



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Perry County 2025

Annual Report



321 North Main Street, Suite 1
Perryville, MO 63775
573-547-4504

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

 **Extension**
University of Missouri
an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

PHONE 573-882-2394

EMAIL cchiggins@missouri.edu

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

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

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

We have also adapted to new realities. Even as the 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 – Local Office

Faculty and Staff



Stephanie Schindler
Extension Engagement Specialist



Bethany Bachmann
Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health Education



Dianna Koenig
Youth Program Associate



JoAnn Steffens
Administrative Assistant

OUR COMMUNITY

Every year Missourians turn to the University of Missouri (MU) Extension for practical knowledge, problem-solving, and guidance in navigating change. As a key resource for informed decision-making, we play a vital role in delivering this knowledge, fostering progress, and empowering individuals and communities to thrive.

OUR MISSION

As a land-grant institution, our mission is to **Bring Mizzou to YOU**. We bring the University of Missouri's cutting-edge research and expertise to the residents of the county, helping individuals, businesses, and municipalities make informed decisions that improve quality of life. Through our educational programs, we aim to strengthen communities, boost local economies, and promote sustainable growth by offering accessible, relevant, and responsive solutions backed by the resources of the University of Missouri System.

OUR MAIN PROGRAM AREAS

- › Agriculture
- › Business & Workforce Development
- › Community Development
- › Health and Human Science Initiatives
- › Nutrition & Health Education
- › 4-H Youth Development

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff Resources



Donna Aufdenberg
Field Specialist in Horticulture



Brad Coleman
Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development



Sarah Denkler
Regional Director



Audrey Johnson
Field Specialist in Human Development



Alexis Link
Field Specialist in Livestock



Anthony Ohmes
Field Specialist in Agronomy



Clayton Skelton
4-H Youth Development Educator



Randy Stephens
Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

Extension Council Members

Angelia Schuessler, Chairman
Shannon Allison, Vice-chairman
Carol Roth, Secretary
Marsha Buchheit, Treasurer
Garrett Behrle
Hannah Fritsche-Donze
Reagan Mackay
Kristyna Meier
Angie Mezo
MJ Myers
Dana Reinwald
Mark Roth
Keith Hoehn, Appointed
David Lohmann, Appointed
Jeanne Morgan, Appointed
Sean Unterreiner, Appointed



County Commission

Mike Sauer, Presiding Commissioner
Jay Wengert, First District Commissioner
Keith Hoehn, Second District Commissioner

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



BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations Budget

Income	
County Appropriations	54,507
Total Income	54,507
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	42,792
Travel	4,308
Telephone	1,500
Office Supplies/Service	2,367
Postage	280
Insurance	2,300
Miscellaneous	960
Total Expenses	54,507

Return on Investment

University System	102,640
Donations	2,630
Program Revenue from Outside Resources (grants)	28,258

For every dollar invested by the county, MU invests \$2.06.

Reach

Review the [Reach report](#) for a snapshot of contacts within the county.

Key Outcomes

- ✓ **3598 total educational contacts by MU Extension**
 - 2,041 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources.
 - 1,287 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development.
 - 170 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders or renewing the local economy.
- ✓ 198 soil samples tested (176 agronomy samples, and 22 horticulture samples.)
- ✓ 1,625 Perry County youth participated in the 4-H Program.
- ✓ Private Pesticide Applicator Training was provided to 37 Perry County residents.
- ✓ 45 Perry County seniors participated in Stay Strong Stay Healthy Classes.
- ✓ 12 Perry County seniors participated in Freeze It! a program designed to help individuals increase the frequency of home-prepared meals and reduce food waste.
- ✓ Horticulture related classes and programs had a total of 58 Perry County participants.
- ✓ 40 Perry County seniors attended technology related classes.



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Perry 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.

Perry County Highlights – Perry County Food Drive

Feeding Perry County Food Drive

To raise awareness about food insecurity in Perry County the Perry County Extension Council, and Mercy Hospital Perry teamed up and held a *Feeding Perry County Food Drive*. Posters were made to advertise the project and shared on Facebook with more than 21,475 post views. It was also emailed out to our email lists.

After the tornado in March, the decision was made to suspend the item of the month and take any non-perishable food items. In February we collected 191 pounds, March 497 pounds, and in April 1,203 pounds. **The total for 2025 was 1,891 pounds of food.** This is enough food to serve 2,269 meals! After the tornado we received a phone call from SEMO Milling, and they graciously gave us a large donation to purchase food. SEMO Milling also donated to the Cowboys and Angels 4-H Club to repair damage to the 4-H Horse Arena.

Food was distributed to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Ladies of Charity, and Perryville United Methodist Church Food Pantries. Each organization was also given recipes to be distributed using the items collected.



Stephanie Schindler and Bethany Bachmann, from Perry County Extension, and Sarah and Mylee Geringer, from the Cowboys and Angels 4-H Club receiving checks from SEMO Milling representative Steven Minner.



Food donations collected in March.



Final food donations collected in April after several deliveries had already been made.



Perry County Highlights – Good Neighbor Week

Good Neighbor Week

Missouri's Good Neighbor Week was celebrated September 28 to October 4, 2025. The mission of Perry County Extension was to collect non-perishable food items for three food pantries in Perryville. Food items could be dropped off at the Extension Office during the week. A huge thank you to MJ Myers, Perry County Extension Council Member, who volunteered to host a food drive at Roziers Food Centre on Friday, October 3 from 3:00-6:00 pm. She did a wonderful job of collecting food and cash donations. Ladies of Charity, Immanuel Lutheran and Perryville Methodist Church food pantries each received nonperishable food items and a check for \$115.



MJ Myers collecting food at the Good Neighbor Week "Food Drive!"



Food collected at the Good Neighbor Week Food Drive.

2025 East Perry Community Fair

Each year the Perry County Extension Council sets up a display board at the East Perry Community Fair in September. In 2025 the theme of the display board was "Extension in your Community?" Classes that were scheduled to be held were advertised and information about what specialists do was displayed. The Extension Council display board was well received. This year there were a record number of people looking at the booth and taking handouts. Very few handouts were brought back to the office. Various free items were given away this year. Extension Council members did a great job of talking with fair visitors as all the items were gone early Saturday morning.



Extension Council display at the East Perry Fair.

Perry County Highlights – State Fair Farm Family /Chamber Annual Diner

Perry County State Fair Farm Family – The Koenig Family

The Andrew and Emily Koenig family were among those honored during the 68th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, in August at the Missouri State Fair. The Koenig family was selected as the Missouri County Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension and the local Farm Bureau. Each year, the fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state that are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local outreach and extension programs such as 4-H or FFA. The Koenig operate a row crop and beef cattle farm. Their children grew up showing beef in 4-H and FFA at county and district fairs.



Emily, Mya, and Andrew Koenig with Missouri State Fair Officials.



Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce

Each year community business and organizations are given the opportunity to sponsor and decorate a table for the Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner. The Perry County Extension Council did this for the fourth time in 2025. The table theme was “MIZ-ZOU Rah!” The group that sat at the table was super excited about all their Mizzou and University of Missouri Extension goodies.



Perry County Extension's Table at the Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner.

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACT REPORT

This report offers a detailed overview of MU Extension's impacts, including data on those affiliated with the University of Missouri System, along with the healthcare and extension services provided over the past year.

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

This report supports informed decision-making, advocacy efforts and strategic planning by illustrating the tangible impact of university-driven initiatives at both the local and statewide levels.

[Access Perry County's Impact Report.](#)



GRAND CHALLENGES

The Grand Challenges Report reviews the most pressing issues facing Missouri communities. By focusing on these challenges, MU Extension can better leverage university resources, data and partnerships to empower people to improve their lives, businesses and communities.

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

[Access Perry County's Grand Challenges Report.](#)



PARTNERSHIPS

Extension programming would not be possible without the following partnerships. We are grateful for the support we get from these associates:

- ✓ Altenburg Public School District #48
- ✓ American Legion Post 133
- ✓ Buchheit of Perryville
- ✓ City of Perryville
- ✓ East Perry Community Fair
- ✓ FCS Financial
- ✓ Gibson Recovery Center
- ✓ Growing Tree Daycare
- ✓ Immanuel Lutheran Church Food Pantry
- ✓ Immanuel Lutheran School
- ✓ Ladies of Charity Food Pantry
- ✓ M&M Kids Kampus Daycare
- ✓ Mercy Hospital Perry
- ✓ Perry County Commissioners
- ✓ Perry County Farm Bureau
- ✓ Perry County Head Start
- ✓ Perry County Health Department
- ✓ Perry County Heritage Tourism
- ✓ Perry County Pork Producers
- ✓ Perry County School District #32
- ✓ Perry County Senior Tax Board
- ✓ Perry County Youth Tax Board
- ✓ Perryville Area Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Perryville Methodist Church
- ✓ Perryville Senior Center
- ✓ Riverside Regional Library
- ✓ St. Vincent DePaul Schools
- ✓ Salem Lutheran Church
- ✓ SEMO Milling

Local Impact

Perry County 4-H provided 1,625 youth with positive youth development learning experiences in 2025. Youth participated in Community 4-H Clubs, Clover Kid groups, Special Interest Clubs (SPIN), SNAC-Kids in the Kitchen and Afterschool 4-H Clubs at Altenburg Public School plus the School Enrichment Embryology Program held at all schools in the county.

Youth explored interests and ideas in 75 different 4-H project areas with guidance from 114 adult and youth volunteers.

The top 5 project areas were:

- 1)Animals
- 2)Communication & Expressive Arts
- 3)Leadership & Personal Development
- 4)Foods & Nutrition
- 5)Environmental Education/Earth Sciences

Local 4-H members demonstrated their leadership and citizenship abilities this year through a WIDE variety of hands-on experiences held at the local, regional, state, national and even international level including:

Officers Training	4-H Camp
Achievement Day	4-H Fair Shows
Show-Me 4-H Wares	Teen Career Tours
State Teen Conference	State 4-H Congress
4-H Day at the Capitol	State Ambassador
State 4-H Council	4-H Cardinals Day
SEMO Fair 4-H Shows	East Perry Fair 4-H
State Horse Judging	State Fair Demos
State Horse Public Speaking	
Regional & State Shooting Sports	
National 4-H Ignite in Washington D.C.	
4-H States International Exchange to Japan	
4-H International Exchange to Costa Rica	



Perry 4-H - Embryology

Profiles and Stories

Dianna Koenig, Youth Program Associate



4-H Embryology - One county teacher commented, “**Students were excited and intrigued by seeing the chicks hatch firsthand. It sparked an interest in reading books about chicks...as well as asking questions [about the project].**” Over 1,300 students across Perry County at all schools learned agricultural literacy and the life cycle of a chick embryo.

From expressive arts to animals to personal development skills, **4-H Achievement Day** and the **Perry County 4-H Fair** provided places for youth to participate and grow with **929 entries over five days** of 4-H shows and contests. Proceeds from the 4-H Fair Chicken Dinner went back to youth as a reward for their hard work and creative 4-H project work. The dinner served 864 meals while a record eighteen 4-H entrepreneurs turned their 4-H projects into profit by selling their items during the Show Me 4-H Wares event.



County 4-H members/families gave over **10,000 hours of volunteer service** to help people in our community! Highlights in 2025 include: tornado and ice storm cleanup, 400 boxes of food for seniors made, East Perry County Easter Egg Hunt, Reverse Trick or Treat with Seniors, Goody bags for residential care residents, Birthday Bags for food pantries, Chemo Bags and MORE.



Health and Human Science-Stay Strong Stay Health

Profiles and Stories

Bethany Bachmann, Field Specialist in Health & Nutrition Education

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Levels 1, 2, and 3 were all offered in 2025. Forty-five Perry County residents completed the 16-session programs. Stay Strong, Stay Healthy supports older adults in maintaining strength, balance, and mobility to fully engage in the activities that matter most to them. The program combines safe, effective exercises with practical information on nutrition and wellness, helping participants build confidence, connection, and well-being for lifelong health. Results from pre-/post- paired surveys of participants in Perry County indicated improvements in strength, flexibility and balance:

- **88% improved lower-body flexibility**
- **74% improved lower-body strength and endurance**
- **73% improved upper-body flexibility**
- **57% improved balance**



Stay Strong, Stay Healthy class participants do various exercises as part of their class.



Participant Comments:

"I am so thankful for this class because my bone density scan has improved since I have been doing Stay Strong, Stay Healthy!"

"The chair squats have made gardening so much easier! I am able to squat down to pick green beans and other things much easier."

"I have been taking this class for 7 years. It's helped me in all aspects of my life. Not only with my health, strength, and weight, but I'm also less lonely."

Health and Human Science — Freeze It!

Profiles and Stories

Bethany Bachmann, Field Specialist in Health & Nutrition Education

Freeze It!

Twelve individuals completed the four-session Freeze It! program in Perryville. The program engaged participants in building practical skills around meal planning, food safety, time management, and reducing food waste through freezer-friendly meal preparation. Each participant also took part in a hands-on meal preparation activity at each session and took home a freezer-friendly meal.

- 83% reported increased self-efficacy related to planning healthy meals
- 83% reported an increase in social connection
- 92% reported increased skills used to reduce food waste
- 92% reported decreased loneliness



Freeze It! class participants preparing meals to take home. They will either cook them the same day or freeze them for later use.

Participant Comments:

- “I now think more about using everything I have and not letting food go to waste.”
- “I am now rotating food in my refrigerator and using what needs to go first.”
- “I am more careful about packaging and preparing food for the freezer.”
- “I enjoyed the socializing and cooking together in class.”
- “The comradery among classmates was my favorite part of the program!”

Health and Human Science – Diabetes & Expo's

Profiles and Stories

Bethany Bachmann, Field Specialist in Health & Nutrition Education

Diabetes Self-Management Program

Twelve individuals from Perry and Cape Girardeau Counties completed the six-session Diabetes Self-Management Program in Perryville. Participants took part in hands-on activities to better understand how to better manage diabetes, how to work with their health care providers, and how to ask for help when they need it.



Bethany Bachmann leading a brainstorming session during class.

Young at Heart Wellness Expo

The Young at Heart Wellness Expo was sponsored by Mercy – Perry and held at the Perry Park Center. Over 250 individuals attended. The MU Extension Blender Bikes were on hand for participants to use in making healthy smoothies. Participants were also provided with several MU Extension publications on healthy eating and physical activity. Special guest Fredbird was also in attendance.



Perry County Extension Staff at the Young at Heart Wellness Expo



St. Louis Cardinals Fredbird took a turn on the blender bike.



Bethany Bachmann and Stephanie Schindler at the first Senior Resource Expo.

Senior Resource Expo

Independence Health System held the first Senior Resource Expo in 2025. Over 120 Perry County Residents attended the event. Nineteen community organizations were represented. MU Extension shared information on upcoming programs, resources for healthy living, and connected with other agencies for future collaboration.

Health and Human Science-MyChart and Chromebook

Profiles and Stories

Stephanie Schindler, County Engagement Specialist

MyChart Workshop

The MyChart workshop is a one-session workshop that allows participants to better understand Epic's MyChart system for healthcare consumers. The local hospital utilizes a version of this, as do several healthcare providers in the area. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about the system, including how to connect family members on the MyChart. They also reviewed several of the features in MyChart that allows them to view test results, communicate with their healthcare provider and request appointments with their provider. **All participants reported a better understanding of the MyChart system.**



Participant Comment:

"This was great! I feel like I can actually use MyChart."

Chromebook Essentials Course

The Chromebook Essentials is a 10-session course and had five participants. Three of the participants graduated from the course by attending a majority of the sessions. All graduates reported a better understanding of how to use a Chromebook. **Participants reported feeling more comfortable finding resources online and stated that the online safety section of the course was the most helpful.** One participant had been considering buying a Chromebook. After the first two sessions, she purchased a Chromebook and set it up with confidence.

Health and Human Science — iPhone Basics

Profiles and Stories

Stephanie Schindler, County Engagement Specialist

iPhone Basics Workshop

This one-time workshop had 15 attendees. All brought their iPhones to the workshop and had the opportunity to ask questions about their phone during and after the workshop. All participants reported feeling more comfortable with their device after the workshop, and all participants indicated that they would attend another Senior Planet workshop if offered. Multiple participants provided ideas for workshops to offer in 2026. One key item of feedback from this workshop was the need for more time to explore their phones. This will be adjusted the next time the session is offered.



Android Basics Workshop

This one-time workshop had 10 participants. Each participant brought their Android phone to the workshop and had the opportunity to ask questions about their phone during and after the workshop. All participants reported feeling more comfortable with their Android device and said they would attend another Senior Planet workshop if offered. Participants also provided ideas for 2026 programs.

Participant Comments:

- “We need to do this class all around the county.”
- “What will you be offering next year?”

Health and Human Science — SNAP Education

Profiles and stories

Nutrition Program Associate

SNAP Education

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought over \$11,419,598 in federal funds to Missouri in 2025 to support engagement with 70,722 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients and eligible citizens. Through direct education, newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline, 926 direct and indirect contacts were reached in Perry County.

MU Extension nutrition educators work with individuals and groups in a variety of settings throughout the state to meet a wide range of needs. Whether reaching out to youth and adults through direct education or working with communities to promote healthy policies, systems and environments (PSE), our goal is to help participants make behavior changes to achieve lifelong health and fitness. Often people tell us how the program has impacted their lives, even years after they have participated. Each day there are new stories that bring home the same important message: The MU Extension Family Nutrition Education Program makes a difference, a difference that means better health and fitness for a lifetime.

926 participants
(both youth and adult)
received education in
Perry County in 2025.



Blender Bikes at the Young at Heart Wellness Expo.

Health and Human Science — WITS / Keep Your Keys

Profiles and Stories

Audrey Johnson, Field Specialist in Human Development

Extension Health and Human Sciences is dedicated to helping Missourians improve their lives. Using research-based education and proven strategies, Extension professionals work in partnership with communities to improve conditions that help Missourians live better where they live, learn, play and work. Our programs help individuals and families, rural and urban, reaching Missourians of all ages in every county and the city of St. Louis.



WITS Workout is a program for seniors with fun, interactive puzzles and games that not only challenge your mind but also help you learn easy ways to keep your brain sharp every day. One two-hour session was taught once weekly for four weeks in Perry County. Six participants attended and completed the class. Participants communicated that the class was very helpful and stated, "**I remembered five addresses I lived at from the past,**" "I remembered the Ten Commandments," and "I enjoyed the comradery."

Keep Your Keys

Keep Your Keys is a driver-safety program to help seniors stay on the road for as long and as safely as possible. Three Keep Your Keys programs were provided in Cape County (2) and Stoddard County (1) with a total of 19 participants. Surveys conducted after class showed:

- **95% of participants reported the class was informative.**
- **74% of participants reported if they could not drive (either short or long term) they would feel more prepared to approach driving retirement.**



Strengthening Families Program: for Parents and Youth 10-14, is a seven-session series for parents or caregivers and their young teens to attend together to improve family communication, resolve conflict and improve parental skills.

A research study conducted by the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute found a RETURN OF \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing the Strengthening Families Program.



Health and Human Science — Senior Tech

Profiles and Stories

Audrey Johnson, Field Specialist in Human Development

Senior Technology Classes

Five Senior Technology classes were taught, with a total of 41 participants, in the following counties: Mississippi(1), Scott(2), and Stoddard(3). The classes included:

- AI all Around
- All things Zoom
- Finding Information Online
- Protecting your Personal Information Online
- Digital Coupon Tools

Surveys taken after sessions showed that of the 41 participants:

- **Fifteen reported being interested in trying something new because of the program.**
- Eleven reported wanting to learn more about the topic that was covered.
- Eleven stated it is extremely likely they would attend another Senior Planet program.



Participants stated the classes were:

- Very informative.
- Good to get new knowledge.
- **Needed to keep up with increasing technology.**
- This program (AI All Around) is informative and helpful to the generation we live in.
- Great opportunity to receive information.

Additional HHS Programming:

Alzheimer's Awareness – Cape County
Building Strong Families – virtual
Mental Health First Aid – Madison County
Taking Care of You – Mississippi County

Counties Served: Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Scott, and Stoddard.

Agriculture and Environment - Horticulture

Local Impact

Donna Aufdenberg, Field Specialist in Horticulture

Donna Aufdenberg, Field Specialist in Horticulture, offers horticulture programming in Perry County. Services offered include plant diagnostics, plant identification, insect identification, soil test assistance, greenhouse consultations and troubleshooting, and gardening programs.

Popular programs delivered in 2025 include (but not limited to):

- Salad Box Gardening
- Seed Starting and Transplanting
- Emergency Preparedness and putting together emergency buckets
- Garden Irrigation Basics

The Master Gardener Program is an education outreach initiative by the University of Missouri Extension designed to train volunteers in horticulture and gardening best practices. Donna Coordinated Master Gardener Training in January 2025 in Perry County. Nine people finished training covering topics of plant anatomy, soils, flowers, woody ornamentals, insects, diseases, vegetable gardening, home fruit production and more. They went on to complete 30 hours of volunteer service to gain their certification.



There were 35 seniors who attended a class to hear Donna teaching about how to grow and use herbs in cooking. **Participants were able to take herbs home to grow and use.**

Horticulture

/ˈhɔːrdəˌkælCHər/

Noun 1. the art or practice of garden cultivation and management

162+

Participants in 5+ Programs in Perry County

101+

One-on-One Education
➤ Calls
➤ Emails
➤ Walk-ins

Top Gardening Requests

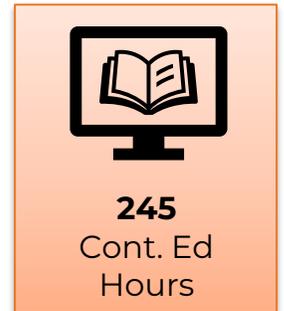
Vegetable Gardening • Growing Berries
• Planting Fruit Trees • Composting • Soil Testing • Raised Bed Garden • Hydroponics • Greenhouses

Garden Spade Newsletter reaches over 2,556 subscribers every month with a 9.6% increase in readership during 2025. Each issue shares practical, research-based information that is “Reliable, Responsive, and Relevant” to Missouri Gardeners. Subscribe to the garden spade at <https://extension.missouri.edu/counties/cap-e-girardeau> or click the QR code at the right.



Master Gardener Program

Local Impact



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

Extension Master Gardener Events

Number of Chapter-led Education Events - **2**

Number of Participants in Education Events - **310**

Extension Master Gardener Events

- Spring Gardening Seminar
- Plant Sale

Extension Master Gardener Projects

- Native Plantings at Higher Education Center
- Military Museum landscape maintenance
- Seed Library at Perryville's Riverside Library



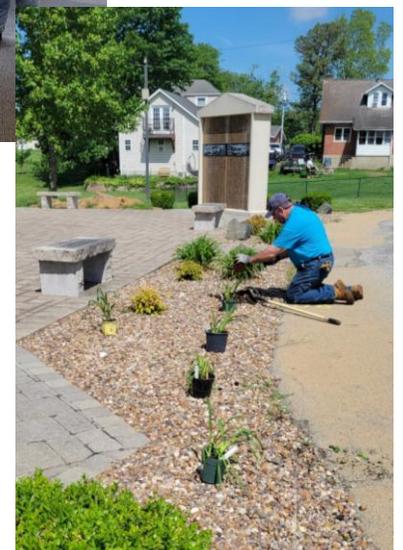
Workday with the Natives!



*Seed Library at
Riverside Regional
Library - FREE Seeds!*



Native Planting at the Perry Higher Ed Center



*Plantings at the
Military Museum
in Perryville*

Agriculture and Environment-Livestock

Profiles and stories

Alexis Link, Field Specialist in Livestock

In 2025, the Show-Me-Select Heifer Replacement Program marketed 1,689 heifers statewide. Sales conducted **in Southeast Missouri generated \$318,350 from fall-calving heifers and \$164,350 from spring-calving heifers.** Through the program, producers apply total quality management practices to on-farm heifer development, strengthening herd management, reproductive performance, and genetic quality through retained ownership or by marketing heifers for added income. Buyers benefit from improved herd quality and reduced rates of dystocia and calf or heifer losses.



More than 200 Perry County residents were reached through SMQA programming, on-farm visits, FFA Field Day, and direct producer consultations. Educational topics included, but were not limited to, nutrition, reproduction, disease management, heifer quality, herd health, small ruminant production, and youth livestock education. Producers are able to apply this information to strengthen management practices and enhance the productivity and sustainability of their operations.



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



Agriculture and Environment-Agronomy

Profiles and Stories

Anthony Ohmes, Field Specialist in Agronomy

Forage Systems

Diversifying forage systems for greater resilience of the forage supply by implementing the use of warm and cool season forages, perennial and annual grasses, legumes, and forbs to meet the needs of Missouri's diverse livestock segment.

Grazing Schools teach Management-intensive Grazing (MiG) methods that improve forage persistence and quality, increasing the number of days of grazing forages in pastures, reducing dependency on hay, while conserving Missouri's natural resources. Two schools were offered in 2025. Thirty-one attended from Southeast, East Central, and Southwest Regions. Twenty-four were livestock producers with **83% planning to adopt MiG and 17% reporting they already practice MiG.**



2025 Spring Grazing School in Perry County

One-on-one direct consultation on forage species, soils tests, nutrients, weeds and insects was provided to individuals across the region.

Pesticide Applicator Training

Pesticide applicator training rule changes went into effect in 2025, expanding training for private applicators. Private pesticide applicator training (PPAT) includes required General Pest Control (CORE) along with those seeking optional grain bin fumigation, soil fumigation, or aerial application training. Additionally, applicators that work under the supervision of commercial applicators are required to receive non-commercial restricted use pesticide (NRUP) training. Education on integrating pest management methods, protecting the environment, labeling, and reducing exposure risk while meeting federal and state requirements for restricted use pesticides was provided. Twenty-one PPAT and five NRUP events offered across the Southeast Region educated 130 private and 31 NRUP applicators.

Missouri Agriculture contributes \$93.7 billion annually to Missouri's economy.*

*Missouri Department of Agriculture 2024 Status Report

Field Crops and Soils

Increasing Missouri field crop production through education on integrated pest, nutrient, crop, and soil management accomplished through events, soil testing, and one-on-one consultations. Regional meetings and one-on-one direct consultation on field crop management reached 393 direct contacts across the region.



2025 Rice, Cotton, and Soybean Crop Meetings.

Agriculture and Environment-Ag Business

Profiles and Stories

Randy Stephens, Field Specialist in Ag Business



Market Outlooks

As a result of the increased market uncertainty and low commodity prices Randy Stephens, Field Specialist in Agricultural Business, presented multiple market outlooks. They included: 2025 Crop Conference, Perry County Farm Bureau Crop Conference, Big River Ag Grower meeting and TRC Beef Market Outlook.

Southeast Missouri Outlook

Randy Stephens, Field Specialist in Agricultural Business began a newsletter in April that is sent out monthly to 1318 farmers, ag business professionals and ag lenders in the region. The newsletter has been a huge success. Feedback from recipients, as well as data from Dotdigital, our email platform, indicates a total open rate of 81%.

Canola Budget

New to the MU Extension line-up of crop budgets is a winter canola budget. Randy Stephens, Field Specialist in Agricultural Business worked with industry representatives and other MU faculty to develop a winter canola budget that will be available to producers to view and download. Interest in canola production has grown in Southeast Missouri as a result of new markets that are available as well as profitable contacting options for canola.



Farm Management – On My Own (offered statewide online)

A brand-new offering in 2024, **'Farm Management – On My Own: What the Hay?'** helped landowners and operators understand how to improve and manage the cost of hay stands. The program, a collaborative effort of Agronomy and Ag Business specialists Travis Harper, Valerie Tate, and Amie Breshears, debuted in the fall of 2025 with an online lunch-and-learn series of four sessions offered online statewide.

By the numbers:

- ✓ **21 registrants**
- ✓ **100% would recommend the program to others**
- ✓ **16 Missouri counties represented – including Perry County**

Agriculture and Environment — Tax Schools

Profiles and Stories

Mary Sobba, Field Specialist in Ag Business

Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension coordinated and offered tax education through one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was in person and live online. Fall schools were in Columbia and Springfield and an online school. The schools were designed for those who prepare taxes including enrolled agents, tax preparers, CPAs, individuals, and attorneys.

The training included updates on legislation, rulings and cases, individual taxpayer issues, agricultural and natural resources topics, ethics, trusts and estates, agriculture and natural resource tax issues, business tax issues, business entity tax issues, IRS issues, installment sales, tax benefits of home ownership, retirement tax issues, and individual tax issues. The schools were approved for up to 16 hours of continuing education credit by the IRS, Missouri Bar and for CFP continuing education. Total continuing education hours reported to IRS for the schools was 4,024 hours.

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

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. One comment from an online participant was “The video was outstanding – best I’ve seen on any CPE I’ve done live.” Planning is underway to offer training in 2026. **Local county residents benefit when local tax preparers can gain knowledge, which benefits their clients and communities.** The tax schools are a program of the ag business and policy program of MU Extension, coordinated by Mary Sobba with help from a team of ag business specialists throughout the state.

The resources for the schools included the IRS, 2025 National Income Tax Workbook from the Land Grant University Tax Education Foundation, and materials written by the instructors.

The 2025 school attendance totaled three hundred eighty-nine people, which was an 11% increase from 2024. Perry County had one participant.



Business and Community

Local Impact

Missouri APEX Accelerator

The Missouri APEX Accelerator provides education, training, and technical assistance to ensure all businesses become capable of participating in federal, state, and local government contracts. Assisting Missouri businesses to be successful in the government marketplace helps to keep tax dollars local and encourage economic growth of our communities.

The services offered include training and education, one-on-one counseling, registration and certification assistance, market research and marketing strategies, bid-match notifications, solicitation reviews, bid and proposal proofreading, and post-award assistance.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) and the State of Missouri award small business certifications for eligible businesses in different socio-economic categories, such as woman-owned and veteran-owned. These certifications require a lengthy application and review process before businesses are officially certified. These certifications can help businesses be more competitive because government agencies have specific purchasing goals.

These statistics describe the number of government contracts our clients have won and the award revenue received. This is federal, state, and local tax money that is staying in our communities. **In 2025 Perry County was awarded \$23,699,740.00 in government contracts, 21 government contracts, 19 unique clients were served, 11 clients were counseled and 215 clients attended training events.**

Missouri APEX's six counselors provide public training events online, in person, and hybrid. Topics include introduction to government contracting, guide to small business certifications, creating a capability (marketing) statement, and more. Counselors are also able partner with other organizations to deliver content to the public or specific audiences, such as company employees or veteran business owners.

