Basic Formula Price options narrowed down to four

On the heels of another drop in the Basic Formula Price (BFP) for April milk of $1.05, which brought the price to $11.44 (see Market Outlook, page 5) the ISOS. BFP committee submitted four alternatives for further discussion to base the price of all the country's milk. The options include two multiple-component pricing plans, a product price formula and a competitive pay price. The committee based its consideration of possible options on published public comments, input provided during a public BFP forum held in Madison, Wis., a survey of transaction prices for manufactured dairy products, analysis by a group of university researchers, and extensive study and analysis by the BFP Committee. The BFP Committee evaluated options against the criteria of stability, predictability, simplicity, uniformity, transparency, sound economics and reduced regulation. The four options, as detail, are:

Option 1

A four-class, multiple-component pricing plan to compute prices for noric solids and butterfat used in butter and powder (Class IV) and a second multiple-component pricing plan to compute prices for protein, butterfat and lactose used to make cheese (Class III). Class I and II prices would be set independent of the manufacturing prices, or computed by addition of differentials to the higher of the Class III or Class IV prices.

Option 2

A three-class, multiple-component pricing plan. This option is based on a modification of the "Benchmark Component Pricing" plan, developed by the University Study Committee, which computes a protein price from a cheese price, a butterfat price from a butter price, and an other solids price from a powder price. The Benchmark Component Price is then calculated by multiplying each of the component prices by a standard factor representing the share of each component in a 1200-pound milk. This option has only one manufacturing class consisting of butter, powder and cheese.

Option 3

A butter/powder-cheese formula to compute a BFP that would function as the minimum price for manufacturing milk used in all three products. It would be the Class III price in a three-class market and possibly the price insurer for Class I and Class II. The formula uses seasonal allowance, and the contribution of each manufacturer is weighted by the average of the manufacturing prices on the higher of the Class III or Class IV prices.

Option 4

A formula that computes a protein price from a cheese price. A "build Michigan II" which would refine the way manufacturing and insurance markets are used to compute prices for manufacturing milk used in all three products. It would be the Class III price in a three-class market and possibly the price insurer for Class I and Class II. The formula uses seasonal allowance, and the contribution of each manufacturer is weighted by the average of the manufacturing prices on the higher of the Class III or Class IV prices.

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Michigan spring planting well underway

This Isabella County farmer - and many other farmers across the state - got a jump on getting their corn in to put the state's corn crop at over one-third planted. Michigan farmers hope to have the majority of Michigan's estimated 2.6 million-acre corn crop in by now with soybeans soon to follow.

Governor's road funding proposal: A right direction for Michigan's roads

At a May 8 press conference, Gov. John Engler unveiled his transportation reform package called "Build Michigan II" which would refine the way roads and bridges are funded and calls for a four-cent gas tax increase.

"We're extremely pleased the governor has indicated his willingness to go to the taxpayers, the drivers, the users of the roads, and ask for their support to rebuild our infrastructure," said Jack Laurie, president of Michigan Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization. "It is a movement in the right direction to rebuild Michigan."

Calling the $75 million package very positive news, Laurie said the organization was generally pleased with the "Build Michigan II" package, which includes several major reform measures, a proposal to increase Michigan's share of federal highway funds, and a 4-cent-per-gallon gas tax increase. Michigan Farm Bureau policy supports a gas tax increase up to 7 cents.

"We're still looking closely at the proposed distribution system to see if it satisfies the needs of agriculture, because our concerns are, and continue to be: What does this do for rural Michigan? Will it address the problems that we have of moving agricultural products from the farm to the consumer and bringing inputs back out to the farm?" Laurie asked.

According to Michigan Farm Bureau Associate Legislative Counsel Tim Goodrich, the package is relying on $200 million in additional federal highway funds, a 4-cent increase in the gas tax, which would bring an additional $90 million and increased in registration fees for trucks. The plan also includes tort reform and internal reforms within the transportation department regarding insurance on construction projects.

According to Goodrich, "It would be naive at this point to think the governor's proposal is going to be the final proposal. But, like the property tax issue, until the governor got serious about that issue, there wasn't any real reform. And that's what this issue has needed; it needed the governor to come forward and step up to the plate and say that he's willing to go on record for some form of a gas tax increase."

Goodrich said although the 4-cent increase will mean motorists who drive 12,000 to 15,000 miles annually will spend, on average, $22 to $30 per year, the net impact is a positive one. Studies show right now that motorists are averaging about $100 in repair costs due to the conditions of the roads. "Goodrich explained, "So while motorists will see a slight increase at the gas pump, they should see a decrease at the repair shop."

Proposed Road Funding Sources (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased Federal Highway Funding</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Cent Gas Tax Increase</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending the Diesel Discount</td>
<td>$28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Commercial Truck Registration</td>
<td>$38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an Overweight Truck Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending the Spillage Allowance</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund Contribution</td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Reimbursement</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on page 8
After more than 40 years of service, Charles retirement Michigan Farm Bureau administrator the largest farm organization, has announced his plans by Kevin Page of Lyons for $1,200. The sale grossed consigned by Jones’ Simmentals of Clare and bought 28, Angus S $50,350 with an average of $1,399. These numbers were then compiled to form the index. Brief The United States is considering lifting the 67-year-old trade embargo on all District 4, Tom Guthrie, Delton; District 5, Alan Garner, Mason; District 6, Ray Wood, Marlette; District 7, Wyant. Don Johnson, administrative director, has held the position for 12 years and has been instrumental in the growth of the organization. He earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science from Michigan State University. 

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

May 15, 1997

News in Brief

Young People’s Citizenship Seminar deadline approaching

Michigan Farm Bureau will once again be holding its Young People’s Citizenship Seminar (YPS) June 16-20 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. More than 250 high school sophomores and juniors from around the state will start in the week-long political education program. According to YPS program manager Tom Nott, the 13-year-old program has helped educate thousands of Michigan high school students about the U.S. political process by presenting practical hands-on experience and top-notch speakers. A favorite among the students who participate actually go through the election process, by campaigning and voting in primaries and general elections. What a unique proposal, "Nugent explained. "Students also have the chance to interact with political leaders and have the real-life experience of politics from all over the country. They'll also interact with their peers from throughout Michigan. This is an excellent opportunity for a young person to learn about the complex process of government."

Speakers for this year's event include Dr. Bob Lee, president of American Citizenship Center at Oklahoma Christian University, on "The Moral Foundation of Freedom," Frank Rice, Albion College, on "South Africa's First Elections," and Bollenbacher survivor, Marine, Kennekeen, Lansing Public Schools, on "The Secret Ingredients," and a player from the Detroit Lions. High school sophomores and juniors are encouraged to attend YPS. To get an application, contact your county Farm Bureau office prior to the May 25 seminar deadline. County Farm Bureau scholarship winners are also available to cover the $175 registration fee. For more information, contact your local county Farm Bureau, or Tom Nott at 840-2660, extension 695.

MCA/MSU Bull Test Sale provides Michigan producers with quality bulls

The Michigan Cattlemen’s Association (MCA)/MSU Bull Test concluded on March 22, 1997 with the annual Bull Test Sale. More than 250 individuals turned out for the 25th year of the Michigan Livestock Exchange in St. Louis where 56 bulls were sold to 32 different buyers, all of the state of Michigan. The high indexing bull was a Simmental bull consigned by Jones’ Simmertals of Clare and bought by Kevin Page of Lyons for $1,200. The sale grossed $80,950 with an average of $.199, a $3 improvement over last year’s auction. The high seller of the Angus bull consigned by Michigan State University and purchased by MIB Egg Improvement Programs of East Lansing for $260.

The Test Station for this event has been Stone Farm in Coldwater since the beginning of the program in 1988. Bulls were delivered to Stonefarm in mid-October and the official test began in the beginning of November. All bulls were weighed on days 28, 54, and 84 of the test and the ultimate gain assay was performed. Those numbers were then compiled to form the index, which determined the bulls that would sell and the order in which those bulls would sell.

Counting Michigan's tart cherries

Tart cherry trees will be blooming soon, and the Federal-State Agriculture Statistics Service will conduct its annual Tart Cherry Objective Yield Survey. This survey is unique to Michigan, which historically produces about 75 percent of the United State’s tart cherries. Last year’s yield for the state was 195 million pounds, a 37 percent decrease from the previous year. The total value was $150 million. During the last five years Michigan’s production has averaged 246 million pounds, 90 percent of which is bottled.

What will be the tart cherry production for 1997? Tart cherry growers, cherry processors, and others have this question answered, when the 1997 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) releases its forecast. USDA has tentatively set June 26 as the release date for the official 1997 tart cherry crop estimate.

MDA director appoints director of ag policy

Dale A. Shemberg of Lansing has been appointed director of agriculture policy by Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Dan Wyant. "Dale has vast experience in the agriculture and legislative arenas, at the local, state and federal levels," Wyant said. "I expect him to focus on some of the most important emerging issues in agriculture today. We're looking forward to having him as a member of the MDA executive team.

Sherwin most recently served as a member of the House Republican Policy and Research Staff, focusing on all issues related to agriculture, forestry and transportation. He has also worked as a legislative aide to Sen. Nick Smith, Republican state director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture; and Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Affairs and Commodity Programs, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, Sherwin worked in the Foreign Agricultural Service, as a lobbyist and trade specialist for the American Farm Bureau Federation, legislative and field representative for the Michigan Farm Bureau, and as a farmer in Davison. He earned a bachelor's degree in animal science from Michigan State University.

Taiwan outbreak bad news for U.S. corn exports

"The discovery of foot and mouth disease in Taiwan's hog farms has significantly impacted feed imports, specifically from the United States, as Taiwan is one of the top three markets for U.S. corn," USDA said in its monthly world grain report.

The recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Taiwan's hog farms will mean the nation will import about 500,000 tons less corn this year, according to a report released by the Agriculture Department.

"Watchdog" group criticizes estate tax reform

Saying Republican proposals to reform the federal estate tax would cost the government $12 billion each year and lift only the most wealthy Americans off the tax hook, a budget watchdog group called the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities called estate taxes an important progressive tax.

The group said in reality the estate tax affects "an extremely small portion of all estates" and does not adversely affect family-run farms and small businesses. Without the estate tax, a report released by the group said, millions of dollars in tax revenues would be lost.

"If estate taxes are reduced in large-scale ways that extend beyond providing targeted relief to small family-owned businesses and farms, that would provide a windfall to the wealthiest taxpayers in the country," the report said.

The report said Republicans supported repeal of federal estate taxes.

U.S. considering lifting Argentina beef ban

The United States is considering lifting the 27-year-old ban on imports of beef from Argentina. The U.S. import ban has been in place since the 1970s following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, a livestock sickness the country has been certified free of for the last three years. According to the report, Paul Drache, the Agricultural and Consumer Affairs Committee's top trade official, said the country is considering lifting the ban because it would have "little impact" on the U.S. beef industry.

The ban was imposed when U.S. negotiators were taking place at high levels and include representatives from the White House.

Organizational Briefs

Michigan Farm Bureau administrator announces retirement

After more than 40 years of service, Charles Burkett, administrative director for the state’s largest farm organization, has announced his plans to retire effective Sept. 30. He has served as the executive director of the Michigan Farm Bureau since 1957 and was unopposed in the election of a tour of duty with the U.S. military.

Burkett joined Farm Bureau Services as a management trainer in June 1957 following his graduation from Western Michigan University with a bachelor of science degree in business. He served numerous roles within the organization, including nine years as a regional representative before being named executive director of the organization’s field operations division in 1969. He was then promoted to the MFAA, administrative director position in 1977.

"We should all share the pride of Chuck's accomplishment of being a part of the Farm Bureau family for more than 40 years," said Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Larre. "This service is an exception, not only in our organization, but in all other organizations as well. Chuck has agreed to continue serving Farm Bureau as a director and as a member of our executive board on the Michigan Blue Cross Blue Shield board of directors following his retirement."

Burkett was recently elected by the Blue Cross Blue Shield board of directors to serve as its chairman. He is the first person from outside of southeast Michigan to serve as chairman since southeast Michigan’s Blue Cross and Blue Shield organization consolidated in 1973. Burkett was first appointed to the Blue Cross board in 1986, as a member of the Blue Cross board.

The Michigan Farm News (ISSN:0743-9962) is published monthly by Michigan Farm Bureau, Inc. For more information, contact your county Farm Bureau office prior to the May 25 seminar deadline. County Farm Bureau scholarship winners are also available to cover the $175 registration fee. For more information, contact your local county Farm Bureau, or Tom Nott at 840-2660, extension 695.
NATIONAL

Estate tax reform

The Family Business Protection Act of 1997, H.R. 1261, has been introduced to reform the federal estate tax. The major provisions include:

- Reducing the unified credit against an estate tax of $750,000 on the amount the property can be reduced to federal law. The current $600,000 exemption was significantly reduced by $1 million over the past 16 years it was last used in 1981.

- MBF position: Farm Bureau supports H.R. 1261.
- Action requested: Please contact your U.S. representative and ask him/her to support H.R. 1261.
- MBF contact: Al Ams, ext. 2045.

STATE

Federal gas tax diversion

In 1993, the federal government increased the gas tax from 4.3 cents per gallon. The revenue from the increased gas tax has been earmarked for federal deficit reduction rather than dedicating the increased revenue for roads. In 1995 alone, motorists have sent over $331 million to Washington to be used solely for deficit reduction.

- MBF position: Support S.396.
- MBF contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2043.

STATE

Amendments to change milk labeling

H.R. 456, H.B. 4569, H.B. 4570, H.B. 4571 and S. 4572 are sponsored by Rep. Ron Nuel, Bona Varga (D-Detroit). These amendments of sections of law dealing with grading milk and the manufactured milk and milk products. The bills would permit theuse of milk label or milk products produced by a cow that was not created with BST (bovine somatotropin).

- MBF contact: Ron Nelson, ext. 2043.

STATE

Pipeline crews on private land

S. 326, sponsored by Sen. Joel Greig (R-Day City), Sen. George Mcmanus (R-Traverse City), Rep. Mike Roth (Elsie Ignace) and Sen. Mar. Dunikalski (R-Roseville), amends H.R. 15, 1997, which regulates the transportation and sale of crude oil and natural gas through pipelines, to establish certain requirements for persons constructing a crude oil or petroleum pipeline or facility.

- MBF position: Support S. 326.
- MBF contact: Ron Nelson, ext. 2043.

STATE

Governmental Immunity Act

S. 386, sponsored by Sen. Leon Stille (R-Pontiac), amends the Governmental Immunity Act to limit a government agency's liability to $300,000 or less for bodily injury or damage to the property arising from the commission of a governmental agency's failure to maintain and repair a highway. Any individual not carrying a valid insurance policy would not be charged a non-economic damages. Under this proposal, a governmental agency's negligence would be limited to a highway, road, or street, which may be kept in repair or maintenance each year.

- MBF position: Support S. 386.
- MBF contact: Scott Derent, ext. 2046.

STATE

Self-employment tax

It is common for farmers in a partnership to include a non-farming spouse in the partnership business and to rent individually owned assets to the partnership.

- MBF position: Support S.B. 262.
- MBF contact: Tim Goodnight, ext. 2048.

STATE

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- MBF position: Support S. 396.
- MBF contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2043.

STATE

Revise explosives crime penalties

The bill was introduced on Feb. 11, 1997 by Rep. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) and was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary.

- MBF position: Oppose H.B. 4280.
- MBF contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2043.

STATE

Primary seat belt bill

H.B. 830 was introduced on Feb. 11, 1997 by Rep. Perring (R-Grand Ledge) and has been on the House calendar since April 17, pending a second reading. When the bill is on the House floor it can be taken up at any time.

- MBF position: Support H.B. 830.
- MBF contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2043.

NATIONAL

Fire blight research funding

Fire blight is a bacterial disease of apples that is causing problems on some production farms in Michigan, New York and other states. The bacterium destroys the tissue that it infects. Often it spreads rapidly by infecting the apple blossoms and killing branches. Once a tree is infected, the bacterium spreads through the tree infecting that part of the tree and killing it entirely.

A method of controlling fire blight involves the use of the antibiotic Streptomycin, which is specifically of fire blight-resistant apple varieties that are resistant to Streptomycin have appeared having left no effective method of control.

Last year Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association had to work with Congress to acquire $525,000 to begin research in a method of fire blight. The appropriation is divided among the Michigan State Agricultural Experiment Station, which are working cooperatively in the research.

- MBF position: Support fire blight research funding.
- MBF contact: Al Ams, ext. 2045.

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Farmers, rescue personnel attend safety seminar

The American Farm Bureau Federation recently established a relief fund to aid rural victims of the Red River flood in North Dakota and Minnesota. According to AFBF President Dean Kleckner, the fund will be used to provide relief in farming and rural areas affected by the devastating flood.

"There are heavy property losses along the flooded Red River in Minnesota and North Dakota," Kleckner said. "While most of the news concentrates on destruction in Grand Forks, tragic losses in more rural, agricultural areas of the two affected states have touched thousands of lives and livelihoods."

Tax-deductible donations to the fund are being coordinated by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBF). Flood relief donations may be sent to AFBF Disaster Relief Fund, 225 Touhy Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068. "Americans, especially those in rural areas, always come together in critical times of need," Kleckner said. "Now is one of those times. Many farmers and ranchers are hurting and will be for a long time due to this flood's lingering effects."

"Even though the flood waters may be subsiding in that area, states MFB President Jack Laurie, "the devastating effects of the flood on Red River Valley agriculture will last well into this summer. This fund will be there for fellow farmers in need for a long haul and hopefully get them back farming as soon as possible."

"Cash donations are the quickest way to get necessities in the hands of those who need them. We are sure that farmers from the affected areas would appreciate any assistance that is offered, " Kleckner stressed.

Funds will be distributed by charitable organizations, including churches, in the affected states. Donors may earmark their contributions for the general fund, which will be divided according to need between the two states, or directly to either of the states.

Due to this year's harsh blizzard, a relief fund has also been established for disaster victims in South Dakota. Michigan Farm Bureau members wishing to contribute to this fund may send donations to: South Dakota Livestock Foundation, c/o South Dakota Department of Agriculture, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501-5182.

Farm Bureau establishes relief fund for Red River flood

NIOSH launches national research program to protect children on farms from injury, death

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched on April 21 a national research program designed to protect children on farms from illness, injury and death.

Under the grant, NIOSH will conduct and support research to identify factors that put children at serious risk of injury on the farm, and to develop better information nationally about the prevalence and circumstances of such injuries. The program will also foster new approaches for raising the awareness about safety risks for children on farms and providing information to help farm families, communities and organizations safeguard young people.

"This national program recognizes that farms and their children embody a unique tradition of hard work, responsibility and love for the land," said Donna E. Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services. "This is a heritage that we want to nurture while assuring safety and health for a new generation of farmers."

Details of the program were announced by NIOSH at a town meeting today in Marshfield, Wis. Speakers included Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.) and NIOSH Director Linda Rosenstock, M.D., M.P.H. This program builds on previous NIOSH research and on recommendations in a national action plan for child agricultural safety and health released last year by a broad-based coalition of farmers, agricultural organizations, safety and health professionals and government officials.

"This initiative places NIOSH at the forefront of determining the factors that contribute to preventable illnesses, injuries and deaths among children in farm families, the children of migrant and seasonal workers, and children visiting farms," Obey said. "When we know more about these factors, we can help parents and employers determine which tasks and actions are appropriate for children of different ages."

Studies estimate that about 100 people under 20 years of age are killed on farms each year and more than 100,000 injured in agriculture-related activities. Agents associated with these deaths and injuries include tractors and other farm machinery, livestock, building structures and falls.

The NIOSH initiative is funded at $5 million. Most of the funding will be awarded by NIOSH in competitive grants for research by outside institutions. Also through competitive grant funding, NIOSH plans to establish a national center to facilitate activities toward childhood agriculture injury prevention. The remainder of the funding will support internal NIOSH research. NIOSH published a request for applications for competitive research grants on March 10, 1997, and expects to issue another request for applications to establish a national center.

Further information on NIOSH's initiative on safety for children on farms and its other activities in agricultural safety and health is available by calling toll-free 1-800-35-NIOSH or by accessing the program's homepage on the World Wide Web: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html.

Capitol Corner

Continued from page 3

STATE

Snowmobile ID numbers

H.R. 5452 was introduced March 19 by Rep. Bobier (R-Hesperia) and was referred to the House Committee on Conservation, Environment and Recreation.

The bill provides that snowmobiles having been issued a certificate of registration, shall put on or attach to each, the registration number on the belly pan immediately in front of the footwell in the following manner:

- Number must consist of block-style characters of not less than three inches in height, reading from left to right.

Numbers shall contrast so as to be distinctly visible and legible.

Under no circumstances should other numbers be attached or otherwise displayed on any part of the snowmobile.

The current registration decal shall always be affixed to the right of the registration number.

Farm Bureau Policy #93: We recommend the reinstatement of required snowmobile and personal watercraft ID numbers for identification purposes.

MFB position: MFB supports H.R. 5452.

MFB contact: Howard Koldy, ext. 2646.

Senate and House resolutions on deer damage

R.S. 45, sponsored by Sen. Juanitaansom (R-Redwood), and H.B. 155, sponsored by Rep. Larry DeVore (R-Bakersfield), encourage the Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission to increase efforts to reduce agricultural, forest and snowmobile damage caused by deer.

MFB position: MFB supports both resolutions.

MFB contact: Scott Bierett, ext. 2640.

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†This cash back offer is valid for members of participating Farm Bureaus, is scheduled to expire 9/30/97, and is subject to change. It may not be used in combination with any other Chrysler Corporation certificate program or certain other special programs. Ask for restrictions and details. Farm Bureau® is a registered service mark of the American Farm Bureau Federation.
A yall know, the month of May is a critical month for corn farmers. It's a highly respected period with crops being harvested and priced. This month is crucial for setting the corn price for the rest of the year.

The USDA released their list of supply and demand estimates for the 1997 corn crop on May 12. Comparing them to the March list below. If they are generally different, then the market has probably moved significantly. This means updating your pricing plan.

**Corn**

New crop, think hard about pricing some at a day's old crop as the market is now looking at a trend to consider pricing some more if December corn futures bounce back into the $3 area. Remember, you have several tools to price and can use more than one of them. Consider such things as the basis, how much downside risk you can, or want, to handle; and the cost to keep some upside potential.

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**Wheat**

Weather seems to be on somewhat of an uptrend. This would be expected with the late freeze in the Plains and southwest, and the question about planting progress in the spring wheat region. However, as with all agricultural commodities, this can quickly change.

The USDA released their list of supply and demand estimates for the 1997 corn crop on May 12. Comparing them to the March list below. If they are generally different, then the market has probably moved significantly. This means updating your pricing plan.

**Soybeans**

As of the first of May, old crop soybean prices were strong. When July soybean futures are trading over $4.70, things are good. It's hard to give advice, such as hold for more. However, old crop soybean prices remain in an expansive position, up and down. Just keep rolling along as corn use will last until January expiration.

**Cattle**

Current market supply is ample and a fall rally in milk prices will be relatively good milk price year. The supply and demand situation in the U.S. dairy industry continues to be positive. The price of milk in the U.S. has been increasing for the past year and a half.

The USDA released their list of supply and demand estimates for the 1997 corn crop on May 12. Comparing them to the March list below. If they are generally different, then the market has probably moved significantly. This means updating your pricing plan.

**COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corn</th>
<th>May '97</th>
<th>Soybeans</th>
<th>May '97</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Jul. '97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average price</td>
<td>$2.80</td>
<td>$3.40</td>
<td>$2.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>$2.60</td>
<td>$2.20</td>
<td>$2.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Live Cattle**

Live cattle prices have been firm to higher in recent weeks with futures rising at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) and the Kansas City Board of Trade.

**Live Hog**

Live hog prices have been firm to higher in recent weeks with futures rising at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) and the Kansas City Board of Trade.

**COMMODITY SUPPLY/Demand Balance Sheets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Corn</th>
<th>Table 2 - Wheat</th>
<th>Table 3 - Soybeans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Million bushels)</td>
<td>(Million bushels)</td>
<td>(Million bushels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres harvested</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres planted</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres harvested</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning stocks</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>2,182</td>
<td>2,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supply</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>2,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>2,643</td>
<td>2,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed and residual</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broek</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total domestic</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>1,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>1,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total use</td>
<td>2,402</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending stocks</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crushings</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>2,277</td>
<td>2,373</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total supply</td>
<td>2,516</td>
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**EGG AND BROILERS**

The price of eggs in April averaged about nine cents a dozen below April 1996. At the end of the month, prices dropped to nearly 25 cents a dozen below last year. Feed ingredient costs had dropped about 15 cents a dozen below April 1996.

The number of hens and pullets on farms on April 1 was 2 percent above last year. Egg production was slightly lower than analyst expectations.

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**Dairy**

Larry G. Hamm

A price disaster to the dairy product market. As a result, near-term farm milk prices will be going down. Dairy markets funda-

mental, however, strong December corn futures likely that 1997 will be relatively good year.

During April trading on the National Cheese Exchange (NCE), the average wholesale price for 49 pounds of cheddar block (5 cents above spot), trading on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), Grade A butter dropped 24 cents per pound. The Basic Formula Price (BFP) for April is adjusted by the change in the product values for cheese, butter and powder between March wholesale price levels and April wholesale price levels. The dramatic drop experi-

enced on the dairy product market exchanges guar-

Technology is sporing so that as the underlying causes are for the weaker dairy product market, it is less predictable and forward contractshare price.

Continued on page 7
Market outlook
Continued from page 6

BROILERS
Braising prices averaged nearly 4 cents a pound (Midwest, U.S. Grade A, 3-5-pounders fresh,track-in-weight, as of about 1995 even though the number of chicks placed was almost 8 percent up from the previous year. Broiler prices in the first 3 months of 1997 averaged about 1 cent a pound, above the same month in 1996, while the number of chicks placed was up 2 percent from a year ago.

It should be recalled that the number of chicks placed will increase during the summer months with prices increasing several cents a pound from the same month in 1996.

Potato growers seek feeders for oversupply

A significant tonnage of potatoes will be directed toward livestock feed in order to clean up the bins. Potato growers from Maine to Washington are facing a serious disposal problem. Michigan growers will still dump approximately 130,000 cwt. with a farm gate value over $100,000.

Livestock feeders or potato growers are urged to contact the Commission office for information.

Ron Bush, Executive Director of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission indicated that "cleaning up the 1996 Michigan potato crop, no matter how painful, must be done in a prudent manner to avoid disease contamination of the 1997 crop with 1996 crop potatoes being discarded. Feeding potatoes to livestock is an excellent way of avoiding the spread of the potato spittle bug and differing potato viruses."

Agriculture's Summer Celebration set for June 24 at Michigan State University

Event to focus on state's livestock industry revitalization efforts

Several Michigan agricultural organizations will join forces Tuesday, June 24, to host Agriculture's Summer Celebration on the campus of Michigan State University. Farmers are invited to help celebrate the completion of the Animal Industry Initiative, a $70 million effort to revitalize the state's livestock industry.

Participants may take guided tours of new MSU Livestock Facilities at 1:30 p.m. and include the dairy and swine facilities and the new Pavilion for Livestock and Agricultural Education. Special Rim, consultations the livestock science building at 4 p.m. and dinner will be served from 5 to 7 p.m.

The event coincides with the opening day of Ag Expo, the annual agriculture trade show held in MSU. A free shuttle will transport visitors between Ag Expo and the celebration. Look for the tent near the corner of Shaw and Farm Lane in East Lansing, behind the Farmall Agricultural Engineering building.

To order tickets (available in advance only), send $5 each payable to Michigan Farm Bureau to Agricultural Summer Celebration, P.O. Box 5000, Lansing, MI 48909. For more information, call (800) 205-2680, ext. 5234. Deadline for ticket orders is June 12.

Agriculture's Summer Celebration is sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan State University, Michigan MBM Producers Association and Michigan Livestock Exchange.

"Moving our business operations to Indianapolis better positions the FFA and agricultural education for the future," Case said. "Indiana provides a better quality of life for our staff, pure closer to the majority of our members and helps reduce operating costs. The supportive local agri- community and youth-focused state philosophy also will help us achieve our mission of making a positive difference in the lives of students through agricultural education."

The National FFA Foundation, Inc., has initiated a national capital campaign, themed "I Believe in the Future," to help finance the land and building. FFA has received local leadership gifts totaling $1.5 million from The Lilly Endowment, Dow/Enco and The FFA Fund on behalf of Elanco Animal Health.

The Dow Chemical Company is one of the parent companies of DowElanco, both time-long supporters of FFA that sponsor several education and leadership programs. The land sale, partly made possible by a gift from Dow/Danisco and Dow Chemical, is an extension of that support.

"The most important investments we can make is in the future of our young people and the future of the agricultural industry," said John Hagaman, president and chief executive officer of DowElanco. "We believe that supporting FFA is the best way to make that investment. The return is evident in our own employees, many of whom are former FFA members, and in the young students we meet through involvement in FFA. These students will become the industry's next leaders, and they are well-prepared."
Variable-rate seeding technology

by Neil R. Miller

Modern planters now allow producers to vary seeding rates continuously as they move across a field. Several of my clients have been using Rowcrop hydraulic drives on their corn planters for years. Many new planters now come with factory-installed variable-rate drives, and in 1998 John Deere and possibly Case IH will offer their own controllers to GPS so that populations can be varied according to a pre-programmed computer generated map. (Rowcrop has had this capability for several years.)

What benefits can producers expect to reap from this new technology? As with other aspects of site-specific management, our agronomic knowledge lags somewhat behind the engineering capabilities. We simply do not know the optimum seeding rates for the myriad of soil types, varieties, management systems and weather conditions we may encounter. Consequently, it is difficult to estimate what the benefits of this technology will be in the future. Nevertheless, the following generalizations appear to hold true:

For many producers, optimizing corn populations will involve an across-the-board increase. Recommended corn populations in Michigan have increased steadily over the past decade. Modern hybrids, especially those in the shorter maturity range, show continuing response to increased seeding rates. Thus, even before you use variable rate technology to optimize populations on a site-specific basis, many producers will benefit by simply increasing their overall seeding rates.

Soil characteristics, especially water-holding, capacity, will be the dominant factor determining site-specific corn populations. Fields with higher moisture-holding capacity, and higher yield potential, will often continue to respond as seeding rates increase above 50,000 seeds/acre. In contrast, yields on sandier, relatively low-potential soils tend to peak at seeding rates of 20-25,000, and decline above this, especially in dry years. The accompanying figure illustrates the relationship between productivity of a given environment and optimum corn populations. Note that these are final populations, and seeding rates would likely be 10 percent higher.

The most common way to document variable yield potential within fields is to map its various soil types. If you plan to use NRCs soil survey maps to do this, be sure to verify their accuracy ahead of time. Many counties in Michigan now have digitized, geo-referenced versions of these maps that can be easily imported into site-specific farming software. However, the NRCs has not carried out field validation of these maps, and my experience suggests that their accuracy varies widely. Before they can be used for prescription writing, they should be taken to the field and edited using GPS data logging equipment. Contact me if you are interested in details on how this can be done. Variable rate seeding of soybeans will likely produce fewer benefits. Most soybean varieties exhibit a remarkable ability to adjust their growth habits to various environmental conditions. Thus, even when seeded at a uniform rate, plants will produce more branch stems and produce or abort pods as needed to take advantage of differing conditions within a field. I have talked with some producers who are interested in holding back populations on their most productive ground in order to decrease lodging and white mold potential. However, I have not seen research to document whether or not this would be beneficial.

Basic Formula Price

Continued from page 1

Option 4

A combination of a competitive pay price series and a product price formula. The competitive pay price would be the national weighted average price paid for Grade A milk used to produce manufactured dairy products for the preceding month, less performance premiums, plus hauling subsidies. A product price formula would be used to update the competitive pay information to the current month. The competitive pay price would be collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service for a representative sample of states that account for the majority of Grade A milk used to produce manufactured products. The price series does not currently exist and would have to be developed.

Included in the university study of pricing alternatives was Michigan State University Agricultural Economics Department Chair Larry Hamm. According to him, "When you strip all of the details apart, you fundamentally have a price that reflects what consumers are willing to pay for manufactured products that are made from milk."

"As a group we looked at 52 to 54 different options," said Hamm, "but one of those is valuing milk on the value of the products that are made - using a product price formula that basically weighs the amount of milk that goes into butter, powder and cheese, and then adjusting that value by how much it costs to manufacture products."

According to NMB Livestock Specialist Kevin Kirk, option four - the product price formula - carries the most merits of the four alternatives. "I think that is the most fair way to do it," he adds. "When you look at the things that they were talking about in the criteria - stability, simplicity, uniformity, sound economics, reduced regulation, predictability, and a recognizable replacement for the basic formula price - that's what we need to do it is to have something that the industry can recognize and understand. It has to be broad across the entire United States - we can't take one designated area, because as things change, production changes, we have to take that into consideration."

UNMATCHED CAPACITY

GEHL FORAGE HARRVESTERS

June 30, 1997

Gehl forage harvesters get job done faster with these performance features:

- Exclusive Auto Max Load-Sensing System - Increase capacity by up to 20%. Only you operate at top capacity without the fear of damaging the equipment.
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- In-head Hydraulic Knife Sharpener - Makes adjusting the cutterbar quick and easy.
- Patented One-Sided Cutterbar Adjustment - Allows adjusting the cutterbar while the machine is in the field.
- Three Models To Choose From - Including the largest pull-type hay harvester on the market.

GEHL LAYERS MAKE HAY YOUR WAY!

Exclusive Total Density Control (TDC™) system lets you build the best possible bale in a wide variety of crops and conditions. You easily custom-build bales to maintain maximum nutritional value.

With TDC you can crank up the density to pack more hay into every bale for fewer bales to make, move, store and feed. You save valuable time in every step of your round baling operation.

Gehl's electronic bale control system monitors the entire baling process and makes adjustments on-things. It all adds up to the ultimate in round bale performance and convenience. Your Gehl dealer can show you the model that's right for you.
Each day we light the way for you and other farmers across the state — providing the power that keeps you in business. But our commitment to you doesn’t stop there.

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

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

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

For stray voltage questions call 1-800-252-VOLT

For other service questions call 1-800-477-5050

Consumers Energy
Count on Us
First business registered under new law

Michigan's first shrimp operation opens

Farm Bureau opposing truck weight legislation

Focus on savings with NuVision.

Member Vision Care Plan from Michigan Farm Bureau
Blind spots about vision can cause needless worry, wasted effort and unnecessary expense. You might be tempted to throw away your glasses! "Urged the ads for laser eye surgery. For millions of nearsighted Americans, that prospect seemed like a dream come true. But last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission sent a letter warning physicians that unqualified promises for such an outcome are "misleading and deceptive."

The notion that you'll never wear glasses again after laser surgery is just one of many myths about eyesight that can lead people to waste time, effort and money - and sometimes even expose them to needless danger.

Myth: You'll never need glasses again if you undergo surgery to correct nearsightedness.

Truth: Surgery can reduce or eliminate nearsightedness, by flattening the cornea. But there's no guarantee that surgery will eliminate the need for glasses. In the traditional operation, called radial keratotomy, the surgeon makes several pie-shaped incisions in the cornea. Ten years after surgery in the largest study so far, 30 percent of patients were still needled for glasses. In the version of the operation perfected, a number of patients will eventually need reading glasses, because the lens of the eye thickens with age.

In addition, surgery can result in problems with glare that may persist for months, sometimes even longer, and visual acuity may fluctuate for years. Moretrigeminal. 3 percent of patients could not see as clearly as glasses as they could before the operation. More serious complications, such as infection or rupture of the cornea, are rare, but potentially blinding. And the surgery weakens the cornea, so a subsequent blow to the eye could shatter it.

A newer method, called photorefractive keratectomy, uses a laser beam to shave a minimal layer of the eye, the cornea. The laser reduces the chance of overcorrection or undercorrection, with a result that is more comfortable, can be more permanent than your glasses. But even the most advanced technique has its limitations. And the surgery weakens the cornea, so a subsequent blow to the eye could shatter it.

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Of course we’re supposed to brush every day. But how many of us know why? Take this test to find out if you’re truly treating your teeth well.

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   a. Kissing
   b. Sharing a toothbrush
   c. Both
   d. Neither

2. Toothbrushing prevents
   a. Detached gums
   b. Root decay
   c. Stained decay
   d. None of the above

3. You’re least likely to get cavities from eating
   a. Raisins
   b. Pure sugar
   c. An English muffin
   d. None of the above

4. Who’s especially susceptible to getting gum disease?
   a. Pregnant women
   b. Menopausal women
   c. Toothbrushers

5. If you can’t brush your teeth after a meal, what’s the best thing to do?
   a. Eat a banana
   b. Chew gum
   c. Use a toothpick
   d. None of the above

6. The minimum time for a thorough toothbrushing is
   a. One minute
   b. Three minutes
   c. Four minutes
   d. None of the above

7. Which will relieve toothache pain fastest?
   a. Aspirin
   b. Clove oil
   c. Salt water
   d. None of the above

Answers

1. c. By age 35, three in four Americans have at least the beginnings of gum disease, an irritation and infection below the gum line caused by certain bacteria in dental plaque. But occasionally bacteria transmitted via the saliva of someone with gum disease can bring on gum disease in someone who doesn’t even have plaque. So if your partner isn’t taking care of his or her teeth, take the problem seriously. Your own gums may be at risk.

2. d. Toothbrushing removes plaque and prevents cavities on the gum line, but not below. When plaque isn’t cleaned out, the gums fall away, allowing germs to get at your roots and even at the bone anchoring the teeth. Gum disease is the nation’s leading cause of tooth loss. To prevent it, you have to floss regularly.

3. b. Sugary foods, including candy and chocolate, are cleared from the mouth more quickly than starchy foods. Raisins are a special case because they stick between teeth so tenaciously.

4. a. Nearly all pregnant women get some signs of gum disease because hormones associated with pregnancy increase swelling, bleeding and tiny infections in the gums. There’s an old saying: lose a tooth for every child. To keep it from coming true, brush after every meal, floss daily and see a dentist at the beginning of your pregnancy.

5. b. Chewing gum stimulates copious secretions of saliva, and saliva’s chemicals neutralize tooth-decaying acids. Pop in a piece when you finish a meal. Sugarless gum works much better than regular, and gum containing xylitol works best of all, reducing tooth decay by as much as 85 percent. (The sweetener keeps bacteria from mass-producing.) The gum is sold mostly in health food stores.

6. b. To make this task seem less daunting, try dividing your mouth into ten sections. (Include a section each for the roof of your mouth, your tongue, and the inside of your right and left cheeks, all places where bacteria congregate.) Then count to 20 alligators as you brush each section. The average American spends about 30 seconds brushing.

7. b. If your dentist can’t see you right away for a painful cavity or infection, assimilate a cotton ball in oil of clove (sold at many pharmacies) and put it on the aching tooth. The anesthetic oil should ease the pain in a couple of seconds.

Source: HEALTH magazine
Human ailment wrongly called "mad cow" disease

With increasing frequency, we're seeing inaccurate news reports of people who have died of "mad cow" disease or the disease linked to it, Creutzfeld-Jakob. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers on this issue.

What is CJD?
Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease (CJD) is a rare degenerative brain disease found in humans. It occurs at a rate of approximately one in a million with the wide. It is one of a number of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) that infect humans and animals. CJD typically occurs in individuals older than 60. It progresses relatively rapidly and is always fatal.

What is BSE?
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) is a TSE that has been found in cattle. It was first reported in Great Britain, but a limited number of cases have been found in other countries, as well. It has never been found in the United States. More than 108,000 cases have been reported in British cattle since it was first identified in 1986. Animals with the disease are not "mad," but do suffer from a degenerative brain disease. They become nervous, lose body weight, lose control of their legs and die. Like CJD, it is always fatal. It appears that the disease was spread by feeding rendered animal protein to cattle. One difficulty with identifying BSE, and any other TSE, is that there is no live animal test for it. In other words, the presence of the disease, brain tissue needs to be examined.

Is there a link?
Concerns were raised when the United King­dom's Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Com­mission indicated that BSE might account for 10% of the cases of a variant form of CJD that had been found in the country. Since that time an additional six cases have been confirmed. The new variant CJD (nv-CJD) is different from the conventional form in that it affects younger people (average age less than 30), takes longer to progress and shows some­what different damage to the brain and muscle when autopsies are conducted. The possible link between nv-CJD and BSE caused beef sales to plummet in Great Britain and in Europe.

We're almost there
Polio is targeted for global eradication by the year 2000. There are now 145 countries that are free of this disease.

Heart-smart pork

Long touted as "the other white meat," lean cuts of pork are just now proving to be as healthy as poultry in countering cholesterol, say researchers at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C. Over a 28-day period, 51 men and women with elevated cholesterol ate large portions of either skinless chicken breast or lean pork each day. Both means helped to lower cholesterol levels by 7 or 8 percent.

Hand-to-hand combat - against germs

Children who wash their hands four or more times during the school day get sick less than other kids, according to a recent study right here in Michigan. The hand-washers had 24 percent fewer sick days due to colds and flu, and 50 percent fewer days lost because of stomach flu. It's believed studies, in children and adults, have shown that hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of colds and other infectious diseases.

Five a day for better health, Michigan

Only about 22 percent of Americans eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. States with the most five-a-dayers (at least 30 percent): Connecticut, Kansas, Massa­chusetts, Michigan and New Jersey; States with the fewest (less than 19 percent): Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota and Utah. On an upbeat note, the propor­tion of high school students who ate at least five servings a day doubled between 1995 and 1997, from 14 to 26 percent.

Reach out and hit someone

In 1995 almost 10 million people acquired car phones in the United States - more new phones than smoke detectors. In a new study, epidemiolo­gists at the University of Toronto examined a total of 25,798 calls and learned that phoning from the car quadruples the risk of a crash. Ironically, there's one offering factor you can call for help on the car phone after the crash. (The crashes under study did not involve physical injury to the driver or pas­sengers, but only material damage.) Oddly, a hands­free phone offers no advantages. It's the distraction that causes the crash, not one-handed driving. Some counties (such as Brazil and Ironton) have made it illegal to talk on a phone while driving. If you have a car phone, keep your calls short. Hang up if you're in a tight spot. When making a long or potentially upsetting call, pull over.

No more finger pricking?

In the future, implanted glucose monitors might spare some people with severe diabetes the pain and inconvenience of pricking their fingers up to a dozen or more times a day to measure their blood sugar levels. Implanted Biosystems, Inc., of Yellow Springs, Ohio, is developing one such monitor, which the company plans to bring to market in the next two years. The monitor, about the size of a be­tween 10 percent 19 percent) Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota and Utah. On an upbeat note, the propor­tion of high school students who ate at least five servings a day doubled between 1995 and 1997, from 14 to 26 percent.

I have hypoglycemia and crave sweets, but my doctor told me to stay away from refined sugars.

There are many things to do to im­prove your eating habits when you have hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) besides avoiding refined sweets. The dietary goal for people with hypoglycemia is to keep blood sugar relatively even throughout the day. For most people, that means eating a meal or snack about every three hours. If you wait longer than that for food, you may start to feel the symptoms of low blood sugar (shakiness, weakness, confusion, irritability, headache).

It's helpful to include both a carbohydrate food and a protein-containing food at every meal and snack. This could be snacks such as peanut butter on crackers, half of a cheese sandwich or a bowl of cereal. If someone needs to limit fat because of a cholesterol or weight problem, then we'd suggest something like half of a lean meat sandwich or low-fat bean dip with baked corn chips. A piece of fruit plus an ounce of low-fat mozzarella cheese would work, as well.

In years past, the dietary recommendations for hypoglycemia were different. Protein foods were heavily emphasized and carbohydrates were dis­couraged. At that time, people were told to eat lots of cheese or a spoon of peanut butter or a handful of nuts for a between-meal snack. You may hear this type of suggestion from someone now, but it is not the most current advice.

Another helpful hint for those suffering with hypoglycemia is to avoid alcohol; alcohol tends to keep blood sugar low, triggering a headache or sleepiness. You'll also want to limit caffeine, because when the effect of the caffeine wears off, you'll feel like your blood sugar is dropping, even if it is.

If you still don't feel well after trying some of these ideas, you may want to meet with a registered dietitian individually for a meal plan. He or she would look at your calorie needs, activity level and current eating habits to help you fine tune your eating plan and feel better.
Medical Focus

Surgery for skin cancer achieves high cure rate

Mohs micrographic surgery is a highly specialized method for treating the two most common types of skin cancer—basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. It is particularly effective for skin cancers on the face because it precisely locates the extension of a cancerous tumor on the face and spares as much healthy skin tissue as possible. Mohs surgery has also been shown to have a higher cure rate than any other treatment for skin cancers.

"The most important advantage of Mohs surgery is to make sure you get the tumor out with as much normal tissue as possible," says Bruce Nelson, M.D., associate professor of dermatology at The University of Texas-Houston. Mohs surgery employs a unique method of cutting a tumor from the skin. The surgeon injects a local anesthetic around the skin cancer and cuts a disk-shaped section of skin around the tumor, keeping the edges of the disk at a 45-degree angle. After the specimen is removed, the surgeon examines the tissue under a microscope, typically 10 to 15 minutes. If it has been removed, frozen and processed on slides, the patient's wound is kept open until the surgeon is satisfied that all the cancer has been removed.

"This is particularly true for skin cancers on the face," says Nelson. "At the Mohs unit at the University of Wisconsin, we have a recurrence rate of 2 to 5 percent, and this is the best procedure known."

Curate rates

There have been no standardized and randomized clinical trials comparing Mohs micrographic surgery with other treatments. However, a retrospective review of Mohs surgery performed by the Mohs unit at the University of Wisconsin showed that Mohs surgery had a 99 percent cure rate for basal cell carcinoma.

"There are no standardized and randomized clinical trials comparing Mohs micrographic surgery with other treatments," says Nelson. "At the Mohs unit at the University of Wisconsin, we have a recurrence rate of 2 to 5 percent, and this is the best procedure known."

Skin cancer prevention

It's always better to prevent skin cancer than to treat it. When going out into the sun, always wear a wide-brimmed hat and a sun screen with an SPF of at least 15.

Skin cancer has reached almost epidemic proportions. It is the most common form of cancer in the United States with about one million new cases diagnosed each year. But a new medical procedure may help treat the two most common types of skin cancer.

![Skin cancer](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

### Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) recurrence rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mohs</th>
<th>Non-Mohs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High-risk lesions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary SCC of the skin and lip</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary SCC of the ear</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally recurrent SCC of the skin (not site-specific)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC with perineural (nerve) involvement</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCs greater than 2 cm in size</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly differentiated SCC</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Farmers help make it through the peaks and valleys

It's common knowledge that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Any business person would agree, applying that notion to his bottom line and pointing out that shortening the peaks and valleys provides a much shorter route to profitability. Those whose business is particularly seasonal may arrest to the fact that the inevitable peaks and valleys can make for a wild ride.

Some of those business owners, though, have learned to break the seasonal breadcrumb trail by the use of operating loans. Businesses as wide-ranging as greenhouse manufacturers, equipment dealers, seed companies and agricultural producers frequently rely on the stability an operating loan can provide.

Technically, financial institutions—as well as some suppliers—offer two types of loans: operating loans and capital loans. Operating loans are purpose-specific; the note and the revolving line of credit, according to Roger Ellis, account executive for Farm Credit Services of East Central Michigan in Lansing. A note tied to the kind of loan most commonly offered by some suppliers—allows growers to borrow against, say, a ton of grain, on which it is to be paid in full on a certain date, with interest. If the grower repays any amount of money before that date, however, interest is not paid on that other amount.

On the other hand, a type of operating loan—one that has evolved with customers' needs—said Ellis, is the revolving line of credit. It is a more "friendly" loan for farmers. The revolving line of credit is where money is placed in a grower's checkbook against a certain credit limit and allows them to pay against debt as they are able. The most significant difference between the note and the revolving line is in the fact that borrowers are able to withdraw money repeatedly, up to their limit, as they repay against the revolving line of credit. This flexibility takes advantage of the "peaks and valleys effect" and decreases the amount of interest that must be paid on the loan. These features make it a valuable management tool for growers—one that lets them control their operation's cash flow and financial position.

Both the note rate and the revolving line of credit are typically written for a term of 12 months or the selling cycle of the product for which the loan was initially written. However, some revolving line entries can be written for a term of up to three years, which is convenient for borrowers, Duane Hoxie, vice president and general manager of Farm Credit's Hemlock branch, said, added, but all that is usually required from them every year, during the term of the loan, is updated financials.

"The revolving line of credit," said Hoxie, "is perfect for cash-grain operators who plan their crops in the spring and don't time one until fall. This gives them some cash flow during the growing season with which to pay for short-term expenses." Hoxie is familiar with the short-term expenses as things such as feed, fertilizer, repairs and other operating expenses that have a useful life of less than one year. "Tom Budd, branch manager at Farm Credit's Hemlock branch, has this to say. "An operating loan can be used to pay for anything that can readily be listed as an expense on a farmer's Schedule F form (reimbursed income and expenses).

Hoxie added that livestock farmers also are excellent candidates for the revolving line of credit, although they typically use the line on a more frequent basis as they buy and sell their livestock. "Visually anyone who plants crops for feed or sells land is benefit by taking out an operating loan," said Ellis. He urges consumers to secure their operating loans as early in December in order to take advantage of the discounts—typically ranging from 5 percent to as much as 12 percent—available early in the year from feed, fertilizer and other suppliers. Ellis explained that farmers usually can often their operating line credit payments significantly through these early discounts.

Although the use of operating loans is only one of the advantages of securing a revolving line of credit, according to Budd, it is often noted that farmers, in addition to children represent all types of unexpected expenses. An operating loan gives farmers the safety net they need to deal with emergencies. For more long-term or larger expenses, Hoxie explained that a capital line of credit may be more useful than a typical operating loan. These types of loans are written for terms of up to five years, and may be used for longer-term equipment purchases. Hoxie mentioned that capital lines can be used by farmers who make equipment purchases at auction. The borrower normally is billed for 20 percent of the outstanding balance of the loan every year, plus interest, and it is paid in full. If a straight line is the shortest route between two points, drawing that line may be the most satisfying way to get to "yearly financial nation. For this reason, some financial institutions have instituted draft plans to be used in tandem with their revolving credit lines.

Using a draft plan, a borrower can write checks—issued by the lender—against his revolving credit line of credit. In effect, the draft plan is a pre-approved line of credit the borrower can access anywhere and anytime. It allows the borrower to pay for his purchases immediately and saves him the time he would have spent having his lending institution issue the check to the retailer. The amount of the loan is pre-determined and the borrower has control from that point on.

"About 50 to 91 percent of our revolving line customers take advantage of our draft plan," said Hoxie. "These checks are as good as cash and are the most convenient way for farmers to take control of where their money is spent." Ellis added that the most significant advantage of using a draft plan does "dowel that providers offer quick financing options, such as Farm Credit's "On the Spot" financing. An "On the Spot" loan requires answers to only about a dozen questions from applicants, which include limited financial and earning information. The responses to these requests for quick financing are known within minutes. If a lender offers this type of quick "spot" financing, it is typically offered on loans under a certain dollar amount, $10,000 to $100,000 is common.

The bottom line to the operating loan question, the one that smart farmers have been listening to season to season, and grows allows greater control of their cash flow. Whether an operating or capital loan is the right thing depends entirely on the grower's present situation. A question is a question as it has presented. Thinking and asking if the operation would allow your money to carry you through the year, you'll want to take out an operating loan for emergencies," "Judd added that he frequently suggests to customers who regularly use operating loans that they should try to build up their cash reserves as they make use of the loans.

"Believing operating loans are of the biggest use to strong farmers and to farmers who are undertaking large expansion projects," said Budd. "He encourages potential borrowers to "—no matter what type of loan they're applying for—to put together a business plan, complete with projections before applying. (Tell them to assume average weather when they make their projections," he mentioned). He then reemphasized those plans and looks at thegrower's history, a balance sheet, financial statement, three years of tax returns and his balance sheet. Hoxie added that some lenders offer quick financing options, such as Farm Credit's "On the Spot" financing. An "On the Spot" loan requires answers to only about a dozen questions from applicants, which include limited financial and earning information. The responses to these requests for quick financing are known within minutes. If a lender offers this type of quick "spot" financing, it is typically offered on loans under a certain dollar amount, $10,000 to $100,000 is common.

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Farmerwriter legal services announces new name and affiliation of migrant labor project

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Farmworker legal services announces new name and affiliation of migrant labor project

Office locations and staffing

The Berrien Springs office is located at 4451 Elm Shaeeneve Road, P.O. Box 266, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0268, Tel. (616) 473-2819, Fax (616) 473-7644. Bilingual full-time staff include: Angela Walker, para-legal; Joseph Hughes, attorney; Tom Thurnharm, legal assistant; and Veronica Rodriguez, intake. A new Kent County office will be opening by May 1997, with bilingual full-time staff including: Jessica Morgan, immigration attorney; Jose Sandoval, law graduate; and support staff (to be hired). The new address is 668 Three Mile Road, Walker, MI 49347-9564. Both offices currently are seeking bilingual legal interns for the migrant season.

Services provided by MMLAP

According to Kelly, in 1995-96 MMLAP conduct a long-term planning process to decide how best to meet the legal needs of migrant workers who are also available to perform community legal education presentations.

The staff is also available to aid farmers to possibly assist them in securing legal representation for their workers," explains MFL Legislative Counsel Howard Kelly. "Farmers are commonly unaware that there are two specific legal firms supporting farmworker rights and labor issues in the state instead of the one.

USDA: Don't let up on foreign market development

The Agriculture Department's top marketing official said for American agriculture to remain the nation's biggest export outlet, the industry must continue to focus on developing more foreign markets with an emphasis on growth. "If we want to grow, we have to be looking overseas," said August Schumacher Jr., administrator of the Department's Foreign Agricultural Service, who noted that the domestic market for farm goods is relatively flat. Last year, U.S. agricultural exports reached a record $58.9 billion—the 37th year in a row agriculture marked a trade surplus. American agriculture is now poised for growth. Rising incomes and increasing demand in the Middle East and North Africa will make those areas future strong markets for Americans, he said.

Bugs captured on CD-ROM

Farmers will soon have computer technology at their fingertips in the battle against insects. Farmers and tobl of the department's Foreign Agricultural Service, who noted that the domestic market for farm goods is relatively flat. Last year, U.S. agricultural exports reached a record $58.9 billion—the 37th year in a row agriculture marked a trade surplus. American agriculture is now poised for growth. Rising incomes and increasing demand in the Middle East and North Africa will make those areas future strong markets for Americans, he said.

for about a year. The project was originally based on the structure of a normalized course that the two men (the lead developer) built. The development project quickly saw other audiences for the material. Information about biological control—fighting pests, such as introducing predator insect species—has not been easily accessible to farmers, gardeners and crop consultants. A CD-ROM allows users to interact with the graphics, rather than just study a picture in an insect book.
Consumers Energy sponsors a fragrant fund-raiser for FFA Foundation

Spruce up your yard with "Grown Wild with FFA."

Over 14-ounce bag of impatiens or wildflower mulch can make your spring landscaping a breeze. A product manufactured by Ampco Industries in Bradley, Mich., is being sold through Consumers Energy as a fund-raiser supporting the Michigan FFA Foundation.

Each bag contains mulch, seeds and fertilizer. Ampco uses approximately 14 million pounds of recycled, shredded newspaper each year to create the mulch used in Antrim.

One 14-ounce bag of Annual covers a 15-square-foot area. Follow the three-step planting instructions included in the bag, and look for growth in 15 days. Each bag costs $5.99, plus $2.95 for shipping and handling.

Since the fund-raiser is in its first year, the Grown Wild with FFA program was only offered to 400,000 Consumers Energy customers. "If this year goes well, we plan to offer it to more of our customers in the future," said Consumers Energy Agricultural Services Director James Schrandt.

All proceeds will go to the Michigan FFA Foundation where the funds will help create an endowment intended to support Michigan FFA programs.

"The money will go toward annual events—those events dedicated to the FFA's career development contests," said Julie Chamberlain, FFA Foundation executive director. The FFA helps youth develop technical skills in agriculture and natural resources while expanding upon their leadership abilities.


Michigan floriculture sales down

Michigan placed fourth nationally in value of wholesale of floriculture products in 1996, according to the Federal/State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. California, Florida and Texas reported larger sales than Michigan.

Reports from Michigan's 36 commercial growers indicated an estimated wholesale value of $182 million for all surveyed floriculture crops, down 1 percent from last year. This estimate includes summarized sales data as reported by growers with $100,000 or more in sales plus a calculated wholesale value of sales for operations with sales from $10,000 to $99,999. Crop category breakdowns for Michigan operations with over $100,000 in sales and the percent change from 1995 were as follows:

- First, bedding/garden plants with $215 million in sales, down 2 percent;
- Second, flowering potted plants with $274 million at sales up 5 percent;
- Third, cut flowers with $104 million in sales, up 2 percent; and
- Fourth, foliage for indoor or patio use with $3.7 million in sales, down 1 percent.

Michigan leads the nation in value of sale for floriculture crops. They are:
- Potted Geraniums (seed) with 17.7 million pots sold, valued at $53.8 million.
- Bedding Impatiens with 2.4 million flats sold, valued at $14.5 million.
- Potted Easter Lilies with 1.5 million pots sold, valued at $5.2 million.
- Geranium Hanging Baskets with 41,000 baskets sold, valued at $2.8 million.

Other notable Michigan crops that ranked second in value of sales nationally were:
- Other Potted Flowering and Foliage Type Bedding Plants with 13.9 million pots sold, valued at $17.7 million.
- Bedding Petunia with 1.4 million flats sold, valued at $8.6 million.
- Cut Gladioli with 36.2 million spikes sold, valued at $5.5 million.
- New Guinea Impatiens Hanging Baskets with 435,000 baskets sold, valued at $2.7 million.
- Bedding New Guinea Impatiens with 98,000 flats sold, valued at $798,000.
- Cut Sweetheart Roses with 1.5 million blooms sold, valued at $605,000.
- Poinsettia Hanging Baskets with 108,000 baskets sold, valued at $625,000.

Total greenhouse cover for all operations in the state rose 2 percent to 23.9 million square feet. This includes both rigid and film plastic greenhouses as well as glass greenhouses. Only the states of California and Florida have more total greenhouse cover than Michigan.

Nationally, the value of floriculture crops continued upward in 1996. The total value of all crops at wholesale for all growers over $10,000 in sales is estimated at $3.42 billion for 1996, compared with $3.33 billion in 1995. Area in production for the 36 states totaled 843 million square feet of covered area and 51,100 acres of open ground in 1996. The largest valued products were bedding and garden plants which increased 4 percent in 1996. Michigan ranks second nationally in this category. At $418 million, this category contributed 45 percent of the total wholesale value of production for operations over $100,000 in sales.

A consumer of these products is defined as someone who has $10,000 or more in gross sales. Growers with gross sales of $100,000 or more provided data for cut flowers, potted flowering plants, bedding plants and cut cultivated greens.

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Lansing, Michigan 517-333-8788
Michigan Farm Bureau joins estate tax reform campaign to "Kill the Death Tax"

Michigan Farm Bureau has joined the American Farm Bureau Federation in a nationwide campaign to "Kill the Death Tax," a grass-roots effort to reform the estate tax. The two-month campaign will urge the Michigan congressional delegation to reform the estate tax, by either repealing it or raising the per-person exemption from $600,000 to $2 million.

In making the announcement, Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie said the estate tax is nothing more than a penalty for farmers and other family-owned small businesses who have invested in their operations.

"The estate tax is particularly insulting to farm families, because often the entire family is involved in the success and growth of an operation," Laurie said. "Estate taxes add an unneeded financial burden to the remaining family members attempting to keep the operation in business and intact."

Laurie said surviving members of a farm partnership often must sell all or a portion of the operation just to settle the estate tax liability. "Estate planning doesn't work in all situations, especially in unexpected and accidental deaths," he said.

The incidence of farm liquidation, due to estate taxes, could actually accelerate in the near future, cautioned Laurie, noting that nearly 47 percent of all farm operators nationwide are 55 years or older and control about $50 billion in assets, according to the 1992 Census of Agriculture.

"From an economic perspective, the correct tax rate for estate transfers should be zero," Laurie said. "The income that was invested back into those operations was taxed when it was originally earned. The estate tax actually encourages immediate consumption rather than saving and investing in the future."

Estates with a gross value over $600,000 must file a return within nine months of death, unless an extension is requested, according to Ken Nye, director of the Michigan Farm Bureau's Commodity and Environmental Division. "The tax rate varies from 37 percent after the $600,000 exemption to as high as 55 percent for estates over $1 million paid out $47,000 in estate taxes in 1992."

Based on Internal Revenue Service figures, Nye said Michigan taxpayers shelled out roughly $600 million in estate taxes to the national total of $17.2 billion in 1992.

Nye estimates that 20 to 25 percent of the 46,000 Michigan farms identified by the 1992 Census of Agriculture exceeded the $600,000 exemption threshold, which would mean that at some point in time, those operations could be subject to estate taxes.

"On average, estates ranging from $600,000 to $1 million paid out $47,000 in estate taxes in 1992," Nye said. "Estates over $1 million owed an average of $757,000 in estate taxes."

Chances of an outright estate tax repeal may be slim, according to Michigan Farm Bureau Public Affairs Director Al Almy. He says the recent budget compromise leaves little hope for estate tax elimination, but it does create an opportunity for other reform measures, including raising the exemption. Although not specified, the budget agreement reached last week calls for a total of $135 billion in tax cuts from five different taxes, eliminating but it does create an opportunity for other reform measures, including raising the exemption. Although not specified, the budget agreement reached last week calls for a total of $135 billion in tax cuts from five different taxes, eliminating the $600,000 exemption threshold, which would mean that at some point in time, those operations could be subject to estate taxes.

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Estates that exceed the $600,000 exemption threshold are subject to estate taxes on income.

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Nye estimates that 20 to 25 percent of the 46,000 Michigan farms identified by the 1992 Census of Agriculture exceeded the $600,000 exemption threshold, which would mean that at some point in time, those operations could be subject to estate taxes.

"On average, estates ranging from $600,000 to $1 million paid out $47,000 in estate taxes in 1992," Nye said. "Estates over $1 million owed an average of $757,000 in estate taxes."

Chances of an outright estate tax repeal may be slim, according to Michigan Farm Bureau Public Affairs Director Al Almy. He says the recent budget compromise leaves little hope for estate tax elimination, but it does create an opportunity for other reform measures, including raising the exemption. Although not specified, the budget agreement reached last week calls for a total of $135 billion in tax cuts from five different taxes, eliminating the estate tax.

"Our organization still remains committed to eventual repeal of the estate tax," Almy said. At a minimum, we believe the per-person exemption should be raised from $600,000 to $2 million in assets and indexed for inflation. We are still a long way from having any meaningful estate tax reform. It is important for all citizens, not just farmers, to speak out on this issue and demand estate tax reform." To participate in Farm Bureau's "Kill the Death Tax" campaign, simply write a letter to your member of Congress and send it to Michigan Farm Bureau, Attn: Jack Laurie, P.O. Box 3060, Lansing MI 48909-8060. All of the letters received will be hand-delivered to Michigan's congressional delegation in mid-July following a news conference to be held in Washington, D.C. •

MDA provides advice for livestock management and tuberculosis in northeast Michigan

State Veterinarian Mike Chaddock and his staff provided the Michigan Farm News readers with management and husbandry suggestions to help reduce the risk of cattle and deer for tuberculosis control. The greatest risk would appear to be contamination of feedstuffs or pasture by infected deer rather than direct deer-livestock contact. The emphasis, however, should be to reduce all forms of direct or indirect livestock-deer interaction to a minimum.

According to Chaddock and his staff, the following is a summary of possible actions that producers could take to reduce the risk of introduction of M. bovis tuberculosis into domestic livestock herds from the endemicely infected white-tailed deer population.

- Reduce livestock-deer contact.
- Feed livestock only by or in barns, outbuildings, or other high human traffic areas.
- Keep livestock out of high-risk/deer traffic areas.
- Confining livestock to barns and/or fenced enclosures during times when livestock-deer interaction is most likely.
- Keep livestock out of high-risk/deer traffic areas. Either voluntarily or mandatorily. This might be seasonal or year-round as the circumstances dictate.
- Deer proof fencing of livestock yards and enclosures at a minimum, and possibly entire fence lines or beds in high risk or high deer traffic areas.
- Confining livestock to barns and/or fenced enclosures during times/seasons when livestock-deer interaction is most likely.
- Provide feed for deer, but well away from livestock-utilized lands.
- Keep open permits for producers to hunt deer on their property.
- Reduce deer-livestock feed contact.
- Fence and securely cover stored livestock feeds.
- Remove livestock feeders that are not by barns, etc., leaving a limited entry way for cattle.

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T
he "shrogen" approach to proposed new clean air standards will not result in significa-
cant change, but instead will only hurt
American agriculture, Farm Bureau told a Senate panel
members.
California Farm Bureau President Bob Vice, testifying before a Senate Environment and Pub-
lic Works clean air subcommittee, said the ag-
cultural community supports efforts to improve
air quality. The Environmental Protection Agen-
cy's (EPA) proposal to revise the National Ambient
Air Quality Standard for particulate matter,
however, raises many concerns because it would
impose severe restrictions on farming and ranch-
ing practices, Vice said.
"Make no mistake: we are all for clean air," 
Vice told the panel. "This debate today is about
how to continue to achieve those goals."
Vice, a Fullerton, Calif., citrus and almond
grower, said he is concerned that EPA studies
blame agriculture and forestry for a dispropon-
tion of PM emissions. Experts have questioned the acu-
ity of this large estimate, he said, adding that the data
was based on erroneous factors.
Vice, an American Farm Bureau board
member, said the emissions inventory used by EPA is a central and southern California
air district "has proven that it has many flaws"
regarding agricultural practices.
"Inaccurate estimates of the number of times
a farmer drives his tractor over a field is one major
effect: eight times for an alfalfa crop, 15 for 
rice and two for forage," Vice said. "But probably the
most bizarre example, which would have cost the agricultural industry thousands of dollars, was the
initial emission inventory for combustion engines
used to operate irrigation pumps."
He said the original inventory estimated
emissions of nitrogen oxide, a precursor of particu-
late matter, at 626 tons per day from all the pumps
in the San Joaquin Valley. This would have exceed-
ed all mobile source inventory and caused truck
traffic, which together emit 355 tons per day. Prompted
by agricultural inquiries, a new study was commis-
sioned based on actual instrument readings.
Vice, said. The new study determined the nitro-
gen oxide emission rate for the pumps is only 32
tons per day. The Farm Bureau said farmers and ranchers should get credit for the many con-
servation practices "we've undertaken that have
improved air quality...if we continue to be penalized
against wasting money on controls that have
no effect or on cleaning up air for the sake of
this nation," but impose costly regulations on agri-
culture.
"The concerns of America's farmers and ranchers must be addressed by the EPA in order
to ensure a continued safe, abundant, healthy and affordable U.S. food supply," Vice said.

U.S. Naval Academy agrees
dairy farming is tough

A
the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.,
the nation's best and brightest learn many
skills, from basic leadership to the latest principles
of naval combat. However, they can't seem to keep
their dairy operation afloat.
According to Naval Academy spokesman Capt.
Tom Jollakowski, "we've been trying to
make a dairy business work for years that
do away with the dairy business, because, frankly, we can buy
milch cheaper than we can produce it and serve it to midshipmen.
"The Academy got into the dairy business in
1911, after an outbreak of typhoid fever was traced to
sickeningly high levels of dairy products. Many students
were forced to quit eating dairy foods. The academy
imposed severe restrictions on farming and ranching practices.
"The committee heard testimony from witness-
es from USDA, the General Accounting Office
(GAO), the crop insurance industry and the com-
modity trading industry. Senators and witnesses
said the following issues should be addressed:

- Whether some federal reimbursements for ad-
ministered expenses are issued for legitimate expenses.
The GAO cited lobbying expenses, a baseball
stadiums, sports and other questionable expenses. Industry witnesses said about 1 per-
cent of all reimbursements are legitimate.

- Whether the USDA Risk Management Agency's
approval process takes enough consideration of
actual information. Late last year, Chairman
Lugar questioned whether the Revenue
Covenance proposal was being approved without
enough information, which might put the federal
government at risk to lose money in a subsidy of insurance companies and agents.

- Whether there is enough evidence that a federal subsidy to the insurance industry is necessary. It was suggested that commodity market hedging
might be used to offset the insurance policy risk.

- Whether the federal government is paying too much federal spending on the crop insurance program.

Lugar said, "The crop insurance program may face fiscal difficulties for years to come. It is important for the
program to be placed in the 1998 crops, approximately
$200 million in discretionary funding must be
provided in this year's agriculture appropriations bill
to fund sales commissions of crop insurance agents.
At the moment, it is unlikely that additional funding of this magnitude can be provided without at least some
to the crop insurance program."

Scher nominated for ag ambassador

U
nited States Trade Representative Charlene
Barshefsky crushed the rumormill in mid-
April by formally nominating Peter Scher to the position
of special presidential envoy for agriculture, which
would make him the senior U.S. agriculture trade
negotiator. Scher's nomination must be ap-
proved by the Senate.
"We will begin by focusing on persuading China to drop trade barriers to U.S.

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Michigan's "Best of Beef" recipe originated in Dietlin's kitchen

Patti Dietlin of Kewadin, impressed the judges with her original Mediterranean beef sandwich recipe at the Michigan Beef Cook-Off. Her winning entry, "Patti's Pesto Beef Hoagies," features thinly sliced roast beef served in a hollowed-out round bread loaf that's been brushed with a pesto-mayonnaise mixture and topped with mashed red peppers, mixed salad greens and feta cheese. This easy meat idea is especially colorful when it's sliced into serving wedges.

Judges for the event included: Nancy Johnson, Food Science and Human Nutrition instructor at Michigan State University; Shannon Kipple, co-host of cable cooking show "At Home Cooking with Debby Dahl"; and Dennis Baduel with the Michigan Farm News. The entries were evaluated for taste, ease of preparation, overall appeal and appearance.

Prior to moving to Michigan, Patti competed in the Illinois Beef Cook-Off. However, this is the first time she has been awarded the grand prize. She received $500 and will advance to the National Beef Cook-Off contest. If her recipe is selected as one of the top 15 in the nation, Patti will be invited to participate in the National Beef Cook-Off event in Tamworth, Fla., Sept. 18-20. Participants in the national contest compete for more than $15,000 in cash prizes, including the $12,500 Grand Prize.

The second place winner at the Michigan Beef Cook-Off was awarded to Richard Rizzio, Traverse City, for his "Beef with Curried Glazed Carrots and Onions." Third place went to Wendy Biegas, Urania, for her "Talavera Burgers" and hon- orable mention went to Ron Cubbert, Brooklyn, for his "Pepper Loaf and Cheese Pasta" and Linda Ackerman, Portage, for her "Mexicali Meatballs." entry.

The Michigan Beef Cook-Off is sponsored by the Michigan Beef Industry Commission, which works on behalf of Michigan's beef producers to promote beef and beef products through research, education and promotion programs. To receive the top five beef recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to: Michigan Beef Industry Commission, 2161 University Park Drive, Suite 300, Okemos, MI 48864.

FB: CRP cut violates commitment to agriculture

A legislative proposal that will potentially re- duce the Conservation Reserve Program re- enrollment by one-third is "a violation of the committ- ment Congress made to America's farmers and ranchers," according to American Farm Bureau Federation President Dean Rocker.

"This is not the time to make significant changes that will delay the Agriculture Department from meet- ing the mid-June deadline it has set for signing up qualifying farmers who have offered to take 26 million acres out of production as a means of improving envi- ronmentally sensitive land," Rocker said.

The House Appropriations agriculture subcom- mittee voted to limit to 5% the amount of acreage that can be enrolled in the current CRP sign-up. The lan- guage does not set a specific acreage the CRP re-enrollment payments will cover in the next fiscal year.

The proposal evolved from northeastern and western congressmen seeking to redirect the use of the CRP program in their states to protect water quality. Few farmers in those states offered bids because they were uncertain of the current sign-up or historically have not participated in farm programs.

"With 22 million acres coming out of the CRP this fall and another 5 million acres for which 10- year contracts are scheduled to expire next year, we need to be moving ahead with both the re-enrol- lment and new enrollment to help our farmers and their lenders plan for future use of their land," Rocker said.

"We can't let the appropriations process de- cide what land should be farmed and what needs to remain out of production," the farm leader said. "We have been involved as USDA has carefully de- veloped sound criteria to determine which land needs to be in a conserving use and which can be brought back into production. That effort needs to proceed and it is premature to judge the outcome."

Farm Bureau is committed to using the CRP to protect fragile soils and improve water quality. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is slated to begin a major promotional effort next month. AFP will encourage farmers to sign up for CRP strips along waterways in an ongoing enrollment section of the CRP. It has been estimated that up to 8 million acres will be needed for water quality purposes.

The subcommittee also authorized moving $30 million from the agricultural research portion of the farm bill's rural development program to pro- vide additional funding for the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program.

Ban lifted from most of Arizona's wheat crop

The Agriculture Department lifted a year-old quarantine on most of Arizona's wheat. The quarantine, which crippled the state's wheat industry, had been instituted after the discovery of Karnal bunt during a March 1996 inspection.

Arizona officials said the federal government had overcome the discovery of the fungus, Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) announced he had amended a bill to require USDA to lift Karnal buntless drastically. The amendment read that "this minor wheat disease has caused major problems in the international trade of wheat, thus impacting the domestic wheat industry." Farm Bureau supports the bill.

USDA spokesperson Larry Hawkins said the department decided to lift the restrictions after realizing the test for the fungus was unreliable. Nonetheless, the quarantine is still in place for areas known to have had infestations of Karnal bunt. Andy Rants, executive secretary for the Arizona Farm Bureau, said 21 fields in 11 counties had been found to have the fungus. Farmers are prohibited from growing wheat on those fields for the next four years. The state's 1996 durum wheat crop has been realized the dura crop only a year-old and the value of the durum crop was estimated at $30 million to $100 million to the industry. Sen. Bentsen, president of the Arizona Farm Bureau, said, "We need to make sure that the excellence of our durum wheat is protected before the federal quarantine."

Ban lifted from most of Arizona's wheat crop
Horses and riders: Are you safe?

by Kara Erdelyi

A sprigtime sets in, Michigan's more than 40,000 horse riders are anxious to enjoy the fresh air, but in their calf-booted, stirruped, they should remember safety. "Horses react on a fight or flight-type mechanism, and that's just what they're born with," explained Christine Corn, MSU horse specialist. "All of the training goes to try to tame that instinct into reaction, but sometimes it creeps up on us when we least expect it."

According to a study by Dr. David Nelson in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, more than 27 million Americans ride horses each year, an activity which results in as many as 92,000 emergency room visits in a single year. Twenty percent of those injuries were to the head and neck.

The Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center found that head injuries account for more than 60 percent of equitation-related deaths.'"Head injuries are probably about third on the list of horse-related injuries, but they are by far the most devastating injury," said the senior author at the University of Michigan's Department of Health and Injury Prevention. The two most common injuries are soft tissue contusions and fractures.

According to Nelson, although 70 percent of riders wear a helmet, only 55 percent actually wear one regularly. Of the helmet owners, 41 percent believe their helmets prevent at least one injury.

Why the reluctance?
The top excuses for not wearing a helmet are that they're too hot, too heavy and too uncomfortable. Equestrian helmet manufacturers have tried to make them more comfortable. They're lighter, have more ventilation holes and come in a range of new styles, including helmets that look like the western cowboy hat.

Prices range from $40 to $100. Many manufacturers will replace a helmet that is cracked but not damaged, so a $100 investment is an investment for life.

Equestrian helmets meeting the American Society for Testing Materials and the Safety Equipment Institute's standards are designed to withstand a triple gravity impact — an impact three times the force of gravity. They closely resemble bike helmets, but need stronger struts against moose sports equipment. "Equestrian helmets come in a larger portion of the head, and they withstand much stronger impacts," noted Burser. Beware: not all equitation helmets are ASTM/SEI certified. Only labeled helmets meet the safety standards.

According to Nelson, 67 percent of all horse riders younger than 15 and 65 percent of all 15- to 24-year-olds belong to riding clubs. Some riding clubs do mandate that riders wear helmets, but that choice is left up to the discretion of the club. "These clubs may provide the best opportunity for educating riders about helmets."

Michigan's 4-H program takes safety seriously. "All participants in hunter and gymkhana classes are required to wear an ASTM/SEI certified helmet," said Stacey Daum, MSU extension youth specialist. Some Michigan counties require youth to wear helmets in all events and while practicing. "Some counties have a more encompassing rule," she said.

At present, no statewide mandate has been established regarding helmet use. "It's an arena that needs to be addressed," said Bud Heyboert, Michigan Horse Council president. "We actually spoke the organization for the industry, and hopefully the issue will be addressed in the future."

Although head injuries are the most serious injuries to the arms, legs and torso are more common. According to the American Medical Equestrian Association, 35 percent of horse-related injuries are to the hands, arms and shoulders, 21 percent to the legs and feet and 25 percent to the torso.

Finding equipment that fits is important in reducing all accidents. "It's important to have equipment that fits both the horse and the rider. Buy a small saddle for a smaller rider," said Reid.

Correct that equipment is not the only safety key. "Sometimes people use equipment as a bandaid and still go on and practice unsafe horse riding," said Heyboert.

Additional safety suggestions:

1. Be aware of how many times you've heard someone say "If I had only worn two seconds," said Heyboert. "Those who've had accidents are aware of safety issues. It's those who've never had an accident who think they're safe."

2. Work in pairs. If an accident occurs, having someone clear by will make valuable use of time quicker medical response.

3. If you plan to ride alone, let someone know your route and when you expect you back.

4. Be aware of rough terrain or any event that could spook your horse, such as a passing car. Know the area and plan routes around rough terrain.

5. Stable and tack owners can protect themselves from lawsuits claiming someone was injured on their property or while using their horse or equipment through the Michigan Equine Activity Liability Act. Unless negligence can be proven, owners can protect themselves by posting this sign. WARNING: Under the Michigan Equine Activity Liability Act, the owner or operator of an animal is not liable for any injury to or the death of a participant in an equine activity resulting from an inherent risk of the activity.

Kleckner disappointed over EU agreement

A merican Farm Bureau Federation President Dean Kleckner recently said he was pleased with the agreement the United States had made with the European Union on the matter of meat imports. "I'm pleased," he said, "but that does not overcome his disappointment over the failure to resolve the poultry issue."

The EU has objected to the U.S. poultry industry's use of chlorinated water and anti-microbial agents to decontaminate poultry carcasses. On April 1, the EU imposed stricter rules, halting imports from the U.S. The American poultry industry could lose $3.2 trillion in trade with the EU, $10 million in value and $6 million in spent, according to the National Banker Council, the National Safety Federation Protection and the USDA Poultry and Egg Export Council.

Kleckner said, "It is a great disappointment that the European Union has not been able to recognize that the poultry industry's decontamination method and inspection system for poultry in the U.S. is as safe as their own. We still believe the EU continues to demand changes in the U.S. inspection process that are not consistent with science and do not recognize the equivalency of our standards."

Milk production slips

D airy belts in Michigan produced 465 million pounds of milk during March, down 3 percent from a year ago according to the Federal State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. Milk per cow was 1,491 pounds compared to 1,659 per dairy in March 1996. The preliminary value of milk was $15.50 per hundredweight in March, 30 cents less than in March 1996. The preliminary value of milk was $15.50 per hundredweight in March, $1.60 less than in March 1996, 11.5 billion pounds, compared with 13.0 billion pounds a year ago. Ice cream output (on a 1.65 million gallons compared to 1.8 million gallons in February 1996). Milk dry product production was 1.36 million pounds, compared with 1.58 million pounds a year earlier.

Poll to chair Hamilton Farm Bureau board

R andy Poll of Hamilton has been elected chair- man of the Hamilton Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Elected as vice chairman is John Zorn, Holland, and elected to serve on the executive com- mittee was Paul Lubbers, Hamilton.

Poll has been on the HB board since 1992, serving as secretary/treasurer since 1993. Poll is involved with Poll Farms, a family corporation with two brothers and their father.

Zorn was elected to the HB board in 1995. He and his wife, Beth Ann, own Zoan Farms, Inc., a grain and poultry farm.

Lubbers, who has been on the HB board since 1993, has a farrow-to-finish hog operation and raises corn and soybeans.

Recent new board members were elected by the HB members. They are John Buskirk of Hamilton and Gale Low of Byron Center. Reounding out the Board of Directors are Bill Gruppen, Zeland, and Dr. Dave Steenstra, professor of management at Davenport College in Grand Rapids.

Hamilton Farm Bureau, a member-owned cooperative headquartered in Hamilton, provides the following services for the community feed, lumber, Chevron, petroleum and propane, hardware, eggs and agronomy.
Plant industry hopes to improve state’s economy through MSU’s Project GREEEN

“We’ve had a focus in five to ten years has in the sugarcane yield,” LeCureux continued. Project GREEEN is working diligently to increase funding from the state. They hope to show the governor and legislature the success of Project GREEEN so far and garner their support for more funding.

Michigan farmers already grow a diverse array of crops, and our state is home to many processing companies that add value to plant products by turning them into baby food, cereal, pickles, potato chips and a host of other food and non-food products. Proponents of Project GREEEN say that for the industry to thrive, research is essential to generate new products, ingredients and processes, along with new technologies that allow growers to remain competitive and protect environmental quality. “The key word in Project GREEEN’s flexibility,” Boehm says. “We want to demonstrate that dollars invested through Project GREEEN can advance and sustain plant-based agriculture in Michigan and pay back big dividends to producers and the general public in Michigan.”

Discussion Questions

1. Plant-based agriculture was responsible for $11 billion and 125,000 jobs in the state in 1993. How might Project GREEEN increase those numbers?

2. Besides alfalfa in sugarbeet rotations, what are some other cultural practices that Project GREEEN should evaluate and promote? What new crops could be planted in your area that need research to bring them to reality? What types of new or updated processing is needed in Michigan to stimulate new crops or to revitalize production of existing crops?

3. How could Project GREEEN aid the development of successful producer–processor integrations, or value-added, “new-wave” cooperatives?

4. Is Project GREEEN a valid use of government funds? Is it financing for a select few farmers, or is it a good program for all Michiganians? Why?

North Carolina hog industry facing criticism

Large-scale hog farms in eastern North Carolina have residents there upset and fearful their property values will continue to drop. They blame the hog operations for environmental problems and tourist officials are concerned about expansion of the industry and its affect on the tourism industry due to public perception.

The uproar has one state lawmaker fighting mad. Richard Morgan, a Republican state legislator, introduced a bill that would halt new large-scale hog lot construction for one year and allow county commissioners to decide whether hog lots could open and triple the space between hog waste lagoons and nearby property. North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt (D) recently said he would support a two-year ban on new and expanding hog operations, but he would not endorse zoning authority for counties.
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brochure with same.
Weather Outlook

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

In terms of temperature, April 1997 was very similar to April of 1996, a year with many agricultural weather challenges. In terms of precipitation, however, the comparison is one of contrast. Drier-than-normal conditions developed early in the month statewide and continued through month's end. April temperatures averaged much cooler than normal (1 to 4°F below normal), while April precipitation averaged much less than normal (precipitation totals generally from 25 to 50 percent of normal). The drier-than-normal weather allowed a rapid start of spring field work, including early corn planting in many sections. Severe thunderstorms caused at least two tornadoes and wind damage on the 30th. By month's end, seasonal growing degree day accumulations (summed from March 1st) and vegetative development had generally fallen to seven to 10 days behind normal.

The near-term outlook is for an active jet stream through the middle of North America, leading to above-normal precipitation totals and to fieldwork delays. In this transitional season, you may see a reversal of temperature patterns between April and May, suggesting warmer-than-normal conditions in the weeks ahead. National Weather Service long lead outlooks call for increased odds of below-normal temperatures for May, with near equal probabilities of below, near, and above-normal temperatures and precipitation. For the May-July early summer period, the outlook is still for equal odds of all three scenarios of temperature and precipitation.

Potato stocks down

Fall potato stocks in Michigan on April 1 were placed at 2.5 million hundredweight (cwt), 7 percent below stocks on hand last year, according to the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. This year's stocks represented 18 percent of the total production, 7 percentage points above a year ago. Fall potato production for Michigan reached 13.8 million cwt. in 1996. Michigan disappearance of this year's crop, from harvest to April 1, totaled 12.9 million cwt. Disappearance for last year's crop during the comparable time period was 15.65 million cwt. It included sales, shrink and waste.

Nationally, potato stocks totaled 145 million cwt. on April 1, 1997, up 25 percent from last year and 11 percent above two years ago. Disappearance for the season was a record high 296 million cwt. of potatoes, 7 percent above the past two years.

Shrinkage and loss of 29.2 million cwt. was 5 percent above a year ago.