



**KANSAS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**Agricultural Economics**



## From the desk of Dr. Allen Featherstone

Another fall semester has quickly passed us by. Students, faculty and staff worked together to make the fall semester a success even as the COVID-19 Pandemic continues. More than 40 undergraduate and graduate students finished their degrees and are now alumni of the Agricultural Economics Department. Faculty and staff continue to win awards for their research and contributions.

One of our land grant missions is to produce applied research to issues facing residents in our state. As an example, Vincent Amanor-Boadu received a grant to explore options for sustainable building materials developed from food and agricultural byproducts. You can read more about this project in this enewsletter.

Other highlights for this enewsletter include faculty and staff awards, a tribute to Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, a highlight of five undergraduate student summer internships, calendar of events, and more!

Our achievements are directly related to the continued support of our alumni and corporate sponsorships. This support helps us provide our students and outreach programs the proper foundation to continue our tradition of excellence. We appreciate the dedication and engagement of our alumni and outside supporters. Thank you to our generous donors who give back to the Department. If you have an interest in giving before the end of the year, please contact me about departmental needs or go to our Give Back ([www.ageconomics.k-state.edu/giveback.html](http://www.ageconomics.k-state.edu/giveback.html)) page to contribute.

Please take time to learn more about the activities of our department. We also encourage you to share your career and family developments so we can keep your fellow alumni informed. Please email me at [afeather@ksu.edu](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.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season!

**Dr. Allen Featherstone**

Department Head, Professor, Master of Agribusiness Program Director

# Farm policy expert Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh passes away

by Sara Wyant, President, Agri-Pulse.com

Barry Flinchbaugh Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, an economist who influenced decades of U.S. farm policy and thousands of students and farm leaders, died Nov. 2 in Topeka, KS. His doctors indicated the cause of his death as a malfunction of his pacemaker, according to his family. He was 78 years old.

There are a lot of different and talented agricultural economists in this country. But Flinchbaugh was unique in his style, his colorful stories and his convictions. If you ever met him, you wouldn't forget him.

"While Barry was well-known for his contributions to U.S. agricultural policy, Dr. Flinchbaugh also had a great passion for teaching and his students," Dr. Allen Featherstone, Agricultural Economics Department Head, said. "He continued to teach his Ag Policy course via distance this fall. He will be deeply missed and leaves a big hole in the Agricultural Economics Department that can't be filled with someone of his knowledge and wit. Our hearts go out to Cathy and his family."

As a professor and extension educator, Flinchbaugh taught agricultural policy subjects to approximately 4,000 undergraduates and, as a much sought-after speaker, lectured at farm meetings around the country. Most recently, he served as professor emeritus, department of agricultural economics, at Kansas State University, where he joined the faculty in 1971.

"He was always able to look at complex numbers and develop a narrative around those numbers that helped everyone understand the policy and the implications — whether it was the farmer, the elected official or the person in the White House," noted Mike Torrey, principal and founder of Michael Torrey Associates and a former student in Flinchbaugh's farm policy class.

Kansas farmer Jay Armstrong was Flinchbaugh's second teaching assistant in 1972-74.

"I drove him around to every county in Kansas when he educated farmers on how use-value appraisal would work. It was complicated, but Barry's style made it so farmers could understand it," Armstrong recalled. "From that effort, ag organizations took hold of their now educated membership and got urban candidates to support a change to the Kansas constitution which has saved farmers untold millions."

"His plain speaking style is what made him a necessary force in Kansas ag policy and in turn his talents were used nationally with Freedom to Farm. Outspoken? Certainly. Effective? Definitely, yes."



Students flocked to Flinchbaugh's classes and many remember his style as tough but rewarding. He frequently chewed on a cigar and in later years, took pleasure in stomping his cane at his side to make a point.

"The truth was that Barry's 'bark was worse than his bite.' He would challenge and sometimes even scare students. But once they became amiable to working and understanding, he would bend over backwards for them - not only in their studies but helping them with their lives and finances. In short, his heart was bigger than his bravado," Armstrong added. "He told me many times, 'put humor into teaching and students will remember...that's the goal.'"

During his early professional years, he began working with leaders of both political parties on federal farm bills. On a national level, his contributions to the development of U.S. agricultural policy have included serving as chairman of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture formed by the 1996 FAIR Act (also known as the Freedom to Farm Act).

Dana Brooks, the CEO of the Pet Food Institute, said she first met Dr. Flinchbaugh when he chaired the 21st Century Ag Commission in 2000. She was a new staffer on Capitol Hill.

"I was mesmerized by his intelligence, personality, leadership and commitment to agriculture. When I started looking at graduate school programs, I picked Kansas State University

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because of their reputation and Dr. Flinchbaugh was an advisor to the program. He will always be larger than life in my memories."

Some of Flinchbaugh's speeches and comments created controversy. Gregg Doud, who is now the top agricultural adviser for the U.S. Trade Representative, remembers walking across the Kansas State campus during his freshman year when the American Agriculture Movement hung a Flinchbaugh look-alike in effigy. They were upset about comments Flinchbaugh had made about whether or not there were too many farmers in 1985.

"I remember thinking, 'who is this guy?'" Doud recalled. "He taught me never to back down."

Many government leaders shared their memories of the impact he had on policy, as well as them personally.

"Franki and I are deeply saddened by the news of Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh's passing. Dr. Flinchbaugh was nothing short of a legend in his field. His expertise made him one of the most coveted and trusted advisors for agricultural policy for decades," noted Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts.

Barry Flinchbaugh teaching "Dr. Flinchbaugh's legacy as an educator and advocate will live on through his work at Kansas State University and his lifetime of dedication to agriculture. I will not only miss his guidance, but I will also miss his friendship, wit and humor. I have many special memories of Barry, in particular our times together on the "Pat and Dan Show," where he moderated lively discussions between former Congressman Dan Glickman, our state agriculture groups and myself. Our prayers are with the Flinchbaugh family during this difficult time."

Glickman, who served as Secretary of Agriculture from 1995-2001 and appointed Flinchbaugh to the Commission on 21st Century Agriculture, said "there will be a little bit of Kansas history lost," when he learned that Flinchbaugh had died.

"He has been my mentor for decades and will be fondly remembered for his wit, his wisdom and irreverence," Glickman said. "He was one of the most unforgettable characters I've ever met."

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, said, "There may be no Kansan whose company I enjoyed more." But before getting to their remembrances, it might be nice and surely fun to recall the directness, wit and insight Dr. Flinchbaugh provided whenever he spoke. Here is a Sampler of Flinchbaughian Rhetoric (excerpted from his keynote speech to a Kansas Commodity Classic audience in January 2018).

*"We've got a solid Kansas delegation with Sen. Moran and Sen. Roberts, and with Dr. Marshall we have a member on*

*the House Ag Committee again. .... If the other 49 states had the kind of delegation Kansas does, there'd be a lot fewer problems. But unfortunately, they don't."*

*"There is a big lesson that needs to be learned or re-learned [regarding trade]. This is a global economy and we aren't going back. In 1960, about 9% of our GDP came from trade. In 2016, it was 24%.*

*"We've been through the nonsense of having congressmen fall for the idea of separating the two [regarding food stamps]. ....If you take food stamps out of the bill, then that's the last Farm Bill you'll see. Urban congressmen don't have any reason to support crop insurance without a nutrition program. The two have got to stay together."*

*"You've got people saying if food stamp recipients need to be drug-tested, then so do farmers getting subsidies for crop insurance. ....It's a no-win position."*

*"TPP was probably the most lucrative bill for farmers in my lifetime. It put the U.S. in a strong, countervailing position of power to China. It put two powers in the region instead of one bully. Rejecting it played right into China's hands. We have to get across the point that multi-lateral agreements are far superior to bi-lateral agreements for farmers."*

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*"At the end of the day, the question is, if you don't have exports, you need to cut ag by 25%. Which 25% do you want to put out of business?"*

*"You get all this talk about H2A workers, but we don't need seasonal workers. Cows have to be milked 365 days a year. We need permanent workers."*

*"The reality of the last several years has been that net migration is going south, wages are going up and labor shortages are becoming common."*

Flinchbaugh went on to serve on a variety of boards of directors such as the Farm Foundation, advisory organizations like the 25x'25 Alliance and national task forces, providing input on domestic food and agriculture policy and serving as an advisor to industry and government leaders.

Originally from York, Pennsylvania, Flinchbaugh earned a bachelor's degree in animal science in 1964 and a master's degree in agricultural economics in 1967, both from Penn State. He went on to earn a doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Purdue University.

Flinchbaugh has been honored with Outstanding Teacher Awards three times by Kansas State University and has been recognized by the agricultural industry with several honors. He received a Distinguished Service Award from the American Farm Bureau and recently was selected as one of Farm Credit's 100 Fresh Perspectives, a national recognition for leaders making positive contributions to agriculture and rural communities.

Flinchbaugh is a lifetime member of Penn State's Alumni Association, its Ag Alumni Society and its alumni Stockman's Club.

He and his wife Cathy raised three children: David (deceased), James, and Katherine. He is also survived by two grandchildren: Henry and Piper.

There will be a private family burial and then a celebration of Dr. Flinchbaugh's life scheduled sometime after the pandemic is over. The family suggests that memorials be sent to the Kansas State University Foundation for the Flinchbaugh Agricultural Policy Chair (Account O64415), the Flinchbaugh Agricultural Policy Student Scholarship (Account O64410) or given to a charity of your choice in Barry's name. The Kansas State University Foundation is at 1800 Kimball Avenue, Suite 200, Manhattan, Kansas 66502-3373.

## Agricultural Economics Administrative Staff Provides Experience and Knowledge to Department

Like most offices, administrative staff keep everything running smoothly. We are blessed to have a number of dedicated and experienced staff members in the Agricultural Economics Department. In fact, our four Office Specialists have **more than 146 years** combined experience between them. We recently celebrated work anniversaries for each:

- **Mary Winnie,**  
Office Specialist  
III - 40 years
- **Mary Hunninghake,**  
Office Specialist  
II - 36 years
- **Carla Woodyard,**  
Office Specialist  
II - 35 years
- **Deana Foster,**  
Office Specialist -  
35 years

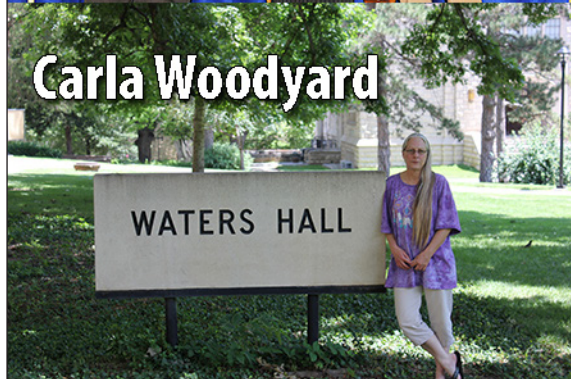
We want to thank them and all of our staff for their years of service to the Agricultural Economics Department and Kansas State University!



Mary Winnie



Mary Hunninghake



Carla Woodyard



Deana Foster



# Global Food Security Grant for Fungi-Based Building Materials Department

Professor Vincent Amanor-Boadu along with Jonathan Dessi-Olive, architecture, and Richard Todd, plant pathology, secured a Global Food Systems grant from Kansas State University to investigate the technical and economic feasibility of fungi-based building materials as sustainable development opportunity in Rural Kansas.

"We are investigating renewable energy (wind and solar) for electricity, which will be used to produce ammonia from atmospheric nitrogen for use as fertilizer and energy storage and treat water for improved water conservation in arid areas. My role is to develop a system dynamic decision support system for the alternative technological solutions that allows small town and rural (STAR) communities' leaders to select the appropriate scale and scope of the technologies to achieve their socio-economic objectives," Amanor-Boadu said.

More than ever, the building construction industry relies on materials that are neither renewable nor reusable – often mined and manufactured with energy-intensive processes. New building materials are needed to build homes that can be sourced and produced locally to create jobs and support circular material economies. Non-conventional materials such as mycelium-based composites ("mycocomposites") that use byproducts from agriculture and forestry industries have emerged as a commercially viable renewable building material. The growth forms of mycelia used in mycocomposites have lent themselves to applications including packaging materials, acoustical panels, and composite core panels to replace petro-chemical foam and fiberglass. How modified growth forms of mycelia could produce other desirable material properties has not been widely studied. Myco-composite and biopolymer materials are understood

to be compostable, but the manner in which these materials degrade may be useful and is unknown. Furthermore, no current building construction or fabrication systems exist in which materials are meant to be reclaimed.

"Although renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar power, have brought some economic growth to Kansas, these industries import the majority of their inputs, and hence do not create enough jobs opportunities to expand the state's employment base. By identifying new bio-based building materials developed from better management of food and agricultural byproducts, there is opportunity to create a new sustainable material industry in Kansas that would create new local jobs and generate export revenues."

This pilot project will assess the technical and economic feasibilities of novel applications of fungi and agricultural byproducts to create this bio-based building material industry in Kansas. The long-term goal of the project is to provide alternative materials for design and construction that fit in a sustainable circular economy, reducing the adverse environmental effects of current materials.



## Upcoming Events

### Farm Financial Management Online

Available online starting January 4, 2021

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.

### Winning the Game Grain Marketing Workshops

January 21, 2021: LaCross, KS

January 26, 2021: Brown County/Walnut Creek

Extension District  
January 27: Russell, KS  
February 9: Belleville, KS  
February 10: Kinsley, KS

### Center for Risk Management Education and Research Student Fellow Applications January 24, 2021

The Center for Risk Management Education and Research will be opening applications for the next class of student fellows on January 25th, 2021. The program seeks to enhance student's understanding of risks inherent in our global society through hands-on education and research. The experience includes a seminar course, guest lectures and workshops, networking opportunities, and industry partner

research projects. For more information please visit [www.k-state.edu/riskmanagement](http://www.k-state.edu/riskmanagement) or contact Emily Warriner.

### K-State Scholarship Network Deadline March 15, 2021

Deadline for continuing students to create and submit their K-State Scholarship Network (KSN) profile for scholarships. Those students who complete the KSN forms and are eligible, will be invited to apply for the cooperative scholarships coordinated by the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center (ACCC). To learn more about the cooperative scholarships: <https://acccl.k-state.edu/studentresources/scholarships.html>.

# Agricultural Economics Faculty, Staff & Students Awards



## Dr. Aleksan Shanyon

### USDA Excellence in College and University Teaching Awards for Food and Agricultural Sciences Regional Award, 2020

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) honored Dr. Aleksan Shanyon with one of six Regional U.S. Department of Agriculture 2020 Excellence in College

and University Teaching Awards for Food and Agricultural Sciences. The award celebrates university faculty for their use of innovative teaching methods and service to students.

"The department of Agricultural Economics at KSU has established a track record of excellence in teaching and learning and I am happy to be able to continue that tradition," Shanyon said.

Shanyon has been on the faculty in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University since 2012. He teaches courses in agribusiness economics and management to undergraduate and graduate students where he combines real-world problem-based learning activities with computer-aided real-time learning

assessment tools.

"I am grateful to the department and the college for their support and dedication to high quality instruction, and for the opportunity to work with most enthusiastic and hard-working students a teacher can ask for," he said.

In his teaching philosophy he emphasizes the importance of human connection and sincere dedication to student success. Outside the classroom, Shanyon's dedication to student success is reflected in his involvement in a wide range of advising and extracurricular activities. He serves as a co-adviser of Agricultural Economics Club, has advised student research projects for the Center for Risk Management Education and Research, served as a mentor for undergraduate students in the K-State Research and Extension Multicultural Summer Research Fellowship program, advises K-State Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Case Study Competition Teams, serves as an academic advisor to undergraduate students and supervises graduate student thesis and dissertation research. Alex is also actively involved in research on teaching and learning and is a frequently invited contributor to teaching workshops and mentoring programs organized by the university and professional associations. "It's an honor to have been chosen as one of the Ag Econ Department's Outstanding Seniors. The Department has truly shaped me into the individual I am today, and I am grateful for the support and guidance I have been given over the past three years. Here, I have found my passion and have been set on a path to success."

## Robin Reid and LaVell Winsor

along with Dr. Mykel Taylor, Mary Bowen, Mary Hunninghake and others

### K-State Research and Extension Team Award 2020 for the Farm Financial Skills for Kansas Women in Agriculture program

Lead by Reid and Winsor, this large team worked together across the state of Kansas, and in their smaller groups locally, to provide meaningful programming. Seventy-five county and district extension agents across the state set up 32 host sites for the program. The series of four programs, one night a week for 4 weeks, brought in 685 participants. Topics included Farm Recordkeeping, Balance Sheets, Income Statement, Cash Flow, and Goal Setting. While the program was titled Farm Financial Skills for Kansas Women in Agriculture to target as USDA defined underserved demographic, the series was open to anyone

and did attract several male participants.

"We were honored to receive this award, but the county and extension agents who got

people to attend hosted and facilitated the events made the program successful. Everyone working together made it possible to provide meaningful programming to such a large group," Winsor said.

This award recognizes outstanding efforts by a group of individuals addressing one of the grand challenges facing Kansas: global food systems, water, health, community vitality, and developing tomorrow's leaders.



Awards continued on next page



## Dr. Glynn Tonsor

**K-State Research and Extension and Kansas ACE, Communicator of the Year, 2020**

Glynn Tonsor, professor and Extension specialist in the Department of Agricultural Economics, received the Communicator

of the Year Award. The committee noted his willingness to be available to answer questions and try new things as they helped people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are many deserving of this and other awards. It is always an honor to be recognized by your colleagues and I want to extend a thank you as I was not able to do so at this year's Annual Conference," Tonsor said.

Tonsor has been with K-State since 2010, is a regular contributor to the AgManager.info website. His knowledge of swine and beef production was especially valuable during the crisis, and he was a sought-after expert for interviews across the state and nationally. In addition, he prepared several publications and continued his regular communication efforts throughout this time.

"Looking forward, it appears society's need for objective information has perhaps never been higher. The pandemic has magnified several pre-existing challenges and now there are many divisions within the U.S. meat-livestock industry. While my comments on the economic workings of meat and livestock markets, impacts of possible policy adjustments, etc. are not always popular I do hope they provide value and contribute to the growing thirst for objective information."

The award is presented annually by the K-State Department of Communications and Agricultural Education members and the Kansas chapter of the Association for Communication Excellence (ACE), the international professional association for Extension communicators.

## Dr. Andy Barkley

**K-State Office of International Programs, International Educator of the Year, 2020**

Andrew Barkley, professor of agricultural economics, has been named the 2020 International Educator of the Year.

K-State created the International Educator of the Year Award in 2003. It was established by the provost's office and implemented by the Office of International Programs. We announce this award during International Education Week in November each year. This award recognizes an individual who has contributed to advancing international education at the university. Agricultural Economics faculty have been recognized three times with this award.

"I am excited about International Education Week, and honored to be recognized with this award," Barkley said. "I view the honor as a team award because there are a large number of people who work hard to make international programs possible. Our programs in agricultural economics are developed and implemented by Mary Ellen Barkley, Cherie Hodgson and myself, so I am thrilled to accept this award on their behalf. Study abroad programs are supported by a great group of people in Education Abroad and the department of agricultural economics. The dedication of these individuals provides students

with truly meaningful life experiences."

Barkley added, "There is no greater reward than sharing international travel with our great students at K-State! The outstanding work of the Office of International Programs provides a once-in-a-lifetime experience for students, with knowledge and compassion that will stay with them for a lifetime!"

Barkley advised many international students and teaches international agricultural economics courses.

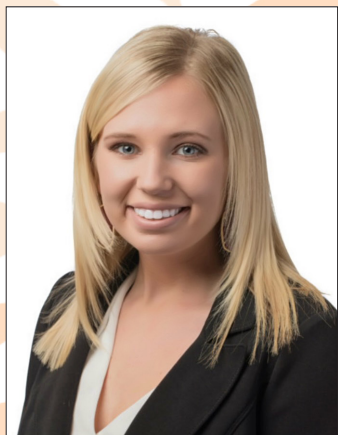
Since 2003, the international programs office added additional international award categories to recognize faculty, staff or administrators of the K-State community and external partners for their major contributions and sustained commitment to advancing international education at the K-State.





# Students Complete Summer 2020 Internships

Although many summer activities were put on hold due to COVID-19, some students were still able to participate in summer internships. Internships are an important opportunity to valuable gain on-the-job experience and apply skills learned in the classroom. Here's a brief look a few summer internships.



## **Avery Aust, Merchandising Intern, Consolidated Grain and Barge**

This summer, I had the privilege of interning for Consolidated Grain and Barge as a Merchandising Intern in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This internship allowed me to gain a perspective of both a merchandising and operations side of Consolidated Grain and Barge and introduced me to the skills of how to derive key information to assist in company origination.

Although I worked in an office setting in Tulsa, I also had the opportunity to experience the busy wheat harvest period at the Consolidated Grain and Barge facility in Enid, Oklahoma. I spent a week in Enid, and during this time I learned how to grade wheat, operate the wheat probe, and assisted in customer relations with trucking companies and local growers. I learned information that was applicable to the work I had been completing in the Tulsa office – such as protein grades and the discounts offered on hard red winter wheat. During my internship, I learned the process of basis and hedging in a cash business, the valuation of barge and truck freight and how this drove company exports, as well as the importance of

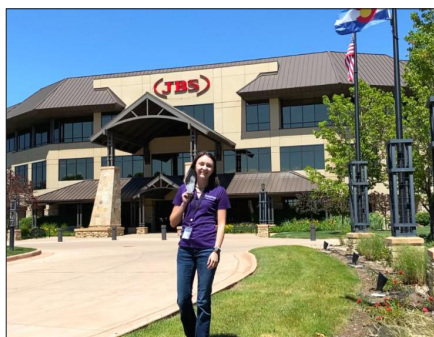
communication and following up with customers to obtain valuable market information for the company. This internship helped me grow both professionally and personally and I am very thankful for my time spent in Tulsa.

## **Antoinette Dorris, Accounting Intern, Garden City Co-op**

Garden City Co-op hired me to work with Kelly Drees in the Accounting and Finance department. During the spring semester I was able to start working with them through the Collegiate Career Development Program to sharpen my professional and technical skills before I went to the office during the summer. I completed multiple financial projects through the semester and the summer. These consisted of simplifying data to make it easier to understand and access in the future. The co-op helped me gain a better understanding of their grain process by having me shadow employees that are part of their grain department. I shadowed elevator managers, grain merchandisers and grain originators. I enjoyed the inclusion and the learning atmosphere I was a part of this summer. I was able to put college classes to real world experiences. The Garden City Co-op gave me the opportunity to learn more about their industry and gave me skills and values to use in future experiences.



## **Natalie Harris, Fed Beef Sales and Marketing Intern, JBS**



Natalie Harris is a senior majoring in Agribusiness and Global Food Systems Leadership. She began her internship with JBS, USA in Greeley, Colorado this past summer as a Fed Beef Sales and Marketing Intern. Some of her responsibilities included implementing a digital shelf recommendation for key formula customers to improve e-commerce, studied data and analytics to get a better picture of the ideal product, and attended sales meetings with the marketing and outside sales teams. Natalie appreciated the opportunities that JBS was able to extend and to keep their internship program an integral part of the company in the midst of all that's happened this year.



## **Morgan Lowderman, Market Intelligence, INTL FCStone**

I am currently a senior in Agribusiness that is also obtaining a certificate in Risk Management. This past summer I interned for INTL FCStone, now known at StoneX, in Kansas City, Missouri. There, I was the intern for their Market Intelligence team. At first I felt intimidated and not qualified enough to be on this team, but quickly my feelings changed. My first project was predicting the lean hog index price for the livestock team. I ran many regressions and analyzed them. Luckily, I was very familiar with this kind of analysis thanks to my ag econ classes at K-State. Some of my other projects included

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predicting US corn and soybean yields and analyzing the differences between food consumed at home versus food consumed away from home. I also helped my team answer daily broker requests that came in. I was able to help my team on the current reports that they sent out, but also develop new reports to be sent out and posted to our portal. I am so grateful I took a step outside my comfort zone and said yes to this internship. I was able to learn how to navigate through different databases including Bloomberg, ProphetX and datamart. I learned how to properly read many USDA reports. I also was able to further develop my excel skills and my communication skills. This internship showed me that I truly have a passion for data analysis and market research, and it also taught me to be confident in my findings.

### **Eli Ohlde, Agronomy Sales Intern, Central Valley Ag Cooperative**

I interned with Central Valley Ag Cooperative as an Agronomy Sales Intern this summer. I was based out of Clifton, Kansas but spent my time traveling the whole area serviced by Central Valley Ag over the summer. I helped plant and maintain plots, I delivered seed, delivered chemical, offered recommendations for chemicals and fertilizer for producers, and even sold some dry fertilizer to a new customer for CVA. I learned a ton about chemical systems and soil fertility over the summer. My boss and mentor was phenomenal. He was excellent at helping me learn more the technical parts of agronomy. I fit in well with the company culture at CVA and enjoyed working for the cooperative.



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## **Bailey Hinkle and Devin Brand**

### **1st Place, Agricultural and Applied Economics Association's National Case Study Competition 2020**

Bailey Hinkle and Devin Brand, master's students in agricultural economics, recently competed in the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association's national Case Study Competition and earned first place.

The students were given an in-depth case study covering a real business venture, Solinftec, a Brazilian technology and precision ag company that wants to establish a foothold in the United States. Hinkle and Brand had a month to prepare their proposed solutions and strategies for the company and to submit them in the form of a video presentation.

The video submissions were reviewed by a panel of judges, including faculty from across the United States, as well as the chief operating officer of Solinftec. Hinkle and Brand then had to present their strategy and defend their solutions to the judges in several rounds of live discussions.

"The competition looked a little different this year due to the pandemic, but we were excited about the opportunity to use our education and skills to provide a solution to a real-world problem," Brand said. "We are grateful to our advisor, the competition organizers and the company executive who thoughtfully considered our proposed strategy."

"The first-place win in this national competition is a result



of Devin and Bailey's hard work and creativity," said Aleksan Shanoyan, associate professor of agricultural economics and the team's advisor. "It is also a testament to the high-quality training they received in the department of agricultural economics at K-State."

In the past 20 years, the Agricultural Economics Case Study Team has placed in the top three 12 times and has placed first seven times in the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association competition.

"This continues the tradition of K-State agriculture economics graduate students placing top in national and international competition," Shanoyan said of the programs continued success.