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### **McLouth High School wins award at Kansas Association of Agricultural Educators(KAAE) Agriculture Education Symposium**

MAYETTA, Kan.- Agricultural Education teachers from across Kansas met at the Prairie Band Casino and Resort in Mayetta, Kansas for the Kansas Association of Agricultural Educators Ag Ed Symposium on January 20th through 22nd. While there, teachers attended educational sessions, heard from keynote speaker Laila Down on “Teaching with Grace and Growth”, held business sessions, and recognized award winners.

The McLouth High School Agricultural Education Department was named the Kansas Association of Agricultural Educators Outstanding Middle/Secondary Program. This award is sponsored by Kevin and Rosemary Harris. Instructors are Nicole Hinrichsen and Marie Umphenour.

“Nicole Hinrichsen is in her ninth year of teaching in the district,” said Janna Davis, McLouth Middle/High School Principal. “She was the first Ag teacher that our district employed, as we chartered a new Ag program. While this was not an easy venture for a young educator to enter into first year teaching and starting entirely from scratch, Nicole did so with enthusiasm, confidence, and a vision for what a successful program would look like. Due to not be able to continue with FACS in our district and evaluating the success and popularity of Mrs. Hinrichsen’s Ag program, we have added an additional Ag pathway. This led to hiring an additional teacher and FFA sponsor. It would have been easy for someone who has successfully built a strong program from the start to be hesitant to add an additional Ag pathway, should it take away from her program. On the contrary, Nicole saw the value of Ag in our district and the consistent growth of the FFA chapter and was excited to support the opportunities it could provide to our students.” Mrs. Marie Umphenour student taught at McLouth in the spring of 2021 and was hired as the second instructor for 2021-2022.

The Kansas Association of Agricultural Educators is an organization of teachers of agriculture at the high school, postsecondary, and adult levels who seek to advance agricultural education in Kansas. The KAAE strives to provide leadership opportunities, service, and advocacy for its members.

The KAAE is affiliated with the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE).

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