



Gratiot County 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



MSU had \$6,169,492 total economic impact in Gratiot County*

*<https://mispartanimpact.msu.edu/stories-data/index.html?geography=county&impactarea=msu&county=Gratiot&district=&variable=>



1,168 youth participated in 4-H clubs, early childhood or after school programs.



The MSU Extension website received 22,038,201 page views by Michigan residents. 65% of Gratiot County residents still used desktop computers to make their 3,161 views.



4,425 Michigan residents participated in 111 MSU Extension programs Hosted in Gratiot County in 2023. There were an estimated 13,869 contact hours by programming staff.

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Gratiot County MSU Extension provided programming from all four MSU Extension institutes in 2023.

Each institute is home for Educators, Program Instructors, Program Coordinators, Paraprofessionals, Students, and various Part-time staff who live and work in the local communities. A detailed list of staff is included at the end of this report. The following pages highlight just some of the programming that staff delivered to Gratiot County residents in 2023.

During this period, 1,447 Gratiot County residents participated in 248 different in-person or online programs. There were 4,425 participants in programs hosted in the County. In addition, 359 4-H youth and 82 4-H volunteers participated in 23 4-H clubs while an additional 809 youth participated in other programming. Your local MSU Extension staff and the statewide network of Educators worked through local partners to bring the University's research and resources directly to our County residents.

Bill Hendrian



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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension



Supporting Agriculture and Agri-Business

Agriculture and Agri-business Institute



Farm Business Educators explain the Farm bill.

PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPATION FROM GRATIOT COUNTY

Animal Agriculture:	31 prog.	632 par.
Business Mngmt.	7 prog.	29 par.
Consumer Hort.	6 prog.	38 par.
Environmental Ag.	3 prog.	12 par.
Field Crops	40 prog.	163 par.
Fruit Crops	1 prog.	10 par.
Ornamental Hort.	2 prog.	11 par.
Vegetables	3 prog.	19 par.

PROGRAMS HOSTED IN GRATIOT COUNTY

- MSU Feedlot Health and Management
- Beef Cattle Nutrition and Management
- Riverdale Mill Producer Meeting
- Gratiot County Project Red
- Milker Training
- Speak to African Agriculture Fellows
- Total Direct Contacts in Ag. 495



Photo by Heather Dyer.

FARM EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Our MSU Extension Dairy Team continues to provide on-farm education and training. We equip dairy employees with essential skills, so that farms can achieve tangible results. We cover milking techniques, maternity care, sick cow management, calf care, low-stress animal handling, cow feeding management, and team communication. These trainings are offered on farms across the state of Michigan and are delivered in English, Spanish, or both languages. In 2023, the dairy team conducted more than 22 training sessions, affecting 15 farms, and representing over 20,000 dairy animals. More than 160 dairy employees took advantage of the training. According to our dairy educator, Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa, 88% reported at least one positive change in the employees during the following months after the training, including: engagement, communication with the farm management team, teamwork, and efficiency. 100% reported improvements in at least one area.



MSU Extension Dairy Educator, Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa offers education to dairy farm workers.



Supporting Good Health and Safe Food

Health and Nutrition Institute

PROGRAMS ATTENDED STATEWIDE BY LOCAL RESIDENTS

Food Safety	24 prog.	38 par.
General Health	36 prog.	201 par.
EFNEP	1 prog.	1 par.
SNAP Education	8 prog.	105 par.

EDUCATOR HOLLY TIRET AND HER TEAM HOSTED 85 GENERAL HEALTH PROGRAMS THAT WERE ATTENDED BY 3,245 PARTICIPANTS.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS HOSTED IN THE COUNTY

- Stress Less Online
- Sleep Series Online
- RELAX Online
- A variety of Mindfulness topics
- Show Me Nutrition
- Re-Think Your Drink
- Be Kind to Your Mind
- Changing Negative Self-Talk
- Laughter is the Best Medicine



NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Our Community Nutrition Instructors work with schools, community groups, even the courts providing basic nutrition education and physical activity. The students learn basic food preparation, making healthy meals, and shopping on a budget while still selecting the healthy foods. Our Community Nutrition Instructors held programs in a number of Gratiot County venues in 2023.

Participants also learn the importance of incorporating physical activity into their daily routines. Our Community Nutrition instructors make it fun, and the participants often bring their knowledge home to share with their families.





Supporting Youth Development

Children and Youth Institute

4-H PARTICIPATION



The MSU Extension Children and Youth Institute provides programs for youth, caregivers, and families.

Number of 4-H Clubs	23
Youth Involvement in 4-H clubs	359
Youth involvement in outreach And Expansion 4-H programs	809
4-H Volunteers	82

PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPATION BY COUNTY RESIDENTS



4-H offers youth the opportunity to pick an animal or still-life project and learn throughout the year. The culmination is often the show at the County Fair.

4-H programs	19 prog.	114 par.
Career Exploration	5 prog.	57 par.
Child & Family Dv.	27 prog.	60 par.
Leadrshp & Civic Eng.	4 prog.	9 par.
Science Literacy	5 prog.	33 par.

YOUTH GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FROM 4-H



4-H Youth Swine Day held in partnership with the Gratiot County Fair for Youth.

Forty-two youth participated in a 6 hour workshop with multiple presenters to learn selection, care, and showmanship for their 2023 swine projects. Local sponsors like Greenstone Farm Credit Services, Farm Bureau, and the Gratiot County Leaders Council helped support the event. Gratiot County Swine Educator, Casey Zangaro, was the primary speaker with assistance from Kapre Filhart of Isabella County. The program was well received from all participants.



Supporting Strong Communities

Community, Food, and Environment Institute



PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPATION ATTENDED BY COUNTY RESIDENTS

Community		
Food Systems	2 prog.	18 par.
Financial and Homeownership	18 prog.	28 par.
Government and Community Vitality	24 prog.	31 par.
Leadnet	1 prog.	1 par.
Natural Resources	4 prog.	12 par.
Sea Grant	1 prog.	1 par.
Product Center	8 prog.	8 par.



In Gratiot County, Brenda Long helped with 4 MIHAF applications to prevent foreclosures in 2023. The funding approved:

\$ 21,899.86

“You have no idea how much this means to us. Not only do we thank you but owe you. We get to keep our home.”

BH, Program Participant

Participants

3,285

Sessions

281

Hours

441

HELPING STRUGGLING HOMEOWNERS

MSU Extension Educator Brenda Long was on the Financial and Homeownership Education (FHE) team. She assisted homeowners with the online Michigan Homeowner Assistance Fund (MIHAF) process. Many of these homeowners did not have the technology skills to self-apply and upload the required documents. She also provided follow-up assistance.

As a HUD certified housing counselor, Brenda could also provide in-depth mortgage counseling to homeowners including communicating with their mortgage servicers and submitting a mortgage assistance application. She also worked closely with several county treasurers who referred homeowners facing foreclosure for delinquent property taxes.

MSU Extension staff located in Gratiot County

Bri Clark	4-H Program Coordinator	989-875-5295	vanvler2@msu.edu
Bill Hendrian	District 8 Director	616-527-5358	hendria2@msu.edu
Monica Jean	Field Crops Educator	616-443-8782	atkinmon@msu.edu
Kami Paksi	Office Manager	989-875-5233	paksikam@msu.edu
Holly Tiret	Social Emotional Educator	616-632-7893	tiret@msu.edu
Steve Whittington	Field Crops Educator	989-831-7509	whitti34@msu.edu
Casey Zangaro	Swine Educator	989-875-5292	zangaroc@msu.edu

Additional MSU Extension staff serving Gratiot County

Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa	Dairy Educator	970-888-1356	paolabs@msu.edu
Corey Clark	Farm Business Educator	517-420-2042	clarkcr@msu.edu
Roxanne Turner	CYI / 4-H Supervising Educator	517-546-3950	turnerr@msu.edu
Charles Gould	Bioenergy Educator	616-994-4547	gouldm@msu.edu
Sheila Hebert	Maternal Infant Health Educator	517-432-3076	murphysh@msu.edu
Ezra Pompos	Finance and Homeownership	517-887-4575	epompos@msu.edu
Joanna Urban	Community Nutrition Instructor	989-831-7506	urbanjoa@msu.edu
Eric Walcott	Government & Public Policy	517-353-9106	walcott3@msu.edu