

## Migrant Labor Housing Inspection and Licensing Program

The Foundation of Michigan's Food Safety Efforts  
Authorized under the Michigan Public Health Code – 1978 PA 368, Part 124

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The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) inspects and licenses approximately 760 migrant labor housing sites each year. These sites include 3,700 living units with a capacity to occupy 22,000 workers. Inspections cover structural safety, allowable occupancy, water quality, sanitation, and waste disposal at sites with five or more migrant workers engaged in agriculture. Licensing requirements apply to housing provided to five or more migrant agricultural workers.

Migrant labor housing is typically provided by farmers who need migrant workers to harvest or process their crops. Thirty-eight of Michigan's agricultural crops are dependant on labor intensive hand-harvesting or processing. These include specialty crops such as asparagus, blueberries, cherries, apples, grapes, tomatoes, and cucumbers. The annual farm gate value of these crops in Michigan is estimated to be in excess of \$2.3 billion.

The migrant workforce comes predominantly from Texas or Florida. As such, Michigan is at the end of the road for workers who have an opportunity to work in any of the states between Michigan and Texas or Florida. Survey and evaluation results indicate that two things draw migrant workers to Michigan. One is that the diversity of our agriculture gives them season long work opportunities. The other is our national reputation for good housing.

The Migrant Labor Housing (MLH) program delivers outcomes in three complimentary areas. These are: viability of specialty crop agriculture, migrant worker health, and food safety. Quality housing improves worker health, reduces the potential for transfer of communicable diseases via hand-picked fruits and vegetables, and provides Michigan with a competitive advantage over other states competing for migrant workers.

MDARD staff provides field support for the Workforce Development Agency guest worker (H2A) program. Provision of multiple services via MLH sanitarians reduces overall costs and strengthens MLH sanitarian knowledge of industry requirements.

Migrant workers hand-harvest and pack the fresh market produce consumed by Michigan citizens. Their health and access to adequate sanitation facilities is vital to the state's food safety efforts. Healthy workers with clean hands are our first line of defense against food borne illness.

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# Migrant Labor Housing Inspection and Licensing Program 2013 Annual Update

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2013 was a revitalization year for the Migrant Labor Housing Program. With the support of agricultural producers, migrant advocates, our legislature, and administration we are back to full staffing levels. A manager, secretary, and three inspectors were hired and began training in 2013.

## Milestones / Accomplishments

Key milestones and efforts of the MLH team in 2013 are listed below:

- Pre-season inspection protocols updated and vetted by staff
- Established new inspector service areas to balance workloads and travel times
- Used cross-training to ensure uniform inspection and licensing procedures
- Completed implementation of an electronic document management system allowing staff to spend more time working with housing providers
- Returned to conducted programmed in-season inspections and resolving occupancy based violations via compliance assistance
- Continued work with U.S. Department of Labor on differences in standards and enforcement critical to resolving the overlap between our two programs

## Programmatic Metrics

MLH Metrics	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Applications</b>					
Not Opening	41	71	61	108	82
Opening	843	808	794	748	777
<b>Inspections</b>					
Licensing	845	891	895	797	935
H2A	58	39	34	34	51
Occupancy	-	-	9	79	694
Referral	30	-	3	12	14
Enforcement				4	4
Plan Review	59	12	8	19	22
Total	975	973	1,028	914	1,648
<b>Licensing</b>					
Camps	801	788	777	704	755
Units	3,863	3,798	3,749	3,404	3,723
Capacity	22,673	22,857	22,820	21,005	22,747

Prior to 2013 occupancy inspections were conducted primarily on a complaint basis with none in 09 & 10 when staffing was at its lowest. Referral numbers were not tracked in 2010 due to limited staff time. Enforcement actions tracked separately starting in 2012.

Performance reported in Departmental Scorecard rated at 110%, 90%, 107%, and 144% for quarters 1 through 4 respectively.

Congratulations Migrant Labor Housing Staff.