

# McPherson County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

June 2025

K-State Research & Extension, McPherson County  
Wheat Plot Tour, May 16, 2025



Photo Credit: Shad Marston, Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

## N/A, 4-H Youth Development, County Agent

### June 2025

6/1-Rabbit ID's DUE to Extension Office  
6/4- Farm Safety Day Camp  
6/12-4-H Council @ 7:00 PM  
6/15-State Nomination Deadline for Marker Swine, Market Sheep, Meat Goats and Commercial Heifers/Ewes/Gilts

**Have project news or reports of fun 4-H happenings? Please email [Lhelm@ksu.edu](mailto:Lhelm@ksu.edu) or bring in any articles to Lauralee at the Extension Office by June 23rd to get them into the Newsletter.**

### McPherson County Fair in Canton

July 16-19, 2025

The McPherson County Fair is held in Canton each year prior to the 4-H Fair. There are 4-H and Open Class Divisions that are a great way to get projects finished and out before the 4-H Fair. You may even get some great feedback to help with your item at the 4-H Fair!

Check out all the Fair has to offer, July 16-19.



### McPherson County 4-H Fair in McPherson

July 25-28, 2025

4-H Fair Books will be available in print and online in the coming weeks! Save the dates of July 25-28 for fair activities.

There will also be a fairgrounds set-up and grab and go meal on July 22 and fairgrounds cleanup and pizza lunch/swimming party on July 29.

### Family of the Year Nominations

Each year every club has the opportunity to nominate a family for the "Family of the Year" award. We have lots of deserving families that volunteer a lot of time and energy to the McPherson County 4-H program and to their club. So it is time to recognize those efforts. So at your next club meeting consider which family you would like to nominate for this award. Awards nominations for clubs are due on August 3 to the Extension Office. At the August Meeting of 4-H Council, we will announce the nominations and then council members will take it back to their clubs for a vote before voting as a 4-H Council. So get your nominations ready, nomination forms are available at [www.mcpherson.ksu.edu/4-h/awards-recognition/additional-awards](http://www.mcpherson.ksu.edu/4-h/awards-recognition/additional-awards)

Remember there are other awards nominations as well later in the fall as we get ready for Achievement Banquet.

### Reminder...

State Livestock Nominations are due on June 15th for Sheep, Meat Goats, Swine, and Commercial Heifers.

Members that are wanting to show animals for the KJLS or State Fair have their online information as well as DNA hair samples mailed off by June 15.

**(Market Beef were due May 1)**

\*Remember this process has changed and families are required to pre-purchase the DNA envelopes from the State Office.

### YQCALAST CHANCE:

Youth Livestock Quality Assurance – REQUIRED

This training will be required yearly for all Beef, Sheep, Swine and Goat exhibitors prior to the 4 -H Fair.

An in person training will be held Tuesday, July 22 (\$3.00 cost) starting at 4:00 PM. You must register online BEFORE coming to class.

You can also do this online for a cost of \$12.00.

Visit: [YQCAprogram.org](http://YQCAprogram.org)



## **Livestock News**

### **Avoid a Winter Hangover This Breeding Season by Shad Marston**

Winter can be long and difficult for livestock producers. The cold and wet weather increase energy demands on cattle and calves.

Cows could be thinner than normal after calving and winter conditions could have negatively influenced bull fertility as well. Hopefully, weather will support good forage growth this June but that remains an unknown for now with the lack of moisture in most areas of the county. Monitoring breeding activity and use of timely pregnancy detection are risk management tools that should be used routinely but are especially important given the recent weather challenges. How soon cows resume normal estrus cycles this breeding season will depend on their body condition at calving, any calving difficulty, age, and their access to enough energy in their diet to exceed peak lactation requirements, resulting in a positive energy balance. Green grass can do wonders for thin cows but there has to be enough growth (quantity) to get the benefit. Young and very thin cows still may have extended postpartum intervals to rebreeding. If all cows in a group are cycling, there should be roughly 5% in heat per day. While cows are still shedding winter coats, noting the number of rubbed or hairless tail heads can give you a good indication of how many have resumed cycling.

Heat detection aids (i.e. self-adhesive patches) used for AI programs could be considered for more accurate assessment. Non-cycling cows that are close to resuming normal cycles can be induced to cycle with a CIDR insert (contains progesterone) or 48-hour calf removal. These tools can both be used with natural service. In one study, CIDR-treated cows conceived earlier than control cows, but overall pregnancy rates were not increased. The breeding season began relatively early (fewer days since calving) early in this study by design, and cows were in good body condition. Regardless of method, these efforts require time and handling. As you evaluate these options, consider that getting one cow to conceive one week earlier is worth about \$56 per week in the value of her calf next year (7 days x 2 lbs./day x \$4.00/cwt). It may be possible to target this type of approach to subgroups of cows with greatest need. Bulls should be in a body condition of five at the start of the breeding season and have had a breeding soundness exam each year prior to turn out. This year in particular it will be important to ensure there was no frostbite damage to the scrotum from these year's February low temperatures.

Once the breeding season begins, monitor breeding activity to ensure bulls remain healthy and that bull's work is decreasing during the season. Spend some time observing heat once or twice a week, early in the morning or later in the evening to confirm works well. Remember that an injured dominant bull can prevent fertile bulls from mating. If cows are thin and the risk of poor reproductive response is high, leaving bulls out for a longer breeding season may increase pregnancy rate. Combine this with pregnancy diagnosis less than 120 days after bull turnout so pregnancies can be accurately staged and this information can be used to do further planning. The earlier this information is available, the more time for study of the best economic approach if pregnancy rates are abnormally low or shifted to late in the season. If you leave bulls out until the early pregnancy check, that information can be used to decide if bull exposure should continue or not.

Granted, some cows will need to be rechecked because short-term pregnancies can't be differentiated from opens. Determination of stage of pregnancy is much more accurate on pregnancies of 100 to 120 days or less. Avoid letting a long breeding period become a long calving period. An extended calving period results in greater expense of over and under feeding cows unless cows can be sorted and fed by stage of gestation. Strive to market those cows that do not conceive soon as the prices for these cows is at an all-time high. A long calving period with a number of late calving cows depresses weaning weight and often lowers pregnancy rate over time, robbing profit from the enterprise. The weather presented a number of challenges this past winter that could easily have carry over effects to the breeding season. Individual circumstances will affect the best management options to cope with less than ideal breeding conditions. Contact me to discuss specific options to fit your operation and goals.



Photo Source: Shad Marston



## June is key time for controlling brush in Kansas pasture by Shad Marston

A Kansas State University range management specialist says the state's landowners are approaching a key window of opportunity for controlling three woody brush species that are prevalent in the state's pastures.

Walt Fick said the species commonly found in the Kansas Flint Hills and parts to the west are buckbrush, roughleaf dogwood and smooth sumac. He said that if left unchecked, each of those is known to be highly competitive with grassland.

Those three species can be controlled, but the methods for doing so vary. Prescribed burning can help to a point, but timing is quite important when we're using fire. These woody plants have to be leafed out if we're going to cause much damage. Of the three, buckbrush is the easiest to control with fire, because it's the first to leaf out – typically in late April or early May. It is more common to knock those shrubs back with herbicides on all three of these species in June.

K-State's most updated recommendations for using herbicides to manage pastures are available in the 2025 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pasture, Rangeland and Noncropland.

It takes planning to get the right herbicides for the particular species that is in a field. For example, the common herbicide 2,4-D is available in many products and can be very effective against buckbrush. K-State research, though, has shown that other herbicides may work just as well, and in fact, mixing 2,4-D with other products is sometimes the most effective way to get long-term control.

Roughleaf dogwood can be the most difficult to control of the three, so K-State's trials serve as a good guide for pasture managers. One of the better products KSRE has found (to control roughleaf dogwood) is PastureGuard HL. A more effective approach to control roughleaf dogwood is using Surmount or 2,4-D plus the herbicides picloram and triclopyr. K-State's publication also includes guidelines for using ground pellets and other management strategies.



Photo Source: Canva

## Gardening News

### Now's the time to fertilize warm-season grasses in Kansas

It's crunch time for homeowners and others who manage warm-season grasses in Kansas. Turfgrasses should be fertilized when it's actively growing, and for warm-season grasses, that time is now. Late spring and early summer fertilizer applications are ideal for bermudagrass, buffalograss and zoysiagrass.

Fertilizing too early, does not help warm-season grasses, but rather encourages cool season weeds to grow. Fertilizing too late in the season can increase the turfgrass' vulnerability to winter damage and should be avoided after Aug.15.

Below are recommendations for fertilizing the three most common warm-season varieties:

- **Bermudagrass** – Apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet every four weeks.
- **Zoysiagrass** – Apply three-fourths pound of nitrogen in two applications: one in June and one in mid-July.
- **Buffalograss** – Nitrogen is not needed for its survival, but applying a nitrogen fertilizer will improve the color and density of the lawn. Apply one pound of nitrogen sometime between mid-May and early June. If a darker green is desired, follow the same fertilizer recommendations as zoysiagrass.

### Moving Houseplants Outside for the Summer

It is often helpful to set many houseplants outside for the summer so they can recover from the low light levels endured during the winter months. As soon as night temperatures stay consistently above 55 degrees F, houseplants can be moved to their summer home.

Choose a spot that has dappled shade, is protected from the wind, and is close to water. A porch or a spot that receives shade from trees or buildings will work well. Putting houseplants in full sun will cause the leaves to photooxidize or sunburn because the leaves have become adapted to low light levels inside the house. Where possible, sink the pots into the ground to help moderate root temperatures and reduce watering frequency. If you have a number of plants, dig a trench 6 to 8 inches deep (or deeper if you have larger pots) and long enough to accommodate all of your plants without crowding. Place peat moss under and around the pots.

Peat moss holds water, helps keep the pots cool, and reduces evaporation from clay pots. About every two weeks, rotate the pots a quarter turn to break off any roots that have penetrated the peat moss surrounding the pot and to equalize the light received on all sides of the pot. Only water as needed. If the potting soil is dry a half inch deep in the pot, it is time to water.

## Mulching Garden Crops

June is a good time to mulch garden vegetables if you haven't done so already. Mulches provide several benefits including weed prevention, reduced watering due to less evaporation, and cooler soils that enhance root growth. Straw and hay are popular mulches in Kansas and both easy to find.

However, both may contain weed seeds that will germinate if the thatch layer is not thick enough. Grass clippings can also be used if the lawn has not been treated with weed killers. Add only a thin layer of clippings at a time and allow to dry for 2 to 3 days before adding more. A thick layer will form a mold that is almost impervious to water. A mulch layer one-half to three-quarters inch thick is about right for grass clippings, but hay or straw should be at a depth of 2 to 4 inches.

## How Much to Water a Lawn

Homeowners usually want to know how much and how long to leave the sprinklers on. There are too many variables to give a solid answer. You will need to do some experimentation to determine what is needed for your lawn. The key is to make sure water reaches about 8 inches deep. This can be checked with a wooden dowel or a metal rod (rebar or electric fence post). Pushing it into the soil will tell you how deeply water has reached as it will stop when it hits dry soil. Start by watering for 15 minutes and check the depth of watering. If the soil is only moist 4 inches deep, then you will need to water another 15 minutes. Check again after the second watering to be sure moisture reaches your desired depth.

Watch for runoff. If you see any before the soil is wet to the desired depth, you may have to water each area twice with some time in between to allow the water to soak in. If there is still runoff before water reaches the desired depth, more watering's per week may be needed to make up for the shallow depth the water is reaching. On such lawns, core aeration during September would be highly recommended to help increase the rate at which the soil absorbs water. That brings up how often should we water. During most of the growing season, once per week will be adequate. However, during extreme heat or on heavy soils where runoff occurs quickly, twice a week may be needed.

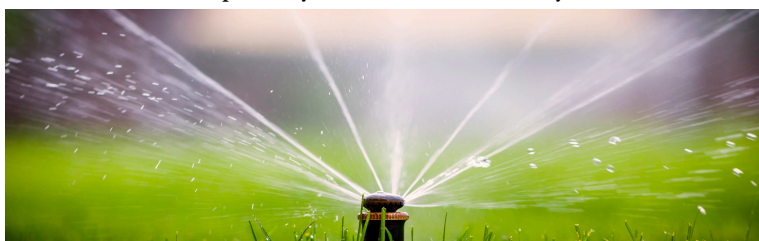


Photo Source: Canva

Photo Source: Canva



## Bagworms

State forestry and horticulture experts are urging patience and persistence when trying to manage bagworms, noting that caterpillars may emerge from eggs from late spring through early summer, depending on weather conditions. Once bagworms are detected, homeowners might need to treat with an insecticide weekly for up to four weeks. In addition to emergence over time, young bagworms can 'blow in' - called 'ballooning' - from neighboring plants on silken threads, thus increasing the importance of treating multiple times during the growing season.

Once the caterpillars emerge from eggs, they begin feeding on the host tree or shrub, creating a protective bag, hence the common name. The plant material fed upon is used to build a protective covering that provides protection from predators and insecticide treatments, which can influence the effectiveness of insecticide applications. The larger and more robust the caterpillars and their cases become, the more difficult they are to control chemically. Treating the smaller bagworms now increased effectiveness and prevents bagworms from causing substantial plant damage to our windbreaks, Christmas trees, and ornamental landscape trees.

Bagworm feeding is commonly associated with such conifers as juniper, arborvitae, pine, and spruce, but the caterpillars also feed on numerous deciduous host plants. Although defoliation of deciduous trees and shrubs typically does not result in long-term plant damage, extreme defoliation of conifers can cause significant plant stress and even plant mortality. Thorough coverage is important when treating for bagworms, including penetration into the interior plant canopy and upper branches. Commercial treatments may be more effective for large trees or established windbreaks where applications from common household sprayers cannot reach the upper canopy of trees. Many insecticides are labeled for bagworms, but timing of application and thorough coverage will ensure the effectiveness of insecticides in managing bagworms. Hand removing and destroying bagworm bags is an option for smaller infestations.





## Hydration: The Simple Summer Habit That Makes a Big Difference

As summer settles in across Kansas, many of us are spending more time outdoors—working in the garden, playing sports, attending fairs, or simply enjoying the sunshine. With this increase in outdoor activity comes a heightened need for hydration, a health essential that's often overlooked until it's too late.

Water makes up roughly 60% of our body weight and plays a key role in virtually every bodily function: regulating temperature, transporting nutrients, supporting joint health, and flushing out toxins. Even mild dehydration—losing just 1-2% of body weight in water—can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, irritability, and trouble concentrating. That's especially true for children, older adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

### How much water do we need?

The common guideline is 8–10 cups of fluid per day, but actual needs vary by age, activity level, and environment. During hot weather or when you're physically active, your fluid needs can double. For children, aim for 6–8 cups daily, with extra after play or sports. Older adults may need reminders to drink, as the sensation of thirst can dull with age (try setting a reminder alarm on your phone to remind you to drink a glass of water throughout the day).

### Beverage choices matter:

Not all fluids hydrate equally. While coffee, tea, and milk contribute to hydration, sugary sodas, energy drinks, and alcoholic beverages can have dehydrating effects. For children, limit juice to 4 ounces per day and avoid sports drinks unless they're recovering from prolonged physical activity.

### Involving Kids and Families:

Make hydration fun and consistent by setting goals as a family. Try a "Water Challenge" — track how many glasses you drink using a sticker chart or set timers to remind kids to take a drink. Encourage water breaks during sports, outdoor play, and before meals.

In a season filled with sunshine, activity, and busy schedules, don't let hydration fall to the bottom of your list. By making it a daily habit, you support energy, focus, and safety for the whole family—all summer long.

### Hydration Tips for Everyday Life:

- Start your day with water. A glass of water when you wake up kickstarts your metabolism and helps replace fluids lost overnight.
- Keep a bottle with you. Invest in a reusable water bottle that you enjoy using. If it's within arm's reach, you're more likely to sip regularly.
- Infuse with flavor. If plain water feels boring, try adding lemon slices, cucumber, berries, or mint for a natural, refreshing twist.
- Use hydration cues. Tie water breaks to regular activities—every time you check email, water your plants, or take a phone call.
- Monitor your output. A good indicator of hydration is your urine color—it should be pale yellow. Darker urine signals dehydration.

### Heat Safety and Hydration:

During extreme heat, water becomes a safety tool. The risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke rises when you're not properly hydrated. Make a hydration plan for days when you'll be outdoors: bring enough water, take breaks in the shade, and avoid peak sun hours when possible (typically 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).



Photo Source: Canva

## Youth Making a Difference: Community Projects for Summer

Summer offers a break from traditional school routines and opens the door for learning that's rooted in real-life experiences. One of the most valuable ways youth can spend their summer is through community service projects that build leadership, compassion, and civic engagement skills.

## Youth Making a Difference: Community Projects for Summer (cont'd)

In McPherson County and beyond, youth are natural problem-solvers and creators. When given the opportunity and a bit of guidance, they can make lasting contributions to their neighborhoods, towns, and local organizations.

### Why Community Engagement Matters for Youth

Research shows that youth who are actively engaged in service are more likely to:

- Develop stronger leadership and teamwork skills
- Increase their sense of purpose and self-worth
- Feel more connected to their community
- Continue serving as adults

This engagement also helps them build real-world experience, boost resumes and scholarship applications, and even discover career interests.

### Ideas for Youth-Led Summer Projects

There's no need for a big budget or complex logistics to make a difference. Consider these youth-friendly project ideas:

- Neighborhood Clean-up Day: Organize a trash pick-up in a park or schoolyard. Provide gloves, trash bags, and a prize for "most unusual find."
- Kindness Rock Garden: Paint positive messages on stones and place them around a park or trail.
- Little Free Library or Pantry: Repurpose a small bookshelf or cabinet and keep it stocked with books or nonperishable foods.
- Adopt-a-Grandparent Program: Pair teens with older adults in the community for phone calls, letters, or porch visits.
- Host a Kids Carnival: Organize simple games and activities in partnership with a local library or church.

## Screen Time vs. Green Time: Finding Balance This Summer

As digital devices become more integrated into daily life, the challenge for families isn't avoiding screens entirely—it's finding balance. With summer break here, it's especially important to set boundaries to protect mental and physical health while still embracing the fun and educational aspects of technology.

### Why Screen Time Needs Boundaries

#### Too much screen time can:

- Disrupt sleep cycles
- Lead to eye strain and headaches
- Decrease attention spans
- Contribute to sedentary habits and weight gain
- Increase anxiety and social withdrawal in some youth



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day for school-aged children.

### When Screens Are Helpful

Technology isn't the enemy. It connects us, supports learning, and entertains. Just make sure it's being used mindfully and doesn't replace real-world exploration.

## Supporting Youth as Project Leaders

While adult support is valuable, the magic of youth engagement happens when young people take the lead. Ask them:

- "What problems do you see in our community?"
- "What's one thing you'd like to change or improve?"
- "How could you use your skills or interests to help others?"

Provide encouragement, structure, and resources—but let youth voices guide the process.

### Extension Resources

McPherson County Extension has a Summer Youth Activity Challenge available in the foyer, come by and your free copy.

Empowering youth to lead and serve this summer plants the seeds for lifelong community stewardship.



Photo Source: Lauralee Myers, KSRE McPherson County, 4-H Mini Camps

## Green Time: Nature's Antidote

### In contrast, spending time in nature:

- Improves mood and reduces stress
- Boosts creativity and problem-solving
- Promotes physical activity
- Enhances attention and memory

### Simple Strategies for Families

- The "1:1 Ratio": For every hour of screen time, aim for at least 30–60 minutes outside. Gardening, bike rides, or even sidewalk chalk count!
- Tech-Free Zones: Establish screen-free times (like meals or family walks) and places (like the dinner table or bedrooms).
- Build a Summer Rhythm: Alternate between screen-based activities (games, movies) and hands-on experiences (cooking, crafting, exploring).
- Plan Green Adventures: Visit local parks, go on a scavenger hunt, or have a picnic at the lake.





Photo Source: Canva

## Mental Clutter = Physical Exhaustion: How to Clear Your Mind and Reclaim Energy

Do you ever feel completely wiped out—yet you haven't done anything particularly physical? That's mental fatigue at work. In our always-on world, we're flooded with information, decisions, distractions, and responsibilities. Over time, this mental clutter leads to real exhaustion, making us feel unfocused, overwhelmed, and short-tempered.

### What Is Mental Clutter?

- Constant to-do lists running in your head
- Worrying about things you can't control
- Multitasking without breaks
- Decision fatigue from endless small choices (what to wear, eat, do)
- Digital overload from news, texts, and social media

These brain “tabs” left open all day drain your mental energy—just like apps on a phone battery.

### How to Clear Mental Clutter:

Here are practical strategies to declutter your mind and reclaim energy:

#### 1. Brain Dump

Take 5 minutes to write down everything on your mind—chores, appointments, worries, goals, and reminders. This simple act helps clear your working memory. After dumping the list, you can sort it into “Do Now,” “Later,” and “Let Go” categories.

#### 2. Daily Reset Ritual

Create a small routine to close out each day:

- Review your schedule for tomorrow
- Write down your top 3 tasks
- Tidy up your workspace or kitchen
- Take 3 deep breaths and reflect on one win from the day

This helps reduce racing thoughts at bedtime and improves sleep.

Small shifts in your daily routine can make a big difference in how you feel. Reclaim your energy this summer by clearing out the noise and tuning back in to what matters most.

## Stretch Your Food Dollars While Eating Healthy This Summer

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy fresh, vibrant foods, spend more time in the kitchen as a family, and make the most of longer daylight hours. It's also a great time to revisit how we shop, cook, and eat—especially when it comes to balancing nutrition with budget-conscious choices. With some thoughtful planning and a few creative ideas, you can stretch your food dollars and still eat well all summer long.

### Symptoms of Mental Fatigue:

- Trouble concentrating
- Short temper or irritability
- Feeling “foggy”
- Poor sleep
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of motivation

It can be easy to mistake these signs for laziness or burnout when the real culprit is unmanaged mental load.

### 3. Set Boundaries with Information

Not every notification or article needs your attention. Consider:

- Turning off news alerts
- Checking email at set times instead of constantly
- Putting your phone on “Do Not Disturb” during meals or evenings

Less input = less clutter.

### 4. Prioritize What Matters Most

Not everything is urgent. Focus on the essential few tasks that support your values and goals. Say “yes” to what aligns, and practice saying “no” to the rest.

### 5. Incorporate Mindfulness Moments

You don't need a full meditation routine to find peace.

Try:

- A 2-minute breathing break in a quiet space
- A walk without your phone

Doing one task at a time—slowly and fully

These micro-moments of calm help “reset” the brain.

## Start With What You Already Have: Shop Your Pantry First

One of the simplest ways to save money and reduce food waste is to build your meals around what's already in your kitchen. Before heading to the store or farmers market, take a few minutes to “shop your pantry” and see what ingredients you already have.

Do you have cans of beans or vegetables hiding in the back? Dry pasta, rice, or oats waiting to be used? A few lingering freezer items you forgot were there? These ingredients can serve as the building blocks for many summer meals.

## Stretch Your Food Dollars While Eating Healthy This Summer(cont'd)

### For example:

- Combine canned black beans with leftover corn and chopped tomatoes for a summer salsa.
- Toss pasta with roasted or grilled vegetables and a drizzle of olive oil for a cool pasta salad.
- Use oats to make no-bake energy bites flavored with peanut butter and honey—perfect for a grab-and-go summer snack.

### **Use Summer's Bounty to Your Advantage**

Seasonal fruits and vegetables are not only at their freshest in summer—they're often more affordable and widely available. Whether you're buying at the grocery store, a local farmers market, or growing your own, summer produce can bring color, flavor, and nutrition to your meals.

### Look for:

- Zucchini and squash: These are versatile and can be sautéed, grilled, spiralized into noodles, or baked into muffins.
- Tomatoes: Use them in sandwiches, salads, sauces, or even roasted as a side dish.
- Cucumbers and peppers: Great raw in salads or for snacking.
- Berries, peaches, and melons: Perfect for breakfast, snacks, or dessert.

When you find a great deal on produce, buy extra and freeze it for smoothies, soups, or sauces later.

### **Give Your Favorite Comfort Foods a Healthy Summer Twist**

Comfort food doesn't have to be heavy or unhealthy, and it can definitely be budget-friendly. With a few smart substitutions, you can enjoy your favorite dishes while keeping things light and nutritious during the warmer months.

### Here are a few summer-style comfort food makeovers:

- Grilled Veggie Quesadillas
  - Use leftover vegetables like bell peppers, onions, and zucchini. Combine with a bit of cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla. Serve with salsa and a dollop of plain Greek yogurt instead of sour cream.
- Cool Pasta Salad
  - Mix cooked whole grain pasta with chopped seasonal veggies and a simple dressing made from oil, vinegar, and mustard. Add beans or leftover chicken for protein.
- Fruit-Infused Water & Smoothies
  - Skip sugary drinks and make your own refreshing beverages using cucumber slices, lemon, mint, or frozen berries. Blend fruit with yogurt or milk for a satisfying snack or breakfast.
- Homemade Frozen Treats
  - Blend bananas, strawberries, or mangos and freeze in molds for a healthy popsicle alternative.

### **Make Simple, Smart Substitutions**

You don't need fancy ingredients to eat healthy. Just swap what you can with what you have.

### Try these ideas:

- Swap mayo for plain yogurt in salads and dips.
- Use beans or lentils to stretch ground beef in tacos or burgers.
- Replace white bread with whole grain options for more fiber.
- Try roasted veggies instead of chips as a side or snack.
- Freeze leftover fruit for use in smoothies or homemade slushies.

## Plan and Prep Ahead

Meal planning can save you time, money, and decision fatigue—especially in the summer when activities fill your calendar. Start with a few easy steps:

1. Pick 3–5 meals based on what you already have or what's in season.
2. Cook once, eat twice: Make larger portions of pasta salads, soups, or grilled meats to enjoy later in the week.
3. Prep snack bins with fruits, veggies, cheese sticks, and crackers so kids can help themselves between meals.

Summer is also a great time to involve the whole family in meal prep. Kids can help wash fruits, snap green beans, stir batter, or pick herbs from the garden.

### **Make the Most of Every Meal**

Eating well this summer doesn't mean spending more. It means making the most of the ingredients you already have, using seasonal produce to your advantage, and being creative with substitutions. Whether it's building meals from pantry staples or transforming traditional comfort foods into something fresh and healthy, you can stretch your food dollars without sacrificing flavor, fun, or nutrition.



### **Stay Connected with Community Events & Resources!**

Sign up for our newsletter to stay informed about upcoming events, calendar updates, and exciting webinars happening in your area. See a selection of upcoming grants, discover senior and military discounts, access important county resource phone numbers, and never miss out on local happenings. If you don't see your event listed, use the link provided to add it to the county-wide calendar. Stay engaged and connected—subscribe today!

Add events by visiting:

<https://tinyurl.com/MCAddEvent>



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

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



County Connection Sign-Up

<http://eepurl.com/iicSFn>



Upcoming Events



Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 12:00-1:00 PM

Discover the beauty and resilience of heat-loving perennials that thrive in Kansas' climate. Join Jason Graves, Central Kansas Extension District Horticulture Agent, for tips on selecting and caring for low-maintenance, drought-tolerant plants that add color and texture to your landscape. This session will provide practical advice for creating a thriving garden in even the harshest of Kansas environments.

<https://bnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>



Friday, June 6, 2025, 9:30-10:30AM

Webinar: Presenter: Jessica Gnad, Director, K-State 105 shows the All Things Kansas Database. <https://allthingskansas.k-state.edu/>. The purpose of the First Friday e-Call is to increase the local community's knowledge of the experts, education, and economic resources available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs and to share innovations in community development. This call is open to the public; please forward the information to anyone who might benefit.

### Teach & Taste

MINI CHICKEN POT PIE MUFFINS

Did you know? AROUND 500 BC THE ANCIENT GREEKS MADE MEAT PIES CALLED ARTOCREAS. THESE PIES HAD A BOTTOM CRUST BUT NO TOP CRUST. ONCE THE ROMANS STARTED MAKING ARTOCREAS THEY ADDED A TOP CRUST MADE FROM OIL AND FLOUR. THEIR PIES WERE MADE FROM THINGS LIKE FISH, MUSSELS, OYSTERS, LAMPREYS, AND A VARIETY OF MEATS.

June 11, 2025  
6:30 PM  
McPherson County  
Extension Office  
600 West Woodside  
McPherson, KS 67460

**Class is ALWAYS Free and Hands-On!**

Register by scanning the QR code or visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/MiniPotPieMuffins>

**K-STATE** Research and Extension  
McPherson County

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Age Wise Nutrition

Age Wise Nutrition is a class tailored for seniors, focusing on a variety of topics to support them in living their healthiest and happiest lives.

**K-STATE** Research and Extension  
This extension is an equal opportunity provider.

Malnutrition & Oral Health: How Do They Connect?

**MONDAY, JUNE 16TH**  
**9:30 AM**  
**MCPHERSON COUNTY SENIOR CENTER**  
**112 E EUCLID ST. MCPHERSON, KS 67460**

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact, Chuck Laughlin, four weeks prior to the start of the event by emailing [claughlin@ksu.edu](mailto:claughlin@ksu.edu) or by calling 620-241-1523. Request made after the deadline will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

Kansas State University Agriculture Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service  
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Food Preservation Class

Are you interested in food preservation? Do you need to brush up on current food preservation methods? Come join us for hands-on workshops to learn about pressure canning, waterbath canning, dehydration and freezing your food harvest!

**PRESENTED BY**  
**KAREN BLAKESLEE, M.S. RAPID RESPONSE CENTER COORDINATOR**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2025**  
**9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM**  
**MCPHERSON FIRST METHODIST CHURCH**  
**1200 E KANSAS AVE, MCPHERSON, KS 67460**

**Cost: \$35 per person**  
**Lunch will be provided on-site.**  
**Space is limited to 20 participants, you must REGISTER AND PAY by June 10, 2025. Those who have not paid by June 10, 2025 will have their space relinquished.**

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**SCAN**

<https://tinyurl.com/Preservation2025>

**K-STATE** Research and Extension

Grab a buddy and join us for a week long cooking camp!

### TASTE BUDDIES

Kids Cooking Camp

We will learn easy, kid-friendly recipes and kitchen knowledge!

**June 23-27, 2025**  
**McPherson County Extension Office**  
**600 West Woodside**  
**McPherson, KS 67460**

**Ages: 10-14**

**2 Class Times Available:**

- Morning: 9:30 am-10:45 am
- Afternoon: 1:30 PM-2:45 pm

<https://tinyurl.com/TasteBuddies25>

**SCAN ME!**

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**K-STATE** Research and Extension

# WEBINAR

**SECOND**

**First Friday e-Call**

Resources for small businesses and the towns that love them

July 11, 2025 at 9:30 AM-10:30 AM

Creating Welcoming Communities:  
Did you know 1 out of 7 Kansans move each year? How do we make them feel welcome and part of the community? Do the other six Kansans feel included in the fun? We'll hear new ideas from Simone Elder, Monique Mercurio, Rebecca Herrera, and Luisana Chaida.

# What Does Digestive Health Really Mean?

Gut Health is a popular term used by consumers, the food industry, and practitioners, but what does it mean?

Five major criteria have been identified to define gut health from a healthcare perspective:

- Effective digestion and absorption of food
- Absence of gastrointestinal (GI) illness
- Normal composition and vitality of the gut microbiome
- Effective immune status
- Status of well-being.

Gut discomfort encompasses a range of symptoms that can significantly affect overall well-being. Some of these symptoms include:

- Bloating
- Flatulence
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Borborygmi (rumbling sounds)

Photo Source: Canva



Common disorders linked to these symptoms are lactose intolerance and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Dietary modifications often play a crucial role in alleviating or managing these conditions. While food intolerances are not life-threatening, they can drastically alter one's quality of life. The pain or discomfort associated with gut issues can make it challenging for individuals to concentrate on daily tasks. Moreover, having to avoid certain foods due to intolerances can lead to ongoing frustration.

Gut microbiome refers to the microorganisms (microbiota) living in our intestines. Gut microbiota also play a role in gut health and management of several GI disorders. The composition of the gut microbiome is affected by dietary intake and can be changed by dietary carbohydrate, prebiotics, and probiotics. Within our gut microbiome, there are types of bacteria that are helpful for our health. These bacteria have several beneficial functions:

- Assist in the fermentation of fiber; these microbes can often digest the carbohydrates that our bodies can't digest, like fiber, and use them as an energy source. This creates by-products like fatty acids that our bodies can use.
- Produce vitamins (biotin and vitamin K)
- Play a significant role in immunity

However, there are also bacteria which can live in our gut that can be harmful. One goal of digestive health is to increase the population of 'helpful' bacteria in our gut and reduce the population of 'harmful' bacteria. Evidence shows that a person's diet influences the gut microbiome and has the potential to alter the management of diseases and conditions in which gut microbiome may have a significant role, such as obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and bowel disorders. Most recently, a gut microbiome-brain connection has been identified, meaning the different populations of bacteria in our gut can even impact how our brains work.

Foods that help create and nourish a healthy gut microbiome include prebiotics (fibers that bacteria use for energy, e.g. garlic, onions, bananas, inulin), fermentable fibers (e.g. beans, legumes, fruits, and vegetables), and fermented foods or probiotics (foods containing bacteria that survive the digestive process and take residence in our gut, e.g. yogurt, kefir, kimchi).



Photo Source: Canva

The important role of diet in digestive health is undeniable. Encouraging a diet rich in prebiotics, fermentable fibers, and probiotics is important for overall gut health. Creating foods that help people manage their digestive health, such as low-FODMAP foods or low-lactose dairy products, or including pre- or probiotics in products will become more important as more consumers become aware of digestive health. In our next blog on digestive health, we'll take a deeper dive into the consumer market and future opportunities in this space.







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](mailto:smarston@ksu.edu)

Radio Every Monday:  
7:40 AM-96.7 FM KMPK  
7:40 AM-98.9 FM KMCP  
7:40 AM-95.5 FM KLBG  
Ad Astra Radio Station

Chuck Laughlin  
County Extension Agent  
Family & Community Wellness  
[claughlin@ksu.edu](mailto:claughlin@ksu.edu)