

2013 Agronomy Field Day will focus on unmanned drones

One recent development in agriculture is the use of small unmanned aircraft systems to evaluate crop conditions. Farmers, agronomists and the public can view a demonstration at the free 2013 Agronomy Field Day Friday at Kansas State University's Agronomy North Farm. Use of these unmanned aircraft equipped with aerial optical sensing technology has gained national attention in recent months. Kevin Price, K-State professor of agronomy and geography, and Deon van der Merwe, associate

professor of veterinary medicine and head of the diagnostic laboratory toxicology section, are among the leading researchers in the nation on this technology. They are working to develop systems that can be used by farmers, ranchers and crop advisors. "We've had an incredible reception among consultants, producers, plant breeders and others when we've shown them what this technology can do," Price said. "It has the potential to make their jobs much easier and will help them make better recommenda-

tions in a more timely manner. "At the field day, I will be showing some of the kinds of things we can accomplish with these small unmanned aircraft systems in field demonstrations." This is just one of several new technologies to be featured at the field day by agronomy researchers. Other demonstrations will show the work of Dave Mengel, professor and soil fertility specialist, on optical sensors for nutrient recommendations; Vara Prasad, associate professor and crop physiologist, on stress tolerance

research; and Peter Tomlinson, assistant professor and environmental quality specialist, and Chuck Rice, university distinguished professor of agronomy, on techniques used to measure greenhouse gases. The day will begin with registration at 9 a.m. and wrap up at 2 p.m. A complimentary lunch will be available. Preregistration is requested so that a lunch count can be made. Call Troy Lynn Eckart at (785) 532-5776 or go to kstateagron2013.eventbrite.com/. Sessions include two concu-

rent one-hour tours in the morning, starting at 9:45 and 11 a.m. After lunch, there will be demonstrations on unmanned flights, analyzing and interpreting aerial images from and field checking of optical sensing readings for crop nutrient status. Displays from commercial companies and K-State researchers will be in a shed near the registration area, along with a crop garden, forage garden and weed garden for browsing. Extension specialists will be available to answer questions.

For information, contact Dallas Peterson at (785) 532-0405 or dpeterso@ksu.edu.

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