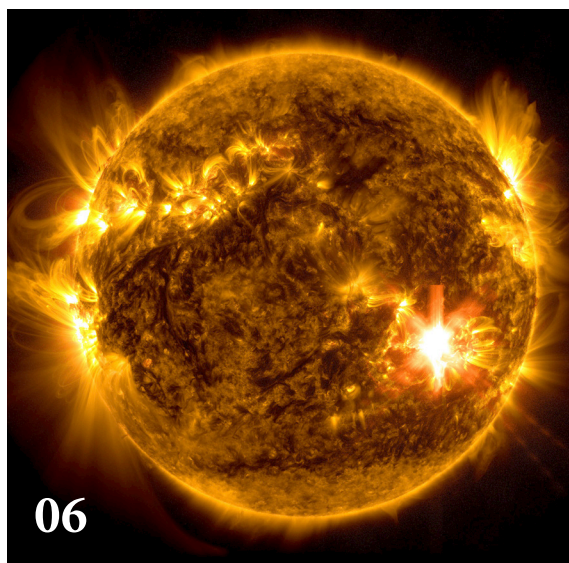




the **Exchange**

K-STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS | 2025

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Fall 2025

The Exchange is for Kansas State University Department of Agricultural Economics friends and alumni. If you have story ideas, comments, or suggestions, please let us know.

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On the Cover: A geomagnetic storm, often caused by solar activity like solar flares or coronal mass ejections, can lead to increased visibility of the aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) further south than usual.

Photo by Harlan Thomas
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From the Desk of

Dr. Allen Featherstone



We're thrilled to welcome you to the Fall 2025 Exchange. This issue is dedicated to celebrating the many achievements of our students and faculty, made possible by the unwavering support of our alumni and friends.

In the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University, excellence continues to be our standard. Our faculty and students have earned numerous awards for their outstanding contributions to teaching and research, including prestigious association Fellow and teaching awards for Dr. Ted Schroeder, Dr. Glynn Tonsor, and Dr. Aleksan Shanoyan, along with several others. Inside, you'll find updates on their latest research, global projects, and outreach efforts.

We're especially proud to announce our 2025 Distinguished Alumni, Phil Kirk, who will be honored at our annual scholarship and awards banquet this October along with 116 student scholarship recipients. This event is a testament to the incredible talent and dedication that comes from our department.

Your support is the foundation of our success. We are deeply grateful for the continued engagement of our alumni and corporate sponsors. The generosity of our donors is what allows us to continue providing a world-class education. If you are considering a year-end gift, please reach out to me directly to discuss departmental needs or visit our Give Back page to contribute.

If you'd like to order any agricultural economics shirts, jackets or hats, check our new online store at: <https://kstateagecon.itemorder.com/shop/home/>.

As always, we love hearing from you! Please share your personal and professional news so we can keep the K-State family connected. You can email me at afeather@ksu.edu or our communications coordinator, Mary Sullivan, at mjbowen@ksu.edu.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Go Cats!

Allen M Featherstone

Dr. Allen Featherstone

Department Head and Professor

Navigating the New Reality: AI and Teaching



Oct 9, 2022

Launch
GPT 3.5

GPT 4

K-STATE
LIBRARIES

Shanoyan shares findings from Coffman Chair research

Dr. Aleksan Shanoyan, professor of agricultural economics, was selected as the 2024-25 K-State Coffman Chair for Distinguished Teaching Scholar, recognizing his commitment to excellence in undergraduate teaching and learning. Each chair is an acknowledged leading teaching scholar and is provided the time and resources to conduct a research project or develop programs to improve educational methods at the university.

For his Coffman Chair project, Shanoyan explored the effects of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) on undergraduate teaching to gain a better understanding how it is affecting undergraduate instruction and to help faculty proactively navigate these changes.

"GAI is quickly reshaping the landscape of higher education. To better understand its impact, my research for the Coffman Chair on AI and Teaching explored how faculty perceive and interact with GAI in the classroom," Shanoyan said. "The results highlight a potential disconnect between faculty perception and the actual influence of GAI, revealing important takeaways for the academic community."

Key Takeaways and Surprising Discoveries

His research suggests that many faculty members might be underestimating the influence of GAI. A significant finding was that nearly 60% of instructors reported no perceived impact from GAI in their classrooms, a result that came as a major surprise.

However, a deeper dive into the data revealed a crucial link between personal experience and perception. Instructors who reported either using GAI themselves or having received training on it were more likely to report an impact.

"Our findings suggest that faculty may be underestimating the impact, both positive and negative, of GAI in the classroom. While nearly 60% of instructors reported no perceived impact, our analysis indicates that instructors' own GAI use and training influence their perception. A higher percentage of instructors with GAI training or personal use reported an impact, yet a significant portion of our survey pool lacked this experience—48% were non-users and 74% were untrained in GAI," he said.

Why This Research Matters

"I chose this topic because GAI is not just a passing trend; it's a profound change that requires us to be proactive. By providing research-based insights, we can help faculty navigate these changes more effectively. Understanding this potential blind spot—the lack of perceived impact—is the first step toward preparing both educators and students for a new reality where AI tools are an integral part of learning and work. The goal is to move from a reactive to a proactive approach, ensuring we harness the positive potential of GAI while addressing its challenges head-on," he said.

The Coffman chair was created in 1995 to highlight K-State's commitment to excellence in undergraduate teaching and learning. Recipients retain the title of teaching scholar throughout their career at K-State.

Our findings suggest that faculty may be underestimating the impact, both positive and negative, of GAI in the classroom. While nearly 60% of instructors reported no perceived impact, our analysis indicates that instructors' own GAI use and training influence their perception.



The Connection between of Agriculture

From fields to flares

When you think of space weather, solar flares, geomagnetic storms, and disruptions to GPS, you probably don't imagine Kansas farmland. But for Dr. Terry Griffin, professor of agricultural economics and precision agriculture economist at Kansas State University, the connection is undeniable.

Griffin was recently appointed to the Space Weather Advisory Group (SWAG), which supports the White House Subcommittee on Space Weather Operations, Research, and Mitigation (SWORM). He will serve through 2027, helping the U.S. prepare for the risks solar activity poses to GPS-dependent industries such as agriculture, construction, mining, and drilling.

"As a representative of our nation's end-users who are directly affected by space weather, I've been estimating potential economic damages to agriculture, construction, drilling, and mining when GPS technology, also known as GNSS, experiences signal degradation," Griffin said.

A lifelong fascination with space

Griffin's passion for space started long before his academic career.

"Astronomy has been my oldest hobby, probably inspired by the early Voyager images of Jupiter," he said. "In fifth grade, I got my first telescope and was able to see Halley's Comet plus the planets suspended on what appeared to be nothing."

The 1986 Challenger disaster briefly dampened his enthusiasm, but GPS technology rekindled his interest.

"When GPS became available for civilian use in the 1990s, I was able to combine agriculture and space in my master's thesis on the adoption and profitability of GPS technology, what we now call precision agriculture," Griffin explained.

Connecting space weather to farming

Griffin's research took a new turn in 2020, when colleagues at The Aerospace Corporation asked him to explore how ionospheric scintillation, solar flares, and other space weather events could affect agriculture.

"That was when I really started evaluating the economic impacts of GNSS disruptions," he said. "I presented at the Space Environment Engineering and Science Applications Workshop in 2021, where I discussed how degraded signals could affect farm profitability. Not long after, I was invited to speak to the White House Space Weather Advisory Group itself."

By 2024, Griffin was officially appointed to SWAG to represent end-users of GPS technology in agriculture and related industries.

Why this research matters right now



With the Sun entering solar maximum, GPS reliability is more at risk than usual.

"Although GPS has been used for agriculture since the mid-1990s, we are just now experiencing normal heightened solar activity during the GNSS era," Griffin said.

"Automated guidance technology became popular during the tail end of Solar Cycle 23, but the following cycle was relatively

Culture and Space Weather



calm. The next two growing seasons are likely to have adverse GNSS outages for farmers.”

Making a national impact

Griffin’s impactful research, publications, and presentations on solar storm effects on precision agriculture includes his work on the Gannon Storm in May 2024, which occurred while many producers were planting corn. Midwestern farms were particularly susceptible to GNSS signal degradation, which

significantly impacted the accuracy of precision agriculture technologies. This vulnerability was heightened by fewer available fieldwork days due to unfavorable weather, further delaying planting.

“Currently, about 70% of planted acres in the United States rely on equipment that uses GPS automated guidance to make straight parallel lines through the field. We no longer exclusively use physical row markers, and the equipment is getting bigger to the point that we can no longer operate when



the GPS is taken away,” he said. “Not all farms were affected, but those that were lost on average about \$17,000 per farm. It’s not catastrophic, but they’ll miss it.”

Working on the economics of space weather has opened new doors for Griffin.

“This research has connected me with colleagues at NOAA, NASA, DHS, and other agencies,” Griffin shared. “It’s given me a chance to demonstrate the value of GNSS to industries like

“
Although GPS has been used for agriculture since the mid-1990s, we are just now experiencing normal heightened solar activity during the GNSS era.

agriculture that many people don’t typically think about when they hear about space weather.”

Since presenting at the NOAA Space Weather Workshop in March 2025, Griffin has focused on quantifying the economic value of a GNSS signal degradation nowcast—particularly for crops like peanuts.

“Those results will be shared as NOAA prepares to launch the SWFO-L1 satellite in September 2025,” he said. “It will be the first satellite dedicated entirely to space weather monitoring and forecasting.”

Griffin’s work ensures that farmers, and other GPS-reliant industries, are represented in critical conversations about space weather.

To learn more about his research and updates on space weather impacts on agriculture, give him a follow at <https://x.com/SpacePlowboy>.



Renée McReynolds Laird's Return as Alumni Fellow

The Journey

For Renée McReynolds Laird, the path from a family farm in Rooks County, Kansas, to the boardrooms of global finance and agriculture tech has been a testament to adaptability and resilience. Now, the Kansas State University graduate and seasoned executive was back on campus, not just as an alumna, but as an Alumni Fellow for the College of Agriculture, a recognition she calls "an incredible honor."

Her selection as an Alumni Fellow came at a time of personal and professional introspection.

"This award came at a time in my life when I didn't hold an impressive title or have the corner office at a big corporate," Laird said. "It came when I felt the most balanced and at peace in my life. The timing was so ironic given where I am today, and yet it was perfect."

A Global Perspective Rooted in Kansas Values

Laird's career is a masterclass in professional evolution. From her early days moving from "the Little Apple to the Big Apple" (Manhattan, Kansas, to Manhattan, New York City), her experience has spanned investment banking, commodities trading, and reviving startups in the ag tech space. She credits her K-State education, specifically the Department of Agricultural Economics, with providing a crucial foundation for this diverse journey.

"K-State's emphasis on practical problem-solving and leadership has been vitally important," Laird said. "The values of K-State's College of Agriculture resonated deeply with my

background. The importance of hard work, innovation, and fostering relationships—whether in a rural community or on the global stage—was something K-State nurtured.

"The faculty in Agricultural Economics Department specifically provided me with a deep understanding of markets and financial systems. This has been instrumental in navigating the diverse sectors I've worked."

These values have been the constant thread throughout her career. Now a strategic advisor in Denver, Colorado, she focuses on innovation, transformation, and growth scaling businesses across agriculture, finance, and global markets in sectors of ag technology, commodities, physical and financial trading, capital markets, and investment banking, as well as working as a leadership and life coach.

Currently, she is a consultant for HitchPin, an agriculture marketplace and payments solution provider, focusing on scale and diversification of the company.

"I love the flexibility and opportunities to choose meaningful projects. Working with dynamic clients, who are open to different perspectives and ideas, to solve pain points and execute an action plan is especially rewarding," she said.

She is known for turning businesses around, developing people, and being a problem solver. But her biggest passion?

"One of my biggest passions and joys is in developing individuals and teams to their fullest potential. I love to blend business strategy with unlocking human potential and

authenticity. I'm most proud of finding my voice, navigating challenging situations and times, and living remarkable experiences in my career while being a working mom.

Laird still has a strong connection with K-State, serving as an advisory council member of Risk Management Center and a trustee on the KSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

"Through mentorship or strategic guidance, K-State remains an essential part of my career journey. K-State prepared me academically and provided the tools, network, and mindset to excel in a wide range of industries," Laird said. "I'm proud to be a graduate of K-State and the College of Agriculture. I continue to carry its principles of innovation, community, and leadership into everything I do."

Advice for the Next Generation of Leaders

As an Alumni Fellow, Laird is eager to share her wisdom with K-State's current students and young alumni. Her advice is tailored to different career stages, but a common theme of continuous learning and authentic relationship-building runs through it all.

For recent graduates, she emphasizes the importance of embracing learning and adaptability. "The world is constantly changing, especially in industries like agriculture, finance and technology," she advises. "One constant has been the need to continuously learn and adapt to new challenges."

Her message is clear: build a strong knowledge base, but don't be afraid to take risks. "Early in my career, I didn't always know exactly where I was headed, but I was open to opportunities and willing to grow from each experience."

Laird also highlights the power of networking, not just for career advancement, but for personal growth. "The relationships built in your early career will stay with you throughout your life. Seek out people who inspire you... Be open to new perspectives and take advantage of your network, as it can often lead to unexpected opportunities and incredible connections."

For those in the middle of their careers, her advice shifts toward leadership, mentorship, and giving back. She

encourages mid-career professionals to focus on developing and empowering their teams, recognizing that "your success is ultimately tied to the success of the people you work with." She also urges them to avoid complacency, to continue pushing themselves, and to "give back" by taking on advisory roles or contributing to their communities, just as she does for K-State's Risk Management Center and the KSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

Laird's final piece of advice is a reminder to find balance.

"Work hard, but also be patient and stay true to your values. Be authentic," she says. "The most rewarding careers are those that align with personal passions and make an impact on others." She adds that taking time for wellness—physical, mental, and emotional—is essential for long-term success.

Laird's journey is a powerful example of how a foundation built on Kansas values can lead to a career of global impact. Through her role as an Alumni Fellow, she is not only honored for her past accomplishments but is actively shaping the future of the next generation of K-State leaders.

“

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ALUMNI FELLOWS



AGRICULTURE

Renée McReynolds Laird '93

Ag Tech & Commodities Executive, Financial & Risk Management Leader, Leadership & Wellness Coach
Renée Laird Consulting
Denver, Colorado



Welcome Our New Faculty

Dr. Micah Cameron-Harp



Micah Cameron-Harp joined the Department as an Assistant Professor during the summer. Originally from Rochester, New York, He brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for natural resource economics. His journey began at Cornell University, where he earned his undergraduate degree in Natural Resources. It was there that he was inspired by a professor to pursue a career in economics.

After graduating, he moved to Tempe, Arizona, where he earned his M.S. in Sustainability at Arizona State University. Following a two-year stint as a climbing arborist in Philadelphia, Cameron-

Harp and his wife moved to Manhattan, Kansas, in the summer of 2019.

"I started my Ph.D. in the Agricultural Economics department, and a year later Kelly was admitted to K-State's veterinary school. We refer to the years when we were both getting our doctorates as the 'double doctor project.' It was difficult but we wouldn't change it for anything, and now we're both proud K-State alumni," he said.

Cameron-Harp's doctoral research focused on the economics of irrigation efficiency and the design of voluntary agricultural carbon credit markets. He defended his dissertation in December 2022 and has been serving as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the department, where he's continued his research and extension work.

"One of the things I love about Kansas is the variability across the state. It's especially exciting for me because the concerns each region has about water differ widely. In western Kansas, for example, declining aquifer levels are the primary concern. But in eastern Kansas, water quality concerns are more prescient due to the greater rainfall they receive there," Cameron-Harp said.

He is excited about his new role, highlighting two main aspects.

"First, I love the applied nature of extension work. Hearing first-hand about the difficulties the agricultural industry faces is incredibly motivating. It makes it all the more rewarding when someone says that the information and tools we provide as extension economists helped them think through a decision or frame a problem in a new light," he said. "The other aspect of the position I'm looking forward to is working with graduate students and helping them navigate the research process."

Dr. Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya

Dr. Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya joins the department as an Assistant Professor, bringing a research focus on the intersection of environmental and health economics. She grew up in a small, rural community in northeastern South Dakota, an experience that has inspired her research into the challenges faced by rural communities.

She earned her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Colorado Boulder, where she gained valuable experience in

undergraduate teaching and began developing her research agenda with a specific focus on water quality.

"My research explores issues related to water quality and human health, particularly the impacts of agricultural practices and environmental policy on drinking water safety and rural well-being," she said.

She is eager to contribute to the department's mission of supporting Kansas agriculture through research and outreach.



"I'm looking forward to joining a department and university that values research with real-world impact and meaningful engagement with the agricultural community in Kansas and beyond. I'm particularly excited to collaborate with colleagues who are experts in water and natural resource issues."

Sorensen Montoya will be teaching an undergraduate course while continuing her research. She is eager to get into the classroom and get to know K-State students, as well as foster their curiosity and engagement with agricultural economics.

"I am just thrilled to call Manhattan home and am grateful for the warm welcome I've already received," Sorensen Montoya said. "I feel very fortunate to be joining the K-State Agricultural Economics community."

Dr. Juhee Lee

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Juhee Lee back to the department as a Research Assistant Professor. Lee is a familiar face, having earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Kansas State University in 2020. Her career began in Korea, where she worked as a researcher at the Korea Energy Economics Institute after earning her M.A. in International Studies from Hanyang University. Following her move to the U.S., she received an M.S. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of Tennessee before joining K-State. Since completing her Ph.D., she has held positions at the University of California, Riverside, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and most recently served as a Professor of Practice in K-State's Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences.

"As an alumna of the Agricultural Economics Ph.D. program, I look forward to contributing to a vibrant academic community that played a formative role in my development as a scholar. I'm eager to collaborate across disciplines, mentor graduate students, and lead applied research that supports agriculture, sustainability, and rural communities in Kansas and beyond. I also hope to strengthen the department's leadership through externally funded projects and innovative partnerships," she said.

Lee's research is centered on applied economic topics in agriculture, environment, and biomanufacturing. She uses a variety of methods, including econometrics, policy analysis, and integrated evaluation tools, to study challenges related to agricultural resource management, climate adaptation, and rural development.



She is particularly interested in identifying economically viable and environmentally sustainable strategies that strengthen food, water, and energy systems. Much of her work involves interdisciplinary collaborations with researchers across various fields, where she contributes economic insights to projects on sustainable agriculture, the circular bioeconomy, and environmental resilience.

"It's a genuine privilege to take on a faculty role in the department that helped shape my academic path," she says. "I look forward to building lasting collaborations and contributing to the department's continued impact."

Award-Winning Faculty, Staff, and Students

The Agricultural Economics Department has a history of award-winning faculty, staff and students. We are pleased to highlight our award winners.



Schroeder named Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Fellow

According to Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) "Recognition as an AAEA Fellow is AAEA's most prestigious honor." At the annual AAEA meeting in July, Dr. Ted Schroeder, professor, was named a 2025 AAEA Fellow. He is the first from the K-State's Agricultural Economics to be selected for the honor.

"This is not me receiving the honor, but rather me accepting it. The award is for the amazing people I have had the pleasure of working with over the years," Schroeder said. "Several of those folks have already received this same award; several will in the future; and several others could or should."

The main consideration for selecting Fellows is continuous contribution to the advancement of agricultural or applied economics as defined by the Vision Statement. Achievements may be in research, teaching, extension, administration, and other contributions to public or private sector decision-making.

Schroeder has worked with K-State for 40 years and was nominated by his peers to receive this award.

"Perhaps it reflects 40 years of being a faculty member and getting the opportunity to work with some of the most talented and most fun folks in our profession," Schroeder said.

Throughout his time at K-State Schroeder gives credit to the talented individuals who have worked and are currently working alongside him.



Tonsor named Western Agricultural Economics Association Fellow



Dr. Glynn Tonsor, professor, was named Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) Fellow in July.

"It is a great honor to be named a WAEA Fellow. The WAEA has been a key part of my professional path from my time as a graduate student to more recent engagement as President with a

multitude of enriching activities in between."

The purpose of this award is to grant the highest recognition to members making an enduring contribution over their career to agricultural or other type of applied, resource, and/or environmental economics in the Western states and the WAEA.

"At a time when many things are changing in higher education, I encourage folks to assess their comparative advantage and intentionally engage in associations that align. For me, the WAEA has certainly aligned with my interests and professional focus. Further, my career-long efforts at integrating applied research, active outreach, and assisting graduate students routinely align with the WAEA making my WAEA engagement even easier and self-rewarding."

"Recognizing connections specific to Kansas State University, it is pleasure to join a list including Tom Marsh, Jayson Lusk, Mike Boland, Gary Brester, Ted Schroeder, Andy Barkley, and Clem Ward. These WAEA Fellows have either current or past ties directly to our department. Further, this list includes a list of mentors, friends, and colleagues - it is humbling to join them!"



Dr. Aleksan Shanoyan, professor

Distinguished Teaching Award: Ten or More Years' Undergraduate Teaching AAEA

Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award: More than Ten Years, WAEA

"I am deeply honored to receive these awards and grateful to the Department

of Agricultural Economics for the nominations. The support and dedication to teaching excellence I have seen from my colleagues and mentors at KSU and throughout the profession are truly inspiring. This recognition is a tribute to the supportive and collaborative culture they have fostered. I am especially thankful for my students, who bring so much energy and intellectual curiosity to the classroom, making the teaching and learning process a constant source of inspiration."

Armen Khachatryan, Ph.D. candidate

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award, AAEA, for "A Structural Analysis of Urban-Rural Differences: The Case of Food Consumption in China" (work done at University of Wyoming).

Dr. Jennifer Ifft, professor, along with Todd Kuethe, Greg Lyons, Alexander Schultz, and John Zhu

Best Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy (AEPP) Article - Honorable Mention, AAEA, for "Crop Insurance's Impact on Commercial Bank Loan Volumes - Theory and Evidence."

"This award means a lot to me, especially after five years at Kansas State University, where Dr. Art Barnaby helped pioneer revenue protection policies now used by most crop producers. Kansas Senator Pat Roberts and his staff—including many Kansas State University alumni like Mike Seyfert—played key roles in shaping legislation that made crop insurance the foundation of today's farm safety net," Ifft said.

Chandan Bhattarai, Atif Rao, and Kalyani Shrestha, Ph.D. candidates

Graduate Case Study Competition - 3rd Place, AAEA

Their case focused on the Brazilian agribusiness company AMAGGI and explored strategies for sustainable growth in the grain trading business.

"The competition pushed me to think critically under time pressure and work collaboratively to develop practical

solutions. It was an incredibly rewarding experience, and I'm proud of what our team accomplished," Bhattarai said.

Dr. Allen Featherstone, Dr. Rich Llewelyn, Ashlee Westerhold, Robin Reid, and Rhonda Lund

Outstanding Extension Program Award, WAEA

"I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of a team that recognized and responded to the unique needs of non-operating landowners. Reaching this particular demographic was something I hadn't seen done before, and I found our approach both innovative and thoughtful. As these landowners attended the conference, it was clear they genuinely valued the information and resources shared with them," Ashlee Westerhold, Director, Farm and Ranch Transition Office said. "I sincerely appreciate this award as a recognition of the creativity and hard work our team has invested in this project."

Dr. Jason Bergtold, professor

Outstanding Published Research, Honorable Mention WAEA, for "Conservation Intensification Under Risk: An Assessment of Adoption, Additionality, and Farmer Preferences," published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 2024.

Margaret Lippsmeyer, Ph.D. candidate

Mike Boehlje Agribusiness Management Fellowship, AAEA

Best Graduate Student Paper in the Applied Risk Analysis Section, AAEA

Graduate Student Section Chair Elect, AAEA

"I was honored to receive the Boehlje Agribusiness Management Fellowship and so grateful to have the opportunity to know Mike Boehlje. He has had a tremendous career, pursuing research and extension that bridged the gap between academia and industry. If I can achieve even a fraction of the influence and stakeholder engagement that defined his work, it would be a career well spent."



Dr. Logan Britton, associate professor

Food Resilience Fellow, Sustainable Agricultural Systems Food Shock Resilience Project, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Awards continued on Page 14

Graduate team wins global agribusiness competition

Department graduate students recently attended the 2025 International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA) World Conference in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, on June 23-26. The conference connects leaders and stakeholders in the food and agribusiness industries through keynote speakers, discussion, and the Student Case Competition.

K-State's Graduate Case Study Team made up of Abena Duku Damuah, Ph.D., Calder McCollum, M.S., and Margaret Lippsmeyer, Ph.D., took 1st Place in the competition.

"Participating in IFAMA's student case competition was an incredible experience. Traveling to Brazil, seeing their production systems firsthand, and working on real challenges faced by local agribusinesses was truly eye-opening," Margaret Lippsmeyer said.

For 20 years, IFAMA has annually hosted the only global agribusiness competition for students, graduate-level, and early career professionals who are pursuing careers in the food and agriculture sector—establishing itself as a premier event showcasing the next generation of talent and future leaders.

"Participating in the IFAMA Case Study was an intense yet rewarding journey. The process taught me the importance of agility, strategic thinking and effective collaboration. What has stuck with me is not just the win but the moments where we learned to challenge each other constructively," Damuah said. "I am proud of our team and grateful to our mentor and all the people who supported us. I look forward to contributing to work that tackles the complex issues in our food system."

Teams from top universities and institutions worldwide convened to demonstrate their analytical and problem-solving skills on a global stage. The competition occurs over several days and progressively advances in complexity through an elimination process that identifies the top tier teams who pitched their solutions before the entire congress during the Business Forum at the 2025 World Conference in Brazil.

World Champions!

K-State Graduate and Undergraduate Case Study Teams have placed 1st at IFAMA in 2021, 2023, and 2024!



Left to Right: Dr. Allen Feathestone, Abena Duku Damuah, Calder McCollum, Margaret Lippsmeyer, and Dr. Aleksan Shanoyan.

Awards continued from Page 13

Dr. Megan Hughes, assistant professor

Outstanding PhD Dissertation Award, Purdue University for "Essays in Agricultural Finance."

Dr. Jeff Williams, professor emeritus

Outstanding Published Research, Honorable Mention, WAEA

From the Classroom to Career

Students building careers through summer internship experiences



At just 20 years old, Emma Duff is preparing to enter her senior year at Kansas State University, finishing her degree in just three years. Majoring in Agricultural Economics with a minor in Animal Science and Industry and a specialization in Agricultural Communications, she plans to graduate early and pursue a master's degree in Biomedical Science, focusing on feedlot studies. "I will be entering my senior year of college to complete my degree ahead of schedule," she said. "After graduation, I plan to begin my master's and specialize in feedlot studies."

This summer, she is working as a research study intern at the Beef Cattle Institute (BCI) under Dr. Brad White. The internship has given her valuable hands-on experience with a variety of beef industry projects. "The most beneficial aspect of my time spent is being able to be hands-on with

different projects in different beef industries," she said. "Getting to experience first-hand different types of studies, programs, and careers not only prepares me for my future master's experience, but also gives me an inside look into the real world and all the different things I can do with my education."

No two days at BCI are the same. She often attends research meetings, helps prepare for the summer necropsy team, writes project guides, and assists in studies with beef-on-dairy calves. "Every day is a different experience," she said. "This internship stood out to me because I saw the word BEEF. I'm a huge advocate for livestock, specifically bovine, and I'm interested in the how, why, and what that goes into the cattle industry—from the calf all the way to the steak."

Annie Petersen

As a senior at Kansas State University majoring in Agricultural Economics, Annie Petersen has her sights set on a future in the wine grape industry. She is spending the year working as a viticulture internal operations intern for E&J Gallo Winery in southern Sonoma County, gaining hands-on experience in vineyard management while taking a semester off from school to work through harvest. “I wanted an internship that went beyond scouting and gave me a better look at the day-to-day operations of running a vineyard,” she said.

Her role covers roughly 1,100 acres across six ranches, where she scouts vineyards for pests and diseases, measures vine water stress, and reports findings that influence real-time decisions on spraying and irrigation. “One of the most beneficial things I do is scouting for pests and diseases, because it directly impacts what issues the company is aware of and whether or not they’re going to spray,” she explained. “It’s also been valuable to gain experience with equipment, operations, and different viticulture practices that will make me more prepared to work full time after graduation.”

This internship stood out because it combined in-depth viticulture work with the opportunity to participate in harvest. “I’ve worked as a field scout before, but I wanted something that would let me see more of what goes into running a vineyard,” she said. “Working through harvest will give me even more experience, and it was a perfect fit since I’m graduating a semester early but still get to finish school with my friends.”



Kylie Temple



This summer, Kylie Temple is gaining hands-on experience in the cattle feeding industry as a Feedyard Research Assistant with Beef Northwest. The 20-year-old Kansas State University student is entering her sophomore year, studying Agricultural Economics and Global Food Systems Leadership with plans to pursue a career in law specializing in succession planning and asset management.

Her internship has given her the chance to combine data analysis with practical cattle management. “At the beginning of my internship, we randomly allocated cattle into our trial after terminal sorting,” she explained. “Every day we collect data that is inputted into an interactive Excel dashboard I built to keep Beef Northwest management up to date with our research. I’ll also be completing an economic analysis of last summer’s shade trial.”

One of the highlights of the program is the opportunity for interns to create meaningful change. “At the end of each summer, interns present a project to answer a question the feedyard management may have,” she said. “What’s great about Beef Northwest is that after a summer of researching and preparing to defend your presentation, they listen. Walking around the yard, you see the advancements interns have suggested actually being implemented, making the time invested worthwhile.”

Kristin Partlow

As she heads into her sophomore year at Kansas State University, Kristin Partlow is already building a strong foundation for a future career in agronomy sales. The 19-year-old is majoring in agribusiness with a minor in agronomy and is spending the summer as an intern with The Equity, gaining hands-on experience in the field.

Her internship focuses on a variety of agronomy projects, from tracking replicated corn plots to collecting tissue samples and stand counts. “There isn’t really a ‘typical’ day,” she said. “One day I might be taking tissue samples, and the next we’re meeting with branches to discuss what they need. We track several different trials throughout our territory, including replicated corn plots and molybdenum trials.”

The opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting has been the highlight of the experience. “I’ve learned so much about crops and spraying and planting, and I’ve been able to connect what I learned in my agronomy classes to real situations,” she explained. “It’s preparing me for success after graduation because I’ll already have experience that will help me transition into the workforce more easily.”



Kadence Riddick



Spending the summer as a ranch intern at Odde Ranch in South Dakota has given Kadence Riddick, a junior at Kansas State University, the chance to immerse herself in every aspect of cattle production. Majoring in Agricultural Business with a minor in Animal Science, she hopes to build a career in the beef industry after graduation, possibly focusing on the business side of cattle production and reproductive technology.

Her days on the ranch are far from routine. “We start early by checking pastures and feeding, but every day brings something new,” she said. “I’ve helped with heat detection, breeding, and working calves, and I’ve loved being able to learn something different almost every single day.”

For someone who grew up in Georgia with little exposure to agriculture, the experience has been transformative. “This internship has really helped me gain confidence and hands-on skills,” she explained. “It’s confirmed that I want to work in this industry long term and has introduced me to career paths I might not have considered otherwise.”



From the Farm to Federal Service: Phil Kirk's Journey to Distinguished Alumnus

Securing the Nation's Infrastructure

Today, Kirk is a Regional Director for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). CISA is the nation's risk advisor, working with partners to defend against digital and physical threats and build more secure infrastructure for the future.

"CISA's mission is to lead the national effort to understand, manage, and reduce risk to the cyber and physical infrastructure that Americans rely on every hour of every day. This includes securing critical infrastructure from both cyber and physical threats and improving the nation's overall resilience. CISA personnel do this by providing risk information and mitigation advice; conducting outreach, and assessments; and coordinating and delivering training and exercise support across the public and private sectors," Kirk said.

As a Regional Director, Kirk leads a talented team of cyber, physical, and emergency communications professionals. He is responsible for executing CISA's programs in a four-state region that includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. He serves as a senior liaison between DHS and state, local, tribal, and private sector officials, directing incident management activities and helping to restore critical infrastructure after an event.

Kirk finds immense satisfaction in CISA's mission. "I have the authority and autonomy to target and tailor services to those critical infrastructure sectors most important to the four Region 7 states," he explains. Being in the heartland of the United States, this includes a heavy focus on the Food and Agriculture Sector.

He frequently has the opportunity to connect his background in agriculture and agricultural economics education to his role as Regional Director. One such example occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. During a directors' call, a discussion on the impact of swine processing plants having to close for periods of time came up. Members on the call were having hard time conceptualizing what euthanizing 30,000 hogs a day really meant.

Raised on a diversified farm in northwest Kansas, Phil Kirk's journey from a small-town farm kid to a leader in federal service is a testament to the power of hard work, strong relationships, and a solid foundation from Kansas State University. Kirk, a 1989 graduate of the Department of Agricultural Economics, has been recognized with the prestigious Distinguished Alumnus Award, an honor that he says is both humbling and a capstone to a fulfilling career.

The Roots of a Leader

Kirk's path began on his family's farm near Clayton, Kansas, where he was involved in sports, student government, and the Future Farmers of America (FFA). His dedication to FFA earned him the Northwest District Star Farmer, State Farmer and American Farmer Degrees. Following in the footsteps of his older brother, Will, Kirk chose to pursue a degree in Agricultural Economics at K-State.

While at K-State, Kirk didn't just focus on his studies; he immersed himself in student life. He was a member of the Ag Econ Club and Ag Ambassadors, served as the Ag Careers Day Coordinator, and was elected Ag Student Council President. His leadership extended beyond the College of Agriculture, as he joined numerous campus honor societies and the Student Alumni Board. He also fostered lifelong friendships as a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity.

His college years were a blend of academia and practical experience. During the summer before his senior year, Kirk interned with Farm Credit Services, an experience that initially set him on a path toward agricultural lending and a return to the family farm. But a chance encounter a few weeks before graduation with a fellow K-State Agricultural Economics graduate who was a friend of his brother, presented a new opportunity—working as an agriculture specialist for U.S. Congressman Jim Slattery. Taking a "calculated risk," Kirk accepted the position, which ultimately launched a 36-year career in federal public service.

"I was able to explain the physical impact by asking them to envision the space needed to bury a 300 lb. person times 30,000, which equals 9 million pounds of hogs needing to be disposed of daily. At the same time, estimating the initial economic impact, considering each pound being conservatively equal to \$1.00, which is approximately \$9 million a day," he said. "Once they were able to grasp the numbers, it made it easier to understand the sheer impact of the situation."

A Career of Impact and Pride

Throughout his career, Kirk has been at the forefront of some of the nation's most significant challenges. He was one of the first 10 employees to establish the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board and later became a "plank owner" of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security after the 9/11 attacks. His birthday, September 11, played a personal role in his decision to commit his career to homeland security.

One of his most profound professional memories comes from more than 20 years with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), where he was deployed to over 40 disaster sites.

"I have met with many Americans that just had one of their worst days," he recalls. "I have had them cry on my shoulder and I have held their trembling hands. I am proud to have served on the front lines during those times, providing assistance that helped them get back on their feet and make their lives better."

In 2021, Kirk achieved a significant personal and professional milestone when he was selected for the Senior Executive Service (SES), fulfilling a challenge his late father had given him years earlier. Only a small fraction of federal employees, less than one-half of one percent (0.4%), ever reach the SES rank, which is a group of leaders within the civil service who hold positions just below the top political appointees, acting as a crucial link between these appointees and the rest of the federal workforce.

A Foundation Built at K-State

Kirk credits his education and experiences at K-State for providing the foundation for his career. The academic knowledge from the Department of Agricultural Economics not only prepared him for his first job as a congressional aide but also enabled him to speak "authoritatively to the importance of agriculture to our national and economic security" throughout his entire career.

He holds fond memories of the professors who invested in

him, particularly his advisor, Dr. Arlo Biere, who challenged him to improve his grades after a difficult semester. Kirk still has the letter Dr. Biere sent him. He also remembers the guidance he received from professors like Dr. John Riley, Dr. Larry Erpelding, and Dr. David Mugler. He recalls Dr. Mugler's frequent use of Theodore Roosevelt's quote, "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

"There was never any doubt in my mind that my professors and administrators in the Agricultural Economics Department and the entire College of Agriculture truly cared about me and wanted me to succeed," Kirk says.

Principles for a Purposeful Life

Kirk's career has been guided by 11 principles, which he formalized and shared with his team. These principles, which he says were "instilled or cultivated" during his time at K-State are:

1. Do no harm
2. Assume good intent
3. Demonstrate integrity and honesty
4. Surround yourself with good people
5. Listen before speaking
6. Embrace change
7. Practice life-long learning
8. Develop and maintain relationships built on trust
9. Be authentic
10. Show compassion and kindness
11. Maintain work/life balance

For Kirk, giving back is a core part of his life. He mentors students through the Student Foundation and the Student Alumni Board and the Kirk family has established two endowed

scholarships at K-State, along with an annual scholarship for Alpha Gamma Rho. His philanthropic passions are focused on leadership development and student mentoring, ensuring the next generation of leaders has the same opportunities he did.

As he prepares for retirement, Kirk reflects on the honor of being named a Distinguished Alumnus.

"I was honored just to be considered for this award. Considering the distinguished list of past recipients of the award, being selected for inclusion in that list is quite humbling. My roots have and will always be firmly anchored in rural America, production agriculture and agribusiness," he said. "The Agricultural Economics degree I obtained from the College of Agriculture is a foundational element of my professional career, and for that, I am thankful."



Kirk was selected for the Outstanding Young Alumnus Award from the K-State College of Agriculture in 2011. He is pictured here with Dr. David Mugler.

Scholarship Recipients

Aaron Patrick Morrison Scholarship

Carissa Dalquest

**Adrian John Polansky II
Scholarship**

Brock Armstrong

**Allen and Weir Families'
Agribusiness Scholarship**

Jenna Richardson

**Bill Hanson Crop Insurance
Professionals Association Memorial
Scholarship**

Kahne Truelove

**Charles Dean and Harriet McNeal
Memorial Scholarship**

Eli Boden

Claire Boles

Mitchell Bosse

Dylan Cooper

Kinley Lilleman

Logan McCarty

Riley Rowe

Ellie Weers

**Charles W. and Lois H. Nauheim
Agricultural Economics Scholarship**

Heidi Fisher

Reagan Morris

Alexis Powelson

Hannah Schreiner

CHS Foundation Scholarship

Samantha Bonifas

Eli Brunk

Korben Clawson

Sydney Heller

Coy Stamm

Kylie Temple

Sage Toews

Cleo Harvey Kuhn Scholarship

Joel Bryan

**CoBank Outstanding Student
Scholarship**

Madelyn Hill

Macie Morris

Reygan Schrock

**Dan and Beth Bird Scholarship in
Agricultural Economics**

Luke Ballin

Nicholas Lines

Nicholas Pearson

**Dave Woolfolk
Scholarship**

Blake Turner

**Duane and Pauline
Murphy Agricultural
Economics Scholarship**

Jace Korf

**E. Robert and Donna Kern
Agricultural Economics Scholarship**

Mason Springer

**Farmers National Company
Foundation Scholarship**

Jonathan Temaat

**Flinchbaugh Agriculture Policy
Scholarship**

Kendall Geist

**George R. Hanson Scholarship in
Agriculture**

Zander Seth

Jenna Wallace

Gladwin A. Read Memorial Fund

Hannah Andringa

Jackson Arender

Harrison Bhend

Breckin Bowin

Brett Buhrman

Audrianna Byers

Cav Carlgren

Conner Chamberlain

Nicholas Cipra

Callie Collins

Carissa Dalquest

Cash Davis

Samuel Derks

James Derouchey

\$255,000
in awards

Ian Dunn

Luke Fischer

Blake Fowler

Evan Fowler

Jonathan Frisbie

Jaxson Gebhardt

Dominique Girard

Avery Glasgow

Matthew Hafliger

Joshua Hammes

Peter Harrington

Quade Harris

Emma Harrison

Reed Hedrick

Robert Hert

Cooper Johnston

Jace Korf

Carter Kramer

Alex Kuhr

Abigail LaSpada

Margaret Lugo

2025

Ethan Lulich
Gillian Mae Villa
Dillon Mai
Molly Malter
Tyler Marsh
Crayton McCafferty
Claire Nelson
Kristin Partlow
Rylie Reichenberger
Jenna Richardson
Kadence Riddick
Brooke Rogers
Ty Scheer
Cambree Schmaltz
Zander Seth
Sophia Shaffer
Riley Showalter
Blake Skalsky
Zacary Smith
Mason Springer
Eli Stuchlik
Bailey Troike
Kahne Truelove
Blake Turner
Rhett Vander Dussen
Taylor Wiebe
Savannah Williams
Paige Wood
Kailey Woodcock

**Hosea S. Harkness Agricultural
Economics Scholarship**

Rex Crotts
Karoline Johnson

J. Adair Hodges Memorial Fellowship

Rebecca Felix
Carter Kramer

**James E. Pruden, Jr Memorial
Scholarship**

Avery Glasgow

**Jim and Mary Lou Birkbeck Family
Scholarship**

Noah Beach
Delaney New
Abigail Robinson

**John T. and Pearl E. Bullock
Memorial Scholarship**

Jonathan Temaat

**Joseph Lieber Memorial Cooperative
Scholarship**

Kennedy Coffin

**Kansas Ag Bankers Scholarship
Brayden Fulton**

Matthew Hendricks

**Leonard W Schruben Agricultural
Economics Scholarship**

Gillian Mae Villa

**Matthew Kent Stamper Memorial
Scholarship**

Lauren Ellenz

**Orlen Grunewald Agricultural
Economics Scholarship**

Jay Tatum

**Otis and Mary Lee Molz Cooperative
Scholarship**

Madeline Drake
Aidan Yoho

**Packebush Family - Mary Vanier
KSU Family Scholarship**

Tyler Marsh
Nicholas Pearson

**Sam and Martha Logan - Kruse
Family Scholarship**

Taylor Hooper-Deleon

Kristin Partlow

Schroeder Family Scholarship

Blake Fowler

**Seyfert Family - Vanier Family
Scholarship**

Peter Harrington

**Stanley G. Wendland Memorial
Scholarship**

Mitchell Bosse
Tyree Figge
Briana Holle

**Ted Heath Memorial Scholarship
Fund**

Delaney Goshorn

**Tim Lim Undergraduate Scholarship
in Agriculture**

Douglas Peterson
Benjamin Suber

W. Dan and Lynn Weaver Scholarship

Caleb Van Booven

**W.L. 'Bill' Webber Memorial
Scholarship**

Harrison Bhend

**William S. May Scholarship for
Agricultural Finance**

Samuel Birdsall
Mackenzie Malson

134 Scholarships

Featured Producers: Kenoma Farms



Randal, Kevin and Sandy Karr

A legacy of Innovation and Family Tradition

Each year, the Kansas Farm Management Association selects a featured farm family to highlight during the annual Risk and Profit Conference. The Karr family, led by Kevin and Sandy Karr, was selected as the 2025 family.

The Karr family has built a lasting legacy at Kenoma Farms, blending time-honored farming traditions with forward-thinking agricultural practices. What began as a hog farm passed down from Kevin's father has transformed under Kevin's leadership into a diverse and progressive operation focusing on crops and hay.

Kevin's passion for farming took root in high school, when his aunt and uncle gave him the opportunity to use a field for his 4-H project. That very same piece of land is still part of the farm today, a living symbol of his dedication and growth. While he was raised working with hogs alongside his father, Kevin quickly found his stride in crop production, and he's continued to evolve with the industry ever since.

Known for his willingness to experiment, Kevin is constantly testing new equipment, techniques, and sustainable practices on the farm. With the help of his seven children, he's made it a priority to reduce the use of pesticides and chemicals, not only to produce healthier crops for consumers, but also to protect the well-being of his family and neighbors who live and work around the fields.

As the next generation steps up, Kevin is preparing to pass the torch to his son, Randal. Though Kevin and Sandy are not quite ready to retire, they're excited to watch Randal take on more responsibility and lead the farm into the future. Randal has already played a key role in bringing new technology to Kenoma Farms, including the use of agricultural drones and composting systems that enrich the soil for future crops.

Together, the Karr family continues to shape Kenoma Farms into a model of sustainable, family-centered agriculture, honoring the past while embracing innovation for a better future.



K-State Risk Management Center Wraps Up Spring Fellowship, Welcomes New Cohort

This past May, more than 40 students successfully completed their fellowship experience with the K-State Risk Management Center. Their spring activities, along with other updates from the center, are featured in the latest edition of *The RMC Adviser* newsletter — available now at <https://lnkd.in/grYbQAxr>.

Looking ahead, the center is set to welcome approximately 45 new students into the Risk Management Fellows program this fall.

Want to stay informed? *The RMC Adviser* is published twice a year and can be delivered directly to your inbox. Sign up at <http://eepurl.com/iXJ4rI>.



Risk Management Center students during a recent trip to Denver, CO.

New Strategic Financial Management Training Offered

The Arthur Capper Cooperative Center (ACCC) and the K-State Department of Agricultural Economics Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program have partnered on a new executive education training program on strategic financial management. This two and a half day program, developed and taught by Dr. Brian Briggeman, K-State agricultural economics Professor and ACCC Director, and Dr. Brady Brewer, Associate Professor and MAB Director, uses a market simulation online game to reinforce and teach core financial and strategic business decision making concepts.

A pilot program was tested with cooperative partners at the CoBank office in Wichita, Kansas, in July. Participants shared that the game demonstrates how strategic decisions impact a firm's financial position. Participants also felt that the emotion of real-world decisions was removed, which allowed them to focus on executing the strategy through sound business decisions. And it was very clear, that the game was fun and created a great learning environment!

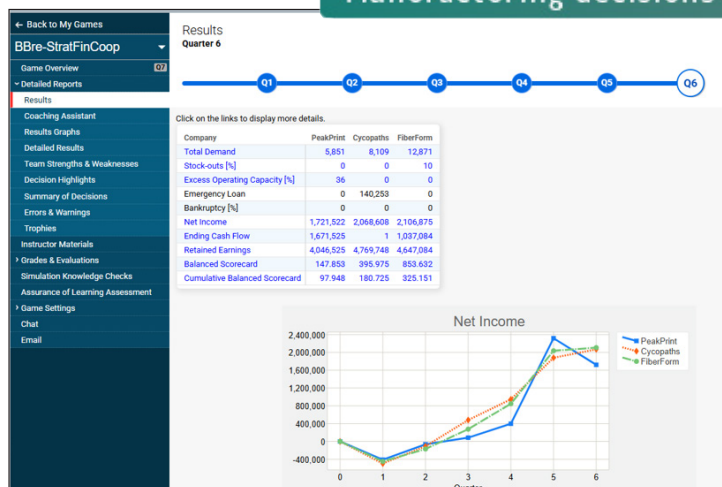
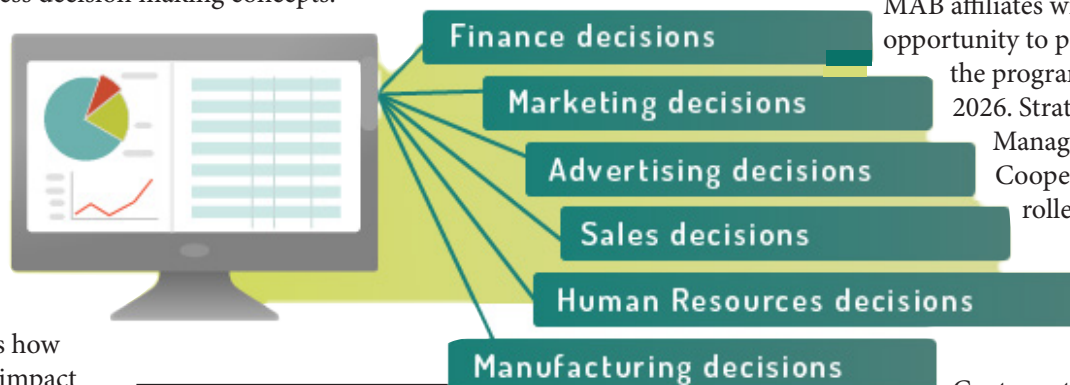
Who is the target audience?
Attendees should have some

financial knowledge to use the simulation effectively to gain strategic insights into how decisions made today impact the future financial position of the agribusiness. Briggeman and Brewer teach and reinforce concepts throughout the program and the participants use the information to guide their strategic decision-making process. Both professors have years of experience with executive education programs, have a research focus on agricultural finance and are also experienced at teaching in the classroom.

MAB affiliates will have the opportunity to participate in the program in January 2026. Strategic Financial Management for Cooperatives will be rolled out later in 2026.

The Arthur Capper Cooperative Center, established in 1984, is a public-private partnership between the Kansas Cooperative Council and the Kansas State University Department of Agricultural Economics.

The MAB program is a flexible, online business-focused graduate degree for food, agribusiness and animal health professionals.



Spain and Portugal 2026

Farm and Agribusiness Tour



K-State's Master of Agribusiness program is offering a farm and agribusiness tour of Spain and Portugal June 6-18, 2026. Anyone interested in getting a better understanding of this region is encouraged to join us.

Day 1 - Saturday, June 6th: Madrid (D*)

Arrive Madrid. City sightseeing tour on arrival and a welcome dinner in hotel tonight.

Day 2 - Sunday, June 7th: Madrid - Toledo (B)

Depart after breakfast for a visit to the beautiful city of Toledo with a sightseeing tour on arrival. See the impressive Alcazar, medieval Gothic cathedral, Synagogue, and Church of San Tome. Damascene, embroidery and pottery feature strongly in Toledo province, and a visit to a craft centre will be included.

This afternoon visit a sheep farm making traditional Manchego cheese. Overnight, Madrid

Day 3 - Monday, June 8th: Madrid -

Granada (B/L/D)

Depart Madrid this morning. Continue to the region of Castilla La Mancha remains permanently associated in popular imagination with the adventures of Don Quixote, and the windmills he famously charged there.

Visit a vineyard in the Valdepeñas wine region, situated in the province of Ciudad Real and which covers an area of 30,000 hectares. It consists of 47 vineyards (Bodegas), which produce 50 million litres of wine annually. Overnight Granada

Day 4 - Tuesday, June 9th: Granada (B)

This morning, visit a family-run Holstein dairy operation, producing milk, yoghurt and cheese that is processed and supplied to the province of Granada.

Enjoy an afternoon guided visit of the famous Alhambra Palace. Return to your hotel. Overnight, Granada

Day 5 - Wednesday 10th June Granada - Estepona (B/D)

This morning visit an agricultural

cooperative where a variety activities take place including an olive oil mill, composting plant, cattle feedlot, and storage facilities for cereals and animal feed.

There will be free time for lunch and independent exploration in Ronda. Overnight, Estepona

Day 6 - Thursday, June 11th: Estepona - Seville (B/L)

This morning visit one of the top fighting bull ranches in Spain, where you will enjoy learning about the breeding and selection of the bulls, the daily work at the farm, along with history and anecdotes about the family.

Afterwards continue to Jerez de le Frontera for a visit to the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art (Spanish Riding School). See the riders going through their dressage paces. The Spanish Andalusian horses are known worldwide for being a pure breed with incredible grace, speed, stamina and above all beauty.

Enjoy a visit to a Sherry wine producer. The visit will include a tour of the winery and a tasting + lunch based on typical tapas of the area paired with the wines. Overnight, Seville

Day 7 - Friday, June 12th: Seville (B/D)

Visit a farm growing and exporting organic citrus fruits (about 30 varieties) including their famous Seville Oranges, used in the popular marmalade of the Great Britain. There will be a tour of the farm with explanations of the



different types of citrus fruits, their cultivation, flora, fauna, biodiversity, ecology, etc.

Depart for a visit to a producer of extra virgin olive oil. Walk through the olive trees to learn about harvesting and growing. Visit the family museum, the packaging area, the mill and the cellar (where the olive oil is stored in tanks)

Return to Seville with a chance to get a quick lunch before your afternoon city tour.

Enjoy an afternoon guided walking tour of Seville. The tour includes the massive cathedral, burial place of Christopher Columbus, the Moorish Giralda Tower, the Santa Cruz quarter and Alcazar.

Tonight enjoy dinner and a flamenco show. Overnight Seville

Day 8 - Saturday, June 13th: Seville - Evora (B/L/D)

Depart Seville this morning and drive across the border into Portugal.

Visit the UNESCO world heritage town of Evora, an ancient settlement in the heart of the Alentejo. On arrival there will be lunch followed by a guided tour of the historic city centre including the ruined Temple of Diana and Evora cathedral. Enjoy time at leisure to explore this fascinating town independently. Overnight, Evora

Day 9 - Sunday, June 14th: Evora - Lisbon (B/D)

This morning visit a farm in the Alentejo Region with Alentejo pigs, sheep and cork production.

Cork production in Alentejo, Portugal, is a significant industry, as the region is one of the world's major cork-producing areas.

Continue your journey to Lisbon. Enjoy an afternoon sightseeing tour featuring the Monument to the Discoveries and the Belem Tower. We'll also visit Jeronimo's Monastery with the tomb of Vasco da Gama. Overnight, Lisbon

Day 10 - Monday, June 15th: Lisbon (B)

This morning enjoy some free time or a walk through the cobbled alleys of Alfama to see Sao Jorge Castle (exterior).

This afternoon we'll travel to the countryside near Samora Correia to visit a state-run agriculture and forestry company on 20,000 hectares, producing rice, wine and livestock. The focus of the afternoon tour will be cork oak forestry and management, and cattle. Overnight, Lisbon

Day 11 - Tuesday, June 16th: Lisbon - Oporto (B/D)

This morning we'll continue north to visit Fatima where we'll see the great white Basilica commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary to three children in 1917.

Lunch independently in Coimbra, overlooking the Mondego River, with some time at leisure to explore its old quarters.

Proceed to Porto and visit a Port Wine Lodge, one of the oldest of the founding Port houses, dedicated entirely to the production of some of the finest Port wines. Overnight Porto

Day 12 - Wednesday, June 17th: Oporto (B/L/D)

Excursion to the Douro Valley. Visit a charming family-owned wine estate "Quinta" for a tour of the winery. Enjoy a tasting session featuring some of their finest wines.

Next take a leisurely boat trip along the Douro River in Pinhão. Relax and soak in the picturesque surroundings as you glide along the tranquil waters.

We'll head to a village for a lunch before returning to Porto. On return the rest of the day at leisure. Farewell dinner. Overnight Porto (B/L/D)

Day 13 - Thursday, June 18th: Oporto (B)

Depart for airport this morning.



Estimated Trip Rates:

- Double Occupancy Rate:
 - Single = \$4,400**
 - Couple = \$8,800**
- Single Occupancy Rate = \$5,600**

***These are based on current estimates and exchange rates. The final cost will depend on the number of travelers.*

Cost Breakdown:

- Registration fee: Includes in-country logistics, hotel rooms (4 star where available), entrance fees for sightseeing as indicated on the itinerary, and most meals.

Additional Expenses:

- International Economy Airfare - Group flights may be available
- Additional meals, souvenirs and personal items
- Optional trip insurance
- Tuition if participating in the trip for class credit

*Indicates meals provided:
B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner

A shorter option ending in Lisbon is available.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Mary Sullivan at mjbowen@ksu.edu, 785-532-4435 or www.mab.ksu.edu/about/events/travel/spainportugal2026.html

A Global Voice in Agricultural Economics

Walter Ac-Pangan's Path through Agricultural Economics

When Walter Ac-Pangan first arrived in Manhattan, Kansas, in 2019, he had no idea he'd end up calling it home for the next six years. Now a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University, Ac-Pangan graduated in July, armed with international research experience, a passion for teaching, and a résumé that spans three continents.

Ac-Pangan's journey to K-State was anything but linear. Originally from Guatemala, he lived in Florida and Minnesota before settling in Kansas to begin his master's degree in agricultural economics. After completing his M.S. in 2021, he decided to stay and pursue a Ph.D., drawn by the strong academic environment, the changing seasons, and the welcoming, small-town feel of Manhattan.

"I really like the weather, you get to experience all four seasons," Ac-Pangan said. "It's quiet, not much traffic, everything's close. It's a different pace from Florida or Minnesota, but I've enjoyed the changes."

While pursuing his doctorate, Ac-Pangan has focused on forecasting and international trade within grain markets, specifically rice, corn, and soybeans. His current research centers on the global implications of export bans in rice markets, with a spotlight on India, the world's largest rice exporter. His work explores how these policy changes impact global rice prices, food security, and trade relationships, particularly in Asia and Latin America.

"One of my dissertation chapters examines how India's export bans on non-basmati and broken rice affect the global market," Ac-Pangan explains. "When a major exporter like India makes a move, it has ripple effects, especially for countries that rely on rice as a staple food."

This timely and impactful research took him all the way to Australia in February 2025, where he presented at the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) conference in Brisbane. Ac-Pangan submitted his research months in advance and was selected to share his findings among economists from across the globe. The experience not only gave him valuable feedback but also expanded his academic network.

"I met people doing similar research, got great feedback, and had the chance to explore a new part of the world," he said. "It

was my first time in Australia, and I even saw kangaroos."

But Ac-Pangan is more than just a researcher. He's also an enthusiastic educator, having taught senior-level Agribusiness Logistics and freshman-level Decision Tools courses at K-State. With a natural ease for connecting with others and explaining complex concepts, he hopes to continue teaching after graduation.

"I'm looking for a faculty position here in the U.S.," Ac-Pangan said. "I enjoy teaching and research, so a position that allows me to do both would be ideal."

Outside of academia, he finds time to stay active and involved. He plays soccer, pickleball, and volleyball, and regularly participates in local races, including the Bill Snyder Half Marathon and the Run for Roses 5K that supports the K-State Gardens. "I try to stay active, and there's always something going on," he said with a grin.

Reflecting on his years at K-State, Ac-Pangan is grateful for the community and the opportunities he's found. "The faculty are so supportive and kind. That's why I stayed for my Ph.D.," he says. "It's a strong program, one of the best in the U.S. for agricultural economics."

As he finished up his final months as a student and

“
The [K-State] faculty are so supportive and kind. That's why I stayed for my Ph.D. It's a strong program, one of the best in the U.S. for agricultural economics.”



looks ahead to the next chapter, Ac-Pangan remains rooted in the curiosity and passion that brought him here in the first place.

“I think as economists, we have to pay attention to what’s going on in the world,” he says. “That’s where good research begins.”

Ac-Pangan is now headed to Virginia Tech to be an instructor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics for the Fall 2025 semester.



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 30, Garden City
- October 1, Manhattan and Online

Agricultural Economics Scholarship Banquet & Tailgate

- Banquet - October 10, Manhattan, Please RSVP the number of attending and names to Amy at ageyer@ksu.edu or 785-532-6702
- Tailgate - October 11, Manhattan, Please RSVP Mary at mjbowen@ksu.edu or 785-532-4435

Kansas Crop Insurance Workshop

This one-day workshop will help crop insurance agents, agricultural lenders, farmers/ranchers, and other financial consultants provide better risk management information and advice to their clients or apply to their farm-ranch. If you are involved in the crop insurance industry, either as an agent, a producer, or an agricultural lender, you should consider attending this workshop.

- October 16, Salina

Kansas Income Tax Institute

The Department of Agricultural Economics invites you to attend the 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 30-31, Online
- November 3-4, Garden City
- November 5-6, Hays
- November 12-13, Salina
- November 24-25, Wichita
- December 1-2, Lawrence
- December 10-11, Pittsburg
- December 15-16, Online

Kansas Landowner Conference

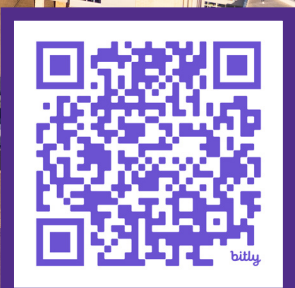
The 3rd Annual Kansas Landowner Conference is specifically tailored to folks who have agricultural land in Kansas, but may not reside on the property, or even in the state of Kansas. The Kansas Landowner Conference is designed to be a resource where landowners can build networks and increase their knowledge in many aspects of land management.

- November 11-12, Manhattan

For a full list of events and to register, visit www.agmanager.info/events



Join us at our 2025 Agricultural Economics Tailgate



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