December 2012

Dear County Commissioners and Associated Friends of MU Extension:

At MU Extension, we know that citizens want their taxpayer-supported institutions to be responsive to their needs. Our distinct land-grant mission is to provide relevant, reliable and responsive education that improves Missourians’ lives, communities and the economy. We fulfill that mission by providing access to many research-based resources of the University of Missouri, in partnership with local and statewide organizations and groups.

Funded through the support of federal, state and county government; grants and contracts; fees for services; and private gifts, MU Extension leverages every dollar received to create expanded educational opportunities. Every dollar appropriated from county government is leveraged with $6 to create a significant return on investment.

MU Extension creates value for citizens – including those who do not participate directly in its programs. For example:

The MU Extension Fire and Rescue Training Institute teaches volunteer and career firefighters how to handle or mitigate fires and disasters, resulting in safer firefighters, citizens and communities. In FY2012, MU FRTI trained 17,096 fire and emergency service personnel through 217,000 instructional hours of training. Enrollees were from all of Missouri’s 114 counties.

This summer’s severe drought put MU Extension faculty in an active leadership role in helping Missourians deal with the crisis. MU Extension developed educational materials and programs and provided technical assistance for homeowners, businesses and the agricultural community. Social media, including Facebook, YouTube and websites, were used to inform citizens on such topics as animal nutrition, including nitrate poisoning; heat-related disabilities; government programs; wildfires; and more. Extension faculty also worked with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to implement drought cost-share practices, which allowed more than 11,000 landowners to apply for state assistance to access adequate water supplies for livestock and crop production.

These are just two examples of MU Extension’s public value impact. I’m sure you will find many other examples in your local community. I want to thank you for your support of MU Extension as a critical team player in your locale. Your ideas for improving our partnership are always welcome.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Ouart
Vice Provost and Director
The Drought of 2012 sent many producers to contact Extension Specialists to test forage for toxic nitrate levels and to discuss alternative water and feed sources, utilizing damaged crops for feed, testing feed quality and fall pasture planting options. Many were also exploring how this affected lease and rental agreements.

**Beef Cattle Genetic Improvement Program** This program focuses on advancing genetic merit of beef cattle related to productivity and profitability. Green Springs Bull Test Station near Nevada is a leader in the field of selection and development of bulls. They hold two bull sales annually and provide individual feed efficiency numbers and performance data for each bull evaluated. The top bulls sell bi-annually at auction.

**Commercial Fruit & Vegetable Growers** continue to increase production with over 300 acres in the area. Crops grown include tomatoes, peppers, melons, squash and apples. Many vegetables are grown in hoophouses to take advantage of the early market. Produce is wholesaled as well as sold at farmers markets, roadside stands and on-farm stands. Some is also sold directly to restaurants. Sixty Vernon County growers learned about pest and production updates and educational opportunities via mailings and e-mails.

**Missouri Show Me Quality Assurance** Every 4-H and FFA member exhibiting animals at the Vernon County Youth Fair has been trained through the Show Me Quality Assurance program. The focus is to help youth develop a familiarity and knowledge of practices ensuring the wholesomeness of their meat project’s end product. A safer food supply is a goal of the program.

Forty area cattlemen improved their livestock and forage production skills at the **Cattle and Forage Meeting** in El Dorado Springs. Topics included bull health, annual forages, weed control and cattle management.

**Agriculture Resource Center** Over 3,000 citizens received information via phone, internet, office visits, farm visits or seminar participants. The Vernon County Center serves as a resource for home and landowners for soil tests, plant disease I.D., plant and insects I.D., rental agreements, and forage testing. There were 87 field crop or forage soil tests and 27 for horticulture tests. Ongoing consultations are provided to producers covering the primary topics of crops, forage selection, pasture weed control and management and livestock health and nutrition. The quarterly Ag Newsline informs nearly 450 producers about more efficient production practices, thus increasing their income.

**Private Pesticide Applicator Training** Forty-one ag producers learned safe methods of pesticide application, resulting in reduced environmental and personal hazards. This training provides them a private applicator license to purchase restricted-use pesticides.

**Grazing Schools** are held throughout Missouri. Many local beef producers improve their forage management knowledge and abilities as they attend these conferences. **Forage Discussion Groups** guided by Extension specialists, held monthly pasture walks and other forage management tours. This more intense management of their production resulted in higher carrying capacities, more forage being utilized and less winter feed being required. This improves the local economy and encourages young producers to enter the beef industry.

A **Cover Crops Field Tour** allowed 29 producers to view mixes planted for soil improvement and forage production.

**Home Gardeners** improved their horticultural skills at several **Lunch & Learns** and other classes. Topics included lawn care, drought tolerant plants, container gardening, new plants for 2012, fencing for wildlife prevention and flower arranging.
McGennis Youth Center is a 160 acre farm donated by Mary A. McGennis to be used as a recreational facility for the area. It is located in northwest Vernon County and its board is appointed by area Extension Councils. It includes a 4.7 acre swimming and fishing lake with a sand beach, barn with meeting room and kitchen, historic one-room school, restrooms and rustic camper cabins. The barn is the backdrop for an outdoor play every summer. There are two large shelters with barbeque pits and several smaller picnic areas. The Center also boasts a new playground area, a restored chapel and an old school house. Their annual barbecue and auction was held in September and featured horse-drawn hay rides and children’s games. The Center once again had a fundraiser food booth at the Rich Hill 4th of July Celebration.

Holiday Open House was attended by over 380 community members. This yearly event, held the first Friday in December, provides an opportunity for the extension faculty to visit with their government officials and clients from throughout the community. Attendees also learned how to put together an emergency kit, start a small business, control lawn weeds, discover origins of plants, improve nutrition and find out about Extension programs such as 4-H.

United Community Fund Recipient The Vernon County Extension is a local United Way Community Fund agency. United Way allocated $3,500 in 2012 for youth extension programs. As a participating agency, we participated in their Oktoberfest fundraiser by holding a kids’ games booth.

Small Business Development In Vernon County, during 2012, business development program specialist, Kathy Macomber and other specialists with MU Extension, Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers (MO SBTDC), Missouri Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (MO PTAC), Missouri Environmental Program, Missouri Career Options Project, and the Missouri Market Development program served 23 people and their companies with business start-up and management counseling, training, and other assistance. In addition, entrepreneurs and business owners in Vernon County reported the following economic impact and activity as a result of the services provided by the MU Extension Business Development Program: five new jobs, sales increases of $205,000, $35,000 in loans and investments in business, $35,000 in acquired assets, nine clients/companies receiving business counseling, fourteen business training attendees and conference participants.

Coalition and Networking Extension faculty serve in a variety of leadership capacities with various coalitions and organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Youth Task Force throughout the county. Various civic groups learned about topics such as county demographics and the importance of strong youth programs to the county from Extension speakers.

Master Gardeners helped home gardeners with vegetable and landscaping questions. Fifteen volunteers in the Four Seasons master gardeners group spent nearly 400 hours doing volunteer and educational activities. They had 855 contacts and worked on projects that include the historic herb garden at the Bushwhacker Jail, veterans memorial, flower beds at Walker City Park, Vernon County Fairgrounds and Nevada Golf Course and youth gardening at the middle school.
The Character Critters  The Character Critters program teaches young children the six key elements of character development—Caring, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Citizenship, and Respect. The program was designed to increase young children’s understanding of character issues, increase parent’s understanding of character issues, and increase parent’s involvement in developing their children’s character. In 2012 the "Critter Lady," Saralee Jamieson, visited about 100 children in Nevada Head Start.

Who Gets Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate walked fourteen family members through the process of passing on personal possessions.

Home Food Preservation  In June and July, a series of five lessons that included: Pressure Canning Low Acid Foods, Salsa, Jams and Jellies, In a Pickle, and Freezing and Dehydrating Food were offered. In these hands-on classes, participants rolled up their sleeves and prepared a home-canned product during each class. 90% of participants stated that before the class, their knowledge of the topic was some, a little or none. 80% of participants stated that at the end of the class, their knowledge, skills or understanding was a lot or a great deal.

Stay Strong Stay Healthy  In partnership with On My Own, a 10-week session of Stay Strong Stay Healthy was held August 29-November 7. The program’s goal is to improve health and quality of life. Sessions meet one hour per week and include warm-up exercises, simple strengthening exercises, and cool-down stretches. Participants are instructed to do the exercises on their own one other time during the week. 92% of participants feel their health is better because of the program and 85% feel physically stronger.

Cooking Matters is a six session course that combines hands-on cooking experience with nutrition education. Participants prepare and sample 2 recipes in each class and receive ingredients for one recipe to make at home after each class. Participants learn how to eat healthfully on a budget. In partnership with On My Own, a six-week session of Cooking Matters was held in Clinton with a total of 14 graduates. Seventy percent of the participants increased fruit and vegetable consumption during the class.

Healthy Nevada  On October 20, University of Missouri Extension participated in the kickoff day for Healthy Nevada with more than 300 participants. The Healthy Nevada project, initiated by the Cerner Corporation and the City of Nevada, seeks to enhance the health of individuals and empower health professionals, while reducing the overall amount spent on health and care. The goal of this multi-year initiative is to improve Vernon County’s current ranking in health issues such as heart disease, juvenile diabetes, obesity and other health risks from the lowest one-third in Missouri.

Food and Nutrition Programs  University of Missouri Extension Family Nutrition Education Programs (FNEP) reaches low-income participants with nutrition education in Vernon County. FNEP provides information on nutrition, food safety, and physical activity for lifelong health and fitness. Nutrition education for youths provides information in kid-friendly terms and lessons with hands-on activities. During 2012, over 2,878 youth participants were served through schools, community groups and agencies. A few schools and organizations that participated were Bryan and Benton Elementary, Northeast Vernon County, Bronaugh and Sheldon Elementary and High School, Nevada Middle School, Nevada Pre-School, Head Start and Nevada Library. Healthily Ever After and Healthy You Review educational display was held at the Northeast Vernon County Elementary School. Adult agencies that participated included the Vernon County Health Department the Neal Center and various churches within the county. Statewide, 90% of the teachers surveyed noted that their students were more aware of their nutritional needs and 65% were making healthier meal or snack choices. Adults that participated statewide are using Nutrition Facts Panels to make healthier food choices.

Paula Gray, FNEP Program Assistant, gives out food samples and recipes.
4-H Clubs  Through club involvement youth learn valuable life skills such as: goal setting, problem solving, record keeping, teamwork, and character. Three hundred and fifty-four members comprise 17 community-based clubs. County-wide participation grew 2% over last year’s involvement.

4-H Leadership Development. One hundred and seventy six volunteer leaders assisted members in project and club work. One hundred members finished the Missouri Report Form which highlights leadership, community service and project work. Seven delegates attended the State 4-H Congress. Eight participated at Teen Conference. One youth was selected to attend National 4-H Congress.

4-H Community Service  Over 76 community service projects were completed by 4-H clubs.

4-H Activities  4-H members and their families participated in club meetings, tours, lock-in, achievement day, the youth fair, numerous judging contests and regional and state events.

4-H Project Work  Swine, shooting sports, photography, beef, and arts and crafts continue to be highly desirable projects. Also, the meat goat, poultry and rabbit projects continues to grow in number of participants. County youth had 14,148 hours of learning and adults gave 15,580 hours leadership and guidance.

At 4-H Chicken BBQ nine hundred chicken halves and three hundred steaks were prepared by 4-H families and volunteers to raise over $5,000 for 4-H programming such as educational training and awards.

4-H Youth Excelling  The Vernon County Livestock Judging team attended state competition and continued on to the national level. We had 28 youth participate at the state shooting sport competitions. One competed at the national level. Youth had 2,567 exhibits at the Vernon County Youth Fair, 176 projects were selected to show at the State Fair and 91 at the Ozark Empire Fair.

McGennis Youth Camp  This activity is for youth 8-11 years old and provides camping for children who might otherwise not be able to participate. Twenty young people and fifteen youth and adult volunteers participated as counselors or presenters with over $2,500 in donations from area sponsors.

4-H Interstate Exchange  Nine youth traveled to Kentucky for a week, they learned about local agriculture and industry. They visited Churchill downs and a historic horse farm. This event was largely an unplugged event allowing youth to gain social and leadership skills.
A unique partnership exists between University of Missouri Extension and local government. In Vernon County, we’re proud of the many ways our partnerships with local government, organizations and coalitions have worked to help people help themselves.

This past year University of Missouri Extension had more than 25,000 educational contacts with the citizens of Vernon County. Citizens benefited from one-on-one assistance, seminars, services and research-based publications. This annual report highlights just a few of the many programs that made a difference in 2012.

While extension centers draw from expertise on the four campuses, our extension faculty members are ingrained in local communities. Through input from University of Missouri Extension Council of Vernon County, extension faculty respond to local priorities with programs to enhance economic viability; build strong individuals, families and communities; and create and sustain healthy environments.

We look forward to a continued presence in Vernon County, providing experts to link citizens with local, state and federal resources and offering research-based knowledge to help people solve the everyday problems of family and business.