



# Barry County 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS



\$12,253,236 total economic impact in Barry County



1,776 youth participated in 4-H and youth development programs



544 adults and youth benefited from health and nutrition programs



MSU Extension website received 6,754 visits from Barry County residents, 75% first-time visitors



Barry County students received \$2,831,161 in financial aid from MSU

100

MSU Extension has served Barry County over 100 years

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Barry County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Barry County residents need it most.



This year, we've also welcomed Barry County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

We're passionate about serving Barry County and are looking forward to a new year. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Erin Moore, District 7 Director

## CONTACT



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Michigan State University Extension



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# Program Highlights

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MSU Extension is here to assist farmers, families and individuals with issues such as succession & estate planning, budgets, and cost production.

## FARM MANAGEMENT

Jon LaPorte, Farm Business Educator with MSU Extension, serves Barry County farmers. His main area of focus is in farm management, with an emphasis on farm business analysis, business transition, income tax education, and general farm business management topics such as economics of technologies and return on investment. In 2018, Jon worked with area farmers on issues such as new tax law and doing re-evaluations of current tax strategies being used on the farm. After discussing management strategies, the final estimated tax analysis was reduced significantly, resulting in a combined tax savings of \$216,105 for these farms. This impacted the job retention of an estimated 109 employees with the combined payroll for these farms at \$4,427,348.



Extension Master Gardener stops to take a closer look at a plant.

## CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Ever wonder what plants are best for your garden? Or how to keep them alive? Around 170 Barry County residents have utilized the Smart Gardening Education through MSU Extension. The Consumer Horticulture team of educators keeps Michigan gardeners informed about environmentally friendly ways to garden through programs and resources such as the Master Gardener Program, Ask an Expert online resource, the gardening hotline, and education at different conferences. Through these statewide initiatives, MSU Extension is able to maximize impact and deliver science-based gardening practices and provide gardeners increased accessibility to all of the Extension resources.



Spartan Barley has made a comeback in Michigan.

## SPARTAN BARLEY

On October 3rd, 2018, Dr. Russ Feed and Dr. Dean Bass hosted a conference at Kellogg Biological Center, with over 30 Barry County residents in attendance, about Spartan Barley. Entitled “Dessert with Discussion: The comeback of Spartan Barley for the Michigan Brewing Industry”, the workshop covered how the 1916 barley was brought back to life in 2016, why barley is a good fit for Michigan, some of the challenges associated with its comeback and current research projects on both winter and spring barley. Check out the presentation on YouTube: <http://www.kbs.msu.edu/dessert-discussion-live-stream/>

# Program Highlights

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

According to Mental Health America, over 40 million adult Americans have a mental health condition. MSU Extension has a team of educators and staff dedicated to raising awareness of mental health illnesses, reducing stigma surrounding them and providing resources through evidence based research. Holly Tiret, Social and Emotional Educator, helps Barry County families and children become socially and emotionally healthy so they can lead satisfying and productive lives. She also works to provide resources and training to medical professionals. In 2018, Holly led the Mindful Laughter training presented to the Barry County area Hospice Volunteers as part of the Stress Less with Mindfulness program.



MSU Extension offers many resources to decrease the stigma associated with mental health illnesses and raise awareness about tools and resources to stay mentally healthy.

## MSU WATER PROGRAMS

In 2018, Barry County residents participated in a variety of water programs including the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program, the Michigan Inland Lakes Convention, and Botany classes on Aquatic Plants. Additionally, MSU Extension recruited Barry/Eaton County representation to serve on the Michigan Water School Statewide Advisory Council. The group is working to identify local, statewide, and/or emerging water issues, provide advice for the program, including but not limited to: future direction, local target audience need, program content and structure, and priorities, where the program is needed, review evaluation feedback, identify program resources, and promote and advocate for the program.



MSU Extension hosts a variety of programs around natural resources, and water quality.

## HEALTHY EATING HABITS

MSU Extension understands the importance of creating healthy eating habits early on. One way to do this is to make sure that children are exposed to a variety of fruits and vegetables. Erika Garner, Barry County based Health & Nutrition Instructor, provided this opportunity to a group of youth at the Sue Drummond Head Start school. To create excitement, the group did a mystery bag game where they were able to feel a fruit or vegetable and then guess what it was. After, they tasted two of the mystery vegetables, carrots and radishes. While all the children had carrots before for many it was their first time trying a radish. They all took a brave bit and many said they liked it!



A favorite quote from a youth at the Sue Drummond Head Start was, "I'm going to ask my mom to try a radish!"

# Program Highlights



Intermediate Show of Champions participants and winners at the 2018 fair.

## BARRY COUNTY FAIR

Nearly 900 4-H Youth participate in the annual Barry County Fair programs through 45 different 4-H Cubs. The 2018 Barry County Fair was supported by 250 adult volunteers and 70 teen volunteers who worked to make the event a successful one. In 2018, the livestock auction generated nearly \$800,000 in sales, which demonstrates the economic impact that 4-H programs can have for families and communities. There are also numerous social benefits that come from being part of the 4-H community. The Barry County 4-H program helps to prepare our future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for youth development. From the local club experience to the statewide workshops and events, all youth have the chance to participate and develop skills that last a lifetime.



Youth pose with the Ag Awareness Day at the Barry County Expo Center.

## AG AWARENESS DAY

Barry County 4-H partnered with Barry County Farm Bureau, and the Expo Center to host Ag Awareness Day with the Thornapple Kellogg School District Third Graders. Over 500 youth spent the day learning about agriculture. 25 4-H teen leaders were recruited to bring their animals in and give presentations on animal science to the classes which included presentations on poultry, ducks & geese, rabbits, beef, dairy feeders, goats, sheep, swine and dogs. Not only was this an opportunity for the younger youth to learn about agriculture, but also another way that 4-H works with their teen leaders to develop speaking and leadership skills.



"Just Nature" SPIN club on a walk around the Pierce Cedar Creek grounds.

## JUST NATURE "SPIN" CLUB

Barry County 4-H and Pierce Cedar Creek Institute partnered to create a SPIN Club called "Just Nature!". Ellen Holste, the Program Coordinator at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, served as the club leader. She coordinated the hands-on activities so the youth can explore all that nature has to offer. A 4-H SPIN club is a special interest club where five or more young people get together to learn about a topic of interest. The SPIN club model provides increased flexibility in when and how long groups meet. Through their SPIN club experience, youth learn by doing as they build, create, explore, make, discover, test, plan, cut, estimate, experiment, experience, measure, draw and so much more!

# Program Highlights

## CULINARY ARTS

Laura Anderson, Disease Prevention Educator, partnered with 4-H staff to offer the Garden Row to Café Table – Culinary arts program. 12 youth participated in a series of 8 learning sessions harvesting and using vegetables grown in the culinary garden about garden harvesting, food safety, cross contamination, and kitchen etiquette. Each week they were presented with nutrition education centered around the veggies grown and used. A highlight of the program was serving 80 guests at a plated dinner where they had the opportunity to plan the menu, feature the vegetables they had grown, run table service and learn how to present an attractive plate. A great experience for all involved!



Youth work with Chef Justin of Seasonal Grill to plate dinners at the local Flavor Fest Dinner.

## 4-H TEEN LEADERSHIP

Growing leadership skills in teens is a key focus for 4-H Program Coordinators Melinda Pepper and Kathy Pennington. Through structured 4-H projects, teen leaders gain a variety of skills to help them become successful in communication, teamwork and organization. One such project was the “4-H Rocks” campaign. The Barry County Teen Leaders Group met to paint rocks, develop a plan for where they would hide the rocks, followed by a rock-hiding venture into the community. The rocks directed people to the Teen Leadership Facebook page. From the Facebook page, people were directed to go to the MSU Extension office for a prize and more information about 4-H. Rocks were then placed back into the community for others to find!



Barry County 4-H teen leaders meet and collaborate on their “4-H Rocks” campaign.

## SCIENCE NIGHT

The MSU Extension 4-H program facilitates opportunities that encourage learners of all ages to make observations and to ask questions while exploring their world and learning about their world. Melinda Pepper, Barry County 4-H Program Coordinator, participated in the Community “Science Night” at the local library. There were 134 youth and 91 adults that visited the MSU Extension booth to learn about the life-cycle of a bean seed. Participants learned about science and how to get involved in 4-H. They were able to color a bean at the table and make a “living necklace” from a dampened cotton ball, a bean, a small Ziploc, and a string to wear it. Participants also received a booklet with directions for growing the bean.



MSU Extension “bean” booth at the Community Science Night, hosted at the local library.

# Featured County Story



The MSU Extension Tasting Garden raises awareness about how to grow healthy fruits and vegetables and eat healthy.

**The MSU Extension Taste Gardens** currently include four raised garden beds located next to the MSU Extension building in Barry County. The gardens are bordered with donated brick and mulched around the outside of the garden beds. The gardens represent a place for community members, families and visitors to see the growing process of vegetables and have the opportunity to pick and taste. A variety of uncommon vegetables were planted along with various methods of planting that included square foot gardening and container gardening. Small, yellow pear-shaped tomatoes, popcorn, German-striped tomatoes, Brussel sprouts and lemon cucumbers were a few of the tasty produce planted and harvested.

**The Pilot Program:** This pilot program began in the later spring of 2018 as a collaboration across two MS Extension institutes, Health and Nutrition and Children and Youth Development. The idea was sparked by multiple local and internal goals such as the Blue Zones Project, the Food Forest project, the local Farmer's Market and the MSU Extension Health Initiative. As MSU Extension staff, we practice what we preach! MSU Extension encourages each county office to incorporate a health initiative to create an atmosphere or environment for MSU Extension staff and community to have the opportunity to implement lifestyle choices that promote a healthier way of living. Barry County has implemented the taste gardens to be a way to provide staff a way to release stress, move more and enjoy fresh produce.

**The result:** MSU Extension increased awareness of stakeholders, community leaders and Blue Zones officials on the location and idea behind the Tasting Gardens. Educator Laura Anderson reflects on one experience, "Upon working in the gardens on a Farmer's Market day, there were three families that stopped by the gardens on their way to or from the market. Two of the families were fathers with their children and the other was an individual with physical limitations. One of the fathers shared that he brought his kids to the garden all summer when they came to stay with him every other weekend. They enjoyed the yellow tomatoes the most! Another father was hesitant to try anything from the garden and seemed to share that same sense of hesitation with his children. When asked if he would like to try something, he quickly refused. As I walked away, I noticed that he asked his children if they would like to try something. His children were very hesitant but dad offered them a tomato and encouraged them to try it. And they did!" Overall, this project can be a model for continued awareness around where our food comes from, and healthy eating.



## MSU Extension staff located in Barry County

Laura Anderson	Disease Prevention Educator	Extension #5	ander359@msu.edu
Erika Garner	Nutrition Training Coordinator	Extension #7	prineeri@msu.edu
Wendy Hunt	Office Manager	Extension #8	blakel13@msu.edu
Erin Moore	District 7 Director	734-717-0917	mooree16@msu.edu
Kathy Pennington	4-H Program Coordinator	Extension #2	pennin25@msu.edu
Whitney Pennington	AmeriCorps 4-H SPIN	Extension #1093	penni102@msu.edu
Melinda Pepper	4-H Program Coordinator	Extension #6	pepperm3@msu.edu

## Additional MSU Extension staff serving Barry County

Jan Brinn	Youth Development Educator	269-673-0370	brinn@msu.edu
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Garrett Ziegler	Community Foods Educator	616-608-7436	zieglerg@msu.edu

# Collaboration Across MSU Extension

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MSU Extension is an organization comprised of individuals with broad knowledge of subject matters related to a particular discipline, such as field crops, nutrition, or youth development. Having four MSU Extension Institutes gives the ability to bring together cross-disciplinary expertise to address issues that are multifaceted and complex. For example, MSU Extension Educators and Program Instructors have worked together on physical and financial health issues, agricultural and stress issues, economic, community development and conservation issues, and issues that span generations.

Your local office is housed with experts in particular fields. Individuals may serve in the Agricultural and Agribusiness Institute, the Children and Youth Institute, the Health and Nutrition Institute or our Community, Food and Environment Institute. However, even if you do not have a local expert for the issue that you need addressed, MSU Extension has the unique functionality of drawing from a statewide pool of experts to make sure that you have the information that you need. In addition, the MSU Extension website [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu) is maintained and updated on a regular basis. We are always looking for ways to collaborate with each other to apply knowledge to the critical issues you face.

**Through successful partnership and collaboration with Barry County, MSU Extension is able to continue its local presence and to provide vital educational resources and programming in such areas as community and economic development, agriculture, land use, health and nutrition, and youth development.**

**Thank you Barry County!**

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**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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