

McPherson County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

December 2023/January 2024



Clover Corner

SHYANNE JONES
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Council Meeting

The next 4-H Council Meeting will take place on December 7th at 7pm. **Please make sure to check your inbox for the Zoom link!**

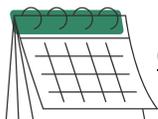


Dog Judges Training:

The annual training and re-certification for 4H Dog show judges will be January 26-28 at the Leavenworth County Fairgrounds in the Northeast area of Kansas. This is a 5 year certification.

All 4H dog shows must have certified judges for members to qualify for the State Fair Dog Show. There is a reduced cost for leaders/members who want to observe but not become a judge.

Registration will be out soon and located on **Kansas4H.org** website under events.



Calendar of Events

December

- 12/4- Fiber Arts Meeting at 6 PM
- 12/5- Foods Project Meeting at 6:15 PM
- 12/7- 4-H Council Meeting at 7 PM
- 12/25/2023-01/01/24- Office Closed

Get Published

Have project news or reports of fun 4-H happenings? Please email or bring in any articles to Lauralee at Lhelm@ksu.edu by January 22 to get them into the Clover Corner!

Judges Training

Judges training in static exhibits is on January 15th in Hays, KS. Please share with those individuals who would like to begin judging and creating growth for our youth. More details to come!

Horse Show Judges Seminar

Kansas 4-H, the KSU Horse Judging Team and Colby Community College are excited to offer a 4-H Horse Show Judges Seminar Friday, April 12, 2024 in Colby, KS. This includes individuals who would like to begin judging 4-H horse shows as well as youth participants who would like to learn about horse judging. More details and registration will come after the first of the year.



2024 4-H Horse Panorama

The 2024 4-H Horse Panorama is scheduled for January 27, 2024, at K-State Salina. A schedule of events is located on the 4-H Horse Panorama website.

Horse Bowl encourages young people to develop knowledge of equine-related subject matter. This contest develops alertness, self-confidence, and knowledge in a competitive setting, surrounded by an attitude of friendliness and fairness.

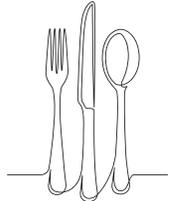
Members are encouraged to be enrolled in the Horse or Horseless Horse projects. If you are interested in participating in this event, please let Shyanne know by December 15th.

Foods Project Meeting

Good Tidings of Joy Christmas Place Setting & Meal

- **Who:** All McPherson County 4-H Foods & Nutrition project members
- **What:** A project meeting to learn table place setting plus eat dinner.

Please, bring with you a written menu of what you would prepare for a Christmas dinner. Along with the plate you would place on your Christmas themed table. It can be a formal China plate to a paper plate. There is no wrong plate.



When: Dec. 5, 2023 (Tuesday) 6:15

Where: MP Co. Extension Office

Why: because it will be fun!

How: Invite a parent to join you.

Next RSVP to Terra that you and your parent will come to our Good Tidings of Joy Event by December 3rd.



Fiber Arts Project Meetings

December 4th – at 6pm there will be a Meet and Greet Pizza party with small project to start the year. Bring a sewing machine, some bobbins, and a small amount of cotton fabric (**if you need to borrow a machine – let us know**). Please RSVP by noon on the 4th to Shyanne!

December 11th – 4-H quilters are invited to attend the McPherson Quilt Guild Christmas Party at the First Presbyterian Church in McPherson. Food and snacks will be available as well as quilts to learn about and get ideas for your own projects. Please park in the east lot, the southeast door will be open.

Community Mitten Tree



When: Between Thanksgiving & Christmas

Where: Home State Bank and Trust's Main or Euclid Street locations OR the Extension Office

Things you can donate:
Hats—Gloves—Scarves—Socks
Coats—Monetary Donations

*Items donated will be distributed to all elementary schools in McPherson County



AG NEWS

SHAD MARSTON
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Reflection of 2023:

Now that 2023 is coming to a close, the ag community can now reflect on the past year. Drought is still on the minds of every farmer and rancher here in central Kansas. Think back to last June when our dryland corn looked amazing. We had hopes of being out of the drought, but then came July, and the corn and all row crops burnt up. The hopeful thought of a super El Nino weather pattern means a higher chance of getting adequate moisture this winter and into the next year's growing season. We need 12" of rain to get us back to normal before the end of March. During the winter months, this might mean snow. Grain farmers are excited to talk about getting more moisture and the thoughts of raising higher yields for their wheat and row crops. Even though commodity prices have fallen a bit, good farmers are still making a profit. Being able to be more diversified in their farming operations, allows the farmer to withstand some of their unseen setbacks. On the cattle producing side, higher prices in the cattle market have helped ranchers stay in the black for the year. The lack of forages and the high price of hay has taken a toll on some cow/calf producers to reduce their herds. With our cow herd numbers reaching the lowest numbers since 1962, hopefully the strong market will last and with added moisture this next year, producers can start the build back of numbers in their cow herds. The need of moisture to grow forages and fill our pasture ponds would be a blessing. We haven't had a lot of winter snow for a number of years. The thought of dealing with snowy weather during the winter and early spring for cattle producers means better management plans and long chores during calving season. Items cattlemen can deal with if preparing early for winter storms.

The cost of borrowing money is becoming increasingly expensive in today's environment. Many agricultural loan rates are between 7.5 percent and 8.5 percent, which is double what the rate was two years ago. The ratcheting up of rates has slowed tremendously, but that does not mean interest rates will not be increased in the coming years. There are many operations that are not in a financial situation to reduce borrowing needs. However, there are some operations that could use some capital on hand for operating money and reduce borrowed capital. The use of available cash could reduce costs tremendously given the current interest rate environment. This statement is not to insinuate using all cash on hand in place of borrowing money, but rather to use a portion of the available capital to replace some borrowing. For those who do not have cash on hand to replace a percentage of borrowed capital, it would be advantageous to establish a goal of putting back some cash in the coming years for times such as this. The one good thing here for both the farmer and the rancher is a strong commodity market and cattle market.

IRM Redbooks for Sale

The 2024 IRM Redbooks are here and will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. The price is \$7.75 per book. To get your supply of Redbooks, please contact Terra Regehr (tregehr@ksu.edu or 620-241-1523).

They make a great Christmas presents for friends!

New in January 2024

K-State Corn and Soybean Schools held together

In January 2024, look for a new format for the traditional K-State Corn and Soybean Winter Crop Schools. K-State Research and Extension, in collaboration with Kansas Corn and Kansas Soybean, has combined the schools for a whole-day program covering both crops.

2024 K-State Corn and Soybean Crop Schools

January 17 (Wednesday) – Hesston

at Agco Corporation

Stay tuned for the complete agendas and how to register.



Save the date for the 2024 Cattlemen's Day

The 2024 Cattlemen's Day date has been set for March 1 in Weber Hall and Arena in Manhattan. More information about the schedule, tradeshow, and registration information will be available soon. Information will be published on ***KSUBeef.org*** as it becomes available. If you are interested in having an exhibitor booth, please contact Dale Blasi (dblasi@ksu.edu or 785-532-5427) or Katie Smith (katiesmith@ksu.edu or 785-532-1267)

Safety first when planning deep tillage or earthwork: Call before you dig!

With harvest complete and some mild temperatures heading into winter, farmers might take to the field for deep tillage such as ripping, or to make earthwork repairs around the farm. A few days before you want to start these activities, call 811 for your safety and to prevent expensive damage to underground utilities. The website, <http://call811.com>, has easy-to-follow instructions for requesting this free service and detailed information concerning why you need to know what's below.

A video produced by Marathon Oil tells the story of a farm family and their close call with a pipeline when installing tile drains. The landowner knew where the pipeline entered and exited the field, and they assumed the pipeline was straight— it wasn't. Watch this 6-minute, eye-opening video for the whole story: <https://youtu.be/oe-iknpYzF8>.

Sadly, fatal accidents do happen in soil excavations. If you dig any trenches or soil pits, safety should be considered from the very beginning of the project. Soils with sandy textures are more susceptible to collapse than soils with a higher clay content. If standing water is present in the pit, the walls are more apt to collapse. Digging in soils that have been disturbed before, such as digging next to a hydrant or foundation, means that the soil is far less stable than you might expect if that soil had never been disturbed before.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines exist on excavation safety, such as when it is necessary to shore the walls of a soil pit or trench. One important consideration is soil should be piled a minimum of 2 feet away from the walls of the trenches for two reasons:

1. Soil clods or excavating tools could roll back into the trench and cause injury to occupants.
2. It helps reduce the risk of a trench collapse by keeping the weight of the soil piles away from the trench edges.

Even if a soil pit is 5 feet deep or less, it is a good idea to angle the edges, especially if the texture is sandy, the soil is wet, or if the soil is otherwise unstable. This does create more disturbance, but if it prevents an accident, it's worth it.

Master Gardener's and Friends Spring Program Series

This new year starting in January, the Master Gardeners and Friends group hosts educational programs which are open to all horticultural enthusiast's in our community. Master Gardener meetings are from January through April, on the 4th Thursday starting at 7:00 pm and are held at the McPherson County Extension Office. We have invited Horticulture specialists to come and present an educational program covering topics that are important to our area.

2024 programs will be:

- *January 25: Calandria Edwards, Butler County Horticulture Specialist covering, "How do you start with a new landscape or Planting a Butterfly Garden"*
- *February 22: Pam Paulsen, Reno County Horticultural Specialist, "Gardening Myths and Misconceptions"*
- *March 28: Kody Kramer, K-State Forestry, "Fruit Tree Planting and Care"*
- *April 25: Karen Blakeslee, M.S. Extension Associate Rapid Response Center Coordinator Kansas State University Research & Extension, Department of Animal Sciences & Industry, "Storing and preserving produce"*



Cattle Chat: Feeding corn stalk bales

K-State cattle nutritionist explains how corn stalk bales can be a feed resource:

When eating a salad, imagine how it might taste if all there was to eat were the stems of the plant. Not very appealing, right?

Similarly, cattle that are offered corn stalk bales to eat in place of hay also often find that to be less palatable, said Phillip Lancaster, beef cattle nutritionist for the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute.

Lancaster said there is an increase of corn stalks being baled as a feed resource this year because of the shortage of hay and the decrease in pastures available for fall grazing due to a lack of moisture.

“Traditionally, grazing cattle in the late fall on harvested corn fields can be an option to extend the grazing season because cattle can eat the husks and leaves, which have a decent nutritional value,” Lancaster said. “However, this year farmers are baling up the corn stalks after they’ve harvested the crop, which leaves only the stalks that are lignified and indigestible.”

He said that when cattle are offered a corn stalk bale, they will consume the resource at a higher proportion of stalks than they would if they were just grazing the field.

“Producers feeding those bales will have quite a bit of wastage unless they grind them and add them to a mixed ration,” Lancaster said.

For producers who need to use this as a feed resource, Lancaster said they need to supplement the cattle with protein. He added: “For cows going into their third trimester this winter, their maintenance requirements are higher so along with protein they will also need to be supplemented with energy as well.”

Additionally, there is a potential health concern with bales that were made from a failed corn crop when fed to the cattle, Lancaster said.

“If nitrogen fertilizer was put on the crop in the spring and then it failed, the plant may still be holding that nitrogen,” Lancaster said.

In that case, producers will need to test the bales for nitrates, according to Lancaster.

The Cost of Money Source Dr. Andrew Griffith, Assistant Professor, Depart. of Ag and Resource Economics, University of Tennessee

The cost of borrowing money is becoming increasingly expensive in today’s environment. Many agricultural loan rates are between 7.5 percent and 8.5 percent, which is double what the rate was two years ago. The ratcheting up of rates has slowed tremendously, but that does not mean interest rates will not be increased in the coming years. There are many operations that are not in a financial situation to reduce borrowing needs. However, there are some operations that could use some capital on hand for operating money and reduce borrowed capital. The use of available cash could reduce costs tremendously given the current interest rate environment. This statement is not to insinuate using all cash on hand in place of borrowing money, but rather to use a portion of the available capital to replace some borrowing.

For those who do not have cash on hand to replace a percentage of borrowed capital, it would be advantageous to establish a goal of putting back some cash in the coming years for times such as this.

Planning for the Third Trimester **Sandy Johnson, KSRE Beef Specialist**

The third trimester of pregnancy is a crucial period because of the rapid growth the fetus undergoes and because it is our opportunity to improve cow body condition prior to calving if needed. It is easy to forget those things when we can’t see the growing fetus and a growing winter coat may be deceptive when it comes to body condition.

The table below is a simple reminder of when the 3rd trimester begins based on various dates for the start of the spring breeding season.

Start of Breeding	Start of 3rd Trimester	Start of Calving
May 1	Nov. 6	Feb. 8
May 15	Nov. 20	Feb. 22
June 1	Dec. 7	March 10
June 15	Dec. 21	March 24



Fetal growth is exponential during this time with blood flow increasing 3 to 4-fold from mid to late gestation. In the last 60 days, 75% of growth occurs, or 60 pounds of an 80-pound birth weight. The total weight of the pregnancy with fetus, fluids and membranes at calving is around 100-150 pounds total. This process never ceases to amaze me.

Early in pregnancy, the placenta, organs and limbs develop. Muscle fiber growth starts early as well, and the number of fibers is largely determined by the 7th month of pregnancy. The size of muscle fibers and formation of fat cells that produce marbling occur later in gestation and nutrient restriction at this time can reduce the size of muscle fibers and formation of fat cells that produce marbling. The impacts on muscle fiber size have been demonstrated in heavier calf birth weights (no change in calving difficulty), weaning weights, and carcass weights. Additional marbling is not as consistently evident across studies however by harvest time many additional factors may come into play.

As little as 1 pound of a 28% protein supplement per day during late gestation for cows grazing native range has been shown to be beneficial to calf weights and heifer performance. This level of restriction in the un-supplemented cows was not enough to reduce pregnancy rates compared to supplemented cows.

Feed costs are high this year, but strategic supplementation can pay off in calf weaning weight. Pay particular attention to first calf heifers that are growing themselves in addition to the fetus.

Evaluating Alternative Feedstuffs for Cattle **Justin Waggoner, KSRE Beef Systems Specialist, Garden City**

The term “alternative feedstuff” conjures images of a variety of post-production food products (i.e. bakery waste, potato products, candy remnants, brewery waste etc.) that can be fed to livestock. However, I would contend the term would also apply to a variety of specialty or vegetable crop residues (dry beans, chili peppers etc.). Alternative feedstuffs can provide economical sources of nutrients in cattle rations.

Many alternative feeds are postproduction waste products, so it is essential to understand a variety of factors.

- ***What exactly is in the product?***
- ***How is it produced?***
- ***Are there any artifacts of the production or cleaning process that would impact livestock or cattle?***

It is also important to understand how the product is handled, stored and how it will be delivered to the end-user. Many low or no cost alternative feedstuffs can be difficult to handle and store which may limit the potential use of a product as a feed commodity. Another consideration is the expected shelf-life of the product and the typical volume of the product received. In some situations, the products are close to or past their “best by” date for human consumption and may need to be fed quickly. Many waste product streams (cull vegetable produce waste, candy) also include product packaging material which may need to be removed prior to feeding. In some cases, packaging material may be fed but not fully digested and thus is present in manure, which can become unsightly in the facility or in crop fields.

If a specialty crop or vegetable residue is being evaluated, the type and application timing of any herbicides or any chemicals should also be considered. Many herbicides for specialty/vegetable crops do not consider grazing, haying or any livestock use on their labels. Evaluating the safety or potential risk associated with a specific chemical/herbicide can become challenging and thus seeking the advice of professionals with technical expertise in chemicals is advised.

Producers should request a chemical analysis of the feedstuff. The analysis should include the amount of moisture in the product (dry matter), crude protein, fiber (crude fiber, ADF: acid detergent fiber, NDF: neutral detergent fiber), starch, fat content and a mineral profile that includes both macro and microminerals preferably. Given that many of these products are by-products of a production process and not naturally-occurring they may contain disproportionate concentrations of nutrients or minerals that may potentially limit inclusion in rations. Obtaining a nutrient analysis, also facilitates the calculation of nutrient (crude protein, energy) cost per unit calculations (lb or ton, dry basis) and allows producers to accurately compare alternative feedstuffs with traditional protein or energy commodities.



FCW News

CHUCK LAUGHLIN
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
FAMILY & COMMUNITY WELLNESS



Teach & Taste – No Crust Pumpkin Pie

Hard to believe we are on the final recipe of 2023 and looking forward to the 2024 recipes. We will be making the December recipe on December 13, 2023 at 6:30pm at the Extension Office.

Please RSVP to ensure we have enough for everyone.

Use the link below to register and come join us and try out a new recipe.

This recipe is...

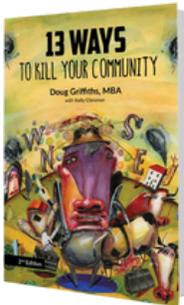
Gluten Free (option available)

Vegetarian (option available)

<https://tinyurl.com/TeachandTasteDecember>

13 Ways to Kill Your Community by Doug Griffiths coming to Canton

The new year will be bringing a pilot program for McPherson County to the city of Canton. We will be making available the book 13 Ways to Kill Your Community for a community-wide discussion titled Community Shelf Care. This pilot program will be done in partnership with the Canton Township Carnegie Library and will be evaluated for future rollouts.



Trail Talk Tuesday

Join K-State Research and Extension on December 12th from 12:00-1:00 pm for our third Trail Talk Tuesday webinar. Public trail enthusiasts in Kansas will get to hear the experts and network with each other to learn more about building and maintaining trails. The topic for December's call is "What Will This Cost?"

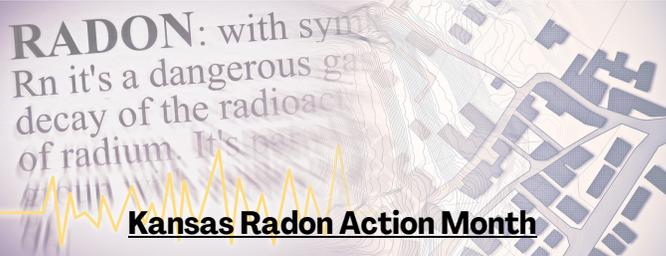
Register now at <https://ksre-learn.com/trail-talk>

Give the Gift of Food Mixes in a Jar Posted on November 15, 2023 by Karen Blakeslee

Sometimes a meal in a jar can make life easier! Giving the gift of food mixes in a jar can be budget friendly for the gift-giver and a time-saving blessing for the giftee!

North Dakota State University Extension has lots of ideas for any occasion. They can be added to gift baskets for a holiday auction. Recipes include a chili mix, cornbread mix, a cookie mix and a soup mix. The recipes for preparing the mixes are already in the publication, just cut and attach to the jar.

Another resource is from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. This publication includes soup mixes, muffin and cookie mixes, granola and more.



Kansas Radon Action Month

Many of you are aware that January is Kansas Radon Action Month (KRAM). I want to highlight resources and support available through the Kansas Radon Program <https://kansasradonprogram.org/>

TEACH & TASTE

December 13, 2023
6:30 PM
600 W. Woodside
McPherson, KS

MENU
No Crust Pumpkin Pie

FREE &
HANDS-ON
CLASS!

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/TEACHANDTASTEDECEMBER](https://tinyurl.com/TeachandTasteDecember)



Kansas Department for Children and Families Family Mobile Crisis Helpline

Services are available for all Kansans 20 years old or younger, including anyone in foster care or formerly in foster care.

Call, text, or chat with the helpline at

833-441-2240

A wealth of resources at your fingertips



Over the phone support and problem solving to help resolve a child's behavioral health crisis



Over the phone support with referral to community resources or a recommendation to engage in stabilization services



In-person support via mobile crisis response if the crisis cannot be resolved over the phone



In emergency situations, EMS, law enforcement and/or the mobile crisis response unit will be contacted to assist

Stay Strong Stay Healthy Returning to McPherson County in 2024

After a brief hiatus we will be bringing back the ever popular Stay Strong Stay Healthy class for 2024. Please use the link provided to indicate your date and time preferences and we will be scheduling classes based on the most popular time. Please note that the cost for participation in this program is \$20 per participant.

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/SSSH2024>

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

What is Stay Strong, Stay Healthy?
It is an evidence-based strength training program designed for older adults. The eight-week program includes 16 exercise classes that meet twice weekly for one hour.

Why strength training?
Strength training keeps your body and mind functioning at their best! Regularly completing strengthening exercises will help you build muscle and increase bone density, preventing frailty and osteoporosis.

What are the benefits of strength training?
Strength training:

- Increases muscle strength
- Improves balance
- Enhances flexibility
- Strengthens bones
- Relieves arthritis
- Helps control weight
- Lifts depression
- Reduces stress
- Reduces risks for heart disease

How does Stay Strong, Stay Healthy work?
The program's goal is to improve health and quality of life. Classes incorporate:

- Warm-up exercises
- Eight strengthening exercises, with or without hand and ankle weights
- Cool-down stretches

Over the course of the program, you will learn exercises to improve strength, balance and flexibility. After the eight weeks are over, you can continue the strength training program in the comfort of your home or with a group.





To schedule time with Chuck follow the link below or scan the QR code.

<https://calendly.com/claughlin-ksu/meeting-with-chuck>

County Connection E-News

To register to receive updates on upcoming events, calendar updates, webinars, senior and military discounts available, county resource phone numbers, as well as tips and tricks to make life easier.



<http://eeurl.com/iicSFn>



K-State Research & Extension
McPherson County
600 W. Woodside
McPherson, KS 67460

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AGENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Shad Marston
County Extension Agent
Agriculture & Natural Resources
smarston@ksu.edu
Radio Every Monday:
7:40 AM-96.7 KMPK
8:40 AM-98.9 KMCP
Ad Astra Radio Station

Shyanne Jones
County Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development
shyannejj@ksu.edu

Chuck Laughlin
County Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness
claughlin@ksu.edu