

**Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting
Michigan Department of Agriculture
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, Michigan State University
Room 101, South Harrison Road
East Lansing, Michigan**

**MEETING MINUTES
March 8, 2001**

PRESENT:

Jordan Tatter, Chair, Commission of Agriculture
Douglas Darling, Vice-Chair, Commission of Agriculture
Nora Viau, Commission of Agriculture
Bill Pridgeon, Commission of Agriculture
Dan Wyant, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture

ABSENT:

James Maitland, Secretary, Commission of Agriculture

OTHERS PRESENT *(All or part of the meeting):*

Michigan Department of Agriculture Staff
Ron Zellar, Assistant Attorney General
Rob Anderson, Michigan Farm Bureau
Ann Louise Budd, Michigan Horse Council
Jerry Crandall, Michigan Information Reporting Service (MIRS)
Dr. Dewald Keet, Kruger National Park, South Africa
Duane Dykstra, Michigan Horse Council
Bev Grunheid, Michigan Horse Council
Tom Guthrie, Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Chris Klaver, Gongwer News Service
Tonia Koppenaar, Michigan Farm Bureau
Dr. Gary Lemme, MSU Agricultural Experiment Station
Ron Nelson, Michigan Farm Bureau
Dr. Larry Olsen, Michigan State University

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Tatter called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture to order at 8:33 a.m., Thursday, March 8, 2001. The roll was called with Director Wyant and all Commissioners present, except for Commissioner Maitland. He is representing the department and Commission on the Agricultural Trade Issues and Policy Study Trip to Mexico, March 5-14, 2001. Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan State University sponsored the trip.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 8, 2001 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 14, 2001 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER VIAU MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 14, 2001 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED.

MOTION TO AMEND: CHAIR TATTER MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES AS FOLLOWS:

Page 5, paragraph 7, line 4, change the word "as" to the word "for,"

Page 6, paragraph 3, add the words "Bovine Tuberculosis" as a bullet under the MDA Accomplishments heading

Page 9, paragraph 6, line 2, add a comma after the word "facility,"

COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES AS FOLLOWS:

Page 3, paragraph 5, line 6, change the word "where" to "with,"

Page 3, paragraph 5, line 7, delete the words "was in attendance."

SECONDED. MOTIONS TO AMEND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

THE FEBRUARY 14, 2001 MEETING MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Commission of Agriculture is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 11, 2001, at the Michigan Department of Agriculture, 4th Floor, Pridgeon Conference Room, Ottawa State Office Building, 611 West Ottawa Street, Lansing, Michigan.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONERS' PER DIEM AND/OR TRAVEL

MOTION: COMMISSIONER PRIDGEON MOVED TO APPROVE COMMISSIONER VIAU'S PER DIEM AND TRAVEL TO ATTEND THE FEBRUARY 21, 2001 UPPER PENINSULA POTATO ANNUAL MEETING, AND COMMISSIONERS TATTER'S AND DARLING'S PER DIEM AND TRAVEL TO ATTEND THE BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS CONFERENCE HELD MARCH 5-6, 2001 IN LANSING. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

UPDATE ON BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS: Dr. Michael Chaddock, State Veterinarian and Director of the Animal Industry Division

Dr. Michael Chaddock, State Veterinarian and Director of the Animal Industry Division, introduced Dr. Dewald Keet, Office of the State Veterinarian, Kruger National Park, South Africa. Dr. Keet was a featured speaker and presenter at the 2001 Bovine Tuberculosis Conference held in Lansing. Dr. Keet is the state veterinarian-in-charge of research and monitoring of controlled diseases in the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Dr. Keet provided a brief summary of South Africa's bovine tuberculosis situation. He said that bovine tuberculosis is virtually eradicated in most of South Africa, except for the area in and around the Kruger National Park.

Dr. Keet said that South Africa has had a major bovine tuberculosis problem since the late 1950s. Commercial cattle herds were located next to the Kruger National Park and, at that time, there was no fencing between the park and the herds. Cattle and buffalo were allowed to move in and out of the park. South Africa had eradicated the disease elsewhere in the country, but not in the park area. For approximately 30 years, the disease broadened, and it was only in August of 1990 that it was diagnosed. By that time, the disease was well settled in the buffalo population.

The disease is still in low prevalence in the northern buffalo population. The northern area environment does not lend itself to vehicles, so helicopters and airplanes are used to monitor the situation. In 1995 other species, such as lion, cheetah, leopard, Chacma baboon, Greater Kudu, Spotted Hyaena, wort hog, and other scavenger species, were diagnosed with the disease.

Dr. Keet said that today Kruger Park has a game-proof fence, but in February of last year a massive flood washed away large parts of the fence. Because of this, in excess of 400 buffalo left the park. Buffalo also are carriers of the foot-and-mouth virus. There have been three massive foot-and-mouth outbreaks since November of last year. Unfortunately there were no funds available to upgrade and repair the fence soon enough after the flood. Many of the buffalo were captured and destroyed, with the majority of them showing gross tuberculosis lesions.

South Africa is said to have the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world. Dr. Keet noted that assuming basic disease principles, the third world population would ultimately be infected by the buffalo that commingle with the cattle surrounding the park. As of 1999, the cattle have tested negative; however, no additional skin tests have been performed since that time. The neighboring population does not pasteurize their milk, even though it has been proven that unpasteurized milk is the primary cause of the *M. bovis* infection. These neighbors are at tremendous risk, and those with the HIV/AIDS virus are more susceptible to *M. bovis*.

Dr. Keet explained that another problem in the park is relocating or exporting animals from the park. The park is under tremendous restrictions on the movement of all high profile species.

Commissioner Darling asked if, based on his past experience, Dr. Keet would recommend that Michigan take a different course of action in eradication.

Dr. Keet said there are many differences between the two situations, but he would recommend that Michigan sharpen its control and management measures. He is very impressed with what has been done so far in Michigan, and wishes they would have done the same in Kruger Park years ago.

Director Wyant asked if they are actively trying to eradicate the disease within the park, and if they are trying to keep the domestic population separate from the wildlife.

Dr. Keet said that it appears the situation in the park is beyond repair. He added that they are looking at using an experimental vaccine (BCG). The vaccine requires a booster dose; therefore, the animal must be inoculated twice. If the vaccine works in experimental conditions, it could be applied to the free-ranging situation. It is hopeful that it would help to suppress or lower the prevalence rate and lower the spillover to the neighboring cattle areas and other susceptible species in the ecosystem. The extreme weather conditions and landscape make it difficult to maintain a buffalo-free corridor, and then eradicate or control the disease to the south, without having a physical barrier across the park.

Chair Tatter asked about the BCG vaccine.

Dr. Keet said that the vaccine has received fairly good reports in human and animal use. The research work is being done in America, and is currently the only substance that may be available. The difficulty is that once an animal has been inoculated that animal will test positive to the disease. There is no other test to distinguish between an inoculated animal and an infected animal. This is why America has not used the vaccine and why it is not used in the domestic species in Europe, New Zealand, or Australia. It does show some promise for wildlife, but is still in the experimental stages. If it does not work in captive situations, it will not work in free-ranging conditions. Currently, the vaccine must be injected, but research continues on administering the drug orally, or possibly even aerial spraying.

Dr. Chaddock asked if the disease in the park continues to progress at the same rate it has over the past 10 years and, if the vaccine is not available, what will be the long-term prognosis for the park and its surrounding area.

Dr. Keet responded that if the disease continues to progress, all buffalo herds would be infected at a very high prevalence. This would include all the lions and scavenger species. It is impossible to fence in the entire area to keep the animals from leaving the park area.

Chair Tatter asked if the TB situation has affected tourism.

Dr. Keet said that visitors are not at risk because they are never in close contact with the animals. The park is, however, in financial trouble.

Commissioner Darling asked Dr. Keet if he believed Michigan could ever be too aggressive in tackling this disease.

Dr. Keet replied that when the disease was first diagnosed in the park 10 years ago, he believed that because the disease was found only in the buffalo, and the herds were doing well, it was not necessary to begin an aggressive depopulation effort. However,

in hindsight, Dr. Keet believes that he was incorrect. The disease has progressed to a degree that it cannot be controlled.

Commissioner Viau asked if the buffalo carry more than one disease.

Dr. Keet replied that buffalo are excellent disease disseminators. They carry three or four different diseases and parasites that can infect domestic animals.

Dr. Chaddock said that Dr. Keet was amazed at the lack of biosecurity measures at the airport when he entered into this country.

Dr. Keet said although America's biosecurity measures are much better than South Africa's, there is still a small risk that world travelers could carry the disease.

Dr. Chaddock said that Dr. Keet would be visiting Northeast Michigan today to meet with staff and view the bovine tuberculosis situation.

INTRODUCTION OF DR. GARY LEMME, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MSU AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

Dr. Gary Lemme, Associate Director of the MSU Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, expressed his appreciation to the Commission and MDA for their continued support. There is a tremendous, cooperative working partnership between MDA and MSU that benefits Michigan agriculture. Project GREEN is an excellent example. Dr. Lemme distributed and reviewed information from the *Project GREEN Annual Report*.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Nora Viau reported that the calving season is underway. Rainy weather, followed by a bitter cold wave, caused havoc for livestock and people, but a welcomed warm spell melted a great deal of the ice.

The Annual UP Winter Potato Meeting was held in Escanaba on February 21. One question asked was whether MDA is planning future consumer education programs about the safety of genetically modified seeds. She said growers believe consumers need to be aware of and educated about the benefits. A discussion was also held about the need for a potato inspector in the area.

Commissioner Viau said that MDA's Kevin Kirk attended the "Growing UP" meeting held on February 22. He indicated that MDA would not be providing whole herd TB tests. Dairy and cattle producers are concerned about the impending split state status for the UP. They fear that when the UP is granted split state status, MDA will not compensate them for whole herd testing. The compensation has already been reduced from an annual to a biannual basis. Producers also fear that the surrounding states, mainly Wisconsin, will not honor split state status and producers will have to absorb all costs.

On February 26, UP beef producers were invited to a "bull session" hosted by Select Sires. Producers from the UP were treated to a delicious dinner and provided information about cattle breeding options. Paul Naas from the UP Experimental Station

in Chatham, Michigan updated the attendees on the research currently being conducted by MSU.

Commissioner Viau referred to a Wisconsin cattle requirement covering Michigan feeder cattle. A Wisconsin resident who purchases and feeds out Michigan cattle is required to complete a form, which goes to the processing plant stating that the cattle are TB suspects. Green Bay Packing will not process any cattle that are classified in this way. However, Michigan fed cattle can go directly to Green Bay Packing and go through the processing.

Director Wyant responded to the concerns raised by Commissioner Viau.

MDA has developed a position paper addressing the genetically modified seeds issue. MDA is supportive of the science, if it can be verified as safe. MDA is not in the position of promoting genetically modified seeds, but leaves that to the manufacturer of the seed. There is an active committee within the department that continues to look at the regulatory issues. There is also discussion at the national level about whether or not there is a market for genetically modified seed.

Commissioner Viau asked if a GAAMP could be developed to address the genetically modified seed issue.

Director Wyant believes the issue lies with the consumer, not the producer. The producer may see economic benefits, but the issue becomes whether the consumer will accept genetically modified seed.

Director Wyant said that he believes there is miscommunication on the issue that MDA will not be providing compensation for required whole herd TB tests. Michigan plans to pursue split state status by June and, if that is the outcome, MDA is hopeful that whole herd testing will not be required. However, in the event there is a requirement for mandatory testing, MDA would pay for the actual testing costs. Director Wyant will contact Mr. Kirk to clarify his statements.

Commissioner Bill Pridgeon reported that there has been disagreement about the national pork checkoff program. A lawsuit was filed by the Michigan Pork Producers after the Secretary of Agriculture decided to end the checkoff. An out-of-court settlement was reached with USDA to keep the program in operation.

Commissioner Pridgeon said as of March 1, 2001 the Michigan Livestock Exchange (MLE) was bought out by United Producers of Columbus, Ohio. United Producers is a regional livestock co-op that in the last year has absorbed Missouri, Illinois and now Michigan. Tom Reed was a great leader of the MLE. There is concern about how the Michigan commodity organizations will maintain their state leadership.

Commissioner Douglas Darling said workshops have been held to discuss farmland preservation. Farmers are getting ready for spring planting and discussions continue about the farm bill, commodity prices, fuel, nitrogen, and seed availability.

Commissioner Darling participated in the following events:

- Monroe County Extension Advisory Committee Meeting,
- FFA Banquet,

- MSU ANR Week Dean's Luncheon, and the
- Bovine Tuberculosis 2001 Conference.

He referred to a conference report from the bovine tuberculosis conference that states, *"the results also suggest that deer with no gross lesions of TB may be capable of spreading the disease."* Another conference report states that *"primary results indicate that the current management practices will result in a decrease, but not an elimination of TB positive deer over time."*

Chair Jordan Tatter reported that while winter has been easy since the start of the new year, there has been no unseasonable warm weather as occurred in both of the past two years, which initiated early fruit bud growth. The crop potential is excellent. A considerable acreage of apples and tart cherries has been removed in Southwest Michigan and even the best of growing seasons could no longer produce the crop tonnage of just three years ago for these two major fruit crops in Southwest Michigan.

Since the last Commission meeting, Chair Tatter has been involved in the following:

- The Michigan Farm Bureau Legislative Reception that immediately followed last month's Commission meeting.

- The final winter meeting of the Southwest Michigan Agriculture Service Club at which rural roads and major transportation routes and their impact on agriculture in Southwest Michigan was the topic.

- A meeting of the MSU Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center Advisory Council on which he serves as vice-chair.

- The monthly board meeting of the Sorett Nature Center. This 1000-plus acre facility provided nature-based education to approximately 25,000 young people in Southwest Michigan last year.

- A local township land use informational meeting at which three MSU staff and consultants spoke to the concerns of a rural township that is being urbanized and resultant land use conflicts and their resolution. Almost 100 residents of the area attended.

- The Past Chairman's President's Council of the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses and the World Food Logistics Organization in Carmel, California. The group meets twice a year with a major food company executive as their guest and he chairs the council.

- The Western Frozen Food Convention, sponsored by the American Frozen Food Institute in Monterey, California. Many Michigan-based fruit and vegetable processors, distributors, brokers, and major Michigan food retailers attend this convention of about 1,300 attendees.

- The Bovine Tuberculosis 2001 Conference at which over 200 attendees from our state and several other states and nations were brought up-to-date on bovine tuberculosis. This was an exceptional learning experience.

--As a member of the MSU Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center Board of Directors, Chair Tatter took part in the selection of research projects and extension demonstrations for the 2001 growing season. He noted that it was frustrating to have to turn down excellent proposals due to a lack of funds. The facility that is just 12 years old and cost more than \$3 million to build has about a \$1 million fixed operating budget and less than \$200,000 for research and demonstration projects this year. Yet Michigan will spend millions on bovine tuberculosis in 2001. This excellent facility is not working as hard as it could and should on behalf of agriculture in Southwest Michigan due to funding constraints for its intended purposes—which is research and demonstration.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Brad Deacon

Brad Deacon, Legislative Liaison, distributed and reviewed the March 2001 Legislative Status Report.

Mr. Deacon said that Dr. Chaddock, Dr. Keet, Bovine TB Eradication Coordinator Robert Bender, and Dr. Steve Schmitt of the Department of Natural Resources will be discussing the bovine tuberculosis situation today with the House Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Committee.

PRESENTATION OF THE COOPERATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE: Ron Spenski, Environmental Stewardship Division

Ron Spenski of the Environmental Stewardship Division distributed and reviewed the *Cooperative Resource Management Initiative (CRMI)* program report. He explained that the program's goal is to provide for the best management of our state's natural resources now and in the future.

Mr. Spenski explained that the program is co-funded by the departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources working through the conservation districts. The conservation districts administer the program with the grants received from MDA. The primary objective for the first year was to establish the program, develop the networking with partners, and train conservation district staff. Many individuals and landowners are learning more and being provided information about the program.

Chair Tatter suggested that the CRMI program be considered in the resolution of Right to Farm complaints.

APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR THE BRANCH COUNTY 4-H FAIR PREMIUM MONEY FOR THE NATIONAL BARREL HORSE ASSOCIATION SHOW, AUGUST 13, 2001:

Marilyn Thelen of the Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division presented and recommended approval of a request from the Branch County 4-H Fair requesting funding for premium money for the National Barrel Horse Association Show to be held August 13, 2001. The show has been moved from the regular fair week to the August 13 date to allow for parking of horse trailers on the grounds.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER PRIDGEON MOVED TO APPROVE THE FUNDING FOR PREMIUM MONEY FOR THE BRANCH COUNTY 4-H FAIR NATIONAL BARREL HORSE ASSOCIATION SHOW TO BE HELD AUGUST 13, 2001. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Director Wyant announced that Marilyn Thelen would be leaving MDA to work with MSU Extension in Clinton County. Director Wyant and the Commission expressed their appreciation for the hard work and expertise she has provided for Michigan's fair program.

Ms. Thelen distributed copies of *FairTime* brochures and invited the Commission to view the exhibit at the MSU Museum.

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE RIGHT TO FARM ACT (SB205): Marvin Johansen and Wayne Whitman of the Environmental Stewardship Division

Marvin Johansen of the Environmental Stewardship Division explained that amendments to Senate Bill 205 became effective on March 10, 2000. Mr. Johansen discussed the following:

- ? One major change was the response time in which MDA must address complaints. The law now states that MDA must respond to a complaint within seven business days. MDA has changed its protocol to get information to the local inspectors and is averaging approximately a four-day response time.
- ? MDA must notify the village, township and county of a complaint. Once an investigation has been completed, a copy of the report is mailed to the township, city or village and county. They are also informed once the final inspection is done.
- ? The department must notify the Department of Environmental Quality of any potential violations of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. The Act currently preempts any local ordinance, regulation, or resolution that purports to extend, revise or is in conflict with the Act or the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMP) from being enforced at the local level. The exception is when a local unit of government submits an ordinance that is different than the GAAMP to MDA for review and there is a concern about any adverse effects on the environment or public health. To date none have been received.
- ? The Commission has issued a GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control on New and Expanded Livestock Facilities that went into effect by May 31, 2000. MDA is required to post all GAAMPs on the MDA web site, and to establish a toll free number for the Right to Farm program. The Right to Farm toll free number is 1-877-MDA-1-RTF (1-877-632-1783).

Commissioner Viau asked if it is possible to shorten the response time even further if needed.

Director Wyant responded that in cases of an environmental concern there is an immediate response. This would be different from a nuisance complaint. There is an Ag

Pollution Emergency Hotline (800-405-0101) and a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) hotline for reporting emergencies such as a direct discharge to surface water or the breach of a lagoon.

Mr. Johansen added that there have been improvements made in the MDA/DEQ partnership as it relates to environmental complaints. A 20/20 Working Group was established to clarify roles and to develop communication plans. The process resulted in the formation of a steering committee that meets regularly. MDA met with DEQ district office staff to discuss the open cases and to improve communication. MDA extended an invitation to DEQ to participate in routine inspections in cases where compliance has been an issue in the past. Information mailed from MDA and DEQ to farmers explains the need to comply with the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act.

REVIEW OF THE 2000 ANNUAL RIGHT TO FARM REPORT: Wayne Whitman of the Environmental Stewardship Division

Wayne Whitman of the Environmental Stewardship Division distributed and reviewed the *2000 Annual Right to Farm Report*. MDA's Right to Farm Environmental Complaint Response Program addressed a total of 140 new farm-related environmental and nuisance complaints during FY 2000. A total of 100 complaints were addressed during the same period in FY 1999. A majority of the new complaints concerned manure management practices at livestock facilities. The Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMP) for Manure Management and Utilization were used in the investigation and resolution process. The average response time for the initial on-site inspection to investigate the complaint was 5.1 business days. From March 10 through September 30 the response time was 4.4 business days.

Mr. Whitman said that in FY 2000 surface water was the primary resource of concern comprising 40 percent of the complaints received. Air quality complaints accounted for 38 percent. Groundwater was identified as a resource of concern in nine percent of the complaints. During FY 2000, 70 percent of the complaints concerned dairy, beef, and swine farms, compared to 73 percent in FY 1999. During FY 2000, 71 percent of the new complaints received were from neighbors; 19 percent from the Department of Environmental Quality, and nine percent from other sources.

Commissioner Pridgeon asked if farmers work with MDA before they begin the process of building a new facility.

Mr. Whitman responded that often farmers do ask for copies of the GAAMP. He also has been invited to construction sites. The site GAAMP and the preliminary review of the plan would be beneficial to all concerned. It continues to be an educational process for the farmer. He also added that the new Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) would benefit farmers in their expansion planning.

Vicki Pontz-Teachout, director of the Environmental Stewardship Division, added that the banking community has become increasingly aware of the MAEAP program and Siting GAAMPs. There have been discussions with Farm Credit Services and a meeting will be held with the banking community to discuss the program.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment was received.

UPDATE ON MICHIGAN INTEGRATED FOOD AND FARMING SYSTEMS: Tom Guthrie, Executive Director of the Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems

Tom Guthrie, Executive Director of the Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS), distributed and reviewed information highlighting the accomplishments for the year 2000 of the MIFFS. He briefly discussed the following projects:

- ? *Market Line Project:* A web site database of producers, commodities, buyer, and users of food products.
- ? *Edible Urban Forest:* A project in cooperation with the Detroit Agriculture Network to allow for planting of fruit and nut trees in Detroit's vacant lots.
- ? *Groundwater Stewardship:* Up to 15 successful projects were identified and news articles written to promote groundwater stewardship.
- ? *Dunlap Award:* The award allowed MIFFS to help the communities around Clare County pursue the idea of a Cooperative Community Farmers Market. They are currently doing a feasibility and marketing study that will also include the Amish community.
- ? *Farmland Preservation/Land Use:* Funds were secured from The Americana Foundation and the Frey Foundation to help partner with others on the farmland preservation land use issue. This will assist communities develop local programs.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 11:10 a.m. in order for the Commission to attend the ANR Week President's Luncheon.

RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened at 1:50 p.m.

REVIEW OF 2001 MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU POLICIES: Ron Nelson of the Michigan Farm Bureau

Mr. Ron Nelson of the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) introduced Tonia Koppenaal. Ms. Koppenaal has accepted the position of associate legislative counsel in the Public Policy and Commodity Division of the Michigan Farm Bureau. She will work with the MDA, MSU and various commodity organizations. She also will have responsibility for transportation and law issues.

Mr. Nelson distributed and reviewed the *Michigan Farm Bureau 2001 Policy Book*, adopted by the delegates to the 81st Annual Meeting held December 5-8, 2000 in Traverse City, Michigan. Mr. Nelson briefly discussed the following policies:

- ? *Right to Farm:* MFB supports amendments to the Right to Farm Act to discourage false or unverified complaints. A person making two unverified complaints against a

farm would incur a \$1,000 fine from MDA. Monies collected would revert to MDA for costs of the complaint and investigations.

- ? *Animal Resource Management:* MFB will continue to work with MDA, DEQ, NRCS and MSU to develop and promote voluntary, incentive-driven management practices to avoid any new permitting requirements for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. MFB supports the continued use of manure-management practices developed under the Right to Farm Act and urge all livestock, equine and poultry producers to adopt these practices.
- ? *Livestock and Poultry Health:* MFB urges MSU to conduct research on the occurrence level of Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis. MFB urges equine owners to consult with vets and have their equine vaccinated for infectious and contagious diseases before the fair and show season.
- ? *Meat Inspection:* MFB encourages enabling legislation and funding to reinstate Michigan's slaughter inspection, or an agreement with USDA to provide state inspection services to satisfy federal standards. MFB supports the development of an additional standard by MDA to increase farmer-owned meat processing while maintaining food safety.
- ? *Michigan Nursery, Floriculture and Greenhouse Industry:* MFB supports efforts to unify industry actions on a statewide level.
- ? *Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing:* MFB supports creation of an Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing Advisory Committee.
- ? *Abandoned Orchards and Vineyards:* MFB supports removal of abandoned and neglected orchards, vineyards, etc. that harbor diseases and insects.
- ? *Value-Added Initiatives:* MFB supports individual and cooperative efforts by producers to improve income with processing and marketing methods which add value to raw farm products. MFB supports the efforts of a working group with representatives from commodity organizations, MSU, Farm Bureau, private consultants, and local, state and federal government agencies. MFB believes that the Michigan agriculture renaissance zones have tremendous opportunity for Michigan.
- ? *Stray Voltage:* MFB supports the need for a regulatory standard in order to judge stray voltage.
- ? *Land Use and Farmland Preservation:* MFB supports the use of PA 116 by creating additional incentives to maintain and increase participation. There is a need to reduce Michigan property tax to or below the national level average.
- ? *Agricultural Pollution Prevention Methods and Authority:* MFB believes that it is critical for the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program to move forward.
- ? *Agricultural Drainage:* MFB believes there is a need to revisit the Drain Code, either in portions or in its entirety.
- ? *Wildlife Management:* MFB supports a statewide ban on feeding and baiting of free-ranging deer.
- ? *Wetlands Protection Act:* MFB urges Michigan to adopt a consistent and realistic definition of a wetland. There should be no regulation of man-made wetlands and uses compatible with wetlands should be allowed.
- ? *Labor Housing Zoning:* The need for adequate housing for farm laborers is recognized and must be consistent with the Right to Farm Act. Conflicts exist in state laws governing the construction of migrant labor housing.
- ? *Anhydrous Ammonia:* There is an increased problem with the theft of anhydrous ammonia.

UPDATE ON MICHIGAN HORSE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES: Ann Louise Budd and Bev Grunheid, co-chairs of the Michigan Horse Expo 2001

Ann Louise Budd of the Michigan Horse Council distributed information and extended an invitation to the Commission to attend the Michigan Horse Council's 18th Annual International Stallion Exhibition and Trade Show Horse Expo 2001 underway at the MSU Pavilion.

Ms. Budd and Duane Dykstra of the Michigan Horse Council discussed Equine Infectious Anemia and the impact of the new legislation on Michigan's horse industry. Mr. Dykstra agrees that the legislation is needed for the horse industry, but believes that it needs some minor revisions.

Bev Grunheid distributed and reviewed information about Lyme Disease in Michigan. She is traveling throughout Michigan educating people about the disease. Education also needs to come from the state level because this is a health issue that affects farmers, trail riders, and all citizens of Michigan. She has appeared before the House Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Committee. The Michigan Lyme Disease Association has distributed over 3,500 surveys. Ms. Grunheid said that this disease is not being reported as it should and is being misdiagnosed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Dan Wyant

Director Wyant reviewed his monthly activities report and discussed the following issues:

Agriculture Heritage License Plate: Secretary of State Candice Miller introduced an Agriculture Heritage license plate to promote agriculture education. The funds from the \$50 license plate fee go directly to the FFA.

Organics Conference: The Michigan Organics Conference was held March 3-4, 2001, with over 500 attending. Organics is a growing segment of Michigan agriculture.

Bovine TB Conference: The Michigan 2001 Bovine Tuberculosis Conference was held March 5-6, 2001, with over 200 attending.

Wine Industry: A meeting will be held later this month with members of the wine industry to discuss the possible creation of a statewide standard for winery development on agricultural land. MDA is working with the Liquor Control Commission on the issue. Research is also being done on what other states are doing with respect to winery development and land use.

Land Use: Land use will be an important and time-consuming issue during the legislative session.

2002 Federal Farm Bill: The Michigan Farm Bureau and others will be asked to attend a future Commission meeting to discuss the 2002 Farm Bill. The Michigan Agri-Business Association will be hosting a conference to discuss the Farm Bill. The MFB also will host a series of discussions on the bill.

Confined Animal Feeding Operations: Director Wyant and staff will be traveling to Washington DC to hopefully meet with Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and EPA

Administrator Christine Todd Whitman. There already is a commitment from two undersecretaries to hear Michigan's presentation about the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program.

Fireblight: MDA staff researched funding opportunities for Southwest Michigan apple growers. Staff found four available federal programs: Special Apple Loan Program; Emergency Loan Assistance Program; Apple Loss Market Assistance Program (\$100 million for grants); and Apple/Potato Quality Loss Assistance Program (\$38 million for grants). The following recommendations were accepted by Director Wyant:

1. MDA will ask the USDA Farm Service Agency to quickly define the rules governing implementation of assistance programs not yet finalized.
2. MDA will work with the Michigan Legislature to increase funding and change the scope of the Abandoned Orchard Program. A program entitled, "Diseased Orchard Management Program" would provide funding for the removal of diseased trees, abandoned or not.
3. MDA will work with the USDA and the Michigan Congressional Delegation to authorize funding for the Tree Assistance Program.

Chair Tatter complimented staff on its research and on the new approach of adding the concept of diseased trees, abandoned or not.

Director Wyant noted that Congressman Fred Upton and U.S. Senator Carl Levin have indicated that they would work cooperatively on the Tree Assistance Program. Director Wyant said he expected to see challenges from other states.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

The following documentation is on file in the Commission of Agriculture office and is available upon request by contacting Vicki Burke, Michigan Commission of Agriculture, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, Michigan 48909, 517-373-1085.

Attachment A	Commission of Agriculture February 14, 2001 Meeting Minutes
Attachment B	Project GREEN Annual Report
Attachment C	March 2001 Legislative Status Report
Attachment D	Cooperative Resource Management Initiative (CRMI) Program Report
Attachment E	Letter from the Branch County 4-H Fair
Attachment F	2000 Annual Right to Farm Report
Attachment G	Information about Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems
Attachment H	2001 Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Book
Attachment I	Information about Lyme Disease
Attachment J	March 2001 Director's Report