

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: zoningadministrator <zoning@villageofonekama.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:18 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPS - Public Comment
Attachments: WilcoxR2-at-Michigan-gov.docx

To whom it may concern:

As a 10 year Zoning Administrator with a presence in many rural communities, please accept my brief comments. There has long been many misunderstandings between the 'local' unit of government where farms and farm operations are concerned. Education awareness seems to make this job much easier to administer.

Whatever course of action is chosen, please err on the side of CLARITY; concise and definitive statements will allow all entities concerned to cooperate efficiently.

As the attachment notes - Zoning Administrators have these questions as well.

Thank you -

Bob

Robert (Bob) Hall
Zoning Administrator
Village of Onekama
5283 Main Street - P.O. Box 477
Onekama, Michigan 49675
Phone: 231-889-3155

Zoning Administrator - Norman Township, Manistee County
Zoning Administrator - Everett Township, Newaygo County
Zoning Administrator - City of White Cloud, Newaygo County

1. Proposed changes in Right to Farm Act (RTFA) Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMP) may return local control in areas exclusively zoned residential. The GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities has a proposed revision which creates a new category number four. The current categories are:

- Category 1 Sites - Sites normally acceptable for livestock production facilities
- Category 2 Sites - Sites where special technologies and/or management practices could be needed to make new and expanding livestock production facilities acceptable
- Category 3 Sites - Sites are generally not acceptable for new and expanding livestock production facilities

The new category 4 Sites will be for sites not acceptable for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities and Livestock Production Facilities. In its entirety it reads:

"Category 4 Sites are sites that are exclusively zoned for residential use and are not acceptable locations for livestock facilities regardless of number. Confining livestock in these locations does not conform to the Siting GAAMP."

Currently there are several points of interplay between zoning and RTFA where the law is not clear:

- Can a provision within a GAAMP delegate back to local control what the RTFA clearly removed from local control (MCL 286.474(6))?
- Can local zoning require farms to only be allowed in certain zoning districts, or do farms now have the right to start anywhere regardless of zoning?

It is this second question that the proposed GAAMP change is trying to address. This is not the first time this type of issue has attempted to be dealt with in a GAAMP. All GAAMP now have this paragraph:

"This GAAMP does not apply in municipalities with a population of 100,000 or more in which a zoning ordinance has been enacted to allow for agriculture provided that the ordinance designates existing agricultural operations present prior to the ordinance's adoption as legal nonconforming uses as identified by the Right to Farm Act for purposes of scale and type of agricultural use."

These changes are currently proposed. Public reaction, for or against, is likely to have an impact on if, and how, the proposal is adopted. Public comment will be taken on all eight GAAMPs, though there are proposed changes only in the GAAMPs for Manure Management and Utilization, Pesticide Utilization and Pest Control, the Care of Farm Animals, Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Production Facilities, and Irrigation Water Use. Currently, there are no proposed changes in the GAAMPs for: Nutrient Utilization, Farm Markets, and Cranberry Production.

Now the Agriculture Commission and Michigan Dept. of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is seeking public input on Agricultural Management Practices announced the public input meeting and review period has been scheduled for January 22, 2014, **TODAY**, in order to gather comments on the 2014 drafts of the state's GAAMPs. Written comments may be submitted to MDARD's Environmental Stewardship Division, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909 and postmarked no later than January 22, 2014, or sent via e-mail to WilcoxR2@michigan.gov by 5:00 p.m. on January 22, 2014. MDARD will forward all comments received by the due date to the respective GAAMPs Task Force Chairpersons for

consideration. The GAAMPs Task Force Chairpersons then present proposed GAAMPs to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development for final adoption. Public comments are accepted and considered at scheduled commission meetings, before final versions of the GAAMPs are approved.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Ayers, Cheri (MDA)
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 3:57 PM
To: Whitman, Wayne (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: Johnson, James (MDA); Eyde, Jennifer (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs Comments Received
Attachments: FW: Right To Farm Act, I OPPOSE a change; FW: Right to Farm Act

The attached comments were received via the MDA-Info mail box. Would you please respond and handle accordingly. Thx!

Cheri

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andorfer, Bob (MDA) on behalf of MDA-Info
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 3:38 PM
To: Ayers, Cheri (MDA); Smith, Brenda (MDA)
Subject: FW: Right To Farm Act, I OPPOSE a change

This message came in to the MDA-Info mailbox today.

From: T.D. [<mailto:dilutequarterhorses@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 2:42 PM
To: MDA-Info
Subject: Right To Farm Act, I OPPOSE a change

I am writing to express my opinion on the Michigan Right to Farm Act. I STRONGLY oppose changes to the Michigan Right To Farm Act. I feel that those in residential areas should retain their rights to raise their own livestock as well as garden.

Tracy Darby
South Lyon, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andorfer, Bob (MDA) on behalf of MDA-Info
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 3:38 PM
To: Ayers, Cheri (MDA); Smith, Brenda (MDA)
Subject: FW: Right to Farm Act

This message came in to the MDA-Info mailbox today.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mrs. Dawne Shelton [<mailto:yesihomeschool@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 2:52 PM
To: MDA-Info
Subject: Right to Farm Act

I am contacting to encourage you to NOT get rid of this act! Many areas are, in fact rural, yet now zoned as residential. Being forced to get rid of family livestock is just ridiculous. Will YOU be the one to tell my 12 year old boy that he must get rid of his pet goat?

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jackie Green <greenj@marsusa.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 3:04 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: MDARD and new GAAMPs

To:

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Environmental Stewardship Division

I am a registered voter in Oakland County Michigan.

I am also completely against this excessive governing proposal of regulation of farm animals. I am a firm believer in the idea of sustainable living and urban farming. What will happen next? Over regulation of dogs, cats, gardens, horses, etc?

Livestock limits in Non-Agricultural areas is totally understandable, but to completely over-regulate and deny someone wanting a few chickens at their home is ridiculous. Especially if they are kept according to local guidelines and in a neat and orderly fashion.

I hope you will consider my comments for this upcoming regulatory change.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Green

32880 Raphael Rd

Farmington Hills, Mi 48336.

P.S.

I own 60 acres in Hadley, MI/Lapeer County where I plan to retire and dream of a future small self-sustainable farm. I hope these new regulations will not deny my dream.

Jackie Green | Senior Art Director
248.936.2342

MARS | Where the Shopper is Hero
25200 Telegraph Rd | Southfield, MI 48034

This e-mail may contain information proprietary to the sender and is intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient(s), you are notified that you have received this message in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. All e-mail sent to this address is subject to archival and may be reviewed by someone other than the recipient. If you have received this electronic message in error, please notify us immediately and destroy the original message and all copies.

This footnote also confirms that this email message has been scanned for the presence of computer viruses.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Whitman, Wayne (MDA)
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 2:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: Deacon, Brad (MDA)
Subject: FW: RTFA AND GAAMPS

Rhonda:

Here are some comments about GAAMPS.

Thanks.

Wayne

From: Jackie Smith [<mailto:kowpunchr62@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 1:00 AM
To: Whitman, Wayne (MDA)
Subject: Fw: RTFA AND GAAMPS

To Whom it May Concern,

I am quite sure that the RTFA was enacted to protect Rural areas from from urban encroachment.

I am zoned Rural Residential, Agriculture is allowed, firewood, corn, hay, all crops. But livestock, is being restricted by a special **non commercial** land use permit. I can plow up all 10 acres and put corn in. But my 10 old son CANNOT raise meat chickens, for show at the county fair!!! Nor can he ride his horse, to practice for 4-H. Have you forgotten how much farmland has been lost in Michigan???

What are you doing to the small farmer and WHY???. I want to raise my own food. I don't want to eat NASTY hormone ridden meat!!! What are you doing to the FUTURE FARMERS of this STATE!???

HAS the MDARD forgotten who you are SUPPOSE to be working for and with?? HAVE you FORGOTTEN what the second largest industry is in this state???. Have you forgotten how many jobs have been lost?? How many people are going back to raising their own food because you don't regulate the crap that's being put in OUR FOOD?? YOU have to know how many people are growing organically, want to get their own eggs, pork, beef, drink their own milk, make their own sweaters!!

This New GAAMPS is soo wrong in on soo many levels. Read the Law, FARM PRODUCT!!! LIVESTOCK is included!!!!!!

Support the FARMERS Big and Small!!! Support 4-H kids!!! Support FARMERS, NOT NON FARMERS!!!! The MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE!!! That's who you are, NOT...The MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT of CITY PEOPLE MOVING INTO RURAL AREAS!

I have my GAAMPS and am a commercial farm...I still cannot have livestock, according to my township, but I can plow my land under and grow crops!!! If I'm not allowed to have livestock, that is what I will do. And I will tell every other small farm to do the same!!! WOW!! Think that'll make these people happy that are non farmers??? Then, what will you do next?

Jacqueline Kerr

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Karen Flansburg <northstarresort@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:44 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Comment on proposed GAAMP guideline revisions

Dear Committee Members:

First let me say, I was raised a farm girl. I grew up learning to be self-sustaining.

Second, I feel that your changes to the current GAAMP guidelines to be overstepping and controlling. In the revisions I find that the word "production" has been stricken from the guideline in almost every instance. Most of us who are trying to fend for ourselves do not produce for sale to the general public and now you are trying to tell us we cannot even raise farm animals to feed ourselves or our families.

Then you create a "category 4" that was never there before and not part of the original intent of the "Right to Farm Act." which prohibits anyone who owns property in a zoned residential area from even owning 1 farm animal. There are many areas throughout the State of Michigan that are zoned residential simply to keep the areas from becoming mixed with a variety of different business within areas where people reside. Further, these residential areas could be 50 x 50 lots or quite a few acres of land.

Having grown up on a 30 acre farm that was zoned residential where we baled hay, grew corn, raised cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys so our family could survive and provide for ourselves, I find your recommended revisions to the GAAMP just plain wrong and

respectfully request that you do not restrict an individual's freedom to provide for themselves on property that they rightfully own (or rent), strike the changes proposed and leave it the way it was.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen R. Flansburg

North Star Resort

Mio, Michigan

989-826-3278

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Brad Baughman <wbbaughman@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 12:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed legal changes.

To the GAAMPS task force:

I am an M.S. student at Michigan State in the school of Ag & Natural Resources, and Berrien County's recent hire for Small Fruit Educator. I have heard from colleagues and read recently the proposed changes to state law regarding acceptable sites for the keeping of livestock. My understanding of these changes is:

-livestock kept *in agriculturally zoned areas* which are in close proximity to residentially zoned areas will no longer be protected by the Right to Farm Act,
and

-livestock kept in residential zoned areas, even in cities or townships that allow certain animals to be kept, will no longer be protected by the Right to Farm Act.

And, if my understanding of these changes is correct, I must say that this is ill-advised at best, and absurd at worst. Areas zoned for agriculture should have every right to keep livestock on the property. It may be that the proposed changes are intended to protect neighborhoods from several-thousand-head pork and beef facilities, which is warranted due to the smell. However, this will also remove the protection from more modest-sized farms who are doing no harm to their neighbors. And in fact, a strong case can be made that more traditionally-sized farms with animals nearby can be a boon to a community - exposure to their fellow-creatures is healthy for the emotional development of children. As for the possible noise nuisance - e.g. crowing roosters? My only response is that this is inane: we live in a world of loud televisions, engines, sirens, and all manner of unpleasant sounds; the sound of a bird's morning call is absolutely not worth making ordinances over.

And as for the changes in residential zoning, these will also do great harm to many people. I currently live just off the Michigan Avenue Corridor in Lansing, where many residents grow vegetables, keep laying chickens, and the occasional rabbit or honeybee hive. There is interest in backyard goats, which has been proposed as a possible change to the county Animal Control. This is a healthy and productive activity that strengthens the sense of community in the neighborhoods, gives people from different socio-economic, racial, or language backgrounds something we can connect about, and often helps refugee immigrants integrate into American life. It is a social good. It gives residents a sense of pride in what they can produce for themselves. I understand that some people believe chickens and other animals to be a nuisance. I can't speak for other cities and townships, but here in Lansing the city has a number of fine-able offenses regarding chickens, which provide a strong incentive to keep them contained, only 4 per yard, and reasonably quiet. Indeed these ordinances may be too restrictive as it is! There is no need to alter state law on this subject. And if the state law *is* altered, we will lose a lot of very positive and social activity, which is otherwise often few and far between, in our cities.

The move towards small animals and gardening in the cities and towns is a positive social development, and it *must not be stifled* while it is in its infancy! We need *more* opportunities for Michiganders to learn about small-scale farming, *not fewer*.

I personally have kept chickens in my back yard, have bought feed from a nearby farmer, and have used the composted bedding to improve the nearby community garden soil.

For the above reasons, I urge you NOT to adopt the proposed changes in the Site Selection GAAMPS.

Thank you for your time,
William B. Baughman
(810)-407-4321

p.s. The opinions stated herein are my own and not necessarily those of my Department or the University. So far as I know, neither Michigan State University nor MSU-Extension has an official stand on this issue.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: David Holcomb <david.o.holcomb@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:46 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed amendments to the Protections afforded by the Michigan Right to Farm Act

Dear Sir or Madame,

My name is David Holcomb, and I am a small farmer with a backyard flock of chickens. The changes that are being proposed, which would eliminate any protection for those of us keeping chickens in residential areas greatly concerns me.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture seems to think that removing these protections will benefit the environment, and reduce nuisance issues in neighborhoods. I would like to address these claims.

First of all, I think it is a little hypocritical to claim to be helping the environment by eliminating the small flocks that help provide food with much less environmental impact than the large poultry farms do. There is a reason the Right to Farm Act exists, and part of that reason is that large industrial farms smell. Manure lagoons, and hazardous levels of ammonia in chicken confinement houses represent practices in industrial agriculture that are damaging to the environment. Small flocks of chickens like mine, do not stink up the neighborhood. Studies have been done that show that 11 chickens produce about as much manure as one dog. My small flock creates as much manure then as my neighbors two dogs, and I take care of it more effectively because I treasure it as a resource for my garden. I trap that chicken waste with wood shavings that cut the smell and bind with the manure making for nice smelling coop that reminds one of a pile of wood, rather than a gaseous swamp or a chemical factory.

I think the preceding paragraph also addresses most of the nuisance concerns as well.

I see the small backyard flocks of our state as the lemonade stands of the farming world. how can we expect young people to decide to pursue farming as a career if we eliminate any chance for the majority of young people in our state to have a small scale opportunity to work with farm animals and run a small business? Our young people and any others with entrepreneurial gusto should be encouraged to start such small businesses in order to help the economy keep money moving locally instead of going to other states or to far away cities. Urban gardening and farming has produced wonderful results in rough areas of Detroit where I have seen first-hand neighborhoods transformed by people putting down roots with community gardens, and raising chickens on their small plots.

I think more education about keeping chickens should be offered, rather than a restriction of a basic freedom to keep animals for companionship and sustenance.

If the measure your proposing are implemented they will have far reaching effects, forcing me to perhaps give up eating eggs and chicken altogether until I can live somewhere where I can raise my own. I refuse to eat commercially produced poultry products, now that I know how those animals are treated. So if the MDARD revokes my right to eat eggs and chickens that I have raised, they are pressuring me to become vegan or move to the country.

In short I think these measure are short-sighted and very injurious to the health and freedom of our communities. Such sweeping measure will give me and others more reason to leave Michigan for other states that will allow us to exercise our basic freedoms and eat in a way that seems good to us.

Please reconsider and do not remove the power of communities to make their own decisions regarding this issue. Please stop taking away freedoms from hard working people who are trying to eat well and take care of

themselves. Whatever you do, rest assured I will be watching and informing everyone I know about this decision and who is to blame. My vote will be swayed by your response, and if I can help it, I will never support those that take away our basic freedoms.

Sincerely,
David Holcomb

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Spincoffice <spincoffice@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 2:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Fwd: GAAMP site selection and category 4

January 20, 2014

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Environmental Stewardship Division
P.O. Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909

Room A at the State Secondary Complex – General Office Building,
7150 Harris Drive
Dimondale.

Re: Category 4 and Site Selection and changes to the "Right to Farm Act"

Greetings,

As a resident of the State of Michigan and a follower of Rural agricultural concerns, I am airing my extreme disappointment and adamant disapproval of attempts to skirt and circumvent constitutional protections for the "Right to Farm Act" in the State of Michigan (Public Act 93 of 1981), MCL 286.471 et seq. Of course I will be following the results of your committee's action and will alert any and all of my neighbors and friends who may also care enough to learn what you folks are up to.

You and your committee's attempt to create a new category to redefine what is acceptable or not in communities violates our farming rights on many levels for which I will not repeat here. That is a matter for which the legions of lawyers will vehemently appeal should you folks pass such an amendment/change. Further, through other letters myself and my fellow protectors of the "Right to Farm Act" generate and address to our legislature representatives as well as the governor's office and attorney General's office...will surely result in numerous inquiries as to the legitimacy of you and your committee's very existence.

If I sound angry..... I am! I am certain many other Taxpayer will be too.

Does not your committee have enough work to do without adding on to your chores to be peeking into every chicken coop to count hens? Or is that the point...you folk just need to create more work to make yourselves useful??

Enough is enough! Please allow the specific communities and the residents of the respective communities to determine their own destiny. Not one of them needs anymore state control of this form. Where do/will you stop? How many farms will you affect? What will it do to the quality of life? These are good questions you should ask. I suspect these are questions you can not answer.

The backlash you will receive from this will be significant I am certain. Just the mere thought of a small committee's concept to alter the "Right to Farm Act" in favor of draconian and restrictive new rules created solely to circumvent our State Constitution, to me, is grounds for committee termination or at the very least a review of your individual salaries as well as your very purpose as a necessity.....or not.

If it were me? I would not consider this change.... The many measurable negatives far outweigh the unpublished and undefined positives.

Respectfully

Jon Sheldon
4893 Fisher rd

"In the proposed changes, MDARD defines a new term, Livestock Facility, as one with any number of animals - including a single animal," a step, the alert warns, that "for the first time brings small farm operations under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs. And then in a second step, MDARD creates a new class of sites - Category 4 sites - that are not ever acceptable sites for Livestock Facilities."

Category 4 sites are defined as those exclusively zoned for residential use.

Those changes could be the kiss of death for enterprises such as backyard chicken flocks, or small acreage hobby farms such as VanderKley's that keep a few animals on suburban acreage, said Michigan Small Farm Council member Randy Buchler, of Shady Grove Farm in the Upper Peninsula community of Gwinn.

"It would exclude a whole bunch of people who are seeking Right to Farm protection... and strip the small farmers of their right to be protected by a state law."

A circuit court judge ruled in Buchler's favor when he cited Right to Farm to protect his own farm's existence on residential property in Marquette County, the largest county in the state, he said.

"What they are trying to do is to take away Right to Farm protection from people trying to be self sufficient but not able to do agriculture on any level according their local zoning.

"The way it looks to us," Buchler said, "this would allow local ordinances to trump state law."

Mitigating conflict

"The GAAMPs look at nuisance risk and are intended to help mitigate conflict," said Jennifer Holton, spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

"The committee recognizes that when you add in animals into those densely populated areas, it increases nuisance risk as well as the potential for conflict," Holton said. "This proposal recognizes that there is a continuum - there are places ideally situated for livestock, and there are places in the state where livestock should not be located. "

"The proposal also recognizes size and scale in a new way - there are places where large livestock facilities can be located - and the new category recognizing that small scale livestock (4-H, a couple of horses, etc.) can fit well in other places."

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Aubrey Ann Parker <aubreyannparker@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: rlht@charter.net
Subject: re. Right To Farm

To whom it may concern,

I live in Frankfort, MI, where we actually do have a fairly supportive residential agriculture ordinance -- for now. Since about 2011, when we completed our Master Plan, residents of the city have been allowed to keep up to two chickens, but no roosters, in their backyard. Neighboring Traverse City residents, a real metropolis for up here in the Northwestern Lower Peninsula, are allowed to have up to three chickens, I believe.

Many local communities here are working toward completing our master plans and ordinances that deal with an individual's rights to create our own food and energy -- right now, energy is a matter of discussion in Frankfort, where we currently have a moratorium on clean-energy alternatives, meaning that for nearly three years we have not been able to put up any solar panels on our roofs, for instance. I would hate to see this current legal battle, mentioned in the attached Mlive article, damper the process of creating local ordinances that work for the majority of residents. And, moreover, I would hate to see those of us who do currently have good ordinances in place have our rights overturned because those ordinances become "unpopular" with the small minority who are holding power.

I can't speak for big cities, of which I have lived in very few for not very long (Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor, during college), but I can speak for quite a few towns and villages in Northwest Lower Michigan, where "good ole boy" mentalities reside. The last names of elected officials tend not to change over decades, and contracts are given to the high-school best friends and/or family members of local officials, rather than going out to a bidding process. Sadly, I have heard that these ways of managing government do happen in big cities, too -- look at the mess that Detroit's in.

So why don't more young people get involved to change the system, to protect their rights? Well, because we are working three jobs and are putting our kids through school. In Frankfort, nearly every member of city council is retired. Even so, I know many, many young people who came out and worked very hard to ensure that we got our Master Plan right the first time. They dedicated time to crafting ordinances that worked for everyone. But what if all that hard work is for naught?

If Michigan residents are stripped of their right to implement small-scale urban farming in their own backyards, and furthermore to argue this point in court, this will be greater incentive for the "good ole boys" -- in my small town and in towns both small and large across the state -- to keep out any new and transformative ideas that might challenge the status quo, as well as to reverse already-approved ordinances that local citizens worked so hard to implement in the first place. Not only will residents in nearby Lake Ann, which does not yet have an ordinance on chickens, be at risk of losing that right, but residents in Frankfort could lose our right. What if Frankfort city council members decide that they want to undo the work that was so hardly fought for in our Master Plan -- to take out the backyard chickens and the roof solar panels? If Right To Farm is challenged, it will be a lot easier for them to do this.

Please vote with the majority of Michigan's residents, not the minority of "good ole boys" who still hold so much power,

Aubrey Ann Parker
Frankfort, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andrew Wilkinson <andrew.t.wilkinson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 1:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP

Hello,

I am writing to voice that I am opposed to changes in policy that restrict the ability to raise livestock in urban/residential areas.

If we are to have a connection with our food system, localized for sustainability, and liberty from reliance on Big Ag, which also requires greater energy/transportation resources; we must have the ability to locally raise and grow our food.

Thank you,

Andrew Wilkinson

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Cherie <divanailz123@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 1:06 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: RTFA

Please continue to allow all small farming to continue, people should be able to grow their own food and have livestock. I have friends that have individual farms that are raising their own food. Their farm has been passed down for generations, and I am concerned that the re-zoning would cause them to lose the ability to continue farming.

Cherie Scarvelis
Redford MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Michelle Hazard <networktraversecity@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:43 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Farming committee

Small Farms need the protection, please don't eliminate the ability for people to feed their families.
http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/01/hold_manure_pile_tweak_suggest.html Right to Farm should be left intact. There are small businesses in Michigan that we support in their efforts to provide local food. Your committees recommendation will put them out of business.

Michelle Hazard
Network Administrator
(231) 680-0796
Network Traverse City, Michigan
Twitter

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Kristin Kaul <kkaul@riseup.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: public comment on GAAMPs

Hello,

I think the move to create a site category where livestock/farm animals are not allowed is a move backward. The growing trend toward self-sufficiency - whether at the individual or the community level - is good for families, good for communities, and good for Michigan.

Allowing families to meet part of their food needs on their own properties is a step toward the future, and an opportunity to educate their neighbors. Disallowing property owners on small acreage from having backyard chickens, ducks, a goat or cow, is the wrong decision and I hope the Michigan Department of Agriculture takes into account public comment.

Thank you,

Kris Kaul
Ann Arbor, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: desertvet762 <desertvet762@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:41 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

I object to any new restriction on the keeping of livestock in residential areas. This should be left up to the townships and municipalities themselves. Many people are now enjoying raising their own chickens for meat and eggs; others have long kept horses and other animals on their property without any issues. This appears as nothing more than government intrusion into an area where it is not needed or wanted. Communities are better suited to decide what is in their best interests. We do not need your "one size fits all" so-called solution.

Sincerely,
Mike Janik
Kalamazoo County

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy S4

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: LTSTAR1253@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:40 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

Dear People:

Before WWII, 40% of vegetables grown in America was grown by Urban Farmers in their Front and Backyards. No one wants to poison their food and their family. All we want is the right to grown our own food in a safe, healthy and secure environment.

Please save the GAAMP. We are not bad people and we are making less money than back in the 1970's. We have to find a way to feed ourselves. Lawns will not feed us.

Linda Torony
Nature's Harvest Organic Farm
Metamora, MI 48455

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Diane R <akalady_di@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:38 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed revisions worrying the Michigan Small Farm Council are tweaks to the GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities.

Importance: High

I don't want the State of Michigan messing with our right to keep two chickens. I recognize local governments need to assure residents do not create nuisances to their neighbors. However, government needs to be practical. In Nashville, Michigan their zoning allows chickens if they are not loose, don't own a rooster and don't present unsanitary conditions to the neighbors.

Taking away the ability to be self sufficient is another example of state government taking on issues of which they know little. For example, Michigan government has tortured Michigan Public Education with nonsense issues and constantly creating plans that do not work. As Michigan legislators discover their new idea doesn't work, they toss it out onto the garbage heap and throw something else into the pile.

Respectfully yours, Jim Erwin and Diane Root

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Leigh Young <leigh67333@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:43 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm Act

To Whom it May Concern,

Michigan is in a special economic development at this time. We, our government, has reduced the amount of food stamps allowed per family. Michigan, our government, has reduced the amount of assistance to those living at or below poverty level. Michigan, our government, has reduced the amount of unemployment benefits to those people who are either under employed or totally without employment. And then we want to take away their ability to feed their families by growing food themselves? I don't understand the logic.

I am a Realtor in Grand Rapids. It is part of my job to help people locate to an area that suites their needs. If they do not want to be in an area which is zoned for the possibility of people living self-sustained, it is my job to know that and inform them. No one should purchase a home without full knowledge of their zoning, their taxes are based on this important piece of information. Please do not try to argue this point as a reason to make these belittling changes.

More and more often, politicians run on the platform of smaller government. Who will enforce these rules and regulation proposed? Who will pay for the enforcement? Many of those of us who vote regularly find these meddling laws to be overly intrusive. Leave us to tend to our children, grow some of our sustaining foods, and let big business fight at the grocery store!

With the infusion of more and more chemicals into our food systems so many more allergies have cropped up without our populace. To take way their ability to thrive, would be to take on the mantle of executioner in many instances.

Please uphold Michigander's ability to be self sustaining. Please uphold our right to move to areas which promote this form of independence.

I thank you for your prompt attention to this detail.

Leigh Young
Coldwell Banker AJS Schmidt
616-634-6065

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: John Cox <jacox@mtu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:34 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: 2014 proposed GAAMPs

I cannot make it to the public meetings, but as a beginning farmer, I wanted to share my opinion on some of the proposed GAAMPs.

I oppose the changes relating to "Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities."

By creating the term "Livestock Facility," and applying it a farm with any number of animals, combined with the creation of Class 4 sites, it creates trouble for small farmers and hobby farms. In Oakland County, it seems like most all land has been zoned residential, even large tracts of 20 or more acres. A small number of livestock could be raised on these lands, without trouble. The new rules go against the spirit of the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Please do not adopt these changes, they are wrong.

John Cox
Milford, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andy Kaufmann <andy.kaufmann@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:31 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: keep our small farms

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to recent proposed changes to the GAAMPs covering small farm owners. Michigan needs more small farms not fewer; it needs to protect the rights of individuals who maintain a small number of animals, and it needs to foster small farming operations not threaten their existence.

Andy Kaufmann
515 Barton Dr.
Ann Arbor MI 48105

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Stefanie Stauffer <ststauffer@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:32 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: proposed GAAMPS revisions

Hello,

As an urban farmer with a commercial operation on less than half an acre, I am very worried what this proposed legislation will do to our ability to have a small flock of chickens and other livestock. GAAMPS currently applies to livestock facilities with 50 animals or more, so I don't understand why it will now apply to operations with as few as 1 animal. We are not a large operation and have neither the desire nor the space to have 50 animals, so this proposed change unnecessarily lumps small operations like ours with large CAFOs. CAFOs are a nuisance in residential areas while our flock of 6 chickens is not. We are a very different type of operation and should be distinguished as such.

Also, I am worried what these changes will do to ordinances that already allow urban food production in residential areas. For instance, the city of Ypsilanti already allows 3 backyard chickens as well as honeybees in areas zoned residential. Would these proposed changes then invalidate the ordinances that allow these backyard chickens & bees?

Furthermore, according to the law, changes to GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence, yet no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs. Also, changes to GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment yet no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat either.

Lastly, the proposed changes create language in GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Overall, I thought the Right to Farm act was supposed to protect Michigan farmers like me from unfavorable zoning enacted by local municipalities but these changes seem to empower municipalities to use zoning to undermine small Michigan farms like mine. These proposed changes hurt Michigan agriculture. Please do not make these changes.

-Stefanie

Stefanie Stauffer
Grower, Owner, Chef
Nightshade Army Industries--Hot Sauce & Salsa
Ypsi-Grown, Ypsi-Made!!
<http://www.facebook.com/nightshade.army.salsa>
<http://www.realtimefarms.com/farm/3144001/nightshade-army-industries>

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tammy Bass <tammylbass@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:25 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP

Leave the small hobby farmer alone..I am highly against this new provision

Tammy L Bass 

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Cathi Haske <cjhaske@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:26 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Keep the rights for small farmers...do not change to the size of a livestock production.

As a citizen of Michigan and a small farmer I want you to stop the over regulation of the citizens and stop imposing on the rights of a property owner. I am sick and tired of you politicians telling me what I can and can't do with my own property. If you take my rights away to grow my own food or force regulations on me, my family will be leaving Michigan. You spend my tax dollars to promote foreign business but do what ever you can to hinder the citizens of Michigan.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: heather crull <h_crull@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:24 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: I do not support changes to 2014 Site Selection GAAMPs

As a home gardener and potential backyard chicken owner, I do not support the changes proposed to the 2014 Site Selection GAAMPs. I do not wish to have my rights to farm severely restricted, especially as a small scale farmer. I understand the intent of the changes - that it is to protect people from negligent farmers who do not use good agriculture practices (specifically with manure control), but the way that the changes are currently written does not provide adequate protection for those of us who do ensure we are using proper practices. I strongly encourage revision of the changes in order to protect small scale farmers.

Sincerely,
Heather Crull
269-342-0530

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Millar, Mary <keyesm@cns.msu.edu>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:44 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Stop Sticking Your Nose into the Business of the People!

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment. People should be ENCOURAGED to grow/raise their own food, not penalized for caring about what is in the food they (and their families) eat! This nation was built by hardworking farmers and every American deserves the right to farm in whatever capacity they can! You can't FORCE people to eat the food you want them to...especially when most American's can't afford the food produced by big ag companies. It's disgusting and you should be ashamed of yourself for trying to take away a basic human right to grow/raise food! The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

You should be ashamed!

Mary

Mary Millar

Undergraduate Secretary
MSU Neuroscience Program
293 Farm Lane; Room 108
East Lansing, MI 48824
PH#: (517) – 353 – 8947
Email: keyesm@msu.edu

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: noveskeya <noveskeya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:42 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Farm Animals Being Banned from Neighborhoods

To Whom It May Concern,

I am very upset by the proposed ban of farm animals in neighborhoods in Michigan. I think that it is against our rights as American citizens to have others prevent us from owning a few farm animals such as chickens to provide food for our families. I do not feel that it is lawful to be told that I would have to move my residence or be forced to buy chicken or eggs from a super market that might be prepared with chemicals or other non-organic ingredients. It is my land and I should be able to grow healthy food on it for my family! Please turn down this proposal!

Thank you,
Anya Noveskey

Sent from my Sprint phone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Smabery@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:37 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices under review

I object to restrictions/bans of local chickens & small farm critters from urban/residential settings etc allowed under local ordinances. Please support small local farmers in favor of large commercial scale farming.

Mr. Sandy Mabery
405 Shady Oaks
Lake Orion, MI 48362

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Peg281944@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:34 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: food/farming

Your job is to protect me - my right to anything you have a right to and more.

You represent ME - not the reverse.

Do YOUR job!!

Peggy S. Collins
21310 Lathrup St.
Southfield, MI 48075

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Susan Richardson <ssrichie1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: re:Michigan's Right to Farm Act

Dear Mr. Wilcox,

Since I am not good at writing these points myself, I am sending along these notes which already have the points I am trying to make:

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.
3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

I do not understand how the Michigan Dept of Ag and Rural Development thinks it is okay to change the way things are for Michigan small farmers when they do not have the authority to change the meaning of the law. How about following the constitution of the USA and the laws that are already on the books??? Small farms and gardeners are NOT a threat to public health or the environment... in fact they support the good health of our citizens and Mother Earth which we are ruining with the way much of the farming is done these days. Small farms and gardeners are effecting a positive change in that.

Most sincerely,
Susan Richardson,
Northville, MI 48168

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Bryan Mets <metsbryan@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:28 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP review comments

Hello,

As a concerned citizen, I am writing to express my objection to proposed changes in GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities. Little evidence has been described publicly to explain the need for a change to the definition of livestock production facility or inclusion of a new Category 4 for GAAMP site selection.

The proposed change in definition of "Livestock Production Facilities" to include facilities with any number of animals, as opposed to MDARDs current definition of "over 50," is harmful to small, low nuisance operations and backyard growers. At the same time, creation of a Category 4 for GAAMP site selection where livestock production is never acceptable in residential areas is overly restrictive.

Local ordinances already cover livestock production in residential areas, and as local governance is more aware of the needs of their citizens. I fear this change will circumvent the authority of community governments to serve their constituents.

Additionally, the monetary cost of increasing the scope of regulation to regulatory agencies has not been adequately analyzed. As a state that has done very well at defunding local communities, giving more money to regulators instead of encouraging cottage industries and food security is simply backwards.

Sincerely,
Bryan Mets
Citizen and aspiring Farmer
Ray Twp. MI 48096

--

This e-mail may contain data that is confidential, proprietary or non-public personal information, as that term is defined in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (collectively, Confidential Information). The Confidential Information is disclosed conditioned upon your agreement that you will treat it confidentially and in accordance with applicable law, ensure that such data isn't used or disclosed except for the limited purpose for which it's being provided and will notify and cooperate with us regarding any requested or unauthorized disclosure or use of any Confidential Information.

By accepting and reviewing the Confidential information, you agree to indemnify us against any losses or expenses, including attorney's fees that we may incur as a result of any unauthorized use or disclosure of this data due to your acts or omissions. If a party other than the intended recipient receives this e-mail, he or she is requested to instantly notify us of the erroneous delivery and return to us all data so delivered.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Kathy Frezza <kathfrez@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:21 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right-to-Farm

Please maintain the right of small farmers to continue to operate without interference by protecting the Right to Farm Act as is. We purchase healthy and good food from local, organic farmers. They provide the freshest and healthiest food, and we want to see them stay in business. Please leave the urban and small farmers alone.

According to the law, changes to the generally accepted agricultural and management practices (GAAMPs) should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Thank you,

Kathy Frezza
5005 Rohr Rd.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: kennithnss2001@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:19 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm

When are legislators going to leave the common man alone? If I pay taxes on land and not breaking zoning laws, leave us alone!

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jan Sackley <jansackley@chartermi.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: MargaretOBrien@house.mi.gov; Tonya Schuitmaker
Subject: Proposed Revisions to GAAMPs for Site Selection for Livestock Production Facilities

Dear Mr Wilcox,

I am writing to express my concern about the intended revisions to the Site Selection GAAMPs to expand their reach beyond production facilities to any type of livestock housing.

First let me note that I am not a farmer, I do not have any animals (not even household pets), and I am not connected to the agricultural industry in any way other than the fact that I belong to Farm Bureau. I reside in the City of Portage. I read about these proposed changes in the media.

Within a few blocks of my home, there are several parcels of land that have one, two or even five or more acres, all zoned residential. Some of these parcels, including one less than a block away from my home, have barns. At least one of these keeps horses on their property. If a person resides on a parcel large enough to provide adequate space for a cow or two, or a horse or two, or goats or a few chickens, they ought to be able to have them without interference from the state extending its reach through bureaucratic rules originally intended for livestock producers and larger farms.

If there are noise or odor problems with the neighbors, the local municipality can deal with it through local ordinances as the City of Portage has done with its chicken ordinance (assuming such ordinances to not override Right to Farm Act provisions). Amending the GAAMPs to encompass ALL livestock locations, including those with ONE horse, chicken or goat, and painting a broad brush to prohibit livestock in any residentially zoned areas, is too onerous and unfairly includes properties where livestock may be suitably housed.

I note that the attempt to change the GAAMPs from applying to LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION FACILITIES to simply LIVESTOCK FACILITIES is a very broad change, perhaps not intended to be so all-encompassing by the legislature when it gave MDA this authority under Act 93. I note that the Act defines "Farm operation" as activity in connection with "the **commercial** production, harvesting, and storage..." (emphasis added). It seems to me that the proposed changes are an overreach, and if adopted, may very well result in yet more legislation to curtail the overreach.

Also, the proposed GAAMP adds a definition of Livestock Facility as "Any facility where farm animals as defined in the Right to Farm Act..." **However, I note that the Right to Farm Act DOES NOT DEFINE FARM ANIMALS.**

I urge the MDA to reject the proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs that would add provisions that preclude non-commercial livestock from being housed in residentially zoned areas. The proposed changes are too broad and infringe on property owner rights to maintain animals for their personal use.

Thank you in advance for sharing my comments with the Task Force. I am also copying my elected representatives.

Jan Sackley
10314 Archwood Dr
Portage MI 49002

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Elizabeth Hunter <liza.s.hunter@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:40 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

To whom it may concern

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing as a concerned Michigan resident; it has been brought to my attention that the Right to Farm Act is being revised and the new additions to the act would not allow farm animals in residential areas. Why would our state take away families livelihoods? Especially if those farms are following the protocols and regulations already in place, which the farmers have fought so hard to uphold. It is extremely upsetting to me that we would choose to damage a family's work and the gifts that they offer to the community with their local food. I live in Marquette, MI, and one of the reasons I do is because I have access to food from people that I know personally and am able to go see their farming practices. This is such a gift. Please do not change the Right to Farm Act in the way that is being proposed. Help the farmers who continue to help the communities.

Sincerely
Elizabeth Hunter

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Carolyn Izzo <carolynizzo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:11 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act.

These talking points that I completely support. I also resent how government for the public "GOOD" continues to take our rights away. Remember we are a constitutional government by the people and for the people and not a socialist communist state that tells "We the people" what we can do.

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.
3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Shame on you
Carolyn Izzo
9741 Fish Lake Rd
Holly, MI 48442

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Rob Malcomnson <robmalcomnson@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:52 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: MI RTF

To whomever it may concern,

As a full-time farmer near an urban area, I am completely opposed to changes in the site selection criteria of the Right to Farm Act. It's working as intended. Leave it alone! Zoning ordinances wrongly prohibit innocent enough as it is. Basic human rights like food production/sales **MUST** be protected at all costs regardless of location. Besides,

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.
3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do **NOT** have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Thanks,
Robert Malcomnson
2267 N. Henderson Rd.
Davison MI 48423

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jennifer Fillion <jfbones@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:50 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Comments on Site Selection GAAMPs and the new Category 4 definition

I am very disturbed by the recent information I received regarding the proposed changes to GGAMPS and the new category 4 definition. While I do believe that good farm management is essential to protecting both people and animals, the new changes recommended would essential eliminate any protections to small-scale farmers in Michigan particularly if they should live in a residential zone-regardless of the size of their property or they type of animal they may have. You shouldn't treat a flock of 5 chickens the same as having a flock of 1000. Or having 1 goat on 4 acres the same as have 5 head of cattle on the same acreage. Reasonable limits are good to promote quality animal care and positive human-animal interactions but a wholesale blanket policy does nothing to promote small-scale animal farming within Michigan. Overall the small scale animal farming community is in decline due to the retirement of aging farmers, rising cost of farmland and pressure of large-scale commercial farming. Adding these new rules to this will hurt us in developing the next generation of small scale farmers (some of whom start as children raising a few chickens in residential areas) and reduce the ability of responsible Michiganders to be more self-sufficient. Please consider a more balanced approach to this and reject the proposed changes being made. Sincerely, Jennifer Fillion

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: David Beaudette <dbeaudette@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:34 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm

Any change in the current laws that would inhibit small farms will be a mistake and with 94% disapproval rate of congress I think it is clear people are fed up and paying attention. With that said if these new changes pass I personally will do all in my power to make sure that those who are responsible will never hold a public seat again! Thank You for your consideration on this matter.

Making the world a brighter place one drink at a time www.liquallights.com

Making the world a brighter place one drink at a time www.liquallights.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Ann Schneider <annnhoney@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:01 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

As a Michigan resident, and resident of Ypsilanti Township, I am in full support of Right to Farm as it applies to individuals being self sufficient. Keeping bees and chickens for individual use should be everyone's right, and not hindered by local ordinance or restrictive state law. I am disheartened by the trend of support for large agricultural industry and subsequent attack of the self reliant Michigander.

Ann Schneider

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Frances Sterling <presence1st@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAMMPS PROPOSAL CHANGES

Are you kiddin' me!!! We deserve the right to control our own food supply from a vegetable garden to farming our own land.

Our food supply is being contaminated everywhere. I have not trusted eggs from sources other than locally raised chickens fed organic feed (not this GMO "crap") for over 15 years now. That means most breakfast foods, cakes, pies, soufflé, and a score of other foods. BTW recently the neighbor's chickens were taken away from her because of a disgruntled neighbor and her land has been farmed for decades!

I am looking into aquaponics as Michigan does not afford me good organic produce year round and in 10, 20 or 30 years there won't be favorable distribution of food anyway. Big AG companies control what most of our population consumes and in what quantities including more fructose and GMO corn than our bodies are able to adapt to...leading to a diseased society.

I have never been one for the big brother scenario or conspiracy groups, however I am beginning to see the light. Perhaps they are correct. Perhaps this is simply human nature. To take away more rights and empower the few only.

I read today that 85 people control 50% of the money in our world. Will they now control the food supply?

Fran Sterling

P.S. IF I GET A FORM LETTER BACK I'M NEVER VOTING AGAIN. BETTER TO SEND NOTHING OTHER THAN AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THIS EMAIL WAS **READ**. INSTEAD I'LL LOOK INTO CLAIMING SOVERIGNTY AND MY OWN FOOD SUPPLY. YOU MAY THINK THIS IS A RIDICULOUS CLAIM FROM A CRAZED WOMAN. I AM AN EARLY RETIRED CHIROPRACTOR CARING FOR MY HUSBAND WHO IS A RETIRED VIETNAM VET LIVING A MAINSTREAM LIFESTYLE OTHER THAN EATING HEALTHY WHO LIVE ON A FIXED INCOME. I LEFT CALIFORNIA SEVERAL YEARS AGO BECAUSE OF THE POLITICS AND WHAT I FELT WAS A RADICAL GROUP OF PEOPLE. WELL, NOW I'M CONVINCED THEY WERE RIGHT ALL ALONG!

Fran

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: tmkwhite@juno.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:27 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

Michigan has the best Right to Farm Act (RTFA) in the country; under the RTFA, all Michigan citizens have the right to farm as long as they are a commercial operation (with no minimum sales requirement to be considered commercial under the law) and the farm is following applicable generally accepted agricultural and management practices (GAAMPs) issued by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

The protection that Michigan's RTFA provides to suburban and urban farms on non-ag zoned land is now in jeopardy, however, due to proposed revisions to the GAAMPs from MDARD.

MDARD has issued GAAMPs for "Site Selection" to help determine the suitability of sites for livestock production facilities. Until now this site selection criteria applied only to larger agricultural operations, not to farms in urban and suburban areas; under the proposed revision, the Site Selection GAAMP would apply to *any* farm with livestock.

The proposal states that "sites that are exclusively zoned for residential use . . . are not acceptable locations for livestock facilities regardless of [the] number [of livestock]. Confining livestock in these locations does not conform to the siting GAAMP." In other words, **those with livestock on land exclusively zoned for residential use will no longer be protected by RTFA.**

This move by MDARD is unjustifiable. In the words of attorney Michelle Halley, who successfully represented FTCLDF members Randy and Libby Buchler in a right-to-farm case one year ago, "The agency can't rewrite the law. They have only the authority to carry it out as the legislature intended. If they're going beyond that, they're violating the separation of powers. Period."

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Sincerely,
Todd & Michelle White
Richland, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Scott White <plastipop@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:59 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: The Right to Farm

Importance: High

To the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD),

I am writing you today to express my concern over possible changes to the Michigan Right to Farm Act. I strongly believe that a "one size fits all" agricultural regulation is a bad fit for local food production in Michigan. One that is struggling economically.

Due to increasing costs and scarcity of pure, healthy food (no GMOs, hormones, pesticides, processing, additives, nutrient poor soil, etc.) my wife and I decided to supplement our food by growing some vegetables and raising a small flock chickens for eggs. We've been doing this for several years now and it's been very successful. Our neighbors approve and in addition we've been able to offset the maintenance costs through the sale of surplus eggs.

I believe it is everyones right to provide for themselves and that includes owning a garden, having a small flock of chickens, or owning bees. Allowing and even encouraging these types of practices in communities enriches them, increases health of the people, educates and brings a level of awareness and responsibility to provide for oneself.

I understand concern about adding animals to urban areas, however by what standards are people owning other animals in urban areas considered acceptable? Cats kill local songbirds and get into fights with other cats and dogs. Dogs put adults and children and other animals at risk, wandering off onto other peoples property as well as leaving their waste on the ground. Dogs commonly howl, bark and cause numbers disturbances at all hours of the day.

If these types of behaviors are acceptable and manageable in urban areas (which they are) then having a small flock of chickens, or a garden of tomatoes is in no way poses a risk or hazard to citizens. Simply put, people have the right to grow their own food.

Sincerely,
Scott White
313-310-8831
plastipop@me.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Matt Swan <bigwhitebird29@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:20 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: farm animals in residential areas

I'm against the revisions to the right to farm act, removing persons in residential dwelling their rights to provide their own food supplies.

Matt Swan
613 Hercules
Gwinn, MI 49841
906-371-0265
bigwhitebird29@yahoo.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Raymond Thibeault <fourscorefour@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:04 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Sustainable Agriculture

Dear Mr. Lee,

Please do all you can to lessen the many harmful effects of corporate agriculture and promote small farm, sustainable agriculture.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Raymond Thibeault

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Bob Toland <tolandrhc@ameritech.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 10:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Agricultural uses in residential areas.

Finally, something is being acted upon to decrease the nuisances created by farm animals in residential zoning districts and that zoning is being recognized as a benchmark for realistic placement of land uses. The most serious issue of nuisance is in residential areas of higher density. Therefore, rules could be added that would provide a sliding scale or graded range of allowing farm animals based on the density of the immediate residential zoning. In many communities today, a modest number of farm animals are allowed in residentially zoned areas that have larger lot sizes such as perhaps a five acre minimum lot size or greater. More dense residential areas of 3 or 4 acre minimum lot size could conceivably allow a much reduced number of farm animals. However, residential areas having lot sizes of less than 1 or 2 acres have a strong likelihood of making the existence of farm animals intrusive and inappropriate. Thank you for allowing comments.

Robert Toland
Robert Toland Consulting
616-204-3747
616-785-3747
tolandrhc@ameritech.net

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Nicholas James Thomasma <nikthomasma@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:56 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Please don't take away small farmers rights. The Right to Farm act is there to protect people who grow food. Please let it stay that way.

Thank you,

Nicholas James Thomasma

Singer Songwriter
Folk, Country and Americana
Grand Rapids, MI
www.NicholasJamesThomasma.com

I send out a monthly newsletter on the first of each month. It's the best way to stay up to date. I'll rarely contact you outside of the monthly newsletter and I'll never, ever sell you to the machine. [Sign up here.](#)

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: williamrmays <williamrmays@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:52 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm

I support the right to farm act. Small farms such as Mr. Randy Bulcher of shady grove in Gwinn, Mi. Should continue to exist and people should be able to be self sufficient under this act. William Richie Mays. 7504 n. Ardmore ln. Jackson, Mi. 49201 (517)4143692

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Anne[lewis] Anderson <annebunac@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:59 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes to GAAMPs a gross, embarrassing over-reach

Please record this message in opposition to the proposed GAAMPs changes aimed at preventing the keeping of even a few chickens or a goat in a "residential" area. This is a gross overreach of government regulation and oversight intended to benefit very few, pretentious, privileged folks who seek to control the actions of their neighbors.

Please consider the potential impact on the rights of people to raise their own food. Obviously, limits and even sometimes regulations are a good thing as they protect both animals and humans. However, a few backyard chickens or a couple of milk goats in a large backyard is doing no harm.

Overreaching to nullify the zoning in place in cities and counties across an entire state is simply undemocratic and a violation of basic rights Americans hold dear.

This over-reaction on the part of the Dept. of Agriculture- not based in science or in logic - is not the way to resolve the growing pains of occasional neighborly disputes.

This is just as silly as not allowing a clothesline in the yard. Honestly, why not take it a step further? Domesticated cats are wiping out bird populations. Dogs wander through my neighborhood and leave their feces all over my yard, sometimes at their owners' request! Oh, and the constant barking!!! These are clearly nuisance animals more than any hen I've ever encountered (roosters are another story) and by the rationale of the proposed rules, we should deem cats & dogs (and guinea pigs and turtles since they also poo) just as unfit for residential areas and serving no purpose other than companionship.

I sincerely hope that the committee will see the lunacy of the proposed residential livestock changes and put a stop to them. I'd really rather not see Michigan on the Daily Show or Fox News over this and suspect the changes wouldn't be in effect for long before legislators take up the matter in favor of hobbyist farmers and 4H kids.

Thank you for your consideration,
Anne Anderson

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mac Waldorf <mac.waldorf@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:34 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

To Whom It May Concern,

I've read with great concern the plans to uproot the very basic rights we have in Michigan to meet our own consumption needs from small hobby farming. I believe the ability to maintain a modest amount of farming practices on small scale acreage is the essential and removing such rights would be deplorable. Further, I believe adding more oversight and creating more governmental red tape in order to maintain a small hobby farm is ridiculous and flies in the face of all the great work our Governor has done to strip away layers of oversight. Please, leave the Right to Farm option the way it is and move on to more cumbersome problems.

Kind Regards,
Mac Waldorf

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: BL <bethany7273@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:58 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP revisions

To whom it may concern,

Please do not change the MDARD terminology of "livestock facility" to apply to anything less than 50 animals. Please protect the rights of urban homes to keep backyard chickens & a reasonable amount of farm animals to be self sustainable. Please do not strip the small farms of their right to be protected by state law.

Thank you,
Bethany Lundquist

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Thomas Funke <tfunke1968@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:20 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities

Mr. Wilcox,

What is this world coming to if we make it ILLEGAL to grow your own food on your own property?

As a small farmer, who raises just enough food to feed my family, I find regulating farmers activities that do not effect anyone off their own property unreasonable and unnecessary. This applies at the federal, state, and local level.

If neighbors have issues with "odors" (and, a fully functional compost pile creates no smell) have the neighbors work it out among themselves.

I cannot imagine what my reaction would be if government regulators showed up on my property to shut down my operation for having a chicken running around on my property. First thing I would look for is if some Monsanto employee is tagging along. I strongly suspect some sort of corporatism taking place, as, we small farmers are fully aware of the New World Order Monsanto is bringing about through the use of their chemicals and genetic engineering. They hate competition from the small guy.

Leave the small farmer alone.

--

Thomas Funke
Hastings, Michigan, USA

PO BOX 332
Cloverdale, MI 49035
269.275.3628
tfunke1968@gmail.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Joanna Tomacari <cottondog1@charter.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:19 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

I am writing to you to support the "Right to Farm" protection. Everyone should be allowed to raise their own chickens, etc. as long as guidelines are followed and the animals are well kept. Everyone should continue to have the right to be self sufficient, especially in this day and age where the economy has crashed for so many. Also, by raising your own animals, you can be certain of what they are fed and their overall health. For instance, I prefer to buy my eggs from a small farm who feeds their chickens organic food as well as allows them to roam freely as this produces a healthier egg! I like to be able to visit the animals and see for myself how they are raised. I also come from generations of families who did their own gardening and raised their own chickens. This is our "right" if we should choose to do so and I am adamantly against that right being taken away. Taking those rights away reflects a huge loss of freedom and is wrong on every level.

Anna Tomacari
362 S. Francis Mine Dr.
Gwinn, Michigan 49841

Ph. 906-346-6964

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jessica Heikkinen <jessheikk@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:10 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Fwd: restricting small farmers rights

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Jessica Heikkinen" <jessheikk@gmail.com>
Date: Jan 20, 2014 9:03 AM
Subject: restricting small farmers rights
To: <WilcoxR2@mighigan.gov>
Cc:

please! reconsider making it difficult for families to be self sufficient by restricting small farmers rights. it is our God given right to work the soil and raise livestock so that we may teach our children how to LIVE. make good choices in the best interest of the people. its our health and food at stake! thank you,
the heikkinen family

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Leanne Swan <yooperswan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

The revisions in GAAMPs Right to Farm act would take away so many citizen's rights to be as self sufficient as we can! We do NOT support these changes!

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Christine N McGuire <christine.n.mcguire@wmich.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs

First of all, I can't believe that regs are changing even for ONE animal. You all should be helping people live well with animals.

I battled with a group of urban farmers/environmentally mindful Kalamazoo Township residents living in the platted areas against Kalamazoo Township to ammend the ordinance for owning chickens, not roosters. So many counties and states in urban areas from NYC to Detroit to Ann Arbor to the City of KAlamazoo have taken a forward thinking approach and allowed this to happen.

After ONE YEAR of going back and forth with the township board, zoning board, appeal appeal appeal. They still voted it down by a narrow margin. A few old farts in the audience said "It will decrease my property value" or "Chickens stink I grew up on a chicken farm". People only hear what they want to hear. We proposed a limited number of hens only with a permit that helped fund the changes and enforcement. It still failed.

Well, I know 20 people in my neighborhood breaking the law and having a few chickens for their own benefit, teaching their children 4H and because they know the government never makes the right choice.

Mattawan is hoity toity in areas with its McMansions, but it's also rural. And how are these people hurting anyone? It's not a nuisance. No more so than our ordinance which allows three yapping dogs for owners. And we've got our share of college students who are ignornant and oblivious to noise and being considerate to their neighbors.

You should not negatively impact this family in Mattawan. They are caring and clean. What is the matter with you people?

Clue in and leave them alone.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Leanne <butterflyawaynow@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 8:58 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm act

I do not support the revisions being made under GAAMPs Right to Farm act!! Thank you!

~Leanne Marie of the family Swan~

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tricia Thorington <t.r.thorington@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 8:58 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Small Farm Protection

Mr. Wilcox,

In response to MLives news article:

"No more farm animals in residential neighborhoods, Michigan agriculture committee advises"

Leave the small farmer alone!

As our government has proven to be insufficient in providing subsidies to working families allow and protect these people to

live off the land to sustain their homes!

Thank you for your time and consideration to vote FOR small/hobby farm protection.

Sincerely,

Tricia Thorington

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Rebecca Stuurwold <rhs123@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:05 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: concerned about proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs)

I'm concerned about the proposed changes to the GAAMPs in Michigan as detailed in this article on M-LIVE:

http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/01/hold_manure_pile_tweak_suggest.html

I know several people with small farms who stand to be adversely affected by the proposed changes if they are put into effect. If changes must be made, I suggest leaving it up to local governments and individual communities to decide what is best for a given area. For example:

-The City of Portage passed an ordinance within the past few years allowing city residents to keep a small number of chickens (providing that certain conditions, such as limiting the number of birds and requiring them to be kept in a coop, were met).

-My neighborhood in Texas Township is a sub-development and has rules regarding what kinds of animals may be kept as pets and how many may live in a given household.

I believe allowing individual communities to decide what is best is much more effective in this type of situation than having rules governing the entire state.

Yours sincerely,
Rebecca H. Stuurwold
5202 Misty Creek Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: skybox53@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:14 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPS Public Comment

Protection of the Right to Farm Act should be contained to commercial farm operations in a properly zoned area. The law as written has been distorted since its inception. Although I can appreciate the fact that many people would like to be self sufficient, this must be weighed against those who purchased property with the expectation of enjoying their property without the possible nuisances accompanying farming operations. Additionally, clashes of property use has the potential of reducing property values. There is a reason land is categorized.

Zoning needs to be controlled by local ordinances, the Right to Farm is a legislative issue that should clearly delineate what is considered a commercial operation which will take away any ambiguity in the law. As long as the judicial side of the house is left with ambiguity, case law will result and distortion will persist.

Roger Soldano
Mattawan, Michigan

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: David Ostrem <ostrem@charter.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 8:53 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: Stork, Andrea; Ostrem, Luke; Ostrem, Molly; O'Brien, Margaret; Reid, Claudette; SenTSchuitmaker@senate.michigan.gov; coyi2004@yahoo.com
Subject: MGAAP: Comment on Proposed Rule Change

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Environmental Stewardship Division
P.O. Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909
Dear Sir/Madam:

I write to register my opposition to any changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices that would result in a statewide ban on the keeping of animals deemed to be livestock on property zoned as residential. Such regulations should be left to local units of government, and not addressed in a one-size-fits-all approach.

A few years ago, my hometown of Portage adopted a reasonable "backyard chicken" ordinance, repealing its previous prohibition, after several public hearings where residents were given the opportunity to have their voices heard. As a result, Portage enacted an ordinance that balanced the rights of chicken owners with neighborhood quality of life concerns, and the results have been good. However, Portage's ordinance that works well here might not fit the situation in Bay City. Thus, such decisions are best left to local communities to make on their own.

On a personal note, my family and I have raised backyard chickens and have enjoyed numerous benefits by doing so. First, our children learned to appreciate animals and the circle of life. Next, our property rests on a creek with wooded wetlands beyond resulting in a habitat that is abundant for mosquitoes. To our surprise, our chickens put a noticeable dent in the mosquito population, allowing us to reduce other abatement strategies including the use of chemical treatments. Thus, our chickens actually help us to be better stewards of our environment. A statewide ban on keeping certain animals on properties zoned residential would potentially take these positive aspects of backyard farming away from us and others like us.

In closing, please leave such decisions up to local units of government, where they more properly are made.

Sincerely,

David Ostrem
1515 Dogwood Drive
Portage, Michigan 49024
(269) 321-9264
ostrem@charter.net

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Allison Bellairs <bunnyraiser13@bellairsfiberfarm.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:20 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan small farm changes

Hi,

I am a small farmer and a just out of 4-H member and a future Leader. I read the possible new changes and I think you are wrong. You need to keep helping small farms and hobby farms. We love having fresh eggs from our chickens. Why would you like to take away that. You would also destroy 4-H. Have you ever been in 4-H? Lets say a kid is showing a chicken from the three they can have. That kid has to work with that chicken and care for that chicken. If you took a chicken to the table you have never handled the judge can tell. The 4-H kids work all year to care for these animals. The 4-H kid learns so much about responsibility and respect. The 4-H kid cares for there animal for a year and then shows there animal for one day. The kids are tomorrows adults and wouldn't you want to have a responsible hard working adult rather than a irresponsible adult. Why do you want to cut down the farms. These are what keeps Michigan going. Please don't take away the kids pets and the future farms. Please you will be taking away 4-H and an excellent way to teach responsibility and respect.

Thank you,
Allison

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mark Bugnaski <markbugnaski@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 8:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Read the article in the Kalamazoo Gazette, and...

In concern with the right to residential farm:

Allow people in Michigan the right to be self sufficient in a safe and compromising manner.

The right to produce one's own food is more about knowing where your food comes from. It's about wanting a wholesome lifestyle.

In all fairness, small-scale farming nuisances, residential or otherwise, can be tolerated just as much as lifestyles that convert land use into McMansions and chemical-dependent evergreen lawns.

Please support fair policies.

Mark Bugnaski

Kalamazoo

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Liz Busch <liz@buckleyscanoe.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:20 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm/ GAAMPS

Hello,

I am writing to voice that I am opposed to changes in policy that restrict the ability to raise livestock in urban/residential areas.

If we are to have a connection with our food system, localized for sustainability, and liberty from reliance on Big Ag, which also requires greater energy/transportation resources; we must have the ability to locally raise and grow our food.

Thank you.
Liz Busch
Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: William McMullin <mcmullinw@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 19, 2014 9:03 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Promote Small, Family Farms

Michigan wants tax dollars to support sustainable agriculture, NOT polluting factory farms.

Thank you.

William McMullin
510 Montrose Ave., Apt. 5
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Robin LaRoy <robinlaroy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:36 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Farming

To Whom It May Concern,

I am highly concerned with the proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices that are currently under review. By attempting to exclude operations that are in some cases as small as just one animal from Right to Farm protection in residential areas you are stripping families and small business owners of their right to provide for their families.

From my understanding, the new changes would not take into consideration factors like how well you are able to provide for the animals or how much land you have. It, to me, seems to be a move toward big factory farms and away from self sustainable practices.

What about the family farmer that lives on a residential acre and wants a small flock of chickens because they are in moral, or even religious, disagreement with the disgraceful way that chickens are raised in large factory farm settings? What about the family that provides for themselves by raising a small amount of animals and selling at a farmer's market? What about the couple that wants a chicken or two for fresh eggs?

Honestly, if this is an attempt to attack the backyard chicken farmer, this is an inappropriate place to do so, as it does not take into consideration any practical qualifications as to whether the land or facilities are actually appropriate for the animals.

What is the difference between owning a dog and owning a chicken? Only the factor that an untrained dog could actually hurt another person.

Food safety is very important to me. Promoting local Michigan business is very important to me as well. Having the ability to purchase whole foods grown using methods I prefer should be possible for ALL residents of Michigan. There are a great many people taking their food safety into their own hands and growing for themselves. This should be encouraged and admired.

Please reconsider your recommendations that would put small farms out of business and negate a family's right to provide for themselves. Please do not treat small farms like large corporate factory farms. Small farms are not a nuisance to society like large factory farms are.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin LaRoy
Troy, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Kala Snyder <ferris07@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 5:01 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan's Right to Farm Act

Dear Representative(s),

I am writing with much concern over the proposed elimination of the Right to Farm Act coverage for even a single animal in a residential-zoned area. When a person buys, or rents property, they are then making an agreement to be a productive citizen to continue contributing to work, their community, and providing for their family. For some, and increasingly more, this may include a few farm-typical animals to help offset food costs, possibly curb food allergies for some family members, decrease reliance on store-bought packaged food, and help make neighbors more reliant on what our founding father's knew - how to care for, respect, raise, and eat the livestock we have been blessed with for nourishment.

Restricting the rights of any individual willing to care for animals and their family goes against all aspects of raising responsible citizens. When food prices get too high, when conventional food becomes too toxic or scarce, what mechanisms will those who pay your salary have to continue surviving? To continue allowing YOU to survive?

Raising animals, no matter the number or if they're considered 'livestock', teaches compassion, responsibility, and care for another being that no textbook can provide. If we want a strong Michigan, we have to continue PROTECTING the basic rights each person has - food being an essential element. Maintaining this protection, and support, of 'farms' of any size (including a residential property with only a single animal) under the Right to Farm Act is imperative. I urge you to avoid changing the proposed number of animals from 50 to anything less than that. Additionally, I pray you will be able to find yourselves working with said animals, finding their value in providing vital life lessons for their caregivers, and agreeing with the importance of the nourishment they supply compared to factory-raised, plastic-packaged meat that us consumers do not get to control what goes into them... This country is about freedom, and we shan't bite the hands that feed us, or those that feed our neighbors who may one day be the ones helping feed us.

I want to thank you kindly for all your considerations as you continue your public service with your head held high. God be with each of you to provide peace, guidance, and above all - love - in all you do.

Blessings,
Kala Snyder, RN, BSN, Owner
My Baby First, LLC
www.mybabyfirst.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: David Rank <abletreeco@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 5:50 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Opposing Proposed Changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs)

I strongly urge the Michigan Department of Agriculture to stop the Proposed Changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs)

It is not helpful or necessary for our state government to meddle into the activities of personal property owners on this issue. There are many benefits to our communities by gardening and the producing one's own food. To prohibit this activity is an invasion when there is not a strong harmful action needing intervention.

Please help keep our state government from over-regulating our personal lives.

I would like to further comment in reference to GAAMP Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities. I strongly oppose the inclusion of Category 4 sites because these localized regulations should be left to city zoning ordinances and not state governance, lot size and livestock size are not taken into account on the state level where they are on the city level, etc.

Thank you - David Grank

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tim and Alyssa Stevens <tastevens0318@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 7:16 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP site selection and odor control...

Dear Sir,

I am an alarmed and concerned citizen writing you about the GAAMP Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities. One size fits all agricultural regulation is bad for local food production in Michigan. It is also bad for individual Michigan families who are trying to live healthfully, frugally and locally. I oppose the inclusion of Category 4 sites because localized regulations should be left to city zoning ordinances and not state governance, lot size and livestock size are not taken into account on the state level where they are on the city level. This type of regulation may lead to the destruction of hardworking family businesses and may prohibited individual families from passing along the age-old American practices of small-scale farming and animal husbandry. Many children will miss out on the character development associated with 4H programs and the simple practice of raising animals and enjoying the bounty of hard work. Please oppose this change!

Respectfully,

Alyssa Stevens
Cohoctah, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: William Kowalak <wgkowala@peoplepc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 7:34 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm act

Dear Mr. Wilcox,

Please allow the small farms to continue to prosper without interference. They are doing no harm to anyone and should be left to produce foods which are vitally important in growing communities. They should be applauded as the work is hard and laborious. They deserve to be respected in the fullest by being allowed to farm as they wish.

Sincerely,

Laurie Kowalak

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: troxsel@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 7:37 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Hobby farm regs

Mr. Wilcox,

It always amazes me when city liberals come to the country they want all of the city smells and non of the good fresh country smells. Why would townships or cities even consider attacking the hobby farm which is the life blood of many communities? This is just pure evil when city liberals want to control everyone,s way of life.

We are all fed up with these people that tend to want to rule everything in their path. It is time someone shoved some bovine excrement down their throat and send them back to the city. Good grief. If the natural things of nature upset a person that much then WHY, WHY do they consider coming to the country? GET A LIFE, but leave us alone.

Mr. Terry Sellers
Oshtemo



FREE Animations for your email 

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Wendy Wagoner <w.wagoner@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 7:43 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

January 21, 2014

State Secondary Complex
General Office Building, Room A
7150 Harris Drive
Dimondale, MI 48813

To Whom It May Conern:

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

This move by the MDARD is unjustifiable, would like you to reconsider this change.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wagoner
18087 Virginia Circle
Interlochen, MI 49643

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Pam Carter <pacarter.68@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 7:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: farm animals in residential areas

January 21, 2014

I am writing to state my concerns about impending new rules for farm animals in residential areas. I am disappointed that you feel the need to restrict farm animals in urban settings. In the last two years, I have become more and more conscience of where my food comes from. This began with a simple back yard garden and led to coordinating a community garden and finally for the last two years preparing to raise chickens.

At the present time I live in the city of Redford on just under a half acre (.473) I am planning to raise 6 to 8 chickens for meat. This after long thought and research into the inhumane practices of industrial farms. I have been purchasing eggs from a local farmer for two years now, but regularly purchasing chicken meat is not an affordable option for me. There are already sufficient rules in place about farm animals in residential areas. The reasoning that it will help keep squabbles between neighbors down seems minor compared with my right to be self sufficient and to be able to eat meat without a guilty conscience. Perhaps we should take away peoples cars so that they do not act out in road rage?

Unfortunately, I am unable to move from my home to a rural area, I can not afford it and I work in a nearby community. Still I wish to eat healthier, I wish to know where my food comes from and I wish to rely less on commercial agriculture. Thank you for allowing me to state my opinion.

Sincerely,
Pamela Carter
734 620-1089
Redford, MI 48239

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jackie <j7623@altelco.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:12 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Changes in GAAMPS for 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

We am briefly writing to let you know that we are against the proposed changes that are being presented.

We own a small acreage farm with horses in Zeeland Charter Township, surrounded by other smaller farms that have cattle, poultry, horses, pigs, and goats. Our farm has been here over 100 years, and many of the others almost as long. Many are owned by retired farmers or farmer's children and are a substantial part of the community in this area, and depend on their livestock for existence. Changing of the MDARD terms for a livestock facility from 50 animal units to one would not only affect us small time farmers, but also all of the heritage farmers, and violate the Michigan Right To Farm Act.

A few years ago a development was put in down the road. From what I understand of the changes, this new development could possibly force out all of the farmers who have been here for generations because it was built too close to agricultural zoning and for some reason would take precedence over the existing farms. This would be a huge injustice to those who were here for generations before the residential development was built.

Please chose wisely and do not make the proposed changes. We citizens have the right to farm in Michigan. Please don't do anything to violate that right.

Thank you,

Jacke & Dave Flanders
1724 64th Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Guy Brown <mr.guybrown@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:15 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Rtfa

My vote is to leave it alone. Many familys including mine are dependant on the right to raise their own food. It is a shame that the right to farm act even has to exist to protect people. I understand the need for limits but to completly rid the public their right to raise their own food is Ludacris.

Guy Brown

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Cindy Beck <cindybeck@mindspring.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:17 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: small farming is my right as a citizen of the United States!

I am writing this email to you about the plans to change Michigan's laws on right to farm. I am a small urban farmer, in a small town in St. Clair county. We farm our 2 city lots. What I mean by that is we raise chickens for eggs for our family. We grow all of our veggies for our family. We sell our home made goods at local farmers markets in the spring, summer and fall. By changing our right to farm you will not only take away some of our income but, will also take away our right to feed our family. I can not understand what you are trying to do other than make it so we have to buy our food from a store. We have gone out of our way to make sure our neighbors are on board with what we are doing and we share what we grow with them. We also educate them on farming and the good practices of farming. Big business has no business farming we need in our country the small farmers to come back and be the back bone that they once were. This is the only way we as a country will be able to take care of our selves. By taking our right to farm away you are dragging our country further in a deep whole that we will never be able to get out of. Do you realize most of our children in urban areas have no idea were there food comes from other than Meijer. I had a 8 year old tell me that chickens can lay 12 eggs a day!
I had a 10 year old tell me that
Veggies come from a warehouse. I had a 11 year old tell me that the meat his family gets in the store is not from a animal but, from (yes again) a warehouse. These kids have no idea what a small farm is or were there food comes from. This is because we as small farmers are being pushed out.
We need to be able to educate and show our children how to take care of them selves with out needing big business.
Being self sufficient is what we need to be as a country. And you will take this away by changing this law. I also have to say I will not change how I am doing any thing even if you change the law. Because as a US citizen I have the right to take care of my self and my family so long as I am not hurting any one else. And me growing and raising my own food is not hurting anyone.

Thank you for your time,
Cindy Beck

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Lee Walsh <leelwalsh@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:17 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my OBJECTION to the proposed changes to Michigan's Right to Farm Act. It is important to me that all citizens in Michigan have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live.

I further object on the following grounds:

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.
3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). **While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.**

I trust that justice will be served in this matter. Preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act!

Sincerely,

Lee Walsh
Tecumseh, MI
517-423-9092

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Justin Panhans <panhans@u.northwestern.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

My comments:

I am an engineer living in Detroit. I do not farm, but I depend heavily on the food provided by small farms that produce food nearby. I believe I have a right to choose to eat food that has been locally and sustainably created. I believe it is better for my health, the health of my family, and the health of the environment. What kind of state would take away those choices? If state legislators are truly looking out for the welfare of the people, they need to ensure that small farms can prosper.

The Center for Disease Control estimates that 23,000 people die each year from antibiotic resistant bacteria. Considering that 80% of all antibiotics are used in large scale farming, the safest thing to do would be to support small organic farms that raise their animals in such a way that the animals are not sickly and do not require antibiotics. Supporting small farms would benefit everyone's health.

Also all farmers need to follow the instructions that outline proper use of pesticides. Lifting that requirement opens the doors for polluted water.

Please do the right thing,

Justin Panhans

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: element116@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:30 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

It recently came to my attention that there are revisions proposed to the generally accepted agricultural and management practices (GAAMPs) by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). In essence, these revisions would mean **those with livestock on land exclusively zoned for residential use will no longer be protected by the Right to Farm Act (RTFA).**

It is not clear to me what the motives are in this case, but changes to the GAAMPs should be for the purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment. As a long time Michigan resident who values the benefits of quality food from small local farms, this concerns me. All Michigan residents have a right to participate in the production of their own food regardless of where they live. Where is the data showing that these revisions are warranted and what benefits will it provide to Michigan residents?

Sincerely,
Andrew Murphy

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: debwyant@yahoo.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:35 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs Site Selection

Thank you very much for the invitation to express public opinion on the issue of Site Selection GAAMPs.

I would like to express my concern, and voice my objection, to the Site Selection GAAMPs being redefined to include the new term Live Stock Facility, and the definition as being one with any number of animals. This would include a single animal. I object strongly to redefining Livestock Production Facilities to less than 50 animal units. I believe the Michigan Right to Farm Act, Act 93 of 1981, adequately addresses generally accepted agricultural and management policies, and would like to see the Act protected.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Respectfully,
Deborah J. Wyant

Sent from Windows Mail

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Debbie Ridenour <knightprincess@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:49 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP Site Selection

I am emailing concerning the proposed revisions to the GAAMP Site Selection Draft.

I live on the border of Indiana, and several communities in Indian have done research and now are allowing families in residential neighborhoods to have a few hens. They do have restrictions in that the hens cannot be for their own meat production, and the eggs produced have to be for their family consumption and not for sale.

I feel it is very important for families to become more self sufficient on a small scale, with gardens and/or having hens, even in residential areas. The United Nations has already been discussing the best way to feed communities is for families to be more self sufficient and have gardens to help produce their own food. Having a few hens would help in this process.

There are families that have 3 or 4 dogs, which is no different than having 3 or 4 hens in the backyard in a coop. The hens make a lot less noise than dogs and do not cause problems.

Also, regulating farms that have been in the same family for generations, and then residential communities start building near them and start complaining. I think in a residential neighborhood is planned near agriculture where there are animals, then maybe before buying property or housing the buyer should be informed that there could be smells from animals on that farm. It should not be the small farmer's that have to suffer.

Thank you for your time,

Debbie Ridenour

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: lynnette Gideon <g_haus_fashions@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs)

Hello,

I am disappointed to hear that your commission is considering creating category 4 sites which would not allow livestock facilities (including as few as 1 animal) in a residential zone in Michigan. I am personally familiar with several families in suburban Detroit that include backyard hens as pets as a part of their family. I believe that they should have the freedom to keep these chickens as useful pets. The hens are certainly quieter and cleaner than most dogs, which are more than welcome in residential zones. And, as a bonus, chickens are productive because they bear eggs. Please protect our freedom and do not change the law in Michigan to ban small numbers of livestock animals in residential zones.

Thank you,
Lynnette Gideon
313-378-1292

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jodi Beauchamp <jodianna032007@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm act.

I am learning about the decision to try and take away ones right to grow there own food. Michigan has always been known as a right to farm state and I agree with its decision to allow that. It has one of the lowest obesity rates in the country, and Michigan is known for its great crops. Please, I beg you to not take away the peoples rights to have small farms. We have a small garden in chickens that are well cared for. Please dont take away more rights of the people. Enough damage has been done. We need to work toward going back to the way things were years ago, instead of further away from it.

Thank you,
Jody Beauchamp

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mary Dorothy Gargano <ae4865@wayne.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

MDARD

I am in favor of continued Right to Farm protection for small farmers in Michigan.

I oppose bringing operations as small as a single animal under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs, and am against the new Category 4 definition to being used to exclude those operations from RTF protection in residential areas.

Please forward my comments for consideration.

Thank you,

--

Mary Gargano

Wayne State University

Institute for Environmental Health Sciences
EACPHS Building, 259 Mack Ave., Room 5250
Detroit, MI 48201
Phone: 313-577-5521
FAX: 313-577-0082

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: tomme.maile@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 9:56 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPS

Dear Folks,

We grow much of own fresh food. We also provide garden space for other people in our neighborhood. We have chickens and the neighborhood children help us harvest the eggs. The people in this poverty stricken inner city location love what we are doing and we have never heard a complaint, but they often say, "more people should be doing this". The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo County Land Bank support and encourage our efforts to provide beautiful, productive green space where blighted abandoned homes once stood. Please protect our right to produce our own healthy food.

Tomme Maile & Dale Abbott
Trybal Revival Gardens

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: . B <evilink@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 9:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs comment

Good Evening,

I recently became aware of the proposed changes to the GAAMPs rules. I do not think we should make it harder for small farms to operate in Michigan. As I understand things, the proposed changes will make it more difficult for residents to own livestock, even extremely small scale "farmers" like suburbanites who own a single chicken. This is ridiculous. Not only does the ability to raise and care for livestock provide a potential source of income, but it is a means of independent sustenance for those who wish to eat something that they can be proud of. Something that hasn't been soaked in bleach, shipped from China (where it may have been prepared to lower standards with slave labor), or even something that the government decided was "close enough" to serve as the intended item - I can't even buy tuna and be sure I'm getting tuna anymore! If you make it harder for us to create things with our own hands, you take away the strength that built this nation and the skills we could teach our children.

Sincerely,
Michael Barberi
Ortonville

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Daron Anderson <goldenwillowpoultry@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 9:20 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs

Dear Michigan Agriculture Commission,

My name is Daron Anderson, I am 25 years old. I have been raising chickens for 11 years, cattle and heritage hogs for 2 years, goats for a year. I live with my parents on 5 acres, zoned residential out in the country, 1 1/2 miles from the nearest town surrounded by farms and homes. Ever since getting chickens, my dream is to have a farm of my own, and raise livestock to provide food for my family and sell the excess to provide income. I love farming small scale, its when I can truly enjoy farming, but if Michigan Agriculture Commission makes its changes to the GAAMPs, I would lose my dream among millions of other small scale farmers just trying to survive and provide for their families.

It would not just affect the small scale farmers, it would affect the 4H clubs, FFA clubs.

4H and FFA kids and teenagers would not be able to get any livestock to care for and to show them at fairs. And learn how to care for livestock.

It would affect the economy also.

Things are needed when owning livestock. Feed, shelter, feed and water containers, bedding, medical care, etc. Where does a farmer and a 4H member get those things needed for his livestock? From local business! TSC, Family farm & Home, Local Feed-mills, Local animal clinics, hardware stores, etc. Take away the small farms, local business will suffer from loss of income.

Please keep the current GAAMPs, and think of millions of people that will be affected by this change, and it would limit us as Americans to have the freedom to grow/raise our own foods.

Sincerely,

Daron Anderson January-20-2014

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: LJOHNKROPF@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 9:46 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes to GAAMPS

Michigan Agriculture Commission,

As I understand the proposed change, it would adversely affect small scale farmers, families trying to make ends meet on small budgets...providing some of their own food (eggs as example), FFA, 4H clubs among others. It seems a broad sweeping change...one size fits all with no discretion.

It would take away opportunities for kids to learn not only the care and feeding of an animal, where our food comes from, but other valuable skills in areas of business and finance, budgeting and personal responsibility.

I see a trickle down effect as well for businesses that provide items related to small scale farming. We all want to see Michigan be a business friendly state.

I urge you to not make these changes that would take away opportunities for our youth in particular, adversely affect our business atmosphere, thereby causing folks to want to leave our state for friendlier "pastures".

Thank you,
Jacki Kropf
Ada, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Sue <suemusial@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:07 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Small farms

I strongly disagree with someone telling me that I can't have a few harmless chickens in my own backyard! In my 60 years on this earth I have never seen a bad backyard chicken. In these hard times I see nothing wrong with trying to be self sufficient. The government should save its time and effort for things that truly are important for its citizens!

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: John Hakenjos <hakenjo1@cvm.msu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:16 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Regarding Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices

Dear Mr. Wilcox,

I am writing in opposition to proposed changes to the MGAAP that would hinder the people from their Right to Farm protection in residential areas. This move would hinder peoples in grocery deserts, those trying to stretch their limited income by growing their own food, and those who do not wish to partake in the sometimes harmful practices of some large agricultural companies. The ways these changes could be used against small farmers could be vindictive and are not well-defined. This is not just a dispute between pain-in-the-butt neighbors. The consequences are far-reaching.

Sincerely, John Hakenjos

BS Animal Science from MSU

BS Biology from GovSt

Current Veterinary Student at MSU.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: David Johnson <iisonu2012@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:16 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan right to farm act

To Representative Wilcox:

I need to voice my concern about changing the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

I am not a farmer, but have friends who are, farming is essential to everyone big or small. As these times are becoming more and more economically unstable, one thing I want to be able to rely on is our small farmers. They are not union, and so survive simply by the works of their own labor. Most of Michigan is rural or suburban, to think that only big business can have the freedom to farm is unpatriotic. Stand up for the common man, we want the freedom to rule our lives, not to be beasts of burden run by an out of control government.

I can understand there can be concerns that may be addressed on a case by case basis, but to blanket rule is not right on any level.

Sincerely

David Johnson