Online programs for beginning farmers show impact, new series offered

New farm businesses provide jobs, income and increased economic and social stability, and increased food security to rural and other communities. Providing basic, practical information to people interested in, or already engaging in, new farm enterprises helps these small business develop sound production and marketing plans. The MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series helps to make this happen, reaching 664 people since 2012.

An evaluation of the series of 24 webinars offering during January – May, 2016 showed that the series was perceived as valuable by respondents, with strong indication of knowledge increase. Respondents indicated that the series will have impact on the land they manage and on several key farming decisions and activities. Respondents indicated that the series contributed to the creation of ten new jobs.

A new series of 9 beginning farmer webinars is planned for January – May, 2017. Presenters include Michigan State University Extension educators and others. The following evening webinars will provide valuable start-up information on general and more specific farming topics, including:

“Getting started with….”

- Jan 30, Small vegetable farm systems
- Feb 13, Hoophouse management
- Feb 27, Maple syrup
- Mar 13, Fencing and watering systems for livestock
- Mar 27, Blueberries
- Apr 3, Crop nutrient management
- Apr 10, Aquaculture (fish farming)
- Apr 24, Planning and operating a mixed fruit orchard
- May 8, Producing and selling eggs

A fee of $10 per webinar is required, or you can register for the entire series at ½ price for $45. Webinar recordings will be provided to all registered participants. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your own home or office. Registration, a brochure containing details on each individual program, and online or mailed payment options can be found at https://events.anr.msu.edu/BegFrmWeb2017/. You may register for all or some of the courses at any time, even if the session has already taken place. In that case, you will get a link to the recorded program.

Each program begins at 7 p.m. Eastern Time and will last up to two hours. A high-speed internet connection is required. You will receive webinar connection information after you register.

An archive of fifty-eight 2012 – 2016 MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series programs on a wide variety of topics can be accessed free of charge at http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/beginning_farmer_webinar_series.

Jim Isleib, U.P. Field Crop Educator
2016 Upper Peninsula potato variety trial results
By Monica Jean, MSUE Field Crops Educator

After a successful growing season, the 2016 Upper Peninsula potato trial results are in, accounting for 32 different varieties. The top six are noted.

Michigan State University Extension conducts multi-location field trials every year to evaluate new potato varieties. The Upper Peninsula location for trials was at TJJ Farms in Cornell, Michigan, operated by Tony and Joe VanDamme. In 2016, 32 different varieties of red, russet and yellow tuber types were planted and compared to industry standard varieties. In the field trial, every variety was sized according to the tuber type, evaluated for yield and quality, and were rated for vine vigor and maturity.

The potato trial was planted May 24 and harvested Oct. 3. The region gained two weeks in heat accumulation compared to previous years with a growing degree-day (GDD) accumulation for base 40 degrees Fahrenheit of 2,762. Regional rainfall beginning in April accumulated 19.5 inches, compared to the five-year average of 17.8 inches. This growing season has been moderately successful for potato farmers with a one-to-two-week earlier-than-normal harvest and good yields.

The results of the variety trial were on par with farmers’ results for yield and quality. The Dakota Ruby, a dark red skinned variety with bright white flesh, yielded 362 cwt/a US#1 with 67 percent A and 31 percent B size tubers. With a specific gravity of 1.078 and good sizing, the Dakota Ruby would be a good variety for table use. The top three russet varieties all yielded around 500 cwt/a US#1 and above, with ND050032-4Rus yielding 542 cwt/a US#1. Specific gravity ranged from 1.085-1.087, possibly making these varieties good candidates for French fry production. A06862-18VRRus had a very vigorous vine with early emergence and late maturity.

The top two yellow varieties were Soraya and Julinka, yielding 462 and 440 cwt/a US#1, respectfully. Specific gravities on these varieties were in an acceptable range for table use. Soraya had a high percentage of oversized potatoes and may benefit from a closer in-row spacing in order to reduce the overall tuber size profile. Internal tuber quality was excellent for all of the varieties with no hollow heart or discoloration noted.

Variety trials are used as a stepping stone for farmers by informing them on variety success in their local area. They can then use this information in their decision-making process when choosing varieties for larger scale production. By pinpointing successful varieties within a growing region, we are able to move towards commercial production while maintaining quality and yield. Some of the top varieties noted here will go on to a larger scale planting next growing season.

Photo credit—M. Jean, MSUE
Extension Master Gardener Class Begins Jan. 21st!

Did your garden not turn out the way you had hoped last year? Did those pesky weeds take over your garden space? Was your harvest more or even less than you expected? If you experienced any of these issues or one of many others, then January is a great time to begin talking and learning about gardening for the upcoming spring! Start this year’s garden season out right by taking time this spring to learn the basic science of growing plants.

The Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program is being offered on the following Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm: January 21, February 18, March 11, March 25, April 8, April 22, and May 20, 2016. The class will be held at Eastern UP Intermediate School District, Conference Room A, 315 Armory Place, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

The Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a volunteer leader training program offered by MSU Extension to those who are interested in learning more about general gardening and have the desire to pass that knowledge on to others. No experience or prior knowledge is required! Participants will gain access to world class gardening knowledge. Instructors will cover a series of 14 topics based on university research including: plant and soil sciences, annuals and perennial flowers, small fruits, tree fruits, vegetable gardening, lawns, woody ornamentals, diagnostics, integrated pest management, household and nuisance pests, and gardening practices to protect water quality.

The cost of this 7-week all day program is $300, which includes the 1,000-page training manual. There are some partial scholarships available to help offset this cost; you must apply for these online. To enroll in the Master Gardening training, please complete the registration and agreement forms online at: https://events.anr.msu.edu/MGChippewa_w17/. The last day to register online is Jan. 13th. Register by Jan. 3rd (if paying by check). If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact Rebecca Krans, MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator and UP Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator, at 906-875-0606 or kransr@anr.msu.edu.

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Market Report
Choice Steers $85—$108 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers $75—$92 per 100 lbs.
Hogs $38—$41 per 100 lbs.
Lambs $125—$145 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows $40—$55 per 100 lbs.
Calves $50—$135 per 100 lbs.
Goats $150—$190 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals
Grade Holstein cows $1100—$1800/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers $1600—$2200/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Avg. $/cwt</th>
<th>Avg. $/ton</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$9.87</td>
<td>$197.40</td>
<td>$145-280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soymeal</td>
<td>$22.28</td>
<td>$445.50</td>
<td>$380-552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>$9.16</td>
<td>$183.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>$9.03</td>
<td>$180.50</td>
<td>$140-232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

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Steve Cell (906) 399-2858
Escanaba Community Garden Meeting

December 15th, 2016 at 6:30 pm
Bay College JHUC 900 Building, Room 911

Open to existing participants and anyone interested in getting involved

Meeting will include:

- When do I sign-up for the 2017 growing season?
- Gardening for Veterans
- How do I test my soil?
- Including the Community Garden soil test results and recommended fertilizers
- Common Gardening Issues and Smart Gardening Solutions

Guest Speaker: Rebecca Krans, MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator

Questions or concerns?
Please Contact Monica Jean, MSU Extension Field Crop Educator
Phone: (906) 786-3032   email: atkinmon@anr.msu.edu
Review sessions and exams for state certified pesticide applicators

MSU Extension is offering pre-exam study sessions for those seeking state pesticide applicator certification.

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center
E3774 University Drive, Chatham, MI 49816
Friday, December 2, 2016, 9am – 1pm eastern time
State exam offered at 1:15pm eastern

Menominee County MSU Extension Office
904 South US Hwy 41, Stephenson, MI 49887
Wednesday, February 8, 2017, 9am-1pm central time
State exams offered at 1:15 central

State Office Building
305 Ludington St, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Escanaba, MI 49829
Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 9am-1pm eastern time
State exams offered at 1:15 eastern

These 4-hour reviews are intended to help prepare for the State of Michigan commercial and private pesticide applicator certification exams. Four re-certification credits toward renewal of current State of Michigan Pesticide Applicator Certification are available for private applicators and commercial applicator 'core' category. The program will consist of a review of example exam questions from the study manuals. It is strongly suggested that participants acquire copies of the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual and study it thoroughly before the exam. If seeking commercial certification or re-certification, the study manual for the category(s) desired should also be acquired and studied. This program will cover only 'core' manual material, no commercial categories. Please note that several other state exam opportunities are offered in the U.P. without pre-exam study sessions. Check exam dates by entering as a ‘guest’ at https://secure1.state.mi.us/opes/Welcome.aspx.

A State of Michigan official will offer state exams after the review is completed. If you plan to take an exam, register at www.michigan.gov/pestexam and be prepared to pay $50 for the private exam and $75 for the commercial exam (including any number of categories) by check payable to "State of Michigan". A waiver from the State of Michigan is offered to honorably discharged veterans seeking private pesticide applicator certification. You must provide a copy of your veteran’s federal form DD-214 that indicates honorable discharge status along with your application.

A $10 fee, payable at the door, is required for the review (lunch not included). If paying by check, make check out to "Michigan State University Extension". This fee covers program costs and refreshments. (Note: This is a separate fee from the State of Michigan exam fee).

The core manual and other study materials can be purchased on-line at http://shop.msu.edu/category_s/463.htm or ordered through your local county MSU Extension office.

For more information, contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.
**Summary of Upper Peninsula Field Crop Production for 2016**

By Monica Jean, MSUE Field Crops Educator

*Michigan’s Upper Peninsula reported adequate field crop yields despite a dry July and wet fall.*

**Weather and rainfall**

Regional rainfall beginning in March accumulated 19.5 inches and was relatively consistent across the Upper Peninsula. This is a change from last year when regional rainfalls ranged from 12 inches in Stephenson, Michigan, to 16.27 inches in Escanaba, Michigan. Rainfall averages were low in July, resulting in drought-stressed crops. Half of the regional rainfall accumulated in August, September and October, making for a wet fall.

**Growing degree-days (GDD)**

Warmer temperatures occurred this season, especially from July on (see graph). Regional GDD accumulations since March 1 totaled 3,464 base 42 degrees Fahrenheit; 2,967 base 45 F; and 2,193 base 50 F. The region gained two weeks in heat accumulation compared to previous years. The exception was the western part of Iron County, which was one to two weeks behind the area’s average. Temperatures as of Oct. 14 reached below freezing at night according to the regional Michigan State University Enviro-weather stations located at Chatham, Escanaba, Newberry and Stephenson.

**Commodity reports**

*Corn* yields were above average with the highest reported yield of 218 bushels per acre in Stephenson (Menominee County). Some stalk rot and lodging issues were reported. Corn silage averaged 15-18 tons per acre. Silage is just finishing up, but plenty of corn still stands in the fields.

Half-way through *dry bean* harvest, it seems the effect of weather is showing. Dry bean yields were projected to be exceptional, but the July drought caused a significant blossom drop. Things are looking average to slightly below, but quality issues like immature beans and mold have been reported. Dark red beans are currently being harvested at 19-22 percent moisture with yields ranging from 10-15 bags per acre. Black beans are averaging 12-13 bags per acre, down from previous yields of 20 bags per acre. Weed pressure seemed to be an issue this year, with nightshade and *giant ragweed* being more prevalent.

With the exception of some hail damage, *potato* yields were good this year. White rounds averaged 300 hundred weight with some skinning issues reported. Norkotah yields ranged 400-500 hundred weight. Harvest time was about one to two weeks earlier than normal, finishing up last week.

Central regions reported healthy *hay* yields for alfalfa with three cuttings harvested. More northern regions, especially to the west, reported single cutting of mixed hay.

To learn more, contact Monica Jean atkinmon@anr.msu.edu.
**U.P. Crop Nutrient Management program—REGISTER NOW!!!**

MSU Extension is offering a 2-session crop nutrient management educational program in 5 Upper Peninsula locations. All farmers and interested people are welcome to attend these free programs.

*Please reference the calendar of events on page 8 for meeting dates, times and locations!*

**Session one:**
- Developing a crop nutrient management strategy
- Determining crop nutrient needs
- Determining current soil fertility situation
- Strategies for meeting immediate crop nutrient needs
- Strategies for building long-term soil fertility and health

**Session two:**
- Implementing your nutrient management strategy
- Fertilizers, manures, green manures and other soil amendments
- Application techniques, timing and placement
- Evaluating results of your nutrient management strategy

Presenters: Jim Isleib and Monica Jean, MSU Extension U.P. Crop Production Educators

Pre-registration is required at least one work day prior to the program you plan to attend. Register by phoning or emailing your name, address, phone number and email information to Jim Isleib at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu or to Monica Jean at 906-786-3032 or atkinmon@anr.msu.edu. On-line registration is also available through the MSU Extension website at [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/) under ‘events’.

All meetings 6:30 – 8:00 pm local time.

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**Novice Farm Finance Management Meeting**

MSU Extension Educator Frank Wardynski will be conducting a farm finance management program to include three sessions at the Houghton County Extension Office from 7:00-9:00pm on January 11, and 25, and February 1. Learn how to organize your farm accounting, develop detailed balance sheets, analyze farm profitability, and grow the farm business with sound financial measures.

Session one will include detailed information about accounting systems and balance sheets. Participants will leave with their first homework assignment of setting account categories in their accounting system and developing a balance sheet. Session two will cover analysis of the farm profitability and development of an income statement, using past information to develop future budgets and cover financial measures and ratios. The final session will have Dennis Stein, MSU farm business educator on webinar for expert advice and question and answer session.

If you struggle with tax preparation, don’t develop end of year balance sheets, don’t annually analyze farm profitability, don’t understand debt to asset ratios, working capital, liquidity, solvency then you need to attend this program. Cost of the program is $25 per farm family and registration deadline is January 6, 2017. Register online at [https://events.anr.msu.edu/novicefarmfinance/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/novicefarmfinance/) or call the MSU Ontonagon County Extension office 906-884-4386.
Calendar of Events

**U.P. Crop Nutrient Management Programs**—each meeting runs from 6:30-8 pm (local time)

- November 30 & December 14: Delta MSUE Office, 2840 College Ave, Escanaba
- January 4 & January 11: Menominee MSUE Office, S904 US Highway 41, Stephenson
- January 16 & January 23: Mass City Community Center, 1502 Mass Avenue, Mass City
- February 22 & March 1: Garfield Twp Hall, Engadine, MI
- March 15 & March 22: Rudyard Twp Hall, 18725 S. Mackinac Trail, Rudyard—NOTE CORRECTED DATES!

**Pesticide Applicator Core Manual Review sessions**—each meeting runs 9 am—1 pm (local time)

- December 2: Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, Chatham
- February 8: Menominee Co MSUE Office, Stephenson
- March 21: State Office Building, 305 Ludington St, Escanaba
- January 11, 25 & February 1: Novice Farm Finance Management, Houghton County Extension Office (7-9 pm)

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**Ag For Tomorrow Conference**

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Bay College Escanaba

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