2013 Annual Report:

Wexford County

Research and education delivered locally
**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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**A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR:**

It is my pleasure to bring to you the Annual Report for Wexford County Michigan State University Extension. Thank you for your continued support of Extension services and 4-H in your county. We continue to strive to help people improve their lives by bringing the vast resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan’s economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information that they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower our children to dream of a successful future.

2013 was another productive year for MSU Extension in Wexford County. Our agriculture, 4-H, food and nutrition programming were all strong, and I’ll elaborate on that in the following pages.

2014 marks the anniversary celebration of 100 years of Cooperative Extension in the United States. On May 8, 1914, the Smith Lever Act was signed, granting federal legislation to the vast cooperative extension services throughout this county. In 1914, Wexford County received its first agriculture agent and joined many counties throughout the state of Michigan in a cooperative extension program.

Happy Birthday Wexford County MSU Extension!

Shari Spoelman
District Coordinator

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**2013 PARTICIPATION NUMBERS**

- 4-H Children & Youth programs .......................................................... 663
- 4-H Members (Traditional Club Enrollment) ................................. 93
- School Enrichment Participants .......................................................... 451
- 4-H Clubs .......................................................................................... 11
- Agriculture & Agribusiness programs .................................................. 72
- Greening Michigan programs .............................................................. 42
- Adult Health & Nutrition programs ....................................................... 431
- Soil Samples ....................................................................................... 91
- Insect, plant, disease identification ...................................................... 200-300

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The Positive Development of Youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development - is a longitudinal study that began in 2002 and was repeated annually for eight years, surveying more than 7,000 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across 42 U.S. states.

Highly regarded as the first-ever research project of its kind, the study defined and measured positive youth development. Compared to their peers, the report shows that youth involved in 4-H programs excel in several areas. 4-H'ers are about:

- Four times more likely to make Contributions to their communities (Grades 7-12)
- Two times more likely to be civically active (Grades 8-12)
- Two times more likely to make healthier choices (Grade 7)
- Two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Grades 10-12); and
- 4-H girls are two times more likely (Grade 10) and nearly three times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school time activities.

Animal Education Fair 2013 - The Wexford County 4-H members were asked to participate in the Animal Education Fair by showing their animals to the public. The fair was presented by South Shore Animal Hospital of Houghton Lake and Baker College of Cadillac.

Open House - An Open House was held in June 2013 to encourage participation among youth and parents. The event was held at Northwood Feed and Supply and was complete with animal demonstrations and refreshments.

2013 4-H Exploration Days - 4-H Exploration Days is a pre-college program that offers youth a wide variety of science related programming. In 2013 Wexford County had 9 attendees at Exploration Days.

Graduating seniors from the Wexford-Missaukee area who have attended Exploration Days are 3 times more likely to attend college than those who did not attend.
Wexford County 4-H Clubs - The following club were active in Wexford County in 2013.

Art Club: Members have an opportunity to learn about photography, painting and origami.

Babysitting Club: Members learned basic first aid, safety, discipline, child development, nutrition & how to safely market their babysitting skills.

Canine Crew: Members learned about dog obedience and agility.

Cloverbuds: Members learn about different cultures, our natural resources and arts and crafts through hands-on activities.

E.E.E.C. Club: Exploring, Entrepreneurship, Environments and Careers. Members participated in fundraising to establish funds for assisting youth with the cost of attending 4-H Exploration days. They also spent six weeks learning to sew handbags. Their finished items were entered in the fair.

Geocaching: Members learn the sport of geocaching: finding hidden caches using a handheld GPS unit while exploring the Wexford County area and its natural treasures.

Grands: Members raise small animals for fair projects and participate in crafts such as sewing.

High Horizons: Members learn about the care and nutrition needs of animals that they raise for fair participation as well as craft projects in the off season such as making butter.

Horseless Horse Club: For kids who love horses, but don’t have one, this club met for 6 weeks to teach them about horse breeds, riding styles, grooming and caring for horses, whether they are planning on becoming a rider or owning their own horse some day.

PEP: Proud Equestrians Program—members with special needs participate in therapeutic horseback riding.

Robotics: Members learn about the world of robotics as they experiment with a variety of science projects and eventually build their own robot using Lego Mindstorm kits or recycled items.

Because Michigan 4-H is part of MSU Extension, the activities kids participate in are all backed by and based on child development research. We use experiential (i.e. hands-on) learning and time spent intentionally thinking about what’s been learned to make it a meaningful experience, with skills and ideas learned that last a lifetime.
National Christmas Tree Trial Established in Wexford County -
In May, a research trial evaluating several seed sources of Turkish and Trojan fir was planted at Antioch Tree Farm near Mesick. This is one of two trials established in Michigan as part of a larger research effort in cooperation with North Carolina, Oregon/Washington, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania to identify superior seed sources. Turkish and Trojan fir make wonderful Christmas trees due to their symmetry and needle color. In addition they may be resistant to diseases, particularly Phytophthora root rot. Both Turkish and Trojan fir are closely related to Nordmann fir, which is widely used as a Christmas tree in Europe. This is a long term project benefitting Michigan growers by potentially reducing input costs, increasing yield and further diversifying product mix, helping growers to be more competitive in the national market.

Helping Farms Raise Better Soybeans in Northern Michigan -
With rising interest in soybean production in Northern Michigan, an education meeting was coordinated by Extension Educator Jerry Lindquist in conjunction with the Michigan Soybean Association and Extension Soybean Educator Mike Stanton to update cash crop producers. Thirty Eight farms attended the February meeting in Cadillac. The following fall 27% of those who attended were surveyed and reported increased incomes of an average $4,845 per farm as a result of the information gained at the meeting.

Evaluating, Operating and Scheduling Irrigation Systems—
Following the drought of 2012, many farm businesses were seeking information on new irrigation systems. In March 2013 MSU Extension provided an educational program at Baker College's Lake City campus. Topics included:

- Water source and legal requirements for irrigation
- Irrigation management and scheduling—how much water do I need?
- Irrigation economics—what can I afford to pay?
- Chemigation/Fertigation—using irrigation to maximize resource inputs

Evaluation of those in attendance show that 87% were already utilizing some irrigation and 71% planned to expand the number of acres they irrigated. The 13% not currently irrigating planned to begin irrigation within the next two years. The majority said they did not understand the water statutes and reporting requirements of Michigan before the meeting and had a better understanding at the conclusion of the meeting. As the demand for farmland continues to increase in the area, many farms are turning to irrigation to get more yield out of their existing land.
Enhancing Reproductive and Genetics Management of Dairy Cattle—This MSUE educational program was held in February 2013 at the Kettunen Center. Two nationally recognized dairy reproduction experts presented strategies to enhance reproductive performance. Participants also learned how to improve the genetic potential of dairy herds. Profitability of Michigan dairy herds is dependent on cows beginning a new lactation on a regular interval. In addition, selecting genetically superior sires is necessary to ensure the availability of high-quality heifers for herd replacements. Attendees included Wexford County dairy farm owners and employees, veterinarians, and agribusiness professionals. The veterinarians and agribusiness professionals share the information gained from these meetings with their clientele.

Dairy Nutrition Round Table—Four dairy nutritionists serving Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford Counties had the opportunity to participate in a Dairy Nutrition Roundtable in Lake City in December 2013. MSU dairy nutrition professors interacted with dairy nutritionists and veterinarians to informally discuss current issues related to the nutrition and feeding of dairy cattle.

Consumer Horticulture—Science-based gardening, environmental awareness and sustainability have long been a hallmark of MSUE consumer horticulture programs, yet somehow these messages were not getting through to the home gardener, according to Dr. David Smitley, MSU Professor of Entomology. This prompted MSU faculty and staff to start developing simple messages centered on smart lawns, soils and plants that were supported by years of research at Michigan State University: “Smart Gardening.”

During the winter of 2013, MSUE consumer horticulture educators and trained volunteers actively engaged clients at three home and garden shows which allowed them to interface with tens of thousands of people representing more than half of the state’s counties.

This team of educators also ramped up their home gardening website to reflect the “Smart Gardening” messages and populated the site with tip sheets, dozens of “smart” news articles and Smart Gardening videos. The popularity of the website has allowed it to be first choice when using a search engine for gardening in Michigan. Throughout the year, over 35,000 people visited the website making over 136,000 page views.

Garden or Yard Questions? Ask an Expert! 1-888-678-3464

http://migarden.msu.edu/
HEALTH & NUTRITION INSTITUTE

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management—In 2013, MSU Extension’s Health and Nutrition Institute added an Extension Educator to provide chronic disease prevention and management education throughout District 6. Pam Daniels holds a masters degree in Health Promotion and is developing partnerships in Wexford County to provide diabetes and other chronic disease education to the residents of Wexford County.

» Diabetes Education - The percent of adults aged 20 and above in Wexford county who have been diagnosed with diabetes is 10% (Statewide Average is 8-10%) Michigan ranks 15th nationally for prevalence of diabetes and it ranks fifth nationally for obesity. MSU Extension’s Disease Management & Prevention has been working hard in 2013 developing great partnerships in Wexford County.

» Dining with Diabetes in Wexford County - In 2013, MSU Extension partnered with the Meijer corporation. Meijer donated $1,000 to MSUE’s Dining with Diabetes. Thanks to MSUE & The Meijer corp., more Wexford residents will have the opportunity to learn more about healthy eating. Dining with Diabetes is taught exclusively by MSUE.

Cooking Matters® for Childcare Providers—This five-session, evidence-based series teaches childcare professionals about healthy meal preparation and creation of a healthy food environment for children in their care. In collaboration with Paris Philo, Quality Improvement Specialist from Northwest Great Start to Quality Resource Center in Wexford County, Shannon Lindquist facilitated a five-week series; Cooking Matters for Child Care Providers to 15 local center and home care providers. Some of the feedback from participants included the following:

“This class has made me realize I need to have a budget and stick with it.”

“I will be able to make better choices when serving or purchasing food.”

“I learned things that I thought I already knew but really I didn’t know enough”

“I have definitely been watching labels and portion sizes.”

Home Food Preservation—MSU Extension food safety workshops teach food preservation skills and techniques that provide participants with safe, high-quality canned products. Using up-to-date research methods, participants learn how to successfully and safely preserve food. District Coordinator and Extension Educator Shari Spoelman provided a Canning Class to Wexford County residents in August 2013 at the First Congregational Church in Cadillac.
Nutrition Education - 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.

Youth Nutrition—Youth nutrition education focuses on the fundamentals of MyPlate—portion sizes, amounts of fruits and vegetables, rainbows of color, etc. Presentations were provided at Franklin Elementary, Manton High School, Farm and Field Day, and Mesick Babysitting classes.

Show Me Nutrition—this evidence-based six week curriculum provides youth with age-appropriate literacy-based education in areas of nutrition, food safety, physical activity, body image and media influence on health choices. This nutrition education program was taught at Cadillac Head Start and Manton Head Start preschools. Youth Program Impacts, according to the teachers:

- 70% of youth can identify food groups correctly.
- 71% of the children are more willing to try new foods.
- 64% reported that children improved hand washing.

Adult Nutrition: In addition to the programs highlighted below, nutrition education was provided at Harbor View senior apartments, TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) chapter in Cadillac, North Central Community Mental Health using Eating Right is Basic and MyPlate curricula.

Project FRESH—Partnering with the Health Department, MSU Extension provides the nutrition education on how to choose, store, and prepare fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. WIC eligible individuals receive coupons to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers markets.

Market FRESH for Seniors - Eligible seniors in select Michigan counties have the opportunity to participate in a nutrition program that qualifies them to receive coupons for the purchase of unprocessed, Michigan grown products from authorized Michigan farmers markets and roadside stands. Participants gain access to fresh produce that helps satisfy essential nutrients for healthy aging. MSU Extension provides the nutrition education portion for Market FRESH for Seniors who receive the coupons through the Wexford County Council on Aging.

Cooking Matters for Adults - Local chefs work with participants in this hands on six part series teaching the basics of selecting nutritious, budget friendly ingredients and preparing healthy meals. This curriculum was taught at the Wexford County Lake Street Building to the Youth Build participants (young adults).

Eat Healthy, Be Active—This evidence-based six session program gives adults an opportunity to learn the skills needed to make healthy eating and regular activity part of their lifestyle. This program was taught to clients working with Love, INC at their Higher Grounds program.

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<tr>
<th>Wexford County Nutrition Education Numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults in Series</td>
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<td>21</td>
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One participant said, “It's easier than I thought to cook healthier” and “We are now eating more vegetables than before and I am working on getting more activity into my day.”

“They have gained so much more than culinary knowledge from these classes...”
Start Your Own Food Business—This workshop provided participants with information to safely make, label and sell “cottage foods.” Michigan’s Cottage Food Law was approved in 2010 to allow those with an entrepreneurial spirit the opportunity to prepare and sell certain homemade foods prepared in home kitchens. Cottage foods are basically non-hazardous foods. They can be safely kept at room temperature and do not require refrigeration. Examples include: jams, jellies, breads and similar baked goods, cookies, cakes, fruit pies, vinegars and other non-potentially hazardous foods. MSU Extension’s Wendy Wieland, Business Consultant and Agriculture Specialist and Jennifer Berkey, Food Safety Educator, presented the business and food safety aspects of preparing and selling cottage foods. Participants received a certificate stating they have food safety training related to Michigan Cottage Foods. This workshop was provided at the Wexford County Lake Street Building in August.

Career Education for “at risk” Youth—MSU Extension Educator Sara Keinath provided a seven week series to Cooley High School students to help them improved their job prospects and to consider career paths. Included in the program were resume building skills, interviewing skills, presentation, attire, business handshakes, application processes. Resumes the students developed were critiqued by community business people. Students received constructive criticism.

Strategic Planning Assistance—In February 2013 MSU Extension staff members Mark Thomas and Tom Kalchik facilitated a strategic planning session for the Falmouth Coop who has members in Missaukee and Wexford Counties.

Michigan Northern Counties Association—Extension Educator John Amrhein provides support and facilitation to the northern Michigan counties. The group meets monthly bringing county commissioners together from 33 counties in northern lower Michigan to learn about issues important to county government, and to share information and learn from the experiences of others has long been the goal of the Michigan Northern Counties Association (MNCA).
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.

MSU Extension News features pertinent articles on a variety of categories. It is available both in a traditional format and in a mobile format that can be accessed from any smartphone or pad. 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.

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MI SPARTAN IMPACT

ENROLLED MICHIGAN STUDENTS
41

ALUMNI RESIDING IN COUNTY
532

SPENDING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES
$89,007

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT*
$4,908,269

FINANCIAL AID DISBURSED
$637,612

District 6:
Wexford County