



# THE Loop

SEPTEMBER 2009

NEWSLETTER

## Animal Care Legislation

**Legislation has been introduced in the Michigan House and Senate that would develop proactive statewide standards for animal care.**

The legislative package specifically does the following:

- Clarifies the Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Commission as the sole authority regulating livestock health and welfare.
- Codifies into statute scientific-based animal care standards, providing a requirement for farms to comply by 2020.
- Provides opportunity for revisions to the animal care standards or additional livestock specie standards through an Animal Care Advisory Council that will provide recommendations to the Department and Agriculture Commission for inclusion in rules.
- Utilizes a third-party audit system that would require little infrastructure or cost to the state for managing the program.
- Provides for science-based specie specific input into animal care requirements through the Animal Care Advisory Council and subcommittees appointed thereby.

We need our Legislature to show leadership and demonstrate sound support for comprehensive, science-based Animal Care law that provides certainty for the Michigan Agriculture Industry and Michigan economy.

**Please work with your county's Farmers CARE Action Team to continue contacting legislators to support HB 5127 & 5128 and SB 654 & 655.**

## Membership Standings

	2009	August 20, 2009	
GOAL	192,719	184,102	<b>95.53%</b>
TARGET	47,543	46,397	<b>97.59%</b>

## A look ahead....

### September

- 4 Annual CAG Supply Packets mailed out by this date to Community Action Group secretaries that are updated in iMIS.

### November

- 18-19 Campaign Mgt Workshop

### December

- 1-4 MFB Annual Meeting



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



## Troubles sprout again for Michigan's white wheat crop

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

LANSING, Aug. 21, 2009 - A near disastrous 2009 crop will make the decision to plant white wheat this fall a difficult one for growers like Carl Bednarski of Caro.



*Contrary to the dry field conditions illustrated in this file photo, wet weather led to severe sprout problems in this year's soft white wheat crop in Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac counties. See the accompanying news release for more details.*

"I never saw a loss this bad," says Bednarski, who farms in the Thumb, Michigan's largest white wheat growing region". The problem is the region was hit with heavy rain just as harvest was being considered, and the crop sprouted pre-harvest.

"People thought if the wheat was green, it wasn't mature and wouldn't sprout, even with the rain. But it did. Wheat harvest is all about timing, and we experienced one of the coolest and wettest periods in history smack dab during harvest time," said Bob Boehm, manager of the Michigan Farm Bureau Commodity and Marketing Department.

"We know that sprouting is possible at 30 percent moisture, but it's highly unlikely. The books say it's possible, but I never expected this," said Martin Nagelkirk, director of the Sanilac County MSU Extension office and a wheat specialist.

"We encouraged people to harvest at 20 percent moisture, but sprouting started at 26 to 27 percent or higher. There was no way growers over here could have gotten in the fields early enough to beat sprout."

Troubles seem to be mounting for wheat growers who last year had to accept lower prices for their crop because of sprout-related quality concerns. Despite doing all the right things, consequences of this year's weather are as bad or worse than last year for many growers in the Thumb.

"You'd think the probability of having such severe problems in back-to-back years would be slim, but that's the reality for some growers," said Boehm. "Products made from Michigan soft wheat are in demand and we have a large value-added industry in the state. That's why it's imperative for farmers, researchers, grain elevators, millers, end users and the crop insurance industry to come together to

address the risk involved in producing this often very challenging crop."

Nagelkirk is also concerned the state could lose white wheat acres and growers but remains cautiously upbeat. "People are seeing huge losses in a year when cash is already tight and markets are down. It's been a scary year, and it's not over yet," he said. "In the long term, white wheat has been good to us. If we can do it anywhere, we will do it in Michigan."

In some parts of the state, quality was not a problem. Farmers in southern Michigan reported few problems, and less sprout-prone red wheat was comparatively OK, with discounts reported, but not like white wheat.

Challenges for white wheat growers likely will continue until a sprout-resistant variety is developed. "On our end, we're trying to push harder to understand the problem and find better resistance to it," said Janet Lewis, MSU wheat breeder. "Unfortunately, breeding is a slow process." In the meantime, elevators are working with their customers to be as flexible as possible, but markets available for sprouted white wheat are limited.

Animal feed provides one alternative market. Although the national feed market is filling fast with wheat from other states, there could be an opportunity to supply product to Michigan livestock farmers who are seeking less expensive feed options and who are able to incorporate sprouted wheat into their feed rations. Boehm suggests livestock farmers consult with MSU Extension and their nutrition specialists about this possibility.

Another option for growers, said Mark Seamon, with MSU's Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources, is to use the sprouted wheat in a biomass heating system like a corn burner. But growers should do their homework before making the switch, he said.

Marketing or usability options will likely depend on a grower's insurance coverage. However, any salvage value, such as selling it for feed, will be deducted from an indemnity payment, said Mark Schwandt, head of crop insurance claims with American Farm Bureau Insurance Services. Straw is a different matter. "You can do whatever you want with straw because it's a byproduct," he said. The bottom line is every situation is different, so farmers should consult with their insurance adjuster, said Schwandt.

## USDA implements Farm Storage Facility Loan program

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

Changes to the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program have been implemented in accordance with the 2008 farm bill, according to Christine White, Michigan State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), which administers FSFL on behalf of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

"This program helps to ensure that producers have adequate capacity to store their harvested production until they sell it on the open market," said White. The FSFL program provides low-interest financing for farmers of eligible commodities to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

### **The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:**

- Corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Dry beans
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruit (including nuts) and vegetable cold storage facilities

The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment.

Loan terms of seven, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all

construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

*Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. For more information about FSFL or other FSA price support programs, visit your FSA county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).*



## MFB, GM extend vehicle savings program with modifications

Contact: Jenna Schrot, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6552

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is still able to provide members with a discount on many General Motors (GM) vehicles but some changes have been made to the savings program.

Now through Jan. 4, 2010, qualifying MFB members are eligible for \$500 toward the purchase or lease of select new GM vehicles, including Flexfuel/E85 vehicles. The discount program no longer offers a \$750 incentive for Flexfuel/E85 vehicles.

GM brands eligible for the new program are Chevrolet, Buick, Pontiac, GMC and Cadillac. Some vehicle exclusions apply. Medium-duty trucks are no longer eligible. [www.michfb.com/benefits](http://www.michfb.com/benefits).

Although the private offer has been scaled back, "MFB is pleased to be able to continue offering its members this valuable benefit," said Jenna Schrot, MFB Members Services Department manager.

Individuals must be MFB members 120 days prior to the date of vehicle delivery to be eligible for the savings program. The private offer can be combined with many other incentives, including GM Business Choice.



## DIGITAL DIALOGUE REMINDER!

You can follow Michigan Farm Bureau news and interact with the organization using the following social media tools.

**Facebook:** The Michigan Farm Bureau operates a page on Facebook called Michigan Farm Bureau. Search for it at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and become a fan.

**Twitter:** The Michigan Farm Bureau operates a Twitter account named MichFarmBureau (no spaces). You can find us at <http://twitter.com/MichFarmBureau> and become a follower.

**YouTube:** The Michigan Farm Bureau has its own YouTube channel, appropriately titled MichiganFarmBureau (no spaces). Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/MichiganFarmBureau> and become a subscriber.

## Reminders



- **“FB Update” DVDs are mailed out quarterly. Your next version will be in November, 2009.**
- **Annual CAG Supply Packets will be mailed out by September 4, 2009 to all CAG secreteries that are currently updated in iMIS.**
- **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)**
- **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, PO Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909-8460 Attention: Amy Pline**

## MFB loses historian, former communications manager



The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is mourning the passing of former longtime MFB employee Donna Wilber, who passed away Aug. 19. Wilber began her Farm Bureau career in 1950 as a membership clerk and later was promoted to management positions in the organization’s Information and Public Relations Division. At the time of her retirement in 1994 she served as the division’s assistant director in charge of media relations. That same year she authored “In the Service of the Farmer Part II,” which chronicled MFB’s history following “In the Service of the Farmer” published 35 years earlier by MFB’s first leader Clark Brody.

Visitation will be held at 9 a.m. Sept. 12 at the Keck-Coleman Funeral Home in St. Johns, followed by a memorial celebration at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Ovid Historical Society.



### Available resources to help educate consumers on how farmers care:

- **Farmers Care Display**
- **Farmers Care Brochure**
- **Farmers Care Bookmark**



These items are available by contacting your county administrative manager. Your county Farm Bureaus are currently appointing Farmers Care Action Teams (FCAT).

If you are interested in helping educate other consumers in your county, let your county President know you are interested in serving on this committee.