

The Department of Communications and Agricultural Education at Kansas State University is hiring a **master's-level, graduate research assistant to begin in the Fall 2026 semester**. The role will contribute to a project focused on identifying actionable steps to successfully implement industry-wide shifts to alternative crops for dairy forage. This effort will inform current practices on High Plains dairy farms, opportunities for future water conservation, and social barriers to further adoption of potential forage-based water conservation efforts. The position will focus specifically on understanding dairy farmers' perceptions of the benefits, barriers, and plans associated with conserving water through low-water-input forage crop production, including sorghum. Data will be collected from dairy farmers across the High Plains using a qualitative, in-person interviewing method.

Responsibilities

- Work as a collaborative member of the project research team to complete the project objectives
- Design and conduct related original, empirical, qualitative research
- Plan and facilitate engagement with research project participants
- Conduct qualitative data analysis and interpretation
- Disseminate research outcomes through scholarly and industry publications and presentations
- Other duties as assigned

Qualifications

A strong candidate will have experience in social science research, interviewing, industry project management, and agricultural and natural resources stakeholder relationship development and communications. Applicants need to have demonstrated proficiency in working independently and as a part of a team as this project is a collaborative effort with multiple stakeholders. Other essential qualifications include a strong sense of initiative; persistence through challenges; attention to detail with a high level of accuracy; and effective written, verbal, and visual communication skills. A B.S. in agricultural or environmental communications, animal science, agribusiness, human dimensions of natural resources, or an equivalent field is required.

Terms

Appointment: 12-month appointment with opportunity for renewal based on performance

Workload: Average of 20 hours of assistantship-related responsibilities per week.

Annual stipend: \$30,200 (USD) for up to two years

Tuition: The stipend has been calculated to include compensation for up to 18 credit hours per academic year. The successful applicant is responsible for paying all associated tuition, campus/student fees, distance/online fees, and purchasing course textbooks.

Health insurance eligibility: Students appointed in a GRA position are eligible for the university's Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan.

Start Date: August 17, 2026

The successful applicant will be required to enroll in 6 graduate credit hours each semester in our [Master of Science in Agricultural Education and Communication program](#). An offer will be contingent on program acceptance and a successful background check, neither of which is required to be completed before applying.

For more information, contact Dr. Nellie Hill-Sullins, Associate Professor of Agricultural & Natural Resources Communications, nlhill@ksu.edu

To apply, email one PDF file containing a one-page cover letter, resume/CV, and names and contact information of three references to Dr. Nellie Hill-Sullins (nlhill@ksu.edu) with the subject line as "Dairy GRA Application [Last name]". Review of applications will begin July 8, 2026 and continue until a suitable candidate is identified.