

LSU AgCenter St. Martin 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

According to the County Health rankings of 2023, St. Martin Parish has 41% of its population suffering from obesity and 37% of the population lacks access to physical activity opportunities. While this impacts the overall health of the residents of our parish, the NCH program provides education on nutrition, health, physical activity, and food safety to combat these issues. The General Nutrition program and Snap-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) help teach audiences about making lifestyle choices to improve their overall health. General Nutrition classes are offered to residents to make healthier food choices along with lifestyle changes to improve their health. Both programs work to make St. Martin Parish a healthier community.

4-H Youth Development

Youth Development Research indicates the development of a sense of belonging is connected to psychological well-being. Youth who feel they belong have a greater sense of independence, are more intrinsically motivated, and have fewer behavior problems in school. Examples of 4-H activities conducted to increase a sense of belonging include: Junior Leader Retreat, Get Acquainted Activities at Junior Leader Meetings, Barnyard Bash for livestock exhibitors, orientation meetings for participants before 4-H Camp and 4-H University, Shooting Sports Safety meetings for participants, solicitation of youth voice through 4-H advisory groups, and more. St. Martin Parish offers a 4-H club program to youth at all public and parochial schools across the parish with eligible grades, as well as at-large students.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture is a well diversified \$87 million dollar industry vital to the economic health of St. Martin Parish. Plant enterprises account for \$59 million with a 32,516 acre, \$47 million sugarcane crop leading the way. Over 3,000 acres of soybeans and nearly 5,000 acres of rice account for the rest of the field crop total. Other major commodities include fisheries and wildlife valued at \$19 million and animal enterprises including horses and cattle estimated at over \$8 million. In the past few years, educational program emphasis has been on Best Management Practices for all commodities including Master Farmer and Master Gardener Programs. This varied clientele is served through Advisory committees, producer organizations, commodity meetings, field days, recycling programs, newspaper articles, Internet, social media and e-mails.

PROGRAMS

4-H and Youth Development

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Social Media:

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Parish Chair:

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WHOM WE REACH:

38,588 enrolled in youth development programs (including 650 St. Martin Parish 4-H members and 26 school 4-H Clubs)

5,300 adults (through Agriculture and Natural Resources and Nutrition and Community Health programs)

HOW WE REACH THEM:

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

EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS:

150 volunteers from 4-H, Master Gardeners, Master Horseman, family and community.

PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, aquaculture, wildlife and animal enterprises to St. Martin Parish residents. The total dollar amount from these commodities were: Animal enterprises, \$8 million; aquaculture and wildlife, \$19 million; plant enterprises, \$59 million.

Land area — 737.5 square miles; Population — 51,767; Population under 18 years old — 26.8%; Population 65 years old and over — 17.8%; Median household income — \$53,394; Persons below poverty — 18.1%

LOCAL ISSUES AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR:

Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.

- Conduct field days and workshops.
- Write 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.

- St. Martin Parish residents reside in a sportsman's paradise. Roughly 75% of land in St. Martin Parish is leveed off in the Atchafalaya Basin flood way.
- This provides 300,000 acres of land for hunting and fishing opportunities.
- The St. Martin Parish 4-H Agents offer hunter's education certification, and safety classes annually to youth and adults.
- Over 100 St. Martin Parish 4-Hers take part in the 4-H shooting sports program. 4-Hers are offered the opportunity to participate in all disciplines ranging from archery to shotgun.
- St. Martin Parish 4-H Agents have received a Wetlands grant that provides funding for learning opportunities at a Parish Wetlands Fun Day.
- Marsh Maneuvers, WHEP and the Wetlands Track at 4-H Camp Grant Walker teach St. Martin Parish 4-Hers about protecting our vital water resources.
- St. Martin Parish Ag Agents help hunters improve wildlife habitat by assisting with food plot and soil testing questions.

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

- Develop and implement service-learning projects throughout the parish.
- Cloverbuds will explore animals that contribute to pollination in our world.
- Junior Leaders will learn financial literacy, character education projects, and promoting youth development activities.

Strengthen families and communities.

- Snap-Ed program clients receive education and training on feeding their families healthier with limited resources.
- Nutrition and health programs help reduce the incidence of chronic disease and prevent obesity.
- With Healthy Communities efforts residents will have greater access to walking and biking safely.



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