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Sandra L. Wick, Post Rock Extension Agriculture Agent, Agronomy,  
K-State Research and Extension

**Post Rock Extension District "Recorded" Wheat Plot Tour**

Well, it won't be long, and the combines and farm trucks will be rolling in the wheat fields around north central KS. The 2025 wheat crop has certainly been through a variety of conditions during the growing season with some looking pretty good while others not so good. Stay tuned and I will provide an update on our Post Rock Extension District Wheat Demonstration Plot Tours that were held the end of May.

Annually, the Post Rock Extension District conducts face-to-face tours of our wheat demonstration plots around the district, and this was held on Thursday, May 22 at our three locations. The variety signs will continue to be up on each of the wheat plots in Jewell, Mitchell, and Smith counties and the field locations are posted on our website at [www.postrock.ksu.edu](http://www.postrock.ksu.edu) under the "Crops" tab and then go to "Test Plots". So, we encourage you to go by and take a look at the varieties in any of the wheat plots closest to you.

We recorded the Smith County wheat demonstration plot tour, and it is posted on our "Crops" page, under "Test Plots." K-State Research and Extension agronomists along with myself provided information on each of the varieties along with conditions throughout the growing season including diseases.

"The wheat variety plots provide a visual demonstration of how crop varieties perform in a particular area of the state along with yield potential of that variety," Sandra Wick, K-State Research and Extension, Post Rock District, Crop Production Agent explains. "This is known as "seeing is believing!" "Produc-

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ers who observe the demonstrations and the latest methods or practices, then may apply them to their own situations," added Wick. Producers can then compare the yield data from the many K-State Research and Extension experiment fields across the state of Kansas, to this local yield data, in selecting the most adaptive and productive wheat varieties.

Our Demonstration Wheat Plot cooperators take a lot of time out of their busy schedule to provide local yield data to producers of north central Kansas. A BIG thank you to Justin Angleton and Jason Ryan, Jewell Co.; Marty Fletchall, Mitchell Co.; and Mark Kuhlmann, Smith Co. If you would like to volunteer as a Wheat Demonstration plot cooperator, contact Sandra at any of our Post Rock Extension District Offices in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

We especially would like to thank all of our sponsors for our Post Rock Extension District Wheat Test Plot Program including Ag Mark, LLC; CPI; Central Valley Ag; Kansas Wheat Alliance; Lang Diesel, Inc.; Midway Coop, Inc., Phillips Seed Farms; Randall Farmers Coop Union; Sims Fertilizer & Chemical; Star Seed Inc.; and Trinity Ag Cooperative, Inc. We encourage all producers and agriculture businesses to take advantage of these educational opportunities from the Post Rock Extension District and K-State Research and Extension.

For more information on our **Wheat Demonstration plot program**, contact me at any of our Post Rock Extension District Offices in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

Kansas Farm Bureau....Insight

Will Stutterheim, Fort Hays State University

Advancing rural mental health  
Born and raised on a farm in North-west Kansas, I've seen firsthand the challenges the agricultural community faces. As a child, my parents had to fight to keep our farm, and I saw the mental and emotional toll these challenges placed on our family.

Years later, I took a job as a therapist in a rural community just miles from my parents' farm. I saw the need for education on the effects of stress in agriculture, but I also saw the stigma associated with talking about mental health. Kansas was hit hard by drought, and the effect of the stressors could be seen on our farms and in our rural communities.

I saw the community struggling and decided to give my first presentation on the effects of stress in agriculture. The stigma surrounding mental health was very strong 20 years ago and only three people ended up attending that first presentation. Stigma has always surrounded mental health; however, in agriculture, it's almost ingrained in the profession.

"Rub some dirt on it," "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and "tough it out" are some well-known phrases in farming communities. While "toughing it out" might work on a minor physical injury, it isn't the best way to recognize, understand and manage your stressors during times of uncertainty.

In the past 20 years, I have seen significant improvements in the stigma surrounding mental health. Instead of getting lost in the stigma and ignoring mental health needs, people are starting to recognize the symptoms of stress earlier and how that can affect mood and anxiety. This is critically important, because like any challenge, the quicker you are to respond to your mental health needs, the more likely you will be successful.

They also recognize and understand that much of their stress is from challenges they have little to no control over. Instead of blaming themselves for challenges outside of their control, hardworking farmers and ranchers are finding better ways and resources to manage their stress, anxiety, depression and overall mental health. The stigma is still there, but it doesn't have the same grip that it used to, and this allows people to think about mental health differently.

It's not just the agricultural community that is getting better; the people and resources supporting the community

are changing as well. I have seen so many great people and organizations take on the stigma surrounding mental health in agriculture. The next generation of farmers are taking the time to talk about and prioritize mental health. Small communities and agricultural organizations are working tirelessly to spread information and resources to those who are struggling. Families that were once reluctant to discuss the effects of stress now come together to talk and support each other through challenging times. Rural communities are full of amazing people and resources working to overcome the mental health stigma and finding ways to support those in need.

While I worked as a therapist, I was always fond of saying that stress and mental health issues are not an excuse or a weakness like the stigma suggests. They are a challenge.

Improvements are still needed regarding mental health and the stigma surrounding mental health — I've seen firsthand the substantial steps that have already been taken to improve mental health in agriculture. My first crowd may have consisted of only three people, but since then, I have given similar speeches to thousands of farmers and ranchers in numerous towns across Kansas.

Amazing people are working tirelessly to break down this stigma every day, and there's a way to honor their advocacy: Kansas Farm Bureau's Rural Minds Matter Advocate of the Year Award. It was humbling to receive the inaugural award last year, and I am excited to see the program continue to celebrate the impact of mental health advocates in rural communities. Their dedication can be truly life changing. To learn more about the awards or to nominate an advocate, please visit [www.kfb.org/ruralmindsmatter](http://www.kfb.org/ruralmindsmatter).

Farmers and ranchers are recognizing the need for bootstraps while also recognizing the toll these stressful times are having on them. If we work on this challenge in the next 20 years like we have in the last 20 years, I can't wait to see the advancements the next generation of farmers and ranchers make to further break down the stigma surrounding mental health.

About the author: Will Stutterheim has more than 20 years of experience helping individuals and families cope with the pressures of agriculture through mental health therapy and education.

KW&P Commission to meet in Russell

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission will hold its next public meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Dole-Specter Conference Center in Russell. The meeting will begin at noon and continue until all agenda items are addressed.

The meeting will begin with a report from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, including a public hearing on proposed duck zone changes and amendments to K.A.R. 115-25-14, which governs creel, size, and possession limits. Commissioners will also receive updates on regulations currently in the promul-

gation process.

Other agenda items include:

General public comment, Remarks from KDWP Secretary Christopher Kennedy, Informational updates on non-resident waterfowl hunting and the wild turkey adaptive harvest strategy, General discussion

Commissioners will also review workshop items—topics that may be voted on at a future meeting—including K.A.R. 115-45-1, which pertains to commission rules and regulations.

The meeting will conclude with an additional opportunity for public comment.

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