



Michigan Agri-Business Association

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MABA Praises Stabenow Plan to Strengthen Food Safety

Reforms include more inspections, support for agriculture and processors

EAST LANSING – The **Michigan Agri-Business Association** today praised Sen. Debbie Stabenow for spearheading a plan that will strengthen the nation’s food safety through more inspections and stronger support for agriculture, businesses and food processors.

“Sen. Debbie Stabenow’s proposal sends a clear signal that food safety is a priority and agriculture is eager to be part of the solution,” **MABA** President **Jim Byrum** said. “Contaminated food affects all of us, threatening our health and jeopardizing businesses and jobs in a range of industries. Stronger food safety reforms benefit all of us, in our homes and at the workplace. Sen. Stabenow’s proposal gives agriculture the tools and resources agriculture needs to help stop the threats before they reach out dinner tables.”

Last week, Stabenow introduced a proposal that will help farmers and processors do even more to ensure the safety of our nation’s food supply. The Senate is currently considering food safety reform proposals that would increase FDA food inspections and improve the nation’s food safety system. Stabenow’s bill will provide technical assistance and education to small and medium-sized farmers, food processors and distributors so they can effectively implement these new reforms.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Integrated Food Safety Initiative will administer the trainings and assistance programs. Those eligible to apply for competitive grants under the bill include state Departments of Agriculture, extension services, agricultural trade associations, and universities. Training can be in the areas of handling practices, manufacturing, produce safety standards, risk analysis, sanitation standards, safe packaging, storage, traceability, record-keeping, and food safety audits. Under this legislation, existing standards for conservation, biodiversity and organic farming must be taken into account in developing the training program.

“Families in Michigan and across the nation deserve the best food safety system, and this legislation is the kind of reform that can help us accomplish this goal,” **Byrum** said. “Because it can bring real and positive changes, Sen. Debbie Stabenow’s legislation deserves the full support of Congress.”

With steady annual growth, Michigan agriculture is the second-most diverse in the nation, after California. It generates more than \$71.3 billion a year and employs more than a million Michigan citizens in a wide range of areas, from producing to processing.

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