



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Macon County 2025

Annual Report



111 N. Rollins Street
Macon, MO 63552
660-385-2173

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**



Extension
University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

PHONE 573-882-2394
EMAIL cchiggins@missouri.edu

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 sunsetting 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chadwick C. Higgins".

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

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff

Kris Bockting

Missouri APEX Accelerator

Darla Campbell

Field Specialist in Community Development

Mark Christian

Small Business Development Center Business Specialist

Theresa Eads

4-H Youth Development Educator

Zachary Erwin

Field Specialist in Livestock

Taylor Harris

Youth Program Associate

Tracie Moore

Extension Engagement Specialist

Jennifer Schutter

Field Specialist in Horticulture

Mary Sobba

Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

Valerie Tate

Field Specialist in Agronomy

Jeremiah Terrell

Field Specialist in Human Development

Deanna Turner

County Office Support Staff



Council Members

Nicole Wilson

Chairman

Christian Meeker

Vice-Chairman

Ashley Anselmo

Secretary

Jennifer McVicker

Treasurer

Jordan Dawson

Ethan Foster

Kayla Hartung

Angela Helton

Ashlea Neill

Paige Wieberg

Donny Wyatt

Rebecca Yount



County Executives

Dean Still

Presiding Commissioner

Matt Shoemaker

District 1 Commissioner

Jeff McLin

District 2 Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations 54020.80

Total Income 54020.80

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits 22069.07

Travel 2568.00

Postage 175.99

Telephone 1602.74

Rent 8400.00

Office Supplies/Service 3649.85

Utilities 2009.39

Insurance 1325.83

Furniture/Equipment 1518.10

Total Expenses 43318.97



State Fair Farm Family

Each year, the Macon County MU Extension Council, in cooperation with the Missouri Farm Bureau, selects a family to represent them at the Missouri State Fair. We select a family actively engaged in agriculture, supporters of MU Extension, active in the community through leadership roles in organizations, support youth in the areas such as 4-H and FFA and are respected by their neighbors and community. The Rick and Janie McVicker family was selected to represent Macon County for 2025.



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

Local support

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

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Macon County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Macon 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 Macon 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 Macon 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.



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

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



4-H brings hands-on learning directly into schools through in-school and afterschool programs that extend classroom lessons. **Teachers, 4-H professionals,** and **volunteers** guide students through 4-H projects in areas such as science, agriculture, health, and leadership, helping youth connect learning to the real world.

Programs like **Show Me Embryology** give students a front-row seat to science in action as they watch chicks hatch and explore the life cycle of a chicken. These experiences help students grow curiosity, confidence, and critical thinking skills, preparing them to be Beyond Ready for whatever comes next.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Local Impact

4-H Youth Development Program

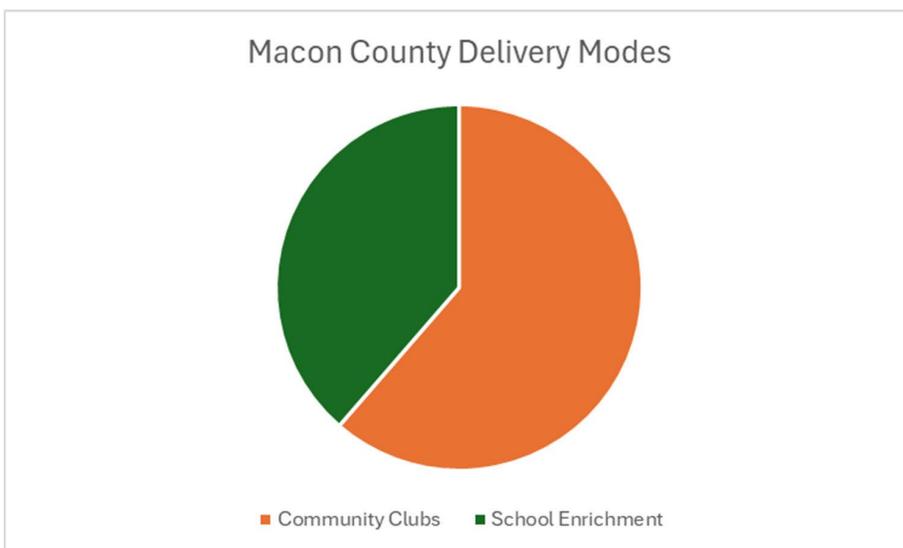
By Taylor Harris-Youth Program Associate

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 12 in 100 (or 12 percent) of Macon County youth were reached through 4-H programming through MU Extension.

4-H programming reaches youth through a variety of delivery modes in Macon County, including Community Clubs, SPIN Clubs or short-term 4-H programming, and in-school or afterschool membership or school enrichment programming. These varied delivery modes allow participants to participate in the format that best meets their needs and interests, while focusing on multiple skills including public speaking, leadership, exploring sparks (or interests), developing life skills, responsibility, group decision making, and exploring college and career pathways.

DIAGRAM of Macon County 4-H Enrollment by Delivery Mode



4-H Community Club Members

- 216 youth reached through the Macon community clubs in Macon County during the 2024-2025 4-H Year.
- Over 190 4-H members were engaged in science related projects and experiences.
- Collectively, youth participated in 2,376 hours of documented community club work and 422 hours of community service in Macon County.

Local Impact

4-H Programming Participation

- 37 youth served in a leadership role within their club or council. One youth from the County also held leadership roles beyond the county serving as (Regional Representative, Missouri State Council, Missouri Civic Engagement Ambassadors, Shooting Sports Ambassadors, National Congress Delegates, National Conference Delegates, Ignite Delegates).
- 83 youth demonstrated their public speaking and communication skills by participating in the Achievement (Major Events) Event held in Macon County this year.
- Youth showcased what they learned in their projects this year with 359 exhibits by Macon County youth shown at the Macon Town and Country Fair.
- Macon County was represented by 57 youth exhibiting in the 4-H Building and Livestock Shows at the Missouri State Fair in 2025. Seven youth also showcased public speaking skills by presenting demonstrations in the 4-H Building at the Missouri State Fair.
- Macon County youth also sited in on their future through their shooting sports projects which strives to teach them focus and safety while honing their skills and developing sportsmanship. Three youth competed in the Missouri 4-H State Shoot events this year.
- 12 state level recognition forms were completed by members. Completing these forms allows members to reflect on the things they have done and learned throughout the 4-H year and how they can apply what they have learned in the upcoming year.
- Two youth received a Missouri 4-H Scholarship as an investment in their future.
- 12 youth learned more about civic engagement and the Missouri Legislature by participating in 4-H Day at the Capitol.
- One member used their skills to capture the beauty around them by participating in the Great Outdoors: Missouri 4-H Photography Contest.
- 100 youth participated in the 2024 Regional Roundup held in Macon and 18 youth in the 2025 Spring Energizer held in Paris where they connected with others and gained knowledge and skills through workshop sessions.
- Youth also took their 4-H experience beyond the county lines participating in the following events:
 - State 4-H Equine Tour
 - State 4-H Congress*
 - State Poultry and Rabbit Day*
 - State 4-H Teen Conference*

Local Impact

4-H Programming Impact

- 4-H members are twice as likely to go to college compared to their non-4-H peers and they tend to pursue careers in STEM fields (Lerner & Lerner, 2011).
- 4-H also prepares youth for the workplace. Youth must be prepared to live and work in a world we cannot completely envision - competing for jobs that do not yet exist, using technologies that have yet to be identified. 4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture, life sciences, and social sciences from the university system. This brings relevant science content and hands-on learning that helps youth thrive (Arnold, Bourdeau, & Nott, 2013).
- Youth who earn a bachelor's degree increase their annual earnings by \$2 million over their lifetime. (U.S. News and World report, 2011) If 50% of the Macon County youth participating in 4-H events on a college campus receive a Bachelor's degree, 4-H would help young people acquire \$1.6 billion more in lifetime earnings.



Local Impact

4-H School Enrichment, In-school and Afterschool Clubs

- 136 youth were reached by school enrichment programs in Macon County in 2024-2025.
- Six classrooms across the county were reached through the Embryology: Hatching Chicks in the Classroom program culminating in 12 hours of learning about development, agriculture and sanitation, in addition to responsibility.



Macon County members enrolled in a combined total of 105 projects during the 2024-2025 4-H Year

The top project areas included:

- Country Cured Hams
- Arts and Crafts
- Woodworking
- Photography
- Poultry

Resources

- Arnold, M., Bourdeau, V., & Nott, B. (2013). Measuring science inquiry skills in youth development programs: The Science Process Skills Inventory, *Journal of Youth Development*, 8(1).
- Arnold, M. E. (2018). From Context to Outcomes: A Thriving Model for 4-H Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 6(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.54718/NBNL5438>
- Independent Sector. (2023). *Value of Volunteer Time Report | Independent Sector Resources*. Independent Sector. <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>
- Lerner, R.M., Lerner, J.V. (2011). The positive development of youth: Report of the findings from the first seven years of the *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-developmentresearch/>.
- U.S. News and World Report (2011). How Higher Education Affects Lifetime Salary. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2011/08/05/how-higher-education-affects-lifetime-salary>

Macon County

Missouri 4-H

Profiles and stories

Impact in Their Own Words

- “4-H has taught me that I can prepare to be a leader in the future, by being a leader today.”
- “I learned that anything worth doing is worth doing right because I practiced and practiced and to my surprise, my demonstration was chosen for the state fair.”
- “One of the things I’ve already learned in 4-H is how important it is to try, even if something seems hard or unfamiliar at first.”



4-H Volunteers

4-H Volunteers are the true muscle of the 4-H program, extending the reach of 4-H professionals and making a difference in the lives of youth by connecting them with a caring adult to support them in their development.

- Macon County 4-H members were supported by 69 enrolled, screened and oriented adult volunteers supporting the development of youth in the 2024-2025 4-H Year.
- Volunteers contributed 6,000 hours to the Macon County 4-H program valued at \$240,051.
- 12 volunteers participated in volunteer development efforts including the Club Leader Summit and Project Leader Summit offered by 4-H Professionals to learn and be equipped for the leadership roles in which they serve.



Adult volunteers serve as mentors for our youth, helping them transition into caring, healthy adults who contribute back to their communities, which is priceless.

County Engagement

Missouri Century Farms

Century farms and ranches have shaped our nation. In every kitchen, behind every barn door, and in every soiled and calloused hand lie stories of those who feed our world. The Missouri Century Farm program celebrates the lasting contributions farmers and ranchers have made to our country and state heritages.



John and Charlene Bergfield were awarded the Missouri Century Farm designation in 2025. The 55 acres farm was purchased in 1891 by their great grandfather, David P. Mears.



The Velma Lois Hook Bruner farms were awarded the Missouri Century Farm designation in 2025. The original farms, consisting of 117 acres in Macon County, purchased in 1899 by James Isaiah Carter, and 109 acres farm in Randolph County, purchased in 1893 by Robert Franklin Hook.



The Macon Community Garden was alive this season with a bounty of tomatoes, peppers, green beans, broccoli, and other vegetables. Macon County Extension hosted a couple of Farmer's Markets at this site as well.



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

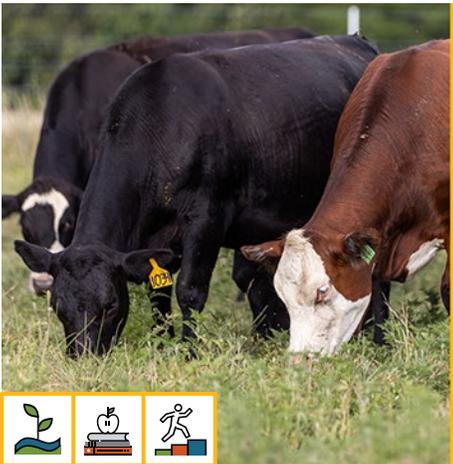
Agriculture and Environment



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.

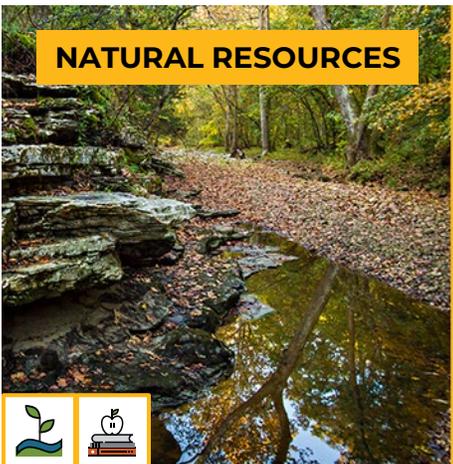


In 2023, almost 4,000 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 149,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state.



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

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

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Performance Tested Bull Sale

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

MU Extension livestock faculty visit farms to record yearling weights and hip heights for bulls enrolled in the Northeast Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement program. These measurements provide producers with valuable performance data for herd management and marketing decisions. Producers in this program sell bulls in the annual Northeast Missouri Performance Tested Bull Sale in Palmyra, Missouri, as well as off the farm.

Missouri producers benefit by gaining access to alternative markets that support sustainable business practices. At the 2025 sale, 33 bulls sold for an average of \$6,221 per head, generating \$205,293 in total sales. These dollars strengthen the local economy and benefit northeast Missouri.

LIVESTOCK LICK TUB ROUNDUP

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

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. The program participants and farmers donated tubs, strengthening community engagement and eco-friendly practices. To date, Schreck has collected over 550 tubs.

SHOW-ME-SELECT REPLACEMENT HEIFER PROGRAM

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

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 Macon 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



PEARLS OF PRODUCTION — WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

Pearls of Production is a statewide educational program for women involved in livestock production. In 2025, MU Extension offered five virtual sessions providing practical, research based education on critical topics, including on-farm biosecurity, herd health management, nutrition strategies for pregnant cows and heifers, vaccination and disease prevention, innovative marketing tools such as artificial intelligence, and hands-on programs for new beekeepers.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

Women in Ag is a hands-on workshop geared toward women involved in agriculture in northeast Missouri. One Macon participant 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.

Key Outcomes and Numbers

- 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

HORSEMEN'S WEBINAR SERIES

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

MU Extension delivered a quarterly Horsemen's Webinar Series in 2025 to provide practical, research-based education for horse owners and equine operations. The free, online series featured MU Extension specialists and university experts who addressed key topics impacting horse health, safety, and farm management, including forage management, toxic weed identification, hay selection, and farm tax considerations. The series helped participants improve horse health, reduce risk, and strengthen farm management decisions.

The program reached 116 registrants from 12 states and two countries. The strong participation demonstrates both local need and the efficiency of Extension's virtual delivery model, which maximizes county investment while expanding access to high-quality education.

FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT (FSMA)

By Brenda Schreck-MU Extension Livestock Specialist

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) ensures the U.S. food supply remains safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it in livestock feed. MU Extension livestock specialist Brenda Schreck works directly with agricultural firms that provide and/or process livestock feed to develop and maintain feed safety plans.

Across Northeast Missouri, Schreck continues to maintain 23 plans for elevators and feed manufacturing firms. Discussions focus on implementing documentation for preventive controls and maintaining accurate records as required by the FDA. Feed safety manuals help firms track preventive measures and ensure animal feed safety standards are met.



Agriculture and Environment

Soil Testing

By Valerie Tate-MU Extension Field Specialist in Agronomy

Soil testing is a valuable tool for farmers. It is a process used to estimate the ability of the soil to support plant growth. Samples submitted to the University of Missouri Soil Testing Laboratory are analyzed for pH and nutrients including phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Soil can also be tested for micronutrients including sulfur, zinc, manganese, iron, and copper.

The objectives of the MU Soil Testing Laboratory are:

- to help farmers make effective use of fertilizer to increase their financial returns
- benefit society with improved environment and water quality through efficient use of fertilizer
- to ensure public and private labs are providing reliable and quality soil test results to the citizens of Missouri

University of Missouri Soil Testing Laboratory ensures Missouri farmers are efficiently using the plant nutrients which are applied to agricultural fields by providing unbiased, research-based fertilizer and limestone recommendations based on soil fertility analysis. This is a cost-effective way to determine if adequate fertilizer is being applied to obtain the yield goals set by the farmer. It also ensures the farmer is not applying excess fertilizer, which is not only costly, but can be damaging to the environment. In 2025, the MU Soil Testing Laboratory analyzed 4 soil samples from Macon County.



Private Pesticide Applicator Training

By Valerie Tate-MU Extension Field Specialist in Agronomy

The private pesticide applicator license issued by the Missouri Department of Agriculture is required for producers wanting to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides. Restricted use pesticides are classified as such because without additional training they pose a risk to people, animals, or the environment. Agricultural producers needing to obtain or renew certification of this license must take this pesticide safety training every five years. New licensing requirements went into effect in 2025 which required producers to obtain a Category 20-CORE license which was valid for many restricted use pesticides. Producers who purchase and/or apply soil fumigants, non-soil fumigants, or apply restricted use pesticides using a drone, helicopter or airplane on their own farm or farmland they rent, must obtain supplemental licenses in addition to the CORE.

During the training, participants learn about:

- safe handling of pesticides
- proper mixing, calibration techniques
- environmental ramifications of improper mixing or careless application
- chemical breakdown of pesticides in the environment
- what records are needed
- pesticide formulations
- personal protective equipment and how to clean it
- pesticide storage
- common Missouri pests
- integrated pest management (IPM) techniques.

During 2025, 40 agricultural producers in Macon County were trained and licensed to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides.

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Master Gardener Program

By Jennifer Schutter-MU Horticulture Field Specialist

In 2025, the Macon-Shelby Master Gardener chapter had 14 members (11 from Macon County, 3 from Shelby County); two trainees who completed the core course and now are completing 30 hours of volunteer service; one emeritus who became a Master Gardener 26 years ago when the chapter was founded; and eleven active certified Master Gardeners.

The Macon-Shelby Master Gardeners completed 883 volunteer service hours as a chapter, with a value of \$30,719.57 using the value of \$34.79 for 2025 per volunteer hour from the Independent Sector. They are required to complete 6 hours per year of continuing education, which totaled 177.5 hours for the chapter. The 11 Master Gardeners from Macon County completed a total of 381.5 service hours valued at \$34,272.39. They had 84.5 continuing education hours for the year.

The chapter continues to maintain beds at Samaritan Hospital, Long Branch Lake Visitor Center, Macon Post Office, Loch Haven and Macon Health Care Center. With plans to focus more on helping others learn to grow, the group will study which beds to continue to maintain.

Master Gardeners enjoyed presentations about the All-America Selections Display Garden, Plant Identification and Vocabulary, Founding Gardeners, and Tulips of Holland at their monthly meetings. Chapter members toured Lake Country Gardens at Perry, MO. In April, Dr. Todd Higgins, Extension Horticulture Field Specialist, presented “Grass Masters”. Forty-nine attended the event. Seventeen were Master Gardeners from northeast Missouri. Thirty-two non-Master Gardeners attended from the following locations: Anabel, Brashear, Cairo, Clarence, Green City, Kirksville, Macon, Madison and Moberly.

The chapter held a plant sale at the Clarence Homecoming, their first sale for many years. They sold various plants, butterfly feeders, bluebird houses, loofah, pocket presses and broom corn. From their proceeds, they granted \$100 scholarships to their trainees.

Various members participated in the State Women in Agriculture conference held in Macon, and the local conference held in Green Castle; the International Master Gardener Conference; the Missouri State Master Gardener Conference; advanced continuing education classes entitled “EMG Volunteer Boards”, and the Garden’s Palette in Quincy, IL. A member from Shelby County has served as secretary of the Missouri Master Gardener Association (MOMGA) for four years and will assume the role of treasurer in January 2026. Another Shelby County resident has served as chapter representative on the MOMGA board for four years. One member represented MOMGA and Extension Master Gardeners at the Pumpkins and Pirates event at the St. Louis Aquarium where a state fair winning pumpkin was displayed. Two-chapter members taught children how to plant flowers and care for them as part of the Macon Library Summer Reading Program, Color Our World. A new chapter newsletter was launched in the fall of 2025.

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

The Macon City Council proclaimed October 14, 2025, as “Macon-Shelby Master Gardeners’ Day”. The proclamation stated, “Decades of service, leadership, and community enrichment exemplify the very best of civic dedication. We are fortunate to have such an organization deeply rooted in our community....” A letter of commendation from the Honorable Senator Cindy O’Laughlin states, “This outstanding chapter has demonstrated exceptional dedication to the mission of the University of Missouri Extension’s Master Gardener program....Their leadership, community engagement, and commitment to excellence reflect the best of what volunteer service in Missouri represents.”



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact



Garden Talk Newsletter:

Seventy-nine people from Macon County receive 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.



Master Naturalist

Twelve individuals, of which one was from Macon County, 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. These individuals are members of the North Star Master Naturalist Chapter which meets monthly in Kirksville.

Women in Agriculture:

A Women in Agriculture program was held November 5, at Wildflower Grove in Green Castle. Twenty-five women attended the program, with 1 participating from Macon County. Various sessions on agriculture topics were taught throughout the day. These included Estate and Financial Preparedness, Artificial Intelligence and Agriculture, Missouri Beef Industry Update and Plant Diagnostics. Women in Agriculture programs bring women together to network, form connections, and gain knowledge they can use in their farm operation or agriculture business.

State Women in Agriculture Conference:

The Missouri State Women In Agriculture Conference was held at Emerald Fields in Macon County in September. Over 150 women from around the state attended the 3-day conference that focused on agriculture programs for women involved in the agriculture industry and farming operations.

Consultations:

Throughout the year, home gardeners and producers in Macon County receive information and advice on various gardening questions, to help them make more informed choices about their vegetable gardens, flower gardens, fruit trees, soils, lawns and landscapes, soil testing and soil test results.

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Farmers' Markets are a Primary Source of Price Data

By Darla Campbell-MU Community Development Specialist

The Missouri Department of Agriculture partnered with University of Missouri Extension to collect farmers' market price data on crops present at Missouri farmers' markets June-October of 2025. Five MU Extension Specialists collected data while providing production, marketing, and financial resources to producers around the state. The data is available seasonally on MDA's website and helps new and experienced producers determine market prices for their products. There was a total of 45 different markets visited in 2025 with 1908 prices collected.

I made 16 market visits to 12 different markets in Northeast and Central Missouri. These markets were in Kirksville, Unionville, Brookfield, Milan, La Plata, Louisiana, Hannibal, Palmyra, Mexico, Lancaster, and Columbia.

Vendors: Adair-18; Audrain-8; Boone-18; Callaway-9; Chariton-3; Cooper-5; Howard-2; Lewis-2; Lincoln-4; Linn-11; Macon-10; Marion-14; Monroe-1; Pike-9; Putnam-15; Ralls-16; Randolph-7; Schuyler-21; Sullivan-8, and Out of State-3.





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

Business and Community



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

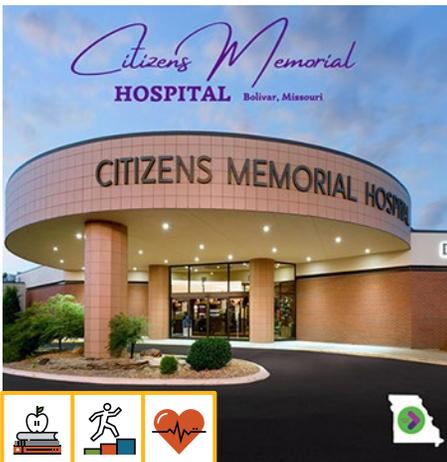
The conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 for Benton County.



DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DATA TRAINING

MU Exceed offers customized data training. Participants learn how to use public data through hands-on exercises and demonstrations.

In 2022, Exceed provided data training to MORE THAN 200 MISSOURIANS. 95% of the attendees said that the information they learned was useful to their work.



Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFWs) foster a workplace culture that promotes employee safety, health and well-being through strategies that support managers and employees, including reducing stigma and providing recovery resources related to the challenges surrounding substance use disorders. The framework was developed in partnership with MU Extension's Labor and Workforce Development Program.

As of 2024, 41 Missouri businesses have been designated recovery friendly workplaces, and 2,651 EMPLOYEES have been trained on addiction, stigma and naloxone distribution.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Business and Community

Local Impact

Agriculture Lender Seminar

By Mary Sobba-MU Agriculture Business Field Specialist

Sixty-five lenders from 20 Missouri counties and Illinois attended an ag lender seminar in Mexico. Lenders learned about crop and livestock outlook, agriculture & tax policy, rental rates & land values, input costs and enterprise budgets and regulatory updates. The average tenure of agricultural lender was 12 years with a range of 1 to 38 years. On average, lenders had 207 agricultural loans in their portfolio with an average loan size of \$33,526. Given this information, it is estimated the Mexico Agricultural Lenders Seminar reached 13,455 loans valued at 4,487.6 million dollars. Attendees drove an average of 49 miles to attend the program with a range of 5 to 95 miles.

By attending University of Missouri's Agricultural Lenders' seminars, lenders gain knowledge to help their clients make better decisions based on objective education and resources. More information and better decisions benefit their portfolio of producers, landowners, and agribusinesses through enhanced understanding of enterprise budgets, market expectations, and other decision-influencing factors affecting families' and businesses' financial health.

Participants described the seminar as informative, well organized, and enjoyable. Several complimented the quality of the presentations and expressed appreciation for the event overall. In addition to the ag lender seminar in Mexico, there were seminars in Chillicothe, Jefferson City, Springfield and Warsaw. The total statewide attendance was 198 ag lenders, with 2 of those lenders from Macon County.



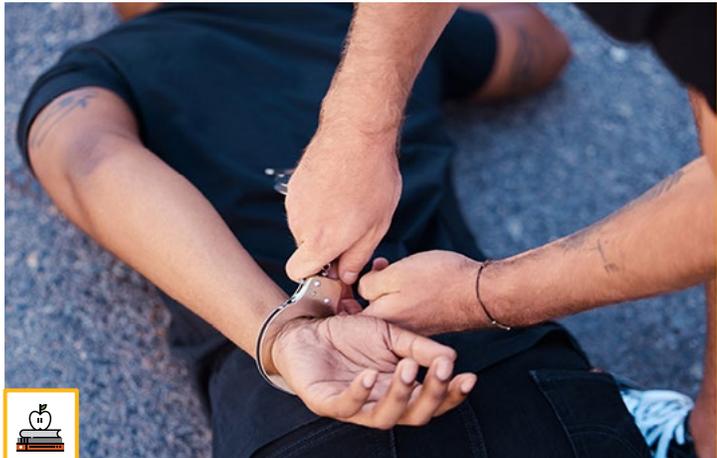


MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Continuing Education



The **Fire Service Leadership Enhancement Program (FSLEP)** prepares fire and emergency service leaders for the opportunities and challenges they will face. For 25 years, the MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute has partnered with the Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs and the Missouri Association of Fire Protection Districts on this program.



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



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



Legend



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Health & Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
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Health and Human Sciences



Home Food Preservation

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

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

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

"This course made me more self-sufficient and improved my family's access to quality food."



Chronic Disease Self-Management programs offer evidence-based information for individuals and their caregivers to boost self-confidence in managing symptoms, enhancing quality of life and even reducing health care expenses.

These programs have undergone rigorous evaluation and are proven to be effective tools for individuals dealing with chronic conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, depression and diabetes.



Brain and the Disease of Addiction

provides a foundational understanding of how the brain is affected from substances such as drugs and alcohol and how the disease of addiction develops. The Brain and the Disease of Addiction Program is for individuals, parents, students, healthcare professionals, and groups and organizations who will benefit from an understanding and knowledge of the science of the disease of addiction.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

HEALTH & WELL BEING

BY JEREMIAH TERRELL-HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY SCIENCE FIELD SPECIALIST



PROGRAM: TACKLING THE TOUGH SKILLS

Tackling the Tough Skills is a two-hour, five session, curriculum for building “soft skills” for work and life.

Topics include: Attitude, Responsibility, Communication, Problem Solving, Preparing for the Workplace. This program had 40 contacts in Macon County and was done in partnership with 41st Circuit Treatment Court.

Participants were able to:

- Recognize how their attitudes have affected their lives.
- Brainstorm ways to change negative self-attitudes.
- Recognize their personal strengths and see how in doing so they felt more responsibility in their lives.
- Consider what commitments they were willing to make and to keep.
- Make a plan for the future.

Program: Building Strong Families

The Building Strong Families: Challenges and Choices program helps families find their strengths, build on those strengths, and learn skills to create stronger families, improve relationships, and increase positive communication. Participants reported the following after attending:

- I learned how to take more time with each individual child.
- I realized that each member of my family has a role and responsibility and bring value to the family.
- I learned about how to manage my stress level and how to have a family council.
- I will organize my bills and set up a family spending plan with my family.

This program had 56 contacts in Macon County and was done in partnership with the 41st Circuit Treatment Court.

Health and Human Sciences

HEALTH & WELL BEING

BY JEREMIAH TERRELL-HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY SCIENCE FIELD SPECIALIST
CONT.



Program: Wits Workout

Wits Workout is based on brain health and aging research. “Just like muscles, our brains need exercise to maintain flexibility and strength,” says Byers, co-author of Wits Workout. “Challenging ourselves with new and diverse activities promotes cognitive health and can help maintain brain function as we age.” Join in with others to challenge your brain and learn more about keeping your brain healthy. This program had 54 contacts in Macon County and was done in partnership with the 41st Circuit Treatment Court.

PROGRAM: RELATIONSHIP SMARTS

Relationship Smarts a research-based curriculum that incorporates hands-on activities to focus on skills and knowledge necessary for healthy dating relationships. The curriculum, developed by The Dibble Institute, offers developmentally appropriate information that address identity development, personal goals and values, what healthy (vs abusive) relationships look like, current relationship dynamics, important communication skills, and the promotion of future-orientated thinking about relationships. This program had 54 contacts in Macon County and was done in partnership with 41st Circuit Treatment Court.

Program: Taking Care of You

Taking Care of You is a multi-session program offering practical strategies and experiences to help deal with the stress in life. Managing life’s challenges in a healthy way allows you to take better care of yourself and your overall health. A rigorous program evaluation showed decreased stress levels and improved lifestyle behaviors.

As a result of the program, participants:

- Cultivate positive emotions and resiliency to stress.
- Discover opportunities in life’s challenges.
- Develop improved responses to stress in terms of their thoughts, emotions and behaviors.
- Take better care of one’s health-body, mind and spirit.

This program had 28 contacts in Macon County and was done in partnership with the 41st Circuit Treatment Court.

232

Total of Human Development Program
Contacts.