



THE Loop

MARCH 2010

NEWSLETTER

Barry Co. Farm Bureau earns Excellence in Grassroots Lobbying Award

Contact: Sarah Black, (800) 292-2680, ext. 2040

LANSING, Feb. 18, 2010 - The Barry County Farm Bureau is the second-ever recipient of the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Excellence in Grassroots Lobbying Award.

Introduced last year, the award recognizes outstanding grassroots lobbying efforts of a county Farm Bureau Public Policy Committee.



Representatives from the Barry County Farm Bureau accepted the award Feb. 17 at MFB's Lansing Legislative Seminar in Lansing. In recognition of the honor, the Barry County Public Policy Committee received a traveling plaque and a \$250 gift certificate for Farm Bureau apparel.

County Farm Bureau Public Policy Committees are charged with helping to implement Farm Bureau member-developed policy at the local, state, and national levels. In selecting the award winner, county Farm Bureaus were judged on, among other things, their efforts to educate legislators on MFB policies, their action on priority issues, and their participation in MFB's state and national lobbying seminars.

The Barry County Farm Bureau Public Policy Committee's commitment to providing members with multiple occasions to interact with legislators and discuss issues important to agriculture makes the county a worthy award recipient, said MFB President Wayne H. Wood.

Continued on page 2

Membership Standings

	2010	FEBRUARY 19, 2010	
GOAL	189,958	97,599	50.41%
TARGET	47,736	27,558	57.73%

A look ahead....

March 2010

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

April 2010

- 30 Deadline to qualify for Chairman's Trip

May 2010

- 19 - 20 County Staff Conference, Lansing

June 2010

- 18 - 20 Membership Chairman's Trip, Detroit
- 28 - 1 Young People's Citizenship Seminar, Northwood University, Midland

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 Topic questions, Set-up Sheet, Discussion Response Form and Report Form 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**

Activities have included an appropriately named “Earful with Ehlers” event in which the committee hosted U.S. Congressman Vern Ehlers (R-Grand Rapids), giving more than 20 Farm Bureau members the opportunity to provide feedback on national issues affecting local farmers. A “legislative update” meeting with state Sen. Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck) and Rep. Brian Calley (R-Portland) also attracted more than 20 members and explored a variety of topics including renewable energy, property taxes, high school graduation requirements, and state park funding.

Calley, at the invitation of the Public Policy Committee, again was a special guest at the Barry County Farm Bureau annual meeting where he provided more than 40 attendees an “insider’s view” on the legislative process and current issues under the Capitol dome. Barry County’s political outreach extends beyond traditional legislative walls. Wood cited the county Farm Bureau’s involvement in a legislative breakfast sponsored by the Barry County Chamber of Commerce as an example of the organization’s successful community-based advocacy. “At the event, members were able to discuss many issues important to farmers and rural Michigan.

Communicating Farm Bureau’s position on issues at this event provided other businessmen a different perspective on issues farmers deal with on an everyday basis,” said Wood. But perhaps most impressive, and telling, are the glowing endorsements from the legislators themselves, said Wood. Calley, in recommending Barry County for the award, said “Barry County Farm Bureau members have kept close watch on every bill that will impact agricultural communities, and lend me and my office their thoughts...Their depth of knowledge accompanied with a statesmanship attitude make them a perfect candidate for the Excellence in Grassroots Lobbying Award.”

Ehlers echoed similar sentiments stating, “I have found that I can depend on the Barry County Farm Bureau to furnish information about agricultural issues from both a state and local perspective, and I appreciate the information and legislative analysis they so willingly provide.” Members of the Barry County Farm Bureau Public Policy Committee are:

George Hubka - Dowling, Chairman
 David Chase - Hastings, Myron Kokx - Hickory Corners, Rick Lawrence - Hickory Corners, John Lenz - Hastings, Daniel Wenger - Middleville. MFB is the state’s largest general farm organization, representing more than 47,000 farm families from across the state.

Farm Bureau virtual farm game gets support from DuPont

*Contact: Deb Schmucker, (800) 292-2680, ext. 3213
 Pioneer Hi-Bred, a DuPont business, has pledged \$500,000 to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture to further build agricultural awareness and understanding through the foundation’s My American Farm virtual education program. The My American Farm project at www.myamericanfarm.org teaches agricultural literacy to consumers and the public through an interactive computer game. Players learn where food comes from in addition to learning how products get from the farm to their dinner plate. The Web site also is a destination for children to be entertained by playing games while learning math, social studies, language arts and science in the context of agriculture and food production.*

Farm Bureau Quick Facts: Top “Food People” of the decade (2000 - 2010)

The Food Channel editorial staff has compiled a look back at the last decade in food, highlighting some of the “top food people of the decade” and local farmers make the list! Here are some of their selections.

Food bloggers

Julia Child/Julie Powell

Celebrity Chefs including: *Rachael Ray; Paula Deen; Bobby Flay; Guy Fieri; Emeril Lagasse and Gordon Ramsey*

The local farmer

The home cook

The local restaurant chef
 Martha Stewart

Source: www.foodchannel.com

Michigan eggs to feed Haiti quake victims

As part of the national "Good Egg Project," eight Michigan egg farmers are donating 576,000 eggs and shipping them to Haiti to help feed victims of the January earthquake.

The farmers gathered at Herbruck's Poultry Ranch in Saranac on Feb. 18 to prepare the eggs for their journey. At Herbruck's, the eggs were cracked and the liquid, totaling about 48,000 pounds, was chilled to around 35 degrees. A semi-trailer is transporting the eggs to Iowa, where the liquid eggs will be dried and flown to Haiti.

"Michigan family egg farmers like to say we feed the world -- now we're helping feed those who need a helping hand the most," said Cal Schipper, president of the Michigan Allied Poultry Industries Inc.

The farms banding together in the effort are:

(located near Holland)

Old Pike Farm
DeWeerd Poultry Farm
Schipper Poultry Farm
Zoet Poultry

(located near Pigeon Herbruck's Poultry Ranch & Herbruck's Poultry Ranch - close to Saranac)

Konos Inc.

(located near Hudsonville)

Sunrise Acres Egg Farm

Transportation of the egg powder to Haiti is being organized by Feed the Children. The Michigan egg farmers and the drier in Iowa are donating all costs, estimated at \$100,000, as part of the Good Egg Project, America's egg farmers' effort to fight hunger.

In total, America's egg farmers will be donating more than 275,000 dozen shell eggs (more than 3 million eggs valued at more than \$275,000) to Feed the Children's Haitian relief efforts.

For more information, call (517) 333-1606.



Scenes from the 2010 Lansing Legislative Seminar

On Feb. 17, about 400 farmers from across the state gathered in Lansing for Michigan Farm Bureau's (MFB) 2010 Lansing Legislative Seminar. The annual event provides an opportunity for MFB members to meet with their legislators face-to-face and discuss member-developed Farm Bureau policy and issues affecting their farms and Michigan's \$71.3 billion agriculture industry.

This year's seminar primarily focused on MFB policy concerning government streamlining and reforms to state spending.

Pictured: MFB President Wayne H. Wood, right, bends the ear of House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.), a likely Democratic candidate for the 2010 gubernatorial election.



Another gubernatorial hopeful, U.S. Congressman Peter Hoekstra (R-Holland), also attended the legislative reception.



Hoekstra, pictured left, chats with Oceana County Farm Bureau members David Rabe, center, and Phil Carter, right.

Dozens of other legislators had intimate conversations with their constituents, including Sen. Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood).

Pictured below, (left - right), he speaks with Kent County Farm Bureau member Renee McCauley and Ionia County Farm Bureau member Dan Mauer.





Michigan produce farm featured on 'America's Heartland' TV show

Ruhlig Farms of Carleton in Monroe County was featured in the final episode of season 5 of "America's Heartland," a program airing on Public Television and RFD TV. The segment can be viewed online at http://www.americasheartland.org/episodes/episode_522/a_family_affair.htm.

Titled "A Family Affair," the segment tells the story of fourth-generation farmer Dave Ruhlig and the involvement of his wife, sons, and daughters in operating their successful produce business. The story also sheds light on how the family farm copes with growing seasons and perishable products, as well as their strong emphasis on meeting consumer demands and connecting with the non-farming public.

"America's Heartland" is the only nationally broadcast program of its kind connecting consumers to America's agricultural communities and the values of America's farm and ranch families. It gives urban viewers up-close and personal insights into the lives of America's farm and ranch families who provide food, feed, fuel and fiber for the nation and world.



The program is produced by KVIE Television in Sacramento, Calif. The American Farm Bureau Federation and the Monsanto Co. have been sponsors of the show since its inception.

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

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

Michigan farm numbers remain steady from 2008-09

The estimated number of farms in Michigan in 2009 was 54,800, down slightly from 55,000 in 2008, reports the Michigan Field office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

- Michigan land in farms was estimated to be 10 million acres in 2009, unchanged from the previous year.
- The average size farm in Michigan in 2009 was 182 acres, also unchanged from 2008.
- The number of farms in the United States in 2009 was estimated at 2.2 million, virtually unchanged from 2008.
- Total land in farms, at 919.8 million acres, decreased 110,000 acres from 2008. Nationally, the average farm size was 418 acres in 2009, unchanged from the previous year.


For survey purposes, a farm is defined as any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold during the year. The \$1,000 threshold can be met by any combination of sales and government payments. Land in farms includes: crop and livestock acreage, wasteland, woodland, pasture, land in summer fallow, idle cropland, land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, and other set-aside or commodity acreage programs.

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

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.

 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.

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