

ECOSYSTEM AND STUDENT SERVICES



The Tree Campus Higher Education Program honors colleges and universities for effective campus forest management and for engaging staff and students in conservation goals. CKD Horticulture Agent Jason Graves has played an instrumental role in Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) being awarded the certification for the fourth consecutive year in 2022.

He serves on their tree advisory committee, which develops and maintains a campus tree-care plan, manages dedicated funding for the campus tree program and hosts an Arbor Day observance and student service-learning project. As one of only eight educational institutions to earn the designation in Kansas, Jason has worked with KWU to inventory, identify and tag more than 230 trees on campus. He also assists in organizing their annual Arbor

Day celebration and service event, which engages students to help plant trees and take part in the learning project.

The Tree Campus designation is exciting for KWU and the Salina community because it demonstrates a growing sense of awareness of the critical role nature, especially trees, has in the health and vitality of students, citizens and the ecosystem as a whole. Plus, through his work with this small, private college, Jason is increasing public awareness about K-State Research & Extension amongst an audience who might not otherwise be involved with our programs or services.

FINANCIAL LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

Ashby House is a family-oriented shelter facility, focusing on individual needs such as case management services and life skills trainings that include such topics as finances, employment, self-care, parenting, and goal setting. Deb Wood, CKD Family Resource Management Agent, teamed up with First Bank Kansas and Consumer Credit Counseling this year to provide financial education to Ashby House residents participating in a financial literacy program, presenting about financial resiliency and success strategies. Those who committed to and completed the program were eligible for financial incentives (\$500 toward one of their goals) provided from a grant through United Way. Three participants successfully completed the first cohort and two participants successfully completed the second cohort.



Wood also taught classes in a life skills program. “Credit Matters” participants learned how and where to pull their credit report, the components that make up a credit score, how their score impacts their financial life, and steps they can take to improve their credit score. “Basic Money Management” participants increased knowledge in how to create a spending plan, needs versus wants, cash-flow and when bills are due, and cutting expenses.

Positive changes and comments as a result of completing the program:

-“I am now planning, saving, and setting/reaching personal financial goals.”

-“Helped me learn how to budget my money. I learned you can save money and pay off debts at the same time. Also helped me quit smoking cigarettes.”

-“I am more aware of where my money is going and what I’m doing with it.”

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH SOIL HEALTH

Two different field days were held in 2022 to highlight a multi-year forage systems demonstration project in the Central Kansas District. District Director Cade Rensink, Crop Production Agent Jay Wisbey and Livestock Production Agent Justine Henderson partnered with the Saline County Conservation District, Star Seed and the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation to educate agriculture producers and other land managers about opportunities to build soil health by appropriately integrating annual forages into cropping rotations.

Beginning in 2021, approximately 35 acres of farmland were planted to large-scale plots of non-traditional forages including Teffgrass, crabgrass, triticale, cereal rye, barley, oats, annual ryegrass, Sorghum/Sudangrass, and Hybrid pearl millet at various times throughout the two years depending on their respective growing seasons. At the field days this year, agronomics, management practices and harvest production data for each forage was shared with attendees as they toured the fields. In addition, several trials to control invasive species such as Crown vetch, Old World Bluestem (OWB) and Sericea lespedeza were showcased.

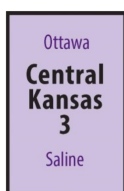


In total, close to 100 attendees representing 12 Kansas counties participated in the two field days. From the survey, nearly 96% of the respondents indicated the information presented was valuable or very valuable. In terms of knowledge gained (1 = Low / 5 = High), participants:

- increased their awareness of Crown vetch as an invasive species in Kansas from 2.3 to 4.3
- understanding of control options for Crown vetch went from 1.9 to 4.4
- awareness of “non-traditional” cool season forages that are available increased from 3.0 to 4.5
- increased their understanding of available “non-traditional” warm season forages from a 3.4 to a 4.4
- awareness of Sericea lespedeza as a noxious weed in Kansas went from 4.0 to 4.8
- awareness of OWB as an invasive species in Kansas increased from 3.4 to 4.5
- understanding of control options for OWB went from 2.8 to 4.4.

Over one-half of the people indicated they were not currently using annual forages in their operation as a cover crop. However, as a result of these field days:

- those respondents rated their likelihood of incorporating forages as a cover into their rotation in the next three years as 3.6 out of 5.0 and
- they are almost certainly going to graze the forages they plant.



Central Kansas Extension District #3

Minneapolis Office • 307 N. Concord, • Minneapolis, KS 67467 • (785) 392-2147
Salina Office • 2218 Scanlan Avenue • Salina, KS 67401 • (785) 309-5850

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*Knowledge
for Life*