

Mason County

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

MSU Extension (MSUE) in Mason County has provided another successful year of local educational programming to meet the needs of the residents of Mason County and Michigan. Educators and Paraprofessionals continue to work to provide creative and informative programs from which Mason County residents benefit. Our Educators and programming staff have worked to establish collaborative programming initiatives with both local organizations and statewide groups. This 2015 Annual Report will provide highlights of work MSU Extension has provided within the structure of our four programmatic Institutes: Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute, Children and Youth Institute, Greening Michigan Institute and Health and Nutrition Institute. We thank the Mason County Board of Commissioners for their continued support and valued partnership.



Michael S. Krauch
District Coordinator

CONTACT US

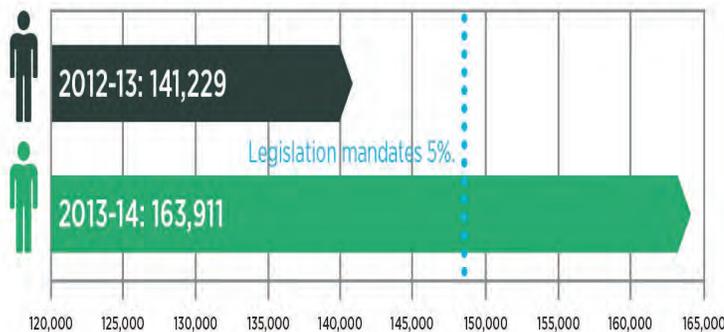
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Staff Housed in Mason County

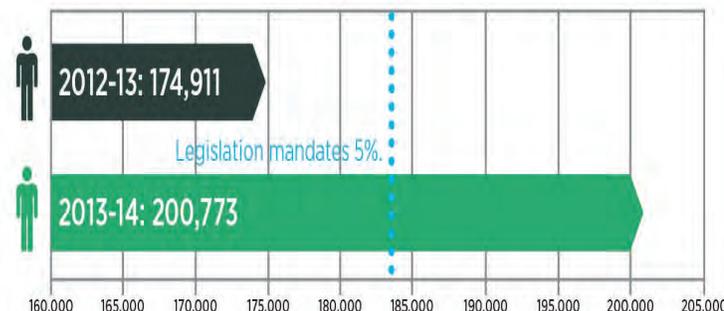
William "Bill" Hendrian - Finance & Homeownership Educator
D'Ann Rohrer - 4-H Supervising Educator/Leadership & Community Engagement
Cynthia Corey - 4-H Program Coordinator
Aaron Myers - Tech Wizards Program Coordinator
Kendra Gibson - SNAP-Ed Program Instructor
Wendy Marek - Secretary

MEASURING IMPACT

15% Growth in Adults Participating in MSU Extension Programs



16% Growth in Youth Participating in MSU Extension Programs



DISTRICT 5 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, there were 103,489 visits to the MSUE website from District 5 counties. Visitors viewed more than 272,000 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.

MSU Extension's Expanded Digital Reach



2 million visitors viewed more than 4 million pages



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



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

DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

Mason County's 4-H Youth Program experienced another year of growth with 4-H enrollment peaking at more than 300 youth participants enrolled in 28 clubs. In October, the 2015-16 4-H program year kicked off with an event at the Mason County Fairgrounds. More than 220 adults and youth joined us for a day of fun and demonstrations at this community kick-off event. Overall, in 2015, more than 1000 youths were reached through special interest, community events and school enrichment programs. 4-H benefits tremendously from the commitment of its volunteers. In Mason County, more than 90 adult 4-H volunteers gave their time to support 4-H as club leaders, committee members and in many other roles.

Mason County 4-H had a very active year in 2015 with new staff, new programs and new opportunities for Mason County youth. 2015 saw the addition of new staff to support the Mason County 4-H program. In early summer, D'Ann Rhorer joined MSU Extension as 4-H Supervising Educator. This position, formerly housed in the Newaygo County MSU Extension office is now housed in Mason County. D'Ann has the dual role of 4-H Supervising Educator and Extension Educator for Leadership and Community Engagement. Additionally, Cynthia Corey joined Extension in late summer as Mason County 4-H Program Coordinator. Cynthia brought a wealth of experience and energy to her new role.

Mason County 4-H again had a group of local youth participants attend 4-H Exploration Days on the campus of Michigan State University in June. Twelve Mason County youth attended the 3-day pre-college program. The Exploration Days program allows participants to experience what collage is like while helping them learn new skills and explore career and academic opportunities.

4-H Tech Wizards Youth Mentoring Program

In 2014, Mason County 4-H was awarded a pilot 4-H Tech Wizards program. This innovative youth mentoring program brings adult mentors together with youth participants around S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) educational projects. 2015 saw the pilot program expand to become a fully funded site operating at three different locations in Mason County (Ludington Area School District, Mason



Life skills are a basic foundation that prepares youth for success in life. The Mason County 4-H program helps youth develop life skills over time through 4-H Projects and other educational programs and opportunities.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

County Eastern and Mason County Central schools). Total funding in the amount of \$41,000.00 allowed us to expand the program to new sites, add staff to support and manage the program and purchase program equipment. To date, we have 11 adult volunteers working with 45 youth participants in this truly innovative program.

4-H and the Mason County Fair

4-H had another great year at the Mason County Fair. Youths participated in both small and large animal market auctions. The 4-H Shooting Sports club held a demonstration and competition. Additionally, the 4-H building at the Fair was filled with club and project demonstrations that allowed 4-H youth participants to show visitors and community members just how much fun and learning they had throughout the year.



4-H youth participants also showed their creativity and resilience at the 2015 West Michigan Fair. Due to the potential spread of Avian Flu, the showing of live poultry was prohibited at all Michigan Fairs in 2015. But, this didn't stop our participants from having fun, showing their creativity and having a great learning experience. Using models and demonstration boards, participants were able to show their skills and knowledge of their poultry projects.

Supporting Michigan's military families

Families of military personnel face unique challenges: frequent relocations, deployments, changing family roles, reintegration after deployment and more. These dynamics can be

To date, 250,000 books have been distributed to more than 2,500 children through programs sponsored by MSU Extension and its partnership with the Molina Foundation.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

especially difficult for more than 200,000 children in military families throughout Michigan.

To support to these families already sacrificing so much for our state and country, MSU Extension offers a range of programming to Michigan's military families and their children. This includes social, recreational and educational opportunities to connect military families with local resources and support, as well as predictable, safe and nurturing environments for military youth to unite with others facing the same challenges.

In the past year, MSU Extension's Operation: Military Kids, 4-H Military Partnerships and other general Extension and 4-H programming supported military families across Michigan, including:

- » Hosting 24 military-focused events for 454 military youth and 672 military adults in 34 counties.
- » Engaging 619 youth and 132 volunteers from military families in 67 counties in 4-H programs to develop critical leadership, organizational and technical skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Youth influencing community decisions with support from adults

More than 20 percent of the U.S. population is between the ages of 5 and 19. These youth look to adults for guidance in various situations. As youth become more involved, whether in academic or community settings, they search for ways in which their voices can be heard. Youth voice is a resource that often goes untapped in communities. MSU Extension provides training through Michigan 4-H for internal and external groups to consider the value of youth-adult partnerships in the decision-making process.

Youth are gaining life skills such as leadership, planning and teamwork, while adults are learning about the information about the needs, concerns and issues that pertain to youth.

- » Local 4-H councils and committees are encouraged to seek out, listen to and enact

MSUE's Operation Military Kids, 4-H Military Partnerships and other Extension programs supported military families across the State by hosting military focused events and through programs to develop leadership and other skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

MSU Extension offers social, recreational and educational opportunities to connect military families with local resources and support, as well as predictable, safe and nurturing environments for military youth to unite with others facing the same challenges.





As a result of MSU Extension food safety programs, individuals now use safer food handling, preparation, storage and preservation techniques.

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food

Teaching residents about food safety

From the farm to the kitchen table, food safety is an important issue. Foodborne illness outbreaks occur crossing all socioeconomic lines from production and consumption to preservation of foods. Foodborne illness costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, hospitalization, long-term disability and even death. The Cottage Food Law took effect in July 2010, allowing home-processed foods to be sold to the public, emphasizing the need for food safety education. In June, 2015, Jane Hart, Food Safety Educator, partnered with Kay Cummings, Product Center Innovation Counselor to offer “How to Start a Successful Cottage Food Business in Michigan” course to District 5 residents.

MSU Extension Cottage Food Law workshops supply Michigan residents with up-to-date, scientifically backed information on food safety. Through these programs, thousands of Michigan residents have learned about preserving food and preparing safe food for public consumption. Food consumers can have increased confidence when buying food products sold by someone with an MSU Extension food safety certificate related to producing cottage foods.

Participants in MSU Extension’s Cottage Food Law workshops reported:

- 46 percent will now sanitize surfaces before preparing food, in addition to 54 percent who already practiced this.
- 46 percent of participants learned how to properly prevent food cross-contamination;
- 54 percent were already using safe food cross-contamination practices.

Participants documented that, because of MSU Extension food safety workshops, they are careful to wash their hands and to keep countertops clean when preparing foods.

Reducing foodborne illnesses

Food preservation is both a popular hobby and a small business opportunity, but people who preserve food without following scientifically proven food preservation techniques increase the risk of foodborne illness. A survey conducted by the National Center for Home Food Preservation in 2005 found that many food preservers still follow the out-of-date practice of open kettle canning. Because of the risk of foodborne illness,

Michigan produced more than 83 million bushels of soybeans, valued at more than \$1 billion, in 2013, making it one of Michigan’s most valuable commodities.



including botulism from failure to use safe home-canning techniques, it is important to continue to provide up-to-date guidelines for safe home food preservation

As a result of MSU Extension food safety programs, individuals now use safer food handling, preparation, storage and preservation techniques. This reduces medical expenses, reduces food recalls and contributes to the financial stability of food businesses. This benefits other community members by decreasing the economic costs of foodborne illnesses, estimated at \$6.9 million in 2000. Participants in MSU Extension safe food preservation workshops reported:

- » 97 percent said they will properly use processing techniques to safely can foods.
- » 93 percent said they will select high-quality foods for preservation.
- » 89 percent said they gained knowledge on how to properly can food.

Annually, Jane Hart, Food Safety Extension Educator hosts food preservation workshops in Mason, Lake and Newaygo counties. Jane and her dietetic intern, Blaire Wolski demonstrated to participants the proper use of a Boiling Water Canner and answered their questions on various food preservation topics. Fifty-three participants attended the workshops.



Safer food handling, preparation, storage and preservation helps reduce medical expenses, food recalls and contributes to the financial stability of the food business.



For several years, MSU Extension has worked to get healthful, Michigan-grown vegetables into more school lunches.

ENSURING STRONG COMMUNITIES

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

Strengthening Michigan's financial capacity

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

Widespread efforts by MSU Extension have led to a significant increase in knowledge gained and behavioral changes across Michigan. Since July 2013, MSU Extension's foreclosure counseling has aided participants spanning 24 counties, across all income levels. As a result of receiving this counseling, a higher percentage of homeowners are able to better communicate with their mortgage servicers, obtain loan modifications and in over half of the cases, keep their homes. As a result of all financial and homeownership education:

- » 84 percent pay their mortgage on time.
- » 80 percent now save money for home maintenance costs.
- » 86 percent maintained or increased their knowledge of predatory lending practices.
- » 54 percent of foreclosure clients were able to keep their homes.

Locally, Finance and Homeownership Educator William "Bill" Hendrian

MSU Extension conducted targeted outreach to residents, small businesses and farm owners to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence in the ability to purchase health insurance.

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Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

provided consumer finance and budgeting programs for area residents. Throughout the year, Bill provided mortgage and foreclosure counseling to Mason County residents. He also taught money management courses to help area residents better manage their personal financial resources.

A key program to help get homeowners back on track has been the “Step Forward Michigan” program. This program and associated funds was established to help Michigan’s hardest hit homeowners. This program is offered by MSHDA and funded through funds received by the State of Michigan from the national mortgage settlement. MSU Extension’s Finance and Homeownership team worked with the Mason County Treasurer’s office in 2013 to make this program available to Mason County residents. Since that time, more than \$416,000.00 has been distributed on behalf of Mason County residents to help them eliminate mortgage and real estate tax delinquencies. As of December, 2015, \$65,994.12 has been disbursed to the Mason County Treasurer’s office to redeem delinquent property taxes and help homeowners avoid losing their homes to foreclosure. Mr. Hendrian is also a Neighborworks and MSHDA certified housing and foreclosure counselor and provides assistance to Mason County residents who apply for Step Forward assistance.

Assessing financial health and recommending fiscal improvements for the future of Michigan’s municipalities

As Michigan looks to rebound from recent fiscal difficulties and become stronger and more fiscally sound in the future, MSU Extension has been a valuable partner in educating the public as well as legislators. Whether it is helping to explain the ramifications of Detroit’s bankruptcy to the public or assisting legislators in understanding alternative sustainable funding options, MSU Extension specialist Eric Scorsone and other MSU Extension educators and specialists have served as a valuable resource of educational, unbiased information.

Scorsone has served as an adviser or been a member of the Lansing Financial Health Team, the Flint Blue Ribbon Committee and the State Treasurer’s Municipal Finance Reform Task Force, which all focused on assessing fiscal health and recommending changes to maintain or improve the financial future of Michigan and its cities.

Scorsone and his team has released white papers that:

» Calculated Michigan has \$12.7 billion in unfunded other post-employment benefits

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Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

(OPEB), primarily driven by health care costs.

- » Calculated that Detroit alone has \$4.9 billion in unfunded OPEB liability.
- » Examined 108 municipalities, taking actuarial valuations and exploring commonalities including retirement package design, service requirements, benefit provisions and cost sharing.

Attracting talent through placemaking

Placemaking, a strategy led by local governments and planning commissions, can be a cornerstone of Michigan's economic recovery. As the state moves to be more competitive in the New Economy, it focuses on attracting and retaining educated people by making communities rich in physical and cultural amenities, and making it easier to forge partnerships between businesses, governments and nonprofits.

The Michigan Placemaking Curriculum is a comprehensive training program covering the latest research on the economics of Placemaking, the role of urban form in creating a sense of place, and tools and techniques for engaging the public in Placemaking. The Michigan Placemaking Curriculum was prepared as part of the MIplace Partnership and was written under contract with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) through a grant to the MSU Land Policy Institute.

In 2015, 32 "Placemaking Development Workshops" were conducted throughout the State of Michigan. Senior Extension Educator, Kurt Schindler, provided a program that led participants through several training modules to developing an action plan. The six-hour workshop was held in Hart, MI. in April, 2015 and had participants from multiple counties including several from Mason. County Participants included local government, planning and economic development officials. Three educational modules covered topics such as, People, Places and Placemaking, Economics of Place, and Neighborhoods, Streets and Connections. This interactive session allowed participants to engage with Placemaking experts to help identify opportunities for Placemaking activities in their communities. The second half of the session gave participants the opportunity to identify a Placemaking opportunity and create a draft Placemaking strategy.

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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 bioeconomy sectors. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods. You also help young people develop business skills that will help them succeed as adults and help communities capitalize on their ecological, social and cultural assets. This fuels the economy by creating and retaining jobs, and helps ensure a healthy tax base.

Providing valuable work experience to young professionals

MSU Extension encourages Michigan's young people to envision a future career path that can help them positively impact their communities and build valuable professional skills. A new internship program creates a link between campus life and future career success. The internship program has been popular with communities, MSU Extension educators and, most importantly, with the students, who have shown growing interest. In 2013, the program was piloted in regions in Michigan with a focus on agriculture. It provided students with a valuable networking opportunity with farms and within the agriculture industry, and allowed them to gain important skills in vital areas of agriculture.

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

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

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods.



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Keeping Businesses Strong, continued

Meeting the needs of Michigan craft brewers

Consumers are eager to purchase made-in-Michigan products, and craft brewers in Michigan are attempting to meet this demand by using all Michigan-made ingredients in their suds. Michigan's growing craft beer industry, made up of dedicated small business owners, is improving the economy and instilling a sense of local pride in regions throughout Michigan, which are seeing their locally made brews get national attention.

Michigan brewers are looking for high-quality, affordable malt and hop products with consistent quality and availability. If these needs are met, then the craft brewing industry will continue to grow to support positive economic development for local communities. MSU Extension has educators and specialists supporting the growing hops and craft brew industries, and is working to help them meet their biggest challenges going forward:

- » Currently, there are only two small malt houses in the state with more needed to keep up with demand.
- » Farmers will have to learn to produce high-quality malting barley and hops both in and out of the traditional growing season.
- » Return on investment for farmers will need to be competitive with other available crops.
- » Start-up costs are high and there is a lack of key control measures.

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KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

Fighting obesity through education

Michigan has the 11th highest adult obesity rate in the United States, according to the CDC. More than 30 percent of adults are obese, and an additional 35 percent are considered overweight. Nearly 80 percent of both adults and youth do not consume adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables. MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Topic areas include nutrition, physical activity, food safety and food resource management. 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.

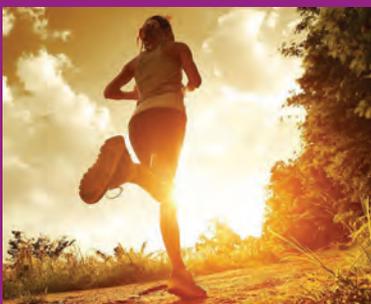
Helping Michiganders prevent diabetes

Michigan ranks 15th in the nation for prevalence of diabetes, with an estimated 10 percent of Michigan adults aged 18 and older had been diagnosed with diabetes – about 758,300 people. An additional 250,200 Michigan adults are estimated to have diabetes but are currently undiagnosed.

Through the National Diabetes Prevention Program, MSU Extension helps participants to learn ways to change their lifestyles and improve their health. A trained lifestyle coach leads 16 core group sessions weekly. Participants learn how to make modest lifestyle changes. Groups then meet monthly for six post-core sessions. The program provides participants with both a lifestyle coach and a valuable support system.

- » More than 2,400 Michigan residents participated in MSU Extension disease prevention and management classes in 2013.
- » Participants have lost a total of 695 pounds, which is 6 percent of their total body weight, through the National Diabetes Prevention Program delivered by MSU Extension.
- » Participants report being active an average of 150 minutes per week, significantly decreasing their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes through the National Diabetes Prevention program delivered by MSU Extension.

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.



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

Keeping People Healthy, continued

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

In 2011, 17.5 percent of people in Michigan were considered to be living below the poverty level. More than 1.7 million Michigan residents receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs including Cooking Matters, Project Fresh, Healthy Harvest and Show Me Nutrition teach adults how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe. Participants learned about the nutrition and health benefits of foods to feed their families in healthy ways.

MSU Extension nutrition education programs have:

- » Reached 80,366 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) participants from 82 of Michigan's 83 counties in 2013.
- » In the next year, targeted program participants will receive more than 72,000 nutrition education reinforcement items, including measuring cups, cutting boards, strainers and more from MSU Extension nutrition educators.
- » These items are expected to have a direct and indirect impact on more than 12,000 individuals and families in Michigan.

Locally, MSU Extension has enhanced our SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) program in Mason County by adding a SNAP-Ed Program Instructor to our Mason County team. Kendra Gibson joined MSU Extension in June, 2015. After completing her orientation and training, Kendra got right to work, engaging new partners and bringing programming opportunities to the residents of Mason County. Her efforts included nutrition classes taught at Longfellow Towers in Ludington where she conducted the "Eat Smart, Live Strong" program in November. In just her first few months of work, Kendra provided programming for more than 100 Mason County residents.

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

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



Keeping People Healthy, continued



MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs teach adults how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe.



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Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

Helping Michigan residents become better stewards of our inland lakes

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

The convention helped participants learn how to become better stewards and better protect Michigan's inland lakes, and it boasted more than 25 educational opportunities. Sessions included such topics as youth and volunteer education, aquatic invasive species, plant identification, algae blooms and water quality.

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

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

Research conducted annually by teens involved with M4-HYCC has introduced a bill that promoted the development of the Michigan Heritage Water Trails program.

The Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council taps into the desire of Michigan's youth to get involved and become a community leader on subjects they are passionate about.



SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

Bridging the gap between farm to fork

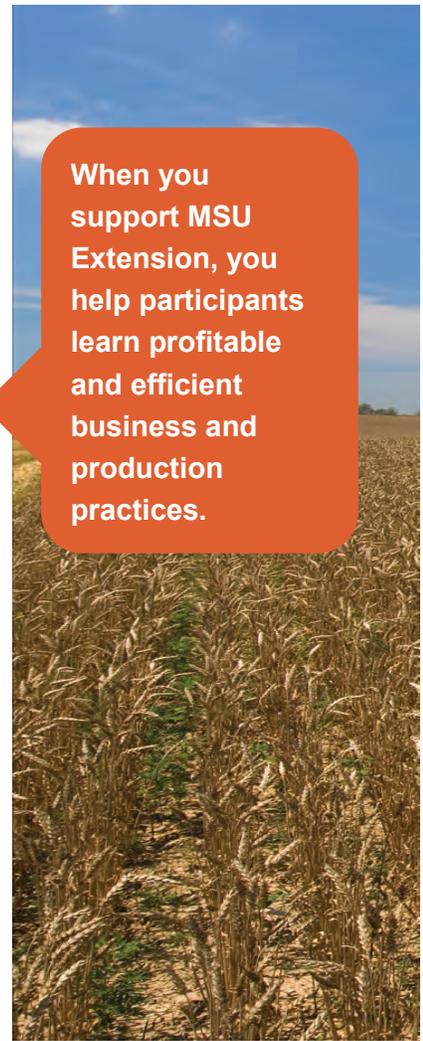
Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) bridges the gap between Michigan's farmers and consumers who often have little idea where the food on their plates comes from. BOTF invites the public to enjoy a delicious farm-fresh breakfast on a working farm and educates them on the farm-to-fork process. BOTF is an open door for the community to learn about modern food production and build trust with and appreciation for local farmers. An online survey showed that 88 percent of participants told others they should attend a BOTF event.

In 2015, MSUE was pleased to partner with the Stakenas Dairy Farm in Freesoil, MI to present "Breakfast on the Farm" in West Michigan. On July 11, 2015, staffed by 300 volunteers, the event hosted more than 2300 individuals from 23 states and 5 countries. Of those, more than 800 individuals were from Mason County communities. Participants enjoyed a free pancakes and sausage breakfast and toured a working dairy farm. They also had the opportunity to visit many educational stations throughout the tour.

Fighting back against emerging pests

The spotted wing drosophila and the brown marmorated stink bug are two invasive pests that pose the biggest threats to Michigan's fruit production. Michigan growers will likely have to implement new management programs to control these pests from harming their fruit crop.

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



"Breakfast on the Farm" volunteer orientation at Stakenas Dairy Farm, Freesoil, MI - July, 2015

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Working together to eliminate these invasive species will be essential to lessen the loss of the Michigan tree fruit crops in the future.

The spotted wing drosophila has an optimal developing temperature of 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit, 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.

MSU Extension partners with farmers and statewide agencies to monitor these pests. Working together to eliminate these invasive species will be essential to lessen the loss of the Michigan tree fruit crops in the future.

Growers need to monitor for both the spotted wing drosophila and the brown marmorated stink bug because:

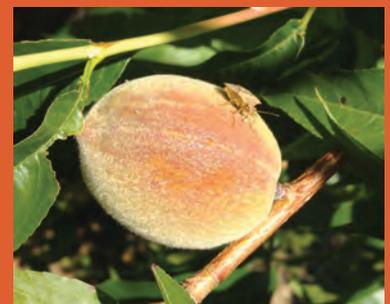
- » Spotted wing drosophila feed upon and lay eggs in ripe fruit.
- » Spotted wing drosophila can produce many generations in a relatively short amount of time.
- » The brown marmorated stink bug has a host range of more than 300 known plants, including fruits grown in Michigan.
- » In other states, brown marmorated stink bug populations reached high numbers causing substantial damage in tree fruits.

Curtis Talley, Jr - Farm Business Management

During the winter months, Curtis Talley, Farm Business Management Educator conducts personal workshops with commercial agricultural producers to analyze the financial performance of their business. Curtis conducted 3 such meetings with Mason County resident farmers. Business financial data is organized and entered into a business analysis program. The business is scored in 16 different financial performance benchmarks. Curtis evaluates and interprets the results to the producer. A farm specific report is printed and provided to the producer. These results are helpful in determining if the operation can add another member, expand, or if the current operator can retire and a successor take over. Data obtained from the individual workshops is combined with other Farm Business Management educator team members to create team summary reports such as the Michigan Dairy Farm Business Analysis Summary and the Michigan Cash Grain Analysis Summary. These are available to anyone at no charge.

Curtis also has an ongoing educational initiative involving mineral rights, oil and gas leasing, rights of way and easements. Curtis and an oil and gas attorney with

The brown marmorated stink bug has a host range of more than 300 known plants, including fruits grown in Michigan.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

whom he has consulted were Asked by the National Business Institute to provide a one day professional training program for attorneys, title examiners, real estate professionals and paralegals on the topic “Mineral Rights: What You Should Know Now!” The National Business Institute utilized the material to create a 137 page book of the same name that was recently added to the collection of the MSU Library. The book is divided into four sections: 1) Mineral Owners vs. Surface Owners; 2) Title Examination; 3) Mineral Leases 101; and 4) Legal Ethics in a Changing World. The authors are Daniel Pulter an attorney with Worman & Dixon PLC and Curtis Talley, Jr, MSU Extension Farm Business Management Educator.

An important program offered by Curtis Talley, Jr and his FIRM team colleagues was focused on helping farmers better understand the provisions and implications of the 2014 Farm Bill. This series of workshops was held throughout the State of Michigan in 2015 with 33 Mason County residents taking part.





Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Tree Fruit Educator Position Created

Michigan State University Extension, in partnership with the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission has created a new West Michigan Tree Fruit Extension Educator position. This new position will be housed in our Oceana County office and will serve all MSU Extension District 5 counties, primarily focusing on tree fruit production agriculture in Mason and Oceana Counties and other West Michigan communities. The position was recruited in the fall of 2015 and winter of 2016. We are pleased that David Jones, a Master's Degree candidate in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, will be joining our team at the conclusion of his studies at the end of the fall 2016 semester.

Extension Staff Serving Mason County

Staff Located in the Mason County Office:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
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Extension Educators Serving [Insert Name] County, Continued

Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving [Insert Name] County

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Extension Educators Serving Oceana County, Continued

Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving [Insert Name] County

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