

Dispute Resolution Assistance for Michigan Farmers

Farmers facing financial or other conflicts may receive no-cost dispute resolution assistance through the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP).

Forty-two states have Agricultural Mediation Programs. Through a federal-state partnership each program receives a stipend from USDA. With this and other funding sources Agricultural Mediation Program services are offered at a very minimal cost or at no cost as with the MAMP. A not-for-profit organization, MAMP has been providing dispute resolution services to Michigan agriculturalists for 30 years.

“This existing federal-state partnership has a proven track record of providing confidential and neutral forums to discuss and resolve loan and credit issues between farmers and their lenders,” said US Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) in a 2020 letter to former Secretary Perdue. “The program’s caseloads have steadily risen over the past eight years and can be expected to increase as the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic ripple through the rural economy.” Stabenow chairs the

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

In mediation, a trained, impartial mediator helps participants review and discuss their conflicts, identify options to resolve disputes, and agree on solutions. Ideally, this process helps avoid expensive and time-consuming administrative appeals and/or litigation.

Dispute types eligible for free services through the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program may include these and others:

- Agricultural credit and loans
- Wetland determinations
- Compliance with farm programs, including conservation programs
- Crop insurance
- Organic certification
- Leases
- Family farm transitions
- Farmer-neighbor disputes

To make a confidential inquiry about MAMP services please call 800/616-7863 and ask for Kate. Agricultural Mediation Program information is also available on the web at <https://www.agmediation.org/>

Hudson Post Gazette, March 11, 2021