

Substitute for House Resolution No. 312.

A resolution to declare March 2014 as Agricultural Heritage Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Each year, states across the nation recognize March as a time to celebrate the importance of food and agriculture as it provides almost everything we eat and use each day; and

Whereas, As part of that celebration, Governor Rick Snyder has proclaimed March as Food and Agriculture Month in Michigan; and

Whereas, Michigan's food and agriculture businesses are increasing in value and importance. The industry generates \$96 billion in total economic activity each year and the sector is likely to increase even more because of the export opportunities the next 10-20 years in research and development, food processing, and exports; and

Whereas, Michigan's food and agriculture sector is very diverse with nearly 55,000 farms on nearly 10 million acres of farmland producing more than 300 food and agricultural commodities. Our state ranks fourth in the nation for farmers markets and is also home to 101 wineries and dozens of micro-breweries. Twenty-two percent of the state's workforce (923,000 Michiganders) are employed in agriculture, food processing, and related businesses; and

Whereas, Michigan leads the nation in the production of 17 commodities, including tart cherries, blueberries, three kinds of dry beans (black, cranberry, and small red), 11 floriculture products (including begonias, geraniums, petunias, and impatiens), and pickling cucumbers. Michigan also ranks in the top ten for forty other commodities; and

Whereas, Exports are an important segment of Michigan agriculture. The industry exports about one-third of its agricultural commodities each year, generating nearly \$3.2 billion in revenue. Over sixty percent of all Michigan's agricultural exports go directly to Canada, our number one export market. Other top importing countries for Michigan-grown products are Mexico, Japan, Korea, and China; and

Whereas, Food processing is a large contributor to the state's economy. Michigan is home to approximately 2,000 licensed food processors who employ more than 130,000 residents and generate nearly \$25 billion in economic activity, making the state nineteenth in the nation for food processing; and

Whereas, FFA has a long and distinguished history in the state. The Michigan FFA Association provides a solid foundation for youth and the future of agriculture in Michigan by promoting premier leadership, personal growth, and career success among its nearly 6,300 members. The members represent diverse backgrounds from rural and urban lifestyles, but share a common goal of educating classmates and communities about the state's \$96 billion food and fiber industry, including more than 300 agricultural commodities. The FFA is a vital part of quality intra-curricular education, developing good citizens, leaders, entrepreneurs, employees, executives, and future agriculture educators; and

Whereas, The month of March celebrates National Agricultural Week, Michigan State University hosts the State FFA Convention as well as Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, and Secretary of State Ruth Johnson has formed a 2014 partnership with Michigan FFA in promoting Agricultural Heritage License Plates; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of the Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare March 2014 as Agricultural Heritage Month in the state of Michigan. We encourage all citizens to recognize and celebrate this momentous occasion.