



Mason County

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

MASON COUNTY STAFF

Lori Cargill
4-H/Tech Wizards Program Coordinator

Julie Eriksen
Extension Administrative Support

Kendra Gibson
Community Nutrition Instructor

Naomi Hyso
Disease Prevention Management
Educator

CONNECT



Mason County MSU Extension

West Shore Community College
300 N Stiles Rd
Scottville, MI 49454



231-845-3361
msue.msu.edu
mason@msu.edu



Mason County Michigan State
University Extension



@MSUExtension

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

I'm excited to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Mason 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 services 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.

Again, this year, we've welcomed Mason County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media, and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Mason County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you'll be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

James Kelly,

District Director



ANNUAL REPORT

MSU Extension Mason County

Food • Ag • Youth • Health • Environment • Community

Since 1916, the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has helped the residents of Mason County improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs, and opportunities.

53

Programs delivered in Mason County

1,235

Mason County Residents

Participated in programs offered by MSU Extension.

214

Programs Attended

By Mason County residents either in county, outside of Mason County, or on-line.

705

Mason County Youth

Participated in programs offered by MSU Extension.

1,736

Program Participants

In programs led by Mason County staff online or statewide.

4,461

Reached through Facebook.

36

Senior Market Fresh participants at Longfellow Towers

212

Plat Books sold

48

Programs delivered by Mason County staff

MASON COUNTY STAFF

1

Educators

2

Program Instructors

.75

Clerical Support

25

Partnerships and coalitions

MASON COUNTY FOCUS AREAS

Agriculture

MSU Extension works to increase farmers' success while protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, reaching new markets, and advancing agriculture through applied research. Agriculture is now one of the fastest growing sectors of the Michigan economy.

- MI Ag Ideas to Grow With
- Heroes to Hives
- MI Great Beer Conference
- Farm Financial Analysis
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
- Beginner Grazing School
- Sheep and goats for small farms
- Parlor Performance/Milker Training
- Pruning Workshop / Crop Scout School
- Asparagus Day / Tree Fruit Day
- Pesticide Application Training
- 11 soil tests processed.
- Corn and Soybean conference

Environment

Our natural resources programs improve public understanding, help landowners and communities use those assets for sustainable long-term social and economic development and conserve natural resources for future generations.

- Intro to Lakes
- Steelhead Fishery Workshop
- Michigan Birding 101
- Lake Michigan Region Fisheries Workshop
- Let's learn about invasive Species.
- Lakes Monitoring Program

Community

Successful and thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the most trusted tools, MSU Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan.

- Citizen Planner
- Fiscally Ready Communities

Community (cont.)

- First Impressions Tourism
- Credit Craze: Basics of Credit
- Planning and Zoning for Solar Energy
- Affordable Housing Workshop
- How to start a food truck business
- Zoning Administration Training

Health & Nutrition

MSU Extension's programming promotes healthy lifestyles and empowers Michigan residents to take control of their health. Participants learn how to build nutritious diets on a budget, reduce foodborne diseases and become leaders in the food industry.

- Nutrition Education at Mason County Central, G2S, Ludington Schools. Longfellow

Towers

- Tai Chi for fall prevention/ Matter of Balance
- Mindful Eating
- Teen Cuisine
- SLEEP
- Community Garden Education
- Product Center Counseling
- Cottage Food Law Training
- Food Safety Q & A
- RELAX: Alternatives to Anger
- Preserving MI Harvest
- Diabetes Prevention Program

Family

Keeping Michigan families strong and successful—financially, emotionally and physically—is a big part of measuring MSU Extension's success.

Programs devoted to keeping families safe include those dealing with bullying and violence prevention.

- Various 4-H club activities
- Relax, Alternatives to Anger
- 4-H Exploration Days on MSU Campus
- Positive Discipline
- Resilience Toolbox
- ABC's of Early Literacy
- Screen Time for Young Children

4-H Mason County

*According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2X** more likely to be civically active, and **2X** more likely to make healthier choices.*

21
Clubs

169
Members

20
Volunteers
25% Increase

47
Tech Wizard
Participants

Agriculture



Mason County boasts a diverse agricultural economy that produces over \$85 million annually, 72% in crop sales and 28% in livestock.

MSU Extension is helping to make a difference in Mason County.

Highlights of MSU Extension Agricultural support in 2023: Mason County has a long history of dependence on natural resources, and in particular agriculture, as a strong source of identity and economic prosperity. MSU Extension provided education and support to Mason County residents through a variety of targeted workshops and services.

The Stakenas farm participated in a parlor evaluation. The evaluation, using VaDia technology, was performed to examine current milking practices and to gather data to develop tailored milker training. The evaluation was also used to provide recommendations to increase milking efficiency on the farm and a milker training session was implemented to reinforce proper milking practices.

Mason County farmers took advantage of a webinar focused on creating a farm business plan. The business plan helps to evaluate alternatives, identify market opportunities, and communicate ideas to potential lenders and business partners. Participants explored how to understand what lenders look for in a business plan when farms are seeking loan financing.

A tree and shrub planting presentation was organized and MSU Extension staff gave a presentation about backyard fruit tree care. This program was designed for landowners and professionals such as foresters, ecologists, and loggers, interested in planting trees and shrubs.

West Central Horticulture Breakfast Meetings are seasonal meetings for tree fruit growers to share timely information, weather updates, and pest and disease information about ongoing or emerging issues. The meetings were well attended by Mason County residents and allowed for sharing of information with growers and engagement with industry members who sponsored the breakfast each week.

Asparagus Day and Spring Horticulture Day provided opportunities for farmers to hear the latest research results and industry updates for various commodities. Coupled with one-on-one farm visits and local research plots, Extension services remain an essential piece of a thriving agricultural economy.

Additionally, in the spring of 2023 MSU Extension relaunched soil testing services for both home and commercial purposes. Both segments took advantage of the testing and accompanying analysis that MSU Extension soil testing services produces.



A VaDia device is attached to the milking equipment to record vacuum in individual milking. This is used to analyze and improve protocols. Photo By: Martin Carrasquillo-Mangual