MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

A mission statement communicates the purpose of an organization. Our mission statement is: “Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.”

Over the past 12 months, our staff have worked with citizens throughout Kent County to address local needs by connecting people to the resources of the university.

In this annual report, there is not enough space to give a complete accounting of all of the important work done by MSU Extension staff across Kent County. I will try to capture some of the most significant highlights of our work in 2015 and give a sense of the direction of our work in the future.

And though I express my appreciation to you for your continuing and strong support every year, it remains true that without you, we would not be here doing this important work with your constituents. Once again, thank you.

Betty Blase
District Coordinator, District 7

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

4-H Children and Youth programs………………………………………..3,623
4-H members (traditional club enrollment)……………………………..954
Special Interest program participation …………………………………...1,099
Youth in school enrichment programs……………………………………...1,691
Youth volunteers …………………………………………..………………….  71
Adult volunteers………………………………………..………………………378

Master Gardeners recertified………………………………………… …………………………213

Table of Contents:

Supporting Food and Agriculture Pages 4-16
Developing Youth and Communities Pages 17-20
Ensuring Safe and Secure Food Page 21
Ensuring Strong Communities Pages 22
Keeping People Healthy Pages 23-25
Making the Most of our Natural Assets Pages 26-27
Michigan Spartan Impact Page 28
District Extension Council Page 29
Staff Listing Page 30-31

DISTRICT 7 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, 112,812 visitors from our 3-county district viewed 299,071 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.

Based on data from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.
Michigan agricultural businesses are competing for market share and profits domestically and in a world economy. Food safety concerns, highly volatile energy prices, an aging population of active farmers, tax law changes, weather-related disasters, credit availability and cost are challenges producers face.

The 2014 Farm Bill introduced major changes in risk management programs for corn, wheat, soybean, fruit, vegetable 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 one-time irrevocable decision by producers, educational programming in this area required the combined farm management, financial analysis, and marketing subject matter expertise of many MSU agriculture educators and faculty. The irrevocable decision, combined with the complexity of these new programs and uncertainty of the long-term commodity price outlook, created a unique urgency for this programming.

In collaboration with the USDA Farm Service Agency and commodity organizations in Michigan, the MSUE FIRM team (Farm Information Resources Management) developed a one-stop source of information for producers and landlords that included:

1. a set of publications for Michigan producers and landlords,
2. decision-making software to analyze the financial consequences of alternative program decisions,
3. integration of the FIRM software with advanced risk management tools developed at the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University, and
4. 110 local and regional educational meetings that reached a total audience of 8,000 producers throughout the state.
Understanding and complying with Farm Labor Laws has become increasingly more difficult due to the changes in the laws and the numbers of issues facing farm employers. The 2015 West Michigan Ag Labor meeting, held on 2-26-15 in the Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, assisted ag employers to understand issues impacting them and their employees. It also included an update on labor regulations that impact farms. The agenda included the following:

- Accounting system and records that meet U.S. Department of Labor rules; passing a DOL audit—From Mary O’Rourke, U.S. Department of Labor
- Tips from an ag labor attorney on proper accounting records—Kim Clarke, Varnum LLC
- Correct steps for farmers to follow when working with a farm labor contractor. Legal pitfalls to avoid—Tom Thornburg, Farm Worker Legal Services
- What farmers need to know if you are hiring H2-A workers. New housing upgrades that Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is focusing on. —Robert Bausick, MDARD
- Update from US Homeland Security Investigations; the IMAGE and E-Verify process; deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) process; worksite enforcements in West Michigan—Cory Howe, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Results of the 2014 Pilot H-2A Programs in Michigan
- What was learned during the 2014 growing season...thoughts for 2015 Sarah Pion, Michigan Farm Bureau and Amy Irish-Brown, MSU Extension
- What smaller employers need to consider when looking at health insurance plans for their workers—Dr. Adam Kantrovich, MSU Extension.
**Dairy Industry**

Dairy producers, dairy farm employees, and industry professionals received timely updates about topics important to managing today's dairy farms at the Focus on Dairy Production meeting offered in Grand Rapids in February, 2015 by the Michigan State University Extension Dairy Team. The focus of these meetings is on enhancing the competitive advantage of Michigan dairy producers and the industry. Through specialized dairy programs ranging from online resources and educational seminars to face-to-face programs, the MSU Dairy Team provides Michigan’s dairy industry with easy-to-access information on a consistent basis.

Caring for dairy cattle requires knowledge and skills that ensure cattle are healthy, comfortable and capable of producing a safe and nutritious product. Relevant, science-based information and tools are provided on such dairy production topics as: Animal Health, Calves and Heifers, Dairy Nutrition and Feeding, Genetics, Herd Management, Milk Quality, Nutrient Management and Environment, and Reproduction.

MSU Extension dairy educators held calf care schools in 2015 in Hamilton, Ionia and Bad Axe. This was an excellent opportunity to develop and refine any calf manager’s or care giver’s skills for raising dairy calves. Emphasis was on practical application of science-based knowledge on topics like newborn calf care, milk/milk replacer, calf housing, and monitoring performance. This training can be implemented on any dairy farm. Participants learned concepts and skills related to profitable calf management from birth to weaning (first two months of life).

At the “Dairy Nutrition Roundtable Discussion” in Comstock Park, Dr. Mike Allen and Dr. Adam Lock from the MSU Department of Animal Science led the discussion on dairy cow nutrition. Participants (dairy nutritionists, veterinarians and other dairy agribusiness professionals) presented questions and shared information about current issues facing dairy producers in managing their nutrition and feeding programs.

Proper care and management of heifer calves has a tremendous impact on their profitability as lactating dairy cows.

In the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, Kent County milk production was valued at almost $32 million.
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. This fuels the economy by creating and retaining jobs, and helps ensure a healthy tax base.

Meeting the needs of Michigan meat producers

For the fifth consecutive year, MSU Extension meat quality educator Jeannine Schweihofer provided education at the Byron Center Meats’ annual producer appreciation and education day. The 100 people in attendance are livestock producers from Kent, Allegan or Ottawa that have livestock processed at Byron Center Meats. Many of these producers direct market meat. This year Schweihofer revisited the topic of pricing direct marketed meat, specifically pricing beef carcasses, and introduced an Excel worksheet co-developed with the University of Wisconsin Extension.

Producers who direct market beef need resources to help establish and change their pricing. Changing prices can be a daunting task for some producers who do not know what to charge to cover their costs or deal with recent fluctuating and rising beef prices.

To address this issue, a Freezer beef pricing worksheet was created in Excel and demonstrated at the workshop to help producers determine what price to charge per pound of hanging weight. This tool can make a significant difference for beef producers by helping them properly calculate cost of production and price needed when direct marketing meat. This can improve their business model, profitability, and ability to help customers compare the price of purchasing freezer beef with retail average pricing.

Many favorable comments were received from producers about the pricing worksheet. Of those who completed evaluations, 63% indicated they plan to implement change, primarily on how they were pricing their product.

Changes that participants planned to implement include:

- “Figuring costs to price needed for profitability; I will use the MSU calculator more to figure cost.”
- “To try to figure out how to use more of the waste products- fat and bone.” and
- “Use programs available through MSU.”

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods.
For the 12th consecutive year, Michigan State University Extension collaborated with 5 leading Michigan-based young plant producers to host the 2015 Michigan Garden Plant Tour, July 27 through August 7. The objective of the tour was to educate growers and industry professionals about new and existing plant selections and how they perform in different settings.

Host sites included Mast Young Plants in Grand Rapids, Pell Greenhouses Inc. in Hudsonville, Walters Gardens, Inc. in Zeeland, C. Raker and Sons in Litchfield, Four Star Greenhouse, Inc. in Carleton, and the Michigan State University Horticultural Demonstration Gardens.

Attendees could see the latest in new annuals and perennial plant introductions, and compare existing cultivars across numerous offerings from multiple propagators. Participants were able to see plant performance at different locations in order to make educated decisions for their usage and production.

More than 2,100 visits occurred at the five commercial sites plus the MSU Trial Gardens throughout the two weeks. Participants were retail and wholesale greenhouse growers, landscapers, grounds managers, horticultural supplier sales reps and Master Gardeners. They came from 24 different states and four countries.

As a result of seeing these plants on the 2015 tour, 90% of attendees responding to a post event evaluation indicated they would be adding anywhere from 1-20 new plants in 2016 that their customers could purchase. This represents over $100,000 in new plant sales for these retail and wholesale growers. Also, 90% of respondents indicated they would be attending 13th annual Michigan Garden Plant Tour in 2016.

During a presentation at the Michigan Greenhouse Growers Expo in Grand Rapids in December, MSU Extension senior educator Tom Dudek and Daedre Craig, Botanical Technologist at the Horticulture Department, Michigan State University, shared the top five plants from the 2015 Michigan Garden Plant Tour and highlighted the best of the best from all the host sites.
Michigan fruit producers are in competition with more than 30 fruit pests that threaten to damage their crops. The Trevor Nichols Research Center (TNRC) in Fennville, established in 1967, is one of 13 MSU AgBio Research centers and several on-campus research facilities that provide growers, natural resource managers and commodity groups with critical information they need to remain viable and competitive in the global economy. Dr. John Wise, Professor of Entomology at Michigan State University, is the Research and Extension Coordinator at TNRC.

The primary objective of the 156-acre center is to find the best ways to keep fruit pest-free in Michigan while preserving the environment and ensuring economic viability for the state’s fruit growers. Research topics include studying performance attributes of reduced-risk pesticides, optimizing delivery systems for crop protection materials, monitoring and controlling invasive and emerging pests, and developing novel pest management tactics. The center also supports IR-4, a United States Department of Agriculture project that works with specialty crop growers, registrants and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to register products for use on specialty crops, including reduced-risk pesticides.

In 2015, the TNRC hosted fruit crop research on topics of:
- invasive species,
- protecting pollinators, and
- novel delivery systems such as trunk injection, attract N kill, and solid set delivery systems.

They conducted GLP (Good Laboratory Practices) field residue trials in association with the USDA IR-4 Project to help register new reduced-risk pesticides for fruit growers.

The Research Center also hosted several MSU Extension events targeting pollinator safety, controlling Spotted Wing Drosophila and the annual pesticide performance field day.

Trevor Nichols Research Center will be the recipient of several generous donations from the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission, including a new research sprayer and laboratory renovations.
Fighting back against emerging pests in fruit crops

The spotted wing drosophila (SWD) and the brown marmorated stink bug are two invasive pests that pose big threats to Michigan’s fruit production. In Michigan, the first SWD were found in late 2010. In 2011 first captures were in early July, in 2012 first captures were in late May. Across Michigan, SWD is now found throughout the fruit production regions in fields of blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, cherry, and grape, also in many wild habitats where the flies infest wild fruiting plants.

The SWD has an optimal developing temperature of 65 to 70 °F, normal conditions during a Michigan growing season. This makes early detection information vital to activate pest management programs that prevent rapid population increases and potential infestations.

At Michigan State University Extension, our goal is to support blueberry growers and small fruit industry efforts to increase productivity while maintaining high standards in food safety, protection to workers, consumers and our environment. To achieve this, the MSUE small fruit team prepared workshops and twilight meetings beginning in March. Activities were directed to meet the needs of our clientele as expressed during end of season evaluation sessions, as well as priorities established by the blueberry industry. Topics covered during the March meeting included updates on the industry, insect management, winter and frost protection, disease management, plant nutrition, weed control, EnviroWeather, and the 2015 blueberry export program.

Farm visits were done in 2015 for weekly monitoring about SWD activity. On-farm research was done to evaluate different baits for monitoring, comparison of new and existing insecticide sprays, studies to improve timing of SWD control practices, and measurement of pesticide residues to support blueberry exports and marketing. Monitoring and on-farm research sites included farms of disadvantaged and underserved small fruit growers.

Also in 2015, advanced integrated pest management for Hispanics at Trevor Nichols Research Center and Michigan Works! included hands-on training on use & management of insecticides for SWD control under different weather conditions. Materials were available in both English and Spanish.
Apple Production in Kent County—more than 11,000 acres

According to the latest USDA Census of Agriculture, Kent County ranks as the top county in Michigan, and 7th county nationally, in apple production. Topographically, the Ridge in northern Kent county is the perfect place to grow apples and other fruit.

MSU has located key resources close to Kent to provide research and educational support to this industry.

- Trevor Nichols Research Center near Fennville focuses on finding the best ways to keep fruit pest-free in Michigan while preserving the environment and ensuring economic viability for the state’s fruit growers.

- Clarksville Research Center near Clarksville hosts research on small fruits and tree fruits and a variety of other crops in areas such as variety development, fruit thinning and growth regulators, dwarf rootstocks for fruit trees, integrated pest management, organic production systems and new pruning practices to help make production more profitable, efficient and environmentally friendly.

In 2015, MSU Extension educators Amy Irish-Brown and Phil Schwallier were successful in securing funding from the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission, the Michigan Apple Committee, and the Michigan State Horticultural Society to create an apple lab on the Ridge near Sparta to measure apple maturity indices. The goal for the work done at this lab is to improve Michigan apple maturity and storage awareness for two important varieties, Honeycrisp and Fuji.

This funding was used to outfit an existing lab space for apple testing, hire staff to assist with sample and data collection, and to pay for mileage to collect samples. In addition to the above donors, Storage Control Systems, AgroFresh, River Ridge Produce Marketing, Dr. Randy Beaudry—MSU Department of Horticulture, and local growers provided space, equipment, and fruit needed for the start up of this lab.

Information analyzed at the new Sparta lab included fruit weight, fruit red and green color, internal and external defects, fruit length and diameter, fruit firmness, reduction in fruit chlorophyll to determine optimum maturity, starch index, and brix (ratio of sugar to liquid in the fruit as it ripens).

Fruit samples were collected at 71 sites over a 10-week period beginning in late summer. Samples were collected at orchards primarily in Kent and Ottawa, but also in Ionia, Oceana and Mason. Several detailed, written reports were created as the harvest season progressed and sent to a total of 600 producers in the larger area. Fruit will continue to be analyzed throughout the storage season to determine effects that type of storage—cold storage or controlled atmosphere storage—may have on these varieties.
Choosing smart plants to support pollinators

Smart Gardening for Pollinators Conference

New in 2015 was the development of a Pollinator Habitat Garden in the Grand Ideas Garden at the Kent/MSU Extension office. The purpose of this garden is to encourage “smart” gardening behaviors to enhance survival of native pollinators. Pollinators are essential to our food supply and many terrestrial ecosystems linked to the food web.

The garden design allowed for maximum number of plant species (annuals, perennials, herbs, woody plants) for evaluation and demonstration and for weather-proof signage. Signs focused on plants, habitat, importance of pollinators to humans, and simple activities gardeners can do to encourage pollinators.

On August 8, nearly 60 people attended a pollinator conference held in the Grand Ideas Garden. The conference was developed to address growing concerns about pollinator declines—especially bees and butterflies—due to habitat loss and other issues. The agenda focused more on preserving native bees than on managed honeybee hives. It linked educational messaging to home gardening activities.

Choosing the right plants, offering an inviting habitat and decreasing use of pesticides contribute to the enhancement of bee and butterfly survival. As a side-note, beneficial insects that keep garden pests at bay and thrive on the same garden conditions were also highlighted during the course of the day-long conference.

MSU instructors included Dr. Rufus Isaacs, Dr. Jason Gibbs, Dr. David Smitley and Rebecca Finneran. The lab was also supported by Advanced Extension Master Gardener, Amy Heilman. Different participant learning styles were addressed by providing lecture as well as several opportunities for hands-on learning, both with identifying insects and during the outdoor lab in the Grand Ideas Garden.

Finneran taught the Smart Plants for Pollinators session which focused on making intentional plant choices to provide nectar and pollen throughout the season. She and MSU Extension staffer Virginia Wanta are a part of the Michigan Pollinator Initiative (MPI) which includes MSU campus specialists, educators and staff from the Agriculture and Agri-business Institute, and many others.

“Bees of the Great Lakes region and wildflowers to support them—A guide for farmers, gardeners and landscapers” is a new, pocket-size publication from MSU. Photos and descriptions in this spiral-bound book will help farmers and gardeners identify many species of bees inhabiting Michigan and surrounding states, and native plants that can be grown to provide pollen and nectar. Order this publication for $10 from www.shop.msu.edu by entering E3282 in the search box.
Enviroweather Weather Data and Pest Modeling aims to help users make pest, plant production and natural resource management decisions in Michigan by providing a sustainable weather-based information system. This online resource provides ‘local’ weather information and weather-based tools. There are currently 78 weather stations throughout Michigan (each yellow dot on the map).

Five of these Enviroweather stations are located in or near Kent County, including Sparta, Kent City, Standale/Walker, Hudsonville and Belding. Each station provides readings every 30 minutes on air temperature, soil temperature, soil moisture, relative humidity, solar radiation, wind speed and direction, precipitation, leaf wetness. There are different components of Enviroweather that deal specifically with field crops, fruit, vegetables, trees, turfgrass, and landscape/nursery.

Weather influences crop and pest development and management decisions. For example, wind speed and direction for drift management, temperature to prevent phytotoxicity that may result from applications on hot days, insect and pathogen development are all influenced by weather.

Model predictions allow growers to prepare to take management action if necessary. Enviroweather tools are intended to assist, not dictate, management decisions. The decision to take management action should be influenced by several factors including: a history of problematic pests, the current season pest pressure, susceptible crops, and past and predicted weather events.

Enviroweather is a collaborative project of: Michigan Climatological Resources Program & the MSU Integrated Pest Management Program. It is supported by: Project GREEEN, MSU AgBio Research, MSU Extension, private donors, and the MSU departments of Crop and Soil Sciences, Entomology, Forestry, Geography, Horticulture, and Plant Pathology.
Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Community Supported Agriculture Promotion and Development

Work continued in 2015 on development of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) marketing project for Grand Rapids and the Kent County region. The project began in 2014 as a collaboration between Local First of West Michigan, the West Michigan Growers Group and MSU Extension with a grant from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program. Work on objectives of the grant included:

- hosting the “2015 Growers Fare CSA Open House” at the Downtown Market
- strategic planning for the West Michigan Growers Group (WMGG), and
- building stronger partnerships with food assistance organizations across the county to increase supply of local produce to food pantries.

The Growers Fare Open House was held on March 21, 2015 at the Grand Rapids Downtown Market. The event attracted more than 400 people to the market and 18 local farmers who staffed displays to market and sell their 2015 CSA shares. Over 40 shares were sold at the event. Farmers attributed many more sales to people that they met at the event or through other project marketing materials.

Michigan Food and Farming Systems served as a consultant for strategic planning of the West Michigan Growers Group during November and December, 2015. More than 40 farmers participated in the planning that resulted in a new mission statement for the organization: “The West Michigan Growers Group exists to bring farmers together so they and their farms flourish within a sustainable local food system.”

The group was also able to develop goals, metrics, and strategies around four categories:

- social community,
- education,
- farm viability, and
- structure.

Continued development of the WMGG will ensure that small farmers in Kent county will have a strong voice in the future of “Good Food” work in West Michigan.
Community food system work done in West Michigan by MSUE educator Garrett Ziegler focuses on assisting farmers with access to new markets, building local food supply chain infrastructure and ensuring all residents have access to healthy, local food.

South East Community Ministries (SECOM) operates a pantry in southeast Grand Rapids. Throughout the summer and fall of 2015 SECOM purchased 25 CSA shares from a local farmer they met at the Growers Fare CSA Open House in March (previous page). SECOM then purchased a winter share from another local farm and plans to purchase more than 50 CSA shares in 2016—more than $25,000 in local farm purchases.

This “CSA to food pantry” project was developed into a successful grant proposal by the Kent County Health Department and Access of West Michigan with support from MSU Extension. This Michigan Health and Wellness 4x4 grant of $50,000 for obesity and chronic disease prevention was awarded in 2015. The grant supports purchase of over 50 CSA shares from local farmers to be distributed at five food pantries in the county. It also supports creation of a Good Food education curriculum for food pantry managers and staff, which MSU Extension and Access of West Michigan will develop. This grant can both decrease health disparities and increase marketing opportunities of small and medium-sized urban and rural growers.

SECOM will also begin piloting a program where they will accept SNAP benefits and Double-Up food bucks and actually provide a pick up location for CSA’s. This ensures that local food is able to get into the hands of customers who aren’t traditionally able to afford a CSA or wouldn’t normally have access. Plans include development of a cooking curriculum to prepare SECOM clients for the abundance of fresh produce they will receive in their CSA share.

All of this momentum for innovative ways to increase access through CSA’s has come out of partnerships catalyzed by the initial USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant (see previous page). It has empowered local farmers and local organizations to work together to solve complex issues, and find benefits for all partners involved.
Learning to Grow on Foreign Soil

Growers from Bethany Christian Services’ Hope Farms attend MSU Student Organic Farm Beginning Farmer Workshop

Hope Farms is a two-year old fruit and vegetable farm in the Grand Rapids area managed by Bethany Christian Services. The project focuses on allowing refugees from Nepal and the Republic of Burundi to develop past farming experiences in their home countries into deeper agricultural and entrepreneurial skills. Produce from the farm is sold at local farm markets, in grocery stores and to area restaurants. While gaining valuable knowledge and experience, refugees also earn a supplemental income and gain access to healthy local foods. Hope Farms is managed like an incubator farm. Bethany Christian Services hope is that once growers gain knowledge and experience, they will be ready to go out on their own and operate their own farms after a few years.

In an effort to reach all populations of farmers in Kent County, Michigan State University Extension covered the cost of a translator for three Hope Farms growers, an intern and the farm manager to attend a Michigan State University Student Organic Farm’s Farmer Field School workshop on soils in October 2015.

Scott Townley is the manager of Hope Farms. He reported that growers participating in the workshop learned a lot about cover cropping, which will help reduce soil erosion and add nutrients back to the soils on their farm. He said that growers really benefited from seeing some of the organic agriculture practices they have discussed at the farm, but haven’t had a chance to implement yet. “Seeing is believing,” said Townley.

“I think seeing a lot of different ways of doing things balanced on top of some basic soil science was encouraging and sparked some imagination for their farms in the future. The scale was different from what we are doing. But again, many principles presented were very relevant. I had a chance to talk to the interpreter afterward. He felt that the trainings were valuable. He emphasized how they gained a deeper understanding of nutrient cycling in soils. These growers used animal manure and vegetable waste for fertility in their home country, so I think the new information built on their deep experiential knowledge,” stated Townley.

The growers may benefit from attending future workshops, especially the trainings related to tests, diseases and business planning. The MSU Farmer Field School is comprised of intensive one and two day hands-on workshops, tailored to deliver in-depth, practical information for farmers with less than ten years of experience growing for local and regional markets. Michigan State University professors, MSU Extension educators and other agricultural experts serve as instructors for the program.
Farmland Preservation

Kent County Purchase of Development Rights Program

The goal of the Kent County Farmland Preservation program is to create a long-term environment for agricultural production. The Purchase of Development Rights program is an economic development tool to retain agricultural businesses. This voluntary program compensates owners of agricultural property for accepting a permanent deed restriction on their land limiting future development of the land for non-agricultural purposes.

Kent County is home to some of the most prime, unique fruit growing lands in the nation. Agricultural producers in Kent County supply some of the state’s leading food processing facilities including the Gerber Products Co., Zeeland Farm Services, Country Fresh, Cole’s Quality Foods, Kellogg’s, King Milling, Michigan Turkey Producers, and Yoplait.

One farm in Kent, the Hall farm, was permanently preserved in 2015. Total cost for preserving the 63.49 acre cow-calf, and hay farm in Grattan Township was $108,443.00. Federal Agriculture Conservation Easement dollars were not used in purchasing the Hall easement. The easement was funded through the 2014 and 2015 Wege grant cycle, and with funding from Grattan Township of $5000.00 toward the purchase.

The Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board is working to preserve two farms in 2016: the Bradford Dairy Farm, through funds secured from the American Farmland Trust, and the Malone Farm which will be split into two easements, one 100 acre easement and another 56 acre easement. Once these farms are preserved, the total acreage of prime and unique farmland preserved through the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program will be over 3,000 acres since 2003 when the program was created.

The Kent County Agriculture Preservation Board will submit a grant application to the USDA NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to seek 45% of matching funds toward the total cost of preserving one additional farm in 2016. The Agriculture Preservation Board has submitted a proposal to the Wege Foundation to assist with funding a portion of this 2016 project.
Supporting STEM careers through youth programming

Animal science is an important area of STEM (Science, technology, engineering, math) in which many Kent 4-H’ers excel. Raising an animal provides a wide range of valuable learning experiences, including:

- Disease prevention, control, and treatment (biology, chemistry)
- Anatomy and physiology
- Training—behavioral science
- Food safety—preparing food for human consumption
- Environmental stewardship
- Life skills—responsibility, planning, problem solving, ethics, money management.

The 2015 Michigan 4-H/FFA Meat Judging Contest on Friday, July 24, 2015 brought two full weeks of youth livestock, dairy and meats judging competitions to a close.

This competition is a collaborative effort between the Michigan State University Meat Lab, MSU Extension, Michigan 4-H and Michigan FFA. Forty-three contestants competed. Participants evaluated three beef classes, three pork classes, identified retail cuts, analyzed three beef carcasses for yield and quality grades, and answered questions. Additionally, 4-H members gave one sets of oral reasons to defend their placing. By participating, contestants illustrated their ability to evaluate carcasses and identify meats through individual and team competition, and developed important life skills in communication and decision-making.

4-H contestants competed in two divisions including Junior 4-H and Senior 4-H. Kent County youth ranked the first in the Junior 4-H division, with a team consisting of Tori Kik, Gage Snarski and Mitchel Snarski.

The Kent Senior 4-H "A" team placed third in the Senior 4-H division. Team members included Brynnen Gardner, Jennifer Spaans, Lauren Snarski and Kristen Blasher. The Kent Senior 4-H “B” team member Joe Beukema placed sixth.

The 2015 Michigan 4-H/FFA Meet Judging Contest was hosted by the MSU Meat Laboratory. Carcasses for the classes were provided by the Michigan Livestock Expo.
Developing Youth and Communities, continued

4-H Innovative Programs

Inspired by the 4-H motto “to make the best better,” Kent County 4-H is always working to expand our reach and continually improve programs in order to best meet the needs of our youth. With the development of new community partnerships comes the implementation of innovative programs. 2015 was marked with many successes as we reached new audiences through a variety of programs.

¡Qué Rico! La Cultura

4-H showcased the nationally accredited curriculum ¡Qué Rico! La Cultura to students at Burton Elementary School in Grand Rapids during their time with the YMCA’s LOOP afterschool program. Over the course of six weeks, students in grades 1-5 were able to explore the Latin American culture through crafts, oral expression, visual arts, and celebration. For many students, this provided a deeper look and understanding into their own heritage. This program aimed to make youth more culturally aware of the world around them, while encouraging them to explore their creative side. Activities included making worry dolls from Guatemala, making rain sticks from Chile, and painting a mural. Students even got a visit from a local artist who shared his personal story of his migration from Mexico to the US, and how it has inspired his artwork. At the end of the program, students’ families were invited to participate in a celebration which included a traditional Mexican meal and a piñata.

Dirt to Table

Kent County 4-H hosted a “Dirt to Table Day” at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services in Grand Rapids in July 2015 as part of their annual Kids Kamp Program. This event focused on healthy eating and teaching youth where food comes from. The day was jam-packed with games, recipes, food, stories, and more! Although organized by 4-H, the delivery of this program was really a collaborative effort with the MSU Extension Health and Nutrition department and MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers. Participants learned where plants come from, what plants need to survive, and even got to plant their own green bean seed to take home. Instructors taught youth about how vegetables grow, which parts you eat, and how to turn that into a tasty recipe. Participants got to make their own salsa using fresh ingredients and enjoy as an afternoon snack!

This page written by Nicole Grabowski, 4-H Program Coordinator, Kent MSU Extension
Developing Youth and Communities, continued

4-H Goes Outdoors!

Nothing compares to the learning experiences and therapeutic values related to being in the great outdoors! Whether exploring your own backyard or going for a hike in the woods, there is so much West Michigan has to offer our youth. Through gardening and outdoor adventure programs, Kent County 4-H is continually connecting youth to nature through intentional learning opportunities.

4-H Gardening Programs

During 2015, a relationship bloomed between the MSUE Kent County 4-H and the consumer horticulture departments. As interest in urban gardening is on the rise, it only made sense to collaborate with the first hand experts – our very own Certified MSU Master Gardeners. Through intentional coordination, 4-H was able to work with a variety of youth-focused organizations to implement hands-on, educational gardening programs.

Based on a needs assessment per organization, 4-H established a program built with lessons in teamwork, leadership, collaboration, science, math, and of course gardening! 4-H Program Coordinators worked with a team of ten MSU Master Gardeners to select garden related curriculum that is most relevant for the youth we serve. We were able to use these activities to:

- start a summer long garden club at Byron Township Community Center
- create a one day program at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, and
- support the existing school garden at Congress Elementary.

Perhaps the most notable garden project is the installation of a garden and outdoor classroom at Chandler Woods Charter Academy in Belmont. 4-H and volunteer MSU Master Gardeners are working with the school to teach students the entire process of gardening, including topics related to soil, plants, water, insects, the environment, and more!

Students are guiding the entire process from design, to installation, to maintenance and care. MSU Master Gardeners are volunteering their time as teachers for an elective class during school hours for 6-8th grade students called “4-H Sustainable Gardening”. The goal for this project is to complete the outdoor space over the course of five years.

This page written by Nicole Grabowski, 4-H Program Coordinator, Kent MSU Extension
4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Programs

A new addition to the Kent County 4-H offerings in 2015 was the 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge (OAC) Programs. Youth will be able to explore the great outdoors through activities such as hiking, camping, rock climbing, backpacking, snowshoeing, canoeing, and more!

This program began to take root at the Byron Township Community Center 4-H Outdoor Adventure Day camp in July, and through an OAC Kickoff event in September at the MSU Extension Office. Both programs were aimed to draw in participants who were new to this kind of activity. Volunteer leaders taught youth how to set up a tent, build a fire, track animals, and use a compass.

October 2015 marked the official start of a year round 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Club in Kent County. Led by six highly qualified volunteer leaders including a National Outdoor Leadership School alumnus, a Peace Corps alumnus, veteran Outdoor Adventure Challengers, and former nature center teachers, this club has only just begun their adventures together! The group meets once a month to explore the outdoors, learn new skills, and work together as a group.

This page written by Nicole Grabowski, 4-H Program Coordinator, Kent MSU Extension
ENSURING SAFE AND SECURE FOOD

Teaching food pantry staff about food safety

Local food pantries exist out of compassion and a desire to help others. The last thing they want is for someone to become sick from food they receive. Feeding America West Michigan held agency conferences throughout West Michigan in 2015 for local food pantry staff. An important topic at the conferences was on how to implement proper food handling measures to ensure that the product being distributed is safe.

MSU Extension educator Jane Hart was the featured speaker on food safety at several of these conferences. In Kent County, 49 local pantry staffers learned about safe food handling for susceptible audiences, sanitation, date marking, storage/rotation, and pest control. Hart was also the featured food safety speaker at similar agency conferences in Ottawa, Cass, Muskegon and Allegan counties.

ServSafe—Food Service/Safety Certification Training

Michigan State University Extension offers ServSafe, a national certification program for food service workers. ServSafe teaches about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train employees about the latest food safety issues including:

- providing safe food,
- forms of contamination,
- the safe food handler,
- the flow of food,
- food safety management systems,
- safe facilities & pest management,
- cleaning & sanitizing.

MSU Extension educator Jane Hart taught ServSafe classes in Kent County in 2015 to 38 county residents. A partnership between MSU Extension and the Kent County Health Department was formed in 2014 to reduce the burden on KCHD staff of having to teach the classes themselves, freeing their time for other duties including inspections and enforcement. MSU Extension staff teach both the 8 and the 16-hour classes to Kent County restaurant workers and food program staff.
Helping Michigan residents make smart money decisions

In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults learn the skills they need to increase savings, manage their spending, avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. These outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

Michigan State University Extension Financial and Homeownership Education aligned with the National Strategy for Financial Literacy for 2011. This strategy establishes a long-term vision of financial success, financial stability, and financial security for the diverse U.S. populace. It also seeks to foster a culture in which households take periodic stock of their financial situations, individuals seek information and ask questions before entering into financial transactions, and everyone has the information and tools needed to manage debt, save to meet their financial goals, and plan for secure financial futures.

In 2015, MSU Extension educator Jinnifer Ortquist provided one-time workshops or a 3-part series of classes to participants in Kent on these aspects of money management:

- Making sound financial decisions
- Creating a spending plan and save more
- The importance of saving and investing
- Paying down debt and use credit wisely

She provided these classes through local partnerships with Michigan Works! PATH program, Hope Community, Job Corps, Head Start, North Kent Community Services, Family Network of Wyoming, Grand Rapids Salvation Army Kindred Transition program, the Health Center for Homeless Veterans, and many others. In 2015, she provided finance or homeownership education to 335 people in Kent County.
More than 32,400 Michigan children were documented as victims of child abuse and neglect during 2010.\(^1\) Neurological research shows that abuse and neglect can alter early brain development, resulting in developmental delays, poor physical health, depression, lower academic achievement, social difficulties and aggression,\(^2\) as well as longer-term health problems such as alcoholism, chronic disease, depression and substance abuse.\(^3\)

In addition to the substantial impacts on the children themselves, there are quantifiable financial costs to our broader society. Nationally, the direct costs related to child abuse and neglect, such as the child welfare system, are estimated at $33 billion annually, while annual indirect costs such as special education systems are estimated at over $70 billion.\(^4\)

MSUE educator Holly Tiret provides a series of lessons for parents in Kent from the Nurturing Parenting community-based education curriculum. Many of these parents are referred to the class by local social service agencies. In 2015, Tiret and instructor Georgina Perry provided 7 Nurturing Parenting series to a total of 60 participants in Kent county.

In addition, more than 1,000 Kent residents participated in other workshops on topics of stress, anger management and parenting throughout the county, including:

- **Youth sites:**
  - Job Corps
  - Kent County Juvenile Detention Center
  - Grandville Transitions

- **Child Care Provider training:**
  - Kent District Libraries
  - Telamon Migrant Head Start
  - Kent Regional 4-C Conference

- **Low Income sites:**
  - Liz’s Place Temporary Housing
  - Senior Neighbors Community Center
  - United Outreach Ministries

- **Parenting and RELAX classes:**
  - Kent/MSU Extension office series for parents—taught in English
  - Cesar Chavez parenting group—taught in Spanish
  - Other Way Ministries—taught in Spanish

---

\(^1\) U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2011  
\(^2\) U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008  
\(^3\) Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008  
\(^4\) Wang & Holton, 2007
Disease prevention and management

MSU Extension disease prevention and management education programs help participants increase their ability to lead a healthy lifestyle. This greatly reduces a person’s risk for developing chronic disease or improves disease management.

Chronic diseases are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health issues. Access to high-quality and affordable prevention measures is essential to saving lives, reducing disability, and lowering costs of everyone’s medical care. Reducing the prevalence and improving management of diabetes is a public health concern for all Michigan citizens to reduce healthcare costs.

MSU Extension provides education related to prevention and management of leading chronic diseases. Michigan ranks 13th nationally for prevalence of diabetes and 17th nationally for obesity. An estimated 10% of Michigan adults have been diagnosed with diabetes and an additional 250,000 have the disease but are undiagnosed.

In 2015, MSU Extension educator Christi Demitz offered the 6-part Diabetes PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) series at Solon Center Wesleyan Church in Cedar Springs and the 5-part series “Dining with Diabetes” at Adams Park Apartments in Grand Rapids.

- **Diabetes PATH**, developed at Stanford University, enhances patient confidence in their ability to manage diabetes and work more effectively with their health care providers.

- **Dining with Diabetes** is an evidence-based program developed by West Virginia Extension for people with diabetes or their family members.

Demitz serves as the regional contact for West Michigan Partners on the PATH. This group coordinates PATH workshops and trainings and builds referral systems locally. Michigan Partners on the PATH (MI PATH) was first convened in 2005 with core representatives from MSU Extension, the Office of Services to the Aging, and the Michigan Department of Community Health. More than 50 agencies currently participate with MI PATH, including Health Alliance Plan, Arthritis Foundation Michigan Chapter, the National Kidney Foundation of MI, UPDON, and regional Area Agencies on Aging.
Keeping People Healthy, continued

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

Improving health and nutrition for Michigan residents is the goal of MSU Extension staff in the Health and Nutrition Institute.

In 2015, continued focus for Michigan State University Extension health and nutrition programs in Kent County was on building and maintaining strong community partnerships to assist us with outreach throughout the community.

MSU Extension expanded their partnership with Head Start of Kent County significantly in 2015 by reaching ALL 3 year olds enrolled in Head Start with nutrition education. We also expanded our partnership with Spectrum Health Healthier Communities, and developed new partnerships with San Juan Diego Academy, Alpha Women’s Center, Wyoming Adult Education and Sparta Adult Education.

It is important to provide education that will help participants build skills to feed themselves and their family healthier foods. Cooking Matters is a program that incorporates kitchen and cooking skills into a traditional nutrition education class. Participants walk away from each class with ingredients to make a recipe at home for their family after practicing with a trained chef in class. By leveraging grant dollars for take-home groceries and the volunteer chef’s time, MSU Extension is able to provide a comprehensive program that helps participants build the necessary skills to live a healthier life. These classes were provided to both adults and teens at various Kent County sites, in coordination with our partners.

In 2015, MSU Extension also worked with Telamon Migrant Head Start to present nutrition parent nights. Extension staff coordinated purchasing food, preparing dinner and presenting a lesson on healthy eating to parents. The presentation was conducted by bilingual staff, and all materials provided were in Spanish. This important partnership allows us to reach an underserved audience in our community with information that will impact their family’s health.

A participant from MSU Extension nutrition instructor Gloria Martin’s Cooking Matters for Adults class at Reflections apartment complex sent her this picture of homemade pizza ingredients.

He sent this to her after the class, when he was back home saying: “Cooking DOES matter!”
Sampling on board the D.J. Angus provides an up close look at local waters

Harbor Island is a popular spot in Grand Haven. Soccer fields, bank fishing spots, and the popular boat launch on Coho Drive bring a steady stream of people past the dock where the D. J. Angus is moored for much of the year. Thousands of people have been on board the D. J. Angus since it began operating in 1986, but many more who pass by each day do not realize that this fantastic resource is available so close to downtown Grand Haven.

This 45-foot research vessel is owned and operated by Grand Valley State University and serves as a “floating classroom” that offers educational programs on the Grand River, Spring Lake, and Lake Michigan. The dock at Harbor Island provides easy access to all three water bodies, and a typical 2 ½ hour excursion offers participants a chance to compare water quality at different sites.

The D. J. Angus often hosts school groups of fourth grade and above, accommodating up to 26 passengers in addition to the crew. Adult programs are also offered, and even people who have lived on local waters for years will almost certainly come away with a greater understanding of what lies beneath the waves.

On September 16, 2015, Michigan State University Extension’s District 7 Council took a trip on board the Angus. High waves prevented sampling in Lake Michigan, but comparisons between the Grand River and Spring Lake were made and a variety of topics were covered by educators with GVSU and Michigan Sea Grant.

Council members learned about invasive species, even finding some quagga mussel shells in the Grand River. Although Michigan has taken steps to prevent the spread of invasives by requiring that boaters remove plants and drain water from boats, a recent study found that boaters are not always clear on what the laws require. Participants also heard about two emerging invaders, New Zealand mudsnail and Didymo, that can even hitchhike on the soles of boots or waders.
Sampling local waters on board the D.J. Angus

Watershed connections were another theme of the trip. What happens on the land invariably affects the quality of water in rivers and lakes. One example was provided by a Shoreline Assessment of Spring Lake, which found that 62.2% of the shoreline has been artificially hardened. “Rein in the Runoff,” a project undertaken by collaborators with GVSU and Sea Grant, found that re-vegetating buffer strips would be one of the most cost effective ways to improve water quality in Spring Lake.

Hands-on sampling was the highlight of the trip. Participants assessed water clarity, sediments, bottom-dwelling invertebrates, plankton, temperature, oxygen, and other water quality parameters. One key point was that high nutrient loads from runoff result in low oxygen levels, particularly in deep areas of Spring Lake. Sensitive species cannot tolerate low oxygen levels, so only a few types of invertebrates are found here.

All in all it was an enjoyable and enlightening day on the water. In summing things up, presenters noted that environmental quality in the Grand River and other local waters have improved in many respects over the past several decades. However, several challenges remain and new threats (including Asian carp) may loom on the horizon.

To book your own group trip on the D. J. Angus or its sister ship in Muskegon, the W.G. Jackson, follow instructions given on the Annis Water Resources Institute website. Participants in the MSUE Master Naturalist program as well as the general public will have the opportunity to attend a supplemental class titled: “Great Lakes Issues and Ecology” taught by Dr. Dan O’Keefe onboard the D.J. Angus on August 20th, 2016. For more information, please contact Ginny Wanty wanty@msu.edu or 616-632-7873.

Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan’s coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 33 university-based programs.

Dan O’Keefe; Michigan Sea Grant; okeefed@msu.edu
Michigan State University is making a difference—everywhere—in Michigan.

Every day, Michigan State University—the nation’s pioneer land-grant university—works to advance prosperity for the people of Michigan. MSU makes a positive impact on the state’s economy in the areas of technology, agriculture, manufacturing, health care, education, energy, environment, and the arts.

MSU’s talent and expertise help position Michigan as an uncompromising competitor in a global market. A vital contributor to the state’s economy, the university attracted more than $528 million in external funding in fiscal year 2014 and plays a key role in the state’s annual $91.4 billion agribusiness industry through partnerships, research, and educational programs in all 83 counties.

*Data from an independent study by the Anderson Economic Group*
DISTRICT 7 EXTENSION COUNCIL

Each district of MSU Extension has an advisory council to assist the District Coordinator in a variety of ways. The Council’s composition is a balance among various sectors that Extension educational programming serves.

Members are nominated and selected due to their experience with Extension and proven leadership. They network with others who share similar interests and concerns, help shape Extension programming efforts important to citizens in the district, gather support for establishing or extending educational efforts around issues of concern in the district, and participate in leadership and issue focused educational events.

Members of the District 7 Council in 2015 include:

- Nora Balgoyen-Williams (Allegan)
- Max Thiele (Allegan)
- Reuben Roberts (Kent/Allegan)
- Dick Bethel (Kent)
- Gary Lemke (Kent)
- Harold Mast (Kent)
- Carrie Jo Roy (Kent)
- Jim Steketee (Kent)
- Mary Jane Belter (Ottawa)
- Mike Bronkema (Ottawa)
- Greg DeJong (Ottawa)
- Matt Fenske (Ottawa)
- Yumiko Jakobcic (Ottawa)
- Matt Schmid (Ottawa)
# Extension Staff Serving Kent County

## Staff Located in Kent County Office:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid Aguayo-Fuentealba</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Instructor</td>
<td>616-632-7898</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aguayofu@msu.edu">aguayofu@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristi Ayers</td>
<td>4-H Program Coordinator</td>
<td>616-632-7888</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bowerskr@msu.edu">bowerskr@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Blase</td>
<td>District 7 Coordinator</td>
<td>616-632-7887</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blase@msu.edu">blase@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Brady</td>
<td>Hort. Events &amp; Acct. Manager</td>
<td>616-632-7880</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bradydi1@msu.edu">bradydi1@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christi Demitz</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7881</td>
<td><a href="mailto:demitzch@msu.edu">demitzch@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Eccles</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Instructor</td>
<td>616-632-7864</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecclesl@msu.edu">ecclesl@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Eschbach</td>
<td>Evaluation Specialist</td>
<td>616-632-7869</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cpeters@msu.edu">cpeters@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Fenton</td>
<td>4-H Program Coordinator</td>
<td>616-632-7876</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fentons@msu.edu">fentons@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Finneran</td>
<td>Consumer Horticulture Senior Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7886</td>
<td><a href="mailto:finneran@msu.edu">finneran@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Grabowski</td>
<td>4-H Program Coordinator</td>
<td>616-632-7870</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grabow36@msu.edu">grabow36@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Green</td>
<td>Extension Program Support</td>
<td>616-632-7877</td>
<td><a href="mailto:greende4@msu.edu">greende4@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Gutierrez</td>
<td>Office Administrator</td>
<td>616-632-7875</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gutier83@msu.edu">gutier83@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Higley</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Associate</td>
<td>616-632-7890</td>
<td><a href="mailto:higleyj@msu.edu">higleyj@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Irish-Brown</td>
<td>Senior District Fruit Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7891</td>
<td><a href="mailto:irisha@msu.edu">irisha@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenda Kilpatrick</td>
<td>4-H Extension Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7879</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kilpatri@msu.edu">kilpatri@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Labun</td>
<td>ANR Events Management</td>
<td>616-632-7872</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sibsonje@msu.edu">sibsonje@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriane Land</td>
<td>Master Gardener Program Facilitator</td>
<td>616-632-7880</td>
<td><a href="mailto:landadri@msu.edu">landadri@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Lucas</td>
<td>Master Gardener Hotline Team Leader</td>
<td>616-632-7892</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lucasma5@msu.edu">lucasma5@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Marino</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7889</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marinos1@msu.edu">marinos1@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Martin</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Instructor</td>
<td>616-632-7885</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marti878@msu.edu">marti878@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinnifer Ortquist</td>
<td>Money Management Extension Educator</td>
<td>616-632-7874</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ortquisj@msu.edu">ortquisj@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgina Perry</td>
<td>Family/Parenting Program Instructor</td>
<td>616-632-7884</td>
<td><a href="mailto:perrygeo@msu.edu">perrygeo@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Pilkenton</td>
<td>Educational Media Coordinator 4-H</td>
<td>616-632-7867</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pilkento@msu.edu">pilkento@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Shattuck</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Associate</td>
<td>616-632-7901</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shattu19@msu.edu">shattu19@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latoyia Thomas</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Associate</td>
<td>616-632-7871</td>
<td><a href="mailto:thoma634@msu.edu">thoma634@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Tiret</td>
<td>Senior Extension Educator/Better Kid Care</td>
<td>616-632-7893</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tiret@msu.edu">tiret@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesenia Velasco</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Program Associate</td>
<td>616-632-7882</td>
<td><a href="mailto:velasco@msu.edu">velasco@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginny Wanty</td>
<td>Master Naturalist Coordinator</td>
<td>616-632-7873</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wanty@msu.edu">wanty@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kendra Wills</strong></td>
<td>Local Foods Extension Educator</td>
<td>616-608-7424</td>
<td><a href="mailto:willsk@msu.edu">willsk@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garrett Ziegler</strong></td>
<td>Local Foods Extension Educator</td>
<td>616-608-7436</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zieglerg@msu.edu">zieglerg@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kendra and Garret are located at: GR Downtown Market, 109 Logan S.W., Suite B102, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**
### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Kent County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith Cullens</td>
<td>Dairy Educator</td>
<td>989-224-5240</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cullensf@msu.edu">cullensf@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Davidhizar</td>
<td>MSU Product Center Innovation Counselor</td>
<td>269-944-4126</td>
<td><a href="mailto:davidhiz@msu.edu">davidhiz@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Dudek</td>
<td>Senior District Hort. &amp; Marketing Educator</td>
<td>616-994-4542</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dudek@msu.edu">dudek@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Ferry</td>
<td>Swine Educator</td>
<td>269-445-4438</td>
<td><a href="mailto:franzeli@msu.edu">franzeli@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Garcia-Salazar</td>
<td>Small Fruit (Blueberries) Educator</td>
<td>616-994-4545</td>
<td><a href="mailto:garciass4@msu.edu">garciass4@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Goldy</td>
<td>Upland Vegetables, Celery &amp; Onions Educator</td>
<td>269-944-4126</td>
<td><a href="mailto:goldy@msu.edu">goldy@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gould</td>
<td>Bioenergy Crops Educator</td>
<td>616-994-4547</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gouldmc@msu.edu">gouldmc@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Gould</td>
<td>Beef/Livestock Educator</td>
<td>616-527-5357</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gouldk@msu.edu">gouldk@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Guthrie</td>
<td>Equine Educator</td>
<td>517-788-4292</td>
<td><a href="mailto:guthri19@msu.edu">guthri19@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Hart</td>
<td>Food Safety Educator</td>
<td>231-724-6694</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hartjan@msu.edu">hartjan@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Kantrovich</td>
<td>Farm Management/Financial Educator</td>
<td>616-994-4570</td>
<td><a href="mailto:akantrov@msu.edu">akantrov@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin Karcher</td>
<td>Poultry Extension Specialist</td>
<td>517-775-0485</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dkarcher@msu.edu">dkarcher@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Lee</td>
<td>Dairy Educator</td>
<td>231-839-5850</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leeka@msu.edu">leeka@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Longstroth</td>
<td>Small Fruit (Blueberries) Educator</td>
<td>269-657-8213</td>
<td><a href="mailto:longstr7@msu.edu">longstr7@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce MacKellar</td>
<td>Field Crops Educator</td>
<td>269-657-8213</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mackellar@msu.edu">mackellar@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill O’Donnell</td>
<td>Christmas Trees Educator</td>
<td>231-779-9480</td>
<td><a href="mailto:odonne10@msu.edu">odonne10@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan O’Keefe</td>
<td>Michigan Sea Grant Educator</td>
<td>616-994-4572</td>
<td><a href="mailto:okeefed@msu.edu">okeefed@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeannine Schweihofen</td>
<td>Meat Quality Educator</td>
<td>810-989-6935</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grobbelj@msu.edu">grobbelj@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Schwaller</td>
<td>Specialty Crop Production Educator</td>
<td>616-490-7917</td>
<td><a href="mailto:schwallli@msu.edu">schwallli@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Shemer</td>
<td>4-H Program Coordinator</td>
<td>616-994-4578</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shemerw@msu.edu">shemerw@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MISSION:**

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

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeff Dwyer, Interim Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.