

2026 Dairy Programs

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a
SPARTAN
of
Michigan's
Dairy
Industry

The MSU Extension dairy team has a commitment to enhance the **competitive advantage** of Michigan dairy producers and Michigan's dairy industry. We do this by:

- Conducting research and demonstrations directly with dairy producers
- Visiting farms to apply research-based information and concepts tailored to each unique operation
- Holding educational programs throughout the state focusing on issues relevant to the industry
- Creating and sharing educational resources through our website, social media, news releases, and emails

MSU DAIRY TEAM ON-FARM EVALUATIONS



All dairy evaluations
and trainings are...



- **Parlor Performance** combines digital vacuum recorders (VaDia) and other metrics to analyze milking protocols and parlor efficiency. Educators provide recommendations to address issues such as bimodal milking and poor milk quality. Data can also be used to tailor milker-training programs for the participating farms.
- **Feeding Management** evaluations focus on 6 core areas: efficiency, mixing, production, shrink, hygiene, and safety. A detailed report of findings and recommendations for improvement is provided. Focus areas also include pushup routine, mixing procedure, and equipment evaluation. The feeder's training and consulting program often follow up on this assessment.
- **Heat Stress** will thoroughly evaluate the farm heat stress abatement strategies. The evaluations include wind speed mapping, barn temperature, THI measurement, and other indicators of heat stress. A detailed report of findings and recommendations for improvement is provided to the farm.
- **Passive Transfer of Immunity in Calves** assesses serum total protein levels, to evaluate the effectiveness of your colostrum management and provides critical insights into your calves' immunity status. We supply a recordkeeping tool designed to help your calf care team track and analyze results, enabling data-driven decisions to optimize colostrum and calf care practices, reducing the risk of future illnesses.

MSU DAIRY TEAM ON-FARM EMPLOYEE TRAININGS

- **Stockmanship** training will cover general stockmanship and animal handling. This training meets the requirements of the National Dairy FARM program.
- **Down Cow Management** will teach farm staff about the care of down cows and why these cases should be treated as emergencies.
- **Calf Care** will instruct dairy farm employees in basics of calf care, along with new management practices and research to grow calves to their full potential.
- **Dehorning with Pain Mitigation** is an interactive training which covers the use of a hot iron dehorner and caustic paste, as well as the proper medication administration techniques for pain management in calves.
- **Maternity** training covers critical points around calving, including the care of the cow and newborn, colostrum management, and calving difficulties.
- **Feeder** training goes over the do's and don'ts for a dairy feeder and focuses on explaining the why of feeder tasks and SOPs.
- **Hands-On Euthanasia** uses portable models and a captive bolt stunner to teach placement and protocols for proper euthanasia.
- **Farm Team Communication** reviews the concepts of active listening, effective communication, and conflict approach to improve communication on dairy teams, between colleagues, and with supervisors.



DIGITAL PROGRAMS

- **Hay Production 101** is primarily for first time and beginning hay growers to build a foundation of knowledge on growing hay. It covers a variety of topics aimed at the unique challenges of growing hay in Michigan and the Great Lakes Region. This program is led by Forage Specialist Kim Cassida with other Extension Specialists and Educators contributing.
- **Virtual Coffee Break with the MSU Dairy Team** covers a wide variety of dairy topics, new episodes are released in the spring and fall. Each episode features a dairy extension educator and a guest expert. Episodes are available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Contact Martin Mangual to suggest a topic.
- **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series** are weekly online seminars featuring field crops educators during the growing season. This weekly series for farmers and agribusinesses focuses on a wide array of relevant field crops pest and crop management topics. The series is flexible, fluid, and able to adapt when issues arise due to unforeseen growing conditions. The series runs from March to September on Thursdays at 7AM. Register at canr.msu.edu/dairy/events.
- **Managing Farm Stress** provides resources for agricultural professionals, including teletherapy, farm management and financial resources, and stress management strategies. Visit canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress or contact Remington Rice.
- **FaceFarmLive!** is a short video series program about farm issues or procedure improvements relevant to dairy farmers. Videos are posted to the Facebook Groups West Michigan Dairy Farmers and Thumb Dairy Group. Contact Martin Mangual for assistance joining these groups.
- **MI Ag Ideas to Grow With** runs from February 23rd to March 5th, and features webinars on animal agriculture, field crops, farm finances, and water management. Several seminars offer RUP and/or CCA credit. Register at canr.msu.edu/miagideas. Contact Betsy Braid at braidbet@msu.edu for assistance registering.

Go to canr.msu.edu/dairy/events for a complete program listing



IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

- **AgrAbility** provides free assistance to people in the agricultural industry who have an injury, illness, or physical disability to enable them to continue working. Staff provide personalized recommendations for assistive technologies and equipment modification, as well as bilingual on-site pain and arthritis screening. Visit michiganagrability.org or contact Sam Wolfe to schedule.
- **Artisan Cheese Workshop** is a three-day class on the art and science of cheesemaking, taught by internationally acclaimed cheesemakers from Leelanau cheese at the MSU Dairy plant in East Lansing. Participants will make six cheeses. Contact Phil Durst or go to canr.msu.edu/dairy/events to register.
- **Breakfast on the Farm** is a series of consumer events where farms open to visitors. Attendees will learn how farmers care for animals, protect the environment, and produce safe and nutritious food. Visit breakfastonthefarm.com to learn when events will occur between June and September 2026.
- **Crisis Preparedness Planning** is a partnership between MSU Extension and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. Participants will develop an in-depth crisis preparedness plan in response to risks that can impact farm operation continuity. Contact Phil Durst.
- **Farm Employer's Workshop** provides resources for farm employers and supervisors to become better leaders. The interactive workshop covers workplace culture, communication, feedback, handling problems, and more. Contact Phil Durst.

4-H PROGRAMS

- **Michigan 4-H Dairy Conference** is a two-day opportunity for 12 to 19 year old's to learn about the Michigan dairy industry from 2/27 to 3/1.
- **State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest** will take place on June 27th, featuring written and oral questions on dairy topics
- **Michigan 4-H Dairy Days** will occur in East Lansing from July 13th to 16th. It includes management and judging contests, as well as showmanship and a celebration picnic.
- **National 4-H Dairy Conference** in Madison, Wisconsin, is an opportunity for youth to visit the World Dairy Expo and learn about the global dairy industry from September 27th to October 1st.

Contact Kendra Van Order for additional information

Dairy Contacts

Extension Dairy Advisory Team

The MSU Extension Dairy Advisory Team is a group of progressive dairy producers and professionals selected to provide input on need in the industry and feedback on MSU Extension activities. Members serve two-year terms and meet regularly by phone and in person twice per year.

Steve Admonson
Lindsay Bliss
Carrie Ceh

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Brianna Hill
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