



Michigan Agri-Business Association

Key Priorities Summary – Winter 2024

Complete Work on a Bipartisan Farm Bill

Completion of a new bipartisan Farm Bill is a top priority for Michigan and U.S. agriculture.

MABA appreciates the hard work that has already gone into the Farm Bill process and we urge Congress to complete work on a bipartisan Farm Bill without delay. Because of Michigan's incredible diversity of agricultural production, every page of the Farm Bill positively impacts Michigan agriculture.

Promote Agricultural Innovation and Access to Ag Technology

We support the development and availability of modern tools to enhance agricultural production. Modern technology has helped growers make more specialized decisions, and crops are safer than ever from pests and disease thanks to chemistry and seed trait advancement. Successfully deploying new technology, and maintaining access to it, is critical for our industry.

Action Items:

- Support **HR. 4288, the Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act**, and the inclusion of similar language in **Sec. 461 of the FY24 House Interior Appropriations Bill**. These measures reaffirm that EPA is the preeminent authority on pesticide labeling requirements to prevent a disruptive patchwork of conflicting state labels. This does not restrict states/localities from enacting sales and use restrictions.
- Support **continued strong research investment** to enhance crop yields and improve plant health, led by America's Land Grant College and University system. (See attached APLU unified budget request.)

Ensure Critical Trade Corridors Remain Open

Michigan's agriculture sector and rural communities greatly benefit from export markets, and MABA strongly supports open trade. In light of recent intermittent border closures, we remain concerned about open trade between the United States and Mexico, a leading export destination for U.S. and Michigan products.

Action Item:

- Help ensure U.S. Customs and Border Protection **maintains open trade corridors, especially for freight rail, between the United States and Mexico**. We appreciated action by USCBP in December to reopen freight rail bridges that had been closed. We urge these crossings remain open as this is a key market for Michigan and U.S. agriculture.

Support Specialty Crop Growers Facing Labor, Market Challenges

Michigan is the "specialty crop state," producing more than 200 crops and commodities – but many specialty crop growers, especially fruit and vegetable farmers, face unprecedented challenges from rising labor costs and foreign competition. MABA member businesses work hand-in-glove with specialty crop farmers statewide, and farmers' success drives broader economic success. We are especially concerned about increases in the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) for visa workers, which puts additional strain on specialty crop growers.

Action Item:

- Support the **Supporting Farm Operations Act (H.R. 7046)**, which will freeze the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) at the level that was established in 2023 until end of 2025. This will have an immediate and direct positive impact for the Michigan specialty crop industry.



Michigan Agri-Business Association
Chuck Lippstreu, President
chuck@miagbiz.org | 616-265-4698 (m)