

2006 Michigan SARE PDP Annual Report

A. **Summary.** During 2006 the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and MSU Extension conducted a statewide needs assessment, culminating in development of five strategic priorities which will organize work during the foreseeable future:

- Developing entrepreneurs
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Paving the way for the bio-economy
- Educating and supporting decision makers
- Building leaders for today and tomorrow

These strategic priorities, coupled with the State of Michigan's prolonged economic downturn, require framing sustainable agriculture education in ways that clearly contribute to one or more of these priorities and even more importantly, that they contribute to economic development.

During 2006, the SARE coordinator was invited, for the first time, to provide an educational session for conservation district employees from across Michigan. The presentation focused on writing successful proposals to support sustainable agriculture and featured SARE opportunities as the example.

During 2006, agricultural educators who were involved with Michigan SARE professional development efforts in both major and minor ways accomplished the following:

- MSU Extension supported nomination of a Michigan dairy farmer noted for his grass-based operation, seasonal milking and conservation support to receive one of just a few significant partners
- 50 new MSU Extension educators toured MSU's student organic farm and year-round CSA, incorporating ideas for educational programs in agriculture, nutrition, youth development and community development
- Presentations from Michigan Animals in the Food System conference were transcribed and posted at www.mottgroup.msu.edu
- 11 Extension educators visited a grass-based dairy and learned how ecolabels and related certification programs can benefit local/regional marketing
- At least 15 Extension educators requested and received information to help local people start or enhance farmers markets or CSA operations
- Michigan Farmers Market listserv grew to over 100 subscribers and activity several days each week
- People involved in the SARE-supported New Ag Network and others organized Great Lakes Cover Crop Summit, parts of which were facilitated by MI SARE coordinator
- An ag leader and peer educator developed more effective approaches to working with agricultural regulators as an outcome of a SARE-sponsored experience
- An ag educator secured a fellowship and is helping to develop a new MSU residential college based, in part, on her involvement in a SARE-sponsored experience
- Extension educators are conducting meat goat educational sessions in multiple Michigan locations for youth, small scale producers and commercial producers. These sessions have drawn a broad range of participants including Latino and Amish farmers and many lower income and single female farmers.
- An ag educator was able to assist farmers to develop a stronger SARE proposal based on her SARE-supported travel experience
- A youth horticultural educator increased her involvement in youth entrepreneurship and local food systems work after a SARE-supported experience
- An Extension educator reported increased involvement with African American and Latino small scale farmers after SARE-supported participation in a Growing Power workshop
- Two agricultural educators organized a meeting of key Michigan stakeholders to increase farmers markets ability to accept food stamps

- After SARE support helped two Extension educators to participate in a readers theatre presentation of *Voices: What will be in the fields tomorrow?*, they arranged to add a reading to offerings for the 2007 National Association of County Agricultural Agents meeting.

B. Expected Outcomes. SARE PDP efforts in Michigan are designed to encourage ag educators to understand and appreciate concepts and processes of sustainable agriculture and food systems; to provide clients with information about more sustainable approaches with at least as much comfort, confidence and research base as they have for information about conventional approaches; and to infuse their ongoing educational programs with input from sustainable agriculture scholarship, including but not limited to SARE. A related outcome is to help agricultural educators become critical consumers of all information which they use to develop educational programs.

C. Approach and Methods. Our approach to sustainable agriculture professional development in Michigan has been opportunistic. Because general offers of professional development support and inservice sessions have generated minimal response, we have tried to target individuals who show some interest in developing their expertise in sustainable agriculture and/or whose clients are requesting such support. For example, early in 2006 an Extension youth educator approached the SARE coordinator indicating personal interest in local and sustainable food systems, especially farmers markets and CSAs. Since then, the coordinator has offered specific opportunities to this staff member to build on that interest in ways that can be incorporated in his ongoing youth development work. So far, none of the opportunities has worked out, but it often takes longer than a year to find the right combination that can make a significant difference.

It has also worked quite well to send more than one person to participate in conferences and other professional development events. That provides some additional support to pursue back home efforts and seems to pay off.

The final 2005 report and 2006 plan was shared with stakeholder advisors on 12/13/2005. Response was generally supportive and stakeholders indicated willingness to help but limitations on their time to do so. Each individual within the stakeholder group was involved in one or more of the activities outlined in this report.

D. Other Information. 2006 marked another year of changes within MSU Extension. Dr. Steve Lovejoy joined as MSUE Associate Director for Programs; Kathy Foerster moved to become MSUE Professional Development Coordinator; and in early 2007, Dr. Larry Olsen was appointed MSUE State Leader for Agriculture, marking the first time in several years that position has been filled on more than an interim basis. The Michigan Association of Conservation Districts changed both its headquarters, moving from Cadillac to Lansing and acquiring Lorie Keene Phalen as its new executive director.

In addition to information in the tables below, the MI SARE Coordinator engaged in or supported the following during 2006:

- Outside reviewer for one SARE R&E proposal
- Consulted with S. Cocciarelli, J. Marinez, L. Dyer, D. Mutch on SARE PDP Pre-proposals and proposals
- Consulted with B. Botkin on NCR SARE FRGP grant implementation; with R. Osborne, L. Lizana, J. Sluyter on NCR SARE FRGP proposals
- MIFFS 2006 Family Farming Conference and the 2006 Northern MI Small Farm Conference included MSU Extension educators and SARE grant recipients as speakers, drawing upon previous SARE-supported experiences – in part due to coordinator input
- Participated in Community-based Food System Partners ongoing MI SARE PDP project

- Nominated an Extension educator active in sustainable agriculture for MSU Distinguished Academic Staff Award. MSU Extension administration did not move the nomination forward.
- Requested meeting about sustainable agriculture professional development with MSU Extension professional development coordinator. Meeting was postponed.
- Advised D. Hudson (Ext Ed) regarding his plans to develop a bus tour and winter meetings about organic agriculture opportunities and at least 20 other MSUE ag educators about various aspects of sustainable agriculture
- MI Food Policy Council recommendations released in October 2006 included many recommendations that would support MI agriculture moving toward greater sustainability; SARE coordinator and many others contributed to the report
- Served on MI Agritourism Promotion subcommittee and provided recommendations for policy changes
- Recommended MSU Extension educators to instruct CSA conference session on business planning; W. Wieland taught session
- Facilitated discussion of MI meat processing issues and concerns at a session sponsored by MI Food and Farming Systems and attended by farmers, state officials, academics.
- Attended 7/25 Soil Quality Field Day, which was the culmination of a SARE R&E project
- Provided Michigan Farm Radio Network interview 9/12 on SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program
- Wrote "Conduct Vegetable Research – with Help from SARE" article published in October 2006 *Vegetable Grower News*
- Was interviewed for 7/9 *Grand Rapids Press* and 7/10 *Lansing State Journal* articles on organic food
- Cooperated with M. Miller, CIAS, University of Wisconsin-Madison, on a proposal to disseminate information from upcoming bio-control publication to educators and farmers
-

Table 1. Progress Toward Expected Outcomes

Expected Outcome	Activities	Output	Outcome Measure
Be aware that farmers engaging in more sustainable practices are among MI ag leaders	Successfully nominated Howard Straub Jr, sustainable dairy farmer and MIFFS president, to be honored as an MSU Extension	Straub was one of several MSU Extension partners honored during recognition banquet attended by ~250 Extension educators. Information about him and his operation was included in program.	Straub was invited to participate in stakeholder group when new MSU Crop and Soil Sciences chair was selected.
Become aware of entrepreneurial ag models in MI	Offered to support Extension educators to participate in Entrepreneurial Ag tour as professional development	No takers	
Know where to find sustainable ag information and resources.	Organized a segment of each MSU Extension new staff orientation session (March & September 2006). Arranged a tour of MSU Student Organic CSA Farm and a local foods dinner (not paid with SARE funds) on site in one of the hoop houses. Provided information about SARE, food	~50 (25 each time) MSU Extension educators participated in the 2006 sessions.	Participants evaluated this segment 4.5 of a possible 5 points on importance. Several (~8) participants have followed up with questions about resources, information.

Expected Outcome	Activities	Output	Outcome Measure
	systems		
Know current research and issues related to grass-based animal systems and local/regional marketing	Transcribed presentations from Animals in the Food System Conference to post on web and create CD. Includes production, distribution, marketing and consumer issues.	www.mottgroup.msu.edu	Have not yet developed measurement for this impact
Know sources of sustainable ag certification and marketing advantages	Proposed and was accepted to provide MSU Extension annual conference concurrent session <i>Certifying Sustainable Agriculture Practices</i>	11 Extension educators (of the 22 who had registered for the session) visited a grass-based dairy farm that makes cheese; heard from family members why they farm together; and heard about The Food Alliance and other eco-labels	MIFFS resource person was invited by MSU Extension staff to make presentations about Food Alliance sustainability certification at two 2007 programs to date.
Know how to help farmers start/ grow local farmers markets and CSAs	Proposed and was accepted to provide posters on farmers markets and community supported agriculture at MSU Extension annual conference reception	Posters and exhibits were held in an area remote from reception refreshments and thus were very sparsely visited.	Requests received from ~15 Extension educators during 2006 for information on supporting farmers markets and CSA farms
Know how to help farmers start/ grow local farmers markets	Launched and improved farmers market web site with specific sections for market managers, market farmer/vendors, market customers	www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu	Listserv at site has grown to over 100 subscribers to date and is typically active at least 3 days per week
Know organic production and marketing approaches	Contacted MSU Extension educators offering financial support for participation in MI Organic Conference as professional development	No takers	
Share information and experience about cover crops	Contacted MI colleagues inviting them to provide input to update of <i>Managing Cover Crops Profitably</i>	All three people contacted indicated willingness to contribute to or review publication	Revised publication should reflect MI perspectives
Farmers market managers support accurate and legal product promotion and labeling	Developed <i>What farmers market managers need to know about organic agriculture</i>	Document was reviewed by MI Dept of Ag Organic Advisory Committee members and mailed to ~150 MI	Little impact in evidence to date

Expected Outcome	Activities	Output	Outcome Measure
		farmers market managers	
Know how to help farmers start CSA operations	Offered ag educators scholarship support to attend Great Lakes CSA conference as professional development	One educator expressed interest, but too late because session was filled	
Expand formal educational opportunities in sustainable agriculture	Worked as team member to develop new MSU Organic Farming Certificate Program and publicized to ag educators	Program approved. See http://www.hrt.msu.edu/OrganicFarm.htm	Program officially began January 2007 with nine students in first cohort. About half indicate that their goal is to use the background to do ag education. Moving courses on line in future will make them more available to current ag educators.

Table 2. Stakeholder/Advisory Group Membership

Member Name	Affiliation
Dale Mutch	MSU Extension – organic, cover crops
Doug Buhler	MI Ag Experiment Station – Assoc Dean
June Grabemeier	NRCE Economist
Ben Bartlett	MSU Extension -- livestock
Juan Marinez	MSU Extension – Assistant to Director
Howard Straub, Jr.	MIFFS, GLGC, MHGC, dairy grazier
Christine Lietzau	MI Dept of Ag, Ag Development
Beverly Ruesink	Organic market gardener, young farmer
Tom Cary	West MI Environmental Action Council, CRAFT
John Biernbaum	MSU Horticulture, Organic Farming Certificate Program

Table 3. Travel Scholarship Report

Educator Name	Affiliation	Funds Awarded	Attendance	Outcome
Cindy Dutcher	MI Food & Farming Systems Council member	\$250	Women in Sustainable Ag conference (conf was in 2005 but results in 2006)	Conference inspiration gave her energy to push local farmers market forward. Conference networking with attorney has helped her in poultry processing and raw milk dealings with MI Dept of Ag. Seeing ag in VT provided inspiration for possibilities in MI.
Cynthia Vagnetti	MSU grad student and independent agricultural videographer	\$250		Conference provided empowerment that infuses MSU Public Life in America course that she teaches on service learning using stories. Her essay on women in agriculture led to a Castle Fellowship and her involvement in a team developing a new MSU residential college

Educator Name	Affiliation	Funds Awarded	Attendance	Outcome
Tom Rorabaugh	MSU Extension Educator	\$650	Sheep & meat goat symposium (in 2005 but results in 2006)	Co-taught 2-hour meat goat session at MSU goat day for over 100 people; provided info to ~6 people starting out w meat goats; taught 2 sessions to 4-Hers about meat goats; conducted half day regional workshop with MSU veterinarian on meat goats for 25 farmers including several Amish
Roberta Osborne	MSU Extension Educator	\$650		Co-taught 2-hour meat goat session at MSU goat day for over 100 people; Started newsletter for meat goat producers. Taught session at MIFFS Family Farming conference. Conducted regional barn meeting. Reaching several Hispanic farm families, many low income and single women farmers. Helped one farmer open a farm-based goat supply store. Working with several commercial herds and many smaller scale operations.
Vicki Morrone	MSU Academic Specialist, Outreach	\$650	SARE National Conference	Information gained at the conference allowed her to better assist farmers to develop a SARE FRGP proposal. She also gained a broader sense of SARE's potential for MI.
Vicki Morrone		\$250	Great Lakes CSA Conference	Provided contact with beginner CSA farmers who have questions about organic production and did not realize MSU can help. Information gained will help her to more effectively frame organic vegetable and field crop production information to better address the needs of the CSA audience.
Dixie Sandborn	MSU Extension Associate Program Leader, Youth Horticulture	\$225	The Food Project Summer Workshop	She increased her involvement in MSU's Youth Farmstand project and made significant contributions to new MSU Entrepreneur/Local Food Activity Guide
Beth Clawson	MSU Extension Educator	\$100	Growing Power workshop	She reports increased work with small scale African American and Latino farmers in SW MI
Dru Montri	MI Farmers Market Assn (NGO)	\$200	IA Farmers Market EBT conference	They organized meeting of key MI players to initiate broad effort to place EBT/credit/debit terminals in farmers markets
Dan Keane	MI Farmers Market Assn	\$200		

Educator Name	Affiliation	Funds Awarded	Attendance	Outcome
Michael DiRamio	Food Systems Economic Partnership (NGO)	\$250	W.K. Kellogg Food and Society Conference	Networking at conference helped him to develop a working relationship with the Leopold Center and brought some of their approaches to MI
Lindsey Smith	University of Michigan	\$250		She submitted a proposal and helped to develop a concurrent session for the 2006 Community Food Security Conference in Vancouver based partly on conference networking
Warren Schauer	MSU Extension Educator	\$200	Voices: What will be in the fields tomorrow? Readers theatre	Voices was added as an offering for the July 2007 National Association of County Agricultural Agents meeting.
Phil Durst	MSU Extension Educator	\$200		
Christopher Reisinger	MSU Extension Educator	\$100	Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, Farm Market Expo	Made presentation on effective farmers market displays to ~50 farmers

Table 5. SARE Workshops

Workshop Focus	Location	Attendance	Date
Developing effective sustainable agriculture proposals	Higgins Lake, MI	30 MI Conservation District staff members	6/27/2006
Farmers markets: A direct marketing link to consumers. Concurrent session during Food Systems Economic Development conference	Canton, MI	27 ag & community leaders from Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, Wayne, Washtenaw counties (SE MI)	3/15/2006
Farmers markets as a tool for downtown revitalization	MI State Housing Development Authority Downtown Revitalization Conference, Kalamazoo, MI	~100 community leaders from across MI	4/5/2006

Workshop Focus	Location	Attendance	Date
Speakers Bureau sessions: Ruth Katz, Michael Rozyne, Mary Howell and Klass Martens, Fred Fleming, LaDonna Redmond, Margaret Krome	MSU, East Lansing, MI	~ 30-40 attendees per seminar. Typically about 1/3 MSU faculty, staff, educators; some agency participants; some NGO participants. Major support from outside SARE but targeted in part to expose academics and extensionists to successful community food and farming system efforts	1/11, 1/25, 2/1, 2/15, 2/22, 3/1
MSUE New staff orientations	MSU Student Organic Farm	~50 MSU Extension new staff members across programs	3/28/2006 9/56/2006
Farmers markets in urban neighborhoods	MI Affordable Housing Conference, Lansing, MI	23 community leaders. Several communities have followed up requesting help to work with or develop farmers markets	5/7/2006
Generate Great Lakes region agenda for cover crops research and education	Cover Crops Summit	State SARE coordinator facilitated ~ 40 academic and farmer representatives from six states and Canada to generate priorities for regional cover crops research	8/15-17/2006