

March 2025

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Holton, KS 66436-1778
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Oskaloosa Office

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Oskaloosa, KS 66066-0326
785-863-2212

Seneca Office

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Seneca, KS 66538-1504
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District Office Hours:

Open Monday-Friday

8:00 AM-Noon; 12:30-4:30
PM

**Closed on designated
holidays**

Horticulture



Laura Phillips, Extension Agent

Meadowlark Master Gardener Updates

This past fall we had 34 trainees attend our Extension Master Gardener (EMG) training in the Meadowlark District. We had two in-person trainings, and the rest took place online over zoom. As we enter January, the Master Gardeners will now start planning out their volunteer work for 2025 and I will be planning for the next round of trainees to start in the fall.

What is an Extension Master Gardener?

Extension Master Gardeners, or EMGs, are volunteers who receive in-depth horticultural training. Every fall we offer EMG Basic Training to those who want to be EMGs. It consists of 40 hours of training led by a variety of specialists from K-State Research and Extension. After basic training, participants complete 40 hours of community service focused on horticultural education in their communities.

You can complete trainings by attending a watch party at one of our extension offices, by zooming in on your own, or watching the recordings of trainings after they are posted.

Returning participants complete 10 hours of advanced training in horticulture topics of their choosing and 30 hours of community service each year.



Extension Master Gardener Hotline

Do you have horticulture questions? We have answers! This spring we will launch our EMG Hotline where you can submit your horticulture questions for our trained Master Gardeners to answer. To submit a question to our Master Gardeners, you can call into one of our Meadowlark District offices, or you can submit your inquiry online at https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3KJQu35s9pqXfT0. The hotline will open on **April 21**. You can still send in horticulture questions outside of this time frame.

Pro-Tips for Submitting a Horticulture Question to the Hotline:

- Make sure you leave your name and contact information. If you include an email or mailing address, we can send you written information for you to keep.
- Let us know the plant(s) you are calling about, and please indicate species and variety if you can.
- Give us some background information on the plant – how old is it, how much do you water it, etc.
- If you are calling about an issue with a plant, please leave as much information about what symptoms you see and when they first started. Let us know if only one plant is affected, or multiple.
- Send in a picture or leave a physical sample at one of our offices. Make sure to put the sample in a bag and keep it in the refrigerator until you can get it to us.

Interested in Becoming an Extension Master Gardener with us?

In late spring we will host a few informational sessions for anyone interested in the program to learn more. Applications will then open in early summer. If you are interested, please email auraphillips@ksu.edu. You will get an email notification when we host the informational sessions and open enrollment for Fall of 2025.



David Hallauer, Extension Agent

Introducing Corn Stunt Disease

Long a problem in Central America and parts of the southern U.S. as well, Corn Stunt Disease expanded in 2024 with confirmation in 26 Kansas Counties and multiple Midwest states. While 2024 losses were limited, isolated field losses suggest the need for vigilance in 2025.

As the name implies, Corn Stunt Disease often causes stunted plants. Many other symptoms can be present as well, including purpling or reddening leaves, excess ear production, and even a stay green effect. Infected fields can show significant losses – with limited treatment options.

Corn stunt isn't a fungal pathogen. It's a virus/virus-like with disease cycle complexity increased because it is vectored from infected plants to non-infected fields by an insect (Corn Leafhopper). The result: more questions than answers heading into 2025

At current, we are monitoring the presence/absence of the leafhopper through winter. Early season arrival of the insect could cause problems if they are transmitting the Corn Stunt virus when plants are in the early vegetative stages. We'll also be monitoring for Corn Stunt infections throughout the growing season. If you see suspicious areas of fields with some of the symptoms above, drop me a line so we can continue to learn more about this difficult to manage pathogen.

Invasive Bluestem Awareness

Quiz: Visit the Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses webpage: <https://kswildflower.org/index.php>. Select Grasses. How many Bluestem species are listed? Share your answer at <https://forms.office.com/r/hZaJFSkeey> (or scan the QR code!) to be entered into a drawing for a prize from the Meadowlark Extension District! Correct bonus question answers will be entered twice!



Broomsedge



Caucasian

It might surprise you how many species fall under the bluestem heading (and that's just the ones listed on this page...) as well as how many of them aren't necessarily desirable. Invasive bluestems are an issue. These images, to the left, are just two of the ones we might deal with here. Broomsedge is the much more common species we see across our area, often an increasing issue in cool season hay fields and pasture. The Old World Bluestems (Caucasian pictured) are less prevalent, but on the increase. Both deserve attention to keep desirable pastures and hay fields from lost production caused when they invade.

To learn more about these invasive species, check out two recent posts on the Meadowlark Extension District Agronomy Blog at: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/meadowlarkagronomy/>

ARC/PLC Decision Resources

If you're on the fence on ARC/PLC elections – don't delay much longer. While April 15th is the deadline for farm program selections with FSA, if you are purchasing a crop insurance product tied to a specific farm program election (SCO), you'll need to do so based upon the deadline for crop insurance. Be aware of enrollment deadlines for *all* programs. Need guidance? Check out the resources via the KSU Department of Agricultural Economics:

- *ARC/PLC Tradeoff spreadsheet*: <https://agmanager.info/ag-policy/2018-farm-bill/tradeoff-between-20252026-arc-and-plc> - allows comparison of potential ARC/PLC payments at various MYA price levels/yields in a convenient comparison chart.
- *SCO Comparison Tool*: <https://agmanager.info/crop-insurance/crop-insurance-papers-and-information/advanced-arc-plc-sco-tradeoff-tool> – looks at the value of the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) on your individual crop insurance with PLC enrollment.
- *Webinar Recording*: <https://agmanager.info/events/2025-winter-wednesday-webinars> - get insight on recent changes and insurance options from Ag Economists, Robin Reid and Jenny Ifft



Ross Mosteller, Extension Agent

What is a Natural Resource?

One half of my title refers to Natural Resources, so what does that mean? A natural resource is a raw material that comes from the environment and is used to make the products people need for things like food, shelter, clothing, and entertainment. Natural resources include things like plants, soil, sunshine, water, fossil fuels, air, wildlife, metals, and minerals. Water tends to be a focus in my programming, but it is all these things. Really all three of the agriculture Meadowlark agents have some piece of the Natural Resources area and is a place where we cross over.



KCARE
Kansas Center for Agricultural
Resources and the Environment

From an Extension perspective, the Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE) is an excellent resource that focuses on the natural resource topic. The Publications page is especially useful with a wealth of information related to water and agriculture

production. Check out this website, <https://www.kcare.k-state.edu/>, if you'd like to learn more.

NE Kansas Sheep and Goat School

The annual small ruminant education event of the year for northeast Kansas will take place on Wednesday, **March 12**, in Troy, with registration beginning at 6:00 PM.

Parasites and predators pose significant challenges for sheep and goat producers, requiring more intensive management strategies than other livestock species. This meeting will focus on these two critical issues. Dr. Kelsey Bentley, K-State Small Ruminant Extension Specialist, will discuss managing parasitism in sheep and goats. Dr. Drew Ricketts, K-State Wildlife Extension Specialist, will cover predation management.

This educational event is **FREE** to attend, but a **RSVP** is requested by **March 10**. You can RSVP at any Meadowlark District office or online at: <https://forms.gle/jj6wc9ADWeLE2Qf99>.

How Much is a Herd Bull Worth?

The livestock press is full of spring bull sale advertisements in all forms from private treaty to live sale auctions with online bidding. There is a full palette of breeds, breeders, data, breeding guarantees, etc... so how do you know where to purchase your next herdsire and maybe more importantly, what is a fair value that you can afford to pay? Choosing a supplier of genetics could be an article in and of itself, today let's focus on the value side.

It was 2023 when I last did the "cowboy math" for an article like this and at that time, the average value that a producer could afford to pay came out in the range of \$6,500 to \$7,500. This uses the old rule of thumb that a bull is worth the value of five of his offspring. Do you think it has changed with the run-up in the calf market? Let's push the pencil and see.

The \$6,500 value came from a 650 pound long weaned steer calf, so let's use that again today. The Kansas weekly market recap report from February 14 shows that this steer would be worth right at \$3 per pound. That means that steer calf was worth \$1,950 (650# X \$3/#). Take that number times our five-calf rule and you end up with a value you could pay for your next herd bull of \$9,750. That is an increase of \$3,250 in two years, illustrating what the cattle market has done.

Does that mean that every bull sold is worth \$9,750? No, not all bulls are created equally and not every 650-pound steer brings \$3 per pound, but it does illustrate that producers need to do some math and assess the current value of a calf crop. Additionally, keep in mind the salvage value of existing herd bulls. Last week, an average 2000-pound bull sold for \$166.74 or \$3,334.80. Heavy weight, premium quality dressed carcasses are worth well over \$3,000 right now. Keeping all these things in mind, it is simply unreasonable to expect to find a \$3,000 (or cheaper) bull right now!

Dr. Mark Johnson, Oklahoma State University Beef Cattle specialist, covered this topic in a short video on Cow Calf Corner that is worth the watch: <https://youtu.be/EHXOBNJ0zsz?si=KAKGvlhyXE-oOnmz> Good luck with those bull buying decisions this spring and don't expect to pay steer price for a herdsire!

Summary of the effect of increasing different parameters on the bull value estimated by the calculator

Parameter	Increase by	Effect on bull value
Maintenance cost	\$100	Decrease by \$520
Years of service	One year	Increase by \$350
Expected calf price	\$10/cwt	Increase by \$300
Cow-to-bull ratio	One cow	Increase by \$280
Expected weaning rate	1%	Increase by \$80
Expected calf weight	One pound	Increase by \$10
Death loss	0.5%	Decrease by \$15

BCRC Bull Valuation Calculator





Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

Hypertension Awareness and Prevention program (HAPp)

What is HAPp?

HAPp is a 4-month, self-monitored blood pressure (SMBP) and healthy lifestyle education program. It will be introduced with a “kick-off” meeting from 12:00-1:00 on **May 19** at the Kaw Senior Center in Perry.

The program goal is to help senior adults with hypertension learn how to manage and lower their blood pressure through self-monitoring. Trained HAPp coaches teach participants how to self-monitor their blood pressure with validated devices.

Program Benefits:

- **FREE** blood pressure monitor
- Twice-monthly check-ins with a trained coach to help take and track blood pressure
- Nutrition, physical activity, and stress management education
- Monthly nutrition education workshops
- Guidance on self-measuring blood pressure and advocating for personal health
- Connection to community resources

Who is Eligible?

- 18+ years old
- Diagnosed with or on antihypertensive medication
- Interested in and ready to address hypertension

Why It Matters:

- Hypertension increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, the leading causes of death in the United States.
- 47% of U.S. adults (116 million) have hypertension, but only 24% (1 in 4 adults) have it under control.

K-State Research and Extension is partnering with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Jefferson County Health Department to bring the Hypertension Awareness and Prevention program to the Perry/Grantville Senior Citizens.

For questions and registration:

- Registration: **March 17–May 19** | Kick-off: **May 19**
- Contact: Cindy Williams or Dawn Seymour with the Oskaloosa—Meadowlark Extension District office at 785-863-2212.

Could Walk Kansas Be Your Key to Better Health?

Staying active is key to good health, but finding motivation and time can be challenging. tough. Walk Kansas makes it fun and achievable! This 8-week, team-based program encourages movement, helping you meet national Physical Activity Guidelines while virtually traveling across Kansas.

Why Join Walk Kansas?

- **Team Accountability** – Stay on track with friends, family, or co-workers.
- **Flexible Activities** – Brisk walk (2.5 to 4 mph), bike (under 10 mph), dance, yard/garden work—choose what you enjoy!
- **Support & Motivation** – Get weekly tips, recipes, and wellness resources.

Guidelines:

Aim for 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, plus strength training twice a week. Get your heart rate up and break a sweat. Not sure if you’re reaching a moderate level, try the talk test—if you can talk but not sing while doing the activity, you’re in the right range!

Registration: **March 4 – April 7** | Program Dates: **March 30 – May 24**

Contact: Meadowlark Extension District Offices:

- Oskaloosa: (785) 863-2212
- Holton: (785) 364-4125
- Seneca: (785) 336-2184

Learn more & register online: www.walkkansas.org

Take the first step toward a healthier lifestyle—**get your team together and join Walk Kansas today!**



Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent



What to Remember if You Changed Your Medicare Part D Plan in 2025

If you decide to change your Medicare Part D Plan in 2025, there may be a few things that are different about your new plan from your old plan. Typically, when Medicare beneficiaries decide to switch to a new drug plan, they are looking for cost savings. The cost of the old plan would be more expensive if they kept that plan versus changing to a new plan for the new year. That said, at the beginning of the new year, you may wonder why you switched. Keep the following things in mind if you start to second-guess yourself.

1. **Deductibles:**

The new plan could have a deductible that you have to pay before it will start covering your medication. Most Medicare Part D plans have a deductible. During this period, you will most likely have to pay the full cost of your medication. The plan deductible amount in Kansas can range from the highest at \$590 to the lowest at \$0. Just because a plan has a \$0 deductible doesn't mean it is the most cost-effective for you.

2. **Coverage Levels:**

Medicare Part D plans have different coverage levels. In 2025, most plans have three coverage levels: the deductible phase, the initial coverage level phase, and catastrophic coverage. We talked about the deductible phase above. The initial coverage period kicks in when you have met your deductible; you will then pay the full negotiated price for your covered prescriptions. You will either pay a co-payment or a co-insurance. In 2025, your initial coverage level ends when you have paid \$2000.00 out of pocket. The Catastrophic coverage begins after you reach the \$2000.00 out-of-pocket for covered drugs. During this period, you pay \$0 for covered drugs.

3. **Special Enrollment Periods:**

There may be times when you can change your plan outside of the annual open enrollment period, called special enrollment periods. You must meet certain conditions to qualify for a special enrollment period. Below are some of the situations that may qualify you to change plans:

- If you move to a new address not in your plan's service area.
- If you live in or recently moved out of an institution (like a nursing home).
- You are no longer eligible for Medicaid.
- You qualify for Extra Help or are no longer eligible for Extra Help.
- Medicare takes an official action because of a problem with the plan that affects you.
- Your plan ends its contract with Medicare during the contract year.
- Other special situations.

4. **Plan Formulary:**

Make sure your plan covers your medication. Each Part D is required to provide you with a list of drugs they cover. All plans must include at least two medications in a drug category and all in certain classes. If your drug is not on the drug formulary, you may be paying the full cost of the medication. Medicare beneficiaries can ask for an exception to get a medication covered. Certain medication classes, including weight loss or gain and over-the-counter medications, are not covered.

5. **Preferred Pharmacy:**

If you use your plan's preferred network pharmacy, you may pay less than if you used a standard pharmacy. Keep in mind that some pharmacies may be out of network for your plan, meaning that you will pay the full cost of the medication no matter what coverage level you are in.

Please contact the extension office if you have questions about your Part D plan. We can help explain your plan to help you better understand your options.



Healthcare costs are high, but there are ways you can save. Programs like **Extra Help** and the **Medicare Savings Programs** can help you pay for health care and prescriptions.

Contact our office to see if you qualify. Call: 785-364-4125



David Key, Extension Agent/Director

Promoting Community Fundraisers and Events— Tips and Recommendations for Signage

When designing event signage for both pedestrians and drivers, using the right font size and type is essential for readability and quick comprehension. Here are ten tips to effectively advertise and promote a fundraiser or community event:

1. **Eye-Catching Signage** – Use large, bold fonts with high-contrast colors to make signs easily readable from a distance. Include essential details: event name, date, time, location, and a brief call to action. Place signs at high-traffic intersections and community hubs.
2. **Follow City Regulations** – Check local ordinances on posting signs in public areas to avoid fines or removal. Use weather-resistant materials for durability.
3. **Engage on Social Media** – Create an event page on Facebook and share engaging posts with images, videos, and countdowns. Encourage community members to share.
4. **Leverage Community Groups** – Post event details in local Facebook groups, Nextdoor, and other community forums where residents stay informed.
5. **Partner with Small Market Radio** – Many local stations offer free Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or reduced rates for nonprofit events. Prepare a short, engaging script highlighting the event's impact.
6. **Utilize Local Newspapers** – Submit a press release or event announcement to community newspapers.
7. **Engage Local Businesses** – Ask local businesses to display flyers, post on their social media, or even sponsor your event for added exposure.
8. **Word-of-Mouth & Personal Outreach** – Encourage supporters to spread the word in schools, workplaces, and places of worship.
9. **Use Email & Text Alerts** – Send reminders to community members who've attended past events or signed up for updates.
10. **Incentivize Participation** – Offer raffles, giveaways, or discounts for early registration to encourage attendance and engagement.

Two popular and easy-to-use graphic design apps that can help create eye-catching event materials include:

1. **Canva** – A user-friendly online tool with pre-made templates for posters, social media graphics, and flyers. It offers a drag-and-drop interface, free and premium design elements, and easy customization options.
2. **Adobe Express (formerly Adobe Spark)** – A simplified design app that allows users to create high-quality promotional materials, including social media posts, flyers, and event banners. It provides easy-to-use templates, fonts, and graphics with no design experience needed.

Both tools are great for making professional-looking visuals to promote community fundraisers effectively! When designing event signage for both pedestrians and drivers, choosing the right font size and type is crucial for readability. Here's a general guide:

Event Signage Readability Guide

Viewing Distance & Speed	Font Size (Height in Inches)	Recommended Font Type	Best Practices
Pedestrians (5-15 ft.)	Headline: 1-2" (72-144 pt) Subheading: 0.5-1" (36-72 pt)	Arial, Helvetica, Montserrat, Futura	Short, clear message;
Drivers (Up to 35 mph, 25-100 ft.)	Headline: 3-6" (216-432 pt) Subheading: 2-4" (144-288 pt) Details: 1-2" (72-144 pt)	Arial, Helvetica, Impact, Futura	Bold, thick letters; minimal words; high
Avoid	Fonts that are thin, script or decorative	Hard to read at a distance	

 **Tip:** Use black or dark text on a light background (or vice versa) for maximum visibility.

Reference: United States Sign Council (USSC), *On-Premise Sign Standards*, 2013

Rural Community Health Worker



Dawn Seymour, RN

The Weather is Nice; Now Let's Get Active

Not sure where you can go if you want to work out in a gym-like environment? Did you know that many schools in Jefferson County have weight rooms available for community use? It is a hidden perk that not many community members are aware of!

For example, Jefferson County North High School in Winchester allows community members to rent a key fob for the weight room. The only requirements are a monthly fee of \$10, signing a usage agreement, and following the outlined rules and available times.

Call your local school district office and ask about gym usage information!

Jefferson County North High School—District Office: 913-774-2000

McLouth High School—District office: 913-796-2201

Perry Lecompton High School: 785- 597-5138

Jefferson West High School: 785-484-3331

Oskaloosa High School: 785-863-2539

Valley Falls High School: 785-945-3214

4-H Youth Development

Kansas 4-H has Partnered with HirePaths for Career Exploration

Kansas 4-H and HirePaths are teaming up to bring career-related content and opportunities to 4-H youth. This partnership will make information about high-demand jobs and skills related to Kansas careers available. We know that 4-H prepares young people for the future by teaching critical thinking, communications, and problem-solving, and we know that 4-H already builds life readiness. With HirePaths, we hope to give our 4-Hers the tools and spark needed to pursue careers in Kansas.

HirePaths has launched a Cool Career Video Series for Kansas Kids. These career-focused videos feature real Kansas career fields, professionals, and 4-H youth. Kansas and Kansas businesses have so much to offer our young people. The Cool Career videos range from 5-10 minutes in length. They present a Kansas industry by focusing on a day in the life of the professional.

Some examples include becoming a drone pilot in Perry, Ks with Hamm Companies. A drone pilot, Paul, shows how drones are used in the construction business to measure stockpiles of material and survey construction sites. He explains the value of the 3-D images provided by the drones. The episode concludes with Dallas, the 4-Her trying her hand at flying the drone. Other episodes feature a welding career in Manhattan with the Florence Corporation, an agronomist in Ulysses from Crop Quest, and a land surveyor in Basehor from Atlas Land Consulting.

The beauty of this video project is that each episode is created by youth and professionals in Kansas industries. The future of our state, communities, and families depends on the education and retention of our young people in Kansas. 4-H and HirePaths are launching a video contest to 4-H youth who want to create their own Cool Career videos that focus on our local businesses and opportunities. If you are interested in finding out more, go to hirepaths.com and explore some of what Kansas has to offer.

HirePaths has three primary goals, all focused on building a positive discussion around post-high school options:

1. To inform parents, guardians and educators about the variety of educational paths available to young people for achieving successful careers.
2. To broaden parents' viewpoints about their child's future by informing them about well-paying, in-demand careers that do not require a bachelor's degree.
3. To reinforce that a young person going straight to work or attending a technical program is not in any way a failure – quite the contrary! Kansas needs young people pursuing all paths for our state to thrive, and wages for in-demand careers keep rising.

Meadowlark Extension District

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<https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Meadowlarkextensiondistrict>

Publications & Resources For Sale

Caregiver Helpbook
Family Account Book
Farm Account Book
Radon Kits
Predator Calls
IMR Calving Books (Red)
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)
Forage Tests
Grazing Sticks
911 Signs
Pesticide Application Field Record Book (free)
Cow/Calf Record Book (free)
Body Condition Record Book (free)
K-State Publications (free)

Upcoming Events

Mar. 3-April 7: Walk Kansas registration open
Mar. 7: KSU Cattlemen's Day, Manhattan
Mar. 10: Agritourism Advantage: Mastering Customer Service & Marketing, Mayetta
Mar. 12: "Pinching Pennies in the Kitchen" 12:10-1:00 PM Zoom—FREE, register to get Zoom link.
Mar. 12: Northeast Kansas Sheep and Goat School, Troy
Mar. 14-15: Kansas Graziers Conference, Soldier
Mar. 17-May 19: Hypertension Awareness and Prevention program (HAPp) registration open
April 22: District Family and Consumer Science Program Development Committee meeting 11:00, Holton
Mar. 30-May 24: Walk Kansas
Apr. 5: Grey for a Day, Sabetha

Items to Check Out

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