



# Gladwin County

## 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

[msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is serving the residents of Gladwin county by providing a variety of programs and resources to help people achieve their greatest potential. We offer a variety of resources through our Land Grant University. Whether it is a youth program designed to help kids learn responsibility, or disease identification for a grower's specialty crop, we've got the backing of researchers and specialists on campus and across the state in each Extension office.



Our staff is trained to connect people to the resources they need to grow food for their family, to prepare food safely and efficiently, to provide nutritious meals for their family, to work together to find common goals, and to help grow our communities.

In this day and age, a simple Google search brings up "answers" to life's many questions. It's easy to get answers. But are they the right ones? How do we know what will work best for us? That's a whole new challenge, and one that we are prepared to handle. We'll help you navigate the wild frontier out there.

Along the same line, technology has provided us with opportunities to teach from a distance. It allows participants to learn in their spare time, on their own schedule, and from the comforts of their own home or farm. MSU Extension provides many opportunities for online learning, as well as the traditional classroom style, office appointment, phone call, or farm visit. Throughout the years we have adjusted our methods to meet the needs of the changing world, but we hold on to some traditional values of face to face interactions and "hands-on" learning.

Whatever the need, we are here to serve you. We will do our best to provide you with the information you need to make your life better. Whether its health, agriculture, entrepreneurship, or teaching youth skills to carry forward throughout their lives, the cooperative extension service extends the research of the university while meeting the needs of the local community.

We thank our local governments, partners, and residents for providing us with the needed resources to maintain a local office, a strong 4-H program, and a touchpoint for local service.

Shari Spoelman , District Coordinator

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MSU Extension has more than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.



1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were sent to about 16,900 email addresses.



More than 3.7 million visitors viewed more than 7.2 million pages.

## MEASURING IMPACT

### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

Youth Served .....	796
Health & Nutrition.....	579
Agriculture & Landowners .....	85
Career Building (youth).....	123
Finance and Home .....	117
Soil Tests .....	82
Gardeners .....	24
Food Safety .....	24
Growing Communities .....	21

### DISTRICT 6 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, 51,592 visitors from the 7-county district viewed more than 138,129 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website ([msuc.msu.edu](http://msuc.msu.edu)). Of those, 52.1 % were first-time visitors. Search engine rankings make [msuc.msu.edu](http://msuc.msu.edu) one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

# Developing Youth and Communities



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.

4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

## Growing true leaders

With innovative ideas, exuberant energy and the ability to look beyond preconceived obstacles, youth have the capacity to change the world. However, many lack the skills and confidence to empower these assets into motion. They need experiences and training that help them to feel ready and capable to lead.

Michigan 4-H helps to prepare current and future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for leadership development. From the club experience to statewide youth councils, all youth have the chance to serve in a leadership role. Those experiences and various leadership trainings provide youth with skills to last a lifetime and empower them to stand up today as true leaders in their families, schools and communities.

Gladwin County 4-H youth participating in a Community Service Project



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



*4-H Clubs in Gladwin County*



*Youth in organized 4-H Clubs*



*Adult volunteers help make it happen!*

## **4-H Clubs**

The club model of program delivery is essential to 4-H. It is the original and the oldest method of providing 4-H programming to county youth. Club leaders and other adult volunteers work with groups of youth, focusing on specific project areas and educational goals. There are 13 active clubs in Gladwin County. Projects include: livestock, small animals, shooting sports, crafts, and performing arts.

## **Exploration Days**

An event open to youth ages 11-19, Exploration Days is designed to help young people learn new ideas and techniques, increase their interest in and readiness for college, explore career options, and develop their decision making, independence and team-building skills. Each year, approximately 2,500 Michigan youth attend this educational event. Gladwin County had 9 youth members attend Exploration Days and two adults serve as chaperones for the event.

## **Kettunen Center Events and Trainings**

The center is a full-service conference and retreat facility that is owned and operated by the Michigan 4-H Foundation. Workshops at the Kettunen Center offer hands-on opportunities to youth and adults and include many indoor and outdoor educational options. Gladwin County Extension Educator Bev Przystas taught and facilitated sessions at the events and workshops offered throughout the year. Workshops attended by Gladwin County Youth and Adult Volunteers:

- 4-H Winterfest
- 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine Workshop
- 4-H Vet Science Workshop
- 4-H Visual Arts, Crafts, Sewing, and Textiles Workshop
- 4-H Advisory Board Retreat
- 4-H Challenge U Workshop
- 4-H Goat Workshop

## **4-H Palooza, Spring Break Day Camp**

Gladwin 4-H hosted a two-day camp for youth ages 7-12 during the week of spring break for Gladwin area schools. Youth participated in fun, educational activities and learned about science, healthy living, money around the world and more. Youth also participated in fun activities such as building rockets, learning new camp songs, and making tie-dyed shirts. 28 youth participated in the event, along with five teen leaders, and four adult volunteers.



Gladwin Festival of Lights





## Junior Master Gardeners

In partnership with the Beaverton Activity Center and a grant received from the SHOPKO Foundation, Gladwin County 4-H hosted a six-week SPIN (Special Interest) Club called Junior Master Gardeners, featuring the “Learn, Grow, Eat and Go,” curriculum. Six Gladwin youth and four adults learned about gardening, how to eat healthy, and be healthy all while growing their own garden outside of the Beaverton Activity Center.



## 4-H State Goat Show

The 2016 Michigan 4-H Goat Show was held June 25<sup>th</sup> at the MSU Pavilion-South Barn. Over 70 youth from across the state competed in various dairy, meat and fiber goat as well as goat pack, driving and obstacle classes. The show allows youth to demonstrate their knowledge and skill with their goat project in showmanship and breeding classes. Gladwin County 4-H youth members participated in the show.

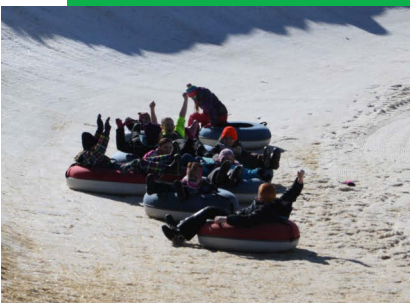


## 4-H Fish Fry

The Gladwin Knights of Columbus holds an annual fish fry to raise funds for the Gladwin County scholarship fund. 4-H families attend the event to help promote 4-H and to serve, wait tables, and clean up alongside the Knights of Columbus members. 63 youth members and 16 adults helped to make the event great. Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus for their continued support of the program.

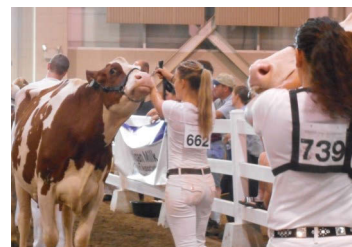
## Winter Fun

4-H Members enjoyed tubing at Snow Snake in Harrison, Michigan, one of the many fun things that 4-H members get to do throughout the year.



## **Gladwin County Fair**

Over 200 4-H youth participated in the Gladwin County 4-H Fair. The Gladwin County Fair is an event in which 4-H members showcase their hard work and efforts throughout the year. 4-H'ers participate in animal projects, still exhibits, shooting sports, and help with the 4-H concession stand. The livestock and small animal auctions were both a great success in 2016 thanks to the continued support of local businesses in Gladwin County and surrounding areas. The fair theme was "Christmas in July." Clubs decorated booths in the still exhibit barn, decorated their project areas in animal barns, and participated in the parade to start off fair week.



200

*4-H youth participated in the Gladwin County Fair*

8

*youth participated in the 4-H State Horse Show*

## **4-H State Horse Show**

Gladwin County 4-H members participated in the State 4-H Horse Show in East Lansing in August. This three-day event brings together almost 600 4-H'ers from across Michigan, selected by their county 4-H programs. Gladwin County had 8 youth members that participated and 3 adult volunteers.



Over the three-day show, members compete in English, dressage, western, trail, jumping and gymkhana with some of the most accomplished young equestrians in Michigan. Many have spent months, even years, preparing themselves and their horses or ponies for the show in hopes of bringing home a gold medal or even being named a state champion. Congratulations to all the participants.

## **4-H Summer Camp**

In partnership with Gratiot and Isabella Counties, Gladwin 4-H hosted 4-H summer camp (ages 9-12.) Over 100 youth members participated in this multi-county event with the theme "4-H Campalooza, Whooo's Ready for Camp?" 4-H camp features fun, educational activities that are hands-on and innovative for youth members. Teen leaders serve as counselors for the camps and are able to develop leadership skills and enhance their life skills.



253

*youth reached in school and after-school programs*

288

*youth reached in school enrichment programs*

# Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

When you support MSU Extension's efforts to enhance residents' access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food, program participants will focus on food safety measures in the field and at harvest, learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, and bring community partners together to strengthen access to healthy food supplies. This leads to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

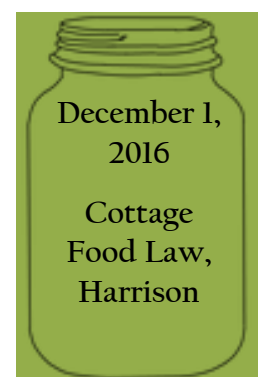
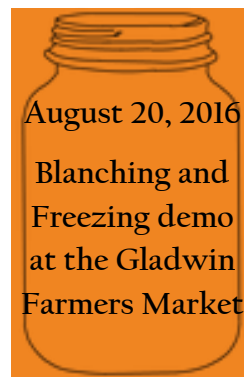
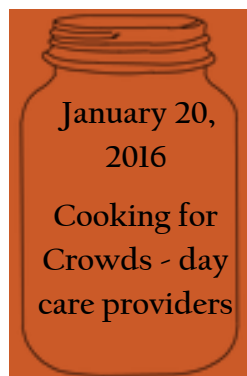
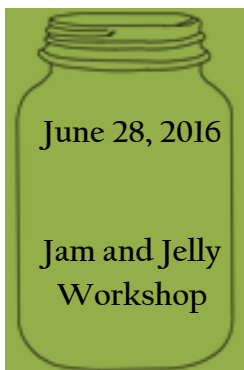
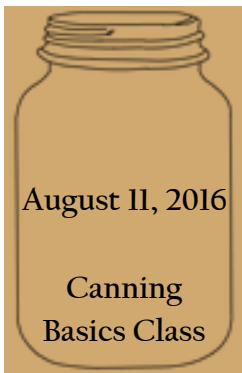
## Reducing foodborne illness through education of individuals, small businesses

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. Since 2013, MSU Extension food safety and preservation programs have taught almost 10,500 Michigan residents safe food handling, food preservation and methods to reduce foodborne illness.

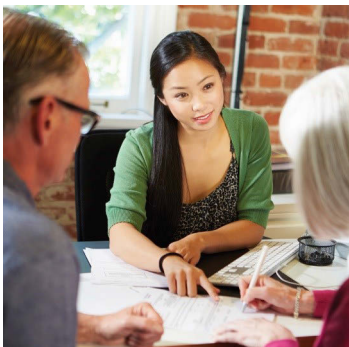
Participants include youth, nonprofit organizations that prepare food for the public and food preservers who want to create safe products for their small businesses.

Through face-to-face and online learning, Michigan communities receive high-quality, research-based education using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe food preservation.

- 95% of participants report they will follow research-based and tested recipes for home food preservation.
- 86% of youth participants gained knowledge about food spoilage organisms and learned how the organisms' growth can be slowed or prevented.
- 85% of participants can correctly list strategies for cross-contamination prevention.
- 91% know correct methods of cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.



# Ensuring Strong Communities



*“After today, I feel like I could go into an interview with confidence.”*

*“I feel extremely prepared for a real interview.”*

*“Very cool and a great way to practice interview skills.”*

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending, avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

## Mock Interview Day-Clare/Isabella/Gladwin

High school students need the opportunity to practice interview skills in order to be ready for the workforce. Employers appreciate and are more likely to hire candidates who know how to present themselves. Michigan 4-H is perfectly situated to provide this type of learning opportunity. To address this need, a Mock Interview Day event for Isabella, Clare, and Gladwin counties is planned and held in mid-March every year. Chaired by staff from MSU Extension, other partners include Michigan Works!, Mid-Michigan Development Corporation, Gladwin Economic Development Corporation, Central Michigan University, Clare-Gladwin RESD and Mid Michigan Community College. On the day of the event, about 70 adults from local businesses volunteer their time to interview students, review résumés, and provide short educational workshops. In 2016, 300 11th and 12th grade students from 8 area schools took part in the event. 121 students attended from Gladwin County. After the event in 2016,

- 95% of the students surveyed felt they would do a better job interviewing in the future
- 96% agreed that after this event they had more confidence in their ability to do well in a job interview
- 96% felt more prepared to join the workforce
- 96% would encourage other students to attend this event in the future

## Gladwin County Farm Markets

This past year, a new farm market opened up in Beaverton, MSU Extension had an educational information booth present to share programs and information on 4-H, food preservation and agriculture.

The Gladwin Farmers Market opened in May and MSU Extension had a 4-H display table set up and held blanching and freezing demonstrations and shared Michigan Fresh – food preservation information. Staff was available for pressure canner dial checks. MSU Extension was present in both locations a total of 6 six times throughout the summer to showcase what we offer.



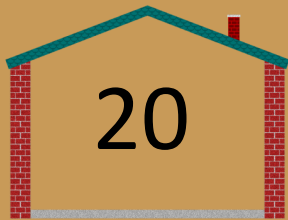


## Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

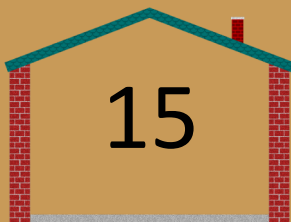
*I am working with the New Dawn Shelter in Gladwin, providing Money Management and Rent Smart classes.*

*I am presenting a budgeting and credit class to Gladwin County Recovery Court THREE times a year. This has been made mandatory by the judges in Clare & Gladwin Counties.*

- Teagen Lefere, MSU Extension program instructor



**People from Gladwin County became better renters.**



**Gladwin County residents learned to better manage their money**

## Homeownership & Foreclosure Prevention

MI Money Health's team of knowledgeable, straight-forward financial pros demystify common money and homeownership best practices with university-backed, research-based programs and resources to help Michigan residents navigate through whatever financial challenges life throws their way.

**Homeownership Education:** This course helps participants make informed choices about the true costs of homeownership. Bonus? Completing the course can help Michigan residents qualify for down-payment and other assistance programs.

**Money Management:** Unbiased education about common money struggles and best practices help Michigan residents at any financial stage in life. In Gladwin County 15 individuals participated in three sessions of "Money Management" education.

**Foreclosure:** Our certified housing counselors help Michigan residents navigate through the tough decisions and explore options to avoid foreclosure whenever possible.

**Rent Smart:** The "Rent Smart" program covers the financial preparation, basic rental process and continual good tenant conduct. It is designed to help educate individuals or families on how to be good tenants, including the rights and responsibilities of a renter. Gladwin County had 20 participants in this program.

## Build Your Future

Fourteen youth ages 13 – 19 years olds attended a 3 week session on Build Your Future – choices, connections and careers. The youth received their own career journal to keep track of what they learned. Information was shared on finding out their career path, goal setting, building portfolios, funding sources, resume writing, interview skills and pathways to success. Extension Educator Bev Przystas along with local volunteer leader Janelle Thurlow taught these sessions.



# Keeping Businesses Strong

## Leadership Gladwin County

In 2005, three local business people attended a workshop called “Developing Community Leadership” sponsored by Michigan State University Extension. A steering committee was formed to develop a county-wide leadership program. The first class was offered in

September of 2006 with 12 local individuals, male and female, ranging in all ages, various jobs and organizations. Later, a grant from the Midland Area Community Foundation was received for program implementation. The interest continued the following year and has been ongoing ever since. Michigan State University Extension had taken the lead as coordinator and other volunteers from the

community were on the committee. As the program grew and new ideas formed, the committee took a year off, regrouped, and formed a 501(c)3 non-profit leadership board.

The 10<sup>th</sup> year started in the fall of 2016 with 13 participants. Over 120 county leaders have graduated from this program since its inception. A community service piece has been incorporated so the participants are able to give back to the community in various ways throughout the year long program. At the end of the year, the participants enhance their public speaking skills by providing a presentation about something they like in Gladwin County and want to share with others.

The program begins in September and runs monthly through May with day-long meetings shared between Gladwin and Beaverton, using local businesses, schools, and offices. For more information on the leadership program, the contact is Diana Mella, program coordinator at [leadershipgladwinco@gmail.com](mailto:leadershipgladwinco@gmail.com).

## Gladwin County Youth Leadership

In its 7th year, 10 high school students from both Gladwin and Beaverton were selected to be a part of the county youth leadership program. They attend 5 day long modules over 5 months which include education, county history tour, Real Colors personality test, career prep, law and law enforcement. The youth join the adult leadership group on the last day and share presentations with each other on some aspect of Gladwin County. Beverly Przystas, MSU Extension Educator, provides leadership activities using Life Skills, while assisting with the overall coordination of the youth program. Michelle Neff, Extension Educator leads both the youth and adults in the Real Colors presentation to help participants understand communication styles related to personality types.



Gladwin County Adult Leadership participants learn about law and law enforcement.

# 10

High School Students took part in the Gladwin County Youth Leadership Program in 2016

# Keeping People Healthy



**Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.**



*People in Gladwin County received nutrition instruction in 2016*

## Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

Limited income and poor nutrition affect quality of life and can increase healthcare costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 30 percent of Michigan adults are considered obese, and one out of every three deaths in Michigan is caused by cardiovascular disease, influencing the quality of life and adding billions of dollars each year in economic burden.

MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to help residents in urban and rural communities stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity.

- 79% of youth participants improved their abilities or gained knowledge about how to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Guidelines.
- 79% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one nutrition practice, such as preparing foods without adding salt, or using the Nutrition Facts labels to make food choices.
- 73% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one food resource management practice, such as planning meals in advance or comparing prices when shopping.

SNAP-Ed instructors provide education either through one time presentations or series. They often “partner” with local organizations to provide programming to their clients. In Gladwin County MSUE partnered with the following agencies or organizations in 2016:

- New Dawn Shelter
- District Health Department - Gladwin
- Gladwin County Council on Aging
- MMCAA (Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency) Head Starts in Gladwin and Beaverton
- MMCAA Commodity outreach
- Gladwin Elementary School Great Start Preschools
- NEMCSA (North East Michigan Community Service Agency) Head Start - Gladwin
- Beaverton Elementary School SPARKS
- Beaverton Elementary School Backpack Program
- Gladwin Intermediate School Backpack Program
- 4-H Day Camp at Gladwin City Park

## Keeping People Healthy, continued

The following evidence-based curriculums were used in Gladwin County in 2016:

**Show Me Nutrition** – a curriculum for Pre-K through Jr. High – each level adds to previous instructions and exposes children to healthy food, physical activity, body image and media influence through instructions, activities and sampling. In Gladwin County we have been working with preschools and the Beaverton SPARKS after school program (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades).

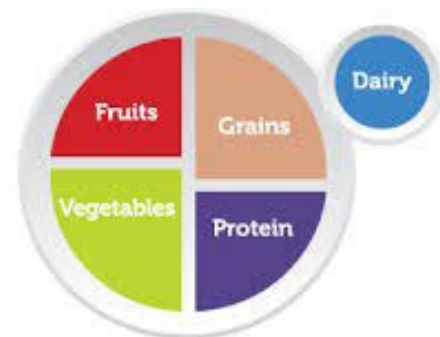
**Cooking Matters** – includes both a nutrition lesson and cooking instructions. This has been co-led by MSUE Nutrition Instructor Coral Beth Rowley and Becky Perkins, who has been a volunteer cooking instructor for this program for several years.

**Eat Healthy, Be Active** – a USDA curriculum designed for adults to help improve understanding and practice of healthy food choices and preparation, eating well on a budget, and engagement in physical activity - healthy lifestyle factors - has been used with various audiences in 2016 as a series of lessons.

MSU Extension also contributed to the education of recipients of Project Fresh and Market FRESH.

**Project Fresh** – encourages participants of the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program to eat more Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables and works in cooperation with the WIC program which provides coupons for Michigan-grown produce at participating local farm and farmers markets.

**Senior Project FRESH (Market FRESH)** – encourages lower-income adults 60 and over to purchase (and eat) more Michigan-grown produce in season at local participating farm and farmers markets. MSU Extension works in cooperation with the Council on Aging which provides coupons through the state office for use at these markets.



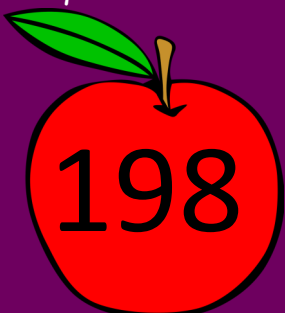
**Cooking Matters**  
Participants making chicken empanadas with sweet potato fries.



Adults in Gladwin County were taught nutrition through a series of classes.



Additional adults attended nutrition presentations



Youth were taught nutrition through a series of classes



Youth in Gladwin County attended nutrition presentations

## *Keeping People Healthy, continued*

### **Staying Healthy: A systems approach (Policy, Systems, and Environment)**

MSU Extension nutrition programming has begun to engage with workplaces, schools, and childcare facilities to address policies, systems, and environments that directly influence the health of those who regularly use their services. The goal is to help them work toward self-selected goals that make the healthier choice the easier choice to make. When a system improves, it fosters healthier practices for those using that system, whether children or adults, which can lead to healthier lives.

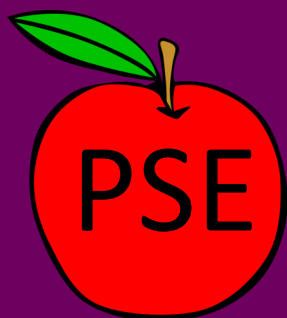
In Gladwin County, we began work with facility directors at a large childcare facility. Using an online tool to help them assess the overall environment, we then provided support choosing goals to work on, making a plan, and providing various educational resources. The center directors are working on incremental improvements in the areas of nutrition and physical activity that will make it easier for staff and children to “make the healthy choice the easy choice” most of the time.

The childcare facility that Nutrition Program Instructor Coral Beth Rowley worked with over a five-and-a-half month period in 2016 put a policy in place for screen times, something they had previously started to practice but had never put in writing. They achieved “best practice” in this goal area as well as in the practice of having water available wherever the children were, both indoors and outdoors. They made strides



in serving all meals family style, a goal they set and began to practice and will be continually working on. These were their three primary goals, but in addition they found they were improving other practices as they became aware of them throughout our ten visits. MANY practices were improved, as they went from 39.6% to 52.4% achieving best practices overall in nutrition and physical activity and improved their levels of achievement in many areas. In activities supporting physical activity they went from 54.5% to 69.7% best practices achieved and in the nutrition area went from 24.5% to 40.8% best practices achieved by the time of their final assessment in October. The Assistant Director said she has now “started eating with the kids” and the Director stated that she is starting to “focus on improvement by policy” and is working on “best outcomes for the children”. They plan to do nutrition activities and tasting with the children and are interested in having MSU Extension come back and do something of the sort with the children in the future.

This childcare facility serves around 80 children on varying schedules and is currently piloting a preschool program for very young children. Many lives are affected by the practices that they encourage.



*Policy, Systems & Environment—the best practice for sustained healthy living*

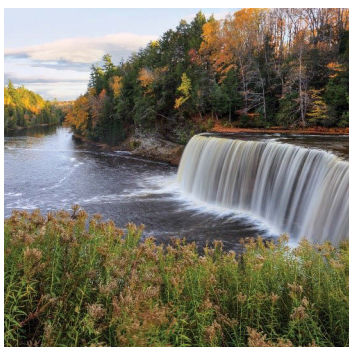


*The amount of months it took to assess, develop a plan, and start implementing change for a healthier environment.*



*The number of primary goals to get you started on a healthier path in school or at work*

# Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



**Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.**

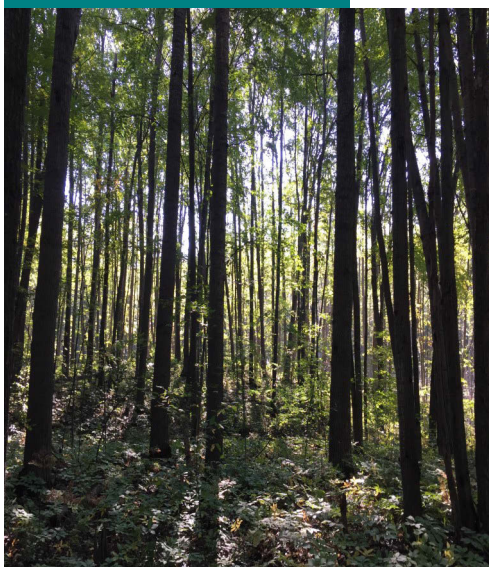
When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

## Raising awareness of the benefits of cover crops

Cover crops are a hot topic in agricultural circles, thanks to an MSU Extension specialist's message that is resonating with the right crowd. Dean Baas, a senior research associate, conducts cover crop and organic agriculture research and education.

Cover crops are plants seeded into agricultural fields, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining ecosystem quality. Environmental benefits include enhanced biodiversity, increased soil infiltration and attraction of honeybees and beneficial insects. Initial studies have shown that:

- Farming benefits include reduced erosion, improved soil quality through increased porosity, soil organic matter and water-holding capacity, as well as the addition of beneficial microbes.
- Cover crops help retain nutrients that otherwise would be lost.
- Cover crops add nitrogen through fixation while combatting weeds and breaking disease cycles.

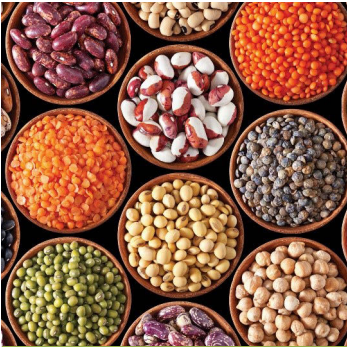


## Woodlot Management Program

MSU Extension Educators Julie Crick, Kable Thurlow, Paul Gross, and Dennis Stein collaborated to bring a Woodlot Management Program for Gladwin County residents. The program featured speakers from the following organizations/agencies: Clare Conservation District Forestry Assistance Program, Natural Resource Conservation Service; MDARD's Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP); private industry and MSU Extension Educators.

The evening session was attended by 12 people. A half day in the field was scheduled following the evening session. The field session in Gladwin County had 6 participants.

# Supporting Food and Agriculture



When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues to increase. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices. Participants also learn how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and how to conserve and protect water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, and helps retain and create agricultural jobs. These measures strengthen Michigan's economy while connecting farmers to local food opportunities and global markets. In this way you help MSU Extension encourage growth in a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

## Mid Michigan Cattle Network

The Mid Michigan Cattle Network is for networking and education of beef producers in central Michigan, it is a producer driven group. The group's main goal is to give producers an opportunity to get together in an informal setting and share thoughts and ideas, listen to experts from various agribusinesses, and from MSU Extension. This group was started in 2011 by Kable Thurlow, MSU Extension Beef Educator housed in Gladwin County. They host meetings in our area that vary from farm tours to inside (non-formal) settings. There were 141 attendees at 7 events in 2016, and they were held in 4 counties in central Michigan. Topics ranged from soil health, to precision farming, grazing, and grass fed beef producers.



Learning about grass finishing beef on the Gardner Farm.



Attendees learning about the beef checkoff program.



24

August, 2017 is the date of the “Focus on Forages and the Future” MSU Agriculture Innovation Day at the Lake City Research Center.

“Forage production plays a crucial role for livestock farmers across the state. This field day puts farmers in front of the leading experts, the latest research...”

- Ron Bates, director of agriculture and agribusiness for MSU Extension.



## Farm & Garden Show – Gladwin County

The 2016 Farm & Garden Show was a huge success with over 50 Business Exhibitors and over 800 attendees. The show continues to grow and offer attendees a chance to visit with various agribusinesses from around the state. This show started in the Edick Dairy Farm Shop in 1976 and has continued to be a fun and experiential learning event since its creation. The Gladwin Team of Michigan State University Extension employees Coral Beth Rowley, Tracy Volk, Bev Przystas and Kable Thurlow continue to support the event by being on the planning committee and helping with various activities throughout the year and the day of the event. New in 2016 was a youth scavenger hunt. Since the show moved from a week day to a Saturday, it was decided to hold a scavenger hunt for youth to learn in a fun environment. Youth visited a variety of booths and received a sticker. Once they filled their activity card up they were able to turn in their card and receive a goody bag. Over 130 youth 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders came to the show and took home an Ag bag. They visited 10 booths and with the help of older 4-H youth, they experienced various agriculture related exhibitors.



Local Farmers, Dennis Vannest, and Thane Grove, enjoying the Farm and Garden Show

## Bull Breeding Soundness Exam

Fertility testing the breeding bull is a minor production cost that can help prevent or identify reproductive failure. Using a bull that is infertile or that has structural problems will frequently result in a higher percentage of open cows. Increasing costs of production due to higher feed costs, make keeping an open cow cost prohibitive.

In the 2016 clinics held around the state, 18% of the bulls tested were unsatisfactory, and would not have been able to satisfactorily impregnate cows.

Bull Breeding soundness clinics were held across the state of Michigan; Gladwin County was able to host this clinic again with MSUE Beef Educator Kable Thurlow coordinating the clinic. The Gladwin location had close to 20 bulls from several different farms in Gladwin County, and the surrounding areas.



Breeding soundness exam in Gladwin



30

4-H club members were registered in beef projects in Gladwin County in 2016

## Forage and Grazing Conference

MSU Extension Educator Kable Thurlow was a member of the 2016 planning committee, and also responsible for working with the speakers for the Forage Spokesperson Contest at the event. One of the speakers (Jon Nelson from Midland Co.) at the event was part of the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Grass Fed Beef Project. Jon has been willing to share his experiences in transitioning from cash crop to grass fed beef.



Kable Thurlow took several producers from Gladwin and Midland Counties to this event. The producers attended sessions from keynote speaker Dr. Dan Undersander on advances in hay machinery, and on the future of forages. Comments made on the evaluations, and on the ride home were positive. Producers stated they learned information that day that they would be able to implement to produce a higher quality hay product.

## Youth BQA Webinar

Beef Quality Assurance is a national program that covers every management aspect of producing high quality beef. Utilizing the national beef quality assurance program offers an excellent educational opportunity to teach youth various aspects of producing high quality beef. There is not a Beef Quality Assurance program for youth in the state of Michigan. Youth can currently attend Pork Quality Assurance trainings and learn how to properly produce a high-quality pork. 4-H beef exhibitors previously have not had that opportunity. Youth 4-H members produce beef that goes into the market as finished beef. For the reputation of the beef industry, it is imperative that the beef produced by 4-H exhibitors is of the highest quality



Michigan State University Extension Educators, Frank Wardynski and Kable Thurlow offered a statewide Beef Quality Assurance training for youth in November of 2016. The webinar was recorded, and has been used to train additional beef members, by 4-H Clubs since the live webinar.

There were 72 participants that took the test, representing 19 different counties in Michigan. Of those that took the class, everyone (100%) passed with a score of 70% or better.

## MSU Extension’s Issues Identification Process—2016

Statewide— 7,180 “Focus” surveys, plus focus groups throughout the state. Top two statewide priorities that emerged:

1. Safe and secure food and water
2. Creating jobs for tomorrow’s work force

### Priorities Identified in Focus Survey—Gladwin County (n=58)

Preparing today’s youth for tomorrow’s job

Helping communities create jobs and be great places to live

Help youth develop leadership, citizenship, and other life skills

Ensuring the food supply is safe and plentiful

Helping MI maintain a healthy and sustainable environment for work, living, and play

Assisting farmers in agricultural production & profitability

Conducting research & educational programs to combat diseases & pests that threaten health of plants/animals/people

Strengthen early childhood education

District 6 Focus Groups	Priority Issues	2015-2016
	<b>Water Quality/Quantity:</b> Provide education and research that helps assure Michigan’s water remains clean and plentiful. Focus on protection of our watershed.	
	<b>Career Development:</b> Teach career development and job skills to youth that prepare them to be successful in the work force. Provide a special focus on agriculture related employment opportunities and skills.	
	<b>Youth Outreach - At-Risk Youth:</b> Promote traditional 4-H club involvement to reach youth that might otherwise not be able to participate due to financial considerations or lack of family support.	
	<b>Budgeting and Personal Finances:</b> Provide education to help consumers budget and use their limited resources wisely. Assist with poverty reduction through education.	
	<b>Disease Prevention and Nutrition Education:</b> Provide education and support for adults faced with chronic health conditions, especially as it relates to overweight and obesity.	
	<b>Home Economics and Life Skills:</b> Provide basic home economics and life skills education to youth. Include cooking, nutrition, food preservation, sewing, personal finance management (budgeting, account balancing, saving money, minimizing debt, etc.)	
	<b>Agriculture Best Practices:</b> Provide education related to agriculture production. This should include continued research and education for specialty crops like hops and barley, as well as specialty production like grass fed beef and aquaculture.	
	<b>Farm Business Management:</b> Provide education and support for farmers to maximize their profits. There should be a special emphasis on estate planning, farm succession planning, and assisting young or otherwise new farmers to enter the business successfully.	
	<b>Agriculture Literacy:</b> Educate the public about farming practices and the importance of farming. Provide unbiased reports and information on consumer topics of interest like GMO’s and Organics vs non-Organics to dispel myths and provide a factual basis for sound personal choices.	
	<b>Cottage / Small Businesses:</b> Provide education and support for small business development, including cottage food law, gardening, food production, energy, environment, small government training and facilitation.	

**Staff Located in Gladwin County Office:**

Kable Thurlow	Extension Educator, Agriculture
Bev Przystas	Extension Educator, Children and Youth
Coral Beth Rowley	Nutrition Program Instructor
Melissa Preston	4-H Program Coordinator
Tracy Volk	SNAP Data Management
Jenny McKillips	Office Manager



**MSU Extension Educators Serving Gladwin County:**

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Ken Brown  
Jack Kleinhardt (Commissioner)  
Vanessa and Trudy Foster  
Christine Hammond

## Gladwin County

Terry Walters (Commissioner)  
Dick Metz  
Ron Morley

## Isabella County

Jerry Jaloszynski (Commissioner)  
Kathy Methner

## Mecosta County

Marilynn Vargo (Commissioner)  
Vacancy

## Missaukee County

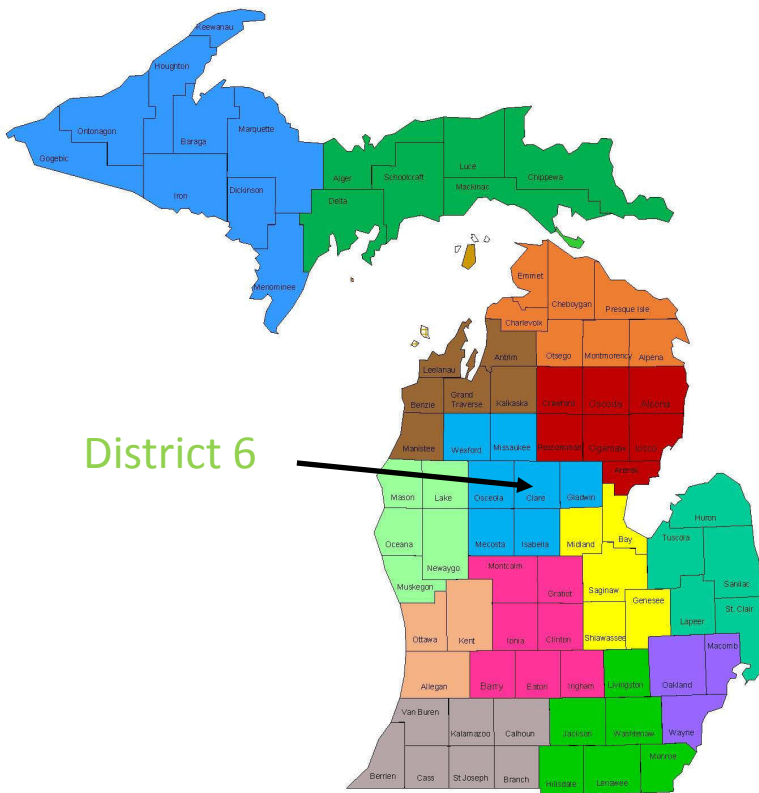
Cindy Jones  
Frank Vanderwal (Commissioner)

## Osceola County

Chris Gentry  
Jill Halladay (Commissioner)  
Russ Nehmer

## Wexford County

Mike Solomon – Chair  
Bill Goodwill (Commissioner)



District 6

## District 6 Administrative Staff

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### MISSION:

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