

Jody G. Holthaus  
District Extension Agent  
Livestock and Natural Resources

## **PTSD**

We are suffering from a different PTSD at our house! Post Traumatic Snow Disorder. Being married to a Road supervisor can be challenging, especially during these snowstorms. I would like to share with you his perspective. On the first snow storm, his mantra is “people should just stay home”. I was sympathetic, after all the Governor had called a State of Emergency. This carried over to the next storm, finally I told him, you can’t just say that, people have to work, have medical things like dialysis etc. That worked, and now his mantra is “just move to town”. I understand his frustration, when they have to dig out the roads and then some do da has a compact car stuck in the middle of the road. Once they reach the car, of course the keys are not left in it, so they have to go all the way around the section to dig out the other half of the road. As my sister would say "people are just a problem".

I think he would be more understanding if the reason they were out in the 4 foot drifts with a compact car, was because of a medical emergency or getting fired if they missed work, but going to catch the all you can eat buffet doesn’t garner much sympathy.

I guess there are just some people that have to get out, just to see if they can make it. I remember growing up, a very bad blizzard. My dad drove the tractor to town, I’m not sure what the excuse was. I’m pretty sure it was a case of cabin fever and the challenge of making it! Not me, I’m pretty content to be “snowed in”. After this winter, my husband wants to avoid the public too. So as a Public Service Announcement- if you get your car stuck on a road, you can be ticketed, you can be towed at your expense. If you have done damage to the road, you may have to pay for fixing the damage. Plus, you are hindering the job that the snow plows can do.

We will be having a “New to the Country, New to Land Ownership” Meeting where we can discuss some of the expectations for country living. This meeting will be held, April 10, 2019 at the NE Kansas Heritage meeting room, 12200 214<sup>th</sup> Road in Holton Kansas.

Besides all of the fence laws, leasing laws etc. we will discuss, bee keeping, planting fruit trees, Hi-tunnel greenhouses, livestock for small acreages and planting trees. The meeting will begin at 7 pm. There is no charge for this meeting and reservations do not need to be made. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate!!

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

### **KSU Lease School**

According to the 2019 Corn Cost-Return Budget in Northeast Kansas, cash rents comprise approximately 19 percent of the expenses necessary to produce a corn crop. The soybean number is 27 percent (assumes the same rental rate on a farm in a corn-soybean rotation with differing expense structures based on crop). We can argue what that number *is* or *should* be, but the fact is: land rent is a big expense line item when it comes to producing a crop.

Because of the impact cash rents have on both landlords *and* tenants, finding that right number is often the key to a successful agreement. There are lots of ways to do so. K-State's Department of Agricultural Economics website – [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) – has an entire section devoted to the topic. On it, you can find results from USDA surveys, a spreadsheet tool to help calculate an equitable arrangement, rental rate projections, and even copies of presentations by KSU Economists that help explain where the numbers come from. It's a great resource – but there are often still questions that persist that discussion with a human could help answer.

One of the 'answer' folks is also one of the major contributors to the information at AgManager. Dr. Mykel Taylor is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University and has authored many of the presentations and publications available on leasing on the website. She is also our guest for the *2019 KSU Lease School* coming up on February 19<sup>th</sup> in Corning, Kansas. The Lease School be held at the Corning Community Building starting at 1:30 p.m., and will consist of ninety minutes of excellent information on everything from factors affecting the land rental market to projections for the future to how to structure a rental arrangement to help make your farm partnership better. She'll explain where the numbers from surveys and projections come from, while sharing background information that can help landlords and tenants further understand what to expect for 2019 – and beyond.

There is not cost to attend or need to RSVP. If you would like further information or if inclement weather becomes an issue, please contact the Holton Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 364-4125 or e-mail me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu) or Jody Holthaus at [jholthau@ksu.edu](mailto:jholthau@ksu.edu). Landlord, tenant, or both, this workshop will have something for you. Hope you can attend.

Cindy Williams  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

## Home Problems

January and February sees the peak of home heating fires and carbon monoxide poisonings. Here are some tips to avoiding problems in your home.

### Heating Equipment:

- \*Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves, or portable space heaters.
- \*Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- \*Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year.
- \*Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- \*Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into a room.

### Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- \*Replace the battery for your home’s CO detector each spring and fall.
- \*Do not heat your home with a gas range or oven.
- \*Never run a car or truck inside an attached garage.

### Smoke Detectors:

- \*Test your smoke alarms at least once a month.
- \*Change batteries when daylight savings time changes.
- \*When a smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside.
- \*Replace all smoke alarms in your home every 10 years.

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

### Radon Test Kits Available

Radon is an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas produced by the decay of natural radioactive materials found in the soil. It's a naturally occurring environmental hazard that seeps into homes and other buildings through joints or cracks in the foundation and has been found above recommended levels in as many as one in four homes in Kansas.

Radon is known to be the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in smokers, and testing is recommended.

Do-it-yourself radon test kits are available at K-State Research and Extension Meadowlark District offices for a small fee during January Radon Action Month as well as throughout the year.

Following the directions provided with the test kits and detectors is important, so the results will reveal the potential for elevated concentrations in the lowest lived-in level of the home.

How often should you test? If your results are low, consider repeating the test every five years or whenever there is a significant change in the home's foundation, heating system or air tightness from weatherization efforts.

If you currently have a mitigation installed, your home needs to be tested every 2 years, to make sure that it is working properly and you do not have any additional changes in your foundation to increase the radon levels in your home.

If you do any major home modifications, then you should test after you complete that project to find out if you have radon in your home because of the structural changes in your remodel.

What if the test result is above the EPA level? If radon is present above the recommended ceiling (4.0 pCiL/Pico Curies per liter), a confirmatory test should be conducted. If you want to know the radon concentration in other areas of your home, conduct the desired number of tests at the same time. When high results are confirmed, experts recommend consulting a radon professional for mitigation system installation.