

Winter Maintenance Practices for Spring Start-up Success

Here are a few tips to keep your family safe and help your spring farming get off to a great start. Based on a list of some common insurance claims experienced by Farm Bureau members, these are just a reminder of some things that might be easily overlooked.

Check machinery for nesting raccoons and birds in the fan or radiator area of the equipment. Tractors, trucks, combines and other equipment can suffer severe damage when started up with debris in these areas, and may cause a lengthy delay in getting the spring farming under way.

Inspect glass and doors in cabs, and check for worn or rusted hinges and cracked or missing seals. These can lead to windows and doors breaking and falling out or off. Leaning against a weak window or door can lead to a dangerous, even tragic accident.

Keep tool shed and barn doors shut and latched when storms are approaching or the doors are not in use. The wind will generally damage the doors and surrounding structure, and a door can actually become an airborne missile, damage other buildings and equipment.

Membership Drive Planning Under Way

The Genesee Farm Bureau Membership Committee will launch this year's campaign with a kickoff party at 6 p.m. Feb. 3 at Galaxy Lanes in Grand Blanc. The kickoff is where membership workers set their goals, lay their plans, and get motivated before braving the cold with a stack of membership application forms.

The drive will continue for a few weeks before wrapping up with the annual Vegas Night victory party to recognize membership writers. This year's victory celebration will include an exciting gaming program from Vegas Knights, as well as terrific prizes for the players. Membership writers are entered to win some great prizes, including, this year, an Amazon Kindle, tickets to Michigan Adventure, and tickets to Les Miserables. Other incentives are

offered as well to reward all who recruit new members.

Membership committee members are responsible for organizing the drive, recruiting local captains, providing Farm Bureau information to membership volunteers, and following up with new members.

To participate in the membership drive, contact committee co-chairs Nancy Szikszay or Tracy Jelinek through the Farm Bureau office, 810-732-3770.

Maintaining and increasing membership is vital to the survival of any grassroots organization, especially your county Farm Bureau. Be a part of our success—lend a hand and get involved!

What's Coming Up for P&E

Genesee County's Promotion and Education Committee has a lot happening in the upcoming months. To get involved in your Farm Bureau's outreach activities, contact the Farm Bureau office or get in touch using our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gencofb/>.

P&E chair Nancy Birchmeier says the group is always on the lookout for volunteers to join the committee, help with events or to go into classrooms as guest speakers or presenters.

The group's 50/50 raffle at the upcoming Vegas Night will benefit the Food Bank of



Eastern Michigan. It's one of the many ways members can get involved in supporting a great community organization. Last year's raffle raised around \$350 for the Food Bank, and of course an equal amount for one lucky winner!

This year's third-grade poster contest, themed "Animals Life on the Farm," ends Feb. 3. The winning students receive a gift certificate to Barnes and Noble and then also have their poster displayed at the fair, and have

a mug created from the picture to be displayed on the Channel 12 mug shot for Ag Week in March. Students entered the contest with the help of their classroom teachers. Winners will be announced in March.

Mark Your Calendar!!!

- Feb. 3 — Membership kickoff and family bowling night
- Feb. 15 — Lansing Legislative Seminar, Lansing
- Feb. 17-20 — AFBF Young Farmer Leadership Conference, Grand Rapids
- Feb. 20 — Young Farmer Meeting
- March 1-2 — Voice of Ag Conference, Lansing
- March 4-10 — Ag Week
- March 14 — Ag Day at the Capital
- March 17 — Vegas Night
- March 21-23 — Washington Legislative Seminar

For more information on any of these events please contact the county office: 810-732-3770.

Genesee Good Food

Welcome to our first recipe corner! This is the place to share our great cooking ideas, and our favorite recipes. I'm going to kick off the series with one of my own, and invite the rest of you to send me your recipes or cooking tips. To submit something for the next issue, please send it to me at hortmom@comcast.net or by mail to Genesee County Farm Bureau 6020 W. Pierson Rd. Flushing MI 48433. Just include "Good Food" in the subject line or on your envelope. Bon appétit!

Christina's Pasta Sausage Skillet

This one is good to make fresh, but it's written to use up leftovers.

- 3 cups cooked pasta shapes
- 4-6 cooked breakfast sausage patties
- 2 cups cooked sweet corn, removed from ear
- 1 Vidalia onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 large eight-ball or small straight zucchini, cut into approx ½" to 1" chunks
- 10-15 two-bite tomatoes, cut approx ½" to 1" pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter

In a large frying pan, sauté zucchini and onion together until onion is translucent. Add remaining ingredients in the same pan, or in a saucepan. Chop up the sausage if you'd like, or leave them whole. Cook over medium heat until all is warmed through. Serves 6.

Genesee county newsletter

County 25

A Publication of the Genesee County Farm Bureau

January 30, 2012

Young Farmer Group Seeking 18-35-year-olds

The Genesee County Farm Bureau Young Farmer Group has been an important part of our organization for decades, providing learning opportunities, community outreach and fellowship opportunities for area agricultural producers. This group has long been looked at as the future leaders of our organization and continues to strive toward continued excellence and relevance within our community and organization.

The Young Farmer Group will host its first meeting of 2012 on Feb. 20 at the county office, 6020 W. Pierson Road in Flushing. We are asking for any interested members of Young Farmer age—18 to 35 years old—to join our group as we plan for the year ahead.

“This is a great opportunity for those that have wanted to get involved to jump in and join us,” said Young Farmer Chair Laura Slieff. “If you know of any person between the ages of 18-35 who might want to become involved but isn’t sure how, this meeting will be a great starting point.”

For more information, contact the county office at 810-732-3770 or committee chair Laura Slieff at 810-625-1797.

Ag Week 2012

National Agriculture Week, March 4-10, will be a time of celebration across the state of Michigan. County Farm Bureaus will reach out to farm and non-farm consumers alike to remind them that agriculture provides safe, affordable and abundant food.

They want them to remember Michigan farmers CARE about their land, animals, the environment and them!

Watch for local happenings on the Genesee County Farm Bureau Facebook page and website.



Representing Genesee County Farm Bureau at MFB's 2011 Annual Meeting were (front row, from left) Willo Birchmeier, Jo Parker, Heidi Birchmeier, Margaret Rogers; (back) Roy Rhoads, Ronald Parker, Ray Birchmeier, Ted Rogers and Donald Hill.

Local Delegates Help Plot MFB's 2012 Policy

A 16-member delegate team traveled to Grand Rapids to represent Genesee County at Michigan Farm Bureau's 92nd Annual Meeting, Nov. 29 through Dec. 2. The group consisted of Heidi and Ray Birchmeier, Willo Birchmeier, Don Hill, Jane and Wayne Morgan, JoAnn and Ron Parker, Kathleen and delegate chair Roy Rhoads, Margaret and Ted Rogers, Nancy Szikszay and Janice Stiles.

Delegates reviewed and voted on policy recommendations submitted by county Farm Bureaus statewide. In addition to policy-setting, delegates had the opportunity to attend several educational sessions and award presentations.

They were also on hand to congratulate Alan Garner as he was re-elected as District 5 MFB Board Director.

County FB members help fight hunger

Genesee County Farm Bureau members demonstrated their generosity and commitment to fulfilling agriculture's mission by contributing to the new Harvest for All program. Coordinated by the MFB Young Farmer and Promotion and Education committees, in conjunction with the Food Bank Council of Michigan, Harvest for All aims to fight hunger statewide.

Harvest for All encourages Farm Bureau members to fight hunger in their local communities in one of four ways: donate non-

perishable food products, volunteer time at a local food bank or agency, donate money, or donate surplus agricultural commodities.

The next volunteer opportunity will be 9 a.m. to noon on March 24 at the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. It's a great way to get to know fellow members, and to get a behind-the-scenes look at the Food Bank, an organization that delivers food to programs and recipients in 22 counties.