

Our Impact

2016-2017 Program Focus Team Report

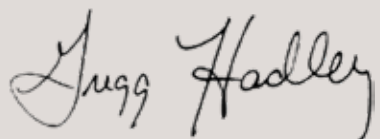


From the Associate Director

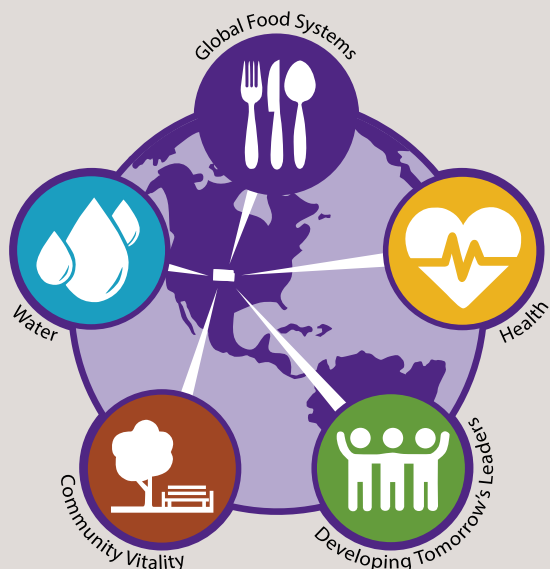
K-State Research and Extension addresses critical and emerging issues by providing research-based educational programming. These programs address the five grand challenges facing every Kansan — global food systems, water, health, growing tomorrow's leaders and community vitality.

Program focus teams are a critical component of our programming endeavors. These teams of agents and specialists discuss issues that program development committees identify as needing addressed in local communities, counties and districts. After identifying these needs, the program focus teams develop educational programs to address these issues.

The following are just a few successes achieved by the teams. I believe you will be as impressed by their impact as I am.



– Gregg Hadley



Progressive Community Vitality Processes

Kansas communities struggle to remain vital. K-State Research and Extension has created a strategic approach to help communities help themselves to preserve, create and improve their future. These programs include:

- First Impressions (community needs assessment)
 - » More than 65 communities identified signage, walkable communities, repurposing buildings, park improvements, and local grocery store projects.
- Kansas PRIDE (community improvement and empowerment)
 - » 79 PRIDE communities implemented 761 projects to address identified needs.
- Board Leadership and Grant Writing (community capacity building)
 - » 120 participants at 15 sites participated in leadership training. 98 percent of the participants felt better prepared to serve as a more effective board member.
 - » 95 percent of participants in grant-writing workshops report they were more confident in writing grants.
- Ripple Effects Mapping (collective impact measurement)
 - » This process is a new method to document collective community impact in four communities that helps to visualize the effect of community vitality programs on the local community.



Results are in the Numbers

Managing a Struggling Farm
Economy rated 4.2 out of 5
by attendees

647 adults participated
in 768 Stay Strong, Stay
Healthy classes

295 producers attended
four Farmer's Market Vendor
workshops



Farm Families Facing Tough Decisions

The pressures of low commodity prices and high input costs, including debt from land and equipment purchases, have left the farm economy in a vulnerable position. Many farm families are facing tough decisions about the future of their operations.

In response, K-State Research and Extension provided information to help producers and lenders evaluate the financial situation of farm operations. Eight meetings were organized statewide and consultations with individual farm operations were conducted.

Of the 814 participants, more than 92 percent found the information valuable. Producers from almost every county in Kansas were reached, as well as some from surrounding states. In addition, 56 county agents and Kansas Farm Management Association economists were trained to assist producers to analyze their financial situation and develop strategies for weathering the difficult financial situation. Agricultural lenders and producers better understood the current situation in regards to price outlook, production costs, debt levels, and potential strategies for keeping operations solvent and liquid.

"So glad that these concerns are being addressed. This type of meeting wasn't available in the '80s ... might have helped some farms experiencing the financial crash then. Great job!"

– Program participant



Promoting Specialty Crop Producer Vitality

One of the fastest-growing segments of agriculture is organic and local production of fresh produce. K-State Research and Extension partnered with the Kansas Department of Agriculture to plan four Farmers Market Vendor workshops. These workshops reached 295 producers with information on food safety, produce production and marketing. K-State Research and Extension professionals also provided individual consultations on insect and disease control, irrigation and soil fertility.

In a six-month follow-up survey,

- 90 percent said they learned new information about food safety,
- 52 percent made food safety-related changes to their business or market including improved washing practices and more careful sampling practices, and
- 50 percent made changes to their marketing or production techniques.

Program success stories include a new producer who connected with her local K-State Research and Extension office to find out why she had lost 60 percent of her tomatoes to blossom end rot the previous season. After a farm visit, it was clear that low-tech irrigation practices were the cause. With recommendations to get her through the season and plans to upgrade her irrigation technology, she had a more productive and profitable 2017 season.



40 first-generation college youth participated in the Education Experience Camp

70 PRIDE communities implemented 761 projects

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education reached 38,318 individuals



Helping Seniors Gain Strength and Reduce Falls

Despite compelling research about the benefits of muscle strengthening, the majority of older adults, particularly women, do not currently perform strength exercises.

Trained K-State Research and Extension professionals conducted Stay Strong, Stay Healthy classes across the state, reaching 650 people with this eight-week, 16-class program. Participants learned skills to improve, or in the case of some elderly class members, to at least maintain agility, balance, upper and lower body flexibility, and strength. Results indicate participants improved or maintained in the following ways:

- Lower body strength, 92 percent
- Agility, 93 percent
- Lower body flexibility, 85 percent
- Upper body flexibility, 77 percent
- Balance, 77 percent

Results such as these help prevent falls by older adults and enable them to live independently for a longer time. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates the cost of the average hospital stay resulting from an older adult falling to be greater than \$30,000. Not only does this educational program help reduce costs from falls, but it also improves the overall health and quality of life for participants.



Preparing Youth For the Future Workforce

Through 4-H programs in 2017, 74,837 youth were exposed to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competencies that will prepare them for the future workforce. Partnering with more than 12,000 volunteers, youth learned career readiness skills in hands-on activities in aerospace, robotics, food science, geology, entomology and agriculture including:

- More than 300 Kansans, from ages 7 to 80, participated in the 4-H Geology Field Trip. Volunteers from many industries and locations were involved.
- More than 200 elementary students in Hays participated in Drone Discovery – an engineering challenge that's part of National Youth Science Day.
- The Boys and Girls Club of Kickapoo in Horton, partnered with 4-H to engage local youth in STEM activities during their summer programming. Seventy-five youth in the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska and the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas participated in weekly STEM activities.

These learning opportunities help 4-H youth grow in the skills and confidence to be future community problem solvers and leaders.



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