

# MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

MICHIGAN'S ONLY STATEWIDE FARM NEWSPAPER

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU



MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

May 30, 1997  
Vol. 74, No. 10



## End of an era, beginning of a new

### Send your comments on CBOT delivery proposal today

Michigan farmers have until June 15 to send their comments to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) on a proposal from the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) to eliminate the Toledo, Ohio delivery point. Under the CBOT proposal, points of delivery would be reduced from three locations to just one, on the northern Illinois river. The CFTC is expected to rule on the proposal soon.

The loss of the Toledo location, used extensively by Michigan producers to convert futures contracts into cash contracts at the time those contracts expire, would be a huge financial blow to Michigan crop and livestock farmers, according to Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity Specialist Bob Boehm. He worries that the state's producers aren't fully aware of the consequences if the CBOT proposal to eliminate Toledo is approved.

"The impact to Michigan producers, and all of the eastern Corn Belt for that matter, would be drastic," Boehm said. "We've heard loss estimates, on a per bushel basis, ranging from 5 cents to as high as 20 cents, due to increased price and basis volatility on the futures market since the system would rely solely on unpredictable river barge traffic and one export outlet — the gulf."

Basis, the difference between local cash price and the CBOT futures price, would be very unpredictable, which means that both sellers and buyers of Michigan-produced corn and soybeans would be affected, including livestock producers, says Boehm. "This issue will have a direct and indirect impact on all of Michigan's agricultural industry," he said. "It's critical that producers become informed on this issue and take immediate action. We simply cannot afford to lose the Toledo delivery location."

Tension between the CBOT and CFTC is building, even while the public comment period is still open. CFTC officials had recommended to the CBOT that it retain the Toledo delivery point. That prompted the CBOT to hold an emergency board meeting which voted unanimously to reject the CFTC recommendation, fueling speculation that a power struggle of sorts is brewing between CFTC and CBOT.

After the emergency board meeting, CBOT Chairman Patrick Arbor stated "Our ability to compete is once again being threatened by CFTC mismanagement. The inaction of the CFTC creates an uncertainty for the users of our markets."

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Written comments should be mailed or faxed to: CFTC, Three Lafayette Centre, 11555 21st St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20581  
FAX: (202) 418-5521  
E-mail: <http://www.cftc.gov/ag/>

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On May 13, the more than half-century old livestock pavilion came crashing to the ground with little fanfare, to pave the way for the final steps in the completion of the \$70-million Livestock Initiative, which includes an unprecedented number of new facilities focused on teaching and research.

### Insurance plan could mean savings for Michigan drivers

The ball is now in the state Legislature's court to take action on Gov. Engler's proposal to reform Michigan's no-fault auto insurance. While the Michigan Farm Bureau is still analyzing the proposal, officially dubbed the Driver Savings and Lawsuit Protection Plan, the organization's Associate Legislative Counsel Tim Goodrich says the proposal could give consumers some options and decisions to make regarding non-economic coverages on their auto policies.

Non-economic damages refers to pain and suffering, which insureds are currently legally liable to another person as a result of an automobile accident. Under Engler's proposal, a person wishing to collect pain and suffering damages, due to an accident, must purchase the coverage in advance.

"The change that the governor's talking about means that drivers would have the option to purchase coverage for non-economic," Goodrich explained. "You could opt to not have non-economic damages covered, which means you would not be able to sue for non-economic damages, nor would you be able to be sued."

Goodrich said the proposal also means that drivers who elected to purchase coverage for non-economic damages would collect from their own insurance company, regardless of who was at fault. "Currently, if you're involved in an accident, you collect from the at-fault driver's insurance company," he said.

Although the Engler proposal



Driver Savings and Lawsuit Protection Plan at a Glance	
Current Law	Reform Plan
<b>Medical Benefits</b>	
No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued	No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued
<b>Car Repairs</b>	
No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued	No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued
<b>Lost Wages</b>	
No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued	No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued
<b>Non-economic Damages</b>	
Sue to Collect Can be sued	No Lawsuit to Collect Can't be sued

won't necessarily reduce frivolous lawsuits, Goodrich says the plan would reduce the number of cases coming before a court, since drivers would be collecting for non-economic damage from their own insurance company if, and only if, they purchased the additional coverage.

In announcing his insurance plan, Engler said the proposal would complement his road funding plan by saving motorists \$100 on average, which would more than offset the projected \$22 increase in fuel taxes. Goodrich cautions, however, that the true level of savings is uncertain and will depend largely on an individual's driving record.

The insurance proposal won't be tie-barred to Engler's road funding proposal either, stressed Goodrich, meaning that they're not conditional on both being passed. "Michigan Farm Bureau doesn't have a position at this point. We'll be analyzing the proposal and expect to have a position in the near future."

### COVER STORY

#### Old livestock pavilion demolished

Area will provide parking for increased flow of visitors to new facilities

Amidst the backdrop of a newly renovated Anthony Hall, the MSU livestock pavilion, which served as the center of many of MSU's animal agriculture activities since it was built in 1938, came plummeting to the ground on a cold and rainy mid-May day.

The removal of the long-time icon of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources came as a result of the \$70-million Revitalization of Animal Agriculture Initiative, which added many new research and teaching facilities for the university, including the replacement for the pavilion — the 187,000-square-foot Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.

In the pavilion's place, the university will revamp the entrances to the two heavily used parking areas and construct a pedestrian walkway between Anthony Hall and the International Center to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety.

According to Animal Science Department Chair Maynard Hogberg, the pavilion was first built to showcase the draft horse, among many other things it has become synonymous within the livestock industry.

Today, the new pavilion is already expanding with added parking to accommodate the virtually sold-out weekend traffic the new confines have attracted. Unlike its demolished predecessor, the new pavilion can accommodate four teaching classrooms, auction sales and major shows in either its indoor arena or two outdoor arenas.

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# News in Brief

## From the President



### Road funding in Michigan - legislators need to deliver

As you're well aware, Gov. John Engler has introduced Build Michigan II — his vision for how we should finance road and bridge repair in our state. The \$570 million package relies on several systemic reform measures generating \$170 million, a proposal to increase Michigan's share of federal highway funds by \$200 million, and finally, a 4-cent-per-gallon gas tax increase to generate another \$200 million.

I commend the governor for showing the leadership and the courage to make the first move on this controversial issue. As politically unpopular as a gas tax increase may seem, the alternative is quickly becoming less popular. Michigan motorists are spending, on average, \$122 a year for extra repairs due to poor roads. More than 34 percent of our 10,417 bridges are deficient, and about 60 percent — or three of every five miles — of Michigan roads are in disrepair. Simply put, we're running out of time and roads!

The MFB Legislative Committee met shortly after Gov. Engler's announcement to discuss whether organizational policy would allow us to support the package. Delegates to last year's annual meeting approved policy supporting a 7-cent gas tax increase. In fact, MFB has had long-standing policy supporting increased transportation funding for road and bridge maintenance and construction.

The Legislative Committee determined that the governor's proposal, while not a perfect fit with MFB policy, does answer a lot of the questions regarding how we finance highway repairs in Michigan and voted to support the Build Michigan II program.

One area that I'm sure will be of considerable debate regards jurisdiction — who controls which roads and, consequently, who receives the funding to maintain those roads. Under the governor's proposal, the state would assume control and responsibility for an additional 23,000 miles of county roads that receive federal highway funds. This will result in two major changes — increased matching federal dollars, and a commitment from the Michigan Department of Transportation to turn many of these roads into all-season routes.

MFB has long supported county road commissions. Under the governor's proposal, the road commissions will still have authority over 85,000 miles of roads that do not receive federal aid. We also have long-standing policy that highway work be open to competitive bidding, which is essentially what will happen. County road commissions can continue to do the work, provided they make a competitive bid.

Let's not lose sight of the big picture in the forthcoming discussions on this issue. The package, as proposed, will mean more dollars for local road and bridge repairs. In fact, revenue on a per-mile basis will grow from \$4,194 to \$6,404 — a 53 percent increase.

Let's also encourage our legislators to handle this issue based on necessity, not politics or next year's election. We have already lost any chance of funding and actually conducting any additional road improvements for the 1997 construction season due to political posturing.

As Michigan farmers, we produce more than \$3.7 billion in raw commodities each year. We depend on good roads and bridges to move those raw products to the processor and, ultimately, the end-consumer. Likewise, we rely on good roads to transport needed inputs. To maintain the competitiveness and future vitality of the state's second largest industry — agriculture — we need good roads.

Sincerely,

*Jack Laurie*

Jack Laurie, President  
Michigan Farm Bureau

### MSU pavilion demolished

Continued from page 1

According to Hogberg, the auction ring has been filled to capacity when it comes to auction sale time. "We estimated over 900 people crammed into the auditorium for the recent quarter horse sale."

#### Your chance to see the new facilities

On Tuesday of the upcoming Ag Expo, everyone will get their chance to see the new facilities that were created as a result of the Livestock Initiative. Billed as Agriculture's Summer Celebration, producers will get an opportunity to tour new teaching facilities for dairy, swine, turkey and the newly renovated Anthony Hall and Meats Laboratory.

The celebration, sponsored by MSU, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Livestock Exchange and Michigan Milk Producers Association, will include a commemoration of the Livestock Initiative at Anthony Hall. The Michigan Pork Producers, Michigan Beef Industry Commission, Michigan Sheep Breeders, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Country Fresh, Michigan Horse Council, Thorn Apple Valley, Michigan Potato Industry Commission and Michigan Bean Commission will also be a part of the event with samples of their agricultural commodities for everyone to enjoy.

Agriculture's Summer Celebration requires the advanced purchase of a \$5 ticket to cover the cost of the dinner. Clip and mail the ticket order form on the left to order your tickets by June 12. ■

### Novartis acquires Merck, expands crop protection line

Novartis Crop Protection, Inc., is expanding to acquire Merck & Co., Inc.'s insecticide/miticide and post-harvest fungicides business.

In the purchase, Novartis acquired the abamectin and thiabendazole chemistries of Merck's global crop protection business. Those chemistries account for global sales of about \$200 million.

Novartis President Leo Botempo said the Merck products serve as excellent complements to Novartis products used for disease, insect and weed control in the growing of high-value crops, including cotton, citrus and vegetables.

Growers of cotton, fruit and vegetables use abamectin to fight insect pests including citrus

rust mites. In North America, abamectin is sold primarily under the brand names AGRI-MEK and ZEPHYR. It is derived naturally, from fermentation. Novartis says abamectin controls pests that are resistant to other chemicals, while providing excellent initial and residual control at low use rates. Novartis plans to develop new uses for abamectin.

Another chemical, thiabendazole, is a post-harvest fungicide treatment for fruits and mushrooms. It is sold under the brand name MERTECT.

Novartis believes the acquisition will increase significantly the company's insecticide and fungicide sales. ■

### Court of Appeals rules for Consumers Energy

The Michigan Court of Appeals has issued a unanimous, 3-0 opinion (Benn vs. Consumers Power Company, April 22, 1997) in favor of Consumers Energy and rejecting claims of a Jackson County farmer who alleged that stray voltage originating from the utility affected his dairy herd operation.

The opinion upholds a Jackson County Circuit Court ruling that rejected the suit as untimely and because the farmer ignored information by Consumers Energy offering assistance to analyze any potential stray voltage problems. In addition to having his financial claim rejected, the farmer must pay Consumers Energy approximately \$40,000 in court costs.

The farmer in April 1994 had sought more than \$1.2 million from Consumers Energy claiming that stray voltage from the utility reduced milk production by his dairy herd, beginning as early as 1985.

"This unanimous ruling by the Michigan Court of Appeals observes that Consumers Energy provided information to agricultural customers in the 1980s, offering expert assistance with any potential stray voltage situations. The court ruling clearly demonstrates that having chosen to ignore this offer of assistance, the farmer could not now bring a lawsuit," said Michael G. Morris, Consumers Energy's president and chief executive officer. This is the second time in the past month that a Michigan Appellate Court has ruled that such lawsuits need not be heard by a trial court. The earlier case involved a farmer in Gratiot County.

Consumers Energy, the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy Corporation, is Michigan's largest utility providing natural gas and electricity to more than 6 million of the state's 9.5 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties. ■

### Poultry farmers fight IRS on tax

Poultry growers are fighting the Internal Revenue Service on the issue of when a chicken becomes something of monetary value. Poultry farmers say a chicken is an item of value when it is sold. The IRS says a chicken is an item of value as soon as there is investment in it.

The so-called 'farm method' for pricing poultry was put into place by Congress to allow farmers to price their inventory at value when they want to sell

the poultry. Farmers feel the IRS has misused this rule, so that it gives immature chickens a value based on how much money has been spent on them so far.

The Mountaire Corp., a company based in Arkansas, has filed a suit in U.S. Tax Court in Washington, D.C., to overturn IRS demands for \$1.84 million in back taxes for 1993 and almost \$526,000 for 1994. Other companies also have such cases pending against the IRS. ■

### \$1.5 million fine levied in Espy-related case

A federal court levied a fine of \$1.5 million on Sun-Diamond Growers of California, the nation's largest fruit cooperative. Sun-Diamond had been found guilty of giving illegal gifts to former Clinton cabinet member Mike Espy.

The cooperative was also put on probation for five years. During that time, Sun-Diamond must make regular reports to the court to ensure it does not again violate federal gratuity laws.

Sun-Diamond is owned by five member cooperatives — among them the nation's largest raisin, prune, walnut, fig and apricot cooperatives — which in turn are owned by about 4,500 farmers. The affil-

ates have not been charged with any crime. Those affiliates are Sun-Maid Growers of California, Diamond Walnut Growers Inc., Sunsweet Growers Inc., Valley Fig Growers and Hazelnut Growers of Oregon.

Sun-Diamond also has been barred from selling its products to the government for three years. However, the company's affiliates have not been barred, having reached compliance agreements with the federal government. The cooperative and its affiliates sell to the Agriculture and Defense Departments, who use the products for school lunches, government commissaries and military cafeterias. ■

### New cheese series to help set milk price

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced in mid-May that, beginning June 5, a new cheese price series will be used under the federal milk marketing order program to calculate the Basic Formula Price (BFP). Cheese prices reported on the National Cheese Exchange had been used in the calculation of the BFP.

The new cheese price series, developed by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is based on a weekly survey of cheese manufacturing plants throughout the country.

"The new cheese price series being factored into the Basic Formula Price will significantly contribute to improved market information for the dairy industry," Glickman said, "while allowing the current longer term process

of reforming federal milk marketing orders, including possible replacement of the BFP, to continue without disruption."

NASS intends to publish the new price series on a weekly basis. All bulk sales of 40-pound block cheddar cheese during a week are included in the survey price, thus providing more information than the National Cheese Exchange (NCE), in which trades only took place each Friday. ■

### Fields to lay fallow three more years

A quarantine of 3,200 wheat-growing acres in southern New Mexico because of the wheat fungus Karnal bunt will last three more years, despite lack of any evidence of the fungus.

Already the fields have sat empty for two years, but Agriculture Department representatives say, "They have three more years" of planting restrictions. That will hurt the family farmers dependent on crops to survive, said state officials, who have petitioned USDA to lift the ban.

"The USDA sanctioned laboratory testing of more than 885 samples of confiscated seeds and harvested grain for New Mexico and found no bunted kernels," said New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Frank DuBois in a letter to USDA.

Because wheat is a rotation crop for New Mexico farmers, other crops like chili, cotton and onions will be adversely affected by the ban. ■

### CALENDAR

#### August 14

Montcalm Research Farm Field Day  
— Montcalm Research Farm - Entran, MI.  
Contact Don Smucker - (517) 831-7500

#### September 5-7

Llamafest '97 — East Lansing, MI.  
All new state-of-the-art indoor facility. All new workshops and medical clinics with Dr. David Pugh. ALSA sanctioned llama show, llama auction, Pet-A-Rama, herdsire row, and vendors. Call Dar Snyder (616) 668-4382 or Sue Frambes (517) 857-3787.

Tickets just \$5  
available in advance only  
**Agriculture's  
Summer  
Celebration**

### Ticket Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner Choice(s): \_\_\_\_\_

# of Beef \_\_\_\_\_

# of Pork \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets at \$5 Each: \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline for ticket orders — June 12

Mail check, payable to  
**MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU to:**  
**Agriculture's Summer Celebration**  
PO Box 30960  
Lansing MI 48909

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# Capitol Corner

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

## NATIONAL

### Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a tax credit available to low-income taxpayers who have earned income. Because of changes made in last year's welfare reform law, the IRS is declaring some farmers ineligible for the tax credit.

Low-income taxpayers can claim EITC provided they do not have more than \$2,200 of capital gains net income. Capital gains net income is defined by the Internal Revenue Code to be gains from the sale of capital assets.

The IRS is incorrectly characterizing profit from the sale of breeding livestock as capital gains net income, therefore disqualifying farmers from claiming EITC. In March, a group of congressmen wrote the Internal Revenue Service arguing that it should not

characterize profit from the sale of breeding livestock as capital gains net income. The congressmen stated that breeding livestock is property used in a trade or business rather than a capital asset.

On April 29, the IRS wrote to the congressmen reaffirming its position that profits from the sale of breeding livestock should be considered a capital gain and could be used to disqualify farmers from the EITC. Legislation is now being prepared for introduction to exclude gain or loss from the sale of breeding livestock from the computation of capital gains net income when determining eligibility for the EITC.

**MFB Position:** Farm Bureau will support the legislation.

**MFB Contact:** Al Almy, ext. 2040

## NATIONAL

### Particulate matter standards

Efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to adopt new clean air standards for ozone and particulate matter (PM) that would affect agriculture are continuing. Agriculture practices identified as emitting fine PM or ozone include dairies, feedlots, fuel combustion sources, diesel engine emissions and dust from soil preparation, harvesting, grain mills and grain elevators.

Farm Bureau has filed comments with EPA and testified at congressional hearings to express strong opposition to the new proposed air quality standards. Many Democrat and Republican members of Congress have also stated their opposition to the proposed air quality standards.

Among the leading powerful congressmen opposing the proposed air quality standards is Michigan Congressman John Dingell (D-Dearborn), who is the ranking Democrat on the House Commerce Committee. Congressman Dingell said the

science used by EPA in developing the proposed standards is "unclear." He has also expressed frustration with the White House and EPA's unwillingness to reach a compromise on the proposed standards. He accurately said the standards "represent a masterly contempt for good sense."

Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration have questioned the proposed air quality standards saying they "are not based on adequate scientific evidence" and would have "a large economic impact" on "tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of small businesses and farms."

Despite the growing pressure against the proposed clean air standards from industry and Congress, EPA Administrator Carol Browner says the agency has no plans to back away from the standards. It is expected EPA will issue final standards by late June.

**MFB Contact:** Al Almy, ext. 2040

## NATIONAL

### Balanced budget agreement

On May 6, the president and congressional leaders reached agreement on balancing the federal budget by 2002. The agreement came after many meetings to reconcile differing viewpoints on how to balance the budget.

The agreement provides for \$135 billion in tax cuts, slows the growth of Medicare spending by \$115 billion over five years and provides \$600-\$700 billion of entitlement program savings over 10 years.

The agreement calls for tax cuts in five areas: (1) a cut in the federal estate tax, (2) a cut in the capital gains tax rate, (3) a credit for families with children, (4) expansion of individual retirement accounts, and (5) higher education incentives. The

agreement does not say how the taxes are to be cut. The size and type of tax relief will be largely determined by the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

While much remains to be done by Congress before implementation of the budget agreement is realized, Farm Bureau is pleased that cuts in the federal estate tax and the capital gains tax rate will be considered. Politics will factor in the legislative process and the outcome cannot be predicted with accuracy.

**MFB Position:** Farm Bureau will be providing more information and calling on members in the near future to support the tax cuts.

**MFB Contact:** Al Almy, Extension 2040

## STATE

### Pipelines

S.B. 262 and S.B. 480, introduced by Sen. Joel Gougeon (R-Bay City), have passed the Senate and are on their way to the House Committee.

The bills would amend P.A. 16 of 1929 and P.A. 9 of 1929, which regulates the transportation and sale of crude oil, petroleum and mineral gas through pipelines, to establish certain requirements for persons constructing a crude oil or petroleum pipeline or facility.

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

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

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

construction or repair of a pipeline was properly separated and replaced. ("Topsoil" would mean surface soil that was presumed to be fertile as distinguished from subsoil.)

- The method by which property will be appraised.
- For property used to produce crops prior to construction of a pipeline, an estimate of the value of the loss of the productivity based on historic yield of the site before pipeline construction. The agricultural property owner would have to provide historic crop yield values upon request.
- That payment would be made for all damages incurred after construction of the pipeline due to the pipeline owner's or operator's entry upon the property to exercise easement rights, except that the owner or operator would be allowed to maintain a clear right-of-way without further compensation being due to the landowner.
- That the landowner had rights under the Uniform Condemnation Procedures Act. A copy of that act would have to be provided to the landowner.

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

**MFB Position:** Farm Bureau supports both S.B. 262 and S.B. 480.

**MFB Contact:** Scott Everett, ext. 2046

## STATE

### Primary seat belt bill defeated

In a vote on May 8, the Michigan House of Representatives defeated a proposal that would expand the police authority to stop vehicles in which people are suspected of not wearing a seat belt.

According to MFB Legislative Counsel Howard Kelly, MFB has had a long-standing policy supporting

crime control. "At the same time, Farm Bureau policy has opposed further expansion of police powers — including the ability to stop vehicles under the suspicion of violating the seat belt law."

H.B. 4280 Primary Seat Belt Bill - May 8, 1997 Farm Bureau supported a NO vote.

#### Here's how the House of Representatives Voted:

Name	Party	Legislator's Vote
James Agee	D	Y
Tom Alley	D	N
David Anthony	D	N
Paul Baade	D	Y
Laura Baird	D	Y
Lyn Banks	R	Y
Patricia L. Birkholz	R	Y
Bill Bobier	R	Y
Beverly Bodem	R	N
Rose Bogardus	D	Y
Bob Brackenridge	R	Y
Elizabeth Brater	D	Y
Ling Brewer	D	N
Bob Brown	D	Y
William Byl	R	Y
William J. Callahan	D	Y
Nancy Cassis	R	Y
Deborah Cherry	D	Y
Nick Ciaramitaro	D	N
Penny Crissman	R	N
Alan Cropsy	R	N
Candace Curtis	D	Y
Jessie Dalman	R	N
Eileen DeHart	D	N
Larry L. DeVuyst	R	N
Barbara J. Dobb	R	N
Agnes Dobronski	D	Y
Robert L. Emerson	D	Did Not Vote
Frank M. Fitzgerald	R	Y
A.T. Frank	D	N
John F. Freeman	D	N
Pat Gagliardi	D	N
David Galloway	R	N
Terry Geiger	R	N
John Gernaat	R	N
Donald H. Gilmer	R	Y
Sharon Gire	D	Y
Patricia Godchaux	R	Y
Michael J. Goschka	R	N
Mike Green	R	N
Michael J. Griffin	D	Did Not Vote
David M. Gubow	D	Y
Dan Gustafson	R	Y
Derrick F. Hale	D	N
Beverly Hammerstrom	R	Y
Michael Hanley	D	N
Clark Harder	D	N
Curtis Hertel	D	Y
Morris W. Hood Jr.	D	N
Jack Horton	R	N
Mark C. Jansen	R	N
David Jaye	R	N
Ron Jelinek	R	Y
Jon Jellema	R	Y
Shirley Johnson	R	N
Greg Kaza	R	N
Thomas Kelly	D	Y
Kwame M. Kilpatrick	D	Did Not Vote
Alvin H. Kukuk	R	Y
Edward LaForge	D	Y
Gerald H. Law	R	Y
Burton Leland	D	N
Clyde LeTarte	R	N
John Llewellyn	R	N
Terry London	R	Y
Allen Lowe	R	N
George W. Mans	D	Y
Lynne Martinez	D	Y
Thomas Mathieu	D	N
Jim McBryde	R	Y
Michelle McManus	R	Y
James McNutt	R	Y
James Mick Middaugh	R	N
Thomas Middleton	R	Y
Raymond M. Murphy	D	N
Michael E. Nye	R	N
Dennis Olshove	D	N
Lynn Owen	D	N
Glenn Oxender	R	N
Joseph Palamara	D	N
Mary Lou Parks	D	N
Charles Ferricone	R	N
Hubert Price Jr.	D	Y
Kirk Profit	D	N
Michael Prusi	D	N
Nancy L. Quarles	D	Did Not Vote
Andrew Raczkowski	R	Y
Kim Rhead	R	N
Andrew C. Richner	R	Y
Vera B. Rison	D	N
Sue Rocca	R	Y
Mark Schauer	D	Y
Gloria Schermesser	D	Y
Mary Schroer	D	Y
Martha G. Scott	D	N
Judith L. Scranton	R	Y
Ken Sikkema	R	N
Keith B. Stallworth	D	Did Not Vote
Paul Tesanovich	D	N
Samuel Thomas III	D	Y
Iiona Varga	D	Did Not Vote
Ed Vaughn	D	N
Harold Voorhees Sr.	R	N
Timothy L. Walberg	R	N
Ted Wallace	D	N
Howard Wetters	D	N
Deborah Whyman	R	N
Karen Willard	D	N
Paul Wojno	D	Y

## STATE

### Governor Engler's Build Michigan II proposal

On May 7, 1997, Gov. Engler unveiled his proposal for increase transportation funding.

The Governor's proposal consisted of a proposed \$570-million-per-year increase in funding, as well as reforms to the current transportation system.

These reforms include the state obtaining control of all roads receiving federal aid. Maintenance of these roads will be bid out to both county road commissions and the private sector. In addition, the statutory restrictions on the use of transportation dollars by townships would be eliminated.

Engler proposes to raise the \$570 million in additional transportation funding in the following ways:

1. \$200 million in additional federal monies.
2. \$170 million in "system-wide" reforms.

- a. End diesel discount \$28 million
- b. Increase truck fees \$38 million
- c. New overweight truck fee \$6 million
- d. Eliminate gas spillage \$15 million
- e. End gas tax diversions \$43 million
- f. "Wrap-up" insurance \$30 million for construction.

- g. Transportation tort reform \$10 million
3. \$200 million from a 4-cent gas tax increase.

**MFB Position:** MFB is pleased the Governor has come out in favor of a gas tax increase. MFB policy supports up to a 7-cent gas tax increase. MFB will continue to monitor this proposal to ensure that the transportation needs of agriculture are met.

**MFB Contact:** Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048

## STATE

### Land application of biosolids

S.B. 140, sponsored by Sen. Walter North (R-St. Ignace), passed the House, was concurred on by the Senate and is on its way to the Governor's desk.

The legislation will require the Department of Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to develop rules to properly manage the land application of sewage sludge (biosolids).

All current local ordinances regulating the land

application of biosolids will be preempted by this bill. For a local governmental unit to regulate or restrict biosolid applications beyond state law, the legislation provides that the two actions must be based on factual and unreasonable adverse effects on public health and/or adverse environmental impact.

**MFB Position:** Michigan Farm Bureau supports the bill as amended.

**MFB Contact:** Scott Everett, ext. 2046

## STATE

### Official state game mammal

Rep. Jessie Dalman (R-Holland) has introduced H.B.4162 to designate the official state mammal.

The designation was initiated by the fourth grade class at Borculo Christian School in Zeeland, Michigan.

The bill designates the white-tailed deer as the official game mammal of Michigan.

H.B. 4162, as introduced, designated the white-tailed deer as the official mammal of Michigan. An amendment in the House Conservation,

Environment and Recreation Committee changed the designation to the official state game mammal. The bill is on its way to the House floor.

**MFB Position:** Concerns of unintended consequences were addressed; Farm Bureau is neutral.

**MFB Contact:** Scott Everett, ext. 2046

# Capitol Corner

Continued from page 3

## STATE

### Grading milk, manufactured milk and milk products

Rep. Ilona Varga (D-Detroit) introduced a series of bills, H.B. 4568, 4569, 4570, 4571, 4572, aimed at amending laws dealing with grading milk, manufactured milk and milk products.

The package of bills was referred to the Committee on Regulatory Reform which is chaired by Rep. Varga. The bills have been referred to a legislative group to discuss and evaluate options.

The bills would permit a person to label milk or milk products produced by a cow that was not treated with rBST (recombinant bovine somatotropin).

BST (bovine somatotropin) is a naturally occurring protein that stimulates milk production in cattle. rBST is a manufactured product that is ad-

ministered to dairy cows to increase lactation.

The sponsor's intent is to provide labeling of milk so consumers have more information and can select the milk of their choice. The committee understands there is no difference in the two products and no test is available to determine if rBST is administered to the cow.

The Department of Agriculture permits labeling if the label follows the federal guidelines with specific language indicating there is no difference in the milk, whether or not the cow is treated with rBST.

**MFB Position:** Farm Bureau does not support H.B. 4568, 4569, 4570, 4571, 4572.

**MFB Contact:** Ron Nelson, ext. 2043

## STATE

### Anti-disparagement

H.B. 4660, Sponsored by Rep. Allen Lowe (R-Grayling), would amend the revised Judicature Act of 1961. The bill, which is often referred to as the anti-disparagement bill, would provide that a person could be liable for civil action for false state-

ments made against a product if in fact the producers of that product suffer a loss attributed to the damaging statement. The bill attempts to discourage disparaging statements.

**MFB contact:** Ron Nelson, ext. 2043

## STATE ISSUE

### Doctrine of Adverse Possession

Sen. Joseph Conroy (D-Flint) has introduced S.B. 417 to abolish the Doctrine of Adverse Possession. The Doctrine of Adverse Possession deals with property line disputes and provides

that property occupied for a period of time, 15 years or more, becomes the property of the occupying individual.

**MFB contact:** Ron Nelson, ext. 2043

### Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan United Conservation Club join forces on deer problem

Joint proposal for additional antlerless season adopted by Natural Resources Commission

The Natural Resources Commission recently approved several specific deer hunting regulation changes in an attempt to solve Michigan's white-tailed deer overpopulation problem. One major change came as a result of a joint proposal from Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC).

The Natural Resources Commission, which is charged by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with providing sound, scientific management of the state's wildlife, met May 7 and 8 to discuss changes proposed by DNR staff. After hearing public testimony, commissioners adopted several new regulations. Among the most significant are:

- Antlerless deer permits are now stand-alone licenses, most likely costing \$3.50 each.
- Antlerless licenses may be used through all seasons.
- Eligibility for a private-land antlerless license will require that individuals own or have permission to hunt on parcels of 10 acres or larger (changed from 40 acres).
- In many areas of Michigan, leftover antlerless permits will be available from any dealer.
- An experimental, early antlerless season will be opened in Menominee County in September.
- A private-land, antlerless-only season will be

open Dec. 20 to Jan. 4 in selected counties or Deer Management Units.

Michigan Farm Bureau and MUCC testified together before the commission to offer several proposals. The Dec. 20-Jan. 4 season came as a direct result of that joint testimony.

According to Scott Everett, Michigan Farm Bureau associate legislative counsel, reducing the white-tailed deer population means allowing hunters the ability to harvest antlerless deer. The new regulations attempt to do just that, he says. "This is probably the most progressive change in deer management policy since the introduction of block permits in 1989," Everett said.

"It makes sense having the largest farm organization and the largest conservation organization partner up and work jointly on this issue," he continued.

Dennis Knapp, MUCC wildlife biologist, agrees. "I think it's a very positive thing that we are working together, making some suggestions and looking for solutions together."

Knapp says the new regulations, especially the December-January firearm season, will allow hunters to harvest more antlerless deer. "We, along with Farm Bureau, came up with some additional proposals for restructuring deer hunting and shifting to the areas of the state where the populations are too high," he said of the joint proposal. "It will provide a very large potential to harvest deer in problem areas at a time where there are not likely to be agricultural conflicts."

"The Natural Resources Commission is fulfilling their obligation of scientifically managing the deer herd in Michigan," Everett said. "These recent decisions are a step in the right direction."

At its May 7 and 8 meeting, the Natural Resources Commission adopted new deer hunting regulations to address the state's overpopulation of white-tailed deer.



### Advisory on changes in supply and demand estimates report

The May 12 *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE)* report provides the Agriculture Department's first assessment of supply, demand, and prices for crops and livestock products in the coming year. The report is issued by the World Agricultural Outlook Board of USDA's Office of the Chief Economist.

The May 12 issue presents USDA's first marketing year 1997/98 projections for U.S. and foreign grains, oilseeds, and cotton. The report also includes the first projections for 1997/98 U.S. sugar and U.S. milk supply and use and calendar year

1998 U.S. meat and poultry products. Country supply and use details for 1997/98 are published in May for wheat, coarse grains and corn, and in July for oilseeds and cotton.

Table formats were the same as those used in the May 1996 issue. To view the May 1996 WASDE report, access the following World Wide Web address: <http://www.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/waobr/wasde-bb/>. Click on 1996, then May 10.

For more information on format changes or electronic access, call (202) 720-5447. To subscribe to the WASDE report, call 1-800-999-6779.

### CBOT delivery proposal

Continued from page 1

"This is not a normal regulating agency/regulating industry relationship," states Boehm. "The CBOT has in essence told their regulating body — the CFTC — that they are going to implement their proposed delivery system against the CFTC's recommendation."

Public opinion, thus far, has favored keeping the Toledo location by an overwhelming margin, with a majority of the 370 letters opposing the CBOT plan. Boehm says industry demands for justification by the CBOT for eliminating the Toledo delivery point is growing, including congressional inquiries.

According to Boehm, there are five major points that producers need to relay to the CFTC when submitting their written comments:

- Unpredictability of basis values and movement will lower returns to producers.
- The proposed plan — only allowing delivery on the Illinois River — focuses on only one mode of trans-

portation (river barge) and subjects basis levels to volatile swings in barge freight rates and river disruptions. Michigan commodities currently rely almost exclusively on rail and truck transportation.

- The proposed plan ignores domestic livestock and processor demand by focusing only on the gulf export market.
- The proposal negatively impacts buyers and sellers of corn and soybeans, whether they are directly involved in the futures market or not. Cash prices are established on the CBOT — established price.
- The loss of Toledo as a delivery point interferes with the convergence of the cash grain price and futures price at contract expiration. The proposal disrupts traditional marketing channels for buyers who opt to take actual delivery, increasing transportation costs and time required for delivery.

For more details, call Boehm at (800) 292-2680, ext. 2023.

### Glickman expresses concerns over U.S. "professional" futures market

USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, in a letter to the head of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), expressed reservations about the so-called professional market for futures trading.

Bills in both the House and Senate to overhaul the Commodity Futures Act would create a so-called "promarket" for institutions and highly capitalized individuals who are considered more sophisticated traders. The promarket traders would be exempt from nearly all CFTC oversight.

The Senate bill would not include agricultural futures markets under the promarket provisions, but the House bill would.

The Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange have strongly lobbied for the exemption, saying that overseas exchanges have a freedom from government oversight that gives them an economic advantage over U.S. exchanges.

However, CFTC strongly opposes the exemption, saying it would exempt too much trading from government regulation.

Several grain groups have said they oppose the promarket's exemptions for agricultural futures.

In his May 5 letter to Brooksley Born, CFTC chair, Glickman said that futures exchanges are

"linked in numerous, complex ways to the overall performance of many industries," including agriculture. Prices farmers receive are set in part by futures prices set by exchange futures trading, he said.

"Consequently, I believe (futures) regulatory policy must continue its present balance. Before I would support changing it, I would want to be assured that the changes would not jeopardize the price function of exchange markets in the interest of enhancing their profit functions."

Other concerns Glickman raised about the promarket exemption were:

- It might limit CFTC's ability to monitor the markets to prevent "manipulation or fraud"
- It could "adversely affect exchange price transparency" and could create more volatile prices
- It could "drain" business from the other markets that continue to be regulated, thus weakening them for the retail investors

Even if the exemption weren't given to agricultural futures markets, those markets could be harmed, Glickman said. A credit problem for a non-agricultural trader could affect a clearing function, he said. "It is very difficult to segregate totally" agricultural and non-agricultural markets, the letter said.

### Senate leader says tax relief likely

If the congressional budget process stays on track, farmers should see some form of tax relief enacted this year on capital gains, estate taxes and deferred payment contracts, the Senate's top Democrat said.

Speaking at the American Farm Bureau Federation's governmental relations conference, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) said that completing work on the budget agreement that purports to balance the budget by 2002 represents "the most important job (in) this Congress."

Daschle expressed confidence that Congress

will start the nuts-and-bolts tasks of passing a budget resolution, crafting spending bills and writing a tax-cut package. The tax cuts sought by Farm Bureau and others, he stressed, are dependent on congressional support for the budget agreement, which has been attacked by all sides since it was struck May 2. The expression of support will come during the vote on the budget resolution.

Daschle was emphatic about protecting ethanol tax incentives during Congress' tax-writing process. He said that ending the federal tax credit for ethanol production before its scheduled expiration in 2000 should "not be negotiable."

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## Farm Bureau urges uniform country-of-origin labeling for food

With tainted imported strawberries still on the minds of many, Michigan Farm Bureau is supporting efforts to ensure uniformity in country-of-origin food labeling. Several proposals to boost country-of-origin label requirements on fresh and frozen foods are working their way through Congress, according to Ken Nye, director of Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity and Environmental Division.

"Farm Bureau supports the labeling of imported agricultural goods — including fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and processed products — with clear and readable designations of the country of origin," Nye said. "That label should appear on the main display panel of every package."

The American Farm Bureau Federation recently told the Treasury Department that Farm Bureau supports efforts to ensure uniformity for country-of-origin markings on packages of frozen imported produce.

"All food products should be labeled as to the country of origin at the distribution point and at the retail level," said Richard Newpher, American Farm Bureau Federation Washington, D.C., office executive director, in a letter to Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Because some processors and distributors of imported food goods do not mark their pack-

ages clearly, Farm Bureau urged Rubin to ensure that processors follow current requirements and new efforts to make the country-of-origin mark more visible.

"Current country-of-origin labeling is either not present or, in many cases, not present in a manner easily decipherable by the consumer," Newpher said. "We would urge not only moving forward with the labeling requirements, but also making sure that adequate steps are taken to require compliance."

A Farm Bureau-supported bill introduced by Rep. Sonny Bono (R-Calif.) also addresses the labeling issue. Bono's bill would require fresh produce to be labeled with its country of origin, which, Bono says, would bring the United States in line with most of the nation's major trading partners.

The California congressman said the requirements of his bill would not be an added burden to farmers and retailers. Bono said the proposal could also increase sales of domestic produce.

Another Farm Bureau-supported bill, sponsored by Sens. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) and Larry Craig (R-Idaho), would require country-of-origin labels on all imported meat. Backers say it would help protect consumers and provide them with more information about the meat they consume. ■

## USDA to publish a weekly cheddar cheese prices report

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) began publishing a weekly Cheddar Cheese Prices report beginning in early May. Weighted average prices received and volumes of sales by manufacturers will be published for 40-lb. blocks, 640-lb. blocks, and 500-lb. barrels of cheddar cheese.

NASS will also publish regional data where possible. The May 9 report contains data for the weeks ending March 7 through May 2. Subse-

quent weekly reports will include the most recent five weeks of data in each report.

NASS's *Cheddar Cheese Prices* report is based on a survey of cheddar cheese manufacturers in the United States that sell cheese on a bulk, wholesale basis. NASS began the survey the first week in March at the request of the secretary of agriculture. The purpose of the report is to provide a statistically defensible cheddar cheese price series to satisfy industry and USDA needs. ■

## New food safety standards being considered

A Clinton administration food safety proposal could be a good-news and a not-so-good-news proposition for Michigan producers. The \$43.2 million package, included in Clinton's 1998 budget proposal, would strengthen safety standards for fruit and vegetable juices and eggs, according to Ken Nye, director of the Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity and Environmental Division.

Although Congress has yet to approve the funding for the initiative, Nye said the concept is well intentioned and could prove to be a substantial step toward implementing new inspection and testing technology. "We have one of the safest food systems in the world," he said. "However, we can take some of the new technology that we've gained in recent years, apply them and make our system even safer. It's very important in times of budget reductions that we maintain adequate funding and staffing for adequate inspection throughout the process."

Elements of the administration's plan include:

- Improved inspection and safety measures, including \$8.5 million for additional Food and Drug Administration inspectors. Fruit and vegeta-

ble juices and egg products will be added to the seafood, meat and poultry products subject to the safety tracking system.

- A \$4 million national education campaign on food handling in homes, restaurants, and stores.
- Another \$16.5 million to develop new tests to detect food-borne pathogens.
- An additional \$13.7 million for a national early warning system to respond to outbreaks.

The officials are still studying the possibility of requiring all juices to be pasteurized, which would include apple cider. Nye is hopeful that steps taken by the apple industry after last fall's incident with contaminated apple cider will prevent the need for pasteurization.

"Here in Michigan, we're doing a lot of work with the apple juice, the cider industry, to make sure it's the safest that we can possibly have," Nye said. "We've developed a set of best management practices for the manufacturers themselves. The cider industry wants to do their absolute best to make sure that the product they're putting out is wholesome and good for people." ■

## China to buy U.S. grapes for the first time

This summer will be the first time that California table grapes will be sold in mainland China. Until now, the only American fruits imported by China have been apples and cherries from Washington state, according to Bruce Obbink, chairman of the California Table Grape Commission.

Obbink said that probably by July, China will import grapes from four San Joaquin counties: Madera, Fresno, Tulare and Kern. He said the industry hopes to add Riverside County to that list during

the harvest next spring.

Initially, the grapes will be sold in four major cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and Dalian. Together, those cities have 34 million people. Obbink says he expects the industry to sell at least a pound per person, which would yield about \$25 million.

Obbink believes California grape sales in China will yield \$50 million within three years, despite the 45 percent tariff China has in place. ■

## Deere profits are up

Deere & Co. says its net sales of agricultural, construction, and commercial and consumer equipment increased 15 percent to \$3.108 billion in the second quarter ended April 30.

Worldwide agricultural equipment operating profit increased 33 percent to \$339 million for the quarter.

Net sales and revenues for the second quarter grew 14 percent to \$3.521 billion. Overseas sales are up 20 percent.

The first six months of its 1997 fiscal year, Deere reports physical volume of sales increased 8 percent.

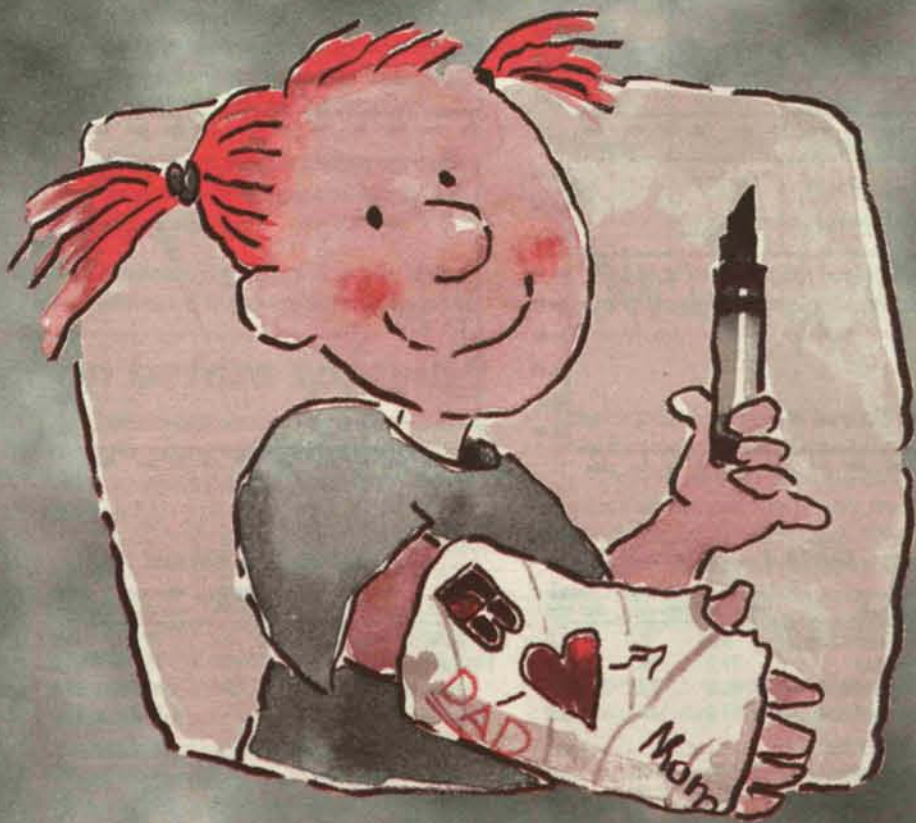
Deere reports second quarter income of \$319.5 million or \$1.25 per share, up from \$1.04 a year ago. ■

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# Market Outlook

by Dr. Jim Hilker,  
Department of  
Agricultural Econom-  
ics, Michigan State  
University



## CORN

The USDA released their first projections for the 1997-98 corn marketing year on May 12 and they are presented in Table 1. Up to this point, the 1997-98 estimates have been my forecasts. The biggest difference between the USDA projection and my forecast on the supply side is the projected yield. I had been using the trend yield of 129 bushels per acre and the USDA chooses to up that to 131 with the early plantings. Early planting generally leads to better-than-average yields. However, adding two bushels at this point seems a bit out on a limb.

As shown in Table 1, the USDA is projecting strong domestic use, with FSI increasing 90 million bushels and feed use jumping 275 million bushels. This would indicate that they feel corn prices will be low enough to encourage expansion in ethanol production and the high hog returns now will bring large expansion as we go into 1998. The export projection is disappointing given the low projected prices, but it comes from increased world stocks and a projected world coarse grain crop as large as this year's when we increased ending stocks.

What does all of this mean for pricing decisions? The fundamentals suggest that new crop futures should be in the \$2.65 range near where they are now, giving us \$2.30-2.55 fall contracts depending on where you are located. At this point, I would consider holding off any further pricing of new crop corn until we see a rally. If you have not priced any

## Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Corn	..... ?
Soybeans (explosive)	..... ↑ ↓
Wheat	..... ↔
Hogs	..... ↔ ↑
Cattle	..... ↔ ↓

Index: ↔ = stable prices; ↑ = higher prices; ↓ = lower prices; TP = topping; BT = bottoming; ? = unsure

or much new crop, consider pricing some if prices rally back to \$2.75. If you have already priced 15-25 percent of your expected production, you may want to wait for \$2.85. It's hard to justify holding on to old crop corn any longer, certainly consider dumping the remainder at \$3 July futures.

## WHEAT

The freeze damage in hard red wheat areas did cause damage, but not as badly as first projected. The first USDA winter wheat survey showed a country yield of 38.2 — a bushel better than last year's drought-stricken crop, but still below trend. Michigan's wheat yield estimate was put at 52 bushels per acre, significantly higher than last year's 38, but still below the record 60 bushels per acre. And we will still have some hurdles to get over before harvest.

As shown in Table 2, the USDA is projecting a wheat crop in 1997 nearly as large as in 1996 even with over 6 million fewer acres being planted. This is due to less abandoned without a drought and a bushel higher yield. Due to the larger beginning stocks expected for 1997-98, total supplies are expected to be higher. On the use side it will be hard to match this past year's level. Food use will be up a bit, but feed use will drop with lower corn prices and hopefully less feed grade wheat.

My reading of the fundamentals suggest that new crop wheat futures are a bit low at the \$3.85-3.90 level they are now. At this point, consider waiting for a rally. If you have not priced much or any to this point, consider doing so if Chicago July futures reach the \$4.10 range. If you have already priced 25-30 percent, consider waiting for another quarter.

## SOYBEANS

The latest USDA Supply/Demand Report for soybeans, shown in Table 3, showed we will import about 5 million more bushels of soys this year than usual with the tight situation. While

small, it does show just how tight things are for this marketing year. The USDA upped the crush an equal amount leaving the 1996-97 ending stock estimate the same.

The first USDA 1997-98 is a different story. If we plant the number of acres suggested in the March Planting Intentions Report and have a trend yield, the tight situation will be over as can be seen in the third column of Table 3. The USDA supply projection is in the middle of others' projections, but the export projection is on the low side of general expectations.

Probably time to move remaining old crop soys if you have not already done so. On the new crop side, consider forward pricing some at today's \$7.00-7.10 levels of November futures if you have not priced many, this will make a cushion if the market falls. If you already have 25 to 30 percent priced, consider waiting for the \$7.25 level to price more.

## HOGS

The USDA put out their first estimates for the 1998 pork supply demand situation on May 12. They project pork production will be up 7 percent in 1998. Year-to-year increases are expected to start in the fourth quarter of 1997. The projected average price for 1998 was put at \$53-57, down from the 1997 average of \$56-58. My guess is 1998 prices will be closer to \$48-52, and the futures tend to agree with me on this one.

This production increase would suggest an increase in per capita consumption of 2.5 pounds of pork. This, along with an increase in poultry consumption of 5 pounds per person, more than offsets the decrease of 2 pounds of beef per person. Are we really going to average more than five more pounds of meat per person?

## CATTLE

The latest USDA Cattle-On-Feed Report, released May 16, was near expectations. Cattle on feed in the U.S. in lots over 1,000 head was up 8 percent from a year ago and up 9 percent in the seven historic states. Placements were up 13 and 12 percent, respectively. Marketings were up slightly for the whole U.S. and 2 percent for the seven states.

To go back another year to put these numbers in perspective, we had to use the seven state numbers as the monthly U.S. numbers only began in January

of 1996. On feed is 3 percent above 1995 and placements were 8 percent below. Remember, corn was very high priced a year ago so placements were light. But marketings were high last year, so to have marketings at and above last year is positive.

At this point, futures for the summer in the \$65 range is what is expected. Consider holding any forward pricing for a couple dollar rally. This is not to say we will have one, but for the summer as a whole the downside risks do not seem to be huge. ■

## Trade disputes reflect Europe's internal problems

The United States must continue to challenge the European Union on a growing list of agricultural trade issues, according to the nation's largest general farm organization.

"Are there any answers to all these trade disputes with the EU? I do not see any simple solutions, because many of the disputes are an extension of the EU's internal problems," said American Farm Bureau President Dean Kleckner. "To keep our agricultural industry competitive we must continue to challenge the EU on these and other issues. Trade agreements must be monitored and enforced."

Kleckner told a House agriculture subcommittee that many agreements are just not honored by the EU. "We find that negotiations with the EU are not negotiations with a single unit, but one body with 15 heads often pulling in different directions and causing changes in agreements after the fact," he said.

"The EU is both a competitor and a market. However, it is a very protected market, a market hiding behind artificial sanitary and phytosanitary barriers, and a market in which consumer hysteria blocks our products. Even with the many existing barriers that the EU currently uses we must look to the EU not only as it is today with 15 member countries but as a much larger trading unit as it expands its membership into Eastern Europe."

Kleckner said Farm Bureau is a strong supporter of free and open trade. "We worked hard to secure passage of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade as well as the North American Free Trade Agreement. We also strongly support most-favored-nation trade status for China as a protection against unreasonable tariffs for U.S. products."

"In addition, we support fast-track authority for the negotiation of future treaties. Fast-track is critical to future negotiations, especially in the 1999 renegotiation of the agriculture agreement of the Uruguay Round and for adding other nations to NAFTA. There will be no reason for other countries to take us seriously in these negotiations if we do not have fast-track in place."

Kleckner said most farmers are satisfied with the new farm bill. But, he added, "farmers are still questioning if our trade agreements are really working. Many farmers do believe the export numbers, which tell us these agreements are working, but I spend a lot of time defending our trade agreements, knowing that there are no good excuses for the long battles we are fighting with the EU over beef, dairy and poultry products as well as subsidized grain and wheat gluten problems."

He said that negotiating with the EU seems to be an endless cycle, with three years of negotiations over veterinary inspection equivalency. "All of this, however, is somewhat overshadowed by the failure to make sufficient progress on the poultry issues."

"Why do we have to expend three years worth of valuable USDA resources to prevent a trade war when our agreements were clearly being circumvented? We feel the EU demands changes in the U.S. process that are not consistent with science and do not recognize the equivalency of our standards." ■

## Genesis Ag, Grower Service launch Emerge

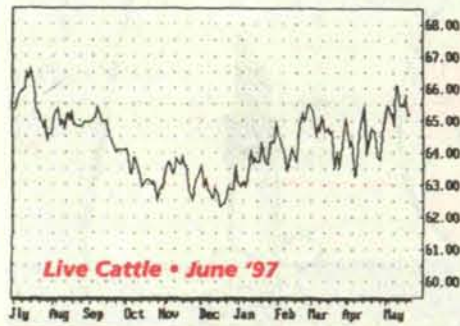
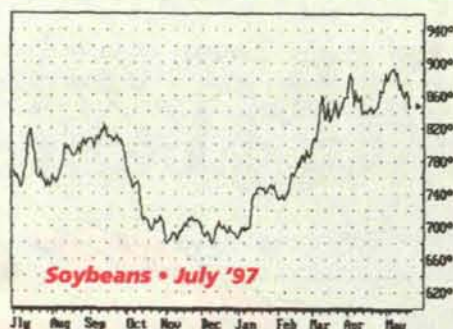
Emerge is an aerial infrared photography providing a complete field-level information system of high resolution field images designed to identify trouble spots (disease and weed pressure) before they are visible to the human eye.

"This permits us to identify and treat disease and weed pressure on time to preserve the highest quality seed stock for farmers' planting needs," said Bill Byrum, project coordinator, Genesis Ag Ltd.

Red wheat varieties available that are Emerge-monitored are Mendon, Dynagrow 426, Brandy and Wakefield. All are available from Genesis Ag Ltd. and Grower Service Corp.

Ramrod, the new high-yielding soft white wheat developed by MSU, is available exclusively from Genesis Ag Ltd., Grower Service Corp. and Harrington Seeds, Inc. and will be the only soft white wheat variety 100 percent Emerge-monitored. ■

## COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS



## COMMODITY SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE SHEETS

Table 1 — Corn

(Million acres)	Estimated 1995-1996	Projected 1996-1997	Hilker 1997-1998
Acres set-aside/diverted	6.2	0.0	0.0
Acres planted	71.2	79.5	81.4
Acres harvested	65.0	73.1	75.1
Bu./harvested acre	113.5	127.1	131.0
<b>Stocks (million bushels)</b>			
Beginning stocks	1,558	426	909
Production	7,374	9,293	9,840
Imports	16	10	10
<b>Total supply</b>	<b>8,948</b>	<b>9,729</b>	<b>10,759</b>
<b>Use:</b>			
Feed and residual	4,696	5,325	5,600
Food/seed & ind. uses	1,598	1,670	1,760
<b>Total domestic</b>	<b>6,294</b>	<b>6,995</b>	<b>7,360</b>
Exports	2,228	1,825	2,050
<b>Total use</b>	<b>8,522</b>	<b>8,870</b>	<b>9,410</b>
Ending stocks	426	909	1,349
Ending stocks, % of use	5.0	10.3	14.3
Regular loan rate	\$1.89	\$1.89	\$1.89
<b>U.S. season average</b>			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$3.24	\$2.75	\$2.45

Table 2 — Wheat

(Million acres)	Estimated 1995-1996	Projected 1996-1997	Hilker 1997-1998
Acres set-aside & diverted	5.2	0.0	0.0
Acres planted	69.1	75.6	69.2
Acres harvested	60.9	62.9	61.0
Bu./harvested acre	35.8	36.3	37.1
<b>Stocks (million bushels)</b>			
Beginning stocks	507	376	465
Production	2,182	2,282	2,262
Imports	68	90	90
<b>Total supply</b>	<b>2,757</b>	<b>2,748</b>	<b>2,817</b>
<b>Use:</b>			
Food	883	895	910
Seed	104	102	100
Feed	153	300	250
<b>Total domestic</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>1,260</b>
Exports	1,241	985	1,000
<b>Total use</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>2,260</b>
Ending stocks	376	465	557
Ending stocks, % of use	15.8	20.4	24.7
Regular loan rate	\$2.58	\$2.58	\$2.58
<b>U.S. season average</b>			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$4.55	\$4.35	\$3.90

Table 3 — Soybeans

(Million acres)	Estimated 1995-1996	Projected 1996-1997	Hilker 1997-1998
Acres planted	62.6	64.2	68.8
Acres harvested	61.6	63.4	67.5
Bu./harvested acre	35.3	37.6	38.5
<b>Stocks (million bushels)</b>			
Beginning stocks	335	183	125
Production	2,177	2,383	2,600
Imports	4	10	5
<b>Total supply</b>	<b>2,516</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>2,730</b>
<b>Use:</b>			
Crushings	1,370	1,425	1,450
Exports	851	895	890
Seed, feed & residuals	112	131	130
<b>Total use</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>2,451</b>	<b>2,470</b>
Ending stocks	183	125	260
Ending stocks, % of use	7.8	5.1	10.5
Regular loan rate	\$4.92	\$4.97	\$4.97
<b>U.S. season average</b>			
Farm price, \$/bu.	\$6.72	\$7.35	\$6.25

Source: Knight Ridder Financial

Source: USDA and Jim Hilker

# USDA accepts 16.1 million acres for enrollment in Conservation Reserve Program

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will accept 16.1 million acres of the nation's most environmentally sensitive cropland into the new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

"Last February I pledged that this sign up would be the first step toward a new CRP that would provide more environmental benefits over the next 10 years than the old program did over the last 10. That pledge has been fulfilled," Glickman said. "We set out to enroll land that would yield the highest environmental benefits, keep productive cropland growing food and fiber and be fair to taxpayers in providing the most environmental bang for the buck."

"That goal has been met in three significant ways," Glickman said. "One, the 16.1 million acres we are accepting into the CRP will result in a nearly 85 percent increase in the environmental benefits for every dollar spent. Two, the average Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) of the bids we are accepting today is 46 percent higher than the acreage enrolled presently in the CRP. Three, while getting greater environmental benefits, we will be paying 21 percent less per acre — saving more than \$1.6 billion for the life of the program."

The environmental benefits of the 16.1 million acres accepted are significantly greater due to a variety of factors, including producer willingness to adopt more environmentally beneficial vegetation, the enrollment of acreage in conservation priority areas, the restoration of more than 790,000 acres of wetlands with protective upland areas, and the enrollment of more than 1 million acres of trees.

"We were very impressed with the number of people willing to make their existing CRP contracts more environmentally sensitive," Glickman said. "This fact has enabled us to keep the regional distribution of acreage in the CRP stable while increasing environmental benefits."

For this sign up, the EBI was redesigned to compare the offers of all acreage based on seven factors: soil erosion, wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality, location in a conservation priority area, long-term retention of conservation benefits beyond the contract period and cost.

The temporary retirement of this land will not have any substantial effect on commodity prices, farm income, or the United States' ability to supply world markets with its agricultural products.

USDA immediately will begin the notification process to let farmers and ranchers know whether their offers were accepted. Those whose land was not accepted should consult with a representative from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or a conservation district to improve the environmental benefits or rental rate of offers for the next CRP sign-up, scheduled to take place this fall. Potential bidders can

increase the environmental value, and acceptability, of their offers by proposing to establish certain covers that enhance wildlife habitat and by offering only the more sensitive cropland acres.

Glickman urged farmers and ranchers who may not have participated in this CRP sign up, or did not have land accepted, also to look into the CRP's continuous sign up options. The CRP continuous sign-up provides farmers with the opportunity to enroll land in the CRP by devoting it to certain high environmentally-valued conservation practices, such as riparian buffers and grass waterways.

Today, some 32.9 million acres are enrolled in the CRP. There are approximately 21.2 million acres subject to CRP contracts expiring on September 30, 1997. The new 16.1 million acre enrollment will bring the total acres enrolled in the CRP to 27.6 million on October 1, 1997.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q:** When were producers notified whether their bids were accepted?

**A:** The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Kansas City Management Office sent lists of accepted and rejected bids to all state and county FSA offices by overnight mail by May 23. After receipt, FSA county offices started notifying producers during the week of May 27-30.

**Q:** How much acreage subject to expiring CRP contracts will be re-enrolled in this sign-up?

**A:** Approximately 11.7 million acres that are currently subject to contracts expiring September 30, 1997, will be re-enrolled in the new CRP.

**Q:** When will the new contracts become effective?

**A:** CRP bidders were able to present offers for contracts that would become effective either October 1, 1997, or October 1, 1998. However, contracts covering acreage already subject to CRP contracts must become effective October 1, 1997.

**Q:** Can a 1997 crop be harvested even when normal harvest occurs after the October 1, 1998, contract effective date?

**A:** CRP participants with new contracts are permitted to harvest the preceding year's crop even when normal harvest occurs after October 1 of the effective date of the new contract. The first year's payment is not affected by the harvest date.

**Q:** What will be the duration of CRP contracts?

**A:** Generally, CRP contracts will be for a term of not less than 10 years. However, for land devoted to certain practices such as riparian buffers, filter strips, restoration of cropped wetlands, hardwood trees, shelter belts, windbreaks, or wildlife corridors, contracts are for a term of not less than 10 nor more than 15 years, as selected by the participant.

**Q:** How were the offers selected?

**A:** USDA used a competitive environmental benefits index (EBI) based on seven factors.

The EBI factors were: (1) wildlife habitat benefits which encourage covers on contract acreage that will be most beneficial to wildlife; (2) water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff, and leaching; (3) on-farm benefits of reduced erosion; (4) likely long-term benefits beyond the contract period which recognizes that certain practices such as trees will provide environmental benefits beyond the contract period; (5) air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion; (6) benefits of enrollment in conservation priority areas where enrollment would contribute to the improvement of water quality, wildlife habitat, or air quality; and (7) cost.

**Q:** May land that was the subject of a bid and rejected for enrollment be re-offered during a later sign up?

**A:** Yes. Land that meets basic eligibility criteria may be offered during any CRP sign up even if it was not accepted previously. The likelihood of acceptance could be increased by bidding less than the maximum payment rate for the acreage, agreeing to establish more beneficial cover, or limiting the offer to only the more environmentally sensitive acreage of a particular parcel of land.

**Q:** If not accepted under a new bid, must land coming out of CRP be farmed according to a conservation plan for the producer to maintain eligibility for benefits under certain USDA programs?

**A:** Yes. If the acreage meets the applicable highly erodible land definition, a conservation plan will be required to retain eligibility for certain other USDA programs.

**Q:** If a bid is not accepted, when can a producer begin preparing the CRP land for crop production?

**A:** Beginning July 1 in the final year of the contract, CRP participants may begin cer-

tain land preparation activities for fall-seeded crops. For 1997, in arid areas, land preparation approved for fall-seeded crops on certain CRP acreage may begin as early as May 1. Preparation of land for spring-seeded crops may begin with chemical burn down of cover during the summer. Beginning dates for this activity vary by region. All early land preparation activities must be applied under an approved conservation plan. Interested participants should contact their local FSA office for details regarding early land preparation policies in order to ensure they do not violate the terms and conditions of their CRP contract.

**Q:** When will the next general CRP sign up be held?

**A:** The 16th sign up is scheduled to be held this year during the fall.

**Q:** What were the impacts of using the EBI?

**A:** The EBI fostered competition, enhanced cover for wildlife habitat and long-term protection, and provided a quantitative basis for selection of the most environmentally sensitive acres.

**Q:** When can a CRP participant begin to establish the approved cover?

**A:** CRP applicants with accepted offers may begin establishing the cover immediately. Producers who establish the cover before the CRP contract is approved do so at their own risk.

**Q:** When will producers and operators receive their first payments from land accepted into the 15th sign up of the CRP?

**A:** Producers and operators will receive their first payment shortly after October 1, 1998.

### State-by-state listing of acres offered and accepted by the Agriculture Department for the Conservation Reserve Program.

	State Offer	Accept	Total
Michigan	114,579	36,833	259,234
Illinois	346,035	174,469	608,207
Indiana	141,706	77,171	313,814
Iowa	1,119,220	522,935	1,292,129
Kentucky	212,786	143,178	234,235
Minnesota	1,031,760	393,082	791,824
Ohio	125,708	85,979	309,152
U.S.	23,269,083	16,146,955	27,623,611

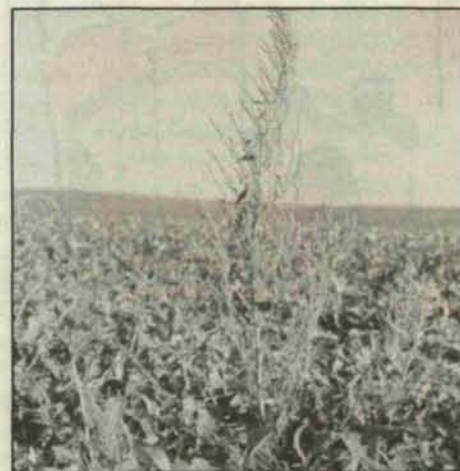
The state total includes new acreage and existing acreage remaining in the program. ■

## Manage ALS resistance — check mode of action before spraying

As more weeds become resistant to a popular class of herbicides known as ALS inhibitors, researchers say the herbicide that worked for you last year may not be the best choice to use this year.

Growers should know their herbicide chemistry and avoid continuous use of the same mode of action, advises George Kapusta, weed specialist with Southern Illinois University.

"If you're using ALS inhibitors like Beacon in



ALS-resistant waterhemp is a problem in many parts of the Corn Belt.

corn and Harmony Extra in wheat, then you should probably use a non-ALS inhibitor herbicide in soybeans," says Jim Martin, of the University of Kentucky.

Researchers like Kapusta and Martin are recommending herbicide rotation to minimize the spread of ALS-resistant weeds.

"We can trace our current problems with ALS-resistant waterhemp here in Illinois to the continuous use of ALS inhibitor herbicides like Pursuit and Classic in soybeans," says Kapusta.

ALS inhibitor herbicides for corn include Accent, Battalion, Basis, Beacon, Broadstrike, Exceed and Permit. ALS inhibitor herbicides for soybeans include Classic, Pinnacle, Pursuit, Scepter and Synchrony STS. Harmony Extra is a popular ALS inhibitor herbicide for wheat. All control weeds by inhibiting the ALS (acetolactate synthase) enzyme.

Resistance to these herbicides can develop when they are used year after year. Currently, ALS-resistant waterhemp is a problem in many parts of the Corn Belt and is moving east. Growers in Nebraska are also battling ALS-resistant shattercane. And ALS-resistant smooth pigweed was recently identified in Kentucky.

"Once weeds become resistant to ALS inhibitor herbicides, we lose the utility of these herbicides forever," says Gordon Harvey, weed scientist with

the University of Wisconsin. "But by taking a proactive stance, farmers can delay the spread of ALS-resistant weeds and extend the useful life of these products."

The first step is to break the cycle of continuous ALS herbicide use by applying herbicides that have a different mode of action.

In soybeans, Kapusta says diphenyl ethers like Blaxer, Cobra, Reflex and Flexstar are excellent alternatives to Pursuit. Diphenyl ethers control weeds by disrupting plant cell membranes. They provide broad spectrum broadleaf control and are effective against ALS-resistant weeds like waterhemp. According to Martin, diphenyl ethers have also been highly effective against ALS-resistant smooth pigweed.

For best results on waterhemp in soybeans, Kapusta advises starting with a soil-applied herbicide like Treflan, Prowl, Frontier, Lasso or Dual. Then follow up with a non-ALS postemergence treatment.

"Resistant weed populations can take over a field without much warning," says Fred Roeth, weed specialist with the University of Nebraska. "On a continuous ALS program, you can go from good control to only 60 percent control in just one year."

Because ALS resistance is transferred by pollen, it can spread quickly over fence lines, county lines and even state lines, notes Roeth. "If farmers

rotate early enough, they can keep ALS herbicides useful for a longer period of time."

There are over two dozen ALS inhibitor herbicides now registered for use on corn, soybeans and wheat. "Don't assume you're using a different mode of action just because you're using a different brand name," cautions Harvey. If you don't know what the mode of action is, you should find out before you spray.

In addition to herbicide rotation, Harvey recommends using one or more of these strategies:

- Tank-mixing an ALS herbicide with a herbicide that uses a different mode of action.
- Rotary hoeing and cultivating. Tillage controls both resistant and non-resistant weeds.
- Using herbicides with very little potential for resistance to develop. (These would include chloroacetamides like TopNotch, Surpass, Harness, Dual, Lasso and Frontier, and growth regulators like 2,4-D and Banvel.)
- Rotating to a perennial like alfalfa where practical. Crops with different life cycles combat resistance by competing with different species of weeds.

"It's important to keep the weeds guessing by using a variety of strategies for control," concludes Harvey. ■

## USDA announces final EQIP program rules

**Final rule defines a large confined livestock operation as more than 1,000 animal units**

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced on May 20 the publication of the final rules for USDA's new Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), making long-term conservation contracts and funding available to farmers and ranchers to improve the environmental health of the nation's farmland.

"EQIP will help farmers throughout the country address some of their most pressing natural resource concerns — including soil erosion, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and grazing lands. Healthier lands, cleaner water and better wildlife habitat on private lands will benefit all Americans for generations to come," Glickman said.

With an annual budget of \$200 million authorized through 2002, EQIP is USDA's largest conservation program designed to conserve and improve land while it remains in agricultural production.

EQIP provides cost-share assistance for up to 75 percent of the cost of certain conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells and wild-

life habitat enhancement. Incentive payments can be made for up to three years to encourage producers to perform land management practices such as nutrient, manure, irrigation water, wildlife, and integrated pest management. Total cost-share and incentive payments are limited to \$10,000 per person per year and \$50,000 for the length of the contract, which can run from five to 10 years.

For fiscal year 1997, at least 65 percent of the funds will be used in locally identified priority areas, and up to 35 percent can be used for other significant statewide natural resource concerns.

Those who agree to address the primary conservation concerns in the priority areas will be given preference for an EQIP contract. The program is limited to persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production. Nationally, one-half of the funds are targeted to livestock-related natural resource needs and the remainder to other significant conservation priorities associated with crop production.

**Large confined livestock operations not eligible under EQIP**

The 1996 farm bill prohibits providing EQIP cost-share assistance to large confined livestock operations for the construction of animal waste

storage or treatment facilities. The final rule defines a large confined livestock operation as one with more than 1,000 animal units.

That's an area of concern for Michigan Farm Bureau Livestock Specialist Kevin Kirk, who served on the State's Technical Committee, further explaining that the rules do allow the NRCS state conservationists, after consultation with the State Technical Committee, to modify this national standard to meet state needs. However, any proposed modification must be approved by the chief of the NRCS.

"Why should these larger operations be penalized by not being allowed to participate in this program?" Kirk challenged. "We're concerned, since more and more Michigan livestock operations are expanding, that we need to focus our efforts on these operations as well, simply because they're most likely to need and use manure storage facilities, for example, which need to be properly designed and constructed. These so-called large farms are becoming more the norm than the exception."

According to USDA guidelines, 1,000 animal units would equate to 1,000 feeder steers, 1,500 to 2,000 calves, 740 dairy cows, 450,000 broilers, or about 50,000 turkey hens. For swine, 1,000 animal units is equivalent to approximately 2,400 to 2,700 sows, or about 9,000 feeder pigs.

Kirk says that the EQIP funds should be distributed based on environmental needs and benefits returned for the dollars disbursed, not on the size of the individual's farm operation. He's hopeful that Michigan will ultimately amend the 1,000-animal unit requirement to allow bigger operations to utilize the EQIP program as well.

To qualify for EQIP consideration, producers must have a site-specific conservation plan developed in cooperation with local NRCS staff. Conservation plans must address primary natural resource concerns and are subject to NRCS technical standards. For more information, contact your local NRCS office, Farm Service Agency or your local MSU Extension office. Information is also available on NRCS's World Wide Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

## Panel rules for U.S. on hormone ban dispute

A World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute panel recently ruled that the European Union's ban on beef treated with growth hormones is not based on sound science and violates free trade rules.

The interim ruling in favor of the United States found that the EU's restrictive measure and policies on hormone-treated beef are out of line with WTO accords. The panel concluded the EU should lift the ban and bring its policies on hormone-treated beef in line with free trade accords.

"U.S. farmers and ranchers, as well as those in several other countries, have been discriminated against by not being able to sell beef for use in Europe," said Dean Kleckner, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Comprehensive scientific reviews have found no human health concerns resulting from beef produced with growth promotants.

"It has taken nearly 10 years to resolve this trade dispute although we now fully expect the EU to appeal the WTO panel's preliminary decision, Kleckner said. Their appeal not withstanding, they must either lift their import ban or pay compensation to the U.S."

Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Canada joined the U.S. in challenging the European Union. The U.S. complaint was based on the sanitary/phytosanitary statutes of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. GATT requires any WTO member applying measures to protect its people or industry to base its measures on scientific principles.

The EU is expected to appeal, which could take three to four months. The finding could lead to a WTO order requiring the EU to lift the ban or pay compensation to the U.S. based on the amount of lost sales from the United States.

The debate over beef produced with hormones began in 1988. The Uruguay Round trade talks established the sound science criteria for sanitary and phytosanitary issues, and formation of the WTO provided the U.S. an objective forum to dispute the EU ban.

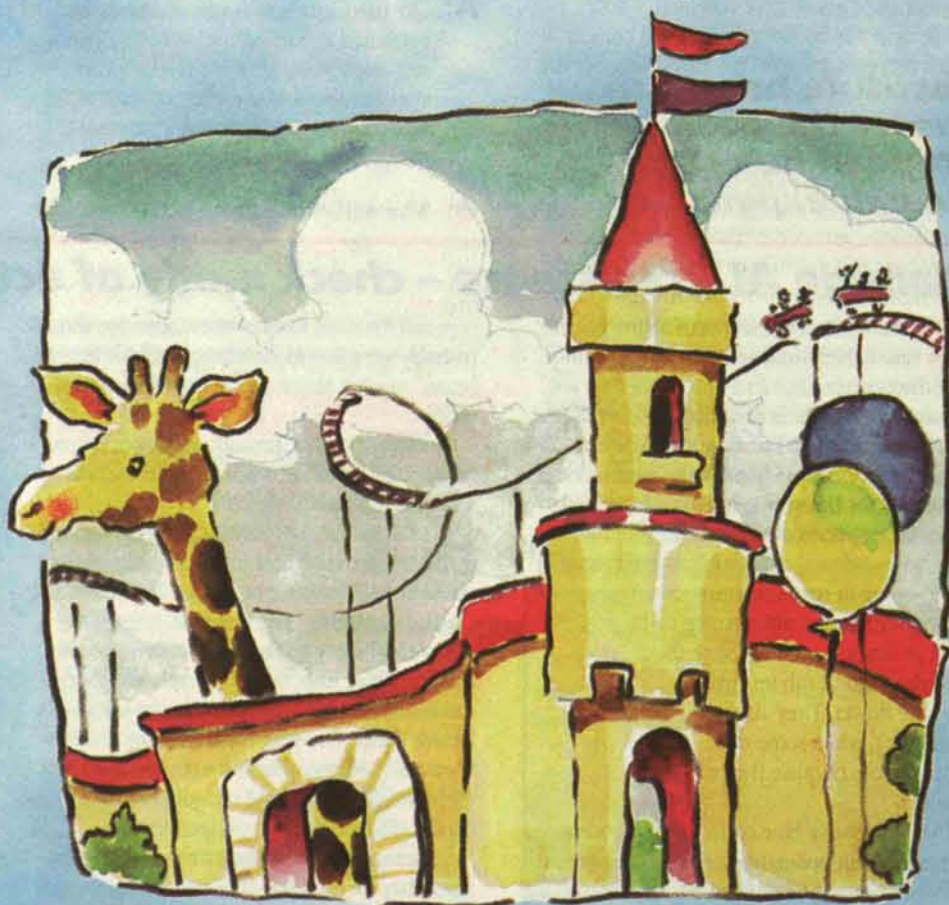


The final rules for EQIP will cost-share up to 75 percent of the cost of certain conservation practices, such as construction of manure management facilities.

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# Precision Agriculture



Perry M. Petersen, C.P. Ag.-CCA, Corporate Manager, Precision Agriculture, Terra Industries Inc.

**P**at Trail, Terra's cropping systems adviser based in Marshall, Michigan, talks to a lot of farmers, and he hears a wide range of opinions and comments on precision agriculture. In the course of these conversations, Trail has discovered some misconceptions or myths farmers have about precision agriculture.

Trail has developed a list of the most common myths. They are presented here, along with the facts about what is often touted as the most significant crop production advance in the last 50 years.

■ **Myth:** *You have to be one of the "big guys" in*

## Swine fever infects another 10, total of 164 Dutch farms

**T**en more pig farms have been infected with swine fever, bringing the number of farms affected to 164, the Dutch Agriculture ministry said recently.

The 10 new farms afflicted with the disease are located in the southern Netherlands, which has been at the heart of the epidemic since it broke out Feb. 4.

Some 14,000 animals from the infected farms will be slaughtered and incinerated, ministry spokeswoman Angelique van Helvoort said. Some 220,000 pigs from 120 affected farms have already been destroyed.

Pigs from surrounding farms may also be slaughtered as a preventive measure, she added.

The pigs have been bought by the Dutch government before being destroyed in an effort to compensate the farmers whose pigs were infected.

The European Commission has agreed to finance 70 percent of the operation, the total cost of which has not been revealed.

All transport of animals, pig sperm, ova and embryos from affected areas has been strictly banned.

Swine fever is highly contagious and usually fatal to pigs but harmless for humans.

## Substitute bees could counter the decline in European honeybees, research experts say

**T**he declining numbers of European honeybees have been of concern to farmers. Researchers at the Agriculture Department's Bee Biology Lab at Utah State University have come up with alternatives varieties of bees that could pollinate plants in place of the honeybees.

European honeybees have been ravaged by a variety of diseases and mites in the past several years. But Vincent Tepedino, a research entomologist for USDA, notes that there are 3,000 to 5,000 species of bees in the United States.

According to research entomologist Jorki Bosch, honeybees are not necessarily the most efficient pollinators anyway. Sometimes European honeybees don't rub up against the right parts of the flower. They also don't like to visit multiple trees, while some trees need pollen from other trees because they won't pollinate themselves.

The Utah native blue orchard bees, on the other hand, begin pollinating earlier in the year, work longer hours, and don't mind rain and cold weather. They also tend to switch trees; 250 blue orchard bees can pollinate the same orchard space that about 20,000 honeybees can.

The lab has been studying other bees, like the alfalfa leaf-cutter bee, to pollinate indoor hybrid plants and endangered native plants. Neither the blue orchard bee, nor the alfalfa leaf-cutter bee make honey.

# Debunking some precision ag myths

*order to take advantage of precision agriculture.* It's not just farmers with thousands of acres who are turning to precision agriculture. Corn and soybean farmers with 400 acres and vegetable growers with 200 acres are reading the precision ag menu and selecting the techniques and technologies that fit with their crop production systems. These farmers usually choose one aspect of precision agriculture — grid soil sampling, for example — as an entry point and over time incorporate other technologies such as variable rate applications or georeferenced yield monitoring.

■ **Myth:** *Precision agriculture costs are prohibitive.*

A farmer does not have to make an initial investment of \$10,000 or more to get involved with precision agriculture. There are relatively inexpensive ways for a farmer to begin compiling data about his land and crops. One method is to collect weather data. A weather database, with detailed information on temperature and precipitation variations, can be a valuable management tool, especially when used in conjunction with georeferenced data on soil conditions and yields. Even grid soil sampling is less expensive than purchasing yield monitoring equipment. Yet, georeferenced grid soil sampling may have a big payback because it allows a farmer to identify and manage a majority of the variables in

his fields with precise applications of fertilizer, lime, micronutrients, seeding rates, pesticides, etc.

■ **Myth:** *You must be a computer expert.*

With just a little instruction and support, farmers who don't even own a personal computer are able to use sophisticated computer hardware and software for collecting detailed, georeferenced data on their cropping systems. While some farmers are adept at using computer software to create yield maps and cropping prescriptions, others leave those tasks to experts such as Terra's cropping systems advisers. The extent to which a farmer gets involved in precision agriculture's technologies is a matter of personal preference.

■ **Myth:** *What works for neighbors works for you.*

The equipment a farmer needs to implement precision agriculture technologies on his farm may be somewhat different from the equipment needed by a farmer located just across the highway. For example: "Farmer A" uses a global positioning system (GPS) receiver capable of receiving FM-based differential corrections. However, electric power lines running alongside "Farmer B's" fields interfere with an FM-based signal, making it necessary for "Farmer B" to use a GPS receiver designed to pick up differential corrections from an AM signal provided by the Coast Guard. Likewise, the results one

farmer achieves with precision agriculture techniques may be different from the results his neighbor achieves. For example: "Farmer B" has been conscientious in the past about applying lime to correct soil pH. Grid soil sampling indicates lime applications are necessary on only 20 percent of his crop acres. "Farmer A" has been negligent with lime applications, and grid soil sampling indicates he must apply lime to 90 percent of his acres. Grid soil sampling has saved "Farmer B" on his lime applications and has caused his neighbor to spend more. However, "Farmer A" has boosted his potential to achieve yield improvements in his fields.

The introduction of any new technology is often accompanied with misinformation or misunderstanding. Fortunately, experts like Terra's cropping systems advisers can help farmers sort through the myths and the realities of precision agriculture. ■

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Fax: (712) 277-7383

**su·per (soo'-per) adj.** superior to;  
better than others

**ex·tra strength (eks'-tra) adj.** more  
than is normal or expected;  
**(strenkth) n.** force, power, potency

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## Teaching is simply a priority for \$30,000 prize winner

One of 16 children on a small Michigan dairy farm, Gary Anderson grew up in a world of hard work woven together with the wonders of nature. These threads still define the texture of life for the animal science professor who was named to receive this year's \$30,000 prize for Undergraduate Teaching and Scholarly Achievement at the University of California, Davis.

Believed to be the largest individual award of its kind in the nation, the annual prize pays tribute to campus faculty members who combine outstanding undergraduate teaching with remarkable scholarly achievement.

Established by the UC Davis Foundation through gifts from the Davis Chancellor's Club Fellows, the prize is based on the recommendations of both academic peers and students. It will be awarded to Anderson at a gala dinner May 22 in Freeborn Hall.

"This award is a small tangible expression of our gratitude to those who excel in their mission of teaching," said Julita Fong, chair of the foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports UC Davis.

An international leader in the field of embryo physiology, Anderson focuses most of his teaching and research on the reproduction of mammals, particularly livestock species. He has received numerous teaching awards, and his outstanding research achievements were honored by the American Society of Animal Science, which presented him with its 1995 Research Award in Physiology.

His research projects are concentrated in four areas: understanding the biological barrier that prevents successful cross-species pregnancies, improving milk composition by transferring genes into cows to change their milk proteins, isolating embryonic stem cells from embryos of domestic livestock, and examining the reproductive processes in various animal species ranging from mice to horses.

He currently is teaching lecture and laboratory courses on the physiology of reproduction. In addition to classroom teaching, he serves each year as the major professor to several graduate students and as a major adviser to about 20 undergraduate students.

"Ideally, all our faculty members strive for a balanced blending of their research and teaching activities," said UC Davis Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef. "Gary Anderson is the exemplar. Melding his work as teacher and researcher, he is wholeheartedly committed to his students as an integral part of the scientific endeavor."



Professor Gary Anderson, foreground, examines pregnant goats in the campus research barns. Anderson, a Michigan native, is the recipient of the 1997 Award for Undergraduate Teaching and Scholarly Achievement at the University of California, Davis.

Anderson's colleagues praise him for his practical devotion to teaching, noting that after 23 years in the lecture hall he still "frets" over every lecture, lab and seminar. He not only continues to evaluate the content of lectures that he has delivered countless times, but, also continues to practice their delivery.

Students, meanwhile, give Anderson high marks for his enthusiasm, sense of humor, organization, approachability ... and "cool" neckties. His excitement about his subject intrigues them.

Anderson was never anxious to leave the family farm when he headed off to study dairy science at Michigan State University. But as the 11<sup>th</sup> child in the Anderson clan, with an older brother already interested in running the farm, he realized his career path would likely lead elsewhere.

He originally planned to become a high school biology teacher. One semester of student teaching and the guidance of a college professor instead steered him toward graduate school at Cornell University, where the excitement of scientific research snared him.

In 1973, after obtaining his doctoral degree in vertebrate physiology from Cornell, Anderson joined the faculty of the UC Davis animal science department. Fresh out of graduate school, he recalls arriving in Davis looking younger than many of the students in his introductory animal science class.

He intuitively fell back on his farm-bred work

ethic and the teaching model of Robert Foote, his major professor at Cornell.

"He believed one had to place a high priority on teaching, and he put a lot of time into teaching," recalled Anderson. "He rarely stated his philosophy, but he lived it."

Since those first years on campus, Anderson's own teaching style has changed little. He's just more relaxed, he believes. He offers no secrets to teaching, aside from meticulous organization and preparation. He still mulls over every lecture trying to think of ways to make better transitions between subjects. And, yes, he does still practice the delivery of each lecture, since he isn't naturally comfortable as a public speaker.

"To be a truly effective teacher takes a commitment of time and energy," he said. "The night before a lecture is sacred. I don't go anywhere. I'm at home working on my lecture."

He continually draws upon his ongoing research in the area of embryo development to fuel his classroom lectures. This synergy can be powerful, and he is encouraged that UC increasingly views itself as a strong teaching campus as well as a powerful research institution.

Students comment that Anderson seems to really care about his students and how they are doing in his classes.

"He hasn't forgotten what it's like to be a

student," says one.

Anderson works hard to follow through on his course plans and is almost obsessive about fairness.

"Equity is important," he says. "I can be sympathetic to students, but I also have to treat everyone fairly. I hope students don't ever have to wonder if they are getting what's coming to them."

Despite all of his attention to organization and preparation, Anderson admits there are still those bad days at the lectern when he doubts that he is connecting with his young audience.

"I think my lecture is lasting forever and look at my watch only to find I've talked for only five minutes," he recalls ruefully.

While most undergraduate teaching is confined to the lecture and lab, graduate education for Anderson's students often occurs in the campus barns, standing watch over a pregnant animal.

"I've spent many nights sleeping in one of the research barns, just taking my turn," said Anderson. "It's important to take your turn."

He tries to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship among his graduate students. During long days in the lab or around the holidays, Anderson frequently prepares multi-course meals for his student group. It's all part of his philosophy that learning is hard work, but it need not be painful. Furthermore, he feels genuinely indebted to his graduate students.

"I stay current in this field through what my graduate students are learning, and our lab continues to be competitive and stay funded through their work," he said.

Those are the more tangible rewards of teaching. But for the most part, the payback is very simple.

"It sounds hokey, but the reward is when a student says 'thank you, I enjoyed your class and I learned something,'" says Anderson. "Because the two are not the same."

That's what Joan Rowe from Anderson's first animal science class back in 1974 said when she returned recently, not as a student, but as a faculty member in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. She is just one of Anderson's many former students who have gone on to careers in veterinary medicine or as faculty members at research universities throughout the nation.

"Dr. Anderson has touched the lives of many students at UC Davis," Rowe wrote in supporting his nomination for the teaching prize. "His teaching should be celebrated as one of the richest experiences of a UC Davis education."

### American Cyanamid obtains EPA registration for Lightning™ herbicide

American Cyanamid Company has obtained registration for Lightning herbicide from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Lightning is an imidazolinone herbicide that provides one-pass contact and residual control of most grasses and broadleaves, including foxtails, crabgrass, woolly cupgrass, wild-proso millet, velvetleaf, cocklebur and lambsquarters. The product is for use with IMI-CORN® seed hybrids only.

Optimal application timing for Lightning is early postemergence, when weeds are 1 inch to 4 inches tall; however, it can be applied until corn is 12 inches tall. Grasses and broadleaves are controlled on contact and later germinating flushes are controlled because Lightning provides residual control to canopy.

Applied at a low use rate of 1.28 ounces per acre

on all soil types, Lightning can be used in all tillage systems.

"Lightning has all the benefits farmers want," says Barney Bernstein, Ph.D., Lightning product manager. "It provides one-pass control of grasses and broadleaves and residual weed control through canopy."

American Cyanamid is a subsidiary of American Home Products, which is one of the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical and health-care product companies, and is a leading developer, manufacturer and marketer of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications.

Growers wanting information about LIGHTNING should contact their local Cyanamid Agri-Center™ dealer. ■

### Coordinator retained to bolster state's white wheat production

The need to bolster white wheat production in state is being underscored by the hiring of a coordinator by Michigan millers to work with growers, agribusiness, crop advisors and agronomy researchers.

Jim Thews, who recently retired from Michigan State University Extension in Saginaw County, began his duties earlier this month.

His position is being supported by Star of the West in Frankenmuth, Chelsea Milling Company in Chelsea, Knappen Milling in Augusta, and King Milling in Lowell.

Thews will also be involved with MSU's Wheat 2000 program which has a membership of about 1,000 growers.

"Jim will be in a position to advocate and add to the coordination of our education programs and workshops for growers and agribusiness persons," says Steve Poindexter, Wheat 2000 chairperson and MSU Extension agricultural agent in Saginaw County. "I think this will be a boost to our program and

ultimately, growers' renewed enthusiasm for wheat production.

Art Loeffler, spokesperson at Star of the West Milling says the position will continue into Fall, perhaps longer.

"Jim's primary responsibility will be the provision of information to growers on the importance of white wheat as a cash crop and the benefits wheat provides in the crop rotation," Loeffler says. "He will also network with others in the wheat industry about the progress of the crop."

Thews says that he will work throughout Michigan's wheat growing regions to make growers and others aware of advances in wheat growing technology via field workshops, personal contact, wheat plant management clinics and pre-plant seed drill clinics in late summer.

More information about Thews' plans can be obtained by calling him (a mobile telephone) at 517-284-1053 or by writing to him at 3780 Conklin Drive, Saginaw, MI 48603. ■

### Exclusive German ag exhibit at Bavarian Festival

The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Bavarian Festival, with the help of local sponsors Big Chief Sugar and Star of the West Milling Company, is pleased to present a unique exhibit originally created for the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. This display has now been converted to a fabulous traveling exhibit that is free for public viewing during the festival, June 6-14, at Heritage Park in Frankenmuth.

The exhibit contains 50 panels of visuals, photos and text, which tell the story of the tremendous contributions to U.S. agriculture and rural life by German immigrants and their descendants. Highlighted are household names like Oscar Mayer and H.J. Heinz, as well as Anheuser-Busch and Weyerhaeuser.

Learn how Oscar Mayer as a young boy in Bavaria dreamed of having his own meat market — eventually far surpassing his dream and establishing

a national meat company in America!

View antique farm equipment and local and regional farm displays as well as a petting zoo and animal exhibit.

Also new to the festival this year will be the Heritage Art Display. Visitors can view old-world handiwork as real artisans share the tastes, sounds and special secrets of their crafts. Crafts include German pastry making, cottage cheese making, dulcimer music, rope braiding, soap making, Scherenschnitte (German paper cutting), portrait painting, spinning and weaving. Many of these talented artists and crafters will offer their handmade items for sale. The Heritage Art Display is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield and Northwest Airlines.

For more information, call the festival office at (517) 652-8155. ■

### License of commercial pesticide applicator suspended by MDA

A decision to suspend the commercial pesticide applicator license of Organic Lawns, Inc. of Novi, and impose an administrative fine of \$8,000 against them was made April 9 by Dan Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA).

According to Wyant, the decision is based on recommendations from a formal hearing first initiated on July 23, 1996. The hearing was held to address violations of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994, (Public Act 451, part 83, Pesticide Control).

The changes included:

- two counts of offering for sale a pesticide not registered in the State of Michigan;
- failing to keep records of general-use pesticides;
- applying a pesticide without entering into a service agreement;
- failing to provide a precautionary warning at the time of pesticide application; and
- three counts of making false, misleading, deceptive or fraudulent representations on pesticide safety.

Wyant said the findings of the formal hearing confirmed all of the above allegations and recommended that he issue an administrative fine of \$8,000 plus deny the commercial pesticide applicator license of Organic Lawns, Inc. for 180 days. He said this order effectively places Organic Lawns, Inc., out of the business of applying pesticides for hire in the State of Michigan for the 1997 application season.

"We want to inform the public of this enforcement action so that any person expecting pesticide application services from Organic Lawns will know that this action prevents delivery of these services for 180 days," Wyant said.

Attorney General Frank Kelly said, "It is my hope that the company has learned a valuable lesson from its mistakes and change their method of operation."

Questions related to this action against Organic Lawns, Inc., may be directed to MDA's regional office in Southfield at 810-356-1700 or by calling the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division in Lansing at 517-373-1087. ■

## Ethanol excise tax exemption subject of budget negotiations

**Legislators ignoring economic and environmental benefits of alternative fuel**

The 5.4-cent excise tax exemption for ethanol blended fuels, set to expire in the year 2000, is being targeted for early elimination by Rep. Bill Archer (R-Tex.), when the House Ways and Means Committee begins to write its version of the budget reconciliation tax bill.

Unfortunately for Michigan corn producers, that move, if successful, would cost them approximately 14 cents per bushel of corn produced, and it means consumers would lose the environmental benefits of an alternative fuel, according to Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity Specialist Bob Boehm.

Figures from a U.S. Department of Agriculture report issued this past week show that net farm income nationwide would drop by \$1 billion per year, if the excise tax exemption were eliminated. Farm income losses could reach \$10.2 billion over a five-year period, the report concluded.

"More than 500 million bushels of corn were used last year to produce 1 billion gallons of ethanol, reducing our dependency on imported oil by 98,000 barrels per day," Boehm said. "The federal excise tax credit is a primary economic incentive for

the U.S. ethanol industry. There are now 43 ethanol plants in 20 different states with a capital investment of about \$3 billion, which creates about 40,000 jobs direct and indirectly."

Boehm claims that the economic incentive is needed to allow for continued improvements in production efficiencies of the alternative fuel. Improvements in distillation processing, higher yielding corn and the use of molecular technology have improved production efficiencies by as much as 8 percent in recent years.

Michigan Farm Bureau Public Affairs Director Al Almy says the organization is urging Michigan congressmen to keep the excise tax exemption in place at least until the year 2000. He questions the political wisdom and irony of efforts to eliminate the tax break.

"Ethanol has been proven, time and again, to improve air quality by reducing carbon monoxide emissions more effectively than any other fuel additive," Almy said. "While Congress is basically considering destroying the ethanol industry, the Environmental Protection Agency is attempting to pass the strictest clean air standards we have ever witnessed, to reduce harmful emissions." ■

## New member elected to the National Potato Promotion Board

The National Potato Promotion Board welcomed 24 newly elected board representatives at its annual meeting held in March. This year's meeting celebrated the board's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The industry used this "silver" anniversary as a chance to reflect on the past while looking toward the "golden" opportunities of the future and the next 25 years.

Part of the board's bright future includes the new board members who are elected by districts and are responsible for sharing the concerns of these constituents. Other important board member tasks include communicating information about board activities back to the industry and taking an active role in the board awareness program. The

mission of the awareness program is to involve more of the industry in the board's planning process and to help communicate the programs and activities to the entire industry.

New board members this year are: Bob Layton, AZ; Doug Gunnels, CO; Frank Johns Jr., FL; Gary Lands, FL; Lynn Loosli, ID; Richard Poteet, ID; Edward Smith, ID; Scott Stecklein, ID; Carl Taylor, ID; Kenneth Atcheson, ME; Robert Walther, MI; Larry Reynen, MN; Gregory Stocker, MN; David Hankey, ND; John Child, NY; Tim Moomaw, OH; Bruce Richardson, VA; Brett Bergeson, WA; Nelson Cox, WA; Richard Miller, WA; Kevin O'Rourke, WA; Randy Bauscher, Importer; Roberto Meza, Importer; and Sam Wolf, Importer. ■

## Be cautious when around anhydrous ammonia

Anhydrous ammonia is potentially one of the more dangerous chemicals used in agriculture, but taking appropriate precautions can reduce the risk for personal injury.

"It has a tremendous affinity for moisture, and even a small amount of anhydrous ammonia can inflict serious injury in seconds to body tissue, especially the eyes, skin and respiratory tract," says Howard J. Doss, Michigan State University Extension agricultural safety leader.

Anhydrous ammonia has such a sharp, pungent odor that a person will not voluntarily remain in a concentration sufficient to cause substantial injury. But when a sudden release of concentrated anhydrous ammonia catches someone unprotected and unable to escape, severe injury, even death can occur, Doss relates.

About 80 percent of reported accidents are the result of improper procedure, lack of knowledge or training about handling anhydrous ammonia and failure to follow proper safety precautions.

Before taking the anhydrous ammonia tank from the depot, inspect all couplings to make sure they fit tightly and that there are no cracks, cuts, abrasions, bulges, soft spots or blisters on any of the hoses, Doss advises. Make sure the tires are properly inflated and that the wheels' lugnuts are tight. The correct size hitch pin and clip on the tank tongue is also important for safe towing and adequate braking.

Each time the tank is filled, check the level gauge and the pressure gauge. The should be working properly and be consistent in their readings. Don't use tanks with faulty gauges.

The law requires an SMV (slow-moving vehicle) sign in good condition on the rear of the tank

and safety chains on the tongue. Because the tanks are generally fitted with field tires, roadway speeds should not exceed 25 miles per hour.

Most injuries from anhydrous ammonia are the result of accidents, so personal protection equipment is essential, Doss says.

When working with anhydrous ammonia, always wear ventless goggles (standard eye protection provides no protection) or a full-face shield, loose-fitting rubber gloves with long cuffs that can be rolled up to catch drips, and a long-sleeved shirt or, preferably, coveralls. Short-sleeved shirts do not provide satisfactory protection.

Do not wear contact lenses when handling anhydrous ammonia because it will concentrate behind the lens and intensify its caustic effects.

Anyone working around or handling anhydrous ammonia should carry a 6- to 8-ounce squeeze bottle of fresh water accessible within seconds on the side of the tank.

"A similar water container on the tractor can be a lifesaver if an anhydrous ammonia tank vents a cloud of vapor around the tank and the emergency water supply," Doss says.

If someone is exposed to anhydrous ammonia, flush the exposed area with copious amounts of water for at least 15 minutes. Seek medical attention immediately, even if the exposure to anhydrous ammonia is small. Do not apply any oils or ointment to the exposed area — oily substances can intensify the damage from the burns.

Additional information about anhydrous ammonia handling safety can be obtained 24 hours a day by fax from the MSU Department of Agricultural Engineering by calling 517-353-7823. ■

## Opposition to clean air standards grows

A growing number of Democrats are joining a chorus of Republicans in voicing opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed new standards for ozone and particulates. Twenty-one conservative Democrats have expressed strong doubts about the standards to President Clinton.

Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), the ranking Democrat on the House Commerce Committee, said the science used by EPA is "unclear." Dingell

has expressed frustration with the White House and the EPA's unwillingness to reach a compromise on the standards. Dingell says the standards "represent a masterly contempt for good sense."

Many say Dingell's remarks could force the administration into a position where it will have to find middle ground on the issue.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has expressed its strong opposition to the proposal. ■

## Michigan auctioneers attend Certified Auctioneers Institute

Four Michigan Auctioneers attended this year's Certified Auctioneers Institute (CAI). They are Dave Albrecht of Vassar, Jerry Cole of Beulah, Howell Davis of Brighton, and Matt Thornton of Kalamazoo. All are members of the Michigan State Auctioneers Association (MSAA), and the National Auctioneers Association (NAA).

The CAI designation is the highest designation awarded in the auction industry. The program is a three-week, one-week-a-year executive education program designed for decision makers in auction firms and is offered by the Auction Marketing Institute (AMI) at Indiana University in Bloomington Ind.

The curriculum includes courses in finance, legal considerations, real estate, personal property, antiques and collectibles, appraisals, personal business development, interpersonal communications, marketing, and business management. Faculty for the program are selected from the Indiana University

College of Business, professionals serving the auction industry, and nationally recognized auctioneers.

To qualify for the CAI program, auctioneers must meet strict educational and experiential requirements. To earn the CAI designation, they must complete the three courses, pass examinations, and prepare an auction summary report. Maintaining the designation requires that one be a member in good standing of the AMI, the NAA, and complete at least 24 hours of continuing education every three years.

These individuals are among 124 auctioneers who are candidates for the CAI designation. Only 882 auctioneers hold this prestigious designation. The MSAA is extremely happy that these members have chosen to better themselves and the services they offer their clients and customers by attending the Institute. For more information on MSAA members, or membership, call Brian Lovellette at 517-372-7391. ■



Michigan State Auctioneers Association members (left to right): David Albrecht, Howell Davis, Jerry Cole, Matt Thornton

## Efforts to improve wheat, sugar beet production getting a boost from MSU

Finding ways to reverse the decline in Michigan's sugar beet yields and reduce or prevent the threat of the fungus that nearly devastated the 1996 wheat crop is a goal of Michigan State University research agronomists.

Ian Gray, director of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES), says that the two problems pose a serious risk to the continued viability of two of Michigan's more prominent agricultural industries.

Partly because of meetings with wheat industry leaders last year and a statewide conference that focused on fusarium blight, generally known as "scab" in wheat, a major research program involving 10 Upper Midwest universities is being proposed.

Gray says Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio (Kentucky and New York may also become involved) share the common problem of scab in wheat and barley. Gray's idea is to pool their talents to focus on scab abatement research.

The group is hoping for \$5.1 million in research funding for five years from Congress. Gray credits Pat Hart, MSU Extension plant pathologist, and Rick Ward, MAES wheat breeder, for getting their counterparts to participate in the project.

"I think we stand a reasonably good chance of obtaining the funding because this is such a pervasive problem in the region and finding a solution through our combined efforts is very important to the industries that require quality barley and wheat production," Gray says. "Further, this approach will be much more efficient in finding a solution because it will be fully integrated and not duplicate efforts to arrive at solutions."

He estimates that between 40 and 60 researchers would be involved in the project, along with numerous Extension specialists and agents who are involved in wheat and barley production in the participating states.

MAES and MSU Extension are also undergirding an agronomist position for the Sugarbeet Advancement Committee (SAC), organized in December to focus on bolstering sugar beet production. Sugar beet yields have been declining since the mid-1980s — by 25 percent, according to some growers. Michigan's sugar beet production was just over 2 million tons in 1996, the lowest since 1983.

In the agreement, MSU will split the expenses with the SAC, which consists of growers, sugar beet processors and agribusiness operators. The joint venture will support the cost for the agronomist's salary, research and equipment expenses. A dollar amount has not been specified.

"We are extremely pleased with the assistance the university is providing the industry," says John Spero, chair of the SAC and a grower near Saginaw. "We are quite optimistic that the new agronomist will be on the job by midsummer."

"Extension and MAES agronomists have been involved with the SAC from its beginning, helping the committee to get organized and focus on what needs to be done to preserve the value of this industry," Gray says.

"It's clear to the SAC that a major overhaul is necessary in some parts of the industry if it is to survive and become more profitable, and it's also clear that the university needs to be much more involved in working with the industry to determine jointly the priorities for research and Extension," he adds. ■

## USDA adds new meat safety rule — targets spinal cord

The Agriculture Department last Friday told its meat inspectors to ensure that high-speed meat stripping machines do not leave any fragments of spinal cord when the meat is processed. The action is designed to keep brain and spinal cord material out of meat, because those are the most infectious parts of an animal with bovine spongiform encephalopathy—despite no reported cases of the disease in the United States.

"We did see there was some spinal cord in these advanced meat recovery systems," said a USDA spokesperson. "If there is any suspicion of any spinal cord in the meat, the inspector can take a sample and send it to the laboratory for analysis."

"There should be no spinal cord in the final product."

The new methods of stripping meat off bones produce 300 million to 400 million pounds of ground meat each year. The stripping end products are combined with ground beef, sausages and hot dogs. USDA has developed a test to determine if any spinal cord tissue is contained in meat products. ■

## A good worker is hard to find and keep

**W**ith agriculture production processes and equipment becoming more complicated, farmers are facing the increasingly difficult challenge of recruiting and maintaining competent skilled employees. As the skill level requirements increase and your ability to pay competitive wages is squeezed, how do you find and maintain the people you need?

Ten years ago, a strong back and willing heart were all the qualifications necessary. Hands-on experience was a definite plus but was not a requirement for many farm jobs. Business and government-required paperwork was something that could be completed easily at the end of the week. Today farmers are spending more and more time on training, staffing, record keeping and regulatory concerns.

Initial employment documentation (including the Form I-9, W-4, W-9 and personal data collection) alone can take more than an hour. Additionally, the required training including the EPA Worker Protection Standard, Employee Right-To-Know, annual tractor and equipment safety training and certified private pesticide applicator training/testing amount to a substantial time and dollar investment in an employee.

As the farm labor market becomes more and more competitive not only within agriculture but also with other employers (such as fast food establishments) seeking to lure traditional agricultural workers, farmers must adopt and implement employment strategies.

The neighborhood recruitment network days are long gone with rural young people moving into business and industry with much higher compensation levels than available in agriculture. As the knowledge and skill level required for many agricultural jobs increases, farm employers must become more sophisticated in finding, training, and meeting the needs and demands of this new type of work force. Many farm operations have changed their attitude of workers as simple farmhands to professional employees doing professional jobs.

But, where do you find farm workers with professional attitudes? The answer: By being a good manager, who can clearly state to employees (and potential employees) what is expected of them, what they need to accomplish and how it is to be accomplished. The farm owner/manager must spend time and effort on recruiting, hiring and training individual employees. Go to Florida and Texas and personally recruit individuals who are capable of doing the job you expect of them and be prepared to tell them what you will offer for their services.

### Recruiting and Hiring Workers

The most important responsibility in your business is hiring the right person. Full-time workers who operate sophisticated equipment and deal with complicated laws regarding safety, chemicals, migrant workers and record-keeping are the most valuable input you may have (besides yourself and your family).

It used to be easy to grab a person off the street who was dependable, though not as knowl-

edgeable as you would like, and with limited effort turn the person into a competent worker. Now an employee's mistake could cost you your business.

The challenge of hiring a good worker can be made easier by:

1. Identifying what you expect of an employee before you look for one. Careful development of your Terms of Employment disclosures required by the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act can be invaluable in communicating this to a prospective employee;
2. Developing job descriptions for the positions you intend to fill;
3. Adopting a job application process where applications are always taken regardless of whether or not you have any openings. Application forms should be constantly monitored for the proverbial "diamond in the rough" and to make sure you are obtaining information useful in sorting out the best possible applicants. Although caution must be used to avoid discriminatory questions, a wide range of questions can be used.
4. Determining compensation rates not only of similar area agricultural operations but also of general businesses in your area who employ workers with similar skills. Use this information to develop compensation levels you would be willing to pay for various skill and responsibility levels of a worker. This information will also allow you to focus on the more positive aspects of your compensation package and know your pos-

sible weaknesses as well

5. Cultivating a network of possible sources of qualified workers such as local ag teachers, area colleges and internship programs and scouting for good workers who may be looking to change jobs or careers
  6. Developing advertising methods suitable for the type of employment you have. For example, a "Farm Help Wanted - Call 616-555-0000" ad in a local paper may not provide any suitable applicants but an ad in the same paper saying "Flexible hours, outdoor work, competitive compensation" may interest more talented people.
- These suggestions take time to develop and implement, but the benefits can be substantial.

### Maintaining Satisfied Employees

Once you find the right person, make sure that person finds working conditions desirable. Employees today care about benefit packages, health care, vacation days and retirement plans. Do you have these things in place? Are you moving in this direction? People care even more about money. Incentives are crucial for good worker productivity. Trying to excel has little meaning for workers if they can only expect a small pay increase, if any, regardless of performance.

### Keeping Workers Productive

Once workers are hired, it is imperative that a clear message be sent to these employees on how to conduct themselves. Make sure all equipment operators are properly trained and pesticide applicators are certified or have received proper handler

training. Effective employee management requires solid direction from the top down, in terms of establishing what is important regarding employee performance, and making sure that you do not establish disincentives to the employees.

You cannot just hire people, expect them to do a good job, and yell at them if they don't; you need to be out there with them on a regular basis. This includes going to the housing, if you provide housing, to determine if there are any problems.

Training is one of the most important, and one of the most under-utilized, tools that farmers have to improve worker productivity. Farmers need to consider investing in outside training. This will keep both you and your skilled workers informed and productive on current trends and requirements. Many employees view outside training as a reward (particularly when paid to attend) and will carry the training message back to other employees.

Another method is to form a development plan for each skilled employee. These plans should identify a worker's strengths and weaknesses, and create a specific set of goals and training experiences to feed off of strengths, including classroom and field work training.

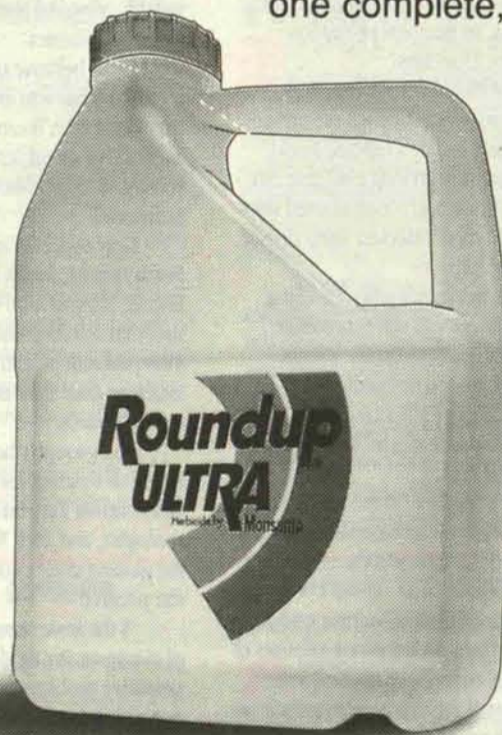
It is important to consider that you may no longer be able to do everything on your own to keep up with the changing, marketplace and regulatory arena. As the workers skill levels increase, so must your management skills. ■

Source: Regulatory Compliance Assistance Program

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### Brazil demands trade concessions from U.S.

**R**ecently, Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso said the United States would have to make some concessions in free trade talks taking place in Brazil. Brazil may push for freer trade of its agricultural exports.

The talks are taking place during the third ministerial meeting of the 34 Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) signatory countries. The organization was started in 1994 for the purpose of setting up a free trade area of 1 billion potential consumers by the year 2005, to be able to compete with the European Union.

The talks are expected to be a "test of wills" between Washington and South America's Mercosur trade bloc, which includes Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil, the group's leader.

Washington, represented by Commerce Secretary William Daley, wants to push free trade. Brazil wants to leave tariff talks until last, fearing that tariff cuts would increase the rapidly expanding trade gap between the two sectors — \$5.5 billion in 1996 and seen reaching up to \$12 billion this year. Brazil wants assurance from the U.S. that free trade would apply to all sectors of trade, including agriculture. Brazilian agricultural exports are subject to a series of non-tariff barriers.

Washington's cause was boosted by the publication of an interview with Chilean Finance Minister Eduardo Aninat, in Brazil's *O Globo* newspaper. Aninat said Santiago placed a higher priority on free trade across the Americas than on Mercosur. ■

## Public meetings feature draft recommendations to eliminate TB from deer

A multi-agency committee charged with preparing recommendations to solve the problem of TB in free-ranging Michigan deer will host a series of public meetings on key points of the draft recommendations during the month of June.

To date, TB-infected deer have been found in the five-county area of Alcona, Alpena, Oscoda, Montmorency and Presque Isle. Public input from the meetings will be included in the written recommendations to be delivered Aug. 1 to the directors of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Department of Community Health.

The committee's draft recommendations to eliminate TB from wild deer in Michigan includes the following key points which are up for discussion at the public forums:

- Conduct studies on the infectiousness and transmissibility of bovine tuberculosis in white-tailed deer, in addition to research currently being done on deer movements and economic impact.
- Continue surveillance for bovine tuberculosis in white-tailed deer in the affected five-county area (Alcona, Alpena, Oscoda, Montmorency, Presque Isle) and statewide. In addition, monitor elk and other species of wildlife.
- Test all livestock within the affected five-

county area for bovine tuberculosis in 1997, and retest at regular intervals thereafter.

- Continue monitoring of the situation by the Michigan Department of Community Health by conducting TB skin tests on persons with significant exposure to deer in the five-county area, even though at this time there are no known cases of bovine tuberculosis in humans in Michigan.
- Provide opportunities to the public to become informed and participate in developing a solution, given the long-term nature and complexity of the bovine tuberculosis problem in white-tailed deer in Michigan.
- Seek authority to prohibit the artificial feeding of deer (including both baiting and winter feeding) in the five-county area, and do not allow deer numbers in deer management unit 452 to increase. This is because prolonged contact among large numbers of deer is thought to be a major factor in the transmission of tuberculosis among deer, and experts believe the disease can only be eliminated from the deer herd by maintaining low deer numbers and stopping supplemental feeding of deer in the affected area.
- Periodically re-evaluate the situation to determine if more stringent deer-control measures, such as further reduction in total deer num-

bers are necessary.

The committee preparing these recommendations, which has held several meetings since December 1996, includes representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Farm Bureau, private hunting clubs and livestock producers.

In addition to seeking input at the public meetings, the committee is encouraging anyone with concerns or suggestions regarding the TB in deer issue in the Northeast to write to one of these contacts:

Dr. Stephen Schmitt, Veterinarian in Charge, Rose Lake Wildlife Disease Laboratory, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 8562 East Stoll Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823.

Dr. Mike Chaddock, Division Director and State Veterinarian, Animal Industry Division, Michigan Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909.

Dr. David Johnson, Chief Executive Officer/Chief Medical Executive, Community Public Health Agency, Michigan Department of Community Health, P.O. Box 30195, Lansing, MI 48909. ■

### The public meetings will be held at the following locations:

- Escanaba, June 5, 6-8 p.m., Bay de Noc Community College, Learning Resource Center Auditorium. Contact Joy Ott, 906-786-5802, ext. 158.
- Mt. Pleasant, June 10, 6-9 p.m., Isabella County Building, 201 North Main, Room 124. Contact Trace Anderson, 517-772-0911, ext. 302.
- Hillman, June 11, 7-9 p.m., Hillman Community Center. Contact Tom Carlson, 517-785-4251.
- Hubbard Lake, June 12, 1-3 p.m., Hubbard Lake Community Center. Contact Tom Carlson, 517-785-4251.
- Mio, June 12, 7-9 p.m., Mio School Auditorium. Contact Tom Carlson, 517-785-4251.
- Cadillac, June 17, 7-9 p.m., Cadillac School Auditorium, 400 Linden Street. Contact Donna Boersma, 616-779-9380 (until 4 p.m.)
- Livonia, June 24, 7-9 p.m., Schoolcraft College, West Waterman Campus Center, 18600 Haggerty Road. Contact Margaret Edmonds, 313-462-4400, ext. 4475.
- Walker, June 25, 6-9 p.m., City of Walker Community Building, 4243 Remembrance Road, NW. Contact Melanie, 616-453-6311.

## MSU agri-marketing team national runner-up

For the second time in three years, Michigan State University's "Spartan Agri-Marketers" finished second in the prestigious 1997 National Agri-Marketing Association's (NAMA) Student Marketing Competition, April 16-18 at the Nashville Convention Center.

The MSU team advanced to the "Final Four" with victories in the qualifying and semi-final heats. Thirty-one college and university teams from across the country competed, the most ever in the 22-year-old competition.

Each student team develops and presents a complete and comprehensive marketing plan to agricultural marketing, advertising and public relations professionals judging the contest. Teams are evaluated on both their oral presentations and their written summaries. The MSU team spent seven months preparing for the competition.

For its product, the MSU squad chose the sand-manure separator, which processes sand-laden manure, rendering the sand reusable, the manure more manageable, thus saving farmers money. Teams are prohibited from using goods and services currently on the market, but they may select products in the research and development stage.

The MSU team received financial and technical assistance from the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and faculty, McLanahan Corporation (Pennsylvania), Michigan Farm Bureau, ANR Computer Services, Biggs/Gilmore Communications, and Pace & Partners. Additional sponsors

included Charles Snyder, Michigan FFA Projects Consultant; Camden Publications; *Progressive Farmer*; the Michigan Milk Producers Association; and the Michigan Agri-Business Association.

The five-person presentation team included Dan Bihlmeyer, Agribusiness Management senior from Manchester; Tonia Kopenaal, Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Communications senior from Zeeland; Steve Tomac, ANR Communications senior from Chesaning; Molly Avis, ANR Communications junior from Vicksburg; and Brooke Totzske, a Baroda native and Agribusiness Management freshman. During the "Final Four" round, these students

presented their plan to over 600 agricultural marketing and communication professionals.

The advisors for MSU-NAMA are Dr. Kirk Heinze, Dept. of Agricultural and Extension Education; and Josh Merchant, Michigan Farm Bureau.

In 1995, the MSU-NAMA team placed second in the competition in St. Louis. This year's winner was the University of Florida, marketing Predator, a new insecticide. ■



The MSU NAMA presentation team includes: (back row) (l-r) Dan Bihlmeyer, Steve Tomac, Tonia Kopenaal, (front row) Brooke Totzske, Molly Avis

### Other team members attending the conference were:

Jill Raterink	Animal Science	senior
Nicole Benedict	ANR Communications	senior
Eric Lefevre	Food Systems Management	junior
Kate Feuerstein	Food Systems Management	junior
Dawn Green	Agribusiness Management	junior
Brian Devine	Agribusiness Management	sophomore
Darron Birchmeier	ANR Communications	sophomore
Chad Paalman	ANR Communications	sophomore
Laura Henne	ANR Communications	sophomore
Callista Ransom	ANR Communications	sophomore
Erica Root	ANR Communications	freshman
Nichole Potgetter	ANR Communications	freshman
Melissa Wright	ANR Communications	freshman

### Team members unable to attend were:

Carrie Alwin	ANR Communications	sophomore
Amy Brodeur	ANR Communications	senior
Lori Chamberlain	ANR Communications	junior
Erinn Dempsey	Animal Science	senior
Shannon Fisher	ANR Communications	junior
Dana Kirk	Biochemical Engineering	sophomore
Lana Rowe	ANR Communications	sophomore
Darrin Siemen	ANR Communications	freshman
Scott Tanis	ANR Communications	junior
John Tomasek	ANR Communications	senior
Jennifer Ward	ANR Communications	sophomore

## USB amends strategic plan, approves new projects

With international and domestic consumption of U.S. soybeans on the rise, the United Soybean Board (USB) is stepping up its efforts to build demand, increase utilization and improve soybean production.

At the recent USB board of directors meeting, held March 7-10 in St. Louis, the board amended its current long-range strategic plan. USB also invested more than \$2.5 million in checkoff funds for 36 new projects.

"The projects we approved at the meeting will play an important role in achieving the amended Long-Range Strategic Plan," says USB Chairman David Winkles of Sumter, S.C.

"USB's Long-Range Strategic Plan outlines the soybean checkoff's mission and strategic direction by establishing ambitious administrative and program area goals in international and domestic marketing, new uses and production. Equally important to these goals are soybean quality, trade analysis and producer communications.

"USB's strategic direction is not only to increase utilization to 3 billion bushels by 2005, but also to improve U.S. soybean production efficiencies," explains Winkles. "Our mission is to create an environment so U.S. soybean producers can maximize profits."

To support its strategic direction and mis-

sion, USB is expanding its communication efforts with producers and consumers, while enhancing coordination with Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSB) and industry partners.

Last year, U.S. soybean producers harvested the second-largest crop ever, 2.4 billion bushels, half of which was exported. With the international market growing faster than anticipated, USB has amended its previous International Marketing goal. The board's new goal is to increase soy exports and its market share of the worldwide export market from 1 billion to 1.5 billion bushels by 2005.

Domestic utilization already has reached 1.2 billion bushels. Having revised the Domestic Marketing goal, USB is working to increase domestic use to 1.5 billion bushels by increasing soy utilization through value-added production, edible products utilization and market share, and industrial products utilization and market share.

USB is confident the revised New Uses goal of developing eight new uses by 2005 will increase U.S. soybean utilization. The previous New Uses goal has not been amended, an emphasis is being placed on quality — developing higher yielding, higher protein and higher oil content soybean varieties, improving production

## How to predict when the leafhopper may ride air currents into Michigan

Do you find it a little hard to believe that a bunch of bad bugs could ride air currents all the way from the Gulf of Mexico region into Michigan to attack crops?

That's some 1,500 miles away, yet every year hordes of potato leafhoppers manage to get aloft and ride upper-level winds into the Upper Midwest and begin feeding on several crops, including soybeans, dry edible beans, alfalfa and potatoes.

Christina DiFonzo, Michigan State University Extension field crop entomologist and pesticide education coordinator, calls the leafhopper the "ultimate snow bird."

"It spends its winters in the southern United States in permanent breeding areas along the Gulf, and as warmer weather moves northward, the leafhopper populations begins to migrate northward," DiFonzo says.

The weather pattern most conducive to the leafhoppers' flight north consists of a low pressure system (its front moving eastward) over the Great Plains, a high pressure dome over the eastern United States and, flowing between them, a vigorous south to southwesterly wind.

DiFonzo says that when growers see that formation on the weather map, they can expect leafhoppers to arrive in a few hours to a day or two.

The adult leafhopper is about 1/8 inch long, has wings, is lime green and bullet-shaped, and tends to hop or skitter sideways on six legs when disturbed. A hand lens and an insect identification sheet or booklet may be needed.

"Growers can test the accuracy of their weather observation by using a sweep net on alfalfa or weedy field edges the next day," DiFonzo says. "Leafhoppers can appear so suddenly that a person would think they must have been lurking in soil, leaf litter or fence rows waiting for a juicy crop to attack."

Once in Michigan, leafhoppers will continue to produce offspring until killing frosts arrive.

Because of the severe damage done by both leafhopper nymphs and adults as they feed on the plants, growers should monitor fields carefully and apply controls according to the economic threshold level for that crop, which can range from one adult or nymph per 8- to 12-inch alfalfa plant to one or more adults per trifoliate leaf in soybeans.

The economic thresholds and appropriate control methods are in MSU Extension bulletins E-1582, "Insect and Nematode Control in Field and Forage Crops," and E-0312, "Insect, Disease and Nematode Control in Commercial Vegetable Crops." They are available through the county MSU Extension office. ■

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20  
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General

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19  
General

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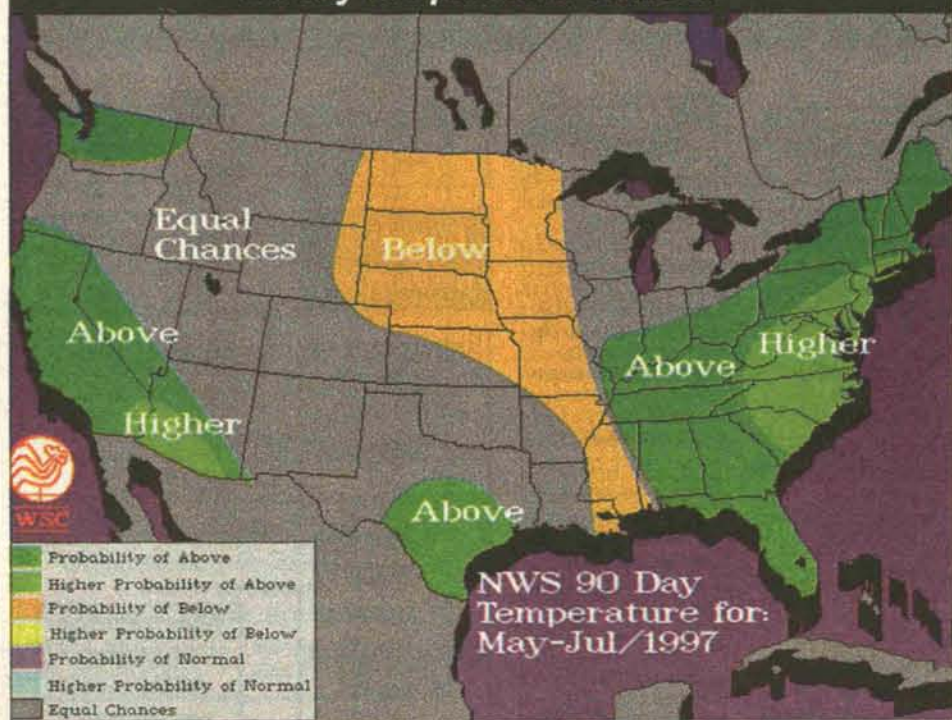
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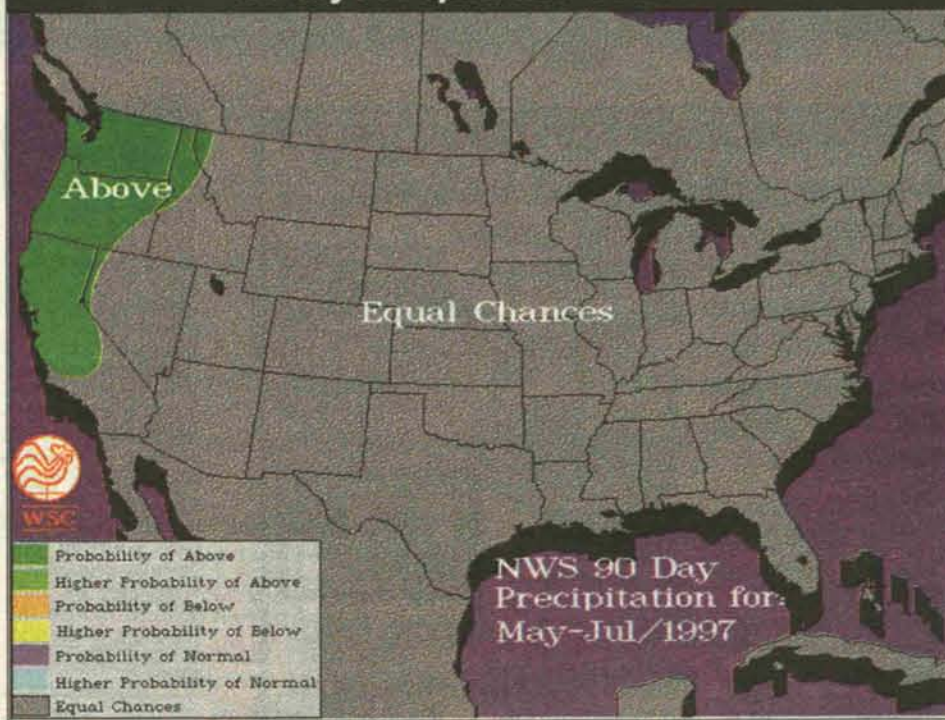
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90-day Temperature Outlook



90-day Precipitation Outlook



# Weather Outlook



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

By mid-May, growing degree accumulations had fallen more than two weeks behind normal due to consistently below normal temperatures (generally 3 to 7 degrees below normal statewide during the past 30 days). The cool weather significantly slowed germination and early growth of most field crops. On the brighter side, drier-than-normal conditions allowed spring planting to progress rapidly. Given the choice of delays due to cold soils vs. delays from future rains and wet soils, most growers have chosen to plant and wait for warmer weather. Climatologically, this is probably the wisest choice since the risk of rain/wet soil-induced delay in Michigan is generally greater than that of extended cold soils, especially for heavy, fine-textured soils.

How long will the cold weather last? New long-lead outlooks for the early summer suggest moderation (as do climatological statistics), while the longer-term outlook is for a cool, wet late summer and fall. Specifically for June and for the June-August mid-growing-season period, the National Weather Service outlook is for equal odds of below-, near-, and above-normal temperatures and precipitation. For this period, Michigan is forecast to remain between forecast areas of below normal temperatures across the western Corn Belt and central Great Plains regions and warmer-than-normal temperatures across much of the eastern U.S. Odds of below-normal temperatures increase by late summer and continue through the fall season, with elevated risk of above normal precipitation also indicated for the September-November and October-December periods. All outlooks reflect recent warming of ocean surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific region, which is a likely sign of a developing negative ENSO or El Nino event. ■

## Canada gears up for cattle identification

Canadian beef and dairy producers are gearing up for a national computerized system designed to track diseased cattle back to their origin. The National Livestock Identification Strategy (NLIS) aims to identify every dairy animal with approved tags and lifetime numbers at birth or prior to leaving the farm. The first steps toward the plan will begin in September. At this point the NLIS is voluntary, but officials expect it will have to be made mandatory at some point to include the entire cattle population. Creating a computerized network to track the cattle will be a major job and will require the cooperation of veterinarians, auction markets and packing plants across the country. ■



### Michigan Weather Summary

4/16/97-5/15/97	Temperature		Growing Degree Days(*)		Precipitation	
	Obs. mean	Dev. from normal	Actual Acc.	Normal Acc.	Actual (inch)	Normal (inch)
Houghton	41.3	-2.5	32	112	1.61	2.80
Marquette	40.0	-3.7	37	112	2.30	2.80

Sault Ste. Marie	41.3	-3.0	22	65	2.51	2.89
Lake City	42.8	-5.9	43	133	3.37	2.75
Pellston	42.9	-3.5	39	133	2.99	2.75
Alpena	43.6	-3.1	37	126	2.64	2.77
Houghton Lake	43.3	-6.3	40	126	2.72	2.77
Muskegon	45.5	-5.7	53	165	2.23	3.09
Vestaburg	45.0	-6.7	72	181	3.09	3.28
Bad Axe	44.1	-6.2	46	175	4.06	2.82
Saginaw	47.4	-4.3	83	175	3.84	2.82

Grand Rapids	46.8	-5.5	70	211	1.74	3.42
South Bend	48.2	-6.2	89	211	1.47	3.42
Coldwater	47.5	-5.6	84	207	0.88	3.32
Lansing	45.4	-7.0	62	207	2.16	3.32
Detroit	48.5	-4.8	82	193	3.54	3.19
Flint	45.5	-6.5	57	193	2.19	3.19
Toledo	48.7	-5.1	85	193	0.59	3.19

\* Growing degree day accumulations are calculated with the 86/50 "corn" method and are summed beginning April 1, 1997.

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