



## Annual Report 2008

### Mission

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

Extension offices in counties throughout the state link the research of the state's land grant university, MSU, with the issues of concern in local communities. Extension provides information and offers educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, youth and families, and community and economic development. Local citizens serve on the county Extension Advisory Council and help identify current focus areas for programming.

### Staff

<i>Position</i>	<i>Incumbent (2008)</i>	<i>Funding</i>
County Extension Director Family Consumer Science Educator	Shari Spoelman	State Federal
Department Secretary / Office Manager	Melanie Danforth	Wexford County
Department Assistant (1/2 time)	Sheri Pollington, Sarah Downing	Wexford County
Family Nutrition Program Breast Feeding Initiative Program Associate II	Deb Dyer	Federal (USDA) 91%, Local (Mercy Hospital) 9%
Family Nutrition Program Program Associate II	Susan Warren	Federal (USDA)
4H Youth Educator	Sara Keinath	Wexford County (45%) State Federal
Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator - Christmas Trees Statewide Educator	Jill O'Donnell	Federal State
State and Local Government District Educator	John Amrhein	Federal State
Land Use and Economic Development Regional Educator	Kurt Schindler	State Federal Kellogg Foundation Fees

MSU Extension depends on a cooperative partnership between the federal government (USDA), State of Michigan (MSU), and Wexford County. Think of it as a three-legged stool: if one leg breaks, the stool no longer stands up.



# 4-H and Youth Development

*“I’ve never had a kid in my juvenile court who was in 4H.”*  
 -Michigan Family Court Judge

## Highlighted Programs for 2008

**New Mentoring Program:** With help from an AmeriCorps service member early in the year, we built the foundation for our new mentoring program, Wexford SideKicks. Our program will focus on adding positive role models to the lives of at-risk youth; our target population is children of incarcerated parents. We are working in partnership with Community Corrections on this program.

**Disabilities:** Proud Equestrian Program ran from June to August this year, with 15 participants and 36 volunteers. Many familiar faces joined us as instructor Jackie Samuels put riders through their paces; we had several new riders, too, who enjoyed learning about the horses and became more confident each class. Classes were held at Center Lake Bible Camp in Tustin, whose staff provided the horses and volunteered in the ring.

**Community Service:** Many clubs incorporate community service into their activities. Barnyard Bunch and Wexford Whatevers volunteered at Project Christmas. Canine Crew members started training their dogs to be therapy companions. Kountry Bunnies visited a nursing home. Bent Nails Productions put on puppet shows for younger children throughout the community.

<b>Wexford 4H &amp; Youth Development</b> <i>by the Numbers</i>	
4H Clubs (active in 2008)	10
4H Club Members	99
4H Club Volunteers (adults)	43
Youth Education Hours	33
Youth Educational Sessions	18
<b>Total Youth Served (unduplicated)</b>	<b>284</b>

*“All 4-H clubs teach leadership, citizenship, and community service. 4-H programs give youth skills for life - nutrition, marketing, self-confidence, safety, livestock production, and creative self-expression are just a few. These are necessary skills for our youth to achieve success in the future, no matter what the economic climate.”*  
 - Sara Keinath

**Partners:** MSUE partnered with our local YMCA in September to organize an America On The Move event for our community, providing family friendly activities and highlighting the opening of the Clam River Greenway. MSU Extension continues to collaborate with the Wexford-Missaukee Mentoring Coalition, helping with fund-raising, training, and activities.

In 2008, the 4H Youth Educator joined the Cadillac leadership class of 2008-2009.

**Reaching Beyond Our Community:** Three students attended Exploration Days on Campus in June. Three members attended camps. Six members participated in the State Dog Show in August. Three local families hosted Japanese exchange students for a month in the summer, and one student, who had previously hosted, traveled to Japan for two months.

**Areas of Interest:** The majority (73%) of youth programming and interests pertain to two subject areas:

- Personal Development & Leadership
- Plants and Animals

**Contact:** Sara Keinath, Youth Development/4-H Extension Educator, 231-779-9480, [skeinath@msu.edu](mailto:skeinath@msu.edu).



# Family and Consumer Sciences

## Highlighted Programs 2008

**Teen Pregnancy Prevention** - A community forum was held in June to educate the public about Wexford County's high teen pregnancy rate. In September the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative was formed of community stakeholders to develop a plan of action. At the end of the year, 2 grants had been submitted in this effort.

**Personal Action Towards Health: PATH** is a chronic disease self-management program. MSU Extension partnered with Mercy Hospital Cadillac and District Health Department #10 to provide this six week class to community groups. The estimated actual cost savings in medical expenses of the people that completed this training in 2008 is between \$4,000 and \$20,000 (or more). Specific behavioral changes of PATH participants in pre and post tests indicate:

- 18% increase in appropriate exercise levels
- 28% improvement in breathing techniques
- 43% improvement in managing fatigue
- 37% improvement in making healthy eating choices
- 33% improvement in dealing with depression
- 29% increase in making informed treatment decisions

**Suicide Prevention (Gatekeepers)** - With the Suicide Prevention Coalition, community training was provided on the signs and risk factors of suicide, how to conduct an assessment, and how to refer within the community. In 2008 our target audience included front line managers in manufacturing and other industries, since the middle age male is the demographic at highest risk. Our evaluation (pre and post tests) revealed the following outcomes:

- 34% increase in knowledge of warning signs of suicide
- 35% increase in knowledge of who is most at risk
- 48% increase in how to interact with a suicidal person
- 48% increase in assessing the level of immediate risk
- 34% increase in where to refer a suicidal person

*"This is a training that everyone should go through no matter what their career."*  
- Participant

*Q. Why is it important to work on teen pregnancy prevention?*

*A. Because Wexford County has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state.*

A child born to a teen mother who has not finished high school and is not married is **nine times** more likely to be poor than a child born to an adult who has finished high school and is married. Their children are more likely to:

- Be born at lower birth weight
- Grow up poor
- Drop out of school
- Live in single parent households
- Enter the child welfare system
- Experience abuse and neglect
- End up in foster care
- Daughters are more likely to become teen mothers themselves
- Sons are more likely to be incarcerated

*On average, every child born to a teen mother costs taxpayers almost \$25,000 a year.*

**Working to make this a better place to live by serving as an active member of:**

- Cadillac Area Health Coalition
- Lakeview Lutheran Manor Advisory Committee
- Cadillac Area Free Health Clinic
- Human Services Leadership Council
- Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative
- Cadillac Rotary Club

Family Consumer Sciences	
By the Numbers	
Educational Program Participants	
Chronic Disease Self Management	14
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	102
Suicide Prevention	20
Second Time Around Relative Caregiver	6
Human Services Goal Setting / Year in Review	30
Better Kid Care	17
Girls on Track	25



cadillac  
community  
health  
coalition

Contact: Shari Spoelman, Family and Consumer Science Educator, (231)779-9480, [spoelma4@msu.edu](mailto:spoelma4@msu.edu);

# Family Nutrition Program

## Program Highlights 2008:

**Family Nutrition Program:** FNP is nutrition education for low-income families, adults, and youth through home visits, group sessions, or in school education. This program is funded by a Federal grant from the USDA, which is matched by local in-kind and cash resources.

**Breast Feeding Initiative:** The Breast feeding Initiative encourages and supports breastfeeding amongst WIC eligible women. Peer educators provide information and encouragement in person, by phone, in the home, at the hospital or at WIC clinics.

**Project Fresh:** Project FRESH provides WIC clients with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer's markets. Project FRESH nutrition education helps low income participants learn how to:

- choose new locally grown produce
- prepare a fruit or vegetable in a new way
- store and preserve fresh fruits and vegetables
- increase fruit and vegetable consumption
- find other community resources that can benefit the family

**Senior Project FRESH:** The same benefits of project FRESH for Seniors. MSU Extension works with our local Commission on Aging and Senior centers to provide education to seniors.



**Grow Your Kids with Fruits and Veggies:**

Grow Your Kids is a social marketing campaign intended to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among food stamp recipients by engaging the community to disseminate a consistent message: Grow Your Kids with Fruits and Veggies.

*“Working as a Family Nutrition Associate at MSU Extension, I feel that the program has improved the quality of lives of the low income citizens that live here. The FNP program targets at risk youth, adults and senior citizens. We provide nutrition education that promotes basic skills in healthy food choices, budgeting (stretching food dollars) and food safety.”*

-Sue Warren

*“Obesity has been identified as a priority health concern in Wexford County. The Family Nutrition program helps consumers make better choices about nutrition. Physical activity is also emphasized. Improved quality of life and reduced health care costs are benefits resulting from this program.”*

-Deb Dyer

**Jump Into Foods and Fitness:** JIFF is a research-based curriculum for kids ages 8 to 11 (grades 3 to 5). Fun nutrition, physical fitness and food safety learning activities are integrated into the program, which uses the MyActivity Pyramid and the MyPyramid for Kids.



Family Nutrition program <i>By the Numbers</i>	
Program Participants	
Breast Feeding Initiative	71
Family Nutrition Program	290
Project Fresh Education	138
Senior Project Fresh	173
Grow Your Kids with Fruits and Vegetables	238
Jump Into Foods & Fitness (youth)	85

**Contact:**

**Deborah Dyer**, Family Nutrition Program and Breast Feeding Initiative Program Associate; (231)779-9480, [dudden@msu.edu](mailto:dudden@msu.edu);

**Susan Warren**, Family Nutrition Program Associate, (231) 839-4667, [warren57@msu.edu](mailto:warren57@msu.edu).

# Christmas Tree Industry

Michigan is among the leading states in Christmas tree production. A favorable climate, abundance of favorable planting sites and soils, and a somewhat centralized location combine to produce conditions favorable to the intensive culture of over 8 different varieties of conifers. The Wexford, Missaukee and Osceola county area produces almost one third of the state's annual production. Our Christmas Tree Specialist works with over 40 local farms to evaluate management strategies along with identifying various problems and helping them to determine options for control.

## Highlighted Programs for 2008

### Predicting the Timing and Control of Douglas-fir Needle Midge

The first Douglas-fir needle midges were found in 2003, in Missaukee and Osceola counties. Since then it has slowly spread to other locations in the surrounding areas but it may be more widespread than we realize. Douglas-fir needle midge can be a very destructive pest and infestation of new needles can be as high as 100 percent. Needle loss is an especially serious problem because the value and salability of Christmas trees is determined largely by tree appearance. In 2008 we set up trials in the area to determine when this pest emerges and the optimal timing for control.

#### Impact

Michigan's market niche is its ability to provide customers with over 8 different species of Christmas trees. If we are unable to determine effective timing and control materials this can potentially limit our ability to grow Douglas-fir costing almost \$500,000 in annual sales plus sales from wreaths and roping for Wexford county growers.

### Christmas Tree Worker Training

Workers in the Christmas tree industry are exposed to a number of workplace hazards, including pesticides, traumatic injury from equipment such as tractors, chain saws and shears, noise-induced hearing loss, musculoskeletal stress from repetitive work and awkward postures, insect bites, heat stress and sun exposure. MSU Extension provided safety training programs for workers on local Christmas tree farms.

#### Impact

Safety training reduces injuries and the liability of the farm entity when workers have been trained on safe practices. 95 workers attended two training sessions that focused on field hazards, pesticide safety, IPM scouting, basic first aid, shearing safety, equipment safety during harvest, and the use of PPE and mower/weed trimmer safety. The program was presented in both English and Spanish.

### Integrated Pest Management

In 2008, 50 growers attended a workshop to help them learn about the identification, biology, and management strategies of the many insects, weeds and diseases affecting Christmas trees.

#### Impact

The value and salability of Christmas trees is determined largely by tree appearance. Therefore, any organism that affects foliage quality, tree form or other aspects of tree appearance can substantially reduce the value of trees. Also, pests may slow the growth of trees, thereby increasing the length of the rotation period. Longer rotations reduce the margin of profit for growers, and require additional inputs of labor and pesticides.

### Programs

- Sustainable Production
- Integrated Pest Management - disease, insect and weed identification and management
- Soil and Nutrient Management
- Compliance with State and Federal Regulations
- Water Management

*Q. Why is working with area Christmas tree growers important?*

*A. Christmas trees are Wexford County's largest agricultural crop.*

3,800 Acres

44 Farms

**\$ 6.2 million revenue annually**

Contact: Jill O'Donnell, Statewide Christmas Tree Educator, (231) 779-9480, [odonne10@msu.edu](mailto:odonne10@msu.edu)

# Land Use

*“Thirty seven million acres is all the Michigan we will ever have”*

–former Governor William G. Milliken

The world has shifted to what is called the “New Economy”. Michigan, and communities like Wexford County are now playing “catch up.” The time is **now** to change how we approach economic development for a community to have jobs and economic growth in five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years. Getting this message out, and helping communities make this transition is the major focus of MSU Extension Land Use Team efforts.

The stakes for this are high. MSU’s Professor Adelaja Adesoji once put it this way: “Communities that understand and shift to the new economy will be where economic growth and success occurs in Michigan’s future. Those that do not will be left behind.”

## Highlighted Programs for the Past Year

- New Economy
- “Michigan Strategic Growth”
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act - The new planning act requiring a re-invention of planning commissions

Training programs, in conjunction with the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments have been presented on

- Planning and zoning ethics
- 28 ways to stay out of court
- New economy strategic planning
- Wind energy
- Recreation and tourism
- Waterfront
- Water quality
- Community junk cleanup
- Citizen Planner Program

## How Wexford County’s Money is Used

Reduced cost, or no-cost services in land use are provided to the county and municipalities within Wexford County. Wexford County is host to a Regional Land Use Educator for an 18-county area of the northwest lower peninsula of Michigan. Wexford County contributes office space, secretarial support staff, and office supplies in return for that expertise being located in Cadillac.

## *Services to Wexford County:*

- Education sessions on the New Economy:
  - ✓ Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce’s Luncheon-lecture series
  - ✓ Baker College’s Leadership Learning Series
  - ✓ Human Services Leadership Council of Missaukee and Wexford Counties.
- Technical assistance for Haring Charter Township and Wexford County Planning Commissions.
- Materials to Haring Charter Township, Wexford County, Mesick Village, and Harrietta Village Planning Commissions.
- Review of Wexford County’s new Planning Commission Ordinance.

Total Instruction Hours	64
Total Number of Participants	2812
Wexford County Participants	94

## **New for 2009:**

Together with the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce, Baker College, Cadillac Area Industrial Group, and Michigan Land Policy Institute, Kurt Schindler is facilitating a community stakeholder planning process to position the community for *The New Economy*.

*“We’re not waiting for the State or the Federal Government to come here and wave a magic wand. We’re positioning ourselves for our future.”*

- Community Stakeholder

Contact: Kurt H. Schindler, Land Use Educator, (231)779-9480; [schindl9@msu.edu](mailto:schindl9@msu.edu).

# State and Local Government

The State and Local Government Area of Expertise Team works to achieve MSU Extension's mission in the arena of public policy education. The role of team members in public policy education is analysis, assistance, and facilitation. It is not the making of policy decisions or the promotion of particular outcomes.

## Highlighted Programs for 2008

**Cadillac City Council:** Facilitated day-long planning retreat for Cadillac City Council.

**New County Commissioner Workshops:** An overview of the roles and responsibilities of county commissioners. 85% of commissioners newly elected in 2008 attended, including 2 from Wexford County, as well as many other experienced commissioners and county staff at 6 locations across the state.

**Michigan Northern Counties Association:** Monthly workshops for commissioners representing 34 northern lower Michigan counties, including Wexford. Molly Whetstone, Wexford County Equalization Director and President of the Michigan Association of Equalization Directors, presented in April 2008 on equalization and assessing.

**Building Strong Sovereign Nations:** Developed and presented tribal finance workshop as part of a two day conference for tribal council members from 11 of Michigan's 12 tribes.

**Conflict, Collaboration, and Consensus:** Part of teaching team for an intensive 6 day workshop series for professionals in natural resources occupations seeking to improve the results of their work with individuals and groups in the public arena.

**Facilitation Services:** Groups working on intergovernmental efforts to improve services and reduce costs. Facilitated countywide meetings of local government officials looking for additional ways to work together to improve services and reduce costs, in nine Michigan counties in recent years. Several counties have implemented new efforts and others are still studying possibilities.

## Program Emphasis for 2009

- Budget and Finance Workshops for county commissioners and staff, late April-early May.
- Facilitation and strategic planning on request, including intergovernmental efforts
- Further development of finance and other workshops for tribal council members.
- Michigan Northern Counties Association (see above)
- Continued support for local governments seeking to work together to improve services and reduce costs.
- Assisting group representing Wexford County and City of Cadillac in discussion of opportunities for shared efforts.
- Facilitating discussion in another northern Michigan county aimed at restructuring to improve fire and EMS services and reducing costs. This effort is a result of a countywide summit.

## Contact:

John P. Amrhein, State and Local Government Educator, (231)779-9480; [amrhein@msu.edu](mailto:amrhein@msu.edu).

# Agriculture and Natural Resources Programming

Revenue to Wexford County from agriculture **is nearly \$10 million dollars annually**. Michigan State University Extension provides research-based educational programs to Michigan's agricultural and natural resource industries, from farmers to commodity groups, forestry and natural resource managers, agribusiness, food processors, retailers and communities. Extension is working to ensure the sustainability of Michigan's agriculture system and huge un-managed natural systems for the future. Programs are delivered through client-directed Area of Expertise teams and through county based agriculture and natural resource educators and programs.

<b>Wexford County</b>	
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Dairy	\$ 2.65 million
Beef	0.26 million
Sheep	0.0011 million
Swine	0.001 million
Cash Crops	0.53 million
Christmas Trees	6.2 million
<b>Total Annual Revenue from Agriculture in Wexford County</b>	<b>\$ 9.64 Million</b>

\*Based upon estimated 2007 market prices and production estimates from the 2002 Census of Agriculture and the 2006 National Agricultural statistics service which are both part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **Dairy – Kathy Lee District Dairy Educator**

Our dairy educator offers a variety of educational programs in northwest lower Michigan. Special areas of interest include: herd production records for day-to-day management and herd analysis; generally accepted manure nutrient management practices; and herd genetic improvement programs. Information may address current problems or new technologies. Target audiences include dairy producers, dairy farm employees, and agribusiness representatives. She also assists individual dairy producers to identify problems and determine potential solutions.

## **Livestock – Dr. Janice M. Rumph, PAS North Region Livestock Extension Educator**

Dr. Rumph took over the responsibilities of Livestock Extension Educator for the 21 counties of the North Region (which includes Wexford county) in June 2008 and is housed at the Lake City Experiment Station. Her primary training is in livestock breeding and genetics, but also offers help to livestock (non-dairy) producers in the areas of herd management, nutrition, and disease control, particularly related to bovine tuberculosis. Upcoming livestock Extension programs for 2009 include:

- Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics
- Artificial Insemination School
- Summer Hay Day

## **Forestry – Russ Kidd, District Forestry Educator**

Participation in the Sustainable Forestry Education (SFE) program is a requirement of all mills in the state participating in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) program. Before obtaining supply contracts, logging contractors throughout the state are required to complete the SFE core program conducted by Extension trainers and additionally attend at least eight hours a year approved continuing education training. MSU Extension tracks all participation in approved training programs and provides this information to the participating timber industry

companies. In addition there is a seemingly endless list of exotic and native forest insect and diseases lately. Of most recent concern to Wexford county forests and landscapes have been Emerald Ash Borer (not yet found), Oak Wilt, Forest Tent Caterpillar, and Beech Bark disease. Extension's role has been to increase community awareness through educational programs on how to best manage these pests.

**Farm Management – Curtis Talley**  
**Farm Management Educator**

The farm management program assists agriculturally-related industries, businesses, families and individuals to improve their lives and achieve their goals through an educational process that applies management and economic knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. Programs include business management succession, investment analysis, budgeting, human resource management, tax strategies, and energy along with financial management and planning.

**Master Gardener**

Master Gardener is a horticulture education and volunteer leader training program offered by Michigan State University Extension (MSUE). Residents with an interest in plants, a personal commitment to volunteerism and an enthusiasm for sharing knowledge with others are the only prerequisites for application. Applicants attend classes, learning basic horticultural principles and environmentally sound gardening practices. In 2008 Wexford county Master Gardeners contributed volunteer hours in garden/landscape design and management to projects for local community groups such as: Club Cadillac, local churches, Daybreak, Wexford Soil Conservation District and the Cadillac city park. In 2008 Master Gardeners completed a total of 373 volunteer hours. The estimated national dollar value of volunteer time for that year was \$19.72 per hour, valuing their volunteer work at \$ 7355.56 for 2008. These are just a few ways the Master Gardener Program enriches and enhances our community.

**Consumer Horticulture**

Homeowners and county residents can turn to MSU Extension to help them solve problems with pest identification and management, gardening, plant health, food safety and preservation, household pests, and other information involving the home, yard, and gardens. Information and answers are just a phone call away as the Wexford County Extension office provides a variety of publications, videos, pest identification and other horticulture resources at the Wexford County office or through a specialist at Michigan State University. **Over 1,000 consumer inquiries relating to plant identification, horticultural topics, insects, fertilization and pest control issues are handled yearly through our office.**

<b>Soil Tests</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>Insect identification</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Plant Disease Diagnosis</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>Master Gardeners Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>373</b>

**Highlighted Partnerships for the Past Year**

Clam River Pathway/Greenway  
Wexford Soil Conservation District  
Cadillac Area YMCA  
Lake Cadillac Eurasian Water Milfoil Association  
Grand Vision  
Wexford Missaukee Mentoring Coalition

**Highlighted Programs in Wexford County 2008**

Sustainable Forestry (3), Russ Kidd, Roscommon County  
Pork Quality Assurance, Dave Stroud, Missaukee County  
Lawn Care, Ron Calhoun, MSU Turf Specialist  
Better Kid Care (5), Therese Povolo, Benzie County  
PRIDE (Foster Care) Training, Linda Cronk, Crawford County  
Farm Management, Curtis Talley, Oceana County

**Contact:** Shari Spoelman, County Extension Director, (231)779-9480; spoelma4@msu.edu

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