

## Message from the District Director

Mother Teresa once said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters and create many ripples”. MSU Extension is a catalyst for creating lasting impact that ripples across the Thumb, state, and beyond. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups. From youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults being able to access healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to increase economic impact. The possibilities of impact through MSU Extension are endless.

Through partnerships we can produce exponential ripples to change the lives of our neighbors, family, and friends. For over 100 years, MSU Extension’s goal has been to “bring knowledge to life”. By connecting with organizations and agencies across the Thumb, we bring the knowledge and research from Michigan State University to our communities and empower them to improve their lives. Alone we can cast a small stone to create ripples. Together our stone grows to produce larger impact than any one organization can create themselves.

I have been with MSU Extension for over nine years focusing on improving the health and nutrition of community members. As I continue to learn my new role as District Director, I am looking forward to exploring new ways to work with our partners as we create ripples of impact across Huron County and beyond.



**Karly Creuger**  
District 10 Director

Office: 989.672.3870  
Cell: 989.217.1264  
Fax: 989.673.5953  
[oberski9@msu.edu](mailto:oberski9@msu.edu)

Serving Huron, Lapeer, St Clair,  
Sanilac and Tuscola Counties

### Sanilac County Staff

- Mary Gilbert - Community Nutrition Instructor
- Mary Heiden - 4-H Program Coordinator
- Jerad Jaborek - Beef Feedlot Educator
- Betty Jo Krosnicki - Supervising Educator
- Shelly Krueger - 4-H Online Data Systems Support Staff
- Renee Travis - Program Instructor

### Contact Information

171 Dawson Street, Suite 323, Sandusky, MI 48471  
810.648.2515  
Fax: 810.648.3087  
[msue.sanilac@county.msu.edu](mailto:msue.sanilac@county.msu.edu)  
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/sanilac>

**198**

EXTENSION PROGRAMS  
INCLUDING SANILAC  
COUNTY RESIDENTS



**1504**

SANILAC COUNTY  
RESIDENTS ATTENDED  
EXTENSION PROGRAMS

## REPORTING

**20**

Extension educators, specialists and  
program staff reported data for  
Sanilac County

**195**

Direct Contacts Reported

**32**

Extension programs held in the county

**1050**

People attended programs held in the county

**800**

Total hours of programming in the county



# Staff Programing

## Sanilac County 4-H Program

4-H is the largest youth development program in Michigan. Its motto is "To make the best better." Members and leaders follow a 4-H pledge that represents the 4H's by, "Head for clearer thinking, Heart for greater loyalty, Hands for a greater service, Health for a better living for my club, my community, and my world."

Most people think 4-H is for kids who live on farms or are interested in raising animals. That is not true! 4-H offers a lot of different topics and existing areas along with animal science and agriculture such as, STEM activities, cooking, clothing and textiles, woodworking, Lego's, robots, gardening, shooting sports, creative arts, and so much more. 4-H members participate by belonging to a club, or attend camps, a SPIN (Special Interest) club, school enrichment, after school programs, virtual programs, workshops, community events, and many other program opportunities. 4-Her's learn by doing.

At the heart of 4-H are caring adult volunteers who grow current and future leaders by giving their time and expertise to empower young people with important life skills. The volunteers provide positive role modeling with real life experiences. 4-H leaders help members build confidence and dream for the future.



**Mary Heiden**  
**4-H Program Coordinator**

[heidenma@msu.edu](mailto:heidenma@msu.edu)  
810.648.2515



### Inside the Numbers

- Clubs - 33
- Volunteers - 110
- Youth Participants - 542
- Program Participants - 2,436
- Programs - 44
- Hours 168

## 4-H Program Highlights

### Environmental & Outdoor Education

4-H environmental and outdoor education teaches youth about science and ecology, interrelationships and impacts, health, and positive outdoor experiences. As a result, youth learn to appreciate and respect the connection between people and nature.

### Finding Your Spark in 4-H

4-H offers opportunities that encourage youth to try new things, ask questions, problem solve, test ideas and discover answers while exploring and learning about their world.



Youths aged 8-19 learned about Outdoor Wildlife during Spring Break Spin Club held at the Old Maple Valley Elementary School.



35 Carsonville- Port Sanilac Elementary Students participated in Beginning Archery Spin Club program and learned about Safety and Basic Archery



*"The kids look forward to Archery after school!"*

*-CPS Principal*



50 Sanilac County 4-H Youth participated in numerous sewing and craft events throughout the county. Youth had fun while learning to use a sewing machine, make Christmas Cards for Adult Foster Living Homes, baking, cooking and more.

## Animal Agriculture

The Thumb Area is one of the most populated in the state when it comes to cattle. MSU Extension's Jerad Jaborek, Beef Feedlot Educator, offered programs to help producers with a variety of issues. These workshops were offered throughout the Thumb Area.

One of those workshops was titled *Implant Boot Camp* where participants learned that cattle ear implants are a safe and effective technology that utilizes hormones to improve body weight gain, feed efficiency, and leanness in steers and heifers raised for beef. The in-person and hands-on training programs offered in collaboration with Zoetis's Sarah Messing, were provided in both Peck and Bad Axe. A presentation discussing what cattle implants were, the expected improvement in animal performance and return on investment, proper implant management, implant products available, and new FDA labeling changes were covered during lunch. Attendees were able to practice implanting cattle with the newly learned information pertaining to implant sanitation and proper ear implant placement.



Beef Carcass Ultrasound

Recognized as a need by the Michigan cattle feeding industry, Jerad, along with colleagues Kevin Gould and Phil Durst presented the *Feedlot Health and Management Program* for feedlot personnel focused on basic animal handling and recognizing feedlot cattle with health concerns. MSU Extension Beef educators discussed topics relevant to the program. Michigan State University veterinarian, Jessica Gordon, also participated by discussing the importance of working with your veterinarian to prevent and treat common illnesses observed in feedlot cattle.

In 2023, Jerad became a certified *Beef Carcass Ultrasound* technician. He has been working with beef seedstock producers, county fairs, and the MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program to provide carcass ultrasound scanning data. Capturing carcass ultrasound images to measure ribeye size, back fat thickness, and marbling deposition provides a peak under the cattle hide without having to slaughter the animal. This gives seedstock producers a greater knowledge of the carcass potential of their bulls and heifers used for breeding through enhanced expected progeny differences (EPD). For county fairs, it allows exhibitors the ability to learn about carcass grading and how well their market steer's carcass performs relative to other steers in the show.



### Jerad Jaborek Beef Feedlot Educator

[jaborekj@msu.edu](mailto:jaborekj@msu.edu)  
715.451.2035

## Agriculture and Agribusiness



### Jenna Falor Field Crops Educator

[falorjen@msu.edu](mailto:falorjen@msu.edu)  
517.449.9055

MSU Extension serves the agriculture industry by engaging in research, education and outreach that enhances the quality of life of Michigan residents. The Thumb Area in particular has some of the richest farmland in the state allowing for high quality field crops to be produced. This past growing season, 10 soybean on-farm research plots were grown and harvested in the Thumb with the data collected to be used for future education.

MSU Extension's agriculture and agribusiness programs cover not only field crops, but programming that is relevant to area producers. In 2023, Sanilac County residents along with Huron and Tuscola County residents had the opportunity to participate in programming relating to several topics including *Restricted Use Pesticide Testing, Crop and Pest Management Updates*, and a *Regional Wheat Field Day* held right here in Thumb Area. Also offered to area residents was a *Farm Succession Planning Workshop*, as well as a family friendly *Farm Record-Keeping for Women in Ag* workshop. *Thumb Ag Day* is another opportunity for producers to not only be able to sit in on field crop and animal agriculture educational sessions, but it's also an opportunity for them to visit with local agribusinesses all under one roof during this day long event held at Ubyly Heights each December.

4,729 live participants took part in the Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series including 233 people from Sanilac County in 2023.

Another highly successful program offered by MSU Extension Field Crops Educators is the *Field Crops Team Virtual Breakfast Series*. Happening every Thursday morning during the growing season, this virtual series is geared toward farmers, agribusiness professionals, agency personnel, and others interested in agriculture. The series is flexible, fluid, and able to adapt to constantly changing conditions for crops. Valuable crop management information is shared to address potential and current issues related to weather, pest infestation, and crop disease. Emerging issues are addressed in a timely manner to help farmers increase efficiency and profitability for the farming operation. While all Field Crops Educators along with campus and industry experts are involved with this program, you can find Jenna in the background and Phil Kaatz at the helm of this project.



Thumb Ag Day

### Phil Kaatz Field Crops Educator

[kaatz@msu.edu](mailto:kaatz@msu.edu)  
810.338.5242

**Nutrition and Safe Food**

**Nutrition Instruction and SNAP-Ed**



In May 2023, Mary Gilbert joined the MSU Extension team as a Community Nutrition Instructor working within the SNAP-Ed Program with residents in both Sanilac and Huron Counties. Her main focus in the beginning was *Senior Project Fresh* where she was able to give out 150 coupons to eligible Sanilac County seniors along with educational materials on the benefits of eating healthy fresh fruits and vegetables.

Another of Mary's focuses during her short time with MSU Extension has been a project called *The Last Food Mile*, which distributes three pound bags of seasonal produce to area residents. This produce is grown by local Amish farmers. Sanilac County received over 8,400 pounds of fresh produce which was distributed among residents at East Side Manor and Sunrise Village as well as on the Sanilac Transportation busses for patrons to benefit from. Over 200 people a week received this produce.

Mary along with colleague Carol Bublitz, took part in *Project Connect* where they offered two budgeting benefits presentations as well as a cooking demonstration. Project Connect is made up of community business members who provide resources to participants. A food distribution was also available. For the cooking demonstration, Mary and Carol used items from the food distribution to help people come up with ideas for recipes using the items they received as well as providing knowledge on food safety.

**Mary Gilbert**  
**Community Nutrition Instructor**

[gilbe242@msu.edu](mailto:gilbe242@msu.edu)  
810.648.2515

Mary has now shifted her focus to cooking, teaching a *Cooking Class for One* course in Sanilac County with plans for more Nutrition Instruction in the coming months.



Project Connect



The Last Food Mile

**Keeping Our Food Safe**

There is a need for unbiased, science-based information on safe food practices. MSU Extension provides food safety education and outreach for home food preservers, entrepreneurs, childcare providers, consumers, foodservice workers, and volunteers aiming to reduce foodborne illness for all. Sanilac County residents participated in online and in-person classes offered by the Food Safety team including *Preserving MI Harvest Home Food Preservation*, *ServSafe Manager Certification*, *Michigan Cottage Food Law*, *Safe Food = Healthy Kids*, *Cooking for Crowds* and *Pantry Food Safety-It's Your Job!*

To provide additional food safety education, there were multiple resources to utilize. MSU Extension's Think Food Safety Facebook page is available for social media users. Think Food Safety shares food safety tips and information on a huge variety of topics, food preservation information, food recalls, upcoming class schedules and videos at your fingertips. Also available to Thumb Area residents online are Michigan Fresh fact sheets which are loaded with information on using, storing and preserving the Michigan Fresh Produce grown in your garden or purchased from local farmer's markets. Finally, the Food Safety Hotline (call 877.643.9882) is available to anyone having a food safety question of any type.

**Laurie Messing**  
**Food Safety Educator**

[lmessing@msu.edu](mailto:lmessing@msu.edu)  
989.269.9949

**Additional Resources**

**By Phone...**

Food Safety Hotline: 877.643.9882 Mon - Fri 9 - 5 p.m.  
Garden or Yard Hotline: 888.678.3464 Option 1

**Online...**

Ask Extension: [Ask Extension - MSU Extension](#)

**Websites...**

MSU Extension: [www.canr.msu.edu/outreach](http://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach)  
MI Fresh Fact Sheets: [www.canr.msu.edu/mi\\_fresh/index](http://www.canr.msu.edu/mi_fresh/index)

**Social Media...**

- Join us on Facebook:
- + MSU Extension District 10
  - + Sanilac County 4-H Youth Development
  - + Family Nutrition Program
  - + Thumb Ag Research & Education (TARE)
  - + Think Food Safety

Instagram: [Sanilac\\_County\\_4-H\\_Youth](#)

Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) [@MSUExtension](#)

Sanilac County  
part of District 10

