

# The Exchange eNewsletter • Summer 2021



**KANSAS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**Agricultural Economics**



## From the desk of Dr. Allen Featherstone

Summer is rapidly coming to a close and we are planning for a more “normal” fall semester as the University has phased out many of the COVID-19 protocols. We are looking forward to fall programs and events!

In this enewsletter, we share updates on Spring Commencement, celebrate awards Agricultural Economics students received, provide updates on AgManager.info and graduate student job placements. We are also pleased to announce one of our graduate student agribusiness case teams recently won the “World Championship” at the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association conference. You can read more about all of these topics in this enewsletter.

Our achievements are directly related to the continued support of our alumni and corporate sponsorships given the continued tight budgets. This support helps us provide our students and outreach programs the proper foundation to continue our tradition of excellence. If you have interest in investing in our programs, let me know. Please take time to learn more about the activities of our department.

We encourage you to share your career and family developments so we can keep your fellow alumni informed. Please email me at [afeather@ksu.edu](mailto:afeather@ksu.edu) or Mary Bowen, our communication coordinator, at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) with information you would like to share with your fellow alumni.

*Allen M Featherstone*

**Dr. Allen Featherstone**

Department Head, Professor, Master of Agribusiness Program Director



# Spring Commencement 2021

After not having any commencement ceremonies last year, we were excited to be able to celebrate our graduates in May! All together, the Agricultural Economics Department graduated 90 students during the spring.

The department was also pleased that Ag Econ Ph.D. candidate, Hannah Shear, was selected to be the Graduate School Commencement speaker.

"I was approached by Vice Provost/Dean Claudia Petrescu, and asked if I would consider serving as the Graduate School's commencement speaker. She said that as a 'new' arrival on campus she had asked around and she had heard my name from several people in regards to being an active and engaged graduate student on campus," Shear said. "I was honored to be asked to speak, but was also unsure if I could manage to say anything meaningful or memorable.

"After the past year-and-a-half, many of the graduate students had spent a large portion of their studies in a less than ideal situation. Some students had lost loved ones, jobs, had technology struggles, and more. So I wanted to be sure to recognize that, but I didn't want the speech to be centered around the pandemic. So I chose to encourage our graduates to have grace over success.

"In a combined graduation (Spring 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021) there were more than 700 graduates, so I kept it short, and hopefully sweet," she said.

Here's the speech she shared with graduates:

## **Grace Over Success**

*Congratulations. You did it! You have successfully achieved a graduate degree. You have achieved a level of education that a very small percentage of the world population reaches. You have succeeded in your academic endeavors and you deserve to be recognized for all of your hard work. That hard work may have felt insurmountable given all that has happened over the course of the past year. But you persevered. You succeeded.*

*Success is generally defined as "the accomplishment of an aim or purpose". For each of you, your short-term aim was to achieve a graduate degree. Thus, as a participant in this graduation, you are, by definition, a*

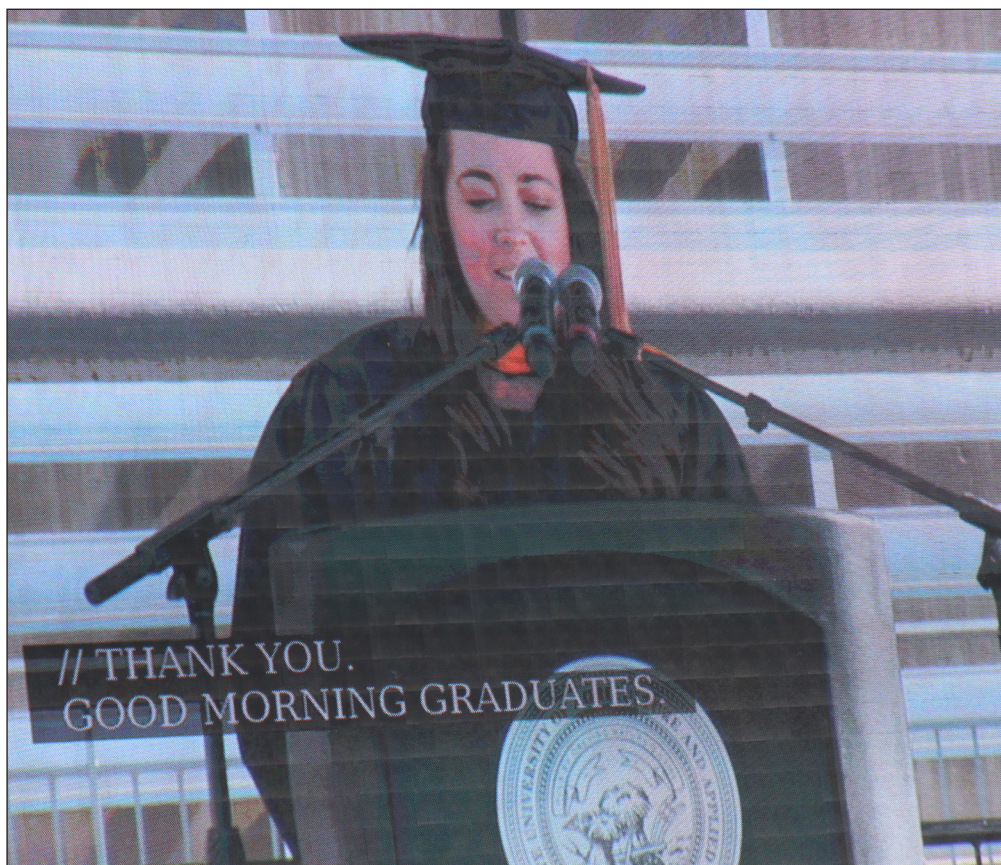
*success. As you each move forward you will define for yourself a new aim or purpose. I know you will take the knowledge you have gained in your time here at Kansas State University and leverage it to be successful yet again.*

*So you can call yourself resilient, persistent, and successful as a graduate of Kansas State University. But I want to encourage you, as you leave this place, to consider placing grace before success.*

*Grace can be defined as "courteous goodwill". I implore you all, as members of the K-State family to always put grace before success. Be gracious in your words, actions, deeds, and choices. Pick up the piece of litter on the ground, return the shopping cart to the stall, comfort someone in need, nominate someone for an award, celebrate another's achievement, send a note to a loved one, be free with forgiveness and stingy with anger. Be harder on yourself and easier on others. Respect one another and our differences, hold the elevator, volunteer, beautify your surroundings.*

*If you make your aim or purpose to do all things with grace, then you will without a doubt be successful. So as you leave here today to celebrate, go with pride, go with the knowledge that you are forever a part of the K-State family, and go with grace.*

*Congratulations graduates.*



Hannah Shear, Ph.D. candidate providing the Spring 2021 Commencement address.



# K-State Team Wins IFAMA World Student Case Study Championship

K-State's Graduate Students of Agricultural Economics (GSAE) Case Study Team of John Green, Lauren Benavidez, and Megan Hill recently competed in the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA) Student Case Competition. The team was awarded 1st Place in the Graduate Division out of a field of 26 teams from around the world.

"It was a very fulfilling experience having real-life company issues to solve strategically with the knowledge acquired from our master's program studies," Benavidez said. "The group dynamic was great as everyone came up with ideas from our diverse backgrounds and that made the contest also an enjoyable experience."

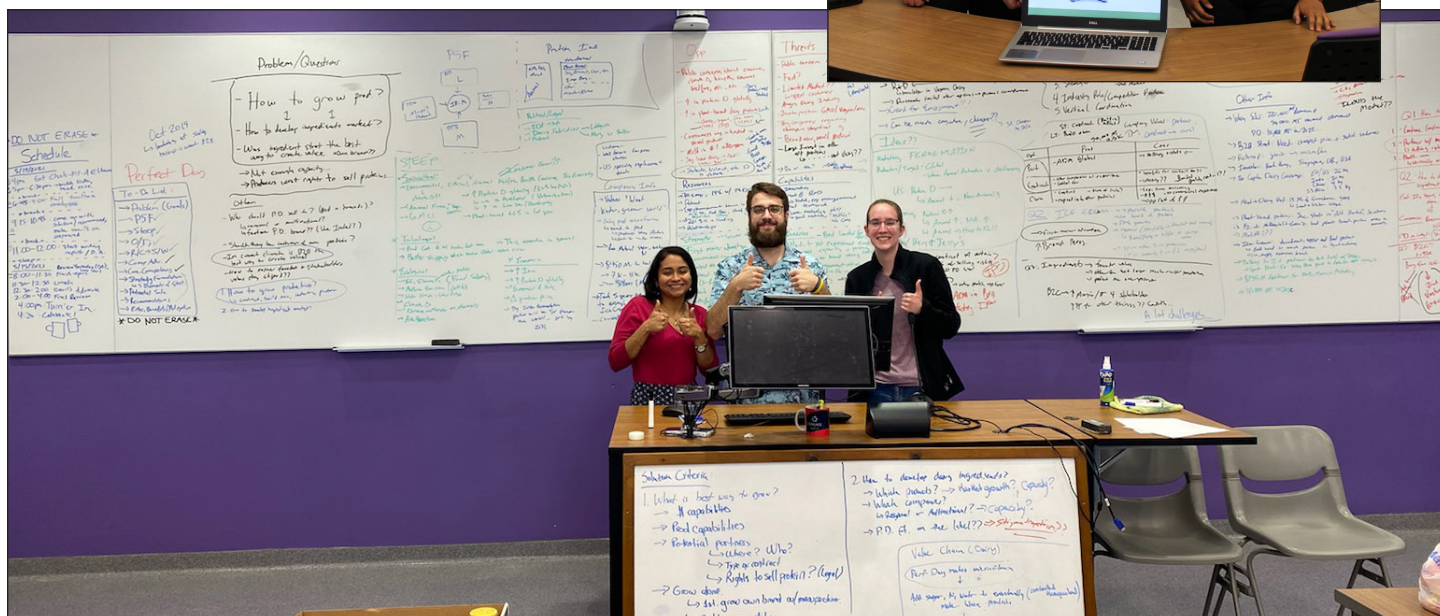
IFAMA conducts the competition at its annual conference, but due to COVID, the 2021 contest was conducted virtually. During the competition, teams review a selected company and provide recommendations to a panel of senior management judges.

"The IFAMA Student Case Study Competition was held virtually this year and consisted of two rounds. In the preliminary round, we had 24 hours to read and analyze a case study over the company Perfect Day and write a five-page report giving our recommendations to the company," Hill said. "In the final round, we had four hours to read part two of the case study and create a presentation with our recommended solutions. Immediately after the four hours ended, we gave our presentation to the judges over Zoom. This was a challenging experience because of the time constraints, but it gave us the opportunity to use the skills we

learned in the classroom and apply them to real issues that companies face."

The team wins a cash award; opportunities for internships and interviews with the sponsoring companies; an opportunity to serve on a sustainability council for Perfect Day--the company featured in the case study; and complimentary conference attendance for the IFAMA in-person conference in Costa Rica in 2022.

"John, Lauren, and Megan worked hard and were determined to successfully represent KSU in this international competition," Dr. Aleksan Shanoyan, Associate Professor and the team's faculty advisor, said. "Taking 1st place in this global competition indicates the quality of our graduate students and the world-class agribusiness education they receive in the Department of Agricultural Economics at KSU. This continues the tradition of our students placing top in national and international competitions."



Lauren Benavidez, John Green and Megan Hill preparing for their case study competition presentation.

# Agricultural Economics Outstanding Seniors

The Agricultural Economics Department selected five students to receive the Department's 2021 Outstanding Senior Award. The award recognizes seniors in the Agricultural Economics Department for their significant contributions during their time at K-State.

"It is always a pleasure to recognize the outstanding seniors in our department. It is exciting to be reminded about the exceptional things our students are doing academically as well as serving their peers and communities," Dr. Elizabeth Yeager, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics and Director of Undergraduate Programs, said. "This group of students has been challenged as they faced virtual learning, changes in internships, and disruptions to their final three semesters at K-State. Despite that, they have thrived. We appreciate their resiliency, all of their contributions and wish them the best as they become alumni of the Department of Agricultural Economics."

The following students were recipients of Agricultural Economics Outstanding Senior Award:

**MiKayla Deters, Sabetha, Kansas**, completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agribusiness with the international option and a secondary major in Global Food Systems Leadership. Deters has been involved with many activities on campus. She was a member of Blue Key Senior Honorary as the Director of Nationals and Scholarship, as well as being involved with Sigma Alpha Ag Sorority and National Agri-Marketing Association. She has completed internships with Cargill Animal Nutrition and John Deere. She accepted employment in Cargill's Animal Nutrition

Business in Olathe, Kansas as a Management Associate. Her career interests lie in pricing, merchandising, and strategic marketing. She plans to pursue a Masters of Agribusiness after several years in industry and eventually transition into running her own business and operating the family-farm.

"I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to be recognized by the agricultural economics department as an outstanding senior. Looking back on my experience at K-State, I know that the department has been instrumental in my development and boasting the best faculty and staff on campus. It's truly been an amazing four years!" Deters said.

**Rebecca Hernandez, Fort Worth, Texas**, completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, majoring in Agricultural Economics with a specialty in optimization and a minor in Statistics. Hernandez has started a two-year Technical Research Associate position at MIT Sloan School of Management. Hernandez intends to pursue a PhD in Economics in the future. She is a McNair Scholar and was actively engaged in research with Dr. Schwab throughout her time in our program.

"From the moment I stepped into the Ag Econ Department I felt at home. All the students, professors, and staff were always so welcoming and that made it easy for me to form relationships which have helped me to excel in my coursework. I used to joke that Waters Hall was my real home away from home and not my apartment because of how often I would be there in my free time. It truly is an honor to be selected as one of the Outstanding Seniors,



***MiKayla Deters***



***Rebecca Hernandez***



***Megan Hill***



because my passion for Agricultural Economics was planted and nourished under the guidance and influence of the Ag Econ Department and I am forever grateful," Hernandez said.

**Megan Hill, Home, Kansas,** completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agribusiness with a minor in Animal Science and Industry in December 2020. Hill was actively involved in the leadership of NAMA. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University with an anticipated graduation date of May 2022. In 2019, Hill held a dual internship with Merck Animal Health in Desoto, KS and the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor in Kansas City, MO.

"I am very honored to be selected by the agricultural economics department as one of the Outstanding Seniors. The faculty and staff in this department played a huge role in making my time as an undergraduate student at K-State a fulfilling experience. I look forward to continuing my academic career in this department by pursuing a master's degree," Hill said.

**Dannell Kopp, Fairview, Kansas,** completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, majoring Agricultural Economics with a pre- veterinary specialty and a minor in Animal Science and Industry. Kopp is a member of the College of Agriculture Ambassadors, Alpha of Clovia, and the Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness club. Following graduation, she began working with Drs. Ted Schroeder and Robert Larson to collect data for their cow-calf record keeping and data transfer app. In August, she will start her course work in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University. Kopp's goal after graduation is to return to a rural community in Kansas where she can practice

veterinary medicine on production livestock animals.

"I truly appreciate being chosen for this distinguished honor. Majoring in Agricultural Economics with a Pre-Vet option was one of the best decisions I made during my undergraduate career," Kopp said.

**Amber Oerly, Boonville, Missouri,** completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, majoring in Agricultural Economics with a specialty in Policy. She was a transfer student from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College. While at K-State, she has been a student researcher with Dr. Glynn Tonsor and completed an internship in Washington, D.C. for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Oerly has co-published articles including her most recent publication in 2020: "Traceability, Biosecurity and Health Management by U.S. Feedlot Operations – 2018 Survey Summary." Following graduation, she will spend the summer in Denver, CO on an internship with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association in their beef sustainability research program. This fall Oerly will attend graduate school at K-State focusing on livestock economics and policy.

"I am extremely honored to be selected as an outstanding graduate in the agricultural economics department at Kansas state. Not only does the program have national recognition for research and extension work, the faculty also have a genuine desire to assist their students in becoming better scholars, professionals, and agriculturalists. I am certainly blessed that God led me to K-State for my undergraduate career," Oerly said.



## Class of 2021 Outstanding Seniors



***Dannell Kopp***



***Amber Oerly***

# K-State Alumni Association Awards

Each year the Alumni Association recognizes students annually with Anderson Senior Awards and Graduate Student Awards.

Faculty and peers nominate students for the awards, and committees consisting of members of the Alumni Association board of directors and K-State students select the recipients.

"These students are role models for leadership, community service, inspiration and academics and exemplify the caliber of students at K-State," said Tamie Redding, assistant director of student programs for the Alumni Association. "The Alumni Association is pleased to celebrate these students by recognizing them for their contributions to the Wildcat community."

The Anderson Senior Award recognizes four graduating seniors for excellence academics, leadership, inspiration and service. The award was established in 1998 and pays tribute to K-State's second president, John Anderson, who served from 1873 to 1879. Of the eight Anderson Awards, two were awarded to Agricultural Economics students.



**Riley Sleichter, Abilene, Kansas,** agribusiness, for inspiration.

In his own words: "As I reflect on my time at Kansas State I hope the biggest impact I leave is an aspiration for the students I was involved with to be filled with ambition to chase their

dreams and fulfill their goals. I have spent a lot of my time in Manhattan focused on helping develop others personally, professionally, and academically, and I love watching them succeed—whether it be getting that internship they worked for or successfully leading a group. Life can be full of so much more joy and purpose if you take the time to prioritize your personal goals and do what makes you feel fulfilled—that's the biggest impact I hope to leave: to encourage others to find their 'Why.'"

After graduation, Sleichter accepted a position with Deere and Company in their Marketing and Customer/Product Support Development Program.

**Thomas Smith, Windom, Kansas,** agricultural economics, for service.



"I don't know that I would say that I have one specific instance that I feel was my biggest impact on campus, however, I would say that my biggest impact has been in the relationships that I have made. As a freshman I had a lot of upperclassmen invest in me to help me and that really helped cultivated K-State Experience for the better. After that, I made it my goal to do the same and invest in the future of K-State. I was able to do this through my fraternity, Student Governing Association, College of Agriculture Student Council. Throughout these organizations I was able to work with others to help build and invest in my fellow K-State students in hopes to make their K-State experience better. In addition, I also worked at formerly New Student Services giving tours to perspective K-State Students in hopes of showing them the university that I love so much in hopes that they would choose to come here as well. It is through these interactions that I feel I was able to impact K-State and help shape its future leaders," Smith said.

Smith has accepted a position with StoneX Group, Inc., in Kansas City, MO as a Risk Management Consultant.

The Alumni Association recognizes two graduate students with its Graduate Student Award, which was established in 2010. The award recognizes outstanding graduate students for academics, service and leadership. One of the award winners was from Agricultural Economics.

**Hannah Shear, Winchester, Kentucky,** doctoral candidate in agricultural economics.

Shear has served the graduate community at K-State in a variety of positions. She served as President of both the Agricultural Economics Department Graduate Student Association (GSAE) and the Graduate Student Council (GSC). In addition to her formal leadership positions, Shear organized food drop-offs and childcare for students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She has accepted employment as an assistant professor in Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University.

"We celebrate with our students as they have been recognized for their hard work and leadership during their time in the Agricultural Economics Department," Dr. Allen Featherstone, department head, said. "Hannah, Riley and Thomas are all well deserving of these awards, and are positioned to make a lasting impact as they embark on their life's journey."



# Graduate Student Success

When choosing a graduate degree, many potential students want to know what types of jobs previous graduates taken or how successful the program is. One way to evaluate the quality of our graduate students is through their initial employment after completing their degrees.

"We have been very fortunate to attract outstanding graduate students over the past several years. I credit that not only to the current award winning faculty, but previous faculty that helped build and maintain the K-State Agricultural Economics brand that we are known for today," said Dr. Dustin L. Pendell, Agricultural Economics Professor and Director of Graduate Studies.

Recent M.S. students have taken jobs at:

- Wamego Telecommunications
- Kansas Farm Management Association
- CattleFax
- StoneX
- Smithfield Foods
- Kansas Department of Agriculture
- Northwest Farm Credit Services
- Kansas Farm Bureau
- continued on to Ph.D. programs

Our recent Ph.D. graduates have taken jobs as faculty at:

- University of Arkansas
- Kyunghee University, Korea
- University of Ghana, Ghana
- Makerere University, Uganda
- Iowa Wesleyan University
- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Bangladesh
- Georgia Military College
- Africa and Middle East Team Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)
- Post-Doctoral Fellows at University of Kentucky, Kansas State University, Louisiana State University and the University of California-Riverside
- and various government agencies including USDA-Economic Research Services and Korea Institute for International Economic Policy



# AgManager.info on the move

Weekly update emails for AgManager.info have been sent via K-State's listserv since we started doing this in 2007. That will change in mid-July, when we will send them out using Constant Contact.

This will make it easier for you to manage your subscription, and it will help us track which articles are viewed and relevant to our readers.

Emails on the current list have already been moved to the new system. To change your email or subscribe to the weekly Update go to <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/lyWKsyq>.

If you have questions, please contact Rich Llewelyn, [rwl@ksu.edu](mailto:rwl@ksu.edu).



## Upcoming Events

### Farm Financial Management Online

Available Now

Self-paced online course for farmers and ranchers of all types. Six Lessons: Recordkeeping, Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow, Managing Family Living Expenses, Goal Setting. Three case farm activities to apply what you learn. Contact Robin Reid for more information.

### Leadership Symposium for Cooperatives

Monday-Tuesday, August 16-17, 2021

K-State Alumni Center, Manhattan, KS

### Risk and Profit Conference

August 19-20,

K-State Alumni Center, Manhattan, KS and Virtual

This conference provides you with opportunities to interact with other producers as well as Ag Economics faculty. What you take home helps you make better risk and profit decisions.

### Agricultural Economics Scholarship Banquet

September 17, 2021, Manhattan, KS

### Agricultural Economics Tailgate

September 18, 2021

Cat Town, Manhattan, KS

KSU vs Nevada

### Ag Lenders Conference

K-State's annual Agricultural Lenders Conferences are designed to provide the Kansas financial community with updates on current agricultural topics, but it's not only for lenders and bankers. Producers, landlords, crop insurance agents, and agribusiness managers also attend.

- September 28, 2021, Garden City, KS
- September 29, 2021, Manhattan, KS

### CRMER Tailgate

October 2, 2021

Cat Town, Manhattan, KS

KSU vs OU

### Master of Agribusiness Tailgate

October 16, 2021

IGP Parking Lot, Manhattan, KS

KSU vs ISU

### Kansas Crop Insurance Workshop

- October 19, 2021, Colorado
- October 20, 2021, Grand Island, NE
- October 21, 2021, Salina, KS
- October 22, 2021, Enid, OK

### Kansas Income Tax Institute

The Kansas State University Department of Agricultural Economics invites you to attend the 73rd annual Kansas Income Tax Institute. The program is for tax professionals and is designed to provide up-to-date training on current tax law, regulations, and updates.

- October 25-26, 2021, Garden City, KS
- October 27-28, 2021, Hays, KS
- November 3-4, 2021, Zoom webinar
- November 8-9, 2021, Salina, KS
- November 9-10, 2021, Lawrence, KS
- November 22-23, 2021, Wichita, KS
- December 8-9, 2021, Pittsburg, KS
- December 13-14, 2021, Zoom webinar

### Celebrate Ag at KSU Football

November 13, 2021

Manhattan, KS

KSU vs West Virginia

### K-State Commencement

December 10-11 2021, Manhattan, KS