



St. Clair County

2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT

msue.msu.edu



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Message from the District Coordinator

Partnerships, People and Programs...the essence of our promise to our stakeholders in St. Clair County. Whether it is the delivery of food and nutrition education programs to limited income clients, the development of entrepreneurial opportunities in communities, leadership and citizenship development with our young people or delivering quality educational experiences for development of agriculture and agribusinesses, PARTNERSHIPS are the cornerstone of our work with individuals, families and communities. As you review this annual report you will witness plenty of examples of our relationships with others in St. Clair County, and the District and across the state. PEOPLE are the reason why we are in this business; the business of providing non-formal educational programming to meet the needs, issues or opportunities of our communities. PROGRAMS that support the mission of helping people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical needs, issues and opportunities.



This report highlights specific programs within our four major program areas: Health and Nutrition—Keeping people healthy; Ensuring strong communities – Governance, conflict management, and community development; Developing youth and communities – Literacy, school readiness; and 4-H programs that prepare youth learning skills that prepare them for the workforce, encourage them to be civically active, and ensure success in school.

Thank you for your PARTNERSHIP to deliver sound educational PROGRAMS that are meaningful to the PEOPLE of St. Clair County.

Joseph W. Bixler, District Coordinator, District 10

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| FUNDING | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 2016 County Assessment | \$165,000 |
| MSU contribution | \$425,016 |

MEASURING IMPACT

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 4-H Traditional Program, youth..... | 1,262 |
| 4-H Leaders (51 Clubs) | 403 |
| 4-H After School Program..... | 366 |
| 4-H Environmental Education | 1,547 |
| 4-H Public Outreach | 7,735 |
| Food Safety Program | 228 |
| Food Security, Businesses | 6 |
| Greening Michigan Institute..... | 139 |
| SNAP-Ed, Adults | 350 |
| SNAP-Ed, Youth | 4,600 |

TOTAL IMPACT **16,636**

DISTRICT 10 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, more than 100,000 visitors from the St. Clair County area viewed both the msue.stclaircounty.org and the msue.anr.msu.edu/ websites filled with pages of rich, science-based content, Search engine rankings make msue.msu.edu one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.



Developing Youth and Communities



Robotics with Kindergarteners



Teen Leaders at work in Robotics Program

Quote: “4-H is the only program that offers Robotics to all grade levels from kindergarten to high school seniors. The kids are so excited it’s very motivating for the Leaders involved”

**Lori Warchuck
4-H Program
Coordinator**

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.

St. Clair County 4-H is building communication skills for a lifetime

- ◆ **4-H SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** – Nearly 70 youth ages 5 – 19 and volunteers participated in age appropriate educational activities related to science and technology in 2016 during the Junk Drawer Robotic education session series. Activities included, but not limited to, the following: dimensional drawing, writing technical instruction, designing and constructing a catapult. In addition more than 25 youth were actively engaged in designing and building robots to participate in the FIRST Robotic tournaments and challenges earning some of the top awards.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued



Field trip to the Riverwalk



Harvesting Honey



Animal Mania Event



Field trip to the Riverwalk

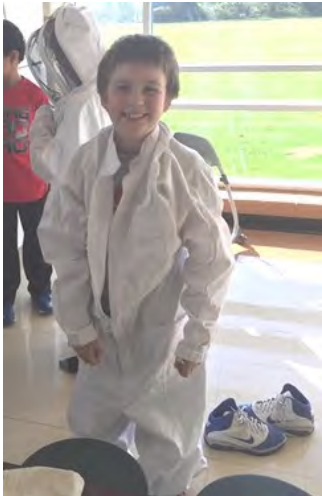
- ◆ **WINTER SHOWCASE** = 4-H Winter Achievement 2016 – more than 90 youth ages 5 – 19 participated in the annual 4-H Winter Achievement event. Youth have the opportunity to exhibit projects in 24 different educational departments that include leadership, science and technology, photography, foods, safety, hunting and wildlife to name just a few. Each project exhibit has a required interview with a skilled caring adult volunteer. Both project and the interview are evaluated and scored with the incentive of winning top awards. The projects exhibited during this event are important opportunities to develop critical life skills during their creation; however the primary focus of continued effort to improve and build on participants' interview skills is paramount.
- ◆ **ENTREPRENEURS** = 4-H Bee Keeping 2016 - 17 youth are buzzing with knowledge about bee keeping. Youth participated in hands on educational activities that included installation of packages of bees to the hive, hive care, honey bee health, challenges facing bees, extracting honey and selling honey and hive products. More than 100 pounds of honey were harvested and sold. Profits from the sale of the honey were reinvested into expanding the project area.
- ◆ **PUBLIC OUTREACH** = 4-H Animal Mania 2016 – nearly 2,500 youth and adults participated in the annual 4-H Animal Mania event. This animal science based event that takes place in down town Port Huron features more than 50 interactive displays. Displays included but not limited to horses, llamas, wool spinning, exotic pets, SCC Animal Control, pet grooming, SCC Sheriff's K9 Unit, 4-H Clubs and local veterinarians. The goal of this fun educational event is to have participants leave with a better understanding of food animals, pet care, careers in agriculture, and careers in law enforcement and vet science.
- ◆ **4-H AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM** = The 4-H After School Program, a longtime partner with the Port Huron Area School District's 21st Century After School Program (ASP), provides unique hands-on education experiences for students in an after school setting. Over 360 third through eighth grade students at 6 elementary and 2 middle schools, participated in innovative science and social studies activities that support and enhance participants' current academic studies.

The 4-H After School Program challenges our students with hands-on science investigations. This year many were designed to improve their understanding of the natural world and the impact they can have on the environment. Here's what they have learned while:

Developing Youth and Communities, continued



Tagged Monarch butterfly



Trying on a real
beekeeper suit



China Art Winner

- ⇒ Tagging and Releasing Monarch butterflies - Did you know that the monarch is the only butterfly known to make a two-way migration as birds do? Some fly as far as 3,000 miles to reach their winter home!
- ⇒ Visiting the Riverwalk with a presentation on Great Lakes Sturgeon from another community partner, the Friends of the St. Clair River – Did you know that the Lake Sturgeon can grow up to 7 feet long and live 100+ years?!
- ⇒ Learning about the impact that honeybees have on our food supply with a visit from a local beekeeper with an active hive and building a Bee-bot and choosing and constructing a foraging route. – Did you know that one out of every three bites of food we eat require pollination by honeybees?
- ⇒ Studying the Barn Owl and dissecting owl pellets to investigate and identify its food source. – Can you identify the skull of a meadow vole?

Students at Garfield and Kimball Elementary schools also had the opportunity to develop global awareness and knowledge of China by participating in the 2016 Michigan's 4-H Children's Art Exchange with China. Through the Art Exchange, children communicate and learn about China by viewing and discussing artwork created by children in China, and then by creating "visual letters" to send children their own ages in China. 2016 had over 6000 participants state-wide! 100 pieces of artwork were selected to go to China to represent Michigan and 2 were created by our ASP students!

Our program has worked diligently this year helping our students to develop critical thinking and communication skills and to encourage our students to make choices that benefit our environment and our world.



Titled: Ft. Gratiot Lighthouse



Titled: Meadow of Love

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

4-H Environmental & Science Programs = Through these programs all St. Clair County youth are able to learn about the interconnection of people and nature. They develop respect for and an appreciation of natural resources as well as finding a sense of stewardship. These hands-on projects enrich knowledge through new classroom experiences or outdoor education opportunities. Through these free programs youth are able to take part in Adopt-A-Stream cleanups; visit the St. Clair County Earth Fair; take part in 4-H Showy Science classroom series; plant a plot in their 4-H Urban Garden; or take part in hunting and ethics lessons through our 4-H From the Forest to the Table workshop.

The partnerships that St. Clair County 4-H has with other agencies, local school districts and funding sources allows for a high quality of programs delivered to youth. These groups allow our programs to be delivered to larger audiences that we would not, traditionally reach. FFA Feed America Days, Port Huron Area School District Summer Horizon's Program, St. Clair County Farm Bureau and the Earth Fair have made it possible for 2,345 county youth to receive our 4-H program while not being enrolled in a traditional 4-H Club.

Adopt-A-Stream Project, commits to two stream clean-ups yearly; instant feedback on the overall health of a stream by tests done on site. Eight, 1 mile stretches, of streams were adopted throughout St. Clair County and 2 in Northern Macomb County. 126 youth participated last year.

4-H Showy Science Classroom/School Enrichment, where 4 local school districts, 8 Elementary Schools, 20 Classrooms consisting of 632 students used Showy Science Programs ranging from Water Quality 4H2O; Physics; Force & Motion; Geology explorations; Embryology and many other enrichment lessons for teachers and students.

St. Clair County Earth Day Fair, 1,135 St. Clair County youth were able to attend this free workshop last year. Each student received a free tree seedling that they were instructed on planting. The St. Clair County 4-H Program does all of the marketing, registering and grant writing to provide this opportunity to county youth. At the 2016 event 3 transportation scholarships were awarded to schools that would not be able to attend the Earth Fair due to the high cost of transportation. Each student also received a free reusable Earth Fair shopping bag to keep all of their projects and materials together while visiting the fair.

From the Forest to the Table Annual Workshop, 88 youth attended this one day hunting and wildlife workshop. This workshop is a partnership between St. Clair County 4-H Leaders and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Urban Gardens, 39 youth participated in the organic gardening program. All youth have their own garden plot to plant their choice of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Youth not only tend their gardens but learn the basics of cooking. Recipes are made on site by gardeners from the harvest at the their Urban Garden.

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, 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.

228 reached with Food Safety programs:

- Food Preservation: 153 (the majority in partnership with Blue Water Community Action Agency and held at Vantage Point Farm Market-9 classes)
- One time Food Safety presentations: 63
- Cooking for Crowds: 9

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food, continued

Food Processors Face Challenges—Food processors have many challenges in their businesses. Food safety is one area that is of utmost importance to processors and impacts public health. Additionally, regulations related to food safety continue to change and increase in number. Jeannine Schwehofer, Extension Educator, coordinates the Michigan State University Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) team that includes four additional MSU Extension specialists. This team conducts several HACCP trainings per year for the food industry. St. Clair County establishments participate in HACCP training, including three in 2016.

The MSU Product Center staff worked extensively along with MSU Extension staff with a soup manufacturer in St. Clair County to become federally inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for manufacturing of their soups that contain more than 2% meat or poultry. Achieving federal inspection greatly increases the marketing possibilities for the soup manufacturer, increased oversight to food safety, and provided job security for employees.

Meat Quality Assurance—Two existing federally inspected small meat processors in St. Clair County also received assistance from MSU Extension related to HACCP. These meat processors also received assistance related to the Specialized Meat Processing Variance at Retail Establishments (Variance) that has recently been required through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The food safety plan required changes in current processing procedures and MSU Extension was able to assist processors in updating their processes to meet current food safety standards. This enables these businesses to continue manufacturing and selling processed meat products that are important to their bottom lines.

Consumer Education—Consumer education related to meat cookery methods and safety was demonstrated at the St. Clair County 4-H and youth fair. Participants were able to see the importance of using a food thermometer when cooking ground beef patties and that internal color is not a valid indicator of doneness. Patties that looked pink inside were actually safe to consume and patties that looked well done were not cooked to a safe internal temperature. Additional discussion and demonstration of cooking steak and chicken occurred during the event.

4-H'ers Learn About Meat Quality The 4-H After School program teamed up with meat science education for sausage processing. Students were educated on sausage making and allowed to formulate a sausage recipe, cook and taste their products. This hands-on activity combined science with food production methodology and was well received by students. Additionally, commercially available sausage products were compared and evaluated for sensory characteristics.

Other Food Safety and Meat Processing programs:

- ◆ St. Clair County food and business establishments participated in food safety training from MSUE, including Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification.
- ◆ St. Clair County meat processors received assistance for federal and state food safety regulations and requirements.
- ◆ Consumer education related to meat cookery methods and safety was demonstrated at the St. Clair County 4-H and youth fair.
- ◆ 4-H after school program students were exposed to sausage processing and sensory evaluation.



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.

Strengthening local governments and entrepreneurial communities

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.

MSU Extension’s Government/Public Policy and Land Use Educators have provided support to St. Clair County in multiple formats during 2015-2016. Specifically using MSU Extension experts in Land Use, Metropolitan Planning offered trainings on the Right to Farm Act and Walkability to communities during their 2016 Annual Workshops. Additional expertise also provided support to multiple communities in the county (and region) via Citizen Planner – a seven week education series for Planning and Zoning officials and active citizens.

CEC Conference Evaluation Impact Summary 2016, Port Huron, MI

Issue (who cares and why?)

Michigan State University Extension believes that fostering entrepreneurship and community support are key strategies for creating jobs and transforming the state’s economy and global presence. Michigan State University Extension has been involved in helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses for many years. The CEC program was



created in Michigan approximately 10 years ago. It was launched in an effort to educate communities on the various tools and resources available to help them support and grow entrepreneurs in their communities.

What has been done?

To strengthen communities' support of entrepreneurs, the Greening Michigan Institute organizes a statewide conference focusing on Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) each year in October. The 2016 Conference was held in Port Huron on Oct. 5-6.

This unique conference was embedded in each community enabling attendees to explore and experience entrepreneurship throughout the event. Participants were energized after listening to the lessons learned by local entrepreneurs who served as keynote speakers. From there, they were able to see the community as they walked to their breakout sessions held in different venues including museums, coffee, furniture and other retail shops, restaurants, breweries, and chamber offices to name just a few.

Impact-Demographics

In 2016, all attendance records were broken with 139 individuals representing 5 states and 58 Michigan communities and officials of Canada attended the CEC conference. When asked what sector the participants represented, their responses were as follows **Impact - Knowledge Gain**

The following are the results from the evaluation collected on-site and through an on-line survey for the conference (N=48)

97.9% of respondents reported they Increased knowledge of business concepts, tools, skills, and resources to build entrepreneurship in their community. Strongly Agree 47.9% Agree 50%

76.6% of respondents reported an Increased in knowledge of the value of ag, arts or cultural development as a useful economic development strategies. Strongly Agree 27.7% Agree 48.9%

78.7% of respondents reported they increased their knowledge of the value of tourism and/or the sustainable use of our natural resources as a useful economic development strategies.

Conference Outcomes and Quotes

77.1% of respondents reported that as a result of the CEC conference, *they plan to create/expand at least one community based entrepreneurial activities and initiatives presented at the conference.* In the next 3-6 months: 29.2% In the next year: 47.9%

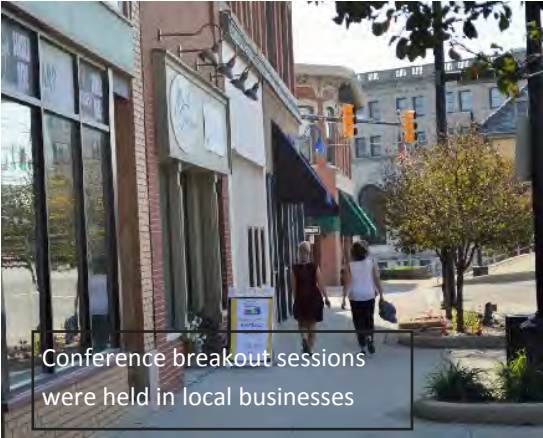
Some of the participant's community based entrepreneurial plans include:

- ◆ We will facilitate an entrepreneur/local community workshop
- ◆ Will be looking heavily at the reverse scholarship program currently used by the St. Clair County Community Foundation as a workforce development tool in our area.
- ◆ Will consider opportunities to link and partner existing cycling infrastructure and publically owned-managed naturalized lands/trails with private industry to create awareness, increase use, and encourage stewardship.
- ◆ I am a Kansas state research and ext. specialist. Would like to make a KS conference embedded instead of traditional format.
- ◆ Partnering with local University to bring students downtown & engage them with downtown businesses and entrepreneurs with the long term vision of retaining talent within our community, rather than having them move on to bigger cities, etc.

Additional Participant Comments on overall conference:

"I cannot wait to attend next year! While our individual challenges are all unique to our own communities, at a basic level, we all have the same overarching issues of not fully grasping the intent or processes involved in licensing. I also have to complement the choice of keynote speakers- incredibly inspiring! And lastly, I hadn't been in Port Huron for at least a decade and was just blown away by how the downtown core has evolved. BIG thanks to our lovely Port Huron leadership and business owner hosts!"

These folks traveled from Nebraska and Kansas to attend



Conference breakout sessions were held in local businesses



SBDC and EDA members support registration



National and international attendees networking during event

Keeping People Healthy

From the school Teacher = The children now tell each other “I don’t like it YET” or “You just don’t like that YET.” On one occasion I heard a child say, “Now I really do like it. Remember when I didn’t like it. I was really little then.” (FYI - That was when he was really little, six weeks ago!).



“Salad Selfies” are one of the fun ways MSUE Health and Nutrition Instructors introduce fruits and vegetables to school age children. Most children can’t resist tasting while they are creating!

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.

SNAP-Ed

“Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partners with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), a free nutrition education program to reduce hunger and food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits. MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition instructors teach youth, teens, adults and seniors how to make health a priority through an instructional series.

With community partners as host sites, information in series of 6 classes or in single presentations to over 350 adults throughout St. Clair County. They taught adults how to choose, prepare, and store healthful, safe foods that are also affordable and delicious. Adults also learned how to keep eating in balance with physical activity to address overweight and obesity concerns. Adults who participated in series completed pre- and post-assessment surveys. 73% showed improvement in one or more nutrition practice and 70% of the participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practice. One curriculum, *Cooking Matters for Adults™*, has the added feature of hands-on food preparation with groceries sent home to replicate the cooking done in class. Near the end of the series, they tour a local grocery store.



Seniors meet to get tips and tricks for eating well and staying active, with USDA's "Eat Smart, Live Strong" curriculum. These are recent graduates from the Washington Life Center in Marine City.



Let's make a Sandwich! Letting children help make their own food is a great way to get them to try new things. "The Show Me Nutrition" curriculum gives children the opportunity to make and taste a variety of healthy food.



Everyone has their hands up and we are ready to learn a hand-washing song! From Program Instructor Jennifer McNamara. Handwashing for food safety is one of the first very important lessons we learn in the Pre K "Show Me Nutrition" curriculum.

The tour culminates in a challenge for each participant to choose 4 adult servings from each of the 5 food groups and keep the cost \$10 or less. The program then purchases those foods for the participants. Almost all of them meet the challenge; most of them save about 20% on their purchase; some save as much as 60% and more.

Thanks to partners in early childhood education programs, schools, and 4-H, SNAP-Ed youth nutrition programs have a broader reach. With delivery of programs in series and presentations to over 4,600 youth and teens. The students who participate in nutrition programs receive material to take home to continue the fun learning in their home environments. The students and their families are not the only learners. The teachers learn, too.

One teacher wrote:

"I work in a program in which both teachers and preschool age children eat family-style meals together. In our class children take a portion of all the food that is offered; however, each child chooses whether or not they choose to eat it. . . .Although our meals were very relaxed, I found that children still seemed to be fearful of trying new foods. I modeled eating those items. I smiled. I talked about the "delicious" the food. But no matter how much energy I put into it, the children looked at me and said, "Yuck".

Supporting Food and Agriculture



Breakfast on the Farm feedback various elements increased for example:

- “caring for the land and environment” increased from 80.6% BEFORE the tour to 93.5% AFTER the tour
- “protecting water quality” jumped from 72.2% BEFORE to 95.6% AFTER
- “Safeguarding the food they provide us” increased from 74.6% BEFORE to 94.7% AFTER
- “modern food production methods: also increased from 51.8% BEFORE to 65.5% AFTER

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.

Cover Crops for Sustainable Farming—Swoish Farms, North Branch, MI

Building soils and soil health are major trends for farmers that are serious about improving farm outputs in an environmentally friendly way. One of the building blocks of this trend is the use of cover crops to provide a nutrition rich, high organic matter, environment where plants can thrive. On a warm summer evening over 40 participants, from around the Thumb Area, enjoyed an opportunity to learn about the latest science-based information on cover crops to help farmers do a better job on their farms. Michigan State University Extension and the Soil Conservation District partnered together on the Matt Swoish Farm to conduct the training.

Following the training session, the Swoish Family farm conducted a tour to look at different mixtures used in tandem with manure to build their soils and increase profitability.

Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) - Zwerk & Sons Farms

This year’s event was held in a pouring rain on August 13, 2016 and provided consumers the opportunity to see, touch, and feel what it’s like to be on an active working farm. This event provide everyone, especially those unfamiliar with agriculture, the chance to learn where the food on their table originates. It’s an experience that attendees relish as they personally talk to farmers and enjoy a hearty breakfast. 2,500 people passed through the farm gates to meet the farm families, industry personnel, educators and others on this 7,000 acre crop farm. Corn, soybeans, navy beans, wheat, sugar beets, and cover crops are the main crops of this farm that also has a milk trucking operation.

Guests from 48 different counties and 8 different states participated in the event. For first-time visitors, the level of trust that crop farmers will do the right thing with regard to various elements increased in all cases. There were 55 youth volunteers, 220 adult volunteers, 568 youth visitors, 1,630 adult visitors and 46 households

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