

**David Hallauer**  
District Extension Agent  
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

### **Farm Transition**

Three faculty in Ag Economics from Oklahoma State University wrote one of the many publications available on the subject of farm transitions. In it is a very telling graphic entitled ‘Generational transition success rates for small businesses. While the data isn’t just from family farm transitions (the source is the Family Business Institute), it underscores the difficulty in getting a farm or small business successfully transitioned. Their data shows a thirty percent transition success rate from the first to the second generation. That rate drops to twelve percent between the second and third generations and three percent from the third to fourth generation.

So how do farms desiring transition success make it happen? There are numerous reasons. Sometimes it’s just not a priority to get an estate plan in place. Sometimes the conversations needed to prepare the next generation are difficult – or don’t happen at all.

Bottom line: there is no silver bullet. Every farm/family/situation is different, and sometimes the best way to get rolling is just a little bit of a guiding framework. That framework is what the 2022 KSU Farm and Ranch Transition Conferences are designed to do. These full day conferences will be held in three locations (Colby, Salina, Erie) across the state with each one featuring one of the authors of the publication I referenced above: Dr. Shannon Ferrell. Dr. Ferrell is an Associate Professor of Agriculture Law at Oklahoma State University. After a few years practicing law in the private sector, he returned to Oklahoma State where for the last 15 years he has assisted producers with everything from transition planning to land leases. He’ll talk about the *First Steps of Succession Planning* with pointers to help get the process started.

A recently formed Office of Farm and Ranch Transition at Kansas State University will also be featured. Director of the Office, Ashlee Westerhold, will talk about features of the AgKansitions program available to Kansas producers. Afternoon sessions will include the role of a lawyer in the succession process as well as a peer panel on transition planning.

Cost to attend is \$60 and registration is required by December 1. For more information or to get registered, visit the Office of Farm and Ranch Transition at <https://www.agkansitions.org/> and check out the events listed at the bottom of the page.

### **Wood Ashes as a Fertilizer Source?**

It’s cold and the fireplace has likely been in heavy use the past week. The ash left can be an issue on multiple fronts, but if your disposal site is a garden, be careful.

Wood ashes have value as a fertilizer product. They don’t contain nitrogen, but may have a low level of phosphorous. What they contain a lot of is potassium. Unfortunately, it’s not a nutrient we tend to need much in the garden, with additions raising soil levels for no reason.

An even greater concern might be the pH effect of wood ashes. Most garden soils are not only high in P/K, but pH, too. Adding wood ashes could unnecessarily raise soil pH levels, potentially causing issues for other nutrients as well.

It might be best to discard wood ashes away from the garden altogether. If you can’t, consider a soil test to determine nutrient needs prior to application. Soil probes are available via any District Office. For less than twenty dollars, you can learn a lot about what your soil needs – and what it doesn’t.

## Ross Mosteller

District Extension Agent  
Livestock & Natural Resources

### What's Your CRP Forage Worth?

One of the first “big kid” farm projects my Dad turned me loose on by myself, was seeding down the marginal farm ground our family has owned for a century. Driving that M Farmall back and forth spreading brome seed for a new concept called the Conservation Reserve Program - CRP, made a second grader feel like big stuff in the mid-1980s. I'll not claim to be all knowing on this program and defer to FSA for a definition and rules.

CRP is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. Thanks to voluntary participation by farmers and landowners, CRP has achieved significant goals in conservation and sustainability.

As I write this, all three counties of Meadowlark District (*honestly - most of the state*) falls under the declaration for emergency haying and grazing of CRP acres. It obviously is getting late in the year to be putting up hay, but every year there seems to be CRP acres available for haying/grazing and especially this year, nearly everyone is utilizing forages of any kind to get livestock through the winter. Meadowlark District has a rich history with the CRP program and I know these acres still exist.

All CRP forage is not created equally, as there runs a gamete of mixes of grasses and forbs - mostly our native Kansas grasses, but not always. Not only is the composition of forage at play, so is the timing of harvest. Generally, this type of hay is put up later, due primarily to the designated nesting season restriction, and often times of drought stress come later in the growing season. Additionally, CRP forage typically is not harvested in consecutive years, so this type of hay can contain old growth forage from previous years. All of this is to say that regardless if CRP is put up for hay or grazed, this is not the kind of forage that brings a premium, based on quality. Most often this forage is compared to corn residue or wheat straw in terms of quality, but is it???

Hopefully this all makes sense thus far and I've not grossly misstated something so badly as to receive a call from the FSA office! So, why in the world have I invested this much time and newspaper space to this topic? First, as stated earlier, this is a year where CRP hay might be incorporated into rations more often and more widespread than a “normal” year. What kind of values should be plugged into a ration balancing software? The best answer is to complete a good, representative forage test and go from there with actual forage numbers. This low-quality forage will need to be supplemented, but at what rate? The second reason is a call for action.

K-State Research and Extension has a new beef cow-calf Extension specialist - Dr. Jason Warner. Dr. Warner is organizing a statewide project to measure the forage quality value of CRP forages in Kansas and I've committed to providing testing locations in the northeast part of the state. What I don't know is who might be willing to serve as cooperators on this project? Full details are forthcoming and I'll be happy to visit with anyone with interest, but basically, I just need to identify 2-3 sites across the District where representative clippings can be taken throughout the growing season. Please contact me if you want to help with this important study. 785-336-2184 or [rmostell@ksu.edu](mailto:rmostell@ksu.edu)

**Teresa Hatfield**  
District Extension Agent  
Family and Community Wellness

### **Celebrating the Holidays with Older Family Members**

The holidays can be an excellent time to join with family and celebrate. We often see loved ones we haven't seen in several months. These are often times for happy memories and family traditions. It is also a good time to consider how the holidays affect older family members. The holidays can bring also be a time for mixed emotions. It is a good idea to be aware of some tips and ideas that can make the holidays more enjoyable for everyone.

First, consider the physical abilities and needs of older family members. They may only be able to join in some of your scheduled activities. Try to include them whenever possible and arrange transportation if needed. Holiday activities they could participate in consist of; meal preparation, decorating, holiday shopping, sharing homemade treats, or viewing outdoor light displays. Plan or make a new tradition involving all family members. For family members unable to join in activities, keep communication open; you can also use technology such as FaceTime or Zoom.

With the busyness and frequent coming and goings, consider having a quiet room where others can relax or get away from the activities.

This time of year can also be stressful. As we get older, we often experience loss and grief and miss those people who have gone before us. It is important to remember those who are no longer with us and the memories they have left behind. Family members may want to share stories about past holiday memories with the younger generation. Consider getting out the old photo albums or home movies. Be open and supportive to those expressing feelings of sadness and loss. Be aware that depression, however, is not a normal part of aging. The blues are temporary, but clinical depression can continue after the holidays. It is best to contact a healthcare provider if you suspect a loved one is suffering from depression.

It is also important to prepare your home to prevent hazards for seniors. One of the most significant risks is falling. Older adults are more likely to suffer serious injuries. As we age, we may experience gait instability or arthritis pain, decreasing our mobility. Many older adults take medications that can impact stability. Vision is not as good as it was, making it harder to see obstacles, and reduced reaction times make older adults more likely to take a fall. There are steps you can take to make your home more hospitable and safer for older adults during the holidays.

On the outside of your home:

- Make sure sidewalks and driveways are clear of ice and snow.
- Put down salt or ice melt.
- Make sure steps and walkways are well-lit, and handrails are tight.
- Beware of cracks or uneven surfaces that could be a tripping hazard.

Inside your home:

- Pick up any clutter and any loose items on the floor or stairways.
- Pick up any rugs or electric cords that could cause a tripping hazard. Make sure pathways between rooms are clear, and move furniture obstructing the path.
- Tighten handrails on staircases.
- Make sure stairways are well-lit.
- Pets can also be a tripping hazard; make sure they are under control and mind their manners.
- Pick up any children's or pet's toys from the floor.

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- If an older adult is spending the night, make sure there is a lamp near the bed, so they can turn it on before getting out of bed, and consider putting night-lights in the hallways.
- Make sure there is a clear pathway to the bathroom.

These tips will help to make a safe and happy holiday season. I hope that everyone enjoys the season.

## Cindy Williams

District Extension Agent  
Family & Community Wellness

### **Is Turkey Healthful?**

There's no doubt that the bird is the star of the show at most family holiday dinners, so it's fair to wonder whether all the turkey talk this time of year is going to be good for the waistline.

Turkey has a lot of basically healthful qualities, but what we do to prepare it can either help to maintain that healthy name tag, or it can completely change its complexion. In other words, basting, brining and frying may be inviting extra fat or sodium to an otherwise healthy meal.

In the United States, we definitely have embraced the idea of eating turkey. We eat about twice as much as we were eating 50 years ago because we have learned about the positive things it can do for our health. Data from 2019 indicate that Americans eat about 16 pounds of turkey per person each year, or about 5.3 billion pounds of turkey combine.

Turkey is a great source of protein, and our bodies need protein to build and repair bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, blood and tissue. Roasted turkey is low in fat, with white meat lower in fat compared to dark meat. Most fat in poultry is located right under the skin.

Turkey is also a good source of beneficial vitamins and minerals, including magnesium, niacin, iron, choline, phosphorus, potassium, B12 and zinc.

Turkey is an excellent source of selenium, a trace element that helps the body make antioxidant enzymes. Some studies have shown that a diet rich in selenium can help to prevent certain types of cancers, including bladder, breast and lung cancer.

Other types of poultry, including turkey, are considered part of what is commonly called the MIND diet, named for its association with the Mediterranean and DASH diets, and thought to be beneficial to the brain.

Poultry as a regular part of our eating patterns may help to slow mental decline associated with Alzheimer's disease and other cause of dementia. Researchers recommend eating poultry products about twice a week, especially for older adults. It is not the entire solution, but it may be part of the answer. We can address this through healthier eating.

There is also the fact that eating a turkey dinner seems to make you want to nap. It is true that turkey contains tryptophan, an amino acid that has this property that can help you have better sleep. The sheer volume of what we eat as part of the turkey dinner is also what makes us sleepy.

In any case, a serving of common sense with the turkey dinner—including controlling portion sizes—is a good idea if you're concerned about gaining weight this holiday season. A brisk walk after dinner instead of extra pie is another healthy idea.

Holiday foods themselves are not the real problem. In many cases what tends to affect our weight is how much we eat, how often we over-eat and how active we choose to be over the holidays.