



When Times Get Tough, Mediate

When farm incomes decline and prospects for agricultural exports are uncertain, producers may face challenges with loan or credit arrangements.

A productive way to get back on track is through mediation with the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP). Mediation enables farmers and lenders or creditors to informally discuss options for revising terms in ways that meet everyone's needs and comport with the law. A trained neutral mediator helps the parties build trust, share information, communicate constructively and focus on the issues. A mediator can be especially helpful if direct talks between the parties have broken down.

“It’s important to address these issues early before parties set hard and fast positions,” says MAMP Program Director David Gruber. “Mediation provides a confidential forum in which they can explore options that sometimes can save the farm.”

The MAMP, which began in 1997, is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA’s goal is to provide a service that can help resolve disputes quickly and at less cost than hearings and litigation. There is no cost to the parties of dispute for using MAMP services.

Requests for mediation can be made online at <http://www.agmediation.org>, by calling (800) 616-7863, or by mailing in the form from the MAMP brochure which is available on the MAMP website and at most Michigan USDA Service Centers and County Extension Offices.

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