

## Right to Farm Works for Everyone

The Michigan Right to Farm Act, P.A. 93, was enacted in 1981 to provide farmers with nuisance protection. This state law authorizes the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop and adopt Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) for farms and farm operations in Michigan. These farm management practices are scientifically based and updated annually to utilize current technology promoting sound environmental stewardship on Michigan farms.

By utilizing GAAMPs, farmers and Michigan residents benefit: through environmental protection of natural resources; sound management of agricultural inputs; and sustaining a strong and stable agricultural industry.

While adherence to the GAAMPs does not act as a complete barrier to complaints or lawsuits, it does provide an umbrella of protection from nuisance litigation. In addition to conformance to the GAAMPs, farmers also need to comply with all state and federal environmental and agricultural laws.

The GAAMPs cover eight specific areas of on-farm production agriculture:

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

## Farm Market

Michigan has a diverse variety of farm fresh products. Many of these products can and are being directly marketed to the public locally. The Farm Market GAAMPs, first adopted in 2010, help define and provide guidance as to what constitutes an on-farm market and farm market activities.

## Pesticide Utilization and Pest Control

American agriculture has been able to meet consumer demands for a reliable and abundant food supply through the use of improved technology. For over 50 years, this technology has included the use of pesticides and other pest management techniques.

Producers are encouraged to adopt and implement practices, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which employs a variety of pest control measures and utilizes pesticides only as needed. This approach combines cultural practices with appropriate technologies to achieve the desired commodity quality and yield, while minimizing adverse effects to people, nontarget organisms, and the environment.

GAAMPs for Pesticide Utilization and Pest Control were first adopted in 1991. They address worker safety, application procedures, transportation, storage, disposal of unused pesticides and containers, and record keeping.

## Manure Management and Utilization

Michigan's animal agriculture industry must have the flexibility and opportunity to change with market conditions and adopt new technology to remain viable and competitive. An increase in the scale of commercial livestock production brings new management challenges to control odors and utilize agricultural by-products. These include livestock and poultry manure, milkhouse wastewater, silage leachate, and barnyard runoff.

Sound manure management practices can lower production costs as well as protect the environment. Careful storage, handling, and land application of manure is needed to utilize nutrients, control odors and protect water resources. When properly utilized, manure supplies nutrients necessary for growing crops and reduces commercial fertilizer costs.

GAAMPs for Manure Management and Utilization were first adopted in June 1988. They are designed to help farmers implement reasonable farm management practices that protect our natural environment, and allow Michigan's animal industry to remain profitable and competitive.

These practices include recommendations for:

- Runoff Control
- Odor Management
- Manure Storage Facility Design
- Manure Application to Land
- Record Keeping
- Manure Management System Plans

## Nutrient Utilization

Nutrient management practices, including the use of commercial fertilizers for crop production, have played a major role in Michigan agriculture by increasing crop yields for many commodities.

Nutrient management practices include regular soil testing, manure nutrient analysis, and realistic crop yield goals. Areas covered by these practices include:

- On farm fertilizer storage/containment
- Land application of fertilizer
- Soil conservation and erosion control
- Irrigation management
- Container grown (greenhouse) plants

GAAMPs for Nutrient Utilization include guidance on environmentally sound land application of manure and other organic materials, such as food processing by-products, municipal wastes, and aquatic plant materials. When managed properly, these organic materials are valuable sources of nutrients for crop production.

There is increased awareness of the potential for mismanagement of nutrients that causes environmental degradation. Adherence to these GAAMPs for Nutrient Utilization will significantly reduce the potential for nitrate movement to groundwater and nonpoint source pollution of surface waters.

## Cranberry Production

Michigan has a favorable climate, proper soils, and the fruit processing capability to support a significant cranberry industry. Producers need to follow sound pesticide utilization/pest control, nutrient utilization, and other technical management practices in order to minimize the environmental risks associated with cranberry production.

The cranberry plant is a wetland crop species. Therefore, construction of cranberry beds typically involves activities in wetlands. Because of this unique situation, both technical and regulatory practices were adopted for cranberry production in 1996.

## Irrigation Water Use

First developed and adopted in November of 2003, GAAMPs for Irrigation Water Use are based on the core principle of stewardship. Stewardship in irrigation management includes conservation of water quantity, protection of water quality, and productivity of soil, plant quality, and crop yield. Proper management of an agricultural irrigation system is an integral part of generally accepted agricultural and management practices.

The GAAMPs do not establish legal criteria to resolve water use conflicts nor do they confer priority rights to water use.

## Care of Farm Animals

Proper care and management are essential for the well being of farm animals and the financial success of livestock operations. A sound animal husbandry program provides a system of care that permits animals to grow, mature, reproduce, and maintain health.

Domestication of livestock has made farm animals dependent on humans. Humans have responded to this dependence with a commitment to practice humane conduct toward domestic animals and to prevent avoidable suffering at all stages of their lives.

GAAMPs for the Care of Farm Animals were first adopted in 1995 and include 19 species of animals raised on Michigan farms. Animal care includes nutrition, manure management and sanitation, animal handling and restraint, transportation, facilities and equipment, health care and medical procedures, and recommendations for the environment.

## Agricultural Pollution Emergency (APE) Hotline

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development maintains a toll-free number for use in reporting agricultural pesticide, fertilizer, and/or manure spills. Prompt reporting and rapid response with appropriate technical assistance will reduce the environmental risk associated with an agricultural spill. The **APE Hotline is 1-800-405-0101.**

## Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities

To establish a new livestock farm operation or expand an existing facility is a complex process. Water quality protection, odor control, existing land use and ownership constraints, and future land use or development patterns, are all considered in this process. Also included are facilitating feasibility and cost efficiency for the operator, maintaining esthetic character, minimizing conflicts with adjacent land users, and complying with all applicable state and federal laws and local regulations.

Through careful planning livestock farmers can increase productivity while developing or continuing good relationships with their surrounding community.

GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities were first adopted in June 2000. Their purpose is to provide guidance for effective odor management, protection of our natural environment, and economic viability for livestock facilities.

For more information, contact:  
**Michigan Department of Agriculture  
and Rural Development  
Right to Farm Program**  
P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909  
**PH: (517) 373-9797, (877) 632-1783**



# Michigan's Right To Farm Program



***Assuring Michigan's  
Agriculture Producers  
the Right to Farm  
While Promoting  
Environmental Stewardship***

[www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)