March 2018

Making a Difference

K-State Research and Extension develops and delivers practical, research-based solutions to challenges faced by all Kansans, which includes the grand challenges:

- Global Food Systems
- Water
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders

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K-State Research and Extension - Shawnee County

Grand Challenge: Global Food Systems, Water, Health, & Community Vitality

Title: Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation Series for Ag Producers

Why is this issue important?

Agriculture and agribusiness contribute to the total economy of Kansas, both directly and indirectly. One in five Kansans, rural and urban, work in jobs related to agriculture and food production. Agriculture is the number one industry in Kansas, and Extension education helps Shawnee County farmers stay up-to-date on all aspects of their Agriculture operations.

Agriculture, food, and food processing sectors support 8,981.5 jobs or 7.63% of the workforce and a total economic contribution of approximately $2.73 billion, roughly 28.41% of the economy in Shawnee County.

Today’s American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide. In 1960, that number was 25.8. In order to continue to increase production for the growing population and to help the farms transition to the next generation, Shawnee County Extension needs to continue to work with local farmers to increase efficiency, production, and profitability.

How did Extension address this issue?

Shawnee County Extension and the Shawnee County Conservation District held four meetings this winter to address issues facing farmers and ranchers. The topics were identified by local farmers and ranchers and the Shawnee County Extension Agriculture Program Development Committee and included:
* Pond Maintenance: Aquatic Problems-Fish, Plants
* Weed Suppression, Resistant Weeds and Increasing Beneficial Cover
* Leasing, Fence Laws, Easements, LLCs and Estates; and a
* Soil Health Test Plot Tour.

What was the impact?

Approximately 1330 farmers and ranchers attended the spring Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation series meetings. 100% of the participants gained knowledge, with 98% ranked the programs as excellent or very good. The group (collectively) represented farm businesses with 25,450 acres of crops and hay, 18,771 acres of pasture, and 2,982 head of cattle. All participants reported learning recommendations that will be reflected in changes to their operations.

[Image: Sara Fredrickson, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service is shown examining the soil texture and temperature of corn ground with a cover crop compared to without a cover crop.]

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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