



THE Loop

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NEWSLETTER

FRITO-LAY "LOCAL" CHIP CAMPAIGN FEATURES MICHIGAN FARMERS

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

LANSING, May 14, 2009 - Two faces from third-generation, family-owned Walther Farms in Three Rivers are among the new faces of a nationwide Frito-Lay marketing campaign aimed at "celebrating local people (and the) communities behind America's favorite potato chips."

Brothers Brian and Gary Walther represent Walther Farms, which is one of five potato farms featured in the "Lay's Local" campaign for Lay's Potato Chips. Thirty-second national and regional television ads featuring the Walthers will begin airing May 18.

"While Lay's Potato Chips have been one of the most popular snacks since they were introduced, what people might not realize is how many communities across the country play a role in the creation of America's favorite potato chip. The truth is we are closer to home than people might expect," said Dave Skena, vice president of potato chip marketing for Frito-Lay North America.

"People have an interest in knowing where their products are made and share a sense of pride knowing the role they play in a success story like Lay's Potato Chips, and our hope is that this campaign helps put a spotlight on these communities and demonstrates the appreciation we have for their contributions," Skena added.

Walther Farms has grown potatoes for Lay's Potato Chips since 1975 and received the company's prestigious Potato Supplier of the Year Award in 2008.

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Membership Standings

	2009	May 20, 2009	
GOAL	192,719	145,360	75.43%
TARGET	47,543	39,656	83.41%

CONGRATULATIONS
to the Full of Fun Farmers CAG
of Shiawassee on their 44th year
as a Community Action Group with
Michigan Farm Bureau!!!!
Thank you!

A look ahead....

- June**
22-26 Young People's Citizenship Seminar (YPCS)
26-28 Membership Chairman's Trip - Grand Hotel,
Mackinac Island
- July**
17-19 MI Livestock Expo, Ingham County Fairgrounds, Mason. (MSU Pavilion)
21-23 Ag Expo - MSU



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Brian Walther, who manages the business's southwest Michigan production area, said Walther Farms is honored to be spotlighted in the campaign, noting that it's an extraordinary opportunity to promote Michigan agriculture and the state's family farms. Michigan farmers grew more than 472 million pounds of potatoes for Frito-Lay last year.

The "Lay's Local" campaign also ties in with the farm's mission statement, which is "to be a leader in agribusiness that promotes sustainable excellence and innovation in our practices and in our service to our people, community, customers and environment."

Walther Farms began in the 1940s as a backyard

hobby farm with a few vegetable acres. Today it involves multiple family members and boasts 8,000 acres of commercial and seed potatoes grown throughout the United States for the potato chip and fresh table stock markets.

The majority of acres are farmed in southwest Michigan. Seed potatoes are grown in Gaylord in northern Lower Michigan and in Newberry in the eastern Upper Peninsula. Commercial operations are located in central Michigan, southern Illinois and Indiana and western Texas, as well as the panhandle and mid sections of Florida.

The comprehensive "Lay's Local" marketing campaign will also include national print advertising, on-pack messaging and 40,000 in-store displays. The brand also will participate in more than 50 local market events throughout the country. The other farmers featured in the campaign are from California, Florida, Maine, and Texas.

Lay's Chip Tracker

As part of its "local" emphasis, Lay's Chips also operates an online Chip Tracker which enables consumers to enter product info from a bag of Lay's chips and learn the state where the chips were made. The Chip Tracker also features an interactive map of the United States which enables consumers to see where Lay's potatoes are grown and processed, and learn state-specific information by clicking on a state. The Chip Tracker can be found at <http://www.fritolay.com/lays/chip-tracker.html>.

Michigan Farm Bureau debuts YouTube channel for ag story-telling

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

LANSING, May 14, 2009 - As part of continued efforts to connect with farmers and consumers through popular social networking Internet sites, the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) has launched a channel on YouTube to showcase videos produced by MFB's Video Services Department about agricultural topics of interest to farmers and the greater public. YouTube users can view posted videos and subscribe to the channel at <http://www.youtube.com/MichiganFarmBureau>.



"There's no denying the fact that video is a powerful form of communication. Add the Internet and YouTube's easy accessibility and you have the perfect recipe for broadcasting to millions of people," said Jill Corrin, MFB media support services manager. "Michigan Farm Bureau's Video Services Department is constantly praised for its exceptional story-telling and the organization is excited to share this work and agriculture's stories with the masses."

For the YouTube channel debut, six short segments from the 2009 Spring Edition of MFB's video newsletter "FB Update" have been posted. The segments are devoted to animal welfare and how-counter to animal rights activists' claims-farmers care about the animals they raise. The six-part series is titled "Close-Up on Animal Welfare" and includes the following:

- Part 1: Animal welfare dynamics
- Part 2: Farmers care about animals
- Part 3: Gestation stalls for pigs
- Part 4: Farm animal welfare standards
- Part 5: Animal welfare legislation/ballot initiatives
- Part 6: Farm animal welfare truth for consumers.

“This series takes a real look at the animal welfare issue and tells the truth about how farmers care for their animals,” said Ernie Birchmeier, MFB livestock and dairy specialist and “FB Update” host. “Today’s farmers provide care to their animals based upon knowledge, science and practices that have been time honored, tested and truly provide what is best for the animal.

“Farmers are also affected by legislative efforts and outside interest group agendas that cause the entire food production industry to be impacted. These videos take a look at the big picture and discuss animal care practices down at the farm level for the full story and the real truth.”

The Spring Edition of “FB Update” can be found and viewed in its entirety on the MFB Web site at <http://www.michfb.com/newsroom/video>.

Repeat rains dampen pace of state’s corn planting; worry farmers

Contact: Bob Boehm, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2023

LANSING, May 14, 2009 - They say rain makes grain but there won’t be much grain to make unless the rain holds off. That’s the scenario facing many Michigan corn growers as they nervously watch their optimal planting window tick by with every shower.



Continuing a pattern of frequent and heavy showers over the last month, as much as 3 inches of rain fell in some parts of the state Wednesday evening and more precipitation is expected in coming days. The constant moisture is wreaking havoc for farmers who are anxious to plant corn but can’t until their fields dry out. Historically, corn is the first field crop planted in Michigan in the spring.

“We’re hearing about highly variable conditions across the state. In some areas it’s more or less

business as usual, but in other areas planting has been at a virtual stand-still. For those producers who have been delayed, the clock is ticking,” said Bob Boehm, manager of the MFB Commodity and Marketing Department.

Time is of the essence because the sooner corn is in the ground the better chance it has to fully develop and mature over the growing season and produce high yields come fall.

On May 10, however, only 18 percent of Michigan’s corn crop had been planted. At the same time last year, 66 percent of the crop was in the ground, surpassing the five-year average of 62 percent.

Michigan’s not alone. Cool, wet spring weather has delayed corn planting in surrounding Midwest states and much of the eastern Corn Belt. Nationally, corn planting was only 48 percent complete as of May 10, compared to the five-year average of 71 percent.

A wet fall followed by a cold, snowy winter has only exacerbated problems in Michigan, said Boehm. As of May 10, 43 percent of the state’s topsoil and 36 percent of the subsoil had surplus soil moisture.

“What we really need is a string of warm and sunny days,” said Boehm.

Until then, farmers plagued by showers are doing what they can as they wait things out. Some, for instance, are planting on the less soggy high ground in their fields even though it’s more time-effective and cost-efficient to plant an entire field at once.

Despite the planting delays, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has not adjusted its outlook for U.S. corn-planted acreage, which is estimated at 85 million acres. But some analysts predict U.S. corn-planted acreage may be reduced up to 1 million acres, said Terry Francl, an American Farm Bureau Federation economist.

“If the rain delays and cool weather continue for another week or two, acreage could drop by as much as 1.5 million to 2 million acres,” said Francl.

Francl predicts most of those acres would shift to soybeans. The same would likely be the case in Michigan, said Boehm.



“Ideally, you’d have all the corn in the ground by the end of May. If that doesn’t look feasible a grower may opt to move on to the next field crop in Michigan’s spring planting cycle which is soybeans,” said Boehm.

With corn planting pushed back, soybean planting is also well behind schedule in Michigan. Only 5 percent of soybean planting was complete as of May 10, down dramatically from 29 percent last year and the five-year average of 28 percent.

In other Michigan crop progress reports as of May 10:

- At 91 percent complete, sugar beet planting closely followed last year’s progress and the five-year average, both which were 98 percent.
- Potato planting, at 28 percent complete, was behind last year’s progress of 45 percent and the five-year average of 44 percent.
- Barley planting was 54 percent finished, ahead of 30 percent last year but below the five-year average of 61 percent.
- At 77 percent complete, oats planting was down slightly from
- 81 percent last year and the five-year average of 87 percent.

Editor’s Note: For assistance arranging an interview with a local farmer, contact Jill Corrin, media support services manager, at (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585, or Jeremy C. Nagel, county communications manager, ext. 6584.

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**
- **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**

Farm Bureau Quick Facts

Asparagus

In Michigan, asparagus is typically harvested for a six- to seven-week period from late April or early May through mid to late June.

Asparagus grows best in sandy, well-drained soil. In Michigan, most of the commercial acreage is on the west central part of the state around Hart and Shelby in Oceana County, near Lake Michigan. Only the states of California and Washington produce more asparagus than Michigan.

Three seasons pass before the asparagus plant can be harvested. In its first season of growth, a crown forms with 6 inches of root. In the second season, the crown grows into a fern. Asparagus can be harvested in its third year. It reaches its prime after six to eight years, when it can yield as much as 1 to 2 tons per acre when grown commercially.

Asparagus was first cultivated about 2,500 years ago in Greece. The name is a Greek word, meaning stalk or shoot. The Greeks believed asparagus was a herbal medicine which, among other things, would cure toothaches and prevent bee stings.

The asparagus plant is a member of the lily family, which also includes onions, leeks and garlic. Asparagus is a nutrient-dense food which is high in folic acid and is a good source of potassium, fiber, thiamin and vitamins B6, A and C. Asparagus is also fat-free, contains no cholesterol and is low in sodium.



Source: Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board

