

# Lapeer County 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## BY THE NUMBERS

**100+** Over 100 years MSU Extension professionals have provided education to Lapeer County residents



\* \$88,547 spending with local businesses in Lapeer County



157 Lapeer County students enrolled at MSU



MSU disbursed \$3,319,830 in financial aid to Lapeer County students



1,319 MSU alumni living in and contributing to Lapeer County



3,442 youth involved in 4-H in Lapeer County youth development programs



\* \$10,275,669 total economic impact in Lapeer County

\* 2019 Numbers

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

To say 2020 was an unprecedented year does not do it justice. Our nation, indeed the entire world, was thrust into the uncertainty and fear of battling an invisible enemy called COVID19. And everything changed – our normal activities, so long taken for granted, seemed forever altered. From grocery shopping to youth sports, from local schools to factories, from fairs to health clubs, from mass transportation to worship, nothing was left untouched by the threat posed by this virus. We had no choice but to reinvent methods of collaboration, education and community. We had to find new ways to deliver products, services and compassion to our families, our co-workers and our community.

I am proud to say that Michigan State University Extension was up to this challenge. We were prepared to move into the environment of virtual education and collaboration. Moreover, we ensured that our customers – the residents of Lapeer County – were well served with the high quality, evidence-based curricula to which they have become accustomed. From stress management to disease prevention, from tourism to food insecurity, from nutrition to food safety, from livestock to field crops, MSU Extension hit the ground running – actually increasing our reach in the midst of this pandemic.

Thank you for supporting MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Jerry Johnson, District Director

## CONTACT



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# Supporting Food and Agriculture



Phil Kaatz

kaatz@msu.edu

Forage Management and Field Crops Educator

“The Breakfast Meetings were very informative all season and I hope they continue next year and into the future.”

*Ira Krupp*

“Thank You for doing the Virtual Breakfast Seminars!”

*Dave Walsh*

“Enjoyed the virtual breakfast meetings, and picked up much useful information.”

*Jim Borgert*

## 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 30-minute zoom session is divided into 15-minute segments for crop information and weather. Following the presentations, participants have the opportunity to participate with MSU Specialists and Educators in a half-hour 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 was able to ask questions of the specialists and educators during the live sessions.

The Virtual Breakfast Series is a result of a focus group that included young farmers asking for opportunities to have fast-paced, video or Internet based, and unbiased research information during critical times of the spring and summer.

A wide range of topics was planned according to the seasonal issues that frequently occur at specific times. However, the series was flexible, adaptable, and had the ability to change quickly and effectively when unexpected issues arose.

One of the unexpected issues for 2020 was the lengthy planting delays for all crop producers. The MSU Extension Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute provided a “Delayed Planting” webpage due to these widespread weather delays throughout Michigan and flooding that occurred in the Mid-Michigan area. Due to the flooding, a special session focusing on nutrient losses for field crops was inserted into the lineup.

The Virtual Breakfast Series provided the initial discussions concerning delayed planting and responded to the need to have additional crop management, crop insurance, and risk management options for growers. Each week field crop producers are invited by email to participate and a MSU Extension News article is written to encourage participation.

This was an example of how the MSUE Field Crops Team was able to provide information at the right time with an unscheduled topic.

Virtual Breakfast Series	Live participants:	YouTube views:	Facebook Views	Social Media	Article Page views	Total Participants & Views
Total Audience	2,134	2,045	10,619	1,290	2,170	18,258
#/week	97	89	483	59	99	794

# Developing Youth and Communities



## Kids Learn Best by Doing

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Kids and teens complete hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture and civic engagement, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Kids, ages 5-19, can concentrate on one focus area or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience. Outside of the school system, 4-H is one of the few youth programs that are mostly supported directly by tax dollars.

### MSUE 4-H staff serving Lapeer County:



**Kathy George**  
Program  
Coordinator



**Jean Kreiner**  
4-H Program aide

### What makes 4-H special? Michigan 4-H:

- **Follows 7 Guiding Principles:**

1. Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
2. Youth are physically and emotionally safe.
3. Youth are actively engaged in their own development.
4. Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process.
5. Youth develop skills that help them succeed.
6. Youth recognize, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.
7. Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership.
  - Uses research based education
  - Is open to everyone
  - Is Youth driven

Young people who are members of 4-H clubs are more likely to engage in positive activities, go to college and be civically engaged in their communities. They are less likely to be involved in negative behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, risky sexual behaviors or bullying. Many of our programs have evaluations to show that participants not only increase their knowledge, but change behaviors. Locally, Lapeer County 4-H participates in local community service as well as offers a variety of educational opportunities and scholarships. This past year, Lapeer County 4-H was able to offer both in person and virtual programming as well as a variety of educational scholarships for higher education and learning experiences.

# Developing Youth and Communities



Michelle Hedgcock,  
4-H leader

2019-2020

Enrolled 4-Hers: 1119

Enrolled Adult

Volunteers: 316

## Imagination Unlimited 4-H Club

Since the members in Imagination Unlimited 4-H Club are teenagers (most of them in 10th grade), the club decided to focus on budgeting, so that they will be ready for adult life and not get themselves unknowingly in debt in college and beyond. Over the past few years they learned record keeping and how it would benefit them with applying for scholarships and college applications. Last 4-H year they talked about options in order to go to college debt-free, including choosing the right school, saving money, getting as many scholarships as possible, working while in college, and paying as you go. Along with this, Michelle Hedgcock, the club's leader, shared several scholarship opportunities, so that when they were ready to apply, they would know how and have the resources ready.

Michelle then wanted to go deeper and talked with the members about spending habits. Since she didn't have enough information to help members learn this topic, she reached out to 4-H for more resources. A Michigan State University 4-H Educator, Laurie Rivetto, was invited to virtually meet with the 5 members and provide a 2 hour training session on money education.

Michelle has been a great administrative leader of Imagination Unlimited 4-H Club (one of our county's few all indoor project clubs) for 6 years in 19 different indoor project areas. She co-leads our 4-H Ambassador Court program as well as hold the position of treasurer of our auction committee, which is our county's sole fundraiser to fund our local program. Any of these positions are quite a commitment, but Michelle leads in all of these roles with a positive attitude and is a major asset to the Lapeer County 4-H program. Michelle was recently honored in the Michigan 4-H Volunteer Spotlight <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/michigan-4-h-volunteer-spotlight-lapeer-county-s-michelle-hedgcock>.

*I pledge...*



my HEAD to  
clearer thinking,



my HEART to  
greater loyalty,



my HANDS to  
larger service,



my HEALTH to  
better living,

For my club, my community,  
my country and my world.



From left to right:

Madelyn Lamb,  
Lauren Swartz,  
Alyssa Elder,  
Isabella Friedenstab,  
Alexis Hedgcock

# Developing Youth and Communities



Community Service

Grants and Scholarships

Awards!



**HEAD  
HEART  
HANDS  
HEALTH**

## Community Service

At the 2019 Project Red held on October 2 in Imlay City, members of the Young Pioneers 4-H Club along with their 4-H leader, Thresa Schumitsch, presented to 900 3<sup>rd</sup> graders how to separate milk from cream and then hand-churning cream into butter as well as chatted about life on the farm and answered questions inquisitive students asked.

About 25 4-H Lapeer County 4-H members donated their time to help run the second Annual Farmer Appreciation Day on August 6, 2019, in partnership with Jim Riehl's Friendly Chrysler Jeep of Lapeer, Lapeer County Farm Bureau, the View Newspaper Group and Lapeer County FFA. The event generously donated \$3,750 back to the Lapeer County 4-H Livestock Committee to support local agriculture related youth programming.

## Grants and Scholarships

The Lapeer County 4-H Sheep Committee was awarded a \$2,500 grant through America's Farmers Grow Communities, sponsored by Bayer Fund, which will be used to further educational programming in the sheep project area.

The Lapeer County 4-H Auction Committee earned a \$1,500 DTE Foundation Grant to support overall programming efforts through the 4-H Council.

Alexis Hedgcock, earned a Michigan State University Pre-College Scholarships for \$2,000 this year towards a degree at MSU.

Lapeer County 4-H Awards Program –Bryan Dahn of Dyna Mutts 4-H Club, earned a full scholarship of \$1,500 to attend a civic engagement educational experience at National 4-H Congress in Atlanta. This five-day conference in Atlanta, Georgia, offers workshops on topics such as diversity, cultural experiences, leadership and team development. 4-H'ers can also apply to be on the leadership and design teams that develop and conduct the event.

Every year, eligible 4-H members apply for college scholarships. It was our pleasure to award three scholarships to very deserving and accomplished 4-H members:

- Emily VandenBerghe -Dawn Childers Memorial Scholarship \$500
- Alex Albrecht- Tina Novotney Memorial Scholarship \$1,000
- Amber Bennett-4-H Council Scholarship \$500

# Developing Youth and Communities

4-H has different types of clubs, depending on a volunteer's interest and time commitment.

- **Community clubs** focus on multiple projects and involve members of a variety of ages and interests. Meet every month.
- **Project clubs** focus on one primary 4-H project. Meetings may be monthly or weekly.
- **SPIN clubs** combine concepts of special interest groups with the 4-H club model. Focus on one topic for a set length of time, perhaps 6 to 8 weeks.

## State and National Educational Opportunities

### SYLC Trenton Haarz

State Youth Leadership Council (SYLC) members serve as representatives of the Michigan 4-H program, promoting 4-H through state and local activities, and can provide youth voice and perspective on the development of 4-H programs and curricula. One such member, comes from Lapeer County this year, Trenton Haarz of the Bark Brigade 4-H Club. Jackie Martin, MSU Extension Educator and SYLC mentor, has this to say about Trenton:

“Trenton has been a regular attendee of SYLC meetings, including our in-person training event held in February. Trenton is learning and practicing leadership skills on this state-wide council. His creativity and engagement is appreciated from both peers and adult advisors. He is an engaged learner and observer, who I expect will be an important contributor in group discussions as he continues his two-year term.”

Trenton added: “During my time in SYLC I have learned about being professional and marketing to large groups. While I haven't been a member for very long, I can tell that SYLC is the type of group that does everything in its power to cause the betterment of 4H. All the members and coordinators are some of the nicest and most caring people you will ever find. Their passion for 4H is purely astonishing, and very inspiring. It's great to see how much these people care about their clubs, and how much they want to broadcast 4H to others who are unfamiliar with it.”



# Developing Youth and Communities

## State and National Meats Judging

4-H members, Amber Spudowski, Isaac Conley, Elizabeth and Mary Hartmann competed at the Michigan 4-H Meats Judging Competition at the MSU Meats Lab on campus in May 2019, where they swept the placings for both Junior and Senior Overall 1<sup>st</sup> place.

Meats judging helps youth develop important life skills and by participating in the project, contestants show their ability to evaluate carcasses and identify meats. Contestants evaluate carcasses to determine yield and quality grades at the Michigan 4-H/FFA Meat Judging Contest. By participating, contestants show their ability to evaluate carcasses and identify meats. This contest will include individual and team competition, in three beef classes, three pork classes, identification of 20 retail cuts, yield grade and quality grade three beef carcasses and answer one set of questions. Additionally, 4-H members will give one set of oral reasons. After placing so well, our Lapeer County 4-H competitors continued with their learning and started to work on the chance to compete at the national level, which, until this year, has not happened in Lapeer County 4-H.

The 2019 National 4-H Meat Identification and Evaluation Contest, hosted by Kansas State University and the American Royal Livestock Show, took place in October 2019, where teams from across the country compete. The Lapeer County 4-H team fundraised to attend the national contest. Isaac, Amber, Mary, with leader Marie Curell, traveled to Kansas to earn 12<sup>th</sup> place nationally. Mary tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place in Retail Cuts category and placed 4<sup>th</sup> nationally after tie breaker.

They all represented Lapeer County well, especially being their first national contest experience, and increased their knowledge greatly in the meats industry.



# Developing Youth and Communities

## Local Programs

Lapeer County 4-H has been able to offer both in person and virtual programming this year. Prior to March, MSU Extension Educators came to Lapeer and lead workshops on top notch resume writing and also adult/youth partnerships. We also organized and completed first Lapeer County 4-H Open House this fall at the Eastern Michigan State Fair. This was a free family event open to the public providing educational hands-on experiences in craft, animal and STEM projects, fun snacks, face-painting, safe archery practice as well as opportunities to meet about 15 different clubs' leaders and 4-H members to learn more about joining a club. A camper workshop and holiday fun workshop was also offered, learning about nature or making holiday treats for their families.

In addition to the wide array of online workshops and special interest virtual clubs offered throughout the state, Lapeer County 4-H member stayed connected through fun, virtual challenges and educational experiences. Through the Goosechase App, members competed for points in fun challenges including dance competitions, penny stacking challenge, 4-H trivia, healthy eating and wellness while at home and cleaning their bedrooms before and after pictures (which the parents really appreciated!). Top three members earned a \$20 gift card to the online 4-H store.

A photo contest on Facebook was also held where youth conducted 4-H projects at home and submitted pictures for a chance to earn free participation fees for the 2020-21 4-H year, beginning September 1, 2020. Since Michigan 4-H are waiving all participation fees for the upcoming year, winners of the photo contest will also receive a \$20 gift card instead.

In partnership with Livestock Nutrition Company of Lapeer and Purina Animal Nutrition, 4-H Animal Project Feed Virtual Workshop was held in June 2020 as a 6 part series focusing on healthy nutrition for a variety of livestock and domestic animals. Youth had a chance to ask questions to experts, win prizes and interactively participate in these live webinar sessions.





# Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.



Christine Venema,  
Extension Educator  
Food Safety

**In Lapeer County**, Christine Venema, MSU Extension Educator for food safety, provides programming in the areas of Food Preservation, Michigan Cottage Food Law, Pantry Food Safety—It’s Your Job! and ServSafe manager training for adults. In 2019-20, she provided ServSafe manager education leading to certification for 73 foodservice employees in Lapeer County from local schools, restaurants and churches. This national certification program teaches about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train employees on the latest food safety issues including:

- \* providing safe food
- \* forms of contamination
- \* the safe food handler
- \* cleaning & sanitizing
- \* the flow of food
- \* food safety management systems,
- \* safe facilities & pest management

The **Michigan Cottage Food** Law program allowed five cottage food businesses to start producing specific food products in the home kitchen and sell the products at the local farm market, farm stands, and in a face-to-face venue.

Since March 16, 2020, Christine as a member of the MSU Extension Food Safety Team has been providing **weekly food preservation programming** to the people of Lapeer County and the world via the zoom educational format. The weekly educational program consists of a power point presentation with a question and answer period. In June 2020 the programming expanded to being taught two times per day. One educational session at 1 PM and another at 6 PM.

Since April 13, 2020 Christine as a part of the MSUE Food Safety Team has been providing a Question and Answer food safety educational session via zoom to the people of Lapeer County and the world. This programming format is a thirty-minute food safety topic presentation followed by a thirty-minute question and answer period.

Christine has also provided a session on **“What to do After a Flood”** as a part of the emergency preparedness food safety programming.

## **Pantry Food Safety—It’s Your Job!**

Christine developed and designed a food safety curriculum for volunteers and staff of food banks and food pantries entitled Pantry Food Safety—It’s Your Job. The curriculum is based on current food science and food regulations. Feedback from volunteers and staff was included in the development of the topics for the program. Topics covered by the curriculum were food safety at the food pantry, handwashing and personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, receiving and storage of food products, receiving and storage of fresh produce, repackaging and legal information for food banks and food pantries. Originally the curriculum was designed to be delivered in a face-to-face format. During 2020 it has been converted to a 3 hour zoom and two 1.5-hour formats. Currently, the program is being offered on a monthly basis at various times of the day. The curriculum is also being converted to an online course to be offered in the Michigan State University D2L learning system.

# Keeping People Healthy



**Jennifer McNamara**  
**Extension Nutrition**  
**Program Instructor**



## **SNAP-Ed Nutrition and Physical Activity Programs**

MSU Extension provides education on nutrition and physical activity through SNAP-Ed, which targets groups that are likely to have a high number of people with low incomes. Our SNAP-Ed Community Nutrition Instructors (CNIs) Jennifer McNamara and Nola Auernhamer provide fun evidence-based learning in one-time classes, series of classes, and at special events.

CNIs are also involved in community groups, such as Healthy Living Lapeer, and the Great Start Collaborative. They have participate in community events, such as Family Fun Day, and the senior health fair.

In 2019, SNAP-Ed served over 80,000 adults and youth statewide. Locally, SNAP-Ed has served more than 312 adults and youth.

12 adults participated in Lapeer County's first "Cooking for One" class this year. Classes are free and included hands-on food experiences as well as lessons on nutrition, food safety, physical activity, meal planning, and stretching food dollars.

Over 90 youth in Lapeer County participated in curricula such as "Show Me Nutrition", and "Grow It, Try It, Like It". These curricula place importance on handwashing and food safety, as well as physical activity and food tasting experiences.

Even during the COVID epidemic, MSU Extension was able to reach out to over 200 seniors in Lapeer County with the Senior Project Fresh program.

Senior Project Fresh is a program that gives lower income seniors 60 an over coupons they can use at their local farmers market to buy fresh fruits and produce. This program helps not only seniors but local farmers as well!

Over 232 seniors in Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties participated in our first ever phone education on the importance of nutrition and physical activity as a way to boost your immune system!

A new addition to SNAP-Ed is providing virtual programs. MSUE staff is continuing to work in programming development to create power points from our youth and adult curricula to use in virtual settings. Lapeer County should be seeing more virtual programs in the coming year.

# Keeping People Healthy

## FOOD TO PEOPLE



Joe Bixler, Community Food Systems Educator  
Michigan State University Extension  
bixlerj@msu.edu



## Thumb Food Policy Council

The Thumb Food Policy Council, created in 2018, covers the geographic area of all five Thumb counties (Lapeer, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac and St. Clair). Representatives from all five counties provide community input and strategic planning on behalf of those communities and the Council.

The 2019-20 year was marked with marketing efforts to local community organization with presentations, development of a formal plan of work, consultations regarding food insecurity best practices, development of communication and marketing strategies, and delivery of food to communities experiencing hardships due to the COVID 19 virus pandemic.

A summary of the Council's priorities through 2022 include:

- A. Food to people: The transportation and distribution of food in both directions. That's is general distribution of food to people and/or people to food.
- B. Ongoing assessments of food pantry capacity in all five counties
- C. Greater access to affordable, safe, and diverse food
- D. Agriculture and food literacy

Two programs, central to these priorities, were kicked off during the 2019-20 year. A Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) BASICS presentation was developed and presented to 163 individuals in group settings from January 2020 to June 2020. The second program offered was due to a significant pivot of our work ad result of COVID 19 and food insecurity efforts. In partnership with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, the Council began to assist in the recruitment and coordination of volunteers and procurement of sponsors for community mobile food pantry giveaways. The total number of pounds distributed as of this writing is in excess of 1.5 million pounds. These efforts are considered paramount to our first priority of FOOD TO PEOPLE.

Although the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic altered our work significantly, it is conclusive that we were properly positioned with our fundamental priorities to impact all five Thumb counties with food in a time when it was, and still is, most need. It is likely that the Council's FOOD TO PEOPLE priority will continue for the remainder of 2020 as well as agriculture and food literacy.



Together We Can:  
Creating a Healthy Future for our Family

## Extension Educators Serving Lapeer County

### MSU Extension Staff Serving Lapeer County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Kathy George	4-H Program Coordinator	810-667-0343	<a href="mailto:george92@msu.edu">george92@msu.edu</a>
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### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Lapeer County

Name	Role	Phone	Email
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