



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Cass County

# 2024 Annual Report

201 W. Wall Street  
Harrisonville, MO  
816-380-8460

**SERVE  
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER  
MIZZOU.**



**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



**David Hoffman**  
Field Specialist in Livestock



**Kyleigh Brown**  
Field Specialist in Human Development



**Ellen Bloomer-Thornton**  
Nutrition Program Associate



**Dalaney Couch**  
Youth Program Associate



**Jill Parks**  
Administrative Assistant



**Mikayla Neil**  
Extension and Engagement Specialist

## Council members

### OFFICERS

**Aaron Miller**, Chairman, *Pleasant Hill*  
**Scott Holtwick**, Vice-Chairman, *Garden City*  
**Glenda Gash**, Secretary, *Harrisonville*  
**Ryan Streicher**, Treasurer, *Garden City*

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Kathy Lambertz**, *Harrisonville*  
**Emily Cassil**, *Freeman*  
**Scott White**, *Belton*  
**Jim McDonnell**, *Archie*  
**Charla Martin**, *Drexel*  
**Greg Mansker**, *Raymore*

### APPOINTED

**Austin Moreland**, *Farm Bureau*  
**Monty Kisner**, *County Commission*  
**Patte Klaus-Schreihofe**, *City of Belton*  
**John Vic Grice**, *City of Raymore*



## County executives

**Bob Huston**  
Presiding Commissioner

**Monty Kisner**  
Associate Commissioner District 1

**Ryan Johnson**  
Associate Commissioner District 2

# Budget and more

## Appropriations budget

### Income

County Appropriations	87,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>87,000</b>

### Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	73,200
Travel	6,000
Office Supplies/Service	7,200
Copier/Maintenance	600
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>87,000</b>

## Cass County partners

Belton School District  
Belton Senior Center  
Bright Futures Harrisonville  
Cass County Farm Bureau  
Cass County Health Department  
Cass County Public Library System  
Cass County Master Gardeners  
Cass County Soil & Water Conservation District  
East Lynne School District  
FCS Financial  
Harrisonville Chamber of Commerce  
Harrisonville Community Center  
Harrisonville Kiwanis  
Harrisonville Parks & Recreation  
Harrisonville School District  
Hawthorn Bank  
Heart-N-Hand Food Pantry  
Kinder Kastle Preschool  
Manna Food Pantry  
Pleasant Hill School District  
Raymore-Peculiar School District  
Sherwood School District  
Wee Rock Learning Center

## MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

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

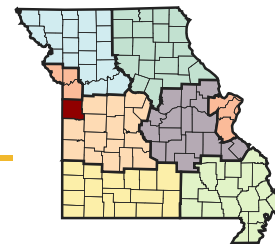
The Cass County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Cass County Commissioners for their continued support of extension programs.



## Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Cass 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.

# Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



## CASS 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

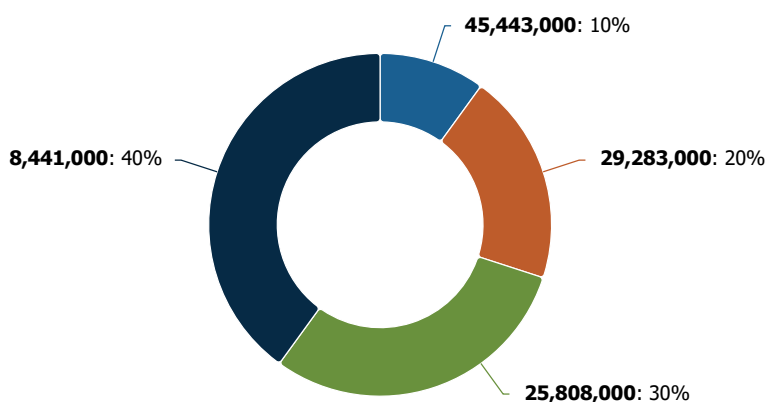
### Knowing Local Challenges



#### 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 \$31,907,000 in 2017, an average of \$24,282 per farm. This is below the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Cass	1,314	\$24,282
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: *Early Childhood Education*

### Access to Early Childhood Education

Head Start is an early childhood education program for at-risk children through age 5. Families utilizing Head Start have better success meeting developmental goals and achieving economic stability. In 2018, there were 2 Head Start programs in the report area, or 3.23 per 10,000 population. Access to head start is lower in this area than in the state.

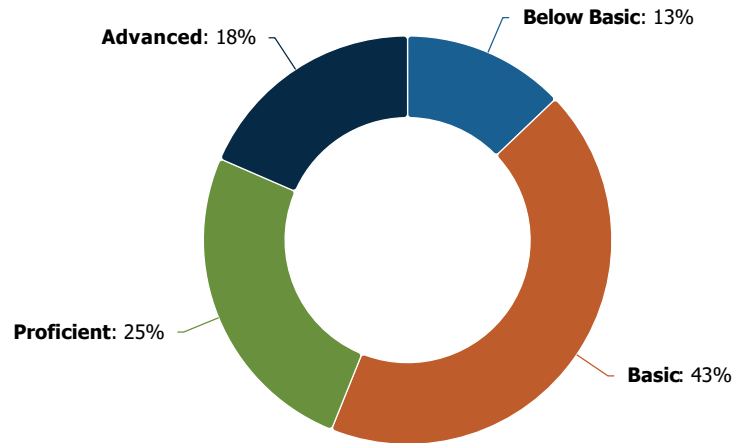
#### Head Start Programs, Rate (Per 10,000 Children Under Age 5)



Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, [HRSA - Administration for Children and Families](#). 2024.

### English Language Arts Proficiency

Starting in the 4th grade, public schools emphasize proficiency in reading and reading comprehension. The ability to comprehend becomes the foundation to find and process information in later years and it is important to prevent children from falling behind. Of the 1,296.00 fourth graders tested in 2018, the known total number of students who had a basic level of English Language Arts was 547.00. The number tested as below basic was 163.00, basic was 547.00, proficient was 322.00, and advanced was 234.00.



Data Source: [Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education](#). 2022.

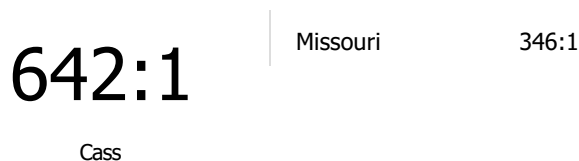


## CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Access to Care*

### 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 168 credentialed professionals providing mental health care to serve the area's 107,824 residents. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 642 to 1, which means there is 1 provider for every 642 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)



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 27 primary care physicians (MDs and DOs) to serve the area's 19,212 residents over the age of 65. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 712:1, which means there is 1 provider for every 712 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



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



## CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: *Soils Testing*

Recent public initiatives and USDA programs are putting a focus on producers to improve the health of their soil. The USDA-NRCS defines soil health as the continued capacity of the soil to function as a vital, living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans. A variety of practices can improve soil health, including regular monitoring, sampling and testing protocols. The MU Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory provides testing and unbiased, research-based recommendations for economically viable and environmentally safe nutrient management practices across Missouri.

Report Area	Agriculture	Home and Garden	Community Areas	Research	Total
Cass	169	97	14	0	280
Missouri	13,742	4,773	421	6,406	25,342

Data Source: [University of Missouri Extension Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory Annual Summary](#). 2022.

# Cass County



University of Missouri System

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## UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



### FY24 county students

**1,027 students**

- 892 Undergraduates
- 135 Graduate and professional students
- 553 Full-time students
- 474 Part-time students
- 177 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)



### County employees and retirees

**133 people employed by UM**

- 118 Campuses
- 13 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)
- 2 UM System

47 UM retirees and beneficiaries

UM salary and retirement income: \$6.6 million

UM state tax revenue: \$228,634

UM federal tax revenue: \$937,050



### County alumni

**Selected school alumni**

- 70 Medicine
- 175 Nursing
- 147 Health Professions
- 73 Dentistry
- 96 Pharmacy
- 2 Optometry
- 27 Veterinary Medicine
- 270 Agriculture
- 718 Engineering
- 151 Law

**Alumni teaching K-12**

- 179 teachers
- 14.3% of all district teachers
- 18 principals and administrators
- 24.3% of all district principals and administrators



### County breakdown

**MU**

- 327 students
- 1,735 alumni
- 31 employees

**UMKC**

- 610 students
- 2,435 alumni
- 86 employees

**Missouri S&T**

- 45 students
- 351 alumni
- 1 employee

**UMSL**

- 45 students
- 44 alumni
- 0 employees



### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Cass County



County population: 109,393



### County services provided

**Health care (FY24)**

- 245 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$76,791 of uncompensated care
- 375 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 65 visits to 34 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

**Extension (2023)**

- 7,118 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
- 1,590 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
- 3,747 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
- 1,499 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy



# Cass 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.

**\$3.1 billion**

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 16,687 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)

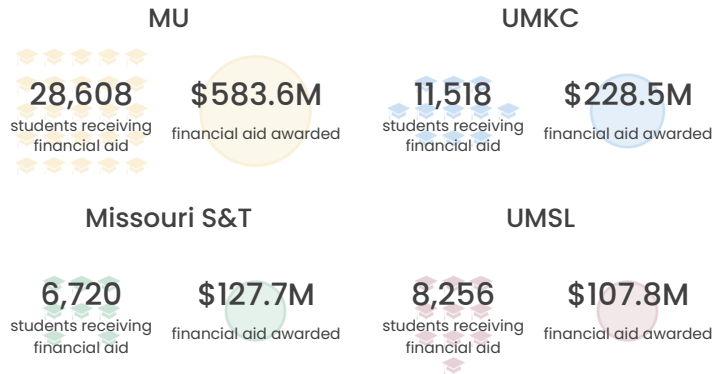


210,577 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2023)

### 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



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





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

## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18



As responsible citizens, we promote generosity and community strengthening through service. In our partnership with **Feeding Missouri** and Missouri Farmers Care Drive to Feed Kids, Cass County along with Missouri 4-H engaged in a friendly competition to combat food insecurity by volunteering and collecting food and funds. From January through April 4-H members competed to raise meals for local families through food drives, fundraisers, volunteer work, and educational activities. This year, Missouri 4-H raised 291,735 meals, bringing the six-year total to **2,015,066** meals.



Missouri 4-H engaged in **Summer STEM** expanded and enhanced programming throughout the summer of 2024. Cass County was able to reach an additional 96 youth. 4-H had the opportunity to engage in hands-on STEM programs, including robotics, communication skills, and nutrition.

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 that participated 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.



This year marks six years of teaching 4-H members the importance of organic **gardening** while highlighting the need to maintain nearby native pollinator gardens. In 2024, our efforts produced 90 pounds of fresh organic produce, which we shared with the Food Pantry in Peculiar, MO, near the gardens. Beginning in 2025, the project will move to Sutter's Creek Park in Peculiar, MO. This new location will provide larger harvests, community service opportunities, and expanded educational programs for children and volunteers.



### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



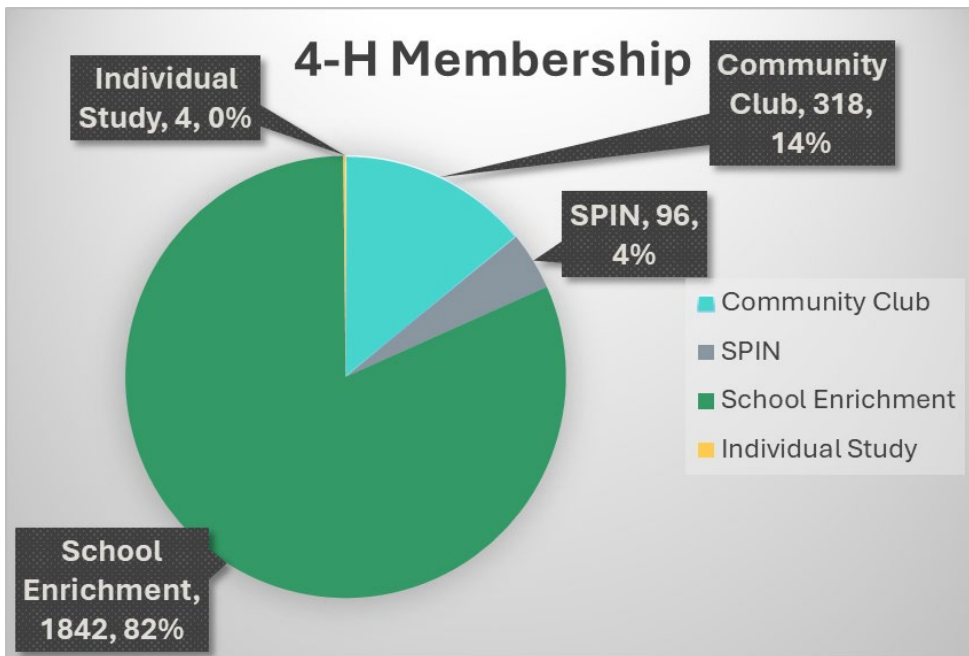
Health & Well-Being

# Cass County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement in a positive environment youth receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Youth have the opportunity to concentrate on one focus area, or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience.



### 2023-24 Totals

Membership:  
**1,839 youth**

Volunteers:  
**148**

Estimated value of  
volunteer time  
invested:  
**Almost \$500,000**

### Volunteers

4-H members are supported by 148 youth and adult volunteers

Time valued at almost \$500,000

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 Cass County 4-H volunteers was worth almost ½ million dollars 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.



# Cass County

## Missouri 4-H

### Profiles and Stories



Nine Cass County members were a part of the **Missouri 4-H Equine Career Tour** where youth experienced and explored the various facets of the equine industry firsthand through a week-long trip that visited 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, Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Facility and the Haythorn Ranch in Elm Creek, Nebraska, and Cheyenne Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming, the University of Wyoming in Laramie, the Vee Bar Ranch in Laramie, Colorado State and more!



Four Cass County youth joined 117 other youth from all corners of the state for the 78<sup>th</sup> annual **State 4-H Congress**. 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.

Twenty Missouri 4-H Delegates including one from Cass County traveled to Atlanta, Georgia for a once in a lifetime experience. They attended the **National 4-H Congress** to network with peers nationwide. While there, they attended workshops, completed service-learning opportunities, and toured some of Atlanta's famous landmarks.





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



**The Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program**

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



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



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

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



**The Missouri Master Gardener program**

enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and 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

# Cass County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

#### **100<sup>th</sup> Annual Cass County Soils and Crops Conference**

Sixty-five (65) producers and landowners attend the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Cass County Soils and Crops Conference. The attendees gained valuable information on regenerative agriculture practices, sprayer drone technology and market outlook for 2024. Program was co-sponsored by Cass County Farm Bureau, Hawthorn Bank and West Central Auction Company.

In 1925, 197 farmers (pictured below) attend the first annual conference (formerly known as Clover and Prosperity Conference) and gained valuable knowledge on utilizing clovers as a cover crop and lime as a soil amendment to improve production.



# Cass County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and Stories



#### **Home Horticulture:**

Citizens received assistance/guidance on fruit and vegetable production, lawn and landscape management. Master Gardeners offered assistance on various gardening topics. Master Gardeners maintain the gardens at MU Extension Office, Cass County 4-H gardening project and many other projects.

#### **West Central Missouri Show-Me-Select Heifer Program:**

Producers used proven heifer development and management practices to minimize calving difficulty and increase longevity. Producers sold 53 head of fall-calving heifers for an average of \$2715 per head and 124 head of spring-calving heifers for an average of \$3791 per head, grossing \$614,000.00 in direct sales. In 26 years, program has sold 6288 head of bred heifers for \$10.8 million in west central Missouri.



## **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)

- 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 questions.

# Cass County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and Stories

Crops	Acres
Soybean	81,801
Forage (Hay/haylage)	36,997
Corn for grain	35,290
Wheat for grain	2,361
Sod	2,012

Livestock	Numbers
Cattle	35,225
Hogs	30,164
Horses	1,575
Goats/Sheep	1,495

Farm Overview	Amount
Number of farms	1,314
Land if farms (acres)	301,581
Cropland (acres)	181,586
Pastureland (acres)	68,883

### Value of Agriculture to Cass County

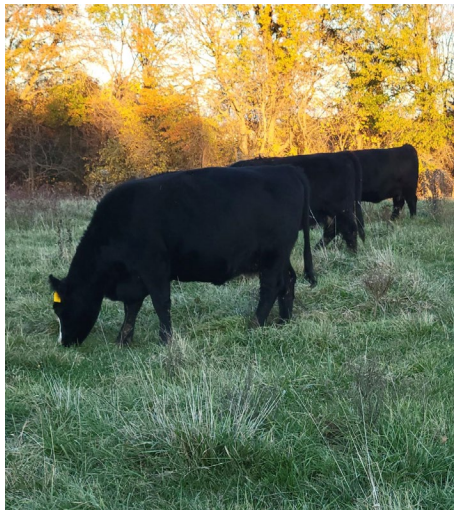
- According to 2022 Census of Agriculture, production agriculture has an economic impact of \$140,298,000.00 in crops (76%) and livestock (24%) marketed annually.
- Cass County ranks 41<sup>st</sup> (of 114) in state of Missouri for market value of ag products sold, 24<sup>th</sup> for crops, 55<sup>th</sup> for livestock.
- 95% of all farms are family owned.
- Producers age:

<35:	7%
35 – 64:	55%
65 & older:	38%

### Program Participation:

Producers and landowners received assistance via:

- Show-Me-Select Heifer Program
- Cattle Reproductive and Genetic Management
- Forage Management
- Integrated Crop Management
- Ag Business Management
- Private Pesticide Applicator Training
- Home Horticulture
- Farm/Agricultural Services: soil testing, forage testing, water analysis, etc.







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



## **Cooking Matters**

*Make quick, tasty, and affordable meals everyone will enjoy.*

Learn valuable tips for stretching your food dollars and how to prepare a recipe and sample easy, low-cost, nutritious and delicious dishes.

**"We prepared barley jambalaya in class and one participant mentioned she had never tried barley before. She tried the jambalaya and really enjoyed it. A few days later she excitedly said she made the recipe at home and her whole family enjoyed it!"**

**Cooking Matters facilitator about a class participant**



## **Building Strong Families**

Studies show that people with strong family bonds tend to have lower stress levels. Building Strong Families helps families deal with disagreements, manage stress and show their love for one another.



**Policy, systems, and environmental** (PSE) changes encourage residents to improve community health by making healthy choices easier and more accessible. Residents design strategies around local needs, assets, and interests.

**HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY** leaders decided pantry clients needed access to healthier foods. Review of food procurement and display practices led to a new policy allocating **\$1,000** of pantry discretionary spending for **LOW-FAT DAIRY OR FRESH PRODUCE.**



## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# Cass County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### Focus on Kids

When filing for proceedings in family court, many parents are required to take a co-parenting education course. This class provides strategies to improve communication between co-parents and support their children during the transition. 57 parents completed this in-person program in Cass County this year. 88% of respondents reported the class helped them think of new ways to resolve conflict with their co-parent.



# Cass County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Profiles and Stories



#### Early Childhood Education

Research indicates quality childcare promotes positive lifelong outcomes for children. One factor of childcare quality is the education and training of providers. MU Extension provides state-approved professional development trainings to providers across the state including 7 in Cass County this year.

#### Mental Health First Aid

Missouri rates of suicide are higher than the national average. For the last several years MU Extension has received grant money to provide education on mental health in rural communities. 650 Missourians were trained in either Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid or *Question. Persuade. Refer.* in 2024 including 3 residents of Cass County.

#### Chronic Disease Self-Management

Kyleigh Brown, Human Development Specialist and Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Specialist partnered provide this class to 10 participants at the Belton Senior Center. This program helps individuals manage their conditions more effectively and improve their overall well-being. Participants learned how to make healthier food choices, safely increase physical activity, cope with pain and fatigue, and communicate more effectively with their healthcare team.



# Cass County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### Healthy Living Program

Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Field Specialist, was selected for a \$2,500 grant from the American Heart Association to be trained in a program called Healthy Living (only one selection made per state). She delivered the program at the Belton Senior Center to 15 participants. The program entails interactive features like healthy cooking demonstrations, shopping skills presentations, and nutrition and heart-health workshops. Participants received free groceries to make recipes at home.

#### Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

This 16-session exercise class targets older adults. This class increases flexibility, improves balance, and develops strength. 5 participants took this class in Cass County. 100% of participants maintained or improved strength, balance, agility, and flexibility.



#### Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Number of Participants: 101 Cass County Residents

Nutrition Program Associate Ellen Bloomer-Thornton, and Nutrition and Health Field Specialist Sara Bridgewater, partnered up for multiple enrollment events in Cass County. The Missouri Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (MoSFMNP) provides benefits to low-income seniors (60 years of age or older) residing in one of 47 Missouri counties. Eligible seniors receive \$50 in benefits annually. A one-time bag of produce from Jirak Family Produce worth \$50 was offered to seniors who had difficulty spending their benefits at the markets. Special thanks to Wolf Creek Farms for offering a popup market to WCMCAA's senior living facilities.



# Cass County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### Family Nutrition Education Program (FNEP)

FNEP Provides research- based nutrition education to Missouri's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and those who are eligible. Nutrition Program Associates Ellen Bloomer-Thornton and Michael Waguespack worked in a variety of settings throughout Cass County with the goal of helping participants make behavior changes to achieve lifelong health and fitness.



**During 2024, 514 youth and adults were served through direct education and 8,980 through indirect education at schools and community agencies across Cass County.**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Agencies</b>
Sherwood Elementary	Cass County Public Libraries
East Lynne	Heart-N-Hand Food Pantry
Pleasant Hill Primary	Cass County Health Department
Wee Rock Learning Center	Bright Futures Harrisonville
Kinder Kastle	Manna Food Pantry
	Belton Senior Center

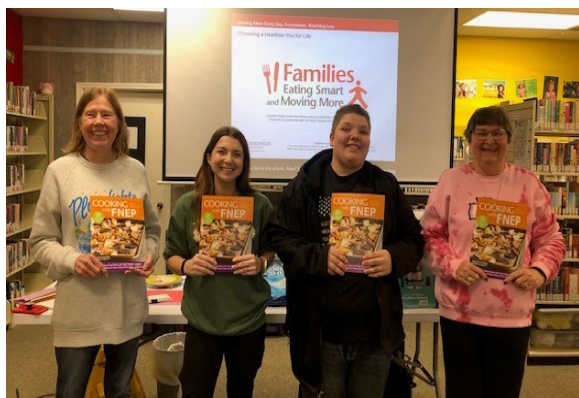


MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Health and Human Sciences**



**Community Gardens**

This year two new community gardens were established in Cass County. Through a garden grant we were able to secure new supplies such as beds, a shed and greenhouse to Wee Rock Learning Center, new beds and a greenhouse for the 4-H Community Garden and rain barrels to Heart-N-Hand St Mary Magdalene Donation Garden. The gardens offer education opportunities and supply multiple Cass County food pantries with fresh produce.



**Families Eating Smart and Moving More**

Families Eating Smart, Moving More (FESMM) is a direct education intervention designed to improve dietary intake, increase daily physical activity, and improve home food safety practices, food resource management, and food security. The lessons in the curriculum include recipes along with physical activities that help participants learn simple solutions to eat smart and be active every day.



**Show Me Nutrition**

Show Me Nutrition is a sequential nutrition curriculum set that teaches youths from preschool through junior high how to have a healthy lifestyle while reinforcing behaviors that promote a healthy weight. It supports both the State of Missouri's Show-Me educational standards for health and physical education and Missouri's School Wellness Policy.

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

### Local Impact

#### SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2024

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.

**10601** direct and indirect contacts were made in Cass County. Participants in SNAP-Ed learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical activity, and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan.

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

#### EFNEP Public Value Statement 2024

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

0 of these youth and adult participants reside in Cass County. Participants in EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, trying new foods, increasing their physical activity, and making healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan. This vital programming effort also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.