

Volunteer of the Month

Arvid Arvila

April, 2007 Volunteer of the Month

Farm Bureau honors Oakland County member for service, dedication

In recognition of his outstanding efforts promoting agriculture to young people, retired schoolteacher and Oakland County Farm Bureau member Arvid Arvila has been honored by the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the statewide organization's Volunteer of the Month for April 2007.



For the first time this year, Oakland County Farm Bureau's Promotion and Education Committee honored the family of the first baby born during National Ag Week with a basket of Michigan agricultural products, including milk and baby food. Undaunted by the quantity of hospitals in the area, Arvila spearheaded the effort, which made a healthy splash in the local media and spread a good deal of good will between parents, hospital staff, and the county Farm Bureau.

"Arvid has been an instrumental force in our Tri-County Project RED (Rural Education Day) for the last seven years," wrote his nominator for Volunteer of the Month honors, referring to the annual event that gives hundreds of area school children an opportunity to learn about farming in an interactive, hands-on setting. "He is an exceptionally creative person, very personable, and is able to communicate the message of agriculture to a diverse audience, sharing with them his own enthusiasm."

Arvila applies that same enthusiasm to other promotion and education activities as well, regularly volunteering his time to assist in presenting Ag in the Classroom lessons and helping staff the Miracle of Life exhibit at the Michigan State Fair.

In addition to his work on the promotion and education committee, he is also active in his county Farm Bureau's membership efforts and as a voting delegate representing Oakland County at MFB's State Annual Meeting.

Arvila grew up on a northern Minnesota dairy farm, and later spent three decades teaching in Flint-area schools. Wanting to remain involved in agriculture since retiring, he stays plenty busy at Glen and Candy Mitchell's farm near Holly, working in the greenhouse and coordinating fall farm activities.

Johanns announces purchase of up to 3 million pounds of asparagus products

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced USDA's plan to purchase up to 3 million pounds of asparagus products to be donated to child nutrition and other domestic food assistance programs.



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

With today's announcement of USDA's intention to buy, FNS will survey potential recipients to determine how much product will be accepted for shipping. AMS will seek the lowest overall cost by publicly inviting bids to supply the desired quantity and by awarding contracts to responsible bidders.

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.

The



JUNE 2007



Michigan Farm Bureau Family of Companies - Welcome Home Open House

The Michigan Farm Bureau Family of Companies cordially invites you to be our guest this summer at our Welcome Home! Open House. With the recent completion of our building addition and renovations, we would love for you to join in the celebration.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2007

FARM BUREAU CENTER – LANSING MI

3:30 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

A commemorative ceremony will be held at 5:00 p.m.

We have a fun-filled day planned with something for everyone with events like:

- Old fashioned hog roast with all the fixins'
- Inflatable bounce toys for kids
- Live Entertainment
- Building Tours
- Great prizes and giveaways



A donation of \$5.00 per person will go to the agriculture charity of your choice. RSVP to your local county Farm Bureau office. Don't forget to include a check for \$5.00 per person payable to the county Farm Bureau. A confirmation will be sent to you along with your meal tickets and a map to the FB Center in Lansing in the next few weeks.

We look forward to seeing you!

Membership Standings

2006/07 05/28/07

Goal 201,244

Target 47,655



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

www.michiganfarmbureau.com

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

June

- 11-15 YPCS
- 29 Membership Chairman's Trip

July

- 17-19 Ag Expo
- 18 FB Welcome Home Open House

August

- 8 YF Golf Outing
- 30 Membership Year End

Senate agreement on immigration legislation is sign of progress

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) still must review the specifics of this week's Senate agreement on immigration legislation once details are made public, but for now, MFB is pleased to see the Senate make progress toward immigration reform.



"Although we haven't been able to analyze the details of this week's agreement, we're pleased to see the Senate make advancements toward immigration reform," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood. "Immigration reform is a key component to preserving Michigan's second largest industry - agriculture. We look forward to continued cooperation and collaboration on this issue in the Senate, and we hope to see the same in the House."

Immigration reform is vital to Michigan's agriculture industry because many of the commodities produced in the state, particularly fruits and vegetables, rely on large work forces for specialized hand labor. These jobs, often seasonal and regional in nature, do not attract domestic workers, so guest workers fill the void.

In recent years, the Michigan agriculture industry has employed about 45,000 guest workers annually, making Michigan the state with the fourth highest number of guest workers. According to a Michigan State University (MSU) study, crops that rely on guest workers account for almost 58 percent of the total economic activity generated by the state's farm sector and related input supply industries. Without guest workers, the MSU study predicts the economic output of Michigan's agriculture industry would decline by up to \$272 million in the short term and up to \$362 million long term. These production losses would have a multiplying effect on local economies as well as state tax rolls.

To avoid this outcome, Farm Bureau is urging Congress to pass a workable guest worker program that would do the following:

Develop an electronic verification system for guest workers. Farmers currently face a Catch 22 when verifying the status of the work force. If a job candidate's work documents appear reasonable on their face but the employer requests more documentation, the employer could face a federal investigation or lawsuit for discrimination. If, on the other hand, the employer

accepts those documents but later learns they do not match Social Security Administration records, the employer is at risk of being prosecuted for "knowingly" hiring an illegal worker.

Identify a way to maintain current workers until a new system is in place. Farm Bureau does not support amnesty; however, growers must be able to maintain a work force during the transition in immigration policies. Farm Bureau supports a range of approaches that would provide some farm workers with an opportunity to apply for legal status.

Achieve a regulated and dependable supply of guest workers. This would include reforming H-2a, the only existing federal program which authorizes farmers to recruit and temporarily employ foreign workers. Michigan farmers have found the program to be ineffective and unreliable in meeting time-sensitive labor demands. In addition, the existing program only addresses seasonal work and does not provide for year-round labor needs of livestock farms.

First Quarter Reports for New GM Program



The new GM \$500-\$750 Private offer has proven to be a value-added benefit for many of our members as seen in General Motors' first quarter reports. Overall, Michigan Farm Bureau members purchased 1,252 GM vehicles with 337 of those being GM's E-85 Flexfuel brand. Michigan Farm Bureau ranks 4th among state Farm Bureaus in the total number of GM vehicles sold during the first three months of the program. For more information on the program and savings opportunities, contact the Member Services Department at (888) 805-4864.

Regional Probable Issue/PD Meetings

MFB will be hosting a series of 6 statewide probable issue surfacing/policy development sessions June 19-21. The Future Ag Policy series "Growing our Ag Economy Through Informed Ag Policy Decisions" will provide members and leaders an opportunity to participate in discussions about emerging agricultural policy issues and Farm Bureau's grassroots policy process. Topics such as renewable energy, availability of agricultural labor, environmental challenges to industry growth, national farm policy, animal rights/welfare agendas, land use, forestry issues, tax reform, animal health/diseases, and other topics specific to each meeting location's surrounding counties will be covered.

Horse owners encouraged to respond to state equine survey

Equine enthusiasts should check their mailboxes because this month marks the release of the Michigan Equine Survey. All equine enthusiasts who receive the survey are strongly encouraged to complete it.

In addition to determining the number of equine in Michigan, the survey will measure the economic impact and land usage of horses in Michigan. An extensive equine survey has not been conducted in Michigan since 1996.



The survey is being distributed and processed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service. While this is a large survey, it is not a census. Therefore, not all horse owners or operators will be contacted.

However, all responses are important - even those from individuals with only one or two horses. That's because the surveyed population will be a sample of the state's equine industry, and each response carries weight beyond that individual horse operation.

The survey's data collection phase will take place from May 21 to July 31 by mail, phone, and face-to-face interviews.

The first results from the Michigan Equine Survey will be released Dec. 12-13 at the Michigan Equine Conference, with more detailed studies to follow.

Michigan wheat production down; U.S. hay stocks lowest in 57 years

Michigan's first wheat production forecast of 2007 indicates a lower yield and less production than in 2006, according to the Michigan Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service.



Michigan wheat farmers expect to harvest 650,000 acres, unchanged from last year. Winter wheat in Michigan is forecast at 71 bushels per acre, down 2 bushels from 2006. Wheat production in the state is expected to total 46.2 million bushels, down 3 percent from the previous year's wheat crop.

U.S. winter wheat production is forecast at 1.62 billion bushels, up 24 percent from 2006. Area harvested for Horse, Cont'd pg. 3

grain totals 37.2 million acres, up 19 percent from last year. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 43.5 bushels per acre, up 1.8 bushels from last year.

Hay stocks in Michigan on May 1 were 350,000 tons, down 11 percent from last year at this time. U.S. hay stocks that same day totaled 15 million tons, down 30 percent from the previous year. This was the lowest May 1 hay stocks since 1950.

Ahhh, the power of cheese!

Party Cheese Ball Recipe

3 cups (12 oz.) sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (24 g)

1(8 oz.) package fat free cream cheese, softened (16 g)

1 tbsp mayonnaise (1 g)

1 medium onion, finely chopped (11 g)

3/4cup pecans, finely chopped (6 g)

Mix together Cheddar cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise and onion. Form ball and roll in pecans. Cover and chill overnight.

