

Meadowlark Extension District Annual Report for 2023

Since 2006 our Extension District has been in alignment with K-State Research and Extension and provides research-based information to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

Here are a few extension programming highlights we would like to share with you from 2023.

Sincerely,
David Key
Meadowlark Extension District Director

Global Food Systems/Water



Natural Resources - Pond Management Meeting

With demand for pond related questions being one of the highest priority question areas in the past, a pond management meeting was formulated and delivered in Ozawie in March. Will Boyer, Watershed Specialist, presented ways to better utilize ponds for livestock watering systems, with a focus on water quality. Joe Gerken, Aquatic Specialist gave a presentation on general pond basics and management including aquatic plant and animal management. Nearly twenty individuals from the region participated, asked good questions and participated in the discussion. Individual landowner pond visits were conducted

before and have since continued with many individuals. The sessions were recorded, and links shared via YouTube with those who were unable to attend as a future resource.



Help! My Plants Are Dying!

Our new District Horticulture Agent hosted her first house plant diagnostics workshop called “Help! My Plants are Dying!” After going over the basics of plants, we looked at common house plant problems and ways to solve them. Participants brought in their own houseplants that were struggling and we practiced diagnosing the issues together.

Organizers were incredibly excited to host my workshop. Throughout the workshop, participants were incredibly engaged. During the Q&A session after the presentation and demonstration, attendees asked about all kinds of things, from general questions about plant systems to specific issues they have seen. Participants remarked that they never realized all the possible issues a plant could face or how much went into a plant’s well-being and survival.

Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

4-H Enrollment Jump

The 2022-2023 4-H year saw an increase of 5.2% enrollment among active members with 748 youth members last year. Cloverbud enrollment was up 41% with a total of 79 youth enrolled in that program!



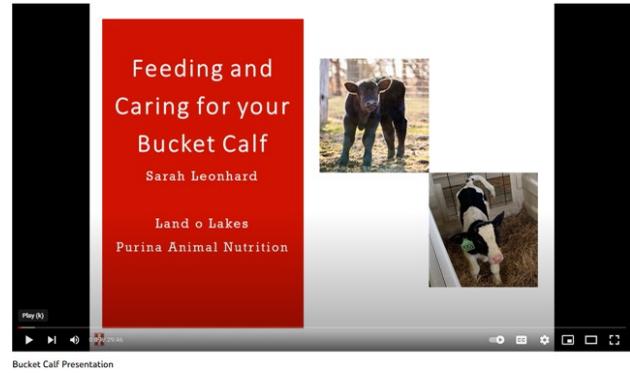
Safe Food Preservation Workshop for Youth Held

Two successful Jams and Jellies workshops were held this summer for youth. Workshops were conducted at Grantville and Holton. There was a total of 25 participants in both sessions. This workshop covered the science behind successful jams and jellies and the basics of food preservation. All participants put in to practice the principles of making jams and jellies by make 5 different sweet spread recipes. Emphasis was on low-sugar and no-sugar recipes. We also had two adults and two youth that served as volunteers to help these participants. Those participating in this workshop were able to try different methods of making sweet spreads like using a jam maker, preparing their own juice and purchasing juice.

Bucket Calf Workshop Supports Project Work

The Jefferson County Bucket Calf Project Leaders hosted a workshop in 2023 that reached 61 participants with another 71 participants viewing the online recorded version. Guest speakers presented the best practices for health, care, and nutrition for bucket calves. It was an incredibly beneficial meeting where youth and parents learned together!

After speaking with parents and kids, they were incredibly happy to receive the information, and they say it prepared them for the upcoming project year. I spoke to many people at the fair that were impressed by the overall improved condition of the calves from prior years. Most people mentioned that the bucket calves seemed healthier, stronger, and were a more vigorous, and thrifty.



Health

Walk with Ease

2023 had many successful programs that promoted health and wellness. In the spring, the Arthritis Foundation’s “Walk with Ease” program was held in Holton. Walk with Ease provides education about becoming more physically active for people with arthritis. The program helps them relieve pain and overcome barriers to being more physically active. Seventy-five percent reported that at the end of the program, they improved on how long and far they could walk. Participants reported valuing learning about arthritis, how to warm up with stretches before walking, and socializing with others. Participants met twice a week for six weeks.

One participant commented,

“I would like to thank you so much for your guidance and helpful tips during the Walk with Ease class. The class has been so beneficial for me! My goal is to continue doing exercises and walking. I have been surprised at how little effort the exercises take and how much more flexible and comfortable I have become by doing them. Thank you so much for teaching me!”



Health

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK)



Understanding Medicare and the other insurance that works with Medicare is challenging for many. The Meadowlark Extension District began offering Medicare counseling

through the Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) program in 2022. Counseling is available for those new to Medicare who have a question about a claim or need help during the annual open enrollment period in all three Meadowlark District Offices.

One hundred and nineteen beneficiaries were served through one-on-one counseling. Medicare Mini Facebook video posts provided information on the ins and outs of Medicare Advantage plans. Five interactive Medicare presentations were provided to the district. In 2023 during Medicare Open Enrollment beneficiaries saved \$48,670.64 in prescription drug costs by changing from their current drug plan to a more cost-effective option.

Since offering SHICK counseling in the district participants have saved nearly \$85,000 in prescription drug costs.

Walk Kansas 2023

Walk Kansas is a team approach to helping individuals to improve upon their lifestyle and become more active. As a group of six or less, team members help and encourage one another to walk across Kansas together, which is 423 miles. Research shows that two thirds of chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed by being physically active, such as with moderate walking. Walk Kansas helps to get you motivated and encourage the development of new healthy habits. Walk Kansas is a holistic disease prevention program that can be done right at home or in your own community.

In the Meadowlark Extension District, there were 49 teams that walked a total of 33,615 miles from March to May.



Global Food Systems

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in District



Regular updates were provided to farmers and industry contacts as part of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) outreach effort to scout for alfalfa weevil, tar spot in corn and fall armyworm in forages in 2023. Two years of proactive IPM scouting resulted in the first find of Tar Spot in corn field in Kansas and the second find of Soybean Gall Midge in Kansas. IPM efforts will become increasingly important as Frogeye Leaf Spot of soybeans fungus has been confirmed as resistant in Kansas to some classes of foliar fungicides and Tar Spot seems to overcome many of our more common active ingredients. Timely confirmation of diseases combined with appropriate control/management programs will be paramount in the years to come.

Community Vitality

Welcome A-Board

The Welcome A-Board online series was offered again this year, and we had a strong class with representatives from all three counties in the District taking the course. Noted increases in confidence from a 2.5 (agree) to a 4.0 (strongly agree) for understanding their role and responsibility as a new board member, having better skills to be an effective board member, and gaining more confidence to guide the work of their organization. Participants also indicated they felt better prepared to have more productive meetings and understand what should be on an agenda.

Meadowlark Extension District Governing Body Members

Jackson County	Jefferson County	Nemaha County
Henriette Area, Mayetta	Mike McNary, Meriden	Marcia Bauerle, Goff
Bruce Yonke, Holton	Kim Swearngin, Lawrence	Pam Deters, Baileyville
Carolyn Kennedy, Circleville	Susan Voelker, Valley Falls	Marya Haverkamp, Bern
Amy Pruyser, Hoyt	Julie Newman, Oskaloosa	Jan Rottinghaus, Seneca

Meadowlark Extension District Agents and Staff

Holton Office	Oskaloosa Office	Seneca Office
David Hallauer, Extension Agent Agriculture and Natural Resources	Cindy Williams, Extension Agent Family and Consumer Sciences	David Key, District Director and Extension Agent Community Vitality
Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent Family Community Wellness	Clay Roland, Extension Agent 4-H and Youth Development	Ross Mosteller, Extension Agent Agriculture and Natural Resource
Cara Robinson, 4-H Program Manager	Laura Phillips, Horticulture Agent	Debra Henry, 4-H Program Manager
Carol McManigal, Office Professional	Heather Roenne, 4-H Program Manager	Amy Haverkamp, Office Professional
Michelle Pentlin, Office Professional		

Meadowlark Extension District – Nemaha, Jackson, and Jefferson Counties

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