



Oceana County

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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MSU Extension Oceana



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MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

I'm excited to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Oceana 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.

Again, this year, we've welcomed Oceana County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media, and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Oceana 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





ANNUAL REPORT

MSU Extension Oceana County

Food • Ag • Youth • Health • Environment • Community

Since 1917, the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has helped residents in Oceana County improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs, and opportunities.

15,362

Program Participants

In programs lead by Oceana County staff on-line or statewide.

10%

Increase

1,592

Oceana County Residents

Participated in programs offered by MSU Extension

15%

Increase

241

Programs Attended

By Oceana County residents either in county, outside of Oceana County, or on-line.

31%

Increase

5,378

Office Contacts

Handled by the MSU Extension office.

965

Oceana County Youth

Participated in programs offered by MSU Extension

Even

53,868

Facebook Page Views

24% increase

67

Soil test-kits sold

504

Plat Books sold

26,877

Dollars of bulletins sold by Oceana office

OCEANA COUNTY STAFF

2

Educators

2

Program Instructors

1.375

Clerical Support

46

Partnerships and coalitions

OCEANA COUNTY FOCUS AREAS

Agriculture

MSU Extension works to increase farmers' success while protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, reaching new markets and advancing agriculture through applied research. Agriculture is now one of the fastest growing sectors of the Michigan economy.

- Loan prep for beginning farmers.
- Succession Planning
- Pest and Crop Management Update
- Backyard Fruit 101
- Field Crops Webinar, Young Growers Tour
- Farm Stress, Farm Financial Analysis
- Asparagus Day
- Beekeepers Annual Conference
- Crop Scout School, Pruning Workshops
- Pesticide Application Training
- Hop Chat & Beer State Conference

Environment

Our natural resources programs improve public understanding, help landowners and communities use those assets for sustainable long-term social and economic development and conserve natural resources for future generations.

- Intro to Lakes
- Lakes Monitoring Program
- Midwest Stream Forum
- Steelhead Fishery Workshop
- Lake MI Regional Fisheries Workshop
- Wild About Conservation
- MI Birding 101
- Lawn and Garden Hotline

Community

Successful and thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the most trusted tools, MSU Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan.

- Citizen Planner
- Fiscally Ready Communities
- Homebuyers Education, Attainable

Community (cont.)

- Starting a commercial food business
- College Access and Career Fair
- Product Center Consultations
- First Impressions Tourism - Hart
- Regional Meetings for ARPA
- Effective Meetings and Good Governance
- Oceana County Planning Commission- Planning to Plan
- Budget for Fiscal Sustainability

Health

MSU Extension's programming promotes healthy lifestyles and empowers Michigan residents to take control of their health. Participants learn how to build nutritious diets on a budget, reduce foodborne diseases and become leaders in the food industry.

- Eat Healthy, Be Active
- SLEEP
- Preserving Food as a Family
- Tai Chi for Arthritis
- A matter of Balance
- Diabetes Education/Prevention
- Chronic Disease PATH
- Cooking for One

Famil

Keeping Michigan families strong and successful—financially, emotionally, and physically—is a big part of measuring MSU Extension's success.

Programs devoted to keeping families safe include those dealing with bullying and violence prevention.

- Oceana Fair Activities
- Relax: Alternatives to Anger
- Various 4-H Club Events
- Mindfully Feeding Infants & Toddlers
- Promoting Social Emotional Health in Young Children
- Exploration Days, on campus MSU
- Helping Kids Manage Stress
- 4-H Creative Arts Celebration
- Horse, rabbit, cavy, cat clinics

4-H Oceana County

*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.*

34

Clubs

20% increase

263

Members

7% increase

60

Volunteers

13% increase

6,100

Volunteer Hours

Agriculture Highlight



Oceana County boasts a diverse agricultural economy that produces over \$212 million annually, 60% in crop sales and 40% in livestock.

MSU Extension is helping to make a difference in Oceana County.

Highlights of MSU Extension Agricultural support in 2023: Oceana County has a long history of dependence on natural resources, and in particular agriculture, as a strong source of identity and economic prosperity. MSU Extension provided education and support to Oceana County residents through a variety of targeted workshops and services. In 2023, 104 programs related to agriculture, agricultural business, and food systems were attended by residents of Oceana County

The presence of the West Michigan Research Station in Hart provides an opportunity to bring to Oceana County expertise in various disciplines. Spring Horticulture Day is an annual program offered for West Central Michigan tree fruit growers. Approximately 90 growers attended, heard from commodity experts, networked, and received three pesticide applications and continuing education credits for certified crop advisors for this program. Asparagus Day is a similar event, drawing in growers from across the mid-west. In 2023, 139 participants took home essential knowledge to help them maintain best practices in crop management, disease prevention, storage techniques, and more, as well as having some industry vendors available for information.

The 2023 Farm Field Day was held on Aug 8 at the West Central Michigan Research and Extension Center and was co-organized by MSU and the local MAEAP technician, Lynda Herremans. This event was in partnership with the Oceana Conservation District, Farm Bureau, and the West Central Michigan Horticultural Research Center, with additional sponsorships from 14 industry partners. With over 90 attendees, this field day highlighted the fundamentals of current spray equipment and technologies that growers can use to improve farm efficiency and fruit quality. Spray drones were demonstrated in asparagus and cherry trees, and an autonomous sprayer, the mini-GUSS, was demonstrated in pear trees.



West Central Horticulture Breakfast Meetings are seasonal meetings for tree fruit growers to share timely information, weather updates, and pest and disease information about ongoing or emerging issues. This is a great meeting to share information with growers and engage industry members who sponsor breakfast each week. Coupled with one-on-one farm visits and local research plots, Extension services remain an essential piece of a thriving agricultural economy.

Oceana County farmers took advantage of a webinar focused on creating a farm business plan. The business plan helps to evaluate alternatives, identify market opportunities, and communicate ideas to potential lenders and business partners. Participants explored how to understand what lenders look for in a business plan when farms are seeking loan financing.

Additionally, in the spring of 2023, MSU Extension relaunched soil testing services for both home and commercial purposes. Both segments took advantage of the testing and accompanying analysis that MSU Extension soil testing services produce.