

# HILLSDALE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

20 Care Drive Suite B  
Hillsdale, MI 49242 | (517) 439-9301  
Email: [msue.Hillsdale@county.mus.edu](mailto:msue.Hillsdale@county.mus.edu)  
Website: [MSU Extension Hillsdale County](#)

Follow us on social media: [Hillsdale County MSU Extension](#)



## Message from the District Director



Thank you for another great programming year of partnership between Jackson County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension! Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities. MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups. From youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults being able to access healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to increase economic impact.

Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

The following pages highlight some of the programming staff delivered to Hillsdale County residents in 2024. We continue to provide our programs in a variety of spaces and delivery methods that are convenient for our participants to engage in and access. Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving the County, thank you for another great year! We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.



**671** participants from the county attending programs



**5** Extension Master Gardeners from the county with **228** volunteer hours



**403** youth enrolled in 4-H



**172** volunteers



# Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



**67,320** participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan



**470** virtual programs related to Financial Education, Food Systems, Water and Environmental Quality, Government and Businesses



**309** participants in county agriculture programs



**\$246.5 billion** annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy (STATEWIDE)



Animal control officers and first responders do not frequently have the opportunity to work with large animals when responding to emergency situations. MSU Extension has assembled several tools and resources to help animal control officers, and first responders develop their skills in working with large animals.



Photos from ERAIL training

## Climate Ready Farm Assessments

Risk is not new to farming but the risks a variable climate brings are! How do you usually respond to risk? University professors and educators from the north central region have created this tool to help you determine your farm's vulnerability to the evolving climate. The Climate Ready tool was made using the current body of research around mitigation and adaptation to climate change in crop, dairy, tree fruit and swine production. This is a tool for inward reflection, only looking to help each unique farm find the best choices for their operation. Since each farming system has a built-in amount of risk, achieving a "no risk status" is nearly impossible. So, the goal is to move the bar towards less climate risk.

Climate Ready Assessments: <https://climateready.rsgisnext.msu.edu/>



## Public Health, Nutrition, and Youth Programming



403 youth enrollments in 4-H



9,808 people participating in Food Safety programs including ServSafe (Statewide)



\$5,149.17, 4-H volunteer hour value



59 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county



663 total youth participants



162 county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs



12,861 total volunteers (statewide)

### Food Preservation

*"I am well-experienced with home food preservation, but I don't know it all. [MSU Extension] makes research and science-based information non-threatening, logical, safe and high quality."*

—Preserving MI Harvest class participant

### Food Safety

*"Over the years I have availed myself to the courses offered by Michigan State Extension (I have taken your Cottage Law session three times and many Apiary Program sessions) because they are some of the best in the country. Rest assured, I will probably be taking [this] session again."*

—Participant in Selling Honey and Maple Syrup Safely class



### Learning about Glass Art

A group of youth attended the 4-H Day at the Glass Act Studio in Hillsdale. With several youth requesting that MSU Extension host this opportunity again. This opportunity was offered by MSU Extension and paid for by the Hillsdale County 4-H Council. One participant said,

*"I had no idea what this class would be about, but I am so glad I came. I learned so much from how to cut glass pieces, how to lay them out so they fused properly, and how different pieces require different hanging options."*



Photos by  
Kayela Gimenez

## A Statewide Network of Resources to Help You

MSU Extension is the home of the latest in research, education and outreach covering a wide range of issues from agriculture & agribusiness, health and nutrition, youth education and outreach and community and economic vitality. If MSU Extension doesn't have an expert in your county to answer your questions, we can connect you to our statewide resources to connect you to the information you need.

**Ask Extension** offers one-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts and Extension Master Gardener volunteers on topics such as lawns, gardening, agriculture, nutrition and physical activity, food safety, food preservation, natural resources, community development, youth programming and more! **Ask Extension:** [www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert](http://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert)

### Lawn and Garden Hotline:

**888-678-3464** (option 1)

Hours: M/W/F, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm (Year round)

Crabgrass, brown spots, or powdery mildew, the Lawn and Garden Hotline can give you information on all your home gardening questions.



**Soil Mailers:** MSU Extension home lawn and garden and commercial soil mailers provide access to personalized fertilizer recommendations for thousands of Michigan residents every year. The home lawn and garden mailer can be purchased in person at [MSU Extension offices](#) or online from the [MSU Extension bookstore](#). Commercial soil mailer are purchased in person at MSU Extension offices. Questions about soil results can be sent to [MSUsoiltest@msu.edu](mailto:MSUsoiltest@msu.edu).

### Food Safety Hotline:

**877-643-9882** Hours M/W/F, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Do you have questions about food expiration dates, how long food will last or preserving foods at home? The Michigan State University Extension food safety hotline can help answer these types of questions and concerns.

**MSU Extension Bookstore:** <https://shop.msu.edu/collections/msu-extension-bookstore> Look for bulletins, publications and MSU Extension products at the Bookstore!

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Kayela Gimenez  
4-H Program Coordinator  
(517) 462-6965  
[gimenezk@msu.edu](mailto:gimenezk@msu.edu)



Keving Knapp  
Community Nutrition Instructor  
(517) 745-3704  
[knappkev@msu.edu](mailto:knappkev@msu.edu)



Sarah Zeiler  
Environmental Management  
Educator  
(517) 212-1043  
[szeiler@msu.edu](mailto:szeiler@msu.edu)



Laura Miller  
Administrative  
Assistant  
(517) 439-9301  
[lmiller@msu.edu](mailto:lmiller@msu.edu)



Mary Bohling District 12 Director  
(313) 410-9431  
[bohling@msu.edu](mailto:bohling@msu.edu)

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