

Oceana County

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

MSU Extension (MSUE) in Oceana County has provided another successful year of local educational programming to meet the needs of the residents of Oceana County and Michigan. Educators and Paraprofessionals continue to work to provide creative and informative programs from which Oceana 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 Oceana County Commissioners for their continued support and valued partnership.



Michael S. Krauch
District Coordinator

CONTACT US

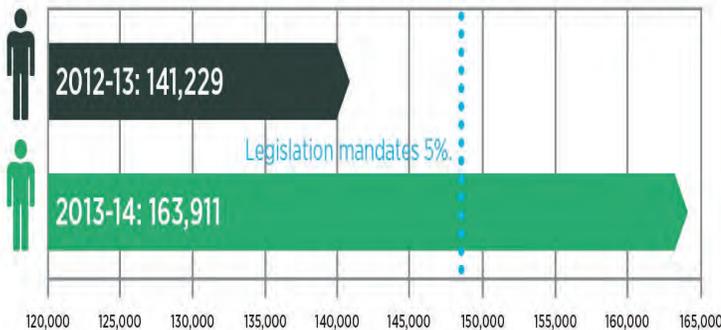
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Staff Housed in Oceana County

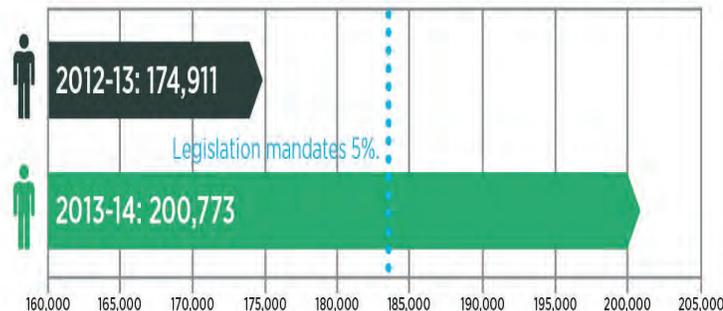
Curtis Talley, Jr - Farm Business Educator
Dr. Ben Werling - Vegetable Educator
Lori Cargill - 4-H Program Coordinator
Stephanie Ostrenga - SNAP-Ed Instructor
Kathy Walicki - District Support Staff
Toni VanBergen - 4-H Secretary

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

Oceana County's 4-H Youth Program experienced another year of growth with 4-H enrollment increasing to 326 youths involved in 32 clubs. Of these, 26 were first year participants. An additional 1255 youths were reached through special interest and school enrichment programs. 4-H benefits tremendously from the commitment of its volunteers. In Oceana 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.

The Oceana County 4-H had a very active year in 2015. The Folk Festival marked its 33rd year of offering educational opportunities for Oceana County 5th grade students. This program gives students an opportunity to investigate cultural traditions and ways of living throughout the past 300 years. 4-H Program Coordinator Lori Cargill and Barbara Sims of Storybook Village, Pentwater, MI, visited 5th grade classrooms and conducted lessons on oral storytelling traditions. Exhibitors at the festival included wool spinners, square tappers, Native American tools/pottery/attire, an apple cider press and pottery wheel, to name just a few. Our partnership with Oceana County Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Committee contributed greatly to creating agricultural learning opportunities for participants. The Folk Festival event was attended by 207 youth, and 45 adult volunteers who helped make the event possible.

4-H Leaders and members continued to show the importance of community service and philanthropy in Oceana County this year. The Annual County-Wide Yard Sale/Bake Sale generated \$1250 in sale proceeds that were donated to the Crystal Valley Care Fund. 4-H youth, parents and leaders participated in many community activities including parade appearances promoting 4-H, biannual MDOT Adopt-A-Highway Program pickup, and assisting with County Park cleanup days. 4-H Leaders and members also volunteered at the Saddle-Up for St. Jude's Trail Ride.

Oceana County 4-H members showed an increased interest in various 4-H statewide programs offered throughout the year. Ten (10) 4-H Club Leaders and Volunteers attended Kettunen Center workshops, taking 26 youth with them. Kettunen Center is a conference and retreat center in Tustin, MI. The Center is owned and operated by the Michigan 4-H Foundation. Each Kettunen Center weekend focused on building specific content area skills and knowledge. The Oceana County 4-H Youth Council provides 100% expense reimbursement for attendance at these workshops when



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

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

participating teens share what they have learned with others in the 4-H community.

4-H Exploration Days, held each June, saw a similar increase in participation with 21 4-H members attending the three day event at MSU. During this pre-college experience, participants have the opportunity to stay in dormitories at Michigan State University and participate in a variety of classes on campus. These classes include sessions in animal science, sports, crafts and performing arts. Three teens attended the Teen Spokesperson training at Michigan State University where they developed skills to help them communicate their 4-H story with others.

The multi-county collaborative Cloverbud Program for 5-8 year olds was held again in 2015. There were more than 20 youth ages 5-6 that participated in the day camp at Country Dairy in New Era where they learned about Dairy Farms and had an opportunity to explore dairy science.

Youth who are not proficient readers by fourth grade are 68 percent more likely to drop out of high school. Research shows that young children who develop literacy skills prior to entering kindergarten are better prepared to learn to read. In Michigan, there is an educational standard to ensure children from birth to 8 years old have access to learning and development programs. Children's school readiness improves when parents and caregivers are taught methods that increase early childhood science and reading literacy as well as providing ways to prepare children socially and emotionally. Programming provided through MSU Extension and other organizations prepare children for academic success by giving parents and caregivers the tools they need to help children succeed in school. MSU Extension is also making learning to read more accessible by putting books into the hands of thousands of children in families living in low-income situations.

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. As a result of MSU Extension trainings and workshops, adults indicated an increase in knowledge of concepts of early childhood development and techniques that promote school readiness and academic success.

In Oceana County, 4-H Youth Council serves in an advisory role to the Oceana County 4-H Program. Three project related committees meet on a monthly or quarterly basis to discuss program projects and requirements specific to their areas of interest. These committees include the 4-H Horse Developmental Committee, 4-H Market Livestock Committee and 4-H Small Market Animal Association.

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Developing Youth and Communities, continued

4-H and the Oceana County Fair

4-H Participants had another great year at the Oceana County Fair. The 4-H Market Livestock Program had 125 registered projects. 103 animals were sold at auction with a total auction value of \$186,240.00. The 4-H Small Market Program featured 9 registered participants and the Junior Market program featured 18 participants. Auction proceeds from the Small Market Program totaled \$11,105.00 and proceeds from the Junior Market Program totaled \$14,803.00. More than 300 4-H members participated in the 2015 Oceana County Fair.



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 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

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.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

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.

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Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Oceana County sent 4 teens to the Youth Leadership and Global Citizenship Spectacular! at the Kettunen Center in January. Highlights included visiting with the Honorable Dr. Betty Undongo, making a Horror Film trailer, and presenting "Exploring Voices: Civic Dialogue and Participatory Theatre. We also sent a record number of Oceana Co. 4-H families to the Lady Spartan's 4-H Day basketball game at the Breslin Center with over 75 tickets distributed!

Summertime activities in 2015 included having Oceana County 4-H members promote 4-H at the "Hart Sparks" youth event prior to the fireworks display on July 2nd. Ambassador Cheyenne Kalfsbeek and 4-H members Maisie and Amanda Whitaker demonstrated how to make Chinese Ribbon Dancing wands. They also shared their 4-H experiences with area youth and challenged them to share their own life skills development using the 4-H Life Skills Wheel. On July 13th, 3 Oceana County teens attended a Teen Spokesperson training in East Lansing. The training was funded in part by the Ag-Innovators grant from Monsanto. Teens from Michigan had the opportunity to create impactful messages about 4-H, practice interviewing, and learn how to leverage their 4-H experiences through technology and social media

In the Fall, Oceana County 4-H celebrated the accomplishments of it's youth on Sunday, October 25th at the annual Fall Awards Ceremony. Over 100 youth attended, and each brought a canned good donation for the Bread of Life food pantry as part of a "WE SCARE HUNGER" campaign. Youth and adults took part in the photo booth social media campaign. Community Service Trooper, Daniel Thomas, of the Michigan State Police spoke to the importance of Halloween Safety and shared information on the OK2SAY campaign.

Oceana County 4-H is also very proud of Michigan 4-H Animal Science Sportsperson of the Year, Cassie Holladay of Oceana County. Cassie Holladay has been involved in 4-H for 10 years with projects in Beef, Dairy, Horse, Teen Leadership, and Community Service and as a member of the 4-Star and Rough Riders 4-H clubs. Cassie is also the Teen Beef Representative to Oceana's Market Livestock Committee for 2014-2016 and previously served as a 4-H Ambassador for Oceana County. Multiple community members nominated Cassie for this honor, mentioning that while Cassie is a fierce competitor, she never hesitates to take the opportunity to help or teach someone less experienced. Her respect for animals, respect for opponents, respect for the game and respect for others made her rise to the top!



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 Oceana County residents. Eight participants learned the basics of home food safety and how to create a business plan.

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, including botulism from failure to use safe home-canning techniques, it is important to

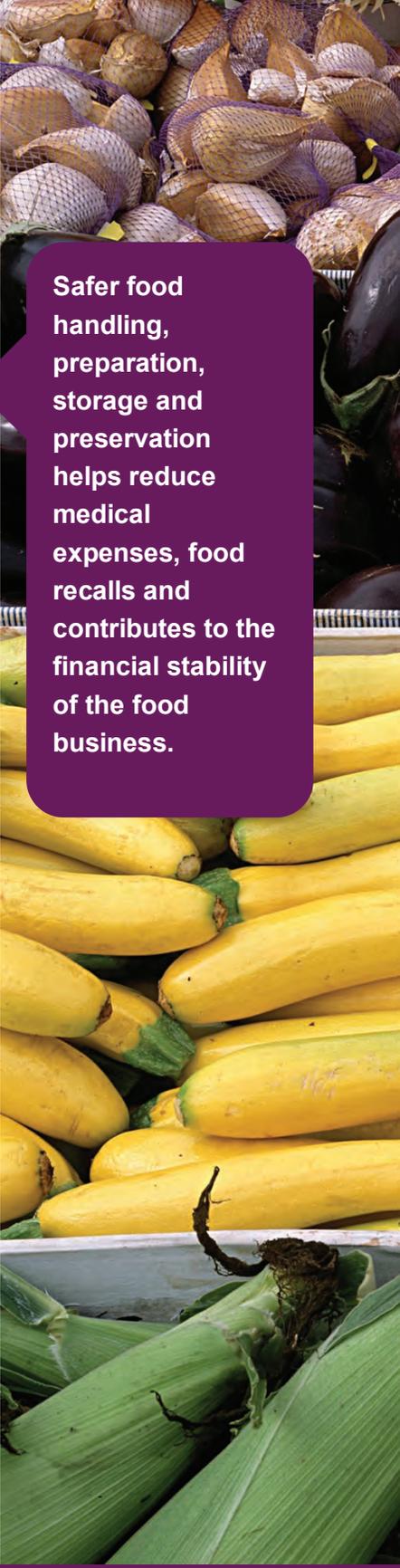
Michigan produced more than 83 million bushels of soybeans, valued at more than \$1 billion, in 2013, making it one of Michigan’s most valuable commodities.



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.



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. Once such program, “Making and Managing a Spending Plan” was conducted in collaboration with Feeding America - Feeding West Michigan - Feeding Oceana County, in New Era, MI. This program helped 12 Oceana County residents better understand how to manage their home budgets, plan for emergencies and large expenses and navigate other important home budgeting topics. Bill also provided this program for a group at the Barnett Station Apartments in Shelby, MI.

Money Smart Week®, created by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago in 2002, is a public awareness campaign designed to help consumers better manage their personal finances. As a partnering organization, MSUE hosts events and provides educational materials related to this week-long focus on consumer finance. Several Oceana County residents took advantage of one such event held at the MSUE office in Newaygo County. The event, a “Route Your Retirement Fair” was conducted in partnership with the Gerber Federal Credit Union and provided education on 7 basic consumer spending topic areas: Food and clothing, housing, transportation, leisure, travel and entertainment, communication, giving, health and fitness.

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 Scorson and other MSU Extension educators and specialists have served as a valuable resource of educational, unbiased information.

Scorson 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.

Scorson and his team has released white papers that:

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

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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.

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 offered in Oceana County was held in Hart, MI. in April. 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.

Placemaking, a strategy led by local governments and planning commissions, can be a cornerstone of Michigan's economic recovery.



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

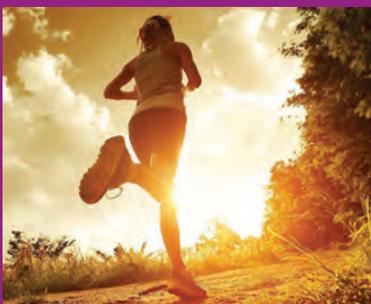
Fighting obesity through education

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.

Nutrition programming was a hot topic in Oceana County in 2015. Joining MSUE in late June, Stephanie Ostrenga, Nutrition Program Instructor, held multiple “Cooking Matters” series in the late summer and fall of 2015. This six-week educational series targets adults with limited resources and teaches participants to shop smarter, how to use nutrition information to make healthier choices, and to cook delicious, affordable meals. Participants in these classes learned about basic food safety, food label reading, adjusting recipes to individual taste, the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, how to prepare popular convenience foods at home, the difference between healthy and unhealthy fats, and making healthier choices in the Protein and Dairy food groups. In addition to the summer series, three additional “Cooking Matters” series were held in September, October and November. Partnering with volunteer chefs, participants in these sessions experienced live cooking demonstrations and learned kitchen safety skills in addition to nutrition education.

Stephanie helped share MSUE resources with families from Walkerville, MI during the first ever, “Walkerville Thrives” resource fair sponsored by Love INC. The fair was held on November 12, 2015 during parent-teacher conferences. The fair featured a variety of community resource providers in Oceana County. These included MSUE’s Human Nutrition program, as well as the Children & Youth and Greening Michigan Institutes. Participants who spoke with at least 6 different service providers had access to clothing, on-site haircuts and personal care products. Nearly 100 youth and adults spoke with MSUE staff about 4-H, Health & Nutrition and Money Management programs and many went home with books from the Molina grant.

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

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.

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.

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

» These items are expected to have a direct and indirect impact on more than 12,000 individuals and families in Michigan.

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.



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

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

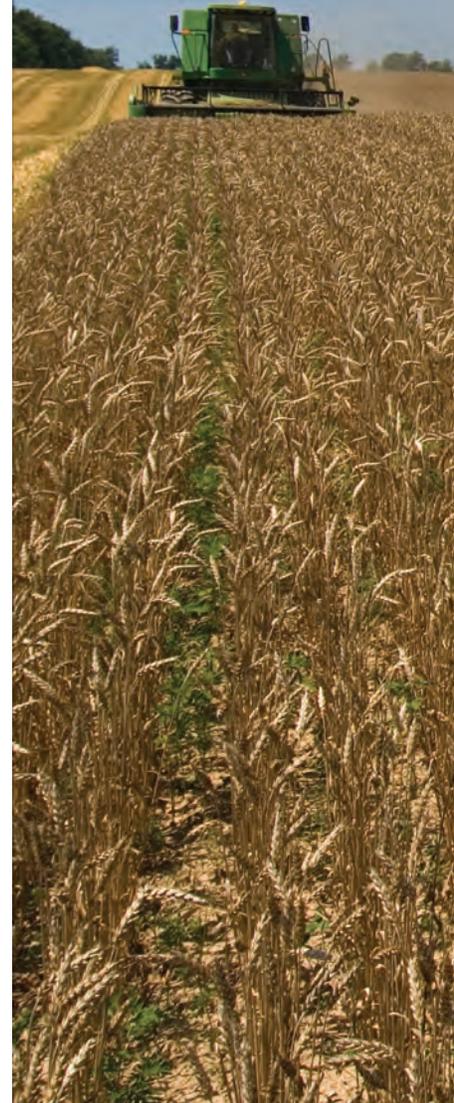
Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) bridges the gap between Michigan's farmers and consumers who often have little idea where the food on their plates comes from. BOTF invites the public to enjoy a delicious farm-fresh breakfast on a working farm and educates them on the farm-to-fork process. BOTF is an open 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. 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. More than 60 Oceana County residents journeyed to Freesoil for this very unique learning experience.

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:

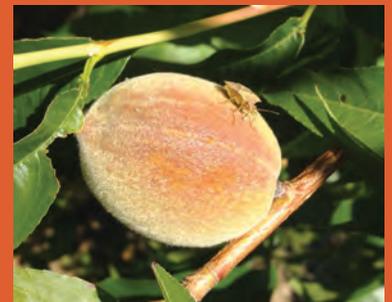
- » Spotted wing drosophila feed upon and lay eggs in ripe fruit.
- » Spotted wing drosophila can produce many generations in a relatively short amount of time.
- » The brown marmorated stink bug has a host range of more than 300 known plants, including fruits grown in Michigan.
- » In other states,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

On September 28, area dairy educator Kathy Lee, MSU Professor Chris Wolfe and area farm business management educator Curtis Talley conducted “Update of the Dairy Margin Protection Program” workshop. This was targeted to dairy producers within the counties surrounding Newaygo County. The Dairy Margin Protection Program is a voluntary risk management tool similar to crop insurance that provides financial assistance to participating producers when the difference (margin) between the national prices of milk and feed costs falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer. Participating producers enrolled in 2015 need to make a coverage election for 2016 and pay the \$100 administration fee.

Dr. Ben Werling, Vegetable Extension Educator

We grow an amazing diversity of vegetables in West Michigan. Dr. Werling programs throughout the production season as asparagus is harvested and beans, beets, cabbage, carrots, onions, sweet corn, squash and other veggies are in the process of being planted or are growing. To serve our industry, one ongoing effort is a weekly breakfast from May-July where crop consultants meet with Extension colleagues. Each week a different specialist is invited to address a specific topic. We use Zoom web technology to link with a second breakfast location on the other side of the State. The breakfasts present a great opportunity to meet and discuss issues and learn about the latest research impacting the industry. A survey last year indicated attendees provided information to growers managing a minimum of over 3000 acres of vegetables, so this is a great opportunity to work with the industry and make an impact.



During the 2014 Ag Expo, MSU researchers provided a demonstration for local municipality representatives of animal mortality composting.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

In 2015, Ben also partnered with the State of Michigan Workforce Development Agency and Mi Works to offer local area growers updates on the latest employment requirements when hiring farm labor. The program also covered farm safety reminders related to equipment operation and provided analysis of accidents that have happened around the state. Growers from Oceana, Mason and Manistee attended the one day training at the Hart United Methodist Church in Hart.

Growers learned new rules and regulations related to hiring processes and documents that must be completed by both employers and employees. Agency representatives provided updates on the services they provide. Craig Anderson, Michigan Farm Bureau, provided an afternoon session covering farm safety and regulations that must be followed when moving equipment between fields. He provided examples of accidents that had happened in the past year and measures growers could take to not only be safer, but to reduce their liability exposure as well. There were 64 growers in attendance.

2015 Asparagus Day

MSU Extension is proud to organize the premier Midwest educational meeting focused on asparagus production each spring in Oceana County. In 2015, 175 participants representing Michigan and Canada attended. Speakers provided the latest updates on international competition, disease and pest management and labor and marketing outlooks. Attendees also had the opportunity to visit with 12 commercial industry related vendors to discuss their growing season needs.

Oceana Research Tour

Each year, Dr. Werling also co-organizes the annual Oceana Research Tour. The 2015 tour was attended by over 45 Mason and Oceana County growers. The tour showcased the unique MSU-grower partnership established in Oceana County. The first two stops showcased five different research trials, all conducted on Oceana farms. The final stop showcased our asparagus research farm, which is one of the only research farms in Michigan completely funded by growers. This farm is used by both industry and MSU researchers, and has produced results that influence many aspects of the industry. New research conducted in 2015 at the Research Farm was the Mustard Demo Plot. This trial is helping to determine if Mustard can be a good avenue for weed control in fields. Dr. Dan Brainard discussed the steps and processes used in collecting the data and how the mustard would be incorporated into the soil in future weeks.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Ben invited local growers to witness the final step of incorporating the mustard into the field to continue the research in determining whether this has potential for weed control. Fifteen area growers joined Ben Werling and Dr. Brainard in September 2015 for the tilling in of the mustard. Results of this research trial will be presented at the 2016 Oceana Asparagus Day program.

Ben also assisted area growers this season with monitoring leaf wetness and temperatures in carrot and asparagus fields to help growers protect their crops from disease. Working with 8 growers to place equipment in their fields and coordinating with local chemical field representatives, Ben posted results on the weekly electronic newsletter to keep growers informed of condition changes. Ben also assisted growers with monitoring of soil moisture to help assess their irrigation needs. Crops that were monitored included asparagus, carrots and peppers.

West Michigan Spring Horticultural Meeting

Nikki Rothwell, MSU Extension Educator, with assistance from Kathy Walicki, District Support, organized a Spring Horticultural Meeting for area fruit growers. The program allowed growers to hear the latest information on disease and pest monitoring, weather forecasts for 2015, thinning practices, new chemistries that are available and proper pesticide handling. Growers attending the day-long meeting had an opportunity to become involved in a research project focusing on record-keeping practices. There were over 75 growers in attendance representing Oceana, Mason, Manistee and Benzie Counties.

Ag Legislative Breakfasts in District #5

An opportunity for Oceana residents to interact and engage with state legislators is available on a bi-monthly basis with an early morning breakfast held in Fremont. This 90 minute informal meeting is hosted by MSU Extension and supported by both State Representative Jon Bumstead and State Senator Goeff Hansen. The breakfast gives growers and residents an opportunity to discuss their concerns directly with State officials as well as giving the State officials an opportunity to update residents on the happenings within the State government. Meeting attendance generally reaches 25-30 participants every other month with Oceana County representing a steady participation of growers.

Tom Cast sensors in
a carrot field...





Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

10th Annual Oceana County Agricultural Banquet

In cooperation with the Oceana County Farm Bureau, Soil Conservation District, former Oceana Dairy Committee Members and representatives from various commodity organizations, MSU Extension contributes to the organization of the Annual Oceana County Agricultural Banquet. On March 14, 2015, more than 160 area growers, residents and elected officials gathered for the 10th Annual Oceana County Agricultural Banquet was held at the New Era Reformed Church. The banquet is an opportunity to recognize the diverse commodities grown in Oceana County and the growers for their outstanding farming efforts.

The evening event kicks off with the “Taste of Oceana” reception that showcases some of the tasty creations made locally with products grown in Oceana County. During the formal program, growers are recognized for their efforts in farming with the announcement of the “Conservationist of the Year “ through the Soil Conservation District, recognition of MAEAP certified operations and the awarding of the “Friend to the Oceana County Agricultural Industry.” In 2015, the award was presented to Mike Van Agtmael of Van Agtmael & Sons Farm of Hart. As a special addition to this year’s program, Patrick Cudney, MSU Extension Associate Director of Operations, attended and provide an update on MSU Extension.

Tree Fruit Educator Position Created

It was at the 2015 Oceana County Agricultural Banquet that Association Director Cudney announced a new partnership between the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission and MSUE to fund a Tree Fruit Educator position. This newly created position will be housed in Oceana County and will serve several counties in West Michigan. A search to fill this position is underway at the time of submission of this report.

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Extension Educators Serving [Insert Name] County, Continued

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Extension Educators Serving Oceana County, Continued

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