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MDARD Recognizes Freeland Bean and Grain Inc. as Michigan's 2026 Agriculture Exporter of the Year

FREELAND, Mich. – Director Tim Boring of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) presented the 2026 Agriculture Exporter of the Year Award to [Freeland Bean and Grain Inc.](https://www.freelandbeanandgrain.com) today at a ceremony held at the company's facility in Freeland.

"Freeland Bean and Grain Inc. is Michigan's Agriculture Exporter of the Year thanks to their team's commitment to opening new markets for Michigan producers, creating economic opportunities for Michigan farmers and helping strengthen communities across our state," said **Director Boring**. "MDARD takes pride in working with companies like Freeland Bean and Grain that show what's possible when Michigan agriculture reaches beyond our borders and brings the value of our products to markets around the world."

Founded in 1983, Freeland Bean and Grain is a locally owned, family-run business that buys and sells corn, soybeans, soft red wheat and edible black beans. The company also provides a variety of agricultural products and services that have enabled them to steadily grow as a full-service agribusiness.

"Winning this award has great significance for our team here at Freeland Bean and Grain because it recognizes the effort and time we've devoted to building strong relationships with customers and growers, and to investing in new technologies and facilities," said **Freeland Bean and Grain Marketing Manager Roger Hupfer**. "As a small company our strengths are extreme customer focus with our growers and our export partners. Being awarded Ag Exporter of the Year is the culmination of years spent executing our vision - providing high quality edible black beans, promoting our brands and growing our export business."

Freeland Bean and Grain first entered international markets in 2005 and now exports Michigan-grown edible black beans to Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru. In 2025, Freeland's exports of edible black beans accounted for a quarter of the company's total annual sales. The company's exports are 100 percent grown in Michigan.

Freeland Bean and Grain's export growth is built on a strong partnership with [Jack's Bean International](https://www.jacksbeaninternational.com), which provides logistical, regulatory and overseas marketing support. In 2024, Freeland for the first time sponsored a booth as part of the MDARD supported Michigan delegation to the [SIAL Paris international food exhibition](https://www.sialparis.com).

MDARD presents the Agriculture Exporter of the Year Award annually to a company recognized for high quality, Michigan-grown products and a strong commitment to exporting. To be eligible for the award, more than 50 percent of a company's product must be grown, processed, or manufactured in Michigan, and exports must contribute significantly to the company's overall growth.

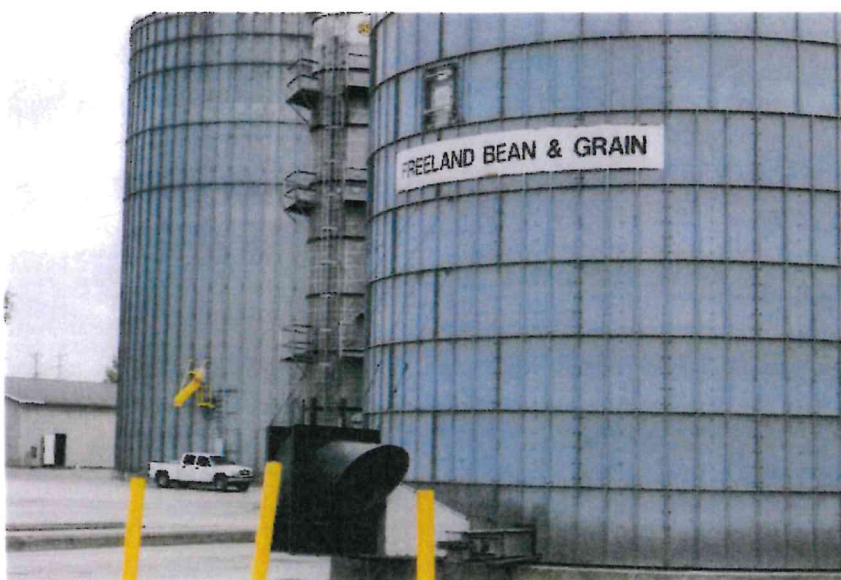
The winner of the Michigan Agriculture Exporter of the Year Award is selected based on export growth, innovation and the pursuit of new export markets. Applications are reviewed and scored by an outside committee representing the [Van Andel Global Trade Center](https://www.vandelglobaltrade.com), [Michigan State University's International Business Center](https://www.msu.edu), the [U.S. Commercial Service's International Trade Administration](https://www.uscommerce.gov) and the [Michigan Economic Development Corporation International Trade Team](https://www.michigan.gov/agexport).

Michigan is one of the most agriculturally diverse states in the nation and is the largest U.S. producer of black beans and six other agricultural commodities. The Great Lakes State is also the nation's second-largest producer of total edible dry beans. Food and agriculture businesses contribute nearly \$126 billion to Michigan's economy each year.

For more information on past winners and MDARD's International Marketing Program, visit [Michigan.gov/AgExport](https://www.michigan.gov/AgExport).



MDARD Director Tim Boring presents the 2026 Ag Exporter of the Year Award to Freeland Bean & Grain Marketing Manager Roger Hupfer at a ceremony in Freeland, MI (August 12, 2026)



Freeland Bean & Grain's facility in Freeland, MI (August 12, 2026)
