



Allegan County 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



6,262 Allegan County youth involved in 4-H and other youth development programs



\$718,187 spending with local businesses



115 Allegan County residents received social and emotional health education



8,000 gardening questions answered statewide



MSU Extension website received 6,583 Allegan visitors; 80.2% were first-time visitors



MSU disbursed \$4,888,135 in financial aid to Allegan County students



\$12,148,571 total economic impact in Allegan County

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Allegan County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Allegan County residents need it most.

We're excited to present the 2018 Annual Report that gives an overview of MSU Extension's accomplishments and ongoing work.

We're passionate about serving Allegan County and we look forward to a new year. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Erin Moore
District 7 Director



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Program Highlights



Jan Brinn poses with youth wearing their origami helmets.

JAPANESE CHILDREN'S DAY

With the help of MSU Extension Educator, Jan Brinn, Allegan County Youth learned about the Japanese National Holidays. The youth received a presentation and activity related to each of the day's; May 3rd being "Constitution Day", May 4th "Green Day", and May 5th being "Children's Day" (originally Boy's Day) also called "Kodomo-no-Hi" in Japanese. Hands-on activities included origami helmets and carp banners. They received their names in Japanese hand writing of katakana which they were very excited to practice. They also learned that origami is art science and were shown how it connects to engineering.



Livestock Judging Team at the American Royal Show in Kansas.

LIVESTOCK JUDGING TEAM

The 4-H Livestock Judging Team won at the State level and then advanced to the National level. For the Keystone International Competition in Pennsylvania, the Hopkins Future Farmer's of America (FFA) team of three placed 4th in reasons, 4th in cattle, 4th in sheep, 4th in swine, and were the 4th overall junior team (4-H & FFA combined). The 4-H team, which consisted of two Allegan county youth, placed 7th overall. For the American Royal Livestock Show in Kansas City, the Allegan County team placed 6th out of 17 in the 4-H division, which is the highest of any recent Michigan team.



4-H Youth pose with their balloon animals at the Linking Center Kickoff event.

LINKING CENTER KICKOFF

On June 24th, Dian Liepe, Allegan County 4-H Program Coordinator, dressed as Giggles, the 4-H Clown, in order to promote the summer 4-H programs. Dian used a promotional display and made over 350 balloon creatures for local kids. This kickoff event was the beginning of the 4-H Summer Linking Center program that featured the MSU Extension's 4-H Program options. MSU Extension will continue to explore collaboration opportunities with the Linking Center to be able to provide the community with low-cost and free programming in a variety of service areas.

Program Highlights

BEEKEEPING SPIN CLUB

The kickoff event held at the Linking Center, located in Pullman, was the beginning of the 4-H Summer program that featured the 4-H International Program and an Educational Beekeeping Special Interest (SPIN) club. Children from kindergarten to 10th grade were involved, with a diverse representation. Other programs included wildflowers, pressing flowers, healthy games, dogs, duct tape crafts, clowning, exploring nature and Lego robotics.



Youth gather for Beekeeping program at the Linking Center.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Mental health in Allegan County continues to be an important and complex issue. Through two trained experts, MSU Extension brings it's evidenced based programming such as "Stress Less with Mindfulness," "Relax: Alternatives to Anger", "Farm Stress Management" and "Mindfulness with Children" in Allegan County that all focus on one's social and emotional well being. In 2018, a total of 115 Allegan County Residents received education on a myriad of these topics related to mental health.



Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Sue Elwell, Nutrition Educator for Allegan county, provided sessions for 141 children and 36 adults in 2018. The sessions MSU Extension is able to provide not only give transfer knowledge about healthy eating and active living, but give participants tangible tips for making their next steps. In fact, one boy in the 2nd grade approached Sue to show her his water bottle and said, "I stopped drinking orange soda and Kool aide". In addition to providing nutrition education at schools, Sue partners with the Arc of Allegan County to provide a variety of programming to their clients.



MSU Extension, Sue Elwell, delivers a lesson on Myplate and walks through the park with participants from The Arc of Allegan County.

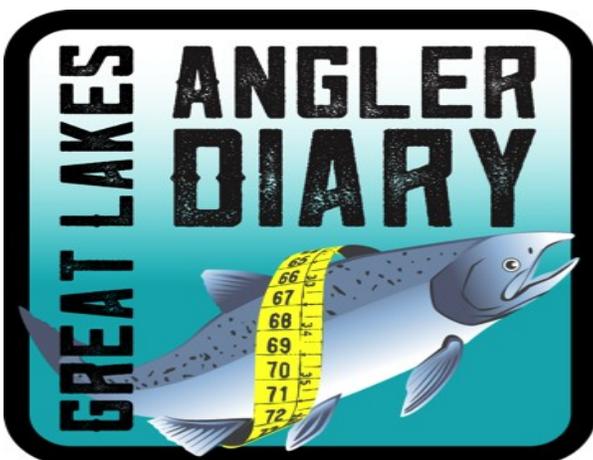
Program Highlights



Bars of soap made at Cheshire Farms, one of the stops on the Arts and Eats tour.



Allegan County Commissioner, Mark DeYoung, and District Director, Erin Moore, test the water quality of Lake Michigan.



The Great Lakes Angler Diary was developed with guidance from [Michigan Sea Grant](#).

ARTS AND EATS

MSU Extension supports the annual Arts and Eats Tour as both the Farm liaison and logistical support. This included securing farms for the 2018 tour and developing a partnership with the Lakeshore Harvest Tour to have their tour participants included in Arts and Eats and pay a discounted group rate for 13 farm participants. Arts and Eats raises awareness and appreciation of the region's human and natural resources. The tour reminds us about the benefits of buying and consuming locally grown foods and supporting Michigan artists as entrepreneurs. Local businesses and artists appreciate the opportunity to showcase their talents and their wares to both locals and tourists during this annual event.

D.J. ANGUS VOYAGE

Joined by members of the MSU Extension Advisory Council, Erin Moore, District 7 Director, led a small group of local legislators on the 4th Annual DJ Angus Voyage. The voyage focuses on water quality, invasive species, and the connection between watersheds, rivers, and the Great Lakes. This 45-foot research vessel is owned and operated by Grand Valley State University and serves as a "floating classroom" offering educational programs on the Grand River, Spring Lake, and Lake Michigan. Dr. Dan O'Keefe, MSU Extension Sea Grant educator housed in Ottawa County, leads the educational programs that day.

GREAT LAKE ANGLER DIARY

The Great Lakes Angler Diary App was developed to help scientists who are covering the great lakes collect "citizen science" to fill in knowledge gaps. Thanks to the widespread availability of mobile technology, many anglers are already equipped with high-tech hardware necessary for recording quality data. All they need is appropriate software to guide and organize their efforts. The Salmon Ambassadors program enlisted anglers in recording length, location, and fin clip information on stocked and wild Chinook salmon. The new version of the app, developed in 2018, has improvements to the Total Length dropdown menu, Fin Clip dropdown menu, and formatting of the data entry screen layout.

Program Highlights

TOURISM WORKSHOP

MSU Extension's Tourism Educator, Garrett Ziegler, partnered with the Allegan County Tourist Council and the Allegan County Parks Department to bring a tourism workshop to Allegan for those who were interested in better understanding the current and potential impacts of the tourism industry. The workshop aimed to demonstrate the magnitude and significance of the tourism industry, expose communities to relevant tourism trends and travelers' interests and provide a facilitated, open forum for innovative and collaborative exchange for developing tourism across your region.



63% of Michigan residents participate in outdoor recreation activities each year.

SOYBEAN FARM TRIALS

Mike Staton, Agriculture Educator located in Allegan County MSU Extension, continued his soybean farm trials through 2018. Additionally, he conducted an evaluation survey throughout the 2017 Soybean Farming Program that covered topics such as cyst nematode management, and herbicide resistant weeds. Participants from Hamilton, Michigan noted that, as a result of the program, they saved or earned \$19.40 per acre, with 1,685 acres impacted for a total financial impact of \$32,735.



Soybean farmers gather on soybean field day to learn about new equipment.

SWD MANAGEMENT

On June 15, 2018, blueberry growers received training to manage the spotted wing Drosophila (SWD) under a System Approach to Pest Management. The SWD is causing tremendous damage to the economy of small blueberry growers in Allegan County and all major Michigan small fruit producing counties. Training consisted of one-day classroom and hands-on session. This is an advanced Integrated Pest Management program that provides knowledge and skill to manage the spotted wing Drosophila at levels that allow the sustainability of blueberry production and employment in small blueberry farms.



Hands-on training to develop a spray program using training notes and Enviroweather .

Featured County Story



Photo: Dairy Cows from on-farm consultation in Hopkins.

The issue: Michigan dairy producers are producing more milk than can be processed in the state, which has led to lower milk prices compared to our nearby neighbors. Additionally, the shortages in labor in the dairy industry have led to financial struggles of many dairy farms in Allegan County.

MSU Extension actions taken: MSU Extension is tackling these issues with a cross-disciplinary team. Dairy Educator, Martin Mangual, at the request from local stakeholders, conducted two Employee Training Programs in Allegan for milking crews (that serve 850 cows) to improve milk quality in their farms. Additionally, Martin works with Farm Management Educator, Jon LaPorte, on direct farm business consultations. Jon's main area of focus is in Farm Management, with an emphasis on farm business analysis, business transition, income tax education, and general farm business management topics such as economics of technologies and return on investment. Jon and Martin work to get to the bottom line—how can dairy farms make more money?

The result: Jon and Martin work with farms on three main issues—feed, labor and people. Finding that the longtime belief that it's cheaper for farms to raise their own feed and support multiple families may not always be true, Jon works one-on-one with local farmers on business plans to ensure farm profitability and assists them in better understanding their farm business as a whole to make successful, well-informed decisions.

How this has made a difference: The feedback from farmers has been very positive. In response to the training programs, one farmer said "somatic cell count numbers improved (Somatic cell count drop) and employees are maintaining a cleaner environment in the parlor" which is one of the stronger indicators of milk quality. Another farmer told us that they better understood where their strengths and weaknesses were as a result of our work with them. They now know where to focus their improvement efforts on the farm, but also that there are areas of success and opportunity still within the operation, too. MSU Extension has helped to shed light on the positive aspects of the dairy industry with raised awareness of continuing opportunities. MSU Extension is still working with them on the "how" of achieving ultimate desired outcomes, but they're having some healthy conversations within the farm family about what to do moving forward.

Collaboration Across MSU Extension

MSU Extension is an organization comprised of individuals with broad knowledge of subject matters related a particular discipline, such as field crops, nutrition, or youth development. Having four MSU Extension Institutes gives the ability to bring together cross-disciplinary expertise to address issues that are multifaceted and complex. For example, MSU Extension Educators and Program Instructors have worked together on physical and financial health issues, agricultural and stress issues, economic and community development and conservation issues, and issues that span generations.

Your local office is housed with experts in particular fields. Individuals may serve in the Agricultural and Agribusiness Institute, the Children and Youth Institute, the Health and Nutrition Institute or our community and natural resource sustainability institute—the Greening Michigan Institute. However, even if you do not have a local expert for the Extension issue that you need addressed, MSU Extension has the unique functionality of drawing from a statewide pool of experts to make sure that you have the information that you need. In addition, the MSU Extension website www.msue.msu.edu is maintained and updated on a regular basis. We are always looking for ways to collaborate with each other to apply knowledge to the critical issues you face.

Through successful partnership and collaboration with Allegan County, MSU Extension is able to continue its local presence and to provide vital educational resources and programming in such areas as community and economic development, agriculture, land use, health and nutrition, and youth development.

Thank you Allegan County!



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.

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