

# THE SYLLABUS

A newsletter for Kansas State University  
Master of Agribusiness students, alumni & friends.



5 x 15 = 75 Fish  
4 x 15 = 60  
5 x 2 = 30  
3 x 15 = 45  
64 Fish  
60 Fish  
3 Punish - 1



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**MAB Class of 2024 Taylor Mock presenting her thesis defense during the March 2026 campus session.**

# Field Notes from Dr. Brady Brewer, Master of Agribusiness Director

MAB Students, Alumni and Friends,

As another academic year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our Master of Agribusiness students, graduates, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry partners.

To our graduates, congratulations on reaching this milestone. Balancing graduate education alongside careers, families, and personal commitments is no small task, and your dedication throughout the program has been impressive. We are excited to see how you will continue to lead and create impact across the agricultural industry.

I also want to thank our faculty and staff for the energy and commitment they bring to the program each year. The MAB program succeeds because of the time, expertise, and mentorship you provide to our students, both inside and outside the classroom.

To our alumni, advisory board members, and supporters, thank you for your continued engagement with the program. Whether through mentoring students, supporting recruitment efforts, participating in residencies, or sharing industry perspectives, your involvement plays an important role in keeping the program connected to the needs of today's agribusiness sector.

This year has been an exciting one for the MAB program. From

welcoming new cohorts and hosting on-campus residencies to expanding executive education opportunities and strengthening industry relationships, we continue to build momentum and look toward the future with optimism.

As we move into the summer months, I hope you have an opportunity to step back, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends. Thank you for being part of the MAB community and for your continued support of the program and the agricultural industry.

Best regards,

*Brady E. Brewer*

Brady Brewer

Associate Professor | Director, Master of Agribusiness Program  
Kansas State University



*Dr. Brady Brewer*



*Students at Spring 2026 Commencement Left to Right: Veronica Borne Lavoie, Kelsey Waugaman, Kayla Allen, Ben Ramsey, David Casterline, Carmen Daszczuk, and Jonelle (Gilardi) Monego*

# WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2028



**Cody Bailey**  
Founder, Principal Consultant  
Bailey AG Marketing  
Chillicothe, MO



**Ariana Hallum**  
Adjunct Professor  
Bakersfield College  
Bakersfield, CA



**Tillie Johnson**  
Operations Supervisor  
CHS  
Rochester, MN



**Jordan Martin**  
Senior Data Engineer  
John Deere - Intelligent Solutions  
Group  
Overland Park, KS



**Tana Overton**  
Territory Sales Manager  
Armor Animal Health  
Oshkosh, WI

## Set sail with K-State in Chicago

The Master of Agribusiness program along with the Department of Grain and Food Science **invite all K-State alumni and friends in the Chicago area**, and those attending the Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting (IFT FIRST) to join us for a special evening aboard the First Lady Chicago Riverboat Cruise.

**First Lady Chicago Riverboat Cruise**  
**Monday, July 13, 2026 | 7–9 p.m.**

Reconnect with fellow Wildcats, expand your professional network, and enjoy an unforgettable evening cruising through downtown Chicago while taking in the city's iconic architecture and skyline. Food and drinks will be provided.

The event is free, but space is limited, so RSVP early!

Sign up online:

**<https://bit.ly/4dwbpm6>**

**Registration deadline: June 26, 2026**



# THESIS DEFENSES



**Kayla Allen**

Class of 2026

*Evaluating the Robustness of Company X's Credit Scoring Model*



**Dustin Anderson**

Class of 2025

*A Framework for Estimating Real-World Bank Valuations: A Quantitative Approach to Identifying Acquisition Opportunities*



**Veronica Borne Lavoie**

Class of 2026

*Stage-Gate and Successful Commercializing of Novel Ingredients in the Food and Beverage Market*



**David Casterline**

Class of 2026

*Using VaR and CVaR to Quantify Downside Risk when Supplementing Crop Insurance Decisions with County-Based Products*



**Carmen Daszczuk**

Class of 2026

*Cost Transparency in Consumer-Packaged Foods Procurement: A Should-cost and Does-cost Analysis of Poultry Sourcing*



**Michael Eastlack**

Class of 2019

*From Growth to Efficiency: A Strategic Model for Labor Cost Reduction*



**Jonelle Gilardi**

Class of 2026

*Financial Feasibility of a Central California Greenhouse Operation*



**Matt Krueger**

Class of 2015

*Investing Below the Surface: Financial Viability and Unrecovered Investment Frameworks for Tenant-Installed Subsurface Drainage on Rented Farmland*



**Taylor Mock**

Class of 2024

*Forecasting End-of-Season Peanut Yield Using Mid-Season Crop Condition Rating Signals*



**Juan Orozco**

Class of 2014

*Economic Analysis by Comparing Different Artificial Insemination Techniques in Pork Production*

Thesis projects can be found at [krex.k-state.edu](http://krex.k-state.edu) or by logging into the MAB Community Page on Canvas.

# THESIS DEFENSES



**Ben Ramsey**

Class of 2026

*How Structure and Board Composition Influence the Financial Performance of Farm Credit Associations*



**Lindsay Thornton**

Class of 2025

*Exploring Alternatives to Selling Farm Ground under Urban Development Pressures: A Case Study in Wichita, KS*



**Kelsey Waugaman**

Class of 2026

*Operational Efficiency and Regulatory Barriers Influencing Agricultural Drone Adoption*

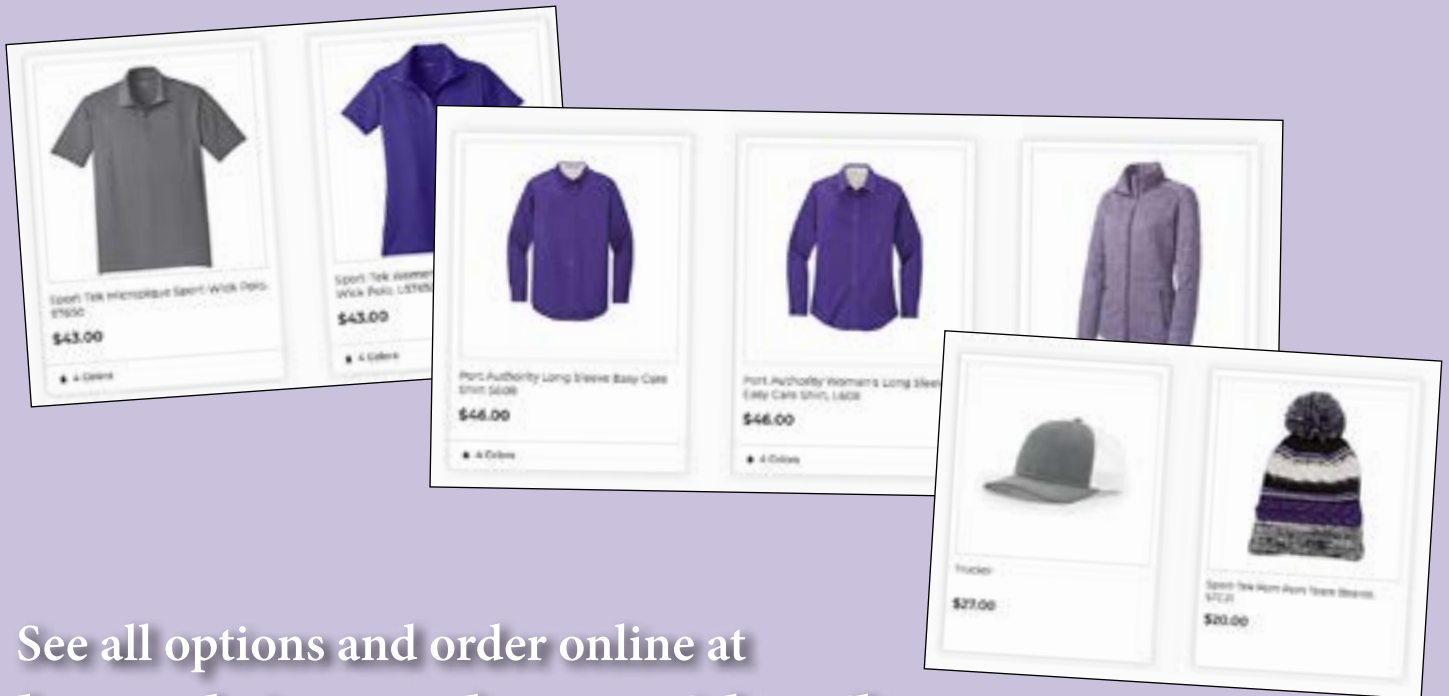


**Diana Zamora**

Class of 2025

*Traceability of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza for Milk Production in Southwest Kansas: Economic Impacts during Transportation*

## New MAB Shirts and Apparel



See all options and order online at  
[ksumab.itemorder.com/shop/home](https://ksumab.itemorder.com/shop/home)

Shipping is currently unavailable on the store. If you order, please let Mary know at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu).  
When the order is ready, the MAB office will ship it to you.

# Students and Alumni

**Rich Porter** ('00) was named the 2025 Stockman of the Year by the KSU Livestock and Meat Industry Council and the Flint Hills Discovery Center is recognizing him as their 2026 Friend of the Flint Hills.

**Michael Vogt** ('00) has been promoted to Farm Loan Manager with USDA Farm Service Agency.

**Joel Karlin** ('01) and his wife, Margot, welcomed their second grandchild, Luka Vykhrst, on November 24.

**Carlos Piana Guarderas** ('01) completed an Operations and Process Management Certificate from Illinois State University.

**Tracy Brunner** ('02) was named K-State Department of Animal Sciences and Industry's 2026 Stockman of the Year.

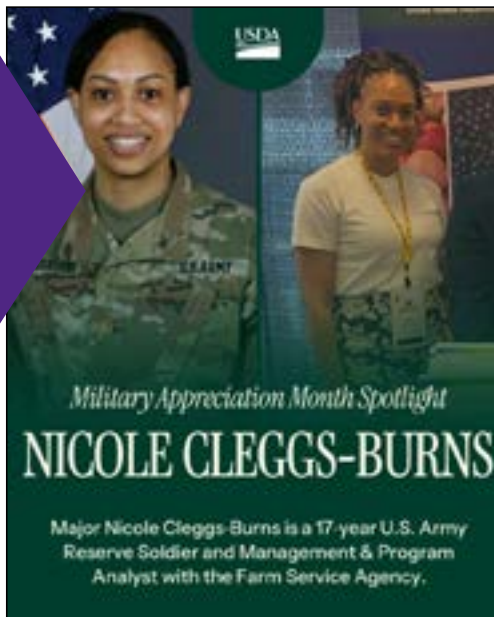
**Mark Seitz** ('03) retired from North Carolina Cooperative Extension at the end of March. He had served as an Extension Agent and County Extension Director for 22 years. Counting his years working on farms in high school, in a Crop Science lab at Michigan State University as an undergrad, two years as a soil science research technician and 12 years at Seneca Foods Corporation in the vegetable canning industry, Mark has given 44 years of his life to agriculture.

**Jim Zook** ('06) started a new position as General Manager at Donovan Farmers Cooperative.

**Chris Carey** ('07) started a new position as a Design Leader at Solventum.

**Stacie (Garvert) Shea** ('07) accepted a new position as a Director at Freepoint Commodities.

**Jared Brown** ('08) joined Lumachain, an ag tech startup, as North America Sales Lead.



**Meng Yee-Tee** ('09) started a new position as General Manager for Rocket Farms, Inc.

**Mike Wisner** ('11) is now the Chief Executive Officer at Agri Trails Coop

**Chris Witt** ('12) started a new position as Plant Manager with Cake Craft USA.

**Derek Brown** ('13) has been promoted to Relationship Manager at AgWest Farm Credit.

**Seth Harrison** ('13) started a new position as Territory Sales Manager at PI AgSciences US.

**Martin Mwansa** ('13) earned his PhD, Business and Management from the University of Zambia.

**Kelley Ayres** ('15) and his wife, Lynda, welcomed their 5th grandson, Nash Emerson Matthews on September 16th.

**Ryan Bennett** ('15) was appointed Vice President, Farm Program at the American Humane Society.

**Kevin Black** ('15) was promoted to Chief Credit Risk Officer at Pinnacle Bank.

**Jennifer McDonald** ('16) accepted the Vice President of People and Culture at Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City.

**Theresa Sisung** ('16) was promoted to Commodity and Regulatory Relations Manager with Michigan Farm Bureau.

**Nicole Cleggs-Burns** ('17) was featured by the USDA's Military Appreciation Month Spotlight.

**Jamie Cooke** (17) started a new position as Europe Procurement Manager, SGIS at ABB.

**John Sachse** ('17) has been promoted to Captain in the Kansas National Guard and he was a finalist for the 2025 Agriculture Future of America (AFA) Bridge Builder Award.

**Corey VanOtegham** ('17) and his wife, Katelyn, welcomed their first child, Wesley Dean, on September 10th.

**Tyler Rouse** ('18) is now Vice President of Aftermarket at Tellus Equipment Solutions.

**Dustin Miner** ('19) has been promoted to Senior Manager of Operations and Supply Chain at Barkman Honey.

**Megan Espinda** ('21) placed third nationally in the American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture competition.

**Molly (LaRue) Hughes** ('22) and her husband, Lyle, welcomed their second child, David Todd on April 23.

**Sam Bormann** ('23) was recognized by the Kansas City Agribusiness Council as their member highlight in December.

**Morgan (Steele) Stutrud** ('23) and her husband, Josh, announced the birth of their second baby, Reese Grant, on February 11.



**Parry Briggs** ('24) was recently promoted to Senior Vice President - Lending for Farm Credit Services/ Frontier Farm Credit.

**Taylor Mock Cunningham** ('24) had her MAB thesis published as a journal article, "A Tough Nut to Crack: When Do Weekly USDA Crop Condition Reports Become Reliable for Predicting Peanut Yields?" by *FarmDocDaily*, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Sean Moore** ('24) and his wife, Megan, welcomed their third son on December 22. His name is Lane Robert. He also joined Marlen International as the Director of Product Management.



**Alina Porta** ('24) was featured by Swineweb.com as one of their Women in Swine spotlights. <https://swineweb.com/first-women-in-swine-feature-women-in-swine-alina-porta-knows-the-work/>

**Rylee Streit** ('25) is now the Regional Large Ag Sales Manager at Papé Machinery Agriculture and Turf.

**Akm Chowdhury** ('26) is now a Consumer Safety Inspector (CSI) at the USDA Food Safety Inspection Services.

**Nasrin Sultana** ('26) has taken a Consumer Safety Inspector (CSI) position with the USDA Food Safety Inspection Services.

**Tana Overton** ('28) accepted an additional role as Regional Sales Manager for the Northeast Livestock team at Armor Animal Health along with her current responsibilities as a Territory & Strategic Accounts Manager.

If you enjoy seeing student and alumni updates in the newsletter, be sure to follow the Kansas State University Master of Agribusiness LinkedIn page and share your own professional and personal milestones with us. We love celebrating the accomplishments of our MAB community and helping students and alumni continue building connections, expanding their networks, and supporting one another across the food and agriculture industries.



# SAVE THE DATE

May 31 - June 1  
MAB at CVM/KVMA in Manhattan, KS

June 1  
Application deadline for September 2026 cohort

June 6-18  
MAB Farm and Ag Tour of Spain and Portugal

July 7-9  
Strategic Financial Management for Agribusinesses short course, Manhattan, KS

July 11-13  
MAB at AVMA in Anaheim, CA

July 13-15  
MAB at IFT FIRST in Chicago, IL

August 18  
Defense ballot and final copy of thesis due to be Summer '26 graduate

August 20-21  
MAB at Risk and Profit Conference, Manhattan, KS

August 30 - September 3  
Fall Cohort Campus Session in Manhattan, KS

September 21-22  
MAB at KC Ag Outlook Forum in Kansas City, MO

September 22-24  
MAB at Women in Agribusiness Summit, New Orleans, LA

October 1  
Last day to schedule Final Defense for name to appear in commencement program

September 19  
MAB/AgEcon Tailgate before K-State/Tulane

football game - be watching for more details!

October 15  
Application deadline for January 2027 cohort

November 1  
K-State Online scholarship application due

November 4  
MAB at Chicago Section IFT in Chicago, IL

November 6  
MAB at AFA in Kansas City, MO

November 16-20  
Fall Cohort Campus Session in Manhattan, KS

November 17  
Defense ballot and final copy of thesis due to be Fall '26 graduate

December 1  
Spring MAB/Ag Econ scholarship applications due

December 11  
Fall Commencement at Bramlage Coliseum

