

*Newaygo County*

**2012 ANNUAL REPORT**

MSU Extension in Newaygo County continues to provide local educational programming and impacts to meet Newaygo County and Michigan's needs. Extension staff members work diligently to reach as many residents as possible each year. Educators and paraprofessionals have worked hard to innovate with creative and inventive ways of providing programming at reduced costs.

This report provides highlights of MSU Extension's work in Newaygo County during 2012 within the structure of our four programmatic Institutes:

- » Greening Michigan Institute
- » Health and Nutrition Institute
- » Children and Youth Institute
- » Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute

MSU Extension has changed in many ways to meet Newaygo County needs since our partnership began in 1913. We have not changed our focus of connecting education and research on campus to the people and businesses in the communities we serve. Thank you for your continued support of this critical partnership.

*Kay Cummings,  
District #5 Coordinator*



*Back: Susan Burkle, Ryan Coffey, Marge Peck, Sandy Risedorph. Front: Renee Carroll, Linda Merrill, Kay Cummings  
Not pictured: Jane Hart and Shirley Ringler*

**Mission**

*Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.*

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**Children & Youth Institute**

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4-H Educator

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4-H Program Coordinator

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**Health & Nutrition Institute**

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*Thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the best research-based tools, Michigan State University Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan, helps communities create and retain important jobs and gives residents and groups the tools to positively impact their cities, towns, townships and the state.*

The Newaygo County Land Use Educator provides our communities with comprehensive land use education for growth management and natural resource protection, to build an informed body of land use decision makers, and to promote intergovernmental cooperation and resource sharing. Ryan Coffey works with our locally elected and appointed officials, agencies, and other community leaders on key issues related to planning and zoning, community development and grant writing.

## Workforce Development

Developing an educated and knowledgeable workforce with skills relevant to current and future needs requires the collaborative efforts of businesses, agencies and educational institutions working to create educational opportunities. The Newaygo Agricultural Technology Initiative (Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties) was established to create educational and employment opportunities in the agricultural sector that meet the needs of our regional agricultural businesses. Local area partners include NCRESA, local school districts, NCEDO, North Central Co-op, Nestle Gerber, Muskegon Community College, MSU and MSU Extension. As a critical part of this initiative, the Newaygo County Land Use Educator developed, compiled and analyzed a survey instrument to identify specific areas of educational need in our region's agricultural sector. The results of this study have led to meetings with area agricultural industry leaders to further define their needs and to develop local curriculum and course offerings through area community colleges. These studies



have garnered the attention of many agencies including the MI Workforce Development Agency, the MI Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, all of whom have provided their support to our efforts. Additionally, several state representatives and senators, and US Senator Debbie Stabenow's office, have met with MSU and MSU Extension and have supported these efforts. As a result of our success,

these efforts have been replicated in two other regions (Mason, Manistee and Lake counties and the greater Kalamazoo region), with two more (greater Flint and Saginaw Bay regions) scheduled in 2013.

## New Economy

**Twenty-four** local government officials and business owners attended an advanced New Economy program in Fremont that provided information and strategies to promote and encourage strategic economic growth locally. Attendees indicated that they had learned strategies that they could incorporate into their decision-making processes to encourage prosperity in their communities. One community is pursuing a highly competitive statewide grant to implement placemaking programs in their community.

## Croton Postal Service Analysis

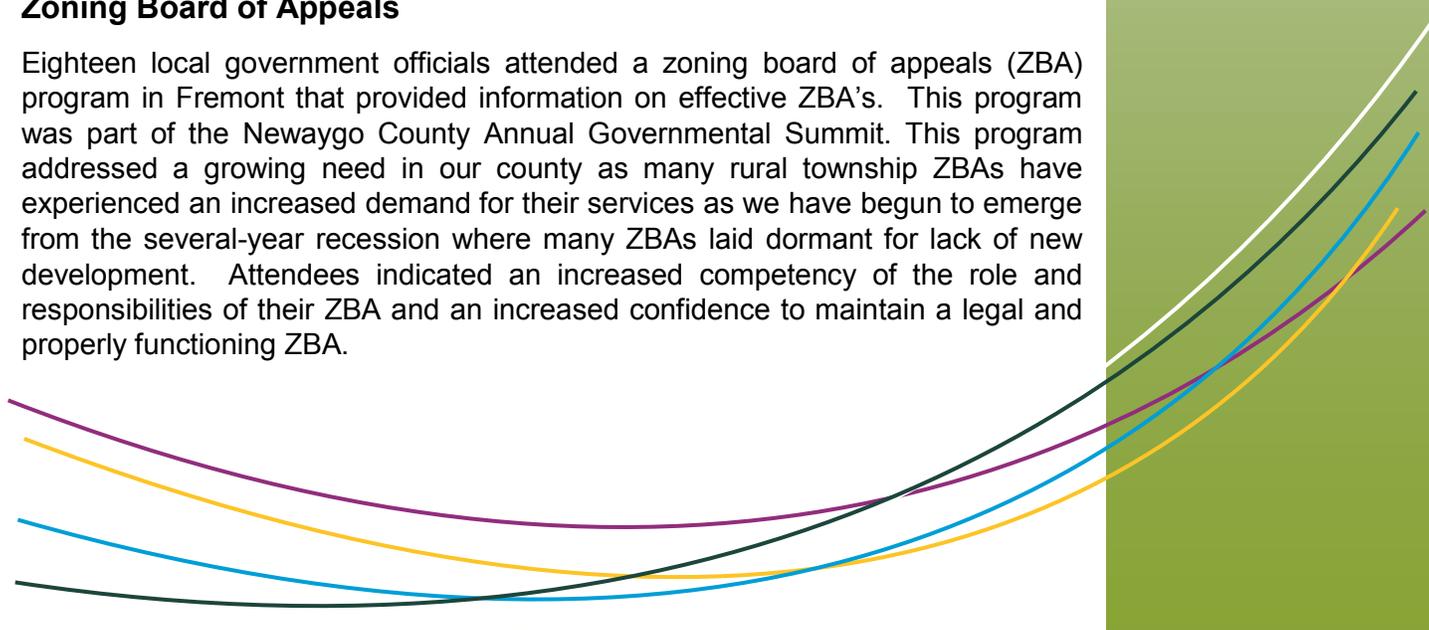
MSU Extension leveraged its on-campus resources to provide expert analysis of Croton Township's satellite postal service station to assist in its future decision whether to continue funding. The report provided by MSU Extension provides a comprehensive, fact-based picture of the station's services and its associated costs and benefits to Croton area residents. This research was presented to concerned community residents at a well-attended public meeting and will assist officials in their decision-making process for the 2013-2014 budget.

## Right-to-Farm Act & GAAMPs

**Twelve** farmers from across Newaygo County attended a day-long Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assistance Program (MAEAP) Certification educational program provided by the Newaygo County Soil Conservation District in partnership with MSU Extension. As part of the MAEAP Certification process, it is critical for local farmers to understand the intricacies and nuances of Michigan's Right-to-Farm Act (RTFA) and its relationship to Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs). As a statewide, court certified expert on RTFA and GAAMPs, Ryan Coffey provided farmers an understanding of legal issues associated with this law to protect their operations.

## Zoning Board of Appeals

Eighteen local government officials attended a zoning board of appeals (ZBA) program in Fremont that provided information on effective ZBA's. This program was part of the Newaygo County Annual Governmental Summit. This program addressed a growing need in our county as many rural township ZBAs have experienced an increased demand for their services as we have begun to emerge from the several-year recession where many ZBAs laid dormant for lack of new development. Attendees indicated an increased competency of the role and responsibilities of their ZBA and an increased confidence to maintain a legal and properly functioning ZBA.



In summary, Mr. Coffey reached **638** elected and appointed officials at the local, county, and state level. He also worked with **112** agriculture operations in Newaygo County (farmers/producers, production/processing facilities, specialty operations). He has collaborated with 26 local, state, federal and non-profit agencies to accomplish his goals.

### New County Commissioner Training & MNCA

Every election year, MSU Extension offers New County Commissioner Training in partnership with MTA. Attending commissioners get an overview of their upcoming role and how county government functions. One hundred and seventy attended statewide. Newaygo County is also a member of the Michigan Northern Counties Association, facilitated by John Amrhein of MSU Extension.

### Cottage Food Law and Beyond

Mary Robb, Extension Educator in Entrepreneurial Development, provided this workshop in May at The Stream in Newaygo, with 17 in attendance. Evaluation results indicated that:

94% agreed or strongly agreed that they had a better understanding of using food safety techniques in the kitchen and had gained knowledge of resources available to them.

100% agreed or strongly agreed that they had a better understanding of The Cottage Food Law, how to market their business, and had gained information they could use immediately

Mary worked with NCEDO and "E-Merge" from Muskegon County to bring a Food Entrepreneurship conference to the Dogwood Center. **Thirty-two** new or existing entrepreneurs attended (25% from Newaygo). Presenters included successful entrepreneurs as well as an MDARD inspector on food business regulation and Made in Michigan promotions .

Mary is also an MSU Product Center counselor. The MSU Product Center ([www.productcenter.msu.edu](http://www.productcenter.msu.edu)) helps Michigan

entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the agriculture, natural resources, and bioeconomy sectors. Mary worked with three individuals in various stages of development from Newaygo County in 2012.



Newaygo residents, as a whole, rank below national levels for good health. High levels of obesity, especially in children; chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer; and low levels of physical activity – all contribute to an unhealthy population, which means higher health care costs and loss of productivity. To help increase health levels, the federally funded Newaygo County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) continued to partner in 2012 with 5-CAP, Tru North, the Commission on Aging, District 10 Health Department, Work First, and WIC, among others.

Staff in 2012 included Linda Merrill, program instructor, Shirley Ringler, program associate, and Jane Hart, supervising educator.

## Project FRESH/Senior Market FRESH



**1,150** Newaygo County residents learned about using, storing and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer of 2012. Project FRESH is conducted in partnership with the Health Department, and Senior Market FRESH is in partnership with the Commission on Aging. Eligible families receive \$30 (WIC) or \$20 (COA) in coupons to be spent at a local farmer's market in exchange for attending an educational workshop provided by MSUE. For many young parents, this is the first time taking advantage of this exceptional source of fresh produce. For the senior citizens, it is a very important boost to their intakes of fruits and vegetables.

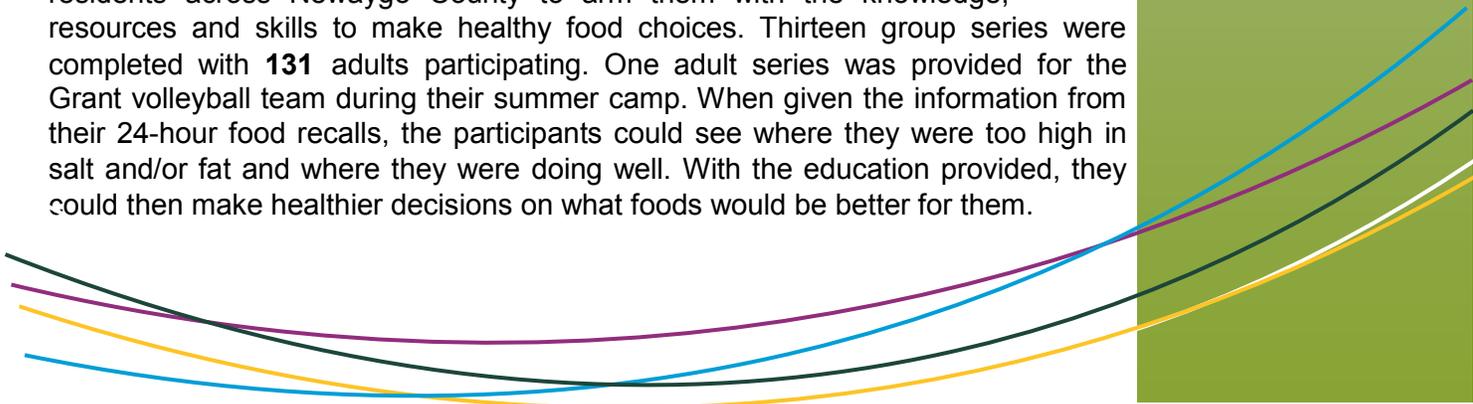
## Cooking for Crowds

In April of 2012, Linda Huyck, extension educator from Montcalm County conducted a *Cooking for Crowds* workshop for Newaygo's Knights of Columbus group, with **21** members attending. This program addresses the food safety and food handling practices of volunteers who occasionally cook for the public as part of their organization's food fundraisers.



## Eating Right is Basic

The SNAP-Ed program provides the *Eating Right is Basic* program to residents across Newaygo County to arm them with the knowledge, resources and skills to make healthy food choices. Thirteen group series were completed with **131** adults participating. One adult series was provided for the Grant volleyball team during their summer camp. When given the information from their 24-hour food recalls, the participants could see where they were too high in salt and/or fat and where they were doing well. With the education provided, they could then make healthier decisions on what foods would be better for them.



### Food Preservation Workshops

Food preservation workshops were held twice last summer for **80** participants. Extension Educator Linda Huyck partnered with 5CAP and Wise Women (Newaygo County health Department) to bring research-based information to those attending to keep families safe.

### Eat Smart, Live Strong

Michigan State University Extension was chosen by the USDA to be a pilot state for testing their *Eat Smart, Live Strong* curriculum for senior citizens. Being chosen to be one of the participating counties and partnering with the Commission on Aging, we were able to facilitate four group series with **28** senior citizens at the meal site in White Cloud. This series consisted of lessons of importance to seniors – including increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables and incorporating physical activity into their everyday lives.

### Food Safety Hot Line

Jane Hart was available all year to answer food safety questions from the public. Both email and phone questions on food preservation and safe food handling were answered. Pressure canner gauges were also checked for accuracy in the Newaygo office by appointment.

### Show Me Nutrition

Both Shirley Ringler and Linda Merrill worked with the schools in Newaygo County using the *Show Me Nutrition* curriculum, and reached **1048** children from preschool to middle school. There were 41 series of lessons completed, which kept them very busy. This curriculum covers everything from fruits and vegetables to body image, and the importance of good nutrition and physical activity throughout. An educational lesson was also delivered to **126** children at the popular Summer Magic program.

### Breastfeeding Education

Funded through a Kellogg Foundation and Fremont Area Foundation grant, the MSU Extension breastfeeding program helps low-income moms (referred by WIC) to be successful at breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is recognized by the American Academy of Pediatrics as the best source of nutrition for infants, and an important contributor to infant health as well as maternal health. Breastfeeding does not always come “naturally”, so some technical support is often needed to get the nursing couple off to a good start and keep going.

Sue Burkle is our Newaygo County Breastfeeding Peer Counselor. She was 50% time in 2012, and served **124** women.

100% of the women she enrolled in the program initiated breastfeeding, 39% were still breastfeeding @ 6 months, 29% still breastfeeding at 12 months and 25% exclusively breastfed for 6 months.



# Children & Youth Institute: 4-H Youth Program

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*4-H helps young people ages 5 to 19 explore their interests through fun, engaging, hands-on learning experiences led by adults who care deeply about youth. Studies demonstrate that the more than 6.5 million youth participating nationally in 4-H do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem, and develop lasting friendships. The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical “learn by doing” experiences encourages youth to experiment, innovate and think independently.*

These numbers represent lives that have been touched and changed as staff, adult volunteers and community workers come together to help “make the best better” through Newaygo County 4-H.

- » Youth in Clubs - 667
- » Special Interest (2 Petting Zoos)- 735
- » School Enrichment Program (Arbor Day) - 900
- » Total reached all programs - 2302
- » Registered 4-H clubs in Newaygo County: 48
- » Direct adult volunteers supporting the county 4-H program: 193
- » New volunteers completing the Volunteer Selection Process: 22
- » Indirect adult volunteers supporting the county 4-H program: 467
- » Projects that 4-H members enrolled in: 8130

The activities of the Newaygo County 4-H program are guided by the 4-H Council, which consists of **sixteen** elected adults and **nine** teens from throughout the county. Funds are raised through the sale of Plat Books, 4-H t-shirts and a silent auction during the Newaygo County Agricultural Fair. The council provides support to local, state and national 4-H programs as well as scholarships to members to attend state and national events such as 4-H Exploration Days, Capitol Experience and Citizenship Washington Focus.



## Michigan 4-H Mission

*Our mission is to create non-formal educational opportunities to help youth thrive in a complex and changing world.*



## Children & Youth Institute: 4-H Youth Program

*"The biggest obstacle that 4-H has helped me to overcome is to be more self-confident in myself. I believe that every child should experience all that 4-H has to offer because with 4-H they too, can, do anything!"*

~Kyle, age 12



Besides the traditional club project areas there are a variety of opportunities for 4-H members. Some unique Newaygo County 4-H annual events include a county-wide Arbor Day Program for all second grade classrooms, and the 4-H Special Riding Program which operates six weeks in the spring and six weeks in the fall. 4-H members also attended the following state programs:

### 4-H Kettunen Center

Over **twenty-five** Newaygo County teens and adults participated in a wide variety of learning experiences at the 4-H conference facility. Newaygo County 4-H Council provides a portion of mileage and registration costs.

### MSU 4-H Exploration Days

A pre-college program designed for career exploration and hands-on learning experiences. 4-H Exploration Days participants from the classes of 2009 to 2011 are currently attending college at a 77% higher rate than their Michigan same-age peers. **Forty-six** Newaygo County 4-H participants and 7 chaperones attended.

### Youth Farm Safety Day

**Fifty** Newaygo County youth participated in this event designed to make them much more knowledgeable on how identify and deal with agricultural related hazards. Participants visited a variety of stations throughout the day that taught them how to stay safe, as well as how to deal with an emergency if it occurs.

### State Animal Science Events at MSU

**Over thirty** Newaygo County 4-Her's attended and/or participated in State Shows sponsored by Michigan State University's Department of Animal Science. Youth gained not only knowledge in animal science and agricultural areas, but also self-confidence and leadership opportunities.

By building on the strengths of youth rather than focusing on their deficits, 4-H is preparing confident, healthy young people who are ready for life's challenges and equipped to resolve conflict through non-violent means. Service learning is an important aspect of 4-H. By giving back to the community, 4-H'ers develop many critical life-skills.

### Child Care Provider Training

Also under the Children and Youth Institute, MSU Extension provides training in human development principles to parents and child care providers. In 2012, **12** Newaygo County child care providers attended training provided by Theresa Silm at an Early Childhood Conference in Howell. Topics were "Raising Young Readers" and "Inquiring Minds Want to Know", (focused on appropriate science activities for pre-schoolers).



*Supporting agriculture is key to a brighter future in Michigan. Michigan State University Extension works to increase farmers' success while protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, reaching new markets and advancing agriculture through applied research.*

## 2012 Fruit Freeze and Drought

Last spring, early season warmth followed by April frosts drastically reduced the Michigan apple crop (estimated 2.9 million bushels statewide compared to 25 million for 2011). In early March, Jeff Andresen, MSU Agricultural Meteorologist, forecast unseasonably hot conditions which would cause plants to begin growth very early. A conference call between fruit, landscape, nursery and consumer horticulture educators and specialists quickly set a plan of action in motion. Articles at MSUE News alerted growers to the unusual conditions and strategies they could use to reduce injury, about the freeze tolerance of tree fruit, and active and passive frost control measures.



Frozen blueberry flowers

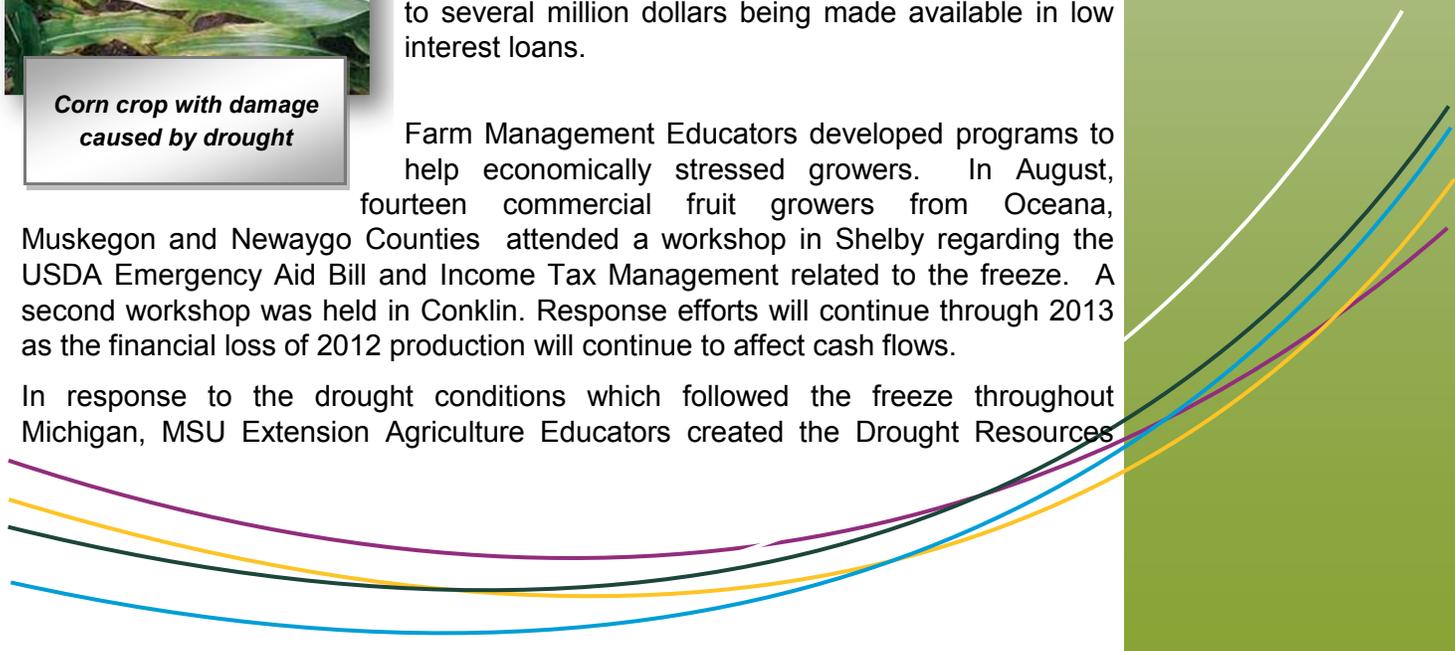
In Newaygo County, Fruit Educators had **two** on-farm meetings with commercial fruit growers (each attended by **10**) to observe new plantings and technology and get an update on pest situations and management efforts. Once the freeze hit, they brought Andresen in to speak on freeze control strategies with wind machines, and developed plans for maintaining fruit trees and vines that had no crop. Educators visited growers to help them assess the damage, discuss their options for pest control and harvest, and assess their emotional and educational needs. They worked with crop insurance loss adjustors and the USDA's Risk Management Agency to expedite crop insurance payments. They worked with Farm Bureau and industry leaders to help set a background that led to several million dollars being made available in low interest loans.



Corn crop with damage caused by drought

Farm Management Educators developed programs to help economically stressed growers. In August, fourteen commercial fruit growers from Oceana, Muskegon and Newaygo Counties attended a workshop in Shelby regarding the USDA Emergency Aid Bill and Income Tax Management related to the freeze. A second workshop was held in Conklin. Response efforts will continue through 2013 as the financial loss of 2012 production will continue to affect cash flows.

In response to the drought conditions which followed the freeze throughout Michigan, MSU Extension Agriculture Educators created the Drought Resources



## Agriculture and Agribusiness

webpage: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/drought\\_resources](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/drought_resources). This valuable resource is available to growers and the public with updated information on a variety of state crops and issues, including: Weather, Field Crops, Forage/pastures, Fruit Crops, and Christmas Trees and Nurseries.

Other educational sessions in 2012 that were available in the county or region and had varying numbers of attendees (1 to 30) from Newaygo County included:

- » Annual Spring Spray Meeting & orchard walks (Apples)
- » Pesticide Applicator Training
- » New and Emerging Corn Pests
- » Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo
- » Cover Crop farm tour
- » Dairy Nutrition and Reproduction
- » Ag Marketing Update
- » Ag Labor Update



Curtis Talley provided individual consultations on cropland cash leasing and year end financial analyses. Several educators have electronic newsletters and updates that are sent on a regular basis, such as the "Landowner Oil and Gas News", "Dairy News", and "Fruit Grower News". Farmers can also call into a central line during the growing season to hear weekly (or more frequently) updated messages about pest and disease emergence.



### Veggies 101

On March 24, The Consumer Horticulture team for MSU Extension offered a day long workshop in Fremont. **Veggies 101**, a six-hour introduction to growing food was created for people involved in community gardening or in food gardening for their family. It covered pre- planning and soil preparation through preservation of the harvest. **Twenty-four** people attended. A grant from the Fremont Area Community Foundation provided program development and lunch costs and reduced registration costs from \$75 to \$10. MSU Extension Educators Beth Clawson and Linda Whitlock were the instructors.