



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

MSU Tollgate Farm December 2020

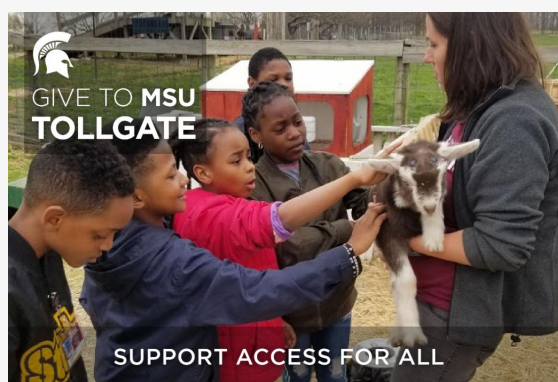
Welcome to the New and Improved MSU Tollgate Newsletter!

Upcoming Events

- [Holiday Lights at the Farm:](#) December 17-21
- [The MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening Photo Contest:](#) Ends December 21st
- [Collaborative Teacher Support Network:](#) January 11th, February 8th, March 8th
- [MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening Series:](#) Second Saturdays 10 am, February – September 2021
- For Homeschool and Hybrid Students: Virtual Vet Science Interactive Series for Grades 4-8: February 1-5, 2021
- [Building Leaders: A Summer Leadership Adventure for Ages 13-19:](#) Summer 2021
- [Steward Sustainability Leadership Institute for Ages 15-19:](#) Winter-Summer 2021
- [Virtual Goat Experiences:](#) All Year Long

News & Announcements

- [MSU Tollgate Virtual Farm School: Learning Fresh From the Farm](#)
- [Thank you to our Decorators](#)
- [Tollgate Farm 4-H Club - Virtual Ultrasound Event](#)
- [MSU Tollgate Farm Adapting to Meet Our Educational Mission Through Virtual Programming](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture Team: What is Season Extension?](#)
- [December Oakland County 4-H Newsletter](#)



MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center Needs YOUR Support More Than Ever

Like many community organizations, MSU Tollgate Farm relies on program and event revenue to operate. With the many COVID-19 cancellations in 2020, it is likely MSU Tollgate Farm will miss out on almost \$600,000 – 50% of our annual operating budget – in revenue generated from our programs and events. MSU Extension supports our efforts through state and federal funding, but even at the highest levels there is uncertainty about our financial future.

The farm uses this revenue to supplement the cost of educational programs for high-needs audiences. Additional fees ensure that an experienced paid staff person leads every program, and every program is of the highest quality. We recognize that the cost can be difficult for some schools, community groups, families, or individuals to cover. Our goal is to sustainably implement quality farm

Opportunities & Spotlights

- [Staff and Volunteer Spotlights December 2020](#)
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#)

experiences for our community, especially to those members of our community who are most in need. Our programs about agriculture, healthy living, food security, science, and sustainability are more important than ever as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. You can support those most in need by donating to the MSU Tollgate Farm – Access for All Education Fund. This campaign continues all of December to meet our goal of \$5,000. We are already 71% funded and hope you can help us reach 100%!

GIVE NOW

Upcoming Events

Lead Sponsors



Major Sponsors



Holiday Lights at the Farm: Thank you to our sponsors!

Registrations for Holiday Lights at the Farm has closed and we are so grateful for our sponsors! Thank you to our lead sponsors: [ITC Holdings Corps](#), [Vibe Credit Union](#), and major sponsors: [NSI Consulting and Development](#), [Paesano, Akkashian, Apkarian Attorneys and Counselors](#), and the [Eisenhower Center](#).

Stay tuned to the next newsletter for photos from this special event.

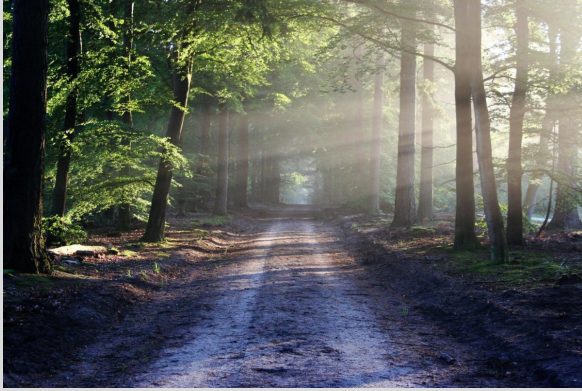
Announcing the MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening Photo Contest

MSU Tollgate is holding a HomeGrown Garden Photo Contest. Submit a photo of you and/or family members busy having fun in your vegetable garden. Winning photos will receive a small prize in the mail and be used for promotion of the Tollgate HomeGrown Gardening Series being held second Saturdays of the month, February - September 2021! Divisions include general garden photo, my/our first garden, gardening with kids, senior garden, trellis gardening, gardening in small spaces, harvest time! When submitting your photograph, please email your photo, your mailing address, and your signed media release found at the link below to [Ellen Koehler](#) by December 21st!



PHOTO MEDIA RELEASE

Teachers, are you Looking for a Way to Light your Path During the



Coming Months?

Could you use some moments to pull away, connect with peers, learn new ideas, and meet new friends? Join the Collaborative Teacher Support Network for a chance to hit refresh!

"What you pay attention to grows." Adrienne Maree Brown

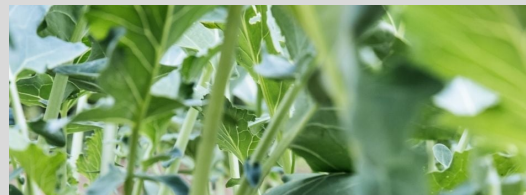
Hosted by MSU's teaching farms across the state, this is a conversation space for place-based educators who want to share ideas about the potential for – and challenges to – experiential learning and outdoor education for students during this COVID-adapted school year. Join us from 3:00-4:15 pm EST on the second Mondays of the month including Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 8. Sign up below, and feel free to share with your colleagues! Questions? Email [Ellen Koehler](#).

REGISTER HERE

Announcing the MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening Series: Second Saturdays 10 am, February – September 2021

Interest in vegetable gardening has surged as more of us explore fun healthy family activities close to home. Are you thinking about starting a garden for the first time? Are you an experienced veggie gardener looking to explore new ideas and share your knowledge with others? Families with kids and individuals, join Extension educators from metro Detroit and across the state for this new virtual interactive series designed to encourage and support home vegetable gardeners! Check out the flyer [here](#).

REGISTER HERE



MSU TOLLGATE FARM

**HEMGROWN
GARDENING**

For Homeschool and Hybrid Students: Virtual Vet Science Interactive Series for Grades 4-8: Coming this February 1- 5th



Spend time exploring the Tollgate barn and pastures virtually as you investigate veterinary science and animal medicine. Get to know an array of animals as you experience the care of our livestock up close and personal. Explore the five freedoms, engage in STEM challenges, and learn about veterinary tools & technology. Interactive real time sessions with MSU Extension Animal Science educators, Tollgate Farm staff, and visiting vets complement investigations and activities. The next best thing to being on the farm! Watch for the sign up, coming soon!



Building Leaders: A Summer Leadership Adventure for Ages 13-19

The Tollgate Stewards Program offers a chance for teens to mentor and lead at camp while gaining valuable leadership and life skills. Stewards-in-Training (13-14 years) and Stewards (15-19 years) assist the educational leaders and serve as role models for campers and peers. Stewards and SITs have fun adventures and make new friends while developing a deeper understanding of the farm and what it means to be a leader.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute for Ages 15-19

This fun and challenging leadership summit is the advanced level of the progressive Tollgate teen leadership programs. For teens ages 15-19 who love adventure, SSLI includes virtual sessions on sustainability, a multi-day outdoor wilderness team-building experience, leadership roles at camp, a mentorship model where you are paired with a community member, a certificate of completion, and a capstone sustainability

action project during summer camp. Become a Sustainable Steward in 2021.

[LEARN MORE](#)



COVID-19 Precautions for Future Programming

Programming format for spring/summer programs will be determined by university and state guidance related to COVID-19. The hope is that in-person programming is able to resume by summer camp season 2021 with COVID-19 precautions in place. If we are unable to resume in person programming we will continue with virtual programs. Although we miss in person programming, the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and visitors is paramount.

Virtual Goat Experiences

Last time we checked goats can't use phones very well, but luckily our MSU Tollgate staff can! Want a personal goat encounter? Sign up for Goat to Meeting or Goat Shout Outs!

[LEARN MORE](#)



News & Announcements

MSU Tollgate Virtual Farm School: Learning Fresh From the Farm

A virtual classroom series with MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center is designed for students to explore the outdoor world with



interactive experiential hands-on learning. Aligned with literacy, math, and Next Generation Science standards, programs utilize inquiry place-based learning and action projects. Life cycles and systems interdependency are revealed as students virtually visit the fields, forest, greenhouse, barns to investigate science phenomena taking place on the farm. Reservation for these interactive virtual series are being scheduled now for February through June 2021. Programs include interactive sessions, recorded virtual farm visits, accompanying journal pages, and blog. Choose from Winter on the Farm, Maple Sugaring, Plants and Their Partners, Follow the Nutrient Trail, and Vet Science. A Tollgate financial aid process is [available](#) for schools. For questions or to tailor a program to meet your teaching goals, please email [Ellen Koehler](#).

RESERVE YOUR SPOT



Thank you to our Decorators!

We greatly appreciate all the volunteers and families who have helped decorate Tollgate for our Holiday Lights at the Farm Event. We cannot wait for our visitors to see all of your hard work and dedication. Our volunteers make MSU Tollgate Farm such a special place to visit.

READ MORE



Tollgate Farm 4-H Club - Virtual Ultrasound Event

Early December is an exciting time for the members of Tollgate Farm 4-H Club. That is when we use the ultrasound to check on the pregnancy status of the Toggenburg goat does. This year was our first virtual ultrasound meeting. We were able to share the screen of the ultrasound and a view of the proceedings with our youth members over Zoom. The happy news is that we have 6 pregnant does expecting 14 kids! In that count are 2 sets of triplets. Might raise that number to 15 - Ivy are you carrying quadruplets (see the photo for the ultrasound)? Many thanks to our volunteer vet, Dr. Melissa Holahan, for helping us to understand the

images and answering questions. Goat kids arrive in March. Interested in learning more about the Tollgate Farm 4-H Club? Click the link below to visit their facebook page.

LEARN MORE

MSU Tollgate Farm Adapting to Meet Our Educational Mission Through Virtual Programming

How is MSU Tollgate Farm adapting to meet our mission through educational programming during these difficult times? In response to school closures and safety restrictions caused by the pandemic, we knew we needed to try to help teachers and families by providing students with an opportunity to still connect to and learn from the *place* called Tollgate Farm. Tollgate has recreated school and community programs in an interactive virtual format bringing the farm to students in new ways. One of these programs was a series called The Secret Life of Trees which met for five weekly 45 minute virtual interactive sessions filled with experiential learning and connection for area kindergarten students. We visited students from the arboretum, the forest, the orchard, and the great Dawn Redwood tree shown above. Check out the [blog](#) students followed along with and a [video](#) about this program.



READ MORE



Sustainable Agriculture Team: What is Season Extension?

What is season extension and how does it help the Tollgate Sustainable Agriculture Team continue to grow produce into the fall/winter? Season Extension refers to anything that allows a crop to be grown beyond its normal growing season. Often season extension in colder climates such as ours is achieved through additional protective structures over the crop. Eager to sign up for our Summer CSA? More information coming in early 2021!

READ MORE

This Month's 4-H Newsletter is Here!

Oakland County 4-H Connections is a monthly newsletter for 4-H members, families, and the general community with news and information about 4-H youth development activities in Oakland County.

READ MORE

Oakland County
Youth & Families

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension December 2020

5 REASONS TO JOIN 4-H IN 2021



What is 4-H?
Michigan 4-H is growing current and future leaders. As the largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.

Many people think 4-H is just for kids who live on farms or those interested in raising and selling animals – but that's not true! Offering a diverse range of topics and interest areas, 4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. In fact, each year more than 200,000 young people, ages 5-18, explore what interests and excites them as they grow with Michigan 4-H.

5 Reasons to join Michigan 4-H
From 4-H for all youth in Michigan
There is a \$20 participation fee for each child enrolled, however during the 2020-2021 program year (Sept. 1, 2020 - August 31, 2021), this fee has been waived.

If you are new to Michigan 4-H and want to learn more or enroll, visit ourwebsitefor.msus.org

will assist you in identifying opportunities and a 4-H club in your community that meets your interest areas and availability.
If you have previously enrolled in Michigan 4-H or already connected with a 4-H club or county staff person, visit 4-H.org to complete or update your enrollment for the current year.

Virtual Experiences
Due to the Coronavirus all current 4-H opportunities are held virtually until further notice. Virtual 4-H experiences are opportunities for engagement when face-to-face meetings are not possible to supplement face-to-face programming. Virtual programs won't fully replace the relationships built by meeting in-person, but using technology to the fullest potential can help fill the gap in the interim. For a full list of current statewide virtual 4-H opportunities, visit 4-H.org.

4-H is for youth of all ages
Cloverbuds are our youngest 4-Hers - children ages 5 to 7 years old. Although they aren't quite ready to participate in many of the project areas and activities that older children can, there's still plenty for them to do in 4-H, starting with fun!

The Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Snapshot Series provides information on ten different science-related project areas you can explore with your youngest 4-Her.

Opportunities and Spotlights

MEET OUR STAFF



Sam Stokes:
Interim Livestock Manager

Staff and Volunteer Spotlights December 2020

Curious about everyone who works at MSU Tollgate Farm? Every Monday on our Facebook and Instagram we feature a staff member or volunteer. The last month we have featured Kathy Begin, a educational programs and camp volunteer, Katie Gallagher, our Educational Garden Leader, and Sam Stokes, our Interim Livestock Manager.

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Interested in Volunteering at Tollgate?

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSU Tollgate Farm. Would you like to volunteer at Tollgate? Check out the steps to become part of the Tollgate volunteer team.

LEARN MORE



MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center
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