



Ionia County

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



\$14,116,065 total economic impact in Ionia County



887 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



517 adults and youth participated in health and nutrition programs



MSU Extension website received 5,916 Ionia County visitors, from Ionia County, 76% from first-time visitors



Ionia students received \$2,743,607 in financial aid from MSU



More than \$914,320 was spent with local businesses

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

In 2019, Michigan State University Extension helped its partner, Ionia County, meet needs of County residents through education, consultation and collaboration. Your local MSU Extension staff and the statewide network of Educators provided information and expertise to local farmers, government officials, local and state employees, as well as, County youth and adult residents. MSU Extension has over 200 programs and continually strives to meet the needs of Michiganders with research backed, unbiased information to help improve their lives.



This annual report gives examples of some of MSU Extension's accomplishments and the impact that we continue to have in the County. Thank you for the opportunity to share our most valuable resource – our people. Whether taking phone calls, answering the many walk-in questions or providing education programs to groups or individuals, we strive to provide answers to questions that help solve real problems right here in Ionia County.

Bill Hendrian,
District 8 Director

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MICHIGAN STATE
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Extension

Program Highlights



Tammy Fletcher demonstrates making healthy snacks with Ionia Middle School students.

TEEN CUISINE

Tammy Fletcher, Community Nutrition Instructor, led over one hundred 7th graders at Ionia Middle School through the "Teen Cuisine" curriculum. Tammy shows students how to make healthy foods and drinks (without sugar) taste great! Many students were shocked at how much they loved the taste of the healthy snacks. Several students went home and made the snacks for their family members or asked their parents to purchase the ingredients at the store so they could make the snack at home. This group of students told Tammy that they now drink less sugary drinks, eat less fast food and take their time to read the nutrition labels. Success!



MSU Extension aims to improve the knowledge, skills and behavior of how individuals view nutrition.

COOKING MATTERS

Tammy regularly schedules nutrition classes for adults. Tammy has worked with partners like Rivers Edge-CMH in Ionia to teach classes like Cooking Matters. She used the Cooking Matters for Adults curriculum to show participants how to cook healthy meals at a low cost. Food safety, portion size, label reading, and knife safety were also an important part of the lessons. Tammy uses The My Plate poster to highlight the five food groups-dairy, grains, fruits, vegetables and protein, and she discusses WHY it is so important to eat from each of these 5 food groups on a daily basis in order to maintain good health. Some participants come to class with zero cooking experience.



Tammy Fletcher and a group of youth enjoy the end of each session by eating their lesson for the day!

TEACHING ACROSS CULTURE

Tammy provides instruction to Migrant Students as well using the five food groups from My Plate-fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and protein. Students receive a healthy snack at the end of each lesson that coincides with the food group theme of the day. One example for the protein lesson - students discovered the taste of brownies that were made with black beans. Students also learned how to measure the amount of fat that was contained in a cheeseburger, fry and shake meal from a fast food restaurant. The "Blubber Burger" activity really grossed out the students when they actually saw how much fat was in the fast food meal.

Program Highlights



John Duvall, Ionia County 4-H Program Coordinator, poses with Dana Hengesbach and Ionia County 4-H Youth Members.



In 2019, 266 market animals were sold at the Ionia Free Fair by 4-H youth.



Michigan State University Extension continues to serve the residents of Ionia County and we welcome you to stop in and say hello.

4-H IN THE COMMUNITY

The county 4-H program is always looking for ways to connect with new partners. A newly formed partnership with Friends of the Red Mill began with the '4-H through the Ages' event this last fall at the Red Mill in Portland. The event's mission was to honor the 4-H alumni of Ionia County and share what 4-H has to offer to people who may not be familiar with the program. There was an alumni booth, a crafting booth, a small petting zoo, and a fun educational game called The Commodity Carnival - provided by a partnership with 4-H and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group. Members of the public were able to increase their public understanding of the massive value of agriculture commodities, portray the difficulties of managing business risks when taking commodities to market, and improve agriculture literacy.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, the Ionia County MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator, John Duvall, settled into his new position. Ionia County youth had a successful program year and fair participation was excellent despite the challenging heat and rain. Close to 900 youth participated in 4-H this past year: 35 traveled to the campus of MSU to explore university life; 19 youth participated in the annual bakeoff and cookbook publishing; 175 Ionia County youth attended miscellaneous educational programming throughout the state; and 266 market animals were sold at the 2019 Ionia Free Fair by 4-H youth. Program Coordinator, John Duvall, is also working to increase participation in programs that involve science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM).

OVER THE COUNTER

Many residents like the personal touch or for other reasons come visit with us at the office. Many 4-H youth, volunteers and parents attend meetings or drop off information, fees, or just to say hello. Many local residents would like a plant or insect identified. Gardeners and farmers often stop by to pick up soil test kits. In fact, in 2019 Ionia County residents used 93 soil test kits. When someone visits the local office, the local support staff are the link to many MSU Extension services. Whether it is by appointment, by phone, or by walk-in, our local office is here to serve the needs of Ionia County.

Program Highlights

MEETING AG COMMUNITY NEEDS

MSU Extension Educators respond to daily producer calls, emails, text, etc. to handle immediate and upcoming challenges and opportunities related agriculture production. Responses focus on research based information and provide timely information to help clients make decision to better their farm business. Kevin Gould has served as a Beef Educator for Ionia and surrounding counties the past 26 years having direct contact with over 450 producers annually. Kevin is responsible for the Beef Carcass Ultrasound Program and does additional work in several group programs such as the Beef Quality Assurance and the annual Beginning Grazing School. He also serves in several leadership rolls within MSU Extension and the beef industry.



Kevin Gould, MSU Extension Beef Educator, performs an ultrasound on a local bull.

BULL EVALUATION

The Michigan State University Beef Team cooperates with the Michigan Cattlemen's Association to hold a Bull Evaluation Program each year in Crystal, MI. 2019 was the 32nd annual event that brought purebred and composite beef bulls to the test station for evaluation. Of the 80 bulls consigned, 64 of the top bulls qualified for the March 21st sale. This program showcases the partnership between MSU Extension and the Michigan cattle industry and provides a high-quality product for the commercial cow calf industry in the mid-west. The sale grossed over \$225,000 and the exceptional bull genetics will influence approximately 5,000 beef calves born over the next three calving seasons. For more information on the program and bull offering, visit the website at mibulls.com.



Programs such as the ones in collaboration with the Cattlemen's Association, help ensure that food reaching consumers is of utmost quality.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

In 2015, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was detected in Michigan. Since that date, 119 deer have tested positive for CWD across nine Michigan counties. In 2017, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission established the Chronic Wasting Disease Working Group to develop recommendations on steps and actions to mitigate or eliminate CWD in Michigan. A key recommendation proposed by the working group was the development of public education. Toward this effort, MSU Extension and the MDARD collaborated late in 2019 to hire Katie Ockert, MSU Extension Educator, to create, deliver, and evaluate local and statewide communication strategies and innovative educational programs that meet current and projected outreach needs related to white-tailed deer management and CWD.



MSU Extension is working to raise awareness and to provide education regarding CWD through conversation and outreach.

Featured County Story



For further information or to see if you qualify for assistance you can go to StepForwardMichigan.org for a list of FAQs and access an online application and a list of documents that are required to submit an application. Photo: StepForwardMichigan.org

STEP FORWARD MICHIGAN

In 2019, Step Forward Michigan or lenders approved 34 distressed homeowners in Ionia, Montcalm and Gratiot Counties who received nearly \$144,000 in delinquent mortgage and property taxes assistance, thus keeping their homes. MSU Senior Extension Educator, Brenda Long, works on a daily basis with those who are hardest hit. In Ionia County alone, she met with 68 individual homeowners to provide foreclosure counseling. She also took 171 calls from Ionia county residents to discuss the potential loss of a home or to redirect struggling homeowners to needed resources.

One homeowner, a disabled Vietnam Veteran, had received a Summons and Complaint from his mortgage company with a court date. Brenda referred him to Legal Aide, who promptly filed a motion to set aside the default. Brenda then helped the homeowner submit a Step Forward Michigan application. This homeowner had fallen behind do to some expensive car repairs. He received \$12,000 to help bring his mortgage current. On another occasion, a single mom was behind on her mortgage due to missing work for her cancer treatments. Brenda helped her file a Step Forward Michigan application and the program helped the homeowner bring her mortgage current.

These are just a couple of the many stories of homeowners receiving assistance from Brenda Long. Brenda regularly makes one-time presentations about various money topics. She teaches money management classes and homeownership classes – over 200 Ionia County residents took classes offered by Brenda in 2019.



MSU Extension staff located in Ionia County

Katie Courtade	CYI / 4-H Supervising Educator	courtad3@msu.edu
John Duvall	4-H Program Coordinator	duvallj2@msu.edu
Tammy Fletcher	Community Nutrition Instructor	fletchta@msu.edu
Kevin Gould	Livestock, Beef Educator	gouldk@msu.edu
Karen Grieves	Accounting / Support Staff	kgrieves@ioniacounty.org
Bill Hendrian	District 8 Director	hendria2@msu.edu
Brenda Long	Financial & Housing Senior Extension Educator	longbr@msu.edu
Katie Ockert	Chronic Wasting Disease Educator	ockertka@msu.edu
Janice Ransom	Office Manager	ransomja@msu.edu

Additional MSU Extension staff serving Ionia County

Roger Betz	Farm Management Educator	269-781-0784	betz@msu.edu
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Holly Tiret	Social Emotional Educator	616-632-7893	tiret@msu.edu
Casey Zangaro	Swine Educator	989-875-5292	zangaroc@msu.edu

Supporting MSU Extension

For more than 100 years, MSU Extension staff have been helping people in our communities. MSU Extension values the opportunities made possible by our federal, state and local partners. In addition, our staff often seek grants that focus on particular needs that enable us to focus our efforts where necessary. In fact, grants made up the largest percentage of our statewide funding in 2019. Another important resource comes from donors. MSU Extension receives generous support from individuals and organizations who are passionate about specific work we do and want to make possible even more education. Donors fund local programs or offer opportunities to youth to participate in activities beyond the local program. Gifts sometimes fund research positions or just help boost local operations. To learn more about giving to MSU Extension, visit extension.msu.edu/giving.

Through successful partnership and collaboration with Ionia 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 Ionia County!



MISSION:

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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