

Montmorency County

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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From the DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Montmorency County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Montmorency County residents need it most.



In this report, we're excited to share about the people and programs that are improving the lives of Montmorency County residents in many ways, including helping grow Michigan's agriculture economy, encouraging sustainable use of our natural resources, controlling health care costs by giving individuals the information they need to manage chronic illness and preparing tomorrow's leaders. From an in-person workshop to online education, MSU Extension professionals work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure their success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

We're passionate about serving Montmorency County and are looking forward to a new year of serving. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Jennifer Berkey
District 14 Interim Coordinator

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Priority Issues

Identified by Citizens in MSU

Extension District 14:

- ◆ Youth Development/Education (4-H)
- ◆ Life Skills
- ◆ Community Development
- ◆ Nutrition
- ◆ Farm to School
- ◆ Water Quality Issues
- ◆ Agriculture
- ◆ Bovine Tuberculosis Research

**WHO WILL
HELP OUR
COMMUNITY
SOLVE
PROBLEMS?
SPARTANS
WILL**

MSU Extension
website views:
9.8 million

Michigan
residents viewing
MSU Extension
website:
1 million+

Electronic
newsletters
delivered in 2017:
1.9 million



3.7 million visitors
viewed more than 7.2
million pages



1.3 million topic
newsletters distributed to
more than 16,900 email



Nearly 3,500 Facebook
and more than 2,800
Twitter followers

2014-15



2015-16

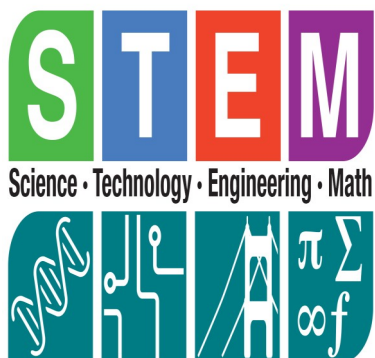


27% Increase in District 3 Visitors to MSU Extension Website

Statewide 2015-16 Digital Reach

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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).



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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

Montmorency County 4-H strives to reach youth from all areas of the county and across the age span of 5 to 19. We offer learning opportunities through ongoing clubs, SPIN clubs, day camps, multi-day camps, day long events, weekend workshops and leadership roles. These experiences teach youth skills they can use now and for a lifetime!

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.

Camps Help Youth Develop the Skills Needed to Make Good Decisions

4-H Camps are a summer highlight for youth. They look forward to making new friends and participating in fun hands-on learning activities. Camps also provide youth an opportunity to learn the social skills that are needed to interact well with others, participate in groups, work cooperatively to accomplish goals, and value differences in other people.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

- Camp “4-H20” taught 9 to 12 year olds how to preserve and care for the water system and our five Great Lakes. Youth learned how to keep our waters clean and the best way to teach others how to do that as well. Campers were able to make their own tie-dye shirts to take home. Activities included in this overnight camp at Ocequeoc Outdoor Center were archery, kayaking, slip and slide water fun, ROVs and a paint war. Youth from all areas of Montmorency County and three teen counselors joined nearly sixty other youth from neighboring counties in this three-day adventure.



Building Communication Skills for a Lifetime

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 now, and in adulthood.

To help young people develop this important life skill, MSU Extension’s Michigan 4-H has made communication education a focus in much of its programming.

- MSU Exploration Days is a pre-college program for youth ages 11 to 19. Exploration Days is designed to increase responsibility, confidence, independence, accountability, problem-solving, decision-making and time management skills. Youth are also able to develop and expand career and personal management skills.
- This year Montmorency County 4-H welcomed 36 new members to the team. We also gained a new horse leader to help fill the need for all the youth that want to show horses as well as 5 new approved volunteers.
- The Seed program is designed to help youth in Montmorency County learn how to start and take care of a garden. Every year youth from Atlanta, Hillman, and Lewiston Elementary schools are given the chance to sign up for and receive free seeds that they can use to plant their very own garden. Youth can choose to take some of their produce to the fair and enter it. This year we had a total of 75 youth that took advantage of this great program.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

- Montmorency County 4-H Fair is always a wonderful way for youth to learn business skills and learn about taking care of livestock. Youth can get together, find out what each other have been working on and show their skills through some good friendly competition. This year we had 14 new youth show at the county fair.



Montmorency County had 113 youth enrolled in 4-H

There were also 20 volunteers active in the 4-H program

Future 4-H Events

- Craft Days will be starting in September again. This is the second year that these events have been offered and the youth love them. The participation in these craft events this year almost doubled depending on the craft. 4-H Youth and local youth from all over Montmorency County can come out and participate in these projects. Scholarship monies were raised and we should be able to continue these projects for a long time to come.
- This year, education events have been added to the Livestock Association meetings. 4-H youth are learning more about their livestock projects and that there can be career opportunities through animal science. With this additional educational content at livestock meetings, participation numbers at the meetings tripled. Most of the meetings now have over 30 participants.



JOIN | THE REVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY
Cooperative Extension's Youth Development Program

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



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' access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food, program participants will focus on food safety measures in the field and at harvest, learn proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, 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.

Reducing foodborne illness through education of individuals, small businesses

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. Since 2013, MSU Extension food safety and preservation programs have taught almost 10,500 Michigan residents safe food handling, food preservation and methods to reduce foodborne illness.

Participants include youth, nonprofit organizations that prepare food for the public and food preservers who want to create safe products for their small businesses.

Through face-to-face and online learning, Michigan communities receive high-quality, research-based education using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe food preservation.

In Montmorency County:

- There were 3 servsafe classes, 2 cottage food law presentations, 4 Food Preservation classes for both youth and adult, with approximately 35 attendees. Some of the partners MSU Extension works with are Brush Creek Mill, Hillman elementary and high schools, Fair Board, Senior Centers, and the Methodist Church.



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 preventing chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

MSU Extension's Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) programs including Cooking Matters, Eat Healthy, Be Active, Jump Into Foods and Fitness, Healthy Harvest and Show Me Nutrition teach income-eligible adults and children how to:

- Make the most of their food dollars
- Develop skills such as menu planning
- Understand recipes
- Prepare food safely

In 2017, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed programs were presented to 66 adults and youth in Montmorency County!



YOUTH

Multi-session
nutrition lessons: 40



ADULT

Multi-session
nutrition lessons: 26

Adult Programming

Northeast Michigan Prescription for Health is a Michigan Health Endowment grant funding partnership with Alcona Health Center, District 2 and 4 Health Departments, Thunder Bay Health Center, and numerous local vendors to refer participants to a 6-week nutrition class and receive \$10 vouchers weekly (a total of \$60) to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables available to eight counties in our region. Voucher redemption rates have been high—over 85% which further demonstrates participants are following through and putting knowledge into action.

- 75.5% graduated from the program.
- A total of \$6,120 vouchers were purchased for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 49% of those reported recorded weight loss.

\$1 = \$10



**EVERY \$1 SPENT ON NUTRITION EDUCATION SAVES
AS MUCH AS \$10 IN LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE COSTS.**



Keeping People Healthy, continued

Youth Programming

In partnership with Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency, MSU Extension instructors provide 30 minute lessons in Lewiston and Royston.

National Breakfast week in partnership with Hillman schools food service prepare 200 prepacked bags and distribute to all elementary, preschool, and Headstart classrooms including educational materials and breakfast promotion items.

Karen Fifield has lead this effort for MSU Extension for more than 10 years with Bonnie Hardies and Kaelie Fessler assisting this year.



The MSU Extension team was honored at our statewide conference in October for their efforts in partnering, programming and outreach within their communities and region!

Backpack Program

MSU Extension is serving children and families weekly in the Tip of the Mitt area through a partnership with Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. As part of the backpack programs of food distributed for the weekends, 72 children and families at 2 schools in Montmorency County receive recipes, resources and information to make the healthier choice an easy choice.



Supporting Food and Agriculture

Michigan agriculture continues to be a diverse and thriving segment of the state's economy. When you support MSU Extension, you help producers develop efficient farming practices that optimize the use of inputs to enhance productivity while protecting soil and water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, which helps retain and create agricultural jobs. Together, these measures strengthen Michigan's economy, encouraging growth of a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

Field Crop Variety Evaluation

Better than 50% of the upward trend in crop yields over the last several decades can be attributed to genetic improvements achieved through breeding and selection. Selecting the right crop variety for each field is a critical management decision that can make or break a farmer's season. Unfortunately, variety performance information applicable to Northern Michigan can be hard to come by due to the limited number of farms and unique growing conditions in our region. To fill this gap, MSU Extension has invested in variety evaluation for several crops, conducting four on-farm variety trials in corn, dry beans, potatoes and malting barley during 2017.

- Three field day events were held in 2017 to highlight variety performance evaluation projects in corn, dry beans and potatoes, attracting a total of 66 participants.
- Our corn hybrid trial in Posen, MI evaluated 37 grain and 43 silage hybrids, finding 53 bu/a and 2.9 T/a differences between the lowest and highest yielding hybrids. These yield differences translate into \$200/a (grain) and \$1,600/a (milk) of gross revenue for local farmers simply by selecting the best corn hybrid.

Addressing Sulfur Deficiency in Alfalfa Hay

Sulfur is an essential element for forage yield, quality regrowth, and stand durability. Alfalfa utilizes more sulfur than many other field crops, approximately 5-6 lbs. per ton of dry matter harvested. A 2015 state-wide survey of tissue sulfur levels found that 88% of Northeast Michigan alfalfa fields tested were sulfur deficient. To remedy these deficiencies, MSU Extension conducted two years of research testing the impact of different sulfur fertilizer sources on alfalfa-grass hay yield and quality.

- Our research found that 25 lbs/a of sulfur as gypsum can increase alfalfa hay yield up to 1 TDM/a, and net farm income by \$81/a.



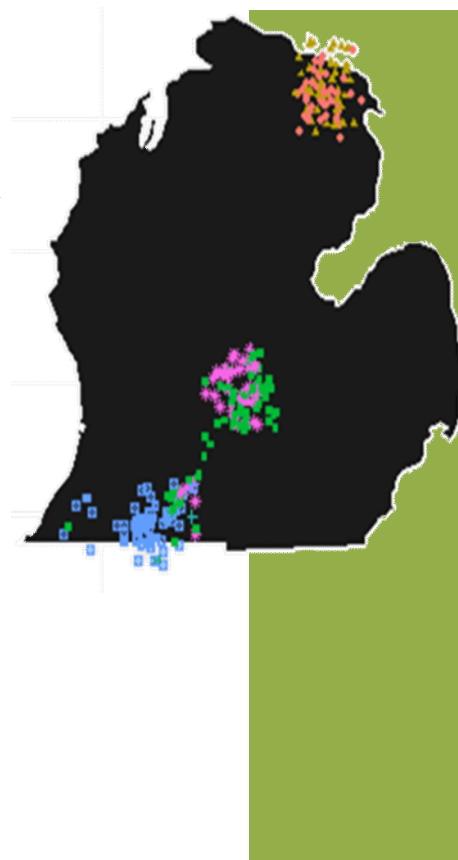
The MSU Extension agriculture program in Northeast Lower Michigan leveraged \$180,672 in external funding and generated over \$246,000 in savings or added revenue for Michigan producers in 2017.



Targeting Tillage to Jumpstart MI Soybeans

Michigan soybean growers till the soil for many reasons such as seed bed preparation, amendment incorporation and weed control. However, tillage operations can be costly in terms of machinery, fuel and labor, and often degrade soil health. Since 2016, MSU Extension has partnered with the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and 33 farms across the state to investigate site-specific relationships between tillage intensity, soil health and soybean performance. After two years of hard work, this project is generating valuable data to help farmers make informed decisions that balance the potential costs and benefits of tillage.

- Over two years, the Jumpstarting Michigan Soybean Production project monitored 133 soybean fields divided into 273 zones, visiting each field four times annually for crop and soil sampling.
- The project has identified six unique environmental clusters (see map above), within which soybeans respond predictably to tillage.
- By following the tillage recommendations generated by our project, growers could increase soybean yields 7-21 bu/a on average, increasing net farm revenue by \$40-\$180 per acre while also protecting soil health.



Field Crops Webinar Series

In 2017, MSU Extension Montmorency Co. offered seven one-hour webinars as part of the fifth annual Field Crops Webinar Series. The program was designed to share key production points from MSUE's traditional winter meetings with underserved audiences that cannot attend in-person programs due to geography, scheduling or ability. 104 individuals from 44 Michigan counties, two other states and Ontario participated in the program, resulting in 490 live webinar views.

- Evaluation of this program revealed that at least 15,296 acres of field crops and forage were exposed to practices that mitigate risk, increase yield, improve quality, or decrease inputs as a result of the series, generating a total of \$123,300 in savings or added revenue during 2017.
- This program is one of very few opportunities for certified pesticide applicators to earn MDARD recertification credits online, and participants earned a total of 374 credits by participating in the series.
- Participants commented:
 - "These webinars help us stay current with best practices and ideas; looking at the trend line yield shows how far we've come over the past 40 years!"
 - "These webinars are certainly well worth the effort and greatly appreciated. Thank you!"



Keeping Businesses Strong

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.

Michigan State University Product Center Assists Entrepreneurs

Mary Dunckel is specially trained as an innovation counselor to deliver business development services to local residents pursuing a business related to food, agriculture or natural resources. Free business counseling is conducted one-on-one and may take place at an MSUE office or the client's home, farm or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or identifying funding options. The innovation counselor also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University such as feasibility studies, nutritional labeling, food science and packaging assistance.



490 live views



**\$123,300 in
savings or revenue**



**374 online
recertification**

“The Product Center has been a great partner for us. Their efforts in keeping us in the loop in all food-related opportunities in Michigan has been instrumental in securing thousands of dollars in

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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