

The Michigan FFA Creed

April/May 2008



The Michigan FFA Creed



Issue 4 Volume 6

The State FFA Office
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D- Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

Learn more about the mysterious disappearance of the honeybee

F- Show Me the Honey!

The very sweet business ventures of a Lapeer FFA member is shared with the rest of the association

H- Member Highlights

Read about the SAEs and lives of six Michigan FFA members

K- The Rest of the Story...

Learn more about those who are serving as your state officers

N- Learning to Do

The Webberville Agriscience & Natural Resources program finds its stride to success

The Michigan FFA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, weight, sexual orientation or disability. Any student requiring an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact the chapter advisor to arrange such accommodation.

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I believe in...

...life and living life to its fullest. There is a famous quote that says, "Today is a gift. That's why they call it the present." We couldn't agree more.

Life can become a series of seemingly meaningless days and events if we let it. But why should today look just the same as yesterday? If we look into the past we can find memories that are both difficult and rewarding. But it's those positive memories and experiences that are inspiration for today and tomorrow. We may not be able to change the past but we still have today to enjoy and take advantage of.

We can change our ways if we chose or simply appreciate what we have. We can grasp this moment, this day and challenge ourselves to make a difference, to appreciate life and the opportunities before us. With each day, new opportunities come, whether it's the chance to do something you've

always dreamed or bring a smile to someone else's face, each day is full of possibility.

One day you may decide to take that trip to the Mackinaw Bridge that you've been yearning to, or go see an old friend. Maybe you'll go back to school and pursue a degree in your dream field and then again today you may decide to simply enjoy life and the people that surround you, appreciating the life you've made for yourself.

Today is a gift, one that's filled with vast possibilities and opportunity at every corner. You have the power to change your life, making it everything you want it to be. So take today and embrace it, make today a great day, one filled with zest, joy and life. And carry that passion for life with you into tomorrow and the rest of your tomorrows. Living a life that's been designed just for you, and living it to max.

Dates to Remember...

April

- 18 Meats Contest
- 18 Ag Skills Contests
- 19 Horse Judging

May

- 9 FFA Lansing Lugnuts Game
- 13 American Degrees and other applications due to State FFA Office

Where Have All and the fruit? and the vegetables? and

By: Alex Henry
MSU ANR Communications Major

Picture a world with no apples, no bananas and certainly no honey.

No, global warming, gas emissions and corn shortages are not to blame, but rather... dying bees! Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has been blamed for a speculated 90 percent decrease in the wild honeybee population nationwide and has raised major concern amongst industry leaders and consumers alike.

Now don't expect the complete disappearance of fruit anytime soon, but many experts are concerned with the uncertain future of the dwindling honeybee population. With reports of 25 to 50 percent hive losses and estimates that every third bite of food consumed is the result of a pollinator, scientists are beginning to worry about the viability of nature's first farmers.

CCD-affected hives have left beekeepers across the nation baffled at the virtual disappearance of their livelihood. These keepers report that their thriving colonies of 40,000 or more bees mysteriously vanish over the course of a week.

To make matters more puzzling, affected hives show no signs of mass casualties. The hives are just empty. Adult bees of CCD infected colonies uncharacteristically abandon their hives leaving ample food stores and developing offspring behind. It's as if the bees leave for their daily foraging and forget how to get back home.

But what's causing it? CCD affects only adult bees and the disorder has no affect on the development of larvae, so how

does it spread so quickly?

Some have blamed Genetically Modified Organisms and agriculturally approved pesticides. No conclusive results, however, have substantiated this claim.

The Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium published a new Summary of Research on the Non-Target Effects of Bt Corn Pollen on Honeybees which stated, "a field study... (soon to be published in the bee journal Apidologie) [reveals that] there is no evidence thus far of any lethal or sub-lethal effects of the currently used Bt proteins on honey bees."

In addition, lethal pesticide levels in bees would primarily affect the young (the brood), and has therefore failed to be linked to adult infecting CCD.

Others believe that climate change is to blame, attesting that erratic weather disrupts the bee's naturally sensitive cycles. Dry, warm winters could have added to the problem by preventing the blossoming of flowering plants. This, in turn, could have limited the nutrients available to the bees and made their immune systems more susceptible to attack.

Another possible cause for CCD highlighted by researchers is radiation, primarily from cell phone towers. This hypothesis is once again pure speculation and studies have shown that although the radio frequencies of similar towers may disorient the bees, they resulted in no mass hive collapse.



the Flowers Gone?

come to mention it, where's all the honey?

Other potential causes include malnutrition, pathogens, and mites. Scientists have not found evidence to substantiate any of these arguments therefore leaving the origins of CCD a mystery. Thirty-five states have already reported incidents inside their borders while countries abroad – Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain – have reported similar puzzling losses.

But why all the panic? Who honestly likes bees anyway?!

The answer: the economy. While \$455 million worth of Michigan crops depend on honeybees, Cornell University estimates that commercial honeybees contribute \$15 billion to the United States economy annually. Sales of hive products alone, such as honey, wax, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and venom generate hundreds of millions of dollars!

America is home to 150,000 beekeepers – renting and trucking their over 3 million hives to farmers for a variety of commodities. Crops especially dependent on the bee population include

apples, squash, sunflowers, alfalfa, sweet cherries, blueberries, almonds, cranberries, tomatoes and strawberries. As an extreme case, California needs 1.5 million colonies of bees in a 3-week window in late February and early March.

Both producers and legislators have begun to acknowledge the importance of our pollen transporting friends. Congress declared June 24-30, 2007 National Pollinator Week. Last March, a bill was introduced to Congress that would give the United States Department of Agriculture \$50 million over 5 years to study CCD.

But everyone can agree, something must be done to protect our pollinators for the sake of agriculture, for the health of the environment and the future American consumer. Albert Einstein said it best, "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."

The Buzz on Bees

- 2 million Americans are allergic to bee stings
- Honeybee queens lay 3,000 eggs a day, 175-200 thousand annually
- It takes 2 million flowers to make 1 jar of honey
- An average worker bee makes 1/12th tsp of honey in her lifetime
- Bees have a magnetic band around their brains to help them navigate
- One gallon of honey equals the combined flight distance of going to the moon and back
- Worker bees are only females and they last only four weeks in the summer
- Honeybees fly 15 mph



show me The Honey!

By: Andrew Walker
MSU James Madison College



With a suggestion from his uncle, Eric Fisher of the Lapeer FFA Chapter began his career as a bee entrepreneur. For five years, Fisher has been experimenting with honey production and looking for new ways to help his business grow. Starting out, he had two beehives and a bee suit, but set a goal to produce at least 250 pounds of honey. Five hives, each producing 60 pounds, would be necessary to reach this goal. He also had to acquire clear bottles and the proper equipment for processing the honey. Fisher set out to achieve these goals at any cost.

Like all good SAE projects, some lessons have to be learned the hard way. In developing his hives, Fisher stumbled across a few problems and quickly learned from them, such as keepings the mite population down in order to relieve the bees from their stressful work. Fisher also has to watch the weather, because cold conditions can often hurt the bees in the early spring. However, he has dealt with these issues through the guidance of others and can now handle them on his own.

Fisher maintains twelve hives and works with his mentor, Bill Schnute, in producing honey and beeswax candles. In order to utilize his beehives efficiently and maximize his profit, he has taken courses to become a registered beekeeper. He is also a member of the South Eastern Michigan Beekeeper's Association, Michigan Floral Association, and the Michigan Nursery/Landscape Association. By being actively trained and part of professional organizations, Eric Fisher has expanded his business, as well as advanced his marketing techniques.

Increasing his honey production over the years has allowed him to increase the entire scope of his business. Professional equipment is necessary for Fisher to harvest the honey. He recently purchased gear from a local industry person, allowing himself to become totally self-sufficient in his operation. Marketing has also become a necessary concern for him, as he

increases his production yield.

The marketing plan Fisher uses allows his business to be seen in the public eye. Because stores demand a constant supply of honey, he is unable to sell his goods in local supermarkets. Therefore, he has found other outlets in order to sell his merchandise. He uses his church, home-school group, vocational school, and FFA chapter to aid in distributing his product to customers. He has found that making his product look professional and offering sale discounts encourages consumers to buy his honey. Christmas tends to be his booming time of year because many individuals purchase bee products for stocking stuffers.

Along with Fisher's busy bee work, he is very involved in his local chapter. He has been a member of the Floriculture and Landscape CDE contest, as the state winner in both and placing high at the national level. He has recently been recognized for his work with his bee operation by being the state winner of the Agricultural Processing Proficiency Award for Michigan. His help at the Lapeer Technical Education Center is invaluable to his advisor, Tammy Hyatt and the students he aides.

"Eric is one of the hardest working students when it comes to his devotion to learning," says Hyatt about Fisher. "He has gained knowledge in plant and animal science, floriculture, greenhouse management and landscaping."

Eric Fisher may be from a small town, but decided that he wanted to try something that he enjoyed. "I chose to have this business as a way to show people around me that local honey could be sold from a little business such as mine and want nothing more than to balance my investment book and have good relationships with people I had never met before." Through his hard work he is making a reality out of something that began as an idea. Now he will continue improving his SAE, while passing his experience and knowledge down to younger members in his chapter.



What is YOUR FFA age?

1 How many components are there in Agriculture Education?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 5

2 When was the organization name changed from “Future Farmers of America” to the National FFA Organization?

- a) 1952
- b) 1985
- c) 1970
- d) 1988

3 How many FFA chapters are there in Michigan?

- a) 59
- b) 77
- c) 109
- d) 125

4 Who wrote the FFA Creed?

- a) Leslie Applegate
- b) Dave Wyrick
- c) E.M. Tiffany
- d) Gus Linter

5 What year did the New Farmers of America merge with FFA?

- a) 1930
- b) 1965
- c) 1969
- d) 1972

6 What year was the National FFA Alumni founded? The National FFA Foundation?

- a) 1971; 1944
- b) 1931; 1962
- c) 1975; 1965
- d) 1989; 1953

7 Who is the National FFA Advisor?

- a) Dr. Larry Case
- b) Mr. Marion Fletcher
- c) Mr. C. Coleman Harris
- d) Mr. Steven Brown

8 How many National Proficiency areas are awarded?

- a) 25
- b) 37
- c) 47
- d) 59

9 In opening ceremonies, the plow is a symbol of...

- a) knowledge and wisdom
- b) a new era in agriculture
- c) friendship and brotherhood
- d) labor and tillage of the soil

10 Which ability requires a two-thirds vote?

- a) Parliamentary Inquiry
- b) Previous Question
- c) Refer to a Committee
- d) Division of the Assembly

Answers: 1-C, 2-D, 3-C, 4-C, 5-B, 6-A, 7-A, 8-C, 9-D, 10-B

Answers are on the right side of this page. How do YOU rank?

0-2 Correct:

You're a Junior High member and you have a bright future ahead of you! Through hard work, dedication, and mentorship from older members you will soon advance through the FFA ranks.

3-4 Correct:

You're a Greenhand member and you still have much to learn! Get involved in chapter activities to better explore all that FFA has to offer you. It will take time, perseverance, and patience for advancement, but you are the future knowledge base of our organization!

5-7 Correct:

You're a Chapter Officer! You are charged with leading your chapter and ensuring that new, younger members are welcomed into the FFA. Your most important tasks include recruitment, retention, planning and execution of events, leadership development!

8-9 Correct:

You're a State Officer! You are trusted with the important task and privilege of serving as a constant advocate of the Michigan FFA. You must be accountable, driven, and enthusiastic to spread the message of agriculture education and FFA!

10 Correct:

You are a National Officer! You have shown a continued passion for agriculture and a genuine habit of servant leadership! For an entire year, you will represent members as one of the most talented public speakers, liaisons, and advocates in our membership!

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Do you or someone you know have an impressive SAE? If so, please email pettyd@anr.msu.edu and let us highlight the student!!!

Member



Region I Stephen Reinart, Hopkins

Stephen Reinart of the Hopkins FFA Chapter is now in his second year of membership at Hopkins High School. In his short career, he has been involved in many activities that reach beyond the chapter level, national convention; the EDGE conference and SLCCO are just a few.

Having an SAE of diversified livestock production also comes natural to Stephen as his family operates a farm that raises cows, sheep and pigs. Each day he is responsible for feeding and turning the family's flock out to pasture, along with care of their pigs and cattle.

As he is currently in the tenth grade, Stephen will graduate in two years. Currently he plans to attend Grand Valley State University to study criminal justice.



Region II Sarah Mann, Camden-Frontier

As president of the Camden-Frontier FFA Chapter, Sarah Mann has shown the type of leadership that inspires others to take action. The high school senior is also involved in 4-H, Junior Dairy Club, the Hillsdale County Horse Judging Team and the seatbelt safety club.

For the past nine years, Sarah has shown market hogs, sheep, steers, goats, rabbits, chickens and ducks at the Hillsdale County Fair. From this SAE, Sarah said she has learned hard work and dedication.

After graduating from high school, Sarah plans on attending Michigan State University and majoring in Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications.



Region III Ben Bryant, Alma

The FFA has taught Alma FFA member Ben Bryant how to be significantly more outgoing and has given him the opportunity to meet people and make many new friends. A senior at Shepherd High School, who is currently serving as chapter reporter, he has been an FFA member for two years.

Ben's SAE is beef production. He helps on his family farm by caring for their beef cows and steers. Ben is also in charge of the farm bull that he must hay and grain him daily. He also has to find time each week to mix feed to fill automatic feeders in the steer lots.

Ben will graduate from high school this year and he plans to attend Michigan State University in the fall to study in Animal Science.

J

Highlights



Region IV Trina Unger, Byron

Raising dairy cattle comes natural to Trina Unger of the Byron FFA Chapter. She first got involved in the dairy industry in 1996 at the age of six when her family started their dairy operation and she began showing calves at the Shiawassee County Fair. She has since continued that tradition and is now in her twelfth year of the project. This first became her SAE in 2004 as a freshman in high school. FFA, along with her SAE, has taught her many life. Skills such as how to write a business letter, taxes and financing, and running organizations.

Trina, who is currently a senior at Byron High School graduates this year. At this time she is undecided about what college or university she will be attending this fall, but she knows that she will be majoring in either English and Literature or Visual and Performing Arts.



Region V Kate Cavanaugh, Caledonia

Caledonia FFA Treasurer Kate Cavanaugh first began her supervised agricultural experience of raising and showing steers at age fourteen, although she has shown at the Kent County Youth Fair since she was nine years old. Of the many things her SAE has taught she feels that three of the most important things are how to properly care for cattle, how to be confident in what she does and how to be respectful towards the people and animals around her.

She was first inspired to join the FFA by the stories she heard from her family, as both her dad and uncle were members in high school. They too, along with her brothers helped her to get started in her SAE. When Kate graduates this spring, she plans to attend ITT Technical Institute to study criminal justice.



Region VI Emily Walker, Ogemaw Heights

Ogemaw Heights FFA Chapter junior Emily Walker is a very outstanding young lady. Currently she serves as chapter president and as sentinel of her region, along with being a member of several 4-H clubs, National Honor Society, and playing on three varsity sports teams.

Raising livestock is a major part of her life outside of school related activities; she has been doing it since she was eight years old. This has helped her to develop a very successful SAE in diversified livestock production, in which she raises beef cattle, swine, goats and dairy heifers all to be shown at the local county fair. From her projects she has learned the rewards of hard work and the sense of achievement along with good time management skills as it can be challenge managing her animals along with her busy extracurricular schedule.

Feb/March 2008

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The classics are back!

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JACKSON
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The 2007 FFA Tractors are now on sale.

This year's FFA tractor is a 1/16 scale Farmall 806. The first Farmall in the series! It is available at Tractor Supply Company (TSC) stores statewide. All proceeds benefit the Michigan FFA Foundation.



Now only \$56.98!

For more information about how you can support the FFA, contact the Michigan FFA Foundation at (517) 432-2482 or online at www.michiganffa.com

The Rest of the Story...



Amanda Sollman State Secretary

Michigan FFA meet your state secretary, a sophomore at Michigan State University, Amanda Gayle Sollman of the Sanilac FFA Chapter.

Having her father as her Ag teacher and chapter advisor, Sollman says that, “FFA has always been a family affair for her.” Having a very successful career in high school, she was a member of three national career development teams, and competed in prepared public speaking all three years of membership.

Raising and showing livestock is a passion that lies very close to Sollman’s heart. Currently she raises and produces show pigs and lambs for county, state, and national shows. She also has an SAE in agricultural services, where she is employed by Bio-Systems, Inc. There she assists with pulling soil samples, conducting soil tests, and analyzing the results to assist local farmers in their decision making.

When she is not busy working in the FFA office or busting her brain with school work, she can be found watching Grey’s Anatomy or Veronica Mars re-runs. She enjoys going to the movies with friends and snuggling up to a good book by Meg Cabot; her food of choice is homemade beef stroganoff. She also loves eating sugar-coated gummy worms.

She would like to leave the members of Michigan with this quote, “many things in life will catch your eye, only a few will catch your heart---pursue those.”

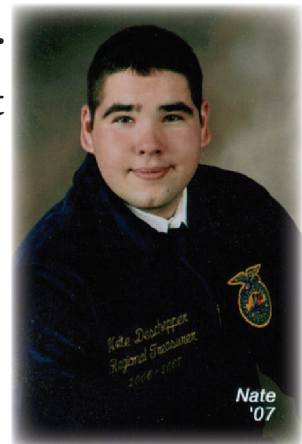
Nate Deschepper Region IV State Vice President

Region IV State Vice President Nate Deschepper is truly inspired by the FFA members of Michigan. He says that it is truly amazing to hear about the goals that members of this state are excited to reach and that he is always more than excited to hear about the amazing opportunities that others have had through our wonderful organization.

Originally from the Byron FFA Chapter, Deschepper is currently a freshman at Lansing Community College, where he is studying diesel mechanics. Before graduating from high school, he was very active in his FFA chapter and high school. Having played football for three years, it is surprising that he still managed to find time to work on a local dairy farm and raise chickens for the poultry contest.

Nate also has some pretty rock solid Supervised Agricultural Experiences. He raises both steers and market hogs, which he shows at the county fair. He also owns a cow and a heifer, which he breeds, and is planning to start a small beef production operation with. This year he hopes to more than anything, help the members of our state achieve their dreams and to help to inform the public about agriculture and the National FFA Organization.

This down home boy enjoys his mom’s home cooked steak and cheesy potatoes especially on days where he plans to go outside and hunt, his favorite outdoors activity. He also enjoys driving his Chevy and listening to Montgomery Gentry. At this time his favorite song is we rode in trucks, as it describes some of his favorite past times.



LAST CHANCE - ORDER NOW!

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YOUR JOURNEY STARTS AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY!



Get where you're going with one of the two new majors from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources CARRS (Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies) Department!

In the Fall of 2008, two new majors will be revealed within the CARRS Department: Environmental Studies and Agriscience & Park Recreation and Tourism Resources.

In the Environmental Studies and Agriscience major, options will include: Communication, Community Engagement and Education, Science and Policy, as well as Agriscience and Natural Resources Teacher Education.

In the Park Recreation and Tourism Resources major, options will include: Community Engagement and Education, Commercial Recreation and Tourism, Community Recreation and Zoo and Aquarium Sciences.

For more information please contact: Dr. Randy Showerman (showerma@msu.edu), Dr. David Krueger (kruege20@msu.edu) or Dr. Jenó Rivera (jeno@msu.edu).

Our Motto in Motion: Learning to Do



By: Dustin Petty
MSU ANR Communications Major

This isn't your grandfather's agriculture class.

No, the time when cows, plows and sows dominated the Ag classroom is gone, and today, students in Loretta Benjamin's Agriscience program at Webberville High School are just as likely to be found studying wetland preservation and marketing plans as learning about dairy management.

Watching Benjamin teach a class is akin to seeing a pro basketball player in the height of his game. She moves from side to side, looking her students in the eyes, hoping to catch any glimpse of confusion before she moves on. Her passion in the classroom is matched only by her earnest desire that each student reap the rewards of being knowledgeable in her subject matter.

A mother of two and wife of a Webberville farmer, Benjamin is a former state officer of the Future Homemakers of America and a graduate of Michigan State University. She feels her responsibility is one to remind students of the importance of agriculture while also teaching them about what they'll need to

know for their futures.

"There are so many issues in the forefront concerning the environment and our natural resources," said Benjamin, "and I think all students need to know about these issues. At the same time, since agriculture is one of the biggest industries in the state, it's important they be educated in that field as well."

And students respond to her teaching.

"My classes with Mrs. Benjamin have more hands-on activities than any other class that I've ever taken," said 18-year-old senior Andrew Clark. "When my friends hear that I'm in an Agriscience class, they ask me why I would want to learn about cows and farming but it's so much more than that."

Clark is putting what he's learned in the Webberville Agriscience & Natural Resources program to good use.

"Andy is working on a big wetland restoration project and helping the high school become more energy efficient," said Benjamin, speaking like a proud mother of her students and their accomplishments.

All together, there are about 100 students in the Webberville Agriscience & Natural Resources program.

And Benjamin's teachings reach farther than the city limits of Webberville. As part of the developed curriculum at the Capital Area Career Center of Ingham County, students from Mason, Williamston, Stockbridge and other regional areas make their way to Webberville High School. No busing system currently exists for area students that want to attend the Webberville program so it takes some devotion – and sometimes about twenty miles a day – to get to and from the facilities.



Loretta Benjamin with two students

FFA NEW HORIZONS

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Victoria Rodkins is a junior at Mason High School and makes the 25 minute drive to Webberville.

“I want to be a veterinarian one day,” said Rodkins, “and I can learn skills here that will help me accomplish that.”

However, no matter where the student’s home school is, each has the opportunity to join the Webberville FFA Chapter. Known until 1988 as the Future Farmers of America, the FFA is a leadership organization made up nationwide of over 500,000 students enrolled in an agriscience and natural resources program.

Members of the Webberville FFA have the opportunity to compete in leadership contests and gain real-life skills, like public speaking and the art of succeeding in a job interview. There is also more than two million dollars available each year in scholarships.

And in this, the program’s fiftieth year in existence, Benjamin believes there is a future for her field.

“We’re always going to have agriculture and natural resources and we’re always going to need to teach our young people about that. If they want to eat, anyway.”



This article was prepared in conjunction with Kali Fields, Alyn Kiel and Andrea Kerbuski, all of Michigan State University.

April/May 2008

Find your fit in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources!

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