



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

June 2022

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 26 Issue 6

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Central UP Food Hub Feasibility Survey

The NMU Center for Rural Health has partnered with the U.P. Food Exchange, Feeding America West Michigan, and Michigan State University to explore the feasibility and development of a food hub located in Marquette or Alger County, Michigan. This project is funded by a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund's Nutrition & Healthy Lifestyles program.

USDA defines a food hub as "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products. By actively coordinating these activities along the value chain, food hubs are providing wider access to institutional and retail markets for small to mid-sized producers, and increasing access of fresh healthy food for consumers, including underserved areas and food deserts."

As Yooper farmers know, geographic isolation and aging or nonexistent Ag infrastructure are among the greatest challenges to farming in the UP. These challenges are especially significant for those producing crops and livestock that require special processing, and for those wanting to market products regionally across the vast UP.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the UP is home to approximately 184 small vegetable farms. About 85% of UP vegetable acreage is potatoes for fresh tablestock or seed. The average size (crop area) of UP vegetable farms focused on potato production is 54.36 acres, while the average size of UP vegetable farms NOT focused on potatoes is 1.72 acres. The top 10 vegetable products grown in the UP by acreage are:

- Potatoes (1539 acres)
- Pumpkins (39 acres)
- Snap beans (17 acres)
- Squash (16 acres)
- Sweet corn (14 acres)
- Carrots (11 acres)
- Garlic (10 acres)
- Lettuce (10 acres)
- Tomatoes (9 acres)
- Beets (8 acres)

A food hub in the central UP could theoretically benefit producers and consumers by aggregating such produce from small farms across the region and adding value through processing, storage, marketing, education and other spaces/services available to producers. Over the next few weeks, our project team is conducting a survey of local producers to confirm this potential. We aim to gain a deep understanding of the local community's specific needs and opportunities related to the proposed food hub. We need farmer input to inform the design, financial development, and operational plans of a facility that is responsive to the needs of our community.

Would you please take 20 minutes to share your input?

Links to our survey are listed on the next page. The survey will be open until Wednesday, June 15th. Your individual responses will be kept confidential. If you are not a farmer, consider sharing our survey invite with farmers in your network.

We will be raffling off a \$50 gift card to a UP producer - any grower who completes the survey in full by June 15th will be registered to win!

Michigan State University

AgBioResearch

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

The survey links (URL and QR code)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIFarmer>



Survey to evaluate approaches to on-farm research

[Michigan State University Extension](#), in collaboration with Kansas State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and The Ohio State University, is looking for Michigan farmers to participate in a multi-state survey.

The goal of this project is to evaluate farmer's views and approaches to on-farm research. Additionally, this survey will assess motivation of farmers to participate in on-farm research as well as the importance of on-farm research to their operations. Information collected from this project will help promote on-farm research and improve engagement between farmers and university Extension systems.

The short survey only takes 5-10 minutes to complete and will not need any information from your records. Your responses are completely voluntary and anonymous. Please fill out the survey by **June 15**. For any questions related to this survey, please contact Manni Singh at msingh@msu.edu, 517-353-0226.

Click here for survey:

https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_71iwM5FE0zhSW10

New Michigan State University Institute of Agricultural Technology Program Coordinator Named at Bay College *Bay College partnership and programs with Michigan State University Institute of Agricultural Technology expands in Upper Peninsula.*

Tyler Sisson was named program coordinator for the forest technology and agricultural operations programs at Bay College in Escanaba, Michigan, as part of the Michigan State University Institute of Agricultural Technology (MSU IAT) partnership. Through the MSU IAT partnership, students can attend Bay College and earn an applied associate's degree in forest technology or agricultural operations while also earning a Michigan State University (MSU) certificate. These courses and credits can also transfer to a bachelor's degree at MSU.

The MSU IAT collaboration provides education and training for Escanaba and the surrounding areas through face-to-face, online, hybrid, and in-the-field instruction. Bay College is located 15 minutes from the MSU Forest Biomass Innovation Center and 45 minutes from the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, both of which provide rich experiences for students to learn outside of the classroom and network with leading professionals, according to Sisson.

"This partnership provides a platform for students to take a hands-on-approach through various in-state and out-of-state internships, which in-turn can help students land exciting jobs in forestry or agriculture," said Sisson. "Students usually want to know potential salaries, lifestyle, and places they can work. Competitive job placement is a primary life goal for students who complete these programs. The forest technology program offers opportunities to become a forest technician, procurement forester, consulting forester, wildland firefighter, geographic information system aide, or a land surveying aide. Additionally, the agriculture operations program offers opportunities in equipment retail sales, farming operations, crop production management, production services, and crop processing facilities."

The MSU IAT expansion into the Upper Peninsula continues to support workforce development in Michigan, and MSU's land-grant roots of reaching people with practical education further strengthens the agricultural mindset for business-driven individuals.

Sisson brings to MSU IAT a set of real-world skills and a student-centered approach to program management. He is a military veteran with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Regent University. Through the Michigan College Access Network initiative, Sisson has worked in higher education with Bay College since December of 2020. His primary roles as a college success coach and holistic advisor has helped students overcome barriers and complete credentials within the liberal arts and allied health pathways.

To learning more about the MSU IAT programs, email Tyler Sisson. Interested students must dual apply to [Bay College](#) and [MSU IAT](#) by August 15 for the MSU IAT fall semester.

Registration now open for North Central Region Water Network's Climate Intersections Conference

Registration is now open for the [North Central Region Water Network's Climate Intersections Conference](#) July 12-14, 2022, in Duluth, Minnesota. The conference theme is "Taking Care of People, Water, and the Land" and will feature emergent research and key programming that can facilitate solutions for resilient and equitable agricultural systems, communities, and watersheds throughout the North Central Region and beyond.

The conference is a long-overdue and unique opportunity to gather in person with water, climate, and natural resource professionals from across the North Central Region. Conversations will focus on how we, as professionals, connect with the communities in which we live and work and how we can foster equitable solutions to the ways climate change impacts our water, our work, and our way of life.

The keynote speaker will be [Kyle Whyte](#), a professor of environment and sustainability at the University of Michigan, who presents on Wednesday, July 13. Whyte is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and will discuss Indigenous peoples and climate justice and the types of relationships needed to coordinate action to adapt and mitigate climate change.

[Concurrent session presentations](#) will focus on solutions for creating resilient agricultural systems, helping communities adapt to extreme weather, and working in watersheds in times of change. [Michigan State University Extension](#) educators Monica Jean and Sarah Fronczak will be highlighting their work with climate readiness tools that they utilize when consulting with farmers on climate adaptation and mitigation.

The conference will also feature a cross-cutting symposium that will bridge all three conference tracks on the Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu, a collaborative effort that recently received the 2022 Minnesota Collaborative Adaptation Award and provides a framework to integrate indigenous and traditional knowledge, culture, language, and history into the climate adaptation planning process.

It's not just the program that will inspire attendees—the conference's location on the shores of Lake Superior will too. We have negotiated the federal employee rate for all conference attendees at the Inn on Lake Superior, where you can take in the views of the Great Lake from your room window or the rooftop pool. The hotel also offers complimentary summer bike rentals and nightly smores on the lakeside patio each night, creating additional networking and socializing opportunities for attendees.

Attendees will also have an opportunity to get to know Duluth with a walking tour of downtown to see first-hand how the city is putting their Climate Action Work Plan into action. The 2-hour, multi-stop tour will take place on July 12 and start at the conference venue, the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. The \$20 tour fee is separate from conference registration.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to make or strengthen connections that can lead to collaborations and increase the scope and impact of our work to take care of people, water, and the land.

Smart Gardening is MSU Extension's campaign using earth-friendly messages to help gardeners make smart choices in their own backyards. The goal is to equip gardeners with a "tool kit" of research-based knowledge to use immediately at home. Whether choosing plants, using garden chemicals, fertilizer or applying water, gardeners need to understand the long-term impacts on their communities.

These videos and tip sheets are a quick reference for Extension Master Gardeners and home gardeners alike. Visit our [Events](https://www.canr.msu.edu/home_gardening/events) page (https://www.canr.msu.edu/home_gardening/events) to find workshops and classes.

[Smart Gardening videos and webinars](#)

[Smart Gardening for Shorelands tip sheets](#)

[Smart Gardening for Pollinators tip sheets](#)

[Smart Fruit tip sheets](#)

[Smart Vegetables tip sheets](#)

[Smart Plants tip sheets](#)

[Smart Lawns tip sheets](#)

[Smart Soils tip sheets](#)

[Smart Gardening Press](#)

Farm Field Trips at UP Research and Extension Center Offer Hands-on Learning in Agriculture and Science

By Abbey Palmer, Community Food Systems Educator

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, UPREC hosted farm field trips for schools from across the UP this spring. Approximately 350 K-12 students from 11 schools in Alger, Delta, Houghton, Mackinac, and Marquette counties visited the North and South Farms to learn how agriculture and food systems relate to their lives and communities.

Groups of students tour the farm sites, learning about agriculture practices and the research projects that are carried out at UPREC. Then, students participate in a variety of small-group activities that connect with science standards. They learn about topics that range from grazing and forage production to integrated pest management, food safety, plant life cycles, and the history of agriculture in the UP. There is an emphasis on viewing a farm as a part of an ecosystem, recognizing that food production happens within a specific place that depends on the land and all the communities of plants and animals that live on that land as well. Each activity on a farm field trip is led by a person whose career is related to agriculture, farming, and food systems education, which gives students a first-hand opportunity to see a variety of kinds of jobs in the field.

A highlight for many students is the opportunity to ride in a wagon pulled by a tractor to visit the beef cattle, with Paul Naasz speaking about how grass-fed cattle are raised, the differences between grass-fed and grain-fed beef, and rotational grazing.

For teachers, farm field trips offer a unique opportunity to be outdoors with students and learning about agriculture. Many teachers who bring their students have school gardens or produce food on-site at their schools, so coming to a research farm to see science in action helps students deepen their understanding of how their activities at school are connected to broader concepts in food systems. Student transportation was supported by the Growing UP Agriculture Association, which provided travel funding. Thanks to community engagement from their teachers, the schools that visited the farm this spring included Gladstone High School, MARESA's Transition Classroom, Bothwell Middle School, Graveraet Elementary, Ishpeming Public School No. 1, KI Sawyer Elementary, Gilbert Elementary, Munising High School, Chassell Schools, Burt Township School, and Mackinac Island Public School.

Farm field trips are supported by all staff at UPREC, who generously contribute their time and energy to helping future generations understand where food comes from and how it is produced. Paul Naasz, James DeDecker, Sarah Goodman, Christian Kapp, Joe Charlebois, Cole Ferguson and Marleigh Sherbinow all shared their areas of expertise with students. Lovisa Kunkle filmed some of the farm field trips this year, and will be producing a video for UPREC's Youtube channel (MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center). MSU Extension staff from Alger County, Vicki Ballas, Liz Wiener, and Jillian Schramm, offered education about local food and healthy eating. Brian Wibby played a memory game with students that helps them get ready to start gardening. Mike Osier from Traunik Farm, part of UPREC's Farm Business Incubator program, taught sessions in the greenhouse on how farmers make decisions using the principles of Integrated Pest Management. Landen Tetil, On-Farm Produce Safety Technician with the Marquette County Conservation District, taught about food safety. Rachael Pressley from the Western UP Planning and Development Region took students on a foraging walk and offered seed saving activities through the Portage Lake Seed Library. Local food samples were provided by Case Country Farms and Marquette Food Co-op. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this year's farm field trips a success! If you're interested in learning more about farm field trips or visiting MSU UPREC, please contact Abbey Palmer at palmerab@msu.edu



Marquette and Alger counties are giving away 50 pollinator gardens this summer

The Marquette County Conservation District was awarded a 2022 Urban Agriculture Implementation Grant. The grant will allow Marquette and Alger County Conservation Districts to partner for their Pairing Pollinators with Food Gardens project. Together, they will hold four workshops, distribute 25 pollinator gardens in each county and host an educational field day for students between both counties.

The project's goal is to bring agricultural education and increased food production to both counties.

"Really this is about increasing local food production because in the UP we're very rural and it's important to rely on the community that we have and the local food sources that we have so that we're a little more self-sufficient," said Maddie O'Donnell, Marquette County Conservation District Program and Outreach Coordinator.

The grant was awarded by the National Association of Conservation Districts. If you would like to apply for a pollinator garden, click [here](#).

Sampling your soil

A healthy lawn or garden starts with knowing the condition of your soil. The [MSUE Home Lawn and Garden Soil Test Mailer](#) provides you with everything you need to make the process easy. Here's how to take a soil sample:

1. Decide which one lawn *or* garden area you would like to test. Use a spade or a trowel and a clean plastic pail.
2. Collect 10 random soil samples from this lawn or garden area. Each of these samples should be about 1/2 cup.
3. To do so, remove a slice of soil (extending to the bottom of the plant roots 3 inches deep for lawn; 7 inches deep for all other plants).
4. Do not include roots, thatch or other plant materials in the sample.
5. Mix the 10 sub-samples together. If the soil is wet, spread it on paper and allow to air dry overnight before filling the sample bag. Do not use artificial heat (i.e. radiator, oven, microwave, hair dryer, etc.) to force-dry the sample.
6. Place roughly 1 cup of the well-mixed soil inside the resealable plastic bag that is included in the Soil Test Mailer and seal carefully.

Do not overfill the plastic bag. Do not pour extra loose soil inside the white postage-paid envelope.

How to Submit *HOME* Lawn and Garden Samples

The Home Lawn and Vegetable Soil Test Mailer can be used to process any type of home soil sample (lawn, vegetable garden, tree, shrub, flower, and tree/small fruit). [It is available through the MSUE Bookstore](#) (opens in a new window). This mailer may also be available for pick-up at your local MSU Extension county office. [Click here to find a local county office](#) (opens in a new window)

How to Submit *COMMERCIAL* Samples

Farm, landscape, lawn maintenance, nursery, athletic field and other commercial operations or those who wish to test soil for wildlife plots should contact their local MSU Extension office ([click here for a list of county offices](#)) or the Soil and Plant Nutrient Laboratory by calling 517-355-0218 or visiting www.spnl.msu.edu for soil testing instructions and costs.

When Will I Receive the Results?

You will receive an email (and text message if you opted-in) within 10 days after your sample is received at the MSU Soil Nutrient and Plant Lab letting you know your results are available at this website. A link directly to your report will be provided in the email and text message, or you can use the unique Report Code that is also sent.

If you submit your sample without an email address, it will take slightly longer for you to receive your results **in the mail**.

What soil test results/fertilizer information will you receive?

Soil texture

pH value

Nutrient levels for phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), and magnesium (Mg)

The soil organic matter (OM) level

Personalized recommendations for fertilizer and any needed pH modifications

Contact the MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Lab if you would like to run additional tests: soiltesting.msu.edu

For more information about these tests, please contact the MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Lab via email (spnlab@msu.edu) or phone (517-355-0218).

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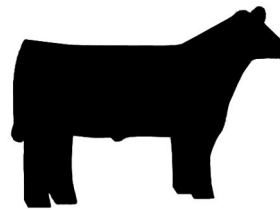
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FOR SALE: Hay, 5x6 round bales legume grass hay, stored
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Call Dave Bell in the EUP 906-440-6455 or email
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Market Report

Choice Steers	\$120-\$144 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$100-\$137 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$74-\$82 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$200-\$250 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$70-\$90 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$100-\$160 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$450 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$2400/head
 Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$2500/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$16.43	\$328.65	\$265-440
Soymeal	\$27.79	\$555.75	\$490-624
Oats	\$18.75	\$375.00	\$320-420
Barley	\$13.90	\$278.00	\$200-394
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

E-WASTE and FREON APPLIANCE COLLECTION

June 17th 4 pm-8pm & June 18th 8 am-noon
Munising High School parking lot, 810 M-28

The Alger Community Recycling Committee in cooperation with Michigan EGLE, Superior Watershed Partnership, Alger County Conservation District, Munising Public School and Library and UPPCO will be hosting an Electronic Waste and freon containing appliance collection. Items to be accepted 6/17 & 6/18:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Computer Monitors | Video Game Systems |
| CPUs | DVD, VCR, CD Players |
| Tablets | Routers |
| Televisions | Also Accepted: |
| Radios | Refrigerators |
| Telephones | Freezers |
| Cell Phones | Dehumidifiers |
| Copy machines/scanners | Air conditioners |
| Fax Machines | |
| Stereos | |

Thank you to our planning partners MSU Ag, MSUE and Munising Twp
 The freon appliance recycling is a special collection sponsored by UPPCO