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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

## The Interest in Land Rental Rates

I've referenced the KSU Ag Economics site ([www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info)) many times in this space over the years – and for good reason. It's a great resource when it comes to all things economics as related to agriculture, covering topics like budgets, ag policy, and many others.

One of the most popular topics at the site is land rental rates. In fact, in 2022, the Land Rental Rates page (<https://agmanager.info/farm-management/land-rental-rates>) was the most visited page on the site. Part of that stems from that vast array of information available there, from lease rates to rental forms, plus many, many, *many* presentations on ag lease topics. Part of it is because leases and land rental rates are huge line items in most ag production budgets, accounting for over 15 percent of total costs in our KFMA corn production budgets and close to 25 percent of total soybean costs. In short, getting the 'right' rental rate is an important part of the budget for both landlords and tenants. If you haven't checked out the rental rates page at the AgManager site, it's a great resource.

Want to dig deeper in to land leasing strategies? Consider a four-part workshop in January and February entitled *The Power of Negotiation and Communication, Land Leasing Strategies for Midwestern Ag Women*. Don't let the title scare you. This series will provide useful information for landlord or tenant, man or woman, less experienced or more experienced, with topics including lease agreement basics, landlord/tenant relations, and how conservation practices may play a role in lease agreements. Registration (\$50/person payable at the door) is due January 13<sup>th</sup>. See a flyer at [www.agmanager.info/events](http://www.agmanager.info/events) or contact any Meadowlark Extension District Office. Huge thanks to the Jackson County Farm Bureau for their generous sponsorship of this program.

## Vegetable Garden Planting...Guide...

Now that the holidays have passed, you may have gotten the itch to start gardening. While it may be just a *little* early, it's *not* too early to plan.

When doing your planning, check out the KSU's *Vegetable Gardening Planting Guide* available online (<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf315.pdf>) or upon request from any District Office (or e-mailing me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu)). In just four pages, it outlines everything from when to plant – including frost tolerance scores – to how much you'll need to plant per person. It also includes information on seeding rate, spacing, and even common plant problems.

It's a great resource for the experienced gardener trying to make sure they are planting enough to the new gardener trying to figure out where to start. Check it out via any of the options above – and start the planning process for a productive 2023 gardening season.

## Ross Mosteller

District Extension Agent  
Livestock & Natural Resources

### **Lambing and Kidding Reminders**

I had a conversation earlier this week with a local sheep producer, who was showing me a live link camera from his lambing barn on his phone. This got me thinking about how nice that would be calving heifers for me personally, but also served as a reminder that many lambs and kids are being born now. North Carolina State has an excellent publication that serves as the reference today, found on the web for more information at: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/lambing-and-kidding-cheat-sheet-for-beginning-small-ruminant-producers>

Survival of newborn lambs and kids is key to the economic viability of the operation. During the period surrounding lambing and kidding, understanding and identifying normal versus abnormal behavior and physiology and knowing when to assist are essential to newborn survival, a healthy start to life, and productive individuals in the future. One of the most important references should be your Veterinarian's contact information, as they should be your go-to in times of concern. Trusted, experienced, mentors are great contacts as well.

Facilities: Housing areas must be dry and well ventilated. Bedding should be kept fresh and replaced as needed to keep the environment dry and free of excessive manure buildup. Good ventilation is essential, but it is important to minimize unwanted drafts. Temperature should be monitored to prevent condensation and ensure an environment unfavorable to pathogen development. Excessive heat can be more detrimental than cooler environments.

Essential Equipment: It is important to be stocked with equipment BEFORE lambing and kidding season starts. Some of the basic items include: gloves, antimicrobial soap, halter, dry towels, heat lamp, OB lube, lamb/kid pullers (head and/or leg snares), thermometer, syringes and needles, prolapse retainer and harness, vitamin supplements, tube feeder, nursing bottle, stored colostrum, ear tagger and an Elastrator, to mention just a few.

Birthing Process: Lambs or kids are delivered front feet first with head between the front legs just above the knees. Within 30 minutes of water bag delivery, feet should appear. Following the feet, delivery should proceed without much delay. Allow ewe or doe to complete the lambing process in the location she has chosen. In the case of multiple births, do not disturb unless necessary until all lambs and kids are born. Moving her will delay the birthing process for subsequent lambs or kids.

Recognizing and Addressing Dystocia: Dystocia is a general term used to describe an abnormal or difficult birth. Common dystocia issues include: abnormally long birth time, head or shoulder lock, leg back, or breech deliveries. Fluids during delivery should be clear or have a slight yellow tint. A dark yellow or brown coloration indicates a stressful delivery. More than 30 minutes without progress means the ewe or doe likely needs assistance.

There is much more that can be discussed pre-birth, post-birth, processing newborns and early life care, but for today will refer interested individuals to the publication mentioned above. Educating or refreshing on these processes before the season starts can prove to be invaluable. Good luck to everyone lambing and kidding, here's to no more below zero windchills!

### **Power of Negotiation and Communication; Land Leasing Series**

One final reminder that registration for the four week land leasing series that we are hosting in Holton is due Friday, January 13 at: [www.AgManger.info/events](http://www.AgManger.info/events) This is a three state programming effort that will give participants information on how to successfully navigate leasing land. If you have interest, we encourage your participation! Questions can be directed to David Hallauer or myself, by contacting any of the Meadowlark Extension District offices.

## Teresa Hatfield

District Extension Agent  
Family and Community Wellness

### Help Paying for Home Energy Costs

Winter is officially here. With the arctic blast a couple of weeks ago, and the need to use more energy to heat our homes, some may be worried about how to pay for high heating bills this winter. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per-year benefit.

The LIEAP application period is from Tuesday, January 3, 2023, through 5:00 PM on Friday, March 31, 2023. To qualify for the program, applicants need to meet eligibility requirements.

These include:

- The applicant living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs at the residence, either directly to the utility company or to the landlord.
- The applicant must establish that they have a recent history of payments toward purchasing primary heating energy and have made payments of at least \$80 toward the cost.
- The program also has income guidelines. The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level.
- Be a U.S. citizen in have been an eligible legally admitted person for permanent residence.

The amount of LIEAP funding received is based on the federal government's funding distribution, the anticipated number of applicants, dwelling type, type of heating fuel, and the number of people living in the household and their incomes.

You can complete a LIEAP application by going to the following website: <https://cssp.kees.ks.gov/apsssp/sspNonMed.portal>. Paper applications can be mailed or faxed to your local DCF office at 500 SW VanBuren, Topeka, KS, 66603, or sent to 785-296-5666. When completing your application, remember to follow these tips:

- Answer all questions on the application
- Include signatures of all the adults living in the home
- Include proof of income for everyone living at the residence
- If applicable, provide a Veterans Administration (VA) award letter, SSA/SSI award letter for pensions
- If claiming self-employment, provide a copy of the most recent tax return
- Provide a copy of all fuel bills
- Proof of child support payments received or court-ordered
- If you are living in subsidized housing, provide a copy of your rental agreement
- Make sure only to send copies of the required documents, as DCF will not return originals.

You will need to make copies of these documents for yourself before applying. If you need additional information about the program, you can call 1-800-432-0043.

**Cindy Williams**  
District Extension Agent  
Family & Community Wellness

### **January is Radon Action Month**

Because of its odorless, tasteless and colorless ways, radon can be a silent killer and unfortunately, it's fairly prevalent in Kansas soils. The radioactive gas that occurs naturally in some soils is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. It claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans every year, according to the EPA. But there are ways to test for it and mitigate it. To help raise awareness and encourage people to have their homes tested, the EPA has deemed January Radon Action Month.

The Kansas Radon Program encourages all homeowners to test for radon. Test kits can be obtained from your Meadowlark Extension District offices in Oskaloosa, Holton and Seneca. The price of the kits is now \$7.00. For more information contact Cindy at 785-863-2212.

More than 112,000 radon measurements have been reported in Kansas, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The agency indicated that the statewide average indoor radon level in Kansas is 4.9 picocuries of radon per liter (pCi/L), which is above the EPA threshold of 4.0.

For homeowners who test and find elevated radon levels in their homes, the most common technique to reduce it is called Active Soil Depressurization. An ASD mitigation system is a permanently-installed pipe-and-fan system that places a direct constant vacuum on the soil beneath the home's foundation, so the amount of radon that can penetrate into the living space is reduced.

For more information about radon, testing and mitigation is available at [www.kansasradonprogram.org/home](http://www.kansasradonprogram.org/home) or by calling the Kansas Radon Hotline at 1-800-693-5343.