



PO Box 554  
Manchester, MI 48158  
517.317.4544 Fax: 517.481.2880  
mifairs@gmail.com  
[www.mifairs.com](http://www.mifairs.com)

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Fairs and horse racing have a long history in Michigan. The County Fairs are an important part of the strong tradition of horse racing in this state. County fairs provide training facilities and racing opportunities for young and inexperienced horses and drivers. Basically the fairs are the minor leagues of harness racing and provide opportunities to develop and prepare horses for pari-mutuel competition.

In many rural areas of our state the production and training of horses is a significant portion of the local economy. When horses in training are housed or practice at the local fairgrounds, the economic effect on the community is substantial. The industry provides local employment for farmers, caretakers, veterinarians, farriers, etc. and year round markets for hay and grain; and horse interests pay taxes to local communities on breeding and training facilities. The horse racing industry in Michigan employs over 12,000 people.

SB 661 would place 90% of the tax revenue raised through the tax imposed on racetracks holding historical races into the Agriculture Equine Development Fund. This fund may be used by fairs across the state for necessary track and building improvements on their grounds, thereby ensuring the fair industry, and the horse industry remain viable in Michigan and that the tradition of horse racing in Michigan can live on.

John Currie  
Michigan Association of Fairs & Exhibitions  
Harness Racing Committee Chair  
231.629.7273

**MAFE 136th Annual Convention – January 14-16**  
Future convention dates: January 13-15, 2022 & Jan. 12-14, 2023  
All events held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel & DeVos Place, Grand Rapids MI.

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