

MICHIGAN RIGHT TO FARM ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 93 of 1981

286.474 Investigation of complaints involving farm or farm operation; memorandum of understanding; generally accepted agricultural and management practices; unverified complaints; applicability of other statutes; preemption of local ordinance, regulation, or resolution; ordinance proposed by local unit of government; generally accepted agricultural and management practices for site selection and odor controls at new or expanding animal livestock facilities; advisory committee; manure management plan; duties of department; definitions.

Sec. 4.

(1) Subject to subsection (2), the director shall investigate all complaints involving a farm or farm operation, including, but not limited to, complaints involving the use of manure and other nutrients, agricultural waste products, dust, noise, odor, fumes, air pollution, surface water or groundwater pollution, food and agricultural processing by-products, care of farm animals, and pest infestations. Within 7 business days of receipt of the complaint, the director shall conduct an on-site inspection of the farm or farm operation. The director shall notify, in writing, the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located of the complaint.

(2) The commission and the director shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the director of the department of environmental quality. The investigation and resolution of environmental complaints concerning farms or farm operations must be conducted in accordance with the memorandum of understanding. However, the director shall notify the department of environmental quality of any potential violation of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.101 to 324.90106, or a rule promulgated under that act. Activities at a farm or farm operation are subject to applicable provisions of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.101 to 324.90106, and the rules promulgated under that act. The commission and the director shall develop procedures for the investigation and resolution for other farm-related complaints.

(3) If the director finds upon investigation under subsection (1) that the person responsible for a farm or farm operation is using generally accepted agricultural and management practices, the director shall notify, in writing, that person, the complainant, and the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located of this finding. If the director identifies that the source or potential sources of the problem were caused by the use of other than generally accepted agricultural and management practices, the director shall advise the person responsible for the farm or farm operation that necessary changes should be made to resolve or abate the problem and to conform with generally accepted agricultural and management practices and that if those changes cannot be implemented within 30 days, the person responsible for the farm or farm operation shall submit to the director an implementation plan including a schedule for completion of the necessary changes. When the director conducts a follow-up on-site inspection to verify whether those changes have been implemented, the director shall notify, in writing, the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located of the time and date of the follow-up on-site inspection and shall allow a representative of the city, village, or township and the county to be present during the follow-up on-site inspection. If the changes have been implemented, the director shall notify, in writing, the person responsible for the farm or farm operation, the complainant, and the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located of this determination. If the changes have not been implemented, the director shall notify, in writing, the complainant and the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located that the changes have not been implemented and whether a plan for implementation has been submitted. Upon request, the director shall provide a copy of the implementation plan to the city, village, or township and the county in which the farm or farm operation is located.

(4) A complainant who brings more than 3 unverified complaints against the same farm or farm operation within 3 years may be ordered, by the director, to pay to the department the full costs of investigation of any fourth or subsequent unverified complaint against the same farm or farm operation. As used in this subsection, "unverified complaint" means a complaint in response to which the director determines that the farm or farm operation is using generally accepted agricultural and management practices.

(5) Except as provided in subsection (6), this act does not affect the application of state statutes and federal statutes.

(6) Beginning June 1, 2000, except as otherwise provided in this section, it is the express legislative intent that this act preempt any local ordinance, regulation, or resolution that purports to extend or revise in any manner the provisions of this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a local unit of government shall not enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance, regulation, or resolution that conflicts in any manner with this act or generally accepted agricultural and management practices developed under this act.

(7) A local unit of government may submit to the director a proposed ordinance prescribing standards different from those contained in generally accepted agricultural and management practices if adverse effects on the environment or public health will exist within the local unit of government. A proposed ordinance under this subsection must not conflict with existing state laws or federal laws. At least 45 days prior to enactment of the proposed ordinance, the local unit of government shall submit a copy of the proposed ordinance to the director. Upon receipt of the proposed ordinance, the director shall hold a public meeting in that local unit of government to review the proposed ordinance. In conducting its review, the director shall consult with the departments of environmental quality and health and human services and shall consider any recommendations of the county health department of the county where the adverse effects on the environment or public health will allegedly exist. Within 30 days after the public meeting, the director shall make a recommendation to the commission on whether the ordinance should be approved. An ordinance enacted under this subsection must not be enforced by a local unit of government until approved by the commission.

(8) By May 1, 2000, the commission shall issue proposed generally accepted agricultural and management practices for site selection and odor controls at new and expanding animal livestock facilities. The commission shall adopt such generally accepted agricultural and management practices by June 1, 2000. In developing these generally accepted agricultural and management practices, the commission shall do both of the following:

(a) Establish an advisory committee to provide recommendations to the commission. The advisory committee must include the entities listed in section 2(d), 2 individuals representing townships, 1 individual representing counties, and 2 individuals representing agricultural industry organizations.

(b) For the generally accepted agricultural and management practices for site selection, consider groundwater protection, soil permeability, and other factors determined necessary or appropriate by the commission.

(9) If generally accepted agricultural and management practices require the person responsible for the operation of a farm or farm operation to prepare a manure management plan, the person responsible for the operation of the farm or farm operation shall provide a copy of that manure management plan to the city, village, or township or the county in which the farm or farm operation is located, upon request. A manure management plan provided under this subsection is exempt from disclosure under the freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

(10) The department shall do both of the following:

(a) Make available on the department's website current generally accepted agricultural and management practices.

(b) Establish a toll-free telephone number for receipt of information on noncompliance with generally accepted agricultural and management practices.

(11) As used in this section:

(a) "Adverse effects on the environment or public health" means any unreasonable risk to human beings or the environment, based on scientific evidence and taking into account the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits and specific populations whose health may be adversely affected.

(b) "Commission" means the commission of agriculture and rural development.

(c) "Department" means the department of agriculture and rural development.

(d) "Director" means the director of the department or his or her designee.

History: 1981, Act 93, Imd. Eff. July 11, 1981 ;-- Am. 1995, Act 94, Eff. Sept. 30, 1995 ;-- Am. 1999, Act 261, Eff. Mar. 10, 2000 ;-- Am. 2018, Act 292, Eff. Sept. 27, 2018