

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension



Southwind
District

Making a
DIFFERENCE

1st QUARTER 2026

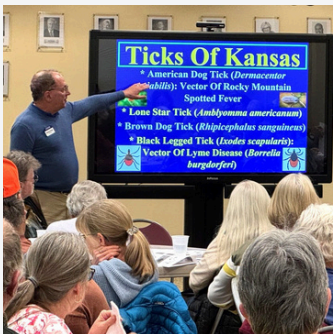


“Diversity” was the key word for the first quarter of 2026 programming for the Southwind Extension District. We had one of the biggest ag programs ever in our district, and all of our agents presented school enrichment programs that covered everything from aging to robots to flowers to money. We addressed the growing Alpha-Gal Syndrome problem in Southeast Kansas and continued working with young people in the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Our agents and program assistants continue to support our aging population with Stay Strong, Stay Healthy and Walk with Ease.

We’re looking forward to another great quarter!



Beyond the Bite: Understanding Ticks & Alpha-Gal



60 participants attended “Beyond the Bite”, an informative program on ticks held in Fort Scott. Organized by agents Sandy Haggard and Krista Harding, the program featured K-State entomologist Dr. Raymond Cloyd, who discussed tick behavior, life cycle, disease transmission, and prevention. It also featured K-State nutrition specialist, Dr. Priscilla Brenes, who discussed Alpha-Gal Syndrome, which has become increasingly common in southeast Kansas.



Middle School Students Build Skills and Support Their Community Through Pie-Making

Chanute Cherry Street Youth Center middle school students learned how to prepare and roll out their own pie crusts as they created two-crust pies from scratch.

Master Food Volunteer Susan Stich led the instruction, demonstrating techniques for mixing dough, rolling crusts, and preparing a well-fitted top layer. The project was coordinated by agent Sandy Haggard, with additional assistance from program assistant Hollie Yoho on the second day.

Students showcased their creativity by designing unique top crusts before the pies were frozen and readied for donation. All of the pies were baked and served at the Soupline fundraiser for rental and utility assistance on February 19th, allowing the students to directly support a local charity through their efforts. To celebrate their hard work, they also enjoyed a sample slice of pie that Mrs. Stich prepared in advance.

This project not only introduced students to practical baking skills but also highlighted the value of giving back to their community. Participants left with greater kitchen confidence - and the pride of knowing their homemade pies supported a good cause.






Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges

Allen and Neosho counties have continued to have annual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges. Five students from both Chanute and St. Paul high schools met to compete for the Neosho County Finals. One Iola student and four Marmaton Valley students competed in the Allen County challenge.

Participants develop and pitch their own business ideas, then compete for recognition and prizes while connecting with local business leaders. It provides a great opportunity for young, aspiring entrepreneurs to learn how to operate a successful business and make long-lasting connections. Local winners are determined after their trade shows, which showcase the students' hard work, and are attended by community members, business owners, and their peers. They will go on to compete at the state competition at K-State for over \$70,000 in cash prizes. YEC State is sponsored by NetWork Kansas, Kansas State University Extension, and Kansas State University Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship.



School Enrichment Activities Snapshot

 17 different programs delivered;  Pre-K through 12th Grade served;  These schools were served: Chanute Christian Academy, St. Mary's Catholic School, Chanute Homeschool Coop, Iola High School, Winfield-Scott, Humboldt High School, Yates Center High School, Chanute Early Learning Center, Iola Elementary School, Yates Center Elementary School, St. Paul Elementary School, Eugene Ware Elementary School, Humboldt Intervention Program, West Bourbon Elementary School.

1. STEM & Agricultural Sciences

Hands-on exploration of the natural and mechanical world.

- Chick Incubation: (Elementary)
- Worms & Soil Health: (Elementary)
- Flower Anatomy: (Elementary)
- Junk Drawer Robotics: (Elementary)



2. Financial Literacy & Career Readiness

Equipping students for adult decisions and future pathways.

- Reality U: (High School)
- Money Mystery Breakout Box: (Grades 3–6)
- Seeing Yourself in the Future: (High School)



3. Health & Human Physiology

Understanding the body and making wellness fun.

- Body Connection (Nervous System): (Grades 3–5)
- Smooth Ride to Health Blender Bike: (K & 4th Grade)
- Gray for a Day (Sensory Aging): (High School)
- Health Rocks!: (Youth Wellness)



4. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Building the "soft skills" necessary for lifelong success.

- Mindfulness: (Elementary)
- Be a Bucket Filler: (Pre-K – 2nd Grade)
- Friendship Breakout Box: (Grades 3–5)
- Integrity, Self-Control & Acceptance: (Grades 3–5)



5. Leadership & Team Dynamics

Interactive challenges to foster collaboration and character.

- Training Wheels Gutter Ball: (Elementary)
- Kansas Day Heritage: (Elementary)





Theileria in Cattle

More than 150 producers gathered at the Fort Scott Livestock Market for an educational evening focused on the tick-borne disease, Theileria, that is impacting cattle across the region.

The event featured Dr. Cassandra Olds, K-State veterinary entomologist, who provided an overview of Theileria, discussing transmission, control strategies, and

management decisions that reduce disease risk while minimizing insecticide resistance. Hunter shared information on behalf of the Farm Service Agency regarding the Livestock Indemnity Program and the documentation needed to report a loss of livestock due to Theileria.

Bull Pen Management

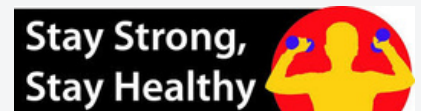
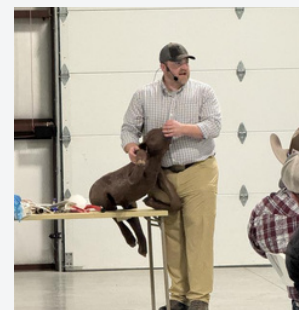
Together with Cherokee County, Southwind District hosted Drs. Tarpoff and Warner to discuss nutritional management, body condition scoring, and vaccine/testing requirements of herd bulls. Hunter Nickell discussed the Artificial Insemination vs Natural Service calculator and which option made the most sense for producers' operations. Lonnie Mengarelli also assisted with program set-up and registration. There were 37 producers in attendance who were very engaged and who asked good questions to all of the presenters.

Calving Management School

Another program done in partnership with neighboring counties and districts was the Calving Management School. Agents from Wildcat District, Cherokee County, and Hunter from Southwind hosted an engaging program in Erie. Dr. A.J. Tarpoff was the featured presenter; Hunter presented on the body condition scoring of cows and the importance of condition for calving. 84 participants took home valuable skills for their operations and became more confident in their calving abilities at home.

Farm & Ranch Transition Conference

Together with AgKansitions, Southwind hosted the conference in Fort Scott for 30 attendees. The keynote speaker, Lance Woodbury discussed challenges of transition planning and different transition models. The Kansas Ag Mediation Service provided resources; Kansas Farm Management Association discussed the importance of accountants, and a local attorney discussed legal topics as they apply to the transition process. The attendees, including our agents, learned lots of good things to take home and share!



Walk with Ease

Eleven community members completed this six-week Arthritis Foundation program in Bronson. Participants reported both physical and social benefits, noting increased flexibility, motivation, and enjoyment. Participant feedback included:

~"Love it! Bright part of my day!"

~"The stretching helped a lot."

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Thirteen community members in Galesburg and nine in Iola completed this popular eight-week strength training program. Participants met twice weekly to practice progressive exercises designed to build strength, improve balance, and support overall mobility for adults of all ages. 100% showed measurable improvement on three or more indicators from pre- to post-assessment.

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