

A Letter from Allen Featherstone

Another fall semester is passing quickly. As we near the end of the semester, I would like to highlight some of the departmental teaching, research, and extension accomplishments within the department.

Recently, we hosted the annual awards banquet and awarded over \$230,000 in scholarships to our students. Our department continues to outperform the university average with a department 80% graduation rate. We brought in our largest freshman class ever due to the strength of our curriculum and the demand for our graduates.

Our graduate students have worked with industry, and we're pleased to share Emilie Herbst's internship story with you.

One of our land grant missions is to produce applied research to issues facing residents in our state. As an example, The Office of Local Government worked closely with community officials to develop a co-responder program concerning mental health issues. We provide a closer look at the project, including other stakeholders working to implement the program.

Our achievements are directly related to the continued support of our alumni and corporate sponsorships. This support helps us provide our students and outreach programs the proper foundation to continue our tradition of excellence. We appreciate the dedication and engagement of our alumni and outside supporters. Thank-you to our generous donors who give back to the Department. If you have interest in knowing areas for investment, let me know.

Please take time to learn more about the activities of our department. We also encourage you to share your career and family developments so we can keep your fellow alumni informed. Please email me at afeather@ksu.edu or Thomas Reust, at tomreust@ksu.edu with information you would like to share with your fellow alumni.



SCHOLARSHIPS

The Department of Agricultural Economics recently held their annual Scholarship and Awards Banquet at the KSU Alumni Center. Family, guests, donors and faculty members joined scholarship recipients and students at the banquet. The department awarded \$230,000 in scholarship funds to over 100 undergraduate and graduate students from across the globe for the 2017-2018 academic year.

The scholarships recognize students for their academic and leadership achievements and support their continuing education. These students have at least a 3.5 GPA while 22 have achieved a 4.0 GPA in their respective programs.

Undergraduate program coordinator, Dr. Christine Wilson, says she appreciates the commitment and support from donors. "Our alumni and industry donors provide incredible support for our students."

Dr. Allen Featherstone, department head for agricultural economics, says he believes it is important for donors to realize the difference they are making. "Scholarships help reduce the financial stress in student's lives and allows them to concentrate more on their studies as opposed to spending many hours working to support their studies. I'm confident that these students will be leaders in industry, academia and solving real world issues in their future."

DEPARTMENT UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

The Department of Agricultural Economics continues strong with 454 undergraduate students despite a lag in university enrollment. In fact, new freshmen enrollment increased again this year for the 8th time in the last 10 years. Our strong and diverse curriculum combined with our outstanding teaching continue to provide a valuable and marketable education to our students. Our job placement remains excellent at 98% with starting salaries averaging about \$47,000.

Our undergraduate majors include a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness and a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a major in Agricultural Economics. Our department also offers Minors in both Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics.

The Agricultural Economics major offers focus areas in Farm Management, Quantitative Agricultural Economics, and a self-defined Specialty focus that students determine providing the ultimate opportunity to tailor student interests and desired knowledge.

Common Specialty areas of focus are pre-law, pre-veterinary medicine, natural resources and environmental sciences, agronomy, animal sciences, finance, risk management, data analytics, accounting, sales, marketing, and statistics. This is not a complete list of specialty areas as a student has the opportunity to select essentially any practical area as a specialty focus. The flexibility to design a targeted area of focus in their curriculum is appreciated and valued by students.

The Agribusiness Degree offers three business-centered focus areas, Agribusiness, International, and Food

Industry. With a similar core curriculum as the Agricultural Economics major, students in the Agribusiness Degree build the same fundamental economic decision-making skills while further developing their focus on agribusiness, international agribusiness, or food industry agribusiness.

Our students continue to secure valuable internship experiences, study abroad opportunities, and leadership opportunities, contributing to a well-rounded educational experience. Our faculty continue leading in their areas of expertise and continue to be recognized in teaching, research, and extension and outreach with local and national awards each year. The department is continuing its tradition of excellent programs, faculty and staff, and students.

Finally, we are continuing to adjust our curriculum to emerging needs. We are in the process of approving an Agriculture Sales course. This will provide students across campus an opportunity to understand the skills needed and methods used in the Food and Agricultural industry.

We urge those who are interested in finding out more to contact our undergraduate program coordinator, Cherie Hodgson, at chodgson@k-state.edu or at 785.532.4559.

TEACHING MATTERS

With three years of data collected, Dr. Elizabeth Yeager, and Dr. Jason Bergtold are conducting research to determine if where students sit in class impacts their grades.



The research is focused on where students sit spatially in a stadium-style classroom, whether in the front, back, middle or along the sides, as well as whom they choose to sit next to. Much of the data the two are working with is from Dr. Bryan Schurle, who retired from the department last May, Yeager said. She and Bergtold are using Schurle's detailed seating charts from when he taught Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (AG ECON 120).

Current AG ECON 120 students in Bergtold's classes are also contributing to a new data set. Yeager said she has not started doing interviews with the students, but Bergtold has started getting volunteers to contribute to the data with information about study habits, who students prefer to work with, involvement on campus and other factors that might contribute to their performance in the class.

Both Yeager and Bergtold are stepping out of their primary field of study for this research. Both have said it is still relevant to what they do given their teaching appointments and would like to explore the classroom setting more.

"I typically allow my students to choose their seats for the semester, and I have found that whether or not they are asked to continue sitting in the same seat, they do sit in almost the exact same spot every class period. There's obviously a comfort factor."

It is this comfort factor Yeager and Bergtold wish to explore. Bergtold said what this research could help do is



support instructors in learning how to help students get the most from their time in the classroom. Bergtold said he hopes the research can be used to improve classroom environments, no matter the education level. Yeager said the research could be applied to any classroom using stadium-style seating, which can make group work and student engagement difficult.

“I am hoping results from this research will help to identify strategies and practices that will better enable instructors to engage students in the classroom and learning process,” Bergtold said.

Yeager and Bergtold have presented their initial research at an Agricultural and Applied Economics Association conference and are in the process of getting it published. The project is ongoing, and the researchers hope to ultimately be able to provide fellow professors data that will help them determine the best way to structure classrooms for optimal learning.

INTERNSHIP

Emilie Herbst, master’s student in agricultural economics, interned with Cargill Starches and Sweeteners’ Feed Products Group as a demand analyst in Blair, Nebraska. She was then offered a job after she graduates in May 2018, in the same location. “The people were really fun to work with, and it’s something I really enjoy doing,” Herbst said. “I got to apply a lot of the skills I’ve learned in my master’s program.”



This Cargill Group focuses on developing and producing branded feed products for feedlots and dairies domestically, and aquaculture customers globally. As a demand analyst intern, Herbst helped the company develop a new pricing model for Empyreal, their fish feed. She also had to determine shrink at customer feedyards.

“When in class, students often think, ‘when am I ever going to use this?’ and then you actually use it, see how it works and understand why it was important to learn.” Herbst said.

As an intern, Herbst worked closely with an analyst and was able to experience first-hand how professionals in the field develop a project plan and timeline, coordinate with relevant leaders, gain insights, test hypotheses and validate results, and then how to communicate progress and outcomes.

The job at Cargill will be one Herbst has been working for since her undergraduate career at Texas A&M. Her interest was always in agriculture, and she enjoys the economics side of agriculture.

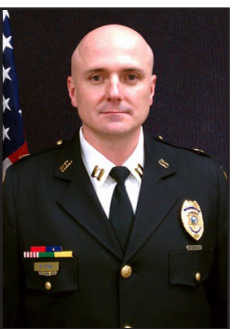
Cargill is a multinational company specializing in agricultural consumer goods in the global marketplace. The company processes a wide range of commodities to fill feed and fuel needs for their customers. One of their key missions is “creating efficiencies, developing innovations, and helping communities thrive.”

OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Dr. John Leatherman, professor in the Agricultural Economics Department, is the director of the Office of Local Government (OLG), and his mission is to give communities the ability to face the challenges of good governance. The Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation, or CAPE, is part of a national initiative to couple the expertise of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration with the community know-how of the USDA Cooperative Extension Service to build capacity and launch programs to tackle mental health and substance abuse challenges communities are facing. Currently, the CAPE initiative is supporting an active program working within Riley County with mental health care providers, local leaders and first responders to provide mental health experts for first response units for the community.



Leatherman says the program has expanded from the initial stages of implementation. “Our formal project was to test an early-warning community behavioral health surveillance system. We recruited key informants from various institutions throughout the county and regularly asked them to report what they were seeing for a period of a year. We reported findings to the Riley County Mental Health Task Force where I observed ongoing work and discussion around such activities as the co-responder program and the crisis center.”



The co-responder program is a partnership between the Riley County Police Department and Pawnee Mental Health Services, the regional mental health services provider. Mental health professionals work with police department officials while on patrol and at the county jail.

Captain Richard Fink is the Riley County Police Patrol Unit commander and believes the program shows how research and community outreach has made a difference in his department’s mission to protect and serve, “the co-responders respond to calls involving mental health in the field. They have the ability to interact with people in crisis and provide options to the responding officers as well as helpful resources to the person in need. Without the co-responder the officer really has three options when it comes to dealing with a person in crisis: they can arrest if a crime has been committed; they can take the person into police protective custody, if the person makes very specific statements; or they can do their best to resolve the immediate problem and leave. The co-responders can do a field evaluation of a person in crises and give the officer the authority to take that person into protective custody. This is a real benefit because if the person does not say certain things the officer has no other option then to leave or arrest if a crime exists. The co-responders are aiding people in crisis to receive help and services instead of being arrested.”



Director of Jail operations, Captain Kurt Muldrop says he's seeing the benefits of the research and capacity building first hand, "The co-responders come to the jail to meet with the many inmates we have when they are experiencing a mental health crisis. These range from suicidal thoughts and actions, to those that are hearing voices, hallucinating, or acting aggressively. Co-responders are involved in helping train staff to better work with inmates that have mental health issues. They also provide suggestions to myself and staff regarding any actions we can take in certain cases to handle some inmates in crisis. They have acted somewhat as a link to other area services that inmates can use once they are released."

One of the new efforts of the program is a proposed mental health "stabilization" center with partnerships including Pawnee Mental Health and other local governments in the area.

Dr. Leatherman believes this kind of inter-local communication and cooperation enhances the ability to team-build for other problems that may arise in the future and says, "In Riley County, we had probably the best participation of any of the communities from around the country participating in the project. The project sponsors viewed what was going on in Riley County as a model. It boils down to community leaders regularly talking to one another and helping each other. That includes mental health, health care, police officials, local government, and others."

Leatherman says his next program will focus on helping communities face the growing opioid crisis. "The Office of Local Government has to be agile, and have the ability to use our strengths to safeguard communities from the issues they are having today."

The Office of Local Government operates under the Department of Agricultural Economics, and more information can be found at <http://www.ksu-olg.info> .



RESEARCH AND EXTENSION AWARDS

Several Department of Agricultural Economics faculty and staff received awards for their extension work focusing on financial downturn occurring in production agriculture. Recently, at the 2017 Annual Kansas State Research and Extension conference, Associate Professor Dr. Mykel Taylor and Extension Assistant and Director of the Kansas Farm Analyst Program Duane Hund were recognized for their outstanding extension performance. In addition, the Farm Management Program Focus Team was also recognized.

Dr. Taylor received the "Outstanding Area or State Extension Professional" Award, and says she credits the team for engaging with the effort, "Extension programs are largely a result of teamwork between specialists, county agents, and the producers needing up-to-date information. I was honored to receive the award, but would not have earned it without the help of others."



Hund received the “Professional Staff Employee of the Year” Award. His work has had a substantial impact across Kansas over the years, but most especially during the downturn in the farm economy.

The Farm Management team received the 2017 K-State Research and Extension “Outstanding Program Focus Team” Award. Agricultural Economics Faculty and staff on this team are: Dr. Art Barnaby, Dr. Allen Featherstone, Dr. Gregg Hadley, Kevin Herbel, Duane Hund, Dr. Gregg Ibendahl, Dr. Rich Llewelyn, Dr. Dan O’Brien, Robin Reid, Dr. Mykel Taylor, and Dr. Glynn Tonsor. Other team members include: Eric Atkinson, Forrest Buhler, Darren Busick, Marty Gleason, Lucas Haag, Darl Henson, David

Kehler, Glenn Newdigger, Mark Ploger, Elly Sneath, and Matthew Young.

The Farm Management Program Focus Team presented the program entitled “Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy” at eight locations to over 800 producers, lenders, and industry professionals across the state. It featured fielding FINPACK software training and providing alternative planning techniques to maximize profits during the market downturn.

Department head Dr. Allen Featherstone nominated the individuals and the team, “Their work in providing assistance to struggling farm families through educational programs and providing professional development opportunities for all extension agents across the state is a great example of excellence in extension.”

“I believe the Farm Management Program Focus Team has played an important role in training agents and providing excellent programs and services to Kansas producers. The Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy series coupled with the expanded Farm Analyst one-on-one services, succeeded in bringing a very helpful educational program to many producers.” says Dr. Featherstone.



The team is working on a new program entitled “Farming for the Future,” that is set to begin in December. More information on the new program can be found at AgManager.info/events/farming-future.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The KSU Agricultural Economics Emeritus Faculty and Friends Scholarship Fund for competitive graduate student assistance has provided \$33,000 to outstanding M.S. and Ph.D. students since 2010. Earnings will be available in March 2017 helping the Department remain competitive in recruiting high quality graduate students. The Fund has now reached over \$176,000 towards meeting our initial goal of \$250,000.

We rely on the Emeritus Faculty and Friends Scholarship Fund as one of the PRIMARY sources of funds allowing us to be a competitive program. The “topping off” provided by the scholarship funds have in many cases allowed us to bring in students we might otherwise have lost.

Public support for research and graduate student assistance continues to decline. The Emeritus Faculty and Friends Fund will continue to provide much needed support through your generous donations. Your past and continued support is greatly appreciated.

Kansas State University and Kansas Agriculture is now reaping the dividends of our investment in tomorrow's leaders in Agriculture.

We appreciate and thank you for your support of this scholarship and department donations you have provided.

Please contact us for more details on how to make your pledge, and for additional options to support the program including:

Make a Tax-Wise Deferred Gift of Stocks, Property, Life Insurance

Including the Fund in my Will or Trust

Commodity Gifts

Other Planned Giving Options

Please contact our Department Program Coordinator Judy Maberry via email: judym@ksu.edu, or you can use the address and phone number below to receive more information on giving your gift.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Farming for the Future

Farmers and ranchers are currently experiencing one of the largest financial downturns with several parallels to the 1980's. Planning for the future is critical for the short-term viability of the farm business but also for the long-term growth and sustainability of the farming legacy.

This program will offer a host of outlook talks to assist in planning for the upcoming years. Having a grasp of input costs and projected prices can assist in making equipment purchasing decisions, land rental arrangements, cattle and grain marketing plans, and much more. Managing a farm's financials will also be discussed, as it pertains to the current economic times.

At the end of the program there will be sign-up opportunities to work one-on-one with a K-State Farm Analyst. These appointments will be locally offered approximately 3 weeks after the Farming for the Future program to assist producers in gathering their financial information and planning for the upcoming year and future direction of their business by looking at the expected financial outcomes on their farms.

December 14, 2017

Pratt

3 more upcoming dates

Farm Financial Workshops

Farm Financial Workshop Information:

A Farm Analyst will work directly with your family to assess your current financial position and possible changes your farm could make to increase farm profitability and cash flow. Your family will come away with a balance sheet, enterprise budgets, base business plan, and alternative business plan scenarios.

January 11 - 12, 2018

Salina

4 more upcoming dates

Risk and Profit Conference

See 2017 presentations [HERE](#).

An annual conference hosted by the Department of Agricultural Economics that provides an opportunity for key agricultural decision makers to interact with each other and with faculty on important topics in agriculture.

Questions? Rich Llewelyn at rwl@ksu.edu(link sends e-mail)(link sends e-mail) or 785.532.1504.

August 16 - 17, 2018

Manhattan