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Interdisciplinary Research Team to Receive National Award

MANHATTAN, Kan. – A project that aligns the efforts of four Midwestern universities and two other groups dedicated to improving grazing practices for beef cattle in the Great Plains has received national recognition for its work.

The Great Plains Grazing project has been selected for a Partnership Award for Multistate Efforts by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which cited the group's "outstanding efforts to strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research."

"This award is a testament to the significant efforts of all the collaborators involved in Great Plains Grazing," said Dan Devlin, project leader and director of the Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE) at Kansas State University. "This research is important not only for projecting how climate change will affect the beef grazing industry but also how to manage that industry more successfully through future drought conditions."

Devlin noted that protecting the nation's vital beef production from the stresses of climate variability is a key method to ensure the success of ranchers in the Southern Great Plains as well as to protect food security for the country.

The project fostered partnerships between K-State faculty and researchers from Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma, the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Noble Foundation, and Tarleton State University.

The interdisciplinary project included 45 scientists, and more than 50 graduate students and post-doctoral researchers assisted with the research. Together, they successfully measured the net greenhouse gas emissions of grazing cattle in the Great Plains and were able to develop and quantify the impacts of improved grazing management practices on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Along with Devlin, K-State faculty and staff who played significant roles in Great Plains grazing work in the Department of Agronomy, Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, KCARE, the Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation, the Western Kansas Research-Extension Center, and the Southeast Kansas Research-Extension Center.

Martin Draper, K-State College of Agriculture interim associate dean for research and graduate programs, will join Devlin to accept the NIFA Partnership Award on behalf of Great Plains Grazing on April 25 in Washington, D.C.

The annual NIFA Partnership Awards were established in 2007 to recognize achievements and contributions by partners at land grant universities and other organizations and institutions.

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K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu

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