

Workshops offer how-to on reducing animal disease risks at county fairs

In response to a few animal disease outbreaks that prompted livestock quarantines at county fairs in 2006 and 2007, a series of upcoming regional workshops aims to help stakeholders develop and implement appropriate safeguards and biosecurity plans.

The workshops are a joint effort between Michigan State University (MSU) Extension, the MSU Department of Animal Science, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), Michigan Farm Bureau, and Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (MAFE), and target fair board members, show superintendents, MSU Extension staff, FFA advisers and agriscience teachers, veterinarians, and any other interested individuals.

The interactive workshops will provide information on dealing with potential disease outbreaks and possible animal quarantine situations. MDA officials will also be available to discuss regulatory policies and requirements.

All of the programs will run from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. as follows.

- Jan. 23 Escanaba - Delta County Extension Office
- Jan. 24 Gaylord - Location to be determined
- Jan. 30 Lawrence - Van Buren Careers Center
- Jan. 31 Grand Rapids - Kent County Extension Office
- Feb. 5 Frankenmuth - Fisher Theatre Museum
- Feb. 6 East Lansing - MSU Pavilion Classroom C/D
- Feb. 7 Saline - Farm Council Fairgrounds

The workshops are free; however, reservations are requested for planning purposes. Additional information and reservation forms are available at county Extension offices or by contacting Kenneth Geuns, of the MSU Department of Animal Science, at (517) 353-2924 or geuns@msu.edu.

An abridged version of the workshop will also be held at the MAFE annual convention in Grand Rapids on Jan. 11. For information on this convention, contact MAFE Executive Director E.J. Brown at (517) 371-2000 or mifairs@yahoo.com

Farm Bureau Quick Facts

Michigan Christmas trees

Michigan has approximately 42,000 acres in commercial Christmas tree production, with an annual farm gate value of over \$41 million.

Michigan ranks third in the nation in the number of Christmas trees harvested, supplying approximately 3 million fresh Christmas trees to the national market each year.



Michigan produces and sells more than a dozen tree varieties on a wholesale level - more varieties than any other state.

The top Christmas tree species in Michigan is Scotch Pine. The three other leading species are Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir and Colorado Blue Spruce.

The top six Christmas tree-producing counties in Michigan are: Missaukee, Oceana, Wexford, Montcalm, Allegan, and Manistee. These counties account for just over 50 percent of Michigan's total Christmas tree acreage.

The Michigan Christmas tree industry generates an additional \$1.3 million in sales of wreaths, cut boughs, garland, and other cut greens.

Source: Michigan Department of Agriculture

Kapp promoted to MFB land stewardship specialist

Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) Matt Kapp has taken on a new position in the organization as land stewardship specialist with MFB's Agricultural Ecology Department.

Kapp began his new position on Dec. 3. Since December 2004, he had worked as a regional representative servicing county Farm Bureaus in MFB's North Region, which includes Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego and Presque Isle counties.

In his new role, Kapp will serve as MFB's lead resource regarding land use and zoning issues. He will also work directly with county Farm Bureaus in providing technical assistance, training and education in these areas.

Kapp hails from Ann Arbor and now resides in Lansing. He holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and natural resources communications from Michigan State University.

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JANUARY 2008



Local farmers take active role in setting MFB's 2008 policy agenda

Delegates from each of Michigan's 67 county Farm Bureaus represented their local agriculture industries at Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) 88th Annual Meeting, where they spent three days approving policies that define MFB's 2008 agenda.

Policy sessions were at the core of the annual meeting, held Nov. 27-30 in Grand Rapids. Delegates voted on 141 resolutions concerning state, national and organizational issues. The resolutions were consolidated by MFB's Policy Development Committee from 855 resolutions adopted by county Farm Bureaus.

In one of several approved policies addressing environmental concerns, MFB members supported ratification of the Great Lakes Compact, which is an agreement between eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces that would, among other things, give state governors and provincial premiers veto power to prevent the diversion of Great Lakes water outside its natural basin. This same policy includes an endorsement for the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), as does other adopted policies. MAEAP is a voluntary program through which farmers identify and eliminate or minimize pollution risks on their farms.

The delegate body also codified its formal opposition to a proposed state service tax, just days before the Legislature repealed the unpopular measure that could have rendered agriculture - Michigan's second-largest industry - less competitive in the marketplace by taxing storage and warehousing, business consulting and landscape services.

The proposed service tax and the Legislature's general sluggishness to balance a budget also moved MFB members to adopt policy that says "MFB would consider supporting a part-time Legislature, provided other legislative reforms are implemented to maintain a balance of power between the three branches of government."

All adopted policies will soon be posted to the MFB Web site at www.michiganfarmbureau.com. In the meantime, visit www.michiganfarmbureau.com/annual for more policy highlights.

In addition to policy development, Farm Bureau members attended educational workshops addressing farm safety and public perceptions of animal welfare. They also heard from guest speakers on matters such as renewable energy. The meeting also featured several award presentations as well as agricultural promotion and education activities.

Based in Lansing, MFB is the state's largest general farm organization, representing more than 47,000 farm families across the state.

Membership Standings

	2007/08	12/18/07	
Goal	199,120	44,128	22.16%
Target	47,860	6,645	13.88%



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For questions, comments and suggestions, please contact Amy Pline at ext. 3211



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.
- Completed set up sheets can be mailed directly to your county administrative manager. Remember: Discussion Leaders are designated to receive all materials, so make sure the person designated as DL is an active member of your group.
- Any suggestions or ideas for future articles, discussion topics or fun pages can be e-mailed to apline@michfb.com or sent to Michigan Farm Bureau, 7373 West Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917 Attention: Amy Pline

January

- AFBF Annual Meeting - New Orleans, LA
- Council of Presidents Conference

February

- AFBF YF&R Leadership Conf
- Lansing Legislative Seminar
- Young Farmer Leaders Conf

March

- Washington Legislative Seminar
- Ag Day at the Capitol

Farmers reminded to register chemicals with Homeland Security Reporting of certain chemicals above federal thresholds required by Jan. 21

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is reminding farmers that they need to determine whether their farms are subject to U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) REGULATIONS that require users with large stocks of certain chemicals to complete a risk assessment by Jan. 21 or face penalties for non-compliance.

As part of national anti-terrorism efforts, DHS is authorized to regulate the security of "high-risk chemical facilities," which are deemed to be any facility using or storing certain chemicals above a specified threshold established by DHS Chemical Facility and Anti-Terrorism Standards.

Chemicals singled out by DHS include commonly used products on Michigan farms, such as anhydrous ammonia and propane. Chemicals of interest and quantities that are most likely to affect agriculture include, but are not limited to:

- 20,000 pounds of 28 percent nitrogen (1,878 gallons)
- 10,000 pounds of anhydrous ammonia (Four typical pull-behind tanks, completely loaded)
- 2,500 pounds of chlorine (bulk)
- 500 pounds of chlorine (bagged, on a trailer, or in some other transportation package)
- 2,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate (bagged, on a trailer, or in some other transportation package)
- 400 pounds of potassium nitrate (bagged, on a trailer, or in some other transportation package)
- 400 pounds of sodium nitrate (bagged, on a trailer, or in some other transportation package)

A full list of impacted chemicals and quantities is available online in Appendix A: Chemicals of Interest List at www.dhs.gov/chemicalsecurity.

Agricultural producers who have any of the identified chemicals over the threshold quantities on their farm as of Nov. 20 must complete an online risk assessment tool called the Chemical Security Anti-Terrorism (CSAT) Top Screen by Jan. 21. The tool can be found at www.dhs.gov/chemicalsecurity. After this step, DHS will determine whether the farm presents a security risk and is subject to the Chemical Facility and Anti-Terrorism Standards.

While many Michigan farms will find they need to complete the initial risk assessment, it's unlikely that they'll be subject to additional DHS protocols, said MFB Commodity and Marketing Department Manager Bob Boehm.

"It's our understanding that DHS intends to focus additional security standards on major production facilities and chemical plants where risk is the highest. Still, agriculture is included in this initial step, meaning farmers need to fully cooperate in the interest of national security," said Boehm.

In order to make this process as convenient and manageable for farmers as possible, during the rulemaking process Farm Bureau successfully lobbied for the adoption of higher threshold levels and the complete removal of some chemicals from the list, including urea.

To ensure enforcement, DHS is authorized to conduct audits and inspections of high-risk facilities. The agency can impose civil penalties of up to \$25,000 per day and/or shut down facilities for failure to comply with the regulations.

For more information, contact: Bob Boehm, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2023

Farm Bureau members help people served by Michigan food banks Harvest for All campaign donates 14 tons of food; plus money, volunteer hours

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) members have nearly quadrupled the amount of food donated to Michigan's food banks, and food bank staff say the generosity couldn't come at a better time as food banks across the state struggle with depleted stocks and increased demand.

MFB's third annual Harvest for All campaign collected about 13,000 pounds of non-perishable food products and 17,000 pounds of surplus commodities - collectively nearly 14 tons of food! That's up dramatically from the 5,561 pounds of non-perishable food products and 2,690 pounds of surplus commodities collected last year.

In addition, MFB's 2007 Harvest for All campaign raised more than \$11,000 in donations, up from about \$9,000 raised last year, and provided more than 300 hours of volunteer time at local food banks.

Harvest for All is a national program that encourages county Farm Bureaus to help fight hunger in their local communities in one of four ways: donating non-perishable food products, surplus agricultural commodities, money, and/or volunteer hours to local food banks. The campaign is coordinated in Michigan by MFB's Young Farmer and Promotion and Education (P&E) Committees in partnership with the Food Bank Council of Michigan.

Kim Harkness, food programs manager for the Food Bank Council of Michigan, said the MFB 2007 Harvest for All campaign "helps tremendously." Due to several factors, food inventories at food banks across the state are presently down 20 percent or more, she said. At the same time, demand is up 12 percent and as much as 20 percent in some distribution areas.

"Right now if I went to one of our food banks, I could see through the shelves," said Harkness, noting that's not normally the case, especially at this time of year.

P&E Committee Chair Jennifer Lewis credits this year's highly successful Harvest for All campaign to several factors, including a strong collaboration between the P&E and Young Farmer Committees, enhanced promotion, and increased reporting of activities by county Farm Bureaus. Most importantly, though, is the buy-in at the local level, she said.

"We're especially proud that Farm Bureau members statewide are contributing to their local communities. That's been integral," said Lewis. "Members can see how they're helping people in their own communities and really see how they're making a difference."

Continued needs and giving

In addition to MFB's Harvest for All efforts, Harkness said the agriculture community can further aid the Food Bank Council of Michigan by providing the council with contacts for food processors, suppliers and others in the food industry who might be willing to partner or do business with the organization.

Harkness added that the public shouldn't discount the value of monetary donations in comparison to actual food contributions, saying a dollar goes a long way in feeding people when food is purchased in bulk.

For more information on how to help, call the Food Bank Council of Michigan at (517) 485-1202 or (800) 552-4483. Additional information is also available online at www.fbcmich.org.



Members of the Genesee County Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Committee volunteer their time at a local food bank. Volunteerism is one of four ways that Farm Bureau members from across the state have aided Michigan food banks as part of Farm Bureau's 2007 Harvest for All campaign. See the following press release for more details.