



MFGC UPDATE

For members of the Michigan Floriculture Growers Council

October 2014

MFGC Office

235 N Pine St
Lansing, MI 48933

Calendar of Events

MFGC Annual Meeting

December 9, 2014
Grand Rapids

Great Lakes Expo

<https://www.glexpo.com/>

2014 Board of Directors

Donny Marvaso - President

Bill Tuinier - Vice-President

Dick Derks -

Secretary/Treasurer

Andy Buist

Paul Karlovich

Ken Tuinier

Dennis Crum

Erik Runkle - Educator

Appointee

Carter Kent - Allied Trade

Appointee

Mike Faber - Allied Trade

Appointee

Mark Watkins- MDFGA

Appointee

Scott Stiles - WMGA

Appointee

Policy Chair - Bill Tuinier

Membership Chair - Ken
Tuinier

Dear Member,

In the next week or two you will be receiving a comprehensive survey mailed from the USDA. Although you are receiving this survey from the USDA, it is a survey requested, created and paid for by Michigan Floriculture Growers Council with an approved grant. The council has heard members loud and clear when voicing concerns on what impacts your business. Based on those concerns we drafted a survey to gather needed information that will help us address those concerns. Whether it is a need for legislation, a rule change, research or education - we need your information to determine the best approach to secure positive results. The three main areas are operations, energy and labor. Please feel free to contact me or the MFGC office if you have any questions.

MFGC played a critical role in obtaining a Project GREEN and a Specialty Crop Block grant to fund MSU research and communication with the general public on the issue of neonicotinoid insecticides and bees. Dr. David Smitley is leading this research and will be one of our guest speakers at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 9. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

As always, feel free to contact the council with any concerns, ideas or thoughts you have. We appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dominic Marvaso
President

Department of Agriculture Golf Outing



Michigan Floriculture Growers Council Membership Renewal

You will soon receive your 2015 Membership Renewal.

Industry advocacy and good policy doesn't happen by accident. Now more than ever we need your participation and support to keep our industry moving forward. We all appreciate your membership!

MFGC President Donny Marvaso, Vice President Bill Tuinier, Executive Director Val Vail-Shirey and Jeanne Hausler of Mi Dept of Agriculture teamed up to play in the Ag Dept. Scholarship Golf Outing.

Dr. Smitley's Presentation on

**Growing Flowering Plants
That are Safe for Pollinators in the Yard and Garden**

<http://www.ent.msu.edu/uploads/files/SmitleyFiles/NneonicsandBees10-8-14.pptx>

MAEAP Certified Members

Great Lakes
Greenhouses
Kalamazoo
GreenDorr Greenhouse
Dorr
Joe Theisen Farm
St. Clair
Westrate Greenhouses,
Inc
Kalamazoo



Michigan Floriculture Growers Council Reception and Annual Meeting

Tuesday, December 9, 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

River Overlook Room E-F (upper level)
DeVos Place Convention Center

All Michigan Floriculture Growers Council members and other interested industry professionals are invited to attend this event. This will be an opportunity for networking and informative discussion of the Council's activities including presentations from the energy industry and on research of neonicotinoid insecticides. The Council's annual meeting will be held as part of this event. A strolling dinner will be served.

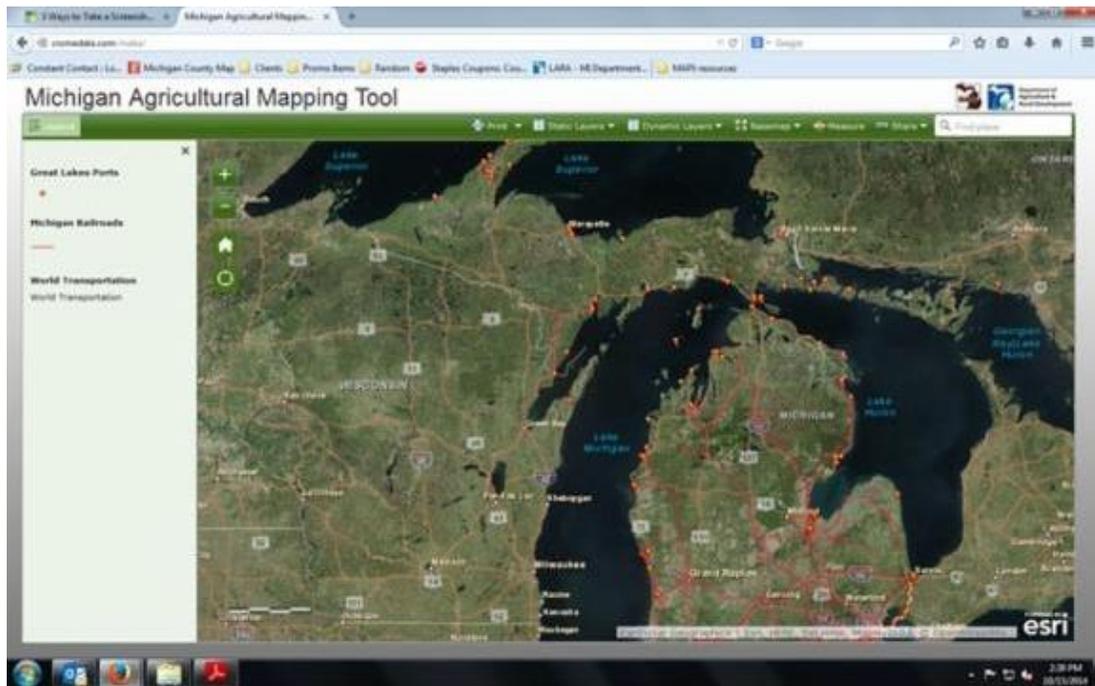
Quick Guide to the Michigan Agricultural Mapping Tool

The Michigan Agri-Business Association's "Agricultural Mapping Tool" is a publicly available web-based resource that was developed in partnership with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development through a Strategic Growth Initiative Grant.

This interactive tool gives Michigan agribusinesses, producers, policymakers and others access to key information across the state. It is intended to guide strategic business decisions, allow agriculture to seize new opportunities for economic growth, and provide guidance in developing priority areas for agricultural expansion in response to new markets, climate change and other factors.

Getting Started:

- The tool can be accessed free of charge on the MABA website at : www.miagbiz.org
- You can also view our brief video tutorial to learn how to use the system on our website



Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Requesting Ag Commission to Approve an Increase in Inspection Fees

Subject: Notification of Proposed Inspection Fees Changes for 2015

Based on an increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Fiscal Year 2014, the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development (the Commission) will be considering an increase in fees charged for nursery stock, Christmas tree, export, import, and other inspections at the upcoming November 12, 2014 Commission meeting. The proposed hourly-based fees will increase from \$57 per hour to \$58 per hour. Annual nursery inspection fees, which are based on acreage, would increase from \$52 per acre to \$53 per acre for the first acre inspected. Fees for additional acres inspected would increase from \$31 per acre to \$32 per acre. The fee increases would become effective January 1, 2015 and remain in effect until December 31, 2015.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) charges fees for inspection of plants and plant products as authorized under Public Act 189 of 1931, Insect Pests and Plants Diseases. An amendment prescribes that MDARD will annually evaluate its costs of conducting inspections and may adjust inspection fees but not more than an amount determined by the state treasurer to reflect the cumulative annual percentage change in the Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint CPI over the one-year period, with the adjustment not to exceed 5%. Fee increases are subject to the approval of the Commission.

The state treasurer reported to MDARD a 1.1% increase in the CPI for Fiscal Year 2014. MDARD is requesting that the Commission approve an increase in inspection fees, based on the 1.1% change in the CPI, during the November 12th Commission meeting.

Persons with specific concerns about the proposed inspection fee adjustments may express them to the Commission by appearing in person at the Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

Gina Alessandri, Director
Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division

EPA Waters of the United States

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced a proposal during the month of March to change the definition of what is considered a Water of the United States. Although the EPA claims that the new adjustments will not have a great effect on the agricultural industry, the American Farm Bureau Federation and many other agricultural organizations say otherwise. The EPA states that the new proposal would allocate 1,600 additional acres as Water of the United States; however, the American Farm Bureau Federation claims that implementing this new rule could affect more than 106 million acres.

Allowing this proposal to be implemented would greatly hurt the agricultural industry in allowing the EPA the opportunity to claim jurisdiction over areas such as ditches. In order to alter a Water of the United States, approval and permits must be issued to the individual. Through increasing the amount of land being considered as a Water of the United States, the proposal will prove to be very costly for many agriculturalists who will most likely need to pursue permits.

Since the introduction of the proposal, word from concerned agriculturalists and agricultural organizations such as the American Farm Bureau Federation have resulted in the introduction of the Protecting Water and Property Rights Act of 2014. This bill would prevent the EPA from finalizing the proposal pertaining to Waters of the United States. Although the bill has been approved by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and shows positive signs of being approved by the House of Representatives, being passed by the democratic controlled Senate and approved by the President will prove to be the bills greatest challenge.

It is crucial to spread the word of the influence this bill has on the agricultural industry. It is also important to contact your local senator and representative to voice the concern of the EPA's proposal and the importance of the bill preventing the proposal to pass. The extended deadline is November 14, 2014. Below is an example provided by the Farm Bureau of an effective letter that can be used in contacting your representatives.

For more information <http://www2.epa.gov/uswaters>

Communicate with the EPA by visiting their website at
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-0001>

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

I oppose the Environmental Protection Agency's implementation of its proposed rule on the Definition of the Waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act, Docket No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880. While EPA has stated this rule will offer clarity, simplify the regulatory process, and improve protection of water resources, I believe the proposed rule does none of those things. Instead, this rule will hurt the agriculture industry, as well as many other businesses. It will damage the American economy that depends on the services agriculture and other industries provide. Further, it will interfere with states' efforts to develop water protection programs that really work and which do not depend on such burdensome regulation. The rule does not benefit the environment like EPA says it will. The rule must be rescinded to fix these problems. Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Name

