



# EXTRA

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21

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2026

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## KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Specialty Crop Block Grants awarded for 2026

### SUBMITTED

The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) has been awarded \$383,242.73 through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Funds for the program are awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

According to the USDA, specialty crops are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” Through a competitive application process, KDA has selected recipients to further utilize the funds.

The following is a list of Kansas projects that will be funded by the grant.

- **Expanding Kansas Apple Education to Increase Specialty Crop Awareness and Consumption Among Elementary Students** – The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom will increase elementary students’ knowledge and consumption of specialty crops by developing a standards-aligned lesson unit for third to fifth grade teachers centered on Kansas apple production.
- **Innovative Sprayable Edible Coating to Reduce Frost Damage and Economic Losses in Kansas Specialty Vegetables** – Pittsburg State University will develop and validate an anti-frost coating to delay ice formation and reduce frost-induced specialty crop damage to help preserve yield and quality during critical growth stages.
- **Pumpkins with a Purpose: Enhancing Specialty Crop Production, Education and Sustainability** – Allen County Community College will establish a demonstration plot to evaluate pumpkin varieties and production practices relevant to regional growing conditions to improve production efficiency, reduce input costs, and increase adoption of sustainable practices. The college will also support agriculture education and workforce development by providing its

students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities aligned with agriculture career pathways and hosting at least six events annually, including field days, workshops, and educational programs with area high schools.

- **Drought-Responsive Irrigation for Specialty Crop Landscapes in Kansas: Consumer, Industry and Municipal Perspectives** – Kansas State University will build upon ongoing applied landscape irrigation research supported by industry partners to evaluate how consumers, landscape professionals and municipal staff perceive specialty crop landscapes managed under drought-responsive irrigation scenarios.
- **Enhancing Specialty Crop Competitiveness through Year-Round Production, Student Training and Community Engagement** – Kansas State University will develop and demonstrate a climate-resilient, year-round specialty crop production system suitable for Kansas conditions at the Willow Lake Student Farm. The project will expand workforce development by embedding farm-based learning into horticulture courses, incorporating additional interdisciplinary classes, offering internships and supporting a student farm club.
- **Start-Up Funding for Heartland Elderberry Collaborative** – The Heartland Elderberry Collaborative will be formally established to enhance the competitiveness of Kansas-grown American elderberry against imported alternatives and increase consumer access. This investment in shared infrastructure and governance will create a blueprint for other specialty crop growers in Kansas, demonstrating how collective action can move a crop from limited farmers’ market sales toward broader regional wholesale and commercial viability.

For more information, visit KDA’s Specialty Crop Block Grant webpage at <https://agriculture.ks.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrant>.

## KANSAS SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE

# KSHL overwhelmingly approves five resolutions

### SUBMITTED

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (KSHL) overwhelmingly approved five resolutions that set its priorities for the 2027 legislative session. Sixty-five delegates took part in the two-day session on the floor of the Kansas House of Representatives, with every Planning and Service Area in the state represented.

On the first day, each resolution went through committee hearings that included testimony from professionals who work on these issues every day. Committees amended the resolutions after testimony and debate, and the full body then debated each one before Thursday’s final vote.

“Delegates representing every part of Kansas overwhelmingly approved these resolutions,” said KSHL Speaker Leroy Burton. “That tells legislators something. Seniors from rural towns and big cities alike agree on what they need to stay healthy, independent and involved in their communities.”

The five resolutions are:

- **Resolution 4400, Senior Transportation.** Urges the Legislature to continue supporting and to increase funding for collaborative, community-based transportation for seniors, including micro-transit in rural, remote and metropolitan areas. It supports local control of these systems and asks the Kansas Department of Transportation to study transportation needs and work with local governments, Area Agencies on Aging, the KSHL and other organizations on projects that meet them.
- **Resolution 4401, In-Home Care.** Urges the Legislature to increase funding for the Senior Care Act and the Home and Community-Based Services Frail/Elderly Waiver so Kansans can continue to receive vital in-home support.
- **Resolution 4402, Medicaid.** Urges the Legislature to support Medicaid expansion in Kansas and to strengthen KanCare by increasing provider reimbursement rates.
- **Resolution 4403, Personal Needs Allowance and Medicaid Application Help.** Urges the Leg-

islature to raise the personal needs allowance for residents of Medicaid-approved nursing facilities to \$72.74, matching the national average, with an annual review for a cost-of-living adjustment. The allowance is the monthly amount residents keep for personal expenses. The resolution also calls for more help for seniors applying for Medicaid, including funding and designating the Kansas Area Agencies on Aging to provide that assistance.

- **Resolution 4404, Voting Rights.** Opposes any effort by the Legislature or county election officials that would restrict or prevent Kansas seniors from voting. It urges the Legislature to support the voting rights of seniors and all other voters by ensuring access to the polls, early voting and mail-in ballots.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Copies of the resolutions will go to all Planning and Service Areas, legislators, senior centers, and other senior organizations across Kansas. After the Nov. 3 election, the KSHL will contact newly elected legislators, share the resolutions and schedule meetings with new committee chairs and committees. In early January, delegates will return to Topeka to visit every legislative office to deliver and discuss the resolutions. Testimony will begin once the new Legislature is sworn in.

“Passing these resolutions is the starting line,” Burton said. “Our delegates will be in every legislative office in January, making sure these issues are heard.”

### ABOUT THE KANSAS SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature is a state-wide advocacy body made up of delegates who advocate for the more than 700,000 seniors in Kansas. Each year, KSHL delegates bring forward resolutions grounded in survey data and lived experience from every county in the state to shape policy that affects Kansas seniors.

## Current Blue-Green Algae Public Health Advisories

*This information is provided by Kansas Department of Health and Environment on October 16, 2026.*

### WHAT IS IT?

A harmful algal bloom (HAB) may look like foam, scum or paint floating on the water and be colored blue, bright green, brown or red. Blooms can develop rapidly; if the water appears suspicious or there is decaying algae on the shore, avoid contact and keep dogs away. These toxins can be absorbed by ingestion, inhalation of aerosols and even skin contact. Symptoms vary depending upon the type of exposure (e.g. direct contact, ingestion, inhalation) but can include rash, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, sore throat and headache. If you, or your dog, come into contact with algae rinse the area with clean, fresh water. Suspected HAB-related health incidents, whether human or animal, regardless of season, should be reported at [kdhe.ks.gov/1163](https://kdhe.ks.gov/1163).

*For information on blue-green algae and reporting potential harmful algal blooms, please visit [kdhe.ks.gov/HAB](https://kdhe.ks.gov/HAB) and check out our interactive story.*

| ACTIVE WARNINGS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | HAZARD STATUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | WATCH STATUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LIFTED                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A Warning status indicates that conditions are unsafe for human and pet exposure. Contact with the waterbody should be avoided.<br>When a warning is issued, KDHE recommends the following precautions be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signage should be posted at all public access locations.</li><li>• Inhalation of spray or aerosols may be harmful.</li><li>• Lake water is not safe to drink for pets or livestock.</li><li>• Lake water, regardless of blue-green algae status, should never be consumed by humans.</li><li>• Water contact should be avoided.</li><li>• Fish may be eaten if they are rinsed with clean water and only the fillet portion is consumed, while all other parts are discarded.</li><li>• Do not allow pets to eat dried algae.</li><li>• If lake water contacts skin, wash with clean water as soon as possible.</li><li>• Avoid areas of visible algae accumulation.</li></ul> | A Hazard status indicates that a harmful algal bloom is present, and extreme conditions exist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signage should be posted at all public access locations.</li><li>• It is recommended that either a portion of the lake or the entire lake or zone, be closed to the public.</li><li>• In some cases, the adjacent land should be closed as well. Actual setback distances will be determined on a site-specific basis, if necessary.</li><li>• When partial closures (i.e., beach or cove) are issued, the remaining lake or zone area will carry a warning status.</li></ul> | A Watch status means that blue-green algae have been detected and a harmful algal bloom is present or likely to develop. People are encouraged to avoid areas of algae accumulation and keep pets and livestock away from the water. During the watch status, KDHE recommends the following precautions be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signage will be posted at all public access locations.</li><li>• Water may be unsafe for humans/animals.</li><li>• Avoid areas of algae accumulation and do not let people/pets eat dried algae or drink contaminated water.</li><li>• Swimming, wading, skiing and jet skiing are discouraged near visible blooms.</li><li>• Boating and fishing are safe. However, inhalation of the spray may affect some individuals. Avoid direct contact with water, and wash with clean water after any contact.</li><li>• Clean fish well with potable water and eat fillet portion only.</li></ul> | A Lifted status indicates that it is safe to resume normal water-related activities. |
| KANSAS LAKES IN ACTIVE WARNINGS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | KANSAS LAKES IN HAZARD STATUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | KANSAS LAKES IN WATCH STATUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | KANSAS LAKES THAT HAVE BEEN LIFTED                                                   |
| Butler State Fishing Lake, Butler County (Elevated Oct. 16)<br>Lake Charles, Ford County<br>Frazier Lake, Grant County<br>Frisco Lake, Johnson County<br>Marion County Lake, Marion County<br>Lake Scott, Scott County<br>Lake Afton, Sedgwick County<br>Neodesha Riverwalk Park Pond, Wilson County                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Lone Star Lake, Douglas County<br>Hain State Fishing Lake, Ford County (Lowered Oct. 16)<br>Gathering Pond, Geary County (Lowered Oct. 16)<br>Jetmore City Lake, Hodgeman County<br>Elkhorn Lake, Jackson County<br>Amesbury Lake, Johnson County<br>Melvern Outlet River Pond, Osage County<br>Ottawa State Fishing Lake, Ottawa County                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | None                                                                                 |



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# opinion

## YOUR VOICE

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## LETTERS POLICY

**WRITE:** Letters to the Editor, The Sabetha Herald, P.O. Box 208, Sabetha, KS 66534

**EMAIL:** news@sabethaherald.com

We welcome letters of general interest to the community and reserve the right to edit for clarification or length. Letters should be fewer than 400 words, and writers are limited to one letter every other week. Letters are due by 10 a.m. on Monday before publication and must be signed with the writer's name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only the name and hometown will be included in the printed letter. We do not publish anonymous letters or letters printed elsewhere.

## COLUMNS

### Morrill Public Library chat

It's officially spooky season in Halloweentown! The library has hosted several fun seasonal events and the month is not over!

There is still time to get your pumpkin in to be judged for our Literary Pumpkin Decorating Contest! Turn your pumpkins in by Sunday, Oct. 25, (a two-day extension) and we will set them around the library. I will take photos and judging will be on our Facebook site next week! Prizes will be awarded in four categories — Elementary, Middle-High School, Family and Adult.

This year, Halloween falls on a Saturday and the library will be closing at 1 p.m. that day so our staff can enjoy the downtown festivities. However, the library will be taking part in Business Trick-or-Treat, directly following the Afternoon Parade (which starts at 3 p.m.) by setting up with candy downtown on the north side of the courthouse square.

We also want to welcome Miss

#### Morrill Public Library Chat

BY: JOEY MAY

Kansas Sophie Lewis for a special storytime at our trick-or-treat location following the parade.

Sophie Lewis was crowned Miss Kansas on June 6, 2026, and will spend her year promoting scholarship, service, leadership and community impact across the state. She earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry with a minor in business and works in the biotechnology industry, helping expand access to biomarker blood testing for early lung cancer detection. Her passion for science and innovation is matched by her commitment to improving lives through education and advocacy.

Sophie's Community Service

Initiative inspires middle school girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Through classroom visits, mentorship and community outreach — such as her visit to Hiawatha — Sophie encourages young women to challenge stereotypes, build confidence and embrace their potential. As Miss Kansas, she travels across the state through partnership with the Kansas Department of Transportation Traffic Safety Office.

Families are welcome to stop by and say hello to Miss Kansas Sophie Lewis and take part in her special reading event while trick-or-treating downtown!

Miss Kansas will also be crowning the 2026 Hiawatha Halloween Queen that evening, prior to the Grand Parade.



Sophie Lewis is crowned Miss Kansas on June 6, 2026. Submitted



Miss Kansas Sophie Lewis

### Flu shots remain one of the best defenses for older adults

It's that time of year, the leaves are falling, the temperatures this week at least (it's Kansas after all) are cool and crisp. I'm enjoying the cooler weather and the chance to break out a couple of light sweaters. It's also time to think about getting your flu shot. I may be preaching to the choir, but I'm surprised how many folks I talk to that haven't gotten it yet.

No one is immune to the flu, and those older than 65 face greater risk of serious complications, including hospitalization, and death. It's nothing to mess around with. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 70 percent and 85 percent seasonal flu related deaths and 50 percent to 70 percent of flu-related hospitalization occur among people age 65 and older.

This is because as we age our immune systems do as well, and they don't quite work as well as they used to. This makes us more vulnerable to illnesses such as influenza. The vaccination helps to support our immune system and reduce the risk of developing serious illnesses like the flu.

While there is still controversy around vaccinations, the flu has been proved safe for many years. The CDC recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older receive an annual flu vaccine, with special emphasis on adults age 65 and older. For this age group, CDC preferentially recommends

higher-dose or enhanced flu vaccines, including high-dose, recombinant, or adjuvanted flu vaccines, because they may provide better protection than standard-dose vaccines.

Some people mistakenly believe that the flu is simply a bad cold. In reality, influenza can lead to severe illness, loss of independence, and lengthy hospital stays for older adults. Even healthy older adults can develop serious complications. Vaccination not only helps protect the individual receiving the shot but also helps reduce the spread of influenza to family members, friends, and commu-

nity members.

The good news is that Medicare makes it easy and affordable for older adults to get vaccinated. Medicare Part B covers one flu shot each flu season at no cost when administered by a provider or pharmacy that accepts Medicare assignment. Beneficiaries pay no deductible, copayment or coinsurance for the vaccine.

Health officials generally recommend getting vaccinated in September or October, before flu activity begins to increase. However, it is still beneficial to receive a flu shot later in the season if you have not yet been vaccinated.

For older adults, an annual flu shot is one of the simplest and most effective steps they can take to protect their health, maintain their independence, and enjoy a safer, healthier flu season.

#### Family & Wellness

BY: TERESA HATFIELD MEADOWLARK EXTENSION DISTRICT



## DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in editorials, columns, letters to the editor or editorial cartoons do not necessarily reflect those of The Sabetha Herald or its staff. Furthermore, The Sabetha Herald does not and will not fact check the information included in letters to the editor. All information will be left as presented by the author.



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## If it matters to you... It matters to us.

We have been serving Sabetha and the surrounding area since 1876. The Sabetha Republican was established in 1876, and The Sabetha Herald was established in 1884. The two consolidated in 1893.

COLUMNS

Control broadleaf weeds in lawns in late October to early November

Late October to early November is the most effective time to control broad-leaf weeds in lawns.

Dandelions usually produce a flush of new plants in late September, and the winter annual weeds henbit and chickweed should have germinated in October. These young plants are small and easily controlled with herbicides such as 2,4-D or combination products (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out) that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba. Even established dandelions are more easily controlled now than in the spring because they are actively moving materials from the top portion of the plant to the roots in the fall. Herbicides will translocate to the roots as well and will kill the plant from the roots up.

Choose a day that is 50 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. The better the weed is growing, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots. Cold temperatures will slow or stop this process.

Weed Free Zone (also sold under the name of Speed Zone) contains the three active ingredients mentioned above, plus

On the Extension Line

BY: MATT YOUNG  
BROWN COUNTY  
EXTENSION



carfentrazone. It will give a quicker response than the other products mentioned especially as temperatures approach 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Apply Late-Season Nitrogen Application in November

November is the time to give cool-season lawns the last nitrogen application of the season. Why November? Because while top growth slows in response to cool temperatures, grass plants are still making food (carbohydrates) by photosynthesis. A November nitrogen application helps boost the photosynthesis rate.

Carbohydrates that are not used in growth are stored in the crown and other storage tissues in the plant. These carbohydrate

reserves help the turfgrass green up earlier in the spring and sustain growth into May without the need for early-spring (March or April) nitrogen. Those early-spring nitrogen applications are less desirable because they can lead to excessive shoot growth and reduced root growth. Other benefits of November-applied nitrogen for cool-season grasses include improved winter hardiness, root growth and shoot density.

How much should you apply? One to 1-1/2 pounds actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn area is sufficient. In order for this application to be effective, the nitrogen must be readily available to the plant, because the growing season is nearly over. Therefore, for a November application, use a soluble (quickly-available) nitrogen carrier such as urea or ammonium sulfate.

Many turfgrass fertilizers sold in garden centers and other retail outlets also contain soluble nitrogen. Avoid products that contain water-insoluble nitrogen (slow-release) for this application. As always, sweep up any fertilizer that gets on driveways, sidewalks, or streets and reapply it to the lawn.

Weaning time data collection

Two recent conversations have reemphasized the reason why data collection is important. Breed associations need more of it for databases and bull buyers appreciate it! We are in that time of year where spring calving cow herds are weaned, and this serves as a good checkpoint for data collection. I fully realize that not everyone has a scale, but many data points can be made through visual observation, transferred to paper by pen.

Comprehensive management decisions used to improve genetics, management practices and profit potential of cow-calf operations should be based on data. Periodically, it is important to step back and evaluate the production system. Weaning time is the best time of year to measure, quantify and document herd performance. This is typically the one time in the year when all animals are caught and under close evaluation. Not only is weaning time a great time to vaccinate and weigh calves, but is also the opportunity to preg check, evaluate and weigh the cowherd. Herd health practices like de-worming and vaccinating can be performed as well.

Weaning day can yield a wealth of information which can be

Livestock & Natural Resources

BY: ROSS MOSTELLER  
MEADOWLARK  
EXTENSION  
DISTRICT



evaluated to direct management decisions. A few pieces of information to consider collecting include: pregnancy status of the cows, weight and body condition of cows, weight of calves, evaluation of – udder, eyes, feet/legs and docility scoring, and evaluation of teeth in older cows has value. This is another good point in time to gauge the general health and condition of animals, check for internal and/or external parasites and apply treatments if warranted.

So how does one use this information? Since the cow is the production machine in the beef production system, maximum output needs to be produced for the system to be the most efficient. This can be measured in weaned pounds of calf, percent body weight weaned, pregnancy rates, etc... The cow herd requires input expenses and there is opportunity

cost on the dollars tied up in cow inventory. The only opportunity to operate at a profit is when the production factory yields a weaned calf of greater value than the annual cost of owning and operating the production factory. The data collected can inform you about the efficiency of the production factory.

Production records like the percentage of breeding females exposed that raised a calf to weaning, the percentage of calves born that survived to weaning and the percentage of our cow's mature weight that they are weaning off are some important benchmarks of cow productivity. These serve to determine efficiency and can be used to improve management and selection decisions that will result in more profitability. These benchmarks of productivity can be calculated from the data captured at weaning, so take advantage of the opportunity to collect and use data.

Kansas State University Animal Science has an Excel spreadsheet that can be used to calculate these Standard Performance Analysis (SPA) numbers. It can be found at <https://www.asi.k-state.edu/extension/bceff/files/SPAproduction-Blank2014.xlsx>.

Healthy snacks for everybody!

Everyone knows holidays are a time for indulgence! Candy, large meals and frequent consumption are part of many of our traditions. While the adage, "Everything in moderation" is true, it is important to remember that looking out for our health is important and can often go overlooked in times of celebration.

Here are some suggestions to keep your healthy eating as a priority during the upcoming holiday months. Firstly, choose to make healthy alternatives over quick snacks, party treats and potluck

food. Instead of heavy dips, bags of sodium-high chips or sugar filled cupcakes, investigate other recipes that feature fruits, vegetables, and healthy grains.

- Try:
- Apple-themed treats
  - Pumpkin-themed treats
  - Other vegetable and fruit treats
  - Whole grain treats such as popcorn

Nutrition & Finance

BY: CINDY WILLIAMS  
MEADOWLARK  
EXTENSION  
DISTRICT



- DIY trail mix
  - Limit:
  - Cookies and other baked sweets
    - Chips and chip dips
    - Meatballs or other meat-centered items
    - Pasta salads
- Second, if you need store bought pre-packaged or single serve items for school parties or trick-or treaters, opt for healthy options at the store. Look

for snacks that do not contain artificial flavors, synthetic colors, added sugars, trans fat or high fructose corn syrup.

- Try
- No sugar added applesauce or other fruit cups
  - Whole grain snacks such as pretzels, popcorn or cereal bars
  - Trail mix
  - Limit
  - Snack cakes
  - Cookies
  - Pudding packs
  - Candy

ARC/PLC resources

As harvest continues, don't forget the deadline to make another Farm Bill election. A choice between Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) for payments to be made in October of 2027 will be required by the Dec. 11 deadline (the election and enrollment period for the 2027 crop year will run from Nov. 2 through March 15, 2027). That means it's time to evaluate options and review some of the decision-making resources available from the K-State Department of Ag Economics to help you do so.

With prices a component of both program choices, price outlooks are important. Updated monthly as NASS prices are released, two different price information projections are available (link below). The K-State projections come with a detailed explanation of where the numbers come from. Three additional price projection sources are available for cross reference as well.

A second great resource is the

KSU Farm Bill Tradeoff Spreadsheet. This Excel tool (with user instructions included...) provides

a visual representation of potential ARC and PLC payments based on your farm's information. Visit the link below to download.

One of the best resources

will be an upcoming webinar featuring KSU Ag Economists Robin Reid and Jenny Ifft. For 90 minutes (noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday Nov. 3), they'll provide an overview of current markets, projected commodity prices, county yields and their influence on the 2026 ARC/PLC program. Sign up for a link to the livestream (it will be recorded) at <https://www.agmanager.info/events/arc-vs-plc-title-i-contenders-webinar>.

Check out the webinar at the link above. Price projection resources and the Farm Bill Tradeoff Spreadsheet can be found under the Farm Bill section of K-State's Department of Agricultural Economics AgManager website at <https://www.agmanager.info/ag-policy/farm-bill-0>.

Can your phone identify plants for you?

With thousands of different plants growing in our state, determining what you are looking at can be difficult. While field guides used to be the principal method of plant identification for beginners and experts alike, smartphones are shifting the way we approach the mystery plant in our backyard. Certain phone applications promise to instantly identify a plant using only a picture. The idea of snapping a picture and getting an instant identification has its appeal – but are they accurate, how do you use them effectively, and how can you tell when it is wrong?

The accuracy of these applications depends on the type of plant, what you include in the picture, and your standard for accuracy. Michigan State Extension found that apps were less accurate when identifying plants with subtle differences like grasses. A study at Rutgers University found these applications are better at identifying tree leaves rather than just the bark. Both studies consistently found the applications were good at determining the genus but are

far less accurate at pinning down the species. Do not be surprised if your plant identification app thinks your Black Willow is a Red Willow.

Looking at the accuracy of some popular plant ID applications like iNaturalist, PictureThis, and PlantNet (all available on iOS and Android), we also see that these apps are not created equal. In recent studies, PictureThis consistently shows a 95 percent or above accuracy to the genus, while iNaturalist had around 90 percent accuracy to the genus. PlantNet and Plant ID trail behind in the 80 percent accuracy range. These numbers, however, are not static. Earlier studies on these applications show unremarkable accuracy, and our changing technology is continuing to improve their plant recognition abilities.

While recent studies show impressive accuracy, user error can

lead to incorrect results. Blurry pictures or pictures with multiple plants confuse the application.

close-up only showing part of a leaf, or a picture taken from far away will not provide the application with enough detail. After you submit a good picture, it will generate a few possible identities, along with descriptions and example pictures. Examine the pictures and description to ensure it matches the plant you are looking at. Your phone only uses visuals for identification, and some plants have specific textures or odors that distinguish them. While many apps use your location to narrow results, use the description to see if the suggested identification grows in your region and the habitat you are in. If it suggests a shade-loving plant while you are in an open field, you have good reason to doubt the results.

Horticulture

BY: LAURA PHILLIPS  
MEADOWLARK  
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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

## Kansas crop progress, condition reported as of October 13

*Submitted*  
For the week ending Oct. 11, there were 5.8 days suitable for fieldwork, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Topsoil moisture supplies rated 6 percent very short, 17 percent short, 65 percent adequate and 12 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture supplies rated 10 percent very short, 25 percent short, 58 percent adequate and 7 percent surplus.

**Field Crops Report**  
Winter wheat planted was 44 percent, behind 56 percent for the five-year average. Emerged was 20 percent, behind 29 percent average.

Corn harvested was 63 percent, near 64 percent average.

Soybean condition rated 11 percent very poor, 21 percent poor, 34 percent fair, 30 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Soybeans dropping leaves was 88 percent, near 86 percent average. Harvested was 27 percent, behind 37 percent average.

Sorghum condition rated 14 percent very poor, 26 percent poor, 36 percent fair, 20 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Sorghum mature was 71 percent, behind 83 percent average. Harvested was 23 percent, behind 40 percent average.

Cotton condition rated 8 percent very poor, 23 percent poor, 40 percent fair, 25 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Cotton bolls opening was 84 percent, ahead of 79 percent average. Harvested was 9 percent, near 12 percent average.

Sunflowers harvested was 16 percent, behind 31 percent average.

**Pasture and Range Report**  
Pasture and range conditions rated 12 percent very poor, 20 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 30 percent good and 3 percent excellent. Data for this news release were provided at the county level by USDA Farm Service Agency, KSU Extension Service and other reporters across the State.

Access the National Crop Progress and Condition publication at <https://esmis.nal.usda.gov/publication/crop-progress>.

Access Crop Progress and Condition graphical products at [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts\\_and\\_Maps/Crop\\_Progress\\_&\\_Condition/2026/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/2026/index.php).

## Kansas crop progress, condition report released

*Submitted*  
For the week ending Oct. 18, there were 4.7 days suitable for fieldwork, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Topsoil moisture supplies rated 5 percent very short, 17 percent short, 66 percent adequate and 12 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture supplies rated 8 percent very short, 23 percent short, 63 percent adequate and 6 percent surplus.

**Field Crops Report**  
Winter wheat planted was 60 percent, behind 69 percent for the five-year average. Emerged was 30 percent, behind 43 percent average.

Corn harvested was 70 percent, near 73 percent average.

Soybean condition rated 13 percent very poor, 21 percent poor, 33 percent fair, 29 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Soybeans dropping leaves was 94 percent, near 92 percent average. Harvested was 41 percent, behind 53 percent average.

Sorghum condition rated 12 percent very poor, 25 percent poor, 39 percent fair, 20 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Sorghum mature was 80 percent, behind 91 percent average. Harvested was 30 percent, well behind 53 percent average.

Cotton condition rated 11 percent very poor, 28 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 20 percent good and 4 percent excellent. Cotton bolls opening was 93 percent, ahead of 85 percent average. Harvested was 12 percent, behind 21 percent average.

Sunflowers harvested was 23 percent, well behind 44 percent average.

**Pasture and Range Report**  
Pasture and range conditions rated 12 percent very poor, 18 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 32 percent good and 3 percent excellent. Data for this news release were provided at the county level by USDA Farm Service Agency, KSU Extension Service and other reporters across the State.

Access the National Crop Progress and Condition publication at <https://esmis.nal.usda.gov/publication/crop-progress>.

Access Crop Progress and Condition graphical products at [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts\\_and\\_Maps/Crop\\_Progress\\_&\\_Condition/2026/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/2026/index.php).

| Crop Progress by District<br>For the Week Ending October 11, 2026 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Percent                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|                                                                   | NW | WC | SW | NC | C  | SC | NE | EC | SE | STATE |
| Winter Wheat Planted                                              | 58 | 38 | 52 | 25 | 45 | 46 | 11 | 18 | 30 | 44    |
| Winter Wheat Emerged                                              | 25 | 15 | 32 | 4  | 19 | 22 | 5  | 5  | 8  | 20    |
| Corn Harvested                                                    | 31 | 45 | 77 | 60 | 91 | 91 | 50 | 74 | 96 | 63    |

| Crop Progress by District<br>For the Week Ending October 18, 2026 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Percent                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|                                                                   | NW | WC | SW | NC | C  | SC | NE | EC | SE | STATE |
| Winter Wheat Planted                                              | 70 | 63 | 68 | 46 | 60 | 61 | 19 | 24 | 34 | 60    |
| Winter Wheat Emerged                                              | 70 | 63 | 68 | 46 | 60 | 61 | 19 | 24 | 34 | 60    |
| Corn Harvested                                                    | 47 | 56 | 82 | 65 | 94 | 93 | 60 | 81 | 98 | 70    |

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