

Responding to Media Calls



Michigan State University (MSU) Extension educators, specialists and other staff members frequently receive calls from the media on a variety of topics. Media members know MSU Extension is a source of trusted, unbiased information and that we have a wide range of expertise to offer.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ray Hammerschmidt, Interim Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. WCAG2.0AA

Here are some tips to keep in mind when the media contacts you.

- **Respond in a timely manner.** Reporters often contact MSU Extension with hours left to finish and file their story. Ask them about their deadline, and do your best to accommodate the reporter's schedule. Without a timely response, MSU Extension might lose an opportunity to get quality information to the public and serve as a valuable, educational resource in the eyes of the public and stakeholders.
- **Keep it simple.** When referring to your affiliation it is best to keep it as simple as possible. Don't say, "I'm Jane Smith, Community Food Systems Workgroup, Greening Michigan Institute, Gladwin County Extension." Say, "I'm Jane Smith with Michigan State University Extension."
- **Refer sensitive questions to those who can best respond.** If the reporter asks a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, particularly if it is about MSU Extension as an organization, the university at large, funding issues, etc., please refer the reporter to your district coordinator or someone else at the administrative level who is best equipped to answer.
- **Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."** If you don't know how to answer a specific question, it is okay to say, "I don't know," to gather more information and get back to the reporter, or to let the reporter know that you're not the best person to answer a question.
- **Help the reporter find other sources.** If you are not the best source, don't be afraid to recommend other sources for the reporter to contact. If you don't know who the best contact might be, you can refer the reporter to the [MSU Extension website](#), [MSU Extension Expert search](#) or [ANR Communications](#).
- **Ask ANR Communications for help.** If you have an upcoming interview, media request or other issue, [ANR Communications](#) can help. We can offer talking points, help refer the reporter to other contacts or data, and more.