

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension
Frontier District

Second & Third Quarter • 2025



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

REBECCA MCFARLAND
DISTRICT EXTENSION DIRECTOR

Frontier District Friends and Supporters,

It's hard to believe the holiday season is already upon us, and that we're one month into a new Extension programming cycle. Our team of agents has just completed their annual reporting process, which includes setting goals and plans for the coming year while reflecting on the successes and lessons of the past year. Each agent reports outcomes and the impact of their work, demonstrating how Extension continues to make a difference in our communities.

Additionally, our agents recently returned from the Extension Annual Conference, where they had opportunities to learn, connect, and bring back new ideas to strengthen our local efforts.

As we look ahead, our team remains committed to engaging with community partners and local leaders to identify needs and deliver meaningful, research-based programs. Whether it's promoting health and wellness, supporting local food systems, fostering youth development, or strengthening families and communities, we are proud to serve the people of the Frontier District and to continue advancing the mission of K-State Extension.

Rebecca McFarland
District Director

Frontier Extension District Making a Difference Report

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AGRICULTURE and LIVESTOCK UPDATES

ROD SCHAUB LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AGENT

On July 22, 2025, Kansas Agriculture and Technology experts had a chance to learn more about the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of agriculture at Kansas State University's AI in Agriculture conference. This was hosted by the Institute for Digital Agriculture and Advanced Analytics, and K-State Extension Frontier District.

200 attendees that were graduate students, industry technician leaders, university researchers, veteran producers, state lawmakers, and early career farmers got the opportunity to hear about how AI is influencing the way that farmers tend their land and grow food.

The conference was built around a panel of experts who talked about the subjects of emerging technologies, economics, and farmer perceptions. Along with listening to the panel about AI emerging with agriculture, attendees got to be up close and personal with the technologies.

The technology included aerial spray drones and a weed trimmer with interchanging attachments. These two have the goal of helping farmers save time. While participants were intrigued by this information, they were still curious when it came to specific features, battery life, payload capacity, etc. They felt as though these AI features needed to prove itself and receiving as much information as possible.

Organizers covered all those bases and say this conference helped them redefine AI in a more thoughtful way. That their intentions are for good and to support the work of farmers.



Farmers learn about new AI features that aims to help them in agriculture and redefining the way they do their production. (photo credit: Cailin Wycoff)



Attendees getting the opportunity to see the AI technologies up close and learning about it's information. (photo credit: Carol Engle)



The group of 200 gathers outside to see the new enhanced AI additions to farming planes

RYAN SCHAUB CROP PRODUCTION and FARM MANAGEMENT AGENT

For the past two growing seasons, Ryan Schaub, Frontier District ag agent specializing in crop production and farm management, has been helping with a research project studying the speed of on-farm waterhemp evolution across the Midwest. This project is being conducted by the Kreiner Lab at the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois Chicago, Cornell University, Purdue University and Kansas State University. One of the main goals of the project is to associate the history of field management and current practices with shifts in the frequency of different variants across the genome and to relate the findings to traits and weediness in fields.

This research requires four sampling dates: one each in the months of May, June, July and August. Sampling requires collecting 3 leaves from each of 40 plants across the field and depositing them into a container and then shipping the container to the Kreiner Lab at the University of Chicago. During August's sampling, researchers also take seeds from the plants across the field that are then tested for herbicide resistance.



The Frontier District is involved in collecting data for waterhemp research that seeks to understand the speed of on-farm evolution of this plant across the Midwest. (photo credit: The University of Illinois)

TEAMING UP ACROSS DISCIPLINES

CHELSEA RICHMOND NUTRITION, FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH AGENT

The Frontier District hosted a collaborative Food Production and Food Preservation program on May 6 in Lyndon. The evening meeting provided an opportunity for agents in the district to combine efforts in the areas of horticulture and foods and nutrition.

The program featured two K-State specialists, Dr. Cary Rivard and Karen Blakeslee. Dr. Rivard presented on how to promote healthy garden soils to increase vegetable production; soil is the most important thing we manage while producing crops, he said. The goal for gardeners is to produce greater yields of high-quality fruits and vegetables in their own backyards.

Karen shared a “tool kit” for preserving food safely, which included using reliable recipes, processing foods in the appropriate canner based on acidity, accounting for elevation, and using the right jars and lids. Karen also brought and shared information about new canning equipment – electric pressure canner, steam canner, and electric water-bath canner – that is now available on the market.

The 15 people in attendance were very engaged and asked both specialists a variety of questions. Based on survey results, after attending the program,

- 91% strongly agreed that they had increased their knowledge or confidence in where to find reliable recipes and resources to safely preserve food at home.

- 82% strongly agreed that they had increased their knowledge or confidence in their ability to follow research-based methods to safely preserve food at home.

- 82% strongly agreed that they could better identify the correct canning method for low-acid and high-acid foods.

Participants also expressed that they had learned that while new canning lids need to be washed, they no longer need to be heated and placed in boiling water before processing. Additionally, they expressed that they learned about electric canners, that dial pressure canner gauges should be checked each year for accuracy, and that tomatoes need to be acidified with either lemon juice, citric acid, or vinegar.

K-State Extension publications, including resources focused on safe food preservation methods and up-to-date recipes, were available for participants to take home. These free publications continue to be available at the Frontier District offices in Lyndon, Garnett, and Ottawa.



Dr. Cary Rivard uses visuals to illustrate the importance of soil health at the May 6th joint horticulture/foods and nutrition meeting in Lyndon.



Dr. Cary Rivard is director of the K-State Olathe Horticulture Center. Attendees to the May 6th meeting asked Dr. Rivard and Karen Blakeslee a variety of questions.



Karen Blakeslee shares information on new canning equipment available to those preserving garden produce.



Attendees at the May 6th meeting in Lyndon are engaged in Karen Blakeslee's presentation on preserving food safely.

FAMILY and CONSUMER SCIENCES UPDATES

JANAE McNALLY

ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND AGING and FAMILY RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT AGENT

Falls happen every day, and many older adults believe that they occur due to circumstances beyond their control. However, falls are not an inevitable part of aging, but rather, they are a serious and preventable public health issue in Kansas. According to America's Health Rankings, Kansas ranks 43rd in the nation for falls among adults age 65 and older, indicating a higher-than-average prevalence compared to other states.

According to KDHE (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) reports, unintentional falls among older adults remain one of the leading causes of both fatal and nonfatal injuries in Kansas. The financial impact is substantial, too, as hospital costs associated with fall-related injuries account for a large portion of healthcare spending on injury care. Nationally, the CDC notes that falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries among older adults. Additionally, one out of every ten falls results in an injury serious enough to limit daily activities or require medical attention.

Recognizing the toll that falls have on Kansas communities and hearing from health care providers, Frontier Extension District Agent Janae McNally offered the Matter of Balance class to Frontier Extension District residents. The class is an eight-week, two-hour session that focuses on empowering older adults to reduce their fear of falling, increase their physical activity, and adopt practical behaviors that help prevent falls. The program is designed to improve confidence, strength, and independence.

At the conclusion of the classes that have been taught, participants have stated the following outcomes:

- Over half reported that, as a result of participating in this class, they feel more comfortable talking with others about their fears of falling and plan to make changes to their environment.
- 100% reported making changes to their home environment to improve safety.
- 100% said they planned to continue the exercises and make them part of their daily routine.
- Over half strongly agreed they felt more comfortable increasing activity as a result of the class, while the rest agreed.
- One participant noted she already felt stronger and more confident after 8 weeks. Another said she enjoyed learning easier ways to get out of bed and up from the floor.
- One participant shared that they now have less fear of falling, as they now know better ways to prevent falls because of this class.

Participants from one of the locations have reported that they are continuing to get strong while socially engaging with each other each week, and have found many benefits from both.



Janae McNally, adult development and aging & family resource management agent in the discussing information and resources with fall risks

Lyndon Office
128 W. 15th
PO Box 400
Lyndon, KS 66451
785-828-4438

Ottawa Office
County Annex Building
1418 S. Main, Suite 2
Ottawa, KS 66067
785-229-3520

Garnett Office
411 S. Oak
PO Box 423
Garnett, KS 66032
785-448-6826

Remember, soil tests and radon tests are always available for purchase! Contact your local Extension Office for more information on our services.

HORTICULTURE UPDATE

LAUREN GAMMILL
HORTICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES AGENT

The Frontier District's Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program is focused on bettering the community through creating vibrant green spaces, growing food for its neighbors, and sharing education with people of all ages. When individuals sign up for the program and complete the course, they also receive ongoing education on gardening, as well as fellowship with other green thumbs across the district.

During the past quarter, EMGs worked on an informational booth for the Ottawa and Garnett library plant swaps. At the Ottawa Library plant swap, EMGs Mark Ferrel and Kristi Dunn shared a presentation and demonstration on soil blocking. They created a soil mix, designed a presentation, and shared their knowledge with a large group of plant lovers. Additional volunteers set up and ran other garden pop-ups throughout the district every month of the quarter. These events were not only opportunities to share knowledge and possibly gain some in the process, but they were also chances to get to know people in the community and be an aid to them in their gardening journeys.

Although sharing knowledge is a central part of being an Extension Master Gardener, having additional opportunities to gain knowledge in creative ways is a big perk for the volunteers. This quarter, local growers and gardeners invited the EMGs out to see their flower farms. In May, Brenda Hayden, owner of the beloved Aunt B's Blossoms, gave a tour of her Franklin County flower farm. In June, Lenora Larson, owner of Long Lips Farm in Paola, invited EMGs out to see incredible native gardens and flower beds and to share a meal and conversation about all things outdoors!

Being a Master Gardener is not only a good way to help the community, but it's also a way to meet new people and share in incredible experiences across the state. If you are interested in joining the Frontier District Extension Master Gardener program, call your local Frontier District office or fill out an application on its website (<https://www.frontierdistrict.k-state.edu/>); applications this year are due Friday, August 15, at 5 pm.



Kristi Dunn (pictured) and Mark Ferrel were presenters on soil blocking at this summer's Ottawa Library plant swap.



Frontier District Extension Master Gardeners were guests of Lenora Larson's at her Long Lips Farm in Paola this summer.



KOFO RADIO
103.7FM / 1220AM

**Frontier Extension District
Radio Recordings**
(Or listen LIVE)

Family & Consumer Sciences
Director Update
Community Vitality
Mondays - 6:40 a.m.

4-H Youth Development
Wednesdays - 6:40 a.m.

Agriculture/Horticulture
Fridays - 6:40 a.m.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

JESSICA FLORY
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENT

Fall is in full swing, and summer now feels like a distant memory as we move into the 2026 calendar year. As I take a moment to reflect on the past summer during my quarterly review in Extension, I want to share my thoughts on the fairs that occupied much of my time during the summer in the Frontier Extension District, which includes Anderson County, Franklin County, Osage City, and Overbrook.

What truly stands out to me are the heartfelt moments that define our community engagement, rather than just counting blue ribbons or livestock shown. Over the eighteen days spent at these fairs, approximately 550 4-H members showcased their determination, hard work, and passion—all made possible by the incredible volunteerism that supports each event.

I'm grateful that we had a fair photographer at the Franklin County fair to capture some of these special moments. This truly reflects the essence of what the fair is all about. For many families involved in 4-H, the fair is not just an event; it's a cherished tradition that strengthens community bonds and creates lasting memories. The excited voices of children, the laughter of parents, and the dedication of volunteers all contribute to the spirit of the fair.

One such family deeply immersed in this experience is Joseph Thomas and his daughter Lauren, a proud member of the Rowdy Wrangler 4-H club. As Joseph reflects on their time spent at the fair, he emphasizes the importance of family bonding. "The fair allows us to navigate the highs and lows together," he shares. The lessons learned during these challenges resonate beyond the fairgrounds. "There aren't many opportunities as parents to walk alongside our children through created adversity," he notes, and that shared experience fosters resilience and growth. The relationship between judge and contestant teaches valuable lessons in humility and perseverance; "Some days the judges may agree with us, and other days they may not. No matter what, we are learning together."

This picture of Ron, Aaron, and Grayson captures the multi-generational impact of their experiences at the fair. The Dunbars are a cornerstone family of the Franklin County Fair, reflecting on its importance to them.

"Our years in 4-H taught us to set goals, work together, and be civic-minded," Ron reflects, emphasizing the vital lessons that have shaped their family and community. Aaron adds, "4-H offers unique experiences that help us grow and strengthen our family ties," highlighting the significance of shared moments at the wash rack, where generations connect.

In this touching snapshot, 11-year-old Grayson beautifully encapsulates their family spirit, stating, "4-H has taught me about livestock care and leadership. It's a family effort."

The fair experience goes beyond competition; it's about storytelling and connection. Ron explains, "At the wash rack, it's more than just cleaning animals; it's about storytelling and laughter passed down," emphasizing how these intimate exchanges foster resilience and camaraderie among families. As they engage in the traditions of the fair, the Dunbars exemplify the essence of 4-H: a legacy built on shared values and support.

Looking to the future, Ron envisions that this legacy will endure. He states, "Our connection to our roots keeps our community strong." He believes that the lessons learned within the 4-H framework will inspire future generations to continue this rich tradition of growth and togetherness.



Joseph Thomas and his Daughter Lauren reflecting on their time and enjoyment at the fair



Ron, Aaron, and Grayson are pictured with their cow during the 4-H events

The spirit of community and growth resonates deeply with me, both as a 4-H Youth Development Agent and a 4-H mom. Balancing my responsibilities often means working long hours to prepare for the fair, yet my children thrive during this time. The fair is the highlight of their summer. My son, Patton, who is just four years old, eagerly anticipates every moment at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. Although he is not yet a participant, his excitement is palpable.

"He fights me to leave every night," I laugh, recalling our mornings when he is out the door before I am. He can't wait to experience everything the fair has to offer. Watching him play in the dirt and mud, surrounded by animals and the thrill of fair attractions, reinforces my dedication to this role. These are the moments—finding joy in competition, making new friends, and embracing the lively atmosphere of the fair—that enrich the vibrant experience for everyone involved.

Ultimately, the fair experience is about building relationships—those we share with our families, fellow 4-H members, and the broader community. It transcends the accolades of trophies and belt buckles, focusing instead on the memories and bonds that define our human journeys. As we reflect on the joys and challenges of our time at the fair, may we recognize the hidden, powerful moments that shape our lives, impacting not just the youth involved in 4-H but families and communities across generations.

Let us carry forward the essence of the fair—shared laughter, cherished memories, and the opportunity for growth—ensuring that these sentiments are passed down to the next generation of 4-H members, keeping the spirit of the fair alive in our hearts forever.

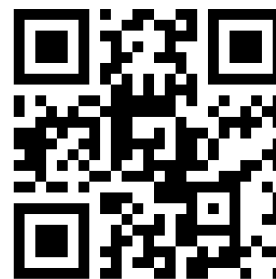


Frontier District's 4-H Youth Development Agent, Jessica Flory, enjoys a touching moment with her son, Patton

What is 4-H? Why is it Important?

4-H's main goal is to promote positive youth development and to engage them in their community. They use a lot of hands-on activities and experiences to enhance their quality of life as well as teach life skills. **"Prepares Young People to be Beyond Ready."**

***For more Information about 4-H,
Scan the QR code Below!***



4-H.org

[Visit our Frontier Extension District website at
https://www.frontierdistrict.k-state.edu/](https://www.frontierdistrict.k-state.edu/)

and

[Join us on our Facebook page at
https://www.facebook.com/FrontierExtensionDistrictKSRE/](https://www.facebook.com/FrontierExtensionDistrictKSRE/)

REBECCA MCFARLAND
District Director, Family & Community Wellness Agent

Frontier District Director and Family and Community Wellness Agent Rebecca McFarland continues to partner with Osage County Economic Development to share resources and collaborate on efforts aimed at stimulating economic and community revitalization.

In December 2024, McFarland introduced one such resource - the Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB). At the Osage County Mayor Summit held on January 23, 2025, Sabine Martin, Ph.D., President of CTOR Solutions, LLC, and K-State TAB Partner, joined the group virtually to provide an overview of the program. KSU TAB offers no-cost, expert guidance and tools to help local communities stimulate economic and community revitalization through engagement, education, and one-on-one assistance. Following the summit, Osage City identified and prioritized several brownfield properties for future development considerations.

In August 2025, approximately 40 community members, business owners, and stakeholders gathered to discuss what is missing on Market Street (Osage City's main street) and explore ways to enhance the community's quality of life.

McFarland co-facilitated the session with Martin, which included small group discussions. A follow-up survey was distributed to those unable to attend, allowing for broader input. The results were compiled, and priority ideas were identified: streetscape improvements, improved use and appearance of existing structures, attraction of new businesses, and creation of public venues (entertainment, farmer's market, food trucks, live music).

Next steps were discussed, which may include conducting a traffic study, as Market Street is designated as a state highway, and pursuing a market analysis and streetscape rendering through a landscape architect contracted with KSU TAB. Most recently, McFarland introduced another resource, the Kansas State University Technology Development Institute, which may provide digital twin creation services that can scan a wide range of buildings and facilities to create a digital twin of the facility as built. This system helps teams work together faster, share useful information, and save money by reducing travel and planning mistakes.



The meeting in August with 40 community members discussing ways to help enhance Osage City's Market Street (main street)



Members brainstorming and writing down ideas with one another



The Market Street meeting groups talking in hopes to contribute their services to the community of Osage



What is a Brownfield?

A brownfield is real property of which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contamination. Public Law 107-118 (H.R. 2869). – “Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfield Revitalization Act” signed into law January 11, 2002.

Staff News



Welcome to Jamie Guenther, Frontier District Office Professional 4-H Youth Development. Jamie came on board the district staff on June 9th and immediately joined in the fair planning that was in progress. Jamie's office is in Ottawa; stop in to meet her, or give her a call at 785-229-3520. Welcome, Jamie!



Welcome to Gabrielle (Gabby) Kinder, our new Marketing and Communications Manager. Gabby officially came on board the 1st of October and is eager to begin her journey here at the Frontier District. Welcome, Gabby!



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 5- Climate Resilient Gardens: K-State Garden Hour

November 27 & 28- Frontier Extension Offices will be closed

December 3- Gifts for Gardeners: Zoom Webinar

December 4 - Ticks and Flies: New Animal Health Challenges

December 24- Extension Offices Open Until 12:00 PM

December 25-January 2 - Frontier Extension Offices will be closed

See you in 2026!

CONNECT WITH US



Frontier Extension District



<https://www.instagram.com/frontierextensiondistrict/?hl=en>



KSRE - Frontier District



Frontier YouTube Channel



<https://www.frontierdistrict.k-state.edu/>

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