

NW Michigan Regional Fruit Grower Newsletter October 2009

CALENDER OF EVENTS

2009

- 11/1 **Michigan Farmer Award Application Deadline**
- 11/5 **Women In Agriculture**
NWMHRS
- 11/6 **Leelanau Conservation District Annual Meeting**
Maple City Health & Fitness Center
- 11/10 **Pre-registration Deadline for Great Lakes Expo**
- 11/11 **“Making It In Michigan”**
Lansing Center
- 11/14 **Open House for Merlin Dumbrille**
Masonic Hall, Greilickville, 2-5 p.m.
- 12/3 **Farmer Rancher Grant Proposals Deadline**
- 12/8-10 **The Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, & Farm Market Expo**
Grand Rapids

2010

- 1/19-20 **NW Michigan Orchard & Vineyard Show**
Grand Traverse Resort
- 1/29 **11th Annual Northern Michigan Small Farm Conf.**
Grayling High School
- 3/10 **Get Farming’s Entrepreneur Series**
www.localdifference.org

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

A **free** workshop for aspiring and veteran farmers, particularly women, will be held **Thursday, November 5 from 6-9 p.m.** at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station. The evening begins with a presentation on farm succession strategies by Ellen Fred, an attorney with the law firm of Smith, Haughey, Rice and Roegge in Traverse City. She will explain conservation easements – an important tool for keeping productive land in farming. She’ll also answer questions about passing on the farm – outside or within a family. The floor will then be open for networking and discussion of any topic, driven by your needs and interests.

To register for this free event, call the Michigan Land Use Institute at 231-941-6584 and for more information, contact Nikki Rothwell at 231-946-1510 or rothwel3@msu.edu; Jim Sluyter at 231-941-6584, ext. 15 and jimsluyter@mlui.org.

Men are also welcome to attend!

LEELANAU CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING

The Leelanau Conservation District's 65th Annual Meeting will be held on **November 6th** at the Maple City Health and Fitness Center located at 172 W. Burdickville Rd, Maple City. Time **6:00 p.m.**

This year's program will pay tribute to the retiring Merlin Dumbrille who has been a friend and supporter of conservation and agriculture in the area for many years. Merlin's voice on WTCM's Farm and Orchard Show will be greatly missed...don't miss this opportunity to pay tribute to Merlin and to wish him well in his retirement.

The District will also recognize volunteers extraordinaire, Nancy Miller and Jo Walker for their efforts in eradicating *Phragmites*, the invasive weed invading our shorelines. The Leelanau Conservancy will also be receiving honors for their efforts in Farmland Preservation. In addition, there will be a director's election, a silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and lots of door prizes.

Tickets are \$18 and can be purchased through October 30. For more information and to purchase your ticket, call 231/256-9783.

MICHIGAN MASTER FARMER AWARD

Jennifer Vincent, Editor, Michigan Farmer

This is the 6th year Michigan Farmer, Michigan Agri-Business Association, and Michigan Farm Radio Network are sponsoring the Michigan Master Farmer awards.

Farmers are humble people, but they're also incredible businesses men, environmentalists, innovators, and community leaders. This award is designed to recognize those qualities.

We're asking agri-business people, neighbors, fellow farmers, agronomists, industry leaders and anyone involved in agriculture to nominate farmers worthy of this award.

Each year we recognize three Master Farmers during a luncheon ceremony at the Lansing Center that's held in conjunction with the Michigan Agri-Business Association's Winter Conference in mid-January.

Michigan Farmer will feature the farmers, their families, and their operation in the January issue of the magazine and will prepare a special tribute to them during the luncheon.

They also receive a plaque, Carhartt jacket, and a \$1,000 cash award, courtesy of our sponsors GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Mosiac and Great Lakes Hybrids.

The application deadline is approaching. Applications must be postmarked or received via e-mail by **Nov. 1, 2009**.

The applications are available online at www.Michiganfarmer.com, by requesting one through e-mail at jvincent@farmprogress.com or by calling 989-224-1235.

The application forms ask for basic information about the farmer and the operation, but the most important part is the nominator's statement – please explain why this farmer really stands out and be specific. Multiple letters are encouraged.

There are many people who have great respect for farmers and the food and fiber they grow. This is your chance to stand up for them and let them be recognized.

MAKING IT IN MICHIGAN – Michigan’s Premiere Specialty Food Show

Are you ready to be the next great entrepreneur?

Are you an existing business looking for help with the next great product? Then this day is for you!

This full and exciting event brings you all the resources and networking you'll need to bring your dreams and goals to reality. Come meet the Product Center team. Network with buyers from stores looking for exciting new products. Learn from the experts about launching or expanding your business through educational classes that prepare you for the road ahead in regulations, safety, production, marketing and distribution. This is the one day that every entrepreneur, producer, buyer and processor in food and agricultural businesses needs to attend.

The food show will be held **November 11, 2009** at the Lansing Center. For more information, visit <http://www.makingitinthemichigan.msu.edu>

NCR-SARE ANNOUNCES 2009 FARMER RANCHER GRANT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The 2009 North Central Region - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) Farmer Rancher Grant Call for Proposals is now available online at <http://sare.org/ncrsare/cfp.htm>.

Farmers and ranchers in the North Central Region are invited to submit grant proposals for projects to explore sustainable agriculture solutions to problems on the farm or ranch. Proposals should show how farmers and ranchers plan to use their own innovative ideas to explore sustainable agriculture options and how they will share project results.

Sustainable agriculture is good for the environment, profitable, and socially responsible.

Projects should emphasize research or education/demonstration. Grants can range from \$6,000 for individual farmers up to \$18,000 for groups of 3 or more farmers.

NCR-SARE expects to fund about 50 projects in the twelve-state North Central Region with this call.

The deadline for proposals is **Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.**

For more information, contact Joan Benjamin, NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program Coordinator, at jbenjamin2@unl.edu or 402-472-0809 or (800) 529-1342.

The NCR has funded more than 700 farmer rancher grants worth more than \$4,300,000 since the inception of this program.

Each state in SARE's North Central Region has one or more State Sustainable Agriculture Coordinators who can provide information and assistance to potential grant applicants. Interested applicants can find their State Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator online at <http://sare.org/ncrsare/PDP/pdpstco.htm>.

UPDATE ON GAP AUDIT SNAFUS

Erin Lizotte and Nikki Rothwell, NWMHRS
Amy Irish-Brown, CHES
Dawn Drake, MACMA

During this first year of USDA GAP audits in the fruit industry, the learning curve has been steep. However, many growers have passed their audits successfully. Those growers that have been through

the USDA GAP audit process have helped us construct the following pointers based on their experiences. We hope this continued collaboration will result in further audit success. Due to the differences in GAP manual organization, these suggestions are listed under the section names utilized by the USDA GAP and GHP Audit Verification Checklist.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

Maps – Indicate on your maps how you and/or your farm workers identify the individual blocks. For example, if you have an aerial photo, simply identify (whether it is by # or name) each block. You can simply handwrite the information on the picture/document. This step is an important part of satisfying Questions G1 and G2 and is also important for Part 5 – Traceback.

WORKER HEALTH & HYGIENE

Farm Policies Checklist – A grower had a file of his signed *SPANISH* farm policy pages in a file folder, but when the auditor looked at the file folder he could not understand the policy pages as he was not fluent in Spanish. Growers should make sure to include a copy of the *ENGLISH* version of the policies as well the *SPANISH* version to ensure the auditor knows what the checklist/policy the workers were signing includes.

Field Harvest Visitor Policy – Growers should instruct the auditor to follow the guidelines set up in the Field Harvest Visitor Policy, which may include washing his/her hands before beginning the inspection. The auditor may be looking for this request and you will be demonstrating your Visitor Policy (G7).

Field Sanitation Facilities – Wording in this section of the food safety plan should be amended to define how often the facilities are serviced (cleaned, pumped out, etc.) to satisfy Question G10.

Product Contamination from Blood/Body Fluids – At this time, there is variability between MACMA and MSU manuals on this point but the policy wording should include the following verbiage “destroy the product, clean any equipment, and remove/replace any clothing that may have been contaminated” in order to satisfy Question G13.

MANURE & MUNICIPAL BIOSOLIDS

If your farm does **not** use manure and/or municipal biosolids (Option C as defined in the USDA Audit), include a policy in the plan that states that no manure or biosolids are utilized in order to satisfy Question 1-22. *Remove* the other pages under this tab that reference Options A or B.

FIELD HARVESTING & TRANSPORTATION

Light Bulbs & Glass – Clear packing tape placed across the light bulbs would be considered taking steps to satisfy Question 2-9 and protect the produce in case of breakage.

TRACEBACK

Be sure to include a completed bin/tank tag as an example - a blank tag *will not* work. All bins should be tagged in the field or before they leave the farm as part of your policy for ‘traceback’. You should include a policy for traceback as well as a mock recall procedure (an example of a mock recall can be found in the [MSU USDA GAP manual](http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/msu_GAP_Manual_5_4_09.doc) under the Traceability Policy)

http://www.maes.msu.edu/nwmihort/msu_GAP_Manual_5_4_09.doc.

Include this policy or a similarly crafted policy in the manual that fits your operation.

SAVE THE DATE – Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference

The 11th Annual Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference, “Changing Realities in Farming and Food” will be held **January 29-30, 2010**, at the Graying High School. Keynote speakers include Melinda Hemmelgarn and she will be speaking Friday evening on “Feast or Famine: A Fork in the Road and the Critical Farmer – Consumer Connection” and Saturday evening Gary Zimmer will be addressing “Value Added: For You, For the Environment, and For the Consumer. There will also be a youth keynote speaker, Daniel Salatin, speaking on “Growing Up Joel’s Son: The Real Story.”

Some of the workshop topics to date will cover hydroponics; GAP, Laws and Regulation updates; Poultry production; Building your CSA; Permaculture: Integrating Animals into Your Farm; Hops and Saskatoon production; and Farm-sized Wind Energy.

Registration forms will be available in early December. For more information, call 231-533-8818, or check the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference website: www.msue.msu.edu/antrim. Exhibitors of farm products and services welcome. For information, contact Presque Isle MSU Extension at 989-734-2168.

NEW FARM PROGRAM LAUNCHES THIS MONTH!

N.L. Rothwell, District Horticulturist

The New FARM Program is official. We are setting into motion a two-year program that will help young farmers develop valuable leadership skills that will be used to maintain the agricultural tradition and heritage of northwest Michigan. We are 31 members strong, and the group has unique backgrounds, interests, and experiences in farming. We hope that this diversity will be the foundation for creating a supportive set of young farmers and leaders for our agricultural industries.

To launch the *New FARM* Program, we will hold our first event as an overnight at the Kettenun Center on October 30 and 31st. The program includes Dr. Don Ricks, Professor Emeritus; Dr. Chris Peterson, Director of the MSU Product Center, and Ann Chastain, Extension Educator. We are excited for this program, and we thank everyone for their support over the next two years.

REMINDERS – Great Lakes Expo

Don't forget to make your room reservation for the Great Lakes Expo as rooms at the Amway go fast! Also, the pre-registration deadline is **November 10** for savings on registration fees. Visit GLEXP0.com for registration, program, and other information.