



THE Loop

NEWSLETTER

Late Keith Brown of Hillsdale Co. immortalized with Farm Bureau Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award

Contact: Annual Meeting Newsroom, (616) 742-7776

GRAND RAPIDS, Dec. 3, 2009 - The Michigan agriculture industry lost a valued farmer, trusted public servant and respected industry advocate with the passing of Keith Brown in April. But Brown's memory and legacy will live on through the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Distinguished Service to Agriculture (DSA) Award.

MFB presented Brown the DSA Award posthumously during a Dec. 3 awards ceremony at the MFB 90th Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids. The DSA Award is MFB's highest honor and recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the state's agriculture industry. DSA Award recipients are selected by the MFB Board of Directors based on nominations submitted by county Farm Bureaus and representatives of the agriculture industry.

"Few men have been more deserving, and even fewer have been so widely praised and respected than the late Keith Brown," said MFB President Wayne H. Wood. "Keith Brown's life is the epitome of distinguished service to agriculture." Brown was a fifth-generation farmer from Jonesville who raised top-quality registered Holsteins, Percheron draft horses, sheep and hogs. His work life was dedicated to agriculture

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Please note that the Community Action Fun Page will be discontinued, effective with the January 2010 issue. The archive of past months (back to 2006) will still be available on the MFB Website, under the CAG section.

Membership Standings

| | 2010 | DECEMBER 10, 2009 | |
|--------|---------|-------------------|---------------|
| GOAL | 189,958 | 40,903 | 21.53% |
| TARGET | 47,736 | 6,557 | 13.74% |

A look ahead....

January 2010

- 10 - 13 AFBF Annual Meeting
- 27 - 28 MFB Council of Presidents Conference

February 2010

Statewide Membership Day Feb 2, 2010

REMINDERS

- **"FB Update" DVDs are mailed out quarterly. Your next version will be in February, 2010.**
- **Annual CAG Supply Packets were mailed out by September 4, 2009 to all CAG secretaries that are currently updated in our database.**
- **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 or discussion topics can be E-mailed to apline@michfb.com or sent to Michigan Farm Bureau, 7373 West Saginaw Hwy, PO Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909-8460 Attention: Amy Pline**



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



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from his youth. Even before he graduated from Michigan State University (MSU) in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's degree in animal nutrition, he traveled to Nigeria with International Farm Youth Exchange as a 4-H ambassador.

While Brown was a "farmer first and foremost," he established a second career as a district director and agricultural specialist for Congressman Nick Smith from 1998 to 2005, and again for Congressman Tim Walberg from 2007 to 2009. "Keith was almost universally recognized as a man of wisdom and wide-ranging experience," said Walberg. "He was also respected as a man of consistent principles and successful practices.... Keith Brown's training, experience and common-sense wisdom allowed him to focus people's attention on agriculture in ways that showcased the richness of nature and its resources, and the dignity of hard work."

Pictured right, MFB President, Wayne Wood, presents the Distinguished Service to Agriculture, posthumously, to the family of Keith Brown.



Smith concurred. "I suspect Keith was effective because he was willing to spend time researching the issues and used common sense and humility presenting ideas to others," he said. "But what is not well known is he got many farmers' good ideas into legislation." Brown's humility and farm-bred common sense, even when working on Capitol Hill, was not lost on his peers back home.

"While serving under the Congressmen, he was very accessible," wrote one of the many individuals nominating Brown for the DSA Award. "He regularly updated us at our (county Farm Bureau) board meetings regarding legislative issues and the farm bill, and asked for our input." Brown has an extensive resume of civic service and agricultural organization involvement and

leadership at the local and state levels, including with the Hillsdale County Farm Bureau, Hillsdale County Fair Board, Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation, and Michigan Centennial Farm Association. He also was a founding member of Hillsdale Hay, Inc. In addition, he served on the Jonesville School Board and served many years as Moscow Township supervisor.

Brown's formal honors are too numerous to list, but include the 1981 MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Distinguished Service Award, and the Republican of the Year Award from the Hillsdale County Republican Party in 2008.

MFB is the state's largest general farm organization, representing more than 47,000 farm families. The MFB 90th Annual Meeting runs Dec. 1-4 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and

Editor's note: Visit <http://www.michfb.com/annual> for photos from the awards ceremony. For more information after Dec. 4, contact Media Support Services Department Manager Jill Corrin at (800) 292-2680, ext. 6585.

New young farmer representative

MFB's Young Farmer Committee representing Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 selected Joe Ott of Sand Creek as committee chairman. In this position he will serve a one-year term as the young farmer representative on the MFB board. Ott, 32, and his wife Allison custom feed cattle and grow corn, soybeans and wheat in Lenawee County.

In other election news, MFB members re-elected the following individuals to two-year terms.

- Brigette Leach, of Climax, was re-elected District 1 Director representing members in Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties. Leach and her family operate Avalon Farms, which offers a diverse mix of traditional field crops, vegetables grown in a hydroponic greenhouse, plus a "Share of the Farm" direct marketing

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program for locally grown food.

- Charles Mulholland, of Coral, was re-elected District 7 Director representing members in Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana and Osceola counties. Mulholland is a hay and beef farmer.
- Josh Wunsch, of Traverse City, was re-elected District 9 Director representing members in Benzie, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee and Wexford counties. Wunsch is an apple and cherry grower.
- Lastly, Merisa Campbell of Johannesburg will continue as chairperson of the MFB Promotion and Education Committee, and serve another one-year term as promotion and education representative on the board. She and her husband Linc raise beef cattle and operate a commercial hay business with Linc's brother Larry. They also own and operate a trucking business.

Editor's Note: Photos and biographies of individual members of the MFB Board of Directors are available online at www.michfb.com/about/bios.

Local farmers take active role in developing MFB policy

Contact: Jeremy C. Nagel, (800) 292-2680, ext. 6584

LANSING, Dec. 10, 2009 - Delegates from Michigan's 67 county-level Farm Bureaus represented their local agriculture industries at Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) 90th Annual Meeting, where they spent three days last week approving policies defining MFB's 2010 agenda.

Policy development sessions were at the core of the annual meeting, Dec. 1-4 in Grand Rapids. Delegates voted on more than 147 resolutions concerning state, national and organizational issues. These were consolidated by MFB's Policy Development Committee from nearly 900 resolutions adopted by county Farm Bureaus.

Acting on the findings of a special task force appointed by the MFB Board of Directors, delegates called for streamlining state government, improved policing of abused social services, and incorporating fingerprint identification into drivers' licenses and state ID cards. The policy

also recommends revising sentencing guidelines for non-violent crimes to shrink the corrections budget, clarifying state regulations impacting farms, and extending legislative term limits."

Other recommendations included foregoing the 2010 constitutional convention, and consideration of a part-time legislature. Delegates also approved policy supporting Michigan's commission system of government to keep oversight authority-specifically with respect to the state agriculture department-in commissioners' hands rather than in the executive branch.

Responding to heightened scrutiny of animal care practices, delegates called for creating a state advisory board to oversee animal care guidelines and regulations. The same policy urges livestock farmers to comply with existing Right to Farm laws and Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices, implement animal care guidelines for farm employees, and educate authorities and local humane societies about livestock care and production practices.

Seeking to maintain its positive perception in the eyes of a general public increasingly detached from agriculture, Farm Bureau members agreed upon a national-level resolution urging improved consumer education programming: "We encourage all Farm Bureau members to take an active role in educating their neighbors and consumers in an effort to spread the general information on their food supply; ... (and) we support an aggressive, comprehensive program presenting the facts of modern agriculture production to the general public, food industry and school children."

In addition to policy development, Farm Bureau members attended educational workshops about public relations, communications and how to better inform the non-farming public about agriculture. The meeting also featured several award presentations as well as agricultural promotion and education activities. Based in Lansing, MFB is the state's largest general farm organization, representing more than 47,000 farm families across the state.

Editor's Note: Visit www.michfb.com/annual for photographs of each county delegation and additional information about the meeting.

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AFBF, Ag Library create information clearinghouse for beginning farmers

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Library to create the National Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.

The new information-sharing program will help those who have decided to pursue a career in agriculture and will help support Farm Bureau's commitment to rural development. The clearinghouse is a component of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, a competitive grant initiative that is part of the 2008 farm bill. The clearinghouse will be supported by a five-year, \$1.5 million grant from USDA. "

This is a great opportunity for Farm Bureau to provide information to beginning farmers on how to start and stay in farming and ranching," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "We are providing in-kind support to the National Ag Library with outreach, publicity, educational seminars and our annual conference where other project grants will be highlighted."

The clearinghouse will use the grant money to develop a Web site and databases to serve beginning farmers and ranchers, with particular focus on those categorized as underserved. The clearinghouse will provide education, training, outreach and mentoring materials to beginning farmers and ranchers across the United States.

AFBF will serve as a conduit for distribution of the information. "Our goal at Farm Bureau is to help farmers be successful and to move agriculture forward," said Dan Durham, coordinator of AFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

"The projects included in the clearinghouse are fascinating and diverse: an agricultural entrepreneurial program in Missouri, legal and technical support for beginning and immigrant farmers in Minnesota, effective business practices to Navajo farmers in Arizona, business planning and sustainable practices for women in the

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Northeast, and absentee forest landowner training in Tennessee."

Farm Bureau will host a beginning farmer and rancher conference annually that will be held in conjunction with the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Conference, beginning in Orlando, Fla., in February 2011.

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

Please join us in congratulating the Full of Fun Farmers for their 44 years as a Community Action Group. They have been together since 1965. Good luck and thank you!

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 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.