

Jody Holthaus, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Livestock and Natural Resources

Sunshine on My Shoulder

You all remember that John Denver song? “Sunshine on My Shoulder, makes me happy!” I think we could all use some of that right now. I got to see John Denver in concert in Salina, I think it was about 1980, with a friend of mine, who now is my neighbor. It’s a small world. There is a real mood disorder, for some people when they don’t get enough sunlight. I read about a lady that brought some litigation to her employer because they would not give her a desk by a window. The article said it didn’t look like she had a chance of winning, the company she worked for was a Liability insurance company.

Speaking of liability, I’m sharing something I read in the [Angus Journal](#) awhile back: "Suppose you are the owner of some grazing land. It could be native range, improved pasture or wheat pasture. It might be a field with crop residue suitable for grazing. You own land with available forage, but possess no livestock. So you rent the land to another party who stocks it with cattle.

One dark night, the ringing telephone brings you out of bed. It seems your tenant’s cattle have breached the fence surrounding your property and wandered onto the adjacent highway. Actually, the fence wasn’t too great, but there hadn’t been any problems until this night. But now, at least one escaped critter has been party to a fender-bender. No one was injured, but the owner of a banged-up automobile is mad and threatening to sue somebody for damages. Who should be worried about potential liability for damage to the motorist’s car? Is it you, as owner of the land, or your tenant who actually owns the cattle? According to Terry Arthur, attorney for Kansas Farm Bureau, it’s hard to provide a pat answer since state and local laws can vary so much. However, both parties may have cause for concern.

“Generally, a landlord is responsible for maintaining a legal fence,” says Arthur, noting that most state fence law language says “landowners” must maintain legal fences when and where they are required. And responsibility for escaped cattle would rest with the landowner if he provided custom grazing services including care of the cattle on his property.

“But a tenant, as owner and manager of the livestock, is responsible for escaped cattle. It’s possible, however, that the complaint could come against both landlord and tenant,” Arthur adds. Other factors can muddy the water in situations like the one described, making it even more important for landowners and tenants to protect themselves.

“It’s incumbent upon a landlord to make clear who is responsible for fences on the property, in a lease with a tenant,” states Arthur, who recommends putting terms of the agreement in writing. A lease agreement can be an overriding factor if it clearly assigns duties and responsibilities, including responsibility for maintaining fence and preventing cattle escape and trespass." It may not give total immunity but it sure can help.

David Hallauer, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Crop and Soils, Horticulture

Tomato Trials

It won't be long! Tomato season is (just about!) upon us!!

One of the projects that Kansas Master Gardeners do on an annual basis is evaluate tomato varieties. They do so by taking measurements like average fruit size in ounces, fruit per plant, and the pounds of tomatoes that are produced per plant.

These varieties are also shared with University of Missouri Extension Horticulture Agent Tom Fowler, who is located in their Buchanan County (St. Joseph) Office. I've seen his trial and it is impressive! In addition to the varieties supplied from Kansas, Tom and his crew of Master Gardeners add some of their own.

The Kansas results are coming soon, but the combined 2015 and 2016 (two tough years in NW Missouri!) results from the Missouri trials are ready for publishing! The complete results are available from your District Office or by e-mailing me at dhallaue@ksu.edu. The results from some of our common varieties are pretty interesting!

The variety Celebrity has been fairly common over the years. It produced just under nine pounds of tomatoes per plant in two years in the MU trial. That easily puts it in the top 25% of producing varieties on a pounds per plant basis. The winner from the Buchanan County trial was our old standby JetStar with a yield of over 11 pounds of tomatoes per plant!

What was your top tomato variety in 2016? We don't have as much information as these trials provide, but it's always interesting to hear what others are planting! If you are willing to share, I'll accept one 'nomination' per person for your favorite 2016 tomato variety. If you can send a short e-mail (three sentence or less!) to dhallaue@ksu.edu noting the variety name and a short description about why it was your favorite, I'll compile (anonymously!) the list and we'll share it on the Meadowlark Extension District Facebook page. Entries are due February 15th!

Cindy Williams, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Food and Nutrition, FNP

Mindful Tips to Improve Your Eating Habits

The new year is well underway. Now is a great time to be mindful of our eating habits. Being aware of what we eat, and how much, is the first step for a healthier 2017. We could shed a few of those pounds we had gained, have less stress on our heart and lower our blood glucose level. Below are simple ideas to assure the first steps toward a healthy 2017:

Control Portions—Be mindful of how much food you put on your plate. Try eating smaller portions. This is very important during the winter months when we have a tendency to be less active.

Eat when you're hungry—Out of boredom, many of us go to the kitchen to see what is available to snack on. Judge your hunger on a scale of 1 to 10. Don't eat until you are truly hungry.

Plan—Have healthy snacks such as vegetables and fruits cut up in the refrigerator. If you are going to be gone most of the day, take a healthy snack with you. Snacks filled with fiber will keep you full longer.

Slow down—Take the time to taste each bite instead of eating so fast you didn't taste the food. Also, when sitting at a table concentrate on the meal and put your fork down between each bite.

Pay attention—Turn off the TV, computer and phone while eating and close the book and magazines. It is too easy to forget how much you are eating when you are paying attention to something else.

Keep a food diary—This is a strategy that helps control portion sizes and have people more MINDFUL of what they are eating every day. It works!

It is very important to keep our health in check. There are many things we can do to help ourselves. Being mindful of your eating habits and you will feel better, have more energy and enjoy the best and rest of 2017!

Nancy Nelson, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Spotting Charity Fraud

Many of us donate to charities we care about. But, I'll bet almost everyone has gotten solicited by charities – real ones and fake ones – to give money. We can be better prepared to spot the scams and make sure our donations go where we mean them to.

Many charities get in touch by phone, by mail, or by email. Donations are what keep charities in business. Which means many charities try to raise money from people like us. They might be groups you know and recognize but they might not. Many charities buy or trade fundraising lists, so they can find even more people who might contribute.

Charities and fundraisers are not covered by the Do Not Call list. They are allowed to call people but according to the Federal Trade Commission, if you tell them to put you on their Do Not Call list, they have to stop calling you.

How can you tell what charity is legitimate and what's a scam? Scammers want our money quickly. Charity scammers often pressure you to donate right away. They might ask for cash, and might ask you to wire money. Scammers often refuse to send you information about the charity, give you details, or tell you how the money will be used. They might even thank you for a pledge you don't remember making.

Here's what you can do: Take your time. Tell callers to send you information by mail. For requests you get in the mail, do your research. Is it a real group? What percentage of your donation goes to the charity? Is your donation tax-deductible? How do they want you to pay? Rule out anyone who asks you to send cash or wire money. Chances are, that's a scam.

The Federal Trade Commission talked with a scammer about how he got money from people. The scammer said he moved on when someone said no quickly. That's your best defense against any kind of scam.

We all have the strategies that work for us to get off the phone. What do you do? For people who can't just hang up, you could simply interrupt the caller's fundraising pitch and say, "No thanks" or "I'm not interested" and then hang up.

Some people make a policy of never making decisions about money based on a phone call. The fundraisers sometimes press you to make a pledge. In that case, you can repeat yourself and add, "If I get the information in the mail with a pledge filled in, I won't give you anything at all." Remember, it's your money. You get to decide how to spend it.

If you spot a scam, please report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Call the FTC at 1-877-382-4357 or go online: ftc.gov/complaint. Your complaint can help protect other people. By filing a complaint, you can help the FTC's investigators identify scammers and stop them before they can get someone's hard-earned money. It really makes a difference.