



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION



Knox County 2025

Annual Report

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**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**



Extension
University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

With appreciation,

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

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff

Mike Krauch

Regional Director — Northeast Region

Lisa Doster

Extension Engagement Specialist

Crystal Murr

4-H Youth Program Associate

Amber Haines

County Office Support

Julie Shaw-Brown

Bookkeeping

Zac Erwin

Livestock Specialist

Jennifer Schutter

Horticulture Specialist

Robert (Nick) Wesslak

Agronomy Specialist



Council Members

Andrew Hodge

Chairman, Eastern District

Chase Brenizer

Vice-Chairman, Western District

Brenda Niemeyer

Secretary, Western District

Lisa Penn

Treasurer, Eastern District

Thomas Boatman

elected member, Western District

Robert Collinge

elected member, Western District

Sadie Moore

elected member, Eastern District

Rachel Miller

elected member, Eastern District

Matthew Reel

elected member, Eastern District

Aaron Golden

elected member, Eastern District

Mike Ellison

appointed member, 4-H

Bill Whiles

appointed member, County Commission

Stacy Harder

appointed member, Farm Bureau

Delmar Strange

appointed member, City Council

County Executives

Les Cardwell

Presiding Commissioner

John Greenley

Eastern District Commissioner

Bill Whiles

Western District Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

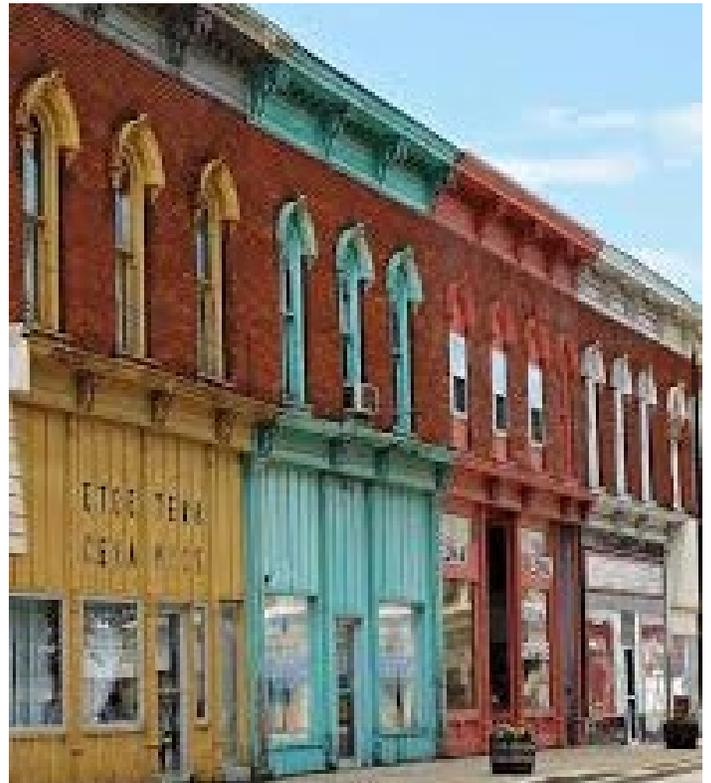
County Appropriations	55,524.00
Total Income	55,524.00

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	48,220.17
Travel	2,136.00
Telephone	700.00
Office Supplies/Service	37.83
Postage	300.00
Insurance	2,000.00
Advertising/Printing	300.00
Professional Services	330.00
Other Contract Services	850.00
Miscellaneous	650.00
Total Expenses	55,524.00

Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Knox 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.



Extension
Knox County
University of Missouri

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.

Thank you

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

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Knox County Community Impact Report

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

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

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

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



GRAND CHALLENGES

Grand Challenges

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

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

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

[Access your county's Grand Challenges Report.](#)





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

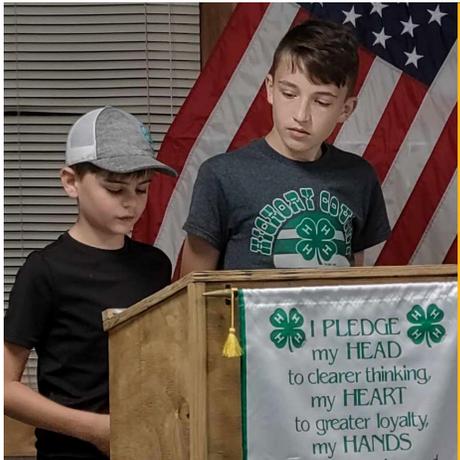
Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



What is 4-H?

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

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



Community clubs are at the heart of 4-H. Led by trained volunteers, members come together regularly to learn, lead, and serve. Youth elect officers, enroll in projects, and plan hands-on activities that build leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. Some clubs focus on a single project—like photography or livestock—while others explore a variety of topics throughout the year.

SPIN (Special Interest) **clubs** provide a short-term way to dive deep into a specific topic with expert guidance. These clubs meet for several weeks to a few months, giving youth flexibility while developing skills to be Beyond Ready for life.



4-H's Healthy Living programming teaches skills for healthy choices and lifestyles, enhancing overall well-being and equipping youth to tackle life's challenges. Emphasizing social-emotional health, 4-H fitness, health, nutrition, and safety programs cultivate confident, caring young leaders who prioritize mental and physical well-being.

4-H Feeding Missouri has helped provide over 2 million meals to neighbors in need across the state in the last seven years.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Missouri 4-H

4-H Youth Development Program

4-H programs are built on the belief that youth learn best by doing. With the support and guidance of adult volunteers serving as mentors, youth engage in hands-on learning experiences through projects in areas including engineering and technology, environmental science and natural resources, plant and animal science, leadership and personal development, expressive arts, and healthy living, in addition to taking on leadership positions which help to mold them into the caring, competent, and confident citizens who know the value of contributing to their communities.

During the 2024-2025 4-H Year, 272 Knox County youth were reached through 4-H programming through MU Extension.

4-H Community Clubs

- 58 youth reached through 3 community clubs and 64 volunteers
- Over 95% of 4-H members were engaged in science related projects and experiences.
- Collectively, youth participated in 5,800 hours of documented community club work and 1,000 hours of community service

Knox County 4-H/FFA Fair

- 113 livestock entries
- 139 Art Hall exhibits
- 40 participating youth

MO State Fair

- 23 Art Hall exhibits
- 81 livestock entries
- 25 participating youth

Teen Conference

Four Knox County 4-H members attended 4-H Teen Conference CSI: Communicate, Serve, Inspire in May on the University of Missouri campus. Youth participated in a fun-filled two-day event where they were able to make new friends from across Missouri, serve the community, inspire themselves and others in exciting leadership sessions, enjoy the dance and game night, and investigate life on Mizzou's campus!



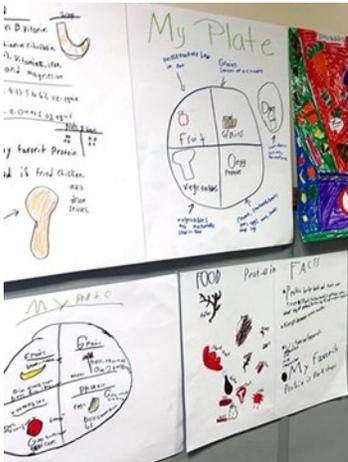
4-H Projects

4-H Clubs offer in-depth educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision making, public speaking, and working with others. Members learn by doing under this guidance of adult volunteers, who lead a wide variety of projects that support 4-H members in finding their SPARK. Club and project leaders also involve youth and teens in community service, leadership opportunities, and educational trips. 4-H project work and related educational experiences help youth explore interests in citizenship, communication, and leadership.

Knox County 4-H community club members enrolled in a combined total of 166 projects in 2024-2025. The top project areas included:

- CLOVER KIDS
- ARTS & CRAFTS
- BEEF
- FOODS
- PHOTOGRAPHY
- CAKE DECORATING
- POULTRY
- HORSE
- SHOOTING SPORTS
- SWINE
- WOODWORKING

Local Impact



4-H SNAC Clubs

Knox County R-1 fourth-grade students participated in Missouri's Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) Initiative in collaboration with MU Extension Family Nutrition Education and Knox County Extension. Students completed the program by creating projects that promoted nutrition education and community health, including posters on MyPlate, the five food groups, and healthy meal plans displayed during spring parent-teacher conferences. A total of 37 students completed the program and were recognized with certificates and nutrition resources, with chef hats and aprons sponsored in part by Jared's Jams.

The program creates 4-H clubs that focus on teaching nutrition in combination with leadership and citizenship skills which are central to 4-H. This curriculum encourages youth to eat healthier meals and snacks, because of hands-on cooking experiences. Participants learned how to prepare simple, healthy foods that they can make themselves and for their family members.

"I love your program! Alexis couldn't wait to make your recipe today when we got home."
— MW, parent of SNAC participant

"I never knew healthy could taste so good!"
— AR, SNAC participant, Lesson 1: Yogurt Parfait

4-H Feeding Missouri — Easter Meal Distribution

In partnership with Missouri Farmers Care - Drive to Feed Kids and support from local organizations, Knox County 4-H Feeding Missouri hosted an Easter Meal Drive Thru on Friday afternoon, April 18, 2025, at the 4-H Pavilion in Edina. Sixty boxed meals were distributed drive — thru style.

Through this community service project, Knox County 4-H Feeding Missouri and their partners distributed 11,284 meals (704.15 lbs., \$900.00, and 28 volunteer hours) to food insecure families in Knox County.



Local Impact

“Chick It Out” 4-H Embryology Program

Over 75 Knox County youth participated in “Chick It Out” 4-H Embryology this spring, including KCR-1 first and third graders, as well as children from Angie Miller’s daycare in Edina. The program provided a hands-on learning experience in chick development and animal science.

The fertilized eggs arrived in classrooms on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. Murr visited each site throughout the week to present on chick development, guide students through egg dissections, and demonstrate interactive experiments such as “Egg in a Bottle” and “Naked Egg.” Each classroom received a candler to observe embryonic growth through the eggshell, a key technique in understanding incubation and chick development.

Students participated in a pre- and post-test using the interactive Kahoot platform to measure learning outcomes. First-grade students demonstrated a knowledge gain of 18%, while third graders increased their understanding by 23%, reflecting the program’s effectiveness in teaching embryology concepts.

During incubation, classrooms carefully rotated their eggs to ensure even heat distribution. Students observed the hatching process the following week, experiencing firsthand the natural outcomes of life and death in a safe and educational environment. Of the 80 incubated eggs across five sites, 65 chicks successfully hatched, yielding an 82% hatch rate—a strong outcome, especially with the addition of two new classrooms this year. Third-grade students also explored egg mechanics with a homemade “egg crusher,” learning about pressure tolerance in a fun, hands-on experiment.



Throughout the nearly two-week program, students gained practical experience in animal care, embryonic development, nutrition, and incubator operation.

Knox County educators note that the program enhances science curriculum by integrating topics including physiology, human and animal development, nutrition, disability awareness, environmental science, and applied mechanics.

This program was funded by University of Missouri Extension in Knox County and offered free of charge to participating locations.



Local Impact

KCR-1 Kids Club

KCR-1 Kids Club is a collaborative effort between the Knox County R-1 School District and MU Extension — Knox County that provides 4-H Youth Development programming while addressing the need for adult supervision of youth during school sporting events. This collaboration met a critical need for the school district while expanding 4-H outreach through an alternative program delivery model.



The program served 43 youth during the 2024—2025 school year. Of the youth participating, 65% had also participated the previous year, demonstrating sustained engagement. Across the 2023—2025 program years, 72% of participants were not enrolled in 4-H Community Clubs, indicating success in reaching new audiences with positive youth development experiences.

KCR-1 Kids Club provided experiential learning opportunities aligned with the 4-H mission, including Clover Kids, STEM, Communication and Expressive Arts, Plant and Animal Science, Healthy Living, and Leadership and Personal Development. Sessions were structured to include icebreakers, hands-on learning activities, nutrition education and physical activity, STEM exploration, creative arts, and healthy snacks.

Program evaluation results reflected positive youth outcomes and high program satisfaction. Eighty percent of participating families strongly agreed that Kids Club helped them learn new skills and develop new interests. All respondents (100%) agreed that the program provided a safe environment with caring adult supervision and opportunities to interact with supportive adults. Additionally, 100% of respondents indicated they would like to participate in Kids Club again and would recommend the program to others.

Funding for KCR-1 Kids Club was provided through the Missouri 4-H Center for Youth Development and Missouri 4-H Foundation Program Innovation Grant, with additional support from the Knox County Extension Council.

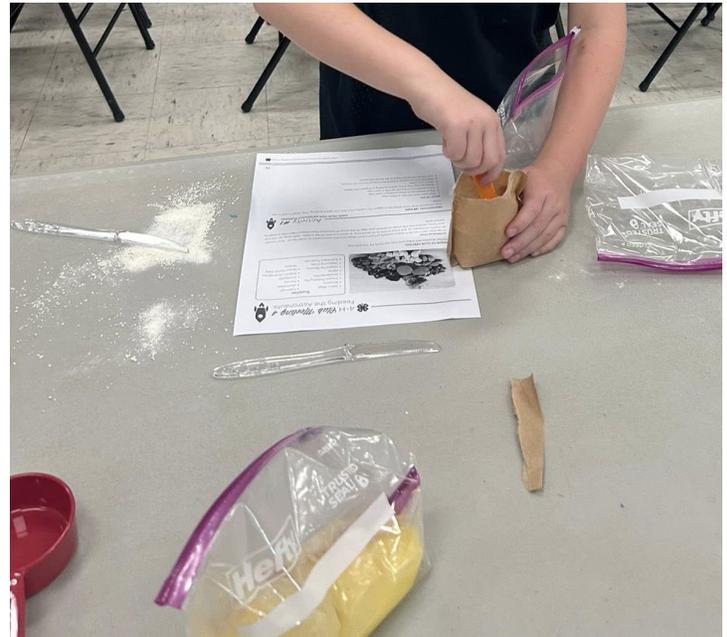


Local Impact

KCR-1 Summer School: Mission to Mars

In June 2025, MU Extension — Knox County partnered with the Knox County R-1 School District to provide 4-H programming during summer school afternoon clubs. Incoming kindergarten through sixth-grade students chose from a variety of summer school clubs, including 4-H Mission to Mars. Over the course of the approximately two-week summer school session, May 29 — June 17, 2025, 30 elementary students participated in two separate sessions led by Crystal Murr, 4-H Youth Program Associate.

Students participated in hands-on 4-H activities using the *Discover 4-H Clubs: Mission to Mars* curriculum (Utah State University Extension, 2017), which included: creating group mission patches, learning about space food and making astronaut pudding, exploring space weather and climate, making a rocket ship, practicing space yoga and mindfulness, learning about animals in space, and more. These activities were designed to foster teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, and inclusion while giving students a fun, immersive experience in science, nutrition, and leadership.



The Mission to Mars club was designed to engage students across a wide range of ages and abilities, fostering both personal and social development. Participants had the opportunity to:

- Learn and practice public speaking skills
- Develop decision-making abilities
- Be introduced to parliamentary procedure
- Build teamwork skills through collaborative activities
- Practice voting and nominating processes
- Demonstrate inclusion and support for peers

Through these activities, students developed essential social and leadership skills that support academic success and prepare them for future workplace environments.



Profiles and stories



MO 4-H State Hippology Team — Eastern National 4-H Roundup

The Missouri 4-H State Hippology Team represented the state at the Eastern National Livestock Exposition and 4-H Roundup in Louisville, Kentucky, this fall competing against 22 top teams nationwide.

The team achieved an 8th-place overall finish, demonstrating excellence in knowledge and teamwork. Top-ten results included:

- 8th — Written Test
- 8th — Stations
- 6th — Team Problem

Team members included Adalena M. (Andrew County), Jolynn S. (Lafayette County), Adalyn S. (Schuyler County), and **Hailey L. (Knox County)**.



2025 Naomi Crouch 4-H Volunteer Leadership Award

The Closet in Edina is recognized for more than eight years of service and support to 4-H in Knox County. The Closet selected the Knox County 4-H Council to receive the \$250 reward in their honor.

The Closet in Edina, a ministry of the Knox County United Methodist Parish, became involved with 4-H to support youth and youth programs in Knox County. In past years, the ministry sponsored awards and Clover Kids, and currently donates to the 4-H Council so funds can benefit all youth involved in 4-H. They value 4-H for its role in teaching essential skills, leadership, and teamwork—qualities necessary for success in life. The ministry chose to become 4-H volunteers because of the program's significance in Knox County, particularly in the largely rural farming community. The most rewarding aspect of their involvement is seeing their donations and efforts support annual 4-H projects and observing the positive impact on youth as they grow into leadership roles. Their advice for those looking to give back to 4-H is to contribute both time and financial support, whether by serving as a project leader or by contacting the local council to discover ways to help.

Each year, the Missouri 4-H Foundation selects two volunteers and one organization from across the state to receive this award in recognition of their dedication of time and talents to MU Extension's 4-H youth development program. The award is named in honor of Naomi Crouch, a Plattsburg, Missouri native who served as a 4-H volunteer and Missouri 4-H Foundation trustee for more than 20 years.

Photo by Echo Menges, *The Edina Sentinel*



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

Agriculture and Environment

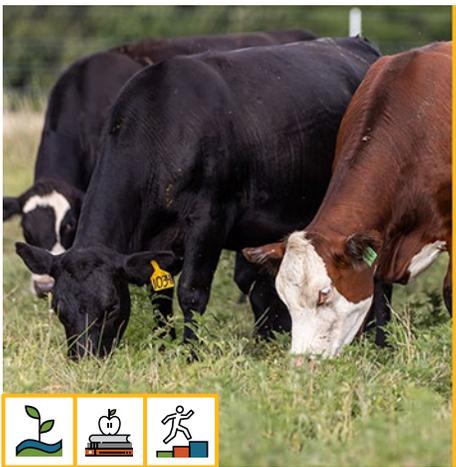


MU Extension Specialists quickly respond to **emergencies and disasters** across the state. If a disease outbreak occurs in livestock, specialists are there. If a natural disaster such as flooding occurs, specialists are there. Missouri farmers can count on MU Extension to guide them through emerging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



The Missouri 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.



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



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Pesticide Applicator Training

Nick Wesslak taught 87 total applicants for PPAT licensing in the Northeast Region.

Nick presented at the 2025 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training Recertification in Columbia, Missouri to 953 individuals over a 9-day period, with 68 of those individuals being online.

Nick also conducted Non-Certified Restricted Use Applicator (NRUP) Training for area agribusinesses. All total, 66 individuals employed by agribusinesses in the Northeast region were able to receive the necessary training to conduct commercial application operations

Pesticide Safety

Nick Wesslak taught youth pesticide safety programming to 775 high school and middle school aged children so they could learn safe usage of pesticides and other chemicals.

The program aimed to help youth better understand why pesticides and other chemicals are important to human safety and food production, while also helping them to a better understanding of the risks involved with the use of these products.



Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories

Integrated Pest Management

Nick Wesslak participated in several activities regarding MU IPM (Integrated Pest Management) efforts in the field. Several photos and videos related to IPM were captured for later educational use during educational activities.

The Northeast Region was home to several IPM activities such as corn and soybean disease scouting and migratory insect trapping and monitoring stations for the IPM Pest Management Network.

This network served as an alert system for the entire northeast Missouri region and helped indicate to producers what species of migratory pests should be scouted for in the field.

Integrated Pest Management Continued

The MU Extension 4th Annual Crop and Forage Chat held in the Northeast Region attracted 18 in person attendees and 13,705 indirect educational contacts were generated through partnering with the Quincy Herald Whig.

Participants took from that day a better understanding of current plant disease issues in corn and soybeans, grazing management practices, and corn and soybean insect pest management.

Nick also conducted an in-field TV interview with WGEM discussing farmers' winter preparations for next year's crop. This interview broadcast to approximately 99,000 homes and generated 113,241 indirect educational contacts.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Opportunities for Drones in Missouri Agriculture

Nick presented on federal regulation exemptions needed to operate an agricultural utility drone and delivered hands on manual flight control instruction to 35 program attendees in the Southwest Region and 6 program attendees in the Northeast/East Central Region. He also developed the curriculum for these sections. This was part of a statewide initiative funded by a grant from the Missouri Governor's office.

Shelby County Ag Night

Nick helped organize and MC the Shelby County Ag Night. This event gave attendees the opportunity to choose two 30-minute educational sessions covering a range of topics, including ag technology, livestock, crop science, economics, and health. 65 people attended this event.

MU Certified Strip Trial Program and Miscellaneous Trials

Nick held several trials in the Northeast region. Trials were as follows: starter response plots in corn (2), in-furrow DAP soybean response (1), in-furrow DAP wheat response (1), cover crop trials (1).

Soils

Nick oversaw the soil sampling program at the county level and made recommendations to clients based upon their soil sample results for the eight northeast counties of the state of Missouri. There was a total of 219 participants. Participants in the soil sampling program learned about their soil fertility levels and received research-based recommendations to achieve their desired yield goal of their crop(s).



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Crop Consultations and Contacts

Nick Wesslak consulted with 713 different individual agricultural contacts on topics related to row crops, forage crops, and horticulture crops, from across the Northeast region.

Soil and Water Conservation and Management

Nick Wesslak served as Secretary on the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.

Northeast Missouri Agricultural Connection

Nick Wesslak served as a team member of the NEMO Ag Connection Newsletter. He wrote and edited articles for the newsletter. Subscription numbers led to a total number of indirect contacts of approximately 27,000 individuals throughout the region.

Engagement and Stakeholder Relations

Hannibal Middle School hosted a career day, and Nick presented for the ag career session and focused on his career in Extension. Special emphasis was made on discussing real world scenarios Nick encounters and how STEM knowledge and education help to resolve the issues Nick and producers face. Nick saw 200 students that day. Nick also participated in the Lewis County Progressive Farm Safety Day, where he taught 125 5th graders about pesticide and household chemical safety.

Nick saw a successful event with the Northeast Missouri Old Threshers Ag Safety Day, with 538 participants. Attendees focus was placed on learning valuable safety minded practices when working around the farm.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists' (MHMN) saw a very busy year with chapter activities starting off with Clarksville Eagle Days. The Honeysuckle Hack team met monthly throughout the year to remove invasive honeysuckle from Riverview Park in partnership with Hannibal Parks and Recreation. MHMN participated in the Hannibal Chart Teen Task force Health Fair with 5 members staffing a booth on the benefits of spending time in nature.

Several members assisted at Mark Twain Lake to cut and place cedar trees in exposed flood plains for fish habitat. MHMN also held a youth deer shed hunt at Mark Twain Lake with 200 children. The 2nd annual Hannibal Eagle Days was also conducted by MHMN, with 650 visitors enjoying a live eagle show, several educational nature booths, crafts and activities for children, a nature story time, and conservation education opportunities.

MHMN conducted prairie burns, participated in a training for Sturgeon Watch in partnership with MDC, and partnered with the Mark Twain Lake Army Corps of Engineers in building 80 fish habitat structures which were later sunk in Mark Twain Lake. For Earth Day, MHMN partnered with the Army Corp of Engineers at Mark Twain Lake/Frank Russell Recreation Area for a day of fishing with students from 3 local elementary schools. MHMN members participated in the Inaugural Missouri Birding Challenge.

Members participated in the Knox County Safety Day with a presentation on Outdoor Safety that focused on tick and mosquito bite prevention. MHMN joined Monroe City for the Queen of the Prairie "Every Yard a Prairie" event where MHMN sold native plants for planting, demonstrated pollination and answered questions about conservation issues.

The chapter worked with Mark Twain State Park on invasive species control throughout the summer months. MHMN joined the Missouri Dark Sky Program. MHMN partnered with Hannibal Arts Council to conduct the Wild and Wacky Art Adventure in Hannibal and taught students about Missouri turtles. Over 200 children attended this event.

MHMN held a Stream Team event on Bear Creek with an invertebrate study and a physical data collection on the stream. Reece Worthington discussed "Prairies before the Plow" with chapter members and the chapter surveyed old cemeteries around Mark Twain Lake for native species. The chapter also participated in the Indiana Bat Monitoring program.

MHMN also participated in the Northeast Missouri Old Thresher's Ag Safety Day discussing outdoor safety with students from several elementary and middle schools in the Shelby County area. MHMN also presented a similar program to over 200 4th grade students in Pike County on outdoor safety. Subject areas included poison ivy, venomous snakes, sun safety, and ticks and mosquitoes. MHMN also helped with litter pickup in Ralls County that continued throughout the summer. A fall hike was held at the Bridalspur Hunt Club.

MHMN held a Fall Field Day located on the Mississippi Riverfront in Canton. With the cooperation of MHMN, the city and citizens of Canton, and Culver Stockton University, numerous non-native tree species were removed and mulched. Trails were also constructed that day, and 3 educational speakers presented on conservation topics at the local library. MHMN also participated in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories



Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists Presenting at the Teen Health Fair on Nature Connections



Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists Presenting at Hannibal Eagle Days



Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists removing invasive honeysuckle plants.

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Garden Talk Newsletter

Eleven people from Knox County receive a hard copy of the Garden Talk newsletter each month. The newsletter provides them with timely gardening tips and information on a variety of horticulture topics. It also includes upcoming horticulture programs and activities. Some residents receive it electronically.

Consultation

Throughout the year, citizens of Knox County receive information and advice on various gardening questions, to help them make more informed choices about their gardens, fruit trees, soils, lawns and landscapes and soil testing.



Master Naturalist

One Knox County resident completed the Master Naturalist course held during the fall of 2025. They learned information on various conservation related topics. The mission of Missouri Master Naturalist is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service. The individual is a member of the North Star Master Naturalist Chapter which meets monthly in Kirksville.



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



In 2025, 2,125 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 112,713 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state, a value of \$3.9M dollars.



Agriculture and Environment

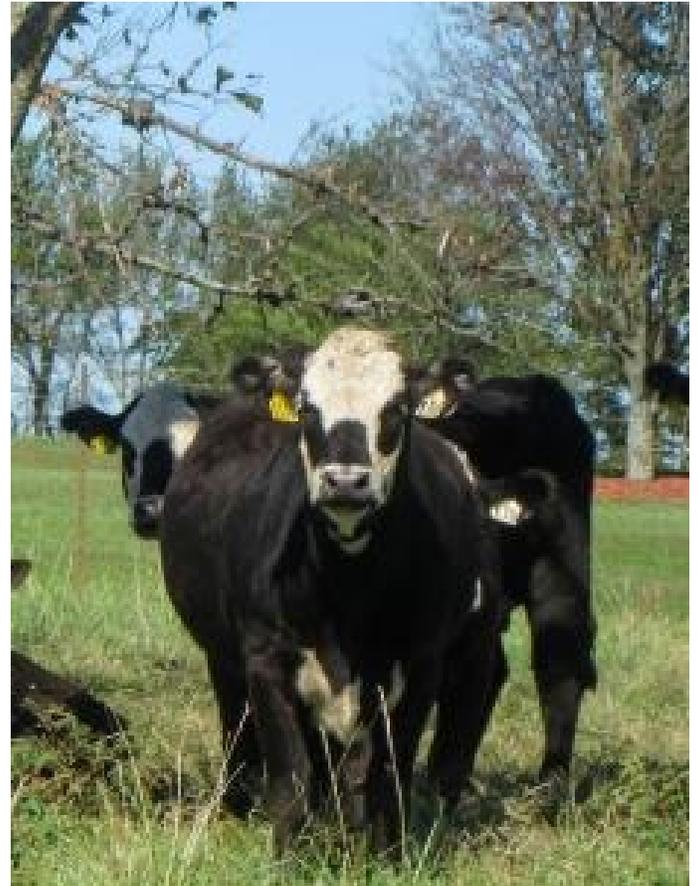
Local Impact

Show-Me-Select Heifer Program

The Show-Me-Select (SMS) program focuses on increasing the adoption of management practices by Missouri farmers, improving long-term herd reproductive efficiency, and increasing profitability. Program participants learn the importance of pre-breeding examinations and how these practices impact both economic and productivity levels.

In Knox County, one beef producer enrolled in the SMS program this year and one consigned to a sale.

The Northeast Region hosts two Show-Me-Select Heifer sales annually in Palmyra, Missouri. In 2025, 486 heifers sold in the spring and fall sales with a combined average price of \$4,236. These Palmyra sales alone added \$2,096,212 to the local economy by improving reproductive efficiency and marketing opportunities for Missouri-raised heifers.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Women in Agricultural Workshop

Women in Ag is a hands-on workshop geared toward women involved in agriculture in northeast Missouri. Six Knox County participants attended the workshop and learned about Missouri Farmers Care programs, pollinators, women's health from the ground up, and enjoyed interactive activities such as bug bingo and tasting farm-to-table meals. Participants also created barn quilts as part of the hands-on experience.



By offering programs targeting women in agriculture, MU Extension empowers women to make informed decisions about farm and home management.

- 98% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction as Very Good or Excellent
- 100% of respondents gave top marks for the quality of information presented
- 98% found the materials provided to be highly useful and relevant



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Livestock Lick Tub Roundup

Since 2022, University of Missouri Extension has partnered with local farmers to repurpose used livestock lick tubs into container gardens for nutrition education. This program, led by MU Health and Human Sciences and SNAP-Ed staff, promotes sustainability and hands-on learning for adults and youth. Brenda Schreck, MU Extension Livestock Specialist, has coordinated tub collection efforts across the region, encouraging farmers to contribute to this statewide initiative. In Knox County the program engaged 1 participant, and farmer donated 80 tubs, strengthening community engagement and eco-friendly practices. To date, Schreck has collected over 550 tubs.





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

Business and Community



Neighborhood Leadership Fellows is an advanced leadership program centered on driving systemic change. Twenty-six residents of North St. Louis City and part of North St. Louis County, graduated from the program in 2022. Fellows gained advocacy skills that enable them to take on civic leadership roles and influence policymaking. Key program outputs include a 10-year personal leadership plan by each fellow and group projects aimed at fostering more equitable regional policies for their neighborhoods.

In the most recent St. Louis election cycle (April 4, 2023), **ELEVEN NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP FELLOWS** alumni ran for office, and **SEVEN OF THEM WON** their election. In that group, individuals were elected to serve as mayors, school board members and city council representatives.



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

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



Strategic Doing is a one-day workshop that guides community stakeholders through an inclusive, problem-solving approach to developing high-impact projects to address local development issues.

"I highly recommend this incredible program to any community looking for focus and direction."

Strategic Doing participant



The city of Risco, Mo., lacked retail options for food. **Risco's Strategic Doing workshop and follow-up activities resulted in a GROCERY STORE OPENING in the community.**

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Business and Community

Local Impact

Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension coordinated and offered tax education through one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was in person and live online. Fall schools were in Columbia and Springfield and an 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, installment sales, tax benefits of home ownership, retirement tax issues, and individual tax issues. The schools were approved for up to 16 hours of continuing education credit by the IRS, Missouri Bar and for CFP continuing education. Total continuing education hours reported to IRS for the schools was 4,024 hours.



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

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. One comment from an online participant was “The video was outstanding — best I’ve seen on any CPE I’ve done live.”. Planning is underway to offer trainings in 2026. 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, 2025 National Income Tax Workbook from the Land Grant University Tax Education Foundation, and materials written by the instructors.

The 2025 school attendance totaled three hundred eighty-nine people, which was an 11% increase from 2024. The participants were from throughout Missouri and two from out of state.





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

Health and Human Sciences



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.



A Matter of Balance helps older adults overcome their fear of falling, increase their activity levels and reduce their risk of falls. In eight classes, participants learn fall-prevention strategies, develop personal prevention plans, acquire balance-improving exercises and make lifestyle changes to minimize their fear of falling.

“I have cleaned my house of clutter for safety, put non-slip stickers on my tub floor, I’m getting much more regular exercise and I’m feeling stronger.”



Stay Strong, Stay Healthy supports older adults in maintaining strength, balance, and mobility to fully engage in the activities that matter most to them. The program combines safe, effective exercises with practical information on nutrition and wellness, helping participants build confidence, connection, and **well-being** for lifelong health.

After eight weeks, participants in the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program showed significant improvement in their STRENGTH, BALANCE and SLEEP QUALITY.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



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Health & Well-Being

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2025

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,419,598 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 70,722 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and eligible citizens of Missouri who learned about being active and healthy eating on a budget. This year we had 970,939 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, and food pantries.

197 direct and indirect contacts were made in Knox County.

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

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



EFNEP Public Value Statement 2025

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

37 of these youth and adult participants reside in Knox 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.





Extension
Knox County
University of Missouri