

UP Research and Extension Center Field Day

Tuesday, July 23rd 10 AM – 3 PM

Dr. John Biernbaum – Professor, Department of Horticulture and Faculty Coordinator for the MSU Student Organic Farm

John is a professor in the Horticulture Department and, along with the original group of students, is one of the founders of the SOF. He has worked with students, staff and faculty since the farm's inception to secure funding, coordinate special topic classes, and help develop the site and facilities, the CSA and SOF teaching programs. John also initiated the SOF Outreach Program now coordinated by Adam Montri. John teaches courses in greenhouse management, organic farming principles and practices, compost production and use, transplant production, organic certification, culinary and medicinal herbs, and has taught vegetable crop and cutflower production. He does research on year-round diversified organic farming with emphasis on the PSGH. John has also coordinated the certification of the 5 acre MSU CHES Organic Apple Research Plot by OCIA and OGM. He has developed and taught courses on organic transplant production, compost production and use, and winter greenhouse vegetable production for the MOSES Organic University and is currently working on developing on-line courses for these topics. In 2004 he was recognized by the Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance (MOFFA) with their Public Service Award and he is currently a member of the MOFFA Board of Directors.

Jim Isleib – Extension Educator, Alger County, Upper Peninsula Field Crops Educator

Jim covers crop production extension work in the Upper Peninsula Region. He also has state-wide responsibilities in crop disease management for MSU Extension.

Chris Kapp – Research Technician, Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

Chris Kapp has worked at the UP Research and Extension Center for 12 years. He oversees and coordinates all crops research, laboratory and field operations. That work involves designing, planning, administering and executing research experiments and activities. In addition to variety trials, applied research projects focus on forages, small grains, corn, potatoes and biofuels. Kapp graduated from MSU with a B.S. in Crop and Soil Science.

Ashley McFarland – Center Coordinator, Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

Ashley was recently hired to serve as the Coordinator for the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham. There she will serve as a liaison between campus faculty and center staff to conduct integrated crop and livestock research focusing on the improvement of soil health. She will also serve as an Extension Educator in the Greening Michigan Institute in the area of Community Food

Systems. Ashley previously worked for University of Idaho Extension as a natural resource educator for five years and holds a B.A. in Political Science and Environmental Studies from Central College and an M.S. from Iowa State University in Environmental Science and Water Resources.

Paul Naasz – Farm Operations Manager, Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

Paul is the Farm Manager of the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center and oversees the daily activities of the beef herd and farm cropping program. Paul was born and raised on a dairy farm in South Dakota and earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Animal Science from South Dakota State University. He has served as the Farm Manager since 1985.

Dr. Matt Raven – Professor and Coordinator, AgriScience Educator

Matt R. Raven is a Professor in the Department of Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. Dr. Raven received his B.S. in Plant Science as well as his Ag Specialist and Life Science Single Subject teaching credentials from University of California at Davis, his Masters in Agricultural Education from Kansas State University and his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education from The Ohio State University. Prior to Michigan State University he served on the faculty at Montana State University and Mississippi State University. His research interests include instructional technologies and their educational efficacy, teaching and learning in higher education, and knowledge sharing and creation in social networks with emphasis on diffusion and adoption of innovations within an agricultural context. Dr. Raven provides leadership for the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource Education program housed within Community Sustainability.

Dr. Jason Rowntree – Assistant Professor, Beef Cattle and Forage Utilization

Dr. Rowntree's objective is to develop low-cost, low-input beef production systems for the Upper Great Lakes. As Faculty Coordinator of Lake City Experiment Station, his research and extension focuses on forage utilization of grazing beef cattle, extending the grazing season and forage-finishing. Another facet of their work is to improve economics of small and medium size beef producers through local and regional beef production and distribution system development. Bovine tuberculosis is a challenge to northern Michigan beef cattle producers, and they aim to develop holistic approaches to beef cattle and white-tail deer management through selective forage plot establishment, hay feeding and fencing strategies.

Mark Seamon – Extension Educator, Saginaw County, Bioenergy Educator

Mark is a Bioeconomy Innovation Counselor with the Michigan State University Product Center where he assists Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses with the development of new ventures in the bioeconomy industry. This work focuses on developing plant and animal based replacements for petroleum. Bioenergy Crop Production applied research and education is another focus area. Results of the evaluation and management of both new and existing energy crops are shared with the agriculture and energy industry. Mark has fifteen years of experience with MSU Extension. Mark lives on a small farm in Saginaw County with his wife and children.

Michelle Walk – Extension Educator, Chippewa County, Community Development Educator

Michelle Walk is a Community Development Educator with Michigan State University Extension in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Michelle has worked in the community development field for 20 years, including 9 years with MSU Extension. In her current role with MSU Extension she focuses primarily on business development related to tourism and local foods. In addition, Michelle serves as an Innovation Counselor with the MSU Product Center.

Michelle provides leadership and coordination for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Food Hub project and is a co-lead for the Upper Peninsula Food Exchange. She provides technical assistance to farmers and farmers' market vendors on marketing and value-added ventures. In addition she works with connecting farmers to retail, restaurants, schools and institutions interested in sourcing local products. She has a B.S. in Economics from Oakland University and an M.A. in Economics from Michigan State University.

Frank Wardynski – Extension Educator, Ontonagon County, Dairy and Beef Educator

Frank is a Ruminant Extension Educator covering the U.P. with statewide responsibilities in the area of beef cow/calf management. Frank provides educational programming for beef, dairy, sheep and goat production across the U.P. He also has focused educational priorities working with beginning farmers in joint efforts with other U.P. staff teammates with an objective to grow agriculture across the U.P. After graduating with an Animal Science M.S. degree in the area of Ruminant Nutrition from Michigan State University, Frank served as livestock agent in Ionia County for five years. He then moved to the U.P. to raise beef cattle for ten years, before returning to MSU as Ontonagon County Extension Director in 2003.