

**December 2015**  
**17th Edition**

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Dear Meadowlark Extension District Patrons,

We hope you enjoy our winter edition of the Meadowlark Extension District Newsletter produced by your District Extension Agents. K-State Research and Extension, based at Kansas State University in Manhattan Kansas, offers programs, publications and newsletters focused on improving the quality of life for Kansans and others using science-based information and has offices in all 105 Kansas counties.

We are committed to providing practical information, education and training that is research based on issues that Kansans consider important and helpful in improving their lives, farms, organizations, businesses, families or communities.

For more information about K-State Research and Extension, visit one of our Meadowlark Extension District offices in Holton, Oskaloosa or Seneca, using the contact information shown on the front page of this newsletter or our website: [www.meadowlark.k-state.edu](http://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu)

Sincerely,  
David Key  
Meadowlark Extension District Director and Agent  
Seneca KS



## Community Economic Development

David Key

### Agritourism Farms Are More Diverse Than Other U.S. Farms

Agritourism involves attracting paying visitors to farms by offering farm tours, harvest festivals, hospitality services (such as bed and breakfast), petting zoos, and other attractions. Farms that provide agritourism services also typically produce agricultural commodities and may provide a variety of other goods and services. Some agritourism businesses directly market: fresh foods to individual consumers and/or retailers, value added agriculture (such as the production of beef jerky, fruit jams, jelly, preserves, cider, wine, and floral arrangements), and custom work (such as machine hire and hauling for other farms). These are considered nontraditional or niche activities that involve innovative uses of farm resources. Research suggests education and connections to the broader economy are associated with farmers adoption of such activities.

Based on the 2012 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), compared with other farmers, agritourism business owners are more likely to have a college degree (45 percent versus 25 percent), use the Internet for business (78 percent versus 64 percent), and draw on paid management advice (72 percent versus 42 percent). Aside from their diverse farm and nonfarm activities, agritourism businesses vary greatly in size. Compared with other U.S. farms, agritourism businesses are much larger on average (2,140 acres versus 387). But this difference is largely because the largest one fifth of the agritourism businesses operate large ranches (8,740 acres on average) with relatively little cropland. They control 84 percent of farmland and more than half of woodland operated by all agritourism businesses. As they have large areas of woodland (363 acres on average), hunting and fishing are likely agritourism activities on these farms, but some of them may operate dude ranches, provide overnight stays, or offer ranch tours, hay rides, or rodeos. The average size of the remaining four fifths of agritourism businesses (433 acres) is only a little larger than the average of all other U.S. farms. Furthermore, 20 percent of agritourism farms operate less than 50 acres.

Agritourism based businesses have quite diverse sources and amounts of income. These farms earn \$713 million from agritourism, \$349 million from sales of fresh foods directly to consumers, and \$63 million from custom work. On average, agritourism businesses obtain 20 percent of their gross farm income from niche activities, including 7.1 percent from agritourism. Average income from

agritourism is \$20,670, but 51 percent of these farms earn less than \$5,000, and only 1 out of 7 earn over \$25,000 from agritourism activities.

### Agri-Tourism in Kansas

Kansas Agritourism businesses have been around for a number of years. It is only recently that this industry was given an official name and strategically promoted to tourists.

The Kansas Agritourism Promotion Act was signed into law in 2004. This act promotes the growth of agritourism in Kansas. Benefits of the legislation include:

1. The creation of a registration process through which the state can assist in the promotion of agritourism operations.
2. Limiting the liability through signage, which advises visitors of inherent risks.

A great resource for Meadowlark Extension District residents to learn more about Agri-tourism can be found on the web at: [www.travelks.com/industry/agritourism](http://www.travelks.com/industry/agritourism)

### Starting a Agri-Tourism Based Business

The following checklist can serve as a guide for planning your new business:

1. Consider your business structure (sole proprietorship, limited liability company, partnership, etc.
2. Register your business with the Secretary of State's Office and receive a Federal Tax Identification Number (FEIN) for tax filing purposes.
3. Register your business with the Kansas Department of Revenue and receive a tax identification for remitting sales tax.
4. If providing lodging or serving food to your guests, contact with the Kansas Department of Agriculture for the proper inspection and licensing requirements.
5. Purchase Liability Insurance coverage.
6. Research zoning requirements in your county.
7. Prepare business and marketing plans for your company.



## Crops and Soil, Horticulture

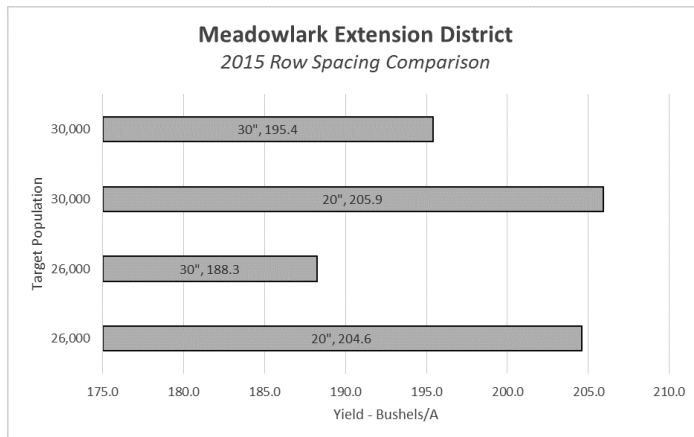
David Hallauer

### Plot Results

Year two of a multi-year corn row spacing study is in the books. Results are included in the chart below.

The high yielding environment was again conducive to narrower row spacing. For a copy of data from both years, please contact a district extension office.

Special thanks to plot cooperators. Domann Farms and Gigstad Farms in northeast Jefferson County.



### Recommended Plants for Kansas

There aren't a lot of plants that aren't adapted to Kansas, but there are some! Even within adapted plants, everyone recognizes the fact that some are just more adapted than others.

To help sort through the myriad offering of plants available, the K-State's Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources hosts a website with a number of plant selection resources available. You can find it at: [www.hfrr.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=731](http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=731). On it, you will find links to a wide variety of plant selection resources that include everything from vegetable garden to rose varieties. The tree selection resources are broken out by area of the state and further broken down to include selection resources by tree size. Low water use plants and ornamental grass recommendations are also included.

The Prairie Star recommendations for annual and perennial flowers, including a picture gallery can be found at this site as well. This is a great resource to consult before selecting planting material! Check it out today!!

### Conservation Tree Order Forms Available Now!

The order window for conservation trees from the Kansas Forest Service will soon be here! Order forms are available in District Offices or online at [www.kansasforests.org/conservation](http://www.kansasforests.org/conservation). If a windbreak planting is in your plans, check out *Windbreaks for Kansas*, available from your District Office and give us a call to chat about planning!

### Rental Rates

Two of the biggest budget items in the most recent Corn Cost Return Budget published by the K-State Department of Agricultural Economics are land charge/rent and custom hire/machinery expense. Each comprise about 20 percent of the expense side of the budget. With that in mind, and with crop production budgets tighter than they've been in many years, information to help you make sound economic decisions is more necessary than ever.

For lease information, check out the K-State Agricultural Economics page dedicated to land lease resources at: [www.agmanager.info/farmmgmt/land/lease/default.asp](http://www.agmanager.info/farmmgmt/land/lease/default.asp). The site includes great resources to help you start to evaluate what a fair and equitable leasing arrangement looks like.

Since a statewide custom rates survey is no longer undertaken, information is available only in the form of projections, with the last year of projections done in 2014. This information is still available at K-State's Ag Econ's [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) website for you to check out. Surrounding states do continue surveys. Nebraska does their survey every other year, with information posted at: [cropwatch.unl.edu/economics/customrates](http://cropwatch.unl.edu/economics/customrates). Iowa's can be accessed at: [www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/fm1698.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/fm1698.pdf).



## Livestock, Natural Resources

### Jody Holthaus

#### Dairy Day Hosted in Seneca

January 29, 2016 will be the date of the K-State Dairy Day at the Nemaha County Community Building, located at 1500 Community Drive in Seneca. The event starts at 10 a.m. An update on research projects will be presented. The noon meal is sponsored by the Kansas Dairy Council at no charge, but meal reservations are requested by January 25 by calling the Meadowlark Extension District office in Seneca at 785-336-2184.

#### Women in Agriculture

This first-time event is co-sponsored with the Nemaha County Soil Conservation District. The evening event will take place on January 14 at 6 p.m. at the Nemaha County Community Building. Some excellent presenters will kick off this event. Paige Pratt who moved farm and family back to Kansas to take over her family's farm. She will have a lot of good information on transitioning the farm.

Join cattle rancher Debbie Lyons-Blythe and Chef Alli for an evening of fun, entertainment, and engagement! Together these two will bring insight and perspective on the importance of encompassing our own unique voices to share the story of agriculture.

Debbie will speak about how and why her love of land and her family ranch has empowered her to advocate for agriculture everywhere she goes, reaching out to a congregation of consumer audiences all across the United States, helping them understand the importance of beef cattle and proper grazing techniques that ensure sustainability of future generations on the ranch.

As your Kitchen Crusader, Chef Alli loves to stir up a love of farm fresh cooking. Passionate about food, she knows that building trust and rapport with her audiences is of utmost importance in order to gain opportunities to

engage with consumers about food and cooking — the perfect lead-in for conversations about farming.

Get ready to laugh (and cry!) as these two crazy, no nonsense women help you understand why there's never been a more important time for all of us to share what we do on the farm, how we do it, and creative ways you can use even the most simple, authentic things around you to do so. Give a new meaning to "Speaking under pressure." Supper will be provided by sponsors, reservations are requested by calling Dana Schmelzle at 785-336-2184 Ext. 3.

#### Kansas Land Values

The 2014 average land values for non-irrigated cropland for our area of the state was \$5133/acre, and for pasture \$3095. As the farm economy is slowing down with lower commodity prices and livestock prices, cash rental rates are expected to be lowered as well. What farmers can pay for cash rent for non-irrigated crop land, has dropped significantly. In 2014, that figure was \$167.65 per acre, due to historical commodity prices. That same figure for 2015 was \$119.50 per acre, but the project figure for 2016 is \$78.24. As most contracts are 3 to 5 years, farmers may be locked in for the short term. Cash rental rates will gradually decline. Pasture rental rates are at historic levels, driven by cattle prices, as cattle prices are now lower, the rental rates should follow downward. Forecast for 500 pound calves next year will be 13.4 percent lower and in 2017, another 1.8 percent lower. (Kansas Agricultural Land Value, Mykel Taylor and Livestock Production Economics Update, Dustin L. Pendell)

The KS Ag Economic website, [agmanager.info](http://agmanager.info) has excellent resources for landowners and Farmers. There you can find, crop budgets and leasing information as well as a new pasture lease pricing tool, visit at: [www.AgManager.info](http://www.AgManager.info)



## Food and Nutrition -Financial Management

Cindy Williams

### What You Need to Know to Protect Your Passwords

It's time to have a word about your password. Many of us use the same sign-on and password over and over for online accounts. That is why phishing scams, which often seek password information, are so successful. Once a criminal has your password for one account, it's highly likely you used the same sign-on information for other accounts.

The IRS, state revenue departments and the tax industry have teamed up to combat identity theft in the tax arena. Their theme: Taxes. Security. Together. Working in partnership with you, we can make a difference.

That's why we have all agreed to new stronger standards that you will see when you access your tax software products for 2016 and file your taxes. These include:

- A password that has eight or more characters, including upper case, and lower case letters as well as numbers and a special character.
- New features include a timed lockout and limits on unsuccessful log-in attempts.
- You must complete three security questions.
- Tax software partners must verify email addresses. In many cases, this means a PIN will be sent to your email or text that you must use to verify your address before you can proceed with your tax software.

These are a few of the new protections in place for the 2016 tax season to protect you from identity thieves. Most of the protections they are taking may not be visible to you, but they will add layers of protection during tax time.

While they are taking these steps, it's a good time for you to think about the passwords with a mix of letters, numbers, and special characters. Do not use the same password for multiple accounts. The longer, the better. And change your passwords regularly.

### Winter Weight Gain

From Thanksgiving feasts to Super Bowl celebrations in January, our holidays and traditions seem to center on food.

Adults of average weight gained one pound over the holidays from mid-November into early January, according to the New England Journal of Medicine. People who were overweight at the start of the study gained more: five pounds on average over the winter months.

Those who reported little physical activity and felt hungrier gained the most weight during the winter months. The researchers studied other factors, such as stress, emotional disorders, and attendance at parties, but these were not associated with weight gain. And contrary to logic, those who were trying to lose weight over the holidays did not gain or lose more than those trying to change their weight.

Research has repeatedly pointed to exercise as being vital in managing body weight. Physical activity also helps control the appetite and reduces feelings of hunger. Importantly, during the holiday season, physical exertion helps clear the mind, reduces stress and allows time for reflective thought.

Making time to exercise does not have to be burdensome, complete with exercise clothes and a workout routine. Going for a short walk several times a day is a great way to increase physical activity during the winter months. If you have children or a dog, consider taking them with you on your walks. On the other hand, cold weather and slick outdoor conditions may call for indoor exercise, such as a stationary bicycling. In any case, remember that increasing physical activity is one good way to lessen the chance of gaining weight any time of the year.



## Family Life

Nancy Nelson

### The New Screen Time

The emergence of smartphone and tablet technology has brought the notion of screen time, once only applied to television, to virtually every aspect of modern life. Smartphones and tablets have become part of the culture, and parents need to make decisions about appropriate screen time for their families.

While limiting children's screen time is important, adults should also limit their screen time during family activities. Children and adults can benefit from being conscious of the amount of time they spend watching screens.

### Families with very young children

Screen time should be severely limited for very young children. Ideally they should have none before age 2. Young children's brains are developing rapidly, and they benefit most from interpersonal communication with others.

This is not just an early childhood phenomenon – adults are likewise more stimulated by interacting with others. However, adults' brains are not developing the number of connections, nor at the rate that young children are, and thus human interaction in early childhood is much more important. The number of neural connections dictates the amount of cognitive capacity we have, so building more connections early is crucial.

### Families with children aged 6 to 17

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents create "screen-free" zones at home for all their children. The reality is that children of all ages can benefit from alternative activities to screen time. Crossword puzzles, reading books, hobbies such as model building or

learning to play a musical instrument, and playing outdoors are all tremendously beneficial alternatives.

### Adults with children

Adults are just as drawn to screens as children, and do not have the benefit of an authority figure watching out for them. A good rule for phone and tablet use is to put them away whenever you are with your children.

There are always alternatives for screen time. Family board games can be a fun, engaging, and entertaining way to spend time together. When the days are long, and there is lots of daylight in the evenings, few activities can compare to playing outside as a family. These activities can be as simple as kicking a soccer ball or playing in the yard with the family pet, if you have one. If it is safe for you and your family, walking around your neighborhood can be a fun way to spend time. Making sure you talk about what you are seeing and experiencing is an important aspect of this time together.

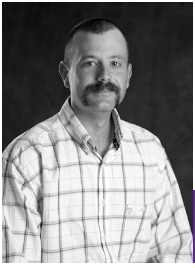
Remember that you are the model for your children. If you do not control your screen time, it sends a strong message that they need not control theirs. While there is no escaping the new screen time, you can navigate this new reality with sound practices. More information is available in the Extension publication below.

Source: *The New Screen Time: Beyond Television and into the Future*, MF3248.

Authors: Bradford B. Wiles, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Early Childhood Development and Laura Schachtner, Graduate Research Assistant, Marriage and Family Therapy Program School of Family Studies and Human Services, Kansas State University.



April 3 – May 28, 2016



## 4-H Youth Development

Ross Mosteller

### Inspiring the Next Generation, Through the 4-H Ag Innovators Experience

National 4-H Council and Monsanto Company continue their efforts to inspire the next generation through 4-H Ag Innovators Experience. Through this program, the organizations are partnering to help youth develop 21st century workforce skills necessary to meet the needs of a growing population.

The 4-H Ag Innovators Experience connects STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and agriculture through a fun, interactive activity that engages young people. In 2016, the activity will focus around honey bees and pollinators. Youth who participate as a Teen Leader will receive an iPad to use during the grant and after successful completion of the grant, they will be able to keep their iPad!

Launched in 2014, the 4-H Ag Innovators Experience successfully reached more than 10,000 youth in urban, suburban and rural area across select states in the Midwest. Kansas was an active participant in 2015 and will again be involved in 2016.

“Within the next 40 years, population trends project the world population will grow by 2 billion and this will create new environmental challenges that the leaders of tomorrow must be prepared to address,” said Jennifer Sirangelo, President and CEO, National 4-H Council. “As a valued supporter of 4-H Monsanto has been invaluable in helping to educate the next generation of farmers, scientists and other ag professionals.”

A key element of 4-H Ag Innovators Experience is to engage teens who are emerging as young leaders in their

community and provide them with the opportunity to work with their peers and younger kids on the activity

The selected teen leaders will engage in in-depth training and be responsible for rolling out activity to approximately 10,000 youth (nationwide) through 4-H clubs, after-school programs and summer camps. After completing the activity, participants can create a video to demonstrate potential applications in their local communities. Four winners will be chosen, and each will receive a cash award.

In 2015 Meadowlark Extension District had two youth participate in this activity—Samantha Beauchamp and Elizabeth Roach. Elizabeth, from Hoyt Livewires was one of the 2015 4-H Ag Innovators Experience video contest winners, showing how to provide real world agriculture science solutions!

Elizabeth has won a \$5,000 award for showing how young people can be the solution to feeding a growing global population through applying team work, communication, agricultural and science skills! A check was presented at the 4-H Achievement event in Holton. Congratulations to Elizabeth and all youth who participated in this challenge!

Kansas is looking for youth ages 15-19 to become teen leaders for the “Honey Bee Challenge.” If this is something of interest, please contact your local Extension office. We would be happy to share with you the specifics of this program. As evidenced last year, our local youth have the ability and capacity to do great things when put to the challenge!

Learn more at: [www.4-h.org/about/partners/monsanto](http://www.4-h.org/about/partners/monsanto)



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# Meadowlark District

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## **Fair Dates 2016**

**Nemaha County Fair**  
July 29 – Aug 1

**Jackson County Fair**  
July 25 – 29

**Jefferson County 4-H Fair**  
August 1 – 4