

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING REPORT

GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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

April 23, 2007, Public Input Meeting

Pursuant to the Michigan Right to Farm Act, (Act 93 of 1981, MCL 286.471 *et seq.*), the Michigan Commission of Agriculture may define Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs), developed with assistance by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and with written recommendations from Michigan State University's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Extension Service, and Agricultural Experiment Station, as well as the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency; the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; and other professional and industry organizations. In addition, the Commission directed the Department to hold a public meeting to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on proposed changes to the GAAMPs. This meeting occurred on April 23, 2007, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Lake Superior Room of the Michigan Library and Historical Center, 717 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan.

Present from the Michigan Department of Agriculture were Wayne Whitman, Kristin Linderman, Jan Wilford, and Amy Bearss.

Information about this meeting was released to the news media on March 29, 2007. Over 300 daily, weekly, food, farm, and environmental media and organizations were notified. In addition, this information, along with copies of proposed changes to several of these GAAMPs, was posted on the Michigan Department of Agriculture web site.

All GAAMPs are developed by multi-agency Task Force Committees which are chaired by Michigan State University faculty. GAAMPs are then presented to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture for consideration and adoption under the authority of the Michigan Right to Farm Act, Public Act 93 of 1981, as amended. Since their initial adoption, these GAAMPs have undergone annual review by the respective Task Force Committees, which include scientists and others with expertise, education, and knowledge in the field. The Chair of each Task Force gathers comments from members and then makes recommendations for revisions of the GAAMPs to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture. The Commission approves, amends, or rejects those recommendations.

Members of the public attending the meeting were told that a summary of all oral comments and copies of all written comments would be sent to the Task Force Chairs, the Director, and each member of the Commission. The deadline to receive written comments was 5 p.m., April 23, 2007. Copies of all written comments submitted are attached; written comments were received from:

1. Scott Piggott, Lansing, representing Michigan Farm Bureau
2. Philip C. Lombard, Jr., Ferndale
3. Ken Nobis, St. Johns, representing Michigan Milk Producers Association
4. Brian Geerlings, Saranac, representing Herbruck's
5. Edward LaForge, Lawton
6. Ben Kudwa, DeWitt, representing Potato Growers of Michigan
7. Amy Frankmann, Okemos, representing Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association
8. Steven Chester, Director, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
9. Senator Cameron S. Brown, 16th District
10. Anne M. Woiwode, Lansing, representing Sierra Club of Michigan
11. David Smith, representing Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited
12. Sam Hines, representing Michigan Pork Producers Association
13. Jody Pollok, DeWitt, representing Michigan Corn Growers Association

In addition to the written comments provided, the following individuals attended the public input meeting on April 23, 2007, and filled out attendance slips:

1. Tonia Ritter, Lansing, representing Michigan Farm Bureau
2. Philip C. Lombard, Jr., Ferndale
3. Ken Nobis, St. Johns, representing Michigan Milk Producers
4. Jeff Oesterle, Mason
5. Scott Piggott, Lansing, representing Michigan Farm Bureau
6. Peter Loonen, Marshall
7. Sandra Miles, Lowell
8. Mike Seiloff, Alto
9. Gray Trimner, Novi, representing Michigan Milk Producers
10. Duane Roskoskey, Lansing, representing Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
11. Brian Geerlings, Saranac, representing Herbruck's
12. Ed LaForge, Lawton

Oral comments at the Public Input Meeting covered a range of subjects, along the following lines:

- Concern that the time of year when the GAAMPs are under review is a very busy time for producers, making it difficult for them to participate in the process.
- Concern that a preface statement added to each GAAMP indicating that conformance with GAAMPs does not equal compliance with all federal and state laws is written in such a way as to suggest that GAAMPs are contrary to federal and state laws.
- Suggestion that the prefaces remain, but be edited to clarify, possibly adding local health department involvement.
- Concern that the distance and setbacks contained in the Site Selection and Odor Control GAAMPs are insufficient.
- Concern that changes to the GAAMPs be based on sound science and that nuisance lawsuit protection needs to be maintained.
- Suggestion that legislative changes be made limiting the ability of residential housing to expand towards farming operations to be consistent with Site Selection GAAMPs.
- Concern that there is still confusion among local government officials as to who (owners, renters, tenants, etc.) can obtain protection under Right to Farm, and how Right to Farm interacts with zoning laws.
- Suggestion that a manure management plan no longer be shielded under the Freedom of Information Act after a producer has had several verified violations.
- Suggestion that non-compliance with GAAMPs should have greater consequences and that there should be greater recognition and benefits for compliance.
- Concern that under the Manure Management GAAMPs, there should be water testing requirements for pathogens and hormones.

Bradley N. Deacon
Hearings Officer
April 30, 2007