

Michigan State University Extension Branch County Annual Report - 2012

Agricultural Update

Branch County Farmer's Day

The 46th annual Farmers Day was held on Monday February 18, at the Branch County Area Careers Center in Coldwater. Twelve educational sessions were held:

What's new in Crop Insurance: Roger Betz, MSUE Educator.

Just because it's sealed doesn't mean it's safe: Rita Klavinski, MSUE Educator.

On Farm Food Safety for Produce Growers: Phil Tocco, MSUE Educator.

Corn Production & Marketing Update: Dr. Jim Hilker, MSUE Specialist & Bruce MacKellar, MSUE Educator

Exploring 4-H: Connie Lange, MSUE Educator

Pork Quality Assurance: Megan Sprague, Michigan Pork Producers Association

Farm Business Succession – "Taking Over" the Family Farm: Roger Betz, MSUE Educator

Farm Accident Consideration: Orval Huff, Retired Fireman/EMT

Thrifty Tips for Your Food Fund: Suzanne Pish, Sarah Johnson & Valerie Albright, MSUE Educators

Soybean Production & Marketing Update: Dr. Jim Hilker and Bruce Mackellar, MSU Extension

Home Greenhouses & Raised Gardens: Kent Neitzert's Greenhouse

Want to take a livestock project to the fair - Half hour sessions throughout the day presenting information on how to start eight livestock projects: Connie Lange, MSUE, and several 4-H volunteers.

Over 1,000 people attended this day long educational and networking opportunity.

Other agricultural programs attended by Branch County residents or held in Branch County include:

MSU Resources for Hops & Chestnuts

Genetics management in dairy herds

Reducing nutrient & pesticide runoff

Reduction of Antibiotic residues in meat and milk

Upland vegetable management

Pork management workshop

Cereal grains management

Forage management

Mission

Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

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Branch County has 1,162 4-H members and 304 4-H leaders in 48 clubs. There are many other learning opportunities for 4-H youth including county, state, national and international programs.

Connie Lange

Extension 4-H Educator

- » **4-H Program** — Branch County enrolled 1,162 4-H members between the ages of 5-19 and 304 adult volunteers in 48 clubs. In 2012, 22 new adult volunteers completed the 6 step process to become a 4-H volunteers consisting of application, code of conduct, criminal history check, reference check, interview and orientation. 260 leader files were updated with current criminal history checks and CSC checks.
- » **Take The Lead**— Designed by Branch County 4-H for all middle school youth. In 2012 7 senior high school student mentors and 3 adults taught the 4 day long program to 19 participants. The course included many hands-on activities followed by discussion and processing in the four leadership areas of communication, challenge, character and community which were identified by a focus group during design meetings held in 2009-2011 with Central Michigan University Leadership Program Representative, Brian Pridgeon.
- » **Life Skills**—4-H continues to emphasize the “learn by doing” model of Do, Apply, Reflect. A Life skills session was held for 38 Branch County 4-H Leaders. Evaluation responses included a notable increase (81.8%) reporting that they strongly agree that they were able to identify the connection between 4-H and life skills development and 100% of leaders will intentionally apply life skills into 4-H work with youth. *Life skills model pictured below.*
- » **4-H Volunteer Advisory Groups**—Branch County 4-H has a network of 4-H volunteer advisory groups that help conduct the program. 4-H Leaders’ Council, 4-H Foundation, 4-H Boosters’, 4-H Horse Leaders’ along with smaller developmental committees such as the Dairy Organization, small animal group, and several project committees work to bring new opportunities to Branch County youth. 4-H groups work closely with Jr. Livestock and Fair Boards.
- » **National and State Government Programs**—Each year Branch County 4-H youth attend the Citizenship Washington Focus Program in Washington DC and the Capitol Experience Program in Lansing with other 4-H members statewide. Participants meet with legislators, attend hearings, and learn how they can impact the legislative process.
- » **4-H Exploration Days**—In 2013, 45 Branch County youth and 10 adults spent 3 days on campus along with 2,500 other 11-18 year old participants. They navigated MSU’s campus to attend classes in college classrooms and lived in the college dorms. 2 Branch County youth were selected to receive a \$2,000.00 MSU pre college scholarship as a result of their high school record and participation in this program.

Young People in 4-H are Committed to Improving Their Communities

The 4-H Exchange Club Food Baskets for Veterans was one of 14 community service projects completed by 4-H clubs in 2012.

A Tuft University Study indicates that grade 11 4-H youth are 3.3 times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H. See the full study at <http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/researchPositive4H.htm>



Suzanne Pish, M.A., CFLE

Extension Educator

- **RELAX-Alternatives to Anger** (series and one-time presentations [OTP])

In 2012, there was a need in District 13 for the RELAX-Alternatives to Anger series.

Thirteen series were provided for 251 participants. Two **Nurturing Your Child's Body and Mind** series were completed. One series in Branch County with Sarah Johnson and one in St. Joseph County with Diana Fair, both teaching the Eating Right is Basic (ERIB) Nutrition Series. The Michigan Youth Challenge Academy in Calhoun County and received the RELAX series for 97 adult participants. The AmeriCorps Association wanted the **RELAX** training in Van Buren County. Child Care Resources requested RELAX in Kalamazoo County to over 20 people. Branch County was served through series and OTPs at various conferences along with SMILE program. Over the last year the SMILE program made the biggest impact.

In September 2012, at the NEAFC Conference, the Social Emotional work group was involved in giving a presentation to colleagues from all over the United State on how we created this curriculum, how to instruct it and the results of its success. Michigan State University is currently selling the RELAX curriculum to educators across the globe.

- **Nutrition and Physical Activity** (one-time presentations [OTP] and POPS-Growing Healthy Project):

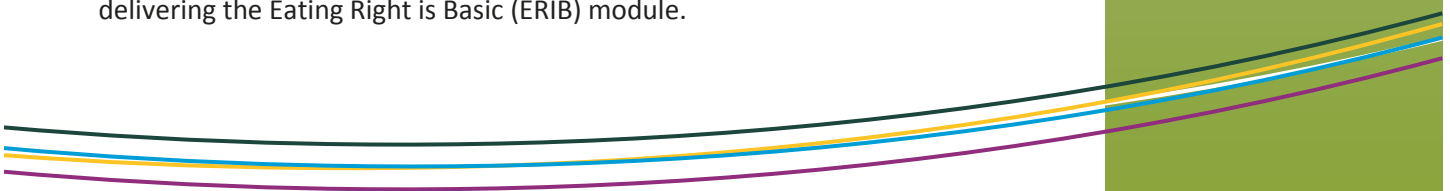
My time in NPA is 30% with 10% SNAP-ED and 10% Growing Healthy Project and 10% non-specific. With this split being such a little amount of time in each project I feel I did a really great job of meeting the needs in each category. In my the 30% time I had 334 adults go through a one-time presentation related to the MyPlate. I had 5 adults go through a series through the POPS-Growing Healthy Series the first time and 11 Adults that graduate in December 2012. I also had 32 children graduate through the POPS child series and 47 children go through one-time presentations. During the "SNAP-ED" crisis I took serious getting one-time presentations to help our district reach its goals.

- **Community-Based Nurturing Parenting Series:**

At the beginning of 2012 4 series and 40 participants were planned by the end of 2012 , 6 series and 236 participants were reported. A OPT to the Talamon Head Start training in Van Buren County using the Nurturing Parenting Child Development section to 184 people. Child Care Resources also partnered with MSUE to deliver one-time presentations to Branch and Barry County using the Brain Development session. Two series were delivered n Branch County using the Nurturing Your Child's Body and Mind Model with colleague Sarah Johnson delivering the Eating Right is Basic (ERIB) module.

"Over the last year the SMILE program made the biggest impact."

— Suzanne Pish



MSU Extension programming promotes healthy lifestyles and educates Michigan residents.

Sarah Johnson

Extension Educator, Community Coach

- » **Through community-based approaches, Michigan State University Extension delivers high-quality and affordable education to serve the needs of children, youth, families and communities in urban, rural and suburban areas. MSU Extension programming promotes healthy lifestyles and educates Michigan residents, allowing each individual to acquire the skills to take control and manage his or her personal health, consume an affordable and nutritious diet, improve self, family and community relationships, reduce the spread of disease and to be a leader in the food industry.**
- » **Show Me Nutrition** — Show Me Nutrition educates youth with age appropriate content on nutrition, food safety, physical activity, media influence and body image. Participants will receive handouts and content as well as engage in activities to learn how to have a healthy lifestyle. Series were offered at Bronson Community Schools grades K-4 and Friends Day Camp to a total of 521 youth.
- » **Eating Right is Basic (ERIB) and Eat Smart, Live Strong (ESLS)**— Participants in ERIB learn to stretch food dollars, food safety, food preservation and maintaining a healthy weight. The ESLS nutrition education program for older Americans. Seniors focus on eating fruits and vegetables, increasing physical activity and goal setting for a healthy lifestyle. Series in these curriculums reached 81 adults and seniors.
- » **One Time Presentations (OTP)** — One lesson from approved Michigan State University Extension curriculum can be used to educate participants. OTP reached 186 adults and 157 youth.
- » **Communities Preventing Childhood Obesity**— "Mobilizing Rural Low-Income Communities to Assess and Improve the Ecological Environment to Prevent Childhood Obesity" a USDA funded AFRI grant. Community coaches, county Extension Educators, and others involved in the grant have access to various curricula and other materials and resources to help reduce obesity in four year olds. MSU Extension has partnered with Branch County Great Start Collaborative on this grant.

Valerie Albright

SNAP Ed Program Instructor

• **Cooking Matters and MI Works Jet Program**

Cooking Matters Signature Courses teach family members skills that will last a lifetime and more as they share them with relatives and friends. When families practice what they've learned during the six-week course—how to plan, purchase, and prepare healthy, tasty, and affordable foods at home—they are winning the fight against childhood hunger and protecting themselves from the destructive [consequences of poor child nutrition](#). Highlights of Cooking Matters' include: 89% of Cooking Matters for Adults graduates improved their cooking skills, which means they're better equipped to make healthy meals for their families at home. 97% of kids who graduate from Cooking Matters for Families enjoyed cooking alongside their parents during class, an important element in continuing to prepare and eat healthy meals together as a family. After graduating from Cooking Matters for Teens, 67% of teens are eating more fruits and 50% are eating more vegetables. We had 28 participants involved in Cooking Matters in 2012.

Our Cooking Matters Class in February 2013 had twelve Head Start Mothers for a seven weeks course. The class was very motivated and they loved the many new foods and recipes they were experiencing. One of the mothers said that she had made our Turkey Chili with Vegetables every week because her child liked it so much. She was so happy to find something that he really liked that was healthy for him. Eating the recipes in class, then going home and making the recipe helps to improve confidence in the kitchen, and this encourages the participant to try new foods and recipe with their families. That's when "Cooking Matters"! We know Cooking Matters works from the stories of change we hear from participants – and from the hard data we gather from our course leaders. We use this data to assess our impact, share what's working best, and expand and improve our programs.

• **MI Works JET (Job, Education, and Training) Program**

The JET program consists of activities designed to help families move toward financial independence. It is designed to fulfill the requirements of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) law. MSU Extension provides classes to the participants in the JET program. In 2012, 50 participants attended a week long series of classes for improving food choices and improving physical activity in their lifestyles.

“I enjoyed the nutrition courses, I have learned a healthier way to shop, prepare, eat food. “

Participant from the April 2012 MI Jet Program



Cooking Matters participants learning to make healthier food choices at a grocery shopping