

# M I C H I G A N Agriculture News

STATE SENATOR 20th District

## Tonya Schuitmaker



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Dear Friend of Agriculture:

Agriculture is good business in Michigan!

For the past decade, Michigan's agri-food sector has been a steady and growing force in the midst of economic turbulence. Our new state leaders not only recognize agriculture's vital role in the economy, but have awarded the \$71 billion industry a prominent seat at the economic development table.

Even the newly renamed Department of Agriculture and Rural Development reflects a renewed commitment to the economic growth of Michigan agriculture.

Here at home, farming is also a big part of the vitality and quality of life we enjoy. One of my top priorities is working to support an environment where our farm families and businesses can flourish.

I am pleased to send along this legislative report. For more information on these topics, or if there is any way I can be of assistance to you, please contact me toll-free at (866) 305-2120 or visit my website at [www.SenatorTonyaSchuitmaker.com](http://www.SenatorTonyaSchuitmaker.com).

Best wishes for a productive and prosperous season!

Sincerely,

State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker

### CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 20<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

- Number of Farms: **1,001**
- Land in Farms: **172,332 acres**
- Average Size of Farms: **172 acres**
- Number of Farm Operators: **1,632**
- Market Value of Products Sold: **\$194,226,000**
- Gross Income, Farm Related Sources: **\$6,056,000**

The 2007 Census of Agriculture was conducted by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

# Schuitmaker supports effective farmers' environmental program



By the very nature of their livelihood, farmers are active conservationists.

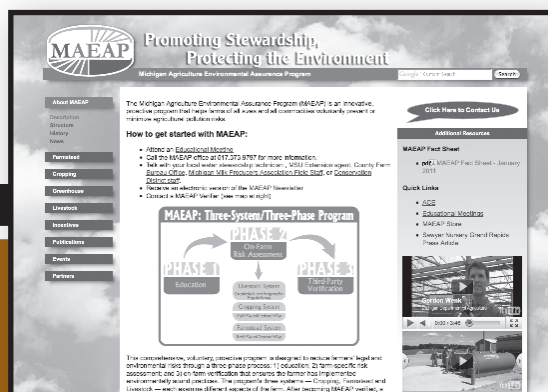
I recently supported Senate legislation now signed into law that provides new incentives for more farmers to participate in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

The voluntary program teaches effective practices that comply with state and federal regulations and shows farmers how to find and prevent agricultural pollution risks on their farms.

Farms verified under the program are protected from onerous civil fines. Grant money is also available to encourage more farmers to join the program.

MAEAP participation helps farmers show the public they are “good neighbors” and practice sound agriculture that promotes soil and water conservation. With the increased scrutiny of farming operations, good land stewardship helps protect our agricultural heritage.

The law puts the program in state statute with MAEAP becoming an official environmental standard for Michigan farms. Participation remains voluntary.



## SCHUITMAKER: INVASIVE PEST ALERT

The Michigan Department of Agriculture is advising farmers to be on the lookout for another invasive pest that wants to call Michigan home.

The presence of the aptly-named brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) was confirmed in Eaton and Berrien counties early this year. Previously, the pest was found in eastern states, and California and Oregon.

The brown, shield-shaped bug feeds on a variety of fruits, vegetables, field crops and ornamental plants with the potential for serious damage. Feeding on tree fruits such as apples makes the fruit unmarketable as a fresh product.

MDA is working with Michigan State University researchers to find ways to control the bug.

Detailed information, including photos, is available at [www.ncipmc.org/alerts/stinkbug\\_alert.pdf](http://www.ncipmc.org/alerts/stinkbug_alert.pdf) or [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/animals/stinkbug.shtml](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/animals/stinkbug.shtml).



## MAEAP Facts:

- To date, nearly 10,000 Michigan farms have started the verification process.
- Nearly 1,000 Michigan farms have become MAEAP verified or have requested verification.
- MAEAP boasts a 300 percent return on investment for every \$1 of state General Fund money spent.
- Farmers working toward MAEAP verification spend more than \$1.2 million on environmental protection measures each year.

Find full information on the MAEAP program at [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org).

# SCHUITMAKER SUPPORTS AG FOOD PROCESSING

We've known for a long time that Michigan must diversify its economy.

The 21st Century Jobs Fund was created several years ago to help grow our fledgling high-tech economy. Funding was limited to the life science, homeland security, advanced manufacturing and alternative energy sectors.

I recently supported legislation to open the program to agriculture.

Senate Bill 144 would allow information and agricultural food processing technology projects to be eligible for funding. Farmers could use the money to invest in technology to improve productivity and businesses could expand in-state processing.

It just makes sense to support the growth of the industry that has supported our state during some of the toughest economic times in memory!

The bill has been sent to the House for consideration.



## Schuitmaker backs bill to help support biofuel production

Currently, Michigan ranks in the top third of states in commercial ethanol and biofuel crops, with a large cellulosic ethanol plant due to open soon.

Cellulose is a major component of agricultural waste (corn stover, cereal straws) and forest waste (sawdust, pulp waste from paper mills, wood chips). Michigan has an abundance of woody biomass which could be tapped to supply cellulose to produce ethanol in the future.

New legislation would take important land use recognition steps to further support this important new source of energy - biofuel production - that is taking waste, what is essentially for many a liability, and turning it into an energy asset.

Senate Bill 46 clarifies biofuel production as an agricultural practice for zoning and outlines the process to qualify for special land use approval.

With our vast agricultural and forest resources, Michigan can play a leading role in the bioeconomy. I'm pleased the legislation supports this emerging segment of Michigan agriculture.



## From small beginnings come great things

Michigan's new Cottage Food Law allows small-scale entrepreneurs to sell directly to consumers and test the market for food business opportunities. Under the new law, farmers can also expand their product line at farm markets to items like baked goods and jams.

P.A. 113 of 2010 exempts a cottage food operation from state licensing and inspection provisions, however, other provisions as well as applicable state and federal laws and local ordinances must be followed.

For more details, including a sample label for cottage foods and a list of frequently asked questions, go to [www.michigan.gov/cottagefood](http://www.michigan.gov/cottagefood).



**SENATOR SCHUITMAKER  
ENCOURAGES FARMERS TO  
VISIT NEW SENATE WEBSITE**

Whether you farm, apply pesticides, process food or lend money, you deal with the state of Michigan.

I am interested in your ideas on how to streamline government and find cost efficiencies. Please feel free to contact me directly, or visit a new Senate website and make suggestions on ways to reform and restructure state government.

Go to [www.MIReform.com](http://www.MIReform.com) and help us change the way the state does business!



**State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker**

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**MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE:  
JUST THE FACTS**

- Second only to California in terms of agricultural diversity, Michigan produces more than 200 commodities.
- Michigan ranks fourth in the nation for the most operational farmers markets.
- The growing food processing industry in Michigan generates nearly \$25 billion annually.
- In 1930, one farmer produced enough food to feed 10 people, today one farm supports 130 people.
- There are 6,000 certified Centennial Farms in Michigan - the oldest dating back to 1776!



**AGRICULTURE RESOURCES**

Michigan Department of Agriculture  
[www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

Agricultural Statistics Service  
[www.nass.usda.gov/mi](http://www.nass.usda.gov/mi)

USDA Rural Development  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/mi](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mi)

Farm Service Agency  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

MSU Extension  
[www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu)

MSU Product Center  
(Commercialization Assistance)  
[www.productcenter.msu.edu](http://www.productcenter.msu.edu)

MSU Agriculture Weather Office  
[www.agweather.geo.msu.edu](http://www.agweather.geo.msu.edu)

Emerald Ash Borer  
[www.michigan.gov/eab](http://www.michigan.gov/eab)

West Nile Virus  
[www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases)

Bovine Tuberculosis  
[www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases)