



Lake County

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



Over 500 Lake County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



274 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



154 youth and adults participated in health and nutrition programs



19 programs were offered by Lake County staff. A total of 7 MSU Extension staff delivered programs to Mason County residents.



308 Lake County residents participated in 85 unique virtual programs.



646 users visited the Lake County website, viewing 1,400 web-pages.



The Lake County Ag educator had contact with 9,394 residents across the state

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Lake County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses, and communities.



MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational services to county residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

Of course this year was a year like no other, and the following pages allow me to share my pride in how well MSU Extension has responded to the challenges both broadly as an organization, and of course locally through our continued delivery of programs and services made available to our local communities.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Lake County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you'll be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

James Kelly, District Director

Unprecedented Times - Director's note

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) brings the science, programs and resources of Michigan's land grant university to organizations, communities and individuals throughout the state. Our outreach and engagement is built on a local basis, thanks to our county partnerships and more than 600 faculty and staff in offices across all 83 counties.

Historically, most of our relationships have been maintained through in-person meetings and programs. Over the last few years we have built up the breadth and quality of our website at extension.msu.edu which now averages 1.25 million visitors per month. In 2020, we expanded our capacity to provide high-quality virtual education.

2020 will be a year to remember for many reasons. The creativeness, dedication, teamwork, and resilience that our MSUE professionals exhibited during this global pandemic has been outstanding. This has been a difficult time for communities, families and staff, and I am proud of the work we have done to continue to provide high-quality educational programs throughout Michigan.

Forced to focus on online programming, MSUE staff were given an opportunity to do something they have wanted to do for a long time - convert their in-person programming to a digital format. Digital formats don't work for everyone or every program, but to expand our reach and to help more people incorporate the evidence-based learning from a major university into their homes, families, businesses and communities, it has always been a goal worth pursuing.

Many were moving in that direction already; the pandemic required others to move there faster.

Working from home with the tools and support needed to help them succeed in a remote environment, MSUE educators have continued to assist farmers through the growing season, elected officials and decision makers, parents, families and youth by meeting with them on virtual platforms through online meetings and webinars. With the work they have accomplished over the last months, staff reported to me that they have learned that:

- programs that are produced for a live audience and recorded allow more people to view the meetings in a time convenient for them;
- we are reaching audiences that would not be able to attend our programs in the past because of time, travel and disability;
- we are reaching local, regional, state, national and global audiences;
- we are able to share our expertise, ideas and best practices more efficiently across the state;
- a digital divide still exists, not all programs work in an on-line format, and nothing will replace our local, face to face, relationship-based work.

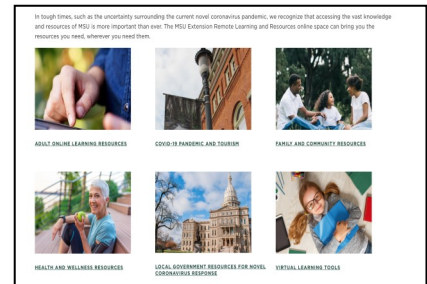
In the end, I believe the experience in on-line program development and investment in capacity will not only augment but strengthen our face to face work (once that resumes). Our programs will have greater reach than ever before and MSUE will be a leader in virtual education.

Please contact me for more information and thank you for your continued support!

Broad Response to Novel Corona Virus

In late March, MSUE pivoted all of our programming to online formats to comply with the original Stay Safe, Stay Home order (EO2020-42). Within six days of that order, we launched the Remote Learning and Resources website and our teams immediately began modifying programming to a digital format that would provide equal educational value right in people's homes. This online space provided a platform to launch this effort and since then has become a robust virtual one-stop-shop for everything MSU Extension has to offer online. This site has evolved over the past year and houses educational resources:

- to help parents keep their children on track with learning at home;
- an extensive list of online programs for adults;
- a calendar of virtual events;
- educational videos;
- relevant, responsive and evidence-based articles authored by MSU Extension's experts;
- resources for local governments and communities navigating the effects of the pandemic and more.



Within a few days into the quarantine, staff had new programming spooled up and ready to present digitally. A few noteworthy examples include:

- Staff members quickly pivoted from a face-to-face program offered in a few locations to a series of one-hour presentations called **Adulting 101**. Topics include things such as what to look for when renting, tips and tricks for easy cooking, how to keep your finances in order and the right way to do household tasks such as ironing and setting a table. The series attracted more than **3,000** participants statewide and was recommended by school districts. This program has now become a regular recurring series and engaged a team of program staff to share in its delivery.
- **Cabin Fever Conversations** became a highly popular series of 11 webinars via Zoom and Facebook Live designed to get people's minds off of being cooped up inside and get them thinking about their garden spaces. Sessions focused on lighthearted but educational conversations about gardening featuring guests who discuss topics like seed saving, houseplants, pollinator health, community gardening and container gardening. The webinar's success of more than **500 attendees per session** has prompted organizers to continue programming during winter 2021. This program also provided a great learning opportunity for staff who had never presented live webinars and created comical do's and don'ts to live programs for staff to learn from to improve their work.
- **Rapid Response For Agriculture** was a site developed in 2019 to provide a single point for farmers to access resources developed in response to several weather related emergencies. In 2020, our agriculture team immediately rose to the challenge to assist the industry with resources and management tools to aid them through the pandemic emergency. One first response was a series of articles and best practice options for the floriculture industry who were limited in the ability to sell to their wholesale markets. Other resources were aimed at keeping farm employees safe and how to best manage operations while still meeting consumer demands for a fresh, safe food supply during emergency conditions created by Covid-19.

Broad Response to Novel Corona Virus (cont.)

- **MSU Extension CHAMP:** COVID-19 Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Program is one tool found on the rapid response site. This tool was designed to help ag operations reduce the risk of worker exposure to COVID-19 and mitigate disease spread. It assists farms and ag related businesses with designing a pandemic preparedness plan, conducting a hazard assessment to identify risks for exposure, and developing mitigation practices supporting worker safety and health. These agriculture-centric, pandemic preparedness education and support materials were designed to align with federal, state and local guidance.

Going Virtual with Traditional Face to Face Programs

- **Annual Research Project and Demonstration Field Days** highlight on-farm research collaborations between MSU Extension, MSU AgBioResearch and local growers. These in-person daylong experiences have always been held in-person, on farms. In 2020, these events were moved to a digital format. The program and attendance of these events so far has been impressive. Moreover, the production of these events will allow the visual results to be shared at other meetings.
- **Fruit Crop Research and Scouting** carried out by the **MSUE Fruit team** is especially important to the economy of District 5. The Integrated Pest Management meetings that occur every Monday during the growing season have been held face to face for decades reaching a handful of Michigan famers each week with the remainder waiting for the written report to be broadcast. Taking this program virtual has brought in growers from all the fruit growing regions in the state as well as several people from other parts of the and the world. Also, the sessions were recorded, allowing growers to hear the latest on pest and disease conditions at their own convenience. Information shared during these meetings is critical to the sustainability of agriculture in west Michigan. Fruit Field Days were also successful for this team and included the Viticulture Field Day in July and Peach Field Day held in August.



Chase Township farmer Jack Thornton was featured in statewide education during a virtual field day event.

- **Food Safety Education** teaching capacity was increased by MSUE in early 2020 with the ServSafe Certification program for food managers and workers scheduled to be offered throughout the district. However, without national approval to provide the course on-line our programming efforts were put on hold in April. The Food Safety Team worked quickly to modify other face to face curricula into web-based offerings and expanded their educational reach to engage food service workers, homemakers, and families in weekly educational sessions. The sessions were designed to answer questions about food preservation, cottage food law, and food pantry safety. With an emphasis on engaging young people during the quarantine, the team focused on youth focused topics and seasonally themed cooking workshops. They have maintained a weekly programming schedule since May 2020 which has significantly increased their reach across the state.

Local Program Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

In 2020, direct support for Lake County was delivered in the form of strategic planning support for the Parks and Recreation Commission. In addition support for the Off-Road Vehicle project included assistance in working with the DNR, local Township negotiations, and the submission of a State of Michigan Trust Fund request.



Off-road vehicles (ORV's) can include motorcycles.

PUBLIC POLICY SUPPORT

Providing education and technical support to help create successful commissions and local government is the foundation of the work MSU Extension's Government and Public Policy Educators. Together, we have assisted in the development of master plans in Luther, and Ellsworth, along with providing assistance with zoning challenges in Yates, Chase, Cherry Valley, and Peacock Townships.



MSU Extension provided education regarding interpretation and implementation of regulations regarding the Michigan Medical Marijuana act in Lake County.

WATER RESOURCE EDUCATION

MSU Extension's focus on lakes, streams, and watersheds brings together educators and researchers with local, state, regional, and federal agencies and stakeholder organizations to protect and promote the sustainable use of the state's distinctive aquatic resources. In 2020 in Lake County, Extension facilitated meetings that lead to the formation of the Irons Area Water Protection Partners. Other projects included invasive species identification, herbicide research, shoreline preservation, and assistance to Lake Boards.

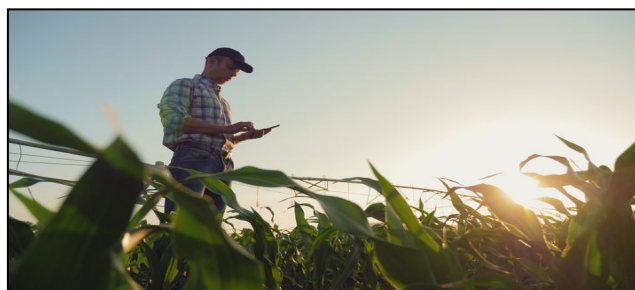


Research on inland lakes in Lake County provides data for statewide reports.

Local Program Highlights



Pesticide application in process.



The Farm Records Book for Management is a free tool to track farm income and expenses.



An Introduction to Cost Production webinar.



Gypsy moth caterpillars were back in 2020.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE

MSU Extension works to increase farmers' success while protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, reaching new markets and advancing agriculture through applied research. In 2020 in Lake County pesticide application training was held that led to certification for pesticide applicators.

Our soil crop educator based out of Lake County provided programming that reached 9,394 participants. She developed an on-line course with the approval of MDARD that provided on-line pesticide certification options.

Our Farm Business Educator in District 5 had direct contacts with 110 farmers between email, Zoom and phone calls in the last quarter of 2020. In addition she reached at least 3235 customers via digital content, 104 with printed materials, 580 with accounting spreadsheets, 4 with podcasts, 13 with videos, 30 with paper letters, and 2495 with newsletters, plus more via social media.

Significant education was provided to agricultural workers in the area regarding the resources that were offered through the Federal CARES Act, and the many other Covid relief initiatives that were created in 2020. An increased understanding of those resources and assistance with how to apply for them resulted in increased success in securing assistance.

GARDENING & CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Homeowners often have insect infestations or plant diseases that they are unfamiliar with and need help addressing. MSU Extension provides soil testing, plant and insect identification, disease identification and treatment, Smart Gardening resources, and a toll-free Lawn and Garden hotline. The Lake County MSU Extension office provides assistance to many customers with basic home gardening concerns.

Local Program Highlights

NUTRITION EDUCATION

MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides basic nutrition education and hands-on activities for all ages. Core curricula are designed to help low-income families stretch their food dollars while maintaining good nutrition. Some instruction includes physical activity and cooking techniques that help instill life-long skills. It is estimated that every \$1 spent on nutrition education saves as much as \$10 in long-term health costs. In 2020, 154 residents participated in health and nutrition programming in Lake County.



Youth learn to make healthy snacks during "Cooking Matters for Teens."

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

MSU Extension continues to work closely with the Lake County Community Food Council to provide guidance and resources that are having an impact. At the Bread of Life food pantry in Baldwin, MSU Extension continued to support the rebuilding of their volunteer base and their transition to new leadership. Our Community Nutrition instructor has also been working with Bread of Life Food Pantry to discuss projects that they can continue to engage in that would grow the MyChoice/MyPlate approach at the pantry. MSU Extension hope's to connect resources between the food pantries in Lake and Mason counties to help maximize available resources.



Bread of Life Food Pantry huddle in Baldwin.

YOUTH CAREER & MENTORING

MSU Extension believes that all youth need positive, caring, nurturing adults to reach their optimum potential. Beyond 4-H programming, MSU Extension also provided financial literacy training for youth in Lake County. In 2020, the Career Exploration and Workforce Development educator delivered financial literacy training to youth in Lake County through the the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, through Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.



Investing in Lake County Youth with 4-H

*According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2X** more likely to be civically active, and **2X** more likely to make healthier choices.*



In Lake County, we believe in the power of young people. By providing opportunities to learn and lead, 4-H helps youth become informed and engaged community members. While exploring new topics and activities in an experiential way, youth build the skills they need for life. Essential skills youth develop while participating in 4-H include problem solving, decision making, leadership, resiliency, and communication.

In 2020 Lake County 4-H made significant gains in participation, increasing the number of adult volunteers to eleven, the number of youth enrolled as 4-H club members **from 58 to 100**, resulting in 4-H becoming the largest youth-based organization in Lake County. In addition, 174 youth aged 5 to 19 took part in other learning opportunities within MSU Extension. The number of 4-H clubs in the county also increased from six to twelve clubs, each providing opportunities for youth through community clubs, in-school clubs, after school clubs, and later as COVID-19 restrictions were put in place, take-home 4-H Learning Kits.

To effectively support local 4-H programs, Lake County 4-H program was the recipient of both the 2020 4-H Legacy Grant for a 4-H Babysitting Club and 2020 On-Target Grant, part of the Thomas H. Cobb 4-H Shooting Sports Endowment Fund, for the Lake County 4-H Archery Club.

Both grants are sponsored by the Michigan 4-H Foundation of Michigan State University Extension. In addition, the Lake County 4-H was awarded two grants from the Gerber Foundation in 2020 for 4-H Learning Kits and archery equipment. These grants will provide 4-H programs, opportunities, and guidance to all 4-H youth through hands-on activities, starting in their own communities, and reaching far beyond while empowering them to develop and strengthen valuable life skills.

The Lake County 4-H Youth Program offers many different project areas and learning experiences that actively engage youth while having fun. From food sciences to robotics, and from fashion design to photography, 4-H offers youth, ages 5 – 19, a wide range of choices and opportunities to learn and grow through community clubs, in-school clubs, after-school clubs, and through 4-H camps.

Through hands-on learning and positive youth-adult partnerships, 4-H youth acquire knowledge and develop life skills that enable them to find and focus their energy into their passions while also giving back to the community.



Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan’s economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities, and empower their children to dream of successful futures. For more information about the programs we offer please refer to the contact information below.

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