

February Class III Price Up 28 Cents

The February Class III price is \$11.89, up 28 cents from January and up \$2.23 from a year ago. This is the highest February price since 1998. The February Class IV price is \$12.21, up \$1.24 from January and up \$2.40 from a year ago.

MMPA Board Members Reelected

MMPA delegates reelected MMPA Vice-President Ken Nobis to an at-large position on the MMPA board of directors during the 88th MMPA Annual Delegate Meeting in March.

During the District Meetings in February, the following individuals were also reelected to the board: Dan Javor, District 4; Harold Cnossen, District 5 and Deanna Stamp, District 8.

USDA Accepts Downer Cow Comments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will accept comments until April 12 on the current ban of downer cows to the food supply. Comments may be sent to:

FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket #03-025IF
102 Cotton Annex
300 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Two MMPA Member Farms Achieve National Dairy Quality Platinum Award

MMPA member farms Coppernoll Dairy of Leslie, and Westvale-Vu Dairy of Nashville, were selected as Platinum winners of the 2003 National Dairy Quality Awards (NDQA) Program. The farms are two of only nine operations from across the country that earned Platinum ratings from the NDQA judges.

Harry Sr. and June Coppernoll, with their son, Harry Jr., milk 87 cows at Coppernoll Dairy. The farm was named MMPA's top quality award winner for 2002. The Coppernolls use a CMT paddle to detect problem quarters and closely monitor the herd's SCC and bacteria counts via MMPA quality faxes.

Westvale-Vu Dairy is owned by Doug and Louisa Westendorp. They milk 100 cows and cut the herd's SCC in half when they went from 2x to 3x milking.

Both farms were recognized for their quality achievement at the National Mastitis Council's Annual Meeting in February.

MDEQ Requires Individual Permits for New Large CAFOs

On February 27, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issued a determination and notice stating that any new CAFO that exceeds specific animal numbers in Michigan will be required to apply for an individual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

According to MDEQ, a new large CAFO must apply for the individual permit if it has at least *double* the number of animals the state defines as a CAFO; it will expand to confine at least 3.5 times the number of animals over a five-year period; and it has open manure and wastewater storage structures, or applies liquid manure to the land.

For dairy producers, a CAFO is defined as 700 mature cattle. The new ruling means that any new dairy producer with over 1,400 mature dairy cows are likely to have a public hearing in order to obtain an individual permit.

Upcoming Events

April

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| 2 | Young Cooperator Dairy Leadership Conference – Mt. Pleasant |
| 7 | MMPA Advisory Committee Meeting - Novi |
| 14 | MMPA Dairy Communicator Meeting - Lansing |
| 29 | Michigan Dairy Industry Conference - Lansing |

Greens Receive MSU Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award

Duane and Velmar Green of Elsie, Mich., partners in Green Meadow Farms, have been honored with the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Distinguished Service Award.

MSU President Peter McPherson and College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Dean Jeff Armstrong, presented the award March 11 during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at MSU.



MSU Agriculture Dean Jeff Armstrong, right, presents Velmar Green with the Distinguished Service to Agriculture award.

Duane and Velmar are active in several state and national organizations. Duane has served as national board member, vice president and president of the Holstein Association USA. Velmar currently serves as director and treasurer of Michigan Milk Producers Association.

Throughout their careers, the Greens have been early adapters of new technologies in dairy herd management. They have adapted and experimented with new milking, manure handling and labor management systems. When they joined their father, Merle, in 1954, the farm had 250 milk cows. Today, Green Meadow Farms has 75 full-time employees and milks 3,300 cows. The farm also has the largest herd of registered Holsteins in North America.

Green Meadow Farms, opens its doors to MSU students in veterinary medicine and animal science, giving them opportunities for hands-on learning and research. The Greens have also participated in MSU research related to manure management and environmental protection.

2003 Michigan Farm Land and Farm Numbers Remain Unchanged

The estimated number of farms in Michigan in 2003 was 53,300, unchanged from 2002, according to the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service. Land in farms was estimated to be 10.1 million acres, unchanged from last year. The average size farm in Michigan was 189 acres per farm, unchanged from 2002.

The number of farms and ranches in the United States in 2003 was estimated at 2.13 million, down 0.4 percent from 2002.

The average size farm, 441 acres, increased one acre from 2002. The decrease in the number of farms and land in farms continues to reflect a consolidation in farming operations and competition for agricultural land for other uses.

Michigan Receives \$23 Million for Conservation of Natural Resources

Funding for Michigan land owners interested in conserving natural resources is now available for the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers these programs, which provide cost-share and technical assistance to landowners for the protection and enhancement of water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, soil, air quality and other natural resource areas.

Applications for EQIP, WHIP and WRP will be selected through a competitive ranking process that evaluates the environmental benefit of the conservation plan proposed.

"With Michigan's landowners historical high interest in protecting natural resources, Michigan NRCS typically receives more applications than we are able to fund," says Ron Williams, Michigan NRCS State Conservationist. "I would encourage those interested in obtaining assistance for implementing conservation through EQIP, WHIP or WRP to visit their local NRCS office as soon as possible."

Those interested in applying for EQIP, WHIP and WRP should visit their local NRCS office, typically located in the county USDA Service Center. Applications are available at www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.