

The

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August 2008

'Famous Michigan Bovine' gets new home to show off unique hide Farm Bureau Insurance buys, loans animal to Michigan learning farm

Contact: Luke Schafer, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2753 or Jill Corrin, ext. 6585

LANSING, July 24, 2008 - A steer who became a celebrity because he has a map of Michigan on his hide will have a permanent home in Michigan, thanks to Farm Bureau Insurance.



Pictured right, previous owners Jacob and Georgia Kessler pose with the steer on their Spaulding Township farm prior to the bovine's transfer to the learning center

The Lansing-based insurer purchased the unique animal from Saginaw County cattle farmer Jacob Kessler, and has relocated the steer to the Wolcott Mill Farm Learning Center in Macomb County. The animal's hide has distinctive markings which embody the state of Michigan. On one side is the Michigan mitten, which he is famous for, and the other side a large U, which Farm Bureau Insurance says stands for the Upper Peninsula.

Known as the "Famous Michigan Bovine," the steer made national news because of its unusual markings and became a celebrity around Saginaw. Radio commentator Paul Harvey mentioned the animal on his news show, and several newspapers and Web sites ran photos of the steer.

"We call ourselves Michigan's Insurance Company because we're dedicated to serving only Michigan. We also want to bring a little fun to the state. The Famous Michigan Bovine is like a fun gift to the people of Michigan," said Jim Robinson, Farm Bureau Insurance executive vice president.

The steer, born May 7, 2006, on Kessler's farm in Spaulding Township just outside of Saginaw, is a full-blooded Michigander, according to Luke Schafer, public relations manager for Farm Bureau Insurance.

"He was born in Michigan, raised in Michigan, and he's staying in Michigan," Schafer



Membership Standings

	2008	7/29/08	
Goal	199,120	177,286	89.03%
Target	47,860	44,774	93.55%

The summer edition of FB Update features a story on the AFBF Environmental Conference held in June in Traverse City, with the highlight of the conference being a tour of both Old Mission and Leelanau Peninsulas, to learn about land preservation efforts, along with visits to several environmentally-verified farms.



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A LOOK AHEAD ...

August

- 13 State Young Farmer Golf Outing
- Centennial Acres, Sunfield
- 19-22 AFBF Staff Institute, Indianapolis, IN
- 22-Sept 1 Michigan State Fair - Detroit
- County Annual Meetings begin...

September

- 1 Labor Day Holiday
- 3-5 AFBF Administrative & Financial Officers Conf. - San Antonio, Texas

October

- 7-8 State Policy Development Committee Meetings

(Cont'd from front page)

said. "Our state has the robin, white tail deer, and the wolverine, but this is the first Michigan mascot that actually features the state on its body."

A new home

After purchasing the animal July 18, Farm Bureau Insurance loaned it to the Wolcott Mill Farm Learning Center in Ray Township, where it will be on display to the general public for the next several years. The center, part of the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, is an operational farm where visitors can experience the sights, sounds, smells, and feel of modern farm life.

"This will be a great home for the Famous Michigan Bovine," said Robinson. "He'll spend his life with other farm animals, be accessible to any Michigan resident who wants to see him, and live out his days drawing visitors to the Wolcott Mill Metropark."

Wayne H. Wood, president of the Michigan Farm Bureau Family of Companies, said the steer and its new home represent agritourism and agricultural education at their finest.

"The majority of Michigan's population is removed from farming - far removed, so every opportunity we get to educate people about Michigan's vital agriculture industry is valuable," said Wood. "We suspect the novelty of the Famous Michigan Bovine will provide added interest and entertainment value to enhance these learning experiences."

Farm Bureau Insurance has additional promotional plans for the animal, including a "Name the Famous Michigan Bovine" contest coming up this fall.

As Michigan's largest farm insurer, Farm Bureau Insurance also plans to use the animal to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of its Farmowners policy in 2010. The company introduced the nation's first Farmowners policy in 1960 and has been the leader in Michigan farm protection ever since.

Young People's Citizenship Seminar informs, inspires local teens

Contact: Lisa Pruden, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3246, or Scott Piggott, ext. 2021

LANSING, July 17, 2008 - More than 130 high school juniors and seniors from across the state participated in Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) Young People's Citizenship Seminar (YPCS), June 23-27 at Northwood University in Midland. The annual event aims to educate young people about the American political system, and inspire them to take an active role in it. Local teens attending this year's YPCS were (INSERT LOCAL NAMES AND COUNTIES HERE FROM PARTICIPANT LIST WHICH FOLLOWS THIS RELEASE).

With a packed schedule of informational, recreational and social events, the weeklong conference challenged participants to rally around causes, develop political platforms, caucus, organize campaigns and ultimately win over the hearts and minds of their peers in a bid for office. Those who registered to vote made their choices by casting ballots in actual voting booths.

This year's platform issues dealt with current hot topics such as changes to the current high school graduation structure, firearms on college campuses, use of personal information posted on the Internet by employers, and the relevancy of the current two-party political structure.

Throughout the seminar, presentations from an impressive roster of speakers connected the overarching themes of service, perseverance, self-motivation and leadership. Among the guest speakers featured at this year's conference were educator Maxine Hankins-Cain and Detroit-area Holocaust survivor Martin Lowenberg.

"YPCS strives to promote future citizens and leaders in our local communities, regardless of their background," said seminar organizer Scott Piggott, who also manages the MFB Agricultural Ecology Department. "Our goal is to send them home with a greater sense of what it means to be an American, and an interest in participating in our democracy. That's a benefit to both our local Farm Bureaus and to the entire state of Michigan."

Participants are not required to come from Farm Bureau member families. Notable past YPCS participants include former Lt. Governor Dick Posthumus and U.S. Congressman Mike Rogers.

2008 Ag Expo features precision agriculture



The Michigan Farm Bureau tent at this week's Ag Expo showcased a "Technology Row" that provided farmers with information on the newest devices to help them manage their farms. Pictured, a spectator stops by the Michigan State University Institute of Water Research exhibit to check out 3-D mapping software that details geographic soil data and wetlands locations.

Michigan cucumbers for processing still strong; processed snap beans down

Contact: Ken Nye, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2020

Michigan vegetable processors contracted 46,200 acres this year to three major crops: cucumbers for pickles, snap beans, and tomatoes. That's according to a new report from the Michigan Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Cucumbers for processing totaled 30,000 acres, the same as last year. Michigan continues to be ranked as the No. 1 producer of cucumbers for pickles nationwide. Processors contracted 13,500 acres of snap beans in 2008, down 43 percent from last year's contracted acreage. One contributing factor was the closure of a large processing facility in the state. Tomatoes for processing totaled 2,700 acres.

In the fresh market category, cabbage for harvest was estimated at 1,700 acres, no change from last year's acreage. Carrots totaled 2,600 acres, down 7 percent from last year. Snap beans for fresh market were projected to be 3,100 acres, down 14 percent from last year. Sweet corn acres for harvest decreased to 8,300, down only 2 percent from last year.

Michigan onions were estimated at 2,500 acres, unchanged from 2007. The estimated 2,000 tomato acres for fresh market harvest were down 5 percent from last year's acreage. Nationally, vegetable processors have contracted 1.2 million acres to be planted to the five major vegetable crops: snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers for pickles, green peas, and tomatoes. This acreage is down less than 1 percent from last year.

The prospective area for national harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the summer quarter is forecast at 282,400 acres, down 6 percent from last year.

Farm Bureau Quick Facts

August 13: International Left Handers Day

Have you ever felt singled out for being a "lefty" in school or sports? If you favor your left hand over your right when writing or throwing a baseball, you may actually have, well, the upper hand. Recent studies show that left-handers are quicker than right-handers when processing information and performing certain tasks. Celebrate International Left Handers Day and learn about the advantages of being left-handed.



Other interesting history:

August 1, 1936: The First Televised Olympic Games Opened in Berlin

The 1936 Olympic Games were notable for several reasons. Held in Berlin, they introduced the famous torch relay and were the first to broadcast live on television. Adolf Hitler had also risen to power in Germany, and he attempted to use such an opportunity to promote the Nazi ideology and "Aryan superiority." African-American sprinter and long jumper Jesse Owens proved him wrong, however, winning four gold medals. Learn more about the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.



Local youth attend national FFA conference with Farm Bureau help

Contact: Dennis Rudat, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6586



LANSING, July 17, 2008 - With partial help from the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), 80 Michigan FFA members recently took part in the organization's premier Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) in Washington, D.C. Among more than 2,000 FFA members from across the country attending one of this year's seven weeklong sessions were (INSERT LOCAL NAMES HERE FROM PARTICIPANT LIST WHICH FOLLOWS THIS RELEASE).

A collaborative effort between the national FFA and the U.S. Department of Education, the Washington Leadership Conference helps FFA members learn to make a positive impact in their communities by improving leadership skills and preparing them to shoulder more prominent roles and responsibilities in their chapters, communities and future careers.

"This conference provides the finest leadership and citizenship training FFA has to offer," said Burt Henry, the conference coordinator for Michigan and an Alma High School agriscience teacher and FFA advisor.

The conference focuses on problem-solving, relationship building, living with character, and developing an attitude for serving others. Students attended workshop sessions on persuasive communication, character leadership and building relationships, and participated in discussions on citizenship as well as service learning events.

Attendance by members from Michigan FFA chapters got a boost again this year thanks to a \$30,000 Farm Bureau scholarship.

"FFA's Washington Leadership Conference is the first opportunity for many students to attend a national conference, and often it's their first-ever trip to our nation's capital," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood. "These are experiences these students won't forget. It's a privilege for Michigan Farm Bureau to help make a positive and lasting impression on our youth."

MFB's support, plus an additional \$6,000 from the Michigan

FFA Foundation, made it possible to fill two buses this year, one each for the last two weeks of June. MFB also lent a hand by arranging for the groups to tour the American Farm Bureau Federation headquarters and the Capitol building.

"The Michigan Farm Bureau works with youth on leadership and character building at the state level through our Young People's Citizenship Seminar," Wood said. "FFA's Washington Leadership Conference provides a natural transition for these students to continue their education and development at the national level."

Students further increased their appreciation for the nation's heritage with visits to Mount Vernon; Arlington National Cemetery; the Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt memorials; and other notable D.C. sights. Attendees also were able to visit the office of their legislator.

Formerly known as Future Farmers of America, FFA is a national youth organization of nearly half a million student members - all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture - from 7,000 local FFA chapters across the country. For more information, visit www.ffa.org.

Reminders



- CAG's have online resources available. The Loop, Discussion Topics, Discussion Response Form, Report Form, Questions and the Fun Page are all available to view and print by visiting www.michfb.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
- "FB Update" (DVD) are mailed quarterly
- Please send your completed committee set-up sheets into the home office.