

Department of 4-H Youth Development



Report to Stakeholders

October 2010

About the LSU AgCenter

The LSU AgCenter is dedicated to providing innovative research, information and education to improve people's lives. Working in a unique 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.



Academic/Research/Extension Highlights

4-H programming focused on the three mission mandates of citizenship, healthy living and science, engineering and technology.

- Each year more than 3,000 4-H youth partner with adults to address community needs through service-learning projects. Fifty-four parishes reported 70 service-learning and service projects helping 22,000 individuals and raising \$78,975 in grants, donations and in-kind aid. These youth and adults logged 9,000 hours worth \$182,432.25 according to the Independent Sector value for volunteer hours. Based on local needs, youth engaged in 4-H service-learning projects address issues ranging from environmental issues to promoting literacy to combating health issues to serving the military to advocating for causes affecting Louisiana citizens.



- Smart Bodies is a comprehensive nutrition education and physical activity 4-H school enrichment program for kindergarten through fifth-grade children. A joint initiative of the LSU AgCenter and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, Smart Bodies is taught in schools across the state and helps children learn how to build strong bodies and develop active minds. Smart Bodies consists of three components: Body Walk, OrganWise Guys and Take 10! classroom programs. Since March 2005, more than 400 elementary schools have implemented the program, and nearly 175,000 children experienced the Body Walk.

Beginning in 2009, a second Body Walk exhibit was put into use, reaching more schools. About 80 schools hosted the Body Walk and Smart Bodies during 2009.

- Since its inception in 2007, the Youth Wetlands program has reached more than 100,000 students and 2,000 educators across Louisiana. The Youth Wetlands program is founded on the principles of experience-based learning, community service and leadership development. This program provides students of Louisiana with unprecedented resources on wetland conservation, as well as creates a platform of service that can be monitored as the students move from elementary school to high school to college. The curriculum is endorsed by the Louisiana Science Teacher's Association, and lessons are designed to follow Louisiana's Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). Scores from pre and post tests completed by participating students showed an average increase of 28 percent across grades 4-12. Because the lessons are associated with Louisiana GLEs, it is thought that these scores reflect an increased knowledge of main science concepts.



Department Office

Address: 169 Knapp Hall,
LSU Campus

Phone: 225-578-2196

Fax: 225-578-7847

Website:

[http://
www.lsuagcenter.com/4h](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/4h)

Office Hours:

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

Mark Tassin, Ph.D.

Department Head
mgtassin@agcenter.lsu.edu

Academic Focus:

Offers graduate courses in informal youth education programs, issues in youth development, service-learning and volunteer development.

Research Focus:

Addresses questions and concerns involving youth development, ranging from service-learning, youth leadership, environmental program impacts, school gardening, belonging and life-skills development.

Extension Focus:

Provides high-quality, experiential educational programs and service and outreach activities through in-school 4-H Clubs, community clubs, project clubs, special-interest programs, camps and school-enrichment programs.

Significance of Programs

- More than 240,000 youth from across Louisiana are reached by 4-H.
- In a two-year evaluation examining positive youth development, on all measurements, Louisiana 4-H'ers indicated that they had a sense of belonging.
- In Character Development, 91% of the youth were tolerant of the differences in others.
- In service-learning projects, 91 percent of the youth had a better understanding of the problems facing their community.
- At 4-H Camp, youth indicate they learned about the subject matter taught during camp sessions.
- At the Louisiana Outdoor Science and Technology Camp, 76 percent of youth were curious about the world in which they live.
- With Smart Bodies, youth significantly increased their activity levels and knowledge of the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.
- At area 4-H leader forums, 91-100 percent of volunteers indicated they gained skills and knowledge and increased their leadership capabilities.
- At 4-H University, 77 percent of youth reported their experiences in 4-H had helped them learn to mentally organize their thoughts before speaking.

Department of 4-H Youth Development Facts

- One of the top three state 4-H programs in the nation with U.S. Department of Agriculture Programs of Distinction, a blind review process that recognizes high-quality programs.
- Recognized by multiple national organizations for the top Interactive Technology Website in the nation through the 4-H Clubhouse at www.lsuagcenter.com/en/4H/Kids/.
- Received the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service Partnership Award for Innovative Program Models.
- Acknowledged by the National 4-H 2010 MetLife Foundation Awards of Excellence for exhibiting excellence in citizenship programming.
- Videos on Youth Wetlands Week and Wet Works have received several national awards as well as from the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and the Association for Communications Excellence.



LSU AgCenter Departments and Schools

Maximizing the potential for the state's agricultural industries and improving the quality of life for all Louisiana citizens are the major initiatives of the LSU AgCenter.

To achieve its mission of serving the people of Louisiana and providing them with the latest research-based information on a vast variety of topics, the LSU AgCenter operates 11 academic departments/schools in Baton Rouge in conjunction with the LSU College of Agriculture. In addition, four other specialized departments also contribute to the mission. These 15 units are an integral part of the LSU AgCenter's research and outreach activities.

Faculty members in the LSU AgCenter's on-campus units are involved in a variety of efforts, including research, classroom teaching and extension education. They cover topics ranging from agricultural economics to human ecology and from entomology to experimental statistics.

The LSU AgCenter has the most successful record of commercialization of intellectual property in the LSU System. Since 2000, nine new companies have been started based on licensed technology from LSU AgCenter. The income is distributed among the LSU System, the inventors and more research.

Future Plans

Developed a strategic plan for the Louisiana 4-H Youth Development program based on a national review, and implemented it beginning in August 2007. The plan is based on the four essential elements of youth development — belonging, independence, mastery and generosity. Programming addressed in the plan is aligned with the three mission mandates — science, engineering and technology; healthy living; and citizenship/leadership. In 2010 began the process to update and revise the plan based on the current youth development conditions in Louisiana.



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Louisiana State University Agricultural Center: William B. Richardson, Chancellor. Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station: David Boethel, Vice Chancellor and Director. Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service: Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director. The LSU AgCenter provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.