

Ionia County MSU Extension Semi-Annual Update, March, 2022

Ionia County MSU Extension continues to serve our residents both locally and regionally. As in the past, MSU Extension continues to offer both in-person and online programming opportunities. For online resources the web page originally created during the pandemic is still active as many residents are still cautious about engaging fully in the community – see [Remote Learning & Resources for Those at Home During COVID-19 Pandemic](#). The number of MSU Extension website users continues to grow as well. **In 2021 There were 16.7 million users partaking in 20.7 million sessions viewing 29.3 million pages. From Ionia County there were 1,529 users partaking in 1,465 sessions viewing 3,961 pages.** As you know, Janice Ransom retired at the end of 2021 and we have been in the process of finding her replacement. We hope to be able to announce this very soon. In the mean time, we have worked with the IT Group to enable our local staff to make full use of the new phone system. This has allowed us to monitor the local office even when we are on the road.

Supporting our local community

We receive phone calls, emails, faxes and in-person inquiries from local residents, the business community, farmers, government agencies and departments. The number one request is for information and resources to solve problems and improve businesses, families and systems. Our local staff provide the information and resources through educational programs, materials or expert advice. Our commitment to Ionia County is to accomplish our mission by providing Extension Educational Programs in the following areas:

- Agriculture & Agribusiness.
- Children & Youth Development, including 4-H
- Health & Nutrition
- Community, Food & Environment

How have we accomplished this over the last year?

Agriculture and Agri-Business

Kevin Gould is an experienced educator with the [Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute](#). He is the local contact for many agricultural issues including::

- Providing answers to grazing questions and developing grazing plans on a regular basis.
- Performing multiple ultrasounds on cattle for the benefit of the beef industry adding educational value and marketing opportunities for scanned cattle.
- Participating in the local response to agricultural accident planning and training.
- Working on local farm succession issues.

- Presentating on the Right To Farm Act.
- Answering local agricultural questions.

In addition to and including Kevin, we have a network of agriculture educators and program instructors that have provided the following programs to Ionia County residents in 2021:

▪ Basic Home Hydroponics	2
▪ Michigan Manure Management Summit	2
▪ Cabin Fever Conversations	1
▪ MI Ag Ideas to Grow With	3
▪ Michigan Soybean On-farm Research Winter Meetings	9
▪ Virtual Pest and Crop Management Update 2021	3
▪ Smart Gardening with Vegetables 101	1
▪ Sustainable Farming webinar	1
▪ Back to Basics: Christmas Tree production	2
▪ 2021 Farm Bill and Crop Insurance Decisions	4
▪ Tree Fruit Pruning workshop	1
▪ Birth Management for Sheep and Goats	1
▪ Sheep and Goats for Small Farms	3
▪ MSU Feedlot Educational series	2
▪ Return of the Coronavirus Relief Programs	1
▪ Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference – Strategic Planning	7
▪ Hay Production 101	1
▪ Women in Agriculture: Taking a Seat at the Table with Confidence	1
▪ SARE – Training Agricultural Professionals on Innovative online tools	1
▪ Field Crops webinar series	4
▪ Backyard Fruit 101 webinar series	1
▪ Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference	1
▪ Maternity Training – Steenblick Dairy	9
▪ Michigan Beekeeping webinar	5
▪ Invited presentation to Kalamazoo Bee Club	1
▪ June Lawn and Garden contacts	1
▪ Milker meeting and discussion	5
▪ Manure Hauler Certification Presentation	1
▪ Small Grains for Brewing and Distilling Field Day	1
▪ USDA Specialty Crop Research and Extension Initiative	2
▪ August Lawn and Garden Hotline contacts Oakland County	2
▪ 2021 Michigan Christmas Tree Association meeting	3
▪ IPM of the spotted wing drosophila and the blueberry stem	2
▪ Direct Marketing webinar	1
▪ Dig In! – West Michigan Extension Master Gardeners	4
▪ Solar Grazing Pasture Walk	4
▪ MSU Soybean Research and Crop Management Field Day	1
▪ Milker Training – Steenblick Dairy	23
▪ Prepare Your Farm for Tax Season Now – online workshop	1
▪ Feed Program Assessment	6

▪ Smart Gardening with Bulbs	1
▪ Beef Quality Assurance Certification	1
▪ Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo	32
▪ Feeder Training – Steenblick Dairy	5
▪ Extension Master Gardener Basic Training	1
▪ Extension Master Gardener Class	1
▪ Extension Master Gardener local evaluation	1
▪ Integrated Crop and Pest Management update	9
▪ Pollinator Champions Free Online Class	2
▪ Consumer Horticulture – Ask an Expert	25
▪ D2L Pesticide Course	1
▪ Montcalm Community College Ag Student Gathering	5
▪ MEAP Educational Field Day – Beef Cattle and Pasture Management	31
▪ Hay Production 101	1

Children & Youth

John Duvall is our 4-H Program Coordinator. The program coordinator develops partnerships, recruits and maintains volunteers, recruits youth for programs and clubs, manages budgets and oversees the operation of all club and 4-H council activities. Through hands-on clubs, short-term clubs, educational programs and special events, our aim is to prepare youth to be productive, creative, and enthusiastic contributors to the Ionia community. Many in positions of leadership today, participated in 4-H growing up. We want to continue and improve that tradition.

- There are 40 active clubs and committees that John oversees and coordinates.
- There are 101 active volunteers that John manages and maintains within the MSU Extension Volunteer Central System.

John and colleagues from the Children and Youth Institute coordinate educational programming and activities for Ionia County 4-H youth, volunteers, caregivers and the general public. Our Ionia County residents have the opportunity to participate in many opportunities statewide and beyond. In 2021, Ionia County youth, volunteers and residents participated in the following Children and Youth Institute educational activities:

▪ Adulting 101: Winter Series	3
▪ Adulting 101: Summer Series	2
▪ What’s All the Buzz? 4-H Bee Programs	1
▪ Wild and Crazy 4-H Careers	1
▪ Pippin’s Pantry: DIY Dog Treats	1
▪ 4-H Lego SPIN Club	2
▪ Let’s Talk: Parent and Provider Communication, Extension Extras	2
▪ MYOI – Entrepreneurship	1
▪ Cooking with Kristi	1
▪ Screen Time for Young Children	1

▪ Together We Can: Extension Extras Parenting Hour	1
▪ 4-H Capitol Experience Youth Summit	2
▪ The Roots and Branches of Your Family Tree	1
▪ Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting Webinar	2
▪ Healthy Living: Daniel Gil Presentation	2
▪ Hinamatsuri Japanese Girls' Day Celebration Series!	2
▪ Young at Art Extension Extras Parenting Hour	1
▪ Earth Day Heroes SPIN Club	1
▪ Building Early Emotional Skills	2
▪ 4-H Exploration Days Expanded	1
▪ Eaton and Ingham 4-H Cloverbud Camp	1
▪ U. P. State Fair Market Livestock Record Book Competition	4
▪ U. P. State Fair Livestock Skillathon	1
▪ 4-H Financial Fitness and Fun	1
▪ Crane Fest	1
▪ Fair Activities: Pollinator Free Ice Cream Sundae, Number Game	9
▪ Raising Young Readers, Extension Extras	2
▪ D2L Embryology Train the Trainer	1

Health and Nutrition

Tammy Fletcher was our Consumer Nutrition Instructor in 2021. Tammy delivered health and nutrition programming to youth and adults throughout the County and region. Tammy partners with schools, community centers and other partners to deliver this critical education that helps youth and adults make wise food and nutrition choices, learn new skills and how to prepare and eat healthy meals. In addition to the work of our Community Nutrition Instructor, the County residents have access to education from our health team, food safety and disease prevent teams statewide. In 2021 Ionia County residents participated in the following programming offered by Tammy and our Health and Nutrition teams:

▪ Winter Food Preservation: Selecting Seeds	2
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Using Frozen Fruit and Juice	1
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Beans, Beans, Beans	1
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Broths and Soups	1
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Preparing for Preservation	2
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Using What You Preserved	1
▪ Winter Food Preservation: Preserving Maple Syrup	1
▪ Preserving Foods: Tools of the Trade	1
▪ Preserving MI Harvest: The Art of Sauerkraut	1
▪ Preserving MI Harvest: - Garden Leftovers: pumpkins and squash	1
▪ Preserving MI Harvest: Preserving Soups	1
▪ Preserving MI Harvest: Preserving Wild Game	1
▪ Preserving MI Harvest: Preserving Food for Gifts	1

▪ Michigan Cottage Food Law	8
▪ Safe Food = Healthy Kids	3
▪ Show Me Nutrition online	15
▪ Ionia Middle School Teen Cuisine	241
▪ Changing Negative Self Talk	1
▪ Maintaining Health During Challenging Times	1
▪ Begin With a Breath	2
▪ Making Food Fun for the Picky Eater	3
▪ Stress Less Coffee Hour	1
▪ RELAX	6
▪ RELAX: Alternatives to Anger Calming Down and destressing	1
▪ Stress Less With Mindfulness: Mindful Eating	1
▪ Stress Less With Mindfulness	1
▪ Mindfulness	1
▪ Powerful Tools for Caregivers of Special Needs Kids	1
▪ Mindfully Feeding Infants and Toddlers	1
▪ Eight CAP Ionia Show Me Nutrition	60
▪ Diabetes Toolkit phone course	1
▪ Asparagus – Spring’s First Vegetable	1
▪ Food Safety Q & A: Eggs, Eggs, Eggs now what?	1
▪ 2021 Rhubarb	1
▪ Spring’s Early Catch: preserving fish	1
▪ 2021 WIC Food Safety	1
▪ WITS Workout	1
▪ Maintaining Health through Self Care	2
▪ Online Diabetes PATH Series	1
▪ Investigating Food with Science – Green Eggs and Ham	1
▪ Investigating Food with Science – Charging your lemons	2
▪ Investigating Food with Science – Magical Balloon	1
▪ Investigating Food with Science – What is in Your Water	1
▪ Dining with Diabetes	13
▪ Mental Health First Aid	1
▪ Teaching Kids Mindful Eating	1
▪ Presentation on Fruits and vegetables: youth	205

Community, Food and Environment

Brenda Long and **Katie Ockert** are both experienced educators from the Community, Food and Environment Institute.

Brenda is part of the Finance and Homeownership Team. Brenda offers foreclosure education and helps many local residents apply for home-saving assistance. This not only benefits the homeowners, but the County receives the benefit of real property taxes being paid that otherwise may not be collected. In addition, Brenda and her colleagues offer many personal finance and

homeownership series – some required for future homeowners to qualify for certain loan programs. Brenda offers financial and homeownership education to Ionia county residents and beyond.

Katie is the sole Chronic Wasting Disease educator for MSU Extension. In addition to gathering vital information, offering educational programming and guidance for hunters, Katie answers many animal disease questions from both local and statewide residents. Katie is often in the field but also puts on webinars and other online seminars.

Brenda, Katie and their colleagues offer Ionia County residents many educational program opportunities including and in addition to the above. There are many natural resource, good governance, community food systems and environmental programs as well. In 2021, Ionia County residents participated in the following:

▪ 2021 Introduction to Lakes	1
▪ Citizen Science Program: MICorps Cooperative Lakes Monitoring	1
▪ Lake and Stream Leaders Institute	1
▪ Wild Spartans Series	4
▪ Loan Preparation for New and Beginning Farmers	1
▪ FIT Program Opportunities for MEDC RRC Communities	1
▪ Leading from Any Chair	2
▪ ELP Session I & II	2
▪ Retirement Myths and Facts webinar	1
▪ Your Money Your Goals	1
▪ Spending Plan	1
▪ Informed Renter	4
▪ Homebuyer Education	3
▪ Budget Credit and Affordability & Cap	5
▪ eHome	3
▪ Money Management eMoney	
▪ Foreclosure Prevention Triage	27
▪ Foreclosure Counseling	1
▪ Every Penny Counts: Savings Strategies and Tips	1
▪ Retirement Reality Fair	1
▪ Understanding and Applying New Federal Outdoor Recreation Data	1
▪ 10 Cents School Foodservice Support Webinar – Sourcing Local	1
▪ Towards a Sustainable Meat Supply Chain in Michigan	1
▪ Introduction to Orienteering	1
▪ Meeting Deer’s Nutritional Needs through Food Plots	6
▪ Monthly Product Center Client Consultations	11
▪ Fiscally Ready Communities: Capital Asset Management and Planning	2
▪ Fiscally Ready Communities: Budget for Fiscal Sustainability	3
▪ Great Lakes Lunch and Leadership Academy: Lunch and Leadership	2
▪ Conducting Land Division Reviews	1
▪ Regional Meetings for ARPA Local Government Funding	6



Our local and extended staff are proud to serve the residents of Ionia County by meeting their needs as we have done for more than 100 years. Thank you for your support! (Pictured above - top row: Kevin Gould, John Duval and District Director Bill Hendrian. Bottom row: Tammy Fletcher, Brend Long and Katie Ockert)

Through successful partnership and collaboration with Ionia County, MSU Extension has helped to grow Ionia County's economy by equipping Ionia County residents with information needed to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower our children to succeed.

MISSION:

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