



# Tuscola County

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS

100+

Over 100 years MSU Extension professionals have provided education to Tuscola County residents



\* \$230,992 spending with local businesses in Tuscola County



65 Tuscola County students enrolled at MSU



MSU disbursed \$1,330,982 in financial aid to Tuscola County students



667 MSU alumni living in and contributing to Tuscola County



1,963 youth involved in 4-H in Tuscola County youth development programs



\* \$5,647,370 total economic impact in Tuscola County

\* 2020 Numbers



### Message from the District Director

As our battle with the pandemic continued into 2021, our nation, our state and the thumb region struggled to recover. When our residents tried to resume their former lives, we learned even more about their challenges and to no one's surprise, Covid-19 was not the only problem they faced. What we saw were people neglecting routine medical care, putting off cancer screenings, staying home from school or "attending"

virtually. We saw food insecurity on the rise, we saw high unemployment, rampant underemployment and money woes on the increase and we saw small businesses going out of business. We saw an increase in the use of recreational drugs and alcohol. We saw people fighting isolation, confusion, depression and loneliness. However, we also saw "hunger" ... a hunger to return to normal or at least a new normal.

We saw a hunger to grow as producers planted, harvested and processed – and our Agricultural Educators were there to support them. We saw a hunger to become more self-sufficient in home food preparation and preservation and our team was there to help our residents do it safely and efficiently. For those with a hunger for financial relief, we were there to provide education and resources to stretch their food dollar further. Our children never lost the hunger to learn and we were back to in-person teaching with our 4-H youth in a year that saw a welcome resurgence in fair attendance. Many of our residents had a hunger to reduce their level of stress or provide essential care to a loved one and our program instructors and educators were setting attendance records in reaching residents both virtually and in person.

Thank you for supporting MSU Extension and for working with us to provide life-changing education to the residents of Tuscola County.

Jerry Johnson, District Director





# Developing Youth and Communities



**MSU EXTENSION 4-H STAFF**  
**KATIE COOPER**  
4-H Program Coordinator

**Committee Leaders:**  
**Scott Holmes**  
4-H Council President

**Genevieve Hecht**  
4-H Large Livestock President

**Jennifer Beardslee**  
4-H Small Livestock President

**Jackie Garner**  
4-H Horse Leaders President

4-H is America's largest youth development organization, providing educational opportunities to over 6 million youth. The 4-H program offers a vast selection of project area topics—science, healthy living, arts, and civic engagement to name a few, all with hands-on experiential learning for youth. 4-H programs are available for all youth ages 5-19, and are made possible by the service of our dedicated volunteers. We always welcome new members and new volunteers; if you are interested in joining 4-H, please contact the Tuscola County MSU Extension office at 989-672-3870. We would be happy to help you enroll today!

Tuscola County 4-H provided local members and volunteers opportunities to connect to learning experiences beyond the county as well. These included:

## 4-H in 2020/2021

The Tuscola County 4-H program took on a new look in the 2020/2021 program year. The challenge of working through the pandemic was no easy task but as all business and schools learned, we found a new innovative ways to connect with our audiences! Many of the traditional in person 4-H programs that we were used to offering, now had to pivot to a virtual/online program. Our 4-H clubs and committees began engaging over zoom. In person educational programs were converted in too take home kits, and statewide programs where youth once had to travel hours to participate, now were able to participate right from their living room! Youth in Tuscola County participated in fairy garden kits, survival bracelet kits, and bird feeder kits! Although the programs in 2020/2021 program year were far different from the traditional programs we offered, Tuscola County 4-H was able to adapt and overcome the many challenges the year brought.

## 4-H Community Service

4-H'ers pledge there "hands to larger service"! Many youth who participate in Tuscola County 4-H help in different community service project! In the 2020-2021 program years clubs have helped clean up their communities, raised money for those fighting cancer in Tuscola County and collected food donations to help those in need in their community. By giving back to their communities, young people can:

- Learn the value of helping others, develop leadership, communication, organizational skills and a sense of empowerment.
- Learn how important the connection is between subject matter and life in the community.



## Developing Youth and Communities, continued



- Learn how to cooperate with one another and work as a team with diverse groups of people including adults, peers and others with different backgrounds and experiences.
- Succeed in an area different from academics, athletics or popularity.
- Build self-esteem from the positive results of their service.
- Develop problem-solving and decision-making skills by applying their knowledge to real-world situations.
- Develop a sense of being responsible for their community and a sense that citizenship requires them to actively participate in their community.
- Receive recognition for their efforts and possibly college scholarships.

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### Our Volunteers

4-H programs are made possible by the service of our dedicated volunteers. An Effective 4-H Council is essential to planning, conducting and evaluating 4-H work. To be successful, 4-H programs must meet the needs and interests of local participants. Determining these needs and interest and then developing and implementing programs that fulfill those needs require the organized involvement of local volunteers and community stakeholders. Tuscola County's 4-H program has 4 committee boards that are made up of 38 dedicated volunteers. They are vital to the local 4-H program as these volunteer groups fulfill their mission thru the following functions:

- ◆ Assist in developing a total 4-H program based on the needs of youth and the county and then actively carrying out the plan.
- ◆ Introducing new 4-H projects, programs and activities that are designed to attract new youth to the 4-H program
- ◆ Planning for and assisting with the recruitment, education and recognition of 4-H members and 4-H volunteers.
- ◆ Raising and managing funds to underwrite the planned 4-H curriculum, program and activities.
- ◆ Recommending policy and procedures for the county when not determined by state or national regulations.
- ◆ Providing for the representation of the 4-H program at other meetings and events.
- ◆ Evaluating the overall 4-H program on a continuing basis.
- ◆ Promoting the work of the 4-H council, its committees and the entire 4-H program throughout the county.

Not only do young people gain by being involved in community service, the clubs and groups that they are in also experience benefits from planning and carrying out service projects.



## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

### Camp Activities included:

- Outdoor skills
- Olympic training
- Cabin Games
- Skits
- Shooting sports
- Nature walk
- Mud hike
- Kayaking
- Swimming in Lake Huron
- STEM
- Team building events
- Minute-to-win-it games
- Outdoor cooking

### 2021 Thumb Area 4-H Camp

Thumb Area 4-H Camp was planned and developed in a collaborative effort by the District 10 4-H staff in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, St. Clair & Tuscola Counties. 4-H staff met via zoom for several months working together to develop and plan a day camping experience for 4-H members and non-4-H youth. While the Covid health concern existed, overnight camp was not an option for 4-H camp this year.

- Thumb Area 4-H Camp Counselor's Teen Leadership workshops were held over zoom and a face-to-face in-person training in July, where eight 4-H teens participated in the event. During the training camp counselors learned team building skills, problem-solving skills, brainstormed ideas, and developed a plan for the 2021 Adventure Day camps.

Thumb Area 4-H Camp provided two 4-H Adventure Day Camps in August 2021. The day camps were held in Lapeer County at Camp Lael with 16 registered campers, and Evergreen Park in Sanilac with 21 registered campers. Campers ranged in age from 8 to 14. Ten teen counselors (aged 15-19) assisted with various activities during these day camps. Campers enjoyed team building skills, games, science-based STEM activities (lava lamps and s'mores solar ovens), archery, tie-dying camp t-shirts. Everyone had a great time!

### The Tuscola County Fair

The County Fair is an opportunity for 4-H youth to showcase all their hard work to the community. Over 300 4-H youth participated in the Tuscola County Fair. Showing projects at the fair has many educational benefits such as teaching youth about the value of hard work, healthy competition, and many life skills.



# Keeping People Healthy

Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Health and Nutrition Staff serving Tuscola County

Karly Creguer

Supervising & Staff Development HNI for District 9 & 10

Nola Auernhamer  
Community Nutrition Program Instructor

This past year, **Nutrition Education** had to shift to virtual programming, due to Covid-19 shutdowns. Our staff across the state worked quickly and efficiently to move our classes to an on-line/Zoom format so that we were able to continue to meet the needs of our participants with only a short delay. Each Community Nutrition Instructor worked in groups of three to teach classes within their team of ten counties (Tuscola, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, St. Clair, Genesee, Shiawassee, Saginaw, Bay, Midland), where we were able to reach **2,090 participants**. In July 2021, we were allowed to go back to teaching classes in-person.

**Michigan Senior Project FRESH (SPF)** was our biggest program this year. SPF is a state-wide program for low-income people over age 60. Participants receive a free \$20 coupon to be used for fresh fruits and vegetable that are grown in Michigan and sold at farmers markets and roadside stands. With the new farmers market in Caro, another venue was added to the list of places where people could redeem their coupons. This was very helpful for Caro residents who do not have transportation. **MSUE was able to distribute coupons to 250 Tuscola County residents, at a total value of \$5,000.**



Other classes for adults were held in partnership with the **Human Development Commission and Tuscola Great Start, reaching 11 students.**

Programs for youth and teens were held in partnership with **Tuscola ISD, Caro Family Court/Juvenile Division, and Mayville NEMCSA, reaching 77 students.**

This past year we started a unique program with the Juvenile Court at their garden where juvenile probationers are required to volunteer. With assistance from our **Master Gardener, Cathy Patterson**, the court staff, and probationers learned how to grow a very productive garden. **Sixty-one pounds of produce was donated** to local food pantries and some produce was used by the kitchen at the jail.

Partnering with generous local farmers and MSUE Community Food Systems, we were able to glean **32,000 pounds of Blue Hubbard squash** that was donated to local food banks. We were also able to glean **1,241 pounds of cucumbers** that were donated to food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens in Tuscola, Genesee and Saginaw Counties.



# Disease Prevention Management and Social Emotional Health Programs

Health and Nutrition Staff serving District 10 (Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, St. Clair & Tuscola Counties)

**Kris Swartzendruber**  
Social Emotional & Disease Prevention Extension Educator

## Available programs:

- \* Stress Less with Mindfulness
- \* RELAX: Alternatives to Anger
- \* PATH for Diabetes
- \* PATH for Chronic Pain
- \* Dining with Diabetes
- \* Powerful Tools for Caregivers
- \* Tai Chi for Arthritis
- \* SLEEP: Sleep Education for Everyone Program Everyone

Kris Swartzendruber, Extension Educator, and Jacqui Rabine, Program Instructor, for the Health and Nutrition Institute, conducted the following programs for District 10.

## Diabetes PATH (Personal Action Towards Health)

is a self-management series for adults with prediabetes, type 1 or type 2 diabetes and members of their

support system. Over the course of six-session series, participants learn strategies to help with blood glucose monitoring, developing a healthy eating and exercise plan, reading food labels, setting goals and a variety of other tools for managing their diabetes. Kris has conducted two online series, reaching 23 adult participants. All expenses related to the Diabetes PATH series were covered by a grant from the Lions of Michigan and Lions International.



## National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)

is an evidence-based lifestyle change program for preventing type 2 diabetes. This is a 1-year program, with a total of 23 sessions and is based on research led by the National Institutes of

Health and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. By making modest behavior changes that are introduced throughout this program, participant's risk of developing type 2 diabetes is reduced by 58%. Kris helped facilitate this online series from September 2020 through February 2021 to 14 participants.



## Chronic Pain PATH (Personal Action Towards Health)

is a self-management series that supports adults, and members of their support

system, who face daily challenges of living with chronic pain. During this six-session workshop participants learn ways to effectively communicate with health professionals, manage and prevent the misuse of medications, deal with frustration, understand difficult emotions and manage pain through healthier eating and exercising. Kris has conducted three of these series online reaching 21 adult participants. All expenses related to the *Chronic Pain PATH* series were covered by a State Opioid Response grant received by Michigan State University Extension.



- \* The human mind has 70,000 thoughts each day. That's 70,000 opportunities.
- \* The typical brain is about 2 percent of your body weight but uses 20 percent of your energy.
- \* 80 percent of repetitive thought are negative. But they don't have to be.
- \* A brisk 10- minute walk reduces the amount of cortisol (stress hormone) in the brain by 50 to 70 percent.



**Stress Less with Mindfulness** is a five-session series that focuses on using mindfulness to reduce stress related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension. There is research that shows that mindfulness may also be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes. By offering alternative ways of relating to everyday life experiences, including thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and events, *Stress Less with Mindfulness* teaches and encourages the use of mindfulness self-care skills to help one feel better and enjoy life. Kris and Jacqui conducted 18 online series reaching 198 participants. All expenses related to the *Stress Less with Mindfulness* series were covered by a State Opioid Response grant from Michigan State University Extension.



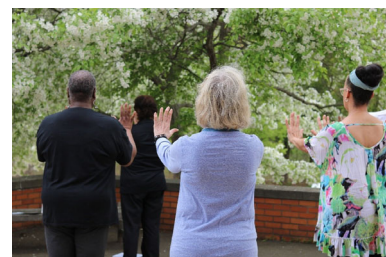
**A RELAX: Alternatives to Anger** is a four-session series that helps adults, parents and caregivers understand and manage anger and stress, and develop the communication and problem-solving skills needed for healthy relationships. Participants learn what anger is, what triggers anger, calming down and de-stressing methods, tools for problem-solving, effective communication skills, and steps that allow them to forgive and let go of the past. Kris and Jacqui conducted 14 online *RELAX* series reaching 293 adult participants.



**Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is a six-session series designed to help those caring for adults with chronic conditions or for children with special needs deal with stress. Participants learn

tools to help them reduce stress, communicate effectively with family members/doctors/paid help, take care of themselves, reduce guilt/anger/depression, make tough decisions, set goals and problem solve. Kris and Jacqui conducted three online *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* series reaching 35 participants.

**Tai Chi for Arthritis** is an 18-session series designed to help older adults, and adults with disabilities and at risk of falling, stay active. Research shows that Tai Chi helps increase strength/balance/posture, prevents falls, improves the mind/body/spirit, reduces stress and increases relaxation. In February, both Kris and Jacqui went through extensive training and evaluation to become a certified Tai Chi Instructors. Since then, they have helped facilitate two online series, reaching over 40 participants. All expenses related to the *Tai Chi for Arthritis* training and series were covered by a Falls Prevention Grant received by Michigan State University Extension.





# Ensuring Safe and Secure Food



## Health and Nutrition - Food Safety Staff

**Laurie Messing**  
Food Safety  
Extension Educator

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**Food Safety** is a global issue from farm to table. Its impact on our health and well-being is significant across the life span. Foodborne illness outbreaks occur on an ongoing basis crossing all socioeconomic lines from production, consumption, and preservation of foods. Overall health is impacted by the safety of the food supply and foodborne illness.



To educate consumers about keeping their food safe, MSU Extension provides programming in the above areas. As the coronavirus pandemic continued, August 2020-2021 focused on providing online education in all our core food safety programming areas to reach a multitude of audiences including childcare providers, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and consumers with the goal of educating on food safety best practices as well as encouraging the implementation of these behaviors. We offered a large variety of food safety education programs as well as food safety educational campaigns to increase knowledge and awareness and encourage consumers to keep food safe.

## Program Successes

9750+ participants

367 food safety sessions offered

Over 21,000 children served by childcare providers who received food safety training

400+ hours of education provided

Comments from program participants included:

- \* "This program helped me gain more knowledge about cleaning & sanitizing, correct temperatures for preparing food, how to engage in activities with regards to food safety, preventing illnesses and tips for meals & snacks."
- \* "It has helped me get through this pandemic by being able to connect with others that love canning."

Data from participants indicated the following results after attending our classes:

- ◇ 51% of Cottage Food Law participants reported after attending they plan to sanitize surfaces before preparing food.
- ◇ 86% of consumers who attended Home Food Preservation classes, reported feeling confident or very confident in their ability to find research-based recipes.
- ◇ 69% of childcare providers attending Safe Food =Healthy Kids plan to check food temperature with a calibrated food thermometer.

# Ensuring Safe and Secure Food, *continued*

## Health and Nutrition - Food Safety Staff

**Laurie Messing**  
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**Think Food Safety** brings awareness to consumers on illegal food sales and the Cottage Food Law (CFL). We continue to encourage awareness of foods consumers are buying to ensure safety. Only non-potentially hazardous foods can be made and sold under the CFL. Examples of approved food items under CFL include bread, chocolate covered pretzels, cookies, and jars of fruit jelly. Unfortunately, there is confusion about what can and cannot be sold as CFL, which results in illegal and unsafe food sales.

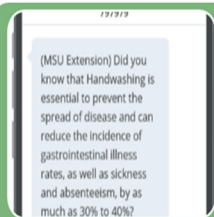
Follow us on Facebook



Please call the **MSU Extension Food Safety Hotline** with any food safety questions you might have, for example, how to preserve food at home, safe food storage, cooking temperatures, etc.

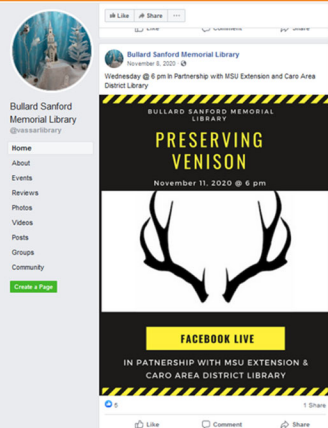
Operating Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. EDT

Call 877-643-9882



Sign up to receive a weekly food safety educational text message providing great information to help you keep you and your family safe from foodborne illness.

Text "SafeFood" to "797979" to join us!



In Tuscola County, we have great partnerships with two local libraries to provide Home Food Preservation programs. We worked together to continue programming through the pandemic and offered virtual classes with both the Caro Area District Library in Caro and the Bullard Sanford Memorial Library in Vassar. Food Preservation classes were offered via Zoom and Facebook Live on the following topics:

- Preserving Venison
- Pickling
- Jam and Jellies
- Preserving Apples
- Blanching and Freezing
- Tomatoes and Salsa
- Home Canning

We value these partnerships to provide food safety education like home food preservation to residents of Tuscola County.



# Supporting Food and Agriculture

## Forages & Field Crop Specialist

### Phil Kaatz

Field Crop Extension Educator -

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Some comments from the Virtual Breakfast series were:

*"It gives me timely information when it is needed the most."*

Ross Voelker

*"The Virtual Breakfast is a great program. It is easy to attend, at a convenient time, has a variety of topics, and knowledgeable speakers."*

Jim Bischoff

*"Timely topics that were well presented by knowledgeable people in a way I could understand, I also appreciate Jeff's weather outlook and totals data, keep up the great work please!"*

## 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 can 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 can ask questions of the specialists and educators during the live sessions. Also, live streaming on Facebook allows for online participation. Each session is close-captioned and recorded for viewing on the [MSUE Field Crops Team](https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/virtual-breakfast/) website.

( [https://www.canr.msu.edu/field\\_crops/virtual-breakfast/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/virtual-breakfast/) )

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.



Farmers and agribusiness professionals also received Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) and Certified Crop Advisor CEU credits weekly.

A wide range of topics were delivered according to the seasonal issues that occur at specific times. However, the series is flexible, adaptable, and can change quickly and effectively when unexpected issues arise.

Each week field crop producers are invited by email to participate and a MSU Extension News article is written and published as the MSUE News Digest to encourage participation. The number of individuals who subscribe are 1,209 to the email notifications and 6,188 to the MSUE News Digest.

## 2021 MSU Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series

Virtual Breakfast Series	Live Participants	YouTube Views	MSUE Podcasts	Facebook / Instagram Views	MSUE News Article Page Views	Total Views
Total Audience	3,180	2,399	1,610	14,165	2,514	23,868

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

**MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise**

Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences  
Sugar Beet Extension Specialist

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### **Sugarbeet Advancement Update**

The summer of 2021 marked a significant milestone for the Sugarbeet Advancement team. For the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to co-host an in-person educational event. This event was the Dry Bean and Sugarbeet Field Day, which took place at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center on August 24. At this field day, researchers from Michigan State University and the Michigan Sugar Company gave presentations about their latest research to farmers and members of the agribusiness community. This information will be used by the growers to make their farms more economically and environmentally sustainable. In all, approximately 185 people attended this educational event. Several of the presentations were later posted online to increase the impact of this field day.

Fall is an extremely busy time for both farmers and agricultural researchers alike. As a result of timely rains, favorable growing conditions, and the dedication of the growers, the crop is currently in excellent condition. In fact, the 2021 sugarbeet crop could be one of the largest on record. In order to best manage the crop, harvest officially began on August 16, which is earlier than normal. For the fields which have been harvested already, the average yield is approximately 30 tons per acre and 16% sugar. Once harvest is complete, it is possible the final average yield for the company could be around 33 tons per acre. The Sugarbeet Advancement team has also started to harvest their research trials. So far, of Advancement's 24 trials that need to be harvest, 5 have already been completed. Harvesting a research trial is a fairly lengthy and physically demanding process. It starts with the trial being rated for applicable root or foliar diseases, as well as the presence of sugarbeet cyst nematodes if they are relevant to the trial. Once the ratings are completed, beets are hand dug from each treatment to measure the sugar concentration of the beets in those plots. Finally, each plot is dug by the farmer, and the weight is measured using the Sugarbeet Advancement dump cart. Once collected and analyzed, the results from each trial will be reported in either the REACH (Michigan Sugarbeet Research & Education Advisory Council) Variety Trial Results book or the REACH Research Results book. Both books are distributed to the growers to serve as an aid in selecting sugarbeet seed varieties as well as making agronomy decisions for their farms.



## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

**When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.**

### **Beef Feedlot Systems**

**Jerad R. Jaborek, PhD**  
Beef Extension Educator

Michigan State University  
Extension

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### **Feedlot Educational Series**

The feedlot educational series began its virtual introduction of monthly feedlot educational presentations in December of 2020 through April 2021 with 82 participants and over an additional 250 online views. Michigan State University Extension Ag Educators presented on a variety of topics related to feedlot production and management. MSU Beef Feedlot Systems Educator, Dr. Jerad Jaborek, presented on crossbreeding dairy cows with beef bulls, alternative protein options for expensive distillers grains, and the effect of feedlot facility designs on cattle growth and performance. Huron County Dairy Educator, Marianne Buza-Murawski, shared some tips for raising healthy dairy calves. Drs. Melissa McKendree and Corey Clark talked with the group about how to prepare an enterprise budget and conduct financial analysis on beef or feedlot operations.

### **Hot Topic: Beef on Dairy Cross Cattle**

A collaborative effort was made with The Ohio State University to provide current and relevant information to dairy and beef producers about crossbred dairy beef cattle. The practice of crossbreeding dairy cows with beef semen has become increasingly popular in Michigan and across the United States. The virtual program consisted of three sessions with 46 participants signing in from across 10 different states and one from outside the United States and nearly 200 online views since. The first program session consisted of a discussion with beef cattle procurement experts from JBS on the current beef on dairy crossbreeding situation. The second session brought in Chip Kemp, director of the American Simmental Association and International Genetics Solutions, to speak about genetic selection considerations for beef matings with dairy cows. The third session was presented by Dr. Jaborek and Garth Ruff, OSU Beef Extension Specialist, who shared multiple on-farm management considerations for crossbred dairy beef calves.



### **Useful Feedlot Tools and Resources**

In the spring of 2021, JBS, one of the major beef packing companies in the U.S., announced that they will be offering a new high-energy Holstein/Holstein-cross contract option for cattle feeders that raise and market fed-Holstein cattle. To help producers decide whether to use the old or new contract option, members of the MSU Extension Beef Team created an excel spreadsheet tool to aid producers in determining which contract would result in the greatest returns for their cattle. The JBS Contract Comparison Tool has 24 downloads to date.

Looking for educational reading materials on feeding feedlot cattle? Over the last year, Dr. Jaborek has written 10 extension articles on a variety of topics including crossbreeding dairy cows with beef bulls, JBS high energy Holstein contracts, rumen development in calves, managing the feed bunk for efficiency cattle growth, bloating in cattle, kernel processing of corn silage, and the economic benefit of corn silage inclusion in feedlot diets. Additionally, two feedlot related articles on the effects of daylength on cattle growth and feedlot manure management have been written for the Michigan Cattleman's magazine by Dr. Jaborek.

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise in:

### Animal Welfare Dairy Management

**Marianne Murawski**  
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Educator

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**36 episodes in 3  
seasons**

**Season 4 about to  
launch**

### Michigan Ag Ideas to Grow With

This was a weeklong virtual program that encompassed many aspects of the agricultural industry and offered a full array of educational sessions for farmers and homeowners interested in food production and those considering agricultural endeavors. This program featured a variety of tracks focused on livestock production, fruit and vegetable production, sustainability, soil health and irrigation, horticulture, and home gardening. A track was also offered for youth participants. Two sessions of the animal agriculture track were led by Dr. Jeannine Schweihofer who presented on direct marketing meat to consumers, and Dr. Jaborek who presented on beef nutrition for small scale beef producers. Phil Kaatz, Lapeer County Field Crops Educator, presented three times on alfalfa pests, cover crops, and farm stress.

### Community Outreach

As a new member of the community, Dr. Jaborek has been trying to introduce himself to the community. He has had the pleasure of meeting with a few feedlot producers in the area and hopes to meet many more. He advises anyone interested in meeting, scheduling a farm visit, or with cattle feeding questions to contact him. Dr. Jaborek has also been able to help collaborate with other people in the community to discuss beef cattle production at Project Red with 4<sup>th</sup> grade youth and with people at the Sanilac County fair. He has also helped serve his community by distributing food at a local food truck in Applegate and help lead at a local youth empowerment camp in Sanilac County.

### Virtual Coffee Break with MSU Extension Dairy Team

Since the beginning of 2020, the Michigan State University Extension Dairy Team has released 3 seasons of podcasts. The topics these podcasts have covered LEAN farm management, dairy farming in other counties, Corn silage management, antibiotic use, metabolic diseases, calf raising, getting a loan, beef and dairy crosses, parlor performance and teat dips just to name a few. There have been a total of 36 episodes and season 4 with another 11 will be released this fall. These episodes have had a total of 3,071 downloads. These episodes have had 75.6% of the plays have been in the USA and 41.9% in Michigan. The thumb area accounts for 9.71% of the total plays of these episodes.

These podcasts are designed as conversations lasting less than half an hour that can be listened any time. The recorded podcasts are perfect for busy farmers who can catch the Coffee Break meeting at their convenience. The series is also available as a podcast on all major podcast channels like Apple Podcast, Google Podcast and Spotify.

### On-farm Training Opportunities

Michigan State University Dairy Team has continued to provide training for farm employees and managers in the areas of: Milking, Calf Care, Maternity Management, Animal Handling, Down Cow Management, Euthanasia and Dairy feeder development. These trainings worked well in 2020 and 2021 because they already target small groups and happen on the farm. They can take place elsewhere but are most conveniently taught on an individual farm for that farm's protocols and needs. These trainings are offered statewide and in English and Spanish.

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

MSU Extension provides trusted, scientific-based education and expertise in:

### Meat Quality & Safety

**Jeannine Schwehofer,**  
Senior Meat Quality  
Extension Educator

Office:  
200 Grand River Ave.  
Suite 102  
Port Huron , MI 48060

Phone: 810-989-6935

Email:  
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### Food Label Claim Infographics

Understanding food label claims can help consumers make informed choices when making food purchasing decisions. Food labels have a myriad of logos, claims and production information. There is so much information on food packaging that consumers have a difficult time digesting it all. "Free Range", "Organic", "Natural", Certified Humane", "No Antibiotics Added" - these are just a few commonly found claims on food labels! Label claims can be government defined and approved, third-party certified, or be a claim made by the manufacturer or producer and verified through documentation. Two different agencies, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA), oversee government approved and regulated claims to ensure that the claims are truthful and not misleading. Being able to decipher information on food labels is important to making sound purchasing decisions. A team of educators formed with the focus of creating educational resources to help clear up food label confusion. To date, the series includes infographics about: Animal Raising Label Claims, Antibiotic Label Claims, Dairy Milk Label Claims, Food Product Dates, Hormone Label Claims, Natural and Organic Label Claims, Food Labels and GMO Label Claims.

The infographics are similar, but different and all of the them are colorful, educational, reproducible and sharable and are available at

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/search?tag=food%20label%20claims>.

Several of them have been translated to Spanish as well.

### Youth Marketing Resources

Marketing resources for youth with livestock projects were developed to use as youth created alternative marketing plans as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. As a result of numerous county fairs being cancelled in the summer of 2020, youth with livestock, poultry and rabbit projects were left scrambling to develop a marketing plan. Direct marketing of meat and poultry requires that certain regulations are followed depending on the method of marketing used and species (livestock vs. poultry/rabbits). The collaborative efforts of MSU Extension personnel established resources specific to each species and packaged the options together in four different factsheets that were created.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/youth\\_business\\_guide\\_to\\_success/4-H-Animal-Project-Marketing-Resources/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/youth_business_guide_to_success/4-H-Animal-Project-Marketing-Resources/) The resources are applicable for direct marketing at any time, not only during the pandemic.

### Meat Processor Assistance

Food safety is a critical component to producing safe and wholesome food. Meat processors in Tuscola County regularly receive technical assistance from MSU Extension. This includes assistance with humane animal handling and stunning training, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Specialized Retail Meat Processing Variance, product labeling, and general food safety and processing.

Many food processors are required to have food safety plans, including Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) or Preventive Controls for Human Foods. These important industry trainings that provide participants with a certificate at the end of the course were hosted by MSU Extension and co-taught by Dr. Jeannine Schwehofer and team of Campus specialists including Dr. Les Bourquin, Tina Conklin, Dr. Kirk Dolan and Jason Hofman.



# Ensuring Strong Communities

**MSU Extension understands that building civic engagement and healthy economic structures leads to greater opportunities and stronger communities.**

## **Serving the State of Michigan**

### **Andy Northrop**

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200 Grand River #102  
Port Huron, MI 48060

- Sustainable Tourism Development
- First Impressions: Tourism Assessments
- Planning for Tourism
- Community Vitality
- Leadership and Facilitation



## **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities 2021**

*Resilience, Recovery, Reconnecting*

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) conference is a community development program designed for stakeholders, economic developers, businesses, local government, educators, and nonprofits to create a network that increases a community's potential for entrepreneurship. The CEC program normally culminates in an annual in-person conference held every October in towns across Michigan where participants attend seminars in downtown businesses to share ideas and learn best practices.

CEC offers programs on a wide variety of topics from:

- microbusiness loans,
- geofencing,
- food systems,
- building strong tribal nations,
- civic and community engagement, and...
- the intersection of design and crime prevention.



## **Sustainable Living and Leadership Series Launched for 2021!**



Launched in 2020, This multi-topic series is designed and hosted by Extension services at Michigan State University, Purdue University and the University of Florida. Together, experts from all three institutions provide national attendees with a plethora of knowledge, including real-world examples, to help strengthen critical thinking skills related to future actions and decision making with sustainability in mind. Series topics will include *sustainability 101*, *energy*, *water* and *food*, and will explore how these interconnected systems function together and independently.

Participants:

- Explore issues of energy, water, food and more
- Learn about sustainability through a "systems lens"
- Share with and learn from other community sustainability leaders
- Delve into our economy, consumer choices and global impacts
- Discover sustainable living actions you can take in your home and community.



# Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

## Serving the State of Michigan

### Goals of our tourism program are to:

- \* Increase awareness of assets and opportunities
- \* Increase knowledge of best practices, trends and changes
- \* Develop new leadership roles, opportunities and action items
- \* Foster new collaborations and plans among stakeholders to advance community-driven tourism



## Transforming Michigan Tourism by Ensuring Safe, Accessible and Welcoming Communities

The Tourism Team of Michigan State University Extension is proud to offer the upcoming online seminar series “Transforming Michigan Tourism by Ensuring Safe, Accessible and Welcoming Communities.” This series will focus on the basic tenets of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and how a community can more effectively make itself a welcoming destination for all travelers.

Future sessions will focus on building strong and mutually-beneficial tourism partnerships with diverse communities in your area while attracting new travelers, and a case study of community and tourism development by and for diverse groups in Detroit.



## 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:

- 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.
- Ongoing assessments of food pantry capacity in all five counties
- Greater access to affordable, safe, and diverse food
- Agriculture and food literacy

The Council is in the final stages of becoming a private non-profit organization. An Executive board along with Joe Bixler have developed the necessary documents to become a 501c3. There will be an opportunity to become a general member. We anticipate finalizing the process in April and announce an inaugural organizational meeting in May or June. We are in the process of creating a roster of those whom would have interest in serving on the board. We are searching for a minimum of two-three members from each of the five Thumb Counties. If you would have interest in serving please contact Joe Bixler at [jbixler4227@gmail.com](mailto:jbixler4227@gmail.com).

## Ensuring Strong Communities, continued



### Tuscola Food Access Collaborative and Thumb Blessing Boxes

Food access was, and still is, among the many repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure everyone has access to food and personal hygiene and cleaning products, Thumb Blessing Boxes has worked with over a dozen communities around Huron and Tuscola Counties to place boxes filled with these essential items. Those in need can visit the boxes and take whatever they may need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, no questions asked. Community members who are able are asked to donate items to the box to keep it stocked. The slogan of Thumb Blessing Boxes is "Take what you need, leave what you can. Above all, be blessed".

A team of organizations in Tuscola County collaborated to place a Thumb Blessing Box on a Thumbbody Express Bus, establishing the first "mobile mini food pantry" in the area. The Human Development Commission, Caro Farmer's Market, Tuscola ISD, and MSU Extension worked together to create a system to keep the box stocked and sustainable. With nearly 500 riders per quarter on the "Blessing Box Bus", this resource is helping many community members in need make ends meet. The group is working toward a goal to have a Blessing Box on each Thumbbody Bus.



Thumb Blessing Boxes can be located at the following locations:

- Kemp Park under the pavilion-corner of Bay City Forestville and 25 in Unionville
- Cass City Rotary Park by the alley way-6530 Main Street Cass City, MI 48726
- Fostoria Post Office entry way - 9301 Foster St. Fostoria, MI 48435
- Caro Area District Library - 840 W. Frank St. Caro, MI 48723
- Castamore Zanglotti's Restaurant - 2034 Main St. Fairgrove, MI 48733
- Trinity United Methodist Church - 513 Washington St. Sebawaing, MI 48759
- Vassar City Hall - 287 E. Huron Ave. Vassar, MI 48768 (back parking lot by police dept entrance)
- Gagetown Gazebo at intersection of Bay City-Forestville Rd and Lincoln St. / Walsh Rd.
- Thumbbody Express Bus #33 (you can also donate items to "restock box" at Caro Farmers Market on Saturdays 8 am - 1 pm)



## Extension Professionals Serving Tuscola County

### Staff Located in Tuscola County Office:

Name	Role	Email
Kaleb Ortner	Educator, Field Crops	ortnerka@msu.edu
Kris Swartzendruber	Educator, Disease Prevention/ Social Emotional Health	swartze6@msu.edu
Katie Cooper	4-H County Program Coordinator	coope305@msu.edu
Karly Creguer	Educator, District 9-10 Supervising & Staff Development	oberski9@msu.edu
Nola Auernhamer	Community Nutrition Instructor	auernha5@msu.edu
Cathy Patterson	Office Support Staff	patte199@msu.edu

### Additional MSU Extension Staff Serving Tuscola County:

Name	Role	Email
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Jerry Johnson	District 10 Director	johnjer@msu.edu
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Jeannine Schwehofer	Senior Educator, Meat Quality	grobbej@msu.edu
Mike Staton	Senior Educator, Soybeans / Field Crops	staton@msu.edu

#### MISSION:

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

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# DISTRICT 10 ADVISORY BOARD

Serving the following counties: HURON, LAPEER, SANILAC, ST. CLAIR AND TUSCOLA

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Jerry Johnson	District 10	St. Clair	<a href="mailto:johnjer@msu.edu">johnjer@msu.edu</a>

## What is the purpose of the Advisory Board?

The Michigan State University Extension District 10 Advisory Board purpose is as follows:

**Advocacy:** Intentionally informing residents and elected officials about the achievements of MSU Extension as well as the educational capabilities and partnership opportunities available.

**Vision:** Providing MSU Extension with the key insights pertaining to your geographic and socio/economic areas of residence, employment and volunteerism.

**Pathways:** Using your influence to open doors for potential partners/customers/collaborators of MSU Extension for the purpose of growing influence and better communities.

**Needs Identifications:** Providing insight into areas of deficiency or opportunity in which MSU Extension educational programming can address and benefit residents.

**Mentoring:** Providing honest, constructive feedback to the MSU Extension District Director on methods of enhancing personal and organizational engagement, involvement and effectiveness.

### Food Safety Hotline

Do you have questions about food expiration Dates? Want to know how long leftovers will last? The MSU Extension food safety hotline can help answer these types of questions.

**Hotline: 1-877-643-9882**

Questions are answered by Cooperative Extension, University staff and volunteers from across the United States

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>



### Garden or Yard Questions?

Visit the Gardening in Michigan website: [www.migarden.msu.edu](http://www.migarden.msu.edu). View tip sheets on smart soils and other smart gardening topics OR call

**MSU Extension's toll free  
Hotline: 1-888-678-3464**