

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

Rental Agreements

A 2014 survey by USDA reported over 50 percent of farmland across the United States was under a rental agreement. Pasture was lower - less than 30 percent - but both numbers underscore the importance of rental arrangements to anyone involved in production agriculture.

There are too many facets of an ag lease to cover in a single news column. From time to time I'll highlight various resources, but the best 'one stop shop' for resources available from our KSU Department of Ag Economics is: <https://www.agmanager.info/> . Select the *Farm Management Tab* and the *Land Rental Rates*.

The *Land Rental Rates* tab includes land rental rate resources. Current Kansas Ag Statistics Service and KSU Ag Econ publications approach rental rates from different angles (survey vs. calculated), but both provide good starting comparison numbers as you evaluate your rental arrangement.

Want to dig deeper in to what makes a good agreement? Choose the *Papers and Presentations* tab. Lease meeting presentation resources are included here to help landlord or tenant decipher changes in land values over time as well as suggestions on what makes a good rental agreement.

The *Forms* tab is helpful if you are trying to put together a written agreement. From simple to more complex, various contract options are available to help you formulate a written agreement right for you.

Too much information to sort through? Contact me via any of our District Offices or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu. There isn't a single 'right' number or arrangement that fits all, but we can try to point you in the way of resources to help you find it.

Natural Needle Drop

Spruce, Arborvitae and Pine species annually experience a phenomenon known as natural needle drop – and it's on full display right now. While not harmful to trees, it's easily confused with other more serious evergreen disease issues.

Natural needle drop is simply the shedding of two to four-year-old interior growth. Needles turn a bright yellow, then brown, and eventually drop from the tree. It happens every year, but is most noticeable when trees are under stress, heat and drought in particular.

Other evergreen diseases can cause similar symptoms, but most generally affect the newer growth on branch tips. If natural needle drop is the issue, only the older, inner needles will be affected and the 'damage' won't include spotting/banding of affected needles.

If you suspect damage above and beyond natural needle drop, look for other symptoms: browning tips, shortened needle growth, or branch decline that can be a sign of more severe issues. Check out this publication for suggestions: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/L722.pdf> or contact any District Office to find out how to submit a sample for evaluation.

Nancy Nelson
District Agent
Family Life

Dividing Household Chores and Responsibilities

The last 18 months have been a time of change. A lot of work and schooling went virtual and many of us went into quarantine. While at home, we stepped up our cleaning practices to help keep ourselves and our families safe and clean.

In a recent American Cleaning Institute survey, nearly 9 in 10 people said they changed their cleaning habits due to the pandemic and most said they would likely continue these behaviors over the next six months.

What also changed was how chores were divided up. According to the survey, 4 of 5 parents said that the children helped with chores, including cleaning their rooms, washing dishes, helping with laundry and mopping or vacuuming. The question is, are those changes here to stay? Only time will tell.

If you are looking to shift the current division of chores in your household, here are some ideas from the American Cleaning Institute that can help.

Identify what needs to be done and how often. Prioritize that list and determine who prefers which tasks. Consider outsourcing when feasible, if it fits into your budget.

Divide chores into smaller pieces to make them more manageable and help divvy up the load. Depending on the age, your kids may not be able to do the laundry, but they can help sort socks, fold or transport clothes to the appropriate rooms to be put away.

Communication is key. Schedule a time for a conversation about how to best divide chores, gather ideas and identify potential pitfalls. For kids, reminders like chore charts can be a way to help turn commitments into habits.

Show appreciation for completed tasks. This could be a simple thank you or a sticker on a chore chart. Perhaps if all chores are completed for the week, the family could celebrate with an outing or a special meal.

Remember when involving children in cleaning to do so safely. Do not have young children handle cleaning products and always store those products up and out of reach.

Cindy Williams
District Agent
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Sweet Potatoes—A Nutritious Bargain for Fall and Winter Seasons

Sweet Potatoes are sometimes called yams. This very nutritious vegetable can be cooked and eaten alone or used in soups, bread, or even fries.

Potatoes are the most popular vegetable in the United States. Boil, bake, mash or microwave.... they are so easy to fix. Try leaving the potato skins on for added fiber and nutrients. Be sure and cut off any green spots or sprouts on potatoes before cooking. Potatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator or next to onions---onions make potatoes spoil.

Something you might want to try—Cut sweet potatoes into strips like French fries and spray with low-fat cooking spray or toss with a little oil. Bake at 375F° for 30 minutes for a tasty snack or side dish.

Or consider baking or boiling sweet potatoes until they are slightly soft. Cooked sweet potatoes make a delicious and nutritious snack—served either hot or cold, sprinkled with a little cinnamon, if desired. Any leftovers will keep up to five days in the refrigerator.

Another possibility includes microwaving them for about 5 minutes, sweet potatoes with their skins left on and enjoy plain or drizzle with a little butter and brown sugar for a sweet treat.

*Nutrition Facts: One baked sweet potato provides 100 calories, 0g total fat, 10 mg sodium, 22g total carbohydrates, 3g fiber.

Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry place—not in the refrigerator. Plan to serve canned or fresh sweet potatoes any time of the year.

Potatoes and sweet potatoes are root vegetables or the “underground” part of a plant that we eat fresh, canned or frozen.

Root vegetables are high in fiber, low in calories, packed with vitamins A, C, and folic acid, plus many minerals. Wait to wash root vegetables until just before using them. Rinse with cold water and scrub with a vegetable brush to remove dirt. Remember where they are grown!

November 12, 2021