

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Karen <riverroadred@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:18 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP's

When will the need to protect us from ourselves stop?!

This is yet another attempt to control every move of the American citizen. Being raised to take care of myself, to be as self sufficient as possible, on the smallest footprint is important to me and many others.

Gardening, a horse, small farm raised animals and chickens is possible without problems to others.

Are there not bigger fish to fry in this country?!

Please go after a cause that may truly make a difference. For example; Help others to learn how to help themselves, there are enough dependent on the government.

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Chris <christinaryanstoltz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:04 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm

Hello,

I am writing to voice that I am truly 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 & Blessed Be!  
Christina Ryan-Stoltz  
231.632.4747

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** dajfsa@gmail.com on behalf of julie flavin <dajfsa@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:16 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** change in GAAMPs

Sir,

I am writing you regarding the change in the law about ' hobby farms'. this is outrageous that you would deny you citizens the ability to provide food for themselves. you are denying them the right to be self sufficient.

if there is a problem with neighbors then it can be addressed in a different manner. to just make a wide sweeping law is plain lazy. there are other ways to accomplish compliance. those that are living there should be grandfathered in. those who move and wish to do 'hobby farming' should have to pay a fee for doing so but in no way be denied the ability to do so.

Shame on you for allowing the few to dictate the rest of us.  
very disappointing.

sincerely

Julie Anderson

Let Go and Let God

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Richard and Laura Boquet <rjboquet@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:19 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** MSFC Action Alert - 2014 PROPOSED GAAMPs

[WilcoxR2@michigan.gov](mailto:WilcoxR2@michigan.gov)

To whom it may concern;

I'm going to move Kalamazoo, Mi. in the spring with rabbits and chickens. Why would the rules change, when there not broken? I've planted a garden to feed myself and my animals. My neighbors and I would like to raise chickens and rabbits in the city of Kalamazoo. I hope the rules in Michigan do not change. Thank you.

Richard Boquet

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** steve harris <stevharrisdesign@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:17 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Reject Changes to GAAMP 1/22/14 Meeting in Diamondale

I am unable to physically attend the meeting, as I work, so thank you for accepting this e-mail.

The new changes to the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices should be rejected. Do Not sell out the small/Family Farmer and individual to satiate the greed of the large corporate agribusiness. To do so would be in direct conflict with the safety, security, and well being of all Michigan individuals, whether you or they realize it or not.

Thank you.

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** whdnlanders@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:32 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Changes to the GAAMPs that are proposed

Dear Sir,

My name is Daniel Morse. Our family farm is located in Southwest part of the state. I understand there are going to be changes recommended to the GAAMPs.

I feel this is a mistake. Not only for the small and hobby farms. Operations that provide employment and any operation that is under 200 tillable. The public has not had enough time to read and understand the proposed changes. We require more time. Frankly, I feel this was pushed under the wire. Poor weather and less than normal information delivery has not given the public and small operators time to discuss and provide proper feedback to their Representative and proper personnel.

That is you also from this moment on.

Everyone I have contacted also feel that more time is needed. Our collective voices have not been heard as of yet. As a person who has sworn to uphold democracy and the great State of Michigan, you should understand.

We need more time. I am asking politely. Please do not recommend any changes until we have more time and it is made more clear. We need more meetings locally and more transparency.

Daniel Morse  
269-369-4233

Kalamazoo County

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Gerald Morin <geraldmorin@att.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 5:48 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm Act

While I do not have livestock due to the small size of my property, I do not believe the proposed revisions to the act are neither legal nor in the best interests of the citizens of Michigan. This proposal appears to be a response to a complaint from someone regarding a specific property.

As a retired building inspector and zoning enforcement official I am quite familiar with the "NIMBY" (not in my back yard) approach to activity on the neighbors property. It is often initiated by the newer neighbor, the "Johnny come lately" to the area.

There would be no surprise in learning that the primary complainants have already lost in court and are seeking to have the law amended to fit their point of view.

Respectfully,

Gerald Morin

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Travis Warner <warnertravisj@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 6:23 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan's Right to Farm Act

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 residential 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.

Further I will point out that this country is of the people by the people and for the people. The freedom to farm/homestead is not based on zoning or regulation, it is a right and freedom. Everyone has the right to grow their own food be it vegetation or livestock.

Everyone I have talked to agrees, these proposed changes are just plain nonsense. People have had enough of supposed government stepping into areas that they have no right. The Constitution itself outlines the rights of government and what it is limited to. It is time it was obeyed.

Travis Warner Farmer/homesteader

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Kendra Pyle <[dreamweaver@buffalodreaming.com](mailto:dreamweaver@buffalodreaming.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 6:27 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Opposed to changes in GAAMPs Site Selection and definition of Livestock Facility

Dear Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Environmental Stewardship Division:

I strongly opposed the proposed changes to expand GAAMPs to define a 'Livestock Facility' as any area that houses even one animal. This would undermine the Michigan Right to Farm Act. The changes would also prohibit keeping of any farm animals in any residential areas, which would mean no more backyard chickens. I am strongly opposed to these changes because they are extremely detrimental to people's ability to be self-sufficient and sustainable and produce their own food.

Many Michigan cities such as Ann Arbor, Coldwater, East Lansing, Kalamazoo, Northville, Redford, Saginaw, Southfield, Traverse City and Ypsilanti and some counties (Ingham County) have legalized keeping small numbers of chickens (usually 3-5) within residential areas. I, along with many other people, am concerned about the hormones and antibiotics that are found in store-bought eggs. I plan to start keeping chickens in my backyard in Lansing this year. These proposed changes would affect many people's ability to raise eggs for our own food.

Please reconsider these changes and allow the Michigan Right to Farm Act to do exactly what it was designed to do – protect Michiganders ability to farm in areas that are not zoned agricultural.

Sincerely,  
Kendra Pyle

Kendra Pyle  
2404 Harding Ave.  
Lansing, MI 48910  
517-243-3224  
[dreamweaver@buffalodreaming.com](mailto:dreamweaver@buffalodreaming.com)

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Vickie Hintz <vickiehintz@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 6:49 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan right to farm

Please do not take away Michigan's right to farm. We have the right to grow our own food, including raising a few chickens, etc.

This is nothing more than a grab at our civil liberties and an attempt to control the food we eat.

Thank You  
Vickie Hintz

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Ashley <doty2ak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 7:00 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMPS

**Please reconsider changes to GAAMPS.**

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.

-Ashley Doty

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Lee <lmccarthy30@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 7:09 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act

I am writing to urge you to preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act.

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,  
Lee Anne McCarthy

Sent from my iPad

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** J Johnson <jeff.kathyj@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 7:29 AM  
**To:** MDA-Ag-Commission; Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Questions for Jan. 22nd GAAMP meeting

Michigan Commission of Agriculture & Rural Development,

I am planning on attending the GAAMP meeting January 22nd. I am concerned about some changes/ additions that have been proposed in the 2014 GAAMP. I have read some of these proposed changes for 2014 . I am greatly concerned that these have the potential to severely restrict the rights of Michigan farmers, particularly small scale farmers.

Below I pasted a few proposed changes from the GAAMP document along with my questions and concerns. I hope that these will be discussed during the meeting.

"These farm management practices are scientifically based and updated annually to utilize "current technology promoting sound environmental stewardship on Michigan farms."

What type of scientific studies were performed to make the proposed changes?

I would like to address the following changes.

"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."

There are villages and cities such as Chelsea which allow residential areas to have a "backyard flock" of chickens. The above does not represent these individuals!

"Livestock Facility – Any facility where farm animals as defined in the Right to Farm Act are confined regardless of the number of animals. Sites such as loafing areas, confinement areas, or feedlots which have any number of livestock that preclude a predominance of desirable forage species are considered a part of a livestock facility."

Why are you changing the definition of a Livestock Facility?

"Regardless of the number of animals" It does not seem right for an individual who only has one farm animals to have to comply with the same regulations as those who have 500. Financially that can be impossible for the small hobby farmer or parent who simply wants to give their children an hands on learning experience to better understand what is involved in raising part of their own food. I do not see how this would be supportive to the future development of the agriculture arena in Michigan.

I am looking forward to hearing from the Commission concerning these statements on January 22nd.

Sincerely,

Kathy Johnson

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** info@applesauceinn.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 7:43 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan Right to Farm Act-changes

I am a concerned business owner who features local ingredients in our breakfasts and desserts for our Bed & Breakfast in Northern Michigan. I am writing because I am concerned about the impact that the "proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs) currently under review by "first bring(ing) operations as small as a single animal under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs," the alert warns, "and then using (a new category) to exclude those operations from Right to Farm protection in residential areas." We need to "protect and extend the rights of urban, suburban, and rural small-scale farming operations throughout the state." These new rules will have a negative effect on many of the farms that I buy food from, my business, my family's ability to find local food, and the environment. I ask you to ensure that new regulations do not put family farms out of business, harm farmers' soil, water, and wildlife conservation efforts, or shut down the growth of local and regional healthy food systems! I raise my own chickens here at the B&B....and this would significantly effect my own ability to offer my guests fresh, local and organic eggs each day.

I have a number of friends in the Traverse City area who are farmers, growers and chefs. These "proposed" changes will negatively impact a region that is thriving and is a destination for FOOD. My guests at the B&B come up North to enjoy and support locally grown organic food. I make every effort to purchase local organic produce and support these often family run businesses. If these farmers go out of business, my only alternative would be to use unhealthy processed food. These family run farms also support the local wildlife and are helping to protect and create habitats for bees and other pollinators.

Jamie Creason~your Innkeeper

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**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Erica Losch <telosch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 7:48 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** comment on proposed changes

To Whom it may concern:

We are not in agreement of the the proposed changes to GAAMPs.

We believe that people should have the right to farm their land. We live on 5 acres that is zoned residential. There are very few houses around us and a farm with 3,000 pigs right by us. We would like to keep the right to be able to have a hobby farm if so desired without intervention and regulation.

Thank you.

Tim and Erica Losch

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Kristi Sweeney <quantumspock@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:07 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

We already have a law that regulates livestock. Why do we need to change a law that is working, especially without scientific evidence to the contrary? The proposed language contradicts the language of the law. Please stop messing with Michigan.

Sincerely,  
Kristi Sweeney

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Trase Passantino <trase@serenityacresnow.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:25 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed changes to Right To Farm

I am writing as both a small farmer, and a concerned citizen who wants to see the best Right To Farm law in our nation remain just that. As agriculture is the second largest industry in our state, and people want direct access to locally grown foods, it is imperative that small farms be allowed to exist and provide those foods.

I am deeply disturbed by the efforts to weaken this law and make small farms subject to the whims of local government officials, rather than seeing the continued protection under Right To Farm that is currently enjoyed, as our legislators intended.

Considering that most land is zoned residential in our state, including many rural plots, turning the decision as to who is allowed to farm where over to local governments and officials who often have priorities antithetical to farming is unconscionable.

I believe altering this law goes beyond the authority of the agency and treads into legislative territory, and I am not alone. Please consider:

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 sincerely hope that the agency reconsiders this action and does not try to operate outside of its realm of authority. ALL farms in our state deserve to receive protection under the law, regardless of size.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Trase L. Passantino

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Erin <erincaszatt66@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:33 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Change to GAAMP's regulations

To whom it may concern:

I feel that any changes to the current regulations that will limit or restrict a family's abilities to raise a small manageable herd of small animals is very detrimental to our society. Our family cannot afford to own 5 or more acres of land right now to have a farm, yet with our small flock of chickens we are able to teach our children the lessons of a farm, responsibilities, compassion, biology and nutrition.

If we were not allowed to raise our small flock of chickens our children would not ever fully understand where food, especially chicken comes from. We could explain it to them until we are blue in the face, but like many lessons a parent teaches their children they do not fully understand until they can see it, touch it and experience it. Most children think that chicken comes in a nugget. Our children have raised our chickens since they were hatchlings, they know that there is nothing on a chicken that is naturally shaped like a nugget.

Most children think that eggs come from a store. Our children know that someone has to collect eggs daily from a hen's nest, because our children collect the eggs daily. Our children also know that chickens have personalities and deserve more respect as a living being than what they receive at a commercial farm. We could read our children books about raising farm animals, we could watch videos and movies on raising animals or we could let them experience it for themselves. In my experience as a human and now as a mother I feel that first hand experience is an irreplaceable learning and teaching tool.

We have spared our children the gruesome reality of harvesting our meat chickens. As we feel they are too young to fully understand, but as they get older we will expose them to the full reality of eating an animal. They do know and understand that if we are to eat a chicken then that chicken must give its life. They are not happy about that, but they appreciate the food that we put on their plates as they have done the hard work to produce a happy healthy chicken.

Please consider the benefits of raising children around animals before making a regulation changes that will make that unattainable for most families and most children. Children are our societies future, let us build a strong foundation for their future.

Thank you for your time,  
Erin Caszatt

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** MDA-Ag-Commission  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:33 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA); michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net  
**Cc:** MDA-Ag-Commission  
**Subject:** FW: 2014 GAAMP changes-comments  
**Attachments:** 2014 GAAMP commx.docx

Thank you for your message. Please note that written comments on the GAAMPs 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](mailto:WilcoxR2@michigan.gov) by 5:00 p.m. on January 22, 2014.

**Your attached comments have been forwarded to the above e-mail address.**

The GAAMPs public input meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 22, 2014, in Room A, at the State Secondary Complex, General Office Building, 7150 Harris Drive, Dimondale, Michigan.

For a copy of any of the GAAMPs including the proposed revisions, please visit [www.michigan.gov/gaamps](http://www.michigan.gov/gaamps) or contact MDARD's Environmental Stewardship Division at 517.284.5619, or toll free at 877.632.1783.

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**From:** Michelle Halley [<mailto:michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 4:52 PM  
**To:** MDA-Ag-Commission; Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** 2014 GAAMP changes-comments

Please find my comments on proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs attached.  
Thank you, Michelle Halley

F. Michelle Halley  
Attorney  
375 N. McClellan Avenue  
Marquette, MI 49855  
[michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net)  
906-361-0520

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F. Michelle Halley  
Attorney  
375 N. McClellan Avenue  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906-361-0520  
michelle.halley@sbcglobal.net

January 21, 2014

Michigan Commission  
of Agriculture & Rural Development  
P.O. Box 30017  
Lansing, MI 48909

And via electronic mail: [mda-ag-commission@michigan.gov](mailto:mda-ag-commission@michigan.gov) and [WilcoxR2@michigan.gov](mailto:WilcoxR2@michigan.gov)

Dear Members of the Michigan Commission of Agriculture & Rural Development:

I am writing on behalf of Michigan farmers who are acutely concerned about two proposed changes in the 2014 Draft Site Selection & Manure Management Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (“Site Selection GAAMP”). These two changes would undermine the Michigan Right to Farm Act’s protection for farmers.

As a small farmer myself and an attorney who represents small farmers, including those who can continue to farm thanks only to the Right To Farm Act, I assure you that small farms are critical to the financial and physical vitality of communities across Michigan. Small farmers form a vibrant portion of the overall community giving hands-on farming classes, providing goods to consumers and fueling lively farmers’ markets. Small farms are bastions of teaching the next generation how to farm. The Right to Farm Act is lauded nationally as an act to emulate for the encouragement and success of farming. Farmers need you to protect its integrity.

First, we oppose the adoption of language extending the reach of the Site Selection GAAMP to farms with even less than one animal unit:

**Livestock Facility** – Any facility where farm animals as defined in the Right to Farm Act are confined regardless of the number of animals. Sites such as loafing areas, confinement areas, or feedlots which have any number of livestock that preclude a predominance of desirable forage species are considered a part of a livestock facility.

2014 Draft Site Selection GAAMP, definitions. The addition of this definition would make the Site Selection GAAMP requirements applicable to the smallest of farms. Even a home with one chicken would be required to meet the setbacks of this GAAMP. This change would likely abolish any keeping of livestock, even flocks of less than a dozen chickens or one bee hive, in most urban settings because the setbacks would be difficult or impossible to meet there. We believe that this is unnecessary over-regulation that could be avoided by leaving the definition of “livestock production facility” just as it is, or at a minimum, making it applicable at a reasonable number of animal units.

Second, we oppose the changes throughout the Site Selection GAAMP that ban all keeping of animals in residential areas:

**Category 4 Sites:** Sites not acceptable for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities and Livestock Production Facilities.

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.

2014 Draft Site Section GAAMP, p. 12. This change would subject every newly regulated “Livestock Facility” (again, just one animal would qualify) to local zoning restrictions. This change would preclude kids across the state from having even one animal for the county fair. Surely this is not your intent, but it would just as surely be a result.

This change gives the power to control where farming can and cannot occur to each city, township or village. This change is in direct conflict with the plain language of the Right to Farm Act:

Beginning June 1, 2000, except as otherwise provided in this section, it is the express legislative intent that this act preempt any local ordinance, regulation, or resolution that purports to extend or revise in any manner the provisions of this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a local unit of government shall not enact, maintain or enforce an ordinance, regulation or resolution that conflicts in any manner with this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act.

MCL 286.474(6)(emphasis provided). The legislative intent of this amendment to the Right to Farm Act is obvious: the legislature intended that local zoning schemes *not* be able to dictate where or how farming could occur. In 1999, the Senate Agricultural Task Force recommended strengthening the Right to Farm Act in order to alleviate the impacts to farmers trying to comply with different zoning requirements all over the state. The report states regarding the state of affairs then, which is exactly what this proposed change would again create, that:

...The current situation of local control creates havoc. Under the current policy regime, 1,800 units of government determine land use policies and regulations. This is a prescription for confusion and frustration on the part of farmers, particularly those who have farmland in more than one unit of government. In order for agriculture to be successful, regulations concerning farming practices have to be consistent on a statewide basis.

1999 Report by the Senate Agricultural Preservation Task Force, p. 32. Returning to this state of affairs would be an immense step backward for agriculture of all sorts everywhere in Michigan. And, it is in direct conflict with the legislative intent and plain language of Michigan's Right to Farm Act.

In its first look at the RTFA, the Michigan Court of Appeals addressed the basis of the law:

The primary rule of statutory interpretation is to ascertain and give effect to the legislative intent. *Farrell v Auto Club of Michigan*, 148 Mich App 165, 169; 383 NW2d 623 (1986). The language of the statute is the best source for ascertaining this intent. *Great Lakes Steel Division of National Steel Corp v Public Service Comm*, 143 Mich App 761; 373 NW2d 212 (1985), lv den 424 Mich 854 (1985). From the language chosen by the act's drafters, we ascertain that the Legislature was concerned with the regulation of land use and its impact upon farming operations. This concern was directed towards regulations imposed upon farms by local government sources as well as private sources. MCL 286.474; MSA 12.122(4). The Legislature undoubtedly realized that, as residential and commercial development expands outward from our state's urban centers and into our agricultural communities, farming operations are often threatened by local zoning ordinances and irate neighbors. It, therefore, enacted the Right to Farm Act to protect farmers from the threat of extinction caused by nuisance suits arising out of alleged violations of local zoning ordinances and other local land use regulations as well as from the threat of private nuisance suits.

*Northville v. Coyne*, 429 NW. 2d 185,187; 170 Mich. App. 446, 448 (1988) (emphasis provided).

The Court's interpretation leaves little room for doubt regarding the legislative intent of the RTFA and its proper interpretation. Even so, this interpretation was rendered prior to the 1999 amendment that mandated that the RTFA not be over-ridden by local ordinances.

To the extent that the Site Selection and Odor Control of New and Expanding Livestock Facilities GAAMPs changes purport to require compliance with local zoning, that portion of the GAAMP would be in direct conflict with the RTFA's specific and deliberate language to the contrary, MCL 286.474(6), and would be invalid.

Please contact me at (906) 361-0520 with any questions you may have about these comments.

Sincerely,

F. Michelle Halley (P62637)

c: Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund  
Michigan Small Farmer Council

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Randy Zeilinger <rzeilinger@wideopenwest.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:42 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Cc:** rzeilinger@wideopenwest.com  
**Subject:** Public COmments - Proposed GAAMPs Changes (2014)

January 22, 2014

To:

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development;

The 2014 GAAMPs Committees.

### **RE: 2014 PROPOSED CHANGES TO SITING SELECTION GAAMP**

With the preface of the Site Selection and Odor Control GAAMP is a statement that purports to "*provide uniform, statewide standards and acceptable management practices based on sound science*".

So with this in mind I would like to know what the **sound science** is that describes the new Category 4 and how exactly local zoning falls within **statewide standards**. Can the committee provide any citations that zoning is actually a true scientific based discipline? In fact, none of the proposed changes provide citations supporting the arbitrary changes. What is the real reason for the inclusion of Category 4? The wording, combined with the other proposed changes seem to be specifically aimed at excluding all Michigan citizens who happen to live in an area which has been arbitrarily labeled as residential.

The problem with "residential zone" is that it is anything that a local zoning board wants it to be. It has little to do with highly populated areas or land use. Local municipalities assign a residential zone to any household that they want to charge a higher tax base to. There is little rhyme and reason for some designations. It is certainly not scientific. Zoning changes are often changes to recoup taxes on devalued properties when city revenues are reduced.

My city, Garden City saw this in a wholesale zoning change from RF1 (resident farm, 1 family house) to R1 (1 family residence). So when I was cited for keeping livestock (chickens and honey bees) I attempted to use PA93 of 1981, The Right to Farm Act. With the proposed changes to this GAAMP, the opportunity to use that same State Law will be denied to me and any other Michigan citizen simply because of a mis-guided Category 4.

Furthermore, current farm operations in a Category 3 situation will also lose their rights if the "proximity" to Residential zones is added. If a new house is constructed and zoned as residential, the existing farm will be denied RTF protection. And that would be solely determined at the local level. Essentially, these changes are permitting a local government to decide who is afforded State-given Rights.

These proposed changes violate the letter of the state law "(6) Beginning June 1, 2000, except as otherwise provided in this section, it is the express legislative intent that this act preempt any local ordinance, regulation, or resolution that purports to extend or revise in any manner the provisions of this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a local unit of government **shall not**

*enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance, regulation, or resolution that conflicts in any manner with this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act." (Emphasis mine)*

I would like to point out that there were similar changes proposed for 2012 which were rejected by the Agriculture Commissioners. There is no reason for these proposed changes to be approved either. These changes, if approved, would be a serious economic blow to the citizens of Michigan. Freedom to raise one's own food, market and sell at farmer's markets would be eliminated. The chaos of each city or town enacting ordinances to protect animals, the environment and neighbors will be result legal challenges at every court level. There are no benefits to approving these changes. There will be severe consequences suffered state-wide if the changes are approved. In the end, this proposed change is detrimental to the health of the state economy and sovereign rights of the citizens of Michigan.

I urge you to reject this change. And if the other GAAMP proposed changes are as ill-conceived as this one, then they all should be rejected and returned to committee for a "sound science" evaluation.

Thank you for protecting our Rights,

Randy Zellinger

Owner of Genius Loci Farms, LLC

V.P. MSFC

Environmental Educator

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

**From:** hjoz - <hjoz@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2014 3:32 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** ACTION ALERT: Speak Up About The Michigan Right to Farm Act by January 22!

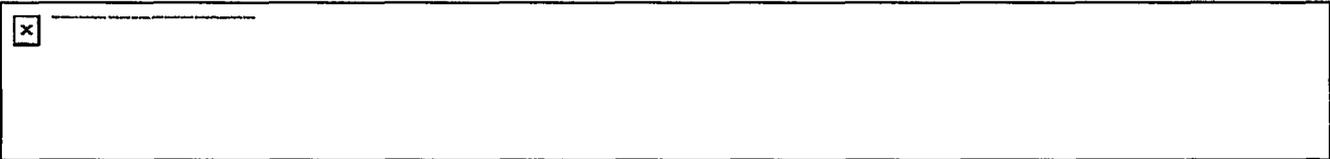
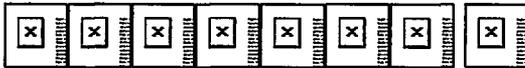
save the act

happy trails to you, howard

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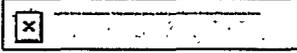
Date: Mon, 20 Jan 2014 10:11:42 -0500  
From: admin@farmtoconsumer.org  
To: hjoz@msn.com  
Subject: ACTION ALERT: Speak Up About The Michigan Right to Farm Act by January 22!

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**Action Alert - visit [www.farmtoconsumer.org](http://www.farmtoconsumer.org)**



**Preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act**

**Speak up at the Public Comment Period this Wednesday or Send an Email!**

**Wednesday Jan. 22, starting at 9 a.m.**

**State Secondary Complex**

General Office Building, Room A  
7150 Harris Drive  
Dimondale, MI 48813 [[directions](#)]

**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).



**Livestock on land zoned for residential use will no longer be protected!**

Preserve the Michigan  
Right to Farm Act and  
**Speak Up Now!**

**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."

Speak up at the public comment period on Wednesday, January 22, starting at 9 a.m.

**Can't attend the public comment period?** See what else you can do below!

**Please share this alert with friends and family.**



## **What You Can Do**

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is meddling with the Right to Farm Act! Please speak up at the public comment period or via email!

- 1. Voice your support for the Michigan Right to Farm Act at the public comment period** scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2014, beginning at 9 a.m. in the State Secondary Complex General Office Building, Room A at 7150 Harris Drive, Dimondale, MI 48813.
- 2. Email comments by 5 p.m., January 22nd to WilcoxR2@michigan.gov.**

The most important story to tell is yours. **Let MDARD and the Commissioners know why it is important to you** that all citizens in Michigan have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live.

### **Talking Points for your public comment or email:**

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

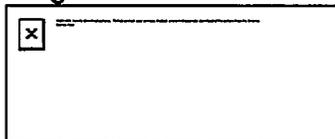
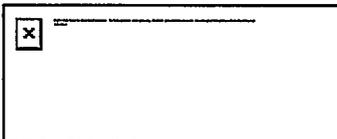
from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.



**Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund**, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit [EIN 20-8605130], defends the rights and broadens the freedoms of family farms and artisan food producers while protecting consumer access to raw milk and nutrient-dense foods. Learn more **About Us** or read the **FTCLDF 2012 Summary**.

**Membership benefits** include the possibility of representation in court; the Fund typically pays for all court costs. The Fund is not an insurance company and cannot guarantee representation on all legal matters. Your membership fees and donations help to keep local food sources available and preserve family farms facing unjust enforcement actions.

**NEW! Subscribe to Food Rights News RSS Feed.**



**Donations** to the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund are always appreciated though not tax-deductible. **Prefer to make a tax-deductible donation?** Go to [www.farmtoconsumer.org/PIL](http://www.farmtoconsumer.org/PIL) for information about "public interest litigation" (PIL).

**Questions?** Contact us by email at [info@farmtoconsumer.org](mailto:info@farmtoconsumer.org) or call 703-208-FARM (3276).

Please forward this alert to others who are concerned about protecting locally-sourced nutrient-dense foods and preserving sustainable small family farms and artisan food producers as well as defending the rights to sell and to access the foods of one's choice from the source of one's choice.

[Forward email](#)



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Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund | 8116 Arlington Blvd., Suite 263 | Falls Church | VA | 22042

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Cheryl DeGroot <charleyswife@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2014 1:09 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed GAAMPs Changes

Attn: GAAMPs Task Force Chairpersons

I am writing in regards to the proposed 2014 changes to the GAAMPs, in particular the proposed Site Selection changes.

I STRONGLY urge you to move away from the proposed "category" classification system. As you are aware, the proposed changes would virtually wipe-out the "backyard" farmer. The (hopefully) unintended consequences of these proposed changes would be that small farmers would be stripped of any protection for their farming operations. The ripple effect of this would affect 4-H and FFA activities, roadside farm stands, and the availability of non-commercially produced fresh eggs and produce, to name a few.

We are a small family farm (10+ acres). The land we live on was originally purchased by my grandparents in 1931. Over the ensuing years this land has been used commercially for raising meat chickens and hay and also for gardening, raising beef cattle and poultry (chickens and turkeys) for personal use. The land has also laid dormant for various periods of time during that 83 year time span. During this timespan, a portion of the property was also changed from agricultural to residential zoning. Under the Right to Farm Act and existing GAAMPs, my family can continue in our family heritage of using this land for sustenance and a sustainable lifestyle. My elementary and middle school aged children have shown the type of entrepreneurial spirit which has long made Michigan great and have run a commercial garden farm stand to support their 4-H activities and set aside monies for college. The proposed site selection GAAMPs have the power to strip away my family's heritage by giving local governments the power to trump state law.

According to the 2011 State Agricultural Overview there are 54,900 farms in the state of Michigan, of which over 48,000 can be classified as small with sales of less than \$100,000. Of these small farms, 90.7% (43,556) had sales of less than \$40,000. Agriculture is a large part of Michigan's identity as a state...what says "Pure Michigan" more than cherries from Traverse City, peaches from South Haven, wine from the Leelanau peninsula or the celebration of youth agriculture activities in 4-H and FFA at countless county fairs throughout the state. Yet, that identity is in jeopardy when the producers of this state (the vast majority of whom are small) are at risk of being put out of business as a result of these proposed changes.

For my family, and many others that I know, eating "locally" produced food is extremely important. We want food (fruits, vegetables, meats, eggs and grains) that are grown/raised using sustainable methods without pesticides, herbicides, hormones, antibiotics or genetic engineering ~ we have no interest in feeding our families the "frankenfoods" found commercially available. The ability for small farmers to meet this demand is essential...and has an economic impact.

I urge you to support ALL agriculture in the state of Michigan - not just "big Ag". I urge you to recognize the economic impact that small farmers - whether they sell eggs, raise rabbits, poultry,

goats, sheep, or produce products such as soap and yarn for the artisan community - have on the state's economy.

Finally, I urge you to step away from these proposed changes which are NOT based on scientific evidence, but rather, I suspect, are rooted in the lobbying efforts of big Ag. I respectfully request that you show due diligence to the residents of this great state and support agriculture at all levels.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl E. DeGroot

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Derek Warner <derekawarner@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2014 12:14 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan Right To Farm Act

Hello,

I am writing to express my concern over discussions being had to amend any part of the Michigan Right To Farm Act as it stands written. I have read both sides of the argument and it seems that politicians supporting such changes must be getting pressure from big agriculture or other special interests groups. Allowing people to grow their own food, even in residential zoned areas should not be frowned upon, it should be highly encouraged. Michigan has farming roots and a history of providing excellent food for our state and this Nation. In a time when Michigan needs more small business owners and entrepreneurial enterprises, why would you support shutting down small scale, local food production?

Ironically, many of the politicians I have spoke with can only site their personal experiences of large farming operations and claim that for the basis of further trying to limit the Right to Farm Act as it stands. If anyone in a residential zoned community decided to open a confinement hog operation, then obviously there should be something that prevents this...if their own common sense did not. However, if someone in a residential neighborhood wanted to have a small flock of backyard chickens, in a small moveable (by hand) chicken tractor, then why should they not have that option? Why is it that small scale food production in residential areas almost becomes criminal?

I am a teacher in Grand Haven and operate a small family farm on 7 acres of property zoned rural residential. We are currently protected by the Michigan Right To Farm Act, although not supported by current zoning laws. We have met with our township officials and I have been shocked to realize what little research they have done on small scale farming and what conclusions they have formulated based on their limited experience and research. I shared this with my high schools students as a way NOT to conduct business. It is embarrassing to watch our local leadership and now our state leadership make a case for shutting down small scale, local food production....without any real good reason.

How is it that our state leadership feels they have the right to re-write something that has been part of our state for so long and what benefits will we see as a result of it? Will it strengthen communities and make them more self reliant? Will it help small business owners looking for local foods to serve in their restaurants? Does it help families trying to teach hard work and responsibility through food production?

Any changes to the current Michigan Right to Farm Act is wrong. I hope you receive many letters like this and a strong showing at the public meeting Wednesday. I will be sure to share this with my high school students and lead a discussion as to why our leaders in Lansing are trying to stop families for producing their own food. These students are smart and will figure it out pretty quick....just follow the money is what they will say. Not sure how any of our leaders that support this sleep at night, knowing they are wrong.

Please feel free to call me with questions or to further discuss. I would be happy to talk with you.

Derek Warner  
810-734-0272 cell

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Mahoney, Stephen (MDA)  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2014 11:18 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed changes to 2014 Site Selection GAAMP for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities  
**Attachments:** 2014 GAAMP response.pdf

Comments on Siting GAAMPs.

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**From:** Walnut Hill Farm [<mailto:farmer@walnuthillfarmmi.com>]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 18, 2014 3:22 PM  
**To:** [wpowers@msu.edu](mailto:wpowers@msu.edu)  
**Cc:** [james@environmentalcouncil.org](mailto:james@environmentalcouncil.org); Crook, Michelle (MDA); Culham, Brian (DEQ); [steve.davis@mi.usda.gov](mailto:steve.davis@mi.usda.gov); [hines@mipork.org](mailto:hines@mipork.org); [lcjones@allegancounty.org](mailto:lcjones@allegancounty.org); Mahoney, Stephen (MDA); [mayg@msu.edu](mailto:mayg@msu.edu); Miller, Scott (DEQ); [kennobis@mintcity.com](mailto:kennobis@mintcity.com); [spiggot@michfb.com](mailto:spiggot@michfb.com); [chanrenn@avci.net](mailto:chanrenn@avci.net); Whitman, Wayne (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed changes to 2014 Site Selection GAAMP for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities

Greetings. Please find attached my comments to the proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMP.

Thank you,

Vikki Papesh

**WALNUT HILL FARM  
54180 DEQUINDRE ROAD  
SHELBY TOWNSHIP, MI 48316**

January 18, 2014

To: 2014 Draft Site Selection GAAMP Review Committee

Dr. Wendy Powers  
James Clift  
Michelle Crook  
Brian Culham  
Steve Davis, P.E.  
Sam Hines  
Larry Jones  
Steve Mahoney  
Gerald May  
Scott Miller  
Ken Nobis  
Scott Piggot, M.S.  
William Renn  
Wayne Whitman

Greetings to all members of the 2014 GAAMPs Review Committee.

I am writing to voice my objection to the language in the proposed 2014 Site Selection GAAMP pertaining to Category 4 sites. Categories 1, 2, and 3 are related both to density of nonfarm residences near the farm as well as number of animal units. The same should be true of Category 4, if defined. Without Category 4, the restrictions of Category 3 are a sufficient restriction as revised.

If altered, this definition would make our rural (no neighbors within 3/4 mile as the crow flies, approximately 200 residents in the entire 36 square mile township and 2/3 of the land is owned by the state) RESIDENTIAL 40 acres ineligible as a suitable place to keep a chicken, turkey, horse, steer. There is NO sound scientific basis in tying zoning to siting. A "residential" zoning does not mean that an area is suitable for constructing a residence, nor that it is inappropriate for other uses. It is merely an indication of potential land use. There are many more factors involved in siting than a tag on an assessor's map.

More time should be spent in considering what the objections are to the keeping of livestock in primarily residential areas. The keeping of animals, whether cat, dog, rabbit, horse, fowl, goat, sheep, cow or any other, should take into account several things: The ability of the site to support the health and welfare of the animal with protection from the elements, proper housing for the type of animal, provision of wholesome feed and water, protection from predators, prevention of vermin, and proper disposal of dead animals and animal waste without offense to immediate neighbors. The Animal Care and Manure Management GAAMPs address these concerns. Conformance with existing and well established scientific principles of livestock management is desirable. In fact, most small farmers provide far more than the published minimum guidelines supported by the state as good management guidelines, especially where floor space, lighting, and ventilation are concerned.

**WALNUT HILL FARM  
54180 DEQUINDRE ROAD  
SHELBY TOWNSHIP, MI 48316**

No one is promoting a 1000 bird broiler facility in a subdivision back yard. But the ability to keep half a dozen or a dozen hens for the purpose of selling eggs or breeding rare varieties, or raising a clutch of turkeys for market, or keeping a backyard goat for milk and cheese, should be within the ability of anyone who can properly provide the necessary living conditions and can properly care for the animals and maintain the facility so that it is not objectively harmful to those around it. We don't do this to shun society. We don't do this to buck laws. We certainly don't do this to get rich. We do this because we do not believe that the commercial alternatives are necessarily our best choice, and we believe that we can do better. And, based on public opinion (repeat sales), we do.

Those of us who are small producers don't consider that we are going to make much of an impact in the marketplace. All in all our products make up only a small percentage of the market. And I don't think any of us have the goal to price our products lower than the grocery store on these commodity items. What we offer is a unique product, direct from the source. The success of small farms in the local marketplace shows that some of the people of our state DO care about quality, sustainability, and other aspects that custom producers provide. All we ask is that our voice be heard even though we have no representation on the review committee.

The Michigan Right to Farm Act addresses commercial farm operations and it should apply equally to all commercial farms regardless of size or location. I am proud to be among those who have gone through our state court system to prove that the Michigan Right to Farm Act is a viable and valuable law for commercial farming operations. Michigan has a strong farming tradition and this tradition should be upheld, not only for major commercial producers, but also for promoters of genetic biodiversity, drug-free living for our food products, and participation in our food production chain as small family farmers have done for centuries.

Yours truly,

Vikki Papesh

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** J Mergos <jmergos@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:01 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** please help protect small family farms

Hello,  
I am a Redford twp resident, Registered Nurse and a solid advocate for small-scale urban agriculture. Being a home care nurse in Detroit for 6 years prompted me to address the root cause of so many of the diseases we are "fighting" with medications and health care dollars. One of the HUGE root factors of illness of all type is lack of nutrition. There is a severe nutritional desert in many areas in Wayne county (Detroit). Please please please help encourage the area towards a state of health by letting citizens with no solid way to provide for themselves, raise food for their families in their backyards.

This help may look like a garden, or a dairy goat or a bee hive. I'm not advocating for large-scale urban agricultural for people to become wealthy from or create a disgusting neighborhood mess.

I'm advocating for spreading the concept that even when life has left you without anything, you can always plant a garden, raise a few animals and provide for your family.

Many neighbors and people in this area depend on food stamps, cash assistance and unemployment that will be ending soon. These neighbors and friends have kids they are responsible to provide for. Please give them access to more than pop, chips and liquor.

Please enable our area to grow what it can (hens or goats or produce), where it can, in socially responsible ways.

We need access to healthy food. Many neighbors do not have working cars. Yes this is a sad state, but even in this state there is hope...an organic, well managed garden. A few hens to lay eggs year round. This can be a huge asset- empowering citizens with the right to make something from natures resources.

Please help us to help ourselves.

I am not asking for a government hand out, I am asking for the opportunity for my neighbors and friends to provide for themselves and their families and set a good example of working to provide food for their children (as opposed to creating a culture of people who expect to live off "the system").

There may not be jobs, there may not be much money, but we can always have a garden and a few small animals to provide some solid nutrition.

Please do not take this request lightly.

I am advocating for a large group of people asking for access to nutrient-rich food. FOOD. In the communities, in our backyards, in neat, clean ways.

If it is not clean and sustainable, it shouldn't exist. The same goes for governing policies. Please encourage policies that help us to be nutritionally sustainable.

Thanks for reading this lengthy request.  
Feel free to call with any questions or comments.

Jennifer Mergos RN, BSN  
313.556.6095

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Brad Baughman <wbbaughman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:02 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed legal changes.

I also meant to request:

If my understanding of the proposed changes is incorrect, please reply with an explanation!

Thank you,  
-W.B.B.

On Tue, Jan 21, 2014 at 12:54 PM, Brad Baughman <[wbbaughman@gmail.com](mailto:wbbaughman@gmail.com)> wrote:  
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)

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**From:** penny krebiehl <penny.ok.art@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:27 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** COMMENTS for the Public Input Meeting: GAAMPS

Dear Ms. Wilcox,

I'm an urban garden-farmer in Traverse City, Michigan. I work within three neighborhoods, developing small-scale garden and food/crop production sites.

Through a program we call LLOOF (Learning Local on Organic Farms) we share knowledge and teach organic growing and permaculture skills/practices and are greatly concerned about as well as committed to, the very important need of empowering families with a grow your own skill-set.

I believe the proposed Michigan Right to Farm Act, changes are overkill and a dangerous move for small-scale and urban garden-farmers like myself and the families I work with. We are mostly trying to feed ourselves, like the kitchen gardeners and victory gardeners, because we need to eat and can't afford or don't have access to good, clean, healthy, nutrient-dense food. The approach that continually DOES NOT work and is far from fair to the citizens is to compare small-scale and suburban practices to large scale agricultural practices.

Education is necessary. Laws and methods of economic punishment and regulatory overkill are not.

Those of us tending small-scale and urban garden farm sites are the ones truly promoting sound environmental stewardship by choosing to step away from large-scale and damaging practices of what has become "traditional" big-ag farmers.

What small-scale and urban farms are doing---especially in urban centers like Detroit---is a decent and necessary act of care-taking people, planet and giving something back.

Please voice my concern about this continued practice of over-doing and over-kill and take action based on the realities we are living w. and the conditions that so many Michigan citizens are struggling through economically.

Give back to us through a well-thought out plan and step away from a broken down system that is spinning it's wheels and destroying our common, basic human needs.

My final suggestion and offers is that each and everyone on this committee (and in this room if you should share my comments) attend a Permaculture Design Course, a 72 hour certification which will teach a new whole-system approach to issues like this, and includes guidance through a set of principles, ethics and ecological design process.

In fact, I'm happy to recommend several which are scheduled to take place throughout the Great Lake State in 2014.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Gracias,

`penny Krebiehl  
Directress/Founder, Little Artshram  
[www.littleartshram.org](http://www.littleartshram.org)

Sponsor, Michigan Permaculture Convergence  
[www.michiganpermacultureconvergence.com](http://www.michiganpermacultureconvergence.com)

Founder/Administrator, Northern Michigan Regional Permaculture  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Michigan-Regional-Permaculture/163332607035880>

Owner/Garden Farmer, O'k CSA and Permaculture Design  
[www.pennyokart.com](http://www.pennyokart.com)

231-922-2014

Penny Krebiehl  
510 1/2 Second Street  
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

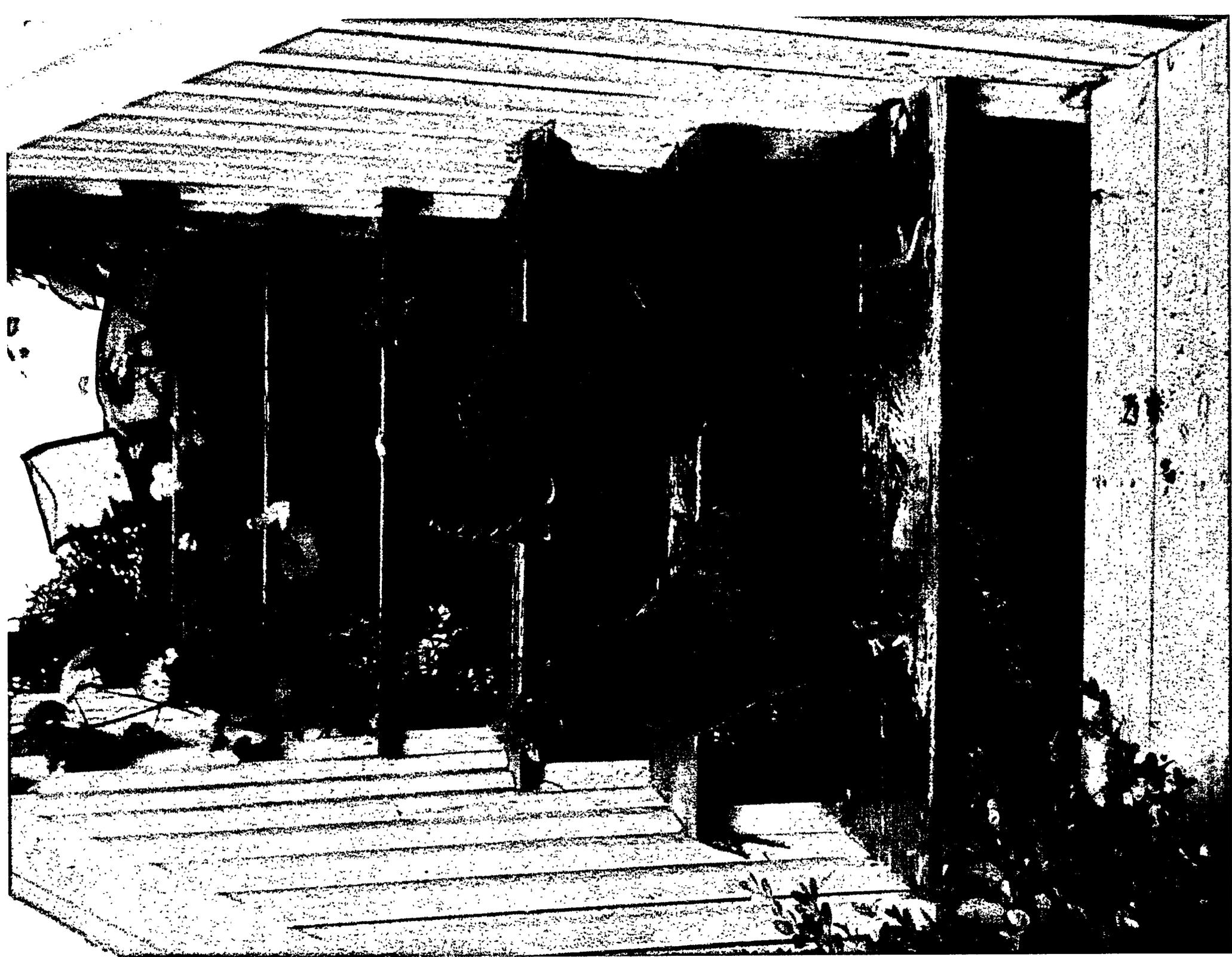
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**From:** Rocm <rocm@careyshouse.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:18 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Chickens in Michigan  
**Attachments:** summer 2013 211.JPG

Please don't take away our right to have our 3 chickens. We have really grown to love them. They follow us around and eat out of our hands. We live in a neighborhood and there are a number of us who have or want to get chickens, we can only have 5 or less. We really enjoy them and none of the other neighbors mind, we have spoken to all of them and they actually like the chickens too.

I don't know what else to say, please, please don't take our chickens away.  
A Michigan tax paying resident and chicken lover.  
Please see the attached photo

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**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Kyle Miron <meeslymeeron@me.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:26 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Film in the making.

I just wanted to let you know that there is a film being made regarding the schenanigans that is going on behind our backs here in Michigan. We know that this is going on in every state and that most of you people are just doing what you're "told."

...how do you want to go down in history?

A crook or revolutionary?

The Choice is yours.

Kyle Miron  
Executive Producer  
Frontiersmen Media LLC.

260.413.4952

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Jeremy Thornton <jeremydavidthornton@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:57 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** No on right to farm act proposal

I want you to vote no on the right to farm act proposal it will be a detriment to Michigan farmers. Farming is a God given right not to be subject to governing bodies. people pay tax on their land which is illegal enough in its own right but to tell people what parts of there land they can farm for food is Hitlarian.

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** thomas alleman <talleman1@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:43 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan's Right to Farm Act

I see the idea of not letting people to create their own food source, something that was in encouraged during WWII, is ridiculous. My grandmother always had chickens, garden and did canning, making our own beer and no one said nothing. The government should look to go after pollution rather than a bunch of gardens. Food safety is what this is in a age of Monsanto Frankenstein crops with no nutritional value nor flavor. America is fat because of it. So if we are to have to be a "business" to make our own food than we also want farm subsidiarity handouts you give every year, that is shocking and absurd. I think that this is a age when food, water and is about quality not quantity. Eating allot of poison will not make you healthy. Victory Gardens or Death.

Thank you,  
Thomas J. Alleman

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** G Haakon Jensen <kulardenu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:22 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Small farm Protection. I am against changing this law.

These small farms should have these rights as well as any large rural farm. What next? Do we ban gardens or not allow canning in urban homes.

Gary Jensen  
1010 Lingle Ave.  
Owosso, MI 48867  
989-721-8345

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Steve DeGoosh <sdegoosh@nmu.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:52 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP/RTF concerns

Dear Members of the Michigan Commission of Agriculture & Rural Development:

I am writing out of concern about two proposed changes in the 2014 Draft Site Selection & Manure Management Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices ("Site Selection GAAMP"). These two changes would undermine the Michigan Right to Farm Act's protection for farmers and others who, I believe, have a right to raise small animals in residential areas.

For more than 25 years I have been involved in local planning—I worked as a professional planner at the regional level for several years, I taught planning at Northern Michigan University for nearly 20 years, and I served on the City of Marquette planning commission for more than 15 years (and more than half of that time as its chair). I have also been actively involved in sustainability issues, especially local food systems, for more than a decade. I am fully aware of the implications the proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMP would have in the connection between state regulation and local land use control.

I oppose the adoption of language extending the reach of the Site Selection GAAMP to farms with even less than one animal unit. This change would likely abolish any keeping of livestock, even flocks of less than a dozen chickens or one bee hive, in most urban settings because the setbacks would be difficult or impossible to meet there.

This is unnecessary over-regulation that could be avoided by leaving the definition of "livestock production facility" just as it is, or at a minimum, making it applicable at a reasonable number of animal units.

I oppose the changes throughout the Site Selection GAAMP that ban all keeping of animals in residential areas. This change would subject every newly regulated "Livestock Facility" (again, just one animal would qualify) to local zoning restrictions. This change would conflict with the intent of the RTF legislature which intended that local zoning schemes not be able to dictate where or how farming could occur. From a planning perspective, I see a return to chaotic/conflicting zoning requirements emerging at the local level all over the state... directly in opposition to the original intent of RTF, and an immense step backward for food security efforts in Michigan.

Do NOT drop the animal units down to 0 in the definition of a Livestock Production Facility.

Do NOT gut the Right to Farm Act by giving local zoning ordinances the power to control where farming can happen.

The Michigan RTFA is a template for the defense and encouragement of local food production and the restoration of agriculture to its rightful place — integrated into communities.

If Michigan wants true food security — defined as the ability to be as self-sufficient in food production as possible — then we need a legal system that supports local, small-scale food production. Please protect the current integrity of the RTF Act.

Thank you for your efforts.

Dr. Stephen R. DeGoosh  
430 West Park St.  
Marquette, MI 49855

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** wendy eaton <stedfast93@att.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:50 PM  
**To:** MDA-Ag-Commission; hansfarm@up.net; jalapeno@cybersol.com; vvp@casair.net; bkennedy@abgco.net; Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Regarding the GAAMP Public Input Meeting today, Jan 22 @ 9 am.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am VERY concerned about this meeting today, Jan 22, regarding...

Today's meeting was described to me as, "The Michigan Department of Agriculture has now released their official proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs (Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices). The proposed changes for 2014 include changes that will limit Right To Farm protection for a large portion of Michigan residents. This has the potential to severely restrict the rights of Michigan farmers, particularly small scale farmers. Be there for the public input meeting for these proposed changes on Wednesday, January 22 at 9 am in Dimondale (just outside Lansing). This is your chance to let the Ag. Commission know in person that you want to keep your right to farm in the State of Michigan."

While I was not able to attend today, I need to voice my opinion on this matter. This is not right, and I'm sure you ALL realize it deep in your hearts. The cost of living is sky high and most food at the local grocery is all CRAP. Forgive my language. I should have access to locally grown, raised eggs, chickens, beef, whatever, grown by caring local farmers who want to provide a much higher quality food for their families and the community.

PLEASE reconsider and see the big picture here! Do you like to eat healthy? Are there any farmers in your family? Do you personally eat local grown and/or organic foods and non gmo's? I'll bet one or more of you reading this do.

Leave these decisions to local municipalities to decide. If there is a problem, let them handle it locally.

Back in WWII the government encouraged everyone to grow victory gardens, raise chickens/eggs, and attempt to provide food for themselves. Now you (the government) wants to step in and take that away from us! It's just NOT RIGHT!!! Listen to your gut instinct and not whomever is padding your pocket and/or contributing to your personal campaign... and stand for what is right!

Thank you for your time, and I PRAY TO GOD that Your Creator does not let you sleep at night and convicts you to your core to do the right thing.

(Nice to learn the Ag Commission didn't even show up. Nice... shaking my head)

Sincerely,

Mrs Wendy Eaton  
Clio MI  
810.397.3748

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Matthew Frayer <mjfrayer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:49 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Do Not Change Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices

I am writing in opposition to proposed changes in the GAAMPs that will outlaw farm animals in residential neighborhoods.

As an urban farmer I take pride in the great services that I can provide to my family and friends in the form of healthy local food. I can take pride that the food that I produce is produced in a sustainable, healthful, and respectful manner.

As a chicken owner I can verify that my small flock is quiet, clean and productive. We live in harmony with our neighbors and share our knowledge freely with all.

The right to produce healthful and sustainable food should be a part of all communities. Legislation should be designed to expand, not limit urban agriculture.

Sincerely



Matthew Frayer  
127 N. Berkley  
Kalamazoo MI 49006

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Caitlin Joseph <caitlin\_joe@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:48 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** MI Right to Farm act changes

I am very concerned about the proposed changes to the MI Right to Farm act that are being considered and I urge you not to make it more difficult for people in our state to grow and stay connected to their food. People are becoming less and less connected to their food sources and this ignorance is not only dangerous to the sustainability and resilience of our communities, but it happens to be reflected in the proposed changes to this law. Dogs and cats used to be animals that people kept primarily because of their usefulness on the family farm. Chickens and other small livestock help close a loop in small agricultural systems that provide very sustainable sources of waste disposal and fertilizer that are key elements of small, environmentally sound agriculture. Labeling the keeping of one chicken as livestock while not doing the same for dogs or cats seems an arbitrary, unfounded, and ignorant change.

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. Why shouldn't someone be able to produce food where they live? Having a small number of animals that have a primarily agricultural purpose does not entail a "livestock operation".

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.

I grew up in suburban Denver with very little connection to my food sources. After working on a small farm in SE Michigan, I learned the value of producing your own food and am continuing to further my ability to provide myself, my family, and my community with healthy, safe food. Please do not take this ability away from those of us trying to strengthen the self-sufficiency of our local communities. Michigan's economy spent years being dependent on corporations for our livelihood and after being burned by that system, people here are learning how to create independence and resilience again. The proposed changes to this law would undermine this effort and set us back on the road to a sustainable recovery.

-Caitlin Joseph

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Jay Harnish <jay.harnish@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:48 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** We want to preserve Michigan's rights to farm

Hello,

I am writing to protest any changes in the Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs) that prevents urban, suburban and small scale farmers from keeping livestock. As long as it is permitted by the city/ordinance in which they live and doesn't disturb the peace of their neighbors, everyone should be permitted to keep their own livestock in order to be sustainable, affordably provide food for themselves and their family and preserve a way of life that is becoming obsolete.

Best Regards,  
Edward J Harnish (Ferndale, MI)

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** D Day <ddayjr@ameritech.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:47 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP Comment

My comment is with respect to the state's Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs).

If the task force in review wants to "close" a "loophole" with allowance to have farm animals in residential settings I would think it would more beneficial to allow the inclusion of small amounts of animals if they comply with generally accepted standards. Small animals such as chickens pose no greater environmental problems than do domestic pets. I believe it is my right to feed myself and to raise my own food without undue interference from regulators.

So I would to have some allowances in the State Act and to not simply allow the local ordinances to hold sway. I have chickens and live in a residential community.

Don't close the "loophole" make it more narrow. That to me is the more prudent and responsible action. Thank you.

regards,

*slan agus beannacht*  
Donald Day

Skype: ddayjr1022

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Michelle Ervin <erwin08@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:47 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm Must Support Hobby and Urban Farming

Ms Wilcox,

As parents of six children living on a hobby farm in Brandon Township Michigan we urge you to consider the great value that urban and hobby farming offer to the future of Michigan. Studies support what our family found when we moved from Beverly Hills, Michigan to Brandon and started a 4-H club. Kids involved in the science of agriculture learn responsibility, creativity, technical skills, endurance, marketing, enviro-responsibility, and so many other life skills directly related to their future capacity as adults and the future of Michigan's economy. Our kids will be the adults who will know how to sustain our states need for food and any career that values the above abilities. Agriculture is one of the top industries which contribute to the Michigan economy. Please consider that future farmers aren't made post-college. These green technology adults grow from kids who start with the urban/backyard hobby/4-H farm. In fact, my oldest daughter is now studying Animal Science and Bio-Technology. She will feed you and I through our twilight years! Protect the small farm!

I would be happy to discuss with anyone our families' growth and development experience here on our hobby farm.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Ervin  
Retired Leader of North Oakland Animal Husbandry 4-H Club  
Mother of Six  
Hobby Farm in Brandon Township  
Owner of horses, donkey, sheep, goats, duck, goose, chicken, rabbit  
Farmer of variety of vegetables  
Assisted with development of local zoning ordinance regarding chickens  
248-318-8568

Carpe Diem

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Amelia Hefferlin <beadsandroses@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:45 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Please continue Right to Farm protections for small farm operations

Dear Ms. Wilcox,

I write to urge you to continue the Michigan Right to Farm Act. I am a small-scale beekeeper and depend upon the Act to provide nuisance protection for my apiary. My operation is in full conformance with GAAMPs which are reviewed annually by scientific committees of various experts, revised and updated as necessary, and which are based on evidence and experience rather than local fears or prejudices. Please help support responsible local growers and beekeepers by continuing the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

Thanks!

Sincerely,  
Amelia Hefferlin  
9195 Jackson Rd  
Dexter MI 48130  
(734) 426-2974

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Carol Enersen <cdunnen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:44 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Mi small farms

I wish to personally state that I am opposed to any changes affecting MI small farms. I have several friends that have a small amount of livestock, and these changes would greatly affect their small farms. This is another example of our government overreaching. It is unnecessary to suggest that one animal be categorized the same as large farms. Also, this proposed change would do exactly as planned, by doing away with small farms in residential areas.

Thank you for your time  
Carol Dunn

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Susan Hagen <susankhagen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:43 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Concern about MI GAAMP changes

On behalf of Oakland County Poultry Club we would like to express our concerns with possible changes to Michigan's GAAMP. The changes that are being considered will severely restrict the rights of Michigan farmers, particularly small scale farmers. As a supporter of Michigan 4H and farmers in general, we would like to bring to your attention that often times it is the simple "backyard" experience and connection with animals that creates the wonderful lifelong understanding and responsibility of animal ownership. Please do not make any changes and jeopardize the wonderful experience that so many 4H children receive from being able to raise a few chickens, goats or rabbits in their own backyard. Thank you.

Susan Hagen  
Mother of 4H children: Mark, Matt, and Shannon  
and owner of chickens  
Ortonville, MI

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Gloria Beckstrom <gjbeckstrom@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:30 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Agriculture and Rural Development

Hello,

Wanted to add my support to keeping livestock (ex. chickens) in urban areas. I am in full support of backyard farming. Please allow it to continue.

Thank you

Gloria Jean Beckstrom  
3098 Wolverine Dr.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Ashley Juengling <ajuengling@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:36 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed GAAMPs Revisions

Hello,

I urge you to explore the impact the revision of the GAAMPs will have to the Right to Farm Act more deeply. The extension of protections and closing of loopholes shouldn't jeopardize people's ability to control their own food supply. I am against the revisions until a more thorough discussion can take place with stakeholders.

Further, I expect you, as public officials, to respect your citizens enough to listen to them. Open a dialogue. As an international agricultural development professional, I can tell you from first-hand experience that the only solutions that are EVER effective are those that had strong community input. The people (small farmers) know what works and what doesn't, and it's your job to engage with them to find a solution that fits for all parties.

Please re-examine the facts before making a decision.

Sincerely,

Ashley Juengling

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Stephanie <seady723@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:31 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm

I write to you today to ask that you please support small farms. Please do not support or encourage our state to take away this right. We are small farmers. Our kids are small farmers. This kind of change would be detrimental to hundreds if not thousands of Michigan citizens. Our livelihood is to sustain ourselves. We grow our own meat because we believe in knowing what we are eating and knowing it was raised humanely. We also help to stimulate the local economy buy buying supplies, and feed from other farms, stores, and local businesses. If you take that away, the affect will stretch far beyond the small farm. We are here to promote keeping it small, keeping it local, and keeping peace of mind.

My kids raise these animals of ours for their 4H projects. We have a couple cows, couple pigs, and a few chickens. This is their love, passion, and the life they want for their future. The want to be farmers and feed the world. They sell these animals to local community members so that they can save money for college. They are the future, and they are making a positive impact on the present.

People who choose to be small farmers have not asked for trouble. And really, I ask you, aren't there more important things in our great state that need to be addressed than taking food out off our plates and causing us small farmers burden and grief! Our education system is a joke, the roads are terrible, and we are still waiting for the jobs and economy to come back. Please, I beg you, do not let them take one more good thing away from us. We have stayed living here and supported this state even when everyone started leaving, please support us too!

Sincerely,  
Stephanie Eady  
Small Farmer, Proud Michigander, and Fed up Voter

Sent from my iPhone

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Liz Waters <liz@trinityphotodetroit.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:30 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA); Holton, Jennifer (MDA)  
**Subject:** Support for Family Farming!

I am writing in regards to the Michigan Right to Farm act Proposed changes. I own 19 chickens on 1 acre and they keep our family and neighbors stocked with farm fresh eggs from healthy hens (no roosters) with no hormones, antibiotics, or pesticides. My 4 children eat eggs daily and we would not be able to afford to purchase eggs of this quality for my family to eat. These are not only our source of food, but also our pets. They serve a great purpose, have a great life and are loved by a family. To take this right away from any family who is following proper protocol and keeping the animals healthy and happy, would be CRIMINAL. Please do NOT change the Michigan Right to Farm Act that protects not only my family's right to farm our property, but also protects the animals from horrible factory farming conditions! Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Waters  
Ortonville, MI

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Stephanie Inson <stephanie.inson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:29 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Please keep Chickens in Michigan's Backyards!

To the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development -

Please do not implement the proposed changes by the Michigan Agriculture Commission to the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Individuals and families who safely and respectfully keep chickens within city limits in Michigan are promoting sustainable lifestyles that are essential to the health and safety of all of Michigan's residents. As a Michigan resident, I feel this freedom is important to protect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Stephanie R. Inson

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Andrea Webber <andreamcaseywebber@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:21 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm

Please protect my rights to farm. Small beekeeping operations are essential to health and wellness.

Andrea Webber

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** clutteringhen@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:20 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

To whom it may concern :

It greatly concerns me to read Michigan Department of Agriculture is considering cutting the Right to Farm act. We are farmers. We would be considered hobby farmers by many. Regardless we are raising livestock to feed ourselves and others. At a time in a country where concerns are many regarding where our food comes from, the small farmer is critical. They can provide healthy homegrown food. Some are organic, others hormone steroid free. Our country is stressing eating healthy, yet you are pulling that rug right out from the small farmer. Consider the health aspects you will be cutting out from these families. My second concern for this cut is the 4H family or the FFA family. These are people teaching their children responsibility, life and finances. These are children that learn respect for the land, to be good stewards and to give back. You see sometimes it goes beyond the actual animal it goes deep into the core of a child. These children are your future generations, future farmers, future producers. I retired from a public school system where I witnessed the decay of family, decay of ethics and decay of respect. Isn't a program that builds that important? The small farm protected under the Right to Farm Act can only enable this in a child, in a family, in a state. I respectfully ask that you consider the implications this will have on a community, a state. Thank you!

Dawn Raymond

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Sarah Potter <sarahjaynepotter@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:16 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Comments regarding the proposed changes to the GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to comment on **the proposed changes to the GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities**

I do not currently have any farm animals, but have in the past and hope to again in the future. To have small farm operations subject to the same state regulations that large farms are subject to is not in the best interest of our communities. It would make it more difficult, and possibly impossible, for many small family farms to operate and provide some of their own food for themselves. Please know, that I and many others are extremely opposed to this action that would only punish small farms to no real benefit, and extremely probable hurt to our communities. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sarah Potter

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Lorenzo Herron <fiablesiriusinvestments@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 4:44 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to grow

Self sustenance is for everyone, not just those deemed by lawmakers as worthy. Let us continue to exercise our rights to feed our families.

Best,

--

Lorenzo Herron  
President and Founder of Fiable Sirius Investments USAID Diaspora marketplace finalist Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences Agribusiness Management  
1(313)-717-9142

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Kenya Davis <rzrrvn@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 5:00 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan Right to Farm Act

To GAAMPs Task Force Chairpersons

This letter is to express outrage at the proposed legislation that would strip the rights of Michigander's to have rightful protection under the law. The alleged loophole closure regarding the residential concerns fail to take into account that for decades, "residential" areas have sprawled into areas that have been traditionally used for farming.

In addition to this, Urban Farming practices and Permaculture are addressing the demands of the populace of this great state. Initiatives to prevent the rights of the people, that favor corporate interests over the individual, are being closely watched by myself and my voting constituents.

The economic advantages to the local economies are also being buttressed by the small farmer who is buying equipment and producing goods to sell. This is also seen as an attack on the cottage industry. This is a message from concerned voters.

We will remember the actions of this body and vote accordingly. We strongly advise you to remember your duty and responsibility to the citizens of this state and not the corporate interests of big agriculture.

Sincerely,

Rev. Kenya Davis

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Dave <info@3kingsmarketing.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:55 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** comment farm act

I agree that the Farm Act should allow cities and local zoning to be able to keep ordinances so local suburban homeowners cannot start chicken or farming operations out of their homes and backyards. There is a place for agricultural zoning and residential home ownership. I believe the farm act was to allow the grandfathering of farm from urban sprawl. It should not be used to start farms in subdivisions. Please close the loophole and make the language clear.

Thanks

Dave Morrow  
734-437-1938



## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Robert VanHover <vanhoverb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:56 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Comment on proposed changes to GAAMP

Dear Commission:

I have been reading on Social Media about proposed changes that would effect small farms all across Michigan.

These changes seem to center around the keeping of livestock. I think that the proposed definition change of what constitutes a " Livestock facility" is extreme. Our local community helps support the raising of small numbers of livestock even in residential areas. They recognize it as our right. It disturbs me that the State of Michigan wants to impose jurisdiction over the local authority. In an age and economy where there is great concern over food price and quality these changes don't seem appropriate. I urge you to reconsider these changes.

Respectfully,  
Robert VanHover  
[vanhoverb@gmail.com](mailto:vanhoverb@gmail.com)

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Katie Hamelin <khamelin@msufcu.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:58 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** a plea for small farms

To whom it may concern:

I hereby profess my disapproval of modifying Michigan's GAAMPs for the purpose of limiting urban and suburban farms from keeping small numbers of farm animals on their property. While I fully support animal rights and strongly disapprove of any human who would keep animals in areas that are too small or unsafe for the species, I do not believe that further regulation limiting the ability of Michigan citizens to take an active role in their food production, entrepreneurship and our connection to nature, will benefit us in any way. As for zoning regulations, I strongly believe that any area designated as Residential property inherently allows for the owners/renters of such property to do whatever they deem necessary to ensure the health and happiness of themselves and their families, and raising appropriate numbers and species of farm animals is a wonderful way of doing so.

Thank you for considering my thoughts and those of my fellow Michiganders. I trust that you will make the right choice.

Sincerely,  
Katie Hamelin  
2386 Washington Road  
Lansing, MI 48911

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## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Moir, Meredith <Meredith.Moir@ONSTAR.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:04 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** New changes to GAAMP

I am writing to express my opinion in regard to the proposed changes of GAAMP. Introducing these changes would restrict our small farms and small-number/single animal residences and I am adamantly opposed to such restrictions. Placing the control in the municipalities is wrong and there is no good reason for the change. "Reducing conflict" is a weak rationale... creating legislation and rules to alleviate some headaches is quite simply, lazy. People should have the right to farm, including raising a few animals for food, education, etc. There are all kinds of irritations in the world (e.g., leaf blowers, lawn mowers, snowmobiles, pets, children, etc.) and it is inappropriate to govern each issue. It leads to an over-governed community and is not a responsible use of governmental resources.

Particularly given the state of our communities...uncertainty around the safety and contents of store-bought food, and with the growing trend of citizens that wish to choose to be self-sufficient and KNOW what is in the food that their families eat, I would think there should be some caution in this area. This is not the time for this type of one-sided change and I sincerely hope you will not tie the hands of the Right to Farm protection.

Meredith Moir  
282 First Street  
Rochester, MI 48307



*please consider the environment before printing this email*

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Price, Jennifer <JPrice@vanburen-mi.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:06 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Letter regarding Proposed changes to Michigan's Right To Farm Act.

**Importance:** High

To whom it may concern.

I am writing in response to the proposed changes to Michigan's Right To Farm Act. Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

It is agreed that their needs for some regulation in regards to small farms, such as manure management, the animal care and the number of farm animals that one is allowed to have on their property; and that should be based on the amount of land and needs of the animals kept on the farm. By regulating that number as few as one farm animal; will not only mean the end of urban farming but it could be the end of programs such as the 4-H Youth Development Program. Urban farming is a huge part of the 4-H organization, the kids will not be able to raise the animals that are shown and auctioned off at the county fairs all over Michigan. For instance "If you read the current citing GAAMP, your neighbor could have 4,999 chickens in his backyard and not have to abide by the citing GAAMP," Johnson said. "Our sense is that's not fair in a residential setting." Thus creating the stance that additional guidelines are necessary, again taking into consideration the size of the land and number of animals.

I agree that the right to farm act need fixing but it needs to be done in a manner that will still protect our rights as small, rural and urban farmers. Our 4-H'ers have learned so many values about animals, how to take care of them, properly feed and clean them as well as kept them busy with outdoor activities instead of video games. The values that the children learn thru raising animals stick with them a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Price  
21000 Martinsville  
Belleville, Mi 48111  
734.260.3282  
[jprice@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:jprice@vanburen-mi.org)

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Corie Jason <wahlcori@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:12 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed 2014 GAAMPs

Hello,

I am a local Lansing, MI resident. Thanks to our County ordinance allowing for chickens in my urban backyard, my children and I have been active in 4H, and our local community, with education about local foods, especially local and homegrown eggs.

This has been a source of community outreach, growth and education for our neighborhood and larger Lansing area. Many families and individuals have had their eyes opened to farming and growing their own food because of this allowance for 5 chickens in your backyard. And they are in no way a nuisance if you follow the ordinance.

I am writing to say I am against any changes to the 2014 GAAMPs. It will only allow large commercial farms (who have money to throw at lobbies/politicians) to thrive and grow and force us to eat their food - at high risk and major health costs to our bodies and our earth. It is a shortsighted reaction to a few law suits brought about in recent years.

This is a terrible decision if the changes go forward. It is a slap in the face to small farms everywhere, including the backyard chicken owners who are making a difference a little at a time in their community.

Please consider not supporting these proposed changes, but look for another way to protect small farmers - which is what the Michigan Right to Farm Act was meant for!

Thank you,  
Corie Ann Jason  
1406 Prospect  
Lansing, MI 48912  
989-948-6948

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*"You need not think alike, to love alike."*

most often attributed to Francis David, 16th Century Transylvanian Unitarian

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Jenny Lowe <eternityepi3@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:13 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Public comment on GAAMPS

My name is Jenny Lowe. I am a resident of Midland County. My house is on a 2.5-acre lot across from a 100-acre cornfield, with cows and horses on the lot diagonal, a hay field directly behind us and a 10-acre hay field to our South. For the last 9 months, my family has been raising a small flock of chickens and selling eggs, using the manure to enrich our garden and teaching our 3 children (ages 7,3,1) lessons of entrepreneurship and responsibility. Our intent is to continue to develop our land in a way that does not affect our neighbors but increases our ability to be self-sufficient and maintain our 175-year family tradition of small-scale farming in Michigan. The proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMPS directly impact us as our township has arbitrarily, without scientific justification, decided that 1. All regions in Lincoln Township are zoned residential, business or industrial and 2. No farm animal can be kept on a plot less than 5 acres. If the Site Selection GAAMPS are changed, then the situation in this rural township will be that you cannot have any number of animals, chickens or otherwise, on a plot of land under 5-acres. In Edenville Township, Midland County (also a very rural township) the zoning ordinance states a property owner must own 10 acres in order to own any farm animal. A change to the GAAMPS prohibiting small-scale farming on rural land that is zoned residential runs contrary both to the science of farming and common sense. This also runs contrary to the spirit of the Right to Farm Act and the tradition of small-scale farming in Michigan.

The proposed changes to the Site Selection GAAMPS are in direct conflict with the language of the law. The law states that the Right to Farm Act preempt any local ordinance and that local regulations cannot supersede protections specified in the Right to Farm Act. As the Site Selection GAAMP uses the limitation of zoning as implemented by local governments, a conflict between the Right to Farm Act and GAAMPS is created. The meaning of the law is thereby changed. Going by zoning ordinances creates a patchwork of what is and is not acceptable in MI. It no longer provides a state protection, but turns the decision of what is allowed to local officials. The definition of an area "zoned for residential use" is very different from Detroit to the Upper Peninsula. As demonstrated from my example of Lincoln Township, the 100-acre working farm and the quarter acre lot subdivision are both residentially zone. The law changes from one of regulation, empowerment and protection to a law of prohibition.

Although I am sure the changes were well intended, I do not believe it is the intent of the committee to wipe out a single class of farmers. This change excludes farmers rather than simply define management practices. A change of this magnitude, which directly impacts the meaning of the law, should thereby be enacted by the legislators, not the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development or the Ag Commission.

My husband recently graduated with his PhD from an Ivy League school. We could have accepted any job throughout the US and world, but specifically chose to come to MI because it allowed us to live our dream. Our research took us to the Right to Farm Act and we became excited knowing that we could return to MI and start living our dream as soon as we got there- not 20 years down the road when we could afford more land. Our 7 year old daughter is excited to participate in 4-H and show her rabbit- something she will not be able to do if the changes go through. We take care of our animals, respect our neighbors and take care of the environment. My hope is that those in the decision making process will realize the incredibly broad impact these changes will have.

Thank you! Jenny Lowe

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** craig thompson <treedog54@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:19 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Gaamps

I'm letting you know that myself and family are opposed to the changes .No moral, enviromental, or scientific reasons for the changes.If your gonna make changes start with the factory farms...To me these changes are UN AMERICAN.Our country used to depend on these small farms before Big Business/Corps.took over.Look at what Indiana is doing to try to help these small farmers.The whole thing stinks ....like a factory farm...Even if you change them, you won't change me or my farm...unless ya arrest me ...

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Sue Buitenhuis <suebuitenhuis@att.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:20 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm public input

I am respectfully sending my opinion that I am opposed to proposed changes that would allow local units of government to override the Right to Farm Act. I believe the GAAMPS in place are sufficient to control the issues and local governments should not be involved with the process.

I am speaking as both a local elected official of Grand Haven Charter Township and also a concerned resident who believes in self-sustainability for families as well as the belief that if we allow this, we will lose the ability for a person to find truly whole, unprocessed foods that are grass fed and not filled with hormones and the like. There is so much evidence growing that processed foods are the cause behind so many cancers and to not allow people the choice of where and how they get their food would be a huge mistake.

Thank you for allowing my comments.  
Sue Buitenhuis

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Linda McMahan <lindamarie517@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:42 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Public input on Ag practices

The proposed changes undermine the Michigan Right to Farm Act that was created to protect small farms in areas that are not zoned agricultural. The changes would also prohibit keeping of any farm animals in any residential areas, which would mean no more backyard chickens or the possibility of urban dairy goats. I am strongly opposed to these changes because they are extremely detrimental to people's ability to be self-sufficient and produce their own food.

Linda McMahan  
[www.theShire.info](http://www.theShire.info)  
[linda@theShire.info](mailto:linda@theShire.info)

"The next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community; a community practising understanding and loving kindness, a community practising mindful living. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the Earth." – Thich Nhat Hanh

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Ryan <rjdusci@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:43 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to farm act.

Dear Rhonda Wilcox

I am writing to you in great opposition to ANY proposal the the Michigan Right To Farm Act. I believe that giving local government the right to curtail farmers choice on what they or have on their farm is a step in the wrong direction. I have already felt the effects of urban sprawl complaints from new residents in my area about my hobby farm. I tell them I was here first and to deal with it. Ms. Wilcox, there are more new homes going up and fewer farmers. Right to farm is the only protection. Who do you think the township will side with, 10 new homers paying taxes or one farmer paying taxes. As I said before I am just a hobby farmer and it is not my source of income. As a probation officer I encounter many people in my day (EX: county commissioner, judges, attorneys, etc). Rest assured I will bend the ear of all who will listen with every breath I can muster drawing attention to this issue. I thank you for your time on this issue and thank you for your service to the great state of Michigan. Ryan J Dusci District 32, St. Clair County

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** amy vannocker <amyvannocker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:44 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Proposed GAAMP revisions - Do not shut down hobby farms!

To Ms. Rhonda Wilcox:

I was born and raised in Michigan, and am again residing here currently. I'm writing to you about the GAAMPs, which are complicated and a bit confusing to me, and thus it's hard to know exactly what to ask for. Essentially, **I disagree with the proposed changes to the section regarding Site Selection.**

**Michigan, and the US in general, needs more people to be involved in agriculture, especially at small-scale, sustainable levels.** As a 28-year old trying to break into the agricultural industry, I can tell you from experience that aspiring farmers face incredible obstacles. You know the facts: 50% of US farmers are over the age of 55. According to 2010 USDA statistics, the cost of opening an "average" cattle operation (44 head on 414 acres) is \$929,968, not including the cost of machinery acquisition. It's very possible that I will never finagle the resources necessary to become a large-scale or even medium-scale farmer. This is why it **discourages me** when I see the State making life harder for hobby farmers in urban areas. Our American food system is in terrible need of more sustainable operations, and small-scale agriculture efforts should be rewarded, not punished!

Michigan also needs more jobs, desperately. In an era of industrialized agriculture, small-scale operations like the ones you would shut down offer a chance to reclaim entrepreneurial opportunities that can help people help themselves out of poverty. **Small-scale operations offer the possibility of a small income on the side, or an off-setting of grocery costs. Furthermore, they are capable of increasing local food security, improving nutrition, reducing waste through composting efforts, improving the topsoil with organic amendments, and providing examples that reconnect modern children to the realities of food.**

I don't believe that small, local groups should be determining and enforcing agricultural law, as that enforcement is often arbitrary and lacking accountability. We need State law to continue to protect landowners' rights to keep reasonable amounts of livestock on their properties. If hobby farms are in compliance with all applicable environmental requirements, there is simply no good reason to shut them down. It's a shame that small-scale agriculturalists have only been "protected" through a loophole of sorts, and I trust that you will take a stand in favor of their good efforts at improving our state, by leaving said "loophole" as is, or by drafting new legislation that explicitly protects them.

I expect that you will consider my opinion, and **I hope to see MI legislation that encourages and supports small-scale agriculturalists.** We are the seat of one of the country's finest agricultural schools (MSU!), we should protect our reputation as an agriculture-friendly state.

Sincerely,

Amy VanNocker  
(Petoskey High School 2003, Calvin College 2007)

**Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Jennifer Price <jenprice73@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:49 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan Right to Farm comment sent on behalf of Bobbi Black

To whom it may concern.

I am writing in response to the proposed changes to Michigan's Right To Farm Act. Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

I am a homeowner in a small community, my neighbor has 4 chickens on a half acre lot. These chickens have brought my family great joy, not only providing eggs, but to watch a little bit of farming happening so close to home. It has made my children more responsible kids. They go out and help the neighbor with the care and maintenance of the animals.

Perhaps the act needs wording on amount of animals according to the amount of land. Caring for said animals including disposal of waste as well as proper storage of feed and feeding techniques. Should be regulated therefore hindering the problems that could occur where someone is putting a large amount of animals on a small parcel of land.

Sincerely,

Bobbi Knot  
9878 Wheeler  
Belleville. Mi 48111

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Family <koberjd@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 2:59 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan right to farm act

Please keep small farms protected by the right to farm act. Townships have too much power to change zoning regardless of what already exists on the land. This is often done to suit there desires for a particular type of tax base. Where is the balance? Small local government loves to control their residents and how they use their own land should not be within governmental control.

Donna Harris DVM

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Meredith Long <meredithlong@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:00 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP changes comment

Hello,

I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs) currently under review. By denying those that live in more dense areas the opportunity to raise animals and use animal bi-products for their families personal use, the Michigan Agricultural Commission will be greatly harming Michigan families. In a world where it is getting more and more difficult to purchase (or afford for that matter) foods that can be trusted as safe, it is imperative the government not meddle in an individual's right to provide for their family.

I would contend that having a few chickens in one's back yard is no more of an inconvenience to neighbors than someone having a few dogs and municipalities like Ferndale and Ann Arbor have shown that it can be done well. I have no problem with regulation, but I do have a problem with an uncreative and unresponsive governments making "one size fits all" policy for the sake of convenience. I realize that it is difficult to make decisions that are inclusive, but that doesn't mean that it shouldn't be done.

Times are changing. We will not be able to count on a petroleum based society for much longer, PLEASE let people make local choices now while the need is still a choice. Our cities and suburbs are going to VERY different places in the next 25 years I urge you to be on the right side of this trend and impress future generations with your ability to see the writing on the wall.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions of me I would gladly accept them.

Meredith Long  
Oak Park, Michigan

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Marion Venema <mvenema@live.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:06 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP proposed changes

To whom it may concern,

I have heard about changes to the GAAMP proposed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). I would like to express my opposition to the committee's proposal to add a Category 4 site to the Site Selection portion of the GAAMPs. I am a farmer myself, and I know and work with many (very) small farmers and people who have a few animals for milk or meat production at their house in an area not zoned agricultural. I know they are all responsible producers who work according to the current GAAMP and are therefore no threat to the environment or a nuisance to their neighborhood. The proposed changes in the site selection could put these small farms and 'home farmers' out of business. This is unfair especially since there is no scientific base for the changes.

Sincerely,

Marion Venema

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Joey Barker <joeyjbarker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:06 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan Right to Farm Act

I am writing in support of the existing Michigan Right to Farm Act. I oppose the changes proposed to MDARD to remove protections for those who live in residential areas.

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.

Additionally, families and individuals should have the right to produce their own food and begin small farming enterprises on their own land. I have four acres of land, and have a few chickens and goats. How is my land unsuitable for housing animals simply because I am in a residential area? These changes infringe upon my right to use land I own in a manner that benefits me and my family, at no detriment to the public.

Sincerely,  
Joey Barker

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Paul Triemstra <paultriemstra@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:20 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP Comments

Please carefully consider changes to regulations and laws to

- Protect existing farms of all sizes when residential neighbors move nearby. The original farms should be allowed to continue.
- Protect the right of any citizen to have a small number of animals on their property; this is a growing area of animal and food awareness, is good for people wishing supplement their incomes and provide good food, and is a grass-roots alternative to food production that could be useful or even essential for a quality food supply.
- Allow 4H and other projects within reason (small animals) on residential properties and in neighborhoods
- Allow small suburban homesteads (1-10 acres) to practice small scale farming with minimum interference outside of good management techniques (addressed in other GAAMPs I believe). Suburbanites should be able to have recreational or food animals and fruit and vegetable production on those properties. Perhaps there are reasonable guidelines that can be put in place without prohibiting reasonable activities.
- Urban homesteading and small farm projects have grown as interest in food production and humane animal initiatives increase. This is good for our state, country, and culture.
- I have not read the proposed new rules and am only aware of them from a newspaper article, but hope reason, including the above, can be considered.

Thanks you

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Hunt <khaamusic2@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:23 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Small farms

To those concerned,

I wish to object to any measure that would or could possibly undermine the Right To Farm for Michigan citizens. Any person should be allowed to grow their own food and raise their own livestock in order to remain self-sustainable.

Even those in urban areas should be allowed to have vegetable gardens and raise chickens, goats, rabbits or whatever they feel they can raise in order to provide safe, healthy food for their families. Various small conflicts may arise between neighbors, but I believe they can and should be handled with communication and common-sense. It is not the role of government to be involved in such minor matters, in my opinion. I think we can all agree that there are many, many larger and more pressing concerns that need the focus of the State, correct?

In this time of processed, chemical-laden food that is sometimes shipped thousands of miles, we have and need the constant protection of the right to have locally grown produce and livestock. It makes sense on many levels -

If it's produced in your backyard or neighborhood, you've just eliminated a huge waste of fossil fuels in transporting it long distances. It eliminates the need to use chemical processes to retain freshness in transit. This is good for the environment and is also good for our economy. We, as responsible humans, all want to conserve as much as we possibly can, right?

If it is produced in your backyard or neighborhood, you still have access to it in case of a major disruption in either the supply chain or infrastructure. Again, as responsible human beings, we would choose to see the least amount of people suffering in the face of an emergency, correct?

I thank you for taking time to hear my voice in this matter.

Respectfully,

V.T. Hunt

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** Karin Friedemann <karinfriedemann@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:27 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Protect urban farms!

Especially in a place like Detroit where people rely on small hobby farms for basic nutritional and financial needs, it would be cruel to deny them the right to get eggs etc. Urban farming is one of the top reasons that Detroit is becoming known to the world again as a place that is developing new ideas.

Karin Friedemann of Ann Arbor

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Girven, Robin <rgirven@fbinsmi.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:31 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP

To Whom It May Concern,

The new changes to the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices should be rejected! Let “small time” farmers keep doing what they’re doing.

Thank you,

Robin Girven  
231-970-6694

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Sarah Sanders <colonel@wcomco.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:30 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMPs

I have been a career farmer for 14 years, living on a very small farm where I raise & produce almost all of our own food, & share with friends and family.

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.

Thank you,  
Sarah Sanders  
Pittsford, Michigan

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Dr. Shannan McNair <mcnair@oakland.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:36 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Michigan's Right to Farm Act

Michigan is in the midst of economic hardship and families are working hard to make ends meet. At the same time, we have myriad problems with obesity, food insecurity, and health issues related to harmful food consumption.

Small farmers are making somewhat of a comeback due to increased interest in healthy food, and the move toward buying local. Citizens in low-income areas have found a way to promote their own movement out of poverty and food insecurity and provide a needed community service by starting urban farms. These are areas where there are large tracts of vacant land that is otherwise an eyesore.

In addition changes proposed are not based on scientific evidence, which is actually the law.

In addition, there is not scientific evidence that the proposed changes are to improve 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.

Last, 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.

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This is not a step forward to support families and to protect the long-term health of the communities we live in.

Shannan McNair  
Associate Professor  
Human Development and Child Studies  
425E Pawley Hall  
Oakland University  
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

## **Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)**

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**From:** maxfly999@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:37 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm

Listen up elected officials. Listen to common sense and the wisdom of nature. How is it that our ancestors lived in close proximity with farmers who provided their daily sustenance with no "issues". With each generation, we are becoming more detached from our food sources, preferring to be dictated to by corporations and mega farms.

The majority of small farm owners are guided by common sense and a desire to respect the natural cycle of all life. Small farms are not (should not) be offensive because they adhere to sustainable farm practices. It's the large scale farms that overload the natural balance of the environment.

If this country continues to honor the holy dollar over common sense, then our country will continue to on a death spiral that every future generation will contribute to. Consciously or unconsciously. I refer to local governments that place greater importance on urban settlers who chose to live in rural areas with full knowledge of the rural environment. And then demand the dynamics be changed to suit their comfort zone!!!!

Can people exist in this country without the government telling them what's in their best interest? I swear, common sense is becoming obsolete. Especially in our elected officials!!!!

Kathryn McGrath  
Sterling Heights

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Sara Guy <saracote1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:40 PM  
**To:** Holton, Jennifer (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMP

I am outraged to think that yet another one of our American freedom's may be taken away. The right to grow food and keep small animals in our backyards should be inherent. Where is the government that encouraged Victory Gardens and to keep chickens in every backyard during World War II? American's should be allowed to produce healthy home grown food in our backyards without government interference. It sickens me to think these rights may be taken away. Please make logical and considerate decisions concerning these issues.

Thank you,

Sara Cote

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Darren Bagley <bugwaterguy76@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:45 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Changes in Michigan Right To Farm Act

I am concerned about changes in the Michigan Right To Farm Act not protecting small farms. I work with 4-H families and very few of them have 50 animal units. I think there should be a separate set of small farm GAAMPS specifically related to small farms with under 50 livestock units. It would serve as an educational piece for those farmers and protect the environment and public health. Raising animals teaches children (and adults) about economics, animals science, and responsibility.

Thanks for your time,  
Darren Bagley

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Dean Simionescu <dean.t.simionescu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:45 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Farm bill loophole

I hope that you will not make changes to close the loophole for small urban farming as described in the mlive article. It is important to me to eat good food where I know the animals are treated well and not injected with hormones. As a college student who has also given up using cars, I must live in an urban setting and have 3 chickens for eggs to get a good protein balance in my diet. Please don't remove my right to grow and raise my own food.

Thank you,

Dean

Sent from my iPhone

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Maria Erlandson <teasso@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:46 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Public Input on Agricultural Management Practices

So.... who is currently suffering and in need of these changes. People shouldn't move next to someone growing food or raising animals if they don't want to live next to it. It's ridiculous. It seems to me that there are ulterior motives involved here. So, I can go move next to a homesteader and then they lose their right to farm because I don't want to see it?? Sounds like an excuse. This law seems to only protect the powers that be who do not wish to see self-sufficiency.

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This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.  
<http://www.avast.com>

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** T Ross <mycarquote@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:36 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm ammendment is WRONG

I am opposed to the suggested changes to the Right to Farm act. It is being distorted so that local communities can prevent families from exercising their rights to provide their own food and sustenance - just because they live in an urban area.

This may be the intended reason for the change but it will soon be use to prevent any small operation. It will be distorted to allow only large corporate farming operations.

Do not change the Right to Farm act.

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Dana Driscoll <adriayna@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:36 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAMP Comment

Hello,

I am Dana Driscoll, and I am writing in support of the CURRENT Michigan Right to Farm act. The roots of our country's history, and our state's history, are within agriculture. Its only been in the last 50 years that this has changed. We have a strong, sustainable farming movement happening all over this state, and we currently are proud of the laws that protect farmers (who are nearly all zoned residential).

I'm concerned with the proposed changes to the GAAMP; they need to be based on science. The current changes appear to not be, and that deeply concerns me as an educator and researcher working at a Michigan University.

Small family farms in residential areas improve public health by access to fresh vegetables, eggs, and so forth--they do not detract. I have several farmers who live on my road, and I am happy to buy produce directly from them, support our local economy, and engage in more healthful eating. I am happy to live in a suburban area that allows for the diversity of farms and healthy living.

Finally, the proposed changes in the law 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 ask, therefore, that you retain the original meaning and intent of the Michigan Right to Farm Act--it is a model for other states, and is allowing Michigan to push ahead with localized, sustainable food systems.

Thank you,

Dr. Dana Lynn Driscoll  
10191 Allen Road  
Clarkston, MI 48348

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Brad Kik <bradkik@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:42 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Cc:** dcoe@blackstarfarms.com  
**Subject:** Comments on RTF and GAAMPS

Dear MDARD.

If we want true food security — defined as the ability of a country, region, state or community to be as self-sufficient in food production as possible — then we need a legal system that supports local, small-scale food production.

Farms that fit this bill turn out healthful food, guard against shortages, stabilize local economies and instill community camaraderie.

Michigan is ahead of the curve when it comes to setting up legal protections for small-scale farmers, and the state's Right to Farm laws are making a real difference.

**Do NOT drop the animal units down to 0 in the definition of a Livestock Production Facility. This will create undue burdens on small farmers.**

**Do NOT gut the Right to Farm Act by giving local zoning ordinances the power to control where farming can happen. This change would violate the language and intent of the Right to Farm Act.**

The Michigan RTFA is a template for the defense and encouragement of local food production and the restoration of agriculture to its rightful place — integrated into communities.

Respectfully,

Brad Kik  
[bradkik@charter.net](mailto:bradkik@charter.net) | (231) 676-7757

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Nathan Ayers <ayers.nathan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:50 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** MDARD - Gaamps - MRTF

Hello,  
If we want true food security — defined as the ability of a country, region, state or community to be as self-sufficient in food production as possible — then we need a legal system that supports local, small-scale food production.

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The Michigan RTFA is a template for the defense and encouragement of local food production and the restoration of agriculture to its rightful place — integrated into communities.

Nathan Ayers  
Chiwara Permaculture Research & Education L3C

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Christi D <cmdomont@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:51 AM  
**To:** Holton, Jennifer (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Mi Right to Farm

Writing in regards to the proposed changes in farming practices.

In regards to family and being a sustainable and green earth, there needs to be a blending of being able to support and feed one's family in a natural and healthy way, with the protection to exercise this right from the government.

The less government control, the more we are allowed to be a free people exercising our freedoms.

I believe in small farms. I believe in eating healthy. I believe that people who are being responsible in the way that they generate these natural foods on small, homesteads should be free to do so.

Please keep this in mind as you look at laws you make, rules that people will forever be bound by. Please consider not your own position, but the freedoms that we should be allowed to exercise and how those freedoms can be kept while working together with parties that may be involved.

thank you for your consideration ~christine domont

"That all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Keith Soucy <knsoucy@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:52 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** GAAMPs

Hello,

I'm writing to you today to voice my concern regarding the new potential changes to the GAAMPs for 2014. I live in Ann Arbor where we are allowed to have up to four hens in our backyard as long as we have a permit from the city. A number of my neighbors have done the same with no complaints or incidents to date. Please let this message serve as my statement of support for the existing 2013 GAAMPs, therefore protecting individual rights to keep small numbers of livestock in areas zoned as "Residential."

My family and the Ann Arbor community as a whole have a strong commitment to building sustainable lifestyles, and being able to raise a small number of chickens in our backyard is a crucial component to that lifestyle.

Thank you,

Keith Soucy

1411 Hatcher Crescent  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Kajeon Secord-Bennett <contactme@kajeon.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:53 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** small farming

To whom it may concern:

I read an article on mlive that talked about the possibility of no longer being able to have small farms in residential areas. I'm not going to get into the specifics of the article, but would at least like to say my peace on the matter before the day is out. I live in Middleville, MI. I very small community surrounded by farms. Small farms make up our community and give us the ability to provide some whole foods to our families at reasonable prices. You can drive down almost any road and find someone selling produce, eggs and more and I don't want to change it a bit. It's a small price to pay for the ability to have locally grown healthy food. There is even a corn field right next to our football field and there is often a very ripe aroma in the air during football games. No one complains because we know it's where our food comes from. We know it's our communities way of life. I can see having issues in very urban areas, but a lot of Michigan is quite rural and a decision like this will have great consequences to not only how we feed ourselves, but on our community and culture as a whole. Please leave the small farms alone. We should have the right to live off our own land!

Sincerely,

Kajeon M Secord-Bennett

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Nathan Hardenburg <nathan.hardenburg@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:51 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** RTFA

Leave RTFA alone!...the right to grow is the same as the right to breath. This is a war on the people of America, and smells like the stench of a terroristic assault against the taxpaying citizens of Michigan. If you don't see that, you should move out of Michigan immediately!

These are the issues in particular, and "nuts and bolts" of why the proposed changes are flat wrong!

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.

Sincerely,

Nathan Kurt Hardenburg  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** kai@cultivationstation.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:58 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Don't Change the Siting GAAMP!

Greetings,

Changing the siting GAAMP threatens urban agriculture because it leaves the decision up the township boards and city councils, which can easily be influenced by money and politics. Townships are only interested in increasing tax base, even at the cost of the municipality's personality. Look at Northville, Novi and Livonia and how they bend over to Schostak and other developers. Farms do not contribute to tax base. But subdivisions swell the coffers. Conflict of interest?

Additionally, urban agriculture represents Detroit's last economic hope. These siting GAAMPs will affect urban farms on the edges of Detroit City, the areas hardest hit by poverty and the areas that could benefit the most from urban farms. Townships and cities across the border from Detroit will use these updated GAAMPs to harass farms on the other side in Detroit, because they are not sited properly.

For that matter, these siting GAAMPs could be used to wage cross border wars between rural townships and developing suburbia. Or the GAAMPs could be used by cities to swallow up bordering rural township land by forcing farmers out, initially with these GAAMPs, and then annexing the property afterwards through voter initiative.

Don't change the siting GAAMPs, please and thank you,

Kai Brodersen  
[tcs-hydroponics.com](http://tcs-hydroponics.com)  
c. 248.444.4606  
p. 734.213.7740  
f. 734.213.7745  
[kai@cultivationstation.com](mailto:kai@cultivationstation.com)

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Jenn Ryan <justadreamerjenn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:59 AM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Small farms

Dear MDARD.

If we want true food security — defined as the ability of a country, region, state or community to be as self-sufficient in food production as possible — then we need a legal system that supports local, small-scale food production.

Farms that fit this bill turn out healthful food, guard against shortages, stabilize local economies and instill community camaraderie.

Michigan is ahead of the curve when it comes to setting up legal protections for small-scale farmers, and the state's Right to Farm laws are making a real difference.

Do NOT drop the animal units down to 0 in the definition of a Livestock Production Facility. This will create undue burdens on small farmers.

Do NOT gut the Right to Farm Act by giving local zoning ordinances the power to control where farming can happen. This change would violate the language and intent of the Right to Farm Act.

The Michigan RTFA is a template for the defense and encouragement of local food production and the restoration of agriculture to its rightful place — integrated into communities.

Respectfully,

jenn ryan

creative enthusiast. dreamer. thinker.

*... speak your mind, even if your voice shakes ... maggie kuhn*

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Christopher Hobson <mr.christopherhobson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:03 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Right to Farm

I don't normally do this kind of thing. I've quit voting and almost quit caring entirely about politics altogether due to our governments growing lack of concern for its people. I have big plans for an urban farm on my property in Burton, Michigan and it seems that this proposal threatens that. Since when did human beings lose the right to provide for and feed themselves? We are all slowly losing our God given rights in this country. Not only every American, but every person born on this planet deserves to be able to farm, gather, and hunt for their own food. Well, there are smaller and smaller places for gathering each year as well as less places to hunt. That leaves us with farming. With Monsanto, GMO's, pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, and hormones being put in our food by big companies and multimillionaires we are being put between a rock and a hard place here. Please leave us alone and quit stripping us of our rights. And when I say rights I'm not only talking about what our forefathers set for us but also as our rights as born citizens of the earth. You need to do what's right and not what your pockets and/or personal opinion tell you.

Thank you for your time,

Christopher Hobson

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Kaylan Radatz <kaylanradatz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:04 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Against Proposed GAAMPs Changes

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to speak out against the proposed GAAMPs changes. The strength and vitality of the local food movement depends on small farms including Rural, Suburban, and Urban farms. This could impact small farmers that also grow and supply produce. This not only hurts the local farmers to provide for their families, but to offer quality product to many in their communities. This is an issue of consumer choice and we should protect and encourage these farms. So I encourage you to help small farmers and an not implement these changes. Thank you for your time.

Kaylan Radatz

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Philip Lombard <plombard@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:06 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** 2014 draft of GAAMPS Public Comment

Here is my public comment regarding the 2014 draft of GAAMPS. Please include it in the record.

It looks like the MI Dept of Ag and the Ag Commission are reworking GAAMPS to exclude small family farms and even the property owners where people want to raise a few chickens or goats. They sure use the Right to Farm Act to stand up for CAFOs and large farm operations but exclude the small farms and hobby-type farms - or even someone who wants to raise a few chickens for the eggs.

Jim Johnson's (an MDARD division director) straw-man argument "... that 4,999 chickens on a 50 x 75 plot is not fair to neighbors." is ludicrous and attempts to ridicule the owners of small farms, hobby farms, and those who want to raise two chickens and a goat and a horse (as an example). Who is advocating raising 4,999 chickens on a 50 x 75 plot? That's less than one square foot per bird! MDARD's belittling ridicule does not portend a reasonable conclusion to this issue.

Sincerely,

Phil Lombard  
830 W Drayton Ave.  
Ferndale MI 48220

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** DeAnn G <ldgardy@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:07 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** keep MI right to farm act intact

I have friends who would be affected by this change. I think citizens should retain the right to raise chickens or grow vegetables. Limitations should be only by property size. If I have enough property to maintain chickens then I should be able to. I listen to neighbors dogs barking, cats defecating in my yard, kids screaming down the road or even destroying my property but I can't own a chicken because it might upset a neighbor? I think the Right to Farm act should stay as is.

Loella Gardyszewski

## Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

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**From:** Erika Ingle <emaingle@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:05 PM  
**To:** Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)  
**Subject:** Small Farmers

Today I am writing with a plea to you as you consider the laws regarding farm animals in urban settings.

Small farm animals such as chickens, which seem to be the most common urban farm animals, are clean, quiet, and non-distracting to neighbors. They are no near as obtrusive than a neighborhood cat or dog. But, they provide food - eggs and healthy meat - giving individuals a choice to choose the kind of food they eat and helping family budgets - urban farming is something that is a saving grace to the city of Detroit and it's residents - to remove chickens from their already on going efforts and success - would be a short sighted choice!

I ask you to please consider, not only to approve, but encouraging urban farming - look, it is not for everyone - they, chickens, are a lot of responsibility - it is not just a hamster type 'pet' you get - those who own chickens and raise them - research - use reliable resources - build great houses and pens for them - and are serious about their responsibilities to the chickens, their families, and of course their neighbors.

Please protect the rights of the people to have this freedom of choice of the food they consume and where it comes from!

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Erika Ingle