

# Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting Minutes

October 1999

Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting Minutes  
611 West Ottawa Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dean Pridgeon Conference Room  
Lansing, Michigan

October 13, 1999

## PRESENT:

James Maitland, Vice-Chair, Commission of Agriculture  
Jordan Tatter, Secretary, Commission of Agriculture  
Douglas Darling, Commission of Agriculture  
Dan Wyant, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture

## Absent:

Deanna Stamp, Chair, Commission of Agriculture

## OTHERS PRESENT: (all of part of the meeting)

Michigan Department of Agriculture Staff  
Ron Zellar, Attorney General's Office  
Ernie Birchmeier, Michigan Farm Bureau  
William Bishop, Michigan Drain Code Coalition  
Bob Boehm, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Monte Bordner, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Jim Byrum, Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Tom Frazier, U.S. Senator Spencer Abraham's Office  
Mary Hauk, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Susan Julian, Michigan Drain Code Coalition  
Bill Lukens, Capital City Associates, Inc.  
Ron Nelson, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Dean Peterson, Michigan Farmer  
Jennifer Schug, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Herb Smith, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Bridgette Voisnet, Michigan Cattlemen's Association  
Dr. Richard Ward, Michigan State University  
Wayne Wood, Michigan Farm Bureau

## CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Maitland called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on October 13, 1999. Secretary Tatter called the roll with Director Wyant and all Commissioners, except Commissioner Stamp, present.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER SKOGMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 13, 1999, AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 22, 1999, COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED.**

**AMEND: COMMISSIONER DARLING ASKED THAT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> PARAGRAPH ON PAGE 5 BE AMENDED TO READ, "COMMISSIONER DARLING PUBLICLY THANKED DICK VERSHUM'S FARM IN MILAN FOR PROVIDING PARKING FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION TOUR."**

**THE ORIGINAL MOTION AND AMENDMENT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**The next meeting of the Commission of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 1999, in the Michigan Department of Agriculture, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dean Pridgeon Conference Room, 611 West Ottawa Street, Lansing, Michigan.**

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

**Commissioner Douglas Darling reported that harvest is going well with good yields. Both of their test plots were harvested, generating about 71 bushels per acre for soybeans and 204 bushels per acre thus far for corn. He attended the Oakland County Farm Bureau annual meeting last month where discussions were held about the agriculture economy, Right To Farm, land use, and use assessment.**

**Commissioner Shirley Skogman reported that harvest is going well, even though the weather has been quite cold. There has been some frost damage to surface potatoes. She said that the yields are normal, but she heard that Wisconsin is harvesting 650 bushels per acre. She added that the deer are harvesting just as many potatoes as they are. Commissioner Skogman apologized for missing last month's meeting, but said it was important that she help with the harvest. She enjoyed the Commission's visit to the Michigan State Fair in August, and expressed her appreciation to Kendra Anderson and Tim Flint for transporting her to and from the airport.**

**Commissioner Skogman feels that the deer feeding ban will not help anybody. She said that in the Upper Peninsula, there is just as much deer feed in the stores and gas stations as ever. There has been talk by some local farm bureaus of asking the Michigan Farm Bureau file suit against the DNR. She said another concern is the issue of farmers hauling produce from the fields to the warehouse and not being allowed to use off-road diesel fuel in their trucks.**

**Commissioner Jordan Tatter reported that Southwest Michigan has yet to have a widespread killing frost. Late season vegetable fields are being harvested right down to the last crate. A vintage grape harvest has been completed for the second year in a row and the apple crop is picking out above all estimates. The availability of apple containers is now a limiting factor to daily harvest efforts, while harvest labor seems to be in good supply.**

**He reported that the Transportation Funding Study Committee has met four times since the Commission's last meeting. He said it is in the final stages of report design and is beginning deliberations that will result in the committee's recommendations to the Legislature by year-end. Commissioner Tatter gave an interview on his agriculture views to Dean Peterson of *The Michigan Farmer*.**

**Commissioner Tatter spent the first five days of October in Boston attending meetings of the National Frozen Foods Convention and the Past Chairman's Council of the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses and the World Food Logistics Organization. Commissioner Tatter chairs the council. The two organizations have members from 46 countries.**

**He reported that on October 11, 1999, he and Director Wyant visited a hog production operation and participated in a press conference in Berrien County. The event was hosted by Dargus Farms and was sponsored by the Southwest Michigan Pork Producers, the Michigan Pork Producers Association, and the Michigan Farm Bureau. The event provided Congressman Fred Upton an "on-the-farm" appreciation for the pork producers' economic situation. Later in the day, Commissioner Tatter and Director Wyant**

toured a newly formed, grower-owned cooperative turkey processing plant in Wyoming, Michigan.

Commissioner James Maitland reported that harvest in Northern Michigan is similar to Southern Michigan. He said there is a shortage of boxes and labor. Commissioner Maitland represented the Commission and MDA at the dedication of the W. J. Beal Plantation in Grayling, Michigan. In 1888, Professor William J. Beal planted 41 species of trees to determine and demonstrate how well various trees and shrubs could be established and grown on dry, sandy soils. The experiment resulted in the oldest documented tree plantation in the Midwest and possibly in North America. Commissioner Maitland accepted a plaque in appreciation of MDA's support of the project and presented it to the Commission.

#### LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Brad Deacon, Legislative Liaison

Brad Deacon, Legislative Liaison, distributed and reviewed the October 1999 Legislative Report. He distributed copies of Senate Bill 205, a bill to amend the 1981, PA 93 "Michigan Right to Farm Act." This bill is a key component of Senator McManus' task force report calling for preempting local ordinances. The bill as amended states that a local unit of government shall not enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance, regulation, or resolution that contradicts or conflicts with the Right to Farm Act or the GAAMPs developed under the Act. It also states that a local unit of government shall not enforce an enacted ordinance until approved by the Commission of Agriculture. If the Commission denies an ordinance, a detailed explanation of the denial must be given within 60 days.

Director Wyant distributed copies of an article written by Hugh McDiarmid of the Detroit Free Press, entitled "*Legislature's timing stinks on farm bill.*" Director Wyant believes that this reflects the rhetoric that will be used in future discussions. Some feel that it opens the door to "corporate farming" in Michigan.

Director Wyant believes that those who oppose the bill are those who have already voiced their concerns to Commission. Those concerns are based on a sincere belief that corporate agriculture is destroying small- and medium-sized family farms and one of the vehicles being used to address the corporate farm issue is zoning. Director Wyant said that corporate farming is not found in Michigan, and he does not believe that it is coming to Michigan for many reasons. He believes that if agriculture continues to be regulated as is currently being done or proposed, it will not be an issue of whether or not there is "corporate" farming in Michigan, but rather whether there is any farming in Michigan at all.

Commissioner Darling said he believes that farmers have to go this route for survival and for economic reasons. He also added that Michigan's land is so fragmented, compared to other parts of the country, that it is difficult to put together 400 acres that are contiguous.

Commissioner Maitland said that he believes there needs to be a written definition of a "corporate" farm.

Director Wyant said the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service and the National Census of Agriculture surveys show that well over 90 percent of farms are private, family-owned operations.

Commissioner Tatter agreed with Commissioner Maitland's suggestion about definitions. He believes that it is important in comments made by the Director and others that the proper definitions be used. He questioned whether the Commission or MDA should make the definition and lead the discussion. The term "factory farm," has a negative connotation in the minds of most readers and listeners.

Director Wyant agreed. He will be meeting with the editorial boards of the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News to talk about today's agriculture and its future. He also will be addressing the House Committee on Agriculture. These meetings would be good opportunities to address the issue.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dan Wyant

World Trade Organization: Director Wyant distributed copies and gave a visual presentation on "*The Next WTO Round: Opportunity for Boosting U.S. Agricultural Exports.*" Commissioner Darling, Ken Nye

of the Michigan Farm Bureau, and Dale Sherwin of MDA will be attending a meeting in Seattle, Washington, to discuss the issue. Director Wyant asked that the Commission review the information presented and provide comments. He will also provide copies of comments made to the USDA U.S. Trade Representative Listening Session that was held in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Captive Deer Policy Workgroup:** The purpose of the workgroup is to define the regulations and to determine what is necessary to support a captive deer industry in this state. The workgroup, facilitated by Michigan State University, will have all interested parties at the table. The goal is to present recommendations at the joint Michigan Commission of Agriculture/Natural Resources Commission meeting in March. Director Wyant would like to bring in members of the workgroup prior to the March meeting to receive background on the issue. The Commission will be asked to make specific policy decisions.

**Laboratory Services:** MDA and MSU are working together to explore potential future collaboration on their labs to be more efficient and to eliminate duplication. MDA has regulatory responsibilities in both plant and animal agriculture, and MSU has diagnostic responsibilities.

**Select Michigan:** This is a brand new campaign designed to promote Michigan agricultural products. A press conference will be held October 25 in Grand Rapids. Staff will provide more information on the program later today.

**Gaming Addiction Fund:** MDA has been working with former state representative Jim McNutt on issues relating to the Gaming Addiction Fund. State law requires MDA to provide a certain percentage of horse race revenue to the Fund. MDA believes that the amount is disproportionate to the horse racing industry as compared to what the contribution was from the gaming and lottery industry. There is legislative support to amend the Act to a more appropriate level.

**Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs):** Russ Harding, director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and Director Wyant continue to work aggressively with the EPA to assure the appropriate regulation of CAFOs.

**Food Writers' Workshop:** A Food Writers' Workshop was held, in partnership with MSU, to discuss the scientific bases for food safety. The workshop offered an opportunity to discuss food safety issues and the changes to the Uniform Food Law.

Commissioner Tatter believes it is important for MDA and MSU to continue to provide information to food writers on the importance of safe food handling by the consumer.

Director Wyant agreed and said that the workshop did focus on that issue. The Food Safety Alliance meets on a quarterly basis and it has been a priority of the Alliance to gather that kind of information. It is important to recognize that three dollars out of each license will be used by MDA for consumer education

**National Association of State Departments of Agriculture:** Director Wyant attended the annual NASDA meeting where the focus was the agriculture economy and Washington's relief package with respect to both drought and economics. The issue of genetically modified organisms and the future of this technology was also discussed. Director Wyant is chairing the NASDA committee on food safety.

**Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA):** Director Wyant has been meeting with Dr. Bill Taylor, Acting Dean of the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, to discuss FQPA and MDA linkages with MSU and others. There will be a meeting next week with industry to talk about FQPA and appropriate rules for those involved.

**Bovine Tuberculosis:** Dr. Debbi Donch provided an update on the bovine tuberculosis situation in Michigan. She said that 1,068 herds have been tested and the testing is almost completed in the entire quarantined area (I-75 east and north of M-55). There are a few herds left that MDA is working with on a one-on-basis. The goal is to have those herds tested or scheduled to be tested by the end of October.

**Commissioner Tatter asked about the status of testing captive cervid herds.**

**Dr. Donch said that within the five-county area there are 34 cervid herds. Nine will undergo a slaughter surveillance plan; four of the nine have completed their initial slaughter surveillance, three are newly formed and will be undergoing a long-term surveillance, and the two remaining will begin their plans with this fall's harvest out of their facilities. The other 25 herds are undergoing single cervical testing as part of their surveillance plan and 19 of those have been completed. There are 38 captive cervid herds in the rest of the area between those five counties and I-75/M55. Nine of those have completed their tests, and MDA is working with the others to set up their testing.**

**Commissioner Tatter asked for an explanation on how one captive cervid herd can be infected at such a high rate, yet there is total absence of infection elsewhere.**

**Dr. Donch explained that this was a very large facility that, when initiated, became a fenced-in area. All efforts were made to clear out the wild deer as much as possible. MDA is working with DNR to look at the operation. The probability is that the cause is wild infected deer that remained in a closed environment.**

**Commissioner Tatter asked how other herds were populated and, if cervids were brought in from other states, were they tested?**

**Dr. Donch responded that the TB program for cervidae was developed in the early 1990s. The captive cervidae industry in Michigan is one of the leaders and one of the most stringent industries in mandating TB testing. The industry has very restrictive captive cervidae import regulations, and the state also has intrastate movement requirements.**

**Commissioner Darling asked if any of the three beef herds that were depopulated have repopulated their operations.**

**Dr. Donch said that Dr. Graham is working closely with one of the operations to get the premises cleaned and disinfected.**

**Director Wyant said that they have not, but are still in the discussion process.**

**Commissioner Maitland said he believes that it is not too early to start thinking about the Year 2000 as it relates to the baiting and supplemental feeding policy. He would like to see a DNR calendar set up to show when hearings will be held, when action would be required, etc. He also would like to see a schedule for the workgroup meetings.**

#### **UPDATE ON 1999 FAIR SEASON: Barbara Hensinger, Director of the Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division**

**Barbara Hensinger, Director of the Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division, said that although final records on total fair attendance will not be available until January 2000, preliminary indications show that overall fair attendance in Michigan was up from 1998.**

**She said that the Upper Peninsula State Fair had a 17 percent increase in gate attendance. The Michigan State Fair attendance is projected to be approximately 5 percent over last year, with paid attendance at 385,000. Preliminary figures indicate that the State Fair may actually make money this year and stay within its appropriation.**

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**Director Wyant introduced Wayne Wood, chair of the Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Subcommittee on State Affairs, as well as the other members of the Committee.**

**Mr. Wood said that the committee is meeting today with MDA as part of the initial policy development process.**

Mr. Wood asked about the McManus report and the request to have MDA increase its value-added activities. He said that if there is an appropriation for grant eligible funds for value-added processing, it is the desire of many producers that it be located in MDA.

Director Wyant said there is a spectrum of value-added activities that MDA does want to be involved in, such as Select Michigan, export promotion, etc. MDA would appreciate the opportunity to have the resources available to assist with feasibility studies. However, he does not believe that the department is ready to get involved in guaranteed loan programs and direct financing programs. He would like to be in a position to provide technical and consultation services for these services.

Commissioner Tatter added that there is no current legislative directive or legislative funds assigned to MDA for this purpose.

Director Wyant said that in some instances MDA would like to have the resources to directly assist specific programs. There are agencies and tools available within state government to provide assistance. MDA is not looking to take over those programs, but to work cooperatively with them. MSU and Project GREEN, Michigan Farm Bureau, are all available resources. The partnership could be strengthened and expanded with more delineated roles. All have a role to play in providing support to get projects up and running.

Dr. Larry Granger of the Office of Agriculture Development said it also is a question of access for the producers. Producers need access to technology and markets when they start talking about making investments in value-added projects.

**UPDATE ON MEAT INSPECTION PROGRAM: Dr. John Tilden of the Food and Dairy Division, and Dr. Larry Granger of the Office of Agriculture Development**

Dr. John Tilden of the Food and Dairy Division and Dr. Larry Granger of the Office of Agriculture Development provided a presentation on "*Michigan Meat Inspection Issues.*"

Dr. Tilden said that until the early '80s, Michigan had a meat inspection program. Federal regulations stated that if a state terminated its program, the federal government would assume responsibility. The Legislature decided to use the money from the state's meat inspection program in other areas and let the federal government assume responsibility.

Dr. Tilden said there are two approaches to meat inspection in the United States today. The USDA approach is mandated by law and governs amenable species. Non-amenable species are regulated by the US-FDA.

- USDA Food Inspection Service (*Amenable Species*)

Cattle, Swine, Sheep, Goats, Horses, Domestic Poultry

- US-FDA (*Non-Amenable Species*)

Cervids, Ratittes, Migratory Water Fowl, Game Birds and Squab; Water Buffalo and Bison, Rabbits

- Amenable Species (USDA)

Meat and meat products must come from federally inspected plants or plants operating under a State-Federal Cooperative Inspection Programs.

- Non-Amenable Species (FDA)

Periodic inspections; Federal Good Manufacturing Practices; 1999 Food Code allows several inspection options for retail sales.

Dr. Tilden distributed a list of "*FSIS Required Elements for Authorized State Meat Inspection Programs.*" He said that Michigan is moving toward adoption of the 1999 Food Code. The code would allow a variety of inspection options to allow non-amenable species to get to retail markets. Amenable

species fall under the USDA regulations.

He said that MDA has talked with other states about their meat inspection programs. It was learned that the resources needed for a state meat inspection program would include directors/managers; secretaries; supervisors, compliance officers, laboratory technicians, veterinarians, field inspectors, and assistants. The National Academy of Sciences, when evaluating how meat inspections are done in the U.S., questioned the cost-effectiveness of the current requirements.

In Michigan, there are approximately 220 USDA inspected facilities. About one-half are very small (less than 10 employees); 100 are small (more than 10 less than 500), and the remainder are egg processing facilities and large meat processing facilities. These facilities are routinely inspected. Slaughter facilities have USDA inspectors on-site during all hours of operation. Processing facilities have USDA inspectors on site at some time during the day. Under the periodically inspected category, there are 180 custom exempt facilities, and these facilities do not offer meat products for sale.

In Michigan there are 19 small volume poultry and rabbit slaughterers that are inspected by MDA. MDA also inspect 100 miscellaneous meat processors (venison, poultry, rabbit, and meat lockers).

Dr. Tilden explained that there are many food safety concerns that are dictating new practices. There are new standards that move beyond the visibly clean and free of defects to microbiologically safe. Industry, consumers and regulators have agreed upon the HACCP format. HACCP has increased demands on food industry managers, increased flexibility for food industry; and decreased regulatory resources. Emerging pathogens is another issue. Infrequent outbreaks of severe illnesses (*Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome*); low level and sporadic contamination; high potential for consumer fear and outrage; and past outbreaks have closed businesses and ended careers.

Another current issue is the small volume processor. The question becomes, if the bar is being raised, how do we help people get over the bar and how do we make it so more have an opportunity to compete for those value-added dollars? When it comes to the meat inspection system itself, the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service sets the standards. They set the facility and equipment standards, the training requirements, and they mandate the regulatory system.

He said that economics can be a factor. Small volume producers may often be more dependent on human labor. It is difficult to keep quality people on board to consistently meet the higher standards. In the maturing meat industry, these producers are competing against others who have increased efficiency and who can ride out the periods of decreased profit margins. The question becomes how to help people to meet established standards.

Dr. Larry Granger added that one barrier is that farmers who are engaged in raising livestock that are amenable species cannot access a retail market for that product without going through a USDA inspection process. If Michigan had a state-based meat inspection program that is the same as the USDA at the present time, that would not open interstate markets. Plants that are state-inspected can currently only sell their products within that state. Also, the cost of the program is substantial. There are a number of different ways a state can become involved in meat inspection as a partner with USDA through a state-federal cooperative program. States do have to bear at least 50 percent of the total cost for a program of this kind. Then the question becomes, if you have a state-based meat inspection program, is there enough economic benefit to the industry overall.

Dr. Tilden said that after talking with other individuals from other states who have a state-based meat inspection program the following advantages and disadvantages were identified:

**Advantages:**

- Better utilization of available resources
- Strengthen non-amenable meat inspection
- Improved access to consultative services
- Stimulate economic development

--Encourage local processing plants

--Cooperative effort

**Disadvantages:**

- Interstate movement restrictions
- Stringent USDA oversight
- Resource intensive
- States must contribute 50% of funding
- Availability of state funds
- Microbiological standards

Monte Bordner asked if Dr. Tilden had personally visited these smaller slaughter sites.

Dr. Tilden said he did not go on-site, but a year ago Director Wyant brought together industry and university to survey the needs of the small processor. He said he also talked with 10 to 15 processors by telephone at the recommendation of the Michigan Meat Association.

Mr. Bordner said that in the last 30 days he talked with two processors, one in Michigan and one in Indiana. Both are afraid of what increased documentation requirements would cost in man-hours to document. He believes the reason MDA does not hear from these plants is the intimidating presence of USDA inspectors. He also believes that it is evident that in the meat industry in this country today, inspection has been the driving force in sending 80 percent of the slaughter capacity to the big processors.

Director Wyant agreed with Mr. Bordner. He added that he is currently concerned that the regulatory scheme may be one thing that is driving the small- and medium-sized producer out of business. It is reinforced in this issue and in other issues that will be discussed today. There are many challenges facing the small producer because of integration and the corporate farming industry. He said it is a "Catch-22" for agriculture because the larger operations are in a better position to comply. The challenge becomes how to keep small meat processors and small producers in niche markets so they survive.

Commissioner Maitland asked that the department continue to review this issue and keep the Commission informed.

**INITIAL SUBMISSION OF THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION: Wayne Whitman, Environmental Stewardship Division**

Wayne Whitman of the Environmental Stewardship Division presented the draft "Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Manure Management and Utilization." This initial submission is for the Commission to consider release of the document for public comment. A public meeting has been scheduled for October 22, 1999, to receive public comment and all comments will be shared with the chair, Dr. Maynard Hogberg, for review. Dr. Hogberg will be scheduled to review the revised GAAMPs at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Darling recommended that all acronyms be spelled out.

Commissioner Tatter asked how the public meeting has been publicized.

Mr. Charney responded that a news release has been mailed to over 300 daily, weekly and special interest media organizations. Copies were also mailed to farm and environmental news organizations. Copies were also sent to the parties who have appeared before the Commission in the past expressing an interest in the issue.



**MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO RECEIVE THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION AND MAKE IT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Tatter asked that the committee consider including waste silage land disposal, and waste from woody materials, and perhaps even changing the title of the manure management GAAMP to "organic materials."

Commissioner Darling said that he believes the issues raised by Commissioner Tatter are covered in the document.

Mr. Whitman said that he did review with the task force the question of silage leachate and other materials and on page 5 of the document, a new GAAMP provision has been added.

Commissioner Tatter asked where forest product waste materials would fit into the GAAMP.

Mr. Whitman responded those materials are covered under composting. He added that nutrient sources are covered in the nutrient GAAMPs. There is a listing of the organic materials and descriptions in the nutrient management GAAMP.

**INITIAL SUBMISSION OF THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR PESTICIDES: Wayne Whitman, Environmental Stewardship Division**

Wayne Whitman of the Environmental Stewardship Division presented the draft of the "Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Pesticides." This initial submission is for the Commission to approve release of the document to the public for comment. A public meeting has been scheduled for October 22, 1999, to receive comment. The public comments will be given to the task force chair and the final draft will be presented to the Commission at the November meeting.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED TO RECEIVE THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR PESTICIDES AND MAKE IT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**REPORT ON PUBLIC MEETING OF THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR NUTRIENT UTILIZATION: Dave Charney, Commission Liaison**

Dave Charney, Commission Liaison, reported that a public meeting was held on October 8, 1999, to receive comment on the proposed Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Nutrient Utilization.

Mr. Charney recommends that the Commission postpone further action on this GAAMP until the November 10 Commission meeting in order to give the task force the opportunity to consider the verbal and written comments provided. Copies of the minutes from the October 8, 1999, public meeting, as well as written correspondence from the Michigan Land Use Institute, USDA Natural Resources Conservation, Mr. Phil Forner, and a voice mail message received from Mr. Robert Hoard were distributed to the Commission and have been provided to the task force chair.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED TO SEND THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR NUTRIENT UTILIZATION AND COMMENTS RECEIVED TO THE TASK FORCE ON NUTRIENT UTILIZATION FOR FURTHER REVIEW. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Patty Cantrell of the Michigan Land Use Institute said that Senate Bill 205 would take away the ability of townships and counties to work within their planning and zoning authorities to have local control over an industrial agricultural facility.

Commissioner Tatter asked if Ms. Cantrell would define an "industrial agricultural facility."

Ms. Cantrell responded that, although it is hard to define, she thinks it is comparable to when EPA looks at a confined operation of 1,000 animal units or more.

Commissioner Tatter asked if that was a satisfactory definition for her. He also asked what was meant in her written comments of "industrial strength odors," and "new breed."

Ms. Cantrell said that there is a shift in the scale of livestock production and more and more operations are going from a few hundred units to thousands. She believes that when talking about that number, there are greater amounts of manure, which is unprecedented for the typical family farm.

Commissioner Tatter asked how Ms. Cantrell would define a "typical family farm." He said that he believes it is important to agree on definitions so everyone knows what is being discussed.

Ms. Cantrell responded that it is a hard question to answer. She said many independents are trying to stay in business and even though they haven't gone into contract with a corporation yet, they are trying to add numbers to the herd size in order to stay in the market.

Commissioner Maitland agreed that it would be helpful if everyone had the same definitions.

Commissioner Darling also agreed and said there is a difference between public perception and economic perception.

Ms. Cantrell said the original intent of the Right To Farm law in Michigan was to ensure that farmers were not put out of business because of normal odors. She said it is a good principle and one that needs to continue; however, as environmental risks become higher, because of larger amounts of manure, it is important that even though there may be a higher technical capacity, operations still have problems with valves not being shut off, oversight, etc. She said that is why the GAAMPs need to recognize whether or not operations are meeting objective standards and to allow for verifiable inspections. She said that the manure management and nutrient management GAAMPs are the first ones her organization is reviewing. She said that the GAAMPs need to be actual standards, not just policy statements that the MDA and DEQ use. They need to contain measurable, objective criteria, and records need to be checked and available to ensure that standards are being met.

Ms. Cantrell also referred to the heightened bars of regulatory compliance in meat inspection. She believes that with a state inspection system, operators would not have to get so large to survive. She said that is the direction she would like to see for Michigan. She said that operations that don't have to get so large to be viable may not have as much of a burden on the manure side. Ms. Cantrell said she also is a member of the committee for the voluntary Environmental Assurance Program.

Director Wyant said he appreciates the dialogue with Ms. Cantrell and others. He said discussions are necessary to reach a mutual understanding. He added that the problem is the varying and multiple standards from community to community and what is needed is a consistent uniform standard statewide.

Ms. Cantrell said that counties and/or townships are reacting more on a case-by-case basis. She believes that there are industrial ag zones where these large facilities may be more appropriately located.

Commissioner Darling said that more and more people are moving from urban areas to rural areas. He said that this has caused an additional opportunity for exposure. He also referred to the written comments submitted by Ms. Cantrell that made the statement that until now the public has never had the chance to review or comment on GAAMPs. He said that the GAAMPs have been and continue to be reviewed on an annual basis by the Commission at public meetings, according to state law.

**DISCUSSION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs): Dr. Richard Ward, Michigan State University, Crop and Soil Science; Robert Boehm of Michigan Farm Bureau; Jim Byrum of the Michigan**

Agri-Business Association, and Ken Rauscher of the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division

Kenneth Rauscher, division director of the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division, said today's presentation is in response to the Commission's request for more information about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Chemical and seed companies have heavily invested in technology and it widely accepted by farmers nationwide. In the past six months there have been concerns from the European community and are reluctant to accept some of these commodities because of health concerns. Mr. Rauscher introduced the panel of presentors: Jim Byrum of the Michigan Agri-Business Association, Robert Boehm of the Michigan Farm Bureau, and Dr. Richard Ward of Michigan State University.

Dr. Ward said that he believes there are two issues that consumers are concerned about: food safety and altering Mother Nature. He believes that information being circulated is somewhat misleading. It would be difficult to identify an organism that has not been modified genetically from its parentage, either through natural regeneration processes or through selective plant or animal breeding. People cannot readily distinguish when a regulated GMO stops and when a new variety begins. He also said that consumers do not see any direct benefit of GMOs to them personally.

Mr. Byrum introduced Dr. Jake Secor, former research scientist and current legislative liaison with Dow Agri Sciences, and Bill Lukens of Capital Associates, representing Monsanto Company.

Mr. Byrum said that there has been a lot of discussion about the segregation of GMO versus conventional commodities. There have been huge yields in Michigan, especially corn, as a result of GMO. He said that as we look at the year 2000 the planting of technologically enhanced crops will be down substantially. There are significant environmental and production advantages to some of those genetic modifications. This is no longer just a scientific issue, but an issue of politics and perception. Perception is reality. American farmers are looking at where the demands for their commodities are going to be and as they look at market opportunities in Europe they don't want biotechnology to be a barrier or an impediment.

He believes that the marketplace will make the determination of what farmers plant next year. Certain food companies will use conventionally produced products as a marketing advantage, just as organics are a marketing opportunity that are pursued by some companies. There is some sentiment that GMOs should be labeled as such and he believes that will happen, whether it is required or not.

Director Wyant asked Dr. Secor and Mr. Lukens if either of their organizations would be backing away from this technology, what strategies are being used, and what will be the state's role?

Dr. Secor responded that they are currently working with alliances throughout the entire food chain, from grower to producer to marketer. It is important to have the consumer and legislators understand the product. There is sound rationale and sound science behind the product. He added that he has been involved in this issue since 1975.

Bob Boehm of the Michigan Farm Bureau said that producers face risk and uncertainty. This issue has most farmers questioning what to plant next year. There is discussion about premiums for non-GMOs, but what will be the situation in 12 months. Second and third generation GMOs are going to require segregation and identity preservation, which will cause a lot of work on both ends of the spectrum. Someone needs to recognize the benefit and be willing to pay for it. The elevator industry will have to make investments in multiple small bins, have the ability to clean them out, and actually ensure purity.

He said that from a grower's perspective they will want to know the benefit of growing a variety of different crops, going through a segregation process, cleaning out equipment, etc. They will question if the added cost is worthwhile if the crop will be worth less or cannot be marketed. He believes that more coordinated public relations is needed between the technology companies and the public. Public perception is critical.

Commissioner Skogman agreed and said that this debate may determine an entire industry and result in the loss of chemicals that the farmers need to grow plants.

Commissioner Darling believes consumers are more comfortable with farmers using products they can identify and recognize. Consumers understand Roundup because they can buy it at the store, but they don't understand genetically modified materials.

Mr. Boehm said a coordinated effort is needed in the short term by bringing together opinion leaders to gather and disseminate good information.

Commissioner Darling said it is important that the public understand why a coalition has been formed, not because of a concern, but because of a desire to educate others.

Bill Lukens said that Monsanto has been seen primarily as a chemical company, but it is focusing on life science. Monsanto is looking at health issues and the quality and quantity of foods as they relate to agriculture. He said there was a biotechnology coalition formed a couple of years ago at MDA that could be reactivated to look at this issue. He offered his assistance to work with MDA and others.

Dr. Ward said that he believes Monsanto will be regarded as an enormous visionary. He said that without Monsanto's investment, we would not be where we are today. There is a National Research Council draft report about GMO management and Dr Richard Harwood of MSU is orchestrating the final draft and review process of this report.

### RECESS

The meeting recessed at 12:45 p.m.

### RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

### VIDEO PRESENTATION

Dave Charney, Commission Liaison, showed a video of the World Dairy Expo 1999, "*Dinner With The Stars,*" in which Commission Chair Deanna Stamp received the "*World Dairy Expo's Dairy Woman of the Year,*" award.

### APPROVAL OF COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE NORTHWEST MICHIGAN HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY: Director Wyant

WHEREAS, the Grand Traverse area of Northwest Michigan's Lower Peninsula is known as "The Cherry Capital of the World" and produces 120-150 million pounds of tart cherries and 50 million pounds of sweet cherries annually, representing over 50 percent of Michigan's tart cherry production and 80 percent of the sweet cherry production; and

WHEREAS, a group of fruit growers from Manistee, Benzie, Leelanau, Grand Traverse and Antrim counties recognized the need for research to help maintain a viable cherry industry in Michigan and in 1979 formed the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Foundation; and

WHEREAS, it was the desire of the industry to make cherry research the highest priority at the Northwest Station, as well as research on several other fruit crops including apples, plums, wine grapes, peaches, apricots, pears, and other potential horticultural crops for Northwest and West Central Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station brings together a unique blend of Michigan State University research and programming, combined with active participation of the fruit industry and support from the Michigan Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station puts the university at the focal point for information for both Northwest Michigan's fruit industry and the tart cherry industry throughout Michigan, North America and the world; and

**WHEREAS, the goal for the Year 2000 is to maintain and enhance the economic competitiveness of the Michigan fruit industry within the changing global market, while utilizing production systems that produce high quality safe foods and assure long-term biological and economic sustainability.**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Michigan Commission of Agriculture extends its appreciation to the founders of the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station for their vision and their commitment to research, and congratulates the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station on its 20 years of service to the Michigan cherry and fruit industry.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF THE NORTHWEST MICHIGAN HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVAL OF THE YEAR 2000 GROWN IN MICHIGAN GRANTS: Debbie Davis, Acting Director of the Marketing and Communications Division, and Debra Merrill, Marketing and Communications Division**

Debbie Davis, Acting Director of the Marketing and Communications Division, distributed copies of the recommendations for the Year 2000 Grown in Michigan Grants and requested Commission approval. The Grown in Michigan program provides matching grants for Michigan non-profit, grower-funded associations for innovative programs to promote Michigan agricultural commodities to the residents of Michigan. This is one of the few programs that help growers sell their products. In fiscal year 2000 we received \$100,000 through legislative appropriations. Notices were mailed and 13 applications were received by the September 3, 1999, deadline. The total request for funding was \$164,839. Five projects were recommended for full funding and five projects were recommended for partial funding.

Debra Merrill reviewed the projects recommended for full funding:

- Michigan Agricultural Commodities State Fair Booth \$17,000
- Retail Floor Displays \$12,634
- Value-Added Product Promotion \$ 9,750
- Farm and Garden Show on WNEM-TV 5 \$ 9,500
- 5 Easy Ways to 5 A Day \$ 9,500

These projects are recommended for partial funding:

- Made with Michigan Apples \$15,000
- MIFFS – "Marketline" \$10,000
- Beef Buying Made Easy at the Retail Case \$ 6,186
- Networking to Increase Direct Marketing of Locally

Grown Michigan Products \$ 5,430

- Consumer and Industry Potato Website \$ 5,000

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE GROWN IN MICHIGAN GRANTS FOR THE FY2000 AS RECOMMENDED. SECONDED.**

**DISCUSSION: Director Wyant asked if there could be cross utilization between the MIFFS program and the Integrated Farm Program directories.**

**Chris Lietzau of the Environmental Stewardship Division and Debra Merrill said that they would contact the two organizations.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**UPDATE ON THE "Select Michigan" PROGRAM: Jeanne Lipe of the Marketing and Communications Division**

Jeanne Lipe of the Marketing and Communications Division updated the Commission on the "Select Michigan" program. She provided the following information:

- **Program Materials Development:** Tool Kit, Point of Sale Materials, Letterhead, Folders, Note Cards, Mugs and Shirts, Select Michigan Display
- **Statewide Kick-Off:** October 25, 1999, 9 a.m., D & W Store in Grand Rapids, Breton Village. Commissioners are invited to attend.
- **Trade Shows, Public Information:** Michigan Grocers Association "Trade Talk," Michigan Conference on Tourism, October 17-18, MSU CANR Autumnfest, November 20; Michigan Horticulture Show, December 7-9; Venetian Festival in St. Joseph, July 2000
- **Promotion/Advertising Efforts:** Michigan Food News article; Associated Food Dealers "Made in Michigan" issue; Apples to the Legislature, October 26; Free advertisement in Michigan State Fair Guide and in the Michigan Festivals and Events publication; Farm Market Month/Michigan Wine Month; 16 Billboards went up October 11 in the Lansing area and 6 outside of Lansing; Select Michigan Website
- **Other Activities:** Fulfillment House; Postal Cancellation; Grown in Michigan grants; Postcards

Commissioner Tatter recommended having a feedback system in place to measure the program's success.

Director Wyant said that MDA has worked with the private sector to encourage participation in the Select Michigan program. He said that there is enough interest to get the program started and as interest develops more resources will be needed. MDA is doing what it can on a limited budget.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Susan Julian is a representative of the Michigan Drain Code Coalition, a coalition of citizens around the state concerned about revisions to the Drain Code.

She explained that the issue is before the House committee at the present time. She is concerned that what has been proposed will not benefit agriculture in the future. She said that the issue of drain maintenance is of major concern. There is an emphasis on new drain projects that will benefit development, but not agriculture. She believes that one of the ways to help the process would be to divide maintenance activities from the improvement activities. This would benefit the taxpayer and the farmer. Drain taxes are hurting the farmer. She believes that there has to be a better way. The Drain Code is over 260 pages long and difficult to reference or understand, and is contradictory. She said that if maintenance and improvements were separate issues, there would be fewer complaints. She stated that the drain tax is five times the property tax.

Commissioner Tatter asked if what she is suggesting is to separate construction from maintenance and make sure the cost versus the benefit is apportioned appropriately.

She agreed and distributed a copy of a letter sent to Senator McManus on behalf of the Michigan Drain Code Coalition.

#### **ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A Commission of Agriculture September 22, 1999, Meeting Minutes  
Attachment B Legislative Report – October 1999  
Attachment C Senate Bill 205

**Attachment D Detroit Free Press Article "Legislature's timing stinks on farm bill"**

**Attachment E "The Next WTO Round: Opportunity for Boosting U.S. Agricultural Exports"**

**Attachment F "Michigan Meat Inspection Issues"**

**Attachment G "FSIS Required Elements for Authorized State Meat Inspection Programs"**

**Attachment H Draft Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Manure Management and Utilization**

**Attachment I Draft Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Pesticides**

**Attachment J Draft Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Nutrient Utilization**

**Attachment K October 8, 1999 Public Meeting Minutes, "Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Nutrient Utilization"**

**--Written Comments Received from Mr. Phil Forner**

**--Written Comments Received the Michigan Land Use Institute**

**--Voice Mail Comments from Mr. Robert Hoard**

**Attachment L Commission of Agriculture Resolution Recognizing the "Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Attachment M Recommendations for the Year 2000 Grown in Michigan Grants**

**Attachment N Correspondence from the Michigan Drain Code Coalition to Senator George McManus**

**I, Jordan B. Tatter, Secretary of the Michigan Commission of Agriculture, do hereby certify that I have read the minutes of the October 13, 1999, meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and they are a true and accurate description of the proceedings thereof.**

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**Jordan T. Tatter, Secretary**

**I, Daniel J. Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, do hereby certify that I have read the minutes of the October 13, 1999, meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and they are a true and accurate description of the proceedings thereof.**

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**Daniel J. Wyant, Director**

**Approved on November 10, 1999**  
**Lansing, Michigan**