



Allegan County 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

msue.msu.edu



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is the community-based office of Michigan State University (MSU), working in partnership with counties throughout the state. We help people improve their lives by bringing the vast resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

Michigan State University Extension has helped grow Michigan's economy by equipping Michigan residents with information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower their children to dream of a successful future.

For over 100 years, we have been providing high quality research and evidence-based educational programs to meet the needs of our local communities. Our staff work to connect community needs with MSU AgBioResearch scientists, MSU researchers, and land-grant university experts throughout the nation.

This report is an overview of work done by MSU Extension staff in Allegan County over the past year. We value our relationship with the leadership in Allegan County and with all of your constituents. Working in partnership, we make a positive difference for people across the county. Thank you for your support.



District 7 Coordinator



CONTACT US

3255 122nd Ave #101
Allegan, MI 49010
(269) 673-0370
(616) 304-7191 (cell)

blase@msu.edu

www.msue.anr.msu.edu

MISSION:

Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

2017 4-H CONNECTIONS

Allegan County 4-H Clubs.....	34
4-H members (traditional club enrollment)	636
Special Interest program participation	3,814
4-H Overnight and Day Camping Programs	1,068
Teen volunteers	202
Adult volunteers	453

Table of Contents:

Keeping Businesses Strong	Page	4
Supporting Agriculture	Pages	5-7
4-H Mission Trip	Page	8
Safe Food; Personal Finance	Page	9
Developing Youth and Communities	Pages	10-11
Keeping People Healthy	Pages	12-13
Sea Grant Programs	Pages	14-15
Arts and eats	Page	16
Local Government Finance & Policy	Page	17
Staff and Extension Council Listing	Pages	18-19
MI Spartan Impact	Page	20

MSU Extension's Expanded Digital Reach



More than 3.7 million people viewed more than 7.2 million pages on MSUE website



~1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to about 16,900 email addresses



More than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.

Based on data for 2015-16 program year.

Keeping Businesses Strong



When you support MSU Extension, you support food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy in your community.

Livestock Producer Education

For the seventh consecutive year, MSU Extension meat quality educator Jeannine Schweihofer provided education at the Byron Center Meat's annual producer appreciation and education day. Approximately 100 livestock producers were in attendance and at least eight producers were from Allegan County.

This year's program included a presentation on marketing meat to millennials, pricing, packaging, and how to tell your farm's story. In 2017, 91% of evaluation respondents indicated an increase in knowledge of meat marketing. Over the years, 50% of evaluation respondents indicate having made a change to their business as a result of this training. Two people changed their marketing strategy, five people have changed their feeding ratios and one person reported selling more animals through direct marketing versus the auction as a result of the program.



Participant Quote:

“I basically gain more confidence in what I’m raising and in selling. That is huge. And each event gives me a more

rounded education in the whole arena. Thanks.”

Supporting Beginning Farmers

MSU Extension also works to support people interested in becoming farmers through a variety of programs, including: [The MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series](#), [The MSU Vets to Ag program](#), [The MSU Student Organic Farm Certificate Program](#), and the [MSU Institute of Agricultural Technology](#).

Supporting Food and Agriculture



When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

MSU Extension staff provide education and research in many areas important to local producers. Participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices as well as how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and conserve and protect water resources.

Blueberry production:

Michigan leads the nation in the production of blueberries, which is considered one of the healthiest foods due to their high levels of antioxidants and vitamins A and C. **Allegan County is one of the highest producing blueberry areas of the state.**

One of the greatest threats to the Michigan berry crops is an invasive species insect called Spotted Wing Drosophila or SWD. This fly species is native to Asia and was detected in North America (California) for the first time in 2008. Since then it has spread through many of the primary fruit production regions of the United States, including Michigan, where it was detected in 2010 and now is well established in all fruit growing counties of Michigan. In 2012, growers estimated \$2.7 million in economic losses due to the SWD.

Michigan State University Extension conducted a series of activities to provide berry growers with technical information and assistance, and tools to ameliorate the economic impact of this pest. The Michigan State University Small Fruit Team conducted two Twilight Meetings and one curriculum-based, hands-on workshop to teach growers about how to incorporate Spotted Wing Drosophila management into their current Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs. This helps them to optimize their pest management strategy to reduce the threat from this insect.

During those events, growers learned to develop a successful IPM program to manage the SWD. Results from MSU Extension education activities measured at the end of the crop season indicated that growers who attend the workshop and Twilight Meetings saved over \$100 per acre in pest control expenses and had a substantial reduction in crop losses due to SWD. In addition, 70% of growers had no crop losses or fruit downgrading.

MSU Extension has also been monitoring another invasive species threat, the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug. This insect is also a native of Asia, first detected in 1998. It has been found all over the U.S., including Michigan. In 2014, the MSU Extension fruit team implemented a network of monitoring sites including sites in Ottawa County. Traps for this insect are checked, recorded and published on a weekly basis during the growing season at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/news/blueberries/P60>

Farm Business Development



MSU Extension works to connect producers with the resources of Michigan State University to address current issues in the field.

**Pictured above:
Lodged soybeans.
Photo by MSU
Extension Educator
Mike Staton.**

MSU Soybean Variety Performance Trial Tour

MSU Extension Educator Mike Staton cooperated with the host producer and two local agribusinesses (CHS Agronomy and Zeeland Farm Services) to plan, promote and conduct a tour of the MSU soybean variety performance trial near Hamilton. More than 25 soybean producers and agribusiness representatives participated. Lodging was a serious problem across the state and tour participants saw first-hand that some varieties stood straight while other were flat (lodged) and badly tangled. Lodged plants slow harvest operations and increase harvest losses. Variety selection is one of the best ways to reduce lodging. Photos from a commercial field in Allegan County and the MSU performance trial were used in a state-wide MSUE News article (http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/recommendations_for_harvesting_lodged_soybeans). The article was picked up by several leading agricultural publications and has received 613 page views in 2017.

Soybean Management and Research Technologies (SMaRT)

The SMaRT program is a partnership between MSU Extension and the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee. The program's goals are to help Michigan soybean producers increase yields and income through on-farm research, educational meetings and timely and relevant articles. Allegan County producers conducted five of the 72, SMaRT on-farm research trials in 2016 and one of the five 2017 SMaRT winter educational meetings was held in Allegan County. The purpose of the educational meeting held in Hamilton on January 19, 2017 was to present the 2016 SMaRT research results, gather input for the 2017 trials and recruit new cooperators. Fifty-five (55) soybean producers and agronomists participated in the program. A follow-up evaluation will be mailed to participants in early December to measure and document the educational and financial impacts of the program.

Dairy Production



Allegan County ranks 5th in Michigan milk production according to the 2012 USDA Ag Census.

Optimizing Dairy Farm Profit

This program highlighted information relevant to dairy farms staying profitable even with low milk prices. MSU Extension dairy educators and MSUE farm management educators presented information on key financial indicators to monitor on dairy farms and the major differences between high and low profit farms. Several critical factors for successful dairy herd management were highlighted, including heifer raising strategies, optimum stocking density in dairy cow housing, labor productivity on farms, and benefits of custom forage harvesting.

The most commonly listed changes that participants intended to make were using partial budgets and cash flow budgets for improved financial planning, increasing labor efficiency, and identifying bottlenecks in herd management. Each person received a USB drive containing useful on-farm management tools.

Dairy Nutrition Roundtable Discussions

The roundtable was held in December of 2016. It provided an open forum for participants to discuss current issues in dairy cattle feeding and nutrition. This session was attended by five dairy nutritionists and feed company reps that serve dairy farmers in west Michigan. Participants asked questions of the MSU dairy nutrition researchers, specialists, and their peers.

Veterinary Feed Directive Informational Meeting

The Veterinary Feed Directives changes that took effect on Jan. 1, 2017 have limited the use of some antimicrobials administered in feed and require veterinary oversight to obtain these products. MSU Extension meetings were held to provide an opportunity for dairy producers, farm employees and industry professionals to learn about what actions were needed to be prepared for the changes. Presentations were followed by a panel discussion led by local veterinarians, nutritionists and feed mill managers.

4-H Club Travel to Kansas and Oklahoma



“While the kids were on spring break from school, they received lessons on this trip that could not be learned in any classroom or in any textbook they will find.”

**- Kerry Tucker,
Northern Allean 4-H
Club Leader**

In response to the devastating wildfires in the spring of 2017, the Northern Allean 4-H Club decided to travel to Kansas and Oklahoma on their spring break to deliver feed and supplies to livestock operations in need. News reports stated that the wildfires claimed seven human lives, 15,000 cattle and 6,500 hogs, and burned through almost two million acres in Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and Colorado.

On April 6, a convoy of 21 semi-trailers and pick-up trailers left the Wayland Hopkins Livestock Auction with a police escort and headed west to help ranchers whose farms were damaged by the fires. Their mission was to deliver hay, feed, milk replacer, and fencing supplies. They covered 2,300 miles in three and a half days.

Kerry Tucker is the 4-H Club leader. She was quoted by MLive as stating, “While the kids were on spring break from school, they received lessons on this trip that could not be learned in any classroom or in any textbook they will find. This is history in the making, but we really doubt this will ever be written in any textbook.”

Tucker and her husband, Craig, own Hawks Nest Calf Ranch in Hopkins. They and their three children, Katrina, Caleb and Colby, traveled west with the 4-H Club. Hopkins FFA members raised over \$5,000 for supplies, and the 4-H Club raised money for fuel. Tucker's family hauled round bales of hay using their own vehicle with a flatbed trailer that was donated from Clearview Dairy in Martin. She said the hay was donated by Paul DeJager, also of Martin.

The large convoy was broken up into smaller convoys, including Tucker's. She said her convoy included two semis and two pickup trucks. The semis were driven by Doug Hedington of Hedington Trucking from North Liberty, Indiana, and Chuck Dreyer from Brink Truck Lines in Holland. The pickup trucks included her family and Brink, co-organizer of the convoy, along with Fred Miller, of Hopkins, and Jeff and Gavin Gouker, of Allegan.



Safe Food Personal Finance



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years. It aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.

Reducing foodborne illness through education

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. MSU Extension food safety training workshops include: 16-hour ServSafe trainings, 8-hour ServSafe trainings, food preservation, Cottage Food Law, and Cooking for Crowds.

On-farm food safety

MSU Extension has been working with several partners around the state to ensure Michigan farmers are informed on the [Food Safety Modernization Act \(FSMA\)](#) and its potential impacts on their businesses. FSMA is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years. This is a significant impact to fresh produce growers because it calls for new standards and training programs.

In addition, MSUE is partnering with Cherry Capital Foods to build **the first statewide USDA Certified Group GAP program in the nation**. MSUE is providing compliance education through a robust suite of resources, events, and trainings, which will assist growers in obtaining GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification.

Personal finance

MSU Extension held a workshop on techniques for passing on non-titled personal property (family heirlooms for example) to the next generation. MSU Extension also offers classes on money management and best practices for purchasing a home both in-person and online. For more information about MSU Extension finance and housing programs, please contact Jinnifer Ortquist at ortquisj@anr.msu.edu.

Memories from the 2017 Fair



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Pictured above: A Best in Show hand built motorbike by Luke Conklin.

Over half of the 636 youth enrolled in 4-H Clubs in Allegan County show their projects at the Allegan County Fair. Most show in Livestock and horse projects. This year's 4-H Market Livestock Auction set another record with a total of \$689,000!



Photo to the left: 13 youth were Top Showman in their species and competed in the All Around 4-H Top Showmanship Derby. Winning Overall Top Showman for the 3rd year in a row was Miles Wixom. He gets to keep the giant travelling trophy which boasts each of the 13 species. Katrina Tucker was the overall Reserve Showman.



Photo to the left: The Milk N Honey 4-H Club 's Fair booth demonstrated the diversity of interests covered by 4-H programs. Unique projects club members pursued included foreign exchange and shooting sports.



Photo to the left: Mackenzie VanKlompberg is a master at felting. She used this skill to create all of the animals and characters for her Best in Show Noah's Ark submission.

4-H Youth Development



With MSU Extension support, the first AAESA Robotics Challenge and Coding Showcase event was held at Allegan Public Schools Fieldhouse in 2017.



Robotics Challenge and Coding Showcase

On March 30, 2017 the first AAESA Robotics Challenge and Coding Showcase event was held at Allegan Public Schools Fieldhouse. Sponsoring organizations included: Area Educational Service Agency, Allegan/Van Buren Math & Science Center, ALL IN (ALlegan AESA INvention-INnovation-INclusion), MSU Extension and the Allegan Area STEM Partnership.

MSU Extension 4-H Educator, Janis Brinn, served on the planning committee for this event and facilitated the Junk Drawer Robotics “Junk Mobile” station with 131 students participating. The EV3 LEGO Robotics Challenge and Coding Showcase was an opportunity for youth who have been studying robotics and/or coding to demonstrate their learning, celebrate accomplishments, and interact with others who share similar interests.

In the Robotic Challenge teams of 2-3 students, in grades 3 through 12, selected one of three challenges. The Coding Showcase was an open event meaning students could participate in a variety of ways and at various stages of completion of a finished product. In the Makerspace portion of the event, students used their creative skills to build artistic robots and junk mobiles (4-H Junk Drawer Robotics).

In addition to honing their technical skills, students also worked on their soft skills. Teams of students were tapped to head to the Press Box by volunteer media representatives to record a video interview. The team members responded to questions and practiced public speaking as well as reflective thinking on what skills they had gained and/or developed by participating in the event. Besides the Makerspace area, participants also could build and test a LEGO drone, explore a Remote Control (RC) car, as well as check out how Underwater Remote Controlled Vehicles (URCV) worked.

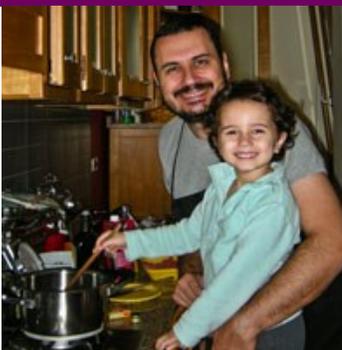
4-H Japanese Educational Program

MSU Extension 4-H Educator Janis Brinn conducted this program with students from four Allegan County Elementary Schools in May 2017 reaching over 750 students. This effort was also supported by the 4-H Resource Volunteer Michiko Yoshimoto and the Japan Center at Western Michigan University. Youth participating in the program learned about the Japanese National Holiday celebrated on May 5th known as “Children’s Day.” Participants compared this holiday to Mexico’s Cinco De Mayo. Participants learned some Japanese greetings and other common words, made origami helmets, carp banners and received their names in the Japanese handwriting of katakana.

Keeping People Healthy



Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.



Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

MSU Extension delivers relevant, evidence-based education to help people in Michigan stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity.

From October 2016—September 2017, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition education programs reached **40 adults and 196 youth from Allegan County**. MSU Extension staff conducted four adult face-to-face workshops in a series and seven youth face-to-face workshops to date in 2017. These programs are supported with funds from the USDA grant for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed).

Allegan County's rate of diabetes (10.3%) exceeds the state average of 9.2%. To address this issue, Christi Demitz, MSU Extension Disease Prevention Educator, reached 26 adults through a *Diabetes PATH* series of workshops in 2017. She reached an additional six adults from Allegan County through two *Dining with Diabetes* four-class series held at Allegan General Hospital in June and July 2017. In addition, Demitz conducted a *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* series in Allegan County with six participants.

Results from a statewide evaluation of all MSU Extension nutrition programs showed that:

- 79% of youth participants improved their abilities or gained knowledge about how to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Guidelines.
- 79% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one nutrition practice, such as preparing foods without adding salt, or using labels to make food choices.
- 73% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one food resource management practice, such as planning meals in advance or comparing prices.

Keeping People Healthy

Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce health care costs by providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.



Children can be taught how to pay attention and pause before reacting to stress.

Photo credit: Pixabay.

Social and Emotional Health

[The Nurturing Families Series](#) works to educate parents, grandparents, childcare providers and others who care for children, ranging from birth to teens. This course is based on research showing that children who receive affection and nurture from their caregivers have the opportunity for healthy development. Participants in this course learn how to enhance positive relationships with children, how to discipline without spanking, child growth and development, how to handle stress and anger, and how to help build self-esteem. Six adults from Allegan County participated in this program in 2017.

[RELAX: Alternatives to Anger](#) is an educational program that actively engages participants to gain knowledge and skills to constructively deal with anger. The core concepts include recognizing anger signals, empathizing, listening, accepting that others' anger is not about you, and letting go of the past in order to maintain a present perspective. Participants learn to better manage their anger and stress at home, in the workplace and in school.

[Communicating with Farmers Under Stress](#) is a new program of MSU Extension, developed as a result of increased suicide and mental illness rates among the farming community brought on by declining farm-based income over the past several years. Eight workshops have been held throughout the state with 160 participants. Evaluation data shows that 92% are now able to recognize the warning signs of depression, suicide and mental illness; 85% increased their understanding of the impact of stress on their bodies; and 97% learned where to send people for help within their community.

Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach.

A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 33 university-based programs.

District Council Invited Lawmakers to Learn on the Water

On September 8, 2017, members of MSU Extension's District 7 Council headed out on the *D.J. Angus*, a vessel owned and operated by GVSU for the purpose of educating people about the Great Lakes and inland waters. Also in attendance were State Representatives Roger Victory, Rob Verheulen, and Jim Lilly as well as Matt Kooiman, Public Policy Manager for Congressman Huizenga.

Council members and leaders participated in water quality sampling in Spring Lake and Lake Michigan led by GVSU staff. In addition to learning about how invasive species have dramatically affected our lakes, the group heard from MSU Extension's District Sea Grant Educator Dr. Dan O'Keefe on connections between our waterways and coastal economies.

The group learned about Michigan Sea Grant's work with the Lake Michigan salmon and trout fishery, a cornerstone of the \$7.1 billion Great Lakes sport fishery. Sea Grant has been instrumental in helping anglers understand their fishery and share data with biologists through the *Salmon Ambassadors* and *Great Lakes Angler Diary* programs. Last year many anglers were caught off guard by the Chinook stocking cut proposal. MSU Extension News articles helped people better understand the issue by addressing some common misconceptions.

- **Most Chinook salmon caught in Lake Michigan are wild, not stocked.** According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Mass Marking Program, wild-spawned Chinook salmon made up 71 percent of the Chinook catch for Michigan anglers in 2014-2015.
- **Even ports that are not near spawning rivers rely mostly on wild fish.** Grand Haven is a good example of a port that does not support natural reproduction. Volunteers with the *Salmon Ambassadors* program found that 74 percent of Chinook salmon caught in the Grand Haven area in 2015 were wild.
- **Alewife are at a historic low.** The USGS Great Lakes Science Center's bottom trawl survey found that yearling and older alewife biomass density dropped to the lowest levels since monitoring began in 1973.
- **Natural reproduction is a huge factor.** In 2017, Lake Michigan stocking is being reduced from 1.80 to 1.35 million Chinook salmon. If wild reproduction returns to normal, we could see an increase of over 3 million young Chinook salmon entering Lake Michigan in 2017. This could completely overwhelm the effect of the stocking cut in terms of the total number of Chinook salmon available in Lake Michigan. In other words, there is a good chance that people will not notice any decrease in the quality of fishing over the next few years. The bad news is that Lake Michigan still appears to have too many mouths to feed and too little food.

Salmon Ambassadors



Salmon Ambassadors is a volunteer program that engages anglers in collecting data on stocked and wild Chinook salmon over the fishing season. 56 anglers participated in the program and recorded data on 2,015 Chinook salmon.

Salmon Ambassadors is a volunteer program managed by Dr. Dan O'Keefe with MSU Extension. The program is a Michigan Sea Grant initiative developed in coordination with the Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The purpose of the program is to engage anglers in learning about their fishery and providing useful information on stocked and wild Chinook salmon. Stocked Chinook salmon are easy to identify thanks to a fin clip.

Volunteer anglers participating in the program check each fish caught over the course of the season. They also carefully measure each fish and record the date and location of each catch. **Fifty-six (56) anglers participated in the program and recorded data on 2,015 Chinook salmon.** This data helps scientists and anglers determine the health of the Chinook salmon population and informs stocking needs.

Since the Lake Michigan program began in 2013, **wild Chinook salmon have outnumbered stocked in all areas of the lake**, with percent wild being the highest at ports like Manistee and Ludington where nearby rivers offer excellent spawning habitat.

The program was made possible by partnerships with the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fisherman's Association, the Michigan Charter Boat Association and Detroit Area Steelheaders. For more information visit, <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/explore/fisheries/salmon-ambassadors/>

Arts and Eats

ARTS
AND EATS



MSU Extension supports tourism, agriculture and the arts in Allegan County through coordination and sponsorship of the Arts and Eats event each fall.

The seventh annual Arts and Eats tour took place on October 21-22, 2017 across Allegan, Barry and small pieces of the surrounding counties. This year's tour featured amazing fall colors, sunny weather in the 70's both days, and increased sales and visitors over the previous year's tour.

Arts and Eats is a backroads food, farm and art tour which provides an opportunity for visitors to southwest Michigan to visit local eateries, artists' studios and galleries, and local farms. It began seven years ago as a collaboration of several community organizations in Barry County, including Michigan State University Extension, and has since expanded to cover Allegan County and portions of Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties. The tour has a specific focus on rural and regional tourism promotion and has been viewed by participating sites as an economic development tool for their county and region.

Specific to Allegan County, there were nine eateries, seven artists, and three participating farms. Each of these sites were included in the annual map and guide, which is printed and distributed across the region/state and serves as a travel companion for visitors. While specific visitor counts and sales numbers for sites are still being compiled, initial feedback from planning committee members who made stops during the tour showed increases in overall visitation and sales throughout the weekend. One site reported more than doubling their visitation from the previous year and tripling sales. While weather can play a big role in the tour's success, much work has been done to increase the tour's promotion and participation—specifically from Allegan County.

For the past two years, the Arts and Eats tour has been supported by a grant from the Allegan County Community Foundation. These grant funds have allowed the tour to bring on a part-time coordinator position and increase participation from potential farm, food and art sites in Allegan County. MSU Extension and other Arts and Eats planning partners are looking to build upon the success of this regional tour effort by expanding the brand and marketing materials to other areas of the state and help regions organize their own Arts and Eats tours. This has the potential to raise awareness of the Arts and Eats brand to new areas of the state and elevate visitation and participation in Allegan County as a result.

Local Government Finance and Policy



MSU's Center for Local Government Finance and Policy works to provide the best research and teaching to help local government officials make informed decisions.

Only with healthy, vibrant communities can Michigan residents be expected to thrive. To help Michigan prosper in a sensible, sustainable fiscally responsible way, MSU Extension launched the [Center for Local Government Finance and Policy](#) in late 2015. MSU Extension has been engaged in the education and training of local government officials in Michigan for over 50 years. The Center will build upon this work and will institutionalize research and outreach on state and local governments at MSU for years to come.

The mission of the Center is to be a leader in the production and dissemination of the best research and teaching on issues of local government finance and related policy issues. The Center will work through a broad and diverse network of affiliates from within and outside of MSU. The Center is supported by many key partners, including the Mott Foundation, Pew Charitable Trust and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Recent research reports from the Center:

- Legacy costs
- Fiscal distress indicators
- The ability of local governments to deliver services
- County revenue sources in other states
- County revenue sharing
- The impact of the Headlee millage rollback provision on county property tax revenues

The Center is led by Dr. Eric Scorsone, who is on temporary leave from MSU to serve as the Senior Deputy Treasurer for the State of Michigan. Robert Kleine is serving as interim director in Dr. Scorsone's absence.

MSU Extension Staff Located in Allegan County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Betty Blase	District 7 Coordinator	269-673-0370 Ext. 2553	blase@msu.edu
Jan Brinn	4-H Youth Development Educator	269-673-0370 Ext. 2555	brinn@msu.edu
Tina Conklin	MSU Product Center Counselor	269-673-0370 Ext. 2558	conkli7@msu.edu
Sue Elwell	Health and Nutrition Program Assoc.	269-673-0370 Ext. 2559	elwell@msu.edu
Ronda Foreman	County Support Staff	269-673-0370 Select "0"	rforeman@msu.edu
Dian Liepe	4-H Program Coordinator	269-673-0370 Ext. 2557	liepe@msu.edu
Mike Staton	Senior Extension Soybean Educator	269-673-0370 Ext. 2562	staton@msu.edu

MISSION:

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The 4-H Name and Emblem have special protections from Congress, protected by code 18 USC 707.

Additional Extension Staff Serving Allegan County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Faith Cullens	Dairy Educator	989-224-5240	cullnsf@msu.edu
Joanne Davidhizar	MSU Product Center	269-944-4126	davidhiz@msu.edu
Christi Demitz	Disease Prevention Educator	616-632-7881	demitzch@msu.edu
Beth Ferry	Swine Educator	269-445-4438	franzeli@msu.edu
Rebecca Finneran	Senior Consumer Horticulture Educator	616-632-7886	finneran@msu.edu
Carlos Garcia-Salazar	Small Fruit (Blueberries) Educator	616-994-4545	garcias4@msu.edu
Charles Gould	Bioenergy Crops Educator	616-994-4126	gouldm@msu.edu
Ron Goldy, PhD	Vegetable Educator	269-944-4545	goldy@msu.edu
Kevin Gould	Beef/Livestock Educator	616-527-5357	gouldk@msu.edu
Tom Guthrie	Equine Educator	517-788-4292	guthri19@msu.edu
Jane Hart	Food Safety Educator	231-724-6694	hartjan@msu.edu
Amy Irish-Brown	Senior District Fruit Educator	616-632-7891	irisha@msu.edu
Glenda Kilpatrick	4-H Extension Educator	616-632-7879	kilpatri@msu.edu
Kathy Lee	Dairy Extension Educator	231-839-5850	leeka@msu.edu
Mark Longstroth	Small Fruit Educator	269-657-8213	longstr7@msu.edu
Stephanie Marino	Nutrition Supervising Educator	616-632-7889	marinos1@msu.edu
Jill O'Donnell	Christmas Tree Educator	231-779-9480	odonne10@msu.edu
Jeannine Schwehofer	Meat Quality Educator	810-989-6935	grobbelj@msu.edu
Holly Tiret	Senior Extension Educator	616-632-7893	tiret@msu.edu
Garrett Ziegler	Community Food Systems Educator	616-608-7436	zieglerg@msu.edu

Members of the MSU District 7 Extension Council—2017

- Nora Balgoyen-Williams (Allegan)
- Mark DeYoung (Allegan)
- Carrie Jo Anderson (Kent)
- Dick Bethel (Kent)
- Harold Mast (Kent)
- Jerry Miller (Kent)
- Mary Jane Belter (Ottawa)
- Mike Bronkema (Ottawa)
- Greg DeJong (Ottawa)
- Matt Fenske (Ottawa)
- Audra Fuentes (Ottawa)
- Yumiko Jakobcic (Ottawa)
- Michelle Morrow (Ottawa)
- Matt Schmid (Ottawa)

MI SPARTAN IMPACT

MSU works side by side for a stronger Michigan.

Every day, Michigan State University works to advance prosperity for the people of Michigan—making a positive impact on the state’s economy in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing, technology, health care, education, energy, environment, and the arts. Michigan State—particularly through AgBioResearch and Extension—plays a key role in the state’s annual \$101 billion food and agriculture system through partnerships, research, and educational programs in all 83 counties.

MSU’s talent and expertise help position Michigan as an uncompromising competitor in a global market, and we make vital contributions to the state’s economy.

The University Research Corridor, comprising Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University, has a combined \$16.8 billion annual economic impact in Michigan. MSU is making a difference—everywhere—in Michigan. See more at: www.mispartanimpact.msu.edu



Thank you to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners for their continued support of the educational and outreach programs of Allegan County MSU Extension.

Dean Kapenga, District 1

Jim Storey, District 2

Max Thiele, District 3

Mark DeYoung, District 4

Tom Jessup, District 5

Gale Dugan, District 6

Don Black, District 7