

two cases of your own personal wine. Appetizers and wine are provided. Classes limited to 25 couples. \$325 per couple. Register online at www.roundbarnwinery.com.

October 13

Harvest Crush Reception and Dinner. St. Julian, Paw Paw. Join St. Julian wine makers and watch the pressing of Pinot Grigio grapes. Appetizers and fine wines will be offered while you observe the wine making process and learn about the 2006 harvest. Then enjoy dinner in the Apollo Dining Hall with each course paired with St. Julian wines. \$70. www.stjulian.com

October 15

Harvest Moon Dinner. Enjoy select Bel Lago wines paired with a specially created menu for this dinner with the Wine maker. Celebrate the harvest at the winery overlooking beautiful Lake Leelanau on the day of the October full moon. Reservations required. Call the winery for price and reservation -

(231) 228-4800. www.bellago.com

October 20

Food, Wine and All That Jazz. Public Museum of Grand Rapids. Over 300 Michigan and other domestic wines, Michigan beer, gourmet food, and a backdrop of live jazz. 7:30-10pm. \$50. Reservations required. www.wgvu.org

October 21

Sandhill Crane Festival. Sandhill Crane Vineyards. Start at Jackson Audubon Society's Haehnle Sanctuary to watch as thousands of cranes fly in for the evening, then drive to the winery nearby to warm up with wine tasting and hot mulled wine. www.sandhill-cranevineyards.com

October 27-29

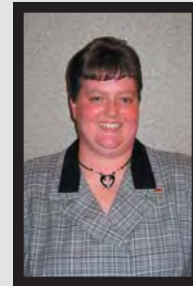
Harvest Wine Tour. A perfect time to tour the vineyards and taste the wines of Leelanau! Start out at The Homestead in Glen Arbor to tour three Leelanau Peninsula wineries. Return to The Homestead for a wine maker's dinner featuring a harvest-themed feast of six courses paired with delicious local wines. Packages start at \$128 per person, per night. Reservations required. www.the-homesteadresort.com

October 28-29

Culinary/Wine Tour Extravaganza. Kalamazoo. Enjoy a day touring a vineyard on the famous "wine wagon" and savor wine tasting at two of Southwest Michigan's fine wineries. Then experience an interactive five-course dining experience at Zazio's in the Radisson Plaza. Packages start at \$179 per person and include one night's lodging. Reservations required. www.travelsolutionsmi.com

This is just a sample of the Michigan wine-related events throughout the state. For a complete list, visit www.michiganwines.com.

Farm Bureau honors West Branch member for service, dedication



West Branch-area farmer Peggy Zettle has been recognized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the organization's Volunteer of the Month for August 2006. Zettle works as a dairy herd manager for Tony Rosebrugh, maintaining the health of more than 250 dairy cattle.

Zettle is an active member of the Ogemaw County Farm Bureau board, currently serving as its president, and is actively involved in several of the organization's program areas, including membership, communications, policy development, and promotion and education.

She has also taken on a regional leadership role helping coordinate the Northeast Project RED (Rural Education Day), held on the last Wednesday in September in West Branch. This joint endeavor of the Farm Bureaus in Ogemaw, Iosco and Arenac counties brings hundreds of students together at the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds to learn about agriculture. Not only was Zettle among the 50-some volunteers who helped direct youngsters through 19 learning stations, she also played a big part in planning the event.

"Peggy does a lot of the grunt work," wrote her nominator for Volunteer of the Month honors. "She attends planning meetings, assists in getting letters out to every school in the three-county region, and helps make sure everything runs smoothly on the big day."

As president of her county Farm Bureau, Zettle is well respected for running efficient board meetings in addition to attending legislative events, taking part in the annual membership drive and Ag in the Classroom programs.

"Peggy does all of this with a smile on her face and a contagious laugh," her nominator wrote. "Her personality is inviting and she represents the farmers of Ogemaw County with pride."

Outside her Farm Bureau involvement, Zettle is also an active volunteer with the Ogemaw County Fair.

"This year's fair attracted several thousand visitors over seven days, so Peggy didn't sleep much given her role of coordinating all the vendors," her nominator wrote. "She doesn't acknowledge the line between work and volunteering — she just does what needs to be done. She does it all with a smile on her face and a positive attitude that welcomes and encourages everyone to become involved."

Zettle lives in Ogemaw Township with her husband Wayne and their two boys, Bryce and Brady.

The



State University (MSU) professor.

"It's a shame to say it, but sometimes it takes large outbreaks to invigorate sanitary processes that eliminate problems like this," said Thomas Whittam, MSU professor of microbial evolution. "Twenty years ago, the main source of E. coli was hamburger, and the meat industry since then has done a good job of monitoring critical (contamination) points, and has given consumers a better education to fully cook meat," he said. "The number of outbreaks from hamburger has essentially disappeared. I'm sure there will be some similar steps involved in the vegetable processing industry now."

The problem, said Whittam, is that 90 percent of the nation's spinach comes from a very large farm where packing takes place in the field.

"They used chlorinated rinses and pressure wash it well, but sanitation under those conditions, particularly in really warm weather, is the main problem. Bacteria do very well under moist, warm conditions," said Whittam.

Bacteria also spread rapidly in co-mingled plant materials, Whittam said.

"It's not the bagging that's the problem," he said. "It's mixing the plants together. If one plant is heavily contaminated, and it's mixed with others, the contamination of one plant is spread out to multiple servings. The problem with this strain of E. coli is that you can get rid of 99.9 percent of it, but if a very small number of bacteria get through, it can be enough to contaminate large amounts of produce. So my recommendation is for people who want to buy fresh produce to buy individual servings."

Also, despite media warnings that washing bagged spinach will not kill the strain of bacteria found in the California spinach, all produce should still be washed, Whittam said.

"We assume that a lot of people eat bagged produce right out of the bag," he said. "But people should always wash their produce. It might not be effective against this strain of

Michigan veggies have safety advantages over California spinach

If anything good can come from the recent E. coli bacteria outbreak linked in part to an organic California spinach grower, it's that steps will be taken immediately to stop future problems, according to a Michigan

October 2006



Membership Standings

	2006	9/28/06
Goal	201,244	7,983
Target	47,655	1,017

Don't forget to send in your set-up sheets to continue receiving materials. If you need a set-up sheet, contact your county FB office.



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

Upcoming Discussion Topics:

November: Hunter access and youth hunting permissions

December: Deer harvest, land access and special permits

January: Young People's Citizenship Seminar

October

- State PD Committee
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-
-
-

November

- State Annual Meeting
- Project RED - DeVos Place
-
-
-

December

- State Annual Meeting
- New County Leadership Conf.
-
-
-

E. coli on this product, but it's always a better choice.

"If you cook it long enough, it will kill the bacteria, and boiling spinach will kill most things. But the recommendation in this case is just to throw it out because there is a concern that people will not cook it well enough, and that they'll unknowingly cross-contaminate other food. We've been told that more nutrients are retained by flash-stir frying or steaming, and that's true, and consumers have learned that and are unlikely to want to boil spinach. So don't take the chance. Throw it out."

Michigan-grown produce

Better yet, replace your spinach with other Michigan-grown produce, which sees little of the warm weather typical in California, and is packaged differently, said Dave Smith, executive secretary of the Michigan Vegetable Council.

"Our spinach season here is earlier," he said. "We're out of season now, and there's very little grown here anyway. What there is almost all goes for processing. We can double-crop, but that second crop is not planted until mid-August, and is a 45-day crop."

As for other packaged vegetables, such as popular baby carrots, Whittam said there's essentially nothing to worry about.

"Baby carrots are not an issue," he said. "I think we need to be concerned about leafy vegetables because, particularly in California, they have huge fields and use huge sprayers, so there's a better chance that more leaves can be contaminated."

Michigan's weather also contributes to produce safety, Whittam said.

"Because of our weather, we don't see E. coli to the extent you see in California," he said. "That doesn't mean it can't happen, but in most of the E. coli 157 (illness-causing strain) cases, the E. coli came from elsewhere."

Smith said his industry awaits the final government findings on the source of the contamination, but he said that despite media speculation that the source may have been irrigation water contaminated with human or animal manure, he believes the more likely source is field wash water.

While the U. S. Food and Drug Administration recommends that consumers not eat fresh spinach or spinach-containing products until further notice, there's no reason to fear other fresh produce, Smith said.

"In spite of this problem, consumers should understand that fresh produce, no matter where it's from, is both safe and nutritious," he said. "Our growers and packers, both in Michigan and around the country, make every effort to ensure that it's grown and packaged safely and up to the highest quality standards. People should not be afraid of produce because of one problem. Vegetables are healthy for people's diets, so they should eat more."

MFB welcomes Dietz as new FSA state executive director

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) welcomes Nancy Lou Dietz to her new position as executive director of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for Michigan. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced her appointment last week. Dietz had been serving as acting state executive director since April.

"The Michigan Farm Bureau congratulates Nancy Dietz on her appointment to head the Michigan office of the Farm Service Agency," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood. "Nancy has been an active leader with the Calhoun County Farm Bureau, and we're confident she'll exhibit the same commitment to Michigan farmers in her new position. In addition, her practical, hands-on experience in production agriculture will be an asset to the agency and the industry as Congress prepares for the reauthorization of the farm bill."

"The Michigan Farm Bureau looks forward to working with Nancy and the FSA to not only address the formulation of the next farm bill but also the cost-effective operation and delivery of FSA services across the state."

Secretary Johanns also praised Dietz in announcing her selection.

"Nancy Lou Dietz has done a superb job as acting state executive director for several months," said Johanns. "She was Michigan's State Committee chairperson before that, with a successful history of farm management with her husband."

For the last two years Dietz has chaired the state FSA committee, which she was first appointed to in 2001. Since 1993 she and her husband, John, have operated Dietz Farms in Tekonsha, growing corn and soybeans and managing a hog finishing operation. Prior to farming, Dietz, a Webberville native, spent seven years in mortgage and consumer lending services.

FSA ensures the well-being of American agriculture, the environment and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of numerous farm programs. FSA's farm programs include commodity programs; farm ownership, operating and emergency loans; conservation and environmental programs; emergency and disaster assistance; domestic and international food assistance and international export credit programs.

Contact: Jill Corrin, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585



Research Shows Opportunities for Bioeconomic Growth in Michigan: Corn and soybean farmers could see new markets for agricultural bio-products

Great opportunities exist for new bio-products that replace petrochemical plastics with plastic-like materials made from agricultural bio-products, according to a recent research report by Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) conducted on behalf of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. The research was funded in part by a \$52,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) grant, awarded in 2004 and administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA). Research results were presented in a final report recently submitted to USDA.

"The agri-food sector, Michigan's second largest industry, contributes over \$60.1 billion each year, produces over 200 commodities on a commercial basis, and employs more than one million Michigan residents," said MDA Director Mitch Irwin. "Our diverse agricultural industry gives Michigan a natural competitive edge when it comes to creating a bio-based economy, and research like this will help drive new product and market development."

The research report, entitled, "Processing Agricultural Residues into Structural Materials: Market Opportunity Analysis," was conducted at SVSU by Dr. Christopher Schilling, C.J. Strosacker Professor of Engineering and Dr. David Karpovich, Associate Professor of Chemistry. During the research project, several combinations of polymers made from low-cost de-fatted soy meal and corn based solids were tested, to assess the economic and engineering viability of mass-produced biodegradable, plastic-like structural materials from polymers developed from agricultural feed stocks.

"On behalf of the state's corn producers, we are very excited about the opportunities we have been able to uncover through our research program with Saginaw Valley State University," said

Jody Pollok, executive director of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. "The FSMIP grant we received has enabled us to further develop corn-based, DDG [corn dried distillers' grain] plastics and focus on potential markets for their uses. It is exciting to see what economic development can be accomplished when business, industry, agriculture and higher education come together."

"Our test results show a great potential for low-cost, biodegradable corn and soy-based plastic materials with unlimited opportunities for their use, including construction, landscaping and home gardening applications, biodegradable clay pigeons for trap shooters, solid heating fuel and biodegradable loose-fill foam packaging," said Schilling. "This research will provide the basis for the future development and marketing of agriculture-based materials and products."

USDA's FSMIP provides matching funds to state Departments of Agriculture and other agencies for 20-30 projects per year, on average. These funds have been used by states to conduct marketing studies or assist in developing innovative approaches to the marketing of agricultural products.

For more information about the research report, contact the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan at 517-668-2676. For more information about Michigan agriculture, visit www.michigan.gov/mda.

Autumn Michigan Wine Events



October 1

Fall Mushroom Mania. Walloon Lake. Hunt for fall mushrooms and enjoy a wine reception and dinner featuring Leelanau Peninsula wines. Beginners and expert 'shroomers alike will enjoy this weekend of fun and food. \$179 per person includes two nights lodging. www.lpwines.com

October 7-8

Red Wine making Classes. Round Barn Winery. After picking grapes from the vineyard, the Wine master will guide you in handcrafting

Did you know...

- The largest pumpkin pie ever made was over five feet in diameter and weighed over 350 pounds. It used 80 pounds of cooked pumpkin, 36 pounds of sugar, 12 dozen eggs and took six hours to bake.
- In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling.

- Pumpkins were once recommended for removing freckles and curing snake bites.
- Pumpkins range in size from less than a pound to over 1,000 pounds.

