

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Barry County 2025

Annual Report



Barry County Courthouse
700 main Street, St#4
Cassville, Missouri 65625
417 847-3161

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

 **Extension**
University of Missouri
an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

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Dear County Commissioners, Elected Leaders, and Friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the remarkable progress we have made together. MU Extension continues to deliver on its mission of linking the University of Missouri with every community across our state, ensuring that Missourians have access to the knowledge, resources, and partnerships they need to thrive.

Through the dedication of our faculty, staff, councils, partners, and advocates, MU Extension continues to make a measurable difference across Missouri. Last year, we had more than 1.5 million educational contacts and generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact. Building on that momentum, your support also helped secure a \$5 million recurring increase in state funding. This important milestone is already being invested in people, programs, and facilities to strengthen agriculture, improve health and well-being, support local economic development, and prepare youth for leadership through 4-H.

We have also adapted to new realities. Even as the sunset of federal SNAP-Ed funding forced hard choices, our commitment to delivering nutrition and health programs to families in need has not wavered. We are expanding investments in rural health, civic leadership and community development to address the priorities Missourians tell us matter most. We are also aligning our work with university, state, and federal priorities to maximize impact, whether in rural healthcare, agricultural innovation or workforce development.

Our strengths remain clear: people, programs, and partnerships. From nearly 6,000 4-H volunteers to county council members, master gardeners, and master naturalists, Extension thrives because of the dedication of those who serve. Our trusted, research-based content was accessed nearly 2 million times and downloaded more than 76,000 times last year, and innovative programs, from soil testing to urban revitalization initiatives, continue to meet Missouri's evolving needs.

Thank you for your continued partnership. MU Extension belongs to all Missourians, and together we will keep building resilient communities, fostering innovation, and preparing our state for the future.

With appreciation,

Chad Higgins, PhD
Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement
Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff



Liz Blankenship
4-H Youth
Program
Associate



Reagan Bluel
Field Specialist
in Dairy



Bai Xiong
Field Specialist
in Community
Health



Jeanne Strange
County Office
Support



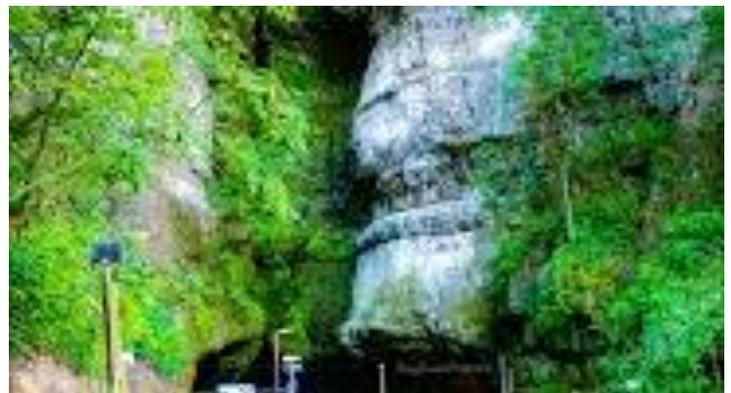
Kyle Whittaker
Extension Engagement
Specialist



Sarah Havens
Regional Director

Council Members

Carolyn Kilts, Chairman
Hannah Bolton, Vice-chairman
Lainey Harvick, Secretary
Aaron Moore, Treasurer
David Bolton, Member
Jan Aplin, Member
John Aplin, Member
Renee Hobbs, Member
Rosario Keele, Member
Tim Smith, Member
Lana Couch, Member



County executives

Steve Blankenship, Presiding Commissioner
Gene Robbins, Southern Commissioner
Gary Schad, Northern Commissioner
Joyce Ennis, County Clerk

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations	\$52,011
Total Income	\$52,011

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	\$39,243
Payroll Exp.	\$1,820
Travel	\$5,748
Office Supplies/Service	\$2,500
Insurance	\$1,600
Advertisement / print	\$850
Postage	\$250
Total Expenses	\$52,011

Barry County partners

Cassville Chamber of Commerce
504 Main St.
Cassville, MO 65625

Cassville Library
301 W. 17th
Cassville, MO 65625

First Christian Church
905 Old Exeter Rd.
Cassville, MO 65625

Harvick Farms
16062 St. Hwy 76
Cassville, MO 65625

Monett Chamber of Commerce
200 E Broadway
Monett, MO 65708

Return on investment

University System	100,000
Donations	14,000
Program Revenue	4,087

MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

Extension funding is a three-way partnership of federal, state and county government. Federal and state money, through the University of Missouri system, pay professional staff salaries, training costs, computers and communication equipment. County funds support the local office, secretarial and youth assistant salaries, staff mileage and council expenses.

The Barry County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Barry County Commissioners for their continued support of extension programs.



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Barry County Extension with a gift to be used immediately or as an endowment contribution for long term efforts. Monies put into the endowment are left forever to earn interest with the county office benefiting each year. You can also direct your donation to a specific program such as 4-H or Master Gardeners.

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Barry County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Barry County, showcasing the meaningful ways local engagement supports residents. It includes data on the number of students, employees, retirees and alumni affiliated with the University of Missouri System, along with the healthcare and extension services provided over the past year.

In addition, the report highlights the broader contributions of the UM System across Missouri in key areas such as education, research, healthcare, economic development and public service. It features metrics like job creation, financial aid distribution, research investment, healthcare access and broadband expansion.

This report is a valuable resource for understanding the measurable benefits the UM System brings to Missouri communities. It supports informed decision-making, advocacy efforts and strategic planning by illustrating the tangible impact of university-driven initiatives at both the local and statewide levels.

[Access Barry county's Impact Report.](#)



GRAND CHALLENGES

Grand Challenges

The Grand Challenges — Economic Opportunity, Educational Access, Health and Well-being, and Agricultural Stewardship — represent the most pressing issues facing Missouri communities. They are important because:

By focusing on these challenges, MU Extension in Barry county can better leverage university resources, data and partnerships to empower people to improve their lives, businesses and communities.

This report presents localized data and insights in how MU Extension in Barry county is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

[Access Barry County's Grand Challenges Report.](#)





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



What is 4-H?

4-H is where Missouri’s young people find their spark and learn by doing. Whether raising animals, coding robots, growing gardens, or giving back to their neighbors, 4-H members gain real-world skills with the help of caring mentors.

Rooted in University of Missouri Extension, 4-H connects classrooms, communities, and families to create learning that sticks—building confident, capable leaders who are Beyond Ready for life. In 4-H, youth discover their strengths, practice resilience, and learn to lead with heart—preparing them not just for what’s next, but for anything that comes their way.



Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs give youth hands-on experiences in areas such as animal science, veterinary science, plant science, and agronomy. Members explore the biology, care, and management of animals and crops while developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Youth can also put their knowledge into practice through statewide competitions, including **Livestock Judging**, **Meat Judging**, **Hippology**, the **Missouri 4-H Equine Tour** and more. These experiences help participants apply what they’ve learned, gain confidence, and prepare for future careers in agriculture and related fields.



4-H’s Leadership and Civic Engagement programs foster understanding, confidence, and decision-making skills to empower young people to become informed and active citizens. These initiatives prepare youth to become future leaders by engaging them in programs where they have voice and influence.

Statewide programs such as the **Missouri State 4-H Council** and **Civic Engagement Ambassadors** give youth opportunities to represent their peers, advocate for issues that matter, and build connections with leaders across Missouri. These experiences help young people grow as confident communicators and thoughtful problem solvers, ready to lead wherever life takes them.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Profiles and stories



Barry County 4-H Shooting Sports was fortunate to receive a grant from the NRA Foundation again this year. The grant provided 3D archery targets as well as supplies and safety equipment for the shotgun program. Barry County once again participated in the state shoot and had outstanding results.



Pictured above is one of the 3D targets received from the NRA Foundation grant this year. The targets purchased through the grant allowed 4-H archery members the opportunity to expand their experiences to more of a real world application.

Volunteers -4-H members are supported by adult volunteers

Volunteers are the core of the 4-H Program. They help to create, support, and deliver educational programs and experiences. Missouri 4-H volunteers report contributing an average of 100 hours per year to the program. Valuing their time at \$33.49 per hour (Independent Sector, 2024), the contribution of Barry 4-H volunteers was worth more than \$33,000 in 2024. More importantly, these individuals serve as role models and mentors for youth.

4-H clubs - 4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects in areas 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.

Regardless of how youth participate, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

- 4-H Community 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 this under the guidance of adult volunteers, who lead a wide variety of projects that support 4-H members in finding their SPARK.
- 4-H offers Community clubs, SPIN (special interest) clubs, In school and Afterschool Clubs, and school enrichment. Families and communities can choose what fits their needs.

Barry County

Missouri 4-H

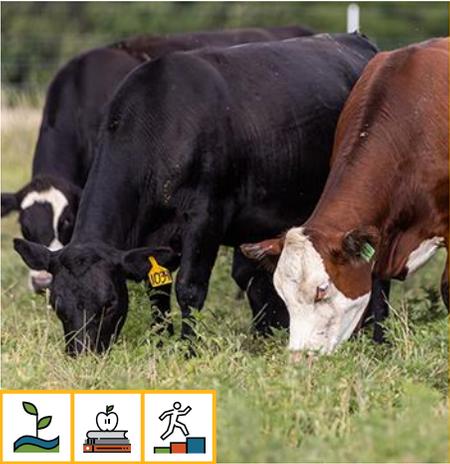
Barry County 4-H Members in Action





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Agriculture and Environment



Missouri Grazing Schools teach management-intensive grazing by dividing large fields into smaller paddocks and systematically rotating livestock among them. Producers who attend the grazing schools learn how to reduce costs through Improved livestock grazing and pasture management while getting insights into fencing, watering systems and grazing system design.

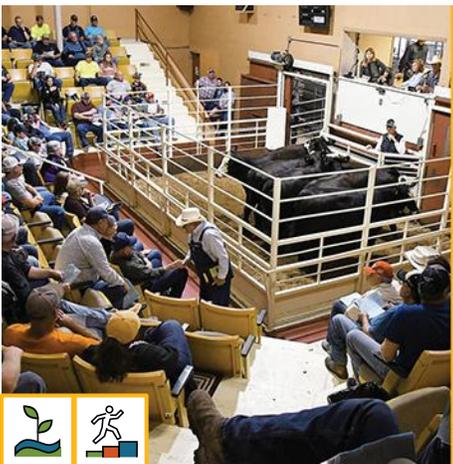
The annual impact of management-intensive grazing is estimated to be \$125 MILLION per year in Missouri



The **Missouri Master Gardener** program enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



In one year, almost 4,000 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 149,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state.



The Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program strives to enhance beef herd reproductive efficiency, boost farm income and establish dependable sources of quality replacement cows in Missouri. The program brings in the power of animal genomics through an enhanced DNA-option, Show-Me-PLUS.



Since its inception more than 900 FARMS have enrolled, with an estimated statewide impact of \$200 MILLION.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

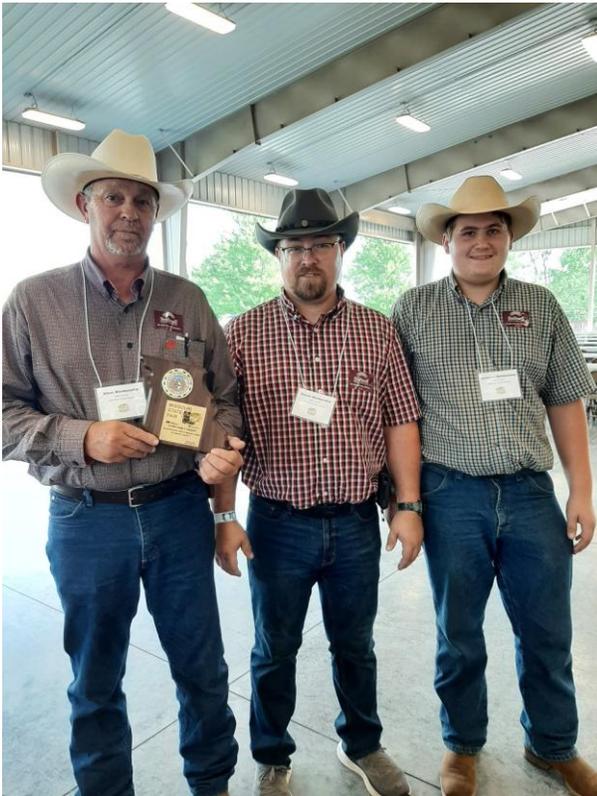
Local Impact



The Barry County MU Extension Council was pleased to recognize to families with Century Farm recognition at the 2025 Annual Picnic.



Local Impact



Cassville, Mo. — Steve Blankenship and family of Cassville were among the families honored during the 68th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 11 at the Missouri State Fair.

The Blankenship family was selected as the Barry County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Barry County and the local Farm Bureau.

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.”

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Missouri Grazing Schools – A grazing school was held in April at Mt. Vernon with 37 participants. This was one of the largest of these events held around the state. These schools provide the most in-depth training on how to be successful with Management-intensive Grazing (MiG) practices. These three-day schools are unique to Missouri and have set a standard for teaching and demonstrating the newest grazing concepts. Other schools offered in 2025 occurred in Greene, Christian, Newton, Wright, Dade and Ozark counties. The schools allowed farmers to think differently about how they manage their pastures and have become a very effective program. There were over 150 livestock producers who attended the sessions from Southwest Missouri counties this year. Numerous presentations were offered along with on-farm field trips to evaluate pasture grazing systems.



41st Annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference - There were around 375 farm producers who participated in the conference in Springfield in February. There were fourteen key presentations and a trade show. This is one of Missouri's largest gatherings of farmers and ranchers and is hosted by a committee made up of extension field specialists and professionals from Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Missouri Department of Conservation.

Private Pesticide Applicator Training - There were 76 participants who attended trainings offered by Tim Schnakenberg. Trainings occurred in Cassville, Springfield, Ozark, Mt. Vernon, Ava and Hollister. This training has direct impact on environmental safety, human safety and the safety of the American food supply. Farmers are retrained every five years in order to maintain a private pesticide license to purchase and use Restricted-Use pesticides.

Farm Fest - Farm Fest is held each year at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds in Springfield and is the largest gathering of the farm community in Southwest Missouri. MU Extension ag specialists staff a booth at this event throughout the entire weekend in October. Thousands of visitors streamed by the booth and hundreds stopped in to visit with regional specialists.

Noncertified Restricted-Use Pesticide (NRUP) Applicator Training - There were 32 participants who attended NRUP trainings offered by Rusty Lee, Micah Doubledee and Tim Schnakenberg. Trainings occurred in Springfield, Nixa and Carthage. City of Cassville employees attended the Nixa program. This newly required training certifies pesticide users to work under supervisors who have commercial licenses. This often applies to employees of pest control operators, farm chemical applicators, government workers and municipalities.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

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Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Warm Season Grass Workshop - There were around 45 farm producers from many counties who participated in the warm season grass workshop at Mt. Vernon in February. With recent droughts, warm season grasses are growing in popularity, and this workshop gave recommendations on species selection, establishment methods and management tactics. One respondent to the survey mentioned, "Very helpful. Completely new to this so I need to hear and re-hear. With each presentation, I learn more, or it sticks with me better."



Ozark Empire Fair Hay Contest - This year's contest had outstanding participation with 49 entries submitted (36% increase from the previous year) from ten counties. Several ag specialists traveled to 30 southern Missouri farms to collect samples of the entries. This was a great opportunity to help producers better educate themselves on hay quality. Counties represented this year included Greene, Lawrence, Christian, Stone, Newton, Howell, Ozark, Iron, Webster and Barry counties. The highest-testing entry and champion dry hay came from Glenn and Toni Obermann of Monett. It was a first cutting alfalfa hay entry that was harvested on May 15. It produced a 231 Relative Forage Quality (RFQ). The champion haylage was alfalfa entered by Maple Pass Farm of Billings. It's cutting date was June 1 and the RFQ was 212. The show has occurred since 1985. Tim Schnakenberg and Reagan Bluel served as Superintendents for this show.



Frost Seeding Legumes Workshop - There were 61 attendees that attended this workshop offered by Caleb O'Neal, Tim Schnakenberg, and Terry Halleran at Mt. Vernon in February. Barry County producers were a part of this program. This program thoroughly covered the practice of improving fescue pastures with frost-seeded legumes. Diversifying the cool-season forage base with legumes extends the grazing season of the land resource and creates higher quality forage when compared to cool-season grass monocultures alone. These legumes also fix nitrogen into the soil, which can increase the yield of the surrounding grasses as well, while also diluting the toxicity of species like K31 tall fescue. Increasing the yield and quality of forage of livestock operations, while also reducing the toxic effects of the cool-season grasses can result in increased carrying capacity, better animal performance, and greater net profitability.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Applied Forage Research – Agronomists Josh Dunn and Tim Schnakenberg worked under the direction of Caleb O’Neal to conduct **forage research** at the Southwest Research, Extension and Education Center. At least two studies have developed including a replicated research trial evaluating various **establishment methods for crabgrass and teff**. Results were shared at the field day in September. Another study that was initiated in December evaluates the best time and practice for **establishing Eastern Gama grass**. Both dormant seeding and spring seeding is being evaluated. Also included is a biological seed treatment.



Insect Pest Monitoring – This is an ongoing effort by extension agronomists to monitor insect pest movement in Missouri. Counts from traps based in Christian and Barton Counties are **recorded weekly on the MU IPM website** and alerts are provided for farmers who sign up for the service. The service provides a heads-up for insect invasions in both crops and forages. Insects are monitored including fall armyworm, true armyworm, stinkbug, Japanese beetle, corn leafhopper and black cutworm.



Soybean Cyst Nematode Survey – A survey of soybean cyst nematodes in local soybean fields was conducted by researchers from the MU campus. Farms were identified in Barry, Lawrence, Newton, Stone and Christian Counties for this survey.

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories



The 100th Annual Lawrence Soils & Crops Conference took place January 14 at the Southwest Research Station. The program was largely drought focused and was attended by 94 participants. Attendees learned about forage, soil, and weed management as it pertains to drought resilience for cattle operations.



The Monett Beef Conference took place March 11 at the Monett Armory and hosted 32 participants. This program largely focused on cattle nutrition, including presentations on forage-based cow nutrition and finishing cull heifers, but also included a beef industry economic outlook for 2025.

Livestock Specialists partnered with 7 veterinarians in Southwest Missouri to host the Bull Soundness Exam Days on several days in the spring and fall at vet clinics across the region. Cattlemen brought in their bulls to be evaluated for breeding soundness by having veterinarians and livestock specialists observe confirmation, body condition, and semen quality, and were educated on bull management and selection. There were 43 farms that participated and 152 bulls that were evaluated.





Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Barry County

Barry County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Engagement Activities



Extension Engagement Specialist Kyle Whittaker, MU Extension Workforce Development Specialist Amy Patillo, MU Extension Horticulture Specialist Kelly McGowen and Youth Program Associate Bailey Andrews conducted a Career Development Event workshops at the Springfield Lawn and Garden Show on February 21st. The workshops were held in conjunction with the lawn and garden show hosted by the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. The team provided the workshops for FFA students preparing for district and state competitions. Three workshops were conducted in the areas of Floriculture, Nursery/Landscaping and Entomology.

The Floriculture Career Development Event includes identifying 60 plants from a list of 143 plants. A plant diagnosis and disorders practicum, greenhouse and floral item identification practicum and a written exam.

The Nursery/Landscaping Career Development Event includes 50 plants specimens from a list of 91 shade trees, flowering trees, perennials, evergreen shrubs, vines and ground covers, turf and flowering shrubs. The event also includes a plant disorder and diagnosis practicum, a landscape design practicum and a written exam.

The Entomology Career Development Event includes identifying 40 insects specimens from a list of 114. The event also includes an insect/plant diagnosis practicum, pesticide formulation problem and a written exam.



Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Barry County

Barry County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Engagement Activities



Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker conducted the Southwest District Poultry and Meats Evaluation Career Development Events (CDE) held on the campus of Missouri State University. The meats CDE involved 27 teams from schools throughout southwest Missouri and the poultry CDE involved 30 teams, 204 students participated in the events. The District CDE was held April 3rd and 4th and is a qualifying event for FFA teams competing for the state FFA CDE.



Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Barry County

Barry County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Engagement Activities



Kyle Whittaker Extension Engagement Specialist provided instruction of feeder and slaughter cattle grades at the Ag Innovation event hosted by Mid Missouri bank. The event involved hundreds of area agriculture education students. The vent was designed to provide real-world learning. Students were given a budget and paired with a mentor to purchase feeder calves.



Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker a goat carcass fabrication workshop at the 2025 Goat Expo held at the Missouri State fairgrounds last summer. Attendees learned how to process a goat carcass into retail cuts and enjoyed eating chevon (goat meat).



Kyle Whittaker provided a professional development session and exhibited a poster at the National Association of County Agriculture Agents conference held in Billings Montana last July.

Agriculture and Environment

Agriculture Business & Policy



2025 Spring Forage Conference provided **47 Barry County** producers with research-based training on soil fertility, forage species, grazing systems, native grasses, and managing fescue toxicosis across beef, dairy, and small-ruminant operations. Participants gained practical, production-focused strategies to improve pasture resilience and livestock performance.

SW-REEC Poultry Processing Demonstration trained **13 Barry County** producers in small-scale poultry processing, including safe handling, sanitation, workflow design, and regulatory compliance. Participants gained skills to support on-farm or direct-market poultry enterprises.

Barry County Soil & Crops Conference 2025 engaged **80 Barry County** participants in updates on agronomy, forage systems, cattle nutrition, and equipment economics. Attendees gained research-based insights to improve decision-making and plan effectively for the upcoming production year.



Agriculture and Environment

State Impact

Women in Dairy



Women in Dairy explore strawberry production as possible cash crop (above). Outreach and promotion of the dairy industry during June dairy month at Springfield's Price Cutter on Battlefield is an annual tradition (right)

Twice a day milking and daily chores, the demands of the dairy farm can be isolating.

Targeted to bring ladies from the dairy community together on a nearly monthly basis, the Women in Dairy program focuses on outreach for the industry and educational topics of their choice.



Artificial Insemination School

Artificial insemination is a skill and trade that producers can use to advance the productivity of their herd through genetic improvement.

Annually MU Extension livestock specialists host 24 students for a 2.5 day "hands-in" learning opportunity thanks to the partnership of Joplin Regional Stockyards.

Producers leave knowledgeable about sync programs and how to inseminate their herd successfully.

Agriculture and Environment



Celebrity Milk-A-Cow Lt. Governor David Wasinger and several other political leaders tried their hands at a 2-minute milking contest at the Missouri State Fair. Designed to interface dairy producers with policymakers, it provided an educational opportunity to learn more about the dairy industry.

The dairy industry generates \$657 million dollars annually for Missouri's economy

The Dairy Science Digest publishes once a month highlighting the most current dairy science. Reagan interviews the scientist and brings the info to the farmgate. Identified as a trusted source for unbiased scientifically supported information for dairy operators globally.

Named Top Dairy Podcast in 2025, the 6th season



Trusted source for unbiased dairy science information to advance dairy operations



Farm Tours Designed to observe and discuss dairy facilities, feeding techniques and management styles and more. Dairy farm tours create a robust learning environment.

179 participants engaged in peer-based learning on 6 different farm operations. Walking, talking and learning from one another and topic expert speakers.

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories



The State of Missouri committed \$2M in competitive grant dollars for farm infrastructure improvements

This grant opportunity unlocked the opportunity to engage **Dairy and Beef producers** in a new exciting way near the end of the year. Reagan Bluel, MU Extension dairy specialist, worked with beef and dairy producers alike to: Brainstorm improvements, run cost estimates analysis, cash flow projections and calculate ROI for every project. In total she helped craft 42 applications, with **over \$2 million in proposed project designs.**



Hosting 172 participants, the **Missouri Dairy Expo 2025** was the largest learning event for Dairy producers statewide.

Producers came to learn about “Feeding for the Future” with experts from across the nation addressing topics such as: High Oleic Soybeans, combating heat stress through nutrition, fiber digestion kinetics and more!



Dairy Specialist, Reagan Bluel, partnered with **Harvick Farms during their annual Fall Fest.**

Community members were educated about the dairy industry and dairy cattle production.

Pictured right, two young ladies learn about cattle teeth and nutrition at the “dairy stop”



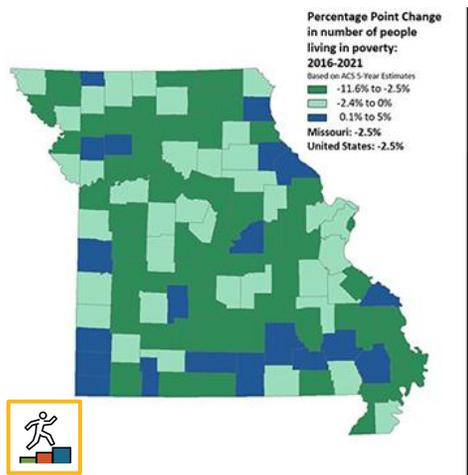
MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Business and Community



Missourians from all walks of life celebrated the **2023 Missouri Good Neighbor Week** Sept. 28 to Oct. 4 by completing and reporting neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors in their counties.

In 2023, the goal was to document 15,000 acts of neighboring. That goal was surpassed with 19,752 Missourians being positively affected during MISSOURI GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK.



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.



The annual **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities** conference is designed for stakeholders, economic developers, businesses, local government, educators and nonprofits interested in increasing their communities' potential for entrepreneurship. In 2023, the conference offered breakout sessions in Benton County's shops and businesses, providing firsthand insight into the world of entrepreneurial communities.

The conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 for Benton County.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Business and Community

Profiles and Stories



Barry-Lawrence County Ag Resource Fair and Disability Expo

The Barry—Lawrence Counties Community Resource Fair & Disability Expo welcomed 105 families, caregivers, community members, and service providers on September 25, 2025, at the Southwest Extension, Engagement, and Education Center in Mt. Vernon. More than 50 organizations participated, offering a wide range of services and support for individuals with disabilities and their families across southwest Missouri. The event was made possible through the partnership of University of Missouri Extension, Missouri AgrAbility, the Lawrence County Board for the Developmentally Disabled, the Coalition of Charities, and local collaborators. Attendees praised the event's organization, the quality and variety of information provided, the excellent facility, and the inspiring performances by Champion Athletes and the Art Creative Dancers.

The Recovery Leaders Network, Connection, and Education program united 27 sober living leaders and community partners from Barry, Lawrence, Newton, Jasper, and McDonald Counties to strengthen relationships, share resources, and align support strategies. Participants reported deeper connection, increased collaboration, and renewed commitment to creating safe, stable, and recovery-supportive environments across southwest Missouri.



Recovery Leaders Network, Connect, and Educate program

Business and Community

Profiles and Stories



North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center, Impact Collaborative, Minneapolis, MN

Missouri Farm Stress team members Amy Patillo, Jendel Wolfe, and Director Karen Funkenbusch participated in the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center Impact Collaborative to identify opportunities and barriers to expanding telehealth services for veterans, farmers, and ranchers in Missouri. Through this work, the team helped strengthen access to no-cost telehealth therapy provided by licensed clinicians to Missourians working in agriculture. Since its launch in 2023, the program has more than doubled its telehealth services and counseling hours, demonstrating growing need and significant progress in supporting the mental health and well-being of Missouri's agricultural community.

MU Extension's Missouri AgrAbility Program was featured on KOLR-10 to share practical strategies that help individuals with arthritis continue gardening safely and comfortably. The segment highlighted tools, adaptations, and body-mechanics techniques that reduce pain, prevent strain, and support long-term participation in gardening activities. By providing education on pre-planning garden tasks, selecting arthritis-friendly tools, preparing the body for physical activity, and managing discomfort, Missouri AgrAbility is helping Missourians maintain both their health and their quality of life while enjoying a meaningful and beneficial pastime.



Second-Chance Hiring Speaking Engagements

KOLR- 10 AgrAbility Arthritis and Gardening

Workforce development is essential for strengthening the resilience of Missouri's agricultural communities. Farm and Ranch stress programs and AgrAbility services support farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers by addressing the physical, behavioral, and economic challenges that directly affect their ability to work safely and sustainably. By expanding access to training, adaptive tools, mental health resources, and problem-solving support, workforce development helps producers remain healthy, productive, and engaged in their operations. These efforts reduce turnover, prevent injuries, and preserve the long-term viability of family farms and rural economies.

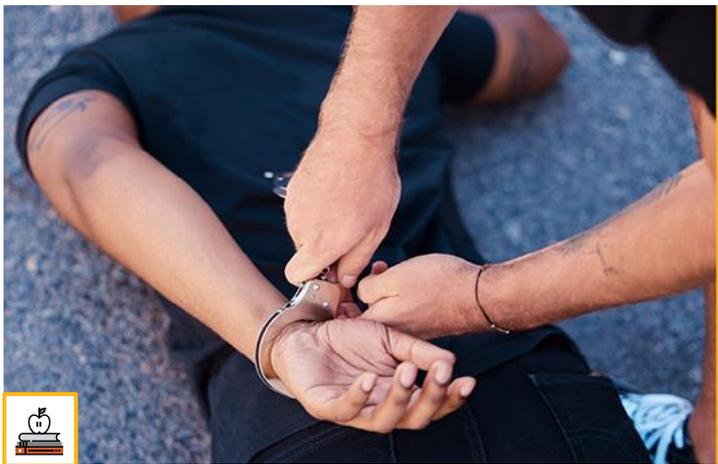


MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs

Continuing Education



Established in 2002, the **Fire Officer Certificate Program** is designed for those who wish to further their professional development without the time and expense of traditional college classes. This program has been developed and evaluated to ensure it provides structured curriculum delivery and academic rigor. The program requires completion of 288 of instruction within three years.



The **Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI)** offers advanced training on a wide variety of topics, including defensive tactics, firearms, use of force and de-escalation. LETI offers customized programs for all required continuing education areas of concentration.



The **Missouri Extension Disaster Education Network** provides education and technical assistance to individuals and families, local governments, schools and organizations so they can prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters. Because of the unique relationship it maintains with each community, MU Extension is a key resource for the public, emergency services and public officials.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Health and Human Sciences



Rural Immersion Program is an opportunity for medical students interested in rural practice to gain experience in the rewards and challenges of working and living in a rural community, examining rural health disparities and quality of life concerns within a specific region. Group activities and meetings with community leaders in business, government, education, health care and natural resources give students a preview of life in a rural area.

Rural Immersion Program participants agree that it has significantly contributed to them FORMING INSIGHTS on the suitability of living and working in a rural community, both personally and professionally.



The **Diabetes Prevention Program** is recognized as “Full Plus,” the highest status given by the CDC and is provided by licensed lifestyle coaches to prevent type 2 diabetes. Through lifestyle changes participants can achieve sustainable weight loss, increase in physical activity and learn coping skills to manage stress.

More than 1 IN 3 PARTICIPANTS have reached the 5-7% WEIGHT LOSS GOAL.



Home Food Preservation

Preserve the season's bounty in a safe and delicious way.

Learn safe techniques for pressure canning, boiling water bath canning, steam canning, dehydration, and freezing.

Understand the importance of using safe food preservation and storage methods to avoid cross-contamination and food-borne illnesses.

“This course made me more self-sufficient and improved my family’s access to quality food.”

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2025

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,419,598 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 70,722 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 970,939 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, and food pantries.

2,697 direct and indirect contacts were made in Barry 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.

EFNEP Public Value Statement 2025

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,624,777 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 424 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 1,550 family members. Additionally, 2,942 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes.

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.

Community Health Outreach and Education- Community Health Field Specialist - Barry County



The **Diabetes Prevention Program** is recognized as “Full Plus,” the highest status given by the CDC and is provided by licensed lifestyle coaches to prevent type 2 diabetes. Through lifestyle changes participants can achieve sustainable weight loss, increase in physical activity and learn coping skills to manage stress.



Statistics of prediabetes

98 million Americans adults have prediabetes

- 1 in 3 Americans have prediabetes
- 8 in 10 of them don't know they have prediabetes.

2025 Collective Outcomes

<p>A1c data: 23 participants completed pre/post labs.</p>	<p>(56.5%) lowered their A1c by .2% or more.</p>	<p>(43%) of participants lost 5% or more of their starting body weight.</p>
<p>Weight loss Goals</p>	<p>(43%) of participants lost 5% or more of their starting body weight.</p>	<p>92% of active participants have started losing weight</p>



Community Health Engagement and Outreach



Rural Immersion Program is an opportunity for medical students interested in rural practice to gain experience in the rewards and challenges of working and living in a rural community, examining rural health disparities and quality of life concerns within a specific region. Group activities and meetings with community leaders in business, government, education, health care and natural resources give students a preview of life in a rural area.



“Rural Immersion is an in-depth review of what life is like in a rural community. Even though I was raised in a small town, this experience was one that helped me lock in on my desire to provide rural healthcare in the future.”



77.7% of Rural Immersion participants develop an impression of whether living and working in a rural community would be a good personal and professional fit for them.

Proposed

Barry Co. Extension Council Meeting Dates & Times:

March 3	6:00 pm
April 7	6:00 pm
May 5	6:00 pm
June 2	7:00 pm
July 7	7:00 pm
August 4	7:00 pm
September 1 *	6:00 pm
October 6	7:00 pm
November 3	7:00 pm
December 1 †	6:00 pm
January 5, 2027	6:00 pm
February 2, 2027 ‡	6:00 pm

** - Annual Potluck Picnic, celebrating Barry Co. Century Farm Families*

† - Budget meeting begins at 17:00

‡ - Annual meeting, celebrating successes of 2026 and swearing in new members