

## **Five Years of Extension Direct Education Contacts**

### **Doniphan County**

**2020 – 555 Direct Contacts** (Agriculture Agent Resigned Feb 2020)

**2021 – 1305 Direct Contacts** (No Agriculture Agent)

**2022 – 1869 Direct Contacts** (Hired Keith Olsen as Agriculture Program Assistant made it 8 months before parting ways)

**2023 – 1963 Direct Contacts** (Hired new Agriculture Agent and was fully staffed by Jan 2024)

**2024 – 1702 Direct Contacts** (Fully Staffed)

### **Atchison County**

**2020 – 6398 Direct Contacts** (Fully Staffed with experienced agents)

**2021 – 8687 Direct Contacts** (Fully Staffed with experienced agents)

**2022 – 2058 Direct Contacts** (Budget was cut hard by Commissioners and one agent was forced to retire)

**2023 – 5577 Direct Contacts** (One experienced agent office tried to cover everything and resigned at the end of the year) (Hired new agent at end of 2023)

**2024 – 785 Direct Contacts** (Agent hired in 2023 resigned in 2024; Hired new agent in 2024 & she is struggling)

### **Brown County**

**2020 – 1367 Direct Contacts** (One Agent)

**2021 – 2495 Direct Contacts** (One Agent)

**2022 – 2161 Direct Contacts** (One Agent)

**2023 – 2631 Direct Contacts** (One Agent)

**2024 – 2292 Direct Contacts** (One Agent)

### **Meadowlark District: Nemaha, Jackson, Jefferson Co.**

**2020 – 18,654 Direct Contacts**

**2021 – 12,971 Direct Contacts**

**2022 – 9,474 Direct Contacts**

**2023 – 15,660 Direct Contacts**

**2024 – 7,085 Direct Contacts** (As you can see in the graphic, they had an open position and a new agent)

## Staffing at Extension Offices

**Brown County:** Matt Young has 17 years of experience as the Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) Agent. He has degrees in Agricultural Economics. Matt has built a very strong 4-H program, that is considered an example across the state. Brown County 4-H sends multiple youth to state events. Matt's strengths are managing his office, natural resource programming, and providing leadership to both extension council members, and regional extension agents. He has served on the New Agent Coaching Team training new extension agents to be successful in their roles across Kansas.

**Atchison County:** Clarissa Conrad-Lierz, AGNR agent, has been on the job since July 2024. She comes to extension with a strong horse background. She has served as an excellent horse judge and educator (which are difficult to find). She is very enthusiastic about youth programming, and livestock topics for adults. Clarissa has been filling the shoes of a longtime ag agent who retired after 45 years of service in Extension.

**Doniphan County:** Kathy Tharman has been the Family and Consumer Science (FCS) agent since 2005. She has often times served as the only agent serving the county in the best of her ability. She has maintained an active Extension Homemaker Unit, assisted with agricultural programming when short-staffed, FCS education for youth, and managed the Doniphan 4-H program. Kathy has been a long-time pillar of Extension in Doniphan County. Kathy has indicated that she plans to retire in the next two years.

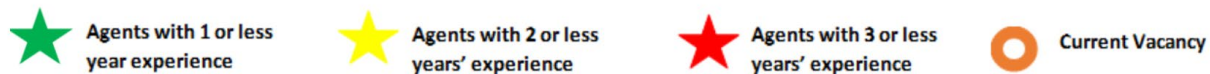
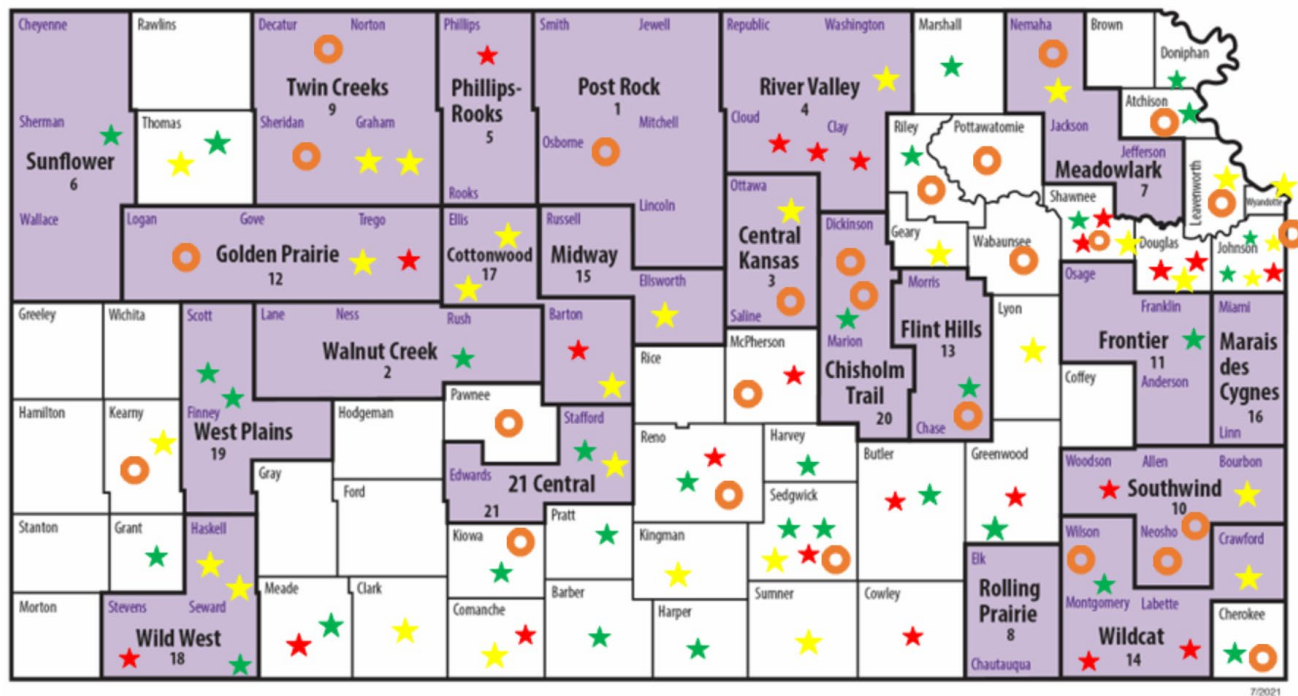
Katharine Sharp has been the AGNR agent since Jan 2024, and brings 5 years of professional experience into her role. Katharine has her degrees in Animal Sciences. She has a strong background in livestock and adult education, though she is enthusiastic to provide programming to residents who have farm management and horticulture extension resource requests. Some agricultural programming Katharine has brought to Doniphan this past year: Corn Plot Field Day, Northeast KS Sheep and Goat School, and Farm Transition Workshop.

### **Summary:**

Each of the county offices have staff that already work well together on extension programming and state/regional 4-H event coordination. Often when the Doniphan office was short-staffed, our neighboring offices have assisted Kathy in the best of their ability/ vice versa.

Districting, or combining extension councils, will allow us to weather personnel changes and maintain our direct contacts in each community. We have built crucial relationships in Homemaker, 4-H, and agricultural community contacts. Burn-out is a major factor in extension, as this job requires multiple late evenings, over-night trips, and year-round programming to serve our county residents to full-fill the mission of Extension.

The purpose of the Extension Agent is to provide community education outreach through sharing of resources and programming activities that foster community relationships. We currently have 2 open positions in our area to fill with a districting model. We hope to be able to hire a 4-H agent for area youth programming, and another agent in any other subject matter beneficial to Northeast Kansas to full-fill the mission Extension has for its residents (ex. Horticulture, Family and Consumer Sciences).



## Agent Positions

- K-State Extension has 1/4 of the agents leave every year for the past 5 years.
  - 105 agents positions open or have less then 3 years experience.
- Hard data to prove that District agents stay longer than County agents. If you subtract 4-H agents from the data set its even longer.
  - District Agents feel like they have a team to support them.
  - Co / State 4-H program expectations are running off new agents
    - 4-H Program requires more support to do it right: Background checking volunteers, two deep leadership, state event chaperone requirements, reaching underserved.
- No one comes out of college an expert in all program areas
  - Extension users have more formal education then anytime in history
  - Agents need to specialize to feel knowledgeable and confident in their job.

## Mil Levy Data:

I have also included the mil levy data for all the extension districts in Kansas for you to review. Which shows that after the first few years of establishment the mil levy starts to trend down or stay flat.

After you have time to review this information. **We would like to set a second meeting to discuss Districting in more detail.** In the meantime, please reach out if you need further information to review.