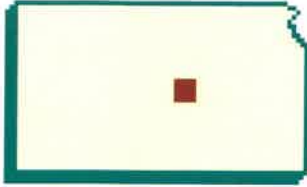


McPherson County



K-State Research & Extension

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www.mcpherson.ksu.edu

SEPTEMBER 2020

General Office Information

Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m

Phone: 620-241-1523
Website: mcpherson.ksu.edu

The Staff is in!

- 1) If you have questions and they can be answered virtually call the office at [\(620\)-241-1523](tel:620-241-1523) or email mp@listserv.ksu.edu.
- 2) Please wear a mask or face covering properly if you come to the office in person.
- 3) Please maintain a distance of 6 ft between other patrons and staff whenever possible.
- 4) Only 2 patrons allowed in the lobby area at all times. If the lobby area is full please wait patiently outside.

K-STATE | McPherson
Research and Extension County

Welcome Our New Office Professional!

Hello. My name is Lauralee Helm and I am excited to join the K-State Research and Extension team here in McPherson County! I have only lived in McPherson for about two and a half years. I am originally from Parsons, Kansas. The growing community yet small-town vibes are what really draws me to love McPherson. As for my hobbies: I love music, art and cooking for my family and friends. If you'd like to learn more about me or would just like to stop in and say "hello" I would appreciate it! I am excited to meet so many members of the community and all the cool things they do!

Prepare Kansas is a free, easy way to ensure you're better equipped to handle emergencies

To help Kansans become as prepared as possible for emergencies, K-State Research and Extension is offering the Prepare Kansas Annual Preparedness Challenge. It's a free weekly online challenge through September that includes activities individuals and families can accomplish each week. By the end of the month, participants will be better prepared to withstand and recover from emergencies.

Prepare Kansas aligns with National Preparedness Month, with a theme in September this year of "Disasters Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today."

To find weekly activities, please visit, <https://blogs.k-state.edu/preparekansas/>

September is Food Safety Education Month

MANHATTAN, Kan. – It is certainly a good thing, Karen Blakeslee says, that September is widely known as Food Safety Education month.

But, says the longtime Kansas State University food safety specialist, knowing a little something about protecting yourself from foodborne illness is important all the time.

“We eat food every day,” said Blakeslee, who also is the coordinator of the university’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science. “So, keeping food safe is a daily event, too. Using basic, safe food handling practices can eliminate many opportunities for foodborne illness.”

In September and every month, Blakeslee preaches the virtues of food safety’s four core principles:

1. Clean. Wash hands and keep cooking surfaces clean.
2. Cook. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature, and to keep hot foods hot.
3. Chill. Put leftovers in the refrigerator promptly and keep cold foods cold.
4. Separate. When preparing and serving meals, keep raw foods away from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.



She added that good hygiene – always a food safety tenet – has come into greater light during the coronavirus pandemic, especially the importance of washing your hands. “Handwashing is your primary defense against spreading disease,” Blakeslee said, “not only for food safety, but overall health. Always wash your hands before, during and after handling any food.”



She notes information from Oregon State University that introduces the idea of high speed hand washing. The concept is intended to encourage school children or other large groups of people to take time to wash their hands.

Standing in line, the first person wets their hands and squirts them with soap. Then, they move to the back of the line to scrub hands while the others take their turn getting soap and water on their own hands.

By the time the first person reaches the front of the line again, they’re ready to rinse off the soap and dry their hands.

“We know that time is precious for everyone, especially in schools,” she said. “High speed hand washing can save time, keep the kids moving and most importantly get their hands washed. It also saves water, energy and ultimately helps prevent the spread of disease.”

Blakeslee said all food safety steps contribute to keeping meals safe.

“Do your part,” she said. “Not only for yourself, but for the health of your family and friends to prevent foodborne illness.”

More food safety tips are available from local extension offices in Kansas, or online from the K-State Rapid Response Center.



Clover Corner



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Lindsey Mueting
County Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development



Believe it or not, it is time to be looking at those record books, encouraging friends to try out 4-H and start looking towards a new year of goals! It has been a unique and often challenging summer, but our 4-H members continue to learn and accomplish things! While I do not have answers right now for exactly what this year will look like whether it is school, 4-H, etc- I do know there are some new and exciting things being planned! Sept 3 we have a leaders and parents meeting to discuss even more about what we can all do to insure McPherson County 4-H has a great year!

I hope you are all having a great start to the new school year, whatever that may look like for you, and as always, let me know if you have any questions!
— Lindsey

Help Judge Record Books

As we each work to complete our KAP record books for the year- other counties are also doing the same! It will soon be time for us to help screen others record books. ALL help is welcome and no experience is necessary. We are screening for a district this year. One set of books will need to be complete between Sept 28 and Oct 1. I know this is a fast and short turn around, before our books are even due, but we want to help these 4-H'ers out the best we can! It is helpful for past 4-H'ers, parents and volunteers to come help! No experience is necessary!!!

4-H Council

The next 4-H Council meeting will be Thursday, October 1 at 7 PM. One agenda item will be Officer Elections for the new year! If you would like to hold an office please make sure you attend the meeting or let Lindsey know in advance! Please make sure you have representation from your club (two youth, two adult). If you currently hold an office be sure to plan to attend as to run this last meeting before the new officers take over!

Importance of Thank You's!

The Fair is complete and we are looking towards another 4-H year, but have all fair responsibilities been taken care of?! What about those Thank You notes?! Spending a few minutes to write a thank you note to your award sponsors, leaders and volunteers is a very important responsibility as a 4-H'er!

Calendar of Events

September

- 3 Leader/Adult Meeting- 4-H Building, 7 PM
- 7 Labor Day, Office Closed
- 12 State Fair Item Judging Results to be posted
- 30 Records Book Due Into Office, Must Be Screened At Club Level First
- 30 Club Seal Due, Along with other Various Club Forms and Awards to Office
- 30 Ambassador Applications Due

October

- 1 Records Book Due Into Office, Must Be Screened At Club Level First
- 1 4-H Council- 7 PM Extension Office
- 2-4 Kansas Junior Livestock Show, Hutchinson
- 4-10 National 4-H Week

Newsletter Deadline

Any information you would like included in the October edition of the 4-H Clover Corner needs to be emailed or given to Lindsey by September 21, 2020.

Achievement Banquet

The Achievement banquet committee is working hard to plan an event that will be safe and still congratulate and honor our awesome 4-H members! Look for more information soon on this end of the year celebration!

Fairboard Members Needed

Are you interested in the fair, how decisions are made and what goes on during fair week? Then consider applying to be a member of the fairboard. There are several spots open for youth and adults. Please consider applying and help make the fair even better. You can find the application online www.mcpherson.ksu.edu or at the Extension Office. Members do NOT need to be current 4-H parents or volunteers, just have an interest in being active in supporting the 4-H Fair! We do encourage at least one person affiliated with each club to apply for a fairboard position so we achieve a balanced group! Spread the word! Applications due October 1.

National 4-H Week

4-H...AWESOME! National 4-H Week is coming up, October 4-10. What will YOU do to celebrate? Maybe wear green for 4-H, hand out 4-H bookmarks, do a community service project or invite a friend to your 4-H meeting! Start thinking now of how you can show everyone how great 4-H is!

To celebrate National 4-H Week, think about entering the window display or poster contest! These are open to everyone. Contact Lindsey with questions or if you need space ideas.



WAYS TO PROMOTE!!!

There will be two contests for National 4-H Week this year!

1. Clubs or groups can enter a Window Display promoting 4-H. Think of where these might be located... store fronts, school entry way or display case, libraries, etc. These do not HAVE to be in a store window! Displays can be located in any public space within the county. Remember to get permission!
2. Individual Poster Contest. 4-H members can create a standard size poster promoting 4-H. Posters can have any theme the entrant would like. These need to be hung in a public place for the week!

Both contests will be judged for top awards! Entries will need to have short video (or picture for posters if you choose) that is posted to the McPherson County 4-H Facebook page or emailed to Lindsey. The video can be a simple phone capture, but should show the display/poster well and can include any other info you would like the judge to know. Videos must be under 2 minutes. Entries need to be in place with videos completed by October 6. Let us know what type of entry you have and where it is located when you email/post the video! Have fun and think outside the box... time to tell people how awesome 4-H is! Awards will be announced at Achievement Night!

484H

What is 484H?!? 48 Hours for 4-H'ers to serve our communities and make an impact on the state!

4-H is challenging club members, adult leaders and 4-H alumni to explore their service capabilities and inspire the community around them by taking part in some type of service project during the weekend of October 10-11.



Officer Training

2020 Officer Training will be held in a virtual format this year! We will be planning interactive sessions to train our officers as the year gets underway! We will also be seeking adults to help lead some sessions. Reach out to Lindsey if you are willing to help and please watch your emails for more information as October draws near!

Year End Information

It is that time of year... Record Book Time!!! To conclude each 4-H year it is my hope that each 4-H member completes a record book. This allows for another great skill to be practiced as well as the chance for scholarships, prizes, awards and recognition for the 4-H year. Please take a look at the record information and work on completing at least one record! Don't let lack of experience or information to include scare you away! Dive into the forms and as you are going make goals for how to grow and improve next year. It will get easier with each completed record!!!

All record books, pin applications, special award applications and club summaries are due to the office on October 1. Club leaders must review and sign books and forms prior to this date, so check with them for their deadline!

All forms can be found online! www.mcpherson.ksu.edu, 4-H Youth Development, Awards and Recognition, Record Books. You can choose to complete the applications on the computer (copy to another folder on your computer) or print out the applications and fill in by hand.

STORY TIPS: The first paragraph should be facts about you, your family, where you live and a list of your projects. The next portion (largest section) should discuss your involvement in the project for which you are completing the form. Next briefly discuss work in each of your other projects. Then discuss other leadership or community service and club activities you have done. Finally evaluate your year and mention your future plans. The majority of your KAP story should be focused on the project you are filling it out for!



Ag News

Shad Marston
County Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources



With fall just around the corner, many thoughts/plans change for the closing months of the year. No matter what form of Agriculture you are in, September is a time to start preparing for the colder month to come. Wheat producers are adapting their ground for the important fall planting of Hard Red Winter Wheat and all that it entails. On the other hand, row crop farmers are gearing up for the fall harvest of corn, soybeans and milo. While the livestock producers start making plans to weaning spring born calves and also make all the preparation planning it takes to care for their livestock during the hard winter months. Successful producers make sure their operations can complete fall activities of field work and replenish winter feed supplies before the unpredictable weather comes in winter. As for the others, now is the time to capitalize on the fall beauty of gardens and flower beds. Many gardeners remember to replant cool season vegetables that extend their gardening fun for a couple more months. Some flowers and trees reach their peak this time of year and can be enjoyed by all. No matter what your projects are for the fall, K-State Research and Extension is here to answer any of your challenges with researched based, unbiased information. Stop in our office and look through the many isles of fact sheets over endless topics of Agriculture. Remember, we are here to help you.

September Garden Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Continue to harvest vegetables
- Pick apples and pears and store in a cool place to extend freshness
- Harvest pumpkins when flesh is completely orange and avoid carrying by stem
- Harvest winter squash when rind is hard enough to puncture with fingernail
- Plant lettuce, spinach, and radishes
- Remove weeds from garden plantings before going to seed
- Herbs can be dug from garden and placed in pots for indoor use this winter
- Remove small tomatoes from their vines to increase late development of more mature fruits

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs, tulips, daffodils, and others
- Dig, divide, or plant peonies
- Divide perennials, especially spring bloomers
- Remove seedheads from perennials to prevent reseeding in the garden
- Plant chrysanthemums for fall color
- Dig gladiolus as foliage begins to yellow and air dry before storing for winter
- Clean up garden areas to reduce insects and disease as plants dieback for winter
- Enrich soil by adding organic matter such as peat moss or compost

Lawns

- Plant or sod new bluegrass or tall fescue lawns
- Renovate bluegrass or tall fescue lawns by verticutting
- Core aerate cool season turf
- Fertilize cool season grasses with high nitrogen sources of fertilizer
- Mow turf at 2 to 3 inches and sharpen blade for a clean cut

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant trees and shrubs, deciduous and evergreen
- Rake up fallen leaves and compost
- Prune broken and dead branches from trees
- Avoid pruning spring flowering shrubs such as lilac and forsythia to ensure spring flowers
- Hand pick bagworms to reduce problem in future

Houseplants

- Bring plants in before temperatures drop into the fifties
- Clean and wash before moving indoors to reduce insects
- Fertilize before winter conditions arrive and growth slows
- Poinsettias can be forced into Christmas bloom by starting dark treatment of short days

Volunteer Wheat Control: Protecting Kansas Wheat

Wheat in the Great Plains is often plagued by complex of viral diseases including wheat streak mosaic virus, High Plains virus, and Triticum mosaic virus. As we move toward planting season, it is helpful to have a few timely reminders about ways to reduce the risk of disease problems in 2021. There are several things producers can do: delay planting dates as long as feasible, control any significant stands of green foxtail and barnyard grass near fields that will be planted to wheat, and plant wheat varieties with resistance to wheat streak mosaic virus (Paradise or Rock Star) or to the wheat curl mite (Byrd, Langin, TAM 112, T-158, etc.). However, getting good control of these virus diseases starts primarily with controlling volunteer wheat, especially after the rainfall events. Control volunteer wheat soon in order to protect the wheat crop planted this fall.

Volunteer wheat within a mile or more of a field that will be planted to wheat should be completely dead at least two weeks before wheat planting. This will also help control wheat curl mites, Hessian fly, and wheat aphids (bird cherry oat aphids and greenbugs, etc.) in the fall.

Pre-Emergence Herbicides for Wheat

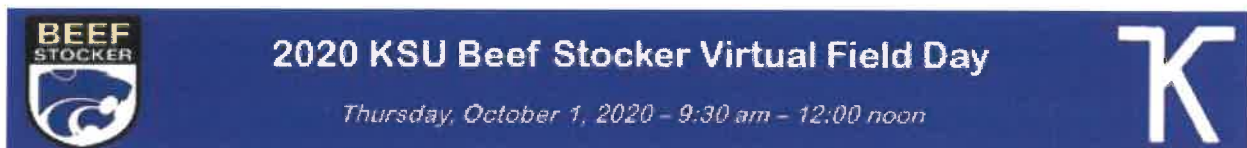
Pre-emergence herbicides with residual activity are an important component of high-yielding cropping systems. They are used less frequently in wheat production compared to other cropping systems in Kansas, but residual herbicides applied prior to wheat emergence can be part of a good weed management system in wheat production.

Most residual herbicides labeled for pre-emergence application in wheat are Group 2 (ALS-inhibiting) herbicides, which are associated with herbicide resistant populations of kochia, marehail (horseweed), bushy wallflower, flixweed, henbit, and brome species in Kansas. Products in Groups 14 (the PPO-inhibiting herbicides) and 15 (the long-chain fatty acid inhibiting herbicides) are also labeled; however, they are generally more dependent on rainfall for activation than the Group 2 herbicides.

Herbicides without residual activity may be applied with or without residual herbicides in the weeks prior to planting wheat. Older products include the Group 2 herbicides Amber, Olympus, and Pre-Pare, as well as Group 4 (plant growth regulating) herbicides like 2,4-D, dicamba, or fluroxypyr. It is especially important to be aware of planting interval restrictions for Group 4 herbicides, which range from 10 to 45 days.

One new product is Pixxaro. Pixxaro is a combination of two Group 4 herbicides: fluroxypyr (Starane Ultra, others) and halauxifen (Elevore). It is labeled for control of emerged weeds both before wheat planting and after emergence when wheat is at the 2-leaf through flag leaf stage. The application rate for both timings is 6 fl oz/A.

When selecting pre-emergence herbicides for use in wheat production, keep in mind that many of these products are also labeled for use in emerged wheat. Unless using a planned split-application, avoid repeated use of products from the same herbicide group to slow the development of herbicide-resistant weed populations in your fields.



Plan to join us for the 2020 KSU Beef Stocker Virtual Field Day on Thursday, October 1, 2020, beginning at 9:30 a.m. The Field Day will be hosted on the Zoom webinar platform.

This year registration is FREE for all participants. This is made possible through the generous support of past Field Day Unit sponsors. Please visit ASI.KSU.EDU/StockerFieldDay to learn more about the schedule.

To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2020> StockerFieldDay

For questions, please contact Dale Blasi (dblasi@ksu.edu) or Lois Schriner (lschrin@ksu.edu)

Tips For Fall Planting Of Alfalfa

Alfalfa is a very important leguminous crop for dairy and other livestock industry in Kansas, with high yields that are highly digestible and high in protein. Late summer and early fall are often the best times to plant alfalfa in Kansas due to less weed pressure than spring planting.

Available moisture at planting is crucial for alfalfa establishment, but too much moisture can increase seedling disease incidence and reduce alfalfa nodulation and nitrogen fixation.

If soil moisture is available, growers in northwest Kansas can plant as early as Aug. 10. Optimum sowing date occurs later as we move towards southeast Kansas, where growers can plant until mid- to late-September. In other parts of Kansas, the optimal planting time is late August or early September. Producers just need to plant early enough to have three to five trifoliate leaves before the first frost.

Alfalfa is a four- to five-year, or longer, investment and therefore it is crucial to ensure proper establishment. Some producers shy away from alfalfa because of its high establishment cost and risk of stand failure. In the long run, however, it's relatively inexpensive, if amortized over the life of the crop.

If managed properly and given favorable weather conditions, dryland alfalfa can produce 3 to 6 dry matter tons of forage per acre per year. Irrigated fields can produce 6 to 8 dry matter tons per acre per year or more. When sowing alfalfa, producers should keep the following in mind:

Soil test and correct soil acidity. Alfalfa grows best in well-drained soils with a pH of 6.5 to 7.5, and does not tolerate low soil pH. If the soil is acidic, add lime to raise soil pH to 6.8 before planting. Ensuring appropriate soil pH levels prior to planting is essential, especially as lime is relatively immobile in the soil profile and the field will not be worked for the next 3-5 years.

Soil test and meet fertilization needs. Apply the needed phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) amounts according to soil test recommendations. Phosphorus fertilizer will be required if soil test P levels are below 25 ppm, and potassium fertilizer will be required if soil K levels are below 120 ppm. Even soils that test higher than these thresholds may need additional fertilizer. Small amounts of nitrogen fertilizer (15 to 20 lb/acre) as a starter at planting are beneficial for alfalfa establishment.

Plant certified, inoculated seed. Ensuring the correct *Rhizobium* inoculation is crucial for alfalfa seedlings to fix available soil nitrogen to meet the needs of growing alfalfa for optimum production.

Plant in firm, moist soil. A firm seedbed ensures good seed-soil contact; therefore, use a press wheel with the drill to firm the soil over the planted seed. No-till planting in small-grains stubble will usually provide a good seedbed.

Don't plant too deeply. Plant one-fourth to one-half inch deep on medium- and fine-textured soils and three-fourths inch deep on sandy soils. Don't plant deeper than 10 times the seed diameter.

Use the right seeding rate. Plant 8 to 12 pounds of seed per acre on dryland in western Kansas, 12 to 15 pounds per acre on irrigated medium- to fine-textured soils, 15 to 20 pounds per acre on irrigated sandy soils, and 12 to 15 pounds per acre on dryland in central and eastern Kansas.

Check for herbicide carryover that could damage the new alfalfa crop – especially when planting alfalfa no-till into corn or grain sorghum stubble. In areas where row crops were drought-stressed and removed for silage, that sets up a great seedbed for alfalfa, but may still bring a risk of herbicide damage.

Choose pest-resistant varieties. Resistance to phytophthora root rot, bacterial wilt, fusarium wilt, verticillium wilt, anthracnose, the pea aphid, and the spotted alfalfa aphid is essential. Some varieties are resistant to even more diseases and insects.

Purchase alfalfa varieties with a fall dormancy rating ranging from 4 - 6 for Kansas. Fall dormancy relates to how soon an alfalfa variety will stop growing in the fall and how early it will begin growing in the spring or late winter. Simply put, it would be better not buy a variety with fall dormancy of 9-10, which can be more suitable for California and regions where alfalfa can keep growing year-round under irrigation.

More information about growing alfalfa in Kansas can be found in the *Alfalfa Production Handbook*. That information also is available on the web at: www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/c683.pdf Also see *Alfalfa Growth and Development*, available on the web at: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3348.pdf>



Figure 2. Early bloom alfalfa. Photo by Doohong Min, K-State Research and Extension.

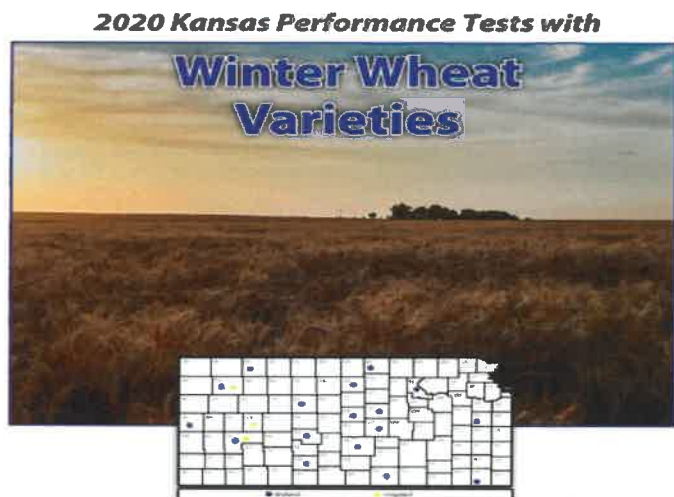
2020 Kansas Performance Tests with Winter Wheat Varieties report available online

The 2020 Kansas Performance Tests with Winter Wheat Varieties report is now online. The Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station annually compares both new and currently grown wheat varieties across different regions in Kansas. These performance tests generate unbiased information designed to help Kansas growers choose the best wheat varieties for their cropping system.

In this report, you will find a recap of the 2019-20 wheat crop, with a detailed discussion of factors that made this year a very challenging growing season for some Kansas wheat producers. From extreme drought and harsh spring freezes, to an almost stress-free growing season; variability is the key word explaining the 2020 winter wheat growing season in Kansas. Different parts of the state were exposed to different levels of stresses, resulting in very different crop conditions and yield levels. More importantly, the results of the 2020 wheat variety performance tests are also shown.

Producers and crop consultants can use this resource to help select wheat varieties for their operation by checking for varieties that show a consistently good performance in their region.

Click [here](http://www.agronomy.k-state.edu/services/crop-performance-tests/winter-wheat/index.html) to access the online version of the variety performance test results. Results from previous years are available at <http://www.agronomy.k-state.edu/services/crop-performance-tests/winter-wheat/index.html>



Report of Progress 1158

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Kansas Forest Service Tree, Shrub Seedling Sale Opens Sept. 1

The Kansas Forest Service Conservation Tree and Shrub sale opens Sept. 1, providing landowners with a source for low-cost tree and shrub seedlings.

“Large conservation plantings can become very costly when several hundreds or thousands of plants are needed to meet the conservation goals of the landowner,” said Aaron Yoder, conservation trees specialist.

Conservation plantings may function as wildlife habitat, windbreaks, wood lots, timber plantations, or educational and riparian (streambank) plantings.

Yoder said species grown in the program are selected for characteristics that make them ideal candidates for conservation plantings. This year, Rusty Blackhaw (*Viburnum rufidulum*), also known as Southern Blackhaw, and New Jersey Tea are two new shrub species offered. Both species are native to Kansas.

“Both species of shrub offer multiple benefits for wildlife, especially as nectar and pollen sources for bees, butterflies and other pollinators,” Yoder said.

Many other native and a few non-native species are offered through the conservation program that will thrive in Kansas and surrounding states.

Planting trees and shrubs in the fall presents several benefits over spring plantings, including less pressure from insects, disease and weeds. Additionally, seedlings planted in the fall have lower moisture demands than spring plantings and soils are typically drier in the fall as compared to wet or saturated soils in the spring, which restrict field preparation and planting activities, according to Yoder.

To provide the greatest chance of success for conservation plantings, seedlings will only be shipped to Great Plains states including Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Minnesota, Iowa, Arkansas and Missouri. The KFS fall conservation seedling sales coincide with the ideal planting time for these states. Limiting the states served by the conservation program is a change for the 2020 fall season.

In addition to the new shipping limitations, all orders placed in the program must be shipped. The change to a shipping-only policy ensures the safety of KFS staff, their families and the public as the program continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on the Conservation Tree and Shrub program or to place an order beginning on Sept. 1, please visit https://www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees/.

Beef Genetic Data Tools Defined

In any team sport, members contribute their physical strengths to help achieve the goal for the common good. It is hard for an athlete to be the best in all aspects of the game.

In much the same way, bulls that excel in maternal traits are not always the ones that reach the top of chart for siring calves that rank the best at the time of harvest.

“With many purebred breed associations, bulls are measured for 12-15 traits. While a few bulls will excel in multiple traits, it is nearly impossible to have a bull that can be a leader in all the traits,” said Bob Weaber, Kansas State University beef cattle extension specialist.

EPDs defined

One tool that is used by purebred and commercial cattle producers is the Expected Progeny Difference (EPDs).

“EPDs offer a relative comparison of genetic merit in any given trait,” Weaber said.

He cited the example of having two bulls mated to a similar group of cows. “When comparing a bull with a 40-pound weaning weight EPD to a bull with a 50-pound weaning weight EPD, we would expect the calves from the 50-pound weaning weight EPD sire to weigh on average 10 pounds heavier at weaning,” Weaber said.

He added that the environment in which the cattle are raised will also influence the weaning weight of the offspring.

“Along with the EPDs, the production environment also drives a lot of the variation observed in an animal’s performance, but there is a portion of that variation in performance that is under genetic control and the heritability is the expression of that relationship between genetic and phenotypic variation,” Weaber said.

Steps to sorting information

There is a lot of information available to producers when making bull selections. Weaber offers the following advice to those who are new to the business.

“Go out and look at your respective breed association’s website and you’ll find really detailed descriptions about each trait,” Weaber said.

There are some common traits across many breeds. Here are the key ones Weaber encourages producers pay attention to depending on the goals of their breeding program.

Calving Ease Direct — Measures how easily a sire’s calves are born based on calving ease score data and birth weight data from progeny of first calf heifers. Weaber said this measurement is helpful in managing calving dystocia.

Weaning and Yearling Weight — These are two EPDs that describe the adjusted weight of the pounds of calf at weaning and yearling ages, respectively.

Maternal Milk — Describes the differences in the calf weaning weight that are due to having a common maternal grandsire. It monitors the maternal effect of a sire’s daughters and is reported in pounds of calf weaning weight.

Marbling — This a terminal carcass trait that predicts the amount of ribeye marbling a beef animal will have at harvest.

The bottom line is that producers need to focus on things that are economically important to their operation.

Using indexes

To help producers connect to the economically important data, look at indexes when making sire selections.

“Indexes are basically EPDs for profit at a particular endpoint,” Weaber said. He cited the examples of the \$Maternal Weaned Calf Value versus the \$Beef Value index both reported by the American Angus Association.

“The \$M index reports a profit value difference between calves of a particular bull to the weaning endpoint, while conversely the \$B is a terminal index that puts no economic weight on maternal traits. So, if you are selecting bulls to produce terminal calves, retaining none of the heifers, and you own them throughout the value-based marketing chain, then prioritizing \$B is a great way to simplify your selection emphasis.”

He added: “Indexes are an important tool because they have economic weightings to them and it will balance the tradeoffs between the traits.”



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provided and employer. K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact Lindsey Mueting at 620.241.1523.