

Message from the District Director

Mother Teresa once said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters and create many ripples". MSU Extension is a catalyst for creating lasting impact that ripples across the Thumb, state, and beyond. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups. From youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults being able to access healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to increase economic impact, the possibilities of impact through MSU Extension are endless.

Through partnerships, we can produce exponential ripples to change the lives of our neighbors, family, and friends. For over 100 years, MSU Extension's goal has been to "bring knowledge to life". By connecting with organizations and agencies across the Thumb, we bring the knowledge and research from Michigan State University to our communities and empower them to improve their lives. Alone we can cast a small stone to create ripples. Together our stone grows to produce larger impact than any one organization can create themselves.

I have been with MSU Extension for over nine years focusing on improving the health and nutrition of community members. As I continue to learn my new role as District Director, I am looking forward to exploring new ways to work with our partners as we create ripples of impact across Tuscola County and beyond.

Karly Creguer, District Director



Karly Creguer **District 10 Director**

Serving Huron, Lapeer, St. Clair,
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REPORTING

7

Extension educators, specialists
and program staff reported data
for Tuscola County

9

Coalitions were reported
in Tuscola County

36

Partnerships were reported
in Tuscola County

96

Direct contacts reported
in Tuscola County

171

Programming hours hosted
in Tuscola County

218

Extension programs were attended
by Tuscola County residents

333

Volunteer hours completed by 9
Master Gardeners in Tuscola County

820

Hours of programming were completed
for residents of Tuscola County

1,966

Tuscola County residents attended
Extension Programs

2,009

People attended Extension programs
held in Tuscola County

11,009

Total estimated contact hours for
Tuscola County participants

Staff Programming and Outcomes

Tuscola County 4-H

Many people think 4-H is just for kids who live on farms or those interested in raising and selling animals – but that’s not true! Offering a diverse range of topics and interest areas, 4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. In fact, each year thousands of young people explore what interests and excites them as they grow through Michigan 4-H. From program areas ranging from science and technology to clothing and textiles, and so much more, 4-H provides fun, educational opportunities that empower young people with skills to lead for a lifetime and become the foundation for future success. After all, true leaders aren't born: they're grown!



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School Programming

Tuscola County 4-H provides programs to our local school districts.

- Embryology is a 4-H program where chicks are hatched right in the classroom. Students are able to see the process, have classes on the beginning of life cycle and learn to care for animals.
- Plant Science and Agriculture education are other programs we have been able to partner with schools to help educate the youth.

2023 4-H Camp

Tuscola County provides two camps for youth to attend throughout the year.

- Tuscola County 4-H Winter Camp is an overnight experience where youth come and do outdoor winter activities. In 2023, youth learned about winter survival skills and fire building.
- Thumb Area 4-H Camp is a 4 day, 3 night camp held for all 4-H members in the Thumb of Michigan. Thumb area 4-H camp provides the camp experience for youth ages 9-14 and provides leadership opportunities for teen counselors age 15-19.

YQCA and Clinics

Tuscola County offered a number of clinics pertaining to animal health, nutrition, record keeping and showmanship. Many youth received their Youth Quality Care of Animals certificates so they would be eligible to Market animals.

The Tuscola County Fair

The County Fair is an opportunity for 4-H youth to showcase all their hard work to the community. **Over 200** 4-H youth participated in the Tuscola County Fair. Showing projects at the fair has many educational benefits such as teaching youth about the value of hard work, healthy competition, and many life skills.

Michigan State 4-H Events

Michigan 4-H provides Tuscola County youth with the opportunity to participate in state wide events and competitions.

Tuscola County was represented at the Michigan 4-H State Horse Judging , Michigan 4-H State Hippology Contest, Michigan 4-H State Large Livestock Judging, Michigan 4-H State Horse Show, Michigan 4-H State Archery Tournament and 4-H Exploration Days.

Community Nutrition & SNAP-Ed

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In 2023, **1,436 Tuscola County residents** participated in cooking and nutrition classes offered by MSU Extension. Two of these programs are highlighted below.

In partnership with MSUE, the Tuscola Food Access Coalition and Thumb Food Policy Council secured a **three-year \$1.6 million grant**. The grant is used to buy fresh local produce from Amish farmers and distributed to low-income residents in Tuscola County and across the Thumb. The Thumbbody Express, Tuscola Great Start and Caro Senior Commons help to distribute the produce here in Tuscola County. Every week, residents receive three pounds of produce, recipes, and education on how to use and store the fruits and vegetables. In this photo, MSU Extension staff and a local partner farmer meet to discuss the grant (named the Last Food Mile Project) and inspect the spaghetti squash crop.



Through the Senior Project Fresh program, MSU Extension was able to distribute **\$6,550** in coupons to **262 low-income people** over age 60, to be used for fresh fruits and vegetables that are grown in Michigan and sold at farmers markets and roadside stands.

Food Safety Education

Laurie Messing, Food Safety Educator
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The goal of the food safety team's education and outreach is to reduce foodborne illness for all. There is a need for unbiased, science-based education on safe food practices.

Our partnership with the **Caro Farmers Market** continued, resulting in collaboration in the Kids Club and Family Day, with food safety and food preservation activities. On Family Day, Laurie demonstrated Measuring Headspace when filling jars for canning and distributed canning tools through the MDARD grant. We reached over **650 kids and families** with these food safety efforts.



- **Preserving MI Harvest Home Food Preservation:** Education for consumers to increase knowledge of safe home food preservation methods and recipes. Past studies by the USDA National Center for Home Food Preservation found that risky canning behaviors were still being practiced in more than 40% of surveyed households.
- **ServSafe® Manager Training and Certification:** Education for ServSafe® Manager training and proctoring of the certification exam for foodservice workers.
- **Michigan Cottage Food Law, Cooking for Crowds, Safe Food = Healthy Kids, and Pantry Food Safety-It's Your Job:** Food Safety education for entrepreneurs, volunteers and childcare providers to encourage safe food handling and prevent foodborne illness.
- **Food Safety Outreach:** Think Food Safety Facebook page, Podcasts, Videos, Michigan Fresh website resources, Food Safety Hotline and more to share food safety best practices and answer consumer questions.

Disease Prevention / Emotional Health

Kris Swartzendruber, Health Educator
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District 10 health educators Jacqui Rabine and Kris Swartzendruber have provided evidence-based programming to over **1,100 participants** in 2023. Programs covered include:

Disease Prevention and Management including PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) for Chronic Disease, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain programs. These programs help educate people to learn to manage their chronic conditions through increased physical activity, knowledge of healthy eating, and improved communication with healthcare providers.

Falls Prevention programs including Matter of Balance and Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention. These programs are evidence based and address the needs of aging adults in our community.

In a statewide report of those surveyed:

- 98% of participants learned ways to prevent falls.
- 97% of participants learned strategies to address their concerns about falls.
- 98% of participants plan to continue to exercise to increase their physical strength.

Social and Emotional Health programs include Stressless with Mindfulness, RELAX Alternatives to Anger, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, ACES and Positive Childhood Experiences, and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). These evidence-based programs allow our participants to focus on their mental health.

In a statewide report of those surveyed:

- 93% of MHFA participants say they can better recognize signs of a mental health crisis.
- 90% of RELAX participants report improved communication skills.
- 93% of participants feel confident using mindful breathing to reduce stress.
- 87% of Powerful Tools participants felt highly confident making caregiving decisions as a result of taking the class.

For more information about MSU Extension Health programs, please visit the following website:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/about/impacts_and_programming_in_michigan/health-nutrition/index

or

scan the corresponding QR Codes below.



Agriculture & Agribusiness

Field Crops Report – Upper Thumb (Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac)

- 179 people attended 2 Winter Update Meetings
- 10 soybean on-farm research plots
- 3 Field Days events were held In the Thumb

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Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series

The MSU Extension Field Crops Team hosts the Virtual Breakfast Series every Thursday morning during the growing season for farmers, agribusiness professionals, agency personnel, and others interested in agriculture. The series is flexible, fluid, and able to adapt to constantly changing conditions for crops such as corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat, sugar beets, and dry beans. Valuable crop management information is shared to address potential and current issues related to weather, pest infestation, and crop diseases. Emerging issues are addressed in a timely manner to help farmers increase efficiency and profitability of the farming operations.

Post-program evaluation completed in November 2023:

- 325 total respondents
- 4,522,267 acres represented
- 99.1% had an increase in knowledge
- 79.1% indicated a crop management change has been made or will be made in the future
- An average of 52% of the acres will have changes
- A total of \$2,816,810 of increased revenue or savings to farmers or agribusinesses these management changes represent



Livestock Education

Jerad Jaborek, PhD, Beef Feedlot Systems Educator
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The Thumb Area is one of the most populated in the state when it comes to cattle. MSU Extension’s Jerad Jaborek, Beef Feedlot Systems Educator, offered several programs to help producers with a variety of issues. These workshops were offered throughout the Thumb Area.

- **Implant Boot Camp** was designed to provide producers with hands-on-training on cattle ear implants. **25 Producers** attended this program.
- **Feedlot Health and Management Program** - This program focused on basic animal handling and recognizing feedlot cattle with health concerns.
- Jerad also became a certified beef carcass ultrasound technician in 2023. This certification will allow him to capture carcass ultrasound images, which provides a peak under the cattle hide without having to slaughter the animal to measure ribeye size, back fat thickness, and marbling deposition. This data gives producers a greater knowledge of the carcass potential for various breeding or genetic trait uses. It will also allow 4-H exhibitors the ability to learn about carcass grading and to see how well their market steer’s carcass performs relative to other steers showing at their County Fairs.

Michigan Sea Grant

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Michigan Sea Grant Extension promotes research, education, and outreach to enhance the responsible and sustainable use of our diverse Great Lakes resources. Through MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant works with Michigan residents, industries, and coastal communities to encourage their use, benefits, and enjoyment of Great Lakes resources that positively influences our state’s economy, environment and quality of life.

Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops

In the spring of 2023, Michigan Sea Grant Extension hosted two hybrid Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops – one focused on the open water fisheries and another on Saginaw Bay. These workshops engaged **over 150 anglers, charter captains, and others** with fisheries researchers and managers from across Michigan – close to 60 participants learned about the Saginaw Bay fishery. Participants gained better understanding of Lake Huron fisheries ecosystem changes, and these stakeholders were connected with information, research and management activities relating to Lake Huron and local communities.

www.michiganseagrants.org