

County FB recognized for outstanding programs

The Osceola County Farm Bureau and its members were honored for their outstanding efforts this year at the 2011 President's Banquet at the MFB Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids.

Thanks to the many hours of volunteer time and effort, Osceola County received a Gold Star Award for its Promotion and Education efforts. Accepting the award for Osceola County was Mark Eisenga, vice president of the Osceola County Farm Bureau.

Star Awards recognize county Farm Bureaus for their hard work and creativity in promoting agriculture at the county level. Applications are submitted by each county committee and judged by Michigan Farm Bureau staff.

Farm Bureau staff and insurance agents writing five or more regular members are recognized with the Key Club Award. This year Dan Lee, Farm Bureau Insurance agent in Reed City, brought home Key Club honors.



2012 Membership Drive Planning Under Way

Heading up the 2012 Membership Campaign is Eric McLachlan of Evert.

"I attended the membership training meeting held at the state annual meeting Nov. 29. I see I have quite a job ahead of me and will be asking for help with the campaign," said McLachlan. "I had an opportunity to sit in on some of the resolutions presented Nov. 30 and seen first-hand the importance of our grass-roots organization."

The Osceola County Farm Bureau Membership Committee will launch this year's campaign with a kickoff in February or March of 2012. At the kickoff event membership workers will 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 a victory party to recognize membership writers.

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 Debbie Szot at the county office, 796-1119.

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!

Eisenga, Schmidt New to County FB Board

Elected at the October county annual meeting, Highland Township dairy farmer Richard Eisenga is one of the new members of the Osceola County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Richard and his wife Beth have been married for 33 years and have three daughters. Dick farms with his brother Don Eisenga and Don's son Kevin. They farm approximately 800 acres, raising hay and corn. Dick represents District 2 (Hartwick, Highland, Marion and Middle Branch townships).

Also elected to the board is Janet Schmidt of Hersey, who represents District 4 (Cedar, Hersey, Lincoln and Richmond townships). Janet and her husband Art, along with son Mike, have a beef cow-calf operation in Richmond Township. They farm 150 acres, raising hay and corn. Janet retired from Ferris State University last March and wanted to serve on the county Farm Bureau board. The Schmidts have been Farm Bureau members since 1972.

Discounts for Members

Show your Osceola County Farm Bureau membership card at the following businesses for special discounts, and be sure to thank them for participating in our member benefits program:

- Dean's Greens, Reed City — 832-5438
- Tessman Acres, Evert — 231-944-8803
- Smith Lumber Company, Evert — 734-5513
- Complete Cleaning and Restoration, Evert — 231-250-5049
- Hair of the Dog, Marion — 743-2482
- LeRoy Hardware, LeRoy — 768-4483
- Mr. Pibs Restaurant, LeRoy — 768-5288
- Pompeii's, Reed City — 832-3216
- The Rose Golf Course, LeRoy — 768-5060
- Vic's Foodland, Reed City — 832-5001
- Reed City Quick Lube, Reed City — 832-1997

Steinhaus Elected County FB President

Doug Steinhaus was elected president of the Osceola County Farm Bureau at the Oct. 10 reorganizational meeting.

Doug is a dairy farmer in Rose Lake Township. He farms 750 acres, raising corn and alfalfa. Doug and his wife Marlene have three children; their oldest son will be getting married in April. He is also involved with the Michigan Corn Growers Association, Dairy Market Services and is on the Rose Lake Board of Review.

"This will be my last year on the Farm Bureau board and I hope to make a difference in the growth of the organization," Steinhaus said.

Meet the rest of your county board

Vice President Mark Eisenga and his wife Deb live in Highland Township. They have been married 35 years and have three boys, grown and married. Mark works for North Star Cooperative and travels a lot. He also raises cash crops on his 10 acres. Mark is a director-at-large on the board.

Third Member Duane VanPolen and his wife Laurie, with their son Mike and daughters Kristin and Beth, operate a dairy farm with his parents Ken and Anna VanPolen in Highland Township. They are milking 200 cows and farm approximately 700 acres, raising, corn, alfalfa and barley. Duane is also a director-at-large on the board.

Tom Bluhm and his wife Karen live in Richmond Township. They operate a beef cow-calf operation with his brother Jim on their centennial farm. Tom is a director-at-large on the board.

Jerry Stein and his wife Eva have been married for 52 years. They own 160 acres in Osceola Township, which is also a centennial farm. He rents his land to a neighbor to be farmed. Jerry is active on the Evert Free Methodist Church Board, the Michigan Christian Camp Board, the Osceola Township Planning Commission and the Pine View Home Board. Jerry represents District 3 (Evert, Orient, Osceola and Sylvan townships).

Promotion and Education Chair Summer Deline and her husband Lewis live west of Reed City with their three children, raising registered Watusi cattle. Summer just finished student teaching at the Tustin Elementary School and has a bachelor's degree in education. The Deline family just opened the Wood by Deline furniture store northeast of Hersey on US-10.

Young Farmer Chair Eric McLachlan works as a trucking supervisor with his father Jim McLachlan at McLachlan Drilling Company in Evert. They farm approximately 650 acres. This is Eric's first year on the board.

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Legislative Breakfast held in Paris

Approximately 20 farmers from Mecosta, Osceola and Wexford counties attended the fourth legislative breakfast held at the Paris Café on Dec. 5. State Senator Darwin Booher and Representative Phil Potvin were present to give members a legislative update. Dale Jernstadt, president of the Mecosta County Farm Bureau, chaired the meeting. Farmers enjoyed a delicious breakfast buffet while getting a chance to visit with their legislators.

According to Booher, some of the bills being addressed in the senate now are the unemployment bill, workman's compensation, personal property taxes, transportation and roads.

"Gov. Snyder's message to the senate was the new Pure Michigan Talent Connect, a job recruitment program," said Booher. "Gov. Snyder signed into law, starting January 2012, a bill that requires all school board elections to be held in November in the even years."

Phil Potvin was very proud of the bullying law that was just passed. He also talked about public schools, along with charter and vocational schools, and how they are funded. No-fault insurance, personal property tax and county road commissions are issues being discussed in the house.

Special thanks go to Isabella Bank, which sponsored the breakfast.

Our 2012 Legislative Breakfasts will take place March 5, June 4, Sept. 10 and Dec. 3. Please plan to attend at least one of these meetings.

Thanks, Ben

Doug Steinhaus and the board of directors want to thank Ben Eisenga for his years of service to the Osceola County Farm Bureau as president and for serving on many committees.

"We appreciate your commitment to the organization," Steinhaus said.

County Office Hours

Monday — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tuesday & Wednesday — 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Representing Osceola County Farm Bureau at MFB's 2011 Annual Meeting were (from left) Douglas and Marlene Steinhaus, and Eva and Jerry Stein.

Local delegates help plot MFB's 2012 policy

A five-member delegate team traveled to Grand Rapids to represent Osceola County at Michigan Farm Bureau's 92nd Annual Meeting, Nov. 29 through Dec. 2.

The group consisted of Mark Eisenga, Jerry and Eva Stein, and Doug and Marlene Steinhaus. Delegates reviewed and voted on more than 148 policy recommendations submitted by county Farm Bureaus statewide. Mark Bontekoe of Marion served on the MFB State Policy Development Committee. He and members of his committee were on hand when questions were asked about the resolutions being presented.

This was Doug and Marlene Steinhaus' first trip to the state annual meeting.

"I was very impressed with how well the annual meeting was organized, the great location and how the resolution sessions were handled," Doug said. "One thing I learned is that all of the resolutions require money to come from some source, whether it is state or federal."

Mark Eisenga was also a delegate the first couple of days.

"One thing I learned was how important trade and exports are to the state of Michigan," said Eisenga. "It was a great state annual meeting; some resolutions had much more discussion than others."

Jerry and Eva Stein were both delegates.

"One of the resolutions discussed was the proposed New International Trade Crossing (NTIC)," said Jerry. "Many of the delegates were concerned about the funding and cost to

Michigan taxpayers."

MBF members confirmed their support for the proposed New International Trade Crossing between Michigan and Canada, hoping it will allow easier access from different highways and shorter delays with customs inspections.

Other policy highlights at this year's annual regarded feral swine, game farms and hunting preserves. Wildlife management was discussed, supporting "sound biological science" with wildlife management along with competitive license fees to encourage hunting and fishing in Michigan.

Farm Bureau opposes effects to restrict the ability of young workers to be employed in agriculture. MFB members also oppose the U.S. Department of Labor to restrict children from many activities on farms.

Farm Bill negotiations will begin in 2012. MFB members adopted policy that recommends farmers be ineligible for disaster assistance payments if they don't purchase crop insurance. Delegates also approved the national dairy policy opposing any type of supply management program.

Resolutions adopted on state issues will direct MFB action for the 2012 year. Adopted resolutions on national issues were forwarded to the American Farm Bureau Federation for their annual meeting, Jan. 8-11 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In addition to policy setting, delegates had the opportunity to attend several educational sessions and award presentations.