



**2024  
STRONGMAN  
PUMPKIN  
EVENT**



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Benton County



## 2024 Annual Report

**SERVE  
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER  
MIZZOU.**

Benton County Extension Office  
100 West Washington St.  
Warsaw, MO 65355  
660-438-5012



**Extension**  
*University of Missouri*

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension  
and Engagement  
*University of Missouri*

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December 2024

Dear county commissioners, elected leaders and friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support of MU Extension and for your partnership in enhancing the lives of Missourians.

Your support for MU Extension fuels Missouri's agriculture, strengthens families, prepares our youth and promotes the health, well-being and vitality of our communities. Over the past year, our programs have focused on addressing key needs throughout the state:

- **Expanding access to 4-H:** To make 4-H more accessible, we've introduced more in-school and after-school clubs, reducing barriers and creating opportunities for young Missourians to develop essential skills and leadership abilities.
- **Supporting agriculture and land stewardship:** We're addressing critical issues such as succession planning for family farms, rural mental health, agricultural business management and land stewardship. These initiatives are helping Missouri's farmers plan for the future and preserve the health of our land for future generations.
- **Advancing health initiatives:** Our team of community health field specialists, covering every region of the state, works directly with local leaders to assess health needs and bring UM System resources and expertise to these communities, supporting healthier lives and stronger communities.
- **Promoting economic development:** MU Extension is helping to create economic opportunities by working with individuals, supporting businesses in their growth and collaborating with communities to enhance local vibrancy. Through these efforts, we help bring new jobs, skills and possibilities to Missourians across the state.
- **Providing essential training:** Our continuing education programs prepare Missouri's firefighters and health care workers to meet the demands of their roles with the latest skills and knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared to serve our communities.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you feel as proud as I do of the accomplishments we've achieved together. The dedication and professionalism of MU Extension's faculty and staff are inspiring, and I am grateful to work alongside them—and each of you—as we make Missouri a stronger, healthier and more vibrant place. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are serving Missouri by delivering the University *for* Missouri.

Warm regards,

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

# Who we are

## Faculty and staff

### Benton County Faculty and Staff

**Amie Breshears**

Field Specialist in Agriculture Business  
660-438-5012

**Tammy Culpepper**

Nutrition Program Associate  
660-438-5012

**Angie Shepard**

Office Support  
660-438-5012

### Staff serving Benton County

**Wayne Prewitt**

West Central Missouri Regional Director  
417-448-7749

**Michelle Larson**

FNEP Associate Director  
660-383-1633

**Travis Harper**

Agronomy Specialist  
660-885-5556

**Gene Schmitz**

Livestock Specialist  
660-827-0591

**Joni Harper**

Natural Resources Specialist  
573-378-5358

**Allison Gunter**

Extension Engagement Specialist  
417-745-6767

**Alex Freeburger**

Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health  
660-827-0591

**Linda Clinton**

Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development  
417-448-2560

## Council members

**Josh Sater** Chairman

**Caitlin Dill** Vice-Chair

**Holly Eierman** Secretary

**Leslie Dickerson** Treasurer

**Rod Brethower**

**Leland Burnett**

**Holly Eierman**

**Rob Exendine**

**Dan Hagedorn**

**Brian Harms**

**Brittany Beeman**

**Noah Long**

**Scott Harms**

### **University of Missouri Extension Benton County**

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660-438-5012

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Website: <http://extension.Missouri.edu/Benton>

Office Hours: 9:00am-12:30pm

1:00pm-4:00pm

Monday-Friday

## County commissioners

**Steve Daleske** Presiding Commissioner

**Scott Harms** North Side Commissioner

**Larry Berry** South Side Commissioner

# Budget and more

## Appropriations budget

### Income

County Appropriations	46,697.16
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$46,697.16</b>

### Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	30,701.57
YPA	8,713.48
Travel	2,882.85
Telephone	336.72
Office Supplies/Service	1,933.01
Advertising	73.15
Insurance	1,177.00
Capital Repairs	21.75
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$45,839.53</b>

## Benton County partners

- *BENTON COUNTY TOURISM*
- *BENTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*
- *BENTON COUNTY ARTS*
- *BENTON COUNTY CATTLEMEN*
- *WARSAW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE*
- *LINCOLN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE*
- *COLE CAMP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE*
- *EQUITY BANK*
- *HAWTHORN BANK*
- *OAKSTAR BANK IN CLINTON*
- *WARSAW-LINCOLN AMBULANCE BUILDING*
- *COLE CAMP JAYCEES BUILDING*
- *LINCOLN CITY HALL BUILDING*
- *BENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE*
- *BENTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT*
- *WALMART*
- *G AND W MARKET*
- *TRUMAN VISITOR CENTER*
- *and more!*

## MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

Extension funding is a three-way partnership between federal, state, and county governments. The University of Missouri system uses federal and state money to 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 Benton County Extension Council, faculty, and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Benton County Commissioners for their continued support of University of Missouri Extension programs.



## Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Benton 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, and the county office benefits each year. You can also donate to a specific program such as 4-H or Master Gardeners.

# Benton County



## UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



### FY24 county students

**60 students**

- 51 Undergraduates
- 9 Graduate and professional students
- 47 Full-time students
- 13 Part-time students
- 23 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)



### County employees and retirees

**19 people employed by UM**

- 15 Campuses
- 4 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)

9 UM retirees and beneficiaries  
 UM salary and retirement income: \$888,690  
 UM state tax revenue: \$22,816  
 UM federal tax revenue: \$119,202



### County alumni

**Selected school alumni**

- 7 Medicine
- 11 Nursing
- 13 Health Professions
- 7 Dentistry
- 9 Pharmacy
- 9 Veterinary Medicine
- 53 Agriculture
- 28 Engineering
- 7 Law

**Alumni teaching K-12**

- 17 teachers
- 8.6% of all district teachers
- 1 principal or administrator
- 9.1% of all district principals and administrators



### County breakdown

**MU**

- 40 students
- 199 alumni
- 15 employees

**UMKC**

- 9 students
- 65 alumni
- 0 employees

**Missouri S&T**

- 9 students
- 17 alumni
- 0 employees

**UMSL**

- 2 students
- 8 alumni
- 0 employees



### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Benton County



County population: 19,887



### County services provided

**Health care (FY24)**

- 1,476 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$749,497 of uncompensated care
- 22 in-state patients seen at UMKC School of Dentistry with a statewide average of \$52.57 per patient in uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 552 visits to 319 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

**Extension (2023)**

- 10,970 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
- 1,075 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
- 8,013 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
- 999 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy

# Benton County



University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

## UM System Statewide Footprint

### Economic and Community Development Highlights

- In FY23, Business Development Specialists worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide to create or retain 98,527 jobs.



For every dollar invested from 2019 to 2021, the MU Extension Business Development Program has returned \$133 in economic impact for its clients by increasing sales more than \$1.6 billion. For a total impact of \$3.1 billion, the program has generated more than 37,000 jobs and attracted nearly \$451 million in capital investments and \$1.5 billion in government contracts.

- Between FY18 and FY23, UM System brought Missouri more than \$1.58 billion in federal and private research funds, funded primarily from outside the state, but spent within the state.



In FY24, UM System was issued 29 patents and filed 69 new U.S. patent applications.

- In FY24, the UM System awarded 707 design and construction project contracts throughout Missouri, for a total investment of \$287.3 million in the state.



In FY24, to improve access to medical and health related services, MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO program provided 16,887 hrs of case-based instruction to 3,113 learners located in 105 of 114 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis.

### 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)

### Education Highlights

#### FY24 Financial Aid Awards

In FY24, 69.7% of the UM System's 79,014 students received financial aid totaling \$1.048 billion

MU		UMKC	
28,608	\$583.6M	11,518	\$228.5M
students receiving financial aid	financial aid awarded	students receiving financial aid	financial aid awarded

Missouri S&T		UMSL	
6,720	\$127.7M	8,256	\$107.8M
students receiving financial aid	financial aid awarded	students receiving financial aid	financial aid awarded



UM System's MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) provides internet connectivity, access, support and training to 58 higher education institutions (230,000 students), 484 K-12 school districts (830,000 students) and 134 public libraries (serving nearly 3 million Missourians) in 2023.

- UM System awarded 50.5% of the 31,689 Bachelor's or higher degrees awarded by Missouri four-year public institutions in 2023-24.
- UM System awarded 35.0% of the 1,776 research doctorates and 26.8% of the 3,796 professional doctorates awarded by Missouri public and not-for-profit private institutions in 2023-24.
- In FY24, UM System's \$30.7 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants represented 96.9% of all NSF grants made to Missouri public colleges and universities.
- In 2024, over 12,400 Missourians accessed mobroadband.org, part of the UM System Broadband Initiative which helped the statewide build-out of high-speed internet infrastructure.

Supporting the University of Missouri is an investment in the future of Missouri.

The university advances Missouri citizens and communities through its mission of teaching, research, public service, and economic development across our four campuses and University of Missouri Extension.

Prepared in December 2024, based on the best available and most recent data. Data Sources include: Missouri Office of Administration • UM IR • MU Institute for Public Policy • Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) • MU • UMKC • Missouri S&T • UMSL • UM System • UM Health Care • MU Extension • US Census Bureau • US Dept. of Health and Human Services • National Science Foundation



# Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



## BENTON COUNTY

### Knowing Missouri's Needs

MU Extension asked Missourians to share the greatest challenges they and their communities face.

We heard that feedback and made big changes in the way we work with council and local partners to improve lives. Locally, a network of county engagement and subject matter specialists now share MU's knowledge, research and engagement, targeting programs, information and assistance in:

- agriculture and environment
- youth and family
- business and community
- health and safety

**For each grand challenge, MU Extension and Engagement targets a specific gain by 2023:**



#### Economic opportunity

Increase MU Extension and Engagement's economic impact to the State of Missouri from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion overall, and from \$88 billion to \$100 billion in agriculture, the top economic sector



#### Educational access and excellence

Increase participation in postsecondary education from 66% to 70%



#### Health and well-being

Improve Missouri's health ranking from 40th to 35th in the nation

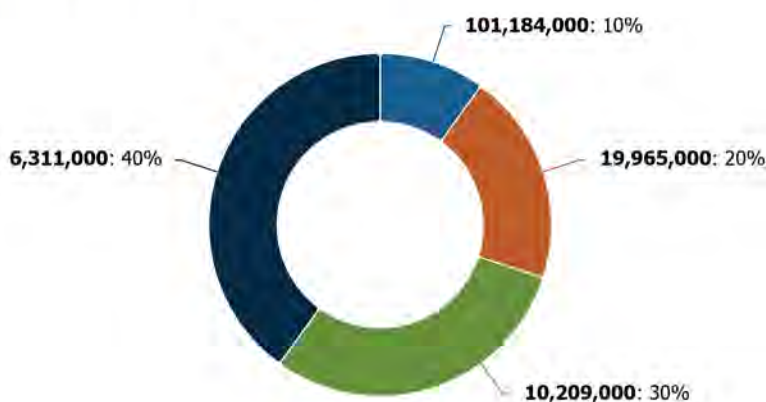
### Knowing Local Challenges



#### CHALLENGE 1: Economic Opportunity: Agricultural Economics

#### Leading Agricultural Products

Total Rank (Sales): \$10



Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, [Census of Agriculture](#), 2022.

#### Net Farm Income

Net farm income (total sales, government payments, and other farm-related income minus total farm expenses) reflects the strength of the local agricultural community and can be an important measure for lenders and policy makers. The report area had a combined net farm income of \$62,223,000 in 2017, an average of \$86,421 per farm. This compares favorably to the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Benton	720	\$86,421
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, [Census of Agriculture](#), 2022.

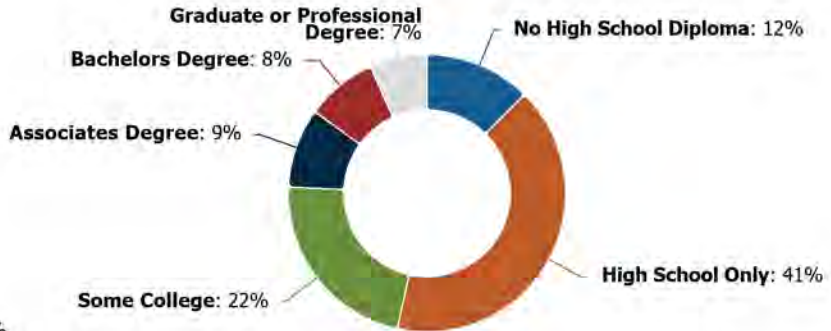


## CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *Educational Attainment*

### Adult Educational Attainment

Educational attainment shows the distribution of the highest level of education achieved in the report area, and helps schools and businesses understand the needs of adults, whether it be workforce training or the ability to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics opportunities. Educational attainment is calculated for persons over 25 and is an estimated average for the period from 2017 to 2021.

In the report area, 22.3% of adults have at least some college education and 17.6% of adults have an associate's level degree or higher. However, 41.1% stopped their formal educational attainment after completing high school, and 12.4% of adults did not complete high school.



#### No High School Diploma

12.38%

Missouri 8.69%

Benton

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2018-22.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2018-22.



## CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Access to Care*

### Mental Health Care Providers

Mental health is a critical public health issue worldwide. Access to mental health services is a challenge across Missouri, which ranks 46 out of 51 states in provider access. In the trio there are approximately 22 credentialed professionals providing mental health care to serve the area's 19,394 residents. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 882 to 1, which means there is 1 provider for every 882 persons. The ratio of persons to providers in the report area is higher than the state average of 346:1, which means there are fewer providers per person in this area.

#### Ratio (Population to Providers)

882:1

Missouri 346:1

Benton

Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, [CMS - National Plan and Provider Enumeration System \(NPPES\)](#). December 2024.

### Primary Care Providers

Older adults make up a historically large percentage of the U.S. population and meeting the healthcare needs of an aging population can be challenging. In the report area, there are approximately 5 primary care physicians (MDs and DOs) to serve the area's 6,164 residents over the age of 65. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 1,233:1, which means there is 1 provider for every 1,233 older adults. The ratio of adults to providers in the report area is higher than the state average of 250:1, which means there are fewer providers per person in this area.

#### Rate per 100,000 Seniors

81.10

Missouri 399.40

Benton

Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [HRSA - Area Health Resource File](#). 2021.





## CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: *Food Security & Access*

The ability to access healthy and affordable food can be a challenge in Missouri's rural and urban communities alike — with negative impacts on people's health and food security status. Food insecurity is the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life. It is associated with many adverse social and health outcomes. Missouri's overall food insecurity rate is 11.8% — and 12.8% for children under age 18. More than half of Missouri's 114 counties and the City of St. Louis report food insecure populations of 12.6% or higher. Multiple interventions that address the root causes of food insecurity can impact this critical public health issue. Learn more at the [Food Security Story Map](#).

### Population Living in a Food Desert

30.52%

Benton

Missouri

17.69%

Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, [USDA - Food Access Research Atlas](#), 2019.



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## **Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18**

A community of 62 youth-building life skills, contributing to their community and becoming college and career-ready.

### **Common Measures**

Findings from a 2021-22 evaluation study show that Missouri 4-H:

#### ***Missouri 4-H Inspires Kids to Do***

98% said they are willing to work hard on something difficult.

91% set personal goals.

97% said they try to learn from their mistakes.

98% said they treat others the way they want to be treated.

#### ***Missouri 4-H Grows True Leaders***

97% said they like to learn about people who are different from them.

93% said they think about others' feelings before they say something.

75% reported feeling comfortable being a leader.

#### ***4-H Builds Leadership and Communication Skills***

95% help others reach their goals.

86% comfortable speaking in a group.

99% said they show respect for other's ideas.

85% Can work with someone who made them upset.

95% Look for ways to involve all members of a group.

#### ***4-H Builds Social and Emotional Skills***

94% said they keep trying until they reach their goals.

89% Stop thinking about their choices when making a decision.

97% reported that they like to learn new things.

91% of Missouri 4-H'ers surveyed said they are willing to try something they might get wrong.



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## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18

### 4-H Clubs

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects in 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 participants = **256**
  - *\*Duplicates not removed.*
- 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.

### Volunteers

- 133 youth and adult volunteers support 4-H members. 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 Benton County 4-H volunteers was worth more than \$170,800.00 in 2024. More importantly, these individuals serve as role models and mentors for youth.

### Reference

Independent Sector (2024). Independent sector releases new value of volunteer time of \$33.49 per hour. Retrieved from <https://independentsector.org/blog/independent-sector-releases-new-value-of-volunteer-time-of-33-49-per-hour/>



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## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18

### 4-H SNAC Clubs

The Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) clubs are available in various settings, including community programs and before, during, and after school programming. These clubs empower youth to enhance their knowledge of nutrition and fitness. Participants take on leadership roles, becoming ambassadors of Healthy Living by designing and executing projects that promote nutrition education and improve fitness in their communities. In 2024, Missouri established 121 SNAC Clubs, engaging 2,543 youth and reaching over 7,330 others through their leadership initiatives.

### 4-H SNAC Club Mini-grants

In 2024, the Missouri 4-H Foundation partnered with Healthy Blue to provide mini-grants of up to \$500 per county, supporting 4-H SNAC clubs throughout the state in implementing their leadership projects. 37 counties received funding, amounting to \$18,500 in mini-grants.

### Leadership Projects

4-H SNAC Club completes a leadership project each year. This year, youth created:

- Organizing canned food drives for local food pantries
- Creating student cookbooks
- Rebuilding and planting in community gardens
- Weeding and maintaining garden spaces
- Teaching younger youth soccer skills
- Providing snacks for a local nursing home
- Cooking family meals
- Hosting bingo games with healthy foods and snacks
- Making salsa for faculty and staff
- Growing lettuce for their class pet, a bearded dragon
- Presenting to younger youth
- Organizing inclusive soccer games for the after-school program
- Launching the "Healthy Choices, Happy Faces" initiative
- Designing yard signs and posters to promote food groups and healthy eating
- Raising awareness about healthy living
- Cooking garden produce for families and staff
- Donating fresh produce to local food banks
- Replacing garden beds with new ADA-accessible ones
- Setting up a salad bar for teachers
- Collecting and packing Buddy Bags for elementary students.



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## **Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18**

### **Missouri 4-H Summer Enrichment 2024**

Missouri 4-H engaged in expanded and enhanced programming throughout the summer of 2024. 4-H team members across Missouri provided diverse educational opportunities to 5,349 young people. Program offerings included career and college awareness and exploration through simulations, program series, and day camps. In partnership with community libraries and community centers, youth unfamiliar and familiar with 4 H had the opportunity to engage in hands-on STEM programs, including coding, aerospace, robotics, embryology, and gardening.

Responses to the family survey showed that 60% of youth developed better work habits, 70% of youth had an increased interest in learning, 84% felt that 4-H showed respect for their family's culture, and 70% felt that the 4-H program helped prepare their child for the future. Of the families participating in the program, 41% had a parent who participated in 4-H as a child, and 48% were not 4-H participants.

Funding for the ARPA Summer Enrichment grant was made possible through a contract with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to distribute a portion of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) 1% Set-aside for Summer Enrichment to youth-serving programs across the state.

## **State Events**

### **Working Together Online to Bangladesh**

Missouri 4-H'ers partnered with teens from Bangladesh in a program called EXCEL. The program, a collaboration between Missouri 4-H and the Bangladesh Institute of Information and Communication Technology in Development (BIID), aimed to promote cultural understanding, teamwork, communication, and critical thinking. The seven-week program featured one-hour virtual meetings, allowing both groups of 13- and 14-year-olds to discuss interests, cultural practices, and topics like family, traditions, food, hobbies, and sports despite the 8,000-mile distance between them.



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## **Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18**

### **State Meats Judging Contest University of Missouri – Columbia, MO February 2024**

At the State 4-H Meats Judging event on February 17 at MU's campus, 54 youth judged and identified meat cuts, developing essential skills for careers in the meat industry and informed consumer choices. Youths in the meat judging program develop key life skills to aid in their future career success and success as lifelong consumers, Calvert said, noting that 84% of participants feel they are educated consumers of agricultural products and 86% are seeking to learn more; 83% are comfortable sharing their knowledge of agriculture with others; 77% feel they are an advocate for the agriculture industry and 63% are seeking a career in agriculture. A majority (55%) said their involvement in this project area and contest has encouraged them to continue their education in a related field. After competing, more than half of the youths said they had more knowledge in carcass judging, cuts judging, meats judging terminology, and giving reasons than before the contest.

### **Sportfishing SLAM Spring**

The University of Missouri Extension State 4-H Sportfishing SLAM ran from the beginning of March to the end of June. The SLAM offers nine different categories made up of varying species, habitats, and baits. 4-H members are challenged to stretch their knowledge and skills surrounding fishing in the State of Missouri.

### **Ignite Washington D.C. Spring 2024**

Forty-two Missouri teens recently attended Ignite by 4-H, a four-day conference in Washington, D.C., focused on STEM, agriscience, and healthy living in Washington, D.C. Missouri delegates created a total of three projects to bring home: plans to improve trash, recycling, and composting options to promote sustainability; using gardening as a tool for mental health and to combat food insecurity; and developing an organization to provide support for civil rights in experiences with the justice system.

### **Missouri 4-H Equine Tour May 24**

Missouri 4-H youth experienced and explored the various facets of the equine industry firsthand through a week-long trip to Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado to explore the equine industry present in those areas. Highlights of the trip included stops at the Pony Express Museum in St. Joseph, the Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Facility and the Haythorn Ranch in Elm Creek, Nebraska, Cheyenne Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming, the University of Wyoming in Laramie, the Vee Bar Ranch in Laramie, Colorado State and more!



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**Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18**

### **State Teen Conference May 2024**

Teen Conference offers a fantastic opportunity to experience being a teen in 4-H. This event provides a safe and enjoyable campus experience where youth can enhance their skills and forge new friendships. The "Road Trippin'" theme drew the participation of 209 youths from 50 counties in 2024.

### **State Congress University of Missouri - Columbia, MO May 2024**

Youth from all corners of the state converged on the University of Missouri campus for the 78<sup>th</sup> annual State 4-H Congress. With over 121 teens aged 14-18, the event offered a wide range of hands-on workshops tailored to their individual interests. These workshops covered diverse areas, from science to leadership development, complemented by experiences at the MU Student Center, social activities, and inspirational speakers. State 4-H Congress played a vital role in helping these teens develop essential life skills, explore potential career paths, nurture leadership abilities, and foster new friendships with peers from across the state.

### **State Poultry Day**

#### **University of Missouri – Columbia, Mo. June 2024**

Poultry Day, which occurred on June 8 at MU's campus. Competitions included a poultry judging contest, quiz bowl, egg demonstration contest, photo contest, and dozen egg contest.

The State 4-H Poultry Day allows youths to gain firsthand knowledge of cutting-edge industry practices and basic poultry knowledge to help them succeed in their projects. 4-H members gained skills in grading eggs and poultry carcasses, identifying poultry cuts, and selecting quality live poultry, all while networking with youths from around the state who shared similar interests.

### **Career Pathways Conference MU – Columbia, Mo July 24**

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual 4-H College and Career Pathways Conference on the University of Missouri campus, 50 middle-school, and high-school-aged youth had the opportunity to participate in activities and workshops covering various themes, including goal-setting, personal finance, and career exploration. They took practice ACT tests, had mock interviews, and built lasting relationships while immersing themselves in a hands-on college experience.



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## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18

### Equine Events

At the Missouri State Fair 4-H/FFA Horse Show, 210 youths made 1,421 entries. It was an event where they could showcase their riding and horsemanship skills.

The State 4-H Horse Public Speaking and Demonstration Contest and the Youth Equine Fine Arts and Poster Contests took place on July 24 at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

<https://extension.missouri.edu/news/youths-demonstrate-speaking-presentation-artistic-skills-at-4-h-equine-event>

### 4-H at the Missouri State Fair

#### 4-H Building

3,611 exhibits from 2,416 youth in 89 counties were displayed in the 4-H Building at the Missouri State Fair in 2023.

<https://extension.missouri.edu/news/missouri-4-hers-celebrate-summer-best-story-at-the-state-fair>

#### Livestock and Animal Events

3,195 livestock entries were made by youth at the 2024 Missouri State Fair.

#### Shooting Sports State Shoot

At the Shooting Sports State Shoot, youth demonstrated their skills and competed within their chosen discipline(s).

#### Western Heritage State Shoot

Youth competed in Cowboy Action Shooting, Period Clothing/Character Development, and Western Knowledge during the Western Heritage State Shoot.

### Livestock Judging Contest

#### University of Missouri - Columbia, Mo. June 2024

The State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest occurred on June 3 at MU's campus, with 94 youth participating. Through involvement in 4-H judging teams, members must make rapid, logical decisions and defend them via oral reasons. More than half of the participants responded that compared to before participating in this event, they now have more knowledge of identifying visual and genetic characteristics of an animal, comparing their perception of an animal against the ideal, applying what they know about one species of livestock to another, judging classes, using livestock judging terminology and giving reasons.





# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs

## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18



**Community clubs** are organized by volunteer club leaders and teams of recognized volunteers. Members attend club meetings, elect officers, enroll in projects and plan learning and community service activities. Some clubs opt to be single-project clubs, where all members focus on the same project.



**4-H In-school clubs** meet during the school day. Members participate in projects that supplement their existing lessons. Clubs may meet for short periods or span the full 4-H program year. Members can elect officers and plan learning activities with options of public speaking, community service and links to career readiness.



**4-H Natural Resources programs** employ hands-on activities in climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing and wildlife conservation. The **Shooting Sports program**, which teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting and archery principles, is a prime illustration of how 4-H programs promote holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs offer opportunities to cultivate life skills, self-worth and conservation ethics.



### Legend



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being

# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact

Benton County 4-H clubs offer long-term educational experiences in which members learn life skills, such as Decision-making, project mastery, public speaking and working with others. Members learn by doing under the guidance of adult volunteers, who teach projects ranging from computer science, and arts and crafts to Animal science and healthy living. Clubs also involve Youth in community service, camping, and educational trips.

### 4-H'ers are...

**4X** more likely to give back to their communities

**2X** more likely to make healthier choices

**2X** more likely to participate in STEM activities

## 4-H Participants

Benton County had 3 Clubs with 62 youth and 51 Volunteers

- *Lake Creek Lamplighters*
- *All Arounders*
- *Turkey Creek Homesteaders*

All 3 Clubs received Purple Community Service Club Award Seals in 2024.



### Local Profiles and Stories

#### **Embryology (Hatching Chicks in the Classroom)**

The 4-H embryology program is a popular classroom supplement designed to provide youth with a hands-on science learning experience by observing pre-incubated eggs that hatch over the course of a few days under their care.

256 students from 3 schools participated in Embryology, resulting in 145 hours of learning. Students learn about where their food comes from while gaining knowledge of embryo and reproductive development life cycles.

By using experimental learning and hands-on activities in the classroom, Teachers can build classrooms geared towards developing student's scientific and observational learning skills. Participants developed the social skills necessary to care for and nurture a living being by helping turn and care for the chicks both before and after they hatch alongside their teacher.

#### **4-H Camp at Heit's Point**

Our Camp council includes 5 counties, Carroll, Chariton, Benton, Saline, and Pettis. Due to Specialist Staffing, we partnered with and held camp at Heit's Point, in Warsaw, MO this year. Our camp theme was, "4-H Camp: A universe of possibilities!". Youth participated in several activities throughout each day including, flag raising/lowering, dancing, arts and crafts, singing, swimming, astronomy, team-building, campfires, and games. Camp ran from June 5th-7th.

6 youth attended from Benton County

#### **Benton County 4-H/FFA FAIR and Missouri State Fair**

The Benton County event was held June 27-29. Over 15 towns were represented by 95 youth. 441 Exhibits, including Beef Cattle, Sheep, Swine, Dog, Poultry, Rabbits, Goats, Cured Meats, Arts and Crafts, Cake Decorating, Graphic Design, Foods, Floriculture, Photography, STEM, Welding, and Woodworking.

Lots of youth earned Blue Ribbons to attend the Mo. State Fair.

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# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact



Turkey Creek Members at Benton County 4-H/Youth Fair

# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact



Lake Creek Lamplighters 4-H Club

# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact



# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact



Lake Creek 4-H Club is picking up trash to keep the county beautiful!

Lake Creek members at Cole Camp Fair.



# Benton County

Missouri 4-H

## Local Impact



Amelia represented the All Arounders 4-H Club in the Cooking with Honey Contest. She placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Senior Division.

Lake Creek members Gus placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Junior Category and Charlotte placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Intermediate Category.

They demonstrated delicious recipes that included Honey Meatballs, Honey Butter, and Indian Honey Cake.







MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Agriculture and Environment**



**The Missouri Agriculture, Food and Forestry Innovation Center** (MAFFIC) provides

dedicated technical assistance to help value-added agricultural producers launch or expand their businesses. Through personalized support in marketing, product development, business planning and financial analysis, MAFFIC business counselors equip producers with the knowledge and tools needed for success. Each year, these free services reach more than 150 producers, driving innovation and growth in Missouri agriculture.



MU Extension Specialists quickly respond to **emergencies and disasters** across the state. If a disease outbreak occurs in livestock, specialists are there. If a natural disaster such as flooding occurs, specialists are there. Missouri farmers can count on MU Extension to guide them through emerging issues with knowledge and expertise.



**The Missouri Master Gardener program**

enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and then apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



**In 2024, over 3,600 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed 98,200 VOLUNTEER HOURS – giving back over \$3 million to their communities.**

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

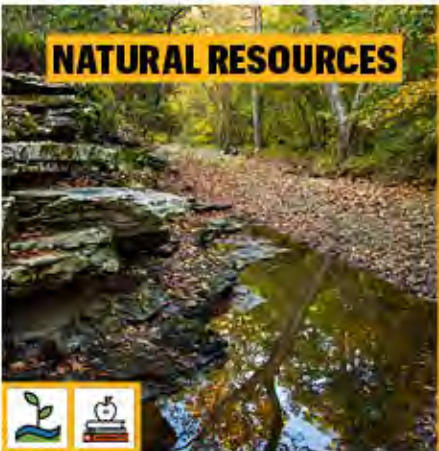


MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Agriculture and Environment**



**The Missouri Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM)**, funded by USDA grants, has been an important extension program for more than 30 years. Mizzou IPM distributes articles, pest monitoring data and publications on how to improve the application of integrated pest management strategies and systems in crops. In addition, the new Soybean Growth Monitoring Report is released through IPM every two weeks during the growing season.

**The MU Soil Testing Program delivers research-based nutrient and lime recommendations to more than 32,500 customers annually.**



**The Missouri Master Naturalist program** is a community-based initiative for adults, supported by the Missouri Department of Conservation and MU Extension. It aims to create a group of knowledgeable volunteers who can offer education, outreach and service for the responsible management of natural resources in Missouri communities.

Additionally, the **Missouri Woodland Steward program** offers a short course that equips private landowners with knowledge of woodland management, helping them identify wildlife habitats, develop plans and connect with local natural resource experts.

**"A lot of veterans come right out of the service and may feel disconnected and may be struggling with finding job opportunities. The Heroes to Hives program offers a diversion as well as opportunities."**

**Eric Work, Heroes to Hives participant**



**Heroes to Hives** offers free professional training in beekeeping to veterans, promoting financial and personal wellness through community development. Missouri's Heroes to Hives group has trained more than 1,200 veterans since 2021. It is the nation's largest agriculture training program for U.S. military service members.

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Agriculture and Environment**

## Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension's 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 CFP continuing education. The total continuing education hours reported to the 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, the Missouri Department of Revenue, and extension ag business specialists.

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. Planning is underway to offer training 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.



### Legend



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



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# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Agriculture and Environment**

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# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*



### 2024 Warsaw Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade Grand Marshalls

For my dedicated service to the Warsaw Chamber and community, I was honored along with Jo Ann Lane, as the '2024 Warsaw Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade Grand Marshall' at the annual Warsaw Chamber of Commerce Christmas Celebration in December. It was a total surprise and a great honor! We had a wonderful time and distributed lots of candy! Also pictured is Jo Ann Lane, Benton Co. Economic Developer.



Amie Breshears received the Pioneer Award from the Benton County Extension Council at the 2024 Annual Meeting in recognition of her leadership in hosting the state-wide Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) Conference in Benton County. Pictured (left to right) Amie Breshears; and Caitlin Dill, Benton County Extension Council Chair.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*



**FARM MANAGEMENT**  
*On my own*

A program to help female landowners and operators understand ag leases and 'what it's worth' when it comes to land and agricultural activities

OCT 15	WARSAW	JAN 14	CALIFORNIA
OCT 24	WARRENSBURG	JAN 21	VERSAILLES
NOV 6	BOONVILLE	JAN 30	ONLINE
DEC 10	ONLINE	FEB 18	CLINTON
DEC 12	SEDALIA	FEB 25	HARRISONVILLE

*all programs 6-8pm*

**REGISTER:** [Extension.Missouri.Edu/Events](https://Extension.Missouri.Edu/Events)

Extension  
University of Missouri

### NEW PROGRAM THIS YEAR – OFFERED IN ALL MY COUNTIES

#### Farm Management – On My Own

A brand-new offering in 2024, 'Farm Management – On My Own' helped female landowners and operators understand ag leases and farmland values, rental rates, and custom work costs. The program debuted in the spring and summer of 2024 with an in-person class offered in 8 counties in the West Central Region. Because of updated farmland values and rental rates survey data, as well as positive evaluation response, another round of programs, both in-person and online, was offered in the fall of 2024 and will continue into the spring of 2025. I created the program in response to questions I was getting from female landowners about their farmland and farm operations.

#### *By the numbers:*

- 64 registrants
- 100% would recommend the program to others
- 3 presenters
- 4 states represented – *Missouri, Florida, Minnesota, Wisconsin*
- 19 Missouri counties represented – *Adair, Benton, Boone, Buchanan, Callaway, Cass, Cedar, Cooper, Douglas, Greene, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Moniteau, Pettis, Polk, St. Clair, Saline, Vernon*
- 11 West Central Region counties represented - *Benton, Cass, Cedar, Cooper, Henry, Johnson, Moniteau, Pettis, Polk, St. Clair, Vernon*
- Partners included *USDA-FSA, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Ag Bankers, MU Center for Regenerative Agriculture*

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

You are viewing Amie Breshears' screen. View Options

Mary2 Amie Breshears Olivia Callison - CMA Mary Sobba Jason C. Morris Nina Carter

### Farmland Values (\$ per Acre)

	Cropland				Pastureland		
	Irrigated	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	P
State Average	10,214	8,524	6,996	5,556	5,687	5,043	4
Northwest	11,037	8,915	6,874	5,244	5,409	4,735	3
North Central	10,333	8,167	6,135	5,013	4,663	4,400	3
Northeast	12,833	9,912	7,906	6,396	6,415	5,756	5
West	8,933	8,202	7,140	6,048	6,215	5,444	4
Central	9,636	7,863	6,830	5,422	5,848	5,254	4
East	11,689	10,988	9,249	7,253	7,056	5,999	5
Southwest	5,531	5,650	4,563	3,906	4,320	3,883	3
South Central	6,688	6,194	5,203	4,219	4,547	3,776	3
Southeast	10,658	9,694	8,094	5,583	5,625	4,950	3
Urban Area	22,833	13,833	11,750	9,625	9,389	8,556	7

Participants Chat Share Screen Summary All Comparisons Record Show Captions Reactions Apps Whiteboards

Amie Breshears (pictured top left) teaches about MO Farmland Values during the 'Farm Management-On My Own' ONLINE program on Dec. 10, 2024.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### **Benton County Grazing School – Benton County**

I was honored to be a presenter at the Benton County Grazing School in Lincoln in September. My specific areas of focus were 1) Resource Planning and 2) Economics. In a nutshell, my goal was to help producers by providing tools to evaluate the business/financial impact of utilizing a managed grazing system in their operation. The Benton Co. Soil & Water District (and others around the state) has costshare funds available for managed grazing systems; one of the requirements to be eligible for costshare is that producers attend a Grazing School to learn about managed grazing systems before they create one on their own operation. It was great to meet Benton County producers as well as folks from surrounding counties. They had lots of good questions and there was plenty of interesting discussion. Gene Schmitz, Travis Harper, and Mark Kennedy also presented. Dwane Kreisler generously allowed the School to visit his farm operation and see a 'real world' managed grazing system. Tina Dulaban, Jamie Henderson, and the Benton Co. Soil & Water Office staff always do a great job planning and managing the logistics and details – from the location to materials to food and more!

### **Farm Tax Workshops**

I hosted a Farm Tax Workshop in Lincoln on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 6:30-8:30pm at Lincoln City Hall. Registration was free and we had 4 in-person attendees.

I hosted the Farm Tax Workshop in Cole Camp on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30-3:30pm at the Cole Camp Library. Registration was free and we had 5 attendees.

Topics included updates on livestock tax issues, Form 1099 requirements, sale and exchange of farm property, and Beneficial Owner Information updates.

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# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*



Progressive Ag Safety Day - A Lincoln Elementary student models how to wear a helmet correctly before using ATV's or UTV's for classmates, with Todd Lorenz, MU Extension.

### Progressive Ag Safety Day at Lincoln School District

I coordinated the first Progressive Ag Safety Day at the Lincoln School District – held in conjunction with Lincoln High School FFA Barnyard Day on Oct. 11th. Progressive Ag Safety Day at Lincoln went off without a hitch!

Students learned how to prevent and avoid accidents, which are the leading cause of death for Missouri youth.

Going into the day, my goals were simple: 1) Everyone learn. 2) Everyone enjoy the day. 3) Everyone make a new friend. 4) Everyone stay safe!

*\*\*If even one child learned something at Progressive Ag Safety Day that later prevented injury or even saved their life, all the work and effort is worth it!\*\**

- 323 elementary students pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade attended hands-on safety presentations
- Over 400 youth and adults and 9 partner organizations were involved.
- Progressive Ag Safety Foundation grant funds provided a t-shirt and take-home bag for every student and volunteer.
- Benton County Extension Council donated \$200 to pay for lunch for the volunteers.

Our sessions:

- ATV/UTV safety (Todd Lorenz),
- electrical safety (Keith Mueller, Central Electric Power Co.)
- bicycle/helmet safety (Bonnie Etter, Ethel Keyte, Barry Pabst - Benton Co. Health Dept)
- sun safety (Linda Clinton)
- drone safety (Gene Schmitz)
- food safety/nutrition – Michelle Larson, Tammy Culpepper, Angie Shepard
- Picture Taker / 'Roam'er – Allison Gunter (also Asst. Coordinator)
- Amie Breshears – Coordinator

FFA session topics:

horses, beef cattle, fishing, goats, rabbits, hunting, trapping/taxidermy, FFA history, plants, rabbits, and more!

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### Ag Lenders meeting in Bolivar, Nov. 19th

I presented on 'Missouri Rental Rates' at the 2024 West-Central Region Ag Lenders Seminar, held at Smith's Restaurant in Bolivar on Nov. 19th. There were 43 attendees from 14 counties, 3 MU presenters (Amie Breshears, Ben Brown, and Wesley Tucker), and Marla Young from MASBDA. Wesley Tucker coordinated the meeting and I assisted him.

- 14 Missouri counties represented – *Bates, Benton, Boone, Cass, Cedar, Dallas, Greene, Henry, Laclede, Pettis, Polk, Taney, Vernon, Wright*
- 9 West Central Region counties represented – *Bates, Benton, Cass, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Pettis, Polk, Vernon*

#### EVALUATION:

- 100% said 'the presented information will help me serve and advise my ag clients'.
- 95% agreed or strongly agreed that:
  - The material met my expectations
  - The program was well-organized and effectively conducted
  - The meal and facilities were suitable for this experience

#### TOPICS INCLUDED:

- crop market outlook
- livestock market outlook
- input costs and enterprise budgets
- policy updates from MASBDA
- land values and cash rental rates



43 attended the **Ag Lenders West-Central** meeting in Bolivar on Nov. 19 at Smith's Restaurant. *Amie Breshears* presenting. *Extension Specialists Ben Brown, Wesley Tucker, and Marla Young with MASBDA also presented.*

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### **Feedlot School – Selling Direct to Consumer – West Plains,**

The MU Extension Value-Added Meats Team was invited to present at the MU Extension Feedlot School in West Plains, MO. Topics included meat cuts, rules/regulations, working with the processor/customer, pricing, and marketing. I presented on 'Finding & Keeping Your Customer' with colleague Jennifer Lutes, including marketing, identifying your customer and market channel(s), creating and sharing your advertising 'messages,' and social media/websites. I also moderated the 'Beef Producer Panel.'



**West Plains Feedlot School – Ag Producer, Students, and Extension Specialists at Farm/Ranch Visit**

### **Women Landowners Ag Conference in Concordia on April 5th**

I was invited to present a "Land Values, Rental Rates, and Determining Fair Leases" session at the Women Landowners Ag Conference in Concordia on April 5th. A great group of ladies attended my session – it was fun to get to know them and to help them learn about farmland values, rental rates, and ag lease components. My presentation covered the most recent MU Extension research on Missouri farmland values and rental rates, the components of ag leases, and the importance of putting leases in writing. I also connected with other Extension colleagues and folks from USDA and other partner organizations.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### Missouri Agricultural Extension Professionals – ‘Agriculture Leadership Award’

Gene Schmitz and I nominated Maplewood Acres Farm, Mr. Matt, and Dr. Jennifer Boatright for the Missouri Agricultural Extension Professionals (MAEP) ‘Agriculture Leadership Award’ for 2024, and they received the award in Columbia at the annual MAEP meeting.



**Pictured (left to right): Gene Schmitz, MU Extension Livestock Specialist; MAEP Agriculture Leadership Award Winners Dr. Jennifer Boatright and Mr. Matt Boatright; and Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist**

### **Leadership contributions to Missouri agriculture:**

Dr. Jennifer and Mr. Matt Boatright have a lifelong legacy of contributing to Missouri agriculture as farmers, public servants, in the workplace, as volunteers, and through their families. The Boatrights own and operate Maplewood Acres Farm, a multi-generational family farm. The grass-based seed stock production farm encompasses 775 acres in eastern Pettis County. The couple raises Red Angus and Polled Hereford cattle, commercial Hair sheep, and Kiko/Boer cross goats. They held a yearly Bull and Heifer Production sale at their farm for more than 35 years; however, in recent years, they have experienced such high demand for their cattle that all available animals have been spoken for before the sale could take place. Similarly, in the past, they held a sheep and goat production sale at their farm, but they no longer do so because all available animals have been sold before a sale could be held. In addition to operating their farm, Jennifer and Matt operate J & M Veterinary Services.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

Matt has a degree in Animal Science from MU and the Agriculture Leadership of Tomorrow, Class VI. He has been an Ag Teacher, served 8 years as a member of the Missouri House of Representatives from 1985-1997. He was Deputy Director and Acting Director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture from 2005 to 2009 and is currently Market President of Wood & Huston Bank in Sedalia. Jennifer has a doctorate in veterinary medicine from MU and served as a veterinarian at Thompson Hills Animal Clinic in Sedalia for 30 years. Jennifer serves on the Board of Directors for the Central Missouri Electric Cooperative and is also a member of the Sedalia Animal Advisory Control Board. The Boatrights are members of Maplewood Church.

The Boatrights were selected as the 2017 Farm Family of the Year for Pettis County. They are members of the Pettis County Cattlemen's Association, Pettis County Farm Bureau, and Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

The Boatright's have been married for 34 years and have two grown children, both MU graduates who work in agriculture, and five grandchildren.

### **Leadership contributions to the University of Missouri Extension:**

For many years, Jennifer and Matt Boatright have demonstrated leadership as dedicated supporters of MU Extension programming efforts, educational opportunities, and outreach. As Council members, partners, fundraisers, and goodwill ambassadors, Jennifer and Matt have been critical to the success of MU Extension. Jennifer is serving her second consecutive 2-year term as a Pettis County MU Extension Council member. During her time on the Council, she has served as Council Treasurer and has also served on several Council committees. The Boatrights have generously partnered with MU Extension by hosting multiple Grazing Schools, Pasture Walks, and other MU Extension educational events at their farm over the years. They have also hosted the MU School of Medicine Rural Scholars Program 'Rural Immersion Tour' at their farm and supported MU Extension Ag Outlook meetings. Further, they have been generous sponsors of the Pettis County MU Extension Council funding and fundraising efforts, including the yearly fundraiser dinner. In recognition of their contributions to MU Extension, Jennifer and Matt Boatright were selected for the MU Extension Leaders Honor Roll in 2020. Their leadership has been imperative for the success of MU Extension.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### Ag/Farm Safety Booth – Missouri State Fair

I was honored to be chosen to work at the 'Ag/Farm Safety Booth' at the Missouri State Fair. I was blessed to have several Extension colleagues and folks from the Missouri Department of Labor to work with as the booth was bustling!

- In a nutshell, our job was to help fair-goers by providing safety information for ag producers and everyday people. Check out the new website, 'Show Me Farm Safety'!
- We also shared information about the new 988 Missouri Crisis Line and the MO AgriStress Helpline (a confidential farmer-to-farmer resource available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text 833-897-2474. *It's OK to need help. It's OK to help. It's OK to ask for help.*)
- We met and shared information with thousands of people – it's always good to see old friends and make new ones!
- Kids especially love the 'grain bin' simulator, where you see how many pounds you can pull if someone needs a rescue. Moms and dads and even grandpas and grandmas get in on it too! We had an 88-year-old young lady try it and a dad who pulled 342 pounds, the most I've ever seen pulled.
- Full disclosure – except for that guy, your best pull is never enough! It takes 325 pounds of 'pull' to rescue a 160 lb. person buried to their waist. Our message is 1) stay out of grain bins, 2) if you must get in a grain bin, wear a harness and tie it off, and 3) always have a spotter outside the bin.



Extension Colleague David Middleton, and I at the fair in the Ag/Farm Safety booth

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Amie Breshears, MU Extension Ag Business Specialist*

### Media Efforts

Media efforts included social media posts in my coverage areas and statewide, monthly newspaper columns on Farm Records and Farm Financial Measures, and media interviews for print publications and radio. I continue sharing information via email with my subscribers on various Ag Business topics. I get very positive feedback from this form of outreach.

### Economic Development

**Benton County Economic Development Committee** – continued facilitation of the Benton County Building Local Prosperity (BLP) work through the Benton County Economic Development Committee and the surrounding local leadership team of county leaders and stakeholders working with Jo Ann Lane, Benton County Economic Developer. This includes monthly meetings and frequent, ongoing communication with the committee and team.

### COMMUNITY WORK and OTHER PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

- **Benton County Arts Fest:** 5<sup>th</sup> Annual art show featuring only Benton County artists put on by a partnership with Benton County Tourism, Benton County Arts group, and Benton County MU Extension. The 2024 Benton County Arts Fest was the best yet!
- **Benton County Barn Quilt Trail** – The Barn Quilt Trail Committee oversees and maintains the Benton County Barn Quilt Trail of painted quilt blocks on select Benton County barns throughout the county to celebrate our agricultural roots and promote tourism.

[Barn Quilt Trail of Benton County, MO! \(welcometowarsaw.com\)](http://welcometowarsaw.com)

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# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Gene Schmitz, MU Extension Field Specialist in Livestock*

#### **PaddockTrac Sensor Yield Estimation Research**

Regional specialists continued working with MU faculty to harvest native warm-season grass plots with the goal of developing PaddockTrac forage yield estimates for native warm-season grass species. Samples were collected from NWSG plots at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg and Hundley-Whaley Extension & Education Center in Albany, MO. Additionally, forage samples were collected periodically to monitor the forage quality of NWSG throughout the growing season.



Figure 1. PaddockTrac sensor calibration harvest on native warm season grass plots at UCM-Warrensburg.

#### **Feedlot School**

Twenty producers from 10 Missouri counties and two states attended the 2-day Feedlot School in Boonville, MO. Participants learned information on the following topics: Why Feed Cattle in Missouri; Feedlot Performance Expectations; Fat Cattle Marketing; MU Extension Feedlot Budgets; Health Management; Beef Handling, Facilities, and Stockmanship; Diet Formulation; Starting Cattle on Feed & Bunk Management; Feeding Technologies; Feed Mixing Demonstration. In addition, two farm tours were held, and one industry representative discussed future cattle harvesting facilities in Missouri. Evaluation comments included the following: Very informative class; Best one I've been to - would recommend to everyone; Great tours, excellent speakers/material, good info; Lots of great information.



Figure 2. Day 2 Feedlot School producer tour.



# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Gene Schmitz, MU Extension Field Specialist in Livestock*

#### **Show-Me-Quality Assurance Training**

Youth participating in 4-H Market animal projects are required to take the SMQA training throughout their show careers. Participants learn livestock management skills related to producing 4-H market animal projects. Emphasis is placed on animal welfare, proper use of animal health products, food safety, and exhibiting good character traits while showing their livestock projects. 60 youth in Benton, Cooper, Moniteau, Morgan, and Pettis counties received training in 2024. Moniteau County reported, “The highlight of the evening was when Gene gave a sick banana a shot with a subcutaneous or intramuscular injection and then dissected the banana to determine if the injection was correctly administered.”

#### **Livestock Update During PAT training**

At the invitation of regional agronomy field specialists, I presented a livestock update during Pesticide Applicator Training sessions. This year’s presentation focused on maintaining proper body condition scores on beef cows, the importance of hay testing, locating hay, and evaluating pasture conditions. 157 producers from Benton, Cooper, Moniteau, Morgan, and Pettis counties attended these sessions.

#### **General Programming**

Over 4,700 direct and indirect contacts have been reported through 10/31/24. These have come from 38 different counties across Missouri. This does not include counties in SW MO that were reached through newsletters and media, nor other counties throughout the state that goes through state-wide media commercial publications.

Drought or abnormally dry conditions continued through the 2024 growing season, though not as severe as the previous two growing seasons. Due to ongoing weather challenges, Beef cattle feeding, pasture, and forage management were the focus of many of these contacts and media efforts.

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# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

*Gene Schmitz, MU Extension Field Specialist in Livestock*

### Other Programming Activities

I have continued work with the Alliance for Grassland Renewal, a “national organization focused on enhancing the appropriate adoption of novel endophyte tall fescue technology through education, incentives, self-regulation, and promotion.”

During 2024, I participated in two significant education efforts sponsored by the Alliance. On 3/21/24, approximately 50 producers, Extension agents, and other forage educators attended an in-person workshop at Batesville, AR, in cooperation with the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and the Livestock and Forestry Research Station at Batesville, AR.

A second educational event was held by Zoom on 11/19/24, specifically for Agriculture Extension agents and other agency personnel. One hundred and three participants from 15 states attended the 3-hour training. Participant affiliation included county and state Extension personnel and NRCS and SWCD personnel. After the training, participants received access to a PowerPoint presentation on toxic tall fescue renovation they could use for local programming. This continues to be a popular training event for this audience throughout the Fescue Belt.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### **Local Profiles and Stories** *Travis Harper, MU Extension Field Specialist in Agronomy*

**Private Pesticide Applicator Training**— Private Pesticide Applicator Training teaches producers how to safely store, handle, and use restricted-use pesticides in agricultural production. Proper application of pesticides results in more excellent safety for the applicator and their neighbors. Proper pesticide application results in reduced pesticide exposure to the environment, ultimately leading to safer living conditions for all Missourians. Approximately 12 Benton County residents received a license in 2024. There are currently 80 active private pesticide applicators in Benton County.

**Soil Testing** – More than 50 soil samples representing more than 1,000 acres were submitted through the Benton County Extension office for analysis at the University of Missouri Extension’s soil testing laboratory. Soil sampling provides Benton County’s forage and row crop producers with an accurate analysis of precisely what is in their soil. It provides them with recommended fertilizer application rates for the crop they are trying to grow. Benton County’s agronomist reviews the soil sample results with the producers, fine-tuning the recommendations for their particular situation and needs. Soil sampling and accurate fertilizer application increase crop production, reduce input cost, maximize profit, and reduce the environmental impact of fertilizer loss from fields through leaching and runoff.

**Heroes to Hives** – Heroes to Hives is a statewide program offered through Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) and the University of Missouri Extension that seeks to address veterans' financial and personal wellness through professional training and community development centered around beekeeping. It features online training through MIFFS and hands-on training from the University of Missouri Extension at our teaching apiaries in Warrensburg, Mt. Vernon, Poplar Bluff, and St. Louis. More than 1200 veterans across Missouri have participated in the program; numerous participants come from Benton County.

**Warsaw Elementary School Outreach** – MU Extension agronomist Travis Harper taught a program on insects in the garden for 40 elementary school students in Warsaw. Students learned how to examine plants for insects, distinguish between beneficial and damaging insects, and control harmful insects while protecting beneficial insects. Instilling an appreciation of the outdoors and the environment at a young age often leads to a better understanding and management of gardening systems in adulthood.

**Benton County Grazing School** – A management-intensive grazing school was held in Benton County in September 2024. The grazing school was designed to teach producers, educators and agency staff the basics of management intensive grazing with a hands-on approach. The 3-day workshop provided opportunities for in-depth discussions, field exercises, and reference materials covering livestock and agronomic grazing topics. Graduates of the school often produce more pounds of beef per acre, which has a lower environmental impact and production cost than traditional operators. More than 13 producers representing more than 5,000 acres attended the grazing school in 2024.

# Benton County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Profiles and Stories

*Heather Conrow, MU Extension Livestock Specialist*

#### Backyard Laying Hen Workshops

The number of backyard flocks continues to increase across the state. Over **40** participants attended these workshops, representing **10** counties.

Participants learned basic management practices to ensure a healthy backyard flock, in addition to biosecurity, licensing and labeling requirements, processing, washing, and grading eggs.

Hands-on opportunities included equipment demonstrations and processing, candling, and grading of eggs.

**100%** of participants said they would recommend the workshop to others for the following reasons, "lots of good information, great basis to start," "very informative and fun."



Participants increased their knowledge on the following topics with the percent increase following:

- Getting started with chickens: **38%**
- Caring for laying hens: **58%**
- Protecting your flock and family: **68%**
- Washing and storing eggs: **42%**
- Grading eggs: **72%**

#### Program Feedback

- "I've personally shown 4-H chickens for 10 years and I didn't know some of this."
  - "Showing equipment that does and doesn't work is very helpful."
  - "Now I know how to actually evaluate a hen rather than just guessing."
  - "Some of the best hands-on info I have been to."
  - "I didn't even think of these things (biosecurity) before."
- Being aware of these procedures is very helpful."
- "I learned a lot about grading eggs. I had no prior knowledge of how it worked."
  - "I previously thought candling was only for crack checking."
  - "Perfect for all ages."
  - "Great workshop! I would love to attend more."
  - "Well worth my time."



### Local Profiles and Stories

## SBDC

1. Capitalization – dollar amount of loans, grants, equity, etc. going into businesses over the past year due to the work of SBDC, Apex and TAAC counselors;
2. Sales increase – reported amount sales increases in client businesses over the past year due to counseling and other work done by the team;
3. New businesses started – number of new businesses started over the past year by SBDC clients;
4. Dollar of Awards – dollar amount of government contracts received as reported by clients over the past year;
5. Number of Awards – number of government contracts received as reported by clients over the past year;
6. Job created – number of jobs created, as reported by clients, over the past year;
7. Jobs retained – number of jobs retained, as reported by clients, over the past year;
8. Number of clients counseled – number of unique clients from the county who received counseling services from the SBDC, Apex, and TAAC programs;
9. Number of training event attendees – number of attendees from each county at training events over the past year.

<b>Capitalization</b>	\$1,187,500.00
<b>Sales Increase</b>	\$38,002.00
<b>New Businesses Started</b>	3
<b>Dollar of Awards</b>	\$327,454.00
<b>Number of Awards</b>	12
<b>Jobs Created</b>	9
<b>Jobs Retained</b>	99
<b>Number of Clients Counseled</b>	82
<b>Number of Training Event Attendees</b>	113

# Benton County

## Business and Community

### Local Impact

### *Farm Family of the Year 2024*



### ***2024 Missouri State Fair Farm Family of Benton County, Casey and Stephanie Ledbetter and family***

The Casey and Stephanie Ledbetter family of Warsaw, Missouri, were honored during the 67<sup>th</sup> annual Missouri Farm Family Day on August 12, 2024, at the Missouri State Fair.

The Ledbetter family was selected as the Benton County Missouri Farm Family by the University of Missouri Extension in Benton County and the local Farm Bureau. The family includes sons Zane and Pace.

Each year, the fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state who are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local outreach and extension programs such as 4-H or FFA.

The Ledbetter family operates a 180-acre cow/calf operation. In June, Zane showed Herefords and received Reserve Division Champion at the MCA All-Breeds Jr. Show. Pace is the owner/operator of "Pickle's Egg Farm". In 1992, Eddie and Brenda Arnett (Stephanie's parents) were selected for the Benton County Farm Family.



MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Community and Professional Health Education**



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.**



**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. The 2024 program was hosted by Union, Mo. and the 2025 host city will be Hayti, Mo.

**All of the 2024 participants agreed that the Rural Immersion Program significantly contributed to them FORMING INSIGHTS on the suitability of living and working in a rural community, both personally and professionally.**



**Strengthening Families Program: for Parents and Youth 10-14,** is a seven-session series for parents or caregivers and their young teens to attend together to improve family communication, resolve conflict and improve parental skills.

**A research study conducted by the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute found a RETURN OF \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing the Strengthening Families Program.**

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Continuing Education**



## The **Fire Service Leadership Enhancement Program**

(FSLEP) prepares fire and emergency service leaders for the opportunities and challenges they will face. For 22 years, the MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute has partnered with the Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs and the Missouri Association of Fire Protection Districts on this program.



## 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 hours of instruction within three years.



The Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) has provided basic and advanced training for law enforcement since 1948. LETI's **Basic Peace Officer Academy** exceeds the 600 hours of training required for licensure in Missouri. From 2019 through 2023, the basic academy has licensed almost 300 peace officers, more than any other academy in the state. During that time, all but one graduate became employed by a law enforcement agency. LETI graduates come from around the state and return to their communities to serve and protect.

### 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**



Divorcing or separating parents encounter distinct challenges when living apart. **Focus on Kids** guides parents in fostering effective co-parenting strategies to support their children through this process.

**“Understanding that divorce doesn’t ruin children, but parents can significantly influence positive outcomes through good communication, was invaluable.”**



**Stay Strong, Stay Healthy** teaches older adults basic exercises to boost strength, balance and overall daily functionality. Participants also gain insights into nutrition and wellness for healthy aging and active living.

**After eight weeks, Stay Strong, Stay Healthy participants significantly IMPROVED their STRENGTH, BALANCE and SLEEP QUALITY.**



**Show-Me Nutrition**

*Programming for preschool through junior high*

An engaging way to demonstrate the benefits of food safety, nutrition and physical activity. Meets Missouri’s Show-Me Health and Physical Education standards and the state’s School Wellness Policy.

**“We have struggled with our daughter’s picky eating for years and have tried so many techniques to try and get her to eat new foods. Your influence on her has worked magic this year. She has come home so excited about trying new foods and has now become not only willing but excited to try new things.”**

**Parent of a Show-Me Nutrition participant**

**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**

## SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2024

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought Missouri \$11,145,237 in federal funds. 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.

12,774 direct and indirect contacts were made in Benton County.

Participants in SNAP-Ed learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, being more willing to try 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 their 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 2024

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought Missouri \$1,624,777 in federal funds. 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.

7 of these youth and adult participants reside in Benton County.

### Programming locations in Benton County

#### Schools

Lincoln Elementary  
 Cole Camp Elementary  
 Warsaw North School  
 Warsaw South School

#### Agencies

Benton County Food Pantry  
 Benton County Senior Center  
 Swinging Bridge  
 Boonslick Library

## Legend



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being

# Benton County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Profiles and Stories

*Tammy Culpepper, MU Extension  
Nutrition Program Associate*

### Success Stories in Benton County

#### SMALL STEPS LEAD TO BIGGER STEPS

This past Spring, I had a child in my class who was hesitant to try new foods. Before starting the Fruit and Vegetable lessons, the teacher spoke with me about a particular student who was very picky and wished me good luck.

One of the guidelines I utilize in teaching is to explain to the class that I would not make them eat a fruit or vegetable, but I would really like for them to at least sample a piece. After the conversation with the teacher, I thought of ways to get the student to try the foods. I explained to the class that we would focus on getting to know the food before they could take a bite. I didn't push the students to take a bite, just that they participated in getting to know the food. Each student had to smell the food and then touch the vegetable/fruit. After smelling and touching it, I let them know they still could not eat the vegetable/fruit. The next step was to place the vegetable/fruit sample on their tongue but not eat it.

Unfortunately, he did not eat the vegetables. However, while I was teaching the fruit lesson using fresh pineapple, the teacher observed the student. He kept putting the pineapple sample on his tongue and sucking the juice from it. He then started taking tiny bites and was smiling. After class, the teacher texted his mom to let her know about his enjoyment of eating pineapple. She was super excited that he would even touch it.

#### HEALTHY SNACK X 2

At Cole Camp Elementary in the first-grade classes, I served whole wheat bread with peanut butter and bananas for one of the lessons. I have them prepare the snack themselves, and we discuss all the food groups and why it would be a healthy snack. The teacher wanted to let me know that on the last day of school, she lets the class vote and decide on a snack, and she then brings the stuff to make it. She thought it would surprise me to know that her class wanted to make the same snack they had made with me. She stated they had many unhealthy choices but wanted to go with the peanut butter banana on whole wheat bread and they even reminded her it needed to be the healthier bread.

# Benton County

## Health and Human Sciences

Local Profiles and Stories *Tammy Culpepper, MU Extension Nutrition Program Associate*

### A helping hand and beyond

I recently helped a gentleman apply for SNAP benefits, and usually, when I am done, I never hear back from them. However, a few weeks ago, that gentleman called the office to inform me that he had been approved for roughly \$28. I thought he was calling because he was unhappy with the amount. I have heard people say it's not worth it when they only get a small amount to spend. However, he was calling to tell me how happy he was that he could use the SNAP benefits to buy eggs, milk, bread, cereal, and bananas every month. He had it down on precisely what he could buy each month. He was so thankful for the extra help.



# Benton County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Profiles and Stories

*Tammy Culpepper, MU Extension Nutrition Program Associate*



# Benton County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Profiles and Stories

*Alex Freeburger, MU Extension Nutrition and Health Field Specialist*

#### **CoMo Connect Health Fair**

Co MO Connect invited me to attend their health fair for their employees. I had a booth where I offered handouts about healthy eating and information on programs Extension offers. A rough estimate of 120 employees attended and stopped by for information.

#### **Sedalia Area Farmers Market**

I visited the Sedalia Area farmers market several times this summer, offering pressure canner testing and information about food preservation and canning, as well as Extension and their programs. At one of the events, I worked with one of my Nutrition Program Associates by having samples at our booth. During my time at the farmers market, I was in contact with at least 150 people who came by to talk, pick up information, or bring their canners for testing/inspections.

#### **Guest Lecturer**

I was invited to several colleges and universities to speak to students about Extension, Nutrition, and Health.

The first location was at State Fair Community College in Sedalia, Missouri. I spoke to the nursing students about the rise of obesity and strategies and programs that Extension has available to educate the people in the communities that I serve. The total number of students was about 50.

The second institution was Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. In their community nutrition class, I spoke to dietetic students about Extension and what I do in my communities. There were 26 students in the class. I have been invited to speak again in the Spring Semester



# Benton County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Profiles and Stories

*Alex Freeburger, MU Extension Nutrition and Health Field Specialist*

### Stay Strong Stay Healthy

I have successfully taught multiple Stay Strong Stay Healthy (SSSH) classes. SSSH is a weight training program for older adults where they can improve their strength, balance, flexibility, and coordination. Roughly 74 individuals across multiple classes/counties have participated in the program.





**Della Miller**  
**Field Specialist in**  
**Human Development**

# Benton County

Serving Laclede, Camden, Dallas, Polk,  
 Benton, Hickory, Wright and Webster Counties

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### What is the Role of Field Specialist in Human Development in the Community?

Field Specialists in Human Development deliver evidence-based programming to communities across Missouri. These initiatives are designed to meet the unique needs of each community by providing education on topics such as parenting, family strengthening, mental health awareness, adolescent development, aging well, early childhood care and education, and other related areas.

### Families & Parenting Programs

#### **Building Strong Families**

The Human Development and Family Science team partnered with the Missouri Department of Social Services Children’s Division to provide parenting classes for parents trying to bring their children home from foster care. We offered five 6-session parenting classes online throughout the year. These classes covered communication, stress management, discipline, and more.

#### **Impact**

- The team taught 81 parents who earned 800 hours of parenting information.
- Positively impacted the 167 children of these parents.
- Parents from 32 different counties across the state of Missouri joined the classes.

#### ***What Participants Are Saying About Our Programs:***

*“The stories and scenarios to help in how to approach youth in crisis best. Especially for tough conversations that we may feel anxious bringing up.” – Youth Mental Health First Aid Participant*

*“Not only does this course teach new things. It also helps affirm strategies already being used and helps make me feel free and good about myself as a parent. It really helped me grow. Thank You.” - Building Strong Families Participant*

*“This was one of the most useful programs I’ve ever heard. Growing older is not easy, but I like all the tips to try to keep us safe” – Keep Your Keys Participant*

*“Everyone should be taught this information. Thank you for coming to talk to us!” – Alzheimer’s Association Program Participant*

### Professional Development Programs

Childcare Provider Training Virtual (Collaborative) and In-Person Childcare programming by Human Development and Family Science Field Specialists in-person and virtually was completed statewide. The childcare programming provides statewide clock hours for professional development for childcare providers who must obtain 12 hours yearly.

#### **Impact**

- Provided 422 childcare providers across the state of Missouri through 41 sessions.
- 844 clock hours provided for professional development
- In-person trainings were provided to childcare providers in Laclede, Miller, and Camden Counties.

### Well-Being Programs

#### **Taking Care of You**

This multi-session program provides practical strategies and hands-on experiences designed to help you effectively manage stress in your daily life.

#### **Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSMP)**

A six-week program that equips participants with essential tools to manage chronic conditions better. Topics include self-management techniques, action planning, healthy eating, and effective communication with healthcare providers.

#### **Mental Health First Aid (Adult and Youth)**

This program teaches individuals to identify the signs of mental health and substance use challenges in both adults and youth, promoting early intervention and support.

#### **Impact**

- Well-being programs positively impacted 80 participants across 20 counties, including Camden, Laclede, Dallas, and Miller Counties.

### Aging Well Programs

#### **Alzheimer’s Association Programs**

This program offers informative presentations on various Alzheimer’s and dementia-related topics, including the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer’s, effective communication strategies, and how to understand and respond to dementia-related behaviors.

#### **Keep Your Keys**

Focused on driving safety, this program covers maintaining the physical and medical fitness necessary for safe driving, when and how to plan for driving retirement, and provides valuable tools and resources to enhance road safety.

#### **Impact**

- The Aging Well programs reached 48 individuals across several counties, including Hickory, Miller, Dallas, and Laclede, significantly impacting their well-being.





# 2024 Report

Covering West Central Counties of Missouri

Joni Harper  
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## 2024 In Review

This year saw the expansion of natural resources programming to many of my counties. Here are some highlights of 2024:

- Woodland Steward Workshop
- Forest Farming Workshop
- Revival of Missouri Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program
  - Monthly virtual Zoom meetings connecting with women woodland owners over topics of interest.
- Heroes to Hives Program
- Youth programming: 4-H soil and water experiment and watershed curriculum
- Keep Your Forest in the Family Legacy Workshop

It was great getting to connect with everyone in person and over Zoom. I will continue to offer virtual natural resources programming as it's the best way to reach all my counties. I will also continue to bring in-person programming to more counties as well.

Thank you all for your support in 2024.

## Stay Up-to-Date on Natural Resources Programming

Follow our newsletters to receive information monthly about our upcoming programs & learn more about Missouri's natural resources:

### **MU Extension Natural Resources Newsletter**



[bit.ly/MU-Ext-Natural-Resources](https://bit.ly/MU-Ext-Natural-Resources)

### **Women Owning Woodlands Newsletter**



[bit.ly/missouri-wow](https://bit.ly/missouri-wow)

## Looking at 2025

Here are a few programs to keep an eye out for in 2025.

- Women Owning Woodlands Monthly Zoom meetings
- Chainsaw Safety Courses
- Invasive Plant Workshops
- Agroforestry Programming
- Forest Management field days & tours
- Natural Resources youth programming

Let me know what you'd like to see in your county - looking forward to engaging with everyone in conservation next year!

