



THE Loop

N E W S L E T T E R

Leelanau Co. couple appointed to AFBF Young Farmer Committee:

Ben & Kelsey LaCross of Cedar to serve two-year term on national committee

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

LANSING, Dec. 30, 2009 - Ben and Kelsey LaCross of Cedar have been appointed to serve on the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Young Farmer and Rancher Committee (YF&R), which aims to build a more effective Farm Bureau through leadership development, education, problem solving and networking among Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35.

The YF&R Committee is appointed by the AFBF president, and is made up of 16 positions representing all four regions of the United States. An individual or a couple can hold each committee position. Ben and Kelsey LaCross are one of eight new appointments. They will serve a two-year term on the committee from 2010-2012.

The committee is responsible for YF&R programming, including the operation of YF&R contests during AFBF's annual meeting, and planning and implementation of the YF&R Leadership Conference held in February. Every other year, committee members also participate in a "Day on the Hill" event in Washington, D.C., where they visit with each of their members of Congress, helping to inform them about the issues facing

Continued on page 2

The Winter edition of the FB Update DVD, which is enclosed with this mailing, is a complete wrap-up of the 2009 Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. It features all of the award winners, along with news on policy set forth for the organization for 2010.

Also included are the videos for the four Young Farmers and the Ag Educator Award winners.

Membership Standings

	2010	JANUARY 25, 2010	
GOAL	189,958	80,509	42.38%
TARGET	47,736	22,529	47.19%

A look ahead....

February 2010

11 Winter Commodity Conf - Mt. Pleasant
 17 Lansing Legislative Seminar
 20 - 22 AFBF YF&R Leadership Conf, Tulsa, OK
 26 - 28 MFB YF Leaders Conf, Grand Rapids

Statewide Membership Day Feb 2, 2010

March 2010

10 - 11 Washington Legislative Seminar
 17 Ag Day at the Capitol

May 2010

19 - 20 County Staff Conference, Lansing

REMINDERS

- **"FB Update" DVDs are mailed out quarterly. Your next version will be in May 2010.**
- **All CAG Set-up Sheets were due to County Administrative Managers by Dec 1, 2009.**
- **CAG's have online resources available. The Loop, Discussion Topics, Discussion Response Form, Report Form, and Questions 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**



7373 West Saginaw Hwy. • Lansing, MI 48917
 Phone (517) 323-7000 • Fax (517) 323-6604

www.michfb.com

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



Continued from front page

agriculture in America.

"I am always impressed with the quality of people who are nominated for these positions and this year is no exception," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "It is important to ensure that the future of agriculture is in good hands, and I am confident that these individuals will become great leaders as they have already given so much back to their communities."



Ben LaCross is a past chairman of the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Young Farmer Committee and a past Young Farmer Representative on the MFB Board of Directors. He also was one of three young farmers to serve on MFB's 2007 Policy Development Committee, and among 20 MFB members selected to participate in MFB's 2006 international agricultural study tour to Europe to learn how farm policies of the European Union compare to those of the United States.

The second-generation farmer grows tart cherries, sweet cherries and plums on 600 acres primarily in Leelanau County. The harvested crop is processed into food products at Suttons Bay-based Leelanau Fruit Company, of which LaCross' family owns. In addition to cherries and plums, Leelanau Fruit Company processes strawberries and peaches. He and Kelsey also operate a 40-acre apple orchard.

Kelsey works on the farm in the summer, weighing and grading local growers' fruit to be shipped to processors, but spends the majority of the year working as a Spanish and English teacher at Leland Public Schools.

The couple is also active in their local Farm Bureau, the Northwest Farm Bureau which represents farmers in Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties. Ben has served on the Northwest Farm Bureau's Membership and Policy Development Committees, and Kelsey currently is chairperson of the Promotion and Education Committee.

Their service to agriculture is not limited to Farm Bureau. Ben is vice president of the Leelanau Horticulture Society and a board member of the Michigan Association of Cherry Producers. Kelsey is a member of the National Cherry Festival Queen's Committee.

Ben earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Central Michigan University. Kelsey holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Hillsdale College and a master's degree in educational technology from Michigan State University. The couple has two children; a son Keaton, 2 ½, and a 2-month-old daughter Lauren.

Editor's Note: A photo of Ben and Kelsey LaCross, courtesy of Emily DeFour Photography, is available online at http://www.michfb.com/files/2009/12-31_Ben_and_Kelsey_LaCross_credit_Emily_DeFour_Photography.jpg. Please credit the photo to Emily DeFour Photography.

Farm Bureau Quick Facts: Most memorable food stories of '09

The seventh annual year-end survey of American adults commissioned by Hunter Public Relations, a leading public relations firm specializing in the food and beverage industry, revealed the following as the most memorable food-related stories of 2009.

1. Food safety concerns
2. Newly poor swell lines at food banks
3. Consumers cut food spending sharply
4. Pork industry fights concerns over H1N1
5. Two million people enjoy free breakfast at Denny's
6. Proposed soda tax
7. Michelle Obama's agenda, including healthful eating
8. Julia Child movie: "Julie and Julia"
9. President Barack Obama orders a hamburger
10. Gourmet Magazine goes out of print

Source: As reported in Foodie News by the American Farm Bureau Federation, <http://foodienews.posterous.com/>

MFB earns national Awards for Excellence

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

The Michigan Farm Bureau has been recognized by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) for outstanding achievements and programs over the past year. On January 10, 2010 at AFBF's 91st Convention and Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, 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.

Editor's Note: High resolution images are available to view or download at <http://www.michfb.com/newsroom/photos/43>

Muskegon County young farmer advances to 'Sweet 16' in Discussion Meet

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

Ravenna High School agriscience teacher and FFA adviser Melanie Block successfully advanced to the semi-final round of the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Young Farmer Discussion Meet, Jan. 10 in Seattle, Washington.



Block, of Conklin, was one of 16 contestants selected to participate in the third round of competition after completing two initial rounds. The Discussion Meet challenges Farm Bureau members, ages 18 to 35, to discuss current agricultural issues. Contestants are evaluated on their timed analysis of each topic, delivery and cooperative attitude.

Block, 32, won Michigan Farm Bureau's state-level Discussion Meet last month, and that win qualified her to compete in the national contest. The national Discussion Meet was among young farmer activities held as part of the AFBF 91st Convention and Annual Meeting.

Editor's Note: High resolution images are available to view or download at <http://www.michfb.com/newsroom/photos/43>

Barry, Cass Co. Farm Bureau members swap ideas with national audience

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

Michigan Farm Bureau members were exhibitors in the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) prestigious idea swap at the AFBF 91st Convention and Annual Meeting, Jan. 10-13, in Seattle, Washington.

Barry County farmer George Hubka of Dowling was one of 15 Farm Bureau members selected from across the country to participate in the Farmer Idea Exchange program, which encourages members to share ideas that help farmers cut costs, become more efficient, and improve the environment and their net income. Hubka shared information on a device he developed called the Grain Saver Deflector Guard, which helps improve the process of unloading grain.

Representatives from the Cass County Farm Bureau participated in the County Activities of Excellence program, which recognizes innovative, action-oriented programs developed by county Farm Bureaus in the areas of agricultural education and promotion, member services, public relations, leadership development and policy implantation.



Sarah and Alan Peterson share information on the Cass County Farm Bureau's "Farmers CARE" campaign with a woman from Utah at the 2010 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington.

The Cass County Farm Bureau was among 15 county Farm Bureaus selected for the program, and was recognized for its "Cass County Farmers CARE" campaign, which put a local face on agriculture and communicated to the general public how area farmers care for their animals, the environment and their community.

More information about the programs and exhibitors is available at <http://www.michiganfarmbureau.com/press/agrinotes.php?date=20100107#5>.

Editor's Note: High resolution images are available to view or download at <http://www.michfb.com/newsroom/photos/43>



AFBF supports halt to EPA regulation of greenhouse gases

Contact: Ryan Findlay, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2025 or Carrie Vollmer-Sanders, ext. 2026

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) announced today that she would co-sponsor a resolution to disapprove the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) effort to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. Lincoln's support builds key momentum for an issue that is of vital importance to America's farmers. American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Bob Stallman said Lincoln's support for the resolution, introduced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), could not have come at a better time and reflects true bipartisan concern. "Sen. Lincoln recognizes the very real apprehension that Americans today harbor about the overreach of government regulations," Stallman said.

"America's farmers and ranchers believe incentives and initiatives that focus on clean energy would be much more effective than once again trotting out the heavy hand of government regulation. We fully support Sens. Lincoln and Murkowski in their efforts to oppose EPA's greenhouse gas regulations." According to Stallman, the EPA's proposal to regulate greenhouse gases is all about propping up seriously flawed cap-and-trade climate legislation being considered in Congress. "Cap-and-trade climate bills would cut deeply into America's ability to produce food and grow crops," Stallman said.

"Trying to breathe life into bad cap-and-trade legislation through an all-stick-and-no-carrot regulatory scheme is just bad public policy. In this case, there is no lesser of those two evils. "While the benefits of those regulations are very much in question, the costs are crystal clear-fewer American jobs and higher costs for all Americans. Gearing up our nation's clean energy capability and encouraging innovation that is fueled by positive government policy will pay dividends and offer American agriculture a key role in a lasting solution."

Please
note that the Community
Action Fun Page has been discontinued,
effective with this issue of the Loop. The archive
for past copies, back to 2006, is available on the
MFB website, under the Fun Page Tab.

New video chronicling MFB's annual meeting is on YouTube

The winter 2010 edition of "FB Update," Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) 20-minute quarterly video newsletter, is available for viewing on MFB's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/MichiganFarmBureau.

Divided into two parts, this edition chronicles the MFB 90th Annual Meeting, held Dec. 1-4, 2009, in Grand Rapids:

Part 1 profiles the winners of the many MFB awards handed out over the four-day meeting and features scenes from the award ceremonies.

Part 2 summarizes the young farmer activities and includes footage from MFB President Wayne H. Wood's annual address in which he emphasizes the importance of agricultural involvement in determining Michigan's next slate of legislative leaders and calls for members to demand accountability from individuals elected to office. The video also documents the activity of voting delegates at the policy sessions and highlights some of the adopted policies.

Individuals with story ideas are encouraged to contact "FB Update" producer Steve Paradiso at (800) 292-2680, ext. 3208, or via e-mail at sparadis@michfb.com.

Michigan Farm Bureau President Wayne H. Wood signals that the MFB delegation would like to discuss a proposed amendment to dairy policy at the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) 91st Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington.



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.