

Message from the District Director



Michigan State University Extension continues to work for Mecosta County youth, adults, businesses and communities providing outstanding research-based education and community development programs. With the ever-changing world and needs of the people we serve, MSU Extension ensures that everyone can participate in our programming. Considering participants and their needs, many of our face-to-face programs provide both an in-person and remote option to participate. Our mission remains providing the knowledge and resources of MSU's campus directly to individuals, communities and businesses to help improve lives around Michigan.

Eric Karbowski, District Director

Mecosta County Staff

- Christi Demitz - Health Educator
- Cora Okkema - Dairy Extension Educator
- Maribel Richards - Program Instructor, Youth and Family Health
- Karen Ripke - Secretary
- Renee Sanders - Community Nutrition Instructor

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★ **20** ★
**COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

Food Safety

Kara Lynch provided a Cooking for Crowds, in-person workshop at Barryton United Methodist Church in March of 2022.



Cooking for Crowds is a workshop for nonprofit groups that prepare food for fundraisers. Participants will learn how to prevent unsafe conditions that may cause foodborne illness when planning, purchasing, storing, preparing and serving food.

29
Extension programs held in the county
(up 107%)

355
People attended programs held in the county
(up 171%)

797
Number of residents from county that attended MSU Extension programs
(up 9%)



**BY THE
NUMBERS**

7,289
reached
on Facebook
47
residents
served with
SNAP-Ed

242
youth enrolled
in county 4-H

29
adult volunteers



Dining with Diabetes



**Christi Demitz,
Health Educator**

Dining with Diabetes (DWD) is a diabetes self-management educational program open to all, with particular interest to individuals with prediabetes, type 1 or type 2 diabetes and members of their support system. An exclusive program offered only by Cooperative Extensions across the United States, Dining With Diabetes helps participants to build food skills through cooking while learning self-management strategies to better manage, prevent or delay complications surrounding diabetes.

Demitz provided a four-part series on Dining with Diabetes, in the fall of 2022. 11 residents of Mecosta County attended the in-person sessions at the Big Rapids Community Library. Curriculum is focused on covering topics such as healthy eating, being active, monitoring, taking medications and reducing risks. Classes include research-based education, cooking demonstrations and healthy recipe tasting.

From Demitz:

"A participant attended a Dining with Diabetes workshop with his partner. He acknowledged he is making progress at a slower rate than he had hoped. He wrote, 'I needed to adjust the R [meaning to be more realistic when setting goals] of my SMART goal -- but I am continuing my progress and efforts toward my goals.'

He was appreciative for the class and helping him learn and take hold of healthy habits! The class helped him learn his daily targets for macronutrients, how to read labels & shop wisely, plan a healthy plate, overcome portion distortion, and much more! He found practical guidance from the handout materials, and the hands-on activities continue to teach him as he reviews and applies them."

Farm Crisis Preparedness



**Cora Okkema,
Dairy Educator**

Crisis preparedness is an often-overlooked area of farm risk management; yet the risk here is loss of reputation and potentially, loss of market.

What happens on and off the farm not only could affect the farm's opportunity to sell product, but also could impact the industry as well.

A farm crisis is an event that seriously disrupts the farm. Examples include: an environmental problem such as a chemical or manure spill, an animal abuse problem by employees or by a visitor, an employee injury or death by accident or intention, or a food product quality problem caused by accident or intention.

Cora Okkema, dairy educator, serves Mecosta County and provides education on drafting a preparedness plan and crisis response education.

Okkema helped provide two separate workshops at two separate farms in 2022. Topics covered included Plant and Animal Production and Health, Secure Food and Fiber Systems, Plant and Animal Production and Health, Environmental Stewardship and Natural Resource Management. In total, 8 people attended.

4-H Programming

Offering a diverse range of topics and interest areas, 4-H is the largest youth development organization in Michigan. In fact, each year more than 200,000 young people, ages 5-19, explore what interests and excites them as they grow with Michigan 4-H. In program areas ranging from science and technology to clothing and textiles, and so much more, 4-H provides fun, educational opportunities that empower young people with skills to lead for a lifetime and become the foundation for future success.



4-H Community Reviews

"I attended the first horse show of the year for the Mecosta County 4-H Horse program. I stayed the whole 12 hours of the show to be there supporting our kids and assisting where needed. Multiple parents and volunteers approached me throughout the day thanking me for being there to support the horse kids as a whole. Thank you for being here the whole day for our kids."
- 4-H Parent

"Thank you for spending the whole day at the show and helping when needed, We have never had a 4-H Program Coordinator dedicate their time to be here in support of our horse program and 4-H kids."
- 4-H parent and Horse Leader

Financial Resources

MSU Extension provides Financial & Homeownership training and resources, foreclosure prevention assistance, homeownership education, and money management for the residents of Mecosta County.

Lefere taught a home buyer education class in 2022. She received the following review from a participant:

"It was a great class. Glad I took it. Made me feel more comfortable with the process."



**Teagen Lefere,
Financial
Homeownership
Instructor**

Agriculture and Agribusiness

MSU Extension serves the agriculture industry by engaging in research, education and outreach that enhances the quality of life of Michigan residents.

In 2022, residents of Mecosta County were able to attend an on-farm meeting, participants (one farm owner, one farm manager, one nutritionist, one veterinarian) completed an assessment and feedback form (form supplied with Antibiotic Stewardship project materials). This was the sixth in a series of meetings on-farm.

The following is a comment left by a participant:

"We will continue the meetings because we have been able to accomplish many goals in this time; imagine what we could do over years!"