

# Three Minute Thesis Competition

## First round schedule

**February 11, 2026**

Each heat will begin with opening remarks by the moderator. Presentations will follow and will occur approximately every 4 minutes (3 minutes per presentation followed by approx. 1 minute for judges to finalize scores and to transition between presenters.)

\*Schedule is subject to change.\*

updated: 2-10-2026

**Heat 1****9:15 - 10:15am | 227 K-State Student Union**

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Mohsen	Davoudkhani	Doctoral	Psychology	Detecting Mild Cognitive Impairment Before Memory Declines	Heather Bailey
Sarah	Fenn	Master's	Kinesiology	Small talk, big impact: How doctor's advice can improve women's heart health during menopause	Carl Ade
Stephen	Zimmer	Master's	Public Administration	Community improvement districts in Kansas City, MO: A different approach to decision-making	Ethan Bernick
Mariam	Gharib	Doctoral	Agricultural Economics	Wildfire and Severe Drought Effects on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Persistence	Jason Bergtold
Kristina	Morrison	Master's	Kinesiology	Fixating on Frailty	Carl Ade
Minnie	Adams	Master's	Interior Architecture	Food Access Through Design: Forging Meaning From Stigma In A Bronx Food Desert	Mariana Junqueira
Mia	Reyes	Master's	Agricultural Education and Communication	Targeting Growth: Segmenting the Entrepreneurial Drivers of Kansas Agritourism Operators	Nellie Hill-Sullins
Madeleine	Pike	Master's	Public Health	Nutritional, Microbiological, and Feasibility Evaluation of Sorghum-Based Hummus	Valentina Trinetta
Rachael	Cox	Doctoral	Curriculum and Instruction	Strengths, Resources, and Needs of Secondary Language Arts Teachers for Literacy Instruction	Vicki Sherbert

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### Heat 2

9:45 - 10:50am | Flinthills Room K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Abby	Vollmar	Master's	Plant Pathology	Have You Ever Seen The Rain? Monitoring and Forecasting Environmental Impacts on Wheat Disease	Erick DeWolf
Aprajita	Jha	Doctoral	Biochemistry	Can Bacteria Teach Us to Make Better Immune Therapies?	Brandon L. Garcia
Sandhya	Gopisetty	Doctoral	Plant Pathology	From Field to Food: A toxic fungus story!	Christopher Toomajian
Shubhangi	Arvelli	Doctoral	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	From Trash to Cash	Jikai Zhao
Dhanashree Rajesh	Gaidhani	Master's	Grain Science	Two Proteins for One Secure Future	Kaliramesh Siliveru
Loveleen	Dhillon	Master's	Biochemistry	A small genetic change, a big impact on survival.	Ming Shun Chen
Kelechi	Igwe	Doctoral	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Beyond the Visible: An Early Warning System for Detecting Water Stress in Maize	Vaishali Sharda
Ngoc Huy	Truong	Doctoral	Mathematics	Which Wire Matters Most? The Mathematics of Network Resilience	Pietro Poggi-Corradini
Saurav	Pantha	Doctoral	Pathobiology	Same Shot, Different Shield: Why the Same Flu Shot Works Better in Females than Males in Obesity	Santosh Dhakal
Sabreena	Paray	Doctoral	Agronomy	From Field to Feed: Breeding Forage Sorghum	Terry Felderhoff, Ramasamy Perumal

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### Heat 3

10:45 - 11:55am | 227 K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Nilofar	Arabi	Master's	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Tagatose: A Smarter Sweetener	Jikai Zhao
Ruchi	Chauhan	Doctoral	Food Science	Can Heat Save Low Falling Number Wheat?	J. Scott Smith
Amelia	Huebsch	Master's	Grain Science	Betaine: A New Approach to Cat Obesity	Julia Pezzali
Sumit	Chowdhury	Doctoral	Plant Pathology	How a Fungal Pathogen Adapts to Crops and Climate	Chris Toomajian
Meghan	Rice	Doctoral	Chemistry	Molecules with a Mission: Nature Inspired Drug Delivery Systems	Ryan Rafferty
Niranjana	Unnithan	Doctoral	Computer Science	Privacy vs. Popularity: Finding the middle ground in social networks	Geroge Amariucai, Bala Natarajan
Mostafa	Sadeghnejad	Doctoral	Geography	Predicting landslides before they happen	Laura Moley
Mauro	Platero	Master's	Agronomy	Let's Target That Right Nitrogen Rate: Grain Sorghum Edition	Dorivar Ruiz Diaz
Prudhviraj	Dhanapala	Doctoral	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Power for All: Keeping the Lights On Fairly	Balasubramaniam Natarajan
Olusola	Olagunju-Yusuf	Doctoral	Grain Science	Teaching Computers To See Wheat: An Optimized Model for Automated Winter Wheat Assessment	Yonghui Li
Sourajit	Dey	Doctoral	Agronomy	When Lesser is Better: Rethinking Irrigation Management for Alfalfa Production	Doohong Min, Gaurav Jha

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### Heat 4

11:15am - 12:25pm | Flinthills Room K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Yuri Adriano	Bezerra Gross	Master's	Agronomy	Growing Together: Wheat-Soybean Relay Intercropping for Sustainable Intensification	Rachel Cott
Indira Priyadarshini	Lakkakula	Doctoral	Plant Pathology	Can plant hormones help fight disease?	Christopher Little
Shaghayegh	Janbazialamdar	Doctoral	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Field Feeds the Future	Edwin Brokesh
Luiza	Adami Monteiro de Castro	Doctoral	Genetics	From Water Bears to Stronger Plants: Building Drought Tolerant Wheat	Harold Trick
Victoria	Lopez	Master's	Food, Nutrition, Dietetics, and Health	Fermenting Sorghum: Breaking the Cage	Valentina Trinetta
Rajendra	Mishra	Doctoral	Agronomy	Two Decades of Corn Stomatal Response: What Does it Reveal?	Xiaomao Lin
Elif	Peker	Master's	Food Science	Improving sorghum byproducts for use in biodegradable food packaging films	Umut Yucel
Mir Tuhin	Billah	Doctoral	Grain Science	Lag Against the Machine - Using Data Science in Snack Processing	Sajid Alavi
Arijit	Roy	Doctoral	Mechanical Engineering	Materials Design Strategies for Future Battery Electrodes	Gurpreet Singh
Prativa	Bhatta	Master's	Biology	Transcriptional Impact of <i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i> <i>cyaB</i> at the Host-Pathogen Interface	Vanessa Ante
Vikas Kumar	Galipothu	Doctoral	Horticulture and Natural Resources	UV light helps keep food safe	Manreet Bhullar

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### Heat 5

1:15 - 2:20pm | 227 K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Giovanna	Teixeira Sandoval Moreira	Doctoral	Plant Pathology	Editing Wheat Genes to Combat Viral Threats	Harold Trick, John Fellers
Jannat Ara	Jabin	Master's	Civil Engineering	What You Don't See Keeps Bridges Safe	Parth Panchmatia
Nishadi	Dodampe Mudiyanselage	Doctoral	Agronomy	Invisible Dust, Real Danger: Toxic Lead in Our Homes	Ganga Hettiarachchi
Lee J	Hinkle	Doctoral	Health and Human Sciences - Kinesiology	Learning from living history: Neuromuscular lessons from aging athletes	Joshua Carr
MaRyka	Smith	Doctoral	Pathobiology	Traceability 'til the cows come home	Mike Sanderson
Elisa	Tobar	Doctoral	Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health	Sanitizer Efficacy Against Biofilms in Simulated Food Processing Conditions	Valentina Trinetta
Asmita	Mahara	Doctoral	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Nature's Cleanup Crew for Industrial Wastewater treatment	Mark R Wilkins
Nayara	Mota Miranda Soares	Doctoral	Grain Science	Giving wasted ingredients a new purpose in dog food	Julia Guazzelli Pezzali
Jasmine	Mehalic	Master's	Animal Science	Turning Cashew Byproducts into a Tool to Reduce Cattle Methane Emissions	Evan Titgemeyer
Aashna	Srivastava	Doctoral	Biochemistry	Keeping up with the Lyme borrelia proteins!	Brandon Garcia
Shristy	Budha Magar	Master's	Veterinary Biomedical Sciences	Gut: The Missing Clue to Flu	Santosh Dhakal

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### Heat 6

1:45 -2:50pm | Flinthills Room K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Shruthi	Pullangari	Doctoral	Genetics	Stronger Sorghum Through Gene Editing	Terry Felderhoff, Harold Trick
Nilsson	Toro	Master's	Food, Nutrition, Dietetics, and Health	Evaluation of cleaning and disinfection strategies to control <i>Escherichia coli</i> in live haul trailers	Valentina Trinetta
Inisa	Shrestha	Master's	Plant Pathology	Mycobiome and Secondary Metabolites in Corn	John Leslie
Shreyansh	Mishra	Doctoral	Industrial Engineering	Sniffing Out Climate Change: Greenhouse Gas Sensing on a Chip	Suprem Das
Audrey	Matheny	Doctoral	Pathobiology	Evaluation of cross-protective immunity of West Nile vaccines against Japanese encephalitis virus in swine	Dana Vanlandingham
Abhinash	Boddepalli	Master's	Entomology	Outsmarting Storage Pests with Innovative Packaging	Kun Yan Zhu, Deanna Sheff
Nik	Carpenter	Doctoral	Health and Human Sciences - Kinesiology	Harnessing the Power of the Pepper	Steven Copp
Nomenatiana	Bakoalijaona	Master's	Food Science	Health of Our Planet and Consumers: Addressing the Challenge at its Roots through Kernza-based Foods	Sajid Alavi
Shirin	Sheikhzadeh	Doctoral	Grain Science	Solving Environmental and Health Challenges Layer-by-Layer: 3D Printing of Plant-Based Meats	Sajid Alavi
Katie	Janzen	Master's	Agronomy	Dealing with Soybean Stress	Tina Sullivan, DeAnn Presley

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### Heat 7

2:45 - 3:45pm | 227 K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Madison	Sultz	Master's	Agricultural Education and Communication	An analysis of crashes involving farm equipment in Kansas	Ed Brokesh, Jonathan Ulmer
Miracle	Okpala	Master's	English	On Storytelling: Can Words Rebuild Home and Self?	Traci Brimhall
Oluyomibo	Asunlegan	Doctoral	Leadership Communication	Healthy Kansas: Simple Steps to Fight the Climate Crisis	
Adji Zamtato	Gane-Bang	Master's	Agricultural Economics	Alternative Enterprise Opportunities for Western Kansas: The Case of Sesame	Vincent Amanor-Boadu
Allison	Taylor	Master's	History	Carrier vs. Carrier: American Sailors' Perspectives of the Pacific War	Marjorie Galelli
Faridah	Abraham	Master's	Communication Studies	Organizational Health Literacy: Fixing the System, Not the Problem	Samuel Mwangi
Adam	Hedelund	Doctoral	Health and Human Sciences - Couple and Family Therapy	Grieving Across the World: International Student Loss	Joyce Baptist
Lucas	Watson	Doctoral	Psychology	Using a foraging video game to gain insights on human choice and behavior	Gary Brase
Abena	Damuhah	Doctoral	Agricultural Economics	The Structure and Performance of Food Manufacturing in Kansas	Vincent Amanor-Boadu

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### Heat 8

3:15 - 4:25pm | Flinthills Room K-State Student Union

First Name	Last Name	Degree	Program	Tentative Title	Faculty Mentor(s)
Sudan	Baral	Master's	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Design, Fabrication, and Dynamic Modeling of a Skid-Steer Robot Digital Twin in NVIDIA Isaac Sim	Ajay Sharda
Alex	Hutchinson	Doctoral	Grain Science	Freezer Burn No More: Using Food Proteins to Fight Ice Recrystallization	Yonghui Li
Msgina	Aregawi	Master's	Biological and Agricultural Engineering	Corn Yield and Water Productivity Under Full and Deficit Irrigation: Soil Amendments Role	Jonathan Aguilar
David	Hayes	Doctoral	Microbiology	How do fungi kill mosquito larvae?	Kristin Michel
Aytug	Ulutas	Doctoral	Genetics	How Proteins Talk to Lipids: Unraveling the Hidden Conversations in Plants	Kathrin Schrick
Shubham	Kumar	Master's	Horticulture and Natural Resources - Urban Food Systems	Strawberries for a Healthier Midwest	Ravneet Sandhu
Tamima	Rashid	Doctoral	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Understanding Soil Moisture We Cannot Measure	Bala Natarajan
Sadaf	Azhar	Doctoral	Food Science	The Battle for Better Bread: Can Your Bread Handle the Protein Punch?	Kelly Getty, Elisa Karkle
Vidya	Nadar	Doctoral	Chemistry	From Rare Molecules to Real Medicines	Ryan Rafferty
Udit	Debangshi	Doctoral	Agronomy	Smart Irrigation: Saving Irrigation Water in Kansas	Gaurav Jha
Olamide	Adesina	Doctoral	Plant Pathology	Understanding Maize Resistance Against Goss's Wilt	Sanzhen Liu