September 2003 NW Michigan Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2003

9/24       Crop Insurance Meeting
           NW Mich Hort Res Station

9/25       Trevor Nichols Field Day

11/7, 11/21, 12/5, 12/19       Positioning Fruit Business for the Future
                               NWMHRS

11/12-13   National Blueberry Conference
           Grand Rapids

12/9-11    Great Lakes Ag Expo
           DeVos Place Convention Center
           near Amway Plaza
           Grand Rapids

2004

1/20-21    NW Michigan Orchard & Vineyard Show
           Grand Traverse Resort

3/1-4      IDFTA Tour/Conference
           Bolzano, South Tyrol, Italy

CROP INSURANCE/FEDERAL PROGRAM UPDATES
By Jim Bardenhagen, Leelanau Co. MSUE

There have been some changes to the crop insurance programs for fruit crops we currently have and some work toward new ones. Many growers need to sign up for the non-insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) as a result of applying to the 2001/2002 Disaster Assistance Program. Some of the new Farm Bill Programs for fruit are getting close to being launched and funded. All these are tools that can help you manage risk on your farming operation.

On September 24, there will be a Crop Insurance/Federal Program Update in two locations and times. Please take the opportunity to attend and find out the latest information in these areas so you know about and meet the November 20 sign-up dates for many of these programs.

Meeting details:
Date:       Wednesday, September 24, 2003
Time/Locations:       1:00 – 3:00pm Acme Township Hall (US-31 & M-72)
           7:00 – 9:00pm NW MI Research Station
Cost:       Free – includes refreshments

Agenda

- Sweet cherry, Apple, and AGR Insurance
  - Shelly Inman - Greenstone FCS Crop Insurance
  - Chris Shellenbarger – Spartan Insurance Co.
• Future Tart Cherry Crop Insurance Update
  o Perry Hedin – Cherry Industry Administrative Board (CIAB)
• NAP, Crop Disaster Assistance & Tree Assistance Program
  o Greg Shy – Farm Service Agency (FSA)
• Farm Bill Programs for Fruit Update
  o Buzz Long – Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
  o Tom Adams – Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
• Upcoming Workshop & Course Opportunities for Fruit Growers
  o Jim Bardenhagen – MSU Extension - Leelanau

POSITIONING YOUR FRUIT BUSINESS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAM
By Jim Bardenhagen, Leelanau MSU Extension Director and Jim Nugent, District Horticulturist, MSUE

Positioning Your Fruit Business for the Future is a management-education program emphasizing strategic planning. This program develops your management skills, gives insights on how family and employees figure into your business goals and shows how the changing agriculture scene locally, nationally and globally will affect your farm. The program teaches participants how to do a financial assessment of their operation, how to define their business mission and set goals to accomplish their mission. Participants will develop long and short term goals, identify alternative strategies and end up with a strategic plan for their farm.

A team of MSU specialists, Extension farm management and horticulture agents will be the resources for the program. The program is sponsored by the MSU Extension fruit and farm management teams.

If interested in this program, please mark Nov. 7, 21; Dec. 5, 19 on your calendars. The program will be all day sessions and will be held at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station. Additional program details will be sent in the next newsletter.

PESTICIDE CERTIFICATION FEES INCREASE

As of October 1, 2003, pesticide certification fees will increase for private applicators from $10 to $50 and for commercial applicators from $50 to $75. The certification remains effective for three years. This is the first fee increase since 1976 when the law requiring certification was passed in Michigan.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Michigan State Horticultural Society and the Michigan Vegetable Council, Inc. announce the availability of scholarships for students who intend to pursue careers in the Midwest fruit or vegetable industry. The target amount per scholarship is $1,000 but can be more or less at the discretion of the selection committee.

Deadline for scholarship application is October 1, 2003. More information is available on the MSHS web page: http://www.mihortsociety.org/ or an application is available at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station.

POCKET SCOUTING GUIDE FOR GRAPES

MSU has recently published "A Pocket Guide for Grape IPM Scouting in the North Central and Eastern U.S." This 112-page guide is available for $13 from area Extension offices or NWMHRS. Two similar guides have been developed in recent years for apples and stone fruits.