



# ISABELLA COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

510 W. Pickard St., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

## Message from the District Director

It's a privilege to once again highlight the impact of our ongoing collaboration between Isabella County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Thanks to your continued partnership, our team has been able to deliver meaningful, research-backed programs that benefit youth, families, entrepreneurs and the broader community of Isabella County.

Throughout 2024, MSU Extension staff have worked diligently to promote healthier lifestyles, support local and emerging businesses, foster youth leadership and career readiness, and assist farmers with business planning, pest management, crop production, and mental health resources. Our team members are deeply embedded in the community! We live here, work here, and are ready to respond to the emerging needs of our neighbors.



This progress wouldn't be possible without your support. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Isabella County, thank you for helping us make a difference. We're excited about the year ahead and hope to see you at one of our upcoming programs or events.

## Impact



21,383 of contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters and handouts



30 current 4-H Clubs



2,429 participants from the county attended programs.



302 volunteers in the county



57 total soil tests processed



109 programs hosted in the county

## Isabella County Office Staff:

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Liz Antvelink  
*4-H Program Coordinator*



Misty Oebel  
*Health & Farm Stress Educator*



Kara Lynch  
*Food Safety Educator*



Sabrina McGee  
*Community Nutrition Instructor*



Eric Karbowski  
*District 6 Director*



Monica Jean  
*Field Crops Educator*



Danielle Schrock  
*Master Gardener Program Instructor*

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Nonie Gross  
*Office Manager*



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# Overall Impact



353 programs (across the state) attended by participants from this county.



6 policy, systems, and environmental changes with those PSE sites. 877 people impacted.



5 Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy System and Environmental sites receiving PSE education within the county.



128 client consultations



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts. (STATEWIDE)

## Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



67,320 of 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.



294 participants in county agriculture programs.



\$246.5 Billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan’s economy





552 youth enrolled in 4-H



2,044 youth participants



284 total volunteers



1,783 participants in nutrition and physical activity were hosted in-county.



1,763 of county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs.



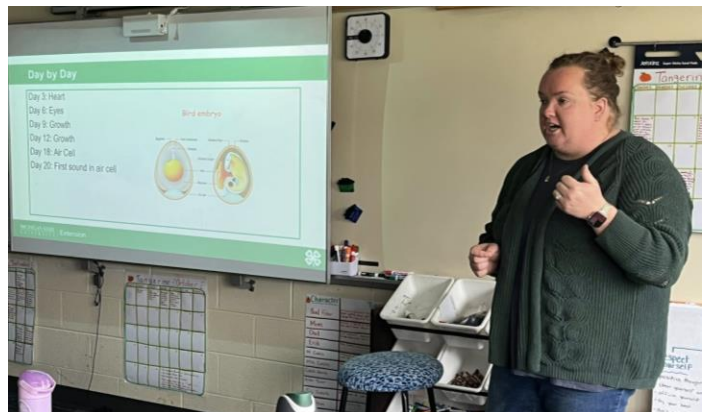
9,808 people participating in Food Safety programs, including ServSafe® – Statewide

### 4-H Program – Embryology In the Classroom 2025

Over six weeks, seven embryology programs were delivered across nine classrooms throughout Isabella County. The programs served students from kindergarten through high school, with McGuire Elementary utilizing three incubators to support five classrooms.

Each session began with an age-appropriate “egg-breaker” question to spark curiosity and participation—such as asking kindergarteners what their chicken name would be. Students explored the concept of embryology, learned about different chicken breeds and discovered surprising facts, including that chickens have ears and earlobes—an unexpected detail that fascinated many.

As part of Isabella County 4-H, the program also featured a collaboration with SNAP-Ed, community nutrition instructor Sabrina McGee during the first lesson. This partnership highlighted the nutritional value of eggs, enabling students to understand their health benefits and incorporating a valuable nutrition education component into the experience.





## Isabella County MSU Extension Highlights:



### Field Crops Educator- "The Weeds" Podcast Update—

The "In the Weeds" podcast has been running for five years and received five ratings of five stars on Apple Podcasts and one 5-star rating on Spotify. It has taken many members from across our agriculture and agribusiness-focused teams to make this podcast run and the support of our 12,135 listeners across Michigan.

*"The webinar series and now these podcasts are excellent. It can be hard to get away to meetings and these tools make it easy to keep working on the farm and plug in to hear the latest from Extension. I have no doubt this podcast will get info to more growers and also make them aware of the services and resources available. Keep up the good work!"—*  
Webinar Listener

### Farm Stress Educator Updates:

Michigan State University Extension offers a variety of programming and resources to support yourself or loved ones undergoing mental health distress. Our expert staff offer programs such as [Mental Health First Aid](#), which can teach you how to support someone who is experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis. For those in the agriculture industry and their families, resources and information can be found at the [Managing Farm Stress](#) website. These resources include [teletherapy services](#), the free virtual training [Rural Resilience](#), and in addition to mental health resources the [AgrAbility project](#), which supports people with disabilities working in agriculture and more.



### Community Nutrition Instructor- Share Table

In partnership with the Mt. Pleasant School District, MSU Extension's Sabrina MaGee collaborated with district leadership and staff to establish a Share Table initiative. Share Tables provide a designated space where students can place unopened food and beverage items, making them available to peers who may want or need them. The goal of this partnership was to reduce food waste and address food insecurity by offering additional, free food to hungry students. After presenting various examples, Sabrina worked closely with school staff to design, educate, and implement the current Share Table model, which has been well received and actively utilized by students.



## Master Gardener Program Updates:

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program offers adults in Isabella County science-based training in gardening and horticulture. Participants gain practical knowledge and become certified Master Gardeners, helping to lead local gardening projects and share research-backed practices with the community.



## Food Safety Educator Highlight:

During a ServSafe® class, Food Safety Educator Kara Lynch was sharing resources, including the [Think Food Safety](#) (TFS) social media page. A participant shared her excitement and support of following TFS saying “I love it” and encouraged others to follow it. Her excitement about some of the information and resources she has gleaned from the site was evident. This organic show of support is helpful to get feedback on the impact and encourage others to follow.

Another participant provided feedback after taking the ServSafe® class with Kara:

*“Thank you so much for your help with studying for the serve safe exam. I appreciate your professionalism and desire for everyone to succeed.”*

### Impact:



134 participants in community, food and environmental programs from Isabella



168 participants in agriculture and agribusiness programs from Isabella



1,763 participants in health and nutrition programs from Isabella



383 participants in children and youth programs from Isabella

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