

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



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## Grand Challenge: Global Food Systems

**Title:** Sheep and Meat Goat Programs for North Central Kansas Producers

### Why is this issue important?

Sheep and meat goat production continues to expand across the state of Kansas. Though the integration of small ruminants in our cattle grazing systems for better utilization of pastures and brush control is extremely beneficial, it is important that producers are educated and aware of the different management practices and maintenance that comes along with raising sheep and goats. With the expansion of this industry, there has been an increased demand for predator control as well. Knowledge on not only what kind of predators they need to be aware of and how to control them, but how to properly prevent the problem from progressing is vital to the success of any sheep and goat operation.

### How did Extension address this issue?

To better reach livestock producers in north central Kansas, Justine Henderson, Central Kansas District Livestock Production Agent, collaborated with several other area agents to develop a virtual educational series. One of the online programs in the series highlighted multi-species and co-grazing, types of grazing, diet preferences across species, and benefits / drawbacks of the various grazing systems.

In addition to the virtual program, she also offered an in-person small ruminant workshop in Minneapolis this spring. With sponsorship from private industry, expert presenters hit on a plethora of topics including body condition scoring, prevention of common diseases, proper parasite management techniques, vaccine handling and storage, livestock quality assurance, fencing, predation statistics, coyote biology and predator control – to name a few. The evening closed with a 30-minute Q & A, which ended up lasting almost an hour due to active discussion and participation.



### What was the impact?

- The workshop drew two dozen individuals from all over the north central part of the state. Ranging from five miles away to as many as 75, participants represented all segments of the industry (producers, business, academia, youth).
- Attendees not only got to listen to general information, but, more importantly, engage in one-on-one conversations with specialists, agents, commercial suppliers, and peer producers.
- Through post-meeting evaluation, participants rated their knowledge gained as moderate to significant for each of the topics areas.
- Surveys also indicated all respondents are 'likely' or 'very likely' to make changes to their operation as a result of the program.