January 2008 NW Michigan Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2008

1/1 Erin Lizotte Begins IFP/IPM position at NWMHRS

1/7-2/18 Get Farming Classes Begin
Michigan Works, Traverse City, MI

1/11-12 Farm it Forward
Frankenmuth, MI

1/15-17 NW MI Orchard & Vineyard Show
Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI

1/19 CSA Training
Kettunen Center, Tustin, MI

1/19 Maple Syrup Program
Clare, MI

1/26 Small Farm Conference
Grayling High School, Grayling, MI

1/30 Agriculture's Conference on the Environment
Lansing, MI

2/4 Census of Agriculture Forms Due

2/6-7 SW MI Horticulture Days
Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor

2/13-20 51st Annual Fruit Tree Assoc. Conference
Visalia, CA

2/29 Balancing Animal Agriculture and Communities
MSU Kellogg Center

3/3-7 Ag & Natural Resources Week
MSU

3/11 Emergency Preparedness and Labor Issues Workshop

3/12 Peach Program
SW Michigan

3/12-13 Vineyard Establishment Workshop
Berrien & Traverse City ISD County Centers

4/1 Water Use Reports Due

6/5 Deadline for Drought Disaster Loans

SIGN UP FOR *GET FARMING!* COURSE

If you're dreaming about farming − and actually making money at it − then the Get Farming! Entrepreneur Series is the place for you this winter.

Get those ideas out of your head and into the field! For only $85 you receive seven classroom sessions, field trips to area farm and food businesses, one-on-one business counseling, and a selection of bonus workshops.

Classes run January 7 through February 18 at Michigan Works!, 1209 Garfield Ave. Contact course organizer Julie Hay, at the Michigan Land Use Institute, for more information: 231-941-6584, ext. 19 or julie@mlui.org.

CSA TRAINING
Robert Sirrine, County Extension Director, Leelanau

Want to start a CSA? After a season or two do you need some training or advice? Then attend the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) training on **January 19, 2008** at the Kettunen Center near Tustin, Michigan. This is a chance to discuss your project with seasoned CSA growers!

The format will be 'Farmer-to-Farmer.' A panel of experienced CSA growers, including Leelanau County's Jen Tutlis and Jon Watts of Meadowlark Farm, will make short presentations where each grower offers insight on many important topics regarding CSA's. Participant needs and interests will guide additional discussion.

The training will run from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, and the cost is $50 (manual & lunch included). A second person from the same farm, sharing handouts, is half price.

Pre-registration is strongly advised, as attendance will be limited. Get a registration form online at: http://csafarms.org/csafarms0731293.asp or by calling 877-526-1441.

This training is sponsored by CSA-MI and partially funded by a SARE grant.

INFORMATIVE TOPICS HEADLINE ANNUAL MAPLE SYRUP PROGRAM
Russ Kidd, District Extension Forestry Agent

Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan Maple Syrup Association (MMSA) will be co-sponsoring a day-long educational program on Saturday, **January 19,** 2008 for any interested maple syrup producers. The highlight of this year's program will be two in-depth presentations focusing on "Using Tubing & Vacuum Systems Effectively for Sap Collection" and "Using Your Reverse Osmosis (RO) Equipment Effectively". Both presentations will be made by representatives from CDL Maple Syrup Equipment Inc. In addition, Brett Crosby of CAS, Inc. will be discussing Risk Management Educational Grants. In addition to the educational program, there will be several maple syrup equipment dealers and suppliers who will be exhibiting their equipment as well as a maple syrup judging contest by MMSA.

The program will be held at the Doherty Hotel Conference Center on the I-127 Business Loop in downtown Clare, and will run from 9:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.. Registration for the program begins at 8:30 a.m. and costs $40.00 per adult and $15.00 per child, age 6-13 (under age 5 free). Registration fees are payable at the door. This fee includes a buffet lunch, refreshments, and program costs. For more information, please contact the Roscommon County MSU Extension office at 989-275-4670.

9TH ANNUAL NORTHERN MICHIGAN SMALL FARM CONFERENCE

This year's conference is titled "Increasing Production and Usage of Locally Grown Products" and will be held **Saturday, January 26, 2008** from **8:30 to 5:00 p.m.** at Grayling High School, Grayling, Michigan. The school is located 3 miles north of Grayling on Old 27.

The Keynote Speaker is Chris Bedford and his topic is "Local Food Revolution and How it Can Rebuild Michigan". You can attend three 1-hour workshops, and the topics range from Farm Estate Planning, Farm Financials/Economics, Hoop Houses, Organic Pork, Cellulosic Ethanol, Weed Identification, Growing Woodland Mushrooms, Small Woodland Management, Grass-fed Beef, Farm to School, What Will be in the Fields Tomorrow, Climate Change Effects on Northern Michigan Agriculture and much more!

For more information call 231-533-8818, or check the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference website: www.msue.msu.edu/antrim. Co-sponsors to date: Northern MI MSU Extension offices, Organic Valley, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, Project GREEEN, C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU,
and Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance.

AGRICULTURE'S CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

EAST LANSING, Mich.—Every day environmental laws and regulations that influence producers and their farms are being created and enforced. Producers can learn how to address these issues, learn about management practices to control environmental risk, and find out what incentives and partnerships are available to them for compliance by attending "Agriculture's Conference on the Environment: Managing Today for Tomorrow," **Jan. 30** at the Lansing Center in Lansing, Mich.

The conference runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will feature more than a dozen sessions covering environmental trends, laws and regulations, management practices, marketing, and partnerships and incentives.

Keynote speaker David Kohl, professor of agricultural finance and small business management and entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech, will discuss the ten best management practices—including environmental practices—that will position producers' businesses for sustainability to 2010 and beyond. His futuristic presentation will highlight how farms might work in the future.

The registration fee is $50 ($20 for students) before Jan. 22. It includes lunch, refreshments and parking. After that date, the registration is $75. To register by cash or check, go to www.maeap.org to print a registration form. To register by credit card, call Jim Van Arkel at 517-241-2232.

"Agriculture's Conference on the Environment: Managing Today for Tomorrow" is hosted by the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), Michigan Farm Bureau and GreenStone Farm Credit Services, and sponsored by Michigan State University Extension, the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and the Michigan Farm Radio Network.

MICHIGAN'S AG FROST & FREEZE DISASTER REQUEST GRANTED

Lansing, MI, November 21, 2007 – Governor Granholm and Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Don Koivisto announce that the USDA has granted the state's

August 2007 request for frost and freeze assistance. Michigan farmers in several counties who have faced weather-related crop losses are now eligible for federal disaster assistance.

According to Koivisto, the USDA designation addresses 29 Michigan counties that experienced extreme frost and freeze conditions from April 4, 2007, through June 13, 2007. The weather conditions devastated crop yields across the state, particularly impacting fruit, vegetables, and other weather-sensitive crops. This designation, in addition to the recent drought disaster designation for 83 counties, will help Michigan farmers access loans as a result of poor harvests. Of the 29 primary counties receiving disaster declaration due to frost and freeze damage and losses, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Manistee are in the northwest region.

The USDA designation makes all qualified farmers in both the primary and contiguous disaster counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provided eligibility requirements are met. Michigan farmers will have **eight months**, beginning November 14, 2007, to apply for the loans to cover up to 100 percent of their weather-related production losses.

CENSUS GIVES FARMERS A VOICE IN THEIR FUTURE

America's farmers and ranchers will have the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of agriculture.

"The Census of Agriculture provides information that is not available anywhere else - information that benefits agricultural producers and their communities in myriad ways," said National Agricultural Statistics Service Administrator Ron Bosecker. "For instance, policy-makers use Census data for decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. Community planners use Census information to target delivery of local services. Companies rely on Census data when determining where to locate their operations. And farmers themselves look at Census data when deciding to make changes in their production strategies."

The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by **February 4, 2008**. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site. For more information about the 2007 Census of Agriculture, please call (800) 727-9540 or visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

REQUEST FOR HOOP HOUSE APPLICATIONS

The Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University Extension, the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University and Michigan Food and Farming Systems is seeking applications to assist with on-farm research in the greater Traverse Bay area. Of particular interest is the potential of hoop houses to contribute to on-farm sales, agri-tourism and educating the public about local, sustainable food systems.

One selected farmer will receive a hoop house to be placed at his or her farm, and technical assistance in constructing and operating it will be provided in conjunction with the MSU Student Organic Farm. In return, the farmer will keep extensive records of activities, including sales revenue, labor, and purchased input and labor costs. The farmer will also agree to share

experiences with adopting this technology as well as serve as a demonstration site for other prospective farmers interested in adopting this technology. The farmer will be free to choose to grow the crops of his or her choice, as best suit the farm's overall marketing strategies.

Specific application requirements and forms are available online at www.mottgroup.msu.edu/ProgramsActivities/HoopHousesforSeasonExtension/HoopHouseDataForms/tabid/2542/Default.aspx

Applications are due by ***February 1,*** 2008 at 5pm. For more information contact David S. Conner, Ph.D., C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, Dept of CARRS at Michigan State University, at 517-353-1914 or connerd@msu.edu.

LOCAL GROWER ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT OF STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Mark Drake, of Stony Point Orchards in Leelanau County, was recently elected Vice President of the Michigan State Horticultural Society. In two years, according to the rules of the Society, he will become president. If you see Mark driving one of his hot-rods around town, be sure to congratulate him on this accomplishment!

2007 WATER USAGE REPORTING

Robert Sirrine, County Extension Director, Leelanau

A reminder that the 2007 Water Use Conservation Report is due to the Michigan Department of Agriculture by ***April 1, 2008***. If you reported for 2006, you should have received the instructions and forms by mail. If you did not the forms, they are available on line at www.michigan.gov/mdamichiganwateruse.

The reporting requirement generally applies when you have farm-use wells or surface water that have a combined capacity of 70 gallons per minute or more.

BALANCING ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

The interaction between animal agriculture and residents continues to be a potentially controversial topic in many rural communities. MSU Extension will host a one-day conference called, *"Balancing Animal Agriculture and Communities"* at the MSU Kellogg Center in East Lansing on **February 29th** to discuss the topic.

Wendy Powers, Director of Environmental Stewardship and Animal Agriculture at MSU, suggests the conference will bring Michigan residents, farmers and policymakers together to discuss critical aspects of growth and development of communities and agriculture.

Topics include:

- Prominent community concerns about animal agriculture
- Comparative effects on animal agriculture air emissions on human and environmental health
- Comparative effects on animal agriculture on aquatic ecosystem integrity
- Comparative effects of animal agriculture on real estate values
- Comparative effects of animal agriculture on quality of life in surrounding communities
- Animal agriculture today: options and tradeoffs
- How technology and management affect on-farm activities
- Community response to evolving animal agriculture

Cost is $95 per person, which includes lunch. *Register before* ***January 11*** and save ($115 after 1/11). For a complete agenda and registration, go online to www.animalagteam.msu.edu.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND LABOR ISSUES WORKSHOP
Steve Fouch, Benzie Co. CED

Date: **Tuesday, March 11, 2008**
Location: Blaine Christian Church, Joyfield Road, Frankfort
Sponsored by: Benzie-Manistee Horticultural Society and MSUE

Although details are still underway for this workshop, it will be open to anyone interested in agricultural emergency preparedness and labor issues. Key speakers will be Craig Anderson, Michigan Farm Bureau, who will cover "Emergency Preparedness and Response", "MIFACE Reporting", "Small Tractor Rollover Prevention", "Hazzard ID" in the morning session. Rose Rangel will facilitate a panel of speakers in the afternoon that will touch on a wide array of labor issues.

The event will be held on March 11 and a final workshop announcement and registration form will be available at your local MSUE Office in the next few weeks.

VINEYARD ESTABLISHMENT WORKSHOP

The Michigan wine industry has been steadily growing for over 25 years. That growth is based on the production of quality wine grapes. The continued growth of this industry is dependent upon the expansion of Michigan wine grape acreage which is the focus of this workshop. Participants will receive current information on topics ranging from the economics of vineyard establishment, the market conditions for Michigan wine grapes, and the many aspects of locating and developing a vineyard. This workshop is being held concurrently in Berrien Springs, Michigan and Traverse City, Michigan with enrollment limited on a first-come basis to 50 and 30, respectively.

Dates and Times: March 12 (10 am to 9:30 pm) and
March 13 (7:45 am to 1:15 pm)

Locations: Berrien Co. ISD Career Tech Center
711 St. Joseph Ave.
Berrien Springs, MI

Traverse Bay Area ISD Career Tech Center
Parsons Road
Traverse City, MI

For more information, call Dr. Tom Zabadal at 269-944-1477.

SASKATOON PROJECT UPDATE
Steven Fouch, Benzie County MSUE

For the past three years, with funding support from MSU GREEEN, over forty individuals have planted Saskatoon seedlings in Northwest Michigan. To date approximately 5000 seedlings have been planted for a total of 10 acres, and more interest in this alternative small fruit continues to grow.

Our next step will be to schedule a “brainstorming meeting” after the first of the year. This session will feature Tom Kalchick, MSU Agricultural Innovation Center; representatives from a number of local processors; MSUE staff and potential interested growers. Details are forthcoming, but this meeting will likely be held at the NW Research Station later this winter. Topics for discussion will include:

- sources of planting stock
- current and future demand
- processing and marketing opportunities
- mechanical harvesting
- health benefits
- growing tips
- formation of an association of growers

Once details have been finalized, information will be mailed to all growers on our Saskatoon mailing list. If you have not been involved with this project and want to be included, contact the Benzie County MSUE Office at 231-882-0025.

GUTHION REMINDERS FOR 2008

Dr. John Wise, Trevor Nichols Research Center, MSU
Dr. Nikki Rothwell, NWMHRS

Guthion (8) (azinphos-methyl) is no longer labeled for use on peaches, nectarines, plums, caneberries, and cranberries. Guthion is still registered for use in apples, pears, cherries, and blueberries, with some use restrictions. The maximum yearly amount of Guthion 50 WP to be applied has been reduced to 6 lbs on apples, 6 lbs on pears, 2.5 lbs on blueberries, and 3 lbs on cherries.

The Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI) for apple and pear use is 14 days, with a 21-day PHI if the last application is greater than 2 lbs of Guthion 50 WP per acre. Additionally, growers must observe a 60 foot buffer from permanent bodies of water and occupied dwellings (which do not include farm buildings and barns), and Pick-Your-Own apple growers must observe a pre-harvest interval of 44 days when applying between 2.02 lbs per acre and 3 lbs per acre of formulated product, 39 days when applying 1.2 lbs per acre and 2 lbs per acre of formulated product and 33 days when applying 1.2 lbs per acre or less.