



# Clinton County

## 2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT

[msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

MSU Extension serves individuals, businesses and families throughout Michigan. District 8 spans seven counties, with eight different Extension offices. MSU Extension also has a close partnership with MSU AgBio Research, and District 8 is home to two of their research centers; the Clarksville Research station and Montcalm Research center. The two organizations work together to keep farmers and the general public current on the newest technology and management practices.

MSU Extension programs create innovative opportunities for Michigan residents. These programs offer youth and adults access to educational opportunities as varied as dairy herd management, bullying prevention, diabetes prevention, youth college experiences, gardening, human nutrition and animal nutrition. Extension also provides an opportunity for new commissioners to attend New County Commissioner Training which includes workshops on county budgets, policy making, and statutory obligations.

It is a pleasure to work with the over fifty MSU and County staff members housed in these eight District offices. Please contact me with any questions you may have about this report or any MSU Extension programs.

Don Lehman  
District Coordinator, District 8



## CONTACT US

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## MEASURING IMPACT

### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

4-H Clubs and Afterschool .....	1279
Parent Education .....	696
Playgroup & other youth .....	804
Health & Nutrition .....	1090
Agriculture .....	542
Greening .....	88
<b>TOTAL IMPACT.....</b>	<b>4499</b>

### DISTRICT 8 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, over 9,000 visitors from Clinton County viewed more than 20,426 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website ([msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)). Search engine rankings make [msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu) one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country. Clinton County provides an e-newsletter to over 300 ag readers.

### MSU EXTENSION'S EXPANDED DIGITAL REACH

Through combined face-to-face trainings, online webinars, social media, website interaction and electronic newsletters, MSU Extension has made more than 8.8 million connections. More than 149,000 adults\* and 203,000 youth† participated in MSU Extension programming in the 2015-16 programming year.

More than 3.7 million people viewed more than 7.2 million pages on the MSU Extension website.‡ Of those, more than 760,000 were Michigan residents. MSU Extension remains one of the most visited Cooperative Extension System educational websites in the country.

MSU Extension also distributes a series of electronic newsletters that cater to residents' unique interests. Last year, nearly 1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to

about 16,900 email addresses.‡ You can sign up for these informative newsletters by visiting [msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu) and clicking on "Newsletter Sign Up" or by texting MSUE to 22828.

MSU Extension uses social media channels to reach people with educational content. Currently, Extension reaches more than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.‡ In addition, Michigan 4-H families and volunteers stay informed about activities through social media channels, including on Michigan 4-H Facebook with more than 4,000 likes and on Twitter with more than 1,300 followers.

\*From ES237 Federal Report – Oct. 1, 2014, to Sept. 30, 2015

†From Michigan Extension Planning and Reporting System – Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2015

‡From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016

# Developing Youth and Communities



**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).**

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). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active. 4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

## Growing true leaders

With innovative ideas, exuberant energy and the ability to look beyond preconceived obstacles, youth have the capacity to change the world. However, many lack the skills and confidence to empower these assets into motion. They need experiences and training that help them to feel ready and capable to lead.

Michigan 4-H helps to prepare current and future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for leadership development. From the club experience to statewide youth councils, all youth have the chance to serve in a leadership role. Those experiences and various leadership trainings provide youth with skills to last a lifetime and empower them to stand up today as true leaders in their families, schools and communities.

In the past year:

- 25 youth formed the Michigan 4-H State Youth Leadership Council, becoming statewide champions for 4-H.
- 32 youth were trained as teen leaders in the 4-H Ag Innovators Experience. These youth cultivated important leadership skills as they delivered programming to 1,200 of their peers.
- 7 Clinton County youth were among 40 statewide who learned how to become advocates for themselves and 4-H through the 4-H Teen Spokesperson training; 86% of those surveyed indicated they feel confident in standing up for issues that are important to them.



## *Developing Youth and Communities, continued*

### **Animal Tales at the fair, a literacy event**

#### **Look who was introduced to Animal Tales:**

- **66 children**
- **37 adults**

Clinton County MSU Extension is a member of the Great Start Collaborative in Clinton & Eaton Counties. By working with this community cohort, we are able to attain goals that are common to the early childhood team and the local collaborative. Animal tales is a great example of community working together to promote literacy.

During the Clinton County 4-H fair, MSU Extension, local Library staff, Jennifer Smith a St Johns first grade teacher, and staff from the Great Start Collaborative worked together to deliver a literacy event for families, Animal Tales at the Fair.

4-H youth supported the event by bringing their animals to participate in the story telling stations. There were 4 story locations, families moved from one to the next in small groups. Each location had books that related to a 4-H activity.



### **New curriculum developed for childcare providers**

Clinton County has 100 licensed childcare programs. In order to improve the quality of child care programs and preschools, providers are required to have 20 hours of training a year. MSU Extension offers training for these child care professionals. Topics presented include; Emotions of early childhood /emotion coaching, the importance of outdoor play, and a session on professional development. Child Care professionals utilized monthly online Early Childhood trainings provided by the MSU Extension Child and Families team covering a variety of topics.

Working with local Early On Partners, Kittie Butcher, MSUE Early Childhood Educator, developed a new series, “Tools for working with Parents, Early Childhood Educators, Child Caregivers and Community Support Systems”. This gives childcare providers even more professional development offerings to help them provide great care for your children in childcare and preschool programs.

## *Developing Youth and Communities, continued*

### **Building communication skills for a lifetime**

**Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play.**

Communication is an essential element of every aspect of life – personal and professional. Whether it is written, spoken or visually represented, the way we express ourselves makes a big impact on our daily lives at home, work and play. Youth who practice and enhance their communication skills in adolescence will find these skills to their advantage in future employment and adulthood.

To help young people develop this important life skill, MSU Extension's Michigan 4-H has made communication an aspect of nearly every area of its programming. Youth are required to record their progress on projects, verbally report their activities and illustrate their understanding in a number of ways. Some Michigan 4-H programs make communication a major focus, further allowing youth to cultivate and enhance these critical skills.

### **Clinton County 4-H Dairy program**

The Clinton County 4-H Dairy program works to ensure that they are also helping our youth to build their communication and leadership skills. In 2016 the Clinton County 4-H Dairy program sent 42 youth to the Michigan 4-H Dairy Conference. 4-H Dairy Leaders also put together a trip to the North American Livestock Expo dairy show in November and had over 30 people participate. There was a fantastic cheering section for the Dairy Quizbowl team that competed at the Expo. Team members included Carmen Hicks, Jessie Nash, Mirah Dershem, and Maddie Meyer. Clinton County represented Michigan well, as they came in 4<sup>th</sup> place out of 19 states who competed.



## *Developing Youth and Communities, continued*

### **Support for foster/adoptive families is truly a “Work of Heart”**

#### **Work of Heart results**

- **Reduced replacement of foster children**
- **Increased informal support networks created between the families**
- **Children experience a normalization of their lives in the foster care system by connecting with other that have similar challenges**

Over 13 years ago, MSUE participated in a community assessment. Results of the assessment were:

- Foster families were being under served in Clinton County.
- No supports in place to maintain foster care.
- Disrupted adoptions.
- Need for on-going support for foster/adoptive families.

A plan was created that resulted in the birth of the Work of Heart program. Work of Heart provides educational activities for children and support for foster and adoptive parents. It also provides training opportunities for foster and adoptive parents and occasional respite.

As a result of this program, we have seen reduced replacement of foster children and an increased informal support networks created between the families. Children also experience a normalization of their lives in the foster care system by connecting with others that have similar challenges.

Below are some of our 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders displaying their cooperative skills during the ‘How Full is Your Bucket’ September launch activity. Our 2016-17 has had a focus on literacy and other important life skills. Before this cooperative challenge was put before the children, the room leader read to them the story “How Full is Your Bucket? For Kids”, by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer. Each room had this book read to them that evening. Each family received a copy of the book to take home and keep.



# Ensuring Strong Communities



**MSU Extension helped to start the school year off right by reaching:**

- **381 children**
- **288 adults**

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

## Back-to-school experience for local youth

One example of Clinton County MSU Extension working to ensure a strong community and a safe and healthy start to the school year, is their partnership with the Great Start Collaborative. By working with this community cohort, we are able to attain goals that are common to the early childhood team and the local collaborative. The community back to school project is one of these goals!

Back To School/Project Connect, held August 24<sup>th</sup> at the Clinton County Fair Grounds, is an event made possible by Clinton County MSU Extension and community partners. Maria Cook, Great Start Parent Liaison says, "This event allows us to help families alleviate basic needs for a new school year so that education can be their main focus. It features all the resources a family might need to start school."

This event is open to all individuals and families with limited resources that live in the area. MSU Extension staff; Patti Marrs, Roxanne White and Kittie Butcher served on the planning committee, and worked during the event to assure success.

MSU Extension and community partners offer this free event annually. In 2016, we helped 288 adults and 381 children start the school year off right!

Services provided at the event:

- Hair cuts
- Vision screenings
- Fluoride treatments for teeth
- Fresh food items
- Clothes (new and gently used)
- School supplies
- Backpacks
- Car seats

# Keeping Businesses Strong



**When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods.**

MSU Extension and the MSU Product Center help Michigan entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the food, agriculture, natural resources and bioeconomy sectors. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods. You also help young people develop business skills that will help them succeed as adults and help communities capitalize on their ecological, social and cultural assets. This fuels the economy by creating and retaining jobs, and helps ensure a healthy tax base.

## Building entrepreneurial spirit and skills

As the backbone of the economy, small business owners play a critical role in the prosperity of the nation. But to be a successful entrepreneur, one must have not only the ambition and moxie to take a risk, but also the business sense and skill to make a profit. To ensure the business owners of tomorrow – today's youth – are triumphant in their future endeavors, they need to learn the entrepreneurial concepts that pave the way for success.

MSU Extension is helping to meet this need by providing youth and the adults that support them with the skills and resources necessary to turn ideas into business ventures. Through simulations and workshops, youth learn how to develop business plans and operate their own companies, as well as how to be more entrepreneurial in their everyday 4-H experiences. In 2015, these programs were delivered to nearly 1,200 people in 59 Michigan counties.

As a result:

- 92% said they learned how entrepreneurial skills could be used in any career, and 60% reported planning to start their own businesses.

## Optimizing Dairy Farm Profit

MSU Extension also supports existing businesses. In 2016 Michigan dairy farmers were receiving \$4 less per hundred weight of milk than they had received just one year earlier. This represented a 25% decrease in income. This much of a drop in market price meant farmers would need to take a close look at their operation to survive.

## *Keeping Businesses Strong, continued*

**151 participants  
attended the  
Optimizing Dairy  
Farm Profit  
workshops,  
benefiting over 300  
Michigan farms.**

In March 2016, the MSU Extension Dairy Team and specialists from Michigan State University offered “Optimizing Dairy Farm Profit”, a workshop designed to highlight information relevant to dairy farms staying profitable with today’s low milk prices. Presentations focused on a variety of topics that can impact a farm’s bottom line. Dr. Chris Wolf, MSU dairy economist, provided a dairy market outlook. MSU Extension dairy and farm management educators also presented timely information including:

- How to identify bottleneck in management
- Financial indicators
- Financial comparisons between high and low profit farms
- Labor cost and productivity
- Economic analysis of custom forage harvesting
- Impact of stocking density
- Heifer enterprise considerations
- Easy-to-use Dairy Farm Cash Flow projection tool

Over 300 farms across Michigan were served by this program. Of the 151 participants, producers attended from Barry, Clinton, Gratiot, Ingham and Ionia Counties. Over 65% of those responding to the survey said they would be making management changes on their farm as a result of the meeting.



# 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.**

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these 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

Limited income and poor nutrition affect quality of life and can increase healthcare costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 30 percent of Michigan adults are considered obese, and one out of every three deaths in Michigan is caused by cardiovascular disease, influencing the quality of life and adding billions of dollars each year in economic burden.

MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to help residents in urban and rural communities stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity. In 2015 alone, these programs reached more than 112,000 adults and youth across the state in over 1,600 different locations.

- 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 the Nutrition Facts 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 when shopping.

## Supporting parents supports kids!

Supporting parents of young children helps to support the health and development of children. Clinton County MSU Extension offers several classes to parents that will help them be the best parents they can be.

Nurturing Parenting – Currently offered at the Library in Bath with plans in place to expand the class to include a Dewitt location. This 10 lesson in 8 session series offers parents the opportunity to learn the philosophy and practices of Nurturing Parenting.

## *Keeping People Healthy, continued*

### **Parenting Matters/ Cooking Matters**

- **Prepare a healthy meal with parents**
- **Tips for nurturing parenting**
- **Groceries to prepare the meal**

**Parenting Matters/ Cooking Matters** - Brings together healthy eating and tips for parenting in one location. The class was co-taught by Roxanne White, Health & Nutrition Instructor, and Patti Marrs, Early Childhood Program Associate, in the spring of 2016 at Smith Hall in St. Johns. Participants learned parenting skills and tips for making healthy meals.

**Play Group** – Partnering with RESA (Regional Educational Service Agency), MSU Extension works with parents and children each week through playgroup. Participating in planning sessions and in playgroups allows us to share MSU Extension materials and information on parenting topics and developmentally appropriate topics.



# Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



**Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.**

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

## Raising awareness of the benefits of cover crops

Cover crops are a hot topic in agricultural circles, thanks to an MSU Extension specialist's message that's resonating with the right crowd. Dean Baas, a senior research associate, conducts cover crop and organic agriculture research and education.

Cover crops are plants seeded into agricultural fields, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining ecosystem quality. Environmental benefits include enhanced biodiversity, increased soil infiltration and attraction of honeybees and beneficial insects.

Researchers are focusing on ways cover crops can be used by farmers to bring diversity to the crop system, reduce reliance on fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, and to determine the impact of cover crops on overall operation economics.

Initial studies have shown that:

- Farming benefits include reduced erosion, improved soil quality through increased porosity, soil organic matter and water-holding capacity, as well as the addition of beneficial microbes.
- Cover crops help retain nutrients that otherwise would be lost.
- Cover crops add nitrogen through fixation while combatting weeds and breaking disease cycles.

## Water quality in the Great Lakes state is everyone's business

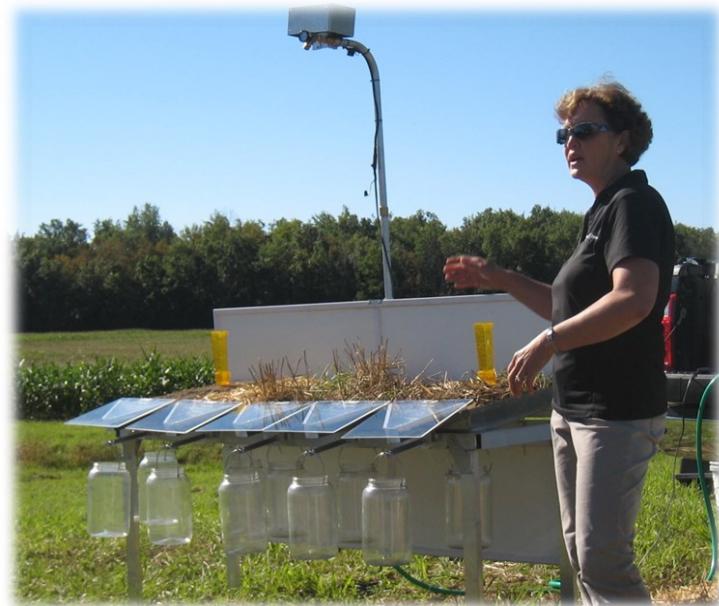
Understanding how to manage the soil to impact water infiltration and run-off is the first step in learning how to do our part in creating cropping/gardening systems that are resilient in the face of extreme weather events and systems that will protect water quality.

## *Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued*

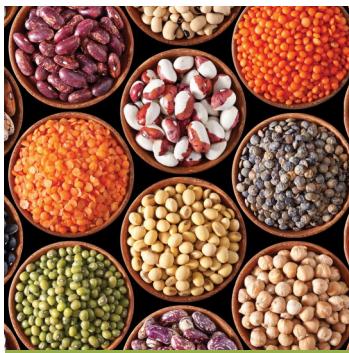
**59 teachers were reached during two training sessions on how to use the rainfall simulator.**

In 2016 MSU Extension provided training for K-12 science teachers, in Mid-Michigan. The training included a live demonstration and discussion on how to use the rainfall simulator and posters/PowerPoints developed by MSU Extension to engage students in the science of water and soil.

In the two training sessions, Summer Institute – GRAND Learning Network, and, Preparing tomorrow's scientists: Technology in the Classroom, the three presenting educators, Marilyn Thelen, Paul Gross and Dean Bass, were able to reach 59 teachers.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture



**Farmers see results when they practice best management of calves within the first 24 hours.**

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues to increase. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices. Participants also learn how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and how to conserve and protect water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, and helps retain and create agricultural jobs. These measures strengthen Michigan's economy while connecting farmers to local food opportunities and global markets. In this way you help MSU Extension encourage growth in a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

## **Extension Educators take a close look at the first day of life for dairy calves**

Top-notch animal care needs to be a priority on every farm from the first day of life. Best management of calves within the first 24 hours sets the stage for healthy heifers and ultimately healthy cows in the milking heard.

During the summer of 2016, Dairy Educator, Faith Cullens, along with MSU students worked with 50 dairy farms across the state to survey how well they are doing with newborn calf care. Faith visited farms multiple times collecting data and samples, then followed up with producers on how they can improve newborn calf care. Participating farms are located in Barry, Clinton, Eaton, Ingham and Ionia counties.

Individual farm results were shared and several producers made changes to improve newborn calf care after participating in this in-depth program working with Faith on best management practices. Results of this study are being shared at programs in January and February 2017 across the state.



## *Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued*

### **Using technology to reach a larger audience**

#### **Integrated Pest Management Webinar Series:**

- **6 sessions**
- **110 participants**
- **232 recertification credits**

Farmers across Michigan have attended MSU Extension's Integrated Pest Management program to receive the latest research and recommendation from Michigan State University researchers for years. However, these programs are offered in just 6 locations and are traditionally offered during the day. This format does not work for everyone.

The winter of 2016 marked the 4<sup>th</sup> year MSU Extension offered a webinar series to extend the information from the live meetings. The webinar series is held one evening a week for six consecutive weeks. Each session featured one of MSU's researchers presenting current findings and/or recommendations for managing field crops. These sessions mirror the agenda from the live IPM meetings. Participants can earn Restricted Use Pesticide recertification credits for participating.

In 2016 we reached 110 farmers/ag business professionals, from 40 counties, including 30 participants from District 8. Of the participants, 52 received a total of 232 recertification credits. These credits help participants maintain their Pesticide Application Licenses. This format allow farmers from across the state to participate at a time that may be more conducive to their schedule. Technology has allowed us to reach over one hundred more farmers with current, research-based information of crop production.

In 2017, MSU Extension will again offer these webinar sessions for recertification credits. Topics this year include:

- Resurgence of Western Bean Cutworm
- Controlling Resistant & Troublesome Weeds
- Soybean SDS & Wheat Stripe Rust Management
- Selecting Wheat Inputs Wisely
- Field Crop Soil Fertility Management
- Soil Fertility for Forage Production
- Cover Crops for Potato and Soybean Systems

### **Smart Gardening outreach**

"Smart Gardening" outreach was provided at a Master Gardener and MSU Extension educator staffed booth at the Lansing Home and Garden Show, March 17-20, 2016. Of the people that visited the booth during the event, 91 were from Clinton county. Educators were there to answer their gardening questions and provided seminars on a broad range of subjects including: growing tomatoes, taking soil tests, gardening for pollinators, growing herbs, growing raspberries and tree and shrub care. Twenty-four free "Smart Gardening" tip sheets were available to visitors. The tip sheets provided environmentally friendly, simple to implement tips on a wide variety of gardening and soil topics.

## Extension Educators Serving Clinton County

### Staff Located in Clinton County Office:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Kittie Butcher	Children & Youth Educator	989-224-5228	butche36@anr.msu.edu
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## Extension Educators Serving Clinton County, Continued

### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Clinton County

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George Silva	Field Crops Senior Educator	517-543-4467	silvag@anr.msu.edu
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**Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.**

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