

BENZIE COUNTY 2021–2022 ANNUAL REPORT



I'm delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Benzie County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses, and communities.

MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. We continue to innovate post-pandemic by providing our outreach online, asynchronous, hybrid as well as in-person formats. These options have increased accessibility to Michigan State University resources by your residents. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Benzie County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs. - Jennifer Berkey, District 3 Director

Helping people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.





DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES

Learning
Life Skills
through
Hands-on
Experiences



4-H Equine
Day Camp

Over 150 youth
ages 5-14
participated in the
4-H Soccer
Program



- **Expanding Benzie 4-H:** Through youth voice, new 4-H interests and programs are taking shape in Benzie County and for the first time since 2017 Benzie 4-H hosted a 4-H Equine Day Camp! It was a momentous success, and the young people finished the day asking when the next event would take place. For one family in particular, this event provided a safe area for their special needs child to explore 4-H through horses and feel safe and secure enough to engage independently.
- **New Clubs & New Faces:** Continuing in the spirit of Benzie 4-H expansion, we received several new volunteer applications for the program and accepted seven new program volunteers. Because of these volunteers, Benzie County's 4-H Soccer Program was able to proceed with the Fall 2021 in-person season to accommodate the influx of new and returning 4-H Soccer players.
- **4-H Soccer:** Over 150 youth, ages 5 to 14, participated in the Benzie 4-H Youth Soccer

program in 2021. What started out as limited coaches and referees, evolved into parents and community members stepping up to become 4-H volunteer coaches and referees so our kids could play, including the 4-H Program Coordinator as a referee during the last game of the season! Our oldest age bracket did not have enough youth registered for more than one team, so together with their coach and 4-H staff, we found two games for their season in Elk Rapids, against Charlevoix and Elk Rapids teams from the Northern MI Soccer Alliance. It was a wonderful demonstration of effort, determination, and sportsmanship on behalf of all youth, coaches, and parents involved.

At the conclusion of the 2021 season, a Soccer Advisory Development Committee began to take shape and currently includes the Benzie Central High School Boys Varsity Coach, former Benzie Central soccer coaches, and soccer knowledgeable 4-H parents turned volunteers.



DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES



Bridgette Heinz
*Reserve Grand
Champion: Show-
manship and
Market Overall*

4-H DOG INFO NIGHT!

w/ **Gretchen Sauvage**

Learn about a new 4-H Program involving human's best friend! Bring your questions! Open to ALL interested youth age 5 and up!

March 22 @ 6:30p

Pleasant Valley Community Center
3586 Glovers Lake Rd, Arcadia, MI




Manistee County 4-H
August 13 at 11:47 AM · 🌐

Manistee/Benzie 4-Her Allie and her canine Bo are our first 4-H Farm Dog and Handler to be Farm Dog Certified at Northwest Michigan Fair this morning! Congrats Allie and Bo, we're so proud of you both!



Together with 4-H staff, we will work to create an even better fundamental soccer program for Benzie soccer from first experiences through to Varsity!

- **4-H at Fair:** 4-H across the state returned to in-person fair experiences in 2021, and Benzie youth returned to their Fair of choice in 2021: Northwest Michigan Fair or Manistee County Fair.

A first year Benzie 4-H youth took Northwest Michigan's Dairy Feeder program by storm and took home Reserve Grand Champion in Showmanship and Market Overall. We are immensely proud of her achievements and commend her commitment to hard work and her Club Leadership for a quality educational experience.

Another first for Benzie 4-H youth in 2021 was participation in the 4-H Farm Dog contest at Northwest Michigan Fair. This experience has led the drive of youth to form a new 4-H Dog Club in Benzie County.

- **4-H in Benzie Schools:** Coming in Fall 2022 to Lake Ann Elementary School, a 4-H sponsored after-school club! In collaboration with Centra Wellness' SafeNet this club is open to grades K through 5 and will begin meeting in September, each Thursday from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM. Lake Ann 4-H Kids Club is for any youth and will cover fun, hands-on, engaging educational experiences ranging from Arts and Crafts to Animals and Ag to STEAM. This club will meet throughout the school year and Lake Ann Elementary students are excited to get started.

In Benzie Central High School, 4-H and SEEDS are collaborating to teach Benzie Central freshmen and sophomores Your Thoughts Matter, a 4-H workbook curriculum that teaches youth about mental health, its importance to the overall well-being of youth, and steps to promote understanding and action in themselves and others.



SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

Fruit Crop Research

Profitable & Efficient Business & Production Practices

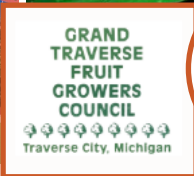


Over **650** contacts with Michigan grape growers to assist with production challenges and establish approximately **200** acres of new vineyards across the state



62 Year Partnership

Northwest MI Orchard & Vineyard Show



Orchards & Vineyards

- The staff at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center (NWMHRC) has been partnering with the Grand Traverse Fruit Growers' Council for over 62 years, to host the annual Northwest Orchard and Vineyard Show. This show is the northwest region of Michigan's premiere educational event and trade show for tree fruit and wine grape growers. Each year, these partners convene at the Grand Traverse Resort in mid-January for a two-day outreach program that provides cutting-edge information and research about tree fruit and wine grapes to Michigan fruit producers. These topics vary yearly based on grower need and seasonal challenges.

With the commitment of the Grand Traverse Fruit Growers' Council and other regional horticultural societies, these funds will be matched with other partners including the Michigan Tree Fruit Commission and MSU to complete this lab in time for the 2022 field season.

- The outreach for our growing community by the NWMHRC staff included the tree fruit webinar series, Integrated Pest Management updates for our northwest Michigan growers as well as weekly email communications on scheduled updates and other key growing considerations.
- In order to strengthen connections and partnerships with the Michigan grape and wine industry, as well as other higher education institutions, MSU Extension collaborated in 19 industry meetings and events, as well as 15 nationwide Extension meetings hosted by other higher education institutions such as Cornell and Penn State Universities. MSU Extension's grape and wine Educator also manages the vineyards at the NWMHRC during the growing season to support timely research for the northwest MI grape and wine industry.

Orchard & Vineyard Show Attendees:
2021 Online: **425**
2022 In-Person: **263**
96% said sessions improved their knowledge on their farm.

The past two years' proceeds from the Orchard and Vineyard Show were dedicated to the NWMHRC in support of a laboratory expansion. We broke ground on this new lab in February 2022.



SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

2018-21 Product Center Impacts in Benzie County:

3 Clients
23 Counseling Sessions
\$1 Million Combined Annual Sales



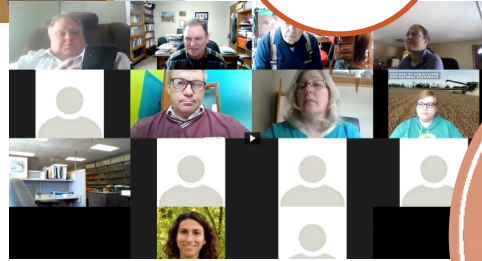
Business of Cheese Making

TelFarm

MSU Extension helped **14** area farms representing over **70** jobs and **\$11.5 million** in sales in 2021 complete analysis of their farm's financial records to improve their financial standing.

Master Gardeners volunteered over **500 hours**.

Good News Garden volunteers donated **227 pounds of food** to the Benzie Baby Pantry at St. Phillips Episcopal Church and Benzie Area Christian Neighbors



Year-end tax estimate meetings provided farmers with the opportunity to save over **\$95,000**, resulting in more resources being available for purchases by these farmers in their communities.



Agriculture Labor Sessions

Home Horticulture

- A Master Gardener Training class was held in 2021, certifying 15 new Extension Master Gardeners. Other horticulture education programs included Composting and Biochar, Organic Pest Management for Vegetables, and Tree Fruits for Northern Michigan.

Farm Business Management

- MSU Extension Educator Stan Moore worked with multiple northern Michigan farmers to ensure a successful farm transfer to the next generation. Many of these farmers are using resources through the "Legacy of the Land" farm stress project, funded by both MDARD (Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) and federal grant dollars.
- Stan Moore served as an Educator for MSU's Hay Production 101 online program. 46 out of 60 respondents indicated that they improved their knowledge as part of this program, and 50 out of 60 indicated that they intended to make changes based on their involvement in the course.
- 12 individuals completed the Artisan Cheese class in 2021, including several northern Michigan farms. Stan provided education on the "business of cheese making." Individuals who have completed this class are moving forward with new cheese-making enterprises on their farms.

- Over 190 individuals attended one of two Agriculture Labor sessions, coordinated by Stan Moore, at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo held December 2021. Stan also provided multiple labor education meetings to farmers, including two virtual presentations, and two out-of-state programs for dairy farmers and fruit/vegetable farmers. These out-of-state meetings attracted over 700 farmers including some from northern Michigan.

- Stan Moore hosts a monthly "TelFarm User's Group" during the winter months. In 2021, five sessions were held with an average of six-seven farmers. These sessions provide an opportunity for farmers to build the agenda, hear from the experts, and learn from one another.

MSU Product Center

- The MSU Product Center conducts educational programs in addition to one-on-one business counseling. In August 2021, the Product Center collaborated with Crosshatch and Leelanau, Grand Traverse and Benzie Conservation Districts to host a "Hazelnuts in Agroforestry Twilight Tour" in Mud Lake. 32 attendees from across Northwest Michigan attended to learn of the ecological and business potential of hazelnuts.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD



Teen Cuisine, Benzie Central

Physical activity breaks, Betsie Valley

Milk for Benzie Central and Frankfort Varsity Athletes



456 students positively impacted at 4 schools

Over \$51,560 in grants awarded to Benzie Central Schools and nearly \$18,500 to Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools due to MSU Extension partnerships



• **Fuel Up to Play 60** is a national free, in-school nutrition and physical activity program that allows teams of students to make changes that encourage other students, staff members, and administrators to lead healthier, active lives. Betsie Valley continues participating in Fuel Up to Play 60 (FES) by hosting school-wide movement days where students rotate between stations, including a healthy snack station, and have fun while being active.

With MSU Extension assistance, Betsie Valley applied for and received a Manistee Community Foundation grant, to purchase fitness trackers. Fitness challenges, classroom competitions, and prizes continue to encourage students and staff to be active.

Fuel Up to Play 60 is thriving at Frankfort Elementary (FES)! By partnering with MSU Extension to help implement this program, Fuel Up to Play 60 is helping their school learn about leading a healthier lifestyle. The FES team has been designing “brain breaks”, or short physical activity breaks, for classrooms. The student team is working together to provide wellness tips during the school-wide morning announcements. These Frankfort Panthers are hard at work making sure

their school is a healthy place for all.

• The **Chocolate Milk: Nature’s Sports Drink program**, provided by the United Dairy Industry of Michigan, encourages athletes to choose chocolate milk after grueling practices and games as it contains nine essential nutrients needed for overall health. MSU Extension works closely with Benzie Central and Frankfort’s athletic teams to help student athletes reach peak performance by staying hydrated with chocolate milk. By partnering with MSU Extension, sports teams receive funding to purchase chocolate milk for their student athletes. Over the last year, Benzie Central teams who have received this grant include boys' varsity football and girls' varsity soccer. Grant recipients from Frankfort have included varsity football and cross country.

• **Benzie Central High School Teens Learn Healthy Eating and Job Skills:** Students participating in the *Teen Cuisine* class learned how to convert grams of fat to teaspoons and were given a visual demonstration of what 30 grams of fat would look like. One student was surprised to learn this and shared, “My mom and



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD



STUDENTS START FOOD PANTRY FOR CLASSMATES

6:06
9:10
NEWS
at 6:00



Direct education from SNAP-Ed Programming works!

“This program has helped me with my diabetes. I am eating better and eating more fresh food.”



Food Pantry, Frankfort High School



“I used to find shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables intimidating - I didn't know what to do with them.”

stepdad go to [a fast food place] all the time and I want my stepdad to come to class so he can see how much fat is in one of those meals!” At the next lesson, students told MSU Extension that they shared this new information with their families who have decided to make healthier diet changes.

• **Food Pantry for Frankfort Students:** MSU Extension is assisting the Frankfort student council with developing and maintaining a food pantry for students. This pantry serves approximately 50 students, many of whom experience transitional housing and who may have younger siblings who also need access to nutrient-rich foods. Future plans include more nutrition education, hands-on cooking classes for students, and establishing a database of short, filmed cooking demonstrations.

• **Peak Health and Performance** is a program designed to provide young athletes with sound nutrition education so they can improve their athletic performance as well as their overall health.

• **The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program** is designed to help patients with chronic disease create healthy eating habits and increase access to fresh produce. In 2021, virtual education was provided to enrolled participants who received up to \$100 in tokens to redeem fresh produce and/or seedlings at the Grow Benzie Farmers Market. MSU Extension partners with Munson Healthcare to deliver the program locally.

In collaboration with Munson Healthcare and Michigan State University Extension, Community Nutrition Instructors provided nutrition education to a total of 82 participants using the Discover Michigan Fresh curriculum through September 2021.

Panthers share favorite ways to be active





FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES



Great Lakes
Research,
Education and
Outreach



ARPA workshop series: over **750** participants from many of Michigan's nearly **1,900** units of government.



Northern
Michigan
Counties
Association



Michigan Sea Grant

- Michigan Sea Grant funds research, education, and outreach projects designed to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of Great Lakes resources. Sea Grant also provides access to science-based information about Michigan's coasts and the Great Lakes.
- In Benzie County, Sea Grant Extension interfaced with Point Betsie Lighthouse on coastal erosion issues, Benzie County Conservation District on water level issues, City of Frankfort on Great Lakes water safety, Sleeping Bear Dunes on Great Lakes research and provided information to general citizens on fisheries, and other great lakes issues.

Government & Public Policy

- County delegates to Northern Michigan Counties Association celebrated their return to in-person meetings in 2021 with great participation and decided to try hybrid meetings for 2022. Participants share lessons learned in their counties, learn about topics currently impacting county government, and discuss the impacts of pending legislation on county government.
- A series of meetings from late 2021 through early 2022 explored both House and Senate bills aimed

at solving problems with provision of Community Mental Health services. The goal of these discussions is to learn more about what is in the bills and to propose improvements to ensure higher quality services with less negative impact on counties.

- In September-October 2021, member regions of the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR) and MSU Extension hosted local and tribal government officials to explore American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund spending opportunities in a regional context. The workshop content was based on the U.S. Department of Treasury's May 17, 2021 Interim Final Rule for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. The 14 workshops, including an in-person in Traverse City, covered:

- ~ ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Basic Rules
- ~ Best Practices & Early Examples of ARPA Spending
- ~ Practical Considerations for Contracts, Accounting, and Project Management
- ~ Group Discussions Related to Regional Collaboration
- ~ Leveraging Other State and/or Federal Funding and Priorities

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