

EMMET COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

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Message from the District Director

I'm happy to share highlights from another successful year of partnership between Emmet County 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



253

programs accessed by residents



1,894

reached through programming



11,641

reached by social media

Emmet County 4-H

The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides thousands of young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.



4-H Dairy Conference 2025

Three Emmet County 4-H youth and volunteers attended a 4-H Dairy Conference where they learned all about dairy production and even dissected a cow's reproductive tract and udder! We toured the Dairy Store and enjoyed some ice cream.



4-H Exploration Days 2025

Participants, volunteers, and staff traveled from across the state to attend MSU 4-H Exploration Days on the campus of Michigan State University. Members attended career tracks to explore careers in areas of interest, and each youth chose from different classes including shooting sports, search and rescue K9's, creating your own TV Show, Preserving Jams and Salsa, Vet Nurse for the Day, Sign Language, and multiple other animal science classes. They explored campus, experienced dorm living, and got a taste of college life for 4 days.



Emmet-Charlevoix 4-H Judging Clinic 2025

MSU Extension hosted a livestock judging clinic to help youth understand what judges look for in various species, strengthening their confidence and readiness for fair season. Held June 8 at the Emmet-Charlevoix County Fairgrounds, the day-long clinic covered rabbit, poultry, beef, sheep, swine and horses. A total of 84 youth attended: 48 from Emmet County, 11 from Charlevoix, and 23 from Cheboygan. Participants gained hands-on experience and species-specific insights that will help them prepare animals and improve showmanship skills. By equipping youth with practical knowledge and fair preparation strategies, this clinic supports agricultural literacy, personal growth, and community engagement through 4-H programming.



Babysitting Training

Participants learned skills necessary to be safe and successful babysitters, such as CPR, First Aid, and child care safety tips.



Clucktastic Chicken Talk Event

In partnership with the Petoskey Library, a 4-H leader shared information about starting and maintaining a backyard flock. Twenty-seven participants of all ages gathered to learn about poultry care and got hands-on experience and education.



Emmet-Charlevoix County Fair

Youth and volunteers prepare for fair all year - it's a great opportunity to see all of their hard work pay off and have some fun as well!

- The fair auction brought in \$278,606.50
- Youth from seven different 4-H clubs participated.



From pigeons with the Flying Clovers Pigeon Club, to sheep with Bear River 4-H Club – there is something at the fair for everyone.



The fair is an opportunity for youth to showcase their skills and even practice some resilience!



Even the volunteers and adults got in on the fun and participated in a volunteer swine showing contest.



Emmet-Charlevoix 4-H Horse Council

The Overall Exotics Champions posed for photos with their fellow competitors after the show
Photo Credit Tony Johnson

Horse Council Costume Contest

Youth and horses dressed up together for the Horse Council Costume contest



Improving Health, Nutrition, and Food Safety

SNAP-Ed PROGRAMMING

SNAP-Ed is an evidence-based program that helps people lead healthier lives. SNAP-Ed teaches people using or eligible for SNAP benefits about good nutrition and how to make their food dollars stretch further. SNAP-Ed participants also learn to be physically active. The program has proven to reduce the risks of chronic disease and improve overall health for millions of people making low-income.

SNAP-Ed works by building partnerships with all types of community organizations. Communities have social marketing campaigns, hold nutrition education classes, and improve their policies, systems and the environment of the community.



Fruits and Veggies Presentation

Community Nutrition Educator Marilyn Ellenberger returned for her second year of programming with three Pellston classrooms this year. She instructed six sections of students age K-5 about topics relating to nutrition, health and sanitation.

This program builds foundational health knowledge in early learners, reinforces positive habits and strengthens school-community relationships. By returning a second time, MSU Extension helped to foster continuity in health education and support long-term wellness outcomes for the area youth.



ServSafe® Training

MSU Extension's ServSafe® Manager Certification Training equips food service professionals with the knowledge needed to safely manage food operations and protect public health. Food Safety Educator Karen Fifield delivered ServSafe® Manager Certification Training at the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians Health Clinic. Nine participants completed the course and earned certification. Certified attendees are now qualified to lead safe food programs, including food preservation workshops and commercial kitchen operations, within their community. This training strengthens food safety practices, supports culturally relevant programming, and empowers tribal members to lead health-focused initiatives with confidence and compliance.



Governance, Leadership & Community Engagement

COMMUNITY ECONOMICS PROGRAMS



New Commissioner School
Grayling
71 participants



2024 Regional
Small Business Outlook
50 attendees



Northern Lakes Economic Alliance
Symposium and Showcase
272 attendees



Catalyst Conversations:
Outdoor Rec Industry
36 participants



Leadership Little Traverse
18 participants

“First time participant... I would attend again and recommend to other professionals.”
– Local Professional

Sam Bailey moderates a panel of outdoor recreation industry leaders at the February Catalyst Conversations event. Sam Bailey is an MSU Extension educator who is also partially funded by and fully embedded at Northern Lakes Economic Alliance.



“This is one of the more valuable economic sessions I’ve attended in our region. All of the presenters were knowledgeable and well spoken.”
– Nonprofit Leader



The Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Matt McCauley moderates a panel including (L to R) Aaron Harke of Kokosing Industrial; Rachel Huntman of Preston Feather Building Centers; Jeffrey Guilfoyle, PhD of Michigan Department of Treasury; and Todd Alderman of Daifuku Airport North America at the 2025 Economic Symposium

Governance, Leadership & Community Engagement

PLANNING, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

As Michigan communities adapt to new legislation and evolving land use needs, MSU Extension provides timely education to support informed decision-making.

MSU Extension Tribal Extension Educator Emily Proctor and Mary Reilly, AICP, partnered with Harbor Inc. to deliver a 90-minute program on changes to renewable energy permitting under Act 233 of 2023. The session was held August 15 at Little Traverse Township Hall with 28 participants, including Harbor Inc. board members and Emmet County Zoning and Building Director Tammy Doernenburg. Additionally, MSU Extension hosted Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) training on May 2, 2024, at the same location, engaging 12 participants in scenario-based learning focused on ZBA fundamentals. The LTBB Community Center also supported Cross Village Township Planning Commission visioning sessions to gather community input and guide future development.



Participants gained clarity on new permitting requirements, practiced zoning decision-making, and contributed to local planning efforts through
These programs build local capacity for responsible land use, strengthen tribal and township collaboration, and ensure that planning decisions reflect both legal standards and community priorities.





FRTEP 2025 SPRING GITIGAAN/GTEGAN/KITIGAAN (GARDEN) KIT DISTRIBUTION

Access to gardening resources and culturally relevant education supports tribal food sovereignty, wellness and community resilience. MSU Extension’s Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) helps strengthen these efforts through hands-on outreach. The program distributed 745 garden kits to four tribal nations in Michigan’s northern regions. In collaboration with Ziibimijwang Farm and the LTBB Mina Mskiki Gumik Health Department, 141 Kitigaan Kits were provided to Little Traverse Bay Band community members. Each kit included plant starts, seed packets, educational materials, and additional garden supplies. Families received tools to grow fresh produce at home, engage in traditional food practices, and build gardening skills. The collaboration also reinforced local partnerships and expanded outreach capacity. This initiative promotes food security, cultural connection, and health education while empowering tribal communities to cultivate their own food systems.



Agriculture and Agribusiness



59,018 participants

in MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness programs



170,000 subscribers

to agricultural and agribusiness related MSU Extension News Digests



922 programs

provided by MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness educators



\$104.7 billion

annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy

PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING

Safe pesticide use is critical to protecting public health, the environment and agricultural productivity. MSU Extension Agriculture educators partnered with the Pesticide Safety and Education Program (PSEP) and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to revamp pesticide safety education. Together, they hosted 24 in-person review and testing sessions across Michigan, including locations in Traverse City, Escanaba, and Gaylord. Applicators received updated training aligned with current regulations and best practices, improving their readiness for certification and safe pesticide handling. This statewide effort supports environmental stewardship, regulatory compliance, and the safe production of Michigan's food and agricultural products.



Michigan Pesticide Applicator Core Review and testing at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center.
Photo by Salta Mambetova, MSU Extension

100

Years MSU Extension has provided soil testing services



MSU EXTENSION SOIL TESTING PROGRAM

Accurate soil analysis helps Michigan residents—from commercial farmers to backyard gardeners—make informed decisions about fertilizer use, crop health, and environmental stewardship. In partnership with A&L Great Lakes, the lab analyzes samples and provides data that extension staff use to generate MSU-specific recommendations for fertilizers and soil amendments. From January to December 2024, MSUE issued recommendations for **4,377** home lawn and garden samples and **1,819** commercial and farm samples, up 11 percent. This service supports sustainable agriculture, protects natural resources, and empowers Michigan residents to improve soil health and productivity with confidence.

MANAGING FARM STRESS

Farmers and agricultural workers face unique stressors that impact mental health, including economic uncertainty, isolation, and unpredictable weather. MSU Extension's Farm Stress Program helps address these challenges through education and support to Michigan's agricultural community. In 2024, we delivered **45** educational sessions, reaching **1,769** participants. By normalizing mental health conversations and equipping agricultural professionals with coping strategies, this program strengthens Michigan's rural well-being and supports the sustainability of its farming communities.

Supporting Food Entrepreneurs

2025 NORTHERN MICHIGAN SMALL FARM CONFERENCE

Michigan's small and mid-sized farms face evolving challenges related to sustainability, market access, and community engagement. MSU Extension helps foster collaboration and innovation through educational events that connect growers and food system advocates.

In August 2025, over 160 farmers and local food supporters from across Michigan gathered for a two-day conference featuring workshops, networking, farm tours, and issue-focused discussions. Several growers from Emmet County participated. The event is a flagship activity of the Crosshatch Center for Art and Ecology. For more than 25 years, MSU Extension has contributed facilitation, programming content, sponsorship, and planning committee leadership. Participants gained new insights, built peer connections, and explored practical strategies to strengthen their farms and communities. This long-standing partnership supports resilient local food systems, cultivates farmer leadership, and amplifies Extension's role in advancing agricultural innovation across Michigan.



MSU Product Center Counselor Parker Jones delivers a workshop on Agritourism during the NMSFC. Photo: Wendy Wieland



Sugarbush damage at Maple Moon Farm, Petoskey. Photo: Wendy Wieland

ICE STORM RESPONSE

Extreme weather events like spring ice storms can devastate farm infrastructure, disrupt operations, and threaten livelihoods. MSU Extension staff participated in a regional initiative to raise awareness and provide direct assistance to farmers impacted by the 2025 spring ice storm. In partnership with Crosshatch Center for Art and Ecology, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, the Local Food Alliance of Northern Michigan, the Northeast Michigan Healthy Food Initiative, the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, the effort raised over \$37,000. Funds were made available to growers for clean-up activities and other urgent financial needs, helping them recover more quickly and continue operations. This collaborative response demonstrates the power of community partnerships in supporting agricultural recovery, protecting local food systems, and sustaining rural economies in times of crisis.

Supporting Food Entrepreneurs

NORTHERN MICHIGAN SMALL FARM TOURS

Agritourism and direct-to-consumer marketing offer Michigan farmers new pathways to diversify income and strengthen community connections. MSU Extension supports knowledge exchange to advance these practices locally and globally. Dr. Nino Sachaleli, visiting from the Republic of Georgia, met with Emmet County farmers to learn about their agritourism strategies and public engagement efforts. The visit was part of a USDA SARE-sponsored tour that included Michigan-based farm educators. The group toured four Emmet County farms—Bear Creek Organic Farm, Open Sky Farm, Ziibimijwang Farm, and Beckon Hill Farm—each demonstrating value-added agriculture and direct-marketing approaches. Participants gained insight into successful agritourism models, explored farm-based education techniques, and built connections that support cross-cultural learning and sustainable agriculture. This tour highlights the role of Michigan farms as innovation hubs, strengthens international agricultural relationships, and promotes economic resilience through diversified farm enterprises.



David Coveyou and Dr. Rachel Sachalei discuss Agritourism. Photo: Parker Jones



Susan Sharp hosting agricultural educators at Open Sky Farm, Pellston. Photo: Wendy Wieland



Tracie Roush of Petoskey Farms Vineyard and Winery with Wendy Wieland
Photo: MSU Product Center

MSU Extension Product Center staff have assisted **26** Emmet County businesses that employ over **140** people and that generated over **\$6 million** in annual sales in the past year.

MSU PRODUCT CENTER COUNSELING

Entrepreneurs in food, agriculture, and natural resources need tailored support to launch and grow successful businesses. MSU Extension helps meet this need through specialized counseling and technical assistance. The MSU Product Center provides confidential, one-on-one business counseling to Emmet County residents through Innovation Counselor Wendy Wieland. Support is available at any stage—from start-up to scale-up—and includes guidance on product development, financing, and regulatory compliance. Food entrepreneurs also receive technical assistance to meet food safety standards. Local businesses gain access to customized strategies, funding pathways, and regulatory support that improve their chances of success and sustainability. By fostering entrepreneurship and supporting value-added agriculture, the Product Center strengthens Michigan's rural economy, promotes innovation, and expands access to locally produced goods.

EMMET COUNTY MSU EXTENSION

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This past year
Emmet County MSU
Extension 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

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

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



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