



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

The Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station generates knowledge through strategic research to enhance agriculture, natural resources and families and communities in Michigan.

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MSU is an affirmative-action,
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Strengthening Michigan's Economy:

Roles for the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and MSU Extension

Michigan is a rapidly changing state with evolving needs, valuable assets and a diverse population. These realities produce challenges, new opportunities and complex issues for individuals, families and communities. Michigan State University (MSU), the state's land-grant institution, is charged with generating research-based knowledge and educational programs people can access to make informed decisions to improve their lives. To accomplish this critically important mission, both MSU Extension (MSUE) and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) are constantly evaluating and updating their focus areas to best meet the ever-changing needs of Michigan's people, industries and communities. As the state's priorities change, research and educational programs, research agendas and external relationships also must change.

Gathering Public Input

MSU Extension and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station must periodically review their direction to assure that research and educational programs are relevant and responsive to citizens' needs. These two organizations are working together to gather public input on the issues of greatest concern to Michigan citizens. This process will ensure that relevant, research-based educational programming is available to address local issues. Both organizations will use the input they receive to guide state-level decisions for research priorities and program support. This process serves MAES and MSUE programs in a number of ways. Elected decision makers and funders are interested in assurance that our programs are aligned with citizen priorities. MSUE and the MAES are required to submit a federal plan of work to the USDA, our federal partner, regarding our strategic goals and objectives, and this plan must be grounded in a public input process.

Multiple Levels of Stakeholder Input

The Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and MSU Extension are asking citizens for input on future direction during the winter of 2005-06:

- **Statewide telephone surveys (SOSS) and citizen focus groups** will be used to ask: *what are the major issues and opportunities in Michigan?*
- **A Web-based survey will ask:** *what do you see as the role for MSUE and MAES related to key issues and opportunities?*
- **Community based discussions in all Michigan counties, involving the local MSUE councils and MAES advisory committees** to learn: *what are the issues and opportunities that you think should be addressed by Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station research and MSU Extension educational programs?*
- **Area of Expertise (AoE) Teams will conduct subject-specific focus groups** comprising a variety of stakeholders. Community groups, commodity and producer groups and other state and local partners will be asked: *what are the specific issues and opportunities in your field of interest that should be addressed by MSU Extension's educational programs and Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station research?*
- **The MAES/MSUE State Council** will respond to the question: *Looking at the results of the SOSS survey, what are the implications for MSUE educational programming and MAES research in the future?*

Multiple Methods for Generating MSU Faculty and Staff Input

MSU Extension and Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station faculty and staff members will play active roles in providing input for planning and setting future direction for the two organizations.

- **AoE co-chairs** representing 29 teams were asked to identify emerging issues and opportunities in each of Extension's major focus areas. Each team will conduct stakeholder/constituent input sessions and reflect the results in plans of work.
- **Faculty focus groups**, with representatives from all MSU colleges and units, will be used to learn faculty perceptions on emerging Michigan issues and opportunities and identify ways that MSU science might be used to address those issues and opportunities.
- **MSU faculty and MSUE/MAES staff surveys** will be used to develop a better understanding of MSU's ability to respond to the issues and opportunities identified in the faculty focus groups.
- **County teams, including MAES field station managers**, will synthesize and submit the local priorities identified by local MSUE councils and MAES advisory committees.
- **AoE teams** will synthesize and prioritize content-specific program and research needs generated from input of their advisory bodies.
- **Regional and campus meetings** in late spring of 2006 will provide an opportunity for Extension council members, faculty and staff members to examine the identified priorities and discuss possible strategies for addressing the issues and opportunities.

Support for Collecting Input

A Web site (www.msue.msu.edu/issueid/) will feature suggestions and resource links to assist AoE teams, county staff and faculty members with the different aspects of this issues identification process.

Please contact any member of the resource team for support and assistance:

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Results for Michigan's Future

Your involvement is important in helping the MAES and MSUE define research and educational priorities for the future. These priorities will shape local programming and will be the basis of a statewide, cohesive plan that uses the university's research capacity and knowledge base. The plan is expected to be released in spring 2006, and will generate specific research efforts and program direction for MSU faculty and staff members as they address the priority needs of people across Michigan.

Timeline

