

Michigan

F A R M E R

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Wheat checkoff has its leader
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Regulation rift

Key Points

- Egg industry, HSUS agree to a national production standard.
- Legislation is introduced but has not yet passed.
- Producers of hogs and other animals opposed.

By **JENNIFER VINCENT**

A GREAT divide within animal agriculture is forming in Michigan as activists push to create a national regulation for egg production.

Here at home, the concept is being embraced, even heralded, by the Michigan Allied Poultry Industries and the Michigan Agri-Business Association. So what's the problem?

The Michigan Pork Producers Association and Michigan Farm Bureau are opposed to the idea of the government telling growers how they will operate — particularly when those standards are being drafted by the Humane Society of the United States. They say that agency has a clear anti-animal agriculture agenda and has a track record of successfully organizing and passing state ballot initiatives that govern animal production practices, including one in Michigan in 2010.

"I understand where the egg



YES TO REGULATION: Brothers Bill (left) and Dick Patmos own and operate Sunrise Acres that houses 2 million hen layers in Hudsonville. The family-run operation is in favor of adopting national standards for egg production.

producers are coming from, but when the feds want to dictate production practices, it sets a very dangerous precedent," says Sam Hines, president of MPPA. "Where does it end?"

For Dick and Bill Patmos, brothers who own a 2 million-hen

layer operation, called Sunrise Acres, in Hudsonville, moving toward a uniform standard would ensure their ability to compete with growers in other states. "We realize we're going to have to change to meet market demand; we just want the entire industry

from state to state to have the same standards," Dick says. "It creates a level playing field, and while we're not thrilled with having to work with HSUS on this, it's the first time they have negotiated with integrity in regards to what is best for the future."

On Capitol Hill, H.R. 3798 has been introduced to create the national egg production standards. Lobbyists within animal agriculture are on both sides of the aisle.

■ **Read more about H.R. 3798 on Pages 4-5.**

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