

# Land Use Decision Makers Learn About Preservation and Economic Impact of Agriculture at Farm Tour

How much positive economic impact can a fifth-generation, 250 cow dairy farm have on a community? Quite a bit. The Calhoun County Agriculture Preservation Board and Michigan State University Extension hosted a land use tour for local township and county officials at the Crandall Dairy Farm, on September 22, 2005 to showcase the economic impact of agriculture. Participants also learned about land use issues as they relate to agriculture.

The Crandall Farm is a fifth generation dairy farm land locked in an area that is also picturesque for country living housing growth. The tour brought over 130 township and county officials together with neighboring farmers to discuss the economic benefits of agriculture in the community.

MMPA members Larry and Gloria Crandall operate Crandall Dairy Farm, along with their sons,



*Brad Crandall explains the purpose of having a freestall barn to provide cow comfort, which directly increases milk production.*

Mark and Brad and their families. The farm is located north of Battle Creek where they share the countryside with a neighboring lake, golf course and many new neighbors who have moved to the country.

"This was a great opportunity for rural and urban residents to mingle," Larry says. "Hopefully we were able to educate the urban folks of the importance of agricul-

ture as part of the local economy as well as the environment."

Most of the residents in this area moved there for the open space and country air. As land prices increase, the few farms left in the area want to maintain their farms, and grow to include their children, and maybe even grandchildren, into the farm in the future.

Larry stressed the importance of teaching the non-farming public, especially neighbors, the impact agriculture has on local economies. Although some farmers may be a bit leery about hosting a tour for non-farming people, Larry said many of those touring the farm were very impressed with the amount of effort that goes into dairy farming on a daily basis.

"They were astonished by the technical side of the business," Larry says.

The tour was sponsored by the Calhoun County Agriculture Preservation Board and MSU Extension. The MMPA Battle Creek-Homer Local provided ice cream and dairy treats for the tour.



*Mark Crandall explains the different types of feed ingredients used to increase milk production.*