



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Miller 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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Columbia, MO 65211

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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



Brandi Richardson  
Extension Engagement Specialist  
Bethany Prenger  
4-H Specialist  
Rudra Baral  
Agronomy Specialist  
Rachel Hopkins  
Ag Business  
Dhruba Dhakal  
Horticulture  
Gene Schmitz  
Livestock  
Ashley Allen-Brown  
Community Development  
Kathleen Deeken  
Health and Human Science  
Paulette Orsborn  
Office admin

## Council Members

Robb Young, Chairman  
Winnie McKinley, Vice-chairman  
Kathy Galland, Secretary  
Bryan Struebig, Treasurer  
Connie Riley  
John Riley  
Jim McDonald  
Dianne McDonald  
Frances Ray, Miller County Farm Bureau  
Kevin Cardwell



## County Commissioners

Kevin Cardwell, Presiding Commissioner  
Don Abbett, 1st District Commissioner  
Travis Rowden, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commissioner

# BUDGET AND MORE

## Appropriations budget

### Income

County Appropriations \$40,355

### Expenses

Salaries/Benefits \$37,661.00

Travel \$5124.00

Telephone \$1688.00

Office Supplies/Service \$3479.00

Postage \$263.00

Insurance \$2377.00

Advertising \$323.00

Misc \$244.00

**Total Expenses** \$51,159.00

## Miller County partners

Miller County Farm Bureau

Miller County Commission

Eldon Food Pantry

Hope House

The Well

Eldon Senior Center

His Fathers Table

St. Elizabeth Care Center

## Return on investment

**University System**      **154,000**

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

## Local support

Did you know you can donate directly UM Extension Council of Miller County 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.



# Miller County



University of Missouri System

## UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



### FY24 county students

**114 students**

- 93 Undergraduates
- 21 Graduate and professional students
- 88 Full-time students
- 26 Part-time students
- 31 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)



### County employees and retirees

**128 people employed by UM**

- 32 Campuses
- 96 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)

14 UM retirees and beneficiaries  
UM salary and retirement income: \$6.5 million

UM state tax revenue: \$206,332

UM federal tax revenue: \$1.1 million



### County alumni

**Selected school alumni**

- 6 Medicine
- 24 Nursing
- 51 Health Professions
- 9 Dentistry
- 13 Pharmacy
- 1 Optometry
- 9 Veterinary Medicine
- 88 Agriculture
- 77 Engineering
- 12 Law

**Alumni teaching K-12**

- 38 teachers
- 10.8% of all district teachers
- 3 principals and administrators
- 16.7% of all district principals and administrators



### County breakdown

**MU**

- 82 students
- 403 alumni
- 28 employees

**UMKC**

- 11 students
- 46 alumni
- 0 employees

**Missouri S&T**

- 15 students
- 60 alumni
- 3 employees

**UMSL**

- 6 students
- 41 alumni
- 1 employee



### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Miller County



County population: 25,081



### County services provided

**Health care (FY24)**

- 7,681 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$2.7 million of uncompensated care
- 9 in-state patients seen at UMKC School of Dentistry with a statewide average of \$52.57 per patient in uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 1,674 visits to 977 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

**Extension (2024)**

- 2,086 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
  - 933 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
  - 731 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
  - 297 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy

# Miller 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.

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.

**\$3.1**  
billion

- 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 FY24, UM System was issued 29 patents and filed 69 new U.S. patent applications.

- In FY24, the UM System awarded 707 design and construction project contracts throughout Missouri, for a total investment of \$287.3 million in the state.



In FY24, to improve access to medical and health related services, MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO program provided 16,687 hrs of case-based instruction to 3,113 learners located in 105 of 114 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis.

### Education and Training Provided



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)

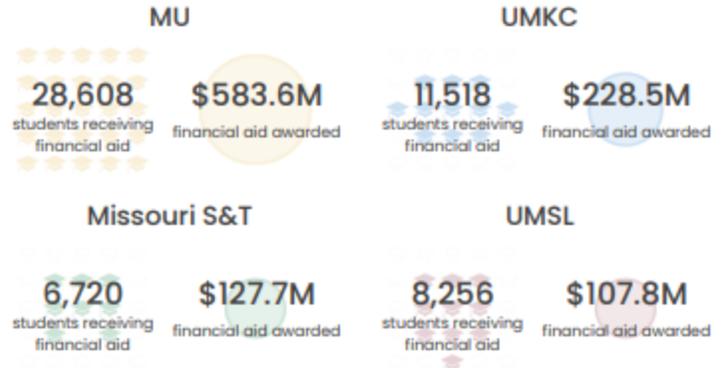


254,220 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2024)

### Education Highlights

#### FY24 Financial Aid Awards

In FY24, 69.7% of the UM System's 79,014 students received financial aid totaling \$1.048 billion



UM System's MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) provides internet connectivity, access, support and training to 58 higher education institutions (230,000 students), 484 K-12 school districts (830,000 students) and 134 public libraries (serving nearly 3 million Missourians) in 2023.

- UM System awarded 50.5% of the 31,689 Bachelor's or higher degrees awarded by Missouri four-year public institutions in 2023-24.
- UM System awarded 35.0% of the 1,776 research doctorates and 26.8% of the 3,796 professional doctorates awarded by Missouri public and not-for-profit private institutions in 2023-24.
- In FY24, UM System's \$30.7 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants represented 96.9% of all NSF grants made to Missouri public colleges and universities.
- In 2024, over 12,400 Missourians accessed [mobroadband.org](http://mobroadband.org), part of the UM System Broadband Initiative which helped the statewide build-out of high-speed internet infrastructure.

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

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

Prepared in December 2024, based on the best available and most recent data. Data Sources include: Missouri Office of Administration • UM IR • MU Institute for Public Policy • Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) • MU • UMKC • Missouri S&T • UMSL • UM System • UM Health Care • MU Extension • US Census Bureau • US Dept. of Health and Human Services • National Science Foundation



# Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



## MILLER 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

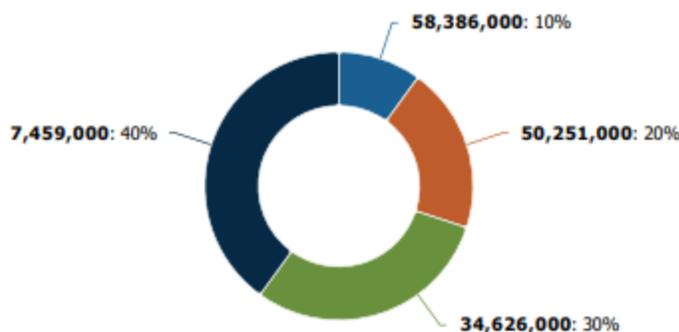
### Knowing Local Challenges



#### 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 \$49,431,000 in 2017, an average of \$56,557 per farm. This is below the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Miller	874	\$56,557
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

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

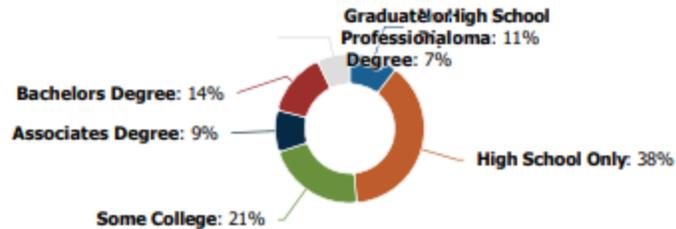


## CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *Educational Attainment*

### 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, 21.4% of adults have at least some college education and 23% of adults have an associate's level degree or higher. However, 38.0% stopped their formal educational attainment after completing high school, and 10.5% of adults did not complete high school.



#### No High School Diploma

# 10.45%

Missouri 8.41%

Miller

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 Aging*

### Fall Injuries

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related fatality and hospitalization among older adults in the United States. Between 2013 and 2015, adults over age 65 in the report area had 764 hospital or emergency room admissions for fall and jump-related injuries. The rate of these injuries was 5,099 per 100,000 population, which is lower than the state rate of 5,396. Falls hospitalizations have increased since the 2001-03 time period when the rate was 3,911.

### Primary Care Providers

Older adults make up a historically large percentage of the U.S. population, and meeting the healthcare needs of an aging population can be challenging. In the report area, there are approximately 8 primary care physicians (MDs and DOs) to serve the area's 5,071 residents over the age of 65. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 634:1, which means there is 1 provider for every 634 older adults. The ratio of adults to providers in the report area is higher than the state average of 251:1, which means there are fewer providers per person in this area.

#### Rate per 100,000, 2019-2021

# 5,099

Missouri 5,396 😞

Miller



Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, [Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services](#). 2019-2021.

#### Rate per 100,000 Seniors

# 157.80

Missouri 399.10

Miller

Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [HRSA - Area Health Resource File](#). 2022.



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

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

Report Area	Agriculture	Home and Garden	Community Areas	Research	Total
Miller	297	33	5	0	335
Missouri	13,742	4,773	421	6,406	25,342

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



# GRAND CHALLENGES



## 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.



Missouri 4-H is igniting curiosity and cultivating innovation through 4-H Powered STEM. From robotics and coding to environmental science and engineering, youth engage in hands-on learning that makes science come alive.

**4-H STEM** programs build problem-solving skills, spark discovery, and prepare the next generation of innovators and leaders. Every young person—no matter where they live or learn—has access to high-quality science experiences that open doors to future opportunities and help them become Beyond Ready for the challenges of tomorrow.



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.

# GRAND CHALLENGES



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.



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.

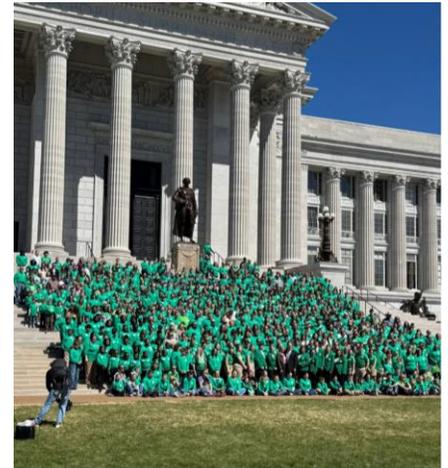
The **4-H Shooting Sports** program teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting, and archery principles, demonstrating how 4-H encourages holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs help youth cultivate life skills, self-worth, and conservation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



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

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18

Miller County



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

## 4-H Youth Development- Miller County

**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 in Miller county of County 807 youth were reached through 4-H programming through MU Extension.**

4-H programming reaches youth through a variety of delivery modes in Miller 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 Miller County 4-H Enrollment by Delivery Mode

**4-H Community Club Members**

- 172 youth reached through the 6 community clubs in Miller County during the 2024-2025 4-H Year.
- Over 172 4-H members were engaged in science related projects and experiences.
- Collectively, youth participated in hundreds of hours of documented community club work and hundreds of hours of community service in Miller County.

**4-H SPIN Clubs**

- 513 youth participated in 4-H through the SPIN Clubs which are short-term 4-H clubs focused on a specific topic. Among the SPIN Clubs offered in Miller County this year, clubs focused on special topics identified by club members.

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

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

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

## Impact Update

**Bethany Prenger**  
4-H Field Specialist in Youth  
Development  
O: (573) 369-2394 | C: (573) 821-3548



December 2025

Covering Maries, Miller, and Pulaski Counties

### KEY SUCCESSES

#### Educate:

- ❖ Waynesville Library Partnership
- ❖ Robotics and Ozark Mountain Club Meeting
- ❖ Maries County: Hot Chocolate and Sugar Cookies

*Success Story- "we had so much fun decorating sugar cookies for our community!- Maires County Member*

#### Create:

- ❖ County wide newsletters & Club Leader Activity
- ❖ Grants for new curriculum
- ❖ Create kits to for new club leaders and volunteers- 4-H Library
- ❖ Develop new 4-H council material

*Success Story- "The new 4-H keys chains from our meeting ROCKED!" -4-H Member from Pulaski County*

#### Connect:

- ❖ Schedule and coordinate meet and greets with new volunteers, 4-H council members
- ❖ Starting Embryology Partnerships
- ❖ Professional Development and Other Activities
  - ❖ Serving as Regional Chair
  - ❖ Move Across Missouri Coordinator
  - ❖ Category Meetings
  - ❖ Promoting our Programs and Clubs
  - ❖ Serve as Camp Clover Point Camp Director
  - ❖ Attend Extension and 4-H Council Meetings



Connect with the Youth in our Programs  
Through our social media pages!



Maries County  
4-H



Miller County  
4-H



Pulaski County  
4-H



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.**



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.



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.



Fifteen Lake Area Master Gardeners (LAMG) contributed numerous service hours in the Lake Area during 2025. These hours reflect work done in both Camden and Miller Counties. During 2025 LAMG volunteers worked in LAMG local garden projects, did spring planting at two Central Bank locations in the Lake Area, and shared advice and resources at booths (Westlake Aquatic Center's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Laurie, MO; Farmers Market in Eldon, MO and local festivals - Osage Beach Fall Festival and Camden County Historical Museum's Fall Apple Butter Festival). Plants and garden gloves were sold at Festivals to raise money for the LAMG Scholarship Program. A few LAMG volunteered with the Lake Ozark Watershed Alliance (LOWA) on two of their projects (Community Cleanup for Camden County-Recycling and LOWA Native Plant Sale) held in Sunrise Beach, MO.

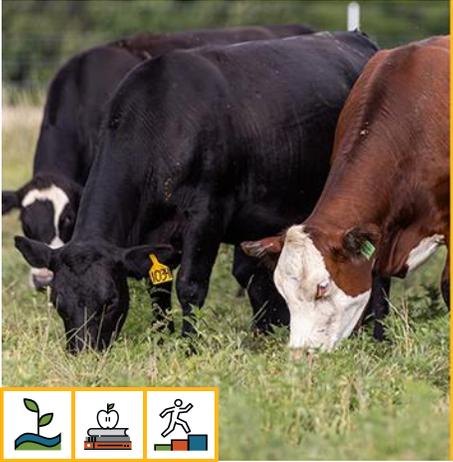


A Garden Festival was hosted by LAMG at Faithbridge Church on May 3, 2025. In the Conference Room were presentations related to various gardening topics.

- \* "Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters" – Regina Garr, Birds-I-View, Jefferson City
- \* "Propagating Cactus and Succulents" – Dean Thiemann, MO Cactus & Succulent Society
- \* "Monarchs" – Joann Billington, Ozark Prairie Master Gardeners

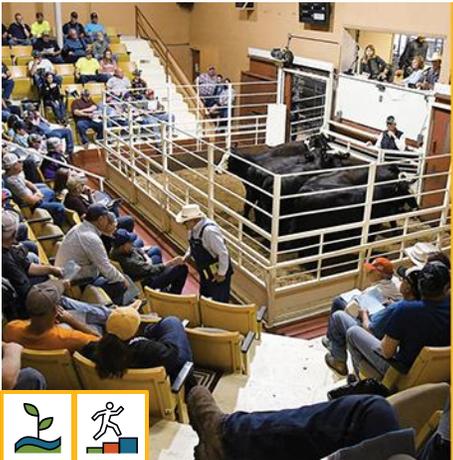
Activities in the lobby area included an Information Booth with free publications/information on various gardening related topics, gardening gloves for sale, cookies and bottled water available, and an opportunity to visit with local artists from the Lake Arts Council and view some of their work. In the parking lot, LAMG had a Plant Sale and the Miller County Soil and Water Conservation District gave away bare-root tree seedlings. Any funds raised at the Garden Festival went toward the LAMG Scholarship Program. Garden Festival participants had the opportunity to see the garden beds outside the Church.

# Farming /Agriculture



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



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



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.

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and stories



Rudra works with producers throughout the seasons to identify nitrates in hay. This makes it unsafe for consumption



He goes to the farmer's market to show how different conditions affect the soil and encourages landowners to do soil testing. Armed with this knowledge they know whether they need fertilizer, or lime.

Rudra teaches at a farm event.



## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT-AGRONOMY PROGRAM

**Rudra Baral**

**Agronomy Specialist, University of Missouri Extension**

Serving Cole, Miller, Pulaski, Osage, Maries, Gasconade and Laclede County



### Executive Summary

The 2025 calendar year represents a year of substantial impact, growth and partnership across the University of Missouri Extension's East Central Region. As the Agronomy Specialist serving seven counties (Miller, Cole, Osage, Gasconade, Maries, Pulaski, and Laclede), I delivered research-based education, created innovative tools and services, and strengthened community connections in alignment with MU Extension's Core Principles: Educate (Learning & Access), Create (Innovation & Opportunity), and Connect (Engagement & Partnership).

During 2025, 238 participants benefited from direct educational programs, while 2.2 million were reached indirectly through Extension publications, newspapers, digital media, soil testing and community outreach. In addition, 1,830 soil samples were reviewed, 71 producers received direct technical assistance, and multiple partnerships resulted in improved access to conservation programs, grants, and applied agronomic solutions.

### EDUCATE: Learning & Access

Providing evidence-based information and creating meaningful learning opportunities for diverse audiences in our region.

### Direct Educational Programming

#### 1. Workshop and Training Delivery

I conducted 16 major educational programs reaching 238 direct participants in 2025:

- **Private Pesticide Applicator Training (PPAT):** Conducted 4 training sessions across Cole, Gasconade, Maries, and Osage Counties, training 40 producers who subsequently received MDA applicator license recommendations. This essential safety training ensures pesticide application compliance across the region.
- **Understanding Your Soil Needs Workshops:** Delivered 4 workshops (Cole, Pulaski counties, plus a virtual program in December) to 34 producers. The December virtual workshop expanded reach significantly with 100 participants, demonstrating strong producer demand for accessible soil management education.

# Ag Business

Covering Franklin, Gasconade, Osage, Maries, Miller, Pulaski, Phelps, Dent, Crawford, Washington, St. Francois and Ste. Genevieve Counties

Rachel Hopkins  
Ag Business Specialist  
573-438-2671  
[hopkinsrm@umsystem.edu](mailto:hopkinsrm@umsystem.edu)



## 2025 AT A GLANCE

- **38** Lenders attended 'What Lenders Need to Know in 2026' in Jefferson City. Lenders heard from presenters discussing Market Outlooks, Policy Updates, Beef Feeding Calculator, Farmland Values and Rental Rates.
- **60** attendees at the Farm Tax Workshops held in December, both in-person and online. Rachel hosted 2 locations (Ste. Genevieve & Vienna) and presented on drought & farm lease.
- **89** mid-Missouri farmers and ranchers attended the Central Missouri Forage & Beef Conference in Maries County.
- **35** local producers attended the Wurdack Producer Field Day in October to hear about local applicable topics.
- **120** producers attended three Grazing Schools where Financial Aspects of Grazing were taught.

**\$47,753** in lease's consulted on in 2025.



The cannulated bovine is always a memorable time with the FFA students.

## 1924 DIRECT CONTACTS 7140 INDIRECT CONTACTS



Rachel spoke to the East Central Cattleman's Association in March 2025 on tips for succession planning.

## KEY SUCCESSES

- ✓ **Monthly emails** out to subscribers letting them know of upcoming Extension programs in the region.
- ✓ Connect & Educated **50 STL City youth** about agriculture at **Wurdack Extension Center**.
- ✓ **Rural Safety Day** educated **177 3<sup>rd</sup> graders** in Washington County of hazards they might encounter and thus preventing traumatic injuries.
- ✓ **Annie's Project** brought together **13 women in Maries County** for the 6 weeklong event. It included field trips, guest speakers and activities.
- ✓ **Wurdack FFA Day** provided a learning opportunity for **528 9<sup>th</sup> graders** on different fields in agriculture and exposes them to new ideas and concepts.



# Horticulture Programs in 2025

Dhruba Dhakal, Field Specialist in Horticulture

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## University of Missouri Master Gardener Training

In-person master gardener training was organized in mid-Missouri in 2025 which included participants from various counties in central Missouri. Eight participants attended the 12-week long training. The training educated the participants through 12 lectures and 8 field sessions.

## University of Missouri Master Pollinator Steward

In-person master pollinator steward was organized in mid-Missouri in 2025 which included participants from various counties in central Missouri. Five participants attended the 6-week long training. The training educated the participants through six lectures and three field sessions.

## Spring Garden Seminar - 2025

A full day-long garden seminar was organized in Jefferson City, MO in 2025. Eighty-five participants attended the seminar. Participants learned various topics such as landscape design, plant disease diagnosis, lessons learned about tomatoes, after 20 years of the TomatoFest, Flower farm in Tipton and garden IPM session.

## Other workshops and seminars on horticulture - 2025

Dhruba organized workshops and seminars on various horticulture topics. Some of them were garlic production workshop, talk on planting cover crops in the garden, workshop on cool season vegetable production, workshop on tomato production in home garden, and talk on making and using compost in the garden.

## Soil, Plant and Water Sample Test

Extension office receives soil, plant and water samples from local people and sends them to University of Missouri soil and plant testing lab. Field specialist in horticulture receives the test report and provides recommendations and interpretation to the clients. In 2025, Miller County Extension Center received 20 soil samples for horticulture crop fields. Horticulture specialist sent the reports to the client and discussed with them the nutrient status and other soil properties. The specialist also discussed what needs to be done to improve their soil health and soil fertility status.

## On-site Garden and Horticulture Farm Visit



Horticulture specialist also visited home gardens, fruit and vegetable production farms to identify or diagnose the issues and provide research-based management options to the client. Timely diagnosis of issues in the garden/farm helps farmers to save their crops, increase farmer's knowledge and awareness to adopt good agricultural practices (GAP). This helps to increase net farm income by increasing crop productivity and reducing production cost. The increased local economy in Miller County contributes to the better Missouri state's economy.



*Pic. 1: Participants at EMG training field session, Jefferson City*



*Pic. 2: Participants at Master Pollinator Steward Field Session at Runge Nature Center, Jefferson City*



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

**Business and Community**

**Miller County**



**Extending a hand** – Miller County University of Missouri Extension members volunteer at the chamber of commerce booth Saturday, Sept. 27 at the Eldon Turkey Festival. Pictured are, from left: Connie and John Wiley, Diane and John McDonald and Robb Young. Not pictured is Winnie McKinney.



**Legend**



**Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship**



**Economic  
Opportunity**



**Educational  
Access &  
Excellence**



**Health  
& Well-Being**



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**



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.**



**“I highly recommend this incredible program to any community looking for focus and direction.”**

**Strategic Doing participant**

**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.

**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.**

## Regional Economic Development (RED) 2025 SUMMARY

## Business and Community

2025 marked a year of growing interest and engagement around economic development conversations in **Miller County**, reflecting an increased awareness of the value MU Extension brings to local and regional planning efforts. MU Extension experienced a noticeable uptick in requests for insight, participation, and discussion related to entrepreneurship, workforce and youth development, agribusiness, and broader economic vitality.

These interactions signaled a strengthening appetite for **regional economic development perspectives** that connect local priorities to practical strategies and data-informed decision-making. The momentum built in 2025 reinforces the importance of relationship-driven, accessible engagement—meeting communities where they are and supporting informed dialogue that leads to action. As interest continues to grow, 2026 presents an opportunity to deepen strategic engagement in Miller County, ensuring Extension remains a trusted resource for communities seeking to strengthen economic vitality, workforce readiness, and long-term community capacity through collaborative, regional approaches.



Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.  
Regional Economic  
Development Specialist  
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**Total Direct Contacts**  
1726

**Total Program Participants**  
2809

**Total Indirect Reach**  
157,413

### Regional Economic Development (RED) Programming Impact: Depth and Reach (2025) Miller County



**Direct Contacts:** 86 residents interacted or contacted MU Extension B&C RED in Miller County for assistance.

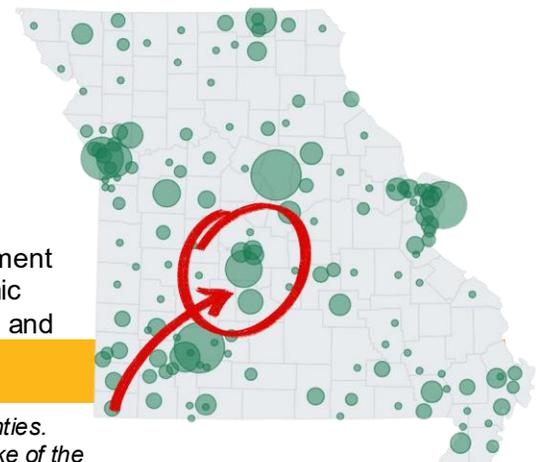


**Program Participants:** 12 individuals and stakeholders from Miller County attended an MU Extension B&C RED program.



**Indirect Reach:** 2,500 residents reached through articles, hard copy educational materials, community events, and social media engagement.

MU Extension Business and Communities' Economic and community development programming for the Lake of the Ozarks region is led by one Regional Economic Development Specialist, yet the region continues to exceed engagement goals and deliver measurable impact across multiple counties.



\*The image to the right demonstrates B&C-specific activity heatmap across all Missouri counties. The red circle with arrow denotes heavy concentration of activity in Miller County and the Lake of the Ozarks Region.

# Business and Community Tackling the Grand Challenges through Regional Economic and Community Development Programming

# Miller County

## Crisis to Collaboration: Tackling the Child Care Challenge

Held November 12 in Sunrise Beach, this meaningful program addressed the region's childcare shortage as a critical workforce, economic development, and community sustainability issue. Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and hosted by the Camden County Council of MU Extension in partnership with CO-MO Connect, the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, the Lake West Chamber, and Lake TV, the solutions-focused panel and asset-mapping workshop moved the conversation from awareness to action. Forty-five participants from across Missouri—including educators, community leaders, and practitioners—engaged in identifying root causes, sharing promising practices, and mapping local assets to support collaborative, community-driven solutions for strengthening the Lake of the Ozarks workforce and economy. **There were 45 in attendance from across the state.**



Presents

## Crisis to Collaboration Tackling the Childcare Challenge



Expert Panel Discussion - Luncheon - Asset Mapping Workshop

A FREE Community Service in partnership with



[bit.ly/ChildcareSummit25](http://bit.ly/ChildcareSummit25)



Left: An expert panel moderated by Jennifer Presberry, Economic Development Specialist for CO-MO Connect, kicked off this day of meaningful engagement.

*Photo courtesy of Lake TV.*



Above right: Camden County Council of MU Extension member and childcare expert, Shayla Veile, listens as Good Shepherd Learning Center director, Cyndy Andrews shares her experience as a childcare provider.

*Photo courtesy of Lake TV.*

Camden County attendees = 16    Morgan County attendees = 3  
 Laclede County attendees = 1  
 Hickory County attendees = 1

## Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon 2025

Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and co-hosted by the Laclede and Camden County Councils of MU Extension. The Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon was underwritten in part by a grant from the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, and the program allowed employers, decision-makers, healthcare practitioners, and concerned community members the chance to hear from labor and workforce development experts regarding the Recovery Friendly Workplace program. This was designed to approach the workforce crisis currently plaguing Missouri. Dr. Doug Swanson and Dr. Rob Russell presented strategies to reduce stigma and provide recovery resources. In addition to the program, attendees will enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and interact with key resource providers. **There were 24 individuals in attendance from across the state.**



### RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

LEARNING LUNCHEON AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

MEET YOUR LABOR AND WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS



DR. DOUG SWANSON



DR. ROB RUSSELL

11:30 AM  
UNTIL  
2:00 PM



WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 9,  
2025



THE LODGE OF FOUR SEASONS  
VALENCIA ROOM  
315 FOUR SEASONS DRIVE - LAKE OZARK, MO

The Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon is part of the MU Extension Resident Economic and Community Health (REACH) Workforce Development Collaborative, and is underwritten in part by the Camden and Laclede County Councils of MU Extension, and



Above: Dr. Doug Swanson provides key information while Miller County community leaders and stakeholders listen and engage.

Camden County attendees = 8  
 Laclede County attendees = 4  
**Miller County attendees = 5**  
 Hickory County attendees = 1

# Focused Education



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 programming from the **MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute (MU FRTI)** is available to all qualified fire and emergency first responders. Seventy percent of courses are held at the local departments or agencies. With most of the state's fire service personnel considered volunteer or part-time, this local access and flexibility assures training opportunities for all firefighter and emergency responders.



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.

# Nutrition/Exercise for Older Adults



## Cooking Matters

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

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

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

**Cooking Matters facilitator about a class participant**



**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.”**



**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.



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

Health and Human Sciences

Miller County



## Legend



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being



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### **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.

593 direct and indirect contacts were made in Miller 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.

70 of these youth and adult participants reside in Miller 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.

-- OR --

### **Combined SNAP-Ed and EFNEP Public Value Statement 2025**

Missouri's **Family Nutrition Education Program** oversees two programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (**SNAP-Ed**) and Expanded Family Nutrition Education Program (**EFNEP**). Together, these programs brought over \$13 million in federal funds to Missouri in 2025. MU Extension's Family Nutrition Education Program engaged with 970,000+ Missourians with low income. Over 74,000 Missourians participated in nutrition education classes.

Participants in SNAP-Ed and EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical

