Michigan Agri-Business Association
1501 North Shore Drive, Suite A
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

www.miagbiz.org
Telephone (517) 336-0223
Fax (517) 336-0227

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CONTACT: Chuck Lippstreu, Byrum & Fisk Communications
clippstreu@byrumfisk.com

Michigan ag leaders react to Heidelberg University research on livestock and water quality

LANSING – The **Michigan Agri-Business Association** today pointed to comments from researchers at Heidelberg University that large livestock operations may have less impact on water quality than some claim, as another signal that Great Lakes water quality discussions must be thorough and balanced.

"The research presented by Heidelberg University demonstrates the need to avoid talking about Great Lakes water quality in broad talking points, when we should instead be working together to carefully examine a complex issue," said **Dr. Tim Boring**, vice president of **MABA**. "These findings by leading, unbiased researchers reflect the strict standards and practices in place for large operators and highlight the benefits of nutrient management restrictions already in place for those operations. These findings are a reminder that there is no 'silver bullet' when it comes to addressing water quality concerns."

Dr. Boring pointed out that large livestock operations follow the strictest regulations in the industry. Modern comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs), which are required in Michigan for these operations, specifically dictate when, where, and how manure is applied in order to mitigate environmental impacts.

As a result, he said, it is not accurate to assume that a greater number of livestock in an area will automatically lead to water quality degradation.

The presentation delivered by researcher **Dr. Laura Johnson** was reported by the Toledo Blade, available at: http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2016/08/19/Expert-CAFOs-effects-on-water-less-than-thought.html.