

MSU to focus on rural development

Michigan State University (MSU) is slated to be the focus of rural development research and education for the Midwest beginning July 1. The university recently won a competitive grant of nearly \$2 million that will make it the host of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) for the next five years.

The NCRCRD is one of four regional centers charged with strengthening the ability of the land-grant university system and its partners to help build rural community capacity, create vibrant and sustainable economies, and cultivate inclusive gov-

ernance to enhance regional well-being. MSU Extension, the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) will jointly administer the center, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

"Because 59 of Michigan's 83 counties are considered rural, it is only natural that we are dedicated to helping rural communities thrive," said Frank Fear, senior associate dean of the MSU CANR. "This opportunity allows our faculty and staff

members to work with neighboring states to foster research and outreach efforts throughout the North Central Region."

The USDA North Central Region consists of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Extension organizations, including MSU Extension, serve as the outreach arm that transfers research from universities to communities where information can be successfully implemented to trigger economic development.

"Applying education to economic development is our driving force," said Tom Coon, director of MSU Extension.

"We look forward to fostering multistate collaborations that can address needs of rural communities in Michigan and across the Midwest."

Scott Loveridge, MSU Extension state leader for community and economic development, will serve as the center's transitional director. He will chair a nationwide search to find a permanent director for the NCRCRD.

"The center was crucial in helping me launch my research program at the beginning of my career," Loveridge said. "I plan to help the center continue to play that role as we establish it here at MSU and seek a full-time director."

Crops

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tions lead to over-applications. Nitrogen costs are so high, farmers can't afford extra N, so we're trying to find the rate that's most economical. At this point, we think most farmers can cut N rates by 20 to 40 pounds-per-acre in corn."

TARE team members from MSU include Pratt in Tuscola County, Emily Sneller in Saginaw County, Bob Battle in Huron County, Phil Kaatz in Lapeer County and Martin Nagelkirk in Sanilac county. Each specializes in a different commodity.

At the end of each year, the research done in all eight Thumb counties - duplicated from year to year at multiple locations - is presented in a TARE booklet, and presented at December meetings in various locations.

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