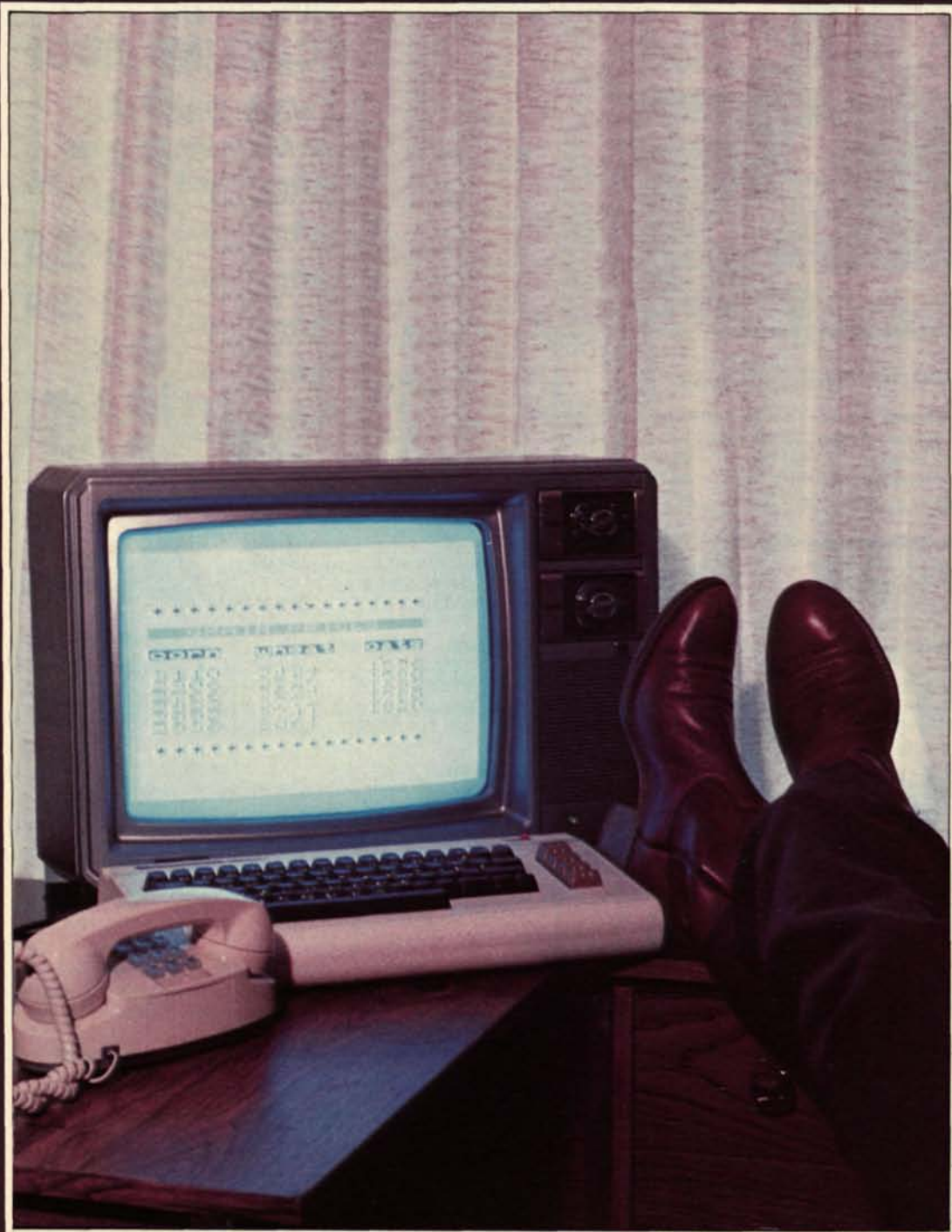
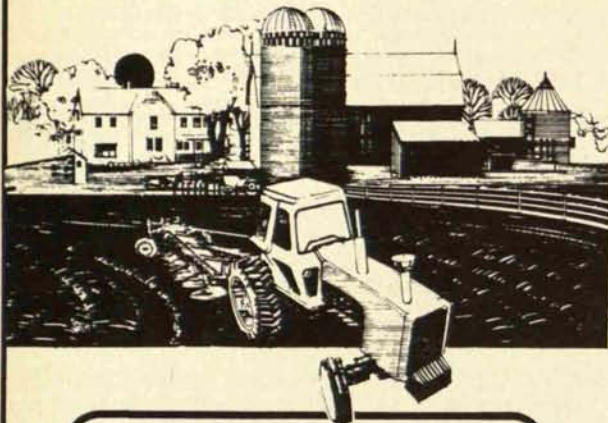


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Michigan Farm News
RURAL LIVING



Agriculture Enters the
Era of Personal Computers

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THE COVER
Daily market reports, news
and weather reach Michigan
farmers and agribusinesses
via AgriCom.
Photo by Marcia Ditchie

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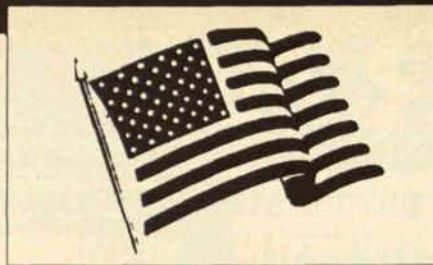
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Pride in America, Agriculture and Farm Bureau

There are times when it's appropriate to set the concerns and challenges of the day aside, temporarily, and simply say: "I'm proud to be an American; I'm proud to be a farmer; I'm proud to be a Farm Bureau member." The celebration of our nation's birthday is one of those times.

In our sophisticated society today there seems to be a cynicism about public display of anything related to patriotism. It seems to me that public opinion tends to label celebrating events such as the Fourth of July as "corny."

I don't agree with that attitude. I believe America was built by people who showed pride in their country, demonstrated respect for those who serve the nation and put forth effort into community service. Those actions became tradition while this nation was developing into the wonder of the world.

I'm proud that our organization dedicates a portion of its united efforts to that concept. As I read the essays submitted by our young citizens to Farm Bureau Insurance Group's "America and Me" contest, I gained a feeling of confidence in tomorrow's leadership.

It is entirely fitting that the winners of this contest receive public recognition for their achievements. But more than that, I'm proud that our Farm Bureau affiliate provided an op-

portunity that was responded to by several thousand students from 500 Michigan schools. Multiply that response by the 16 years that FBIG has sponsored the contest and you have a groundswell of young people seriously considering what it means to be an American!

I'm proud, too, of the Young People's Citizenship Seminar sponsored annually by our state and county Farm Bureaus. That activity, which just took place for the 20th year, literally changes the lives of many young people who will soon take their rightful places as community and state leaders.

Watching these young people respond to the opportunities the seminar offers to learn about our system of government compared to others, to actually participate in political activities, and gain a new appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy, is a moving, gratifying experience.

Earlier this year, at the Young Farmer Leaders' Conference, our Distinguished Young Farmer, Gary Carmichael, shared his experiences of visiting other countries through the Michigan Agricultural Leadership Program, and eloquently reaffirmed his devotion to our nation and its private enterprise system.

I could relate to his message. It has been my privilege to be involved in trade missions to several foreign countries, both in the free world and behind the Iron Curtain and, believe me,

after those visits, it's with great feeling that I say, "America is for me!"

With all its problems, America is the greatest nation on this earth, and the magic ingredient that makes us different from other countries is freedom! That freedom extends from our political life to our economic life. We are free in our religious choices, our social status and our educational aspirations. We are free to choose our vocation, free to try to succeed — even to fail and try again.

As we pause on this Independence Day to celebrate those freedoms, let's also remember that we must always guard against the loss of those freedoms. There is a price for maintaining them — being active in organizations like Farm Bureau to give direction and guidance to our elected representatives, carrying out our citizenship responsibilities to vote knowledgeably and support candidates who share our concerns and philosophies, giving of our time and talents to community service.

Compared to the supreme sacrifices so many made to insure our freedoms, ours is a very small price — but a necessary one. Let each of us vow to pay it.

*Elton R. Smith, President
Michigan Farm Bureau*

The Value of Your Membership

By Robert Delano, President
American Farm Bureau Federation

Because Farm Bureau has been around so long, it is easy to underestimate the continuing value of a family membership. We grow so used to relying on Farm Bureau to represent us and to work on our behalf, that it is easy to forget the many hard jobs each of us would have to do without it.

Here, out of hundreds, are several valuable local Farm Bureau actions I have observed, or taken part in, through the years:

- Tax reform — and work to assure that farmland is assessed according to present farm use rather than someone's idea of potential value.

- Support for farmers in eminent domain proceedings in which farm property is taken over for public purposes.

- Effective commodity market expansion and promotion programs organized by Farm Bureau.

- Helping township and county commissions in planning and gaining approval for needed water drainage and control.

A different, but equally important, list of accomplishments could be drawn up for virtually every township and county where years of positive work by Farm Bureau families have sensitized local and county officials to farm and ranch needs. Unified Farm Bureau effort has opened doors for farmers and ranchers to hundreds of county committees, councils, hearings and platforms — to the point where the county Farm Bureau office usually is the rallying place for most important farm actions.

When I first joined Farm Bureau nearly 30 years ago, I remember thinking that farmer representation at the state capitol alone was worth more than the price of an annual membership. I personally did not have the time to leave the crops or cattle for days of lobbying on farm issues at either the state house or Washington. It was a good feeling to know that I could stay home most of the time, because a competent state Farm Bureau legislative staff represented my interests according to policies that, as a Farm Bureau member, I helped write.

My belief in Farm Bureau's legislative effectiveness has strengthened with the years. Without exception, state Farm Bureaus have assembled superb, professional lobbying and legislative-research staffs to represent member interests. A recent list shows 113 state Farm Bureau legislative workers, most of them full-time professionals.

Because these people are backed by the powerhouse of family membership strength, Farm Bureau has become the single most effective lobbying force in most states. Statewide telephone grids are part of this strength.

Our American Federation

What value can be placed on the unified national affairs efforts of state Farm Bureaus, as coordinated through the American Farm Bureau Federation? Last year, Farm Bureau originated a 12-point plan to im-

prove depressed farm income. Currently, the American Farm Bureau Federation is leading an all-out "tax attack" to prevent the states and Congress from increasing taxes to finance still greater spending.

Few of us have the time or expertise to face a congressional hearing. Without organizational backing, our individual testimony would often mean little in such broad areas as national security, monetary policy, general labor and environmental issues. Farm Bureau has nine registered lobbyists on its Washington based staff, working with members of Congress and the branches of government on behalf of member-families.

What is the yearly value of Farm Bureau-organized, cooperative marketing programs (local, state and national) to each of us? What is the yearly payback from Safemark programs and other Farm Bureau affiliated services? What price tag can be placed on the results of our combined voluntary efforts in farm safety and health?

Through Farm Bureau, these voluntary efforts are directed, much like the flame of a welding torch, to either cut, in slashing red tape, or to weld, in building sound farm program policy. Farmers and ranchers join Farm Bureau, not only because it directly pays in many ways — but also because, through it, we are effective in shaping and directing our own destiny. That, most members agree, is worth whatever it costs.

FB Tax Attack Continues

Tax writing committees are "flying blind" with no idea of what revenue requirements of the First Concurrent Budget Resolution will be. The Senate resolution calls for \$9 billion in higher taxes in 1984 and the House version calls for \$30. The delay in the budget resolution process may mean that a tax bill of major proportions will not be adopted until sometime in July or even later.

WASHINGTON

If a budget resolution is not adopted by Congress, which will recess for the month of August and is scheduled to adjourn in October, the president will have the opportunity to conduct an informal budget process by use of the veto of appropriations bills. The major drawback would be no binding reconciliation feature that would require the authorizing committees to make changes in legislation to reduce government outlays.

As part of the organization's "tax attack," FB testified at two Senate Finance Committee hearings in late June. At a hearing on the administration's proposal to cap the amount of health insurance premiums that may be furnished tax-free to employees by an employer, FB testified against it because it constitutes a tax increase. Instead, FB supports a tax deduction or tax credit for the cost of health insurance premiums paid by self-employed taxpayers and employees who must self-finance their health insurance costs.

At a hearing on estate and gift taxation, FB testified in support of a bill to repeal the estate tax and a Senate resolution to oppose any freeze in the current estate tax law. Legislation has been proposed which would freeze estate tax exemptions at the 1983 level of \$275,000 rather than allowing them to accelerate as required by the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.

FB members are urged to continue sending the message to their congressmen that a continuation of their "tax and spend" tradition will not be tolerated.

Highway Use Tax on Farm Trucks — Legislation has been introduced in the Senate which would increase the existing 5,000 mile per year exemption for farm trucks from payment of the heavy vehicle use tax to 10,000 miles per year. FB maintains that the heavy truck use tax, which will go into effect on July 1, 1984, is inequitable for farmers whose only hauling activity is taking produce to market. If enacted, the bill will enable farmers to travel an additional 5,000 miles annually on public roads without having to pay the increased tax of \$1,600

FB is looking for co-sponsors for the bill. Similar legislation has also been introduced in the House.

Dairy Program Legislation — Legislation which would give the secretary of agriculture authority to adjust the dairy support price as low as \$11.60 per cwt. from the current

\$13.10 has been introduced by Rep. Barber Conable (R-NY). Unlike the measure approved by the House Agriculture Committee, Conable's proposal (H.R. 3292) would neither pay farmers to cut back production nor impose a tax on the milk they sell.

AFBF President Robert Delano said the Agriculture Committee's proposal, H.R. 1875, would hurt taxpayers and consumers and be "deadly public relations for the industry. Payments to producers under the paid diversion part of the program will greatly exceed the revenue generated by the tax and consumers will not realize reduced prices until a real cut in the support price is enacted," he said. He also said it would be difficult to end even though it is supposed to run for only 15 months.

"Farmers will support the Conable legislation because continuation of the much-disputed 50-cent assessment is unacceptable, the 15-cent promotion fee that producers have no say in is unacceptable, and because they know that current price levels will cause continued deterioration of the dairy marketing situation and eventually lead to destruction of the national dairy program," Delano said.

LANSING

Lansing legislative topics are reviewed by Robert E. Smith, senior legislative counsel.

FLOC Plans for Michigan —

In a special appearance before the Interagency Migrant Services Committee in Lansing on June 7, Baldemar Velasquez, leader of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), said that migrants were victims of misdirected public policy. Farm laborers are hard-working people who should be compensated adequately for their labor instead of being social service recipients, Velasquez told the committee, and said that much of that compensation should be subsidized by "huge companies" like Campbells.

FLOC, which has led the strike and boycott against Campbell Soup Company in Ohio since 1978, recognizes the plight of small family farms, Velasquez said, and will use a strike only as a last resort if their efforts to negotiate with growers and processors fail. The FLOC leader requested a "dialogue" with farm organizations such as FB to gain understanding of the migrants' plight and support in getting processors to the bargaining table.

Positive improvements must be made in the farm workers' situation, Velasquez said, and whether that takes place "without confrontation depends upon how seriously we are taken."

Special Farm Truck Licensing — H.B. 4581 (Rep. Allen, R-Fairgrove) has been favorably reported out of the House Transportation Committee to provide:

- A special \$15 permit for any truck, truck tractor or road tractor used exclusively to gratuitously transport farm crops between the field where produced and the place of storage. A few years ago FB succeeded in getting the special

Horse Industry Celebration



Members of the Michigan Horse Council gathered on the capitol lawn on June 8 to call attention to their \$2 billion industry. Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison), at right, samples the beef stew served from a chuck wagon that was part of the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage back in 1976. The council also brought exhibits, information booths and horses to the capitol.

\$15 plate for this particular use. However, the law limited it to vehicles "designed" for the use which caused confusion and limited the use of the law. In fact, the secretary of state's office quit issuing the permit.

- A new section has been added allowing a farmer to buy a license for three months or more at a time for a truck, road tractor or truck tractor if used exclusively in his own farming operation and not for hire. The fee is 1/10 of the regular annual fee for each month. This will be very helpful to many farmers as they will be permitted to choose the period of time they use the truck. This applies on trucks where the regular fee is \$50 or more. This FB-promoted bill has passed the House and is in a Senate committee.

PCB Contaminated Silos —

An emergency regulation signed by Gov. James Blanchard specified that after May 9, 1983, no feed or farm products can be added to a PCB contaminated silo. The order further states that such silos cannot be used after Sept. 1, 1983. This replaces a regulation that was to become effective in 1984 and results from the finding of a very high level of PCBs on one farm.

According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture, of the 14,220 silos surveyed to date, 317 silos were found to be contaminated. About 91 of those are presently being used. PCB is a highly toxic chemical and a known carcinogen. Federal law now prohibits its manufacture or sale. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also sets

(continued on page 33)

Agriculture Enters the Era of Personal Computers

By *Connie Turbin*

Computer systems housed in large, air-conditioned buildings are not obsolete, but the era in which computer technology was reserved for major corporations or government agencies has passed. Today, the personal microcomputer makes the uses and applications of the technology available to virtually everyone.

Because of the availability and affordability of computer hardware, software and information services, the decision for many farmers is not so much one of whether to enter the computer age, but rather which combinations of hardware and software will best serve their needs. That's the question most frequently asked of MFB AgriCom specialists Robert Craig, Ken Nye and Mike Kovacic.

Kovacic answers that the question of a major investment in computer hardware can be delayed, depending on the immediate and future needs for on-farm application.

"If a member is only interested in receiving the AgriCom information service, we can get them on the system with the very basic equipment: a videotex unit with telephone modem and their own television set," Kovacic says. "With this basic hardware investment at a cost of about \$150, they can begin to explore the farm computer age."

Selection of more sophisticated computer hardware and software programs to perform analysis, recordkeeping or other tasks may follow. "We have found," says Kovacic, "that subscribers who have utilized the basic service using a videotex or a color computer have either increased their interest in computers so that they want to expand, or they have determined that the basic investment satisfies their interest in and need for an on-farm computer. In that case, they have been happy with the system that AgriCom provides.

"Because for many of our members this is an initial move to on-farm computers, naturally, there are frequent questions about compatibility of computer equipment for the AgriCom service, but we haven't run into a personal computer yet that is incompatible with our service," he says.

Kovacic says that although many people believe they must have some type of formal training, i.e. through continuing education classes or junior college courses, "computer courses aren't necessary to run AgriCom."

However, new subscribers can attend an introductory seminar held four times each year. For the intermediate and advanced user, one seminar is conducted each year, usually in February, and others may be available at additional costs beyond the basic AgriCom subscription fee.

Craig, who heads the team of AgriCom specialists, says that

educational support is one of the most important features of the AgriCom system. "On this system we can give information and marketing advice, but if the subscriber doesn't know how to interpret and use that information, the potential value of the system is not being utilized."

What separates the AgriCom service from other such information systems, Craig says, is the opportunity for personal contact with the AgriCom staff and the educational seminars.

"Mike, Ken and I are available to our subscribers on a call in basis. If you don't understand what you're reading on the screen, you can call us up and talk to us about it. No other system offers this and I believe we can continue to provide this kind of personal contact."

Primarily, calls for assistance come from new or relatively new subscribers and the need for personal assistance diminishes as the individual becomes more familiar with the system.

Computer Road Show

During July, August and September, Michigan farmers will have the opportunity to see AgriCom and other farm computer applications in operation at several local fairs when Michigan Farm Bureau and Corlee Computer Systems, Inc. of Lapeer tour 11 Michigan fairs and MSU's Ag Expo with a "computer road show." The road show concept was generated by Jim Cork, co-owner of Corlee Computer.

In the joint venture, MFB and Corlee will travel to the fairs in a motor coach equipped with IBM Personal Computers, DEC Personal Computers, Commodore, COMPAQ, and Osborn models for demonstrating on-farm software applications and the AgriCom information con-

nection. With nearly 100 MFB members throughout the state subscribing to the service, current AgriCom users are likely to be on hand to share their own experiences and successes.

Corlee Computers will demonstrate many programs, including livestock management, dairy herd management, crop management, farm accounting, payroll, farm machinery management and word processing.

Corlee markets its computer systems nationwide. The company has been in business for three years and its agricultural division is well known for the personal and special consideration given to farmers and agribusinesses before, during and after the sale.

AgriCom-Corlee Computer Summer Fair Schedule

Stop by the AgriCom/ Corlee Computer exhibit at one of the local fairs in your area or at Ag Expo, July 26-28.

Mecosta County Fair
July 10-16, Big Rapids
Berlin Fair
July 17-23, Marne
MSU's AG EXPO '83
July 26-28, East Lansing
Ionia Free Fair
July 29-Aug. 7, Ionia
Huron Community Fair
Aug. 7-13, Bad Axe
Berrien County Fair
Aug. 12-20, Berrien Springs
Western Michigan Fair
Aug. 22-27, Ludington
Lapeer County Fair
Aug. 29-Sept. 5, Imlay City
Saline Community Fair
Sept. 6-10, Saline
Saginaw County Fair
Sept 10-17, Saginaw
St. Joseph County Grange Fair
Sept. 18-24, Centreville
Hillsdale County Fair
Sept. 25-Oct. 1, Hillsdale

System Pays for Itself

Farmers interviewed for this article give the AgriCom service high marks, and many have already saved the cost of the computer hardware and the AgriCom subscription fee by following the marketing advice provided by the farmer-member-only feature — AgriVisor.

Fred Folkema of Grant in Newaygo County relates that the AgriVisor recommendation to buy soybean meal in May of this year was a good one. Savings on that purchase were nearly equal to his investment in computer equipment made 30 days earlier. Folkema says that "pay off" has convinced him that up-to-the-minute market information and advice can make the profit difference. And, he says, the AgriVisor feature gives him a feeling of confidence in his decisions.

"After the soybean meal purchase, we sold cattle timed on an AgriVisor prediction that cattle prices would go up," Folkema says. "Right now (in late May), the advice says to keep lots current, so I sold and will deliver a pen (of cattle) within a day or two. I could have fed them out a little longer, but I decided to take the profit in the market now rather than put the money into additional feed to sell in a soft market."

Folkema, who says that farm periodicals constituted his market information sources in the past, really appreciates the timeliness of the information and the feeling of confidence that he is gaining in marketing decisions. "Of course, you always question (your decision) when you make a contract whether you've hit the high or if you've blown it, but with the

AgriVisor, I have more assurance that my marketing decisions are well timed."

The daily package of information available to farmer members in AgriCom includes:

Specific Marketing Advice

- Livestock and Grains — Recommendations on when to sell cash, forward contract, or hedge commodities. Advice is based on both technical and fundamental analysis and is updated twice each business day.

- Feed Purchases — Advice on when to forward purchase soybean meal and feed grains to take advantage of the best pricing opportunities.

Price Quotations

- Futures — Complete futures price quotations including the daily highs and lows from the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Quotes are updated at 10-minute intervals throughout the trading day.

- Cash — Cash prices on all major commodities from around the state and the Midwest, including the Michigan Elevator Exchange, the Michigan Live Stock Exchange and key terminal markets are updated on a daily basis.

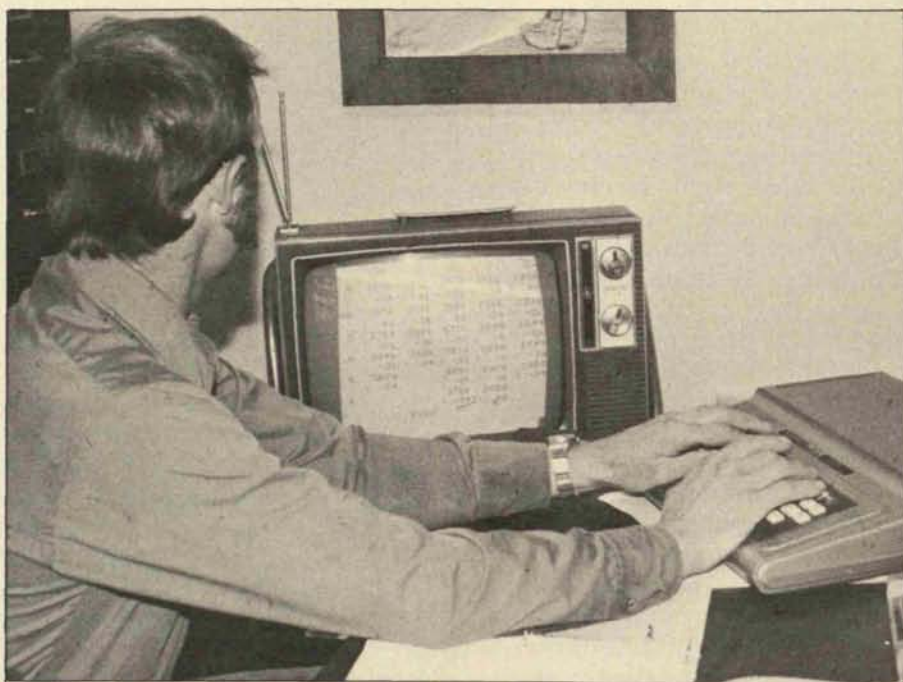
Agricultural Weather

- Local, state, national weather is provided continuously on the AgriCom system. Updated three times a day, forecasts include current, 3 to 5 day, 6 to 10 day, an extended 30 day outlook, and a special international forecast.

News and Information

- Subscribers receive the latest legislative, regulatory and commodity news from Lansing, Washington and around the world via AgriCom.

AgriCom farmers . . . give the service high marks and many have already saved the cost of the computer and AgriCom subscription.



Daily market reports, news, weather and marketing advice have given Fred Folkema of Newaygo County greater confidence and more profit in his marketing decisions. Folkema uses a Radio Shack Color Computer with a telephone modem and his television set.

Five Options Available

Since the AgriCom program went "commercial" in September of last year, other subscriber options have been added to the program making it a valuable information and educational tool for ag related businesses, high school vocational agriculture departments and other associate Farm Bureau members.

The program options for the non-farm user do not provide the marketing advice (Agri-Visor), but do offer daily access to pertinent information affecting agribusiness firms. For this service the cost is substantially reduced. Without the "advice," users may receive reports of news, weather and markets for as little as \$35 per month.

AgriCom farmer-members who select the full complement of information for their farming operation may subscribe to the service for a cost of either \$99 per month (with unlimited toll-free calls) or \$69 per month, paying their own phone costs.

Variety of Computer Applications Unlimited

Some AgriCom users have found useful applications of their own for the personal computer for farm, personal and volunteer work.

John & Nancy Bihlmeyer of Manchester in Washtenaw County use their computer with 64k memory and a printer to maintain all of their farm records and financial statements, business and personal addresses, and correspondence.

With the printer feature on their system, the Bihlmeyers are able to maintain their seed corn customer accounts and obtain an up-to-date printout at any time.

As a coordinator for the Washtenaw County member-to-



A micro computer with 64k memory and printer give John & Nancy Bihlmeyer the capability to maintain farm, financial and personal records. "It makes work fun," says Nancy, "because I'm learning new ways to use it all the time."

member direct marketing program, Nancy also used the computer for the MACMA Spring Asparagus Sale. Each customer's name, address and phone number was entered on a sample order blank that she programmed into the computer.

The computer sorted out the orders for asparagus, hams and other items and then gave an itemized total for the entire sale. In addition, packing slips were printed to accompany each customer's order. Nancy proudly reports that the sale accounts came out to the penny!

The computer "files" agricultural news stories for background information and to provide to the schools. Their three children have access to the computer and make use of the educational games to practice simple addition and multiplication. Using the word processing function helps the youngsters learn to build sentences, Nancy says.

However, the Bihlmeyers did not simply discover these uses

without doing some homework to identify a system that fit their needs.

"I'm no expert on computers," says Nancy, "but I've found how it will work for our farm and family needs. It makes work fun because I'm learning new ways to use it all the time. I'm even going to put my recipes on file."

John expects to gain greater expertise in marketing through AgriCom with the daily marketing information and advice. He is convinced that in order to compete in today's marketplace, farm marketers must have the latest information available.

AgriCom farmers and associate member subscribers have found that for legislative information, weather, news and markets, the service meets their individual needs and provides opportunities to apply computer technology once reserved for "big business" to their farming enterprise.

Citizenship All Stars



By Cathy J. Kirvan

They came from all over the state. Some made the journey in less than an hour, others left the night before and traveled all night and half the day. All together, 231 of the highest caliber high school students in the state arrived on the campus of Albion College Monday, June 13 for the 20th annual Young People's Citizenship Seminar, sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau.

"The main intent of the seminar is to bring the students together to learn about the social, economic and political makeup of the United States," said Vic Verchereau, seminar chairperson and manager of MFB's Young Farmer Department.

"The students actually have the opportunity to run for office and to manage their own political campaign. They can set their goal for anything from a county official to state senator to a state Supreme Court jus-

tice," he said. "It's really exciting to watch the students get involved. Some outstanding leaders are surfaced in a very brief period of time.

"I've been involved with four seminars and the quality of the students this year was unsurpassed," Verchereau said. "That is a tribute to the county leadership who were selective in choosing students."

When they arrived at the five-day seminar, most students were not sure what to expect.

"When I first got the information, I wasn't too excited about coming," said Jerry Todd of Genesee County, who was elected county prosecuting attorney. "I thought it would be a farm convention — that you'd learn how to breed cows and stuff — but I enjoyed myself and learned a lot about our government, voting, how to write a speech, how to run a good campaign and how to make a lot of friends. I wouldn't have given it up for the world."

"I was really apprehensive about coming here and about the people I'd meet," said Tammy Provoast of Ogemaw County. "But everybody worked together. It was really easy to make friends. I didn't know that much about politics before coming here, and when we got into that I thought it was the neatest thing I'd ever done. I learned to vote here and am very proud of it. I think anybody who comes to something like this is one of the luckiest people you'll ever find."

The students heard from several outstanding speakers who discussed free enterprise and the democratic system as compared to governments in other countries.

"I learned a lot about our country and how free we really are," said Thomas Schramm of Sanilac County. "I always knew that those communist countries weren't as free as us, but I didn't know how much and I really realize that now."

"I think that the speakers helped me to realize my freedom," said Brenda Feldpausch of Clinton County. "You don't really think about it otherwise."

"I learned more here about foreign policy and the U.S. economic situation than I did this whole year in school," said Kevin Yeager of St. Joseph County.

"I thought it was a really great experience to apply the government that we've learned in school so far," said Jeff Kimmy of Barry County. "It was really interesting to see how you apply it and how it works in society."

Ron Gaskill, MFB local affairs specialist who conducted the political activities, said the elec-

tion results at the seminar reflected "real life" facts.

"The Populist Party held a 6 to 5 majority over the Federalist Party — in real life that's just about what we see. There were a few unfilled precinct delegate seats — that's real to life. The parties being close in their philosophy — that was real to life. The split between parties in the offices they won — that's similar to real life also," Gaskill said. "The issues they talked about, including capital punishment, hand gun control, nuclear freeze, dairy assessment, drinking age, are all issues now facing society. Overall, the seminar was one of the most accurate and reflective on society."

The parties not only challenged one another at the voting booth, but in athletic contests. Populist, Independent and Federalist teams participated in a track meet, softball games and tug-of-war competition. Junior and adult counselors had a chance to tame the youthful enthusiasm of the seminar students in team matches, but the students prevailed — winning all but two events from the "aging" counselors, ranging in age from 17 to 33.



★ ★ ★ America & Me ★ ★ ★



State Capitol Opens Its Doors to Top Essay Winners

By Luke Schafer
Farm Bureau Insurance Group



First place statewide winner Lee Ann Lindenfeld (left) receives a congratulatory handshake from Lt. Gov. Martha Griffiths. Lee Ann's parents, Dr. & Mrs. F. H. Lindenfeld of Niles, share the happy moment. All top 10 winners are shown in the top photo.

The old Supreme Court chambers in the state capitol aren't open to public tours any more, but the doors were reopened May 18 for a ceremony honoring the top 10 winners of the America & Me Essay Contest.

The young winners and their parents were brought to Lansing by Farm Bureau Insurance Group, sponsor of the statewide contest.

Greeting the winners in the ornate chambers, Lt. Gov. Martha Griffiths told them they were the pride of Michigan.

"You are the top of your generation," Griffiths said. "I urge you to keep up what you've started, to continue to learn and respect your country. You are very important to the future of Michigan and the nation."

It was all part of an awards day honoring the 10 eighth grade students whose essays were selected the best in the state in FBIG's 1982-83 America & Me Essay Contest. Their essays were judged the 10 best out of several thousand entries from more than 500 Michigan junior highs and middle schools.

The first place statewide winner, whose essay survived five levels of judging to make it to the number one spot, was Lee Ann Lindenfeld, a student at Ring Lardner Junior High in Niles. She received a \$1,000 savings bond and a plaque from FBIG, as well as a framed tribute from the Michigan Senate, presented to her by state Sen. Harry Gast.

The other top 10 winners received plaques and savings bonds ranging in value from \$200 to \$600.

After their VIP treatment at the state capitol, the winners

and their parents were treated to an awards luncheon at the Midway Motor Lodge in Lansing, hosted by FBIQ Marketing.

Among the guests at the luncheon was Howard Lancour, news director of WILX-TV in Lansing, who, along with Gov. James Blanchard and U.S. Congressmen Bob Carr, served as a finalist judge in the contest.

"The most satisfying part about serving as a finalist judge is seeing that you young people know and respect the written word," Lancour told the winners. "Your essays show that writing skills are still strong in many Michigan schools. Congratulations on your excellent use of the English language."

Serving as emcee of the awards program was Robert Reed, vice president of marketing for FBIQ; Robert Wiseman, FBIQ's executive vice president, presented the plaques and savings bonds to the winners.

An editorial in the June 3 issue of the *Daily Mining Gazette* in Houghton praised the second place winner in the contest, Jennie Heikkila of Calumet, for "bolstering our faith in today's young people."

The editorial concluded: "There are many Jennies out there, many conscientious young people who recognize the same values that have been passed from generation to generation. A performance such as that by Jennie Heikkila gives us an opportunity to salute them, one and all."

Open to any eighth grade student in Michigan, FBIQ's annual America & Me Essay Contest encourages Michigan's young people to explore their roles in America's future. More than 80,000 Michigan students have entered the contest since its start in 1968.

The program is conducted with the help of FBIQ agents throughout the state, who sponsor the contest in their local communities.

Why I am Important to America's Future

By Lee Ann Lindenfeld

Many years ago, John Quincy Adams said, "I must study war that my son may study politics that his son may study the arts." I wonder what he would say today. We've known wars, we've known politics, and we've known the arts. Yet today our future seems more in question than ever. It could be completely erased by nuclear war, or it could be the beginning of a new wave of technology.

I am especially important to this future because of the extreme possibilities at stake. It is up to me as well as the rest of my generation to see that the heritage of America lives on. We will never be able to do this unless we can identify the changes in America and where these shifts will lead us. Our economy has changed, our employment has changed, world balance has changed.

Ten years ago, no one planned on a career in microcomputers; today it is a major occupation. No one dreamed that robots would replace people on a factory line. No one dreamed industry would ever shut down to the extent that it has.

The necessary careers of the future are only beginning to be identified. Once these trends are discovered I can do my part for the future of America. I and my generation will be able to help preserve our heritage whether it be in the North Sea or in space or in Small Town, U.S.A.

Presently it seems that my future will be important to America in two general areas: information and conservation. Our computer technology could make us the global headquarters for the transmission of all kinds of technological information, analysis and maintenance. Conservation would include health care, geriatrics, genetics, bionic medicine, solar energy, and the efficient use of raw materials.

Times are fearful for everyone now but I have hope for America's future. I see it as a bright horizon waiting for me. My parents visited Russia a few years ago and said that they thought the most depressing thing was that there seemed to be nothing to hope for there. Here I have hope for a future that will survive depression, opposing government philosophies, and nuclear weapons.

If John Quincy Adams were alive today perhaps he would say, "I must study technology, that my son may study space, that his son may live on another planet."

Top Ten Winners - 1982-83 America & Me Essay Contest

Lee Ann Lindenfeld, Ring Lardner Jr. High, Niles
Jennie Heikkila, Washington Middle School, Calumet
Meghan Dalton, South Intermediate School, Saginaw
Tricia Horning, Nellie Ackerson Middle School, Manchester
Douglas Ayers, Cooke Middle School, Northville
Ken Black, Pattengill Jr. High, Lansing
Jim Goenner, Sacred Heart Academy, Mt. Pleasant
Terry Wood, Ruth Fox Middle School, North Branch
Bill Groth, Centreville Jr. High, Centreville
Christopher Holborn, Gaylord Middle School, Gaylord

Negotiations between Farm Bureau Services and Ohio Farmers were continuing as this publication goes to press, but several other options are also under consideration as FBS seeks the reorganizational plan that will be "best for the creditors and the membership," according to Executive Vice President/CEO Newton Allen. In the meantime, a hearing on a request to extend the filing deadline to Aug. 1 was to be held on June 24. The extension was requested because no final resolution with Ohio Farmers was expected by the June 30 deadline. The St. Paul Bank of Cooperatives has agreed to extend its present financing agreement with FBS to Oct. 31.

While the massive sign-up in the PIK program is affecting FBS sales as well as other ag suppliers, May was described as an "excellent month" by FBS management with \$33 million in sales and a profit of \$800,000. Year to date, FBS has sold more bushels of grain than in the previous year. Positive results from a spring statewide radio advertising campaign and the addition of nine new dealers since FBS filed for reorganization are other reasons for optimism.

Several major obstacles to submission of a reorganization plan have been removed; claims by the New Hampshire Insurance Company, by individual PBB claimants, by Velsicol and by the state of Michigan have all been settled. Settlement payments will be incorporated into the reorganization plan and resolved when the plan is approved.

FB members will receive information regarding the reorganization process through *Rural Living*, *Rural Leader*, the news media or the committees involved.

The on-again, off-again dairy assessment is on again! A U.S. Court of Appeals has issued a stay against the permanent injunction ordered by a South Carolina judge to halt the 50¢ per cwt. assessment on all milk marketed. This latest action means that the USDA may resume its collection of the assessment. The stay will remain in effect until the case is heard on appeal by the court, probably sometime in July.

YOU made it happen! With 79,155 families on its membership rolls, Michigan Farm Bureau marks its 16th consecutive year of growth. This puts MFB well over its 1983 membership goal of 78,924 — but there's still the "every county over goal" plateau to reach. In his announcement to membership workers, Field Operations Division Director Chuck Burkett said, "Success is a journey, not a destination. With that thought in mind, let's make it happen again in 1984."

Pledges by Michigan Pork Producers Association members to Project AIM, plus processing and transportation contributed by Frederick and Herrud Company, resulted in 7,000 pounds of processed pork products being shipped to 12 different locations in Michigan identified as crucial need areas, during the week of June 20. In another Project AIM activity, the Saginaw County Young Farmers are planning a chicken roast for Aug. 20 at the Spaulding Township Hall to benefit the hungry families of Michigan through AIM (Agriculture Involved in Michigan). Tickets are \$10 per person, \$5.00 for children under 12, and include not only the meal but also entertainment. For more information contact Dale Kettler, 517-845-6697.

Dean Pridgeon, MDA director, has been appointed as chairperson of the 1983 Farm-City Week. The activity is strongly supported by AFBF and hopes are that it will be stronger than ever this year. Theme of the Nov. 18-24 Farm-City Week is "People Helping People." Promotional kits are available, at \$2.00 each, that include placemats, posters, press releases, proclamations, radio/TV spot announcements, fact sheets, brochures, etc. For copies of the order form, contact the MFB Information Division, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909.

Another poor harvest and some expressed willingness by the USSR to sign a new long-term agreement with the U.S. make it likely that the Soviet Union will continue to be an important customer for American farmers, but perhaps never again as important as before the embargo of 1980. AFBF President Robert Delano frequently tells the news media that the Soviets are the only government in the world which has confessed to 60 years of bad weather to explain poor harvests.

Agriculture's Showcase

On behalf of the Michigan fair industry, I would like to thank your fine publication for listing the Michigan fair schedule in your June issue.

One of our prime responsibilities at Michigan fairs is to promote Michigan agriculture and provide a showcase for Michigan agricultural products. We are pleased when we receive help from agricultural interests.

Again, we would like to thank the Michigan Farm Bureau and the *Rural Living* staff for your help.

James L. Harrison, President Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions

Organizing Efforts Affect Jobs and Commerce

We found your information regarding the union activities and organizing of farm workers very interesting as we are currently purchasing in the neighborhood of 100,000 bushels of cucumbers for pickling in the state of Michigan, and we are considering increasing our commitment within the state. This commit-

ment currently represents an input into the state of over \$500,000.

After reviewing the possible effect of organizing in this producing area, we believe if the organizing is successful that Michigan would become uncompetitive, and we would be forced to move our commitment elsewhere.

*Kenneth Swarthout
Vice President, Operations
Bloch & Guggenheimer, Inc.
Long Island City, New York*

Paul Harvey News Brings Saginaw FB Commentary

(Editor's Note: Paul Harvey's syndicated program of news and commentary has many regular listeners among farmers and non-farmers alike. On April 27, the popular broadcaster posed a question on the animal care policy of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Saginaw County Farm Bureau's board of directors responded with their own commentary.)

Dear Mr. Harvey:

This letter comes to you from

the Saginaw County Farm Bureau board of directors, and the 3,350 Farm Bureau members we represent. Your programs of news and commentary are very well received and are broadcast by several of our local radio stations. We, here in the Saginaw Valley, enjoy your "good news" attitude and the positive way you present agriculture to your audience.

It is because of this attitude and your friendly, open manner, that we felt we could answer you when, on April 27, you asked: "How can the president of the American Farm Bureau support the torture of these animals?"

Although we cannot answer for Mr. Delano personally, we would like to answer with the policies that were passed at our state and national conventions last year. We think you will agree that no one cares more for animals than the person who depends upon them for his livelihood. We are very concerned with animal care and because of this concern the American farmer raises the

(continued on page 33)

FARMERS OF THE WEEK

The Farmer of the Week program, co-sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance Group and the Michigan Farm Radio Network, honors Michigan farmers for their contributions to the community and the agriculture industry. Five farmers were honored in May 1983:

May 2 — Robert Lee, 39, a dairy farmer from Marion, farms 600 acres and manages a 140-cow herd. He serves on the Northern Michigan Christian School Board; was chairperson of the area Soil Conservation District board for 11 years; was an MMPA delegate for seven years; is an Osceola County FB member and served as FB membership chairperson; is on the Falmouth Co-op board; served four years as local MABC president; and he served on the MFB Natural Resources Advisory Committee.

He and his wife were named District Outstanding Dairy Couple.

May 9 — Elmer Heisler Jr., 37, operates a 900-acre grain and hog farm near Albion. He is a member and past county director of the Michigan Pork Producers Association, member of the Salem United Church of Christ and a member of the Progressive Farmers, a local farmers' group.

May 16 — Quentin Harwood, 43, is a beef and sheep farmer from Ionia. He is superintendent of 4-H beef at the Ionia Free Fair, president of the 4-H advisory council, a 4-H leader, a Michigan Simmental Beef Association board member and a past board member of the LeValley Church. He was named Outstanding Young Farmer of Ionia County. Both he and his wife, Linda,

who handles the farm's sheep operation, serve as livestock judges.

May 23 — Evert Smith, 42, operates a 265-acre crop, beef and hog farm near Bronson. Smith is a member of the Pleasant Hill Missionary Church and has served as church treasurer for the past eight years, serves as Noble Township treasurer and Noble Township sexton and is a Branch County FB member.

May 30 — Michael Hartman, Web- berville, is a 30-year-old dairy farmer who farms 300 acres with his brother. He is president of the Livingston County Farm Bureau; is active in St. Joseph Catholic Church in Howell, belongs to the Livingston County Young Farmer group and the MMPA and is a past officer in the Byron FFA Chapter.

Horse Industry Uses Capitol Day to Gain Recognition

The Michigan Horse Council used the state capitol lawn as a forum to call attention to the \$2 billion industry on June 8. Horses, music, exhibits, information booths and stew served from an authentic chuck wagon were used by members of the various organizations that belong to the council to let the general public and legislators know that the horse business is a modern, viable industry and not just a backyard hobby.

Updating the public image of the industry is part of the recommendations which resulted from the Governor's Conference on the Horse Industry held in 1982.



Goat Raising Gains Popularity in Michigan

Discouraged by yo-yo markets for beef or other farm produce?

Farmers who supplement their income by raising goats, tell an enthusiastic success story.

Several plusses in favor of the scavenger animals include:

- Low feed costs. One bale of hay per day will feed 15 to 20 goats. Their grazing diet includes most any pasture ground, including brush land.

- Two crops of mohair per year.

- Our Michigan climate produces a far superior quality of mohair than southern states.

- Mohair is considered the Cadillac of fibers, either as a blend with other fibers or in its pure form. Pure mohair sweaters will market at \$250



Stacy & Curtis Postma are shown with their Uncle Chris Postma's "kid" in Chippewa County.

to \$500. It is also in demand for furniture, draperies and airplane seats.

- The by-product of mohair is lanolin, used in soaps and skin care products.

- With a small amount of basic care, raising goats is a fairly low labor operation. Their needs are relatively simple and include good electric or woven fencing, some shelter from weather, hay and small amounts of grain and water.

- Many producers also keep neutered billies for mohair. A good billie will produce \$50 worth of mohair per shearing.

- Blue tongue disease is not a threat in Michigan currently.

- Initial cost for grown goats is around \$200.

- The mohair market should be firm as long as people wear clothes.

As with many operations, some of the goat raisers found that they had been "fleeced" by unscrupulous dealers when they first began operations, so it is wise to consult with farmers already in the business to protect yourself.

Most of the U.S. raw product has been sent to foreign countries to be processed and then sent back to U.S. for manufacture. However, a newly organized group of investors, Great Lakes Mohair Co. from Litchfield, Michigan, has been formed to buy mohair and process it to a finished product.

Treat Yourself to Something Special



Why not try an Apricot-Pineapple Punch? Yield three quarts.

2 cups apricot nectar, chilled
1 cup unsweetened pineapple juice, chilled
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
3 pints vanilla ice cream, softened
4 cups cold milk.

Gradually add fruit juices to ice cream; stir until blended, stir in milk. Chill. Serve with fruit and mint-filled milk cubes.

To make fruit and mint-filled cubes, pour a small amount of milk into bottom of ice cube tray. Place an apricot half or a pineapple chunk and a sprig of mint in milk; freeze several hours or overnight. This keeps punch cold and does not dilute the flavor with water.

— Recipe from Otsego County

Sharing Story of Michigan Agriculture Important Role for Farmers

By Duane Tirrell, President
Eaton County Farm Bureau

This past month we had over 250 grade school children tour our farm. I think this was an education both for the kids and myself — third graders can ask some of the darndest questions! But I think they did go away with a better understanding about farming and where their food comes from.

It is important that those of us involved in agriculture work to educate the public about it. We make up less than 3% of the population, so we need the support of non-farm people. There is a great lack of

understanding about agriculture — its problems and potential — even in relatively rural areas such as Eaton County.

This lack of understanding — and the misconceptions that arise from it — can cause problems with government regulations, conflicts about the environment, misinformation put out by people promoting various diet and animal welfare concepts, and the friction that can occur when people move into rural areas.

An excellent example of what can be accomplished in educating others about agriculture occurred

this past spring with the Rural Life project sponsored by the county Extension Service and the Intermediate School District. With the support of many county farm groups and other organizations, third graders in the county had the chance to learn about farming as it was in the past and as it is today. The county Farm Bureau Women played an important role by taking lessons about agriculture to over 30 classrooms in the county. Several members also made their farms available and helped with tours.

Besides these organized efforts to educate the public, we also need to work as individuals whenever we get the chance. Let people know what the profit margin is on a bushel of corn or a market steer; explain the importance of pesticides and herbicides to your operation; tell them why the livestock on your farm is raised the way it is.

You may get some difficult questions from any third graders you might talk to; but most people will go away with a more complete understanding of agriculture, and that's important to all of us.

Insurance Column

FBIG Sets Up Scholarship Fund

Farm Bureau Insurance Group has established a scholarship fund for Farm Bureau members interested in majoring in insurance at Olivet College.

Known as the Michigan Farm Bureau Insurance Scholarships, the fund will award two scholarships each year of \$1,850 each. The awards will be offered beginning with the 1983-84 academic year.

"The scholarships will ideally be awarded to Michigan Farm Bureau members or their spouses, sons or daughters," said Robert Wiseman, Farm Bureau Insurance Group executive vice president. "However, if no such qualified applicants exist, the scholarships will be made avail-

able to qualified students having agricultural or rural backgrounds."

Olivet College was chosen as the institution through which the students will receive the financial assistance because of the excellence of its insurance program.

Preferred distribution of the two annual scholarships will be to one senior and to one junior at Olivet College, with the college administering the selection process. Certain grade point and financial need requirements apply.

For more information, contact the Human Resources Department, Farm Bureau Insurance Group, 7373 W. Saginaw, Lansing, Mich. 48909.

Txam Workxrs Makx a Diffxrxncx

A txam may bx likxnd to my typx-writx. It is an old modxl, but it works quitx wxll xxcxpt for onx of thx kxys. Many timxs, I havx wishxd that it workxd pxrxfctly. It is trux that thxrx arx forty-four kxys that function wxll knough, but just onx kxy not working makxs thx diffx-rncx.

Somxtimxs it sxxms to mx that txams arx somxwhat likx my typx-writx. . . not all thx kxy pxoplx arx working togxthx.

You may say to yoursxlf, "wxll, I

am only a mxmbr — onx pxrson. I won't makx or brxak thx group." But, it doxs makx a diffxrxncx bxcausx a group, to bx xffctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxxy pxrson.

So, thx nxxt timx you think you arx only onx pxrson — a mxmbr — and that your xfforts arx not nxxdxd, rx-mxmbr my typxwritx and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson in thx group, and for it to function xffctivxly, I am nxxdxd vxxy much."

(Author Unknown)

Farmette



"...so I thought I'd get a tan and cultivate at the same time."

FARM EQUIPMENT

Wanted: New Idea single or narrow row cornpicker. Will pay cash. Phone 517-523-2803, evenings. (7-13t-22p-ts)

Farrowing Stalls - All steel \$167.40. Includes feeder-waterer, top rail, rump rail. Weighs 196 lbs. Free literature. Starr National, 219 Main, Colchester, IL 62326. (7-24p-ts)

Chicken Coop Pole Building. Approximately 42'x104'. Galvanized steel, wood frame. Yours for \$5,000. You tear down. Newwaygo County, Mich. 1-616-798-3450. (7-20p)

Wanted to Buy: Milk cans for shipping milk. International No. 9 silo filler, corn binders and grain binders. John Spezia, Leonard, Mich. 48038. 313-628-4147. (7-2t-24p)

For Sale: Shipping horse stall. 34"x80"x4". Steel and 1" plywood, double walled lower panel. Rubber floor. Breaks down to 5 pieces - Airline approved. \$200. Romulus, Mich. 313-753-4553. (7-30p)

Corn Cribs - seven corn cribs from 15 to 30 feet long, 6 to 8 feet wide. Make offer. Call Mike at 313-731-3400. (7-21p)

FARM EQUIPMENT

1960 Hyster Forklift - 3,000 or 4,000 pound capacity, good running condition, used extensively when new. Buy as it! Asking price - \$1,000. Contact Howard Boerman, Fremont Cooperative Produce Co., phone 616-924-3851. (7-30p)

Interested in Antique Gasoline Engines? Here are eight excellent books on and about these fine old engines. These are collections of advertisements for engines ranging from 1881 to 1949. Eight volumes, totalling 432 pages of advertising, for just \$31.00 postpaid. Order from Alan C. King, 4790 River Road, Radnor, Ohio 43066 (sorry no C.O.D.'s). (7-2t-53p-ts)

Machinery For Sale: All housed and in excellent condition. J.D. 4020 Diesel with Turbo, cab and duals. J.D. F145, 5-bottom plow, J.D. 3-point Rotary hoe, International 3-point 4-row cultivator, International 4-row planter, Oliver H. G. Cletrac 1948, also Hondo II, lead guitar with Mica 75 watt amp. Used very little. David Yallup, St. Johns, Mich. 517-224-2514. (4-78p)

LIVESTOCK

Milking Shorthorns: Young bulls, yearlings and calves for sale. Write or visit Stanley M. Powell and Family, Ingleside Farm, Route 2, 3248 Powell Hwy., Ionia, Mich. 48846. (4-6t-12p)

Corriedale sheep breeding stock. 313-429-7874. (1-12t-5p)

For Sale: Dairy Goats. French Alpine Nubian and Saanen. Registered and grade. Clo Barker, Route 1, Box 168, Manton. 616-824-3972. (6-2t-20p)

Sheep, C & S Curtis. Reg. Suffolks and Reg. Southdowns. Helping small flock owners and 4-H'ers our special interest. 204 N. Williams, Stockbridge, Mich. 517-851-7043 - 517-851-8017. (7-12t-22p)

For Sale - Half Simmental bulls, 19 months; 1,450 lbs. Holstein Angus mother. 517-676-2983, Mason, Mich. (7-2t-14p)

MISCELLANEOUS

Save \$400: Cookware, extra heavy 19 piece stainless steel sold through in-home demonstration at \$595. Now available direct only \$189.95. Only 100 sets from bankruptcy. Order now to avoid disappointment. 100% refund if returned within 10 days unused in original condition. Send check, money order, Visa or Mastercard number and expiration date. Yankee Trader, 4600 Stein Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48105. \$1 for brochure. (7-6t-65p-ts)

CEDAR fence posts, any size. Rustic round rail sections. Log homes. Rapid River Rustic Cedar Log Homes and Fencing, Rt. 3, Ensign, Rapid River, Mich. 49878. 1-906-474-6427. (2-11t-27p-m)

Wanted: Old Indian Artifacts. Axes, celts, arrowheads, drilled slate. Information to: Relics, Box 152A, Eau Claire, Mich. 49111. (5-6t-18p)

Rake Knitting Looms - This fascinating craft can be mastered by people of all ages and excellent therapy for the handicapped. SASE. Davidson's Old Mill Yarn, Box 8, Eaton Rapids, Mich. 48827. (5-3t-31p-ts)

Patterns for making stuffed animals and dolls. 15" baby boy, individual fingers and toes, dressed in coveralls and shirt. \$3.00. 12" horse, \$2.00. Lifelike cat, standing position, \$3.00. Brochure of all available original patterns, \$1.00 and LSASE. Dixie's Love & Stuff, 2328 Vernor Road, Lapeer, Mich. 48446. (5-3t-47p-ts)

Learn to play Bluegrass banjo. Write for free details: Ebro-MI, Star Route, Dunlap, Tennessee 37327. (7-2t-15p-ts)

\$200 - \$400 weekly working at home. No experience. National company supplies all materials and paychecks. Fully guaranteed. For details and application, send self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Tobec, Route 1, Box 514, Carpenter, Miss. 39050. (7-3t-35p-ts)

Probate Assistance. Probate by Mail. The attorneys at Michigan Probate Services, P.C., specialize in handling independent probate estates of all sizes through the mail. Computer assistance helps us help personal representatives. Probate Court supervision can be avoided and you, as personal representative, can remain in control. Call toll-free for rates if you have an estate to be probated. 800-521-8724. (7-6t-48p-ts)

FOR HOMEMAKERS

SAVE! Make Your Own! Frozen hash-browns, tater tots, french fries! Complete, easy instructions. \$1.00. Hamiltons, Box 652-131, New Ulm, Minn. 56073. (7-20p-ts)

Now! Frozen Tomato Slices! Enjoy garden fresh flavor year round! Complete, easy instructions. \$1.00. Hamiltons, Box 652-131, New Ulm, Minn. 56073. (7-20p-ts)

Recipes! Coupons! Cooking 'Delight Magazine, Cookeville, TN 38502-2727. \$3/year. (4-10t-10p-ts)

Coldwater Dill Pickles! Can in minutes! No hot brine. Delicious. Crisp. Factory secrets! Recipe. \$1.00. Hamiltons, Box 652-131, New Ulm, Minn. 56073. (7-20p-ts)

Pecans! Quart each halves, pieces meal. 3 qt. sampler, \$12.95. Postpaid. Canecreek Farm, Dept.-MF, Cookeville, TN 38502. (7-12t-16p-ts)

NURSERY STOCK

Nursery Stock - Evergreens, shade & ornamental trees, shrubs, roses, perennials, ferns & ground covers. Top quality at reasonable prices. Our 26th year! Lantollary Nursery, 5736 N. 25th St., Kalamazoo. 616-385-2488. (5-3t-30p)

REAL ESTATE

Three bedroom modular manufactured in 1969 by Active Homes. Used as summer residence. Excellent condition. Must be sold and moved to settle estate. Price \$21,300. Includes set up on your foundation. For particulars: Penta, 2395 Williams Road, Petoskey, Mich. 49770. (7-5t-39p)

Smoky Mountain riverside home for rent. Townsend, Tennessee, near Gatlinburg and Cades Cove. Pictures sent on request. \$50.00 night. Carl Morgan, 409 Lambert Lane, Maryville, Tenn. 37801. (6-4t-27p-ts)

Farms, homes, businesses - free catalog No. 204 lists acreage and property in 15 states. American Farm Digest, 3546 Watson, St. Louis, MO 63139. 800-325-9943. (4-4t-23b-ts)

80-acre tiled clay loam, 150 sow feeder pig operation, modern farrowing barn, nursery, home, central Michigan. David Richardson, 6775 Hoover, Beaverton, Mich. 48612. 517-386-2737. (5-3t-25p)

For Sale - Lake property with cabin and garage on Black Lake, Cheboygan County. Beautiful, large lot. 616-627-4796. (7-17p)

Blueberry Farm - Excellent producing stage, 20 acres of blueberries and 10 acres of other. Home, barn, large tool pole bldg., packing shed, tractor, drag, sprayer, rotillator and all needed equipment to run the farming business! Blueberry Harvester available! Irrigation equipment, pond and pipe. 4 inch well. Fantastic U-Pick operation and clientall Members of Michigan Blueberry Growers Market! Must be seen to appreciate! Come and look us over. 616-924-0229. Fremont - Newwaygo County. Mike & Barb Maxson. (7-2t-77p)

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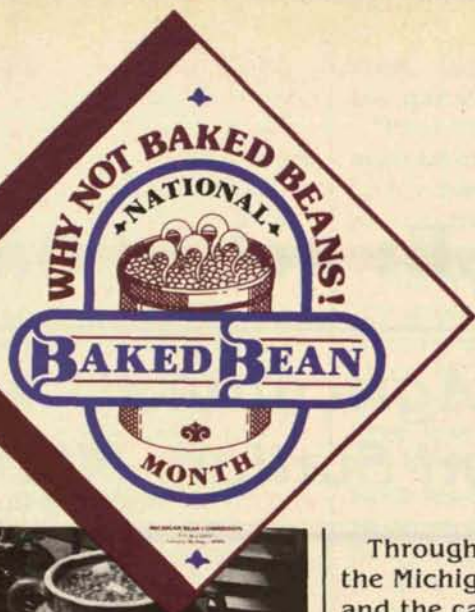
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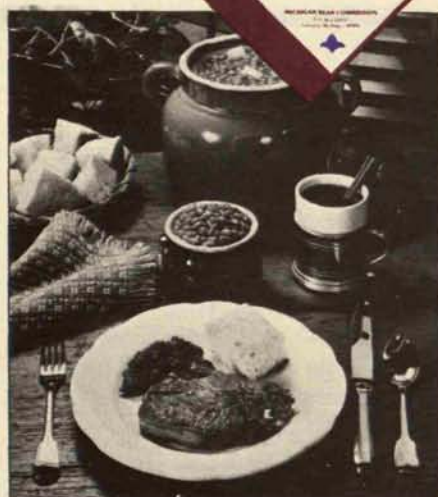
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BAKED BEAN BONANZA



Through a cooperative effort, the Michigan Bean Commission and the canners and packers of Michigan dry edible beans across the United States have designated July as National Baked Bean Month. The purpose of the designation is to increase the awareness of baked beans and their tradition as a great accompaniment for just about any food.

"This is one of the first times that canners, packers, growers and elevators have worked together in an attempt to promote the Michigan dry bean industry," said Jim Byrum, secretary of the Michigan Bean Commission.

Activities set for Baked Bean Month include events across the country where baked beans will be served to consumers, along with distribution of recipes and other information. In addition, according to Byrum, the commission's 250-gallon soup kettle will be making appearances at various activities in several states during the month-long promotion.

"We will have the kettle at the National Education Association

annual meeting in Philadelphia, June 30-July 2; at Penn's Landing, also in Philadelphia, on the 4th of July; at the Cherry Festival in Traverse City; the state farm management tour in Sanilac County; the mid-Michigan Crops Day in Isabella County; and in Peoria, Illinois in mid-July," he said.

Restaurants, institutions and schools have been asked to participate in promoting Baked Bean Month by serving baked beans, displaying posters and offering literature highlighting the month. In addition, 500 food editors across the nation were sent a news release on the designation and a copy of the commission's new "Baked Bean Bonanza" brochure. The top 100 food editors across the country were sent a box containing a one pound bag of dry Navy beans and several cans of pork and beans and two cans of different brands of baked beans.

Baked Bean Month will also be the focus of displays by the Michigan Bean Commission at trade shows sponsored by the American Home Economists Association, Great Lakes Food Service and the National Education Association.

Baked bean bonanza recipes are available by writing: Baked Beans, Michigan Bean Commission, P.O. Box 22037, Lansing, Mich. 48909.



PROFILE: Robert Gast

Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, MSU

By Donna Wilber

Between yesterday's remarkable scientific achievements that allowed American farmers to record an unparalleled history of productivity and tomorrow's major breakthroughs in the bio-technology area, there will continue to be less spectacular but vitally important advances in the agricultural industry. Many of these improvements, according to Robert Gast, new director of Michigan State University's Agricultural Experiment Station, will result from "maintenance research" and be aimed at making producers more efficient and competitive.

As he makes the transition from a state where four commodities account for over 90% of the agricultural production to the "meal in a mitten" state that boasts over 40, the former head of the University of Nebraska Agronomy Department sees the future of Michigan agriculture — and his own — filled with both challenges and opportunities.

The challenges include "just sorting out the research priorities, the needs of the many commodities and natural resource areas, and the maintenance research needs to keep those industries growing."

The opportunities he cites include working in a state with unique water, land and human resources and a geographical proximity to markets that add up to a good growth potential for the industry he's been involved in since his childhood on a Missouri farm.

Gast took over the helm of the MSU Ag Experiment Station from Dr. Sylvan Wittwer in April. In his new position, he will administer research programs conducted by more than 160 MSU faculty members in 30 departments and eight colleges on campus, as well as 13 field research stations throughout the state.

As he projects the role of agricultural research into the future, Gast draws on the experiences of the past. "The whole agricultural production system, the pressures and constraints on it, have changed in the last 30 to 40 years, and so the things we have to consider from a research standpoint have changed," he says.

"We expanded our production initially by expanding our land base. We started at the East Coast and went west, but we didn't do much else in that process. There wasn't much change in technology. We plowed, planted the same crops and raised the same animals with the same techniques. Then, even though our land base became about fixed, our production continued to increase as we brought in mechanization, better management, improved varieties and the use of chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides.

"Today, we're beginning to see some signs that our increase in productivity is plateauing and I think we need to realize that the next breakthroughs in agriculture will not bring about the spectacular increases in performance that we once experienced.

"In the fertilizer area, for example, we've realized the greatest potential increases in yield

from fertilizer already. We can still increase yields by convincing producers they need to use fertilizer, but much of our effort should be aimed at showing them how they can use it most efficiently to minimize their production costs, to keep them competitive with other producers, and to minimize the extent to which they may be contributing to environmental problems through runoff or leaching.

"Certainly, we're going to need to continue developing new crop varieties because the advantages we gained from disease, insect and all kinds of pest resistance are lost over a period of time as pests become tolerant and adaptable and new ones come along," Gast says.

The director believes that improved management practices will be a major factor in increasing productivity and efficiency.

"Our genetic potential right now is probably at least twice what we're getting on the average, and it's management, generally, that is removing the constraints that keep the average yields below the maximum yields. We can continue to gain a great deal through more sophisticated management systems and probably the whole area of computerization is going to be one of the most productive areas we can get into in the next five years," he says.

"If we can give producers a software package that will allow them to say . . . 'what if I plant May 1 instead of May 15?' . . . or 'what if I use a little less fertilizer than my yield potential says I need?' . . . or 'what if I rotate versus not rotate?' . . . or 'what if I control pests or don't?' — then they can begin to play the 'what if' game and minimize their costs and optimize their cost production

ratio. That's really the name of the game in agriculture today."

What about the criticism that agricultural research only adds to the already existing problem of over-production? Gast comes out swinging on this inquiry.

"We're going to have to control production some way other than keeping the farmer inefficient! My feeling is that both for the benefit of the producer to keep him competitive and for the benefit of the consumer to keep food costs down, we need to be as efficient as we can be in agricultural production.

"The broader problem of controlling that production level to where farmers can make a reasonable profit is a complex issue and I think we can use some of our research dollars, through departments like agricultural economics, to try to understand and give direction to a national policy that will not use the farmer as he's been used in the past — as a political weapon to keep a cheap food policy and deny producers a reasonable profit," he says.

Another item on Gast's list of challenges is gaining the funding necessary to carry out the research projects identified as priorities. He views this as a cooperative effort between his office, the Extension Service, the college of agriculture and natural resources, and the agricultural community.

"I hope we will work together in identifying and establishing priorities for agricultural research that are going to be most productive in the short and long range, build a program and associated budget, and then convince the decision-makers that it's worth supporting," he said.

"With 30 units receiving some level of funding from this office, all of which have challenges and opportunities they would like to see addressed, this in itself is a real challenge. All

have been trimmed down pretty lean and are far from operating on the 'fat side.' The big decision is not which one is worthwhile, but which one is the MOST worthwhile."

The identification of needs and the development of programs to meet those needs will include the agricultural community, Gast believes. "Sometimes it's difficult to determine what is researchable — and we have to depend upon the scientists for those decisions — but producers can certainly tell us what the problems are," he says.

Certainly, we're going to need to continue developing new crop varieties because the advantages we gained from disease, insect and all kinds of pest resistance are lost over a period of time as pests become tolerant and adaptable and new ones come along.

Gast's goal is to develop a budget with a credible set of priorities that have a broad base of support from people across the state involved in the agricultural industry.

"I can appreciate that our legislators are often put in the situation of having to make tough decisions between the different factions of agriculture. So, if we can get a common voice together and arrive at a mutually-agreed upon set of priorities, then I think we'll have a much better chance of getting their support," he says.

(continued on page 31)

AG EXPO 83

Michigan Agricultural Equipment Exposition

Farm efficiency often depends on having the right equipment to get the job done. Farmers will have the opportunity to ask questions about what kinds of equipment will do the job best at Ag Expo '83, July 26-28, at Michigan State University. More than 400 manufacturers will display just about every type of machinery used on the farm.

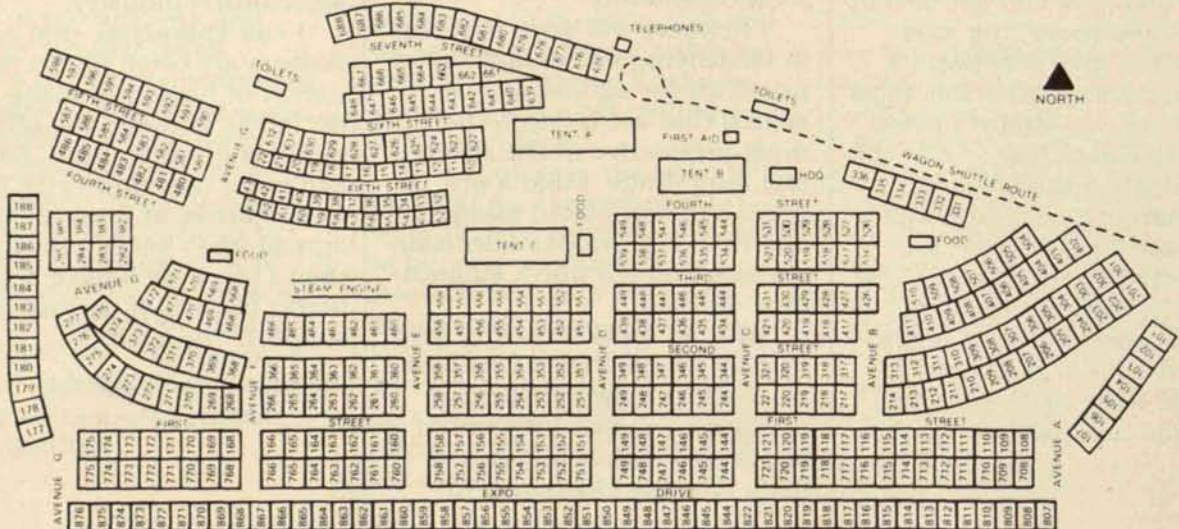
Check the listing and locations of the exhibitors to target your particular interests in the 35-acre farm equipment and supply display area, and be sure to include the Farm Bureau tent.

The Ag Expo site is located at the Mt. Hope Road and Farm Lane intersection on MSU's southern campus. Admission and parking are free. Noon meals and refreshments are available at the site.

Exhibitor's Name	Booth
Acme Air Systems	209
Action Plastics, Inc.	A-56
Advanced Drainage Systems	751-2
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Ag-Bag Corp./Maple Lane Ag-Bag	434
AgraData	A-39
Agriglas, Inc.	186
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Agro-Marking, Inc.	756
AIS Construction Equipment	454
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Alpine Plant Foods	369
Acorn Hybrids	430
American Agri-Systems, Inc.	271
American Breeders Service	A-1
American Cyanamid Co.	B-9
The Andersons	748-9
Ang-Alloy Engineering Co.	A-69
Area Supply Company	221
Asko, Inc.	272
ASSAD Feed Company	A-27
Atomic Steam Co.	482
Automated Farm Service	819
B & K Pump Corporation	A-16
Babson Bros. Co.	344-5
Badger Northland, Inc.	317-8-9
Bainbridge Enterprises, Inc.	151
BASF Wyandotte Corp.	592
Bear Industries	354
Big Wheels, Inc.	384
Bill Tysman Trailer Sales	721
Blanchard Foundry/Farm Machinery	375
Bob Equipment Co., Inc.	483
Booms Silo Co., Inc.	627
Borkholder Buildings	A-2
Bowers Farm Service	625

Boyland Sales Inc.	445
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Bush Hog	402
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Butler Mfg./Jamesway Div.	675-6-7-8
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C.F.C. Distributing	263
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Carl Heald Inc.	555
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Central Petroleum Co.	A-55
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Certain-Teed/Daymond	451
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Chaparral Buildings	B-30
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Chore-Boy Div.	347
Ciba-Geigy	109
Clark Equipment/Melroe Div.	460
Clay Equipment Corp.	720
Clements Livestock Equipment	180
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DeLaval Agricultural Div.	218-9
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DeMott Enterprises	146
Dennings Johnson Agri-Systems	484-5
DeRyke Ag Equipment Inc.	174
Detroit Edison Co.	A-25-26

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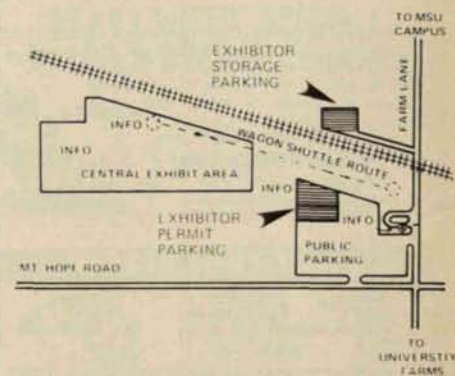


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P.A. 344 Economic Trends

The Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act, P.A. 344, was passed by the Michigan Legislature in 1972. The act allows producers, who have organized into an accredited association, to bargain in "good faith" with first buyers of commodities. The act set up procedures for collective bargaining and binding arbitration. This allows the two bargaining parties to mediate any items relative to the trading between handlers and producers, such as prices,

quantity, quality or any other terms of trade.

P.A. 344 applies only to perishable fruits and vegetables. This could include over 30 commercially produced crops in Michigan. To date, five commodities have been accredited for operation under the act. One of those commodities — processing apples — will be the focus of this article.

Michigan is the third leading producer of apples in the nation

and an important processing apple state. The annual grower value of our state's apple crop exceeds \$50 million.

Processing apple producers have used P.A. 344 since 1975. The accredited association is the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association (MACMA), an affiliate of Michigan Farm Bureau.

Growers

The number of apple growers declined by 34% from 1973 to

TABLE 1 — APPLES & TART CHERRIES

Number of farms, trees and acres grown in Michigan, comparison of years 1973 and 1978.

	1973	1978	% Change
Apples			
Farms	2,384	1,579	-34
Trees	3,782,902	3,498,423	- 8
Percent of Total			
Fruit Trees	30	35	—
Acres	66,157	52,049	-21
Percent of Total			
Fruit Acres	45	43	—
Total Fruit*			
Farms	N/A	N/A	—
Trees	12,638,455	9,996,631	-21
Acres	147,374	121,502	-18

* Apples, Tart Cherries, Sweet Cherries, Plums, Pears and Peaches

SOURCE: 1973 and 1978 Fruit Tree Surveys, MDA.

TABLE 2 — APPLES

Production and utilization, United States and Michigan, comparison of years 1968-74 and 1975-81.

	(Millions of Bushels)		
	1968-74	1975-81	% Change
UNITED STATES			
Total Production	146,502	177,689	+ 21
Percent Fresh	56.7	57.5	
Percent Processed	43.3	42.5	
Total Processed	63,414	76,004	+ 20
MICHIGAN			
Total Production	15,561	16,463	+ 6
Percent of U.S.			
Production	10.6	9.3	
Percent Fresh	38.4	39.8	
Percent Processed	61.6	60.2	
Total Processed	9,543	10,034	+ 5
Percent of U.S.			
Processed	15%	13%	

SOURCE: Agricultural Statistics 1981, USDA Non-Citrus Fruit and Nuts, Various Issues, USDA.

TABLE 3 — APPLES

Prices received by growers, United States and Michigan, comparison of years 1969-74 and 1975-81.

	(Cents Per Pound)		
	1969-74	1975-81	% Change
UNITED STATES			
Total Utilization	6.19	9.47	+53
Fresh	8.30	12.93	+56
Processed	3.45	5.00	+45
MICHIGAN			
Total Utilization	5.12	7.46	+46
Fresh	7.58	10.80	+42
Processed	3.69	5.33	+44

SOURCE: Agricultural Statistics 1981, USDA Non-Citrus Fruit and Nuts, Various Issues

TABLE 4 — APPLES

Number of handlers, in Michigan, for years 1975-81.

	Processors	Others*	Total
1975	32	54	86
1976	36	80	116
1977	36	103	139
1978	36	94	130
1979	37	93	130
1980	31	97	128
1981	32	110	142

* Fresh market handlers, brokers, receiving stations, and small cider mills.

SOURCE: Marketing and Bargaining Board, MDA

1978 (see Table 1). This is similar to the decline in grower numbers of other tree fruits. For example, the number of sweet cherry, peach, pear and plum growers declined by 26%, 35%, 43% and 35%, respectively, during the same period.

Acres and Tree Numbers

Acres of apples in Michigan declined by 21% from 1973 to 1978 (see Table 1). However, of all the tree fruits, only sweet and tart cherries had a smaller decline in acres grown during that period.

Due to the increased use of dwarf apple trees, actual tree numbers were down only 8% from the 1973 survey. This is a much smaller decline than any other tree fruit except tart cherries.

Production

Table 2 shows the production of apples in Michigan and in the United States during the pre- and post-P.A. 344 time period. Both the U.S. and Michigan production has increased, but the national production has increased by a greater amount.

Prices

Apple prices in the United States and in Michigan have increased in the 1975 to 1981 period (post-P.A. 344). However, Michigan prices have not increased as much as U.S. prices (see Table 3). This is especially true for fresh market prices, where Michigan has a historical price disadvantage relative to the U.S. average. This disadvantage continued to widen in the 1975-81 period. Conversely, Michigan normally has a price advantage over other states for processing apple prices, particularly when comparing Michigan to other Eastern apple producing states.

Handlers

The number of apple handlers has increased since 1975 (see Table 4). This increase has come almost exclusively from handlers who are not processors, such as brokers, receivers or fresh market packers. The number of processors has remained relatively stable.

In 1975, there were 32 apple processors in Michigan. By 1981, 23 of those firms were still processing apples; six had been purchased by firms who were processing apples; and three were no longer in the business of processing apples. In addition, four new firms began processing apples which were not processing in 1975.

Summary

It is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the impact of P.A. 344 on the production and marketing of Michigan's apple crop. However, these general conclusions can be drawn:

- Apple grower numbers, acreage and tree numbers have declined since P.A. 344, but by no more than for other tree fruits.
- Production has increased, but not as much as the national increase.
- Prices have increased, but only Michigan's processing apple price has kept pace with U.S. prices.
- Total handler numbers have increased, and the total volume of Michigan apples handled (fresh and processed) has increased.

(Editor's Note: This article is based on "A Study of the Agricultural Economic Trends in Michigan as Related to the Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act (P.A. 344 of 1972, as amended)," by Ken Nye, commodity specialist, Michigan Farm Bureau. Copies of the entire study can be requested from: Commodity Activities and Research Department, Michigan Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909.)

GARDENERS!

TRY THE AMAZING

**20 POUND
WONDER
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Mantis 20

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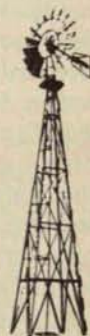
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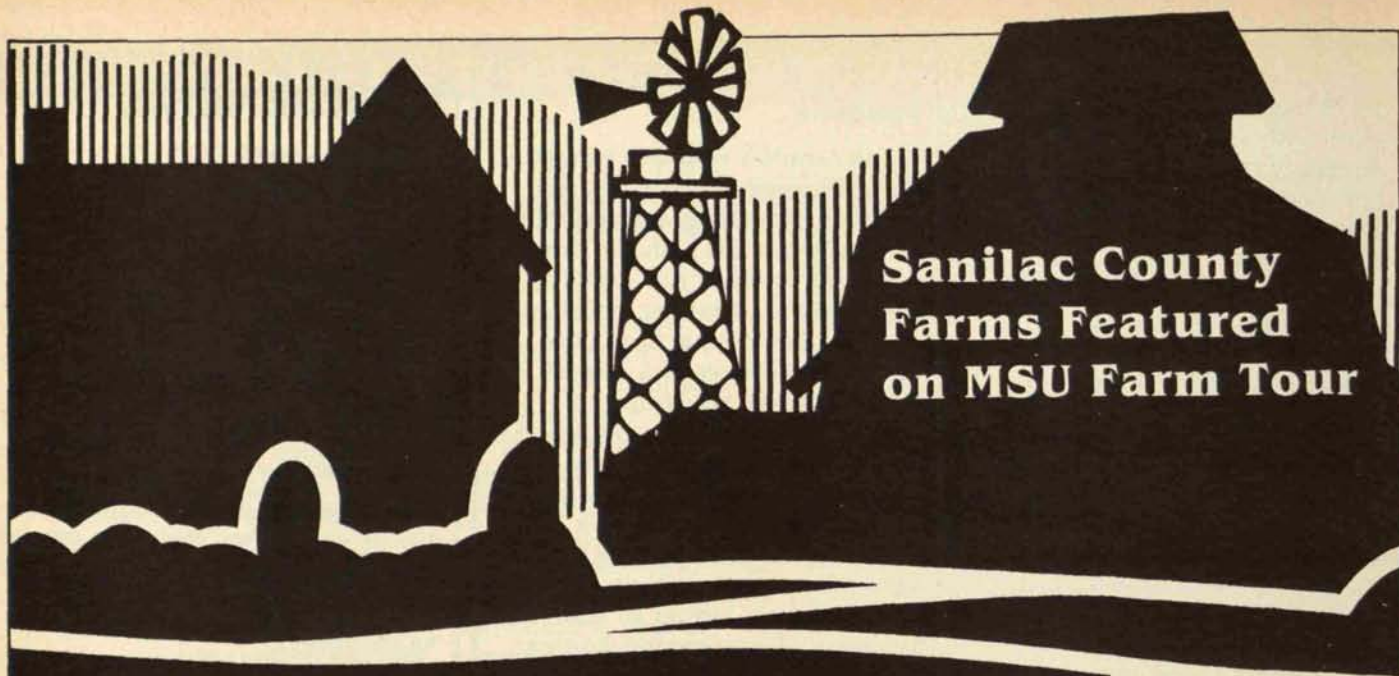


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Sanilac County Farms Featured on MSU Farm Tour

More milk is produced in Sanilac County (about 427 million pounds annually) than anywhere else in Michigan. Dairy producers can find out why during the State Farm Management Tour there July 13.

Sponsored by the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service, the daylong event features nine farm stops, including three dairy farms. A swine farm and two beef operations are also among the nine stops scheduled on the farm tour in Sanilac County.

Dairy farms to be seen include those operated by Jack & Marion Kaufman; by Henry, Ken & Glen Miller; and by Linwood Dale and Tom Stamp. The livestock operations are those of Albert Stoutenburg, Charles Cork and Earl & Chuck Hendrick.

Dairy Farm Stops

KAUFMAN, Sandusky **381 Freiburger Road**

This 225-acre farm has been in the family 65 years and is

currently managed by Jack & Marion Kaufman. The farm is noted for outstanding milk production and quality animals, including a number of proven sires currently in service with several artificial breeder organizations. An interesting facet of this stop is the use of on-farm embryo transplants.

Kaufman's 40 registered Holsteins have a current rolling herd average of 23,300 pounds of milk and 898 pounds of butterfat.

The farm cropping program usually contains 55 acres of shell corn, 15 acres of corn for silage, 70 acres of alfalfa, 20 acres of wheat and 28 acres of oats.

Jack is active in MABC, DHIA and the Holstein Association. He is a member of the Sanilac County Dairy Banquet Committee and the Sandusky school board; and he is a 4-H leader. His son, Jim, is an FFA member, a 4-H dairy judging leader and treasurer of the Holstein Association.

MSU Extension specialists will conduct a public interview with the Kaufman family at 10 a.m.

MILLER, Marlette **2411 McGill Road**

This farm has been in the family for 71 years. It consists of 1,000 acres that produce shell corn (550 acres), corn silage (150 acres), alfalfa (114 acres) and wheat (26 acres) each year.

The Miller brothers milk 130 grade Holsteins, with a current rolling herd average of 19,000 pounds of milk and 676 pounds of butterfat, in a recent structure expansion that houses a double-eight herringbone parlor. The herd has been in the county 17,000-pound club since 1977.

MSU Extension specialists will conduct a public interview with the Miller family at 1 p.m.

DALE-STAMP, Marlette **2675 Wood Road**

This farm has been in operation since 1856. The partnership between Linwood Dale and Tom Stamp has existed since 1976. The two currently manage 1,200 acres for the support of 110 Holsteins (40 grade and 70 registered).

The herd is currently posting a rolling herd average of 19,500 pounds of milk and 633 pounds of butterfat. Milking is done in a double-seven herringbone parlor. Dale and Stamp have upgraded existing facilities by equipping them with a computer-controlled magnet feeder and total mixed ratios in a one-cow group. The herd has been in the county 17,000-pound club since 1978.

Crop production usually includes 500 acres of shell corn, 15 acres of corn silage, 200 acres of alfalfa, 85 acres of wheat, 200 acres of dry edible beans and 70 acres of oats.

Tom is a 4-H leader, a trustee of the Second Presbyterian church, secretary of the Marlette Co-op board, a member of the Marlette school district agriculture advisory board and a member of the county dairy banquet committee. His wife, Deanna, is a 4-H leader, a county dairy communicator and a member of the dairy banquet committee.

Linwood is a 4-H leader, the secretary of the Second Presbyterian church and a member of the Cass Valley Co-op. His wife, Elizabeth, is a 4-H leader.

Both Dale and Stamp are members of Sanilac County FB.

MSU Extension specialists will conduct a public interview with the families at 2:15 p.m.

Livestock Producer Stops

STOUTENBURG, Sandusky 70 N. Stoutenburg Road

This 1,550-acre farm has been in the Stoutenburg family for approximately 100 years. It is currently managed by Albert Stoutenburg, a cash crop producer who also operates a small beef feedlot that is stocked with locally purchased feeders.

Albert annually markets 200 Holstein steers through area stockyards and as locker beef. The herd's ration, all farm grown, consists of full feed silage and dry grain fed at a

rate of 1% of body weight.

The farm cropping program consists of 330 acres of corn with yields averaging 140 bushels per acre, and 100 acres for corn silage. The 20 acres of alfalfa, harvested three times during the season, yield four tons per acre. The 100 acres of wheat average 80 bushels per acre, and 350 acres of sugar beets, grown under contract with Michigan Sugar, yield about 20 tons per acre. The 350 acres of dry edible beans have been averaging 15 cwt. per acre.

Albert is a member of the Michigan Sugar Company, the McKenzie Hospital board and the Sanilac County Agriculture Advisory Board.

MSU Extension specialists will interview the Stoutenburg family at 1:15 p.m.

CORK, Peck 236 Mortimer Line Road

This farm, which has been in the family for more than 100 years, is currently operated by Charles Cork. The cropping program consists of continuous corn for silage, with yields averaging 25 tons per acre. All of it is marketed through the 2,000 cattle annually sold through the Michigan Live Stock Exchange.

The feeders, generally Angus-Hereford-Charolais crossbreds, are purchased from Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. They are started in conventional pole barns and are fed a growing ration of silage with brewers' grain protein. They are finished on slats and are fed out on shelled corn (50% dry matter).

Charles is a member of the Thumb Cattlemen's board of directors, chairperson of the Speaker Township Planning Commission and vice president of the local school board. His wife, Dorothy, is committee chairperson of the local Cub Scouts and is a Girl Scout assistant leader.

MSU Extension specialists will conduct interviews with the Corks at 2:45 p.m.

HENDRICK, Decker 5318 Pringle Road

Earl & Chuck Hendrick have operated Hendrick Farms as a father-son partnership since 1977. They market Duroc-York crossbred hogs annually through the Michigan Live Stock Exchange.

The Hendricks, who purchase only breeding stock off the farm, have complete farrow-to-finish facilities that were built in 1978. An average of 765 hogs are farrowed per year. The average litter size is 8.7 piglets per sow.

The cropping rotation consists of 300 acres of corn with a yield of 115 bushels per acre; 20 acres of wheat yielding 75 bushels per acre; 200 acres of dry edible beans yielding 18 cwt. per acre; and 25 acres of oats.

Earl & Chuck are members of the Sanilac County FB.

Interviews with the Hendricks by MSU Extension specialists will begin at 9:45 a.m.

Lunch Available

A catered noon meal, served by the Sanilac County 4-H leaders, will be available at the Sandusky fairgrounds from 11:30 a.m. through 1 p.m. Tour details may be obtained from the Sanilac County MSU Cooperative Extension office at 313-648-2515.



**Michigan State University
July 26 - 28**

The Discussion Topic is used by Community Action Groups for monthly policy discussions.

Roads and Bridges

Many things in life are taken for granted. Urban citizens expect food to always be at the grocery store. Rural citizens think they can always drive to work or have the kids picked up by a convenient school bus. Farmers expect supplies to be delivered and products to go from farm to market. It has always been, so long as we can remember.

Each of these activities are dependent upon good roads — a system taken for granted. But trouble looms on the horizon for the system.

While state trunk lines represent 8% of the total roadways of Michigan and face problems, this topic will focus on county roads. County roads are divided by statute into primary and local. County primary roads measure 25,161 miles and represent 22% of the state's roads. Local roads involve 62,755 miles, or 53.4% of the state's road system.

What is the condition of county roads? Brace yourself!

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation report #162 (released in 1981), 34.6% of county primary roads are rated inadequate. For local roads, the figure is 58.2%. For bridges in Michigan, the inadequate rating is given to 36.5% on county primary roads and 66.9% on local roads. These two road systems contain 5,500 bridges.

County primary and local roads are under the jurisdiction of county road commissions. These commissions faced a decline in revenue for the past several years brought on by lighter cars, more fuel-efficient vehicles and ride sharing.

Because of decreased revenue between 1977 and 1981, road commissioners cut personnel from 7,985 to 5,186 in 1982. Annually, road commissions spend about \$28 million to keep equipment adequate. In 1981, that figure dropped to \$11 million.

Cost cutting methods are being used. Recycling material is

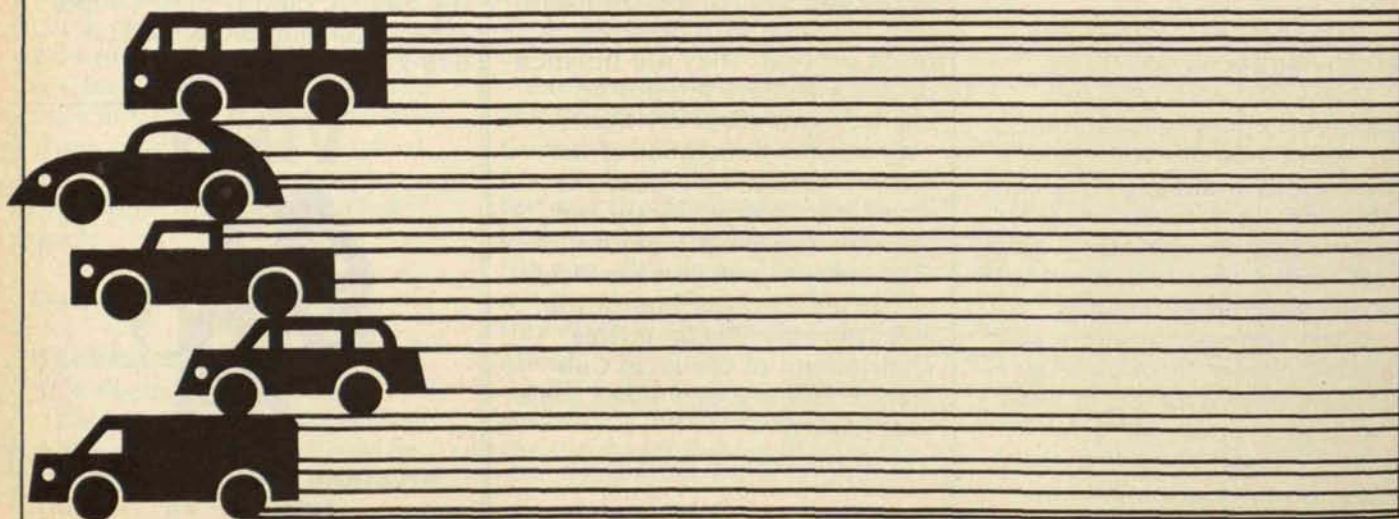
an example. However, building costs continue upward. Gravel and stone in some areas in Michigan are scarce and the cost is rising rapidly.

Experts believe that, for the most part, the construction of county roads is complete. We are now in the preservation phase. This includes strengthening to reduce break-up and widening for improved safety.

In January 1983 it was announced that work would start to replace 63 bridges this year. This is in addition to 28 previously approved for construction. In most cases, bridge construction comes from 80% federal funds with 10% from both state and local agencies.

Townships have, in many areas, used funds to help counties in financing bridge and road improvements.

In January 1983 the federal gas tax increased by 5 cents per gallon. In April, Michigan



gas tax increased by 2 cents per gallon. However, consumption continues to decline by about 6.5% comparing the first quarters of 1982 and 1983. It is estimated that the average driver will spend about \$5 per year more for gas tax this year than the previous year.

The net result, however, was that state revenues for maintenance and improvement rose in the first quarter of 1983 for the first time in three years. County road commissions received \$59.4 million based on the first quarter revenue.

It is estimated that \$30 million should be spent each year just to keep pace with bridge replacement. Under current economic conditions, that is not possible. It has been suggested that local millage be levied to pay for bridge repair in the local communities. Currently, user fees and taxes on vehicles and fuel form the basis of road and bridge construction and repair.

Part of the new "jobs bill" requested by Gov. James Blanchard and enacted by the Michigan Legislature is geared to road construction and repair. What that involves is not known at this time.

The dilemma will continue. Roads and bridges are going to deteriorate. School buses will not be able to cross some bridges, making student pick-up less convenient and more costly. Routes for trucks carrying supplies to farmers will be more difficult and costly.

Roads and bridges are important to rural Michigan. How can they be more adequately maintained?

That is the question facing the citizens of this state.

Discussion Questions

- User fees are the traditional way to finance road construction and maintenance. List other alternatives and indicate whether group members ap-

prove or disapprove of the alternatives.

- How much does your group know about your county road commission?

- How many miles of roads and how many bridges are in your county?

PROFILE: Gast

(continued from page 23)

Gast was born and raised on a farm in northeast Missouri where his parents still live. After receiving his degree in soil science from the University of Missouri, he worked with the Atomic Energy Commission and the University of Tennessee for 10 years on basic soil science, studying the fate of radio-nuclides in soils and their uptake by plants and subsequent incorporation into the food chain. The next step on his career ladder was the University of Minnesota Soil Science Department where his teaching and research broadened his interest in production agriculture problems. After seven years in that field, he became head of the department of agronomy at the University of Nebraska.

Gast met his wife, Mary Lou, while they were in college and today they have three grown children and two grandchildren.

While Gast is perfectly at ease discussing nuclides and biotechnology, he still remembers his early days on the farm "doing my share of work behind the horses. I sometimes think my dad held off mechanizing until my brother and I left home to keep us out of trouble. You don't have much time to get in trouble when you're behind two old horses and a plow."

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BCBS Premium Costs Set

As the current contract period for the Farm Bureau Blue Cross Blue Shield group draws to a close, Michigan Farm Bureau management reports a substantial improvement in the group performance.

MFB Member Services Department Manager John VanderMolen announced recently that after three years of rate increases — averaging 30% annually, the overall increase for all groups combined is less than 8% for 1983-84.

"Certainly, the past year has been a time of change and adjustment," VanderMolen said. "We are encouraged that our efforts to tighten medical underwriting and match premium to anticipated individual utilization has been successful.

In addition to implementing significant changes in the Farm Bureau program this past year, management has actively explored alternatives to the present Blue Cross Blue Shield carrier, including a thorough examination of private carrier and self-funding plans. Each alternative was evaluated based on benefit levels, costs and acceptability by providers as well as members.

Several health maintenance organization (HMO) plans were analyzed this past year, and as a result, members in 12 counties were given the opportunity to choose an HMO plan instead of one of the traditional Blue Cross Blue Shield plans. HMOs have demonstrated a remarkable ability to maintain low utilization and premium costs by concentrating on preventive health practices.

In addition, a free standing dental program was made available to members in several counties this past year. Unlike most dental plans that are tied to medical insurance, the free standing dental plan offered by Farm Bureau is available with or without medical insurance.

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Letters to Rural Living

(continued from page 17)

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Our concern extends to all domestic animals and we are totally opposed to any cruelty. While we, in agriculture, are not directly involved with laboratory test animals, we do see this method as the only viable method to safeguard consumers and to speed development of useful and sometimes life saving products.

These (Farm Bureau) policies, like this letter, originate at the basic "grassroots" level and they constitute the concerns and beliefs of American agriculture today.

Saginaw County Farm Bureau
Board of Directors
Richard E. Leach, President

If you have a question or opinion that you would like to share with Michigan Farm Bureau members in Rural Living magazine, send it to: Letters to Rural Living, Michigan Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, Mich. 48909. We retain the right to edit letters for length.

Legislative Review

(continued from page 7)

stringent tolerance levels in milk and meat.

Since 1976, when the danger was recognized, the MDA has discouraged the use of such silos and advised recoating the interiors to limit the contamination of stored feed. The contamination has been found in silos constructed by the Michigan Silo Company which has been out of business for several years. The PCB was an ingredient of the material used to coat the inside walls. The problem has been found in about 15 states. MDA Director Dean Pridgeon has outlined the details of the emergency rules in a letter to farmers having the PCB contaminated silos.

Farmers are being asked to work closely with the MDA's dairy and animal health inspectors so silage levels and contaminated silos can be monitored. Samples must be taken when silage is down to the six foot level as this silage may be highly contaminated and should not be fed until the degree of contamination is determined. Inspections must also be made on used silos that might be purchased as replacements and soil samples may need to be taken around the old silo site.

It is emphasized that the MDA must "make certain that no PCB contaminated milk or meat reaches the retail market for the protection of the industry as well as the public."

The MDA is also proceeding with a permanent regulation as the emergency rule expires in six months unless extended by the governor.

Pridgeon's letter recognizes that farmers are concerned about compensation for removal and disposal of the silos and points out that it is anticipated that legislation will be introduced to address the problem.

Farmers with PCB silos are concerned with the problems created by the emergency order. Some have been able to find other silos to use while replacing a contaminated one. Six farmers went to court and succeeded in getting a temporary injunction permitting them to add feed or farm products to their silo after the effective date of May 9. The court order applies only to those who brought the suit and does not affect the portion of the rule prohibiting the use of the silo after Sept. 1, 1983.

Michigan Farm Bureau has closely followed this issue for some time, especially since Blanchard signed the emergen-

cy rule. FB's long time general policy is that the farmer should be compensated when property is lost through government action and by no fault of the farmer. Usually such taking of property by government is compensated through condemnation procedures. FB will strongly support legislation to compensate farmers' losses resulting from the PCB silo contamination.

This is a bipartisan issue. It is expected that the legislation will be introduced in the Senate by Sen. Nick Smith (R-Addison) and in the House by Rep. Lewis Dodak (D-Montrose).

"Prepayment" of Sales Tax on Gasoline — The Department of Treasury is now promoting legislation to require "prepayment" of sales taxes on gasoline. The bill, H.B. 4587 (Brown, D-Kalamazoo), would mandate "prepayment" of most of the sales tax on gasoline by the first purchaser within the state.

For example, the wholesaler would "prepay" the tax to the refiner, who would "prepay" the tax to the state. The "prepaid" tax would be passed on to the retailer and consumer. The "prepayment" would be claimed by the retailer on the monthly sales tax return. The "prepayment" rate would be 4% of the statewide average price of self-serve leaded gasoline. Presently, sales taxes are collected by the retailer and then sent directly to the state.

The reason given for the legislation is that the Treasury Department claims that sales tax revenue is being lost because of illegal operations, fraud, bankruptcies, falsified records, etc. Honest station operators claim this creates unfair competition. The claimed loss is \$2

(continued on page 34)

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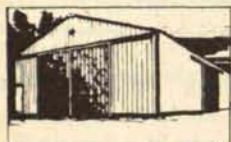
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Legislative Review

(continued from page 33)

million a year, but testimony stated that the total revenue from this source is \$150 million a year. The loss is thus about 1 1/4%, which is extremely low.

FB raised the question of what happens when gasoline is sold to those who are exempt from the sales tax because it is used for the production of a product. This would include farmers, schools, governmental agencies, construction, etc. The answer was that it would have to be refunded. This means that during the delay and paper work of refunds, the state would have interest free money.

Farmers Petroleum Cooperative, Inc., estimates that it would cost \$10,000 to just change the computer programming. It is also estimated that the annual interest cost on the money required to make the "tax prepayment" would be \$25,000 a year. Such added cost would have to end up in higher prices to farmers and other customers. All companies would be affected in a similar manner.

The question really is: Is the 1 1/4% loss in revenue the real reason the Treasury Department wants "prepayment"? Or, do they want that huge amount of money paid in advance, which suddenly would balance this year's budget and provide money for other things? This would be regardless of the added cost to businesses.

Still another question might be: Is this only the beginning? Will prepayment of other taxes be mandated? And the final question: Why can't the state of Michigan enforce the present law? After such questions, the House Taxation Committee has appointed a subcommittee to

further study the issue and report in September. The issue has serious consequences.

If "prepayment" can be mandated for gasoline sales taxes it can also be mandated for other taxes.

Education Finance Flim

Flam — Two newly introduced bills, S.B. 313 and S.B. 314, provide a scheme for the state to shift some school costs back to the local taxpayers. The proposal would avoid the mandate of the people when they passed the Tax Limitation Amendment to the constitution in 1978. This constitutional change requires that the "proportion of total state spending paid to all units of local government, taken as a group, shall not be reduced below that proportion in effect in fiscal year 1978-79."

In order to carry out the electors' mandate, in 1979 the Legislature set the proportion of the state budget guaranteed to local units, including school districts, at 41.6%. The state's payment to the Public School Employment System and to Social Security were counted in the "state" share and not as part of the 41.6%.

S.B. 313 and S.B. 314 would evade the constitutional requirement by making full payment of these costs to local school districts and at the same time charge the costs to the 41.6%.

The cost is estimated to be \$125 million for the rest of the current fiscal year and \$300 million for 1984. This payment shift would make it possible to gain that money for other state spending and circumvent both the spirit and intent of the 1978 constitutional mandate.

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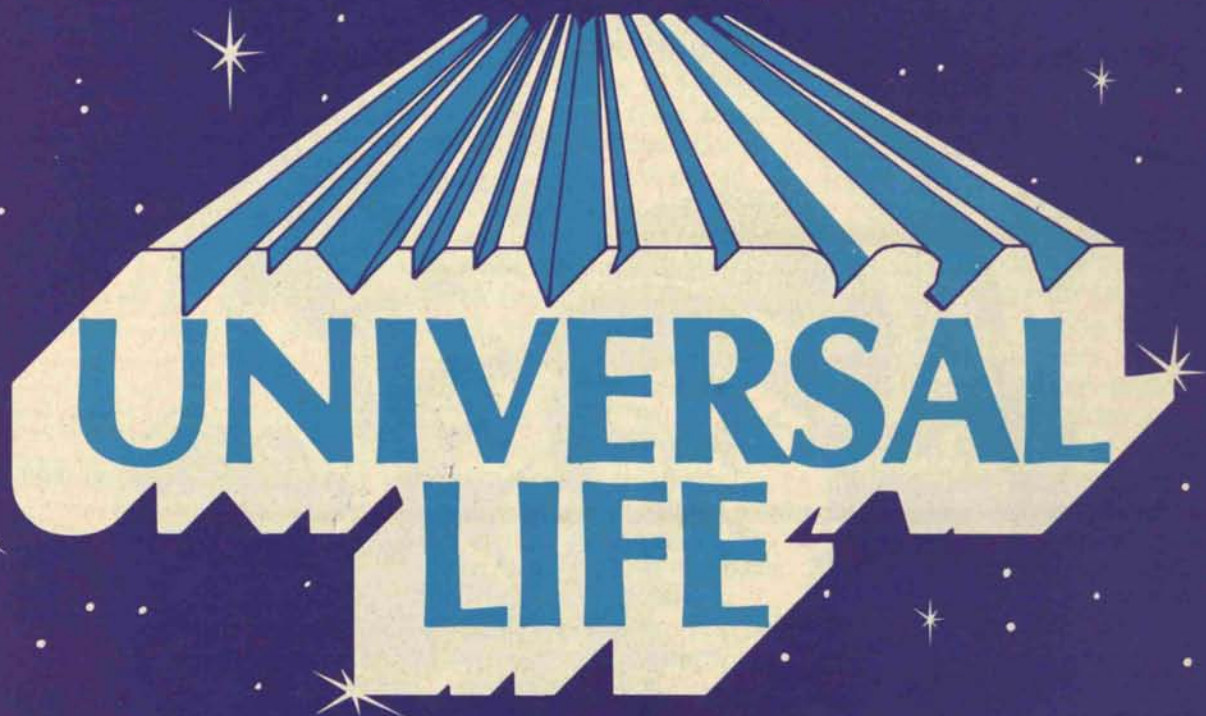
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