



## Meet the NW Michigan Agriculture Business Team



*(L-R : Tom Coon-MSU Extension, Susan Cocciarelli – NW Ag and Food System Sector Alliance, Elaine Wood – NWMCOG, Wendy Wieland – MSU Extension/Product Center, Annie Shetler – SBTDC, Brenda Rau – MSU Product Center, Mary Rogers – MI-SBTDC)*

Farmers and other agriculture related businesses can access a variety of assistance programs through the new **Northwest Michigan Regional Agriculture Business Services Partnership**. The partnership brings together the services of an MSU Extension agriculture innovation counselor, a MI-SBTDC agriculture business counselor, and the Northwest Michigan Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance to enhance services to Ag related businesses such as product development, marketing, business plans, financing, education and training, and farm production and distribution.

Spearheaded by the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, the Regional Agriculture Business Services Partnership brought six different organizations together to leverage resources. Included in the effort are the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG), Michigan State University Extension, MSU Product Center, and the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC). The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) provided leadership to form this partnership and identify funding sources. Funding for the partnership is being provided by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, MSU Extension and the NW MI Council of Governments.

"This partnership continues MSU Extension's proud history of supporting Michigan's agriculture industry by helping entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value products in the agriculture, natural resources and bio-economy sectors," said Patrick Cudney, MSU Extension District Coordinator and NLEA Board member.

"We're thrilled with this new effort," states Andy Hayes, NLEA President. "In typical NW Michigan fashion, several organizations combined resources to offer much better services with a far broader reach than any individual organization could have provided on their own."

For more information about the Ag Team and services for your situation, contact any member of the team: Wendy Wieland, Innovation Counselor, MSU Extension, 231-582-6482, [wieland5@msu.edu](mailto:wieland5@msu.edu); Annie Shetler, Ag Business Counselor, MI-SBTDC, 1-888-774-7988, [annieshetler@nwm.cog.mi.us](mailto:annieshetler@nwm.cog.mi.us); Susan Cocciarelli, Coordinator of the Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance, NWMCOG, 231-929-5096, [susancocciarelli@nwm.cog.mi.us](mailto:susancocciarelli@nwm.cog.mi.us).

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