

On-line programs for beginning farmers show impact, new series offered.

Results of the MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series include new farm businesses and jobs.

Jim Isleib, Michigan State University Extension

New farm businesses provide jobs, income and increased economic and social stability, and increased food security to rural and other communities. Providing basic, practical information to people interested in, or already engaging in, new farm enterprises helps these small business develop sound production and marketing plans. The MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series helps to make this happen, reaching 664 people since 2012.

An evaluation of the series of 24 webinars offering during January – May, 2016 showed that the series was perceived as valuable by respondents, with strong indication of knowledge increase. Respondents indicated that the series will have impact on the land they manage and on several key farming decisions and activities. Respondents indicated that the series contributed to the creation of ten new jobs.

A new series of 9 beginning farmer webinars is planned for January – May, 2017. Presenters include Michigan State University Extension educators and others. The following evening webinars will provide valuable start-up information on general and more specific farming topics, including:

“Getting started with....”

Jan 30, Small vegetable farm systems

Feb 13, Hoophouse management

Feb 27, Maple syrup

Mar 13, Fencing and watering systems for livestock

Mar 27, Blueberries

Apr 3, Crop nutrient management

Apr 10, Aquaculture (fish farming)

Apr 24, Planning and operating a mixed fruit orchard

May 8, Producing and selling eggs

A fee of \$10 per webinar is required, or you can register for the entire series at ½ price for \$45. Webinar recordings will be provided to all registered participants. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your own home or office. Registration, a brochure containing details on each individual program, and online or mailed payment options can be found at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/BegFrmWeb2017/>. You may register for all or some of the courses at any time, even if the session has already taken place. In that case, you will get a link to the recorded program.

Each program begins at 7 p.m. Eastern Time and will last up to two hours. A high-speed internet connection is required. You will receive webinar connection information after you register.

An archive of fifty-eight 2012 – 2016 MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series programs on a wide variety of topics can be accessed free of charge at http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/beginning_farmer_webinar_series.

Contact the Alger County MSU Extension office at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu for more information.