

June 2006 Volunteer of the Month Recognized

Local farmer Denise Schian-Squanda has been recognized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the organization's Volunteer of the Month for June 2006. With her husband Wayne and their two children, Squanda helps operate a cash crop operation based in Buena Vista Township, raising 650 acres of soybeans, wheat, dry beans, corn and sugar beets.



Squanda is active in her county Farm Bureau's promotion and education (P&E) committee, organizing outreach programs to boost agriculture's profile in the greater community. She orchestrates local Ag in the Classroom projects, visiting area schools with instructional programming to teach young people about the significance of the state's second-largest industry.

With help from fellow Farm Bureau volunteers and the cooperation of a local restaurant, Squanda in May successfully hosted a nutrition expo to teach more than 350 lower elementary students about the new food pyramid. Students circulated among a number of educational centers to learn not only about the food pyramid, but also about the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle and making the right dietary choices. Participating teachers were given packages of supplementary instructional material for use in extending the day's lessons into their own classroom.

Looking to promote agriculture to older students, Squanda's P&E group also distributed 20 biodiesel chemistry kits to teachers at local high schools. Made possible through a grant she helped obtain from the Michigan Soybean Commission, the biodiesel kits were the first such packages to be distributed in the state.

"The response from the teachers was upbeat and positive," wrote Squanda's nominator for Volunteer of the Month. "They were all extremely appreciative that someone would work to provide our children with being part of the cutting edge in technology, and be connected to the agricultural side of our county.

"Denise has a good eye for promotion and is very insightful about how to communicate to our diverse community," her nominator wrote. "She has a true teacher's heart, and the ability to communicate with others is a winning combination. She is constantly thinking of ways to improve or add to what we are doing - trying new things, creating different angles to work from and finding ideas to spread our message."

Squanda is also a member of the County Liners Community Action Group and coordinates her P&E activities with the county Farm Bureau's information committee to help get the word out.

Miracle of Life Exhibit Seeking Volunteers

The 2006 Michigan State Fair will be upon us before we know it! The Michigan Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Department is seeking Farm Bureau members as volunteers to teach others about the importance of agriculture.

Last year, over 272,000 fairgoers visited the Miracle of Life exhibit staffed by more than 300 hardworking volunteers, many of which were Farm Bureau members.

Volunteer opportunities exist from August 23 - September 4, 2006. Morning shifts are from 9:45 a.m. - 4 p.m. and afternoon shifts are from 3:45 p.m. - 10 p.m.

If you are interested in being a part of this opportunity to educate others contact Nicole Campbell at (800) 292-2680 ext. 3242 or e-mail at ncampbe@michfb.com.



CAG'S Speak on Immigration

You see it in the news almost on a daily basis, US border control vs. skilled labor. What did CAG's around the state have to say when we asked, "Why is it so difficult to find US citizens who will do farm work?" You said, because of the shift in work ethics, it is getting more and more difficult to find workers willing to do manual labor. The perception is that farm labor is "beneath" able bodied Americans.

Then we asked "What will happen to US food security if agriculture is forced out of business through lack of skilled labor?" Most of you answered, that there will be an increased threat of food contamination if agriculture is forced out of business and the US must turn to importing its food supply. There is also the concern of lack of regulation over fertilizers and pesticides overseas leading to further problems for the US should importing become necessary

Lastly we asked, "In your opinion, which is the greater security threat: illegal immigration or loss of control over food production?" Overwhelmingly, you responded that the loss of control over food production would pose a greater threat. When we turn from the ability to produce and control our own food supply to being at the mercy of importing from other countries, we open ourselves up to many risks.

The



EPA head says MAEAP fits strategy for better collaboration between agency, agriculture industry

Top officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were in Michigan this week to pledge better collaboration between EPA and the agriculture industry and to recognize the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) as a national role model for voluntary conservation programs.



Speaking Tuesday at Ag Expo in East Lansing, EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson said he and President Bush "want an EPA that's viewed as a source of cooperation, not a source of conflict."

"We've learned that when acting alone, mandating rules and regulations, our progress is incremental. But when we work in cooperation with our partners, including our partners in the agricultural community, we can actually accelerate the pace of environmental protection and build upon the environmental gains we've already achieved," said Johnson.

Collaboration is "so important" to Johnson that he "put it in writing" when he signed off on EPA's National Agricultural Strategy in May. The strategy's mission "is to engage the agricultural community through a number of collaborative, cooperative, innovative and voluntary ways," in addition to the agency's traditional regulatory approaches, said Johnson. The goals of the National Strategy for Agriculture include:

- Increasing EPA employee awareness of how their actions affect agriculture and how farming benefits human health and the environment;
- Working with the agricultural industry - including production, processing and distribution - in developing and demonstrating environmental protection solutions that express to the public the value of farmland environmental stewardship activities;
- Coordinating research and technology development and real world application so the needs of agriculture and EPA can be more efficiently met; and
- Identifying existing environmental improvement measures for agriculture and developing new ones, where needed.

"The National Agricultural Strategy sends a strong signal, both internally with EPA and to those outside the agency, that EPA has more tools in our environmental tool box than

August 2006



Membership Standings

	2006	7/28/06
Goal	203,012	183,456
Target	47,566	44,576

The FB Update video is now available to view online at www.michiganfarmbureau.com/video



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For questions, comments and suggestions, please contact Mike Wenkel at ext. 3232

August

- AgriPAC
- Primary Election
- Young Farmer Golf Outing
- State Fair

September

- Membership year begins
- MFB European Study Tour
- State P&E Committee
- State YF Committee

October

- State PD Committee

just a hammer," said Johnson.

"I want EPA to be part of a constructive, problem-solving strategy to produce environmental and economic solutions," he said. "By working together we can develop solutions that are both economically reasonable and preserve our environment."

MAEAP endorsement

In his keynote address, Johnson said EPA has embraced Environmental Management Systems, which encourage businesses and organizations to voluntarily take responsibility for environmental quality in every aspect of their operation.

"The good news is Michigan farmers, in cooperation with state and local agencies, are already using some of these voluntary tools," said Johnson referring to MAEAP, a voluntary program that helps Michigan farms of all sizes and commodities identify and prevent environmental risks and comply with environmental regulations.

A day earlier Jon Scholl, the agricultural advisor to Administrator Johnson, visited an Eaton County farm that is verified in the MAEAP Farmstead System and met with agricultural leaders from state commodity organizations to learn more about MAEAP and the environmental concerns of Michigan farmers.

"I think the MAEAP program you have here in Michigan is a real good example of the kind of attitude and kind of approach that we certainly want to encourage in the EPA," said Scholl, noting qualities such as MAEAP's training, resources, positive focus on problem-solving and producer ownership.

"We understand there are means, there are mechanisms and there are programs people can employ that very much help them address their environmental stewardship responsibilities in a very positive and proactive way. I think the MAEAP program is a good example of the kind of program that can be very effective," said Scholl.

Michigan Farm Bureau President Wayne H. Wood said it is encouraging to hear Johnson and Scholl state that voluntary, incentive-driven programs and innovative, proactive efforts are goals of EPA.

"Their endorsement of these types of programs and efforts is a salute to the Michigan agriculture industry and the industry's visionary approach in developing MAEAP. It also lets us know that EPA recognizes agriculture's important role in protecting and improving our environment," said Wood.



Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan 4-H are partnered together to establish the Michigan FarmBureau4-HExcellence

in Agriculture Award. This award will recognize 4-H leaders who are advancing youth learning in the areas of agriculture. This will be an endowed award resulting from the efforts of county Farm Bureaus and Michigan Farm Bureau raising \$100,000 during the next 3 years. Michigan Farm Bureau will match county Farm Bureau contributions on a dollar for dollar basis up to \$50,000.

The endowment will provide up to 5 awards (\$1,000 each) annually to county 4-H leaders once the endowment is fully funded. County Farm Bureaus will have an opportunity to nominate 4-H leaders from their county who they feel deserve this award.

County Activities of Excellence and Farmer Idea Exchange

The search is on for innovative, profit-boosting ideas developed by farmers and county Farm Bureaus. Promotional material is out regarding the County Activities of Excellence Program and Farmer Idea Exchange Program. The purpose of the County Activities of Excellence is to recognize and share successful county Farm Bureau programs and activities. Fifteen county Farm Bureaus from across the nation will be selected to present a display of their winning activity during the AFBF Farm Bureau Showcase, Jan. 7-8, 2007, at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. Those counties selected will receive \$2,000 toward expenses incurred to participate in the CAE program.

The purpose of the Farmer Idea Exchange is to encourage Farm Bureau farmer/rancher members to share their innovative ideas and help other farmers/ranchers find new ways to cut costs, improve efficiency, protect/improve the environment and increase their net income. Similar to the County Activities of Excellence program, up to 15 ideas from around the country will be selected to display their winning idea as part of the 2007 AFBF Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Enter your outstanding and innovative idea now. Who knows, you may be showing it off to Farm Bureau members and guests from across the nation in January! Entries must be submitted to Michigan Farm Bureau by Friday, September 8, 2006. For more information, go to <http://www.fb.org/programs/> or contact Lori Chamberlain at ext. 3234.

NEW MICHIGAN TRUCK IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FARM OPERATIONS

Commercial vehicles, including farm trucks, have long been required to have vehicle markings under the Motor Carrier Safety Act. Recent legislation has made the Michigan statute consistent with the federal regulations. Below are some Q & As regarding vehicle markings.

Q. Who needs to mark their vehicle and how does it have to be marked?

A. Commercial vehicles over 5,000 lbs but not over 10,000 lbs. (actual gross weight or manufacturer's GVWR, including any trailers) and all towing or platform bed wreckers under 10,000 lbs. (Section 257.723 of the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code):

- Name, City, and State, both sides of the power unit, 3" in height.
 - Towing or platform bed wreckers based in MI shall not use removable devices. All other vehicles may use removable devices.
- Commercial vehicles over 10,000 lbs. (actual gross weight or manufacturer's GVWR, including any trailers) or any vehicle required to display hazardous materials placard (Section 390.21 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations):
- Name and USDOT Number, both sides of power unit, visible from 50' when stationary.
 - Towing or platform bed wreckers based in MI shall not use removable devices. All other vehicles may use removable devices.

An owner of a vehicle subject to No. 1 above may choose to comply with No. 2 instead. An owner of a vehicle subject to No. 2 may not comply with No. 1 instead.

Q. What about passenger carrying vehicles?

A. The following vehicles must comply with No. 2 (Section 390.21 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations):

- Any vehicle designed or used to transport more than 8 passengers, including the driver, that is used to transport passengers for compensation; or
- Any vehicle or used to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver, that is not used to transport passengers for compensation.

A vehicle that meets one of the above definitions and is required to be certified by the Michigan Department of Transportation under Act 432 PA 1982 is subject to the new requirements.

Q. How do I get a USDOT #?

A. You can obtain a USDOT number on line at <http://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/>. On the left side of the screen, click on "FMCSA Registration and Updates." You can also call USDOT at 800-832-5660. The Michigan State Police will be setting up a USDOT # hotline for intrastate companies later this year. There is no charge to obtain a USDOT#.

Q. Do I need a USDOT # if I don't leave the state?

A. Yes. The regulation applies to intrastate and interstate vehicles operated in commerce. It does not apply to recreational or personal use vehicles.

Q. Does this mean I need a log book and CDL?

A. No. Other requirements, such as CDLs, drug and alcohol testing, have different vehicle size thresholds than what is listed above. Safety regulations such as log books and medical cards are generally required for vehicles the same size as listed in No. 2 above. However, there are exemptions for medical cards and log books for certain vehicles such as farm operations, utilities, etc.



Did you know...

- August begins on the same day of the week as February in a leap year.
- August's flower is the gladiolus or poppy.
- August's birthstone is the peridot, sardonyx, or sapphire.
- August contains no United States holiday.
- August in the Northern Hemisphere is the seasonal equivalent to February in the Southern Hemisphere and vice versa.
- August is National "Admit You're Happy" month as well as National Back to School Month.
- August also hosts numerous occasions like "Wiggle your toes day, Bad poetry day, play in the sand day and watermelon day!"

