



Extension

University of Missouri

The Year in Review - 2024 Audrain County

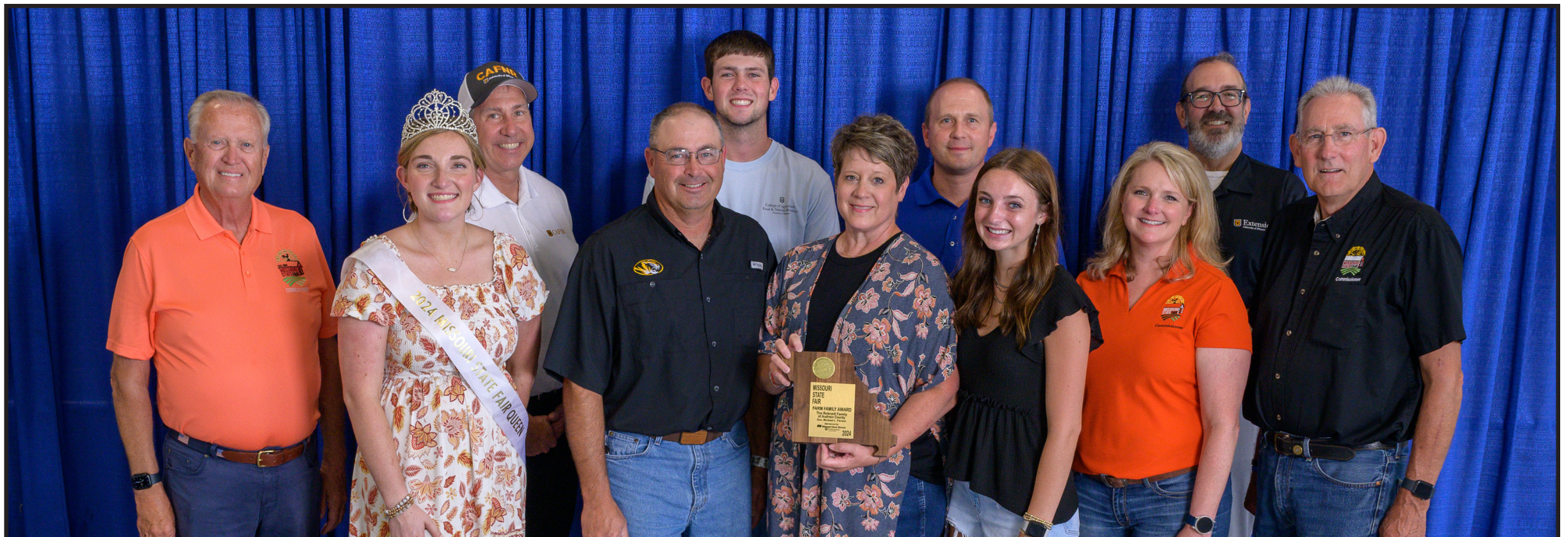
Audrain State Fair Farm Family

Jon and Dana Robnett and family of Laddonia were among the families honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 12 at the Missouri State Fair. The Robnett family was selected as the Audrain County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Audrain County and the local Farm Bureau. The family includes children Lauryn, Tucker, and Kate Robnett. Each year, the fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state that are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local outreach and extension programs such as 4-H or FFA.

The annual event is sponsored by five partner agencies: the Missouri Farm Bureau; the Missouri Department of Agriculture; the Missouri State Fair Commissioners; the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and MU Extension.

The event showcases the impact that Missouri farm families have on the economy and heritage of the state, said Missouri State Fair Director Jason Moore. "These families are involved in agriculture activities in their communities and are active participants in local outreach and extension. As the premier showcase for Missouri agriculture, the Missouri State Fair is most certainly the appropriate place to celebrate these families."

The Robnett family operates a 4900 acre grain and beef cow operation. The Robnett's farm with Jon's father Ken, brother Jay and nephew Jacob. Jon is a 4th generation farmer. Jon and wife Dana have three children Lauryn, Tucker and Kate. Lauryn graduated from MU in 2024 with a degree in agribusiness and was the CAFNR outstanding senior. She is now a territory manager for Corteva in Liberty, MO. Tucker is a sophomore at MU majoring in agribusiness. Kate is a high school senior at Community R-VI. The Robnett's have been very involved with Merry Martins 4-H Club and Audrain County R-VI FFA. The Robnett's were the recipients of the Dale H. Schnarre Rural Citizen Award in 2024. The Robnett's are members of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsburg.



Front Row - Jerald Andrews, Missouri State Commissioner, Claire Walker, Missouri State Fair Queen, Jon Robnett, Dana Robnett, Kate Robnett, Christine Chinn, Director, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Kevin Roberts, Chairman, Missouri State Fair Commissioner.

Back Row - Chris Daubert, MU Vice Chancellor & Dean, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Tucker Robnett, Garrett Hawkins, President, Missouri Farm Bureau, and Chad Higgins, Vice Chancellor for MU Extension & Chief Engagement Officer, UM System.

For More Information on University of Missouri Extension Call 581-3231

2024 Audrain County Extension in Review

University of Missouri Extension in Audrain County continued to have a year of change while still offering a variety of in-person and on-line programs, activities, and services to the citizens of Audrain County this past year. The programs provided education in the areas of agriculture, 4-H and youth, nutrition, and variety of other educational opportunities. University of Missouri Extension is the University of Missouri's classroom in communities across the state.

In January, Olivia Brune was hired as the Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development, with her office being in the Audrain Extension Center. In June, Kayla Scobee joined the Audrain Extension team as the Nutrition Program Associate. Kayla began teaching nutrition programs in area el-

ementary schools in the fall. The administrative assistant completed her second year and has taken on additional responsibilities to keep the office operating efficiently and is extremely helpful to the clients and staff. Also in the Audrain Extension office is Mary Sobba, Field Specialist in Ag Business & Policy who is teaching classes and working with clients throughout the entire northeast region due to vacancies and a few counties in the east central region. In December Olivia Brune left the office for another position.

Extension was created by federal land-grant legislation and guided by state statutes. University of Missouri Extension connects the citizens of Audrain County to research-based education to improve the county's economy and quality of life. University of

Missouri Extension prides itself in being relevant, reliable and responsive to the citizens of Audrain County.

The support from stakeholders is vital to Extension. A huge and sincere thank you to the Audrain County Commission for its steadfast support of the Audrain County Extension office. The financial support from the county is necessary to keep the office doors open and provide educational programming to the citizens of Audrain County.

The Audrain County Extension Council provides input and recommendations for what is best for the community in the area of educational programming and the expenditure of Extension funds. This partnership promotes identifying needs and builds trust with the community. As a result, the citizens of Aud-

rain County benefit from this wise use of public and private resources.

Extension is frequently referred to as Cooperative Extension. The term Cooperative Extension comes from the fact that Extension is made of up of three components – federal, state and local. The educational resources used in Extension teaching and funding come from federal, state and local (county) sources.

Investing in University of Missouri Extension programs benefits not only the direct participants, but local communities and society as a whole. County, state and federal dollars invested in MU Extension enables local communities' access to public services they would not have otherwise. MU Extension programs, using unbiased research-based information, focus on prevent-

ing problems, which is much less expensive to the citizens of Audrain County than trying to fix problems.

Extension on the national level is the educational branch with the U.S. Department of Agriculture which cooperates with land grant universities across the nation to develop educational programs needed within the states. The county extension offices are the local link between the four University of Missouri campuses and Lincoln University and the people throughout the state. University of Missouri Extension's land grant mission is to "improve lives, communities and economies by producing relevant, reliable and responsive educational strategies that enhance access to the resources and research of the University of Missouri".

County extension councils

consist of elected and appointed citizens who plan and oversee local extension activities. The 2024 Council Members are listed on the back page. It is through their dedication and devotion to Audrain County that helps Audrain County maintain a high quality of life for our residents.

The Audrain office staff works very hard to provide and support programs for the residents of Audrain County. With dedicated staff, council members and many volunteers; valuable programs are available to all to Audrain County residents. The Audrain University of Missouri Extension Center is located in the Audrain County Courthouse, Room 304. The office is open Mon.-Fri., from 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Soils and Crops Conference

The 98th annual Audrain Soils & Crops Conference was held January 29, 2024 at the Hart Career Center in Mexico.

The conference consisted of a variety of concurrent sessions to offer a selection of choices. The sessions included: Disease, disease and more disease, Biological nitrogen management systems, Continuation of grazing milo a year later, The hottest topics in weed management in 2024 and beyond, USDA

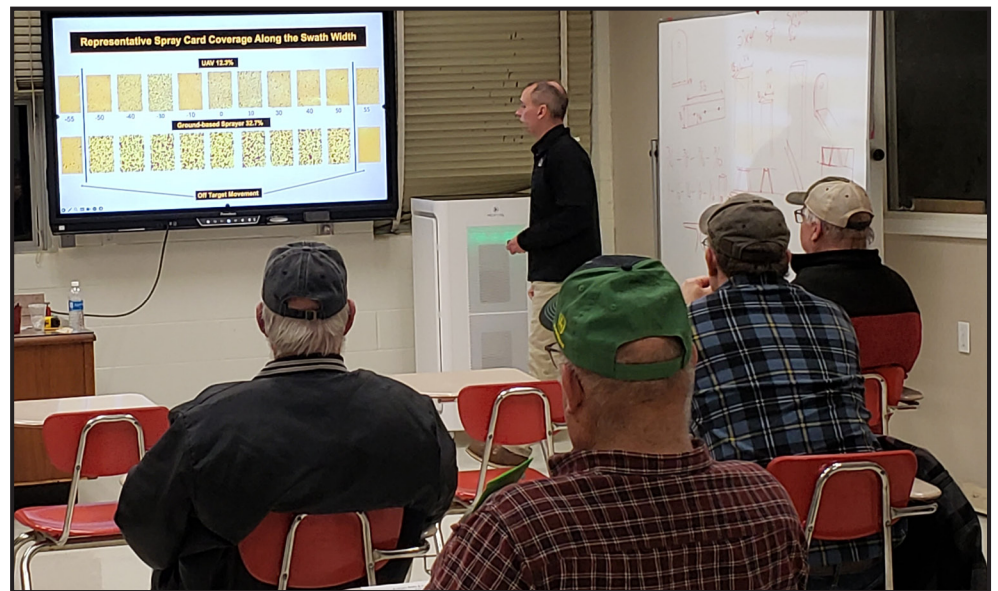
Updates, Unique ways to use phone apps in agriculture, New releases for farmers from MU ag business, Native pollinators, and Cooking nutritiously for busy families.

Participants were asked to provide feedback through a short survey. The comments from the surveys indicated the sessions were helpful and especially the information about fungicides and grazing milo. One of the participants planned to take the data and share with their 4-H mem-

bers.

Sponsors for the program included Audrain County Extension Council, Mexico Young Farmers and Audrain County Farm Bureau.

Instructors included state and regional MU extension specialists, USDA personnel, Mexico Young Farmers Association, area farmers, and Audrain County Master Gardeners. Fifty-six people from six counties attended the conference.



Extension
University of Missouri

Family Nutrition Education Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,145,237 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 74,864 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and eligible citizens of Missouri who learned about being active and healthy eating on a budget. This year we had 1,164,143 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline. 8,861 direct and indirect contacts were made in Audrain County.

Participants in SNAP-Ed learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical activity, and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan.

This vital programming effort also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

Kayla Scobee and Alli Freyer are the Nutrition Program Associates serving Audrain County

Programming Partners Schools

Hawthorne Elementary

Mexico Head Start
Community RVI Head Start
Agencies
The Help Center
Mexico Sr. Center

Success Stories

From Kayla
I taught Show Me Nutrition 5th grade curriculum for the first time to 5th grade students at Hawthorne Elementary.

• Show Me Nutrition 5th grade at Hawthorne Elementary was my first ever program that I did independently. When I was speaking with the teachers about starting this program, they had some concerns about what students were bringing to eat during the day so they thought this program would be beneficial. I had a class on Tuesday with Mrs. Medina, and a class on Thursday with Ms. Willis, with a total of six lessons per class. In Mrs. Medina's class, from the start of the class, there were a couple students that did not seem too intrigued with what I was talking about. As the weeks went on, this one in particular student began to become more engaged, started to answer questions during the lessons and take part in the activities. On my last day with Mrs. Medinas' class, that one student said "can we all give you a group hug before you leave?" And before I know it, all the students are swarming me and thanking me for coming in to teach them, helping them learn how to make better choices for themselves.

On my last class with Ms. Willis' class, the students did the same thing, they wanted to give me a group hug and thanked me for coming in to teach them these important things. As I was getting ready to leave Ms. Willis' class, the teacher came over to me and handed me a card. The teacher then thanked me herself and stated that she believed the class was beneficial for the students, especially the students they had a higher concern about before the lessons started. When I got back to my office, I opened the card and it was a thank you card signed by all the students and teacher from my Thursday class.

From Alli Freyer

The Help Center in Mexico Mo allows participants to come once per month and shop at the food pantry

• I did a food tasting sample at a food pantry in Mexico Mo, where I made a crockpot Split Pea Soup. I had 48 people try it, there was one family that had never tried split peas before. After tasting the sample, and liking the flavor, I also explained how nutritious split peas are with being high in fiber and protein. The family came up to me before they left the pantry and had grabbed a couple bags of split peas and wanted the recipe for the soup so they could make it at home. They had never tried this vegetable and because of the tasting, they chose to make a point to grab this ingredient and recreate the recipe at home!



Kayla Scobee



Alli Freyer

EFNEP Public Value Statement 2024

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,624,777 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 559 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 2,068 family members. Additionally, 2,864 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes. 4-H SNAC programs

are provided by Youth Program Associates.

54 of these youth and adult participants reside in Sullivan County.

Participants in EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, trying new foods, increasing their physical activity, and making healthier food

choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan. This vital programming effort also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

Nutrition Education Offered in Audrain County

Tai Chi for Arthritis

Two classes consisting of 32 sessions with a total of 336 contacts were offered at the Eastern

Family YMCA in Vandalia. Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention (TCAFP) is an evidence based exercise program recommended by the CDC to benefit overall well-being. It is especially beneficial for those with joint pain, mobility limitations, at risk of falling, and for those who wish to improve their physical and mental health. This picture was taken during one of the sessions during the course. One female participant stated "This has helped my breathing and balance so much. I love this class."

Multiple sessions Health Education Presentations

The Strength in Numbers program is designed to improve the health of an entire community. Presentations were given monthly to 8-14 participants from March to October at the

Mexico TOPs group. Each presentation aimed to raise awareness about individual health needs and ways to improve overall health in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and chronic disease. In any given group, there will be participants in each of the five stages of behavior change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance.

Community Garden Initiative

MU Extension is leading the way with community gardening

by engaging the community in healthy eating and physical activity while focusing on community activities such as nutrition education, food distribution, and even taste tests. Additionally, research shows community gardens increase socialization and cooperation among neighbors within com-

munities. Eastern Missouri Family YMCA in Vandalia, MO received grant funding from the partnership of the University of Missouri Extension and Missouri Department of Social Services through funding from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The funding was given to support the continued gardening project. Equipment received was gardening tools, weed mat, raised beds, and watering hoses.

In 2024, the vegetables planted in the community site were Potatoes; Onions; Cherry Tomato Plants; Regular Tomato Plants; Pepper Plants; Radishes; Spinach; Lettuce; Beets; Turnips. They estimate the garden has 1,200 contacts and 15 volunteers attending the various needs of the garden.



Stay Strong,
Stay Healthy



2024 Audrain County 4-

MU Extension 4-H Youth Development

A community of 269 youth building life skills, contributing to their community, and becoming college and career ready.

6 in every 100 Audrain County youth under the age of eighteen participated in a MU Extension 4-H Youth Development program in 2024.

4-H Youth Development programs are guided by the 4-H Thriving Model, which is a framework to illustrate the connection between high quality 4-H programs and indicators of youth thriving with developmental outcomes which ultimately leads to the long-term outcomes of youth who experience academic or vocational success, are civically engaged, are employable and economically stable, and experience happiness and wellbeing.

4-H Members

4-H programs are also grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects like science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement in a positive environment, youth receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Youth have the opportunity to concentrate on one focus area, or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience. Audrain County served youth through 6 community clubs offering long-term educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision-making, public speaking, and working with others.

- There were 183 youth reached through community clubs in Audrain County during the 2023-2024 4-H Year.
- Over 156 4-H members were engaged in science related

projects and experiences.

- Collectively youth participated in 1,647 hours of community club work in Audrain County.

- Over 514 hours of community service projects were completed by 4-H members and volunteers during the 2023-2024 4-H Year.

4-H members have demonstrated learning through the following activities:

- 6 members participated in the Northeast Region Energizer held in the spring of 2024 in Palmyra and 2 members and attended the Northeast Region 4-H Round Up held in Macon in the fall.

- 1,032 exhibits at the 2024 Audrain County Youth Fair from 287 4-H and FFA members, who are also supported through youth programming.

- Audrain County youth exhibited over 41 exhibits in the 4-H Building and at the Missouri State Fair. 1 member received Best of Show for their project.

- 5 members participated in the State 4-H Teen Conference, which offered youth a fantastic opportunity to experience being developing leaders in 4-H. This event provides a safe and enjoyable campus experience where youth can enhance their skills and forge new friendships.

- Audrain County was represented at State 4-H Congress by 3 delegates. Delegates attended workshops covering diverse areas from science to leadership development that were complemented by experiences at the MU Student Center, social activities, and inspirational speakers. State Congress plays a vital role in helping the teens develop essential life skills, exploring potential career paths, nurtur-

ing leadership abilities, and fostering new friendships with peers from across the state.

- 6 youth from Audrain County participated in skill development contests on the State level including State Meats Contest, State Livestock Judging, State Fashion Revue, State Poultry Day and State Public Speaking. Participation in these events helps youth to develop confidence and practice their decision making and public speaking skills through competitions tied to project areas they are passionate about.
- Audrain County was represented at 4-H Camp Clover Point with 14 youth in attendance. Members made friends, participated in STEM activities, and enjoyed the outdoors.

- 5 youth from Audrain County participated in the State Shoot events and 2 youth from Audrain County represented Missouri on the state teams at the National 4-H Shoot.

- 3 Audrain County youth participated in the Regional Representative Election and 3 participated in the State 4-H Council Board of Directors Election.

- 1 youth from Audrain County received a Missouri State 4-H Foundation Scholarship.

- As responsible citizens, we promote generosity and community strengthening through service. 7,895 meals were donated in Audrain County through the 4-H Feeding Missouri Initiative in 2024.

4-H Clubs offer in-depth educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision making, public speaking, and working with others. Members learn by doing under the guidance of adult volunteers, who lead a wide variety of projects that

support 4-H members in finding their SPARK. Club and project leaders also involve youth and teens in community service, leadership opportunities, and educational trips. 4-H project work and related educational experiences help youth explore interests in citizenship, communication, and leadership.

Audrain County members enrolled in a combined total of 688 projects in 2024. The top project areas included:

- Country Cured Bacon • Arts & Crafts • Woodworking • Welding • Cake Decorating • Swine • Photography • Beef • Foods • Sewing • Meat Goats • Gardening

Impacts of 4-H Programming

- 4-H members are twice as likely to go to college compared to non 4-H peers and tend to pursue careers in STEM fields (Lerner & Lerner, 2011).

- 4-H also prepares youth for the workplace. Youth must be prepared to live and work in a world we cannot completely envision- competing for jobs that do not yet exist, using technologies that have yet to be identified. 4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture, life sciences, and social sciences from the university system. This brings relevant science content and hands-on learning helping youth thrive (Arnold, Bourdeau, & Nott, 2013).

- Youth who earn a bachelor's degree increase their annual earnings by \$2 million over their lifetime. (U.S. News and World report, 2011)



4-H Volunteers

- Audrain County 4-H members were supported by 49 enrolled, screened and oriented adult volunteers supporting the development of youth.
- Volunteers contributed 3,920 hours to the Audrain County 4-H program valued at \$131,280.80.

Volunteers participate in development opportunities in addition to ongoing support from MU Extension youth faculty and staff gaining knowledge in how to offer a valuable learning experience for the youth while maintaining a safe, supportive environment.

Volunteers create, support, and are a vital part of the 4-H community. Dedicated volunteers help to organize club meetings, fundraisers and events. They also provide learning opportunities for youth through projects, teaching life skills and instilling qualities of character like respect and responsibility in members. Adult volunteers serve as mentors for our youth, helping them transition into caring, healthy adults who contribute back to their communities, which is priceless.



4-H and Youth Highlights



Audrain County 4-H Members: Their Story and Things They Have Learned Through 4-H

• “I did a bowling project this year. I like bowling and learned how to add scores. My mom took me to 3 bowling alleys to compare that prices and lanes. I like 4-H because I have friends in 4-H. I have to take care of my animals to keep them healthy and growing” - *Audrain County 4-H Member, age 11*

• “I got to lease, ride, and show “Chesney again this year. She is a good horse. I went to the weekly project meetings and took weekly lessons along with my sister at her barn to get better at riding. I learned how to do the trail course better. I really like Ranch Riding,

so we practiced that a lot. I kind of like roping and would like to learn a little more of it. It is fun! It is exciting because as of September, we are now the owners of “Chesney!” – *Audrain County 4-H Member, age 18*



4-H School Enrichment- Embryology

• There were 85 students from 5 classrooms who participated in the Hatching Chicks in the Classroom program in 2024.

• Students participated in over 510 hours of learning with the “Chick It Out” program.

During the Embryology program, students learn about the 21-day development occurring within a fertilized, incubated egg that can result in the hatching of a chick. Students identify the parts of an egg and discover what each part provides for the developing chick. Students learn how to tell if an egg is raw or boiled and explore the strength of the egg’s shell providing protection to the developing chicks.

Students review the necessity of hand washing due to potential contamination caused by salmonella in poultry and poultry products. Students often gain experience with death and disabilities. Throughout the experience, students are charged with rotating the eggs three times a day and are responsible for checking to make

sure the incubator has water and is maintaining the correct temperature. Once the chicks hatch, the students care for them, providing feed, water, warmth, and a calm environment.

Impacts of Programming

Students practice life skills including decision making and responsibility, helping them to develop qualities that will shape development into adults. Students are provided with the opportunity for a practical experience that connects with the core subjects of communication arts, math, science, and health.

Youth with hands-on experience with science are more likely to pursue science-related careers, which is critical to our county, state, national, and global economy. Students are conscious of the need to practice proper hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of illness and disease. Students also learn compassion and develop an understanding of how to accept individuals with disabilities, as well as how disabilities can be compensated for.



Audrain County Fair Royalty

King- Stetson Stone
Queen- Lydia Van Schyndel

Princess- Audrey Shellabarger
Prince- Jacob Isaacson



Agriculture Programs

2024 MU Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension ag economics department and ag business specialists worked together to coordinate one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was in person and live online. Fall schools were in Columbia and Springfield and one online school. The schools were designed for those who prepare taxes including enrolled agents, tax preparers, CPAs, individuals, and attorneys.

The training included updates on legislation, rulings

and cases, individual taxpayer issues, agricultural and natural resources topics, ethics, trusts and estates, agriculture and natural resource tax issues, business tax issues, business entity tax issues, IRS issues, related party issues, real estate rental activity issues, limited liability company issues, and international tax issues. The schools were approved for 8 and 16 hours of continuing education credit by the IRS, Missouri Bar and for CFP continuing education. Total continuing education hours reported to IRS for the schools was 3,776 hours.

The teaching teams included CPAs, a former IRS stakeholder liaison, an IRS certified retired ag economics professor, an attorney, a certified financial planner, Missouri Department of Revenue and extension ag business specialists.

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. Planning is underway to offer trainings in 2025. Local county residents benefit when local tax preparers have the opportunity to gain knowledge, which benefits their clients and communities. The tax schools are

a program of the ag business and policy program of MU Extension, coordinated by Mary Sobba with help from a team of ag business specialists throughout the state.

The resources for the schools included the IRS, the National Income Tax Workbook from the Land Grant University Tax Education Foundation, and materials written by the instructors.

The 2024 school attendance totaled three hundred fifty people. The participants were from throughout Missouri. There were fourteen participants from Audrain County.

Audrain County Master Gardeners - 2024

Audrain County Master Gardeners had a busy year. In January members presented a session on pollinators at the Audrain Soil and Crop Conference

The main project was a seed distribution project. Master Gardeners attended all the distribution days (14) at the Laura Miller George Help Center in the month of April plus the distribution day in Vandalia. Master Gardeners interacted with 838 families and gave seeds to 401 families. Audrain Master Gardeners purchase seed in bulk and then repackage seeds into envelopes which are designed to be sufficient to feed a family for the summer. Master Gardeners repackaged eight unique varieties of vegetables into 300 packages of each resulting in 2,400 total packages of seeds.

Audrain Master Gardeners partnered with the Mexico Garden Club to have two plant/yard sales.

Master Gardeners judged

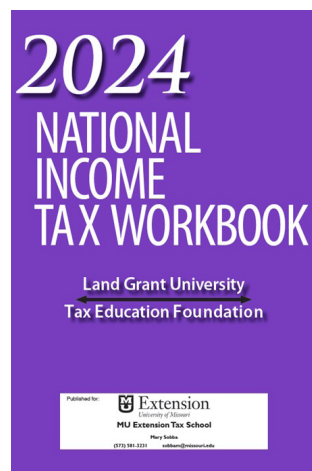
horticulture and bee classes at the 4-H youth fair in July. In addition, Audrain Master Gardeners sponsored the Big Veggie contest at the fair.

Audrain Master Gardeners had a few relaxed and fun activities for its members including a picnic in July and a dinner in December.

In addition to the activities already mention, group members talked to individuals on various topics of gardening.

Audrain Master Gardeners continue to learn to help others. This year members attended the Missouri Master Gardener Convention in St Joseph, Mo in September for continuing education. In addition Audrain County had representation at the quarterly board meetings for the Missouri Master Gardeners Association (MOMGA).

All members were active in the above events plus doing continuing education on their own to further their knowledge in horticulture along with attending monthly meetings.



UM System Footprint in Audrain County in 2024

Audrain County Students

- 179 students
- 153 Undergraduates
- 26 Graduate and professional students
- 141 Full-time students
- 38 Part-time students
- 55 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)

Audrain County

- MU
 - 149 students
 - 932 alumni
 - 99 employees
- UMKC
 - 19 students
 - 43 alumni
 - 1 employees
- Missouri S&T
 - 10 students
 - 38 alumni
 - 0 employees
- UMSL
 - 1 students
 - 34 alumni
 - 0 employees

Audrain County Alumni

School alumni

- 35 Medicine
- 65 Nursing
- 76 Health Professions
- 10 Dentistry
- 8 Pharmacy
- 3 Optometry
- 6 Veterinary Medicine
- 244 Agriculture
- 75 Engineering
- 22 Law

Alumni teaching

- K-12
- 61 teachers
- 23.6% of all district teachers
- 6 principals and administrators
- 33.3% of all district principals and administrators

Education and Training Provided

- 40,542 police, fire fighters, and medical professionals attending continuing education (2023)
- Agriculture and natural resource programs served 369,077 farmers and related businesses (2023)
- 210,577 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2023)

Horticulture Programming in the Northeast and East Central Regions

In 2024, there were 2,565 direct contacts from 38 educational programs that Justin Keay organized or co-taught. Participants in these in-person and online programs were actively engaged in the learning process. Programs included home vegetable gardening, commercial fruit and vegetable production, on-farm produce safety tours and trainings, value-added agriculture workshops, selling local foods workshops, grant opportunities for small farmers, soil fertility management, and integrated pest management. There were 475 requests for horticulture information through calls, emails, walk-ins from 39 Missouri counties. Justin performed 22 farm visits across the Northeast and East Central regions to help small farmers solve crop production problems on their farms.

Online programming through webinars, videos, and e-newsletters reach growers in Missouri and other states. The monthly Missouri Produce Growers Video Newsletter reaches over 1,100 subscribers every month with an increase of 155 during 2024. Topics include fruit and vegetable production, small farm business management, pes-

ticide safety, produce safety regulations, invasive pests, and more. Twenty-three educational videos were created and hosted on the MU IPM YouTube Channel. Videos from the newsletter received over 36,744 views throughout the year.

Participants who engaged in horticulture programming learned about insects, weeds, diseases, soil health and fertility, general plant care, and variety selection. Small farmers learned how to increase fruit and vegetable yields, grow farm revenue, and protect Missouri's natural resources.

- Seven small farms were connected with MU Center for Regenerative Agriculture grant opportunities, who received a total of \$35,000 to support conservation projects on their farms.

- One-hundred and thirty-four fruit and vegetable farmers were trained on the Produce Safety Rule Food Safety Modernization Act. This training satisfies a regulatory requirement of the Food and Drug Administration.

Expanding Value-Added Production in Missouri

Adding value to fresh fruit and vegetables by processing

them into finished products such as juice, ready-to-eat meal kits, sauces, and jams can help small farmers increase farm revenue and grow farm businesses. This can allow growers to hire more staff and contribute more to the local economy. Two all-day workshops were held to help producers understand marketing opportunities, food safety, and regulatory compliance to help producers bring their products to market.

Training Growers on Federal Requirements for Produce Safety

The Food Safety and Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule places regulatory requirements on produce growers to ensure consumers are provided with safe produce, free of common pathogens such as e. coli and salmonella. In partnership with Missouri Farmers Union, MU Extension hosted four on-farm produce safety tours, where participants learned how to implement federal regulatory requirements and to ensure the produce they provide to consumers is safe. In addition to on-farm tours, 134 growers were trained during six separate Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule trainings.



Justin Keay teaching at the Selling Local Foods workshop in Hannibal.

Farmers' Markets are a Primary Source of Price Data

The Missouri Department of Agriculture partnered with University of Missouri Extension to collect farmers' market price data on crops present at Missouri farmers' markets June-October of 2024. Five MU Extension Specialists collected data while providing production, marketing, and financial resources to producers around the state. The data is available seasonally on MDA's website and helps new and experienced producers determine market prices for their products. There was a total of

59 different markets visited in 2024 with 2295 prices collected.

Extension business and community specialist, Darla Campbell visited 13 different markets in Northeast and Central Missouri including: Kirksville, Unionville, Brookfield, Milan, La Plata, Louisiana, Hannibal, Palmyra, Mexico, Center, Booneville, and Columbia.

These visits included a total of 223 vendors from twenty-seven counties. Thirteen of the vendors were from Audrain County.



Agriculture Lender Seminar

Seventy-two lenders from 20 Missouri counties and Illinois attended an ag lender seminar in Mexico. Eight of those lenders were from Audrain County. Lenders learned about crop and livestock outlook, agriculture policy, rental rates & land values, MU budgets, wind and solar leasing, input costs and enterprise budgets, Missouri farm business management summary and Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority (MASBDA) programs.

By attending University of Missouri's Agricultural Lenders' seminars, lenders gain knowledge to help their clients make better decisions

based on objective education and resources. More information and better decisions benefit their portfolio of producers, landowners, and agribusinesses through enhanced understanding of enterprise

budgets, market expectations, and other decision influencing factors affecting families' and businesses' financial health. Lenders in attendance manage farm loans totaling \$155,250,000.



Ben Brown, state ag economist shares crop market outlooks with participants.

Livestock Symposium

The Missouri Livestock Symposium (MLS) started in 2000 as a means of providing the latest research and best management practices to area livestock producers and landowners. The MLS has evolved into an annual educational program attracting hundreds of livestock producers from across the Midwest and is considered a source for professional development by area agricultural educators and professionals. The MLS involves a 20 member all volunteer planning committee contributing approximately 672 hours annually to planning and another 293 hours for event implementation.

The Missouri Livestock Symposium features a true multi-disciplinary and cross-

agency approach to program planning with a diverse committee consisting of producers, Extension specialists, University researchers and governmental liaisons. The inclusion of diverse backgrounds and people strengthen the program direction and overall program delivery.

Strong attendance noted for the 2024 Livestock Symposium. Keynote speaker, Cassandra Fish, Beef Market Analyst headlined the event as she spoke about How the Industry has Changed. Many notable topics and speakers were featured on Saturday December 7th as livestock producers looked for answers and interaction with experts in livestock production.



University of Missouri Extension Mission Statement

Our distinct land-grant mission is to improve the lives, communities and economies by producing relevant, reliable and responsive educational strategies that enhance access to the resources and research of the University of Missouri.

2024 Audrain Extension Council Members

Officers

Bobby Stone, Chairman
Amy LeCount, Vice Chairman
Darla Eggers, Secretary
Monica Brown, Treasurer

Appointed Members

Leslie Meyer – County Commission
Bobby Stone – MFA
Amy LeCount – City of Mexico

Elected Members

District 1 – NW Area: Monica Brown

District 2 – SW Area: Emily Curtis and Darla Eggers

District 3 – NE Area: Dawn Miller

District 4 – SE Area: Cindy Fort and Becky Hoyt

District 5 – City of Mexico: Ron Hopkins, Jane Duffner, and Betty Jo Sydenstricker

University of Missouri Extension Faculty & Staff

Headquartered in Audrain County

Mary Sobba
 Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

Olivia Brune
 Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development

Kayla Scobee
 Nutrition Program Associate

Karen Potter
 Administrative Assistant

Headquartered out of County

Mike Krauch
 Regional Director

Jim Meyer
 Extension Engagement Specialist

Carrie Elsen
 Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health

Stephanie Femrite
 Assistant Extension Professor & Assistant
 Director 4-H Youth

Justin Keay
 Field Specialist in Horticulture

Rusty Lee
 Field Specialist in Agronomy

Daniel Mallory
 Field Specialist in Livestock

Kent Shannon
 Field Specialist in Agricultural Engineering

Jeremiah Terrell
 Field Specialist in Human Development