

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACE yields wisdom on balancing people, planet, power, prosperity

LANSING, Jan. 28, 2009 — Juggling the needs of people and the planet with the fundamentals of power and prosperity can be overwhelming for Michigan farmers, especially when these unique yet intertwined forces come in the form of rapidly changing markets, environmental regulations and agricultural production costs and resources. But Agriculture’s Conference on the Environment (ACE) is helping farmers learn how to balance these priorities and pave a path to sustainability.

More than 500 conference attendees gathered today at the Lansing Center in Lansing to hear from state and national experts on topics such as agriculture’s “green footprint” on the environment, the changing energy landscape and new marketing opportunities.

Built around a theme of “People, Planet, Power and Prosperity,” the ACE agenda included three general sessions and a dozen concurrent breakout sessions. The general sessions featured:

- A keynote address by Chris Peterson, director of the Michigan State University (MSU) Product Center, on sustainability and putting all four themes into perspective.
- A luncheon address by Janice Swanson, of MSU’s Department of Animal Science, on “Creating balanced approaches in a single-issue world: Lessons from animal welfare.”
- A closing address by Ron McCormick, Wal-Mart vice president and divisional merchandise manager of produce and floral, concerning Wal-Mart’s “locally grown” initiative and how Michigan farmers can partner with the retail giant.

Among the 25 speakers leading the breakout sessions were individual farmers who shared accounts of their personal success. Topics for the breakout sessions included:

- Impacts of the bioeconomy on the environment;
- The food and fuel debate;
- The role of agriculture in climate change;
- Food safety related to manure and bio-solids;
- Marketing your farm in the neighborhood; and
- Farm bill conservation programs.

The biennial conference is made possible by more than a dozen sponsors, including the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Michigan Pork Producers Association, MSU Extension, Phase 3 Renewables, Michigan Allied Poultry Industries, Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee, MSU Institute of Water Research, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dairy Farmers of America, Elton R. Smith Endowment, Michigan Cattlemen's Association, Michigan Sheep Breeders Association and National Grape Cooperative, and supported by all partners of the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program.