

LSU AgCenter DeSoto 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

Agriculture and Natural Resources

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistic Services, DeSoto Parish had approximately 11,000 head of beef cows and calves as of January 1, 2024. The 2024 LSU Agriculture Summary reported a gross farm value of \$22,397,361 for beef production in DeSoto Parish. To sustain the cattle industry in DeSoto Parish we conducted a series of meetings in which beef producers gained awareness of feeding cattle through the winter, cool season forage variety recommendations, marketing beef cattle, weed control in pastures and hay fields. We average 40 producers that attend our beef meetings. With the utilization of a beef cattle email distribution list, in which I have 308 members, monthly newsletters are sent to cattlemen in my area to keep them informed.

4-H Youth Development

4-H is a community of more than 6.5 million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H'ers participate in fun, hands-on learning activities which encourage a sense of belonging among the youth. The 4-H Club is the largest youth organization in the United States! Louisiana has more than 85,000 4-H members in more than 1,700 clubs. Louisiana 4-H reaches a diverse group of youth, grades K-12. Through non-formal, research-based, experiential learning activities, 4-H participants gain knowledge and life skills to become productive, capable, and compassionate members of their communities. The 4-H program combines the cooperative efforts of youth, volunteer leaders, land-grant universities, federal, state, local governments, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nutrition and Community Health

Nutrition and Community Health programs in DeSoto Parish aim to improve residents' health through nutrition education. By partnering with schools, healthcare facilities, senior centers, and libraries, these programs promote healthier eating, physical activity, and food safety. Nutrition programs and Healthy Community initiatives were implemented in all DeSoto Parish PreK classes, DeSoto Parish Library Systems and Council on Aging from January 2025-January 2026. NCH has established an adult pickleball league that plays biweekly. A monthly article is also published in The DeSoto Parish Journal. The NCH goal is to make adopting a nutritious lifestyle easier and more accessible.



PROGRAMS

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Livestock Production
Forage Production
Horticulture/Lawn and Garden
Pest Management
Forestry
Environment/Watersheds
Commercial Fruit Production

4-H and Youth Development

School 4-H Clubs
Project Clubs
Overnight Camps
Leadership Trainings

Nutrition and Community Health

Healthy Communities
Flavors of Health
Harvest of the Month

EXTENSION OFFICE

Address and Phone Number:

10117 Hwy 171
Grand Cane, LA 71032
Phone: 318-872-0533
Fax: 318-872-2367

Office Hours:

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

Website:

www.LSUAgCenter.com/DeSoto

Social Media:

www.facebook.com/DeSotoParishExtension

www.facebook.com/DeSoto4H

www.facebook.com/DeSotoNattyNutrition

STAFF

Parish Chair/Agriculture:

Joshua Salley
jsalley@agcenter.lsu.edu

Administrative Coordinator:

Melissa Saenz
msaenz@agcenter.lsu.edu

4-H Youth Development:

Ami Altom
aaltom@agcenter.lsu.edu

Nutrition and Community Health:

Erin Stockton
estockton@agcenter.lsu.edu

WHOM WE REACH:

908 youth (includes 461 4-H members, 121 Cloverbuds, 50 adult volunteers, 19 school 4-H Clubs, and 16 after-school project clubs) 24,901 adults (3,548 agriculture and natural resources and 21,353 Nutrition and Community Health) DeSoto residents seeking better health.

HOW WE REACH THEM:

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

EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS:

Over 100 volunteers from 4-H, ANR and Nutrition and Community Health.

PARISH FACTS:

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, aquaculture, wildlife and animal enterprises to DeSoto Parish residents. The total dollar amount from these commodities were: Animal enterprises, \$38,156,691; aquaculture and wildlife, \$5,481,450; plant enterprises, \$42,683,995. Land area — 895 square miles; Population — 26,897; Population under 18 years old — 24%; Population 65 years old and over — 18.5%; Median household income — \$46,077; Persons below poverty — 21.8%

LOCAL ISSUES AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR:

Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.

- Conduct quarterly beef cattle producer meetings.
- Conduct annual pesticide recertification meetings.
- Assist clients with lawn and garden questions.
- Conduct farm and home educational visits.
- Collaborate with DeSoto Soil & Water District and DeSoto Farm Bureau to provide educational programming to DeSoto Parish producers.
- Write news columns on current science based agricultural practices.

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

- Develop young leaders through Character Development lessons in school club meetings.
- Conduct life skill lessons in partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders for the Jr. Leadership Club.
- Partner with DeSoto Occupation/Vocational Education (D.O.V.E.) Program to teach life skills through a school enrichment program leading into early adulthood utilizing community garden lessons.
- Encourage youth to participate in parish, regional, and state events, workshops, and contests.
- Growing involvement in community and civic activities.

Strengthen families and communities.

- Conduct educational workshops on health and nutrition, food safety, MyPlate, meal preparation, and incorporating physical activity into family lifestyles
- Submit monthly articles for publication
- Partner with healthcare providers and community stakeholders to host a free community-wide health fair
- Strengthen social media presence
- Impact built environments in the parish with Healthy Communities initiatives to make the healthy choice the easy choice



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