

# 2023 Kansas Small-Scale/Urban Grower Meetings

*Funded by Kansas NRCS, via KACD and Marketing Angle*

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## Introduction and summary of finding

In spring 2023, small-scale and urban grower focus groups were conducted in Kansas to determine the needs of these growers. The focus groups consisted of 12 total small-group discussions (4-8 people per small group) and a total of 57 individuals who identify as small-scale, specialty, or urban growers participated. Some sessions were held in person (Bonner Springs, Wichita, and Salina) and some were held online through Zoom. Participants were recruited mainly through email, either directly or through partner organizations, and the following organizations helped us find grower email addresses or spread the word about the focus group meetings: county conservation districts, Kansas Black Farmers Association, Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Agritourism, Kansas State Research and Extension, the Kansas Specialty Crop Growers Association, ICT Food Circle, Common Ground Producers and Growers Inc., Kansas Farmers Union, Cultivate KC, and Growing Lawrence. 350+ small-scale or specialty/urban growers were emailed an invitation to participate.

During the focus groups, facilitators from Kansas State University led growers through a series of questions that aimed to identify a wide range of challenges they face and information resources they need. Government personnel did not participate in the sessions to preserve grower confidentiality and encourage open conversations. Sessions were recorded with grower consent, and all of the information in this report is summarized from those recordings.

## Brief summary of findings:

It is recommended that Kansas NRCS provide additional, or adjusted, grant and cost-share programs related to high tunnels, growing system intensification, water access and irrigation, low- or no-chemical pest and weed management, solar energy, and fencing. Growers need financial and technical assistance, but are overwhelmed in sifting through the large amounts of information coming from many sources. Many growers are dedicated to regenerative or semi-organic growing in small spaces, and particularly need expertise and resources for their scale. This report also provides recommendations related to county office relationship approaches based on participants' feedback.

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## Who attended: Grower participants and operation characteristics

Below is a summary of the types of growers who participating in these focus groups, including personal characteristics along with characteristics of their operation and markets. At least two of the 57 growers were veterans, but we did not directly ask for that information.

- Total number of growers who participated: 57
- Participant age range: 30 years old to 77 years old
- Participant grower gender: 29 growers were women, and 28 growers were men
- Participant grower race/ethnicity: Of those who shared their race/ethnicity, participants identified as: American Indian (1), Asian (3), Black or African American (2), Hispanic or Latino (3), multiracial (1), or white (39).
- Years of experience as a small-scale or specialty grower ranged from 0 years (just starting) to 48 years of experience

### Acres in operation

Not every participant shared how many acres they operate, but of those who did, Table 1 summarizes their acreage. An additional 3 participants had varying acreage due to rental ground.

*Table 1. Acreage participants operate*

<b>Acres in operation</b>	<b># of participants</b>
Less than 1 acre	3
1-3 acres	5
4-5 acres	2
8-12 acres	6
25 acres	1
144-155 acres	3

### County locations of participants

Of those who shared their zip code, participants receive mail in these Kansas counties (Table 2). Note: One participant's zip code was in Missouri, and another was in Nebraska. We assume they operate some land in Kansas.

*Table 2. County locations of participants*

County	# of participants
Butler	3
Cloud	1
Decatur	1
Douglas	5
Finney	1
Franklin	1
Harvey	1
Jefferson	1
Johnson	6
Leavenworth	3
Miami	6
Osage	1
Sedgwick	7
Shawnee	2
Sumner	1
Wilson	1
Wyandotte	7

### Wichita participants

In the in-person Wichita sessions, 11 growers participated. These participants grow a variety of vegetables, along with fruits, pumpkins, salad mixes, grapes for wine, apples for hard cider, elderberries, evergreen trees, bees/honey, and other value-added products like jellies.

Their markets: Wichita participants produce at a wide range of scales, from large gardens where excess produce goes to their community, to well-established markets like direct-to-restaurant sales, online sales all over the United States, and on-site stores and U-pick operations. Others take produce to farmers markets or have other types of on-site operations (events, private wine tastings, pumpkin patch).

### Kansas City (Bonner Springs) participants

In the in-person Bonner Springs sessions, 29 growers participated. These participants grow a variety of vegetables, beef, pork, poultry, eggs, full-service wedding florals, hydroponic tomatoes, pick-your-own veggies, hay, livestock, grapes for wine, sunflowers, raw goat milk, goat milk products, alfalfa, wheat, nursery crops, u-pick flowers, lavender, herbs, fruit trees, berry bushes, and/or edible flowers.

Their markets: Kansas City area participants sell to or participate in a variety of markets, including direct-to-consumer such as farmers markets, u-pick, CSA and fresh markets; restaurant sales, some sell to food banks, some sell to school districts, and some do van deliveries. Few are certified organic. Some diversify their with income from: Air BnB, Pizza club, wellness spa, photo venue and workshops.

### **Salina participants**

The in-person Salina meeting was in association with the Kansas Black Farmers Association meeting. Two member growers participated. Their operations grow alfalfa and hay, and meat birds and vegetables.

### **Zoom participants**

In the virtual Zoom sessions, 15 growers participated. They grow a variety of vegetables along with other products, like paw paws, persimmon, a variety of berries, bees for honey, buckwheat, extreme peppers, apple and pear trees, mushrooms, grapes for wine, goats, pork, milk goats, sheep, lambs, cows, chickens, wheat, row-crop/vegetable crop combination, and/or cut flowers.

Their markets include direct and/or wholesale: community-supported agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, an online store, pick-you-own, grocery store sales, a mobile food hub, food subscriptions, bulk vegetables sales.

## **Growers' natural resource topic challenges and concerns**

Focus group participants brought up a range of challenges and concerns that they face in their operation. The natural resource-focused challenges are summarized below into these categories:

- Weather
- Water
- Regenerative farming
- Soils, soil fertility, and soil quality
- Weeds and pests
- Chemical and overspray
- Energy

They spoke about additional (non-natural resource) challenges and concerns, and that list of topics is included after the natural resources concerns list.

### **Natural resource concerns**

#### Weather

Weather is a challenge mentioned by many, from drought to extreme storms. Some have experienced tornadoes, microbursts, damaging wind storms, or floods on their operation. Many can see that the climate is changing, with concerns about soil temperature for germination or

extreme drought, and other future implications of climate change. Other weather concerns include wanting to extend their growing season, shelter for animals, dangerously hot temps for their crews, needing a heated facility for winter, and insurance needed to protect infrastructure (protect high tunnels from wind, for example). They need strategies to prepare for drought and other crippling weather-related issues.

### *Example quotes*

"I feel there's just been a lot more high-wind storms that have lasted for days in the last couple years, and that really we were investing a lot in covered production, so high tunnels, unheated greenhouses. And so we decided that we needed to get insurance on these plastic structures, because the stress was too much. We would stay awake all night worrying about this high tunnel blowing away." -KC participant

"We sold cattle. There was nothing for them to eat, and I refused to watch them starve. So, I sold more than half of my herd. I spent my life savings. It wasn't much, but my extra money... I spent that on hay to keep the rest of them alive, and I just had to turn off the water to the garden and shut the hoop house and walk away." -KC participant

*Context: drought*

## Water

Drought is not the only water-related concern. These growers get water from a variety of sources – rural water, water from the spigot on their house, hauling water from town to their cistern, well water, or surface water from the river. Some are concerned about the cost of water, and the cost to access water more efficiently via drilling a well, needing hydrants and hoses, and timers, and concerns over the safety of surface water. Some are already using irrigation such as drip tape, or overhead irrigation in greenhouses, but several need help deciding what irrigation set up is best for them, and they stress that the capital needed to invest in water systems is expensive. One would like a portable watering systems for rotational grazing, or a cheap watering system so they can invest in multiple to rotate livestock.

### *Example quotes*

"What we need in urban ag is water sourcing, small scale water programs, small to medium water irrigation, conservation, not 2,500 acres." – Zoom participant

"Irrigation and access to water. I live in a rural area and I am not on city water. I haul my water in from town for my house and for one of my gardens. If it doesn't rain, then my cistern isn't filling up. If the van breaks down, then I can't haul water. So in the first couple years, that was a serious problem for me... I was able to get access to a \$5,000 grant. It was general money that allowed me to improve some of my infrastructure, and that meant putting in an irrigation system in the garden next to the house that I could irrigate with the cistern and buy a pump for a pond for another field that I work in. But anyway, my cistern water is huge, and that's a struggle, especially if you don't have money to fix that problem." -KC participant

"So another big issue that we've had is getting water to where we need it. So I currently have a hydrant off of the back of my house that has a four-hose splitter on it and it goes

out about 200 feet and fills drip lines. I have not had issues with the drip lines because of pressure because once they pressure up, they're good. So that has been working for me, but it's extremely frustrating to be 400 feet away from where you need to be when you need to turn on and off the water. So that's one challenge that I've had to overcome or try to overcome by myself. I'm not sure where to get help on that, and it's expensive to put in.” -Zoom participant

### Regenerative farming

Many participants are interested in growing either in a regenerative style, or as naturally and environmentally friendly as possible. Very few were certified organic growers, and no one directly expressed interest in becoming certified organic. But many mentioned sustainable methods and concerns/awareness around soil microbes, beneficial/companion plants, and pollinators. Many participants had uncertainty about how to operate with minimal chemical inputs, given weed pressures along with overspray issues from neighboring properties. One participant needs capital for cross fencing for rotational grazing.

#### *Example quote*

“...we have 80 acres. We're not trying to produce on 80, but we want the entire 80 acres to be healthy, to be a return to what nature wanted. And get away from a lot of the chemicals, and tillage, and things like that.” – Wichita participant

### Soil, soil fertility, and soil quality

Several participants expressed concerns related to soil. Some have had issues getting the soil balanced (not just ph, but other balancing), including figuring out what amendments they need and how to source those amendments. For those wanting to do no-till and/or cover crops, they struggle with weeds (since they want to use minimal chemicals). In terms of soil fertility, some access compost, but it's expensive. Others want to learn more about new ideas, such as compost tea.

A few growers recognize issues with field space and rotation. They either grow specialty crops like pumpkins, or they otherwise don't have space or ability to rotate crops, ending up with unhealthy soils (bacterial issues, increased weed pressure). At such small scales, they have trouble giving up space to allow the soil to rest, or to plant a cover crop.

#### *Example quotes*

“They say you want diversity in your soil, so we try to grow diversity. But really, in order to make money, we had to go specialize in... You know what I mean? In the more leafy greens area. There was no other way to make money in greens.” -Wichita participant

“So we ended up with a bacterial infection in the soil and a lot of that had to do with lack of rotation and space.” – Different Wichita participant

### Weeds and pests

As mentioned above, weeds are a problem due to a variety of reasons, including many participants' desire to use minimal chemical, along with not enough land space to rotate crops.

Specific weeds mentioned as troublesome were: annual grasses in general, Johnson grass, Bermuda grass, bindweed, and honeysuckle. Specific pests mentioned were grasshoppers, blister beetles, Japanese beetles, rabbits, deer, raccoons, and birds. A couple participants mentioned they were trying integrated weed management. Some have trouble finding the right weed chemical, and some said they are dealing with weeds they've never seen before.

### *Example quotes*

"We're currently trying to really work on weed management. That is our big Achilles' heel with the vegetable side of things. Having grown vegetables over a lot of the same ground for 20-plus years, we're not able to rotate into our field-crop land because we don't have water source close... So we're limited, we have to keep the vegetables in the same area. And that does cause a lot of weed pressure, as some of you that are just starting out. The weeds will get worse if you can't rotate into some row crops, that's the best way to do it. But we are limited just by the layout of the farm and our water sources. So that's our big step this year, we're trying some more integrated weed management." – Zoom participant

"So, there was organic material that we used. I'd have to ask my wife what it was, but put it on the ground and it helped for that, for certain species of bugs. But then, like I said, I think it was mid-July or so, we already had our crops going and we were already hitting markets and stuff like that. But then they [grasshoppers] came in a wave almost and it was ridiculous." -Salina participant

### Chemicals and overspray

Some participants were certified organic, but most of them were not, and did not indicate a desire to become certified. However, the group as a whole had a variety of perspectives about organic growing, and many wanted to grow as naturally/organically as possible, partly to preserve beneficial insects. They have concerns about overspray and drift from neighbor farmers and neighbor residential areas. Additionally, two participants in two different locations had big concerns about the possibility of drift from soon-to-be-installed solar panel farms next door and the potential absence of pollinators due to the solar farms.

### *Example quotes*

"We really believe in the organic method. Granted we're not organic certified because we can't deal with all the freaking paperwork involved. But we do grow organically." - Wichita participant

"So I guess my main concern is the herbicide use and the county commissioner's not listening to our concerns about the solar farm going in by us. [County] is, it's splitting the two counties. [County's] getting 2000 acres. [County's] getting a thousand, so that's 3000 acres and you cannot tell me that they're not going to use herbicides to control the vegetation growth in that size of a complex and it's going to be sprayed and it's going to volatilize and I totally expect to lose my [operation] within about five years because of the drift that's going to be coming off those solar pumps." -KC participant

"Anytime we're trying to keep something alive, we're all dealing with some of the very same factors. Over spray from my neighbor's farms is probably the thing that I've suffered the biggest loss from. But the challenge that I face is finding information on how I can insure myself against that." -Wichita participant

### Energy

Several participants mentioned the need for, or that they are participating in, a solar energy program, either for a water pump, or for running electricity out to their high tunnel. The high tunnel uses fans and other electricity needs.

#### *Example quote*

"I have a high tunnel greenhouse that's 80 by 30, and I need electricity in there so that I can get my fans to operate rather than manually so that I've got electricity in there." - Zoom participant

### Growers' documented challenges with current funding/ cost-share programs

The high tunnel program is a program that several participants have used, but many were not aware of it. Some did not want a high tunnel, and others weren't sure they qualified or had a negative experience working with NRCS to get one in the past. A few participants had experience with other programs, like the certify organic program; funding for a solar pump; beginning farmer and rancher; SARE; and awareness of grants from multiple sources. Several expressed frustration or concerns about government agencies not understanding how their operations function, connecting that lack of understanding to lack of funding opportunities that they qualify for.

#### *Example quotes*

"Just access to that whole process is very daunting, the whole USDA and NRCS process."  
– Zoom participant

"I'm sitting here looking at probably four to five different USDA emails that keep popping in. I feel like I'm chasing my tail trying to get information, understand where I can go for grants. By the time I read through a grant, I'm like, "Oh, I can't apply for that." You go down a rabbit hole to find out you don't qualify. You should be able to see it at the top, or filter from the beginning, to see if you even qualify" – KC participant

"And what we find is so many of especially the FSA, USDA, NRCS-level supports are really still tailored, and designed, and explained for large operations. We're talking conventional farming where, "Yes, we're going no-till." But you're still buying into all of the chemical-company operations that are designing the seeds, and designing the sprays, and all of that. And especially if we're talking specialty crop. So there are a lot of really cool, great opportunities for cover cropping and that, but it's like if you're not a large-scale farmer, you just can't take advantage of those. Because you're signing contracts the last five years, that you may need to evolve what you're doing based on how you're responding to the change that you're noticing in your livestock. Or in the wildlife, and the flora, and the fauna, and everything that goes into it. And it just seems



so sad that there's a lot of opportunity that's being missed because we don't fall into that category.” – Zoom participant

“Some of the programs, because we funded on our own our hoop house, but then I learned later that the NRCS could have helped cost share that with us and we weren't aware of that program at all. So, I guess just awareness from some of the federal programs that are out there that can help. Then also the importance for us to be classified, we had to go fill out the 860 form to become a socially disadvantaged farmer. We didn't do that initially. So, some of those things I wish... Hindsight's 2020. So, I wish that we were able to have that information.” -Salina participant

*(Successful example):*

“Every year we do an open contract and then they find out what's going to fund and then we fill it.” – Wichita participant

## Growers' additional challenges and concerns

- a) Labor – time to train, the turnover and reliability of workers, their insurance, crew morale, and other concerns
  - One quote: “We went through six employees last year”
  - Another keeps cover crops and sunflowers on 4 acres because they don't have enough labor to grow vegetables on that land
- b) Initial debt of starting up – sometimes don't make a profit for a few years
- c) Start-up costs and capital – big items like market value of land, but also just needing starting funds for infrastructure
  - Example purchases needed to expand: coolers, refrigerated van, commercial kitchen equipment
  - Scaling up while still making a profit
- d) Fair distribution outlets
- e) Branding
- f) Inflation
- g) Supply changes
- h) Rising taxes
- i) New food tax and complicated taxes
- j) Changes in laws, administrations, law interpretation changes, rules and regs, and how that affects what they do (KDA inspectors giving inconsistent info)
- k) Marketing: having a consistent customer base in a rural area, developing new markets, and battling misinformation among customers
- l) Working through farm succession
- m) Physical ability limitations (disability, knee replacements, it's difficult physical work)
- n) Record keeping and business management
- o) Hard to find accountants who understand what they do; legal advice is expensive. Need easier access to legal/financial help
- p) Yield
- q) Loss of being able to purchase drugs; antibiotics are in animal restrictions
- r) Balancing their day job and their small business

- s) Zoning/neighborhood restrictions
- t) Relationships with neighbors
- u) Pressure from people with suburban lawns
- v) Land being eaten up/land cost increases due to development
- w) Competition from nurseries or large-scale commercial produce
- x) Hoops in joining farmers markets
- y) Needs mobile sorting equipment for cattle
- z) Lasting barriers related to discrimination

### Information needs:

- Topic specific educational needs:
  - Integrating goats
  - Aquaponics
  - Geothermal greenhouses
  - Intensified growing (to minimize labor, like the paperpot system for transplanting)
  - Business and financial management training
  - Lack of a consolidated place to learn about natural, organic-style growing at their scale
- Information resources needs:
  - “You don’t know what you don’t know”
  - Information that relates to their scale – lots of info out there for the backyard gardener and large commercial grower. But those approaches aren’t scalable for them
  - Someone in the USDA office that specializes in specialty growers, even in western Kansas
  - Grant writing training for the grants they apply for
  - Navigating rules and regulations
  - Insurance – for things like drift, bee hives failing/dying. One participant expressed dissatisfaction with USDA’s risk management and insurance
  - Trials - there was an emphasized need for K-State Extension to provide more help with plant trials, and other specialty crop assistance, like they used to. Variety trials for now and future climate changes, but also trials for best weed and pest management. “I imagine that there is a huge need for all of us to have local production specific variety trials done by K-State.” -Wichita participant
  - They need pricing information (wholesale, direct to consumer, etc)
  - Future market development assistance
  - Mental health – they experience stress at their scale in running a business that depends on weather and regulations and markets, and is labor-intensive. They need support and awareness, and a safe place where everyone is ok with each other
  - Risk management training (for example: risks and possible payoff of planting fruit trees)

- Politicians to better understand the importance of local food and specialty agriculture
- Government websites need to be easier to navigate
- 1.5-2 hours seminars are not worth their time. They need short, concise bits of information
- Simple marketing training and digital needs tip sheet
- They trust producers who are going through the same challenges they are, or who have seasoned experience. Experienced mentors for new growers
- Networking with other growers is so important

## Five Recommendations for Kansas NRCS to consider:

### 1. Programs and Funding

We recommend Kansas NRCS continue to offer, and adjust as needed, funding programs for both beginning and experienced small-scale and specialty growers. Beginning small-scale and specialty growers need help building capital and have limited cash, and seasoned growers need financial assistance in expanding their operation while continuing to make any profit. Asking either group to pay in full up front, and be reimbursed later, is very financially risky for them, so fewer are likely to participate in programs that require a full up-front cost investment. Their requests for funding assistance vary from \$2,000 to \$20,000. They mentioned a double-edged sword – beginners who don't have capital or proof of success yet are required to provide proof of success or potential in order to receive funding.

#### Areas and topics for potential funding programs:

1. The high tunnel program has been successful overall, especially with the improvements made to the program over the years (not always requiring up-front payment in full). We recommend NRCS continue to offer that
2. Systems to intensify production at a smaller scale, to both create land space for rotation/cover crops and potentially reduce labor needs
3. Water access (well drilling, spigots closer to the growing space, cisterns, etc) and irrigation systems (hoses, timers, overhead irrigation, etc)
4. Integrated pest and weed management solutions for their scale (0.5 acres; 3 acres; 8 acres; 20 acres) including strategies that do not use chemicals, or use limited chemicals
5. Solar energy for water pumps and other electricity needs (for high tunnel fans, facility heating, etc)
6. Fencing for a variety of needs (wind fence, cross fencing for livestock rotation)

### 2. Technical assistance needs

In terms of production assistance, participants either directly or indirectly mentioned skill and expertise guidance needs in the following areas. One participant stated that they need a knowledgeable, experienced person to come to their operation, take a look at everything, and tell them what they need. Note that there was a general comment made by one individual that there is info out there on the backyard garden scale and at the large commercial scale, but not necessarily for the 1-acre to 10-acre scale:

- Incorporating crop rotation and/or cover crops at their scale, with limited space
- Managing weeds with minimal or no chemicals, including new pests and weeds.
- Incorporating no-till with minimal or no chemicals
- Soil fertility solutions, including innovative ideas for use of compost and/or lowered cost for compost
- Irrigation options for their scale and type of operation (which are varied)
- Symbiotic growing, including attracting pollinators and the use of companion plants
- Disaster preparedness for instances of: drought, severe wind, dust storms, bee die-off, microbursts, flooding.
- Information about new or less-commonly used approaches such as hydroponics, geothermal greenhouses, or compost tea.
- Note: they are excited and eager to learn from each other (grower-to-grower), however, they have limited spare time to gather.

### **3. Information resource needs**

In addition to technical assistance with the above areas, small-scale and urban growers need information and guidance from NRCS or other agencies and organizations on the following:

- For those who have never signed up for government programs: They need a clear and simple list of pre-work tasks to complete before they will be able to apply for cost-share, to include tasks like getting a SAMs and DUNS number. Because their overall time is limited, they want clear communication about what it takes, and how long it takes to achieve this type of “pre-work”
- A list of funding opportunities they might actually qualify for
- Regional specialists in local food, in both urban and rural areas
- More opportunities to learn from each other. There are a vast number of Facebook groups and organizations they could be a part of, but not a consolidated list of opportunities for them to determine what group to get involved with, or where educational meetings are happening.
- Legal, financial, and business management resources. Although this report is focused on mainly natural resource concerns, I want to stress that their needs for legal, financial, and business management help are extremely important to them.

### **4. Labor needs**

Across all locations, but especially in the Kansas City region, growers express a large need for help with labor. Much of these growers’ time is spent training new people, as turnover is high. One stated much of their labor help is high school students or retirees. We suggest Kansas NRCS or another organization consider supporting a trainee program that provides assistance in funding labor training on the farm, or provides labor training, or provide a matching system for crew training. Some organizations already provide training (the KC Farm School, for example). However, organizing a way to facilitate the training of laborers in specialty crop growing may foster a pipeline of future agency employees who have expertise and knowledge in small-scale specialty operations. There may be specific capital investments that could be cost-share

programs that can also help with labor, such as efficiency in transplanting or other labor and time-intensive activities.

### **5. County office relationship needs**

There is a perception among some small-scale or specialty growers that if you're a beginner, or anyone different than the normal customer, government programs immediately put up a red flag. While some have had positive experiences, some have had negative and discouraging experiences at the county office either due to county office staff not being knowledgeable or giving them bad advice. Those who have had negative experiences don't want to waste their time traveling to the county office, but would prefer to be contacted directly if their county office does want to interact with them and has informed, helpful information to share with them. Particularly:

- They invest a lot of time looking for grants, or looking into grants, only to find they don't qualify or they've missed the deadline. They need someone to help them figure out up front and well ahead of time which opportunities they should be looking into.
- They need clear, simple guidance on how to get ready to apply for cost share or a grant (steps like getting a SAMs # and DUNS #).
- Grants seem to be inaccessible due to their farm size, income bracket, whether or not they are beginners, or if they only rent land.
- They don't want programs pushed on them. They want someone to come to them and say, "Here's what you might qualify for – are you interested in learning more?"

### **Summary and conclusion**

In spring of 2023, we interacted with 57 small-scale, urban or specialty growers in small break-out groups to discuss their needs and challenges related to growing at their scale in Kansas. Many of the participants appreciated the chance to share their thoughts and took the opportunity to learn from and make connections with each other. Some participants have had past success with government programs; some had negative experiences with government programs, and some, even those in operation for a long time, were unaware of what cost-share or other assistance is available. They are overloaded with information from a variety of media – email, Facebook, mailers, and more, and they spend too much of their valuable time trying to sift through and find information that is meaningful for them. Growers desire and appreciate time to gather and swap ideas and experience with other growers like them. They face challenges and have concerns related to natural resources, marketing, investing in needed capital, financial and business management, and rules, regulations, and policy. This report summarizes those concerns and information needs.

We want to thank the growers who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us and share their stories. We also thank Marketing Angle, Troy Munsch and Matt Sprick with Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), conservation district managers who help with this project, Colene Lind and the graduate student small-group facilitators from Kansas State University, and all other partners who helped us find growers to speak with. We especially want

to thank the KACD for identifying the need for this project, and the Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service for funding the project.