



# Arenac County

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS



\$1,183,491 total economic impact in Arenac County



110 Arenac County residents participated in SNAP-Ed programming



154 MSU alumni living in Arenac County



MSU disbursed \$195,649 in financial aid to Arenac County students



860 youth involved in 4-H and other youth development programs



9,288 Michiganders utilized Ask Extension, including 20 residents of Arenac County



308 Arenac County residents participated in MSU Extension programs

### MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

As I reflect on 2020, it is difficult not to mention what is evident, that it was a year unlike any in recent memory where ordinary life changed in so many ways which prompted us to adjust in both small and large ways. In mid-March when MSU Extension staff were asked to work remotely, we did not foresee that in many Michigan communities, the impact of this global pandemic would be so great and the losses so devastating. We know that while our staff was busy with remote work, many were laboring to care for those affected, to serve people in need, and to keep our communities safe. We are deeply grateful that our programs are relevant and highly regarded by our community partners across the state.

In April, I was approached by Extension Associate Director Patrick Cudney with what was described to me as “an exciting leadership opportunity” to become the Interim District Director for the counties of MSUE’s District 4 – Alcona, Arenac, Crawford, Iosco, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Roscommon. Although it has been challenging to begin this new role at a distance, I am deeply gratified by the warm welcome I have received from the staff, county leaders, and communities in this beautiful region of Michigan.

As we resume our face-to-face engagement this summer and fall, our experience developing on-line programs will allow us to meet more people where they are and offer convenience and expand our ability to bring relevant, research-based information that will help communities address critical needs, issues, and opportunities. I look forward to working more closely with all of you in the coming months.

Julia Darnton  
Interim District Director

# MSU Extension responds to COVID-19 Impacts

Extension has worked to maintain relationships with Michigan communities for over 100 years and most of that has been done through in-person meetings and programs. In the last year, we have expanded our engagement through our website at [extension.msu.edu](https://extension.msu.edu), a website that now averages 1.25 million visitors per month.

Within six days of the first Stay Home, Stay Safe order, MSU Extension launched the [Remote Learning and Resources](#) website, and our teams immediately began to modify programs to continue to reach our audiences and to create programs to engage families, communities, business owners, and leaders to get the best information to keep moving forward under these new conditions.

The website has evolved to a one-stop-shop for educational resources that we offer online. Our educators and program staff were also able to reach farmers through the growing season, elected officials and decision makers, parents, families, and youth by meeting with them on virtual platforms through webinars and meetings, through phone conferences and by kits through the mail or picked up at a convenient location. We have learned that we can connect with friends and neighbors in our communities at the local level through programs designed to reach residents across the state and attract the notice of people across the country and around the world. We have also transitioned many of our programmatic offerings to virtual learning options and on-demand educational courses.

For older youth who are preparing to live independently, a series called **Adulting 101** covers topics like budgeting, understanding credit and student loans, being an informed renter, household tasks, mindfulness, interviewing, resume building, goal setting, conflict resolution, and more. These interactive sessions attracted more than 3,000 participants in 2020 and were promoted by school districts.

**Cabin Fever Conversations** capitalized on the desire in the spring for people who were cooped up inside to re-engage with gardening. As people spent more time at home, their energies were drawn to cultivating their home gardens, indoor plants and landscapes. Each session attracted audiences of more than 500 people and the program was continued this winter with new topics. Programs have been archived and add to information that MSUE has for those with a desire to flex or grow a green thumb.

Our staff expanded upon the **Rapid Response for Agriculture** resources which created a single place for emerging issues in agricultural production. This information infrastructure, created in 2019 to respond to extreme weather events, helped producers address employee health and safety in farming and processing and to maintain a safe and fresh food supply during the emergency conditions early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The site still maintains resources for farms affected by flooding (and dam failures) in the late spring of 2020 as well. Another key tool for operators and managers is the **COVID-19 Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Program**, or CHAMP Tool was designed to help agriculture operations reduce the risk of worker exposure to COVID-19 and mitigate the potential for disease spread.

Many in-person programs pivoted to create virtual versions, thereby reducing the potential of exposure for the participants. Examples included:

- **From the Field** – a series of virtual field days on a variety of topics ranging from wheat to manure management to precision livestock farming and industrial hemp production. Each of these events allowed producers from across the state to attend without travel time and impacts. Events were also recorded and archived in shorter segments to allow attendees to catch sessions they missed, review past sessions, or share with fellow producers. Our agriculture educators continue to use more methods of communication including podcasts, videos, and more.
- **Preserving Your Harvest** – a free Zoom-based instructional series offered by Food Safety Educators and focused on safe, home food preservation methods like canning, freezing, pickling, fermenting and more. Preserving food safely is important because food borne illness is a serious health hazard and the practice also reduces waste, encourages healthy practices, and can help with food budgeting too!



# Program Highlights

## Nutrition Education

MSU Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program Education (SNAP-Ed) instructors deliver evidence-based, hands on nutrition and physical activity learning opportunities that empower limited income youth and adults with information and strategies to make healthy behavior and lifestyle choices.

In 2020, SNAP-Ed reached **110 Arenac County residents** through one time presentations and program series such Teen Cuisine, Show Me Nutrition, and Healthy Eating Adds Up.

Due to the Michigan executive orders of stay home, stay safe, MSU Extension increased virtual outreach through indirect intervention channels by 45% and reached **428,419** adults and youths statewide through articles, fact sheets, radio podcasts, social media postings, web presence and educational videos.



### ADULT Dietary Improvements

**21%** consumed less soda | **41%** ate more fruits/day | **38%** ate more vegetables per day



### ADULT Physical Activity Improvements

**41%** increased moderate physical activity participation  
**37%** increased strength training activities

YOUTH	Health & Nutrition Impact	3rd-5th Grade	6th-12th Grade
	increased vegetable consumption	<b>31%</b>	<b>38%</b>
	decreased soda consumption	<b>29%</b>	<b>31%</b>
	increased physical activity	<b>26%</b>	<b>31%</b>
	washed their hands more often	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>
	decreased screen time	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>

## Arenac County Sea Grant Extension Educator awarded Outstanding Partner Award by MDNR Fisheries Division

Meaghan Gass, Michigan Sea Grant Extension Educator serving Saginaw Bay coastal counties (including Arenac) was selected to receive the Outstanding Partner Award for her work in 2020. This award is given by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Division to dedicated members of the public and organizations which have shown dedication and enthusiasm in developing creative and innovative approaches to recreational fisheries or protection of the fisheries resource. The award ceremony took place virtually in December 2020.

One example of Gass's effort was her collaboration with MDNR Fisheries Division to continue to host community engagement discussions called [Conversations & Coffee](#). In connection with the regional fisheries workshops, these meetings give anglers the opportunity to share questions with managers and biologists about stocking efforts, habitat restoration and enhancement, and learn about some of the science that underpins decisions of the Fisheries Division. These sessions also allow anglers to ask questions about rule and regulations for fishing in Lake Huron. Some participants brought specific questions about species health, limits, and other local issues. MDNR staff also shared 2020-2021 information about local and statewide regulation changes impacting anglers in Lake Huron.



*"This is a great opportunity to get input from Michigan anglers on new and proposed fishing regulations,"* said Randy Claramunt, MDNR, Fisheries Division, Lake Huron Basin Coordinator. These meetings were hosted by Michigan State University Extension and Michigan Sea Grant, and they help to enhance the sustainable use of Lake Huron and connected fisheries!

# Arenac County, MSU Extension & Supporting local youth



## Arenac County 4-H/FFA Virtual Learning Showcase

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Arenac County Fair was cancelled. To provide youth with a way to market their livestock and allow more buyers an economical way to support these youth, the Arenac County 4-H/FFA Livestock Committee partnered with Farm Bureau to design and promote a Cut & Wrap Sale. Participation in this sale was available to 4-H/FFA youth aged 8-21 that participated in the Arenac County 4-H/FFA Virtual Learning Showcase. This style of sale allowed individuals and businesses to support these youth by purchasing large livestock by the pound based on rail weight. Steers were sold by the whole, half or quarter and swine were sold by the whole or half. Small livestock (poultry/rabbits/pheasants) were sold by the head. Prices were set (no bidding allowed) by the livestock leaders and were based on the average of past three years of auction prices.

We had 17 new buyers this year and most of these were individuals that made purchases of the smaller quantities of steer or swine. Supporters were also able to donate to a youth's projects by "add-on" if they were not interested in making a purchase. Given the small community we live in and the economic status of the area, this sale was able to provide the 4-H/FFA youth a way to market their projects, a reserved spot with a processor and provide families with locally grown meat for their freezers.



**2020  
ARENAC COUNTY  
4-H/FFA**



### VIRTUAL LEARNING SHOWCASE

Judging results will be ready for viewing on July 21, 2020.  
Watch for the link!

### LIVESTOCK CUT & WRAP SALE

On July 21-23, 2020 buyers are able to contact 4-H specie volunteers to purchase animals.

**Large livestock** will be sold by the pound (rail weight-\$3.50/lb steers and \$4.75/lb hogs). Beef sold by quarter, half or whole; swine sold by the half or whole, buyer preference. Whole hog roasters will also be offered at \$2.75/lb. Buyer pays processing costs.

**Small livestock** will be a set price per animal (\$90 chicken, rabbit and pheasants [x3]; \$300 turkey) and sold by the pen. Youth will cover the cost of processing.

**Dairy Gallon of Milk** will accept donations as in past years.

**Buyers will be invoiced at close of sale when rail weights become available. Payment can be made by check or credit card.**

**Thank you for supporting the 4-H/FFA youth!**

**More information coming soon!**

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