

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

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

Title: Agriculture and agribusiness needs to continue producing food during COVID-19 pandemic times. One of the services that Shawnee County Extension has continued to provide is testing soil for nutrients to promote production for crop and livestock operations, as well as taking care of lawns and gardens in Shawnee County.

Why is this issue important?

Shawnee County has 847 farms and a total of 201,662 acres in farm ground. Farmers are challenged to keep fertilizer out of lakes, such as Lake Sherwood and Lake Shawnee, as well as ponds and streams, while at the same time keeping enough fertilizer on the crops to grow food. Farmers also experienced unprecedented challenges to the food supply chain during the COVID-19 shutdown of the local and national economy which affected their ability to provide food commodities to the American public.

How did Extension address this issue?

Shawnee County Extension and the Shawnee County Conservation District partner to offer a cost share program to promote soil testing in Shawnee County. This program covers testing costs of up to \$600 per farmer and one lawn or garden routine fertility test per year for Shawnee County residents.



If the soil is short of essential nutrients, the crop, hay field, or garden will not produce efficiently. However, if too much nutrient is put upon the field, the nutrient could run off into ponds or streams and cause pollutants.

What was the impact?

Soil tests were run on 457 farms, lawns and gardens in Shawnee County from July 2020 to April 2021 utilizing \$6,800 dollars of cost share money to cover a portion of those costs. Results are used to advise farmers and homeowners how much of various nutrients to put on their crops, lawns or gardens. We continue to serve our Shawnee County farmers and ranchers to keep them profitable and to provide a sufficient food supply.