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Legal Authority: Michigan Right to Farm Act, Public Act 93 of 1981, as amended

Description of the Program:

- The Right-to-Farm Program provides a common sense approach to investigate and resolve environmental and nuisance complaints involving farms in Michigan. Individuals with concerns about polluted runoff, excessive odor, or environmental issues associated with a specific farm may file a complaint with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- MDARD investigates on-farm management of conditions, activities and/or materials relative to a set of science-based Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) developed by a technical advisory committee of stakeholders and agency representatives.
- If MDARD determines a farm is operating in conformance with the applicable GAAMPs, the farm earns an affirmative defense from a nuisance lawsuit. If changes are needed, farmers are advised to seek technical assistance through the Michigan State University Extension, the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation districts, and private consultants.
- About 1/3 of the complaints are not verified; the farm operation is found to be in conformance with GAAMPs. Nearly all of the rest implement changes to resolve environmental or nuisance problems in a timely manner. Unresolved cases may be referred to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for enforcement under Michigan's National Resources and Environmental Protection Act.

Why it Matters:

- On-farm production agriculture is the foundation of Michigan's \$101.3 billion food and agriculture industry.
- Environmental performance on farms affects everyone's water quality and overall quality of life in rural areas where farms are located. The economic success and social viability of farms depends on their productivity, environmental performance, and social compatibility.

Key Stakeholders:

- Michigan farmers
- Residential non-farm neighbors
- Michigan counties
- Township officials
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- MSU Extension
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Michigan conservation districts

Key Deliverables:

- Timely complaint response
- Consistent evaluation of on-farm practices
- Science-based standards
- Conflict resolution
- Pollution prevention
- Efficient and effective on-farm resource management

FY15 Accomplishments:

- Timely investigation of new environmental complaints; over 95% within seven business days.
- Follow up inspections to verify corrective management practices are implemented.
- On-farm environmental performance and pollution prevention based on scientific standards and documented by inspections.

Measuring Success:

Metric	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
New complaints received	137	132	112	154	137	117	137
On-farm Investigations	152	151	131	167	153	133	154
First response within 7 business days (%)	94	94	94	91	75	89	89
Follow-up inspections	109	99	125	198	117	119	159
Proactive inspection requests	15	19	19	13	16	16	7
Category determinations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	16
Counties served	45	51	44	52	52	51	51
Resolution							
Not-verified (%)	32	43	44	28	37	31	34
Resolved/abated (%)	65	55	54	70	59	69	66
Complaint Type (%)							
Odor	35	54	54	48	45	42	40
Groundwater	13	0	0	3	9	2	2
Surface water	50	45	45	48	40	49	52
Bees	2	0	0	1	1	1	1
Farm market					1	0	1
Enterprise Type							
Livestock	88	85	81	84	89	80	77
Crops	12	15	19	15	11	14	20
Other	0	0	0	1	0	6	3
Corrective Actions							
MMSPs developed	20	15	11	13	22	11	12
MMSP au covered	4481	1720	3259	6874	4729	4712	8414
Livestock exclusions (au)	525	469	1020	327	627	144	150
Streambank fencing installed (feet)	2800	12180	20000	2520	2890	2060	2250
Manure incorporation (acres)					5548	6547	7460
Improved manure management (acres)	3845	1392	3758	803	4793	6395	7429

Scorecards:

The Right to Farm Program did not have an item on the departmental scorecard for fiscal year 2015. Staff is working with MDARD's Director of Strategy and Business Performance to design measures toward this end.

FY16 Program Goals:

- Timely response to complaints, including an initial on-site inspection within seven business days.
- Work with stakeholders to promote the pro-active implementation of applicable GAAMPs on Michigan farms.
- Implement a new inspection data handling system with a revised database.
- Implement a revised records management system reporting process.