



OCTOBER 2025

STEM Central

Exploring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math at Garden City Community College

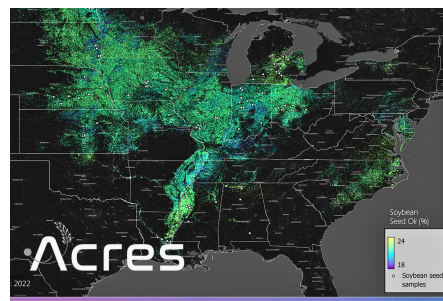
STEM NEWS & Highlights

GCCC LAUNCHES TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE COURSE WITH NASA ACRES

Garden City Community College's Crop Production program launched Technology in Agriculture (AGRO 111) this fall in partnership with NASA Acres, NASA's national initiative using satellite-based Earth observation to advance farming innovation. The course introduces students to tools such as remote sensing, satellite imagery, crop genetics, and precision agriculture.

"Technology is rapidly advancing the way we grow, manage, and harvest crops," said Elisa Mai, GCCC Crop Production Technology Assistant Professor. "By collaborating with NASA Acres, we're giving our students access to innovative tools and real-world data that can make a measurable difference in the future of agriculture."

Through classroom instruction and fieldwork supported by Kansas State University and local farmers, students gain real-world experience that improves efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. Learn more about NASA Acres at nasaacres.org.



Predicted soybean seed oil content in the 2022 Midwest ranges from 18% (blue) to 24% (yellow), with field sample sites marked by white dots. Full article can be found here: <https://www.nasaacres.org/news/mapping-soybean-quality>.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MICHAEL WISE

Math education major Michael Wise competed in the Twister City Throwdown on August 2, 2025, hosted by Kansas Combat Robotics. Entering the 1 lb. division with a robot he designed and built from scratch, Michael showcased the skills he's gained through ROBT 100: Basic Electronics, ROBT 120: Introduction to Robotics and Embedded Systems, and ROBT 130: Industrial Robotics Applications, along with his active involvement in the robotics club. "Working with the materials provided in class gives me a chance to test new ideas with minimal financial stress," he shared.



SCAN ME!



Don't miss out on the latest from GCCC STEM Central. Subscribe today and get our newsletter sent directly to your inbox!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



October:

October 16: Western Kansas Career Showcase (Multi-Career Showcase)

Join us to discuss STEM degrees at GCCC!

- 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Scott City Events Center

November:

November 7: National STEM Day

Join us for STEM demonstrations!

- 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- STEM Success Center

November 12: Exploration Day

Come learn about STEM degrees at GCCC!

- 8:30 am - 1:30 pm
- GCCC Campus

TO REGISTER SCAN HERE



November 20: Western Kansas Career Showcase (Multi-Career Showcase)

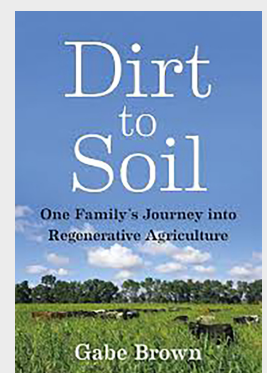
Join us to discuss STEM degrees at GCCC!

- 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Dodge City Civic Center

GEEK OUT WITH A FACULTY FAVORITE

Dirt to Soil: One Family's Journey into Regenerative Agriculture by Gabe Brown

Dirt to Soil tells how Gabe Brown transformed his struggling farm by focusing on healthy soil. His story shows that working with nature can make farming both productive and sustainable.



STEM FACULTY *Spotlight*

ELISA MAI: CROP PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSOR – INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Growing up on a farm, STEM was part of daily life for Elisa Mai from the technology in tractors to the science behind mixing pesticides. Her father's encouragement to "do anything you want" inspired her to pursue an education in agriculture, a passion rooted in four generations of Kansas farming.

Mai began her education at her local community college before transferring to Fort Hays State University, where she earned her Bachelor's in Agronomy Business and held multiple student leadership roles. Today, she continues to farm with her family while preparing the next generation of agricultural leaders as the Crop Production Technology Assistant Professor at GCCC. Her advice for aspiring STEM students? "Any STEM field can be difficult, but it's incredibly rewarding. There are countless pathways, especially in agriculture, and the skills you gain can be applied far beyond your field of study."

As a community college instructor, Elisa values building strong connections with her students. "It's



such a great feeling to see them find their way, and I can't wait to see what they accomplish."

Contact Elisa Mai, Crop Production Technology Assistant Professor at
Phone: (620) 276-9507 or
Email: elisa.mai@gcccks.edu

STEM PROGRAM *Spotlight*

CROP PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY

The Crop Production Technology program prepares students for agricultural careers through stackable credentials—Certificate B, Certificate C, Associate in Applied Science, and Associate in Science—providing clear pathways to the workforce, farm management, or further study. Students build skills in crop management, soil fertility, water use, weed control, and crop physiology, gaining both classroom knowledge and hands-on experience. A highlight of the program is the state-of-the-art on-campus greenhouse, where students study corn production in real time, observe growth stages, identify nutrient deficiencies, and learn to use advanced irrigation systems. The program also emphasizes practical fieldwork and industry collaboration, ensuring students graduate ready to apply modern agricultural practices. An articulation agreement with Fort Hays State University allows a smooth transfer from GCCC's Associate of Science degree to bachelor's programs in Agronomy or Business Agronomy, supporting students who want to continue their education.

STEM CAREER *Spotlight*



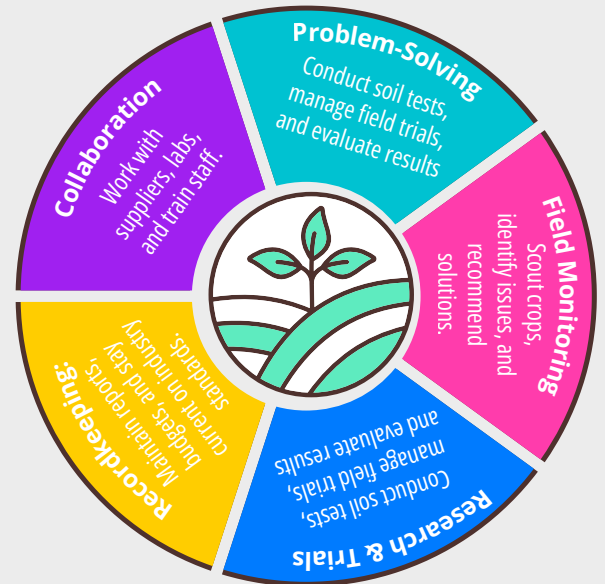
AGRONOMIST:

Helping Farmers Grow More with Less

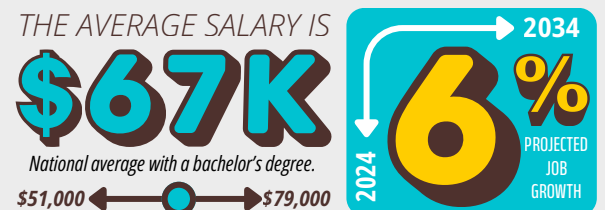
Agronomists apply science and technology to increase crop yields and promote sustainability.



What They Do



Job Outlook & Pay



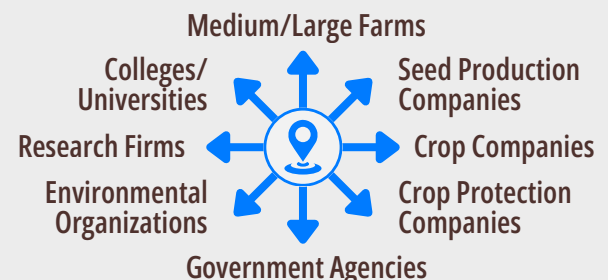
Education Needed

BACHELOR'S • → AGRONOMY,
or MASTER'S • → CROP SCIENCE,
DEGREE • → or BIOLOGY

Smooth Transfer: Agreements with KSU and FHSU make completing your bachelor's degree simple.



Where They Work



Source: <https://agexplorer.ffa.org/career/agronomist/>
<https://www.salary.com/research/salary/benchmark/agronomist-salary>