

The

# LOAD

November 2008



## Membership Standings

2008 10/22/08

Goal	192,719	21,629	10.46%
Target	47,543	3,435	7.23%

**In the Fall edition of FB Update, we take a trip to the Detroit Eastern Market, Michigan's oldest wholesale and retail farm market, to learn about opportunities that exist for farmer's to sell their commodities. We'll meet photographer Paul Mobley, who has travelled across the country taking pictures of farmers for his new book, American Farmer. Then, we will head north to the Mackinaw Straits where over 600 antique tractors of all shapes, colors and sizes drove across the Mighty Mack for the very first time**



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### People, prosperity, planet and power: Discover them all Jan. 28 Farmers should plan to attend Agriculture's Conference on the Environment

Contact: Carrie Vollmer-Sanders, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2026

LANSING, Oct. 16, 2008 - Farmers and other agriculture professionals will be able to gain a wide range of information about agriculture, consumers and the environment - all under one roof, in one day - during Agriculture's Conference on the Environment (ACE) Jan. 28 at the Lansing Center in Lansing.

"People, Prosperity, Planet and Power" will be the rally call for 16 sessions revolving around marketing and management information for all segments of agriculture, as linked to environmental and consumer concerns and opportunities.

Chris Peterson, Michigan State University (MSU) agricultural economics professor, will kick off the event by sharing his domestic and global experiences with sustainability as a concept to drive agri-food systems and innovations in bioeconomic development. He will draw from lessons learned from his wide ranging experiences with the Sustainable Michigan Endowment Project, Michigan local food system work, the Brazilian sugar cane industry, and the work of TransForum in the Netherlands.

Janice Swanson, MSU director of animal welfare and the president of the International Society for Applied Ethology, will discuss animal interactions over lunch. Swanson, one of the leading experts in welfare and behavior as it relates to agricultural animals, leads a program focused on social responsibility in the food system and its relationship to animal welfare, the role of animals in society and animal behavior. She will address the practical and political engagement between agricultural producers and community stakeholders that can help bring balance to an emotionally charged issue.

Ron McCormick, Vice President/Divisional Merchandise Manager for Produce & Floral at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., will bring the day's conversation full circle by covering Wal-Mart's environmental goals which integrate sustainable practices into all parts of their business including food and agriculture.

In addition to hearing from the three main speakers, participants will have the opportunity to attend issue-based sessions throughout the day that will encompass the theme of People, Prosperity, Planet and Power.

When agricultural producers connect the dots from what they produce to the people who will purchase it, a new way of doing business evolves. Sessions will include hearing from producers who direct market to consumers and to Welch's Grape company, which works cooperatively with its grape growers to integrate national and international performance standards with environmental

#### A LOOK AHEAD ...

\*COUNTY ANNUAL meetings continue to run through November.  
\*MEMBERSHIP SCHOOLS run 10/30-12/15

**November**  
27-28 Holidays

**December**  
2-4 State P&E Committee Mtg  
2-5 MFB Annual Meeting, G.R.  
16-17 AFBF Resolutions  
18-19 New County leadership Conf  
25-26 Holidays

**January 2009**  
1-2 HOLIDAYS  
11-14 AFBF Annual Mtg, San Antonio  
21 MFB Commodity Conf - Mt Pleasant  
28 ACE IV Conference - Lansing Ctr  
28-29 MFB Council of Presidents Conf  
Radisson Hotel, Lansing

(Cont'd from front page)

risk assessment. Three other Michigan producers will discuss how their production systems have changed to meet the consumer demand and flourished financially in return.

The sessions in the prosperity tract will showcase working farms that have implemented environmental practices that have turned into marketing opportunities leading to greater profits.

We've always known agriculture exists in a global economy, but the planet seems smaller all the time. From thinking about carbon footprints to renewable fuels, water use and how we raise animals, the world is interconnected by food and fuel.



The last of the four P's is power; the kind that fuels our homes, farms and industries. Sustainable breakthroughs will be the buzzwords for years to come. Topics will explore small steps that can conserve energy to the larger topic of air quality and climate change.

Complete details and registration can be found at [www.maeap.org/ACE](http://www.maeap.org/ACE). Registration is \$50 per person prior to Jan. 19 and \$75 thereafter. Students are encouraged to attend for \$20 per person. Call (517) 241-2232 for more information.

*ACE is sponsored by partners of the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program including MSU Extension, MSU Institute of Water Research, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Pork Producers Association, Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Cattlemen's Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services, Michigan Allied Poultry Industries, GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. Other sponsors include Dairy Farmers of America, Phase 3 Renewables, and the National Grape Cooperative.*

## Farm bill programs spared from budget deficit for now

Contact: Ryan Findlay (800) 292-2680, ext. 2025

The nation's \$455 billion budget deficit for the 2008 fiscal year means a lot of government programs could face the chopping block next year. So how will agriculture fare?

"The good news is that we just passed a five-year farm bill and it contains mandatory spending for the farm safety net for agriculture. So unless there is a major move to completely reopen the farm bill, the farm safety net is safe for right now," says American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) farm policy specialist Tara Smith. But Smith acknowledges it's hard to say what will get cut.

"It really kind of depends on the politics and how things play out next year and who's in Congress and who's on the appropriations committee," she said. "But AFBF is going to be keeping an eye on the mandatory farm bill dollars to be sure that those don't get tapped into. We're going to be keeping an eye on rural development dollars to be sure that those programs end up fully funded through the appropriations process."

The agriculture budget may not be the best place for lawmakers to look for savings, Smith added.

"Agriculture spending is a tiny fraction of total U.S. government spending, so making dramatic cuts to agriculture won't miraculously turn around the deficit," she said.

The deficit, however, has the potential to affect Extension offices because funding to support Extension goes through the appropriations process. Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices are a different story.

"In terms of FSA offices, again, the farm bill put in place a two-year moratorium on any FSA office closings and put limitations on closings after that period," said Smith.

Conservation spending is also part of the farm bill mandatory spending. "That's not to say that the appropriations committee can't find ways to tap into some of that funding, but the conservation community has already made it very clear that they will protest very loudly if the appropriations committee chooses to go that route," said Smith.

## Michigan's weekly crop and weather



Favorable weather during the week ending Oct. 12 provided ideal conditions for fieldwork and harvesting, according to the Michigan Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Corn was drying down slowly, and growers continued to harvest the crop where field conditions allowed. Silage harvest was nearly complete. Soybean harvest continued on schedule. Alfalfa harvest continued in some areas. Many dry beans were harvested this week due to the nice conditions. Planting of winter wheat continued, and the crop was beginning to emerge. Sugar beet harvest continued.

Apple harvest passed its peak volume; Red Delicious was the principal variety being picked. Concord grapes were being harvested in the southwest; wine grapes were being harvested in the southwest and northwest.

Meanwhile, cool nights have slowed the progress of vegetable crops. Fresh market celery harvest was coming to an end, while celery for processing will continue for at least another week. Potato harvest was in full swing across the state. Carrot, snap bean, and pumpkin harvest continued where weather conditions allowed.

The USDA-NASS-Michigan Field Office can be reached at (517) 324-5300. This information is also available online at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/mi>.

### FARM BUREAU QUICK FACTS:



#### *Pumpkin anatomy*

**Stem** - Located on the very top of the pumpkin. It is brown to brownish green and slightly curved. During the growing season, the stem is attached to the vine. It is the umbilical cord, bringing nutrients to grow the fruit.

**Tendril** - Sometimes attached to the stem are thin, hair-like "tendrils." During the growing season, tendrils on the vine are green. They twist around objects on the ground to help anchor the vine and protect it from the wind. After harvesting, dried, brown tendrils can sometimes be found on the stem.

**Leaves** - The leaves of a pumpkin absorb energy from the sun for plant and fruit growth. Artists' renderings of fall pumpkins sometimes have a few green leaves sitting atop the fruit and attached to the stem. In reality, the stem doesn't have leaves; the vine does, further away from the stem.

**Skin** - The thin, shiny, orange outer layer of a pumpkin is called the skin. It is also called the "rind." It is a protective layer to keep insects and disease out of the fruit. It is not edible.

**Ribs** - Look at the outside of a pumpkin. There are indented ridges running from top to bottom. These are called ribs. Sometimes they are shallow; other times, very deep.

**Seed Coat** - Also called "seed jacket," this is the outer layer of the seed. Nature provides this to protect the nut inside that will eventually emerge into a pumpkin plant.

Source: [pumpkinnook.com](http://pumpkinnook.com)

## MFB Agriscience Educator of Year Award goes to Montague teacher Kyle Fiebig to be honored at 89th MFB annual meeting

Contact: Deb Schmucker, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3213

LANSING, Oct. 16, 2008 - Time and time again, Kyle Fiebig has thrown himself into his work as Montague High School's agriscience teacher and FFA adviser. So it was only a matter of time before Fiebig nabbed the distinction as Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Agriscience Educator of the Year.

The Muskegon resident is the 2008 winner of MFB's Agriscience Educator of the Year Award, which recognizes an instructor who teaches agriculture and natural resources to prepare youth for a possible career in agriculture. He was nominated by the Oceana and Muskegon County Farm Bureaus and selected by the MFB Promotion and Education Committee from nine nominations submitted by county Farm Bureaus from across the state.

As the winner, Fiebig will be formally recognized Dec. 3 at the MFB 89th Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids. There, he will be presented with a plaque as well as a \$500 grant for classroom use, courtesy of the MFB Member Services Department. In nominating Fiebig for the award, the Oceana County Farm Bureau said Fiebig's devotion to his students is unmatched, as evidenced by the "numerous hours" he spends before and after school helping students.

"(He) takes the extra time to help students on a consistent basis achieve beyond what a student thought they could achieve," said Oceana County Farm Bureau President Todd Fox. "The students have a great respect for his time and energy, as do the parents and community members he has involved in the many projects under his direction."

Fiebig's tireless commitment to expanding the school's agriscience program is reflected in his work over the last five years creating the Montague Agriscience Community Center. Born from a simple pole barn that stored school equipment, the center has blossomed into a hands-on learning facility sporting labs for aquaculture and small animal studies and two greenhouses. Here, students can conduct experiments to determine, for instance, how different levels of protein affect an animal's growth or research trials evaluating how different types of soil affect plant growth.

Under Fiebig's vision and leadership, the storage barn was first converted into a full-scale fish farm. That was quickly followed up with the addition of an animal lab and greenhouse thanks to a school-supported bond

and design work by Fiebig and his students. Earlier this year a second greenhouse was added. Next on the agenda is to purchase a working farm where students can raise crops and animals for the production of renewable energy to heat the center.

Fiebig is also credited with creating leadership courses for students involved with the school's FFA chapter. An introductory class on the fundamentals of FFA and parliamentary procedure is offered for freshmen and sophomores. Students in grades 10-12 can take courses on public speaking, demonstration and presenting, as well as advanced parliamentary procedure.

Thanks to the new class offerings the Montague FFA Chapter has averaged six district and four regional championships. In addition, the chapter, on average, has placed fourth in all state FFA career development events. If that wasn't enough, Fiebig has also created a career exploration course that enables students wanting to pursue possible career options to intern with local agricultural employers.

According to Fox, Fiebig has been able to "continue to push the program forward while keeping the interests of current and potential new students in mind."

"Kyle Fiebig has been a great addition for the students in Oceana and Muskegon counties who attend Montague Public Schools. His continual willingness to help students both see and achieve their potential is remarkable," said Fox. "In the eight years he has been instructor, advisor and director of the agriscience program, the program has not only increased in student numbers but also in learning experiences."

### 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](http://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 newsletters, 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](mailto: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. If you received an excess, I apologize.