



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

ACROSS KANSAS

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



## A Message from the Director of Extension

### **K-State Research and Extension is about helping Kansans succeed!**

Each day, our professionals and volunteers empower residents across the state to improve their lives, livelihoods, and communities through educational programs and research-based information.

Together, we tackle issues related to community vitality, health and wellness, global food systems, conserving Kansas' water and natural resources, and developing the state's future leaders. These examples only touch a few of the ways Kansans and K-State Research and Extension come together to positively impact all of our lives.

I invite you to read our *Making a Difference Report*. It contains a few amazing examples, among many, of how K-State Research and Extension has helped you build an even better Kansas. You'll be impressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Gregg Hadley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gregg Hadley

## 2021 Extension Educational Contacts

Every year, K-State Research and Extension records the number of direct and indirect educational contacts made through extension programming efforts across the state. A direct educational contact happens when an extension professional meets with a client. An indirect educational contact is recorded when a programming effort or resource is distributed through radio, video, social media, email, etc.

Seven exceptional K-State Research and Extension programs are highlighted in this report. These programs represent how extension efforts make an impact in communities across Kansas.

*Direct educational contacts reported:*

**708,792**

*Indirect educational contacts reported:*

**1,672,440**

*Volunteer educational contacts made:*

**153,296**

### *Direct educational contacts by Grand Challenge*



**114,639**

GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEMS



**108,645**

HEALTH



**53,847**

WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES



**180,911**

COMMUNITY VITALITY



**97,454**

DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS



*Learn more about the Grand Challenges*



## **Gardening Webinar Series Attracts Viewers from Kansas and Beyond**

With a surge in new gardeners and food security concerns related to the pandemic, extension horticulture professionals developed the webinar series the *K-State Garden Hour* to address growing interest in food gardening. The series featured extension horticulture agents and specialists from across the state and worked with local extension offices to co-host events online.

Overall, the *K-State Garden Hour* series **engaged more than 16,300 participants**. Over 7,701 attended live and 8,625 watched recorded presentations. The highest attended webinar was on container gardening, which hosted 1,034 live participants. Of Kansas' 105 counties, 104 were represented. **Individuals also tuned in from 38 other states and five international countries.**

**Check out the series' archive**



**Of participants who completed surveys following the K-State Garden Hour series:**



**73%**

made five efforts to improve water quality.



**77%**

implemented five strategies to increase pollinator habitat.



**56%**

improved individual physical and emotional health and 57% reported improved quality of life within their community.



**80%**

implemented science literary practices like reading and understanding fertilizer and pesticide labels, identifying plant problems, and selecting proper plants for their local environments.

## Proper Vaccine Storage and Handling to Improve Livestock Health

Vaccines and other animal health products are common tools in producers' herd health programs. Typically developed in conjunction with a veterinarian, effective herd health programs help contribute to the strength of the nation's food supply. **Improper storage, handling and administration of vaccines reduces the material's efficacy and ultimately work against herd health programs.** Effective vaccines are essential in reducing the need for antibiotic use in cattle. To combat this mishandling, extension professionals involved in the Livestock Program Focus Team developed educational resources to improve vaccine best practices in cattle.

Through these resources and trainings, extension agents were able to work with producers on proper storage, cleanliness of syringes, and application of vaccines chute-side, all of which can impact product efficacy. Specialists and agents also demonstrated how to inject vaccines properly into the animal's body and how to make a homemade cooler for proper vaccine storage chute-side.



**Of participants who completed surveys following the training:**



**57%**

indicated increased awareness on improvements for storage conditions.



**48%**

were more knowledgeable of problems stemming from unsuitable storage conditions.



**88%**

would likely or very likely change the storage and handling of vaccines in their operation.



## Youth Improve Communication Amid COVID-19 Disruptions

The global pandemic poses many challenges. One of the most concerning is its impact on youth development and learning. **In response to this challenge, Kansas 4-H identified effective communication skills as being essential in enabling youth to develop life skills, reduce risk factors, and build confidence.** To help hone these communication skills, Kansas 4-H offered high engagement activities through its *Club Communication Project*.

The *Club Communication Project* consisted of six communication lessons presented by adult 4-H leaders during monthly club meetings. **As a result, youth learned about communication preferences, how to give clear instructions, and how to properly research, write and deliver a speech.** In total, 98 adult leaders from 33 local extension units were engaged and active in the project.

Members who participated in the project also indicated they used communication skills developed outside of their roles in 4-H. This included speaking in front of community organizations, presenting in school classes and activities, writing to pen pals, talking on the radio, interviewing for a job, and serving as a yearbook editor.



**Of the 302 youth participants who completed program evaluations:**

**95%** improved communication skills.



**89%** used the communication skills they learned in a leadership role.



**88%** used technology to help present ideas.



**79%** found confidence to speak in front of groups.



# Combating Food Deserts Across Kansas

## Keeping Kansas Grocery Stores Alive

Rural grocery stores face many uphill battles, from competition to high operating costs and slim profit margins. Another, often over-looked challenge affects grocers and the communities they serve: succession planning. In other words, ensuring someone is equipped to take on a grocery store business once the owner has moved on.

To address this challenge, the Rural Grocery Initiative developed the *Grocery Business Transition Mentorship* program. **The program paired grocers and leaders from ten rural communities with mentors who provided one-on-one technical assistance on a range of business transition topics, such as business planning, market assessments, community ownership and more.**

After meeting with their mentors throughout the Spring of 2021, participants learned how to:

- Develop financial projections
- Obtain financing
- Write a guidebook for standard operating procedures
- Create presentations for city leadership
- Submit an offer to purchase a store

Learn more about the  
Rural Grocery Initiative



## Local Food Production Supports Healthy Diets and Eases Food Insecurity

More than 90% of the state's dollars spent on food are spent on items not produced in Kansas. Many small and mid-sized Kansas farms struggle to realize a profit when selling products locally. This fact, combined with child food insecurity rates reaching above 25% in some counties and statewide obesity issues, caused extension professionals to assist in communities' access to healthy foods while building demand for locally grown products.

With all of this in mind, K-State Research and Extension partnered with the Kansas Department of Agriculture to organize farmers market vendor and direct-to-consumer food marketing workshops across the state.

*After joining a workshop with a farm-to-school panel, one participant connected with a school food service director and sold approximately \$100,000 worth of produce to the school district.*

*A follow-up survey showed:*



**72% of workshop participants gained new knowledge and skills pertaining to food safety.**



**43% made changes to their farmers market and direct-to-consumer sales strategies after the webinar.**



## **Helping Farmers Manage Grain Marketing Risks**

Volatile grain prices make it difficult for farmers to market their grain successfully. Grain prices were low for several years due to high global production and lower demand. More recently, grain and oilseed prices have risen due to higher export demand from China and production issues in South America.

Successfully navigating these supply and demand issues requires management and marketing skills by producers. Through hands-on learning with simulation tools, extension professionals in the Farm Management Program Focus Team worked to help producers better navigate how to manage and market grain products through different pricing scenarios.

These simulations enabled Kansas farmers to learn and practice skills in multiple modes, including in-person workshops, webinars and recorded videos. Using pre-harvest grain marketing strategies, producers learned how to integrate crop insurance decisions into whole-farm risk management. They also developed grain marketing plans for a simulated farm using new and different strategies. Additional factors in the simulations included availability of irrigation water and alternative and emerging crops to consider.

***“I learned to be more proactive with forward planning and pricing. Establish a plan, set pricing minimum, know my production costs, and sell when profitable.”***

*– Program participant*

## Developing Tools for Caregivers

Since 2015, the number of caregivers has increased by an estimated 9.5 million. **To put that into perspective, one in five Americans are caregivers.** The personal and professional stress in this area is considerable, and the response to the growing societal costs was an area K-State Research and Extension specialists tackled.

The *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* program was designed to empower people to adopt self-care practices, manage stress, increase communication and tackle tough situations. By engaging and using these tools, people experience less burnout and more fulfilling caregiving relationships. Through 10 in-person and online courses, more than 100 program participants reported lessened stress, greater self-care practices, and more effective self-care.





**100%** of participants felt the course made them better caregivers.

**Respondents' testimonials:**

*"I'm a better caregiver because I have more ways to deal with my frustration or family members. The course taught me how to meditate and relax."*



*"The course introduced me to more caregivers. Just knowing I'm not alone makes me a better caregiver."*

*"I'm more conscience of my feelings. And I have the ability to change and modify my attitudes."*

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**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

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