MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is serving the residents of Missaukee County by providing a variety of programs and resources to help people achieve their greatest potential. We offer a variety of resources through our Land Grant University. Whether it is a youth program designed to help kids learn responsibility, or disease identification for a grower’s specialty crop, we’ve got the backing of researchers and specialists on campus and across the state in each Extension office.

Our staff is trained to connect people to the resources they need to grow food for their family, to prepare food safely and efficiently, to provide nutritious meals for their family, to work together to find common goals, and to help grow our communities.

In this day and age, a simple Google search brings up “answers” to life’s many questions. It’s easy to get answers. But are they the right ones? How do we know what will work best for us? That’s a whole new challenge, and one that we are prepared to handle. We’ll help you navigate the wild frontier out there.

Along the same line, technology has provided us with opportunities to teach from a distance. It allows participants to learn in their spare time, on their own schedule, and from the comforts of their own home or farm. MSU Extension provides many opportunities for online learning, as well as the traditional classroom style, office appointment, phone call, or farm visit. Throughout the years we have adjusted our methods to meet the needs of the changing world, but we hold on to some traditional values of face to face interactions and “hands-on” learning.

Whatever the need, we are here to serve you. We will do our best to provide you with the information you need to make your life better. Whether it’s health, agriculture, entrepreneurship, or teaching youth skills to carry forward throughout their lives, the cooperative extension service extends the research of the university while meeting the needs of the local community.

We thank our local governments, partners, and residents for providing us with the needed resources to maintain a local office, a strong 4-H program, and a touchpoint for local service.

Shari Spelman
District Coordinator

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Measuring Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>4-H Club Members</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-H Special Interest Program</td>
<td>927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Youth Served (unduplicated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition Programs for Underserved</td>
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<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Consumer Horticulture</td>
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<td>Early Childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Health and Nutrition</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comm &amp; Economic Dev, Nat’l Resources</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>

MSU EXTENSION’S DIGITAL REACH

District 6 Digital Reach
From Jan 1, 2016, to Dec 31, 2016, 51,592 visitors from the 7 county district viewed more than 138,129 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website (msue.msu.edu). Of those, 52.1 percent were first-time visitors. Search engine rankings make msue.msu.edu one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

More than 3.7 million visitors viewed more than 7.2 million pages.
1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were sent to about 16,900 email addresses.
MSU Extension has more than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.
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). 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.

In the past year in Missaukee County:
- 8 youth attended 4-H Exploration Days on MSU Campus
- Over 200 youth attended the Regional Swine Workshop
- Over 500 fifth graders went to Geers Farm for the annual Farm to Field Day
- 500 meals were served during the annual 4-H Chicken Barbeque
Missaukee 4-H Program Ag Show Classes

Working together with the Missaukee Agriculture Youth Show, Missaukee 4-H set up 6 programs for 4-H and other fair youth on topics as follows:

- Swine
- Goat and Dog Showmanship
- Dairy Fitting and Showing
- Equine Fitting and Showing
- Livestock Nutrition

Exploration Days

8 Youth and 2 chaperones attended 4-H Exploration Days in June. Exploration Days is Michigan State University Extension’s pre-college experience that allows youth to stay in dorm rooms on the MSU campus and learn to navigate the campus as they attend classes on over 200 education sessions. Classes are active and teach youth in a wide variety of subjects from science engineering & technology, outdoor adventure, recreational sports, cooking sewing, citizenship, leadership & service, personal life skills development, and much more. Students that attend Exploration Days are much more likely to attend higher education than other students.

Fair

Always a big event for the summer is the Missaukee Agriculture Youth Show! Held the first full week of August, 4-H’ers and other area youth enjoy the comradery and competition during fair. The lessons learned in fair completion such as leadership, organization, responsibility, sportsmanship, working together, learning and striving for excellence are life skills that help them prepare to be successful and valuable adults in their lifelong pursuits.

4-H Fundraiser

The Missaukee 4-H Advisory Council, 4-H Volunteers, and 4-H youth all work together to feed 500 meals during the annual 4-H Chicken Barbeque at the Missaukee Agriculture Youth Show. It is the biggest single fundraising event of the year.
Regional Swine Workshop

2016 kicked off in great fashion with a Regional Swine Workshop, with MSU Extension Pork Team members Tom Guthrie and Beth Ferry presenting to a packed house on “Everything you wanted to know about your Market Swine Project”, including:

- Selecting your animal
- Nutrition information
- Feeding tips
- Housing and proper handling

Over 200 area youth and parents attended from Missaukee, Osceola, and Wexford Counties.

Farm to Field Day

Each year Missaukee 4-H partners with the Missaukee Conservation District, Missaukee Farm Bureau, and Geers Farm for the annual Farm to Field Day. Approximately 500 area 5th Graders attend from Cadillac, McBain, Lake City, and Northern Michigan Christian schools. Missaukee County 4-H hosts the small animal station where the youth are introduced to a variety of animals and learn about their care and usefulness. Interesting fun facts are shared about rabbits, goats, chickens, donkeys, swine and sheep.
Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

Limited income and poor nutrition affect quality of life and can increase healthcare costs. MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to help residents in urban and rural communities stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education is funded through a statewide grant from the Federal Government (Farm Bill). “SNAP-Ed” plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition among low-income individuals.

The following programs were delivered in Missaukee County in 2016:

- **Show Me Nutrition** – used for Pre-K through Jr. High – each level adds to previous instructions and exposes children to healthy food, physical activity, body image and media influence through instructions, activities and sampling.
- **Cooking Matters** – this curriculum has material catered to teens, adults, families, and parents, and includes both a nutrition lesson and cooking instructions
- **Project FRESH** – encourages participants of the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program to eat more Michigan grown fruits and vegetables
- **JIFF (Jump Into Food and Fitness)**
- **Ten Tips to a Great Plate** – from the USDA’s Choose MyPlate

**Outcomes:**

- 79% of youth participants improved their abilities or gained knowledge about how to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Guidelines.
- 79% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one nutrition practice, such as preparing foods without adding salt, or using the Nutrition Facts labels to make food choices.
Optimizing Dairy Farm Profit

This program provided by MSU Extension dairy educators and MSUE farm management educators highlighted information relevant to dairy farms staying profitable with low milk prices in 2016. Presentations focused on a variety of topics that can impact a farm’s bottom line.

Participants learned about key financial indicators to monitor on dairy farms and the major differences between high and low profit farms. Several critical factors for successful dairy herd management were highlighted, including heifer raising strategies, optimum stocking density in dairy cow housing, labor productivity on farms, and benefits of custom forage harvesting.

A total of 15 people from Missaukee County attended this meeting on February 25, 2016. The most commonly listed changes that participants intended to make were using partial budgets and cash flow budgets for improved financial planning, increasing labor efficiency, and identifying bottlenecks in herd management.

Ag Marketing Update

This program, held at the Lake City Research Center on March 30, 2016, provided an update on ag markets that are important to dairy producers, including the dairy and grains markets. In addition, a tool that evaluates the level of financial stress on dairy farms was demonstrated. Speakers were Dr. Chris Wolf and Dr. Jim Hilker, MSU Dept. of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics.

Dairy Nutrition Roundtable Discussions

The roundtable was held on November 28, 2016 at the Lake City Research Center. It provided an open forum for participants to discuss current issues in dairy cattle feeding and nutrition. This session was attended by 6 dairy nutritionists and feed company reps that serve dairy farmers in Missaukee County. Participants asked questions of the MSU dairy nutrition researchers and specialists (Drs. Beede, Allen and Lock) as well as to their peers.
**Veterinary Feed Directive Informational Meeting**

The Veterinary Feed Directives changes that took effect on Jan. 1, 2017 have limited the use of some antimicrobials administered in feed and require veterinary oversight to obtain these products. The meeting was held to provide an opportunity for dairy producers, farm employees and industry professionals to learn about what actions were needed to be prepared for the changes.

A meeting was held on November 9, 2016 in Cadillac and was attended by 9 people from Missaukee County (dairy farmers, feed company representatives and veterinarians). This program highlighted information relevant to changes in the Veterinary Feed Directive. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion led by local veterinarians, nutritionists and feed mill managers.

**Cover Crops and Soils**

Together with the Osceola Soil Conservation District, MSU Extension educators provided field days for growers and agency staff from surrounding counties. On September 20, the event took place at two farms in the McBain and Marion area. The annual field day addressed soil health and cover crop management. Tours of cover crop demonstration plots included several varieties of seed mixes established on harvested corn silage and wheat fields in a potato rotation. Visiting two fields, educators spoke about cover crops in different management systems.

A follow up classroom session allowed for presentations about various USDA programs.

**IPM Academy Online Webinar Series**

Michigan State University Extension offers a series of free, on-demand integrated pest management webinars. Viewers are able to request up to five recertification credits toward their pesticide applicators license in the state of Michigan. Over time, a number of webinars have been added and there are currently 17 webinars available, including:

- Becoming an Insect Investigator
- Growing Bee-Friendly Plants in the Greenhouse
- Hop IPM
- Chestnut IPM
- Integrated Pest Management Resources
- Plant Pathology 101
- Plant Science 101
- Insect Scouting in Fruit Crops
- Top Diseases and Insects in Nursery Crops
- Tactics for Vegetable Disease Management
- What’s Wrong with My Vegetable Plants?
- Introduction to Integrated Pest Management
- Entomology 101
- Soil Science 101
- Pesticides 101

Between 10/3/2015 and 1/1/2017, there were 1,778 webinar sessions viewed. Viewers reported an acreage impact of 717,906 acres.

16 viewers participated from Missaukee County in 2016.
Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Christmas Trees:  
*Increasing profitability through local research*

MSU Extension educators address issues critical to growers including: pest and disease management, plant nutrition, marketing, business management, water quality, and sustainability. Services are provided through farm visits, education programs, and research trials. In Missaukee County, farms grow a variety of conifers on 6,900 acres of land. MSU Extension is partnering with local growers to implement research trials looking at ways to reduce costs while producing high quality trees.

**Nitrogen stabilization research.** Application of commercial fertilizer materials has become an essential part of plantation management for many Christmas tree producers in Michigan. Most nitrogen applications are surface applied in the form of urea or ammonium sulfate. With surface applications of nitrogen, there is potential for nitrogen loss from volatilization, leaching, and denitrification. Some growers have begun to add nitrogen stabilizers, hoping to reduce nitrogen loss and optimize plant uptake. The addition of nitrogen stabilizers can add an additional $70.00+ per ton. MSU is conducting trials to determine the efficiency of utilizing nitrogen stabilizers.

**Cone research.** Heavy cone production of Fraser fir remains one of the largest issues for Christmas tree growers. Fraser fir trees may produce hundreds of cones each year, which reduce growth and tree quality. In order to maintain tree quality growers remove cones from trees each spring by hand, a process that is labor intensive and expensive. Working with specialists at MSU we are partnering with local growers on trials to look at alternative cultural practices that will reduce the need for manual cone removal. These include the use of plant growth regulators (PGR’s) and the application of herbicides to interrupt cone development, potentially saving growers over $500/ac in labor costs alone.
Focus Survey: Missaukee County Priorities

- Preparing today’s youth for tomorrow’s job
- Assisting farmers in agriculture production and profitability
- Helping communities create jobs and be great places to live
- Ensuring that the food supply is safe and plentiful
- Helping Michigan maintain a healthy and sustainable environment for work, living, and play
- Strengthen early childhood education
- Creating and enhancing employment in Michigan’s agriculture sector
- Ensure a safe and plentiful water supply
- Conducting research and education programs to make Michigan communities healthy places to live

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<th>District 6 Priority Items</th>
<th>Issues Identification - Focus Groups</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
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<td>Water Quality/Quantity:</td>
<td>Provide education and research that helps assure Michigan’s water remains clean and plentiful. Focus on protection of our watershed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development:</td>
<td>Teach career development and job skills to youth that prepare them to be successful in the work force. Provide a special focus on agriculture related employment opportunities and skills.</td>
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<td>Youth Outreach - At-Risk Youth:</td>
<td>Promote traditional 4-H club involvement to reach youth that might otherwise not be able to participate due to financial considerations or lack of family support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budgeting and Personal Finances:</td>
<td>Provide education to help consumers budget and use their limited resources wisely. Assist with poverty reduction through education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disease Prevention and Nutrition Education:</td>
<td>Provide education and support for adults faced with chronic health conditions, especially as it relates to being overweight and/or obese.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Economics and Life Skills:</td>
<td>Provide basic home economics and life skills education to youth. Include cooking, nutrition, food preservation, sewing, personal finance management (budgeting, account balancing, saving money, minimizing debt, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture Best Practices:</td>
<td>Provide education related to agriculture production. This should include continued research and education for specialty crops like hops and barley, as well as specialty production like grass fed beef and aquaculture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Business Management:</td>
<td>Provide education and support for farmers to maximize their profits. There should be a special emphasis on estate planning, farm succession planning, and assisting young or otherwise new farmers to enter the business successfully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture Literacy:</td>
<td>Educate the public about farming practices and the importance of farming. Provide unbiased reports and information on consumer topics of interest like GMO’s and organics vs non-organics to dispel myths and provide a factual basis for sound personal choices.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cottage / Small Businesses:</td>
<td>Provide education and support for small business development, including cottage food law, gardening, food production, energy, environment, small government training and facilitation.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
# Extension Staff Serving Missaukee County

### Staff Located in Missaukee County Office:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Missaukee County:

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<th>Role</th>
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<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Amrhein</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Jack Kleinhardt (Commissioner)
Vanessa and Trudy Foster
Christine Hammond
Kevin & Bonnie Smalley

Gladwin County
Terry Walters (Commissioner)
Dick Metz
Ron Morley

Isabella County
Jerry Jaloszynski (Commissioner)
Kathy Methner

Mecosta County
Marilynn Vargo (Commissioner)
Vacancy

Missaukee County
Cindy Jones
Frank Vanderwal (Commissioner)

Osceola County
Chris Gentry
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