

# LSU AgCenter Vernon Parish Profile

Report to Stakeholders January 2025



## 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 Vernon Parish 4-H program has 32 traditional clubs for 9 to 19 year olds. 4-H is a traditional agriculture and family-based program that teaches youth necessary life skills. Some of these include personal development, decision making, communication, economic development, citizenship/service learning and leadership. They are taught through club meetings, camps, workshops, contests, and social activities. In addition to traditional clubs 4-H is also offered at Ft. Johnson Military Installation. Members can join the 4-H livestock club, Vernon Parish Shooting Sports and the Teen Leader Club. Vernon Parish also continues to have one of the larger enrollments in the state.

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

LSU AgCenter Extension service provides support to the citizens of Vernon Parish through home visits, soil sample testing, pesticide classes and education. Plant enterprise is the overall leader which includes Forestry, home gardens, hay, vegetables, nursery crops, and fruits. Forestry is the biggest category in our parish for gross farm value. Forestry Enterprise Production in Vernon Parish has a gross farm value of 77,704,303 dollars per year. This includes many types of wood such as pulpwood, pine, chip, saw, and hardwoods. Animal Enterprises Production is second in Vernon Parish and has a gross farm value of \$24,384,931 and includes cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine and exotic animals.

### Nutrition and Community Health

Nutrition and Community Health agents and educators are improving the overall health of residents by helping to reduce chronic diseases which are related to poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles and improving the health outcomes in which Louisiana has traditionally ranked so low. In Vernon Parish, the food and nutrition score is 40/100, indicating a significant need for improved access to healthy food options and better nutrition education. Vernon Nutrition and Community Health Programs include Flavors of Health and SNAP-Ed. Nutrition education offered through in-person classes as well as social and traditional media. Through a partnership with WIC, "Together Tuesday," a monthly resource fair, is hosted at the Vernon Parish Health Unit. New colorful stencils have been painted at Dogwood Park, Vernon Middle School and the library, encouraging physical activity. There is now a permanent StoryWalk signage at Dogwood Park, which includes a survey for a free book at the LSU AgCenter office.



## PROGRAMS

### 4-H and Youth Development

- Teen & Youth Development
- Leadership & Citizenship
- Shooting Sports program

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Wildlife & Fisheries.
- Beef Cattle.
- Horticulture/Lawn and Garden.
- Pest Management.
- Forestry

### Nutrition and Community Health (NCH)

- Healthy Communities
- Flavors of Health
- SNAP- Ed

### Vernon Extension Office

201 South Third Street,  
Leesville, LA 71446  
Phone: 337-239-3231  
Monday- Friday 8:00A.M – 4:30P.M.

**Email:** [vernon@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:vernon@agcenter.lsu.edu)

**Website:** [www.LSUAgCenter.com](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com) or  
[www.LSUAgCenter.com/Vernon](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com/Vernon)

### Social Media:

**Like us on Facebook @Vernon Parish**

**4-H Club:**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064804387902>

**Vernon Parish Nutrition:**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067040733629>

**Parish Chair & 4-H Youth**

**Development:** Chad Hagan

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### Additional Contacts:

**4-H Youth Development:**

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**Nutrition & Community Health Agent:**

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**Forestry & Wildlife Area**

**Extension Agent:**

Robbie Hutchins

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**Vernon Parish**

**Administrative Coordinator:**

Ashley Midkiff

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## WHOM WE REACH:

6,192 youth (includes 1,115 4-H members and 36 school 4-H Clubs)  
2,000 adults (through agriculture and natural resources, pesticide classes, landowner visits and through Nutrition and Community Health).

## HOW WE REACH THEM:

4-H Clubs, school enrichment, field days, publications, coalition meetings, newsletters, class series, website, social media and demonstrations.

## EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS:

190 volunteers from 4-H, Livestock Club, family and community.

## PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on Forestry and Plant enterprises, Fisheries & Wildlife enterprises, and animal enterprises to Vernon Parish residents. The total dollar amount from these commodities were: Forestry & Plant enterprises - \$83,278,796; Animal enterprises, \$24,384,931; Fisheries & Wildlife Enterprises - \$275,791. Land area — 1,326.72 square miles; Population — 46,250; Population under 18 years old — 25.4%; Population 65 years old and over — 14.4%; Median household income— \$58,281 Persons below poverty — 16.7%

## LOCAL ISSUES AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR:

### ***Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.***

- Conduct farm and home educational visits.
- Share news columns, webpage content and seminars on agriculture practices.
- Distribute literature and gardening information.
- Increase Agriculture awareness parish wide

### ***Promote the wide use of natural resources and protection of the environment.***

- Before and after hurricane and storm information
- Conduct private pesticide classes
- Provide and discuss soil sample kits and results
- Distribute Horticulture hints and Gardening guides locally

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

- Develop and implement service-learning projects throughout the parish.
- Enhance adult and youth volunteer programs through recruiting, training and recognition.
- Teen Leaders will work with CASA, character education projects to promote youth development activities.

### ***Strengthen families and communities***

- Implement nutrition programs that promote healthier lifestyles by improving dietary choices and increasing physical activity among youth and adults, leading to sustainable behavior changes.
- Provide training on food safety and healthy lifestyle changes to improve overall well-being.
- Enhance school gardens and support the Farm to School program in local education institutions.



## 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.
- Nutrition and Community Health



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:  
[www.LSUAgCenter.com](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com)