

Miracle of Life changes buildings at State Fair

In 2006, the Miracle of Life exhibit at the Michigan State Fair brought Michigan agriculture to life for more than 272,000 fair patrons as visitors witnessed the births of hundreds of farm animals.

Families across the state can visit the exhibit at the State Fair from August 22-September 3 in Detroit. And although the exhibit is in the sheep barns this year, and not in a separate tent, the event is again highly anticipated.

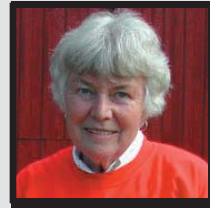
Last year in Detroit, 542 births took place during the fair and included 241 chicks, 156 quail, 39 turkeys, 12 ducks, 61 piglets, 19 lambs and 14 calves. Between births, many activities take place throughout the exhibit, including educational activities and displays. This year's exhibit also features an

activity book for children which doubles as a passport as they venture on their journey through the Miracle of Life.

More than 300 volunteers staff the event during the fair, working around the clock to care for the animals, answer questions and hold animals for visitors to pet.

Miracle of Life volunteers receive both free admission and free parking and are provided with a meal voucher and information packet to prepare them for answering visitors' questions.

Contact Jessica Geurink at 1-800-292-2680 ext. 3242 or by e-mail at jgeurin@michfb.com to volunteer.



Farm Bureau honors Livingston County member for service and dedication

In recognition of her outstanding work helping to educate area youngsters about agriculture, Jean Wylie-Abbe of Fowlerville has been honored by the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) as the statewide organization's Volunteer of the Month for June 2007.

Wylie-Abbe is retired and lives with her husband Marv in Howell Township, where she boards horses; keeps cattle, goats and chickens; and raises hay and straw.

Her operation hosted Livingston County Farm Bureau's annual Project RED (Rural Education Day) in May. It was the fifth time Wylie-Abbe opened up her farm so hundreds of visiting third-graders could learn first-hand about agriculture. Last year's event brought more than 650 guests to the Howell Township farm.

"Jean works her tail off preparing her farm for the students," wrote her nominator for Volunteer of the Month honors. "We get in about two days ahead of time to set up the exhibits. When we arrive, the farm is immaculate.

"She acts like we are doing her a favor by bringing over 600 people to her farm. She loves sharing it."

Wylie-Abbe also hosts riding lessons for disabled young people throughout the summer, and is a member of the Livingston County Farm Bureau's Promotion and Education Committee.

"She is a rare treat of a person and one who is loved and valued by those who have the privilege of working with and knowing her," her nominator wrote.

Wylie-Abbe has two grown children, whose families live nearby.

The



Farm Bureau Welcome Home Open House a Huge Success

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Family of Companies hosted a crowd of nearly 2,000 members, employees, special guests and their families on Wednesday, July 18th, at a "Welcome Home" open house celebrating the recent expansion and renovation of the Farm Bureau center in Lansing. Pictured left to right at the ribbon-cutting ceremony are David VanderHaagen, MFB general counsel and corporate secretary; Wayne H. Wood, MFB President; and Thomas Parker, MFB Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer.



Director Irwin to Retire



State Agriculture Director Mitch Irwin announced that he is retiring as State Agriculture Director to pursue private sector business ventures. Irwin made his official announcement in a letter to the Michigan Agriculture Commission which met in East Lansing. Irwin is expected to leave his post on or before August 17.

Agriculture Commission Chair James Byrum accepted Irwin's resignation and complimented his leadership on agriculture issues.

"Mitch Irwin has been a dynamic advocate for agriculture and has been especially effective in promoting the emerging bio-fuel and alternative energy sectors," Byrum said. "We

are grateful for his service and wish him every success in the future."

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm commended Irwin for his years of dedicated service and creativity he brought to state government.

"Mitch has been an enthusiastic champion for protecting our food supply, promoting Michigan-grown products, and preserving critical farmland," said Granholm. "Mitch also helped launch our effort to create thriving bio-fuel and alternative energy industries in Michigan, a critical part of our plan to revitalize Michigan's economy."

AUGUST 2007



Membership Standings

2006/07 07/28/07

Goal	201,244	179,995
Target	47,655	44,508



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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

August

- 8 YF Golf Outing
- 22-3 State Fair/Miracle of Life
- 30 Membership Year End

September

- County Annual Meetings

October

- MFB State Policy Development Committee Meetings

Irwin said his decision brings to a close a career of public service in state government that began with his election to the Michigan Senate in the 1970s and is looking forward to pursuing private business opportunities.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of leading the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) to help expand agriculture and diversify Michigan's economy," he said, "It is simply time for me to return to the private sector to pursue opportunities in business development, investment, and real estate ventures. MDA has an outstanding team of dedicated professionals, and I have been honored to work with them and with the commission," Irwin concluded.

By statute, the Agriculture Commission appoints the director. Chairman Byrum said the selection process will begin immediately and expects the commission to solicit, interview, and select the new director in the next few weeks.



Farm Safety and Health Workshop

August 20 is the deadline for reservations for the farm safety and health workshop

sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau and Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. The conference will be held August 29 in Lansing at the Holiday Inn West from noon until 4:00 p.m. There is no charge for the workshop, which includes lunch.

The workshop will provide attendees with information on how farm people are being hurt and ways to make certain it doesn't happen. P&E committee members and others in attendance will learn about risks such as tractor overturns, chemical burns, falls from heights and animal bites and how to make sure those types of accidents don't happen. Everyone in attendance will take home at least one safety/health item or resource.

To register for the workshop, call Jean White at ext.3202

USDA to Meet with Community and Faith-based Partners

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced USDA's fourth annual Partners Meeting, bringing together 300 leaders from community and faith-based organizations with USDA officials August 1-3, 2007, at the Doubletree Hotel Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia.

"The theme for this year's meeting, 'Challenge, Choice, Change: Solutions That Strengthen Farming and Rural Communities' fits right in with USDA's proposed plan to reform farm programs," Johanns said. "I encourage our partners to attend and continue our close working relationship."

The Partners Meeting is an annual event coordinated through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. It presents an opportunity for representatives of community and faith-based organizations and USDA agencies to exchange ideas and explore solutions to challenges faced by traditionally underserved farmers, ranchers and rural communities. The Partners Meeting also serves as a "call to action" to propose development of policy to address underserved customers.

The Partners Meeting will include four plenary sessions, a series of conversations led by representatives of community-based organizations and USDA staff, and five training sessions. Subjects include the 2007 Farm Bill, the National Animal Identification System, disaster preparedness, renewable energy, certification and marketing, land stewardship, participating in advisory committees and boards, Emergency Quality Incentive Program, E-Government, grant writing and foreclosure avoidance.

To obtain more information about the Partners Meeting contact the Office of Outreach, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250, Mail Stop 9473, Telephone:(202) 720-6350, Toll Free Number: (800) 880-4183.

MAEAP package explained



SB 501, introduced by Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck), would amend the NREPA to require the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to prepare a booklet identifying

environmental laws and rules of particular significance for farms and farm operations.

SB 502, introduced by Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck), would amend the NREPA to require a complainant against a farm or farm operation to identify himself or herself, and permit the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Director to order a complainant who brought more than three unverified complaints to pay the cost of investigating any subsequent unverified complaints.

SB 503, introduced by Sen. Jim Barcia (R-Bay City), would add Part 86 (Animal Waste Handlers) to the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to require a commercial handler of animal waste to be licensed or certified, and require a \$100 annual fee for licensure or certification.

SB 504, introduced by Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Norton Shores), would amend several parts of NREPA to do the following:

- Provide that an agricultural storm water discharge from a Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)-verified farm would not be considered a violation of Part 31 (Water Resources Protection).
- Indicate that a MAEAP-verified farm would not be considered to have caused an impairment of the State's natural resources unless the Director of the Department

of Environmental Quality (DEQ) determined conclusively that the farm or farm operation had caused a receiving water body to exceed water quality standards under Part 31.

- Require an agricultural feeding operation (AFO) to obtain a permit to discharge effluent into the waters of the state if it were more than five times the minimum size for a large concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO); if it were a large CAFO that was not MAEAP-verified, or if it had a discharge (other than an agricultural storm water discharge) in violation of state water quality standards.
- Prohibit the DEQ from re-issuing a revoked permit or issuing a new permit to the owner or operator of a large CAFO that had violated Part 31, unless the permit prohibited any cumulative expansion of the size of the CAFO for three years; required the owner or operator to obtain a mechanism of financial assurance at least equal to \$100,000 to be used by the DEQ for remediation in the event of a discharge; and required annual water testing and soil testing.
- Require that, in establishing priority lists for sewage treatment and storm water treatment projects, priority be given to efforts that supported MAEAP-verified farms.
- Require that projects at MAEAP-verified farms be given priority when expenditures from the Agricultural Pollution Prevention Fund were determined, and that the presence of a MAEAP-verified farm be considered when certain grants for non-point source pollution prevention and control projects were provided.

SB 501, 503 and 504 have passed the Senate and been referred to the House Agriculture Committee. SB 502 remains in the full Senate. MFB Supports SB 501-504.

MFB Contact: Matt Smego, ext. 2044

Did you know...August is National Family Fun Month

Here are some fun agricultural related places to visit as you celebrate National Family Fun Month with your family:

- Fair Oaks Farm and Dairy Adventure - Fair Oaks, IN: Located just off I65S, this 80,000 square foot adventure center and 30,000 head dairy farm have lots of fun activities like a live birthing exhibit, ice cream factory and tours of their milking parlor.
- Greenfield Village Working Farms - Deerborn, MI: The soul of 19th-century America comes alive, with horse-drawn wagons, livestock and fields of ripening vegetables and grain in scenes straight from the nation's agricultural revolution.
- Miracle of Life Exhibit - Michigan State Fairs: Experience live births of chicks, calves and sheep while learning more about Michigan Agriculture