

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center 2019 Strategic Planning Report



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September 25th, 2019

Introduction

On August 9th, 2019 thirty MSU faculty (4), staff (19) and stakeholders (7) attended a strategic planning meeting to identify priorities for the next five years of work at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (UPREC) in Chatham, MI. Invited participants included members of MSU AgBioResearch and Extension Administration, UPREC faculty coordinators and on-site staff, the UPREC Advisory Council, as well as other MSU AgBioResearch and Extension staff based in the UP. The meeting was facilitated by MSU Extension Government and Community Vitality Educator, Brad Neumann.

Prior to the meeting, a online survey using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and Needs, Wants, Wishes models for strategic planning was administered to collect input from the general public and stakeholders who could not attend the meeting. The Survey included nine open-ended questions and captured 38 anonymous responses. Survey data was coded by UPREC Director, James DeDecker, and presented to participants at the strategic planning meeting to inform their conversation. The coded survey data is included as an appendix to this report.

The meeting opened with an interactive activity where participants were asked to list significant dates/events on a large paper timeline of UPREC history. This was followed by individual introductions where participants introduced themselves, their connection to UPREC, and described the important events that they added to the timeline. This was followed by a presentation from James DeDecker reviewing the most recent UPREC strategic plan from 2012, as well as changes and accomplishments since that time, including current research and extension activities at the Center.

The next portion of the meeting was dedicated to collaborative drafting of an updated mission statement for UPREC using notecards and a think, pair, share approach. After that, the group reviewed and discussed the SWOT survey data, following that with an activity listing critical needs, wants and wishes for UPREC of their own before breaking for lunch. After lunch, the group focused on drafting five-year strategic priorities for the Center. This was accomplished by asking participants to write priority statements on note cards, then collaboratively grouping those notecards into broader categories. The meeting concluded with participants voting on the priority categories identified to rank them by two criteria of “ease” and “impact”.

The remainder of this report summarizes the conversation and input shared during the UPREC strategic planning meeting.

Mission Statement

The last mission statement created for UPREC was drafted in 1996. It reads as follows:

“Our mission is to provide the best possible environment for university or private research projects; to teach agricultural management practices that demonstrate the most economic and ecological friendly practices for northern areas. We strive to promote and enhance the awareness of the agricultural sciences to the general public, particularly youth. Our goal is to have the most visual and appealing research facility in the university system, and to ensure a healthy and safe working environment and to maintain the camaraderie of the staff.”

Ideas for an updated mission statement were collected from participants on notecards during the strategic planning meeting. All of these statements were subsequently entered into Microsoft Excel and analyzed to determine the frequency of keywords used. Below is a list of keywords used at least five times by participants in their draft mission statements. The original participant input and these keywords were then used to draft a final updated mission statement for UPREC capturing the main points emphasized by stakeholders.

<u>Mentions</u>	<u>Keywords</u>
21	community
15	agriculture
15	research
9	systems
8	education
7	agricultural
6	production
6	needs
5	environment
5	relevant
5	UPREC
5	meet
5	food

Updated UPREC Mission Statement:

“Founded in 1899, the Michigan State University Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center is a hub for sustainable agriculture innovation and education that is relevant to the environment, economy and needs of UP communities. We strive to accomplish this by fostering a culture of inclusion, participation, partnership and critical thinking among our team and collaborators.”

SWOT Reflections

After reviewing and discussing data collected by our SWOT survey, participants reflected on what they learned.

- Plans to expand MSU's footprint in the UP with a new dairy research facility in Menominee County were never realized due to the Ag downturn during the 1980s. This created distrust, and that history is still shaping the minds and attitudes of community members regarding MSU and UPREC.
- Recent hires and the positive outward orientation of staff have been well received and successful. This has helped to rebuild trust and confidence among the community over the last 5-6 years.
- Yet, some recent decisions or practices at UPREC, particularly the sale of North Farm produce, are seen as creating competition for area farmers. Stakeholders want greater transparency regarding this issue. The recent shift toward research at the North Farm is appreciated. However, UPREC may also be able to do more to expand available markets and lessen competition.
- Orientation toward youth and horticulture were major parts of UPREC's early history, and are making a welcome comeback.
- UPREC's partnership with Bay Mills Community College has been ongoing since 2006.
- Additional work is needed to ensure relevance of UPREC's work to the far Western and Eastern UP. Expanding partnerships with the University of Wisconsin and Ontario could be beneficial.
- Cattle and grazing research at UPREC has been especially impactful over the years.
- UPREC's diverse identity and capacity in conventional and organic, agronomy and horticulture, crops and livestock is a unique asset.
- The SWOT survey and strategic planning meeting underrepresented conventional crop and livestock producers.
- There is a perceived disconnect with area farmers and the community, and need for better communication from the Center.
- The objective of developing more new farmers through the Apprentice Farmer incubator program and other means is critical.
- Agriculture in Michigan and the UP is fragmented, but UPREC should strive to serve all sectors and bridge gaps. UPREC has always been a catalyst for collaboration among scientists, farmers, agribusiness, etc.

Needs, Wants, Wishes

In addition to the needs, wants and wishes communicated by survey respondents, participants at the strategic planning meeting outlined additional critical needs for UPREC's next five years.

- Additional on-farm demonstrations
- Farmer cooperation to level of shared learning and teaching
- UPREC as the epicenter of related extension work in the UP
- Continued engagement with youth, including youth-adult partnerships (e.g. a youth advisory council, involvement in demonstrations and education)
- Additional venues/facilities for 4-H and other youth activities
- Mixed use of the property, including self-guided trails
- A renewed or expanded focus on soil health
- Additional focus on soil, water and environmental stewardship practices; integration with other resources at UPREC like woodlots and streams
- A focus on farm business and finance outreach, such as short courses in partnership with FSA
- Integration of other assets at MSU(E) (e.g. Master Gardener)
- New investments in infrastructure and human resources, at the North Farm especially, including specialized equipment
- Growing involvement of campus faculty, stressing the opportunity of research on certified organic land

Strategic Priorities

Participants at the strategic planning meeting outlined strategic priorities for UPREC's next five years, grouped into the following categories. Participants then voted to rank these priorities according to "ease" and "impact". Priorities are ranked here by overall importance, represented by the sum of ease and impact votes.

1. Communications and Branding (Ease 19 + Impact 2 = 21)
 - Innovative research with dissemination of results
 - Interaction between all involved
 - More effective data dissemination
 - Articulate and communicate to the UP public where UPREC is headed in the next five years, and why it is a great plan
 - Create and publicize a UPREC identity
 - Integration of UPREC into UP beyond Ag and natural resources
 - Public and partner engagement, branding
 - Share research results with community

- UPREC becomes “destination station”
 - Integration of North Farm and UPREC brands and communication
 - An open campus with multiple free recreational opportunities for the community
 - Build connections with active UP farming community and key UP decision-makers
2. Youth and Beginning Farmers (Ease 12 + Impact 7 = 19)
- On-farm education for people of all ages
 - Collaboration with schools around Ag and food
 - Youth engagement
 - Keep youth involved
 - Formalize field trip offerings tied to grade level standards in partnership with schools and ISDs
 - Youth brought to planning tables and given voice
3. Environment and Sustainability (Ease 3 + Impact 13 = 16)
- Soil health
 - More funded organic research at the North Farm
 - MSU research and education should consider all aspects of social, environmental and economic sustainability
 - Focus on agroecology goals and projects to expand opportunities in community and research
 - Long term impacts of climate change in the UP and resilience/ response
 - Establish environmental stewardship and demonstration committee, grant efforts
4. Partnerships (Ease 8 + Impact 1 = 9)
- Greater faculty and grad student engagement from diverse disciplines
 - Community partnerships and collaboration
 - Partner with Bay Mills Community College to offer feedback and as much research as they agree to
 - Integrate UPREC and FBIC with more Ag at FBIC and agroforestry at UPREC
 - Explore opportunities to partner with tribes on seed rematriation
 - Increasing multi university and interdepartmental faculty collaboration
 - Cross-institute extension programming on natural resources and health
 - Focus on catalytic activities
5. Local Relevance (Ease 2 + Impact 6 = 8)
- More farmer involvement
 - Continue to serve needs of all natural resource production sectors
 - Research priorities shaped by farmer input from across UP
 - Conduct research relevant to all sectors of UP Ag, get findings out to the public

- MSU should be focused, but flexible, in meeting the research needs of farmers
 - Supporting local farms through research
6. Infrastructure and Facilities (Ease 1 + Impact 7 = 8)
- All infrastructure safe, clean, accessible and utilized
 - Fix up all derelict facilities and turn them to productive uses
 - Employee stability and consistency that fits capacity of project and facility needs
 - Repurposing unused facilities
 - Improvements on existing infrastructure and equipment will improve the ability to do research and outreach
 - Matching facilities and equipment with projects and mission
 - Facility maintenance
 - Upgrade specialized Ag research equipment
 - Updates to equipment and infrastructure as prioritized by UPREC staff
 - Indoor and outdoor venue space for groups
 - Expand funding portfolio
7. Business Management Outreach (Ease 0 + Impact 8 = 8)
- “Match-making” linking producers to markets
 - New position integrating marketing, financials, food
 - Market research
 - Financial management capacity
 - Increasing and developing new markets for both commodity and specialty crops
8. Staff Training and Support (Ease 1 + Impact 2 = 3)
- People training
 - Work-life balance and adequate compensation for all staff

Appendix 1:

UPREC SWOT Survey Results, 8/7/19 Coded by James DeDecker, Director

Contents

Strengths	8
Weaknesses	12
Opportunities	16
Threats	20
‘Needs’	24
‘Wants’	27
‘Wishes’	30
Priorities	33
Other Comments	35

UPREC's greatest current strengths as it faces the next five years are (be as specific as possible):

- **Research and Education (28)**
 - **General (10)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (7)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (6)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (5)**
 - **Conventional Crops (2)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (23)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (19)**
- **Funding (3)**

Research and Education (28)

General (10)

1. Ability to educate the public throughout the UP
2. Ability to support local farmers with research results, procedures, and educational support. The ability to test ideas in a farming context that is free from real world economic limitations.
3. Research relevant to U P agriculture
4. A solid research framework has been established. From hoophouse farming to grazing to cereal grain research, etc.
5. Willingness to call on local farmers to lead workshops rather than just MSUE staff

6. A wide variety of community involvement/outreach (hosting events, giving tours, the Apprentice Farmer Program, community education opportunities, tool lending, etc.).
7. Sponsorship of plant establishment/care training sessions (both on and off site).
8. Very good practical and useful research
9. Active research programs.
10. Projects that meet Needs of Upper Peninsula farmers, and businesses.

Organic and Specialty Crops (7)

1. Researching and doing trial & error on specific vegetable and variety types which provides area farmers with information that can better help them decide what to grow.
2. Innovative and locally relevant North Farm program
3. Certified organic land that can be used for production/research.
4. UPREC's north farm 'small farm oriented' food production/operation related programs ie. extended season options such as hoop houses, small farm operations techniques.
5. The North Farm is UPREC's greatest strength in terms of potential impact on the greatest number of people--food, classes, research, etc.
6. UP has greater strength for blueberries.
7. Vegetable growing operation to guide local growers to sustainable businesses

Youth and Beginning Farmers (6)

1. Being so pro-active regarding the safety of our 4-H youth by being ever vigilant regarding adult volunteers
2. Really strong educational program - getting farming and fresh food in front of kids and youth.
3. Relationship with schools in MQT and Alger County.
4. School and other community educational programs
5. Research and outreach to schools--also being mindful of the local farming community's needs and making sure those relationships stay strong.
6. The strengths are the individuals and community partners that want to see young people succeed.

Forage and Cattle (5)

1. Unique beef cattle projects
2. Continuation of the beef cattle research as currently conducting. This is benchmark for land grant university's providing key research and data to educate local beef producers. Outstanding program which is being looked at by producers all over the country. This is trend of production which will continue and grow in popularity and demand. Corporate large farms and input of inferior import products are pushing this by their actions. Small farms increasing with emphasis on program research of beef and forages such as conducted at Chatham. Forage research- Outstanding Continue current practices Field day and tours for local beef and ag producers sharing the data and lessons learned.
3. Livestock (beef cattle) research.
4. Research investment in the livestock herd, so that there is a research basis for the cattle.
5. A cattle herd focused on Grassfed Beef.

Conventional Crops (2)

1. Barley research
2. Commercial crop studies that are applied to Upper Peninsula climates.

Geography, Community and Partnerships (23)

1. It being a U.P. centrally located facility already in place, with many capabilities for field research, and education.
2. Location in the unique climatic and geological conditions of the central UP supports research and testing relevant to ag in the UP
3. Addressing local needs in a global context
4. Having MSU local and active in the U.P.
5. Trusted ally that works to improve the UP
6. In terms of serving the entire UP, it is fairly centrally located
7. Good community perception of the work and services offered at UPREC
8. The ability to establish positive relationships with local partnering agencies and organizations.
9. Access to the resources that MSU has to offer, an already developed presence in the community it aims to serve.
10. Having an office that is near to everyone in the area.
11. Strong Planning Commission Committee
12. UPREC's links to the local (generally central UP) agriculture/local food industry and business outlets such as the Marquette Food Coop.
13. Community support both passive and active as a percent of the population.
14. Isolated location allows for a good location for research
15. Connections to the community and economy through Apprentice Farmer program and vegetable production.
16. Upper Peninsula agriculture community is a supporter of the center and see great value in the center.
17. Centrally located to serve entire UP region.
18. Good community partnerships and support.
19. Community partnerships have a positive history.
20. The strengths of partnerships with hospitals, mental health organizations and recreational parks/ opportunities working together to instill the best interests of all so that the future of great programming like 4-H is still fluid and current.
21. Diverse group of farmers
22. Dynamic partnerships with area farms who are research cooperators
23. UPREC is well situated and well regarded in the UP.

Physical and Human Resources (19)

1. Staff resources both at the center and in support by MSU Extension Educators. Facilities and property to do meaningful research
2. Huge facility/property. Long standing expertise.
3. Facilities

4. Infrastructure, current staff, diversity of Ag practices and producers represented by the North and South farms
5. Excellent staff
6. Excellent and knowledgeable staff working at UPREC
7. The Director of UPREC and his staff are obvious strengths for UPREC. Knowledgeable, hard working, smart, and earnest in their support of organizational mission. 2. The facilities and infrastructure to support the work of UPREC staff.
8. A committed team of staff that are knowledgeable and hardworking.
9. Having staff that can answer questions for the needs of the community.
10. A competent/diverse staff
11. The dedicated staff and new leadership that are very collaborative; collaboration is a key to success with outlying stations.
12. Our employees, newer equipment
13. Has good momentum from the 2012 reorganization. Well staffed with some very qualified personnel. New energy in the form of a new director. UPREC is MSU's presence in the UP and has a strong brand.
14. Diversity of both mission and facilities [North Farm/South Farm].
15. Enthusiastic and dedicated leadership and staff.
16. Staff
17. Staff that is interested in the projects, and creative in their approach.
18. Support from both MSUE and AgBio to provide staff to address community needs and offer research and educational opportunities A facility that is deeply rooted in Chatham and that has witnessed 120 years of change in UP agriculture and that remains committed to current and future generations of farmers in our unique context
19. There are good people on staff. Some of the facilities and enterprises (beef herd, small grain trials) seem to be productive and relevant. It's a picturesque and pleasant place to visit, close to some great recreation areas and parks. At the North Farm in particular, the old buildings, the gardens, and the landscape give the appreciative visitor a very nice experience.

Funding (3)

1. For a long while, very little extramural funding was directed to Chatham. Now there are multiple funding lines coming to the farm.
2. A successful history of grants being awarded, as well as successful research ventures.
3. Current financial investment by both MSUE and LMO (and MABR?) is an asset - not all stations have multiple funding agencies within the university.

The most concerning weaknesses at UPREC as it faces the next five years are (be as specific as possible):

- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (20)**
- **Research and Education (18)**
 - **General (12)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (4)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (1)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)**
 - **Conventional Crops (0)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (12)**
- **Funding (4)**

Geography, Community and Partnerships (20)

1. Distance from MSU makes support by MSU Researchers more difficult
2. Adaptability. Knowing how to utilize standing expertise within the community and community level translators to improve transfer of knowledge.
3. Only focused on the Central UP.
4. Tensions created between community farmers and UPREC based on the unintended consequences of government subsidized products being sold in open/local market. Products created for sale from the North, South and business incubator farms are produced cheaper, more efficiently, at a profit margin no real world farm economy can compete with.
5. I am glad everyone all the supervisors who work on campus are finally visiting the UP. We are so unbelievably different than down state yet most times we are not even considered. But the same is true when you go from a big city to a small town. After 5 years working with MSUE, someone is truly making a change and visiting us and listening to us. We all want to do the right thing but...with such a large organization it is not always possible. My way of looking at things: everyone learns differently. By knowing this think about this: I am being asked how to make mashed potatoes with all the PC's. As long as we get the end result of mashed--what difference does it make HOW we do things step by step--we all get mashed potatoes--we all learn and process differently. Please give the PC's credit for getting the job done no matter how many steps it takes--the bottom line is the job is done and all the rules have been followed.
6. Extensions overall disconnect with farmers and the challenges they face. Farmers do not have state of the art, grant funded facilities and projects, or employees. Helping farmers make do with what they have is more important than trying to make their facilities look like others. Cattle sold to market that could go to local farmers.
7. Local farmer concerns about MSUE subsidized UPREC product competition
8. A lack of autonomy from MSU core activities and their strong bias toward large scale and single commodity ag production. (I believe that most UP ag is best described as traditional farming similar to a 1950's era diversified operation.)
9. Despite being centrally located, UPREC is still a fair distance from many places in the UP
10. A perceived lack of understanding (experiencing) the nuance and stark reality of the difficulties inherent in growing a regional food system and how that may undermine the balance of roles

and responsibilities of all the players in the local/regional food system. This leads to unintentional frayed relationships with local farms whom UPREC is here to serve.

11. Perceived community negativity (certain research areas, production as competition).
12. Stronger relationship would be desirable with related non-agricultural land use/management agencies and groups involved in land use activities that effect/are effected by agricultural operations.
13. Location, and subsequently relatively low number of farms in the immediate area that can benefit from research and outreach at the station. Due to low number of other farms in the area, competition with other farms can be a challenge for direct marketed products from UPREC.
14. Disconnecting from the local economy.
15. Remoteness to central campus and ability to interact easily with staff and faculty about what the center can offer.
16. Being in the UP it tends to be out of sight out of mind by Ag Hall. They really only tune in if there is a crisis, otherwise they tend to just let things run along.
17. UP is generally underdeveloped in agriculture.
18. Isolation!
19. New members perhaps
20. Although the group of individuals who were engaged with MSUE at the time of the research station's transition to UPREC are undoubtedly great assets, I think that the legacy of what UPREC has been (and what expectations or "compromise understandings" those individuals might have formed) should not be the driver for what UPREC becomes in the future. Things are changing rapidly, the economics of farming is not what it was just a few years ago, and it's important that all the voices are heard and given equal consideration if UPREC will have a strong presence in the future. I would not detract from that group in any way, but I also think that they represent a somewhat select group and other voices should be heard in equal measure. Especially on topics such as the vision for the future.

Research and Education (18)

General (12)

1. Continuing to offer relevant and ongoing research and education events in a timely manner.
2. Making sure research is relevant to commercial agriculture
3. Finding accessible ways to share the above research with farmers. maybe this exists but I'd love to see an analysis of how the year's planting season went - what worked, what didn't, what was more profitable, etc.
4. Communication sometimes being segmented (North Farm specific website vs UPREC)
5. Lack of out-reach/communication, involvement of UP producers
6. Communication and community outreach with local producers
7. Not all areas of the farm are participating in long-term research that guarantees income/visibility. Lack of on-campus involvement in both research and support.
8. Figuring out realistic research projects to what a tumultuous market will demand should government support really be needed to fall back on again. With all the luxury research funded by a stable and good economy, an average to below average market reality can be lost in the

apathy (ie if the economy tanks, are we really going to be using diesel to prepare, fertilize, plant, irrigate, harvest, heat, squeeze, process, transport, repair the land, and store ethanol to power machines that wouldn't event be able to perpetually repeat the process just required with the energy produced?) That's the example but it carries over to a lot of other ag industries unfortunately at this time. Unclouding reality from past apparent research failures is going to be important because benefited parties have a way of keeping that cloud there for their gain.

9. How to distribute the research information in a timely manner, how will technology effect the research
10. Outreach to partnerships, events aren't know unless you work within the UPREC. Events like the field days.
11. Sharing research with the communities surrounding UPREC. Sharing projects and strategic plan with the entire UP- Marketing UPREC.
12. Information Gleaned from projects need to get to producers!

Organic and Specialty Crops (4)

1. A strong commitment from MSU to the North Farm and organic farming in general.
2. They (campus) do not truly value the research and outreach from the North Farm since much of it is social science based. The North Farm has been a big part of the success of UPREC over the past 7 years.
3. Maybe boosting the research efforts at the North Farm and also boosting the public outreach at the South Farm would also help with that balance. Why do I only have a research summary from the South Farm and I only have a t-shirt from the North Farm? I think that the continuing integration and support of both sites can only boost UPREC. I'd love an UPREC t-shirt, too!
4. Not utilizing wooded property for education.

Forage and Cattle (1)

1. The use of the Japanese cattle is interesting, but what is the goal? How can it improve other farms who cannot afford such genetics? What would the market be

Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)

1. Retaining and recruiting leaders for our program. Many families are burdened with trauma, mental illness and other factors that lead to dysfunction. The young adults I encounter do not want to commit to 4-H programming or being a volunteer. It may be the last thing they are thinking of as they function day-to-day living.

Conventional Crops (0)

Physical and Human Resources (12)

1. Little staff available to work with area farmers on their concerns.
2. Maintaining staffing to conduct the different lines of research.

3. Scale of infrastructure sometimes feeling unattainable for start up or transitioning farms
4. Possibly trying to do too much with limited staff
5. Staff aging, as well as being currently understaffed for the work being done. Aging infrastructure with no plan for addressing certain concerns.
6. Do we have enough staff to work this area?
7. An aging north and south farm facility infrastructure: need for short (next 5-10 yrs.) AND long term (10 -20 yrs.) plans to implement required actions. For the North Farm in particular there should be a strong emphasis on retaining the historic structures.
8. Need to be able to work & get paid overtime to keep employees need to keep equipment in good condition more hours
9. Facilities are dated and in need of asbestos abatement and funding for same. 2- Inadequate infrastructure to meet the needs for visiting groups, organizations, and MSU campus personnel. 3- Apparent lack of urgency and perception of need for physical improvements by land development office.
10. Infrastructure -- like barns -- that need maintenance and updating to remain useful for research and community gatherings
11. I think that overall UPREC is a beautiful site. But having some areas of both the north and south farms unused and/or in disrepair detracts from the overall "feeling". It leaves the impression that the facility is perpetually in transition or is finding it's way. If every part of the facility were in good repair and had a place in the daily operations, I think it would seem like UPREC was more settled in it's new circumstances. Is the South Farm dairy facility just in mothballs waiting to restart? If not, what could that part of the facility become? How about the lower level of the barn at the North Farm? I think that both of those two facilities could fill useful roles in the new visions of outreach opportunities. Might not be as simple as building a new structure, but if those facilities were repurposed then they would no longer be reminders of obsolescence and disuse. It's important that the North and South Farms share a common purpose and mission as parts of UPREC. Sharing staff and resources between the two hopefully helps.
12. Limitation in size of heated meeting space

Funding (4)

1. What programs will be cut because of funds transferred to other programs?
2. Funding
3. Like other facilities, figuring out ways to generate income to support the station while simultaneously prioritizing research and education is a constant challenge, and a weakness for some of our outlying farms.
4. I'm sure funding is always a concern.

The following represent external opportunities that UPREC should consider to be most successful over the next five years (be as specific as possible):

- **Research and Education (28)**
 - **General (16)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (7)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (3)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (1)**
 - **Conventional Crops (1)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (16)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (4)**
- **Funding (1)**

Research and Education (28)

General (16)

1. Partnering with local agribusiness and farmers to direct research
2. Providing an annual report for area farmers, but maybe also classes about standard case sizes, efficient growing practices, etc.
3. Facilitate ways to help producers market products Focus on reasonable ways farmers can be sustainable, making sure to acknowledge financial sustainability
4. Continued trajectory on established pathways should continue. This will target the rural education, resilience in farming and grazing/cropping research.
5. Continued growth of education programs focused on the research currently being conducted.
6. Community events held around UPREC, and the partnerships associated with those.
7. Training and getting more broad band in the UP
8. Continued collaboration on as many cross-site research and education projects as possible, both within MSU and external to MSU.
9. Highlighting the value of the research done. Marketing the program conducted there.
10. To utilize the northern Great Lakes research zone
11. Need to be looking at and anticipating weather changes which may or may not provide opportunities for agriculture growth in the UP.
12. Outreach for educating other agency of the studies UPREC have completed. Education event about how to manage invasive, like cow parsnip, buckthorn. Education event on how to tell a invasive from native species.
13. Mental health agencies--working on a mental health and farming initiative
14. Work on ways to disperse those ideas, and the experienced ideas of those producers.
15. Education, incubate farm skills, certified kitchen
16. UPREC is among a pretty small number of northern research facilities. Climate change is happening and there is going to be a rapidly growing need to adapt to new conditions. UPREC could be an important resource for that adaptation. Personally, I think that UPREC's blend of more traditional research methods with the on-farm beef and produce enterprises is a fantastic and pretty distinctive model. I think that the enterprises help make the North and South farms more accessible and relatable to the wider UP public than a pure research farm could ever be.

There has been some talk in the past about having more programs intended to engage with the "homestead" community. I think that is a good idea. Hopefully the more conventional farm community can recognize that it's important for UPREC's success that it remain interesting and relevant for a broader range of UP residents than only the shrinking conventional farm demographic. I, like a lot of UP residents, enjoy a fairly independent and self-reliant lifestyle. In my own life, that is not in conflict with agriculture. It does not need to be conflicting for UPREC either. Don't know if there's much research opportunity in the homestead/diversified-small-farm direction. But that's definitely one way to help keep UPREC important for a larger number of people than just the professional farm segment. The biggest event to date at UPREC was the small grower/hoop house event a few years back (when Eliot Coleman was featured).

Youth and Beginning Farmers (7)

1. Continuing apprentice farmer program, offering for basic introduction to farming training program, opening internship opportunities to non-MSU students to better engage diverse interns (specifically target towards tribal students at NMU, BMCC and KBOCC).
2. There seems to be an uptick in the interest in farming by young families who are completely new to cropping and animal husbandry. These people do not have a knowledge base or access to current technologies. Support for on-farm, drive-up sales of ag products for both producer and consumer.
3. Consider developing non-organic curriculum for farmers in the local food value chain
4. Increased interest in the Apprentice Farmer Program, resulting in more AFP farms at UPREC.
5. Continued expansion of the outreach role of UPREC as an agriculture, food, and natural resources education hub serving all age groups and education levels [K-12, as well as college]; formally dedicate and name UPREC as the home of the "Upper Peninsula Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Education Institute."
6. Supporting the ideas and interests of a new community of growers through research partnerships and outreach Working to create a facility that serves the needs of growers to process their products for local distribution
7. The schools in areas partnerships haven't been explored.

Organic and Specialty Crops (3)

1. 1. Organic agriculture research in U.P. 2. Food Processing (regionally) 3. Cold storage/distribution In short, helping to figure out the missing pieces to food system development in the UP.
2. Long-term research opportunities, especially in the organic/sustainable vegetable production arena.
3. There is a frontier of opportunity in more forest based agriculture that can be explored. Between maple syrup, mushrooms, silvo pasture, blueberry, honey, raspberry, blackberry, strawberry, thimbleberry etc. As the U.P.'s farmscape continues to reduce in livestock production and into the more obscure but important commodities, the research station can evolve also.

Forage and Cattle (1)

1. Education and sharing of forage data and research enabling local producers to transition or change crop selections.

Conventional Crops (1): 1. Hemp

Geography, Community and Partnerships (16)

1. Expand impact factor to previously underserved areas within the community.
2. Education outside of the central UP
3. Working more in the Eastern End and local challenges
4. Team up with external organizations to deliver programming training in a way that builds program delivering capacity at more local levels
5. Increase focus on being relevant for UP producers and economic entrepreneurship
6. Additional partnerships with other Ag. Education organizations and programs in the UP (including the forestry research station in Escanaba, programs in local high schools, etc.)
7. Personal contact with the growing number of producers throughout the state and local area.
8. Getting more farmers, and community involved in supporting these programs, and having more programs that really matter to the farmers in the area.
9. Partner, partner, partner with all the local food entities doing work in the area.
10. UPREC should look for ways to connect in nontraditional ways to the central UP to broaden the base of support, research opportunities and philanthropy. Utilization of the facility; reaching specific audiences such as veterans, seniors, etc.; and, providing more community-based education and connecting to local 4-H.
11. Relationship with Lake City Research Center. Geographical location (also a weakness), connection to the Intermediate School Districts in the UP, solid foundation to numerous research and extension/education efforts.
12. Biological Sciences of Michigan Tech is a missing link in UP success.
13. Producers that are willing to try new ideas, and more than willing to share what they are and have learned.
14. Hospitals, mental health organizations, state and federal recreation parks and organizations.
15. Community outreach, community support
16. Working with schools to provide agriculture education opportunities -- whether that is via teacher training, student visits to the farm, or technical assistance with agriculture education programs at schools

Physical and Human Resources (4)

1. Make sure you listen to a large cross section of your employees.
2. In conjunction with others, formulate a UPREC land use/management plan for the Center's acreage. This should include forestry resources and perhaps even recreational
3. Keep up the buildings, fences, equipment involved with others

4. Good staffing, good infrastructure, strong cow herd, USDA Certified Organic acreage

Funding (1)

1. Fundraising in any form to better our infrastructure. Increased farms in the Upper Peninsula that we can serve.

The following are external threats to UPREC's success over the next five years (be as specific as possible):

- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (19)**
- **Funding and Economics (13)**
- **Research and Education (10)**
 - **General (7)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (2)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (0)**
 - **Conventional Crops (0)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (7)**

Geography, Community and Partnerships (19)

1. Not being perceived as valuable as they once were.
2. Becoming disconnected from the local farm community - which I don't think is something that will happen because the individuals there are really great - I think the Upper Peninsula is just much more skeptical of most things than the average region in general.
3. Disconnect with local farmers Age of farmers Outside pressure from non-Ag groups (Environmentalists, animal rights, etc)
4. Faculty interaction due to distance. The pushback from some farmers about the hoophouse projects.
5. Not having local support to confirm to MSU administration that the UPREC is needed
6. Agriculture can be a difficult prospect in the UP - short growing seasons, long distances from markets -Right now, agriculture as a profession can be a difficult prospect anywhere
7. Poor public relations with (some) local farms.
8. Not being thoroughly communicative with UPREC's constituents.
9. Misinformation Lack of engagement with local producers and communities
10. Disinterest from campus (rather than shut us down completely, just starving us of support until we cannot function). Disinterest from the community.
11. With the climate changes - whether they be long or short term - UPREC must be adaptable in the approaches it takes to establish and maintain it's research and education efforts.
12. Strong community visibility.
13. Researcher participation in work at UPREC is critical to ongoing success. If researchers that are not stationed at UPREC discontinue work at the station, then the perceived value of the station can decline quickly, even if the resident staff and leaders continue to do excellent work.
14. Perhaps an aging/retiring clientele that is necessary to maintain continuous support fro the center.
15. Out of sight out of mind. Need to continue to show and demonstrate its value to agriculture and MSU.
16. Distance from campus
17. Apathy of general public towards UPREC's programs due to lack of communication.
18. Loss of farms and farmers.

19. Many parents/young adults do not desire to commit to volunteering. Many do not feel they have the skill sets to do the job. Some of that thought process comes the varied challenges that youth have. Drug addicted babies who grew into youth with several issues. Trauma in the home due to drug and alcohol use. Families not having the education or means to provide for their families. Obesity is an issue too. There are many factors that are a threat to programming across the state but the U.P. in particular has low income and less resources which inflates the depression/drug/alcohol situation.

Funding and Economics (13)

1. Maintaining funding by MSU/State for the site and its activities
2. Funding
3. Continued funding for niche market opportunities
4. By some measures, the average farmer makes more money from secondary jobs than from the farm -Agricultural markets and trading are in a state of flux right now
5. Funding issues? Funding changes or support
6. Lack of grant dollars available/received.
7. Cutting of funds to the programs that UPREC do and support, or the county not seeing their money's worth of having the UPREC here.
8. Eliminating funding resources
9. Funding for current and future research, land and facility, and educational outreach - both on and offsite - to meet UPREC requirements will continue to be a challenge.
10. Relying too much on traditional funding sources at MSU rather than leveraging partnerships, competitive research opportunities and philanthropy.
11. Reliance on grant funding
12. Inadequate support from campus of both funding and recognition of UPREC mission/priorities.
13. Financial, especially if the support of Upper Peninsula producers isn't garnered.

Research and Education (10)

General (7)

1. Alternative research from private and public.
2. Not addressing the traditional agriculture farmers who are the bulk of UP farmers
3. UPREC needs to center itself on education and research.
4. Continuing global and unfortunately now national propaganda that weakens public confidence and support in research. If a spade needs to be called a spade, researchers have to do it. When the scientific community funded by taxpayer bills and secondary grants meet for example in Marquette in 2013 to discuss a plan of action to mitigate the negative effects that climate change has created with the low water levels that will not come up again for decades, if not ever. Only to have it near record 6 years later, and than the same community says, well it's erratic, that's climate change, it's unpredictable. You can't have it both ways we "know" so give us money but we "don't know" it's erratic give us money. That public perception and support lost from the dangerous temptation of tooting a false horn for short term funding gain kills the long term credible research field. No more emotional head nodding.

5. Information not distributed in a timely manner
6. Visibility is very important, so sharing what is happening at UPREC helps gain support for projects station wide.
7. Without strong, ongoing faculty partnerships for research, UPREC will struggle to remain in view and relevant to the state-wide MSU community

Organic and Specialty Crops (2)

1. Production Ag gets all the attention. Legislation and regulations are becoming overbearing on small scale diversified operations, much of which is supported by Extension. Walmart-type marketing/distribution of our food supply.
2. Consumers who don't know how to prepare a healthy meal from unprocessed local meats and produce.

Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)

1. I also think that there has been some mis-identification regarding what the true cause of reduced interest in farming. There are larger forces at work in the industry and in the whole economy that make farming less attractive for many young people. The claim has been made that simply exposing a more youth to farming will lead to more new entrants down the road. I doubt that is correct. I think that we need to be sure that our decisions to not lead UPREC down a path of future irrelevance. And we need to recognize that there are not going to be endless chances to get the future direction "right". With big changes underway in agriculture, the traditional support base for UPREC, it's important that we create a realistic vision of the future and not one that attempts to reestablish a past that is becoming less viable - not due to a lack of educational opportunities, but because of fundamental changes in our economy. Failing to recognize this change and position UPREC to adapt is the biggest threat. If it becomes irrelevant in a future economy, UPREC will gradually lose it's support.

Forage and Cattle (0)

Conventional Crops (0)

Physical and Human Resources (7)

1. Lack of adequate slaughter/meat processing facilities.
2. Change of focus or new leadership with preconceived mindsets
3. MSU has a history of being focused on the provision of new facilities at some considerable cost. and sometimes at 'the expense' of it's 'core mission' (education).
4. Equipment and buildings failing, no money
5. Staff turnover
6. Lack in a permanent station and personnel is a big challenge.

7. I am skeptical of the plan that was put forward for creating a education facility at UPREC. I think that the idea MIGHT be a good one. But it should happen only after a clear, sustained need for such a facility has been well demonstrated. I do not think that the "if you build it, they will come" approach is a good model to follow in this case. Enthusiasm on our end to provide a service does not necessarily translate into real time and budget decisions on the part of schools and families.

Given UPREC's strengths and available resources, please detail what you'd minimally expect to see accomplished over the next five years. Aka 'Needs'

- **Research and Education (33)**
 - **General (14)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (7)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (7)**
 - **Conventional Crops (3)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (2)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (7)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (5)**
- **Funding (2)**

Research and Education (33)

General (14)

1. Continue to provide the research and demonstrate to farmers and landowners of the U.P. that there are methods that can save them money and better conserve the land and water.
2. Increased education and outreach opportunities throughout the UP.
3. Outreach through field days.
4. Ongoing field trials to share UP specific variety and management recommendations for both conventional and organic growers
5. Continued farmer training in both workshops and more intensive on farm training programs
6. Education and demonstration of best practices for a variety of agricultural practices in the UP for farmers and producers - 2-3 basic research projects addressing directly needs and questions of farmers
7. I think UPREC is on a good path, so the continuation of current research with open communication about said research, both successes and failures.
8. Continued input towards well thought out and executed research projects, properly published.
9. Continue to be the flag pole for MSU research in the UP
10. Increase the number and range of educational opportunities facilitated by UPREC.
11. Increase in research and publications from ALL research and extension programs
12. Example would be to see, Marketing criteria, production and marketing goals. "real" financial information regarding the two production enterprises ie. Vegetable, and Beef production. Real meaning not showing the cost of the extra help available to run these enterprises. For malting barley seeing producers get crops to market. Same with Beef and Vegetable production
13. Continue outreach, continue communication, continue farmer interaction, shared resources perhaps
14. Carry out and fund research interests that align with grower needs, with a program to share that information with growers that meets their preferred methods of information delivery

Organic and Specialty Crops (7)

1. Support for the creation of a local organic feed for livestock. Create a production model that normal farms could follow to create organic feed rations. Support a local ability to process and sell those goods locally.
2. Continuation of North Farm
3. Research underway regarding the vegetable program. Organic and non-organic curriculum on supplying the local food value chain
4. Grant dollars earned for research in organic vegetable systems.
5. More help on growing more vegetable in the area and how to make it profitable.
6. Continued growth as an extension/educational center, continued emphasis on regenerative agriculture research across the entire portfolio
7. I look forward to the berry results. It does seem to me as though I have never heard much about research involving the North Farm gardens. Maybe some info on methods and productivity would be good there.

Forage and Cattle (7)

1. Livestock research around UP needs.
2. Data that shapes how farmers manage grass fed cattle
3. Beef projects and increased community out-reach
4. More grazing/forage studies specific to the very different conditions in eastern and western, north and south UP.
5. Improved information regarding the beef cattle grazing work. New project(s) starting with the beef cattle grazing/forage research
6. Beef demonstration, research, and feeding trials; soil health research/demonstrations. Expand education outreach.
7. The beef grazing research.

Conventional Crops (3)

1. Research around varieties and crops that fit UP growing conditions.
2. Continue with: Crop variety trials both onsite and on producer's farms
3. A continuation of the small grain trials

Youth and Beginning Farmers (2)

1. Support beginning farmers by providing access to land, growing resources, and information
2. Continued engagement with youth audiences

Physical and Human Resources (7)

1. More staff time dedicated to education and technical assistance
2. Keep employees for consistency

3. Major improvements to infrastructure that is needed to operate both locations.
4. Transition plans developed for staff who will be retiring soon. More staff added to the North Farm to make it more sustainable.
5. Get more meat processing locations in the UP.
6. Full utilization of existing facilities.
7. Have a healthy beef herd, crop fields producing, equipment in good condition

Geography, Community and Partnerships (5)

1. 100 percent Community presenters on the farm from a diverse background.
2. Sustained investment by collaborating researchers to utilize the sites at UPREC
3. Increase the number of producers who are integrated into the local economy.
4. Increased involvement from faculty beyond the faculty coordinators
5. Function as a meeting place for different attitudes about agriculture and agricultural practices

Funding (2)

1. Execution of existing funding sources.
2. A very focused project with decent funding to UP.

Given external opportunities that exist in the state and industry, please detail what you'd sure like to see UPREC accomplish over the next five years. Aka 'Wants'

- **Research and Education (26)**
 - **General (15)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (5)**
 - **Conventional Crops (3)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (3)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (2)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (6)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (6)**
- **Funding (1)**

Research and Education (26)

General (15)

1. Demonstrate soil health benefits of conservation tillage and cover crops.
2. Marketing the up region as a whole.
3. Getting research data out to the public.
4. More focus on telling people what is happening at UPREC and why it is important to them
5. Establish a central call center for support of Ag producers. Oftentimes a problem arises and a regional agent isn't available or you get into a response cycle that lasts a week or more and it's too late by the time you get an answer. Set up a website for each region of the UP where people can find out what is happening in their area. Example: I call in asking for help with a cutworm infestation, you provide info on treatment options, and someone posts this call to my regional info page.
6. Better educational materials featuring the research and development that has occurred from the UPREC program
7. More integration with the extension staff in the UP with the research and development programs at UPREC
8. Greater community engagement and outreach to population sectors that are not themselves engaged in farming
9. 3-5 research projects, some addressing directly the current questions of farmers, but some also exploring new avenues of production in the UP that currently aren't being utilized
10. Continued input towards well thought out and executed research projects, properly published.
11. Growth in research use of the station by visiting researchers
12. More on farm research
13. Emphasis on programming targeted to Veterans.
14. More educational outreach events that everyone is aware of.
15. In just about every research study from UPREC, something I feel is missing is an economic analysis to go along with the basic agronomic results. We just are not operating in the typical agriculture marketplace here. To be relevant in the UP, the agronomic information needs to be supplemented with additional info on access to markets, transportation costs, market liquidity,

etc. In other areas where there are established, well-understood distribution channels for inputs and products. Farming in the UP requires extra attention to those details.

Organic and Specialty Crops (5)

1. UP branded dry beans, UP branded potatoes readily available in marketplace
2. The North Farm becoming a leader in organic vegetable systems in Northern climates research.
3. Creating market opportunities for UP products/vegetables in lower Michigan
4. Season extension variety trials and structure research that allows growers to choose the best crops for area markets
5. Development of institutional purchasers for local produce

Conventional Crops (3)

1. Field crop research on emerging crops
2. Productive crops
3. More programs to help farmers grow the best crops and what is the best way to do it for not only the large farmer but the small farmer as well.

Youth and Beginning Farmers (3)

1. New farmers/transitional crop farmers leaving training programs with skills and knowledge to succeed
2. Having finally been formally established, the UP Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Education Institute at UPREC expands its function into the K-12 curriculum in UP schools.
3. A vibrant plan for engagement with schools that is organized to be financially self-sustaining to promote careers in agriculture and a basic understanding of food systems

Forage and Cattle (2)

1. Continue focus on beef herd - grass based and genetics of moderation. Beef herd nationwide is becoming terminal bred instead of maternal. MSU Extension has good example of moderate framed cattle that excel within their operation on minimal inputs.
2. Milk cows, healthy beef herd

Physical and Human Resources (6)

1. One dedicated tractor for vegetable production that can be outfitted for cultivation and other needs that fit the long-term plan of the North Farm.
2. Additional staff that is consistent.
3. Improvements to the Grange building so it can be used for year-round educational events.
4. Get more meat processing locations in the UP.
5. Better teaching and meeting facilities at UPREC
6. An experimental station to be established.

Geography, Community and Partnerships (6)

1. Build strong connections with agribusiness and farmers to direct research.
2. In a perfect world? UPREC researchers more visible in communities and UPREC hosting a cross pollination (pun intended) of organic and conventional clients, helping them to meet each other where they are at. UREC could be at the center of whole food system development.
3. More work with FBIC on the existing forested land at UPREC.
4. Connecting UPREC to other MSU/ABR/MSUE entities for branding and marketing purposes.
5. I think UPREC should take the "big tent" approach and create opportunities for small-holders, homesteaders, gardeners, and such to come to UPREC and learn. A "purist" focus on the shrinking professional farmer demographic could prove a missed opportunity in the long run. I don't think it has to be an either-or proposition.
6. Should find some way to help the North Farm gain support in the local growers community. Maybe not possible with those "alternative lifestyle" farmers who define themselves according to their opposition to "the establishment". But for the big majority of everyone else, it would build good will and interest. Would be nice to see UPREC as a hub for that community down the road.

Funding (1)

1. Continued growth in external funding especially Federal grants.

Now dream a bit. What might UPREC be able to achieve over the next five years if funding and other barriers were of little restraint? Aka 'Wishes'

- **Research and Education (15)**
 - **General (12)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (2)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (1)**
 - **Conventional Crops (0)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (14)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (3)**
- **Funding (2)**

Research and Education (15)

General (12)

1. The goal of 100 percent food sovereignty for every family who wants it.
2. For me, I think we are on a good projection and don't see the need to push farther than what we have. Specifically, the Center's approach was changed rather dramatically around 7 or so years ago and finally funding and other resources are helping fund these objectives. To pivot again seems a bit premature to me.
3. UPREC would become the center of ag/land based economic development in the UP including research, training, and leadership
4. Having UPREC addressing issues that are of primary concern to livestock and crop farmers in the UP
5. UPREC would not only be a valuable resources for farmers and others living in the UP, who visit it often, but also an accessible education center and destination for people, including tourists, passing through the area
6. UPREC would be a major research center conducting and communicating research relevant not only to the UP but also to areas of similar climate, and some amount of research that is not wholly and directly agriculturally focused (but still relevant in some way)
7. Continued input towards well thought out and executed research projects, properly published.
8. To continue to be the "go to" for farmers to receive information
9. UPREC could become an economic engine for the Central UP while also being a well-known resource to community members.
10. Reduce unemployment rate at UP.
11. Figure out what some of the key future enterprises will be for northern farms in a changing climate scenario. Do the right kind of research on those topics.
12. Don't just summarize results for the already-savvy audience, but also package/repackage that information to include methods and real-world-in-the-UP economics for more novice farmers. Maybe treading a bit along the lines of the Cornell Small Farms Program.

Organic and Specialty Crops (2)

1. Standard Packaging classes.
2. Add a micro-malting lab (and maybe other small grain quality details) to the barley quality lab

Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)

1. Form an experiential farming school focused youth and college age students who have interest in certificates but cannot afford college.

Forage and Cattle (1)

1. Small dairy with dairy product processing capabilities where we could expand training for dairy farms wanting to go in that direction.

Conventional Crops (0)

Physical and Human Resources (14)

1. Build a local meat processing business that is USDA and organic certified and is independently run without government subsidy.
2. A heated indoor meeting space that can serve larger groups and even potentially small conferences
3. New buildings, new equipment.
4. Get more meat processing locations in the UP and broad band accessibility
5. Paid some overtime hours!
6. Establishment of housing for at least 24 students/clients to stay overnight comfortably. This would provide the infrastructure needed to deliver multi-day programming and make things more convenient given the travel times in the UP
7. The asbestos is gone, existing buildings are being renovated, and new buildings and infrastructure are being built to meet the contemporary/future needs of the community that UPREC focuses upon.
8. Staff out in community, providing hands on help to promote agriculture relevant to the Upper Peninsula.
9. Certified kitchen, farm store
10. Shared resources and equipment
11. Team building
12. Proper facilities and staff to host on-farm education opportunities for people of all ages (ADA compliant, pleasant spaces that acknowledge the history of the farm while being adequately modern)
13. To be an organizing partner in, if not the location for, a certified kitchen where value-added products can be produced, a produce light processing facility, and a meat processing facility

14. Renovate all the existing facilities to make them functional parts of the future North and South Farms operations. And then, once shown essential to meet the proven demand for the excellent content being produced at UPREC, build additional educational/outreach facilities. Creating the content first, then demonstrating the demand, and finally building new outreach capacity.

Geography, Community and Partnerships (3)

1. More local involvement. Chatham is a long way from Houghton, you have at least 3 weeks longer growing season, and you are far enough inland that you don't have the daily influence of cold, humid air rolling in off of Lake Superior.
2. Producer projects that help reenergize Upper Peninsula producers.
3. Becoming known for less usage of pesticides, Styrofoam, spraying , become a clean UPREC!

Funding (2)

1. Well, at least UPREC could establish a foundation in this regard.
2. Market your great beef product directly to the consumers locally at significant profit and sustainability for MSU and Chatham farm. Consumers want directly from the producer and you have a great product with crossing RAA on the Akushi. Make available locally

In my opinion, the following should be UPREC's most important priorities over the next five years:

- **Research and Education (19)**
 - **General (11)**
 - **Organic and Specialty Crops (4)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (3)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (1)**
 - **Conventional Crops (0)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (8)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (4)**
- **Funding (1)**

Research and Education (19)

General (11)

1. Financial Sustainability for local farmers Helping farmers market products
2. Continued emphasis on established research and outreach.
3. Continue balance of research, Farmer education and youth engagement
4. Telling people what UPREC is doing and looking for projects/ research that can impact UP producers
5. Your current newsletter is a great start and very useful. Keep it going. Get a website up and running that provides up to the minute information to UP producers. It needs to be updated at least daily and it should report problems and opportunities specific to each region of the UP — insect, fungus, weather, soil problems and their solutions; a listing of local farmers markets; educational events; current pricing of products; etc.
6. Education and training -Research -Spreading information about results of research widely throughout the UP community
7. Continued research.
8. Keep helping farmers
9. Formally dedicate UPREC as the home of the UP Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Education Institute---and name Abbey Palmer as Director!!! This action will cost virtually nothing. Doing so will help show MSU's commitment, and should help increase the opportunity to gain funding for education focused projects.
10. Communication, support of the local farmer
11. Research on climate change

Organic and Specialty Crops (4)

1. Emphasis on season-extending vegetable production and integrating into the local food economy.
2. Research, Extension and Education around regenerative agriculture
3. Establish more blueberry farms at UP.
4. Open to research on new crops (e.g. hemp, organic grain production)

Youth and Beginning Farmers (3)

1. Opportunities for new and beginning farmers to become established (infrastructure, support, education)
2. Education for beginning farmers
3. Creating and maintaining jobs in agriculture

Forage and Cattle (1)

1. Forage research, Dairy Product research

Conventional Crops (0)**Geography, Community and Partnerships (8)**

1. Community buy in
2. Guiding principal: Focus on creating equality of opportunity for UP farmers to succeed. Be wary of programs that are narrowly focused on the outcomes.
3. Establish stronger constituent relationships and community ties.
4. Building relationships with faculty on campus to ensure that the connection between the Upper Peninsula and main campus strengthens, and more research work can be brought up/replicated here in the UP.
5. Making sure that the little farmers gets the same consideration and help as the larger farms and that both achieve the best crops in the UP and make future farmers to move and live and work in the UP
6. Sustaining and growing collaborations related to the areas of research and education at UPREC
7. Continued work with ISDs in the UP for the development of both formal and nonformal agricultural education efforts Increased cooperation between community colleges and Ag Tech Institute
8. Reenergize Upper Peninsula agriculture

Physical and Human Resources (4)

1. Working with campus to solidify a team of employees that can sustainably carry out the mission of UPREC.
2. Get more meat processing locations in the UP and broadband
3. Full utilization of land and facilities for research, outreach and entrepreneurship.
4. Create a clean environment

Funding (1)

1. Partnerships, competitive research funding and philanthropy should be priorities.

Feel free to detail any other thoughts you believe are important for the purposes of UPREC's next five-year strategic plan.

- **Research and Education (6)**
 - **General (5)**
 - **Organic Specialty Crops (1)**
 - **Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)**
 - **Forage and Cattle (0)**
 - **Conventional Crops (0)**
- **Geography, Community and Partnerships (5)**
- **Physical and Human Resources (1)**
- **Funding (0)**

Research and Education (6)

General (5)

1. Improve communications.
2. I think research on and demonstration of permaculture would be well received
3. Keep up outreach
4. To continue building on the initiatives that have been developed over the past 7 years
5. Make information on all facets of station projects available to producers. To continue on the tract already started.

Organic Specialty Crops (1)

1. As the North Farm is the youngest/most volatile aspect of UPREC, I believe that establishing relationships with professors/faculty doing vegetable research is essential to the long term viability of the North Farm. We have certified organic land to offer that would be great for doing research in that area. Two faculty members that come to mind that UPREC should engage with would be Dan Brainard, in the Horticulture department, as well as Matt Grieshop in the Entomology department. Their expertise, as well as current research disciplines would mesh well with our goals of doing more veggie research.

Youth and Beginning Farmers (1)

1. UPREC and MSUE needs to expand its footprint to respond to UP demographics. Large scale agriculture is increasingly served by industry. Yet there is an increasing need by youth, young entrepreneurs, and small scale operator's for information of an applied nature. Our K-12 schools should be of particular focus and the UPREC facility needs to be upgraded to meet the needs of both outreach and visitors. This is not too ambitious for a five year plan.

Forage and Cattle (0)

Conventional Crops (0)**Funding (0)****Geography, Community and Partnerships (5)**

1. Build community
2. Answer the question - As a UP resident/farmer/land owner why should I care if UPREC exists.
3. Without full throated support locally, UPREC will struggle to fulfill its full and valuable mission in the U.P.
4. Collaborate with Michigan Tech University for all potential projects and opportunities.
5. Don't underestimate the value of good will in the UP public's mind. Hosting events can help UPREC become positively associated with our region wide sense of community. It's a real thing. What other part of Michigan has bumper stickers on half the (non-tourist) cars celebrating their identity. A folk music event, barn dance, black powder shoot, dark sky star-gazing, hand-hewn dovetail-notch log sauna construction, etc. Having UPREC host or include in other events some of these traditional rural lifestyle type events might help build public interest in all the rest of what UPREC is accomplishing.

Physical and Human Resources (1)

1. I think it is important to not take on many, if any, new tasks, and to ensure we have the labor capacity to continue existing work. There are probably a minimum of 5 funded projects at UPREC currently, ensuring the work gets completed is important.