

# Antrim County

## 2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

MSU Extension has been partnering with counties across the state of Michigan for over 100 years. Last year our organization enjoyed celebrating this milestone with our county stakeholders and other key partners commemorating the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Smith Lever Act. Looking back over the past 100 years, our commitment to residents and counties continues to remain the same. We will continue to work within Antrim County addressing critical needs each and every day with individuals, families and communities.



This annual report features the programs offered to Antrim County residents. It highlights our foundational programs like agriculture and 4-H as well as expanding programs like fostering strong communities and health and nutrition education. I think you will be very pleased with the excellent programs provided to residents of Antrim County.

Please let me know if you need additional information on any of the topics covered in this brief overview of our work in 2014. As always, thank you for your continued support of the partnership between MSU Extension and Antrim County.

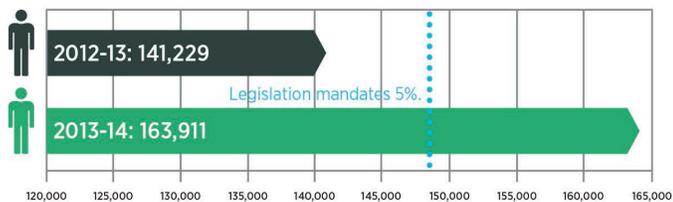
Sincerely,  
Jennifer Berkey, Interim District 3 Coordinator

## MEASURING IMPACT

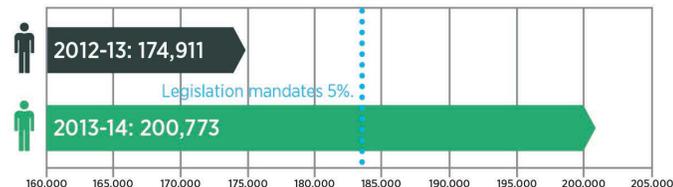
### CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

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<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN ANTRIM COUNTY .....</b>	<b>1,381</b>

15% Growth in Adults Participating in MSU Extension Programs



16% Growth in Youth Participating in MSU Extension Programs



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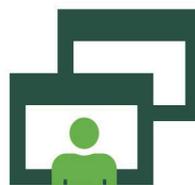
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### MSU Extension's Expanded Digital Reach



2 million visitors  
viewed more than  
4 million pages



560,000 topic  
newsletters distributed  
to more than 8,500  
email addresses



Nearly 2,000  
Facebook and  
more than 1,700  
Twitter followers

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# DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active. 4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

Our **volunteers** are at the core of our 4-H programs as they give of their time and talent to the youth of our communities. Here in Antrim County, over this past year, we have increased our number of volunteers serving our communities by almost 20%.

We have also seen an increase in **clubs and project areas** over this past year. We now have a cooking club, cloverbud club (5-8 year old group), and outdoor adventure and wilderness club. Some of our other project areas in clubs include: archery, dog care and agility, gardening, the care and raising of small and large animals, market animals, lego robotics, sewing and embroidery, career exploration and workforce preparation.

All of our clubs are based on the **experiential learning model** where youth participate in specific program areas through the learn-by-doing approach. In addition to gaining valuable content knowledge, this model teaches our 4-H members critical life skills such as goal-setting, record-keeping, critical thinking as well as personal and interpersonal skills such as leadership, teamwork, character, communication, self-esteem and responsibility. The primary purpose of 4-H clubs is to support the positive development of each youth participant. The club structure is designed to help volunteers and members build significant and lasting relationships.



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn leadership and decision-making skills in that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.



[4h.msue.msu.edu](http://4h.msue.msu.edu)

## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Antrim County 4-H and Mancelona Public Schools continue in a partnership with the [Lego Robotics](#) program. Students had the opportunity to learn in the classroom during the school year and 4-H will be offering programs during the 2015 summer months for interested area youth.

[4-H Spring Achievement](#) is an annual event where club members have the opportunity to showcase the projects they have been working on over the winter months in their clubs. Each participating member is interviewed by an evaluator about their specific project area. A significant number of the questions focus on life skills and personal growth resulting from what they have learned in doing their project and also about their experiences belonging to a club. Many of our leaders and parents have commented on watching a child's confidence really blossom over time, partly due to opportunities such as these.



4-H member speaking to a family in the community about her project.

The interview experience serves as great preparation for future interviews and life experiences to come!

Club members have opportunities to attend [local, state-wide, national and international events and trainings](#). We had a number of volunteers and members attend the *Beef, Sheep and Swine Teen and Adult Leaders* workshop at the Kettunen Center this year that received very positive reviews by attendees. We also have a group planning on attending [Exploration Days](#) on MSU's Campus this coming summer. This spring, here in Antrim County, we will be offering our adult and teen leaders the *Youth-Adult Partnerships* workshop put on by the MSU Extension's Leadership and Civic Engagement team.

Leadership skills are also learned and developed through various activities such as taking part in 4-H club meetings, presenting information at various events, designing and implementing activities for younger youth and carrying out community service projects which all of our clubs engage in over the course of the 4-H year.

These 4-H members were awarded Superior Ribbons for their efforts at this year's Spring Achievement event.



# KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these 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.

## Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed)** provides nutrition education to income-eligible adults and children. This program focuses on improving dietary quality, increasing physical activity while stretching food dollars. The ultimate goal of these programs is to promote healthy weight maintenance and obesity prevention. During the past year in Antrim County, 160 adults and 440 youth were reached through nutrition education classes at various venues in the county.

One of the many classes MSU Extension staff teach each year is through a partnership called **Project FRESH**. In collaboration with the Antrim County Health Department, MSU Extension nutrition staff provide nutrition education to families involved in the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) on the benefits of including more fruits and vegetables in their diet. Coupons were provided to these participants to purchase locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables from Antrim County farmer's markets through Project FRESH. These coupons were redeemed at the farm market for over \$3,000 in funds for produce grown by local farmers.

Nutrition education classes make a difference in lives of adults and youth in Antrim County! Here are a few impacts achieved through MSUE nutrition education classes.

### Impacts with Adults:

- » 83% showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices like planning meals, making healthy food choices or reading food labels.
- » 74% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practice like planning meals, comparing prices or using grocery lists.
- » 92% of participants in Project FRESH learned new ways to incorporate more fruit and vegetables into their meals and snacks.



MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs teach adults how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe.

Cooking Matters participants learned new skills in their class series held at Grand Traverse Industries in Mancelona.



Coupons were redeemed at Antrim County farm markets for over \$3,000 in funds for produce grown by local farmers.

## Keeping People Healthy, continued

First grade student at Mancelona Elementary School with her MyPlate foods.



### Impacts with Youth:

- » 94% of the teachers reported that the children increased in their awareness of the importance of good nutrition.
- » 69% reported that the children were making healthier meal and snack choices.
- » 84% reported the children were willing to try new foods.
- » 73% reported the children were eating more fruits.
- » 67% reported the children were eating more vegetables.

“A gentleman in nutrition education series decided to take the class as something to do with his wife. Each week he left with new insight into what it means to eat healthy. He shared with me that since taking this course he eats more leafy greens each day. He used to eat a lot of trail mix during his breaks at work, but has substituted leafy greens and apples now. Having done so, he's lost 10 pounds. He has also implemented the concept of filling up on leafy greens for his main course. A week after the class, I saw him in the grocery store; his wife gave him a list of items to pick up on his way home from work. They are still cooking together and remind each other of the things they learned in class.”

- Lori Eccles, MSUE Nutrition Program Instructor

## Teaching residents about food safety

Supporting MSU Extension food safety education programs helps prevent food borne illnesses and ensures a safer food supply for consumers – whether that is at food retailers, restaurants, farmers’ markets or community meals served by organizations. MSU Extension food safety education programs train participants to prevent incidents of foodborne illness associated with unsafe food handling practices, which results in fewer medical expenses, fewer food recalls, and less temporary or permanent closures of food businesses by local health departments. Costs of illness, recalls, and food business closures are more expensive from a public health perspective than taking an inexpensive class to learn how to prepare food safely and preserve food correctly. Residents in Antrim County participated in a variety of food safety classes.

Antrim County residents indicated that as a result of attending food presentation workshops:

- » 96% will follow research based/tested recipes when canning food at home.
- » 97% will properly use processing techniques to safely can low and high acid foods.
- » 98% will use correct processing times to safely can low and high acid foods.

Jennifer Berkey’s  
MSUE News Articles

As a result of MSU Extension food safety programs, individuals now use safer food handling, preparation, storage and preservation techniques.



## Keeping People Healthy, continued

### Working to improve social and emotional health

MSU Extension addresses violence and bullying prevention through its focus on social and emotional health, with the overarching goal of helping young people and adults learn to foster safe, affirming and inclusive relationships and settings that are free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. By helping people learn safer and healthier ways to interact with others, MSU Extension benefits communities through decreased mental, emotional, social and economic costs associated with violence in communities. During 2014, MSU Extension's social and emotional health educational programs reached a total of 3,756 participants statewide.

MSU Extension played a vital role, in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Taskforce, planning, recruiting/promoting, and collecting registration for the **3rd Annual Antibullying Conference** held October 17, 2014 at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Over 200 adults and 200 students from 20 schools across the Traverse Bay Area ISD and Manistee ISD regions participated in the conference. This year's featured presenters came from the *Not in Our Town/Not in Our School* movement. Partners in the Anti-Bullying Taskforce include Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Northwestern Michigan College, Disability Network of Northern Michigan, TBA ISD, Michigan State Police Troopers Association, Women's Resource Center, Third Level and TCAPS.

Every day across our communities, many young people are faced with feeling unsafe, disconnected, unsupported and harmed because of bullying, harassment and other forms of violence. **Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments** is an MSU Extension initiative designed to help communities learn about and address these issues. Be SAFE offers a variety of educational resources to help communities reduce and prevent bullying behaviors while promoting healthy social and emotional learning and development. The initiative focuses on helping adults consider ways to do this within all of the settings where young people live, learn, grow and develop – including out-of-school time settings. Be SAFE resources include the Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments curriculum and face-to-face and online workshops for adults.

The Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments curriculum is designed for adults to use with adolescents ages 11 to 14 in a variety of out-of-school settings, such as 4-H, afterschool programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts and faith-based programs. The comprehensive curriculum, which can also be used within middle school settings, includes more than 30 engaging and experiential activities designed for group learning. Michigan State University Extension provides workshops about how to use the curriculum, as well as evaluation support or groups interested in identifying the impacts of using the curriculum within their settings.





## Keeping People Healthy, continued

Three settings involving 92 participants used the Be SAFE curriculum, and 39 youth completed the Be SAFE Survey, a tool designed to measure changes in their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Participants showed positive changes (30% and higher) in the following areas:

- » Participants were more likely to agree that both adults and young people are responsible for making sure settings are safe for kids – and that they should work together to create safe environments that are free from bullying.
- » Participants had a greater understanding about ways in which stereotypes about other people can affect how we treat them.
- » Participants had a greater understanding about the difference between being a bystander and being an ally during bullying situations.
- » Participants had a greater understanding of things they to do in situations where they don't feel safe.

In addition, many participants indicated that they had developed new ways to take care of themselves as a result of what they had learned, as well as new ways to provide support for those who are being bullied. Several also indicated that they had seen positive changes in their group as a result of their involvement with Be SAFE. Selected responses to these questions include:

- » I have found more ways to self-regulate.
- » When I see people getting bullied I make sure to tell an adult and help the situation.
- » I have tried to stick up for people who are being bullied.
- » I've seen that people are starting to socialize with other classmates they don't always talk to.
- » I have noticed a lot less hurtful things going on at school.
- » I've learned not to post certain things on the internet. Also that some things you say may hurt someone in a way that you didn't think would hurt them.

“I feel that the Be SAFE curriculum has opened the lines of communications. Students now know more than ever that the adults are here for them! They feel more comfortable. Be SAFE has affected bullying issues in our group by bringing more awareness to the issue. It has opened our students' mind to different ways they can help. They have also had great discussions about the different forms of bullying. Overall, we are very pleased with the Be SAFE curriculum and look forward to seeing what next year's club does with it!”  
- Adult working with one of the Be SAFE groups



## Keeping People Healthy, continued

### Preventing and managing chronic disease

Chronic diseases are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health issues. Compared to the national average, Michigan adults suffer from more risk factors (obesity, hypertension, and high cholesterol) that contribute to chronic disease.

Michigan State University Extension disease prevention and management programs work to promote health and wellness by reducing and managing the incidence and impacts of chronic diseases among Michigan residents and communities. These community-based sessions provide participants with proven strategies for improved dietary quality, management of chronic health conditions and prevention of chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. In 2014, these programs reached more than 6,000 adults throughout Michigan.

According to the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, obesity and diabetes management/prevention were identified as a top priority among stakeholders in the five-county Northwestern Michigan region. The County Health Rankings, a measure used to better understand the factors that influence health, Antrim County ranks 64 in health outcomes and 32 in health factors. The rankings provide a snapshot of a community's health and a starting point for investigating and focusing ways to promote health.

A new Extension Educator was hired to provide programming specific to chronic disease prevention and management (DPM). Sarah Eichberger MPH, RD is based in Grand Traverse County and will serve a six county northwestern Michigan region. Her efforts to date have been spent initiating conversations with current and potential future stakeholders, representing MSUE Health & Nutrition and supporting capacity within the DPM team to expand prevention focused programming. DPM core programmatic offerings will include the self-management program, Personal Action Towards Health (PATH) in partnership with the Area Agency on Aging, Dining with Diabetes, an interactive series designed to support healthy eating management for type 2 diabetes prevention/management, and one-time presentations specific to chronic disease prevention.

Food, Farms, and Health Conference October 10, 2014 – Food, Farms and Health, convened by local partner, Michigan Land Use Institute and organized in partnership with MSUE Disease Prevention and Management, and Munson Healthcare. Over 120 food, farm and health leaders from the NW MI region and state converged to learn, connect and take action on integrating regional food with health care and wellness. Andrea Romeyn, co-owner of Antrim county's Providence Farm was featured as a speaker – highlighting her involvement and model for employee wellness.



# SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices. Participants also learn how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and how to conserve and protect water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, and helps retain and create agricultural jobs. These measures strengthen Michigan's economy while connecting farmers to local food opportunities and global markets. In this way you help MSU Extension encourage growth in a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

**Farm Transition program** – Farm business owners in Antrim County attended three half-day workshops that took them through the steps to plan transitioning the farm business to a family successor, a non – family successor, or selling and retiring. Presenters included MSUE farm business management specialists and an attorney specializing in business succession. They were available at no charge each afternoon to meet one-on-one with families to answer additional questions.

**Tractor Safety program** – Youth are often employed in agricultural operations in Michigan. Agricultural youth workers are allowed to perform certain operations on farms as 14-15 year olds that would not be allowed in other industries, if those 14-15 year olds take a tractor safety course. Youth performing potentially hazardous jobs on farms are less likely to injure themselves if they are aware of the dangers, and are educated in proper equipment usage. A tractor safety course was offered at the Ellsworth Community High School in Ellsworth Michigan. The class was offered in conjunction with the Ag Science Teacher, but was opened to any high school student that was at least 14 years old. Curriculum for the program was developed by Purdue and was made available free of charge upon request. Students had more than the required amount of classroom education, and had ample time in the field due to a generous area producer allowing us to use multiple tractors and implements. Seventeen students took the class. A majority of students passed the written and driving course test and received a certificate of completion. Students gained first hand knowledge of farm tractors, farm implements, and how to lower the risk of injury.

## **Agriculture Labor Management Meetings**

MSU Extension partners with Farm Bureau, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Migrant Legal Services, Workforce Development Agency, Migrant Resource

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Councils, other agencies involved in agricultural labor, and grower representatives to coordinate agricultural labor management meetings across the state. Programs were held in Traverse City, Lawrence, West Olive and Hart. The programs are designed to address areas of concern identified by producers.

For the past two years, Stan Moore has provided leadership for the Labor section at the Fruit and Vegetable EXPO in Grand Rapids. 130 growers attended this breakout session which featured a program on Effective Management of Farm Employees given by Stan Moore and Phil Durst of MSU Extension.

Stan Moore and Phil Durst developed and delivered a DaireXNET Webinar on **Effective Management of Farm Employees**. Fifteen individuals tuned in and listened to the live presentation, and another 139 individuals have viewed the archived webinar.

Stan Moore and Phil Durst presented a session on Effective Management of Farm Employees at the Midwest Women in Ag Conference, hosted by Purdue University in Merrillville Indiana. The session was attended by over 30 people.

Effective Management of Farm Employees program was conducted in Bay City and Grand Rapids. Over 80 people attended this 2-day program on improving employee management on farms. Attendees were from Dairy, Turkey, Apple, and Blueberry farms. Attendees received researched based information on how to improve their labor management skills in four specific areas of labor management: Attracting good applicants, Building better teamwork, Capitalizing on your employees' desire to learn, and Achieving high quality performance.

An **Employee Management program** was recorded for use in the Institute of Agricultural Technology program led by Brian Matchett of MSU. This program provides an associates degree in agricultural technology in cooperation with Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City.

### Dairy Production

Michigan State University Extension offered 11 meetings across the state in September 2014 to help dairy producers evaluate the impact of the new **Dairy Margin Protection Program** (part of the new 2014 Farm Bill) on their farm businesses. An additional three meetings were held in November 2014, including one live webcast. Dairy producers learned what the Dairy Margin Protection Program is and how it will work, saw a demonstration of the online Dairy Decision Tool Software, and learned about the potential impacts on farm profitability. Dr. Christopher Wolf, MSU Dairy Economist, along with MSU Extension Dairy Educators and Farm Management Educators taught these 2-hour workshops. USDA Farm Services Agency personnel were also present at the meetings to help answer questions. Meetings were held in West Branch, Cadillac,





## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Rudyard, Hillsdale, Sandusky, Bad Axe, Allegan, West Olive, Fremont, St. Johns, Menominee, Alpena, East Lansing, and Grand Rapids. The program was also video taped and uploaded with a link on the MSU Dairy Team website [dairyteam.msu.edu](http://dairyteam.msu.edu). 437 farmers attended one of the sessions.

Dairy producers, dairy farm employees, and industry professionals received timely updates about topics important to managing today's dairy farms at the **Focus on Dairy Production** meetings offered across the state by the Michigan State University Extension Dairy Team. Five meetings were held in February and early March at Hillsdale, Grand Rapids, West Branch, Bad Axe and Falmouth.

Local veterinarians discussed the importance of colostrum management and calf health and their ultimate impact on the profit potential of the milking herd. Participants also gained knowledge about the prevalence of the bovine leukemia virus and how to minimize the disease in their dairy herds. During the afternoon portion of the meeting, dairy producers learned about keys to maximizing milk yield when using increased levels of corn silage in dairy cow diets. Animal handling tips for employee training programs also were shared with the audience. The final topics of the program were best management practices for manure handling during the winter and key components of an emergency response to manure spills.

A total of 97 dairy producers, dairy farm employees, veterinarians and agribusiness professionals participated in these 5 meetings.

Approximately 60% of the people who completed the post-meeting survey planned to make from 1 to 3 management changes on their farms. They estimated the value of those changes would be over \$365,000. The planned management changes that were most frequently listed were:

- » Improve colostrum quality and management; improved calf health
- » Animal handling training for employees; improved animal handling
- » Test for BLV; reduce risk of BLV transmission

**The Artisan Hands-On Basic Cheese Making Workshop** is a three day workshop for those who have never made cheese before and those who want to improve their skills in order to enter the cheese business. Participants learned about milk quality, ingredients, processes for making a variety of cheeses, techniques and requirements for aging cheese and planning to establish a farmstead or artisan cheese business. Speakers included Dr. John Partridge, Bill Robb, and Barb Jenness and Stan Moore. The workshop takes place at MSU's Dairy Plant and utilizes their equipment and employees to make the project "real world". 20 people participated in this year's class. One individual reported starting a new business and three other class members indicated interest in starting a business.

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

### Fruit Production

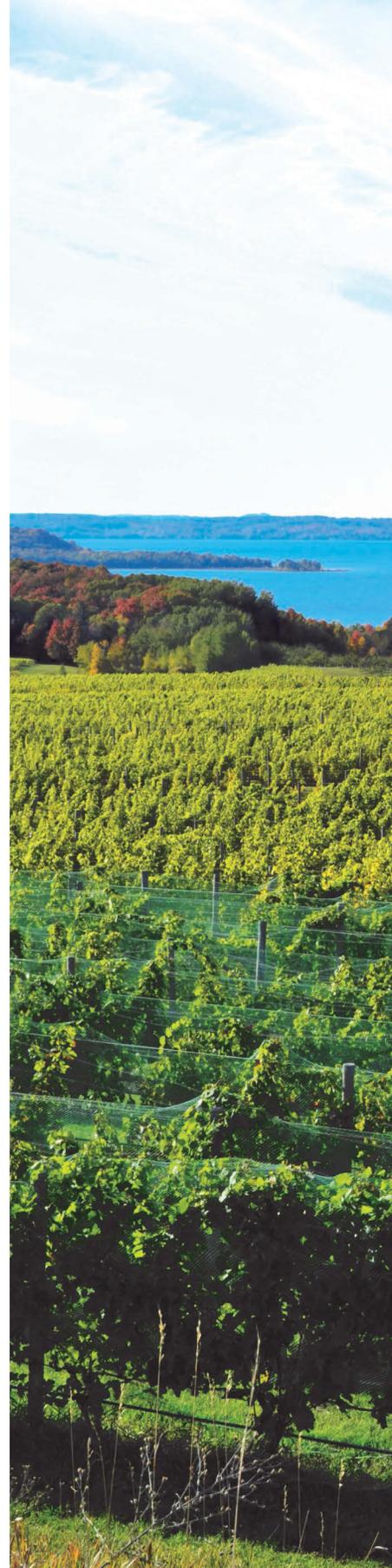
**Northwest Michigan Orchard & Vineyard Show** – The 2015 show was very well attended with over 320 registrations. Sessions covered a broad range of topics pertinent to tree fruit, grape and saskatoon berry production. The wine grape educational session was very well attended as was the saskatoon session.

**Great Lakes Fruit & Vegetable Expo** – MSUE educators from northwest Michigan are involved in the planning and facilitation of this annual December event held in Grand Rapids. Many northwest Michigan growers attend to obtain information and make contacts that benefit their farming operations.

Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center (NWMHRC) staff and the MSU fruit team hosted the **Great Lakes Fruit Workers conference** in Traverse City. The meeting's location rotates among cities in Michigan, New York and Ontario, allowing host states to highlight their fruit growing regions, and to provide the GLFW with first-hand experiences on regional challenges in fruit production. Comprised of researchers, Extension educators and consultants, the GLFW is tasked with the following: identify crop management priorities for fruit producers, foster collaborations between Great Lakes researchers, Extension educators, and growers, develop innovative crop management techniques, and share new integrated pest management technologies, management guides, pest alert systems and outreach efforts that result from these collaborations.

**Extension's response to cold injury in area vineyards** – Following the severe cold injury to grapevines in the Grand Traverse region due to the 2014 “polar vortex” weather events, numerous reports, articles, radio and television interviews and other form of communication were used to educate growers about vine recovery strategies and keep the public informed about the health of the local wine industry.

**Weathering the Climate: Cultivation and Technology in Grape Production Conference** – This program came out of a new collaborative effort between MSU Extension, MSU's Institute of Applied Technology and Northwestern Michigan College. It featured experts in agricultural technology, geography, horticulture, and unmanned aerial systems. Over 90 participants attended the full-day program that included lectures, grower panel discussions and vineyard demonstrations.



**Weathering the Climate Conference attendees explored potential uses for drones in grape production.**

**[Duke Elsner's MSUE News Articles](#)**

## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

**Precision Orchard Management Workshop** – At this interactive workshop, MSU tree fruit experts demonstrated pruning techniques for high-density sweet cherries at grower farms and the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center (NWMHRC) and demonstrated precision orchard management techniques in high-density apples. Precision management includes several management practices, such as pruning, thinning, fertilizing, irrigating and harvest timing, as all of these decisions will affect fruit size and crop value.

The 2014 **Tree Fruit IPM (Integrated Pest Management)** kick-off event in April hosted tree fruit growers from NW MI and started off the season's IPM educational seminar series. Weekly Tree Fruit IPM Update meetings provided assistance and services from MSU Extension to tree fruit growers over the course of the 2014 season.

### Horticultural Research Efforts

A summit was held by MSUE at the NWMHRC to solicit industry input on research and outreach needed to successfully manage **Spotted wing Drosophila (SWD)**, an invasive insect pest that poses serious threats to Michigan's fruit production. SWD populations have increased dramatically in many fruit crops across the state, including cherries, and a sustainable and effective management plan is the top priority of the Michigan Cherry Committee. Six grant proposals were developed based on priorities set by this summit.

The NWMHRC was awarded approximately \$250,000 from granting agencies that supported on-farm tree fruit horticulture and pest management related research. Several of these projects were conducted in collaboration with local tree fruit grower cooperators and the NWMHRC, MSU Extension, and MSU AgBioResearch; research included on-farm monitoring/trapping programs of pest species to facilitate early detection and effective management programs, and pest and disease management trials. Projects also include pollination in tree fruits, apple and cherry diseases, pruning and training, systems management, irrigation, and various other trials.

Research staff manage the SWD colony for efficacy bioassay trials. Working together to eliminate invasive species will be essential to lessen the loss of the Michigan tree fruit crops in the future.



**NWMHRC:**  
[agbioresearch.msu.edu](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/nwmihort)  
[/centers/nwmihort](http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/nwmihort)



Collecting pollinators  
for identification.

# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES

## Cultivating entrepreneurs

For the past 15 years, growers, food enthusiasts, community members and organizational partners have been braving what is typically a long and snowy drive in late January to attend the [Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference](#). What the original MSU Extension organizers likely didn't foresee at the time was how incredibly popular this annual event would become. With over 1000 attendees annually, it has become the preeminent small farm conference in Michigan providing education and resources for small and mid-scale growers in the post-20<sup>th</sup> century world of Agriculture.

From Joel Salatin, the Conference's first keynote speaker and self-proclaimed 'environmentalist, capitalist and lunatic farmer'...to Jeff Moyer, Elliot Coleman, Percy Schmeiser, Fred Kirschenmann, and Winona LaDuke, the Conference has featured the Country's leading growers, researchers and engaged citizen/eaters that have questioned the long-term sustainability of the industrial food system and are providing promising alternatives. The Conference planning team, which is now comprised of a collaboration of growers, University, and Community partners, continues its pursuit of cutting edge practices and practitioners. By focusing on the ecological, economic and social aspects of more community based food-systems, scores of viable, triple-bottom line businesses have been started and thousands more report the changes that they have or will make as a result of something learned at the Conference. The Institute for Sustainable Living, Art and Natural Design, (ISLAND) will convene and sponsor the 2016 Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference.

[The MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio](#) assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy. Extension educators are specially trained as innovation counselors to deliver these services to local residents. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSUE office or the client's home or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. The innovation counselor also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling, food science, and packaging assistance. Twenty six counseling sessions took place to assist nine entrepreneurs in Antrim County this year.



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[smallfarmconference.org](http://smallfarmconference.org)

[productcenter.msu.edu](http://productcenter.msu.edu)

## Fostering Strong Communities & Businesses, continued

### Strengthening municipalities

**Northern Michigan Counties Association** brings county commissioners together from 33 counties in northern lower Michigan to learn about issues important to county government, and to share information and learn from the experiences of others. Recent topics include: cooperative efforts between counties, townships, road commissions, agencies and private owners; tribal sovereignty and cooperative efforts with counties; county committee structures; Medicaid PIHP and regional entities; personal property tax and transportation and the impacts of these issues on county government services. Monthly meetings also include a legislative update from the Michigan Association of Counties.

**Zoning Administrator Certification** – A zoning administrator is often the first or only contact a developer or new business has with local government. That makes the zoning administrator important to a community's development and its public image. This series of eight 3-hour classes cover the technical, legal, pragmatic and organizational aspects of zoning administration. The program includes a final exam and graduates receive a certificate of completion. Josh Vey of Torch Lake Township participated in this very rigorous program and passed, making him a Certified Zoning Administrator in February of 2015.

A panel discussion during New County Commissioner Training included Antrim County Administrator Pete Garwood.



**New County Commissioner Workshops** Since 1968, MSU Extension, in partnership with the Michigan Association of Counties, has conducted the New County Commissioner Workshops following the biennial election of commissioners. The program offers information and learning opportunities on county structure and process, budgeting and finance, county administration, courts, and more. Antrim County participated in the program in 2014.

MSU Extension educators also held the following **Government & Public Policy trainings** in and around Antrim County this year:

- » Streamlining Zoning – training on ways to make zoning ordinances easier to understand and follow
- » Open Meeting Act Workshop: How to Comply with the Michigan OMA
- » Placemaking training and strategic planning
- » Webinar training on a wide variety of topics including right to farm act, wireless communications, urban design.

## Fostering Strong Communities & Businesses, continued

### Supporting communities through facilitative leadership

**Bellaire Public Library** – The Bellaire Public Library Board and Librarian discussed and prioritized six key issues during a session facilitated by MSU Extension Educator John Amrhein. Action on at least five of the topics will be ongoing throughout 2015, and began with preparation for a budget meeting immediately following the planning session.

**Ellsworth Ellebration** – This annual volunteer-run festival is celebrated by all who live in, grew up in, or simply love the Ellsworth community. Several of its long-time organizers were unavailable to help with the 2015 event, leaving opportunity for new individuals to get involved and help shape the event's future. MSU Extension Educator Bethany Prykucki facilitated this year's initial community meeting and helped the group move through the decision-making process to ensure another successful celebration that will show off what makes this small, rural village special - its people and sense of community.

### Making the most of our natural assets

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

Through research, education and outreach, **Michigan Sea Grant** is dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and coastal resources. Sea Grant staff engage partners on projects designed to foster science-based decisions that promote vibrant, livable communities that offer opportunities for economic growth while preserving our natural resources.

In October of 2014, Michigan Sea Grant co-hosted the **7th annual Freshwater Summit** at the NMC Great Lakes Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Educator Mark Breederland gave lake levels rebound talk to a sold-out crowd of 175 attendees, including a large number from Antrim County's Chain of Lakes. Other topics covered included a sea lamprey update, climate change integrated assessment, and keynote from the DEQ Office of Great Lakes.



Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

**Michigan Sea Grant:**  
[miseagrant.umich.edu](http://miseagrant.umich.edu)

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