Dear Meadowlark Extension District Supporters,

For almost as long as Kansas has existed, K-State Research and Extension has been here to help you and every other Kansan thrive. Our promise has always been to provide relevant, science-based education and information to help you make decisions to maintain and improve your health, build and sustain businesses, grow your community, steward resources, feed the world, and raise the next generation of capable, responsible, thoughtful community leaders.

While we remain steadfast in our commitment to that mission, we have had to adapt how we deliver to you during this time of public distancing. K-State Research and Extension Administration recently announced that in response to the spread of COVID-19, the Meadowlark Extension District will be operating in social-distancing status and a ban has been placed on all face to face extension programs, meetings and events through July 4, 2020.

For the health and well-being of our participants, employees and volunteers we place a ban on all in-person events that will effect several 4-H and Youth events, field days, tours, trainings conducted by our employees and volunteers.

District agents and staff are currently remotely working from home providing education and programing in way you may not be used to seeing. We continue to answer phone calls, emails and provide programing utilizing social media we simply cannot interact with you in a face to face manner at this time. Each week we work in a social distancing manner we learn new and better ways to achieve our extension mission while knowing there will someday be a “normal” extension program you have come to know and support.

While our current situation complicates programing a little we still want to hear from you, work with you and keep our extension programs viable. Please call, email, text or even work with offices to set up a video chat we would love to hear from you!
Mowing Height
Mowing season is upon us. At what height is your mower deck set?
One of the most important factors of a healthy lawn is mowing height. For our erect growth habit cool-season turf grasses, you should be in the two and a half to three and a half-inch range. If you are mowing on the shorter end of that range now, make a note to raise the height as you progress towards summer. Hot weather is hard on cool-season grasses. The additional height helps insulate the ground against heat (saving moisture) while keeping leaf area to a maximum and pushing roots more deeply into the soil. Mowing too low during hot weather places cool-season grasses under stress and leads to excessive watering. Mow too low too often and you can cause weak turf stands that are highly susceptible to weeds and other problems.

NOTE: the height numbers on your deck may not be in inches. Be sure to measure deck height on an even surface from the lowest point of the blade.

Fruit Tree Spray Schedules
The most effective and economical strategy for maintaining a healthy orchard is taking proper care of plants through site selection, watering, pruning, and cleanup. In fact, with the cultivars available today, fungicide applications for cedar-apple rust, scab, powdery mildew, and fire blight can be reduced using resistant varieties. Already established orchards don’t have that option, requiring a combination of cultural, biological, chemical, and physical measures to combat issues. If your goal is fruit from the home orchard that doesn’t have to be perfect, try out the recommendations in two K-State Research & Extension fruit pest control publications.

Spray Guide for Growing Apples at Home can be found online at https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3429.pdf. It includes the information you will need to design a chemical control program to support the cultural, biological, and physical measures you are already taking.

Spray Schedule for Growing Stone Fruit (https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3430.pdf) covers peach, plum, and cherry pests. Like the apple guide, it includes a schedule as well as pictures of common pest issues.
First Friday e-calls

K-State Research and Extension offers an entrepreneurship webinar every first Friday of the month. Our mutual goal is to engage knowledge, wisdom, and relationships of local communities with the research and experimentation of the University to create vital communities.

The purpose of these calls is to increase the community’s knowledge about Experts, Education and Economic Resources available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs. They also aim to increase the number of transactions between the small business owner/entrepreneur with the Experts, Education, and Economic Resources that can increase the likelihood that they are successful.

If you would like to be on the notification list to participate in upcoming e-Call, please send your request via e-mail to: nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Working From Home Creates New Businesses And Challenges

What better way to earn extra income than to work from home? Some consumers believe that working from home will allow them to spend more time with their families and reduce the expense of commuting to work. The promise of earning big bucks from your couch is tempting but consumers must do their research to find reputable companies. Operators of these schemes make promises of prosperity. Some promise to return the consumer’s money if they are not satisfied. Many promises are made and few, if any, are kept. The con artists do not disclose details about the long hours involved and little money to be made. They may put unauthorized charges on the consumer’s credit card. It’s not uncommon for the victims of this fraudulent activity to lose thousands of dollars and waste time and energy.

Some of the most popular scams are explained here:

**Envelope Stuffing** - The consumer is charged a fee to receive materials about stuffing envelopes at home. Unfortunately, the consumer receives information explaining how to entice others to “buy” into the envelope stuffing business.

**Assembly or Craft Work** - Consumers purchase expensive tools and supplies to assemble products at home. The company refuses to pay for the products because they are ‘substandard’. The consumer is stuck with the product, tools and supplies.

**Rebate Processing** – Consumers pay a fee for training, certification and registration. They receive inferior training materials and no rebates to process.

**Medical Billing** – The consumer is charged an astronomical amount to receive computer software, customer leads and technical support. They receive nonworking software, out of date and fraudulent leads.

Some work-from-home opportunities are legitimate, but fraudulent work-from-home opportunities are one of the most prevalent scams today. Before committing to any work-from-home agreement, you must do your research. First, examine your talents and plan to capitalize on skills. Also, research different professions. For example, many realtors, graphic designers and computer programmers work from home. Before signing any agreement to work from home, you should ask the following. What tasks will I have to perform? (Ask the program sponsor to list every step of the job.) Will I be paid a salary or will I be paid on commission? What is the basis for your claims about my likely earnings? Do you survey everyone who purchased the program? What documents can you show me to prove your claims are true before I give you any money? Who will pay me? When will I get my first paycheck? What is the total cost of this work-at-home program, including supplies, equipment and membership fees? What will I get for my money?

Contact the state Attorney General, Better Business Bureau, and the local consumer protection agency to see if there are any complaints against the company. Perform a computer search using the company’s name or other company information to check on complaints. Remember that a company that has no complaints may have operated, previously, under a different name. Consumers who are victimized by fraudulent activities should file complaints against the responsible parties. Contact the Federal Trade Commission, your state’s Attorney General, the Better Business Bureau or the US Postal Service to file any complaints.
Ross Mosteller, District Extension Agent

Technology Offers A Venue For Youth Voice And Discussion

Our everyday routines have been drastically changed in recent weeks. Terms like Social Distancing and Stay at Home Orders and Distance Learning have become commonplace. All of us have adjusted to meeting in non-face to face settings. This article is part of one written by Jackelyn Martin, Michigan State University Extension. While it applies to 4-H Youth audiences, it is very timely and applicable to many settings. Stay safe and healthy during this pandemic!

Virtual meetings provide an opportunity for engagement when face to face meetings aren’t possible. A virtual meeting can never fully replace the relationships that can be built by meeting in person, but when we use technology to its fullest potential, it can come close. 4-H Youth Development feels strongly about the importance of incorporating youth voice in decision-making. The 4-H program believes that planning an event or activity of any size can be a powerful learning opportunity for youth.

As we are in this time of utilizing technology to accomplish the mission of youth engagement in planning, it’s important that meeting organizers take time to make sure youth are comfortable contributing using this technology. Following are some points for everyone to consider when planning virtual meetings.

Determine the best platform for the meeting.
Zoom, Skype, Adobe Connect, Google, Hangout, WebEx and GoToMeeting are some examples of technology capable of hosting online meetings. Choose the platform that best meets your needs well in advance of the call so you can send any instructions on connecting or downloading software in advance.

Talk about equipment.
Online meetings are often best when youth have a device equipped with a microphone and webcam. Many laptops come standard with built-in webcams. In the absence of a computer, many youth are able to connect using smartphones or tablets with the same capabilities.

Address accessibility.
Not all youth have access to high-speed internet in their homes. If a call-in option is available, make sure to share that with the participants. It’s usually a better experience when meeting participants are able to see each other, but lack of high-speed internet should not limit their ability to participate in the discussion.

Send an agenda for the call ahead of time.
Provide youth with an opportunity to prepare their thoughts well in advance of the call. Youth may struggle with two different anxieties when attending an online meeting for the first time; suggesting meaningful ideas and speaking up appropriately using a new platform. An agenda sent out early can help eliminate some of that anxiety by allowing youth to formulate their ideas giving them the ability to contribute to the conversation.

Explain online meeting etiquette.
If the platform allows for it, explain the system for muting their audio when not speaking to eliminate background noise and the benefits for using that approach. Explain how to turn their webcams on/off if needed.

Provide visuals. Since youth are generally very comfortable with technology, consult them to see if they have ideas for visuals or virtual meeting spaces that might be feasible with a large group. A simple visual involves placing the agenda or notes from the call in a web space that everyone can view so that in case people get distracted, they can easily find their way back into the conversation. Many youth are increasingly comfortable with the tools available through Google (Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets) for real-time collaboration.

Check-in. Resist the temptation to dive directly into business. At minimum, allow participants to check in with each other. If asking a general question like, “How’s everyone doing?” make sure to give space to everyone to respond, not just those that are quick to respond. For groups that are new or still forming, sometimes silly icebreaker questions help create common ground. Start the conversation by asking everyone to participate in a silly poll question or have everyone introduce themselves with their name and an answer to a simple question, like their favorite hobby, a favorite trip they’ve taken or what they can see at this moment. Youth can add great value to discussions when involved in authentic decision-making partnerships with adults. By taking the time to incorporate youth voice into planning, organizations and groups can gain insight, energy, and solutions to real-life problems.
The American Veterinary Medical Association is staying on top of the COVID-19 issue and offers this information:

“Despite the number of global cases of COVID-19 surpassing the one million mark as of April 2, 2020, we have only seen examples of two dogs and one cat in Hong Kong, and a tiger in New York, that had positive results of tests for infection. None of the dogs or cats determined to be positive showed signs of illness consistent with COVID-19. The two dogs and one cat lived closely with one or more people with a confirmed diagnosis and clinical symptoms of COVID-19. No conclusions can responsibly be drawn regarding the cat in Belgium because of questions surrounding collection and analysis of samples for testing for SARS-CoV-2 and the absence of an evaluation of that cat for other, more common causes for its clinical signs. The tiger was said to be exposed via contact with a zoo employee who was actively shedding virus, and some other large cats at the zoo that were apparently housed in proximity did exhibit signs of respiratory disease, but are expected to recover. There have been no reports of pets or livestock becoming ill with COVID-19 in the United States. At this point in time, there is also no evidence that domestic animals, including pets and livestock, can spread COVID-19 to people.

Therefore, the AVMA maintains these recommendations regarding SARS-CoV-2 and companion animals.

Animal owners without symptoms of COVID-19 should continue to practice good hygiene during interactions with animals. This includes washing hands before and after such interactions or handling animal food, waste, or supplies.

Out of an abundance of caution, and until more is known about the virus, those ill with COVID-19 should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just as you would restrict your contact with other people. Have another member of your household or business take care of feeding and otherwise caring for any animals, including pets. If you have a service animal or you must care for your animals, including pets, then wear a facemask; don’t share food, kiss, or hug them, and wash your hands before and after any contact with them.

There have been no reports of pets or livestock becoming ill with COVID-19 in the United States. At this point in time, there is also no evidence that domestic animals, including pets and livestock, can spread COVID-19 to people.”
Your Body on Walking

Ridiculously simple, astonishingly powerful, scientifically proven by study after study: Sneaking in a few minutes a day can transform your health, body, and mind. Why are you still sitting?

Heart—30 to 60 minutes most days of the week drastically lowers your risk of heart disease.

Bones---4 hours a week can reduce the risk of hip fractures by up to 43%.

Weight---A daily 1-hour walk can cut your risk of obesity in half.

Longevity---75 minutes a week of brisk walking can add almost 2 years to your life.

Health---Logging 3,500 steps a day lowers your risk of diabetes by 29%.

Mood---30 minutes a day can reduce symptoms of depression by 36%

Memory---40 minutes 3 times a week protects the brain region associated with planning and memory.

Brain---Just 2 hours of walking a week can reduce your risk of stroke by 30%.

Recipe Name  Strawberry Spinach Salad

6-ounce package spinach leaves (or about 2 bunches)
1-pint strawberries (about 2 cups sliced)

Dressing
½ cup of sugar
2 Tablespoons sesame seeds
1 Tablespoon poppy seeds
½ teaspoon minced onions
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
¼ teaspoon paprika
¼ cup of vegetable oil
1/3 cup cider vinegar

Wash spinach leaves and strawberries in clear water and drain well. Remove stems from spinach leaves, tear into bite-size pieces and place in a large bowl. Remove stems, slice strawberries and add to spinach. Cover and chill until serving time. In a blender or food processor, combine sugar, seeds, onions, Worcestershire Sauce and paprika. With blender running, add oil and vinegar to combine ingredients. Chill. Toss spinach and strawberries with about half the dressing, reserving the rest for another recipe.

Nutrition Facts:
Serving Size 1 cup (212g) Servings Per Container 6
Amount Per Serving: Calories: 210, Calories from Fat:110,
% Daily Value: Total Fat 12g (18%), Saturated Fat 1.5g (7%), Cholesterol 0mg (0%), Sodium 95mg (4%), Total Carbohydrate 27g (9%), Dietary Fiber 4g (9%), Sugars 21g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 210%, Vitamin C 110%, Calcium 15%, Iron 20%
Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:
The closing of schools and preschools linked to the spread of the new coronavirus sent parents scrambling to find help in taking care of their young children. In some cases, that means older children are helping look after younger kids.

K-State Research and Extension has launched a new program, “Suddenly in Charge,” aimed at helping older children learn the best way to handle what may be a new role talking care of younger children, whether in their own homes or those of a neighbor or friend.

Over the coming weeks, helpful information will be available on the Suddenly in Charge website for teens, tweens and anyone charged with caring for younger children, whether it’s a new situation or they’ve been doing it for years. [Link to website](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/families/suddenly-in-charge).

There are resources being created about food, media safety, disaster safety, animal care and safety, and mental health and wellness, to name a few.

The first resource Babysitter Information features a downloadable, printable list that can be helpful for anyone taking care of children. It includes space for parents’ names, contact information, physical address where you’re caring for the child, child’s doctor’s contact information, a section for rules, screen time, naptime and more.

Technology Helps Family Members Stay Connected

When families are separated during normal times, it can be hard emotionally for members to adjust to periods of not having close contact with the others.

It can be even more difficult during such times as the current outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, when travel is often restricted.

Technology makes it easier for family members to stay connected, but maintaining meaningful contact takes some planning. Here are five tips for staying in touch:

- **Establish regular routines.** Plan how you will most likely communicate and set aside a specific day or time to make contact. This may include phone calls, internet chats, email, text messages or old-fashioned letters.

- **Take the initiative.** Be the first to make contact. Photos are always great to share.

- **Brainstorm creative activities together.** Read the same book or watch the same movie and spend time discussing it.

- **Work on maintaining relationship satisfaction.** When you talk, be an active listener. Pay attention to what each

Maintaining Strong Social Connections

Social support from family, friends, and your community influence your long-term health in positive ways.

Research from longevity studies in the Blue Zones® revealed that health behaviors of each culture were reinforced as people worked and socialized with each other. In Blue Zones® communities, people chose – or were born into – social circles that shaped and supported healthful behaviors.

If those around you practice healthful behaviors, you are more likely to do the same. Unfortunately, people in your social circle also influence you in negative ways. If they choose unhealthy behaviors, you will be more likely to follow that path.

In the coming weeks, challenge yourself to improve your health, and to influence the health of those around you in a positive way. Even though there are limitations right now, there are many ways to connect and still maintain physical distancing. Continue to push yourself to engage in meaningful connection every day.
Currently all K-State Research and Extension face-to-face events conducted by Extension employees or our volunteers and targeted for our constituents and stakeholders remain canceled, postponed, or held via Zoom or other distance technology until July 4, 2020.

We welcome your phone calls, text messages, emails and request to do ZOOM conferencing calls. Be sure to look to our Social Media pages as well for updated information. Our Agents and 4-H Program Managers are busy keeping the information updated for our Meadowlark District patrons.

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K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact the Holton office at 785-364-4125, the Oskaloosa office at 785-863-2212, or the Seneca office at 785-336-2184.