


## Special Signs Celebrate Milestones

In 2014, 53 farms were recognized




## Some of our services include:

 New irrigation requests

 New natural gas service requests

 Free stray voltage electrical inspections

 Advising clients on equipment needs

For more information about agricultural services visit [ConsumersEnergy.com](http://ConsumersEnergy.com) or call 1-800-805-0490

**S**IGNS ARE POPPING UP AT FARMS around the state to celebrate an important milestone and serve as a reminder of the rich history we have with the agricultural community.

Last year, we awarded 53 Centennial and Sesquicentennial Farm signs to farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 and 150 years.

“We have roots going back more than 125 years serving customers throughout the state, including the agricultural sector,” said Carolyn Bloodworth, Director of Corporate Giving. “We take pride in sponsoring the Michigan Centennial Farm program by donating \$20,000 annually to the Historical Society of Michigan in support of their work.”

The relationship with the farming community gained momentum on Feb. 4,

1927, when a seven-mile electric line was constructed between Mason and Dansville, about 12 miles southeast of Lansing. Until that time, the only farmers with electricity lived on the edge of the village.

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—Carolyn Bloodworth  
Director of Corporate Giving

Since the Mason-Dansville line was energized, rural Michigan has changed dramatically. Today, we serve upwards of 30,000 farm customers, more than any other utility in Michigan.

In 1949, we brought electricity to our 100,000th farm customer, becoming the

first utility in the nation to reach that milestone.

The Historical Society of Michigan, which approves Centennial Farm designation, is seeing more families seeking Centennial Farm recognition in recent years.

“Stable funding from our corporate sponsors such as Consumers Energy is enabling us to actively promote Centennial Farms and administer the program effectively, in addition to paying for the signs that are installed on the property,” said Larry Wagenaar, Executive Director of the Michigan Historical Society. “We are seeing a positive increase in program awareness result within the farming community, which is leading to more certified Centennial Farms.”

To learn more about what we’re doing for agricultural customers, visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/farm](http://ConsumersEnergy.com/farm).

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## Michigan's Top Agriculture Products

MIAGRICULTURE.COM

farmflavor.com



### CORN

The top commodity in Michigan generated \$1.86 billion in cash receipts in 2012. In 2011, corn exports were valued at \$251.4 million.



### SOYBEANS

In 2012, Michigan soybean farmers produced 85.6 million bushels, generating \$1.1 billion.



### GREENHOUSE/NURSERY

Earning \$594 million in greenhouse/nursery products in 2012, Michigan is **ranked No. 1 in the nation** for potted Easter lilies, geranium pots and more.



### CATTLE AND CALVES

Cattle and calves account for more than a third of livestock production in Michigan and generated \$480 million in 2012.



### PORK

The Michigan swine industry earned \$357 million in 2012, ranking the state **No. 12 in the nation** for hog production.



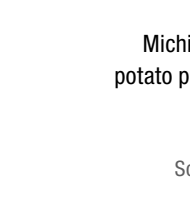
### WHEAT

Wheat was planted on 570,000 acres in Michigan and generated \$318 million in 2012.



### CHICKEN EGGS

Michigan earned \$230 million in 2012, **ranking No. 11 in the nation** for chicken egg production.



### POTATOES

Michigan ranked **No. 8 in the nation** for potato production with \$162 million in 2012.

Source: USDA National Statistics Service

## Delivering Service to Customers

**WHEN SANJU GUINN REPORTS TO WORK** each day at the Jackson Service Center as a Business Account Manager for the Agricultural Industry, she isn't sure where the day might take her. One role she is sure to fill during her work week: providing feedback to our leadership team so we make the necessary improvements to meet customer satisfaction.



What does a typical day look like for you? It really depends on what I have on my calendar. Some days I'm attending customer events, which gives me an opportunity to connect with many of our agricultural customers face-to-face. Other days I might be attending meetings or trainings, or the days I'm in my office I'm either following up on customer inquiries or proactively reaching out to our Agriculture customers to introduce myself and how Consumers Energy can help their business by providing information on energy efficiency, rates and billing questions, power quality and reliability, and provide useful tools to improve their operations.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

What is the most challenging part of your job? The biggest challenge is trying to reach all our agricultural customers to inform them about the great programs and options we can provide. My goal is to arm every customer I contact with the information they need to make informed decisions in order to run a successful business.

### What is the most challenging part of your job?

What's the most satisfying part of your job? Being an advocate for our customers as well as an advocate for our company, and making a positive difference in the communities we serve. I love when customers call back and express their gratitude for helping them out.

### What's the most satisfying part of your job?

## Consumers Energy Contributes \$25K to Support Farmers

**A NEW STATEWIDE BUSINESS INCUBATOR** designed to spur agricultural innovation has received financial support from Consumers Energy.

Company representatives have presented a \$25,000 contribution to officials with the Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business

said Garrick Rochow, Consumers Energy Vice President of Customer Experience, Rates & Regulation and Quality. "A strong agricultural industry is vital to Michigan's economic success. Consumers Energy looks forward to seeing this investment translate into ag-related jobs and businesses."

The incubator, a nonprofit corporation, specializes in helping farmers and agriculture-related entrepreneurs turn their machine, equipment or software ideas and inventions into profit-generating assets or new businesses. Originally started by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, the incubator is now attracting interest and investors across Michigan.

The incubator's services are geared toward farmers and entrepreneurs who have ideas or inventions that improve farming operations or solve farming-related problems. Depending on whether the client wants to sell or license their invention, or whether they want to start a new business, the incubator will work one on one with each client to move their concept forward rapidly.

**These services include, but are not limited to:**

- Validating concepts;
- Assisting in obtaining patents;

- Developing markets;
- Streamlining regulatory permits;
- Developing financial plans;
- Assembling management teams; and
- Developing supplier sustainability plans.

There is no fee for farmers or entrepreneurs to use the incubator's services if they are selected to be a client. Instead, the incubator shares in a small part of the successful business' sales.

Unlike typical incubators, the Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business Incubator does not provide physical building space for its clients. This "garage incubator" model invests almost all resources in staff who help commercialize ag-technology and propel clients through business hurdles. When facilities are needed for clients, the incubator brokers space (office, loading dock, warehouse) on a piecemeal basis from existing landlords in the community.

"Our board of directors is honored to have Consumers Energy's support in our endeavor to create ag-technology businesses and jobs," said Kurt Brauer, Chairman of the Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business Incubator. "Their generous contribution will directly benefit incubator clients by helping to offset the cost of providing business start-up services."



Incubator at the Ottawa County administrative offices. The contribution will support new business development centered on commercializing ag-technology ideas and inventions.

"Consumers Energy is pleased to be a part of this first-of-its-kind business incubator that focuses solely on commercializing ag-technology products,"



## Energy Efficiency Saves Customers Millions

**SINCE 2009, OUR CUSTOMERS** have saved an estimated \$855 million through our energy efficiency programs. Two of the most popular incentives are Appliance Recycling and the Lighting program.

Through our Appliance Recycling program, we will pick up an old fridge or freezer at no cost and give you a \$50 rebate. Throw in an old working air conditioner or dehumidifier and we will give an extra \$15. Since 2009, we've picked up and recycled

more than 100,000 refrigerators/freezers.

With the Lighting program, customers can search through more than 180 participating retailers for instant savings on energy efficient products. We've discounted millions of energy efficient lighting products since 2009 to create an affordable energy saving option for all homes and businesses.

For information on these popular programs and more offers, visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/save](http://ConsumersEnergy.com/save).

### Agricultural Incentives

- There are over 6,000 working farms in Michigan that get their energy from Consumers Energy, not to mention all of the other related agricultural businesses such as greenhouses and processing facilities here in the state
- Over 190 applications received in 2014
- Incentive for USDA Tier II Energy Audit up to \$500
- Over 30 agricultural specific incentives