

MSU EXTENSION

MANISTEE COUNTY

2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

I'm delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between **Manistee 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. 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.

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 **Manistee 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.

~ Jennifer Berkey, District 3 Director

196

Programs accessed
by residents

7,130

Reached by
social media

1,395

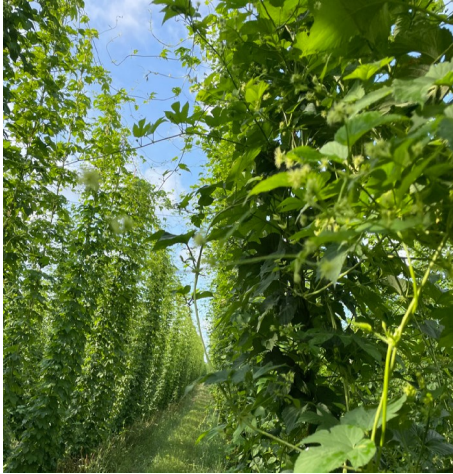
Reached through pro-
gramming

1,878

Reached
indirectly



NORTHWEST MI ORCHARD & VINEYARD SHOW



TREE FRUIT

NORTHWEST MI ORCHARD & VINEYARD SHOW 2024

The annual Northwest Michigan Orchard and Vineyard Show was another great success with over 310 tree fruit and wine grape producers in attendance and 48 vendor booths. Brent Black and members of his team from Utah State University (USU) joined us again to provide an update on the Specialty Crop Research Initiative project in collaboration with MSU on precision orchard management. This year he was joined by Dr. Alfonso Torres-Rua, an expert on irrigation and water management, who discussed new technologies for mapping and remote sensing of irrigation needs and water stress. Richard Price and Dr. Todd Einhorn presented some of the MSU side of the research project on remote sensing for yield estimations and experimenting

with variable rate irrigation in tart cherries.

The 2024 tree fruit educational sessions featured other new topics and speakers including a talk on forest carbon offsets by Daphna Gadoth-Goodman from the MSU Forest Carbon and Climate Program and a segment by Parker Jones from the MSU Product Center on agritourism and cost studies for value-added products to help growers see ways to diversify their income streams. This year's program also featured a section on agritourism, including a panel of local and statewide growers who have integrated agritourism in

HOP RESEARCH

2023-24 EDUCATION & OUTREACH

di-verse ways on their farms.

MSU Extension educators, professors, and graduate students continue to deliver educational content in a variety of forms including conference presentations, the annual MSU Hop Management Guide for growers, peer-reviewed journal articles, and more.

MSU Annual Spring Hop Kickoff Meeting

MSU Extension hosts the annual online ZOOM 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 Hop Chat Webinar Series 2023-2024

MSU Extension hosts bi-monthly online meetings that bring together hop producers, educators, scientists, state and nation-

MICHIGAN'S GREAT BEER STATE CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW



The premier Midwest brewer-grower conference/tradeshow

6 invited conference speakers from MSU

550+ speakers, trade-show representatives, and attendees from across the U.S.



MSU Extension Regional Hop Growing Reports

New in 2023, Dr. Rob Serrine produced bi-monthly hop reports for eight 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.

MSU Extension helps coordinate 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 United States and Canada. MSU Extension 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.

MASTER GARDENER

MSU EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

This year, through volunteer outreach, MSU Extension Master Gardeners continued to share science-based gardening knowledge, engaged citizens and empowered communities in environmentally responsible gardening practices.

MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer activities impacted county residents by improving quality of life, empowering youth, protecting water quality, creating habitat for pollinators, and improving food security. For example, MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers worked tirelessly to improve Manistee residents' access to healthy food last year at the Sophia Street Community Garden and the Armory Youth Project. Community members participating in these projects received gardening education as well as

access to free produce, herbs, and cut flowers.

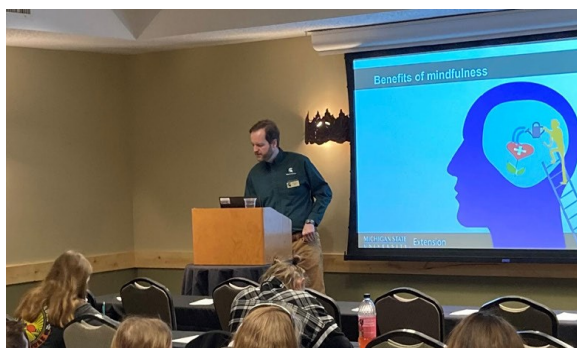
In another highlight from 2023, MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers hosted a Smart Gardening education booth at the Manistee Conservation District's seed swap event at the Manistee County Library. Attendees of the seed swap received free educational handouts on a variety of horticulture techniques that are designed to improve vegetable production and reduce the environmental impact of landscape and garden activities.

At Lake Bluff Farms, MSU Extension Master Gardeners installed pollinator habitat gardens on the grounds that include education signs that educate the public about the importance of native flowering plants for pollinators and other wildlife. Volunteers at Lake Bluff Farms also hosted in-person outreach tables at two public events in 2023 where they shared information about gardening to protect water quality, pollinator habitat, and shoreline stabilization.

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAMS



139 Extension Master Gardener Hours valued at \$4,420



FARM STRESS

MANAGING FARM STRESS RESOURCES

Farming can be an incredibly unpredictable, dangerous, and stressful occupation. MSU Extension is committed to supporting agricultural professionals as they navigate tough times and make decisions that impact their families, livelihoods, operations, and farms.

Combining farm business management guidance with mental and behavioral health expertise, MSU Extension’s team of more than 20 dedicated professionals provides innovative resources and support to the agriculture community — from teletherapy and financial services to free, online education and community presentations.

In 2023, the MSU Extension Farm Stress team conducted the highest number to-date of programs to a record number of

participants: 68 unique direct program activities, which spanned 169 distinct sessions with 5,657 participants. 103 individuals enrolled in the Rural Resilience online D2L (Desire2Learn) training course and 35 farmers and farm family members were referred to counseling services. This is a 52.17% increase compared to 2022.

MSU Extension’s farm stress specialist Dr. Remington Rice also appeared in

several key media outlets to promote resources for farmers, including Michigan Ag Today, UpNorthLive, WPBN-TV, the AgriSafe Network’s Talking Total Farmer Health podcast, among others. As a result of this publicity, several new farmers have reached out to access MSU Extension resources.

Dr. Rice reflects on a recent meeting with a Michigan fruit farmer:

“I journeyed to his farm, expecting a brief conversation, but what unfolded was a three-hour revelation. This farmer, disenchanted with his vocation and contemplating selling his farm, was recently divorced, and felt hopelessly adrift. We explored the roots of his passion for farming – pride in his work, cherishing public interactions at his farm stand and stewardship of the land. As he recounted his story, he rekindled his love for farming and found new meaning and purpose. Today, his farm flourishes, and he passionately advocates for the MSU Farm Stress Program, sharing his story at Research Station events and among fellow farmers. His transformation is a beacon of hope for all.”

~Dr. Remington Rice



I Pledge

my **HEAD**
to clearer thinking,

my **HEART**
to greater loyalty,

my **HANDS**
to larger service, and

my **HEALTH**
to better living, for

my **Club, my Community,**
my **Country,**
and my **World.**



4-H PROGRAM

LIVESTOCK/FAIR 2023

2023 saw another record-breaking year for the Manistee 4-H Livestock Program in youth participation, animals on the grounds, and auction sales!

Friends of Benzie County Republicans, a buyer group at the Manistee County Fair, donated a total of 1720 lbs. of meat (280lbs. pork, 1420lbs. beef, 20lbs. poultry) to Veterans Affairs – an organization that supports all local veterans in our community.

VOLUNTEER EFFORTS & SPOTLIGHT

Dedication and volunteer efforts are the key to many of 4-H's community efforts and events. Manistee's newly reformed 4-H Advisory Council was crucial in securing and implementing much needed

equipment and youth support at the Fair in 2023.

In a short span of time, the 4-H Advisory Council arranged for the purchase of new barn fans for the Small Animal and Beef barns to keep animals cool during the hot Fair days, purchased necessary items for and arranged a youth clothing exchange before and during Fair week for youth exhibitors who needed show clothing (shirts, pants, belts, boots, hats, etc.). This was a FREE exchange; youth and families would bring in show clothes that no longer fit their children to donate to the exchange and families/youth who were in need could take what they needed from the racks. This was an incredible effort that helps overcome barriers to participation in 4-H Livestock programs, especially for new or struggling families.

Another notable equitable contribution these individuals made to youth attending Fair was the implementation of the 4-H Youth Still Exhibit Silent Auction. Not every 4-Her who attends the Manistee

County Fair shows an animal, some come to showcase their art, craft, or educational projects, so by default they are not participating in Auction, until now. With the Still Exhibit Silent Auction, it allows our exclusively Still Exhibit youth to sell up to three of their Still Exhibit to the public! This encourages youth to talk to fair attendees about their Still Exhibit project and how it is made, much like our livestock youth do when they go out to find their auction night buyers. This addition broadens the opportunities for youth engagement and education at Fair and for our 4-H program overall.

PRE-FAIR SELF CARE

Fair Week is the culmination of a year's (sometimes two) worth of hard work and animal husbandry. It's stressful for youth, parents, animals, and 4-H Staff. Cross-road Kids 4-H Club decided to take a day off in the weeks leading up to the 2023 Manistee County Fair.



Crossroad Kids at Michigan's Adventure



NEW 4-H PARTNERSHIP

4-H COMMUNITY IMPACTS

65 4-H youth at the livestock auction



\$193,350.88 in animal sales, resales, and donated items



Every spring, Crossroad Kids does their annual fundraiser through Pleasant Valley Greenhouse and the sale of a variety of plants and the money raised funds the Club's activities for the year. This year, Michigan's Adventure was mentioned. Now, Michigan's Adventure is an educational trip, especially when the kids plan it and learn about mindfulness and self-care!

NEW COMMUNITY PARTNER & 4-H EXPANSION

In 2023, the culmination of three years of hard work and community partnership building has paid off in a big way for Manistee County 4-H. Manistee 4-H Horse & Pony is making a comeback with help from our community partners at Flintfields Horse Park and Traverse City Horse Shows (TCHS)! This year, Manistee 4-H participated in and represented fundraising efforts with Flintfields and TCHS through their Charity Ticket Fundraising

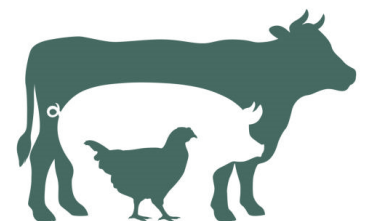
Program.

TCHS Charity Ticket Fundraising program dedicates 100% of its general admission ticket sales to local non-profits. This initiative supports community causes and fosters partnerships, introducing new audiences to elite equestrian sport and our events while spotlighting the organizations that serve Northern Michigan. Focused on youth, families, health, the environment, and community building, TCHS's Charity Ticket Fundraising program creates a unique avenue for meaningful engagement and shared growth between the horse shows and the wider community.

This partnership allowed us to not only raise much needed funds to revive local 4-H Horse & Pony programs, but also began cultivating a lucrative community partnership for our equine inclined 4-H youth providing insight into what exactly Flintfields is, a level of riding and riding

disciplines that are typically only available to view during the Olympic games, a plethora of willing industry contacts willing to engage with youth discussion and questions about their journey and the equine industry as a whole.

In 2023, the TCHS Charity Ticket Program helped us raise over \$2,500 for local Horse & Pony programs. This money will be used to host a 4-H Schooling Show and Fall Tack Sale annually in Benzie County, as well as begin making it possible for more local 4-H Horse Shows in our area and support the rebuilding of local 4-H Horse & Pony projects.





SHARE TABLE PROGRAM IMPACTS

An estimated 3,000 pounds of food was prevented from going to landfills and a savings of \$600 by using share tables!



Nutrition and Physical Activity Education

CAFETERIA CHANGES IN SCHOOLS

Policy, system, and environmental changes are a way of making sustainable changes within our community so that healthy choices are available to all community members. These changes help to improve places where people live, learn, work, play, eat, and worship. MSU Extension works closely with area partners to help write guidelines, alter the way things are done, and improve spaces so all people can be supported in leading a healthful life. Three Manistee County schools were coached by MSU Extension in helping to decrease food waste in cafeterias by installing share tables. A share table is a designated spot in the school cafeteria where students can place uneaten, unopened school-

provided food for other students to take.

Common items include milk, packaged fruit, cheese sticks, and breakfast muffins.

“I really like it [share table]! It’s been a great addition to our cafeteria.”

“This was a great plan – less food waste and kids that want more have access to it!”

~Quotes from Food Service Staff at participating schools

MAPS FIELD DAYS

MSU Extension once again participated in Manistee Area Public Schools’ Field Days. Over 450 elementary students rode the smoothie bikes and enjoyed a refreshing fruit smoothie that they helped blend by riding the bikes and powering the blenders.





The Armory Youth Center enjoyed cooking with foods from their garden



FAST IMPACTS

174 families benefited from the Field 2 Pantry pilot program
346 individuals reported eating more fruit and vegetables
\$590 spent on purchasing local food and supporting area farms
Over 220 pounds of food purchased



FOOD PANTRY ASSISTANCE

The Food Access Strategy Team, or FAST, is a subcommittee of the LiveWell Manistee coalition. The goal of this group is to strengthen the Manistee County food support system for those in need. This work is done by improving coordination of county food pantry efforts and improving accessibility of healthy food to those who need it. In 2022, FAST distributed a county-wide survey to gauge feedback about food access from Manistee County residents in hopes of better understanding what barriers people face in accessing food. Using the results of the survey, 2023 focused on improving access to local fruits and vegetables. MSU Extension assisted in the Field 2 Pantry pilot project where four local pantries were connected with three area farmers and

could purchase fresh produce at a wholesale price.

PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH

Prescription for Health is a fruit and vegetable prescription program that aims to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and support healthy lifestyle behavior changes among people who have an increased risk for chronic disease. 134 participants attended nutrition education classes and received vouchers to purchase fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables at approved grocery stores. This effort is in partnership with District Health Department #10, Munson Healthcare, and MSU Extension.

Prescription for Health uses a variety of programs used such as in-person classes, virtual classes, and online, self-paced classes. The goals of the program are to improve community access to and con-

sumption of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables, foster healthy behavior change in program participants by offering various types of nutrition and physical activity education.

“Through this class, along with another wellness program, my health has drastically improved. I look at labels and ingredients.”



MANISTEE COUNTY ZBA TRAINING



**Manistee County
Commissioner & NMCA
Member Richard Schmidt**

**GOVERNMENT &
PUBLIC POLICY**

PLANNING

The Manistee County Historical Society reached out to MSU Extension to provide facilitation support to create a three—five year strategic plan and identify priorities for the first year. Over two sessions in March and April, board members participated in a consensus workshop to create shared priorities and a path forward.

The Manistee County Planning Department teamed up with MSU Extension to provide a Zoning Board of Appeals training to municipalities within Manistee County at no cost. 25 people gathered at the Manistee City Hall for a 2.5—hour, interactive training on Zoning Board of Appeals.

ZONING

Norman Township requested a training on the Minimum Elements of a Master Plan. MSU Extension provided a one-hour training to Planning Commission members.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Manistee County commissioner delegate Richard Schmidt is an active participant and represents Manistee County well in the Northern Michigan Counties Association (NMCA). Richard also serves as the NMCA President and leads meetings and keeps the Association well connected with the Michigan Association of Counties as well. Approximately 30 counties in the northern lower peninsula are members and participate regularly. NMCA exists as a local forum for commissioners and/or administrators to learn about and discuss topics of particular interest or

concern to county government in the northern lower peninsula. NMCA support service is provided by MSU Extension.

PRODUCT CENTER

**MSU PRODUCT CENTER
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The MSU Product Center worked with one new business in Manistee County, for four hours of advisement.



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