



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Dent County

# 2024 Annual Report

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**SERVE  
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER  
MIZZOU.**



**Extension**  
*University of Missouri*

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension  
and Engagement  
*University of Missouri*

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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

**SERVE**  
**MISSOURI.**

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**MIZZOU.®**

### Extension Engagement Specialist:

Brandi Richardson

### Specialists:

Eric Meusch - Livestock  
Ray Walden - Community Development  
Stephanie Wofford - Nutrition Program Associate  
Gatlin Buntin - Agronomy, Director at Wurdack  
Extension and Education Center  
Rachel Hopkins - Agriculture Business  
Kate Kammler - Horticulture  
Emily Poncher - Community Health  
Sarah Higgins - Natural Resources  
Julianna Thrasher - Youth Development  
Charles Ellis - Agricultural Systems  
Kevin Crider - Outreach Educator, Natural  
Resources Management

### Office Support Staff:

Janet Brannan - Administrative Support Staff  
Cary Terrill-Steelman - Bookkeeper

## Council members

Tracy Strange, Chairman  
Charlee Sue Jadwin, Vice-chairman  
Krystal Sims, Secretary  
Dalton Sanders, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Burrus-Barnett  
Randy Burrus  
Jodie Dean  
Amy Glenn  
Thom Haines  
Dru Howard  
Heather Johnson  
Curt Murr  
Lyndsey Loughridge  
Kolson Seay  
Carla Tiefenthaler  
Crystal Trospen



## County executives

Gary Larson - Presiding Commissioner  
Gary Polk - District 1 Commissioner  
Wes Mobray - District 2 Commissioner

Angie Curley - County Clerk

# Budget and more

## Appropriations budget

### Income

County Appropriations	40,000
City Appropriations	5,800
Judson-Young Foundation	5,000

**Total Income**                    **50,800**

### Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	29,391.21
Travel	1,956.00
Prog.Exp/Supplies	13,913.04

**Total Expenses**                **45,260.25**

## Dent County Partners

The Dent County Extension Office receives generous support from the University of Missouri, the Dent County Commissioners, the City of Salem, and a grant from the Judson-Young Foundation.

We are grateful for the commitment to our efforts to provide the highest level of service to the residents of Dent County.



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



## Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Dent 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.

# Dent 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.



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)

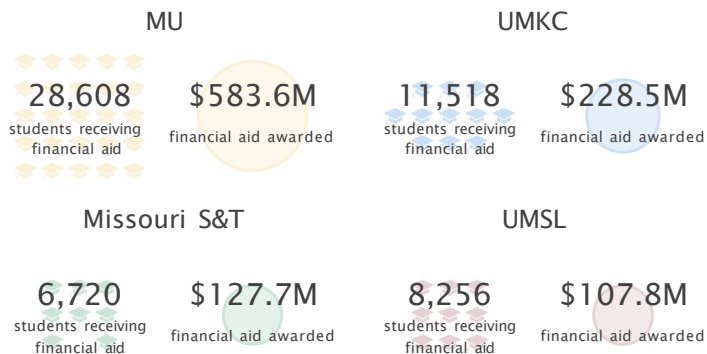


210,577 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2023)

### 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](https://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



# Dent County



## UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



### FY24 county students

**62 students**

- 49 Undergraduates
- 13 Graduate and professional students
- 47 Full-time students
- 15 Part-time students
- 26 Pell grant recipients (aid year 2024)



### County employees and retirees

**58 people employed by UM**

- 53 Campuses
- 3 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)
- 2 UM System

30 UM retirees and beneficiaries

UM salary and retirement income: \$3.0 million

UM state tax revenue: \$104,434

UM federal tax revenue: \$422,702



### County alumni

**Selected school alumni**

- 20 Nursing
- 11 Health Professions
- 2 Dentistry
- 6 Pharmacy
- 4 Veterinary Medicine
- 45 Agriculture
- 67 Engineering
- 7 Law

**Alumni teaching K-12**

- 15 teachers
- 8.6% of all district teachers
- 3 principals and administrators
- 21.4% of all district principals and administrators



### County breakdown

**MU**

- 26 students
- 148 alumni
- 7 employees

**UMKC**

- 0 students
- 16 alumni
- 0 employees

**Missouri S&T**

- 31 students
- 116 alumni
- 45 employees

**UMSL**

- 5 students
- 26 alumni
- 1 employee



County population: 14,506



### County services provided

**Health care (FY24)**

- 668 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$459,595 of uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 626 visits to 364 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

**Extension (2023)**

- 3,404 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
- 606 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
- 2,056 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
- 512 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy



### Construction projects

- \$297,730 remitted to 1 county vendor, for 1 project



### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Dent County

# Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



## DENT COUNTY

### Knowing Missouri's Needs

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

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

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

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



#### Economic opportunity

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



#### Educational access and excellence

Increase participation in postsecondary education from 66% to 70%



#### Health and well-being

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

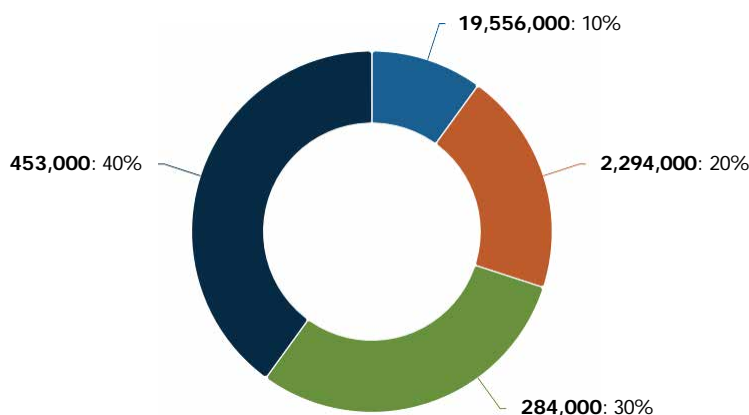
### Knowing Local Challenges



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

### Leading Agricultural Products

Total Rank (Sales): \$10



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

### Net Farm Income

Net farm income (total sales, government payments, and other farm-related income minus total farm expenses) reflects the strength of the local agricultural community and can be an important measure for lenders and policy makers. The report area had a combined net farm income of \$-79,000 in 2017, an average of \$-131 per farm. This is below the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Dent	601	\$-131
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

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

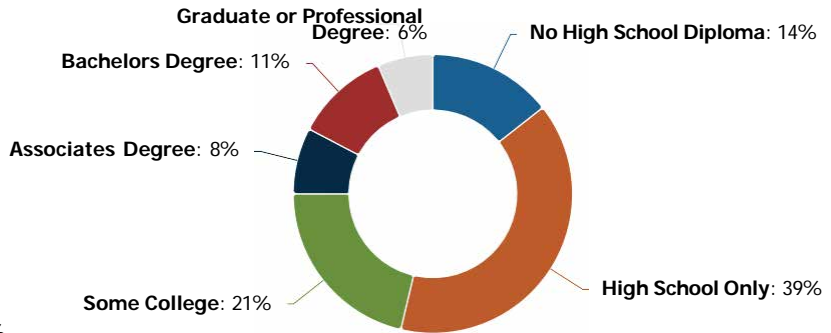


## CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *Educational Attainment*

### Adult Educational Attainment

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

In the report area, 21.3% of adults have at least some college education and 18.6% of adults have an associate's level degree or higher. However, 39.3% stopped their formal educational attainment after completing high school, and 14.4% of adults did not complete high school.



#### No High School Diploma

14.40%

Missouri

8.69%

Dent

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey, 2018-22](#).

Data Source: [US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-22](#).



## 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 70 deaths of despair, or 62.61 deaths per 100,000 population between 2011 and 2017. This rate is higher than the state rate of 52.01 per 100,000, and represents an increase of 48.58% since the 2001-2007 report period.

### 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 5.9 mentally unhealthy days per month, which is higher than the state average of 5.3. This measure of mental health status has worsened since 2014, when adults in the report area averaged 4.6 mentally unhealthy days per month.

#### Average Poor Mental Health Days per Month, 2018

Mortality Rate, 2014-2020  
62.61

Missouri

52.01 😞

Dent



5.9

Missouri

5.3 😞

Dent



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

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





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

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

Report Area	Agriculture	Home and Garden	Community Areas	Research	Total
Dent	514	29	0	0	543
Missouri	13,742	4,773	421	6,406	25,342

Data Source: [University of Missouri Extension Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory Annual Summary, 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.



**Missouri 4-H Agriculture and STEM programs** employ hands-on activities that foster problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking and exploration in engineering and technology. Agriculture programming emphasizes biology, environmental science, agri-science, veterinary science and engaging activities such as animal care and agronomy. STEM programs delve into computer science, robotics, aerospace, physics, chemistry and veterinary science.



### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

### Local Impact

#### Julianna Thrasher, Field Specialist in Youth Development

##### 4-H Youth Development in Dent County

**A community of 239 youth building life skills, contributing to their community, and becoming college and career ready.**

**1 in every 7 Dent County youth under the age of eighteen participated in a MU Extension 4-H Youth Development program in 2024.**

4-H Youth Development programs are guided by the 4-H Thriving Model, which is a framework to illustrate the connection between high quality 4-H programs and indicators of youth thriving with developmental outcomes which ultimately leads to the long-term outcomes of youth who experience academic or vocational success, are civically engaged, are employable and economically stable, and experience happiness and wellbeing.



#### 4-H Members

4-H programs are also grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects 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. Dent County served youth through 4 community clubs and 1 In-school 4-H Clubs offering long-term educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision-making, public speaking, and working with others.

- There were 239 youth reached through community clubs, SPIN clubs, in-school, and afterschool 4-H clubs in Dent County during the 2023-2024 4-H Year.

# Dent County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact

- Over 200 4-H members were engaged in science related projects and experiences.
- Collectively youth participated in 8,404 hours of community club work in Dent County.
- Over 2,103 hours of community service projects were completed by 4-H members and volunteers during the 2023-2024 4-H Year.

4-H members have demonstrated learning through the following activities:

- 633 exhibits at the 2024 Dent County 4-H/FFA Expo from 221 4-H members and FFA members, who are also supported through youth programming.
- Dent County youth exhibited over 15 exhibits in the 4-H Building and livestock shows of the Missouri State Fair.

4-H Clubs offer in-depth educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision making, public speaking, and working with others. Members learn by doing under this guidance of adult volunteers, who lead a wide variety of projects that support 4-H members in finding their SPARK. Club and project leaders also involve youth and teens in community service, leadership opportunities, and educational trips. 4-H project work and related educational experiences help youth explore interests in citizenship, communication, and leadership.

Dent County members enrolled in a combined total of projects in 2024. The top project areas included:

- Beef -52
- Swine-51
- Embryology-48
- Veterinary Science-36
- Cake Decorating- 41

#### Impacts of 4-H Programming

- 4-H members are twice as likely to go college compared to their non 4-H peers and they tend to pursue careers in STEM fields (Lerner & Lerner, 2011).
- 4-H also prepares youth for the workplace. Youth must be prepared to live and work in a world we cannot completely envision- competing for jobs that do not yet exist, using technologies that have yet to be identified. 4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture, life sciences, and social sciences from the university system. This brings relevant science content and hands-on learning that helps youth thrive (Arnold, Bourdeau, & Nott, 2013).

#### 4-H Volunteers

- Dent County 4-H members were supported by 53 enrolled, screened and oriented adult volunteers supporting the development of youth in 2024.
- Volunteers contributed 5,300 hours to the Dent County 4-H program valued at \$168,540.

# Dent County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact

Volunteers participate in development opportunities like project leader training and club leader summits, in addition to ongoing support from MU Extension youth faculty and staff gaining knowledge in how to offer a valuable learning experience for the youth they are working with while maintaining a safe, supportive environment. Volunteers create, support, and are a vital part of the 4-H community. Dedicated volunteers help to organize club meetings, fundraisers and events. They also provide learning opportunities for youth in their projects, teaching life skills and instilling qualities of character like respect and responsibility in members. Adult volunteers serve as mentors for our youth, helping them transition into caring, healthy adults who contribute back to their communities, which is priceless.

#### 4-H School Enrichment- Embryology

- There were 48 students from 3 classrooms who participated in the Hatching Chicks in the Classroom program in 2024.

During the Embryology program, students learn about the 21-day development occurring within a fertilized, incubated egg that can result in the hatching of a chick. Students identify the parts of an egg and discover what each part provides for the developing chick. Students learn how to tell if an egg is raw or boiled and explore the strength of the egg's shell providing protection to the developing chicks. Students review the necessity of hand washing due to potential contamination caused by salmonella in poultry and poultry products. Students often gain experience with death and disabilities. Throughout the experience, students are charged with rotating the eggs three times a day and are responsible for checking to make sure the incubator has water and is maintaining the correct temperature. Once the chicks hatch, the students care for them, providing feed, water, warmth, and a calm environment.

#### Impacts of Programming

Students practice life skills including decision making and responsibility, helping them to develop qualities that will shape their development into adults. Students are provided with the opportunity for a practical experience that connects with the core subjects of communication arts, math, science, and health. Youth with hands-on experience with science are more likely to pursue science-related careers, which are critical to our county, state, national, and global economy. Students are conscious of the need to practice proper hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of illness and disease. Students also learn compassion and develop an understanding of how to accept individuals with disabilities, as well as how disabilities can be compensated for.

#### Resources

Arnold, M., Bourdeau, V., & Nott, B. (2013). Measuring science inquiry skills in youth development programs: The Science Process Skills Inventory, *Journal of Youth Development*, 8(1).

Arnold, M. E. (2018). From Context to Outcomes: A Thriving Model for 4-H Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 6(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.54718/NBNL5438>

Independent Sector. (2023). *Value of Volunteer Time Report | Independent Sector Resources*. Independent Sector. <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

Lerner, R.M., Lerner, J.V. (2011). The positive development of youth: Report of the findings from the first seven years of the *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/>.

U.S. News and World Report (2011). How Higher Education Affects Lifetime Salary. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2011/08/05/how-higher-education-affects-lifetime-salary>



## 2024 AT A GLANCE

- Grazing Schools held in 5 counties taught approximately 110 livestock producers the fundamentals of Management Intensive Grazing. Improved grazing can reduce production costs, provide environmental benefits and improve drought resilience on livestock farms in Missouri.
- Show Me Quality Assurance events held in Dent, Phelps and Crawford Counties trained youth on proper care of livestock. Other youth-oriented activities included Ozark Cattlemen's Beef Day in Salem and the Wurdack Education Day event.
- The Value-Added Meats (VAM) team collaborated with Feedlot School team to develop the Direct Marketing Beef School held in West Plains. VAM also worked through the 2501 Program to conduct a hands-on chicken processing workshop for urban farmers in the St. Louis area



On-farm visits with producers addressing various issues is a key activity that takes place throughout the year.

## KEY SUCCESSSES

- ✓ In the Show Me Select Heifer Development Program the state-wide combined totals for the spring and fall sanctioned sales was 1,352 heifers sold with gross receipts of \$4,490,675.
- ✓ A total of 174 youth in 3 counties received Show Me Quality Assurance training, learning industry standards for food animal care and husbandry. This training is required for youth exhibiting livestock at county fairs and Livestock Expos.
- ✓ Participants in Missouri Grazing schools learned the basics in management intensive grazing, including soil and forage management, grazing system layout, livestock management and infrastructure development..
- ✓ Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers participated in livestock related programs such small-scale chicken processing and farm walk abouts. This was part of the grant funded 2501 Program.



The Value Added Meats team worked with the 2501 and Beginning Farmers Programs to teach poultry processing.

# 2024 Livestock Highlights

## Youth activities



SMQA activities with 4Hers in Crawford County .

- Show Me Quality Assurance (SMQA) training for youth that will be exhibiting livestock was held in Dent, Phelps and Crawford Counties. A total of 174 youth were training during these events.
- Wurdack Extension and Education Center FFA Day included a wide range of demonstrations related to Agriculture and Natural Resources and was attended by 611 students.
- Ozarks Cattlemen's Beef Day is a collaboration between Extension, Cattlemen's Association, FFA and others in the community targeting grade-schoolers in Dent County. 189 4<sup>th</sup> graders attended the 2024 event.

## Grazing Schools

Regional Grazing Schools provide detailed instruction to Missouri livestock producers in the areas of:

- forage and livestock management,
- efficient forage utilization,
- grazing system layout and design
- fencing and water systems.

Grazing schools are over 2 days of classroom work, hands-on field activities and farm visits. I participated in 5 different grazing schools held in Crawford, Texas, Phelps, Carter and Osage Counties, which were attended by approximately 110 producers



A mobile waterer observed on a farm visit during a Grazing School in Texas County .

## Direct Marketing Beef



Beef carcasses sold directly to consumers were evaluated for quality and yield.

A Freezer Beef School was held in West Plains where participants from several counties learned about adding value to cattle by direct marketing beef, cattle finishing, stockmanship and facilities, beef carcass quality and yield, working with processors, beef pricing and marketing.

Follow-up visits with a producer in Reynolds County included carcass evaluation of beeves produced for direct marketing.

# 2024 Livestock Highlights

## Grasslands Partnership

The Grassland Partnership collaborator recruitment and enrollment process was conducted in 2024. This is a 5-year project that MU is implementing with 8 other universities.

Producers that participate in this project will be conducting on-farm trials aimed at improving productivity of grazers in the Fescue belt. Trials will include:

- Improved Grazing Management
- Establishing Warm Season Grasses
- Prescribed burn
- Interseeding Legumes
- Applying Biochar to soils

Five producers have enrollment from Dent, Texas and Phelps Counties.

## Beef Heifer Development



Two quality Crawford County heifers sold through the Show Me Select Heifer sale in Vienna.

The Central Missouri Show-Me-Select Bred Heifer Sale was held at South Central Regional Stockyards in Vienna, MO on May 18<sup>th</sup>. 43 bred heifers sold for a total of \$130,550, averaging \$3,036 per heifer. The state-wide combined totals for the spring and fall sanctioned sales was 1,352 heifers sold with gross receipts of \$4,490,675.

Heifer development workshops were held in Carter and Reynolds counties, teaching strategies and techniques for heifer replacement. This included heifer selection, development and breeding.

## Assisting Socially Disadvantaged & Veteran Farmers

The Missouri Assisting Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (2501 program) works with its target group through several approaches including Team –to–One Coaching, conducting hands-on Learning Circles and Farm WalkABOUTs.

A Forage and Livestock Farm WalkABOUT targeting beginning farmer veterans was held in Phelps County, creating a learning and networking opportunity for veteran farmers.



Cold Spring Farm in Phelps County shares experience in multispecies grazing with fellow veterans.



# Dent County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and Stories

#### Gatlin Bunton- Field Specialist in Agronomy, Director at Wurdack Extension and Education Center

**Integrated Pest Management:** Each year farmers, gardeners and homeowners find that they need information and education on pest management. Weeds, insects and diseases are the primary pest problems. People who have questions about pest management will call or bring in pests to the Extension Center for identification and management options. Pest identification is the first step in developing a management plan. Pest management options are presented for the person to use to make decisions. For farmers and commercial vegetable growers, pest management can be important to profitability. For homeowners, pests may cause aesthetic concerns.

**Soil Testing:** Soil testing provides farmers, gardeners and homeowners information about the fertility of their soil and recommendations on how to fertilize and lime to improve plant growth. Farmers who use soil testing have reported that yields have improved because of using their soil test results. Other farmers have reduced fertilizer inputs due to soil tests showing that fertility levels are already high. Gardeners and homeowners use soil testing to improve fruit and vegetable production or to make their lawn grow better. Soil testing is the first step in making the most of fertilizer application. Extension guides and personal consultations help people understand their soil test reports and how to use the information in the report.

**Private Pesticide Applicator Training:** Farmers who wish to purchase or apply restricted use pesticides must go through training to obtain or renew a private pesticide applicator license. Approximately 10 farmers participated in private pesticide applicator trainings in Dent county in 2024. Farmers who participate in the training learn about pesticide labeling, personal protective equipment, environmental concerns, pesticide mixing and application, principals of pest control and pesticide formulations. The Missouri Department of Agriculture issues private pesticide applicator licenses.

**Farmer Consultations and Site Visits:** Throughout the year farmers need timely answers and advice on various forage, weed management, and agronomic issues. Forage quality assessment was one of the most common reasons for one-on-one consultations in 2024. Weed control was top of mind for many producers throughout the summer. Through site visits, species identification and control method was easily determined.

**Wurdack Grazing School:** Grazing management is important to maintain forage productivity and animal performance. At this event, farmers learned strategies for management intensive grazing, animal husbandry and the economics of grazing. 17 farmers attended the grazing school. Three of these were from Dent County.



# 2024 Summary



Serving Dent, Shannon, Pulaski, Phelps, Crawford, and Texas Counties

## 2024 Update:

Many projects and outreach efforts were completed by the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership Educators this year along with our Elimination Specialists.

End of year numbers of feral hogs removed from the landscape were around 5000. Elimination specialists removed 7,780 feral hogs in 2023. That is a 36.5% decrease in one year.

Aerial operations began again in December which include a helicopter and several drones. The MFHEP staff includes 21 drone pilots. Aerial operations are planned through March with the USDA helicopter, as we have done for the last few years.

In 2024 I contacted several high schools about presenting our MFHEP power point and video for FFA classes. High schools presented to included Rolla, Waynesville, Steelville, and Plato. I also attended SWCD meetings, Farm Bureau, Cattleman's, and County Commissioners. One presentation was given to the Natural Resource Committee of state legislators. Requests for Eminence, Summersville, Winona, Mountain View, Cabool, and Willow Springs High Schools were also submitted.

I also contributed to many ideas for our written publications such as The Hog Herald. Several media and radio interviews were also completed by me in an outreach and education capacity. I spoke to the Salem Rotary Club as well as the Dent County Extension Council. Presentations were given for the Shannon County Extension Council, Pulaski County Extension Council.

One of my primary focus areas in 2024 was the distribution of cooperators signs. We were issued approximately 600 signs as a group, and I have used all of mine. They are posted in Shannon, Dent, Crawford, Pulaski, Phelps, and Texas Counties. Businesses posting our MFHEP signs include MFA, Farm Bureau, Bomgarr's, Family Farm Center, Dicky Bubs, and Walmart.



MFHEP sign posted in Dent County.



MFHEP signs have been accepted for posting at Rolla, Houston, West Plains, and Salem Walmart stores.



Doc and Carla Taylor in Houston are just one of many cooperators that are displaying our signs.

## 2025 Agenda

Plans for this year will be as follows:

- Outreach efforts with high schools in my area for FFA programs.
- Working with landowners that are not currently a part of our program in an effort to expand our private land access.
- Continue updating the county commissioners and SWCD's on our progress.
- Continue outreach efforts utilizing our power point and the new USDA/MDC video.
- Public presentations through media such as print and radio as well as in person.

# Ag Business

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

Rachel Hopkins  
Ag Business Specialist  
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## 2024 AT A GLANCE

- **757** direct contacts in Beef Production Systems.
- **42** Lenders attended 'What Lenders Need to Know in 2025' in Jefferson City. Lenders heard from presenters discussing Market Outlooks, Policy Updates, MASBDA and Farmland Values and Rental Rates.
- **115** attendees at the Farm Tax Workshops held in December, both in-person and online. Rachel presented on Conservation Tax Implications for this workshop.
- **97** mid-Missouri farmers and ranchers attended the Central Missouri Forage & Beef Conference in Maries County.
- **22** local producers attended the Wurdack Producer Field Day in October to hear about local applicable topics.
- **6** attendees at the Succession Planning in Ste. Genevieve
- **66** producers attended three Grazing Schools where Financial Aspects of Grazing were taught.



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

## 1678 DIRECT CONTACTS 3447 INDIRECT CONTACTS



Producer Field Day at Wurdack is a great way to reach local producers. The topic this year was the financial aspects of Native Grass.

## KEY SUCCESSES

- ✓ **Monthly emails** out to subscribers letting them know of upcoming Extension programs in the region.
- ✓ Presented at the **Missouri Livestock Symposium** on the Beef Feeding Profitability Tool, G462.
- ✓ **Rural Safety Day** educates 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in Washington County of hazards they might encounter and thus preventing traumatic injuries.
- ✓ **Tax Workshops** educate participants on timely tax issues and how they can better manage tax liability.
- ✓ **Wurdack FFA Day** provides a learning opportunity for 9<sup>th</sup> graders on different fields in agriculture and exposes them to new ideas and concepts.

# Dent County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and Stories



Teaching about pumpkins, squash, and gourds at the State Women in Ag Conference.

### KEY SUCCESSES

- ✓ Participants in pesticide safety programs increase their knowledge on pesticide handling, safety, restricted use, disposal, contamination, understanding labels, and guides.
- ✓ Plant identification can help determine edibility, control strategies, and possible issues for animals and people.
- ✓ Youth and adults learned about pest versus beneficial insects, and how to identify common insects by playing bug bingo.
- ✓ Participants in the hydroponic workshop learned basic terms, hydroponic systems, problem solving, and growing.
- ✓ Many soil tests results have excess phosphorus and potassium. Provide clients education on “loving” their plants to death—soil tests save clients money and the environment by not over applying fertilizers, manures, composts, & organic matter.

### Kate Kammler

Field Specialist in Horticulture

#### 2024 HORTICULTURE AT A GLANCE

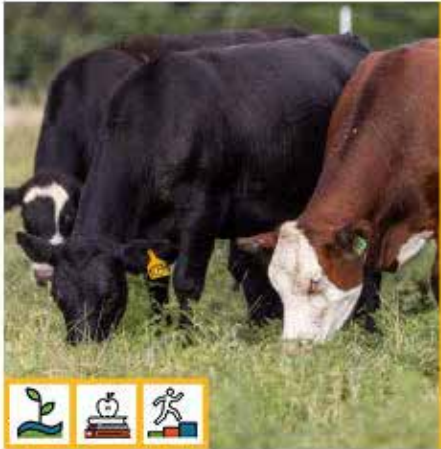
- **1961 direct contacts** through programming where participants are actively engaged in the learning process. Programs included home vegetable gardening, commercial organic specialty crop production, Garden Hour with MU Extension, bug bingo, plant diseases, pumpkin production, weed control, and many more.
- **610 requests** for horticulture information through calls, emails, walk-ins or site visits from **28 counties** and **4 states**.
- **2,310+** subscribers to the monthly Garden Spade newsletter with a **5%** increase in subscriptions during 2024. Topics include insects, weeds, landscape plants, trees, fruit, vegetables and much more.
- **36,700+** views of horticulture MU IPM YouTube videos for commercial producers.



Bug Bingo is a fun way for youth and adults to learn insect identification, pests vs. beneficial insects.

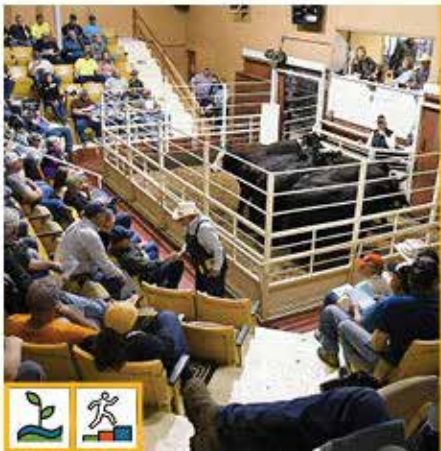


MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Agriculture and Environment**



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

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



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



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



Women make up a growing portion of private forest landowners, and their knowledge and confidence in managing their land is invaluable. **The Women Owning Woodlands program** empowers women landowners to take action to secure the future of their land.

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# 2024 Report

Sarah J. Higgins  
Field Specialist in Natural  
Resources  
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Covering Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Crawford, Dent, Dunklin, Howell, Iron, Jefferson, Madison, Maries, Mississippi, New Madrid, Oregon, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Shannon, St. Francois, Ste Genevieve, Stoddard, Texas, Washington, and Wayne Counties

## 2024 In Review

This year saw the expansion of natural resources programming to many of my counties. I'm happy to report some highlights of 2024:

- Forest Health Field Day in the Shoal Creek Watershed in Crawford County
- Invasive Plant Workshops in Dent and Texas Counties
- Revival of Missouri Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program
  - Monthly virtual Zoom meetings featuring women natural resources professionals connecting with women woodland owners over topics of interest.
- Youth programming: 4-H soil and water experiment and watershed curriculum
- Keep Your Forest in the Family Legacy Workshop

It was great getting to connect with everyone in person and over Zoom. I will continue to offer virtual natural resources programming as it's the best way to reach all my counties. I will also continue to bring in-person programming to more counties as well. Thank you all for your support in 2024.

## Stay Up-to-Date on Natural Resources Programming

Follow our newsletters to receive information monthly about our upcoming programs & learn more about Missouri's natural resources:

### MU Extension Natural Resources Newsletter



[bit.ly/MU-Ext-Natural-Resources](https://bit.ly/MU-Ext-Natural-Resources)

### Women Owning Woodlands Newsletter



[bit.ly/missouri-wow](https://bit.ly/missouri-wow)

## Looking at 2025

Here are a few programs to keep an eye out for in 2025.

- Women Owning Woodlands Monthly Zoom meetings
- WOW Chainsaw Safety Courses
- Invasive Plant Workshops
- Tree identification hikes
- Forest Management field days & tours
- Natural Resources youth programming

Let me know what you'd like to see in your county- looking forward to engaging with everyone in conservation next year!

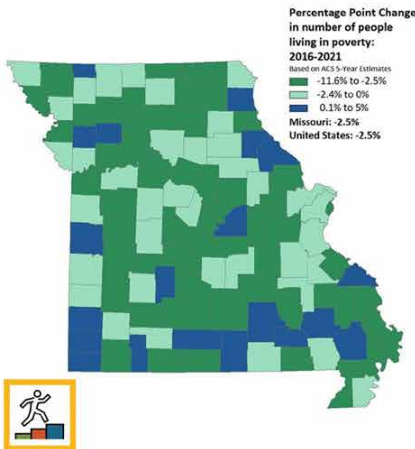


# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Business and Community**



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.**



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

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

**"TAAF funds enhanced our ability to rival our competitors. Now we are proficiently showcasing our American products and feeling stronger in the marketplace."**

**Nancy Montgomery,  
Tacony Manufacturing  
St. James, MO**



The **Mid-America Trade Adjustment Assistance Center (TAAC)** administers TAAF, a program funded of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. TAAF's mission is to boost American manufacturers' ability to compete in a global market, strengthen operations and improve profitability, thereby increasing U.S. jobs. Mid-America TAAC assists manufacturing firms in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

**Mid-America TAAC reported that client sales revenues were more than \$2 BILLION IN 2022.**

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Community Development

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Serving Crawford, Dent, Maries, Phelps, Pulaski, and Washington Counties

## At a Glance

I serve as a Community Development Specialist out of Salem in Dent County and also cover the counties of Crawford, Maries, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington in the East Central Region.

Some of the projects I supported during 2024 included:

- Continue efforts to identify community development priorities and potential partners in support of community development programs and services
- Providing updates on community development programs and formal presentations to county councils and other stakeholders
- Rural Infrastructure Challenge Grant with Missouri S&T
- Multi-State Housing Survey

## Looking at 2025

Plans for 2025 include:

- Continuing efforts with MU Extension's North Central Region Housing Working Group
- Serving as a member of MU Extension's Home Energy Efficiency Contractor Training Grant Team
- Supporting MU Extension's MO Eats initiatives for the HFFI Grant
- Working with communities to identify potential community development related grants

Please contact me with any questions about community development programs or services. I am glad to be serving the East Central Region and look forward to working with your county!



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## BUILDING CIVIC CAPACITY FOR

## THRIVING COMMUNITIES

### What is Civic Capacity?

The collective strength of people in a place to respond to challenges and pursue thriving communities.

### What we do

Experienced community development specialists provide research-based programming and resources to individuals, organizations and local governments based on their unique issues and assets.



### How we do it

Through statewide programming, we empower residents, organizations and governments to build:

#### BELONGING

Building social capital and inclusivity

#### COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Guiding collaborations with diverse community leaders

Engaging residents in civic life and decision-making

Creating conditions for equitable, thriving, resourceful places

#### CONTRIBUTION

#### VITALITY

### Why it's important:

When people feel belonging within the community, they are more likely to contribute to cultivating strong, equitable, prosperous places.

Community-led change is more likely to meet the needs of all residents and make enduring progress toward local vitality.



## Testimonial

"I have learned that my voice is very important, and I am a force to be listened to. I had many ideas but didn't have the courage to pursue all avenues and to make things better for my community, but I now feel that my voice is very important and should be heard."

- Community Development program participant

## Programs and Services

Asset Mapping  
Community Arts Programming  
Community Assessment  
Community Engagement  
Community Planning Support/Coaching  
Community Resource Development  
Facilitation  
Neighborhood and Leadership Classes  
Strategic Doing  
Youth Civic Engagement Programs



## About us

The University of Missouri Extension and the University of Missouri-St. Louis have a history of successful partnerships building capacity for thriving communities.

Contact us to discuss how we can work with you to build civic capacity for YOUR thriving community.

[extension.missouri.edu/topics/community-development](https://extension.missouri.edu/topics/community-development)

# Dent County Impact

## 2024 DENT COUNTY CENTURY FARM

In 1976, the Centennial Farm project was initiated in Missouri, awarding certificates to persons owning farms that had been in the same family for 100 years or more. Ten years later, the University of Missouri Extension and the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources created the annual Century Farm program and recognition. The Missouri Farm Bureau joined as a co-sponsor in 2008. Since the program began in 1976, more than 8,000 Missouri farms have received the Century Farm designation. In Dent County alone, there are over 40 Century Farms—including the recent addition of the Medlock family farm.

Landowners with farms that have been in the same family for 100 years can be recognized with signs, a certificate, and a booklet. The application period for Century Farm status will be open February 1 through May 1 each year. The next application period will be open in February 2025.

One such family that has earned Century Farm status is the Medlock Farm, located near the Current River. The Medlock Farm was homesteaded, which means that back in the 1800s, Penny Felkner's great, great, great grandfather Nathaniel Medlock applied for 40 acres of land. He settled on and farmed the land for a period of at least five years, making the land his own through hard work and successfully earning the rights to the property. Felkner shared that several of her grandfathers' neighbors had century farms with the Century Farm signs gifted by MU Extension. After her father suffered a stroke last year, she felt getting the Century Farm designation was a priority—she wanted her father and uncle to know that she had done it.

The application process wasn't hard, said Felkner. Finding the information, including the deeds and records, was the hard part. The farm has since been passed down from Nathaniel to Felkner's great, great grandfather, and then from family member to family member, sometimes purchased and sometimes passed down, until finally being passed on to Felkner's father and uncle. As her father and uncle aged, they put their own children's names on the deed to keep the property in the family. "I'm just proud that it's been in our family for so many generations after my great, great, great grandfather homesteaded it," Felkner shared. "There's so many farms that have been sold, so I'm thankful that we were able to keep it and continue to use it. Felkner shared that the farm is dear to her heart. She remembers going to the property with her grandfather, who always said that he wanted to keep the farm in the family. "It's special to me that it's been passed down," Felkner said.

The last person that lived on the farm was Felkner's great, great grandfather. In the past, the farm was used for cattle and growing vegetables, like corn and potatoes. Right now, the farm is currently used to bail and sell hay. A significant part of the farm's history was that a long time ago when they were logging near Montauk, the road that goes through the Medlock farm was used to transport those logs. While transporting logs through the property, crew members would spend the night, as it would often take days to get to the sawmill where the logs were needed. As far as plans go to continue the legacy for future generations, Felkner shared that the plan is to continue passing it on for their family to enjoy.

"My kids go down there whenever they can," Felker shared, stating that her kids and family hunt on the property from time to time to this day.



Story edited from The Salem News article, Nick Stogdill reporting. Photo Credit: Janet Brannan

# Dent County Impact

## Ozarks Cattleman's Beef Days: A Long-Standing Dent County Tradition

For over 20 years, Ozarks Cattleman's Beef Days has been a celebrated tradition in Dent County, offering youth the chance to learn about agriculture and its importance in daily life. Held annually in September at the Dent County Commons—apart from a brief pause during the Covid pandemic—the event remains a highlight for local fourth-grade students.

This year, 185 students from Dent County schools, and Bunker participated in the event. Sponsored by the Dent/Phelps Cattlemen's Association and numerous donors in the community, in partnership with Extension and the Salem High School FFA program, and other agencies, the day featured a variety of educational activities focusing on agriculture, natural resources and rural safety.

Students rotated through engaging sessions around the livestock arena, learning about farm animals, farm safety, tractor safety, and firearms safety through interactive presentations by FFA members and guest speakers. Additional presentations were given by the Missouri Beef Industry Council, Pioneer Forest, Intercounty Electric, and the Feral Hog Program. Livestock demonstrations—led by FFA students—highlighted cattle, dairy hogs, goats, horses, and poultry, which proved to be a favorite among the kids.

"With so many kids and volunteers involved, Beef Days is a big event to put on" said Eric Meusch, Field Specialist in Livestock with MU Extension. "It's only possible because of the support of the community and all the volunteers. The Salem High School FFA always deserves a lot of credit for how successful this event has become."

Lunch, prepared by the Dent/Phelps Cattlemen's Association with supplies and donations from local business and supporters, featured grilled hamburgers and hot dogs served by volunteers to students, teachers, and attendees. Afterward, everyone gathered at the show ring for the coloring contest awards before students boarded their buses to return to school.

Beef Day continues to provide a unique opportunity for hands-on learning in a fun and interactive environment, making agriculture accessible and exciting for the next generation.



# Dent County Impact

## Ozarks Cattleman's Beef Days: A Long-Standing Dent County Tradition



# Dent County Impact

## The Dent County 4-H/FFA Expo: A Celebration of Community and Hard Work

Few events bring a community together like the Dent County 4-H/FFA Expo. This cherished annual gathering is the culmination of months of hard work by local youth, parents, volunteers, Extension staff, Salem High FFA, 4-H club leaders, and the Junior Livestock Committee. By mid-July, the Dent County Commons is abuzz with activity. Trucks and trailers roll in, carrying animals, equipment, and eager exhibitors. Salem High FFA members take the lead in transforming the space, setting up pens, stalls, and show rings to create a venue ready for crowds and countless exhibits.

### A Sweet Start: The Dessert Auction

The Expo officially kicks off Wednesday evening with the dessert auction, a highlight of the week. Inside the Community Building, visitors marvel at the array of 4-H and FFA projects—photography, woodworking, cured meats, welding, and more. The creativity and talent on display are a testament to the dedication of our local youth. And then there's the dessert table. Piled high with homemade cakes, cookies, pies, candies, and breads, it's a feast for both the eyes and taste buds. As auctioneers Brad Jadwin, Bill Shafer, and Tom Wulff take the stage, wallets open wide, and the bidding gets competitive. By the end of the night, the community raised an impressive \$14,375 to support the Expo.

### Inclusivity Shines: The Pig Pal Event

Thursday brings one of the Expo's most heartwarming moments: the Pig Pal event. Designed for children with disabilities, this exhibition pairs participants with experienced exhibitors to show pigs in the arena. It's a beautiful reminder of the inclusivity and spirit of 4-H and FFA, creating opportunities for everyone to shine.

### Showmanship and Fun

On Friday, the energy ramps up as exhibitors prepare their animals for the show ring. Each group steps into the spotlight, showcasing their animals' best qualities with pride and precision. That evening, the buyers' dinner offers a chance to relax and celebrate before the hilarity of Adult Showmanship begins. In this lighthearted event, adults take their turn in the show ring while kids judge their performance, flipping the script in a fun, crowd-pleasing way.

### A Day of Giving

Saturday marks the grand finale: auction day. Exhibitors walk into the ring, hoping to hear big numbers as their hard work is rewarded. This year's auction held a special moment of generosity. A donated hog was auctioned off multiple times, raising over \$40,000 for Jeff Eaton and his family to assist with medical expenses. The spirit of giving and support from the community was truly remarkable.

### A True Community Effort

The Dent County 4-H/FFA Expo is more than just an event—it's a celebration of hard work, dedication, and the power of community. From the exhibitors and volunteers to the families and supporters who pack the stands, everyone plays a role in its success. We applaud the youth who pour their hearts into their projects, the volunteers who work tirelessly behind the scenes, and the community members who show up, cheer, and give generously. Together, they make the Expo a shining example of what can be accomplished when a community comes together.

Expo in numbers- 633 Exhibits    Overall Sales Total- \$356,077.07

# Dent County Impact

## 2024 Expo in Pictures



Photos taken by Donald Dodd from The Salem News, used with permission

## Leaders Honor Roll

The Leaders Honor Roll recognizes outstanding leaders and volunteers who have helped to advance the work of MU Extension in their communities. In 2024, the Dent County Extension Council chose to recognize Sharon and Bill Schafer for their decades of volunteer work in our community. Sharon was a 4-H club leader for over 40 years and teacher at Green Forest Elementary School, and Bill has helped more times than we can count with 4-H and at the Expo, serving as an auctioneer in the show ring and the dessert auction. Both have watched generations of Dent Counties kids grow up before their eyes, and in many cases, have watched those kids raise kids of their own.

Selection for the Honor Roll is based on community leadership efforts supporting MU Extension's efforts to enhance economic viability, build strong individuals, families and communities, and create and sustain healthy environments. Each fall, extension and engagement specialists work with their county faculty and staff to identify two outstanding individuals or couples for recognition. The Schafer's were recognized at the annual banquet of the Dent County Extension Council held in February.





# Dent County Impact

## 2024 DENT COUNTY FARM FAMILY

Willie and Stephanie Strader and family of Salem were among the families honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 12 at the Missouri State Fair.

The Strader family was selected as the Dent County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Dent County and the local Farm Bureau. The family includes their son Brady, and daughter Preslie. They live on the family farm in Gladden, which has been in the family since the early 1900's.

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 Strader family has a cow/calf operation, and they also raise show lambs. Preslie shows lambs competitively at the state and national level. Even though Brady no longer lives at home, when he comes back to visit, he's thrown right back into the thick of things.

When asked how the Dent County community has impacted them, Stephanie replied "Dent County is home and whether it's a phone call to the vet's office, the feed store or so and so down the road, they're always going to pick up the phone and be willing to help. Both of our kids were involved in 4h and FFA and showed livestock each year at the Expo and the support that Dent County continues to give year after year, always leaves us speechless."

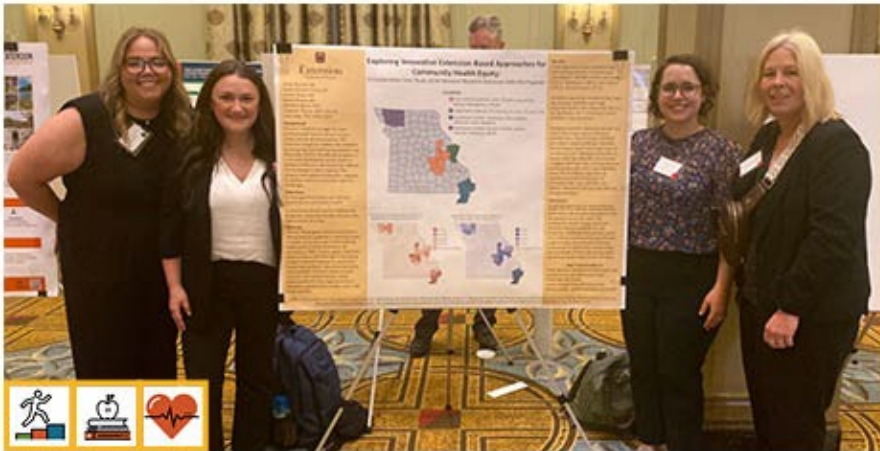
The annual event is sponsored by five partner agencies: the Missouri Farm Bureau; the Missouri Department of Agriculture; the Missouri State Fair Commissioners; the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and MU Extension.

The event showcases the impact that Missouri farm families have on the economy and heritage of the state, said Missouri State Fair Director Jason Moore. "These families are involved in agriculture activities in their communities and are active participants in local outreach and extension. As the premier showcase for Missouri agriculture, the Missouri State Fair is most certainly the appropriate place to celebrate these families."





# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Community and Professional Health Education**



The **Missouri Research-Extension (MO-RE)** Protocol emphasizes the role of Community Health Field Specialists in transforming health and well-being across the state. Following a comprehensive county health needs assessment, each specialist is sharing their findings with partners, stakeholders and organizations in their regions to address the identified priorities.



**Rural Immersion Program** is an opportunity for medical students interested in rural practice to gain experience in the rewards and challenges of working and living in a rural community, examining rural health disparities and quality of life concerns within a specific region. Group activities and meetings with community leaders in business, government, education, health care and natural resources give students a preview of life in a rural area. The 2024 program was hosted by Union, Mo. and the 2025 host city will be Hayti, Mo.

**All of the 2024 participants agreed that the Rural Immersion Program significantly contributed to them **FORMING INSIGHTS** on the suitability of living and working in a rural community, both personally and professionally.**



Resilience is the capacity to adapt when faced with adversity. **WeCanPROSPER Resilience Training** is a 2.5 hour training for participants to evaluate their personal resilience, tap into resources and create an action plan to enhance their resilience. Upon completing the training, participants can attend a facilitator session, enabling them to deliver the content within their communities and strengthen resilience within their networks.

**100% of participants indicate that the skills and techniques they learned will help them become **MORE RESILIENT.****

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# Dent County

## Community and Professional Health Education

### Local Impact

#### Emily Poncher – Community Health Specialist

[emilyponcher@missouri.edu](mailto:emilyponcher@missouri.edu)

Serving Crawford, Dent, Franklin, Gasconade, Maries, Montgomery, and Phelps Counties

### 2024 AT A GLANCE

Hello all! 2024 was an eventful year for myself as a Community Health Specialist, as well as the Community Health Engagement and Outreach team. The year was filled with many successes and growth within the communities we serve across the state.

- I completed a Community Health Needs Assessment for the seven counties I cover. This included a Community Voice Survey, in which I collected 87 responses from community members living and working within these seven counties.
- Upon the completion of the Missouri Research-Extension (MO-RE) program with Dr. Julie Kapp, I identified health priority areas in which I will focus my work as a specialist. These priorities fall into three categories: a chronic disease, an emerging disease, and a cancer.

**Chronic Disease:** Heart Disease

**Emerging Disease:** Substance Use Disorder

**Cancer:** Lung Cancer

- In the fall, the Community Health Engagement and Outreach department aligned with Health and Human Sciences. I am eager to use this opportunity to collaborate more closely with my Nutrition and Health and Human Development and Family Sciences counterparts.



Presenting our research poster at the National Health Outreach Conference in SC

### KEY SUCCESSES

- ✓ Attended Youth Vaping Community Conversations virtual recap that reviewed youth vaping data from Dent County and surrounding counties
- ✓ Shared about local community health efforts through KSMO Radio interview in Salem
- ✓ Facilitated 5 WeCanProsper Resilience Trainings to over 40 participants region-wide
- ✓ Presented a research poster, "Exploring Innovative Extension-Based Approaches for Community Health Equity: A Comparative Case Study of the Missouri Research-Extension (MO-RE) Program," at the National Health Outreach Conference in Greenville, South Carolina with 3 fellow Community Health Specialists
- ✓ Presented needs assessment findings to several internal and external stakeholders to leverage local partnerships and resources



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



**A Matter of Balance** helps older adults overcome their fear of falling, increase their activity levels and reduce their risk of falls. In eight classes, participants learn fall-prevention strategies, develop personal prevention plans, acquire balance-improving exercises and make lifestyle changes to minimize their fear of falling.

**“I have cleaned my house of clutter for safety, put non-slip stickers on my tub floor, I’m getting much more regular exercise and I’m feeling stronger.”**



**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



**Show-Me Nutrition**

*Programming for preschool through junior high*

An engaging way to demonstrate the benefits of food safety, nutrition and physical activity. Meets Missouri’s Show-Me Health and Physical Education standards and the state’s School Wellness Policy.

**“We have struggled with our daughter’s picky eating for years and have tried so many techniques to try and get her to eat new foods. Your influence on her has worked magic this year. She has come home so excited about trying new foods and has now become not only willing but excited to try new things.”**

**Parent of a Show-Me Nutrition participant**

**Legend**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# Dent County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact



### **Nutrition Program Associate Stephanie Wofford**

#### **2024 SNAP-Ed Annual Report for Dent County**

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 this year we had 1,164,143 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline. There were 6,807 direct and indirect contacts made in Dent 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.

**From Stephanie-** While grocery shopping the other day, I ran into a little girl from one of the Show Me Nutrition classes where I am currently teaching. She was with her little sister and her dad, and she was excited to see me. During our conversation, her dad piped up and said, "Wait a minute...so you're the one that has her harping on us to buy healthier food?" I smiled and said I was the one discussing MyPlate with them at school and hoped I was getting through. He showed me that they had picked up some healthy items in the cart and she had "approved" of them. I smiled at her and told her she was doing a great job! She said she thinks she may want to do what I do when she grows up. This child was a youth in a 4th grade classroom where I taught 7 sessions from Choosing Foods For Me curricula.

This is one of many success stories for Dent County, which is the result of Stephanie's hard work and dedication.