

MEADOWLARK EXTENT DISTRICT WEEKLY NEWS FROM AGENTS

Jody G Holthaus
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Livestock-Natural Resources

Big Bucks, Baby Beef and Basic Bees

Learning to manage my calendar is always a challenge. However, sometimes things are just out of your control! We have a few meetings coming up, and due to scheduling conflicts, deer season and other obligations, the meetings got all lined up in one week.

The first is our Deer School, originally planned for the first day of rifle season. That wasn't such a good idea, so it has been rescheduled for December 14th at 7 pm at the Jefferson county fair building in Valley Falls. Charlie Lee our KSU Wildlife Specialist will be the presenter. Charlie will talk everything deer, management for big antlers and nutrition, population and disease.

Secondly Baby Beef will be discussed at our Calving school on December 15th at 6:30 pm at the Jackson county fair building, or the NE Kansas Heritage Complex in Holton. I'm really excited to bring this school to this area. Last year we had a fantastic meeting in McLouth, this year we have two Veterinarians to present the information. The life size cow, which I think looks like a Hereford, has two rubber calves that they can manipulate in the different presentations you might see during calving season. They call her number 34, they insist she is a Simmental-Hereford cross, but at least one of the calves is black. Our new beef Veterinarian AJ Tarpoff and Dr Dave Rethorst will be presenting. Together they have over 45 years of experience calving cows. Give me a call if you'd like to attend, as space will be limited.

The last school is on Basic bee keeping, this is really growing in popularity. We are lucky to have Sharon Dobesh on staff, in the Entomology department. Sharon's interest and hobby with bees, is a real asset to the department. The Basic Bee School will be December 16th at 1:30 pm at the NE Kansas Heritage Complex, 12200 214th Road in Holton.

After my week of Big Bucks, Baby Beef and Basic Bees I will be ready for a BIG BREAK!
All programs are open to the interested public!

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David Hallauer
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

KSU Ag Economics Tools

Economics is seldom a one size fits all topic. Everyone has a little different budget – a little different rate that they are willing to pay for rent or other inputs. Purchasing a sprayer for one operation may not be as valuable as it for another. A ‘one size fits all’ answer isn’t going to cut it when making those types of decisions! That’s kind of the purpose of the tools available at our KSU Agricultural Economics website: www.agmanager.info .

For example: while we do offer a publication that can provide custom rates information, you may want to evaluate your custom rates fees to determine if they are economical for your information. A spreadsheet is available for that very purpose, and many others as well, including evaluating everything from owning your own sprayer to the economics of seeding a cover crop. All of them allow you to put in your numbers to get a number for you instead of a general average.

Rental rates are another huge discussion point between tenants and landlords. AgManager provides USDA-NASS information, as well as calculated averages from inputs used in their KSU Lease spreadsheet – as well as the spreadsheet itself! It might take you a little time to determine the appropriate inputs, but it can also help you better understand how to come to an equitable crop share or cash lease agreement.

Marketing newsletters, projected ARC or PLC farm program price levels, as well as many other budget and price tools are also available. Not comfortable with spreadsheets? Instructions are included with most spreadsheets to help. Don’t even want to mess with the computer – or can’t find something you are in need of? – don’t hesitate to contact your District Office for assistance.

The near term commodity price projections aren’t all that great. With tighter margins, an economic evaluation of varying production facets of your operation is never a bad idea. Take a look at these resources and see whether they might be of value to you!

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Cindy Williams
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Food and Nutrition, FNP

Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

Holidays are a time for festive gatherings with family and friends. They also are occasions when we see tempting treats everywhere we turn. It is easy to get off the health track, but that doesn't mean you have to put on blinders and forego the festivities. Whether you are the host or guest, you can still indulge with a few smart choices.

Here are some tips to help you stay healthy and enjoy the holiday season:

1. Eat five a day—choose appetizers that will help you meet the recommended guideline of five or more servings of vegetables and fruits a day.
2. Fill up on fiber—besides fruits and vegetables, choose hors d'oeuvres that contain whole grains and/or ones with legumes.
3. Limit high-fat choices—most traditional foods can be made low in fat. Turkey is very lean without skin. Gravy can be made without fat. Potatoes served without butter can be very healthful. Pumpkin pie is nutritious, but it is a high-fat dessert when whipped cream is added. Enjoy traditional holiday foods, but just eat smaller portions.
4. Add variety—a variety of foods help add more nutrients to your diet. Also, contrast flavors and textures—crunchy, smooth, hot, cold, and spicy—and strive for a good balance of all categories.
5. Don't forget to exercise—Burning off extra calories can be the key to keeping off weight during the holidays. Plan a brisk walk after meals, park farther away from stores when you go shopping, or walk around the mall before you begin to shop.
6. Sample, sample, sample—at holiday parties and at family meals, feel free to sample foods, just don't splurge. Fill your plate with fresh vegetables, fruit, low-fat dressings and slices of lean meat. Take small portions of high-fat, festive foods.
7. Listen to your body and eat only when you are hungry—Don't just eat because food is near.
8. Limit or avoid alcohol—Too many drinks can topple your will power, and it can add excess calories to your diet. In place of alcohol, drink water with lemon. Water can limit your appetite.
9. Be flexible in your diet—One “bad” meal should not leave you feeling guilty. Try to balance your calories over the period of a few days. Don't worry about just one meal or the food

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Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Family Life

When Driving Skills Change

Age alone does not determine driving ability. In fact, older drivers have a wide range of driving skills.

Your health status matters more when it comes to driving ability. Various health conditions and declines in visual, thinking, and physical abilities that occur with aging can often affect driving ability according to NIH Senior Health. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) are both part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Many people recognize when it's time to change their driving habits or stop driving. Others are more reluctant. Checking your driving skills and talking to family members, friends, or your doctor about your concerns can help clarify what changes, if any, are needed.

Have your skills changed? How do you know if your driving skills have declined? If you answer yes to any of the following questions you should check your skills. You may need to change your driving habits.

- Has a friend or family member expressed concern about your driving?
- Has your doctor advised you to limit driving for health reasons?
- Have you been pulled over by a police officer and warned about poor driving behavior?
- Have you been stopped by the police or had near misses or accidents in the last 3 years?
- Do you sometimes get lost on familiar routes?
- Do your thoughts wander when you drive? Do you become confused or angry?
- Do other drivers honk at you frequently?
- Do cars or people walking seem to appear out of nowhere?
- Do you have trouble moving your foot between the gas and brake pedals, or do you confuse the two?

It's important to be aware of your limitations and how they may affect your driving. If you're not sure you have a driving problem, ask a family member, friend, or doctor for advice. The most important thing is to be safe on the road.