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# Michigan Agri-Weekly

*Agriculture, Sustainability and the Environment*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MABA Calls on Legislature to Protect Agriculture Funds, Avoid Huge Cuts

*Agriculture budget is crucial for food safety, jobs, trade*

EAST LANSING – The **Michigan Agri-Business Association** today urged the Michigan Legislature to step up and protect funding for the Department of Agriculture, which will impact everything from food safety to trade opportunities to jobs and set back one of the few bright spots in Michigan’s economy. The Legislature is weighing whether to cut as much as \$18 million from the MDA budget.

“Agriculture is Michigan’s second-largest industry and one of the rare bright spots in our economy, creating more than a million jobs and pumping nearly \$70 billion into our economy,” MABA President **Jim Byrum** said. “These proposed cuts will set back one of the few bright spots in our economy and send Michigan agriculture backward. Department of Agriculture funds are vital to Michigan citizens, from maintaining our ability to keep food safe for consumers to competing for trade with other countries and states to creating jobs and new investments. Now more than ever, we should invest in Michigan agriculture and help one of the success stories in our economy continue to grow.”

The \$18-million cut represents a 20-percent reduction in the MDA budget and affects a sweeping range of activities within the department, all of which touch Michigan consumers, farmers, agri-businesses and other sectors of the economy.

The cuts will negatively impact, among other functions, food safety and quality, and trade programs and inspections that generate new investments and jobs. The cuts will also impact dairy programs and inspections; plant and animal disease tracking, prevention and eradication; water use and conservation; and proactive environmental stewardship programs that have helped many agri-businesses join with local communities in protecting the land, water and air.

The MDA budget today accounts for less than 1 percent of the state’s total budget.

“In today’s challenging economy, we should invest in sectors of the economy that are doing the right thing, creating jobs and giving back to the state’s economy – and agriculture is definitely one of them,” **Byrum** said. “Cutting funds for the Department of Agriculture is shortsighted and the wrong move. We urge the Legislature to step up to the plate, protect agriculture funding and support Michigan jobs.”

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