



Eaton County

2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

MSU Extension serves individuals, businesses and families throughout Michigan. District 8 spans seven counties, with eight different Extension offices. MSU Extension also has a close partnership with MSU AgBio Research, and District 8 is home to two of their research centers; the Clarksville Research station and Montcalm Research center. The two organizations work together to keep farmers and the general public current on the newest technology and management practices.

MSU Extension programs create innovative opportunities for Michigan residents. These programs offer youth and adults access to educational opportunities as varied as dairy herd management, bullying prevention, diabetes prevention, youth college experiences, gardening, human nutrition and animal nutrition. Extension also provides an opportunity for new commissioners to attend New County Commissioner Training which includes workshops on county budgets, policy making, and statutory obligations.

It is a pleasure to work with the over fifty MSU and County staff members housed in these eight District offices. Please contact me with any questions you may have about this report or any MSU Extension programs.

Don Lehman
District Coordinator, District 8



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MEASURING IMPACT

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

Snap-Ed Participants.....	1236
Adult Participants.....	669
Youth Participants.....	567
4-H Program	1361
4-H Club Members.....	707
4-H Special Interest Participants	407
Foreclosure Prevention.....	12
TOTAL IMPACT.....	2,609

MSU EXTENSION'S EXPANDED DIGITAL REACH

Through combined face-to-face trainings, online webinars, social media, website interaction and electronic newsletters, MSU Extension has made more than 8.8 million connections. More than 149,000 adults* and 203,000 youth† participated in MSU Extension programming in the 2015-16 programming year.

More than 3.7 million people viewed more than 7.2 million pages on the MSU Extension website.‡ Of those, more than 760,000 were Michigan residents. MSU Extension remains one of the most visited Cooperative Extension System education websites in the country.

MSU Extension also distributes a series of electronic newsletters that cater to residents' unique interests. Last year, nearly 1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to

DISTRICT 8 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, 13,365 visitors from Eaton County viewed more than 32,593 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.

about 16,900 email addresses.‡ You can sign up for these informative newsletters by visiting msue.msu.edu and clicking on "Newsletter Sign Up" or by texting MSUE to 22828.

MSU Extension uses social media channels to reach people with educational content. Currently, Extension reaches more than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.‡ In addition, Michigan 4-H families and volunteers stay informed about activities through social media channels, including on Michigan 4-H Facebook with more than 4,000 likes and on Twitter with more than 1,300 followers.

*From ES237 Federal Report – Oct. 1, 2014, to Sept. 30, 2015

†From Michigan Extension Planning and Reporting System – Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2015

‡From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016

Developing Youth and Communities



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).

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). 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'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more 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.

Growing true leaders

With innovative ideas, exuberant energy and the ability to look beyond preconceived obstacles, youth have the capacity to change the world. However, many lack the skills and confidence to empower these assets into motion. They need experiences and training that help them to feel ready and capable to lead.

Michigan 4-H helps to prepare current and future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for leadership development. From the club experience to statewide youth councils, all youth have the chance to serve in a leadership role. Those experiences and various leadership trainings provide youth with skills to last a lifetime and empower them to stand up today as true leaders in their families, schools and communities.

In the past year:

- 25 youth formed the Michigan 4-H State Youth Leadership Council, becoming statewide champions for 4-H.
- 32 youth were trained as teen leaders in the 4-H Ag Innovators Experience. These youth cultivated important leadership skills as they delivered programming to 1,200 of their peers.
- 40 youth learned how to become advocates for themselves and 4-H through the 4-H Teen Spokesperson training; 86% of those surveyed indicated they feel confident in standing up for issues that are important to them.



Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play.

Building communication skills for a lifetime

Communication is an essential element of every aspect of life – personal and professional. Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play. Youth who practice and enhance their communication skills in adolescence will find these skills to their advantage in future employment and adulthood.

To help young people develop this important life skill, MSU Extension’s Michigan 4-H has made communication an aspect of nearly every area of its programming. Youth are required to record their progress on projects, verbally report their activities and illustrate their understanding in a number of ways. Some Michigan 4-H programs make communication a major focus, further allowing youth to cultivate and enhance these critical skills.

Mini Maker Madness

On October 1st, the Mini Maker Foundation hosted the 2nd Annual Mini Maker Madness event at the Meridian Mall in Okemos. In an effort to promote the 4-H Tech Wizards program and 4-H programs in general, a team of 4-H staff from Ingham, Eaton and Jackson Counties operated a booth which provided visitors with an opportunity to explore science and technology through several interactive activities. Activities included app-enabled robotic balls called Spheros that kids could send rolling around our “corral” using ipads; Snap Circuits that allowed kids to learn how electricity and electronics work; Makey Makey kits that turned bananas into piano keys; and self-made catapults constructed with popsicle sticks, rubber bands and plastic spoons that kids could take home with them. Through these activities, staff were able to expose a couple thousand young people to the Tech Wizards program and 4-H!



Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

When you support MSU Extension's efforts to enhance residents' access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food, program participants will focus on food safety measures in the field and at harvest, learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, and bring community partners together to strengthen access to healthy food supplies. This leads to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

Reducing foodborne illness through education of individuals and small businesses

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. Since 2013, MSU Extension food safety and preservation programs have taught almost 10,500 Michigan residents safe food handling, food preservation and methods to reduce foodborne illness.

Participants include youth, nonprofit organizations that prepare food for the public and food preservers who want to create safe products for their small businesses.

Through face-to-face and online learning, Michigan communities receive high-quality, research-based education using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe food preservation.

Food preservation online course

It is important for individuals to stay up to date on the latest research for home food preservation, recipes and processing times, as they are constantly under review and being updated. MSU Extension's Online Home Food Preservation course is a self-paced program that instructs science based recommended methods for safe home food preservation, regardless of a person's experience with preserving foods.

This course will help people avoid dangerous, life-threatening contamination of foods. Individuals will feel confident in processing their produce and feeding their families safe, healthy foods. Home food preservation stimulates the local economy by encouraging locally grown and purchased foods and for individuals and families to grow their own gardens.

This course includes a variety of preservation methods and skills from drying foods, using a dehydrator, freezing and blanching which requires little time or equipment, to a more advanced pressure canning. Each of the seven segments discusses the equipment and tools needed to safely process food.

Ensuring Strong Communities



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

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.

Improving the fiscal health of Michigan communities

Only with healthy, vibrant communities can Michigan residents be expected to thrive. To help Michigan prosper in a sensible, sustainable fiscally responsible way, MSU Extension launched the Center for Local Government Finance and Policy in late 2015.

The center is led by MSU Extension economist Eric Scorsone, who has assisted multiple cities during fiscal crises including Detroit, Flint and Lansing. The center will advise cities during fiscal hardships so communities can find a sustainable path forward. It will also develop fiscal tools and offer outreach to help communities improve their fiscal health. In addition, the center is committed to connecting legislators with experts in public policy and forging partnerships in the public and private sector.

The center's efforts include:

- Assisting in the development of performance metrics for government budgets, strategic plans and public accountability reporting.
- Providing an overall assessment of long-term and short-term trends in revenues, expenditures, debt, general fiscal health and recommendations regarding adoption of financial policies.
- Publishing an annual local government fiscal health report for communities wishing to improve fiscal health.
- Publishing an annual legislative mandate report that identifies the costs imposed on local governments and their impact on fiscal and operational health.

The MSU Extension Housing Program, assisted twelve households in Eaton County to become current on their property taxes. This resulted in the county receiving \$69,339.65 in back owed taxes.

Your Money, Your Goals

One program working to make our community stronger, is the Your Money, Your Goals program. This is a Train-the-Trainer event and works with social and case workers to become more aware of information and tools to financially empower their current clients. MSU Extension educational staff from the Financial and Homeownership team provided resources that the workers can use to assist their clients plus information about locally available resources they may need to create in order to better meet the needs of those they help. Ten Eaton County case workers participated in this training.

Foreclosure prevention

In 2016, the MSU Extension Housing program provided counseling services to Eaton County homeowners concerned about keeping their homes due to delinquent mortgages or property taxes. Foreclosure education is delivered through one-on-one office appointments with household members. The Housing counselors are HUD-approved and MSHDA-certified to provide such services. Follow up with clients is done until the outcome is known. Counselors also respond to phone and email inquiries.

Through working with the Michigan Hardest Hit Fund Homeowner Program, the MSU Extension Housing program was able to secure funds to assist twelve Eaton County households to become current on their property taxes and brought in \$69,339.65 to the county in back owed taxes.

Homeownership Education

Homebuyers make decisions that require them to determine their own financial situations and what financial products are available on the market. Research suggests individuals may not accurately estimate their own financial status, including information about debt and creditworthiness, which leads to less desirable financial decisions. MSU Extension Homeownership Education courses educate homebuyers on advantages of homeownership and steps in the home-buying process, understanding costs of homeownership and how to maintain the investment, mortgage, loan basics, why good credit is important, and how to determine how much house can be afforded.

Households can earn completion certificates by completing this program. These certificates are a requirement for Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) down payment assistance programs.



Keeping Businesses Strong



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

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.

Building entrepreneurial spirit and skills

As the backbone of the economy, small business owners play a critical role in the prosperity of the nation. But to be a successful entrepreneur, one must have not only the ambition and moxie to take a risk, but also the business sense and skill to make a profit. To ensure the business owners of tomorrow – today's youth – are triumphant in their future endeavors, they need to learn the entrepreneurial concepts that pave the way for success.

MSU Extension is helping to meet this need by providing youth and the adults that support them with the skills and resources necessary to turn ideas into business ventures. Through simulations and workshops, youth learn how to develop business plans and operate their own companies, as well as how to be more entrepreneurial in their everyday 4-H experiences. In 2015, these programs were delivered to nearly 1,200 people in 59 Michigan counties.

Annual Fall Conservation Tour focuses on Veterans

Six veterans participated in the Annual Fall Conservation Tour that was jointly sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau, Ingham Conservation District, Eaton Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Farm Bureau Insurance, and MSU Extension. Veterans who were exploring potential careers in agriculture received a special invitation to this annual event.

The veterans heard from several speakers on topics such as high yield and profitability corn research, a soil pit demonstration, how Michigan's farmer veterans are leading the way, and agency updates. There was a lunch served to guests followed by an optional tour of the nutrient management research plot. This event provided the military veterans an opportunity to ask questions, network and to meet representatives from the various agencies.

Keeping People Healthy



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.

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these 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.

Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

Limited income and poor nutrition affect quality of life and can increase healthcare costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 30 percent of Michigan adults are considered obese, and one out of every three deaths in Michigan is caused by cardiovascular disease, influencing the quality of life and adding billions of dollars each year in economic burden.

MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to help residents in urban and rural communities stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity. In 2015 alone, these programs reached more than 112,000 adults and youth across the state in over 1,600 different locations.

Discover Michigan Fresh

In 2016 the Discover Michigan Fresh Senior program development was completed and the materials were made available to MSU Extension staff for programming in Eaton County and across the entire state. Similar to the original Discover Michigan Fresh farmers market tour program, the Senior program is designed to familiarize SNAP-Ed eligible residents with their local farmers market. Participants have the opportunity to meet farmers, exchange recipes and ideas for utilizing Michigan grown fruits and vegetables, and can practice using food assistance benefits at the market. The program materials include specific information for seniors, such as, nutrition tips and recipes for one or two.

In addition, the Discover Michigan Junior program was piloted in 3 Michigan markets. Feedback was very positive and used in developing the final materials. The program consists of eight hands-on lessons for children in grades Kindergarten - Fifth. Each lesson targets a specific Michigan grown fruit or vegetable which participants are able to explore, discuss and taste. Finally, they are given the opportunity to talk to a farmer who grows the fruit or vegetable! The Discover Michigan Fresh Junior lessons will be available to staff soon, for use in all Michigan farmers markets.

Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

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.

Raising awareness of the benefits of cover crops

Cover crops are a hot topic in agricultural circles, thanks to an MSU Extension specialist's message that's resonating with the right crowd. Dean Baas, a senior research associate, conducts cover crop and organic agriculture research and education.

Cover crops are plants seeded into agricultural fields, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining ecosystem quality. Environmental benefits include enhanced biodiversity, increased soil infiltration and attraction of honeybees and beneficial insects.

Researchers are focusing on ways cover crops can be used by farmers to bring diversity to the crop system; to reduce reliance on fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; and to determine the impact of cover crops on overall operation economics.

Initial studies have shown that:

- Farming benefits include reduced erosion, improved soil quality through increased porosity, soil organic matter and water-holding capacity, as well as the addition of beneficial microbes.
- Cover crops help retain nutrients that otherwise would be lost.
- Cover crops add nitrogen through fixation while combatting weeds and breaking disease cycles.

Supporting Food and Agriculture



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

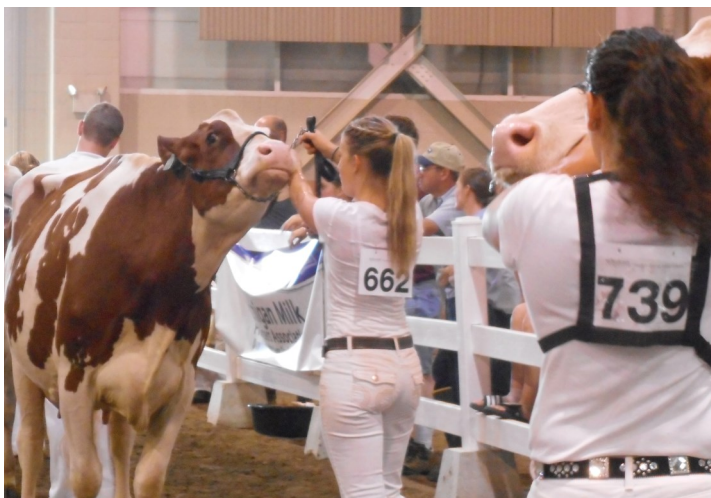
Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues 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.

Preparing youth for future careers in agriculture

As a pillar of Michigan's economy, agriculture must continue to grow and thrive. One way to ensure this success is to prepare an informed and skilled workforce ready for careers in this essential sector.

To meet this need, MSU Extension offers youth a continuum of learning opportunities in the agriculture industry. These opportunities range from interactive experiences such as 4-H Renewable Energy Camp and World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute, to educational resources such as the Youth Business Guide to Success, animal marketing curriculum and zoonotic disease prevention tools. Through these experiences and resources, as well as county 4-H projects, youth are educated about agriculture and prepared for careers in this important industry. In the last program year:

- More than 24,000 4-H youth participated in animal, biological and plant science projects in 78 counties.
- More than 850 youth took part in Michigan 4-H pre-college programs with an agricultural focus. These programs, which include 4-H Exploration Days and 4-H Animal and Veterinary Science Camp, among others, are designed to help youth explore potential careers or academic areas.



Extension Educators take a close look at the first day of life for dairy calves

50 dairy farms across the state participated in a study to determine best management practices for calves.

Top-notch animal care needs to be a priority on every farm from the first day of life. Best management of calves within the first 24 hours sets the stage for healthy heifers and ultimately healthy cows in the milking herd.

During the summer of 2016, Dairy Educator, Faith Cullens, along with MSU students worked with 50 dairy farms across the state to survey how well they are doing with newborn calf care. Faith visited farms multiple times collecting data and samples, then followed up with producers on how they can improve newborn calf care. Participating farms are located in Barry, Clinton, Eaton, Ingham and Ionia counties.

Individual farm results were shared and several producers made changes to improve newborn calf care after participating in this in-depth program working with Faith on best management practices. Results of this study are being shared at programs in January and February 2017 across the state.



Supporting farmers and growers

MSU Extension Educator, George Silva, has assisted numerous farmers and growers in the Eaton County area. One example of this is a grower from the Charlotte area who was experiencing tomato and cucumber problems. George was able to communicate that the symptoms resembled residue damage from the previous year. Samples were sent to the MSU Diagnostic Clinic for further testing. George also worked with a flower grower from Charlotte. The grower had petal burn on gladiolus, which was diagnosed as a problem due to fertilizer sprays that had been used on the flowers and leaves. He was able to recommend monitoring this practice carefully.

George Silva also took on the responsibility of restoring the Eaton County Judge Skinner Memorial Community Garden in Eaton County. He took on the leadership for reviving and maintaining the garden. During the summer he was able to donate two loads of vegetables to the Siren Shelter and four loads of vegetables to Helping Hands Food Shelter. He is working to build capacity by recruiting community volunteers that can use the garden for demonstrations and donations in the future.

Extension Educators Serving Eaton County

Staff Located in Eaton County Office:

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George Silva	Field Crops Senior Educator	517-543-4467	silvag@anr.msu.edu

Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Eaton County:

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