

SPRING 2003 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5/13 – 6/25	Fruit IPM Meetings with Duke Elsner (See inside for weekly dates) 1 p.m. Josh Wunsch Farm, Old Mission
5/14- 6/24	Fruit IPM Meetings with Gary Thornton (See inside for weekly dates) 1 p.m. Larry Esch Farm
5/20 & 6/3	Benzie Fruit IPM Updates with Gary Thornton (See inside for time and location)
5/17	Grafting Workshop – Basic MSU
5/18	Grafting Workshop – Advanced MSU
5/29	Cherry Crop Insurance Meetings Cottage Café, Traverse City - Noon NW Mich Hort Res Station – 7:30 p.m.
5/31	CIAB Orchard Maps Deadline
6/6	Crop Disaster Sign Up Begins
6/18	Organic Field Day Clarksville Expt. Station
8/28	NW Horticultural Research Station Open House

TART CHERRY FMO TO CONTINUE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on April 25th that tart cherry producers and processors voting in a March referendum have decided to continue their federal marketing order program. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service reported that, among producers, 75 percent of the voters representing 73 percent of the volume of production favored continuance. For processors, 79 percent of the voters representing 74 percent of the volume favored continuance.

CHERRY CROP INSURANCE UNDER REVIEW

By Jim Nugent, Jim Bardenhagen and Phil Korson

Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties have been able to participate in a pilot program for sweet cherry crop insurance. This program is now undergoing a review to help determine whether or not the program is meeting the needs of producers and what changes, if any, should be made to improve the program. The results of this review will determine the future for sweet cherry crop insurance.

USDA's Risk Management division has contracted with *AgriLogic* a Texas firm, to conduct the review. Details of this review can be seen on AgriLogic's website at <http://www.agrillogic.com/cherry.html>. *AgriLogic* recently contacted us to help them organize a couple of meetings to solicit grower input.

Also we have been discussing options for getting crop insurance extended to tart cherries. A few options are possible, but the only alternative that has a chance of being developed in the near future is to convince USDA to extend the sweet cherry program to tart cherries. But before we can proceed further, we need your thoughts on this issue. First, should we pursue crop insurance for tart cherries? Would the fundamental concepts used for the pilot sweet cherry program work for tarts, or do we wish to see the development of a different program? No program will be developed without strong support and pressure from the industry.

Therefore, the meetings will have two objectives:

1. Solicit inputs on the sweet cherry crop insurance program for *AgriLogic*.
2. Discuss how we should proceed regarding the establishment of a crop insurance program for tarts. Dr. Roy Black, MSU Ag. Economics Department's crop insurance expert, will assist with this discussion.

Meetings will be held on **Thursday, May 29, 2003**

- **Noon till 2:15 p.m. - Cottage Café, Traverse City.**
Buffet lunch will be provided compliments of *AgriLogic*
- **7:30 till 9:30 p.m. - NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station**
Dessert and coffee compliments of *AgriLogic*

A session with insurance representatives will precede each grower meeting by one hour.

Your input at one of these meetings could be very important to the future of crop insurance on cherries in Michigan. You are welcome to attend either session, which ever is most convenient. Please **RSVP** to the NWMHRS (946-1510 or 888-749-3019) by **Tuesday, May 27**, to help us give a lunch estimate to the Cottage Café and to order enough pies for the evening. You are welcome to attend even if the RSVP is not made, but a response would help us out. Thanks!

CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

By Jim Bardenhagen, MSUE-Leelanau

The sign-up for the Crop Disaster Assistance Program will begin on **June 6, 2003** at your local Farm Service Agency (FSA). The program will provide payments for qualifying crop losses that occurred during either the 2001 or 2002 crop year.

Crop disaster payments will be calculated in a fashion similar to that employed for the 2000 disaster program. The crop value that will be used for payment calculations will be the larger of the Actual Production History (APH) price election or the national (NASS) season-average price.

The disaster payment may equal, but not exceed, 95% of what the crop's value would have been under average conditions. Your local FSA will handle the Crop Disaster Program enrollments. They would like to encourage growers and producers to contact them as soon as possible so you can start assembling the records necessary for participation in the Disaster Assistance.

For livestock producers, the Farm Service Agency also has the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Livestock Assistance Program (LAP) available.

FRUIT IPM MEETING SERIES

By Duke Elsner, Agricultural Agent, MSUE, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska Counties
and Gary Thornton

The dates are set for a series of fruit IPM meetings throughout the region. The meetings will all start at **1:00 p.m.** and last 1 hour. Growers are encouraged to bring samples of pests and/or problems that they have found on their farms.

In the past MDA has awarded 1 credit per meeting that will go towards MDA pesticide applicator recertification.

Old Mission – Josh Wunsch Farm, Phelps Rd.

Dates: Starting the season on Tuesdays: May 13, 27, June 10, 24 and then switching to
Wednesdays: July 9, 23, August 6, 20

Leelanau County – Larry Esch Farm, 1 mile west of Eagle Hwy on Horn Rd.

Dates: Every Wednesday starting May 14th, till June 25th.

Benzie County –

Dates: Tuesday, May 20th, Evans Bros. Orchards, Joyfield Rd.
Tuesday, June 3rd, Jack Gray Farm, Paul Rose Rd Farm, Corner of
Demerly and Paul Rose Road

MSU PESTNET FORECAST

By Gary Thornton, District Fruit IPM Agent

This year's PestNet forecast will be funded entirely by industry support. In appreciation of their efforts you will see the names of the sponsors listed on the reports. Please let them know how much you appreciate their support. As in past years, this network will supply growers with disease and insect models using the Michigan Ag Weather Network information. The disease reports will come out once per day this year whenever it rains. Fireblight reports will be issued daily during bloom. The insect assist charts, which are based on trap catch biofix dates, and the 21-day summary will be delivered to you twice per week.

Delivery options

Via email – This method is **free** of charge. If you did not subscribe last year, or if your email address has changed, please email your address to thornton@msue.msu.edu and indicate from which weather station(s) you would like reports from (see list below).

Via Fax – A fax subscription is **\$25/year**. Subscribe by contacting the NWMHRS at 231/946-1510. If you subscribed last year, you will be sent reports until May 1st. Payment will be required at that time to continue your subscription. Make checks payable to **Michigan State University** and mail them to: NWMHRS, 6686 S. Center Hwy., Traverse City, MI 49684.

Via Phone – The cherry leaf spot and apple scab wetting events will **not** be available by phone.

Via Internet – All reports can be accessed on the Internet at www.mifruit.com

To subscribe to the email or fax versions call 231/946-1510 or 888/749-3019, or e-mail at thornton@msue.msu.edu

Stations: Northport, East Leland, NWMHRS, Old Mission, Elk Rapids, Kewadin, Eastport, Benzonia or Bear Lake.

60 HOUR WEATHER FORECAST

By Jim Nugent and Gary Thornton

A few years ago a program was initiated to deliver **weather forecasts daily** for the Grand Traverse area **during the growing season**. The forecast is given in 3 hr. increments for a 60 hr. period. It is available by e-mail and fax. There is a **\$30** subscription fee for the fax version and a **\$20** subscription fee for the e-mail version per season. The Traverse City 60 hr. forecast is also available free on the web at:

<http://www.agweather.geo.msu.edu/agwx/forecasts/fcst.asp?fileid=fous14ktvc> The predictions are based on the Traverse City airport, so you will need to adjust temperature forecasts as appropriate to your site.

The computer program that generates these reports is run twice per day - based on 8:00 a.m. data that is available to us at about 2:45 p.m., and again based on 8:00 p.m. data and available to us about 2:45 a.m. Fax subscribers will receive the afternoon report only. E-mail subscribers will receive both reports; i.e. updated reports every 12 hours. We will begin the fax cycle by about 3:00 p.m. Reports will be sent daily from **mid April** through **mid October**.

This predictive information should complement the real-time (current) weather and pest scouting information that you are collecting to further improve your IPM implementation decisions!

To subscribe to the 60 Hour Weather Forecast (email or fax) contact Jackie Baase or Alison Heins at the NWMHRS by phone at 946-1510 or 888/749-3019, by fax 946-1404, or by e-mail at nwmihort@msue.msu.edu. Make checks payable to **Michigan State University** and mail to: NWMHRS, 6686 S. Center Highway, Traverse City, MI 49684.

NW MICHIGAN CODE-A-PHONE IS UP AND RUNNING

By Gary Thornton

231/947-3063 or 877/763-3300 (toll free)

The message on fruit pest management and culture will be updated twice per week. The message will typically be updated on *Tuesday* and *Friday* of each week. The system does require the use of a touch tone phone. Press **1** for the **stone fruit** message and **2** for the **pome fruit** message. The disease updates will not be available via the phone this year. The last three years we had two lines incoming, but had to cut back to one. As a result you may have busy signals during busy times. Your feedback on this service is always appreciated!

BRING OUT THE BEES

By Jim Nugent, District Horticulturist, MSUE

Sweet Cherries - Bud damage in sweet cherries varies by variety and location. I've seen bud counts range from about 10% killed to 100% killed. In most cases, there are some good buds, but an above normal percentage of the remaining flowers need to set fruit.

To help accomplish as much fruit set as possible from the remaining good buds, I encourage

growers to have plenty of bees present in the orchards. I recommend two good hives per acre, but I believe often the bee density is lower than this amount. This amount should be adequate, but I suggest avoiding the temptation to get by with fewer bees. The exception would be those blocks with too few buds left to bother trying to set the fruit.

Balaton - I have observed that Balaton does not set fruit as well as Montmorency when conditions during bloom are cold. It seemed to me that bees might help enhance pollination and fruit set under these conditions, so I talked with a researcher from Hungary to find out how they manage Balaton. He indicated that while it is self-fruitful, they do utilize bees in Balaton at approximately the same hive density as sweets.

So while I can't back this recommendation with research data, I suggest placing 1 1/2 to 2 hives of bees per acre in the Balatons. Fewer would be adequate for young bearing trees, as flower numbers are much lower per acre than with mature bearing trees.

GRAFTING WORKSHOPS AT MSU

The Michigan Nut Growers Association, Northern Nut Growers Association, and Master Gardener Volunteer Program are sponsoring two grafting workshops on Saturday and Sunday, *May 17 and 18*. The Basic Workshop on May 17th is aimed at the beginner grafter. The workshop will cover standard grafting and budding techniques. Participants will leave with a grafted apple tree and Norway maple.

The Advanced Workshop on May 18th will include T- and chip-budding, decision making with different scenarios, and top working trees. The cost of each workshop is \$50. A grafting kit, which includes a grafting knife along with all other necessary supplies, will be available for an additional \$25.

For more information call the MSU Dept. of Horticulture at 517/353-3774, or email mg@msu.edu.

NEW COST OF PRODUCING TART CHERRIES PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

Extension bulletin E-1108, **Cost of Producing Tart Cherries in Northwestern Michigan**, is now available at your county Extension office or the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station. Cost - \$1.50.

2003 PESTICIDE CONTAINER RECYCLING PROGRAM

By Dan Busby, Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program Coordinator,
Grand Traverse Conservation District

The Northwest Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program along with Wilbur-Ellis and Hamilton Farm Bureau/Hamilton Agronomy will be hosting the 2003 Pesticide Container Recycling Program.

Starting in July and running till the end of September, you can bring in your properly rinsed pesticide containers for recycling.

The collection sites in Northwest Michigan will be at: **Hamilton Agronomy**, M-72 West in Traverse City; **Wilbur-Ellis**, US 31 North in Acme; and **UAP Great Lakes** in Bear Lake for those of you in the Benzie/Manistee region.

- ♦ Only properly rinsed (triple rinsed or pressure rinsed) pesticide containers will be accepted.
- ♦ Containers will only be collected during normal business hours.

- ♦ Large plastic storage bags and high-pressure container rinsers are available for your recycling convenience. Call your groundwater technician for more information.
- ♦ Special provisions can be made for 5-gallon buckets and/or mini-bulks. Please call ahead.
- ♦ Please label bags with name, farm, and phone number with a marker or a tag.

Disposing of pesticide containers on farm is ILLEGAL. You can legally dispose of PROPERLY RINSED containers at the landfill. Recycling properly rinsed containers can save you some money and keep your farm in compliance with state and federal regulations. Do the right thing and take advantage of the 2003 Pesticide Container Recycling Program.

For additional information, call 941-4191 or 883-9962 (mobile) or email dbusby@gtcd.org

CIAB ORCHARD MAPS DEADLINE EXTENDED!

By Jim Bardenhagen, MSUE-Leelanau

At the April 24, 2003 CIAB meeting, the CIAB extended the deadline for providing tart cherry orchard maps and an Application for Diversion from April 15th to **May 31st**.

The Federal Market Order requires that growers sign a new Application for Diversion during the first year after the passage of the continuance referendum, even if no map changes are required. So while last year no action was necessary to keep orchard maps in effect, this year growers must sign the application form.

Past experience has shown that growers will want as many diversion options available as possible at harvest time depending on the season. So if you haven't supplied the CIAB with this information, do so by May 31st to preserve your options. You can get the necessary forms by calling the CIAB at 888-639-2422.

CAREER TECH CENTER SEEKING FORMER FFA MEMBERS

By Duke Elsner

Did you know there is a Future Farmers of America chapter at the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District's Career Tech Center in Traverse City? Instructor retirements and changing times have lead to a decrease in the activity of this FFA chapter over the last few years.

The new instructor for the Career Tech Center's Horticulture and Natural Resources program, Ann Blight, is looking for former FFA members in the Grand Traverse Region that would like to contribute their time and experience to supporting and improving the FFA program. She is especially interested in the leadership development aspects of the FFA. Not a former FFA but want to help? You are welcome too.

If you are interested in helping with this program, please contact Ann Blight at the TBA ISD Career Tech Center, 231/922-6284.

PROTECTING YOUR FRUIT

By Patrick Ryan, USDA Wildlife Biologist, Gaylord

Michigan fruit is prized by many American consumers - and for good reason. It also has some unwelcome fans - wildlife. Birds and mammals invariably help themselves to the delectable produce, sometimes causing significant damage. If this describes you - there is help!

There is an agency within USDA that does just that. It is the Wildlife Services program, and they

provide assistance in all kinds of situations where wildlife cause problems - to property, human health and agricultural interests like dairies, livestock, aquaculture and crops.

Wildlife Services can help by providing information for the most practical and effective solutions to wildlife problems. For example, they can help a producer get a permit to legally kill protected birds such as gulls that eat cherries or grapes. In some cases, they might be available to do the actual control work.

You may have met some Wildlife Services employees at their booth at the 2003 Northwest Michigan Orchard and Vineyard Show. They have an office in Gaylord and are available to answer questions or make visits to farms to help come up with strategies so that the wildlife gets less fruit and you get more. Their phone number is 989/705-8467.

ARE YOU READY FOR DEPARTMENT OF LABOR COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS?

By Jim Bardenhagen, MSUE-Leelanau

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) plans to target Michigan agriculture for Migrant & Seasonal Ag Workers Protection Act (MSPA) compliance inspections during the 2003 harvesting season. They will be focusing on disclosure statements for wages, housing, transportation and child labor violations for farm operations that employ seasonal and migrant workers.

You will want to make sure that information on the pay stubs is in order and meets the MSPA requirements. This is usually a gauge for DOL on your level of compliance. The standard employment forms will be important also.

Due to budget cuts and retirements in Michigan Department of Ag, you may see less of the labor camp inspectors, but be diligent in keeping the facilities up to requirement as the U.S. Dept of Labor will certainly look at your housing if you get inspected.

Please look at the Agricultural Employers checklist below for a list of forms and requirements. Michigan Farm Bureau (RCAP) (800-292-2680 x 2311) has packets of posters and information on disclosure statements.

Please call Jim Bardenhagen at the Leelanau MSU Extension office (256-9888) if you have any questions about this information.

Agricultural Employers Checklist

Section I – EMPLOYERS PREPARE TO HIRE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES

- ☐ ☐ **Get FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number)**
 - • Fill out form SS-4; this form assigns a 9 digit FEIN to the employer
 - • IRS will send you the required preprinted deposit slips to begin making Social Security and Federal Tax Withholding deposits through your local bank
 - • Call IRS, 1-800-TAX-FORM or 1-800-829-1040 or www.irs.gov
- ☐ ☐ **Form 518 (Registration for Michigan Taxes)**
 - • This form registers you to withhold State income tax from employees' wages and the State will send you the forms for making State tax deposits
 - • 517-373-0888 or 1-800-FORM-2ME or www.michigan.gov/treasury
- ☐ ☐ **I-9 Form (Employment Eligibility and Identity Verification): *Employer is required to keep on file***
 - • This form requires each prospective employee to prove that they are who they say they are
 - • Get form and instructions from Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), www.immigration.gov, National Call Center 1-800-375-5283
- ☐ ☐ **W-4 and MI-W4 BOTH Federal and Michigan (Employee's Withholding Exemption Form):**
Employer is required to keep on file
 - • Establishes employee's name, address, SS#, marital status and number of exemptions
 - • IRS, 1-800-TAX FORM or 1-800-829-1040 or your local MSU Extension Office
 - • Federal W-4: www.irs.gov; State MI-W4: www.michigan.gov/treasury
- ☐ ☐ **Michigan "New Hire" Report**
 - • Complete and send within 20 days of hiring or rehiring an employee
 - • Get forms, 1-800-524-9846 or www.new-hires.com/MI
- ☐ ☐ **Workers Compensation Insurance**
 - • Covers work related injuries and illness
 - • Purchase coverage from a private insurer
 - • Michigan Bureau of Workers' and Unemployment Compensation: www.michigan.gov/bwuc
- ☐ ☐ **Display Posters**
 - • Required posters must be prominently displayed in employees' language(s)
 - • Order poster package from Michigan Farm Bureau, 1-800-292-2680 Ext. 2311

Section II - AFTER HIRING AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES, EMPLOYERS MUST:

- ☐ ☐ Pay at least Minimum Wage (\$5.15/hour): few exceptions
- ☐ ☐ **Withhold** 6.2% (Social Security, OASDI) and 1.45% (Medicare) from each employee's gross paycheck - Total 7.65% (see exceptions in Circular A, Publication 51 and Circular E, Publication 15)
- ☐ ☐ **Withhold Federal Income Tax (FITW)** using tax table in Circular E, Publication 15
- ☐ ☐ **Deposit** employee's share of Social Security and Medicare withheld PLUS matching employer's contribution (Total 15.3%) to local depositor bank with coupon book sent to you from IRS, include the employee's share of Federal tax withheld in the deposit amount and check the 943 box
- ☐ ☐ **Withhold State Income Tax** from employee's wages according to tax guide P.A. 281 (see references)
- ☐ ☐ **Deposit State taxes** withheld from employees' wages to the State of Michigan using the State deposit coupon book provided to you after completing Form 518

Section III - EMPLOYER MUST PROVIDE TO EMPLOYEE

- ☐ ☐ Detailed **statement of earnings** with paycheck which must include: Employee's name, address, SS#, hours worked, pay basis, pay period dates, current and cumulative earnings and withholdings, deductions and purpose, piece rate units and hours, employer's name, address and FEIN
- ☐ ☐ Employee must sign **agreement for any deductions** other than required by tax or court mandates
- ☐ ☐ Employee's copies of annual **W-2** wage statement by January 31 of the following year

Section IV - EMPLOYER MUST COMPLETE ANNUALLY

- ☐ ☐ **W-3** – Summation of all W-2 forms with all Copy A of W-2 forms to SSA by 2/28

- ❑ ❑ **IRS Form 943** – Summarizing all agricultural wages and Federal/SS deposits, due by 1/31
- ❑ ❑ Annual State (Sales, Use, & Withholding) Form due with all Copy I of W2s by 2/28

Section V – OTHER POTENTIAL LABOR REGULATIONS

- ❑ ❑ **State and Federal Unemployment:** Required if gross payroll in agricultural business exceeds \$20,000 in a calendar quarter, or if 10 or more workers during any 20 weeks in a calendar year
 - • Must complete Form 518 to get unemployment authorization number
 - • Submit Forms UA 1017 and UA 1020 quarterly
 - • 1-800-638-3994 or www.michigan.gov/bwuc
- ❑ ❑ **Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSAWPA)**
 - • Anyone who resides “away from home” and those working “part time” in agriculture
 - • Also regulates crew leaders and farm labor contractors
 - • Subject to additional regulations
- ❑ ❑ **Consumer and Industry Services (CIS), 517-373-1820, State and Federal laws and regulations**
 - • OSHA/MIOSHA safety requirements and inspections
 - • Pesticides and hazardous materials (See EPA worker protection standards)
 - • Youth employment restrictions
 - • Medical, disability and termination restrictions

Section VI - REFERENCES

Every farm operation that employs workers should keep a current copy of the following publications:

Available through IRS, 1-800-829-3676 or www.irs.gov

- • IRS Publication 51 – Circular A, Agricultural Employer’s Tax Guide
- • IRS Publication 15 – Circular E, Federal Tax Withholding Contribution Rate Schedule
- • IRS Publication 225 – Farmer’s Tax Guide
- • P.A. 281 Michigan Income Tax Withholding Guide, 517-373-3190 or www.michigan.gov/treasury

Other References and Contacts

- • Michigan Farm Bureau - RCAP Manual (Regulatory Compliance Assistance Program)
Craig Anderson, 1-800-292-2680, www.michiganfarmbureau.com
- • Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program, www.michaglabor.org
- • Social Security Administration, 1-800-772-6270 or www.ssa.gov/employer
- • U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, 1-517-322-1825 or www.dol.gov/esa/whd/

Disclaimer: This publication contains information on the laws and regulations of concern for Michigan agricultural employers. It is not an all-inclusive listing. It does not constitute a legal document and the publishers assume no liability for actions taken based on the information provided. It is a reference for general educational use. Information is taken from reliable sources as of April 2003. It is the employer’s responsibility to keep abreast of current laws and changes.

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