

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Risk Management Skills for Women in Ag - Registration Open

Don't let the name fool you: this year's Risk Management Skills for Women in Ag will be of value to *anyone* involved in crop production (a bonus fifth session will be for cow/calf producers). Each of the four sessions will focus on the uncertainty of fluctuating grain and input prices and how to manage through them. Registration is now open for the weekly (every Wednesday evening) series that will run January 12th through February second.

The four topics will include: determining cost of production, utilizing crop insurance, crop marketing, and farm programs. All sessions will be in person and consist of two parts: a virtual presentation from the KSU Department of Agricultural Economics then a hands-on activity/discussion on each topic. An optional fifth session on February 23rd will focus on cow/calf risk management, marketing and cow/calf insurance options.

Registration is \$50 by December 31st (\$75 after) and includes meals/program materials. An optional February 23rd livestock marketing session is an additional \$10, or is available as a standalone registration for \$15. All meetings will be in Sabetha at the Glacial Hills Business Resource Center hosted by Brown County Extension and the Meadowlark Extension District. For questions, contact the Brown County Extension Office at (785) 742-7871. Registration and program information is available online at <https://www.agmanager.info/events/risk-management-skills-kansas-women-agriculture> or by contacting any Meadowlark Extension District Office.

Mouse Damage to Fruit Trees/Plants

During Extension Master Gardener training session this week, KSU Wildlife Specialist Drew Ricketts showed a fruit tree with the bark removed. It started about six to eight inches above the ground with a four to six-inch band of barked removed all the way around the tree. The tree wasn't going to survive – all because mice used it as a winter meal.

As long as the ground stays uncovered and food sources are plentiful, mice may not harm fruit trees too much. When that changes and food supplies are covered up with snow, mice will begin to feed on the lower area of tree trunks and roots. If severe enough, the feeding can result in girdled trunks and ultimately tree death.

To help prevent mice feeding damage, evaluate the area surrounding fruit tree plantings. They prefer a habitat with some protection, typically hiding out in dead grass and weeds close to the tree's trunk. This is why mulch around the tree's base is often discouraged because of the habitat it provides. Mice tunnel along the soil surface and feed on tree bark. If snow or mulch levels are high enough, they may even work their way up the trunk. Clear all dead grass, weeds, and mulch away from trees and monitor them through the winter.

Check for mice by placing baited mouse traps in PVC or other pipe (inserted far enough to keep them away from pets) near your trees. Check traps once a week and reset if necessary.