

Northern Michigan FruitNet 2014

Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center

Weekly Update

March 12, 2014

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3/14 **Managing Solitary Bees for Pollination Workshop**
NWMHRC

3/17 **Conference for Small, Emerging Cooperatives**
NWMHRC

3/18 **Labor Meeting**
NWMHRC

3/19 **Farm Safety**
Wexford Co. MSU Extension Office
Cadillac

3/20-21 **Advances In Berry Production Workshop**
Guelph, Ontario

4/10 **IPM Fruit Tree Kick-off**
NWMHRC

4/10 **Tractor Safety Class #1**
Leelanau Co. Government Center's Community Room

4/11 **MDARD Specialty Crop Grant Deadline**

4/12 **Healthy Forests – Caring for our Trees**
GT Conservation District

4/17 **Tractor Safety Class #2**
NWMHRC

4/22 **Responding to an S.O.S. from the Commercial Bee Industry – Webinar**

4/24 **Tractor Safety Class #3**
NWMHRC

5/1 **Tractor Safety Class #4**
NWMHRC

5/3 **Tractor Safety Test**
NWMHRC

WORKSHOP ON MANAGING SOLITARY BEES FOR POLLINATION TO BE HELD AT MSU'S NWMHRC

On Friday, **March 14, 2014**, we will host Dr. Theresa Pitts-Singer from the USDA's Logan Bee Lab to hold an intensive workshop on pollination of tree crops using *Osmia* bees. Dr. Pitts-Singer has experience with many aspects of pollination, particularly in managing alternative pollinators, with a primary focus on *Osmia*, which includes the blue orchard bee and the Japanese horn-faced bee. Many growers in northwest Michigan have been using the horn-faced bee for pollinating cherries, and Dr. Pitts-Singer has worked extensively with the blue orchard bee in almonds and stone fruit in the west. She will be here to talk about best management practices, propagating the colony, and using these pollinators successfully in orchards. Dr. Pitts-Singer is part of a large USDA-SCRI funded pollination project, so she will be able to address many questions regarding the importance of pollination in cropping systems. In addition, Dr. Rufus Isaacs will be in attendance and will describe how the project aims to develop integrated crop pollination tactics for growers.

This meeting will begin with a formal presentation, and will be followed by informal, round table discussions and hands-on demonstrations of the bees in their winter stage. We invite interested growers, NRCS employees, crop consultants, conservation groups, and all others to attend this informative session.

We will meet at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center on March 14 at 9:00 a.m., and the session will end by noon. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jackie Baase at 231-946-1510. There will be *no charge* for this event, as it is supported by the Michigan SARE program, and by the integrated Crop Pollination project.

THE MICHIGAN SMALL COOPERATIVE CONFERENCE – 2014

Date: March 17, 2014

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Location: Traverse City - Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center
Contact: Tom Kalchik: 517-432-8751 or kalchikt@msu.edu

The Michigan Small Cooperative Conference is for directors and members of small and recently organized cooperatives and people who are contemplating starting a cooperative or other group organization. We will provide information about basic cooperative operation including types of cooperatives; the role of directors, managers, and members, and basics for starting and sustaining a cooperative. We will allow plenty of time for networking and input from the participants into issues and opportunities for cooperatives in Michigan.

The Conference will be at three separate locations. **Please register for one session in the location that is most convenient for you.**

- March 17 at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center ([click here](#) for map and directions)
- March 18 at Cabela's in Dundee, Michigan ([click here](#) for map and directions)
- March 19 at the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center ([click here](#) for map and directions)

Registration at each site will be at 8:30 AM. The Conference will convene at 9:00 AM with lunch at noon as part of the program. Morning and afternoon breaks will also be included. Below is the tentative agenda (click on the registration page link).

There is no registration fee thanks to strong support from our sponsors: CoBank, Michigan State University Product Center, Mid America Cooperative Council, and various support organizations.

Please register by **March 10** to allow us to adequately plan for the Conference.

Visit [The Michigan Small Cooperative Conference 2014 registration page](#) for more information.

MARCH LABOR MEETING PLANNED

"Labor has become an increasingly pressing problem for growers across Michigan. Too often, we have left crops in the field or orchard due to a shortage of workers. This meeting will help address some of the current challenges growers are facing as well as solutions on how we can better retain quality workers on the farm. We will bring in experts from the following organizations to help answer important questions or concerns about labor issues: Michigan Farm Bureau, the Telamon Corporation, ICE, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture, Office of Migrant Affairs and Michigan State University Extension. The NW meeting will discuss the H2A program and how it can be used on the farm, and we will host a panel of growers that have had recent experiences with on-farm audits and their associated paperwork: 'how do we get it all done and still farm?'. The program will end with a talk on how good communication can improve worker retention on the farm.

The meeting will be held at the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center on **March 18, 2014** from 9:00 a.m.- 4:15 p.m. The cost of this meeting is \$25 payable at the door and includes lunch and breaks. If you are interested in attending this important meeting, please contact Jackie Baase at 231-946-1510 **before March 14th**. We hope to see many of you there!"

MSUE Labor Meeting

Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center

March 18, 2014

- 9:00-9:45 **H2A—Is it Working? Can This Program Work for Multiple Farms?**
Craig Anderson, Michigan Farm Bureau
- 9:45-10:00 **Grower Perspective on How H2A Has Worked on the Farm**
Mark Miezio, Cherry Bay Orchards
- 10:00-10:15 **Q and A About the H2A Program: With M. Miezio and C. Anderson**
- 10:15-10:45 **Michigan’s Farmworker Families: Healthy Families, Cultivating Hope**
Audra Fuentes, Office of Migrant Affairs, MI Dept. of Human Services
- 10:45-11:00 BREAK
- 11:00-11:45 **How Can Growers Better Support the Migrant Community?**
Carla Wojtal, Telamon Corporation
Kevin Benson, Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan
- 11:45-12:20 **What is Happening on the National Front in Immigration Reform?**
Ryan Findlay, Michigan Farm Bureau
- 12:20-1:00 **LUNCH**
- 1:00-1:45 **I-9 Update and IMAGE Presentation**
Blair Babcock & Cory Howe, Agents, ICE, Homeland Security Investigations
- 1:45-2:30 **I Need Migrant Housing, Where Do I Start? What are the BMP’s For the Housing I Have?**
Ginger Bardenhagen, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture
- 2:30-3:45 **Grower Panel on Paperwork: How to Get it all Done When Your Farm has to Follow All the ‘audit-potential’ Regulations?**

TBD

3:45-4:15 **Communicating to Retain Good Workers on the Farm**
Barb Dartt, GROW, The Family Business Advisors

2014 AGRICULTURE LABOR AND FARM SAFETY MEETINGS

Three upcoming Agriculture Labor and Farm Safety Meetings will be held in Bad Axe, Shepherd and Cadillac.

Posted on **February 28, 2014, MSUE News**, by [Stan Moore](#), Michigan State University Extension

Rules, regulations and record keeping requirements are continually being updated in the agriculture labor area. [Michigan State University Extension](#) has partnered with several State, Federal, and local partners to bring a series of [agriculture labor](#) meetings to Michigan. A total of eight meetings are being held across the State. Three of these meetings are being held in Bad Axe (March 12), Shepherd (March 13), and Cadillac (March 19) and are can be [registered for online](#). A brochure for each program is also available at the registration site. The registration fee for each of these three programs is \$35 per person and includes lunch.

Each of the programs will have refreshments available at 8:30 a.m. with the program starting promptly at 9:00 a.m. The morning session will include guest speakers from ICE (Homeland Security Investigations), State of Michigan, MSU Extension, MSU and Farm Bureau. Topics will include I-9 Updates and Image, Workforce Development Agency and Migrant Resource Council Services, Recruiting and Retaining Labor, Ag Labor Law Updates, Employee Handbooks, and How the Affordable Care Act Effects Agriculture. After lunch, there will be a Farm Safety session by Farm Bureau and MSU. There will be three RUP credits available to those participating in the afternoon session. The program will adjourn at 4 p.m.

Managing your workforce and complying with labor laws requires you to keep up to date on many fronts. Keeping yourself and your workforce safe will impact productivity, profitability, and most importantly save lives. Plan to attend one of these meetings to improve this area of your farm business management.

Other MSUE labor programs offered in Michigan this year include meetings in [Adrian](#) (March 14) and Traverse City (March 18). To register for the Adrian program go to <http://events.anr.msu.edu/SEAgLabor>. To register for the TC program call the NW Horticulture Research Station at 231-946-1510. Program agendas are unique to these two locations based on local grower input.

For information on any of these programs contact me at moorest@msu.edu .

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

WINTER WEATHER UPDATE FOR 2013-14

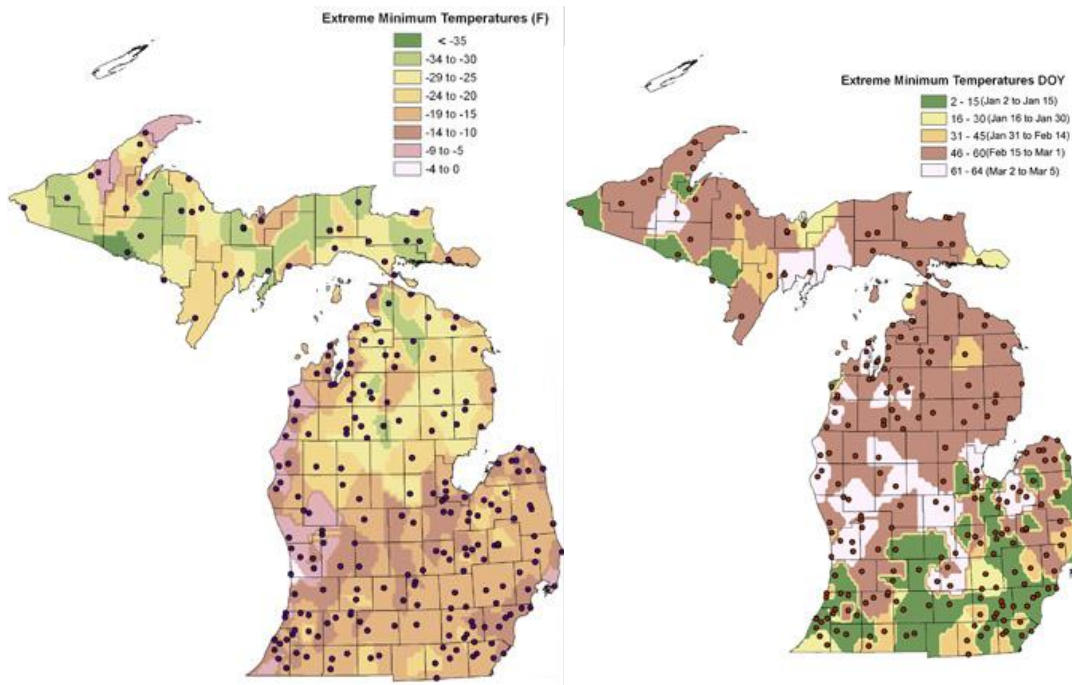
While milder weather and some moderation are expected in the short term, medium and longer lead forecast guidance suggests a general continuation of colder than normal temperatures.

Posted on **March 7, 2014**, **MSUE News**, by **Jeff Andresen**, and Aaron Pollyea, Michigan State University Extension, Department of Geography

A deep upper air troughing pattern persisted across eastern North America during late February 2014 into early March, leading to a continuation of severe winter conditions across Michigan and the Great Lakes region. One of the Arctic-origin air masses associated with the pattern led to extreme cold conditions on March 2 and 3, with minimum temperatures falling to the -15 to -30 degree Fahrenheit range, which were among the coldest readings observed so far this winter and, according to [Michigan State University Extension](#) experts, may have resulted in cold injury to overwintering vegetation above the snowline.

The cold weather has resulted in the most extensive ice cover on the Great Lakes since the winter of 1978-1979. As of March 7, 92.2 percent of the combined lake surfaces were covered, including almost complete coverage on Lakes Erie, Huron and Superior, and only a small area of open water left on Lake Michigan. Precipitation totals during recent weeks have fallen back to normal or below normal levels over most of the state, the result of mostly dry northerly or northwesterly low level wind flow (i.e., lack of Gulf of Mexico-origin moisture) and to the lack of lake effect snowfall.

An updated map of extreme minimum temperatures so far at over 230 sites across the state through March 5 of the current winter season is given in Map 1. The extremes range from -35 F or less in the western Upper Peninsula to -2 F at the airport in Holland, Mich. The second map (Map 2) depicts the timing of the extreme event as a calendar day.



Maps 1-2. (Left map) Extreme minimum temperatures (F) observed across Michigan on Nov. 1, 2013, through March 5, 2014, and (right map) the approximate dates they occurred.

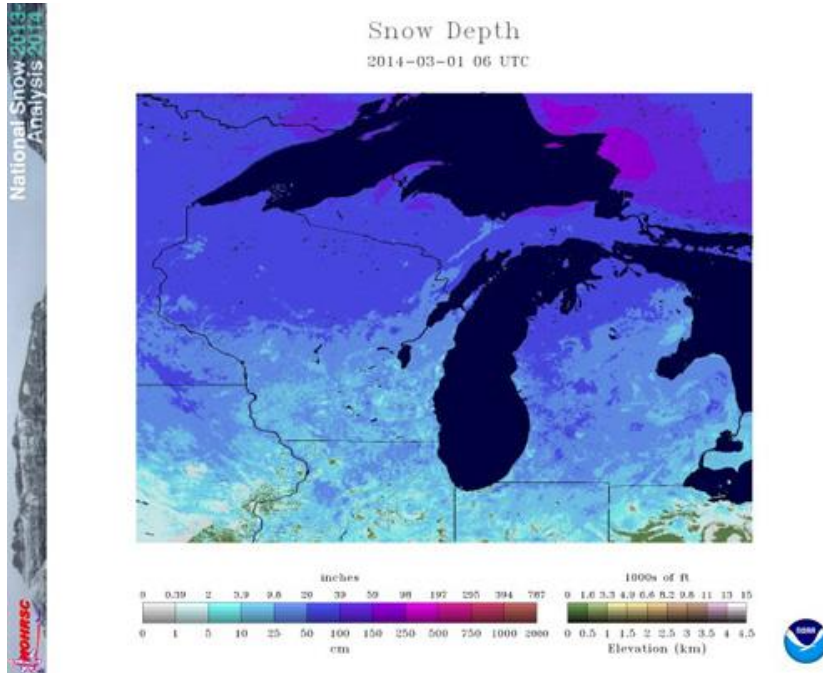
Virtually all of the extremes occurred in five major Arctic-airmass “events” in the region:

1. Jan. 3-8 (note that this was an extremely unusual event accompanied by strong winds; it is very rare to experience these types of temperatures in Michigan with wind)
2. Jan. 27-29
3. Feb. 11-12
4. Feb. 27-28
5. March 2-3 (this event was also extremely unusual given the magnitude of the temperatures so late in the winter season)

Some spatial patterns are evident. Many of these values across southern sections of the state occurred during the first event, in the third event across the north, and in the most recent event across central sections. During the first event in early January, the cold was accompanied by strong west to southwesterly winds. The southwesterly winds allowed some of the frigid air to move into extreme southern and southeastern sections of the state without passing across the still relatively open water surfaces of the lakes, resulting in colder temperatures across those areas (resulting in the pattern across southern Lower Michigan in Map 2).

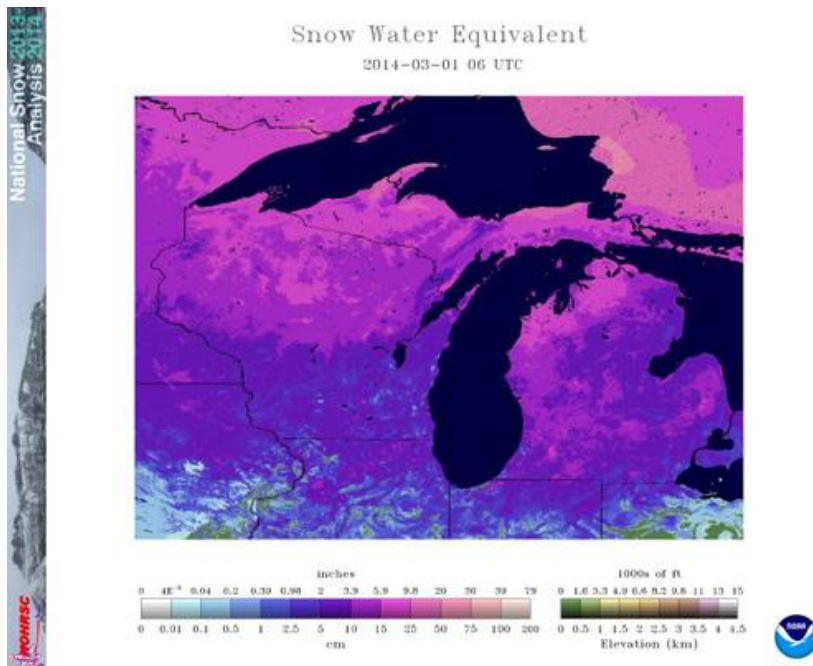
For those interested in how this winter is shaping up relative to our historical record, preliminary climate data suggest that statewide mean temperatures for the December through February 2013-2014 period will average out at about 15 F or about 6.5 F below normal, which would put the season into the books among the five coldest on record. The current record for coldest December through February mean temperature is 13.5 F or 8 F below normal, which occurred during the winter of 1903-1904. In more recent times, the closest parallel is likely the winter of 1976-1977, which was 14.8 F on average and ranks third coldest on record.

Snowfall this year so far has also been heavier than normal in most areas, ranging from about 40 inches in some central and southern sections to more than 250 inches in the Upper Peninsula's lake effect snow belts. The prolonged cold temperatures have allowed the development of an unusually deep snow pack continuing across the state, with depths at the beginning of March ranging from about 4 inches at a few locations in the eastern Lower Peninsula to more than 4 feet across snowbelt areas of Upper Michigan (Map 3).



Map 3. Estimated snow cover in inches across Michigan on March 1, 2014. Figure courtesy of [National Weather Service National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center](#).

A related item of note is the extremely high levels of snow water equivalent in the snow pack (Map 4). Current values range from about 2 inches in the southeast corner of the state to 3-6 inches across much of Lower Michigan to 6-10 inches or more in lake effect snowbelt areas of northwest Lower and northern Upper Michigan. For some areas, like central and southern Lower Michigan, these values are near records. If we were to experience a rapid warm-up in the next few weeks, flooding could be a major problem; nothing like this is apparent in the forecast guidance at this point.



Map 4. Estimated snow water equivalent in inches across Michigan on March 1, 2014. Figure courtesy of [National Weather Service National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center](#).

For much of this winter season, the medium range forecast guidance, which is very helpful in detecting general weather trends and pattern changes one to two weeks or more in advance, has called for a general continuation of the upper air pattern mentioned above. That trend is generally still in place, although latest medium range guidance does suggest some deamplification of the jet stream pattern across North America that should result in at least some occasional moderation of temperatures to more normal levels during the next week or two.

Still, latest medium range forecast guidance in the 6-10 and 8-14 day outlooks calls for a continuation of below normal mean temperatures state and region-wide for March 10-14 and March 16-20. Precipitation for the 6-10 daytime frame is forecast to increase to above normal levels, while below normal totals are expected in the 8-14 day period; my personal expectation with this pattern is for continued below normal precipitation totals. The [NOAA](#) three month March-May outlook for Michigan also calls for below normal mean temperatures and for the equal odds scenario for precipitation.

Given these outlooks and so much ice and snow still present in the region, the likelihood of an earlier than normal start of the upcoming growing season is declining rapidly.

Dr. Andresen's work is funded in part by [MSU's AgBioResearch](#).

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

4-H TRACTOR SAFETY PROGRAM BEGINS IN APRIL

MSU Extension is once again hosting tractor safety training for fourteen and fifteen-year-old youth. Youth must be 14 by June 1st, 2014. Sixteen to nineteen-year-old youth are also encouraged to participate, but priority will be given to 14-15 year-olds. Classes will be held on Thursdays beginning **April 10** and ending **May 1** and will be held at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Center from 6:00-9:00 p.m., except for the first class to be held at the Leelanau County Government Center's Community Room. To become certified, participants must attend all five sessions, pass a written, and a tractor driving test, which will be held Saturday, May 3, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Cost is \$75 per person and includes: classes, handouts and manual. Some scholarships are available if finances are an issue.

To register, call the Leelanau County MSU Extension office at 231-256-9888 for a registration and medical form or go to www.msue.edu/leelanau. Registration deadline is **April 4**. Checks should be made payable to *4-H Youth Association*.

ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS STILL AVAILABLE

MSU Extension's 2014 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series is getting good participation from Michigan, several other states, Ontario and even Australia.

Posted on **March 5, 2014, MSUE News**, by [Jim Isleib](#), Michigan State University Extension

The 2014 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series is a component of [Michigan State University Extension](#)'s educational outreach to beginning farmers across the state. The program involves several MSU Extension educators and campus specialists in various departments within the [College of Agriculture and Natural Resources](#). The online training effort started with three general webinars in winter 2012 organized and conducted by MSU Extension staff in the Upper Peninsula. The programs were meant to provide some basic information for people considering new agricultural enterprises. In 2013, the program expanded to five webinars on more specific topics with 55 participants enrolled in one or more webinars. The decision was made by interested Extension educators to expand the program to include more marketing information and identify new production topics for beginners.

Webinars already held in 2014 included:

- Getting started with soil improvement on your farm (47 registered)
- Getting started with selling to restaurants (18 registered)
- Getting started with organic vegetable pest control (28 registered)
- Getting started with selling to schools and hospitals (16 registered)
- Getting started with selling at farmers markets (31 registered)
- Getting started with hops (151 registered)

These six webinars have attracted a total audience of 244 people who registered and paid (\$10 each) for one or more programs. Recordings were made available to those registrants who were not able to attend the “live” webinar programs. These recordings will be made available online later this year. The recorded webinar programs from 2012 and 2013 are currently available. You can find them at the MSU Extension article “[Dependable information for beginning farmers – where can it be found?](#)”

While Internet-based educational programs can never replace the hands-on, face-to-face relationship between Extension educators and producers, it certainly can be a productive component in an overall educational program. Many people new to MSU Extension have had their first contact through these webinars. The webinar series organized in winter 2014 are meant to be an open-ended program – that is, educators can use the webinar series structure for additional online programs at any time.

To complete the initial set of 11 webinars, five more are scheduled as follows:

- [Getting started with organic field crops](#), Wednesday, March 12
- Getting started with expanding your vegetable production, Wednesday, March 19. (Check for registration link at the [MSU Extension Events page](#) or contact me at isleibj@anr.msu.edu and I’ll get it to you before the program.)
- [Getting started with basic farm business records](#), Monday, March 24
- [Getting started with hoopouses](#), Wednesday, April 2
- Getting started with plasticulture in vegetable production, Wednesday, October 22. (Check for registration link at the [MSU Extension Events page](#) or contact me at isleibj@anr.msu.edu and I’ll contact you with the registration information prior to the program.)

If you have questions about the MSU Extension 2014 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series, please contact Jim Isleib at isleibj@anr.msu.edu or 906-387-2530.

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

NRCS WANTS TO HELP FRUIT GROWERS HELP HONEY BEES BY PLANTING MORE FLOWERS

Michigan farmers can apply for funds to help honey bees through the USDA NRCS EQIP Program.

Posted on **February 28, 2014**, **MSUE News**, by [Julianna Wilson](#), Michigan State University Extension, Department of Entomology



Honey bee. Photo credit: Julianna Wilson, MSU

Michigan is one of five states in which farmers have been invited to participate in a new [USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) program to improve pollinator health. Close to \$3 million has been made available through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) to promote practices that will provide honey bees with additional pollen and nectar.

Michigan, along with Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, was selected because 65 percent of all managed hives in the United States are brought to the region between June and September to build up hive strength before the next winter. This is a critical period of time when bees are gathering pollen and nectar from flowers across a broad landscape. Providing floral resources for honey bees through this program will also benefit other pollinators, provide habitat for other wildlife, reduce soil erosion and even increase soil health.

Growers that rely on honey bees for crop pollination each year know how important honey bees are and should seriously consider applying to this program to help build stronger Michigan colonies. Lack of floral resources leading into a long, cold winter can mean severe colony losses. This winter has been exceptionally cold and the [Michigan Beekeepers Association](#) is already expecting losses of more than 50 percent of their members' colonies. This NRCS EQIP program is one way that farmers can help.

The deadline to apply for these funds is only a few weeks away. **Applications are due March 21, 2014.** To apply for this program, visit your [local NRCS Service Center](#). For more information, read "[Agriculture Secretary announces \\$3 million](#)" to improve pollinator health.

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

RESPONDING TO AN S.O.S. FROM THE COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY

Date: April 22, 2014

Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Webinar

Contact: Rosa Soliz, soliz@msu.edu

Webinar URL: <http://connect.msu.edu/newtech>

Mala Spivak (University of Minnesota) - Given the chronic health problems facing honey bees and the increasing demand for pollination services from almond, blueberry, cranberry, apple, vine crops and many other growers, commercial beekeepers and breeders have requested assistance in maintaining healthy colonies. To this end, we began a novel "Bee Tech Transfer Team" program through the Bee Informed Partnership, a 5-year grant funded by USDA-NIFA. These teams consist of independent beekeepers that provide on-the-ground services to commercial beekeepers to assess and record colony health information; survey beekeepers about management; test for bee diseases and parasites and assist in breeding bees that are more resistant to diseases and parasites.

There is demand for this program nationwide and we are exploring ways to ensure that the Tech Team services are economically sustainable after the funding ends in 2016. As bees are directly or indirectly responsible for 35% of our diet through their pollination services, it is critical to increase effort to keep bees healthy and to provide hands-on assistance to the beleaguered beekeeping industry throughout the U.S. Marla Spivak is a MacArthur Fellow and McKnight Distinguished Professor in Entomology at the University of Minnesota. She has bred a line of honey bees, the Minnesota Hygienic line, to defend themselves against diseases and parasitic mites. Current studies include the benefits of propolis to honey bees, and the effects of agricultural landscapes and pesticides on honey bee and native bee health.

RecycleSmart

Grand Traverse County
Resource Recovery
Department

2650 LaFranier Road
Traverse City
Michigan 49686

www.RecycleSmart.info
RecycleSmart Hotline 941.5555



Newsworthy!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: March 5, 2014

Contact: Kim Elliott, Grand Traverse County--Resource Recovery Marketing/Education Specialist
231.941.5555, kelliott@grandtraverse.org

Spring Household Hazardous Waste & Pesticide Collection

Traverse City, Mich

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY DEPARTMENT (RecycleSmart) will conduct the spring Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) & Pesticide collection on Thursday, March 27, from 1:00 to 6:45 pm.

The *online scheduling* system is a convenient and the recommended tool to secure an appointment. An appointment is required and can be made at www.RecycleSmart.info or by calling the RecycleSmart Hotline at 941.5555.

This service is provided to Grand Traverse County residents at no cost, (up to 150 lbs., \$1.30 lb. thereafter). Accepted material includes cleaning products, pesticides, mercury, moth balls, motor oil, pool chemicals, oil based paint, latex paint, CFL bulbs and more...

Latex paint is now accepted.

For more information visit www.RecycleSmart.info or call the RecycleSmart Hotline at 941.5555

###

MSU Extension programs and material 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. Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Insect and disease predictive information is available at:

<http://enviroweather.msu.edu/homeMap.php>

This issue and past issues of the weekly FruitNet report are posted on our website

<http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/nwmihort/faxnet.htm>

60 Hour Forecast

<http://www.agweather.geo.msu.edu/agwx/forecasts/fcst.asp?fileid=fous46ktvc>

Information on cherries is available at the new cherry website:

<http://www.cherries.msu.edu/>

Fruit CAT Alert Reports has moved to MSU News

<http://news.msue.msu.edu>