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## Challenge Accepted; Heartland Plant Innovations, Center for Outcomes Research and Education; Confucius Institute

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# Challenge accepted

Partnership addresses technological gaps for feeding the world's expected 9.6 billion population

Kansas State University is using a new business strategy to help the world conquer the challenge of feeding 9.6 billion people by 2050.

The university has created a third-party startup company, Technology Acceleration Partners LLC, or TechAccel. The company establishes partnerships with global agriculture and animal health industry leaders to address gaps in technology innovations that are needed to increase food production, improve food quality and enhance animal health.

“A lot of promising innovations struggle to find a way to the marketplace because there is not money to advance the science to the point at which it is market-ready,” said Kent Glasscock, president of Kansas State University’s Institute for Commercialization and one of TechAccel’s founders.

TechAccel is one of the first companies to create partnerships with global food system corporations that are focused solely on research advancement of promising technologies for the global market. The partners identify market opportunities that have unfunded science gaps. Promising technologies are identified, acquired and advanced.

“A researcher might have created a promising innovation, but the funding necessary to advance and validate that promising innovation is not there,” Glasscock said. “Sometimes transformational innovation is so risky that the private sector hesitates to fully fund it and the innovation is stalled in the lab.”

TechAccel is designed to create new momentum behind innovation connected to global food systems. The company establishes a 50-50 partnership to ease the financial risk to the corporation.

“The business model concentrates on advancing promising science in direct partnership with established companies that have robust product development systems and global distribution,” Glasscock said.

After TechAccel has established a partnership, it looks for the researcher and appropriate innovation. TechAccel does not limit the researcher search to Kansas State University, although it does begin there. Kansas State University researchers are evaluated first as part of the founding agreement, which offers a revenue stream for the university in addition to being a founding equity partner.

“The TechAccel concept is really unlike anything else,” Glasscock said. “The business model and K-State’s leadership position in helping to form the company sets us apart from other universities. This is a unique and innovative response to a well-recognized challenge.”

*By Stephanie Jacques*





## Heartland Plant Innovations

Heartland Plant Innovations is partnering with Kansas State University researchers to accelerate plant breeding and improve genetics in wheat and sorghum. The organization provides advanced plant breeding services and contract research to accelerate novel variety development with the goal of delivering new products to help farmers and food companies in short time frames. Heartland Plant Innovations — a collaboration of Kansas State University, Kansas Wheat, the University of Kansas and several private investors — is headquartered at the Kansas Wheat Innovation Center on the Manhattan campus.

*By Jennifer Tidball*

Quick  
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## Center for Outcomes Research and Education

Animal health company Zoetis has contributed \$250,000 toward a new center of excellence in the College of Veterinary Medicine. In February, the Center for Outcomes Research and Education launched under the guidance of director David Renter, an epidemiologist and professor of diagnostic medicine and pathobiology. With a goal of improving effectiveness and efficiency in animal health care and its associated impacts on human health, the center focuses on demonstrating the value of animal health interventions.

“Zoetis has been a leader in outcomes research for animal health and its support of the center is significant as it allows us to build the vision and infrastructure for research and training efforts that extend beyond the traditional case-by-case approach typically used for individual grants and contracts,” Renter said.

*By Jennifer Tidball*

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## Confucius Institute

Kansas State University is increasing its international presence by establishing a Confucius Institute. Confucius Institutes promote, enhance and elevate understanding of the Chinese language and culture, as well as create exchanges between Chinese and U.S. academic institutions and communities.

The institute at Kansas State University — the 102nd Confucius Institute in the U.S. and the second institute in Kansas — also plans to focus on promoting research collaborations in animal health and food safety. The Confucius Institute will engage not just faculty and students, but also the Manhattan community and the greater Manhattan business community.

Kansas State University signed an agreement with Hanban, which is the worldwide headquarters of Confucius Institutes and is affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.

*By Jennifer Tidball*