



UP Ag Connections

725 Greenland Road, Ontonagon, MI 49953

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Published Monthly

NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Warren Schauer recently announced his retirement effective October 31. Over the years, Warren has been the model of excellence as an extension educator with Michigan State University both here in the U.P. and across the state. As I think about my experience of working with Warren, three things come to mind: his attention to detail, his tireless work ethic and his ability to communicate farm business management concepts with farmers. Those characteristics are going to be hard to find. I'll share that both Jim Isleib and I are concerned about who is going to ensure that the details are taken care of in our extension programming efforts.

After I first talked with Warren about his decision, I started thinking about my thoughts of coworker retirements back in my younger days. It didn't seem like that big of a deal. People move on every day. Now that I have some years on me, you develop relationships and actually see the impact they make, I also remember when Ben (Bartlett) retired, I felt the same way. I wanted to feel good for him entering a new phase of his life. But selfish me wanted everything to stay the same. I knew there would be a void that would never be filled. Of course this is a bit different. Michigan State University is committed to filling Warren's position. Regardless, we'll never be able to replace Warren.

There will be an open house to honor Warren at the Delta County Extension Office (details below). I hope you will all use this opportunity show Warren your appreciation for his dedication and service.

Also inside on page 3 you'll find details to information sharing sessions that will be conducted at three locations across the U.P. with the leadership of the College of Ag and Natural Resources at Michigan State University. Fred Poston, dean of CANR, Doug Buhler, director of MSU AgBioResearch, Tom Coon, director of MSU Extension and Kelly Millenbah, associate dean and director of academic and student affairs will be present to share some of the most recent changes at MSU and their vision for the future. They'll also be there to listen to your thoughts for the direction Michigan State University should be moving to grow agriculture across the state. ~Frank

You are invited to an . . .

Open House In Honor of Retiring MSU Extension Educator

WARREN SCHAUER

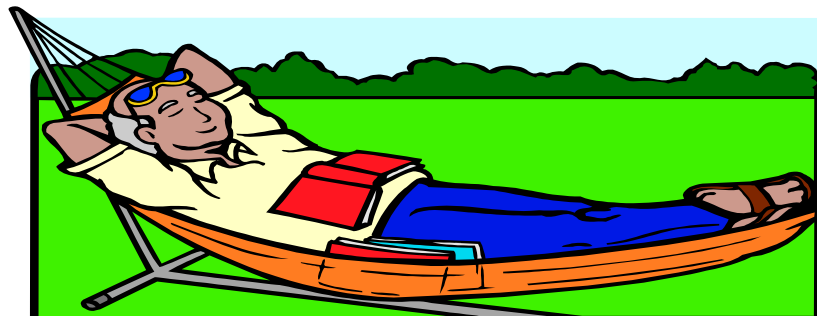
Friday, October 18, 3:00—6:00 p.m.

Delta County MSU Extension Office

2840 College Avenue, Escanaba

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MARKET REPORT (9/20/13)

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Market Ready Prices

Choice Steers	\$100-\$125	per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$100-\$116	per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$65-\$70	per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$110-\$130	per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$67-\$85	per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$80-\$110	per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$100-\$150	per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1400 - 1800 per head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$1200 - 1600 per head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$18.10	\$362.00	\$300-424
Soymeal	\$34.28	\$685.50	\$570- 801
Oats	\$19.10	\$382.00	\$260-504
Barley	\$15.40	\$308.00	\$220-396

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

Wanted & For Sale Listings

Personal ads will be removed monthly. We reserve the right to edit your ad. Free ads must be no more than 110 spaces. Please respect the space requirements. You can always purchase an ad if more space is required. Please call or email your ad no later than the 15th of each month. Call the Ontonagon County MSU Extension office at 906-884-4386 or email msue66@msu.edu.

Registered Hereford Cows, 2013 Heifers/Bulls, Cross and females. A.I. Bred for Fall 2013 and Spring 2013. Also, Suffolk ewes and cross lambs for breeding and slaughter. Call 906-635-9538

FREE - Spent Grains -Keweenaw Brewing Co. 18% CP 80% Moisture South Range, MI Call Paul 906-281-1123

Farms and small businesses should provide employees with health care information by Oct. 1

Employers of all sizes should provide their employees with health care information, but will they be penalized for non-compliance? Posted on **September 18, 2013** by **Adam Kantrovich**, Michigan State University Extension

Most farms and small businesses are aware of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and some of its requirements. By January 1, 2014 all individuals are required to carry health care insurance for themselves and their dependents. In just a few weeks health care insurance exchanges (also known as the Health Insurance Marketplaces) come online to allow individuals and small businesses to shop for health care insurance. The Marketplace opens on Oct. 1, 2013 and according to the U.S. Department of [Health and Human Services](#) Michigan residents will use the [HealthCare.gov website](#) to purchase insurance from the Marketplace. Residents can still go through a health insurance agent if they wish but the Marketplace will be available to all individuals and small businesses.

While the individual mandate still begins for the 2014 year the employer requirement to provide health insurance to their full-time employees (for those that have 50 or more FTE's) as of late Sept. 2013, the date has been delayed and will not begin until Jan. 1, 2015. For those employers that must provide healthcare benefits under the ACA, employers that choose not to provide the required coverage for their employees can face severe financial penalties. Employers received a one year reprieve from providing health care insurance to their full-time employees until 2015, but many are unaware that all employers that are subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) should provide their employees with a health care benefits notification by Oct. 1, 2013. Past articles that news media and I have released stated that there could be a fine of up to \$100/per day per employee. There has been a great deal of confusion about the penalty for non-compliance of the employee notification regulation. There is information coming from multiple sources and multiple interpretations of the ACA. Many of the clarifications finally come from Technical Releases by the U.S. agencies/departments involved with the ACA. Unfortunately, many organizations and businesses are preparing to follow the ACA regulations that have caused interpretations of the law and has caused confusion.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor [Technical Release 2013-2](#) posted on May 8, 2013, there is no mention of a penalty but under section II referring to an earlier change it states that "...an applicable employer **must** provide each employee at the time of hiring (or with respect to current employees not later than March 1, 2013)..." The date of which was pushed back and within the May 8, 2013 technical release set the new date to Oct. 1, 2013. Under section III, sub-section D it now states "Employers are **required** to provide the notice to..." All of the phrasing indicates a requirement for all employers to provide notification of their health care benefit rights by Oct. 1, 2014 for current employees and within 14 days of hire for new employees following Oct. 1, 2014. Since this seems to be a requirement of the Affordable Care Act but made no specific stipulation within its specific section of penalties, many attorneys and others felt that one of the other non-compliance penalties would apply being the \$100/per day per employee.

The U.S. Department of Labor clarified the May 8, 2013 Technical Release 2013-2 by a statement on their website through a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page that says "No. If your company is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, it **should** provide a written notice to its employees about the Health Insurance Marketplace by Oct. 1, 2013, but there is no fine or penalty under the law for failing to provide the notice."

Although this may seem like a positive, there is still a lot of anxiety and confusion on whether or not a penalty can be induced as can be seen by many news reports, attorneys and others. [Michigan State University Extension](#) recommends it is safer to err on the side of caution and that employers follow the Oct. 1, 2013 regulation. If an employer is not sure whether they fall under the Fair Labor Standards Act, they should contact their professional legal and/or tax advisors. Again, it's best to err on the side of caution and provide notice to your employees.

The U.S. Dept. of Labor's Fair Labor Standards Act states that "employers that employ one or more employees who are engaged in, or produce goods for, interstate commerce. For most firms, a test of not less than \$500,000 in annual dollar volume of business applies". Healthcare, education, and government agencies may have other or additional requirements. The United States Department of Labor provided a [technical release](#) on their website that discusses an employer notification requirements including:

Providing the employee with information about the Marketplace shop (also known as the Exchange), how to contact the Marketplace, the type of services and how to receive assistance.

Whether the employer provides insurance and if so, will it meet the minimum requirements of the ACA or if the employee will be eligible for a premium tax credit?

That an employee who purchases a qualified health plan through the Marketplace, might lose the employer contribution (if any) to any health benefits plan offered by the employer and that all or a portion of such contribution may be excludable from income for Federal income tax purposes.

The U. S. Department of Labor has provided two sample notification templates that can be used by employers:

one for [employers that do not provide health care benefits](#)

one for [employers that do provide health care benefits](#)

[Spanish versions of the form](#) can also be found on their website or on the [MSU Farm Management website](#).

With the complexity of this act, [Michigan State University Extension](#) reminds employers that it is always a good idea for all businesses to consult with their respective legal advisors to make sure they are meeting the necessary requirements of the Affordable Health Care Act.

For further information please contact me at akantrov@msu.edu or view the [MSU Extension Farm Information Resource Management webpage](#).

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4M1

What's Now? What's Next? A conversation with leaders from the Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Michigan State University is answering the call to help feed a hungry world while respecting the environment, training young people for success, keeping Michigan healthy and helping communities thrive. And we want to hear from you.

Leaders from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR), MSU Extension and AgBioResearch are touring the state to get input from Michigan residents as they plan for the future of agriculture and natural resources at Michigan State University.

Join us to share your thoughts about how the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU Extension and AgBioResearch can continue to move Michigan forward through research, education and outreach.

This is your opportunity to hear from and talk to:

Fred Poston, dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU
Doug Buhler, director of MSU AgBioResearch
Tom Coon, director of MSU Extension
Kelly Millenbah, associate dean academic and student affairs for the CANR

There are three opportunities available to the residents of the Upper Peninsula to participate. .

November 4th 10 am-12 noon CST Iron Mountain at the Antoine Room
November 4th 4 pm-6 pm in EST Marquette at the Ramada Inn
November 5th 6:30-8:30 pm EST Sault Ste Marie at LSSU Cisler Center

For further details and registration information (registration is requested, but not required) visit <http://events.anr.msu.edu/WhatsNowWhatsNext/>

Thanks for considering this tremendous opportunity for folks in the Upper Peninsula to provide input and feedback.

TOGETHER AT THE TABLE

RECIPES FOR A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Tuesday, November 5th-Houghton

8:30 am - 4:30 pm in each location

Wednesday, November 6th-Marquette

A limited number of pre-registration scholarships are available. Call to inquire.

Thursday, November 7th-Sault Ste. Marie

Pre-registration \$15 until Wednesday, October 30th. Registration at the door \$20.

Visit www.upfoodexchange.com or call 906-225-0671 ext. 11
for details and to register.

Special Keynote Speaker



Ken Meter
Crossroads Resource Center

Ken Meter is one of the most experienced food system analysts in the U.S., integrating market analysis, business development, systems thinking, and social concerns. As president of Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis, Meter holds 42 years of experience in inner-city and rural community capacity building. He will discuss his recently completed report of the Upper Peninsula.

Who should attend?

Anyone interested in our local food system...

Farmers/Growers
Restaurants
Schools
Retail Outlets
Hospitals
Economic Developers
Elected Officials
Community Leaders
Everyone who eats!

Topics to Include...

Understanding Community Food Systems
What's up with The U.P. Food Exchange (UPFE)
Regional Food Hub Updates
Latest News from the MI Dept. of Ag & Rural Dev. (MDARD)
Local Food Panel Discussions –
Overcoming Barriers and Results
Future Plans at the MSU U.P. Research & Extension Center
Breakout Discussions on Local Food Issues

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

 Western Upper Peninsula Health Department

U.P. FOOD EXCHANGE
growing local food systems



Proper bunker silo management is key for high quality forage

As corn silage harvest approaches, producers should remember some principles that can be used to help optimize silage quality for their operation.

Posted on **September 3, 2013** by **Phil Kaatz**, Michigan State University Extension

Use of an inoculant - Lactobacillus buchneri

The use of inoculants is one of the tools available for use by silage producers that has lived up to its billing saving the farmer money. When air is introduced into silage at the start of the fermentation process, there is a delay in beneficial bacteria that produce lactic acid. The longer air is allowed to infiltrate the silage, the more you can expect quality to decrease due to undesirable fermentation and a loss in nutritive value. According to Limin Kung, Jr. in "Aerobic Stability of Silage," the aerobic spoilage during storage is responsible for the majority of total dry matter loss in forages and may be as high as 30 to 40 percent.

Lactobacillus buchneri has been used as a silage inoculant to enhance the aerobic stability of silages. When applied at the time of ensiling at the rate of up to 5×10^5 colony-forming units per gram of fresh material, *L. buchneri* has been demonstrated to improve aerobic stability of high moisture corn, corn silage, alfalfa silage and small grain silages relative to untreated controls.

The use of this bacterium is recommended when heating and spoilage are decreasing silage fermentation quality. Using *L. buchneri* has resulted in an increased concentration of acetic acid, thereby reducing the losses of nutrients and decreasing the chances for lowered animal performance.

Limit air, water and oxygen into the silage by sealing properly

When a silo is not sealed properly, air and water can infiltrate the silage and affect both the quality and quantity of silage available. Air allows yeasts and other undesirable microbes to develop. These microbes consume fiber and nutrients, reducing feed value and may also affect forage dry matter intake. Moisture additions dilute acid levels in the silage, which allows the rate of microbial growth to increase dramatically.

To alleviate the negative effects of air and water, the most common method for covering bunker silos has been the use of plastics weighted down by tires.

Recently, the use of oxygen barrier film has been incorporated into the process to seal the silos. The rate of oxygen transmission through the plastic has been reported to be as low as $4 \text{ cc/m}^2/\text{day}$ compared to typical white/black plastic of $1,650 \text{ cc/m}^2/\text{day}$.

A better-managed bunk silo.

Cover the silo right away

Don't delay the process of covering the silo since every day of delay increases the loss of dry matter in silages. Research has shown that the delay in sealing the silo with a plastic barrier resulted in 10 percent higher dry matter losses compared to silos sealed immediately after filling.

For more information, contact Michigan State University Extension educator Phil Kaatz at 810-667-0341 or kaatz@msu.edu.

BEEF MARKETING MEETING

Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. EST at the MSU Extension Office of Delta County, 2840 College Avenue, Escanaba MI. At this meeting, last year's feeder cattle sale to Waukon Iowa, potential December 18th sale to Iowa will be discussed. This meeting is sponsored by the Bay de Noc Beef Producers Association. Anyone interested in learning more about marketing feeder cattle to Iowa is welcome to attend. For more information contact John Rappette, President, Bay de Noc Beef Producers Association at 906-399-5510.

Special Feeder Cattle Sales

Clare County Livestock: October 3, November 7 and December 5, Starting at 1:00 PM

United Producers, St Louis: October 4, November 1 and December 6, 1:00 PM

Northern Michigan Livestock: October 11, October 25, November 8 and December 13, 1:00 PM

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Why does apple fruit drop prematurely?

There's more going on than simply gravity when apples fall prematurely.

Posted on **September 11, 2013** by **Amy Irish-Brown**, Phil Schwallier, Bill Shane and Bob Tritten, Michigan State University Extension

Unexpected apple drop just prior to harvest is a serious threat for some varieties grown in Michigan. We have some tools to help prevent premature apple drop such as NAA and Retain, but [Michigan State University Extension](#) will go over some of the *reasons* for premature drop. All apple cultivars have some fruit drop as they move through the ripening process. Some varieties, such as McIntosh, are very prone to pre-harvest fruit drop. This problem is exasperated when fruits are left to hang for better red color to meet market demands and fruit drop often occurs when waiting for red color to develop.

As apples begin to ripen they produce large amounts of ethylene, the ripening hormone. Ethylene stimulates softening of fruits and the formation of an abscission layer in the stem. Ethylene enhances the production of enzymes that break down the cell walls and the complex sugars that hold cell walls together in the abscission zone of the stem. As these glue-like substances break down, they leave the fruit connected only by the vascular strands, which are easily broken.

The role of ethylene is well understood by commercial apple growers. There are other stress factors that might come into play with pre-harvest apple drop and can be related to the severity of drop from one year to the next. These include orchard and climatic factors such as fruit load, nutrition imbalance, summer pruning, insect or disease issues, water and weather extremes during the growing season.

Fruit load. A large crop of a short-stemmed apple variety, particularly those that set in clusters, will "push off" each other close to harvest. Good, early season thinning, especially reducing clustered fruits, will help prevent this type of drop. When fruit are pushed off, it stimulates ethylene which can cause even more pre-mature drop in fruits remaining on the tree.

Tree nutrition and soil type. Drop is often worse in orchards where soils have incorrect nutrient levels, in particular low magnesium (Mg), high potassium (K) and high boron (B). Also, the variations in soil type can play a part. For instance, sandy areas will ripen early and drop ahead of heavier soil types.

Summer pruning. Pre-harvest drop can be more severe in orchards that are heavily summer-pruned. It is thought that this problem is likely associated with a limitation or deficit of carbohydrate supply from too many leaves being removed, especially younger, more functional leaves. Drop will be increased if pruning reduces the leaf to fruit ratio below 20:1.

Insects and mites. When leaf-infecting insects are high in number, they can reduce the Photosynth ate produced by leaves. This limits carbohydrate availability and can lead to pre-mature fruit drop.

Water availability. Pre-harvest drop is more severe in dry seasons, where irrigation is not available.

Growing season temperatures. Some apple varieties are affected by hot temperatures more than others, particularly in the early formation of ethylene which promotes early drop.

Harvest season weather and cultivar characteristics. Windy weather close to harvest also impacts fruit drop and can be worse in some varieties, especially those naturally prone to drop. Below is a summary of some varietal characteristic when it comes to drop.

Less prone

- Akane, Empire, Gala, Gingergold, Goldrush, Fuji, Idared, Jonathan, Jonamac, Paulared, Pinova and Sabina

Intermediate

- Blondee, Braeburn, Cameo, Cortland and Jonagold

More prone

- Arlet (Swiss Gourmet), Autumn Gold, Early Golden, Honeycrisp, Jerseymac, Lodi, Golden Delicious, Golden Supreme, Gravenstein, Hampshire, Liberty, Lodi, McIntosh, Princess, Pristine, Spartan, Red Delicious, Stayman and Zestar

Alone, each of these factors can influence pre-mature drop to some degree, however, when they occur in combinations, severe drop can be the result. This is especially true in very drop-prone varieties such as McIntosh. Every grower knows his or her own blocks best including those that tend to have a history with early drop. Perhaps looking a little more closely at some of the other factors mentioned above can also help prevent early apple drop from occurring.

For more detailed reading, read the following sources:

[Factors Affecting Preharvest Fruit Drop of Apples](#), Daniel Lee Ward, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

[The Physiology of Apple Pre-harvest Fruit Drop](#), Terence Robinson, Cornell University

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI.



October 2013 - FSA News

FALL CERTIFICATION DEADLINE – NOVEMBER 15, 2012

Producers Take Notice – All Perennial Forage (Hay and Pasture), Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains need to be certified for the 2014 growing season by NOVEMBER 15, 2013.

ATTENTION PRODUCERS!! - 2013 Production Due

Your 2013 production is needed!! All field visits and crop appraisals need to be completed as soon as possible. Turn your production into the FSA office.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and represent all constituents. This means that minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for underrepresented groups. County Committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 4, 2013. The last day to return completed ballots to the USDA Service Center is Dec. 2, 2013.

NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) INSURANCE DEADLINES

Has a natural disaster like drought, excessive rain, or high winds caused crop losses or prevented planting? Did this impact your bottom line? Crops not insurable under Risk Management Agency CAT Crop Insurance are covered under NAP and can be purchased for \$250 per crop and a maximum of \$750 per county!

To qualify for administrative service fee waiver, a limited resource producer must have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4, or less than 50% of the county median household in both the previous 2 years. Limited resource producer status can be determined using a web site available through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool through the National Resource and Conservation Service at www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tols.asp. Please note that limited resource producers are required to recertify limited resource producer status annually.

THE NEXT DEADLINE for purchasing your 2014 policy is: December 1, 2013 - Honey & Maple Sap

FARM SAFETY

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand, it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped. The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing. These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged. FSA wants all farmers to have a productive crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

NAP LOSS FILING

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (Notice of Loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

GREAT INTEREST RATES:

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Remember: these loans are now available for Hay/Forage Storage as well as traditional grain storage!

September Interest Rates:

- 2.000 percent for 7 years with a loan of \$100,000 or less
- 2.625 percent for 10 years with a loan of \$100,000 - \$250,000
- 2.875 percent for 12 years with a loan of \$250,000 - \$500,000

Contact your local FSA county office for October's interest rates



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Meetings & Events Calendar

October

- 3rd Clare County Special Feeder Cattle Sales
4th United Producers Special Feeder Cattle Sales
11th Northern Michigan Livestock Special Feeder Cattle Sales

Registered Maine
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16th 6:30 p.m. EST Beef Marketing Meeting at Delta County MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, MI

18th 3:00—6:00 pm Open House in Honor of Retiring MSU Extension Educator Warren Schauer—Delta County MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, MI

November

What's Now? What's Next? A conversation with leaders from the Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

There are three opportunities available to the residents of the Upper Peninsula to participate. .

November 4th 10 am-12 noon CST Iron Mountain at the Antoine Room

November 4th 4 pm-6 pm in EST Marquette at the Ramada Inn

November 5th 6:30-8:30 pm EST Sault Ste Marie at LSSU Cislser Center

Together at the table—Recipes for a Sustainable Local Food System Call 906-225-0671 X11 to register for one of sessions below

November 5th Houghton 8:30 am—4:30 pm

November 6th Marquette 8:30 am—4:30 pm

November 7th Sault Ste. Marie 8:30 am—4:30 pm

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