

## MMPA Meets With Michigan Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism Committee

MMPA President Elwood Kirkpatrick and General Manager John Dilland met with the Michigan Senate Agriculture Committee November 3 to present a general overview of MMPA, the impact Michigan's dairy industry has on the economy and voice concerns over how water use legislation would impact dairy farmers.

"Dairy is by far the largest sector in Michigan's Agriculture economy," John told the Committee. He explained that by using a multiplier factor of 2.4, the dairy industry has more than \$2 billion impact on the state's economy. A multiplier predicts how the dollars generated by the dairy industry move through the economy.

John cautioned the Senators about overregulation of the dairy industry and in agriculture in general, noting that there has been a 43 percent reduction in Grade A Dairy farms in Michigan over the past 10 years.

"Dairy farmers must be able to grow to be economically viable as well as to maintain the milk supply in order to meet the demand for milk in the state," John said.

Elwood voiced concerns about environmental regulations and water use legislation.

"I know you have introduced one or two bills dealing with the composting of dead animal bodies and as I look them over, I am favorably impressed," Elwood said. "We will be closely monitoring the rule-making process on this legislation."

Water use legislation was another concern. One version of the proposed water use legislation calls for farms to report the

location of their wells, having that information become public record – something many farmers feel is unnecessary.

"I am not sure I want to report and identify where my well is, I feel doing so is a security concern," Elwood said. "That's the one thing in the legislation that I would like you to look at."

Elwood also voiced concerns over budgets for Michigan State University and cuts at the Michigan Department of Agriculture,

saying he was very concerned about reductions in dairy and food inspectors.

The Senators asked a few questions of John and Elwood following the presentation.

In May, Elwood and John met with the Michigan House Agriculture Committee where they gave a similar presentation.



*MMPA General Manager John Dilland meets with Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Senator Gerald Van Woerkom prior to the start of the meeting.*



*MMPA General Manager, John Dilland and President Elwood Kirkpatrick presented the Senate Agriculture Committee with a general overview of MMPA, the impact Michigan's dairy industry has on the economy and voiced concerns over how pending legislation would impact dairy farmers.*