

The

LOAD

January 2009

Environmental conference is small step for ag; giant leap for Earth

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

LANSING, Dec. 18, 2008 - The planet will share the podium with people, power and prosperity at Agriculture's Conference on the Environment (ACE).

To be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Lansing Center in Lansing, ACE will examine agriculture and sensitive environmental issues from the four unique, yet very much intertwined, perspectives of "People, Planet, Power and Prosperity."

The conference will kick off with Chris Peterson, director of the Michigan State University (MSU) Product Center, outlining how to juggle all four themes when working to achieve the balance necessary to sustain and grow agriculture in Michigan.

Workshops throughout the day will explore the cosmic connection between agriculture and planet Earth in more detail. Guest presenters include:

Kurt Thelen, a professor with MSU's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, will examine how replacing petroleum with perennial and annual crops will impact the environment and agriculture.

Janice Swanson, a MSU professor in the Department of Animal Science, will discuss how consumer demand for cage-free egg production provides insight into all agricultural commodities.

Debbie Reed, of DRD Associates in Arlington, Va., will examine how agriculture will be affected as climate change and energy policy are debated, and how increasing agricultural input costs will bring changes.

Scott Piggott, manager of the Michigan Farm Bureau Agricultural Ecology Department, will look at the future of water use in the Great Lakes, and provide an update on farm compliance with Michigan's new water use laws and water withdrawal assessment tool.

Throughout the daylong conference, a total of 25 speakers in a dozen other concurrent workshops will explore in similar detail topics central to agricultural sustainability, including the bioeconomy, wind and other alternative energy sources, conservation programs and techniques, and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). A representative from Wal-Mart will also share insight on how Michigan farmers can team up with the retailer to market their local agricultural products.

Registration is \$50 prior to Jan. 19 and \$75 thereafter; students may register for \$20. For more information or to register, visit www.maeap.org/ACE. Registrations paid by credit card can also be phoned to Jim Van Arkel with the Michigan Department of Agriculture at (517) 241-2232.



Membership Standings

2008 12/19/2008

Goal	192,719	45,586	23.65%
Target	47,543	7,423	15.61%

Attention:
2008/09 CAG Packets were mailed out in September to ALL county Farm Bureau SECRETARIES.
Included in the packet were 12 CAG envelopes, 12 revised Set-up Sheets- Sorry! 12 revised & Response Forms.
Set-up Sheets must be returned to CAMs by 12/1/08 to insure mailing.



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For questions, comments and suggestions, please contact Mike Wenkel at ext. 3232

A LOOK AHEAD ... 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

: February

: 2-7 ProFILE Trip

: 5-7 AFBF National Leadership Conference

: 7-9 AFBF YF & R Leadership Conference

: 18 Lansing Legislative Seminar

: 21 Michigan FFA Alumni Annual Meeting

Feb 27 - Mar 1 MFB YF Leadership Conference

: March

: 11-13 Washington Legislative Seminar

: 18 Ag Day at the Capitol

Farm Bureau welcomes new Ag, Interior Secretaries

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

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) congratulates former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack on his nomination as secretary of Agriculture and Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) on his nomination as secretary of Interior.

AFBF President Bob Stallman said both have shown experienced and steady judgment in working on agriculture-related issues, such as alternative energy and international trade.

"During his tenure as Iowa's governor, one of the nation's top agriculture-producing states, Gov. Vilsack was an ardent supporter of furthering the use of renewable fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel and wind, as well as an advocate for biotechnology," said Stallman. "He has been a strong proponent of international trade and expanding our export markets.

"His understanding and experience with many of the pressing issues facing agriculture today will serve him well in his new position."

Salazar is also uniquely qualified and experienced to serve as secretary of the Interior, said Stallman.

"He serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and has been a strong proponent of expanding the development of renewable fuels," he said.

Stallman added that Salazar is a recipient of the Friend of Farm Bureau award for his many pro-agriculture efforts, and says "his life-long experience as a farmer will serve him well in addressing the concerns of agriculture."

MFB Harvest for All campaign benefits Michigan food banks

Contact: Lori Chamberlain, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3234 or Deb Schmucker, ext. 3213

Like many others trying to help Michigan families through tough economic times, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) members are going the extra mile to stock the shelves of local food banks.

For the fourth consecutive year, MFB has participated in Harvest for All, a national program that encourages county Farm Bureaus to help fight hunger in their local communities by 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 Committees in partnership with the Food Bank Council of Michigan.

This year's MFB Harvest for All campaign collected 15,284 pounds, or nearly 8 tons, of surplus agricultural commodities. MFB members also gathered 7,856 pounds, or nearly 4 tons, of non-perishable food products.

In addition, members raised more than \$11,000 in financial donations to help stock pantries, and they clocked nearly 2,000 hours of volunteer time at local food banks.



**SUPPORT YOUR
LOCAL FOOD BANK**

Farm Bureau reports 48th year of national membership growth

Contact: Jill Corrin, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585

The American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) national membership rose to 6.2 million member families in 2008, marking 48 consecutive years of membership growth.



AFBF President Bob Stallman said this year's membership growth is especially remarkable given the economic challenges facing the nation. He credited strong programs of advocacy and services offered by state Farm Bureaus for the organization's national membership growth.



"Dedicated Farm Bureau members and their elected leaders at the county and state levels are the force behind our membership growth," Stallman said. "Farm Bureau is a true, grassroots organization and this membership accomplishment sets a positive tone as AFBF heads into its 90th anniversary year. We've certainly come a long way from early 1919 when farmers from 12 states met with the goal of forming a national organization to represent all of American agriculture."

FARM BUREAU QUICK FACTS:



Christmas trees

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

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

...About 42,000 acres of farmland is devoted to commercial Christmas tree production in Michigan, with an annual farm gate value of over \$41 million.

...Missaukee, Oceana, Wexford, Montcalm, Allegan, and Manistee counties account for just over fifty percent of Michigan's total Christmas tree acreage.

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

...Christmas trees typically take seven to ten years to grow to a harvestable size.

Source: Michigan Department of Agriculture

MSU dairy program recognizes leadership of MFB president

Contact: Jill Corrin, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Family of Companies has made a \$1,000 contribution to the Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship Fund on behalf of MFB President Wayne H. Wood, entitling the Sanilac County dairy farmer to be recognized as a Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation honoree.

The fund, which is the largest scholarship program in Michigan State University's (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, supports scholarships for deserving individuals who want to pursue careers in the dairy industry. Over the past 50 years, the fund has awarded more than \$700,000 in scholarships to more than 375 students, and benefited many other students through support for 4-H, FFA and MSU dairy judging teams.



The Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation reserves special recognition for contributions of \$1,000 or more. As a Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation honoree, a plaque with Wood's name will be permanently installed in Anthony Hall on MSU's campus, and Wood's picture will be displayed at the MSU Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education alongside more than 160 fellow honorees. In addition, Wood's photo and biography will be kept in permanent records at the MSU Department of Animal Science.

The Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation was formed at MSU in 1957, and an endowment was established through contributions made in honor of individuals who have served the dairy industry. Other Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation honorees include Wood's father Harold and Elton R. Smith, a longtime MFB president.

...AND THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT JANUARY...

- The garnet is the birthstone for January.



- The snowdrop is the flower for the month of January. It often blooms in the snow.



- Alaska was admitted to the Union as the 49th state, January 3, 1959
- Utah became the 45th state, January 4, 1785
- New Mexico became the 47th state, January 6, 1912
- Michigan became the 26th state, 1 January 26, 1837.
- Kansas became the 34th state, 1861

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 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 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.