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Cherry, Koivisto Award Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. as "Michigan Agricultural Exporter of the Year"

ZEELAND, Mich. – Today, Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Jr. and Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Don Koivisto awarded Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. of Zeeland as the "Michigan Agriculture Exporter of the Year" for its ability to provide high quality products to their international customers.

"Zeeland Farm Services is an exemplary representation of Michigan's quality agricultural products in the competitive worldwide market," said Cherry. "The company's dedication to promoting sound environmental practices while expanding into untapped foreign markets is good news for our state's growing agriculture industry. I congratulate them on their successes and stand ready to work with other companies looking to export Michigan's agricultural products."

"Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. was chosen because of its strong commitment to providing non-GMO products on an international scale and its prospects of sustained export growth in the future," said Koivisto. "Michigan exports over one-third of its agricultural commodities every year. In 2008, our ag exports generated \$1.68 billion in economic activity and employed over 19,000 residents. Successes like this are the bedrock of increasing Michigan's agricultural products in the global marketplace."

Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. (ZFS) is a family owned and operated business with more than 55 years of service to Michigan's agricultural industry. The company produces premium soy products that are closely monitored from beginning to end. Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. began exporting in 2001 and their export sales continue to grow. They are currently exporting to Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Central America, South America, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. This year they expanded their marketing efforts and began exporting to the Philippines and China.

"Zeeland Farm Services is pleased to have been recognized with the 2010 Michigan Agriculture Exporter of the Year Award," said Cliff Meeuwsen, ZFS president. "Since ZFS began exporting products in 2001, we have seen a healthy growth trend in our export sales. Much time and effort has been put into developing relationships abroad that we hope will last for many years to come. ZFS is truly grateful to all who support us, including Michigan's soybean growers, and we eagerly look forward to increasing the market for soybean products worldwide."

The award review committee consisted of representatives from Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan State University, Van Andel Global Trade Center, and PNC Bank. The

decision was based upon several factors including: marketing plans, ability to expand into new markets, alliances with other organizations, and export sales growth over the last three years. To be eligible, the products had to be more than 50 percent grown, processed, or manufactured in Michigan.

Previous winners include: Walters Gardens, Inc., Zeeland; Honee Bear Canning Company, Lawton; Cooperative Elevator Company, Pigeon; Cherry Central, Traverse City; Michigan Apple Committee, DeWitt; and Graceland Fruit Inc., Frankfort.

For information on Michigan's international marketing programs, contact the MDA at (517) 241-3628 or www.michigan.gov/agexport.

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