

**NW Michigan Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter  
April 2006**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- 4/1           **Water Use Report Deadline**
- 4/11           **Spring Grape IPM Day**  
NWMHRS
- 4/11-12       **Experimental Vineyard Pruning Bee**  
NWMHRS
- 4/12, 4/19,  
4/26, 5/3      **Tractor Safety Classes**  
NWMHRS
- 4/18           **Horned-face Bee Meeting**  
NWMHRS
- 4/22           **Saskatoon Berry Workshop**  
NWMHRS
- 4/25           **Annual Spring IPM Kick-off**  
NWMHRS
- 5/13           **Tractor Safety Test**  
NWMHRS
- 5/5            **Antique/Neglected Apple Pruning Workshop**  
Port Oneida Rural Historic District  
Contact: Kimberly Mann 231/326-5135 ext. 501
- 5/10           **Grand Traverse Co. IPM Updates Begin**
- 5/16           **Benzie & Antrim Co. IPM Updates Begin**
- 5/17           **Leelanau Co. IPM Updates Begin**
- 6/1            **Julian-Stille Value-Added Grant Deadline**
- 6/1            **CIAB Mapping Deadline**
- 6/24-25       **Barn Restoration Workshop**  
Port Oneida Rural Historic District  
Contact: Kimberly Mann 231/326-5135 ext. 501

**SPRING GRAPE IPM DAY REMINDER**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator  
Duke Elsner, Grape and Wine Agent, Grand Traverse County

Don't forget to register for the grape IPM meeting on **April 11, 2006**. Drs. Duke Elsner, Nikki Rothwell, Tom Zabadal, Annemiek Schilder, and Rufus Isaacs will all be on hand to present the latest and greatest in grape IPM. The program will run from 10am to 4pm, and the cost is \$25 at the door, which will include lunch. Recertification and CCA credits have been applied for. Please call the NWMHRS to sign up (231/946-1510).

## **VINEYARD PRUNING BEE at the NWMHRS**

Starting right after the Spring Grape IPM Day, Tom Zabadal will be needing a team of **eager volunteers** to help prune and tie the experimental vines at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station. People are needed on both **April 11 and 12**, so whatever day you could spare us some of your time we would be very grateful. No experience is needed – we will train you on the spot. This is a great opportunity to learn a lot in a short time.

If you are interested, please call Duke at (231) 922-4822 to enlist.

## **TRACTOR SAFETY TRAINING**

Jim Bardenhagen, Leelanau MSU Extension

Included in this newsletter is a registration form for the Tractor Safety Training Program for 2006, which will be held at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station on **Wednesdays, April 12, 19, 26 and May 3** from 6 – 9 pm. The written and driving tests will be held on **Saturday, May 13** from 8am – 3pm. Participants must attend all five sessions. Chris Garthe will be the instructor.

If you plan to hire 14 or 15 year olds to work on your farm this summer, please contact them to register for the Tractor Safety Program. It's very important for our 14 & 15 year olds to sign up for this program if they want the opportunity to work on farms this summer. Please make copies of the form as needed.

Even though this training is not required for sons or daughters of farm families (sole proprietor only) working on your farm, I would still encourage you to use this training program to do comprehensive training for your own 14 & 15 year olds. If there is room in the program, they will try to accommodate training for farm family youth that are under age 14 since many start driving before age 14.

Please note that to be certified, youth must be 14 years of age by June 1, 2006. To register, use the enclosed form. **Registration deadline is Friday, April 7, 2006. Encourage the youth to register early!**

If there are any questions, please feel free to call the Leelanau MSU Extension office at 231-256-9888.

## **SEASONAL FRUIT INFORMATION**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

The **code-a-phone** will be up and running for the 2006 season, and it will be updated every **Tuesday** or more frequently if needed. To access this information, dial 231-947-3063 or 1-877-722-3388 (you will need a touch-tone phone). Press 1 for stone fruit information and 2 for pome fruit information and 5 for grape information. Thanks to the area horticulture societies for supporting this program.

**FruitNet** will also be available for 2006 by email or fax for NW Michigan fruit growers. This weekly information is compiled by area extension educators and sent out through the NWMHRS. Past subscribers will remain on the list, but contact the NWMHRS (231-946-1510) to be added to, or removed from, the subscription list. Thanks again to our local horticulture societies for their support.

**60 Hour Weather Forecast**, which is a weather forecast tool for the Grand Traverse region that predicts weather in 3-hour increments, is also on hand this season. This information can be obtained through the internet at

<http://www.agweather.geo.msu.edu/agwx/forecasts/fcst.asp?fileid=fous14ktvc> or a grower can subscribe to receive this information via email. Please contact the NWMHRS (231-946-1510) to sign up for the emailed version. This will also be available at the new MSU IPM/weather site, Enviroweather (see accompanying article)

## **NEW WEATHER-IPM NETWORK IN TOWN**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

For the 2006 season, we will be unveiling our newly upgraded weather-IPM system for fruit growers. Last fall, we secured a grant to improve this system because it had problems that needed to be addressed for it to remain viable for pest management decision-making. In addition to correcting the immediate system drawbacks, we wanted to improve and upgrade the end usability and the quality of the output as it relates to integrated pest management.

Prior to this proposal, there were two independent output systems that linked real-time weather data to IPM-related fruit models in Michigan. The MSU Integrated Crop Management (MSU-ICM) and the MIFRUIT (HortSystems/MSUE at NWMHRS) web sites offered pest models and output from models for Michigan growers. Although most northwest growers have used the MIFRUIT website for their pest management decisions, we have combined the positive facets of both systems into a new program. Our improvements intend to advance the output and the timeliness of the pest management models. This new system will access the network of 46 automated weather stations, Michigan Agricultural Weather Network (MAWN), from around the state to retrieve weather current weather data; this weather information is then fed into pest management models that can be used to help predict pest development. Last year the disease prediction reports (wetting event reports) were generated twice per day. This season, growers will be able to access this information at any time and will receive information updated hourly at all eight northwest stations. This development will help growers better predict disease infection periods throughout the season. Insect prediction charts (formerly assist charts) will also be available hourly, but insect information will also be available interactively. The system will contain historical data, so if a grower misses an infection period, he/she can call on past information for disease control; this feature was not available on past programs.

One major difference with the new system is that we will **not** generate an email message for growers after a wetting event. Growers will be responsible for checking the new website for the most current information. The new system is called ENVIROWEATHER because in addition to our fruit system upgrade, MSU is planning an entire system overhaul. The new address for the system is <http://www.enviroweather.msu.edu/>. Once you reach that website address, click on the station of interest (example: Northport, East Leland, etc.). At the station page, click on fruit for all fruit models and weather information. We will be conducting small workshops to help growers navigate the system in the coming weeks.

We hope that all growers are as excited as we are about our new system. Also, please be patient as we may have many bugs to work out over the course of the season. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas!

## **SEASONAL IPM UPDATE SERIES CORRECTIONS**

Nikki Rothwell, District IPM Educator

There have been some changes in the dates from the past newsletter. Please refer to the new dates (and Benzie location) below:

### **Leelanau County**

*Location:* Larry Esch Farm, 1 mile west of Eagle Highway on Horn Road

*Dates:* May 17, May 24, May 31, June 7, June 14, June 21, June 28, July 5

*Time:* 1-3pm

**Grand Traverse County**

*Location:* Josh Wunsch Farm, Old Mission Peninsula, Phelps Road

*Dates:* May 10, May 24, June 7, June 21, July 5, July 19, August 2, August 16

*Time:* 4-6pm

**Benzie County**

*Location:* Putney Farms, 4290 Joyfield Road, Frankfort

*Dates:* May 16, May 30, June 13, June 27

*Time:* 3-5pm

**Antrim County**

*Location:* Jack White Farm, M-31, just south of Elk Rapids on right

*Dates:* May 16, May 30, June 13, June 27

*Time:* 10:30-12:30

**FRUIT CAT ALERTS**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

Joy Landis, Assistant IPM Program Director

The *Fruit Crop Advisory Team (CAT) Alerts* consist of 18 issues each season: 16 during the growing season plus pre- and post- season issues. **The price for a mail subscription is \$35.**

Print the form below to subscribe and receive the printed/mailed version of the newsletter. The CAT Alerts are also available *free* on the web.

**2006 CAT Alert Subscription Form for Mail Delivery**

Print this form on your printer and fill-in the following information:

Name:		
Company (if applicable):		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code (9-digit if available):
County (if in Michigan):	Phone (please include area code):	

I am subscribing to the following editions of the *CAT Alerts* for the 2004 season (place check mark in front of the editions):

Field Crop CAT Alert (\$35 each)

Fruit CAT Alert (\$35 each)

Vegetable CAT Alert (\$35 each)

Landscape CAT Alert (\$35 each)

**Total amount enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Make check payable to **Michigan State University**. Send your check and this form to: CAT Alerts, 243 Natural Sciences Bldg, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824 (Phone 517-353-4703).

To receive a brief e-mail announcement when a new issue of MSU's *Fruit CAT Alert* newsletter is posted to the web, follow the instructions below (the announcements are sent through an automated system called a listserv).

1. Send the following one line e-mail message to [listserv@list.msu.edu](mailto:listserv@list.msu.edu):
2. SUBSCRIBE FRUITCAT (your first and last name)
3. You will receive a confirmation e-mail asking you to reply in order to complete your subscription. This ensures that the address came with your permission.

If you need help with the listserv, please send an email to [landisi@msu.edu](mailto:landisi@msu.edu) indicating which edition (field crop, fruit, vegetable, landscape, or greenhouse) you would like to receive.

The *Fruit CAT Alert* begins its annual publishing season in late March.

### **SECOND ANNUAL SPRING IPM KICK-OFF!**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

An evening informational session will be held on **April 25<sup>th</sup>** from **7-9pm** to discuss new pesticide chemistries for the upcoming 2006 season. We will review insecticide and fungicide uses as well as resistance management strategies. There will also be a brief discussion about the new weather-IPM system for pest management tactics. We have applied for pesticide recertification and CCA credits. Please give us a call at the NWMHRS if you plan to attend.

### **IMPORTANT HORN-FACE BEE MEETING**

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

For those growers that received horn-face bees last year or those interested in hearing more about these alternative pollinators, we are hosting a meeting on **April 18<sup>th</sup>** from **9-11am** at the NWMHRS. We will discuss last year's results as we have learned some valuable information that will help us to get more pollinating potential out of our new friendly bees. We will also talk about new and continuing research projects for the upcoming season as these will vary depending on our funding. We welcome all those interested in horn-face bees to come and learn more about the bees and our plans for the future! Please call the NWMHRS (231-946-1510) if you will attend the meeting.

I just received notice that my research project on horn-face bees was funded from GREEN this year – this is **exciting news** as it will allow me to continue my project this year with possible renewal for an additional two years.

**Note to growers that are currently keeping horn-face bees:** If you have been housing your horn-face bees outside or in a non-controlled environment (a barn, for example), you should consider moving them into a cooler place as we warm up this spring. These bees develop in their tubes during the summer and fall, and they spend their winters in the adult stage. However, these adult bees need a cold period before they are able to emerge in the springtime. Winter provided the adequate duration of cold temperatures, but as temperatures warm and the amount of daylight lengthens this spring, bees will become active in their tubes, and if temperatures reach 50° F for an extended period, you may see some male bees chewing their way out of the tubes. You **DO NOT** want your horn-face bees to emerge before there is food available for them to eat. To prevent bees from emerging too early, the buckets should be moved to a cool location with the optimal temperature around 39° F. If you do not have access to controlled temperatures, please call Nikki at the NWMHRS to discuss housing options (231-946-1510).

## AREA-WIDE CODLING MOTH PROJECT ON OLD MISSION

Nikki Rothwell, District Fruit IPM Educator

Area-wide management of codling moth is the focus of an ambitious on-farm research project initiated by a team of Michigan State University entomologists and extension agents, and representatives of private industry, including Gerber Products Company and Pacific Biocontrol Corporation. Growers are all too familiar with the targeted pest, as this "worm in the apple" is the number one insect nemesis for most of them. The aim of the project is to 1) facilitate an area-wide approach that relies on mating disruption, codling moth granulosis virus, and the judicious use of reduced-risk insecticides or conventional insecticides for control of this key pest, and 2) to use the demonstration of a successful biopesticide-based codling moth management program to serve as a catalyst for the widespread adoption in Michigan of sustainable management programs de-emphasizing the use of organophosphorous insecticides. The project team and cooperating growers believe this unified approach is needed to manage a pest that every year seems to become more prevalent in harvested fruit.

In 2004, eight apple growers in the Grand Rapids area used pheromone-based mating disruption, granulosis virus, and some recently registered insecticides to effectively control codling moth. Participants have expressed strong satisfaction with the project outcomes, and indicated their desire to continue their involvement in 2005. The project was expanded in 2005 to include a second region. This year, Old Mission Peninsula apple growers have joined the program.

Participating growers on the peninsula will use mating disruption as well as other reduced risk approaches to control codling moth, a pest that has become increasingly important in northwest Michigan. In turn for their cooperation, growers will receive intensive on-farm scouting, a weekly update on their farm, and unlimited resources for potential control of codling moth. If a grower is interested in hearing more about mating disruption or the area-wide project on Old Mission, give Nikki a call at the NWMHRS.

## 2006 FRUIT INSECTICIDE REGISTRATION UPDATE

John Wise, Rufus Isaacs and Larry Gut, Dept of Entomology, MSU

This is a summary of insecticide/miticide label additions and corrections to the 2006 MSU Fruit Management Guide. Agri-chemical labels and regulations change quickly so use this information within the context of each compound's actual label.

### Insecticide additions, label changes, restrictions:

<u>Compound</u>	<u>Label Changes/Restrictions</u>	<u>Crop</u>	<u>Target pests</u>
Admire Pro	New Use	grape	leafhoppers, mealybug, <i>phylloxera</i>
		cranberry	white grubs
		blueberry	aphid, white grub, Japanese beetle
		strawberry	aphids, white grubs
Baythroid XL	New Use	pome fruits stone fruits	codling moth, leafrollers, hoppers OFM, leafrollers, cherry fruit fly grapeberry moth, flea beetle, hoppers
Danitol 2.4EC	Federal label (State pending)	blueberry	fruitworms, Japanese beetle
FujiMite 5EC	New Use	pome fruits grape	mites, leafhoppers, psylla mites, leafhoppers

Oberon 2SC	New Use	strawberry	spider mites
Onager 1EC	New Use	stone fruits	spider mites, European red mites
Proaxis 0.5CS	New Use	pome fruits stone fruits	codling moth, leafrollers, hoppers OFM, leafrollers, cherry fruit fly
Venom 70SG	Change from 20SG to 70SG	grape	leafhoppers, thrips, mealybug
Zeal 72WDG	New Use	grape	spider mites, European red mites
Imidan 70W	REI change (new product only)	pome fruits – 72 hr REI stone fruits – 72 hr REI blueberry – 24 hr REI grape – 14 day REI	

### **New labeled insecticide descriptions:**

**Admire Pro** (imidacloprid) is a new “thyxatropic gel” formulation of this soil-applied insecticide, and is registered for use in blueberry, strawberry, and cranberry for control of aphids, Japanese beetles, and the white grub complex. It is also labeled in grapes for the control of leafhoppers, mealybug, phylloxera. Admire should be applied to moist soil and irrigated in with 0.5 to 1 inch of irrigation within 24 hours of treatment, or by chemigation to the root zone. Admire Pro contains 4.6 lbs of active ingredient per gallon of formulation product, and allows a maximum application of 14 oz per acre.

**Baythroid XL** (Cyfluthrin) is a new formulation pyrethroid insecticide registered for use on pome fruits, stone fruits and grapes for control of a broad spectrum of insect pests. This material is highly toxic to mite predators and should be used carefully to prevent mite population buildup. Baythroid XL follows the label rates of Baythroid 2E is restricted to 2 applications per year and a total of 2.8 oz per season.

**Danitol 2.4EC** (fenpropathrin) is a pyrethroid insecticide newly registered (Federal label, State label pending) for use on blueberries for control of a fruitworms, leafrollers, blueberry maggot, and Japanese beetle. This material is also highly toxic to mite predators and should be used carefully to prevent mite population buildup. Danitol is expected to have a 3 day PHI and 24 hr REI for use in blueberries.

**FujiMite 5EC** (fenpyroximate) is an insecticide/miticide registered for use in apples, pears, and grapes. FujiMite works as a contact miticide/insecticide that provides good knockdown and residual control of mites, leafhoppers and psylla, and should be applied when pest populations are beginning to build and before they reach economic thresholds. It is effective on a broad spectrum of mite pests (European red mites, two spotted spider mites, pear rust mites, apple rust mites), but requires thorough coverage to ensure pests will contact the product. FujiMite 5EC has good in-season flexibility, and is restricted to two applications per season, and a total of 2 pints per acre per year.

**Oberon 2SC** (spiromesifen) is an insecticide/miticide labeled for use in strawberries for control of spider mites and white flies. Oberon is part of a new chemical class called tetrionic acids, and has a novel mode of action characterized as a lipid biosynthesis inhibitor (LBI), and is active by contact to all life stages. Oberon 2SC is restricted to three applications per season, and 48 fl oz per acre per year.

**Onager 1EC** (hexythiazox) is a new formulation miticide (same active ingredient as Savey) for control of European red mites and two-spotted spider mites on stone fruits. It is an active mite ovicide and larvicide, providing 10+ weeks of control depending on mite pressure. Control is

achieved when eggs/larvae come into direct contact with the spray or contact with treated plant surfaces. It can be used after bloom up to a 28-day PHI. It may be applied ONLY once per year. *Onager is not commercially available this season in NW Michigan.*

**Proaxis 0.5CS** (gamma cyhalothrin) is a microencapsulated synthetic pyrethroid insecticide that is labeled for use on pome and stone fruit crops. It is labeled for control of a broad spectrum of sucking and chewing pests, including leafrollers, leafhoppers, plum curculio, scarab beetles, and internal feeders like codling moth and Oriental fruit worm. This material is also highly toxic to mite predators and should be used carefully to prevent mite population buildup. Proaxis is restricted to 1.6 pints per acre per season.

**Venom 70SG** (Dinotefuran) is a new neonicotinoid insecticide registered on grapes for the control of leafhoppers, grape berry moth, multi-colored Asian lady beetle, and mealybug. Insecticide application rates in the 2006 Fruit Management Guide are for the Venom 20 SG formulation, which are different than the current 70 SG label. For foliar applications Venom 70SG should be applied at 1–3 oz/acre, whereas soil application rates are 5-6 oz/acre to control mealybug, leafhoppers and thrips. Soil applications should be applied to moist soil and irrigated in, or by chemigation to the root zone. Venom foliar applications allow up to 6 oz per acre per season with a 1 day PHI, and soil treatment is restricted to 1 application and a 28 day PHI.

**Zeal 72WDG** (etoxazole) is a growth regulator miticide newly labeled for use in grapes for the control of mites. Zeal is primarily active against major tetranychidae mites (spider mites and red mites) in the egg and larval stages of growth, providing control ranging from 8 weeks to full season depending on mite pressure, the extent of tree vegetative growth and predator mite populations. Zeal controls susceptible mites by inhibiting the molting process through disruption of the cell membrane. Since Zeal's activity depends upon mite development, control may not be observable for several days. Etoxazole exhibits pronounced translaminar movement in plant leaves, enhancing activity when the pest is located on the undersides of leaves. Zeal is not known to have risk of cross-resistance with other currently registered miticides. Zeal is restricted to one application per acre per season. 3/27/06

## **SASKATOON BERRY WORKSHOP SCHEDULED**

Steve Fouch, CED, Benzie County

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Saturday, April 22, 2006</b>
<b>Location:</b>	Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station 6686 South Center Highway Traverse City, MI 49684
<b>Time:</b>	<b>8:30 am – Noon</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	
8:30 – 9 am	Registration Coffee, Rolls
9 – 9:15am	“Overview of Saskatoon Research Effort in Northwest Michigan” Steven Fouch, MSUE, Benzie County
9:15 – 10:15 am	“Growing Saskatoon Berries(Juneberries)” Dan Kelner, owner, <i>Juneberry Patch</i> , Velva, North Dakota
10:15 – 10:45 am	Break (opportunity to sample a number of Saskatoon products)
10:45 – 11:45 am	“Potential for Marketing Saskatoons and Health Benefits” Dan Kelner
11:45 am – Noon	Questions

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING REGISTRATION FORM  
AND MAIL TO ADDRESS BELOW:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee = \$30.00 per person X \_\_\_\_\_ (number attending) = \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: **MSU Extension**

and mail to: MSU Extension-Benzie County  
P.O. Box 349  
Beulah, MI 49617-0349

Sponsored by MSU Extension-Benzie County  
Contact Steve Fouch or Cathy Bodell, 231/882-0025, if you have questions.

#### **Information About Dan Kelner**

Dan Kelner, from Velva, North Dakota, worked for the Soil Conservation Service from 1953 to 1986. He became manager of South McHenry Soil Conservation District in 1986 and currently retains that position. He began working seriously with Saskatoon berries in 1995 by doing research with Canadian Saskatoon" berry growers. Saskatoon is the Canadian name for Juneberries. He started The Juneberry Patch by planting 1,000 Juneberry shrubs in 1997 and has continued to plant to the present day. There are now approximately 3,000 shrubs in Velva, North Dakota. Currently, he sells Juneberries, Juneberry shrubs, and operates a U-Pick Juneberry business in Velva, North Dakota.

#### **JULIAN-STILLE VALUE-ADDED GRANT DEADLINE**

Jim Bardenhagen, CED, Leelanau Co.

The deadline for proposals is **June 1, 2006** so you still have time to submit your proposal. For full grant proposal information, you can go to [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) or call 517/241-2178. Locally you can also contact Jim Bardenhagen, an ag innovator with the MSU Product Center (231/256-9888) regarding the grants.

#### **CIAB MAPPING DEADLINE**

The deadline this year for submitting tart cherry orchard maps to the CIAB has been extended to **June 1**. Maps need only to be submitted once in the life of the orchard. Submitting maps to the CIAB keep the option of in-orchard diversion available. Even if your present plans are to take everything to the processor, having maps on file with CIAB keeps all options open. One never knows when a wind storm could make a block worth more for diversion credits than for processing.

#### **MAEAP CROPPING SYSTEM EXPANDS TO INCLUDE ORCHARDS**

Michigan tree and small fruit producers can now participate in the MAEAP Cropping System. The Crop\*A\*Syst environmental risk assessment for orchards and fruit production will be available, on a trial basis, to growers beginning March 1, 2006.

Technicians with the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP) have been helping farmers identify and reduce potential risks to groundwater since the early 1990's. This has been accomplished through on-farm risk assessments that evaluate management practices around farmsteads and in crop fields. Identified risks are addressed in an Action Plan that is developed and implemented by the farmer with the assistance of the Groundwater Technician. Often many of the identified risks are easily and cost-effectively corrected by farmer. Some of the risk, however, may require additional time and financial assistance from state or federal sources to prepare the Cropping System for MAEAP verification.

During 2005, a group of MSU Extension on-campus fruit specialists, field staff and MGSP staff, worked at adapting the Crop\*A\*Syst for field crops to an assessment that is consistent with fruit production practices. The Crop\*A\*Syst for orchards and fruit production includes additional emphasis on:

- tissue sampling for nutrient management
- the use of biosolids to maintain food quality
- appropriate integrated pest management practices for insects, diseases and weeds, and
- record keeping to comply with state and federal regulations.

Fruit producers who complete the risk assessment and implement their action plan will have met the rigorous expectations for MAEAP verification, aligning their operations with applicable Michigan Right-to-Farm guidelines and state and federal regulations.

According to Don Lehman, MSUE Groundwater Educator and lead developer of the fruit assessment, many fruit producers already have experience with the Farm\*A\*Syst and Farmstead System verification. These producers will find the Crop\*A\*Syst for orchards and fruit production a logical extension of the environmental risk assessment program. However, fruit producers can chose to have their cropping system verified independently from their farmstead system.

Lehman also indicates, the cropping system is flexible in that a producer not currently implementing a recommended management practice may be able to write it into the action plan. For example, someone who has not maintained all of the recommended pesticide or nutrient records can still be verified as long as the producer commits to fulfilling the record keeping requirement in the action plan. When the cropping system is re-verified in three years, the Michigan Department of Agriculture verifier will expect to find complete records.

Interested fruit producers can begin the Cropping System verification process by contacting their Groundwater Technician who is located in your local Conservation District or MSU Extension office.

## **MAEAP RECOGNIZED IN LEGISLATION**

On February 16, **House Bill 5711, 5712, 5713, 5714, 5715, and 5716** were introduced. The primary sponsors of the bills are Representatives: Proos, Booher, Mortimer, Stahl, Nitz, and Pavlov.

These bills focus on defining the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) in statute. These bills will also provide a rebuttable presumption to all MAEAP verified farms, create an agricultural storm water exemption for MAEAP livestock verified farms, establishes MAEAP livestock verified farms as being equivalent to an NPDES permit, provides for recovery of investigation costs for unverified complaints, requires MDEQ to create a booklet of all environmental laws and rules to pertain to agriculture, and would shift non-point source grants and funds from MDEQ to MDA.

The six-bill package remains on the House floor after being reported out of the House Agriculture Committee on March 14 without amendments. Discussion continues with legislators on the bills.

The House did not take up the bills this week and now are on a two-week Easter break. The Legislature is scheduled to return on Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

For more information on the legislation visit [www.michiganfarmbureau.com/maeap](http://www.michiganfarmbureau.com/maeap) You must be a Farm Bureau member to access this section of the Michigan Farm Bureau website. For more information on MAEAP visit [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org).