



Tuscola County

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



* \$254,564 spending with local businesses in Tuscola County



66 Tuscola County Students enrolled at MSU



MSU disbursed \$1,330,982 in financial aid to Tuscola County students



680 MSU alumni living in and contributing to Tuscola County



1483 youth involved in 4-H Tuscola County youth development



* \$6,077,838 total Economic Impact in Tuscola County

* 2021 Numbers



Message from the District Director

Newton's First Law of motion is often stated as an object at rest stays at rest until an outside force acts upon it. And even though an object could have abundant potential energy, it won't be realized until inertia is overcome. The arrow will not fly until the bowstring is released and the water will not flow until the spigot is opened. This is a great metaphor for the power of Extension in our community. Michigan State University is home to a wealth of knowledge obtained and transferred through the educational and research accomplishments of the colleges comprising this world-renowned institution. From engineering to agriculture and from nutrition to finance, MSU is on the leading edge of emerging and best practices in the areas important to the residents of Michigan.

If you don't know the difference between a yellow jacket and a honeybee, there are a couple of ways to find out one method is much more painful than the other and comes at the end of a stinger while the other method comes from viewing each insect behind a protective barrier under the instruction of a trained 4-H leader. And if you don't know what a lot of added sugar will do to your body, there are a couple of ways to find out but one method will have you buying larger clothing in a few short months and the other will have you understanding how to read an ingredient label under the guidance of a trained nutrition instructor. In both examples, the difference is education.

MSU Extension is committed to sharing the potential energy of evidence-based knowledge to and for the benefit of our residents and their families. Thank you for partnering with us to make a difference in the lives of Tuscola County residents.

Jerry Johnson, District Director
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Developing Youth and Communities



MSU EXTENSION 4-H STAFF

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President

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4-H Horse Leaders

President

4-H is America's largest youth development organization, providing educational opportunities to over 6 million youth. The 4-H program offers a vast selection of project area topics—science, healthy living, arts, and civic engagement to name a few, all with hands-on experiential learning for youth. 4-H programs are available for all youth ages 5-19, and are made possible by the service of our dedicated volunteers. We always welcome new members and new volunteers; if you are interested in joining 4-H, please contact the Tuscola County MSU Extension office at 989-672-3870. We would be happy to help you enroll today!

Our Volunteers

4-H programs are made possible by the service of our dedicated volunteers. An Effective 4-H Council is essential to planning, conducting and evaluating 4-H work. To be successful, 4-H programs must meet the needs and interests of local participants. Determining these needs and interest and then developing and implementing programs that fulfill those needs require the organized involvement of local volunteers and community stakeholders. Tuscola County's 4-H program has several committee boards that are made up of dedicated volunteers. They are vital to the local 4-H program as these volunteer groups fulfill their mission thru the following functions:

- Assist in developing a total 4-H program based on the needs of youth and the county and then actively carrying out the plan.
- Introducing new 4-H projects, programs and activities that are designed to attract new youth to the 4-H program
- Planning for and assisting with the recruitment, education and recognition of 4-H members and 4-H volunteers.
- Raising and managing funds to underwrite the planned 4-H curriculum, program and activities.
- Recommending policy and procedures for the county when not determined by state or national regulations.
- Providing for the representation of the 4-H program at other meetings and events.
- Evaluating the overall 4-H program on a continuing basis.
- Promoting the work of the 4-H council, its committees and the entire 4-H program throughout the county.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Tuscola County 4-H provided local youth members and volunteers opportunities to connect to learning experiences in many different project areas and programs. Included are a few programs offered in 2022:

School Programming

Tuscola County 4-H partners with our local school districts to provide programs such as Embryology. Embryology is a 21 day, 4-H program where students are able to observe the beginning life cycle by incubating chicken eggs.

4-H Exploration Days

4-H Exploration Days is a pre-college awareness program for youth ages 12-19 held on the campus of Michigan State University. Seven youth from Tuscola county and two chaperones spent 3 days at MSU, lived in a dorm, ate in the cafeteria and attended Exploration Days classes they chose.

Michigan State 4-H Events

State 4-H events are an opportunity for 4-H youth to represent their county at a State level. Youth qualify at a county level and are able to go complete at the State competitions.. Tuscola County had 16 youth compete at the State Horse show, 5 youth compete in the State Hippology and Horse Judging Contest, and 16 youth compete at the State Shooting Sports competition.

2022 4-H Camp

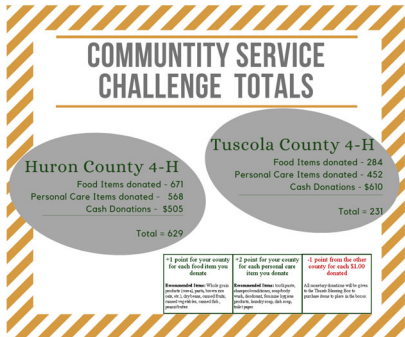
Tuscola County 4-H provides provides and opportunity for youth to attend overnight camps through out the year. Tuscola County 4-H Winter Camp is an overnight experience where youth come and do outdoor winter activities. In 2022, youth learned about ice fishing and macro invertebrates. Thumb Area 4-H Camp is a 4 day, 3 night camp held for all 4-H members in the Thumb of Michigan. Thumb Area 4-H camp provides the camp experience for youth ages 9-14 and provides leadership opportunities for teen counselors age 15-19.

The Tuscola County Fair

The County Fair is an opportunity for 4-H youth to showcase all their hard work to the community. Over 200 4-H youth participated in the Tuscola County Fair. Showing projects at the fair has many educational benefits such as teaching youth about the value of hard work, healthy competition, and many life skills.



Community Service Challenge



Tuscola 4-H also teamed up with Thumb Blessing Boxes to collect donations through a fun competition. Throughout the month of December 2021, Tuscola County 4-H competed with Huron County 4-H in a community service challenge to collect as many items and monetary donations for the Blessing Boxes as possible. While Huron County won, by the end of the month, nearly 2,000 items and over \$1,000 total were collected by both counties to support the Thumb Blessing Boxes in both areas.

Keeping People Healthy

Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Health and Nutrition Staff serving Tuscola County

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Michigan Senior Project FRESH (SPF) was our biggest nutrition program, again, this year. SPF is a state-wide program for low-income individuals over the age of 60. Participants receive \$25 of free coupons to be used for fresh fruits and vegetable that are grown in Michigan and sold at farmers markets and roadside stands. **MSUE was able to distribute coupons to 450 Tuscola County residents, at a total value of \$11,250.**

Other nutrition and cooking classes for adults were held in partnership with the **Human Development Commission, Tuscola Great Start, Caro Farmers Market, Caro Senior Commons, and Vassar Seniors, reaching 87 participants.**

Youth and teen programming included two new projects with **Caro Alternative High School, and Tuscola County Farm Bureau.** Other classes were held at **Caro NEMCSA, Reese Summer Migrant Program, Thumb Octagon Barn, and Tuscola ISD.** 135 students were reached in our six-week nutrition series, and 918 participants in one-time nutrition presentations.

MSUE partnered with generous local gardeners, through our Plant a Row Program. This year 517 pounds of produce was collected and donated to the Caro United Methodist Church's **Good Samaritan Food Pantry.**

Working with local farmers, we were able to glean **432 pounds of Blue Hubbard squash and 102 pounds of cucumbers.** We were also able to rescue **750 pounds of grapes** that were left over from a pop-up food pantry. This produce was donated to local food banks, senior housing complexes, and homeless shelters.

Senior
Project FRESH
Market Fresh Food



Disease Prevention Management and Social Emotional Health Programs

Health and Nutrition Staff serving District 10 (Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, St. Clair & Tuscola Counties)

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Available programs:

- **Stress Less with Mindfulness**
- **RELAX: Alternatives to Anger**
- **PATH for Diabetes**
- **PATH for Chronic Pain**
- **Dining with Diabetes**
- **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**
- **Tai Chi for Arthritis**
- **SLEEP: Sleep Education for Everyone Program Everyone**

Kris Swartzendruber, Extension Educator, and Jacqui Rabine, Program Instructor, for the Health and Nutrition Institute, conducted the following programs for District 10.

Evidence-based disease prevention and management programming helps people learn to manage their chronic health conditions through increased physical activity, knowledge of healthy eating and improved communication with their healthcare provider.

The following in-person and online disease prevention and management programs were offered:

PATH (Personal Action Towards Health), a six-session self-management series that supports adults, and members of their support system, help manage chronic health conditions such as pain, diabetes, and other diseases, to **17 participants**.

Dining with Diabetes, a four-session, in-person, series that helps people with type 1, 2, prediabetes and members of their support system, learn how to make healthier food choices and incorporate balanced meals into their family dining experience, to **35 adult participants**.

In a statewide report of those surveyed:

73% of PATH participants increased or maintained their confidence in keeping physical discomfort or pain from interfering with the things they wanted to do.

89% of Dining with Diabetes participants are now eating smaller portions after taking the class.

One in four older adults will report a fall this year. Falls and the fear of falling can negatively affect people's quality of life by causing physical, social and emotional decline.

Below is a list of the evidence-based falls prevention classes, that were offered both online and in-person:

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention, an 18-session series designed to help older adults, and adults with disabilities and at risk of falling, stay active, by increasing their strength, balance and posture, as well as reducing stress and increasing relaxation through a series of slow and gentle movements, to **128 participants**.

A Matter of Balance, an eight-session series that helps participants increase their physical activity, reduce their fear of falling, and remove fall hazards in the home environment, to **32 older adults**.

In a statewide report of those surveyed:

100% of Tai Chi and Matter of Balance participants reported feeling more comfortable increasing their physical activity as a result of attending the classes.

Disease Prevention Management and Social Emotional, *continued*

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Through evidence-based education, people can learn to manage the stressors in their life and improve their overall well-being. Over the past year, Jacqui and Kris provided in-person and online social-emotional health programming, including:

Stress Less with Mindfulness, a five-session series that focuses on using mindfulness to reduce stress related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension, to **74 adult participants**.



RELAX – Alternatives to Anger, a four-session series that helps adults, parents and caregivers understand and manage anger and stress, and develop the communication and problem-solving skills needed for healthy relationships, to **76 participants**.



Powerful Tools for Caregivers of Adults with Chronic Conditions and Parents of Children with Special Needs, a six-session series designed to help participants learn tools to help them reduce stress, communicate effectively, take care of themselves, reduce feelings of guilt, anger, and/or depression, make tough decisions, to **14 adults**.



In a statewide report of those surveyed:

93% reported that they were confident in having a supportive conversation with anyone about mental health or substance use challenges.

94% reported that they felt highly confident that they understood the benefits of mindfulness.

93% reported that they felt highly confident that they knew how to use mindful breathing to reduce stress.

Mindfulness facts

- The human mind has 70,000 thoughts each day. That's 70,000 opportunities.
- The typical brain is about 2 percent of your body weight but uses 20 percent of your energy.
- 80 percent of repetitive thought are negative. But they don't have to be.
- A brisk 10- minute walk reduces the amount of cortisol (stress hormone) in the brain by 50 to 70 percent.



Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



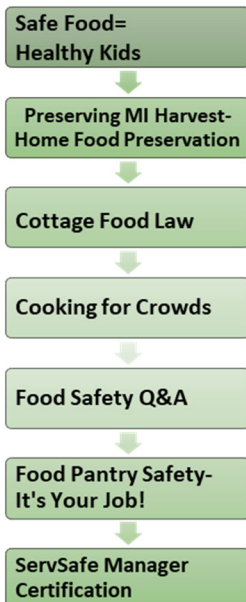
Health and Nutrition - Food Safety Staff

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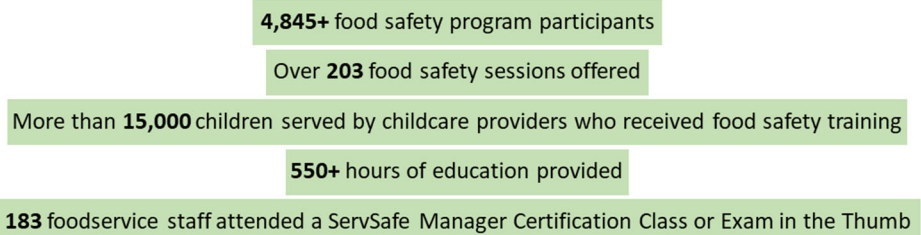
Food Safety Programs:



Food Safety is a global issue from farm to table. It's impact on our health and well-being is significant across the life span. Foodborne illness outbreaks occur on an ongoing basis crossing all socioeconomic lines from production, consumption, and preservation of foods. Overall health is impacted by the safety of the food supply and reducing the risk of foodborne illness.

To increase knowledge and awareness on food safety best practices as well as encouraging the use of those practices to keep food safe, MSU Extension provides education in the program areas below. **In 2021-22**, we were back to in-person programming as well as continued virtual education sessions, providing education in all of our core food safety programs to reach a multitude of audiences including childcare providers, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and consumers.

Program Successes



How Food Safety Education impacted our participants:

- 98% reported they better understood what is necessary to run a successful cottage food business
- As a result of Preserving MI Harvest food preservation training, 95% were confident following safe preservation practices and 97% said they now have confidence in finding research-based recipes. Over 70% were new or novice home food preservers who joined our classes.
- Safe Food = Healthy Kids participants shared 81% will follow safe cooking and cooling practices.

From our participants:

- "Safe Food = Healthy Kids was so helpful for me because the information that I received cannot only help me at work, but also help me at home and in my future!"
- "This session covered all my questions! I wasn't sure about cottage law and this webinar really helped clarify the whole process!"
- Preserving MI Harvest participants said:
 - "The ability to ask questions is essential. These sessions - and the food hotline - have hugely improved my preserving confidence."
 - "Knowing that all canning recipes are not created equal and may not be safe. I learned the equipment needed and why and which foods are safe to preserve by water bath canning."
 - "This was extremely helpful. I think as I take more courses my confidence will build. I plan to attend upcoming webinars."

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food, *continued*

In Tuscola County, we have great partnerships with local libraries to provide **Preserving MI Harvest Home Food Preservation** programs. Collaborating with the **Caro Area District Library** in Caro and **Rawson Memorial Library** in Cass City we educated **40** consumers about safe home food preservation methods and resources.

Classes were offered using Zoom and held in-person at the library on the following topics:

- Canning Basics
- Pickling
- Salsa 101 and Tomatoes
- Preserving Meat



New in 2022 a partnership with the **Caro Farmers Market** resulted in a **Cottage Food Law Training** for **10 Caro Farmers Market vendors** held at Caro City Hall in April.

Also, in collaboration with the market, we participated in the Kids Club and Family Day with a food safety and food preservation activity.

For Kids Club, we **demonstrated washing of fruits and vegetables** and had veggie brushes to distribute to kids and their families through an MDARD grant.

On Family Day, the Blanching and Freezing method for preserving vegetables was demonstrated and freezer bags were distributed from an MDARD grant to assist consumers with properly freezing their summer vegetables.

We reached over **250 kids and families** with these food safety outreach efforts. We value these partnerships to provide food safety education to residents of Tuscola County.





Caro Farmers Market
8 hrs • 📍

Focused on FOOD SAFETY!

This year the Caro Farmers Market was awarded a food safety education grant from the Michigan Farmers Market Association. So far, we have served over 1,500 people with the food safety programs. We are happy to bring fun food safety tips and activities to City of Caro!

This Tuesday we will be partnering with MSUE to offer the Market Kids Club a fun produce washing activity, and a **FREE PRODUCE WASHING BRUSH**.

Other great food safety giveaways will be provided by the Tuscola County MSU Extension office!

Join us for Market 4-8pm,
Market Kids Club begins at 5pm!

State Street Square
238 South State Street
Caro, MI 48723

If you are interested in **MORE** food safety tips, and training- please click the links below!

Registration Link
<https://events.anr.msu.edu/Foodsafetysummer2022/>
If you missed one of our previous webinars check them out on our Think Food Safety Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/thinkfoodsafetymi>



EAT WITH YOUR NOGGIN

THINK FOOD SAFETY MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension



Think Food Safety

Supporting Food and Agriculture

Forages & Field Crop Specialist

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- The **Field Crops Team** has diligently developed and offered numerous educational opportunities over the past year that have been available to Tuscola County Residents. All of these programs had registrants from around the state including Tuscola County. Below is a list of some of the virtual (online) opportunities from the past year:
 - **Thumb Ag Day:** This event was held virtually with 121 participants. Topics covered included the 2021 Thumb Field Trial Results, Michigan Wheat update, Corn Silage mycotoxins, and Market Outlook & Carbon Credits.
 - **Field Crops Webinar Series:** This MSU Extension educational program is geared toward growers, consultants and agribusiness professionals who are interested in addressing field crop production and pest management. This series spanned 8 weeks and averaged 193 participants per week.
 - **Virtual Breakfast**, which offered growers opportunities to learn from a variety of specialists about topics related to field crops and earn RUP/CCA credits from the comfort of their own home.
- Other in person workshops offered more locally (within the Thumb Region)
- 2 Regional **Crop and Pest Management Updates** in January/February with 189 people participating.

- A **Farm Succession Planning meeting** was held in Sandusky, which had 23 local participants. They received information on: An Overview of Farm Succession with Corey Clark, MSU Extension Educator, Anecdotes from Succession Planning over the years with Stan Moore MSU Extension Educator, Technical Tools with Michael Farleigh, Attorney and What Succession Planning looked like for Us, a peer producer panel. Participants were able to gather information and ask questions.
- **MSU Soybean Variety Trial Field Day** in Sanilac County. In September, MSU Extension Field Crops Educators Jenna Falor & Phil Kaatz hosted a Soybean Variety Trial Field Day in Sanilac County. Growers from around the region, including Tuscola County were invited to walk the field and ask questions of Randy Laurenz, MSU Soybean Trial Coordinator, Dr. Dechun Wang, MSU Soybean Breeder, as well as the Educators themselves. The plot included 127 commercial varieties and 17 companies.

In addition to the above meeting opportunities there has been some on-farm work being done. Jenna has been trapping European Corn Borer, Black Cutworm and Western Bean Cutworm as a part of the Great Lakes and Maritimes Pest Monitoring Network and has been helping with some on farm soybean research in Sanilac County. She helped facilitate getting local RUP license testing in conjunction with MSU and MDARD this past winter. Finally, she has also assisted many Tuscola County growers by being available to answer their agronomic questions.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series

Every Thursday during the growing season, farmers were able to access the most current information available for timely, relevant in-season crop and weather information from MSUE Field Crops Specialists and Extension Educators. Each zoom session has a 20-minute segment for crop information and 15 minutes for weather. Following the presentations, participants can participate with MSU Specialists and Educators in a question-and-answer period. This innovative approach using technology has provided growers from every region of the state the opportunity to participate in a live webinar via their computer, laptop, or cell phone. Each participant can ask questions of the specialists and educators during the live sessions. Also, live streaming on Facebook allows for online participation. Each session is close-captioned and recorded for viewing on the [MSUE Field Crops Team](https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/) website (https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/) or a podcast.

Farmers and agribusiness professionals can also apply for Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) and Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) credits weekly. A wide range of topics were planned according to the seasonal issues that frequently occur at specific times. However, the series is flexible, adaptable, and can change quickly and effectively when unexpected issues arise. Each week field crop producers are invited by email to participate and a MSU Extension News article is written and published in the MSUE News Digest to encourage participation. Nearly 1,500 weekly subscribers receive email notifications and over 6,600 are subscribed to the MSUE News Digest. 191 Tuscola participants during the season



2022 MSU Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series

Virtual Breakfast Series	Live Participants	YouTube Views	MSUE Podcasts	MSUE News Article Page Views	Total Views
Total Audience	3,869	5,122	2,448	8,357	11,439

Here are a few comments were received from the Virtual Breakfast Series viewers:

- *"This series provides much information about current topics/issues and is a great tool for farmers to gain knowledge. It generates discussions between us farmers as well, outside of the series airtime. You guys do a GREAT job with this and I thank you for providing this information and discussions."*
- *"This has been very helpful learning opportunity and I appreciate getting some RUP Credits."*
- *"It is a very well put together program. I like the variety, and look forward to it again next year,"*
- *"I appreciate the availability of the recordings as I can't always attend live."*
- *"Very informative and excellent hands-on topics."*

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise in:

Animal Welfare Dairy Management

Marianne Murawski
Dairy Extension Educator

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On-farm Training and Service

The Michigan State University Dairy Team has continued to provide training for farm employees and managers in the areas of: milking, calf care, maternity management, animal handling, down cow management, euthanasia, and dairy feeder development. The trainings are customized for each farm to fill their training needs required by the National FARM dairy animal care program. Trainings are offered statewide in both English and Spanish languages. In addition to on-farm training, MSU Extension offers on-farm analysis using the latest technology in areas of parlor efficiency, colostrum absorption, and heat stress monitoring.

Managing your cow's genes for greater profits

This one-day program was repeated 4 times around the state. One of those locations was in Bad Axe. This program was about genetic advancement incorporating desired genetic traits and the use of adequate management strategies. These topics are the key to greater profitability on your dairy. Our winter meeting talked about new genetic traits, breeding, feeding and herd management and strategies to tie them together. The speaker topics were:

- Feed Saved trait- what is it and from where did it come.
- Building a Breeding Program for genetic progress and profit.
- Feeding Efficiently: Learning from farm feeding evaluations.
- Impact of cow longevity on the overall efficiency of the herd.
- On-going new research at MSU.
- A producer panel discussion on ways to build a successful reproductive program.

Uniquely, MSU Extension partnered with several reproductive companies to improve the expertise available at these meetings. Some speakers were: Dr. Barry Bradford, reproductive expert from either Genex, Central Star/Select, Genus PLC or Alta Genetics (one per meeting), Martin Mangual, Marianne Murawski, MSU graduate student, and Dr. Richard Pursley moderating a producer panel.

Virtual Coffee Break with MSU Extension Dairy Team Season 6 is currently being released.

Since the beginning of 2020, the Michigan State University Extension Dairy Team has released 6 seasons of podcasts. These podcasts have covered topics related to the dairy industry and dairy farm management. The podcasts have been downloaded and played 5,169 times worldwide. Of those downloads and plays, 4.2% of them come from the Thumb area. These podcasts have been cited and publicized nationally in magazines like Hoards Dairyman multiple times. The series is available as a podcast on all major podcast channels like Apple Podcast, Google Podcast and Spotify.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

Beef Feedlot Systems

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Youth Beef Education

Dr. Jerad Jaborek has been actively teaching Michigan youth about beef cattle in 2022. He has provided five nutritional presentations for youth discussing ruminant nutrition and feeding management practices for youth raising feeder calves and market beef projects. In addition, he has performed two ruminant digestive tract dissection workshops to provide youth with an interactive hands-on learning opportunity about the unique digestive anatomy of ruminants. Drs. Jaborek and Jeannine Schwehofer have also led educational sessions for Project Rural Education Day (RED) to introduce 4th grade students to beef in Sanilac and St. Clair counties.

Beef Quality Assurance Certification Training

Beef Quality Assurance is a voluntary program for beef and dairy cattle producers that uses science-based research and national guidelines to teach cattle producers about the best management practices for their cattle operation. Being a BQA certified cattle operation increases consumer confidence and acceptance of the cattle producer's daily practices, which can create additional marketing opportunities for their cattle and beef. During the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022, the Michigan State University Extension Beef Team performed face to face Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certification training for Michigan cattle producers. Drs. Jerad Jaborek and Jeannine Schwehofer trained and certified 116 individuals in the four meetings conducted in Huron, St. Clair, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties.

Feedlot Research

Steers from dairies make up a large proportion of the cattle fed in Michigan. As a result of the increasing use of beef semen on dairy farms, a greater number of beef x dairy steers are being fed in Michigan feedlots. However, little research is available on the expected performance of these crossbred cattle. Drs. Dan Buskirk, Jerad Jaborek, Jeannine Schwehofer, and Melissa McKendree and Master's student Melanie Pimentel-Concepcion have recently completed an on-campus research project that investigates feeding beef x dairy steers. Results from the study should provide cattle feeders in Michigan some insight to the expected growth performance, carcass characteristics, and costs of raising these beef x dairy crossbred steers.



Ensuring Strong Communities

Andy Northrop Extension Educator

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Serving the State of
Michigan & District 10
Huron, Lapeer,
St. Clair, Sanilac and
Tuscola Counties

Programs

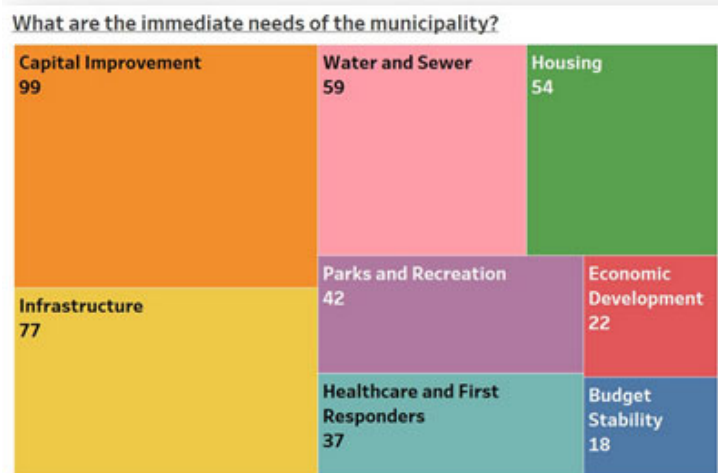
- Sustainable Tourism Development
- First Impressions: Tourism
- Assessments
- Planning for Tourism
- Community Vitality
- Leadership and Facilitation
- Connecting Entrepreneurial Community

Goals of our tourism programs are to:

- Increase awareness of assets and opportunities
- Increase knowledge of best practices, trends and changes
- Develop new leadership roles, opportunities and action items
- Foster new collaborations and plans among stakeholders to advance community - driven tourism

Regional Meetings for ARPA Local Government Funding

In September-October 2021, member regions of the [Michigan Association of Regions](#) (MAR) and [MSU Extension](#) hosted local and tribal government officials to explore American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund spending opportunities in a regional context.



The 14 workshops covered:

- ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Basic Rules
- Best Practices and Early Examples of ARPA Spending
- Practical Considerations for Contracts, Accounting, and Project Management
- Group Discussions Related to Regional Collaboration
- Leveraging Other State and Federal Funding and Priorities

The workshop content was based on the U.S. Department of Treasury's May 17, 2021 Interim Final Rule for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

People Reached and Resources Created:

This statewide workshop series had over 750 participants from many of Michigan's nearly 1,900 units of government. Among participants,

- 46% were elected officials,
- 24% local government staff,
- 15% appointed officials,
- 8% representatives of nonprofit organizations, and
- 8% from other organizations including regional governments and economic development consultants.

Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

MSU websites developed in collaboration with the ARPA workshop series include:

- Regional Meetings for ARPA Local Government Funding Workshop Series
<https://sites.google.com/msu.edu/arpameetings>
- MSU Extension Center for Local Government Finance and Policy, Local Government Federal Revenue
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/tag/local-government-federal-revenue>
- MSU Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, ARPA Funding Community Information
<https://ippsr.msu.edu/arpa-funding-community-information>

The ARPA Meetings Google Site has been shared with all participants, other local government officials, and over 100 nonprofit leaders to date.

Impacts and Outcomes

Evaluation of the workshop series consisted of an immediate post-workshop survey offered digitally and as a hardcopy for those attending in-person workshops. There were 169 evaluations completed throughout the workshop series (a response rate of approximately 23%) with 78% of respondents rating the workshop as “very valuable” or “valuable.”

When asked “As a result of this workshop:”

- 91% responded “I have increased my knowledge about the topic”
- 80% responded “I have increased confidence in my ability to fulfill my role in the community”
- 83% responded “I feel more prepared to help my local unit of government manage ARPA funds”
- 57% responded “I am more likely to pursue regional collaboration efforts”
- 63% responded “I have new ideas on how to match local and regional priorities with state and federal funding initiatives”

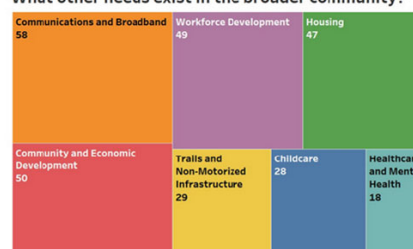
When asked “Which of the following do you plan to do as a result of your participation in this program (check all that apply):”

- 85% selected Share information provided with others
- 65% selected Learn more on the topic
- 11% selected Practice new skills
- 25% selected Use techniques learned to make better decisions
- 46% selected Engage with local officials (ex. Write, speak at meeting)
- 36% selected Leverage (utilize) new and/or existing community assets
- 41% selected Collaborate with new partner organizations
- 5% selected Take on new leadership roles

Participants were also asked “What you plan to do differently as a result of this program?” Three significant themes emerged. First, it is clear from the variety of subjects mentioned and the way they were shared, that many participants' eyes were opened to new opportunities and possibilities than they were aware of before the workshops. Other themes that emerged are 1) Collaboration, and 2) Exploring more options than had been previously considered. These are fundamental methods of operation that each community can apply in ways that best serve the people in their community. This indicates that the workshops have helped participants with approaches to serve their community more so than simply handing them a list of things to do. It is our hope that these lessons continue to be applied to their work on other issues in the future.

In summary, the 14 workshops and subsequent sharing of the resources by participants, staff of MAR member regions, MSU and MSUE staff have been a timely and highly effective educational success.

What other needs exist in the broader community?



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

Partnering to Connect Our Communities with Food

MSU Extension and SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education) continued working with the Tuscola Food Access Collaborative (TFAC) to make impactful changes in the community. This concerted work was recognized by the Thumb Food Policy Council, which awarded TFAC the Community Innovation Award for the concept of placing Thumb Blessing Boxes on Thumbbody Express Buses. Thumb Blessing Boxes is a grassroots project working with communities across the Thumb region to place mini pantries filled with food and personal hygiene products to reach those in need. MSU Extension worked with Thumb Blessing Boxes to continue expanding this year. There are now 10 Boxes placed around Tuscola County – 24 total around the Thumb.



A second Blessing Box was placed on a second Thumbbody Bus in August 2022 to keep up with the demand for this resource. This year the boxes have reached over 2,200 passengers.



In addition, MSU Extension assisted with applying for a grant from Poet Bioprocessing, which was received in June 2022. The \$1,000 award funded the placement of a Thumb Blessing Box inside the Caro Senior Commons and will sustain the Box being filled for the next year or more, reaching over 100 low-income senior residents. MSU Extension facilitates various health and nutrition programs at Caro Senior Commons throughout the year to support residents in making healthier choices.



Tuscola County SNAP-Ed was the first in the state to pilot a video success story for MSU Extension. Their partnership with the Thumb Blessing Boxes was featured. To view the video, visit this link: (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/videos/fighting-hunger-in-rural-michigan-thumb-blessing-boxes>) It tells the story of how powerful local partnerships can be to make a difference when fighting hunger, particularly in rural areas such as the Thumb.

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DISTRICT 10 ADVISORY BOARD

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What is the purpose of the Advisory Board?

The Michigan State University Extension District 10 Advisory Board purpose is as follows:

Advocacy: Intentionally informing residents and elected officials about the achievements of MSU Extension as well as the educational capabilities and partnership opportunities available.

Vision: Providing MSU Extension with the key insights pertaining to your geographic and socio/economic areas of residence, employment and volunteerism.

Pathways: Using your influence to open doors for potential partners/customers/collaborators of MSU Extension for the purpose of growing influence and better communities.

Needs Identifications: Providing insight into areas of deficiency or opportunity in which MSU Extension educational programming can address and benefit residents.

Mentoring: Providing honest, constructive feedback to the MSU Extension District Director on methods of enhancing personal and organizational engagement, involvement and effectiveness.



Food Safety Hotline

Do you have questions about food expiration dates? How long leftovers will last or preserving foods at home? The MSU Extension food safety hotline can help answer food safety questions and concerns.
Hotline: 877-643-9882.

Garden or Yard Question?

Visit the Gardening in Michigan website: www.migarden.msu.edu. View tip sheets on smart soils and other smart gardening topics or call **MSU Extension's toll-free Hotline: 1-888-678-3464**

Join us on Social Media

- ◆ MSU Extension District 10
 - ◆ Tuscola County 4-H
 - ◆ Family Nutrition Program
 - ◆ Thumb Ag Research & Education (TARE)
 - ◆ Think Food Safety
-   @MSU Extension

Ask Extension

Ask Extension offers one-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts and Extension Master Gardener volunteers on topics such as **lawns, gardening, agriculture, food safety, food preservation, natural resources, community development, youth programming** and more!

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>