



# Wexford County 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS



Almost 1,800 Wexford adults and youth participated in MSU Extension programs



Over 1,200 youth participated in 4-H and school enrichment programs



Almost 250 residents participated in agriculture and gardening services



Over 900 adults and youth benefitted from health, nutrition and family development programs



MSU disbursed more than \$530,000 in financial aid for Wexford County students

**100+**

MSU Extension has served Wexford County 105 years



8 MSU Extension professionals based in Wexford County



95 Extension Master Gardeners volunteer hours were performed in Wexford County

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR



Greetings! I am pleased to bring to you another report of Michigan State University (MSU) Extension's work in Wexford County. We are pleased to continue to serve the residents here and help strengthen our communities. MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, bring the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in Wexford County.

Under the leadership of MSU Extension Director Jeff Dwyer, we continue to grow as an organization and are challenged to continue to address the many issues facing Michigan residents. We do this by staying true to our many traditions and mission while stretching our reach through untraditional channels and new technologies.

We're passionate about serving Wexford 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.

Shari Spoelman

### MSU Extension District 6 Advisory Council

Ken Brown	Leonard Strouse	Rick Grove	Christine Hammond
Dick Metz	Jerry Jaloszynski	Bob Wachowski	Frank VanderWal
Chris Gentry	Jack Nehmer	Russ Nehmer	Marilynn Bradstrom
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Michigan State University Extension



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# Program Highlights

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Delphinella shoot blight causes new needles and new shoots to suddenly turn brown.



SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) participants learn new ideas for saving money and create healthy, easy meals.



To-date, a total of 68 presenters have shared information with 1,638 registered participants through 100 webinars.

## CHRISTMAS TREES

Over the approximately seven years it takes to grow a Christmas tree, weeds, insects, diseases and nutrient problems can reduce a tree's value and salability. When tree problems occur, local growers turn to MSU Extension. MSU Extension educators and campus specialists are key partners working with local growers to identify tree issues and develop management programs, helping growers remain profitable. Almost every year, new pests and diseases appear and MSU assists growers with research based recommendations to combat potential issues and the potential for economic loss.

## NUTRITION

MSU Extension aims to improve the knowledge, skills and behavior of how individuals view nutrition. One program, Cooking Matters, is a hands-on course serving limited resource families. This 6 week cooking course offered to parents, families, adults and child care providers helps participants learn how to plan and budget for healthy, affordable, and delicious meals. Adult participants take home a bag of groceries at the end of each class to be able to replicate what they have learned in class. MSU Extension also connects with community organizations and schools to provide nutrition education for all ages, from pre-schoolers to senior citizens.

## BEGINNING FARMER SERIES

Wexford County and other Michigan citizens interested in engaging in new agricultural enterprises sometimes lack knowledge, experience and technical support to get started. Extension receives numerous contacts from people seeking basic, start-up information. In it's 8th year, MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series featured twelve evening webinars on topics of interest to beginning farmers like growing mushrooms and small business planning. Recordings are available online for free which offers dozens of ag topics delivered by industry experts.

# Program Highlights

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Research shows that literacy skills are directly related to how a child performs in their academic setting. Through a series of literacy trainings taught by MSU Extension, nearly 50 early childhood professionals learned effective strategies to develop these skills in young children to ensure future academic success. Tackling literacy issues before the third grade is very important as it more than often affects school achievement, employment opportunities and building relationships with others. This was a collaboration with Great Start to Quality, Wexford Missaukee ISD and NMCAA.



MSU Extension provides early childhood programs that help parents, caregivers and other important adults in the lives of children from birth to age 8 develop important skills.

## YOUTH CAREER PREP

In response to expressed community needs, a program was developed to help prepare youth for the workforce. In 2019, nearly 300 students from six area high schools (including Cadillac, Innovation High, and Mesick) attended the Mock It Then Rock It: Mock Interview Day. Hosted at Baker College, this event is organized in collaboration with community organizations, including Baker College, Cadillac Industrial Fund, Michigan Works!, Cadillac Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, and area schools. Over 100 community volunteers help make this a success for students in our area.



100 Volunteers from local businesses practice interview and resume skills with youth.

## FARM STRESS

Taking care of crops and animals can be hard. Selfcare and wellness in this high-stress profession are often overlooked but are critical for effective farm operations. MSU Extension helps farmers adapt to the changing agricultural environment and address related stress. Outreach efforts including television, radio, newsletters, journals, social media, podcasts, and expanded farm stress staff have been implemented to help the at-risk population. Our programs, “Communicating with Farmers Under Stress” and “Weathering the Storm” provide support to farming communities. We’re working together to promote awareness, reduce the stigma of mental illness, and save lives.



# Kids Learning to Cook



Local youth are learning practical skills in a 4-H cooking and baking club.

The club teaches youth not only how to cook and bake, but also how to:

- follow written instructions
- properly measure ingredients
- plan menus
- make ingredient substitutions

Cooking skills positively correlate with better eating including increased consumption of vegetables and decreased intake of fast food and convenience foods, but busy families don't always have the time to teach these skills. Based on the nearly 40 youth enrolled in the Manton area 4-H club, youth have the desire to learn. So many youth enrolled that MSU Extension staff scrambled to recruit enough volunteers to make it a reality. Thanks to a few parents and teens stepping forward, the club is a success.



The club met three times in December and continues meeting in 2020.

Youth in the club have already started discussing ways to fundraise to help pay for the supplies and ingredients they need to continue the club. They're also discussing leaderships roles. Nominations for a seven-person youth board were gathered, and elections were held in January.



## NORTHERN DISTRICT FAIR

MSU Extension and 4-H are dedicated to helping the Northern District Fair be a successful event for all youth and adult fair participants and attendees. Whether it is encouraging youth involvement in animal and still exhibits, helping with the livestock auction, providing judges for food preservation, providing an embryology display with chicken eggs hatching, or having games for families, we're helping to make our Northern District Fair a success!

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### MISSION:

**Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.**

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