M-AAA
Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture

2026 M-AAA INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES

Michigan Allied Poultry Industries

- Cage Free:
  - Understanding and encouraging performance of behavior that leads to positive welfare
  - Hen movement through cage-free systems: ensuring easy and safe movement among vertical tiers
  - Hen distribution among and use of resources to optimize stocking rates and system design
  - Feed additives for improved health/livability in cage free birds
  - Calcium/ phosphorus requirements of older (65+ week old) hens for better shell strength
- General:
  - Labor shortage / Workforce development (i.e., non-seasonal worker information to inform policy makers)
  - Extension project aiming to mitigate avian influenza and other poultry related disease by strengthening biosecurity measures within small and commercial poultry operations
  - HPAI vaccination options
  - Environmental E-coli mitigation strategies
  - Using no-antibiotic methods to reduce the incidence of enteritis
- Nutrition:
  - Assessing how feed additives (i.e. enzymes, probiotics, prebiotics) perform in a real-world farming environment, considering all the variables present on a working farm, rather than controlled farm settings (research farm)
  - Feed formulations based on digestible P and digestible Ca to enhance nutrient utilization, minimize environmental impact by reducing excess mineral excretion, and meet precise dietary requirements for poultry.
  - Feeding non-bound amino acids in commercial diets at increasing inclusion levels
  - Strategies to maintain intestinal health and reduce intestinal health disorders in a non-antibiotic era
  - The interaction of pro and prebiotics when poultry are also being treated with an antibiotic
- Floor Birds:
  - Strategies to reduce foot pad dermatitis

Michigan Cattlemen's Association

- Health and Well Being (including but not limited to):
  - Bovine TB-Improved prevention methods, improved testing.
  - Bovine Respiratory Disease - Improved detection methods, control and preventative protocols, antibiotic alternatives.
  - Animal welfare and cattle handling improvements
- Beef Industry Environmental Sustainability (including but not limited to):
  - Producer and processor waste and resource management.
  - Grazing & pasture systems for soil health, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.
- Economic Sustainability (including but not limited to):
  - Creation of value from MI's traceability program.
  - Identification of methods to improve product quality.
  - Modernizing feedlot systems (infrastructure, management, biosecurity).
  - Precision technologies and decision support for producers.
- Industry Outreach

- Creation of or improvements to resources available to the industry including increased collaborations with outside sources (e.g., other land grant universities).
- Risk management tools and financing mechanisms.
- Recruitment and rural vet capacity.

Michigan Farm Bureau

- Development of new animal health protection tools to manage current and emerging diseases, with an emphasis on the role of vaccines in disease protection.
- Workforce development and education: Training for jobs and careers in animal agriculture.
- Livestock management tools and systems that are more efficient and economically sustainable for producers.
    - Nutrition research that enhances productivity and health of the animals
    - New facility design for welfare and animal handling
    - Technology development for animal health and management
- Development of new tools to enhance food safety.
- Enhancement and growth of the Michigan meat packing and dairy processing industries.
    - Research in treatment options for wastewater management, with a focus on cost-effective options for small livestock processing facilities.
- Development of new automated tools to address labor issues in the livestock and dairy industries.

Michigan Horse Industry

- Equine Health:
    - Develop tools to better identify, manage and treat current and emerging diseases (e.g. PPID, EHV-1, genetic storage myopathies, etc.), including investigating a novel group of genetic lipid storage myopathies in equines (RR-MADD and RTD), and researching the causes, expansion and earlier onset of Cushings Disease/PPID.
    - Additional research in preventative health management, gastrointestinal disease, and nutrition.
    - Map equine veterinary care coverage across Michigan with travel times, emergency coverage and case outcomes, to identify incentives for practitioners and determine alternative delivery models finding scalable approaches to expand access while sustaining practitioner income and well-being.
- Land Use Challenges: Investigate land use, development and zoning pressures (escalating land values, competition from development, environmental issues, and zoning or permitting hurdles) that make establishing or expanding equestrian facilities difficult.
- Equine Industry Stability, Growth and Long-Term Vitality:
    - Investigate challenges facing equestrian owners and businesses (e.g. lesson barns, boarding facilities, training operations, show venues) that threaten long-term viability of equestrian operations: equine recreational opportunities, youth and new owner outreach, increasing labor costs, insurance, workers compensation, operator burnout, and difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff while navigating complex employment and safety regulations.
    - Investigate the barriers to entry into the horse industry, such as the affordability of horse keeping, aging demographics, and retaining youth engagement in various equestrian disciplines.

Michigan Meat Association

- Operational processing, wastewater disposal options, and food safety controls
    - Investigations of practices or product characteristics for food safety control involving biological, chemical, or physical hazards (e.g., extended shelf life, reduced oxygen packaging, fermented meat products, antimicrobial agents, chemical residues, foreign and natural objects).
    - Investigations into the best available technology for wastewater treatment prior to discharge to meet updated EGLE standards (e.g., nutrient uptake from crops receiving slaughterhouse or meat processor wastewaters)
- Workforce development
    - Training and resources for entry-level and current employees with credit and non-credit programs with hands-on and lecture sessions (e.g., meat cutter training, animal welfare and humane handling, humane harvesting, operational processing techniques)
- Emerging issues
    - Investigations (research and extension) in identification, controls, or prevention of issues or topics that affect meat, poultry, and game animal food safety (e.g., chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis, pathogenic microbial identification and control, parasite, prions, diseases, genetic and muscle abnormalities)

Michigan Milk Producers Association

- Alternative uses of milk
- Impact of the use of short corn in feeding dairy cattle
- Use of High Oleic Oil soybeans in dairy cattle diets
- Assistance with the dairy industry's sustainability efforts – innovative opportunities that demonstrate the dairy industry's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Including but not limited to demonstrating proper accounting of the impact of upcycling nutrients instead of letting them go to landfills, efficient methods to reduce methane gas and research on both feed and reproductive efficiency.

Michigan Pork Producers Association

- Emerging/Foreign diseases (e.g. H5N1, African Swine Fever) and implications for a secure pork supply.
- Consumer acceptance of production practices (research on alternative housing methods, castration/pain mitigation and animal care and handling) and strategies for enhancement of consumer image of swine industry.
- Environmental Issues (manure management, air quality, water availability, mortality management (large scale in relation to a disease or marketing challenge).
- Workforce development/labor shortage (i.e., Precision farming to address labor shortages, or information to help drive policy changes)
- Antibiotic/Antimicrobial alternatives

Michigan Sheep Producers Association

- Improving sheep production efficiencies emphasizing these focal areas: forage utilization, nutritional management, reproductive management, health programs, and development of new and refinement of existing production systems*
- Development of tools to allow producers to track and improve production and sustainability metrics

- Producer education programs focused on flock expansion and improvement of production efficiencies including the involvement of producers in on-farm research
- Producer education programs and applied research on the use of sheep in vegetation management of solar arrays
- Identification of methods to improve product quality (meat, milk, wool)
- Development of new uses for wool and sheep by-products (i.e., wool as enrichment for potted plants, wool to enrich soil health, and others).

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD)

- MI reportable animal diseases (including but not limited to the economics, biosecurity, pathogenesis, control, treatment, and prevention)
- Animal welfare (including but not limited to species standards, impact on health and public perception)
- Environmental sustainability (including but not limited to nutrient management, water quality, wastewater management, climate change, and regenerative agriculture)
- Emerging contaminants and diseases (including but not limited to evaluation of impact and risk to agriculture)

Associate Members

Associate members do not contribute directly to the determination of research priorities for the M-AAA grants programs, review of proposals or initial funding decisions. Priorities exclusive to associate members are not directly supported by the M-AAA grants program, but proposals addressing shared priorities are encouraged.

Michigan Soybean Committee

- Maximize the value (biological and financial) of soybean meal in livestock nutrition and health including, but not limited to, bypass protein and amino acids.
- Utilization of livestock manure as a crop nutrient source – specifically, the effect of protein sources on nutrient composition of animal waste.
- Effect of protein sources in animal diets on meat quality, rate of gain, overall animal health and milk production.
- Increase the use of soybean products (meal, hulls, oil, etc.) in the animal agriculture industry.

*Shared priorities of the Michigan Soybean Committee