

**Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)
Advisory Council Function, Membership, Accomplishments, and 2013
Focus**

MAEAP Advisory Council (AC) Function

MAEAP AC official functions are outlined in Public Act (PA) 451, 1994 as amended, Part 87. The AC is to advise the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) regarding MAEAP standards, on-site evaluations for verification of specific aspects of a farming operation, water quality and environmental monitoring, protocols for verification and revocation of verification, MAEAP activities, interagency coordination of conservation programs, the use of money in the clean water fund created in section 8807 and other funding sources to promote MAEAP and activities to encourage more MAEAP-verified farms, options to increase assistance to assist small and medium sized farms in achieving MAEAP standards and the creation of subcommittees as needed to address emerging and ongoing issues.

MAEAP AC Meeting Frequency

The MAEAP AC meets bi-monthly. The meeting schedule is posted at www.michigan.gov/maeap.

MAEAP AC Membership

The MAEAP AC is co-chaired by Tom Coon, Director, Michigan State University Extension (MSU-E) and Scott Piggott, Chief Operations Officer, Michigan Farm Bureau, and consists of agency, university, agricultural industry and commodity groups, agri-business, conservation and environmental group members. The MAEAP Advisory Council Directory is attached.

MAEAP AC Accomplishments

- Organized and conducted bi-monthly meetings hosted by MAEAP AC members, including tours and discussion of MAEAP verified components on AC member farms (Benne Farms, Inc.; Blight Farms; and True Blue Farms). Approved meeting notes are found at www.michigan.gov/maeap.
- Extensively reviewed, discussed, modified, and recommended MAEAP standards to the MDARD Director for adoption by the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development in September of both 2011 and 2012. Standards were adopted as presented and incorporated recommendations found in the Right to Farm Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices, together with direction from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other agencies and scientific studies.

- Special MAEAP Water Quality Monitoring Task Force established. Preliminary report presented to the MDARD Director in September 2012. Task Force work continues to finalize Water Quality Monitoring Recommendations.
- Verification Task Force established to develop protocols for verification and revocation of verification. Protocols approved by the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development in September 2011 as recommended by the AC. No changes made in 2012.
- Encouraged more MAEAP verified farms through various high profile activities such as the October 2012 celebration of the 1000th verification at Lee Farms in Laingsburg.
- Promoted MAEAP as a model verification “Ag Certainty” equivalent program to various state and national agency leaders and legislators, including Senator Stabenow and staff, and Integrated Pest Management Alliance Decision Maker Tours in both 2011 and 2012.
- Created subcommittees to address emerging and ongoing issues, including the Livestock, Farmstead, and Cropping Sub-Committees and the Communications, Water Quality Monitoring and Verification Task Forces.

MAEAP AC 2013 Focus

The focus for the coming year is to target work toward reaching 5000 verifications by the end of 2015, to direct the work of the subcommittees and workgroups, to consider the final recommendations of the water quality monitoring task force, to continue to visit MAEAP verified farms as a group, and to encourage the development of the regional environmental assurance teams.

MAEAP Livestock System Subcommittee Function, Membership, Accomplishments, Roadblocks and 2013 Focus

MAEAP Livestock System Subcommittee (LSC) Function

The MAEAP LSC primarily focuses on environmental issues related to livestock activities, including manure handling, storage and field application, as well as conservation practices to protect water and prevent soil erosion. The Livestock System targets all Michigan livestock farms, regardless of species or size. The Livestock System concentrates on production and conservation practices, equipment, structures, and management activities associated with animal production. Specific areas of focus include:

- Develop standards for handling issues associated with environmental risks on livestock farms.
- Evaluate effect of new laws/rules/Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) changes on existing components and requirements of the Livestock System, and recommend changes to Livestock System standards as appropriate.

- Evaluate and identify appropriate incentives to increase program participation.
- Identify new research needs.
- Support ongoing discussions and research on various projects. Current focus is related to the manure storage seepage meter, milk house wastewater treatment mounds, and manure dragline standards.
- Actively seek opportunities to promote the Livestock System – MAEAP Website, Communications Workgroup, MAEAP Clips, industry partner promotion, and upcoming Regional Environmental Assurance Team (REAT) development and promotion.
- Continue work with standing committees to identify outreach needs; develop annual plan of work for research, educational, and evaluation progress.
- Define scope of Livestock System – annual and bimonthly updates are reported by program staff. Subsequent discussions are held to evaluate challenges and growth potential.
- Assign task force(s) as needed to address particular concerns - needs are assigned to the appropriate subcommittee.
- Record and distribute meeting notes to subcommittee and AC members.
- Direct activities of the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan subcommittee.

MAEAP LSC Meeting Frequency

The MAEAP LSC meets bimonthly.

MAEAP LSC Membership

Chair or co-chairs as assigned by the AC.

Subcommittee members include MSUE representatives from each livestock area, MDARD (Right to Farm, MAEAP, Animal Industry, Food and Dairy), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (Water Bureau, Air Quality Division), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Bureau, chair of the CNMP sub-committee, and representatives from the following livestock industries - dairy, beef, poultry, swine, sheep, equine, commodity representatives such as corn producers and others as recommended by the LSC. The MAEAP LSC Directory is attached.

MAEAP LSC CNMP Subcommittee Meeting Frequency

As determined by chair or co-chairs.

MAEAP LSC CNMP Membership

Chaired by NRCS, as assigned by the AC, with representatives as approved by the Livestock System Committee.

MAEAP LSC CNMP Function

- Evaluate federal requirements.
- Support education/training of CNMP providers.

- Approve CNMP training events for certification.
- Maintain list of CNMP Providers on website.
- Identify research needs to take to Livestock System Committee.
- Maintain CNMP checklist and Frequently Asked Questions.
- Identify, develop, and maintain tools for CNMP development.
- Recommend new task force groups as needed to Livestock System Committee.
- Identify and clarify differences between United States Department of Agriculture NRCS technical standards and federal and state regulatory requirements.
- Continue to discuss and form consensus with issues related to CNMP components.
- Provide meeting notes to the committee members, the Livestock Committee and the AC.

MAEAP LSC Standards Subcommittee Meeting Frequency

As determined by chair or co-chairs.

MAEAP LSC Standards Subcommittee Membership

Chair or co-chairs as assigned by the LSC chairs with approval from the Subcommittee as a whole. Membership in both Subcommittees consists of representatives from the MDEQ, MDARD MAEAP and Right to Farm Program, Michigan State University and MSU-E, USDA-NRCS, Farm Bureau (MFB), livestock commodity groups (emphasis on field focus), Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), MAEAP technicians, MAEAP AC and others as recommended.

MAEAP LSC Accomplishments

- Developed revised Livestock-A-Syst (LAS) and associated levels and standards required for verification and made recommendations to the MAEAP AC for Livestock System Standards for both 2011 and 2012. The 2011 effort included harmonizing the wording used in questions across systems for consistency in those questions that over-lapped and appeared in more than one risk assessment and in identifying “parking lot” or future issues for discussion.
- Updated Livestock-A-Syst, incorporating the evaluation of existing components worksheet, providing a workable approach that allows for manure storage that are appropriately designed and constructed by professionals to be MAEAP verifiable.
- Identified educational components to supplement bi-monthly meetings, such as a discussion of Feed as Food, presented by MDARD staff.
- Collaborated with Communications Workgroup and others to encourage development of the regional environmental assurance teams.
- Reviewed and updated the Livestock-A-Syst reflecting changes to the Michigan Right to Farm GAAMPs and other identified environmental concerns.

- Added an educational question in the Livestock-A-Syst (not required for system verification) on controlled steam crossing or access for livestock.
- Better defined a bunker silo lined floor required for system verification.
- Clarified that producers without complete manure application records are required to keep complete records for system re-verification in three years.
- Added an educational question in LAS about the importance of manure incorporation to capture phosphorus and ammonia nitrogen in the soil.
- Recommended a new MAEAP standard on manure application and predicted weather conditions consistent with PA 1 of 2011.
- Considered a partner request to not allow manure spreading on frozen and/or snow covered ground for Livestock System verification. No change was recommended because of the safeguards required: Manure Application Risk Index evaluation and Michigan Right to Farm generally accepted agricultural management practices related to field slope.

MAEAP LSC Roadblocks

- Continued growth of the MAEAP Program.
- Complacency around growth and industry participation.
- Total Maximum Daily Load understanding.
- Need for additional incentives to reach 5000 verifications goal.
- Economic situation within livestock and dairy industry.
- Evaluation of existing components (manure storages) built without documentation of NRCS 313 standards.

MAEAP LSC Focus for 2013

- Consider options within the MAEAP Livestock System structure for small and medium livestock operations and promote increased participation.
- Support Michigan Milk Producer's interest in tracking risk reduction changes.
- Evaluate program effectiveness.
- Make supporting documents available on MAEAP web site.
- The MAEAP Livestock Verification Standards Subcommittee will meet in the fall 2012 through winter 2013 to review and update the MAEAP Livestock Verification Standards.
- Identify barriers for participation and identify solutions to remove barriers.
- A complete action plan for 2013 will be developed in November 2012.

MAEAP Farmstead System Subcommittee Function, Membership, Accomplishments, Roadblocks, and 2013 Focus

MAEAP Farmstead System (FS) Subcommittee Function

The MAEAP Farmstead System Subcommittee addresses environmental risks of the entire farmstead, from safe fuel handling to the proper storage of fertilizers and pesticides. It focuses on protecting surface and groundwater. It is the one

MAEAP system which is applicable to every size and kind of operation. Specific areas of focus include:

- Develop revised Farm-A-Syst and associated levels and standards required for verification.
- Identify training needs for technical service providers.
- Evaluate effect of new laws/changes/rules on existing component and system requirements.
- Identify research needs.
- Evaluate changes to appropriate GAAMPs and how those changes impact the System.
- Identify FS needs for education.
- Identify and evaluate appropriate incentives.
- Assign task force(s) as needed to address particular concerns.
- Provide meeting notes to the committee members and the Advisory Council.

MAEAP FS Meeting Frequency

As determined by the chair.

MAEAP FS Membership

Chair or co-chairs as assigned by the Advisory Council. The FS Subcommittee members are representatives from MDARD (Right to Farm, MAEAP, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management (PPPMD)), MSU, MSU-E, MDEQ, NRCS, MACD, MFB, Michigan agriculture, and others as recommended by the Farmstead System Subcommittee. The Farmstead System Subcommittee Directory is attached.

MAEAP FS Accomplishments

- The Farmstead Standards subgroup met May 11, 2011.
- The FS Subcommittee met on May 11, 2011, February 2, 2012 and July 22, 2012.
- Developed revised Farm-A-Syst and associated levels and standards required for verification for 2011 and 2012 Standards review and recommendation. The 2011 effort included harmonizing the wording used in questions across systems for consistency in those questions that overlapped and appeared in more than one risk assessment and identifying “parking lot” or future issues for discussion.
- Areas of discussion included changes to the fuel tank registration standard, development of a horizontal sock well standard, re-use of mini-bulk pesticide containers, disposal of rinsed pesticide containers in dumpsters, setback of pesticide storage from wells, fertilizer storage and handling, liquid fertilizer storage setback from surface water, several issues related to petroleum product storage and management, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures, the addition of a question related to the maximum fuel quantity stored on farm, several areas related

to registration of above-ground and underground fuel tanks and other fuel related areas.

MAEAP FS Roadblocks

MAEAP verifiers and technicians have identified the following situations that prevent farmstead verification.

Well Isolation Distances: FAS 3.01, 3.18, 5.01, 5.24, 6.06, 7.10, 8.04, 8.13, 10.01, 11.01, 12.01

Wells must be isolated from potential hazards by established distances. Variances in the distances between wells and pesticide, fertilizer, and fuel storages have been granted under specific conditions and have provided adequate environmental protections and improved eligibility for farmstead verification. However, previously sited wells on some farms (especially non-dairy livestock farms) cannot be sufficiently isolated and create roadblocks to verification. Many producers, when applying for a well installation permit, were told that a permit was not needed for a livestock watering well, so these wells were often placed close to the livestock barns.

Proposal: Develop a case-by-case review process that determines if individual situations merit additional consideration, assuming adequate safeguards and monitoring are or could be in place.

Proximity of Fuel to Surface Water: FAS 6.10

Farm motor vehicle fuel storage tanks with capacities of 1,100 gallons or less must be more than 50 feet away from a storm drain, surface water or designated wetland unless some other engineering control is present that would control or divert a spill from reaching them. When dealing with fuel for irrigation pumps drawing from surface waters, the setback or engineering controls are not practical.

Proposal: Consider allowing a berm or other secondary containment to provide the environmental protections required and if the law allows it.

Separation of Human & Animal Waste Disposal Systems: FAS 8.01

Human waste must be disposed separately from animal waste by the use of a septic tank and drainage system. The disposal separation is still an issue on some livestock farms, particularly at hog barns with shower-in/shower-out facilities. The additional cost to install the septic system required for verification is not generally something a producer is willing to do.

Proposal: Review the purpose behind the requirement and determine if other human waste disposal options exist.

Backflow/Back siphoning Prevention Using RPZ Valves: FAS 2.11

Well water supplies must be protected from contamination by using an anti-backflow device or a six-inch air gap. Because the standard does not currently specify the type of mechanical anti-siphoning/anti-backflow device that is required (e.g., a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) valve versus a chemigation valve), the use of either device has not been a roadblock to verification so far. However, it should be determined which devices are acceptable for the protection required. Also, if MDEQ at some point determines that an RPZ valve is required, the RPZ valve is more expensive than the chemigation valve, and that cost might become a roadblock to verification.

Proposal: Determine which devices or valves provide the water protections intended and advise farmers which ones will be acceptable. Determine from MDEQ its intent whether or not it will establish RPZ valves as required equipment and react accordingly.

Portable Toilet Transport

The on-farm transport of portable toilets by farmers rather than licensed haulers is an issue that may become a barrier to verification if it is added to the assessment tools.

Proposal: Determine the final outcome of MDARD/Environmental Stewardship Division's evaluation of the issue before deciding whether or not to address the issue in the assessment tools.

SARA Title III Requirements Information

When purchasing products that containing Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS) regulated by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title III, producers may not be aware of the Act's notification and reporting requirements. It would be helpful if the seller of these products would be required to explain the requirements to the producer at the time of sale. This issue is not a roadblock to verification in the current system.

Proposal: Determine if sellers of products containing EHS already provide SARA Title III information to purchasers, if they are willing do so, and at what level they can do so.

MAEAP FS Focus for 2013

- Farm-A-Syst for Michigan Producers (MSU Bulletin FAS 107) will be reviewed by PPPM's pesticide and fertilizer/bulk agrichemical storage program staff to harmonize and update standards and educational questions.
- Supplemental Risk Assessment and Tools (MSU Bulletin FAS 112S) will be reviewed and amended, particularly the Proper Disposal of Dead Animals worksheet and the Manure Storage Review worksheets.

- Emergency Planning for the Farm (MSU Bulletin E-2575) will be reviewed and amended, including adding a quick reference document for emergency responders.
- Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures will be developed, and a printing funding source will be identified.
- Work with other systems subcommittees to address the roadblocks and concerns previously listed.
- Train new MAEAP water stewardship technicians.

MAEAP Cropping System Subcommittee Function, Membership, Accomplishments, Roadblocks, and 2013 Focus

MAEAP Cropping System (CS) Subcommittee Function

The MAEAP Cropping System Subcommittee primarily focuses on environmental issues related to cropping activities, such as irrigation and water use, soil conservation, and nutrient and pest management. The system has components focused on environmental issues related to managing diverse commodities and has crop specific risk assessments for Field Crops and Vegetables, Nursery and Christmas Trees, Orchards and Small Fruit, and Greenhouse.

The MAEAP CS Subcommittee's primary focus is to review and update the four Cropping System risk assessments. The MAEAP Cropping Standards are updated annually to meet current environmental expectations for agricultural operations, including changes to the Michigan Right to Farm GAAMPs and state and federal environmental regulatory changes.

MAEAP CS Meeting Frequency

Meetings as determined by chair.

Meeting Schedule:

May 19 and May 25, 2011

February 2 and July 24, 2012

MAEAP CS Membership

Chair or co-chairs as assigned by the Advisory Council.

Representatives from MDARD (Right to Farm, MAEAP, PPPMD), MSU, MSUE, MDEQ, NRCS, MFB, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, conservation districts, Michigan agriculture, and others as recommended by the Cropping System Subcommittee. The Cropping System Subcommittee Directory is attached.

MAEAP CS Accomplishments

The following Cropping System risk assessments and associated Standards were reviewed, discussed, modified, and recommended for adoption in both 2011 and 2012:

- Crop-A-Syst for Field Crops and Vegetable Producers.
- Crop-A-Syst for Nursery and Christmas Tree Producers.
- Crop-A-Syst for Fruit Producers.

- Greenhouse-A-Syst – cropping sections only (other sections completed in Farmstead System review).
- The 2011 effort included harmonizing the wording used in questions across systems for consistency in those questions that over-lapped and appeared in more than one risk assessment and in identifying “parking lot” or future issues for discussion.
- Reviewed the issue of fall application on nitrogen for corn, wheat, and sugar beets. The risk questions were changed from MAEAP standards to educational questions since the technology is changing with new nitrogen fertilizer formulations that reduce losses.
- Irrigation uniformity standard formerly required all systems to be evaluated within five years. Since there is no formal guidance the timing standard was changed to have a plan to evaluate all systems.
- The erosion standard was changed to evaluate the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE2) and the Wind Erosion Prediction System (WEPS) in only those fields that have potential for significant erosion due to slope or crop management practices.
- Fertilizer recommendation standard was changed to allow industry standards or other land grant university standards for the region, when MSU recommendations are not available.
- Reviewed the new United States Environmental Protection Agency pesticide container regulation. No changes made to the assessments as the new regulation impact pesticide registrants, retailers, and distributors.
- Recommended a new MAEAP standard based on changes in 2012 Irrigation GAAMP: adequate interlock and safety system to prevent over application of pesticides and fertilizers.
- Recommended MDEQ requirement of registering large quantity water withdrawals become a MAEAP standard.
- Added educational questions (not required for system verification) about the US EPA required Fumigation Management Plans for soil fumigation and native pollinator management.

MAEAP CS Roadblocks

Michigan well code requires producers who chemigate (inject fertilizer or pesticides into irrigation water) to maintain at least 150' isolation from the well and chemical storage or preparation area.

Practical septage management options for farms with portable toilets for workers needs to be developed.

MAEAP CS Focus for 2013

Coordinate committee meetings with Farmstead System meetings to review and update the risk assessments for 2014.

Review the four Cropping System risk assessments for consistency among the commodity groups.

MAEAP Verification Task Force Function, Membership, Accomplishments, Roadblocks, and 2013 Focus

MAEAP Verification Task Force Function

The function of the MAEAP Verification Task Force is to develop recommendations for Verification, Reverification, and Revocation protocols for Michigan Agriculture approval.

MAEAP Verification Task Force Membership

Task Force membership includes MDARD MAEAP verifiers, the MAEAP program manager, Right to Farm representation and staff from MDEQ Water Bureau, NRCS, and Livestock, Farmstead and Cropping System Chairs.

MAEAP Verification Task Force Accomplishments

Protocol was developed and presented to the MAEAP Advisory Council for discussion, changes, and eventual approval. The protocol was presented to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2011 and was adopted as presented. No changes made in 2012.

MAEAP Verification Task Force Roadblocks

No roadblocks were identified. Roadblocks to verification are points of discussion by the various Systems Subcommittees.

MAEAP Verification 2013 Focus

Development of Memorandum of Understanding for MDARD & MDEQ regarding situations warranting consideration of verification revocation or MAEAP standards failures and other considerations as outlined in Public Act 451 1994 as amended, Parts 31, 87 and 88.

MAEAP Communications Task Force Function, Membership, Accomplishments, Roadblocks, and 2013 Focus

MAEAP Communications Task Force Function

The MAEAP Communications Task Force functions as a MAEAP partner group and informs and seeks input from the MAEAP AC regarding planned work and projects. Specific functions include:

- Submit annual plan of work to the AC.
- Develop quality information pieces (newsletter/FNews).
- Oversee MAEAP web site task force.
- Develop other promotional information pieces.
- Direct program public relations.
- Interface with Systems Committees for feedback.
- Evaluate effectiveness of communications.
- Provide meeting notes to the committee members and the AC.

MAEAP Communications Task Force Meeting Frequency

The MAEAP Communications Task Force meets bi-monthly.

MAEAP Communications Task Force Membership

The MAEAP Communications Task Force is co-chaired by Heather Throne, MDARD and Emily Beutel, Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS). Membership consists of MAEAP partner communications and/or promotion staff. A MAEAP Communications Task Force Directory is attached.

MAEAP Communications Task Force Accomplishments

- Outreach materials – “Why MAEAP?” Sign, RUP Credits Stuffer, MAEAP PowerPoint, and Spanish MAEAP brochures.
- Monthly press releases for each verified farm – sent to local media outlets, legislators, MSU Extension, Conservation Districts, and posted on the MAEAP website.
- New partner website with updated events, video, images, and news.
- MAEAP Displays at numerous events across the state – Breakfast on the Farm, Great Lakes Expo, Ag Expo, etc.
- Partnerships Annual Meetings – Recognition of the MAEAP verified farms with their organization or groups.
- Continued strong social media presence on Facebook and YouTube.
- Michigan Farm News Partnership Page.
- Michigan Farm Radio Monthly PSA and weekly partnership interviews.
- Developed a “MAEAP Promotion Toolkits” for partners.

MAEAP Communications Task Force 2013 Focus

- Monthly Michigan Farm Radio Network PSA and weekly interviews
- “From the Farmer” consumer piece brochure
- Updated MAEAP DVD
- Monthly feature in Michigan Farm News
- Continued website support with updated features and graphics
- Increase Facebook involvement
- Reprinting of MAEAP brochures, flyers, one pager, etc.
- Phase 1 Webinar for farmers across the state
- MAEAP Smartphone App
- Add new members to our Workgroup

MAEAP Communications Task Force Roadblocks

No roadblocks were identified.