

OGEMAW COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Ogemaw County Staff

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Message from the District Director

For more than a century, Michigan State University Extension has connected people to practical, research-based knowledge that helps communities thrive. Rooted in MSU’s land-grant mission, Extension brings university research into everyday life in ways that are accessible and locally relevant. In a time of rapid change and abundant information, MSU Extension remains a trusted resource—helping people make sense of new ideas and turn knowledge into action. Through strong local relationships and statewide expertise, Extension supports youth, families, farmers, businesses, and communities. This annual report highlights how that work continues to strengthen Michigan today and for the future.

Statewide Impact



206,346,096 contacts with the public via website/social media/media outlets – all of Michigan



6,032 answered Ask Extension questions – all Michigan



296,403 participants from Michigan attending programs.



13,660 volunteers – all of Michigan



170,438 youth in Michigan engaged (includes 4-H)



\$244.2 billion - Economic impact of food and agriculture in Michigan

MSU Extension Health programs address mental health, chronic illness and conditions of aging.

MSU Extension delivers evidence-based programs that support physical and mental well-being across the lifespan. Through partnerships with organizations such as the Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency (NEMCSA), we offer **A Matter of Balance**, a program designed for adults age 60 and older who are concerned about falling. The program helps participants build confidence, improve balance and strength, reduce fall risks at home, and remain safely active. Delivered in small-group settings, it emphasizes peer support, goal setting, and practical strategies that promote independence and healthy aging. Falls remain a leading cause of injury among older adults and often result in long-term impacts such as reduced mobility and loss of independence. By addressing fall risk proactively, the program helps reduce injuries, improve quality of life, and support aging in place.

In addition to fall prevention, MSU Extension delivers mindfulness-based programs such as Tai Chi and SLEEP, which focus on balance, stress reduction, and healthy sleep habits. These programs support both physical and mental health by helping participants manage stress, improve focus, and develop practical routines that promote overall well-being.

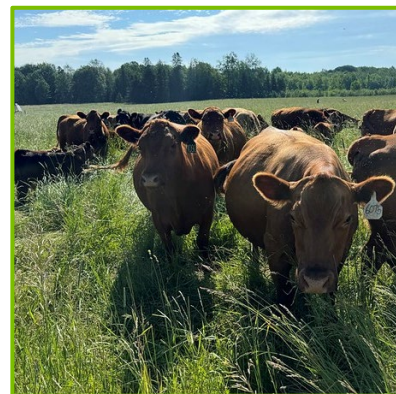
Recognizing the growing need for mental health support in rural communities, MSU Extension also places particular emphasis on connecting farmers and agricultural producers with trusted mental health resources. By combining education, mindfulness practices, and local partnerships, MSU Extension continues to support resilient individuals, families, and communities across northeast Michigan.

Supporting Michigan's Diverse Agricultural Production

MSU Extension works closely with MSU AgBioResearch scientists to translate current agricultural research into practical guidance that farmers can apply in real world conditions. From bees to beef from soybeans to apples, and from dairy to blueberries.

- **Informed crop and pest management:** Through field days, winter updates, and in season education, farmers gain timely insights on crop production, pest pressures, and weather impacts—supporting sound decisions across thousands of acres statewide.
- **Stronger farm profitability and risk management:** Extension education helps producers refine nutrient use, pest control, irrigation, and production practices, reducing costs while protecting yields and long-term farm viability.
- **Support for diverse and emerging operations:** Targeted programming assists specialty crop growers, beginning farmers, and niche markets with production skills, business planning, and sustainable practices.
- **Peer learning and industry engagement:** Extension convenes farm operators, agribusinesses, and interest groups to share knowledge, identify emerging challenges, and strengthen agricultural networks.
- **Resource stewardship:** Collaborative efforts promote soil health, water efficiency, and environmentally responsible practices that support both productivity and conservation.

“This has been a wonderful program. I learned so much regarding sleep, balance, & learning a new skill. Nicole was always so patient & kind with us; I will always appreciate that as I continue with Tai Chi.”



Ogemaw County MSU Extension by the numbers



13 4-H clubs



1,405 People participated in MSU Extension Programs from Ogemaw



689 total youth participants



121 people participating in community, food and environment programs



38 total volunteers



111 Health and nutrition program participants in Ogemaw County



455 direct consultations with MSU Extension Staff



186 people participating agriculture & agribusiness programs



230 programs attended by Ogemaw County Residents from MSU Extension

Beyond Ready



Ogemaw 4-H helping youth get Beyond Ready

Our 4-H Programs are helping youth to prepare for their futures in careers, as citizens and all their passions. It's an effort National 4-H is calling Beyond Ready. Here are some highlights of our programs:

Winter Shooting Sports: Youth of varied ages and experience levels were able to learn together through the winter shooting sports clubs that emphasized safety, discipline, focus, and responsibility. The program helped build confidence, patience, and respect—skills that translate to integrity and career readiness.

Babysitting Training: In partnership with UpNorth Prevention and MyMichigan Health, youth completed babysitting training that covered child safety and development, CPR and basic first aid, and even business basics. Participants gained employable skills and confidence to take on leadership roles in their communities.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA): A newly interactive version of this training prepared youth with livestock projects to demonstrate ethical animal care, food safety, and accountability. By working with peers of different ages and experience levels, youth were able to learn from one another and engage critical thinking skills for projects that teach them responsibility and perseverance.

4-H Citizenship Washington Focus: One Ogemaw County youth explored history and government in Washington, D.C. with visits to senators and national landmarks. Upon returning, he developed a project to encourage youth to explore the outdoors through fishing – a way to understand conservation and self-confidence.

International Exchange with Japan: A local family hosted a Japanese delegate for 4 weeks in the summer. Exchanges like this expand cultural awareness, adaptability, and global perspective, helping youth develop skills essential for success in an interconnected world.



Vegetables stock photo, pexels.com

Learning to eat the rainbow of vegetables

Alexandra Clemens facilitated a six-week Prescription for Health: Cooking for One series in partnership with MyMichigan Health at the MSU Extension Ogemaw County office. Designed for adults seeking to improve nutrition knowledge and cook for smaller households, the program led to meaningful behavior change. One participant initially reported eating only corn and potatoes as vegetables, believing other vegetables offered little value. Through lessons on colorful vegetables and hands-on cooking, his engagement grew. By the end of the series, he had tried twelve new vegetables, identified several favorites, and shared plans to continue expanding his diet—demonstrating the impact of practical, hands-on nutrition education.

MSU Extension works with and for our community in many ways

MSU Extension supported Ogemaw County throughout the year by strengthening local leadership, improving communication, promoting civic pride, and fostering community resilience. Through facilitation, mediation, and public engagement, Extension helped county leaders, residents, and partners work collaboratively to address challenges and build a stronger future.

County Strategic Vision Facilitation: MSU Extension facilitated a strategic discussion with county commissioners and department heads, creating space to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities while encouraging shared understanding and forward-thinking dialogue.

Workplace Mediation Support: Extension staff provided mediation for a county department experiencing communication challenges, resulting in improved collaboration, reduced conflict, and a clear plan for more positive working relationships.

West Branch Sesquicentennial Celebration: MSU Extension engaged residents during West Branch's 150th anniversary with interactive activities and educational displays, celebrating community history while strengthening connections to Extension programs.

Collaborating with Libraries on Community Engagement: At the Prescott National Night Out event, MSU Extension and 4-H connected families with local resources, demonstrated resilience following the library fire, and expanded program awareness. In Rose City, the Color our World Event allowed kids to have fun, be creative and try new things at the library in cooperation with the Family Resource Center!

Farmer-Led Holiday Food Distribution: MSU Extension supported dairy farmers in organizing a holiday food distribution that served over 400 families, strengthening public trust, community visibility, and local collaboration.



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