



# St. Clair County 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS



64 events held for adults, with over 3,400 St. Clair County residents participating in MSU Extension programming



Over 100 years MSU Extension staff have provided education to St. Clair County residents



\$52,172 spending with local businesses in St. Clair County



2,397 MSU alumni living in and contributing to St. Clair County, and 342 students currently enrolled



MSU disbursed \$6,136,158 in financial aid to St. Clair County students



MSU Extension website received 20,355 visits from St. Clair County residents; 77% were first-time visitors



6,452 youth involved in 4-H in St. Clair County youth development programs



\$20,524,240 total economic impact in St. Clair County

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is part of the national Cooperative Extension network, which is housed at land-grant universities across the country. MSU Extension is funded through a partnership of federal, state and county governments, and works with individuals, businesses, organizations and communities to identify and address Michigan's existing and emerging priorities.



From Great Lakes water levels and protection of our natural resources to industrial hemp farming as an emerging business enterprise, from workforce preparedness and youth education to nutritional instruction for our income challenged residents, from tourism and economic growth to training for newly elected county commissioners, MSU Extension delivers evidence-based education for the benefit of St. Clair County. This report highlights the work done last year.

We're passionate about addressing the current and emergent needs of St. Clair County. Thank you for supporting MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Jerry Johnson, District Director

## CONTACT



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[@MSUEExtension](https://twitter.com/MSUEExtension)

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Extension



# 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).

MSU Extension 4-H staff serving St. Clair County:

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Program Assistant  
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4-H is America's largest youth development organization, providing educational opportunities to over 6 million youth. 4-H programs are available for all youth ages 5-19. We always welcome new members and new volunteers; if you are interested in joining 4-H, please contact the St. Clair County MSU Extension office at 810-989-6935. We would be happy to help you enroll today!

## 4-H PROGRAM NUMBERS IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY:

Total club membership—818 youth members

Total clubs—52 4-H Clubs

Total program outreach efforts—4,786 youth reached in outreach programming efforts

Total volunteers—270 adult volunteers

## State Award Program

A 4-H State Award is the highest honor bestowed on a Michigan 4-H member. 4-H State Award winners become part of an elite group of 4-H youth who have demonstrated the highest level of excellence in learning, leadership, and service. The purpose of this awards program is to provide 4-H youth a learning opportunity where they can receive recognition while developing important life skills. Through the experience, members apply skills in communication, organization, and self-motivation.

St. Clair County participants received awards in the following categories, and are pictured here from left to right.

- Gwyneth Glombowski: winner rabbit & cavy science
- Isabell Stull: honors leadership and service
- Leah VanDeWarker: honors birds and science
- Troy Korns: honors science, technology, engineering and mathematics



# Developing Youth and Communities

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.

## 4-H Spin Clubs after school

These Spin Clubs were established at four elementary schools in St. Clair County. Schools included Gardens Elementary (Marysville), Palms Elementary (East China), Garfield Elementary (Port Huron), and Kimball Elementary (Kimball). One hundred twenty nine students participated in a variety of projects that included, but not limited to, the following: wool felting, canvas painting, fabric wreath making and container gardening.

This Program was made possible from funding from a mini grant from St. Clair County 4-H Council and the St. Clair County Agricultural Society (Fair Board).



Canvas painting



Fabric wreath project

## 4-H Day Camp

4-H Day Camp took place on Saturday, May 11, 2019. Nearly 100 youth from across St. Clair County participated in hands-on sessions that included, but not limited to the following: cat care and showmanship, training hunting dogs, decorating cookies, photography, outdoor survival skills, market poultry, stained glass, horses, and much more.

Youth set goals and learned skills that helped them master a project area or introduced them to a new one.



Cat showmanship



Clover Sprout  
PIRATE adventure

# Developing Youth and Communities

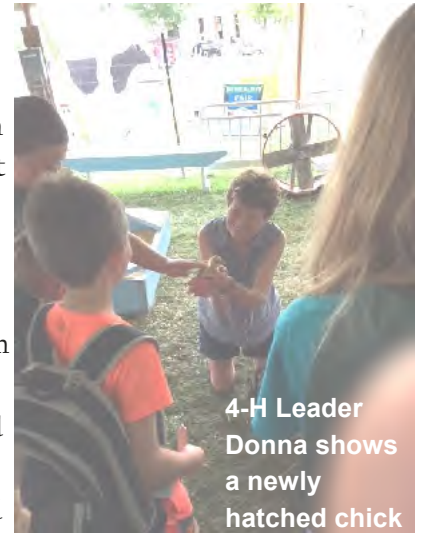


Twins Diane and Debbie holding twin calves!

## 4-H Ag Adventures

4-H Ag Adventures took place on Wednesday, July 17, 2019. Forty-five youth from the Port Huron Recreation Department were treated to a behind the scenes look at the St. Clair County 4-H & Youth Fair.

There were six educational sessions including petting farm animals, miniature horses, dairy cattle, sheep, llamas and hand washing. Featured in the petting farm was an injured turtle that started to heal its own shell and a chicken raising ducks. Other highlights included how milk gets from the cow to the store. Youth all received an Ag Adventure back pack that was sponsored by St. Clair County Farm Bureau.



4-H Leader Donna shows a newly hatched chick



Fish cleaning

## 4-H Lake to Table

4-H Lake to table took place on Saturday, August 17, 2019. Thirty-two youth from St. Clair and Macomb Counties participated in a variety of hands on educational sessions. Sessions included fishing from a boat, baiting the hook, taking catch off a fishing hook, boat safety, knife sharpening, filleting fish and cooking the days catch over an open fire for sampling. The workshop also featured a session by the DNR that included habitat, native fish and invasive species.

Highlight of the day: Jenny Olson from the television program Michigan Out of Doors joined us for the entire day. She interviewed staff, volunteers and youth that participated. It's expected that this event will be featured late this Fall on her show! Picture of her filming at right.



Jenny Olson from Michigan out of Doors was our guest!



# Developing Youth and Communities

Michigan 4-H is growing current and future leaders. The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides more than 200,000 young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion



4-H grows from the farms to the towns, and from the suburbs to the cities. Anywhere curiosity roams and confidence thrives. Anywhere technology can be advanced and achievement is valued. Anywhere positive change is possible and giving back moves communities forward. After all, true leaders aren't born; they're grown!

## 4-H Afterschool 21st Century Grant

4-H Afterschool Programs, provided by St Clair County MSU Extension, offer a wealth of research-based, ready to use, learning by doing curricula on a wide variety of topics. These programs include academic support, hands-on STEM activities and much more! Port Huron area schools that participated in the 4-H afterschool programming were Garfield Elementary, Kimball Elementary, Michigamme and Central Middle school. Nearly 200 youth participated in this unique combination of fun and learning that help youth develop lifelong skills, such as leadership, critical thinking, and teamwork. The programs address a growing need for quality after-school programming in the US where as many as 15 million children come home to empty houses after school. Research shows that high-risk youth can greatly benefit from 4-H programming.

## 4-H Embryology in the Classroom

4-H Embryology in the Classroom takes place in classrooms that spans across St Clair County. Nearly 600 youth from Memphis, St Clair, Port Huron, Fort Gratiot, Ira Twp., and Marine City participated in this science based program.

Students learn about life cycle, measuring temperature, humidity and rotation. Contrast and compare the elements of natural verses natural methods of hatching poultry. Elements of food systems and differences between market poultry and egg production birds are also included.

## 4-H Earth Fair Trash Free Classroom Talks

Nearly 500 youth from 6 schools across the county participated in Earth Fair Trash Free Talks in their classroom. The goal is to have zero waste at the annual Earth Fair that takes place in April at the Goodells County Park. Recycling and upcycling are two areas that youth are encouraged to focus on as they prepare for their field trip. Students are instructed in how to “pack in” and “pack out” lunch with emphasis on the importance of reducing the wastes that impact our landfills and waterways.

MSU Extension staff also instructs youth on food safety and what foods travel well and how to package them to support the Trash Free effort.



# Developing Youth and Communities

## 4-H Capac Summer School Program

Nearly 40 Capac elementary and middle school youth that were identified by their teachers needing to spend some summer time concentrating on core school subjects participated in this opportunity. Youth attending spent the morning in a classroom like setting with lunch bringing in the afternoon sessions with fun hands on 4-H programming that supported the morning's academic work. Activities included but not limited to the following: raising, hatching and releasing monarch butterflies, science of beekeeping, container gardening, food, nutrition and other elements of healthy living.

Program was made possible through a partnership between Capac Community Schools, St Clair County 4-H Council and MSU Extension.



### ALL 4-H PROGRAMS:

- ◆ Animal Science
- ◆ Arts
- ◆ Careers & Entrepreneurship
- ◆ Environmental & Outdoor Education
- ◆ Global & Cultural Education
- ◆ Healthy Youth
- ◆ Leadership, Citizenship & Service
- ◆ Life Skills
- ◆ Science & Engineering
- ◆ Volunteering & Mentoring

## Sturgeon Cruise & River Walk Field Trips

The annual Sturgeon Fest is an opportunity for local 5th grade students to participate in this educational program. Students and teachers learn about this threatened species and the impact that its loss in numbers has on our local ecosystem. This festival is scheduled in conjunction with the US Fish and Wildlife field biologist visit to the St. Clair River and Lake Huron for their annual sturgeon tagging.

Students learn about and see sturgeon and lamprey. Just over 300 5th graders from Port Huron, and Algonac participated in this outdoor education program.



## 4-H Urban Gardens

4-H Urban Gardens are located in Marine City and Woodlands Developmental Center with nearly 40 youth participating. Youth have the opportunity to have a garden plot. Gardening and plant science skills are incorporated as students grow their own food. Growing food is only one component of this dynamic program. MSU Extension nutrition staff deliver programming on healthy living, how to prepare and preserve their harvest. Extra vegetables and herbs are donated to the Mid-City Nutrition Program in Port Huron for their daily free meal program.

# 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.**

**Serving the State of Michigan**

**Laurie Messing**  
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Improving Health &  
Nutrition Institute

St. Clair, Huron, Sanilac  
and Tuscola Counties

## Reducing Foodborne Illness Through Education

Food Safety is a global issue from farm to table. Its impact on our health and well-being is significant across the life span. Food-borne illness outbreaks occur on an ongoing basis crossing all socioeconomic lines from production, consumption and preservation of foods. Overall health is impacted by the safety of the food supply and foodborne illness.

## Food Preservation

As Michigan gardens grow and thoughts turn to those gardens and farm markets overflowing with fresh produce, it is a good idea to think about safely preserving fresh produce. The bounty of Michigan produce can be enjoyed all year long with safe food preservation. Food preservation is a science, and we must properly preserve foods or dangerous bacteria can be present and cause foodborne illness. Food Preservation classes teach safe preserving techniques and provide valuable resources to ensure the safety of home preserved food. Four classes with 53 residents participated in classes to learn about preserving food safely.

## Cooking for Crowds

Classes were held for 14 volunteers to provide local education. Cooking for Crowds is designed for non-profit groups that run food fundraisers and events such as meals, bake sales, sub sales and dinners. There are a range of food safety risks that develop when cooking large volumes of food, and participants learn to reduce those risks and help prevent the conditions that may lead to a foodborne illness.

## Michigan FRESH Fact Sheets

These educate on the safe use, storage and preservation of Michigan grown fruits and vegetables. These are distributed at Vantage Point Farm Market in Port Huron on every day the market is open and the St Clair County MSU Extension Office providing local access to these great resources for County residents. [http://www.canr.msu.edu/mi\\_fresh/](http://www.canr.msu.edu/mi_fresh/)





# Ensuring Strong Communities

**MSU Extension understands that building civic engagement and healthy economic structures leads to greater opportunities and stronger communities.**

**Serving the State of Michigan**

**Andy Northrop**  
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- Sustainable Tourism Development
- First Impressions: Tourism Assessments
- Planning for Tourism
- Community Vitality
- Leadership and Facilitation
- Connecting Entrepreneurial Community

## Prosperity Region 6 (PR6)

MSU Extension Community Vitality and Tourism Educator, Andy Northrop, after four years, still actively co-chairs Prosperity Region 6 (PR6) a seven county partnership comprised of Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola Counties—tourism and quality of life subcommittee. The regional subcommittee has been responsible for facilitating a number of tourism and quality of life projects in partnership with county and various community leadership. Some of those projects include:

## I-69 Thumb Region

Local Crafty Agricultural/Agritourism Directory (2015, 2018) highlighting 150 breweries, wineries, farms, farmers markets, and specialty stores and business, such as orchards and U-pick farms - <http://i-69thumbregion.org/agritourism-directory/>

## Art in Place (2018)

A program designed to create a livelier, engaging, and interesting place using art. District 10 communities were provided the opportunity to apply for Art in Place.

Port Austin, MI (Huron County) was selected in 2018.

## MSU Extension First Impression Tourism Assessment (FIT)

Launched by the Community, Food, and Environment Institute's tourism team in late 2016 and offered in partnership with PR6 since 2017, FIT has proven to be a widely successful assessment program for communities across District 10 in need of new concepts to make their community places people want to live, work, play, learn, and return. Building from four successful FITs in 2017 (Elkton, Imlay City, Marlette, and Sebawaing ), MSU Extension, in partnership with PR6 tourism subcommittee, launched a second round of FIT assessments in 2018. Cass City (Tuscola County) and Marine City (St. Clair County) were selected in 2018 and underwent the FIT program to identify strengths and weaknesses through a team of first-time visitors. Like the communities that underwent FIT in 2017, both 2018 communities received \$2,000 in funding from the PR6 tourism subcommittee to spawn new developments and actions after participating in FIT. Both communities, after receiving their results earlier this year, are currently in the primary stages of new developments and actions after participating in the FIT program.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism\\_first\\_impressions/community-reports](https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism_first_impressions/community-reports)

# Ensuring Strong Communities

## Serving the State of Michigan

### Goals of our tourism programs are to:

- ◆ Increase awareness of assets and opportunities
- ◆ Increase knowledge of best practices, trends and changes
- ◆ Develop new leadership roles, opportunities and action items
- ◆ Foster new collaborations and plans among stakeholders to advance community-driven tourism

### FEEDBACK

“Small town charm on international waters”

“Maritime history prevails”

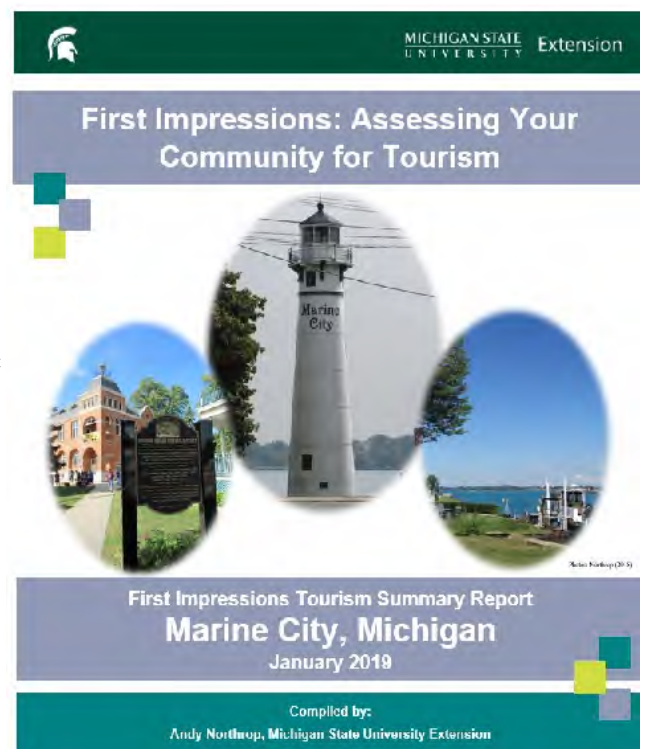
“A place to call home”

Cass City, MI received their results in March 2019. More than 50 community leaders, business owners, educators, and residents attended the forum where results were shared. As of early 2019, Cass City community leadership has fostered the capacity to grow their assets and attractiveness in District 10 and across Michigan. Learn more about their results here - <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/first-time-visitors-to-one-of-michigan-s-thumb-communities-provide-new-perspectives-to-drive-tourism-strengthen-community-vitality-and-spawn-local-leaders>

Marine City, MI received their results from FIT in February 2019. Approximately 60 community leaders, commissioners, business owners, and residents attended Marine City's forum to learn more from the first-time visitor assessment and share thoughts on what the destination can do better. Marine City's FIT results - <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/marine-city-welcomes-first-time-visitor-perspectives-to-strengthen-community-collaboration-and-spawn-new-ideas-for-tourism>

The FIT program is now in its third and final partnership cycle with Prosperity Region tourism subcommittee and benefiting one more District 10 community. The City of St. Clair (St. Clair County) applied for FIT late 2018, which is actively planning their Community Report Forum where they too will receive the perspectives of five first-time visitors to drive new developments for the coastal community. FIT successes in District 10 continue to be a leading model for prosperous community and tourism development initiatives in other Michigan State University Extension Districts.

In addition, the FIT communities to date are regularly promoted statewide and nationally as successful examples of community collaboration and leadership when addressing placemaking, tourism, and quality of life for rural America. MSU Extension's Community Vitality and Tourism educator continues to work across District 10 building off these successes and fostering new programs as well.



# Ensuring Strong Communities

## Joseph Bixler

Extension Educator

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- Fiscal Sustainability for Michigan Municipalities – Statewide
- New County Commissioner Training – Statewide
- Non-Profit Community Grocery Store Model – St. Clair County

## FEEDBACK FROM FOOD SUMMIT:

“Discussing THE food system is difficult because it’s very large and diverse. I appreciated being able to focus on the food insecurity side and tailoring discussions to meet those needs” St. Clair County Food Summit participant

## Food Policy Council in Michigan’s Thumb Area

In July 2018, MSU Extension received a seed grant from the Michigan Local Food Council Network funded by the Kellogg Foundation. Although many local food councils concentrate on one county or smaller geographic area, the Thumb Food Policy Council proposed to include the five Michigan Thumb counties of St. Clair, Lapeer, Tuscola, Huron and Sanilac.

The council spent the last quarter of 2018 organizing itself and collecting human resources in the area of food insecurity (food banks, pantries), agricultural producers, farmers market and farmers market organizers. The council focused on the development of larger food system needs and developed a mission statement:

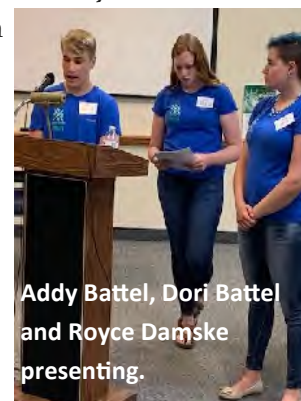
“Identify, develop, and connect resources to support local food communities in Michigan’s Thumb”

The Thumb Food Policy Council’s purpose is two fold: a) to create meaningful educational programming through community partners on the role of the food system in Michigan’s Thumb and it’s interaction to the overall food system in Michigan from a producer and consumer point of view and b) provide recommendations and advocate for changes related to the Thumb food system specifically that will enhance the food security and food needs in the region.

Two community food summits were conducted, one in Cass City in partnership with the Meeting the Need for Our Village in Cass City and another in Port Huron. The results of these summits identified specific action steps to undertake moving forward, some of which have been completed and others in the preliminary stages of development. Some of those specific action steps included:

- Advocating for a grocery store to locate in Cass City
- Develop a community garden to produce fresh vegetables for food pantries
- Create new opportunity for food insecure consumers to have greater access to affordable, healthy, diverse, safe food
- Discover successes within schools feeding kids and develop opportunities to showcase these to other schools for replication

The council looks forward to 2020 to create and deliver programs regarding food and agricultural literacy, development of sustained and coordinated food pantries in the Thumb, and creating new educational opportunities in the communities that the council represents.



Addy Battel, Dori Battel and Royce Damske presenting.

# Ensuring Strong Communities

**Serving the State of Michigan**

**Joseph Bixler**  
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## **FEEDBACK FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

“ I appreciate the new overnight format. It allows us to network with other commissioners from across the state”

Otsego County  
Commissioner

“ This is a very good orientation to what my new responsibilities are as a commissioner”

Delta County  
Commissioner

## **New County Commissioner School**

Since 1968, MSUE and the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) have offered an educational program for new county commissioners following the November election. That program has come to be known as the New Commissioner School (NCS). The 2018 workshop marked the 50<sup>th</sup> year of this program.

In 2017 a long term evaluation of NCS was conducted to assess long-term change in commissioners’ knowledge, skills, and confidence, as well as inform program revisions. Participants responded to questions rating their change in individual competencies, board competencies, and board culture. Information from that evaluation led to changes in the 2018 workshop, including fewer topics, more depth, and a move to a 2-day workshop.

This year, a team of MSUE educators offered the New County Commissioner School at four locations around the state. The workshop consists of two-half day sessions on the fundamentals of county government and included time for networking with other county officials, MAC staff, and MSU Extension educators and directors. Overall response to the format change was positive. Attendance was down only 10 following an election that yielded 24 fewer new commissioners.

A total of 191 people attended the workshops. Based on immediate post-workshop evaluation, 70% of reporting participants were newly elected county commissioners, 20% were experienced commissioners, and the rest were administrators, other county staff, and a couple of Michigan Department of Treasury staff.

MSU Extension’s government, leadership, and community engagement programs engage participants in learning skills of good governance, how to communicate with purpose, and how to collaborate on solving complex issues in order to improve their communities. Participants leave MSU Extension educational programs with:

- ◆ a deeper understanding of their civic responsibilities and roles within their own communities;
- ◆ increased confidence to make decisions;
- ◆ skills and information to better manage community resources;
- ◆ knowledge of how to implement best practices
- ◆ The application of knowledge and skills gained from good governance programs builds a stronger civic infrastructure.



# 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.

*"IN SPECIAL TRIBUTE, Therefore, This document is signed and dedicated to congratulate the St. Clair County 4-H & Youth Fair as it is named a Finalist in this year's Governor Fitness Awards."*



Ethan eats a breakfast parfait that he made

## “Eat Your Ag—From Dirt to Dinner” Governor’s Fitness Award Finalist

Lori Warchuck, 4-H Program Coordinator, works with the St. Clair County Agricultural Society to provide the agriculture education tent at the 4-H & Youth Fair in Goodells. Carol Bublitz, SNAP-Ed Community Nutrition Instructor, is instrumental in helping Lori plan and deliver the programs. In 2018, the theme was “Eat Your Ag—From Dirt to Dinner” with new topics and activities each day. Liane Allen, 4-H assistant, created a physical activity trail with educational signs at each station. The MSU Extension SNAP-Ed program provided hand washing information and nutrition experiences including hands-on food preparation. Lori and the SNAP-Ed staff provided displays highlighting agricultural aspects of select foods and how those foods contribute to a healthful eating plan. Fairs are typically viewed as places full of high-fat, high-sugar, and/or high-sodium foods, but because of the farm to plate educational offerings of the Ag-Ed tent, fairgoers have an option to create a healthful snack, learn more about farm to plate, and enjoy some physical activity.



This event was nominated for the 2019 Governor's Fitness Award for an extraordinary community event. It was chosen as one of three finalists and recognized at a ceremony at the state capitol, where State Senator Dan Lauwers presented a Special Tribute certificate, and at a gala at the MGM Grand Ballroom. Although the event did not win, Lori and Carol were inspired to accomplish even more at the 2019 Ag Ed tent.

## Building Healthy Communities —580 Youth Served

Through a partnership with Wayne State University and the Building Healthy Communities grant, Jennifer McNamara was able to work with all three elementary schools in the Yale school district for the entire 2018 -2019 school year.

This grant took a whole-school approach to wellness. Nutrition education was taught in every grade level, kindergarten through 5th. Gym teachers were trained in the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum, the recess staff was trained in active recess practices, teachers were taught the importance of healthy holiday parties and healthy snacks in the classroom, and an after school “Healthy Kids Club” was implemented in all three schools.

# Keeping People Healthy

## FIGHTING LEAD

“It’s not just a Port Huron problem or a low-income families’ problem. Everyone is at risk. We need to get this information to all of St. Clair County.” Jerry Johnson, District 10 Coordinator

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## OTHER SNAP- Ed PROGRAMMING

- Cooking Matters
- Eat Healthy Be Active
- Cooking for One
- Teen Cuisine
- Grow it, Try it, Like it
- Show Me Nutrition

## Reach of SNAP-Ed nutrition programs

SNAP-Ed provided 133 direct education programs reaching 2,504 individuals with 17,536 items of information distributed. SNAP-Ed staff had 39 partners and worked within four coalitions. 3,000+ residents received information on Fighting Lead with Nutrition.

In response to concerns about the potential for elevated lead levels in local residents, Carol Bublitz and Jennifer McNamara brought MSU Extension resources on fighting lead with nutrition to local residents. Those most at risk from lead are children ages 6 and under. All of the St. Clair County Head Start and Great Start preschool programs received a six-week series of nutrition education focusing on helping children learn to eat and like a variety of fruits and vegetables and to wash their hands, plus information on fighting lead with nutrition to take home. In all, from preschool programs to senior citizens, over 3,100 residents received information on lead.



Salad “Selfies” - a favorite way to get kids to play with their food before they eat it!

## A special guest:

Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America visited Port Huron in July and was able to talk to St. Clair County MSU Extension staff members about programming in the area. He is pictured here with Jennifer McNamara, Community Nutrition Instructor.

Joel is a nationally recognized leader and media spokesman in the fields of domestic hunger, food security, obesity, poverty, food-related economic development, national service, and volunteerism. He is also the author of *All You Can Eat: How Hungry Is America?*



# Keeping People Healthy

**MSU Extension provides trusted, evidenced-based education and expertise in:**

- Markets and Financials
- Risk Management Plans and Farm Analysis Information
- Managing Stress, Anger or Depression

**Kristina L. Swartzendruber**  
Extension Educator

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## Farm stress program

In collaboration with the Ag and Agri-Business Extension Educators in District 9 and 10, Kris Swartzendruber presented the Farm Stress program: “Weathering the Storm in Agriculture - How to Cultivate a Productive Mindset” at five Thumb Ag Review meetings in December of 2018, reaching 95 participants at the 2018 Winter Ag Meetings. Kris also presented this program to farmers at a late-planting emergency meeting, held in Memphis, Michigan on June 13, 2019, with over 200 St. Clair County residents at this meeting.

Farmers know how to care for their animals and crops, however they don’t always take the same care in monitoring and managing their own mental and physical health. Weather related issues, commodity prices, financial issues, etc. make stress especially palpable for the farmers in the Thumb area.

MSU Extension puts a high emphasis on making sure farmers care for their own health and wellness. The Farm Stress program provides information and resources to help farmers, their families and those who work with farmers to identify the signs and symptoms of stress, provide healthy strategies to help manage stress and outside resources for additional help.

## Stress Less with Mindfulness

Kris Swartzendruber, Extension Educator for Social Emotional Health, conducted two Stress Less with Mindfulness series in St. Clair County. The first series was held at the Disabled American Veterans building, in Port Huron, on September 20 – October 18, 2018 for 17 veterans and their family members. The second series was held at the McLaren Port Huron Karmanos Center, in Port Huron, on May 7 – June 11, 2019 for 19 patients and their family members.

Mindfulness means paying attention to the present moment without judgement. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression, physical tension, and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes. By offering alternative ways of relating to everyday life experiences, including thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and events, Stress Less with Mindfulness teaches and encourages the use of mindfulness self-care skills to help one feel better and enjoy life.

The following are testimonials and comments from the participants that took this series:

“The class was helpful in getting me to live in the present.”

“I would recommend this class because it can positively change things in you and how you react.”

“This class was enlightening!”

# Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



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## 2019 Michigan Sea Grant Program

Michigan Sea Grant is a program of MSU Extension and the University of Michigan that fosters economic growth and protection of Michigan's coastal Great Lakes resources with support from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

## Aquatic Invasive Species Education

Sea Grant programs for aquatic invasive species (AIS) focused on education and outreach programs at various locations throughout the county. This past year, the program educated nearly 400 participants at the Port Huron Sturgeon Festival and 25 participants at the MI Paddle Stewards workshop held in Clay Twp on August 10, 2019. Participants learned about AIS threats to biodiversity and what they could do to help stop the spread of these invaders.

## Safe and Sustainable Fisheries

Each year, Sea Grant educators facilitate fisheries workshops across the state of Michigan. These workshops are intended to bring together anglers with fisheries managers and other subject matter experts to provide information about the status and trends of fishing in the Great Lakes and connecting waters. The southeast Michigan fishery workshop covering the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River and western Lake Erie, took place in April with 36 people attending.

## Great Lakes Education Program

This classroom and vessel-based experience focuses on the Great Lakes resources including the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The program includes segments that integrate history, geography, physical and biological sciences, math, literature and the arts to increase student interest in natural resources and encourage understanding of their role as environmental stewards. The first phase of the program begins in the classroom with teachers utilizing the GLEP curriculum which includes activities that focus on water, land, people and life. These activities are designed to familiarize students with the Great Lakes and the ecosystems. The second phase of the program is a field experience aboard a fifty-foot Coast Guard certified ship which is converted into a floating classroom.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture

MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise in:

Animal Welfare Dairy Management

**Marianne Buza,**  
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## “Happy Cows Live in Michigan “

“Happy Cows Live in Michigan” was the 2019 dairy team winter program. This half-day program included 6 topics. This program discussed finding low-cost solutions to improve productivity. The program was designed for dairy farm owners and managers; the program discussed the latest research and strategies to improve efficiency with animal welfare in mind. Topics included: the importance of continual improvement in efficiency, heat stress and its implications, the impact of stocking density on health and profitability, strategies to maintain a stable rumen, and calf and heifer management for improved well-being and profit.

The 14 farms who participated in the *Impact of Various Cooling Systems on Cow Comfort and Production Efficiency on Michigan Dairy Farms* project received individual farm reports. Research findings were shared at the winter meeting, “Happy Cows Live in Michigan”, after the project was completed.

The “Happy Cows Live in Michigan” program had 6 locations, including one location in Bad Axe and 40 participants. The survey asked the participant to indicate the level of increase in their knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= low, 5 = high) and the average for the program was 3.9. Changes that farms were going to make were improving labor efficiency, reevaluating feeding procedures, stocking density, heifer culling, calf nutrition, improve rumen stability, calf nutrition, and colostrum testing, and decrease heat stress with more fans, better airflow and wind speed.

## Thumb Dairy Odyssey

Thumb Dairy Odyssey Days completed its 8th and 9th events. The first event took place in the summer of 2016. This continues to be a unique event that is pulling youth from all over the state to learn about dairy. This year’s events were organized with the help of 4-Hers Milan Forrester and Annie Bowman. This event took place on Saturdays June 22 and July 13 this summer. These youth were able to go to 2 different local dairy farms and learn about animal science, agriculture and most importantly, some of the career possibilities they present. Many farms across the state of Michigan struggle to find those who want to work on farms or work in agribusiness. These youth were also encouraged to try showing animals at fair or attending events like dairy days at MSU. This year, **over 80 people** attended these events.



Youth learning show techniques

# Supporting Food and Agriculture

MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise in:

- Food Safety
- HACCP Plans
- Product Quality
- Beef Quality Assurance
- Meat Cutter Training Course
- Chronic Wasting Disease resources for meat processors
- USDA Grant of Inspection

**Dr. Jeannine Schwehofer**

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Dr. Schwehofer instructing at Project RED

## Beef Feedlot Education and Networking

Cattle feeders and producers from throughout the Thumb attended a summer picnic hosted at a St. Clair County beef feedlot. The event was held to allow cattle producers to network, tour the host farm, learn about vaccination types and importance, and share MSU Extension research and updates. It occurred on August 8, 2018, at Lewis Farms, North Street, Michigan. There were 91 cattle producers in attendance. An industry speaker and event sponsor spoke on the importance of vaccinations. Additionally, Elizabeth Frey, graduate student at Michigan State University, shared a project overview of her on-farm research that is being done at Lewis Farms "Utilizing White Blood Cell Counts to Improve Response to Antibiotics and Reduce Prevalence of Bovine Respiratory Disease". Dr. Schwehofer organized the event, gave an update with various Extension programs, promoted upcoming Beef Quality Assurance trainings and the buyer requirements that are occurring related to BQA training.

Additional programming related to feedlot production was conducted by MSU Extension in the Thumb, from July 2018 to June 2019. There were 87 participants that attended those programs from Huron, Lapeer, Macomb, Sanilac, St. Clair and Tuscola counties. Topics included industry trends and statistics on beef carcasses, injected vitamin supplement at vaccination time, Enogen corn and the impact of feeding it, the impact of dairy beef calf rearing on feedlot performance and carcass quality, corn silage, emerging technologies to assess health of incoming cattle, summaries of feedlot research, U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and benefits of it to the feedlot industry, research findings to reduce the prevalence of bovine respiratory disease, feedlot enterprise economics, and outlook for corn and beef prices.

## St. Clair County Project RED

There were 680 fourth graders from throughout St. Clair County that participated in the Project Rural Education Day (RED) with St. Clair County Farm Bureau at the Goodells County Park. The event is held to educate youth about agriculture, agricultural practices, and how food is raised. MSU Extension staff provided programming at this event including hands-on interactive demonstrations. Dr. Schwehofer provided education related to beef production and Lori Warchuck and Lianne Allen provided programming related to honey bees.

## Meat Processor Assistance

Food safety is a critical component to producing safe and wholesome food. Meat processors in St. Clair County regularly receive technical assistance from MSU Extension. This includes assistance with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Specialized Retail Meat Processing Variance, and general food safety and processing.

# Supporting Food and Agriculture

Beef Quality Assurance provides consumers with assurance that beef producers are properly caring for animals and providing a safe and wholesome product. BQA certification provides producers with more market outlets and greater profitability.

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BQA meetings are well  
attended

## Beef Quality Assurance Certification

Michigan State University Extension Educators and Specialist have conducted Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certification programs for 1,437 beef producers from across the state of Michigan. Certified producers will continue to have full market access in private bids and through auction yards. Most producers trained were first-time certifications. In St. Clair County, there were 30 producers certified by MSU Extension. In addition to in-person certification meetings, 1,641 producers from throughout Michigan certified online at <https://www.bqa.org/>.

Cargill Inc. and Tyson Foods announced in early 2018 that they would require producers be certified in the BQA program in order for them to buy cattle from those producers starting January 1, 2019. Cargill and Tyson make up a major part of the finished beef cattle harvest capacity in the United States. Producers that eliminate them from the bidding pool are likely to receive severe discounts for their finished cattle.

The BQA program has been instrumental in improving beef quality in the United States since its inception over 45 years ago. However, while producers have learned much of the BQA concepts through an educational process, relatively few producers have taken the time and effort to become certified.

Educators and specialists conducted 28 certification programs across Michigan from September 2018 – June 2019. Each session consisted of a presentation and followed with a 15-question test. Producers needed to obtain 80% correct to achieve certification. Certified producers received a unique certification number and certificate that is valid for 3 years.

In early 2019, reports from Michigan auction yards indicate that producers that were not certified received heavy discounts as compared to cattle being sold by certified producers. Consequently, Michigan producers are finding important economic value to the certification program. A total of 3,078 beef producers certified in Beef Quality Assurance from Michigan between July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 via in-person and online trainings.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture

Serving the State of Michigan.

**Phil Kaatz**

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and Field Crops

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## Delayed Planting Informational Meeting

During the 2019 planting season, farmers were faced with one of the most challenging years in history. Most of the farmers in the area had either nothing or a small percentage of their crops planted by June 15, which is usually the end of the planting season.

In response to a call for help from a local St. Clair County farmer, Jim Domagalski, MSU Extension Field Crops Educator, Phil Kaatz, organized a meeting within five days to address the concerns of local farmers. The meeting was held at the Holy Family Parish in Memphis, MI. Over 200 attended and packed the fellowship hall to hear experts discuss strategies for their rain-soaked fields that included marketing and commodity prices; possible crop yields and strategies; prevented planted acres; possible aid from United States Department of Ag (USDA) and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

Experts included elected officials Senator Dan Lauwers and representatives from US Congressman Paul Mitchell were present to discuss what resources were available from our government partners.

The following agenda topics and experts discussed:

Cropping-Planting Options – Phil Kaatz, MSU Extension

Marketing Your Crop – Dr. Jim Hilker, MSU Extension Marketing Economist

Crop Insurance Considerations – Marc Reinhardt, Farm Bureau

Finance/Banking considerations – Greenstone Farm Credit

Farm Stress Resources – Kris Swartzendruber, MSU Extension

Farm Policy Options – Travis Fahley, Director District 6, Michigan Farm Bureau



Senator Dan Lauwers addresses the participants



# Supporting Food and Agriculture



“It’s the first thing in the morning and there’s a lot of information I can use. It’s easy to access and easy to see and it’s relevant to the work I do every day.”

Ron Beier, St. Clair County farmer

“It’s a great idea and I’ve learned a lot from the sessions.”

Andrew Calcaterra, County Executive Director, Lapeer County Farm Service Agency

## Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series

Every Thursday during the growing season, farmers were able to access the most current information available for timely, relevant in-season crop and weather information from MSUE Field Crops Specialists and Extension Educators. Each 30-minute meal was divided into 15-minute segments for crop information and weather. This innovative approach using technology has provided growers from every region of the state the opportunity to participate in a live webinar via their computer, laptop, or cell phone. Each participant was able to ask questions of the specialists and educators during the live sessions.



The Virtual Breakfast Series is a result of a focus group that included young farmers asking for opportunities to have fast-paced, video or Internet based, and unbiased research information during critical times of the spring and summer.

A wide range of topics was planned according to the seasonal issues that frequently occur at specific times. However, the series was flexible, adaptable, and had the ability to change quickly and effectively when unexpected issues arose.

One of the unexpected issues for 2019 was the lengthy planting delays for all crop producers. The MSU Extension Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute provided a “Delayed Planting” webpage due to these widespread weather delays throughout Michigan.

The Virtual Breakfast Series provided the initial discussions concerning delayed planting and responded to the need to have additional crop management, crop insurance, and risk management options for growers. The recorded sessions were included on the Delayed Planting Resources webpage along with other timely topics to assist growers. In an effort to reach a wide, diverse audience, each weeks’ session was close-captioned for the hearing impaired. A link to each week’s recording was included in the weekly MSU Extension Field Crops Production email digest that goes out to 4,476 subscribers.

This was an example of how the MSUE Field Crops Team was able to provide information at the right time with an unscheduled topic.

	Zoom participants:	YouTube video views:	Facebook posts w/ embedded video	Views	Likes/comments/shares
Totals to date:	862	1,248	6,108	2,321	91
Average/session	50.7	73.4	359.3	136.5	5.4

## Extension Professionals Serving St. Clair County

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### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving St. Clair County:

Full listing of Extension Staff at [canr.msu.edu/outreach/experts](http://canr.msu.edu/outreach/experts)

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**MSU Extension toll free line is 1-888-678-3464**

**DISTRICT 10 ADVISORY BOARD for Counties  
Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, St. Clair and Tuscola**

Melanie McCoy	Huron	Kevin Watkins	St. Clair
Carl Osentoski	Huron	Phil Pavlov	St. Clair
Clark Brock	Huron	Don Fletcher	St. Clair
Lourdes Emke	Lapeer	Jim Will	Tuscola
Karen Aboukarroum	Lapeer	Dave Rupprecht	Tuscola
Samantha White	Lapeer	Gene Harrington	Tuscola
Melissa Anderson	Sanilac		
Ryan Rich	Sanilac		
Bill Sarkella	Sanilac		

**What is the Purpose of the Advisory Board?**

The Michigan State University Extension District 10 Advisory Board purpose is as follows:

**Advocacy:** Intentionally informing residents and elected officials about the achievements of MSU Extension as well as the educational capabilities and partnership opportunities available

**Vision:** Providing MSU Extension with key insights pertaining to your geographic and socio/economic areas of residence, employment and volunteerism

**Pathways:** Using your influence to open doors for potential partners/customers/collaborators of MSU Extension for the purpose of growing influence and bettering communities

**Needs Identification:** Providing insight into areas of deficiency or opportunity in which MSU Extension educational programing can address and benefit residents

**Mentoring:** Providing honest, constructive feedback to the MSU Extension District Director on methods of enhancing personal and organizational engagement, involvement and effectiveness

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MSU Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan's economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information needed to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower our children to succeed. It is the mission of MSU Extension to help people improve their lives through an education process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. MSU Extension meets this mission by providing Extension programs in the following subject matter areas:

- ◆ Agriculture & Agribusiness
- ◆ Children & Youth Development, including 4-H
- ◆ Health & Nutrition
- ◆ Community, Food and Environment

**MISSION:**

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

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