



## Mike Marvin – Michigan’s Dairy Fieldperson of the Year

**Y**ou know what they say: *“Dairy farming—it’s in your blood.”* Consider MMPA Field Supervisor Mike Marvin’s dedication to the industry as living proof.

Mike was named Michigan’s Dairy Fieldperson of the Year at the Michigan Dairy Industry Conference in Mt. Pleasant in early May. The annual conference is held for all individuals working as field representatives, farm inspectors or laboratory personnel in Michigan’s dairy industry. All MMPA member representatives and laboratory technicians attend the conference.

“Mike’s deliberate approach, honesty and accuracy have gained the respect of all dairy farmers,” says MMPA Member Services Director Gary Trimner. “His background helps him provide specialized services for members, not only in his area but for all MMPA members, as a Certified Ag Energy Auditor. These skills and attributes contributed significantly to his

recognition as Fieldperson of the Year.”

Mike’s love of dairy farming began early, growing up on a dairy farm near Howell. After high school, Mike tried to satisfy his farming urge by working on a neighbor’s dairy farm on weekends, while moving forward with a career at Detroit Edison.

His plan worked for a while, but after 13 years Mike could no longer resist the dairying urge. He and his young family purchased a farm in northeastern Michigan and soon began shipping milk to MMPA.

Mike’s dairying dream was cut short a few years later, though, when the dissolution of a crucial partnership resulted in financial difficulties. Work was scarce in the early 1980s, but his dairy experience made him a good candidate for an opening on MMPA’s field staff.

“I was an MMPA member before,” Mike says, “so I was familiar with the job because Preston Cole

and Gerry Volz had called on my farm.”

Mike moved his family to Michigan’s Thumb region, where he embraced the role of MMPA Member Representative. By 1990, his problem-solving skills and ease in relating to members earned him a promotion to East Area Supervisor, the position he currently holds.

“I really enjoy working at MMPA—I get to visit with farmers and drive around in a nice area,” Mike says of his duties. “I think the Thumb has some of the best—from farms to farmland, from field staff to state inspectors. We all cooperate together, and that makes for a very nice working environment.”

As supervisor, Mike oversees three MMPA Member Representatives and calls on about half of the farms he did when he was Member Rep. He also calls on several MMPA dairy plant customers to help resolve quality complaints,

is trained to assist members going through MAEAP, and helps MMPA members with stray voltage concerns.

When MMPA decided to send a handful of member representatives to MSU's Energy Audit Certification Program, Mike's name was the first that came to mind. His former experience with Detroit Edison and current status as one of MMPA's Stray Voltage Specialists made him an ideal candidate.

"During an energy audit, I analyze the farm's energy use and suggest ways they can save resources and costs by changing or modifying equipment," Mike explains about the audits he's certified to perform for MMPA members. "I create a spreadsheet to analyze what the payback time would be to implement each recommended change, and review it with the farm owner."

For farmers who may think they have their energy use in check, they might reconsider when learning about a farm Mike's certification class analyzed. During their training to become energy audit specialists, his class audited a 100-cow dairy where they recommended that a custom applicator spread manure. By following the recommendation, the farm stood to save more than \$25,000 in energy costs, not to mention the labor costs associated with spreading manure.

"We're not going to have this kind of success with every farm," Mike says, "but it is amazing how many ways you find for them to save money."

## MMPA's Energy Audit Program

MMPA's Energy Audit Program is available to MMPA members who are able to provide energy auditors with a year's worth of farm energy bills and energy use records, milk production records, and the age and technical information of equipment used on the farm.

Energy audits provide participating MMPA members with practical solutions outlining projected costs and payback information to help make energy-saving decisions. Audits are confidential and performed by a certified energy auditor. MMPA has two energy auditors available to assist members.



Mike discusses MAEAP's Farm\*A\*Syst program with MMPA member Eric Phillips.



Mike and MMPA member Geert vandenGoor review recorded temperatures of milk that is being pumped directly to a tanker.



Before heading out to visit farms, Mike marks sample vials in preparation for a whole herd test the following week.