

February 2023

4-H Youth Development



Clay Roland, Extension Agent

The Value of Volunteering

The value and quality of the 4-H program is heavily dependent on our great volunteers! The amount of influence that these individuals have on each of these kids is undeniable. The Meadowlark District would first like to thank all our volunteers.

Trying to quantify the value of each individual volunteer is difficult, but hopefully this can begin to do just that. The Meadowlark District 4-H program has 211

enrolled volunteers in our 4HOnline system. These volunteers support our youth programs and provide expert guidance on such projects as sewing, shooting sports, livestock, rocketry and nearly three dozen other pursuits.

Sarah Maass, director of the Kansas 4-H program (<https://www.kansas4-h.org/>), cited a study reporting that volunteers donate an average nine hours per month, or an estimated 695,736 hours annually to Kansas' largest youth development program.

Also in 2022, Independent Sector – a coalition of nonprofits, foundations and corporate giving programs – released findings indicating that the value of one volunteer hour in the United States is \$29.95

Doing the math, the annual contribution of volunteers to the Kansas 4-H program tops \$20.8 million.

Recognizing that impact, the Kansas 4-H program is joining in National Volunteer Week, a national celebration for non-profit groups set for **April 21-27** to recognize the contributions of those who donate their time to worthy causes.

There are numerous reasons why community members choose to volunteer with 4-H. For one, 4-H is the largest youth development organization that empowers nearly six million young people across the world with the skills to lead a lifetime.

Additionally, our volunteers will cite that 4-H was the single most influential thing they did as a young person, and the least that they can do is give back to the program.

No matter what your interest is, and how you want to volunteer, we will value your interests and expertise. Just as we tell new and prospective 4-H'ers, there is something for everyone in 4-H! Kansas 4-H offers a wide variety of involvement opportunities for adult volunteers, from a one-time event or program to a multi-year experience as a club or project leader. There are many roles for volunteers, check our website <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/volunteers.html>, or you can call any of our local offices and have a conversation!



Holton Office

114 W 5th St.
Holton, KS 66436-1778
785-364-4125

Oskaloosa Office

P.O. Box 326
100 E Washington
Oskaloosa, KS 66066-0326
785-863-2212

Seneca Office

1615 Branch St.
Seneca, KS 66538-1504
785-336-2184

District Office Hours:

Open Monday-Friday

8:00 AM-Noon; 12:30-4:30
PM

**Closed for designated
holidays**

www.meadowlark.ksu.edu



David Key, Extension Agent/Director

2024 NEK Agritourism Information Meeting

The 2024 Northeast Kansas Agritourism Information Meeting is being held from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM on Thursday, **February 29** at the Courtyard Event Venue in Holton, Kansas. This free event is made possible through a collaboration of various state programs, regional organizations, the local Chamber of Commerce and local business professionals.

Participants can expect a fast paced, comprehensive resource program designed specifically for agritourism business owners and entrepreneurs interested in starting agritourism businesses.

Kansas Agritourism, Land of Kansas and Kansas Farm Bureau will provide program updates and information to support your business during the morning session. A complimentary lunch will be followed by a 'speed dating session' wherein participants will have the opportunity to meet with a variety of resources and ask questions specific to their unique business needs. Angela Dake, owner of Hidden Valley Farms, will share her story, and the day will conclude with a full resource panel question-and-answer session and networking.

Registrations will be accepted through **February 26, 2024**, or until capacity is reached, for this free event. <http://tinyurl.com/Agritourismmeeting>. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact David Key Meadowlark Extension District Agent at 785-336-2184.



Interested in a Board Leadership Refresher or a Beginner Course for Your Organization?

The Meadowlark Extension District can work with your organization or board with in-person or online training sessions at no charge. Known as the Welcome A-Board Leadership Series, these 1-2 hour block sessions initially were offered online to participants during the pandemic.

We offer adult learning sessions on:

- How organized groups function
- Developing agendas that work
- Basic parliamentary procedure, duties and responsibilities of non-profit board
- Organizing and leading effective groups
- Financial responsibilities
- Ethics
- Strategic planning
- Generational behavioral styles
- Conflict management

For more information or to schedule a session, please contact dkey@ksu.edu or call 785-336-2184.

Grant Writing Workshop to be Hosted by Meadowlark Extension District

Individuals and community groups can learn more about writing successful grant proposals at an online workshop planned by K-State Research and Extension and the Meadowlark Extension District on **March 25 and 27, 2024** from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. each day. The workshop is presented by Nancy Daniels, Community Vitality Specialist at K-State Research and Extension and a past author of many successful grant proposals. Participants can register online at <https://ksre-learn.com/grant-writing-basics>. The cost to attend is \$60.00.

This workshop is for everyone, whether they've never written a proposal before and have no idea where to start, to those who have experience but are looking for ways to improve their approach. Four years of data from nearly 2000 participants in both the online and in person workshops in 60 Kansas communities report \$38 million dollars of successful grants funded 6 to 12 months after participating in these workshops! During the workshop participants will often learn from each other and pick up tips and are re-energized after coming together with peers in their communities.

Workshop topics include:

- Conquer your grant writing fears and start writing;
- Sources of data for community needs (where do you find the numbers to back up your request?)
- Where to find grants;
- Practice the grant writing elements: Problem, Outcomes, Activities, Evaluation and Budget

More information is available. Contact David Key at dkey@ksu.edu or 785-336-2184.



David Hallauer, Extension Agent

Custom Rates Survey

If you're doing custom work in agriculture – to help someone out or because it's a part of your business model – determining a 'fair' or 'going' rate can be a challenge. The *Kansas Custom Rates Report* might be able to help.

Published biennially, the report is a compilation of survey data collected by the Land Use Survey Office and Kansas State University then reports it by geographic area of the state. The latest report can be found at: https://www.agmanager.info/sites/default/files/pdf/2022_CustomRates_05-12-22.pdf or a copy requested from any District Extension Office. Older versions are available online as well.

The value of the numbers in the report is only as good as the numbers we obtain, and that's where the Land Use Survey Office needs your help. They are currently compiling data for the 2024 report and looking for feedback from individuals, cooperatives, local agribusinesses, etc... on custom rate values for everything from crop harvest to haying operations to feed preparation and conservation work. If you can provide input to the survey (or know someone who can...), visit the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/custom2024>. Response is voluntary and responses *will* be kept confidential.

Completion should take less than 15 minutes. If you have questions about the survey – or just want to get a copy, drop me a line.

ARC/PLC Decisions—2024/2025 Marketing Year

The Farm Bill has been extended and that means another March 15th deadline to choose between Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) for the 2024 crop (payments made in late 2025).

The basic concepts of each program haven't changed. ARC is a revenue-based program, combining five years of marketing year average prices and five years of county level yields to calculate a guaranteed revenue multiplied by a factor to determine a revenue guarantee. If revenue falls below the guarantee, payments (capped at 10 percent of the benchmark revenue) are made.

The PLC program is primarily a price protection program. When marketing year average prices fall below a reference price, a payment is triggered. This year will see an increase in some effective reference prices. The corn reference price increases over 30 cents and soybeans almost 85 based upon stipulations set forth in the original bill.

When evaluating your decision, some KSU Department of Agricultural Economics tools may help. The first is a general program overview sharing reference price changes and statewide program election numbers since the inception of the Farm Bill. It's a great starting read and can also help you find other helpful tools. Check it out at <https://www.agmanager.info/arc-and-plc-selections-2024>.

For a deeper look at program options, see the tradeoff spreadsheet and marketing year average price outlooks. The spreadsheet graphically illustrates where ARC and PLC will pay and when they won't to see differences in each commodity at a county level.

The second is a compilation of marketing year average price outlooks. One source takes a deep look at KSU projections. The other has predictions from multiple other sources for comparison purposes.

All of the above – and a lot more can be found on the KSU Ag Economics webpage dedicate to the 2018 Farm Bill and it's elections at: <https://www.agmanager.info/ag-policy/2018-farm-bill>.

Forage Planting Dates – Closer Than You Think!

By the time snow melts and it feels like it *ought* to be about time to plant perennial forages, it might be further into the optimum planting window than we think. This chart (source: L-818, *Kansas Crop Planting Guide*) shows suggested planting dates for cool (brome/fescue) and warm (Big bluestem, Indiangrass, etc...) season perennial forages. The planting window will be open sooner than we think.

Start planning now for spring seeding. While planting beyond the optimum window can be successful, these dates provide a good guideline to ensure your planting is as successful as possible.



	Zone 2	Zone 3
Cool Season Grasses		
Fall	Aug. 15-Sept. 15	Aug. 20-Sept. 20
Winter	Not recommended	Not recommended
Spring	Feb. 15-Mar. 15	Feb. 15-Mar. 15
Warm Season Native Grasses	Mar. 15-May 15	Mar. 15-April 30



Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent

Jackson County ChildCare Taskforce Hosts KSU President Linton

In the Spring of 2023, community partners formed the Jackson County Child Care task force. The group's initial focus was to evaluate the child care situation in Jackson County.

In the summer of 2023, the task force distributed a county-wide child care assessment survey in partnership with K-State Research and Extension. The survey had 195 people respond. Respondents included people looking for child care, people who already had a child care provider, child care providers, and the general public. A summary of the survey results indicates that 96% of respondents

believe that childcare availability and access negatively impact the community. Lack of care impacts individuals wishing to work in Jackson County but cannot do so because of the lack of options. This, in turn, impacts the ability of employers to find qualified workers, such as in healthcare.

The survey provides valuable insight into community needs; however, with a sample size of 195, only some are represented in the results. The Jackson County Child Care task force is interested in your input.

On **February 7**, President Richard Linton and a team from Kansas State University will be visiting Jackson County as part of the Regional Community Visits initiative.

K-State would like to invite you to participate in a facilitated conversation with Jackson County's childcare task force, K-State Research and Extension, and local partners as we focus on addressing local childcare needs and efforts. In this session, we will highlight results from the most current needs assessment and strategize for a future responsive to the needs of all children and families within the community.

Together, we will brainstorm ways K-State or other key partners can help leverage resources to serve the county better. Please consider attending this event. Space is limited, so please register using the link below.

Event Details:

Title: Responding to Child Care Needs through Collaboration and Partnership

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024

Time: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Location: Holton Community Hospital
1110 Columbine Drive
Holton, KS

RSVP: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3UIFwZG6wpyLMRU



Medical Identity Theft

Medical identity theft occurs when someone else uses your identity to bill your insurance for services or supplies you did not receive. Your insurance might be billed for medical equipment you did not receive or a surgical procedure you did not get. Medicare identity theft can be hard on your pocket, but it could also impact your healthcare.

Be on the lookout for the following:

- You receive medical supplies you didn't order
- A debt collector contacted you for a bill you believe you don't owe.
- You were denied coverage or benefits because your insurer says you have already received them.
- You gave out your insurance or Medicare number to someone who called you over the phone, to someone offering genetic testing or coronavirus testing supplies.
- You gave out your number at a health fair, in response to a T.V. ad, or someone claiming to cover house-keeping services.
- Your doctor contacted you to cancel appointments since, unbeknownst to you, you were enrolled in hospice care.

What should you do if you believe your number has been compromised:

- First, contact your healthcare provider to check for a billing mistake.
- If you have suspicious activity, contact your insurance provider, or if you have Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE or Senior Medicare Patrol for assistance: 1-877-808-2468.



Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

The Food We Waste

What food do you have on hand? Have you shopped your refrigerator or cabinets before going to the grocery store? As you prepare for meals, what is your plan for food? While we don't want to run out of food, think about what you will do with the leftovers. In almost 32% of average households, that leftover food, along with forgotten food, is wasted. Of all of the sources of wasted food, residential homes make up 37% of surplus food wasted. What can be done?

Go back to basic consumer skills. During the height of the pandemic, consumers wasted less food. Now that we have resumed many normal activities, that amount of wasted has surged. Take a look at your kitchen management plan. Make a shopping list before going to the grocery store. Create a meal plan to utilize what you have before going to the grocery store. Create a meal plan to utilize what you before you buy more food. Preparing meals at home can help reduce food waste. Freeze leftovers to use later. Make a plan about the consequences of wasting food at home. Challenge family members with incentives to help encourage smart food use.



February is American Heart Month

February is designed as American Heart Month. As a leading cause of death in the U.S., it is important to make your heart a priority. Many steps in self-care can greatly improve your heart health. Learning CPR can save a life.

Here are seven self-care steps you can take to heart health.

1. Start with a self-care checklist for the week.
2. Check your blood pressure and know what the numbers mean for you.
3. Make healthy eating goals and simple changes to your diet for big benefits.
4. What is your wellness routine? Part of that is getting quality sleep and reducing stress.
5. Treat yourself? You deserve some fun to break up your normal responsibilities.
6. Who inspires you? Those “feel good” people can improve your heart too!
7. What is your favorite way to take care of your heart? Get outside and take a walk to benefit your heart and mind.

When an Ingredient Statement Says “Spice”

Reading ingredient statements on food packages provides you a list of ingredients in the food from most to least in the formula. So, when you read the word “spice” or “spices” what does that mean?

According to the FCA Code of Federal Regulations, certain spices can be listed by their common or usual name or declared collectively without naming each spice. A spice is defined as many aromatic vegetable substances in the whole, broken or ground form. Examples include allspice, basil, dill seed, black pepper and others. The exception is a substance traditionally used as a food, such as onions, garlic or celery. These cannot be included as a spice. Spices such as paprika, turmeric, and saffron are also colors and must be declared as “spice and coloring” or by their common name.

Hot Cocoa Mix

3 c. non-fat dry milk powder	1/2 c. unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 c. sugar	1/2 c. non-fat dairy creamer

To prepare mix:

1. Measure ingredients into mixing bowl, stirring well to combine.
2. Store prepared mix in a covered container or in a reclosable plastic bag.

To prepare drink:

1. Fill a microwave-safe mug 3/4 full of water. Microwave for 2 minutes on high.
2. Measure 1/3 c. hot cocoa mix and stir into hot water.

Helpful Hints: This mix is easy to make and store, and costs a lot less than the kinds you buy at the store. Kids love its creamy, chocolatey flavor, and it makes a great warm drink for cold days. Keep a canister of mix ready as part of a healthy after-school snack-maybe with some mini-marshmallows.

Safety Tip: Be sure kids know how to safely use the microwave oven and know which cups are safe to use. Cooks of all ages. Remember to use caution! Hot cups with hot liquids can really burn, putting a chill on cooking enthusiasm!

Nutrition Facts: Serving size 4 ½ cups dried mix; Servings per container: 14 cups hot cocoa.

Calories—90; calories from fat 5; total fat 0.5 g; saturated fat 0g; cholesterol 5mg; sodium 80 mg; total carbohydrate 18g; protein 6 g.

Source: Kansas Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program, Kids a Cookin'



Laura Phillips, *Extension Agent*

Tree Talk

Winter Tree Care

While it might not seem like trees are doing much in the winter, they can still benefit from attention, especially if you have young trees planted within the last 2-3 years. This includes watering, mulching, and protecting bark from sunscald.

The first concern is water. Although dormant, tree roots can still dry out and cause drought stress in trees. Evergreen trees, like eastern redcedars, and young trees without expansive root systems are the most susceptible. If you have an unusually dry winter month, it is a good idea to irrigate your tree at least once. Given our recent precipitation, it is unlikely that many trees need extra irrigation for January and February.

Next we should think about the roots. Our recent snow and ice may offer water for our trees, but it also can cause frost damage to roots or sunscald to bark. Roots, which are not as cold-hardy as stems, rely on soil to keep them insulated. Around newly planted trees and shrubs, the soil is likely to have cracks or empty space from moving soil around. These cracks let cold air penetrate the soil and reach the roots, and can cause damage. To protect young trees in cold weather, make sure there is a sufficient layer of mulch around the tree (but not touching the trunk) to protect the roots. The insulation from mulch also helps prevent the freeze-thaw cycle from causing soil to expand and contract around the roots, which can dislodge the plant or damage the roots.

Lastly, we can consider bark. In the winter, sunscald can cause severe bark damage, especially on species with thin bark such as honeylocust, fruit trees, ash, oaks, maples, lindens and willows. When the sun heats up the thin bark it can trick the tree into thinking that it's time to wake up from dormancy. The cells in the trunk then start to become active, resulting in less cold-hardiness. When night falls and temperatures drop, the tree is not as prepared to handle it, causing frost damage, or sunscald. The affected bark will later crack and peel off, leaving your young tree with a wound that is open to infection.

Low-Cost Trees for Conservation on Sale Now

As of **January 5th**, the Kansas Forest Service's annual tree and shrub sale is open! These trees and shrubs are part of the Kansas Forest Service's Conservation Tree Planting Program, which is designed to help landowners in their conservation and restoration efforts.

The program sells tree and shrub seedlings, various seeds, and other materials that can aid in tree planting, like marking flags or barriers to prevent rabbits from eating new seedlings. These plantings can serve a variety of functions, including creating windbreaks, promoting wildlife, growing Christmas trees, or stabilizing riparian areas (streambank).

While these seedlings are great for conservation work, they may not be used for landscape (ornamental) plantings or grown for resale. The seedlings can either be bareroot or containerized. Certain trees may come as one or the other or both. The seedlings typically vary in species, are low-cost, and range from 8-18 inches tall.

Their seedling selection is based around species that will provide the most benefit to conservation efforts. Many of the varieties provide habitat and food for wildlife, including nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. You can purchase a single species in groups of 25, or chose from a bundle that is targeted at promoting specific wildlife, including quail bundle, pheasant bundle, eastern pollinator bundle, and western pollinator bundle.

If you are unsure what trees would be best for your land or conservation goals, the Kansas Forest Service has a guide called "Selecting Trees and Shrubs for Conservation Plantings." You can find the guide online or get a print copy from any of the Meadowlark Extension Offices, located in Seneca, Holton, and Oskaloosa. You can also give me a call for more feedback on which trees will fit your land the best.

Shipping starts **March 11th**, but if you are set on specific types of trees, its best to place your order now before they run out. You can place orders online at www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees or call their toll-free number, 1-888-740-8733, to place your order.





Ross Mosteller, *Extension Agent*

Will the Hay Supply Last?

The heart of winter has arrived with snow cover driving more stored forages to be fed to livestock. Producers need to have a rough idea of how long they can feed and if the hay supply will outlast the winter weather. The first step in understanding forage supply is having an accurate bale count, estimation of bale weight, and knowledge of the hay dry matter percentage. Conducting a forage quality analysis is a great starting point for this, as well as nutritional content. For an example if a producer has 100 bales that weigh 1500 pounds, at 88% dry matter

and 10% dry matter storage loss, the following equation can be developed. $100 \text{ bales} \times (1500 \text{ pounds} \times .88 \text{ DM}) = 132,000$ pounds of dry matter $\times .9 = 118,800$ pounds or 59.4 tons of dry matter forage available.

On the other side of equation are; realistic expectations of animal weight, consumption approximations and feeding dry matter loss estimates. Generally speaking, ruminates will consume somewhere between 1.5 to 3.0% dry matter, of body weight. Calculating total head, by class of livestock, times the number of days on feed gets at the forage demand side. For example, if the producer has 50 head of non-lactating, mature beef cows weighing 1350 pounds, in dry, above freezing conditions, they likely would consume about 2.5% of body weight. That equation would be $50 \times (1350 \times .025) = 1687.5$ pounds needed per day. Don't forget that feeding loss can be substantial so keep that in mind as you budget consumed feed, adjusting up supply by 10 to 15%. In this example, 10% feeding loss or $1687.5 \text{ pounds} \times 1.1 = 1856.25$ pounds/day.

As you estimate, don't forget to include assumptions for lactation, genetic potential for growth, and base quality of the forage. Additional forage needs due to inclement weather and body condition score changes would need to be accounted for. The above situation would give the producer about two months of feeding capacity, without considering cold, wet weather and increasing nutritional needs of third gestation cows.

To answer the question if the hay supply will last, takes some measurements, do some estimates and push a pencil. Taking a thorough approach and using accurate forage inventory estimates helps to make more informed decisions. For help with estimating forage inventory needs see the Hay Inventory Calculator at <https://www.agmanager.info/hay-inventory-calculator>.

Livestock Water Suitability Understanding

Lower water levels in farm ponds and ground water sources has driven an increase in questions about water quality and suitability in livestock water sources. Our offices can aid in testing water sources, but understanding of what the test results mean is paramount. Often, we are very aware of water's role in body temperature regulation during hot summer months, but tend to forget that providing clean plentiful water is just as important in winter months. There are several key components to consider when reviewing livestock water suitability reports.

- **PH** - Optimal pH should be 6.5-8.5. The effect of acidic or more basic water consumption have not been well defined.
- **Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)** is the measure of all minerals dissolved in the water. Typically, these are soluble "salts". High salinity or TDS waters can result in mineral imbalances, diarrhea and decreased production performance.
- **Sodium** - Toxic levels of sodium vary by livestock species. Cattle, sheep and goat diets should be adjusted to reduce salt intake when water sodium is greater than 800 ppm. High concentrations of sodium make animals thirstier.
- **Total Hardness** - Hardness is the total calcium and magnesium ions in water. Hardness is known to contribute to the formation of urinary calculi in sheep and goats. Hardness can contribute to other mineral imbalances within the diet.
- **Nitrates** - Sorghum species get blame for nitrate issues, but nitrates in the water can also contribute to nitrate toxicity. On a low nitrate diet, ruminants can tolerate up to 20 ppm NO₃-N in their water source.
- **Sulfates** - Similar to nitrates, sulfates in the water combined with dietary concentrations of sulfur can contribute to animal health concerns. Sulfates in the water contribute to diarrhea, poor performance and the development of Polioencephalomalacia (PEM) - "Brainers".
- **Microorganisms** - There are a whole host of organisms that can cause issues for livestock, including Fusobacterium, Leptospirosis, Coliform bacteria, Salmonella and others. Water test will generally test for total coliform levels.

In conclusion, it is important to analyze livestock water. After receiving a livestock water suitability report, refer the K-State Publication MF3249, Healthy Cattle Need Healthy Water or visit with your local K-State Research and Extension office for additional assistance.

Meadowlark Extension District

114 W 5th St.
Holton, KS 66436

Address Service Requested

Publications & Resources For Sale

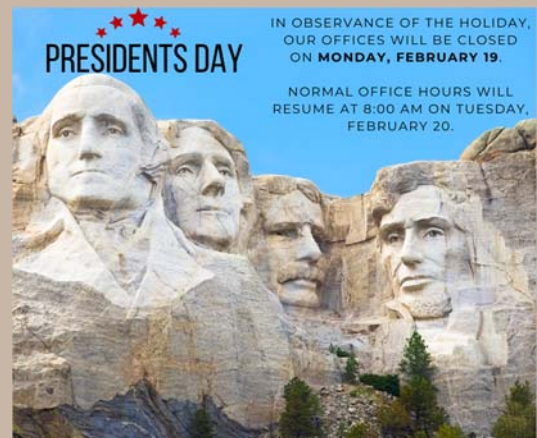
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Geo Textile Fabric (12 1/2' wide-sold per linear ft.)
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Mosquito Briquets
Soil Tests - Crop, Pasture, Lawn & Garden
Water Test Kits (pay SDK Labs, not us)
Field Record Books (free)

Items to Check Out

Soil & Hay Probes
Ear Taggers
Mole Trap
Freeze Branding Irons
Pesticide Manuals
Buzzers

Upcoming Events

Feb. 3—Beef Quality Assurance Training, Basehor
Feb. 5—Rebuilding the Cowherd, Seneca
Feb. 6—KSU Swine Profitability Conf., Manhattan
Feb. 12—KSU Dairy Day, Seneca
Feb. 19—District Offices closed for Presidents Day
Mar. 1—KSU Cattlemen's Day, Manhattan
Mar. 13—Northeast Kansas Sheep & Goat School, Holton
Mar. 28-May 2—Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Seneca



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<https://www.facebook.com/Meadowlarkextensiondistrict>