

AFBFA's On the Farm

Educators from across the country recently came to Kansas for an intensive, three-day lesson on how Kansas beef cattle ranchers, researchers, nutritionists and veterinarians are using science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and what educators can do to incorporate those methods into their classrooms.

American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's On the Farm STEM Experience brought 25 educators to the state, including six who teach in Kansas. On the Farm featured free lessons, activities, online learning tools and enriching professional development events.

"Our On The Farm events connect educators with farmers and ranchers to intimately learn how STEM principles are infused in agricultural processes. Many of the participants have never set foot on a farm or ranch and this opportunity gives them accurate knowledge to take back to their classrooms." said Christy Lilja, American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture executive director.

Educators learned about agriculture and received tools to use in the classroom during stops at Downey Ranch in Wabaunsee County, Tiffany Cattle Company in Morris County, Bichelmeyer Meats in Johnson County and Kansas State University's Beef Stocker Unit in Manhattan.

"The On the Farm STEM event is a fantastic real-life learning experience," a participant said of the Kansas event. "I left the event with so many ideas and ways to teach life science concepts through STEM."

Kansas Farm Bureau and Kansas Beef assisted AFBF with planning and logistics.

Participating Kansas educators

- Jessica Sadler; sixth-grade science teacher and STEM facilitator, USD 233; Olathe
- Jamie Root; shepherd/fiber artist/teacher, Kansas City Young Audiences; Kansas City, Kan.
- Bev Mortimer; vice president of programming Jobs for America's Graduates; Topeka
- Megan Holsapple; teacher, Blue Valley School District; Bucyrus
- Michelle Hamm; gifted educator, USD 382; Pratt
- Lauri Bruce; developmental mathematics program coordinator, Butler Community College; El Dorado

Participating KFB farmers and ranchers

- Downey Ranch, Wabaunsee County
- Tiffany Cattle Company, Morris County
- Bichelmeyer Meats, Kansas City, Kan.

Kansas Farm Bureau's mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.