



Ogemaw County

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



\$22,923,974 total economic impact in Ogemaw County



\$16,975 spending with local businesses in Ogemaw County



251 MSU alumni living in Ogemaw County



MSU disbursed \$488,030 in financial aid to Ogemaw County students



788 youth involved in 4-H and other youth development programs



15 soil test kits processed for residents of Ogemaw County



506 Ogemaw County residents participated in MSU Extension programs

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

As I reflect on 2020, it is difficult not to mention what is evident, that it was a year unlike any in recent memory where ordinary life changed in so many ways which prompted us to adjust in both small and large ways. In mid-March when MSU Extension staff were asked to work remotely, we did not foresee that in many Michigan communities, the impact of this global pandemic would be so great and the losses so devastating. We know that while our staff was busy with remote work, many were laboring to care for those affected, to serve people in need, and to keep our communities safe. We are deeply grateful that our programs are relevant and highly regarded by our community partners across the state.

In April, I was approached by Extension Associate Director Patrick Cudney with what was described to me as “an exciting leadership opportunity” to become the Interim District Director for the counties of MSUE’s District 4 – Alcona, Arenac, Crawford, Iosco, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Roscommon. Although it has been challenging to begin this new role at a distance, I am deeply gratified by the warm welcome I have received from the staff, county leaders, and communities in this beautiful region of Michigan.

As we resume our face-to-face engagement this summer and fall, our experience developing on-line programs will allow us to meet more people where they are and offer convenience and expand our ability to bring relevant, research-based information that will help communities address critical needs, issues, and opportunities. I look forward to working more closely with all of you in the coming months.

Julia Darnton
Interim District Director

MSU Extension responds to COVID-19 Impacts

Extension has worked to maintain relationships with Michigan communities for over 100 years and most of that has been done through in-person meetings and programs. In the last year, we have expanded our engagement through our website at extension.msu.edu, a website that now averages 1.25 million visitors per month.

Within six days of the first Stay Home, Stay Safe order, MSU Extension launched the [Remote Learning and Resources](#) website, and our teams immediately began to modify programs to continue to reach our audiences and to create programs to engage families, communities, business owners, and leaders to get the best information to keep moving forward under these new conditions.

The website has evolved to a one-stop-shop for educational resources that we offer online. Our educators and program staff were also able to reach farmers through the growing season, elected officials and decision makers, parents, families, and youth by meeting with them on virtual platforms through webinars and meetings, through phone conferences and by kits through the mail or picked up at a convenient location. We have learned that we can connect with friends and neighbors in our communities at the local level through programs designed to reach residents across the state and attract the notice of people across the country and around the world. We have also transitioned many of our programmatic offerings to virtual learning options and on-demand educational courses.

For older youth who are preparing to live independently, a series called **Adulting 101** covers topics like budgeting, understanding credit and student loans, being an informed renter, household tasks, mindfulness, interviewing, resume building, goal setting, conflict resolution, and more. These interactive sessions attracted more than 3,000 participants in 2020 and were promoted by school districts.

Cabin Fever Conversations capitalized on the desire in the spring for people who were cooped up inside to re-engage with gardening. As people spent more time at home, their energies were drawn to cultivating their home gardens, indoor plants and landscapes. Each session attracted audiences of more than 500 people and the program was continued this winter with new topics. Programs have been archived and add to information that MSUE has for those with a desire to flex or grow a green thumb.

Our staff expanded upon the **Rapid Response for Agriculture** resources which created a single place for emerging issues in agricultural production. This information infrastructure, created in 2019 to respond to extreme weather events, helped producers address employee health and safety in farming and processing and to maintain a safe and fresh food supply during the emergency conditions early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The site still maintains resources for farms affected by flooding (and dam failures) in the late spring of 2020 as well. Another key tool for operators and managers is the **COVID-19 Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Program**, or CHAMP Tool was designed to help agriculture operations reduce the risk of worker exposure to COVID-19 and mitigate the potential for disease spread.

Many in-person programs pivoted to create virtual versions, thereby reducing the potential of exposure for the participants. Examples included:

- **From the Field** – a series of virtual field days on a variety of topics ranging from wheat to manure management to precision livestock farming and industrial hemp production. Each of these events allowed producers from across the state to attend without travel time and impacts. Events were also recorded and archived in shorter segments to allow attendees to catch sessions they missed, review past sessions, or share with fellow producers. Our agriculture educators continue to use more methods of communication including podcasts, videos, and more.
- **Preserving Your Harvest** – a free Zoom-based instructional series offered by Food Safety Educators and focused on safe, home food preservation methods like canning, freezing, pickling, fermenting and more. Preserving food safely is important because food borne illness is a serious health hazard and the practice also reduces waste, encourages healthy practices, and can help with food budgeting too!



Program Highlights

Nutrition Education

R.O.O.C. Inc. hosted Healthy Eating Adds Up virtual classes with MSU Extension in Fall 2020. Staff members helped facilitate the virtual connections, assist with recipe steps and encourage physical activity movements. One session was joined by a group home by R.O.O.C. clients who were not attending in-person R.O.O.C. activities due to pandemic health risks.

When asked about his favorite part of class, one participant shared, "Everything!" The same participant exclaimed, "That wasn't so hard!" when the class made fruit parfaits and went home and talked with his family about the crispy celery sticks made in class another day. Another participant shared her favorite part was "cooking and learning." Finally, one participant described the fruit parfait as "super fantastico," and said, "I think it's really good so I would try it again." Overall, this class helped R.O.O.C. consumers keep connections with people throughout the community, learn valuable nutrition and cooking lessons, and build life skills to increase independence.



ADULT Dietary Improvements

21% consumed less soda

41% ate more fruits/day

38% ate more vegetables per day



ADULT Physical Activity Improvements



41% increased moderate physical activity participation



37% increased strength training activities

YOUTH	Health & Nutrition Impact	3rd-5th Grade	6th-12th Grade
	increased vegetable consumption	31%	38%
	decreased soda consumption	29%	31%
	increased physical activity	26%	31%
	washed their hands more often	25%	23%
	decreased screen time	27%	28%

Youth Engagement Through 4-H at a Distance

4-H clubs were able to meet via Zoom and the participation increased as people got more comfortable with the technology and able to see the advantage of keeping up with youth even at a distance.

New programs were offered with mixed success. Youth took advantage of programs that allowed them to connect with the natural world such as indoor herb gardening and a kit of flower bulbs to plant outside for the spring bloom and inside to learn about how flowers are forced for year-round blooming. Participants were encouraged to post pictures showing progress on the private Facebook page for the kits.

Connections with youth via distance also included a series of virtual embryology efforts with 3rd and 4th grade students. Youth were also invited to participate in the Ogemaw 4-H Summer Camp Bingo that used a kit for kids to follow along at home. **Many efforts were made to engage youth in virtual programs that were being offered both locally and around the state. We look forward to a blend of in-person and virtual program offerings in the coming year.**



Ogemaw County, MSU Extension & Supporting Agriculture & Agribusiness



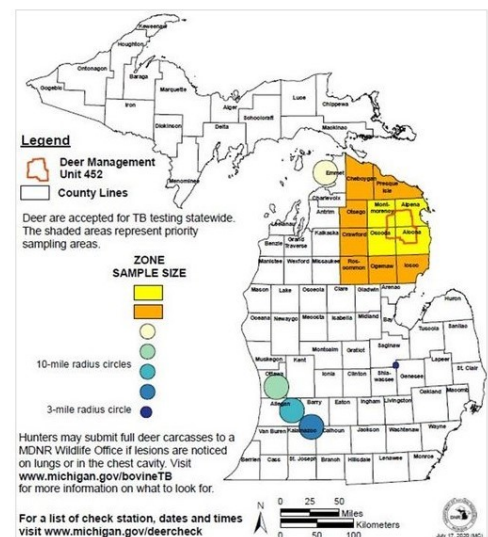
Milker training to improve milk quality at local farm

MSU Extension Senior Educator Phil Durst was called to a local farm because the manager was not pleased with the milk quality as measured by somatic cell count (SCC). SCC is an indicator of mastitis in the cows. The manager felt that it was a problem with consistent processes. Phil and Ottawa County-based MSUE Dairy Educator Martin Mangual spent parts of two days at the farm. On the first day, Phil and Martin observed milking, timing of procedures and analyzed milking using diagnostics equipment. The educators analyzed the data and provided training the next day, based on performance in the parlor. Employees trained in shifts in "classroom" and parlor settings. Following the visit and training, Phil met with the farm manager to explain the training for employees and review a list of process recommendations. A test following the intervention showed a reduction in SCC of 39% and the farm manager was now pleased with milk quality! The connection with MSU Extension has also allowed staff on the farm to reach out with questions about mastitis as they arise and continue the education that improves animal health and milk quality. This is one example of hundreds of visits made by the MSU Dairy Team members to work with farmers on critical needs, enabling them to be more successful



Bovine TB Educational Meetings

In March 2020, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development held five meetings for the public on bovine tuberculosis (TB) at different locations across northern Michigan. Phil Durst partnered with the group to moderate these meetings. Hunters and those with bison and cattle herds were invited to the discussion on deer and cattle health in the northeast Lower Peninsula. The goal was to ensure that groups impacted by bovine TB are aware of the latest information and have an opportunity to define a collaboration that will improve communities that are impacted by bovine TB. Bovine TB is a complex issue that impacts people differently and involves public policy. MSU Extension works to bring people together, to bridge gaps and to facilitate even difficult discussions to solve problems.



Michigan map with zones identified from which deer heads are needed to monitor for Bovine TB.

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