



# Osceola County

## 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

[msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is serving the residents of Osceola 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 its 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 Spoelman

District Coordinator



## MEASURING IMPACT

### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

Soil Tests .....	247
Agriculture .....	234
Health & Nutrition .....	1,457
Community, Economic Development & Natural Resources .....	39
Gardens/Consumer Horticulture .....	13
Total Youth Served.....	1,626

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## MSU EXTENSION'S DIGITAL REACH



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.

### 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](http://msue.msu.edu)). Of those, 52.1 percent were first-time visitors. Search engine rankings make [msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu) one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

# Developing Youth and Communities



In Osceola County



**432**

Youth enrolled in club-based 4-H in 2016



**89**

Adult 4-H leaders actively volunteered their time in 2016



**26**

4-H Clubs



**1194**

Additional youth were reached through specific programs such as Project Rural Education Days and Health Education

## Growing true leaders

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.

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.

## Osceola County Fairs

Osceola County 4-H has a strong traditional 4-H program where a youth raises an animal and takes it to the county fair. Some of these animals are shown and brought home and others are shown and sold through an auction at the end of the week. During the summer months youth have two opportunities to take their animals to a fair: the Marion Fair and the Osceola County Fair. In 2016, 36 youth participated in the market livestock program at the Marion Fair and sold 62 market projects. In 2016, 209 youth participated in the market livestock program at the Osceola County Fair and sold 336 market projects. At both fairs we have our horse program and breeding stock youth participating. Many also do "still" projects and present them at the fairs as well. Total exhibitors at the fair were 456 with 1,711 exhibits.

## 4-H Horse Programs & Horse Clubs

In 2016, Osceola County had 60 youth participate in multiple horse events. During the summer months youth have eight opportunities to show their horse in addition to the horse shows at the fair. Many youth use the 10 shows to work with their horse to perfect showing disciplines to prepare for the Michigan State 4-H Horse Show which took place in August. Osceola County was represented by 12 youth at the State Horse Show.

## Shooting Sports

The oldest 4-H club in Osceola County is our Bad Toads Shooting Sports. Shooting sports have been strong for over twenty years. In 2016, we had 56 youth participate in our 12 week program. In shooting sports the youth learn proper gun handling with BB guns and pellet guns. During the program, youth learn to shoot from four positions: prone, laying, kneeling, and standing. Each youth shoots from each position three times. For youth 9 and older, they shoot for high point. After the fourth week of shooting the youth are broken into separate shooting brackets so youth are competing with others at the same skill level. BB guns are used until youth are 13, at which time they start shooting pellet guns.

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.

## School Programming

### Project Rural Education Days

Osceola County 4-H also offers school based opportunities. In the spring of 2016, Osceola County 4-H program and Michigan Farm Bureau hosted the 24th Annual Project Rural Education Days. Over 300 students from all four school districts in Osceola County attended Gingrich Meadows and Rose Lake Park to learn about agriculture and environmental issues in a nontraditional school setting. During their visit to Gingrich Meadows, youth learn about calf management, milk production and nutrition, feeding dairy cows, and manure management. When they visit Rose Lake Park, students learn about electrical safety, training Labrador retrievers, wild turkeys, draft horses and recreational safety. In the nutrition session, youth were eager to learn how to make a smoothie by pedaling a bike.

### Healthy Lifestyles Education

In 2015, 4-H purchased a bike kit to create a bike especially designed to create blender “smoothies” using pedal power. In 2016 Osceola County 4-H and Osceola County SNAP-Ed presented the smoothie bike at many events from schools, club meetings and even the fair. In all, the lessons from the smoothie bike reached 170 youth during the year.

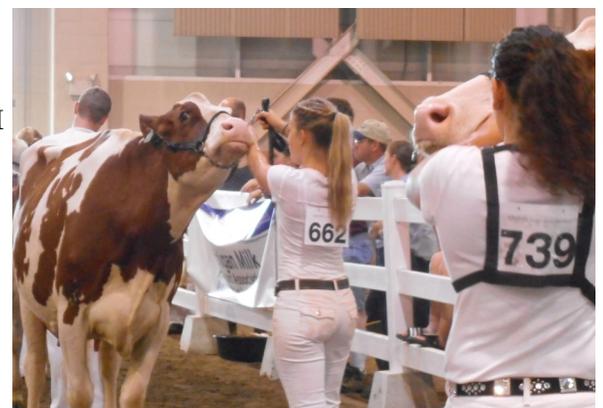
### Science Blast in the Class

Osceola County 4-H continues to be present in the schools. By using a national recognized curriculum, Osceola County 4-H presented Science Blast in the Class three times in the 2016 year. Osceola County 4-H worked with Evert Middle School and Muskegon River youth home to get youth excited about science. Through the 3 lesson Osceola County 4-H actively engaged 184 youth.

### Preparing youth for future careers in agriculture & science

As a pillar of Michigan’s economy, agriculture must continue to grow and thrive. One way to ensure this success is to prepare an informed and skilled workforce ready for careers in this essential sector. To meet this need, MSU Extension offers youth a continuum of learning opportunities. Through these experiences and resources, as well as county 4-H projects, youth are educated about agriculture science and prepared for careers in these important industries. Osceola County youth participated in special classes held at MSU and Kettunen Center, including:

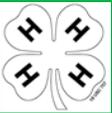
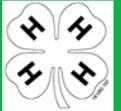
- 4-H Youth Leadership & Global Citizenship Spectacular
- 4-H Winterfest 2016
- 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine and 4-H Veterinary Science
- 4-H Robotics Workshop
- Challenge U 4-H FunFest
- Exploration Days
- 2016 Michigan 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Expo



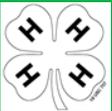
*Developing Youth and Communities, continued*



6th Graders at Evert Middle School—learning about “My Plate”



Osceola County Fair—  
Ag Olympics



Leaders training with  
Katie Ockert



# 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.**



**The CDC estimates 48 million people get sick and 3,000 die from food borne diseases each year in the U.S.**

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.

### In Osceola county:

- Six Osceola county residents attended a ServSafe class.
- 22 Osceola county residents attended Food Preservation classes that were held in the community.
- Eight participants attended the Cottage Food Law to educate people on the State guidelines who are interested in making and selling foods at Farmers Markets.
- Two presentations were held, promoting safe food handling and providing education on the Cottage Food Law.

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.

- 95% of participants report they will follow research-based and tested recipes for home food preservation.
- 86% of youth participants gained knowledge about food spoilage organisms and learned how the organisms' growth can be slowed or prevented.
- 85% of participants can correctly list strategies for cross-contamination prevention.
- 91% know correct methods of cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.

# Keeping People Healthy

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.

In Osceola County...



Adults participated in a series of nutrition classes



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

Limited income and poor nutrition affect quality of life and can increase healthcare costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 30 percent of Michigan adults are considered obese, and one out of every three deaths in Michigan is caused by cardiovascular disease, influencing the quality of life and adding billions of dollars each year in economic burden.

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 are evidence based curriculumms that are used in Osceola County:

- **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 which is co-led by local chef Angela Hunter.
- **Project FRESH** – encourages participants of the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program to eat more Michigan grown fruits and vegetables.
- **Market FRESH** – encourages seniors to eat more Michigan grown fruits and vegetables.
- **Ten Tips to a Great Plate**— from the USDA's Choose MyPlate



"Grow it, Try it, Like it" with St. Peters Lutheran School Pre-K

## Keeping People Healthy, continued

### In Osceola County...



Adults attended a nutrition education presentation



Youth participated in a series of nutrition classes



Youth attended a nutrition education presentation

#### 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.
- 73% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one food resource management practice, such as planning meals in advance or comparing prices when shopping.

MSUE provided programming with or at the following agencies or organizations in Osceola County in 2016:

Crossroads Community Church - Ewart

Ewart Housing Commission

Muskegon River Youth Home - Ewart

Pineview Homes - Ewart

Ewart Public Schools

Higher Ground, LOVE INC

Community Mental Health

NEMCSA & GSRP – Pine River, Marion, Reed City and Ewart

District Health Department

Reed City Housing Commission

Pathway of Hope - Ewart

Eagle Village - Hersey

Reed City Public Schools

Osceola County Commission on Aging

New Journey Clubhouse



MSUE Nutrition Instructor Renee Sanders teaching pre-schoolers about healthy food choices.



“Rock the Bike” is a fun and active way to make smoothies and hummus.

## Muskegon River Youth Home

*Renee Sanders, Nutrition Program Instructor*



Muskegon River Youth Home is a detention center for teens who have been involved in unlawful activities. MSU Extension started providing nutrition and cooking programs at the MRYH in April of 2016. Because these teens are in detention, there are many rules that need to be followed. There are no knives allowed on the grounds due to a violent history of some of the youth so all the prep work and chopping needs to be done ahead of time. Some of the classrooms are not allowed to cook over the electric skillet. And pictures of the students are not allowed because of the privacy laws in juvenile lock up. Here are some success stories of this new endeavor.

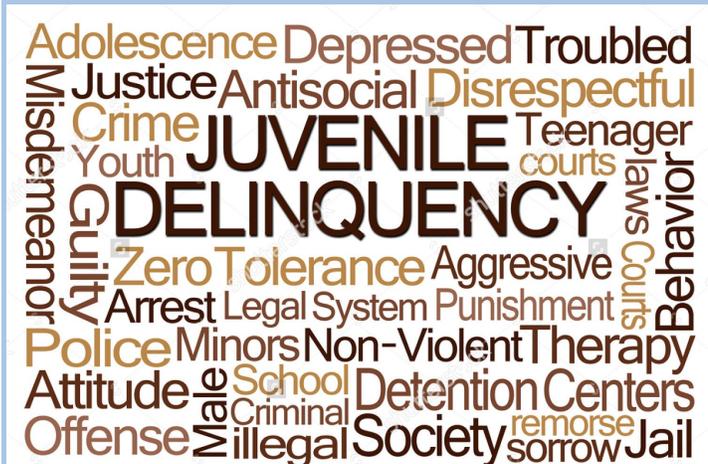
Each and every one of the classes have been unique. They are in no way a traditional “Cooking Matters for Teens” class, but they have all been successful. MSUE Program Instructor Renee Sanders focuses on developing creative ways to cook in different classrooms, with different rules and different attitudes because of the stages they are in the detention process. Every week, two helpers were identified. Helpers measure ingredients and mix them together while following a recipe. They help in all forms of the preparation for the meal being cooked.

Traditional program evaluations are not relevant for this audience. In a world in which every decision is made for them - what to eat, what to do, what is purchased, it’s hard to ascertain what impact the classes will have when the youth transition into the “real world.” When they are out, they will be making these choices for themselves, and Cooking Matters for Teens and MSU Extension are giving them the skills and encouragement to try new nutritious foods and to have faith in themselves that they can prepare these new foods because we took the time to teach them basic skills that they will use the rest of their lives. Below are some highlights from classroom activities.

**Fixing healthy tacos and healthy attitudes.** In one classroom, a student who was not happy to be anywhere fought every decision anyone made for him. He sat in the far corner and did not participate until forced to by the MRYH teacher. Still, he complained. The group made turkey tacos that day, and he complained the entire time as beans and tomatoes were added into the taco meat. Instructor Renee Sanders gave him a little extra encouragement, and he perked up a bit. Little by little, he started to participate in the preparation and cooking process. By the end of the day he was providing “fist bumps” and said it was the best day he had in more than a year! He even enjoyed the turkey tacos.

**Whoops! Laughing at accidents.** In another classroom the group was making smoothies. A quiet girl was chosen helper for the day. She was in charge of working the blender and had never run a blender before. She did a fantastic job until she twisted it to take it off the base, and suddenly the bottom fell out! Smoothies were splattered everywhere – on the participants, the table, the floor, and the walls. She didn’t blink an eye, or say anything inappropriate. Laughing together as it was cleaned up, the instructor was later informed that this girl was never trusted to do anything on her own in her home life, and because she wasn’t yelled at or belittled when she made a mistake, she beamed.

**Selecting a career.** There was a young man asking many questions about cooking and food safety and food timing. Every single session, he was the most excited in the classroom to know what was being made. On the final session he informed the instructor he was graduating the next week, and that he was looking into a culinary arts program because he loved cooking and wanted to eventually teach others how to cook. He was unsure how many people would be able to come to his graduation, and asked the program instructor Renee Sanders if she could come. For Sanders, she wanted to be there for this young man, taking a huge step in his life and making excellent choices for himself. She was proud to be asked to witness his excitement and his speech about his college decisions.



In Osceola  
County...

112

People  
attended  
“social &  
emotional  
health”  
training in  
2016

## Working to improve social and emotional health

Healthy relationships are important to overall health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Social Emotional Health and well-being involves the social, mental, psychological and spiritual aspects of an individual’s life across the lifespan. Social emotional programming helps keep families, caregivers and individuals strong and successful. Educator Shannon Lindquist facilitated programming to 540 adults and children in ten counties during 2016. 112 individuals (adults and youth) in Osceola County attended classes held in series: RELAX Alternatives to Anger, Stress less with Mindfulness, Stress less for Youth, and Babysitting Clinics, as well as one-time presentations on Mindful Eating, and Stress less with Mindfulness. New programming sites included Muskegon River Youth Home. Workshops were provided to various community groups across the district, including the Reed City Chamber of Commerce, Evert TOPS group and WISE support group in Reed City.



# Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



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

**4**

**Or more plant species planted together at the same time can be economical & nutritious for fall grazing**

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.

## **Raising awareness of the benefits of cover crops**

Cover crops are a hot topic in agricultural circles, thanks to an MSU Extension specialist's message that's resonating with the right crowd. Dean Baas, a senior research associate, conducts cover crop and organic agriculture research and education.

Cover crops are plants seeded into agricultural fields, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining ecosystem quality. Environmental benefits include enhanced biodiversity, increased soil infiltration and attraction of honeybees and beneficial insects.

Researchers are focusing on ways cover crops can be used by farmers to bring diversity to the crop system; to reduce reliance on fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; and to determine the impact of cover crops on overall operation economics.

Initial studies have shown that:

Farming benefits include reduced erosion, improved soil quality through increased porosity, soil organic matter and water-holding capacity, as well as the addition of beneficial microbes.

Cover crops help retain nutrients that otherwise would be lost.

Cover crops add nitrogen through fixation while combatting weeds and breaking disease cycles.



## **Cover Crops and Soils**

Together with the Osceola Soil Conservation District, MSU Extension Educators Christina Curell and Jerry Lindquist 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, the educators spoke about cover crops in different management systems.

## Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued

### 1<sup>st</sup> Highland Ag & Natural Resources Conference

The 1<sup>st</sup> Highland Ag & Natural Resources Conference held in March, 2016 in Cadillac for area farmers and landowners set some high standards for similar future events. The conference was highly appreciated by the 90 plus participants that attended. Eighteen different speakers offered cutting edge topics on agriculture and natural resources. Of those participants surveyed 97% said they would attend this conference again next year if it is offered! Conference coordinator Jerry Lindquist of MSU Extension said the conference planners were very pleased with the turn-out for the first year and said those that attended were impressed by the great variety of topics offered and the quality of the speakers. Lindquist feels this conference should be a great venue to bring top notch information to farmers and landowners in Northern Michigan for years to come. This event also provided a great opportunity to bring many different agencies in the Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford County area together to plan and carry out the event including the Natural Resources and Conservation Service, the Conservation Districts, the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program, the Wexford-Missaukee Career Technical Agri Science Program, Baker College, and MSU Extension.



Dean Baas of MSU speaks on cover crops to a full classroom at the Highland Ag & Natural Resources Conference.

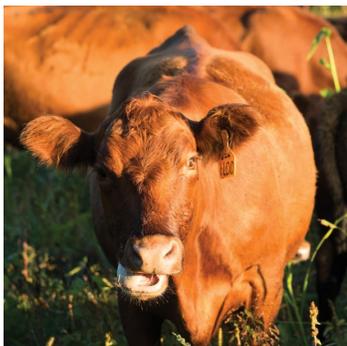
### Understanding Tourism

“Understanding Tourism for Michigan Communities” is a workshop provided by MSU Extension educators from northern Michigan. Held at The Depot in Reed City in April 2016, local government and business leaders from Osceola County participated in this workshop to better understand the magnitude of the tourism industry and plan for more growth in this area. Topics included:

- Trends in tourism
- Who are tourists? What are their interests and needs?
- How niche tourism markets can help leverage community assets
- Identify opportunities and maximize tourism trend
- Strategies to introduce and plan for tourism in the community



# Supporting Food and Agriculture



## 24

August, 2017 is the date of the “Focus on Forages and the Future” MSU Agriculture Innovation Day at the Lake City Research Center.

*“Forage production plays a crucial role for livestock farmers across the state. This field day puts farmers in front of the leading experts, the latest research...”*

*- Ron Bates, director of agriculture and agribusiness for MSU Extension.*

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state’s economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues to increase. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices. Participants also learn how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and how to conserve and protect water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, and helps retain and create agricultural jobs. These measures strengthen Michigan’s economy while connecting farmers to local food opportunities and global markets. In this way you help MSU Extension encourage growth in a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

## Dairy

Osceola County dairy farmers participated in Dairy education meetings at various locations in 2016. Topics included:

- The Veterinary Feed Directive
- Optimizing Dairy Farm Profitability
- Ag Marketing Update
- Managing Dairy Herd Reproduction
- Dairy Nutrition Round Table



## Beef Producers Update

A meeting for beef producers was held in Paris in January 2016. To address issues for beef producers to stabilize their bottom line in the roller coaster cattle market, the MSU Beef Team held meetings to address the cost of production containment. Speakers included Jerry Lindquist, MSU Extension Grazing Educator; Kevin Gould, MSU Extension Beef Educator, Dr. Dan Buskirk, MSU Beef Specialist; and George Quakenbush of the Michigan Cattleman’s Association. Topics addressed included:

- New Trends in Cover Crops Grazing
- Soil Improvement and Profit
- Beef-Cow-Calf Enterprise Budgets
- How are You Selecting Your Most Value-a-Bull Inputs?

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued



International Outreach – MSU Extension Educator, Jerry Lindquist; Lake City Farm Manager, Doug Carmichael; and Craig Pollington from Marion hosted the Agricultural Ministers of Uganda on a tour of the MSU Lake City AgBio Research Farm in August 2016.

Dr. Dan Grooms of the MSU Veterinary Clinic updates area beef farmers on the new restrictions for feeding antibiotics to livestock at a meeting in Paris, MI in January 2016.



Jerry Lindquist, far left, and Kable Thurlow, far right, from MSU Extension led the fencing building demonstration at the MSU Grazing School at the Lake City AgBio Research Farm in September 2016.

New Industries Hopping Up – Kenneth Wirth of Evert talks about his venture into hop production on a regional tour planned by the Osceola County Farm Bureau and MSU Extension.



## Extension Staff Serving Osceola County

### Staff Located in Osceola County Office:

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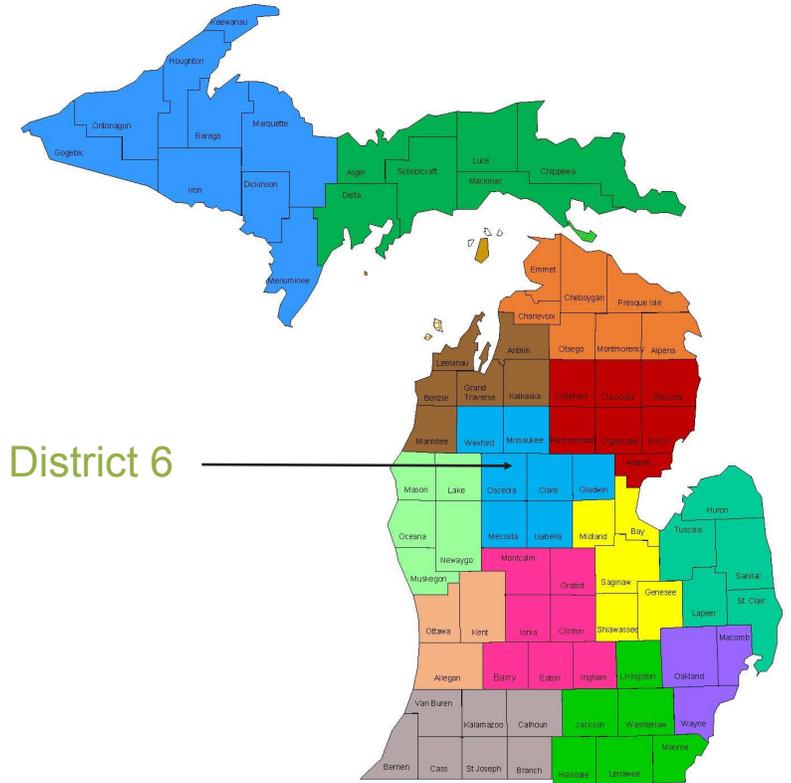
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Pamela Wayne (Commissioner)  
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District 6

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