

Public Policy Position
MDARD Draft 2026 GAAMPS for the Care of Farm Animal

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 257 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item.

The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On September 2, 2025, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 12 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 3 members did not vote.

Oppose with Recommended Amendments

Explanation:

The Generally Accepted Agriculture and Management Practices (GAAMPs), published by the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, impact millions of farmed animals in Michigan. The draft 2026 GAAMPs for the Care of Farm Animals were recently published, and MDARD is accepting comments through September 5, 2025 at 5:00 PM. The Animal Law Section (ALS) is joining Attorneys for Animals, Inc., a Michigan nonprofit organization which has many members who belong to ALS, in submitting a comment. The two organizations submitted joint comments in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The draft: (1) ignores or downplays existential issues related to farmed animals such as sustainability and climate change and excludes relevant expertise; (2) ignores the spread of HPAI (avian influenza) to Michigan dairies since 2024; (3) lacks a thorough review of current science that is critical of industrial agriculture; (4) with respect to the standards for "Depopulation," fails to confront the real controversies surrounding some of these methods, instead referring farmers to their own veterinarian and to the outdated (2019) AVMA guidelines; and (5) with respect to GAAMPs for mink farming, continues to ignore the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on the industry. We recommend that the Advisory Council be expanded to include points of view of those whose focus is animal welfare-centric and not industry-centric and includes regenerative or organic farming representation, and that the comments on specific species be considered and the draft revised to respond.

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