

General Motors Renews Contract for 2008

Great News! General Motors Corporation has approved the continuation of our private offer program for 2008. The discount will remain \$500 off new eligible vehicles and \$750 off new eligible E85 vehicles. The list of vehicles for the program will include the 2007, 2008 and 2009 model years.

There will be changes made to the program beginning on January 4, 2008. Please note the following:

Members must be in good standing for 6 months prior to delivery of vehicle to be eligible for the private offer. Currently, a member must be in good standing for 30 days prior to delivery.

The offer will no longer be compatible with General Motor's employee, supplier, retiree, ambassador 2 or dealership employee purchases.

The 2008 program will include the Pontiac Solstice, Saturn SKY, and Cadillac XLR (previously not included in the 2007 program).

The Cadillac CTS-V, XLR-V and STS-V, Chevrolet Corvette Z06, HUMMER H1, Hybrid vehicles and medium-duty trucks will not be eligible.

General Motors will continue to require eligible members to show their current Farm Bureau membership ID card, driver's license and authorization number (obtained online at www.gmfleet.com/mfb or by calling (888) 273-7596) when using the private offer program.

More detailed information will be distributed once it becomes available to us from General Motors. We are excited about being able to offer this program again to our members and we look forward to another successful year! Please feel free to contact the Member Services Department at (888) 805-4864 with any questions.

Campaign Management Training Workshop

The purpose of the workshop is to help candidates for public office, whether current office holders or first-time participants, plan and execute successful political campaigns. It is designed for candidates for public office, their spouses and their campaign managers and others who may be interested in seeking elected public office at some future time.

The How to Win an Election Workshop was developed by the American Farm Bureau Federation with input from political consultants and staff of both political parties. Video tapes, overheads, a case study and a computerized election campaign have been developed to assist in the presentation of the workshop. This will allow participants the opportunity to have meaningful, hands-on experience and to test techniques, tools and methods. To allow for individual attention, enrollment will be limited to a total of twenty-five people.

Cost:

Candidate (non-FB member)	= \$155.00
Candidate (FB member)	= \$110.00
Campaign Manager w/candidate	= \$110.00
Spouse w/candidate	= \$100.00

The Workshop is scheduled for March 18 & 19, 2008 to be held at the Farm Bureau Center, the deadline for registration is March 7, 2008. Please contact Douglas Ewald, 1-888-379-6007 extension 2042 for more information.

The



Straight from the horse's mouth: Survey gives full scoop on Michigan equine

Preliminary results were released earlier this month, but now complete results from the 2007 Michigan Equine Survey have been compiled and are available online.

Michigan equine on June 1, 2007, totaled 155,000, according to the Michigan Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). That's up from 130,000 equine on June 1, 1996 - the last time an inventory of equine was done in Michigan.

The four most numerous breeds, in order, were American Quarter Horse, American Paint, Arabian, and Standardbred. They accounted for over half the total inventory.

There were 35,000 equine operations in 2007, up from 28,700 in 1991. Almost two-thirds of the inventory was located on places with fewer than 10 equine. About 63 percent of the equine operations were on land zoned agricultural; the remainder was in areas zoned residential or other. Equine were more geographically dispersed than other livestock breeds, with significant numbers located in virtually every county, according to the NASS Michigan Field Office.

Since most equine were on small or medium-sized operations, most equine-related labor was performed on an unpaid basis by 79,000 operators, partners, and family members. Nevertheless, equine operators reported spending \$25 million on 4,300 hired workers in 2006. That represents a fraction of the large number of workers who are supported by the equine industry but not employed directly by equine operations, such as veterinarians, farriers, tack store operators, trainers, jockeys, etc.

Excluding wages and salaries to hired workers, operators and owners incurred \$805 million in equine-related expenditures in 2006. These included costs for feed, fuel, health care, transportation, equipment, tack, boarding, bedding, breeding, show and race entry fees, and taxes.

The survey was conducted with support from several organizations, including the Michigan Equine Partnership of which Michigan Farm Bureau is a member. For complete results, go to the NASS home page at www.nass.usda.gov and select Michigan under "Statistics by State." From the list of Michigan Publications, choose "Other Publications" to find the equine survey.

FEBRUARY 2008



Membership Standings

2007/08 1/31/2008

Goal	199,120	88,865	44.63%
Target	47,860	25,262	52.78%

In this month's packet, there is a postcard with questions about FB Update, the quarterly CAG video. We urge you to take the time to answer the questions and drop it in the mail, so we can continue to provide you with a useful and informative program.



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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

February

- 16-18 AFBF YF&R Leadership Conf
- 20 Lansing Legislative Seminar
- 22-24 MFB YF Leaders' Conf -Big Rapids

March

- 2-8 Ag Safety Awareness Program
- 4-5 Project TEAM Conference- Mt Pleasant
- 12-14 Washington Legislative Seminar
- 16-22 National Ag Week
- 18-19 FB Campaign Mgt Workshop
- 19 Ag Day at the Capitol

April

- *Deadline to qualify for Membership Chairman's Trip
- Canandaigua, New York

Economist predicts crop prices likely to remain high in 2008

Prices for corn, soybeans and wheat are likely to remain high in 2008, but market volatility is a constant threat, said agricultural economists at the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) 89th Convention and Annual Meeting.

Increasing worldwide demand for these crops is contributing to today's higher prices and lower stocks, but there are other factors also at work. Non-farm commodities such as crude oil also are in great demand and trading at record-breaking prices. The continuing decline of the value of the U.S. dollar is another reason farmers are seeing higher prices for their crops, though they also are concerned about rising expenses for fertilizer and other necessary supplies.

"This whole price situation has not occurred overnight, and it's not just one thing such as ethanol that's at work," said Terry Francl, AFBF senior economist. "The demand for these crops has outrun supply for several years."

Francl explained that agriculture is cyclical, and the agricultural economy climbs and plateaus over time. "We're now at a new plateau," Francl said, as he compared current farm prices with those of previous eras. "In fact, yet another plateau may be forming now."

Carryover stocks, said Francl, are the most important indicator of future prices, as evidenced by the most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) crop reports. "It appears that we have not reached prices high enough to begin rationing use yet," he said.

Francl projected an average U.S. corn yield of 154 bushels an acre, with an average price of \$4.60 a bushel in 2008-2009, adding there's a 90 percent probability that corn futures could break the previous

record of \$5.54 a bushel set in 1996 when carryover stocks totaled 11.1 percent. That's down significantly from just three years ago when carryover corn stocks totaled 19.8 percent.

"If there's a production problem, \$7.50 a bushel for corn is not out of the question," he said but added it is unlikely corn prices will reach that level.

For beans, Francl predicted an average U.S. yield of 42 bushels an acre, with an average price of \$11.75 a bushel in 2008-2009. Prices for beans are "likely to continue to go up," Francl said, because of high demand and remarkably low stocks - pegged at just 5.8 percent in the most recent USDA report.

"We are in a bidding war" for beans, he said, and it is conceivable prices could reach \$13 to \$14 a bushel.

Wheat yields have not increased as much as corn and soybean yields, but Francl said an average U.S. wheat yield of 43 bushels an acre is possible, with an average price of \$6.60 a bushel in 2008-2009. "I'd be a little more cautious" about marketing wheat, he said.

In addition, Francl shared tips on successful crop marketing. He urged Farm Bureau members to document overall marketing trends and individual goals and use discipline in contracting and selling on the cash market. Farmers should aim to sell at a profit, beat the average price and sell in the top half of the price range. It also is important for farmers to share their farm and market goals with family members, as well as external advisers such as bankers and brokers.

"Trying to sell everything at the top of the market is like winning the lottery," he said. "Few farmers win, and when they do, it's not because they're good, but rather because they're lucky."

The AFBF Convention and Annual Meeting took place Jan. 13-16 in New Orleans, La.

Farm Bureau Quick Facts

Significant Events in Agricultural History

8000 B.C. - Animals and grain are domesticated in the Middle East, representing the birth of agriculture.

1493 - Christopher Columbus brings calves, goats, sheep, pigs, hens, citrus, melons and many kinds of vegetables to America.

1609 - Native Americans teach settlers in Jamestown, Va., how to grow corn.

1837 - John Deere begins manufacturing steel plows.

1870 - Silos come into use.

1892 - The first gasoline tractor is built.

1945 - Commercial fertilizer use helps increase yields.

1994 - Farmers begin using satellite technology to track and plan their farming practices.

2007 - Globally, more than 10 million farmers in 22 countries grow biotech crops on more than 1.4 billion acres. About 9.3 million people who plant biotech crops are resource-poor farmers in developing countries.

Source: American Farm Bureau Federation

