



Assemblymember **Steve Hawley** (R, C, I - Batavia) and **Matt Kludt** and others discuss agriculture issues in the Kludt farm office on West Kendall Road in Kendall. Members of the Assembly Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Communities held a public forum in Albion on August 31 and toured the Kludt agri-business prior to the gathering to hear from area farmers and local officials about the current condition of the agriculture industry and to help find ways to address the specific needs and challenges of the farming community.



Kludt Farm was established in 1953 and grows carrots, cabbage, corn, squash, beans, peas, field corn and sweet corn. Much of the produce is trucked to area processors in Geneva, Bergen and Oakfield. The farm's grain silos rise tall against the late summer sky. **Matt Kludt** (top right) and others brought to light issues of concern to the farming community, among those, labor costs and gas prices. From now through November, the peak of the harvest season, the labor force available to farmers is key to having a productive season. "Farmers in Orleans County have shown us their tremendous contribution to our state's top economy and I look forward to turning the information we have gathered into legislative solutions to help them," said Task Force member Jim Bacalles of Corning who attended the focus day. "I know first-hand how important agriculture is to this region and I am pleased that the local farming community was given the chance to show off one of its many quality farms," Hawley stated in a press release. Photographs by Rick Nicholson