

# DeSoto Parish Profile



Report to Stakeholders

April 2011

## 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.



## DeSoto Parish Extension Office

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## Program Highlights

### Family and Consumer Sciences

Louisiana has the eighth highest rate of adult obesity and seventh highest rate of overweight and obese youths. In an effort to promote healthy eating habits, 160 youth ranging from 5 to 18 years old received lessons that demonstrated ways to prepare nutritious and healthy snacks for after school and home meals as an alternative to eating high fat, salty and sugary items from fast-food restaurants. After the lessons, 60 percent of the youth at an after school meeting reported that they are eating more fruits and helping prepare more nutritious meals at home. However, some admit that lowering consumption of fast food is a hard habit to break. Also, two Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program educators worked with 125 fifth-graders at Mansfield Elementary. These children were taught nutrition lessons and offered food samples during monthly classes. Most of these children gained knowledge on eating healthier foods and said that they would encourage their parents to prepare these healthier foods at home.



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### 4-H Youth Development

In a response to low science scores on the state's standardized testing, a series of six lessons on Environmental Education were taught during the 2009-2010 school year. More than 200 4-H members attended an environmental themed 4-H Fun Day and more than 60 kids participated in camping activities focused on environmental education. More than 25 Junior Leaders completed a service project to "Feed the Needy." These youth collected canned goods, packed senior boxes at the Food Bank and served meals at the Rescue Mission. Fifteen youth attended 4-H University where six of those youth won blue ribbons. Leah Brown of Logansport was elected to serve as the Northwest region representative on the Louisiana 4-H Executive Committee.



### Agriculture & Natural Resources

The cost of animal production has increased significantly over the past two years. Fertilizer, feed and fuel have caused the cost of production to increase. DeSoto Parish cattle producers were very concerned about the sustainability of their enterprises. LSU AgCenter conducted a series of meetings dealing with producing animals during high input cost. Winter supplement feeding, weed control in pastures and hay fields, using GPS technology and cool and warm season grass variety suggestions are some of the topics discussed at these meetings. More than 200 residents attended these meetings and over 35 percent said that they gained knowledge that would make their farm more profitable.



## Programs

### 4-H and Youth Development

Personal Safety  
Service Learning  
Leadership

### Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR)

Animal Production  
Beef / Dairy Cattle  
Commercial Horticulture  
Horticulture Lawns and Gardens  
Forestry and Wildlife  
Pasture and Forage  
Pest Management

### Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS)

Parents Preparing for Success  
FNP—Family Nutrition Program  
Nutrition and Health

**Who we reach.**

1,117- Youth (includes over 600 4-H members and 13 school 4-H clubs)  
 3,976- Adults  
 1,950 Ag and Natural Resources  
 2,026 Family Consumer Sciences

**How we reach them:**

4-H clubs	Class series
School enrichment	Demonstrations
Field days	Workshops
Newsletters	Websites
Publications	Social media

**Expanding our efforts:**

150 Volunteers -  
 4-H, Master Gardeners, Family and Community

**Parish Facts**

LSU AgCenter county agents provide research-based information on plant, aquaculture, wildlife and animal enterprises to DeSoto Parish clientele. The 2010 total dollar amount from these commodities was:  
 —Plant enterprises - \$34,955,186  
 —Aquaculture and wildlife - \$2,536,745  
 —Animal enterprises - \$23,602,534

**Data from the Louisiana Ag Summary**  
**Website: [LSUAgCenter.com/agsummary](http://LSUAgCenter.com/agsummary)**

Population - 26,401  
 Land area (square miles) - 877.2  
 Persons under 18 years old - 25.3%  
 Persons 65 years old and over - 14%  
 Median household income - \$37,490  
 Persons below poverty - 18.1%

**Local Issues and Plans for this year**

**1. Increase productivity and profitability of Louisiana agriculture.**

- Conduct quarterly beef cattle meetings
- Conduct annual pasture management meeting
- Write news column, Web page content and conduct seminars on agriculture practices
- Conduct farm and home educational visits
- Conduct pesticide recertification meetings
- Assist homeowners with lawn and garden questions

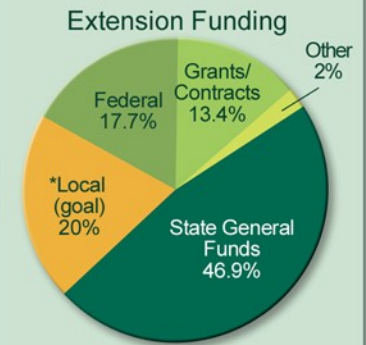
**2. Create a sense of belonging among all the youth involved and promote independence and generosity among teenage groups**

- Conduct safety lessons in schools that will increase awareness of personal safety concerns and tie in with many hands-on activities such as ATV safety clinics, a safety themed 4-H Fun Day and service projects.
- Continue to increase teen involvement by utilizing youth voices and having local teen leaders plan their own age appropriate activities. Encourage teens to plan and participate in both service learning projects as well as social and educational activities.

- Provide more diverse activities to increase involvement of 4-H members who are not interested in livestock and outdoor skills activities. These activities will include a sewing and cooking club and craft project workshops.

**3. Strengthen families and communities**

- Conduct workshops and newsletters for youth and adults on living a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise
- Conduct workshops and newsletters on food safety and importance of hand-washing
- Assist families on budget shopping and comparing prices using the food labels



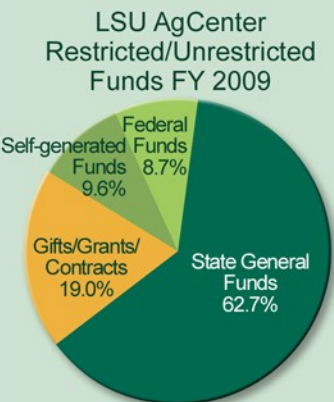
*\*Local Funding  
 DeSoto Parish Police Jury  
 DeSoto Parish School Board*

**How we are funded.**

You are the local supporters and beneficiaries in the LSU AgCenter's Extension programs. Just 20 percent support keeps these programs in your community.

Your parish extension office offers programs in:

- Sustaining Louisiana's agriculture, forestry and fisheries.
- Building leaders and good citizens through 4-H youth development.
- Family, nutrition, health and community development to enhance the quality of life for Louisiana citizens.



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our Web site: [LSUAgCenter.com](http://LSUAgCenter.com)