

# M AEAP

(Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program)

Conservation District offers program to reduce farm environmental risks

CHIPPEWA/LUCE/MACKINAC CONSERVATION DISTRICT – The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program or MAEAP is a free, confidential, and voluntary environmental assurance program offered through conservation districts state-wide.

MAEAP evaluates environmental risks associated with common farming practices, such as manure storage and handling, petroleum product storage and handling, fertilizer and pesticide usage, irrigation practices, well safety, and other environmental concerns generally associated with farming.

MAEAP is a three step process. The first step requires a farmer to attend a two hour educational meeting or event that qualifies for MAEAP Phase 1 credit. The

next step is having a MAEAP technician conduct an on farm risk assessment(s) which cover three individual systems (Farmstead, Cropping, and Livestock) based on the Michigan



Generally Accepted Management Practices (GAAMP) and Michigan's Right-to-Farm Law. The technician will tour the property with the farmer and look for common environmental risks associated with farming. Following the tour, the appropriate risk assessment tool(s) will be completed and the technician will work with the farmer to create an action plan addressing the environmental risks to be reduced or eliminated in order to become verified in each system.

Once the action plan technicians are identified, the technician continues to provide free technical assistance to the farmer to



help reduce or eliminate the identified risks.

All information gathered during the tour or any other visit is completely confidential between the farmer and the MAEAP technician. This ensures farmers are able to proactively identify, reduce, or eliminate environmental risks without fear of being forced to do so by outside agencies or groups.

When the action plan is complete and all identified risks have been reduced or eliminated the farm is ready to be o m e MAEAP verified. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) acts as an unbiased 3rd party to complete the verification. The farmer must call MDARD to schedule an appointment requesting the verifier to visit and evaluate the farm to ensure there are no longer any disqualifying environmental risks on the farm.

Upon successful verification, the farm receives signage indicating their commitment to the environment as well as other benefits that may include reduced liability insurance with certain insurance companies, reduced costs associated with better record management, increased

exposure, and much more. MAEAP verification is valid for three years, at which time the farm can be re-verified by showing continued commitment to environmental risk reduction practices.

On August 2, a free event called Education on the Farm is being held which is dedicated to hands on, in the field education for farmers and residents of Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac, and Schoolcraft counties to learn about various conservation practices and programs (including MAEAP).

The event is hosted by the Conservation District in partnership with the Chippewa County Farm Bureau, the Mac Luce Schoolcraft Farm Bureau, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The event will take place at two MAEAP verified farms.

The first farm, Hunter's Ridge Belted Galloways, owned and operated by Jodi Hunter of Dafter, is a small beef farm verified in the Farmstead system in November 2013. Jodi took proactive steps to become MAEAP verified and was able to complete her action plan in less than one month. Jodi will be available for questions while visiting her farm on August 2 and looks forward to sharing her experience about the program.

The second featured farm is Love Farms, owned and operated by Bob and Tina Love of Rudyard who



Max Benne stands next to his MAEAP signs at his farm in Rudyard. Max was verified in all three systems in 2012.



TWO FARMS, ONE DAY!  
SATURDAY AUGUST 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM  
Hunter's Ridge Belted Galloways  
Jodi Hunter  
4171 W. 10 Mile Rd. Dafter, MI

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Love Farms  
Bob and Tina Love  
12361 W. Turner Rd. Rudyard, MI

also own and operate Love Meats Inc. The Loves were pioneers of the MAEAP program in Chippewa County and were one of the first verified farms in the Farmstead and Cropping systems. Since then, they have continued to proactively improve their farms practices to reduce their environmental risks. In June 2014, Bob and Tina were re-verified in the Farmstead and Cropping systems and added a new verification in the livestock system.

The Loves will be available to answer questions about their involvement in the MAEAP program as well as programs they have completed through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Bob and Tina will also be featuring a free meal highlighting their local meats which will be served to all who attend the event.

To learn more about MAEAP and Education on the Farm visit the Conservation Districts website at [www.clned.org](http://www.clned.org) or visit the MAEAP website at [www.maeap.org](http://www.maeap.org). You can also learn more by calling your local MAEAP Technician, Mike McCarthy, at (906) 632-9611 ext. 101 or by email at [mike.mccarthy@macd.org](mailto:mike.mccarthy@macd.org)