



Wexford County

2017–2018 ANNUAL REPORT

msue.msu.edu



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is pleased to bring you this report of the work we have done in Wexford County during 2017. The partnership that has been developed through the Cooperative Extension system for over 100 years brings valuable federal and state resources to the local level to provide programming and services in youth development, agriculture, community development, natural resources, health and nutrition, and so much more.

By receiving local support for our programming, we are able to bring the research and education from our state's land grant university to meet the needs of the local community.

Inside this report you will see the highlights of the work we have done during this past year. We look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Wexford County for another 100 years.

Shari Spoelman, District Coordinator



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FUNDING	
2017 County Assessment	\$130,000
<i>(from voter approved millage)</i>	
MSU contribution <i>(approx.)</i>	\$474,500

MEASURING IMPACT

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS	
Youth served	1,031
Youth in 4-H Clubs	100
Agriculture & Consumer Hort/Gardening	137
Natural Resources, Comm Dev, Gov & Pub Policy	22
Food Safety	46
Early Childhood	144
Nutrition for low income residents (SNAP-Ed).....	2,296
Other Health & Nutrition	101

WEXFORD CO. DIGITAL REACH
 From Jan. 1, 2017, to Dec. 31, 2017, the MSU Extension website (msue.msu.edu) received 4,448 visits from Wexford County. Of those, 79.5 percent were first-time visitors. The easily accessible and searchable science-based content make the MSU Extension website one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

MSU EXTENSION'S EXPANDED DIGITAL REACH

Through combined face-to-face trainings, online webinars, social media, website interaction and electronic newsletters, MSU Extension has made more than 12.1 million connections. More than 149,000 adults* and 212,000 youth† participated in MSU Extension programming in the 2016-17 programming year. More than 5.3 million people viewed more than 9.8 million pages on the MSU Extension website.‡ Of those, more than 1 million were Michigan residents. MSU Extension remains one of the most visited Cooperative Extension System education websites in the country. MSU Extension also distributes a series of electronic newsletters that cater to residents' unique interests. Last year, nearly 1.9 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to

about 53,000 email addresses.‡ You can sign up for these informative newsletters by visiting msue.msu.edu and clicking on "Newsletter Sign Up" or texting MSUE to 22828. MSU Extension uses social media channels to reach people with educational content. Currently, Extension reaches more than 4,300 Facebook followers and more than 3,200 Twitter followers.‡ In addition, Michigan 4-H families and volunteers stay informed about activities through social media channels, including on Michigan 4-H Facebook with more than 4,700 likes and on Twitter with more than 1,456 followers.

*From ES237 Federal Report – Oct. 1, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2016
 †From Michigan Extension Planning and Reporting System – Jan. 1, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2016
 ‡From July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017

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).

New volunteers make a difference

Wexford County 4-H was happy to welcome five new volunteers in 2017. Roxanne Ansoerge volunteered to assist with the sewing club. Kristie Brown is serving as a co-leader in the Mesick Trotters club as that group continues to grow. Benita Meekhof and Christie Payne both are serving as additional leaders to the Wild Ones club. Cindy Swope has offered her leadership in the model train club, which is currently in the forming stages; in the meantime, she has assisted with various projects at the fair as well as Ag Olympics and our participation in the Freedom Festival Parade.



Youth cooking class

4-H teamed up with MSU Extension's Health and Nutrition program instructor, JoAnne Benthem, and delivered a six-week course on Cooking Matters for Families, focusing on creating healthy meals as a family and getting the youth involved in their nutrition. The MSUE team followed this up with a fall Kid's Cook Challenge. The course offered cooking instruction for youth and then allowed a "cook off" to take place where participants created their own version of pizza from a vast selection of crusts, sauces and toppings. Our budding chefs surprised everyone with some delicious offerings such as a Mexican themed pizza with black beans, corn and tomato. The real winner of the contest was our "judge" and local Extension Youth Educator, Sara Keinath.



Babysitters-in-training

In 2017, Wexford County was able to offer again the ever-popular, Babysitting club. This

club continues to be a favorite as it offers youth an opportunity to look at the responsibilities and safety issues of becoming a caregiver. Local professionals serve as guest speakers to the class offering youth insights on Childcare, Safety, Basic First Aid, Child Development, Nutrition, Safe Marketing Practices and More. The Babysitting club was offered to students in both Manton and Mesick areas.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Getting Dirty Green

Wexford County 4-H was able to dig in this past spring and get youth interested in gardening, hosting two separate Garden in a Glove activity tables. We were able to connect with 102 youth at our local Tractor Supply Store during the annual paper clover campaign and at the Mesick Mushroom Festival. The activity taught youth to start seeds in a unique way (inside a clear plastic glove) allowing them to actually view the germination process of the seedlings.

Exploring MSU campus

Exploration Days is a youth development conference held on the MSU Campus. Through this three-day campus experience youth learn to become more independent, confident and responsible. In 2017 Wexford County had 5 youth attend Exploration Days. Sessions available to attend included many topics including Teen Court & Juvenile Justice System, A Career Caring for Kids, Small Engines, American Sign Language, Junk Drawer Robotics and many more.

Fairly wild and wonderful Fair



It was a busy year at the Northern District Fair for Wexford County 4-H. Again, this year we brought back the Smoothie Bike and the Nutrition Wheel, providing youth with important nutrition facts and a little bit of fun along the way. New to the fair this year was an Embryology display. In addition to the science facts and educational graphics, Wexford County 4-H had incubators in place with baby chicks hatching all week long! Another new addition to our fair activities was the Scavenger Hunt. Informational posters were distributed throughout the fairgrounds. Participants had to visit each poster to answer questions on their "hunt" sheet to complete the process. Despite the rain, we had 40 youth spend their afternoon learning facts about animal science, 4-H and our Northern District Fair. Additionally, thanks to a statewide grant and the help of several of our volunteers we were able to offer the youth at the Northern District Fair an opportunity to participate in Commodity Carnival. The activity uses fun

hands-on demonstration that give youth the insight to what it takes to get an animal project to the fair and how to make a profit. The Commodity Carnival was also offered at the YMCA Back to School Carnival giving us an opportunity to connect with over 500 youth.

Ag Olympics

Wexford County 4-H wrapped up a fantastic fair week this past year with the first annual Ag Olympics. 70 youth and 26 volunteers pulled



together for an incredible day of fun and team building activities.



Teams were randomly selected with varied ages in each team. The teams then competed in activities such as Chicken Flicker (think yard darts) blindfolded wheelbarrow racing, sack races and so much more. Ag Olympics was made possible by the receipt of a Participation Fee Grant that brought us \$4,350 to get us started.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Hatching chicks through embryology

High School. For the second year, Wexford County 4-H participated in an embryology project at the Cadillac High School. In addition to the animal science facts and hatching eggs in an incubator, we have attempted a project that involves hatching a baby chick with an artificial shell. This will be our last attempt as we found that the equipment we have available to us is insufficient to offer a satisfactory rate. There was a great deal of awe in viewing the embryo development to the stages we did achieve.

Elementary School. Fifty youth from Lincoln Elementary's second grade classes were introduced to Embryology through Wexford County 4-H. As students learned about chick development and the parts of an egg, they watched the development of incubated eggs right in their own classroom. After having the baby chicks for a week, they were off to their new home, but not without one return visit just before the end of the school year to demonstrate how quickly they grow.



Fun with science

Science couldn't be more fun than it is with 4-H. That's why we shared it with the families at Forest View Elementary. And Manton Elementary. During an activity night held last year, MSU Extension and 4-H hosted a Science room with activities like water refraction, making rain, creating corn plastic, making butter and exploring gravity.



Youth leadership

Throughout 2017, Wexford County 4-H was able to offer a variety of training/growth opportunities. Working with state 4-H educator, Sara Keinath we offered a fun way to build Leadership Training and Communication Skills during our annual awards celebration. We enjoyed an evening working on Youth-Adult Partnerships. We offered youth a training on Budgeting that can be used in all aspects of life. Finally, we wrapped up our year with a Leadership update that offered youth and adults an opportunity to brush up on their parliamentary procedure skills and offered inspiration for club meetings using youth-adult partnerships and getting the youth more involved including the leadership opportunities that exist with 4-H beyond Wexford County.





“Early childhood begins early, even before birth”.

Madeleine M Kunin

Early Childhood: Building a healthy and strong community

Northwest Michigan is focusing a lot of professional development on the area of infants and toddlers. The first 1000 days of a child’s life are the most important to their development. From conception to age three, the brain is actively making the connections, both positive and negative, that a child will use for the rest of their lives. During this period of time a child’s brain can form 1,000 neural connections every second. A child who is read to, talked to, sung to, played with, is not only happier but will have better cognitive capacity and a more productive life. Through high quality trainings provided to area providers and parents we are ensuring that our youngest members of society are developing a strong foundation of learning for when they enter the formal education setting.

Strengthening our local early childhood network. MSU Extension helps organize and implement the Great Start to Quality Family Expo in the spring. There are activities for children, door prizes and many agencies, including emergency personnel and vehicles, are available for all to explore and learn more about. MSU Extension is also involved with the planning and organization of the Cadillac Early Childhood Conference in March that focuses on Literacy Development, Healthy Brain Development in Infants and Toddlers, Mathematics for Infants and Toddlers, and Understanding a Toddler’s World (behavior).



Through a partnership with Detroit Public TV, MSU Extension provided a training to parents on the importance of having their young children ready for school. This hands-on training provided families with useful tools and activities to use at home with their children.

“Power of Puppets” goes national. Wexford County was represented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children in Atlanta, GA as the “Power of Puppets” was presented by MSU Extension Early Childhood Educator Tracy Trautner to over 85 providers. This was a wonderful opportunity to showcase one of our high quality MSU Extension trainings to caregivers from all over the world. Puppets are a great tool to help young children learn new concepts, gain self-confidence, help develop self-regulation skills and much more.

Training throughout the state. MSU Extension realizes the importance of the first 1000 days in a person’s life and that they are critical to the overall growth of a child. Through the MSUE Child and Development team, we are providing trainings throughout the state of Michigan, and educating families and providers on the factors, including nutrition and quality care, that determine lifetime health and brain development in kids.

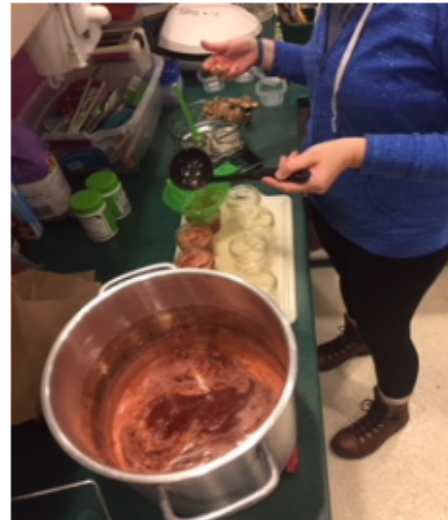


MSU Extension Educator Tracy Trautner demonstrates the “Power of Puppets” at a national conference.

Ensuring Safe and Secure Food

Remember

When you support MSU Extension's efforts to enhance residents' access to an adequate supply of safe, affordable food, we focus on food safety measures in the field and at harvest, proper food preparation and food preservation techniques, bringing community partners together to strengthen access to healthy food supplies. This leads to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

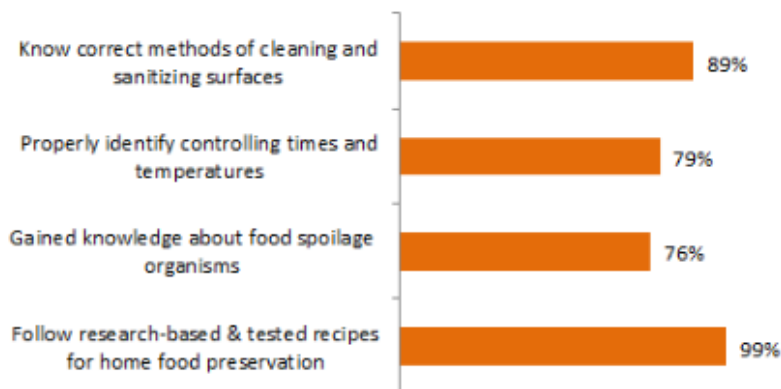


In Wexford County, a Cottage Food Law class as well as a food preservation class was conducted.

Did You Know?

1 in 6 Americans get sick by consuming contaminated foods or beverages!

Participants gaining Knowledge!



Through face to face and online learning, Michigan communities receive high-quality, research-based education using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe food preservation

Ensuring Strong Communities



Wexford County Master Gardeners



Success!

Wexford County Master Gardeners and others worked on a range of different projects in 2018. They include YMCA Gardens, Missaukee Conservation District Walkways, Kettunen Center Beautification Projects, Cadillac Wexford Library Rain Garden, Cadillac Veterans Park Beautification, Wexford Historical Museum Beautification, as well as Supporting MSU Extension through outreach efforts.

\$18,620 Economic Value

735 Volunteer Hours

Focus Areas for Volunteer Outreach Education Projects



Environmental Stewardship



Improving Food Security



Improving Community



Youth Development through gardening



Supporting MSU Extension

Making a Difference!

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program is an adult horticulture education and volunteer leader training program committed to improving the quality horticulture-based volunteerism and beautifying communities throughout the state.

MSU Extension
Gardening Hotline

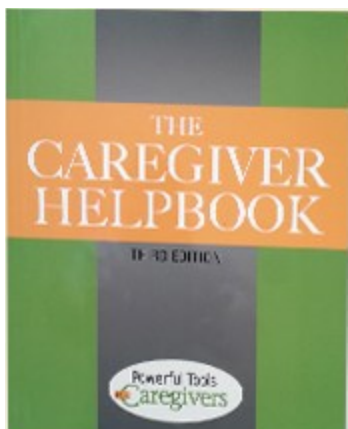
888-678-3463

Gardening Assistance

When an Extension expert is not available in the office, residents with garden or yard questions have several options for assistance. They can visit the “Gardening in Michigan” website at www.migarden.msu.edu to view tip sheets on many gardening topics. To talk to someone directly, they can call the MSU Extension toll-free hotline at 888-678-3463 with their question and a Michigan Master Gardener will offer advice. Another option is “Ask an Expert” at www.extension.org. This is a national website that MSU participates in where residents can submit a question and supporting digital photos and they will receive a research-based answer from an expert. Questions from Michigan residents are usually answered by Michigan Extension professionals.



Ensuring Strong Communities



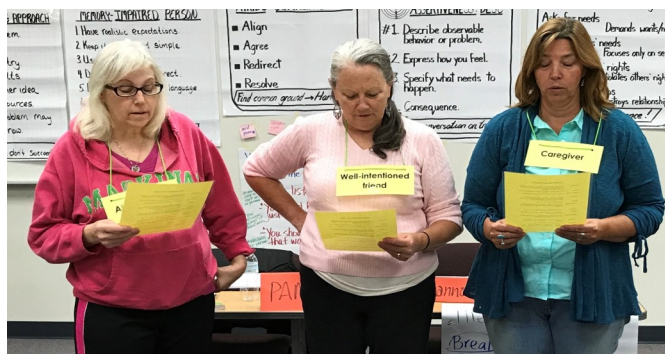
Comments received from participants of Powerful Tools for Caregivers included:

“Before I started these classes I felt like I was drowning. Having to be a caregiver for both my father and mother, I felt so frustrated and alone. These classes have been such a life-saver for me.”

“Learning to take care of myself, has been a huge uplift for me!”

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

“Powerful Tools for Caregivers” is an educational program designed to help family caregivers. The curriculum is based on a variety of tools and support resources that help caregivers as they go through the process of caregiving. Participants benefit from the class whether they are helping a parent, spouse, friend or someone who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an evidenced based curriculum exclusively offered by Extension. Early projections show this curriculum is being well received by communities. Powerful Tools for Caregivers was introduced by MSU Extension in late 2017. Fifteen participants complete the workshop in Cadillac.



Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Participants leading an activity in Cadillac

Don't Guess - Soil Test!

MSU Extension provides soil testing services for home gardens and lawns, field crops and wildlife food plots. For home owners, a postage paid self-mailer is available for purchase that makes soil testing a breeze. After collecting the soil sample, customers simply put the envelope in the mail and then expect results from the lab in approximately 10 -14 days. For field crops and food plots the customer is responsible for mailing the samples to the lab and again, they can expect results within two weeks. Soil testing ensures that the appropriate amount of fertilizer and lime is applied, which is good for the pocketbook and the environment!



Keeping People Healthy



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

Fostering Health through Nutrition and Physical Activity

Our Challenge

Obesity has important consequences on our nation's health and economy. It is linked to a number of chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers. Among adults, the medical costs associated with obesity are estimated at 147 billion dollars. According to The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America released in 2017, Michigan has the 10th highest adult obesity rate in the nation. Michigan's adult obesity rate is currently 32.5 percent, up from 22.1 percent in 2000 and from 13.2 percent in 1990.

Healthier Lives through Nutrition Education

Michigan State University Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. Through the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), we provide exemplary nutrition and physical activity education for limited resource participants where they eat, learn, live, work, play, and shop. Program and outreach efforts aim to increase the likelihood limited resource youth, adults and seniors make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

\$1 = \$10



EVERY \$1 SPENT ON NUTRITION EDUCATION SAVES AS MUCH AS \$10 IN LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE COSTS.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS REACHED THROUGH NUTRITION EDUCATION

1,135

Adults



1,161
Youth

Keeping People Healthy

There have been notable successes as a result of our direct education in the community. Program Instructor JoAnne Benthem draws from evidence-based curricula to reinforce healthy eating and physical activity promotion among youth, adults and seniors throughout Wexford County. One noteworthy success has been a partnership with Munson HealthCare Cadillac Hospital. MSU Extension worked with hospital staff to recruit for Cooking Matters for Families – an interactive course aimed at involving all members of the family in meal preparation. Participants of this course learn how to create quick and affordable recipes and take home groceries to replicate the meal at home.



Wexford County youth learn to make delicious and nutritious meals and snacks.

Making the healthy choice easier - Supporting Changes to the Policy, System and Environment

MSU Extension works to create a culture of health and wellness by providing coaching at the organization level. We provide technical assistance in assessing the environment, including policies and the physical space, creating an action plan, and implementing the action plan to work towards best practices related to nutrition and physical activity.



Supporting Food and Agriculture



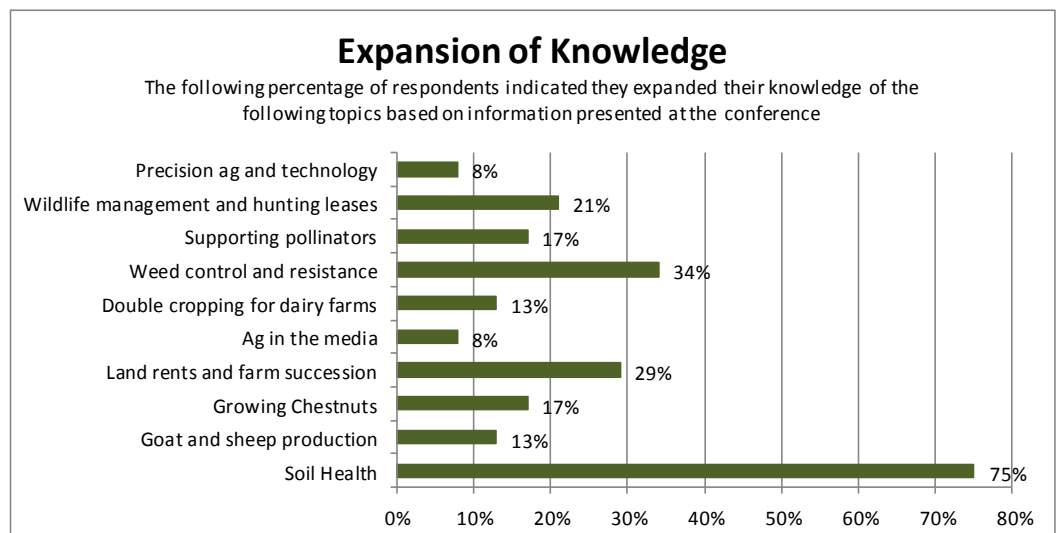
Helping Wexford County farmers grow our economy, grow local food, and protect the environment.

Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state's economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues to increase. 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.

Highland Ag and Natural Resources Conference

Michigan State University Extension, in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford County Conservation Districts, held the second annual Highland Ag and Natural Resources Conference. The goal of the conference was to provide a variety of one hour, concurrent educational sessions with a variety of topics such as; weed management, soil health, estate planning, wildlife management, farm efficiency, using drones and more. The conference was held at Baker College Cadillac Campus and had ninety-six people registered for the event. Multiple sponsors and vendors also attended.

Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that they would consider implementing or expanding use of management practices and tools based on information presented at the conference.



Supporting Food and Agriculture



Christmas Tree Production

Reducing coning in Fraser fir

Cones are a major liability in Christmas tree production. They reduce the aesthetic value of trees and utilize internal resources of trees that could go toward shoot and needle growth. Large trees may produce over one thousand cones, requiring extensive hand labor to remove. In fact, some growers report that cone-picking has become their single largest labor expense. In on-farm trials, MSU is investigating two alternative approaches to control cone formation in Fraser fir Christmas tree plantations. We are evaluating coning and growth responses of Fraser firs treated with plant growth regulators and methods of post-emergent herbicide application to developing Fraser fir cones to prevent cone development.

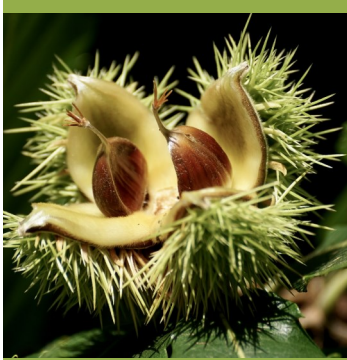
Based on these studies we have consistently seen a high degree of cone control (80 – 100%) and low rates of damage to trees. We will be working with growers to see how we can use these techniques to help reduce expensive costs of cone removal.



Nitrogen Management

MSU Extension is investigating the use of nitrogen stabilizers in conifer nursery and Christmas tree production. Addition of these products can increase costs by \$35 - \$200+ per ton of nitrogen fertilizer. A series of trials with field-grown trees was initiated in 2015 to determine the effect of these products on tree growth and quality. We are also investigating the impact of nitrogen stabilizers on nitrate leaching. Based on results to date, nitrogen stabilizers did not improve growth or nitrogen concentration of needles and did not reduce nitrate-N leaching compared to conventional fertilization with urea or ammonium sulfate. The project is ongoing; however, these indicate the less-expensive conventional fertilizers are adequate for Christmas tree production systems.





Commercial chestnut production has become a significant agricultural commodity in Michigan, the leading chestnut producer in North America.

Research to Combat Asian Chestnut Gall Wasp

Dr. Deb McCullough (MSU Department of Entomology) and Erin Lizotte (MSUE Wexford County) are collaborating on an effort to address a new invasive pest that can impact all species of chestnuts. Asian chestnut gall wasp was first detected in Berrien County, Michigan in June 2015. This pest threatens the burgeoning commercial chestnut industry in Michigan as well as the few pockets of remaining American chestnuts. The tiny wasp induces the formation of spherical galls on leaves and shoots. It can decimate nut production, suppress shoot growth, and if severe, cause branch and even tree mortality. The goal of the project is to assess the biology of this new pest in Michigan and integrate an array of management tactics, including host plant resistance, biological control, and insecticidal treatments.

Milk Check Economics

Dairy farm milk prices have been depressed for several years, causing financial stress on dairy farms. The on-farm milk prices are impacted by several factors – federal milk marketing programs, cooperative/processor aspects and on-farm specifics. This meeting looked at the features of dairy farm milk checks and how each factor is calculated. By understanding the milk pricing system, dairy farmers can determine what aspects of their milk price they can influence.

Dairy producers, agribusiness professionals and agricultural lenders attended this meeting in Cadillac on December 1, 2018. Presentations were made by Dr. Chris Wolf, MSU Dept. of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, and Kathy Lee, MSU Extension dairy educator.

In addition, Shannon Lindquist, MSU Extension educator, provided information about resources available to help people dealing with stress, including the financial stress being experienced by some dairy farm families.

Pesticide Licensing Exam Review

State law requires licensed pesticide applicators to complete an examination and continued education to maintain their credentials. This process helps ensure that pesticides are applied in a manner that protects people and the environment. Each winter we offer certification training and updates for pesticide applicators. The review session is for those wishing to receive final training before the exam or for those needing pesticide recertification credits.



Extension Educators Serving Wexford County

Staff Located in Wexford County Office:

Name	Role	Email
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Erin Lizotte	Integrated Pest Management Educator	taylo548@msu.edu
Tracy Trautner	Early Childhood Educator	trautner@msu.edu
Sara Keinath	Children & Youth Educator	skeinath@msu.edu
Carol Blake	4-H Program Coordinator	cblake@msu.edu
JoAnne Benthem	SNAP-ED Nutrition Program Instructor	benthemj@anr.msu.edu
Lori Trailer	District 6 Administrative Support	trailer@msu.edu
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Ken Brown
Jack Kleinhardt (Commissioner)
Christine Hammond

Gladwin County

Terry Walters (Commissioner)
Dick Metz

Isabella County

Jerry Jaloszynski (Commissioner)
Bob Wachowski

Mecosta County

Marilynn Vargo (Commissioner)
Vacancy

Missaukee County

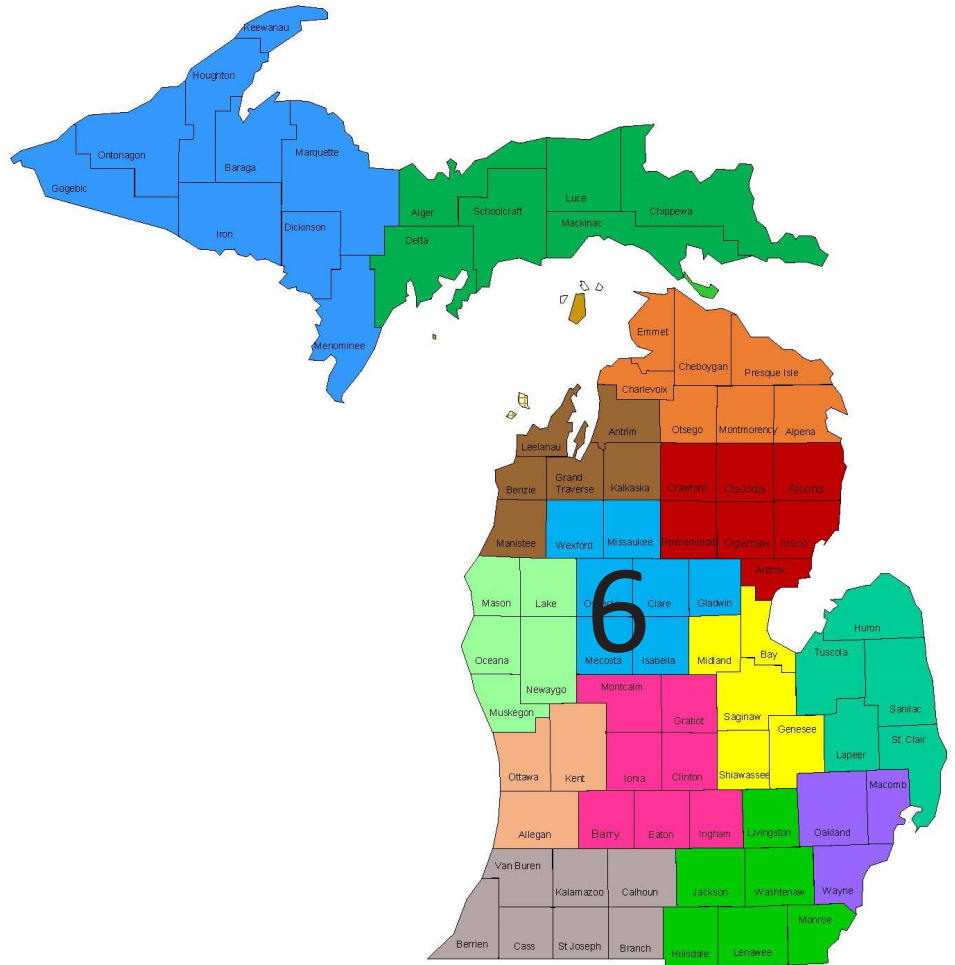
Cindy Jones
Frank Vanderwal (Commissioner)

Osceola County

Chris Gentry—Chair
Pam Wayne (Commissioner)
Russ Nehmer
David Eggle

Wexford County

Mike Solomon
Judy Nichols (Commissioner)



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