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# Michigan Agri-Weekly

*Agriculture, Sustainability and the Environment*

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## Cutting-Edge New Facility will Boost Bean, Beet Research in Michigan

*Opening April 3, facility will focus on new technology, production and profits*

EAST LANSING – A new state-of-the-art research facility that will focus on using new technology to significantly ramp up production – and profits – for Michigan’s critical dry bean and sugar beet industries will be unveiled near Frankenmuth on Friday, April 3. This facility, the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center will bring together scientists, agri-businesses, growers and producers and many more to work side by side with Michigan State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers to advance these and other industries in the region.

“Michigan is a global leader in the dry bean and sugar beet sectors, and this new research facility will help take Michigan agriculture to the next level,” **Michigan Agri-Business Association** President **Jim Byrum** said. “The Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center will become a critical asset for Michigan agriculture and the state’s economy. This new facility will allow the best researchers, growers and agri-businesses in Michigan and at the federal level to work on these crops at one location. Collaboration and partnership at such a high level will give us the tools we need to grow more and produce more, using cutting-edge science, less resources and the best management practices.”

The focus at the farm will be to introduce new technologies to increase yields and maximize profits. The facility will also continue work on developing varieties to improve quality, disease resistance and growth habits, as well as continue work in weed control, tillage, fertility, entomology, pathology, plant breeding and variety development.

**The 250-acre facility is located at 9923½ Krueger Road in Frankenmuth.** The bulk of Michigan’s dry bean and sugar beet production is located in the Saginaw Valley and Thumb area, and this facility is located close to the center of the production region. It replaces the 120-acre Saginaw Valley Bean and Beet Research Farm located south of Saginaw.

Michigan produces more than 4 million hundredweights of dry beans, including black, cranberry and small red beans. More than 1,500 Michigan growers produce dry beans on more than 295,000 acres of land. The nation’s fourth-largest producer, Michigan’s sugar beet industry generates more than \$280 million in direct economic activity and employs more than 2,000 people, including 1,250 growers. As a whole, agriculture is Michigan’s second-largest industry, generating nearly \$70 billion a year and employing more than a million people.

“This new research center will pay dividends for farmers and agri-businesses in this region,” **Byrum** said. “Michigan agriculture looks forward to continuing to be one of the bright spots in today’s economy, and the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center is a key element that can help us accomplish that goal.”

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The new facility will significantly expand the reach, breath and depth of research and development of new technologies, compared with the old Saginaw facility. The old research farm was operated for 38 years as a branch experiment station by Michigan State University, which leased it from its owners, the sugar industry and the Michigan Bean Shippers Association and the Michigan Bean Commission. The owners of the old farm have donated their interest in that facility for Michigan State University to sell, and use the proceeds to put toward developing the new farm in Richville.

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