

The

LOAD

February 2009



COMMUNITY ACTION GROUPS

Membership Standings

2008 1/20/2008

Goal	192,719	75,541	39.20%
Target	47,543	20,332	42.77%

Two Michigan couples are runners-up for AFBF young farmer awards

Runners-up hail from Ottawa, Shiawassee Counties

Contact: Lori Chamberlain, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3234

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, Jan. 13, 2009

- Two couples from Michigan have been named runners-up in American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) awards programs that recognize outstanding young farmers between the ages of 18 to 35. They are Jeff and Alyssa Vander Werff, of Casnovia in Ottawa County, and Chris and Jamie Demerly, of Owosso in Shiawassee County.

Both couples were named one of four runners-up in their respective awards programs during a ceremony Jan. 12 at the AFBF 90th Convention and Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Details about the awards and recipients are summarized below.

Vander Werffs and Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award
The Vander Werffs placed as a runner-up for the AFBF Excellence in Agriculture Award, which recognizes young farmers and ranchers who do not derive the majority of their income from their agricultural operation, but who actively contribute and grow through their involvement in Farm Bureau and the agriculture community.

Jeff Vander Werff, 28, is a specialty and field crops consultant with the grower-owned cooperative Hamilton Farm Bureau. Alyssa Vander Werff, 24, is a veterinary clinical research associate with Pfizer Animal Health. Aside from their full-time jobs, the pair co-own VVO LLC, a 115-acre fruit farm, and they are in the process of entering a four-way, multi-generational partnership with Jeff's father and uncle to continue the Vander Werff family's farm operations.

Jeff Vander Werff qualified for the national competition after winning the state Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award at last month's Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) annual meeting. The national contest includes spouses, so in Texas Jeff and Alyssa competed for the award as a couple.



A Farm Boss chain saw on behalf of Stihl was one of the prizes Jeff and Alyssa Vander Werff received as a runner-up for the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award. Here, the couple, at left, poses with the prize sponsor and a member of the AFBF Young Farmer Committee.

In the Winter 2009 edition of FB Update DVD, is a wrap-up of the 89th Annual Meeting of the Michigan Farm Bureau.

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 to insure mailing.

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

A LOOK AHEAD ...

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

April

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

May

• 25 Memorial Day Holiday

(Cont'd from front page)

As a runner-up in the national contest, the pair received a \$6,000 U.S. Savings Bond, a Farm Boss on behalf of Stihl, and an inscribed plaque. Demerlys and Young Farmer Achievement Award Chris and Jamie Demerly are runners-up for the AFBF Young Farmer Achievement Award, which recognizes a successful young Farm Bureau member for outstanding achievement in the business of farming and leadership in the agricultural community.

Chris Demerly farms full-time in partnership with his parents, producing field and specialty crops. In addition, he operates his own straw and hay baling business. He and his family also own and operate Corunna Mills, Inc.



Chris and Jamie Demerly, left, pose with a prize sponsor and their new Case IH DX compact tractor. The tractor is their award for being named a runner-up for the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer Achievement Award.

Demerly qualified for the national competition after winning the MFB Young Farmer Achievement Award at last month's MFB annual meeting. The national award contest includes spouses, so in Texas Demerly, 34, and his wife Jamie, 31, competed for the honor as a couple.

As a runner-up in the national contest, the pair received a Case IH DX compact tractor and an inscribed plaque.

MFB earns Awards for Excellence

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

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) has been recognized by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) for outstanding achievements and programs over the past year.



AFBF President Bob Stallman, right, congratulates MFB President Wayne H. Wood during the Jan. 11 Awards for Excellence ceremony

On Jan. 11 at AFBF's 90th Annual Convention and Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, MFB earned honors in all five categories of AFBF's Awards for Excellence program. The program areas cover agriculture education and promotion, leadership development, member services, policy implementation, and public relations and information.

MFB members are featured in national Farm Bureau idea swap

Contact: Lori Chamberlain, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3234

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) members were among an elite group of individuals selected from across the country to share their good ideas with fellow Farm Bureau members as part of the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Farmer Idea Exchange and County Activities of Excellence programs. For each program, a total of 15 applicants were chosen to exhibit innovative products and programs at the AFBF 90th Convention and Annual Meeting, held Jan. 11-14 in San Antonio, Texas.

In the Farmer Idea Exchange program, dairyman Bruce Ferris, of Dowling, showed off a water-activated drain cleaner that he created and refers to as the "Poop Pipe Blaster." More information is available in the Jan. 8 edition of AgriNotes & Notes, archived online at www.michfb.com/press.

In the County Activities of Excellence program, the Hillsdale County Farm Bureau shared details of a highly successful agricultural career seminar and farm tour it held for high school students. The Gratiot County Farm Bureau was also an exhibitor and shared information on an advertising campaign it launched to raise public awareness about modern agriculture and the industry's contributions to the county. More information about the two county Farm Bureau projects is available in the Jan. 8 edition of AgriNotes & Notes, archived online at www.michfb.com/press



Standing at the Gratiot County Farm Bureau's "The Power of Green" exhibit in San Antonio, Texas, Brenda Netzley accepts a certificate from American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Bob Stallman recognizing the county Farm Bureau's involvement in the AFBF County Activities of Excellence Program

Farm Bureau Quick Facts:

Looking for answers to your Groundhog Day questions? You've come to the right spot!



Here are some answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the holiday:

- Yes! Punxsutawney Phil is the only true weather forecasting groundhog. The others are just impostors.
- How often is Phil's prediction correct? 100% of the time, of course!
- How many "Phils" have there been over the years? There has only been one Punxsutawney Phil. He has been making predictions for over 120 years!
- Punxsutawney Phil gets his longevity from drinking the "elixir of life," a secret recipe. Phil takes one sip every summer at the Groundhog Picnic and it magically gives him seven more years of life.
- On February 2, Phil comes out of his burrow on Gobbler's Knob - in front of thousands of followers from all over the world - to predict the weather for the rest of winter.
- According to legend, if Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter weather. If he does not see his shadow, there will be an early spring.
- No! Phil's forecasts are not made in advance by the Inner Circle. After Phil emerges from his burrow on February 2, he speaks to the Groundhog Club president in "Groundhogese" (a language only understood by the current president of the Inner Circle). His proclamation is then translated for the world.
- The celebration of Groundhog Day began with Pennsylvania's earliest settlers. They brought with them the legend of Candlemas Day, which states, "For as the sun shines on Candlemas Day, so far will the snow swirl in May..."
- Punxsutawney held its first Groundhog Day in the 1800s. The first official trek to Gobbler's Knob was made on February 2, 1887.
- So the story goes, Punxsutawney Phil was named after King Phillip. Prior to being called Phil, he was called Br'er Groundhog.



While Groundhog Day may be cute to some, the little furry vermin are very destructive to many, especially in agriculture.

Preferring to live in open farmland and surrounding wooded areas, woodchucks inhabit extensive underground burrows, with tunnel systems as deep as five feet extending up to nearly 70 feet in length. The primary burrow entrance is usually marked by a large mound of earth, although secondary entrances — dug from underground — may be virtually unnoticeable. These woodchuck entrances pose a real tripping injury threat to horses, riders and walkers alike. Additionally, old burrows may become the new home for other nuisance animals.

One of the few mammals that enter into true hibernation, woodchuck activity generally ends in mid-November, and resumes in late February. A single litter of up to six pups are born each season, with an average woodchuck's lifespan reaching from three to six years.

Michigan farmer competes in national Young Farmer Discussion Meet

Contact: Lori Chamberlain, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3234

Brian Preston, a dairy and livestock producer from Quincy in Branch County, represented the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) in the Young Farmer Discussion Meet at the American Farm Bureau Federation 90th Convention and Annual Meeting, held Jan. 11-14 in San Antonio, Texas.



Brian Preston addresses a fellow contestant in the Young Farmer Discussion Meet at the American Farm Bureau Federation 90th Convention and Annual Meeting. Discussion during this round centered on how to maintain the involvement of young generations once Farm Bureau members surpass age 35 and exit the organization's young farmer program.

The Discussion Meet simulates a committee meeting in which active discussion and participation are expected. Participants are evaluated on their ability to exchange ideas and information on a predetermined topic.

Preston, who qualified for the national competition after winning the state contest last month at the MFB annual meeting, advanced through two rounds of competition in the national contest.

Wood elected to American Farm Bureau Board of Directors

MFB president will represent Midwest Region for two-year term

Contact: Jill Corrin, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585 or Dennis Rudat, ext. 6586

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, Jan. 13, 2009 - Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) President Wayne H. Wood has been elected to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Board of Directors as a representative for the Midwest Region.

At the AFBF 90th Convention and Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, Wood was elected to serve out the remaining year of a two-year term, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Ohio Farm Bureau President Bob Peterson.

AFBF is the largest general farm organization in the country. The Midwest Region covers a dozen states:

Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. In his new leadership position, Wood is one of eight directors representing the Midwest Region on the 34-member national board.

In speaking with Farm Bureau members from the Midwest, Wood emphasized how his knowledge and experience with Michigan's diverse agriculture industry makes him an ideal candidate to represent farmers beyond the boundaries of his home state. More than 200 agricultural commodities are produced in Michigan, which is second only to California for the state with the most diverse agriculture industry in the nation.

"I consider this an opportunity to not only further Michigan agriculture but to further a deeper understanding of how diversity can be an asset in meeting challenges," said Wood, a dairy farmer from Marlette in Sanilac County. "I look forward to being involved in consensus building to pull all of agriculture together so that we can face issues that impact all of us, such as immigration, trade, taxes or environmental challenges, from a united front."

This is not Wood's first time serving Farm Bureau at the national level. In the past, he has served on the AFBF Labor Advisory Committee, and he spent four years chairing the AFBF Dairy Advisory Committee. Wood has served as president of MFB, Michigan's largest general farm organization, since December 2000.

Editor's Note: Wayne H. Wood's photo and biography are available from the Michigan Farm Bureau Web site at www.michfb.com/about/bios.

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.