



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# McDonald County 2025

Annual Report

500 Olin St.  
P.O. Box 336  
Pineville, Mo 64856

**SERVE MISSOURI.  
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**



**Extension**  
*University of Missouri*

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from the Vice Chancellor for Extension</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>McDonald County Extension Council</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Faculty &amp; Staff</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>UM Systemwide Community Impact Report</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Missouri Grand Challenges</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>County Highlights</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4-H Program</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Agriculture &amp; Environment</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Business &amp; Community</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>First Responder Education</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Health &amp; Human Sciences</b>	<b>21</b>

---

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,

*Chadwick C Higgins*

Chad Higgins, PhD

Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

# County Highlights

## 2025 McDonald County State Fair Farm Family

The Gibson family was selected as the McDonald County Missouri State Fair Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in McDonald County and the local Farm Bureau.

Jimmy and Shayna, were among the families honored during the 68<sup>th</sup> annual Missouri Farm Family Day on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the Missouri State Fair



## Faculty and Staff

**Hannah Sikes**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Jennifer Lutes**  
*Field Specialist in Agricultural Business*

**Kirby Douglass**  
*Youth Program Associate*

**Lori Smith**  
*Nutrition Program Associate*

**Sarah Havens**  
*Regional Director – Green County*

**Allen Brandes**  
*Extension & Engagement Specialist – Lawrence County*

**Eden Stewart**  
*Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health – Newton County*

**Karla Deaver**  
*Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development – Lawrence County*

**Lisa Robinson**  
*Field Specialist in Regional Economic Development – Jasper County*

**Micah Doubledee**  
*Field Specialist in Agronomy – Barton County*

**Ian McGregor**  
*Field Specialist in Livestock – Lawrence County*

**Matthew Huchteman**  
*Field Specialist in Horticulture – Jasper County*

**Amber Allen**  
*Field Specialist in Human Development – Greene County*

**Amy Patillo**  
*Field Specialist in Labor and Workforce Development – Greene County*

**Reagan Bluel**  
*Field Specialist in Dairy – Barry County*

**Megan Crane**  
*Feral Hog Outreach Educator – Douglas County*

**Katie Fields**  
*Director – Missouri SBDC at MSSU*

**Abi Rogers**  
*Business Development – Missouri SBDC at MSSU*

**Allen Waldo**  
*Missouri APEX Accelerator Specialist – MSU*

## Council Members

**Dennis Coberley, Chairman**

**Kellsey Alger, Vice-chairman**

**Hailey Malcom, Secretary**

**Jeff Cooper, Treasurer**

Joshua Coberley, Elected Member

Kitty Collingsworth, Elected Member

Michael Hall, appointed member

Kenneth Harp, Elected Member

Jason Hoth, Appointed Member

Rick Lett, Appointed Member

Carl Steiger, Elected Member

Garrett Wilson, Elected Member

## County Executives

**Bryan Hall**  
*Presiding Commissioner*

**Rick Lett**  
*Western Commissioner*

**Jamey Cope**  
*Eastern Commissioner*

# BUDGET AND MORE

## Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	70,508
Total Income	70,508
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	59,420
Travel	4,968
Telephone	1,440
Office Supplies/Service	4,180
Insurance	500
Total Expenses	68,697

## Return on investment

University System	100,000
Donations	3,510
Program Revenue	4,352



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



## Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to *McDonald* 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.

# Community Impact Report

2026 UM Systemwide Impact Data Sheets

## McDonald County



University of Missouri System

### UM System Footprint in the county in 2025



#### FY25 county students

##### 15 students

- 12 Undergraduates
- 3 Graduate and professional students
- 11 Full-time students
- 4 Part-time students



#### County employees and retirees

##### 4 people employed by UM

- 3 Campuses
- 1 UM System



#### County alumni

##### Selected school alumni

- 1 Medicine
- 6 Nursing
- 4 Health Professions
- 1 Dentistry
- 2 Pharmacy
- 4 Veterinary Medicine
- 10 Agriculture
- 17 Engineering
- 4 Law

##### Alumni teaching K-12

- 3 teachers
- 1.0% of all district teachers



#### County breakdown

##### MU

- 11 students
- 47 alumni
- 3 employees

##### UMKC

- 1 student
- 14 alumni
- 0 employees

##### Missouri S&T

- 3 students
- 16 alumni
- 0 employees

##### UMSL

- 0 students
- 3 alumni
- 0 employees



#### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: McDonald County



County population: 23,492



#### County services provided

##### Health care (FY25)

- 28 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$44,093 of uncompensated care
- 3 in-state patients seen at UMKC School of Dentistry with a statewide average of \$50.53 per patient in uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 45 visits to 27 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

##### Extension (2024)

- 25,277 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
  - 526 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
  - 19,404 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
  - 5,265 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy

# Community Impact Report

## McDonald County



University of Missouri System

## UM System Statewide Footprint

### Economic and Community Development Highlights

- In FY24, Business Development Specialists worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide to create or retain 71,140 jobs.

**\$3.1 billion**

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

- Between FY19 and FY24, UM System brought Missouri more than \$1.75 billion in federal and private research funds, funded primarily from outside the state, but spent within the state.



In FY25, UM System was issued 26 patents and filed 76 new U.S. patent applications, and earned \$6.5 million in licensing income.

- In FY25, the UM System awarded 550 design and construction project contracts throughout Missouri, for a total investment of \$729.9 million in the state.



In FY25, to improve access to medical and health related services, MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO program provided 17,336 hrs of case-based instruction to 3,146 learners located in 102 of 114 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis.

### Education and Training Provided



41,523 police, fire fighters, and medical professionals attending continuing education (2024)



Agriculture and natural resource programs served 297,919 farmers and related businesses (2024)

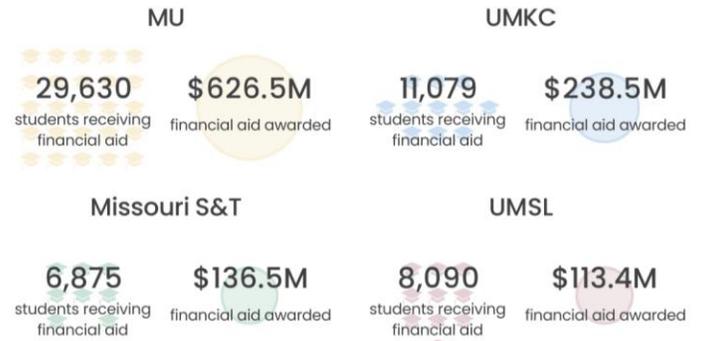


254,220 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2024)

### Education Highlights

#### FY25 Financial Aid Awards

In FY25, 70.6% of the UM System's 78,839 students received financial aid totaling \$1.115 billion



UM System's MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) provides internet connectivity, access, support and training to 58 higher education institutions (231,000 students), 478 K-12 school districts (830,000 students) and 134 public libraries (serving nearly 5.6 million Missourians) in FY24.

- UM System awarded 50.5% of the 31,689 Bachelor's or higher degrees awarded by Missouri four-year public institutions in 2023-24.
- UM System awarded 35.0% of the 1,776 research doctorates and 26.8% of the 3,796 professional doctorates awarded by Missouri public and not-for-profit private institutions in 2023-24.
- In FY24, UM System's \$30.7 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants represented 96.9% of all NSF grants made to Missouri public colleges and universities.
- A \$25 million USDA-funded Missouri Climate-Resilient Crop & Livestock (CRCL) project has had the following impact 2.5 years into the 5-year project: Over 1,200 Missouri farmers implemented conservation practices such as cover crops, regenerative grazing, and improved nutrient management practices on approximately 300,000 acres across the state.

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

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

Prepared in December 2025, based on the best available and most recent data. Data Sources include: Missouri Office of Administration • UM IR • MU Institute for Public Policy • Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) • MU • UMKC • Missouri S&T • UMSL • UM System • UM Health Care • MU Extension • US Census Bureau • US Dept. of Health and Human Services • National Science Foundation



## Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



MCDONALD COUNTY

### Knowing Missouri's Needs

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

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

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

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



#### Economic opportunity

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



#### Educational access and excellence

Increase participation in postsecondary education from 66% to 70%



#### Health and well-being

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

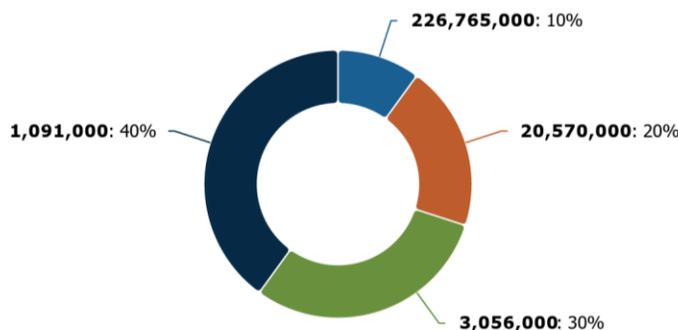
### Knowing Local Challenges



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

### Leading Agricultural Products

Total Rank (Sales): \$10



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

### Net Farm Income

Net farm income (total sales, government payments, and other farm-related income minus total farm expenses) reflects the strength of the local agricultural community and can be an important measure for lenders and policy makers. The report area had a combined net farm income of \$119,933,000 in 2017, an average of \$135,517 per farm. This compares favorably to the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
McDonald	885	\$135,517
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

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

# Missouri Grand Challenges

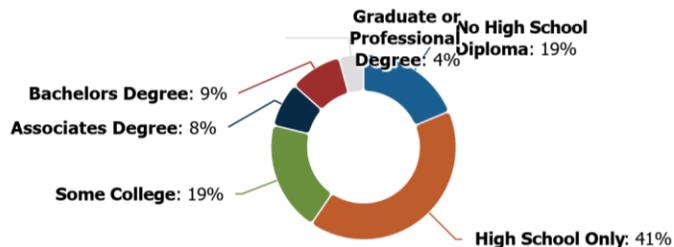


## CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *Educational Attainment*

### Adult Educational Attainment

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

In the report area, 19.3% of adults have at least some college education and 16.9% of adults have an associate's level degree or higher. However, 40.8% stopped their formal educational attainment after completing high school, and 18.7% of adults did not complete high school.



#### No High School Diploma

18.66%

Missouri 8.41%

McDonald

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2019-23.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2019-23.



## CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Healthy Weight*

### Obesity (Adult)

This indicator reports the number and percentage of adults aged 20 and older self-report having a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 30.0 (obese). Respondents were considered obese if their Body Mass Index (BMI) was 30 or greater. Body mass index (weight [kg]/height [m]<sup>2</sup>) was derived from self-report of height and weight. Excess weight may indicate an unhealthy lifestyle and puts individuals at risk for further health issues.

*Note: In 2021, the CDC updated the methodology used to produce estimates for this indicator. Estimated values for prior years (2004 - 2017) have been updated in this platform to allow comparison across years. Use caution when comparing with saved assessments generated prior to November 10, 2021.*

#### Percentage of Adults Obese, 2016

34.8%

Missouri 33% 🙄

McDonald



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#). 2021.

### Physical Inactivity

Within the report area, 4,533 or 25.5% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no active leisure time, based on the question: "During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?" This indicator is relevant because current behaviors are determinants of future health and this indicator may illustrate a cause of significant health issues, such as obesity and poor cardiovascular health.

*Note: In 2021, the CDC updated the methodology used to produce estimates for this indicator. Estimated values for prior years (2004 - 2017) have been updated in this platform to allow comparison across years. Use caution when comparing with saved assessments generated prior to November 10, 2021.*

#### Adults Age 20+ with No Leisure Time Physical Activity, Percent

25.5%

Missouri 21.4%

McDonald

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#). 2021.

# Missouri Grand Challenges



## CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: *Agricultural Economy*

### Jobs Derived

Missouri has a diverse agriculture industry, strong in crops and livestock, as well as food and forestry processing industries. These industries remain a significant part of Missouri's economy, supporting more than 1 in every 10 jobs, on average. In 2021, agriculture, forestry, and related industries in Missouri were estimated to contribute: 456,618 jobs, \$93.7 billion in output and \$31.8 billion in household income. [Learn more about Missouri Agriculture's Economic Impact.](#)

#### Percent of Jobs Derived from Agriculture

73.9%

McDonald

Missouri

23.55%

Data Source: Missouri Department of Agriculture, [Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority](#). 2021.

### Value Added

Value-added agriculture refers to production, manufacturing, marketing or other services that increase the value of primary agricultural commodities. In 2021, the total value-added derived from agriculture, forestry and related economic activity was an estimated \$34.9 billion. Meat processing, food processing, animal and pet food manufacturing, and crop production and related industries are Missouri's top value-added products: \$9.5 billion and 155,425 jobs from livestock production and related industries alone. [Learn more about Missouri Agriculture's Economic Impact.](#)

#### Percent of Total Value Added from Agriculture

74.5%

McDonald

Missouri

21.98%

Data Source: Missouri Department of Agriculture, [Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority](#). 2021.

# County Highlights

## Community Outreach Events



The McDonald County Extension Council is out in public in Noel and Southwest City helping educate people about what all Extension does.



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

## Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs give youth hands-on experiences in areas such as animal science, veterinary science, plant science, and agronomy. Members explore the biology, care, and management of animals and crops while developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Youth can also put their knowledge into practice through statewide competitions, including **Livestock Judging**, **Meat Judging**, **Hippology**, the **Missouri 4-H Equine Tour** and more. These experiences help participants apply what they've learned, gain confidence, and prepare for future careers in agriculture and related fields.



**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.



Missouri 4-H Natural Resources programs engage youth in hands-on learning across climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing, and wildlife conservation. Programs like the **4-H Sportfishing Contest** and **Sportfishing SLAM** give young people practical experience while building teamwork, problem-solving skills, and a love of the outdoors.

The **4-H Shooting Sports** program teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting, and archery principles, demonstrating how 4-H encourages holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs help youth cultivate life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics while exploring the natural world around them.

### Legend



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being

# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

### County Fair



# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

### County Fair



Kids showing their animals at the 2025 McDonald County Fair

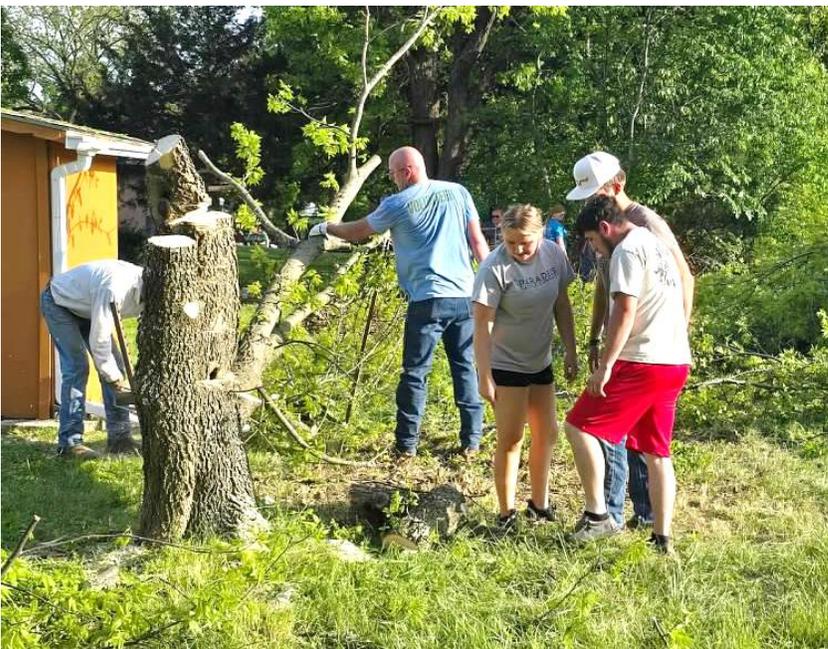


# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

### Community Service

4-H kids helping clean up brush and remove some trees as part of Community Service that McDonald county 4-H takes part in each year.



# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

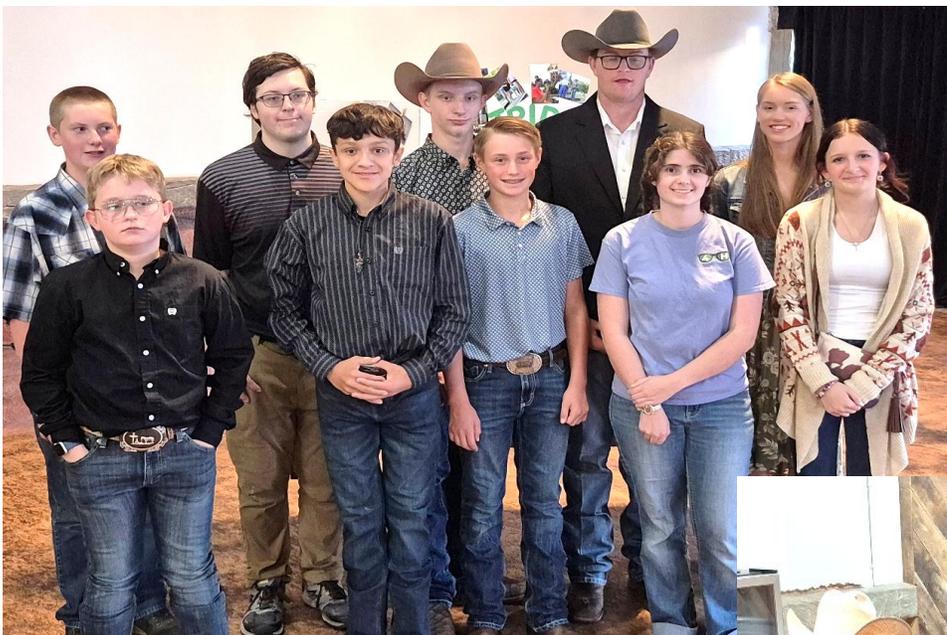
### Community Service



# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

### Annual Fundraiser



# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

### Shooting Sports



# McDonald County

## Missouri 4-H

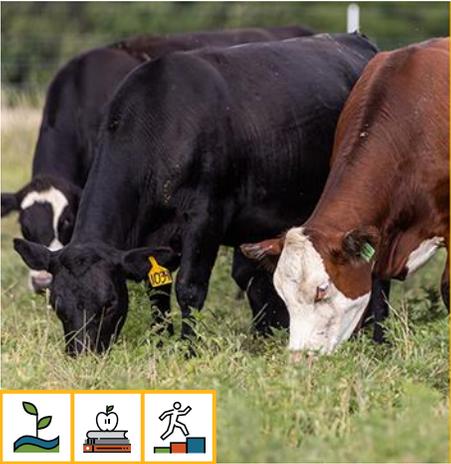
### Shooting Sports





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

## Agriculture and Environment



**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 **Urban Agriculture** program empowers urban farmers, agribusinesses and individuals interested in agriculture with the resources and information to start or grow their business. By collaborating with producers and external partners, the program provides business planning support, farm management strategies, production tools and decision-making resources to foster sustainable growth and success.



**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.**



### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

## Agriculture and Environment

### Agriculture Business & Policy



**Pasture Renovation Workshop** trained **53 McDonald County** producers to assess pasture decline, select appropriate renovation strategies, and establish improved forages. Participants also learned the economics of herd rebuilding, helping them make cost-effective decisions for long-term pasture productivity.

**Tri-County Livestock & Forage Conference** provided **42 McDonald County** producers with research-based strategies to rebuild drought-stressed forage systems, evaluate the economic return of lime applications, and incorporate cover crop grazing. Participants gained practical tools to strengthen forage resilience and improve long-term grazing management.

**Dry Cured Bacon & Field to Freezer** trained **14 McDonald County** participants in curing principles, safe meat-handling techniques, and freezer preparation steps for pork and value-added products. Participants gained practical skills suitable for home use or expanded farm processing.



## Agriculture and Environment

### Livestock



**The 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Lawrence Soils & Crops Conference** took place January 14 at the Southwest Research Station. The program was largely drought focused and was attended by 94 participants. Attendees learned about forage, soil, and weed management as it pertains to drought resilience for cattle operations.



**The Monett Beef Conference** took place March 11 at the Monett Armory and hosted 32 participants. This program largely focused on cattle nutrition, including presentations on forage-based cow nutrition and finishing cull heifers, but also included a beef industry economic outlook for 2025.

Livestock Specialists partnered with 7 veterinarians in Southwest Missouri to host the **Bull Soundness Exam Days** on several days in the spring and fall at vet clinics across the region. Cattlemen brought in their bulls to be evaluated for breeding soundness by having veterinarians and livestock specialists observe confirmation, body condition, and semen quality, and were educated on bull management and selection. There were 43 farms that participated and 152 bulls that were evaluated.



## Agriculture and Environment

### Agronomy



**Weed brought into extension office for identification**



**Soil Sample**

#### **Farm Visits and County Office Interactions:**

University of Missouri Agricultural Field Specialists offer locals individualized education. This education helps farmers and producers make important management decisions for their farms and businesses and helps improve the overall management of Missouri's important natural resources and agriculture production.

**Soil Testing and Plant Testing:** University of Missouri County Extension offices offer soil testing and plant testing via the soil testing lab and plant disease diagnostic lab in Columbia, MO for Missouri landowners, farmers, gardeners, commercial and agricultural producers. In 2025, around 87 soil test were submitted through the McDonald County office.

#### **Management Intensive**

**Grazing School** is three days of intense education to encourage effective management of forage and livestock to help optimize profitability and better management of resources. Eighteen students attended the 2025 Newton/ McDonald County Grazing School this year.



## Agriculture and Environment

### Horticulture

**Produce Food Safety:** MU Extension partnered with Lincoln University Extension to provide two food safety workshops in March and August of 2025 for Hmong farmers in Newton and McDonald County. The workshops educated Hmong farmers in fundamental food safety practices and produce safety training, enhancing proficiency in food safety best practices. These workshops were part of a larger project directed by Dr. Pei Liu (MU) and colleagues. Project initiatives include establishing a food safety model farm as a training center to advance food safety for Hmong farmers in Missouri and developing a collaborative education and training program to advance food safety for Hmong growers. This project is funded by USDA/NIFA/FSOP.



**Career Exploration Day and CDE Workshops:** High school ag students from across the southwest region gathered at the Southwest Research, Extension and Education Center for events including the Future Farmers of America Career Development Event (CDE) Workshop in March and Career Exploration Day in September. Students at the CDE workshop had the opportunity to practice contests (i.e. agronomy, soils, entomology) organized by extension specialists in the region. Specialists provided students with practical instruction relevant to their chosen contest. Extension specialists and ag professionals connected with over 1,500 high school ag students at career exploration day. Students learned about a diversity of careers and agricultural topics through engaging presentations.



**Fruit Tree Pruning:** In December, Matthew Huchteman provided a fruit tree pruning workshop to **9 participants from McDonald and Newton County** at the Newton County Extension office. Attendees gained skills necessary to properly prune trees through a classroom session and hands on pruning of apple, pear and peach trees.



## Agriculture and Environment

### Hill 'n Hollow Master Gardener Chapter



Number of Volunteers — 7

Number of Volunteer Hours — 62

Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours - \$2,156.98

(\*[Independent Sector](#) at \$34.79/hour)

Number of New Volunteers — 1

Number of Continuing Education Hours — 9

Number of Advanced Training Hours — 0

Number of Chapter-led Education Events — 9

Number of Participants in Education Events — 257



#### CHAPTER PROJECTS

- **Demonstration Garden at the Newton County Extension Office** — Serves as an educational resource, exhibiting proper management of fruits, vegetables, herbs and ornamentals.
- **Beautification** - Master Gardeners volunteer their time to maintain several plantings in Newton and McDonald counties including the Anderson Ball Park flower beds, Pineville Log Cabin landscaping, Pineville Green Park landscaping, and the courtyard at Oak Pointe Senior Living Center

#### CHAPTER EVENTS

- **Plant Sale** - Members raise and donate plants to generate funds through the Hill n Hollow Master Gardener Plant sale each spring.

#### EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- **Educational Booths** - Hill n' Hollow Master Gardeners set up educational booths at events including Prairie Days and the Neosho National Fish Hatchery Open House.
- **Farmers Market** - Master Gardeners set up at the Neosho Farmers Market once a month from May through September to offer educational resources and children's gardening classes. This activity generated nearly 250 direct contacts.
- **Classes** - Master Gardeners offered a spring class on growing elderberries for 10 attendees

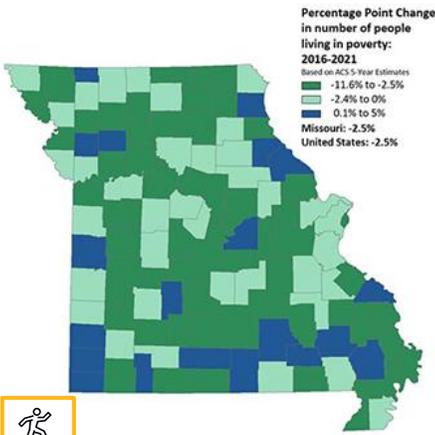
#### CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Several chapter members attended educational workshops including the Barry County Master Gardeners' Fall Workshop, and the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks' Fall and Spring workshops.



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

## Business and Community



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

**In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.**



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.**



The **Neighborhood Leadership Academy** provides in-depth leadership training that emphasizes community-building principles, project planning, organizational leadership and personal leadership skills.

**"The overall knowledge that I have gained through this course has been amazing. From how to engage stakeholders in the community, to planning events and hosting meetings, these are all tools that I will fully utilized going forward."**

**2022 NLA graduate**



### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

## Business and Community

### Economic & Workforce Development

#### WHAT IS CIVIC MUSCLE?

**CIVIC MUSCLE:** The collective strength of people in a place (neighborhood, town, region) to respond to challenges and to proactively pursue thriving communities.



#### Belonging

- Place-based communities building social capital and inclusivity through neighboring, civil dialogue, placemaking, etc.

#### Contribution

- Residents (particularly those at the margins) participating in civic life and engaged in decision making (volunteering, attending public meetings, voting)

#### Leadership

- Diverse community leaders (including those who typically have less power and influence) collaborating for action and bridge-building.

#### Vitality

- Residents, organizations, governments co-creating conditions for equitable, thriving, resourceful



#### Civic Muscle and Data Points for McDonald

**County** Lisa Robinson serves McDonald County as a Regional Economic Development (RED) Field Specialist and taught McDonald County Extension Council about Civic Muscle and Data Points for McDonald County during 2025.

*Reimagining Your Workforce: Breaking Barriers Together* reached 167 community leaders, employers, and service partners. These presentations strengthened understanding of second-chance hiring, highlighted effective workforce strategies, and equipped attendees with practical tools to support justice-involved individuals in reentering employment.

**The Recovery Leaders Network, Connection, and Education** program united 27 sober living leaders and community partners from Barry, Lawrence, Newton, Jasper, and McDonald Counties to strengthen relationships, share resources, and align support strategies. Participants reported deeper connection, increased collaboration, and renewed commitment to creating safe, stable, and recovery-supportive environments across southwest Missouri.





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

## Continuing Education



Established in 2002, the **Fire Officer Certificate Program** is designed for those who wish to further their professional development without the time and expense of traditional college classes. This program has been developed and evaluated to ensure it provides structured curriculum delivery and academic rigor. The program requires completion of 288 of instruction within three years.



The Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) has provided basic and advanced training for law enforcement since 1948. LETI's **Basic Peace Officer Academy** exceeds the 600 hours of training required for licensure in Missouri. From 2019 through 2025, the basic academy has licensed almost 400 peace officers, more than any other academy in the state. During that time, all but one graduate became employed by a law enforcement agency. LETI graduates come from around the state and return to their communities to serve and protect.



MU **Continuing Education for Health Professions** (CEHP) provides evidenced-based, relevant and responsive learning activities designed to narrow professional practice gaps with respect to knowledge, competence, and performance of the healthcare team. A commitment to lifelong learning, in partnership with those we serve, contributes to excellence in practice and improved health outcomes.

**CEHP provided 169 LEARNING ACTIVITIES which reached over 53,000 PROFESSIONAL across all Missouri counties.**

### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



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

## Health and Human Sciences



### 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.



### 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."**



**Rural Immersion Program** is an opportunity for medical students interested in rural practice to gain experience in the rewards and challenges of working and living in a rural community, examining rural health disparities and quality of life concerns within a specific region. Group activities and meetings with community leaders in business, government, education, health care and natural resources give students a preview of life in a rural area.

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

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

### Nutrition & Health



## Seed Library

at the McDonald County Library



## Grow & Share

**Stay Strong, Stay Healthy** - addressed limited access to affordable fitness opportunities for older adults in partnership with the Agency for Aging. Eleven participants who completed the program improved upper- and lower-body strength, flexibility, and functional ability for daily tasks, with many reporting greater ease in movement and independence.

**Seed Libraries Expand Access to Nutritious Foods** - MU Extension partnered with the McDonald County Library to establish and expand seed libraries in Pineville and Southwest City, providing free seeds and gardening education. In 2025, 468 seed packets supported first-time and beginning gardeners, strengthening household food security.

**Food Preservation** classes taught 12 participants how to safely pressure can green beans and making sweet spreads. After the class, 43% of the participants felt *somewhat confident* about safe home food preservation, and 57% felt *very confident*. All participants said they would recommend the class, and one participant even said it was a "great class."



## Health and Human Sciences

### Human Development

**Aging Well:** With nearly 168,000 age 65+ in Southwest Region addressing social connection and well-being is essential. *Aging Well* programs help reduce loneliness and support healthy aging through meaningful education and community engagement. In 2025, **16 programs were delivered across 48 sessions and reached 156 older adults in 6 counties.** Through partnerships with senior centers, libraries, and health organizations, participants explored topics such as brain health, fall prevention, and Alzheimer's education.

Through **12 Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aids, 175 Missourians** were reached with information on recognizing mental health challenges, reducing stigma, and connecting individuals to appropriate resources. **Counties Served through Mental Health First Aid Programs in the Southwest Region: Barry (2), Barton (2), Dade (1) Greene (74), Howell (3) Jasper (6), Lawrence (3), McDonald (3), Newton (2), Taney (1) Wright (1) counties.**

**Counties Served through Aging Well Programs in the Southwest Region: Chrisitan (4), Greene (93), Jasper (14), McDonald (52), Stone (4), & Taney (5)**



**SERVE MISSOURI.**  
**DELIVER MIZZOU.®**