New fruit and vegetable microbial risk guidelines proposed by the FDA

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On Dec. 1, the FDA and USDA held a "town hall meeting" to discuss food safety and hear grower comments on proposed federal guidelines for fresh fruit and vegetable production and processing. The meeting was sponsored by the Michigan Farm Bureau and was held to unveil and hear grower reactions. "We must remember, the American consumer is the world's best consumer," Gardine added. "The produce supplied is the safest in the world and the president wants to keep it that way for a number of reasons: consumer confidence in the safety of the food supply and the need for a constant supply of raw materials to maintain our agricultural economy."

According to the memorandum, the guidelines will be the first set of specific standards for fruits and vegetables, improving the agricultural and handling practices for processors selling produce into the domestic market. Among the guidelines proposed at the early December meeting were best management practices for nutrient management, water quality, worker sanitation and health, facility sanitation, and transportation and handling practices.

"We can deny that recently there have been some high-visibility cases associating microbial problems with produce, either fresh or processed," explained Tom Gardine with FDA's Food Safety Initiative and the main presenter at the meeting. "We can deny that recently there have been some high-visibility cases associating microbial problems with produce, either fresh or processed," explained Tom Gardine with FDA's Food Safety Initiative and the main presenter at the meeting. "We can deny that recently there have been some high-visibility cases associating microbial problems with produce, either fresh or processed," explained Tom Gardine with FDA's Food Safety Initiative and the main presenter at the meeting. "We must remember, the American consumer is the world's best consumer," Gardine added. "The produce supplied is the safest in the world and the president wants to keep it that way for a number of reasons: consumer confidence in the safety of the food supply and the need for a constant supply of raw materials to maintain our agricultural economy."

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Each year, Michigan Christmas tree growers plant approximately 1.5 million new tree seedlings to keep pace with the $90 million industry for our state. Michigan Farm News

Tis the season for Michigan-grown Christmas trees

For the fresh scent of a newly-sawn evergreen tree evokes memories of Christmas past, but maybe you didn't know the age-old tradition of getting a real tree. Michigan's dairy superpool revolves around milk used for other products besides bottled milk. The debate as it was five years ago is the milk going to Class III utilization (cheese, butter, powdered milk usage), Kirk said. "Cooperatives contend that they need some compensation for that milk. The other participants say 'no,' they want to participate only in Class I (fluid milk) and II (cottage cheese, yogurt, ice cream, dairy) are included in the superpool. Processors supplying fluid milk also want assurance for maintaining that market." Recent changes in pricing structures, primarily volume incentives, prompted the failure of the voluntary pool, according to Kirk. "Non-cooperative processors and handlers lost some producers," he said. "The big challenge was the fact that all of a sudden producers were jumping ship, bailing out, moving around, and it was causing too much uncertainty and too much instability in the industry." "We’ve got a whole series of issues," Wyant said, "ranging from whether Class III milk is included in the pool, to investments into cheese plants and the risks taken. The issue now will be: is there any common ground in there?" "The only way the superpool can be resurrected would be to include Class I and Class II milk," Kirk explained.

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Continued on page 4
Michigan dairy producers approve continuance

Michigan dairy producers have approved a referendum for the continuance of the Michigan Dairy Market Program for Grade A milk, according to Dan Wynat, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Michigan dairy producers approved the referendum to continue the Michigan Dairy Market Program for an additional five years beginning Jan. 1, 1999, and ending Dec. 31, 2004. A total of 770 ballots were received in the referendum, which was conducted by MDA from Oct. 20-31, 1997. Ninety-five percent of those who voted approved the referendum. Of the remaining 677 ballots, 962 producers voted yes.

Man pleads guilty in fruit hepatitis case

Frederick Williamson, former president of Andrew & Williamson Sales Co. of San Diego, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court for lying and other counts relating to the company's purchase of strawberries from Mexico. The strawberries, served in school lunches, were believed to be the source of a hepatitis outbreak this past spring in several states, including Michigan. Several students and teachers fell ill after eating the tainted strawberries. It was determined that the fruit came from Williamson's distribution center. Williamson told federal authorities at the time the fruit was grown, it was actually grown in Michigan. He will face federal charges.

Midwest dairy industry shrinking

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago said recently that the Midwest dairy industry may be experiencing some rough sledding in the future. Small farmers, the bank says, are leaving the business due to competition and ever-diminishing government price supports.

Many, typically smaller, dairy farmers continue to exit the industry, while a few others are expanding in hopes of achieving lower per-unit costs of production," said Gary Benjamin, economic advisor and vice president at the Chicago Fed. "A domestic market whose needs can be met with fewer dairy cows held by lower-cost producers implies the restructuring process will continue, at least until export markets open up more and the U.S. is able to establish a foothold as a low-cost producer for the world dairy market," Benjamin noted.

The number of dairy cows in the Chicago bank's district—Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan—during September was down 3 percent from a year ago, and down 6 percent from two years ago, Benjamin said.

Several counties with the five key "growth rate" states—Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, and New Mexico—rose 4 percent from a year earlier and 6 percent in two years.

U.S. bans Belgian livestock and meat imports

In response to the discovery of a case of mad cow disease—bovine spongiform encephalopathy—in Belgium, the Agriculture Department has banned all imports of cattle, sheep, their meat and other related products from that country. Despite the fact that Belgium is not a major exporter of meat to the United States, USDA says "this emergency measure was taken to protect animal and public health." No cases of mad cow disease have ever been discovered in the United States. Recently, the Food and Drug Administration announced plans to set up an on-farm monitoring system to prevent an outbreak of the disease in the United States.

As at least 20 people, mostly from Britain, have died as a result of the human brain disorder Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which has been linked to the consumption of beef cattle infected with mad cow disease. The United States also has turned imports of animals and meat from Britain, France, Ireland, Oman, Portugal, Switzerland and the Netherlands, due to BSE cases.

Tractor sales up during October

U.S. sales of farm tractors rose 0.6 percent to 11,793 during October versus the same month in 1996, the Equipment Manufacturers Insti- tute said recently. The institute said a news release that, for the year to date, sales of farm tractors totaled 109,374, an increase of 11 percent compared with the first 10 months of 1996.
Product liability lawsuits

Rep. Retal (D-Oakley), Bogardus (D-Davison) and Wallace (D-Detroit) have sponsored H.B. 5571, H.B. 5572, and H.B.5573 respectively to address product liability concerns.

In 1995, Gov. Engler signed into law sweeping product liability reform that helped protect manufacturers, small businesses, and agribusinesses from frivolous lawsuits. Specifically, the law eliminated "nuisance stopping," capped and suffered damages, and protected manufacturers and sellers from lawsuits if the product met federal and state standards or if the product was used in a manner in which it was not intended.

H.B.5571, 5572 and 5573 are intended to make it easier for individuals to sue manufacturers, small businesses and agribusinesses. Specifically, the bills:
- Require the jury to determine what is a product is defective.
- Give manufacturers the right to introduce evidence that a product was used as intended.

The IRS proposal would penalize farmers

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed changes in the uniform capitalization (UNICAP) rules that could adversely affect many Michigan fruit and nursery 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. According to Ken Nye, director of Michigan Farm Bureau's Commodity and Environmental Division, they do not apply to dairy and livestock farmers who are not required to use accrual accounting.

The proposed expansion of expenses covered by UNICAP will increase taxes for producers because they will have to wait longer to deduct expenses," Nye said. "That's particularly bad news for orchard operators who have a tremendous amount invested in the establishment of newly planted apple and cherry orchards. Those orchards generally must sit idle for three to five years before they generate a single dollar in revenue.

Under current IRS rules, affected producers must capitalize "preparatory" expenditures, which include the cost of clearing, leveling and grading land, and installing irrigation systems and protecting buildings and trees, and acquiring animals.

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Further guidelines set for food safety

Continued from page 1

The process of gathering information before the group started expressed a certain level of concern. The proposed guidelines, broad and general as they may be, could be the beginning of more red tape to come.

"One thing you've got to get through to the agricultural community is that FDA, as we know, is a regulatory agency, not a recommendatory agency," explained Dan Hill, chairman of the Fruit and Vegetable Advisory Committee for Farm Bureau and a member of Michigan's Vegetable Council.

"Assume we see something in writing from the FDA, we figure it's a regulation waiting to happen. There is no hidden agenda," Gardine emphasized. "No secret plan to turn this into a regulation. We believe the way to work with this is through putting out the best guidance based on current science."

FDA guidelines vs. Right-to-Farm

Questions about the need for further guidelines came up often given the fact that Michigan already has the Right-to-Farm law on the books outlining generally accepted agricultural management practices for manure, pesticide, and nutrient management.

"I really don't see any major areas of conflict," explained Kun Thelen, director of MDK's Environmental Stewardship Division, which manages Michigan's Right-to-Farm. "They're really looking from different perspectives. One's really food safety based, and ours are more environmentally and nuisance based."

"Many of the things that we do to protect water quality also are protective of public health and food safety," he added. "The one comment I made in here was that perhaps these particular guidelines for food safety should reference some of the work that individual states have done with respect to water protection, nutrient management, some of the things we already cover under our Right-to-Farm practices."

"One of the things we pointed out many times during our presentation," Gardine explained, "is that the guidance document does not supersede local law, local requirement, or local regulation. That is an existing federal regulation that is already on the books, a state requirement, or a local requirement."

The Michigan town meeting was the first of six to be held around the country until Dec. 19. After that point, the guidelines may be revised, based upon the testimony and any written comments received by the FDA, and published in the Federal Register. Once they are published in the register, another 45-day comment period will begin for any final notes to be submitted.

"If they have thoughts and comments they want to share, get it in to us," Gardine said. "We would hope that the farmers recognize the importance of microbial safety in the production of fresh produce for their consumers, the American public who purchase their products, and for their business."

Dairy farmers will soon be feeling pinch

Continued from page 1

created from $1.48 per gallon in 1990 to $1.34 per gallon in 1997, while retail prices of milk grew from $2.51 per gallon to $2.62 per gallon.

"Over the last seven years when you take a look at the cooperative's price," explained Kirk, "it's dropped roughly 10 to 11 percent while, at the same time, the retail price has increased over 13 percent. That's a substantial margin, so that means there is room to demand an over-order premium and return it back to the producers."

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and the Pacific. Eastern Europe has experienced a little, unexpectedly, either direction from this point most issues, there are arguments taking place on fundamentals where projea, and as we go through the South American growing season with B.Sino concerns, volatility in the market is the most likely scenario.

ports. My guess is that we will see exports pick up next spring from the present pace, but that they will not make it back to previous expectations.

The local basis is not overly strong and the spread between futures indicates the market will put up strong storage. But there is no compelling reason that prices will be as robust as they were with the world-wide may concern starting in 20 to 45 percent of demand for a spring rally. Others may want to move a higher percentage and consider getting back in the market later with collars or an optimistic bullish strategy.

WHEAT

As evidenced by prices, the wheat market is not the place for us to be. As Table 2 shows, projected use is up to 300 million bushels, but stocks are expected to be up to 240 million bushels, and prices reflect that. Fundamentals suggest prices for the year around $5.50, and we have already seen that case. Without some unexpected production problems somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere, I suspect we won't see much price movement before spring.

It will be interesting to see what the winter wheat planting numbers were as of Dec. 1, which will be released around Jan. 12. The condition of the winter wheat crop is quite good for the country as a whole. If something does spark the wheat market, we want to be first in line back towards $3.00, consider pricing some 1998 wheat.

SOYBEANS

The up-and-down projections for the soybean market continue to do quite well. Demand continues to outpace the market, and we are sure of just how strong, although we are quite sure it's somewhere between very strong and very very strong. Crush for both U.S. and export markets in October was quite strong, with significant year-to-year increases in the estimates.

And exports of raw beans continue on a pace to meet the sharp increases in export projections. As usual, South America is the wildcard this time of year. Plantings seem to have gone fairly well which was a big factor in tempering the soybean market after it rose sharply. As we move into refined soy beans, and as we go through the South American growing season with B.Sino concerns, volatility in the market is the most likely scenario.

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

December 15, 1997

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Corn

Soybeans

Wheat

Table 1 - Corn

\[\text{Area harvested} \times \text{production} = \text{total supply}\]

\[\text{Price} \times \text{production} = \text{total demand}\]

\[\text{Total supply} - \text{total demand} = \text{shortage or surplus}\]

Table 2 - Wheat

\[\text{Beginning stocks} + \text{production} - \text{total use} = \text{ending stocks}\]

\[\text{Price} \times \text{production} = \text{total demand}\]

\[\text{Total supply} - \text{total demand} = \text{shortage or surplus}\]

Table 3 - Soybeans

\[\text{Beginning stocks} + \text{production} - \text{total use} = \text{ending stocks}\]

\[\text{Price} \times \text{production} = \text{total demand}\]

\[\text{Total supply} - \text{total demand} = \text{shortage or surplus}\]

Dairy

Larry G. Hamm

The future of milk pricing mechanisms is in a state of great confusion. However, the milk market continues to tighten. The results of these two factors lead to the proverbial good news/bad news scenario.

As to the future of that wholesale cheese market, particularly for 40 block pounds of cheddar, these have held their strength through the month of November. The latest report from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), indicates that the November Base Formula Price (BFP) increased over October level of $128.25 per hundredweight (on a 3.5 percent test). The November BFP is $128.26. The 13-cent increase in BFP means that the fundamental base under U.S. dairy markets is likely to hold for the next month or so.

The seasonal weakening of dairy product markets will likely occur in the next month or two. However, current market conditions do not seem to suggest a more limited decline in dairy product prices. One important market fundamental is the amount of contractual and government storage holdings of natural American cheese. In August 1997, for example, U.S. warehouses had in storage 3 million pounds of cut cheese, almost double the amount than they did in August 1996. This extra 7.8 million pounds of cheese overhang the dairy markets which was largely responsible for the large drops in the BFP experienced earlier this summer. The latest USDA cold storage statistics shows that for October 1998, over 890,000 metric tons or natural American cheese are on 26 million pounds higher than the October 1997 levels. It appears from these National Agricultural Statistics Service (NAS) figures that the large scale of overhangs on the dairy product markets has been whittled down. This bodies optimism for the level of seasonal adjustment likely to be seen in the next few months.

If that is the good news, the bad news is that the pricing mechanisms by which farm prices are determined are still up in the air. As has already reported, a federal district judge in Minnesota voided milk pricing elements from a significant number of Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) dairy milk pricing mechanisms in the United States. The ruling has cast confusion on to whether PMBO administration can use the long-established pricing procedures in the FMMO dairy milk pricing mechanisms in the United States. The ruling has cast confusion on to whether PMBO administration can use the long-established pricing procedures in the FMMO dairy milk pricing mechanisms in the United States.

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The Michigan Farm News December 15, 1997

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Table 1 - Corn

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Michigan State University's National Food Safety and Toxicology Center opens for business

by Kris Tatske

The recently completed, 115,000-square-foot Food Safety and Toxicology Building at Michigan State University (MSU) will house the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center. Dedicated Oct. 24, the center seeks to develop a safer food supply, well-reasoned public policy and a greater public understanding of food safety issues. It will assess and identify hazards, develop management techniques for handling these hazards and then communicate its research findings to the public.

Dr. Robert Hollingsworth, National Food Safety and Toxicology Center director, said the center could be traced back to historical Michigan concerns over the safety of its food supply. "Over the years, we've had funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in particular, to look at food safety issues that arise from Michigan concerns," he said.

The impact came in 1989 after USDA appropriated $25 million, through the efforts of then-Congressman Bob Trayler, to construct and establish a program for the new food safety and toxicology center.

"We've been building it ever since," said Hollingsworth, a Michigan native who has a special interest in pesticides. "This is the second of our two buildings. We have a very advanced animal and aquatic research facility that was built first, and now this lab facility."

The center's $22,000-square-foot Animal Research Containment Facility provides an environment for complete containment of hazards and waste control of emissions.

During the dedication ceremonies, Gov. John Engler announced a cross-department team of scientists, epidemiologists, veterinarians and physicians is being formed to respond quickly to outbreaks of suspected food-borne illnesses in Michigan.

Called the Special Actions for Food Emergencies (SAFE) Team, the group of professionals from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Michigan Department of Community Health will be mobilized whenever there is a threat to human health involving the food supply.

"The two agencies have already had an extraordinary and successful partnership in handling food safety emergencies," Engler said. "The development of the SAFE Team formalizes and strengthens that relationship, ensuring food supply threats will be prevented or minimized."

Prevention and mitigation are also the main mission of the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center located behind the Plant and Soil Science.

National Food Safety and Toxicology Center's Scope of Activities

- Toxicology Research - The relative risk of dietary exposure to natural and man-made chemicals and their public policy and health implications will be evaluated. Issues include cancer-producing substances, immunity to poisons and their effects, and hormonal disruptions.

- Microbial Pathogens - The center focuses its efforts primarily on Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium and E. coli. Subjects of research interest include detection, passage from farm to human populations, drug resistance, risk assessment, and chronic effects of infection.

- Analytical and Food Chemistry - Special expertise solvents include trace analysis of pesticides, substances that produce fungus and mold, natural products, metals, and persistent compounds belonging to the chlorine-based hydrocarbon pesticides, such as DDT.

- Epidemiology - Working closely with MSU's Department of Epidemiology, the center is developing research programs on the epidemiology of food-borne infectious diseases, the role of animals and fish in their transmission and long-term effects of exposure to organic substances, or substances belonging to the chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides.

- Public Policy - The center's areas of focus include efforts on international commerce of trade barriers based on food safety issues, consumer perception of food risks, and the scientific basis of regulatory policy toward chemical and microbial hazards.

- Outreach and Education - The center intends to provide science-based, up-to-date information and education on issues relating to food safety to both the public and food professionals.

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MICHIGAN FARM NEWS
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MCA annual meeting scheduled as part of agricultural conference

The fourth annual Michigan Agricultural Mega Conference is scheduled for Jan. 19-21, 1998. During the three-day conference, the six hosting organizations will hold their member/annual meetings. Among those groups is the Michigan Cattlemen’s Association (MCA), which is planning its annual meeting for Tuesday, Jan. 20, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Scheduled to speak at the annual meeting is MCA board member Monte Bordner, who will update membership on the MCA Long Range Plan.

Kevin Kirk of St. Johns, Matt Miller of Charlotte, Dave Morris of Grand Ledge, Patricia Murphy of Bellevue, Pete Bontekoe of Greenville, John Cunningham of Concord, Kurt Hrabal of Breckenridge, Pete Howard of Wetters, and state Sens. George McManus and Walter North. For more information about the MCA annual meeting or any other MCA program, contact the MCA office at (517) 336-6780 or write P.O. Box 48909, Lansing, MI 48909.

The second annual Michigan Agricultural Mega Conference is scheduled for Jan. 19-21, 1998. The conference will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa in Traverse City. The conference will feature two educational sessions. One will be presented by Dr. Dennis Banks, who will be followed by MCA board member Monte Bordner, who will update membership on the MCA Long Range Plan.

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MDA seeking Michigan ag exporters for new award

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) is looking for the state’s top exporters of food and agricultural products. MDA Director Dan Wyant announced, “Exporting is critically important to agriculture in Michigan,” Wyant said. “Michigan food and agricultural companies exported a record $1.2 billion of products in 1996, directly supporting nearly 50,000 jobs. We estimate that one-third of the total exports were consumer-ready food products.”

The “Department of Agriculture would like to identify our top players and recognize their achievements, which is why we have created this new annual award.”

Applications for 1997 Michigan Ag Exporter of the Year are now available from the Michigan Department of Agriculture; self-nominations are encouraged. The 12-question application seeks background information on the company and its products, the percentage growth of company exports from 1994 to 1996, and the export destinations.

To be eligible, products must be greater than 50 percent grown, processed or manufactured in Michigan. Companies with headquarters in other states and production facilities in Michigan are invited to apply on the basis of their Michigan-made exports.

Nominations are due to the Michigan Department of Agriculture’s International Program by Jan. 5. Selections will be made by a panel of representatives from Michigan State University, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and the Mid-America International Agri-Trade Council (MATCO). One Exporter of the Year will be selected in both the large company (500 employees and over) and small company (under 500 employees) category. The top exporters will be announced and recognized at a March 10 program, during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at Michigan State University.

For more information or to receive an application, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture at (517) 375-9770.

Christmas tradition makes for booming business

Continued from page 1

In terms of the trees, beginning as early as three years of growth,” Wyant said. According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), over 6 million Michigan Christmas trees are shipped to 38 states from coast to coast, and a few foreign countries. In 1995 alone, 17,000 trees were shipped to other countries. In an effort to prevent the spread of pest pressure to other regions of the United States, the MDA inspects nearly 4 million trees annually, looking for signs and symptoms of gypsy moth and pine shoot beetle. According to MDA, the pine shoot beetle and gypsy moth are not a threat to consumers, their pets or their houseplants, but are monitored and controlled as required by the federal government, so the insects won’t spread across the United States more quickly.

“The shoot beetle is not detrimental typically; we don’t have much damage anywhere in the state because we are spraying and controlling it,” explains Koelling. “Even if it is in the tree the consumer would not notice it, it’s just an exotic pest and UDSA was not sure what was it was going to do if we spread to the southern timber industry.”

The industry as a whole is healthy in Michi- gan, according to the Michigan Christmas Tree Association, which has forecasted a period of large over production. “We’re at the end of our over-production and we have fewer trees on the market,” she said. “We’re hopeful going to see some healthier prices.”

Although the decoration of households during the winter season dates back centuries ago, according to Koelling, the first recorded reference to Christmas trees was back in the 11th century, where evergreen trees were decorated with colored paper fruit and treats. It wasn’t until 1881 that a Catskills man hauled two tons of fur trees and opened the first real lot in the United States in downtown New York City.
Insect management for Stored Grain Principles

by Chris DiFonzo

As we continue harvest time, it is a good idea to review the principles and products related to insect management in stored grain. The price you receive for your grain is a reflection of its quality. Insects reduce quality directly by feeding on grain and reducing the test weight, in some cases up to 8 pounds per bushel. Grain shipments with more insect-damaged kernels (IDK) get a reduced grade designation. For example, if 32 or more IDK are found in a 100 gram sample of wheat, the grain can only be sold as "U.S. sample grade," i.e., for livestock feed.

Insect feeding does more than just eat the grain. As the insect feeds, it also reduces the test weight, insome cases up to 8 pounds per bushel. Grain shipments with more insect-damaged kernels (IDK) get a reduced grade designation. For example, if 32 or more IDK are found in a 100 gram sample of wheat, the grain can only be sold as "U.S. sample grade," i.e., for livestock feed.

A top-dress or "cap-off" treatment, i.e., a surface treatment, can be applied directly on the grain mass immediately after the bin is filled. A surface treatment must not be disturbed after it has been put in place, as this ruins the barrier. Surface treatments protect against insects entering from the top of the bin, but will not control insects already present lower down in the grain mass (for example, if you store new grain over infested old grain). A surface treatment should normally not be applied to grain that already received a protectant at bin-fill. The success of protectant and surface treatments depends on a variety of factors:

- Age of the insect. A fresh spray mixture is important because insects can break down under warm or sunny conditions.
- Application method. Insecticides must be thoroughly mixed, then applied under the right pressure. Low pressure is better, since this creates larger droplets that coat the grain surface better.
- Location of treatment. Protectants should be applied as close to the bin as possible; the further the sprayed grain has to travel, the greater chance that insects will rip off the grain surface.
- Grain condition. Grain moisture and temperature are very important. Protectants may fail if the grain moisture and temperature are excessive (for corn this would mean at least 15 percent moisture and 70°F or higher temperature). Grain should not be treated until it is in the proper condition.
- Identification of the insect problem. Some treatments, for example methoprene and Bt, are useful only against particular kinds of insects. Products labeled as protectants and/or surface treatments include:
  - Common name: Chlorpyrifos-methyl
    Trade name: Ralai
     Registered: For barley, oats, sorghum, wheat
     Note: Not registered for soybeans. Used as a surface treatment.
     • Methoprene
     Registered for: Barley, corn, oats, sorghum, wheat
     Note: Not registered for soybeans. Used as a surface treatment.
     • Methoprene
     Registered for: Barley, corn, oats, sorghum, wheat
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Changes for Malathion Uses

The best way to manage an insect infestation in grain is not to have an infestation in the first place. Practicing good sanitation may save some time and effort now, but it will pay off in the long run. All of the sanitation practices below are common sense, and should be part of your routine prior to storing grain at your farm or farmstead. Clean and seal all cracks and crevices, and cover fans and other openings that allow air to enter the bin. Remove all debris, theremaybe insects. Where there is spilled grain or spilled debris, there may be insects. Treat the clean, sealed bin with a protectant. Protectants are insecticides that are applied onto the grain as it is entering the bin. These treatments are designed to control infestations throughout the grain mass. Protectants should be considered for summer harvested grain that will be stored for three to six weeks at high (60-70°F) temperatures, or for fall-harvested grain that will be stored until Spring.

Post-Storage (Immediate)

Post-storage treatments are found in a 100gram sample of wheat, the grain can only be sold as "U.S. sample grade," i.e., for livestock feed.

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

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

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

*For proof of Asgrow corn success, call 1.800.815.4545. Asgrow Seed Company, Des Moines, Iowa.
Lansing's tri-county looks to cleaner air

By Kris Totzke

The Lansing area Tri-County Regional Planning Commission met an early mid-November morning in the Delta Charter Township Hall to kick off promotion of all alternative fuels and vehicles that use these fuels. Alternative fuels, including ethanol and biodiesel, eliminate carbon monoxide pollution.

The coalition, which just received a 'Clean Cities' grant, wants Clinton, Ingham and Eaton County businesses and citizens to consider alternative fuel use and, in the new future, consider purchasing alternative-fueled vehicles.

A year ago, the City of Lansing applied for the grant, which promotes the use of alternative fuels. After 10 months of obtaining necessary approvals, Lansing took their idea, and their grant, to the regional level. The Clean Cities plan is part of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) national energy policy.

"This is a local initiative with federal support," said Murray Britton, City of Lansing. "We are looking to the future and long-range issues, including sustainability."

Britton said the $24,000 grant would be used to gather and educate industry representatives, such as Lansing's Board of Water and Light, Therrogs Co., Ford and Chevrolet, and get the resulting coalition moving. The coalition would also use monies to apply for the DOE's 'Clean Cities' title and to assist in meeting mandates coinciding with being a 'clean' city.

The Clean Cities grant has also been matched through other contributions from companies, such as the National Ethanol Coalition, Board of Water and Light, and Consumers Energy, resulting in the US DOE's National Energy Policy.

A year ago, the City of Lansing started with an alternative fuel education project. The city surveyed citizens to see how interested they would be in using alternative fuels and buying vehicles using alternative fuels.

"We had a great response to our education project. People were asking about vehicles ranging from boats to tractors," Britton said.

Philip Kokoczka, an environmental/air quality engineer with Lansing's Board of Water and Light, said his company has looked at possible use of alternative fueled vehicles and even has specifications outlined for those vehicles.

"If we are looking at cars, trucks and other vehicles used inside the plant," he said. "Some vehicles already used within our plant run on LPG gas."

Britton said alternative fuels and vehicles using these fuels are a "win-win situation." They help increase air quality, provide economic benefits, provide producers expanded corn and soybean markets, and help maintain national security.

"What's good about being the strongest country in the world, if we get all our fuel from somewhere else?" he asked.

The Corn Marketing Program of Michigan said ethanol and soybean biodiesel fuels would strengthen national energy security because it is outside the realm of foreign policy decisions. Those fuels are a stable, domestic, renewable energy supply.

Bob Boehm, manager of the field crops department at Michigan Farm Bureau, said Farm Bureau supports requirements for biomass fuel use and continued production of ethanol and soybeans.

"We strongly support efforts to encourage biomass fuel production facilities in Michigan and expand the biofuel distribution infrastructure," he said. "We also encourage research and development."

Continued on page 11

"Quick Facts"

- Michigan is one of the nation's top 10 corn-producing states.
- Increased ethanol production would create thousands of Michigan jobs in farming, industry and construction. Michigan would also benefit from cleaner air and a Michigan-grown renewable resource.
- Ethanol contains oxygen, which contributes to a cleaner, more efficient burn of the gasoline. When burned, it does not produce the complex pollutants and aromatics formed by gasoline additives.
- Studies have shown ethanol use reduces emissions that contribute to ozone pollution.
- Diesel engines contribute to high particulate levels and sulfur emissions, but produce practically no carbon monoxide. Studies show that soybean-based emissions of particulate matter and unburned hydrocarbons.
- One bushel of corn produces about 2.5 gallons of ethanol, in addition to the high protein livestock feeds and other by-products. Only the starch is removed for ethanol, so all the protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber and some of the energy remain. This is a very digestible human or livestock food. The price of corn will increase from 4 cents to 6 cents per bushel for every 100 million bushels of corn used.
Michigan Department of Agriculture, Farm Bureau to host Canadian/U.S. agricultural trade conference

M ichigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Dan Wyant and Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie have announced a comprehensive meeting to address agricultural trade issues between the United States and Canada. The U.S.-Canadian Agricultural Trade Conference will be held Tuesday, Feb. 3, at the Holiday Inn West Conference Center in Lansing.

"MDA and Michigan Farm Bureau have jointly called this conference to provide Michigan's agricultural industries background on the current status of trade between Michigan and Canada," Wyant said. "Laurie added that Michigan's most important agricultural trading partner, and we hope to learn how to be an even better trading partner with our northern neighbor."

"Canada is Michigan's most important agricultural trading partner, and we hope to learn how to be an even better trading partner with our northern neighbor."

-- Dan Wyant, MDA Director

In recent years, many Michigan agricultural sectors have felt economic pressure from imported Canadian produce," Likie said. "Many factors are at play, including the exchange rate, differing phytosanitary requirements, trade agreements and trade policies. The February conference should provide our growers with a better understanding of fair trade practices and non-tariff trade issues governing Michigan and Canadian exports."

Speaker will include:

• Lyle Sebranek, Agriculture Minister-Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Ontario, speaking on "The U.S.-Canadian Agricultural Trade Relationship".

• Dr. David Schweikhardt, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, East Lansing, providing an "Introduction to International Trade Terms and Agreement"


Lansing looks to the future with alternative fuels

Continued from page 10

more helping reduce production costs." Technology has reduced the cost of ethanol production by over 50 percent in the last 10 years.

"We are now creating more energy than we are using to produce ethanol," Boehm said.

In his recent newsletter, Earl Collier, presi- dent of Farm Disbursing of Michigan, stated, "With the corn marketing program recently opened two E-85 stations (85 percent ethanol, 15 percent gasoline) in Michigan this fall. One is located in Detroit, the other in Lansing. They will service state and federal fleets and be available for Ford and Chrysler E-85 vehicles being sold to the public."

"We plan on opening more stations as the need arises," Collier said. "Sunoco has taken the lead in blending all of their grades of gasoline with 20 percent ethanol. Many petroleum companies are following their lead."

Boehm has taken a hopeful stance that every city, town and city throughout Michigan will have a Clean Cities program in place by 2002, promoting alternative fuels. He said Lansing administration seems keen on adopting the city's fuel-friendly program and hopes a Clean Cities program will help.

"If we look to now in sustaining our city and surrounding area for the future, there will be a Lansing for people to live in years from now," he said. "It would be nice if you could drive from one side of the state to the other without having to plan ahead for fueling. But most of all, Michigan's air would be so much cleaner."

Testing program in "show animals" is effective in identifying inappropriate drug use

The testing of livestock at seven fairs during the 1997 fair season found only one case of inappropriate drug use to show animals, according to Dan Wyant, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA). A single hog tested positive for acetaminophen (a painkiller and fever-reducing agent) at the Michigan State Fair. The drug does not represent a food safety issue, but it is not approved for use in swine. No other animals have tested positive for illegal or extra-label drug use at any other fair in the state over the last three years.

The testing was conducted by "Michigan's Program for Quality Livestock Shows and Food Safety" at the Michigan State Fair, Upper Peninsula State Fair, Greater Crawford County Fair for Youth, St. Clair County Fair, Lenawee County Fair, Genessee County Fair and the Hillsdale County Fair. Animals tested included horses, beef, sheep and swine. The testing is conducted as a service to the fairs, and each individual fair is responsible for enforcing its rules on order competition and illegal and inappropriate drug use in show animals.

"Over the last three years test results demonstrate the high level of commitment that Michigan fairs and livestock exhibitors have in maintaining healthy and safe livestock for our food supply," said Wyant. The testing demonstrates that Michigan's program to ensure food safety in show animals is effective. The detection of a painkiller and fever-reducing agent demonstrates the effectiveness of the drug screening program in identifying inappropriate drug use and potentially unfair competitive practices. The goal of the program is to improve the quality and fairness of Michigan fairs and to increase food safety through drug testing and education.

Continually educating Michigan exhibitors on inappropriate drug use and other ethical issues is essential to maintaining a high level of "fair play" at Michigan fairs, according to Wyant. In addition to drug testing, the program sponsors ethics awareness workshops in counties throughout the state. Hundreds of people have attended these workshops in the past few years.

"Michigan's Program for Quality Livestock Shows and Food Safety" was developed by a committee of individuals from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University's Animal Science Department, MSU Extension, and representatives from the livestock industry and several Michigan fairs. The program is designed to give fairs, their leaders, parents and exhibitors the tools they need to produce successful shows.

Additional educational programs are being planned for 1998. For more information about the program, contact Martyn Heilen, Michigan Department of Agriculture, 517-373-9710.

New STS® solutions, now under $20/acre

Until now, it's been virtually impossible to get good broadleaf and grass control without running the cost up to $25-$35 per acre. Especially if you're dealing with the likes of tall waterhemp or black nightshade.

You asked for a honest-to-goodness soybean herbicide program that leaves you more room for profit. That's why we're rolling out new STS® solutions that give you what you really want: control of both grass and broadleaf weeds—including tall waterhemp and black nightshade—now for under $20 an acre. ■ There's no technology fee. No complicated legal contracts. Just great control. ■ And best of all, you'll have a proven seed/herbicide system. Which means you'll be growing some of the highest-yielding varieties available today—STS® varieties. Plus, you'll have a system that delivers clean fields without the crop stress associated with traditional herbicides. ■ You get all these advantages at a new low price. It's our way of proving that DuPont and its dealers are committed to bringing you new ways to farm profitably. New products. New technologies. New possibilities. ■ Get the full details now from your DuPont Ag Retailer or DuPont Field Service Representative.

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STS® soybeans now under $20/acre!
December 15, 1997

**MICHIGAN FARM NEWS**

**90-day Temperature Outlook**

**90-day Precipitation Outlook**

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**Weather Outlook**

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

During much of November, jet stream steering currents took on a north-to-south wavelike configuration across the Upper Midwest, resulting in much below-normal monthly mean temperatures (generally from 1-5 degrees below normal across Michigan) and normal to below-normal precipitation totals. By late in the month, the jet stream had split into two separate streams across the U.S. (a pattern more typical of winter El Nino conditions), preventing cold air masses from entering the lower 48 states and resulting in an abnormally warm Thanksgiving Day holiday across most of Michigan. New NOAA Climate Prediction Center long-range outlooks for the coming months continue to call for milder and drier-than-normal conditions for the Great Lakes region. Because of the magnitude of the current El Nino event, forecaster confidence in the outlooks for the upcoming winter is as high as 80 percent in sections of the northern Great Plains (i.e., odds of milder-than-normal temperatures are rated as 80 percent, odds of below-normal temperatures only 20 percent), which is greater than any previously issued long-range outlook. Specifically for Michigan, the outlook for both the month of December and for the December-February winter season is for increased odds of above-normal temperatures and for near equal odds of below-, near-, and above-normal precipitation totals. Lead outlooks for the coming months continue to call for milder and drier-than-normal conditions for the Great Lakes region. Because of the magnitude of the current El Nino event, forecaster confidence in the outlooks for the upcoming winter is as high as 80 percent in sections of the northern Great Plains (i.e., odds of milder-than-normal temperatures are rated as 80 percent, odds of below-normal temperatures only 20 percent), which is greater than any previously issued long-range outlook. Specifically for Michigan, the outlook for both...
Herbicide Crop Rotation Restrictions

An important consideration when choosing herbicides

Herbicide Crop Rotation Restrictions Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herbicide</th>
<th>Crop Rotation Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acrobat</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amistar</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<td>Authority</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carisoprodil</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Command</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consort</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinnacle</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<td>Pennylane</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennit</td>
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<td>Pythion</td>
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<td>Lightning</td>
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<td>Pyranque</td>
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<td>Roost</td>
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<td>Spartan</td>
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<td>Supatra</td>
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<td>Tarragon</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<td>X&amp;P</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tavara</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4000</td>
<td>4 months following application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Yield biomass after 45 months.**
- **12 months or above.**
- **Excessive of all crops following application.**
- **No soil pH restrictions.**
- **Do not use in corn following the previous year use of Command and soil pH is less than 5.2.**
- **Do not use on tobacco or vegetables.**
- **Not recommended for planting**
- **Do not use in field corn following the previous year use of Command and soil pH is less than 5.2.**
- **Not recommended for planting**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months following the previous year use of Pennylane is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**

AND less than 16 in. of capital in the 12 months following treatment.

- **Soil pH may be required to be 5.2.**
- **Do not use on tobacco or vegetables.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**
- **Rotation interval of 16 months is required.**

We're taking dead aim on your toughest pests.

Soon you'll have a product so accurate that it wipes out codling moth, pear psylla, leafrollers and other pests without harming beneficial species. A product so powerful that it delivers 21-28 days of residual control without flaring mites or aphids. A product so advanced that it will change the way you think about insect control.

Targeted Control for apples and pears

Soon after you read this issue, the latest Ag Census forms will be mailed to all farms across the country with over $10,000 in gross sales, including 80,000 forms to be mailed in Michigan.

The census however will mark the first time in 83 years that the USDA will be conducting the comprehensive collection of all agricultural production, inventories, sales and expenditures for every county in the nation.

"We're closer to the agriculture community," explained David Kleweno, Michigan's State Statistician. "For example, when the ag census was done previously we received information that it being done answered questions to support it from that end, but we really weren't involved with marketing and attempt to promote it."

"The census is the only opportunity where the trend in the county production information can be measured," he added. "If we collect and provide solid factual, concrete data to work from then, agriculture cannot be properly represented."

What is the information used for?

According to Kleweno, the census information is used by almost everyone — for Extension educators, Farm Bureau lobbyists — who is involved or associated with the nation's agriculture.

"It is not unusual for our office to receive inquiries from businesses that are planning an expansion or some other business improvement predicated on the value of farm production that is available in a given region." What to look for

With a deadline for return of Feb. 2, the blue, green or gold forms will be mailed in mid-December and should take an average of 30 to 90 minutes to complete. "There's a short form and a long form," Kleweno explained. "The short form will be mailed to approximately 7 percent of the total mailed in Michigan and the long form will go to the remaining 25 percent. The long form has a slight difference in it — it has one more section in it, looking at production expenses and income issues and that type of thing and that go to the larger farmers and operators. Typically those are in the neighborhood of $250,000 in potential gross value of sales, will receive the long form."

By law, the information collected from individual farmers is held in strict confidence by the USDA and farmers must participate in the census.

"It would be nice if we could hard the respondent a $100 bill for the time it takes to complete the form and say, 'here's your immediate payoff,' but often the payoff is much greater than that in long-term benefits to agriculture," Kleweno added.

If you have questions or need assistance completing the 1997 Census of Agricultural report form, call 1-888-USDA-STAT. The Farmall "H" is the fifth in the series of commemorative tractors for sale through Quality Stores to benefit the Michigan FFA Foundation.

Toy tractor collectors take note! Quality Stores, Inc., in partnership with FFA, is continuing the Michigan FFA Collector Tractor series with the Farmall "H." As the fifth edition of the Michigan FFA Collector Tractor series, it will feature an outline of the state of Michigan with a number "5" in the center to signify it as the fifth in the series.

Michigan Farm Bureau's Julie Chamberlain, executive director of the Michigan FFA Foundation, says the collector tractor has proven popular in generating donations to fund youth leadership and awards programs for high school students participating in FFA.

"We are extremely grateful to Quality Stores and FFA for continuing this fund-raising tradition," Chamberlain said. "Quality Stores has also strengthened their partnership with FFA through a $50,000 pledge to the Vision 2000 endowment fund. This fund will provide financial security for FFA and food and fiber experiences for K-12 youth."

Quality Stores, based in Muskegon, made a five-year commitment to manufacture and market a limited edition of Michigan FFA tractors. So far, this program has raised $62,000 for the Michigan FFA Foundation. The funds raised are designated to help support and develop young leaders for the future," said Al Randel, president and chief operating officer of Quality Stores.

The Farmall "H," considered the smaller brother to the infamous Farmall "M," replaced the Farmall "H" in 1939. Designed as a tractor capable of pulling a two-bottom plow, the Model "H" produced 40-HP horsepower. Sold with a free-speed transmission, adjustable rear wheels and drawbar, the Farmall "H" weighed 5,500 pounds. Over 75,000 Farmall "H" tractors were produced before being replaced by the Super "H" in 1955.

In addition to the new Farmall "H," collectors will want to complete their FFA series with the fourth FFA tractor, the Oliver 8855. Both tractors are available at all Michigan Quality Farm & Fleet and Country Pot Store and sell for $39.99 each.

**New Ways to Save You Time & Money**

You can always rely on this powerful family of products from JCB
Dry Corn That Yields

Innovation means more than technology. It means breaking new ground. More choices. More performance. Maximizer." Technology gives our varieties the innovative advantage that means more profit for you. Bottom line... NK® Brand seed helps farmers stay on the cutting edge.

How are hybrids compared in Michigan? Upper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Test Weight</th>
<th>Plot Moisture</th>
<th>Plot Yield</th>
<th>Gross Return</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
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<tr>
<td>NK 4242BT</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>138.0</td>
<td>$275.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pioneer 3607</td>
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<td>30.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>NK MAX747</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pioneer 36127</td>
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<td>24.7</td>
<td>139.1</td>
<td>$297</td>
<td>991</td>
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<tr>
<td>NK 4242BT</td>
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<td>24.7</td>
<td>139.1</td>
<td>$297</td>
<td>951</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How are hybrids compared in Michigan? Lower:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Test Weight</th>
<th>Plot Moisture</th>
<th>Plot Yield</th>
<th>Gross Return</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
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The foundations of precision agriculture

by Neil R. Miller

In the past two years, high-tech equipment and information have moved from the pages of ag journals and science fiction novels to the fields of Michigan farmers. GPS soil sampling, yield monitors, variable rate irrigators, remote sensing, genetically engineered crops, and other formerly unheard of technologies are now available throughout the state.

"Precision agriculture," however, is as old as farming itself. This message was brought home to me last month when I attended a presentation of "More Information, More Control," a farmer training course that will be taught by MSU Extension personnel this winter. The course, commissioned by Deere & Co. but sponsored by various ag-businesses, reinforces the fact that the foundations of precision agriculture lie in good management.

Thorough Planning - Does your farming operation have specified long- and intermediate-term goals? Are they quantifiable so that you can measure your progress over time? Are you aware of management needs and opportunities that you need to pursue, or do you simply wait for the opportunity to find you? Pre-season planning is equally critical in maximizing the "precision" of your operation. This includes planning field trials to fine-tune your crop management systems (not just to meet the needs of your local sales rep).

Record Keeping - When I map a field with poor-producing areas, I have no way of knowing whether the cause was chemical damage, weed outbreaks, compaction, poor drainage, fertility or some other cause unless the producer has a good system of monitoring fields throughout the growing season. This becomes increasingly important as farmers accumulate several years of yield data. With good records you will be able to compare the performance of varieties, planting dates, fertility programs, or other management issues over time. Without such information, you'll be left with a confusing mess.

Crop record-keeping systems are available through MSU as well as an ever-growing number of private companies. Some can be linked directly to georeferenced and yield data. Although compatibility between these programs is still limited, this will undoubtedly improve in the coming years. Pick one of the inputs (contact me if you would like suggestions) and begin logging.

New instrument helps in determining wheat quality

An automated system to identify wheat classes, characteristics and defects—including kernels damaged by diseases such as karnal bunt or scab—could help grain inspectors verify whether wheat is suitable for export. The first commercial prototype of the system was demonstrated at the annual meeting of the American Association of Cereal Chemists, held in San Diego, Calif., in October.

Karnal bunt is a wheat fungus recently found in areas of the southwest United States. If samples of wheat contain "burned kernels"—those infected with the disease—countries without the disease may not import the infected wheat. So it's critical that unaffected wheat can be certified free of karnal bunt.

Currently, bulk wheat samples are usually examined for burned kernels. But grain inspectors would need to check only a few wheat kernels with a new instrument designed by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists and engineers with the help of Deere & Co.

Small Business Committee recently.

Missouri Farm Bureau President Charles Kruse, testifying on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said there remains ample room for fundamental change and improvement in a federal tax code that is complex and burdensome. Kruse said the code also severely limits economic opportunities.

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New pasteurization technique being tested

Agriculture Department researchers are testing new methods of pasteurization that would help make liquid foods taste better by reducing the temperatures needed for proper sterilization.

The research, which has both proven effective and has failed recently, involves subjecting liquids to electrical energy fields---similar to microwaves or radio signals.

Each year hundreds of billions of pounds of liquid foods are pasteurized in the United States, including 150 billion pounds of milk, vegetables juices, most fruit juices, tomato sauce, canned and boiled beef, and yogurt. The process involves heating the liquid to 162 to 167°F---for milk---for 15 seconds. Pasteurization destroys pathogens that can make people sick, but it leaves some side-benefits.

The research in this area is being conducted at the USDA facility near Philadelphia. The researchers are seeking new alternatives to pasteurization at a USDA facility near Philadelphia. "If you heat these things, you can also destroy some of the nutrients in there. This is especially true of vitamin C, which is extremely sensitive to heat."

"Forage 2001 Moving into the 21st century" available at MSU


Forage 2001, an alfalfa producer's workshop, will cover such topics as cost, economics and importance of growing alfalfa in Michigan, the best methods to determine when to harvest first-cut alfalfa for optimum quality, and existing schedules for alfalfa harvest. The workshop will also review insect problems affecting the 1997 alfalfa crop, the best strategies for managing potato leafhopper damage with insecticide options, integrated pest management techniques and economics of control, and varieties of potato leafhopper-resistant alfalfa.

Recollection credits will also be available. Featured speakers include Dr. Rich Leep, MSU's department of crop and soil sciences; Dr. Chris DeBoer, MSU's department of entomology; and local Area of Expertise team agents with dairy, field crops and livestock.

The workshop will start at 9:30 a.m. with registration and end at 3:30 p.m. Cost is $25 for the first family member and $15 for each additional member. Price includes lunch and a supply net. For more information, contact the Jackson County Extension office at (517) 788-4292 or your local Extension office.

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MSU Extension will hold dairy animal meeting at 12 sites

The importance of maintaining a healthy and comfortable dairy herd will be under-scored in a series of health management training sessions across the state starting in mid-January. Topics for each session include the importance of dairy herd biosecurity, treatment and prevention of lameness, control of contagious mastitis and infectious diseases, neonatal calf management, and the effect that housing and ventilation have on optimum animal health.

The topic of animal leadership was a featured educational session at this past year's Ag Expo. The workshop will provide further detail about how to prevent and care for lameness in the dairy herd. The program is being sponsored by the Michigan State University Extension Dairy Programming Team and the Dairy Programs Group.

Early registration, at least 10 days prior to each session, is requested for meal planning and educational material preparation. The cost will be $60 per person plus $20 for each additional person from the same farm. On-site registration will be $75 and $30 for each additional person from the same farm. The noon meal will not be guaranteed for on-site registrants.

Brochures and registration forms are available at the county MSU Extension office. Details about the program can be obtained from David Beede at MSU by calling (517) 432-4660.

Forage 2001 will be held at six locations across the Lower Peninsula:

• Jan. 13, Jackson County MSU Extension
• Jan. 14, Jerry's Restaurant, Grandville
• Jan. 15, Oby Heights Country Club, Ubly
• Feb. 4, Lhaca MSU, one-half mile west of the US 27 Lhaca exit, next to the bowling alley
• Feb. 5, Delta County MSU Extension, 2400 College Rd., Beal City, located in the Delta County Service Center
• Feb. 6, (517) N.J.'s Restaurant, Gaylord

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Looking for Russian and Latvian host families

By Kris Rotke

Three Russian students and three Latvian students are looking for temporary homes for the summer of 1998, and former Barry County Farm Bureau President Bob Bender is looking for six Michigan farm families to show them a glimpse of America's agricultural life through a new Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) internship program.

"It is a dream for most Russians to visit America one day; few get the opportunity. With this program, they are able to experience America and its agriculture," said Bender. "Last year we had three interns from Russia. Now we have the chance to bring three more students here from Latvia." Latvia is a former communist country that used to be a part of the former Soviet Union before it broke up.

The program began last year and is co-sponsored by Michigan State University (MSU) and Michigan Farm Bureau.

Julie McDaniel, administrative officer for MSU's Institute of International Agriculture, said Michigan families are needed to provide a home away from home for only two to three months. Last year's student visited from July 4 until Labor Day. "Ideally, we would like them here when planting season begins, but that is next to impossible," she said.

Bender said Russian and Latvian universities don't end until the third week of June and need to be given a better understanding of how American agriculture works; the new technologies, seed varieties, the distribution channels, how MSU Extension works with farms. They start up again after Labor Day. The students would arrive in America as soon as school got out and head home before the next semester started.

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Hay harvest across much of Michigan was below normal for the second year in a row. This lower yield, coupled with a very low inventory carryover from the 1996 harvest season, continues to make for tight hay supply.

An October survey was conducted by the Oscoda County MSU Extension office of more than thirty Michigan State University county Extension agricultural agents and Michigan Hay and Grazing Council board members. It found hay supplies to be lower than normal in all areas of Michigan except the Muskegon and Ottawa County area where it is reported to be about average. A cool summer with some dry periods and with a heavy infestation of the potato leafhopper caused the yields of the two largest cuttings, the first and second, to be lower than usual. Favorable September growing conditions did allow for some late third cutting growth, making this harvest slightly larger than normal.

Total forage supply was also increased slightly in the Northern Lower Peninsula with an early killing frost that caused more corn to be made into corn silage. Still, this additional forage is doing little to soften hay prices.

For lower-quality hay (under 16 percent crude protein) all but three of the 12 reporting regions reported higher prices than last year. For lower-quality hay for all regions in October were: Southwest $75-115; Southeast $60-100, the Thumb $70-90; Lansing area $65-105; Muskegon area $60-100, Mt. Pleasant to Cadillac area $60-90; Arenac County area $70-100; Grand Traverse area $70-110; tip of the Lower Peninsula $70-110; Eastern U.P. $65-115, and Western U.P. $40-70.

Prices reported per ton for higher-quality hay (greater than 16 percent crude protein) by regions in October were: Southeast $115-175; Southwest $110-160; the Thumb $120-160; Lansing area $105-145; Muskegon Area $160-165; Mt. Pleasant to Cadillac area $125-145; Arenac County $120-175; Grand Traverse area $110-160; tip of the Lower Peninsula $130-180, Barrens U.P. $100-160; Western U.P. $80-120 (very little higher-quality hay are available in the U.P. as most hay is harvested as first cutting).

Price ranges are quite common in hay pricing. These ranges take into account: hay feed value, precipitation, acres harvested, and weather mold in the hay, quantity sold, and bale form. For example, a pickup load of hay ($1 ton) may sell for $15-30 more per ton than a 15-ton semi-trailer load of the same hay. Also, typically round bales sell for $10-20 less per ton than the same hay sells for in square bale form. This is because there are fewer buyers that can handle large round bales, thus there is less demand. Anyone wishing to buy or sell hay should check with their local, county MSU Extension office. Hay for sale can be listed free of charge on the computerized Michigan Hay Seller's List. Anyone wishing a copy of the list can receive one from their county Extension office or can find a copy on the website at http://cerec.msu.edu/MSU Hay/.

Hay prices appear to be the shortest in the Northern Lower Peninsula from Cadillac northward and the eastern Upper Peninsula. Prices are the highest there as well as in Southwestern Michigan for lower-quality hay averaging $100-115 per ton. Higher-quality hay are in the highest demand in Southeast Michigan, Southwestern Michigan, the Arenac County area, and the Northern Lower Peninsula bringing an average of $110-$180 per ton. Prices per ton reported in October for lower-quality hay for all regions were: Southwest $75-115; Southeast $60-100; the Thumb $70-90; Lansing area $65-105; Muskegon area $60-100, Mt. Pleasant to Cadillac area $60-90; Arenac County area $70-100; Grand Traverse area $70-110; tip of the Lower Peninsula $70-110; Eastern U.P. $65-115, and Western U.P. $40-70.

Hay supply remains tight for second year

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Novartis 4242 BT 163.2 24.4
Fitzpatrick Family Farms Fewer, Mi
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Novartis 4600 BT 162.6 25.5
Garst 8814 159.1 22.2
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Three years later: How Proposal A is really affecting school funding

January 1999
A monthly resource for the community
Action Group of Michigan Farm Bureau

Some seemed to think it would be a miracle
for school funding. But now that the
laws are in effect, it is apparent that
within the first year, people have
varied opinions about how well
it's working—or not working.

"We don't see any drastic change today," said Jon Miller, a dairy farmer and president of the
Oak-Erie Area Schools board of education. "There are,
"He noted, "a number of districts in the state of
Michigan ranging in very big to very small."
Miller's district is one that is facing well
financially, but he attributes this to a right-framed
administration and what happens.

Oak-Erie recently dedicated their new
station, the state of the art middle school. "It took a long time
for us to get that organized," he said. "It went through a lot of
problems before we got the millage passed."
But whether the difficulty had anything to do with Proposal A being
on people's minds is hard to tell.

"We have a lot of people that don't understand Proposal A," Miller said, noting that school
funding can be complex.

"Michigan has a system in place, but in 1998, the governor
was attempting to pass a school reform bill approved by
Michigan voters in 1994. It moved funding for schools from property taxes to sales taxes.

Among other provisions, Proposal A contained wording that limits annual property tax assessment increases to 0.75 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. "When the single business
was passed, the new owner pays taxes on the current value.

Besides the fact that it slashed people's property
taxes, another reason Proposal A passed was
that citizens had called out for measures that would

close the gap between funding for 'rich' school
districts and poorer districts. Voters were willing to
support the increase in sales tax from 4 percent to
6 percent to see this and other school finance reform
happen.

According to Gov. John Engler's office, there
are three effects that have come from Proposal A.
First, more money is being spent on public educ-
ation than ever before. Second, the governor says,
there are more fairly or equivalently distributed funds. Finally, he says local school districts are better
financially than ever before.

No one argues that the state money available
for schools has increased. In fact, the 1997-98
school aid budget is $15.4 billion. Compare that
to 1989-90, when the same budget was $7.5 billion.
While Proposal A does have its critics. Some say it was
not a total package. School boards are still suffering serious financial problems.

Society owners (other than farmers) sometimes
tacitly criticize Proposal A because they don't see
the property tax benefits that homeowners and farmers
do. They're taxed at a higher rate to fund schools.

Now that voters approved such more money
to go to schools, some districts are finding it
tough to pass the mills. The problem lies in
that the sales tax money only goes toward school oper-
ing expenses, not capital improvements. A school
needs the capital for things like building new
schools. Voters then vote it. They believe their taxes were just
right, or want to have the government try to raise them again.

On the other hand, school boards are no longer
allowed to propose millages for operating expenses—
only capital improvements. If operating expenses,
such as teacher salaries, are paid for state money,
then the school is out of luck.

All in all, people are finding that Proposal A is
not the black cat for school funding—but it wasn't intended to be. It does shift how school
operating expenses are paid for and it does increase
how much money is available. Local bond issues still
need to pass for schools to make capital improve-
ments. School boards and administrations still need
a chance to manage their money wisely.

It comes down to an issue of fairness. What's
the most equitable way for the state of Michigan
to tax its residents to pay for schools? Then, how
should that money be distributed among schools?
One possible answer to these questions was put
before voters and Proposal A was won.

Discussion Questions:
1. Are schools in your area suffering fi-
monetary problems? Has that changed from years prior to Proposal A?
2. Should future school funding increases
be sought through property taxes, sales taxes, income taxes, or a combi-
nation? Why?
3. Should wealthier communities be ex-
pected to pay for poorer schools? How should state funding be fairly distrib-
uted among districts?

1997 Small grain production

Michigan's 1997 small grains had a good production year due to favorable weather and growing conditions, according to the federal/ state Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. Wheat yields were at a record high due to beneficial spring and summer weather. Moderate summer conditions allowed in better yields for barley and oats compared to last year. Some highlights of the report are as follows:

- Wheat yield, 62 bushels per acre, topped the previous record set in 1991 and 1995. This yield was
well above last year's disappointing yield. Harvest went well and emergence was ahead of normal. The crop came through the winter in good shape, and
plowing conditions were excellent due to a cold spring and mild summer temperatures. Harvest
day was excellent.

- Oat production, 5.5 million bushels, was 53 percent higher than the record low of 3.6 million
bushels for 1996. Oat crops were planted prior to the normal period and benefited from cool May
temperatures. Moderate summer kept the crop in good condition. Harvest began in late July and
august and harvest was completed by early September.

- Barley production, 1.4 million bushels, in-
creased 23 percent from last year, despite a 4
percent decrease in harvested acres. Excellent
planting conditions allowed farmers to get the
barley crop in on schedule. The cool spring and mild fall conditions provided excellent growing conditions.

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

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germplasm tolerant varieties had 21 top 10 finishes alone.
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Ralph Nurtker
313/856-4866

Agglomate, MI
Dan Babcock, D.S.M.
517/849-3162

Applegate, MI
Grandville, MI
517/907-3120

Cargill offers college scholarships

By Kris Toitke
The Cargill Scholarship Program for Rural America is offering scholarships to high school seniors from rural communities across the
country. The committee has set aside $250,000, and through the National FFA Organization, will award 250 scholarships in the amount of $1,000 each. This brings the total to $2.5 million since 1986.
As the cost of post-secondary education is increasing, obtaining an advanced education is becoming harder
to realize," said Ernest Merik, Cargill's chairman, president and chief executive officer. "This program will recognize students' academic achievements and potential while responding to financial
pressures felt by many farm families.
Cargill recognizes and encourages academic achievement, accomplishments and talents of America's rural youth. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic record, demonstrated leadership, extracurricular accomplishments, financial need and other criteria.
Students may apply for a Cargill scholarship if they are from, farm families and plan to attend an accredited post-secondary institu-
tion in the fall of this year. Selections are based on merit. Students must demonstrate financial need and farm families must receive at least 50 percent
of their income directly from farming to be eligible. Students do not have to be FFA mem-
bers.
FFA will evaluate all applications received, select and notify recipients in May.
For more information, contact the National FFA Foundation, Cargill Scholarship
Coordinator, Box 45205, Madison, WI 53714-3505, or the nearest Cargill facility. Applications are due as of April 15.

Single business tax exemption signed into law

Legislation clarifying the exemption for farmer-owned cooperatives from the Single Business
Tax, often referred to as SBT, has been signed by Gov. John Engler. According to Michigan Farm Bureau Legislative Consultant Ron Nelson, cooperatives had traditionally been exempt from the SBT, until the state's statutory office changed their interpreta-
tion of the state's tax code.
"Traditionally, the interpretation of the tax
code was that the portion of business a cooperator had with other members was excluded from the
"Nelson explained. "That treasury audited several farmer co-ops, and recently had another co-op, by way of a bill, that they in fact owed SBT tax.
And if you owe on a portion of your business, then you do, in fact, owe on all of your business, with a penalty," Nelson continued.
"So this measure was very important to several farmer co-ops in the state, plus potentially important to all farmer co-ops in the state, because this language
now clarifies that the farmer portion of the business is tax-exempt.
Business conducted with individuals who are not members of the cooperative will be subject to the SBT liability. The measure also clarifies that
when a contractor buys nursery stock for planting in a yard that the contractor is not the consumer
but is the middleman and, therefore, is not liable for the SBT.
Nelson justifies the SBT exemption for cooper-
atives themselves to show that if they are not your cooperative already pay a tax. "The cooper is nothing more than several individuals doing business
independently, for their own purposes. They are not subject to the extent that they've incorporated in a co-op, already have a tax liability as individuals," he said.
"So when there is profit from the co-op, they share in that profit, which is taxable. This measure recognizes the co-op members from paying the tax twice.
So it's not a matter of escaping the tax, it's a matter of tax equity."
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FDA irradiation approval a win for consumers and producers

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of irradiation for beef, lamb and pork this past week is good news for livestock producers and consumers. And, despite opposition from some consumer activist groups expressing concerns over radiation, Michigan Farm Bureau’s Ken Nye, director of the Commodity and Environmental Division, says the technology has been used safely for years on poultry, fruits and vegetables and other products, so that we can make sure that those products are shelf stable and are as healthy for consumers as possible.

"This technology should be viewed as just one more tool to use in making sure our food supply is as safe as possible," Nye said. "It's really no different than the other processes that we use, such as pasteurization of milk, canning of fruits and vegetables and other products, so that we can make sure that those products are shelf stable and are as healthy for consumers as possible."

The process has been shown to be safe and to significantly reduce bacterial contamination. The FDA gave its stamp of approval to irradiation after three years of study. Irradiation does not make meat radioactive and it does not change the meat’s taste, texture or appearance.

It is now up to the Agriculture Department to change its regulations over the next few months to allow for irradiation, says Nye. "Hopefully, we'll have a final rule in effect as soon as possible, so that we can utilize this new and improved technology to make sure that consumers have one more tool to use in making sure our food supply is as safe as possible," Nye said. "It's really no different than the other processes that we use, such as pasteurization of milk, canning of fruits and vegetables and other products, so that we can make sure that those products are shelf stable and are as healthy for consumers as possible."

Food irradiation is much more effective than steam pasteurization or sterilizing rinses. The FDA is taking a complete look at its safety and effectiveness. So far, there have not been any health risks found to the consumers.

Michigan FFA members earn American FFA Degree

At the recent 70th National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo., local Michigan FFA members earned their American FFA Degree among the more than 6,000 FFA members, guests and supporters who attended the annual event.

Highlighting this year’s list of presenters were Ron Archer, motivational speaker; Dr. Lowell Cafero, agricultural futurist; Edward James Olmos, actor, Heather Whitestone-McCallum, former Miss America; Orion Samuelson, agricultural broadcaster for Channel Food Communications; and Ted Waitt, Chairman and CEO of Gateway 2000.