS

og slaughter continues to grow and indications are that will continue through next year. I expect prices to move sideways, in a seasonal pattern, with a slight downtrend over the next year. That would put us in a price range of \$41-46, with "lows" in the spring and fall and "highs" in the summer.

We need additional demand, which is expected, in order to be at these levels. We will need a big jump in exports to exceed them. While we won't reach first-of-year expectations, Japan has been in the market at a pretty good level since April. We just didn't have the big spring surge we had last year. At this point, I don't see any great forward pricing opportunities.

DAIRY

by Larry G. Hamm

arm level milk prices continue to rise as seasonal demand factors push dairy markets. The recent rise in the October Basic Formula Price (BFP) appears to be the last increase for this year. Seasonal decreases in milk prices are on their way.

The October BFP (announced Nov. 5) showed its fifth consecutive increase from the disastrous low point that it reached in May 1997. The October BFP of \$12.83 for 3.5 percent milk is a modest increase from September's level of \$12.79 per hundredweight (cwt). The lagged price structure of the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) system assures that farm level milk prices will continue to rise over the next two months as these price increases work themselves through the FMMO

The modest gain in the BFP reflects the fact that the wholesale cheese markets, both on the cash trading at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) and as measured by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cheddar cheese price survey, had been essentially flat. During the last several weeks, the wholesale butter markets at the CME have been extremely volatile. For all of October, the average wholesale price of butter increased close to 20 cents per pound. Because the wholesale butter price is not a significant factor in the BFP, the strength in the butterfat markets has not shown in a higher BFP level. However, the butterfat differential has increased to reflect the increased value of butter and will result in some of the highest butterfat payments to producers since 1986.

Dairy markets are approaching the end of the peak demand season. As holiday wholesale dairy product orders are shipped to retail customers and as schools begin adjusted schedules for the holidays, fluid milk and soft manufactured milk product demand drop significantly. Excess supplies of Class I and Class II milk flow to manufacturing plants causing the increased production of butter, powder and cheese. The increased supply of these products usually causes a drop in the wholesale prices of manufactured dairy products, which then feeds back on to the BFP in the months ahead. The good news is that dairy markets have continued to show strength through the first part of November.

COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS





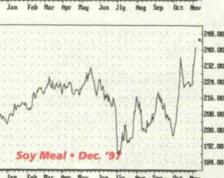




Table	1 — C	orn	
(Million acres)	Estimated 1995–1996	Projected 1996-1997	Hilker 1997-1998
Acres set-aside/diverted	6.2	0.0	0.0
Acres planted	71.2	79.5	80.2
Acres harvested	65.0	73.1	74.0
Bu./harvested acre	113.5	127.1	125.8
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	1,558	426	884
Production	7,374	9,293	9,312
Imports	16	13	10
Total supply	8,948	9,732	10,206
Use:		100	
Feed and residual	4,696	5,368	5,640
Food/seed & Ind. uses	1,598	1,690	1,775
Total domestic	6.294	7,058	7,415
Exports	2,228	1,790	1,995
Total use	8,522	8,848	9,410
Ending stocks	426	884	796
Ending stocks, % of use	5.0	10.0	8.5
Regular loan rate	\$1.89	\$1.89	\$1.89
U.S. season average	I bay	THE STATE OF	
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$3.24	\$2.70	\$2.80

(Million acres)	Estimated 1995–1996	Projected 1996–1997	Hilker 1997-1998
Acres set-aside & diverte	d 5.2	0.0	0.0
Acres planted	69.1	75.6	70.8
Acres harvested	60.9	62.9	63.5
Bu./harvested acre	35.8	36.3	39.7
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	507	376	443
Production	2,182	2,285	2,527
Imports	68	92	95
Total supply	2,757	2,753	3,065
Use:			
Food	883	892	900
Seed	104	103	100
Feed	153	314	325
Total domestic	1,140	1,309	1,325
Exports	1,241	1,001	1,075
Total use	2,381	2,310	2,400
Ending stocks	376	443	665
Ending stocks, % of use	15.8	19.2	27.7
Regular loan rate	\$2.58	\$2.58	\$2.58
J.S. season average		F. LETT	
arm price, \$/bu.	\$4.55	\$4.30	\$3,45

(Million acres)	Estimated 1995–1996	Projected 1996–1997	Hilke 1997-1998
Acres planted	62.6	64.2	70.9
Acres harvested	61.6	63.4	69.8
Bu./harvested acre	35.3	37.6	39.0
Stocks (million bushels)			
Beginning stocks	335	183	132
Production	2,177	2,383	2,722
Imports	4	10	5
Total supply	2,516	2,576	2,859
Use:			
Crushings	1,370	1,436	1,525
Exports	851	882	960
Seed, feed & residuals	112	126	134
Total use	2,333	2,444	2,619
Ending stocks	183	132	240
Ending stocks, % of use	7.8	5.4	9.2
Regular loan rate	\$4.92	\$4.97	\$5.26
U.S. season average			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$6.72	\$7.38	\$6.70

EGGS

by Henry Larzelere

gg prices in October were about 14 cents a dozen less than last October. Feed ingredient prices were nearly 2 cents a dozen eggs less than a

New York wholesale prices for Grade A large white eggs in cartons are expected to average in the upper 70s during the last two months of the year. The number of layers on farms on Jan. 1, 1998, will probably be slightly (less than 1 percent) less than one year earlier, most likely because the rate of slaughter of spent hens has been exceeding last year and lower egg prices will probably modify any expansion plans.

TURKEYS

urkey numbers have been running nearly 4 percent less than last year. Midwestern prices for hen turkeys are currently above 1996 levels, but tom turkeys of comparable size have been below last year.



1997 Census of Agriculture ready to count nation's farms

arm operators across the nation are about to participate in a statistical portrait of U.S. agriculture through the 1997 Census of Agriculture. This portrait will provide a clear picture of agriculture at the county, state and national levels, showing in detail how farmers stand today compared with five years ago.

The picture will focus on key information, including the number of farms, farm size, operator characteristics, crop and livestock production, agricultural products sales, and production expenses of farmers and ranchers.

Data reported by individual farm operators in the census is held confidential by law (Title 7, U.S. Code). Data are summarized to prevent identification of individual farms. Statistical results are analyzed and made available in printed and electronic form.

Farmers can do several things to make this census an effective tool to help chart the future. They can return their census forms and make sure the information is complete, accurate and timely. They can also use the statistics to plan practical improvements in U.S. agriculture.

How do Census of Agriculture numbers provide practical information to improve farm operations and agribusinesses? Here are some examples:

Farm organizations, Congress, and state and local

State milk marketing order could be only way

Continued from page 1

would believe that the producers in the state of Michigan can be very well supported by this action." The Lansing-based dairy resigned from the voluntary pool earlier this fall.

A representative from Dean Foods declined to comment on the commission's action.

What does the superpool mean to Michigan dairy producers?

Laurie pointed out the magnitude of the value of the over-order premium to producers. "According to the MSU ag economics department, in 1996 there was approximately 64 cents a hundred generated in premiums and, of that 64 cents, about 40 cents came from over-order premiums. That 40 cents translated into nearly \$22 million that went to producers."

Testifying on behalf of the Independent Cooperative Milk Producers (ICMPA), President Bob
Naerbout explained that the ICMPA board of directors
"looked at the issue, and we said, no, we don't feel
there's a chance for voluntary pool. What's important
is that we're still generating premiums. You have to
realize that this is really not a consumer issue, because
what we're looking at generating is no different from
what we've done for the last five years. But it is a lot of
money — \$1.8 million to \$2 million a month. You use a
multiplier effect of five, and you're looking at \$10
million through the rural communities per month."

Naerbout also represents the Rural Development Council of Michigan and serves as the president of that organization. "The bottom line is that the dollars are not only for our farmers, but for stability in the rural areas. It's in the best interests of the producers that we represent, and of the producers of Michigan, to support the state-mandated order. If we could have a voluntary, we'd rather go that way. But that does not seem at this point to be an option."

The ag commission approved this motion:

"The Michigan Commission of Agriculture encourages milk producers of this state to utilize mechanisms to enhance individual producer returns provided that any action is the will of the majority of producers, includes features that allow accommodation of marketplace changes and ensures periodic individual producer review of any plan by specific vote to initiate, continue, alter or discontinue such action. Furthermore, that the Michigan Department of Agriculture bring the Michigan dairy industry together through meetings to identify the appropriate mechanisms that will allow Michigan dairy producers to enhance individual producer returns and allow Michigan to be a leader in all aspects of U.S. dairy production and marketing."

Michigan Farm Radio Network contributed to this story.

AGRI NOTES AND NEWS

Visit us on the World Wide Web at: http://www.fb.com/mifb governments plan programs to help farm operators get the most for their investments.

- Farm machinery manufacturers more effectively target their industries to where they are needed by using county and state statistics, resulting in economic benefit for farm operators.
- Seed and fertilizer producers can compare yields and other information to help operators do the most effective job.
- Irrigation specialists, water resource developers and irrigation equipment manufacturers can learn much from census data and convert that knowledge into practical advice for farm operators.
- State and national lawmakers can determine where to allocate funds that will benefit agricultural producers.
- Farm broadcasters and agricultural editors can convey census results to their audiences and use the data to help focus their stories.
- Researchers and legislators can use county-level data to define problem areas and help farmers recover from outbreaks of disease and pests.
- Census information is used for evaluating programs affecting agricultural production.

Report forms will be mailed late in December to the nation's farmers to collect data for the 1997 calendar year. Farmers will be asked to return their forms by Feb. 2, 1998.

Many questions will be similar to those asked in the 1992 census. Data will be collected from all farmers on land use and ownership, crop acreage and quantities harvested, numbers of livestock and poultry, value of crops and livestock sold, and operator characteristics. New items include area and value of cut Christmas trees harvested, acres of maple trees tapped, and number of taps.

The agriculture census has been conducted 25 times since 1840. It was conducted every ten years until 1920 and typically every five years since 1925. The census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive information about agricultural production, inventories, sales and expenditures, and other items for each county and state.

Don Bay, the NASS administrator, stresses that the same law requiring a census of agriculture also forbids revealing information about individuals. "We publish only county, state and national statistical totals, and only sworn NASS employees see the completed forms," Bay said.

Report forms sent to 25 percent of farmers include additional questions on production expenses, fertilizer and chemicals, machinery and equipment, market value of land and buildings, and income from farm-related sources. The report

Census of Agriculture

AGREAGE

Volume 1
GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERIES

Part 22

Michigan

State and County Data

Data was collected from farmers five years ago for the 1992 Census of Agriculture.

forms are tailored by region to make them less burdensome on respondents.

Advice from farmers, farm organizations, agricultural universities, members of the Census Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, and state and federal agencies was used in developing the report forms. Farmers represent a major sector of the nation's economy.

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DuPont Agricultural Products



Avery headlines MEGA Conference as main speaker

son of Michigan agriculture is returning to his home state to deliver a message of opportunity for the American farmer at a time of growing demand worldwide for agricultural products from the United States.

Dennis Avery, a food policy analyst for more than 30 years and former senior agricultural analyst with the U.S. Department of State, will kick off the 1998 MEGA Conference at its opening session on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at the Lansing Convention Center.

Avery will bring to the conference a message outlining the most dynamic opportunity in the history of U.S. agriculture. "With farm trade liberalization, biotechnology, the huge surge in incomes in Asia, which is critically short of farmland," Avery said, "for the first time in 120 years, the world does not have any farmland surplus, and it

'We've got a saturated farm product market in the U.S.," he continued. "Our productivity keeps rising at about 4 percent a year, and we've just added another 15 million acres of crop land back from the government programs. But if Asia doesn't import food, then they're going to destroy thousands of wildlife species clearing tropical forest to grow their own.'

Avery is passionate about the need for the American farmer to step forward and continue to feed the world through increased productivity, therefore protecting millions of acres worldwide from going into production. "Farmers should look at this moment as the greatest opportunity in farming history," he said. "I'm going to talk to them about immediate strategies for taking advantage of it. But if

American farmers don't lead this, it won't get done in time to prevent all of Asia from developing the kind of fortress farm policies that Japan and South Korea developed. It won't get done in time to save the wildlife, and it won't get done in time for them to pass profitable businesses on to their sons.

"The food challenge for the 21st century is, how do we triple farm output without using any more land?" Avery asked. "We've got to have high yields and free trade, and American agriculture has

"As farmers continue to work harder at being good stewards of the land, Dennis Avery's message will be timely," explained Keith Muxlow, executive director of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, which is sponsoring Avery's appearance and MEGA Conference. "Farmers will learn how to

be environmentally sound, productive and make a living at the same time. He will share how we can produce enough food to meet a growing world demand while preserving our farms for future generations."

Avery is the director of the Indianapolis-based **Hudson Institute Center**

Dennis Avery

for Global Food Issues and is the editor of the Global Food Quarterly newsletter. He has also authored the book Saving the Planet with Pesticides and Plastic.



"The Next Farming Generation"

January 19-21, 1998 Michigan Agricultural MEGA-Conference **Lansing Center**

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The 4th Annual Michigan Agricultural MEGA-Conference & Trade Show offers something for everyone.

Kicking off the program on Monday, January 19, is a legislative seminar, "Pending Legislation Affecting the Farm." Panelists include State Representatives John Gernaat, Michael Green and Howard Wetters; State Senator Walter North; and U.S. Representatives Nick Smith and Debbie Stabenow.

Moderated by Pat Driscoll, of the Michigan Farm Radio Network, the panelists will cover topics like: revisions in the drain code, minimum use pesticides, proposed changes in property rights, deregulation of electrical co-ops, and efforts to reduce legal truck weights.

This year's theme is "The Next Farming Generation." Speakers include Dennis T. Avery, author of "Saving the Planet with Pesticides and Plastics; the Environmental Triumph of High-Yielding Agriculture." Mr. Avery's presentation is sponsored by the Corn Marketing Committee of Michigan.

The latest in precision agriculture technology will be the focus of an educational class sponsored by DuPont. Join Doug Hartford, The Innovator in Precision Agriculture, on Tuesday.

We're also pleased to welcome Mark Hooper, of Grower Services, for an informative session on the use of infrared for the identification of pests and fertilizer needs.

Our banquet speaker, Mark Mayfield, will address stress management from a humorous and motivational perspective. His presentation, "Keeping Balance," is sponsored by the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee.

Livestock producers are all too aware of manure managet issues. Join Dr. Wendy Powers, of Iowa State University, for odor reduction techniques.

Brand beef, heat detection methods including devises, reproduction in dairy herds, parasite identification, and vaccination schedules, are just some of the livestock topics slated for the

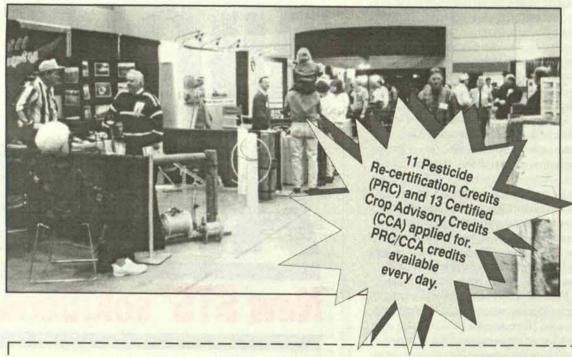
Alfalfa producers won't want to miss "Dealing with Potato Leaf Hoppers in Alfalfa," "Practical Pasture Improvement Methods," and "Disease Identification in Alfalfa."

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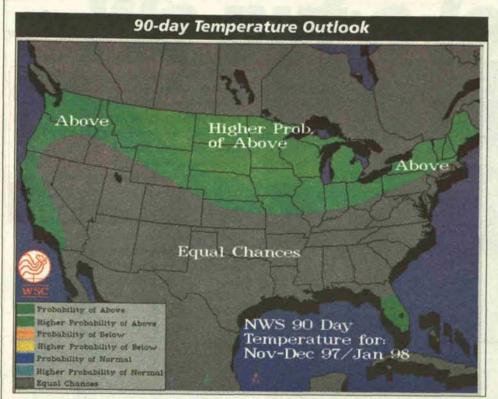
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90-day Precipitation Outlook Equal Chances Above Higher Probability of Above Probability of Abov NWS 90 Day Higher Probability of Abo Precipitation for: Probability of Below Higher Probability of Belo Nov-Dec 97/Jan 98 Probability of Normal Higher Probability of Nor

South Bend

Coldwater

-3.0 -1.4

0.7 -1.4 0.8

* Growing degree day accumulations are calculated with the 86/50 corn method and are summed beginning April 1.

49.5

52.8

2493 2831

2338 2831

2362 2857

2716 2857

Weather Outlook

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



old and wet weather developed across the state by the end of October in response to the formation of a large upper air troughing pattern across the Great Lakes region. The inclement weather brought harvest activities to a halt after several weeks of warm, dry and favorable conditions. Heavy snow fell in many sections of the central and southern Lower Peninsula on the 26th and 27th. The wet, heavy snow (among the heaviest on record so early in the season) led to major electrical power disruptions and likely caused lodging of crops still in the field, especially soybeans, and corn weakened by earlier corn borer infestations.

For the 1997 growing season as a whole, temperatures and growing degree day accumulations averaged significantly below normal. Abnormally warm and dry weather and a later-than-normal first killing fall freeze late in the season helped most field crops reach physiological maturity before the end of the season. Precipitation totals ranged from above normal in east central and central sections of the Lower Peninsula to much below normal elsewhere. Persistent dry weather early in the season, while favoring winter wheat yields and grain quality, may have also led to reductions in the yield potential of some summer crops.

Most recent medium-range forecast guidance suggests a very active jet stream pattern across the central and eastern United States, with a mean troughing pattern across the Great Lakes region. This would result in a relatively cold, unsettled weather pattern across Michigan during the next few weeks, with temperatures remaining below normal. Precipitation levels are likely to remain at normal to above-normal levels, especially in lake effect areas, where significant snowfall is possible.

Looking further ahead, NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlooks continue to call for greater-than-normal odds of above-normal temperatures by late in the year, and for lower-than-normal precipitation amounts by mid-winter. This pattern is expected to continue through spring of 1998, followed by near-equal odds of all temperature and precipitation scenarios (i.e., climatology) by early summer as conditions in the equatorial Pacific return to normal/neutral levels.

Hog inventory up

ichigan's hog and pig inventory Sept. 1 was up 2 percent from last September, according to the Federal/State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. Total inventory was estimated at 1,150,000 head. Market hogs totaled 1,010,000 head, unchanged from a year ago. Breeding inventory increased 12 percent to 140,000 head on Sept. 1.



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Food entrepreneurs gather to share their secrets

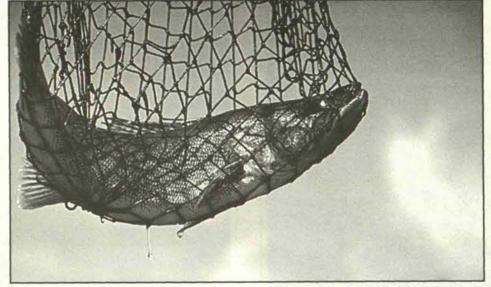
New fish company one of many unique businesses showcased

veryone has to eat. More than 60 people attending the first-ever MSU Food Entrepreneur Day are better prepared to take their ideas about the food they produce and bring it to the end consumer.

Individuals from every level of the foodprocessing chain attended the event, from farmers looking for a niche for their products to restaurateurs, bed and breakfast owners and fledgling companies that have established their own market.

"We see this as phase one," explains Dr. P. Vincent Hegarty, MSU's director of the Food Industry Institute. "Bring people together; you give them a resource book. In that book there's names and addresses of lots of places in Michigan, testing labs, packers, and a variety of other things. Phase two is in how we follow up with each of these people, because you go home and personalize your opportunity, because you're getting general information here. The questions will become more specific and more personal.

"It doesn't make much sense to ship beans or corn or any other commodity out of state to have Illinois or Texas or New York get the benefit of the value-added," Hegarty added, "then for us to go back into the supermarkets and buy that product that was grown in Michigan but processed elsewhere. With the growth of the cooperative movement for farmers, they're now seriously realiz-



ing they can be not only producers, but they can also be processors, and be part of the entire chain until it actually gets into the supermarket."

The success of Mackinac Straits Fish Co.

Once such entrepreneur attending the one-day conference shared her unique story detailing not only how she entered the food business, but also the law that had to be passed for her company to exist.

Jill Bentgen, founder of Mackinac Straits Fish Company, worked for more than a year-and-a-half perfecting her whitefish smoking technique. "Smoked whitefish is a traditional product of northern Michigan," Bentgen explained. "Anybody that goes up here buys their whole smoked fish, it was one of these historically available products that is consumed pretty much on-site."

But before she could complete her work detailing how to smoke fish, she had to work on the repeal of a decades-old law against vacuum-packed fish.

"One of the reasons that there has not been any value-added smoked fish in Michigan goes back to the early '60s," she added. "When vacuum packing technology first was made available, they were vacuum packing fish. There were no smoked fish regulations at the time."

"What vacuum pack does is it prevents any aerobic microorganisms from growing," Bentgen said. "Therefore it allows the anaerobic microorganisms to grow without being challenged by competition from other microorganisms, what happened in the '60s is that botulinum was formed, that toxin was formed in the package, and several people actually died from botulism in the early '60s."

According to Bentgen, the vacuum-packing technology and safety measures put in place now prevent such tragedies from happening. "It was a result of some very abusive conditions in vacuum-packed fish. Michigan, along with a number of Great Lakes states, put in some very stringent smoked fish regulations to prevent that kind of problem in the future. And they had never been updated and challenged in light of all the new technology, new equipment, new distribution systems, new consumer needs.

"One of the problems we had is that you could order vacuum-packed fish out of the catalog and get it shipped to you in Michigan," she explained. "But me, as a Michigan producer, could not make it and sell it to a Michigan customer. I couldn't even make it and ship it out of the state."

So Bentgen went to work proving her point to the Michigan Legislature and exhibited facts that confirmed that the latest vacuum-packing techniques are not only safe, but widely used throughout the United States.

"I did not proceed to buying equipment until I knew the regulation was going to change," she added. "I waited, did lots of other work, but I wasn't going to invest until I knew it was going to change. When I finally saw a rough draft of the bill and knew that this was going to happen, I started to put my equipment in place."

"I put in my smokehouse in December of '95," she continued. "Began producing in June of '96, and it took me until December of '96 before I felt I knew how to smoke whitefish fillets, do it consistently, and then I discovered that my smokehouse had some limitations to it that wouldn't allow me to do it as consistently as I wanted to. I had to upgrade the mechanics of that smokehouse, then this past August I took that one out and put in a larger one with a lot more capability, and now I feel like I can smoke whitefish."

Bentgen maintains the consistency and quality of the fish she uses by only using fish from the Mackinac Straits area. "I buy strictly from local fishermen or processors," she said. "It's all fresh, it is filleted and shipped to me the day it's caught. I don't deal with any fish that's over 24 hours old."

According to Bentgen, about 10 million pounds of Michigan whitefish is caught per year out of the Great Lakes.

"A company like what I'm doing eventually will probably use a million pounds of that a year," she concluded. "I would expect it to have an impact on the price of fish eventually. Even though I may only use 10 percent of what's coming out of Michigan, it will affect the dock-side price, and eventually where I'll probably provide 20 to 30 jobs in the area."

Hegarty notes the success of the Mackinac Straits Fish Company and many others like it as the driving force behind bringing other food entrepreneurs together to share their experiences.

"By that synergy that develops we can better assist the new entrepreneur," he added. "Really, the growth of business in the state is going to come from these small entrepreneurs who start up on their own.

"We're a public university," he said. "If it can be part of having the expertise and the facilities made available to assist the state of Michigan and value-added, that's where the money is out of agricultural products. Otherwise, we're shipping out our raw products, having somebody else make the profit and then they ship it back to us and we go to the store to buy it."

Rail mergers could cripple grain exports

griculture Secretary Dan Glickman said recently he was worried that the recent rail mergers could hamper U.S. exports. The Agriculture Department has filed detailed comments to the U.S. Surface Transportation Board. The board is scheduled to vote on a merger between Conrail and CSX and Northern Southern Corp. in April.

"If we can't get the grain to port, we can't get our exports sold," Glickman said. "I am extremely worried about the availability of railway cars."

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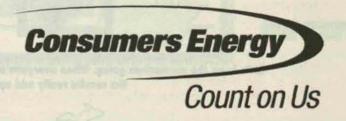
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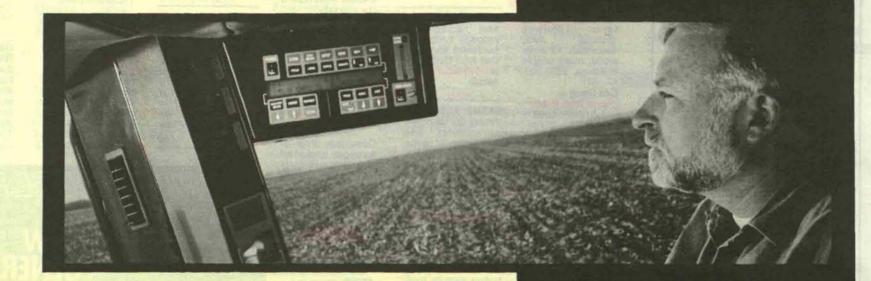
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Lapeer agriscience teacher finalist for national teacher of the year

apeer County Vo-Tech FFA agriscience teacher Tammy Belavek may have more to celebrate in December than the upcoming birth of her baby ... she may be named the Vocational Teacher of the Year by the American Vocational Association.

The only problem is, her doctor won't let her fly to Las Vegas to be interviewed by a panel of judges at the award program. What to do? Enter the role of technology. Belavek's school principal, Tom Shubert, set the interviews up via satellite downlink through a local TV station.

"I will be able to compete and he will be there to receive the award, whatever it is," explained Belavek. "What a way to talk about vocational education and how the technology is increasing and how we can better communicate with the world through technology."

One of the things that garnered such a prestigious award for the teacher of seven years was her work co-authoring a \$360,000 Kellogg Grant to sponsor a fourth-through sixth-grade agriscience education program throughout the county.

"My goal has always been in the future to create a program — vocational program or an agriscience academy — for high school students to integrate all agriscience and natural resources with math, reading, English, history and government,"

Belavek said. "Those kids would come to the academy – it'd be a charter school – and get their education that way as it's integrated. We all know that students learn better as curriculum is applied to something that they're interested in.

"The one thing is that I've really wanted to expand agriscience education to everyone," she added. "We expanded the program at the local schools from 15 to well over 80 of my students alone, not including the total expansion of our agriscience program, including an evening agriscience program."

The evening agriscience is another example of Belavek getting things done with the support of her students. "Twelve students came to the board of education, with the support of the teachers, and said we will even pay \$200 a semester to start the evening agriscience program. Those 12 students paid \$200 for one semester. At the end of that semester, the board of education paid for the entire class to be sponsored throughout the school year every Tuesday and Thursday evening."

With the school district only 50 to 70 miles north of Detroit, Belavek is challenged by the relatively small number of students with any sort of farm background. "Only about 5 percent come from farm backgrounds," she said. "The expansion to a more agriscience basis — not agricultural production program, but a more agriscience-based

program, including biotechnology, aquaculture, in-depth study in animal science, not just producing animals, but how can we better produce animals through research and science — has increased our focus in our program."

How is the award scored?

"There is 100"
points already from the application that was submitted with the letters of recommendation and the letters of support from community, parents, admin-

letters of support from community, parents, administrators and past students," Belavek explained.
"The other 50 will be on the interview, and that is basically the philosophy behind vocational education that is going to count."

"Interesting enough, there are two agriculture teachers competing," she said. "The last few years agriculture has not been well represented with this award. Health occupation instructors, automobile mechanic programs, and machining and business people and those types of things have been recipients of that award, so we're pretty proud of that."



Corn yield at 113 bushels per acre increased 3 bushels from last month and was up 19 bushels from 1996. Corn production increased 20 percent from last year. Although corn crop maturity was behind normal, the threat of widespread frost damage has dwindled. About 20 percent of acres were mature as of Oct. 1, half the five-year average for that date.

Soybean production, at 7.4 million bushels, surpassed the 1995 record high. Yield, at 39 bushels

Michigan crop production: Some crops forecast up from previous years,

others down

Soybean production, at 7.4 million bushels, surpassed the 1995 record high. Yield, at 39 bushels per acres was down 1 bushel from the previous month, but up 10.5 bushels from the previous year. Total Michigan production was 58 percent above 1996. Soybean development fell behind normal in September; harvest began in late September.

ool, wet September weather delayed maturity

of most crops in Michigan, according to the

Federal/State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Ser-

vice. Some highlights of the report were as follows:

Dry bean yield, at 1,650 pounds per acre, was down 150 pounds from the Aug. 1 forecast. Expected production increased 10 percent from 1996. Wet weather in mid September dampened yield prospects. Black beans fared better than navies. Favorable harvest weather in late September pushed harvest beyond the halfway mark by Oct. 1

Sugarbeet yield, at 19 tons per acre, was unchanged from last month. The forecast yield was up 3.9 tons from 1996. September rains benefited the crop; harvest was set to begin the first week of October.

All hay yield and production decreased 9 and 13 percent, respectively, from last year. Wet conditions last month reduced yields and hampered crop harvest. Alfalfa yielded 3.2 tons per acre while other hay yielded 2.2 tons.

U.S. corn production was forecast at 9.31 billion bushels, up fractionally from 1996 and the September 1 forecast. If realized, this will be the third highest corn production on record. Based on conditions as of Oct. 1, yields were expected to average 125.8 bushels per acre, up 0.6 bushels from last month, but down 1.3 bushels from 1996.

■ U.S. soybean production was forecast at 2.72 billion bushels, down slightly from the Sept. 1 forecast but 14 percent above the 1996 production. The yield forecast was 39 bushels per acre, 0.3 bushels below the Sept. 1 forecast but 1.4 bushels above the 1996 final yield. As of Oct. 5, 37 percent of the crop had been harvested in the 19 major producing states. ■

Checkoff making U.S. soybean meal, oil more globally competitive

he soybean checkoff is researching methods to make U.S. soybean meal and soybean oil exports more competitive in the global market.

In a recent checkoff-funded study compiled by LMC International from 1990 to 1995, production costs and tariffs were discovered to be direct contributing factors to the competitiveness of U.S. sovbean meal and oil

Of the nine primary soybean-producing countries, the United States ranks sixth with soybean production costs 6 percent (\$221.6/ton) above the world weighted average (\$208.7/ton), including wages and crop management. Argentina was 22 percent below the world average (\$163.6/ton).

In the United States, higher wages were counteracted by highly mechanized crop husbandry practices. Capital and fuel/fertilizer/chemical costs were higher than in most other countries.

Despite the higher costs of producing soybeans, the United States ranked second (\$20.3/ton) behind the Netherlands (\$20.2/ton) out of 15 countries in maintaining lower soybean processing costs. The world-weighted average is \$23.5/ton. The United States has relatively low capital processing costs, which indicates large average plant scale, high rates of utilization and high levels of efficiency.

Even with the United States being an efficient soybean processing country with higher quality products, most foreign customers' decisions are based on protecting their existing domestic production markets. For instance, many countries in Southeast Asia still prefer the use of palm oil, which is native to that geographic region, as opposed to importing soybean oil.

Corn Experts Speak Out on the Penny Per Bushel Check off

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Jack Laurie

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Deanna Stamp

Commissioner chigan Department of Agriculture Dairy and cash crop farmer Sanilac County

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Call 888-323-6601, fax 517-323-6601 or write to: 6206 W. Saginaw Highway, Lansing, MI 48917-2467



Fall and winter barn ventilation requires care

by Bill Bickert,

MSU Dept. of Agricultural Engineering s fall and winter approach and temperatures drop, people tend to close ventilation openings in barns. They have good intentions, trying to keep livestock warm. Unfortunately, with reduced ventilation, excessive moisture accumulates in the air. And animals may be killed with kindness!

Ventilation system management is critical during times of changing temperatures, even in a properly ventilated barn with open ridges and eves and open sidewalls and endwalls. This becomes even more critical later on when, at the first sign of cold weather, we adjust ventilation for winter conditions but encounter warmer weather in the meantime

If we don't open something for additional air movement, moisture buildup in the air will occur and the result is a cold, damp environment. Not much is worse, especially for baby calves, in terms of environment. The situation worsens when periods of weather around 35-40° F are accompa-

Unfortunately, when experiencing a cold, damp barn, the tendency may be to close it up even more, in response to our feeling cold and damp, when we should provide more ventilation to flush out built-up moisture.

Changes in weather during fall, winter and spring often give rise to respiratory problems in animals, especially in calves when wide fluctuations in temperature occur. Proper attention to ventilation system management may lessen the problems. Such management is especially important in barns depending upon natural ventilation and is crucial in barns where the natural ventilation is marginal at best.

In winter, air movement through the barn should be sufficient to maintain inside temperature within 5-10°F above outside temperature. Hang a thermometer inside the barn. If the temperature inside is more than 5-10°F above outside temperature, more ventilation is necessary. Also, persistent condensation or odor indicate that additional ventilation must be provided.

Over-ventilation is better than under-

Guidelines for buying high moisture shelled corn

any dairy and livestock farmers will be short of shelled corn this year. Some cash crop farmers may have immature corn that is very wet and will not make good dry corn. Cash crop farms will be looking to those farms in need of corn as a way to market some of their crop. The question then becomes how to set a fair price for high moisture shelled corn (HMSC). Here are some guidelines to follow. When negotiating a price with a cash crop farm, determine the following:

- The amount of corn you wish to purchase, normally quoted in wet bushels (call the Extension office if you need to know silo capacities)
- The maximum corn moisture percent you will accept (for example, nothing above 34 percent
- How you will base the price. For example, routinely based on the market price of dry corn at 15 percent moisture with the HMSC price adjust-

Table A — Shrink				
Corn moisture	Shrink factor	Multiplication factor		
26.0	.154	.846		
27.0	.168	.832		
28.0	.182	818		
29.0	.199	.801		
30.0	.219	.781		
31.0	.239	.761		
32.0	.259	.741		
33.0	279	.721		
34.0	.299	.701		
35.0	319	.681		

Multiplication factor = 1 shrink factor

- ed to an elevator's shrink table (see Table A), according to moisture
- Offer some guarantee of payment, as you should understand sellers get nervous when they deliver \$20,000 worth of corn to a person they don't know and may never meet. Routinely, some farms are getting a guaranteed note from their lender up to a set dollar amount; others are setting up an escrow account with a third party, such as a lender, to draw out of as the corn is delivered
- Ask the cash cropper if there is a mortgage on the crop, and if there is, how the payment should be handled (this will avoid legal hassles for yourself)
- Determine trucking price, routinely \$2 per loaded mile.

How to determine pay price for delivered HMSC

- Before delivery, agree to a fair market price for 15 percent moisture corn; you can use an area elevator to give you a local price. If you have a method to determine corn test weight, you may agree to discount the market price if the test weight is below 54 (see Table B). Other possible discounts are for foreign material and kernel damage, mold or sour smell
- Determine actual corn moisture.
- Determine delivered wet weight of truckload from the trucker's certified scale receipts.
- Then use the following equation: (multiplication factor from Table A X delivered wet weight) X market price of dry corn per bushel /56 (which is the weight of dry corn per

Test weight	Discount \$ / bu.
53	.01
52	.02
51	.03
50	.04
49	.06
48	.08
47	.10
46	.12

bushel) = value of truckload corn.

Here is an example: 47,458 pounds of wet corn delivered, your agreed market price is \$3.25 per bushel for 15 percent corn, the corn is 30 percent moisture and the trucking is to be \$2 per loaded mile delivered from 90 miles away.

 $(.781 \times 47,458) \times $3.25 =$ \$2151.08 value of truckload of corn/56

\$2151.08 = (\$2.00 per mile x 90 miles) = \$2331.08 delivered price

\$2331.08 / (47458 /2000) tons = \$98.36 delivered price per ton of 30 percent HMSC

An adjustment to the market price may be made if the test weight of the corn is low. Shrink factors in the following condensed table have a range of 1.4 percent shrink per point of moisture up to 2.0 percent shrink per point of moisture. This increases as corn moisture goes up. It also incorporates a percent dry matter handling loss.

Growers develop skills to benefit agriculture industry

enneth Swanson, of Bannister, Mich., joined 22 fellow National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) members at a Leadership Development Program here, sponsored by Novartis Crop Protection, Inc. Twenty-one members of the American Soybean Association (ASA) also attended.

"Leadership is an acquired skill," said Wallie Hardie, NCGA president and Leadership Development Program graduate. "Even people who have natural leadership qualities benefit from honing their skills at this program. These growers come away with a sense of confidence in their abilities to make an impact on our industry."

During the intensive, three-day program, growers learned association management techniques, how to give successful presentations and how to work with the media. Participants took part in mock news interviews, which were videotaped and critiqued by a media skills consultant. They also completed a brain dominance profile to learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses.

While in Greensboro, growers toured the Novartis Crop Protection headquarters where they learned more about the science behind crop protection technology.

This group of NCGA members will participate in a second session of the Leadership Development Program in Washington, D.C., in spring 1998. In Washington, they will take their issues directly to members of Congress after completing sessions on effective lobbying.

"NCGA is relying on these growers to represent agricultural interests to legislators," said Hardie. "The Leadership Development Program helps train them to do that."

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Naprosyn #30; 250mg.	Kroger	\$32.18	\$21.83	\$10.35



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Michigan Soybean **Promotion Committee**





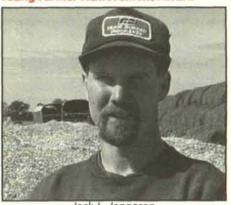
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YOUNG FARMER FINALISTS

ichigan Farm Bureau has announced its 12 finalists for the Outstanding Young Agricultural Leader, Young Farmer Achievement Award and Outstanding Young Farm Employee contests. The winners will be determined at the annual meeting in Traverse City, Dec. 9-12. The awards are presented to farmers who have demonstrated agricultural involvement, leadership in Farm Bureau and their communities and achievement. The 12 finalists will each receive a Carhartt jacket courtesy of Blue Cross Blue Shield. Each state contest winner will receive \$500 from Dodge Truck, an expense-paid trip to the AFBF annual meeting in Charlotte, N.C.

Young Farmer Achievement Award



Jack L. Jeppesen Stanton, Montcalm County Wife: Mary Children: Kaleigh, 9; Kyle, 7

Farm operation

Owner/operator of 660-acre farm including 360 acres of corn, 150 acres of alfalfa, 20 acres of oats, along with 167 dairy cows. Farm herdsman, mechanic, bookkeeper and some field work. Supplies neighboring farms with seed corn, alfalfa and soybeans. Raises pheasants and Christmas trees on land unsuitable for cultivation.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves on county Young Farmer Committee, board of directors as director at large and as Group Purchasing vendor. Formerly chaired Young Farmer, Local Affairs and Delegate Committees. Served as state annual delegate and county president while serving on Media Response Team, Local Affairs Committee, MACMA Committee, Candidate Evaluation Committee, Policy Development and Promotion and Education Committees. Part of state Young Farmer Committee and attended AFBF Young Farmer/Young Rancher Conference.

Community involvement

Serves as township board trustee and on township planning/zoning commission, SCS Wildlife Rehab Management Team and parent advisory committee for First Step preschool. Hosted a farm tour for local elementary, developmentally-challenged students. Volunteers selling dairy products at the "Little Red Barn" for MMPA.



Jerry Kroll Montague, Oceana County Wife: Beth Children: Joel, 9; Kati, 7; Emily, 5 Farm operation

Maintains 398-acre farm with 170 acres of corn, 110 acres of alfalfa, 45 acres of wheat, 35 acres of oats and 8 acres of asparagus along with 97 dairy cows. Responsible for all areas of farm operation. Custom harvests for neighboring farmers and occasionally hauls livestock.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves on county board of directors, Policy Development Committee and as Group Purchasing vendor and Membership chair. Served as a state delegate, Community Action Group chair and participated in Young Farmer Discussion Meet. Presented at Farm

Safety Camp. Attended Lansing Legislative Seminar.

Community involvement

Serves as a Sunday school teacher, youth group sponsor and AWANA leader in local church and is a church youth camp board member.



Jonesville, Hillsdale County Wife: Jennifer

Children: Adam, 8; Brittany, 6; Conner, 4 Farm operation

Partner in a 2,350-acre farm producing 1,000 acres of corn, 130 acres of wheat, 600 acres of soybeans, 420 acres of alfalfa and 98 acres of popcorn along with 440 dairy cows and 80 steers. Manages field crops and sales, repairs, small heifers and calves. Does some custom work for neighbors.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves as an executive board member and formerly a member of Agricultural Accident Rescue Program, County Annual Planning and Tire Recycling Day Committees.

Community involvement

Active in local Jaycee chapter serving as past Human Service Projects chair.



Scott Miller Elsie, Shiawassee County Wife: Jane Children: Randi, 10; Damien, 8

Farm operation

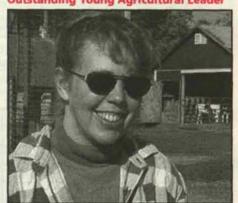
Cash crop farm with 1,000 acres of corn and 1,000 acres of soybeans. Responsible for all corn planting and half of soybeans. Hauls his own and area farmers' grain. Delivers seed corn and beans for a local seed company. Does some custom harvesting and spraying for neighbors.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves on county board of directors, State and Local Affairs, Young Farmer and Annual Committees and as this year's state and Washington Legislative Seminar representative and state Liquid Fertilizer Storage Committee.

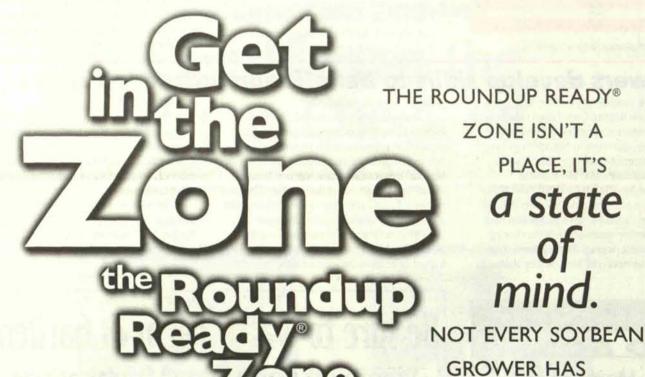
Community involvement

Serves as township board trustee, church board trustee and head freshman football coach. Coaches Little League baseball and softball and junior wrestling.



Loretta Benjamin Webberville, Ingham County Husband: Todd Children: Daniel, 10; Rebecca, 6

Farm operation Works on family farm milking 90 cows and producing 600 acres of hay, corn, wheat and beans. Promotes registered cows by showing them at state shows and county fair. Actively keeps legislators and government officials informed of priority farming issues. Helps maintain a balance between farm and family time.



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1997 Young Farmer finalists

Farm Bureau involvement

Chairs county Promotion and Education, Ag in the Classroom, Ag Olympics, Ag Week and Rural Education Day. Also serves on county Young Farmer and Promotion and Education Committees. Chaired county MACMA, VIP Tour, Ag Days in the City and Ag Day at the Zoo. Attended Lansing Legislative Seminar, state Promotion and Education seminar, Traverse City Outreach and Young Farmer Leadership Conference. Served as state annual delegate.

Community involvement

Chaired Webberville Playground Project. Involved in Webberville Elementary Boosters, Webberville 4-H Club, Ingham County 4-H Council and her local church. Volunteers at Webberville Elementary School



Debra Kubacki Sebewaing, Huron County Husband: Timothy

Farm operation

Owns and operates 400-acre cash crop and 75milking-cow/70-heifer replacement dairy operation with her husband. Crops include sugar beets, corn, oats, navy beans, alfalfa and wheat. Operation became a centennial farm in 1996. Maintains all field and herd management while maintaining all farm records.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves on county board of directors, Promotion and Education Committee, membership contact program, Dairy Commodity Committee, Resolutions Committee and Young People's Citizenship Seminar. Chairs Annual Committee, Reinstate Ag in the Classroom and Little Red Barn Project. Attended Project T.E.A.M Conference and FFA Career Leadership Conference.

Community involvement

Participates in Sebewaing Sparkettes and Sebewaing Jaycettes where she has served as president and vice president. Teaches Sunday school at Immanuel Lutheran Church and sings in the choir. Volunteers with Pheasants Forever, Sebewaing Sugar Festival, Huron County Fair and Agriculture in the Classroom.



Beth Snider Hart, Oceana County Husband: Aaron Children: Luke, 12; Holly, 10; Zack, 6 Farm operation

Operates a contract turkey facility raising 65,000 annually with her husband. Maintain 135 sows raising 3,100 feeder pigs each year. Lost 60cow registered Holstein dairy herd and barn to fire last November. Assists in raising corn, alfalfa, soybeans and other small grains on 450 acres.

Farm Bureau involvement

Currently serves on county board of directors as third member on the executive committee. Served as Happy Harvesters Community Action Group minuteman and secretary, Young Farmer chairperson, delegate to state annual meeting, Young People's Citizenship Seminar counselor, as well as a member of Policy Development, Information, County Annual, Candidate Evaluation and Promotion and Education committees. Attended Lansing and Washington Legislative Seminars and Young Farmer Leadership Conference. Participated in Young Farmer Discussion Meet, State Discussion Meet and ProFILE.

Community involvement

Volunteers as First Baptist Church organist, choir member, Sunday school teacher and AWANA Club

junior high youth leader/mentor, Oceana Christian School hot lunch program coordinator, Neighborhood Fundraising Crusader for American Cancer Society, Hart Area Recreation Program Girls Softball Coach and with Brooks Bacon Makers 4-H Club. Served as Women's Missionary Fellowship president.



Patti Warnke St. Johns, Clinton County Husband: John Children: Bethany, 6; Allison, 4

Farm operation

Assists with operations on 300-cow dairy operation while producing 300 acres of hay, 300 acres of corn and 350 pasture acres. Instituted a new health plan with lower deductibles for all farm employees. Maintains all personal and household records.

Farm Bureau involvement

Served as county board president and Young Farmer chair. Member of Membership, Promotion and Education, Policy Development, Information Committees, County Annual Planning, and Community Action Group. Participated in Discussion Meet, state Young Farmer Conference and softball tournament. Delegate to state annual meeting and an AFBF representative.

Community involvement

Teaches Sunday school at Lowe Church, Volunteers with St. Johns Elementary School, Maple Rapids Library as a storyteller, R.A.V.E. child care center, Clinton County 4-H and Traditions Christmas, serving lunch to the homeless.

Outstanding Young Farm Employee



Mark Todd Reed City, Osceola County Wife: Sharon

Farm operation

Family dairy farm consists of three centennial farms producing 300 acres of corn, 400 acres of alfalfa, 100 acres of oats and 100 acres of wheat. Milks 150 registered Holsteins and Brown Swiss while raising most of their replacements. Raise bull calves for feeders or finish them out as steers.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves on the Osceola County Young Farmer Committee and Community Action Group since 1992.

Community involvement

Active in the Mecosta County 4-H Junior Livestock Club where he was a member for 10 years.



Eric McNeilly St. Louis, Gratiot County Wife: Kay

Agriculture operation

Herdsman/dairy manager for a 600-cow operation on 6,500-acre cash crop farm. Responsible for all aspects of the dairy operation. Manages dairy employees and serves as purchasing agent for all feed and medical supplies.

Farm Bureau involvement

Member of Gratiot County Young Farmers. Attended Young Farmer Leaders' Conference. Former vice president and state delegate for Mecosta County. Former member of Mecosta County Young Farmers and Peach County, Ga., Young Farmers.

Community involvement

Volunteers at Chippewa Hills High School with FFA Dairy Judging. Provided judging and showmanship clinics to 4-H and FFA in Mecosta County and Macon County, Ga.



Peggy Miller West Branch, Ogemaw County Farm operation

Herd manager for a dairy farm with 150 Holstein cattle and 150 replacement heifers on 655 acres. Maintains all computerized cow and replacement heifer records, including breeding programs. Oversees all care, feeding and health management. Works with a nutritionist. Maintains all milking/work schedules.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves as Young Farmer chair, Promotion and Education chair and Policy Development Committee member. Chaired "I Milked a Cow" booth at county fair, Ag Rescue Seminar, "Are We Losing Our Farm Heritage" fair booth and presently working on the Little Red Barn project for this fall. She has been an Ogemaw County board member since 1994.

Community involvement Volunteers as an Ogemaw County 4-H Sheep Leader and Livestock Committee Member. Works in Ogemaw County Ag Society office. Member of Mich-

igan FFA Alumni Association. Member of Michigan State University Dairy Club where she chaired Small Animals Day and the "I Milked a Cow" booth at the Michigan State Fair. Planned a Small Animals Day for West Branch Library.



Michael Boensch Whittemore, losco County

Farm operation

Employed as a mechanic/maintenance supervisor for a 3,600-acre partnership. Responsible for routine maintenance and repair of farm's 20 tractors, 14 trucks, three choppers, two combines, tillage tools and planting, harvesting and feedlot equipment. Maintains accurate records for all equipment repairs. Orders extra parts for upcoming repairs and maintains shop inventories.

Farm Bureau involvement

Serves as county board of directors vice president and on Policy Development Committee. Served as county president, Young Farmer chairperson and newsletter editor and has served on Membership and Candidate Evaluation Committees and as third member of the executive committee. Served on state's Young Farmer and Policy Development Committees.

Community involvement

Volunteers as a Reno Township trustee, Knights of Columbus treasurer, Pastoral Council member at St. Pius X Catholic Church and as a member of the Iosco County Agricultural Society Board of Directors.

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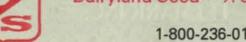
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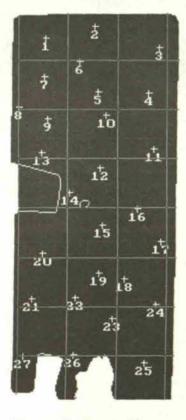


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et's face it - when the glaciers retreated north, leaving behind most of Michigan's soils, they did not vary rates or materials every 330 feet. Neither do our crop yields, and neither should our fertilizer spreaders. GPS-based services have increased dramatically in the past year, but their quality still varies widely. In order to judge the value of what you're paying for, consider the following:



Sample Locations

Figure 1 "Smart" grid sampling directs sample points to significant management zones rather than at the center of square grids.

Geo-referencing management zones

For many of our clients, we have used GPS to log the actual boundaries of naturally occuring and/ or human-imposed soil management zones. This is a tedious process, but it has allowed us to produce fertility maps that correlate better with yield data than virtually any other economically viable approach. "Smart" grid sampling

If your consultant or dealer samples by grids, ask that they use soil characteristics, yield maps, and other "smart" techniques to direct their sampling points to important management zones (Figure 1). Areas of high variability should be sampled more intensively than areas with relatively low variability. These sampling techniques should improve the accuracy of fertilizer spreading maps. Staggered sampling also helps minimize the problem of skewed data caused by past spreader overlaps or skips, which tend to follow parallel lines.

Interpolation of grid point data

Regardless of how your grid points were selected, their value can be easily and dramatically enhanced by a process called interpolation (Figure 2). This is a set of mathematical smoothing procedures that estimate the value at any point in a field using data from multiple locations throughout the field. A 1994 University of Wisconsin study showed that interpolation improved grid-sampled potassium maps from an accuracy of less than 35 percent to around 70 percent. Phosphorus maps were increased from less than 50 percent accurate to 65-70 percent. Insist on the best

Virtually every software package being used by custom applicators to spread fertilizer in Michigan is capable of some form of interpolation. SGIS (used by Crop Production Services and Star of the West) and the Vision System (Terra) automatically interpolate spreading maps. Fieldlink (used by Anderson Agri-Group, Grower Service and IMC) can apply by square grids or interpolated (contoured) spreading maps. If you are paying a consultant or elevator to grid sample your fields, insist that they use interpolation to improve the accuracy of your spreading maps. If we in the industry don't use the tools at our fingertips to deliver the highest quality product possible, we can hardly claim to be practicing "precision."

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0-0-60 (lbs/acre)

Figure 2 Interpolation uses data from multiple locations to smooth variability and enhance the accuracy of spreading maps.



If you have any topic suggestions for the Precision Agriculture column, please write to Michigan Farm News, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909, or send e-mail to: mfbinfo@aol.com



Neil R. Miller Phone: 517-624-6019 E-mail: 73072.1314@compuserve.com

Wheat 2000 leadership changes; former chair to focus on sugar beets

he leadership of the Wheat 2000 steering committee, organized in 1995 to help bolster peracre wheat yield and reverse the continuing decline in acreage planted to wheat, has changed.

Rich Hodupp, MSU Extension field crops agent, and Bob Boehm, manager of the field crops department in the Commodity and Environmental Division of Michigan Farm Bureau, are now cochairs of the Wheat 2000 steering committee.

The change was announced at the organization's Oct. 17 meeting at MSU. Steve Poindexter, MSU Extension agricultural agent in Saginaw, has been the steering committee chair since 1995. He was appointed the MSU Extension district sugar beet agent in midsummer.

Boehm and Hodupp are charter members of the Wheat 2000 steering committee.

Hodupp says his goals are to increase grower membership in Wheat 2000, which currently has 1,050 members, and attract funding.

"Now that the organization is well established with most of the state's growers, we need to obtain funding that will enable Wheat 2000 to continue to do its work in increasing the viability of the crop in Michigan," Hodupp says.

He says there is merit in the organization becoming a permanent entity and functioning similarly to the state associations for corn, soybean and dry edible beans.

Boehm concurs, saying Wheat 2000's educational effort with growers has been impressive and needs to continue to help maintain the competitiveness of the crop with other grain commodities.

"We would like to see more grower involvement on the steering committee and greater participation of growers in on-farm wheat research," Boehm says. "We think that more on-farm research is one of the more practical ways to increase yield and the stability of the crop's position in Michigan agriculture."

He says the MFB membership strongly supports Wheat 2000 practices and goals and that the organization will help encourage other growers to participate in the program.

More information about Wheat 2000 can be obtained from Boehm by calling him at (517) 323-7000 or Hodupp at (810) 667-0341.

Processing tomatoes, snap beans, asparagus down as onions reach record high

roduction of processing tomatoes and snap beans contracted for processing are down from last year, according to the Federal/State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service.

Michigan onions are forecast to the record high yield. Record low May temperatures got the Michigan asparagus crop off to a poor start.

Estimated production of processing snap beans decreased to 66,000 tons, down 5 percent from last year. Snap bean yield decreased to 3 tons per acre, down 9 percent from 1996 while acreage increased 5 percent to 22,000 acres.

Michigan's processing tomato production is forecast at 115,600 tons, down 17 percent from a year ago. The projected yield of 34 tons per acre increased by 5 percent from 1996. Processors contracted 3,400 acres of tomatoes this year, down 21 percent from 1996. The cool, wet May has delayed maturity. Harvest will begin about three weeks late in early September.

Michigan's asparagus production totaled 263,000 hundredweight (cwt.), down 12 percent from 1996. The area harvested for fresh market and processing asparagus was 17,500 acres, unchanged from the previous year.

Michigan's asparagus harvest got off to a low start due to record cold temperatures in May that caused some frost damage. Harvest then proceeded normally and yielded 15 cwt. per acre. Fresh market production totaled 39,000 cwt. valued at \$3.12 million. Processing production totaled 11,200 tons, valued at \$14.7

Michigan's onion acres for harvest is 6,000, up 3 percent from 1996. The projected production of 2.04 million cwt. is up 13 percent, and the estimated onion yield of 340 cwt. increased 10 percent from last year. Onion harvest in Michigan is underway, maturity is behind but the crop outlook is excellent. Yield is forecast at record tying high due to ideal summer condi-

Nationally, processing vegetable production for the four major processing crops is forecast at 14.3 million tons, down 9 percent from last year and 10 percent less than two

Production of processing tomatoes, at 10.0 million tons, is off 11 percent from last year and the lowest since 1993.

Snap bean production, at 718,460 tons, is down 3 percent from last year.

Sweet corn production, at 3.07 million tons, is off 7 percent from last year, and green pea production, at 494,680 tons, is up 20 percent from 1996.

Acres for harvest for the four major processing vegetable crops, at 1.20 million acres, are 4 percent less than in 1996.

Asparagus production is estimated at 1.98 million cwt. 1 percent less than in 1996 and 2 percent below 1995. Fresh market production is up 7 percent from 1996 while processed production is off 10 percent.

The U.S. storage onion production is forecast at 35.8 million cwt. Up 8 percent from last year and 2 percent more than in 1985.

Study shows stronger link between CJD, mad cow

study by British scientists gives stronger backing to the once-suspected link between mad cow disease and the human brain disorder Creutzfeld-Jakob disease. In a study performed at the University of Reading in England, researchers said laboratory studies show the same strain of germs that cause mad cow cause the similar CJD in humans.

The study and another corroborating study found the same infectious proteins called prions are to blame in both CJD and mad cow. In one study, researchers injected laboratory mice with ground up brain samples of persons who died from mad cow-associated CJD and injected others with another CJD variant. Mice with the mad cow-like injection exhibited symptoms similar to cattle with the disease while the other batch did not exhibit the same

British officials say 21 people have been infected with CJD from eating contaminated beef.

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National Conservation Buffer Council promotes commonsense conservation

he National Conservation Buffer Council (NCBC), a new private-sector organization dedicated to the promotion of agricultural conservation practices, officially opened its office in late October.

"This is an exciting day for those of us who are concerned about environmental quality and profitable farm production," said NCBC President David Stawick. "These two goals are not mutually exclusive, and NCBC will be working for the attainment of both."

Stawick said NCBC will encourage farmers and ranchers to establish conservation buffers - tactically placed strips of grass and other vegetation - that reduce rainfall runoff and soil erosion. "Practices like filter strips, riparian buffers, contour grass strips and grassed waterways can be tremendously effective in protecting our water and soil resources," Stawick said.

NCBC was formed to assist in the attainment of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's goal, announced by Secretary Dan Glickman last April, of establishing buffers to protect two million miles of stream banks and lake shores by 2002. Specifically, NCBC plans to promote USDA's continuous enrollment of buffers in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Under the CRP, farmers and ranchers retire environmentally fragile land in exchange for annual

rental payments to compensate for lost production.

"Congress created and expanded valuable conservation assistance programs in the 1996 Farm Bill and USDA has worked hard to implement the programs. Now it's up to landowners to participate," Stawick said. "In addition, the private sector must also step up to the plate to encourage producers to take part.'

Sponsors of the NCBC are Cargill, Inc.; ConAgra, Inc.; Farmland Industries, Inc.; Novartis Crop Protection, Inc.; Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.; Terra Industries, Inc; the National Corn Growers Association; and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. "We expect that dozens of other groups operating at the national, state and local levels will also help us get out the message," Stawick said.

Stawick comes to NCBC from the Senate Agriculture Committee staff of Chairman Richard Lugar, where he played a major role in the development of the conservation title of the 1996 Farm Bill. Prior to that, he was in charge of environmental issues for the National Corn Growers Association and earlier worked as a wire service reporter and farm broadcaster.

New diagnostic tool to aid in eradicating cattle TB

new diagnostic test takes only two to three days to detect the bacterium that causes cattle tuberculosis, an improvement over current diagnostic methods that take two to three months.

Mycobacterium bovis - the culprit in cattle tuberculosis - is very similar to two other bacteria: M. avium and M. paratuberculosis. The inability to distinguish between these similar organisms has slowed down the U.S. Department of Agriculture's goal of eradicating cattle tuberculosis by the year 2000.

Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Ames, Iowa, developed the new diagnostic test at the request of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The test uses polymerase chain reaction (PCR), a technique that makes millions of copies of targeted genetic material found only in M. bovis. Making so many copies of the targeted DNA allows easy identification of M. bovis, which couldn't be seen before the PCR amplification. Extensive tests in other laboratories have proven that this piece of DNA isn't present in other mycobacterial species.

The researchers checked the PCR test by examining 99 known cases of TB in cattle and elk. In 93 percent of the cases, they could make an accurate diagnosis within two to three days after receiving the tissue samples. The speedier diagnosis will allow APHIS officials to take immediate action to identify the most common sources of cattle tuberculosis: imported Mexican steers, the captive elk and deer population, and large dairy herds with low levels of infection.

Thelen appointed director of new environmental stewardship division

o better address the environmental impacts of agriculture on the state's resources, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has appointed the director of its newly created Environmental Stewardship Division, MDA Director Dan Wyant announced today.

"Dr. Kurt Thelen is an outstanding individual with very strong credentials in the areas of pollution prevention, groundwater stewardship, natural resource protection and pesticide management," Wyant said. "Kurt shares my philosophy that we want to work with the industry to continually raise environmental protection in agriculture, without compromising our farmers' economic viability."

"Farmers are the original soil conservationists in this country, and the real work in environmental protection is best done at the local level," Wyant said. "By creating an Environmental Stewardship Division and working with our local partners, we will enhance and encourage Michigan farmers' efforts to reduce environmental impacts into the next century."

The Environmental Stewardship Division will work in concert with local agricultural and environmental agencies, including soil conservation districts and MSU Extension offices, Thelen said. The Environmental Stewardship Division has just announced \$3 million in grants to be used for groundwater protection and education by local soil conservation districts across the state.

Other programs within the 40-person office include the right-to-farm program, spill response for agricultural chemicals, groundwater monitoring, state pesticide management plans, interaction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on agricultural matters, forestry on private lands, and pollution prevention. Environmental Stewardship priorities also include overseeing the inter-county drainage system, and inspection of migrant labor housing for Michigan's 842 camps serving the state farming industry.

The Environmental Stewardship Division concentrates environmental programs previously scattered in several areas of MDA.

Thelen, of Westphalia, holds bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees from the Crop and Soil Sciences Department at Michigan State University where he is also an instructor. He has worked at MDA since 1990, and previously worked at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

In addition to his strong academic credentials, Thelen also understands the practical side of farming having been a partner in his family's 500-acre crop and dairy farm, and owns his own small cash crop, tree and beef cattle operation. He is a member of several professional organizations and has authored numerous papers on the environmental impacts of agricultural chemicals.

Report hands down statistic: Farmers twice as likely to be killed on the job

ccording to a report released by the International Labor Organization, agricultural workers worldwide are twice as likely to be killed while at work than employees in other sectors.

Out of 1.3 billion agricultural workers worldwide, 170,000 were killed each of the past 10 years. The report says mortality rates in the farm sector have remained high while other dangerous occupations, such as construction and mining, have

experienced improved safety records.

In the United States, farmers and farm workers make up only 3 percent of the workforce, according to the report. Yet, nearly 8 percent of all work-related accidents occurred in the agriculture sector.

The report says cutting tools and machinery such as tractors and harvesters - are the leading causes of death and injury, but it mentions exposure to pesticides and other chemicals as major causes.

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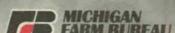
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Agriculture Credit Conference focuses on adding value to farms

economics department has sponsored an annual conference geared toward credit issues facing Michigan agriculture. This year's conference was no different - but it went beyond just current agricultural credit, it looked at ways farmers are making their farming operations more profitable to compete in a world market.

The one-day conference targeted the bulk of Michigan's agricultural finance sector - those who provide the capital to keep Michigan farming. The commercial bankers, Farm Service Agency and Farm Credit Services representatives from across the state who attended learned of the move afoot to add profit to the producer's bottom line by adding value to their raw commodities.

"Value added is a very frequently used buzz term right now," explained Dr. Steve Hanson, coordinator of the event from MSU's department of agricultural economics. "People aren't exactly sure what it is or what it means. But it's happening around us and one of the goals of this conference was to increase people's awareness and get them to start to think about these issues."

"Value-added is the process of giving something more than just a commodity value," stated Jerry Thompson, vice president of commercial lending in Frankenmuth. "The way that I try to measure valueadded is looking through the processor toward the ultimate end user, usually the consumer, and making a product more favorable to them in a manner that, quite frankly, the consumer is willing to pay for."

"Grower ownership of value-added processing is a key component to increasing farm income and enhancing rural economic development," explained Bob Boehm, MFB's field crops manager. "We're pleased to see the interest in the concept from agricultural lenders, because many producers will look to their lender for equity capital. Lender understanding and support of the value-added concept will play a critical role in the expansion of

grower investments in these operations."

Value-added instances

"The chipping potato is the one that's come on the strongest in the last few years," added Thompson. "There's been approximately an 85 percent change in the production that was done in the Red River Valley that has been transferred to Michigan. It's been transferred to Michigan because of improved varieties in Michigan, based on our use of technology and the investment by Michigan producers in potato storage facilities. And there is, of course, a rail transportation advantage in Michigan over the Red River Valley.'

"As the people are participating with their clients," added Hanson, "they will see these activities happening more and more often, if they're aware of them, then they know how to start to think about these things and communicate with their clientele.

Because of low profit margins in production agriculture," he said, "they're looking for other ways to expand. You can only buy so much land out there. There's a fixed land base out there, and you can only squeeze so many bushels of grain out of that land, and they're looking for ways to expand and grow. One way is to move vertically through the

"Like any business decision, you need to evaluate the risk and the reward ratio," Thompson cautions. "You need to understand what it will take to add value, the reward for the value added, how consistent that added value reward will be, the competition for that product and what your market niche is."

Coming from the perspective of someone sitting on the bank's side of the table when it comes to talking financing Michigan's farmers, Thompson explained that raising credit cannot be answered by simply applying mathematical calculations across the board. "When we're talking about credit - credit is a tool, but it has to be a self-serving tool. It must pay for itself. And over and above that, it should return

something to management for the risk involved in that. So the return needs to be measured."

According to Hanson, there are three things he advises people who are looking at new valueadded ventures. "It's going to be a new area for a lot of people. You're going to have to find a market for whatever product you're going to try to add value to. Often, that's going to mean associating yourself with a processor or end consumer for your product; that's done through certain types of contracting arrangements.

"It's not the same as buying another hundred acres of land and going out and farming it the same way you farmed all your other land," he said. "You're going to have to develop new technologies, and this may involve teaming with other people who have that expertise. You may end up forming alliances with people you never thought you would before and hiring people to do many of these things for you.

"The third thing that's critical will be somehow you have to fund these things," Hanson concluded. "You're going to need input from the financial sector; you may have to team up with other people to obtain enough equity capital to enter into these types of value-added activities."

"One of the biggest things that I see in the Saginaw Valley is the fact that we are in the center of a peninsula and we have to ship so much of our production south for it to be processed," Thompson added. "I like the ideas that I'm hearing about looking at abilities and ways to process the product. I think there can be some real opportunities in some of the oilseeds, but also I wouldn't rule out expanded sugar beet production and corn converted into livestock usage; that, to me, all looks like some real solid opportunity in the foreseeable future.

"From the lending standpoint," Thompson concludes. "I think that it's important for lenders to look at ways to add value and not just to loan money, so to speak, or accept deposits. I think we have to be part of the solution as agriculture goes forward."



Check on SMV signs, equipment lighting

all harvest is a risky time for collisions between non-farm motor vehicles and farm equipment, which may be on the roadway from early evening well into the night.

Approximately 300 collisions between motor vehicles and farm equipment on the roadways occur in Michigan each year.

Howard J. Doss, Michigan State University Extension agricultural safety leader, says the two main reasons for the collisions is that motorists misjudge the speed of farm equipment or do not see the equipment in time to avoid a collision. He relates that the driver of a car traveling 55 miles an hour can have as little as seven seconds to avoid a collision with a tractor and equipment traveling

The SMV emblem should be clean and highly reflective. It should be replaced every two to five years. Doss says Michigan law requires every implement to have an SMV emblem on it when on the roadway.

"That means both the tractor and any attached farm implement must carry an SMV emblem that is clearly visible from the rear of the equipment," Doss says

He advises that, in addition to the SMV emblem, all towed equipment should be marked at the rear edges by flashing warning lights or reflective tape - preferably both. Lights and flashers on tractors and combines should also be kept in good working order.

Older SMV emblems can be retrofitted with the new technology. Kits can be ordered from Gemplers (800-382-8473), SMV Technologies, Inc. (813-372-1512), or Triad Products (402-462-2182).

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Adjust wake up to opportunity!

ideas on how to add value to your farm

ou've read a lot about value-added agriculture. Now hear firsthand how four Farm Bureau members have done it.

Make plans to attend Michigan Farm Bureau's educational workshop, Thursday, Dec. 11, at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme during the organization's 78th annual meeting.

"The purpose of the workshop is to get farmers together to share ideas on how to enhance profitability on their farm by taking advantage of value-added agriculture," explains Bob Boehm, MFB's manager of the field crops division.

"The changes brought on by changing consumer demand, communication technology, international trade agreements, a more marketoriented national farm policy, biotechnology and niche marketing are just a few of the things these producers will share with the group," he added.

Four individuals, representing their farming operations, will highlight what they have done to add value to their commodity.

Katrina lott, lott Farms, Petersburg

The lott family farm grows over 1,300 acres of produce in southeastern Michigan. Recently, however, the over 50-year-old farm has taken their highest quality tomatoes to the Internet and sold them as Gourmetos TM! By clicking on www.tomatos.com anyone in the world can order their own handpicked and hand-packed ripe tomatoes in a three or five-pound box. Iott will share how her family's farm has captured the latest marketing arena to sell a portion of their finest produce.

Rob Steffens, Michigan Apple Packers Cooperative, Sparta

During the last two years, 15 apple growers in West Michigan joined forces to form Michigan Apple Packers Cooperative, pooling their resources to build a state-of-the-art packing facility and guarantee part of their production to operate it.

The \$2.1 million, 42,500-square-foot facility

800,000 bushels a year. It is the most technologically advanced packing facility east of Washington. Steffens will share the challenges he and other members of the cooperative faced when forming a new cooperative

Wendell Van Gunst, Country Dairy, New Era

Country Dairy is a family-owned business that has been operating in Oceana County since 1903. Their milk processing plant started in 1983 and now ships to local stores within a 75-mile radius of their farm. Recently, Country Dairy expanded to a larger dairy operation, to meet growing consumer demand. Van Gunst will share his experiences marketing his own bottled milk during his 14 years in the business.

Andy Snider, MACMA's Hog Networking Cooperative

Michigan Farm Bureau's affiliate company, the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association's (MACMA) livestock division, established a three-stage, multiple-site hog networking cooperative. The new hog cooperative's goal is to offer hog producers the ability to participate in a segment of a large hog production network. Snider will explain how the concept behind the hog networking cooperative provides independent hog producers the efficiencies of a large hog operation by working cooperatively, yet retaining flexibility to own a portion of the operation.

"This is our opportunity to show farmers how to thrive in today's economy, not just survive," explained MFB Promotion and Education manager Julie Chamberlain. "The real life experiences will hopefully trigger ideas about what other Farm Bureau members can do on their own operation or with their neighbors.

During the hour-long program, MSU Extension Director Arlen Leholm will serve as moderator, fielding questions from the audience to be answered by the panel. The program begins at 2 p.m. in the Grand Traverse Mackinac Ballroom.

Hunting? Remember these firearm safety tips

unting season in Michigan is a time for more than one million outdoor enthusiasts to participate in one of our many great outdoor recreational opportunities. It is also a time for common sense, for in hunting, there is nothing more important than safety to make hunting an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded. You can never guarantee that your chamber is unloaded. Give an unloaded firearm the same respect you would give a loaded firearm.
- Watch where you point your firearm muzzle. Never point the muzzle of your firearm at yourself or anyone else, even if it is unloaded.
- Know your firearm and its ammunition. Before you load, be sure your firearm is in safe operating condition and the barrel is free of obstructions. Double check the specifications of your ammunition to be sure it fits your firearm.
- Do not load your firearm before you are ready. Why take chances? When traveling to and from your hunting blind, take down or have your actions open, and always carry your firearms unloaded in their cases.
- Be sure of your target and beyond before you squeeze the trigger. Be sure that you have

carefully identified your target, then look past it to be sure it is safe to shoot. Hunters need to keep track of buildings, roadways and other

- Beware of fatigue when hunting. When you've been out in the woods a long time, fatigue can cause accidents. A loaded firearm can accidentally fire with a single, unexpected jar — so watch
- Don't take chances with a loaded firearm. Never step over fences, jump ditches or make other awkward or unbalanced moves while holding a loaded firearm.
- Use care when practicing. When shooting for practice, make sure your backstop will prevent ricochets and protect bystanders. Bullets can ricochet off water, rocks, trees, metal and other hard surfaces.
- Store your firearms safely. When not in use, always store firearms unloaded, away from ammunition and out of the reach of children and inexperienced users.
- Remember: Alcohol, drugs and firearms don't mix. Never consume alcohol or other moodaltering drugs before or during target shooting or hunting.

Food gap predicted

report recently released says a larger-thanexpected "food gap" will leave areas of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa needing large amounts of imported grain, while world food output and prices could become more erratic, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The erratic supplies could mean "higher ... risks of food insecurity for the world's most vulnerable countries and people," IFPRI said.

The report cautions that the world "is not going to run out of food," but that the volume of imports needed to bridge the gap between local

food production and local demand is growing. IFPRI is urging world leaders to act and to expand and stabilize the world food supply.

The group is predicting that by 2020, developing nations will import 229 million metric tons of grains per year, which will eclipse the 95 million tons imported by those nations in recent years. The Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research has called for \$300 million in pledges to fund projects to improve crops and livestock to feed growing populations.

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Topic

December 1997

A monthly resource for the Community Action Groups of Michigan Farm Bureau



Impact of electric deregulation on agriculture yet to be determined

or the past several years, deregulation has been a popular word in Lansing and in Washington, D.C. The latest industry to be considered for deregulation is electric power.

Michigan legislators are currently mulling over bills that could remove some regulations from the business of sending electricity across the power lines. If the electric power industry is deregulated as it is expected to be, it could have users paying much lower rates. But it could also mean that farmers, who often require different amounts of electricity at different times of the day or season, have to pay dearly for power during those peak periods.

What electric deregulation ends up meaning for farmers is yet to be determined, according to Ron Nelson, Michigan Farm Bureau legislative counsel. All that's certain is that careful preparation is necessary

Rather than write one check for electricity and the service of sending it across our power lines (like we do now), consumers would be able to buy electricity from one company and receive it across the

Discussion Electric deregulation could lead to lower prices

lines from their existing company. While the power generation would be largely unregulated, the delivery and related services would continue to be regulated.

"The whole concept here is to allow the user to shop for the best price," Nelson said. Farmers and other users of electricity will be able to go to the open market and purchase power at the lowest price they can find. Whatever power company owns the lines in their area will move that electricity to their home or business.

"We have to start thinking of electricity as a commodity that you can put in the pickup and take home," he continued. "Think of it like a bushel of corn. It can be traded, bought or sold.'

The problems with power

Of course, electricity can't just be put in a pickup bed and that's where the problem lies. Unlike corn, electricity cannot be stored for when it is needed. With separate companies generating the power and delivering it, along with the fact that it cannot be stored, the whole process could be tricky.

For example, a farmer who is set up to irrigate does not know at the beginning of the season if he or she will need to irrigate all the crops or none of the crops.

How will that farmer know how much electricity to purchase ahead of time to run the irrigation equipment? If the farmer purchases too much electricity, it can always be resold on the open market, but they'll probably lose money in the process. If the farmer doesn't purchase enough electricity, it might not be available when it comes time to irrigate. And if it is available, it will probably cost a lot. Or it could be that the lines will be full and can't

transport the electricity when it's needed.

Dairy farmers could run into the same situation, only they'll face it two or three times every day. They might end up paying high prices for that extra electricity during milking, or it may not be available at all. Many farmers own generators, but that may not be enough to get by.

That means power companies will need to have enough room on their lines to service those peak times, but there will be extra capacity at other times. A question of who will pay for that "stranded cost" is yet to be answered.

"With agriculture's demand peaks from day to day and throughout the season, it does complicate the issue somewhat," Nelson said.

Other concerns include who will pay for the costs of the transition from a regulated to deregulated electric industry and how companies will "securitize" their costs.

- 1. Think about how you depend on electricity on your farms. Is saving money on electric power - say 20 percent worth the risk of not always having it when you need it?
- 2. What are some business opportunities that could spring up because of electric deregulation?
- 3. What are some things farmers could do to adjust to electric deregulation?
- 4. Overall, is the concept of deregulation a good one? How has it affected other industries, such as the airlines or trucking?



Saginaw County Farm Bureau member Stuart Reinbold (left) receives a plaque of appreciation from Bill Thayer, Michigan Bean Commission chair, for his years of service.

Michigan bean industry hosts quality assurance seminar

he Michigan Bean Shippers Association and the Michigan Bean Commission held the 1997 Bean Harvest Tour and Quality Assurance Seminar,

The program featured two breakfasts held at Bay City's Bay Valley Inn, and a farm site dinner at the Saginaw Valley Bean and Beet Research Farm. The sessions were well attended with 60 people attending the breakfasts and 80 attendees at the

Following the Monday morning breakfast program, the quality assurance delegates participated in field and elevator tours. Tuesday's agenda included a breakfast program and an array of different focus points that individual delegates had an opportunity to choose from upon arrival. The Monday tour provided delegate participants in this year's event to see some pulling and some limited harvesting. They also had an opportunity to evaluate up close some of the extremes in damage experienced during the growing season.

This year's event was funded by the MBSA and the Michigan Bean Commission.



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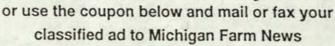
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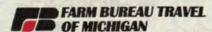
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News for Farmowners from Farm Bureau Insurance

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o matter how carefully you install a wood stove, or what kinds of precautions you take, there is always the possibility that something could go wrong. That's why you should have

UL-approved fire extinguisher in the vicinity of (but not right next to) your stove.

A smoke or smoke/fire detector near your sleeping quarters, but far enough away from the stove to keep the detector from sounding off in the presence of normal heat radiation or smoke that may result from start-up or refueling.

Portable, folding escape ladders under beds or window sills for emergency use.

An emergency exit plan.

We have a helpful guide to the proper installation and use of wood heating appliances. It's called Wood Heat: The Safe Way and is available to you free of charge. Just check the coupon below and

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ore than just your farm needs top-quality protection. Your Farm Bureau Insurance agent offers a full range of insurance services to protect you, your family, and your future.

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Disability income protection especially designed for farmers, underwritten by Illinois Mutual.

Just indicate your interest on the form below and return it to the address or fax number listed there.

Keep your farm shop safe

ervice and maintenance of equipment are important jobs on the farm. Be sure your farm shop is a place where you can make repairs safely. Here are some tips:

- Organize your workshop so that everything has a designated place. Make sure items are secure so that they won't fall on someone.
- Keep walkways clear to prevent trip-and-fall accidents.
- When you're working on equipment, be sure that it is turned off, all rotating parts have stopped moving and safety locks are in place.
- Keep all shields and guards in place on power
- Have the right tools for the job. Handle them properly to avoid skinned knuckles, strains, pinched fingers and the like.
- Equip your shop with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to help prevent electric shock.
- Keep your shop well lighted. Be sure all heaters are properly vented and that flammable liquids are kept away from heat sources.
- Wear personal protective equipment. Standard PPE for a farm shop should include leather gloves, chemical-resistant gloves, safety glasses, face shields, ear plugs or muffs, steel-toed shoes, respirators, a hard hat, a protective apron and welding shields.

For small-business owners: Farm Bureau Life's new SIMPLE retirement plan

ith Farm Bureau Life's new SIMPLE (Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees) IRA, small-business owners can offer their employees easy and affordable retirement plans.

Like Farm Bureau Life's other retirement plans, it will have no set-up or yearly administrative fees.

To find out how the SIMPLE plan may work for you, contact your local Farm Bureau Insurance agent.

Also available from Farm Bureau Life: new Roth and Education IRAs

ongress has approved two new IRA plans that take effect for the 1998 tax year - and both are available to you from Farm Bureau Life.

Contributions to the new Roth IRA plan cannot be deducted from income. But earnings grow tax-deferred and can be withdrawn tax free in retirement (after age 59-1/2) if the account has been in place at least five years.

The new Education IRA allows annual deductible contributions of up to \$500 for each child under the age of 18. Distributions of earnings are tax free, and withdrawals can be made at any time if used for college expenses.

Call your Farm Bureau Insurance agent for more information about these outstanding new opportunities.

Drive carefully, stay safe on your snowmobile

nowmobiling is a popular winter activity in Michigan. But it can be a hazardous one, too. As snowmobiles become faster and more sophisticated, and as snowmobile traffic increases, experts cite three main factors in the accompanying increase in deadly snowmobile accidents: excessive speed, alcohol, and improper driving on roadways.

Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind: Ride at a speed that is compatible with the trail width, condition, and length. Slow down if you

have a passenger.

Don't hurdle or jump.

- Keep your snowmobile in good working condition. Be sure all your lights are operating, and don't overdrive your headlight at night.
- Always wear approved head gear and eye protection. Maintain a safe stopping distance between you

and the machine ahead of you.

Avoid road traveling. If you must travel on a road, and such travel is permitted, reduce your speed. When crossing a road, make a full stop, then look carefully in both directions before crossing. Try to cross at a 90degree angle. Be wary of parked vehicles.

Remember that alcohol and snowmobiling don't mix. Snowmobile operators who drink and drive endanger themselves, their passengers, and anyone else they may encounter on the trail

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- □ Our video Farm Safety: The People Factor

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