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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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DIRECTOR

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY MANUAL INDEX

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MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

OVERVIEW

This overview includes individual sections covering the following:

- Statement of Purpose
- Responsibilities
- Legal Authority
- Procedures
    - Officers
    - Compensation and Expenses
    - Meetings
    - Voting
    - Ethics
    - Policy Manual
- Resolutions
- Legislative, Legal, and Media Issues
- Public Appearance Guidelines
- Duties of the Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Policy Development

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development has the responsibility to recommend, and in some cases determine, policy on food, agricultural, and rural development issues.

As gubernatorial appointees subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, the Commissioners are representatives of the Executive branch of government and cooperate and collaborate with the Governor in the development, creation, implementation, and communication of policy. Effective and efficient administration requires a significant degree of interaction, especially in the implementation of Executive Orders and Executive Directives issued by the Governor that apply to the Commission and to the department.

Michigan's multi-billion-dollar food and agriculture industry needs ongoing focus and support for it to continue to grow. To this end, the Commission encourages diverse, equitable, and inclusive partnerships of government, private industry, trade associations, and residents working toward common goals of protecting the public health, growing our economy, and preserving our environmental heritage.

The Commissioners strive to generate statewide interest and mobilize support for issues important to the food and agriculture sector and to promote the future health and growth of Michigan's vast food and agriculture economy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development should assist the Governor in protecting Michigan's health, economy, and environment through policies that:

- Align with State of Michigan statutes, regulations, and Governor-issued Executive Directives and Orders;
- Protect public health, safety, and welfare of the people of the State of Michigan by reporting information about imminent threats;
- Enhance food safety;
- Prevent and mitigate diseases and pests of humans, plants, and animals;
- Promote land and water stewardship, including implementing the Domestic Action Plan for Lake Erie;
- Develop land-use policies allowing for long-term agricultural viability;
- Develop, diversify, and expand agriculture's economic potential including encouraging opportunities for all businesses;
- Protect all consumers and ensure fair business practices in the marketplace;
- Recognize and celebrate the heritage of agriculture, including the events and activities that make Michigan a great place to live, work, and play;
- Promote and foster efforts supporting viable rural communities;
- Promote public awareness of Michigan agriculture, food, and fiber;
- Promote good stewardship of public resources, including reporting of irregularities relating to public money or public property;
- Coordinate and partner on food, agricultural, and rural development interests with government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels; the private sector, academia, and the many diverse and interested organizations to achieve these goals; and
- Participate from time to time as a group in food and agriculture industry tours.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture was created under Act 13 of 1921 (attachment A); and reorganized under Act 380 of 1965, as amended (attachment B); and named in other statutes that provide specific duties and responsibilities. Executive Orders 2009-45 (attachment C), 2009-54 (attachment D), and 2011-2 (attachment E) further explain the role, powers, and duties of the Commission. Executive Order 2011-2 also renamed the Commission into the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development shall consist of five members, not more than three of whom shall be members of the same political party, appointed by the Governor and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The term of the office of each member shall be four years. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring other than by expiration of a term shall be appointed for the unexpired term. Each member of this commission shall hold their office until the appointment and qualification of their successor. The Commission shall elect from its members such officers as it deems advisable, and not later than March 31 of each year the Commission shall designate a Chair to serve in that role through March 31 of the following year, unless a new chair is elected prior to that date. A member may not serve as Chair for consecutive annual periods. Commissioners "shall be knowledgeable about modern agriculture or food supply and committed to the protection, promotion, and preservation of the food, agricultural, conservation, and economic interests of the People of the State of Michigan." (Executive Order 2009-54).

A majority of the Commission members serving is required to constitute a quorum.

The business of the Commission shall be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of 1976 (attachment F); and records of the Commission are subject to the Freedom of Information Act, Act 442 of 1976 (attachment G).

The chief executive officer of the department is the Director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Director is appointed by the Governor and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Director shall consult with the Commission on agricultural policy matters and the Commission may provide advice to the Director on matters relating to the department, including, but not limited to, agricultural policy.

The Commission has specific responsibilities as delegated within various pieces of legislation:

a) Michigan Renaissance Zone Act, 1996 PA 376 (MCL 125.688c and MCL 125.2688e): responsibility to act on Agriculture Processing and Renewable Energy Renaissance Zones.

b) Julian-Stille Value-Added Act, 2000 PA 322 (MCL 285.302): responsibility to act on Value-Added Grants and the Agriculture Development Fund.

c) Insect and Plant Disease Act, 1931 PA 189 (MCL 286.206): responsibility to act on Nursery Inspection Fees.

d) Michigan Right to Farm Act, 1981 PA 93 (MCL 286.473 and MCL 286.474): responsibility to define and review annually the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices; and, make recommendation to the Director when a review of a Livestock Siting Suitability Determination is requested.

e) Michigan Seed Law, 1965 PA 329 (MCL 286.714): responsibility for prohibition of local ordinances unless reviewed by Commission.

f) Anhydrous Ammonia Security Act, 2006 PA 417 (MCL 286.775): responsibility to establish Safety and Security Practices.

g) Michigan Organic Products Act, 2000 PA 316 (MCL 286.915): responsibility to determine Registration Fees.

h) Animal Industry Act, 1988 PA 466 MCL 287.703b): responsibility for determination of Livestock Zoning and Movement Restrictions.

i) Pseudorabies and Swine Brucellosis Control and Eradication Act, 1992 PA 239 (MCL 287.827): responsibility to establish fee for testing of animals.

j) Michigan Agricultural Processing Act, 1998 PA 381 (MCL 289.824 and MCL 289.824): responsibility to define Generally Accepted Practices for Processors.

k) Food Law Act 92 of 2000, as amended (MCL 287.4111):, responsibility to consult on fees if the Local Health Department ceases inspections.

l) State Bean Commission, 1965 PA 114 (MCL 290.553): responsibility to provide permission for Bean Commission to re-apportion districts.

m) Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act, 1965 PA 232 (MCL 290.657): responsibility to provide permission for re-apportionment of 232 Check-Off Programs.

n) Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451 (MCL 324.3120, MCL 324.8201, MCL 324.8322, MCL 324.8328, MCL 324.8501, MCL 324.8517, MCL 324.8703, MCL 324.8705, MCL 324.8707, MCL 324.8708, MCL 324.8710, MCL 324.8713a, MCL 324.9304a, MCL 324.31704, MCL 324.32708a, MCL 324.36111b, MCL 324.36201, MCL 324.40103, MCL 324.40111a, MCL 324.41301, MCL 324.41302, MCL 324.43102, and MCL 324.51301) responsibility to determine agricultural purpose within surface water discharge provisions; approval of conservation easement practices; approval of pesticide container recycling program; provision for reviewing local pesticide use ordinances; approval of Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program conservation practices; provision for reviewing local fertilizer ordinances; development and approval of voluntary groundwater stewardship practices; approval of members to Conservation Species Advisory Panel; ; definition of agriculture purpose for water diversions; water conservation measures and within the Generally Accepted Agriculture and Management Practices; approval of scoring for purchase of Development Rights; monitoring of Agricultural Preservation Fund Board; agriculture practices/Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices within hunting/conservation practices; and orders on restricted species/invasives.

o) Horse Racing Law of 1995, 1995 PA 279: promulgation of rules for premiums at fairs.

PROCEDURES

Officers

Not later than March 31 of each year, the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development shall designate a member of the Commission as the Chair through March 31 of the following year, unless a new Chair is elected prior to that date. A member of the Commission may not be designated as Chair for consecutive annual periods. The Commission may also designate a member to serve as Vice Chair and as Secretary.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, or in the absence of both, the Secretary, shall serve as Acting Chair.

Compensation and Expenses

Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation (Executive Order 2009-54). Members of the Commission may receive reimbursement for necessary travel and expenses consistent with relevant statutes and the rules and procedures of the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, subject to available funding.

Each Commissioner shall submit a signed expense voucher and statement of respective work completed to the Commission Assistant for payment.

Meetings

The Commission shall hold meetings as it deems necessary.

The yearly meeting schedule will be set at the preceding November meeting, but is subject to change with proper notification.

The Commission reserves the right to cancel meetings or hold special meetings at the direction of the Chair and in accordance with the law.

The Commission shall:

1. Ensure at least three Commissioners, a quorum, are present at the posted meeting location;
2. If possible, post the alternate locations or technological attendance options as permitted by law as part of the formal Open Meetings Act notice, allowing the public to attend and participate through public comment;
3. Shall prohibit the use of texting, or other forms of electronic communication among its members during an open meeting that constitute deliberations toward decision-making or actual decisions in a manner violating the Open Meetings Act.

The Director, in consultation with the Chair, shall develop a proposed agenda for each meeting to include action items, staff reports, presentations, and public comment.

All Commission meetings shall be compliant with the Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act and State of Michigan Attorney General Opinion No. 7318 (attachment H).

The statement of purpose and agenda (when possible) shall be included in/with the posted Meeting Notice.

The Commission shall avoid meeting in facilities or areas subject to public access restrictions.

Minutes will be kept of all meetings of the Commission and retained per the Open Meetings Act and the State of Michigan Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Voting

Unless otherwise requested by a Commissioner, voting on matters before the Commission is by voice vote. If any Commissioner requests a roll call vote, the Executive Assistant to the Commission shall record the vote of each Commissioner.

Ethics

The members of the Commission shall adhere to basic principles for ethical conduct as outlined in statutes, rules, and Executive Directives.

A member of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development:

1) Shall discharge the duties of the position in a nonpartisan manner, in good faith, in the best interests of this state, and with the degree of diligence, care, and skill that a fiduciary would exercise under similar circumstances in a like position.
2) Shall not make or participate in making a decision, or in any way attempt to use his or her position as a member of the Commission to influence a decision, on a matter before the department or the Commission regarding a loan, grant, or other expenditure in which the member is directly or indirectly interested.
3) Shall not be interested directly or indirectly in any contract with the department or the Commission that would cause a substantial conflict of interest.
4) Shall not use public resources to make contributions or expenditures.
5) Shall disclose governmental waste, fraud, and abuse to appropriate authorities.
6) Shall not represent a personal opinion as the opinion of the Governor, the Office of the Governor, a state department or agency, or any other governmental entity.
7) Shall not divulge to an unauthorized person, in advance of the time prescribed for its authorized release to the public, confidential information acquired as a result of their performance of governmental duties.
8) Shall report any alleged violation of these standards of ethical conduct to the director.

9) Members of the Commission shall comply, and the Commission shall adopt policies and procedures for members to comply, with the requirements of this paragraph, State of Michigan statutes and regulations, Governor Directives (ED 2019-03) and Orders, and all of the following:

a) 1978 PA 472, MCL 4.411 to 4.430 (Lobbyists, Lobbying Agents, and Lobbying).
b) 1978 PA 566, MCL 15.181 to 15.185 (Incompatible Public Offices).
c) 1968 PA 318, MCL 15.301 to 15.310 (Conflicts of Interest).
d) 1968 PA 317, MCL 15.321 to 15.330 (Contracts of Public Servants with Public Entities).
e) 1973 PA 196, MCL 15.341 to 15.348 (Standards of Conduct for Public Officers and Employees).
f) 1976 PA 169, MCL 15.401 to 15.407 (relating to political activities by public employees).
g) 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.201 to 169.282 (the Michigan Campaign Finance Act).

Policy Manual

The Commission Policy Manual shall be reviewed, revised as necessary, and re-approved on at least a biennial basis.

RESOLUTIONS

The Commission may adopt resolutions to honor or recognize individuals and organizations, or to represent the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development's position on a specific issue, topic or activity, and to convey that information or a request for action.

A. For resolutions meant to represent the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development's position on a specific issue, topic or activity, or to convey a request of action on the part of others, the following procedure should be followed:

- A Commissioner with a resolution request should contact the Chair at least 20 calendar days prior to a regularly scheduled Commission meeting;
- The Director is contacted and appropriate staff, with particular expertise in the subject area, will be assigned to draft the resolution;
- The draft resolution is returned to the Commission Chair and the Commissioner making the original request for review;
- The draft is distributed to all Commissioners in the pre-meeting mailing one week prior to a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.
- If it is deemed necessary to draft a resolution on the day of the Commission meeting, a Commissioner may request that the Commission Chair consider the resolution for placement on the agenda. If the Chair places the resolution request on the agenda, the Commission shall vote to approve the addition of the resolution to the agenda. Once formally placed on the agenda, the full Commission may consider the resolution.

B. To qualify for a Commission Resolution upon employee retirement or other celebratory occasion, each individual or organization must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Retirement after 15 years or more of employment with the state of Michigan and outstanding service as an employee of the department when recommended by division director and approved by the Director.
- Outstanding contribution to an industry serviced by this department when recommended by the Director.
- Any individual or organization so designated by the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- Other special circumstances.

- When possible, the draft resolution is presented for approval at the next Commission meeting. If the resolution is needed prior to that date, it may be approved at the discretion of the Commission Chair and presented for final approval at the next Commission meeting.

When appropriate, departmental retirees not qualifying for a Commission resolution shall receive a letter of commendation from the Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

LEGISLATIVE, LEGAL, and MEDIA ISSUES

Commissioners shall refer all legal, legislative, and media contacts relating to the duties of the Commission to the Director of the department or the Director's designee.

To remain informed on important public policy matters before the Legislature, the Commission asks for regular updates on legislative activities, and for the department to advocate positions on legislation in accordance with Commission policies and those policies established by the Governor.

The Commission shall occasionally be required to meet legislative obligations as included in appropriations boilerplate language.

When legislative urgency requires a response from the department, and there is no applicable policy from the Commission or the Governor, the Commission may call a special meeting pursuant to the Open Meetings Act.

Outside of Commission meetings, individual Commissioners may express their opinions to the Director on legislative issues.

While each Commissioner as a member of the public is free to contact their legislators and voice opinions during the legislative process or to the media, no Commissioner shall speak on behalf of the Commission to the media or on legislative matters unless done in coordination with the Director.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

Public comment and input are important to the development of public policy. As a public body, the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development needs and wants to hear from the public. In the interest of fairness and ensuring there is adequate time for as many voices as possible, the Commission operates under the following guidelines:

1. Public appearances will be scheduled during the Public Comment period of a regular session of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development. If there is a change in this scheduled time, it will be noted on the original agenda distributed in advance of the meeting. Those registering in advance (prior to noon on Friday before the week of the Commission meeting) of the meeting will be notified.

2. If an attendee needs a reasonable accommodation to participate in the Michigan Commission of Agriculture & Rural Development Public Meeting, please contact the commission assistant at MDA-Ag-Commission@michigan.gov in a reasonable timeframe to process accommodation needs.

3. Persons addressing the Commission will be requested to identify their: name, address, and the organization (if any) they are representing. In those instances in which a person is representing an organization, the presenter should indicate whether the presentation represents the official views of the organization.

4. All persons wishing to address the Commission must declare their intent by completing a public comment card prior to or during the public comment portion of the meeting, unless they have already contacted the Assistant to the Commission, and their names appear on the agenda. For virtual meetings, those wishing to speak should note that in the chat function, and for those joining by telephone, the Chair will provide those wishing to speak opportunity to identify themselves and time to speak. For all meetings, the Chair will ask if there is anyone wishing to speak before closing the public comment period.

5. The public comment period(s) (time(s) allotted on agenda of the meeting will last until closed by the Chair or by vote of the Commission.

6. Anyone wishing to address the Commission is limited to a presentation of no more than three (3) minutes. Extensions shall be at the discretion of the Commission Chair or by vote of the Commission. In instances where there are several speakers on the same subject, the Chair is authorized to request the group appoint a representative to address the Commission on the group's behalf or each individual presentation shall be limited to three (3) minutes. If a spokesperson is designated, that individual may be granted 10 minutes.

    a. A group of persons speaking on a common subject are encouraged to choose a spokesperson for their group.

b. The Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development will make every attempt to accommodate all individuals who wish to speak, and may set time frames different from those referenced above in order to encourage and allow maximum public input.

c. Questions asked by Commissioners and/or department staff will not be considered part of the three minutes allotted for public comment.

7. Written comments (if possible) should be provided to the Executive Assistant to the Commission for distribution, either prior to electronically or at the meeting. This will allow the presenter to include detail and background not possible within the allowed time frame scheduled for oral presentation. These written comments will become a part of the formal Commission record and will provide the Commission and staff with a precise, clear reference upon which to base their response to concerns.

   All documents distributed at the meeting will be considered public documents and are subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. It is the responsibility of the presenter to make sure all statements made are accurate and based on fact.

8. The Commission, at its discretion, may or may not hear matters relative to litigation. The Commission will not comment on or question presentations made relative to matters that are in litigation or pending litigation. Contacts on legal matters made to the Commission should be referred to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

9. The public comment time provides the public an opportunity to speak. The Commission will not necessarily respond to the public comment.

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR RELATED TO THE MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE and RURAL DEVELOPMENT

It shall be the responsibility of the Director to provide leadership and administrative oversight in the day-to-day activities of the department and to carry out the tasks as designated under law.

A. The Director shall have authority over all employees, agents, and entities operating under the jurisdiction of the department.

B. The Director shall assist the Commission in policy decisions for the department, the industry, and government, including policy decisions that may require consultation with Michigan's federally recognized Indian tribes, per the department's Tribal Consultation Policy. The Director shall also recommend adjustments in administrative policies both in the development and implementation thereof.

C. The Director shall report to the Commission on a monthly basis or otherwise as the Commission requests, and shall direct appropriate staff to report as needed.

D. The Director shall make recommendations to the Commission on issues that require Commission approval.

E. The Director is the chief budget officer for the department. It is the duty of the Director to secure appropriate funding and human resources to carry out the department's programs and to recommend program adjustments where needed or required.

F. The Director is the chief spokesperson for the department, including legislative matters, and shall be responsible for recommending changes in current law or to recommend new laws that further the goals and commitment of the department.

G. The Director is the appropriate person to respond to Commission issues regarding department operation.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Accurate information, based on scientific and economic research, is essential to development of sound policies. Recognizing its close operational relationships, the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development would work cooperatively with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Michigan Natural Resources Commission as it strives toward promoting quality of life in Michigan; and, would seek input and expertise from other State of Michigan agencies and organizations as appropriate in developing policies to meet the objectives of the Commission and the department to serve the citizens of the State of Michigan. Further, public understanding is necessary to gain support of such policies.

The Commission may adopt policies as either overarching goals for, or as specific direction to the department.

An intensive ongoing communications effort should be developed to generate public awareness and support of policies recommended.

Policies adopted by the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development will be communicated to the Governor, Legislature, stakeholders, and the general public as necessary.

In the Policy development process, the Commission:

1. Recognizes the value of agricultural diversity in Michigan's agriculture sector. This diversity – in crop type, ownership, size of operation, etc. – contributes heavily to Michigan's economic success.

2. Recognizes the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion in Michigan's food and agricultural sector with inclusion of people in all protected classes as defined by the State of Michigan in the decision making process. This diversity of thought and inclusion contributes heavily to Michigan's economic success.

3. Recognizes that social change has led to greater consumer demand for wider food choices and consumer interest in food and agriculture systems and seeks to support new opportunities to meet these demands.

4. Recognizes that access to healthy food is an important issue to be addressed in underserved communities.

5. Recognizes the value of vibrant local food networks which provide greater stability for small farms and contribute to the quality of life for Michigan residents.

6. Recognizes the importance of food and agricultural businesses for the state's economic stability, and the vital role of the department's programs in supporting business activity.

7. Recognizes that good public policy requires a balance of competing interests, social and economic values, science, and the political environment. MDARD will consider all of these variables.

8. Recognizes the value of engagement with a broad array of stakeholders including those who have not traditionally been involved in policy development.

9. Recognizes that public policy decisions need to balance responsiveness with short-and long-term impacts, and considerations of those impacts on all of the people of the State of Michigan.

10. Recognizes the value of an intensive ongoing communication effort to generate public awareness and support of policies, including communication with the Governor and legislature, as necessary.

11. Recognizes the importance of climate and renewable energy to the food and agriculture sector, and to all the people of the State of Michigan.

12. Recognizes the importance of recycling and food waste prevention efforts.

These statements are not intended to be construed as a position on any specific policy issue.

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 1

Policy Title: **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

By policy the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development affirms the department's commitment to lead and serve the citizens of Michigan through the following values:

Integrity	We say what we will do and we do what we say. We shall strive to be role models to ensure that honesty, respect, fairness, impartiality, trustworthiness, and dependability are standards of all employees' personal and professional conduct.
Excellence	We are committed to getting the work done in a way that we are proud of and that our stakeholders are confident in and impressed with. We are committed to the development of our organization's mission, values, goals, and systems to monitor, measure, and sustain quality.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	We are committed to a sustainable department-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion program that fosters an enhanced workforce and brings added value to its mission in serving the people of the State of Michigan. We include all food and agriculture external stakeholders, members of the public, and every employee of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to be represented and contribute to the important decisions that affect their lives.
Teamwork	We focus on what we can do together, sharing information, resources, and energy to achieve our vision for the department and the State of Michigan.
Customer Focus	We provide the highest quality of service to our customers. It is our responsibility to identify customers and their expectations, and to devise ways to address their needs in a timely manner.
Meeting Staff Needs	We are committed to the development of our entire workforce and encourage participation, learning, and creativity to foster individual achievement at all levels of the organization.
Effective Communication	We encourage the exchange of ideas and information throughout the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and with our customers and organizational partners.

Continuous Improvement	We will take responsibility to seek out and advocate new methods for improving our services.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 2

Policy Title: **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**

The Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development is committed to equal opportunity and an inclusive culture in state employment, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce through involvement and empowerment, where inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. The Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development reaffirms the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's policy, which is attached.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The State of Michigan and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will provide equal employment opportunity for all persons regardless of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, height, weight, marital status, partisan considerations, or a disability or genetic information that is unrelated to the person's ability to perform the duties of a particular job or position and will prohibit employment discrimination. Equal opportunities in state contracting and grant and loan programs and prohibiting discrimination in the provision of state services will be ensured.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is committed to a department-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion program that builds upon our values and invests in our employees. We provide an inclusive culture through involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized.

This policy is promulgated consistent with state and federal law, including Governor Executive Directives.

The State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and I, as the department Director, firmly support equal employment opportunity. I will ensure the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is committed to reviewing all aspects of employment, including recruitment, selection, retention, and promotion, to identify and eliminate barriers to providing all persons equal employment opportunity. In hiring, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will ensure equal opportunity by not inquiring about an applicant's salary history.

Dr. Tim Boring, Director

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 3

Policy Title: **DEPARTMENTAL SAFETY**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to foster the safety and occupational well-being of the department's employees during the performance of their official duties. All departmental employees shall work cooperatively to identify unsafe working conditions involving themselves and others. The department shall strive to meet or exceed federal, state, local and industrial safety and health standards.

This policy shall be implemented within the department by utilizing the following:

A. An active safety program shall be developed, implemented and annually reviewed.

B. The Director shall appoint a safety committee, composed of departmental staff, to provide recommendations to the Director regarding safety issues and programs.

C. The Director shall provide ongoing education for employees on safety and the safe use of materials within the workplace.

D. The Director shall designate an individual to serve as Departmental Safety Officer.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 4

Policy Title: **PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURE**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to foster and encourage the expansion and promotion of all agricultural goods and services and improve public awareness of Michigan food and agriculture products and to strengthen the economy of rural Michigan.

We encourage positive public relations and promotional activities to increase sales of Michigan's products in cooperation with the food and agricultural industry, including commodity marketing programs and individual companies. It is important that consumers everywhere recognize the quality of Michigan products.

We encourage continued cooperation with all partners, stakeholders, and private industry. It is important to provide assistance in identifying and developing opportunities in new and existing markets domestically and internationally. We will provide the food and agricultural industry with current information and compliance assistance to support growth of the agri-food industry.

Further, we encourage the expansion of Michigan food and agriculture through business, education, research, legislative changes, and cooperation with other governmental agencies and organizations.

We are committed to and encourage expanding opportunities and fostering entrepreneurship for innovation and new technology within the food and agriculture sector. The Commission directs the department to assist in the coordination, development, and promotion of the bio-economy to improve the environment and economy of the Great Lakes State.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 5

Policy Title: **FOOD SAFETY**
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH
CONSUMER PROTECTION and INDUSTRY SUPPORT

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to help safeguard the health and welfare of all consumers of this state and to protect the food chain by assuring safe, secure, wholesome and accurately labeled food and other consumer products.

In accordance with its statutory duties, the department shall:

- Prevent, control, and eradicate reportable infectious, contagious and communicable diseases of domestic animals; and work with others on the prevention, control, and response to all diseases of animals;
- Prevent, control, and eradicate pests and diseases of plants;
- Prevent and respond to contamination of any portion of the food or feed supply by noxious materials or toxic substances;
- Protect all consumers' health by maintaining a safe and wholesome food supply; and,
- Promote the economic viability of food and agricultural industries in this state through producer security programs; grading, testing, and evaluation certification programs; and industry collaboration programs.

To achieve this, it shall be the mandate of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to:

A. Enforce laws and regulations that: protect the safety and wholesomeness of foods; govern weights and measures and their respective devices and practices; govern the commercial handling, inspecting, and processing of farm produce; and govern product advertising and labeling;

B. Provide regulatory response and resource expertise for support of domestic animal health and welfare programs, food and dairy, and weights and measures regulatory programs, and assist the livestock, food, and dairy industries;

C. Enforce laws and regulations that protect the welfare of the public and the health of the livestock and animal industries of this state and work with the regulated industries and the veterinary profession to promote compliance;

D. Provide, through laboratory services, accurate scientific analyses and technical data necessary to support the consumer protection and regulatory services of the department;

E. Provide all Michigan consumers and agri-businesses the necessary technical assistance to ensure wholesomeness and purity of food, dairy, meat, poultry and consumer products;

F. Conduct investigations and surveys and support research, when necessary, to monitor the state's food chain and recommend changes and modifications to existing standards to protect the food chain;

G. Recommend necessary changes to existing laws and policies to accomplish these mandates;

H. Provide personnel and expertise in the management and control of the food chain and animal and livestock industry during a crisis by providing effective emergency services planning and response within the department and participate in a coordinated statewide emergency preparedness program, to ensure the food chain, animal food supply, and livestock and plant industries are free from undesirable substances, diseases, and pathogens;

I. Seize, control, or quarantine animals and plants, when necessary, to protect the food chain and the animal and plant industries of this state and destroy and dispose of animals and plants in those situations where threat of exposure to the food chain or the environment is imminent;

J. Seize or otherwise control food and food products to protect the health and welfare of all consumers;

K. Seize or otherwise control animal feeds and other products to protect animals, and the health and welfare of all consumers;

L. Work with the dairy, grain, nursery and other industries to facilitate legislatively enacted producer security and inspection programs; and

M. Collaborate with Michigan's fairs, festivals, and other agricultural events to celebrate Michigan's agricultural heritage and promote understanding and support for Michigan's food and agriculture industry.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 6

Policy Title: **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development that the department maintain an ongoing capability to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate impacts of emergencies and disasters affecting the food and agricultural resources of this state.

The department will utilize the principles of the National Incident Management System and will appoint an Emergency Management Coordinator to provide leadership, assistance, and support to employees of the department in meeting their responsibilities to the food and agriculture sector and the general public during times of emergency or disaster. The principal duties of the Emergency Management Coordinator are to:

- Establish and maintain an emergency management program based on departmental duties and structure that is capable of responding to emergencies and disasters affecting Michigan's food and agricultural resources;

- Maintain the Food and Agriculture support plans to the Michigan Emergency Management Act as required by The Emergency Management Act (1976 PA 390); and prepare and train departmental personnel to meet the emergency and disaster responsibilities of the department;

- Represent the department and its stakeholders on the Michigan Citizen-Community Emergency Response Coordinating Council to advance the cause of emergency planning in the food and agriculture sector as required by SARA Title III, (PL 99-499 of 1986) and Executive Order 2007-18 Michigan Citizen-Community Emergency Response Coordinating Council;

- Cooperate and coordinate with federal, state, and local emergency management agencies in providing emergency and disaster services to the affected public;

- Develop relationships with the food and agricultural community that enhance the delivery of emergency and disaster services; and

- Coordinate with other agencies and the private sector to provide human and animal food and water to victims of disasters and emergencies when normal food and feed delivery systems are unable to do so.

It is further the policy of the Commission that all personnel and divisions of the department will fully support the emergency management program whenever the opportunity to do so arises.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 7

Policy Title: **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies to protect soil, air, water, and ecology while promoting profitable working lands: agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, and horticulture. This includes but is not limited to:

- Protection of air quality;
- Surface and ground water pollution prevention strategies;
- Minimizing soil loss and promoting soil health;
- Regulation and education regarding agri-chemical use and storage;
- Responsible manure and fertilizer management;
- Promoting energy conservation, efficiency, generation programs;
- Wildlife habitat expansion and enhancement programs for private landowners;
- Forest stewardship programs improving forest health and sustainability;
- Enhanced drainage for agricultural productivity and public health;
- Enhanced drainage for the prevention of flood damage;
- Supporting irrigation strategies improving productivity and water use efficiency;
- Facilitating Conservation District capacity to deliver environmental programming;
- Supporting state tax policies benefitting working lands in Michigan;
- Adoption of technologies for mitigating and adapting to climate change; and
- Adoption of testing and monitoring procedures for emerging chemicals in fertilizers, soil conditioners, and related products.

Michigan must also continue to strengthen the economic viability of the food, fiber, and agricultural industry, and to help provide profitable economic opportunities for businesses on working lands. Agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, and horticulture operations must have the protection and freedom to expand or change to remain competitive and profitable. Only in this manner can Michigan create a truly sustainable policy for the protection of natural resources on working lands.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 8

Policy Title: **RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM**

Pursuant to the Michigan Right to Farm Act , as amended, (1981 PA 93), the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development has the responsibility to define Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs).

When defining GAAMPs, the Commission will give due consideration to available Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) information and written recommendations from the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU Extension, and MSU AgBioResearch in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Farm Services Agency, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and other professional and industry organizations.

The GAAMPs will be developed, adopted, and revised pursuant to the procedures in the Appendix below. The Commission will define GAAMPs by formal vote. GAAMPs will be reviewed annually and revised by the Commission when necessary.

The Commission recognizes commodity diversity in Michigan's agricultural industry, which produces more than 300 commodities using a multiplicity of varied management procedures and techniques, and will strive to define specific GAAMPs encompassing all sectors of the industry. Given the breadth of the industry, it is the policy of this Commission that GAAMPs include any traditional farming practice that is not detrimental to the environment or human and animal health.

The following list includes categories and examples of farm products as defined under the Michigan Right to Farm Act:

A. Forages, Sod Crops, and Renewable Fuels: forages, grasses, pasture, seed crops, sod crops, and turf.

B. Field Crops: cereal grains, feed grains, feed crops, field crops, seed crops, soybeans, dry beans, potatoes, sugar beets, mint, hops, ginseng, and other herbs.

C. Livestock and Dairy: breeding and grazing livestock, dairy cattle and dairy products, beef cattle, veal, swine, equine, sheep, goats, bison, llama, privately owned cervid, and wool. (Livestock does not include dogs and cats.)

D. Poultry and Ratites: laying chickens and eggs, broiler chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, peafowl, ostriches, emus, rheas, cassowaries, kiwis, and game birds that are propagated and maintained under the husbandry of humans.

E. Fish and Fish Products: aquatic animals such as fish, shrimp and other crustaceans, mollusks, reptiles, and amphibians, aquatic plants, and other aquacultural products reared or cultured under controlled conditions.

F. Bees and Bee Products: colonized bees raised for pollination or to produce honey, and wax.

G. Small Fruit: blueberries, grapes, strawberries, raspberries, and cranberries.

H. Tree and Tree Crops: fruit trees, nut trees, coniferous trees, deciduous trees, saw logs, firewood, pulpwood, and maple syrup.

I. Vegetable Crops: asparagus, carrots, celery, cole crops, cucurbits, lettuce, onions, peppers, snap beans, sweet corn, and tomatoes.

J. Greenhouse and Nursery Products: bedding plants, vegetable and flower seedlings, foliage plants, flowering plants, cut flowers, seeds, tree seedlings, shrubs, ornamental plants, and other nursery stock.

K. Mushrooms: agaricus, shiitake, oyster, morel, and chanterelle.

L. Fur Bearers: mink, fox, rabbits, and chinchilla.

This listing should not be construed to be all encompassing. Other products may be identified and added to the above list at the discretion of the Commission consistent with the Right to Farm Act.

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with EGLE, MDARD staff will be utilized for the investigation and resolution of non-emergency environmental complaints and agrichemical spills. MDARD procedures will be followed for the investigation and resolution of other farm-related complaints. MDARD staff will provide public information and education on the Act, the GAAMPs, and other statutes. MDARD and MSU may conduct informational seminars in cooperation with other agencies and individuals concerning the GAAMPs. MDARD staff may request other public agencies, professional and industry organizations, and individuals to assist on Right to Farm Act issues.

APPENDIX

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, ADOPTION, AND REVIEW OF "GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES"

The Michigan Right to Farm Act, as amended (1981 PA 93, MCL 286.471 et seq.) says in part:

> A farm or farm operation shall not be found to be a public or private nuisance if the farm or farm operation alleged to be a nuisance conforms to generally accepted agricultural and management practices according to policy determined by the Michigan commission of agriculture. Generally accepted agricultural and management practices shall be reviewed annually by the Michigan commission of agriculture and revised as considered necessary. (MCL 286.473(1)).

Annually, the Commission will establish and review policy for the implementation of Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). In addition, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) staff will present to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development (Commission) on the status of all existing GAAMPs and the need, if any, for proposed new GAAMPs. The Commission will direct MDARD staff as to whether significant changes should be examined in any set of GAAMPs or a new set of GAAMPs should be developed.

New and Existing GAAMPs may be developed and/or adopted by the following procedure:

1) Creation of New Material

a) The Commission identifies the need for GAAMPs and takes a vote to proceed with a request to the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or any other resource or topical experts as deemed appropriate to name a Chairperson for a GAAMPs Advisory Committee. MDARD will assist in the formulation and management of the Advisory Committee.

b) The Advisory Committee develops scientifically-based draft GAAMPs pursuant to the Michigan Right to Farm Act. The Advisory Committee may give due consideration to available MDARD experience reviewing existing language in the field and written recommendations from any other educational, professional, and industry organizations.

c) MDARD staff reviews the draft GAAMPs and discusses suggested changes with the GAAMPs Advisory Committee, then submits to the Commission.

d) The Advisory Committee Chairperson presents the new draft GAAMPs to the Commission for review.

e) The Commission considers the draft GAAMPs and may request other methodologies be used to further identify or define the GAAMPs.

f) In addition, the Commission may identify existing scientifically-based materials, including but not limited to, publications from university, research and extension sources, documents from other departments, and/or documents from other state agencies or federal agencies that may be adopted by the Commission as GAAMPs.

g) The Commission votes on whether to adopt the new GAAMPs.

2) Annual Review of Existing GAAMPs

a) MDARD contacts Advisory Committee Chairpersons to begin the annual review process and to determine if and how new technology, research results, or new regulations may impact the current GAAMPs.
b) If the Advisory Committee Chairpersons determine that substantial changes to the GAAMPs are warranted, they contact their committee members to reconvene their respective committees to review current GAAMPs and propose recommended changes.
c) MDARD staff reviews GAAMPs in light of recent Right to Farm program environmental complaints and site selection verification requests for new and/or expansion of existing livestock facilities and provides feedback to the Advisory Committee Chairperson or Committee as part of the review process.
d) The Advisory Committee Chairperson or Committee completes its review and proposed draft GAAMPs are prepared for review.
e) MDARD will conduct a Public Input meeting to receive additional comments on the GAAMPs; input is provided to the Advisory Committee Chairperson for Committee consideration.
f) The Advisory Committee presents revised GAAMPs to the Commission.
g) The Commission reviews existing GAAMPs, with any changes proposed by the Advisory Committee(s), and votes whether to adopt the revisions to the GAAMPs.
h) Updated GAAMPS that are approved by the commission shall be effective January 1 of the following calendar year, unless a different effective date is specifically noted by the commission.

3) The appointment of Advisory Committee Chairperson

a) Through the retirement of existing Chairperson or the Commission acknowledges the need for new sets of GAAMPs.
b) MDARD's Director, or their designee, sends a letter to the Dean of Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources formally requesting the appointment of a new Chair to lead the Advisory Committee.

All sets of GAAMPs may undergo the annual review process simultaneously to streamline and maximize staff efficiency.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 9

Policy Title: **GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES DETERMINATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to determine that a farm/farmer is not following Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices if a Right to Farm complaint case involves air and/or odor issues, and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development staff is refused access to review practices and/or records related to the appropriate Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 10

Policy Title: **APPEALS FROM MDARD'S SITE SUITABILITY DETERMINATIONS**

Under the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities (Site Selection GAAMP), farms may request a site suitability determination from MDARD. MDARD's site suitability determinations are sent to the farmer and the local unit of government, and posted on MDARD's Right to Farm (RTF) website. MDARD's site suitability determination can be appealed to MDARD's Director as provided below.

A. Who can request to appeal MDARD's site suitability determination

The following people or entities can request to appeal MDARD's site suitability determination:

- The owner of the proposed livestock facility.
- A person with property within one-half mile of the site of the proposed livestock facility.
- The local unit of government in which the site for the proposed livestock facility is located.
- A local unit of government that is within one-half mile of the proposed livestock facility.

B. Timing of a request to appeal

A request to appeal must be filed within 30 calendar days from the date MDARD's site suitability determination is posted on MDARD's RTF Siting website.

C. Contents of a request to appeal

A request to appeal MDARD's site suitability determination is made by sending a written description of the appeal including all documentation supporting the appeal to MDARD's Director through the Commission email at: MDA-Ag-Commission@michigan.gov.

The request to appeal must identify with specificity the section or requirement in the Site Selection GAAMPs that the requestor believes MDARD failed to or improperly applied when it made its site suitability determination.

The request for appeal must include relevant facts, data, analysis, and supporting documentation for the appellant's position.

A request to appeal that does not identify with specificity the manner in which MDARD failed to or improperly applied the Site Selection GAAMPs or does not provide supporting documentation will be denied. The Director will notify the Site Selection GAAMPs Chair, as well as the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development of this decision. MDARD will send a letter to the entity who submitted the request to appeal stating the reason the request has been denied. A denial of a request to appeal is a final agency decision on MDARD's site suitability determination.

A request to appeal meeting the requirements of this section will be approved by Right-to-Farm, on behalf of the Director and will proceed through the appeal process outlined below. MDARD shall make all determinations regarding requests to appeal within 14 calendar days after the close of the 30 calendar day appeal window.

D. Appeal process

Once MDARD approves a request to appeal, the following process will be initiated:

1. MDARD will ask the Chairperson of the Site Selection GAAMPs Committee to convene a panel of recognized professionals to review MDARD's site suitability determination. The panel of recognized professionals may include, but are not limited to, personnel from the following: conservation districts, industry representatives, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, professional consultants and contractors, professional engineers, the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service, university agricultural engineers, and other university specialists and shall contain no less than three recognized professionals.
2. Within 28 calendar days, the panel of recognized professionals shall review MDARD's site suitability determination and consider the information provided by the Appellant. The panel of recognized professionals shall create a written report to be considered at the Commission's next scheduled public meeting.
3. The Commission will consider the panel of recognized professionals' reports, oral or written comments from the appellant(s), and other public comments regarding MDARD's site suitability determination.
4. The Commission shall make a recommendation to the MDARD Director. The Commission's recommendation can take one of three forms: (i) approve MDARD's site suitability determination; (ii) reverse MDARD's site suitability determination; or (iii) send the case back to the panel of recognized professionals or MDARD staff with instructions to consider certain factors or issues that were not sufficiently considered during the panel's initial review, including a timeframe for providing the information to the Commission. In the event of a tie vote by the Commission, the matter shall be submitted to the Director without a recommendation from the Commission.

5. The Director shall issue a written final decision regarding the site suitability determination within 14 calendar days of the Commission's recommendation/ submission.
6. Following the Director's final decision, the farmer, appellant, and local unit of government will be sent MDARD's final decision and the final decision will be posted on the MDARD RTF Siting website.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICY NO. 11

Policy Title: **ENFORCEMENT**

It is the policy of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to utilize progressive enforcement when possible, including, but not limited to compliance assistance, warning letters, settlement agreements, probationary periods, issuance of fine, administrative hearings or a combination of these. The department will consider various factors, such as:

- Nature of the violation
- Establishment of compliance history
- Establishment of maintenance and/or self-inspection programs
- Establishment of probationary status
- Economic benefit for the establishment versus harm to the consumer associated with the alleged violation(s)
- Length of time the requirement has been in effect; and
- Other evidence or special circumstances offered by the establishment operator

A maintenance and/or self-inspection program is considered an essential component of good business practices and the implementation of these programs will be considered and weighted accordingly.

The department is committed to the fair and impartial enforcement of laws and regulations.

Serious, repeated, and/or multiple violations of laws and regulations may result in criminal prosecution where provided for in law.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

POLICY NO. 12

Policy Title: **FISCAL CONTROL**

It is the policy of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development that sound fiscal control practices be utilized in the conduct of department activities. All memoranda of understanding or other documents which commit department be compliant with applicable state and federal rules, regulations, and policies.

Adopted September 24, 2025
Eaton Rapids, MI

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