



# Saginaw County

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**\$33,937,204**  
economic impact



**387**  
enrolled students at MSU



**\$856,576**  
spending with local businesses



**3,348**  
MSU alumni in Saginaw County



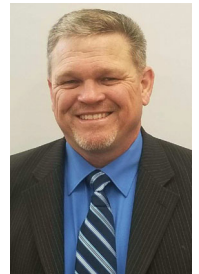
**\$7,618,088**  
financial aid disbursed



**942**  
youth in 4-H

### Message from the District Director

I am proud of the MSU Extension staff that serves your county and residents. 2021 was another challenging year, however, the staff adjusted to provide virtual, hybrid, and face to face programming throughout the year depending on the needs, requests, and restrictions that were in place. We were able to provide hundreds of programs that were focused on youth development, mental health, nutrition, and physical activity. Also offered were mindfulness, business, agriculture, veterans' outreach, Saginaw Bay watershed, invasive species, farmers market, food safety, etc. We focused on the needs of youth, families, farmers, seniors, veterans, economically disadvantaged, and our partners in the communities that we serve. With all of our programs and classes, we keep our mission and values at the core of our efforts to improve lives and make a difference in the communities that we serve.



**Michigan State University (MSU) Extension** helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge of resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan's economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower their children to dream successful futures.

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

Mark Rankin, District Director

Serving Bay, Genesee, Midland, Saginaw and Shiawassee Counties



# Farm Management



Farm Business Management programs provide critical information to assist farmers in profitably managing

their farm. From financial recordkeeping to succession planning to business planning, the Farm Business Management team makes webinars, bulletins, online classes, and on-farm consultation services available to Saginaw County farmers. These resources empower farmers to take control of their farm businesses in order to find success in today's agricultural economy.

Saginaw County farmers have access to a wide variety of financial planning consultations to assist them in successfully managing their farms. The MSU Tel Farm program provides accounting support, tax planning and reporting, and financial analysis to participating farms. A users group is also available to assist farmers in learning more advanced skills. In addition, individually tailored consultations are available for many business planning issues, including succession planning and business planning. Likewise, Legacy of the Land programs provide consultations and services for farm stress and financial management.

Our Beginning Farmer program provides a wide range of critical resources for residents working to start or expand their farms. The website provides access to many resources, including extension bulletins, videos, and articles. Extension bulletins offer a range of topics from marketing to zoning, and videos available on the website provide an even wider range of topics. In addition, we conducted live webinars with experts on many management issues, including farm recordkeeping, preparing financial statements, and handling farm income taxes.

The Farm Business Management Team provided webinars that made valuable information available to Saginaw County farmers. The Ag Ideas to Grow With Conference provided sessions on many farm business management topics, including succession, labor management, and financing strategies. The popular Virtual Breakfast series provided critical updates on crop production and farm business management issues. A panel discussion from women farmers and agricultural professionals was aired on the Women in Agriculture: Taking a Seat at the Table webinar.

In addition, we continued to update farmers on USDA programs in the "Return of the Coronavirus Relief Programs" webinar. Topics of other webinars included managing USDA Farm Bill programs, strategic planning, and succession planning. Additional farm business management programs made additional education available throughout the year. Our weekly Lunch Break program on Facebook Live provided up-to-the minute updates on crop production, farm business resources, farm stress, and other hot issues. Our In the Weeds weekly podcasts offered expert analysis of topics such as marketing strategies and conservation opportunities. Farmers can also find an abundance of resources on our website, including videos, self-paced online courses, and spreadsheet tools on all these farm business topics and more.

## Agriculture Program- Vegetables



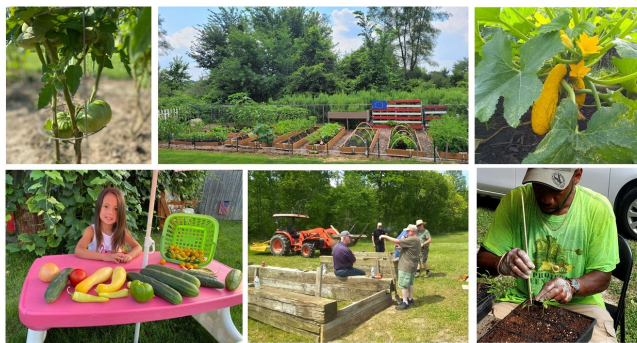
Ben Phillips works with commercial field and greenhouse vegetable growers who target the fresh, wholesale and processing markets in the Bay and Thumb areas of Michigan. His duties entail crop scouting, pest identification, crop management and food safety consultation, resource development, educational programming and facilitation of research projects with MSU's main faculty researchers and grower collaborators. He also

runs his own research program on seedless pickling cucumber varieties to support the local brining industry.

In 2021 in Saginaw County, MSU Agriculture Vegetable Program engaged in **20** consultations regarding the production of vegetables. The Agriculture Vegetable Program help organize and run the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, Farm Marketers, and Greenhouse Growers EXPO (GLEXPO) in Grand Rapids, and there were **27** attendees from Saginaw County. The vegetable agent, Ben Phillips, taught the vegetable chapter of several Master Gardener courses, conducted Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) trainings for compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, and contributed pest management and pollinator protection modules for a self-paced online Integrated Pest Management Course, where there were participants from Saginaw County.

## Veterans Outreach

MSU Extension is committed to providing veterans with programs and services that support their overall wellbeing. One way MSU Extension staff do so is by addressing food insecurity within the Veteran community through the *SNAP Outreach for Veterans* program. Here, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit is explained and promoted using veteran-tailored SNAP Outreach materials (brochures, seeds, etc.). The program is delivered in partnership with the Food Bank Council of Michigan whose Food & Other Resources Helpline number (1-888-544-8773) is listed in all outreach materials. Individuals can call for benefit enrollment assistance or to be connected to local food resources.



In 2021, **over 2,700** veteran-tailored SNAP Outreach brochures and **7,390** vegetable seeds were shared with **160** veterans and veteran service providers within Saginaw County. This was accomplished by sharing the SNAP Outreach materials with military/veterans organizations (American Legion, Michigan Army National Guard, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, Saginaw VA clinic, etc.) and by using social media for program promotion. Facebook posts linking individuals to the SNAP Outreach materials [request form](#) reached over **29,000** individuals, thousands of whom received SNAP outreach brochures and vegetable seeds statewide. This was later documented in a [Veterans show their seeds in action](#) news article. Many veterans shared that they loved growing produce from seed, enjoyed working together on gardening projects, and have relished the opportunity to share their harvest with their communities.

Veterans outreach staff created a [Veterans Resource Fact sheet](#) that provided information about pertinent MSU Extension programs for veteran community members such as Heroes to Hives, Military 4-H clubs, and evidence-based health, family, and agriculture programs. The team also offered online Chronic Pain PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) and *Mindful March* classes to the veteran community and authored veteran-focused health articles and tip-sheets that shared information related to mental health, chronic pain, and diabetes management. These resources can be accessed at [www.canr.msu.edu/veterans/resources](http://www.canr.msu.edu/veterans/resources)

## Health Programs

MSU Extension works to promote the health and wellbeing of Michiganders using a variety of evidence-based programs. In 2021, Extension Educators facilitated multiple health programs, reaching **663 Saginaw County residents** through in-person and online programming. The MSU Extension programs listed below addressed a variety of health topics including:

- **Diabetes Prevention:** Diabetes PATH (Personal Action Towards Health); National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)
- **Disease Self-Management:** Chronic Disease PATH; Powerful Tools for Caregivers; SLEEP (Sleep Education for Everyone Program)
- **Farm Stress Management:** Mending the Stress Fence
- **Falls Prevention:** Matter of Balance; Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention
- **Mental Health and Stress Management:** RELAX: Alternatives to Anger; Mental Health First Aid-Adult; Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); Mindfulness for Better Living programs (Stress Less With Mindfulness series and one time presentations on Mindful Breathing/Eating/Walking/Thinking/Laughter, Maintaining Health During Challenging Times, Changing Negative Self Talk, Mindfully Feeding Infants & Toddlers, Mindfulness for Parents and Caregivers, Mindful Educators, Importance of Adult Sibling Relationships)
- **Pain Management and Opioid Misuse Prevention:** Chronic Pain PATH and Opioid Misuse Prevention Trainings

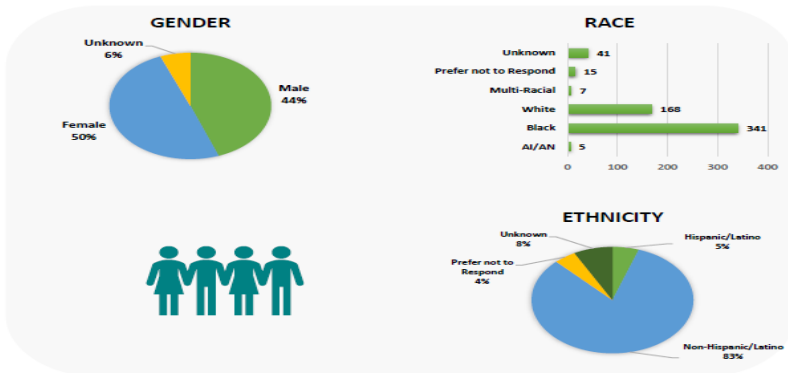
MSU Extension partnered with the following local organizations to offer programs both in-person and online: Bayside Lodge Clubhouse, Child Abuse and Neglect prevention (CAN) Council; First Ward Community Center; Friends for Recovery Center; Great Lakes Bay Health Centers; Michigan Libraries; Saginaw County Commission on Aging, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, Saginaw Intermediate School District's Jerome Parent Club; and Victorious Believers Ministries. Programs were advertised to parent groups, caregiver support groups, faith-based organizations, and the community at large during outreach events and through our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/MSUESaginawCounty](http://www.facebook.com/MSUESaginawCounty)

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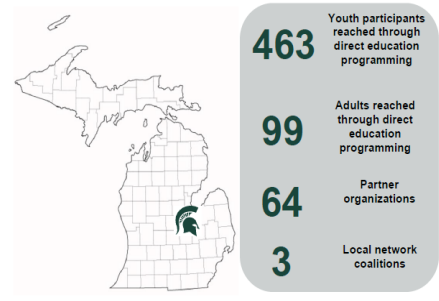


# Nutrition and Physical Activity

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



## PROGRAM REACH



## Program Impact – Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes

In April 2021 Bethel AME Church partnered with MSU Extension on the initiation of an edible garden. Seed donations were provided with support from MSU Extension 4-H. This was an intergenerational project in which youth were involved and for many it was their first introduction to raising their own food in a garden. They asked many questions and were very interested in the process from planting the seed/plants to harvesting.

Youth, parents and grandparents worked together to make this a great garden space. In April, 20 garden boxes were built and in May a day of planting was scheduled. In addition to the original 20 garden boxes another 20 were built and planted. This year there was a waiting list for boxes. Next year they will add boxes or incorporate groups to tend to existing boxes. Signage will be added to the garden for contact information where community members can learn about opportunities to support. Existing connections within the community were strengthened and new connections were fostered. At harvest day, nutrition and food preservation education was provided by MSU Extension.

In addition, physical activity was embedded into the project with a walking path being created. Gardeners took advantage of doing laps on gardening day. Neighbors also used the walking path for daily exercise. Playground equipment will be installed in the next phase for family friendly activities. In addition, an outdoor shelter will be added to hold exercise equipment. "This way an intergenerational project. Youth were involved and for many it was their first introduction to raising their own food in a garden. Youth, parents and grandparents worked together to make this a great garden space."



#SNAPedWorks Funded by the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—SNAP. Delivered by MSU Extension.

# Food Safety

MSU Extension Food Safety Team programming works to provide educational programs for food workers, cottage food entrepreneurs, childcare providers, food pantry volunteers, and consumers, providing information about the five risk factors that contribute most to foodborne illness – personal hygiene and health, cooking temperatures, holding temperatures and cleaning of food contact surfaces. In 2021 the Food Safety team continued to reach multi-counties in Michigan and out of state with virtual programming and the return to live programming as well. Three hundred and ninety-five programs were held, reaching **7,531** participants with food safety trainings.

Food safety for childcare providers provides food safety education for staff who care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The curriculum used is Safe Food = Healthy Kids, developed by MSU Extension educators. In 2021 22 virtual 3-hour sessions were held, reaching **670** participants who can count this encounter towards their requirements needed with MiRegistry and Great Start Collaborative.

**148 food preservation** programs were held, reaching **3,136** participants. Some of these were part of our weekly series Preserving MI Harvest, some were done with local libraries and lifelong learning series with colleges. Others were done in person.



**Cooking for Crowds** is a three-hour food safety training for volunteers working in a non-profit venue. This program aligns with the 2009 Michigan Food Code. Eleven sessions were offered, reaching **65** participants statewide.

**Cottage Food Law classes** were held online using a 2-hour format, **16 sessions** were offered, reaching **708** entrepreneurs. The unique feature with this session is a combination of presentations are offered in this program time the Food Safety Team, teaching safe food handling concepts and the MSU Product Center sharing tips on building a solid business and marketing plan to sell the Cottage Food items.

The program ends with a Q & A session featuring an inspector from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to answer questions pertaining to food products.

**Pantry Food Safety – It's Your Job!** is another three-hour training offered for volunteers working in food pantries and food banks. Fifteen sessions were offered reaching **139** volunteers.

Several other online programs were offered statewide, the Monday Food Safety Q & A, Investigating Food with Science – for youth offered weekly, Emergency Preparedness Series, Food Safety for Food Service Workers (a D2L self-study course). Combined these programs totaled **183** sessions, reaching **2,813** participants. MSU Extension's Food Safety Work Team also continued answering calls on the **Food Safety Hotline (877-643-9882)**. Consumer questions ranged from food preservation to food storage, helping **149** people.

Late in the summer ServSafe classes began, these are held in person around the state.

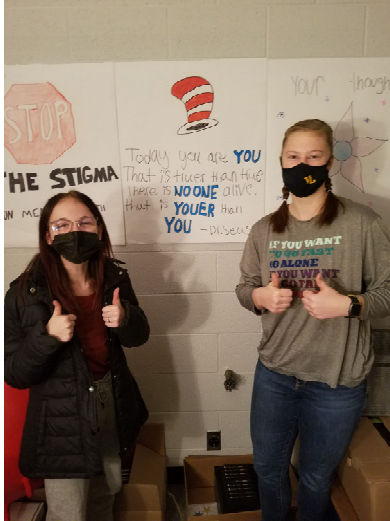
The grant with MDARD is in its second year. The Think Food Safety Campaign (TFS) continues to grow. Consumers have seen messages online, on our TFS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/thinkfoodsafetymi> and will see promotional materials at many of their local farmers markets this coming summer. We have new podcasts that are available on the Facebook page and an educational [video](#) that will also be promoted explaining what the Cottage Food Law is. The goal of this project was to create awareness about what can and cannot be sold at farmers markets without a food license while educating the consumer in the process to "Think Food Safety".





### Saginaw Career Complex – 4-H Your Thoughts Matter Program

Mental health matters to all of us. Saginaw 4-H joined 38 high school students from the Saginaw Career Complex to offer the mental health program called, Your Thoughts Matter: Navigating Mental Health. Your Thoughts Matter is an advanced, multi-week program that helps participants learn



about mental health, why it is important, and specific strategies to improve overall well-being.

“It is ok talk about mental health and there are strategies to help”, said one student. Exploring how to take personal action to help yourself and others was a critical part of this program. “There are a lot of stigmas that negatively impact those with mental illness” stated one student and this program helped me learn “how to manage stress, how to talk about mental health, and how YOU matter”.

### **Local highlights include:**



#### 4-H National Congress

Noah H. from the Saginaw County Pacesetters 4-H Club attended the 2021 National 4-H Congress. As one of the select Michigan 4-H member delegates, Noah traveled to Atlanta Georgia this last November to engage with 4-H members from across the country to be inspired to make a difference in his club, community, country and world! This five-day conference offered workshops in leadership, team development, diversity, cultural experiences, healthy living, science, and had several guest speakers!

### Dare to Serve Challenge

The Dare to Serve challenge unites 4-H members across the county in making a collective positive impact in their communities. Members of the 4-H Pacesetters Club in Frankenmuth took on the challenge over the summer and positively impacted their local community. Projects included buying food for animal adoption centers and volunteering at a shelter, doing yard work for neighbors, buying items for military dogs, writing positive notes for car windshields, and making cards for the elderly in a local assisted living center. One of the favorite projects of the summer was making bags with snacks and local hygiene items to give to the local rescue mission.

### Cash Composition Contest

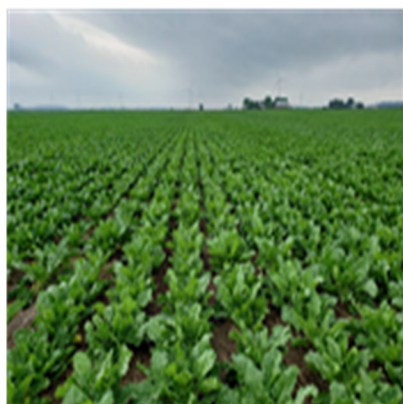
Saginaw County 4-H member, Brannon R. won 3rd place and a prize of \$300 at the Michigan State University 4-H Cash Composition Contest. In support of Financial Literacy Month, Michigan youth were encouraged to participate by submitting an essay of 300 words or less on exploring the difference between investments and savings and how your community would benefit from investments. As a contest winner, Brannon is also serving as a Money Smart Youth Ambassador. In this role, Brannon will have opportunities to share his financial knowledge with others across the state and gain leadership skills.

### 4-H Youth Learn About the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

The “Are Your Laces Tied? 4-H Hiking SPIN Club” introduced basic hiking knowledge and skills for youth to be able to safely and confidently experience the outdoors with their friends and families. Over the course of 5 weeks, youth learned about safely preparing for a hike, choosing and packing essential hiking gear, safety on the trail, and ethical outdoor practices through Leave No Trace principles. U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources partnered with 4-H to offer supplies for the hiking learning kits, including maps, hiking journals, bird guides and much more! “I learned about the ten essentials and some cool places to go. I will use the ten essentials on my next hike to be safe”, one student said.



# Sugarbeet Advancement



Over the past year, Sugarbeet Advancement (SBA) has continued to partner with farmers to conduct on-farm research and grower education.

Through continued research and education, the goal of SBA is to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of the sugarbeet industry for farmers in Saginaw County and the rest of the Michigan Sugar growing region.

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Sugarbeet Advancement had a very successful year of research in 2021. The research SBA does is somewhat unique as compared to that of the other agricultural research programs in Michigan. While other programs conduct small-plot research on sites dedicated to agricultural research, SBA does large plot research in cooperation with local farmers. Aside from the specific variable that is being tested, each trial is managed just as the farmer manages the rest of their beets. Growers put a lot of value on this real-world testing which is done with the same challenges that local farmers face.

There are two primary areas of focus for SBA's research, which include variety trials and agronomy trials. In the traditional variety trials, SBA tests 12 different varieties of sugarbeet which were selected by the SBA committee. These trials are conducted in several different locations and environments to test the resilience of these varieties. The varieties are observed for various factors, including emergence, disease tolerance, and most importantly yield. In all, SBA had **7** traditional variety trials throughout the Michigan Sugar growing region. Along with the traditional variety trials, SBA also conducted **3** trials looking specifically at the new CR+ sugarbeet varieties. These varieties have a much higher level of Cercospora leaf spot tolerance than any other sugarbeet varieties, and may help farmers manage this devastating disease. In these tests, SBA compared several CR+ varieties with traditional beet varieties under two different fungicide spray programs in order to see the disease management and economic benefits of these varieties. Growers use the information from these variety trials to make informed decisions when selecting sugarbeet varieties for the upcoming season. Aside from the variety trials, Sugarbeet Advancement also conducts agronomy trials. In these trials,

the SBA team investigated a number of topics related to sugarbeet production. These include comparing radish and clover cover crops, soil health, fertilizer products and additives, high speed planter accuracy, and disease management. In all, Sugarbeet Advancement had **14** agronomy trials this past year. This work will be used to improve both economic and environmental sustainability on farms in Saginaw County.

In addition to having a productive year for research, Sugarbeet Advancement also had a successful year of educational programming. Last winter, the Bean and Beet Symposium had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. As a substitute for the Symposium, SBA was able to host a virtual meeting which provided the same educational experience as the Symposium would have. About **90** people attended this meeting live by Zoom.

The REACH Winter Agronomy Meeting series was another event which had to be moved to a virtual format. In all, **218** people watched this meeting live, and **289** viewed it later. SBA also presented a poster on Cercospora leaf spot at the national American Society of Sugarbeet Technologists (ASSBT) biennial meeting.

In May, SBA took part in MSU Extension's virtual breakfast series by presenting on strategies for managing Rhizoctonia root rot, which was viewed by **341** people.

In August, SBA was a presenter and co-host of the Dry Bean and Sugarbeet Field Day held at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center. This was the first in-person SBA event since the pandemic started, and featured several sugarbeet and dry bean researchers with about **185** people attending.



The final educational event for SBA in 2021 was Seed Week, which is where SBA presents their variety trial results. This event included five meetings, with a total of **305** people attending.

This past year was indeed a successful one for the Sugarbeet Advancement team. The future for the sugar industry is bright, and the SBA team looks forward to another successful year ahead.

**MSU Extension Educators & Staff Serving Saginaw County**

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**Housed in Saginaw County\***