

and we don't know what the final rule will be."

Not knowing is what upsets cattle producers such as Monte Bordner, a producer near Sturgis and president of the Michigan Department of Agriculture's TB advisory board, especially since the six-month rule appears to have been implemented at the federal level based on politics, not science.

"There is no science to support six-month testing," he said. "USDA's John Clifford and Mike Johanns determined that rule, but in Michigan, we've never found an animal with TB under 12 months old. So my question is: Where is the science?"

Even with politics overriding science, Bordner said, most cattlemen would reluctantly accept the younger testing requirements (which Macarty said will be in effect only until Michigan's Modified Accredited Advanced zone gets Free status), if it means moving the state forward faster. But that also means communication from the MDA and USDA, so cattlemen know the rules.

What we know is that state rules in compliance with federal rules must be in place before the application can be made to move the present Modified Accredited Advanced zone to Free.

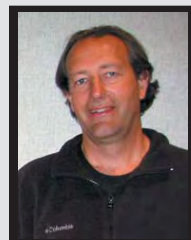
When that happens, agree Macarty, Halstead and Michael VanderKlok, MDA's bovine tuberculosis eradication coordinator, money previously spent on random testing in the Modified Accredited Advanced zone (the cost of at least 725 random whole-herd tests per year) can go into stamping out the disease finally in the Modified Accredited zone, because state and federal officials will have confirmed their belief - yet again - that the rest of Michigan has no TB problem.

"We've conducted 910,000 TB tests and 17,000 whole-herd tests since 2000, and found no evidence of TB outside the Modified Accredited area," VanderKlok said. "That allows the USDA to look at us in a positive light, and at a recent meeting in Riverdale, Maryland, we were encouraged by USDA officials to submit our application for TB Free status, and we will have that application sent in before the first of the year, certainly. In the meantime, while that application is being reviewed, we'll go ahead and do the things we said we'd do (like enforce six-month testing), and hopefully, within a year, we'll get Free status."

While industry leaders such as Bordner remain skeptical, but hopeful, that politics will not get in the way of Michigan's progress, Halstead said things look pretty good, barring another major TB outbreak.

"First we get the zoning order done, then we apply for Free status," he said. "While we wait for USDA to review that application, we get a Memorandum of Understanding together, which is needed to put the zoning order in place. Then, the Modified Accredited Advanced zone could be moved up to Free, but not for a year. There's no guarantee, but we're pretty optimistic."

## MFB honors Hudsonville farmer



Ottawa County vegetable grower Roger Victory has been recognized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the organization's Volunteer of the Month for October 2006. Victory farms more than 600 acres in Georgetown Township near Hudsonville, raising squash, beets, rutabagas, leeks, pumpkins, Indian corn, turnips, gourds and other vegetables.

Victory's Farm Bureau involvement often takes on a political bent. He has twice taken his industry's concerns straight to federal legislators by taking part in MFB's Washington Legislative Seminar, and done the same on the state level in Lansing.

Recently - and on just 10 days' notice - he quickly converted one of his on-farm storage buildings into a "town hall"-style meeting room to accommodate a rally in support of U.S. Congressional candidate Mike Bouchard.

"Roger went above and beyond the call of duty by personally contacting almost 100 people, and getting them there to the event," wrote his nominator for Volunteer of the Month honors. "He volunteered his time to both provide and prepare the facility, even during his busy harvest and packaging time.

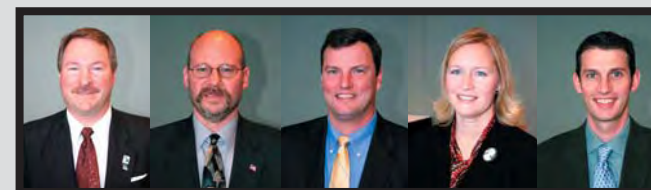
"He took complete ownership of the event and ensured its success almost single-handedly. Roger is a role model of what a good volunteer leader can be."

A member of the Ottawa County Farm Bureau in 1984, Victory also indulges his enthusiasm for agricultural issues by sitting on MFB's state-level fruit and vegetable advisory committee.

The



## Five new members elected to MFB Board of Directors; Wood continues as president



Five new agricultural leaders have been elected by their peers to serve on the board of directors of the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), the state's largest general farm organization.

The elections were held at the conclusion of the MFB 87th Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids. New members to the 17-member MFB board of directors are as follows.

Doug Darling of Monroe County was elected to serve a two-year term as Director At-Large. Partnered with his parents, the Maybee resident grows corn, soybeans and wheat on 1,350 acres.

Mike Mulders of Bay County was elected to a two-year term as District 8 Director. The district represents Farm Bureau members in Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland and Saginaw counties. The Essexville resident raises fresh market vegetables, sugar beets, corn, dry beans and wheat on a 500-acre farm.

Patrick McGuire of Antrim County was elected to a two-year term as District 10 Director. The district represents Farm Bureau members in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, Cheboygan, Otsego, Crawford, Roscommon, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Oscoda, Ogemaw, Alpena, Alcona and Iosco counties. The Ellsworth resident grows fruits and vegetables on 650 acres and operates a farm market and greenhouse.

The MFB Promotion and Education Committee elected Jennifer Lewis of Hillsdale County to serve a one-year term as the Promotion and Education Representative. The Jonesville resident has a 2,100-acre farm that is home to 430 head of dairy cattle and corn, wheat and soybeans.

The MFB Young Farmer Committee elected Joshua Norton of Branch County to serve a one-year term as the Young Farmer Representative. In partnership with his family, the Bronson resident raises 1,500 young swine and 60 head of beef cattle. Corn, soybeans, green beans and tomatoes for processing are also produced on the 2,300-acre farm.

December 2006



## Membership Standings

	2006	12/04/06
Goal	201,244	37,456
Target	47,655	5,427

**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.**



7373 West Saginaw Hwy.  
Lansing, MI 48917  
(517) 323-7000

[www.michiganfarmbureau.com](http://www.michiganfarmbureau.com)

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

### Reminders

There are still a limited amount of CAG coffee mugs and shoulder bags left in stock. Any group wishing to order them can contact Sarah Morrison at (800) 292-2680 ext. 3211. The items will be sent for the cost of shipping and handling.

Any suggestions or ideas for future articles, discussion topics or fun pages can be e-mailed to [smorris@michfb.com](mailto:smorris@michfb.com) or sent to Michigan Farm Bureau, 7373 West Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917 Attention: Sarah Morrison

### Upcoming Discussion Topics:

January: Young People's Citizenship Seminar

February: Genetically Modified Organisms

### December

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

### January

- AFBF Annual Meeting - Salt Lake City, UT
- President's Conf.
- ACE Conf.

### February

- AFBF National Leadership Conf.
- AFBF Young Farmers Conf.
- MFB Young Farmers Conf.
-

In other election activity, the following individuals were re-elected to two-year terms on the board.

Brent Hotchkin of Concord in Jackson County, District 2 Director representing Farm Bureau members in Branch, Hillsdale, Calhoun, Jackson and Lenawee counties.

Paul Koeman of Hamilton in Allegan County, District 4 Director representing Farm Bureau members in Ottawa, Kent, Allegan, Barry and Ionia counties.

Carl Bednarski of Caro in Tuscola County, District 6 Director representing Farm Bureau members in Huron, Tuscola, Lapeer, Sanilac, Macomb and St. Clair counties.

Andrew Hagenow of Rockford in Kent County, Director At-Large.

At the MFB Board of Directors' reorganization meeting, Sanilac County dairy farmer Wayne H. Wood was chosen to serve another two-year term as MFB president.

## ACE: Managing Today for Tomorrow' conference is Jan. 30

Every day, environmental laws and regulations affecting producers and their farms are being created and enforced. Producers can learn how to address these issues, implement management practices to control environmental risk, and find out what incentives and partnerships are available for compliance by attending Agriculture's Conference on the Environment (ACE): Managing Today for Tomorrow, Jan. 30 at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing.

Featuring an all-star lineup of experts, the ACE conference isn't just for classroom types. It's designed to give farmers practical advice that can be applied in the barn or on the field.

The conference runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will feature more than a dozen sessions covering environmental trends, laws and regulations, management practices, marketing and partnerships, and incentives available to those who comply.

The registration fee is \$50 per person and \$20 per student before Jan. 22. After that date, registration is \$75. Because farm management, the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, marketing and environmental issues are of concern to the Michigan Farm Bureau Family of Companies, county Farm Bureau presidents can attend ACE for free, courtesy of Farm Bureau Insurance!

Members in your county can register by cash or check by going to [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org) to print a registration form. To register by credit card, they should call Jim Van Arkel at (517) 241-2232.

For more information, contact Carrie Vollmer-Sanders at (800) 292-2680, ext. 2026 or Dennie Olson, ext. 6550.

## Make your voice heard in D.C.

Registration forms for the 2007 Washington Legislative Seminar (WLS) were mailed last week. Don't miss this opportunity to communicate Farm Bureau's positions on some of the most pressing issues of the day!

Scheduled March 14-16, the seminar will provide opportunities for members to make personal contacts with members of Congress and other government leaders.

As in years past, participation is encouraged by every county Farm Bureau. Some counties have found success in partnering together, sharing the cost of the seminar and rotating participants. Registration forms are due Jan. 31, 2007.

Contact: Megan Ritter, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2025

## Free at last? Cattle producers have new hope

Most of Michigan's cattle may only be about a year away from Tuberculosis Free status after state officials finish the paperwork and wait for a favorable federal designation. In the meantime, in Michigan's Modified Accredited Advanced zone, TB testing will be required of animals at least six months old. Testing requirements remain at two months in the Modified Accredited zone.

Eight years and \$108 million later, Michigan may - emphasize and capitalize that - May be only about a year away from regaining the Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) status cattle producers covet.

It's a mighty sweet sound, that word. But let's not become overly exuberant here. Eleven counties - those that are presently labeled "Modified Accredited" - will not yet be able to shake the shackles that bind them to yearly whole-herd testing, certificates for movement, and a throbbing dull ache every time another cattle herd must be destroyed.

Perhaps it's best to address that ache first. In spite of insistence from Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) veterinarians that there is real, tangible, hard evidence of major progress against the disease, it has been found in seven herds in the Modified Accredited zone in the last eight months. That's not to say that finding seven herds was totally unexpected, or that any of them were totally infected.



"Seven herds is not unprecedented," said Michigan State Veterinarian Steve Halstead. "If you go back into the history of the program, there have been other periods where significant numbers show up. We'll go fairly long periods with no herds, but on average, we can expect three or four herds per year. We're shooting for none, and I think we can hit that."

Those numbers do not mean every animal in the herd has the disease, however. It's a very low incidence.

"Very few herds have more than one or two animals," Halstead said. "We're not seeing transmission of the disease between herds, and that allows us to focus more aggressively on transmission between wildlife and cattle."

If there are so few animals infected per herd, why is the MDA destroying entire herds, along with dogs, cats, hogs and every other mammal on the farm that could carry the disease? Because it's more effective than test-and-remove, said Dr. Reed Macarty, USDA's area veterinarian in charge for Michigan.

"It's been proven that total depopulation is far more economically effective than test-and-remove," he said. "With test-and-remove, there is always more testing required, more equipment to move and use, more hours for personnel. Also, it's part of USDA's progressive TB plan. I know we're talking about economic factors here, and if you say up north (in the Modified Accredited zone), that it's the best way to go, you won't get a lot of support; but from the national eradication standpoint, it has a lot of support. It's a very feasible program as far as the federal dollars go."

Following the recommended USDA TB eradication progression, Halstead said, is important when trying to move the Modified Accredited zone to Modified Accredited Advanced. And it's important when trying to get the entire state declared Free.

"The more quickly Michigan moves to remove herds exposed to bovine TB, the sooner USDA can move the Modified Accredited zone up in status as well," he said. "We can't lose sight of the prize. It takes time, but it is not impossible."

Small numbers of TB-positive animals are to be expected as long as infected wildlife has access to farms, agreed Halstead and Macarty.

"We cannot be discouraged when we find TB in the Modified Accredited zone," Macarty said. "The testing program is working. We are finding the disease in cattle early enough that it doesn't have the chance to be transmitted."

There has been progress in ridding the disease in wildlife as well, Halstead said.

"In 1999, the percentage of deer infected was 4.9 percent, and now it's 1.2 percent in the deer herd," he said. "That's a steady downward trend, and we're confident that the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) measures have been effective. Continuing research will push it lower, and we've got to get it to such a low level that we can't measure it."

If the whole-herd depopulation method is working according to USDA plan, the next step must be taken, Macarty said.

"In the Modified Accredited Advanced zone, presently, the state requirement is testing at 18 months to move to another zone if the animal is sexually intact (basically, heifers, cows and bulls). But the USDA has different requirements," he said. "The federal rule is for testing all sexually intact animals at six months or older before movement within Michigan's zones and interstate shipment."

That rule went into effect July 16 of this year, but it was not communicated to Michigan producers, Halstead said, because Michigan was not prepared to enforce the rule.

"We were not prepared because we did not want to flip-flop again," he said. "We'd been through changes in the required testing before, and every time it causes ripples throughout the industry. When we received the changes, we wanted to talk with the USDA about it and learn their intentions on changing the federal code of regulations. We wanted to know where the USDA was going, and we didn't want the industry to be in another state of flux."

It seems clear-cut now, Halstead said, that once the MDA gets its zoning order worked out and implemented as of March 1, 2007, six-month testing will be the rule for Michigan's Modified Accredited Advanced zone, which will move the state toward Free status.

"We have to make the state regulations consistent with the federal regulations," Macarty said. "But we're still in negotiations,

## Did you know...

- The top Christmas Tree producing states are Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Washington.
- There are about 21,000 Christmas Tree growers in the U.S., and over 100,000 people employed full or part-time in the industry.
- There are approximately 30-35 million Real Christmas Trees sold in the U.S. every year.

- An estimated 175,000 Real Christmas Trees are sold via e-commerce or catalogue and shipped mail-order.
- For every Real Christmas Tree harvested, up to 3 seedlings are planted in its place the following spring.
- Since 1966, the National Christmas Tree Association has given a Christmas tree to the President and first family.