

Montmorency County Annual Report

2024-2025

Staff: Patricia Makins

Karen Fifield

Bonnie Hardies



Hillman Soybean Field Day 2025



Message from the District Director

I'm happy to share highlights from another successful year of partnership between Montmorency County and MSU Extension. Thanks to your continued support through the MSU Extension services millage, we've helped residents lead healthier lives, supported local businesses and farms, and created meaningful opportunities for youth development. Our programs—offered in-person, online, and hybrid—make MSU Extension resources more accessible than ever. Our staff live and work in the community, building strong relationships and responding to local needs. Thank you for your ongoing support. We look forward to another impactful year and hope to see you at an upcoming program.

— Adam Koivisto, District 14 Director

Impact



101 programs accessed by residents



929 reached through programming



27,615 reached by social media

10,000 contacts made through handouts, web activity and e-newsletters.

Developing Youth & Communities



97 youth enrolled in 4-H



818 total 4-H youth participants



55 total volunteers

4-H in Montmorency County

Michigan 4-H offers hands-on learning that helps youth build skills, explore interests and connect with their communities. Local programs in Montmorency County emphasize natural resources and life sciences.

Fifteen Montmorency County youth attended a three-day summer camp focused on Michigan's natural resources. Two schools participated in a six-week embryology program, culminating in live chick hatching. Youth gained knowledge of ecosystems, agriculture, and animal science through immersive experiences. These programs foster curiosity and confidence in science-based learning.

4-H programs equip young people with practical knowledge and leadership skills, preparing them to contribute to Michigan's future workforce and civic life.

- **15** youth attended summer camp
- **3** days and **2** nights of nature-based learning
- **2** schools participated in the embryology program
- **6** weeks of hands-on science instruction



Montmorency County 4-H



Beyond Ready

4-H builds STEM and career skills in Montmorency Schools

Montmorency County youth benefit from 4-H programs that support STEM learning, financial literacy, and career readiness across elementary and high school classrooms.



Kindergarten students at Hillman Elementary engage in monthly STEM activities through 4-H in the Classroom. High school juniors and seniors participate in budgeting lessons and mock interviews led by community volunteers.

Students gain hands-on experience in science, money management, and job preparation. These programs build confidence and practical skills for life beyond school.

4-H enhances academic and workforce readiness, helping young people become informed, capable contributors to Michigan's economy and communities.

Key metrics

- 1 kindergarten classroom receives monthly STEM lessons
- 2 schools host budgeting and career prep programs

Montmorency County Fair

The Montmorency County Fair offers youth a platform to showcase their 4-H projects, build confidence, and engage with the broader community through hands-on learning and family-friendly activities. **More than 80% of local 4-H youth participated in the fair**, which featured record-breaking animal entries. Youth and parents joined in the popular fair goose chase, expanding community involvement. The fair highlighted strong youth engagement and growing family participation. Increased entries and interactive events reflect the vitality of 4-H programming in Montmorency County. County fairs foster leadership, agricultural literacy, and civic pride. High participation rates demonstrate strong return on investment in youth development and community enrichment.



Improving Health, Nutrition & Food Safety

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is here to support all the ways we can live healthier lives, be strong and successful and build healthier communities by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to your community.

MSU Extension offers programming and resources for social-emotional and mental health, chronic disease and diabetes management, food safety and food preservation, developing healthy relationships, caregiving and parenting, nutrition and physical activity and more.

SNAP-Ed Programming



2025 Montmorency County Fair

SNAP-ED 2025 class series:

Atlanta Elementary
Atlanta Jr HS
Hillman Elementary
Lewiston Head Start



Project Connect 2025



NUTRITION

MSU Extension supports the nutritional well-being of all Michiganders. Our staff delivers educational programming to communities and helps create lasting healthy changes in a variety of settings — from schools and childcare homes to food pantries and more.

Supporting Food Safety & Food Entrepreneurs



Food Safety makes a difference in everyone's life. Here are some of the food safety classes taken by Montmorency County residents this year....

Moving Beyond Cottage Food: This program helps Cottage Food vendors to grow into a licensed business.

Preserving MI Harvest: This program is every Thursday at 1 and 6 p.m. Learn about tools of the trade when preserving foods for home use. Other topics include: Spring Produce and Herbs, Pickling, Preserving Venison, Preserving for Outdoor Adventures and many more topics.

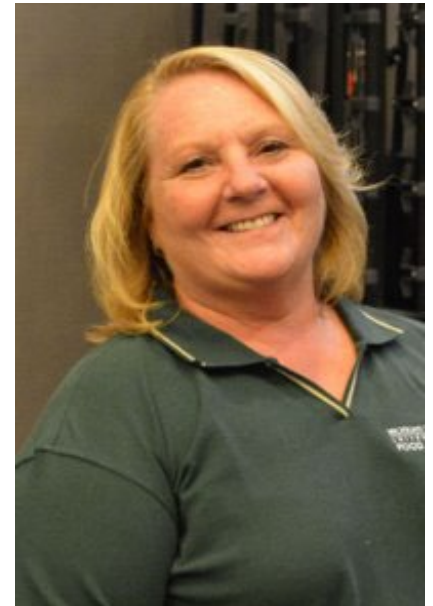
Selling Honey and Maple Syrup Safely in Michigan: This is a new program that helps explain the exemptions, food safety and labeling of selling Honey or Maple Syrup in Michigan.

Serving Up Food Safety: This program is a lunch and learn program every Monday, which helps answer, "What's new in Food Safety?"

Michigan Cottage Food Law: Provides entrepreneurs a chance to sell their best product to the public without having to get a license. This is presented one or two times each month and we always have a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Inspector on the program to answer any questions you may have.

"This workshop helped me to gain a better understanding of what I need to do to have a successful food business from my home."

- COTTAGE FOOD LAW PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



Karen Fifield – MSU Extension Educator, Food Safety





Michigan State University (MSU) Extension educators work with farms of all sizes to positively impact individual farming operations. When individual operations do well, their success helps to fuel state and local economies.



EXTENSION AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS IN MICHIGAN

AG PROGRAMMING

Michigan is agriculturally diverse both in what we produce and who produces it. MSU Extension goes beyond traditional methods of working with farmers with a strategy to reach farms at every level and size of production. We understand that some farmers may not be able to meet in person due to distance or timing of an educational offering, so we incorporate a vast array of online learning and digital informational opportunities to meet people both where they are and when they have the time to consume information integral to their farming success. In the past year, we have reached audiences in a variety of ways.

KEY PROGRAMMING IMPACTS

- Pesticide Safety Training: 88% passing rate of those who attended review sessions
- Swift Response to Avian Influenza Outbreak: \$104.7 billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan’s Economy
- Soil Testing Program: 100 years of services to businesses and private homes
- Managing Farm Stress: 1,769 Participants reached through 45 educational sessions
- Ask Extension: 6,179 questions answered in 82 counties



59,018 participants



992 programs



711 news articles



170,000 subscribers

Highlights

- 70% - In-person Events
- 19% - Webinars
- 6% - Hybrid
- 5% - Online Courses

Master Gardener and Natural Resources Programming



Newly onboarded MSU Extension Master Gardeners from several counties in northern Michigan at an orientation in Grayling, Michigan, May 2025.



Patricia Makins, Montmorency Office Manager, began working with the MSU Extension Master Gardener Team in 2025 to promote and grow the program in Northeast Lower Michigan counties, like Montmorency County.

Extension Master Gardeners work on projects that improve communities in four major areas



Environmentally responsible gardening practices



Improving community and quality of life



Improving food security



Developing youth through gardening

Natural Resources Programs taken by Montmorency County Residents

- Michigan Master Naturalist Program
- Michigan Inland Lakes Convention
- Essential Lake Ecology
- 2025 Introduction to Lakes Course
- Selling Michigan Honey & Maple Syrup
- Harmful Algal Blooms 101

There was a \$246.5 billion impact on Michigan’s economy from food and agriculture, last year.

Office Services

MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents

PLAT BOOKS

Plat books available for purchase in our office for \$30.00 with cash or check written to AMCD.

Home, Yard and Garden

Toll Free Lawn and Garden Hotline: 1-888-678-3464 (1-888-MSUE-4MI)

The hotline is staffed by MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educators and [Master Gardener](#) volunteers; the Hotline is available weekdays 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. When calling the 1-888-678-3464 number, please make sure to choose Option #1 for the Hotline.

Garden Resources

For more information, visit the [Gardening in Michigan](#) website.

Educational Bulletins & Publications

Extension Educational bulletins / publications are sold in the office; however, best to call ahead for availability. You can also search for and order bulletins at our <https://www.bkstr.com/spartanbookstore> from the convenience of your home!

Soil Testing (Don't guess...soil test!)

Home Soil Test Kit (Residential Lawns, Vegetable Gardens, Flower Gardens, Trees and Shrubs)

Available to purchase for \$26 (includes postage) in our office with cash, check or credit card. Note: You must provide an email address as results will be sent directly to you via email. If you would like help interpreting test results, call our statewide Lawn and Garden Helpline at 1-888-678-3464, option 1.

Commercial (Agricultural Crops, Commercial Growers, Pastures and Wildlife Forage)

Soil mailers for sample collection **CANNOT** be ordered on-line but can be purchased at the office at a cost of \$18 each. Does not include postage.



Patricia Makins
Office Manager

MONTMORENCY COUNTY MSU EXTENSION

Address: 12265 M32
Atlanta, MI 49709
Phone: 989-785-8013
Email: msue.montmorency@county.msu.edu
Website: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/montmorencym sue/>

This past year
Montmorency County MSU
Extension has helped
community members
through phone, email,
Facebook and office walk-
ins

As MSU Extension continues to bring research and education to citizens
across the state, three wonderful resources help reach every community
member in our county:

MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline (888) 678-3464

Calls answered by Extension Master Gardeners with the knowledge and
resources to help with gardening and lawn questions.

Ask Extension canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert

One-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts on topics such as lawns,
agriculture, food preservation, natural resources, and more!

Soil Testing homesoiltest.msu.edu

Don't guess - soil test! Learn what vital nutrient your soil is missing for healthy
growth in gardens, lawns, and crops. Purchase soil tests in our office or online.

Stay Connected!

Scan the QR code to sign
up for monthly emails
highlighting local MSU
Extension events and
information you can use



MSU EXTENSION STAFF IN MONTMORENCY COUNTY

NAME	ROLE	PHONE	EMAIL
Adam Koivisto	District Director	231-237-4775	koivist4@msu.edu
Patricia Makins	Office Manager	989-785-8013	makinspa@msu.edu
Karen Fifield	Food Safety Educator	989-785-8013	fifield@msu.edu
Bonnie Hardies	4-H Program Coordinator	989-785-8015	colli427@mus.edu

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