



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Carter County 2024

## Annual Report

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# Extension

University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution

**SERVE  
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER  
MIZZOU.**



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

\*\*Not pictured: Haley Schwantz  
Agronomy Specialist

Emily Doosing  
4-H Youth Specialist

Cara Carswell  
4-H Youth Educator

Jennifer R. Williams  
Engagement Specialist

Kelley Brent  
Nutrition & Health Specialist

Dr. Jason Morris  
Ag Business Specialist

John Fuller  
Human Development Specialist

Eric Meusch  
Livestock Specialist

Traven Crocker  
Horticulture Specialist

Jacqueline Pettit  
Nutrition Program Associates

Sarah Cope  
Feral Hog Educator



## Council members

Alonzo Bradwell, Chairman  
Alan Snider, Vice-chairman  
Tammy Lindsay, Secretary  
Sue Groves, Treasurer

Nick Bratton  
Billie Flesch  
Mary Godsy  
TJ Hudson  
Brian Keathley  
Stashia O'Dell  
Sara Sheedy

Office Manager: Sue Miller



## County commissioners

Ron Keeney, Carter County Presiding Commissioner  
Tom Wilder, Eastern District Commissioner  
Lynn Murdick, Western District Commissioner

# Budget and more

## Appropriations budget

County Appropriations	16,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,500</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salaries/Benefits	15,654
Travel	3,972
Office Rent	4,200
Office Supplies/Service	1,350
Utilities	1,400
Insurance	608
4-H Expenses	250
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>27,434</b>
<b>Total Deficit</b>	<b>-10,934</b>

## Return on investment

Digitally Connected Communities Broadband Technical Assistance Grant	\$95,000+
4-H Youth Summer Enrichment Grant	\$3,333

## MU Extension is a unique partnership.

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



## Local Support

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

## Key Outcomes

- Carter County is served by **11 full time faculty members** in fields such as 4-H, Health & Nutrition, Agronomy, Human Development, Ag Business, Livestock, Natural Resources, and Horticulture.
- Carter County is also served by **2 program associates** in Nutrition.
- Carter County was previously served by Diane Oesch, Youth Program Associate in 4-H until her retirement in June 2024. We have been unable to replace this position due to budget shortfalls.
- 2 active 4-H clubs: East Carter Redbird 4-H Dream Team and Van Buren 4-H
- 2 4-H Special Interest (SPIN) Clubs: Crochet, Baking
- Carter County 4-H Horse Club led by Steve Hager
- 4-H Shooting Sports led by Ted McGavock
- Programs in 2024:

Estate Planning: What's the Worst That Could Happen?

Digitally Connected Communities Guide (multi-month course from April – December 2024)

Pesticide Applicator Training

Nutrition programs at East Carter Schools and Van Buren Schools

Livestock Producers Program: Heifer Development

Medicare Educational Seminar

# 2024 Current River Food Truck Festival

Saturday, June 22, 2024



# County Highlights

## Carter County State Fair Farm Families – The Price Family and the Gibbs Family

The Don Price and the Joshua Gibbs families were among those honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 12 at the Missouri State Fair. The Price and Gibbs families were selected as the Missouri County Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension and the local Farm Bureau. Each year, the fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state that are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local outreach and extension programs such as 4-H or FFA. The Price Family is shown below. The Gibbs family is not pictured because they were unable to attend the dinner due to a work conflict.

**We thank both families for representing Carter County as our 2024 State Fair Farm Families.**



## Carter County Leaders Honor Roll

The Leaders Honor Roll recognizes outstanding leaders and volunteers who have supported and helped to advance MU Extension in their communities.

Congratulations to Sheila Bristol and Michelle Walker, who will be recognized during the annual dinner in March, 2025.





# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**

through credible statewide programs

## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18



“

Carter County 4-H helps our youth grow into confident, capable leaders by offering hands-on learning, mentorship, and opportunities to explore their interests. By building life skills and fostering strong connections, 4-H creates a positive impact that benefits not just our kids but the entire community.

Emily Doosing  
4-H Youth Development Specialist  
Carter County  
417-226-3268  
edoosing@missouri.edu

“

As a 4-H Youth Educator, I see firsthand the positive impact our programs have on Carter County youth. It's inspiring to watch them grow and thrive.

Cara Carswell  
4-H Youth Educator  
Carter County



“

Serving as a teen leader during 4-H Clown College was an amazing experience. It was incredible to see how laughter and fun activities helped younger kids learn positive mental health and social-emotional strategies. Watching them grow more confident and connected was so rewarding—I'm proud to have been a part of it.

—Abigail, 4-H Teen Leader



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

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

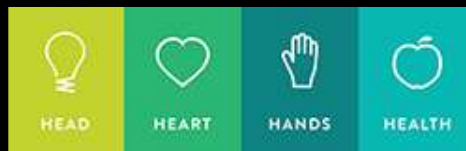
**2X** more likely to make healthier choices

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

# 461

Youth served by Carter County 4-H through:

- Traditional Clubs
- SPIN Clubs
- School Enrichment
- After School 4-H Clubs



# \$22,907

19 volunteers served 4-H youth in Carter County in 2024. Valuing their time at \$33.49 per hour (Independent Sector, 2024), the contribution of Carter County 4-H volunteers was worth more than \$22,907 in 2024. More importantly, these individuals serve as role models and mentors for youth.



Educational Access & Excellence

# 2024 Summary

Sarah Cope  
Cooperative Feral Hog Outreach  
Educator  
573-469-2679  
sarah.cope@missouri.edu



Serving Butler, Stoddard, Wayne, Carter, Ripley, Oregon, and Howell Counties

## 2024 Update:

It has been a busy year for the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership!

New equipment was offered to two of my counties (Wayne, and Butler) affected by feral hogs and Wayne has received a payout for the purchase of a lime buggy already. Equipment that was placed before 2024 in Carter, Ripley, Reynolds, Oregon, Howell, and Wayne counties is still available for use. The equipment is in place for use free of charge to those with feral hog damage, the others are going to be placed this coming spring. The equipment can also be rented for those wishing to utilize the equipment for other projects and is managed by the local SWCD offices.

Firm numbers are not yet available for 2024, however, there is a ballpark estimate of around 5,000 feral hogs taken off the landscape in 2024, as numbers were around 4,500 before the end of the year when aerial operations began. Comparatively, elimination specialists removed 7,780 feral hogs in 2023.

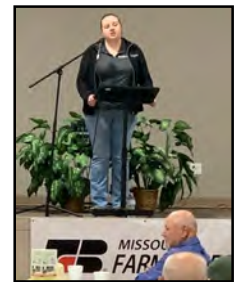
Aerial operations began again in December and the MFHEP staff are busy locating feral hogs and sending the coordinates to the helicopter for daytime aerial removal. Aerial operations are planned through March with the USDA helicopter, as we have done for the last few years.

In 2024 I attended numerous events & meetings in my counties, updating extension councils, SWCDs, Farm Bureau, and others about the Partnership's activities and progress throughout the year. Highlights include several Ag conferences, Ecology Days, other natural resource events, and landowner meetings that I hosted.

I also contributed to many written publications for the Partnership throughout the year and have been working with USDA by creating lesson plans that can be used to meet state requirements for learning while educating high school students about the importance of removing feral hogs from the landscape.



MFHEP Outreach Educators Jerry Richards, Sarah Cope, and Kevin Crider attend Vienna Beef Forage Conference.



MFHEP Outreach Educator Sarah Cope was a featured speaker at the Ripley County Annual Farm Bureau Dinner.



MFHEP display at O'Neal Elementary's Ecology Day in Butler County.

## Looking at 2025

My goals for the new year include:

- Continuing to work closely with Farm Bureau and Missouri Cattlemen's Association and building those relationships.
- Focusing on leads for absentee landowners in hot spots of feral hog activity.
- Continue to make more connections with landowners using targeted outreach strategies.
- Creating more written materials for publication to inform Missourians about feral hogs and the MFHEP.

I am worked diligently in the month of January with my fellow educators to ensure that the 2024 MFHEP Report is ready to be distributed. Both of which I will be distributing to Partners over the next coming months and attending extension council meetings to update the councils on operations statewide and local to their respective counties.

Please contact me for any details related to the program.



# Agronomy Impact - Haley Schwantz, Agronomist



Soil testing is a tool that producers in Carter County have access to use to monitor fertility and pH levels for forage and crop production. There were 38 interpretations of soil test reports by the Agronomy Field Specialist for 2024.

Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings certify crop producers for restricted use pesticides. MU Extension provides classes for these certification needs. There were a total of 3 private applicator trainings in Carter County in 2024.



## Carter County Soil and Water Conservation District Ag and Eco Days

Haley Schwantz helped teach 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders on Soil Health during Ag Day and Eco Day with the Soil and Water Conservation District office in Carter County. Topics covered were soil erosion, organic matter, and soil types. Between both events, there were a total of 162 kids and 60 vendors and partners that attended.

### CARTER COUNTY GRAZING SCHOOL

**June 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Topics covered:**

- The "Art and Science" of Grazing
- Soils, Soil Management and Fertility
- Plant Growth, Forage Quality and Persistence
- Fencing and Water Systems
- Matching Livestock and Forage Resources
- Meeting Nutritional Needs of Livestock from Pasture
- Layout and Design of Grazing Systems
- Economics of Management Intensive Grazing
- Outdoor Field Exercises and Tour of Producers' Farms (Dress appropriately for weather)

**June 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>: 8AM – 4:30PM**  
**June 28<sup>th</sup>: 8AM – 12PM**

**The Beavers Teeth**  
 25 Commercial Drive  
 Van Buren, MO 63965  
 (573) 323-0216

**Cost: \$180/person**  
 Additional person from same farm: \$75

**Snacks, drinks, & lunch provided**

**Register by June 7th**  
 Carter County Soil & Water Conservation Office  
 573-322-0233

**USDA**  
 United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**NRCS**  
 National Resource Conservation Service

**MISSOURI FORAGE GRASSLAND COUNCIL**

**Extension**  
 University of Missouri  
Missouri Extension System

**Carter County**  
 Soil and Water Conservation District

The 2024 Grazing School was held in Carter County at the Beaver's Teeth Restaurant in Van Buren. This is a required training for cost share programs for producers in Missouri and have been conducted in the state since 1991. This program aims to teach farmers the art and science of grazing livestock.

The Carter County SWCD handled registrations and funding for the event partnering with the USDA, NRCS, MU Extension and Grasslands Partnership. There were 12 attendees during the program from July 26 – 28<sup>th</sup>.

# Livestock

Eric Meusch

Livestock Specialist

573-729-3196

meusche@missouri.edu



Serving Dent, Phelps, Crawford, Pulaski, Shannon Reynolds, Carter, and Texas Counties

## 2024 AT A GLANCE

- Grazing Schools held in 5 counties taught approximately 110 livestock producers the fundamentals of Management Intensive Grazing. Improved grazing can reduce production costs, provide environmental benefits and improve drought resilience on livestock farms in Missouri.
- Show Me Quality Assurance events held in Dent, Phelps and Crawford Counties trained youth on proper care of livestock. Other youth-oriented activities included Ozark Cattlemen's Beef Day in Salem and the Wurdack Education Day event.
- The Value-Added Meats (VAM) team collaborated with Feedlot School team to develop the Direct Marketing Beef School held in West Plains. VAM also worked through the 2501 Program to conduct a hands-on chicken processing workshop for urban farmers in the St. Louis area



On-farm visits with producers addressing various issues is a key activity that takes place throughout the year.

## KEY SUCCESSES

- ✓ In the Show Me Select Heifer Development Program the state-wide combined totals for the spring and fall sanctioned sales was 1,352 heifers sold with gross receipts of \$4,490,675.
- ✓ A total of 174 youth in 3 counties received Show Me Quality Assurance training, learning industry standards for food animal care and husbandry. This training is required for youth exhibiting livestock at county fairs and Livestock Expos.
- ✓ Participants in Missouri Grazing schools learned the basics in management intensive grazing, including soil and forage management, grazing system layout, livestock management and infrastructure development..
- ✓ Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers participated in livestock related programs such small-scale chicken processing and farm walk abouts. This was part of the grant funded 2501 Program.



The Value Added Meats team worked with the 2501 and Beginning Farmers Programs to teach poultry processing.

# 2024 Report

**Sarah J. Higgins**  
Field Specialist in Natural  
Resources  
314-971-4826  
sarah.higgins@missouri.edu



Covering Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Crawford, Dent, Dunklin, Howell, Iron, Jefferson, Madison, Maries, Mississippi, New Madrid, Oregon, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Shannon, St. Francois, Ste Genevieve, Stoddard, Texas, Washington, and Wayne Counties

## 2024 In Review

This year saw the expansion of natural resources programming to many of my counties. I'm happy to report some highlights of 2024:

- Forest Health Field Day in the Shoal Creek Watershed in Crawford County
- Invasive Plant Workshops in Dent and Texas Counties
- Revival of Missouri Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program
  - Monthly virtual Zoom meetings featuring women natural resources professionals connecting with women woodland owners over topics of interest.
- 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
- WOW Chainsaw Safety Courses
- Invasive Plant Workshops
- Tree identification hikes
- 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!

# Carter County

## Business and Community

### Local Impact and Stories

A team of Carter County residents utilized the **Digitally Connected Communities Guide** to determine the county's current and future needs regarding broadband connectivity. The process included community meetings in Fremont, Eastwood, Van Buren, Grandin and Ellsinore, and meetings with Internet Service Providers who already serve portions of the county or those who wish to serve Carter County in the future.

The team will advocate for the priorities of Carter County residents for digital connectivity by recruiting Internet Service Providers, supporting infrastructure expansion projects, engaging and educating the community on infrastructure and digital literacy skills, and working to hold Internet Service Providers accountable for the promises they make to our residents.

This project was funded by a \$95,000+ grant from USDA.

We will prioritize our support for those ISP's willing to commit to:

- serve each residence and business within any territory awarded to them by Office of Broadband Development, even if they have to partner with another technology in order to do so.
- provide high-speed internet service at minimum speeds of 1 Gig symmetrical with no speed throttling or data caps.
- deploy broadband expansion on a reasonable timeline
- provide free or low-cost service at a minimum speed of 100 Mbps symmetrical for those with financial need
- meet with our community groups at least quarterly to share updates



# Health and Human Sciences

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

## Kelley L. Brent, Nutrition and Health Field Specialist, Southeast Region

### 2024 Impact Numbers:

- 3,320 direct contacts for area education
- \$33,437 in captured grant funds and donations distributed over 4 counties for local products and education



### Carter County and Surrounding Area Education:

- Virtual Diabetes Self-Management 6-session Series: statewide participants
- Walking Group 16-session Series, Community Resource Council Partnership: Butler County
- Middle School Garden Club Meeting, MU Presentation, USDA Garden Grant Partnership: Butler County
- Food Preservation-Pressure Canning Education and Classes – Butler, **Carter**, Wayne, and Ripley Counties
- Tai Chi for Overall Health and Fall Prevention 16-session Series and Presentations: Wayne, Mississippi, **Carter** Counties
- Iron Horse Festival, County Fair Baked Goods and Canning Judge: Butler County
- Matter of Balance 8-session Series: Stoddard County
- Reginal USDA-NRCS Education Presentation for Missouri area staff
- Chronic Disease Self-Management 6-session Series: Wayne, Iron, Reynolds Counties \*included SNAP-Ed Program
- Stay Strong, Stay Healthy 16-session Series; Wayne, Scott Counties
- Eating for Brain Health Presentation and NPA collaboration with the Housing Authority, Poplar Bluff
- USDA Garden Grant MU Supplies to 8 partners in Butler County Total: \$8,061 (\$12,528 throughout area)
- USDA Local Producer Grant and Food Distribution Events: Butler County, 2 events, \$17,540 of product from Local Producers and distributed into the community, purchased and distributed 1200 lbs. of chicken and 1940 lbs. of ground beef, with an additional 485 half pints of honey, 700 locally produced pumpkins with included educational information, 2,763 indirect household members impacted, Participation: 19 MU Faculty/Staff, 28 Extension Council and Community Volunteers, 22 Community Partners, 12 Free Service Stations at Event, 5 local ranchers, 1 meat processor, 2 pumpkin producers, 1 honey producer
- USDA Local Producer Grant and Food Distribution Events: Wayne County, 3 events, \$2,869 of local product purchase and distribution throughout the area, purchased and distributed 132 bottles of local honey, 500 locally produced edible pumpkins with included educational information, 632 direct education contacts, 1,999 indirect contacts, 11 MU Faculty/Staff workers, 6 community volunteers, 5 community partners, 1 free service station, 1 honey producer, 1 pumpkin producer

### Ongoing Efforts in Carter County and Surrounding Area:

Wi-Fi and workstation at Wayne County MU Extension office, Regional Swimming Lessons, USDA Garden Grant Distribution, Health Fairs, County Fairs, Local Producer Product Distribution Events, Jack-o-Lantern Jubilee Halloween events for region, Annual Women's Conference Speaker (on-going), ECHO Outreach and Education Group, Eat Smart in Parks Initiatives, High Obesity Grant Team Initiatives, MU Extension Resilience Team Initiatives

Actively participating in council meetings, planning meetings, boards, coalitions, committees and community events.

Currently serving: Missouri Parks Association Board of Directors and Officer: Vice-President, Community Resource Council Board of Directors, Board of Directors for the University of MO Extension Employee Association, member of the Butler County Wellness Council, member of the Wappapello Lake Area Association

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy



A MATTER OF  
BALANCE  
MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS



# Health and Human Sciences

## SNAP Education

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

222 direct and 2,826 indirect contacts were made in Carter County. Participants in SNAP-Ed learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical activity, and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan.

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

## Success Story

Another success I had was a mixture between crunch off and the kindergarten classes at Van Buren Elementary. I taught them Show Me Nutrition with Show Me Chef and every week we would have a new adventure! The kids were always excited to see what land we would go to next! I never really knew if they were understanding or liking me and the lessons, but during crunch off one of the little boys was with his mom and he saw me and started telling his mom about lessons that I had taught them! He was so excited and animated! It made me realize I was making a difference, and they were listening! He's the little boy in the picture!



Jacqueline Pettit  
Nutrition Program Associate  
Butler & Carter Counties