



# Eaton County

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### BY THE NUMBERS



\$71,776,680 total economic impact in Eaton County



633 youth participated in 4-H and youth development programs



88 adults and youth benefited from health and nutrition programs



MSU Extension website received 14,843 visits from Eaton County residents, 76% first-time visitors



Eaton County students received \$10,430,605 in financial aid from MSU

# 100

MSU Extension has served Eaton County over 100 years

### MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

In 2018, Michigan State University Extension partnered with Eaton County to continue strengthening youth, families, farmers, caregivers, homeowners, business owners, and communities. Your local MSU Extension staff and the statewide network of Educators worked through local partners to bring the university's research and resources directly to our county residents. This annual report gives examples of some of MSU Extension's accomplishments and the impact that we continue to have in the county – helping to improve the lives of its residents. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our stakeholders and partners and we are especially grateful for the partnership that we have with Eaton County.



Bill Hendrian  
District 8 Director

### CONTACT



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Michigan State University Extension



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# Program Highlights

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40 Eaton County youth participated in the 2018 Exploration Days pre-college program.

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Eaton County 4-H helps to prepare our future leaders by offering numerous opportunities for youth development. From the local club experience to the statewide workshops and events, all youth have the chance to participate and develop skills that last a lifetime. In 2018 40 Eaton County youth traveled to the campus of Michigan State University to explore their futures at the annual Exploration Days pre-college program. Exploration Days is a three day program that is designed to help youth build the skills they need to successfully transition to college and to life as an adult.



Delta Wild 4-H members observe birds as part of their monitoring project.

## DELTA WILD 4-H SPIN CLUB

Delta Wild is one of the newest 4-H SPIN Clubs in Eaton County. A partnership between MSU Extension, MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Delta Township Parks and Recreation and the District Library. In 2018 the club held two series with plans for a third in the spring of 2019. Youth learn about wildlife biology from MSU undergrad and grad students and experience the process of science through creating their own wildlife monitoring projects and exploring wildlife in urban areas. One of the youth stated that the most important thing they learned was "how to work better in a team and learn about animals!"



The Judge Skinner Memorial Community Garden helps local citizens.

## FRESH PRODUCE DONATION

Extension Educator, George Silva, continues to be active organizing and recruiting volunteers for the Judge Skinner Memorial Garden. The garden offers space for residents who have a passion for gardening but no access to land. Growers are also provided with technical advice and some needed gardening supplies. The garden also provides a source of fresh produce for those in the community who are dependent on shelters for food. In 2018, with the help of volunteers such as the Boy Scouts, multiple donations were made to SIREN Homeless shelter and Helping Hands.

# Program Highlights

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## SHOW ME NUTRITION

MSU Extension works with youth to promote healthy habits. Community Nutrition Instructors, Paige Utterback and Anne Sheltroun, partnered with the Eaton Rapids Great Start Readiness program to offer a six week Show Me Nutrition program. Through each interesting and fun nutrition class, students gain the skills necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices. A success story that Instructor Paige shared was a student who was “incredibly shy and often in tears. He would often hide behind tables and bookshelves. Finally, during the last class, he joined us for the story and the snack. The best part was, he tried hummus for the first time and loved it!”



Extension Community Nutrition Instructors work with youth to promote healthy eating, positive body image, physical activity and food safety.

## FARM FINANCIAL ISSUES

Extension Educator, Roger Betz, works with local farmers as well as farmers throughout the state helping them manage their taxable income, provide insight and tools to determine when to buy and sell products and equipment and answers to difficult questions like when and how to transfer ownership to the next generation. Making up Michigan’s second largest industry, our agricultural sector is made up of family farms who have some of the most variable incomes and often volatile business environments. Very difficult discussions, decisions and circumstances can put this vital industry and its people on edge. Roger and MSU Extension provide a critical service for our family farms.



No business is always in the growth phase. It is critical for family farms to understand the various business cycles and be prepared to make critical decisions along the way.

## UTILIZING SOCIAL MEDIA

MSU Extension’s Heather Dyer utilizes social media to help the Health and Nutrition Institute push out interesting facts about Michigan food products. In 2018, Heather began shooting a series of videos featuring Michigan farms and their products. Heather likes to highlight the nutritious foods grown and produced right here in Michigan. She is always looking for opportunities to showcase homegrown talent. From her office in Eaton County, Heather manages the MI Health Matters—MSU Extension’s Facebook page where she is able to spotlight success stories and help followers access MSU Extension health and nutrition articles and information.



MSU Extension Educator, Faith Cullens, interviews a dairy farmer for an educational video.

# Featured County Story

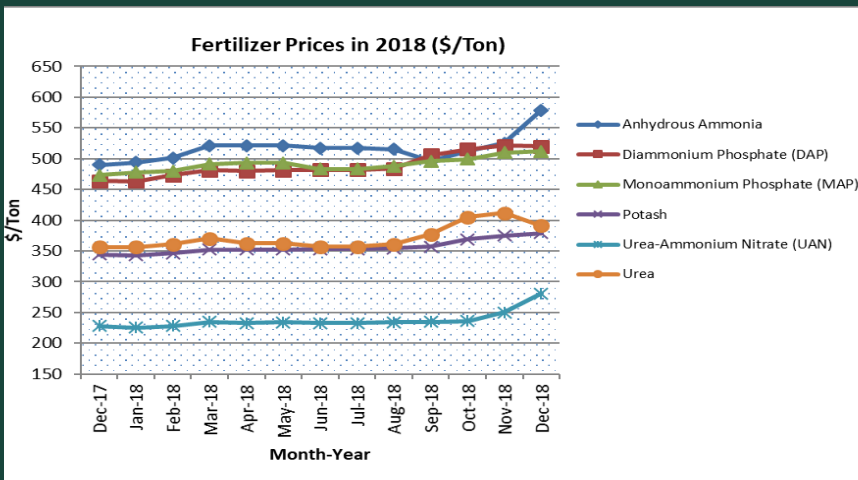
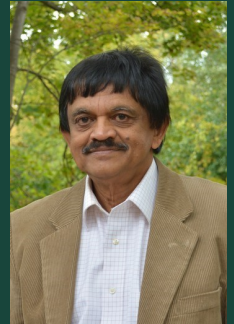


Figure 2. Fertilizer prices in 2018 (\$/Ton)  
 Data source: USDA-Illinois Dept. of Ag Market News  
 Springfield, Ill., cash prices for bulk purchases, granular form unless noted.

Eaton County MSU Extension is fortunate to have Educator George Silva on staff. George enjoys working with and serving local residents and Eaton County farmers. Whether it is analyzing soil test results for a local home garden or reviewing the latest fertilizer and crop data with one of many Eaton County farmers. George helps by engaging in research, education and outreach that enhances the quality of life for Eaton County producers and consumers.



## Fertilizer prices on the rise

The year-end retail prices of all major fertilizers were higher in 2018 compared to 2017, according to USDA statistics. The approximate retail prices for bulk purchases of major fertilizers per ton in December 2018 compared to December 2017, as published in the USDA Illinois Department of Agriculture Market News Report are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Prices for major fertilizers (\$ per ton)

Fertilizer Source	December 2017	December 2018
Diammonium phosphate (DAP)	465	521
Monoammonium phosphate (MAP)	473	513
Potash	345	379
Urea	355	392
Urea-Ammonium Nitrate (UAN 28%)	228	281
Anhydrous ammonia	490	579

All fertilizers were more costly at the end of 2018 compared to 2017. This is in contrast to the relatively stable and low prices in 2017. This rising trend with the exception of urea (Figure 2), is a reflection of global supply and demand. The prevailing low commodity prices should not lead to drastic cuts in fertilizer use on crops. That may lead to unnecessary risks of economic yield losses.

MSU Extension recommends that producers purchase fertilizers in the off-season when the prices are lower compared to planting time. Also growers should rely on soil testing and realistic yield goals in determining phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertilizer rates. Knowing the P and K critical levels in each field is a reliable guideline. It is worth noting that about 60-70% of soil samples tested in Michigan show adequate P, but only 20-25% samples show adequate K. Growers should also consider variable rate applications as a best practice to optimize fertilizer returns. Liming, when necessary is another practice that can increase net returns to investment. Please refer to [MSU Extension Bulletin E-2904](#) for additional information on nutrient recommendations for field crops in Michigan.

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## MSU Extension staff located in Eaton County

Roger Betz	Farm Management Educator	269-781-0784	betz@msu.edu
Heather Dyer	Nutrition Instructor	517-543-4405	dyerh@msu.edu
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Kristy Oosterhouse	4-H Program Coordinator	517-543-4420	oosterh6@msu.edu
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Kaitlyn Rau	Americorps 4-H SPIN	517-543-4469	raukaitl@msu.edu
George Silva	Field Crops Senior Educator	989-831-7509	silvag@msu.edu

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## Additional MSU Extension staff serving Eaton County

Laura Anderson	Disease Prevention Educator	269-945-1388	ander359@msu.edu
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# Collaboration Across MSU Extension

MSU Extension is an organization comprised of individuals with broad knowledge of subject matters related to a particular discipline, such as field crops, nutrition, or youth development. Having four MSU Extension Institutes gives the ability to bring together cross-disciplinary expertise to address issues that are multifaceted and complex. For example, MSU Extension Educators and Program Instructors have worked together on physical and financial health issues, agricultural and stress issues, economic and community development and conservation issues, and issues that span generations.

Your local office is housed with experts in particular fields. Individuals may serve in the Agricultural and Agribusiness Institute, the Children and Youth Institute, the Health and Nutrition Institute or our Community, Food and Environment Institute. However, even if you do not have a local expert for the issue that you need addressed, MSU Extension has the unique functionality of drawing from a statewide pool of experts to make sure that you have the information that you need. In addition, the MSU Extension website [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu) is maintained and updated on a regular basis. We are always looking for ways to collaborate with each other to apply knowledge to the critical issues you face.

**Through successful partnership and collaboration with Eaton County, MSU Extension is able to continue its local presence and to provide vital educational resources and programming in such areas as community and economic development, agriculture, land use, health and nutrition, and youth development.**

**Thank you Eaton County!**

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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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