

The 24th Annual
Kling L. Anderson Lecture

*Department of Agronomy
Kansas State University*



**Unraveling the Success of Old-World Bluestems:
Ecological Mechanisms of an Invasive Grass**

Dr. Karen Hickman

*Professor and Director, Environmental Science Program
Ferguson College of Agriculture
Oklahoma State University*

Old World Bluestems (OWBs) have a complex history in the central and southern Great Plains, where they have been widely planted for livestock forage, hay production, and conservation programs (e.g., the Conservation Reserve Program). However, they have also emerged as aggressive invaders of native grasslands. This lecture will explore the ecological mechanisms behind the success of OWBs as invasive species, focusing on commonly introduced species such as yellow bluestem (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*, also known as WW Iron Master), King Ranch bluestem (*Bothriochloa ischaemum* var. *songarica*), and Caucasian bluestem (*Bothriochloa bladhii*, also known as B. Dahl). The presentation will examine the dual role of OWBs in agriculture and conservation, their early widespread promotion and continued use, and the key traits that contribute to their invasive potential. Research conducted since the late 1990s has documented their ecological impacts on native plant communities, birds, mammals, and arthropods, providing insight into the long-term consequences of OWB invasion. Finally, strategies for managing and mitigating their spread will be considered.

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 4:00 pm and Zoom (QR at right)

**Room 1014 Throckmorton Plant Sciences Center
Kansas State University**

