

# MICHIGAN FARM NEWS



July 15, 1991

## Block Permits Providing Excess Deer Relief

Written by: Cindy Bellinger

Photo: Courtesy of DNR

The 1990 deer hunting season resulted in a 10 - 20 percent decrease in deer populations, the first decrease in Michigan since 1982.

Of the 322,890 antlerless licenses issued last season, 26,263 were block permits. These block permits were issued to 1,463 landowners or approximately 2 percent of the Michigan agricultural producers. Farmers and hunters using these permits were responsible for 8.5 percent of the total deer harvest.

According to DNR Big Game Specialist, Ed Langenau, the crop damage block permit system is a three year program to trim the deer population on private lands where severe crop damage has occurred. "We've been pleased with it, we've helped some farmers control problems that they haven't been able to before," he said.

However, Langenau says the crop damage block permit system is not the answer for everyone. "In many places, block permits are not needed," he said. "There are cases where the regular application process is well suited to the farmers needs, and I have some concern that we're pushing the block permit statewide as a solution to crop damage when there is another option. The regular permit drawing is extremely effective and easy for a landowner to use, while the block permit is the extreme case when the regular system hasn't worked."

Landowners are encouraged to use the regular antlerless permits if less than 12 deer need to be removed. But if severe crop damage has been documented and there are 12 or more nuisance deer on the land, then farmers may find block permits useful.

To be eligible for block permits, landowners must have had significant crop damage in at least one year out of the last four and severe damage during the current year. Crop damage must be documented by a DNR biologist, who determines the severity of damage, eligibility for block permits and the amount of nuisance deer to be removed.

Applications for block permits must be in by Aug. 15, 1991 and, in extreme cases, the DNR will accept applications up to Oct. 15, 1991. If approved, the landowner must purchase at least ten block permits, at a cost of \$3.00 a piece.

A major change in the block permit system, recently approved by the DNR Commission, is a referral system between landowners and hunters, according to Vicki Pontz, associate legislative counsel at Michigan Farm Bureau.

"The important thing this year is that landowners will be told that their name and address can be made available upon request through the Freedom of Information Act," she said.

"The plan is to allow farmers to indicate whether or not they would like hunters referred to their property and if so, their names will be given to the county CES office."

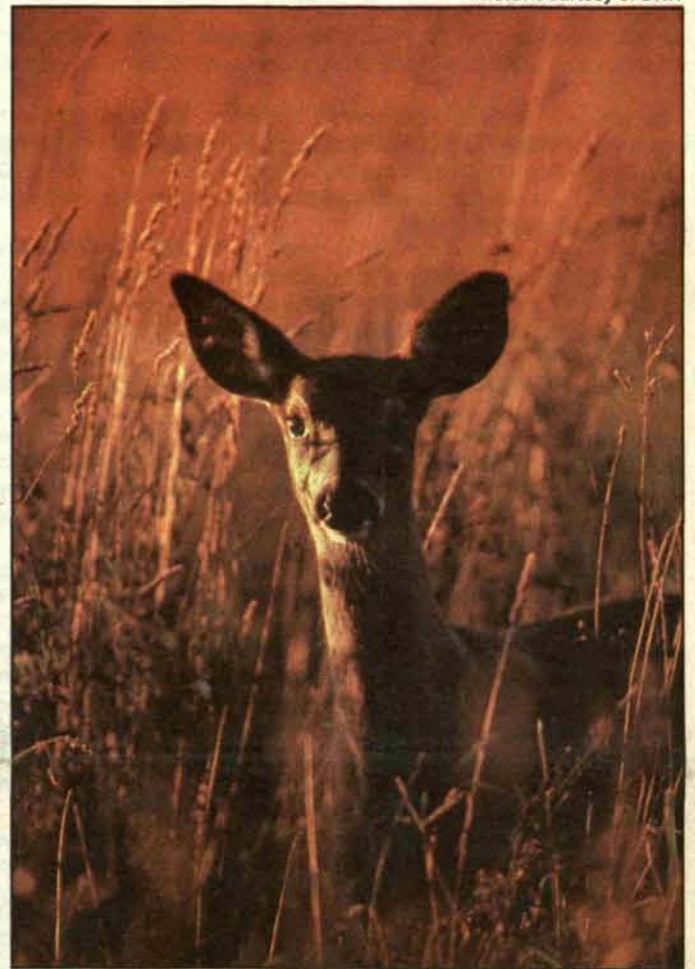
If approved for block permits by District Wildlife Supervisors, landowners will receive their permits through the mail by Sept. 15, 1991. These permits are good from Oct. 1, 1991 to Jan. 1, 1992. Hunters using block permits need to have a valid hunting license for the season they plan to hunt in.

A landowner can give as many block permits to one hunter as he wishes and may reissue them if the permits have not been filled by earlier sportsmen. It is illegal for the landowner to sell these permits. However, in the past, farmers have charged for parking or for the use of their land.

Block permits can also be valid on private lands adjoining the farmers land in which the permits were issued, if the neighboring landowner gives permission.

According to Pontz, when the hunting season is over, landowners must complete the "Report of Hunters Issued Crop Damage Block Permits" form. "The form is important because it provides information needed to justify the program and help the DNR with the count," she said.

This form must be returned to the DNR by Jan. 15, 1992. If the landowner fails to meet the deadline, they'll be ineligible for the program next year. Last year, 128 farmers did not return their paperwork and are not eligible this year for permits, but they may reapply next year, according to the DNR.



Another goal of this program is to maximize the use of block permits while minimizing the use of summer kill permits, but there is still a need for them. "There are situations where taking additional deer in the fall just won't solve the problem," Pontz explained. "Block permits do not solve the problem during the summer when a crop is there and it is being damaged."

Langenau said that much more can be accomplished on the local level than can be achieved by the DNR. "You can have a perfect regulatory system at the state level that provides all kinds of flexibility, but unless you have local participation and understanding, nothing is going to happen," he said.

See "Block" - continued on page 7

### DNR District Offices

<b>Marquette Regional Headquarters</b> (906) 228-6561	
Baraga District	(906) 353-6651
Crystal Falls District	(906) 875-6622
Escanaba District	(906) 786-2351
Sault Ste. Marie Dist.	(906) 635-5281
Newberry District	(906) 293-5131
<b>Lansing Regional Headquarters</b> (517) 322-1300	
Grand Rapids	(616) 456-5071
Imlay City District	(313) 724-2015
Plainwell District	(616) 685-6851
Jackson District	(517) 784-3188

Pte. Mouillee District	(313) 379-9692
Livonia District	(313) 953-0241

<b>Roscommon Regional Headquarters</b> (517) 275-5151	
Gaylord District	(517) 732-3541
Indian River District	(616) 238-9313
Atlanta District	(517) 785-4251
Cadillac District	(616) 775-9727
Traverse City	(616) 946-4920
Baldwin	(616) 745-4651
Mio District	(517) 826-3211
Bay City District	(517) 684-9141
Cass City District	(517) 872-5300
St. Charles District	(517) 865-6211

## Pesticide Ruling Could Cause Chaos

The American Farm Bureau Federation has blasted the Supreme Court ruling allowing local governments to adopt their own pesticide regulations. "The Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the Township of Casey, Wisconsin, is a bad decision which could result in regulatory chaos among the various legal jurisdictions," said AFBF President Dean Kleckner.

Farm Bureau filed a Friend of the Court brief in the case opposing Casey's efforts to place exclusive control of pesticide-use decisions in the hands of its township board, enabling it to bypass the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

The Supreme Court ruled that since the

federal law does not bar states from enacting laws more stringent than those of the federal government, that right also extends to local units of government that are delegated regulatory powers by the state.

"Under the ruling, one farm could fall under several different pesticide laws, if that farm spans several political jurisdictions," President Dean Kleckner said.

According to Kleckner, the ruling will essentially undermine FIFRA. "It will create a patchwork of different restrictions on the use of pesticides, unless local government units can be made to understand that federal regulations are adequate. Separate regulations are unnecessary," he said.

### In This Issue...

You'll find an extra eight pages devoted to management tips and strategies for dairy operators, and notice of an MSU Cooperative Extension Service series of meetings across Michigan called, appropriately, "Farming Through the Dairy Situation."

Special thanks to the MSU Departments of: Agricultural Economics; Animal Science; Agricultural Engineering; Crops and Soil Sciences; and the MSU Outreach Communication staff for their talented, hard work.

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## Membership – Thanks to You, It Works for Everybody

Every Farm Bureau member this month can note with pride the achievement of our 1991 statewide membership goal. Surpassing 114,500 family members gives your organization an all-time membership high and recognition as one of the fastest growing state Farm Bureaus in the nation.

Many people were part of this membership success. The insurance company personnel -- indeed, staff from the entire Farm Bureau family of companies -- played a crucial role in surfacing and signing new member prospects. County Farm Bureau office managers and other support staff also made outstanding contributions to the membership drive.

County Farm Bureau volunteers formed the heart of our campaign to sign-up farmer members. Nothing is more effective in convincing a farmer to join the organization than to have fellow farmers go right out to the farm for a persuasive sales talk. It's hard to resist when you hear your neighbors enthusiastically describe the economic, educational and social benefits of the organization.

Frequently, our most active and innovative leaders are also our most successful membership volunteers. That's because those county Farm Bureau leaders recognize the ultimate value of new regular members. They know that new members are much more than just additional names on the membership roster. New members also represent potential leaders for the future, as well as a source of fresh perspectives on policy issues and concerns.

I would strongly encourage you to get involved in your county membership campaign each year. Not only will you help your organization, you will help develop your own leadership skills. Active county Farm Bureau members recognize that their organization offers unlimited opportunities for effecting positive change in their industry through many exciting projects like Agriculture in the Classroom, legislative seminars, mall and fair displays, Media Response Teams, and Community Action Groups. They recognize that in uncertain times, it's comforting to have an organization like Farm Bureau at your side.

Agriculture faces many challenges in the year to come. Wetland regulations and other environmental concerns will influence farmers' production decisions. Tax reform and revision of P.A. 116 will influence financial planning. And building and maintaining support for Michigan State University will influence the future growth of our industry. These challenges and many more can be successfully met through the unified membership strength of Farm Bureau. Thanks to continued membership growth, our organization is assured a place of stature and influence in the years to come.

*Jack Laurie*  
Jack Laurie, President  
Michigan Farm Bureau

## New Agriculture Dean Recommended at MSU



Fred L. Poston of Washington State University is slated to become vice provost and dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University in September. Poston is to succeed Dr. James H. Anderson, who is retiring after 14 years as dean and seven as vice provost.

The 44-year old director of Washington State's Cooperative Extension Service and Associate Dean of Agriculture and Home Economics will be recommended to the MSU Board of Trustees at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 26, Provost David Scott announced Monday, June 24.

"He has experience in a state that, like Michigan, has extensive water and forest resources in addition to agricultural industries that are highly diversified -- spanning fruit, field-crop and animal farming as well as forestry and fisheries," said MSU President John DiBiaggio.

Poston, who has been at WSU since 1987, has been cited for decentralization of administration as well as a major investment in computers and a television network of 45 satellite dishes linking all 39 Washington counties. Poston received a B.S. degree in biology at West Texas State University and a M.S. and Ph.D. degree in entomology at Iowa State University.

## Great Lakes Corn Destined for the USSR?

There are strong indications that U.S. corn sold to the U.S.S.R. over the last week of June and first week of July has started to be loaded from Great Lakes ports, according to *Knight Ridder Financial News*. A vessel currently being loaded from the Andersons facility in Maumee, Ohio, is said to be destined for the Soviet Union, trading officials say.

According to a recent Chicago Board of Trade, receipts/shipments report for Toledo, Ohio, 514,975 bushels of corn were loaded at the Andersons on July 1, rumored to be the first part of a Soviet-bound cargo.

Sources would not confirm that any Great Lakes corn was destined for the U.S.S.R., but did say that corn recently traded for shipment from Toledo had met Soviet quality and grade specifications. Comparative freight costs between Toledo and Milwaukee have also given rise to speculation of shipments from Milwaukee, Great Lakes trading sources say.

Since a new round of export credit guarantees was offered to the Soviet Union, USDA has reported sales of U.S. corn to the U.S.S.R. totaling 741,000 tonnes. There are now \$171 million remaining of the original feed grain credit line of \$285 million offered to the U.S.S.R. Of the \$75 million dollars allocated for freight, \$45 million remain, USDA said.

## In Brief...

### Dry Bean Industry Research Monies to Continue

Congressional approval to continue funding of two scientists at MSU in dry bean research has been granted. This approval comes on the heels of a threat to discontinue Agricultural Research Service (ARS) funding to MSU after the death of MSU scientist Dr. Fred Saettler.

According to Michigan Bean Commission Chairman Kendall English, the funding approval will mean the commitment toward new variety development will continue. Funding for the Saginaw Valley Dry Bean and Sugar Beet Research farm was continued also to the tune of \$189,000.

### June Farm Price Index Up 2 Percent

The index of prices received by U.S. farmers for their products in June was up 2 percent from May levels, and was up 2 percent from June 1990 levels, according to *Knight Ridder News*.

Higher prices in June for oranges, most sold fresh rather than for juice, were responsible for most of the gain, USDA said in its monthly agricultural price report. The price reflects the short crop in California due to last winter's freeze.

USDA said wheat prices were slightly higher than May, while feedgrain, oilseed and hay prices were all lower compared to May. Other major contributors to the 2 percent increase included tomatoes, lemons, and cotton. Lower prices for milk, hogs, corn and wheat were partially offsetting.

### July 7 Storm Damage Varies Across Michigan

Consider yourself fortunate if you experienced no major losses as a result of the July 7 storm. According to Farm Bureau Insurance's Grand Rapids claims office, portions of Kent and Ionia counties experienced severe losses. An area located five miles south of Belding suffered the heaviest damage, with 17 barns destroyed and 10 to 12 homes also damaged.

"We estimate that our total claims losses from the storm will range from \$1.5 to \$2 million," said Bill Monville, property claims manager for Farm Bureau Insurance. As of press time, 1,000 storm related claims had been filed, with more being reported daily.

### Canadian Pork Products Off-Duty

The United States formally lifted its countervailing duty on Canadian pork products July 1. Duties that have been collected will be returned to Canadian producers, according to a Commerce Department report.

The duty was removed after a U.S.-Canadian panel denied a request by the U.S. pork industry for a reversal of a lower panel's ruling that the duty violated current trade agreements. The duty on fresh, chilled and frozen pork was imposed in 1989. A separate countervailing duty on live hogs, in effect since 1985, remains in effect against Canadian Producers.

### 17 Michigan Counties Seeking Disaster Declaration

Gov. Engler is expected to approve a letter to USDA Secretary Edward Madigan requesting disaster declaration for 17 counties. The designation would allow farmers in those areas to receive low-interest FHA loans, if approved by Madigan, according to Michigan Department of Agriculture officials. A decision is expected soon.

The counties included on the list are: Allegan, Benzie, Berrien, Cass, Grand Traverse, Ionia, Iosco, Kent, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Monroe, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa, and Wayne counties. The three eastern counties are seeking disaster declaration due to excessive spring rains and the subsequent loss of small grains. A majority of the remaining counties are requesting disaster declaration due to early spring high temperatures and frost that devastated a majority of the fruit and vegetable crop in western Michigan.

### Animal Rights Terrorists Strike In Oregon

An animal rights activist organization not only burned and vandalized an Oregon State University animal research facility, they also admitted guilt of the crime and provided videotaped evidence. The publicity hungry group known as the Animal Liberation Front ("ALF"), burned a mink breeding barn and trashed a research laboratory destroying records and spray painting walls and equipment, according to the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*.

In a second incident, a fire was set at the Northwest Farm Foods Cooperative, which furnishes feed and bedding to local fur farms. ALF delivered notes to Washington media taking credit for setting the fire with incendiary devices. The terrorist group, which vowed it would continue similar activities until "the last mink farm is burnt to the ground," may have shot itself in the foot with its acts of trespass, arson and vandalism. Legislation moving through the Oregon Legislature would make interfering with animal research or stealing, injuring or removing animals from research facilities a crime punishable by imprisonment. Federal legislation also is pending to increase penalties for attacks on animal facilities.

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 NATIONAL  
ISSUES


 STATE  
ISSUES

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### Private Property Rights Act

*Status:* Senator Symms (R-Idaho) offered S. 50 as an amendment to the Surface Transportation Efficiency Act approved by the Senate in June. The amendment was approved.

The amendment would require federal agencies to determine if their activities will have an impact on private property rights. If private property rights would be impacted, the agency must then consider alternatives to reduce and/or eliminate the adverse impact, including compensation to the property owner.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau strongly supports the amendment. However, during debate, a motion was introduced to table the amendment, which was defeated by a vote of 44 to 55. Interestingly enough, Michigan Senators Don Riegle and Carl Levin voted for the motion to table the amendment, considered by many to be a vote against private property rights.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Al Almy, extension 2040.

### Disaster Assistance

*Status:* The House Agriculture Committee recently held hearings regarding losses of agricultural crops resulting from disastrous weather conditions. Four Farm Bureau witnesses presented testimony on crop losses in 1990 and 1991 and the need for disaster assistance.

Following the hearings, the committee directed staff to explore methods to fund the estimated \$2 billion program to provide payments to producers along with other forms of relief. Under the "pay as you go" provisions imposed by Congress, the cost of the program must be offset with spending cuts in other program areas, or tax increases.

Congressional staff has suggested three alternatives which politically are, unacceptable. These suggestions include: cuts in wheat and feedgrain target prices; cuts in the dairy program; and putting limits on the amount of grain that could be put into the price support program.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau supports development and funding of a disaster assistance program. Michigan fruit and vegetable growers have suffered serious losses to frost, and field crop producers have experienced losses due to heavy rains in some areas. Farm Bureau does not, however, support tax increases or cuts in other agricultural programs to obtain funding for the program.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Al Almy, extension 2040.

### Dairy Relief

*Status:* The Senate Agriculture Committee and the House Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee has held numerous hearings on supply management alternatives for the dairy industry. The House Subcommittee passed a bill in late June to provide immediate assistance to dairy farmers hurt by falling milk prices. The Subcommittee bill would:

- Increase the price support level to \$12.60 per hundredweight (cwt.) for the next two years. Current law does not allow the support price to drop below \$10.10 cwt. In 1994, the price support would be raised to \$12.10, but drop to \$11.60 in 1995-96.
- Apply an assessment on dairy farmers if government purchases of dairy products are between 5 and 7 billion pounds. The assessment level would be determined by a producer-elected board and would be subject to U.S.D.A. approval. Producers who didn't increase production from the previous year could apply for refunds of the assessment.
- Provide for a two-tier pricing system if government purchases of dairy products exceed 7 billion pounds. A lower price would apply to milk produced in excess of commercial use.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau recognizes the need for immediate relief, but does not support the dairy price support increase and assessment on producers called for in the proposal. Farm Bureau does support consideration of a target price or diversion payment for producers who reduce milk production and help provide a dampening effect on supplies.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Al Almy, extension 2040.

— State Issues —

### Corn Utilization Commission

*Status:* House Bill 4868, sponsored by Rep. Muxlow (R-Brown City), requires a legislative-mandated check-off of 1/4 of one cent on the net value of corn produced in Michigan to fund promotional and informational programs.

An agreement has been reached between House Ag Committee Chairman Rep. Hickner (D-Bay City), Rep. Muxlow and MDA to work with corn growers in utilizing P.A. 232 to develop a program and to conduct the referendum.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau opposes H.B. 4868, but does support any commodity group which is organized to utilize P.A. 232 to determine if a referendum and check-off should be levied for promotional purposes.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Ron Nelson, extension 2043.

### Right-to-Farm Procedures and Guidelines

*Status:* The Department of Agriculture has released draft proposals of Right-to-Farm guidelines for nutrient management and pesticide management practices.

The drafts contain both general and specific recommendations, which, if followed, would provide farmers protection in Right-to-Farm civil challenges. Procedures spelled out in the guidelines include: management and method of application; minimizing impact on non-target areas; and emphasizes following label directions, soil testing and recognizing weather factors.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau is evaluating each of the draft proposals and is seeking comments from members regarding areas of concern for presentation to MDA.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Ron Nelson, extension 2043.

### Pesticide Regulations

*Status:* Rep. Gubow (D-Huntington Woods), has introduced, H.B. 4489, which would require posting and notification of areas receiving pesticide application and a written or oral contract between the applicator and the landowner. The bill also requires commercial applicators to notify property owners with a one-page summary of the pesticides being used.

MDA is currently negotiating rules pursuant to the Pesticide Control Act to do the same as the proposed legislation. The bill allows for a continuation of negotiations on the rules, but if there is no final proposal within 90 days of the effective date, emergency rules can be implemented.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture is speeding up the process of developing regulation 637 rules on pesticide use to comply with Rep. Gubow's proposed legislation.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau provided amendments to ensure that posting and notification requirements and the written contract requirement will not apply to agricultural pesticide application. Farm Bureau continues to work with MDA on the regulations.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Vicki Pontz, extension 2046.

### Off-Road Vehicles

*Status:* The Senate has passed legislation, sponsored by Rep. Tom Alley (D-West Branch), establishing an official off-road vehicle (ORV) trail plan. Michigan now has, according to the Department of Natural Resources, the second largest statewide ORV system in the nation, second only to California.

The resolution changes the previous "open-unless-posted-closed" policy to "closed-unless-posted-open" policy for state forest roads, and requires the DNR to notify all registered ORV owners in the state of the changes.

The notification will include mailing a one-page summary of the act and information on obtaining detailed copies of the system. An ORV Trail Advisory Committee is also encouraged to conduct a minimum of three public hearings on the ORV trail system between June 1 and Aug. 31, 1991.

The DNR will provide information and warnings rather than fines or citations this summer to allow ORV owners to become familiar with the designated trails and new rules.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau supports the legislation creating the ORV policy and the plan to implement the regulations.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Vicki Pontz, extension 2046.

### Pesticide Applicator Regulations

*Status:* Regulations regarding pesticide applicator testing and certification have been passed by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. As a result, several new categories of pesticide application for commercial applicators have been established such as field crops, fruit crops, and right-of-way pest management.

Private applicators (farmers) are not required to be certified by category unless they are applying pesticides by aircraft for structural fumigation, soil fumigation, greenhouse fumigation, or chemigation. In those situations that apply, the applicator must demonstrate a practical knowledge of the additional standards specifically identified by category.

The rules provide an opportunity for an applicator to be "registered" to apply restricted use pesticides if under the direct supervision of a certified applicator. Once a registered applicator has acquired a specific number of hours applying a restricted use pesticide, the certified applicator may request an exclusion to the testing requirements. This exclusion may be useful to private applicators who wish to have their employees registered to apply restricted use pesticides.

Under the new rules, an applicator's certification will be renewable on December 31 of every third year following issuance.

*Farm Bureau Position:* Farm Bureau supported the rules.

*Farm Bureau Contact:* Vicki Pontz, extension 2046.

American Farm Bureau's Toll Free Capitol Hotline Service



**Michigan and Major Commodity Area  
Extended Weather Outlook**

T - Temp.	7/15.....7/31	7/15.....9/30
P - Precip.	T.....P	T.....P
Michigan	A.....N	A.....N
W. Corn Belt	A.....N	A.....N
E. Corn Belt	A.....N	A.....B
Wint. Wheat Belt	N.....N	N.....N
Spr. Wheat Belt	N.....N	N.....A
Pac. NW Wheat	B.....N	B.....N
Delta	B.....B	A.....B
Southeast	B.....B	A.....N
West Texas	N.....N	N.....N
San Joaquin	B.....B	N.....N

A-Above Average, B-Below Average, N-Normal, MA-Much Above, MB-Much Below, NP-No Precip.: Source: National Weather Office

# Weather

**Crop Progress  
Ahead of Schedule**

Corn is generally in good condition with some leaf rolling from dry weather. Corn growth is above normal in most areas, with some corn silking in the Lower Peninsula and average heights ranging from 45 to 60 inches. Some deer damage is being reported in the Upper Peninsula.

Dry bean planting was reported nearly complete with some outbreaks of leafhopper and Mexican bean beetle infestation reported. Winter wheat is rated 68 percent good to excellent.

Isolated orchard areas in Van Buren, Kent, Montcalm and surrounding counties were damaged by wind and hail from the July 7 severe storm. Peach growers are also reported to be concerned about the spread of fire blight bacteria as a result.

Soil moisture is rated 50 percent short, 45 percent adequate, and 5 percent surplus.

**CROP PROGRESS REPORT  
Week Ending 7/7/91**

	This Week	Last Year	5-Year Avg.
inches			
Corn Height	55	17	22
percent			
Corn Silked	18%	1%	2%
Hay First Cut.	96%	90%	90%
Hay Second Cut.	15%	10%	5%
Oats Headed	95%	90%	85%
Oats Turned Yellow	50%	10%	15%
Soys Blooming	30%	0%	3%
Wheat Ripe	50%	5%	15%
Wheat Harvested	25%	0%	5%

Source: Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service

For 6/1/91 to 6/30/91	Temperature		Accum. Grow. Degree Days*	Dev. From Norm. GDD*	Precipitation	
	Observed Mean	Dev. From Normal			Actual (inch.)	Dev. From Norm. (inch.)
Alpena	65.6	+4.4	509	+120	.20	-2.96
Bad Axe	67.8	+0.4	540	+10	1.72	-1.64
Escanaba	64.5	+5.4	446	+159	2.82	-3.04
Grand Rapids	71.2	+4.1	652	+119	1.76	-.34
Imlay City	68.4	+1.0	565	+35	1.77	-.90
Lansing	69.3	+2.5	604	+79	2.60	-.90
Ludington	68.1	+3.2	553	+100	1.24	-1.70
Marquette	62.9	+3.3	431	+92	3.06	-.80
Sault Ste. Marie	63.0	+4.6	364	+77	1.09	-2.17
Standish	67.2	+1.3	527	+43	2.10	-.98
Tipton	69.4	+2.0	588	+58	1.97	-.90
Traverse City	70.5	+7.6	622	+222	.80	-2.23
Watervliet	70.6	+3.0	625	+92	1.58	-1.97

\* Growing Degree Days are based on B.E. Base 50F method and are accumulated from June 1, through June 30 1991.

**Wheat Harvest Ahead of Schedule**

The winter wheat harvest continues to progress well ahead of normal throughout the U.S. Midwest and Ohio Valley amid dry, hot weather, according to *Knight Ridder News*. Harvest activity has been frenzied in the Ohio Valley with the Ohio harvest advancing 48 percentage points during the week of July 1, while Indiana advanced 40 percentage points and Illinois advanced to 29 percent.

Locally, Michigan harvest is 10 to 15 days ahead of schedule by some estimates. Michigan Ag Commodities reported active harvest in Clinton county and western areas, adding that yields and test weight were somewhat disappointing, with 54 - 55 pound test weights. The lower test weights are being blamed on the wet spring that resulted in mold, scab and disease problems. Heavy winds have downed some wheat, but is reportedly still harvestable.

**Summary and 30 & 90-Day Forecast**

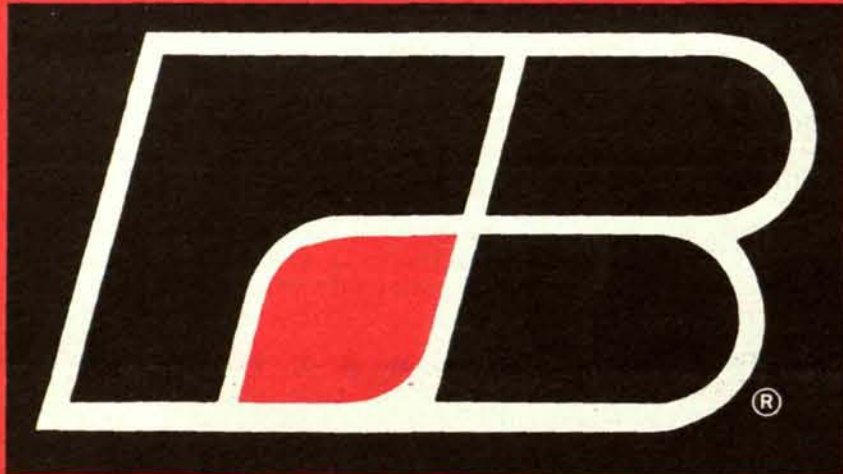
Warmer than normal temperatures continued throughout June, although departures from normal were not as large as those recorded during May. Drier than normal weather caused some drought stress in western and southern Michigan, while the dryness allowed for planting completion in the eastern portions of the state.

The shortage of rainfall may have been compensated for during the 4th of July holiday with widespread rainfall totals ranging from 2 to 3 inches with the heaviest amounts recorded in central Michigan.

The latest 30 and 90-day outlook call for a continuation of the mid-continent ridging jet stream pattern that covered Michigan during May and June. Above normal temperatures are expected to continue all across the state.

Precipitation is forecast to be near normal for the remainder of July. For August through September, precipitation is expected to range from slightly above normal in the western Upper Peninsula to near normal over northern and central sections of lower Michigan, and below normal over the southeastern Lower Peninsula.

Jeff Andresen, Ag Meteorologist, MSU



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- HOME
- BUSINESS
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# DAIRY EXTRA



July 15, 1991

## Seven Ways to Squeeze More out of The Farm's Cash Flow

There are few dairy operations in Michigan that are not having a difficult time trying to maintain an adequate cash flow. However, there is a strong likelihood for survival if the dairy manager enlists the help of the support crew.

Ben Bartlett, MSU Extension dairy and livestock specialist in the Upper Peninsula, says the crew, of course, includes the family and employees and folks off the farm.

"They are the local veterinarian, feed and fertilizer suppliers, equipment dealers, lenders and the Extension agents," Bartlett says. "These people all have a vested interest in the farm's success and can be of substantial value as the manager plans a strategy to ride out the low milk prices during 1991."

He says that it is important to plan well and be sure to tap other people for ideas when considering the following ways to bolster cash flow.

**1) Determine where you are now**  
What did it cost you to produce a cwt of milk last year? Are your feed costs about average for the area? You can get help from your county agent, lender or accountant. Think of this activity as an exercise to identify hidden opportunities in your operation.

### MSU Schedules Special Dairy Workshops

Dairy producers can learn more about management options and the outlook for market prices during six regional workshops that will start during July.

The series will be conducted by MSU Cooperative Extension Service specialists in dairy management and agricultural economics.

The series, "Farming Through the Dairy Situation," will be held at the following locations:

- July 23**, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Sanilac County Extension office, 37 Austin St., Sandusky.
- July 24**, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Grand Rapids Township Hall, 1836 East Beltline Ave., NE, Grand Rapids.
- July 30**, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Wolverine Electric Cooperative, 4 miles east of Cadillac on M-55.
- July 31**, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. CDT (8 p.m. EDT), North Central Area School, US 2 and 41, near Powers.
- Aug. 2**, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Kellogg Biological Station Dairy Center, 10641 North 40th St., Hickory Corners. Guided tours of the facility will be offered beginning at 11 a.m.
- Aug. 7**, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Livingston County Extension Office, 820 East Grand River, Howell.

More information about the workshops can be obtained from the county Extension office or by calling Sherrill Nott or Ann Eure at 517-353-4522.

### 2) Cost Control

a) Since feed is approximately 50% of your costs, test feeds and use a nutritionist to keep the rations balanced. Make sure the expensive additions in your rations are still cost effective with cheaper milk.

b) Many farmers have found grazing to cut costs by \$100/head or more with a payback on investment in months, not years.

c) Review and rejustify your cropping program - are your grain crops (corn, oats, barley) really cheaper to grow than to buy? Is the back "20" with deer damage worth the fertilizer, seed, etc.? Maybe you can still grow some grains, but limit it to those fields you can manure and that have a history of consistently good yields.

d) Soil test to get the most mileage from your fertilizer dollar and to check your fertility bank account. This may be the year to draw upon your past deposits.

e) Make harvesting high quality forage a priority this summer. A 10% increase in forage protein decreases next year's soybean meal purchases by \$23/cow.

f) What's your next biggest cost after feed? What can you do to more effectively control that cost item?

### 3) Price of Milk

a) You can't change the base price, but make sure you are getting a reasonable butter fat level. If not, get the feed dealer or nutritionist to check the ration and your feeding management.

b) Are you getting all available quality premiums? Often only one or two cows will put you over the SCC limit. Find these cows because they're costing you money regardless of milk production.



### 4) Maximize Production Potential

a) Maintain the maximum milk sales your facilities and forage supply will allow. Keep milking cows as long as they cover feed costs, then replace with fresh animals.

b) Almost all herds have the genetics to produce 20,000 lbs. plus, but are limited by nutrition. Feed best forages to fresh cows and balance the ration.

c) Keep cows pregnant, even if it means using a bull. Dry cows and empty stalls aren't profitable even with \$14.00 milk.

### 5) Consider Income Alternatives

- Woodlot harvest - Milk 3 x/day  
- Cash crop - Dairy steers

The potential is unlimited. Review your resources for any additional income that may be appropriate for your situation. But,

be sure to cost out the ideas and make sure they won't detract from your main business, milk production.

### 6) Planning

Put together a cash flow plan for the coming year using these ideas, other sources of assistance and, most importantly, your knowledge of your operation and your goals.

### 7) Communication

Besides using and reviewing your plan, there is one important point to remember. The success of your dairy business will never be as important as your health and family relationships. Don't let things get out of perspective. A lot of people want to help, so give your feed dealer, vet, lender, other suppliers, or extension agent a call.

## Seeking a Long-Term Dairy Solution

Any federal dairy inventory management program should boost the income of dairy producers, allow market-responsive prices and assure an adequate milk supply. And it should be more than a short-term price fix, the American Farm Bureau Federation told Congress recently.

"We should not mortgage the long-term viability of the industry for a short-term price fix," AFBF President Dean Kleckner told the House Agriculture Dairy subcommittee and the Senate Agriculture Committee in separate hearings.

Kleckner was one of several hundred people who packed the two hearings, as well as overflow areas. The session lasted from morning to early evening without a break in order to give witnesses a chance to present testimony on various management programs.

Kleckner said that Farm Bureau has spent time evaluating various alternatives, and the AFBF board adopted criteria that should be used in crafting a legislative response to the current dairy situation.

"These criteria will allow the evaluation of any program or combination of programs that may be presented," Kleckner explained. Farm Bureau, he said, supports program changes that must, to the greatest degree possible, accomplish the following:

- Not include mandatory bases or quotas;
- Not increase cost of dairy program above baseline level (budget neutral);
- Be adaptable to possible trade agreements;
- Minimize the impact of excess supply on dairy producer income;
- Allow industry and individual producers to adjust to new technology and changing conditions;
- Minimize the impact of the program on other commodities;
- Involve a producer board in conduct of programs; and
- Minimize any negative impact on consumption.

In addition to those criteria, Kleckner said "AFBF supports a milk pricing program, established on a base/excess concept, tied directly to the current commercial utilization and market reserve. The price of excess milk should be at the market-clearing level.

"This program should be designed to allow a profitable relationship between supply and demand. An industry-controlled board would initiate this program on an annual basis, only if industry-controlled purchases are estimated to exceed a prescribed trigger level. The industry-controlled board should consist of dairy farmer milk producers."

Kleckner warned against proposals that would include a significant increase in the

support price. An increase in the dairy support price, he said, would send false signals to the industry and have a negative impact on dairy consumption. Such a plan would also have serious impact on the budget and could run counter to future international trade agreements.

"We recognize the immediate need for additional income by producers, but suggest that this goal could be achieved by consideration of a target price or diversion payment for producers who reduce production," he said. "This would provide immediate relief for participants and provide a dampening effect on supply. Coupled with the use of higher solids standards for fluid milk, we have the potential to help all producers without the problems associated with a support price increase."

Kleckner challenged Congress to ensure that the U.S. dairy industry is in a position to enter world markets. "We are certain that the U.S. dairy industry can be competitive with that of virtually any nation. We want to be able increase producer income by making these markets available to them."

Farm Bureau agreed with the recent USDA dairy study emphasizing the importance of a market-oriented dairy industry; however, Kleckner said that Farm Bureau also sees the need to make changes to help the current situation.



## Dairy Farm Financial Management in 1991

### Options Checklist

The list below includes some possible actions that might be used to ease the cash flow crunch, along with a place to check whether each might be applicable to your farm.

- Borrow more money (this makes sense only if you expect the profitability of your business to increase in the future).
- Restructure debt: Put more on long term and less on short term to lower total payments.
- Put part or all of loans on an interest-only payment.
- Increase cash receipts (more than cash expenses).
- Decrease cash expenses (more than cash receipts).
- Participate in the Feed Grain or Wheat programs.
- Cut capital purchases.
- Cut family living expenses.
- Sell nonessential capital assets.
- Keep inventory low (sell unneeded crop, buy feed only as needed, etc.)
- Seek off-farm work for the operator or family members.
- Sell assets and lease them back.
- Sell the assets to an investor and work as the manager.

Many dairy farmers will find that the cash available in 1991 is going to be insufficient to pay all farm expenses, provide for family living, and make debt payments to which they are committed.

Among the first things a farmer needs to do is assure a good working relationship with their lenders. If you know that you will not be able to make all the debt payments to which you have agreed, see your lender.

This may not be a welcome task, but in the long run will be better than just not making payments to which you have agreed. Take your 1990 farm income statement, an up-to-date balance sheet and cash flow projections to your lenders and explain the situation. Don't necessarily expect the lenders to automatically agree to adjust your payment schedule to meet the cash flow that you expect will be available. But if both you and your lenders understand the situation, there is a greater chance that a solution to the problem can be found.

If possible, do not allow a substantial build-up in accounts payable for feed and other items. If your bills are not being fully paid at the end of each month, you probably are headed for trouble. Try to convince your lender to provide the money to keep your accounts reasonably current. If those accounts payable become too large, you will be in danger of having your suppliers refuse to continue to provide what you need. Many feed dealers will be reluctant to take on accounts when a check with other dealers shows that you have substantial unpaid accounts. A large unpaid electric bill could lead to a shut-off of your power.

Capital expenditures for new equipment may need to be cut drastically. Even machines in dire need of replacement may have to be kept running another year or two. Hiring custom work may be less expensive than paying the cost of owning machines and could have the additional advantage that the operator comes with the machine. This might make it possible to not hire other labor. Trading work with neighbors to avoid the need for each to own all the machines may be a possibility.

There are other ways of increasing cash flow in the short run. Equipment not crucial to the farm operation could be sold. Perhaps a building lot or land a long way from the home base that is not contributing much to the profitability of the business could be sold. Off-farm work by you or other family members may be a possibility.

Your lender might be willing to put some or all of your loans on an interest-only basis for a period of time. This would not reduce



the payments much on a relatively new long-term level payment loan (such as 25 or 30 years) because the payment is mostly interest anyway. However, on an intermediate-term loan or a 25-year mortgage that is half paid off, interest only would appreciably reduce the payment.

Refinancing your current loans could result in lower payments if the loan terms can be lengthened and the interest rate does not increase. There may also be a possibility of consolidating, for example, individual loans on each of several pieces of equipment into one loan with a longer term and perhaps a lower interest rate. The greatest gain may come from switching intermediate loans with terms such as five years to real estate loans with much longer terms. Whether this can be done depends on having enough equity in the real estate to entice your lender to be willing to loan more on the real estate.

A monthly amortization table for interest rates of 9 to 12 percent and terms of 3 to 7 and 10, 20, 25 and 30 years is shown below. Note that the gain in terms of lowered payments is much less when going from, say, 20 to 25 years than when going from 5 to 10 years.

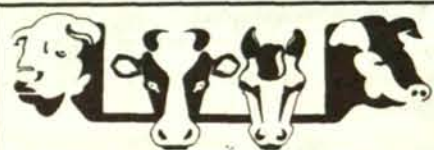
One danger of refinancing everything into the longest possible terms is that you have used up all your flexibility and will not be able to refinance to lower your payments again in the near future. On the other hand, if refinancing is the only way to survive the current financial crisis, losing the flexibility is of relatively minor importance.

If it becomes clear that a payment schedule which you are likely to be able to meet can't be found, more drastic action must be taken. This could include actions such as selling some or all of your cows and heifers and perhaps the equipment and farm, or a write-down of debt by the lender. Reducing or discontinuing the farm operation may not be a pleasant prospect, but it may be the best solution, particularly if the profitability of dairy farming is not likely to increase appreciably for several years.

The last two years (1989 and 1990) were quite favorable for dairy farmers in terms of the relationship between milk prices and input prices. If you did not make a reasonable return for your labor, management and equity capital in those two years, you need to seriously consider whether you should remain in dairy farming because that general level of profitability in dairy farming is not likely to return for several years. If a satisfactory return was not attained in those two years, the next year or two at least may be extremely difficult unless you can make almost revolutionary changes to increase profitability.

If you are having, or anticipate having, a cash flow crunch, be sure to talk to your lenders right away. If you need to increase the profitability of your business, see your Cooperative Extension agent or specialist or other consultants on whom you depend.

(The above was developed from information obtained from Michigan State University and Cornell University.)



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Repayment Period	Annual Interest Rate on Loan			
	9	10	11	12
3 yrs.....	31.80	32.27	32.74	33.22
4 yrs.....	24.89	25.36	25.85	26.33
5 yrs.....	20.76	21.25	21.74	22.25
6 yrs.....	18.03	18.53	19.04	19.55
7 yrs.....	16.09	16.60	17.12	17.65
10 yrs.....	12.67	13.22	13.78	14.35
20 yrs.....	8.85	9.65	10.32	11.01
25 yrs.....	8.39	9.09	9.80	10.53
30 yrs.....	8.05	8.78	9.52	10.29

#### Example:

Ned Farmer owns \$200,000 worth of real estate and \$200,000 worth of cattle and equipment. He owes about \$56,000 on the real estate for a debt-to-asset ratio of 28 percent. He owes \$120,000 on the cattle and equipment for a debt-to-asset ratio of 60 percent. A five-year payment schedule at 11 percent interest on the cattle and equipment would result in payments of \$2,609 per month. The original mortgage on the real estate was \$60,000 with a 25-year term. The payments on the mortgage at 11 percent are \$588 per month. There are about 20 years left on the mortgage. Total monthly payments are \$3,197.

Equity in the real estate is 72 percent, which should allow the mortgage to be increased. If \$50,000 of the \$120,000 intermediate-term loan could be switched to the real estate, the total mortgage would be \$106,000. Payments on a new 25-year mortgage at 11 percent would be \$1,039 per month. Payments on the remaining \$70,000 on the cattle and equipment (5 years, 11 percent) would be \$1,522 and total payments would be \$2,561 or \$636 per month less than the current payments. Switching more of the intermediate debt to long term would lower the payments more.



# FINANCIAL HEALTH AND PRACTICES TEST

## Part 1. Business Financial Health

Debt to Asset Ratio (debt divided by assets)

- Percent Equity (net worth) in my business is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - .20 or less
  - .21 to .40
  - .41 to .60
  - greater than .60
  - not known
- In the past three years, my debt to asset ratio has \_\_\_\_\_.
  - decreased
  - stayed the same
  - increased
  - don't know
- Debt payments (principal plus interest) are \_\_\_\_\_ 20 percent of my cash receipts.
  - less than
  - about equal to
  - more than
  - don't know
- My farm bills are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - paid on time
  - paid, but some are past due
  - increasingly hard to pay and some are rolled into scheduled payments
  - don't know the status of all my bills
- My net farm income (operating receipts minus expenses, including depreciation) has \_\_\_\_\_ over the last three years.
  - been increasing
  - been consistent
  - been decreasing
  - don't know
- The operating costs of producing milk (not including value of operator and family labor and management, and return on equity capital) is \_\_\_\_\_ per hundredweight.
  - less than \$10
  - between \$10 and \$11
  - between \$11.50 and \$12
  - over \$12
  - don't know
- Within the last year, my lender has rejected \_\_\_\_\_ my loan request.
  - no portion of
  - part of
  - all of
- I \_\_\_\_\_ increased borrowing to cover not only capital purchases, but family living expenses and taxes as well.
  - have
  - have not

Total the numbers of the responses selected for each question in this section of the test and match your score with the following guidelines. "Not known" and "don't know" responses indicate areas for better record keeping.

## Part 2. Financial Management Practices

- I've prepared \_\_\_\_\_ 1991 cashflow projections for my farm business.
  - a detailed monthly
  - a yearly
  - a quick or rough
  - no
- I've discussed my current financial condition and 1991 operating capital needs with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - my creditor and financial advisor
  - my creditor
  - no one
- I've secured my operating capital needs for 1991. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - yes
  - no
- I've prepared a complete listing of all assets and financial obligations (structured debt, dealer credit, and open accounts) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - once a year (every year)
  - when my creditor requests it
  - never
- I \_\_\_\_\_ participate in an organized farm business analysis and planning program.
  - do
  - sometimes
  - never
- I \_\_\_\_\_ do a detailed potential profitability and cashflow analysis of capital purchases before buying.
  - always
  - sometimes
  - never
- I \_\_\_\_\_ identified areas where I can cut costs or improve efficiency of my business in 1991.
  - have
  - have not
- I \_\_\_\_\_ reviewed interest rates currently being paid on loans and accounts to determine if lower rates are available.
  - have
  - have not

Total the numbers of the responses selected for each question in this section of the test and match your score with the following guidelines.

With lower milk prices and higher input costs, 1991 will be a difficult year for dairy farmers. The following tests will determine if your business financial health and financial management practices are as strong as possible to survive 1991.

The first part of the test measures business financial health and the second part financial management practices. Place the number of your response in the blank for each question. Your score is the total of the numbers of the response for each question.

My Score \_\_\_\_\_ (Part 1)

**8 to 12 points:** Your business financial health is excellent.

**13 to 20 points:** Prioritize areas where financial health can be improved.

**21 to 31 points:** your business financial health is in serious condition; seek professional counselling from your financial advisor, lender or Cooperative Extension agent immediately.

My Score \_\_\_\_\_ (Part 2)

**8 to 12 points:** Your financial management activities are excellent.

**13 to 16 points:** Prioritize areas to work on and start to improve your skills.

**17 to 22 points:** You've indicated many areas that need improvement. Take immediate action and seek the advice of a financial counselor.

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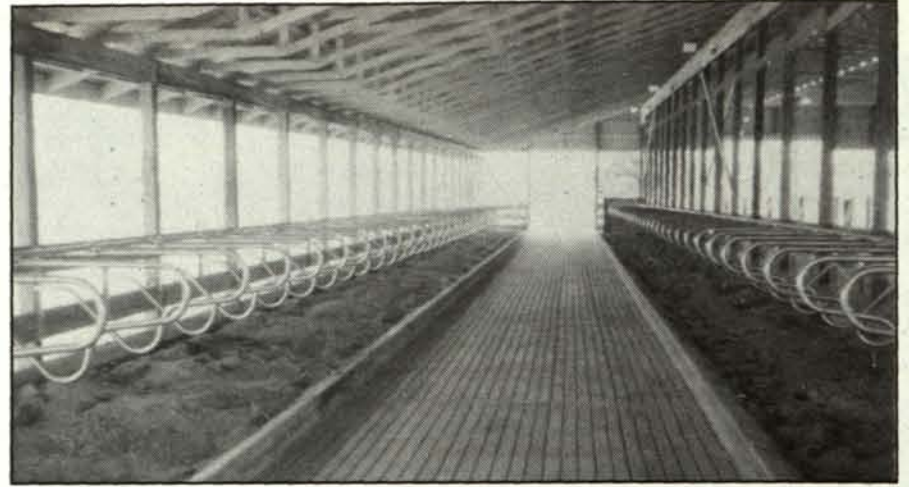


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# Curtain Sidewalls – A Step That Can Be Taken Right Now



This 250 cow freestall barn, with curtain sidewalls, was put into operation on the Nobis dairy farm near St. Johns, in 1988. The ends of the barn also open and close.

Photos: Courtesy of MSU Ag. Engineering Dept.

Current market prices are pressing dairy managers to look for ways to strengthen prices and while there is no easy solution, opening up the walls of the barn right now will likely increase milk production.

Bill Bickert, MSU Extension agricultural engineer, says that relatively simple modifications can be made to the barn this summer, even with \$10 milk.

At this point producers need to do anything they can to improve productivity at little or no cost. One way to achieve increased milk production is to open up the walls and ends of the barn for maximum natural ventilation.

The idea is to reduce the milk production slump that results in losses of nearly 10 pounds of milk per cow per day, or more, during hot weather.

Improving ventilation through the barn will increase the cow's comfort and that can mean several thousands of dollars more in terms of cash flow over a year's time.

For most farmers, opening the sidewalls will likely mean little or no expense other than labor and a few materials. While this can be an immediate task to be completed, producers should consult with their local Extension agent to develop the next series of steps that need to be taken to make the conversion complete.

Replacing the cutaway portions of the barn with a roll-up type curtain material (which can be done next fall) will likely run \$500 or less for the typical 100-cow barn.

Improved ventilation will reduce the cow's heat stress, improve water (extremely important and easy to handle) and feed intake, help dry bedding (subsequently reducing potential for disease), keep alley surfaces drier, reduce problems with flies and generally make the cow more comfortable.

However, improved ventilation through the barn is one of many other factors that need to be examined and planned in terms of long term viability for the dairy operation.

### Have a Management Plan

Buildings and equipment are merely tools which allow essential tasks prescribed by a management plan to be implemented. Developing a management plan is much like writing the specifications for a tool to do a particular job -- you need the specifications before you can buy the tool.

Similarly, selection of the buildings and equipment for the dairy farm can come only after their role in management has been defined. The management plan sets forth all factors related to nutrition, health and

growth as well as other activities of the dairy farm operation.

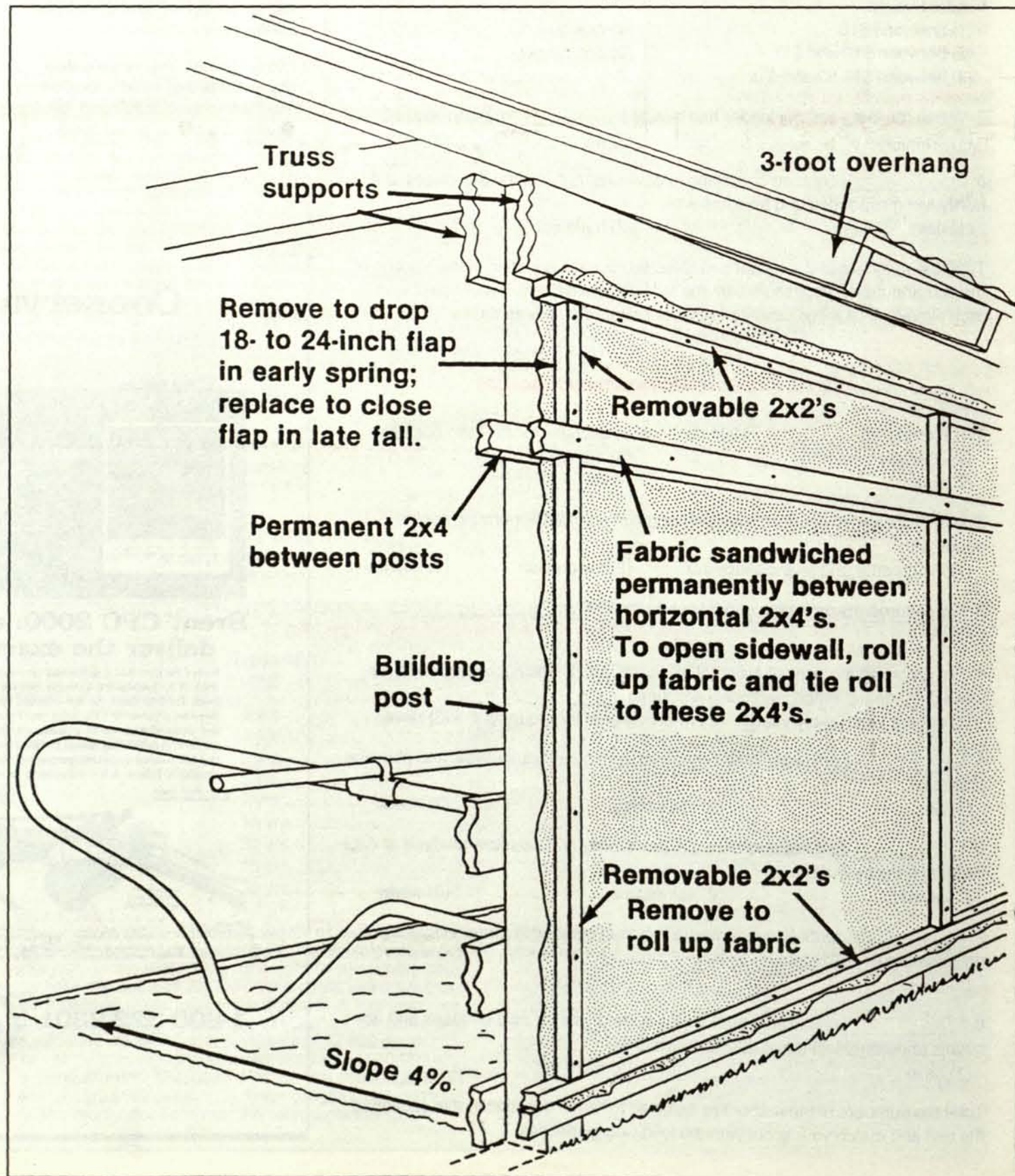
The plan is based on having different animal groups for management purposes. The needs of each group are defined according to nutritional requirements, medical treatments and other procedures, and breeding.

### Provide for the Cow's Environment

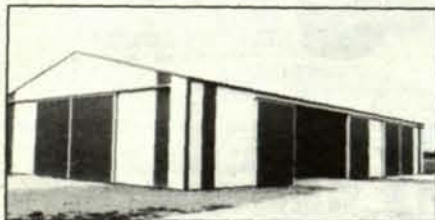
Calves, heifers and cows must be given an environment that permits them to grow, mature, reproduce and maintain health. If the basic needs of the animals are not being met,

no amount of management can assure success. Little scientific data exists to determine whether a particular environment is superior in meeting the needs of livestock.

In the meantime, we look to health, reproductive and productive traits of the animals as indicators of their well-being. There isn't just one ideal set of circumstances -- a variety of conditions and combinations may be suitable. The task is to maintain a balance between the well-being of the animal and the associated facility costs.



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## Avoid Short-term Savings that Cost in the Long-run

If you're looking for ways to cut operating costs, think long and hard before you make any changes in a herd health plan that's working.

That's the advice from Roger Mellenberger, Extension dairy specialist, who says that short-term savings in basic herd health programs such as vaccination, mastitis prevention and treatment, and use of veterinary services can come back to haunt you.

"There are some costs in maintaining herd health that you just shouldn't try to cut," says Mellenberger.

One of those is the cost of a basic vaccination program. Calves, heifers and cows need to be protected at least against IBR, BVD, leptospirosis and brucellosis. Your veterinarian can advise you on other vaccines needed in your area and herd.

Other critical veterinary services include postpartum exams, which catch reproductive tract problems early, and pregnancy exams. Early treatment of uterine infections and other reproductive tract problems within 20 to 30 days of calving can prevent more serious problems and difficulty in getting cows bred, Mellenberger explains. Likewise, pregnancy exams can prevent lengthy delays in getting heifers into production and older cows bred back.

If the cost of prepared teat dips has you thinking about eliminating teat dip, con-

sider this: every \$1 spent on postmilking teat dipping gives you a \$10 return in the form of reduced mastitis problems and associated costs.

Though the first choice in teat dips would be iodine-based products such as Bovadine, Quatermate or similar products, a lower cost alternative is available: Clorox brand liquid chlorine bleach. University studies have shown it to be effective when mixed at the ratio of 1 gallon Clorox to 1 quart water and used as a postmilking teat dip.

"The cost of Clorox - about \$1 per gallon rather than \$6 to \$10 for the prepared products - can make a big difference in the course of the year," Mellenberger observes.

"Before you start cutting costs and changing parts of your operation, analyze your herd health, reproduction and milk production records to find out where you are," he said.

## Hot Weather Can Increase Water Needs 29 Percent

The pleasantness of summer often is offset for dairy farmers by a drop in milk production and other cow-related problems because of high temperatures, says Herbert Bucholtz, Extension dairy nutritionist.

The optimum temperature for lactating or dry cows is between 40 and 60 degrees. The cow starts to experience temperature-related stress such as reduced dry matter feed intake and lower milk production when the temperature approaches 75 degrees. Temperatures above 75 degrees critically stress the cow, especially as the humidity increases.

During hot temperatures, a cow's brain says don't eat as much. In hot weather, gut motility drops. Feeds don't mix as well in the rumen, and passage of feed out of the rumen decreases. Cud chewing and feed digestibility also are reduced. These are all factors that contribute to a decrease in dry

matter intake that means less nutrient intake.

During hot weather, a cow drinks more water. In a research trial, water consumption rose 29 percent. In effect, the increased water intake adds to gut fill, so the cow feels like her gut is full. That additionally reduces feed intake.

The increased water intake benefits the cow by cooling the body, so don't try to restrict water intake in an attempt to increase feed intake; that doesn't work.

Heat stress also affects dry cows by reducing fetal growth and altering hormonal status of the dam. Don't forget the dry cows, especially the close-up cows that may be placed in a hot, poorly ventilated pen area just before calving. The best advice is to use common sense; there is no magic to beating the heat.

### Minimum Requirements of Dairy Facilities

The environment to be provided for the animals can be described based on an assessment of the needs of the animals. The ability of the farmer to manage the herd can be measured according to current management recommendations.

These traits can then be combined and be used to formulate certain basic attributes which become, in fact, the minimum, basic requirements for a dairy facility.

At a minimum, dairy facilities must provide for:

#### All Animals

- The ability to weigh and mix tested feeds
- Handling, restraint and treatment capability
- Adequate supplies of feed and water
- Air quality conducive to maintaining health
- Skid-resistant alley surfaces
- A reasonably clean, dry, resilient bed to lie on

#### Calves

- A clean, dry, well-ventilated maternity area
- Individual housing for calves up to age of weaning

#### Heifers

- Small groups of calves from weaning to 5-6 months of age
- Heifers divided into groups

#### Cows

- Milking cows divided into two or more groups
- Dry cows in at least one separate group
- Properly designed, installed and maintained milking system

Use this set of attributes as a standard against which to evaluate facilities and as a guide when remodeling or building new facilities.

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## Herd Feeding Program Affords The Most Flexibility For Profit

The herd feeding program is one of the best areas where cost can be reduced while maintaining milk production.

"About 50 to 60 percent of the cost of running the dairy farm is associated with the feeding program," says Herb Bucholtz, MSU Extension dairy nutrition specialist. "It's probably the largest single area in which cost control can result in savings and increased profit."

The cow must be fed to meet its nutritional requirements but the aim should be feed only the essential ingredients that will maintain production. That means looking carefully at possible hidden costs that can be avoided.

"If you are buying a feed ingredient, is it really resulting in increased productivity either in milk production, growth or health?" Bucholtz asks.

One producer he is working with needed 6 grams of niacin per cow in the ration but was feeding a package of nutrients that contained the niacin.

"It was a matter of about 5 cents for the niacin as opposed to about 17 cents per cow that he was paying for the package," he says. "By feed reviewing the ration and feeding only the required amount of niacin, he was able to save about \$10,000 per year on the 250-cow herd. The point is, buy and feed only what is essential."

But don't summarily alter feeding costs as that will result in a change in the cow's body condition.

**Forages have variation in nutrient composition due to a variety of factors including the time of cutting, the variety grown, and the type of growing season.**



Make sure the ration is balanced. Re-balance the ration frequently. What was balanced three months ago probably isn't now. That's because there will be as much variability in the forage coming from fields as there is variability between the fields themselves, Bucholtz says.

Variability is also caused by the time of day the forage was harvested because forage moisture and, subsequently, the dry matter (DM) will change. That alone can alter the ration and milk production.

"It is more important to know the moisture content of the ration than its nutrient composition because moisture will change more often," Bucholtz says. "Make sure the DM recommended by the nutritionist is actually getting into the cow."

A 5 percent difference in the forage DM can equate to 8 lbs. of milk. Haylage is prone to the most variability in moisture followed by corn for silage and then high moisture grain, but they all need to be constantly checked in the feeding program.

To reduce DM variability, Bucholtz recommends using a moisture tester to monitor the forage as it is being made in the field or as it is being ensiled. As the moisture changes, adjust the harvest according to the moisture changes to make the forage as consistent in moisture as possible.

Follow through with the moisture testing practice as the forage comes out of the silo. Monitor the quality to determine how good the digestibility is.



The use of a mixer, portable or stationary, with weigh scales, can help tremendously in perfecting your total mixed ration.

"In the high-producing herds I work with, I find that the manager checks the dry matter content of all ensiled feeds every few days," Bucholtz says.

Take a look at corn for silage program. Grow a single variety so that there is consistency throughout the silo. Having several varieties for corn silage means variability in the ration which is hard to compensate for with supplements. Consistency enables the producer to take definite steps to compensate for the lack of quality.

Store forages based on the quality. Segregate forages according to each cutting. Store grass type hay separate for pure alfalfa.

"Producers can make some real savings by feeding forage quality according to the cow's ability to produce milk," says Bucholtz. "As much as possible, maintain a traditional forage program."

Monitor the DM intake. Know how much cows are eating according to their production group. Know how much DM each cow is consuming. The higher the DM intake, the higher the milk production.

Any time that the farmer sees that the cow's DM (NOT wet matter) intake is going down, it immediately signals that a problem is at hand. The amount the cow eats will be reflected three days later in the bulk tank.

The MSU Department of Animal Science staff paper "Practical Implications of Dry Matter Intake," will provide more information about the importance of DM in the

forage. It is available through the county Extension office.

### Bucholtz's other recommendations:

- Record what happens to each cow's milk production each time the ration is rebalanced. Using the bulk tank as a barometer is not a firm indicator as to what is actually happening to each cow. To more closely calculate, select a few cows that are high producers and are 30 to 60 days into the lactation. Check their production level with a milk meter before and a few days after the ration is changed or a major ingredient is added.
- Pay close attention to body condition each time the ration is changed or a major ingredient is added. Make sure the cow is milking off the ration and not off body reserves.
- Look at the cost of the feed ingredients being purchased and the milk production response -- fats, protein supplements, additives, etc. Make a careful evaluation of each item added to the ration. Make sure each contributes to increased milk production. What happens if it is withdrawn from the ration? Ingredients can be moved around in the ration.
- Don't be afraid to challenge the cow (they're pretty resilient), the feed advisor and your own practices. Ask a lot of questions and do a lot thinking about doing the job a little better for less cost.

## Production Records are Essential for Monitoring Milk Quality

A key to survival in today's dairy industry is to be able to make decisions based on well maintained records. Among the records that need to be maintained are those which track herd performance, individual cow production and the quality of milk it produces.

That management tool is available through the Michigan Dairy Herd Improvement Association which has been operating in Michigan since 1905.

Regardless whether DHIA or some other professional record keeping system is used, accurate, up-to-date records are the only sure way to tell where the farm is headed.

Thelen says that farmers who have a thorough testing plan, particularly those using DHIA, often earn upwards of \$310 more per cow per year than those who do not use a testing program. The cost of Michigan DHIA testing is about one-half a pound of milk per cow. DHIA has 17 programs available for monitoring and planning for efficient milk production.

"Simply adding on more cows to make up for reduced income is not necessarily the answer," says Al Thelen, DHIA manager. "Making more milk with the herd you already have or milking even fewer but more profitable cows may be the solution."

An example is the recent report in *Hoard's Dairyman* which cited a Vermont farmer who added more cows to boost milk volume from the farm, but both production per cow and overall profit dropped.

Using a good set of records, the producer eliminated low producers and cows with mastitis and other problems which brought an immediate boost in production. With less crowding at the feed bunks, all cows had a better chance to eat, and none had to lay in alleys because of lack of stall space.

"Good records enable these kinds of management decisions and will pave the way for a more profitable expansion when the current market cycle improves," Thelen says.

Among the culprits that hinder quality milk production is mastitis which, Thelen says, costs farmers on the average of \$225 per cow. The severity of mastitis infections is determined by the somatic cell count (SCC) one of the programs offered by DHIA.

Research at Clemson University shows that the higher producing herds tend to have lower SCC scores. The researchers suggest that for the entire herd, 85 percent or more of the cows should have scores of 4 or below and no more than 3 percent in the 7 to 9 range.

Thelen recommends that farmers:

– Evaluate mastitis in the herd to find out how much milk is being lost because of a high SCC.

– Determine action for infected cows, milking them last or culling them.

– Identify underproducing cows that are producing less milk because of a high SCC. The cow's production deviation from herd

mates is provided each month by the Michigan DHIA information system.

– Evaluate the heifer raising and calving program, making sure heifers are freshening with uninfected udders.

– Evaluate the effectiveness of the herd's dry period making sure that second lactation and older cows are freshening with uninfected udders.

– Evaluate the milking environment to make sure mid to late-lactation cows have a low SCC.

– Develop usable mastitis control program with the local veterinarian, using the SCC to help monitor a monthly herd health program.

Information about the range of services available through DHIA can be obtained from Thelen by calling him at: 517-355-5033.



# Managed Well, Controlled Grazing May Help Boost Cash Flow

There are a number of dairy producers around Michigan who are using controlled grazing to provide flexibility for their business management and trim costs, according to a recent Extension study.

Controlled grazing requires easily movable lightweight fencing that is used to divide a given area into a series of paddocks in which dairy cattle graze for a given period. A rule of thumb is to provide an acre a day for each 40 dairy cows.

Typically, a complete fencing system ranges from about \$40 to \$80 per cow and has an average life of 5 to 20 years. One of the systems studied by MSU Extension specialists cost \$2,000 for 40 cows and covered 21 acres.

A well-designed, controlled grazing system will require about 30 minutes a day to move. Among the merits of the system is that 30 minutes of fence moving is a substitute for about 2 hours a day otherwise

spent in barn cleaning, manure spreading, feeding, crop harvesting, and repairing, according to MSU Extension workers.

The site selected for controlled grazing can be any area not normally used for crop production, that is not shaded and is preferably fairly level.

The best feed quality is generally found on sites that are densely populated with rapidly growing plants of naturally occurring grasses and legumes. MSU Extension recommends that the paddock to be grazed contains grasses between 8 and 12 inches tall. The forage should be grazed to about 2 to 4 inches.

Equally important is the provision of ample, clean water to each paddock grazed. The water source should be located within 600 feet of the area grazed. If animals must travel much further, they will either go without water or spend too much time and energy travelling which reduces feed intake and productivity.

Among the other findings by MSU Extension staff:

- There is evidence to suggest that cows actually consumed more dry matter per acre than in conventional feeding systems.

- On four of six dairy farms studied, milk production per cow increased about 5 pounds per day. In the two herds that did not see increases, the rolling herd average was nearly 20,000 pounds and the two herds saw major reductions in feed cost.

- Outside of broadcast fertilizers and labor to move fencing, controlled grazing has virtually no other costs. It's estimated that from \$80 to \$120 per acre is saved on the cost for conventional harvesting.

- The system tends to be environmentally compatible. Expensive crop rotations or excessive herbicide use to eliminate weeds for pure stands is avoided. Old meadows seem to be perfect for the density and grasses needed for controlled grazing.

There are, however, precautions that need to be taken, such as the possibility for bloat, grass tetany, lyme ticks, etc. Good walkways -- sand or gravel -- between the paddock and barn are needed as are supplemental rations, and minor adjustments in total mixed rations.

The concept also requires some getting used to. That can range from a few months to several years to perfect the practice.

Sums up Ben Bartlett, district Extension dairy and livestock agent in the U.P.:

"Don't plan on doing it 'right.' Every producer I've worked with tells me how they are going to do a better job or differently next year. It's not that the producer is dissatisfied but that controlled grazing takes time and experience to learn. It is a challenge that producers enjoy."

More information about controlled grazing can be obtained from the county Extension office.

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## Make the Best Silage Possible to Maximize Milk Production

When it comes time to harvest corn for silage, make sure the plants have reached physiological maturity before chopping.

That's how to get the most feeding value out of the crop, according to researchers at Michigan State University.

Excessively wet silage (moisture greater than 70 percent) usually results in undesirable fermentation, loss of nutrients through seepage and poor animal performance due to low consumption.

Overly dry silage will be difficult to pack (especially in horizontal silos) and will result in spoilage. The ideal moisture concentration is in a range of 65 to 70 percent.

### Proper Maturity Critical

One way to tell when corn is physiologically mature is when the black layer has formed at the top of the corn kernels. The moisture content of the kernels is about 65 percent by then and the ears will be dented.

Most of the leaves of the plant will still be green but the lower leaves will be in various stages of drying. No further grain development occurs once the plant reaches physiological maturity

Minnesota researchers suggest that the milk line may be a useful visual indicator of kernel maturity.

If the ear of corn is broken, the tip portion of the ear will show the face of the kernels. It is here that the milk line can be observed.

As the plant develops and the kernels mature to the full dent stage, a distinct line can be seen progressing from the crown of the kernel to the base.

The milk line separates the solid from the liquid portion of the kernel. When the milk line is half way between the crown and the tip (half milk stage), kernel moisture is about 40 percent.

At the half milk stage, more than 90 percent of the "normal" yield of grain can be expected. When the milk line has reached the kernel base and becomes indistinct, the kernel base can be probed with a knife point to see if any milk remains.

Kernels containing no milk are physiologically mature and should contain a developed black layer.



### Length of Cut

The length of the silage cut can be manipulated through machine adjustments involving the knives and shear bar on the silage harvester. Knives should be kept sharp during harvest.

A cut 1/4" to 3/8" long is near ideal for minimizing storage losses. Extremely fine chopped corn silage (1/8" or less) such as that produced by a recutter screen, is undesirable.

Material that is chopped too fine will reduce milk fat test with dairy cows due to a decrease of "effective" fiber in the ration.

A practical rule of thumb is that most of the silage particles should be about 1/2" long with 15 to 20 percent of the particles 1" long. If the silage is too dry (below 60 percent moisture) the chop length should be reduced to near 1/4" long so the silage can be adequately packed.

### Boosting Protein

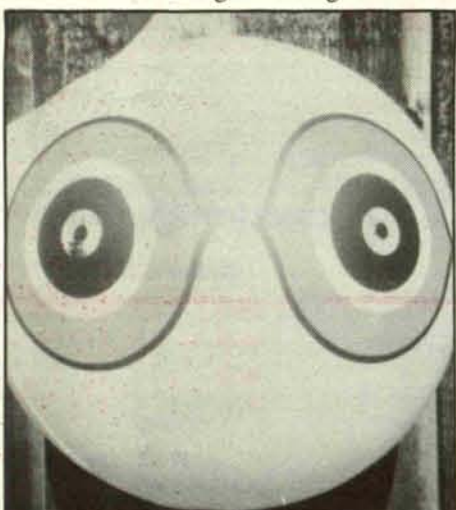
Adding nonprotein silage (NPN) at ensiling is an economical way to provide supplemental protein for silage.

According to Jim Linn, dairy researcher at the University of Minnesota, corn without NPN will contain about 8 percent crude protein on a dry matter basis. Adding NPN products can raise the crude protein level to 12 percent. Adding anhydrous ammonia at the rate of 7 pounds per ton of wet silage or adding urea at 10 pounds per ton of wet silage can bring the crude protein level of the silage up to 12 percent.

More information about making the best silage possible is available from the county CES office. Ask for bulletins: NCH-49 "Corn Silage Harvest Techniques," NCH-59 "Silage Preservatives & Additives for Corn," and NCH-46 "Plant Analysis, a Diagnostic Tool."

## Bird Scare - Capitalizing on a Natural

A new device known as the Bird Scare Predator Eye, uses the eyes of predator birds, such as hawks, eagle, and falcons, to scare off birds. The device, introduced in 1986 by Jack and Mary Tepoorten, is now helping farmers to keep cleaner and safer machine sheds and grain storage facilities.

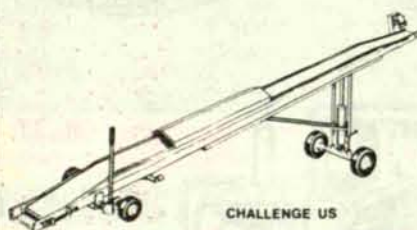


According to Tepoorten, the idea originated thirty years ago with Japanese rice farmers, who used the theory that the eyes of predator birds portrayed on the wings of butterflies could also protect their rice paddies. The farmers designed a sturdy, weather resistant device with the eyes of predator birds silkscreened on its sides. Hung at intervals in the rice paddies, the device scared away the pest birds and increased production, without the use of chemicals, nets or other costly controls.

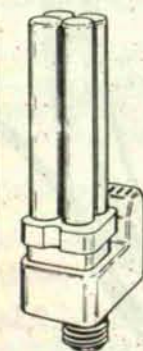
Tepoorten brought the idea to the United States, where the bird scare has found widespread use in machine sheds, airport hangers, marinas, gardens, orchards, and grape arbors. The device is made of wear-resistant .22mm thick poly-vinyl, and is adorned with six predator eyes.

According to Tepoorten, the simplicity of the device is a benefit and curse. "The product is non-toxic and relatively inexpensive, making it difficult for the buyer to believe in the product," he said.

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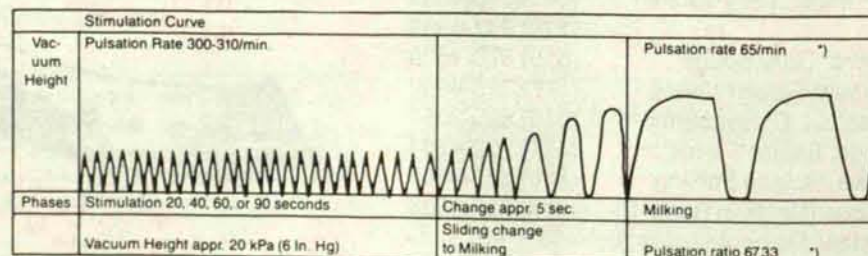
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## Summer Ag Institute a Hit!



Ingham County Farm Bureau member Kathy Lott, (at right) explains feed rations, manure management and the complexities of producing milk on the Lott dairy farm, to 25 educators participating in the Summer Institute for Educators. The Lott operation was one of three stops of a tour recently conducted as part of the Summer Institute, which allows teachers to gain continuing education credits while learning how to integrate agriculture in their curriculums. The Institute is a joint effort of the Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU's Department of Agriculture and Extension Education, Michigan Economic Education Council, and the Michigan Association of Agriscience Educators.

## Chemical Use Rates Studied

In 1990, corn and soybean chemical use was surveyed as part of the President's Water Quality Initiative by the Federal/State Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. The Water Quality Initiative is a multi-agency program designed to provide the knowledge and technical means for farmers, ranchers and foresters to address the complex environmental issues of the 1990s.

There were 2.4 million acres of corn planted in Michigan in 1990. Of these, 97 percent had nitrogen applied, 91 percent had phosphate applied, and 96 percent had potash applied. In addition, 93 percent of Michigan's corn acreage had an herbicide application and 29 percent had an insecticide application. The three most widely used herbicides were Atrazine, Metolachlor and Alachlor. Atrazine was applied to 79 percent of the acreage, Matolachlor to 32 percent, and Alachlor to 22 percent.

In 1990, 1.15 million acres of soybeans were planted in Michigan. Of these, 67 percent had nitrogen applied, 70 percent had phosphate applied, and 78 percent had potash applied. Michigan had the highest use of nitrogen of all states surveyed. In addition, 98 percent of Michigan's soybean acreage had herbicide applied. The three most widely used herbicides were Metribuzin, Linuron and Metolachlor. Metribuzin was applied to 39 percent of the planted acreage, Linuron to 29 percent, and Metolachlor to 27 percent.

MDA Director Bill Schuette recently held a news conference on MFB Board member Dick Leach's Saginaw County farm to update news media about Gov. Engler's progress on agricultural issues. Others in attendance included U.S. Rep. Dave Camp, Sen. John Cisky, Jack Laurie, Ag Commission members Don Nugent, John Spero, and Dave Crumbaugh, several newspapers and two T.V. stations. Pictured below, left to right are Paul Leach, Bill Schuette, Sharon and Dick Leach.



## 1992 Young Farmer Discussion Topics Announced

Four challenging agricultural topics have been chosen for the Michigan Farm Bureau's and American Farm Bureau's 1992 Young Farmer Discussion Meet Contest, according to MFB Young Farmer Department Manager, Ernest Birchmeier.

Regional contests are scheduled to begin in late August, with regional winners continuing on to state level competition at the MFB annual meeting on Dec. 11, 1991. One state winner will advance to national competition during the AFBF annual meeting at Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 12-16, 1992.

Competition is open to all Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 30. Eligible members wanting more information should contact their county Farm Bureau office and/or their local Young Farmer Committee chairman.

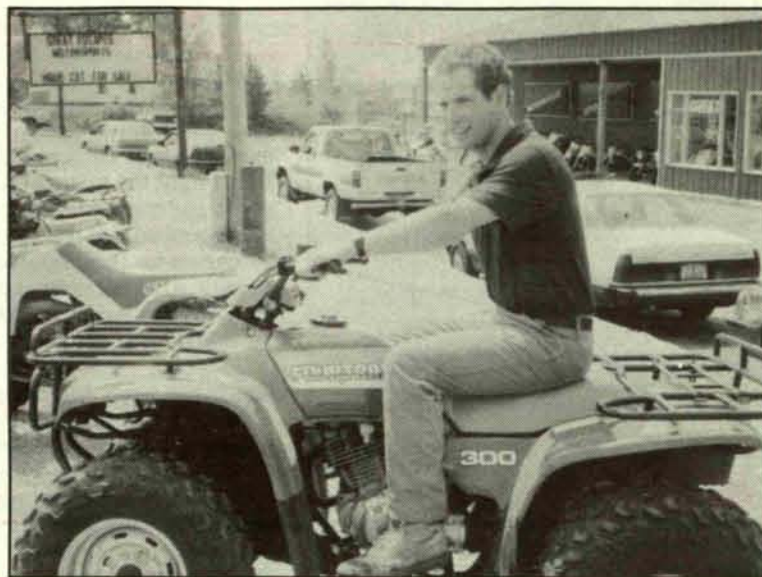
Birchmeier said prospective contestants will want to familiarize themselves with the following topics:

– **What is the future role of land grant universities for meeting the needs of commercial farmers?**

– **How can American farmers and others in rural areas continue to receive adequate health care at reasonable prices?**

– **Conservation - how does it affect a farm's future?**

– **What is the role of agriculture in reducing the United State's dependence on foreign oil?**



Among other prizes, the state Discussion Meet winner will receive a Honda all-terrain vehicle, along with a safety helmet and glasses donated by Honda. Mark Doherty of Traverse City talked his way through four levels of competition in MFB's 1991 Young Farmer Discussion Meet contest and won a Honda Four Trax 300 ATV for his efforts.



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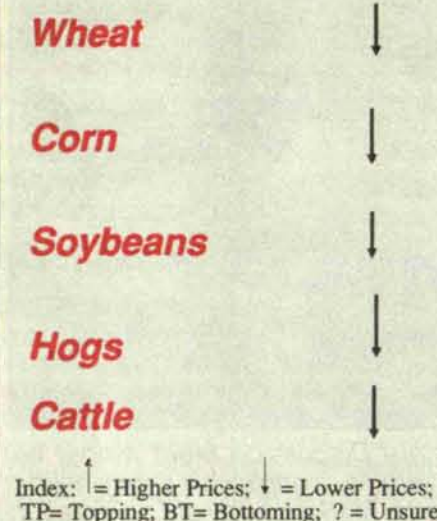
Kings Island





6

## MARKETS

**Seasonal Commodity  
Price Trends (long term)**


Cattle placed on feed in the seven states totaled 1.75 million, 8 percent higher than in May of each of the last two years.

### Hogs

As a result of the USDA Hog and Pig Report released June 28, weak cash markets will likely persist for a short while. The drop in cash prices has put some cushion back in the packers margins. Retailers probably will be conservative buyers, keeping the wholesale market on the defensive. Overall scenario is the market will probably settle in the low \$50's.

#### Hog and Pig Inventory Shows Expansion

The inventory report showed a total of 56.29 million head, up 5 percent from June 1990. Breeding hog inventory rose 6 percent from last year and market hogs are up 4 percent. Market hogs at the lighter weights, under 60 lbs. and 60 to 119 lbs., were at 105 percent of the June 1, 1990 figure.

Michigan's inventory fell 8 percent from a year ago, down 100,000 at 1.2 million head. Market hogs were down 8 percent at 1.04 million head, although nearby market hogs were up 5,000 head compared to a year earlier. Michigan breeding stock, at 160,000 head is down 6 percent, with producer farrowing intentions for the June-August quarter at 68,000 and 55,000 for the September-November quarter.

### Wheat

For the first time in several years, the U.S. supply/demand picture for wheat, projected by USDA to be 26 percent below last years level does not mirror that of other major world exporters. Canada, Australia and Argentina, all project carryover to rise to record levels in 1991-92. These countries do not have a comparable market withholding program like the U.S. reserve program so their oversupply will be dumped on the market. This export picture combined with the continued harvest selling pressure have caused wheat prices to collapse even with the disastrous soft red winter wheat harvest. Wheat prices will continue to be pressured unless adverse weather reverses the decline in the corn and soybean markets.

### Corn

The corn market has dropped reflecting the USDA stocks and planted acreage reports. June stocks were estimated at 2.99 billion bushels compared to trade expectations of 2.11 billion bushels. Feed use for the March through May period was not as strong as expected. There has been a shift to wheat from corn by western cattle feeders faced with poor quality wheat and low prices relative to corn.

Planted acreage of 75.9 million is down from March intentions but not as much as expected. Acreage cuts in Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri due to wet weather were nearly offset by increases in Illinois, Nebraska and Texas. The export business has helped hold old crop relative to new. However, with the level of stocks and planted acreage, adverse weather will be the key market mover.

### Soybeans

The concern over an acreage shift to soybeans from corn due to extreme wet spring planting conditions was confirmed by USDA and quickly reflected in the market. The trade was expecting an increase of about a half million acres from March intentions. The report came in more than five times that amount. Price movement will now be characterized by concerns over weather as this crop develops. However, June 1 stocks at 724 million bushels (128 million above last year) coupled with the increased plantings say "plenty of beans." Export activity has been slow. Soviet credit for the purchase of beans and meal has been bogged down. Small sales are made as commercial bank credit arrangements are finalized.

### Dry Beans

To provide farmers and industry representatives an accurate and complete picture of the dry bean situation in Michigan, a special dry bean survey will be conducted during July. Trained enumerators will take their maps and questionnaires to selected farmers in 200 area segments in the 16 major dry bean producing counties. Their efforts will reveal whether planted acreage had changed from the March Intentions survey, which indicated an 11 percent drop from the 1990 planted acreage estimate in Michigan. The data from this survey will be combined to produce estimates of the dry bean acreage planted in Michigan and the nation. These estimates will be released by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board on August 12.

### Cattle

Live cattle futures are showing signs the market is near the seasonal cash price low. Don't fight the market though because the cash trend may soon reverse. USDA recently announced that it is ready to initiate beef purchases for the school lunch program for this fall. This is a normal procedure for this time of year, but it should offer support to the market.

#### Cattle On Feed At 18-year High

Cattle and calves on feed as of June 1, 1991 for the top seven producing states totaled 8.59 million head, up 9 percent from a year ago and 10 percent above June 1, 1989, according to the USDA inventory report.

The largest number of cattle on feed since 1973 was accompanied by May marketings of 1.7 million, down 5 percent from a year ago and 3 percent lower than May 1989, the report said.

### Corn and Soybean Stocks Up

Michigan's stocks of corn and soybeans and wheat in storage facilities on June 1, were higher than the previous year. Oat stocks are below year ago levels according to Michigan's Ag Statistics Service.

Corn stocks in Michigan, estimated at 97 million bushels, were up 46 percent from a year ago. Soybeans in Michigan storage totaled 9.9 million bushels, 53 percent above 1990 figures. Wheat stored in

Michigan facilities totaled 8.8 million bushels, 92 percent above June 1990 levels. As of June 1, total oat stocks in Michigan amounted to 4.5 million bushels, compared to 6.1 million bushels last year. Nationally, Corn stocks on June 1, were up 5 percent from the previous year, while soybeans on hand were up 21 percent and wheat stocks are also up 61 percent. Barley stocks were down 16 percent from 1990 levels for the same period.

### Michigan Corn and Soybean Acreage Jump

Planted acreage for corn and soybeans is above last season, in spite of the wet spring across most of Michigan, according to the Michigan Ag Statistics Service calculations.

Corn planted acreage is estimated at 2.6 million acres, up 8 percent from 1990. Corn expected to be harvested for grain is at 2.3 million acres. Soybean planted acreage increased 22 percent to 1.4 million acres. Sugarbeet planted and harvested acreage is up 6 percent from last year at 170,000 and 167,000 acres, respectively. If estimates are realized they will set a record for acres planted and harvested. Dry bean planted acreage is estimated at 340,000 acres, down 3 percent from 1990. Planting began, as usual, toward the end of May and has continued at an above normal pace. Acreage planted to summer potatoes is estimated at 12,000 acres, matching 1990 figures.

Winter wheat planted acreage is now estimated at 570,000 acres, down 26 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is expected to total 560,000 acres. Oat acreage is down to an all time low of 150,000 acres, down 40 percent from year earlier figures. Barley planted acreage is estimated at 35,000 acres, down 10,000 from 1990. Rye acreage intended to be harvested is down 2,000 acres from last year at 18,000 acres. Acreage to be cut for all hay, at 1.45 million acres is equal to last summer. Alfalfa hay is down 50,000 acres from last year to 1.2 million acres while other hay acreage is up 50,000 acres from last season to 250,000 acres.

Nationally, corn planted for all purposes is estimated at 75.9 million acres, up 2 percent from last year. Soybean growers planted or intended to plant 59.8 million acres in 1991, 3 percent above 1990 plantings. The 1991 spring planting season got off to a slow start in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and most of the South due to extremely wet conditions. Dry bean planted acreage is expected to drop 11 percent below a year ago to 1.94 million acres.

### Feed Safety and Quality Assurance Meetings Planned

The Michigan Department of Agriculture is conducting a series of seminars on feed safety and quality assurances July 30, 31, and August 1, to inform feed manufacturers and farmers about proper mixing and current problems with improper use of medicated mixed feeds, according to Steve Martin, the feed coordinator for Pesticide and Plant Pest Management at MDA. Topics will include human and livestock health concerns, economic considerations and regulatory concerns.

"A few concerns that continue to arise are the possibilities of feeds being cross-contaminated, mixed improperly or, that some feeds can be mislabeled for one livestock species when it was intended for another species for example," said Kevin Kirk, commodity specialist at Michigan Farm Bureau. "Of course, the big concern is the fact that when we use a medicated feed, that the proper amount is mixed into feed and that, there is sufficient withdrawal time."

The seminars will last approximately half a day at three different locations. The seminars will be held on: July 30, County Center Building at the Kalamazoo fairgrounds; July 31, Harrison, county building; and Aug. 1, Adrian, also at the county building.

The July 30 and August 1 seminar will be from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. while the July 31 seminar will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

For further program information, contact Steve Martin at (517) 373-1087.

### Deutz Allis Introduces New AGCO Allis Tractor Line

A new line of AGCO Allis Tractors -- 12 new models in five distinct series -- was introduced by Deutz-Allis, wholly owned by the Allis Gleaner Company (AGCO). Designed after extensive market research, the new machines ranging from 40 through 130 PTO horsepower "meet virtually every tractor buyer's needs," according to Robert McIlrath, product manager. All AGCO Allis tractors will be painted in the orange sheet metal and black body of tractors previously produced by Deutz-Allis predecessor, Allis-Chalmers.



Deutz Allis recently completed purchase of the White tractor product line from White-New Idea, previously owned by Allied Products Corporation. The purchase included tractor technology, trademarks, patents, production capability of tractors, parts inventories, and the assignment of all dealer contracts for the more than 600 White dealers. According to AGCO, the White tractor and identity will be maintained.

AGCO also completed purchasing the Hesston Corporation, a major manufacturer and distributor of forage equipment in the North American market. These combined acquisitions bring the Allis Gleaner Company's potential annual sales to more than \$400 million.

Pictured is the Model 8630, one of two top-of-the-line AGCO Allis tractors in the 8600 Series. Models 8610 at 105 PTO hp and 8630 at 120 PTO hp are all-wheel-drive tractors, powered by six-cylinder air and oil-cooled diesel engines, which are naturally aspirated in the 8610 and turbo-charged in the 8630.



## August 1991 Discussion Topic: You Make The Difference

Volunteer efforts are the bedrock of successful county Farm Bureau programs. Farmers freely give of their time, energy and creativity in order to benefit their organization and community.

The vitality and enthusiasm of Farm Bureau volunteers generates a wide variety of innovative projects. Now those ideas are available to other Farm Bureau members across the state, in the form of a loose-leaf binder called "The County Committee Idea Network."

The County Committee Idea Network is one of the most valuable resources available for county Farm Bureau volunteers. This award-winning training tool, recently distributed to county Farm Bureau offices, is designed as kind of a "recipe book" to provide a wide variety of proven projects to county Farm Bureau boards of directors and county Farm Bureau committees.

Projects and activities are outlined by category and activity name, and include a description of the objectives and steps to success. To further assist county volunteers and committees in selecting and implementing successful local programs, a "resources and helpful hints" section is also provided for most project ideas.

The ideas are arranged by categories that include Communicating for Agriculture, Education, Leadership Activities, Legislative, Membership, and Safety and Health. Each category contains a number of idea/activity sheets. For example, the Communicating for Agriculture section has an idea sheet on county fair displays. The sheet has six steps for success ranging from confirming the booth space to arranging for signs and banners. A "resources" section suggests obtaining commodity information

from the local Cooperative Extension office.

There are also blank sheets that you can use to contribute your ideas for future editions of the Network.

The County Committee Idea Network has the recipes, but quality ingredients must be provided by county Farm Bureau leaders, according to Becky Jeppesen, manager of the Community Activities Department for Michigan Farm Bureau. "There are several important elements to building a successful volunteer project that helps develop stronger programs and meets the needs of members," she said. "One key is planning and organization. A goal of any project is to convince an audience, not confuse them. If your information and activities are conducted in a logical manner, then you improve your chances of convincing others of the value and relevance of your goals." A well organized event or project also permits the flexibility needed to deal with unplanned emergencies or unanticipated opportunities, she said.

Generating a spirit of enthusiasm about a project is also vital for motivating volunteers, Jeppesen said. "People are eager to participate in what they perceive to be an exciting and dynamic activity. If you as a leader can project that enthusiasm to others, you will have no problem attracting participants. And once you have them involved, help make them feel like it is their project too," she said. "Give them a sense of ownership in the success of the event or activity."

Finally, Jeppesen notes that it is important to match tasks with volunteer interests and abilities. "Some people enjoy planning, organizing and working behind the scenes.

Others like to be out front doing demonstrations and working with the public. If you want to make the most efficient use of your resources, get to know the strengths of your volunteers. Then find a way to fit those strengths to the jobs that need to be done. That will make for happier volunteers and a more successful project," she said.

Community Action Groups can be the dynamos of county Farm Bureau volunteer activities, Jeppesen said. "Recent CAG projects included a successful effort in southeast Michigan that energized the entire community to fight a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility. Another group in Saginaw county has been fighting a special property tax assessment. Because you regularly meet together, you have a good feel for the interests and abilities of your fellow Group members. So, it should be an easy task to find projects that benefit your industry while also meeting the needs and concerns of your Group."

At your meeting this month, review a copy of the Idea Network notebook and consider conducting a project or event. Or, if you have an activity you'd like to share with others, write down the details and send it to the Community Activities Department.

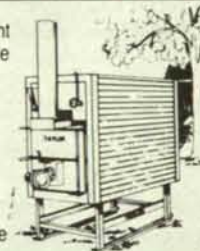
### Discussion questions:

- 1) How many members of your group are currently involved in county Farm Bureau volunteer projects?
- 2) What ideas do you have for projects your group could get involved in?
- 3) Do you have project ideas to contribute to future editions of the County Committee Idea Network? (please list)

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"Block" - continued from page 1

Pontz agreed saying, "A tool is needed to help solve the problem of educating the public and sportsmen about the severity of the crop damage farmers are experiencing. In addition, farmers could also be an asset to solving the problem by enhancing communication with those groups and allowing access on their property."

Using crop damage block permits is the most cost effective and socially acceptable way to trim the deer population, according to Langenau. "After everything we've looked at to control deer populations, we've come back to the best solution, the cheapest most effective way is to use recreational hunting and take those deer during the regular season by licensed hunters," he said.

After the 1991 hunting season ends, the DNR will be hard at work. "We'll be evaluating the effectiveness, and determining if you can really control a deer herd with recreational hunting and block permits," Langenau said. "I believe we are showing that we can."

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### JULY TOURS

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Explore the exciting history of South Dakota during Mt. Rushmore's 50th anniversary. Price includes roundtrip motorcoach tour from Chicago, five nights hotel accommodations, five dinners, Deadwood gaming halls, Boot Hill, Black Hills Passion Play, Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park jeep tour and Badlands National Park. Departures in August as well.

### AUGUST TOURS

#### Train to Toronto

From \$145 per person, based on double occupancy.

Feel at home in this fabulous "foreign city." Toronto has it all: theater, shopping, dining, museums, theme park, harbor and city tours, professional sports. Package includes train from Windsor, two weekend nights accommodations, hotel taxes, bellman's tips. One night and midweek rates available. Choice of other departure cities year round.

### Ride the Rails to Chicago

Cost: From \$85.50 per person, based on double occupancy

Museums, dining, theater, nightlife and beachfront room for your enjoyment. Price includes roundtrip train ride from city of your choice, one night hotel accommodation, Illinois and Chicago hotel taxes. Additional night rates are available. Schedule your time to also enjoy the Untouchable Tour of Famous Gangland Spots.

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Cost: \$199 per person, based on double occupancy- September 13-15, 27-29, 1991

Take your chances on the Mississippi aboard the President Riverboat Casino! Package includes roundtrip motorcoach transportation, two nights hotel accommodations overlooking the river, one dinner, two continental breakfasts, hours of gambling aboard the world's largest floating casino and all taxes and tips. Full payment due 30 days prior to departure.

Note: All packages are subject to availability. Prices are subject to change or variation for 1991. Airport/pier transfers not included in New Orleans.

For more information on how to book your GETAWAY CALL 1-800-354-4272

 MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU



# 8 ATVs: Summertime Fun & Danger

All-terrain vehicles are a source of enjoyment for thousands of people each summer. But along with the fun comes danger. ATVs continue to be involved in far too many serious accidents as their popularity grows.

They pose a particularly severe problem in Michigan, which ranks third -- behind only California and New York -- in the number of deaths from ATV accidents.

Most injuries to ATV riders result from overturns when a vehicle hits a terrain irregularity or obstacle, or the ATV is rode or turned on a slope. Here are safety reminders for ATV users:

**ATVs are not toys**

Children under age 12 should not operate any ATV -- because they typically lack adequate physical size and strength, cognitive abilities, motor skills, and the perception they need to operate a motor vehicle safely. ATVs are difficult to ride and require constant attention to avoid accidents. Children account for about 40 percent of ATV-related deaths and injuries -- and kids under age 12 account for almost 20 percent.

**Take a training course**

Inexperienced drivers in their first month of ATV use have a much higher-than-average risk of injury. Beginners should take a training course from a certified instructor. Figures have shown that half of injured ATV drivers had less than a year's experience, and a quarter had less than one month's experience.

**No passengers**

Don't ride double on a machine designed for only a driver. The presence of a passenger seriously impairs the driver's ability to shift weight in order to steer and control.

**Four-wheelers are more stable**

All newer models have four wheels, but three-wheeled ATVs are still in use -- and the risk of an accident on a three-wheeler is substantially greater.

**Age limits**

Don't let children under 16 ride adult-size (greater than 90cc) ATVs. The risk of injury to children between ages 12 and 15 who drive adult-size vehicles is twice the average risk of injury on ATVs.

**Use helmets**

They save lives. A survey by the Consumer Product Safety Commission found that three-quarters of ATV drivers with head injuries were not wearing approved helmets, and that more than half of injured persons wore no protective equipment -- helmets, gloves, and heavy boots -- at all.

**Avoid paved roads**

Figures show that almost 10 percent of ATV injuries and more than 25 percent of deaths occur on paved roads. The accidents most often result from collisions with other vehicles and frequently happen because ATVs are difficult to control on pavement.

**No alcohol**

In 30 percent of all fatal ATV accidents, some alcohol use has been reported.

**Be responsible**

Accident studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* point to rider attitude as a major factor in ATV safety. Enjoy your vehicle -- but remember that reckless ATV use is dangerous to both people and the environment.



From Farm Bureau Insurance

**CO-OP Merger Approved**

The member cooperatives of both Countrymark, Inc., and the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc., have approved a merger of the two organizations, effective Sept. 1, 1991.

The newly merged company will be known as Countrymark Cooperative, Inc., and will serve Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.

In a joint statement, the cooperatives said, "The support of our member cooperatives during joint management and the merger process has helped focus our efforts and our decisions on what's best for the farmer."



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What you'll find is that dollar for dollar, Farm Bureau insurance is the better value. That's because Farm Bureau offers you the buying strength

of over 3.5 million farming families and other independent businesses. The result: top notch health care insurance at down-to-earth prices.

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What matters to you matters to us.

For further information call 1-800-292-2680 or contact your local Farm Bureau agent.



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