

4-H Program Highlights



Youth learn about commodities through the CIE marketing program at the March 2017 4-H Project Day which served to teach over 100 youth about projects, from rocketry and wood-working, to foods and crafts. Shown is Allison Shilling working with Carson and Garrett Haylett.



Youth meet with State Representatives at Capital Experience

Branch County 4-H Proud Equestrian Program has existed for 40 years, and continues to make an impact on both riders with disabilities and teen volunteer counselors.



Connie Lange, 4-H Educator and Diane Pridgeon, 4-H Volunteer, visited with all Branch County 4th graders as part of the China Art Exchange Program. Youth learned about life in China through visual letters sent to them from Chinese youth. Over 30 youth created art to send to China as part of the program.



Branch County 4-H'er, Asya Modert, is a leader locally and statewide who says that she wants to help the younger generation.



Four Branch youth attended a leadership conference at Kettenun Center, including a 4-H exchange student from Moldova hosted by the Crouch Family. Lina presented how to be a global youth leader.



Over 100 youth and adults took part in the annual Project Day organized by the Branch County 4-H Leader's Council. The day, sponsored by the Branch County 4-H Foundation, was created to teach participants project skills so that they can reteach to club members, and also to exhibit at the Branch County Fair.



Our country was founded on the ability to make things work; the mindset that if it isn't going right, go left, the founding natural rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If you want something to happen, then make it happen. We take for granted every single day that we live in a country where it's OK to speak your mind, OK to disagree, OK to protest peacefully, and biggest of all, it's more than OK to come together as a nation with the strongest resolve the world has ever seen. This is exactly what I grew up learning throughout my years immersed in everything that is 4-H. By Allyson Faulkner, 4-H Youth

Branch County 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



BY THE NUMBERS



7 Extension professionals based in Branch County



2,500+ Branch County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



240+ programs held in Branch County



24 percent of Branch County youth (900+) ages 5 to 19 participated in a 4-H program



160+ adult volunteers dedicated their time and talents to Branch County 4-H



1,100+ Branch County youth and adults participated in food safety, nutrition, and physical activity programs



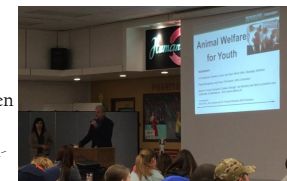
270+ county agricultural producers participated in 20+ ag education programs



\$4,380,605 total economic impact in Branch County

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

The great partnership between Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and Branch County continues to strengthen youth, families, businesses and the greater Branch County community. 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 Branch County residents need it most.



I am pleased to report that MSUE increased their investment in the county in 2017 by bringing two new educators to the county office. Dave Thompson and Paula Bacigalupo-Sanguesa joined MSUE to bring expertise to the animal agriculture industry so important to the economy of Branch County and southern lower Michigan. These two have hit the ground running - assisting their state colleagues with educational programs, writing grants for research and collaborating with the Branch team to support local programming efforts (pictured above teaching Branch 4-H and FFA youth about animal welfare issues).

This report represents a snapshot of impacts in Branch county that would not be possible without your continued support. Thank you for partnering with us to make a difference.

Julie Pioch, District 13 Coordinator

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Emphasis on Pork Industry in Branch County



With Clemens Food Group (CFG) Coldwater pork processing facility up and running in 2017, the MSUE support to the Pork industry intensified with the onboarding of a new Pork Team Educator housed in Branch County. The team partnered with Michigan Pork Producers, CFG, as well as local farmers and contract growers to provide employee training, on-farm food safety training and producer certifications required by processing plants that service the pork industry. As the pork industry grew in Branch county, educators were also on hand to assist with the siting of new pork production facilities to troubleshoot for barns just starting production. These efforts, combined with livestock transport accident response training, offered a number of services to Branch County farmers to help them improve their business, meet industry expectations and requirements and prepare for unexpected events.

Specific services for Branch County farmers were Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Training, Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) Certification, and assisting with open houses for new and educational programming to improve skills and production practices. Around 200 farmers and farm employees were trained by MSU Extension Educators in food safety, animal well-being and received their PQA certification, which helps guarantee them market access. Over 100 people received animal handling instruction and gained TQA certification, which is required by a number of pork processors when supplying them product, and a number of farms completed their site assessment, an on-farm verification of production practices, including animal handling, well-being and food safety practices.

One noteworthy educational program that the pork team brought to the Branch County area in early 2018 was an extensive training on the response to livestock transportation accidents. This training was developed and lead by MSU Educators and brought together a planning taskforce with representatives from Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Pork Producer Association, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Department of Transportation, law enforcement officials and livestock producers.

As the Clemens Food Group processing plant start up brought a large influx of animal haulers to the Branch

County area, the task force realized the need for a network of trained people across the state to respond to rollovers of semis pulling livestock trailers. MSU Extension was at the core of this project and worked to coordinate a specialized training for local police, fire crews, ambulances, veterinarians and other officials for livestock transportation rollover accident response.

Industry experts explained animal behavior, available tools to assist in a rollover accident situation with animals, what past accidents have entailed, and shared different plans and resources that would allow people and crews to best respond to such events. Large production farms, transportation companies, first responders, processors, truck drivers, animal control officers, law officers from local, county and



Health & Nutrition Program Highlights



- HNI Educator Suzanne Pish continues to lead the state in her efforts to increase awareness and treatment of stress for the farming community. Since 2016, over 500 people have attended trainings (including two held in 2017 in Branch County) on the signs and resources for those facing serious mental health and chronic disease challenges.
- Nutrition and physical education classes were offered to food stamp eligible residents of Branch county resulting in 25 one-time presentations, reaching 428 adults; 16 youth series programs reaching 380 students; and two adult series of six sessions, reaching 25 adults.
- Two food safety classes were held in Branch County attended by 18 community members. Classes focused on food handling and safety needs of food pantry managers; non-profit volunteers who provide community dinners and cook for large crowds. ServSafe certification training was provided to four restaurant managers in 2017.

Emphasis on Pork Continued...

state levels and veterinarians from several different states completed this training. Hands-on, interactive demonstrations were used to compliment the lectures. Participants learned about extricating trapped animals, animal behavior and handling techniques, responding to injured animals, and humane euthanasia techniques. MSUE Educator Beth Ferry says, "When you can bring together this many diverse groups for a common issue that affects them all, you know you have made progress. The Branch County area will be much more prepared for these types of unfortunate incidents. I am happy to be part of the MSU Extension team that made this possible for the area."

The participants indicated that because of this event, they had developed or refined a skill and now feel better qualified to respond to a livestock transportation accident. This training also gave attendees an opportunity to network with local law enforcement groups, as well as formulate key questions for continuous improvement of the different systems that they are each involved with. Each and every participant from this diverse audience said they are better prepared to address livestock transportation accidents and would be able to share critical information with their teams.

Focusing on providing Branch County with resources aimed at improving production and profitability, preparing for unexpected events, meeting government and processing requirements and improving quality of the products produced, while safe-guarding animal well-being, are all areas in which the MSUE Pork team have made recent efforts. They will continue to be an asset to farmers in the area by reviewing current needs of the industry and looking for ways to help farmers be on the cutting-edge of different technologies and production practices, as well as being aware of different issues that may be impactful to their businesses. We hope to continue our strong partnerships in this area of the state, helping us strengthen the work we do.

"The training was not only relevant and timely to our large livestock processors in the state (Clemens, JBS, Michigan Turkey Producers and Miller Poultry), but also important and needed training for our state's law enforcement and first responders. The turn out and support from the latter two groups is what struck me as most important. Many of these individuals do not have the knowledge of livestock that the producers and processors have, yet will be the first on the scene of an accident. To give these individuals time to walk through a livestock transport trailer and understand how it is designed, to give them the opportunity to set up temporary pens and have them actually move multiple species of livestock, is invaluable to their ability to perform their jobs to the best of their ability during a crisis.

I have attended and presented at many MSU Extension trainings throughout the state; this was by far the best classroom and hands-on event that I have been to. The feedback I received from the large processors in the state was all positive, and they all said that they would recommend it to others and would send additional individuals from their facilities if it were held again. That, to me, speaks volumes."

Tina Conklin, Director of Accelerated Growth Services (AGS) at the MSU Product Center