Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture

ABOUT

The Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture (M-AAA) is a partnership among Michigan animal agriculture industries, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Michigan State University to advance the Michigan animal agriculture economy. An industry-driven initiative, MSU researchers and educators have been on the forefront of addressing producers' most urgent concerns.

MISSION

The overarching goal of M-AAA is to facilitate applied research and extension projects directly tied to immediate priorities of industry partners. M-AAA research and outreach addresses topics such as animal disease and welfare, production challenges, sustainability and workforce development.

IMPACT

Adam Lock, a professor in the MSU Department of Animal Science, is working with dairy farms on nutritional strategies to increase milk fat content, which impacts the value of milk and profitability. Lock explored how feeding dairy cows high oleic soybeans can cut feed cost, boost milk quality and spark economic growth — **allowing dairy farms to save up to $1.80 per cow, per day in feed costs.**

A dairy farmer working with Lock, Brian Preston, said: **"We operate on tight margins like every other business, and that's an unheard-of change. That's a once-in-a-generation change."**

Michigan Sen. Roger Victory commented on the project: **"Those are real numbers that can make a difference between a producer being in business or out of business."**

Richard Pursley, a professor in the MSU Department of Animal Science, is working to help dairy farmers remediate issues with pregnancy loss. Cows that lose pregnancies have a much greater chance of either being culled from the herd or becoming pregnant late in lactation. **Pursley's M-AAA work has identified strategies that are saving dairy producers roughly $135,000 per year for a 1,000-cow herd.**

Wendell Van Gunst, owner of Country Dairy, said about Pursley's work: **"I'm certain for most farms that most cows are culled out of a herd because of reproductive failures, and then farmers end up having to replace them. Today, a replacement animal is about $4,000, so every time you cull a cow, that's the impact. This means that if you're culling 40% of your herd every year, anything you can do to reduce that down to 34% to 35% is just money in your pocket."**

Beth Ferry, a swine educator with MSU Extension, helped create a training program to assist first responders called Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL). **Thus far, more than 800 first responders have been trained, 21 ERAIL trainings have been delivered since 2019, and nine response trailers are now strategically located throughout Michigan.**

M-AAA has been continually funded since 2017 with $3 million in the State of Michigan's MDARD budget as a grant. However, M-AAA was not included in the governor's FY27 budget recommendations.