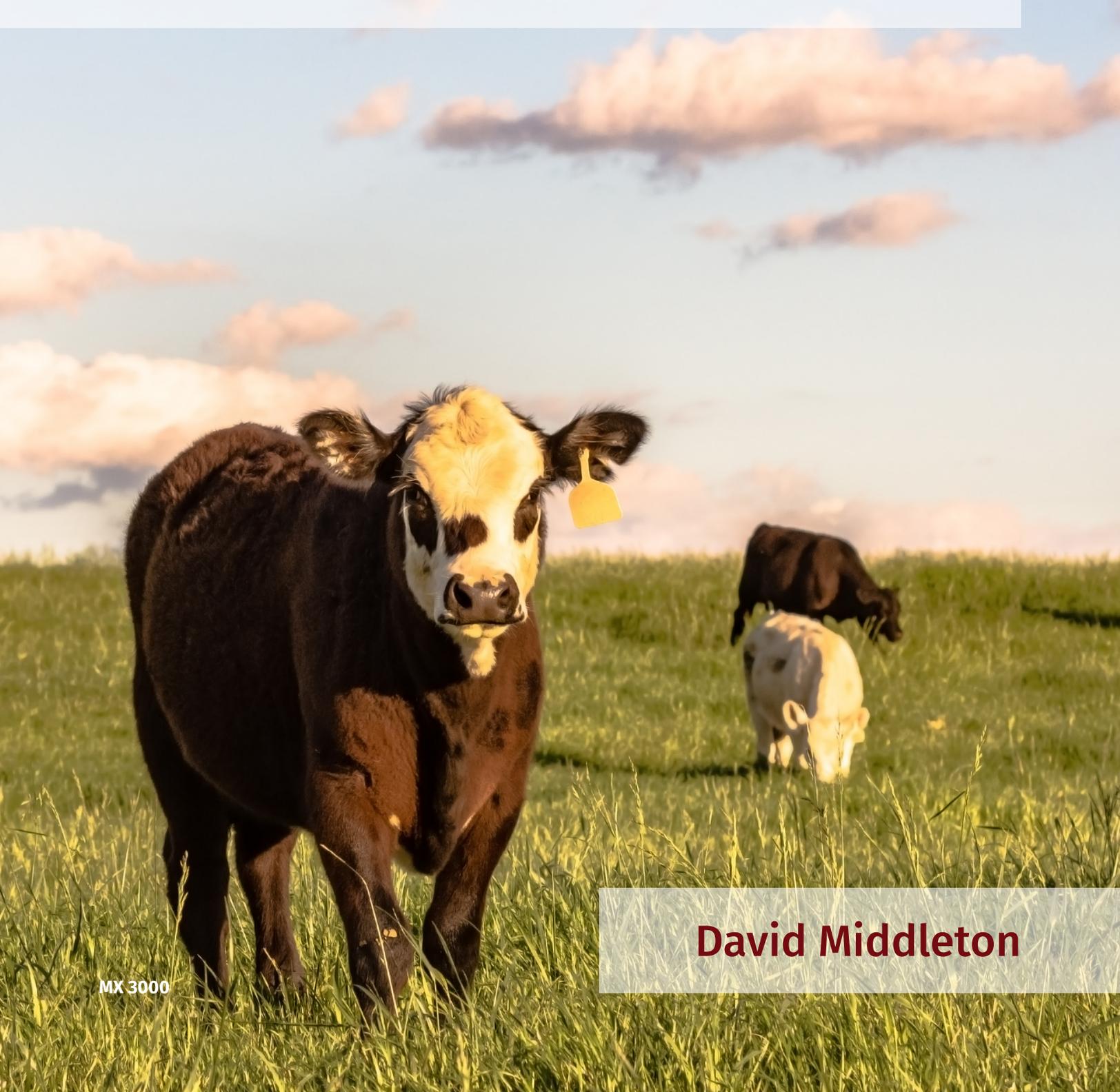


Successfully Direct Marketing Beef



MX 3000

David Middleton

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For more information about Missouri AgrAbility, visit:

<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/agrability/>

Find information about the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program at: <https://www.lincolnu.edu/web/programs-and-projects/innovative-small-farmers-outreach-program>



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About the author

Author David Middleton is a long-time farmer and educator with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension in Jefferson City, Missouri. He also works with the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program at Lincoln University and Missouri AgrAbility.

Middleton grew up on a diversified grain and livestock farm near Laddonia, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in Animal Science. The project that David had started in FFA grew into internationally recognized swine herds of Yorkshire and Landrace that won many national and state shows and breeding stock sold to 38 states and 14 foreign countries. In 1986, a registered Angus beef herd was established and today embryo transfer is involved to develop superior breeding stock.

As agriculture has changed in recent years, Middleton direct markets his beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey and eggs at farmers market, off farm and on the internet.

Middleton operates his own farm as sustainably as possible with managed intensive grazing and use of renewable inputs. In 2008, the Middleton Family Farm was awarded the Grassland Farmer award for Lawrence County. David and his wife Cherri have 6 children and 4 grandchildren.

His passion is to share his knowledge and see successful farms continue into the next generation. His goal is to help other farmers learn how to improve their direct marketing efforts and profits while minimizing physical labor and maintaining health. He also wants to help them educate consumers on the source of their meat, its health benefits and why buying local matters in the creation of a sustainable food supply.



David Middleton

Introduction

University of Missouri Extension and Missouri AgrAbility work with diverse populations to explore revenue opportunities in agriculture that use their abilities and improve their lifestyle.

These groups include small and beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, minority populations, women and those with disabilities.

Missouri AgrAbility, a USDA NIFA-funded program provides an environment of inclusivity and equity to help farmers be a vital part of doubling Missouri agricultural economy by 2030. Missouri AgrAbility strives to enhance the economic viability of its participants by maintaining physical and mental health.

This booklet gives a direct marketing perspective for meat producers to consider in individual markets. The end user will need to explore local markets, disposable income of the buyer, rural versus metropolitan markets, processing fees, local competition and other factors in setting price points for this model.

“Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man.”

— George Washington

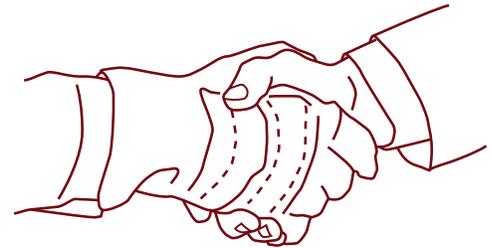
Successfully direct marketing beef

The buzzword in agriculture today is "sustainable." However, to be sustainable, a farmer must be profitable, first and foremost.

Through my direct marketing sales, I find that consumers want to know more about their food source. They also want to develop a trusted, personal relationship with the farmers and ranchers who produce their food, and not from those who have not carried a feed bucket or been involved in the business.

Why direct marketing?

1. For the most profit, market directly to the consumer. You can increase your income by selling a local, high quality product directly to the consumer at the retail price. Other options may include restaurant sales or wholesale (stores). My experience is restaurants and wholesalers want a 20% price reduction from retail pricing and are unwilling to give a firm commitment. You should expect retail sales at farm direct, farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or online sales.
2. Consumers gain confidence in their food source when they buy directly from the farmer. Through face-to-face interaction, they learn where their food was raised and how it was processed. The farmer can educate them about various cuts and aging processes. By buying local, they develop confidence that they are giving their family safe, nutritious food while supporting the local agricultural community.
3. Money spent locally turns over seven times in a community before it leaves, according to Dave Swenson economist at Iowa State University. This improves the economic health of small businesses.



Beef producers, especially those who market only a few head each year, can find cyclical commodity markets frustrating. Marketing meat directly to consumers can be a profitable solution. Direct marketing eliminates the middleman and returns additional profit to the farmer. The key to success is finding a niche market.

What's a niche market?

We can define a niche market by its unique needs, preferences or identity from a larger market. Common ways to define a niche market may be based upon factors such as geographics, demographics, price or quality. Another important factor might be psychographics, which includes values, interests or attitudes.

Niche marketing is promoting a product that no one else offers to serve a specific clientele better than competitors who are seeking a larger, more general customer base. There are many different types of niche marketing already used by direct meat marketers, including organic, grassfed, antibiotic-free, humane handling, etc.

The increased interest in purchasing local foods gives direct market meat producers a big advantage. Many consumers want to know where and how their meat was raised, what it was fed and how it was handled. These consumers want a quality product, peace of mind and a relationship with the farmer.

Concerns about safety in the food supply chain have opened the door for another marketing opportunity: clean, safe beef. Many consumers concerned about food safety are willing to pay a premium for peace of mind of knowing the beef that they feed their families is safe. This gives the small producer a competitive advantage over large chain meat suppliers.

Selling meat directly entails increased producer attention to marketing, processing, labeling, storage and distribution.

Direct marketing a live beef

Advantages

The easiest way to direct market beef is to sell a live animal directly to a customer who handles processing. The seller may charge extra to deliver the live beef to the processing facility or choose to include that in the sale price.

So let's take a look at the numbers.

This steer weighs 912 pounds. Today's live market price is \$1.20 per pound. This beef on commodity sales will bring \$1,094 minus commission, yardage, vet inspection and trucking (about \$75 per head in the central United States).

So, what should the seller charge? Most direct market beef is raised from birth on the farm; some may be purchased at a young age. Selling points include superior genetics, grass-fed, age verified, promoted by breed or any other area that may distinguish the calf. If the seller charges \$1.50 per pound, they cover the \$75 the sale facility charges and makes \$273.60 more than the commodity seller. That makes a difference when applied to several head.

Disadvantages

Not everyone needs a whole beef or can afford the total cost, maybe family or friends could split the beef to make it more affordable. The buyer will also be responsible for processing cost.

Sale barn on hoof beef pricing	
Live weight on farm	912 lbs
Price (Joplin Stockyards)	\$1.20/lb
Gross income	\$1,094.40
Less commission, yardage and insurance	-\$75.00
Net income	\$1,019.40

Direct market on hoof beef pricing	
Live weight on farm	912 lbs
On-farm pricing	\$1.50/lb
Gross income	\$1,368.00
Increased profit over sale barn	\$348.60



Click the image above (or visit <https://youtu.be/fZ7I394lFWg>) for a video introducing direct marketing, beginning with a live steer.

Direct marketing beef on the rail

Advantages

Our steer that weighed 912 pounds has now become a 546-pound carcass. So you could have two 273-pound carcasses or four 136.5-pound carcasses to sell. Smaller quantities merit a higher price. Carcass price from that 912-pound live weight would be \$2.00 per pound, however there has been value added from the cost of hauling and slaughter. A price based on the carcass weight of \$4.59 for a half or \$4.69 for one fourth* of beef are actual prices received on my farm. A value for one 273-pound half is \$1,253.07 less slaughter at \$70 (and not paying a \$75 commission) gives you a gross income of \$2,053.74 per head.

On the rail beef pricing	
273 lb carcass at \$4.59/lb	\$1,253.07
Less processing	
Butchering one half beef	-\$35.00
Processing (273 lbs at \$0.68/lb)	-\$185.64
Stew meat (11.11 lbs at \$0.50/lb)	-\$5.56
Net income for one half beef	\$1,026.87
Net income for whole beef	\$2,053.74

Disadvantages

Customers should understand that they won't get the full amount of meat that they are paying for on the carcass due to bone and trim loss. Unless you can sell the whole beef, there will be excess to store or possibly sell at a discount to move the product.



Click the image above (or visit <https://youtu.be/evXjNnT9lmo>) for a video explaining the carcass weight.

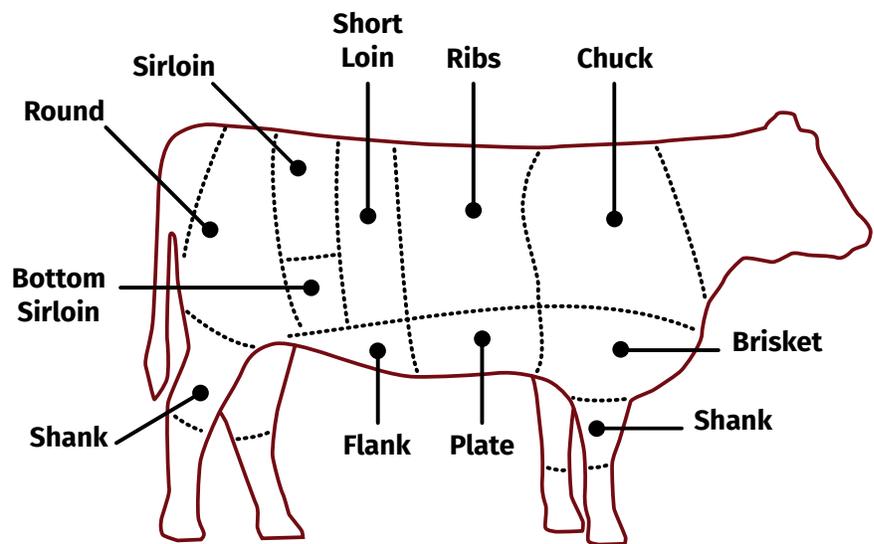
*One fourth is not the same thing as a quarter of beef, but rather half of all the cuts that the half carcass yields. This half of a half lets the customer order a smaller quantity without losing the variety of cuts.

Retail cuts

Selling retail cuts requires a strong marketing effort. The seller must decide what cuts to sell, what price and where to sell.

This requires selling steaks, roasts, ground beef and other cuts in individual packages. My advice is to initially offer only standard cuts:

- Brisket
- Chuck roast
- Arm roast
- Steaks
- Ribeye
- T-Bone or Strip
- Fillet
- Sirloin
- Rump roast
- Round steak
- Stew meat
- Ground beef
- Organ meats



Add specialty cuts as the market and customer demand grows. Vacuum pack meat in convenient sizes, such as one-pound packages except for roast and steaks (preferably two to a package).

- Hamburger patties
- Flank
- Tri-tip
- Flat iron
- Other specialty cuts

Direct marketing beef by the cut from 273-pound carcass			
Cut	Weight (lbs)	Price	Gross income
Ground beef	101	\$6.49	\$655.49
Roast (arm, chuck, rump, pikes peak)	28.3	\$7.09	\$200.65
Brisket	8.64	\$7.29	\$62.99
T-Bone steak	13.61	\$12.29	\$167.27
Ribeye steak	5.70	\$13.39	\$76.32
Boneless sirloin steak	7.79	\$9.29	\$72.37
Sirloin tip steak	7.19	\$9.29	\$66.80
Stew meat	11.11	\$7.89	\$87.66
Organ meats	9.20	\$3.99	\$36.71
Total per half	192.54		\$1,426.26
Less processing			
Butchering per half		-\$35.00	-\$35.00
Processing	273	-\$0.68/lb	-\$185.64
Stew meat	11.11	-\$0.50/lb	-5.56
Net income per half			\$1,200.06
Net income for whole beef			\$2,400.12



Click any image above (or visit <https://youtu.be/0-1CtzQin1g>) for a video detailing the cuts from a 273-pound carcass.

Pricing

What is the right price to charge? Remember that you are not competing with big chain stores for customers basing their purchases primarily on price.

At my farm, we charge \$6.49 for ground beef, \$7.09 for most roast and up to \$13.39 for steaks. Our whole steer cut out 224.22 pounds of ground beef and stew meat, 73.88 pounds of roast, and 68.58 pounds of steaks, giving us a possible income of \$2,897.29 less 452.40 for processing. By direct marketing, the net gain of selling retail cuts over sale barn price is \$1425.49. For selling beef on the rail, direct marketing offers a net gain of \$1034.34 over the sale barn price. Selling a live animal direct to consumer without processing fees included yields a profit of \$348.60.

Remember seasonal changes

With direct marketing, you must offer your customers a constant, reliable supply of product. Adjust your offerings to fit the season. Predict demands and schedule processing accordingly. More customers want steaks and ground beef during summer and roasts during winter.

Frozen vs. fresh

There is an age-old debate among meat scientists: Which is better – fresh or frozen? My experience has been that there is no difference in quality.

In fact, frozen beef may be more tender because fresh, conventionally marketed beef goes through its aging process during transport. If you happen to be first on the delivery that week, your beef has not aged enough.

The color of beef changes when frozen, from a cherry red color when fresh, to more of a rose color when frozen. After frozen meat is cooked, its color looks the same as that of fresh beef.



Ground beef \$6.49/lb.
Stew meat \$7.89/lb.



Roast \$7.09/lb.



Steak \$13.39/lb.

USDA legal definitions

- **Natural beef:** No artificial additives, minimally processed.
- **Organic beef:** No hormones, antibiotics, pesticides, and fed only organically raised feed. The processor who renders must be certified also for the beef to be certified organic.

Processing

Finding a processing facility can be hard or easy depending upon where you live and what your needs are. Processing plants vary greatly in the types of processing they do.

Know your needs before you look for a plant because evaluation and site visits are time-consuming. Check with the state's Department of Agriculture for a list of facilities near you.

The Department of Agriculture list will tell which plants are state or federally inspected and whether they are kill plants, processing plants, or both. According to Temple Grandin, a kill plant kills, hangs and chills the carcass. A processing plant cuts up the carcasses.

I suggest targeting plants that do both killing and processing to avoid trucking meat from one plant to another. Then call or email them to find out exactly what they do. Many plants are very specialized and only serve a particular market. After doing these checks, make a personal visit and site inspection.

Beef may also be processed in a Custom Exempt plant that is non-inspected. This meat will be labeled "Not For Sale". To go this route the live animal must be sold to the consumer before processing, and for legal reasons the processor must be paid directly by the person buying the animal. Customers may split a beef by sharing a quarter or half.

Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, <https://agriculture.mo.gov/animals/health/inspections/>

Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri's Official Plants Under Inspection, <https://agriculture.mo.gov/animals/health/inspections/officialplants.php>

For more on Temple Grandin's work, see <https://www.tampabay.com/archive/2009/04/12/killing-with-kindness/>.

Obtaining a required label

A federal label is required for sales made across state lines. A federal label can only come from a federally inspected plant. The label identifies your product and connects it to your processing plant.

Product labeling instructions

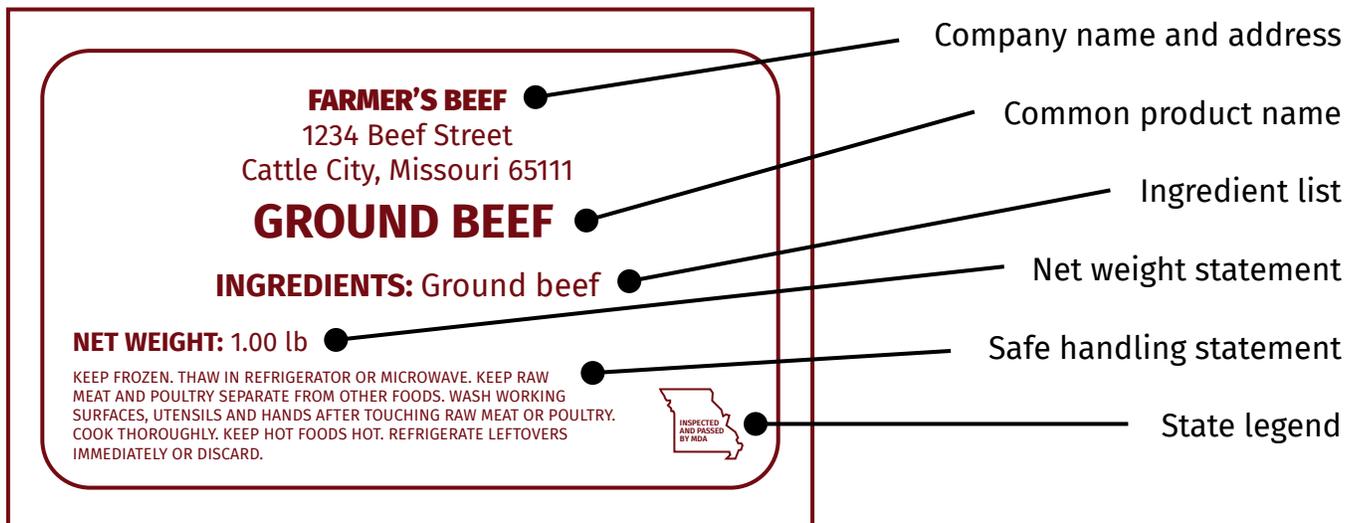
Establishments are responsible for ensuring that labeling used for meat and poultry products is not false or misleading. Labels must be submitted to the Missouri Meat and Poultry Inspection Program for approval prior to use.

Mandatory features on finished product label

1. Name of the product
2. Ingredients statement, if needed
3. Inspection legend and establishment number
4. Handling statements, e.g., keep refrigerated, keep frozen, etc., if needed
5. Safe handling instructions
6. Net quantity of contents statement, if needed
7. Signature line (manufacturer's or distributor's name and address)
8. Nutrition labeling, if needed

See the following resources for more information about labels:

- *A Guide to Federal Food Labeling Requirements for Meat and Poultry Products*
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f4af7c74-2b9f-4484-bb16-fd8f9820012d/Labeling_Requirements_Guide.pdf?MOD=AJPERES
- *Food Labeling for Missouri Food Producers and Processors Fact Sheet*
<https://extensiondata.missouri.edu/pub/pdf/hesguide/foodnut/n01305.pdf>



Customer FAQs

Question: I don't know how to order cuts from a half or quarter.

Response: Offer to take care of cutting instructions for first time consumers and tell them exactly what they will get. Use a standard set of cuts that you use for your family, or make something up that you think will best suit your customer.

Question: How much freezer space do I need?

Response: As a general guide, 50 pounds of meat will fit in about 2.25 cubic feet of cooler/freezer space. The empty freezer compartment of an average-sized home refrigerator will usually hold one-eighth of a beef (roughly 50–60 pounds).

For deep freezers, the rule of thumb is one cubic foot of freezer space for every 35–40 lbs. of packaged meat. A quarter of beef will easily fit into a 5–7 cubic foot chest freezer. A half beef needs about 8 cubic feet. You should plan for at least 16–17 cubic feet of freezer space for a whole beef. A stand-alone freezer usually stores meat at a colder temperature.

Question: How long will beef remain edible?

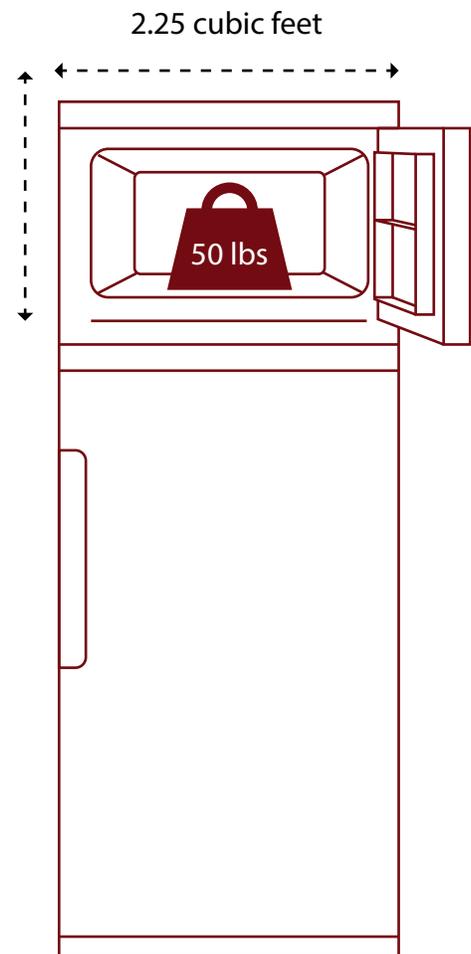
Response: Frozen beef will keep a very high quality for up to 12 months. After that, quality begins to slowly degrade.

Question: How do I know my beef will last?

Response: Too often people have had bad experiences with frozen meat because the meat was not properly packaged and frozen or old before it was frozen. Freezing is nature's best preservative for meat products. Meat that is vacuum-packed and frozen at the optimal freshness will taste just as good as fresh meat cuts.

Question: For how long will a beef feed my family?

Response: A family of four will get between 100 and 130 meals of beef from a half beef, 50–65 from a quarter. If a family of four eats beef two times per week, it will take approximately one year to eat a half of beef, or six months to eat a quarter.



Resources

University of Missouri and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension resources include:

- University of Missouri Extension (<https://extension.missouri.edu/>)
- Missouri AgrAbility (<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/agrability>)
- Missouri Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program (<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-beginning-farmers>)
- North Central Region Farm and Ranch Stress Alliance Network (<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/farm-and-ranch-stress-assistance-network-frsan>)
- Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (<https://www.lincolnu.edu/web/programs-and-projects/innovative-small-farmers-outreach-program>)
- Missouri Food Finder (<https://mofoodfinder.org/>)

Other resources include:

- Missouri Farm Bureau (<https://mofb.org/missouri-meat-producers/>)
- Sustainable Agriculture Network (<https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Direct-Market-Your-Beef.pdf>)
- University of Maryland (<https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/docs/articles/EB-404%20Meat%20Marketing%20Planner.pdf>)

Missouri Food Finder is an online resource that Fahrmeier helped develop with the MU Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) — makes it a snap for consumers and growers to connect.

Missouri Farm Bureau offers a Missouri Meat Producer Directory, a statewide county-by-county listing of farmers that sell meat and poultry products directly to consumers. You can request to be listed by filling out an online form.

Glossary

Aging: process of preparing beef for consumption, mainly by breaking down the connective tissue, increasing the meat tenderness. Dry aging takes 15 to 28 days and wet aging takes 4 to 10 days.

All Natural: No artificial additives minimally processed.

Carcass grades: Graders look at 2 main things: quality grades for tenderness, juiciness and flavor; and yield grades for the amount of usable lean meat on the carcass. For a full list of grades, refer to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/carcass-beef-grades-and-standards>).

Certified Naturally Grown: Products must not use any synthetic herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms. This program is similar to Organic and involves third party verification and certification.

Community supported agriculture (CSA): A subscription (fee) set for a certain amount of shares (# of people) that you get every week of the products that are available for that week. Most CSAs run for about 32 weeks a year. If the farm experiences weather related issues or disease and insects, the CSA members may also reap some of that risk with their subscription. However, if the weather or disease and insects are not a huge issue and production is far better than anticipated some CSAs will also allow their membership some of the bounty as well.

Genetically Modified Organism (GMO):

A Genetically Modified Organism is an organism whose genome has been altered in order to favor the expression of desired physiological traits or the production of desired biological products. USDA Approved Genetically Modified Organisms: Corn, Soybean, Cotton, Potato, Papaya, Squash, Canola, Alfalfa, Apple, Sugar beet.

Grain finished: Market cattle that are finished or brought to market weight on grain.

Grass fed: Cattle that have been raised on a forage diet for most of their lives before being finished on grain.

Grass finished: Market cattle that are finished or brought to market weight on grass never receiving grain.

Hanging or carcass weight: The weight of the usable meats once non usable parts are removed. This weight is usually around 60% of the live weight.

Hybrid: the offspring of two plants or animals of different species or varieties

Kansas City strip v. New York strip steak: Strip steak comes from the larger end of the loin. The Kansas City strip steak maintains the bone and the New York strip steak has had the bone removed.

Delmonico's is the name of various New York City restaurants of varying duration, quality, and fame. It is not a cut of beef.

Live weight: the weight of an animal before it has been slaughtered and prepared as a carcass.

Non GMO: Non-genetically modified organism.

Organic: Relating to or derived from living matter. Products must have an ingredients list and the contents should be 95% or more certified organic, meaning free of synthetic additives like pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones. Cattle can only be fed on organically raised pasture and feed. For beef to be certified organic, the processor who renders it needs to be certified as well. To use the term organic the farmer must be verified and certified by a third party.

Quality grades: For a full list of quality grades, refer to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/carcass-beef-grades-and-standards>). The following are some of the most common:

- **Prime** is the highest in quality and intramuscular fat;
- **Choice** is high quality beef with slightly less intramuscular fat;
- **Select** is the lowest grade commonly sold at retail but is less juicy and tender due to leanness.

Steroid Implant: Implants are small pellets that contain a growth stimulant that is slowly released over a period of time. Many implant products are available for use in nursing calves, stocker calves and feedlot calves. A specific withdrawal time is observed before slaughter.

Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD): Federal rules regulate how medically important antibiotics—medications that are important for treating human disease—can be administered to animals in feed and drinking water. All medically important antibiotics to be used in feed or water for food animal species require a Veterinary Feed Directive. The VFD is for a certain group of animals for a specific time period.

Withdrawal time (drug usage):

The minimum period of time from administering the last dose of medication and the production of meat or other animal-derived products for food.

Conclusion

University of Missouri Extension and the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program at Lincoln University partner with Missouri AgrAbility to assist diverse populations in exploring revenue opportunities in agriculture that use their abilities and improve their lifestyle. These groups include small and beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, minority populations, women and those with disabilities.

This booklet provides practical tips based on the author's real-life experiences of direct-marketing beef, pork, lamb and poultry products at farmers market, off farm and on the internet. David Middleton provides farmers with practical first-hand knowledge about how to successfully direct market beef in an easy-to-understand manner. Middleton gives a direct marketing perspective for meat producers to consider in individual markets. The end user will need to explore local markets, disposable income of the buyer, rural vs. metropolitan markets, processing fees, local competition and other factors in setting price points.

The remainder of this publication serves to introduce the user to resources offered by Missouri AgrAbility, a USDA NIFA-funded program. Missouri AgrAbility provides an environment of inclusivity and equity to help farmers be a vital part of doubling of Missouri agricultural economy by 2030.



Missouri AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension Urban East Region.

Photo credit:
David Middleton, Lincoln University

"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

— Thomas Jefferson



Vocation Diversity
Infrastructure
Mental health

Information access

Transportation

Youth opportunities Substance abuse Mental health Modernization

Workforce development

Housing

Food access

Healthcare

Cultural understanding Modernization Education access

Food security Trade skills
Workforce development

Broadband

Family relationships

Life skills

Poverty Transportation
Living wages

Agricultural training Housing
Inclusion
Diversity
Food access
Mental health



Missouri AgrAbility helps farmers with disabilities and their families succeed. The program links University of Missouri and Lincoln University extension services with a nonprofit disability organization to provide practical education and on-the-farm assistance that promotes agricultural and rural independence.

Who does the Missouri AgrAbility Project serve?

The Missouri AgrAbility Project offers services, including on-site farmstead assessments, to all Missouri farmers, ranchers, farm workers and family members who are limited by any type of physical, cognitive, illness-related disability, disorder or chronic health condition(s). Missouri AgrAbility services are also extended to individuals with a disease, disability or disorder who are working toward becoming a farmer or rancher.

Some examples of who we serve include (but are not limited to): youth workers, women and older operators, veterans, minorities or urban farmers.

AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments: A guide for Missouri farmers and ranchers

Why do Missouri AgrAbility Project staff conduct on-site farmstead assessments?

On-site farmstead assessments help AgrAbility professionals better understand your farm or ranch as you operate it with a disease, disability or chronic health condition.



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from LUCE ISFOP Southwest Region



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension East Central Region



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension Northeast Region

To learn more about Missouri AgrAbility, click any of the images above, or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlpW-RnGJ8E>.

Photo and video credit:
Tevin Uthlaut, MU Extension

What are Missouri AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments?

AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments are used by Missouri AgrAbility staff members and professionals to learn about the size and scope of your farm or ranch, your role as an operator and the potential for alternative enterprises. The following information is gathered to develop an AgrAbility report that includes a summary of:

- Barriers and functional limitations that prevent you from completing essential work tasks
- Assets already available to you
- Worksite modifications, job restructuring or reassignment of hard-to-perform tasks to other family members or employees
- Safe and appropriate assistive technologies, adaptive devices or other supportive services needed to achieve success and independence
- Specific goals that will help increase your overall independence, productivity and profitability

Also, on-site assessments are necessary if you apply to Missouri's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services or Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and potentially become eligible for their services to receive assistive technologies, adapted devices and equipment suggested by AgrAbility professionals.

Please note: Not all farmers or ranchers with a disease, disability or chronic health condition(s) need Level 2 – AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments.

In some cases, the needs may be simple, and solutions to problems can be provided by our AgrAbility professionals through telephone, regular mail, fax or email.

Phone: 1-800-995-8503

1110 S. College Ave.
Columbia, MO 65211

Fax: 573-882-0678

AgrAbility@Missouri.edu

Where do on-site assessments take place?

On-site farmstead assessments take place on your farm or ranch. This allows Missouri AgrAbility staff members and other professionals to observe, discuss, measure and record your specific functional limitations, environmental barriers and any risk factors experienced on the farm or ranch and in your home.

When are on-site assessments facilitated?

If a farm or ranch on-site visit is necessary, then Level 2 — AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments are scheduled when you are deemed medically stable by your health care provider and your caregiver(s) is able to attend. This will allow AgrAbility professionals to facilitate meaningful on-site assessments of your home, farm or ranch.

How are Level 2 — AgrAbility on-site farmstead assessments facilitated?

Before any on-site farmstead assessments can be facilitated, farmers and ranchers must become AgrAbility clients.

To become an AgrAbility client, all Missouri farmers and ranchers with diseases, disabilities or disorders must complete the following:

- AgrAbility intake questionnaire
- Read and sign all AgrAbility consent forms
- Take 10- to 15-minute McGill Quality of Life Pre- and Post-Questionnaires
- A Level 1 — AgrAbility off-site farmstead assessment, which takes about one hour

Once you've completed the questionnaires, forms and agreements, the AgrAbility team will perform a walkabout of your farm or ranch operation. On-site farmstead assessments should take no longer than three hours to complete.



Farmer from MU Extension Northwest Region



Tree Trimmer, MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension Southwest Region



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from LUCE ISFOP Southwest Region

Photo credits:
Kerri Lotven, Today's Farmer Magazine (1);
Tevin Uthlaut, MU Extension (2–3)

How is the AgrAbility report used?

Missouri AgrAbility professionals will use the information gathered from your on-site farmstead assessments to develop an AgrAbility report or plan of action that outlines your specific needs, options and goals as discussed with you and the AgrAbility team.

The AgrAbility report will explain and provide a short description of:

- Your current disease, disability or chronic health condition(s)
- Your farm or ranch operation, including personal goals and objectives
- Occupational barriers and functional limitations that prevent you from completing your essential work at a desired level of independence
- A plan that includes appropriate accommodations and suggestions to help protect and preserve your overall quality of life and livelihood as a farmer or rancher

The AgrAbility report will be written as soon as possible after visiting your farm or ranch operation and sent to you in a timely manner. Upon receiving the AgrAbility report, please understand it is your responsibility to follow through with the AgrAbility action plan it provides.

Missouri AgrAbility staff members and professionals are here to help facilitate, coordinate and monitor your progress toward your goals. Above all, they hope to foster good decision making and responsibility sharing, while helping you feel in control of your vocational situation. If necessary, Missouri AgrAbility staff members and professionals will also help contact service providers and potential funding sources to support your attempt to receive accommodations for the home, farm or ranch.



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension East Central Region



MO AgrAbility Client Farmer from MU Extension East Central Region

Photo credits: Linda Geist, MU Extension



Click the image above to view a profile of AgrAbility client (MU Extension Northeast Region), Zane Volkmann, or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtZKwKnUXok&t=2s>.

Photo and video credit: MU Extension

Missouri AgrAbility resources

AgrAbility — Missouri’s mission is to enhance and protect quality of life and preserve livelihoods. The purpose of the AgrAbility Project is to help increase the likelihood that farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and farm family members, who are limited by any type of disability or chronic health condition employed in production agriculture or agriculture-related occupations become more successful. AgrAbility links the extension service at a land-grant university with a nonprofit disability service organization to provide practical education and direct assistance that promotes rural independence. AgrAbility staff offers practical solutions to individuals who work on small or large operations as well as services to hobby, part-time, farmworkers or seasonal operators.

- **Email:** AgrAbility@missouri.edu
- **Toll-free:** 800-995-8503
- **Website:** agrability.missouri.edu

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Associations create opportunities for people with disabilities through research, education and consultation.

- **Website:** <https://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory-results/MO>

Governor’s Council on Disability — State of Missouri Disability Portal promotes full participation and inclusion of the nearly 1 million Missourians with disabilities in all aspects of community life by educating citizens, businesses, schools, universities and others of their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Email:** gcd@oa.mo.gov
- **Toll-free:** 800-877-8249 (v/tty)
- **Local phone:** 573-751-2600 (v/tty)
- **Website:** disability.mo.gov/gcd/

Lincoln University Cooperative Extension — Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) helps small farmers of Missouri, especially those who are socially disadvantaged and under-served, to raise the level of efficiency on their farms. The ISFOP help farmers become aware and assist them to access resources, so that they can improve their farming operations, which in turn will improve their overall well-being.

- **Local phone:** 573-681-5000
- **Website:** <https://www.lincolnu.edu/web/programs-and-projects/innovative-small-farmers-outreach-program>

Missouri Assistive Technology Project

operates an Equipment Technology Consortium short-term assistive technology equipment loan program for school districts and agencies in Missouri. It offers three programs that assist in providing low-cost assistive technology to individuals with disabilities and supports eight assistive technology demonstration centers across the state of Missouri.

- **Email:** info@mo-at.org
- **Local phone:** 816-655-6700
- **TTY:** 816-655-6711
- **Website:** <https://at.mo.gov/>

Missouri Department of Agriculture

(MDA) is located in Jefferson City, Mo. and dedicated to the promotion and protection of the state's agriculture industry. With nearly 100,000 farms on more than 28 million acres of farmland, the state's Department of Agriculture works to connect farmers with consumers. The Department of Agriculture houses five divisions including Ag Business Development, Animal Health, Grain Inspection & Warehousing, Plant Industries and Weights, Measures & Consumer Protection. These divisions work each day to promote and protect the backbone of the state's economy.

- **Email:** aginfo@mda.mo.gov
- **Local phone:** 573-751-4211
- **Website:** <https://agriculture.mo.gov/aboutMDA.php>

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

is an agency that assists Missourians, including farmers, ranchers and farmworkers, who want to work but have a disability that keeps them from finding or keeping a job. VR specializes in employment and training services that potentially assist Missourians in becoming employed. To be eligible for VR services, Missourians need to have a physical or mental impairment that causes them problems with working and need VR services to be successfully employed.

- **Email:** info@vr.dese.mo.gov
- **Toll-free:** 877-222-8963
- **TTY:** 573-751-0881
- **Website:** <https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation>

Missouri Rehabilitation Service for the Blind (RSB)

has a mission to create opportunities for eligible blind and visually impaired persons, including farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers, in order that they can attain personal and vocational success. RSB provides services to people with varying degrees of visual impairment, ranging from those who cannot read regular print to those who are totally blind. Services are provided on the premise that with adequate preparation and reasonable accommodation, each blind or visually impaired person will be able to achieve his or her maximum potential in the home, community, educational settings and employment.

- **Email:** askrsb@dss.mo.gov
- **Toll-free:** 800-592-6004
- **Website:** <https://dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/>

University of Missouri Extension uses science-based knowledge to engage people to understand change, solve problems and make informed decisions. MU Extension makes university education and information accessible for economic viability, empowered individuals, strong families and communities and healthy environments. MU Extension is a partnership of the University of Missouri campuses, Lincoln University, the people of Missouri through county extension councils and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- **Statewide locations:** <https://extension.missouri.edu/locations>
- **People directory:** <https://extension.missouri.edu/people>
- **Website:** <https://extension.missouri.edu>

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA)

national administrative functions are managed in Washington, D.C. Computational and statistical work is done in Kansas City. Implementation of farm policy through FSA programs is the responsibility of field offices based in states, counties and territories. The organizational structure of FSA is laid out by Congress and overseen by the secretary of agriculture.

- **Website, FSA State Offices:** <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Missouri/index>
- **Website, FSA County Offices:** <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?service=page/CountyMap&state=MO&stateName=Missouri&stateCode=29>
- **Website, Find An Employee With the Online Directory Tool:** <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/employeeDirectory/app>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

in Missouri is designed to their customer service and field office support. NRCS has 100 field offices serving 114 counties employing nearly 400 people. In addition to field offices, NRCS also has technical offices. These offices support soil survey, watershed projects, water quality, outreach, resource conservation and development and plant materials. The State Office, located in Columbia, provides technical and administrative support for all other offices and is made up of nine separate teams. They are Administration and Finance, Engineering, Field Technical Services, Human Resources, Public Affairs, Resource Inventory and Assessment, State Conservationist's staff and Water Resources.

- **Website, NRCS State Office:** <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/home/>

Veterans – Missouri (VA) offers a new veteran, longtime veteran, family member of a veteran, or survivor of a veteran information and resources to meet your needs in one handy location.

- **Website:** <https://www.mo.gov/veterans/>

Meet the team

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Coordinator and Farm Outreach Worker,
Lawrence and Greene Counties

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Innovative Small Farmer's Outreach Program

About the ISFOP

The ISFOP is part of Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE), created to help the small farmers and ranchers of Missouri, especially those who are socially disadvantaged and underserved, to raise the level of efficiency on their farms while taking good care of the soil, water and the environment. A vast body of resources is available from universities, government agencies and all sorts of organizations for small farmers. Unfortunately, many of the small farmers and ranchers are unaware of the information on opportunities. ISFOP will make farmers aware and assist them to access these resources so that they can improve their farms and farming operations, which in turn will improve their overall well-being.

The information provided by ISFOP to small farmers will help them adapt to a rapidly changing economy. We work in partnership with the University of Missouri Extension (UME), other USDA and state agencies and nongovernmental organizations to provide research-based information on various farm topics to help farmers:

- Lower input costs.
- Improve farming skills.
- Increase yields/productions.
- Improve record keeping systems.
- Try new enterprises.
- Find niche markets and improve marketing skills.
- Add value to the harvest/products.

Urban Focus

In addition to working with small farmers and ranchers, we also focus on urban food production in the two largest cities in our work area. One of our goals is to help limited resource minority residents, especially the elderly, get access to fresh, nutritious produce. We have formed partnerships with various groups and community garden organizations that promote urban agriculture. If you are interested in growing a garden in your backyard or in your neighborhood, please contact us.

Eligibility

You are eligible to participate in the ISFOP if:

- Your family lives on a farm.
- Your family provides the management and most of the labor on your farm.
- Your total family income is less than \$50,000 annually.
- You have innovative ideas, and you want to improve your farm income.
- You are a new farmer or an urban gardener in need of assistance.

Contact

- **Website:** www.lincolnu.edu/web/programs-and-projects/innovative-small-farmers-outreach-program
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/LUCE.ISFOP/

Do you have...an amputation • arthritis • a back injury • a vision impairment or blindness • a cardiac problem • cerebral palsy • a cognitive impairment • a hearing impairment or deafness • diabetes • mental illness • multiple sclerosis • muscular dystrophy • post-polio syndrome • a respiratory problem • a spinal cord injury • post-stroke conditions • a traumatic brain injury • other disabling conditions?

Missouri AgrAbility can... help determine if you're eligible for agency services

**WE WANT
TO SERVE
YOU!**



perform a customized, on-site assessment of your farm or ranch

recommend effective and safe solutions to help you overcome limitations

provide educational resources to support your goals

connect you with a peer support network

Find us online!

- Facebook.com/MOAgriAbility
- Twitter.com/MOAgriAbility
- Instagram @moagrability

Contact us at:

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