



Gratiot County 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



\$6,169,492 total economic impact in Gratiot County



1,490 youth participated in 4-H, early childhood, in school, or after school programs



MSU Extension website received 3,993 page views by Gratiot County residents, the most page views were of 4-H pages



1,436 Gratiot County residents participated in 244 different MSUE programs In 2022

100

MSU Extension has served Gratiot County over 100 years

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Gratiot County Residents took advantage of MSU Extension programming from all four MSU Extension institutes in 2022. The following pages contain just a sample of the program highlights from the County's participation in MSU Extension's Agriculture and Agribusiness (AABI); Health and Nutrition (HNI); Community, Food and Environment (CFEI); and the Children and Youth Institute (CYI). During this period, Over 1,400 Gratiot County residents participated in 244 different in-person or online programs. In addition, 4-H youth participated in club activity and projects leading up to the 2022 Gratiot County Fair For Youth. Your local MSU Extension staff and the statewide network of Educators worked through local partners to bring the university's research and resources directly to our County residents.



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Program Highlights

FARM MANAGEMENT

Roger Betz, Farm Business Management Educator, assists farmers, businesses, industries, families and individuals to improve lives and achieve their goals through an educational process that applies management, production and economic knowledge to critical issues. Roger meets with local farm producers enrolled in the MSUE Tel-Farm Record system to manage their taxable income. In addition, forty-three mid-Michigan farm families met individually with Roger in 2022 to develop their business's tax management strategy for the current year. On average, the tax savings was \$33,775 per family totaling \$1,452,326 benefit for the effort. Roger also assists with developing tools and resources for producers to make informed business decisions as well as to make important decisions related to the successful transfer of business skills, responsibilities, and assets to the next generation.



Educator, Roger Betz, gives a report to the Michigan senate agricultural committee.

MANAGING FARM STRESS

Farm family stress continues to be significant. Farm family members that do not know or understand their business financial indicators causes stress. In some cases, some of the most profitable farms can have the most stress. Our farm stress educators discuss the farm's situation. Relationships can be very challenged on the family farm. Enter the critical life-changing decisions that can face a farm and the need for outside professional evaluation and assistance is imperative. In 2022, MSU Extension delivered 39 presentations and educational programs to over 1,200 participants; hosted agribusiness and farm financial decision-making sessions with 36 farmers; received more than 25,000 individual visits to the Managing Farm Stress website; and trained 17 farmers in adult Mental Health First Aid.



MSU Extension recognizes that with farming comes emotional stress. www.canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress/

FIELD CROPS SERVICES

Annually, research events and field days in MSU Extension District 8 showcase research and education around field crops for growers in the North Central Region. In 2022, educator Mike Staton and the field crops team conducted field trials and prepared a report that was mailed directly to more than 11,000 soybean producers in late December and early January. The team also conducted 6 in-person soybean meetings in January 2022. At an event held at Agribusiness in St. Johns, MI professionals and farmers alike were able to visit the MSU Extension booth with a rainfall simulator and cover crops growing in tubes. 2022 was the first season we decided to have live cover crops growing in 4 ft deep tubes. It matched what was planted in the field next to the display, allowing visitors to see both the above and below ground perspective of what a cover crop is doing.



Michigan Soybean On-farm Research program is a partnership between MSU Extension and the Michigan Soybean Committee.

Program Highlights

ANIMAL SCIENCE LEADERS

The Gratiot County Farm Bureau hosted an RED event out at Cary Pioneer Farms, Thursday May 12th for the 4th graders of Gratiot county. This program focused on demonstrating how agriculture and animal science is thriving not only in Michigan, in Gratiot county particularly. It is well known that only about 2% of the kids in the United States live on a farm or have any access to livestock and farming today. MSU Extension Swine Educator, Casey Zangaro, shared facts about pigs and swine farmers with over 450 fourth graders from various public schools across the county. Michigan Pork Producers Association donated modern day swine barn replicas for kids to observe and see how pigs are housed.



MSU Extension Swine Educator, Casey Zangaro, visited with youth at the Gratiot County Farm Bureau RED event.

ENTREPRENEUR EDUCATION

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities is a unique MSU Extension program that partners with local businesses to provide entrepreneurial education to the attendees. The program brings in business experts and local community entrepreneurs to deliver education in a variety of settings throughout the local business community. The classrooms are within and scattered throughout local businesses. This program is only conducted once a year and the local business chosen must put together a committee and bid for the opportunity to put on the conference. The 2022 program was held in Alma, Michigan. Alma has a vibrant and growing local business community and the event was considered a success by attendees, speakers, and the local community.



The MSU Extension 2022 Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities was a great success in downtown Alma.

INNOVATION COUNSELING

In addition to being a lead for the Alma based Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities conference, Diane Longanbach serves as an Innovation Counselor for local food and natural resource businesses. In this role, she provides unlimited guidance on product and business development. Entrepreneurs and budding entrepreneurs bring their ideas to Diane and the other counselors to get insight and information on where to go, who to ask, and what to do next with their business ideas. Diane serves several counties in the capital area. Diane has helped many local and out-of-county entrepreneurs develop products, get products tested, workout labeling, production, marketing, and distribution.



MSU Extension Educator, Diane Longanbach, helped plan and carry out the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference in downtown Alma.

Program Highlights

MIND AND BODY

MSU Extension Health Educator, Holly Tiret, offered a number of online and in-person programs in 2022 that help participants with both mind and body. Holly's popular Lunch and Learns have been attended by hundreds of District 8 residents, many from Gratiot and other surrounding counties. Holly offers education on subjects including anger management, mindfulness, sleep education, caring for the caregiver, and more. All of Holly's Lunch and Learns are free and open to the public. Holly is a veteran MSU Extension educator who has recently moved from the west to the east side of the state. It was a win for our region and Holly is now housed in the Gratiot County office. As we have begun 2023, Holly's classes are in high demand and another veteran educator from District 8, Sheilah Hebert, has come along side Holly to help meet the demand.



Popular classes to help us deal with stress, anger, and poor sleep are just some of the offerings by MSU Extension Educator, Holly Tiret.

EAT HEALTHY BE ACTIVE

The adults in one of the Eat Healthy, Be Active programs arrived on the first day of class with sodas and energy drinks in hand. Ironically, one of the activities for the day was using real sugar and a measuring spoon as a visual of how many teaspoons of sugar can be found in all kinds of drinks, including soda and energy drinks. Each participant took turns counting out teaspoons of sugar and dumping it on a plate to guess how much there was in the drinks. When they saw the final results for soda and energy drinks, they were shocked. There were reminded that if they drank multiple sugary beverages in a day they would need to multiply the amount of sugar by the total number of drinks. This class chose to cut back on sugary beverages.



Eat Healthy, Be Active is one of the many programs that our community nutrition instructors use to help participants make better food choices and increase physical activity.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Our Community Nutrition Instructors work with schools, community groups, even the courts providing basic nutrition education. On one occasion this past year, Joanna Urban was greeted by a participant: "I'm telling you right now that you are not going to teach me anything about nutrition. I retired from an early education program and I was the food director. I'm only here because the program coordinator told me I had to come and it's better than sitting at home being bored." I let her know how happy I was to have her in class and that I hoped she would enjoy herself, even if she didn't learn anything new about nutrition. Throughout the class, I found the group to be good participants and open to new ideas. My reluctant participant started out rather unwilling but she slowly warmed up to the learning experience.



Consumer Nutrition Instructor, Tammy Fletcher, and the District 8 Team of instructors bring nutrition education to residents of Gratiot County.

Program Highlights

WATER QUALITY

MSU Extension works with community leaders, landowners, and industry to reduce risks of water pollution, and state agencies to develop water quality information systems. The goal is to create water-protection strategies, Extension offers programs like “Introduction to Inland Lakes,” the “Conservation Stewards Program,” and “Clean Boats Clean Waters,” just to name a few. Our educators help educate the public on lakeside plants and invasive species. Visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/water_quality/ to learn more about the many water quality programs offered by MSU Extension. Gratiot County is home to many lakes, rivers, and streams, as well as thousands of acres of farm land. Water run off from storms and irrigation is also a concern for our educators. Educators attempt to bring research-based, unbiased information to apply knowledge to these critical issues.



Michigan is home to more than 11,000 inland lakes and 36,000 miles of rivers and streams.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H participants learn by doing. There are many programs and learning opportunities throughout the year where 4-H youth can follow their interests or attend special events. In 2022 Gratiot County youth participated programs like Interviewing for success; Goal setting; career exploration; entrepreneurship; cooking; Money Smarts, Make Your Money Grow, Communication in the workplace, 4-H Swine Workshops, and many more. Gratiot County residents participated in more than 51 different Children and Youth development programs in 2022. Some in 4-H like to say that 4-H isn't just about sows and plows. It certainly does have a strong agricultural and animal husbandry foundation, but it also allows youth to develop many skills that are transferrable to many different areas of study and careers.



4-H Clover buds spend the day at the fairgrounds working on projects and preparing to be the next generation of Gratiot County 4-H youth.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Annual 4-H development programs like 4-H Exploration Days have been held for many years. 2022 was a return to an in-person campus experience to hundreds of 4-H Youth. During this multi-day stay on campus, the youth engage in hands-on projects and hear talks from many of our statewide Child and Youth Development staff on a variety of topics. The youth get a taste of the campus, make new friends, strengthen existing relationships, and get the opportunity to exercise their creativity. This was the first 4-H Exploration Days for our Gratiot County 4-H Program Coordinator, Stacy Woggon. Stacy and the statewide network of Youth Development staff help put on many educational opportunities throughout the year to appeal to the variety of skills and interests of our 4-H community. Leadership, job skills, public speaking and many more topics are offered in addition to traditional animal showmanship and care.



Participants from 4-H Exploration Days work on “Junk Drawer Robotics.”

MSU Extension staff located in Gratiot County

Bill Hendrian	District 8 Director	231-843-4395	hendria2@msu.edu
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Kamlyn Paksi	Office Manager	989-875-5233	paksiKam@msu.edu
Holly Tiret	Social Emotional Educator	616-632-7893	tiret@msu.edu
Stacey Woggon	4-H Program Coordinator	989-875-5233	woggonst@msu.edu
Casey Zangaro	Swine Educator	989-875-5292	zangaroc@msu.edu

Additional MSU Extension staff serving Gratiot County

Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa	Dairy Educator	970-888-1356	paolabs@msu.edu
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Collaboration Across MSU Extension

MSU Extension is an organization comprised of individuals with broad knowledge of subject matters related to a particular discipline, such as field crops, nutrition, or youth development. Having four MSU Extension Institutes gives the ability to bring together cross-disciplinary expertise to address issues that are multifaceted and complex. For example, MSU Extension Educators and Program Instructors have worked together on physical and financial health issues, agricultural and stress issues, economic and community development and conservation issues, and issues that span generations.

Your local office is housed with experts in particular fields. Individuals may serve in the Agricultural and Agribusiness Institute, the Children and Youth Institute, the Health and Nutrition Institute or our Community, Food and Environment Institute. However, even if you do not have a local expert for the issue that you need addressed, MSU Extension has the unique functionality of drawing from a statewide pool of experts to make sure that you have the information that you need. In addition, the MSU Extension website www.msue.msu.edu is maintained and updated on a regular basis. We are always looking for ways to collaborate with each other to apply knowledge to the critical issues you face.

Through successful partnership and collaboration with Gratiot County, MSU Extension is able to continue its local presence and to provide vital educational resources and programming in such areas as community and economic development, agriculture, land use, health and nutrition, and youth development.

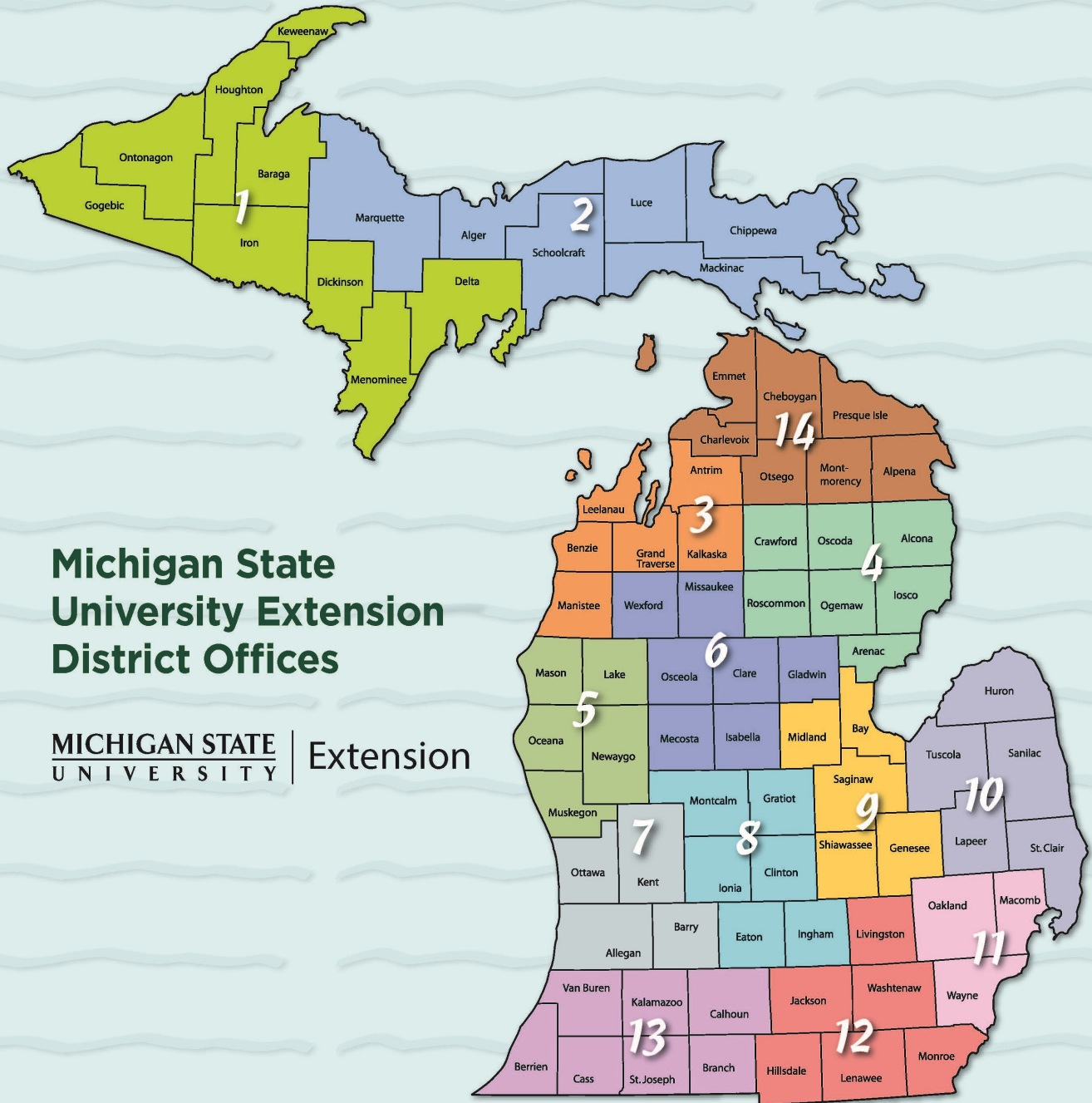
Thank you Gratiot County!

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