



Otsego County

2016–2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Hello from Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) District 14, which serves Alpena, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego, and Presque Isle Counties. We want to thank Otsego County for another year of partnership. Together we offer dynamic and diverse educational events and programs to people right here in our communities. MSUE is the outreach and engagement arm of Michigan State University and brings the latest research from campus directly to you. We believe education and innovative solutions can help address many of today's complex issues. We look forward to our continued service to Otsego County and the State.



The following pages highlight local impacts made possibly by Michigan State University Extension staff through educational programs within the last year. I also want to highlight our Ask an Expert service which is available online through our website (msue.anr.msu.edu) 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Our MSUE Otsego County office staff can also help you use this service. This online tool is used by many Land Grant Universities across the country and allows people to ask Extension and University Faculty questions regarding many topics. The majority of questions asked in Michigan are related to plants and pests, especially during the summer months. When questions are submitted, they are then routed to staff with the appropriate expertise and science based answers are provided. You can see from the chart below that our MSUE District 14 has made good use of this service. Please check out Ask an Expert for yourself. Thank you to Gwyn Shelle of MSUE for this Ask an Expert data.

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MEASURING IMPACT - Michigan Ask an Expert Data 2007-2017

MSUE District Number	Ask an Expert Questions
District 11	3393
District 12	1728
District 8	1704
District 7	1316
District 9	965
District 13	938
District 14	857
District 3	671
District 10	554
District 6	516
District 5	466
District 4	451
District 1	405
District 2	247



Developing Youth and Communities



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.

4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

Growing true leaders

With innovative ideas, exuberant energy and the ability to look beyond preconceived obstacles, youth have the capacity to change the world. However, many lack the skills and confidence to empower these assets into motion. They need experiences and training that help them to feel ready and capable to lead.

Michigan 4-H helps to prepare current and future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for leadership development. From the club experience to statewide youth councils, all youth have the chance to serve in a leadership role. Those experiences and various leadership trainings provide youth with skills to last a lifetime and empower them to stand up today as true leaders in their families, schools and communities.



Newly formed Otsego County Teen Council Goals

- ◆ Community Service
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Fun

Our new youth leadership initiative for 2016-2017 formed a Teen Council to include teens aged 12 through 19. The Teen Council is youth lead and youth driven with adult advisors. The teens wrapped up their first year by sharing at the Otsego County fair promoting youth leadership and leading “Science on a Stick” during kids day.



2016 4-H Members of the Year

Youth Leadership

Building leadership within the Otsego county 4-H community takes shape as we award teen leadership at the 2016 Member/Volunteer Banquet. Our 4-H'ers of the Year worked hard at club leadership, council leadership, and community service. These teens set an example of working together, teaching and mentoring younger members and volunteering for county activities outside of their own 4-H club. Both of these members excelled in their respective animal projects, horse and livestock while mentoring other members. The annual awards banquet recognizes 4-H members and leaders for projects they complete throughout the year and volunteers for their years of service and the many hours of commitment to youth development in our community.

Leadership means more than accepting a position in a club or on council. It means leading by example, teaching others and fostering an attitude of goodwill and cooperation and mentoring younger 4-H members.

Club Enrollment

As the 2016/2017 program year concluded we had a total of 8 4-H clubs that represented 121 youth and 37 adult volunteers.

Proud Equestrian Program

This program serves children, youth and adults from ages 5 to 25 who have a disability. A person is eligible with any disability including, physical, cognitive, emotional or social. Indoor classes were held during the winter months that focused on learning horse parts, tack, raising food for our local food pantry and made fun crafts. As the weather became nice enough to ride, our horse volunteers rallied for the club. Volunteer responsibilities ranged from getting horses ready for the youth to ride by grooming and saddling, to leading the horse and walking beside each youth for safety. The youth learned new riding skills such as balance and sitting up straight, while walking and trotting the horse. The class is divided in half. One group rides and the other group learns about horsemanship, that is, learn parts of the horse, how to groom, what a horse eats, etc., and makes a craft that they can add to their project book to take home. 4-H really does Grow here! This year four youth participated in the Twilight horse show series that is held at the fairgrounds in spring and early summer. This was the first time ever for Proud Equestrians! This summer at the Otsego County Fair, at least 2 of those youth will participate in classes designed for youth with special needs. We cannot thank enough those volunteers who gave so much time to help these kids have an experience that they may not get any place else.



Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play.

Building communication skills for a lifetime

Communication is an essential element of every aspect of life – personal and professional. Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play. Youth who practice and enhance their communication skills in adolescence will find these skills to their advantage in future employment and adulthood.

To help young people develop this important life skill, MSU Extension's Michigan 4-H has made communication an aspect of nearly every area of its programming. Youth are required to record their progress on projects, verbally report their activities and illustrate their understanding in a number of ways. Some Michigan 4-H programs make communication a major focus, further allowing youth to cultivate and enhance these critical skills.



To help our county youth succeed and prepare for their future in the community, 2 local youth and 5 adults attended the Advisory Group retreat held in November at the Kettunen Center. This group's focus was on learning how an Advisory board works within the 4-H program, and how to communicate effectively to help the board enrich the 4-H program within their own county. The emphasis was on supporting the youth to be able to lead these boards and take the initiative to engage themselves in leadership positions. Participants had an opportunity to select from a number of classes for leadership as well as group sessions regarding the 4-H program in the state.



The Otsego County fair provides an avenue for 4-H youth to present their livestock and horse projects. The written project book details the journey of their projects with the journaling of care including feed, medical and other aspects of caring for a market animal or horse. The fruits of their labors show in the results they so proudly display.

Programs like summer camp help keep youth engaged and develop skills such as teamwork, decision making and goal accomplishment that will enhance their chances of future success.

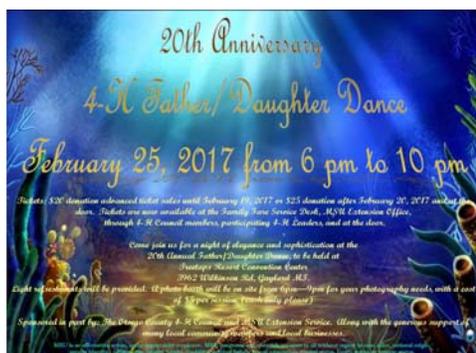
4-H Summer Camps

Otsego 4-H youth joined 4 other counties in presenting Summer Camp 4H2O. This camp focused on the Great lakes. They learned about clean water, eco system, recycling and water safety. The classes also included many subjects that support STEM: science, technology, electronics and math. They also got a good dose of fun. This year, through the fundraising efforts of the Otsego County 4-H council, nine 4-H members were given scholarships to attend with a grand total of 11 youth attending. Four teen counselors from Otsego county made up the leadership team that chaperoned the kids at camp. Their responsibilities encompassed class supervision, cabin leaders and all around fun for the campers. Leadership in focus.

Looking for water bugs and creepy crawlers that live in lakes and rivers.



Otsego county youth campers and counselors



The 4-H council is proud to have held the 20th Annual Father Daughter Dance. Over 800 fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers and their daughters participated at the Treetops resort with the “Under the Sea” theme. This highly anticipated dance is the council’s largest fundraiser. The community support makes this event a huge success!

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.



When you support MSU Extension's efforts to enhance residents' access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food, program participants will focus on food safety measures in the field and at harvest, learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, and bring community partners together to strengthen access to healthy food supplies. This leads to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

Reducing foodborne illness through education of individuals, small businesses

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. Since 2013, MSU Extension food safety and preservation programs have taught almost 10,500 Michigan residents safe food handling, food preservation and methods to reduce foodborne illness.

Through face-to-face and online learning, Michigan communities receive high-quality, research-based education using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe food preservation.

The Food Safety Team has been presenting the Michigan Cottage Food Law to potential entrepreneurs as one of their signature programs. In the past year Karen Fifield and Wendy Wieland have been working together with a few local women to increase their skills in this endeavor.

The Cottage Food Law provides an exemption for Michigan citizens to use their own kitchen as an unlicensed facility to produce a product to sell. Usually this program is presented as a one or two hour program. With this group Karen and Wendy created a four week series that gave the participants a complete hands-on experience creating their own cottage food business. The series encompassed:

- Overview of the cottage food industry
- What the law allows
- Food safety awareness
- Proper labeling
- Bookkeeping methods



The series concluded with participants ready to market their product of grape jelly complete with their own label!

Ensuring Strong Communities



The Otsego County Community and Economic Development Network is ready for action, and housing is the first topic they have chosen to address. Stay tuned for further success stories from Otsego County.

“Proactive about strategic growth to maintain and grow quality of life”

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults.

Otsego County Community & Economic Development Network

- ◆ Proactive about Growth
- ◆ Maintain and Grow Quality of Life
- ◆ Build Shared Community Mission and Vision
- ◆ Think Tank and sounding board for community organizations

Imagine a network of people representing government, business and non-profit organizations from across Otsego County investing in a cooperative effort to encourage community growth and solve community problems.

That desire was the genesis of the Otsego County Community and Economic Development Network, referred to locally as the Community and Economic Development Network. A dozen individuals, representing nearly as many organizations, and sponsored by the Otsego County Community Foundation (OCCF), launched the Community and Economic Development Network in 2016, initially to enhance communication between their organizations.

As they spent time building relationships, they felt a need to clarify their roles in this new network, and to actively engage in efforts to make the Gaylord area an even better place to live than it already is. They asked MSU Extension to help. OCCF Executive Director Dana Bensinger, and Extension Educator John Amrhein developed a facilitation process designed to clarify the purpose of the Community and Economic Development Network. Amrhein facilitated two subsequent discussions.

The first step in the process resulted in a clear statement of purpose, and also identified a need to define a structure for operation, and discussed some opportunities for action in the community. Step two yielded a strong consensus that the network needed to be nimble, with an informal and minimal structure to keep their focus on positive action. The result of the second session was a one-page bylaws-like document that defines membership, outlines a few specific roles and responsibilities for all, and a meeting structure focused on action to make positive contributions to an already growing northern Michigan community.



Communicating Through Conflict

It is especially important in today's polarized society and stressful workplaces to develop skills that can help facilitate a comfortable approach to conflict, an approach that builds and maintains positive relationships. Communicating through Conflict workshops include relevant framework and discussion that provide participants with tools and techniques to manage conflict situations more effectively.

In October, two 3 hour sessions were held for 29 elected officials and county employees of Otsego county government. Evaluations indicated all participants strongly agreed or agreed that the session was valuable for their professional growth and development.

In February, fourteen employees and volunteers from Huron Pines attended the Communicating through Conflict workshop with the following testimonials:

- ⇒ "I will use these skills when addressing issue with customers and partners."
- ⇒ "It was most valuable to focus on the facts and not just jump into problem resolution." "Being more mindful of the facts of a conflict."
- ⇒ "This workshop was very interesting and fun."
- ⇒ "I found identifying positions and interests most valuable, especially how they can be used to move through conflict."
- ⇒ "The handout model is very valuable."

Participants :

- Achieve a deeper understanding of the continuum of conflict management options and approaches.
- Gain conflict resolution skills designed to preserve relationships, create a safe environment for continued dialogue and develop a shared decision.
- Learn approaches to active listening and how to choose strategies aimed at finding a mutual purpose.
- Discern how to recognize interests behind strongly held positions.
- Become aware of when to apologize and when to use a contrasting statement.
- Receive a document with easy-to-follow steps for Communicating through Conflict.

Keeping People Healthy



After a store tour with a Patriot Place Cooking Matters class, one participant shared that he thought it was easy since he'd been reading labels a lot more. At our last session, another participant admitted he wasn't excited to come at first, but really ended up enjoying the class and learned a lot!

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

MSU Extension's SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed) programs including Cooking Matters, Eat Healthy. Be Active, Jump Into Foods and Fitness, Healthy Harvest and Show Me Nutrition teach Bridge Card eligible adults and children

- ◆ how to make the most of their food dollars
- ◆ developing skills such as menu planning
- ◆ understanding recipes
- ◆ food preparation and keeping food safe

Between January 2016 and December 2016, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed programs were presented to 804 adults and youth in Otsego County.

- ⇒ 25 adults and 563 youth participated in a six-week series of nutrition lessons.
- ⇒ 216 adults participated in a one-time lesson on healthy lifestyle choices.
- ⇒ 3,693 contacts were made with adults and youth in 2016-17.

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

MSU Extension is serving 604 children and families weekly in the Tip of the Mitt area through a partnership with Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. As part of the backpack programs of food distributed for the weekends, children and families receive recipes, resources and information to make a healthier choice an easier choice.



Alpena County- 6 schools- 268 children
Otsego County- 1 school- 120 children
Montmorency County- 2 schools- 72 children
Presque Isle County- 1 school- 48 children
Cheboygan County- 2 schools- 96 children

MSU Extension serves to connect and partner with individual agencies and the group as a whole by offering bullying prevention, alternatives to anger, stress reduction through mindfulness, and parenting education.



Group leaders replied to surveys saying, “Attitudes have greatly improved.” and “Students seem to be more open to sharing experiences with their peers.” “Threatening situations aren’t escalating.”



Collaborating to foster social-emotional wellness

Great Start Collaborative (<http://greatstarttoquality.org/>) is a monthly meeting of Intermediate School District staff, local school district staff, Headstart/Early Headstart, Health Department staff, and Human Service agencies working together on strategies to Strengthen Families through building up Protective Factors known to reduce abuse & neglect:

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Nurturing Parenting

In September, the Otsego County Department of Health and Human Services partnered with MSU Extension to refer and host weekly Nurturing Parenting Classes. To date we’ve reached

- 22 parents for six weekly sessions
- Partnerships have expanded to Wellspring Lutheran Services, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Crawford county referrals and attendees.
- Participants practice: communication skills, discipline strategies, praise and self-worth while learning about brain development, empathy and self-care.

RELAX: Alternatives to Anger

- ◇ Otsego County Juvenile Probation Department partnered with MSU Extension for a five part series for both parents and youth reaching 12 parents and teens.
- ◇ Participants learned how to recognize anger signals, empathize, listen, accept that anger is not about them and the power of forgiveness.
- ◇ Some of the teens had also participated in the Healthy Living relationship sessions where they defined healthy and unhealthy characteristics and displayed their learning by painting rain barrels in their garden at the Alpine Center.

BE Safe at Vanderbilt Area Schools

Safe Affirming and Fair Environment focus areas of human differences, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, moving from bystanders to allies and critical media consumer. Two high school students plan and implement session for 36 Fifth-Eighth grade students. Through games, videos, scenarios and activities teens practice skills and gain knowledge about creating healthy relationships and decreasing unhealthy interactions.



Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Disease Prevention and Management

Michigan State University Extension Disease Prevention and Management programs provide participants with strategies to improve the quality of their diets, manage chronic health conditions and reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes. Access to high-quality and affordable disease prevention and management education programs such as those that MSU Extension provides is essential to saving lives, reducing disabilities and lowering the costs of everyone's medical care. In 2016/2017, MSU Extension disease prevention and management programming reached over 6,000 Michigan residents.

Chronic diseases are among the most prevalent, costly and preventable of all health issues. Eighty-two percent of older adults have at least one chronic health condition. Chronic diseases such as diabetes increase the financial burden on the healthcare system. Diabetes is a chronic disease of critical concern. Michigan ranks 22nd out of 50 states in the nation for prevalence of diabetes and 17th nationally for obesity.

According to the latest CDC data:

- Otsego County has 33% obesity which leads to chronic disease such as heart disease, strokes and diabetes.
- In Otsego county 22% of the adults are physically inactive. Therefore, the Disease Prevention and Management team has taught classes that will help the quality of life for Otsego county residents.



MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

A Matter of Balance

- ⇒ teaches safe exercises for strength, balance and safety in the home.
- ⇒ the eight session class helps participants assess their homes and make them safer.
- ⇒ 2 classes were conducted in Otsego County.

The National Diabetes Prevention Program is a yearlong weight loss program for those that are pre diabetes. The program shows you how to make better food choices, be more physically active and find helpful ways to cope with problems and stress. Participants work with a trained lifestyle coach and a small group of people with common goals. MSU Extension partnered with Otsego Memorial Hospital to deliver classes.

Dining with Diabetes is a four session program when participants learn to make healthy food choices and incorporate balanced menus into the family dining experience. MSU extension hosted two Dining with Diabetes series.

Michigan State University also offered to seniors the **RELAX and Mindfulness Programs** to help reduce stress in the participants lives through being aware of thoughts, learning to develop action plans, breathing techniques, healthy eating habits and even laughter! MSU Extension conducted one of each of these programs in Otsego County.



Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.



When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

Bioblitz-Environmental Learning Center and Aspen Park

MSU Extension Educators Brandon Schroeder and Julie Crick in partnership with the University Center at Gaylord contributed to this National Geographic Event. Bioblitz is a super charged science-based event that invites people to visit a specific area to record the variety of living things, or the biodiversity, of the area. The July 22 event was sponsored by the University Center (U. C.) in Gaylord and answers the call from the National Geographic Society and the National Parks Service for every state to host a Bioblitz in 2017.

Bioblitz participants used the iNaturalist app on their phone or tablet to upload and identify pictures of living things. Using the same app for Bioblitz events around the world allows all the data to be stored in one place, giving participants, as well as scientists, a chance to explore the biodiversity on our planet.

The Gaylord Bioblitz featured something fun for the entire family! Guided nature hikes with expert scientists helped find and identify some of the more curious creatures and vegetation in the area. Participants had the chance to learn more about the programs that can help us all work to improve Michigan's natural resources. Michigan State University Extension and Michigan Sea Grant Educators led scheduled demonstrations on how to collect professional scientific data related respectively to aquatic species and forestry.

Forestry

MSUE Natural Resources Educator, Julie Crick works closely with the Forestry Assistance Program Forester in Otsego County. Together with the Otsego Conservation District we increase awareness of forest health issues.



Supporting Food and Agriculture



The MSU Extension agriculture program in Northeast Michigan leveraged \$231,000 in external funding and generated over \$104,300 in savings or added revenue for producers in 2016.



Michigan agriculture continues to be a diverse and thriving segment of the state's economy. When you support MSU Extension, you help producers develop efficient farming practices that optimize the use of inputs to enhance productivity while protecting soil and water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, which helps retain and create agricultural jobs. Together, these measures strengthen Michigan's economy, encouraging growth of a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

On-farm research and outreach

On-farm research and outreach bring locally relevant research-based information directly to producers. During the 2016 growing season, MSU Extension Presque Isle Co. collaborated with colleagues, industry partners and growers to complete eleven on-farm research projects investigating crop varieties and management practices that may improve the productivity and sustainability of crop production on Northeast MI farms. In order to share information regarding these projects, **eight local outreach events** were organized including field days and meetings reaching a total of **243 growers and other stakeholders**. In addition, **21 articles** were published on the MSU Extension website, through local media outlets and our Northern Farm and Field Newsletter reaching over **580 contacts on a bimonthly basis**. Notable findings/outcomes of these research projects have included the following:

- A sulfur fertility study showed that growers can increase hay yields and net income by as much as one ton and \$81 per acre by applying gypsum to sulfur deficient stands.
- A second year of malting barley variety trials showed that environmental conditions in Northeast MI are exceptional for producing high quality malting barley for the craft brewing sector.
- Three site years of wheat trials showed that growers can reduce fertilizer and pesticide inputs without significantly reducing wheat yields, increasing net income by as much as \$76 per acre.
- 78% of producers attending our 2016 Northeast MI On-farm Research Review reported that they intend to change their management practices based on the research results received, which they expect to generate an average of \$14 per acre in savings or added revenue, or \$38,635 total, during 2017.

Stripe rust infested wheat across Michigan in 2016.

Resources from MSU Extension helped growers learn how to manage this new fungal disease.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Wildlife damage management

Since 2013, MSU Extension Presque Isle Co. has partnered with wildlife management agencies, producers and other stakeholders to address the technically and socially complex issue of wildlife damage in Michigan agriculture (crop depredation and bovine tuberculosis (TB)). Conover (2002) estimated that wildlife-related economic losses to farmers and ranchers in the United States exceed \$4.5 billion annually. Exclusion research conducted by MSU Extension found that soybean yield loss to white-tailed deer feeding in Presque Isle Co. averaged 10% or 3.89 bushels per acre in 2015, with a farm gate economic impact of -\$307,388. A combination of education, technical and financial assistance is needed to address wildlife damage. In 2016, MSU Extension's efforts were expanded in the following ways:

- \$100,000 was distributed through two DNR grant programs funding 31 habitat modification projects with the goal of reducing transmission of bovine TB and crop damage caused by deer in Northeast MI.
- 18 beef cattle and dairy farms in the bovine TB zone (DMU 452) were assessed by teams of public agency staff, including MSU Extension, under the new Enhanced Wildlife Risk Mitigation program to identify and prioritize potential TB risks that can be addressed with management changes, supported by \$1 million in government cost share funding, pending approval.
- Wildlife damage management sessions were offered at Michigan's three premier producer conferences in 2016-17 reaching a total of 142 participants, of which 63% rated wildlife damage as important or critically important, and 83% reported learning something new about wildlife damage management to apply on their farm.

Field crops webinar series

In 2016, MSU Extension offered six one-hour webinars as part of the fourth annual Field Crops Webinar Series. The program was designed to share key production points from MSUE's traditional winter meetings with underserved audiences that cannot attend in-person programs due to geography, scheduling or ability. 110 individuals from 38 Michigan counties, five other states and Ontario participated in the program, resulting in 355 live webinar views.

- Evaluation of this program revealed that at least 9,921 acres of field crops and forage were exposed to practices that mitigate risk, increase yield, improve quality, or decrease inputs as a result of the series, generating a total of \$46,650 in savings or added revenue during 2016.
- This program is one of very few opportunities for certified pesticide applicators to earn MDARD recertification credits online, and participants earned a total of 229 credits by participating in the series.
- One participant commented, "I'm an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces and have an ADA-protected disability. With a day job and a disability, these webinars make the information of Michigan State University more accessible to me."



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued



The Alpine Master Gardeners Association in Otsego county provides many opportunities throughout the year for continuing education. In 2016 their members accumulated over 467 educational hours and contributed over 3,607 volunteer hours in our community!



Advanced Master Gardener Expertise

Each year, thousands of Michigan gardeners use the MSU Extension Garden Hotline, 888-MSUE-4MI (888-678-3464), to help them make wise decisions about their garden, lawn and landscape problems. The toll-free number directs callers to a specialized team of Advanced Master Gardeners who can answer questions, identify plants and pest problems, and help callers understand their pest control options.



The Otsego county MSUE office sold over 60 soil test kits during the year to provide residents with the needed information about soil pH, lime and available nutrient levels along with fertilizer recommendations.

The MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Laboratory (SPNL) operates as an integral part of Michigan State University providing support to teaching, research and extension programs. The SPNL offers a variety of analytical services on samples of soil, greenhouse growth media, composts, plant tissue, water and other materials related to the growing of plants (crops) received from commercial and part-time farmers, greenhouse operations, golf courses, homeowners, consultants, researchers, and others.

Extension Educators Serving Otsego County

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