

## Ag Department Stresses Hands-On Learning

The new school year brought big changes to the KDS Agri-Science program. New Ag Teacher Chris Hicks has focused on increasing participation in FFA, helping students earn credentials in various skills designed to make them more marketable to employers.



"FFA is a dynamic youth organization that prepares members for leadership, personal growth, and career success through agriculture education," said Hicks. "We are focusing on experiential learning and having kids learn by doing."

The KDS FFA Chapter was recently awarded a "Living to Serve" Grant in the amount of \$1,200 to construct a community garden consisting of 6-10 raised beds. This nationwide grant program provides funds to local FFA chapters to support semester-long service-learning projects that address needs related to community safety; environmental responsibility; hunger, health, and nutrition; and community engagement.

"We're starting this community garden to share food with people who maybe need some assistance," Hicks said, "but we also want to hold workshops to teach people how they can grow their own food. We want to stress garden-to-table sustainability."

Long-term plans include better utilization of the school's



240-acre campus, with a possible larger garden on the school's old hayfield.



Coach Hicks is also extremely interested in better utilization of the KDS Greenhouse. He and his students have already grown mums and pansies for use on campus, and they have plans for a large community plant sale in the spring.

*The KDS DAR High School Agri-Science students also participate in FFA competitions such as Land Judging and Tractor Driving.*

