



# KACAA CONNECTION

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- **March 26-27:** ESP Annual Meeting, Bowling Green
- **April 6-9,** PILD  
Arlington, VA
- **June 17-19:** KACAA  
AMPIC, Hopkinsville
- **June 29-July 2:** NACAA  
AMPIC, Billings, MT



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet your KACAA Representatives
- KACAA AMPIC
- AWARDS information
- Program Highlights

## GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT:

Dear KACAA Community,  
In an effort to keep the KACAA membership engaged, we are excited to bring you our first KACAA quarterly newsletter that will include the latest updates and news from within the association. In this newsletter, you'll find the latest information on KACAA programs, the leadership team, and highlights from ANR programs within the state.

As always, we appreciate your continued support and engagement. We encourage you to stay connected and reach out if you have any questions or suggestions. Together, we can make the KACAA stronger and even more vibrant in the months ahead.

Regards,  
David Fourqurean, President

## KACAA LEADERSHIP TEAM



*Secretary:* Vicki Shadrick, Webster Co.  
*Treasurer:* Linda Hieneman, Greenup Co.  
*Past President:* Corinne Belton, Shelby Co.  
*Public Relations Director:* April Wilhoit, Fleming Co.  
*Farm Organizations Director:* Brandon Sears, Madison Co.  
*Salary & Fringe Benefits Director:* Lindie Huffman, Pendleton Co.  
*Philanthropy Director:* Jay Stone, Lyon Co.

# 2025 State AM/PIC

## June 17-19 | Hopkinsville, KY

<https://kacaastateconference.com>



### Conference Program & Banquet

*The Bruce*

### Picnic

*Casey Jones Distillery*

### Educational Tours

*Choice of Grain, Beef/Tobacco, or Horticulture*

### Sons/Daughters

*Christian Way Farms, Skyzone, City Forum, Splat That Paint*

### Life Member/Spouse

*Historical Tour, Picnic, House of Onyx, Brewco, Banquet*

### Registration

Open February 15 to April 30.

Late registration applies **after**

**April 30**

[register here](#)

### Fees

Agent Registration: \$200

Late Agent Registration

(after April 30): \$250

Lifetime Member

free.

### Hotel

Holiday Inn & Suites

100 Tilley Way,

Hopkinsville, KY 42240

Rate approximately \$110

KACAA Summer 2025



# KACAA AWARDS DEADLINES

## Communications Awards

DEADLINE: MARCH 15

KACAA Communications Chair: Traci Johnson | [traci.johnson@uky.edu](mailto:traci.johnson@uky.edu)

- 13 Categories: audio recording, published photo, computer generated presentation with script, event promotional package, personal column, feature story article, newsletter, educational video recording, fact sheet, publication, website/online content, learning module/notebook, bound book/e-book.
- The communications piece must have been first published/distributed between March 15, 2024 and March 15, 2025.
- Write a short abstract to go with your application. Instructions and application information at <https://www.nacaa.com/awards-and-applications>

STATE WINNERS  
MUST ATTEND  
KACAA AMPIC, AND  
IF SELECTED FOR  
REGIONAL FINALISTS  
MUST ATTEND  
NACAA AMPIC

## Search for Excellence Award

DEADLINE: MARCH 15

KACAA SFE Chair: Jessica Bessin | [jessica.bessin@uky.edu](mailto:jessica.bessin@uky.edu)

The Search for Excellence Awards recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in one of 8 categories listed on NACAA website.

- It is mandatory for all Search for Excellence Award Programs to be submitted electronically through the NACAA website. <https://www.nacaa.com/login>
- Entries should reflect program activities and accomplishments within the past three years.
- Complete on-line application form and submit with entry that should not exceed 1200 words.
- <https://www.nacaa.com/search-for-excellence-programs-information>

## AG AWARENESS & APPRECIATION AWARD

DEADLINE: MARCH 15

KACAA AA Chair: April Wilhoit | [april.wilhoit@uky.edu](mailto:april.wilhoit@uky.edu)

To recognize NACAA members or team of members for outstanding use of Public Relations in Daily Efforts that improve the understanding of agriculture in their communities.

- Mandatory completion of the on-line application process and additional support materials found at <https://www.nacaa.com/awards/apps/>. No hard copy applications will be accepted.
- For supporting materials and other information: <https://www.nacaa.com/agricultural-awareness-appreciation-award-information>

## KACAA Poster Abstract

DEADLINE: MARCH 15

KACAA Chair: Kristin Hildabrand | [kristin.goodin@uky.edu](mailto:kristin.goodin@uky.edu)

Categories: Applied Research and Extension Education

To showcase a research project or education work. Winners at KACAA 2025, will be judged at NACAA 2026.

- <https://www.nacaa.com/guidelines>
- <https://guides.nyu.edu/posters>

# KACAA Committees

*Committees compile activities happening under their specific program area across the state. They develop relationships and collaborate with specialists to program share and or develop program opportunities for agents. They communicate with department chairs to help to seek input and guidance from both parties. They share information and activities between KACAA and NACAA committees. More detailed information found here: <https://kacaa.org/file-downloads>*

## **PROGRAM RECOGNITION COUNCIL**

*CHAIR | JASON PHILLIPS*

RECOGNITION & AWARDS | JESSICA HOPKINS

COMMUNICATIONS | TRACI JOHNSON

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE | JESSICA BESSIN

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE | KRISTIN HILDABRAND

PUBLIC RELATIONS | APRIL WILHOIT

SCHOLARSHIP | ROBBIE SMITH



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## **PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL**

*CHAIR | ROB AMBURGEY*

4-H YOUTH | MATT FUTRELL

AGRONOMY & PEST MANAGEMENT | MATT CHADWICK

AG ECONOMICS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | MICHELLE SIMON

ANIMAL SCIENCE | SAMANTHA SAUNDERS

NATURAL RESOURCES/AQUACULTURE | SARAH FANNIN

HORTICULTURE & TURFGRASS | ADAM LEONBERGER

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE | NATHAN RIDER



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## **EXTENSION DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

*CHAIR | JOANNA COLES*

EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT | ADAM HUBER

LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS | REGINA UTZ

TEACHING & EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES | NICK ROY

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES & PUBLIC RELATIONS | LINDSAY ARTHUR



# KACAA Area Directors

KACAA member groups reflect the areas of the Cooperative Extension Service, and are done so to facilitate and promote professional improvement among the members in those areas. Those groups elect a director to serve on the board of directors.

For a list of current Area Directors:

[www.kacaa.org](http://www.kacaa.org)

# Partnering Professional Organizations

## **Who is JCEP?**

Joint Council of Extension Professionals

**Mission:** Elevate Extension's national reputation as an organization of excellence and leverage the strengths of member associations to foster leadership, collaboration, professional development, scholarly activity, strategic partnerships, and advocate for the profession.



## **Who is on the JCEP Council?**

JCEP is composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Past-President of the following organizations: KACAA, KAE4HA, KEAFS, ESP and KASEP

## **What does JCEP do?**

JCEP fosters collaboration among partner groups to strengthen Extension and advocate for the profession at national levels. JCEP meets 4-5 times throughout the calendar year. Council members representing each professional organization attend Extension Leadership Conference (ELC) and Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD). Council members facilitate bringing organizational concerns to the administrators during an annual Administrative Update. Council members represent the member organizations and bring greetings to the County Judge Executive Breakfast at their annual meeting. JCEP also provides an opportunity for leaders of the professional organizations to stay connected and to share their respective organization's successes and challenges.



## **Who is ESP?**

Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) is one of the oldest and largest professional organizations for Extension professionals. As an equal opportunity and affirmative action organization, ESP is committed to fostering a diverse membership.

## **Mission:**

To foster standards of excellence in the Extension System and to develop the Extension profession and professional.

## **What we Do:**

It aims to uphold Extension ideals and standards, and enhance the morale of Extension Professionals. Membership is open to currently employed UK or KSU Extension Service professionals who meet specific criteria, such as holding a bachelor's degree and a salaried position for 3 years. The chapter offers various professional development opportunities, including scholarships for attending national conferences and funding for public policy training. These initiatives are designed to support Extension professionals in enhancing their skills and knowledge to better serve their communities.



# WEST REGION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO GROW YOUR SMALL BUSINESS  
AGENTS: JOANNA COLES, WARREN CO. ANR &  
KRISTIN HILDABRAND, WARREN CO. HORTICULTURE

Social media presents an incredible marketing opportunity for farmers. The Warren County Extension Agents for Agriculture and Natural Resources and Horticulture developed a social media series targeting farmers' market vendors, agritourism operators, KY Proud partners, and on-farm business owners. Utilizing University of Kentucky resources and industry standards, they created a three-part series that consisted of classroom instruction, hands-on activities, one-on-one coaching, and after-class exercises to teach marketing principles to increase the attendants' profitability.

Seven businesses participated in the course, and their business progress was collected through pre and post-surveys and evaluations. During session one, 100% of participants increased their knowledge of social networks and crafting their brand story. Only 33% of businesses had previously set social media goals, yet after session one, 100% completed the goal-setting worksheet for their business before returning to session 2.

Session 2 focused on content creation and how to convert that to dollars/calls to action within their business. One hundred percent of participants increased their knowledge in scheduling content, engagement ideas, and utilizing social media analytics. Seventy-five percent increased knowledge of creating content, ads, and useful social media apps.

Session 3 was one-on-one coaching, where agents worked with businesses on achieving individualized goals. Implementing some of the strategies learned in class and then putting them into practice with agents' assistance was beneficial. One participant mentioned that she gained more confidence due to this class and now feels that social media marketing is doable.

In a follow-up survey, participants increased their social media following by 2% to 71%, utilizing techniques learned in the class. One nonprofit has increased its content and activity on its page by sharing content from Warren County Agriculture and has become one of our top Facebook engagers! One business said that the information gained from the class has helped her increase her social media following, and she has been able to sell all her products through social media.





# CENTRAL REGION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

2024 CENTRAL KENTUCKY HAY CONTEST  
AUTHOR: JOSEPH RAY, BOYLE CO. ANR

Understanding forage quality is essential to developing a balanced nutrition plan for livestock. Hay testing provides critical data that helps producers and Cooperative Extension Agents ensure the nutritional needs of animals are met while minimizing waste and unnecessary costs. Without proper analysis, farmers are left to rely on guesswork, often leading to inefficient feeding practices and wasted resources.

The Central Kentucky Hay Contest was created to address this challenge, fostering friendly competition among producers while educating them on forage test analysis and its economic implications. This initiative, led by 15 Cooperative Extension agriculture and natural resource agents from central Kentucky, aimed to promote the value of hay testing. The agents collaborated to collect samples from their respective counties, which were analyzed by the UK Forage Team. The contest culminated in a banquet and educational program co-hosted by Forage Specialists and Equine Specialists to celebrate the results and share insights with producers. A total of 254 hay samples were analyzed as part of this effort.



Traditionally, hay testing in Boyle County was underutilized, with producers often assuming their hay was of poor quality and supplementing feed based on habit or instinct rather than data. On average, only 2-7 producers implemented hay testing in their operations each year. However, the contest sparked a significant change: Boyle County saw a 68% increase in sample submissions, contributing 17 of the 254 samples analyzed. These efforts yielded impressive results, including two third-place finishes in the grass hay and other hay categories. Boyle County's samples ranked 6th overall in average relative forage quality among participating counties.

The program's impact extended beyond the competition. On December 16, 2024, the Central Kentucky Hay Contest program was held at the Fayette County Cooperative Extension Office, featuring a banquet and an educational session. Every participant reported gaining a deeper understanding of their hay test results. With this knowledge, producers are better equipped to make informed management decisions, reducing reliance on supplements and ultimately lowering feed costs. By promoting the value of hay testing and providing actionable insights, the Central Kentucky Hay Contest is helping producers enhance forage quality, optimize feeding practices, and improve the economic sustainability of their operations.



# EAST REGION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

COOK WILD IN SOUTHEAST KENTUCKY  
AGENT: JONATHAN OAKES, RUSSELL CO. ANR

In South Central Kentucky, food insecurity is a sad reality that many of Extension's clients face. According to Feeding America, 1 in 8 Kentuckians face food insecurity. South Central Kentucky is also home to many native wild game species that are commonly harvested for alternate sources of protein. However, many clients in the area struggle to prepare wild game to make it palatable. Game meats are naturally low in fat and cholesterol, but traditional cooking methods, such as frying, can negate those health benefits. The University of Kentucky SNAP Education program created a series of Cook Wild Kentucky recipe cards to provide alternative cooking recipes for wild game to promote healthy eating of game meat. Utilizing these recipe cards, the FCS and ANR agents in Pulaski and Russell counties offered a two-part Cook Wild program in December 2023 and January 2024.

The two-part Cook Wild program allowed Pulaski and Russell County residents to see the proper food safety standards for wild game, sample wild game recipes, and receive answers on how to harvest wild game within the area. A total of 51 participants attended the two-part program, with 43 participants being male, an underserved audience within FCS programs. During this program series, participants were able to try 9 varieties of wild game, including duck, frog, crappie, salmon, beaver, rabbit, squirrel, bison, and venison, in 12 different recipes across two days. Bison and salmon were included as they are a protein source that has been seen in commodities distribution within the two-county area within the past few years. These recipes were demonstrated to showcase proper food safety when cooking wild game, as well as a discussion on the harvesting of local wild game that was sampled.

The program has an overwhelming response from participants, with 97% of participants stating they gained knowledge on food safety for wild game, and 100% of participants reported trying food at the programs. Around 76% of participants took home wild game recipe cards or requested the recipes from agents.

