



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Mercer County

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR EXTENSION AND ENGAGEMENT
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December 2023

Dear county commissioners and friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

Thank you for your important partnership with the University of Missouri Extension this past year.

I want to highlight three areas that address needs you helped us identify.

You may recall that the FY 23 state budget provided a one-time \$5 million infusion to MU Extension for growth. Of that, we allocated about \$3 million for field faculty in the areas of agriculture, 4-H, health/human development and business and community development.

Through a dedicated hiring effort, and thanks to that allocation, we have hired 168 new employees since November 2022. That includes 72 academic/faculty members, most of whom are field specialists in a priority area noted above, and 96 staff members (e.g., office administrators, youth and food and nutrition associates, etc.).

We also returned more faculty to local program delivery that best serves your county's needs, while preserving the partnership and relationship building work you value. Our extension and engagement specialists focus full-time on that work as they serve their assigned multi-county groups. Currently, 19 have been hired, with two more in the pipeline.

Finally, we are prioritizing our work with county extension councils. In the new role of partnership and council development director, Lorin Fahrmeier focuses on strengthening council representation and governance. This role will build stronger links with regional, educational and campus leadership to better identify and address local priorities.

At the UM System level, our engagement work across four universities and with leaders across the state makes a difference in areas of greatest need: broadband, workforce development, health access, food security and healthy futures for our youth.

Your county annual report shows what we are accomplishing together as we Serve Missouri and Deliver Mizzou. We look forward to strengthening that partnership with county commissioners and community stakeholders in the coming year.

Sincerely,

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

Who we are

Faculty and staff



Seated: Cheri Delameter, County Office

Support; Jessica Trussell, Human Development and Family Science Specialist; Jody Van Gundy, Nutrition Program Associate

Standing: Amanda Allen, Youth Program Associate; Shawn Deering, Livestock Specialist; Manoj Chhetri, Horticulture Specialist

Not pictured: Denice Ferguson, Ag Business Specialist; Scott Finley, 4-H Youth Development Specialist; Jim Crawford, Natural Resource Engineer; Micah Potgieter, Nutrition and Health Specialist; Valerie Tate, Agronomy Specialist; Jackie Spainhower, Community Development; Connie Griffith, Nutrition Program Manager



Council members

Misty Clapman, Chairman
Kelsey Jincks, Vice-chairman
Connie McGuire, Secretary
Cody DeMoss, Treasurer
Nicholas Covey
Adam DeMoss
John Girdner
Shelly Holt
Montana Holt
Zach Martin
Lindsay Minter
Logan Stiles
Dawn Taff

2023 Swearing in of elected and appointed Mercer Extension Council Members.

From left to right: County Clerk- Judy Hamilton;
Members: Logan Stiles, Justin Holt, Zach Martin, Shelly Holt, Dawn Taff, Misty Clapham, Adam DeMoss



County commissioners

Jerry Allen, Presiding
Shane Grooms, District 1
Zach Martin, District 2

Budget and more

Appropriations budget

Income

County Tax Levy	48,138.44
Gifts/Grants/Contracts	1,000.00
Educ Service Fees	1,145.00
Misc.	624.39
Total Income	50,887.83

Expenses

Salaries	6,840.00
Payroll Expenses	523.26
Non Payroll Salaries	13,108.72
Travel	2,007.00
Postage	212.45
Telephone	598.67
Advertising	823.64
Rent/Lease Space	7,150.00
Rent/Lease Equipment	724.56
Publishing/Printing	21.20
Copy Services	307.08
Supplies/Service	271.89
Professional Services	407.88
Insurance	638.10
Extension Council Elections	57.20
Soil Testing	660.00
Publications for Resale	302.50
Furniture/Equipment	295.64
Total Expenses	34,969.69

Mercer County highlights

2023 Program Highlights:

- Mercer County 4-H had 3 community clubs, which reached 7 Clover Kids and 31 members.
- 66 field soil samples and 3 garden soil samples from Mercer County analyzed by the MU Soil Testing Lab.
- 9 agricultural producers in Mercer County were trained and licensed to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides.
- After the eight weeks, 10 Stay Strong, Stay Healthy participants significantly improved their strength, balance, and confidence.
- 33 Mercer County youth participated in EFNEP education and 33 participants in Mercer County benefited from SNAP-Education.
- 9 individuals/couples filed their 2022 taxes in Mercer County through the VITA program.

In 2022, Mercer Extension had:

- 2,382 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
 - 48 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
 - 2,334 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development

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



Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Mercer 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.



Missouri 4-H Positive Youth Development

Mercer 4-H

In 2023, Mercer County 4-H had 3 community clubs, which reached 7 Clover Kids and 31 members.

4-H also educated local youth through Student Nutrition Advisory Councils (SNAC) Clubs and Special Interest (SPIN) Clubs.

- SNAC Kids in the Kitchen, Summer 2023 with 32 members
- Received a SNAC grant for \$500 to support this educational club

Community service – 4-H Clubs participated in community service such as planting flowers around at the senior housing, helping wrap presents at the toy drive, making cards and ornaments and trash pickup, including the community beautification shown below.



In 2023, Mercer 4-H members participated in:

- Energizers – youth were invited to Energizer in Cameron and Chillicothe on 2/11/23. 4 Mercer Co youth attended Chillicothe, 2 attended Cameron also.
- Camp – 8 Campers, 1 female counselors
- Fairs – Mercer County Fair in Princeton, MO
 - 37 exhibits in Achievement Day at the Mercer County Fair Building from 12 exhibitors, with 18 exhibits qualifying to the Missouri State Fair
- NWMO fair in Bethany and Missouri State Fair in Sedalia
- 3 youth attended State 4-H Congress and were involved in Regional Teen Council. They also showed in National Red Angus shows and one is on the Teen Board



Agriculture & Environment

Soil Testing for Fields and Gardens

Soil testing is a valuable tool for farmers and gardeners. It is a process used to estimate the ability of the soil to support plant growth, with analysis provided by Valerie Tate, Field Specialist in Agronomy, or Manoj Chhetri, Field Specialist in Horticulture. Soil samples submitted to the University of Missouri Soil Testing Lab are analyzed for soil pH and a variety of soil nutrients.

In 2023 there were 66 field soil samples and 3 garden soil samples from Mercer County analyzed by the MU Soil Testing Lab.

The objectives of the MU Soil Testing Lab are:

- To help farmers make effective use of fertilizer to increase their financial returns
- Benefit society with improved environment and water quality through efficient use of fertilizer on farms, lawns and gardens;
- To ensure public and private labs are providing reliable and quality soil test results to the citizens of Missouri.

Soil testing is a cost-effective way to determine if adequate fertilizer or amendments are being applied to obtain the desired yield both in the field and garden without applying excess fertilizer.



Above is a tomato plant with herbicide damage. Soil testing could offer insight to this issue.



Left: Drought stricken corn shown here provides the possibility of high nitrate level that can be detrimental to livestock.

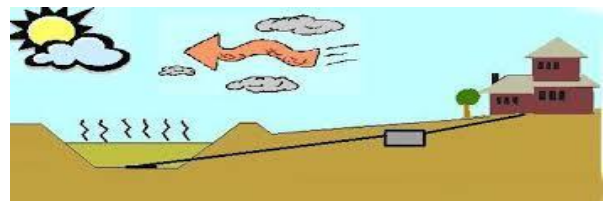
Drought Monitor & Forage Impact Programs

in 2023, Livestock producers were faced with the challenge of not having enough forage to get through the winter and thus liquidated some of the herd. Many producers were both baling and green chopping drought-stricken corn to replace forage losses of 2023, especially in central Missouri. Drought stricken corn provides the possibility of high nitrate level that can be detrimental to livestock.

MU Extension offices provided producers nitrate quick tests to help determine the viability of the corn as a forage. In many cases, specialists diverted potentially harmful situations for producers intending to feed livestock without proper handling of the forage.

On site septic systems

The most common question 2023 for Ag Engineering Specialist, Jim Crawford, was septic lagoons going dry from the drought and what should they do. Each is slightly different, but the general recommendation is to add water to maintain its function and to keep the bottom seal from cracking and causing leaks in the future.



A diagram of how an on-site septic system works when incorporating a lagoon in place of a leach field.

The average cost to replace a septic system is approximately \$20,000. MU Extension offered citizens across NW Missouri with resources for simple, preventative steps to maintain their system and to avoid this cost.



Business & Community

Pesticide Applicator Training & Ag Update

Valerie Tate, Agronomy Specialist, and Shawn Deering, Livestock Specialist, hosted the Mercer private pesticide applicator training and ag update.

This license issued by the Missouri Dept of Agriculture is required for producers wanting to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides. Restricted-use pesticides are classified as such because without additional training they pose a risk to people, animals, or the environment.

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

Information on replacement heifer selection and the importance of disposition as a criteria to include was also highlighted at this year's Ag Update.

Pesticide applicator training helps reduce the harmful effects of improper pesticide use.



The Northwest Regional Grazing School, pictured above, is held each year at the MU Hundley-Whaley Extension and Education Center. Mercer County is invited to attend.

During 2023, 9 agricultural producers in Mercer County were trained and licensed to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides.

Ag Lenders Seminars



Denice Ferguson, Ag Business Policy Specialist presents the Land Values Survey to attendees who were asked for their input on trends in NW Missouri.

In-person seminars will cover a wide variety of agricultural finance topics such as:

- 2024 Row Crop and Livestock Commodity Outlooks
- Production Costs and 2024 Enterprise Budgets
- Program updates from the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority
- Update on local Land Values and Cash Rents
- Outlook on Farm Policy and 2023 Farm Bill Update.

Attending the Missouri Agricultural Lenders Seminar is a tradition for many, with one attendee stating that they have “Been attending for almost 40 years in various locations... good update on farm economy.” An attendee from the Maryville seminar believes that attending is an “excellent way to stay in touch with the ag economy and there’s a benefit to the networking opportunities.”



Health & Human Sciences

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy teaches older adults easy yet powerful exercises to boost strength, balance and daily life capabilities. Participants also gain insight into nutrition for healthy aging and active living.

Nutrition and Health Specialist Micah Potgieter offered the program in Mercer County and participants participated in the course for a total of 16 classes. The county participants that completed the program has an estimated annual healthcare cost savings of \$10,240.

After the eight weeks, Stay Strong, Stay Healthy participants significantly improved their strength, balance, and confidence.



“Thanks for encouraging me to keep moving up in weights. I have asked for a set of leg weights for Christmas. My goal is to continue with the exercises after the class stops.”

-SSSH participant 2023

WITS Workout

Coming together and learning new things is good for your noggin! In the Wits Workout program, participants engaged in various interactive puzzles and games and learned what they can do in their daily life to keep their brain healthy.

This program, held in Mercer County, has two main goals—to provide purposeful opportunities to engage intellectually and to increase socialization through ongoing group participation.

Wits Workout is a peer-reviewed, pilot-tested brain health resource tool based on the research that intellectual challenge and social connectedness contribute to brain health throughout life





Health & Human Sciences

100 Days, 100 Miles

This year's 100 Miles, 100 Days Extension initiative made a significant impact statewide, attracting over 1,300 participants in Missouri, including 5 from Mercer County and more than 240 in our Northwest Region. Throughout the 100 days of summer, participants were urged to discover their own enjoyable ways to cover the equivalent of 100 miles.

Weekly motivational emails provided valuable education and fueled a friendly county competition, adding a bit of excitement into the challenge. Whether participants reached the coveted 100 miles or not, the ultimate goal of our initiative was to instill a lasting enjoyment of movement through a blend of encouragement, accountability, and motivation.



Tai Chi 101 & Strength Training

In 2023, Tai Chi (shown at left with Micah Potgieter, Nutrition and Health Specialist) and Stay, Strong, Stay, Health exercise class was held at the Mercer County Library. Participants learned that being physically active helps to improve not only physical health but also mental health. Participants also got to practice the exercises.

Kids in the Kitchen Summer School





Health & Human Sciences

EFNEP Value Statement

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,626,730 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 526 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 1,926 family members. Additionally, 1,980 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes.

33 of these youth participants reside in Mercer 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.



SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$10,874,798 in federal funds to Missouri. During FY2023, Missouri's SNAP-Ed program reached over 78,000 Missourians through direct classroom education. Each person participated in an average of 6 hours of education totaling over 15,000 hours. In addition, an additional 760,135 persons participated in indirect education. Direct and indirect education resulted in over 1.8 million total contacts with Missourians.

A total of 33 participants were from Mercer 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.





County highlights

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The 2023 NWMO VITA Tax preparation team offered free tax prep to people needing assistance filing their 2022 tax returns. The NWMO VITA program allowed low income, disabled, and older clients to get their returns prepared for free when they didn't feel comfortable using free online resources themselves.

Local Impact:

- 9 individuals/couples filed their 2022 taxes in Mercer County
- Total federal refunds in northwest Missouri was \$126,116, with \$56,980 being returned from the state.

Volunteers spent 377 hours preparing 263 tax returns in Northwest Missouri.

Cost savings to taxpayers (\$200 per tax return) is \$52,600.



Good Neighbor Week

Council and staff assisted with serving and cleaning at the Mercer County Senior Center and helped individuals sign up for upcoming extension programs. 15 sign-ups for the WITS program and 4 sign-ups for the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program. On the first day, (3 extension employees, 1 council member, 1 council employee) helped and engaged with 35 individuals; on the second, (1 extension employee, 1 council member, 1 extension employee) helped 60 individuals.

Missouri Century Farms

The Crouse Family Farm of Cainsville and the Cox Family Farm of Northwest of Princeton, both in Mercer County, were recognized in 2023 for owning a Missouri Century Farm. This program celebrates the lasting contributions farmers and ranchers have made to the heritage of our county, state, and country. It is sponsored by the University of Missouri Extension, MU College of Ag, and Missouri Farm Bureau.



The Crouse Family (left) includes four generations of owners for more than 150 years.

The Cox Family (right) are a 7th generation farm dating back to 1883 when the plot was purchased for \$725.



Mercer County



UM System Footprint in the county in 2023



FY23 county students

10 students

- 8 Undergraduates
- 2 Graduate and professional students
- 8 Full-time students
- 2 Part-time students



County employees and retirees

9 people employed by UM

- 8 Campuses
- 1 MU Health Care

2 UM retirees and beneficiaries
 UM salary and retirement income: \$308,233
 UM state tax revenue: \$8,640
 UM federal tax revenue: \$34,092



County alumni

Selected school alumni

- 2 Medicine
- 4 Nursing
- 3 Health Professions
- 2 Pharmacy
- 1 Veterinary Medicine
- 19 Agriculture
- 8 Engineering
- 4 Law

Alumni teaching K-12

- 3 teachers
- 5.4% of all district teachers



County breakdown

MU

- 9 students
- 55 alumni
- 8 employees

UMKC

- 0 students
- 10 alumni
- 0 employees

Missouri S&T

- 1 student
- 2 alumni
- 0 employees

UMSL

- 0 students
- 5 alumni
- 0 employees



County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Mercer County



County population: 3,517



County services provided

Health care (FY23)

- 26 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$14,564 of uncompensated care
- 1 in-state patient seen at UMKC School of Dentistry with a statewide average of \$43.61 per patient in uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 10 visits to 7 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

Extension (2022)

- 2,382 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
- 48 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
- 2,334 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development

Mercer County



University of Missouri System
COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

UM System Statewide Footprint

Economic and Community Development Highlights

- In 2022, Business Development Specialists worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide to create or retain 81,645 jobs.

\$3.1
billion

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

- Between FY17 and FY22, UM System brought Missouri more than \$1.46 billion in federal and private research funds, funded primarily from outside the state, but spent within the state.



In FY23, UM System was issued 33 patents and filed 61 new U.S. patent applications.

- In FY23, the UM System awarded 805 design and construction project contracts throughout Missouri, for a total investment of \$279.2 million in the state.



In FY23, to improve access to medical and health related services, MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO program provided 18,381 hrs of case-based instruction to 2,938 learners located in 112 of 114 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis.

Education and Training Provided



41,992 police, fire fighters, and medical professionals attending continuing education (2022)



Agriculture and natural resource programs served 174,692 farmers and related businesses (2022)

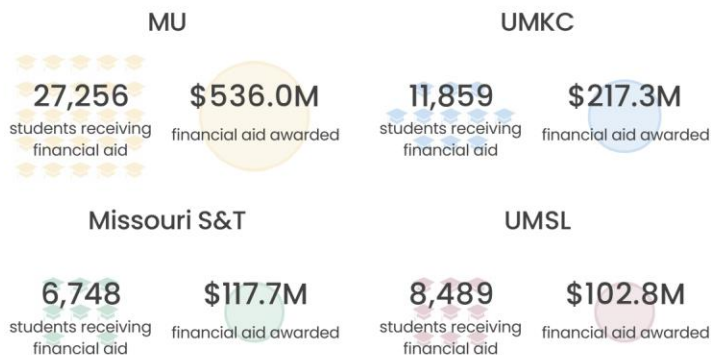


311,749 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2022)

Education Highlights

FY23 Financial Aid Awards

In FY23, 67.3% of the UM System's 80,702 students received financial aid totaling \$973.7 million



UM System's MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) provides internet connectivity, access, support and training to 58 higher education institutions (230,000 students), 485 K-12 school districts (832,000 students) and 132 public libraries (serving nearly 3 million Missourians) in 2022.

- UM System awarded 50.5% of the 32,098 Bachelor's or higher degrees awarded by Missouri four-year public institutions in 2022-23.
- UM System awarded 36.6% of the 1,935 research doctorates and 26.9% of the 3,593 professional doctorates awarded by Missouri public and not-for-profit private institutions in 2022-23.
- In FY23, UM System's \$37.9 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants represented 88.3% of all NSF grants made to Missouri public colleges and universities.
- In 2023, over 10,900 Missourians accessed mobroadband.org, part of the UM System Broadband Initiative which helped the statewide build-out of high-speed internet infrastructure. MU Extension also supported residents in making individual challenges to the FCC that resulted in \$810,000 in additional funding for the state of Missouri.

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 2023, 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

