



# Ionia County

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension serves the residents of Ionia County through the educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. In 2017, MSU Extension Educators, Program Coordinators, Program Instructors and support staff have all played a role in delivering information to help our farmers, school children, teachers, caregivers, consumers, homeowners, business owners, visitors, workers, parents, government officials, home gardeners, entrepreneurs, those battling chronic disease and those seeking better health, improve their lives and the lives of those they serve, lead and follow. As you read through this annual report, you will see examples of many of the programs and participants from our communities. MSU Extension's four institutes: Agricultural and Agricultural Business, Children and Youth, Health and Nutrition, and Greening Michigan all played a role in this year's programming. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our stakeholders and partners.



Bill Hendrian, District Coordinator  
Serving District 8

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## MEASURING IMPACT

### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

Snap-Ed Participants .....	1,327
4-H Program Participants.....	867
4-H Clubs Members.....	437
4-H Special Interest/Enrichment Participants.....	430
4-H Volunteers .....	97
Foreclosure Prevention .....	17
<b>TOTAL IMPACT.....</b>	<b>2,211</b>

### DISTRICT 8 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, the MSU Extension website ([msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)) received 8,229 visits from Ionia county residents. Of those, 78.6 percent were first-time visitors. The easily accessible and searchable science-based content make the MSU Extension website one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

### 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 12.1 million connections. More than 149,000 adults\* and 212,000 youth† participated in MSU Extension programming in the 2016-17 programming year.

More than 5.3 million people viewed more than 9.8 million pages on the MSU Extension website.‡ Of those, more than 1 million were Michigan residents. MSU Extension remains one of the most visited Cooperative Extension System education websites in the country.

MSU Extension also distributes a series of electronic newsletters that cater to residents' unique interests. Last year, nearly 1.9 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to

about 53,000 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 texting MSUE to 22828.

MSU Extension uses social media channels to reach people with educational content. Currently, Extension reaches more than 4,300 Facebook followers and more than 3,200 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 4,700 likes and on Twitter with more than 1,456 followers.

\*From ES237 Federal Report – Oct. 1, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2016

†From Michigan Extension Planning and Reporting System – Jan. 1, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2016

‡From July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017



# 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 with and serving the local community

Ionia County 4-H'ers were able to give back to the local community in a number of ways during 2017. Reaching out to local law enforcement and hosting a soup dinner are just two examples of 4-H'ers honing the skills that they are learning and meeting needs in the community.

One 4-H club made kits for local law enforcement and were able to deliver them in person. The kits were “very thoughtful and creative,” John Odette, Deputy Director of the Ionia Department of Public Safety, told the Ionia Sentinel-Standard. Haley McLean, Ionia County 4-H Program Coordinator said, “There are so many issues with police right now, and the backlash. The kids wanted to show their support and they thought this would be a good project. The kids had a lot of fun doing this.” Just about every item in the survival kit had an adage attached to it on a slip of paper to encourage the officers. Portland Police Chief, David Kirk, told the Ionia Sentinel-Standard, “It goes right to the officers’ hearts. We are truly appreciative of the relationship we have with the community.”

Around a hundred people attended a Soup Dinner hosted by one of the clubs. 4-H'ers were able to raise money for different nonprofits helping people in poverty. The double benefit of helping out the community and developing skills needed to plan and carry out such events, the clubs are able to spread information about 4-H and recruit new volunteers and participants.



# 4-H Youth Development

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.



## Lessons, skills gained and people impacted by 4-H

Our 4-H youth were busy all year long developing the critical skills and gaining the experience to be leaders in our local communities. Some of the highlights from the year include:

- Participation in the Ionia Expo – bringing animals and setting up a 4-H barnyard in partnership with the Ionia Chamber of Commerce. Learning how to market the clubs while providing valuable youth experiences at events.
- Soup Dinner, Annual Bake-Off, Alumni and Friends Dinner.
- Exploration Days.
- Participation in the Ionia County 4-H Dairy Camp and Ionia County 4-H Horse Camp with camping and education for the whole family.
- The Ag Olympics, planned by the Teen Advisory Council

Ionia County 4-H by the numbers:

- 437 youth enrolled in 36 4-H clubs
- 97 volunteers
- 29 youth attended Exploration Days (3 were state award delegates, 2 were Mark of Excellence recipients)



# 4-H Animal Science



Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness.



3rd graders from Ionia Rather Elementary School learned science by participating in a number of fun projects and trainings ranging from chicks to goats through the Embryology Program. They learned to care for and show their animals and learned science along the way.

There were 4 Lessons were taught during the 21 day project:

- Welcome to your new home!
  - Explore the incubator
  - Compare the incubator environment to that of a natural hen hatch
  - Discover parts of the egg
- Stages of development
  - Explore how the embryo develops and the changes that take place day to day
  - Candle eggs
- Home Sweet Home
  - Build a brooder and discuss why it is important
  - Review the hatching process
- Hatch Day!
  - As the eggs hatch, we create math equations to determine the percentage hatched and % of living chicks



# Supporting Food and Agriculture



**When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.**

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations are 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 and sustainable business and production practices.

## Supporting Food and Agriculture on the Farm

MSU Extension Educator Kevin Gould visits farms in Ionia County to review issues producers face in the Beef Industry. In particular, grazing systems.

On a visit to a new beef producer with the National Resource Conservation Service District Conservationist to evaluate his grazing system plan, several key recommendations were made in the fencing, forage establishment and paddock layout to fit with his production and management plan. Key changes from the original NRCS recommendations were accepted into the plan helping this operation get moving much faster and with minimal challenges.

In order to meet the needs of our agriculture industry, MSUE educators are here to do onsite visits, provide factual resource information and guidance to advance their business. MSU Extension is a resource that farmers can count on.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Educators from across the state are available depending on the expertise needed. Tina Conklin, MSUE Food Processing Educator, was called upon by an Ionia county federally inspected red meat establishment wanting to include bacon and ham to their federally inspected products – these are in a Heat-Treated, Not-Fully-Cooked HACCP category. The establishment currently produced bacon and ham products for custom exempt products, but felt that producing their own bacon and ham under federal inspection would increase sales and provide more opportunity to other markets for them.

Tina and other MSU Extension colleagues worked with the establishment to create an acceptable HACCP plan for Heat-Treated, Not-Fully-Cooked meats. The plan could then be submitted to the USDA for approval and implementation based on the current procedures used for the custom exempt process used for bacon and ham. The USDA Inspection program personnel approved the plan and allowed the processor to begin running the bacon and hams under federal inspection.

Adding federally inspected products to this client's operation saw immediate impacts. Their pre-Christmas orders doubled from the previous year and they were able to add two additional employees in their retail area.





# Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued



**When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production**

Support for MSU Extension helps to provide research-based, unbiased education and training that is relevant and practical for Ionia County farm owners, managers and employees. Various trainings, reviews and updates are offered throughout the programming year and utilize MSU Extension experts from a variety of disciplines.

## **On-site training to meet annual requirements**

MSU Extension Dairy Educator, Faith Cullens collaborated with fellow Educators, Marianne Buza, Phil Durst and Martin Mangual to provide farm owners, managers and employees training in the safe handling of animals in a low-stress environment. The training was done in English and Spanish. The Dairy Animal Handling Workshop covered positive handling techniques as well as the affects of negative handling. It discussed dairy cattle blind spots, hearing, herd mentality and the affects of fear on milk production.

Another workshop focused on down cows. The workshop explored planning, prevention and action steps when faced with down cows. Understanding the causes and effects can help farmers prevent loss of animals and production. This training promotes good stockmanship and again, was offered in English and Spanish.





# Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued



## Improving Soybean Production Efficiency and Profitability

MSU Senior Extension Educator, Mike Staton, conducted SMaRT (Soybean Management and Research Technologies) Educational Programs and Follow-up Evaluations.

Participants learned how various management practices and products impacted soybean yields and income in the on-farm research trials. They also learned about herbicide-resistant weeds and soybean cyst nematodes.

On-farm research projects continue to provide valuable information and assist our farmers in the management of their farms. Some of the results from the 2017 follow-up evaluations showed:

- 100% of the respondents gained new knowledge by participating in the program.
- 78% said that they utilized the information they learned at the programs on their farms in 2017.
- Thirty-three (33) producers said they actually earned additional money in 2017 by implementing the new information they learned at the programs.
- The average amount of additional income realized by the implementing the new information was \$7.84 per acre. Because the new information was implemented on 11,353 acres, the actual financial impact of the programs was \$88,995 in 2017 alone.



# Promoting Safe and Secure Food and Environments



**MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.**

When you support MSU Extension's efforts to enhance residents' health and nutrition, program participants will learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, learn to make healthy food choices and bring community partners together to strengthen access to healthy food supplies. This leads to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable. Snap-Ed Program Instructor, Tammy Fletcher, works with a variety of partners in education to serve the residents of Ionia County. In 2017, Tammy helped our youth benefit from the partnership between the National Dairy Council and the National Football League.

## **Making healthy choices the easy choices**

Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) change focuses on making healthy choices the EASY choice. Of the many influences on our young people, the social and physical environment play a substantial role in the choices they make and their health outcomes.

Each year schools are offered the opportunity to apply for a grant to help make their environment healthier. The Fuel Up to Play 60 (FUTP60) is a national program that is funded by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League in collaboration with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This collaboration helps support schools nutritionally and physically. Research shows that by having healthier eating choices and being encouraged to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day the students reach higher levels of school achievement. Michigan State University Extension has partnered with the United Dairy Industry of Michigan in order to provide more support and guidance to the teachers, staff and students in the FUTP60 schools.

In 2016 and 2017:

- Saranac Elementary received \$4,000 towards a new milk cooler and PE equipment for their school.
- Saranac Jr. High received \$1,450 towards a countertop refrigerator and environmental improvements in the cafeteria.
- Belding-Ellis Elem. received \$4,000 towards a new milk cooler and PE equipment.
- Belding-Woodview Elem. Received \$4,000 towards a new smoothie machine, carts, and PE equipment.
- Ionia Middle School received \$4,000 towards a new milk cooler and PE recess



# Encouraging Daily Activity

- Ionia Middle School was selected as 1 of 30 schools in the state to attend the rally for school health for FUTP60 at Ford Field. Six students from the Ionia Middle School wellness committee and three adults were provided with funding to travel and stay overnight in Detroit prior to participating in a fun filled day at Ford Field. All participants enjoyed a healthy breakfast, snacks, and a lunch. They also heard from motivational speakers, Detroit Lions Players-Tahir Whitehead, Ameer Abdullah and Jason Hansen along with other special guests. The highlight of the day was training on Ford Field with offensive guard Laken Tomlinson and other youth football coaches.



## Health and Nutrition Education for all generations

### DIRECT EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

- Show Me Nutrition Curriculum and Cooking Matters for Teens were taught to middle school students along with PreK-5th at the summer Migrant School in Belding.
- Teen Cuisine taught to students in Ionia County.

### DIRECT EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

- Eat Healthy Be Active was taught to adults at River's Edge Community Mental Health.

### DIRECT EDUCATION FOR SENIORS

- Eat Smart Live Strong was taught to 40 Foster Grandparents and Companions at Eight Cap in Orleans.

# Educating for Financial Capability



**MSU Extension understands that healthy economic structures lead to greater opportunities and stronger communities.**

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn personal finance skills and the communities benefit from homeownership education and foreclosure prevention. 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.

## Financial Education

Whether it's handling credit card debt, investing for retirement or college funds, purchasing a new home, avoiding foreclosure, or simply wishing to have more control over personal finances, MSU Extension's Senior Educator, Brenda Long, helps Michigan residents in all aspects of money management. She and her team assist individuals, households, organizations and communities to become more sustainable spenders through education focused on financial capability. MI Money Health is a website that provides Michigan residents with access to noncommercial, easily accessible, and reliable personal financial information.

In Ionia County, we provided group and one-on-one Education. We also provided training to front-line social workers who work directly with clients that encounter numerous financial problems. The train-the-trainer was in partnership with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and other Extension services throughout the country. In addition to face-to-face classes, we offered numerous homeownership and financial education programs online. We continue to provide the highest quality, unbiased financial and homeownership education to any Michigander who desires to participate.





# Educating for Homeownership and Retention



**From January to October, 2017, MSU Extension helped 17 distressed homeowners who ultimately received \$102,621 in delinquent mortgage and property tax assistance from the Step Forward Michigan program.**

## Homeownership Education

Homebuyers make decisions that require them to determine their own financial situations and what financial products are available on the market. Research suggests individuals may not accurately estimate their own financial status, including information about debt and creditworthiness, which leads to less desirable financial decisions. MSU Extension Homeownership Education courses educate homebuyers on advantages of homeownership and steps in the homebuying process, understanding costs of homeownership and how to maintain the investment, mortgage loan basics and why good credit is important, how to determine how much house can be afforded. Participants can earn a certificate of completion that is a requirement for Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) down payment assistance programs, as well as other Federal loan programs.

In Ionia county, we had the opportunity to educate potential homeowners as well as existing homeowners. Many potential homeowners earned certificates that helped them qualify for financing options that would have otherwise been unavailable. Finally, we continued to assist struggling homeowners stay in their homes. We offered foreclosure education and prevention counseling and also worked closely with Step Forward Michigan, a program to help Michigan's hardest hit homeowners.

## Extension Professionals Serving Ionia County

### Staff Located in Ionia County Office:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Katie Courtade	Children & Youth Educator	616-527-5357	courtad3@msu.edu
Kevin Gould	Livestock Educator	616-527-5357	gouldk@msu.edu
Bill Hendrian	District 8 Coordinator	616-527-5357	hendria2@msu.edu
Brenda Long	Housing Senior Education	616-527-5357	longbr@msu.edu
Haley McLean	4-H Program Coordinator	616-527-5357	mcleanha@msu.edu
Vicki Newcomb	County Support	616-527-5357	newcombv@msu.edu
Janice Ransom	Office Manager	616-527-5357	ransomj@msu.edu
Tammy Fletcher	SNAP-ED Nutrition Instructor	616-527-5357	fletchta@msu.edu



## Extension Educators Serving Ionia County, Continued

### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Ionia County:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Laura Anderson	Disease Prevention Educator	269-945-1388	ander359@msu.edu
Roger Betz	Farm Management Educator	269-781-0784	betz@msu.edu
Diane Brown-Rytlewski	Horticulture Educator	517-676-7292	rytlewsl@msu.edu
Faith Cullens	Dairy Educator	989-224-5249	cullensf@msu.edu
Charles Gould	Bioenergy Conservation Educator	616-994-4547	gouldm@msu.edu
Abigail Harper	Community Foods Educator	517-676-7298	harperab@msu.edu
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#### 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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