Message from the District Coordinator

In this report, I have the challenge of conveying the scope and importance of the work of a large group of people in diverse program areas into a concise report. This year’s report includes the following information:

- USDA Census of Agriculture report; the new Farm Bill—pages 2 & 3
- Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute highlights—pages 4-10
- Children and Youth Institute—4-H update—pages 11 & 12
- Greening Michigan Institute—pages 13 - 15
- MSU Product Center-Food/Ag/Bio—page 16
- Health and Nutrition Institute—pages 17 & 18
- District 7 Extension Council —page 19
- MSUE staff listing—page 20

I’ve included links to give more information on the value of Michigan State University Extension programs in your community. Please let me know if you need additional information on any of the topics covered in this brief overview of our work in 2014. I think you will be very pleased with the excellent programs provided to residents of Allegan County. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Betty Blake
District 7 Coordinator
The 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture report showed a slight decline in the amount of land in farms in Allegan County, from 275,120 acres in 2007 to 270,282 acres in 2012. During this time period, however, market value of Allegan’s agricultural products sold grew by 46% from $397,533,000 to $580,835,000.

Allegan County ranked #2 in the state in total value of agricultural products sold, #8 in value of crops sold, and #1 in value of livestock and livestock products sold.

MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness programs focus on:

♦ **Increasing productivity and financial solvency** on Michigan farms to increase local, statewide, national and international ripple effects:
  ♦ Farm revenue translates into more dollars spent in local communities, thereby increasing the tax base.
  ♦ Maintaining the vitality of rural communities creates jobs in areas of the state where agriculture is the primary employer.

♦ Production of high quality, safe and affordable food for Michigan residents and for global exports. Non-food crops supply high-quality and high-value products both in and out of state.

♦ Protecting natural resources through programming that targets more efficient use of energy, water, fertilizers, pesticides and nutrients. Increased use of managed energy sources help to ensure clean, abundant water, soil, air and energy resources for future generation.
The 2014 Farm Bill was signed into law by President Obama on February 7 on the campus of Michigan State University. Education for producers was needed on new provisions in the bill. In Allegan County, two programs were held, one in April to give an overview and updates important for agricultural producers to know. The other was held in September with a specific focus for dairy producers.

The April program was a joint effort between MSU Extension, the Allegan County Farm Bureau, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Participants learned new information on major components of the Farm Bill and decisions they would need to make this summer. USDA-NRCS staff spoke about conservation components. More than 30 local producers attended.

The new Farm Bill also ushered in a new 5-year program for dairy producers. Dairy farmers that understand the implications of the new Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP) of the 2014 Farm Bill are likely to make better decisions on risk management, including their participation in the DMPP program. Price risk management has been shown by market history to be a critically important part of dairy farm business management.

Michigan State University Extension offered 12 meetings across the state in September and November including one in Allegan, one in West Olive and one in Kent to help dairy producers evaluate the impact of the new Dairy Margin Protection Program on their farm businesses. Dairy producers:

- learned what the Dairy Margin Protection Program is and how it will work,
- saw a demonstration of the online Dairy Decision Tool Software, and
- learned about the potential impacts on farm profitability.

Dr. Christopher Wolf, MSU Dairy Economist, MSU Extension Dairy Educators and Farm Management Educators taught these 2-hour workshops. USDA Farm Service Agency personnel were also present at the meetings to help answer questions.

“It’s like a Swiss Army knife.”
President Obama 2014
Livestock Producers and Meat Products

Livestock producers in Michigan raise meat products including beef, pork, poultry and lamb. Production practices such as management, nutrition, and animal well-being have implications for meat quality and safety. Additionally, livestock producers that direct market meat need to understand regulations that are in place for such businesses.

Michigan has meat processors that are USDA inspected, custom exempt, and/or retail exempt and regulated by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Because processing practices can impact product quality and safety, meat needs to be processed in a safe manner to provide wholesome meat to consumers.

Dr. Jeannine Schweihofer, MSU Meat Quality Extension Educator, facilitated an educational presentation for Byron Center Meats’ Producer Appreciation Day, held at MSU on 3-22-14. This event was hosted by Steve and Jim Sytsma from Byron Center Meats for producers that have livestock processed at their location.

Dr. Schweihofer presented meat science information and information on cuts of the pork carcass to the livestock producers. Many of these producers direct market meat to customers. The event included tours of the MSU Meat Lab and MSU Beef Farms.

Of the 87 producers participating in the education and tours, 24 were from Allegan County, 27 from Kent and 26 from Ottawa.

Specialized Meat Processing Variance Training

Hundreds of food establishments that process meat products in Michigan will need to obtain a special variance by March 1, 2015 under Food and Drug Administration guidelines. MSU Extension has created a special self-directed online training that educates processors on the variance requirements and application process.

Under the 2009 FDA Food Code, many meat processors will be required to obtain a Specialized Meat Processing at Retail Food Establishments Variance (SMPRV) by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The most commonly affected food establishments include those that are:

- Curing food
- Packing food using reduced-oxygen packaging
- Smoking food as a method of food preservation
- Using food additives as a method of food preservation or to render food nonhazardous.

Allegan County is the #1 producer of:

- hogs and pigs in Michigan—252,000 animals with a market value of $147,000,000.
- Layers and pullets—6.3 million birds with a value of $136,000,000
- #7 producer of cattle and calves with sales value of $19,300,000
- #8 producer of sheep, goats, wool, mohair and milk with sales value of $419,000

USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012

To read Dr. Schweihofer’s articles on MSUE News, click HERE

Dr. Jeannine Schweihofer
MSU Extension
grobbelj@msu.edu
Soybean Research and Education Highlights for Allegan County

Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day on September 25, 2013 in Martin, was a finalist in the National Association of County Agricultural Agents “Search for Excellence” award for crop production programs. MSU Extension team members: Mike Staton, Ned Birkey, Dan Rajzer, Dan Rossman, Bruce MacKellar and Marilyn Thelen.

Reducing the Impacts of Cool, Wet Weather and Delayed Planting: Staton compiled articles with critical information for field crop producers to reduce the adverse effects of the spring 2014 cool, wet weather and planting delays. See the articles on the MSUE website: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/cool_wet_spring_and_delayed_planting

Producing high-yielding soybeans on irrigated coarse-textured soils: Soybean yields have not responded to irrigation water applications as well as corn. Staton led the effort to design an educational program on this issue. Funded by the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and the Indiana Soybean Alliance, the March 2014 program included:

- Agronomic Practices for Irrigated Soybean Production on Coarse-textured Soils - Mike Staton, MSU Extension Soybean Educator
- Soybean Cyst Nematode Management Recommendations for Coarse-textured Soils - Fred Warner, MSU Nematologist
- Managing Soybean Diseases in Irrigated Soybean Production Systems – Mike Staton
- Double Crop Soybeans: Can Irrigation Improve Your Odds? - Dr. Shaun Casteel, Soybean and Wheat Agronomist, Purdue University
- Irrigation Water Management Recommendations for High-yielding Soybeans - Lyndon Kelley, Irrigation Specialist for MSU Extension and Purdue Extension
- Overview and Applicability of Irrigation Scheduling Programs for Michigan and Indiana - Steve Miller, Irrigation Specialist, Michigan State University
- Irrigated Soybean Producer Panel Discussion
  A panel of successful producers of irrigated soybeans sharing what they have learned

Fine-tuning Soybean Maturity Group Recommendations for Michigan: Planting varieties of soybeans from a range of maturity groups reduces risk of yield losses due to pests and environmental stresses. It also reduces harvest loss due to shattering by preventing all fields from being ready to harvest at the same time. Maturity zone data in Michigan had not been updated since the early 1990’s. Mike Staton studied statewide information in the 2009-2013 Michigan Soybean Performance Reports, sorting varieties by maturity and yield. He developed tables showing average yield for the top five varieties in each maturity group by year. This is a part of his overall work analyzing soybean varieties throughout the state. The 2014 tour of the Allegan County variety trial location took place in Hamilton in September.
Research and Education for the Christmas Tree Industry in Allegan County

Two educational events for Christmas tree producers were held in District 7 in 2014—the winter and the summer meetings of the Michigan Christmas Tree Association. The March winter meeting in Grand Rapids was attended by growers from Michigan, Indiana, New York and Ohio. This annual program updates growers on issues and research important to production of Christmas trees, and features many Michigan State University faculty and Extension staff as presenters.

Topics included:

- **Climate Trends in the Great Lakes Region**—Dr. Jeff Andresen, MSU Dept. of Geography—overview of climate variations and trends in the Great Lakes Region and how that may impact Christmas tree production.

- **Spruce Decline – What We Have Learned?**—Dr. Andy Jarosz and Christine McTavish, MSU Dept. of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences—update on spruce decline and results from surveys done in 2013.

- **Performance Characteristics of Insecticides**—Dr. John Wise, MSU Dept. of Entomology—understanding modes of action and performance attributes of various insecticides to help improve the efficacy of pesticide application.

- **Impacts of Weather and pH on Pesticide Efficacy**—Dr. Annemiek Schilder, MSU Dept. of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences—how temperature, leaf wetness, water pH and other factors alter longevity or efficacy of pesticides.

- **Building a Better Christmas Tree**—Dr. Bert Cregg, MSU Depts. Of Forestry and Horticulture—examples of tree improvement including exotic species, hybrids, provenance tests and a review of current genetic work being done at MSU.

Allegan County ranks fifth in Michigan (40th nationally) in dollar value of sales of cut Christmas trees: $811,000.

*USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012*
Research and Education for the Christmas Tree Industry in Allegan County

The summer meeting of the Michigan and Mid-America Christmas Tree Associations was held in July at Peterson’s Riverview Nursery in Allegan County. Michigan State University Extension works with the associations to develop educational programs at the event. More than 400 growers from Michigan and 28 other states attended, including 38 growers and staff from Allegan County.

Programs focus on current research efforts and education on production practices. Also featured were the national Christmas tree and wreath contests, with a farm from Lehighton, PA winning the honor of supplying this year’s Christmas tree to the White House. Twelve farms selected from around the country to enter trees included two from Michigan, one in Montcalm County and one in Oakland County.

Programs presented by MSUE staff included:

- **Optimizing Your Pesticide Decisions**—Erin Lizotte, MSU Extension—Understanding how a pesticide works is critical in making pest management decisions helping growers optimize pesticide selection and timing. Lizotte discussed pesticide mode of action and implications for management.

- **Cover crops**—Christina Curell and Paul Gross, MSU Extension—Choosing and using cover crops to improve soil structure and productivity. An infiltration table demonstrated impact of various cover crops on water movement.

- **Badger Evergreen Field Tour**—Zantello—Dr. Bert Cregg and Dr. Brent Crain, MSU, discussed coning issues of Fraser fir and provided an update on their research efforts to minimize cone production.

- **Badger Evergreen Field Tour**—Klein—Jill O’Donnell, MSU Extension, presented the Four R’s of Nitrogen Success and strategies associated with efficient nitrogen management in Christmas tree production. Erin Lizotte—scouting, monitoring and identifying natural predators as part of a successful Christmas tree IPM program.

- **Badger Evergreen Nursery Tour**—Importance of irrigation system uniformity checks—Tom Dudek, MSU Extension Senior Educator.

- **Armintrout’s Felber Farm Field Tour**— Dr. Dennis Fulbright, MSU Plant pathologist spoke on a variety of disease issues currently experienced in spruce production. This tour featured spruce, fir, hemlock and some exotic conifers.
Education for Pork Producers in Michigan

MSU Extension education programs for pork producers are designed to:

- Improve and protect health status of individual farms, increasing knowledge and implementation of biosecurity practices.
- Enhance producer/employee knowledge about animal housing
- Increase knowledge of good production practices and pork industry standards, improving skill sets of producers, current and future employees

Because of the size and complexity of the swine industry, an event like a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak would present unprecedented challenges. With funding from USDA APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) and the National Pork Board, a Secure Pork Supply Plan is being developed to enhance coordination and communication, speed up a successful response, and support continuity of operations for pork producers should a disease outbreak occur.

The plan will include procedures that pork producers, processors, federal and state agencies agree are feasible to allow for safe movement of animals from farms in an FAD control area to other production sites as long as they have no evidence of infection.

Reaching small/hobby producers can decrease risk of disease spread and better prepare them for health challenges. The success of the “Secure Pork Supply for Michigan” effort is dependent on cooperation of all pork operations, regardless of size. In October, a “Protecting Michigan Show Pigs” meeting was held in Allegan. Twenty-four people attended. The MSUE Pork team collaborated with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan Pork Producers Association on this program. Emphasis was on keeping pigs healthy from disease (Swine Influenza, Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus and Swine Delta Coronavirus) and official identification of exhibition/show pigs. Keynote speaker was Dr. Madonna Benjamin, MSU Extension Swine Veterinarian.

The MSUE Pork Team plans to offer a meeting called “Grow-Finish Production—Viable Pieces of the Business” in Allegan on January 19, 2015. The target audience of this meeting is producers working in the grow-finish phase of production.
Spotted Wing Drosophila update

MSU Extension presented hands-on training in the spring of 2014 to help berry growers respond to the Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD). Workshops were designed to help berry growers, crop scouts and crop consultants prepare for the growing season and included a detailed review of MSU research on modes of action and performance of key insecticides used to protect berries from the pest. This was followed by hands-on training in fly monitoring and identification, trap construction and fruit sampling methods. Workshops were presented by members of MSU’s Department of Entomology and MSU Extension at the MSU Trevor Nichols Research Center in Fennville, MI.

SWD is a great challenge because it attacks a broad range of fruit crops, has high reproductive potential with multiple generations, and is a new invasive pest, so information on its biology is limited. Also, there is VERY low industry/consumer tolerance for fruit infestation. Effective management requires re-tooling of current Integrated Pest Management programs, which is why these workshops are so important to growers.

The meetings consisted of an overview of the SWD situation during the past season, an extensive analysis of the characteristics of the SWD, insecticides used for SWD control in 2013 and characteristics that made those products effective or ineffective. This was followed by a demonstration of morphological characteristics of different Drosophila flies that might be taken for SWD. Trainees used dissection microscopes and hand lenses for SWD identification.

The final portion of the class was a hands-on assignment to develop a workable pest control program for SWD using information previously provided to students. The group was divided into four teams. Each team received a copy of a fictitious spray program that they had to discuss before presenting their conclusions to the whole group. They had to explain, a) what was wrong with the spray program they received, and b) how they would fix the problems, based on the information previously provided.

The value of fruits, tree nuts and berries grown in Allegan County is $15,199,000

USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012

To read Dr. Garcia-Salazar’s MSUE News articles click HERE
The Integrated Pest Management webinar series:

Michigan State University Extension educators Amy Irish-Brown, Mark Longstroth, Duke Elsner, Carlos Garcia Salazar and Erin Lizotte launched this new prerecorded webinar series in the fall of 2013. The series sought to build grower knowledge of integrated pest management practices and resources. This work was supported by funding from North Central SARE (Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education).

You can view this series at: [http://www.ipm.msu.edu/agriculture/integrated_pest_management_academy](http://www.ipm.msu.edu/agriculture/integrated_pest_management_academy)

Initial impact data from this effort is exciting to see. Here are some of the highlights:

- Between 10/14/13 and 8/22/14, there were 1,663 webinar sessions viewed.
- Viewers reported an acreage impact of 1,207,931 acres and represented at least 439 unique visitors.
- Approximately 30% identified as growers, .4% as policy makers, 13% as crop consultants, 20% as landscapers, 10% as agriculture educators, 5% pesticide distributors, 3% students, 19% recreational gardeners and 8% were members of the general public.
- Fifty-five viewers applied for Michigan pesticide recertification credits (140 commercial applicator credits and 63 private applicator credits).

There were 104 attendees from District 7—four from Allegan, eighty-seven from Kent and thirteen from Ottawa.
Allegan 4-H Youth Development Highlights for 2014

Dairy Quiz Bowl: Fifteen youth were part of the Allegan County 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl & Management teams this year. Two 4-H Volunteer leaders coached them through the Dairy Conference in the spring and county practices. For the third year, the Senior Dairy Quiz Bowl team went undefeated at state 4-H Dairy Days competition. They went on to represent Michigan in Louisville, Kentucky at National Competition. One junior team also went undefeated, taking home the state title in the junior division for the first time in three years. Both teams left little room for opponents to answer questions, with the majority of rounds won by wide margins.

4-H Horse 5 Day Clinic: This year’s clinic continued the tradition of excellence with 90 youth and adults participating in riding classes to increase their skills in gymkhana, western riding, and jumping. Ten instructors and six volunteer leaders were involved in planning and conducting this activity.

4-H Beef Carcass contest: Fourteen youth participated in the live and hanging 4-H Beef Carcass contest. Fifty-five people attended the live portion at Wayland Hopkins Livestock Auction where each youth explained how they thought their steer would dress out. The following week, participants met at Byron Center Meats to participate in the hanging portion of the contest where they found out how close they had been on their estimates.

4-H Swine Carcass Contest live show had 22 participants and 50 attendees at the Wayland Hopkins Livestock Auction. Participants were quizzed by age division. More than 40 people attended the hanging carcass show later at Byron Center Meats. Participants viewed the carcasses and saw where they placed. Byron Center Meats provided information about their business, presenting the champion and reserve champion with pork chops. Byron Center Meats received the Friends of 4-H Award earlier in 2014. It was an honor to visit their business.

Citizenship Washington Focus: For the first time since the 1980’s, Allegan had two 4-H members participate in the Citizenship Washington Focus trip to Washington DC. The teens gave a presentation to the 4-H Council in August and are making plans to take their show to clubs to encourage others to attend.
Science Literacy: Robotics growing in Allegan County

Science is the study of the world around us, and is the theory that lies behind all 4-H projects. The Michigan 4-H science and technology program area cuts across all program and project areas. It includes specific projects in 4-H such as aerospace, computers, small engines, electricity, electronics and robotics.

In Allegan County, Michigan State University Extension is involved in partnerships for science, especially in the robotics area. These included:
- A partnership with the Allegan/Van Buren County Math & Science Center, and North Ward elementary resulting in a Science & Engineering Fun Event. Fourteen classrooms were set up with three science or engineering activities in each. Adult volunteers assisted in teaching youth.
- NXT Robotic Training (Lego Mindstorms’ language NXT-G) was held at the Allegan County Math & Science Center. The training was funded in part by an MSU Extension $1,000 legacy grant. The 18 adult participants included educators, a librarian, YMCA staff, a 4-H leader, and MSUE staff.
- MSU Extension facilitated a Science Spark: “Junk Drawer Robotics” 4-H program at the Allegan County District Library, in Allegan. Twenty-two youth and eight adults participated.

Global Leadership: China Art project

MSU Extension educator Janis Brinn is the Michigan 4-H China Art Exchange statewide coordinator. Allegan County has participated in this project for over 25 years. Since 1991, this program has asked Michigan youth to create ‘visual letters’ to send to youth their own ages in China.

Five Allegan County schools participated this year with a total of 1,258 student participants, out of a total of 6,150 in the whole state! Participating counties sent over 400 pieces of artwork to be judged by a volunteer selection committee; the selected pieces would be sent as the exchange to China. Of the 108 pieces sent to China, 24 were from Allegan County. You can see three of the Allegan selections on this page; to see all 108 pieces listed by county, click HERE.
Charter fishing draws tourists to Saugatuck

The charter fishing industry is an important component of the tourism portfolio in coastal towns. According to a national study, Michigan ranks as the second most popular destination for out-of-state anglers. Only Florida draws more fishing tourists. Michigan also ranks third in the nation in terms of overall angler spending. At the local level, this translates to economic impacts that can be calculated using tools developed by Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan State University Extension, and MSU’s Center for Economic Analysis.

For example, Michigan Department of Natural Resources data show that 484 charter fishing trips were taken in Saugatuck in 2013 and 2,249 anglers fished aboard charter boats. Roughly 74% of customers who book charter trips travel specifically to participate in charter fishing. These are the tourists who come for the fishing but stay in hotels, dine at restaurants, and pick up supplies as local stores while they are in town.

For Saugatuck, this equated to $625,555 in gross sales for the 2013 fishing season. Charter angler spending generated 12,894 employment hours and $268,972 in personal income last year in Saugatuck. About 24% of economic impacts were realized in the hospitality industry and restaurants gained 3,042 employment hours due to charter fishing activity.

The Michigan Catch & Cook program is a partnership between Michigan Sea Grant, MSU Extension, Michigan Charter Boat Association, Michigan Restaurant Association, and two state agencies. The partnership provides a unique connection between charter fishing businesses and local restaurants.

Businesses can register online, review food handling guidelines, and allow charter fishing customers to have their catch prepared at a nearby restaurant. The result is a tasty meal of the freshest possible fish and an experience that goes beyond the thrill of the catch. Three charter companies and three restaurants in the Saugatuck area now offer their customers the chance to Catch & Cook.

Big lake fishing requires a seaworthy boat and specialized tackle. Charter fishing businesses provide tourists with a safe and enjoyable experience that does not require owning expensive equipment.

The Chinook salmon is a favorite among charter anglers.

Dr. Dan O'Keefe;
Extension Educator,
Michigan Sea Grant
okeefed@msu.edu

To read Dr. O'Keefe’s articles click HERE.
The future of the Lake Michigan fishery

While the economic impacts of charter fishing in the Saugatuck area held steady from 2012 to 2013, the future of the Lake Michigan fishery and related tourism is uncertain. Around Lake Michigan, catch rates dropped in 2013 and the decrease in Chinook salmon was of particular concern.

Charter anglers in Saugatuck saw a similar trend as the number of Chinook salmon caught fell from 4,462 in 2012 to 1,661 in 2013. Fortunately, fishing for lake trout did much to fill in the gap and the lake trout catch rose from 612 in 2012 to 2,073 in 2013.

The Lake Michigan ecosystem has undergone radical changes in recent years due in part to invasive species like quagga mussel and spiny water flea. High numbers of salmon also contributed to a reduction of prey fish numbers in Lake Michigan, which led to the decision to reduce Chinook salmon stocking by 50% in 2013.

Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State University Extension were instrumental in partnering with angler groups and management agencies participating in the Lake Michigan Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to help anglers understand these changes and voice their opinion. Educational videos, survey results, and related articles are available online.

In Saugatuck, the decline of Chinook salmon catch and increase in lake trout has some anglers concerned for the future. Lake Michigan Chinook salmon catches have varied somewhat from year to year in the past, but in 2004 Lake Huron salmon catches crashed. Although fishing for lake trout and other species remains good to excellent in Lake Huron, the charter industry and related tourism declined by 50% with the loss of Chinook salmon.

While Lake Michigan does not appear to be facing a similar collapse of salmon fishing, there does appear to be a more gradual decline in Chinook salmon catch rates and transition to a greater variety of species in charter catches. What this means for the tourism in Saugatuck and other Lake Michigan ports remains to be seen.

The modern salmon stocking program began in 1966, at a time when invasive baitfish (alewife, shown above) were dying and washing up on beaches in huge numbers.
Money Smart Week

Michigan State University Extension’s Financial Education program strengthens consumers’ decision-making skills. Unbiased financial education programs empower families to manage spending, avoid predatory lenders and increase savings, providing capital for our economy and reducing fraud. Well-informed consumer spending contributes to sustainable economic growth and activity.

The MSU Extension Financial and Home Ownership work group won first place in the 2014 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences competition for their Money Smart Week marketing package.

Money Smart Week is a national campaign that educates consumers about the importance of financial literacy, informs them of where they can get help managing their finances, and provides free educational seminars and activities. MSU Extension has been a key partner in Money Smart Week since 2005, securing more than 25 major media placements for Money Smart Week and numerous mentions in smaller online, print, radio and television media outlets.

In 2014, Jinnifer Ortquist, MSUE Educator for Financial and Homeownership Education, provided Money Management classes for Allegan MI Works throughout the year. Other partnerships begun or expanded during the year included the Martin Area Resource Center, Fennville MI Works and the Allegan County Community Action Agency. In 2015, MSUE will be partnering with the Allegan Library to offer a series of family education programs on Thursday mornings.

Jinnifer Ortquist
Extension Educator
ortquisj@anr.msu.edu

To read Jinnifer Ortquist’s articles click HERE
The MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy.

Our innovation counselors have special training to deliver these services effectively to local residents. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSUE office or the client’s home or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. Innovation counselors also assist clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling and packaging assistance.

A summary of our work in Allegan County in 2014:

- **One hundred four** counseling sessions took place in Allegan County to assist 10 entrepreneurs in starting new businesses and expanding existing businesses.
- Two new business ventures were launched.
- Five of the businesses that were assisted were agricultural producers who were seeking to add value to their existing enterprises.
- Five of the businesses that were assisted were food processors. These businesses were able to access technical expertise in:
  - food product testing,
  - classification,
  - labeling, and
  - packaging.

The partnership between MSUE and the MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio is providing support for entrepreneurs and supporting economic development across the region.
Improving health and nutrition for Michigan residents is the goal of MSU Extension staff in the Health and Nutrition Institute.

In 2014, the focus for our health and nutrition programs in Allegan County was in building or maintaining strong community partnerships to assist us with outreach throughout the community. One of those partnerships was with Intercare WIC as they distributed coupons for Project FRESH, an educational program providing participants with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer’s markets.

WIC Project FRESH is administered by the Michigan Department of Community Health in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Michigan State University Extension. In Allegan County, MSU Extension partnered with Intercare WIC to provide nutrition education to 85 participants receiving Project FRESH benefits in Otsego, Pullman and Wayland.

Women and children up to age 5 (excluding infants) who are enrolled in WIC can get coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables. Women who are either pregnant or breastfeeding are targeted to help meet their special nutritional needs. Each participant receives a book with $30 worth of coupons to buy fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

MSU Extension also partnered with MI Works, Love INC, Baraga Manor (seniors) and Grand Ravine (seniors) to deliver nutrition education in a series format to adults in Allegan County.

Partnership planning for 2015:

MSUE is partnering with the Allegan Library to offer a series of family education programs on Thursday mornings from 10-noon starting January 15, 2015. Programs offered will include: nutrition, parenting, money management, anger management and stress management. Our hope is to build a sense of community by bringing families together at their local library and expanding their network of social supports.
MSU Extension social and emotional health and well-being programs (anger management, bullying prevention, parenting education) help individuals gain skills and behaviors that contribute to healthy relationships. They help young people and adults learn to foster safe, affirming, inclusive relationships and create settings free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. Supporting participation in MSU Extension programs can ultimately benefit society through improved long-term health of individuals, better prepared citizens for the workforce, and reduced costs of violence in communities.

MSU Extension educator Holly Tiret and program instructor Georgina Perry provided a variety of classes during 2014 in Allegan County, including:

Intro to Bullying Prevention and Keeping Kids Safe Parent Caregiver Workshops at Plainwell Community Schools. Sponsor: Child Care Resources in SW MI. 12 child care center staff attended.

RELAX Parent Caregiver Workshops:
- Allegan AESA with Head Start Great Start Collaborative. 25 parents attended.
- Held in Wayland, sponsored by Great Start to Quality SW Region; 5 participants
- Imagination Station Child Care Professional Development Day at Hope College in Holland. 23 early childhood educators working with infants through 5th grade (5 from Allegan)

Nurturing Families Series:
- In partnership with Pathways MI in Holland. Total 14 participants (1 from Allegan)
- In partnership with Pathways MI Western, held at MSUE Allegan County office. 4 out of 5 participants completed all sessions.

Infant and Brain Development: Plainwell Early Childhood Center, Allegan County. 17 participants (12 from Allegan)

Telamon Migrant Head Start Pre-Service all staff training (Sparta): MSUE provides one hour on child development each year. Lesson based on Nurturing Parenting Infant/Toddler Development and Brain Development. Also showed the First Impressions Video on the effects of violence on early brain development. 190 participants (4 from Allegan)
Each district of MSU Extension has an advisory council to assist in a variety of ways. These councils consist of key stakeholders who are leaders in their communities, industries or organizations. There is a balanced membership representation from each of the three counties in District 7.

The Council's composition is a balance among various sectors that Extension educational programming serves. Members were nominated and selected due to their experience with Extension and proven leadership. Members are able to network with others who share similar interests and concerns, help shape Extension programming efforts important to citizens in the district, gather support for establishing or extending educational efforts around issues of concern in the district, and participate in leadership and issue focused educational events.

Members of the District 7 Council include:

- Dave Armintrout (Allegan)
- Nora Balgoyen-Williams (Allegan)
- Patsy Kreuzer (Allegan)
- Max Thiele (Allegan)
- Marv Voss (Allegan)
- Lorraine (Punkin) Shananaquet
- Dick Bethel (Kent)
- John Finkbeiner (Kent)
- Steve Glass (Kent/Ottawa)
- Gary Lemke (Kent)
- Harold Mast (Kent)
- Carrie Jo Roy (Kent)
- Jim Steketee (Kent)
- Herm Witte (Kent)
- Hosie Woods (Kent/Allegan)
- Mary Jane Belter (Ottawa)
- Mike Bronkema (Ottawa)
- Betty Claar (Ottawa)
- Greg DeJong (Ottawa)
- Matt Hehl (Ottawa)
- Yumiko Jakobcic (Ottawa)
- Phil Kuyers (Ottawa)
- John Willcome (Ottawa)
## STAFF DIRECTORY

### Administration:

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<th>Title/Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betty Blase</td>
<td>District Coordinator, Phone 616-304-7191</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blase@msu.edu">blase@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Educators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Brinn</td>
<td>4-H Youth Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brinn@anr.msu.edu">brinn@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina Conklin</td>
<td>MSU Product Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:conkli74@anr.msu.edu">conkli74@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Staton</td>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td><a href="mailto:staton@msu.edu">staton@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Program Coordinators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dian Liepe</td>
<td>4-H</td>
<td><a href="mailto:liepe@anr.msu.edu">liepe@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program Associates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue Elwell</td>
<td>Nutrition Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elwell@anr.msu.edu">elwell@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Kleinjans</td>
<td>Program Instructor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kleinj22@anr.msu.edu">kleinj22@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Support Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronda Foreman</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rforeman@allegancounty.org">rforeman@allegancounty.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Extension Educators Serving Allegan County:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Davidhizar</td>
<td>MSU Product Center Innovation Counselor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:davidhiz@anr.msu.edu">davidhiz@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Dudek</td>
<td>Senior District Extension Horticulture &amp; Marketing</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dudek@msu.edu">dudek@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Ferry</td>
<td>Swine</td>
<td><a href="mailto:franzeli@msu.edu">franzeli@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Finneran</td>
<td>Consumer Horticulture, Landscape &amp; Turf</td>
<td><a href="mailto:finneran@msu.edu">finneran@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Garcia-Salazar</td>
<td>Blueberries; Small Fruit</td>
<td><a href="mailto:garciass4@msu.edu">garciass4@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Goldy</td>
<td>Upland Vegetables, Celery and Onions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:goldy@msu.edu">goldy@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gould</td>
<td>Bioenergy crops</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gouldm@msu.edu">gouldm@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Gould</td>
<td>Beef/Livestock</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gouldk@msu.edu">gouldk@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Guthrie</td>
<td>Equine</td>
<td><a href="mailto:guthri19@msu.edu">guthri19@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Hart</td>
<td>Food Safety</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hartjan@anr.msu.edu">hartjan@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Kantroovich</td>
<td>Farm Management/Financial</td>
<td><a href="mailto:akantrov@msu.edu">akantrov@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin Karcher</td>
<td>Poultry Extension Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dkarcher@msu.edu">dkarcher@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenda Kilpatrick</td>
<td>4-H Youth Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kilpatri@msu.edu">kilpatri@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Longstroth</td>
<td>Blueberries; Small Fruit</td>
<td><a href="mailto:longstr7@msu.edu">longstr7@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce MacKellar</td>
<td>Field Crops</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mackellar@msu.edu">mackellar@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Marino</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marinos1@msu.edu">marinos1@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill O'Donnell</td>
<td>Christmas Trees</td>
<td><a href="mailto:odonne10@msu.edu">odonne10@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan O'Keefe</td>
<td>Michigan Sea Grant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:okeefed@msu.edu">okeefed@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Shane</td>
<td>Tree Fruit</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shane@msu.edu">shane@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Tiret</td>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition, Academic Success</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tiret@msu.edu">tiret@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendra Wills</td>
<td>Community &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:willsk@msu.edu">willsk@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garret Zeigler</td>
<td>Community-Based Food Systems</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zeiglerg@msu.edu">zeiglerg@msu.edu</a></td>
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