

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

It is with pleasure that I bring another annual report of the good work MSU Extension is providing in Gladwin County. Through our partnership with the county, we are able to bring state and federal funding into the local Extension office to bring resources of our land grant university to this community. 2015 was the first year of our 5 year millage for MSU Extension and 4-H services in Gladwin County. I appreciate the dedication of the Board of Commission and the County elected officials and other staff who have worked together with us to make this a reality. I especially am grateful to the voters and other residents of this county for their support during tough economic times.



Our mission is to help people improve their lives through an educational process. We do this by bringing resources from our four areas of programming:

- Agriculture and Agribusiness
- Children and Youth (includes 4-H)
- Health and Nutrition
- Greening Michigan (Natural Resources, Leadership Development, and Economic and Community Development)

In 2015 MSU Extension continued to strive to meet the needs of the local communities and embarked on a large Needs Assessment process. In addition to conducting an online survey that netted over 5,000 responses statewide, we conducted “Issues Identification” sessions in each District. In our area - District 6 - we held three sessions in the last quarter of 2015. Almost 100 community members attended the facilitated discussions and answered questions like:

What do you think are the most important areas for Extension to focus their efforts over the next 3-5 years?

What are the needs and opportunities in our communities that research and education can make a difference by addressing?

Over the next several months, we will be processing the statewide and local data. We expect it will be very helpful in our program planning and resource allocation decisions. I would be happy to share the results of both the online Focus survey and the Issues ID sessions with anyone who is interested.

As always, I thank you for your commitment to MSU Extension and the people we serve in this great state and this county.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shari Spoelman".

Shari Spoelman, District Coordinator

STAFF

Kable Thurlow—Extension Educator, Agriculture

Bev Przystas—Extension Educator, Children and Youth

Coral Beth Rowley—Nutrition Program Instructor

Jessica Hufford—4-H Program Coordinator

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

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DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

4-H is the nation's largest positive youth development and youth mentoring organization, empowering six million young people in the U.S. In partnership with 110 universities, 4-H life changing programs are research-backed & available through 4-H clubs, camps, after-school and school enrichment programs

Michigan State University Extension staff and volunteers worked hard to provide educational programming to youth in the county. Gladwin County 4-H had a great year with many opportunities for youth and adults to participate in various events, projects, and workshops.

Kettunen Center: The center is a full-service conference and retreat facility that is owned and operated by the Michigan 4-H Foundation. Workshops at the Kettunen Center offer hands-on opportunities to youth and adults and include many indoor and outdoor educational options. Gladwin County Extension Educator Bev Przystas taught and facilitated sessions at the events and workshops offered throughout the year.

Workshops attended by Gladwin County Youth and Adult Volunteers:

- 4-H Winterfest
- 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine Workshop
- 4-H Visual Arts, Crafts, Sewing and Textiles Workshop

4-H Fish Fry: The Gladwin Knights of Columbus holds an annual fish fry to raise funds for the Gladwin County scholarship fund. 4-H families attend the event to help promote 4-H and to serve, wait tables, and clean up alongside the Knights of Columbus members. 45 youth members and 10 adults helped to make the event great. Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus for their continued support of the program.

4-H Summer Camp and 4-H Cloverbud Camp:

In partnership with Gratiot, Clare, and Isabella Counties, Gladwin 4-H hosts 4-H summer camp (ages 9-12) and 4-H Cloverbud camp (ages 5-8). Over 100 youth members participated in this multi-county event. 4-H camp features fun, educational activities that are hands-on and innovative for youth members. Teen leaders serve as counselors for the camps and are able to develop leadership skills and enhance their life skills.

4-H Camp Counselor Training: Camp counselors are an important component of a successful 4-H camp experience. Camp counselors become role models for younger youth and the experience gives older youth a chance to develop leadership skills. Extension Educators Bev Przystas and Jan Brinn (Allegan County) taught the counselors camp skills, leadership and responsibility prior to the camp.



Fish Fry Helpers



4-H Summer Camp



Snow Tubing Fun Day

Each year, Gladwin and Clare County 4-H members, friends, and family attend the annual 4-H day at SnowSnake Mountain. Over 50 members of Gladwin 4-H came together to celebrate 4-H and to have a little fun.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued



Gladwin County Fair

Gladwin County Fair: Over 200 4-H youth participated in the Gladwin County Fair. The Gladwin County Fair is an event in which 4-H members showcase their hard work and efforts throughout the year. 4-H'ers participate in animal projects, still exhibits, shooting sports, and help with the 4-H concession stand. The livestock and small animal auctions were both a great success in 2015 thanks to the continued support of local businesses in Gladwin County and surrounding areas. The fair theme was "American Heroes." Clubs decorated booths in the still exhibit barn, decorated their project areas in animal barns, and participated in the parade to start off fair week.

4-H Clubs: The club model of program delivery is essential to 4-H. It is the original and the oldest method of providing 4-H programming to county youth. Club leaders and other adult volunteers work with groups of youth, focusing on specific project areas and educational goals. There are many active clubs in Gladwin County. Projects include livestock, small animals, shooting sports, and crafts.

State Horse Show: Gladwin County 4-H members participated in the State 4-H Horse Show in East Lansing in August. The State 4-H Horse Show is an annual, three-day event that brings together almost 600 4-Hers from across Michigan. Members are selected by their county 4-H programs to participate in this event. Competing at the show and being able to represent their home county is a great honor for youth. Eight Gladwin youth represented Gladwin County.

Over the three-day show, members compete in English, dressage, western, trail, jumping and gymkhana with some of the most accomplished young equestrians in Michigan. Many have spent months, even years, preparing themselves and their horses or ponies for the show in hopes of bringing home a gold medal or even being named a state champion. Congratulations to all the participants.



Lexie Edick

Exploration Days: An event open to youth ages 11-19, Exploration Days is designed to help young people learn new ideas and techniques, increase their interest in and readiness for college, explore career options, and develop their decision making, independence and team-building skills. Each year, approximately 2,500 Michigan youth attend this educational event. Three youth from Gladwin County attended in 2015.

Great Lakes Natural Resources Camp: This MSU pre-college program teaches young people about Michigan's diverse natural resources, environmental science, the Great Lakes ecosystems management issues, and natural resources career exploration. It is recognized as one of the top 4-H natural resources and environmental science programs in the nation, receiving multiple state and national science excellence awards in the past few years. Two youth and two teen leader counselors from Gladwin County attended in 2015.



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Developing Youth and Communities, continued

4-H Success Story: My name is Elizabeth Hoag and I am ten years old. I am a member of the 4-H club “Everything Under the Sun” in Gladwin County. I show rabbits, chickens, ducks and sheep. This is my 5th year as a 4-H member and last year was the first time I was able to participate in the 4-H livestock and small animal auctions. It was a good year for me. As my mom and I talked about the expenses that needed to be repaid for my projects, we talked about how I could donate some of my funds to help others.

I am also an active member of the Beaverton Church of the Brethren. Each year, a special offering is taken and the funds are used to purchase gift cards for local teachers for classroom supplies. Announcements had been made several times during church that they were only going to be able to buy cards this year for the elementary teachers, due to the smaller amount being raised. As a student at Beaverton Rural Schools, this moved me. I donated \$50 of my 4-H earnings to the fund and challenged the congregation to meet or beat my donation. Nearly 20 members of our small congregation met my challenge. The church was able to purchase \$100 gift cards, not only for the Elementary teachers, but for all of the teachers at Beaverton Rural Schools. We have several teachers in our congregation that teach at other schools and we were able to purchase cards for them as well.

I am proud to be involved in 4-H, my church, and my school. I am humbled to have the support of the community and businesses to sponsor and purchase my 4-H projects, and I was honored to be able to inspire others to donate to a worthy cause.



Elizabeth Hoag

Elizabeth Hoag

Gladwin 4-H Youth Development Numbers:

4-H Clubs:	12
Youth members in organized 4-H clubs:	269
Adult volunteers:	60
Youth volunteers:	36
Youth in-school and afterschool programming:	428
Total Youth served in school enrichment programs:	513
Winterfest:	1 youth, 1 adult volunteer
Beef, Sheep, & Swine Teen & Adult Leader Wkshp:	1 youth, 2 adult volunteers
4-H Visual Arts, Crafts, Sewing, & Textiles Wkshp:	1 adult volunteer
4-H Summer Camp:	6 youth, 2 teen leader counselors
4-H Cloverbud Camp:	1 youth, 1 teen leader counselor
Great Lakes Natural Resources Camp:	2 youth, 2 teen leader counselors



Gladwin County Youth
4-H Members



Krafty Kids Club



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ENSURING STRONG COMMUNITIES

Students of Promise

MSU Extension was asked to present to the Students of Promise Summer Camp at Mid Michigan Community College the second week of June. Fifty youth ranging from 7 to 12th grades (32 from Clare County and 18 from Gladwin County) learned in-depth programming from Extension Educators Bev Przystas and Michelle Neff about Nutrition/Healthy Living, Financial Literacy, and Exploring Careers.

Evaluation Results - 86% of the participants evaluated are aware of the life skills they gained by participating in this work and 80% of the participants could identify life skills learned in the workshop.

Comments from some of evaluations regarding how they plan to use the knowledge gained:

“I plan to track all of my eating”

“I plan on trying not to eat as unhealthy as I do”

“Use app to help with calories and activities”

“Because I am less active (sort of) during the summer, I will eat less calories.”

Gladwin County Youth Leadership

In its 6th year, 10 high school students from both Gladwin and Beaverton were selected to be a part of the Gladwin County youth leadership program. Students attend 5 day long modules over 5 months which include education, county history tour, Real Colors personality test, career prep, law and law enforcement. The youth join the adult group on the last day and share presentations with each other on a chosen aspect of Gladwin County. Beverly Przystas, MSU Extension Educator, provides leadership activities using Life Skills, while assisting with the overall coordination of the youth program. MSU Extension Educator Michelle Neff leads both the youth and adults in the Real Colors presentation (below).



Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

Farm Markets

MSU Extension had an educational information booth at the new farm market that opened in Beaverton in 2015. Staff shared program announcements and information about 4-H, food preservation, gardening and agriculture.



The Gladwin Farmers Market opened in May and MSU Extension had a display table set up and held a blanching and freezing demonstrations, 4-H displays and shared Michigan Fresh – food preservation information. Staff was available for pressure canner dial checks. We were present in both locations a total of 6 six times throughout the summer to showcase what we offer.

Mock Interview Day

High school students benefit from practicing interview skills to be ready for the workforce. Employers appreciate and are more likely to hire candidates who know how to present themselves well. Very often, there are not occasions in the formal high school system for this type of education; MSU Extension’s 4-H Children and Youth Development team is perfectly situated to provide this type of learning opportunity.

To address this need, a **Mock Interview Day** event for Isabella, Clare, and Gladwin counties is planned and held in mid-March every year. Chaired by staff from MSU Extension, other community partners include Michigan Works!, Mid-Michigan Development Corporation, Gladwin Economic Development Corporation, Central Michigan University, and Clare-Gladwin RESD. On the day of the event, about 70 adults from local businesses volunteer their time to interview students, review résumés, and provide short educational workshops. In 2015, almost 250 11th and 12th grade students from 6 area schools took part in the event. 140 students attended from Gladwin County—40 from Beaverton Schools and 100 from Gladwin schools— and numerous business volunteers.

After the event in 2015, 98% of the students who filled out an evaluation felt they would do a better job interviewing in the future. 96% agreed and strongly agreed that after this event, they had more confident in their ability to do well in a job interview. 95% felt more prepared to join the workforce, and 97% would encourage other students to attend this event in the future. Highlights from the written evaluations include:

- After today, I feel like I could go into an interview with confidence.
- I feel extremely prepared for a real interview.
- Very cool and a great way to practice interview skills.



ENSURING STRONG COMMUNITIES, CONTINUED

Gladwin County Master Gardeners

Smart Gardening: Gardening smart to reduce time, waste, and fertilizer inputs while increasing yields

MSU Extension staff member Marybeth Denton coordinated the Introduction to Smart Gardening webinar series from January to March 2015. Three (3) Gladwin County Master Gardeners completed the online course to become an Extension Master Gardener Smart Gardening Volunteer (EMG SGV) and learn how to be an advocate for Smart Gardening in our community. Participants received five hours of online (or on-site) training on smart plants, smart soils, smart lawns, and smart vegetable gardens. Those who completed the course received designation as an EMG SGV, a certificate, pin and tool kit full of materials to use their knowledge to share with others in their communities. This series officially made the Smart Gardening campaign a state-wide effort to share with homeowners the benefits of gardening smart to reduce time, waste, and fertilizer inputs, and increase yields, productivity, and more.

Healthy Harvest

Developed in partnership with the Michigan Master Gardener Program, Healthy Harvest provides participants with information on nutrition based around what's grown in gardens, along with planting and growing tips for their gardens. The classes focus on discovering how their gardens not only grow many healthy and tasty foods, but provide a way to be active and healthy. Participants share ideas and work on healthy goals, sample various recipes from garden-grown foods and discover the many benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables. This class was held twice in 2015 in the MSU Extension office.

One participant in the 2015 summer class told how he learned to eat right (more vegetables and fruit), learned how to blanch fruits and vegetables, lost 10 pounds and feels better. He stated that he changed his eating habits, now eating 3 meals a day with more fruits and vegetables and smaller portions. He stated that he had not eaten a piece of fruit in probably 6 years before this class! He also kept a food journal. The instructor noticed that this participant's color and alertness improved. MyPlate had a big effect on him!

Ag Day at Maxwell's Pumpkin Farm

On the second Saturday in October, forty-one (41) youth and adults visited the MSU Extension and Master Gardener stations during Ag Day at Maxwell's Pumpkin Farm in Beaverton. Participants learned how to join 4-H and participated in a hands-on guerilla gardening activity by making seed bombs! Guerilla gardening is a growing trend in Europe where citizens plant seeds in urban areas where the public wouldn't normally see nature growing. Some examples are planting on a vacant lot, in a sidewalk crack, or around light poles along the sidewalk. Seed bombs, which are not explosive or edible, are a fun way for youth to distribute native wildflowers along roadsides, pathways, and public areas. By mixing seeds, soil, water, and a binding agent, youth learn the value of improving their quality of life and participate in community beautification.

MSU Extension had a booth at the Earth Day event sponsored by the Gladwin County Master Gardener chapter. This yearly event features vendors and guest speakers and usually has over 300 in attendance. There were soil tests available for sale also. 4-H and others staffed the booth throughout the evening event.



"We cannot say enough good things about the SMART program. It is really excellent material. And the change in how Master Gardeners participate with the public is brilliant. This makes the best use of MG volunteers and the vast knowledge of the MSU Extension experts.

Congratulations on such a winning program. It is really SMART!!! Thanks Very Much!"

-Doug and Mary Golla



GLADWIN COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS

KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

MSU Extension provides nutrition education to persons receiving (or eligible to receive) food assistance. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education is funded through a statewide grant from the Federal Government (Farm Bill). SNAP-Ed plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition among low-income individuals. Many others are able to take part in these classes as well, as long as program requirements for the target audience are met.

Youth Nutrition

- » **Show Me Nutrition** - This curriculum was taught in Beaverton Elementary Sparks, Beaverton MMCAA Head Start, Gladwin Great Start Preschools, and Gladwin NEMSCA Head Start.
- » **Nutrition Presentations** - MSU Extension provided nutrition presentations and information at Gladwin Elementary, Central Michigan District Health Department, Farm and Garden Show at the Gladwin Community Arena, and to Beaverton and Gladwin Junior High students.

Youth Nutrition Impact Stories :

Reports from the **Head Start** preschools in **Beaverton** showed that children are more aware of good nutrition, making healthier meal/snack choices, more willing to try foods, eating more fruits and vegetables, identifying food groups correctly, and that they have improved their hand washing. One teacher also said she is eating breakfast more often and has increased her own physical activity doing more music/movement! Very similar observations were noted in the **Gladwin NEMCSA Head Start** rooms in 2015. It was noted that they were aware of more physical activity, eating breakfast more often, and talking about several of the healthy habits in our lessons.

Adult Nutrition

- » **Presentations & Health Fairs** - Nutrition education presentations were provided at Commission On Aging residences and Senior Meal Sites in Gladwin and Beaverton areas, Beaverton Head Start/Great Start Collaborative preschool site, the MSU Extension office for WIC recipients and Seniors; Knights of Columbus, New Dawn Shelter, and Michigan Works.
- » **Project FRESH and Market FRESH for Seniors** – During the summer months, MSU Extension provides the nutrition education portion for Market FRESH for Seniors and WIC Project FRESH. After each presentation, coupons are signed out that can be used at participating farm and farmers markets for the purchase of fresh Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables. There were 136 coupon books distributed to the seniors of Gladwin County with a 93% redemption rate. Participants who took part in Michigan WIC Project FRESH indicated they became more aware of the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and intend to eat more fresh vegetables per day.

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



Gladwin County Nutrition Education Numbers 2015					
Adults in Series	Adults in Presentations	Youth in Series	Youth in Presentations	# Presentations	Total Contacts
30	403	169	319	106	2121

Participants learned about the nutrition and health benefits of foods to feed their families in healthy ways.



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

Keeping People Healthy, continued

- » **Eat Healthy, Be Active-** This program consists of six lessons, where participants taste-test foods and share strategies for purchasing and preparing healthy foods on a budget. Eat Healthy, Be Active promotes healthy lifestyles and can help reduce the risk of obesity and chronic disease. It was taught at Michigan Works, Arnold Center, and Beaverton Manor.
- » **Cooking Matters for Parents** - This is a program consisting of six lessons where participants learn tips for feeding children of all ages and shopping sensibly for healthy meals on a limited budget. Cooking Matters participants practice fundamental kitchen skills including knife skills, cutting up a whole chicken, and making a healthy meal for a family of four on a \$10 budget. Through special grant dollars, adults take home a bag of groceries after each class so they can practice the recipes taught that day. This series was taught for the first time at the MSU Extension office in the summer of 2015.
- » **Cooking Matters at the Store** – Gladwin County conducted two grocery store tour events at Save-A-Lot in Summer 2015. Grant dollars provided for each participant to complete a \$10.00 shopping challenge as part of the tour, purchasing healthy choices from all five food groups to make a meal for their family. Comments indicating the participants had made new discoveries included:
 - *“Learned how to make a meal under \$10.00.”*
 - *“I like making meals for under \$10.00 rather than \$25.00.”*
 - *“Learned to compare frozen to fresh.”*
 - *“Learned to buy less for less waste.”*
 - *“Learned about whole grains (labels) and that frozen vegetables are a great value.”*
 - *“Learned to buy for what I need rather than what I want, and buy for 3 - 4 meals rather than just 1.”*
 - *“Have been shown it is not as difficult as I thought, nor is it more expensive, to shop healthier and more budget-friendly.”*

Adult Nutrition Success Stories:

From attending an **Eat Healthy, Be Active series held at Michigan Works** in Gladwin in April and May, one of the graduates shared that she had learned ways to eat healthier, such as eating more fruits and veggies and whole grains, and had lost quite a bit of weight due to changes she'd made over the six-week time period since she started the classes. Another shared that she exercises more now. **Some of these participants also attended food preservation classes taught by Lisa Treiber** during our Spring 2015 Healthy Harvest class and later.

Connie, a participant from an Eat Smart, Live Strong class stopped by the office and got some MyPlate posters to share at a presentation she was to do at TOPS. She shared with Program Instructor CoralBeth Rowley later that she took her favorite BIG plate - and then used that to talk about how big our plates should be and how to use MyPlate to eat a healthy diet. It is great to see how she has taken what she's learned, applied it and is teaching others!



Keeping People Healthy, continued

Food Safety

The Cooking for Crowds curriculum shows the food safety risks that can develop when preparing and cooking large volumes of food, and teaches participants how to reduce those risks. Participants learn how to prevent unsafe conditions that may cause food-borne illness when planning, purchasing, storing, preparing and serving food. In Gladwin, Cooking for Crowds was taught at the MSU Extension office in conjunction with the Great Start Collaborative to reach out to child care providers as well as the general community to help them ensure safe food handling procedures while preparing meals.

Food Preservation—Michigan State University Extension food preservation workshops that teach skills and techniques to provide participants with safe, high-quality preserved products. Using up-to-date research methods, participants learn how to successfully and safely preserve food. 109 residents of Gladwin County attended a food preservation workshop last year.



In Gladwin County in 2015, we provided the following Home Food preservation classes:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • 2 Blanching and Freezing classes: | 22 participants |
| • 1 Pickling class: | 6 participants |
| • 1 general Food Preservation class: | 9 participants |
| • 1 Cooking for Crowds class: | 7 participants |
| • 1 Food Safety presentation: | 65 participants |



SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Farm & Garden Show – Gladwin County

The Annual Farm & Garden Show was a huge success with over 50 Business Exhibitors and over 800 attendees. The show continues to grow and offer attendees a chance to visit with various agribusinesses from around the state. This show started in the Edick Dairy Farm Shop in 1976 and has continued to be a fun and experiential learning event since its creation. The Gladwin team of Michigan State University Extension employees Coral Beth Rowley, Jessica Hufford, Tracy Volk, Bev Przystas and Kable Thurlow continue to support the event by being on the planning committee and helping with various activities throughout the year, and the day of the event.

Great Lakes Forage and Grazing Conference

There were several farmers from Gladwin and Midland County that attended the 2015 Great Lakes Forage and Grazing Conference in East Lansing with MSU Extension Beef Educator Kable Thurlow. Those attendees were able to listen to speakers from different parts of the country, including the key note from Doug Peterson, NRCS State Soil Health Specialist from Missouri. He spoke about the building blocks of grassland soil health.

The afternoon sessions were split into Hay and Silage Management, and Grazing Management. Topics covered included: forage tissue analysis, building soil fertility with cover crops, soil health and cattle production, alfalfa variety management new items, plus several more. The event had well over 100 attendees.

Beef Bull Breeding Soundness Exam at the Breault Beef Farm

Fertility testing the breeding bull is a minor production cost that can help prevent reproductive failure. Using a bull that is infertile or that has structural problems will frequently result in a higher percentage of open cows. Increasing costs of production due to higher feed costs, make keeping an open cow cost prohibitive. Beef calf prices remained at historic levels in 2015. Losing the opportunity to sell calves due to open cows can have a significant negative financial impact on a beef cow-calf operation. In the 2015 clinics held around the state, 19% of the bulls tested were unsatisfactory, and would not have been able to satisfactorily impregnate cows.

Bull Breeding soundness clinic were held across the state of Michigan; Gladwin County was able to host this Clinic again this year with MSUE Beef Educator Kable Thurlow coordinating the Clinic. The Gladwin location had over 10 bulls from several different farms in Clare and Gladwin Counties.



Beef Producer Rollin Greer from Gladwin (Gladwin Clinic)

Dr. Grooms MSU Vet Clinic and Student Kelsey Deland, discussing results with a producer at the Bull Breeding Clinic.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Grass Fed Beef - Grass Fed Beef production in Michigan is a growing industry. For many years small producers have been selling and marketing grass fed beef, but there were very few places for them to obtain research based information to help them improve the practice. Thanks to Dr. Jason Rowntree and his team of Extension Educators, Jerry Lindquist and Kable Thurlow, and Lake City AgBioResearch farm manager Doug Carmichael, information on grass fed beef production is now available from MSU. In fact, MSU has become known as one of the research leaders in the grass finished beef industry across the nation.

The MSU team has conducted much of their research with the University cattle herds at the Lake City and Chatham Ag BioResearch Centers. They have analyzed the many aspects of grass feeding and finishing beef without grains including: production systems, cattle nutrition, cattle genetics, grazing methods, carcass and meat qualities, economics, and consumer preferences. The team has also worked on a North Central SARE - Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education - grant with 17 farms in Michigan to help them establish a system for grass fed beef production and to learn from their findings.

Through four years of training, these farms have evolved to the point where seven are now producing grass-fed beef. These farms, in conjunction with the MSU research farms, have produced over 250 head of finished cattle that were supplied to the grass-fed market. Carcass quality and yield measurements have been taken on the majority of the cattle produced. These data are still being compiled, but in general, the average carcass grade of cattle has been USDA High Select and the average carcass yield at 19 – 21 months of age has been 53 -54%. Price premiums of 25% above the general cattle market have been received for the hanging carcasses.

But does it taste good? Interviews with buyers and consumers of the product have been conducted. From the butchers to the food wholesale buyers to the chefs and the consumers, the reviews have been good to excellent. For example, one butcher that received four heifers from one of our cooperative farms said, *"Before I butchered these cattle I had a bad opinion of the quality of grass-fed beef. You guys at MSU have shown me there can be quality beef produced in a grass-fed way."*

A chef in Traverse City wrote *"... the grass-fed beef coming from the MSU project is some of the BEST I have had in close to 30 years in the business ... the taste, texture and flavor of your work is something that I hope continues on for many years to come!"*

One major food wholesaler in Northwest Michigan has increased their annual purchases of grass-fed beef from the MSU project from 40 carcasses per year to 70. They say this is because their retail demand for the product continues to grow.

The Grass Fed Exchange Conference

To showcase the growth and significance of grass-fed beef production in the U.S., and to highlight the grass-fed beef research conducted by MSU, the grass-fed beef team hosted the first 2015 Grass-fed Exchange Conference in Mt. Pleasant in 2015. Over three days in September, more than 275 attendees from 23 States and Canada attended the event. A tour of the Lake City farm showcased the MSU research on grass-fed cattle, pasture grazing management, and utilizing cover crops for grass finishing.

Grassfed Exchange Conference

Mt. Pleasant



MI SPARTAN IMPACT

ENROLLED MICHIGAN STUDENTS

10

ALUMNI RESIDING IN COUNTY

236

SPENDING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

\$57,539

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT*

\$2,460,120

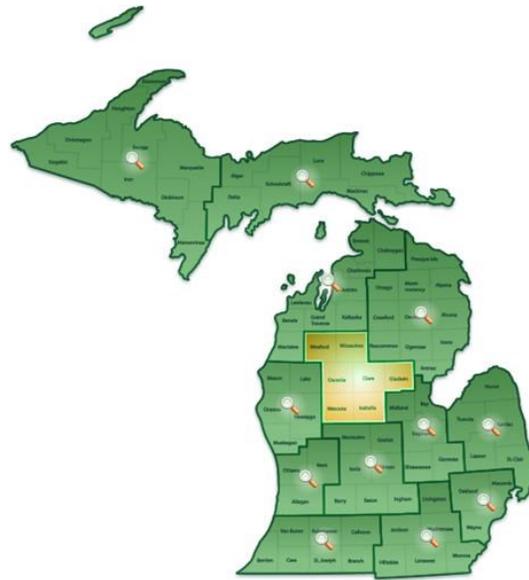
FINANCIAL AID DISBURSED

\$59,001

PRODUCT CENTER COUNSELING SESSIONS

3

DISTRICT 6: GLADWIN COUNTY



In addition to the Extension staff with an office in Gladwin County (listed on page 2), the following MSU Extension staff and faculty provided programming and assistance to Gladwin County residents in 2015:

Beth Clawson	Natural Resources
Brandon Schroeder	Fisheries
Erin Lizotte	IPM
Frank Gublo	Community Food Systems
Gail Innis	Social Emotional Health
Gretchen Stetler	Disease Prv & Management
James DeDecker	Field Crops
Janet Olson	Social Emotional Health
Janis Brinn	Youth Leadership
Jennifer Weichel	4-H Volunteers
Jerry Lindquist	Forages
Jill O'Donnell	Christmas Trees
John Amrhein	Gov & Public Policy
Julie Thelen	4-H Livestock
Kara Lynch	Food & Nutrition
Katherine Ockhert	Small Animals
Kevin Gould	Beef
Lisa Treiber	Food Safety
Michelle Neff	Children & Youth
Phillip Kaatz	Forages
Sara Keinath	Children and Youth
Steve Poindexter	Sugar Beets
Teagen Lefere	Finance/Homeownership
Theresa Silm	Early Childhood
Tracy Trautner	Early Childhood

Lawn & Garden Questions:

Online: <http://migarden.msu.edu/>

Toll-Free: 1-888-678-3464

Soil test kits (homeowners) http://shop.msu.edu/category_s/345.htm Product Code: E3154

Information Bulletins:

http://shop.msu.edu/category_s/345.htm

MSUE Events and Programs:

<http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events>



Online resources for MSU Extension Information

MSU Extension News is an online resource that contains the most recent and relevant information from MSU throughout the state. It is available both in a traditional format and in a mobile format. *MSU Extension News* is updated daily to provide the most up-to-date, relevant information available. You can find it at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/>

A useful feature is the option to request an email notification of articles that recently appeared on the *MSU Extension News* website. The MSU Extension Digests will be emailed to you about every 2 weeks, listing new articles that have appeared. Digests are available by topic or category.