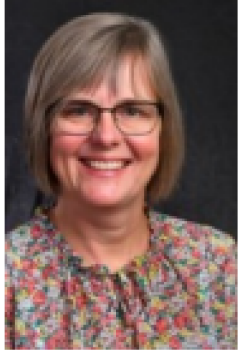


**Message from the District Director**



MSU Extension had another good year leveraging the resources provided by St. Joseph County to help us do our work in the community. Staff have reported working with schools, service organizations, local government, residents and youth to provide educational programs and one on one consultation. Our indirect work has also been strong in the county as programming staff have sent newsletters, used social and print media, published educational articles for farmers and businesses and provided fact sheets on nutrition, immunizations, early childhood education, youth development and other important topics to help people make decisions and improve quality of life. In addition, District 13 educators worked together with MSU researchers, federal and state agencies and non-profits to bring in nearly \$1 million in grant funding to expand their research and outreach efforts in 2022. This quick report provides some numbers and comments from satisfied customers as evidence of our work. We look forward to continuing our partnerships in St Joseph County and strengthening the community through quality research based information and educational programs. **Julie Pioch, District Director**

**St Joseph County Based Staff**

Eric Anderson- Field Crops AABI Educator  
Lyndon Kelly - Irrigation AABI Educator  
Kayla Mitchell - 4-H Program Coordinator  
Tonya Barrington - Secretary

**Contact Information**

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**St Joseph County  
General Fund  
Appropriations**

2020	\$182,896
2021	\$202,672
2022	\$227,912

**242**  
EXTENSION PROGRAMS  
INCLUDED ST JOSEPH COUNTY  
RESIDENTS

**1721**  
ST JOSEPH COUNTY  
RESIDENTS ATTENDED  
EXTENSION PROGRAMS

**51**  
DIRECT CONSULTATIONS  
REPORTED\*

**22**  
PROGRAMS HELD IN THE COUNTY

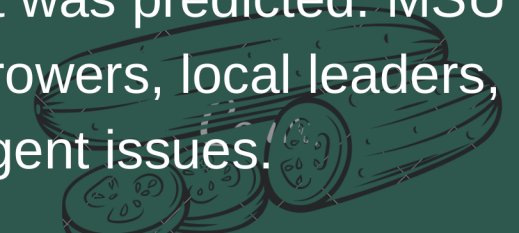
7589 NEW AND RETURNING COUNTY VISITORS TO THE MSU  
EXTENSION WEBSITE --- 30,423 PAGE VIEWS ---  
18% REGULAR CONSUMERS

**Kudos from a farmer...**



*"Well, I certainly feel more comfortable after calling you!"*

On the night of June 13, 2022, a vegetable farm in Three Rivers was decimated by hail. All of the field tomatoes and cucumbers were lost and there were high casualties in tree fruit and other mixed vegetable areas. An immediate call with the owner, senior farm hand and Ben Phillips, MSU Extension Vegetable Specialist resulted in a plan to address the damage. The plan included ways to treat the salvageable vegetable crops to protect them from deadly bacterial infection, help the plants through shock and measures to replace the lost tomato and cucumber crops that were planted over black plastic mulch. In addition to hail, more excessive heat was predicted. MSU Extension educators work one one one with growers, local leaders, businesses and parents to help them solve urgent issues.



**Impressed young adults...**

*"This class will help me avoid suspicious and unsafe scammers and people who steal identities."*

*"I will start shredding my mail and expired forms of identification before throwing them away."*

*"Thank you, this helps me very much. I can't wait for the next classes."*

As part of a statewide youth financial literacy initiative, MSU Extension Children & Youth Educators created a program entitled "Avoiding Money Mishaps" to increase awareness and provide practical tips for youth to prevent identity theft, predatory lending, scams and fraud. In total, 41 youth participated (2 from St. Joseph County) in a series of programs. After the class, 95% felt more confident in protecting their identity and in their ability to avoid scams and fraud.

**592** 4-H Youth Enrolled

**182** Adult Volunteers

**25** Community Clubs

**1560** Total Youth Reached



## What teachers continue to say:

*"I am always pleasantly surprised at how much the students seem to enjoy this field trip each year. Thank you for giving us this excellent opportunity!"*

*"They LOVED (as I did) seeing the piglets being born the day we were there."*

*"Presenters were very knowledgeable!"*

*"Our tour guide did a great job and even helped make sure the students were following the rules."*

The Ag-Citing Experience is now in its 33rd year of providing a unique educational experience for 3rd graders during a guided field trip to the St. Joseph County Grange Fair. After three decades of offering this program, we are hearing from teachers and volunteers who actually took part in the program when they were 3rd graders! Feedback proves that the program is a worthwhile and special opportunity for children who may never step foot on a farm to learn about where their food comes from and how valuable the farmers are who raise the crops and animals that provide it. Forty adult and youth volunteers assist with the program to provide education at several stops, serve as tour guides and assist with the old-fashioned hay wagon ride at the end. Partnership with volunteers from the St. Joe Valley Old Engine Association and Farm Bureau are critical to the success of the program. In total, 761 students from 32 classrooms and 15 schools (plus parent chaperones) attended the tour. The program continues to adapt to the changing times while prioritizing its educational value - not only to local students but to the entire agricultural community. As a capstone to the 2022 program, Eric Anderson, organized an art contest for the 3rd graders who attended the program. The winning art will be used as the new logo for the 2023 program.



## Community leaders speak up:

*"I really loved the whole experience; I was looking to better educate myself to speak knowingly about watershed conservation at township meetings and thanks to this class I will be able to do just that. I now know how to be a better steward of the lakes and feel the support of so many organizations that you have made me aware of, thanks! "*

*"All of the information was clear, actionable and came with useful resource links. I feel like I learned a lot and have the tools to apply this knowledge when working with others in my area. "*

**Introduction to Lakes** is a six-week online course designed for lake users, lakefront property owners, and lake managers. In 2022, we had our largest cohort of 524 participants from 19 states and four countries. Participants were spread out over 69 counties. There were 49 local government officials in the course and 289 owned riparian property. Of the 524 participants, 86% of them completed all six units and received a Certificate of Completion. We attribute our high completion rate to our level of interaction with participants. Unlike many online courses, Introduction to Lakes is cohort based and taught on a week-by-week basis, allowing for online communication between classmates and instructors through topical discussion forums. There were 2,255 discussion forum posts and replies on the course website.

## Volunteer appreciations:

*"Very beneficial, great ideas to share with my youth group"*

*"Training team is experienced & knowledgeable & PATIENT"*

*"Very informative about safety concerns, usage & fun class"*

*"Feel more confident setting up program"*

*"Nice to hear from veteran instructors"*

Evaluations of the 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Certification workshops offered by MSU Extension in April 2022 revealed that 95% of adult 4-H leader participants felt more knowledgeable after participating and planned to apply the knowledge gained in their local programs. 100% of participants felt more comfortable teaching shooting sports following this workshop. Four areas of instruction included hunting & wildlife, archery, rifle and shotgun. St Joseph County volunteers were in attendance.

## Feedback from farmers:



*"This series provides much information about current issues and is a great tool for farmers to gain knowledge. It generates discussions between us farmers as well outside of the series airtime. You guys do a GREAT job with this and I thank you for providing this information and discussions."*

*"Overall, I really enjoyed attending when I was able to! The RUP credits obtained were also an awesome bonus to attending! Thank you for providing this online format for discussion & knowledge! It's super convenient to listen to in the cab of a tractor during the busy seasons, and even at home on the couch during the less hectic times! Being a young farmer, a ton of this information is valuable and especially interesting to share with my parents as we continue to grow throughout the years! I look forward to tuning in for years to come! Thanks again!"*

**Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series** - Agriculture is always changing! To survive, farmers have adopted management decisions related to new technologies, climate change, different supply chains, increased input costs, and decreasing infrastructure. To help meet the educational needs of farmers, the MSU Extension field crops team's Virtual Breakfast Series provides farmers, agribusiness professionals, and others interested in agriculture the opportunity to learn more about field crops being grown in Michigan. The goal of the series is to increase knowledge, efficiency, and profitability. Every Thursday during the growing season, farmers and agribusiness professionals can access the most current information available for timely, relevant, in-season crop and weather information. Each zoom session has a 20-minute segment for crop information and 15 minutes for weather. Following the presentations, participants interact with MSU specialists and educators in a question-and-answer period. This innovative approach using technology has provided growers from every region of the state the opportunity to participate in a live webinar via their computer, laptop, or cell phone. Also, live streaming on Facebook allows for online participation. Each session is closed-captioned and recorded for later viewing on the MSUE Field Crops Team website or a podcast in Spotify, Apple, Audible, and Podvine.



## A parent's comment:

**"My daughter is the germ police!"**

**SNAP-ED:** In early 2022, White Pigeon Central Elementary school was having issues with the spread of hand, foot and mouth, impetigo, and strep so Community Nutrition Instructor Linda Kline, reached out to teachers to see if they would be interested in the Show Me Nutrition series and in particular the hand washing lesson. A series was scheduled and during the first lesson students doodled germs, colored them and were told to put their drawing somewhere at home where they would be reminded to wash their hands. Students were very creative with their drawings and one drew her hands with green germs all over them, she even had the color pink that matched her nail polish. She later drew another picture at home and her mother sent a picture of what she found in her bathroom 2 weeks later (see photo above). Her daughter explained that the germs needed to be washed away so they could go "right down the drain!" It's always wonderful when you get feedback from a parent that their child really listened in class and was now washing their hands more often and reminding the rest of the family to do the same. The mother said now her daughter is the "germ police" in the family!

