

# Agriculture and Rural Development



## General Overview

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) was created in 1921 and is the agency responsible for implementation of laws pertaining to the production, handling, and distribution of agriculture products and building the agriculture-based economy of the State.

The Department's mission statement is "To serve, promote and protect the agricultural interests of the people of the State of Michigan". It has a dual role as regulator and marketer, and cooperates with a number of Federal and State agencies in this capacity. The Department's regulatory programs focus on food safety, weights and measures, animal protection, disease control, and horse racing. As a marketer, MDARD focuses on promoting the development of food and agriculturally based businesses and providing educational services in cooperation with universities and local associations.

Half of MDARD staff work at the Lansing headquarters, and the rest are located at six regional offices in the State. There are 546.0 appropriated FTEs.

## Major Divisions and Programs

**Agriculture Development Bureau.** The Bureau supports the growth of Michigan's food, agriculture and forest product industries and communities. The Bureau connects businesses to technical and development resources including funding and financing, regulatory assistance or international trade as well as providing forest assistance and qualified forest programs, farmland preservation, and regulatory and inspection services throughout the State.

**Bureau of Environment and Sustainability.** The Bureau supports agricultural practices and the conservation and development of soil and water resources, annually prepares detailed soil maps, and promotes voluntary environmental initiatives. The Bureau is also responsible for certifying commodities, regulating the sale and use pesticides and fertilizers, protecting Michigan from invasive species, and implementing Michigan's Right to Farm law.

**Bureau of Food Safety and Animal Health.** The Bureau enforces laws that govern the processing, packaging, transportation, storage, and sale of food and beverages; licenses food establishments; and inspects Grade A and manufacturing grade dairies. This Bureau also ensures the safety and wholesomeness of the food and feed supply; responds to complaints, recalls, and emergencies; ensures the safety and humane treatment of livestock, poultry, aquaculture, equine and companion animals in the State; and provides education and outreach opportunities for regulated businesses and consumers. The Bureau also houses the Animal Safety Division which protects the public health and the health of domestic animals, livestock, and pets through monitoring and eradication of diseases and the humane treatment of animals.

**Laboratory and Consumer Protection Bureau.** The Bureau provides scientific and analytical services for the MDARD and other agencies and provides testing and consulting services on a fee basis to industry and private citizens. The Bureau is responsible for helping regulate the safe use of pesticides, provides diagnostic and metrological testing, ensures the quality and quantity of gas being sold, prevents economic fraud by looking for credit card skimmers, and ensures packages contain the amount of product they claim. Their efforts continue to protect public health, preserve the integrity of the food safety net, and ensure consumers are getting what they pay for.