



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

June 2026

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 30 Issue 6

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Are we ready to get serious about biosecurity?

By Frank Wardynski

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Bovine tuberculosis has been a challenge for us in Michigan for about 30 years now. Because of TB we have lost our closest market for beef and dairy cattle and goats. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection continues to refuse access to their auction markets and make it difficult for Wisconsin producers to buy our livestock even with the proper testing conducted here in Michigan. It's interesting that some states allow our cattle from the Upper Peninsula where there's never been a positive case of tuberculosis in either the deer or livestock populations, yet states like Wisconsin and other states make the requirements so difficult that our livestock are not going to those states.

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza was diagnosed in Michigan dairy cattle back in March of 2024 and disrupted cattle movement, especially cattle moving across state lines, even to slaughter. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development imposed biosecurity restrictions on dairy farms that had many producers up in arms. The biosecurity restrictions required that the dairy have a biosecurity manager, establish a line of separation to keep livestock and high traffic areas separate, disinfecting vehicles and individuals entering the secure area and maintaining a logbook of vehicles and individuals crossing access points. These requirements are very similar to biosecurity protocols that many hog and poultry operations follow.

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The Asian Longhorned Tick was found here in the USA back in 2017 and now has spread across 20 states. Now the New World Screwworm has just crossed the US/Mexican border. These insects have the potential to be devastating. Are we doing everything we can protect our herds?

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And potentially the worst disease challenge has not hit the US yet. Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is **highly** contagious virus affecting cloven hooved animals. It also has the potential to become one of those diseases where everybody stops allowing us to export our meat.

We have all these insects and diseases that have the potential to be devastating to our herds and the economic viability of our industries. Some of the challenges associated with diseases like FMD would be the demand for our product. If we cannot export our product, that will be a decrease in demand and cause our prices to drop. I know that we as individuals cannot stop diseases from entering our country, but we should be taking action to implement biosecurity protocols to safe guard our farms.

MSU UPREC Welcomes Student Field Trips for Spring 2026

By Micayla Greenberg

This May, Michigan State University Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, MI, hosted 253 students from six schools in Marquette, Alger, and Mackinac counties for farm field trips. Ranging from kindergarten through high school, students participated in hands-on activities at both the UPREC North and South Farms, gaining a deeper understanding of Upper Peninsula agriculture and food systems. Farm field trips offer students the opportunity to learn more about careers in agriculture and natural resources, better understand local food systems and sustainable agriculture, and to spend time learning outdoors.

MSU Extension staff and volunteers shared multiple interactive lessons on local history, ecology, conservation efforts, and agricultural practices. Students were introduced to the farm's beautiful acreage and greeted by grazing cattle on "The People Mover" wagon ride with Farm Manager, Paul Naasz and drivers Andy Bahrman and Darin Tyner. Through the "Every Tree for Itself" activity, learners were challenged with realistic tree health and nutrient scenarios, led by Anna Ellis and Tyreen Prunick. UPREC Director, James DeDecker, and Sydney Fayton let the students get their hands dirty with a lesson on judging soil composition and texture by feel. Miranda Fletcher facilitated the "Three Sisters" lesson highlighting the traditional Indigenous agricultural method of planting corn, beans, and squash together as companion plants. During the "Pollinator Relay Race," Lucy DeDecker, Peyton Wensaut and Abby Owen taught students about pollinators and the important role they play in supporting agriculture and healthy ecosystems. The "Integrated Pest Management Scavenger Hunt" run by Al Bussler, tasked students with scouting for insects and identifying different types to make informed integrated pest management decisions. Abbey Palmer guided students on a nature walk throughout the farm, discussing the important roles of "pest" species such as barn swallows and ground squirrels. Students also took a walk down memory lane, as Brian Wibby led a memory game with historic kitchen and culinary tools from days gone by. Rene Sanderson concluded the day with one of the students' favorite activities- food sampling! Students tasted a combination of Yooper favorites and locally grown food products, including Foolazul Hot Sauce, Yooper Sisters Artisan Thimbleberry Jam, Moonlight Meadows Strawberry Rhubarb Jam, and Cherry Bay Orchards dried fruit.



It was a delight to host groups from Bothwell, Gwinn, Graveraet, Ishpeming, and Three Lakes this spring. A special thank you to Growing UP Agriculture Association, MSU UPREC staff, and our Extension volunteers for making this field trip season possible. We look forward to strengthening community connections through future school field trips as we continue to learn and grow together!

Michigan Conservation Stewards Program returning to Marquette Co. this fall!

By Anna Ellis

The [Michigan Conservation Stewards Program](#) (CSP) is an educational program for adult learners offered by Michigan State University Extension. CSP is geared toward those who are enthusiastic about learning science-based ecosystem management principles, getting involved in on-the-ground stewardship efforts, sharing their knowledge with the public, and empowering others to get engaged in improving their local natural areas. Registration for this dynamic 8-week, hybrid program is open and available at events.anr.msu.edu/micsp2026 through Sunday, Aug. 9, 2026, with scholarship opportunities available for all.



Weekly Wednesday evening sessions (6:00-8:30 PM) begin Aug. 26, 2026, and run through Oct. 21, 2026. The program includes:

- Virtual, self-paced lessons;
- Weekly in-person evening sessions with paired field trips at various locations within Marquette County;
- Two Saturday in-person field trips at Beaver Basin Wilderness on September 16th and the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve on September 26th;

Capstone (Applied) Project related to restoring and conserving Michigan's ecosystem, with guidance provided by a local mentor.

"I have never been a part of a group of such like-minded people who I instantly got along with so well before." - Sandra Becka, 2024 Marquette CSP student.

We are proud to partner with the following local organizations:

- Trout Unlimited
- Starflower Ecological Alliance
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve
- Marquette Conservation District
- The Nature Conservancy of Michigan
- Michigan Sea Grant Extension
- Michigan Natural Features Inventory



For additional details of the 2026 Conservation Stewards Program and to register, please visit events.anr.msu.edu/micsp2026.



Cohort and content-related questions can be directed to Anna Ellis at ellisan9@msu.edu.

For general questions and registration assistance, please contact Shelby Warner at warner80@msu.edu. 3

Barn Tour Hosted by Engadine Historical Society

By Wendell Miller

The Engadine Historical Society will host a barn tour Sunday, August 9. The focus will be on the gambrel roof style (hip roof) barn. We will be featuring barns that show the architecture and construction techniques, changes made to keep up with farming practices, and efforts to maintain the structure and usefulness of the barn. The tour will start at the Garfield Township Hall in Engadine and will visit several barns by bus. The bus will leave promptly at 2:00 p.m., so please arrive early to allow time to get on the bus.



Following the barn visits there will be gathering at the town hall that will include a meal served by the Engadine Methodist Women, a display of barn building tools used in building area barns, an example of the rafter construction from an actual area barn, a local barn photographer's display, and a time of barn building memory sharing, with questions and answers. We plan to return to the hall at 5:30. The meal will be served at 5:45. The suggested donation for the meal is \$20.00 a plate, which will include a barn directory booklet and Barn Tour Button. Reserve your seat for the tour by emailing engadinehistorical@gmail.com by August 1, or send a note to Engadine Historical Society, PO Box 114, Engadine, MI 49827. We hope you will join us!

Meet the UPREC Summer Interns!

Meet Micayla Greenberg (she/her/hers), Agriculture Education and Outreach Intern at MSU UPREC! Originally from Metro Detroit, Micayla joined the farm in June for the summer season. Here, she supports educational programming, community outreach, and social media engagement while also assisting with ongoing research projects across the North and South Farms.

Micayla is entering her senior year at Michigan State University studying Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Education with double minors in Environmental Science & Sustainability and Business. In addition, she is looking forward to beginning her student teaching experience next school year. This summer, she is researching the impact of UPREC educational programming throughout the Upper Peninsula.



Outside of the farm, Micayla is a member of Sigma Alpha Professional Agricultural Sorority, serves as President of the Jewish Student Union at MSU, and enjoys biking, hiking, baking, attending concerts and creating art projects. Even though UPREC does not have them on the farm, her favorite farm animals are chickens and goats! Fun fact: Micayla was a competitive tap dancer growing up!

We are grateful to have Micayla's enthusiasm for education, engagement, and outreach as part of the UPREC team this summer! Be sure to follow along with Micayla's updates on the farm through our Facebook (@MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center) and Instagram (@msuuprec)!

SOIL LIFE IS FARM LIFE

Regenerative Agriculture Field Days

Two Days. Real Farms. Real Practices. Expert Speakers.

Free Event ~ Rain or Shine ~ Registration Required ~ Limited Spots

July 28th & 29th | Chatham, MI

Join local producers, MSU researchers, conservation partners, and regenerative ag experts for two days of farm tours, research demos, and hands-on soil health learning. Expect practical farm examples, grazing insights, and actionable strategies you can take home to use on your own operation.

DAY 1: FARM TOURS (July 28th, 12:00 - 5:30 PM)

REGISTER HERE:

- **Producer-led discussions, tours of local farms practicing regenerative agriculture**
 - Yooper Country - farm market & small livestock
 - Rock River Flower Farm - cut flowers, plant starts, and pastured poultry & pork
 - Log Cabin Livestock - cattle and sheep grazing
- **Soils Discussion**
- **End of day networking & appetizers at Rock River Flower Farm**

We will start the day at Yooper Country Farm .
N 5930 Hallstrom Rd, Eben Junction, MI 49825

You will need to be able to drive yourself from farm to farm or carpool.
Camp chairs are welcome at the event.

DAY 1



You may register for just one day, or if you plan to attend both days, please be sure to complete a separate registration for each day!

DAY 2: FARM TOURS (July 29th, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

DAY 2



- **Start the day with a tour of MSU UP Research and Extension Center**
 - Research at North & South Farms and Regen Ag Practices, James DeDecker, UPREC
 - E3774 University Dr, Chatham, MI 49816
- **Key Speaker & Soil Health Expert: Eric Fuchs, Soil Health Academy**
 - Eric is the Vice President and instructor with the Soil Health Academy, helping farmers across the country build healthier soils and more resilient operations. He focuses on practical, real-world strategies that reduce inputs, improve soil function, and work on working farms.
- **Soil Health Demonstration**
 - Michelle Sweeten, MDARD Field Coordinator and Holly Moss, Conservation Technician, Delta CD
- **Lunch, Q&A , and Peer Networking**
 - Lunch provided at UPREC South Farm
 - **DOOR PRIZES ANNOUNCED AFTER LUNCH!**



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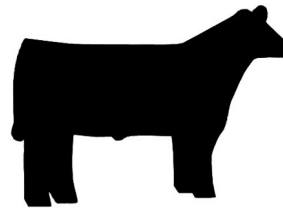
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Choice Steers	\$228-\$250 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$190-\$230 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$65-\$68 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$200-\$330 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$121-\$164 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$525-\$1300 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$250-\$410 per 100 lbs.

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JAN 16, 2027: SING WITH THE SYMPHONY AND
BEETHOVEN'S 2ND SYMPHONY

MARCH 6, 2027: TIM KLIPHUIS, JIMMY GRANT:
SELECTIONS OF DJANGO & GRAPELLI

APRIL 10, 2027: BLOOM AT THE
WATERFRONT: MOMO HE, L. BERNSTEIN,
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JULY 20: Individual
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Classifieds

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