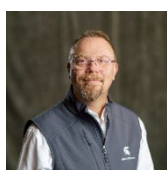


# ALPENA COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Alpena County office

Adam Koivisto	District 14 Director
Mary Dunckel	Agriculture Literacy educator
Michelle Eagling	4-H Program coordinator
Brandon Schroeder	Michigan Sea Grant educator
Sheryl Wright	Office manager



## Message from the District Director

I'm happy to share highlights from another successful year of partnership between Alpena County, Alpena County Youth and Recreation Committee and MSU Extension. Thanks to your continued support, we've helped residents lead healthier lives, supported local businesses and farms, and created meaningful opportunities for youth development. Our programs—offered in-person, online, and hybrid—make MSU Extension resources more accessible than ever. Our staff live and work in the community, building strong relationships and responding to local needs. Thank you for your ongoing support. We look forward to another impactful year and hope to see you at an upcoming program.

~ Adam Koivisto, District 14 Director

## Impact



**249**

Programs accessed by residents



**20,896**

Reached by social media



**3,406**

Reached through programming



**5,800**

Reached indirectly



**227** youth enrolled in 4-H



**66** total volunteers

## 4-H in Alpena County

Since the beginning of the year, Alpena County 4-H has offered **over 100 programs, events, and activities**, providing youth with a wide range of hands-on learning opportunities both locally and statewide. Participants explored topics in **STEM, animal science, horticulture, environmental stewardship, and life skills**, engaging in experiences such as **embryology, pollination and bee education, ice fishing, invasive species awareness, ice water safety, writing checks, counting money, shearing sheep, and tattooing rabbits**. Youth also participated in **clinics and workshops**, further developing practical skills and knowledge in their project areas.

A highlight this year was the successful establishment of a **community garden at Lincoln Elementary**, which provided education around **sustainability** while allowing youth to experience **start-to-finish projects with plants**, culminating in a full-size vegetable garden. This project fostered environmental stewardship, teamwork, and hands-on learning.

In addition to personal development, Alpena 4-H youth actively contributed to the community. Members supported local nonprofits and community events, including the **Brown Trout Festival, Alpena Antique Tractor Club, the Library, and the Optimist Club**, among others. Youth also assisted with **ice storm relief**, helping unload supply and food trucks—teaching teamwork, responsibility, and the importance of giving back.

Alpena 4-H members further developed **leadership, financial literacy, post-secondary preparation, and scholarship readiness**, with over **\$10,000 in scholarships, supplies, and free opportunities** awarded to participants. Over **50 youth represented Alpena County at Tigers 4-H Day**, gaining exposure to statewide programs and experiences.

The **Alpena County Fair**, one of the largest and most recognizable events for 4-H youth, remains the central hub for education, engagement, and project showcase. It provides members the opportunity to practice new skills, demonstrate achievements, and connect with the broader community.

Through these programs, community service efforts, and experiential learning opportunities, Alpena County 4-H continues to **educate, inspire, and empower youth**, helping them develop confidence, practical skills, and leadership abilities while preparing them to make positive contributions in their communities and beyond.





Learning kayak safety at 4-H summer camp 2025



Cloverbud lesson on showing



Foam party last day of fair



4-H Archery Club



4-H day with Detroit Tigers



Lincoln School's Garden







THANK YOU  
FOR SUPPORTING  
ALPENA 4-H  
YOUTH!





# Increasing Agricultural Awareness

## *In-person and online*



**Dairy education & fun at the Alpena Farmers' Market Kid's Day**  
Mary Dunckel, agriculture literacy educator, and Morgan Hardies, HNI program instructor were present during the Alpena Farmers' Market Kid's day with a wooden milking cow and a hands-on butter making activity.



**4-H at the Breslin Center**  
Approximately 2,000 kids and their families attended 4-H at the Breslin Center in 2025. Mary Dunckel, an agriculture literacy educator, created a display and trivia wheel to demonstrate the importance of Michigan agriculture.

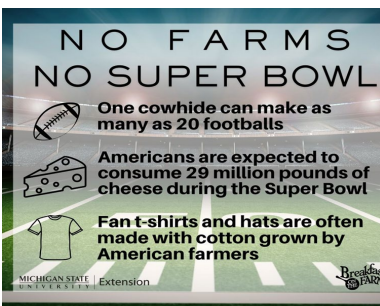


**Small Animals Day at MSU**  
Youth and adults spun the livestock trivia wheel for a chance to win a fun prize. MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources invited the MSU Extension agriculture literacy team to participate in this year's event at the Farm Bureau pavilion at the East Lansing campus. Staff interacted with over 300 youth on a Saturday morning in April.



### **Breakfast on the Farm at the MSU Horse Farm**

MSU Extension's Breakfast on the Farm events connect Michigan families to modern agriculture through immersive, educational experiences. On Saturday, August 2, the 43rd Breakfast on the Farm event welcomed 1,154 attendees to the MSU Horse Farm, located on 100 acres just south of the MSU main campus. Guests enjoyed a farm-cooked pancake breakfast followed by a self-guided walking tour highlighting equine care, farm operations, and agricultural science. Families engaged with MSU experts, volunteers, and interactive displays that deepened their understanding of food systems and animal care. This event fosters agricultural literacy, builds trust between producers and consumers, and strengthens community appreciation for Michigan agriculture.



### **Weekly social media graphics focus on MI agriculture**

In 2024, the reach was 58,529 with 61 infographics and posts

# Fostering Strong Communities



## Michigan Agritourism bus tour & visit November 2024

MSU Extension – Alpena County and the Alpena Farmers Market collaborate to deliver year-round educational programming that connects agriculture, gardening, and community engagement. During the Michigan Agritourism annual bus tour, nearly 50 participants from across the state visited Mich-e-ke-wis Park to learn about the long-standing success of the Alpena Farmers Market. The display featured posters of past market activities, Michigan Fresh factsheets, gardening resources, and a sensory garden designed to engage youth using all five senses. Visitors gained insight into how the market serves as a hub for education and local food access. This event highlights how agritourism and MSU Extension partnerships strengthen local economies, promote agricultural literacy, and foster inclusive learning experiences for all ages.



### Pruning & Planting Apple Trees WORKSHOP

March 29th 10:00am-12:00pm  
Alpena Farmers' Market  
1302 South State Ave.

This will be for the backyard gardener

**Learn about :**

- ✓ Pruning backyard apple trees
- ✓ Pruning apples for the deer
- ✓ How to plant and protect an apple tree

**To register Call 989-255-9362**

#### How to Prune an Apple Tree: The Basics



##### What to Prune

- 1 Some Fruit
- 2 Crossing Branches
- 3 Dead Branches
- 4 Water Sprout
- 5 Broken Branches
- 6 Groth Araising Below the Graft Junctions
- 7 Diseased Branches
- 8 Suckers Growing From Based of Trunk & Spide

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**Cost**

**\$5** with Friends Of the Alpena Farmers Market Membership.  
**\$15** without membership





### PLANTING CONTAINERS WORKSHOP

**TODAY**

Alpena Farmers' Market 10:00, 11:00, 11:30

30min Sessions will start at 10:00am and run throughout the morning until 12:00pm. You can also bring your own plants and pots down to the market and we will help you plant these.

**Learn about :**

- ✓ Different potting options
- ✓ Different growing mediums and fertilizers
- ✓ Watering & lighting for your containers
- ✓ What varieties are best for our climate

Class will be taught by Alpena Farmers Market gardeners. Resources will be provided by MSU Extension.



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**FREE**



## Spring education series at the market

Four hands-on learning workshops were held throughout the spring to help prepare gardeners for the growing season.



# Supporting Food Safety & Food Entrepreneurs

*In-person events and printed resources*




## Food Safety Day at the Alpena Farmers' Market

MSU Extension - Alpena County collaborates with Alpena Farmers Market to deliver educational programming that connects people to agriculture and food safety. During the farmers market's season, Food Safety Educator Karen Fifield and Agriculture Literacy Educator Mary Dunckel attended the market with a booth that had information related to preserving local produce safely, including take-home fact sheets from Michigan Fresh. Visitors received education about the local foods accessible to them and connected with their local MSU Extension experts.

## Michigan Fresh at the Farmers' Market


This MSU Extension effort provides fruit, vegetable, fish and meat fact sheets at area farmers markets. Shoppers can take the fact sheets home to learn about how to safely store, use and preserve nearly every fruit and vegetable grown in Michigan.



### Canning Applesauce

**INGREDIENTS**

- Apples (preferably ripe produce under cold running water)
- Ascorbic acid (if desired)
- Sugar (if desired)



**TO PREPARE**

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Wash, peel and core apples.
3. If desired, slice apples into water containing ascorbic acid to prevent browning. While preparing a canner load of jars, keep peeled, halved, quartered, sliced or diced apples in a solution of 3 grams (3,000 milligrams) ascorbic acid to 1 gallon of cold water. You can get ascorbic acid in several forms: pure powdered form, vitamin C tablets, or commercially prepared mixes of ascorbic and citric acid. If you choose to use these products, follow the manufacturer's directions.

Select Michigan apples that are sweet, juicy and crisp. For a tart flavor, add 1 to 2 pounds of tart apples to each 3 pounds of sweet fruit.

An average of 23 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts, an average of 110 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints.

4. Place drained apple slices in an 8- to 10-quart pot.
5. Add ½ cup water.
6. Simmer, occasionally to prevent burning, heat quickly until tender (5 to 20 minutes, depending on maturity and variety).
7. Press through a sieve or food mill, or skip the pressing step if you prefer chunk-style sauce.
8. Sauce may be packed without sugar. If desired, add ½ cup sugar per quart of sauce. Taste and add more, if needed.
9. Rinse sauce to boiling (cover).

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

[can.msu.edu/mi\\_fresh/](http://can.msu.edu/mi_fresh/)

Michigan Fresh

Using, Storing and Preserving

## Potatoes

Michigan-grown potatoes are available July through March.

Prepared by:  
Joyce McGarry, MSU Extension Educator  
Revised by:  
Laurie Messing, MSU Extension Educator  
Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Potatoes was first published in March 2013 and revised in June 2023. It replaces WQ0456 Food Preservation Series - Potato (Michigan State University Extension, 2009).



### Food Safety and Storage

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Select potatoes that are firm and free of bruises, nicks or soft spots.
- Avoid choosing potatoes with sprouts and those with a green tinge.
- Scrub potatoes with a vegetable brush, under cool running water. Do not use soap.
- Store potatoes in a cool, dark place, preferably 45 to 50 °F, with good ventilation. When properly stored, potatoes will remain fresh for up to a month. Throw away potatoes that are shriveled or green or have many sprouts.
- Keep potatoes away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- For best quality and nutritive value, preserve only what your family can consume in 12 months.

### Yield

One pound =	3 medium potatoes
	3 cups peeled and sliced
	2 cups mashed
	2 cups French fries
20 pounds =	7 quart cans
15 pounds =	9 pint cans
50 pounds =	18-22 quart cans

### How to Preserve

#### Canning

Pressure canning is the only safe method of canning potatoes. Potatoes must be pressure canned to avoid the potential of the foodborne illness botulism.

#### Use new white potatoes.

Select small to medium-sized mature potatoes. For packing whole, choose potatoes 1 to 2 inches in diameter.

- **Hot pack method:** Wash and peel potatoes. Cut into cubes, if desired. Place in a solution of 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid and 1 gallon water to prevent darkening. Drain before cooking. Place potatoes in saucepot of hot water, and bring to a boil. Boil whole potatoes for 10 minutes; boil cubes for 2 minutes. Drain. Pack hot potatoes in hot jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Add ½ teaspoon salt to pints and 1 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from top with fresh boiling water. Remove air bubbles, wipe jar rims with a clean paper towel and adjust headspace if needed. Adjust lids and process (see tables that follow for recommended processing times).

Lawn or garden questions?  
Visit [miganarden.msu.edu](http://miganarden.msu.edu)  
Call toll-free 1-888-678-5464.



54 new product launches



Product Center counselors reported 3,386 counseling sessions with Michigan clients



MSU Product Center clients reported 120 Jobs created plus 64 Jobs retained



655 MSU Product Center clients throughout Michigan

Michigan's food, beverage, and agriculture sectors thrive when entrepreneurs have access to expert guidance. The Michigan State University (MSU) Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new product and service ideas into the food, beverage and agriculture markets. The MSU Product Center has an extensive network of certified innovation counselors who offer services anywhere in Michigan. Mary Dunkel, based in MSU Extension-Alpena County, is one of eight counselors across the state assisting entrepreneurs. Clients gain access to research-backed resources, technical assistance, and industry connections that accelerate growth and reduce risk. By supporting small business development, the Product Center strengthens Michigan's economy, fosters innovation, and expands access to locally produced goods.

In addition to working one-on-one with entrepreneurs and businesses, the Product Center hosts Making It In Michigan, a premier specialty food conference and trade show. The 2025 show brought together 127 vendors from across the state under one roof. It was a full day learning, sharing, sampling and recognizing the accomplishments of many successful entrepreneurs.



*"We recognize the need to actually have an event where new food entrepreneurs could introduce their products, not only to the public but to buyers," **MSU Extension Community, Food and Environment Director Dave Ivan** said. "So, this (Making It In Michigan) really provides an opportunity for that interaction to take place."*

Photo credit: Ryan Newcomb, MSU



# Agricultural Productivity



**\$104.7 billion** annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy

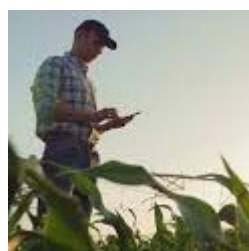
## Agriculture & Agribusiness

MSU Extension works to improve farm personnel well-being and income, expand agriculture-related businesses and increase employment opportunities, making agriculture one of the strongest industries within Michigan. Supporting agriculture and helping to improve financial stability and competitiveness has a significant economic impact on Michigan and local communities.



### Managing Farm Stress

Farming can be a stressful occupation - MSU Extension has a suite of resources and educators that can help identify and manage stress



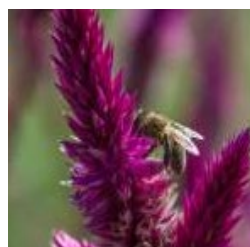
### Farm Management

Integrating management skills and principles into the daily operations of farms and firms along with the programs provided by MSU Extension.



### ERAIL

Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL) provides training and resources when dealing with accidents involving livestock.



### Pollinator Programming

Integrating management skills and principles into the daily operations of farms and firms along with the programs provided by MSU Extension.

**102** Alpena county residents attended **33** agriculture classes or events during the last year.

# Fostering Strong Communities

## Michigan Sea Grant

Dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and coastal resources, Michigan Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University (MSU) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We promote research, education, and outreach to enhance responsible and sustainable use of our diverse Great Lakes resources. Through MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant works with Michigan citizens, industries, and coastal communities to encourage their use, benefits, and enjoyment of Great Lakes resources that positively influences our state's economy, environment and quality of life.

Highlights of programming include:

- **Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops** provided an educational opportunity for more than 160 anglers, charter captains, and others learning with fisheries researchers and managers from across Michigan.
- **Mi Paddle Stewards training** hosted in Alpena County this summer provided education for local paddlers looking to protect the waters they love by learning to properly clean their boats and paddling equipment to avoid transferring aquatic invasive species between water bodies.
- **Sea Grant Center for Great Lakes Literacy provides education leadership for the Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative**, which supported 82 educators and engaged more than 3,952 students, through their learning, in Great Lakes and natural resources stewardship projects in (and with) their communities across northeast Michigan.
- **4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp** is a statewide science, careers, and youth leadership camp and MSU pre-college program hosted in northeast Michigan, serving 65 campers from across Michigan – including Alpena County youth.



**Mi Paddle Steward participants learn how to identify native and non-native aquatic plants locally in the Thunder Bay River**



**4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources campers explore fisheries and maritime history science and careers**





# MSU EXTENSION – ALPENA COUNTY

603 South Eleventh Avenue

Alpena, MI 49707

989-354-9870

Email: [msue.alpena@county.msu.edu](mailto:msue.alpena@county.msu.edu)

Website: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/Alpena/index>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alpenacountymsue/>

This past year MSU Extension – Alpena County has helped community members through phone, email, Facebook and office walk-ins

As MSU Extension continues to bring research and education to citizens across the state, three wonderful resources help reach every community member in our county:

## **MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline** (888) 678-3464

Calls answered by Extension Master Gardeners with the knowledge and resources to help with gardening and lawn questions.

## **Ask Extension** [canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert](https://canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert)

One-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts on topics such as lawns, agriculture, food preservation, natural resources, and more!

## **Soil Testing** [homesoiltest.msu.edu](https://homesoiltest.msu.edu)

Don't guess - soil test! Learn what vital nutrient your soil is missing for healthy growth in gardens, lawns, and crops. Purchase soil tests in our office or online.

## *Stay Connected!*

Scan the QR code to sign up for monthly emails highlighting local MSU Extension events and information you can use



## MSU EXTENSION STAFF IN ALPENA COUNTY

NAME	ROLE	PHONE	EMAIL
Adam Koivisto	District Director	231-237-4775	<a href="mailto:koivist4@msu.edu">koivist4@msu.edu</a>
Mary Dunckel	Agriculture literacy & Product Center	989-354-9875	<a href="mailto:dunckelm@msu.edu">dunckelm@msu.edu</a>
Brandon Schroeder	Michigan Sea Grant	989-980-4032	<a href="mailto:schroe45@msu.edu">schroe45@msu.edu</a>
Michelle Eagling	4-H Program Coordinator	989-354-9878	<a href="mailto:eaglingm@msu.edu">eaglingm@msu.edu</a>
Sheryl Wright	Office Manager	989-354-9870	<a href="mailto:sheryl.wright@affiliate.msu.edu">sheryl.wright@affiliate.msu.edu</a>

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