



# Newaygo County 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS



Over 5,000 Newaygo County adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



1,569 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



4,409 youth and adults participated in health and nutrition programs



65 programs were offered by Newaygo County staff. A total of 18 MSU Extension staff delivered programs to Mason County residents.



953 Newaygo County residents participated in SNAP education programs



1,370 Newaygo County residents participated in 192 unique virtual programs.



1,407 users visited the Newaygo County website, viewing 3,334 web-pages.



972 phone calls and walk-ins were assisted by MSU E Clerical Support

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Newaygo 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 Newaygo 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](http://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.

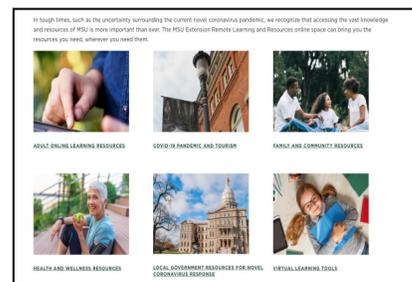
In the end, I believe the experience in on-line program development and investment in capacity will not only augment but strengthen our face to face work (once that resumes). Our programs will have greater reach than ever before and MSUE will be a leader in virtual education.

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.

# Program Highlights

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## 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 Newaygo County, projects included invasive species identification, herbicide research, shoreline preservation, and assistance to lake associations. Over 100 people participated in a Newaygo County Conservation Collaborative Event that MSU Extension helped deliver.



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

## 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 Newaygo County MSU Extension office provides assistance to many customers with basic home gardening concerns. Additionally, 46 soil tests were completed for Newaygo County residents in 2020



Gypsy moth caterpillars were back in 2020.

## FOOD SAFETY

MSU Extension offers high-quality, affordable programs that help Michigan residents learn the importance of safe food and water in their everyday lives. Our research-based programs help food handlers learn safe food-preservation skills and techniques. In 2020, 217 residents from Newaygo County participated in on-line programming focused on Safe Food Preservation. Many more participated in various virtual offerings related to cooking for crowds, safe shopping habits during Covid-19, safe take-out dining habits for Covid-19, to name a few.



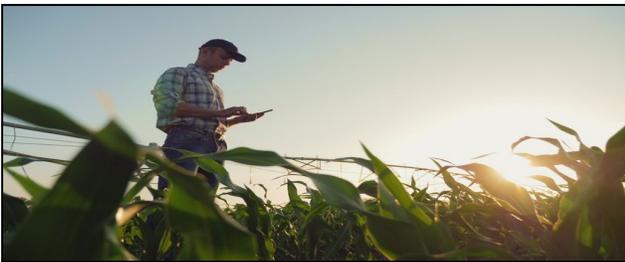
There was a noticeable increase in demand for education on safe handling and food preservation in 2020.

# Program Highlights

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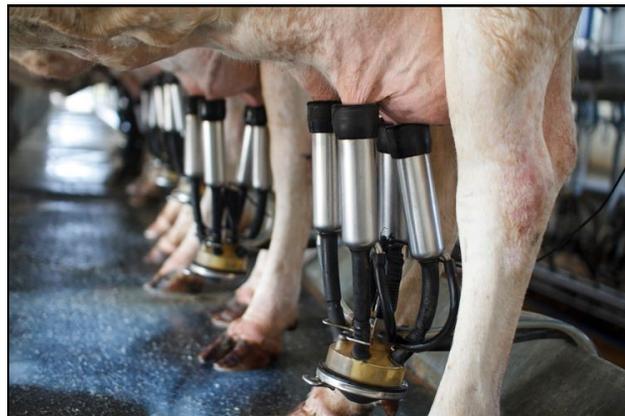
Pesticide application in process.



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



An Introduction to Cost Production webinar.



## 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 Newaygo County pesticide application training was held that lead to certification for pesticide applicators. Multiple farmers took advantage of our Farm Business Educator in Newaygo county.

Providing business support to farmers in Newaygo County resulted in improved financial operations for many farms.

Our Farm Business Educator 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 traditional letters, and 2495 with newsletters (plus more via social media).

Farm visits in Newaygo County focused on succession planning with farm financial analysis, Farm Bill education sessions, and Farm Stress consultations. Virtual sessions on tax preparations , lending tips, cost production and future farm financial trends were also well attended.

## DAIRY FARM CONSULTATIONS

Providing support to dairy farms in Newaygo County resulted in improved performance of those farms. In Newaygo County in 2020, parlor performance data was gathered to determine appropriate milker training. The training resulted in improved protocols and improved milk quality.

# Program Highlights

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## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

MSU Extension promotes social and emotional well-being, helping young people to focus on social and emotional wellness. Programs delivered encompass education on forming and maintaining satisfying and healthful relationships, taking another's perspective, resolving interpersonal conflict, feeling capable and whole, expressing emotions, navigating stress, and having supportive relationships. In Newaygo County youth participated in Mindfulness training in the Grant after school program.



Mindfulness training has been shown to decrease anxiety and negativity.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

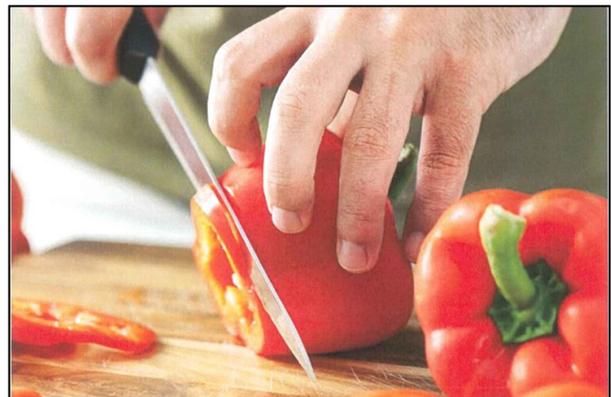
MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-ED) provides basic nutrition education and hands-on activities for all ages. Core curricula are designed to help low-income families stretch their food dollars while maintaining good nutrition. Some instruction includes physical activity 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



Kids land adults earn to make healthy choices

## HEALTHY LIVING

MSU Extension helps people apply research to make positive changes in their lives. We empower individuals with the knowledge they need to make healthy choices. In Newaygo County Diabetes Prevention and Management was taught in White Cloud to 22 participants. Residents learned how to make healthier food choices and incorporate balanced menus into their family dining experience. Classes include research-based education and cooking demonstrations from the recipes in the take-home participant books.



"I learned through this class that foods cooked with healthier ingredients can be *very tasty!*"

# Program Highlights

## PRODUCT CENTER COUNSELLING

Strong counties provide resources to assist entrepreneurial activity within the region. MSU's Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new product and service ideas into the food, agriculture, and bioenergy markets. In 2020, MSU Product Center staff supported two businesses in Newaygo County providing over 18 hours of direct counseling. Support from the MSU Product Center will help these businesses expand their product offerings, which has the potential for increased sales and job creation.



As an early-stage company, low-cost, support services are important to our success and sustainability," said Danielle Bradfield, Hey Sugar Company Owner.

## COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT VITALITY

Providing education and technical support to help create successful commissions and teams is the foundation of the work of MSU Extension's Government and Public Policy Educators. Newaygo County residents received support with GIS analysis, zoning and planning ordinances, project planning and management, funding strategies, COVID-19 grants and small business loans. Our Educator provided direct support to over half of the townships in Newaygo County, to the county itself, and multiple organizations. In 2020 this included 506 face to face interactions and 568 video meetings, In addition MSU Extension played a vital role in administering small business loans designed to provide Covid relief.



Land use management is an essential part of economic success in Newaygo County.

## 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 Newaygo County. In 2020, the Career Exploration and Workforce Development educator delivered financial literacy training to youth in Newaygo County



# Investing in Newaygo 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 Newaygo 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.

In 2020, Newaygo County 4-H had a total of 100 screened adult volunteers to guide 4-H club members involved in 50 active clubs. In addition, 1569 youth aged 5 to 19 took part in learning opportunities with MSU Extension. Essential skills youth develop while participating in 4-H include problem solving, decision making, leadership, resiliency, and communication.

4-H is unique in that it offers experiences to young people who live in cities or rural areas by providing the opportunity to participate in community 4-H clubs, learning experiences in school classrooms, day and overnight camps, and other special interest events. One great example in 2020 was the SHARK (Scientific Hands-On Applied Research Knowledge) club experience that sent 11 youth to Miami, Florida for an immersive learning experience focused on marine biology. Another example is the 4-H Winterfest that was attended by 136 youth, which focused on hands-on learning and fostering independence.



Shark tagging in Florida.



Family Fun Kits!

Virtual programming options for 4-H members has been extensive over the final 9 months of 2020. Participants have explored Dairy, Dogs, Visual Arts, Sewing, Nutrition, Horses, Poultry, Careers, Rabbits and Gardening, mindfulness, History, Life Skills, Leadership & Citizenship, philanthropy, Harry Potter and more. MSU Extension has also been providing regular supplemental virtual programming to the Grant After-school Program in the first year of a new partnership. Drawing on the broad expertise of Extension Educators across the state, the Grant students are getting exposure to a diverse set of topics from fishing and ecology, to mindfulness and animal science.

As the pandemic extended there was a need to serve youth who were not as well connected to the world of virtual programming. This resulted in the creation of the 4-H Family Fun Kits with fun interactive activities that families could do together. In the last quarter of 2020 these kits provided a memorable experience for almost 300 residents of Newaygo County.

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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Newaygo County 4-H



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