

# AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

### SHAD MARSTON COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### In March Comes Spring Planning!

It feels like spring! But the calendar hasn't quite caught up to that season yet. Soon, local gardeners will be digging in their garden plots to plant early spring produce. Spring greens, such as spinach, are popular. During the month of March, we can also plant potatoes, peas, onions lettuce and other salad crops. Remember to start with a small garden or raised bed, as a larger garden area takes more time than our busy schedules allow. One of the most important things we can do at the beginning of any growing season is take a soil test of our garden area, particularly if the soil hasn't been tested in several years. Most of us have seen the commercial on TV that states "it's just a guess, unless you test."

Most gardeners think soil testing only determines nutrient deficiencies, but the tests also help gardeners understand whether the soil contains adequate nutrients. Basic tests check the soil's pH, and the phosphorus and potassium levels. Most of the lawn and garden soil tests that come out of the K-State soil-testing lab show more than adequate levels of both phosphorus and potassium. If those nutrients are not needed, applying them is a waste of money and can be a source of pollution.

Take a sample from multiple locations in the garden and lawn. Samples should be taken at a depth between the surface and eight inches, depending on the area being sampled with a spade or soil probe. Next, mix the samples together in a bucket to total one pint of soil. Bring that sample to the Extension Office to have tests done at the K-State Soil-Testing

Laboratory for a fee. A soil test determines where your soil is at and if any fertility problems come to light. Other conditions that may exist, such as poor drainage, poor soil structure, soil borne diseases or insects, chemical contaminants or damage which may reduce plant performance but cannot be evaluated by a soil test. Soil tests should be used as a tool to identify nutrient deficiencies, but often they do not tell the whole story of other factors affecting plant growth.

Try something new this year and support pollinators in your garden. Pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of flowering plants and one third of human food crops. Here in McPherson county, we depend on these industrious pollinators in a practical way to provide us with the wide range of foods we eat. In addition, pollinators are part of the intricate web that supports the biological diversity in natural ecosystems that helps sustain our quality of life. Abundant and healthy populations of pollinators can improve fruit set and quality, and increase fruit size. In farming situations this increases production per acre. In the wild, biodiversity increases and wildlife food sources increase for all types of species. Factors that can affect plant growth that are not due to nutrient deficiencies or pH include:

- Not enough sun
- Poor soil physical characteristics

• Walnut trees (walnuts give off a natural herbicide that interferes with the growth of some plants, such as tomatoes).

- Tree roots.
- Shallow soils.
- Improper watering.
- Overwatering.

Unfortunately, the numbers of both native pollinators and domesticated bee populations are declining. It is imperative that we take immediate steps to help pollinator populations thrive, by adding plants to our landscape that provide food and shelter for pollinators, throughout their active seasons. By adopting pollinator friendly landscape practices, you can make a difference to both the pollinators and the people that rely on them. Do you want to learn about pollinators or beekeeping? The Kansas Honey Producers are hosting a two-day conference to learn about pollinators, beekeeping, handling honey and more. This conference is being held in Salina, KS on March 8-9, 2024.

https://www.kansashoneyproducers.org/

### K-State Research and Extension Annual Cow-Calf School

After reflecting on our 160 plus in attendance for annual McPherson Cow-Calf School and KC Strip Steak Supper, I would like to send a Shout Out to all that made our program such a great success.

First, to the McPherson County Extension Office staff, Lauralee Myers, Terra Regehr and 4-H Agent, Shyanne Jones, for doing an incredible job in organizing, advertising and setting up for the event. Second, to my Ag PDC members, who served the meal in record time of 25 minutes! Lastly, I would like to thank all the sponsors for making this night happen. It was great to see everyone working together on a night when Extension gets to educate the Ag community with meaningful information about the beef cow industry.



Call the office for information on our speakers presentations.

### U.S. Cattle Inventory Reaches 73 Year Low by Shad & Twig Marston

Not many ranchers active today will remember the last time the U.S. cattle industry was this small. On January 1, 2024, the All Cattle and Calves inventory was 87.15 million head, the smallest total inventory since 1951. Kansas is still ranked 6th in the top 10, Beef Cow States. The last time the total cattle inventory was this small; impressive growth in productivity in the beef cattle industry was obtained. Look for producers to increase their herd numbers if we continue to get moisture and the relief of the 3-year drought. Cattlemen can do this expansion by saving more replacement heifers. Heifer selection is important because of the long-term impacts it can have on an operation. Dr. Twig Marston said, "Begin this process with the End in Mind." Knowing the growth curve from birth to maturity will help you keep on target for the development of your replacement females. Having a sound feeding system in place can effect heifer calf performance. As we know that age and weight of the developing heifer, effects puberty age and mature weight of the female. Feeding lighter heifers separately from the heavier ones helps in the development of the replacement females. Having heifers with a Body Condition Score of 5 and weighing 65% of their mature body weight at the beginning of breeding season would be ideal and decreases calving difficulty by half. Growing these replacement heifers is the most expensive stage of their lives for cattle producers. So when we do our evaluation of which females to select as replacement females, let's keep these traits in mind.

- · Select earliest females born in a calving season
- · Select females that were up fast after born and nursed colostrum
- Select highest Reproductive Tract Score
- · Temperament, docile heifers are more enjoyable to be around. Temperament is a highly heritable trait
- · Hoof quality definitely effects longevity. Keep in mind, poor foot quality only gets worse with age
- · Evaluate teat size and placement, along with udder development

Aside from the focus on the females, remember that the bulls used in herd have a much greater genetic influence. If we are thinking about the genetic flow in the herd, sire selection is the place where we can have the biggest impact overtime. The sires used in the last 3 generations make up 87.5% of the genetics of the replacement female. Strategic sire selection for replacements is key and should be added as the final piece in the selection of replacement heifers.

### Wheat growers in Kansas, take notice: The doctor is in.

K-State Research and Extension and Kansas Wheat are hosting a meeting in Wichita (March 8) to share what those organizations term "a prescription for producing highyielding and high-quality wheat in a sustainable manner."

The meetings – called Kansas Wheat Rx – combine suggested management practices for the economical and sustainable production of high-quality winter wheat in Kansas. The information is based on research conducted at Kansas State University and funded – at least in part – by Kansas Wheat, a cooperative agreement between the Kansas Wheat Commission and the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers. The Wichita meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel at the Airport, 2098 Airport Road.

Registration is available free to members of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers. The registration fee for non-members is \$110, which includes membership to KAWG.

Among numerous topics, experts will discuss: • Cover crops and soil health.

- The benefit of wheat to cropping systems.Soil fertility.
- Important wheat diseases and fungicides.
- The economics of wheat production.

The full agenda is available at *https://kswheat.com/wichita* 

### Wheat streak mosaic virus confirmed in three counties in Kansas in 2024

Wheat streak mosaic virus has been confirmed in Russel, Barton, and Ellis counties in 2024. Now is a good time to start scouting for this disease. Factors such as hail and delayed harvest in 2023 may contribute to higher-than-expected disease pressure in 2024. Wheat streak mosaic virus is just one of several viruses that we need to keep an eye out for in the Spring. While wheat viruses can sometimes be difficult to distinguish by eye, they behave differently in the field.

### Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus Complex

Wheat streak mosaic is one of Kansas's most economically devastating wheat diseases. While this disease is most common in western Kansas, we have seen an uptick in affected fields in the central corridor over the last couple of years. This disease can be caused by several viruses, including wheat streak mosaic virus, triticum mosaic virus, and wheat mosaic virus (high plains). These viruses are vectored by the tiny wheat curl mite, which survives between seasons on volunteer wheat and other grassy hosts. Infections can occur in the fall or spring but can result in more severe yield loss when they occur in the fall after planting. Wheat streak mosaic symptoms develop most rapidly at temperatures above 70 degrees. We often see symptoms appear when temperatures warm in the spring. We expect to see an increase in samples in the diagnostic lab over the coming weeks as the crop moves into the jointing stages of growth.

### Wheat Soilborne Mosaic Virus

Wheat soilborne mosaic virus is most common in the eastern two-thirds of Kansas and typically first appears as large, irregular patches of stunted, yellowing wheat in a field. From the road, these can be confused with a number of other production problems, such as winter injury or nutrient deficiencies. Upon closer inspection, leaves appear to have a yellow background with irregular green blotches. Optimal temperatures for symptoms of this virus are cool (around 60 F). The symptoms fade when dautime temps rise into the mid-70s. Because of this cool temperature preference, we typically see symptoms at the tillering through jointing growth stages and not later in the season. This virus is vectored into wheat by a fungal-like organism called Polymuxa graminis that can survive in the soil for up to 30 years. When soil moisture is high, this organism produces spores that can swim and attach themselves to wheat roots. After they attach, they shepherd in the virus, and infection occurs. Infection may be the worst in areas of the field with higher moisture (such as low spots) and in continuous wheat fields. Equipment has the potential to move soil-infested spores to new locations. Luckily, many of the varieties available in the eastern part of Kansas have resistance to this virus. Susceptible varieties are at risk of yield loss caused by the disease. Much of this yield loss is attributed to lower kernel weight and fewer kernels per spike. To check if your variety is resistant, please see the Kansas Wheat Variety Guide.

### **Barley Yellow Dwarf**

Unlike the two viruses mentioned above, barley yellow dwarf virus is transmitted by several species of aphids while they feed, including bird-cherry-oat aphids, English grain aphids, and greenbugs. Infection can occur in the fall or the spring, with fall infections resulting in the highest potential for yield losses. Avoidance of early planting, variety resistance, and systemic insecticide seed treatments are the best ways to manage this virus. Symptoms usually appear as purple to yellow leaf tip discoloration, and plants will appear stunted. The symptoms of barley yellow dwarf are most visible between jointing and early stages of grain development when warm temperatures favor disease development. Heads of infected plants may be darkened before harvest, and grain can be shriveled, resulting in yield losses.

### Reminders from the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab

- High-quality samples lead to high-quality diagnoses.
- Dig up plants and bag root system separate from aboveground material. Use two plastic bags one for the root system and one for the entire plant.
- · Avoid leaf material contacting soil (keeps sample integrity).
- Collect and ship on the same day.
- If this is not possible, hold plant material in the refrigerator until it is able to ship.

### New Services

Molecular diagnosis (increased detection capability)

- Sudden Death Syndrome
- Bacterial Leaf Streak of Corn

Triticum mosaic virus (TriMV) added to wheat virus screen (ELISA)

• Wheat Virus Screen (6 viruses – WSMV, TriMV, HPWMoV, WSSMV, SBWMV, BYDV-PAV) Submit samples by UPS before 5 pm on Wednesdays for results on Fridays



### Side note:

Each American farmer today feeds more than 165 people...a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more and doing it better, with less. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.



Educational Program, Live Burn & Tour of Fire Equipment

## March 26, 2024

Hosted By: McPherson, Rice, Harvey and Marion Counties Watch out for more information! CHUCK LAUGHLIN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT FAMILY & COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Family & Community Wellness

### <u> Teach & Taste – Pistachio Bread</u>

What a duel we had in February with Black Bean Brownies cruising to an easy victory over apple pie churros! For March, we will be making the recipe of the month, pistachio bread. RSVP now to join us March 13, 2024 at 6:30pm. 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)

https://tinyurl.com/TandTMarch2024

### McPherson County Calendar - Online

It's coming...we will begin to roll out a county-wide calendar of events starting in March. Events will be added more and more each day as we begin to bring the calendar on-line.

To begin, the calendar will include items published in the My Hometown printed calendar. Additional events can be entered to be added at the following link. We will be adding public events, seminars, business sponsored events, etc. More information will be coming out as we begin to add more features. There is not a functionality to add personal events (i.e. garage sales, sale of personal items, etc.).

Calendar events will be added on a batch process so they will not show up immediately. We are also working to streamline this process as we work through processes with K-State (the calendar host).

We are working on a brochure that will be posted with information on entering your business events to show on the calendar.

To ensure the accuracy of information for your event, calendar items must be entered through the link and will not be taken via phone or email.

To view the calendar and events that have been uploaded to date, scan the QR code or enter the link.





March 12, 2024 Trail Sustainability

### Trail Talk Tuesday

Join K-State Research and Extension on March 12, 2024 from 12:00-1:00 pm for a Trail Talk Tuesday webinar and then save the date for March & April. Register now at *https://ksre-learn.com/trail-talk* 



April 10, 2024 Rail Trail Issues

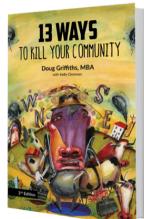




It's coming the end of March. Lace up those shoes and get your team ready. Walk Kansas 2024 hits town March 31, 2024. This 8week program aimed at health and fitness is in the planning stages. Yes, once again this year Route 56 will be an option to take you all along the Route that passes right through McPherson County from West to East. Watch our County Connection email, Facebook, or website for the signup information to Walk 56 in 56 or just Walk Kansas. Either way no matter how you do it the goal is the same to get moving and get healthy. So, get your teams of up to 6 people together and get ready.

### 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.





<u>Watch For Dates Here:</u> https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550514969391





2024 Calendars are available at the McPherson County Extension Office. Come by and pick up your copy while supplies last.

### <u>Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving – Edition 38</u> <u>by Karen Blakeslee</u>

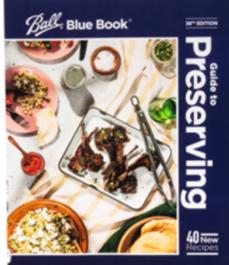
It has been a few years since the Ball® Blue Book® has been updated. The new 38th edition will be coming out this spring.

It includes over 500 recipes with 40 new recipes. It is updated with the latest research to ensure safe and successful canning for all. It includes canning freezing, drying, pickling and more.

Look for this new edition at major retailers such as WalMart, Target, Kroger stores, Ace Hardware and other retailers.

The Ball® Complete Book of Home Preserving has also been updated, the new copyright is 2024.

Also, please note that Ball® Fruit Fresh is being discontinued.



It's simple, delicious, and rewarding Take eating fresh & local to a whole new level

### <u> March 13, 2024:</u>

### "Navigating Diets, Supplements, and Women's Health in a Confusing World"

Speaker: Priscilla Brenes, MPH, Ph.D

Extension Assistant Professor, State Extension Specialist Department of Food, Nutrition Dietetics, and Health

With so much information on health, it's hard to know what is true. This session will cover keys to a healthy and balanced diet, discuss how/when to use supplements, and explore wellness tips for women. Learn if medications that facilitate weight loss work for long-term wellness.





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.

## LIVING WELL WEDNESDAY

Navigating Diets, Supplements, and Women's Health in a Confusing World

Wednesday, March 13th 12:10 - 1:00pm CST



With so much information on health, it's hard to know what is true. This session will cover the keys to a healthy and balanced diet, discuss when and how to use supplements, and explore wellness tips for women. We'll cut through the confusion of trendy diets and focus on science-backed advice for sustainable nutrition. We will discuss whether medications that facilitate weight loss work for long-term wellness. Join us to learn simple, effective ways to enhance your well-being and embrace a balanced lifestyle.





http://eepurl.com/iicSFn

# **4-H Youth Development**

### SHYANNE JONES COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## March 2024

### **Calendar of Events**

- 3/10 Registration for Super Saturday to Shyanne
- 3/13 Clover Camp
- 3/15 Registration for Horse Seminar to Shyanne
- 3/23 Super Saturday

### Upcoming:

- 4/1 Entries for fair book cover due
- 4/6 Club days in Newton

## 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 March 22 to get them into the Newsletter.

## Civic Engagement Projects Flag Disposal

The extension office has a few sets of American flags that need to be properly retired. If you are looking for a Civic Engagement project and would be interested in researching and conducting a flag disposal, we have two or three to get you started!

### "Kansas, We Have The Wheat" FAIR BOOK COVER CONTEST:

You voted and now you get to create!

The McPherson County 4-H Fair will be held July 26-29 and we need a cover for the fair book! There are some rules, check them out:

- 1. Cover must be 5.5" X 8.5" portrait orientation.
- 2. Include the theme, McPherson County 4-H Fair and dates.
- Designs can be hand drawn, computer generated or both. Use your imagination!
   The cover may include color.

#### When Using The Official 4-H Emblem:

## (If these rules are not implemented when using the official 4-H clover in your design, the cover art will be disqualified)

The Official 4-H Emblem is a 4-leaf clover with an H in each leaf, with the stem turned to the right. The Emblem may be two-dimensional (flat) or three dimensional (with shadows that show depth and perspective). Authorized users of the 4-H Emblem should take care to ensure that when they use the Emblem, they have done the following:

- They have obtained the Official 4-H Emblem and are using it in its entirety.
- They do not "flip" the image to create a framed look. The stem on the 4-H Emblem must point to the right as you look at the image. Under no circumstances should the stem be changed to point to the left.
- They are familiar with resizing graphics through the software application being
- used, and do not distort or warp the dimensions of the Emblem.
- The 4-H Emblem is never used to imply endorsement of any product or material.
  They follow the graphic use guidelines outlined.
- They follow the graphic use guidelines outlined.

The contest is open to ALL current McPherson County 4-H members. Top 2 entries will be selected and awarded cash prizes! Submit your cover by **April 1 (we ain't foolin')** to the Extension Office. You may e-mail (*tregher@ksu.edu OR Lhelm@ksu.edu*), snail mail or bring your entry to the office (600 W. Woodside, McPherson, 67460).

### Indoor Judging Opportunities

Northwest 4-H Super Saturday will be March 23rd at 9:00 AM in Hayes, KS. Judging opportunities include crops, horticulture, photography, life skills, and livestock skillathon. Members can participate in one or all events they can complete by 12:30 PM. If you are interested in judging, please let Shyanne know by March 10th!

### From States 4-H Exchange – Summer Exchanges

Our Summer Inbound programs bring youth to the US each summer to stay with a host family for 4 weeks. Based on a complete cultural immersion model, youth are matched with a volunteer American family who wants to share their life with an international visitor.

Visiting youth travel in groups and are accompanied by an adult chaperone who stays in the same state for the duration of the program. Host families will have the opportunity to participate in welcome orientations and departure events that are organized by the 4-H Extension office in each state.

States' 4-H currently offers several different hosting opportunities for interested families. Our Japan Program is our largest and is always in need of families. Please note that space may be limited in our other programs. Contact your State Coordinator for more details about each program and its availability in your state.

Japan Program: https://www.states4hexchange.org/host/summer/japan/

<u>State Coordinators:</u> https://www.states4hexchange.org/state-contacts/





## Horse Judging Seminar

Kansas 4-H, Colby Community College, and the KSU Horse Judging Team are pleased to offer a Kansas 4-H (and open) Horse Show Judges Seminar Friday, April 12th, at the Colby Community College School Farm (2002 County Road 23, Colby, KS). Adults interested in learning to judge open or 4-H horse shows, current open and 4-H Horse Show judges who want to brush up on their judging skills, coaches of youth horse judging teams, and youth looking to gain experience and instruction judging horses are invited to participate in the 2024 4-H and Open Horse Show Judges Seminar.

The seminar will cover basic horse show classes, professionalism of judges, hands-on demonstrations with live classes, and a rule book exam.

Registration is \$50/person and includes snacks, lunch, instruction and materials. If you are interested in participating, please let Shyanne know by March 15th.

### Kansas All Breeds Dairy Show

The Kansas All Breeds Junior Dairy Show Committee would like to invite you to participate in the 2024 Kansas All Breeds Junior Dairy Show June 20-22 in Salina at the Saline County Livestock and Expo Center.

This is a unique opportunity for Dairy project members to participate in Dairy Judging, Quiz Bowl and Skillathon while networking with other youth dairy enthusiasts from across the state.

The show has been moved up this year (previously held in August) and is scheduled for June 20-22, 2024. This is obviously a big change, but one we're hoping will allow more families to participate.

K-State Research and Extension, Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, Kansas Dairy Commission, and Kansas Dairy Association are excited to team up again to bring this unique opportunity to the dairy youth of Kansas.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for the 2024 Kansas Jr. Dairy Show!

SPOTS AVAILABLE



Campus

July 16 - 20, 2024

Number of spots: 30

Cost: \$75 deposit per participant.

and pet food. Industry partners will share job opportunities, career paths and income potential alongside K-State faculty and students. You'll tour K-State's feed and flour mills, bake labs and agronomy research farms, network with peers, and gain an appreciation for food and feed production.

The camp lasts 4 nights and cost includes lodging in K-State residence halls, meals and a Saturday brunch for up to two guests or family members, \$15 for each additional guest.

Join our interest list so you can be notified when registration opens:

https://www.ag.k-state.edu/ag-experiences/summer-camps/

### <u>Club Days</u>

April 6th in Newton, KS. Judging begins at 8:30am, participants will sign up for time slots when they arrive.

Please register at the appropriate link below by MARCH 25TH! INDIVIDUALS: *https://forms.gle/B9hXBFbSK1zJMYk49* CLUBS or GROUPS should have one representative use the following link:

https://forms.gle/G66m1vFpzAxDYbC67



For ages 6-9 years old, Clover Camp gives participants the opportunity to explore opportunities in 4-H, including the following topics:

- Livestock Terminology
- Geology
- Arts and Crafts
- Line Dancing
- Wildlife

March 13th, 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM 710 W. Woodside 4-H Building

Link to register: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\_0qepN3clzlwo1o2

Feeding Your Future Camps

Camp Dates: July 16 - 20, 2024 at the K-State Manhattan

For 10-12th grade high school students for the upcoming

# <u>Please Consider McPherson County 4-H When Donating This Year!</u>

## Your Contributions Help Fund All Kinds of Awesome Opportunities!



- Educational Trips & Tours
- 4-H Camp and Camp Counselor Scholarships
- Record Book Awards
- · School Programming (agriculture, robotics, food science, etc.)
- Project-specific curriculum
- Leader and Volunteer Trainings
- Fair Premiums
- 4-H Promotions





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

<u>smarston@ksu.edu</u>

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 <u>claughlin@ksu.edu</u>