K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District News

May 2024

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Open Monday-Friday
8:00 AM-Noon; 12:30-4:30 PM

Closed for designated holidays

www.meadowlark.ksu.edu

4-H Youth Development

National Volunteer Week: A Thank You to 4-H Volunteers

National Volunteer Week is celebrated annually during the third week of April, and this year it is from April 16th to the 22nd. This week is about highlighting the individuals who offer their resources of time, money, and knowledge to better our community.

In the Meadowlark District, consisting of Jackson, Jefferson, and Nemaha Counties, there are 220 registered volunteers, and countless others that have yet to register! These selfless individuals assist our offices in doing a multitude of activities.

Volunteer positions include, but are not limited to: club leaders, project leaders/ superintendents, fair board, Program Development Committee (PDC), and District Extension Board. Below is a brief description of responsibilities for each position.

- **Club leaders** ensure that their 4-H community club has the necessary leadership to provide positive learning experiences for youth. They are the individuals who organize club meetings, work as a liaison for the club and Extension office, field questions from club members, and so much more!
- **Project leaders** provide leadership and training in a specific subject area to a smaller group of 4-H'ers that are interested in that project area. Project leaders organize project learning experiences, conduct and teach project meetings, and are hands-on during the fair assisting youth, parents, and judges alike!
- The **fair board** is vital to 4-H success. They offer the facilities and grounds that we often use to conduct the fair and meetings throughout the year. They are working constantly throughout the year to upkeep facilities, gather fair displays, and they (or a committee appointed by them) are responsible for the livestock premium sales.
- The **PDC** is an appointed position that offers feedback and ideas to agents. They are responsible for assisting all agents in programming, offering new ideas, providing support, and having a deep understanding of the needs of the local communities.
- The **Extension Board** is the governing body of the Meadowlark District. They are responsible for creating and adhering to our budget, conducting performance reviews, hiring, and have oversight of our educational programming.

With that being said, we want to offer a heart-felt thank you to all our volunteers across the district! We understand you aren't always in the spotlight, or recognized for your efforts, but you are the backbone and the engine that makes 4-H go! We could not offer the programs that we do without your help.

The Meadowlark District is always looking for new volunteers as well. Please call your local office if you want to become involved in helping achieve the 4-H motto "To Make the Best Better."

David Key, *Extension Agent/Director*

The Four Major Roles in a Board Meeting

When asked who has the most "power" in a meeting, or whose responsibility it is to make sure a meeting is successful most people will answer, "It is the chair's responsibility." But that answer is simply not true. Members of a board have as much responsibility in making sure that a meeting is successful as the chair. Moreover, they have as much power as the chair to make sure the meeting runs smoothly. They also have as much power as the chair when it comes to making decisions – keep in mind that in a deliberative assembly each person's opinion is weighted equally through a vote. One of the chair's responsibilities is to protect the rights of the members and members have a right to the enforcement of the rules. The responsibilities of being a member start with being familiar with parliamentary rules, allowing and supporting the presiding officer in facilitating the meeting, and participating appropriately. Other responsibilities of board members include:

1. **Attend Meetings—**Presumably, when someone decides to be on a board, they will make the commitment to attend meetings. When members do not attend meetings, productivity of a board can be derailed. Decisions are delayed, information is not shared and assignments are not completed. Before people volunteer or run for election to be on a board, they should be clear with themselves, their family and their employer about the time commitment to do the job and fulfill their obligations.
2. **Have a Working Knowledge of Rules and other Governing Documents—**It is as much a member's responsibility as it is the chairperson's to have read the rules that govern the organization. This includes state laws the organization may be bound to, all the way down to adopted board policies. Naturally, a member cannot be an expert and know everything about all the different aspects of the organization, but should at a minimum know where to find the information. Board members are most successful when given an orientation to the organization prior to or at the beginning of their term. A notebook or website where important documents are stored and readily accessible is extremely useful.
3. **Prepare Reports and Read Meeting Materials Ahead of Time (be prepared—**When members are not prepared, they waste meeting time by asking for clarification on what was already sent to them ahead of time. It is important to take the work on a board seriously as well as have respect for other members on your board by being prepared to participate. In addition, part of being professional is being prepared with written reports of your own activities when requested. Reviewing the meeting materials in advance enables a member to get questions answered that might only be important to that member before the meeting, and also provides a heads up to staff to be prepared to be prepared with additional information that may be helpful to the entire board when they come together to deliberate.
4. **Participate in Deliberation—**If you do not participate in discussion, then the board will not head your position. Help the chairperson out by offering the dissenting viewpoint if it has not already been presented. However, if your point of view on an issue has already been expressed, there is no need to repeat it unless you need to make a motion to change the proposal in some way. Participating in deliberation also means to be respectful of fellow board members by paying attention to them as they speak and following proper debate rules as adopted by your board.

A meeting is only successful with contributions from active and prepared members of the group. The members have just as much obligation as the chair in making sure that a meeting is successful, the rules are followed and that the group gets something done.

David Hallauer, *Extension Agent*

Corn GDD Calculator

The High Plains Regional Climate Center has an interesting webpage where it hosts what is termed **Corn GDD Tool** (https://hprcc.unl.edu/agroclimate/gdd.php). In short, it allows you to custom input management parameters (planting date, hybrid maturity, location –limited to locations with data points…, etc…) to provide an estimate based on growing degree days (GDDs) of when corn will reach specific growth stages. If nothing else, it can be an interesting look at when hybrids might mature, etc… After parameters are entered, go to the Data tab. There you can see GDD estimates for the current year as well as an average over a 30-year time frame (1981 - 2010) and ranges for when specific growth stages occurred during those years. This tool can also help predict when to start scouting for diseases and potentially fungicide applications if diseases become an issue.

Departure from Normal Precipitation

Ever curious how recent moisture levels compare to normal over time? The Kansas Mesonet has a handy chart showing our departures from normal precipitation with the option to see how we're faring moisture wise over different time periods. Check it out at: https://mesonet.k-state.edu/precip/daily/#mtIndex=24&tab=chart-tab

While We're Talking Corn…Tar Spot Management Starts Now!

While we're most often looking for Tar Spot as we proceed through the growing season, it's never a bad idea to get a head start. For Tar Spot management, think back to what hybrids you've planted, then consider early scouting with a good knowledge of what Tar Spot is and what it looks like. Want an overview of 2023? Check out this resource from the Crop Protection Network: https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/publications/an-overview-of-tar-spot

Season of Use—Smooth Brome

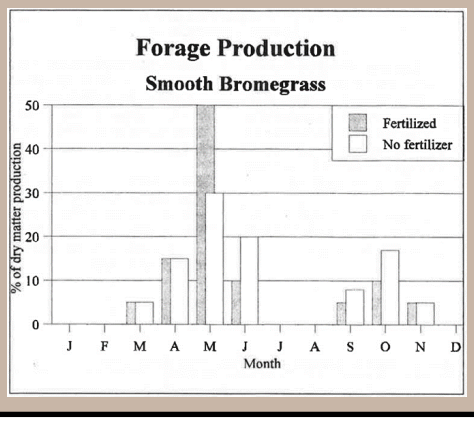
Smooth Bromegrass is the predominant species in most of our forage production systems. Over time, it's been shown to fit our growing season well and fertility management has allowed us to push production, particularly in some of our deeper soils.

Despite its 'fit', it's not perfect. Fertility needs have increased. It likes plenty of moisture, and season of use must be understood so we can best manage it for the current season and beyond. So, while we're a little late to do much about fertility for this growing season and moisture will be what it will be, understanding season of use can still be valuable.

This graphic shows just how 'spring loaded' brome production is. With almost 70 percent of the forage's production coming through May, it's easy to see why spring moisture levels are so important. With those levels facing some deficiencies (see inset), there's potential for us to see slowed or uneven production at the least, and maybe even the potential for reduced production altogether. This will be particularly true if temperatures trend above normal through the early part of the growing season, forcing brome to push more quickly through its growth stages to reach reproduction.

This production graph also underscores why grazing management is increasingly important as we head into mid-late summer – when production (mostly based on temperature, but moisture as well…) is next to nothing. In many cases, the grass stays ahead of grazing early in the summer, but that becomes a much greater issue as we proceed through the season. A careful observation of grass production and grazing conditions, particularly if recent moisture doesn't help our departure from normal, will be important as we progress through the growing season.

In the 'for what it's worth department', a complementary graph in the same reference this graph came from (***Kansas Grazingland Management*** Handbook) shows huge differences in production as a function of fertility and soil depth. If you want to see more on that, check out the companion article on the topic in my blog post at: https://blogs.k-state.edu/meadowlarkagronomy/.



Teresa Hatfield, *Extension Agent*

Do You Have Prediabetes?

If you have prediabetes, your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as having type 2 diabetes. Approximately 98 million American adults, about 1 in 3, have prediabetes. More than 80% are not aware that they have it. Having prediabetes puts you at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

You are more likely to get type 2 diabetes if you are too heavy (overweight or obese), spend a lot of time sitting or lying down, have a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes, are African American, Hispanic, Native American, or Asian American, are 45 or older, or have had gestational diabetes while pregnant. Just because you have risk factors for diabetes doesn't mean that there is nothing you can do. Evidence suggests that getting active and losing weight can reduce your risk of developing diabetes. People who get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week are less susceptible to developing diabetes. People who lose at least 5% of their body weight also experience a reduced risk.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a Prediabetes risk test that you can take to see if you are at risk. Follow this link to take the test: https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html. You may have prediabetes and not have any symptoms. It is important to talk to your healthcare provider if you believe you may be at risk for prediabetes.

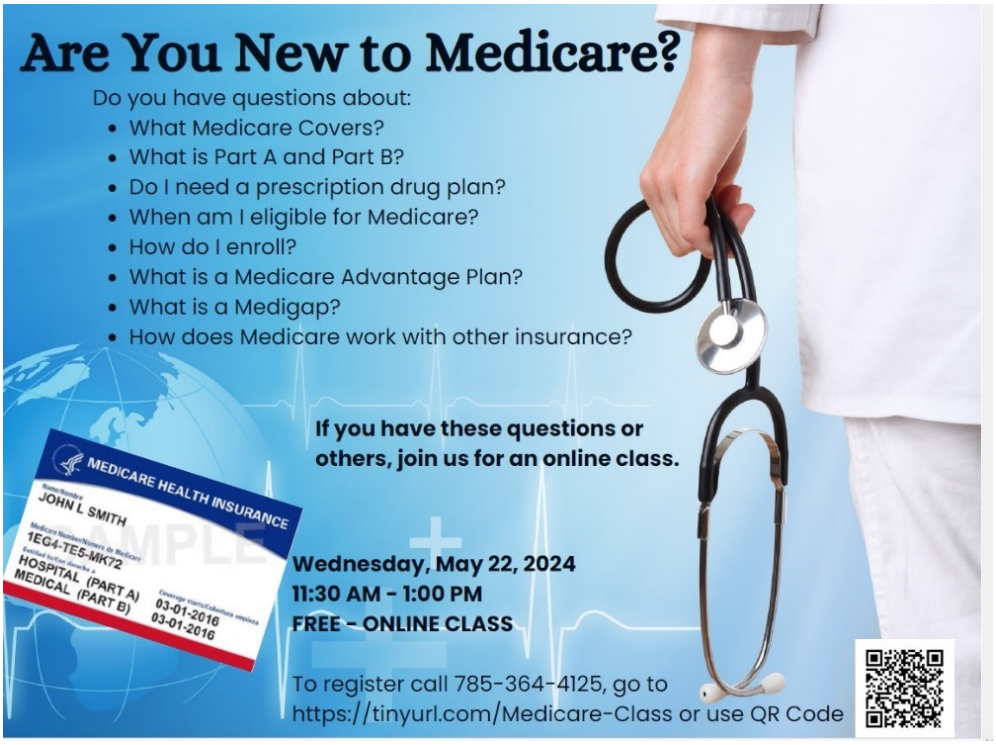
New to Medicare Decisions

As you approach Medicare eligibility, things can seem complicated. Unlike traditional insurance, Medicare comprises many parts (A, B, C, and D) that comprise the total healthcare package. It is important that you understand how all these parts work together and decide when the right time is for you to enroll.

When first enrolling in Medicare, many considerations must be made. Are you using active employer insurance through yourself or your spouse? Are you a veteran and eligible for VA benefits? Are you a retired service member and may be eligible for Tricare for Life? Are you retired, and your employer offers a retirement plan to supplement your Medicare? You may have several different options based on the answers to these questions.

On May 22, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. I will be offering a Medicare Options class online. This class will help you to understand how Medicare works and what it covers. The class will include information on Part A (Hospital), Part B (Medical), Part C (Medicare Advantage), and Part D (Prescription Drug). We will also discuss the other insurance that works with Medicare, including Medigap insurance coverage. I will discuss programs that can help pay for Medicare costs, such as the Medicare Savings Program and Extra Help through Social Security.

You must register to be able to attend this class. Please use the QR code to the right or go to https://tinyurl.com/Medicare-Class to register. Because it will be offered online, you will need a device with audio, video, and a mic (for questions). Registered participants will receive a link to the class.



Cindy Williams, *Extension Agent*

Traveling with Kids This Summer

- **Activity Box/Bag—**Inside the bag/box is a great place to stash activity books, toy cars or dolls, crayons, and markers from home. A book bag or a plastic container with a lid will hold a lot of entertainment.
- **Small travel kits---**Do a little shopping before the trip (without the kids) for some interactive quiet games or books that can be stashed in your carry-on. Give one at the beginning of the trip once everyone is settled and the trip is underway. Reserve a second for later in the trip, **so** when the child(ren) becomes bored there is something new to play with. Great items to include are books with magnetic pieces, sticker books, small video games, or travel versions of board games.
- **Make a list---**Start with a list of car games that you played as a child. Games like 20 Questions, I Spy, The Alphabet Game, and even License Plate ID can help entertain the kids. Also make a list of fun silly songs that the whole family can sing in the car.
- **Travel at night---**If a long trip and young children are involved, consider traveling at night. This way the kids will sleep through the trip, just make sure that the driver isn't tired and has company to keep him or her awake.

Fruit Smoothies (source K-State Research and Extension)

1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt
1 medium apple, peeled, seeded & cut up
1/2 medium banana, peeled & cut up
1/2 cup ice cubes

Directions:

1. In a blender, combine yogurt, fruit and ice cubes.
2. Cover and blend until smooth.
3. Pour into glasses and serve.
4. Cover and refrigerate any leftovers within two hours.

Makes 2 servings: 1 cup each; 145 calories, >1g. fat, 30 g. carbohydrates, 7 g. protein, 0 mg. cholesterol, 85 mg. sodium, 2 g. dietary fiber. Daily values: 20% calcium.
Source: Kansas Research and Extension

Grilling Safely

Grilling outdoors is often one of the most anticipated activities of the summer. Grilling can be a healthy and low-fat way to cook your favorite meals. To avoid food-borne illness and accidents, follow these tips to stay safe and prepare healthy meals.

As simple as grilling can be, it is important to remember building, personal, and food safety rules. Thousands of fires and injuries are reported each year due to grilling accidents. Keep these safety tips in mind:

- Propane and charcoal grills should be used outdoors only. Grilling inside can cause a fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- The grill should be placed at least 10 feet away from the house.
- Check the propane grill tank hose for leaks before using the grill.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill until the grill has cooled.
- Never leave a grill unattended.

Here are seven tips to make grilling a happy, healthy, and nutritious experience:

1. Always wash your hands and wrists with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before, during and after handling food. Bacteria thrive in moist environments, so it is important to remove all moisture on your hands by drying them thoroughly.
2. Use separate utensils, cutting boards, and serving dishes for raw and cooked foods. Thoroughly wash each item that has come in contact with raw foods with warm, soapy water before reusing. Never serve grilled food on the same platter that held raw meat, poultry, or fish. This is considered cross-contamination and can result in yourself and others becoming sick.
3. Never thaw or marinate food at room temperature. Marinate foods in the refrigerator. If you plan to use the marinade on the cooked food as a sauce, reserve a portion separately before adding the raw meat, poultry, or seafood. However, if the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.
4. Keep raw foods that will be grilled such as meat away from foods that will not be cooked such as a salad.
5. Vegetables can easily be grilled. Large vegetables such as corn on the cob can be placed directly on the grill. Wrap chopped vegetables in aluminum foil before grilling.
6. Make sure your grill is hot before you put food on it. If you are using a charcoal grill, preheat coals for at least 20 to 30 minutes before adding food.
7. Use a food thermometer to make sure food reaches the correct internal temperature.

Grilling is a great way to prepare healthy food for family and friends. Keep the tips above in mind as you prepare your next meal on the grill.

Laura Phillips, *Extension Agent*

Spring Lawn Care

Lawn care can be difficult, and not all lawns require the same amount of care. If you are looking to spruce up your lawn, here are some tips and tricks for getting your lawn in better shape.

Types of Turfgrass

Before you determine a lawn maintenance plan, determine what kind of grass you have. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of turfgrass, and they both have differing needs. The first is **cool-season grasses**, which thrive in the spring and fall. The second is **warm-season grasses**, which thrive in the heat of the summer. Cool-season grasses include tall fescue, fine fescues, and blue grasses. Warm-season grasses include zoysia, Bermuda, and buffalo grass.

- **Seeding a cool-season lawn:**
  The best time to seed a cool-season grass is in September or early October. You can seed cool-season grass in early spring, but it will have more competition from winter annuals than it does in the fall.
- **Seeding a warm-season lawn:**
  Warm-season grasses establish best when seeded mid-May through July. If irrigation is not available, plant earlier in May. Planting too late in the season might not give the lawn enough time to establish before winter hits.

Fertilizer Amount

The amount of fertilizer depends on the exact type of grass, your soil, and your lawn expectations. Before fertilizing, we recommend doing a soil test, especially if you have not done one in the last three years. Odds are, you will only need nitrogen, not phosphorus or potassium. Phosphorus and potassium are used up at lower rates than nitrogen and should only be applied when a soil test tells you to. Most lawns can use at least 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet each year. Some lawns may benefit from more. To determine the amount of fertilizer, see our publication *Fertilizing Kansas Lawns,* https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf2324.pdf.

- **When to fertilize a cool-season lawn:**
  The most important time to fertilize a cool-season lawn is in September. The second most important fertilization is in November. You can fertilize a third time for optimal lawn health in May with a slow-release fertilizer.

  Avoid fertilizing before May. Cool-season grasses have a flush of growth in the spring, and adding nitrogen can cause it to grow too fast and exhaust its food reserves - which it will need to survive our hot summers.
- **When to fertilize a warm-season lawn:**
  Fertilize anytime past **May 15 and before August 15**.
  - ◊ If you fertilize too early in the year, you will mainly be helping the cool-season weeds take over. If you fertilize too late in the season, it will encourage new growth that will be susceptible to damage from colder fall temperatures.
  - ◊ If you fertilize too late in the season, it will cause soft new growth to form which is more susceptible to winter damage.

Weed Removal

For both types of lawn, a pre-emergent in mid-April can prevent crabgrass from germinating. Do not apply a pre-emergent if you are seeding the lawn.

While it might be tempting to go out and spray for henbit or chickweed, these are winter annuals and will die off before summer hits. The best time to combat winter annuals is in the fall. You can apply a broadleaf selective herbicide, such as those with 2,4-D, MCPP, or Dicamba in October through early November. During these months, winter annuals are moving resources from the top of the plant down to the roots, meaning that they are going to transport the herbicide you spray on their leaves down to their roots as well, which will kill the plant.

Remember to always follow the instructions on the back of an herbicide package and avoid spraying on windy days or near desirable landscape plants that may be susceptible to herbicide damage.

Ross Mosteller, *Extension Agent*

Need an Alternate Water Source?

April showers bring May flowers, but what happens when those showers don't come? The state of Kansas has been in a period of longer term, varying levels of drought. Even though there has been moisture over the last year, many ponds - which often serve as livestock water sources - have been declining in quality and quantity. Add to this fact are efforts to use improved grazing strategies, such as intensive rotational or paddock grazing, livestock producers need dependable and economically alternative methods of providing water to livestock.

In addition, efforts to improve water quality have resulted in an emphasis on the establishment of buffer strips and riparian zones along streams. In most cases, the establishment of these zones requires the exclusion of livestock. Livestock producers who rely on streams to provide water for their animals must develop alternative watering systems before they can rotate animals into grazing paddocks that do not adjoin streams or ponds, or before they can implement best management practices that require livestock exclusion from streams.

Several options are available to producers when choosing a livestock watering system. These systems can be divided into three basic types: direct access, gravity flow and pressure systems. The best system type for a particular producer will depend on many factors, including site layout, water requirement, availability and cost of utility water and electricity, as well as water source and location.

To address all these questions and considerations, a new K-State Research and Extension publication provides basic descriptions of some livestock watering system alternatives, and discusses some of the positive and negative aspects of each. *Waterers and Watering Systems: A Handbook for Livestock Producers and Landowners* is a comprehensive manual representing years of practical work in this area by the Watershed Specialists from the Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE), https://www.kcare.k-state.edu/index.html. The publication can be found at https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/s147.pdf.

Calving Distribution

How did the calving season go this year? For some you're likely done with calving and know exactly how things went for others who truly do calve in spring, you likely are into the process of calving. Regardless of the time of year for calving in your operation, using a calving distribution score card have give some indication of how you're herd preformed. So, how does one calculate calving distribution?

The first step is to determine contemporary groups of similar age and management. Start counting 21 days from the day the third full term calf was born. To learn more about this process, refer to the September 2019 issue of the KSU Beef Tips for a more in-depth discussion on calculation of calving distribution. A North Dakota State University Cow Herd Appraisal Performance Software (CHAPS) benchmark, https://www.ndsu.edu/chaps/benchmarks/, goal is for a minimum of 64% of cows calving in the first 21 days of the calving season, 89% by day 42 and be wrapped up with calving by day 63. Calves born earlier in the calving season tend to wean at heavier weights and heifers born early in the season, tend to calve earlier themselves as breeding females.

Take a few minutes to calculate this year's calving distribution and use it as you make decisions on management going forward. To best study your herd, benchmark in the same way, annually and note any adjustments to management. It takes time to correct problems from a prolonged calving season. If your calving distribution needs improvement, the best path is to plan ahead to meet nutrient needs and have cows in optimal body condition at calving. Body condition score is the biggest indicator of cow nutrition, which is a big driver for cow reproduction efficiency.

Standardized Perforance Analysis (SPA)		**Calving Distribution (%)**		**Calving Distribution—Cows (%)**	
Pregnancy (%)	94.3	Calves born within 21 days	63.5	Calves born within 21 days	60.6
Pregnancy Loss	0.77	42 days	88.8	Within 42 days	88
Calving (%)	93.6	63 days	96.6	Cow Age (years)	5.6
Calf Death Loss—based on the number of cows exposed (%)	3.2	After 63 days	3.4	Cow Weight at Weaning (pounds)	1430
Weaning (%) - Calf Crop	91.4	**Calving Distribution—Heifers (%)**		Cow Condition at Weaning	6.0
Female Replacement Rate (%)	16.3	Calves born early (before day zero=start of calving)	43.5	Culling (%)	13.1
Calf Death Loss—based on the number of calves born (%)	3.4	Within 21 days	77.1		
Age at Weaning (days)	188	Within 42 days	91.6		

K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

Meadowlark Extension District
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Holton, KS 66436

Address Service Requested

Publications & Resources For Sale

Family Account Book
Farm Account Book
Radon Kits
Predator Calls
IMR Calving Books
Pesticide Manuals
Geo Textile Fabric (12 1/2' wide-sold per linear ft.)
Neutroleum Alpha®
Mosquito Briquets
Soil Tests - Crop, Pasture, Lawn & Garden
Water Test Kits (pay SDK Labs, not us)
Field Record Books (free)

Items to Check Out

Soil & Hay Probes
Ear Taggers
Mole Trap
Freeze Branding Irons
Pesticide Manuals
Buzzers

Upcoming Events

May 22—Medicare Options Class, 11:30 AM via Zoom, register req.
June 3-5—Cooking Camp, Oskaloosa Methodist Church, register req.
June 20—Jams and Jellies Workshop, 1:00 PM, Seneca, register req.

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