

Cooper County

2024 Annual Report

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**SERVE
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER
MIZZOU.**



Extension

University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution

December 2024

Dear county commissioners, elected leaders and friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support of MU Extension and for your partnership in enhancing the lives of Missourians.

Your support for MU Extension fuels Missouri's agriculture, strengthens families, prepares our youth and promotes the health, well-being and vitality of our communities. Over the past year, our programs have focused on addressing key needs throughout the state:

- **Expanding access to 4-H:** To make 4-H more accessible, we've introduced more in-school and after-school clubs, reducing barriers and creating opportunities for young Missourians to develop essential skills and leadership abilities.
- **Supporting agriculture and land stewardship:** We're addressing critical issues such as succession planning for family farms, rural mental health, agricultural business management and land stewardship. These initiatives are helping Missouri's farmers plan for the future and preserve the health of our land for future generations.
- **Advancing health initiatives:** Our team of community health field specialists, covering every region of the state, works directly with local leaders to assess health needs and bring UM System resources and expertise to these communities, supporting healthier lives and stronger communities.
- **Promoting economic development:** MU Extension is helping to create economic opportunities by working with individuals, supporting businesses in their growth and collaborating with communities to enhance local vibrancy. Through these efforts, we help bring new jobs, skills and possibilities to Missourians across the state.
- **Providing essential training:** Our continuing education programs prepare Missouri's firefighters and health care workers to meet the demands of their roles with the latest skills and knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared to serve our communities.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you feel as proud as I do of the accomplishments we've achieved together. The dedication and professionalism of MU Extension's faculty and staff are inspiring, and I am grateful to work alongside them-and each of you-as we make Missouri a stronger, healthier and more vibrant place. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are serving Missouri by delivering the University *for* Missouri.

Warm regards,

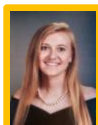


Chad Higgins, PhD
Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement
Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

Who we are

Faculty and staff

- **Todd Lorenz**
Field Specialist in Agronomy
- **Tina Edholm**
Field Specialist in Human Development
- **Casey Adkins**
Nutrition Program Associate
- **Caroline Herigon**
4-H Youth Program Associate
- **Maddison Whitaker**
Office Manager / Bookkeeper



Faculty housed in other counties

- **Elaine Anderson**
Extension Engagement Specialist
- **Gene Schmitz**
Field Specialist in Livestock
- **Kathi Mecham**
Field Specialist in Horticulture
- **Joni Harper**
Field Specialist in Natural Resources
- **Landon Bax**
Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development
- **Alex Freeburger**
Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health



Council members

- **Joshua Siegel, Chairman**
- **Kirt Lewis-chairman**
- **Mickayla Holliday, Secretary**
- **Kim Burnett, Treasurer**
- **Anecita Alvizo**
- **Patty Dick**
- **Cindy Imhoff**
- **Danny Larm**
- **Angie Patrick**
- **Jason Shadwich**
- **Allison Trabue**
- **Steve Young**

County commissioners

- **George Monk**
Presiding Commissioner
- **Charlie Melkersman**
Easter District Commissioner
- **Danny Larm**
Western District Commissioner



Budget and more

Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	84,784
Total Income	84,784
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	61,864
Travel	3,230
Telephone	1,415
Office Supplies/Service	3,000
Utilities	2,500
Insurance	2,500
Election Expense	775
Other Center Operations	9,500
Total Expenses	84,784



Cooper County Employees attended the Kids day at the Boonville Farmers Market.

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



Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Cooper 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.

Local Impact

2024 Cooper County State Fair Farm Family

Kirt and Joyce Lewis and family of Otterville, MO were among the families honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 12 at the Missouri State Fair.

The Lewis family was selected as the Cooper County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Cooper County and the local Farm Bureau. Along with Kirt and Joyce, Ryan and Kristen Hackmann (daughter and son in law) and grandchildren, Allie Hackmann and Tanner Hackmann all help on the farm as much as they can.

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.

Front row left to right-Kristen Hackmann, Allie Hackmann, Kirt Lewis. Joyce Lewis, Tanner Hackmann, Ryan Hackmann



2024 Cooper County Century Farm Recipients

Farm Name:
Immele-Twenter-Weathers Farm
Current Owner:
Mark & Sandra Weathers
Original Owner: John B Immele
Year Established: 1899

Farm Name: Geiger Farms
Current Owner:
William O. & Marilyn Geiger /
Aaron Luke & Malinda Geiger
Original Owner: George Victor Geiger
Year Established: 1912

Cooper County



UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



FY24 county students

183 students

- 133 Undergraduates
- 50 Graduate and professional students
- 139 Full-time students
- 44 Part-time students
- 40 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)



County employees and retirees

513 people employed by UM

- 221 Campuses
- 271 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)
- 21 UM System

198 UM retirees and beneficiaries

UM salary and retirement income: \$35.7 million

UM state tax revenue: \$1.1 million

UM federal tax revenue: \$5.6 million



County alumni

Selected school alumni

- 17 Medicine
- 57 Nursing
- 103 Health Professions
- 2 Dentistry
- 20 Pharmacy
- 1 Optometry
- 12 Veterinary Medicine
- 257 Agriculture
- 66 Engineering
- 23 Law

Alumni teaching K-12

- 38 teachers
- 17.7% of all district teachers
- 4 principals and administrators
- 20.0% of all district principals and administrators



County breakdown

MU

- 153 students
- 936 alumni
- 219 employees

UMKC

- 12 students
- 56 alumni
- 2 employees

Missouri S&T

- 14 students
- 22 alumni
- 0 employees

UMSL

- 4 students
- 14 alumni
- 0 employees



County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Cooper County



County population: 16,835



County services provided

Health care (FY24)

- 10,738 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$3.3 million of uncompensated care
- 6 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 2,401 visits to 1,422 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

Extension (2023)

- 4,239 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
- 1,284 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
- 1,981 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
- 120 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy

Cooper County



University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

UM System Statewide Footprint

Economic and Community Development Highlights

- In FY23, Business Development Specialists worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide to create or retain 98,527 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 FY18 and FY23, UM System brought Missouri more than \$1.58 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



40,542 police, fire fighters, and medical professionals attending continuing education (2023)



Agriculture and natural resource programs served 369,077 farmers and related businesses (2023)

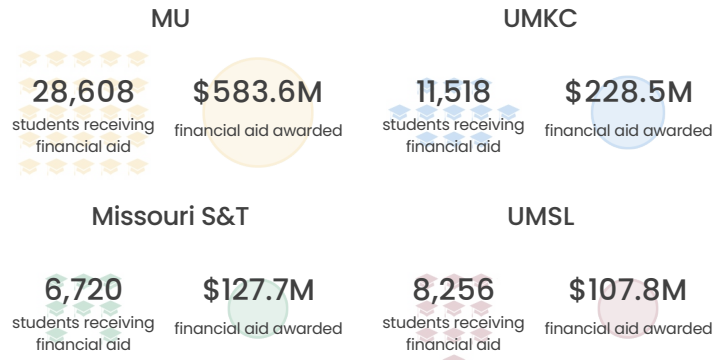


210,577 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2023)

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, part of the UM System Broadband Initiative which helped the statewide build-out of high-speed internet infrastructure.

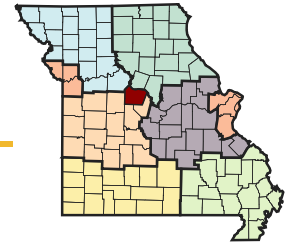
Supporting the University of Missouri is an investment in the future of Missouri.

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



COOPER 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

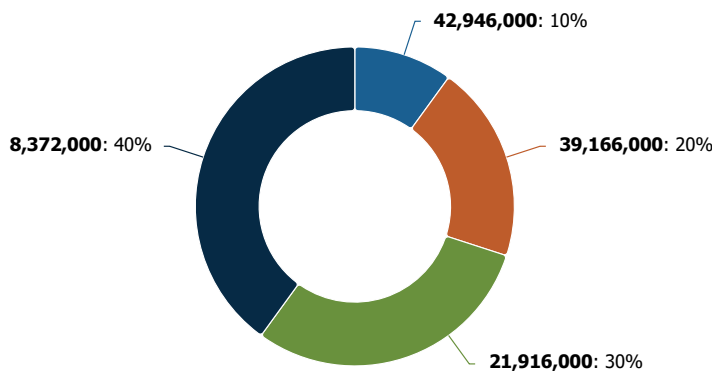
Knowing Local Challenges



CHALLENGE 1: Economic Opportunity: Agricultural Economics

Leading Agricultural Products

Total Rank (Sales): \$10



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 \$52,204,000 in 2017, an average of \$69,328 per farm. This compares favorably to the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Cooper	753	\$69,328
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

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

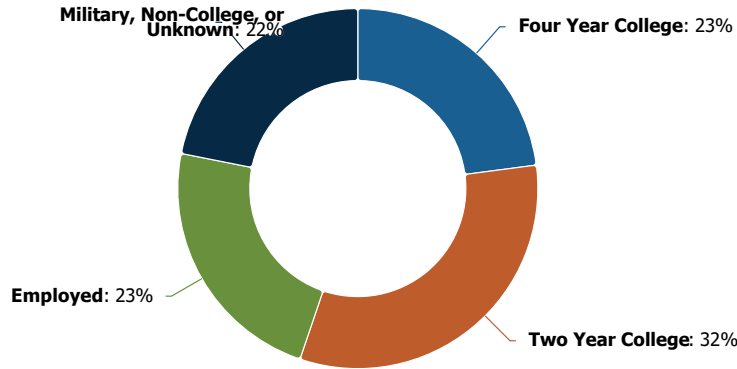
Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, [Census of Agriculture](#). 2022.



CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *College and Career Readiness*

Post High School Report

The 12-month post-graduation activity of recent high school graduates can inform communities about postsecondary education, career readiness, and characteristics of the future workforce. In 2022, of 192 graduates surveyed in the report area, 44 went to a four-year college, 62 to a two-year college, 44 directly entered the job market. The remaining 42 are reported as in the military, not in college, or unknown.



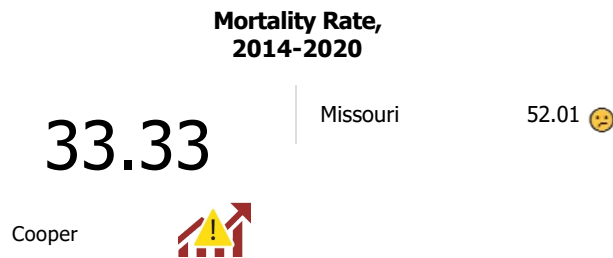
Data Source: [Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education](#). 2022.



CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Mental Health*

Deaths of Despair

Untreated mental health conditions, substance abuse, and stress have caused an epidemic of “deaths of despair” across the United States. Research shows that deaths due to suicide, alcohol-related disease, and drug overdose have caused the first decreases in U.S. life expectancy in the 21st century. Within the report area there were an estimated 42 deaths of despair, or 33.33 deaths per 100,000 population between 2011 and 2017. This rate is lower than the state rate of 52.01 per 100,000, and represents an increase of 2.84% since the 2001-2007 report period.



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [CDC - National Vital Statistics System](#). Accessed via [CDC WONDER](#). 2014-20.

Poor Mental Health Days

Self-reported mental health status is a widely used measure of health-related quality of life. In 2018, adults in the report area averaged of 5.3 mentally unhealthy days per month, which is lower than the state average of 5.3. This measure of mental health status has worsened since 2014, when adults in the report area averaged 4.2 mentally unhealthy days per month.

Average Poor Mental Health Days per Month, 2018



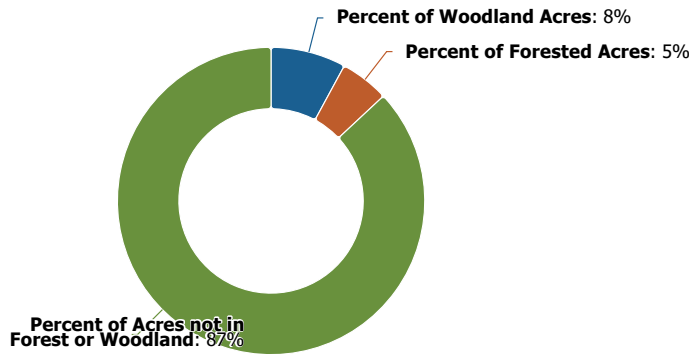
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#). Accessed via [County Health Rankings](#). 2021.



CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: Resource Management

Forested, Woodland & Non-forested Acres

Sustainable management of forests and woodlands and harvesting of mature trees support the state's \$10.3 billion forest products industries. Forests have a closed canopy (>80% cover) permitting little light to penetrate to the ground below. They consist of several overlapping layers of trees, with a mid-story and understory comprising a variety of shade-tolerant shrubs and a sparse layer of soft-stemmed plants. Woodlands have a more open canopy (30-80% cover), and their sparse, woody mid-story allows more sunlight to reach the ground. This light permits the growth of a dense ground cover containing a variety of wildflowers, grasses and sedges. Fire plays a large role in maintaining woodland habitats.

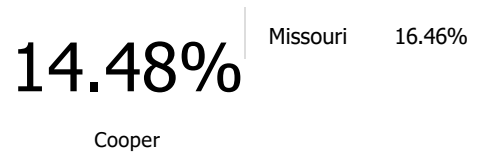


Data Source: Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium, [National Land Cover Database](#).

Rotational Grazing

A planned rotational grazing system allows time for vegetation to rest and recover before being grazed again. In 2017, nearly 16,000 Missouri farms reported practicing rotational or management-intensive grazing. With 11 million acres of row crops and nearly 2 million grazing livestock animals (mainly cattle), Missouri is well suited to capitalize on the grazing potential of cover crops. In addition to generating more income, grazing cover crops can have a positive impact on soil health. Manure, hoof action and the root responses that grazing elicits stimulate soil biological activity and lead to healthier soil and healthier crops.

Percent of Operations Utilizing Rotational Grazing



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



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

Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18



Community clubs are organized by volunteer club leaders and teams of recognized volunteers. Members attend club meetings, elect officers, enroll in projects and plan learning and community service activities. Some clubs opt to be single-project clubs, where all members focus on the same project.



4-H Natural Resources programs employ hands-on activities in climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing and wildlife conservation. The **Shooting Sports program**, which teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting and archery principles, is a prime illustration of how 4-H programs promote holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs offer opportunities to cultivate life skills, self-worth and conservation ethics.



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



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Cooper County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

Caroline Herigon – Youth Program Associate

Cooper County 4-H has provided youth an outlet for learning, personal growth, and adult mentorship opportunities for many years. Through the efforts of the six community clubs, 4-H members have been able to plan and implement community service projects, create community partnerships, and promote the importance of youth leadership.

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement in a positive environment youth receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Youth have the opportunity to concentrate on one focus area, or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience.

Regardless of how youth participate, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

Providing activities such as **4-H Day Camp, MU Good Neighbor Week 4-H Winter Wear Drive, a National 4-H Week Parade Float, 4-H Sundae Funday and the Feeding Missouri Drive**, helps us continue to grow and improve 4-H for youth in Cooper County. Allowing youth to learn through each experience they try will better prepare them for future personal success and adaptability.

Our 197 4-H members enrolled in 2024 were active and engaged both through county and statewide opportunities. From State 4-H Meats Judging, State 4-H Sportfishing SLAM, State 4-H Horse Judging, Move Across Missouri, 4-H Camp Clover Point, State 4-H Fashion Revue, Teen Conference, Citizenship Washington Focus, and State 4-H Public Speaking, Cooper County 4-H members shined with citizenship and leadership exploration.



CooperCounty

Missouri 4-H

Profiles and Stories



Missouri State Fair 4-H Demonstration



4-H Hall of Fame – Janette Pohlman



Outstanding 4-H Club – Family Fun



Frank Graham Award – Volunteer Pat Campbell



4-H Feeding Missouri Grant Teen Leaders – Supply Day



4-H SNAC – Kids in the Kitchen



MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
 through credible statewide programs
Agriculture and Environment



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.



The Missouri Master Gardener program

enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and then apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



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



Missouri Grazing Schools teach management-intensive grazing by dividing large fields into smaller paddocks and systematically rotating livestock among them. Producers who attend the grazing schools learn how to reduce costs through improved livestock grazing and pasture management while getting insights into fencing, watering systems and grazing system design.

The annual impact of management-intensive grazing is estimated to be \$125 MILLION per year in Missouri.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Cooper County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Todd Lorenz, Field Specialist in Agronomy-Missouri sets in a transitional climate zone where we can have the same winters as Michigan and the same summers as Georgia. The impact of 2024 weather extremes were both good and flawed. After almost 3 years of drought in the central Missouri area, spring rains seemed to offset moisture deficiencies in livestock and row crop production. Water sources seemed to replenish, spring forage production was up, and crop producers were optimistic about the year's production. By June, central Missouri was showing no drought, but it was creeping back. By mid to late season, producers were already wanting two more inches of rain to finish filling soybeans. The silver lining was that there was adequate rainfall during the season to produce above average corn yields in much of the area. July and August rainfall was below the 30-year average and temperatures were above average. While soybean yields in the area were an improvement over previous droughty years, a few more late season rains would have improved yield significantly. The USDA Drought Monitor maps show growing season variations across the state (Figure 1). There were areas where rain showers were spotty at best and the maps may not reflect individual locations.

Figure 1: April, August, and November Drought Monitor

Intensity:

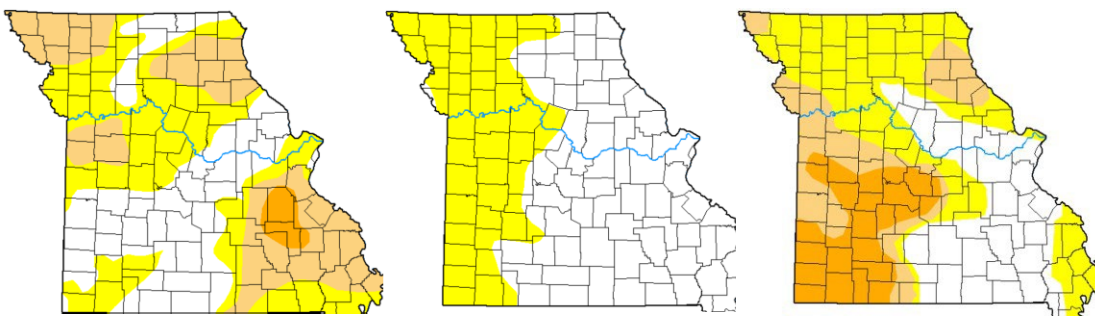


Photo to the right-Nitrate quick tests being conducted from areas of drought stressed crops.



Cooper County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

As a result of our **Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings** crop producers and their advisers will not only be aware of the latest research related to pests and pesticide management but will also learn appropriate techniques of using that information to build efficient integrated pest management systems. The main goal is to improve awareness of aspects of the rapidly changing labels, potential personal injury, environmental degradation, and economic impacts from proper use of pesticides. The goal is to sustain an economically viable crop production industry in Missouri while diminishing potential negative impacts of crop production systems on the environment. This will enhance the economic and social viability of rural and urban Missouri while protecting the environment. #2xAg2030; #ExtendMU

Those who chose to fill out a survey at the Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings in counties that I serve represented over 70,000 acres from in and around central Missouri. Of those reporting, 100% believe Extension educational programs are important in their community. Also, 100% stated that the information provided will make them a better applicator. There were 56 of producers from Cooper who attended the Pesticide Applicator Program this year.

Regional Private Pest Applicator training certifies producers for purchasing restricted use pesticides. Pests limit yields nationally by approximately 30%; safely controlling them using integrated pest management maintains economic value while protecting the environment



Soil testing is utilized by both gardeners and homeowners as well as agriculture forage and livestock production. Any production, from back yard gardens and lawn to full scale agriculture, that is attempted with insufficient information may result in crop failure and wasted money. Through our offices, the University of Missouri Soil Testing Laboratory provide accurate analysis of your soil and provides research-based recommendations on the crop that you are producing. There were 223 of producers from Cooper County who submitted soil samples through our laboratory this year.

Cooper County

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and Stories

Children's Learning Garden 2024 Children's Learning Garden was a huge success with 29 kids signing up this year.

This program is for all area school age students grades kindergarten through 5th grades.

We teach how to grow a garden in the classroom as well as in the garden. In addition, we also teach nutrition, healthy living, working as a team and responsibility. -Eddie Hudson, Boonslick Master Gardeners President

My kids enjoyed taking the vegetables home every week and using them for dinner – A children's learning garden parent 2024

Boonslick Master Gardeners presented Darlene Kraus, former Office Manager of 33 years, with a sign and two decorated flowerpots. From Left to right, Janet Carpenter, Melinda Oswald, Eddie Hudson, Darlene, Jackie Hickam, and Paul Woods. Darlene is now working on becoming a Master Gardener. We all are happy for Darlene and are thankful for her commitment to Extension.



Cooper County

Agriculture and Environment

Gene Schmitz, Livestock Specialist

Twenty producers from 10 Missouri counties and 2 states attended the 2-day **Feedlot School** in Boonville, MO. Participants learned information on the following topics: Why Feed Cattle in Missouri; Feedlot Performance Expectations; Fat Cattle Marketing; MU Extension Feedlot Budgets; Health Management; Beef Handling, Facilities, and Stockmanship; Diet Formulation; Starting Cattle on Feed & Bunk Management; Feeding Technologies; Feed Mixing Demonstration. In addition, two farm tours were held and one industry representative discussed future cattle harvesting facilities in Missouri.



Evaluation comments included the following: Very informative class; Best one I've been to - would recommend to everyone; Great tours, very good speakers/material, good info; Lots of great information.



MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Business and Community**



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.



DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DATA TRAINING

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

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



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

The 2023 conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 FOR BENTON COUNTY.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Cooper County

Business and Community

Local Impact

In celebration of **MU's Good Neighbor Week**, the Cooper County Extension Office and 4-H community rallied together to help those in need. In partnership with the House of Faith Ministries Church, a Winter Wear Drive was hosted at the Boonville Farmers market to benefit local families and the unhoused with essential winter apparel. Community members were kind enough to help us reach an outstanding number of donations which were:

- 100 winter coats
- 22 Blankets
- 50+ Sock pairs
- 28 Scarves
- 50+ Hats
- 41 Glove Pairs
- 100+ Casual winter items
- 15 Shoe Pairs

Our total equals over 400 items donated to this cause. The House of Faith Ministries Community Closet is fulfilling families' and their children's clothing needs completely not-for-profit. It is hosted twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, now at the Cooper County Extension Office. **One family members said, "My children now have all types of winter clothing they could possibly need all winter long, and beyond for this year."** We greatly appreciate all our community members who joined in to support our fellow Cooper County families.



Cooper County

Business and Community

Profiles and Stories

Amie Breshears – Ag Business Specialist

Farm Management – On My Own – Cooper County November 6, 2024

A brand-new offering in 2024, 'Farm Management – On My Own' helped female landowners and operators understand ag leases and farmland values, rental rates, and custom work costs. The program debuted in the spring and summer of 2024 with an in-person class offered in 8 counties in the West Central Region. Because of updated farmland values and rental rates survey data, as well as positive evaluation response, another round of programs, both in-person and online, was offered in the fall of 2024 and will continue into the spring of 2025. I created the program in response to questions I was getting from female landowners about their farmland and farm operations.



By the numbers:

- 64 registrants
- 100% would recommend the program to others
- 3 presenters
- 4 states represented – *Missouri, Florida, Minnesota, Wisconsin*
- 19 Missouri counties represented – *Adair, Benton, Boone, Buchanan, Callaway, Cass, Cedar, Cooper, Douglas, Greene, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Moniteau, Pettis, Polk, St. Clair, Saline, Vernon*
- 11 West Central Region counties represented - *Benton, Cass, Cedar, Cooper, Henry, Johnson, Moniteau, Pettis, Polk, St. Clair, Vernon*
- Partners included *USDA-FSA, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Ag Bankers, MU Center for Regenerative Agriculture*



MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Continuing Education**



The programming from the **MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute** (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 firefighters 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 2023, the basic academy has licensed almost 300 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.



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



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Health and Human Sciences**



Mental Health First Aid equips people to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use challenges.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people (ages 12-17) facing mental health or addiction challenges while the adult version focuses on adults aged 18 and older. Participants learn how to offer initial assistance and guide individuals toward the care they need.

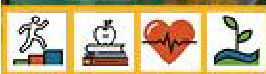
In Missouri, approximately 1 MILLION ADULTS and 72,000 ADOLESCENTS suffer from MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.*

*Missouri Department of Mental Health 2020 Status Report



Building Strong Families

Studies show that people with strong family bonds tend to have lower stress levels. Building Strong Families helps families deal with disagreements, manage stress and show their love for one another.



Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes encourage residents to improve community health by making healthy choices easier and more accessible. Residents design strategies around local needs, assets, and interests.

HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY leaders decided pantry clients needed access to healthier foods. Review of food procurement and display practices led to a new policy allocating **\$1,000** of pantry discretionary spending for **LOW-FAT DAIRY OR FRESH PRODUCE.**

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Cooper County

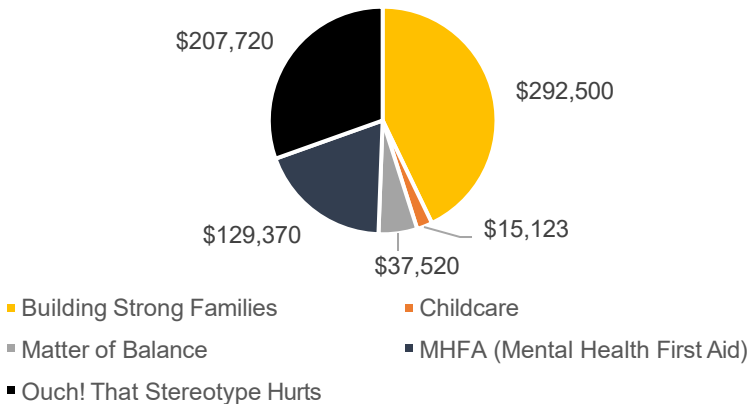
Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

In 2024, a single Building Strong Families session helped a father reconnect with his teenage son after months of conflict. This is just one of the 3,257 lives impacted across Missouri through programs addressing mental health, youth resilience, and family communication, generating an economic impact of over \$682,232. From Saline County youth learning resilience at summer camp to Boone County families strengthening self-esteem, these programs create lasting positive change in Missouri communities. By fostering mental wellness, strengthening families, and empowering youth, these programs create long-term benefits for Missouri communities. Continued support ensures these efforts grow, transforming even more lives in the year ahead.



Economic Impact by Program 2024

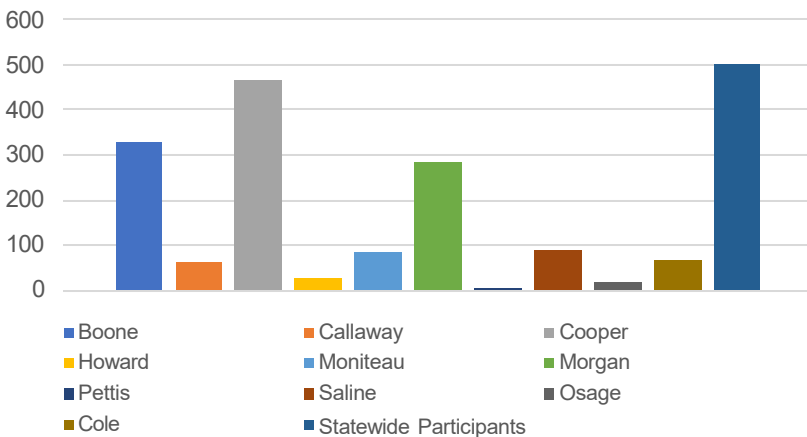


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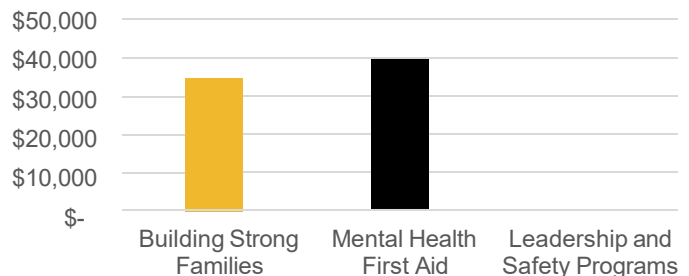
of ag community members accessing teletherapy in 2024 were from Boone, Cooper, Howard, Moniteau, and Morgan counties. Free One-On-One Counseling Build coping skills with confidential counseling from a trusted source who knows ag.

573-882-4677

Participants By County 2024



Economic Impact for Cooper County 2024



Cooper County

Health and Human Sciences

Profiles and Stories

Supporting Families Through Education: Building Strong Families

Tina Edholm delivered the **Building Strong Families** program to **564 participants** statewide, focusing on improving parenting skills. A memorable activity used paper dolls to explore how life experiences, such as bullying or neglect, can harm a child's self-esteem. Participants brainstormed ways to repair self-esteem, such as giving praise and setting achievable goals, symbolized by taping the doll back together.

"This program taught me how to communicate with my teenage son. For the first time in months, we had a calm and meaningful conversation. – *anonymous Building Strong Families Howard County 2024*



"I didn't know I had so many good things about me. This activity made me feel proud of myself."
-third-grader YMCA, Kids and Self-Esteem 2024

Empowering Youth Through Resilience

Across Missouri, **713 youth** developed leadership and life skills through programs like Heit's Point Summer Camp and YMCA activities. A camp counselor noted, *"The kids learned how to work together and express their emotions constructively. It's amazing to see their growth."* These programs not only teach valuable skills but also foster resilience and teamwork, preparing youth for future success.



Promoting Mental Wellness

By equipping 190 participants with skills to recognize and respond to mental health crises, **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** strengthened workplaces and community support systems across Missouri. One participant shared, *"This training gave me the confidence to help someone in need."* These efforts created a ripple effect of resilience and well-being, with an estimated economic impact of **\$32,300**, fostering healthier, more connected communities.

"This training gave me the tools to support a colleague during a mental health emergency. I feel more confident in my ability to help."
– anonymous MHFA participant, Callaway County, 2024



A MATTER OF BALANCE

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

"I didn't realize how much fear of falling was holding me back. Now, I feel ready to enjoy activities I used to avoid."

- anonymous participant, MOB 2024

For older adults, maintaining independence is life-changing. Through A Matter of Balance, participants gained practical tools to reduce fall risks, build strength, and improve confidence. This program not only enhances quality of life but also generates an estimated economic impact of **\$37,520** by reducing fall-related medical costs

Cooper County

Health and Human Sciences

Profiles and Stories

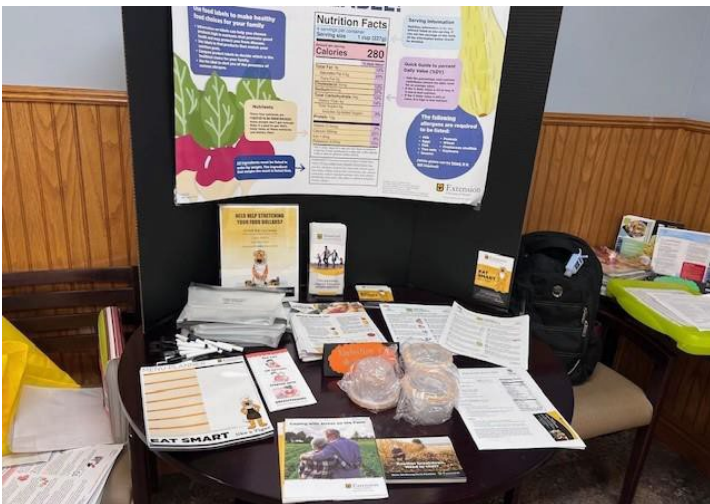
SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2024

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,145,237 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 74,864 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 1,164,143 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline.

2,483 direct and indirect contacts were made in Cooper 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.



Food Label Display at the local health center



Prairie Home First Grade class participating in the SNAP-Ed program

Cooper County

Health and Human Sciences

Profiles and Stories

Alex Freeburger - Nutrition and Health Field Specialist **Stay Strong Stay Healthy**

I have successfully taught multiple Stay Strong Stay Healthy (SSSH) classes.

SSSH is weight training program for older adults, where they can improve their strength, balance, flexibility, and coordination. Roughly 74 individuals across multiple classes/counties have participated in the program.



Cooper County hosted SSSH Level 1 series at the Boonslick YMCA July – August. The course is highly requested to return.



Various Quotes from this program include:

“I enjoyed this class. I feel stronger and more confident to do activities.”

“I learned a lot in this class, and can’t wait join the next one”

“this helped my motivation to lose weight”



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