



Mediation: A Tool for Michigan Farmers

The typical Michigan farmer's toolkit contains a jumble of production and management tools – GIS, CREP, PA116, GAAMPs, UAV, GMO, EQIP, E85, and lastly, the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP).

With the MAMP, Michigan farmers have the option of mediating eligible disputes with agricultural lenders, creditors or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies. Mediation enables the participants to talk informally about the issues and suggest solutions that align with the law and work for all concerned. A trained neutral mediator helps the participants build trust, communicate constructively and focus on the issues. The participants, not the mediator, make the decisions. There is no cost to producers for using the service.

“Mediation is a great way to give everyone their time to be heard. It is a less formal way of discussing and educating,” according to Dr. Betsy Dierberger, State Resources Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a USDA agency, in East Lansing.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA), another USDA agency, encourages farmers who have received an adverse determination to consider mediation through the MAMP.

“While USDA program provisions are not subject to change through the mediation process per se, sometimes new information about the farm's or farmer's specific circumstances will emerge, which may result in a different outcome,” says Mr. Ken Schapman, FSA Mediation Coordinator in East Lansing.

Michigan farmers considering mediation or wishing to learn more can call (800) 616-7863 or visit www.agmediation.org. Mediation is designed to resolve disputes more quickly and with less stress than formal proceedings such as due process hearings. It helps Michigan farmers get back to growing food and fiber for the residents of Michigan and beyond.

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