

May 2010 Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2010

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| 5/11 | Antrim & Benzie Tree Fruit IPM Updates Begin |
| 5/12 | Leelanau & Grand Traverse Tree Fruit IPM Updates Begin |
| 5/13 | Michigan Grape & Wine Industry Council Meeting
NWMHRS |
| 5/15 | CIAB Extended Deadline for Mapping Orchards |
| 6/1 | ACRE/DCP Program Deadline |
| 6/4 | IPM Winegrape Update
NWMHRS |
| 6/18-6/25 | Barn Restoration Workshop
Port Oneida Rural Historic District
Contact: Kimberly Mann, 231/326-5135 ext. 501 |
| 7/9 | IPM Winegrape Update
2-Lads Winery, Old Mission Peninsula |
| 8/6 | IPM Winegrape Update
Len Ligon Farm, Old Mission Peninsula |
| 8/19 | NWMHRS Annual Open House |
| 9/3 | IPM Winegrape Update
L. Mawby Vineyard, Suttons Bay |
| 10/1 | SBA Disaster Loan Applications Due |

IPM TREE FRUIT UPDATE SERIES DATES HAVE BEEN SET!

Erin Lizotte, IFP/IPM District Educator

A series of hands-on IPM workshops will again be held throughout northwest Michigan for the 2010 growing season. Each meeting will characterize a different time in the season and distinct weather patterns, which in turn will present a unique set of pest and disease problems as well as management strategies. These meetings are *free* and will offer Pesticide Recertification Credits from the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Feel free to attend the meeting that best fits your schedule or location, regardless of county.

Antrim County

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

Dates: May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22

Time: 11-1pm

Benzie County

Location: Loy Putney Farm, 4286 Raymond Rd, Frankfort

Dates: May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22

Time: 3-5pm

Leelanau County

Location: Jim and Jan Bardenhagen Farm, 7881 E. Pertner Road, Suttons Bay

Dates: May 12, May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9, June 16, June 23

Time: 1-3pm

Grand Traverse County

Location: Josh Wunsch Farm, Old Mission Peninsula, Phelps Road (look for cars on the road)

Dates: May 12, May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9, June 16, June 23
Time: 4-6pm

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2010 IPM GRAPE UPDATES!

Erin Lizotte, Nikki Rothwell, and Duke Elsner

Dates have been set for the Summer Grape IPM Updates. Topics to be covered include horticulture, pathology and entomology. Feel free to bring along insect and disease samples for diagnosis and management recommendations. These free updates run from 3-5 PM and Pesticide Recertification Credits will be available. Dr. Annemiek Schilder will be at the Longcore Vineyard (11545 Bluff Rd, Traverse City) on **May 7** to discuss protectant strategies for disease management, with special emphasis on powdery mildew. Additional Updates will be held on **June 4** (Duke Elsner at the NW MI Horticultural Research Station), **July 9** (Dr. Paul Jenkins and Dr. Paolo Sabbatini at 2 Lads Winery), **August 6** (Dr. Sabbatini at the Ligon Farm at 3130 Old Mission Rd), and **September 3** (Dr. Rufus Isaacs at Mawby's). We hope to see you all there!

2008 CROP DISASTER PAYMENTS

Curtis Talley, Farm Management Educator

Growers that suffered crop revenue losses in 2008, including fruit crops, may be eligible for revenue assistance payments. SUpplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) was included as a permanent disaster provision of the 2008 Farm Bill. SURE looks at producers' revenue over the entire farming operation when determining a loss. Producers must have had crop insurance or NAP on all their economic significant crops to be eligible for benefits. SURE provides payments of 60% of the difference between the disaster assistance program guarantee revenue and actual total farm revenue. You will be required to have documentation for all 2008 production to substantiate losses. Contact your local FSA office for more details.

SEASONAL FRUIT INFORMATION

Nikki Rothwell, District Horticulturist

The **code-a-phone** will be up and running again for the 2010 season, and it will be updated every **Tuesday** and **Friday** or more frequently if needed. To access this information, dial 231-947-3063. Press 1 for stone fruit information and 2 for pome fruit information and 3 for grape information. Thanks to the area horticulture societies for supporting this program.

FruitNet will also be available for 2010 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. All FruitNet publications, since 1999, are available at www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/faxnet.htm

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. These forecasts are available at the MSU IPM/weather site, Enviroweather at http://www.enviroweather.msu.edu/home_map.asp under the Advanced Weather tab.

CHANGE IN SIMAZINE LABELS?

Erin Lizotte and Nikki Rothwell, NWMHRS

The labels for Princep 4L and Princep Caliber 90 are now listing a 150 day pre-harvest interval (PHI) for apple. However, the label language reduces the PHI to 14 days when tank mixed with other herbicides. We have contacted the manufacturer for clarification, but until we receive more information on this label change, growers should operate under the assumption that product with the new label has a 150-day PHI. However, if growers have an older jug of a simazine product that lists a shorter PHI, that label can be used accordingly. Always read and follow labels carefully as guidelines may change without significant notice.

CIAB MAPPING DEADLINE EXTENDED

On Wednesday, April 21, 2010, the CIAB recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture that he establish authority for the CIAB to issue diversion credits for orchards that are removed during the next crop year 2010-11. This would be available only for orchards that have been mapped with the CIAB. If the orchard to be removed is not mapped with the CIAB, it cannot earn diversion credits for its removal. Therefore, the board extended the mapping deadline to assure that all blocks can be mapped and can qualify for removal credits.

The CIAB extended the mapping deadline to **May 15, 2010** to make sure growers have the opportunity to map any and all orchards that they may want to divert or remove from production.

The CIAB asked that the action be adopted no later than October 1, 2010 to make sure that it is in place and in operation for crop year 2010-11. Please realize that there is no assurance that the Secretary of Agriculture will accept the Board's recommendation or that he will act in time for the program to be implemented next season. If the Secretary does not act in a timely manner, there is certainly a chance that the CIAB will withdraw its recommendation about the tree pull. If this happens, no credits will be issued.

It is in your interest to make sure any orchard that you might want to divert or remove is mapped before May 15, 2010!

GAP NOTEBOOKS

For growers that haven't gone through the GAP program, the Grand Traverse Soil Conservation District office still has some GAP notebooks available. If interested, contact Dan Busby at 941-0960.

FARM TO SCHOOL MARKETING GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

Helping farmers link with local schools

A new resource to help Michigan farmers market their agricultural products to local schools is now available on the Michigan Farm to School website at <http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu> .

The term "Farm to School" applies to a variety of initiatives but centers around efforts to incorporate local foods into meals in school cafeterias. These local food purchasing programs offer a variety of benefits such as expanded market opportunity for farmers, closer relationships among food service directors, farmers, and vendors, improved access for school children to local foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and support of the Michigan economy.

Interest and participation in local food purchasing is growing among Michigan food service directors, but more farmers with a wider variety of products available for more of the school year are needed to meet this demand.

Marketing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide

<<http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/index.php?q=marketing-guide>> provides tools and information to prepare farmers to access school markets. Reviewed by farmers and an advisory committee, the *Guide* includes tools to help farmers address food safety, make insurance decisions, understand school food funding, link with local schools and Farm to School resources, and prepare marketing packets and school food bid documents. Although there are no one size fits all solutions or strategies for Farm to School programs, *Marketing Michigan Products* outlines the steps to follow and questions to ask and answer as farmers embark on this new marketing venture.

The Michigan Farm to School website also hosts *Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide*, a companion guide to help school food service directors purchase local food. Tools for using local food in school fundraisers, links to recipes for incorporating local food in school meals programs, and links to other organizations working on Farm to School are available as well. Interested readers can subscribe to the Michigan Farm to School listserv, and school food service directors and farmers can register their programs on the Michigan Farm to School Directory. Link to local food with Michigan Farm to School!

Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist with the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, coordinates Michigan Farm to School and developed *Marketing Michigan Products*. This guide was funded by Michigan State University's Project GREEN (Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs).

Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist

Tel: 517.432.0310

Email: matts@msu.edu

www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu <<http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu>>

HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION

Below are some preliminary thoughts and links put together by Dr. Dave Schweikhardt, Ag Economics, MSU, in response to recent questions on the health care legislation and ag, and seasonal employees in particular.

There are at least a three items that are relevant to this discussion – timeline, size, and seasonality.

1. Time – according to this timeline, no employer is required to provide health care coverage until 2014.
2. Size – no employer with less than 50 employees would be required to provide health care for employees.
3. Size – provides tax credits for small businesses that do provide insurance (Note: Part of this begins, 2010, then increased in 2011-14 -- see details in second link).
4. Seasonality – it appears that the bill exempts seasonal agricultural workers. As noted in the article below, however, it is unclear how that would apply to an agricultural labor contractor who might have employees working a total of more than 120 days for several different farms. (see third link for discussion with respect to California agriculture).

This information comes from:

<http://docs.house.gov/energycommerce/TIMELINE.pdf>

http://docs.house.gov/energycommerce/SMALL_BUSINESS_G.pdf

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/03/22/90851/health-care-bills-winners-losers.html>

Again, a lot of details are still vague, but these appear to be the basics as it relates to agriculture. Feel free to share with anyone interested with this disclaimer.

HAVE YOU CONTACTED YOUR LOCAL FSA OFFICE?

Christine White, Exec. Director, USDA-Michigan FSA

The **June 1, 2010**, deadline for enrollment into the 2010 Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program or the traditional Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) is rapidly approaching. **This deadline is mandatory for all participants and USDA will not accept any late-file applications.**

White explained that, "With the favorable spring weather conditions, it is critical for producers to begin the enrollment process as soon as possible". Over 50,000 farms were enrolled in DCP/ACRE Program in 2009. "To date, approximately less than 40% have been enrolled in 2010 DCP/ACRE Programs. At the current rate of enrollment, a significant number of farms eligible for 2010 DCP/ACRE will not be enrolled by the June 1, 2010 deadline."

All signatures of producers receiving a share in DCP/ACRE payments are required by the June 1, 2010, deadline. It is important producers contact their local office to set up appointments well before the June 1 deadline.

For more information about the DCP/ACRE programs, please visit your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

OIL AND GAS LEASING – WHAT DO LAND OWNERS NEED TO KNOW?

Curtis Talley Jr., Farm Management Educator, MSU Extension

There is renewed interest by oil and gas companies to lease lands for oil and gas production in Michigan including Missaukee and Montcalm Counties. As a property owner, what do you need to know before you sign your lease? Michigan State University Extension has information that will help you make informed decisions before you sign your lease.

When you sign an oil and gas lease, you have essentially “sold” a part of your property. Obtaining a good lease is a negotiation. Negotiating the lease can result in much more income to the landowner over the lifetime of the lease and insure the land is managed for oil and gas production in an acceptable manner.

An oil/gas/mineral lease is an important legal document that defines the rights, privileges and responsibilities between the Lessor – the landowner (or the owner of the mineral rights) and the Lessee – the party interested in producing/extracting the oil, gas or other minerals. Negotiation of these terms may be a landowner’s first exposure to an oil and gas lease.

Some questions you may need to consider:

- What does it mean my royalty will be calculated in the pipeline based on net income?
- Is there an alternative to a 1/8 royalty?
- What royalty does the State of Michigan receive for its leases?
- Do I want to allow injection wells on my land as part of the lease?
- What does it mean that I have to defend the title to my land?
- If it’s an oil and gas lease, why does it say it includes helium, nitrogen and other gases?
- Is the oil company supposed to pay me for damages to the land surface?
- How do I insure the land is reclaimed in the manner I wish?
- What is the difference between a flow line and a sales line?

Michigan State University Extension has **free** information for landowners that explains the terms and conditions of oil and gas leases. By knowing what terms are acceptable to other landowners you can negotiate your own terms that are comfortable for you. Many sections of leases are negotiable and can be altered, if the landowner has the knowledge to know what pitfalls to avoid in a lease.

For more information, please contact Curtis Talley Jr., Farm Management Educator, MSU Extension at 231-873-2129.

FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS OF MAEAP

First of all, thank you to all that have worked hard for more than a decade to make MAEAP a national model for proactive, voluntary environmental program for farmers. Examples of the program’s achievements include:

- * More than 7,000 Michigan farmers attend an educational session every year geared toward environmental stewardship and MAEAP verification.
- * To date, nearly 10,000 Michigan farms have started the verification process.
- * Nearly 1,000 Michigan farms have become MAEAP verified or have requested verification.
- * MAEAP is a cost effective investment for all of Michigan with more than \$360 return for every \$1 of state tax dollars invested.
- * Annually, over \$1,200,000 is spent for practice implementation by farmers working toward MAEAP verification.

With the commitment of partners, MAEAP is poised to accomplish more. But, there are challenges MAEAP friends, supporters, partners, and participating farmers must address.

With Michigan facing a \$1.7 Billion deficit this fiscal year and projected deficit in the next fiscal year, budget cuts are broad, facing not only MDA’s programming (e.g., Right- to-Farm) but also hitting MAEAP partners such as Conservation Districts, DNRE and MSU. As many of you know, Governor Granholm’s budget proposal moves the MAEAP program to the Michigan Agriculture Experiment Station with none of the \$600,000+ that pays for MAEAP verification programming and staff. The Michigan House of Representatives voted to keep the budget discussion for funding MAEAP alive with a \$100 placeholder. This discussion now moves to the Senate in the Agriculture Appropriations Sub-Committee (Senators Cameron Brown, Ron Jelinek and Martha Scott) that has hearings scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on April 27 and May 4, 2010.

The uncertainty of funding for MAEAP has prompted many farmers to ask “What is the value of my MAEAP verification if the program is not funded?” and “Will MAEAP exist without verification staff at MDA?” My answer is that we will work to NOT have to answer these questions. I place emphasis on “we” because while partnering

organizations have different roles and limits, there are actions that we can all take to promote the importance of MAEAP to our members, neighbors, farmers, local partners as well as policy makers to ensure the program not only continues, but grows including the following options:

1. The MAEAP Communications/Education Committee has created the attached documents to explain the positive impacts of MAEAP on agriculture and the environment. The committee is reviewing ways to advance this message to policy makers with ideas ranging from a "MAEAP Day" downtown to increased communication with county commissioners (Huron County Commissioners recently resolved to support MAEAP verified farms). More materials are available on the MAEAP website at www.maeap.org. If you have further suggestions, send a note to Carrie Vollmer-Sanders cvollme@michfb.com with your thoughts.
2. Several MAEAP verification events are being scheduled on farms from Three Rivers to the U.P. and from Fennville to Richmond; but more are needed. Could your organization sponsor an on-farm MAEAP event?
3. Each MAEAP partner, supporter, friend, participant should continue to promote farmers completing MAEAP verification. I pose the following challenge: what tangible, measurable way can our organizations promote farmers completing MAEAP this spring/summer?
 - a. Will your organization sponsor an on-farm verification event for one of your members? Including media? Policy-makers?
 - b. Will your organization offer/create opportunities for local officials and policy makers to learn about MAEAP?
 - c. Will your organization create a new incentive for MAEAP verified farms?
 - d. Will your organization make a special attempt to recognize a MAEAP verified farm?
 - e. Will your organization highlight the benefits of MAEAP within planned events/tours/meetings?

As we've said all along, more MAEAP verified farms is a good thing. Today, MAEAP needs more than just farmer involvement. We need to engage neighbors, local officials, and legislators to help them understand the importance of the program. WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please take on the challenge of answering the question "In what way will your organization promote farmers completing MAEAP this spring/summer?"

Thanks for all you do to support MAEAP!

Scott Piggott, MAEAP Co-Chairperson
Wendy Powers, MAEAP Co-Chairperson

LEELANAU SCD SPRING PLANT SALE

Leelanau Soil Conservation District still has some plant stock available from their recent sale. If interested, please contact the SCD office at 256-9783 for more information.

Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook now available

Sean McGovern, SARE Outreach

As a proven strategy for bolstering farmers' business and connecting consumers to the food they eat, community supported agriculture (CSA) enterprises are growing in popularity. Today, more than 2,500 thrive across the country. As CSA numbers increase, however, so does the need for innovative practices to keep them running efficiently and profitably.

Written by former CSA growers and members Scott Franzblau and Jill Perry, *Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook* offers clear and straightforward guidance on an innovative practice that is helping CSAs stay strong and viable over the long term: cooperative marketing.

The 126-page book details how farmers can use CSA cooperatives to best market their produce, including advice on staffing, volunteer boards, distribution, legal topics and other practical information.

The book also includes a chapter on crop selection, calculating shares and adjusting to seasonal change, as well as a series of multifarm CSA profiles from around the country. Readers can adapt the book's sample documents to their situations, gaining practical help with planning, marketing agreements, packing standards and the

organizational process.

A CSA is considered a partnership between farmer and member, and Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook offers a framework for how these partnerships can work best to reduce labor costs, assure sales and address the quality requested by CSA members.

Download Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook for free at www.sare.org/publications/csa.htm. To order print copies (\$3.99 plus \$5.95 s/h) visit www.sare.org/WebStore, call 301-374-9696 or send check or money order to SARE Outreach, PO Box 753, Waldorf, Maryland 20604-0753. (Please specify title requested when ordering by mail.)

Discounts are available on orders of 10 or more. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Call 301-374-9696 for more information on bulk, rush or international shipments.