

Agribusiness & Food Processing

2014 Regional Efforts

REGIONAL COLLABORATION: Michigan Hop Network

The Right Place and Barry County Economic Development Alliance's collaboration throughout 2013 has resulted in the establishment of a new statewide business network dedicated to hops in Michigan. In February, a 7 person Board of Directors held their first official meeting, officers were selected and by-laws approved. The statewide membership based organization will focus on hop quality, quantity and competitive product pricing strategies to meet the unquenchable demand from Michigan craft brewers for Michigan hops.

MMTC-WEST: HACCP Food Safety Training

Six companies from Mason and Oceana counties attended a HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) workshop, conducted in partnership with the Starting Block in Hart, MI on January 22 & 23. HACCP is a food safety management system that provides a structure for assessing risks and putting controls in place to minimize those risks.

MMTC-WEST: Operational Excellence in Food Processing

In February, **MMTC-West launched their first "Operational Excellence in Food Processing" program at the Starting Block in Hart, MI.** Both Country Dairy and Gray & Company participated with support from Michigan Works, Muskegon-Oceana district. The Operational Excellence in Food Processing program is an interactive course with 9 learning modules designed to help equip companies with the knowledge and skills needed to implement an efficient and effective food processing system without compromising food safety. Participants learn to understand, analyze and improve their processes to maximize operational excellence. It also takes the participant through identifying potential hazards and developing good work practices and controls to minimize risks to food and consumers.

ANNOUNCEMENT: ConAgra Foods

The ConAgra Foods plant on 44th Street SE will close next year, displacing approximately 260 people. The plant will be completely shut down by February 2015 after scaling back production in the coming months. **The Right Place business development team is currently working with the company and the City of Kentwood on reuse options for this highly improved property.** We have already received numerous inquiries on the property once it becomes available.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Herbrucks Poultry Ranch (\$33M; 50 jobs)

The Ionia County Economic Alliance announced in May the approval of a \$500,000 Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant for Herbruck's Poultry Ranch that will assist the locally-owned egg producer with a \$33 million expansion and 50 new jobs to the Village of Saranac over the next three years.

MMTC-WEST: EVENT – HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points) Workshop

Hosted in partnership with Varnum LLP, MMTC-West help another sold-out HACCP workshop on March 18 & 19, 2014. Seventeen people were in attendance representing nine companies from throughout West Michigan.

MMTC-WEST: EVENT – Food Processing and Agribusiness Summit

Our 3rd annual Food Processing and Agribusiness Summit was held on May 21st, in Hudsonville at the Pinnacle Center. Over 230 Michigan food processors and growers attended the day-long event. The goal of the 2014 summit is to ensure that trend continues and that Michigan's growers and processors have access to the resources, education, and support they need to succeed.

MMTC-WEST: EVENT - SQF (Safe Quality Food) Training

MMTC-West, in partnership with the Starting Block in Hart, MI, will host an SQF (Safe Quality Food) training workshop on June 9 & 10, at the Starting Block in Hart. The purpose of this training is to offer SQF training to the many growers and processors in our northern county regions.