



Ottawa County

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



\$55,765,848 total economic impact in Ottawa County



4,138 Ottawa County youth in 4-H, early childhood or after school enrichment programs



127 adults enrolled in social and emotional health courses



754 adults and youth in nutrition education courses



MSU Extension website received 28,320 visits from Ottawa County, 79% first-time visitors



MSU disbursed \$11,176,053 in financial aid to county students



\$2,176,463 spending with local businesses



8,000 gardening questions answered statewide

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Ottawa County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Ottawa County residents need it most.



This year, we've also welcomed Ottawa County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

We're passionate about serving Ottawa County and are looking forward to a new year. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

Erin Moore, District 7 Director

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Program Highlights



Cows bunked at a local Ottawa County Farm.

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA) TRAINING

Cargill and Tyson are requiring BQA certification from producers they will be purchasing fed cattle from starting January 1, 2019. Producers selling cattle at local auction yards need to be certified if they want buyers from these two companies to be able to bid on their cattle. Concepts of the national BQA program were presented at various locations across Lower Michigan and participants were administered a test to pass for certification. 57 Ottawa County residents were trained in 2018.



Data collection for the heat stress project at an Ottawa county dairy farm.

OTTAWA DAIRY PRODUCTION

Ottawa ranks 4th in Michigan in number of grade A herds, averaging 283 cows per herd. Data shows that the cost of production is the highest for farms between 200-500 cows. MSU Extension is providing programs to improve the economic situation of Ottawa county farms. Management practices to mitigate heat stress were evaluated to provide solutions to the decreased animal performance during the hot season. A feed management project aims at identifying the financial burden of farms when feed adjustments are not performed. Finally, MSU Extension is working closely with farms in Ottawa to develop LEAN Management strategies for Dairy farms.



Hands-on training to develop a spray program using training notes and Enviroweather .

SWD MANAGEMENT

On June 15, 2018, blueberry growers received training to manage the spotted wing Drosophila (SWD) under a System Approach to Pest Management. The SWD is causing tremendous damage to the economy of small blueberry growers in Ottawa County and all major Michigan small fruit producing counties. Training consisted of a one-day classroom and hands-on session. This is an advanced Integrated Pest Management program that provides knowledge and skills to manage the spotted wing Drosophila at levels that allow the sustainability of blueberry production and employment in small blueberry farms. In addition to the training, MSU Extension conducted 40 farm visits with blueberry growers.

Program Highlights

PICK FOR PANTRIES

MSU Extension Community Food Systems Educator, Garrett Ziegler, worked with Ottawa Food to develop a new program called Ottawa Pick for Pantries. The program includes a collaboration with four U-pick fruit farms in Ottawa County and several community resource centers and pantries. Many pantries lack access to fresh local fruit in their pantry donations and this program helped fill that need. Results included the donation and distribution of hundreds of pounds of local fruit to low-income residents through the Pick for Pantries program. This included strawberries, blueberries and apples from local farmers.



Blueberry bucket for U-pick for Pantries by Ottawa Food in partnership with MSU Extension.

SOLAR IN AGRICULTURE

Bioenergy Educator, Charles Gould, hosted a presentation for Ottawa County Greenhouse growers entitled "Opportunities for Solar PV in a Greenhouse Operation." Charles covered topics such as why now is a good time for solar, the federal solar tariff impact, as well as solar project financing. There were 28 Ottawa County residents in attendance. Charles' work in solar has grown and has been recognized statewide for his work developing "Shining a Light on Agriculture Solar Energy Development" which he will bring to Ottawa County in March of 2019.



Solar development on Langland Farms in Coopersville.

GREENHOUSE WORKER SUPPORT

In 2018, the greenhouse extension team carried out a series of meetings on the new Worker Protection Standards and assisted growers with picking the appropriate respirators and making sure that they fit securely. Nursery and Greenhouse Educator, Heidi Lindberg, organized a meeting held in West Olive, MI on January 9, 2018, which was attended by 58 Ottawa County Residents. Growers reported that information received at the event was worth up to \$163,984 on their combined 6,843 acres of greenhouse, nursery, fruit and vegetable production in West Michigan.



Respirator Fit Testing to be compliant with new worker protection standards.

Program Highlights



Ottawa County residents discuss priorities for protecting pollinators.

POLLINATOR MEETINGS

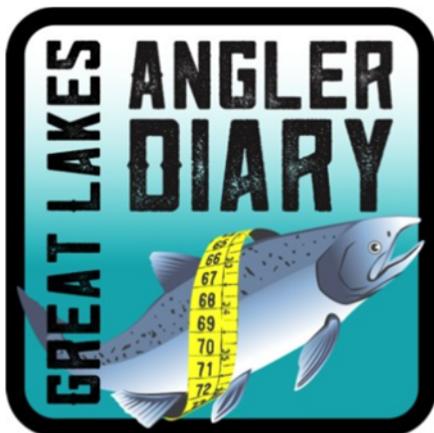
MSU Extension Small Fruit Educator, Carlos Garcia, hosted meetings with local growers, Farm Bureau representatives, beekeepers and local stakeholders to discuss priorities for protecting pollinators in the region. The goals of the meeting were to 1) Survey attendees about their interest and engagement in pollinator conservation; 2) Update attendees about ongoing research related to this project; 3) Solicit input on stakeholder priorities, and how we can incorporate their priorities into our research focus. Approximately 50 Ottawa County residents attended.



Ottawa County Commissioner, Kyle Terpstra, tests the water quality of Lake Michigan.

D.J. ANGUS VOYAGE

Joined by members of the MSU Extension Advisory Council, Erin Moore, District 7 Director, led a small group of local legislators on the 4th Annual DJ Angus Voyage. The voyage focuses on water quality, invasive species, and the connection between watersheds, rivers, and the Great Lakes. This 45-foot research vessel is owned and operated by Grand Valley State University and serves as a “floating classroom” offering educational programs on the Grand River, Spring Lake, and Lake Michigan. Dr. Dan O’Keefe, MSU Extension Sea Grant educator, housed in Ottawa County, leads the educational programs that day.



The Great Lakes Angler Diary was developed with guidance from [Michigan Sea Grant](#).

GREAT LAKE ANGLER DIARY

The Great Lakes Angler Diary App was developed to help scientists who are covering the great lakes collect “citizen science” to fill in knowledge gaps. Thanks to the widespread availability of mobile technology, many anglers are already equipped with high-tech hardware necessary for recording quality data. All they need is appropriate software to guide and organize their efforts. The Salmon Ambassadors program enlisted anglers in recording length, location, and fin clip information on stocked and wild Chinook salmon. The new version of the app, developed in 2018, has improvements to the Total Length dropdown menu, Fin Clip dropdown menu, and formatting of the data entry screen layout.

Program Highlights

OTTAWA COUNTY 4-H

Throughout the year, Ottawa County 4-H offers programs to youth through clubs, afterschool programs and much more. 4-H strives to develop life skills and enhance leadership opportunities for youth. Highlights in Ottawa County 4-H this year include Makyla Nelson of Ottawa County 4-H being selected to serve on the Michigan State 4-H Leadership Council Emily Vis winning youth Best in Show Rabbit at the Michigan State Fair with her Californian Junior Buck in September; and Ottawa County 4-H sending 16 youth to the State 4-H Shoot this past year. Of those 16, six youth placed in the top three for their various divisions including archery, rifle and trap.



State 4-H Youth Leadership Council members kick off their year. Photo by Jackie Martin, MSUE.

4-H and the Boys and Girls Club

4-H Program Coordinator, Susan Fenton, has been hard at work engaging non-traditional youth audiences with our 4-H Program. Susan has created programs in collaboration with the Ottawa County Boys and Girls Clubs. She implements curriculum such as “Problem Solving and Communication” where she teaches team building and character development. She also does STEM related projects such as “messy science” where youth learn how microwaves work and got to make marshmallows puff up, Ivory soap explode, and learn what happens when you put a lightbulb in a microwave. The goal of these programs is to bring structured youth development services to underserved audiences.



Youth at the Boys and Girls Club conducting a “Mysterious mixtures” project to see how oil and water don’t mix!

YOUNG ADULT SERVICES INITIATIVE

MSU Extension Community Nutrition Educator, Christian Kleinjans, has formed a partnership with Ottawa Area Intermediate School District 's (OAISD) Young Adult Services (YAS) program to implement *Healthy Eating Adds Up*, a curriculum designed for Developmentally Disabled (DD) and Cognitively Impaired (CI) adults. Through this partnership, in 2018, about 200 young adults have received hands on cooking lessons coupled with nutrition education. Due to it’s success, the partnership with MSU Extension for the implementation of this curriculum will be built into the annual curriculum for the YAS program starting in the 2019/2020 school year.



Christian Kleinjans, Community Nutrition Educator speaking to the YAS group about *Healthy Eating Adds Up*.

Featured County Story

CSA to Pantry

Ottawa County MSU Extension partners with Ottawa Foods to bring the CSA to Pantry program to local partnering pantry.

Photo: Example of a CSA Share distributed to the LOVE In the Name of Christ food pantry.



The issue: CSA to Pantry is a project that has been popping up across west Michigan for the past two years. The project attempts to improve food access for the most vulnerable populations of the region (food pantry users) by connecting them with local farmers who offer Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. This not only helps improve access to healthy, locally produced fruits and vegetables, but is also set up to ensure that farmers can be paid a full price for their shares and have access to new customers.

MSU Extension actions taken: This project began in late 2016 when grant funds were awarded to the Ottawa Food, to complete several projects related to improving access to healthy, local foods. One aspect of this project was the development of a CSA to Pantry project for Ottawa County. During the second year of this project, there were new partnerships and connections developed to design a project that was more sustainable and worked better for all parties involved. Community Food Systems Educator, Garrett Zeigler, worked with Ottawa Food to develop a new program with LOVE In the Name of Christ, a faith-based organization that has developed a year-long life-skills program which connects low-income and vulnerable populations with education resources that help them improve their lives. Garrett tied the CSA program to the life-skills program and asked participants to utilize vouchers (earned through attending educational classes) as payment for shares. Overall, 20 people participated in 2018 and those people were connected to additional resources through an MSU Extension run SNAP Nutrition class that was focused on “Cooking your CSA.”

The result: An evaluation was performed in partnership with Ottawa Food, which included both pre- and post- surveys to demonstrate the planned increase in fruit and vegetable consumption and healthy living choices. These surveys were only able to capture a small portion of the participants and had mixed results as far as increases in fruit/vegetable consumption. However, comments from the participants were overall positive and we are planning to move forward with the program for 2019. While shares were purchased in 2018 by grant funds, LOVE INC has agreed to utilize general funds to purchase the shares in place of other “rewards” that can be redeemed for life-skill class vouchers.

How this has made a difference: This project has immense value to both the participants who received the food as well as the farmer who participated. Overall, this project can be a model for continued development of relationships between local farmers and low-income consumers who struggle with access to healthy, local food. This project is one of several others that are also taking place around West Michigan, the state of Michigan and the country.

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, 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 Ottawa 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 Ottawa County!

MICHIGAN STATE
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