

Meadowlark Extension District Annual Report for 2021

Since 2006 our extension district has been in alignment with K-State Research and Extension and provides research-based information to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.

2021 was another year of change and transition. Agents and our district staff spent the early part of the year transitioning back to traditional programming and educational events only to be slowed by continued issues related to COVID-19.

As we ended our 15th year as a district two district extension agents announced their retirements! Jody Holthaus announced her retirement effective October 31, 2021. Jody lead our district livestock and natural resources program. Her many years of leadership, programming experience and creativity will be missed.



Nancy Nelson announced her retirement effective December 31, 2021. We were fortunate to have Nancy leading our program efforts in the areas of family life and adult development and aging. Many will remember Nancy leading the effort to promote Walk Kansas.



At their request, no official retirement celebrations were held and well wishes can be sent to the Holton office. When their retirement announcements were made public, the district governing body began discussing how to move forward with programming and filling these vacant positions.

At our November 2021 governing body meeting, it was approved to move forward to fill the open positions in the district using a combination of strategies.

Effective December 1, 2021 Ross Mosteller our current district 4-H and youth agent agreed to serve as district livestock and natural resources agent. Ross will continue to fulfill the roll of district 4-H and Youth Development agent until a new 4-H and Youth Development agent is hired. Before coming to the Meadowlark Extension District Ross served in a similar role in the River Valley District.



At our November governing body meeting, the governing body approved opening and filling the newly vacated district 4-H and Youth Development agent position that will now be moved to our Oskaloosa office.

We will also be filling the vacant agent position in the Holton office left by Nancy Nelson with a community health and wellness agent. Position announcements will be out soon and we anticipate a spring 2022 interview period!

A final announcement regarding our 2022 staffing changes is that David Hallauer, district crops and horticulture agent, will be moving his primary office from Oskaloosa to Holton. David lives in rural Jackson County and worked for the Jefferson County Extension Office before the formation of the district.



Here are a few program highlights we would like to share with you from 2021!

Sincerely
David Key
Meadowlark Extension District Director

Health

The Meadowlark District hosted a hands-on cooking camp for 3rd through 6th graders this summer in Oskaloosa. Twenty two youth attended the three-day camp and the theme was “Keeping Health with Sugar.” Several stations were conducted to allow for hands-on cooking that involved making no-sugar, low-sugar cookie recipes while teaching life-long cooking skills.

The workshop was held in collaboration with the Oskaloosa United Methodist Church, Methodist Church Women, American Family Life Insurance, Swerve, and USD#341.



Developing Tomorrows Leaders

4-H Service Projects-Hands and Health “H’s”

The Lucky Stars 4-H Club was able to collect 70 jars of peanut butter this fall in the “Go Nutty Challenge” In December the club then added additional food items and one of their members made household and food boxes for those in need.



In Holton, Brenna Bontrager collected 90 calendars to donate to the Holton Elementary School for use for craft and learning activities during the school year.



In Seneca the HHHH and Pony Express 4-H Clubs worked together to flip trick or treating in October to a food drive. Members went door to door collecting donations for the Nemaha County Food Pantry in Seneca.

Global Food Systems

A 2020 discussion with a district producer grazing cover crops revealed his concern about being able to capture both the grazing benefit and weed control from the same stand because of inconsistencies in fall establishment.

District agents placed crude exclusion cages on some cooperator fields in order to measure biomass growth and removal and whether that affected weed pressure. Following these observations, additional in-depth studies under the direction of K-State Research and Extension weed specialists involved placing exclusion cages at the initiation of grazing followed by additional cages placed every two weeks while the cover crops were grazed with clippings and biomass readings conducted to gather additional data.



Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

Often times in 4-H, the model is a caring, knowledgeable adult, who shares with and helps educate the youth 4-H member. In 4-H language this would be called the project meeting. Many times, the most successful project meeting is that which is youth led. This past summer, teen leaders in the Billtown Go-Getters 4-H club lead a countywide meeting for swine project members. The model of producing the next generation of leaders is the ultimate goal for 4-H Youth Development work.



Community Vitality

Delia PRIDE recently joined a growing list of communities in the Meadowlark Extension District and across Kansas to complete the First Impressions program. First Impressions is a program developed by K-State Research and Extension to help communities learn about their existing strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of the first-time visitor. Communities in the Meadowlark Extension District that have recently completed the First Impressions Program include: Valley Falls, Seneca, Perry, and Delia.



Health

Walk Kansas was again a popular event in 2021! The District had 28 teams with 168 participants. Seven teams met the goal to complete a virtual tour of the 8 Wonders of Kansas or 435 miles, 15 teams met the Cross Country Goal of 764 miles, and 4 teams met the virtual goal of traveling the winding trail from the Little Balkans to Nicodemus or 1,200 miles! Walk Kansas is a popular eight-week program that seeks to nudge participants to be more active with physical activity and healthy eating choices.

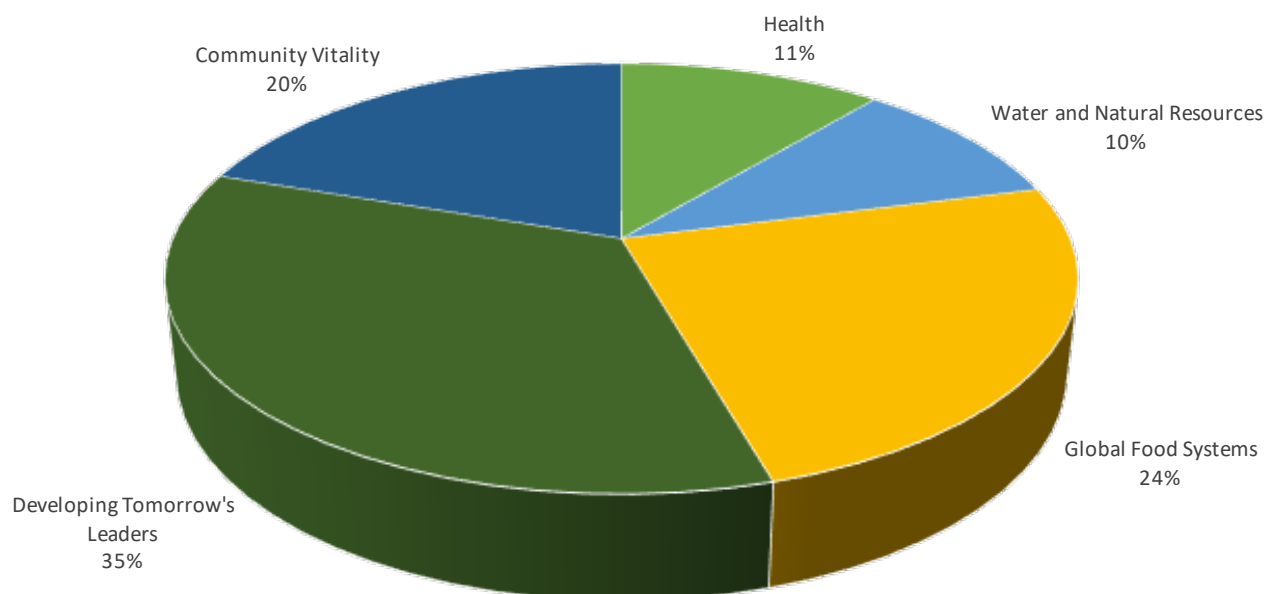
Water

Since 2013, district agents have worked with various state agencies, producers and landowners addressing blue green algae bloom. Through this effort, on farm testing protocols were developed to help detect the algae. In 2019 district agents were asked to join a group of state agencies to place demonstration treatment in ponds in the district. The demonstration involved using barley straw bales anchored to the pond bank and evolved to the development and use of a sand filtering system with the barley bale treatment to improve pond water quality.

The final prototype of the sand filter, which slowly filters pond water over sand bed, was developed and tested by district agents in cooperation with K-State Research and Extension watershed specialists and appears to be successful at improving water quality and filtering out blue green algae.



2021 Meaningful Contacts by Critical Issues in the Meadowlark District



Total Meaningful Contacts Reported in All Meadowlark District Program Areas: 8,566

■ Health ■ Water and Natural Resources ■ Global Food Systems ■ Developing Tomorrow's Leaders ■ Community Vitality

Meadowlark Extension District Governing Body Members

Jackson County

Henriette Area, Mayetta
Bruce Yonke, Holton
Carolyn Kennedy, Circleville
Amy Pruyser, Hoyt

Jefferson County

Mike McNary, Meriden
Kim Swearngin, Lawrence
Susan Voelker, Valley Falls
Julie Newman, Oskaloosa

Nemaha County

Marcia Bauerle, Goff
Pam Deters, Baileyville
Marya Haverkamp, Bern
Tresa Jones, Seneca

Meadowlark Extension District Agents and Staff

Holton Office

David Hallauer, Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Extension Agent Family and
Consumer Sciences-vacant
Cara Robinson,
4-H Program Manager
Carol McManigal, Office Professional

Oskaloosa Office

Cindy Williams, Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences
Extension Agent, 4-H Youth and
Development-vacant
Linda Gantz,
4-H Program Manager
Melanie Bostwick, Office Professional

Seneca Office

David Key, District Director and
Extension Agent Community Vitality
Ross Mosteller, Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resource
Debra Henry,
4-H Program Manager
Amy Haverkamp, Office Professional

Meadowlark Extension District – Nemaha, Jackson, and Jefferson Counties

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