

# 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 446.0 appropriated FTEs.

## Major Divisions and Programs

**Food and Dairy.** This division 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.

**Animal Industry.** This division 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.

**Pesticide and Plant Pest Management.** This division regulates the sale and use of pesticides, focuses on preventing the spread of insects and disease, and monitors raw agricultural products for pesticide residues.

**Environmental Stewardship.** This division provides assistance in the conservation and development of soil and water resources, annually prepares detailed soil maps, and promotes voluntary environmental initiatives.

**Laboratory.** This division 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.

**Agriculture Development.** This division provides promotional and economic development opportunities and administers the Grape and Wine Program.

**Fairs and Expositions.** This division funds purse supplements and premiums for licensed racetracks, racetrack improvements, and the Upper Peninsula State Fair.