

# OTSEGO COUNTY 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



I am very pleased to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Otsego 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, brought health programs to local schools, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents and are rooted in community relationships and responsive to community needs. Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Otsego 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.



- Adam Koivisto, District 14 Director

[MSUE.MSU.EDU](http://MSUE.MSU.EDU)



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



# DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES



Otsego County Spring Break Scavenger Hunt winners!

The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides thousands of young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.

*130 Youth  
23 Adult  
Volunteers*


Otsego County program highlights:

- Spring Break Extravaganza—programming for families that aren't traveling
- NEW: Natural Days and Archery SPIN Clubs
- Top County for Tractor Supply, Co. Clover Days fundraiser for two straight years!



4-H Clean-up at Parmater Road

**99 Years of Serving the Youth of Otsego County!**



**1925 - 2024  
Otsego 4-H  
Celebrating  
99 Years**



People show support for 4-H by marching in the Johannesburg 4th of July parade.



Building birdhouses — our youth participate in a variety of programming .

# DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES



Youth are pictured during the Clover Days fundraiser for educational scholarships in partnership with Tractor Supply, Co.



Small Animal Clinic in partnership with Family Farm and Home.



Youth at the Spring Break Extravaganza baking and tie-dyeing T-Shirts.



Birding is offered during 4-H Natural Days in partnership with Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve.



## 2024 Otsego County Fair Highlights

- (18) 4-H youth participated in the Otsego County Fair in Market Livestock Projects.
- 4-H'ers claimed 5 of 9 Grand Champion and four Reserve Champion awards for Market Animals.
- 4-H'ers claimed 11 of 27 Grand Champion and seven Reserve Champion awards in the Showmanship categories.



# IMPROVING HEALTH & NUTRITION

Michigan State University Extension is here to support all the ways we can live healthier lives, be strong and successful and build healthier communities, by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to your community. MSU Extension offers programming and resources for social-emotional and mental health, chronic disease and diabetes management, food safety and food preservation, developing healthy relationships, caregiving and parenting, nutrition and physical activity, and more.

**Total Reach:**  
298 youth  
62 adults



CNI Jane teaching students about MyPlate.

In Otsego County in 2024, Community Nutrition Instructor (CNI) Jane Sherry taught youth and adults how to eat healthy and be more active.

**Show Me Nutrition:** youth curriculum focused on the five food groups on MyPlate: Fruits, Vegetables, protein, grains and dairy. Each week, students at North Ohio Elementary had a food tasting that connected to each food group and participated in different physical activities.

**Cooking for One:** uses real-life examples and opportunities to brainstorm ways to make cooking for a small household easier while keeping food safety, nutrition and budget in mind

**Start Simple with MyPlate:** helps people make healthy eating choices that are simple, like eat more whole grains, vary your protein, eat more fruits and vegetables and limit added sugars, saturated fat and sodium.



Kindergartners having fun making fruit kebabs!



Students enjoyed making faces out of bread, fruit and soy nut butter.

*“After trying new foods in school, she is more open to trying new foods at home...She likes eating broccoli and cauliflower now!”*

- Parent feedback following Show Me Nutrition program

# IMPROVING HEALTH & NUTRITION



In the spring of 2024, CNI Jane worked with Patriot Place staff to apply for a \$1,500 SNAP-Ed policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change mini grant. Items purchased included new pots and pans, mixing bowls and utensils for each of the veteran houses, and an Instant Pot and electric wok. With these new kitchen materials, the veterans will be able to cook more meals from scratch. By cooking meals at home, the veterans will have improved diet quality leading to positive health outcomes.



Veterans participating in Cooking for One.



Cucumber salad made by veterans.

# IMPROVING HEALTH & NUTRITION



## In Otsego in 2023/2024:

18 program activities – Some popular programs in Otsego: Cooking for One, Start Simple with MyPlate, and Show me Nutrition.

- 3 Policy, System, and Environmental Changes (PSEs) adopted

Top Nutrition Changes:

- Farm-to-table/use of fresh or local produce
- Initiation, improvement, expansion, reinvigoration or maintenance of edible gardens
- Menus/recipes (variety, quality, etc.)
- Use of the garden for nutrition education
- Food safety policy



*“Hello, I’m Sandra Westover, Supervising & Staff Development educator housed in our MSU Extension Gaylord office. In this role, I support community nutrition instructors serving from the ‘tip of the mitt’ down to the top of Saginaw Bay – all along Lake Huron. Supported by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed), MSU Extension helps create long-lasting, positive changes – from community gardens to childcare homes and beyond. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension in the communities where we live, work and play.”*

*-Sandra*

## SNAP-ED Statewide Impacts in 2023

- 40,680 youth were reached through SNAP-Ed community nutrition and physical activity programming
- MSUE collaborated with 945 partners and 168 coalitions throughout the state for SNAP-Ed programming and outreach
- 372,083 adults and youth were reached through indirect education activities, which include listening to educational podcasts and reading nutrition fact sheets on MSU Extension’s website



# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

## Supporting Food & Farming Entrepreneurs

MSU Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new product and service ideas into the food, ag and bioenergy markets. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur or operate a well-established company, the Product Center is your key to the front door of Michigan State University's vast and varied technical expertise, research and outreach services.



**Product Center**  
Food • Ag • Bio  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## Making It In Michigan (MIIM)

is a premier food trade show & networking conference.

The program features educational sessions, an interactive trade show, and a unique buyer-supplier matchmaking program.



148  
Michigan-based Show Vendors

162  
MIIM Conference Attendees

*"I am such a huge fan of MIIM (Making It In Michigan). It's a great way to ease into trade shows, meet buyers who really care, connect and meet with local business owners."*

- Conference and trade show participant

## Governance, Leadership and Community Engagement

Successful and thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the most trusted tools, MSU Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan. Extension educators work with businesses, local governments and communities to improve local economies and the lives of Michigan residents. Extension educators also provide programming aimed at protecting and sustainably managing our state's natural resources.



**NEW COMMISSIONER SCHOOL**

For over 50 years, the New Commissioner School program has provided county commissioners, both newly elected and returning, with the preparation they need to enter their new term prepared to lead their counties successfully.

**\$30,115,124**

Value of resources leveraged by businesses

**1,792**

Government officials who use what they learned in making decisions

**634**

Certifications obtained that allowed continued or expanded work



# SUPPORTING FOOD & AGRICULTURE

MSU Extension works to improve farm personnel well-being and income, expand agriculture-related businesses and increase employment opportunities, making agriculture one of the strongest industries within Michigan. Supporting agriculture and helping to improve financial stability and competitiveness has a significant economic impact on Michigan and local communities.

## \$104.7 BILLION

annual contribution from Michigan's food and agriculture industry

## \$5.13 BILLION

economic impact of the animal agriculture industry in Michigan

## 805,000

jobs related to the food and animal agriculture industry in Michigan

*Partnering with growers for timely research to address local issues*

<p><b>Farm Management</b></p> <p>Over \$1.57 million in tax savings</p>	<p><b>Beginner Farmer</b></p> <p>772 participants 6,071 accessed resources</p>	<p><b>Smart Gardening</b></p> <p>32,711 article views in 2022</p>	<p><b>Field Crop Programs</b></p> <p>508,000 indirect 11,565 direct</p>
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### Helping farm families transition farm businesses to the next generation

- 168 attended educational Programs
- Over 100 private sessions
- 35,272 accessed written articles

*"I want you to know that I sincerely appreciate the help you have given us in the farm transition. Thank you for the hope you have given me (personally). I haven't had any for the farm in a long time."*

-Succession Planning participant

### Industry collaborations focus on preparedness for animal agriculture industry

#### ERAIL: Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock

- Training of first responders, animal haulers and others on how to properly respond when animals are involved in a traffic accident
- The ERAIL program currently has three trailers fully stocked and deployed in Berrien, Branch, Jackson and **Otsego** counties
- 42 counties, seven other states sent trainees to ERAIL

### MSU Extension Fruit Team continues fight against Spotted wing drosophila (SWD)

Daily contact with fruit industry, 20 presentations to 500+ growers representing majority of 60,000 acres of susceptible crops has reduced SWD economic impact

- 83% based management decisions on local/regional SWD trap reports and MSU Extension articles
- 69% pruned cherry orchards to open canopies to minimize SWD pressure
- 65% monitored for SWD adults using traps on-farm





# OTSEGO COUNTY OFFICE

*This past year Otsego County MSU Extension has helped community members through phone, email, Facebook and office walk-ins*

As MSU Extension continues to bring research and education to citizens across the state, three wonderful resources help reach every community member in our county:

**MSU Extension  
Lawn and Garden  
Hotline  
(888) 678-3464**

Calls answered by Extension Master Gardeners with the knowledge and resources to help with gardening and lawn questions.

**Ask Extension  
canr.msu.edu/  
outreach/ask-an-  
expert**

One-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts on topics such as lawns, agriculture, food preservation, natural resources, and more!

**Soil Testing  
homesoiltest.msu.  
edu**

Don't guess - soil test! Learn what vital nutrient your soil is missing for healthy growth in gardens, lawns, and crops.

Purchase soil tests in our office or online.

MSU Extension Otsego County

PHONE: 989-731-0272

EMAIL: MSUE.Otsego@msu.edu

WEB: www.canr.msu.edu/county

*Stay Connected!*

Scan the QR code to sign up for monthly emails highlighting local MSU Extension events and information you can use



## MSU Extension Staff in Otsego County

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**MISSION:**

**Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical needs and issues and opportunities.**

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

