

LSU AgCenter Vernon Parish Profile

Report to Stakeholders January 2026



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

Nutrition and Community Health agents and educators are working to enhance the well-being of residents by addressing chronic diseases linked to poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles—areas where Louisiana has historically ranked low. In Vernon Parish, the food and nutrition score is 40 out of 100, underscoring the urgent need for greater access to healthy food options and stronger nutrition education. Through the Flavors of Health initiative, programs such as *Smart Portions*, *Dining with Diabetes*, and *Let's Eat for the Health of It*, along with radio segments, news features, and youth culinary classes in partnership with 4-H, aim to promote healthier lifestyles and prevent chronic disease. All programs follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA MyPlate recommendations.

4-H Youth Development

The Vernon Parish 4-H program has 34 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. Polk Military Installation. Members can join the 4-H livestock club, Vernon Parish Shooting Sports and the Teen Leader Club.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The LSU AgCenter Extension service provides services to the citizens of Vernon Parish through home visits, soil sample testing, pesticide classes and education. Plant enterprise is the overall leader for Vernon Parish which includes Forestry, home gardens, hay, vegetables, nursery crops, and fruits. Forestry is the biggest category for gross farm value which is 77,704,303 dollars per year. Animal Enterprises Production is second and has a gross farm value of \$24,384,931

PROGRAMS

4-H and Youth Development

- 4-H Programming
- Livestock Club
- Shooting Sports Club

Teen & Youth Development Agriculture and Natural Resources

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

Nutrition and Community Health

- Healthy Communities
- Flavors of Health.

EXTENSION OFFICE

Vernon Parish

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Office Hours:

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Website:

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www.LSUAgCenter.com/Vernon

Social Media:

www.facebook.com/vernon4H

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WHOM WE REACH:

6,192 youth (includes 1,300 4-H members and 36 school 4-H Clubs)
2,000 adults (through agriculture and natural resources and Nutrition and Community Health).

HOW WE REACH THEM:

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

EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS:

165 volunteers from 4-H School Clubs, Livestock Club, Shooting Sports Club, family and community.

PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, aquaculture, wildlife 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.

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

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

- Share before and after hurricane tree and storm information.
- Conduct private pesticide classes.
- Provide and discuss soil sample kits & results
- Distribute Horticulture Hints and Gardening Guides locally.
- Conduct needed home and farm site visits utilizing research-based LSU AgCenter information to make sound production and management recommendations

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

- Develop and implement service-learning/character development projects throughout the parish.
- Enhance adult and youth volunteer programs through recruiting, training and serving
- Teen Leaders will donate to CASA and maintain and work in other service projects.

Strengthen families and communities.

- Nutrition and Community Health Agents 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