



Legislative Watch

Issues important to today's dairy farmers

Ag Day at the Capitol 2008

More than 150 farmers and leaders from agricultural organizations and agribusinesses gathered at the state Capitol to let legislators know that agriculture is key to reviving Michigan's economy during the fourth-annual Ag Day at the Capitol on March 19, 2008.

With its "Michigan Agriculture: Bringing it home ... Michigan grown" theme, Ag Day served up food and facts to emphasize how agriculture—more than any other industry—is reinvigorating Michigan's struggling economy.

To spread their message, farmers visited legislators' offices and invited lawmakers to sample Michigan food products at commodity displays set up in the Capitol. The smorgasbord of diverse offerings included corn dogs, asparagus roll-ups, ice cream, pickles and grape juice.

MMPA board members were on hand at MMPA's booth to pass out ice cream cups from the MSU Dairy, place an "I Love Milk" sticker on lapels and get better acquainted with elected officials representing all areas of the state.

"Ag Day at the Capitol is great exposure for all segments of Michigan Agriculture," MMPA President Ken Nobis says. "The relaxed atmosphere provides an opportunity to build relationships with our elected officials. The ice cream made a great drawing card and a friendly atmosphere to visit with many of the Senators,



MMPA General Manager John Dilland visits with Representative Barb Byrum (D-Onondaga).

Representatives and their staff members." encouraged to take the reusable tote bag with them on their next trip to the grocery store or farmers' market, and fill up with Michigan food products when they shop.

Ag Day at the Capitol was held in conjunction with National Agriculture Week, March 16-22.

Key points shared during Ag Day:

- A recently revised economic study by Michigan State University reveals that agriculture and its supporting industries contribute about \$63.7 billion to Michigan's economy annually.

- Michigan's agri-food and agri-energy industry grew at a robust rate of 5.9 percent from 2004 to 2006, whereas the state's economy overall grew only 4.8 percent for that same period.

- With its support industries, Michigan's agricultural sector collectively employs about 1 million people, or about 1 in 4 Michigan residents.



MMPA board member Mark Halbert and Representative Kim Meltzer (R-Clinton Twp.).

• The direct economic impact of Michigan's agri-food system is \$38 billion. The direct economic impact of the agri-energy system, primarily the production of ethanol, is \$378 million.

• If each week every Michigan household spent just \$10 of their current grocery budget on local food products, more than \$37 million would circulate within Michigan weekly.

• Michigan produces more than 200 agricultural commodities, making Michigan rank second, just behind California, for the state with the most diverse agriculture industry in the nation.

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MMPA Ovid West BTU

February 2008

Allen Beachy*
Kurncz Farms Inc.
Reed Dairy Farm
Dennis Farms LLC
BWT Farms LLC
Christopher Miller
Edward Hansen
Ammon Martin
Betty Walker
John L. & John E. Carter
Barry & Angela Stout

MMPA Ovid East BTU

February 2008

JW, Frances & Lonnie Ward*
Corner Oak Farm*
Ritter Farms LLC*
Nobis Dairy Farms*
Double Eagle Dairy Inc.*
Green Meadow Farms Inc.*
Ro-B Farms
Richard Wardin
Eleanor Bruse
Dale Hackney
Kenneth & Helen Smolek
Lisa Wilson

**scored 100 percent*

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