

Balancing Animal Agriculture and Communities

A mix of agriculture industry personnel, farmers and community leaders attended the first ever conference on Balancing Animal Agriculture and Communities, sponsored by the Animal Agriculture Initiative and hosted by MSU Extension, on February 29, 2008 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center at Michigan State University.

MSU Extension director, Tom Coon opened the conference, welcoming the attendees. Wendy Powers, director of environmental stewardship for animal agriculture, MSU, presented how new technology, commodity prices, wages and the regulatory environment have changed this ever-evolving industry. She pointed out that in the dairy sector, the number of milk cows has

declined while milk production has gone up.

“Michigan is important to the national milk supply as a whole and dairy is important to the state’s economy,” she said.

Powers explained how regulations placed on certain sized farms may actually cause them to grow larger in order to spread out the costs associated with the regulations in order to keep the farm afloat.

Representative Jeff Mayes (D-Bay City), chair of the Michigan House Agriculture Committee, briefly touched on the public’s need for increased environmental awareness and the pending Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assur-



Wendy Powers, director of environmental stewardship for animal agriculture, MSU.

ance Program legislation.

Roger McClellan, former president of the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology, then spoke on the comparative effects of animal agriculture air emissions on human environmental health, saying that air quality has made remarkable progress since the 1970s. In the future, McClellan feels it will be important for policy makers to pay attention to scientific recommendations, not public opinion.

Using forest buffers can reduce the effects of animal agriculture on waterways according to research highlighted by George Vellidis, professor of biological and agriculture engineering at the University of Georgia. Animal agriculture can indeed negatively affect waterways, Vellidis says, but “planning and proper management can reduce and prevent damage.”

Real estate values can drop by up to 14 percent in homes that are downwind from moderate sized farms, according to Glynn Tonsor, assistant professor of agri-

New from the leader in Dairy Liner Technology

IMPULSE™

THE ANTI-TWIST, HIGH PERFORMANCE TRIANGULAR SHELL-LINER SYSTEM

Introducing IMPULSE, the latest evolution from Milk-Rite, the leader in Dairy Liner technology. The IMPULSE system combines a revolutionary new shell design with an anti-twist, interlocking triangular liner. This system delivers enhanced performance through minimal air evacuation. This promotes the liner to open and close faster, and results in longer milk and rest phases. IMPULSE liners are also available in standard life (IP1) and extended life (IP2) models.

MILK-RITE (East) 1-800-558-0150 (West) 1-800-927-4454

cultural economics at Michigan State University. Tonsor spoke on the comparative effects of animal agriculture on real estate values, telling the attendees that a recent study shows distance from the farm and wind direction play an important role in home values surrounding a farm.



Bill Flinn, director of the Social Responsibility Initiative at The Ohio State University

Being “neighborly” goes a long way in fostering positive relationships between farms and their non-farming residential neighbors, says Jeff Sharp, associate professor of rural sociology at The Ohio State University. Sharp discussed the comparative effects of animal agriculture on quality of

life in surrounding communities, noting neighborly behavior won’t solve all problems, but certainly does matter.

Richard Hegg, the national program leader for the plant and animal systems in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, spoke on how technology and management affect on-farm activities, highlighting many innovative manure-processing ideas.

Bill Flinn, director of the Social Responsibility Initiative at The Ohio State University, spoke on the community response to evolving animal agriculture.



Representative Jeff Mayes (D-Bay City), chair of the Michigan House Ag Committee.

The day concluded with a real-time audience response measured through the Trackpoint system.

Additional details and videos of the conference are available at www.animalagteam.msu.edu



A&L LABORATORIES, INC.
1001 GLENWOOD AVENUE
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55405
1-800-225-3832

Quality Sanitation & Udder Hygiene Products

QUALITY MILK IS OUR GOAL!
Call our specialists to learn about our Milk Quality Program



Kurt Fiene
Kenton, OH
612-889-1063

Jeff Timm
Shawano, WI
612-840-0555



**A&L products are available through MMPA Member Merchandise
Order today at 1-877-367-6455**