Oh my! Back in December I was hoping by the time January came around we would all be talking about how bad December was. Now at the end of February I’m wondering how much longer this severe winter weather can last. It’s official, I’ve declared this the worst winter in the 20 years I’ve lived here. The driveway tunnel is over six feet at the highest point and if the wind blows, it doesn’t even need to snow for it to be closed in again by morning. If you haven’t figured it out, I’m tired of winter.

I grew up in Illinois. My family thought I was crazy moving to the U.P. They frequently tease me on Facebook about the snow. But this year is different. They have had more snow than in the last 25 years and their temperatures have been colder than ours. And trust me, they don’t know how to deal with that much snow. Then it warmed up, and in one week the drainage ditches were filled and the rivers flooded. I was watching the weather channel and saw a report on the flooding in my home town. Then the temperatures dropped to frigid again and froze the flood.

The jet stream has dropped south of the U.P. resulting in these incredibly cold temperatures for such long periods. Unfortunately for the southeast portion of the country they also are experiencing temperatures much colder than normal. Drivers were stranded in their vehicles on the highway overnight. Farther north in the most heavily populated region of the country they continue to receive snow storm after snow storm. I complain about running out of room to push snow. They don’t have any place to push snow.

California is experiencing a historic drought. This is their rainy season and they haven’t had rain. The mountains are practically devoid of snow this year. After three years of below normal rainfall and starting the year with depleted water reservoirs, irrigation of crops has ceased. California is the largest agriculture producing state in the nation accounting for over 10% of the country’s cash receipts. California agriculture is dependent on irrigation.

I sometimes think that we in agriculture are a bit of alarmists and have a tendency to cry wolf. I remember hearing time and again about the devastation that would occur if the farm bill wasn’t signed by January 1. I kept asking were this was coming from. It was all over national media. The media isn’t smart enough to fabricate this story. I’m not often correct but I was here. The farm bill wasn’t signed yet the impact was fairly small. I tell that story to address the California situation. Knowing their dependence on irrigation, this could be huge. Ten percent of our nations ag receipts could turn into one. And if that happens, food prices are going to move. Feel bad for the California farmer, but this could have significant impact on prices received for Michigan commodities. If it happens it won’t be good for the American consumer, but this could mean the rest of the American farmers will receive significantly higher prices. This is going to be worth watching.

I can be a real whiner when I just look at my immediate situation. I’m tired of the cold and the snow and I’m worried about how long and horrible the mud season might be. But when I look around, as usual there are others that have it so much worse than I do. So I going to try and be thankful its not worse and be optimistic about the future.

---Frank

**NEWS & VIEWS**
By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

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<td>6...</td>
<td>7...Sponsors</td>
</tr>
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<td>8...</td>
<td>Calendar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MARKET REPORT  (2/20/14)
By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

**Market Ready Prices**
- **Choice Steers:** $120-$150 per 100 lbs.
- **Holstein Steers:** $110-$130 per 100 lbs.
- **Hogs:** $72-$78 per 100 lbs.
- **Lambs:** $140-$165 per 100 lbs.
- **Cull cows:** $65-$95 per 100 lbs.
- **Calves:** $125-$200 per 100 lbs.
- **Goats:** $90-$125 per 100 lbs.

**Breeding and Feeder Animals**
- **Grade Holstein cows:** $1800 - 2500 per head
- **Grade Holstein bred heifers:** $1400 - 2000 per head

**Feed Prices across the U.P.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Ave. $/cwt</th>
<th>Ave. $/ton</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$13.90</td>
<td>$278.00</td>
<td>$240-316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soymeal</td>
<td>$30.01</td>
<td>$600.20</td>
<td>$525-675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>$15.85</td>
<td>$317.00</td>
<td>$260-374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>$14.28</td>
<td>$285.50</td>
<td>$215-356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

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**Wanted & For Sale Listings**

- **Hay for Sale** – Pure Alfalfa & Alfalfa Mix 1st 2nd and 3rd cuttings No Rain and stored inside. Small squares – Round Bales – Wrapped Bales Call 906-238-4482 or 906-630-1617

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**REMINDER** – Don’t forget to register for the March 11 Agriculture for Tomorrow conference at Bay College, Escanaba!! Mail your paper registration and check, or register and pay on-line at http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder=2014AgforTomorrow

**GUPAA Annual Meeting**
The Growing UP Ag Association (GUPAA) will be conducting their Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 1st, Room 952A, Heirman University Center at Bay College in Escanaba with registration beginning at 10:30 am ET. GUPAA will begin their annual business meeting at 11:00 am and discuss previous activities and future agricultural concerns relating to the UP. Michelle Walk, MSU Extension, will deliver a presentation at approximately 1:30 pm. providing information regarding the UP Food Exchange and Regional Food Hubs. For more information and to RSVP, please call 906-439-5114, ext. 1.

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**MCA/MSU BULL SALE:**
March 15, 12:30 (EST)
Open House at Station: March 1st
325 Mount Hope Rd, Crystal, MI
(Angus, Charolais, Hereford, Red Angus, Simmental)
Brian Plank: (989) 506-2061
MI Cattlemen’s Association:
(517) 347-8117
www.micattlemen.org

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**REMINDER!**
Plan now for the FFA Alumni Consignment auction!

Get that equipment out from behind the barn now
Ad registration deadline is April 11, 2014
Plenty of time to do a little fix-up/tune-up!

**AUCTION: Sunday, May 4th starting at NOON**
Havelka’s Construction
On Hwy 41
Just south of Wallace, MI.

For more information call:
906-753-4192
BUY OR SELL!
**REMINDER**

**MSU Extension Field Crops Webinars**

MSU Extension is offering as series of free, on-line programs for people interested in field crop and forage production. This series is an effort to include farmers state-wide in high-quality extension programming that would otherwise be unavailable due to the costs of presenter travel. Each webinar has been approved for 1 recertification credit for state-certified pesticide applicators. High-speed internet connection is needed to receive the programs and registration is required at [http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder=fieldcropswebinars2014](http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder=fieldcropswebinars2014)

Each one-hour webinar begins at 7:00 pm ET:

**March 3, 2014**
* Corn Stover for Feed and Fuel - Dennis Pennington

**March 10, 2014**
* Corn and Soybean Fungicides: To Spray or Not To Spray - Dr. Marty Chilvers

**March 17, 2014**
* Managing Rootworms on the Fringe: Determining If You Have Bt Resistant Rootworms on Your Farm - Dr. Chris DiFonzo

**March 24, 2014**
* Herbicide Site of Action: What’s Next in Weed Control on the Farm? - Dr. Christy Sprague

**March 31, 2014**
* Alternative Forages and Cover Crops - Dr. Kim Cassida

Recordings of the programs will be available on-line. Contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension educator at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu with any questions.

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**MSU Extension Upper Peninsula**

**Dry Bean Meeting**

All current dry bean producers and anyone interested in learning about dry bean production is invited to attend this free meeting.

Friday, March 7, 1 – 4 p.m. ET, Fairbanks Township Hall, 11th Road, Garden, MI (about 2.5 miles south of Fayette State Park entrance)

This meeting will consist of presentations including connection by speaker phone and recordings from recent dry bean production meetings in lower Michigan. MSU Extension educator Jim Isleib will be on-site to facilitate discussion by speaker phone with presenters and to operate the projected slide presentations.

**Tentative agenda:**

- Dry bean insect ID and management, including Western Bean Cutworm, leafhoppers, aphids – Fred Springborn, MSUE Educator (live, by speaker phone)
- Dry bean disease ID and management, including white mold, bacterial blight – Dr. Marty Chilvers, MSU Dept. of Plant, Soil and Microbial Science (recorded presentation)
- Invasive and herbicide resistant weed ID and management – Dr. Christie Sprague, MSU Dept. of Plant, Soil and Microbial Science (either live by speaker phone, or recorded presentation)
- Dry bean market update – Fred Springborn (by speaker phone) or Larry Sprague, Kelly Bean, Breckenridge, MI (by speaker phone)
- Michigan Bean Commission update – Greg Varner and/or Joe Cramer (by speaker phone)

2 MDARD pesticide applicator recertification credits have been approved for this meeting. To register, please contact Jim Isleib at 906-387-2530 (office), 906-250-9609 (mobile) or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.

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**On-line programs for beginning farmers**

The MSU Extension 2014 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series is underway. Six webinars were held in January and February, and several more programs are scheduled. Others will be added throughout the year. Separate registration and $10 fee is required for each program. High speed internet is required. You can test out your system to see if it will work by visiting: [https://connect.msu.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm](https://connect.msu.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm)

March 3, 2014
* Getting started with CSA , presenter Beth Clawson [http://events.anr.msu.edu/csawebinar/](http://events.anr.msu.edu/csawebinar/)

March 12, 2014
* Getting started with Organic field crops, presenter Dan Rossman [http://events.anr.msu.edu/beginorganiccrops/](http://events.anr.msu.edu/beginorganiccrops/)

March 19, 2014
* Getting started with Expanded vegetable Production, presenter Hal Hudson

March 24, 2014
* Getting started Basic Business Records, presenter Frank Gublo

April 2, 2014
* Getting started with Hoophouses, presenter Adam Montri and Rowan Bunce(farmer) [http://events.anr.msu.edu/GSWhoophouse2014/](http://events.anr.msu.edu/GSWhoophouse2014/)

October 22.2014
* Getting started with Plasticulture in vegetable production, presenter Ron Goldy

Dates to be determined
* Getting started with Grass Based dairy, presenter Frank Wardynski.
* Getting started with Beef cow calf production, presenter Frank Wardynski

For those programs without a registration URL listed, check for details under ‘Search all events’ at [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/)

Contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Educator at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu with any questions.
REMINDER — Don’t forget to register for the March 11 Agriculture for Tomorrow conference at Bay College, Escanaba!! Mail your paper registration and check, or register and pay on-line at http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder=2014AgforTomorrow

Looking for a past edition of the newsletter? Check out www.maes.msu.edu/upes

2013 Michigan Forage Variety Test Report available now

Dr. Kim Cassida and research technicians Joe Paling and Christian Kapp have released the new report on forage variety performance. The full report is available on-line at Michigan State University Forage Information Service website: http://fis.msue.msu.edu/

The report contains background information on most available forage types, including seeding rates and site/use suitability of tested forages in Michigan. The varieties tested are those entered by commercial seed companies. Yield information on alfalfa, clovers and grasses, alfalfa fall dormancy and disease resistance is included. Multiple-year data is included where available. Results from Chatham, East Lansing, Lake City and other locations are included. The following tables are samples from the report:

If you are considering seeding any new hay or pasture fields, this report will provide you with a lot to think about. It also contains a listing of all companies providing the seed tested with phone numbers and email addresses.

If you prefer to receive a written copy of the report, please contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Educator, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>3-year average</th>
<th>1-yr total</th>
<th>(Number)</th>
<th>% Vernal</th>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Allied Seed</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Nalech Seed</td>
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<td>3.27</td>
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Mean               | 3.52 | 3.08 | 3.32 | 104      |

† Number of completed 3-year trials
†† Average % Vernal

Table 21. 2013 yields (DM tons/acre) of the MSU Perennial Grass Variety Trial seeded in East Lansing, Michigan, in May 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2-yr total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plant Maturity</td>
<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>Cut 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchardgrass</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomeracat</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISG O635</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISG O652</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rival</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD G 0.05</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>CV %</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perennial Ryegrass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentstar</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remington</td>
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<td>Links</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fennema</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSD G 0.05</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>CV %</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If not statistically different from the greatest numerical value in the column for that species.
†† Table visual ratings from 1 to 10 prior to first cutting; 10 = 100% of plot headed, 1 = 100% of plot still vegetative
† Check variety

If you prefer to receive a written copy of the report, please contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Educator, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.
FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS
The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFLP is $500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding $50,000. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:
- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas, dry beans and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

GREAT INTEREST RATES: Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)
Remember: these loans are now available for Hay/Forage Storage as well as traditional grain storage!

February Interest Rates:
- 2.375 percent for 7 years with a loan of $100,000 or less
- 3.000 percent for 10 years with a loan of $100,000 - $250,000
- 3.125 percent for 12 years with a loan of $250,000 - $500,000

Contact your local FSA county office for February’s interest rates.

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

LOANS FOR THE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED—continued
For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION
The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.
All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more. The AFIDA reports must be filed with the FSA county office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located.

For more information regarding AFIDA and FSA programs, contact the FSA office near you or visit the USDA web site at http://www.usda.gov.

FARMING OPERATION CHANGES
Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchase property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to do so can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE
Any person convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.
On-farm trial in Republic identifies better yielding potato varieties under ‘naturally grown’ practices

This Upper Peninsula farmer used an NCR SARE Farmer Rancher Grant to compare potato varieties in a replicated trial

Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Educator

Potatoes are an important Upper Peninsula crop. The great majority of acreage is raised by growers with long experience, using the most modern technologies and inputs. A large percent of U.P. acreage is grown for seed, and most of the rest for table stock. Most of the crop is trucked out of the U.P. In addition to these growers, there are a number of smaller producers growing potatoes strictly for local markets. Many of these growers produce less well-known varieties. Their local customers often desire production methods using more organic or ‘natural’ techniques.

Mike Wixtrom wanted to find out which potato varieties would be best for his new farm in Republic, Michigan. This Marquette County farmer ramped up his ‘naturally grown’ potato production to 9 acres this year. Mike is farming on land once owned by his grandfather, who operated a dairy and potato farm. The land changed hands for several years since that time, and fields have been sadly run down by grazing and hay harvest without adequate inputs and rotations. Mike was able to buy back a part of the farm, including the house and buildings, a few years ago. He has settled on potatoes as a crop with good market potential. Mike hopes to gain organic certification in the future. For now, he is using organic techniques and selling his farm products as ‘naturally grown’.

With assistance from the NCR SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program and Michigan State University Extension Educator, Jim Isleib, Mike tested 9 potato varieties in 2013. The test consisted of a set of plots, one row by 40’, replicated 4 times. Cultural practices in the plots were identical to the rest of Mike’s fields. Currently without a source of livestock manure, Mike uses purchased organic fertilizers and crop rotation to provide plant nutrients. No irrigation is available yet.

A field day was held on August 17 to give the public an opportunity to visit the farm and see the SARE-funded variety trial. The plots were harvested on October 9, graded and weighed on November 7. Resulting plot weights are converted to hundred weights (CWT) per acre in the table below:

Statistically, there were real differences among the varieties. When grades A, B and C were combined (column 2 in the table above), the coefficient of variation was 19.09% and least significant difference was 13.1. King Harry, Elba and German Butterball were the best performing varieties in the trial.

Keep in mind that this trial is only an indicator for one year, and one location. The results are most meaningful on the Wixtrom farm, since they reflect those specific growing conditions. However, for farms with similar conditions, the comparisons are of interest. The low yields are a result of low soil fertility. However, Mike works hard to develop good-paying, local markets for his potatoes and receives excellent prices, both retail and wholesale. This project is a good example of the value of on-farm crop trials to help producers identify best management practices for their own, specific farming conditions.

A more detailed report will be available on the NCR Sare website when all reports are submitted. For more information on the NCR SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program, visit the NCR SARE (North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) website. Farmer Rancher Grant Program proposals are due in mid-November for projects to be done the following year.

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**The 99th annual Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, hosted by MSU and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Gardeners, farmers, foresters and families interested in animals, plants, land and water are invited to Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Week, Feb. 28-March 8. The annual event, formerly known as Farmers’ Week, is hosted by the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU Extension and MSU AgBioResearch. This year’s events include educational programs on topics ranging from conservation stewardship to beekeeping. ANR Week is also the setting for several annual meetings and conferences for many Michigan organizations.

For a complete list of programs, conferences and educational opportunities, visit www.anrweek.canr.msu.edu, or contact

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**2014 Annual Tree and Plan Sale**

_Gogebic County Conservation District_  
Contact 906-663-4512  
Order deadline April 11, 2014  
Tree pickup May 2 and May 3 in Bessemer, MI

_Houghton Keweenaw County Conservation_  
Contact 906-483-0214  
Tree Pickup May 3, 2014
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Meetings & Events Calendar

February 28 – Mar 9 – 2014 ANR Week program, MSU (http://anrweek.canr.msu.edu/) including:

March 5 Growing Michigan Agricultural Conference
March 6 Forage Technology Conference

March 3 7:00 pm ET - Getting started with a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm - webinar
March 3 7:00 pm ET - Corn Stove as Feed and Fuel MSUE Field Crop Webinar

March 7 1:00 pm ET — U.P. Dry Bean Production Meeting, Fairbanks Twp. Hall, Fayette, MI

March 10 7:00 pm ET - MSUE Field Crop Webinar Com and Soybean Fungicides.
March 11 9:15 am ET - Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference, Bay College, Escanaba
March 12 7:00 pm ET - Getting started with organic field crops – webinar
March 15 Beginning Bee Keeper Workshop call 906-884-4386 for more information
March 15 MCA/MSU Bull Sale, Crystal, MI. Contact Brian Plank (989) 506-2061.
March 17 7:00 pm ET - MSUE Field Crop Webinar Managing Rootworm on the Fringe
March 19 7:00 pm ET - Getting started with expanding vegetable production – webinar
March 20 1:00 pm ET - Clare County Livestock Auction, LLC
March 24 7:00 pm ET - MSUE Field Crop Webinar Herbicide resistance management
March 24 7:00 pm ET - Getting started with basic farm business records – webinar
March 29 Advanced Bee Keeping Workshop call 906-884-4386 for more information

April 1 10:30 am ET GUPAA Annual Meeting at Bay College, Escanaba, MI
April 2 7:00 pm ET, Getting started with Hoophouses – webinar
April 11 Deadline to order Trees/Shrubs from Gogebic County Conservation District call 906-663-4512 or www.gogebiccountymi.gov/soil1/html
April 21-25 Breeding Soundness Exam for Bulls

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***If you do not wish to receive this publication, please contact the Ontonagon County MSUE office at 906-884-4386.