



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

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Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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## Farm Business Incubator — growing farmers in the central Upper Peninsula

### MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center is now accepting applications for their Farm Business Incubator Program.

If you plan to start a small farm business, but want more experience before taking the leap, perhaps the [Farm Business Incubator program](#) (FBI) at the Michigan State University Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center is for you! The FBI is a launching point for beginning farmers interested in starting their own business.

This program lowers barriers to entry for beginning farmers by providing access to organically managed land, hoop house space, farm equipment, tools, cold storage and wash/pack facilities in exchange for a small program fee and four hours of “sweat equity” each week to support the overall program. Affordable on-site housing is also available and program participants are encouraged to avail themselves of this opportunity to be close to their farm business. In addition, farm staff and Extension Educators can provide mentorship on business planning, marketing avenues, and farm management.

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan has long struggled with food security issues due to geographic isolation and a short growing season. In the era of grand challenges like COVID-19 and climate change, small farms and resilient local food systems are more essential than ever. The FBI program works to overcome these challenges by providing low-risk experience to the next generation of farmers who want to supply local, healthy food to the U.P. region.

In 2021, the program will host Joe and Kate of [Mighty Soil Farm](#) for a fourth season. Before applying to the program, Kate and Joe spent several years learning the ins and outs of farming in Michigan, New York and Vermont. They have grown during their time in the program from managing a quarter acre of mixed vegetables and working to develop their production systems, to a growing on a full acre and maintaining purchasing relationships with area restaurants, grocery stores, a CSA, and a focused presence at the area’s largest farmers market.

The program got its start in 2014 with support from the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, who together have created the [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative](#). The primary goal of the program is to support new farm businesses during their riskiest start-up years: testing business plans, honing products and branding, establishing accounts, building capital and fine-tuning their skills so that they can one day farm independently and provide food to U.P. Program participants have the opportunity to establish their farm business without making large capital investments, allowing beginning growers to identify and develop markets before taking on a large debt load. Since 2014, six farm businesses have participated in the program.

The MSU Farm Business Incubator program is currently accepting applications. Complete details about the program can be found at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uprc/farm-business-incubator>.

If you are interested in learning more about the [Farm Incubator Program](#), feel free to reach out to Allison Stawara at 906-439-5058 or [stawaraa@msu.edu](mailto:stawaraa@msu.edu). Stawara is Coordinator of The North Farm at the Michigan State University Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, Michigan.

For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>.

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## Farmers needed to help guide direction of future MSU Extension field crop programming

Phil Kaatz, Michigan State University Extension

**The MSU Extension field crops team is asking farmers for guidance by filling out a brief online needs assessment.**



Every three years, the [Michigan State University Extension](#) field crops team asks farmers and agribusiness professionals to help them chart the course for their programming efforts by participating in a needs assessment survey. The survey has historically been done regionally and held in person. However, in 2020, the field crops team is asking for farmers and agribusiness professionals to help them with an [online survey](#). The survey can be completed in usually less than 10 minutes. Thoughtful and insightful information may come from just one person's idea and input.

In years past, ideas generated from the needs assessment have been developed into programs. One example occurred during the last needs assessment meeting. Tech-savvy farmers shared

an idea for something different to be done online. They needed something that was available on a cell phone and recorded for later listening. That idea turned into the MSU Extension [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series](#) which is held every Thursday morning during the growing season. In 2020, the virtual breakfasts had 2,134 participants. Other hot topic areas such as soil health and cover crops, farm profitability or an emphasis on production risks may become the focal point of new programming based on responses from participants.

The ideas, interests and concerns of those involved with the field crops industry will be collected, summarized, and sorted to give direction to the entire MSU Field Crops Team for the next few years.

To encourage participation this year, participants have the option to be included in a drawing for a \$100 gas gift card. Three cards will be awarded to randomly selected people that complete the online questionnaire and 'opt-in' for the drawing.

To complete the online MSU Extension statewide field crops needs assessment survey, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2020FieldCropSurvey>. For more information, contact Jim Isleib at [isleibj@msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@msu.edu) or call at 906-387-2530.

This article was published by **Michigan State University Extension**. For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/newsletters>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/experts>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

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## Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference cancelled for 2021 – Look for on-line winter programs from MSU Extension

Jim Isleib, Upper Peninsula crop production educator

Due to the current restrictions on public gatherings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty about when restrictions will be relaxed, MSU Extension has decided to cancel the annual Agriculture for Tomorrow conference normally held at Bay College in March. We are hopeful that the program will resume in 2022.

Several work teams within MSU Extension are focusing on programs delivered over the internet. So far, these ones have been completed:

[MSU Extension 'Virtual Breakfast'](#) – Weekly ½ hour programs on Thursday mornings during the growing season. Include a brief presentation by an MSU professor or specialist and a 10-15 minute state-wide weather outlook. Recordings available at [https://www.canr.msu.edu/field\\_crops/virtual-breakfast/index](https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/virtual-breakfast/index)

[MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series](#) – Thirteen sessions held in Jan – April, 2020. Recordings of these sessions have been added to many others on the program webpage at [https://www.canr.msu.edu/beginning\\_farmer\\_webinar\\_series/index](https://www.canr.msu.edu/beginning_farmer_webinar_series/index)

[MSU Virtual Field Days](#) – several 'virtual field days' were organized and delivered on-line. Recordings of these programs are available at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/virtualfielddays/event-recordings>. Virtual field day topics include:

Grazing (best practices, MAEAP, planning, equipment, soil health, farm tour, myth-busting)  
Vegetable root crops (asparagus, asparagus beetle, carrots, nematodes, onion diseases, cabbage maggots)  
Vegetable trials (Bay Area vegetable trials,  
Corn  
Precision Livestock Farming (cattle, poultry, swine)  
Turfgrass (golf courses, athletic fields)  
Peaches  
Cover crops  
Migratory birds (secretive marsh birds, Corey Marsh, cavity nesting birds, Avian influenza)  
Pollinators  
Soybeans (planting time, insects, nematodes, weed control, diseases, soil fertility)  
Dry bean and Sugar Beet (cercospora and other diseases, sugar beet trials, dry bean varieties, N rates in sugar beets, dry bean fertility, dry bean quality, weed control)  
Viticulture (invasive grape insects, grape diseases, canopy management, herbicides, diseases)  
Manure  
Wheat (research and scouting report, roughstalk bluegrass in winter wheat, nutrient management, new varieties, yield contest, precision planting, regional crop reports, managing head scab)

*“What’s U.P. @ UPREC?” – Short (4-9 minute) videos on farm and research activities through 2020 at MSU’s Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, MI. Find the videos by googling “You Tube UPREC” or go to [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn5xv1lRZ\\_ieMSyxrT485lQ/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn5xv1lRZ_ieMSyxrT485lQ/videos)*

This winter, MSU Extension will offer a variety of new, on-line programs including:

The Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo – *A virtual conference for specialty crop growers December 8-10, 2020. Register at <https://glexpo.com/>*

Virtual Integrated Crop and Pest Management Update 2020 – *Designed for ag business, farmers welcome – registration now open at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/ICPM2020>*

The Michigan Brewer’s Guild and Great Lakes Hop and Barley Winter Conference – *A virtual conference for hop and barley producers, processors, and brewers January 12-14, 2021*

2021 MSU Extension IPM and Crop Management Meetings – *Regional on-line meetings, including a U.P./Northern MI meeting on January 15, 2021*

MSU Extension Field Crops Webinar Series – *weekly 1-hour crop related webinars offered in February – March, 2021*

Additional programs for livestock, vegetables, field crops and more are under development.

Several other on-line programs are planned, or have been offered, including the beginning grazing school, swine health champions and more. Look through the MSU Extension webpage at <https://canr.msu.edu/outreach/index> for updates.

Keep up with what's happening in UP agriculture year round by following these MSU Extension social media accounts:

- MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center  
<https://www.facebook.com/MSU.UPREC>
- The North Farm at UPREC  
<https://www.facebook.com/msunorthfarm>  
<https://www.instagram.com/msunorthfarm/?hl=en>
- MSU Extension Upper Peninsula Agriculture  
<https://www.facebook.com/MSUEUPAg>

## **Senator Stabenow Announces \$746,480 to Strengthen Local Food Economies in Southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula**

New grant funded in Stabenow's 2018 Farm Bill will help create jobs, improve access to local food

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, today announced a new \$746,480 investment to help build local food economies, create jobs, and improve access to locally grown food in urban and rural communities in Southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. This investment comes through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new Regional Food Systems Partnerships Program, which Senator Stabenow authored in the 2018 Farm Bill.

"When we produce food here, we create jobs here in Michigan," **said Senator Stabenow.** "This is a win-win for families and local food producers who have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis."

From restaurant closures, to supply chain disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected local food economies. Michigan State University will receive \$746,480 to strengthen local food systems by connecting food and farm entrepreneurs in Southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. The project will create lasting partnerships between farmers and innovative food businesses to help create jobs and improve access to locally grown food in both rural and urban communities.

"This award from USDA will allow us to create a more cohesive collaboration infrastructure to better support urban and rural communities of need in Michigan. We will expand the reach of the Michigan Good Food Fund to assist local food and farm entrepreneurs who bring healthy and affordable foods into Battle Creek and the Upper Peninsula" **said Jamie Rahrig project lead with the MSU Center for Regional Food System and the MSU Product Center.**

In the 2018 Farm Bill, Senator Stabenow authored the new Regional Food Systems Partnerships Program, which builds regional partnerships between farmers and food entrepreneurs to grow local food economies. Senator Stabenow secured permanent funding for these partnerships by including them as a part of the Local Agriculture Market Program, ensuring these investments will be available for food and farm entrepreneurs for years to come.

**Recipient:** Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion

**Award Amount:** \$746,480

**Match Amount:** \$189,560

**Total Project Amount:** \$936,040

### ***Strengthening Public and Private Partnerships for a More Resilient and Just Food System in Rural & Urban Communities Across Michigan***

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) advances regionally rooted food systems through applied research, education, and outreach uniting the knowledge and experience of diverse stakeholders. Partnerships are the core of CRFS' work. Since 2009, the Michigan Good Food Charter has been building strong collaboration infrastructure to support local and regional food systems.

A recent partnership with the MSU Product Center spurred innovation to support food and farm entrepreneurs and link enterprises to statewide resources. Covid-19 has highlighted the essential nature of resilient, and equitable local food supply chains. In this project, we will build upon our existing partnerships and past successes, applying key lessons from COVID-19 to improve coordination, resiliency, and racial equity in targeted local food systems across Michigan.

We have chosen low-resource, rural and urban, communities within SW Michigan and the Upper Peninsula as our food system partnership laboratories for this project. By leveraging existing partnerships and an ecosystem of food system business and policy networks, we will expand our collaborative efforts to connect food and farm enterprises, food hubs, incubator kitchens, and institutional and retail markets. The partnerships will carry forward the work of 21 public and private organizations with over 17 years' experience in developing local and regional food systems. Together we will further integrate local food system expertise to address the needs of low-resource partners, respond to COVID-19, and support economic growth to build a stronger, more resilient, and just local economies.



## Farm Business Incubator

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Apply now for 2021!



Upper Peninsula Research  
and Extension Center  
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<https://www.canr.msu.edu/uprc/farm-business-incubator>

### Market Report

Choice Steers	\$90-\$104 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$88-\$95 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$56-\$63 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$140-\$190 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$45-\$55 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$60-\$130 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$320 per 100 lbs.

#### Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1500-\$1700/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$1500-\$1750/head

#### Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.53	\$230.50	\$180-342
Soymeal	\$24.14	\$482.75	\$450-552
Oats	\$13.48	\$269.50	\$238-340
Barley	\$11.80	\$236.00	\$190-314
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

## Classifieds

**FOR SALE: Mixed hay**, large round bales, 800#, \$20/bale. Call Al (906)647-6697.

**FOR SALE: Koyker 565 Loader** with 7 ft bucket. Also has skid steer adapter. Fits JD 3000-5000 series tractors. \$2500; **Oliver 13 ft disk** with 18 inch scalloped blades, \$1095. Call Tolfree Farms (908) 884-2351 or email [countryj@jamadots.com](mailto:countryj@jamadots.com).

**FOR SALE: Hay**, large square bales 3x3x7.75 Timothy grass, 4,000 to sell. Former dairy farm doing all big square bales hay. Call Dave Bell in the EUP 906-440-6455 or email [Bellsdairy@yahoo.com](mailto:Bellsdairy@yahoo.com). Also a realtor in the UP so contact me for real estate here. [Dave@smith-company.com](mailto:Dave@smith-company.com)

**Beautiful property** in the Upper Michigan, 130 acres In Perkins for sale or pasture for rent for livestock for the 2020 season. Beautiful river running through it. Great for hunting, building or developing, or simple grazing livestock. Land is divided into 9 paddocks with high tensile electric fence and 5 stock watering ponds. Call (906) 359-4825.

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**FOR SALE: John Deere B.** Clean, less than 50 hrs on rebuild. **Allis-Chalmers C.** New paint, runs good. **Hay Hauler.** Hauls up to 10—4x6 round bales, use spear on back, don't have to unhook. Call Terry (906)644-2777.

### CLARE COUNTY LIVESTOCK AUCTION

#### 2020 Fall Feeder Cattle Auctions:

Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>  
\*\*\* All Feeder Auctions Begin at 1:00p.m. \*\*\*

#### **Location:**

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11228 S. Grant Ave.  
Clare, MI 48617  
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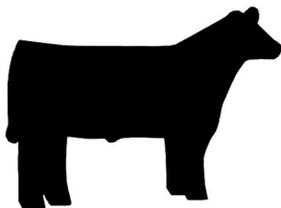
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Farm Ready Research Webinar Series is Extension's agriculture winter webinar meeting series for farmers and ag professionals. Join the webinars to learn the most up-to-date information on topics from dairy and livestock production to farm management resources. Sessions begin December 2020 and run through April 2021. See a full list of topics and register at [go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch](http://go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch)

#### **December 8 1 pm Badger Dairy Insight: Safe Operation of Skid Steer Loaders**

*Skid steers are versatile machines on agricultural operations but a safe operator is key to their operation. This session will cover the basics of safe operation including potential workplace hazards, pre- and post- operation, operating a skid steer in different situations and use of attachments. With live Spanish interpretation.*

#### **December 8 7 pm Beef: Using the Estimating Hay Needs and Heifer Enterprise Budget Decision Tools**

*A process highlighting how to use available tools for determining if you have enough forage going into winter, looking at both inventory and cattle's needs. The heifer enterprise budget tool will be demonstrated to help producers determine their true cost of raising replacement beef heifers.*

#### **December 15 1 pm Badger Dairy Insight: Optimizing Management for Calf Health and Welfare**

*Jennifer Van Os, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, will present on two heads are better than one, the benefits of pair or group housing of calves. Tina Kohlman, Agriculture Extension Educator, will discuss calf success in the first 24 hours; processing the new born calf for success.*