

LSU AgCenter Ascension Parish Profile

Report to Stakeholders October 2023



ABOUT THE LSU AGCENTER

The LSU AgCenter is dedicated to providing innovative research, information and education to improve people's lives. Working in a statewide network of parish extension offices, research stations and academic departments, the LSU AgCenter helps Louisiana citizens make the best use of natural resources, protect the environment, enhance agricultural enterprises, and develop human and community resources.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

4-H Youth Development

The Ascension 4-H program focuses on leadership development for youth, volunteer management, & enriching the lives of youth through age-appropriate competitions, project workshops, community service, activities, livestock programs, overnight camps, outdoor skills training, & identifying the knowledge, skills, & competencies essential to conducting 4-H youth development.

Based on the need identified by stakeholders to increase communication and social competences, the 2022-23 educational focus was a series of six teamwork and communication lessons that were conducted throughout 4-H club meetings in schools. Each lesson included simple, hands-on activities which allowed students to demonstrate communication and teamwork skills and followed the experiential learning model.

Ascension 4-H had 9 youth qualify and compete in National Shooting Sports events in the summer of 2022. Our State winning BB team, along with their 2 coaches, traveled to Rogers, Arkansas to compete for the first time in several years. One of our air rifle competitors placed 2nd at state and went on to place 1st at Nationals in Grand Island, Nebraska. Overall, the Louisiana shooting sports teams placed 2nd in the National Sweepstakes Competition. The Ascension 4-H Shooting Sports program is the largest Ascension 4-H project club. It offers youth the opportunity to learn about teamwork, sportsmanship, dedication, and firearm safety, among other life skills.

Not only does the Ascension 4-H program educate youth and open their eyes to opportunities, but it also provides chances for community service. The 2022-23 service-learning focus was *Today's Readers, Tomorrow's Leaders!* Students collected gently used books, made Holiday bookmarks to provide to Elementary students in hopes of encouraging reading, delivered 100+ St. Patrick's Day Cards to an assisted living facility, and more! Last year's "Mental Health Matters" service efforts received 1st Place State Service-Learning Project from Louisiana 4-H.



Carver Students Planting Seeds

ASCENSION EXTENSION OFFICE

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PROGRAMS

4-H and Youth Development

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Animal Production

Horticulture/Lawn and Garden

Pest Management

Sugarcane/Soybeans

Nutrition and Health & MORE

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED:

Agriculture and Natural Resources

In 2022, the value of Agriculture and Natural Resources for Ascension Parish topped 52 million dollars. The parish has a diverse agriculture-related base which includes sugarcane, soybeans, livestock, and nursery crops, with sugarcane being the most valuable commodity. Throughout the year clientele gain knowledge through meetings, field days, workshops, demonstrations, and farm and home visits.

Master Gardener Program

There are currently 56 active, trained Master Gardeners in Ascension Parish that serve as volunteers assisting LSU AgCenter agents with outreach efforts to help meet educational needs in consumer horticulture. Programs include environmental improvement activities, community and school garden programs, and public horticultural events. Some recent activities of the Ascension Master Gardeners include the library lecture series, Kidz Kove park flower bed maintenance, Lamar Dixon bluebird trial, Veterans Park landscaping, and a demonstration garden. In 2022, Ascension Master Gardeners logged over 1,597 volunteer hours and 543 continuing education hours resulting in 7,378 public contacts.

WHOM DO WE REACH:

3360 youth; 17,752 Mass & Social Media

1,454 enrolled in 34 school clubs and 5 project clubs,
1706 school enrichment, 200 nutrition education, 164 ANR

7,552 adults

7,212 agriculture and natural resources, 250 nutrition education,
90 4-H youth development

HOW WE REACH THEM:

4-H Clubs, school enrichment, field days, publications, newsletters, meetings, class series, website, social media, demonstrations, farm & home visits, and workshops.

PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, fishery, wildlife, and animal enterprises to Ascension Parish residents. The total dollar amount from these commodities was:

Animal enterprises, \$13,436,548
Plant enterprises, \$38,782,459

Fisheries and Wildlife, \$33,212

Data from U.S. Census

Population under 18 years old- 26.6%
Land area (square miles)- 289.97
Median household income- \$86,256

Population- 130,458
Persons 65 yrs. old & over- 12.9%
Persons below poverty- 11.4%

LOCAL ISSUES AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR:

Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.

- Hold a recertification meeting for private pesticide applicators.
- Conduct educational sugarcane and soybean field days and meetings.
- Work with local cattlemen's associations to educate producers.
- Conduct farm and home educational visits.

Promote and grow the Master Gardener Program.

- Support teachers and youth through school garden program.
- Continue popular Master Gardener library lecture series each spring and fall.
- Work to maintain the landscape beds and fruit and vegetable demonstration gardens at Lamar Dixon Expo Center.

Build leaders and good citizens through 4-H Youth Development.

- Develop and implement service-learning projects throughout the parish
- Present hands-on educational lessons on topics that would benefit youth in everyday life circumstances.
- Identify and recruit to increase the base of well-trained, screened, and supportive individuals to expand the capacity of the 4-H program.



HOW IS EXTENSION FUNDED?

- Federal funding from the USDA/NIFA.
- State general funds from the Louisiana Legislature.
- Local support from parish government, including police juries and school boards.
- Self-generated funds.



WHAT ROLE DO YOU PLAY?

Our stakeholders at the parish level are the local supporters and beneficiaries of the LSU AgCenter cooperative extension programs. Their support keeps these critical programs in their communities.



EACH PARISH OFFERS PROGRAMMING IN:

- 4-H and Youth Development.
- Agriculture and Natural Resources.
- Family and Consumer Sciences.



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:

www.LSUAgCenter.com