

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kansas Foundation for Ag in the Classroom names new director

MANHATTAN, Kan. -- Cathy Musick has been named executive director of the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC). Based out of the College of Education at Kansas State University, KFAC's mission is to advance the understanding of agriculture by increasing the scope and effectiveness of agriculture-based educational tools for teachers and students. Musick began her duties with the foundation in February.

Musick brings to the foundation 14 years of experience as a Kansas Cooperative Extension educator and hands-on agricultural experience gained while growing up on a purebred cattle ranch and dryland crop farm in Ellis County. She has served as a Cooperative Extension agent in Wallace, Finney, Douglas and, most recently, in Gove counties.

Musick holds an associate's degree in cow/calf management from Colby Community College, a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Kansas State University and a master's degree in cooperative extension work, also from Kansas State University. In addition to her Extension experience, she has worked with Heartland Cattle Company in heifer development and Oakley Veterinary Service as a beef cattle artificial insemination and market animal ultrasound technician.

"We are very pleased to have found someone as qualified and enthusiastic as Cathy to lead the foundation. Her experience and knowledge of Kansas agriculture make her an excellent choice for leading the foundation into our next 25 years."

Increasing agricultural literacy is an important goal for Musick. As someone who has been involved in one aspect or another of agriculture throughout her life, Musick worked in whatever capacity was needed on her family's Simmental/crop operation, including attending artificial insemination school, building fence and driving the tractor. She credits her dad, Bob Dickinson, for being her best teacher and her role model as an agriculture leader with vision. Her experience as a Cooperative Extension educator confirmed her father's opinion that today's youth and many adults need to be educated about how agriculture affects their daily lives.

“Many people think of the stereotypical Green Acres farm when they think of agriculture,” Musick said. “They are unaware of the professional jobs available in biotechnology, for instance, and other specialized ag careers. Even people within agriculture might not have an understanding of all the aspects of the sector. Crop farmers, for instance, might know very little about feedlots and vice versa.”

Musick is looking forward to working with the KFAC team to provide quality, hands-on educational programs which help incorporate agriculture into the curriculum of Kansas schools by providing teachers with materials that help them meet state required curricular standards in science, reading and math while telling agriculture’s story. The opportunity to present youth information on agriculture-related careers through KFAC programs also excites her. Agricultural careers include distribution, research, marketing and, packaging, of food and non-food and fiber products. New technology, including packing peanuts, insulation, fiber board and artificial skin for burn patients, are options many students don’t realize are connected to agriculture, Musick said.

“I am committed to providing leadership for this dynamic program and building on its 25 years of history and success. Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is fortunate to have great support from industry and business partners and many resources offered through the College of Education,” Musick said. “I feel very fortunate to be able to work for such a great organization.”

Musick’s enthusiasm for agriculture education is shared by her husband, Doug, who is an Agriculture Agent and Director with Cooperative Extension in Thomas County, and her three children. The family is supportive of Musick’s new responsibilities and is looking forward to the move from western Kansas to the Manhattan area.

“The Flint Hills have a wonderful appeal to a prairie girl,” Musick said.

To visit with Musick about The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom’s educational resources, call her at (785) 532-7946 or visit the KFAC website at www.ksagclassroom.org.