

# Cherry Marketing Institute, Inc.

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## **Cherry Industry Receives USDA Grant**

LANSING, MI (Wednesday, Oct. 13) – The Michigan Cherry Committee (MCC) has been awarded a Value-Added Producer Grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business-Cooperative Services. The grant amount is \$141,210. MCC representing all Michigan cherry growers is an official state organization operating under Public Act 232. MCC will use the funds to investigate non-traditional markets for tart cherry products as a functional food. Functional foods provide a medical or health benefit.

Michigan leads the nation in tart cherry production, producing 75 percent of the U.S. crop. Tart cherries sometimes known as sour cherries or pie cherries, traditionally have been used as an ingredient in the bakery industry. However, recent published research on the health benefits of tart cherries offers new marketing opportunities for Michigan cherry growers and processors. Tart cherries contain powerful antioxidants that have the potential to reduce the pain of arthritis and gout and may inhibit cancer tumors and protect against cardiovascular disease. Initial sales activity based on the health benefits of cherries indicates that there is potential for the industry to sell the fruit as a functional food. This is becoming an emerging market for agriculture producers, especially the fruit industry.

The grant funds will help the cherry industry design a blueprint for cherry growers and processors to develop value-added tart cherry products for the functional foods market. The project will focus on natural food ingredient companies, natural food manufacturers as well as natural and specialty food stores. The work also will include extensive nutritional and nutraceutical evaluations of tart cherries. MCC will contract with the Cherry Marketing Institute to do the work of the grant.

Tom Dorr, special assistant to USDA Secretary Ann Veneman, and Dale Sherwin, state director of USDA Rural Development, made the presentation of the grant in a ceremony at the offices of the Cherry Marketing Institute in DeWitt.

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## DIRECTIONS TO CHERRY MARKETING INSTITUTE

The Cherry Marketing Institute (CMI) is located at 12800 Escanaba Drive in DeWitt (about 1 mile north of the No. 87 Exit off I-69). The CMI offices are in Suite A (to the left as you enter the building); the conference room is straight ahead in the center of the building. If you have any problems finding us, please do not hesitate to contact (Chris or Julie) at 517-669-4264.

**From Downtown Lansing**, take Cedar Street (Old Business 27) north. After you pass the I-69 interchange, continue north about 1 mile to Webb Road (Flap Jack's restaurant on the corner). Turn left on Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.

**From Grand Rapids and west**, take I-96 east to I-69 (head towards Flint). Get off I-69 at Exit 87 (called Business 27 and Old 27). Go north about 1 mile to Webb Road (Flap Jack's restaurant on the corner). Turn left at Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.

**From Marshal, Battle Creek or Kalamazoo**, take I-69 north towards Lansing, then follow I-69 towards Flint. Get off I-69 at Exit 87 (called Business 27 and Old 27). Go left (north) about 1 mile to Webb Road (Flap Jack's restaurant on the corner). Turn left at Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.

**From Clare and north**, take 127 south to Round Lake Road. Turn right on Round Lake and take it 1 mile to Old 27 (at the fork in the road, go to the left and you will come out at the light). Turn left (south) on Old 27; go about 2 miles to Webb Road. Turn right on Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.

**From Flint**, take I-69 west to Exit 87 (Old 27). Go north (right turn) on Old 27 about 1 mile to Webb Road. Turn left on Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.

**From Okemos, Brighton or Detroit**, take I-96 west to 127. Go north on 127. Keep going north on 127 past the MSU and Lansing exits. After you pass the Lake Lansing Road exit, you will come (in about 2 miles) to the I-69 interchange. Follow the signs to Grand Rapids and Fort Wayne, NOT FLINT. As you approach the overpass, you will get in the right lane, go under the overpass, then curve up on the overpass. Once on the overpass, you need to get in the left lane and follow straight away. Stay in that lane and get off at the first exit No.87/Old 27. Go right (north) at the exit about 1 mile to Webb Road (Flap Jack's Restaurant on the corner). Turn left on Webb, then left on Escanaba. We are the second building.