

"Add the multiplier effect and this is a big deal," said Korson.

The timing of the announcement is also good news because the Michigan tart cherry industry is on a deadline to move a big portion of the 2006 crop by July, 1, 2007.

Michigan had a "good size" tart cherry crop as it headed into the summer harvest season, but then a number of severe weather events hit the production regions, reducing the supply and quality available for the market.

"We used more cherries for the juice market than we normally would," Korson said.

But now that USDA has announced its buying intentions, Korson is hopeful that some of that juice will find its way into schools as a cherry and apple juice blend.

Dried cherries from Michigan could also land on school cafeteria tables, along with many other food items made from Michigan cherries, such as low-fat cherry hamburgers, a variety of snack size fruit cups and single-serving cherry pies.

First, though, the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service must survey potential recipients to determine how much product will be accepted for shipping. The agricultural marketing arm of USDA will then seek public bids and grant contracts to low bidders.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) purchases a variety of high-quality food products each year for distribution to the national school lunch program, school breakfast program, summer food service program, food distribution program on Indian reservations, nutrition program for the elderly, commodity supplemental food program and the emergency food assistance program.

Government food experts work to ensure that all the food they purchase is healthful and nutritious. Food items are normally required to be low in fat, sugar and sodium. The commodities must meet specified grade requirements and be USDA-inspected or graded to ensure quality. AMS purchases only products of 100 percent domestic origin.

## Local Farm Bureau leaders undergo leadership training

County Farm Bureau leaders from across the state traveled to Lansing Dec. 14-15 to take part in an orientation and training program offered by the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB).

Participants spent time with several MFB department heads and program managers, learning about the personnel and workings of the state's largest general farm organization. New county Farm Bureau presidents also received their ceremonial gavels from MFB President Wayne H. Wood. Specific program topics included the MFB structure; the organization's grassroots policy development

process; the role of the county president and board of directors; parliamentary procedure; staff responsibilities; media relations; and how to recruit, maintain and motivate active volunteers.

At a Dec. 14 banquet, attendees heard from guest speaker Russell Davis, athletic director for Jackson Public Schools. Voted most valuable player for the 1977 University of Michigan Wolverines, Davis went on to a successful career in professional football, helping the Pittsburgh Steelers to a 1979 Super Bowl victory. Drawing on his own experience in both sports and public schools, Davis offered conference attendees several valuable lessons in leadership development.

Local Farm Bureau presidents are elected to one-year terms by their county boards at annual organizational meetings, held in the summer or fall.

## Farm Bureau honors New Era member

Oceana County farmer Phil Carter has been recognized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the organization's Volunteer of the Month for November 2006. Carter raises corn, apples and roaster chickens on 250 acres in Shelby Township with his wife, Kathryn.



Carter devoted 26 years of his life to teaching young people about the food and fiber industry as an agriscience instructor at Shelby Public Schools. During his time there, he oversaw the operation of a 77-acre "land lab," where students raised various field crops, fruit and livestock. Carter also oversaw the management of the school district's 250-acre school forest, where FFA students planted, pruned and harvested wood products.

A Farm Bureau member since 1967, Carter has previously served on the Oceana County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for six years - three as county president. He was elected yet again earlier this year, and currently serves as third member of the executive committee. In addition to his leadership roles and chairing the White Lake Community Action Group, he has also been involved in Oceana County's information, state affairs, candidate evaluation, land use, policy development and membership committees.

Particularly active in policy development, Carter is a fixture of his county annual meeting, helping compose local, state and national-level policies for consideration by Oceana County farmers. He also never misses an opportunity for "face time" with lawmakers; he's a regular at local legislative breakfast meetings, works closely with state senators and representatives, and often takes part in MFB's Lansing Legislative Seminar.

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## Be proactive on environmental issues - Attend ACE

Agriculture's Conference on the Environment: Managing Today for Tomorrow is Jan. 30. Being proactive on environmental issues will help farmers secure their position as a viable part of Michigan's economy, says Wendy Powers, environmental stewardship director for animal agriculture at Michigan State University (MSU). Powers will kick off Agriculture's Conference on the Environment (ACE): Managing Today for Tomorrow Jan. 30 at the Lansing Center.

"I think producers will walk away from this conference with a better vision of the future," said Powers. "It will keep them informed on key issues that help solidify agriculture as a top priority in Michigan."

The one-day conference will feature nationally recognized experts in more than a dozen sessions covering environmental trends, laws and regulations, management practices, marketing, and partnerships and incentives.

Powers, who defines her role as networking with environmental groups and policy-makers to have a positive impact on livestock production in Michigan, says this conference is a must-attend for any farmer who wants to stay on top of environmental issues.

"There's a lot of excitement about ACE, and there will be a lot of good information for a broad audience," she said, adding that lawmakers and the general public will find the conference useful, too.

ACE is sponsored by the Michigan Farm Bureau and 14 other agricultural organizations in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Agriculture. The registration fee is \$50 per person and \$20 per student before Jan. 22.

Farm Bureau Insurance will pay for all county Farm Bureau presidents to attend. Simply indicate on your registration that you are a county Farm Bureau president, and you do not need to include money with your registration.

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, 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.

January 2007



## Membership Standings

2006/07 12/27/06

Goal 201,244 47,515

Target 47,655 7,505



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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

### 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.
- Lansing Legislative Seminar

### March

- Washington Legislative Seminar
- Ag Day at the Capitol

## 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

## Farm safety seminars set



Under current road safety laws, being in compliance means having a slow moving vehicle emblem, red reflective material on the outboard edges and at least one red light on the rear of the equipment, as shown above. New equipment must also have

red and amber taillights, turn signals and brake lights, as the top photo also illustrates. Machinery that is out of compliance can be brought up to date by adding a slow moving vehicle emblem, red reflective material on the outboard edges and at least one red light on the rear.

A series of safety seminars has been planned to show farmers how to solve their safety and security challenges.

A combined effort of Michigan Farm Bureau's Regulatory Compliance Assistance Program (RCAP), the Ag Labor and Safety Services program and Michigan State University's Department of Medicine, the series is directed to agricultural operations and related agribusiness.

The most significant cause of agricultural fatalities in recent years has been the use of smaller and older utility tractors, said Craig Anderson, Manager of the Ag Labor & Safety Services program with RCAP. "We intend on refreshing the safety procedures all operators of these tractors should practice," he said.

"Many of the practices related to food and feed safety can be incorporated directly into your Farm Safety Plan," Anderson

said. "But a book on the shelf does not make an effective program. We will show areas of concern as well as effective solutions to safety and security issues during these seminars."

### Project summary

The project specifically targets employers, managers, service providers and facility owners in agriculture and agricultural-industry organizations such as landscape and commercial pesticide applicators, and is formatted to train both employers and employees. Program officials will apply for two private and commercial pesticide applicator re-certification credits once the program agenda has been finalized.

### Facility reviews

A limited number on-site facility reviews will be used to develop seminar training methodology and materials (to volunteer contact Craig Anderson below). These reviews will include agricultural and general industry safety, health and construction standards that impact the specific operation reviewed and incorporate security principles with safety management. "During the seminar we will complete a virtual facility review to show how we can walk by a hazard every day and never see it. Too often a person (after an accident) will say 'I thought I could do it just this once' or 'I've been meaning to fix it but just forgot about it,'" Anderson said. "We can stop it from happening by taking time in the off season to fix the problem and adjust our practices. The first step is determining the problem."

### Seminar agenda

Selected equipment (e.g. small tractor use, shields, and guards), security hazards in relation to employee safety, and work/management practices are the basis for this year's program. Each attendee will receive a free slow moving vehicle emblem (based on funding level). The projected seminar training segments will include: Evaluating preparedness and response principles; farm fatality assessment; tractor overturns: prevention and response; emergency preparedness and pesticides in relation to worker safety and transportation issues. Seminar training material will be augmented with real-world examples including a tractor rollover video. There will also be a local content section to address current needs of the host area.

"Traveling on the road presents an ever increasing risk," Anderson said. "New marking requirements will be explained for both farm equipment and trucks. Equipment manufactured after the start of the year will require more marking. Most farm trucks are now required to be marked for safety record purposes. Learn the rule and get a free SMV to boot."

### Seminar and Service Providers

Michigan Farm Bureau staff, in conjunction with Farm Bureau county volunteers, Michigan State University Extension field staff, Michigan State University Department of Medicine and local busi-

nesses will organize, develop, and present the free training seminars/presentations. The Emergency Preparedness Series Seminars will be three-hour programs.

The current confirmed dates include the following:

**Jan. 24** from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Jackson Farm Bureau's County Ag Council, sponsored by Jackson County Farm Bureau;

**Feb. 6** from 9 a.m. to noon at the Southwest Michigan Horticulture Days, Mendel Center, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor. Sponsored by Berrien, Cass, Van Buren MSUE, Michigan Grape Society, and County Farm Bureaus;

**Feb. 13** from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Shelby United Methodist Church, 68 East Third Street, Shelby. Sponsored by the Oceana, Mason and Muskegon County Farm Bureaus and MSU Extension;

**Feb. 23** from noon to 3 p.m. at Williams Farm Machinery, Inc. 1115 Lansing Road, Charlotte, hosted by Williams Farm Machinery, Eaton County Farm Bureau, and Eaton MSUE for Eaton and Ingham counties. There will be an open house at the dealership in the morning. Plans are being made for a lunch to be provided as well.

Additional programs in February and March will be in Iosco, Wexford, Leelanau, and Otsego counties with other areas in the planning stage. For more information on locations or to host a seminar, contact Craig Anderson, Manager of RCAP, at canderso@michfb.com .

## Lansing Legislative Seminar

If your county would like to make a difference close to home then attend this year's Lansing Legislative Seminar.



This year's seminar will be held Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at the Lansing Center.

At this annual seminar, your members will:

- Have the opportunity to have face-to-face discussion with their legislator(s), and
- Gain the information and examples needed to give legislators an accurate picture of how Farm Bureau policy reflects real issues that face agriculture today.

Your county's attendance is important for the following reasons:

- The state continues to face a shortfall in revenue, which will result in further budget cuts.
- Farm Bureau policy calls for numerous state-funded programs to protect food safety, human, animal and plant health.
- This is an excellent opportunity to meet with your legislator to discuss Farm Bureau policy early in the legislative year. Potential issues include tax, energy and environmental issues.

## Michigan cherry growers will benefit from mass USDA food purchase

The announcement that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will purchase up to 12.2 million pounds of tart cherries for domestic feeding programs like the school lunch program is sweet news for Michigan fruit producers because the state grows 75 percent of the tart cherries produced in the United States.

"Michigan will be a big benefactor of this purchase, so this is very good news for growers," said Philip Korson, president of the Cherry Marketing Institute and executive director of the Michigan Cherry Committee.

And while 12.2 million pounds of tart cherries sounds impressive on its own, the actual number of tart cherries utilized to fulfill the purchase could be five times that, said Korson, because the USDA order is calculated in what's called a "finished product pound." It actually takes 5 pounds of processed cherries to make 1 pound of dried cherry product.

## Did you know...January is National Soup Month

MUSHROOM AND POTATO CHOWDER

### INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup chopped onion  
1/4 cup butter or margarine  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
3 cups water

1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced  
1 cup chopped celery  
1 cup diced peeled potatoes  
1/2 cup chopped carrots  
1 cup light cream  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

### DIRECTIONS

In a large kettle, saute onion in butter until tender. Add flour, salt and pepper; stir to make a smooth paste. Gradually add water, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms, celery, potatoes and carrots. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add cream and Parmesan cheese; heat through.