

Department of Grain and Food Science expands faculty to enhance high-impact research and student learning opportunities

MANHATTAN, Kan. — As part of Kansas State University’s Next-Gen PROMISE initiative, the Department of Grain and Food Science has completed a nationwide search for five new faculty members. This talented cohort will elevate multidisciplinary research and student training within the new Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation. These strategic hires support the department’s goal of becoming a top-tier research program within the next decade and strengthen K-State’s leadership in food for health and well-being.

These appointments mark a major step toward achieving research and training excellence. The new faculty will lead interdisciplinary work in areas such as gut microbiome function, smart nutrient delivery systems, novel ingredient technologies from byproducts and AI-assisted bioactive compound discovery. This investment by the College of Agriculture and Kansas State University underscores the critical role of food in human and animal health and its broad impact on the Kansas and U.S. economies.

“We are thrilled to welcome this world-class group of scholars to K-State,” said Dr. Joseph Awika, head of the department of grain and food science. “Their multidisciplinary expertise positions us to strengthen global leadership in food-for-health research and to develop innovative technologies that are impactful, affordable and sustainable.”

The new faculty members are Dr. Yanhong He, Dr. Diego Lopez, Dr. Han Peng, Dr. Guojun Wu, and Dr. Xin Yang. Learn more about their backgrounds and research areas at the [Department of Grain and Food Science website](#).