

MMPA Meets with Michigan House Agriculture Committee

MMPA President Ken Nobis and General Manager John Dilland met with the Michigan House Agriculture Committee on May 16 to call attention to issues facing Michigan's dairy industry and introduce the Committee to MMPA.

The Representatives were impressed with the information showing the significant impact of the dairy industry on Michigan's economy.

"The annual economic output for one cow is estimated to generate approximately \$13,737," John said. The economic benefit is passed on to vet services, insurance, real estate, food, medical expenses, construction, fertilizer and many other inputs and services needed to house, feed, care for and milk dairy cattle.

John highlighted the importance of Michigan's dairy industry on the state's economy, noting that average dairy farm receipts of \$893 million from 2001-2005 created a \$5.1 billion impact on Michigan's economy. Dairy is the largest segment of the state's agriculture industry, Michigan's number two indus-

try. Additionally, the dairy industry contributes approximately 25 percent of Michigan's cash receipts for agriculture.

Ken discussed the issues currently facing Michigan's dairy industry such as increasing regulatory requirements, air quality issues and urban sprawl. He also commended the industry for its ability to come together to work on solutions.

"There is a lot of opportunity in our industry because we have the ability to work out issues within the industry cooperatively," Ken said. "We, as an industry, gave \$5 million of our own dollars to fund a study on air emissions on dairy farms in cooperation with the EPA."

Another concern the MMPA representatives highlighted is the lack of funding and perceived threat of reduced funding for the Michigan



Ken Nobis and John Dilland gave the House Agriculture Committee an overview of MMPA, discussed issues facing Michigan's dairy industry and highlighted the positive impact dairy has on Michigan's economy.

Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University Extension and the MSU Ag Experiment Stations.

"The dairy industry is very dependant on the Michigan Department of Agriculture, MSU Extension and MSU Ag Experiment Station," Ken told the legislators. "We need to keep those funded to keep our industry at the forefront."

Following the presentation, Ken and John answered several questions from the Representatives. Committee members raised questions ranging from the correlation between corn prices and dairy to the importance of the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

Representative Richard Ball (R-Bennington Twp.) complimented MMPA and the ease at which the cooperative's Ovid plant is to work with whenever it is needed.

"I am proud to say the Ovid plant is in my district," Representative Ball said. "They run an excellent operation and are very friendly to the community and are good neighbors to have in the district."

