



WHO WILL?
SPARTANS WILL.



Benzie County

2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

This past year, MSU Extension conducted focus groups and online surveys to solicit feedback from the public on what are the most vital needs and priorities for Michigan residents. These results will shape our educational programming for Benzie County residents now and into the future. MSU Extension is committed to providing relevant, responsive and timely outreach to families and communities.



Your MSU Extension staff have linked the knowledge resources of the University directly to individuals, communities and businesses. It is my distinct privilege to present these accomplishments in our annual report. This report summarizes some of the important work done by MSU Extension staff in Benzie County. It has captured most of the significant highlights of our work in 2015 and provides a sense of the direction of our work into the future.

As always, I thank you for your continued support. Without you, we would not be here doing this important work with your constituents.

Jennifer Berkey

 District 3 Coordinator

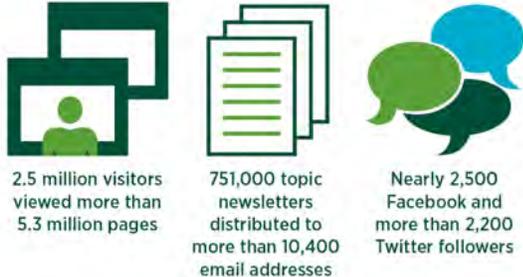
MEASURING IMPACT:

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

4-H: Developing Youth & Communities	705
Keeping People Healthy & Ensuring Safe Food	1,283
Supporting Food & Agriculture, Fostering Strong Communities & Businesses, and Enhancing Our Natural Assets	665

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN BENZIE COUNTY 2,653

MSU EXTENSION'S EXPANDED DIGITAL REACH IN DISTRICT 3 AND STATEWIDE:



Statewide 2014-15 Digital Reach



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DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

The Benzie County 4-H Leaders Association Council

- This leadership group functions as the main oversight of the Benzie County 4-H program and also acts to support the mission, capacity and priorities for the 4-H clubs and other activities and events.
- The current board consists of 8 members, representing the communities of Benzonia Twp., Beulah, Homestead Twp., Honor, and Joyfield Twp.
- A new sub-committee of this council, called the “4-H Expansion and Review Committee,” was established in 2015 to expand the reach of the Benzie 4-H program. In 2016, some Benzie community members took an interest in an educational event that 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws has planned and hosted in Manistee County for over 20 years. The event involves an outdoor nature program with an audience of every 4th grade student and teacher in the county. A similar program for Benzie County is currently in the planning stages.
- The 4-H Leaders Council also works with 4-H staff to support a 4-H ambassador program, county plat book, annual youth trip to Michigan State University, and a volunteer recognition program. 4-H Program Coordinator Laws is currently exploring the possibility of the council seeking donor support to fund an annual college scholarship intended for Benzie County 4-H members.
- 4-H Program Coordinator Laws assists this council by preparing all meeting agendas and materials, reserving meeting space, and in handling a number of clerical tasks required by this group.

The Benzie County 4-H Ambassador Program

- A maximum of two youths are selected annually through an application and interview process to serve as representatives at public 4-H events and council meetings.
- Ambassadors indicate that this distinction is a highly favorable asset when mentioned in portfolios and resumes, scholarship and college admission applications, and employment interviews.
- This year, Benzie County 4-H is pleased to have Kaitlyn Long, now a Benzie Central High School senior, serving in a second term.

4-H youth (grades 7-12) are 4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities.

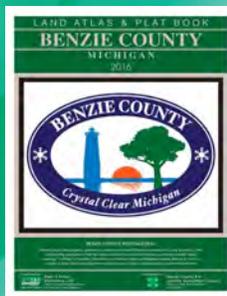
4-H youth (grades 8-12) are 2 times more likely to be civically active.

~ *Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* by Lerner and Lerner.



4h.msue.msu.edu

Developing Youth and Communities, continued



"It's an important item to have in our store. We do what we can to attract people to our store and we notice that people definitely come here to buy plat books. They are very important to our business and to increase our foot traffic."

*~ Desyre Shelton,
Backcast Fly Shop*

The Benzie County Land Atlas and Plat Book

- A brand new edition of the book was launched on March 1st, 2016.
- Proceeds from all sales go directly to the Benzie 4-H Leaders Association Council. Numerous local 4-H activities, special events, and funding for travel to statewide educational events and 4-H Exploration Days are made possible in part due to the financial support received annually through plat book sales.
- The book is a valuable asset in promoting local tourism and real estate interests. Sales records continue to show that the book is ordered statewide, as well as in states surrounding Michigan.
- 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws works with the current plat book publisher, Farm and Home Publishing, to include valuable local content such as government and agency directory pages and a Benzie County landmark or logo for the book's cover. Since October 2011, Laws had been handling all plat book deliveries, but by June of 2016, that duty will gradually be taken over by council volunteers.
- The book is sold at the County Treasurer's office and MSU Extension office, as well as several local businesses including Backcast Fly Shop, Lake Ann Grocery, Nugent Ace Hardware, Stapleton's Market, Tag Limit Outdoors, and Victoria's Floral Design & Gifts.

4-H Exploration Days at MSU

- This 3 day event, held annually in late June at the Michigan State University campus, simulates college life for over 2,200 4-H youth from all over the state.
- The Benzie 4-H Leaders Association Council pays all enrollment fees for adult chaperones and 50% of the cost for youth attendees, plus additional expenses such as group insurance and chaperone needs.
- The youth and their chaperones live on campus, experience dorm life, and attend a variety of classes and other educational events in subject areas that include human and animal sciences, international culture and languages, career exploration in dozens of fields, music, human services, life skills, hobbies and sports, and personal and business finance.
- For most of these Benzie County youth, this will be their first exposure to a college campus and it will influence most of them towards a college education and a greater career goal than they had originally planned.
- For the June 2016 event, Benzie County 4-H will be sending 16 people.



Members of the 2015 Benzie County 4-H Exploration Days delegation in front of the Breslin Center at MSU and the statue of legendary basketball player Magic Johnson.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

The Benzie Youth Soccer Program

- In 1997, the need arose for Benzie County youth to participate in and reap the benefits of a well-organized youth soccer program. In most communities, soccer programs typically fall under the authority of a community recreation association. As Benzie County did not have this type of agency, event organizers looked to Benzie MSU Extension to provide that leadership.
- To support the program, the Benzie MSU Extension office, under the direction of 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws, handles most of the business aspects of the program.
- The Extension office and Laws work with a volunteer soccer program treasurer, but they are ultimately responsible to oversee a well-organized and transparent financial system that handles membership dues, equipment purchases, and insurance coverage. In 2016, the long-time and dedicated volunteer soccer program treasurer, Barbara Wentzloff, announced her retirement from the position, so Laws is currently seeking a replacement.
- The program also utilizes a careful and confidential member registration process and a “volunteer selection process” to ensure that volunteer coaches have undergone thorough background checks.
- Benzie MSUE is thankful to local volunteer Dr. Dennis Pace, for the countless hours he spends on and off the playing field in support of this valuable youth development program. In 2016, Dr. Pace has announced that he is stepping back from his soccer program involvement, so Laws will also be seeking a replacement for this essential position.
- For the 2015 autumn playing season, a total of 157 Benzie County youth participated in the program.

Benzie Volunteers Are An Essential Part of 2 County Fairs

- The Manistee County Fair is not “officially” known as a district fair, but its successes would not be possible if not for the added contributions made by Benzie County residents.
- Of the 13 member Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council, 4 are Benzie County residents. Approximately the same figures and proportions are true of the Manistee County Fair Board. Currently, that fair board’s president is also a Benzie County resident. There are also a number of Benzie county residents who are actively involved in the Northwestern Michigan District Fair and in other 4-H councils and committees that support both fairs.



For youth, the benefits of all team sports, including soccer, are widespread. But probably most important, they encourage the formation of social skills and a sense of belonging. For those kids who feel disconnected or directionless, these advantages can often make the difference in whether they will choose the right paths – or the wrong ones – to follow in life.

Benzie 4-H Soccer players from the 2015 fall season, Casey Meredith and Kadence Popour. Kadence says, *“Forget the glass slipper – this princess wears soccer cleats!”*



Developing Youth and Communities, continued



Although live ducks, chickens, geese and turkeys could not be exhibited at Michigan fairs in 2015, Benzie 4-Hers filled the small animal barn with lifelike displays inside many of the poultry cages or educational posters tacked to the doorframes of poultry pens.



"Because of 4-H, I get to ride horses – which I love!"

~ Submitted by the late Melinda Klockziem, for her daughter Alexis, a Benzie 4-H member.

- The summer of 2015 posed an unusual challenge for all 4-H youth exhibiting and selling any poultry species in Michigan. In early spring, the USDA began monitoring the spread of a large outbreak of Avian Flu in the Midwestern states. By June 1st in Michigan, the announcement was made that no public exhibitions of poultry would be allowed indefinitely. 4-H programs and county fairs were given the option to handle this news in whatever manner worked for their local programs, including canceling any poultry-related activity. Within the first day of the announcement, 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws established a plan for the 2015 Manistee County Fair. 4-H children would continue to raise their market poultry, show an artificial replica at the fair, create a lifelike animal exhibit to take the place of a live one, and then sell their market animals via a full color photo auction program that she produced. Because she made many of her arrangements within the first day of the announcement, she was able to secure some of the last of the lifelike and highly sought after poultry replicas for the kids to use for showmanship. As a result of these efforts, 4-H members sold 70 poultry animals.
- The premier event carried out by this group is the annual 4-H Livestock Auction at the Manistee County Fair. In August of 2015, the auction celebrated its 35th year with a sale featuring 155 animals and 45 donated items. With 109 buyers participating, the event raised nearly \$118,000. Honor State Bank, which is also a 32 year consecutive buyer, has served as auction cashier since 2005.
- A total of 7.5% of auction proceeds go back to the Livestock Council for ongoing support of its programs. A smaller portion goes to other 4-H councils that were designated as recipients of income from certain donated items that were sold.
- The majority of the auction money raised goes back to the 4-H members and is used for back-to-school needs and college funds.
- At the 2015 auction, figures indicate that 24 of the registered buyers represented Benzie County businesses. People want to support businesses that support 4-H. These local businesses report that the exposure and publicity they get by being involved in this event increases their foot traffic and volume.
- The newest effort of this council is an annual day-long educational event to be held every April that will focus on various aspects of the 4-H Market Livestock Program. The 2016 event was just held on April 30th. 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws lined up MSU Extension Educators from various parts of the state who presented on topics such as building skills to improve relationships with auction buyers, showing appreciation for businesses and individuals that support the 4-H Market Livestock program, and animal health and well-being. The event was attended by 63 participants.

Benzie 4-H members Corbin Lopez and Hannah Long performing at the Youth Live Performance event. Their talent is awesome and both have won significant honors at this event.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) provides nutrition education to income-eligible adults and children. This program focuses on improving dietary quality, increasing physical activity while stretching food dollars. The ultimate goal of these programs is to promote healthy weight maintenance and obesity prevention. During the past year in Benzie County, 350 adults and 668 youth were reached through nutrition education classes at various venues.

In the Fall of 2015, the SNAP Education staff confirmed 100% participation with three elementary schools. Every student will have the opportunity to engage in age appropriate, interactive, hands-on activities that promote good eating habits, positive body image, physical activity and food safety. Through each interesting and fun nutrition class, students will gain the skills necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices. In addition, SNAP staff has worked with school personnel implement Smarter Lunchrooms. The Smarter Lunchrooms movement applies practical, research-based principles and strategies that have proven effective at creating an environment that encourages kids to make healthy choices. It uses environmental cues to increase student selection of healthy meal options and decrease plate waste. These include simple strategies such as structuring choices in the lunch line so that healthy foods are easiest for students to access, having cafeteria staff dialog with students in such a way that nudges them toward healthy items, and creatively naming foods or meals to make them more appealing to children.



Students at Betsie Valley formed a Veggie Naming Committee to make healthy cafeteria choices more fun.



Impacts with Youth:

- 94% of the teachers reported that the children increased in their awareness of the importance of good nutrition.
- 84% reported that the children were willing to try new foods.
- 73% reported that the children were eating more fruits.
- 67% reported that the children were eating more vegetables.



Impacts with Adults:

- 83% improvement in one or more nutrition practices like planning meals, making healthy food choices or reading food labels.
- 95% of participants in Project FRESH will eat more fresh fruits and vegetables per day.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

One of the many adult classes MSU Extension staff teach each year is through a partnership called Project FRESH. In collaboration with the Benzie County Health Department, MSU Extension nutrition staff provide nutrition education to families involved in the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) on the benefits of including more fruits and vegetables in their diet. Coupons were provided to these participants to purchase locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables from Benzie County farmer's markets through Project FRESH. These coupons were redeemed at the farm market for \$2,400 in funds for produce grown by local farmers.

A participant in Cooking Matters for Adults reported that she is cooking more than ever before!

"I'm planning meals for the week, from breakfast to dinner, including snacks. I've gotten so many helpful hints on how to add more fruits and vegetables without my son, even really noticing it. My change in eating habits has also extended to my family's behavior, as well. We are having so much fun cooking together as a family. This class has helped me develop confidence in the kitchen."

In the first class, this participant was very timid and hesitant to participate in anything hands on. With each class her confidence and enthusiasm noticeably grew and by the last class she successfully cut and prepared a whole chicken. Her transformation will have lasting impact on the health of her entire family.

Teaching Residents about Food Safety

Supporting MSU Extension food safety education programs helps prevent food borne illnesses and ensures a safer food supply for consumers – whether that is at food retailers, restaurants, farmers' markets or community meals served by organizations. MSU Extension food safety education programs train participants to prevent incidents of foodborne illness associated with unsafe food handling practices, which results in fewer medical expenses, fewer food recalls, and less temporary or permanent closures of food businesses by local health departments. Costs of illness, recalls, and food business closures are more expensive from a public health perspective than taking an inexpensive class to learn how to prepare food safely and preserve food correctly. Residents in Benzie County participated in a variety of food safety classes.

Benzie County residents indicated that as a result of attending food presentation workshops:

- 96% will follow research based/tested recipes when canning food at home.
- 97% will properly use processing techniques to safely can low and high acid foods.
- 98% will use correct processing times to safely can low and high acid foods.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

Preventing and managing chronic disease

Chronic diseases are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health issues. Compared to the national average, Michigan adults suffer from more risk factors (obesity, hypertension, and high cholesterol) that contribute to chronic disease. Michigan State University Extension disease prevention and management programs work to promote health and wellness by reducing and managing the incidence and impacts of chronic diseases among Michigan residents and communities. Health factors such as obesity and physical inactivity significantly influence risk for developing chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The County Health Rankings, an annual measure of the overall health of nearly all counties in the nation ranked Benzie County 30th out of all 68 Michigan counties. Rankings are comprised of several national measures that affect the health of communities, such as high school graduation rates, access to healthy food, rates of smoking and obesity.

MSU Extension can support improved health of individuals and communities through delivery of evidence-based programs and engaging in multi-level partnerships with shared goals of reducing the prevalence of chronic disease. Noted activity within Benzie includes the following:

- A partnership between MSUE, the Northern Michigan Diabetes Initiative and Benzie/Leelanau Health Department to provide the National Diabetes Prevention Program to Benzie county residents who are identified by at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.
- Farms, Food, and Health, this sold out conference took place in January at the Grand Traverse Resort and brought health practitioners, employers, hospital and school food service directors, educators and farmers together under one roof to connect the dots between health care and wellness. Participants from Benzie County were among the statewide audience. MSUE served as one of the primary conference organizers and hosts. A 'Farms, Food and Health' Facebook page was created following the conference to promote sharing.

Enhancing Farm-to-School Programming

FoodCorps is a nation-wide organization working to bring real food to kids and help them grow up healthy. Through this program, we host a FoodCorps service member who actively delivers nutrition education, garden education, and conducts taste tests in order to aid the development of sustainable farm to school programming in two target schools in Benzie County: Frankfort Elementary and Platte River Elementary. From September 1, 2015- May 31, 2016 FoodCorps service members have reached a total of 382 children in Benzie County through 40 lessons in 5 classrooms and 9 cafeteria taste tests.



Farms, Food & Health Conference

Keeping People Healthy, continued

Cafeteria Local Food Taste Tests

In order to provide support to food service directors as they menu items and encourage increased sourcing of local products, FoodCorps service members engaged students during monthly taste tests that highlighted the respective Harvest of the Month. Nine taste tests were conducted at both Platte River Elementary and Frankfort Elementary since September. Thanks to these taste tests, combined with additional nutrition education, students are realizing they can have a say in designing their own lunch menu and are beginning to request new items (like balsamic dressing for their salad bar) from their kitchen leads. Furthermore, food service director at Frankfort, Jenna Noffsinger, continued to exceed with local procurement, offering healthy, local, meals to all her students daily and menuing items that performed well at taste tests (like Panther Fries, which are fries made from roasted rainbow carrots). One parent at Platte River Elementary commented on how this programming is positively affecting her family:

“We were at the farmer’s market the other day and she said ‘Mom, I want radishes!’ and I was like ‘You want what?!’. And it’s great, because she is autistic so it can be extra difficult to get her to try things, but every month she comes home and tells me about all the things she tried with you, so thank you!”



Taste tests of prepared local vegetables and experiments in making “un-BEET-able hummus” enhance classroom learning while building nutritional knowledge.

Classroom Education

Another vital aspect of instituting sustainable farm to school programming is teaching lessons on nutrition and gardening. In the five classes FoodCorps members serve in, a variety of lessons were integrated into existing curriculum and taught in collaboration with teachers. These lessons included conducting soil types experiments, increasing knowledge of the metric system while preparing parsnip pancakes, and learning about states of matter while making un-BEET-able hummus.

Garden-based projects/education

Garden-based lessons are also essential to build a foundation of understanding about the environment needed to grow plants and experience healthy, fulfilling lives. Using a hoop house at Platte River Elementary, students have planted and are growing their own food while they learn about soil and nutrition requirements for the plants and their bodies.

Presentations to stakeholders and media

Finally, to grow the culture of school health and wellness through community engagement, FoodCorps service members presented on local food purchasing and establishing a fruitful farm to school atmosphere at the Frankfort Board of Education and a Benzie County Central Administration meeting. Interacting with and receiving feedback from those invested at all levels of the school is essential to a sustainable farm to school program in Northwest Michigan.



Keeping People Healthy, continued

Reducing anger, bullying and stress

MSU Extension addresses violence and bullying prevention through its focus on social and emotional health, with the overarching goal of helping young people and adults learn to foster safe, affirming and inclusive relationships and settings that are free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. By helping people learn safer and healthier ways to interact with others, MSU Extension benefits communities through decreased mental, emotional, social and economic costs associated with violence in communities. After one-time presentations on social and emotional health topics, evaluation surveys documented that:

- 82 percent of participants said they knew the skills needed for healthy relationships and ways to promote healthy communication.
- 80 percent of participants said they knew how to keep relationships safe physically, emotionally and socially.

MSU Extension's **RELAX: Alternatives to Anger** program offers techniques for calming down and de-stressing, problem solving, communicating and letting go of the past. As a result of the program:

- 96 percent of RELAX Parent/Caregiver workshop participants learned activities to assist children with self-control.
- 65 percent of RELAX participants reported they increased efforts to talk things through until a solution is reached.

Be SAFE offers a variety of educational resources to help communities reduce and prevent bullying behaviors while promoting healthy social and emotional learning and development. The initiative focuses on helping adults consider ways to do this within all of the settings where young people live, learn, grow and develop – including out-of-school settings. Be SAFE resources include the Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments curriculum, face-to-face and online workshops for adults and a series of workshops for parents and caregivers.

“As a result of your program, our adults are more open to understanding young people, and the youth seem to better recognize how much concern and care the adults have for their safety.” - Youth group leader, Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments



SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Developing an Industry-Wide Approach for SWD Management in 2016

Spotted wing drosophila (SWD) is an invasive insect pest that poses significant challenges to cherry production in Michigan. The Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center host a summit on November 20th to bring researchers and industry leaders together to discuss a strategic plan to mitigate the risk of SWD in cherries. There were 75 in-person participants and 49 remote participants who joined the event through ZOOM technology. Participants were provided with the latest updates on SWD research and observations, and MSU Extension conducted a needs assessment to determine the critical foci for future research and extension programs for SWD. As a result of this needs assessment, MSU researchers submitted five grant proposals geared toward SWD in cherries research, totaling more than \$173,500 in potential project funds.

2015 Tree Fruit Integrated Pest Management Updates Series

MSU Extension Educator, E. Pochubay hosted a total of 32 2-hr meetings in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau from May-early August. Over the course of this program, 537 participants attended the meetings to discuss the current season's tree fruit production and receive diagnostic services. Based on a survey of 44 respondents, 60-100% respondents reported that they adopted a practice that was suggested at an IPM Update, and estimated this program's value at a total of -\$11,177 - \$558,883 for the 5,588 acres of apples and cherries that were reported.

Other educational programs with D3 leadership and participation included:

- 2016 Tree Fruit School, February 18-20, Grand Rapids, MI
- Cider: From Apple to Bottle, March 25, Thompsonville, MI
- Hart Spring Meeting, March 31, Hart, MI
- Orchard Tours and More (formerly Cherry Connection), July 6-10, Traverse City, MI
- Traverse City Cider Week, Cider and Sausage Salon, August 17-23, Traverse City, MI
- Great Lakes Expo, Tart Cherry, Sweet Cherry, and Hard Cider Sessions, December, Grand Rapids, MI

The Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center was pleased to host its annual open house in late August this year. This annual event features a day of tree fruit production education through a research station wagon ride farm tour. Tree fruit





Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

researchers from MSU's campus and the NWMHRC provided attendees with the most current updates of the 2015 season's research projects. The 120 attendees were particularly excited to watch a video from the NWMHRC's demonstration of a new approach for harvesting high-density tart cherries using an over-the-row blueberry harvester. At the evening dinner and banquet, Don Gregory of Cherry Bay Orchards was awarded the Distinguished Service Award.

Through volunteer outreach, **Extension Master Gardeners** share science-based gardening knowledge and engages citizens and empowers communities in environmentally responsible gardening practices, improving food security, improving community, and developing youth through gardening.

Other **Consumer Horticulture** programming and services available for residents of Benzie County include:

- Gardening Hot Line
- Gardening in Michigan web site
- Ask an Expert system
- Smart Gardening programming
- Soil tests for home gardens, yards and landscape plants
- Master Gardener Training and Volunteer Program

The **Farm Business Management** team conducted **2014 Farm Bill** educational workshops with the objective of informing producers on the new Farm Bill. This includes the changes in commodity programs and the farm and risk management implications that come along with these changes.

The bill introduced major changes in risk management programs for corn, wheat, soybeans, fruit, vegetables and dairy producers in Michigan. These new programs, combined with an anticipated decrease in commodity prices, created major risk management decisions that will affect the financial success of Michigan producers during 2014-2018 (the life of the 2014 Farm Bill). Because the bill required a 1-time irrevocable decision by producers, programming in this area required the combined farm management, financial analysis, and marketing subject matters of the MSU Extension Farm Business Management Educators. This irrevocable decision, combined with the complexity of these new programs and the uncertainty of the long-term commodity price outlook, created a unique urgency for programming on this topic.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Highlights of this educational effort:

- 110 local and regional meetings were held state-wide that reached a total audience of 8,000 persons.
- The Michigan State University Farm Management Team collaborated with local Agricultural Extension Educators and the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).
- Curtis Talley, area Farm Business Management Educator conducted regional meetings in Petoskey, Rogers City, Alpena and Traverse City.
- A set of educational publications for Michigan producers was developed.
- Decision making software to analyze the financial consequences of the various program alternatives was demonstrated and made available.

The 2014 Farm Bill brought the most significant change to the **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** since the program was initiated. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of crops that are not insurable under normal crop insurance. Tart cherry is one of those crops. The NAP policies are administered by county FSA offices and are designed to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields and / or prevent crop planting.

Previously, the producer paid a \$250 fee / crop (up to \$750 / county) to protect against yield shortfalls that exceeded 50% of the producer's historical average production (APH). Now, the producer can purchase coverages up to 65% of Actual Production History with losses paid at 100% of the NAP market price. The producer still pays the administrative fee and there is a premium for buy-up, a structure similar to crop insurance.

Area Farm Business Management educator Curtis Talley, in cooperation with the Farm Service Agency conducted a regional meeting in Traverse City to explain these new developments and demonstrate decision making software designed by the Farm Service Agency.

Michigan State University Extension conducted 10 meetings across Michigan on the **Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP)** in September 2015. Seven of the meetings were held live, and 3 were live webinar broadcast. Producers received a current milk production and marketing forecast, discussed risk management, and how the DMPP program can fit into a risk management strategy.

- 81 participants
- 16,044 milking cows impacted (based on 36 survey responses)
- 365,610,272 pounds of annual milk production impacted



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

The Michigan State University Extension Dairy Team delivered the **Optimizing Dairy Farm Profits** program to 7 locations in Michigan. The program highlighted information relevant to staying profitable with today's milk prices including: understanding financial performance indicators, improving labor productivity, and making good financial decisions in the areas of forage harvesting, stocking density, and the heifer enterprise.

- Over 130 attendees from across Michigan
- Resource tools were shared with producers on a usb thumbdrive

Managing employees is a critical function of business management, yet one in which farm business owners may lack skills and confidence. The **Effective Management of Farm Employees** research project continues to deliver educational programs for Michigan's agricultural employers. Phil Durst and Stan Moore taught a 1.5 hr. pre-conference session for the Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference with highlights from the 2015 Employee Management conference. The project also led to a regular column for Dairy Business – East, a popular dairy magazine with wide circulation.

- Over 60 producers and professional came early to the Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference for the 9:30 am pre-conference session on employee management. This was a great response to a session offered at a time that required them to leave farms early in order to attend.
- In April 2015, Durst and Moore were asked to provide an in-service for Extension Educators preceding the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference in Ft. Wayne, IN. Educators from Ohio, Indiana and Iowa attended and understood the principles of management taught by Durst and Moore.
- Stan Moore was invited to speak at the Nebraska Beef Summit in mid-November of 2015 on "Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Labor". Moore was the lead speaker for the summit. The summit attracted over 120 producers, students, allied industry representatives, and campus specialist.
- In February 2016, Moore and Durst providing a talk at a symposium for dairy producers in Florida, sharing employee management principles with over 50 attendees.

FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES

Assistance to support beginning farmers across MI

With the intention of promoting and building a vibrant local agriculture community, the 2015 Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference hosted more than 1,000 attendees at this multi-day event. MSU Extension was part of the annual planning committee for this committee as well as taught educational sessions. Local growers had some significant impacts from attending the conference:

- 90% intended to make positive changes in their farm with their new knowledge
- Local growers indicated a highly significant increase in knowledge of where to find local resources and make connections with others working in the local food system
- Participants indicated a highly significant increase in food production/processing knowledge

The public value of this conference is increased local production and purchasing of local products keep dollars in the regional economy which fundamentally supports rural and regional development.

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. Extension educators are specially trained as innovation counselors to deliver these services 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. The innovation counselor also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling, food science, and packaging assistance.

Northern Michigan Counties Association, organized by MSU Extension, county commissioners from 33 counties in northern lower Michigan meet 8 times per year to share information and learn from the experiences of others.

MAC Annual Conference joint presentation by MSU Extension and Citizen's Research Council on constitutional and statutory requirements that Michigan fund mandated local services, types of mandates, and the use of fiscal notes in Michigan and elsewhere to enhance compliance.





Fostering Strong Communities & Businesses, continued

Extraordinary Governance and Effective Meetings workshop held in Benzie County with great discussion from Benzie County participants. It also attracted participation from several surrounding counties.

Building Strong Sovereign Nations is a leadership building program developed by MSU Extension in cooperation with leaders of Tribal Nations in Michigan and delivered annually in conjunction with the United Tribes of Michigan fall meeting. The program is open to leaders from all Tribal Nations in Michigan and is also available to leadership and staff of individual tribes.

New County Commissioner Workshops are being planned for late November and early December 2016, following the election of commissioners.

The **Stronger Economies Together (SET)** program is a national initiative collaborating with USDA and local partners in Manistee, Benzie, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska, to help identify and develop business sectors that hold the highest growth potential in an effort to help create, attract, and retain jobs.

Placemaking workshops, delivered as part of the MIplace Partnership Initiative, help communities create and enhance amenities resulting in a high quality of life for residents, increasing their ability to retain and attract talented workers and therefore making them more competitive in the global economy. Workshops provide training on the MIplace Placemaking curriculum, and MSU Extension facilitators assist communities in developing draft placemaking strategies to move from training to action.

MSU Extension educators also held the following **Government & Public Policy** trainings in and around Benzie County this year:

- Form Based Zoning
- Zoning Board of Appeals Training
- Freedom of Information Act Training
- Land Division Review Training
- Sidewalk Design, Planning and Liability

In 2015, **Michigan Sea Grant Extension** worked on key Lake Michigan fishery transition issues and where fishery changes may impact coastal communities. A Regional Sportfishing Workshop allowed fishers from Benzie County ports to understand changes to the prey base and the salmon and trout fishery. The economic impacts of a diverse and healthy sportfishery are quite significant, drawing people to Benzie County from all over the Midwest.

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