



# Alger County

## 2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

A mission statement communicates the purpose of an organization, this includes ours: “Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.” Over the past 12 months, our staff have worked with residents throughout Alger County to address local needs by connecting people to the resources of the university and beyond.



We hope you enjoy reading the latest Michigan State University Extension Alger County 2015 annual report. It is a snapshot of the highlights of the important work done with your millage matched funds that supports the MSU Extension staff in Alger County. These highlights give a sense of our work in 2015 and where we are guided in the future. Thank you for your continuing and strong support every year, it remains true that without you, we would not be here doing this important work with the residents of Alger County.

Jim Lucas  
District 2 Coordinator

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Left to right: Vicki Ballas, SNAP-Ed Program Associate, Rob Wiener, Program Instructor Natural Resources, Nikki Kulppi, Secretary, Jim Isleib, Crop Production Educator, Liana Graves, 4-H Program Coordinator

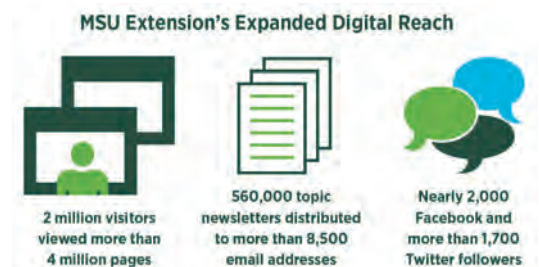
## MEASURING IMPACT

### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

<b>Youth Programs</b> .....	<b>364</b>
4-H Members (traditional club enrollment).....	117
Youth Volunteers.....	1
Adult Volunteers.....	89
Youth in School Enrichment Programs.....	157
<b>Agriculture Programs</b> .....	<b>388</b>
Agriculture for Tomorrow.....	126
Soil Tests.....	167
Beginning Farmer Webinars.....	95
<b>Greening Michigan Programs</b> .....	<b>392</b>
Life of Lake Superior (series of 4 days).....	95
Adult Volunteers.....	40
Adults Enrolled.....	13
Youth Enrolled.....	42
Other Outdoor Activities.....	202
<b>Health &amp; Nutrition Programs</b> .....	<b>1180</b>
# of SNAP-Ed Series Participants.....	274
# of SNAP-Ed Presentation Participants.....	906

### DISTRICT 2 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, 14,016 visitors from our six-county district viewed 42,231 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website (msue.msu.edu). Search engine rankings make msue.msu.edu one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.



Based on data from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

# DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce. Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active. 4-H also helps young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

## 4-H Camp

Summertime presents many challenges for families. Some of those challenges are finding child care for young children, positive activities for older children, opportunities for children to socialize and learn new things. 4-H Camp addresses all of these issues in a safe, fun, and socially friendly environment .

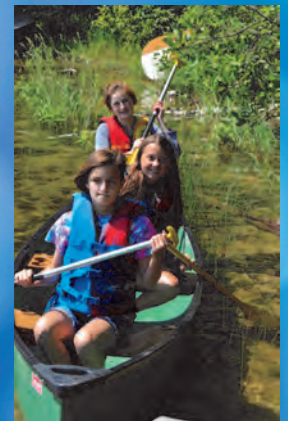
Youth from Alger, Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton-Keweenaw, Menominee, and Ontonagon Counties attended 4-H Camps at Camp Molinare in Dickinson County between July 9<sup>th</sup> and July 25<sup>th</sup>. The Camps included a three-day Cloverbud Camp, a two-day Shooting Sports Camp, and 2 week-long 9-14 Year old Camps.

The 155 campers enjoyed healthy meals and snacks. opportunities for arts and crafts, introduction to new athletic games, swimming, community service projects, fishing, and group building activities. In the evening these campers learned campfire songs and heard campfire stories. They spent the majority of the time outdoors connecting with nature .

4-H also partnered with Clear Lake Education Center in Shingleton, MI to provide two additional camps. The first camp was July 5-7 for campers, ages 9 to 13 years of age. Forty Campers, 13 Juniors Counselors, and 13 Adults spent three days and two nights learning new group building games for large and small groups, fishing, canoeing, swimming, running high and low ropes courses, cookie decorating, line dancing, orienteering, presenting skits, and completing a community service project. They also took turns as kitchen crew and bathroom cleanup crew, teaching them the importance of doing their part in a community of people sharing space. Camp was a huge success. The Junior Counselors worked hard to make sure every camper was having fun and exemplified 4-H Values.

The second camp was funded by a grant from the Bigley Trust Fund and was geared

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



Campers are playing a team building game

## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

toward youth, ages 12 to 15. Youth from Oakland and Macomb joined youth from Alger, Delta, Marquette, and Schoolcraft Counties. The 33 youth participated in team building exercises, listened to stories, learned how to tell their own stories, learned a little about drawing/ sketching using the outdoors as inspiration, toured Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and learned about natural resources. A Native American couple also shared aspects of their culture by allowing campers to try on clothing, and touch artwork.

The campers were looking forward to coming again next year and plan to invite a friend.

### 4-H Exploration Days

4-H Exploration days take place annually in June on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. It is designed for young people ages 11 to 19 and involves approximately 2500 participants from every Michigan county. Alger County had 27 youth and 3 chaperones attend this annual event in 2015.

This fun learning program gives a multitude of hands-on learning sessions, field trips, and recreation opportunities that are designed to :

- ◆ Increase responsibility, confidence, independence, accountability, problem-solving, decision-making and time management skills.
- ◆ Increase communication, team work, citizenship, and leadership skills.
- ◆ Foster ability to meet new people and make new friends from different places and backgrounds.
- ◆ Develop and expand career and personal interests.
- ◆ Develop social and academic skills needed for a successful transition to college and life as an adult.
- ◆ Give youth opportunities to try things that aren't available in their county .
- ◆ Develop social and academic skills needed for a successful transition to college.

Many parents and 4-H volunteers notice improvements in their children's interest, knowledge and social skills after they attend 4-H Exploration Days. Participants often return to MSU as students due to the positive experiences they've had during 4-H Exploration Days.

### Global and Cultural Education

Michigan's 4-H Children's Art Exchange with China has been positively impacting more than 350,000 Michigan youth for over 25 years. Alger county had 147 youth in 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades that participated from Mather Elementary and 20 youth participate from Munising 4-H Club .

Through the Art Exchange, children communicate and learn about China by being asked to create "visual letters" to send to children their own ages in China.



Alger County participants getting ready to load the bus for their trip to 4-H Exploration Days being held on Michigan State University's Campus

## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

A visual letter is like a written letter in that they both tell stories, share important ideas and feelings and connect children on two sides of the globe.

Since written letters are limited with the language differences the visual letters have taken shape as the primary means of communicating and learning about each other.

The collected evaluation percentages are always high in the increase of knowledge, awareness, understanding and desire to learn more because of participation in the Michigan 4-H Children's Art Exchange with China.

Other global educational opportunities can also be found on the [MSU Extension Global and Cultural Education](#) website or for other information about 4-H learning opportunities and 4-H programs, contact Liana Graves at 906-387-2530 or at [deisenro@anr.msu.edu](mailto:deisenro@anr.msu.edu).

### 4-H Service Days

Through its pledge of "hands to larger service," 4-H has historically given back to the community by encouraging young people and adults to volunteer. In 4-H, service is commonly defined as the voluntary action of an individual or a group of individuals without pay. Services were provided to Alger County through raking the yards of elderly neighbors, donating and making items for the Alger Baby Closet and local animal shelter, and hosting a Walk-a-thon/ Bake Sale for Cystic Fibrosis funds.

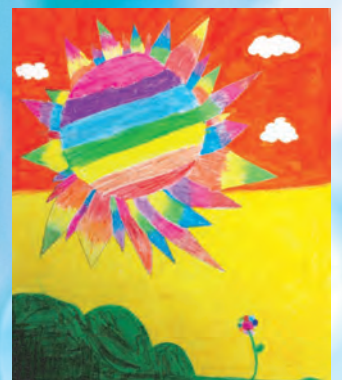
By giving back to our community, young people can:

- Learn the value of helping others.
- Develop leadership, communication, organizational skills and a sense of empowerment.
- Learn how important the connection is between subject matter and life in the community.
- Learn how to cooperate with one another and work as a team with diverse groups of people including adults, peers and others with different backgrounds and experiences.
- Succeed in an area different from academics, athletics or popularity.
- Build self-esteem from the positive results of their service.
- Develop problem-solving and decision-making skills by applying their knowledge to real-world situations.
- Develop a sense of being responsible for their community and a sense that citizenship requires them to actively participate in their community.
- Receive recognition for their efforts and possibly college scholarships.
- Experience the world of work.

Not only do young people gain by being involved in community service, the clubs and groups that they are in also experience benefits from planning and carrying out service projects.



Madeline age 11  
Chinese Art Exchange  
Munising 4-H Club



Logan age 11  
Chinese Art Exchange  
Munising 4-H Club



Above: 4-H participants raking leaves for the elderly.



Left: Baby blankets and burp rags that 4-H participants made and other items donated to the Alger Baby Closet.

Right: Group picture of 4-H participants for the Cystic Fibrosis Walk-a-thon.



# KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

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.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition education to Bridge Card eligible adults and children. This program focuses on increasing physical activity and improving dietary quality while stretching food dollars. The ultimate goal of SNAP education is to promote healthy eating and physical activity. SNAP-Ed is funded through a statewide grant from the Federal Government (Farm Bill). The SNAP-Ed program plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition among low-income individuals.

Vicki Ballas, SNAP-Ed Program Instructor provided youth and adults with 15 nutrition programs reaching 274 individuals, and 25 presentations reaching about 906 people annually in Alger County.

## Eat Smart, Be Strong

Seniors in Munising and Trenary learned to eat healthy, and be active in a group series. This is an opportunity for adults to learn to make healthy eating and regular physical activity part of their lifestyle. Participants also learn the importance of vitamins, minerals, and the 5 food groups.

## Cooking Matters

Vicki works directly with The Getaway Drop-In Center to help serve low-income families over a six-week Cooking Matters series. Each course is team-taught by a volunteer chef and nutrition instructor and covers meal preparation, grocery shopping, food budgeting and nutrition. Adult and teen participants take home a bag of groceries at the end of each class. This series has been a success at the Get Away Drop-In Center in Munising. Cooking Matters has been featured by First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign and recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for excellence in nutrition education.

## Show Me Nutrition

Show Me Nutrition youth series is a six to eight week program with 1-hour sessions providing youth in grades pre-kindergarten to 8th grade with age-appropriate literacy-based education in areas of nutrition, food safety, physical activity, body image, and media influence on health choices. In Alger County 5 annual Show Me Nutrition series are taught in Munising Public Schools and Burt Township with a total of 64 youth.



MSU Extension helps participants to learn ways to change their lifestyles and improve their health.



## Keeping People Healthy, continued

### Community Partners

Nutrition presentations and community events are another important part of the SNAP-Ed work being done in Alger County. These one-time education sessions present opportunities for staff to reach a more diverse audience or to teach about a specific topic. These community organizations recognized MSU Extension as a leading resource for nutrition education information in Alger County: Alger County Community Collaborative, Alger County Fair, Alger Parks and Recreation Department, Department of Health and Human Services, Hoop Houses For Health, LMAS Health Department, Munising Public Schools, Munising's Farmers Market, Munising Memorial Hospital, and Sault Saint Marie Tribe.

### All SNAP-Ed Programs provided in Alger County Include:

#### Youth Program Series

Kids R Cooks and Gardeners  
Life of Lake Superior  
Burt Township School K-12  
Mather Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade

#### Youth Presentations

Munising Public Schools Health Fair (K-12)  
Move Mob (youth & adult)


#### Adult Program Series

Lake Shore Manor Nutrition Club  
Trenary Seniors Center  
Commission on Aging Staff  
The Getaway Drop In Center  
Diabetic Support Group

#### Adult Presentations

Alger Parks and Recreation Dept  
WIC  
Project Fresh  
Hoop Houses for Health  
Community Health Fair  
Neenah Paper Health Fair  
Farmer's Market  
The Great Bean Cook Off

Find Vicki Ballas, SNAP-Ed Program Instructor on Face Book at [Alger-County-MSU-Extension-SNAP-Ed-Program](#) for recipes, cooking videos, healthful discussions or contact her at 906-387-2530 or ballasv@anr.msu.edu.



**MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs help develop skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe.**



# MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

## Life of Lake Superior Program

Life of Lake Superior Youth program consisted of four full-day workshops in July. It is a tremendous community event that utilizes great support and involvement from partnering agencies such as the US Forest Service, National Park Service, MI DNR, Alger Conservation District, and MSUE resources along with local businesses and civic organizations. Life of Lake Superior Program is free for Alger County residents.

Each day is comprised of multiple hands-on activities, centered around major themes. The events all took place in various locations within Alger County. Each day averaged 15 adult volunteers, 42 youth and 13 adults enrolled, an overall total of 360 participants. This year's educational topics included orienteering, Leave No Trace, search and rescue, tree identification, native plant restoration, invasive species, papermaking, and blacksmithing. All participants also had the opportunity to learn to kayak and fish.

A local bus company (ALTRAN) provided all participants transportation from various contact points, to the field sites, and then returned everyone to their respective points at the end of the day.

Each day of the four-day series provided free healthy food and snacks to all participants. A nutritional lesson was incorporated into each day by Vicki Ballas, MSUE SNAP-Ed educator.

To culminate the final day, a family fish boil, complete with a live band was held for everyone's enjoyment.

Evaluations from the volunteers and the participants were overwhelmingly supportive for us to do this again in 2016. For more information or to be involved in this exciting program, contact Rob Wiener at 906-387-2530 or at [wienerr2@anr.msu.edu](mailto:wienerr2@anr.msu.edu).

People who are exposed to positive learning and experiential activities in natural resources will gain knowledge about their natural surroundings. This, in turn, will lead to a better understanding and appreciation of their environment, which will result in them becoming better stewards of their natural resources.





## Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued

### Alger County School Outreach

Throughout the year, various outdoor and environmental educational activities and programs were conducted for schools throughout Alger County. The National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service have outdoor educators in their respective Munising offices; however opportunities are limited for local school children to participate and learn about natural resources. Both agencies are pleased to have MSU Extension available to provide quality outdoor educational programs to our youth.

This partnership has allowed MSU Extension along with the U.S. Forest Service, Clear Lake Education Center, National Park Service, Alger Parks and Rec, Friends of Valley Spur, and a local homeschool group to offer environmental and outdoor education opportunities to over 400 school-aged youth. Rob Wiener, MSUE Natural Resources Program Instructor has conducted a wide range of programs, that include orienteering, nature photography, wetland studies, deer ecology, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, animal tracking, tree identification, survival skills, and wolf ecology.

The positive feedback from the teachers that Rob has partnered with have lead to continuing and expanding their involvement with this program. Plans are already in the works to continue these partnerships in the 2016-17 school year.



# AGRICULTURE

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

The Ninth Annual Agriculture for Tomorrow conference sponsored by MSU Extension was held March 10, 2015, on the campus of Bay College, Escanaba, Michigan. This is the Upper Peninsula's largest MSU Extension Agriculture educational event. One hundred twenty-six attendees were provided with educational programs. It also gave an opportunity for growers, agricultural product companies, federal and state agencies to gather and interact. A majority of them learned about the Agriculture for Tomorrow 2015 Conference from the *UP Ag Connection Newsletter* distributed monthly from the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center. <http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/uprc/newsletters>

After the completion of the 20 different educational programs offered that day, 73% of the attendees positively identified ways to decrease production cost and increase income. Eighty four percent of attendees feel they will now implement new best management practices on their farm.

## Forage Programming

Beef and dairy producers across the Upper Peninsula face unique challenges to grow and harvest high quality forages in an economical manner. Soil conditions, weather during harvest, and short growing season are some of those challenges unique to the Upper Peninsula. MSUE Educators conducted winter meetings and on-farm forage field days to educate producers on innovative management practices to grow and harvest forages with high yield and quality.

In February 2015, a series of forage/cover crop educational meetings were held in four locations and attracted 57 participants. The cover crops/annual forages meetings included an overview of cover crops with potential for grazing in Michigan's U.P. Dean Baas presented these sessions, including a segment on the online cover crop selector tool.

Michigan State University Extension educators also conducted on-farm forage field days at seven farms across the Upper Peninsula that attracted 70 participants. Each forage field day was based on topics identified by local forage focus groups and involved local farmers providing support for demonstrations, tours or both..

Upper Peninsula farmers were receptive to both winter programming and summer field days around the topic area of forage improvement. The participants points of interest were soil health, fertility and low-input practices to improve forage performance. The management practices recommended by MSU had a positive feedback of 75-100% of respondents planning to implement these practices. The participants highly accepted cover crops, rotational grazing and broadcast seeding to establish pastures and improve forage stands based on their plans to implement these practices on their own farms.



## Agriculture, continued

### Beginning Farmer On-line Webinar Series

Michigan citizens interested in engaging in new agriculture enterprises sometimes lack knowledge, experience and technical support to get started. Extension educators and specialists receive numerous contacts from such people seeking basic, start-up information. The Michigan State University Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series was developed in response to this need.

The 2015 series based in Alger County included twenty webinars offered from January 26 through April 20, 2015. Twenty three MSUE educators, faculty and staff presented webinar topics, with 198 people from fifty-four Michigan counties, twelve other states, and three other countries registering for a total of 1,845 webinar views.

A majority of participants indicated that they plan to utilize additional MSU Extension resources based on the series. They also indicated that the series contributed to creation or updates of business and marketing plans, new crop production, and expansion of farms and marketing strategies on many farms. A small number of participants indicated that they were beginning new livestock and poultry enterprises, purchasing farm equipment, establishing new business relationships and improving job prospects. Six participants said that the series helped them decide not to begin cultivating a crop in Michigan due to increased understanding of costs and risks.

Participants were appreciative for the program especially the convenience of on-line participation. MSU Extension received many compliments on the webinar series.

Below is a link to the MSUE Beginning Farmer Webinar Series website .

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/beginning\\_farmer\\_webinar\\_series](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/beginning_farmer_webinar_series)

### Other Agriculture programs held in 2015 included:

MSU Extension Field Crop Webinar Series

Dry bean educational program Feb 20, Chatham. Further collaboration with MI Bean Commission

Pesticide Applicator Certification training – 3 U.P. core manual review sessions

Insect monitoring

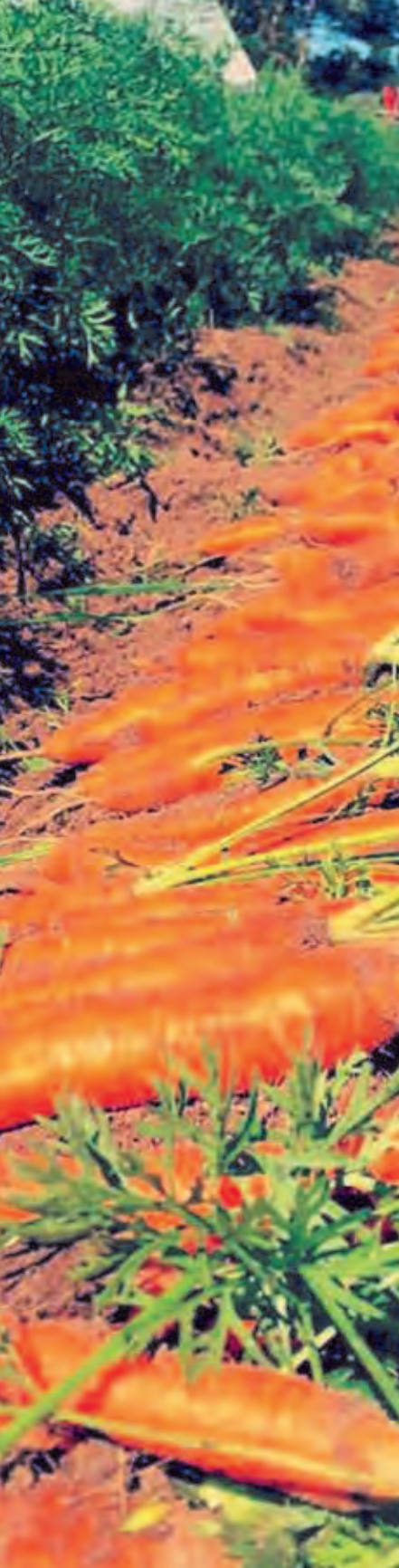
Commercial soil tests

Articles for newsletter, MSUE webpage, local media

Community outreach

Providing basic, practical information to people interested in, or already engaging in, new farm enterprises helps these small businesses develop sound production and marketing plans. New farm businesses provide jobs, income and increased economic and social stability, and increased food security to rural and other communities.





## Agriculture, continued

### Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

In the center of Michigan's Upper Peninsula sits the 118 year old Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (UPREC). The purpose of UPREC is to serve as a hub for integrated crop and livestock research. Applied research on pasture-based cattle management practices and cropping rotations is conducted in the unique environment of the U.P. Grass-based beef finishing, utilization of cover crops, hoop-house farming, season extension and soil health studies are keystone research elements on the farm. The North Farm is an incubator farm specializing in diversified local food production, research, education, and outreach for northern latitude climates. Our focus is healthy soils, food, people, and communities. Please go the UPREC North Farm Facebook site for details and updates: <https://www.facebook.com/northfarmatuprec> or website [www.msunorthfarm.org](http://www.msunorthfarm.org)

Complementary agronomic studies at the 1,262-acre site focus on forages and small grains. The center also coordinates field trials on potato varieties and corn varieties throughout the Upper Peninsula region.

#### Research Goals

1. Improvement of soil quality to enhance the productivity of U.P. agricultural lands in a manner that emphasizes health linkages associated with soil, crop, livestock and people.
2. Development of research that demonstrates the costs and benefits of integrated crop livestock systems, including grass-based livestock production. Closer collaboration between UPREC and Lake City Research Center (LCRC) in Lake City to foster complementary research endeavors and to increase the quality and quantity of research results.
3. Development of research tied to the educational needs of regional food systems in the Upper Peninsula that contributes to community sustainability while linking to objectives 1 and 2.

MSU UPREC has been working over the last three years conducting research to support the growth of malting barley acres in Michigan, especially in the Upper Peninsula. In addition to variety trials, management practices such as fertility recommendations and fungicide use have been studied. In order for the malting barley industry to thrive in Michigan, suitable processing is also necessary. UPREC staff has been working with start-up malt-houses throughout the state and are confident that there will be a major increase in available processing by the end of 2015 – from 2 malt-houses to 6, including one in the Upper Peninsula.

Want to learn more about what Collin does at the North Farm? Please take the time to listen to an in-depth interview with the Farmer to Farmer podcast

<http://www.farmertofarmerpodcast.com/episodes/thompson>



## Agriculture, continued

The following deliverables have been produced in 2014 to support this emerging industry:

- MSU UPREC Malting Barley website to house research, resources, and contact information [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/malting\\_barley](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/malting_barley)
- Malting Barley Production in Michigan guide [http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/Research\\_Files/Malting\\_Barley\\_Production\\_in\\_Michigan\\_-\\_GMI035.pdf](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/Research_Files/Malting_Barley_Production_in_Michigan_-_GMI035.pdf)
- Malthouse feasibility study produced by the MSU Product Center [http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/Research\\_Files/Malt\\_House\\_Feasibility\\_Study\\_JFW\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/Research_Files/Malt_House_Feasibility_Study_JFW_-_FINAL.pdf)
- Four location malting barley variety trial held in Alger, Schoolcraft, Leelanau, and Presque Isle Counties [http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/61579/2014\\_MSU\\_Malting\\_Barley\\_Trial\\_Results\\_UPREC-Posen.pdf](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/61579/2014_MSU_Malting_Barley_Trial_Results_UPREC-Posen.pdf)
- 2015 Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan – April 10th – 11th <http://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?folder-hopandbarley15>

Download the entire 2015 Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, annual report: [http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/UPREC\\_Center\\_Report\\_2015\\_Final.pdf](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/UPREC_Center_Report_2015_Final.pdf)

For more information about UPREC and updates on current projects, please visit their website at: <http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/uprc> or call Director, Ashley McFarland at 906-439-5176 or email: [ashleymc@anr.msu.edu](mailto:ashleymc@anr.msu.edu)

*The*  
  
**NORTH FARM**  
*Chatham, Michigan*



## Extension Educators Serving Alger County

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### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Alger County:

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## Extension Educators Serving Alger County, Continued

### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Alger County

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#### MISSION:

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