M-AAA is a partnership among Michigan animal agriculture industries, Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension focused on the advancement of the Michigan animal agriculture economy.


With competitive grant funding starting in 2015, the State of Michigan invested in M-AAA research to advance the animal agriculture industry in fiscal years 2017 and 2018.

Examples of M-AAA projects

Animal housing standards

By April 1, 2020, all Michigan producers will need to house pregnant pigs in stalls where they can turn about freely, something typically not found in most current operations. The majority of producers don’t have the physical capacity to give each sow an individual pen. And though pigs are social by nature, they don’t always get along well in group settings. Researchers at MSU and Scotland’s Rural College are looking for ways to place pigs so they are more likely to live in harmony together. The basis for the solution may be rooted in genetics.

Managing diseases such as bovine leukemia

In 2010, a survey of 113 Michigan dairy herds found an 88 percent herd-level prevalence of bovine leukemia virus (BLV) — a retrovirus that causes infection in dairy and beef cattle that can lead to more devastating diseases. Evidence is mounting that BLV infection negatively affects milk production and longevity. By educating producers about BLV and its potential effects on their operations, they will be able to identify BLV in their herds and develop control strategies with the help of veterinarians and MSU experts. Since BLV prevalence is not easily predicted, producers need systematic monitoring such as the BLV Herd Profile Test to stay ahead of this disease.

Increasing efficiency of fertility programs

Infertility of lactating cows is an issue that limits both profitability and sustainability of dairy farms. In response, researchers developed fertility programs to control ovarian development. These programs allow well-managed dairy farms to increase cow fertility to that of virgin heifers. Additionally, they decrease pregnancy loss and twinning — both detrimental to profit of dairy farms. Using these fertility programs over time can reduce the number of cows in a herd with excessive body condition loss, revolutionize reproductive management of dairy cattle and improve farm profit. For example, an 800-cow dairy could increase profits by $120,000 per year.

Recurring funding (to maintain the M-AAA) at the FY18 level of $2.5 million is essential.

Find Legislative reports online at http://www.canr.msu.edu/research/publications/michigan-alliance-for-animal-agriculture-legislative-summary/.

Each year since 2015, funding for the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture has increased. In 2018, nearly $3.1 million is committed to support research and extension programs for Michigan’s agriculture industry.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer.