

Changes to Five Year Plan of Work for Michigan State University

The foundation of the Five Year Plan of Work is the mission of Michigan State University Extension:

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

The following changes to the Five Year Plan of Work reflect a process of constituent and stakeholder input that moved from local communities to regional and state teams and back to local communities as MSUE identified and responded to critical issues, needs, and opportunities. The plan is based on stakeholder input from thousands of participants, parents, and volunteers, hundreds of collaborators and partners, over 500 advisory groups, 1,000 community organizations, funders, and citizens. The plan places the identified Michigan residents' needs and interests as the driving force behind MSU Extension programs. In 2001, volunteer county Extension council members, along with staff members in every Michigan county collected stakeholder input for establishing local and state goals (see Figure 1.). Collectively this data provided the basis for identifying **Michigan State University Extension's Focus Areas and Core Priorities** (see Appendix A) and MSUE's **Sharpening Our Program Focus** (see http://www.msue.msu.edu/eis/reports/Statewide_report_by_theme.pdf) that in turn has been used to and provide information to AoE Teams in setting their plans and goals.

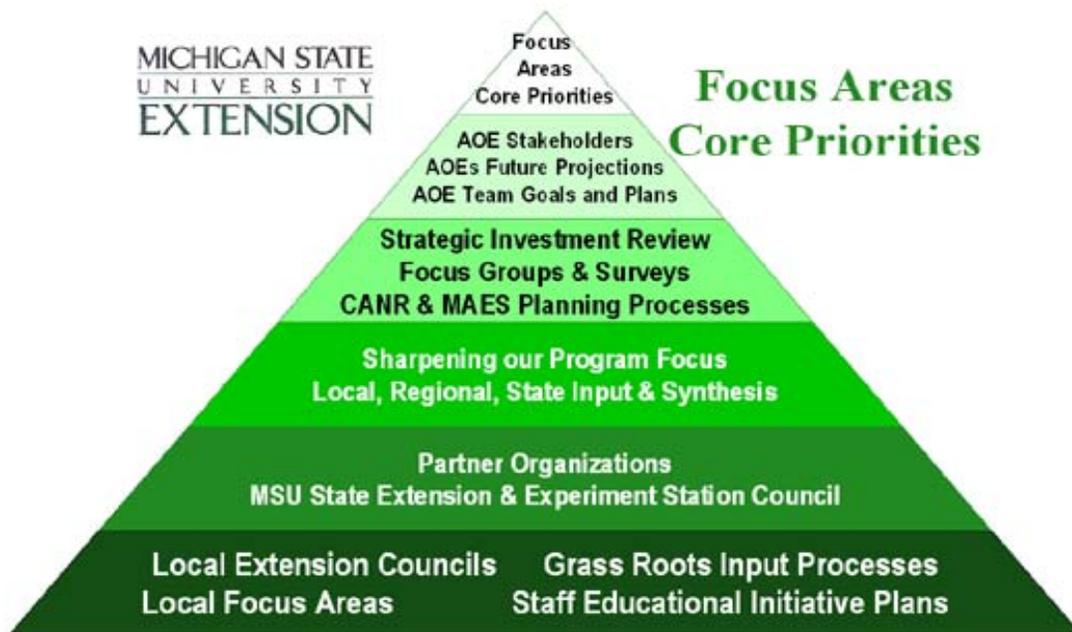


Figure 1.
Focus Areas Core Priorities

From a state perspective, five main themes and corresponding **Michigan Critical Issues** (see http://ceenet.msue.msu.edu/home/criticalissues/Michigan%27s_Critical_Issues.html) were highlighted that included:

- **Building strong communities**
 - Building capacity for rural and urban community development and revitalization.
 - Building community capacity for creating an environment where people of different cultures, backgrounds and life circumstances can reach their full potential.
 - Assisting elected and community decision-makers to develop leadership and public affairs skills.
 - Promoting entrepreneurial development and business expansion.
 - Encouraging communities to develop dialogue, collaboration and emergency response capability.
- **Helping youth succeed**
 - Supporting youth asset development to reduce vulnerabilities.
 - Enhancing leadership and skill development of volunteers to be a positive force for youth.
 - Creating more opportunities for community-based partnerships and collaborations in support of positive youth development.
 - Providing community-based, positive youth development experiences.
- **Enhancing profitability in agriculture**
 - Balancing inputs to agricultural systems to increase profitability and efficiency.
 - Managing outputs in agricultural systems to increase profitability and efficiency.
 - Supporting entrepreneurial and consumer-center product agriculture.
 - Identifying and responding to threats and emerging problems for the food and agricultural industry.
 - Identifying and supporting agriculture systems that are socially and environmentally balanced within communities.
- **Encouraging responsible land and natural resources use**
 - Improving community planning and policy development through access and use of research-based information.
 - Building awareness and understanding of the ecology of natural systems, and capacity to make positive changes.
 - Identifying and promoting best practices for responsible use of natural resource, land and water systems.
- **Building healthy families**
 - Collaborating with community partners to enhance family support systems.
 - Promoting healthy lifestyles across the lifespan.
 - Improving parenting and caregiver skills.
 - Educating families to manage their resources.
 - Strengthening families' capacity to deal with change and transition.
 - Improving practices to reduce food safety hazards.

A survey done in Spring 2002 by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) called the State of the State Survey (SOSS) assessed a variety of public topics. One set of the questions dealt with reaction to the identified program priorities for MSU Extension. The 1012 random surveys were conducted in all six regions of the state. A full report can be found on the IPPSR website at: <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/SOSSdata.htm>

Results around the Focus areas found:

Enhancing Agricultural Profitability

High Priority - 51%
Some Priority - 43.8%
Low Priority - 5.3%

Encouraging Responsible Land
and Natural Resource Use

High Priority - 70%
Some Priority - 27.6%
Low Priority - 2.5%

Building Strong Communities

High Priority - 62.4%
Some Priority - 32.5%
Low Priority - 5.1%

Helping Youth Succeed

High Priority - 78.3%
Some Priority - 18.1%
Low Priority - 3.6%

Building Healthy Families

High Priority - 78%
Some Priority - 17.6%
Low Priority - 4.4%

Keeping in mind that this was a statewide survey, the results suggest the citizens surveyed agreed that these are important areas for Extension to address. Information from **Sharpening Our Program Focus** was used to provide feedback to stakeholders through plans, recommendations, and identified priorities and local goals at Regional Extension council conferences, forums, meetings with legislators, commissioners, and citizens, and working with collaborators. In 2002-2003, Area of Expertise Teams (AoE) teams used the **Sharpening Our Program Focus data** and identified **MSUE Focus Areas and Core Priorities** to examine their existing goals and create new goals. AoE Teams are the foundation of MSUE's previous 5-Year Plan of Work and Extension work. MSU Extension's 29 area of expertise (AoE) teams were asked to carefully review the statewide program input, synthesize the results with their external stakeholder groups, refine the needs cited and develop program plans supporting attention to broader focus areas. The following Plan of Work reflects the changes made to the AoE goals identified in the previous 5-Year Plan of Work and the goals created from this process.

Goal 1: An agricultural system that is highly competitive in the global economy

Enhancing profitability in agriculture

Farm economics and viability concerns echoed across the state. Residents asked MSU Extension to help them explore agricultural diversity, niche markets and value-added opportunities and to continue farm management education for producers.

They also asked for increased emphasis on animal health issues, the economic impact of manure issues, maintaining profitability of small and part-time farmers, and maintaining profitability while enhancing environmental stewardship.

In line with this critical need the **Swine AoE Team** strengthened its goal to: Enhance Michigan's swine competitiveness & profitability via educational programs that address labor, alternative business arrangements, efficient production, environmental compliance and enterprise analysis. In addition, the **Swine AoE Team** added the following goals based on stakeholder input: "Increase awareness of environmental issues through Environmental Compliance that will address GAAMP Standards, Manure Management System Plans along with Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan compliance, and mortality;" and "Deliver PQA recertification designed to deliver current information on farm disease identification and treatment along with PQA recertification."

The **Dairy AoE Team** has continued to focus on profitability with the goal: Assist dairy producers improve business management skills to increase profitability. An extension of this goal is to teach dairy producers the use of partial budgeting to make sound business decisions. In addition, due to stakeholder input, the AoE is strengthening its goal on manure management where the goal is to increase dairy producers' knowledge and understanding of acceptable environmental management practices with 90% of dairy producers capable of diagramming the systems approach to manure nutrient management by September 2005. A secondary goal is to develop a Manure Applicator Training Program to teach dairy producers/manure applicators how to apply manure at agronomic rates and implement basic conservation practices to reduce field application discharge risks by March 2004.

The **Beef AoE Team** echoed similar goals with its primary goal: "Improve beef profitability via retained ownership and pricing strategies;" "Identify strategies for reducing production costs on beef farms and assist managers in the implementation of needed changes;" "Improve the understanding of environmental issues and provide expertise for addressing them;" "Make farm managers aware of all market opportunities and provide information on the application of risk management;" and "Develop coordinated marketing system called Five State Beef Initiative with the goal of to help beef producers capture more value from their cattle by meeting consumer expectations through a responsive production, marketing and information sharing system." Input has been taken from producers, beef cattle associations, land grant universities, state departments of agriculture, Farm Bureaus and a livestock marketing cooperative in IL, IN, KY, MI, and OH. In addition, the AoE team used input from its annual surveys to cattle feeders in Michigan.

The **Field Crops AoE Team** primary goals include: “Work with growers and agribusiness to develop new profit centers and value-added opportunities for Michigan agriculture;” and “Help farmers deal with low commodity prices.” New goals and priorities were set using the Field Crops AoE farmer and agribusiness advisory council that included: 1.) Laws, Regulations (bulk storage, Farm Bill); 2. Board & leadership training; 3.) Information Delivery Task Force Research Data Sharing Pest data, tillage, weed control, soil fertility, variety trials On-Farm Demo Book (multi-state & Canada) CAT Alert Education of General Public (Agricultural Literacy); 4.) New Profit Centers (Value Added/Organics); 5.) Northern MI Field Crops; 6.) Farm Business MGMT/Economics; and 7.) Crop Systems Nutrient Management (Manure) Precision Agriculture.

The primary goal for the **Fruit AoE Team** is: “Enhance profitability and competitiveness of the Michigan fruit industry.” Specific new goals under this area includes: “Identify new plum rootstock to increase profitability for the Michigan plum industry;” “Develop ripening and quality profiles for Michigan Peaches;” and “Improved mechanization for juice grape industry with refinement & demonstration of a mechanical vine positioner.” In addition, stakeholder input has highlighted the need for goals that address the water quality and usage due to, for example, tart cherry orchards tend to be near bodies of water, on sandy sites where agrichemicals are relatively mobile and because this industry uses a significant amount of water to cool cherries in the harvest tanks.

The two primary goals for the **Vegetable AoE Team** are: “Assist vegetable producers adopt integrated crop/pest management;” and “Enhance vegetable marketing.” Working with organizations (the Michigan State Horticultural Society and the Michigan Vegetable Council), local Extension advisory councils, and state commodity associations, Extension agents in the AoE Team identified issues that would help producers and farm marketers improve the management skills, enhance profitability, and utilize land and resources in a responsible manner. As a result new goals were added that include: “Strengthen the competitive position and profitability of the Michigan vegetable industry;” and “Improve water use with vegetable producers.”

New goals were established by the **Forage/Pastering/Grazing AoE Team** from using an advisory council composed of forage producers, suppliers, and members from the Michigan Hay & Grazing Council. The goals included: “Enhance livestock enterprise profitability utilizing grazing/pasture management;” “Improving production of alternative crops to extend grazing seasons; and “Improving production of high quality forages.”

The main goal for the **Christmas Tree AoE Team** is “Stabilize and enhance Michigan Christmas tree industry.” New goals include, “Improving growers’ knowledge and skill levels in the area of Fraser Fir production and marketing;” “Improving weed control;” “Improving cone production;” and “Development of a glyphosate-ready Fraser Fir.”

The main goal for the **Swine AoE Team** is “Improve swine competitiveness and profitability.” New goals include, “Improving Environmental Compliance that include GAAMP standards, Manure Management Plans, comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans, and mortality;” and “Recertifying farmers on Producer Assurance (PQA/SWAP) and encourage SWAP participation.”

Goal 2: A safe and secure food and fiber system

Building healthy families

Extension council members and other stakeholders in nearly every county asked MSU Extension to focus on enhancing family assets. Concerns about nutrition and food were prevalent. Stakeholders asked for educational focus on the safety of our food supply.

The primary goal of the **Food Safety AoE Team** is: “Offer food nutrition education to low income adults regarding food preservation, food safety and healthy hygiene practices around food.” A second focus area is HACCP training and ServSafe training on food safety for restaurants and school food server personnel. Using stakeholder input, a new goal was established: “Improving Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) training.” This goal focuses on the safe production of fresh fruits and vegetables. AoE members have become more active in farm-level educational programs on animal health, especially on issues related to bovine tuberculosis. It is anticipated that future government regulations and educational efforts will place increasing emphasis on farm-level food safety practices.

One initiative that goes across Federal Goals and AoE Teams is the **MSUE Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program** with the Goal: “Assist in reducing losses to both the farm economy and to producers through increased awareness and security to the agricultural and food industry.” To attain this goal, training will be provided to Extension educators who work with the animal, plant, and food industries in Michigan to help them better understand the vulnerabilities, threats, and opportunities to protect the food supply, from farm to table. Information will then be distributed through local Extension educators. Extension publications will be produced that target Spanish speaking audiences, as well as agricultural security in general. Extension will also continue to be involved in the State of Michigan’s strategy to develop a statewide food and agriculture security plan. Extension educators, specialists, and program staff will also be provided training in information through both classroom training and electronic delivery through the MSUE Emergency Management 1-Minute Tips, which has over 1090 subscribers. Partners and stakeholders include the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Extension Disaster Education Network, Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division, North Central and National Plant Diagnostics Networks, Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and various USDA offices including the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Goal 3: A healthy, well-nourished population

Building healthy families

Extension council members and other stakeholders in nearly every county asked MSU Extension to focus on enhancing family assets. Concerns about nutrition and food were prevalent. Stakeholders asked for educational focus on the safety of our food supply, development of healthy lifestyles, and family nutrition education.

The **Food, Nutrition and Health AoE Team** primary goal is: “Improve dietary quality of adults and children by adopting healthy eating and lifestyle behaviors.” New goals identified through stakeholder input are: “Reduce obesity through a portion control initiative;” “Integrate physical activity promotion with nutrition and health education programming;” “Implement chronic disease management and prevention education for families and communities;” and “Implement diabetes education and support for families and communities.”

Goal 4: Greater harmony between agriculture and the environment

Encouraging responsible land and natural resources use

Decision making and leadership development around natural resources and land use issues is important to Michigan residents. In the land use arena, they especially cited farmland preservation, sprawl and planning and zoning issues as areas where MSU Extension should focus resources, along with brownfield redevelopment and urban land use concerns. County Extension council members asked for more information and education about such issues as environmental quality, forestry, natural resources, water quality and wildlife management.

The primary goal for the **Land Use AoE Team** is: “Enable citizens to participate in informed land use decisions.” This goal in response to Michigan critical needs has led to the development of a statewide program called the Citizen Planner. The goal is to train citizens as well as involve participants in meaningful volunteer activities that will facilitate stakeholder involvement in local land use decisions. One of the new initiatives for the Land Use AoE Team is the result of local governments identifying a need for education and materials on infrastructure development and management as it relates to land use planning, development and community investments, especially given growing interest in neo-traditional designs and cluster zoning. Additionally, MSU Extension is a funding collaborator with the John Hannah Land Use Professorship position that will provide overall leadership for MSU land use effort.

The primary goals of the **Water Quality AoE Team** are: “Encourage Michigan citizens to adopt or refine practices to protect water quality on their homesteads and in their communities;” “Help Michigan farmers improve nutrient management to maintain and improve quality ground and surface water;” and “Work with riparians and lake users to enhance their understanding of watershed management and inland lakes water quality issues. New initiatives from stakeholder input focus on Alternative Waste Systems, development of the Lake and Stream Leader's Institute, and development of a statewide Watershed Conference.

The main goal of the **Manure AoE Team** is: “Protect the environment through manure management planning and nutrient management.” A new goal added is: “Improving horse manure management.”

The primary goals of the **Forestry AoE Team** are: “Address environmental issues effecting Michigan forests;” “Enhance logger education.” New goals from stakeholders

and community needs that emerged are: “Educating youth on the stewardship of forests;” “Addressing the Emerald Ash Borer;” “GPS for Beginners;” and “Master Woodland Manager.”

The goals of the **Sea Grant AoE Team** address: “Increase awareness and understanding of the dynamics and interrelationships of the Great Lakes and their biological resources;” “Assist and lead in the efforts to limit the introduction of new aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes while working to reduce the spread and density of existing aquatic nuisance species;” “Improve coastal ecosystem health and the economic quality of life for coastal communities by strengthening community leadership, promoting development and wise land-use decision making, identifying barriers, and increasing municipal communication and collaboration links;” “Reduce the incidence and severity of water-related accidents through preventive education, enhancement of rescue response and management of injured individuals;” and “Expand awareness of relevant international issues and situations and assist people from and within other countries by sharing relevant Great Lakes information.”

Goal 5: Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for Americans

Building strong communities

Michigan citizens identified a variety of opportunities for MSU Extension to assist them in their quest for strong communities. They spoke of the need for increased education in community development and collaboration, economic development, housing and health care. Other focus areas identified include education, diversity, leadership, tourism and volunteer development. These themes were prominent in both urban and rural communities.

The primary goals of the **Community Development AoE Team** are: “Aid community groups in linking, networking, and identifying educational resources;” and “Facilitate visioning, revisiting, strategic planning and implementation primarily for rural communities.” New goals created from stakeholder input are “Building capacity for creating an environment where people of different cultures, backgrounds and life circumstances can reach their full potential;” “Provide assistance for organizational assessment and planning for agencies, organizations and local units of government;” “Encouraging communities to develop dialogue, collaboration and emergency response capability;” and “Provide assistance in accessing, analyzing, interpreting and presenting demographic and economic data for communities.”

The primary goals of the **Economic Development AoE Team** are: “Develop programs of business retention and expansion;” “Implement FastTrac (Entrepreneurship) program for small business development in rural communities;” and “Implement Fund for Rural America.” New goals from stakeholder input are: “Building capacity for rural and urban community development and revitalization;” and “Promoting entrepreneurial development and business expansion;” and “General Workforce Development Assistance” that focuses on issues related to workforce development and methods by governmental and private employers to improve the understanding of and utilization of the existing and potential workforce utilizing wage surveys as well as skill surveys.

The primary goals of **State and Local Government AoE Team** are: “Assisting elected and community decision-makers to develop leadership and public affair skills;” “Educate local government officials on state and local taxation, financing state and local government, and conflict resolution.” New goals from stakeholder input include: “Integrating Michigan Municipal Clerks Institute and Master Municipal Clerk Academy,” where MSUE reached agreement with the Michigan Secretary of State’s Bureau of Elections to formally combine required elections certification training with the MMCI and MMCA programs, allowing clerks to meet both training requirements in a single set of programs for clerks seeking their Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designations; and “Implementing the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program,” where MSUE has assumed responsibility for the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP) formerly administered by the Michigan Supreme Court’s State Court Administrator’s Office;” and “Development of the Local Unit Fiscal Database,” where MSU is working with the Michigan Department of Treasury, the Michigan Municipal League and municipal accounting software providers to develop a single database for the financial reports required to be filed by Michigan’s county, township, city and village governments.

The **MSUE Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program** goal in this area is to work with applicable Area of Expertise teams, MSUE resources, and external stakeholders to increase Extension educator, specialist, and program staff knowledge of Extension roles during disasters, and to increase their ability to provide programming related to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery when disasters strike. Specific areas include family security, stress management due to the trauma of disaster whether natural or man-made, talking to children about terrorism and trauma, hazard mitigation, and protecting the food supply. New Extension publications will be developed for the Youth and Family Security Series of Extension bulletins, including Spanish language versions, which address the aforementioned topics. Extension educators, specialists, and program staff will also be provided training in information through both classroom training and electronic delivery through the MSUE Emergency Management 1-Minute Tips, which has over 1090 subscribers. Partners and stakeholders include the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Extension Disaster Education Network, Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division, Michigan Department of Community Health, and National Food Safety and Toxicology Center.

Another initiative that goes across Federal Goals and AoE Teams is the **LeadNet AoE** Team that focuses on leadership development. The LeadNet team is developing three major initiatives. One is a comprehensive guide to community leadership development at the local level. The intent is to provide Extension Educators with the tools to organize and facilitate a leadership development process or program in collaboration with various community organizations. A second effort involves a three-day training on facilitation that has been piloted within Extension for the last year. This program, which has received rave reviews, will be offered to state and local organizations and agencies. The third initiative focuses on approaches to conflict resolution in the work place and in the community. A number of different approaches to teaching this are being tested within Extension, with the intention of making workshops available to the general public.

Another initiative that goes across Federal Goals and AoE Teams is MSU's new **Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources**. MSU Extension and AES will work with the Product Center on the following goals: "To provide a coordinated, university-wide response for assisting agriculture, food, and natural resource entrepreneurs and managers in improving economic opportunity; and "To cooperate with existing agriculture, food, and natural resource organizations to develop new businesses, new products, and more successful existing business."

Building healthy families

Extension council members and other stakeholders in nearly every county asked MSU Extension to focus on enhancing family assets. They asked for educational programming on quality day care, family relationships, human development and parenting, and family resource management.

The **Human Development AoE Team's** primary goal is: "To provide parents and caregivers the knowledge/skills needed to help their children reach their potential by increasing knowledge about: child development, breastfeeding education/support, parent-child interactions, guidance/discipline, and decision making." New goals from stakeholder input include: "Helping youth deal with anger;" "Helping parents interact better with adolescents;" "Helping families cope with divorce;" "Improving indoor air quality for children;" and "Helping the quality of life for seniors and dealing with aging issues."

The primary goals of **Family Resource Management AoE Team** are: "Improve the organization and management of personal/family financial affairs;" Increase savings and reduce consumer debt;" and "Develop home buying and decision making and action skills." New goals are: "Collaborating with AARP/Michigan to raise the awareness level of seniors regarding home maintenance scams and predatory lending practices;" "Improving financial security of Michigan citizens in later life;" and "Increasing Income Support for Working Households through the Earned Income Tax Credit."

Helping youth succeed

Residents expressed strong desire for educational programming to help young people avoid behaviors that place them at risk. Positive youth development programming should be enhanced, they said, and particular emphasis should be placed on reducing violence involving youth.

The primary goals of **Youth Development AoE Team** are: "Supporting youth asset development to reduce vulnerabilities;" "Providing Community-based, positive youth development experiences;" and "Creating more opportunities for community-based partnerships and collaborations in support of positive youth development." New goal areas are focusing on: "Mentoring Programs;" "Global Education (including Diversity and Multiculturalism);" "Character Education", "Stewardship," and "Reducing Bullying."

The primary goal of the **Volunteer Development AoE Team** is: “Enhancing leadership and skill development of volunteers to be a positive force for youth.” A new emerging goal for this AoE is: “Extend the resources of MSUE Extension and the Volunteerism Area of Expertise Team to outside partners to build community leadership capacity.”

It is important to note that many of the AoE’s, in addition to the Youth Development AoE, focus on youth learning and succeeding, where during 2002-03 over 67,000 youth learned about agriculture, 50,000 youth learned about food safety and nutrition, and 36,000 youth learned about environmental issues and stewardship.

Appendix A
Michigan State University Extension's Focus Areas and Core Priorities



Our Mission

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

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Serving Michigan Families and Communities through our Focus areas and Core Priorities

Late in 2001 MSU Extension announced the results of an intensive, statewide process to identify important topics that the organization could and should address. These focus areas offer overarching themes for statewide programming through our Area of Expertise teams and other program development efforts. Within each focus area is a set of core priorities that all of our Extension professionals contribute to through programs. Partner reports will regularly share the measurable results that improve the lives of Michigan residents. These statewide themes will drive our program delivery through the year 2004.

Building Strong Communities

- Building capacity for rural and urban community development and revitalization.
- Building community capacity for creating an environment where people of different cultures, backgrounds and life circumstances can reach their full potential.
- Assisting elected and community decision-makers to develop leadership and public affairs skills.
- Promoting entrepreneurial development and business expansion.
- Encouraging communities to develop dialogue, collaboration and emergency response capability.

Helping Youth Succeed

- Supporting youth asset development to reduce vulnerabilities.
- Enhancing leadership and skill development of volunteers to be a positive force for youth.
- Creating more opportunities for community-based partnerships and collaborations in support of positive youth development.
- Providing community-based, positive youth development experiences.



Enhancing Profitability in Agriculture

- Balancing inputs to agricultural systems to increase profitability and efficiency.
- Managing outputs in agricultural systems to increase profitability and efficiency.
- Supporting entrepreneurial and consumer-center product agriculture.
- Identifying and responding to threats and emerging problems for the food and agricultural industry.
- Identifying and supporting agriculture systems that are socially and environmentally balanced within communities.

Encouraging Responsible Land and Natural Resources Use

- Improving community planning and policy development through access and use of research-based information.
- Building awareness and understanding of the ecology of natural systems, and capacity to make positive changes.
- Identifying and promoting best practices for responsible use of natural resource, land and water systems.

Building Healthy Families

- Collaborating with community partners to enhance family support systems.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles across the lifespan.
- Improving parenting and caregiver skills.
- Educating families to manage their resources.
- Strengthening families' capacity to deal with change and transition.
- Improving practices to reduce food safety hazards.

These aren't just subjects that will be part of our Extension programs — they comprise the nucleus of our efforts, the very heart of our work. They have been shared across the organization with employees at all levels, and with our stakeholders in government, the private sector, nonprofits and communities. We are fully committing ourselves and our resources to producing unbiased, research-based programs to address these issues and priorities for communities, businesses, farms and families across the state.

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