

SUMMER 2005

Michigan Apple

NEWS



Michigan Apple Committee
www.MichiganApples.com

It's In the Bag!

MAC Works With Industry to Redesign Bag

MAC has been working hard to create a fresh position for Michigan apples in the marketplace.

Michigan's best competitive edge is the superior flavor of our apples, as well as the many varieties of apples grown here. Recently, many retailers have wanted to promote "locally grown" apples, which is another advantage Michigan can take as far south as northern Kentucky and west into Illinois and Wisconsin.

With all this in mind, MAC has focused on "Michigan Apples: Great Lakes, Great Flavors™" as its marketing position and slogan.

For nearly a year, the committee has been working to bring this fresh message to the apple bags. MAC staff

With the flair of a retro fruit label, the full-color bag features a trio of popular Michigan apples.

worked with apple shippers, board members, three graphic designers, several bag printers and the Perishables Group (produce

consultants) to come up with a final design (pictured at right). With the flair of a retro fruit label, the full-color bag features a trio of popular Michigan apples. Text is specific to the apple variety, and focuses on flavor characteristics and how the apple is used.

A unique and fun "Flavormeter" was developed with a needle that runs from "sweet" to "tart." The needle is set in a different location for each of 18 apple varieties.

Michigan Bag Design (front)



Some elements are repeated on the back, as many retailers prefer to turn the bags upside down to better showcase the apples.

Some bags will begin appearing in stores this fall, although full implementation will take a while. Many shippers and apple packing houses have costly inventories of the current bag that must be used.

When enough businesses have converted to the new bag, MAC will launch retail and consumer promotions of it.

To see the bag in full color, visit the "Growers Only" section of MichiganApples.com (User Name: "MichGrower"; Password: "GreatFlavors").

THIS 'N' THAT

Don Baiers of Baiers Orchards in Watervliet has been appointed to the MAC Board by Governor Granholm to represent Michigan Apple Growers in District 1. Also, **Mike Beck** of St. Johns and **Robert Colgren** of Lawrence have been reappointed to their posts. All three are for the terms 2005-2008. Congratulations!



Project GREEN has awarded research dollars for 2005! Nearly \$1.7 million was directed toward either new projects for 2005 or continuations from 2003 and 2004. At least five projects relating to apples were funded, on topics including fire blight resistance, farm marketing and ag tourism, codling moth mating disruption, and thinning.

Eden Foods, Inc., of Clinton, has introduced four new single-serve applesauce flavors. Apple, apple strawberry, apple cherry and apple cinnamon, all in single-serve containers. Burnette Foods, an apple processing company in Hartford, supplies apples to Eden Foods, the largest manufacturer of organic foods in the Eastern US.

The Michigan Apple Committee has reduced its US Apple assessment rate for 2005-harvested apples. Effective with 2005 crop apples, the US Apple assessment will be reduced to 2 cents per hundredweight.

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Cider Issue Heats Up

There has been much discussion recently, initiated by an outbreak of foodborne illness in New York last fall, about mandatory pasteurization of all cider—including cider sold at the location where it is made.

In March, the US Apple Association took a position in favor of mandatory pasteurization, similar to their sentiments in the 1990s.

This has sparked debate among Michigan cider producers. Many cider producers believe their customers demand nonpasteurized cider and that pasteurizing it would hurt their businesses. The cost of pasteurizing equipment would also financially impact many cider makers.

Other Michigan apple cider makers and apple growers believe that by not pasteurizing the potential risk of foodborne illness could hurt the entire apple industry.

The Michigan Apple Committee has not taken a position on this issue. However, MAC has directed staff to set up a Cider Safety Task Force to ensure that Michigan remains a leader in cider safety. The fledgling task force has met twice.

While the US Apple recommendation to change the pasteurization law is in the hands of the FDA, the Michigan task force is looking at more comprehensive ways to make cider production safer.

“We are looking at strengthening the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and requiring food safety education in order to maintain one’s license,” said task force member and cider maker **Jim Koan** of Flushing.

Any Michigan cider maker is welcome to join the Cider Safety Task Force to help keep Michigan at the forefront of cider quality and safety. For more information, please contact the Michigan Apple Committee at (800) 456-2753.

Michigan Apple Committee Board Members and Staff

Board Members

Bryan Bixby, Chair
Julia Hersey, Vice Chair
Mike Beck
Robert Colgren
Alvin Dietrich
Mark Doherty
Scott Lewis

Staff

Denise Yockey, *Executive Director*
Diane Smith, *Manager of Administration & Finance*
Ken Meyer, *Southern Merchandiser*
Scott Hoerman, *Northern Merchandiser*
Gretchen Mensing, *Communications Specialist*
Karen Blink, *Administrative Assistant*

Michigan Commodity Groups gathered at the State Capitol in Lansing May 24 to educate legislators about the importance of Michigan agriculture. MAC was among 28 organizations to attend the event organized by Michigan Farm Bureau.

Working the new MAC booth at the State Capitol were (from left): Denise Yockey, MAC Executive Director; Dawn Drake, MACMA; Robert Colgren, MAC Board; Kristin Colgren; and Allyn Anthony, Michigan Horticulture Society.



Now you can find apple-related festivals and celebrations happening all over the state with the click of your mouse! At the consumer section of MichiganApples.com, click on "Festivals." You'll find a list of apple events happening in Michigan! **Karen Blink**, MAC Administrative Assistant, compiled the information on these festivals and created a list to help Michigan apple lovers enjoy and celebrate their favorite fruit!

Michigan Apple Queen Paula Fisher Steps Out

This summer, Michigan Apple Queen 2005 **Paula Fisher** of Berrien Springs is participating in a series of events representing the Michigan apple industry.

Events the Queen will attend this summer are the Michigan Flavorbest Apple run in Sparta, the National Coast Guard Festival Parade in Grand Haven, and the Michigan State Fair held in Detroit.

Fisher will be joined in many of these events by the first runner-up **Emily Westendorp** of Dowagiac, and second runner-up **Ashley Wright** of Belding.

The Michigan Apple court will be riding in parades on the 2005 Michigan Apple Industry fairytale-themed float designed by 2003 Michigan Apple Queen **Janna Klein**, a graphic design student.

Food Bank Council Thanks Michigan Apple Growers

by Kim Harkness, Food Programs Manager, Food Bank Council of Michigan

The Food Bank Council of Michigan would like to thank the apple growers of Michigan for supporting our food-banking network.

Apple growers in Michigan contribute to the food banks in Michigan through the Michigan Agricultural Surplus System (MASS). The MASS program is a partnership with the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) that provides financial support with a grant and resources from staff members. The grant is made available to offset the costs of production of the fresh apple product. Grant funds go towards harvesting, cleaning, bagging and transporting the product to the food banks.

In 2004, the MASS grant made it possible to distribute 1,306,738 pounds of apples to all 83 counties in Michigan!

In 2004, the Food Bank Council of Michigan had the privilege of working with such growers as **Beck's Cider Mill**, **Dutchman Orchards**, **Jack Brown Produce** and their growers and **Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.** and their growers.

If you would like to learn more about food banking or the MASS program in your community please contact the Food Bank Council of Michigan at (800) 552-4483 or visit our website at www.fbcmich.org.

Pictured, l-r: 2nd runner-up Ashley Wright, 2005 Michigan Apple Queen Paula Fisher, and 1st runner-up Emily Westendorp stand next to the fairytale-themed float at the Tulip Time Festival parade in Holland.



Dates to Remember

August 11

Apple Day at Michigan State Fair
Detroit, MI

August 17

US Apple Export Council Meeting
Chicago, IL

August 18-21

US Apple Outlook Conference
Chicago, IL

August 19-20

US Apple Association Meeting
Chicago, IL

September 17-18

Eli's Cheesecake Festival
Chicago, IL

November 4-7

PMA Convention
Atlanta, GA

December 6-8

Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable
and Farm Market Expo
Grand Rapids, MI

December 7

Michigan Apple Growers Luncheon
Grand Rapids, MI

Hello Apple Growers!

It is with mixed feelings that I submit my farewell letter as Chair of the Michigan Apple Committee. I have served on the committee for six years and I will continue to be involved in the apple industry through US Apple. I have complete confidence that our very competent board will continue to work to represent Michigan apple growers and the industry in a positive way.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Michigan Apple Committee board and staff for their support and hard work throughout my tenure as Chair. Though I am leaving the board, I plan to be very active in the Michigan apple industry for a long time to come!

It seems that I am leaving on a very positive note, as we expect to harvest a large crop this fall! Growers have been asking me what the apple committee will do to help sell this large crop. And since Washington State has a significant carry-over and another big crop on the way, good consumer and retailer promotion will be very important in 2005-2006.

Rather than writing about each program we are developing, the actual marketing plan "sell sheets" have been inserted in this newsletter. The MAC staff and the staff of various apple shippers will be using these programs to encourage retailers to lock in with Michigan apples.

I hope you enjoy reviewing what the Michigan Apple Committee is accomplishing with your grower dollars. We encourage you to share your thoughts on the work we are doing to bring better returns back to the Michigan grower.

Sincerely,

Bryan Bixby, Chair
Michigan Apple Committee



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