

Michigan Ag Commission and MDA Director Irwin Tour MMPA Member Horning Farms

Michigan Agriculture Commissioners and MDA's Director Mitch Irwin toured the dairy operation of MMPA member Horning Farms in Manchester, as part of a three-stop tour in Southeast Michigan on September 21.

The tour gave the Commissioners and Director a first hand perspective of what it is like to farm in southeast Michigan, a more densely populated area of the state.

"It was a good idea for them to come to the dairy farm to see what an animal operation is all about," says MMPA 2004 OYDC Jeff Horning. "We try to do a nice job on our farm so that when people come they get the impression that farming is a top notch business as opposed to some of the negative images they see and hear in the media."

The Horning family explained to the group what happens each day on a dairy operation. They discussed issues and opportunities that agriculture could benefit from.

"It was good to get the new Director of Agriculture on the dairy farm," Jeff says. "It looks like he is going to do a pretty good job understanding agriculture and helping us get done what we need to get done."

"I was very impressed with his questions and comments," says MMPA Board Member and Jeff's father, Earl Horning. "He was very positive and we had a good discussion about the issues and things that need to be done in Michigan agriculture."

Earl and Director Irwin also discussed that with the reduction of jobs in Michigan's manufacturing industry, it makes sense to step forward to strengthen agriculture that would create additional employment opportunities for Michigan residents.

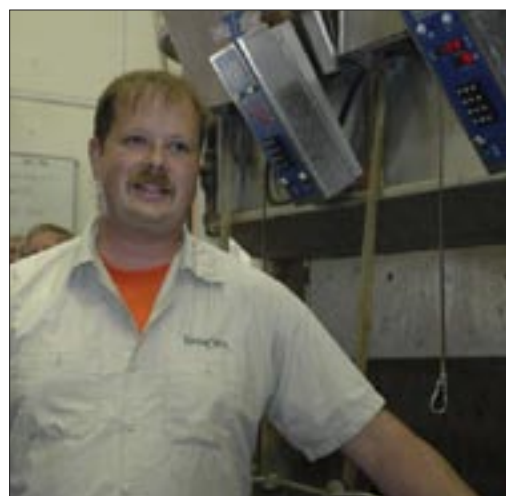
The tour was coordinated by Tonia Ritter, Michigan Farm Bureau Legislative Counsel, with assistance from local Farm Bureau regional representatives and members from Washtenaw and Monroe counties.



Director Irwin, the Commissioners and other guests learned how cows are housed and fed on the Horning farm.



The group also toured the farm's manure lagoon areas.



Jeff explains what goes on in the parlor.