

# **Drivers and Implications of Livestock Production Practice Changes:**

**Dept. of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics**

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# Faculty Directly/Indirectly Involved in Related Research

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# Tonsor/Wolf Project: Gestation Crate/rBST Pressures

- Broad Problem:
  - There are increasing pressures to adjust production practices but significant information gaps persist.
  
- Information needed includes:
  - Consumers
    - What really drives stated preferences for change?
    - How sensitive are preferences to other changes (e.g., larger operations, increase in foreign production)
  
  - Producers
    - What is current sentiment?
    - What producers are most/least likely to adapt?

# Tonsor/Wolf Project: Gestation Crate/rBST Pressures

- Funded by MSU Animal Ag. Initiative
- Surveyed MI Swine & Dairy Producers as well as Consumers (December & January)

# Tonsor/Wolf Project: Gestation Crate/rBST Pressures

- Example hypotheses (consumers):
  - Ho: Size of operation is truly more important than use of crates/rBST.
  - Ho: Awareness of agriculture's importance to MI's economy impacts perceptions.

# Tonsor/Wolf Project: Gestation Crate/rBST Pressures

- Example hypotheses (producers):
  - Ho: If crates are banned, smaller/older operations will be the first to exit.
  - Ho: A ban on crates would accelerate the move to specialized production. (e.g., lower farrow-to-finish proportion)
  - Ho: Producers see crate/rBST pressures as a “slippery slope” issue. (e.g., foresee pressure for lactation crate bans, pasture requirements for cows, etc.)

# Example MI Swine Producer Quotes

- "I hope they ban them (crates) on a national basis. It won't hurt us small producers, but would raise hell with the mega farms."
- "Pork producer organizations need to do a better job of educating the public about where their food comes from and why we raise it this way."

# Example MI Consumer Quotes

- “It’s obvious that I do not know much about gestation crates... No one can vote (or should) on a referendum when little or no knowledge is available – please, pork producers – tell us how crates help – it will be good for the consumer if it is good for the pigs...”
- “I have no idea how these farmers utilize these crates. Sounds cruel and expensive to me as well as unnatural”