

LSU AgCenter St. Mary 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

Nutrition and Community Health

Our goal is to improve health in St. Mary Parish by creating community-led and sustainable initiatives to reduce food insecurity and increase access to safe physical activity. This is addressed through comprehensive healthy living education and healthy communities projects. The objectives are to have adults and youth increase their knowledge of nutrition and physical activity, understand the importance of time spent in physical activity and increase fruit and vegetable intake. The program strives to engage every sense in the learning process with hands-on activities and food tastings included in each series of lessons.

4-H Youth Development

Through non-formal, research-based, experiential education activities, 4-H participants gain knowledge and life skills enabling them to become positive, productive, capable and compassionate members of their communities. Youth from most schools in St. Mary Parish participate in different activities during the school year. In the summer, many have the opportunity to attend state-wide events. 4-H is more than raising animals. 4-H provides different opportunities for everyone.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Economic sustainability is critical to both row crop agriculture and the seafood industry, generating a combined value of \$112 million for St. Mary Parish. Sugarcane is the primary crop, grown on 47,000 acres. Two of Louisiana's eleven sugar mills are in St. Mary Parish, contributing to the two million tons of sugar produced by our state. The LSU AgCenter supports the sustainable production of sugarcane through conducting production meetings, field days, farm visits, and facilitating private pesticide applicator and prescribed burn manager certifications. Producers and LSU AgCenter researchers explore value-added alternatives that will help maintain the viability and productivity of the seafood industry in the parish. Environmental challenges, such as clean air and water, as well as the continued erosion of coastal habitats, persist as areas of concern. The fisheries program is emphasizing the natural resources of the Atchafalaya River Basin and coastal and marine fisheries, particularly crab and shrimp, with a particular focus on the education of Anglo and Asian-American clientele for the purpose of leadership development to help sustain the natural resource base.

PROGRAMS

4-H and Youth Development

- Shooting Sports
- Coastal Club
- Arts and Crafts Club
- Livestock Program
- Operation Cook Club
- Jr. Leadership Program
- Educational In-School Lessons

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Environment/Watersheds
- Fisheries/Coastal Issues
- Sugarcane

- Horticulture/Lawn and Garden
- Animal Production
- Pest Management

Nutrition and Community Health

- Nutrition Education
- School and community gardens
- Healthy Retail
- Physical activity community resources
- Seafood Safety and Quality Program

EXTENSION OFFICE

Office Address:

600 Main St Blevins Building, 2nd Floor
Franklin, LA 70538
Phone: 337-828-4100 Ext. 170



Office Hours:

8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Website:

<https://lsuagcenter.com/stmary>

Social Media:

[Healthy St. Mary Coalition Facebook](#)
[St. Mary 4-H Facebook](#)

Parish Chair:

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Additional Contact:

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WHOM WE REACH:

8,688 youth (includes 758 4-H members and 34 school 4-H Clubs)
10,912 adults (# through agriculture and natural resources and # through family consumer sciences)

HOW WE REACH THEM:

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

EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS:

100 volunteers from 4-H, family, and community.

PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, aquaculture, wildlife and animal enterprises to St. Mary Parish residents. The 2023 total dollar amount from these commodities were: Animal enterprises, \$1,601,770, Aquaculture and wildlife, \$13,423,427, Plant enterprises, \$98,722,396. Land area — 558.5 square miles; Population — 49,406; Population under 18 years old — 24.4%; Population 65 years old and over — 18.0%; Median household income — \$51,768; Persons below poverty — 22.1%

LOCAL ISSUES AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR:

Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.

- Conduct sugarcane production meeting.
- Conduct sugarcane field day.
- Facilitate private pesticide applicator and prescribed burn manager certification.
- Write articles, webpage content, and social media content.
- Conduct farm and home educational visits.
- Support garden club activities.

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

- Conduct educational meetings on important issues facing the fishing industry.
- Continue dockside workshops and meetings on fisheries related areas.
- Continue marketing strategies for local fisheries industry.
- Continue programs on improving the quality and marketing of Wild Louisiana Seafood through better processes for protecting the catches.

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

- Conduct educational programs to youth through club meetings.
- Continue community service-learning projects.
- Continue educational programs through contest days, workshops, livestock shows and camps
- Continue character development and youth safety programs.

Strengthen families and communities.

- Conduct nutrition programs that help create healthy communities by improving overall nutrition and increasing physical activity levels, in youth and adults, which will produce long-lasting behavior changes.



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