

Clinton County

2014–2015 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

In September we announced that Jeff Dwyer will become interim director of MSU Extension, effective Jan. 1, 2016. Dwyer replaces Ray Hammerschmidt, who will resume his research and teaching roles in the MSU Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences.

We are excited to welcome Dr. Dwyer to this difficult position that has undergone much transition in the last 18 months. Though our leadership will be changing, our long-range plan of working diligently to serve Michigan residents has not. Our staff members continue to follow their work plans that they, along with Extension leadership and their colleagues, have developed to meet the ever-changing needs of District 8 and Clinton County. MSU Extension staff are committed to serving their communities.

Our overall plan for our leadership team is the same as it has been since Tom Coon resigned in June of 2014 to take a position as vice president and dean at Oklahoma State University. We will have an interim Extension director until a new dean is named for the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in early 2016. Once that dean has settled in, he or she will have an opportunity to help choose a permanent MSU Extension director whose goals, style and vision complement those of the dean. Until then, we continue to move forward with a strong leadership team.

In this report you will find examples of programs that support youth, encourage better health and nutrition, inspire entrepreneurs, keep farmers up-to-date, protect natural resources, stimulate business, develop communities and help to prepare government leaders. In each of these areas, MSU Extension is committed to utilizing information which is current to research and relevant to communities.

As we transition through these changes, I look forward to our continued partnership in moving Michigan forward.



Don Lehman
District Coordinator, District 8



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MEASURING IMPACT

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

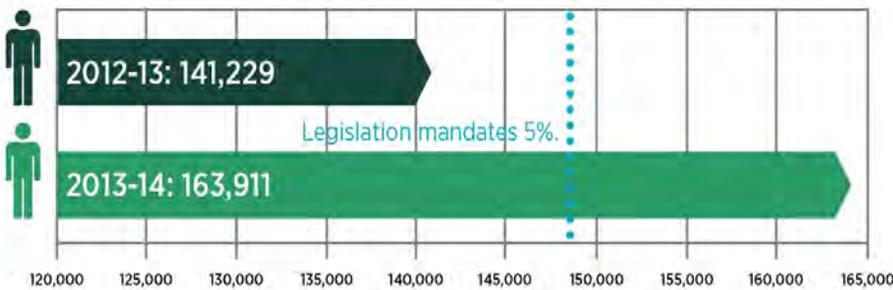
SNAP-ED Participants.....	388
4-H Program.....	1,014
- 4-H Club members.....	726
- 4-H Volunteers.....	288
Gardening Hotline.....	64
Master Gardener Re-Certification.....	15
IMPACTS.....	1,481

DISTRICT 8 DIGITAL REACH

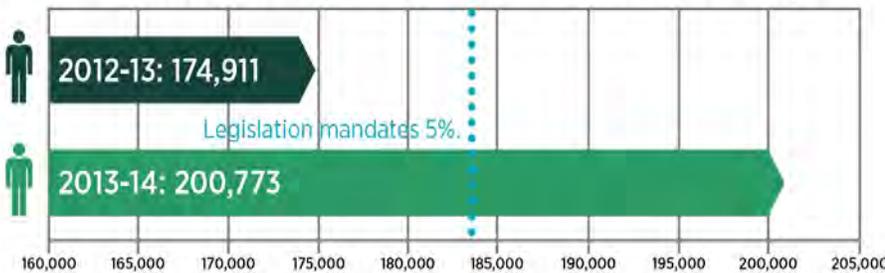
From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, 118,744 visitors from our 7-county district viewed more than 349,343 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website (msue.msu.edu).

Search engine rankings make msue.msu.edu one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

15% Growth in Adults Participating in MSU Extension Programs



16% Growth in Youth Participating in MSU Extension Programs



MSU Extension’s Expanded Digital Reach



2 million visitors viewed more than 4 million pages



560,000 topic newsletters distributed to more than 8,500 email addresses



Nearly 2,000 Facebook and more than 1,700 Twitter followers

DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, you are helping youth participants acquire life skills that are necessary for success in today's competitive economy. One way Extension works to accomplish this is by helping children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. Children who participate are also learning leadership and decision-making skills that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active. Active 4-H participation has also been associated with a reduced risk for negative behaviors such as drug use. This helps ensure that more of our young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. Successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues, consumer spending and increases the likelihood that they will stay in, or return to, their home communities.

Preparing children for academic success

Youth who are not proficient readers by fourth grade are 68 percent more likely to drop out of high school. Research shows that young children who develop literacy skills prior to entering kindergarten are better prepared for school reading curriculum.

Children's school readiness improves when parents and caregivers are taught methods that increase early childhood science and reading literacy, and ways to prepare children socially and emotionally. Programming provided through MSU Extension and other organizations prepare children for academic success by giving parents and caregivers the tools they need to help their children succeed in school. MSU Extension is also making learning to read more accessible by putting books into the hands of thousands of children from low-income households.

- » To date, 250,000 books have been distributed to more than 2,500 children, including youth in Clinton County, through programs sponsored by MSU Extension and its partnership with the Molina Foundation.
- » As a result of MSU Extension trainings and workshops, adults indicated an increase in knowledge of concepts of early childhood development and techniques that promote school readiness and academic success.

2015 Clinton County 4-H statistics:

- 726 Youth 4-H members
- 288 Adult volunteers



MSU Extension provides resources aligned with Michigan science education standards to teach confidence, leadership and responsibility related to STEM.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Early childhood education

There is no more important time than the years between the ages of birth and five. MSU Extension recognizes that and has developed a work team dedicated to focusing on early childhood development services.

Childcare providers and other adults have a significant impact in the lives of young children. The Clinton County Early Childhood Educators and their work team have been working for several years to form partnerships with other agencies to optimize the benefits and impacts on young children and their families. The Clinton County MSU Extension team now works with and partners with many agencies including: Great Start, RESA Head Start, Early Head Start, Caring & Sharing Resource Center, Regional Resource Center, Office for Young Children, Building Stronger Communities Council, and the local CAN Council. Together these groups held 6th Annual Laughing, Loving and Leading Your Kids Conference. This conference, which was held at the Clinton County RESA, focuses on all parents and people who love and care for kids. In total 143 people attended and participated in two days of fun and educational workshops and presentations.

Over 1,200 young children had the opportunity for hands-on science activities provided by MSU Extension's Children & Youth early Childhood Work Team at the MSU Science Festival on April 5th and 6th. Children put their natural curiosity to work and participated in the activities learning that science is fun that that experiential learning is a great way to learn new things.

One of the most valuable outcomes from these two days was the number of parents and other adults, who could see first hand how important it is for children to be engaged in the learning activities and how much they can comprehend and learn at a very young age. Dozens of parents asked for more information and hundreds took with them copies of the overview and various activities so they could continue the experiences with their children at home.

Another exciting workshop that was held in Clinton County was the Experiential Learning workshop for parents and childcare providers. Ten people participated in the session hosted by St. Peter Lutheran Preschool. The participants especially enjoyed the activities which really brought home the message of why experiential learning is so important and how it can be incorporated into our work with young children. Several of the participants were elementary or preschool teachers and expressed excitement over the changes they planned to make in their classroom learning experiences.

MSU Extension programs such as the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council (M4-HYCC) allow Michigan's youth to get involved and become community leaders, but also shows them how to be engaged in the legislative process.



ENSURING SAFE, SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE FOOD

When you support MSU Extension, you are also supporting our food safety programs. Our food safety educators are working to ensure that all have access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food. Programming focuses on food safety measures in the field from planting to harvest. Participants also have the opportunity to learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques. MSU Extension offers a variety of programs that bring community partners together to enhance access to healthy food supplies, leading to more viable and healthy communities with lower health care costs.

Teaching residents about food safety

From the field to the table, food safety is an important issue. Foodborne illness affects all socioeconomic categories and costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, hospitalization, long-term disability and even death. The Cottage Food Law took effect in July 2010, allowing home-processed foods to be sold to the public, emphasizing the need for food safety education.

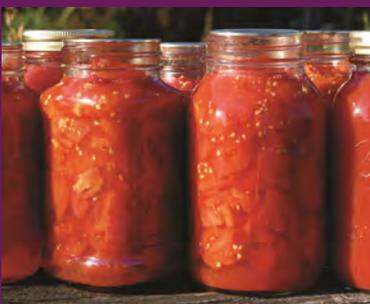
MSU Extension Cottage Food Law workshops supply Michigan residents with up-to-date, scientifically backed information on food safety. In 2013, nearly 4,000 Michigan residents learned about preserving and preparing food safely for public consumption. Participants who successfully complete the training are given an MSU Extension food safety certificate. This increases consumer confidence when buying locally grown and produced food products.

Another program offered by MSU Extension is the ServSafe course. This is a national certification program for food service workers, taught by certified Extension educators. ServSafe topics include:

- » Providing safe food
- » Forms of contamination
- » The safe food handler
- » The flow of food
- » Food safety management systems
- » Safe facilities, cleaning and sanitizing

Participants who complete the course, will earn their ServSafe Certificate.

The growing local food movement has renewed consumer interest in safe food preservation techniques. MSU Extension offers online courses to learn how to safely preserve food from the comfort of your own home. Through the [Food Preservation Online Course](#).



When doing home based food preservation, it's important to not use just any recipe. MSU Extension can provide you with research based recipes for delicious and safe food!

ENSURING STRONG COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension, you are helping to implement best practices in good governance that keep communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills; help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps both youth and adults learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending, avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services, lead to personal and community stability and create strong and safe communities.

Helping Michigan make smart health insurance decisions

In 2013, many Michigan residents and businesses were facing important health insurance decisions they had never had to consider before. The passage of the Affordable Care Act not only opened up the health insurance market to hundreds of thousands of additional people and many small businesses, but also changed the insurance landscape for the previously insured.

These changes along with the launch of the Health Insurance Marketplace in Michigan, caused confusion regarding the new health insurance laws and requirements. MSU Extension conducted targeted outreach to both uninsured and underinsured residents as well as small businesses including farm owners to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence in the ability to purchase health insurance.

MSU Extension educated through weekly webinars, social media and other online outreach.

From November 2013 to April 2014, MSU Extension:

- » Presented 59 direct education sessions reaching 987 consumers.
- » Made 328 one-on-one contacts via email and phone to answer questions.
- » Provided 14,467 indirect educational outreach activities via social media, website page views, educational news articles, email newsletters and other media.
- » Made 854 referrals to local health insurance enrollment counselors.

MSU Extension conducted targeted outreach to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence in the ability to purchase health insurance.

As Michigan looks to rebound from recent fiscal difficulties and become stronger and more fiscally sound, MSU Extension has been a valuable partner in educating the public, as well as legislators, on fiscal health and responsibility.



Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

Helping residents save their homes from foreclosure

When individuals and families in Michigan are financially healthy, it creates an environment for sustained community prosperity. MSU Extension's financial literacy and housing education programs help families and individuals at any stage of their lives make smart money decisions and work through the homeownership process. These courses help reduce mortgage defaults through the counseling of new homebuyers as well as homeowners going through the foreclosure process.

Widespread efforts by MSU Extension have led to a significant increase in knowledge gained and behavioral changes across Michigan. Since July 2010, MSU Extension's foreclosure counseling has aided participants spanning 24 counties, across all income levels. As a result of receiving this counseling, a higher percentage of homeowners are able to better communicate with their mortgage servicers, obtain loan modifications and in over half of the cases, keep their homes.

The MSU Extension counseling staff, working through the Step Forward Michigan program, have been able to assist property homeowners with delinquent taxes, including the application process and follow-through, until a funding decision was reached. Funds brought in by the Step Forward program will help contribute to long term outcomes by keeping families and communities stable.

As a result of all financial and homeownership education and programming by MSU Extension:

- » 84% of participants pay their mortgage on time.
- » 80% of participants now save money for home maintenance costs.
- » 54% of foreclosure clients were able to keep their homes.

Help is also available to those who have gone through the foreclosure process. MSU Extension's University-backed, unbiased *Starting Over After Foreclosure Toolkit* offers research-based tools and resources to those who have experience foreclosure. Accessible and easy to read, this toolkit helps Michigan residents understand their situation both emotionally and financially. This free toolkit can be found online at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/mimoneyhealth/startingover>.

Participants in the homeownership counseling reported an increase in their knowledge of predatory lending practices.



Sustainable homeownership strengthens individuals and communities. As a HUD- and MSHDA-certified counseling agency, MSU Extension helps potential homeowners understand the complex home-buying process and learn the true costs of homeownership.

KEEPING BUSINESSES STRONG

MSU Extension and the MSU Product Center help Michigan entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the food, agriculture, natural resources and bio economy sectors. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods. You also help young people develop business skills that will help them succeed as adults and help communities capitalize on their ecological, social and cultural assets. This fuels the economy by creating and retaining jobs, and helps ensure a healthy tax base.

Providing valuable work experience to young professionals

MSU Extension encourages Michigan's young people to envision a future career path that can help them positively impact their communities and build valuable professional skills. A new internship program creates a link between campus life and future career success. Started in 2013 with seven interns, the program has been expanded in 2014 to 13 interns because of its initial success.

The internship program has been popular with communities, MSU Extension educators and, most importantly, with the students, who have shown growing interest. In 2013, the program was piloted in regions in Michigan with a focus on agriculture. It provided students with a valuable networking opportunity with farms and within the agriculture industry, and allowed them to gain important skills in vital areas of agriculture.

In the internship program's first year, interns worked on:

- » Improvement of air quality around swine production facilities through an investigation of various plant species for use as vegetative environmental buffers.
- » Basic equine health and body condition as well as safe handling of horses.
- » Pork quality assurance and site assessment.
- » Forage management for sheep and goat production.



Michigan 4-H offers many opportunities in career exploration and workforce preparation to help youth look at internships as well.



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KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

When you support MSU Extension, you are helping participants to increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension also provides programs that work to decrease incidents of violence, bullying and to improve the social and emotional health of Michigan residents. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Working to improve social and emotional health

Many negative factors affect social and emotional health, including ongoing and toxic stress that may result from situations including abusive relationships, bias, damaging coping behaviors and relationship violence. Across the lifespan, people faced with these situations and settings are at risk for a wide range of physical, psychological, social, emotional, cognitive, financial and spiritual health challenges. The United States spends an estimated \$425 billion in direct and indirect costs of violence each year.

RELAX: Alternatives to Anger is designed to actively engage adult learners to increase knowledge and skills around anger management and give them constructive ways to deal with anger. In 2013, MSU Extension collected 712 RELAX evaluations from participants.

Consistently, more than half of program participants leave RELAX with improved knowledge or new skills designed to promote social and emotional well-being with other in their lives and immediate environments.

Fighting obesity through education

Michigan has the 11th highest adult obesity rate in the United States, according to the CDC. More than 30 percent of adults are obese, and an additional 35 percent are considered overweight.

Extension programs reached more than 87,000 adults and youth and worked to equip them with skills needed to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods; increase their physical activity; breastfeed their babies and stretch their food dollars. MSU Extension reached more than 87,000 adults and young people across the state through

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



MSU Extension reached more than 87,000 adults and young people across the state through programming. Nearly one-third of youth increased their level of physical activity and more than two-thirds of adults increased time spent being physically active, including three-quarters of older adults.



Programs focus on helping participants gain the skills needed to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods; increase their physical activity; breastfeed their babies and stretch their food dollars.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

programming. Through the program outreach:

- » More than one-third of youth decreased their intake of sugary drinks.
- » Nearly one-third of youth increased their level of physical activity.
- » Nearly half of adults increased their daily vegetable and fruit consumption.
- » More than two-thirds of adults increased time spent being physically active, including three-quarters of older adults.
- » More than two-thirds of adults reported improved ability to make their food dollars go further.

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

More than 1.7 million Michigan residents receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs including Cooking Matters for Adults, Project Fresh, Healthy Harvest and Show Me Nutrition teach adults how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe. Participants learned about the nutrition and health benefits of foods to feed their families in healthy ways. These evidence-based nutrition programs are interactive and discussion-based with an aim to move clients into the action stage of positive change.

Through the National Diabetes Prevention Program, MSU Extension helps participants to learn ways to change their lifestyles and improve their health.



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

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

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, you are helping 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.

Helping Michigan residents become better stewards of our inland lakes

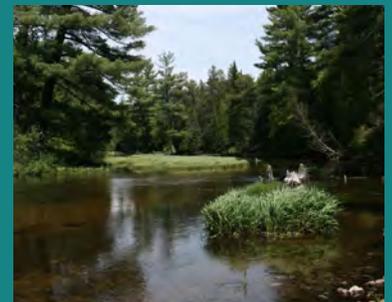
Michigan has more than 11,000 inland lakes, which are among our most beautiful and precious resources. To marshal all of the passion and energy so many people and organizations have regarding Michigan's lakes, MSU Extension helped organize the first Michigan Inland Lakes Convention. The convention hosted 372 lake enthusiasts, professionals, government officials and others for an intensive three-day convention.

The convention helped participants learn how to become better stewards and to better protect Michigan's inland lakes. It boasted more than 25 educational opportunities, including sessions regarding youth and volunteer education, aquatic invasive species, plant identification, algae blooms and water quality.

The convention was a partnership between MSU Extension, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership, the MSU Institute of Water Research and the Michigan Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society.

- » 372 people attended the Michigan Inland Lakes Convention.
- » More than 66% represented nonprofit agencies or were riparian landowners.
- » More than 75% reported increased leadership, confidence and stewardship.
- » More than 90% reported gaining information that will assist them as professionals or volunteers.

To marshal all of the passion and energy so many people and organizations have regarding Michigan's lakes, MSU Extension helped organize the first Michigan Inland Lakes Convention.



SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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.

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

Dairy Calf Care school

On August 6th, 2015 Clinton County MSUE Educator, Faith Cullens, along with Livestock Educator, Kevin Gould, conducted the Michigan State University Calf Care School. This educational workshop was held at the Ionia County MSU Extension office. The Educators provided current science-based information to forty-two participants on refining their caregiving skills for raising dairy calves. Discussions centered around successful calf management and how to raise a calf to reach their maximum potential, contributing to the farms profitability. The tools and knowledge provided can be implemented on any dairy farm. Just a few of the topics covered included:

- » Newborn calf care.
- » Colostrum management.
- » Vaccinations.
- » Weaning.
- » Monitoring performance.
- » Basic calf nutrition.

What's new with Poo

On August 18, 2015, Michigan Innovations in Agriculture 2015 Tour was held. MSU



Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) bridges the gap between Michigan's farmers and consumers who often have little idea where the food on their plates comes from.





Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Extension and several other agencies partnered to bring the event to the community. *What's new with Poo*, was designed to provide information on several manure management practices. In the morning, Amber Radatz, co-director of Wisconsin Discovery Farms, spoke and assisted farmers with issues related to manure management, water quality and nitrogen use efficiency. In the afternoon, four farms in the Montcalm, Gratiot and Clinton county areas were visited to view manure separation, manure treatment and handling, harvestable buffers and cover crops as feed. Approximately 175 people attended this educational event sponsored by several agricultural agencies.

Women in agriculture

Annie's Project, a farm management program designed specifically for women has been offered several times in the Mid-Michigan area since 2010. Early in 2014, Clinton County Crop & Livestock Educator, Marilyn Thelen, received a request to hold the six week program in Clinton County. The program was held in St. Johns in September of 2014 with 13 women participating. Women from Clinton, Isabella, Gratiot, Ionia, Mecosta and Washtenaw Counties, all joined Thelen for the training. At the conclusion of the six week class, the participants were asked to share their goals for what they had learned. One participant indicated, "To become more involved in my farms financials so that we can become more profitable and knowledgeable". Another shared that she "planned to grow her calf operation larger than what it is today by utilizing the tools and resources provided".

Rain simulator

In 2014, MSU Extension received a new demonstration tool, the rain simulator. In October of 2014, Educator Marilyn Thelen was asked by the Clinton County Drain Commissioner to demonstrate the impact of an extreme rain event on the movement of soil and water under various cropping systems. The 53 participants included drain commissioners and agency personal from the MACDC Northwest District from Clinton, Gratiot, Ionia, Kent and Ingham Counties. Thelen was able to use the rain simulator to show how water moves when soils are tilled and have no cover, compared to soils that have been in long term no-till, and finally soils from the fence line that have not been cropped. The demonstration was very effective, generating a lot of discussion. One comment went to show how useful the new tool was, "that is exactly what they say will happen, but I never really understood it. The rain simulator has proven to be a very effective demonstration tool.

In 2014, MSU Extension's rain simulator was used in three Clinton County training sessions, as well as trainings around the state.

Invasive plant and animal species pose an enormous threat to Michigan's biodiversity and economic wellbeing. Emerald ash borer, garlic mustard and zebra mussels are other notable examples of species that harm our state's land and water resources. MSU Extension provides educational resources to identify, assess and control invasive species throughout the state.



Extension Educators Serving Clinton County

Staff Located in Clinton County Office:

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Corissa Harris	4-H Program Coordinator	989-224-5227	harri469@anr.msu.edu
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Marilyn Thelen	Crop & Livestock Educator	989-227-6454	thelen22@anr.msu.edu
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