



## KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Agricultural Economics



### From the desk of Dr. Allen Featherstone

We are wrapping up a successful 2024-25 academic year. Read more about all of the awards received by our students and faculty this spring.

Featured in this newsletter are articles on:

- Farm and Ranch Transition Conferences
- 2025 Outstanding Seniors
- Faculty Awards 2025
- Day of Giving 2025
- Farm and Agribusiness of Spain and Portugal
- Returning the Family Farm
- Calendar of upcoming events

In the fall, we will honor a new distinguished alumni member at our annual scholarship and awards banquet. We hope you will join us for the scholarship banquet Friday, October 10 and at the tailgate event before the October 11 football game against TCU. Be watching for more information on both events.

Our achievements are directly related to the continued support of our alumni and corporate sponsorships. We appreciate the dedication and engagement of our alumni and outside supporters. Thank you to our generous donors who contributed to our student competition team during the Day of Giving in April.

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 Sullivan, our communications coordinator, at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) with information you would like to share with your fellow alumni.

Go Cats!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Allen M. Featherstone'.

**Dr. Allen Featherstone**

Department Head, Professor, University Distinguished Professor

# Spain and Portugal 2026



Kansas State University's Master of Agribusiness program is offering its 9th 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.

**Saturday, June 6th: Madrid\***  
Arrive and city sightseeing tour

**Sunday, June 7th: Madrid/Toledo**  
Toledo sightseeing tour  
Sheep farm making traditional Manchego cheese.

**Monday, June 8th: Madrid/Granada**  
Windmills and winery

**Tuesday, June 9th: Granada**  
Dairy operation, producing milk, yoghurt and cheese  
Alhambra Palace

**Wednesday 10th: June Granada/ Estepona**  
Agricultural cooperative  
Olive oil mill  
Cattle feedlot

**Thursday, June 11th: Estepona/Seville**  
Fighting bull ranche  
Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art (Spanish Riding School)  
Sherry wine producer  
Olive Oil

**Friday, June 12th: Seville**  
Organic citrus fruits including their famous Seville Oranges  
Extra virgin olive oil producer and olive grove  
Walking tour of Seville  
Flamenco show

**Saturday, June 13th: Seville/Evora**  
Cross the border into Portugal  
UNESCO world heritage town of Evora

**Sunday, June 14th: Evora/Lisbon**  
Alentejo pigs, sheep and cork production  
Lisbon sightseeing tour

**Monday, June 15th: Lisbon**  
State-run agriculture and forestry company on 20,000 hectares, producing rice, wine and livestock  
Afternoon tour of cork oak forestry and management, and cattle

**Tuesday, June 16th: Lisbon/Oporto**  
Visit Fatima  
Port Wine Lodge, one of the oldest of the founding Port houses

**Wednesday, June 17th: Oporto**  
Winery tour  
Boat trip along the Douro River in Pinhão  
Farewell dinner

**Thursday, June 18th: Oporto**  
Depart for airport this morning

Please contact Mary Sullivan, [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) or 785-532-4435 for more information and full itinerary.

## Estimated Trip Rates:

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

## 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

*\*Itinerary is tentative and may change. A shorter option ending in Lisbon is also available.*

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



# Farm and Ranch Transition Conferences

As Kansas farm and ranch families face the realities of aging ownership and uncertain succession, a series of conferences hosted this February by Kansas State University offered producers practical tools to begin planning for the future of their operations.

Farm and Ranch Transition ConferenceThe Farm and Ranch Transition Conferences, held in Colby, Wichita and Lawrence from February 25–27, 2025, aimed to raise awareness about the importance of transition and succession planning. The conferences were organized by K-State's Office of Farm and Ranch Transition, Ashlee Westerhold and funded by the USDA Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP-TIP).

"We're really trying to raise awareness around farm transition planning—why it matters, and how to start the conversation," said Westerhold, Director of the Farm and Ranch Transition Office with K-State. "Even if you don't have a successor lined up, you still need an exit strategy."

The conferences were open to all Kansans but particularly targeted toward retiring farmers, landowners, and ranchers looking to begin the transition process. Each event featured local attorneys and accountants specializing in estate planning and agricultural law, allowing participants to connect with professionals in their area.

Keynote speaker Lance Woodbury, a nationally known family business consultant, addressed the challenges of transitioning a farm to the next generation and emphasized the role of communication in reducing family conflict.

"Lance helps families understand that transition isn't just financial—it's personal," Westerhold said. "This year, we also focused more heavily on what to do if you don't have a successor,



**FARM & RANCH TRANSITION CONFERENCES**

Join us in **Lawrence, KS** at the **Double Tree** on **February 27th** for the Farm & Ranch Transition Conference. In attendance will be local accountants and attorneys to speak with. Keynote speaker, Lance Woodbury, is a Principal and Family Business Consultant and will speak on family communication and working through conflict.

**SPEAKER**



Lance Woodbury

**27 FEB**

[www.agkansitions.org/conferences](http://www.agkansitions.org/conferences)

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which is a real and growing concern."

Now in its third year, the traveling conference series has become a respected extension program. Westerhold noted that many attendees have called it "the best extension event they've ever been to" due to its practical focus and relatable subject matter.

Roughly 100 participants attended each location this year, resulting in around 300 statewide. While attendance varies annually, Westerhold said the demand remains strong as more producers recognize the need for intentional planning.

In addition to hosting, Westerhold also managed speaker recruitment, marketing, and served as emcee at each site.

"This isn't just about retirement," Westerhold said. "It's about making sure your life's work continues in a way that honors your legacy—whether that means passing it on to family or preparing to exit with clarity."



Thank you to all those you donated to K-State's Day of Giving on April 9, 2025!

The Agricultural Economics Department's National Agri-Marketing Association competition team received

**\$2,450**

in donations thanks to your generosity! Your support will help the team compete at the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA) conference in Brazil in June.

# Agricultural Economics Outstanding Seniors 2025

The Agricultural Economics Department has selected four students to receive the Department's 2025 Outstanding Senior Awards: Adelaide Easter, Lauryn Karr, Paige Vulgamore, and Grace Walenta. The award recognizes seniors in the Agricultural Economics Department for their significant contributions during their time at K-State.

"Each year we recognize several of our most outstanding students. It is always an honor to recognize their accomplishments within the department as well as the University. Each of these four have excelled during their time at K-State. We appreciate the contributions of Adelaide, Lauryn, Paige, and Grace, and wish them the best as they become alumni from the Department of Agricultural Economics!" Dr. Elizabeth Yeager, Professor of Agricultural Economics and Director of Undergraduate Programs, said.

**Adelaide Easter**, Salina, Kansas, has completed degrees in Agricultural Economics and Global Food Systems Leadership, with minors in Leadership and International Agriculture and a certificate in Nonprofit Leadership. She was named Kansas State University's 39th Truman Scholar for her commitment to public service and addressing challenges in the global food system. Her leadership roles include Director of Stakeholder Relations for Food Security Scholars, Student Coordinator for the Global Food Systems Leadership program, and Director of Leadership Programming for Blue Key Senior Honorary. Easter also served as Basic Needs Director in the Student Governing Association, Co-Chair of the Cats' Cupboard Advisory Board, and founder of the Student Basic Needs Coalition. She studied abroad in Italy and Kenya and completed internships with Kansas Grain Sorghum, National Sorghum Producers, and U.S. Senator Jerry Moran's office through the Flinchbaugh Food and Agriculture Policy Fellowship. This summer, she will intern with Spur Local in Washington, D.C., through the Truman Foundation Summer Institute, and plans to pursue a career in food and agricultural policy before attending graduate school.

"Studying Agricultural Economics at K-State has deepened my understanding of the global food system and economy and set me up for success in working in the community to make progress on issues like food security and poverty through policy and education," Easter said.

**Lauryn Karr**, Gardner, Kansas, studied Agribusiness with a minor in Business. Now residing in Chicago, Karr developed her passion for agriculture through the influence of her grandfather. During her time at Kansas State University, she served as



Left to Right: Lauryn Karr, Adelaide Easter, Paige Vulgamore, and Grace Walenta

President of the Ag Econ/Ag Business Club, where she enhanced her leadership abilities and built strong connections within the agricultural community. She is known for her enthusiastic approach to learning and her commitment to growth both personally and professionally. After graduation, she will begin her career as a Customer Experience Specialist with Frontier Farm Credit, where she looks forward to making a positive impact in the agriculture industry.

"My time at K-State and in the Agricultural Economics Department has been nothing short of transformative. Here, I found my passion, built a foundation for my future, grew into a leader, and made friendships that will last a lifetime. Being recognized as an Agricultural Economics Outstanding Senior is a true honor and a beautiful reminder of the journey that has shaped who I am," Karr said.

**Paige Vulgamore**, Scott City, Kansas, majored in Agricultural Economics and Global Food Systems Leadership. At Kansas State University, she has taken on leadership roles through the College of Agriculture and been actively involved in organizations such as the Student Governing Association serving as Student Body President and Student Alumni Board. Vulgamore participated in agricultural study abroad programs that have strengthened her global perspective and leadership skills. She is passionate about agriculture policy and plans to continue her education at Texas A&M University, where she will pursue a master's degree in Agricultural Economics with a focus on policy.



"I feel so honored to be named an Outstanding Senior alongside several of my incredible peers. This award is truly a reflection of the people who have poured into me here, within the Department of Agricultural Economics and the broader K-State community. The opportunities I've had to learn in the classroom, through campus involvement, and studying abroad, each encouraged by my mentors, have shaped who I am today. I'm so grateful to K-State for challenging me to grow, learn, and lead," Vulgamore said.

**Grace Walenta**, Peoria, Illinois, majored in Agricultural Economics and International Agriculture. At K-State, she served as a College of Agriculture Ambassador, a Worship Leader and Ministry Team member with Reformed University Fellowship and participated in two study abroad programs. Walenta was a Fellow with the Risk Management Center. She was recognized as a CropLife Association (MACA)

Young Leader Scholar and received the Gamma Sigma Delta Outstanding Performance Award, in addition to earning Semester Honors throughout her college career. Walenta completed a Grain Merchandising Internship with The Andersons, served as an Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, and participated in an English-teaching missions trip to Poland. After graduation, she plans to remain in Manhattan to stay involved with her church and campus ministries while pursuing future opportunities in agriculture.

"I am honored to be recognized as an Agricultural Economics Outstanding Senior. My time as a student in Agricultural Economics at K-State has been rewarding and I am grateful for all of the faculty and staff that influenced me. I look forward to new challenges and opportunities ahead and am excited to make an impact with what I've learned," Walenta said.

## Upcoming Events

### Farm Income Webinar

With Dr. Jenny Ifft and Dr. Gregg Ibendahl

- June 17

### Ukraine-Russia Conflict - Agricultural Ramifications Webinar

With Dr. Antonina Broyaka and Dr. Allen Featherstone

- June 24

### "Winning the Game" Grain Marketing Webinars

Volatile grain markets may provide Kansas farmers and agribusiness with the opportunity to price 2025 crops at or above breakeven costs. This free monthly webinar series will help Kansas farmers develop effective 2025 grain marketing plans for Kansas crops. Presented by Dr. Daniel O'Brien from Kansas State University and Mark Nelson from Kansas Farm Bureau.

- June 30

### Risk and Profit Conference

Kansas State University, Department of Agricultural Economics holds a two-day Conference and Trade Show in Manhattan, KS. This conference provides you with opportunities to interact with other producers as well as Ag Economics faculty. What you take home helps you make better risk and profit decisions.

- August 21-22

### 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

- October 10, Manhattan, KS

### Agricultural Economics and MAB Tailgate

Before the KSU vs TCU football game

- October 11, Manhattan, KS

## Kansas Income Tax Institute

The Kansas State University Department of Agricultural Economics invites you to attend the 75th 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 - Zoom
- November 3-4, Garden City
- November 5-6, Hays
- TBD, Lawrence
- TBD, Salina
- TBD, Wichita
- December 10-11, Pittsburg
- December 15-16, Online - Zoom
- Ethics - Online through Washburn University

## 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 a resource where landowners can build networks and increase their knowledge in many aspects of land management.

- November 11-12, Manhattan

## K-State Fall Commencement

- December 12-13, Manhattan

## Risk Management on the Farm Online Class

*Available Now!*

This self-paced course will teach principles of determining cost of production, developing a marketing plan, evaluating crop insurance options, and participating in farm programs (ARC/PLC). Participants will work with a case farm to apply these topics to a real-world farming operation through hands-on, self-graded activities. The goal is for participants to acquire risk management skills they can apply directly to their own farming operations.

## Farm Financial Management Online Class

*Available Now!*

Self-paced online course for farmers and ranchers of all types. Six Lessons: Recordkeeping, Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow, Managing Family Living Expenses, Goal Setting.

# Spring 2025 Faculty Awards

## Dr. Logan Britton

The Eta Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta at Kansas State University held its annual spring reception in April, celebrating significant accomplishments within the agricultural and applied sciences and honoring faculty dedicated to the core values of the land-grant mission – research, teaching, and outreach benefiting the state. Dr. Logan Britton was recognized with the prestigious Early Career Award for his innovative work in agricultural economics and his commitment to student mentorship.

"I'm honored to be recognized with the Early Career Award by K-State's Gamma Sigma Delta chapter. I'm especially thankful for the students, colleagues, and mentors who have supported me along the way. Their encouragement and collaboration have helped me grow as an economist, researcher, and teacher. I'm proud to be part of a department that values both academic excellence and community," Britton said.

Established in 1914, the Eta Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta is a faculty-governed honorary society committed to upholding high standards of scholarship, character, and proficiency in agricultural and related sciences. This organization is dedicated to advancing excellence in scholarship, research, and service across the agricultural and applied sciences disciplines.

## Dr. Lonnie Hobbs

Dr. Lonnie Hobbs recently became a SciComm Identities Project fellow, expanding his expertise in science communication.

"The SciComm Identities Award is a nationally competitive award for young faculty members. It means a great deal to me, as the goal is to improve young professionals' ability to communicate in ways that embrace their unique personality styles," Hobbs said. "Being selected as one of the few recipients this year is truly an honor."

Hobbs is an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University. He specializes in agribusiness, marketing, pet food economics, teaching and learning, and diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.



*Dr. Logan Britton*

The program is designed to help professors communicate research more effectively, particularly to students. Its primary goal is to enhance the scientific communication skills of tenured and tenure-track faculty by teaching them how to express their work in ways that resonate with their intended audiences.

"It has taught me to identify the most relevant aspects of research for my audience and convey them effectively," Hobbs said. "I've now begun sharing these communication strategies with my research students as well."

During the program, participants explore intercultural communication theory to test and develop new approaches to science communication—an element that stood out to Hobbs.

"Being a lifelong learner, I was immediately drawn to the opportunity to enhance my communication skills and network with other young professionals in academia. Working in a profession where communication is essential," Hobbs said, "I recognized this as a valuable chance to develop skills that would benefit not only my students but also my department, college, university and the stakeholders I work with."

Dr. Hobbs' participation in the SciComm Identities Project marks an important step in his ongoing journey as both a scholar and educator, equipping him with tools to make science more accessible, inclusive and impactful for the next generation.

## Dr. Dan O'Brien

Dr. Dan O'Brien has recently been awarded the Lincoln Department of Agricultural Economics 2025 Outstanding Alumni Award from the University of Nebraska.

This award brought back many memories and reminded O'Brien of his capabilities in the Agricultural Economics industry.

"This recognition is humbling, as I consider how many very capable and successful people have graduated from UNL Agricultural Economics," O'Brien said "To be counted among respected graduates of UNL Ag Econ along with other people who have accomplished great things in their careers is something amazing for me to consider."

O'Brien grew up on a farm near Geneva, Nebraska. He appreciated the environmental and economic forces that came from growing up on a farm. This was his inspiration.

"The best way to describe it is that my way of thinking seemed to fit well into the framework or academic discipline of



*Dr. Dan O'Brien*



*Dr. Lonnie Hobbs, Jr.*

Agricultural Economics - which provided a framework for understanding the factors impacting farm profitability and survivability," O'Brien said.

O'Brien pushes students wanting to pursue careers in the field to find satisfaction in applying knowledge to the Agricultural Economics theory. He mentioned the real world

issues that affect our world today.

The only thing O'Brien regrets from his career is when he had good ideas in applied research or educational outreach and did not pursue it. His advice to future Agricultural Economics students, "be continuously motivated by your intellectual curiosity in this area of study."

## Course helps students returning to the family farm

A Kansas State University course is helping students and their families tackle one of agriculture's most difficult challenges: returning to the farm after college and planning for long-term business succession.

Introduced in 2024, AGECE 450: Returning to the Farm, equips students with tools to analyze farm finances, develop business plans and navigate generational transitions in family-owned operations.

Developed by Robin Reid, Ashlee Westerhold and Richard Llewelyn in the Department of Agricultural Economics, the course is designed for students who are planning to rejoin their family's farming or ranching business. Coursework includes enterprise budgeting, estate and transition planning, and analysis of business structures and tax implications.

"Returning home to the farm is more than just going back to work—it's about ensuring the long-term viability of a business and maintaining strong family relationships," said Westerhold, Director of the Office of Farm and Ranch Transition.

A cornerstone of the course is the "family in-service weekend," held early in the semester. Students invite family members or business partners to campus for a weekend of workshops and facilitated discussions. This year, 22 students and more than 80 guests attended.

The event includes presentations by legal and financial experts such as Mark Dikeman, executive director of the Kansas Farm Management Association, and Roger McEowen, a Washburn University professor specializing in agricultural and tax law.

Topics include estate planning, business entity structures, and intergenerational fairness—particularly how to bring one child back into the operation while remaining equitable to others who may not be involved.



"The weekend is designed to spark open and honest conversations," Westerhold said. "We want families to talk about their expectations, concerns and hopes for the future."

According to post-event surveys, 100% of respondents rated the in-service as "valuable" or "very valuable." Many noted increased clarity around the return process and greater confidence in managing family and business transitions.

One former student, Garrett Korte, said the course helped him and his family prepare for his return to their seventh-generation operation. Korte now manages a small square bale business and rents row crop acreage while working alongside his father and uncle on the family's 10,000-acre farm.

"We knew I couldn't just come back and be a 'yes man,'" Korte said. "Dad wanted me to succeed, and I didn't want to fail. That meant we needed a plan."

Korte credited the course and the K-State Office of Farm and Ranch Transitioning for helping his family work through tough conversations.

"They make it easier because they start the conversations a lot of people are scared to have," Korte said. "You realize you're not the only one figuring this out."

Westerhold said stories like Korte's show the importance of offering practical, real-world education for students in agriculture.

"If a family can freely and openly communicate about their goals for the future of the farm, they have a much better chance of succeeding," Westerhold said. "This class is about helping make that happen."

The course and in-service weekend will continue as a regular part of the K-State agricultural economics curriculum.