

20th Annual



March 9, 2024

The Michigan Family Farms Conference is a forum for beginning, small-scale and culturally diverse farmers to network, learn, and build sustainable family farms.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 20th Annual Michigan Family Farms Conference! We look forward to reconnecting with you and meeting new faces. We appreciate you being here and recognize that many of you have traveled great distances to attend. It feels more important than ever that we come together for support, networking, and learning, so for that we thank you for being here.

We are living in challenging times and it is our wish that this conference helps to support and honor the resilience in all of us. We are strengthened by honoring our heritage and drawing on cultural wisdom. By celebrating diversity and lifting up our communal knowledge, we hope that you leave this conference feeling enriched, empowered, and energized.

Today, we encourage you to:

- Visit and interact with exhibitors;
- Strengthen relationships and expand networks;
- Build and share knowledge;
- Enjoy delicious and nutritious food; and
- Have a great time!

This conference is made possible with support from the planning team, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, volunteers, sponsors and exhibitors, funding from the USDA 2501 program, and of course, friends like you.

Please make sure to stop and say hello when you see us throughout the day!

Sincerely,

The MFFC 2024 Planning Team



Agenda

8:00 – 9:00	Registration, Breakfast, Network & Visit Exhibitors
9:00 – 10:05	Session 1
10:10 – 10:35	Break: Morning Snack, Network & Visit Exhibitors
10:40 – 11:10	Session 2 or 2a
11:15 – 11:45	Session 2 or 2b
11:50 – 1:20	Lunch, Network and Visit Exhibitors
1:25 – 2:55	Welcome, Awards, Performances
2:55 – 3:15	Break: Afternoon Snack, Network & Visit Exhibitors
3:20 – 3:50	Session 3 or 3a
3:55 – 4:25	Session 3 or 3b



Youth Track



8 – 9	Check-in room 4230
9 – 11:45	Morning Youth Track
11:50	Pick-up for lunch & welcome session
3:20 – 4:25	Afternoon Youth Track room 4230

Morning Youth Track Sessions:

Interactive Movement & Embodiment presented by Movement Exchange

Food Systems Interactive Activities presented by Food Corps

Make Your Own Smoothie! presented by Valley Food Hub

Afternoon Youth Track Sensory Play Activities:

Sensory Stations Workshop presented by MSU Extension and
Urban Youth Agriculture Detroit

Session 1

9:00 – 10:05

Grant Brainstorming & Collaboration

Track 1, Room 1350

Katie Brandt & Sarah Fronczak, MSU-SARE

Join this session to dream big & find partners to grow the sustainable, small-scale farms of tomorrow. We'll begin by brainstorming themes, such as 'beginning farmers' or 'cover crops'. After learning how SARE funds innovation by farmers, educators & researchers, you'll join a theme group to discuss proposal ideas. Each group will plan goals, activities, potential partners, grant type, and a budget for one idea, then share out. Some may even reconnect to submit their grant!

Produce Safety on a Tight Budget

Track 2, Room 1330

Patrick Gordon, Michigan Conservation District; Morgan Anderson, Ottawa Conservation District; Heather Borden, MSU; Joseph Smith, MDARD; & Phil Tocco, MSU

Produce Safety doesn't have to be exhausting or expensive. Join the Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety team to explore simple and cost effective produce safety solutions and learn about free workshops, resources and cost share dollars available!

Getting to Know School Markets & Selling to Them

Track 3, Room 1310

Megan McManus, CRFS; Cheyenne Liberti & Wendy Crowley, MI Dept. of Ed.; & Kelly McClelland, MSU

This day-long education opportunity is designed to give agricultural producers training and tools to build their capacity to launch or grow efforts to market to schools. Using a national curriculum with interactive sessions, the team of experienced trainers will also share insights from many years of farm to school work in Michigan.

Overview of USDA Programs

Track 4, Room 4560

Aimee Swenson & Brian Buehler, USDA

An overview of common programs for Beginning, Underserved, and Veteran farmers from Agency representatives.

Manoomin

Track 5, Room 4540

Cortney Collia & Roger LaBine

Understanding the story of wild rice in Michigan.

TBD

Track 6, Room 4520

TBD

This session To Be Determined (TBD).

Grassroots Movement Building

Track 7, Room 4510

This track offers space for grassroots community innovators and leaders to gather in response to emerging needs and issues faced by Farmers of the Global Majority (BIPOC). See Track Flyer for more detailed information. We ask that institutional partners respect this as a safe, trusted space for Global Majority Farmers and only attend if you are directly invited by the organizers.

Session 2a 10:40 – 11:10

Predictive Yields for Small-Scale Staple Crop Production in North Central U.S.

Track 1, Room 1350

Eleanor and Scott Hucker, Great Lakes Staple Seeds

Eleanor and Scott will present highlights of their first year's progress growing heritage grains and cereals and other previously underrepresented staples such as amaranth, millet, oats, etc. on small-scale plots. Staple crops are field grown, harvested, and processed on our southeast Michigan homestead.

Session 2b

11:15 – 11:45

Native Cut Flower Project

Track 1, Room 1350

Alex Cacciari, Seeley Farm

Trialing upper-Midwest native plants for their use as cut flowers and foliage for florists and design work.

Session 2

10:40 – 11:45

On-Farm Education 101: Engaging Youth & Community Members

Track 2, Room 1330

TC Collins, Willow Run Acres

Many small and beginning farmers want to engage youth and community members in gardening and farming as part of their farm plan. This workshop will discuss how to successfully engage young children and adult community members in the natural processes of gardening and farming through the medium of the seven senses.

Getting Ready & Growing for School Markets

Track 3, Room 1310

Mariel Borgman & Garrett Ziegler, MSU

This day-long education opportunity is designed to give agricultural producers training and tools to build their capacity to launch or grow efforts to market to schools.

Building Community through Indigenous Seed Saving

Track 4, Room 4560

Kaya DeerInWater, Citizen Band of Potawatomi

Growing, processing, and saving heritage heirloom seeds is the foundation to rebuilding indigenous food sovereignty and there is opportunity to build networks of reciprocity through these regional efforts. This practice has invigorated many native gardeners and farmers in the upper Midwest to start rekindling traditional practices of growing food to reclaim their physical and spiritual well being.

Agritourism: Hosting People on Your Farm

Track 5, Room 4540

Adam Ingrao, Heroes to Hives, MIFFS & Bee Wise Farms

Agritourism activities on the farm are a great way to increase sales and provide clients with a meaningful experience in an agricultural setting. In this session we will discuss the how and why to get clients on your farm and the best ways to protect you and your investment through risk management.

Cattle Production on a Smaller Scale

Track 6, Room 4520

Boyd Byelich, Beef Producer

Learn more about implementing cattle of various types into your small scale farm systems. You will get an overview of all the basics to get started and experienced producer insight into setup, handling, feed, and more.

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Session 3a 3:20 – 3:50

Water Consortium: Best Practices for Urban Farmers in Detroit

Track 1, Room 1350

Jen Kent, Sanctuary Farms

A large barrier to the sustainability of many urban farms is consistent water access. This SARE project addresses these challenges through asking Detroit farmers about their water, education workshops and info sheets and advocating for city policies to support water access for farmers.

Session 3b 3:55 – 4:25

Growing Community: Youth Connections in Community Food Systems

Track 1, Room 1350

Emily Staugaitis, Bandhu Gardens

SARE-funded summer apprenticeship with 5 Bangladeshi-American teens working with Bandhu Gardens, an urban farm in Detroit. Hear about the youths' experiences from the apprenticeship, advice for other programs looking to work with youth and reflections on their family's cultural practices as related to community food systems and sustainable agriculture.

Session 3

3:20 – 4:25

Farming with a Disability

Track 2, Room 1330

Bev Berens, Michigan AgrAbility; & Adam Ingrao, Heroes to Hives, MIFFS & Bee Wise Farms

Do you have a medical condition that compromises your ability to work? Learn about Michigan AgrAbility during this workshop and the services they provide to farmers who work through disability, medical conditions, pain, injury and more. You will be introduced to ideas that can help you continue your farming operation and thrive with assistive technology tools to make work easier. You will also learn techniques to deal with arthritis pain during this session. We will also take a look at one farm's success story with AgrAbility and how it has helped them create a safe and accessible operation specific to their needs.

Farmer Chat & School Resources Rundown

Track 3, Room 1310

Devon Wilson, Sunlight Gardens & Garrett Ziegler, MSU

See description in session 1 & 2.

Economic Feasibility of Small Farms: A Case Study in Detroit Public Schools Community District

Track 4, Room 4560

Matt Hargis, Detroit Public Schools Community District

As part of a USDA Farm to school grant, DPSCD and MSU conducted an economic feasibility study of its farming operations. This session will dissect the study and its findings with tangible takeaways for small or beginning farmers.

Farming from the Ground Up: Soil Health 101

Track 5, Room 4540

Christine Charles, MSU

Healthy soils can play a key role in a successful farming operation. How do we manage our systems with this in mind? Are there ways we can promote a healthy soil? In this session we will discuss what is meant by "soil health", the attributes of soil, and how to observe and assess the soils on your landscape. In addition, we will also discuss different soil management practices and specific considerations for a diverse operation.

Sheep & Goats for Small Farms

Track 6, Room 4520

Aimee Swenson, USDA

Get an overview of the basic needs of producing small ruminants on your farm. You will learn general information on feed requirements, breed selection, disease considerations, housing and much more. Plus plenty of handouts and resources to guide you after the session.

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Exhibitors

American BioChar Company
Crosshatch Center for Art & Ecology
Cushman Creek Supply
Heroes to Hives
Hexx Design
Kalamazoo Valley Community College Food Innovation Center
Michigan AgrAbility
MI Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)
MI Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA)
MI Farmers Union
Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA)
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS)
Michigan State University (MSU) Extension
Native Connections
State of Michigan – WIC Division – WIC Produce Connection
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE)
The Xerces Society
USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA)
Van Buren Conservation District

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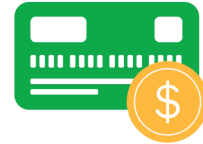
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Michiganders receive over \$235 million dollars in SNAP benefits¹ each month, which they can spend on eligible food items. MIFMA can help connect farmers and markets with FREE equipment to process SNAP Bridge Card transactions!



MIFMA can support you every step of the way through the application process. For more information and to get started, contact us at FoodAccess@MIFMA.org with the subject line "No-Cost Wireless Equipment" or call 517-432-3381.

¹ Total distributed to 1.3 million Michigan residents as of April 2023



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THAT BELIEVES STRONG FAMILY AGRICULTURE IS THE
BASIS FOR THRIVING COMMUNITIES.**

Learn more and join one of our upcoming events at
www.michiganfarmersunion.org

Sponsorships




Proud sponsor of the 2024
Michigan Family Farms
Conference and our state's farmers

From farmers markets, farm to school, and food safety to sustainable farming practices, marketing tips, and more, MDARD serves as a resource for Michigan's family farms.
[Grant opportunities](#) | 800-292-3939 | www.michigan.gov/mdard

MSU CRFS engages the people of Michigan and the world in developing regionally integrated, socially just, and sustainable food systems. We focus on supporting equitable food and farm business development through providing clear funding opportunities, building connections to new market channels, and other business support.



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We value your feedback! Please complete the conference survey and session surveys at the links below. Your input plays a critical role in planning each year's conference.



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