**MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Deborah A Stabenow Building
Douglas Houghton Conference Room

Option to Join via Remote Technology
Dial: 1-248-509-0316; Conf. ID 702 217 188#

**Meeting Minutes**
**November 5, 2025**

## CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Garthe called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 2:03 p.m. on November 5, 2025. The Commissioner Assistant (Katrina Meyers) called roll with the following Commissioners present:

**PRESENT:**
Kathrine Garthe, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.
David Williams, Vice Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.
Monica Wyant, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Felicia Wu, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Andy Chae, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.
Dr. Tim Boring, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 5, 2025 AGENDA. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

## APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Katherine Garthe, Chair, would like to add a correction to the section on greenhouse GAAMPs to update comments on best use of lighting to avoid light trespass.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2025, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED,**

## COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Chae is wrapping up his produce season. He continues to harvest spinach, carrots and radishes. Commission Chae is removing other crops from the field and cleaning up for winter.

Commissioner Williams has been traveling across his farms harvesting and preparing for next spring. Their farm is wrapping up corn.

Commissioner Wu had trips to Malta, Paris, Washington D.C, and Boston for various biosecurity meetings. She is currently co-chairing the US National Academy of Sciences Committee on synthetic cells, including how they relate to agriculture and food.

Commissioner Wyant had no travel to report.

Chair Garthe's had no travel to report. Her farm in Leelanau County has finished their apple harvest and their winter work begins.

**COMMISSIONER ISSUES**

Chair Garthe recognized Stephen Czarnecki's years of loyal service to MDARD highlighting his work in weights and measurements and noting the agriculture excellence award he received on the "Cat Gas" team, the team excellence award for the Peanut Butter Recall Team, and the Specialized Meat Processing Team. Chair Garthe thanked him for his service to the state.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO ADOPT THE RETIREMENT RESOLUTION FOR STEPHEN CZARNECKI. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

Chair Garthe Recognized the Cooperative Elevator Company as the Ag Exporter of the year. The director highlighted Cooperative Elevator's role on the export market, and impact it has had on Michigan Agriculture. A short video was played highlighting their contributions and work. Chair Garthe thanked Scott Gordon, CEO of Cooperative Elevator, and presented him with a framed resolution.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONER RESOLUTION FOR AG EXPORTER OF THE YEAR – COOPERATIVE ELEVATOR COMPANY. WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Boring informed the commission that the department is an active participant in the multinational Great Lakes and St. Lawerence Seaway's Initiative. Michigan will be chairing on behalf of the governor for sustainable agriculture and is excited to continue to work with other states and provinces to highlight our environmental issues, support our communities, foster collaboration, and continue to position Michigan Agriculture for success.

Director Boring explained that MDARD has wrapped up sampling team for the year. Ten events were completed across the state, fostering emergency preparedness and response. The real-life implementation of these structures will continue to set staff up for success when a state emergency occurs. The director expressed his thanks to Brad Deacon and the rest of the MDARD team for leading this effort and continuing to invest in ourselves, so we are in a better position if and when emergencies occur.

Director Boring explained SNAP benefits and their ties to MDARD. MDARD will continue to collaborate with entities and the Fair Food Network. MDARD's farm to family team has been implementing food hub and farm stop grants to assist impacted communities and engage with new farmers and producers. The department continues to focus on meeting nutritional needs across the state.

The department recently announced Specialty Crop Block Grant Funding, that gave us the opportunity to testify before both U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees. This testimony helped the department explain how important the federal investment into the specialty crop industries continues to be and how this funding combats ongoing disease and management challenges for specialty crops, while creating opportunities to build markets in newer and stronger

ways.

Director Boring spoke about HPAI and Michigan has had recent detection. The MDARD team is responding to those reports and working with the federal partners. MDARD will continue to amplify taking precautions and implementing best management and biosecurity practices. The director highlighted State Veterinarian, Dr. Nora Wineland, who was recognized for her ongoing work to the national effort with a distinguished service award from the North American Association of State Animal Health, this week.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

Beatrice Friedlander, on behalf of Attorneys for Animals a Michigan nonprofit and the State Bar's Animal Law Section, testified before the commission.

Dr. Robert Schutzki, on his own behalf, testified before the commission.

Evan Rosin, on behalf of the Wayne County Conservation District and on his own behalf, testified before the commission.

Michelle Beloskur, on behalf of Midwest Invasive Plant Network, testified before the commission.

Merrick Palasty, on behalf of Woldumar Nature Center, and on his own behalf, testified before the commission.

Mary Leys, on her own behalf, testified before the commission.

Megan Tinsley, on behalf of The Michigan Environmental Council, testified before the commission.

Dale Deppe, on behalf of Spring Meadow Nursery, testified before the commission.

Tim Wood, on behalf of Spring Meadow Nursery, testified before the commission.

Amy Upton, on behalf of The Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association, testified before the commission.

Dave Thurston, on behalf of Royal Lawn and Landscape and Weedman Lawn Care, testified before the commission.

Shikha Singh, on her own behalf, testified before the commission.

David Putt, on behalf of the Wildflower Association of Michigan, testified before the commission.

Marilyn Trent, on her own behalf, testified before the commission.

Matthew Steinkopf, on behalf of Steinkopf & Sons Wholesale, testified before the commission.

David Steinkopf, on behalf of Steinkopf & Sons Wholesale, testified before the commission.

Matthew Bertrand, on his own behalf, testified before the commission.

Marvin Wiegand, on behalf of Ray Wiegand's Nursery, testified before the commission.

Eric Otto, on behalf of Northland Farms LLC, testified before the commission.

Hope McCullen Brandt, on behalf of Flow Water Advocates, testified before the commission.

**PROPOSED 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE:**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**MICHIGAN CRAFTED:**

Jenell Jagmin, the Director of The Michigan Craft Beverage Council, presented on the Michigan Crafted Campaign, which is a new promotional campaign in support of Michigan agriculture in our craft beverage industry.

Ms. Jagmin explained Director Boring serves as the chair for this council, which is comprised of nine appointed seats representing different license types within Michigan. The council votes annually on a budget for funding conferences, marketing, and promotions, to benefit the future of the industry. The council collaborates, shares concerns and encourages Michiganders to support Michigan Business, spreading the message that when you support MI craft beverage you are supporting your local farmers.

Commissioner Che asked if The Michigan Crafted Council represents nonalcoholic beer and spirits. Janelle explained that Michigan does not currently have any breweries crafting their own nonalcoholic beer but would represent them in the future if given the opportunity.

Director Boring asked Janelle about the craft beverage summit. Janelle shared that the first Michigan Craft Beverage Summit was held in 2024. It brought in more than 300 Michigan Companies, helping to forge connections between Michigan buyers and producers within the industry. The third annual summit is slated for 2026.Chair Garthe asked if Michigan Crafted included hard cider. Janelle shared that Cider is included in the Michigan Crafted Campaign.

**EXPORT UPDATE:**

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Bureau Director of Agriculture Development Division, presented on Michigan exports, highlighting the fact that exports including food, beverages and wood have continued to trend upwards for the last seven plus years, hitting a record high in 2024 of three billion dollars.

She explained that Michigan has seen a slight decrease in our export value through July of this year, when comparing year over year, however our processed food exports are increasing each year. Wood and dry beans have shown an increase, as well. Soybean Meal and food grade dry beans have seen a recent decline, however Michigan exports continue to be strong.

The MDARD Agriculture Development team will continue to provide export education, consulting services, market research, market entry assistance and programs to new export companies, and

will continue to track trends and find opportunities to navigate the ever-changing trade landscape throughout the world.

Commissioners Williams asked if the numbers presented were based on the calendar year and how free trade agreements and federal tariffs work. Ms. Zmitko-Somers confirmed that 2024 and 2025 were based off calendar year, not fiscal year, and that although Michigan may not add a tariff, the federal administration does have the authority to do so.

Commissioner Wu inquired if there are any dairy facilities in Michigan who would be interested in taking whey and turning it into protein powder, as there seems to be a demand currently? Ms. Zmitko-Somers explained that Michigan has several facilities that are doing that work and are looking at potential expansion.

Commissioner Garthe asked how interested export businesses can access resources. Ms. Zmitko Somers explained that by visiting MDARD - International Marketing you can find information on the international marketing program, economic development team, and other business resources, many at zero or minimal cost to the business.

**GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (GAAMPS) and GENERALLY ACCEPTED PROCESSING PRACTICES (GAPPS) – 2026 GAAMPS AND GAPPS:**

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director introduced Kyle McCarty, the GAAMPs and GAPPs Specialist. Mr. McCarty explained the proposed changes made to the GAMMPs and GAPPs, with no additional changes since the September Commission Meeting. Mr. McCarty provided a public comment response report which provides a summary of public comments that were received over the calendar year and provides a general response to each item identified.

The advisory committee chairs reviewed all public comments that were submitted but felt that there were none that required immediate changes to the GAAMPS. However, they did note that these comments will be researched and reviewed when constructing the 2027 draft GAAMPS. He also noted that based on Chair Garthe's prior request some additional language was created for the Manure and Nutrient GAAMPS on pages one and seven, related to the discharges of manure and other related agricultural byproducts.

*CARE OF FARM ANIMALS GAAMPS*

Kyle McCarty introduced chair Dr. Madonna Benjamin and invited any questions the commissioners may have. Commissioner Chae asked if it would be appropriate to require monitoring for specific diseases that are not within the GAAMPS? Dr. Benjamin explained that the GAMMPS would not supersede USDA recommendations and guidance, pointing out that there is advice in the document on how to maintain biosecurity for animals.

Commissioner Chae asked if there is a reason that the federal and state law shouldn't be part of the GAAMPS and require concerning disease? Mr. McCarty explained that the farm should contact their veterinarian concerning disease but that the committee can certainly look into language addressing that, during the next review cycle.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 CARE OF FARM ANIMALS GAAMPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

*MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION GAAMPS*

Mr. McCarty introduced the chair for the Manure Management and Utilization GAAMPS, Sarah Zeiler. She shared that she has greatly enjoyed her first year with the GAAMPS committee. There were no questions from the commissioners.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION GAAMPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED**

*SITE SELECTION AND ODOR CONTROL FOR NEW AND EXPLANDING LIVESTOCK FACILITIES GAAMPS*

Mr. McCarty introduced Jerry May, the chair of the Livestock Site Selection and Odor Control GAAMPS. Commissioner Chae commented he saw in a public comment someone was concerned about the setbacks from property lines for a medium size bee keeping operations , Commissioner Chae wanted to note that it is of his opinion it should be within reason, as to not make it too onerous for the beekeeper.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 LIVESTOCK SITE SELECTION AND ODOR CONTROL GAAMPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

*NUTRIENT UTILIZATION GAAMPS*

Mr. McCarty stated there was substantial changes concerning Nutrient Utilization GAAMPS and updates were made. The Chair, Dr. Kurt Steinke, was unable to attend. There were no questions from the committee.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 NUTRIENT UTILIZATION GAAMPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

*PESTICIDE UTILIZATION AND PEST CONTROL, FARM MARKETS, IRRIGATION WATER USE, AND CRANBERRY PRODUCTION GAAMPS*

Mr. McCarty stated that there were no substantial changes to the remaining 4 GAAMPS and invited any questions the commissioners may have. Commissioner Chae asked about events on farms and parking, asking if this will be included in the GAAMPS in the future. Mr. McCarty explained that GAAMPS tie the sale of a specific farm product to a specific farm market, the GAAMPS do not cover services or entertainment (agrotourism).

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 PEST UTILIZATION AND PEST CONTROL, FARM MARKET, IRRIGATION WATER USE, AND CRANBERRY PRODUCTION GAAMPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**GENERALLY ACCEPTED PROCESSING PRACTICES (GAPPS)**

Kyle McCarty, the GAAMPs and GAPPs Specialist, within the Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Bureau, is working with a new advisory committee that should have substantial revisions for 2027. No questions or comments from the commissioners for the current proposed GAPPS.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2026 GAPPS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**NURSERY AND RELATED INSPECTION FEES:**

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director, introduced Molly Mott, Plant Health Section Manager. Molly explained that the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division (PPPM) is requesting the commission to approve the proposed increases for its nursery and related inspection fees. MDARD charges an inspection fee based on the cost of the inspection, which can be adjusted yearly, based off the consumer price index (CPI) in Detroit, Warren, and Dearborn. PPPM evaluates the cost yearly, and in 2025 the inspection fees did not cover the costs, and general funds were required to support these programs.

The state treasurer notified MDARD that the change in the CPI rose 2.1% and that with that change, it is proposed that our inspection fee and per acre charges be increased. Among those affected would be nursery stock growers and dealers, exporters of plant and plant products, Christmas tree growers, importers of foreign sourced nursery stocks, and persons requesting other special inspections. The effective period would be for Jan 1 – December 31st. As of October 16th, 2025, PPPM has notified the impacted groups effected by the change.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED NURSERY AND RELATED INSPECTION FEES. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

**PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED INVASIVE SPECIES:**

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director, introduced Molly Mott, Plant Health Section Manager and Susannah Iott, the Invasive Species Program Specialist, who is joined by Katie Grzesiak, an Invasive Species Coordinator at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Mr. Philip explained we have a mandate across several state laws to prevent, detect and respond to invasive species, identifying what we believe should be regulated.

Ms. Iott explained that an invasive species refers to a non-native species that when introduced are likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. These invasive species are then either prohibited, if not widely distributed, or restricted, if they are naturalized, in Michigan. Species are regulated to regulate trade, to close pathways of movement of the species, increase public awareness, and align Michigan with neighboring states.

Coordinated regulation creates clarity, public cooperation, and protects ecosystems. Every plant undergoes a risk assessment, DNR is consulted, and partners are informed and consulted before recommendations are made. A stakeholders' survey was sent out prior to developing recommendations for 6 species and found that there was overall support for regulation.

Recommendations were made to prohibit water hyacinth and water lettuce, and restrict common buckthorn, Glossy buckthorn, Callery pear and Japanese barberry. The proposed beginning date is January 2028. There would be compliance assistance provided as well as educational materials that would include suggested alternatives. MDARD will present comments and propose any further changes at the next agriculture commission meeting.

Commissioner Chae asked if there would be funding for controlled burning. Ms. Iott explained that through the Michigan invasive species grant program, funds can be allocated for active ground control work, but MDARD does not have funds to give to the public for removal. Ms. Grzesiak noted that if

you have one of these species currently on your property you would not be in violation of the regulation.

Commissioner Williams asked for a generalization of why we restrict different species. Ms. Iott explained that restrictions are suggested for multiple reasons, some include competing with native species, promoting soil erosion, altering soil conditions, changing nutrients and cycling, as well as some species being fire tolerant and often times, because they are not native, they do not support native pollinators.

Commissioner Wu inquired about the weed risk assessment (WRA) model which looks at climate suitability, and asked if other variables such as reproduction rate, accreditation rate, and death rate were considered in the WRA. She also asked what other states and provinces use that model. Ms. Iott explained that MDARD with input from the industry, agreed to use the WRA model since it is the most thorough and exhaustive model that is out there. It not only looks at climate and suitability but looks at the likelihood that a species would become established, and if so, what impacts it would likely have.

Commissioner Williams asked if they had determined how long it would take to phase out what is currently growing in the nurseries. Ms. Iott explained that January 2028 is the proposed effective date. This date will be discussed with the nursery and landscape association at their upcoming meeting, and more information will be gathered and presented for the next Agricultural Committee Meeting.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AND OPEN MEETING ACT:**

Brad Deacon, MDARD's Director of Legal Affairs and Emergency Management explained that both the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Open Meeting Act (OMA) date back to a movement of openness and transparency in government post-Watergate.

The Open Meetings Act requires that meetings (a convening of a public body where we have a quorum and that the meeting is for the purpose of deliberating toward a decision) have notice, are posted, are accessible to people, and meeting minutes are provided. Meetings can be recorded and broadcast and there is no registration needed to attend. The commission's policies are created to make sure that meetings are held in an orderly manner. Mr. Deacon explained how a special meeting could be called and how location must be accessible to all.

Mr. Deacon explained that public records prepared, owned or used need to be available to the public, if requested. We must respond within 5 business days to any FOIA requests (with a 10-business day extension if necessary). A cost estimate may be necessary based on how long it will take to review, assemble, and produce the records. Denials must have a legal basis. People are able to appeal a cost estimate or denial.

Mr. Deacon explained there is a handbook produced by the Attorney General that includes court cases to help interpret FOIA and the Open Meetings Act.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public Comment

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

Attachments:

A) *Agenda*
B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes September 24, 2025*
C) *Retirement Resolution: Stephen S. Czarnecki*
D) *Commissioner Resolution: Ag Exporter of the Year – Cooperative Elevator Company*
E) *Written Public Comments*
F) *Proposed Meeting Schedule*
G) *Export Update Presentation*
H) *2026 GAAMPs Updated*
I) *GAPPs Updated*
J) *Nursery and Related Inspection Fee Documents*
K) *Prohibited and Restricted Invasive Species Presentation*
L) *Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act Presentation*