

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Sarah Bye	4-H Program Coordinator
Veronica Dragovich	District 3 & 14 Support
Kate Edwards	Office Manager
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Jessica Protetch	Office Support
Jane Rapin	Community Nutrition Instructor
Michelle Smith	Community Nutrition Instructor



Message from the District Director



I'm excited to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Grand Traverse County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Thanks to your ongoing support, we've been able to make a meaningful impact on the lives of youth, families, businesses, and communities throughout the county.

MSU Extension continues to offer a wide array of research-based educational outreach to our residents. Over the past year, we've empowered individuals and families to lead healthier lives, supported local and new businesses, provided opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, assisted farmers with business management and mental health support, and so much more. Our team lives and works alongside county residents, building strong community relationships and staying responsive to local needs.

We remain committed to delivering our programs in personalized formats and locations that are convenient and accessible to our participants. This ongoing success is possible because of our strong partnership with you. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Grand Traverse County, thank you for another outstanding year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will join us in our upcoming programs.

Jennifer Berkey
District 3 Director

Impact



378
Programs accessed by residents



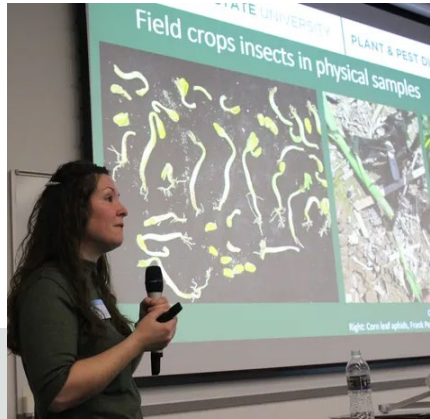
58,057
Reached by social media



5,255
Reached through programming



9,226
Reached indirectly



AgBioResearch
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

NWMHRC BUS TOUR

The Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center was a stop on the inaugural MSU Spartan Bus Tour on October 22, 2024.

The NWMHRC was fortunate to be a stop on the new Michigan State University (MSU)'s President's bus tour in October! President Kevin Guskiewicz, a neuroscientist and leader in concussion research started at MSU in March 2024. He came to us from the University of North Carolina, and in keeping with a tradition he started there, he hosted a bus trip through a slice of Michigan for 60 MSU faculty and staff.

The NWMHRC was honored to be selected as a stop for the tour, where the group learned about the latest in tree fruit research.

Heather Leach hosted a lab tour and update on the entomology research she is conducting in NW Michigan. Erin Lauwers, IPM Educator, piled the visitors on the wagon and explained various research trials that are going on in the field. Board members, Mark Miezio and Bruce Veliquette, were a key part of this visit as they introduced the group to the challenges of cherry production, many of whom do not work in agriculture. Both of our board members did a terrific job, and their messages were engaging, inciteful, and delivered from the heart. Their information really resonated with the group, and we had a plethora of interesting and engaged questions from the audience.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to make our bus tour stop such a success! We heard that

attendees were still talking about the visit to the NWMHRC at stops after ours.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT UPDATES

These updates feature timely discussions of pest challenges and management options dictated by weather and pest biology. Attendees are encouraged to bring examples of pests and damage found on the farm for identification and discussion. Additionally, we host speakers from local organizations and Michigan State University. Updates were held weekly in Leelanau and bi-weekly in Grand Traverse, Antrim, and Benzie counties. A virtual option was also available during Wednesday meetings.

22 *in-person site visits*
16 *scouting reports*
Major field trial



MSU EXTENSION'S IMPACT ON MICHIGAN'S GRAPE & WINE INDUSTRY IN 2024

MSU Extension continues to drive progress in Michigan's grape and wine industry, particularly in Northwest Michigan. Through educational programs, direct vineyard support, and research-driven initiatives, MSU Extension empowers growers and winemakers to enhance sustainability, productivity, and quality.

MSU Extension organized and co-hosted multiple educational programs for Michigan's winegrape growers, including workshops, conferences, and field days focused on sustainability, pest and disease management, and climate adaptability. These events featured expert speakers from across the country, providing hands-on

training and the latest research insights. A highlight of the year was the **Northwest Michigan Orchard and Vineyard Show**, where leading industry experts shared best practices and vineyard innovations.

ON-THE-GROUND SUPPORT FOR GROWERS

MSU Extension worked directly with vineyard owners, conducting 22 in-person site visits in Northwest Michigan to assess vineyard conditions and provide tailored management recommendations. Throughout the growing season, Extension specialists delivered 16 scouting reports, offering real-time updates on vine health, pest outbreaks, and weather patterns, helping growers make informed decisions.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

MSU Extension advanced its research efforts in grapevine cold hardiness, vineyard disease management, and sustainable practices. A major 2024 initiative included field trials aimed at improving grape resilience to climate fluctuations and enhancing vineyard productivity. Additionally, MSU Extension collaborated with industry partners to develop early detection strategies for invasive pests like the spotted lanternfly, ensuring Michigan's vineyards remain protected.





DIRT TO GLASS

EXPANDING DIGITAL OUTREACH AND RESOURCES

MSU Extension expanded its digital resources, publishing educational articles, videos, and scouting reports to support growers across the state. These materials provided practical guidance on vineyard management, fungal disease prevention, and soil health. By leveraging digital platforms, MSU Extension ensured growers could access timely, relevant information, empowering them to make informed decisions.

DIRT TO GLASS™ 2024

Dirt to Glass™ continues to be a premier state-wide event for the viticulture and enology industry held in Traverse City. This event is organized in partnership by MSU

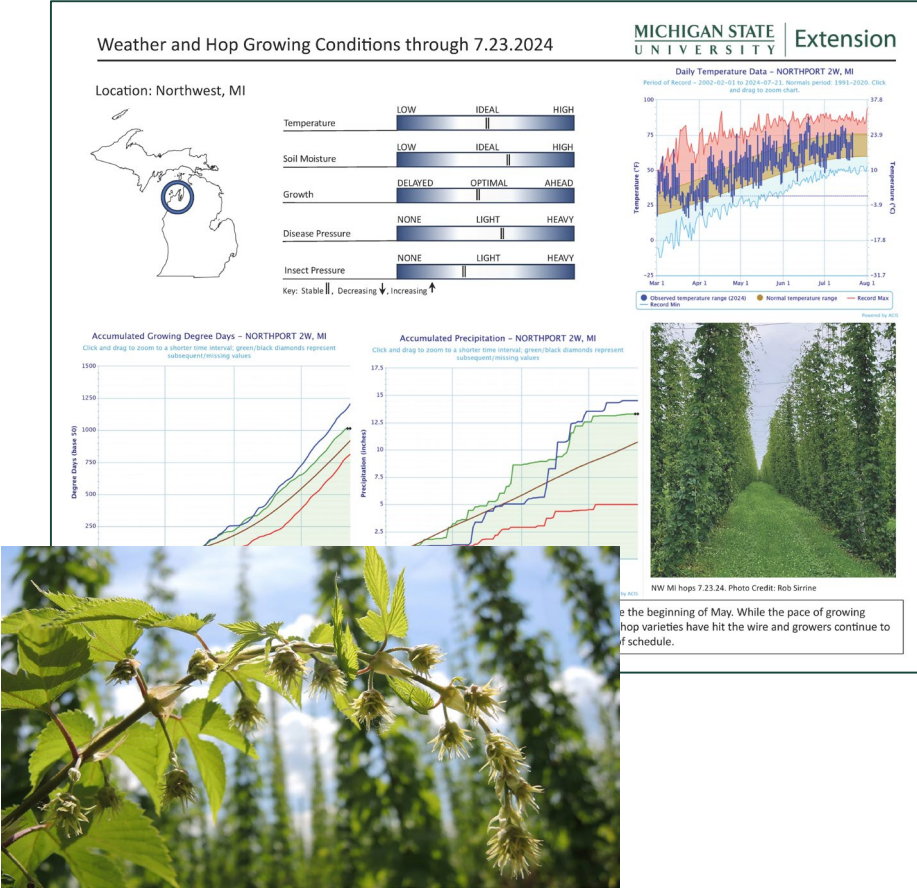
Extension, AgBioResearch and Intentional Agriculture with significant input from the industry in the planning and execution. The conference goals include elevating fruit and wine quality, bolstering sustainability, and positioning Michigan as a nationally competitive wine region. This event is committed to bringing together global leaders to share their research and expertise and inspire Michigan's growers and winemakers. By inviting international experts to showcase their paths to success, Dirt to Glass™ provides attendees with invaluable insights and best practices that can be adapted to Michigan's unique terroirs. Since its inception, Dirt to Glass™ has become a vital platform for collaboration between growers and winemakers, and education, uniquely tailored to Michigan's

grape and wine industry needs. The 2024 conference featured 18 speakers, including 11 local, five national and two international contributors for 186 attendees. Planning is in full swing for the 2025 event in late August.

LOOKING AHEAD

MSU Extension will continue strengthening Michigan's grape and wine industry through expanded education, cutting-edge research, and enhanced grower engagement. By fostering innovation and collaboration, MSU Extension remains a vital resource for ensuring the long-term success of Michigan's wine industry.







MORNING AgClips
AMERICA'S #1 AG NEWS SOURCE

MSU Extension Spring Kick-Off Meeting for Hop Growers

Informative Zoom meeting to kick off the hop growing season on April 17

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 4, 2025



Michigan State University Extension will host an interactive Hop Kickoff Zoom meeting on April 17, 2025, from 10 a.m. -12:30 p.m. (MSU Extension)

HOP RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

MSU Extension Educators, professors, specialists, and graduate students continue to secure federal and state funding for hop research in Grand Traverse County and beyond.

Based upon requests from the Michigan Brewers Guild and the Hop Quality Group, MSU designed a survey instrument to collect cultivar, acreage, yield, and hop quality data from all Michigan hop growers. Those who responded accounted for 85% of the total hop acreage in Michigan. Brewers, growers, and MSU researchers will be able to use the information to improve plant selection, improve hop quality, incorporate Michigan hop varieties into new beer recipes,

and more. Presentation of the survey results spurred conversation with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. We are in conversation to codify collection of this important data on an annual basis.

MSU HOP MEETINGS

MSU Extension hosts the annual virtual Spring Hop Kickoff meeting with hop growers, researchers, specialists, and additional stakeholders. The meeting includes important updates to the MSU Hop Management Guide, pest control options and recommendations, irrigation and fertility best practices, and updates from the Hop Growers of Michigan. MSU Extension also hosts a bi-monthly online meeting that brings together hop producers, educators,

scientists, state and national industry experts, and more to discuss current growing conditions, best management practices, and pertinent issues that may impact Michigan hop exporters.

REGIONAL HOP REPORTS

In 2024 Dr. Rob Sirrine produced bi-monthly hop reports for 7 regions across Michigan during the growing season. The reports included up to date precipitation levels, daily temperature, and accumulated growing degree days as well as temperature, soil moisture, growth, disease, and insect pressure forecasts.





MI GREAT BEER STATE CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

MICHIGAN'S GREAT BEER STATE CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW

The premier Midwest brewer-grower conference and tradeshow was organized and hosted by the Michigan Brewers Guild, MSU Extension, and the Master Brewers Association of the Americas-District Michigan. Dr. Sirrine hosted and moderated a brewer panel focused on purchasing Michigan ingredients and included Scott Stuhr of Silver Spruce Brewery, Traverse City. Sirrine also presented on the 'State of Michigan's hop industry'.

2ND MICHIGAN CRAFT BEVERAGE SUMMIT

The Summit, organized by the Michigan Craft Beverage Council, aims to educate and connect

growers, producers and other industry suppliers and to create collaborative partnerships and advance an ever-growing state craft beverage industry. Dr. Sirrine (MSUE), Dr. James DeDecker (MSUE), and Dr. Tim Miles (MSU) were invited to participate on a speaker panel discussing the role of MSUE and MSU in Michigan's craft beverage raw material supply sector.

COLLABORATION

MSU Coordinates the Great Lakes Hop Working Group, a multi-state collaborative, comprised of university scientists, specialists, and government agriculture workers, that develops hop research and education priorities to meet the needs of hop growers across the Central and Eastern U.S. and Canada.

MSU works hand in hand with the Hop Growers of Michigan, a 501(c)(5) non-profit organization, whose mission is to: advance the interests of Michigan hop growers and the Michigan hop industry through support of research and educational initiatives and promotion of Michigan-grown hops.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Farm Business Management Educator Chris Bardenhagen works with area farmers on succession planning, financial management, and cost of production budgets, both at the farm level and at the industry level. Chris assisted nine area farms with Telfarm program farm level and at the industry level. Chris assisted nine area farms with



*Year-end tax estimate meetings provided farmers with the opportunity to save nearly **\$54,000**, allowing for investment back into the farm business to help build farm resilience*



FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Farm Business Management Educator Chris Bardenhagen works with area farmers on succession planning, financial management, and cost of production budgets, both at the farm level and at the industry level. Chris assisted nine area farms with Telfarm program outreach, helping to determine end-of-year tax strategies and to perform annual balance sheet financial analysis. Farmers who participate in the program gain a greater understanding of their farm's financial strengths and weaknesses, and how they can improve upon their financial standing.

These farms represent about \$5 million in sales in 2024. Even though it was a hard year for many farms, year-end tax estimate meetings

provided farmers with the opportunity to save nearly \$54,000 this year.

Strategizing on year-end taxes is about more than just saving money though – it can help enable upgrades to farm equipment and infrastructure as well. This helps to help build farm resilience.

This year, Chris also consulted with many area farmers regarding important decisions relating to farm transfer plans. Succession planning is a hot topic with farmers right now, and in addition to connecting with more than 8 farm families, Chris helped organize a well-attended seminar this year in partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Succession planning tools and resources equip farm families to make

informed choices to successfully transfer business skills, responsibilities, and assets to the next farming generation.

“Succession planning has been completely overwhelming. I really appreciate your help to make our way through it.”

- Succession Planning Participant

Chris is also working on cost of production studies that provide tools to area growers. This year work was done to develop cost budgets for peaches, apples, and blueberries. Chris has also begun work on a chestnut cost study, which is a crop that can be grown well on old tart cherry sites.



Extension Master Gardener

2,095 Extension Master Gardener Hours Volunteered Valued at \$70,162	489 Pollinators counted on flower planters in Downtown TC 148 citizen scientist observations	83 Horticulture or pest management questions answered through the GT county office
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EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER

MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers participated in 26 volunteer projects in Grand Traverse County in 2024 for a total of 2,095 volunteer hours. The value of this volunteer contribution can be estimated at \$70,162, based on the independent sector’s published value of volunteer time for 2024 (\$33.49/hr). These projects impacted county residents by improving quality of life, empowering youth, protecting waterways, and improving food security. In addition, providing flowering plants to support butterflies, bees, and other pollinators was the focus of several projects this year. Pollinator gardens at Hull Park and Clinch Park in Traverse City provided flowering plants to support bees and

butterflies, along with educational signs so that visitors could learn about the importance of pollinators to our region. Similarly, 17 flower planters along Front St in Downtown TC were maintained by MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, contained flowers for pollinators, and provided educational signage inviting visitors to participate in a citizen science project if they wanted to learn more. A total of 148 citizen scientist pollinator counts were done at the planters in downtown TC in 2024. These observations documented 489 different pollinators visiting the flowers on the planters. Another highlight of the year for this project was the planting day in May, when members of the TC community, schools, and partner organizations joined EMG volunteers to help place the plants in the planters at

Clinch Park. Participants learned about pollinator protection and container gardening while planting the plants in the 40+ planters owned by the DDA that would later be placed in locations throughout Traverse City’s Downtown.

Citizen Science Initiative Project Achievements

- Pollinator Data:** gathered data helps scientists understand the presence and diversity of pollinators in an urban environment, which is crucial for their survival.
- Community Connection:** fosters a greater connection between the community and the natural world by engaging residents directly in scientific data collection.
- Stewardship:** promotes a sense of stewardship and care for the local environment by involving people in the maintenance and observation of these urban plantings.





Downtown TC (Official) · Following
4d · 🌐

👏 Huge thanks to our [Michigan State University Extension](#) program volunteers who helped beautify downtown this wee... See more





Every year we welcome new MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers to the program through a 3-day volunteer onboarding. During volunteer onboarding in 2024, volunteers toured potential volunteer projects in Grand Traverse County, such as Our Neighbor’s Garden, The Grand Traverse Area Children’s Garden, and the Boardman River Nature Center. These trainee volunteers are required to volunteer 40 hours in support of MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer projects in their first year to become fully certified as MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.

County residents can always access the latest research-based horticulture resources through the Grand Travers County MSU

Extension office as well as through our remote options like the MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline and Ask Extension. In addition, every Wednesday in the summer at the MSU Extension Office in Grand Traverse County, MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and staff are available for a walk-in plant diagnostic clinic. This service allows residents to receive real-time solutions to their residential plant and pest problems. In 2024, 83 gardening or pest management questions were answered for county residents coming to the walk-in diagnostic clinic.

100 YEARS OF SOIL TESTING SERVICES

MSU Extension partners with A&L Great Lakes, Inc. to analyze soil

samples from the Home Lawn & Garden soil test and Commercial/Farm sample kits sold in county Extension offices; Extension staff then generate MSU-specific fertilizer and soil amendment recommendations. From January to December 2024, MSU Extension issued recommendations for 4,377 home lawn and garden samples—a 23% increase over 2023—and 1,819 commercial and farm samples, up 11%. Through this program, MSU Extension continues to deliver trusted soil testing services that Michigan residents and farmers have relied on for over a century.

100

years MSU Extension has provided soil testing services





212 clients
7,725 attendees
428 direct interactions
Assistive technology
for 23 farm clients
44 staff trained



MICHIGAN AGRABILITY

Michigan AgrAbility helps people in the agricultural industry continue working despite injury, illness, or physical disability. The program's mission is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America.

In line with this mission, Michigan AgrAbility served 212 clients statewide and supported 7,725 attendees at workshops, demos, and trainings, engaging in 428 direct interactions in 2024. Also, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) supported clients by providing \$368,590 in funding for

assistive technology projects, benefiting 23 farm clients.

In July, Michigan AgrAbility staff partnered with National AgrAbility project staff to provide a Regional Training Workshop in Ann Arbor, bringing together 44 participants from as far as Alaska and Micronesia. The training provided hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of assistive technology and its uses in agricultural settings. Michigan was fortunate to host this valuable opportunity for learning and collaboration and looks forward to strengthening the AgrAbility network to continue to improve the lives of our clients.



Free downloadable plans
developed with MSU
College of Engineering



Swarm Trap Hive Lifter
*Developed for veteran beekeeper/
Heroes to Hives instructor with back injury*

Mechanized Rolling Kneeler Cart
*Developed for client with severe foot pain
to tend rows of low-growing plants*



Stress Management Factsheets

COPING WITH GRIEF AFTER LOSING THE FARM

The impact of losing a farm can be profound. This factsheet provides information on how to cope with grief and loss, and offers resources for support.

HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU

Stress can affect your physical, mental, and emotional health. This factsheet explains how stress affects you and provides strategies for managing it.

STRESS

Stress is a natural response to challenges. This factsheet defines stress and provides tips for managing it effectively.

COPING WITH GRIEF AFTER LOSING THE FARM

This factsheet provides information on how to cope with grief and loss, and offers resources for support.

HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU

Stress can affect your physical, mental, and emotional health. This factsheet explains how stress affects you and provides strategies for managing it.

MANAGING STRESS FOR FARMERS AND FARM FAMILIES

This factsheet provides information on how to manage stress for farmers and their families, and offers resources for support.

YOUTH FARM STRESS

This factsheet provides information on how to manage stress for young farmers, and offers resources for support.

HOW TO TALK WITH FARMERS UNDER STRESS

This factsheet provides information on how to communicate effectively with farmers who are under stress, and offers resources for support.

HOW TO CULTIVATE A PRODUCTIVE MINDSET

This factsheet provides information on how to cultivate a productive mindset, and offers resources for support.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND

This factsheet provides information on how to understand the challenges of farming, and offers resources for support.



2024 saw an increase of **1,130 participants**, representing a **131% increase**

FARM STRESS

Farming is inherently demanding. From job-related injuries to volatile commodity prices, Michigan’s agricultural community faces significant stress. Whether stemming from financial pressures or everyday hardships, MSU Extension is here to help.

In 2024, our Managing Farm Stress team delivered 45 innovative program activities, reaching 1,992 individuals. While 2023 was a historic year for farm stress outreach, 2024 is still more than double the number of individuals reached in any other year on record. For example, while 862 individuals were served in 2022, 2024 saw an increase of 1,130 participants, representing a 131% jump. This sustained expansion demonstrates the ability of the MSU Managing

Farm Stress team to scale programs, engage unique audiences, and provide critical behavioral health resources to our farming community.

A major milestone this year was the creation of the MSU Farm Stress Endowment. Approved by the MSU Board of Trustees in December 2024, this endowment establishes a sustainable funding source to support Michigan agriculture in perpetuity. A generous donation from Cherry Republic helped launch this effort. You too can support Michigan farmers by donating here:



We also continue to offer free counseling services with therapists experienced in farming challenges and provide financial assistance for those in Michigan Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Learn more about these resources here:



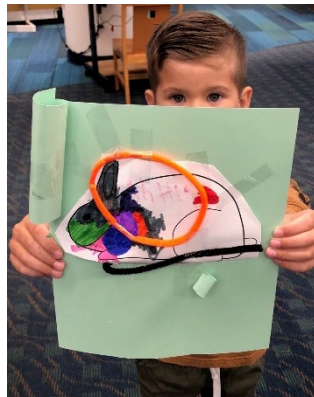
Farming is tough, but you don't have to do it alone. MSU Extension stands by our farmers and is ready to support you.



2023-2024 Program Year

Grand Traverse 4-H had **587** youth enrolled in year-round 4-H clubs.

The program would not be possible without the assistance of the many volunteers that are involved, including **160 Gold level volunteers** and **22 Silver level volunteers**.



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY 4-H

4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. From program areas ranging from science and technology to clothing and textiles, and so much more, 4-H provides fun, educational opportunities that empower young people with skills to lead for a lifetime and become the foundation for future success.

Based on the experiential learning model, youth in 4-H participate in specific program areas through the learn-by-doing approach. In addition to gaining valuable content knowledge, this model teaches 4-H members critical life skills such as goal-setting, self-discipline, conflict resolution and teamwork that directly contributes to the communities they live in. The

growth of these life skills are just one of the many positive youth development outcomes that occur from youth's participation in 4-H and result in a direct impact on not only themselves but others youth interact with as well.

Grand Traverse 4-H currently has clubs that offer the following opportunities for growth and learning:

- Engineering & Robotics
- Community Service & Leadership
- Arts, Crafts, Textiles, Photography
- Dogs & Dog Training
- Differently Abled Program
- Shooting sports: archery, BB gun, hunting/wildlife, muzzle loader, .22 rifles & shotgun

- Exploration Days: pre-college experience
- Outdoor Education: backpacking, hiking, canoeing, climbing & winter camping
- Livestock Animal Projects: horse, goat, swine, junior beef, steer, poultry, lamb, llama/alpaca, sheep, rabbit





4-H LIVESTOCK EDUCATIONAL EXPO

24 EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

271 YOUTH

from Grand Traverse,
Leelanau, Benzie and
Kalkaska counties



4-H LIVESTOCK EDUCATIONAL EXPO

The 2024 educational expo featured 24 sessions focused on livestock and related topics for 271 youth from Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Antrim, Benzie, and Kalkaska Counties who exhibit at the Northwestern Michigan Fair in 4-H livestock classes. This is an annual event to provide educational opportunities for these area youth.

Four of our 4-H Teen Reps (and one teen leader) from the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council worked with staff (Rosali Collier and Autumn Converse) to prepare and present an Animal Handling 101 session twice to groups at the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council Education Expo on Sunday, March 3. The first session reached about 50 people, and the second

session reached about 20 people. We used the PowerPoint (with additional text and photos) from Autumn Converse to have the teens present on this important topic to the audiences and engage with them by sharing their own stories and then asking the audience about their questions and scenarios. Each rep shared information about the species they have typically worked with during fair week, taking turns to tell stories of failure and success and physically demonstrating things like how to approach a pig that is running away from you in the ring. The teens helped plan and prepare and then present and did a very good job. The focus of the sessions was mostly on the "4-H way of handling animals", so the teens were pointing out ways to keep their animals calm (and themselves calm).

"I was really nervous because I knew so many people there and my hands were shaking, but it went okay and the second session went really well!" - Teen Rep

Michigan 4-H Lifetime Volunteer Award Recipient 2025

Honoring Keri Bancroft

Keri Bancroft has been named the 2025 recipient of the Michigan 4-H Lifetime Volunteer Award, joining a

distinguished group of dedicated volunteers who represent the heart and soul of 4-H.





With nearly 12 years of service, Keri has made a lasting impact on youth development across Northwest Michigan.

As the current President of the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council, Keri leads with vision and compassion, supporting youth in Antrim, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska, and Benzie Counties. She plays a pivotal role in coordinating the annual Education Expo, a one-day event that brings together 400–500 youth, families, and volunteers for hands-on learning across 24 educational sessions.

A strong advocate for youth leadership and positive youth-adult partnerships, Keri champions meaningful roles for teen board members and ensures that 4-H clubs remain enriching, inclusive spaces for growth. In addition to her Council leadership, she also serves as the

administrative leader of the Happy Highlanders 4-H Club.

Keri’s commitment to education, mentorship, and community exemplifies the spirit of 4-H, making her a truly deserving recipient of this lifetime honor.

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN 4-H LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

Through our dedicated volunteers, generous community and hard-working youth, our 4-H livestock auction had a record year. Youth learned how to effectively raise, market and sell their livestock project while keeping costs low to make a profit.

2024 NORTHWEST MICHIGAN FAIR

LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Gross sales	\$1,193,962.05
Animal Projects	550
Youth Participated	385
Auction Buyers	211





BOTANIC GARDEN TEACHING KITCHEN

SNAP-Ed Community Nutrition Instructors played a vital role in shaping the vision for the teaching kitchen at the Botanic Garden, offering expert guidance and support. Collaborating with architects, they thoughtfully reviewed proposed designs, ensuring that the space would not only serve the community's educational needs but also promote accessibility for all visitors. Their recommendations included essential enhancements, such as a wheelchair-accessible sink and counter, making the kitchen a welcoming and inclusive environment for individuals with limited mobility.

CAMPUS CRAVINGS

Partnership with Northwest Ed LifeSkills Transition Center

Campus Cravings is a project started by a Life Skills CI (Cognitive Impairment) Teacher, Jake Sedgwick, and Brittany Palmer. Campus Cravings is a student led project providing a salad bar to all employees and students at the Transition Campus. MSUE provides guidance and resources to increase availability of fresh produce to staff and students while increasing food safety. MSUE helped support a salad bar on wheels with sneeze guard and freeze packs to maintain appropriate temperatures during preparation and serving times.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM

Partnership with Munson Healthcare, DDA, SEEDS, local farmers, Sara Hardy Farmers Market, the Commons Farmers Market and Botanic Garden

The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program supports patients with chronic diseases in building healthier eating habits. A well-balanced diet, rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, is a proven way to improve health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Participants are referred by physicians' offices and receive up to \$100 in tokens, which can be used to purchase fruits, vegetables, herbs, and seedlings at the Sara



2,324 impacted



464 participants



8 policy, systems, and environmental changes



PANTRY TO PRESCHOOL



10 childcare sites



182 families served



Hardy Downtown Farmers Market and The Village at Grand Traverse Commons Farmers Market. This program is offered by Munson Healthcare Community Health, with nutrition education classes led by Community Nutrition Instructors from Michigan State University Extension. The Botanic Garden at The Historic Barns Park hosted the education sessions.

FATHER FRED PARTNERSHIP

MSU Extension continues its collaboration with the Father Fred Foundation Food Pantry through the Pantry to Preschool Program, which serves 182 families across 10 early childcare sites. This initiative connects families in need with nutritious food by providing bi-monthly food boxes. Each box contains ingredients to prepare a

family-friendly meal, along with a recipe and essential pantry staples. Families have expressed that the recipes offer valuable inspiration for preparing healthy meals, while the food boxes help stretch their grocery budget, making nutritious eating more accessible.

KINGSLEY PRESCHOOL

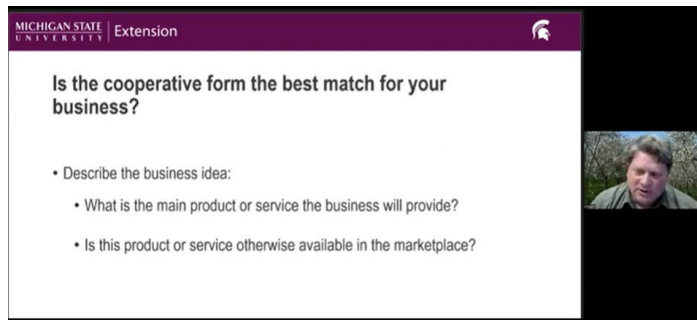
Show Me Nutrition is an evidence-based nutrition education program for youth and is currently taught in four Kingsley Preschool classrooms with 64 students. Children engage in age appropriate, interactive activities, like food tastings, that promote healthy eating, physical activity and food safety.

KINGSLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Each semester, Kingsley Middle School students can choose to take an elective class called Sustainable Science. Part of the curriculum is learning valuable life skills such as cooking and food safety but also increasing knowledge of nutrient dense foods and the impacts on our health and wellbeing. Evidence-based curriculum, Teen Cuisine, is taught to the class (31 students this year). At the end of the semester is a judged cooking challenge - seven teams showcase the knowledge and skills acquired in class. Each team chooses a recipe and gives it a make-over to include more nutrients and show off their learned cooking skills.

SNAP-Ed Works

Evidence shows positive impact of SNAP-Ed



MSU PRODUCT CENTER

The MSU Product Center provides one-one-one business counseling for food and agriculture entrepreneurs in the region through its Traverse City based innovation counselor. In 2024, MSU Product Center staff worked with 28 entrepreneurs in Grand Traverse County for 121.5 hours of preparation and client contact.

Co-ops 101 was an in-person/ virtual hybrid program in Traverse City that educated entrepreneurs on co-op business development steps. Dr. Chris Bardenhagen taught about legal due diligence while Parker Jones, MBA, discussed business development steps. The program was held in partnership with Crosshatch Center.

Parker was selected as an MSU Global Scholar to develop agritourism and the

wine industry in the Republic of Georgia. He included on his team a staff member from Shady Lane Acres, to add expertise and to support their professional development. In 2024, the team held educational trainings, built partnerships, and conducted site visits in Georgia. In 2025, Parker will host a Georgian academic to help cross pollinate these two important sectors in the Grand Traverse County agricultural economy.

CONNECTING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

The annual Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference on building dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystems was held in Cadillac on May 30-31, 2024. The event reached 111 attendees,

PRODUCT CENTER IMPACTS IN GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY



including 21 from District 3, on entrepreneurship development strategies for chambers of commerce, downtown development authorities, and local government stakeholders.



AGRITOURISM SUMMIT & PRE-SUMMIT FARM TOUR

MAKING IT IN MICHIGAN CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

The annual Making it in Michigan Conference and Trade Show on helping food and agriculture entrepreneurs scale their businesses was held in Lansing on April 23-24, 2024. The event was attended by 11 Grand Traverse County entrepreneurs. Trade show vendors averaged 3 one-on-one interactions with commercial food buyers.

AGRITOURISM SUMMIT

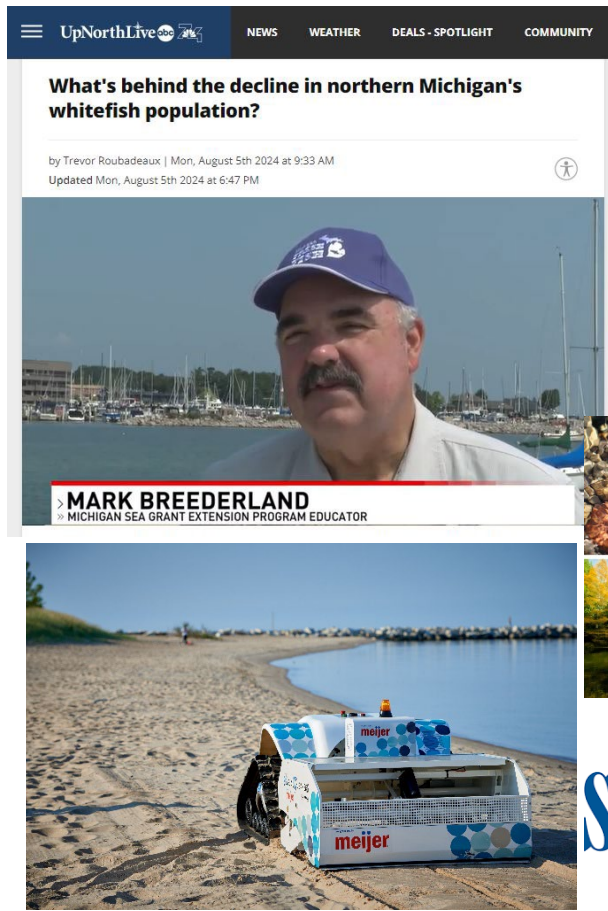
MSU Extension, in partnership with local leaders, gave rise to the first ever Michigan Agricultural Tourism Summit on May 7-8, 2024 in Traverse City. The goal of the summit was to broaden the perspective of local growers and

municipal leaders to better understand the relevance and need to support on-farm agritourism and other farm-related entrepreneurial activities.

On May 7, 65 people joined in on a bus tour around the Grand Traverse region visiting multiple agritourism sites including Jacob's Farm, Leelanau Cheese, Tandem Ciders and Nine Bean Rows. The bus tour culminated with a celebratory soiree featuring locally grown foods and Farm Club in Leelanau County. On May 8, 165 people traveled from 32 Michigan counties to attend the Agritourism Summit at the Hagerty Center. The Summit featured curated speaker panels representing local farms, municipal government, and MSU Extension. Speakers candidly shared their triumphs and struggles.

Within MSU Extension, members of CFEI, AABI and HNI worked seamlessly in a cross-institute collaboration to address the many dimensions of farming, farm stress, entrepreneurship, economics, the MI Right to Farm Act, and local policy and regulations. Building on the success of the first summit, a follow-up summit is planned for 2026.

"This was a phenomenal summit. The organizers did a great job of bringing so many voices and perspectives to the table from many key facets of this multidimensional industry. The tour of the various farms was eye opening."



NEW COMMISSIONER SCHOOL



SEA GRANT

Michigan Sea Grant Extension program – science to the shoreline is dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and coastal resources.

FRESHWATER SUMMIT

In October, topics presented to over 85 attendees included Grand Traverse Bay fisheries, lake whitefish restoration efforts and updates on FishPass at Union Street Dam.

SHORELINE STEWARDSHIP

Local Sea Grant programs include:

- Clean Marinas
- Invasive species education & boat wash stations
- Great Lakes levels & shoreline movement/erosion
- Fisheries trends

- Resilient shorelines
- PixieDrone and BeBot beach robot removing macroplastics

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC POLICY

NEW COMMISSIONER SCHOOL

New Commissioner School 2024 provided fundamental education for new and veteran county commissioners. The program helped participants explore governance complexities, understand their roles, learn about county finance and develop strategies for effective decision-making and collaboration.

GOVERNING ESSENTIALS

9 people from Grand Traverse County participated in a three-part *Governing Essentials Series* covering the Open

Meetings Act, Parliamentary Procedure, and Components of Extraordinary Boards.

INLAND TOWNSHIP

Mary Reilly Provided *Planning Commission Roles and Responsibilities*, to the Inland Township Planning Commission in September. Participants learned the fundamental roles for planning commissioners in a two-hour interactive program.

OLD MISSION PENINSULA

About 33 people attended a program, *Cultivating Local Farm Economies*, at the Mission Peninsula Library. The program discussed the economic challenges for Michigan farmers and the link between local planning and zoning to support on-farm entrepreneurship.

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