

Volunteer of the Month

Farm Bureau honors Ottawa member for service, dedication

Ottawa County farmer David Van Dyke has been recognized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the organization's Volunteer of the Month for March 2007. With his brothers Tim and Daniel, Van Dyke operates a dairy farm near Marne, milking 400 head of cattle and raising approximately 800 acres of hay and corn silage.



An active Farm Bureau member at both the county and state levels, Van Dyke most recently distinguished himself by turning out a substantial group of Ottawa County farmers to attend MFB's annual Lansing Legislative Seminar, where they were able to speak directly with state lawmakers about issues affecting them and their industry. Soon after volunteering to recruit local members to attend the event, Van Dyke had nearly filled his sizeable passenger van with more than a dozen willing farmers.

His accomplishment hit a snag, however, when his previously trusty van broke down the day before the event. Heading straight back to the drawing board, Van Dyke hastily retraced his steps and made carpooling arrangements to get the group to Lansing the next morning.

"David took complete ownership in getting people to attend the Lansing Legislative Seminar," wrote his nominator for Volunteer of the Month Honors. "He believes in Farm Bureau, strongly supports the need for members to get 'face' time with elected officials, and he made it successful for Ottawa County."

In addition to taking part in the Lansing Legislative Seminar (both this year and last), Van Dyke has served as a voting delegate representing Ottawa County to MFB's last three state annual meetings, and participated twice now in the organization's annual Ag Day at the Capitol event, another opportunity for Farm Bureau members to interact with elected officials in Lansing. Locally Van Dyke is deeply involved with the Ottawa County Farm Bureau, sitting on the board of directors since 2004 and serving on the county-level communications and candidate evaluation committees.

"David is very committed to his family and business, and still finds time to volunteer when asked," his nominator wrote. "He is a real asset to Ottawa County Farm Bureau, and to the organization as a whole."

Van Dyke lives in Polkton Township with his wife Cornelia and their eight children.

First female district director laid to rest

Margaret Kartes, the first woman elected to serve as a district director on the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Board of Directors, passed away March 27 after a brief battle with cancer. Kartes, a passionate supporter of MFB and Farm Bureau Insurance, served on the state board from 1981 through 1998. Active in her community, Kartes served as Edwards Township Supervisor for many years and served on the West Branch and Rose City Area Schools Board for 20 years. She was also active in the American Cancer Society, Hospice of Helping Hands, and the Association of Country Women of the World. In addition, she taught Agriculture in the Classroom and was well known for the cakes she made for special occasions. Kartes is survived by her husband, Robert, and several children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her daughter Rosemary previously worked in the MFB Field Operations Division.

MFB welcomes Regis to Michigan Ag Commission

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), the state's largest general farm organization, welcomes Todd J. Regis to the Commission of Agriculture. Regis was recently appointed to the commission by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to represent Democrats for a term expiring Dec. 31, 2010.

Regis, of Jackson, is the director of organizing and executive board vice president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 951, as well as a current member of the Michigan Food Policy Council.

"Todd brings to the table expertise in the food distribution system, which is a crucial component in Michigan agriculture's food supply chain," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood. "Farm Bureau has had the pleasure of working with Todd on the Governor's Michigan Food Policy Council, and we look forward to working with him in his new role on the commission."

Regis succeeds James E. Byrum who was recently appointed to serve the commission in a different capacity.

The Commission of Agriculture, a bipartisan entity, provides oversight and executive direction for the programs administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and is responsible for approving all rules and regulations promulgated by the department.



May 2007



Photo courtesy Michigan Department of Natural Resources

State commissions recommend aggressive action to eliminate feral swine

In an effort to protect the environment and public and animal health, Michigan's Commissions of Agriculture and Natural Resources recently adopted a resolution aimed at preventing non-native feral swine from becoming established in the state. To date, feral swine have been reported in 32 Michigan counties.

The joint commissions directed the Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources to pursue the following recommendations:

- Ban all recreational shooting of swine behind fences.
- Depopulate swine from all Michigan Privately Owned Cervid ranches, game ranches, wild game breeding facilities and other enclosed ranches.
- Depopulate and seek indemnity for those swine described above that are not otherwise shot for profit or sent to slaughter by a determined date.
- Prohibit husbandry practices that involve raising swine for recreational shooting (such as wild pigs, razorbacks, piney-woods rooters, Russian and Eurasian boars and crosses) for sale or transfer.
- Prohibit the sale, importation, or transfer of swine for the purpose of recreational shooting.
- Allow year-round shooting of feral swine as nuisance animals.
- Increase fines related to the importation and release of feral swine into Michigan from other states and Canada.
- Use federal funds to trap, test, and remove feral swine from private property.

"The strong potential exists for feral swine in Michigan to carry and transmit disease," said state veterinarian Steven Halstead. "Aggressive action is needed to protect the state's hard-earned pseudorabies- and brucellosis-free status in domestic swine, as well as to protect the environment and natural resources."

Membership Standings

	2006/07	04/24/07
Goal	201,244	138,394
Target	47,655	37,350

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



Reminders

- CAG's have a new online resource available. The Loop, Discussion Topics and Questions and the Fun Page are all available to view and print by visiting www.michiganfarmbureau.com/cag.
- Any changes to your group can be made directly through your county administrative manager, including changes to discussion leaders. Discussion Leaders are designated to receive all materials.
- Any suggestions or ideas for future articles, discussion topics or fun pages can be e-mailed to smorris@michfb.com or sent to Michigan Farm Bureau, 7373 West Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917 Attention: Sarah Morrison

<p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Staff Conference • District PD Meetings 	<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YPCS • Membership Chairman's Trip 	<p>July</p>
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Member Services "Members in Action" Photo Contest

Attention All Members!

Michigan Farm Bureau is kicking off the 3rd Annual Member Services Photo Contest. "Members in Action" is this year's theme and we will be seeking 13 photographs for our 2008 Member Services Calendar. Photos should capture our members at home, at work and participating in a variety of Farm Bureau activities and programs.

All winners will be notified and will be given credit in the calendar. One grand prize winner will receive a \$100 cash prize and have his/her photograph grace the cover of the calendar. Good Luck!

Contest Rules

- Only Michigan Farm Bureau members are eligible to enter.
- Photos must have a landscape (horizontal) orientation.
- Entries must be submitted as an 8" x 10" print, or a 300 dpi or greater digital photo (also 8" x 10") on a disk (final resolution eligibility will be determined by Michigan Farm Bureau). Digital photos should be saved as a JPEG, TIF or BMP (Windows Bitmap). Other file types will not be considered.
- Entries should be sent to:
Michigan Farm Bureau
Attn: Jenna Schrot
7373 W. Saginaw Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917
- All submitted entries must be accompanied with a photo contest submission form, which is available at your county Farm Bureau office or below (photos must be accompanied with this form to be considered).
- Each member may submit up to four photographs for consideration (use one submission form per entry).
- All entries must be postmarked by Friday, June 15, 2007.
- All photographs submitted for the contest become the property of Michigan Farm Bureau and may be used by Michigan Farm Bureau for any purpose. Photographs submitted will not be returned.

For more information, call the Michigan Farm Bureau Member Services Department at (800)292-2680 ext. 3240.

Non-stop chilly temperatures threaten Michigan's fruit crop

Michigan fruit growers are anxiously awaiting warmer weather so that they can accurately determine the extent of crop damage caused by this spring's unusual cold snap, but based on initial assessments, the outlook appears most bleak for cherries.

Horticultural agents from Michigan State University Extension offices across the state said they expect substantial losses in the state's tart and sweet cherry crops. They note that the recent weather patterns have similarities to conditions experienced in 2002 when severe freezing winds destroyed more than 95 percent of the Michigan cherry crop.

Causing grief this year has been the prolonged and successive periods of arctic temperatures and high winds - all of which surfaced last week following nearly two weeks of abnormally mild weather across the state.

The general risk of freeze in Michigan at this time of year involves temperatures falling during calm, clear nights and rising again after dawn when the sun warms the earth. In these cases, fruit is exposed to low temperatures for only a short period of time. This year, however, cold, wet and windy conditions have stuck around consecutively for many hours at a time.

The overall extent of fruit damage appears to vary by commodity, location, stage of crop development, and late- or early-season varieties, but initial reports indicate damage to cherries, apricots, peaches, apples and grapes. Extension agents expect to have a better handle on actual damage within a week or two.

In the case of apples, growers are concerned but remain optimistic, said Dawn Drake, manager of the Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association, which is an affiliate of the Michigan Farm Bureau. "You can have damage and still end up with a viable crop," she said.

In fact, the return of winter weather might have been Mother Nature's way of taking care of business in terms of thinning apple blossoms - a practice that has to be done naturally or manually to make room for the biggest and most colorful apples to grow.

"Mother Nature appears to be doing it naturally for us," said Drake.

Tourism expert sees promise in state's young agritourism industry

Tourism based around agriculture, most often referred to as agritourism or ag tourism, has the potential to help make the overall tourism industry in Michigan the state's top industry. But in order for that to happen, farmers need to think holistically about how to grow the market.

That's according to Don Holecek, director of Michigan State University's Tourism Center. Holecek expects tourism in Michigan this year will grow by about 2 percent, and ag tourism will likely keep pace.

"I would say in the total scheme of things, ag tourism's potential for growth is about the same as other tourism," he said. "Most ag tourism follows the general trend of traffic, but we might do a little better if people are looking for ways of entertaining themselves that's a little more inexpensive."

That's where direct sales come in. Wineries with tasting rooms, farms that offer hayrides, cider mills and corn mazes, and other attractions are doing well, but there also is growth in destination ag tourism, Holecek said.

"The Cherry Festival in Traverse City is the most noted event that has grown into a destination," he said. "I don't know if Holland's Tulip Festival could be considered ag tourism, but local festivals and county fairs typically have a strong ag theme to them, and they're becoming more popular. The dominant draw for them is more local, but this is a big second-home state, and part of the reason for that is our natural resources base and festivals and county fairs."

So how can farmers take advantage of tourism's potential for growth?

"When thinking of tourism," Holecek said, "Think holistically and locally. Whether ag tourism could be No. 1 in Michigan's tourism is improbable, but if you look at your county, could ag be No. 1 there? Definitely. And not only the product itself, but because of the landscapes, the blossom season, the fall colors. We already have people coming from China to get married among the spring blossoms."

The Michigan Farm Bureau is supportive of agritourism efforts. In fact, one member-developed organizational policy proposes designating certain roads and highways across the state as "Scenic Agricultural Byways." These routes would be designated to showcase Michigan's agricultural diversity, unique agricultural features, farm markets, roadside stands and related agricultural businesses.

The other thing that's important, said Holecek, is for farmers to change the way they think about the value of ag tourism.

"People in Michigan are very good about producing fruit without worms, but we could be thinking not about how to grow the maximum crop, but how to maximize the tourist experience, and focus on the experience rather than the product itself. It's all about the experience," said Holecek. "The product may be very good, but in the total scheme of things, it's not the wine that makes a trip to a winery a great experience. It's the ambience, the hospitality, the fact that people have been treated right. Then they'll tell other people. If we can do that, and put ag and tourism together, we could be the No. 1 industry."

Did you know...

- Americans bought nearly 99 million dozen eggs in the week leading up to Easter in 2006, compared to 74 million dozen weekly throughout the rest of the year.
- About 240 million laying hens produce approximately 5.5 billion dozen eggs per year in the U.S.
- Several factors influence the size of an egg. The major factor is the age of the hen. As the hen ages, her eggs increase in size.
- Shell color is determined by the breed of hen and is not related to quality, nutrients, flavor or cooking characteristics. Since brown egg layers are slightly larger birds and require more food, brown eggs are usually more expensive.
- Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain Vitamin D.
- Occasionally, a hen will produce double-yolked eggs throughout her egg-laying career. It is rare, but not unusual, for a young hen to produce an egg with no yolk at all.
- To tell if an egg is raw or hard-cooked, spin it! If the egg spins easily, it is hard-cooked, but if it wobbles, it is raw.

