



Right to Farm Biosolids

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Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic materials resulting from the controlled treatment of sewage sludge. Due to this controlled treatment, biosolids can be safely recycled and applied to farm fields for crop production as fertilizers. While regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provides education and technical assistance to farmers, locally elected officials, and other stakeholders on the use of biosolids as fertilizer for crop production.

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

The land application of biosolids at agronomic rates saves Michigan farmers more than \$10 million each year in fertilizer costs. It also reduces municipal sewage treatment waste disposal costs by about \$8 million each year.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 90,239 dry tons of biosolids were applied on farmland, with a fertilizer value of \$15.5 million.
- Assisted with planning the 2023 Biosolids Conference.
- Published two *Amendments* newsletters.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Metric	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Biosolids applied (dry tons)	64,000	68,000	86,000	89,000	90,239
Biosolids application area (estimated acres)	21,300	22,700	32,000	29,700	30,000
Nitrogen used as fertilizer (estimated tons)	2,560	3,750	4,760	4,900	4,950
Phosphorus used as fertilizer (estimated tons P ₂ O ₅)	3,170	2,040	2,590	2,680	2,710
Potassium used as fertilizer (estimated tons K ₂ O)	278	200	250	260	263
Farm value as fertilizer* (N-P ₂ O ₅ -K ₂ O) (approximate millions)	\$6.4	\$7.0	\$15.5	\$14.2	\$12.4
Biosolids Conference Participants	155	165	112	119	146

*The estimated value of nutrients applied had the producer purchased them in the form of synthetic fertilizers.

2024 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Provide education and information to conservation district technicians on the benefits of biosolids. Technicians can then provide education and targeted technical assistance to farmers and local officials in their districts.
- Participate in Michigan Water Environment Association’s (MWEA) biosolids committee meetings, activities, and the biosolids conference subcommittee to plan the 2024 Michigan Biosolids Conference.
- Work with AgroLiquid staff to establish and maintain a biosolids demonstration plot.
- Work with Michigan State University Extension, MWEA, EGLE, and Michigan Farm Bureau to provide education and technical assistance to persons involved in or affected by land application of biosolids.
- Develop new educational materials.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Michigan Water Environment Association
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan State University Extension
- Michigan Townships Association
- Conservation districts
- Local crop producers

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, Part 24 Rules and Part 31, as amended



Right to Farm Complaint Response

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The Right to Farm (RTF) program responds to nuisance complaints involving farms. Program staff evaluate farm activities to determine whether a farm is following the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). GAAMPs are guidelines for good farm management promoting a positive image of Michigan agriculture.

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

Right to Farm Complaint Response assists in resolving nuisance issues related to farming operations. This promotes improved on-farm stewardship practices, improved quality of life for non-farm rural residents, and a strong and stable agricultural industry.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Conducted 246 complaint response investigations and received 178 new complaints.
- Overhauled the RTF website for better organization and focus on resources for producers and complainants.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Metric	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New complaints received	193	136	163	156	178
Initial inspections conducted within 7 business days	86%	81%	84%	85%	82%
On-farm investigations	227	250	213	200	246
Complaint cases closed	173	127	159	142	169

2024 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Initial inspection conducted to over 85 percent within seven business days.
- Continue to develop resources for producers to meet conformance with the GAAMPs.
- Work with all stakeholders to understand the Right to Farm Act.
- Work with Michigan farmers to promote the implementation of GAAMPs.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Michigan farmers
- Non-farm rural residents
- Local governments
- Commodity organizations
- State and federal conservation and environmental agencies

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Michigan Right to Farm Act, Public Act 93 of 1981, as amended



Right to Farm GAAMPs Revision

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The Michigan Right to Farm Act provides broad definitions of a farm, its operations, and products as well as a process for the development and adoption of Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). GAAMPs are developed by technical advisory review committees and presented to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development for approval. The GAAMPs cover the following:

- Care of Farm Animals
- Cranberry Production
- Irrigation Water Use
- Farm Markets
- Manure Management and Utilization
- Nutrient Utilization
- Pesticide Utilization and Pest Control
- Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

GAAMPs define socially and environmentally responsible farming practices used as the basis for conformance under the Right to Farm Act. Conformance with GAAMPs can be used as an affirmative defense against nuisance litigation. The number of task force meetings on each set of GAAMPs provides an indicator of the frequency of use as well as updates needed.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

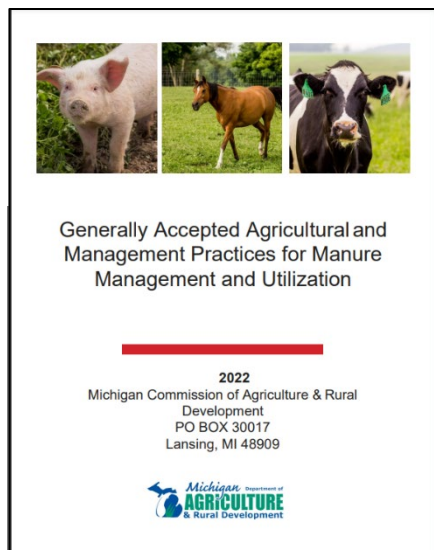
- Initiated annual reviews of all eight GAAMPs.
- Revised GAAMPs documents, including formatting enhancements.
- A public input meeting was conducted on August 25, 2023, to receive feedback and input on all draft GAAMPs.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Review Meetings Held	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Manure Management and Utilization	2	2	3	2	2	1
Pesticide Use and Pest Control	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nutrient Utilization	0	0	0	1	0	0
Care of Farm Animals	1	1	1	1	2	2
Cranberry Production	0	0	0	0	0	0
Livestock Site Selection	4	2	8	5	2	8
Irrigation Water Use	1	2	0	1	0	0
Farm Markets	0	1	3	1	1	1

2024 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Increase consistency between GAAMPs documents.
- Identify ambiguous language across GAAMPs.
- Continue to improve facilitation of the review process by offering additional trainings, information, and technical support to the review committees.
- Develop a Greenhouse GAAMP.
- Update the Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities GAAMP.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Michigan farmers and commodity organizations
- State and locally elected officials
- Michigan State University and AgBioResearch
- State and federal conservation and environmental agencies

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Michigan Right to Farm Act, Public Act 93 of 1981, as amended



Right to Farm Proactive Review

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The Right to Farm Program can assist farms of all sizes by reviewing the farm operation’s conformance with Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). The most intensive portion of this activity is in the siting of livestock facilities. This service is designed to help farmers properly plan, site, build, and maintain new and expanding livestock facilities. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development works with the farm to evaluate all applicable management practices and facility designs, as well as the proximity to non-farm neighbors and existing land use considerations.

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

On-farm production agriculture is the foundation of Michigan’s \$104.7 billion food and agriculture industry, with livestock facilities generating more than \$8.2 billion in annual cash receipts. Yet, there are increasing social and environmental concerns regarding agricultural production in Michigan, especially animal agriculture. Right to Farm proactive reviews allow the industry sector to grow in a responsible way that minimizes nuisance to non-farm neighbors.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Processed 118 total applications, including 15 for livestock production facilities.
- Responded to 103 applications from small/non-livestock operations, a new program record high.
- Proactive reviews approved in 2023 will annually generate:
 - \$48.7 million in economic activity
 - \$8.8 million in earnings for farm households
 - 549 ongoing full-time jobs
 - \$2.4 million in additional tax revenues

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Metric	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New Site Selection Requests	15	6	8	12	4	15
New facilities	7	2	3	8	1	5
Expanding facilities	8	4	5	4	3	10
Siting Appeals Received	2	0	0	0	0	1
Siting Determinations Upheld on Appeal	2	0	0	0	0	1
Final Approvals by Species						
Dairy	4	2	0	0	1	1
Swine	6	7	1	6	2	1
Poultry	3	5	3	6	1	3
Beef	2	0	0	0	2	1
Other	0	0	0	0	2	1
Small/Non-Livestock Reviews	49	52	50	57	76	103

2024 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Complete initial reviews for all new small farm proactive requests within 20 business days.
- Develop helpful management plan templates for small/non-livestock proactive reviews.
- Implement a process for review and adoption of innovative odor control technologies for new and expanding livestock production facilities.
- Increase education, outreach, and guidance to the agricultural industry on GAAMPs, including those for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities.
- Continue to develop resources to assist technicians, consultants, and landowners submit conformance review applications.
- Establish a Greenhouse GAAMP.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Michigan farmers
- Non-farm rural residents
- Local governments
- Commodity organizations

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Michigan Right to Farm Act, Public Act 93 of 1981, as amended