

Partner Report



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December 2010

MSU Extension continues efforts to focus programs, serve communities

Since early 2009 MSU Extension has been working to focus its programming efforts to more effectively use its resources and provide vital educational resources to Michigan communities.

That effort resulted in the streamlining of administrative functions into 13 district offices and maintained programming staff to serve every Michigan community.

“From the beginning, as we’ve looked at how to realign our organization to improve efficiency, our first thought has always been that we need to continue to offer university resources that are also responsive to our county partners’ needs,” said Michelle Rodgers, MSU Extension associate director.

Through a series of town hall meetings over the past year, MSU Extension leaders explored what county government officials need from the organization. The findings from that effort showed that county government partners support MSU Extension’s need to change and its continuing local presence across the state. They expect MSU Extension to offer programs tied to agriculture and 4-H youth development, and also value agriculture-tourism, community development, land use, economic development, nutrition and health.

“Though we might be changing the way we interact with partners in county government, we’ll remain true to our core values of sharing MSU’s unbiased, research-driven resources to make a difference to Michigan’s communities, families, young people and businesses,” Rodgers said.

Realigned programming reflects focus in key arenas

MSU Extension staff members across the state and the campus have also worked with stakeholders in a number of areas to identify the most important topics upon which to focus efforts to contribute to helping strengthen and advance Michigan into a stronger, brighter future.

This effort resulted in establishment of four program institutes. The institutes and their directors are:

- Greening Michigan: Leveraging Natural and Human Assets for Prosperity--Rick Foster
- Enhancing Michigan’s First Green Industry: Agriculture and Agribusiness--Wendy Powers
- Preparing Michigan’s Children & Youth for the Future--Julie Chapin
- Improving Health and Nutrition for Michigan residents--Dawn Contreras

Within these institutes educators based across Michigan will interact with MSU campus-based specialists to develop programs intended to meet Michiganians’ most pressing needs.

Workgroups have been organized within each institute to strategically address issues. The workgroups are cross-disciplinary and comprise MSU Extension educators from across the state. The teams develop short-, medium- and long-range plans for addressing issues that include regular evaluations to ensure that they are staying on track and are connected to measureable goals.

To see an organizational chart with the institutes and the workgroups, visit www.msue.msu.edu.



It's back to school for vegetable growers

With many farmers nearing retirement in Michigan and the interest in local foods continuing to grow, there may be demand for new or larger local food producers. To address both the opportunity and the issues involved in these ventures, fourteen MSU Extension educators and faculty members offered a full day class for small growers on March 19, 2010 entitled *Vegetables 201-Ready to Take the Next Step?*

37 gardeners from Southeastern Michigan participated in the day-long seminar and learned about business planning, marketing, soil and nutrient management and various production practices such as irrigation and pest management. The majority of gardeners that participated grew their crops on less than 5 acres and were relatively new at marketing their vegetables. While many were interested in retailing directly to consumers, 18% had wholesaled their produce in the past and over half were interested in doing so in the future. 66% of those attending were committed to an organic approach to farming.

100% of participants indicated that the program met their expectations and increased their chances of success, and all wanted more in-depth education, particularly on production practices and marketing. A similar program is planned in Kalamazoo on November 4, 2010, and an in-depth five session webinar on methods of season-extension will take

place across the state in November. These educational efforts are geared towards helping to grow the capacity for new producers, to fill market demand, and to sustain profitable businesses in the wholesale as well as retail vegetable markets.

Submitted by Hannah Stevens, MSU Extension Educator

Financial Health Index Survey – How are Michigan Households Responding to Financial Shocks?

Michigan is currently in an economic downturn. For many Michigan consumers facing financial troubles, they are unaware of how to access financial resources and education to resolve their financial situation. In a sense – they are in need of a financial check up.

For a financial “check up” to be successful, a survey/questionnaire for consumers to answer to help assess their current financial situation was needed. A team of MSU faculty and Extension staff developed the Financial Health Index Survey and piloted the survey in the spring of 2009. Over 500 individuals went to the site and over 100 completed the survey. Based on the results, the survey was modified and launched on MSU Extension’s website. From June 2009 to April 2010 there were 325 people who completed the survey. The survey continues to collect data from Michigan families and is then analyzed by Dr. Lisa Cook, an Economics Professor with the James Madison College and the Department of Economics at Michigan State University. The evidence suggests that household spending plans are not adjusted in a timely fashion in response to economic shocks – which suggests a role for MSU Extension in providing continued education in financial management.

Next steps in the progress of this project were to develop a Financial Health website to house the survey, and populate this website with local resources. Once an individual completes the survey, they receive a score sheet with recommendations on how to improve their financial health which links the

individual to resources within the website which they can access for further help and local resources in their community.

The website is scheduled to officially launch later this fall. The MImoneyhealth.org website and Financial Health Index Survey have the opportunity to improve the capability of Michigan residents to manage credit and financial resources and assist in making sound financial decisions. To assess your financial situation go to: MImoneyhealth.org

Submitted by Jean Lakin and Kathe Hale, MSU Extension Educators

Project Clover – Providing Protein to Local Food Pantries

In the summer of 2009, Macomb MSUE 4-H Project Clover was created to accomplish a two-fold mission: provide quality meat products to local food pantries and soup kitchens, and provide support to 4-H youth involved in livestock projects.

During tough economic times, many families can't afford protein enriched food especially meat. Project Clover connects 4-H members to the community by contributing a variety of quality meat products such as beef, lamb, hog, poultry, rabbits, and goats. 4-H members involved in livestock projects spend countless hours caring for their animals throughout the year. Livestock projects teach the youth about responsibility, organization, time management and good sportsmanship. 4-Hers are learning the skills necessary to be our future farmers, veterinarians, meat producers, and agricultural stewards.

With monies collected from various organizations/individuals/businesses, our Project Clover Coordinators, Jennifer Miller and Rebecca DeHondt bid on livestock projects at a fair market price. Bidding takes place during the 4-H Livestock Sale held at the Armada Fair each August. The goal is to purchase at least one of each species and to provide as much variety of food to the pantries as possible.

In 2009, through generous donations totaling over

\$4500, Project Clover was able to purchase 1678 lbs of live meat that included a steer, two lambs, 1.5 pigs, and five pens of poultry. In 2010, Project Clover doubled their fundraising efforts and collected \$9078. Funds came through monetary donations from over 40 different organizations across the county, 4-H youth selling candy bars, and from the 1st annual 4-H Project Clover 5K run/walk. The 5Krun/walk held in June 2010 attracted over 250 community participants who gathered to support the cause. Due to the generous donations and commitment of 4-H volunteers, 2010 Project clover was able to buy 2 steers, 4 1/2 swine, 4 lambs and numerous meat poultry and rabbits at the 4-H Livestock Sale. All the meat/poultry purchased from Project Clover funds was then donated to local food pantries in Armada, Capac, New Haven, Richmond, and Romeo. For the last two years, C-Roy's Meat Processing in Yale has generously processed Project Clover purchases for free.

Project Clover epitomizes how Macomb 4-H youth and volunteers provide larger service to the community by bringing people together to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

*Submitted by: Kathy Jamieson
4-H Extension Educator*



Upcoming Events

(All events will take place at MSU Extension, 21885 Dunham Clinton Twp. 48036 unless otherwise noted)

CHILD CARE, FAMILY AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

I Want, I Want, Building Good Consumers

Tuesday, December 7th 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$15 registration fee

Pre-registration and payment required

Alternatives to Anger

Tuesday, January 2011 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

\$20 individual/\$30 family

Call 586-307-8952 to register



4-H Youth Development

6th Annual 4-H Day at the Breslin Center

Sunday, December 5th at MSU

Doors open at 2:00 p.m., Game starts @ 4:00 p.m.

FREE tickets to Spartan Women's basketball game

Registration required by November 29th

Contact: rcalca@macombcountymi.gov

Green and White attire

Cultural Diversity Potluck Life Skill Training

The 4-H program will provide the main course, and each match/family bring a dish to pass that represents their culture.

Wednesday, December 22nd 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

RSVP-586-783-8163 or

rcalca@macombcountymi.gov by Tuesday,

December 21st.

4-H County Awards and Mentor Recognition Banquet

Thursday, January 27th 2011 6:00 – 9:00 pm

MISD

44001 Garfield Rd, Clinton Twp

Call 586-783-8163 for registration information

Mentoring Night at the Palace

Come participate in the first-ever "Mentoring Night at the Palace" and watch the Pistons take on the Phoenix Suns.

Saturday, January 22, 2011 7:30 pm

Tickets are currently available for purchase at a discounted rate. Tickets sold through this website: https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/group_corp_start.html?l=EN&team=pistons&owner=20190306&group=264&err=&event=&customerID=) Mentor Michigan will receive \$5. The money raised will be distributed through a statewide funding opportunity at a later date in the form of Detroit Pistons mini-grants. When purchasing tickets, please use the keyword "mentor".

Let's Get Growing: Teaching Adults How to Garden with Kids

Four week course: Thursday evenings 6:00-9:15pm

February 24, March 3, March 10, March 17

Fee: TBD Pre-registration and payment required

For additional info, contact Anne

anne.crotser@macombcountymi.gov.

4-H Capitol Experience

This is an annual 4-day conference that focuses on civic engagement and public policy. More than 100 teens from around the state converge on Lansing, Michigan, to experience state government in action!

March 20-23, 2011 held in Lansing

Cost: \$295 for 4-H, \$305 for non 4-H

Applications due February 4th, 2011

For more info:

<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/capexp.html>

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Money Management (Free)

Eight week course; Participants gain control over finances from setting up a spending plan to investing. Thursday evenings 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Starting January 13th 2011 through March 3rd 2011

Call 586-469-7614 to register

Better Budgeting

Three week workshop to improve your finances

Tuesday, February 8, 15 & 22 2011

6:30 – 8:30pm

Call 586-469-7614 to register

HORTICULTURE/AGRICULTURE

Pesticide Applicator Certification Programs (\$25.00)

MSUE assembly room, Clinton Township

Mondays: Seminars 8:30 AM -12:30 PM

Examinations: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM

Pre-registration required. Contact 586-469-6440

Dec. 13: A review of pesticide labels, Compliance topics.

Jan. 10: Biological control topics

Feb. 7: Using Enviroweather in pest management

March 14: Equipment Calibration

The Cottage Food Bill and Your Business

MSUE assembly room, Clinton twp.

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Monday, Dec. 13, 2010: Provisions of this new law

Monday, Dec. 20, 2010: Food safety issues

Monday, Jan. 10, 2011: Business planning tools

Pre-registration required. Contact 586-469-6440

2010 Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo; the premier show for fruit and vegetable growers and farm marketers

Dec. 7-9, 2010

Devos Place Convention Center, Grand Rapids MI.

Call 734-677-0503 or go to www.glexpo.com for registration, program and other information.

HOUSING EDUCATION

Macomb Homebuyers Affordable Housing (Free)

Topics include renting vs. buying, affordable neighborhoods, loan programs, and down payment assistance.

Monday, December 13th 2010

MSUE, Clinton Township 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. - OR -

Wednesday, January 26th

Location to be determined

Call 586-469-7614 to register

Home Ownership Seminars (Free)

Six hour workshop covering house hunting, shopping for a mortgage, getting a home inspection, closing the deal

Saturday, December 4th.

9:00 am – 12:00 pm AND 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Warren Community Center

5460 Arden Ave, Warren

- OR -

Wednesday, January 19th, 26th and February 2nd

Location to be determined

Call 586-469-7614 to register

NATURAL RESOURCES/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mortgage Foreclosure Group Intake (Free)

Offered 3 times per month at various times

Open to anyone interested in learning more about the foreclosure process or homeowners facing possible mortgage delinquency.

Pre-registration is required by calling 586-307-8289

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Food Preservation

ServSafe

\$210 registration fee; Register online:

<http://web2.canr.msu.msu.edu/servsafe/>

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Bringing Knowledge to Life