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# *K-State Research and Extension* **Making an Impact**

**K-State Research and Extension engages Kansas people and Kansas communities by working with them on their issues, through research-based education to improve the quality of their lives.**

## **Agents Help Producers, Communities Plan for Effects of Drought**

Drought combined with searing heat in 2012 to force difficult choices on Kansas farms and ranches. USDA declared all 105 Kansas counties as federal disaster areas.

K-State Research and Extension specialists and agents addressed the issue by producing publications and videos, writing news articles and columns, doing radio interviews, developing a drought resources Web page ([www.ksre.ksu.edu/drought](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/drought)), and presenting programs on managing agricultural enterprises in drought conditions.

Bank manager Jack Woods, Minneola, said, "These ... programs are important so that we, as farmers and lenders, know what we're dealing with now and in the future."

Local agents help farmers and ranchers learn about research-based options and often serve as members of their local emergency preparedness committees. They also work with representatives of the USDA's Farm Service Agency to document local conditions.

## **Regional Expos Address Issues of Aging and Health**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), 18.5 percent of Americans and 18.4 percent of Kansans are age 60 or older. The population of the nation and the state will grow proportionately older as the Baby Boomer generation moves into later life.

To provide educational information addressing issues of an aging population, regional expos were held in northwest and southeast Kansas. The events included presentations and resource fair exhibits about aging and chronic disease. Follow-up surveys showed that, after the expo, participants acted to improve their quality of life. About 90 percent discussed end-of-life issues with family; more than 80 percent said they increased physical activity; nearly 50 percent increased water consumption; and more than 40 percent said they established an open dialogue with their health-care providers.

## **Kansas 4-H Prepares Youth for High-Tech Future**

To increase understanding of science and technology among underserved and at-risk youth, two south-central Kansas agents worked with a professor of youth development and 4-H state liaison for science, engineering, and technology to secure a grant from the National 4-H Council. The grant will provide Cowley County agents with resources to introduce 4-H Tech Wizards curricula at day camps and afterschool programs and to offer small-group mentoring opportunities.

A recent study showed that students participating in 4-H report higher educational achievement and academic confidence, are nearly two times more likely to attend college, and are more likely to pursue future courses or a career in science, engineering, or computer technology.



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## PRIDE Program Focuses on the Future of Communities

A 2012 survey of Kansas PRIDE communities and supporters noted that 62 percent of the respondents had been involved with the program for 10 or fewer years, showing that local leadership for PRIDE is evolving. New leaders enhance sustainability.

When asked what PRIDE has meant to their communities, respondents commented:

- *The community doesn't have a chamber of commerce, so PRIDE is the "go-to" organization to get things done.*
- *We became members of PRIDE shortly after moving to town. It really helped us to become community members instead of just residents.*
- *PRIDE has given our community a sense of direction. We have a common goal and know how to get to that goal.*

## Agents, Volunteers Share Ways to Improve Nutrition and Health

Kansas' adult obesity rate is 29 percent — more than double the 13.5 percent rate of 15 years ago, when the combined obesity and overweight rate was 47.6 percent. In 2003, the combined rate was 56.6 percent, and by 2011, it had risen to 64.9 percent. K-State Research and Extension educators focus on research-based nutrition education to combat the trend:

- In Wyandotte County, the agent and community partners proactively expand the outreach of the Family Nutrition Program, the Kansas version of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP-Ed. Monthly training for 20 4-H paraprofessionals helps them provide nutrition and fitness education in eight after-school sites. In workshops, more than 20 Latino volunteers learned to share with neighbors the importance of fighting obesity to reduce the risks of chronic illness.
- In Seward County, the agent and the school nurse introduced *Walk Kansas*, an eight-week fitness challenge, to high school students. Twenty teams of six logged more than 5,000 hours of activity. Statewide, *Walk Kansas 2012* attracted 18,653 participants who committed to increasing activity and eating more healthfully.
- In Riley County, the agent used the Extended Family Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to teach a summer nutrition and cooking program for 150 first-through sixth-graders from the Boys and Girls Club. In a post-program survey, all participants reported caring about eating healthful foods, 86 percent said they plan to eat breakfast every day, and 65 percent plan to encourage their friends and family to eat more healthful foods.

These examples reflect the K-State Research and Extension commitment to local programming in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, community and economic development, and 4-H youth development program areas. For more information, see <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu>.

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### **Mission Statement:**

K-State Research and Extension is dedicated to a safe, sustainable, competitive food and fiber system and to strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education.

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

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.