

February 2025

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Open Monday-Friday

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

Closed on designated holidays

www.meadowlark.k-state.edu

Horticulture



Laura Phillips, Extension Agent

Did You Know?

Did you know that 1 in 10 people in the Meadowlark District faces food insecurity? That equals approximately 4,500 people. Often, food insecurity stems from a lack of food sources - referred to as food deserts. Farmers markets can play a big role in combating food insecurity by allowing local producers to make their goods readily available to their community.

Established farmers markets can utilize government programs to make food more accessible. Markets can work with SNAP-Ed programs to accept EBT. Through Double-Up Food Bucks, markets can even provide those with SNAP benefits an extra \$25 each week to spend in their marketplace. So far, no farmers markets in the Meadowlark District accept EBT.

Through the Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, low-income individuals 60 years and older (or tribal members 55 and older) can qualify for \$50 of coupons yearly to spend at farmers markets. Farmers markets vendors must attend a short training to learn how to accept coupons so that money gets deposited into their bank account when a senior presents a coupon.

These programs can increase food access and support markets by encouraging low-income individuals to shop at the markets. Hopefully our upcoming project will help us connect with more markets and vendors, bringing these programs to our communities.

“Local Food Fellow” Position

This spring, the Meadowlark District will be hiring a Local Food Fellow to work on our upcoming project: *Food Market Mapping in the Meadowlark District*. The project will create a directory of farmers markets, vendors, and local producers within the District.

We hope this directory will serve multiple purposes. Firstly, to make connections. New markets can struggle to get enough vendors to attract patrons, and new vendors or producers may similarly struggle to find enough markets to sell at to make a profit. Ideally, this directory will make it easier for markets and vendors to connect.

Secondly, KSRE offers training and resources for vendors and market managers. However, it can be hard to get information out to the right people. By connecting with vendors, producers, and market managers, we can more easily inform stakeholders of upcoming opportunities. The connection will also help us learn more about what farmers market stakeholders need, so we can tailor our support.

The position pays \$17.50 an hour for a total of 320 hours of work. The position will run from mid-March to mid-June with an average of 20 hours of work each week. If you are interested in the position, go to https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/about/job_opportunities.html or scan the QR Code below to see the full job posting.

If you are involved in a farmers market in any capacity, we would be interested in connecting with you as part of this project. Those interested can reach out to us by emailing Laura at lauraphillips@ksu.edu.





David Hallauer, Extension Agent

Belt Tightening—Herbicide Edition

Crop production economics were a focus last newsletter, with focus on crop protection products, fertility, and cover crops. University of Missouri Weed Scientist Kevin Bradley recently shared some thoughts at the NW MO Crops Conference on what to consider from a herbicide perspective.

In the list of what to consider, he listed generic herbicide products, targeted applications, and alternative control methods. Some of those are relatively straightforward. Comparing herbicide products doesn't typically require equipment changes, etc... even as they include comparisons of active ingredients and incentive programs. Alternative

control methods or targeted applications might be a completely different story. All deserve some consideration – and background work is going to be required. What he suggested NOT to do is more straightforward – but deserves attention as well because of the impact they can have on herbicide resistance.

Many weed management programs include a pre-plant program to keep us ahead of weed pressure. If you're considering eliminating that pass, Dr. Bradley suggests you reconsider. The seed production capability of a single pigweed. Palmer Amaranth, for example, can reach upwards of 100,000 seeds per plant (some references suggest closer to a million...). Before a PRE program is eliminated, ask yourself: am I really interested in allowing a resistant pigweed go to seed?

How did we get to resistance in the first place? One way it occurs is when herbicide application rates are reduced below the optimum. Cutting costs by reducing herbicide rates is also a cost cutting practice to think twice about. Doing so will likely result in escapes that produce seeds that add to the resistance issues we're already seeing.

While there *are* ways to cut costs in herbicide programs, careful consideration should be given to doing so. Today's escaped pigweed becomes a problem this season – and well into the future as well.

Fall Armyworm Trapping Network Update

The New Year often arrives with a time of reflection. Unfortunately, not all of 2024 was great to reflect upon, including another season of damaging feeding by fall armyworm larvae.

The trapping network instituted in 2023 to monitor fall armyworm moth levels took another step in 2024 with regular moth number reports. While not intended as a way to *predict* damage, it does paint a picture of what moth numbers are doing during the growing season.

For example, moth pressure may have been higher earlier than was noticed. Traps went out in mid-July and were checked weekly, with moths found the first week. Numbers varied, but one location had moth captures in 17/18 weeks monitored. The second had months captured in 11/15 weeks. Early season trapping may not tell us a great deal (there's generally ample forage for feeding without much damage), but it is interesting to note there were likely already numbers present in mid-July.

Second, individual field scouting is important. Moth numbers were reflective of times we heard feeding reports, but lagged slightly. Numbers in the trap in the central part of the District were highest shortly *after* the first damage reports. It will take more looking at weather patterns, consistency among traps, etc... before it is an accurate warning network.

One of the difficulties with trapping is location variability. The peak moth flight in the central part of the District occurred in early September with numbers ten times higher than any other single week of the season.

Numbers in the trap in the southeast part of the District showed a slight increase during that time frame, but the highest numbers didn't occur until long after we expected them to be gone. While they never reached the other trap's levels, numbers had been building over time.

Trapping will continue in 2025 with increased monitoring of weather and harvest timing. With luck, there won't be any moths.

For information on growing season trapping levels, contact me or visit our Meadowlark Extension District Agronomy blog at: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/meadowlarkagronomy/>.

2025 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guides Available

The KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide is now available upon request at any District Extension Office. This annually updated publication has the latest in herbicide ratings for our major crops plus information comparing glyphosate formulations, herbicide safety, approximate costs, and a brief summary on each herbicide product.

It has an entire section devoted to pasture/range weed and brush management using herbicides. Noxious weed control recommendations are available, as well.

Stop by any of our Offices and grab a copy or two. You can also check it out online at: https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/2025-chemical-weed-control-for-field-crops-pastures-rangeland-and-noncropland_CHEMWEEGUIDE.pdf.



Ross Mosteller, Extension Agent

K-State Dairy Day

As it is with any business, there is a constant flux of information, technology and practices that ever evolve and change. Dairy production is not a topic that I cover much, but there is a large and active fraction of the Kansas Dairy industry within Meadowlark District. For many years now, Kansas State University has brought the updates to the producers in regional locations, with Seneca being a long-term host. That is again the case this year.

K-State Dairy day will be held on Thursday, **February 20**, beginning at 10:00 am at the Woolsoncroft Event Center, 1615 Branch Street, Seneca. Dairy producers will have the opportunity to hear updates from University and Industry partners on a wide range of dairy topics. There is not a cost to attend, but we do ask for an RSVP by February 17 to help with the noon meal planning. The meal will be sponsored by Kansas Dairy, with morning refreshments sponsored by vendors participating in the dairy tradeshow held throughout the day.

The complete invite can be accessed at: <https://www.asi.k-state.edu/events/dairy-days.html> To RSVP or ask questions specific to the Seneca location, please contact me at: 785-336-2184 or rmostell@ksu.edu I hope to see dairy producers and those interested in the dairy industry in Seneca on February 20.

Water Testing for Private Wells

Water is one of our most precious natural resources and affects life at all levels. When pouring a glass of water to drink, it may appear clean, taste good, and generally expected to be safe. However, many assumingly safe sources of water may contain dissolved minerals, organic compounds or even live organisms, possibly at harmful concentrations. Contaminated water used for drinking and cooking may affect health. Additionally, high concentrations of certain minerals in water can result in quality issues such as unpleasant taste and odors or staining of bathroom fixtures and/or laundry.

Public water supplies go through periodic testing and reporting to assure a safe public water source. However, the millions of private wells dotting the landscape have no requirement for testing. Properly constructed and maintained water wells can provide many years of trouble-free service. However, surface contaminants may enter the well if it is not properly constructed and maintained, and the well may eventually deteriorate or become damaged as it becomes older. Many of the most serious problems can only be detected through laboratory testing of the water.

There is a plethora of water test available to the private well owner, from simple, quick, do-it-yourself test, to very detailed and specific laboratory run test. In general, water testing can be classified as bacteriological, mineral/inorganic and organic chemicals tests. Many laboratories will offer “kits” and/or “packages” that allow for collection and testing of the most common concerns. Finding a certified and accredited laboratory is the recommended path for accurate testing.

Testing to make sure the water is safe to drink, should be conducted after construction of a new well, repair or maintenance work is conducted, when an unused old well is brought back to service, or if there is suspected issue. Water quality remains fairly stable if the well is properly constructed and maintained. Even if current water supply is clean and safe to drink, regular testing is important because it establishes a record of water quality that may help solve future problems. Annual testing is recommended for total coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids and pH levels.

For most water tests, follow these steps when collecting a sample. Take the sample close to the source/pump, before the water goes through a treatment system. If taking a sample from a household faucet, do not take the sample from a swing-type faucet, one that is leaking and remove the aerator first. Run the water several minutes to clear the line, collecting the sample midstream. Do not touch the sides of the collection bottle, the opening or inside of the cap. Some kits have specific bottles for designated test, read and follow instructions! If needed, store the sample in the refrigerator before taking or shipping to the lab. Most labs will require the sample to arrive within 48 hours of collection. For the most accurate results, transport the sample in a cooler or ship in an insulated container.

In the Extension office, we have a few different options for helping private well owners with testing. If you have concerns or haven't tested your private well for some time, please visit with us and we'd be happy to help. K-State has updated water quality publications, including one on testing called “Testing Private Water Systems” located at https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/testing-private-water-systems_MF3655. It dives deeper into this discussion and helps with determine what test is right for your situation.



Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

Saving Money with These Tiny Challenges

It's the beginning of a new year. Saving money each month requires taking action, but those actions don't have to be difficult.

- **Plan your meals:** Invest 15 minutes planning out meals for the week. Create a shopping list based on what you already have at home. Avoid impulse buys and food waste by sticking to your list. Cook extra and turn leftovers into lunch or a ready-made dinner for next week.
- **Shop your pantry first:** Before heading to the store, see what you already have in your pantry, refrigerator and freezer. Create meals with what you already have.

- **Automate savings:** Turn saving money into a set-it-and-forget-it game. Set up an automatic transfer of \$25 each week from your checking to your savings account. If you can't do \$25 a week, try saving \$5 per week. The amount doesn't matter as it helps you get into the practice of saving and you could always increase the amount later.
- **Declutter and sell unused items:** Explore closets, drawers and shelves for clothing, gadgets or décor you no longer use.
- **Cancel unused subscriptions.** Scan your bank account for recurring charges. Call them to see what they could do to reduce the bill. They should be able to so, without reducing any of the current services.
- **No eat out days, including coffee:** Challenge yourself to avoid dining out or grabbing coffee on the go for a month. Eat homemade meals and drinks from home instead. This simple habit could save you \$100---or even more---all by itself!
- **Switch to generic brands:** Try store brands instead of name brands. The quality is often the same. Sometimes the savings can cut your bill by 20% or more.
- **Create or use DIY cleaning supplies:** Vinegar, baking soda, and lemon juice can be transformed into DIY cleaning products that work wonders. This will help to cut back on your cleaning budget while still keeping things clean.
- **Track your spending for awareness:** Get a clear picture of where your money is going. Write down or use a budgeting app to record every purchase for a week or more. Seeing your spending habits laid out can be eye-opening and help you identify areas where you can cut back.
- **Adjust your thermostat:** Challenge yourself to tweak your thermostat just a few degrees.

By taking on these tiny, achievable challenges, you will save money. It can be a fun and rewarding experience. Can you think of more tiny challenges to help save even more money?

Understanding the Dangers of Radon in Homes

Any home can have high levels of radon, but you can lower them with testing and mitigation systems. You can't smell, taste, or see radon. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), approximately one in every 15 homes across the country has elevated levels of radon gas.

Too often, homeowners don't know about the radon risk until a test uncovers high levels. This can happen when they are selling their home or, even worse, when they become sick. That's why it's important to understand radon testing to detect high levels in your home and learn how to lower them through mitigation systems.

Why is radon so dangerous?

- First of all, what is radon? Radon is a radioactive gas that often enters a home through the soil. It is produced by the natural decay of uranium found in soil, rock, and water.
- What health issues does it cause? Breathing radon over time can lead to respiratory problems, even though there may be no immediate symptoms to alert you to exposure. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., causing an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year, according to the EPA.

What are the warning signs that a home has radon?

Radon can enter a home through cracks and holes in the foundation and even through well water. While all homes have some radon, testing is the only way to determine if indoor levels are too high. The EPA defines high levels as 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher.

Where is radon found in the U.S.?

Radon can be found in every state and in both new and older homes, including those with and without basements. Certain geographic areas, such as mountainous and rocky regions, may be more prone to elevated radon levels. The only way to know if your home has radon is to test for it. Testing is easy and affordable. Test kits are available for \$10.00 each at your local Meadowlark Extension District Offices in Oskaloosa, Holton, or Seneca. Instructions for use and where to send your test kit are included with the kit. For more information, contact Cindy at 785-863-2212.



Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent

Improve Your Balance and Prevent Falls: A Matter of Balance

Do you have concerns about falling, or are you concerned about someone you care about taking a fall? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), millions of people over 65 fall. Three million people are treated for falls in the emergency rooms with broken bones and head injuries. Most falls do not cause injuries, but the impact can be serious for those who are injured. Sometimes, a fall creates a fear of falling, which can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some people might believe that limiting activity due to a fear of falling might decrease falls, but research has shown this notion to be false. Reducing activity leads to a diminished

diminished quality of life. Evidence shows that increasing physical activity helps to maintain your balance better and helps to decrease falls.

The Meadowlark Extension District will host the “A Matter of Balance” program, which includes eight two-hour sessions designed to lessen the risk of falling. “A Matter of Balance” is an evidence-based program designed to decrease your fear of falling. The classes incorporate easy strategies to help reduce the risk of falling. By enrolling in the class, you will gain confidence, improve balance, assess your fall risk in your home, and learn tips to make it safer. You will also learn what to do if you do fall. The program includes group discussion, problem-solving, and gentle exercise.

Who should consider attending this program? If you are concerned about falls and interested in improving balance, flexibility, and strength, this program will

be great for you. If you have fallen in the past or have restricted your activities due to a fear of falling, this program is for you. “A Matter of Balance” helps you learn that falls are controllable. It allows you to set goals to increase your activity and teaches you that you can improve your strength and balance through exercise.

Program Details:

- **Duration:** Eight weekly sessions, each lasting two hours
- **Location:** Circleville Christian Church, 7701 254th Rd, Circleville, KS
- **Start Date:** February 6, 2025
- **Time:** 10:00 am-12:00 pm
- **Cost:** Free

If you are interested in joining the program or would like more information, please contact Teresa Hatfield at thatfield@ksu.edu or 785-364-4125.

Don't let the fear hold you back from enjoying life.



Conditions That Make You More Likely to Fall

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Difficulty with walking and balance.
- Use of medications, such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants. Some over-the-counter medications can also cause you to become unsteady.
- Vision problems
- Foot pain or poor footwear
- Home hazards or dangers such as:
 - Broken or uneven steps
 - Throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over.
 - Poor lighting



David Key, Extension Agent/Director

Preparing Yourself Before Attending Your Next Board Meeting?

To be well-prepared for a volunteer board meeting, a board member should focus on understanding their role, reviewing key documents, and thinking strategically about the organization's mission and goals. Here's a step-by-step guide to help a board member prepare:

1. Understand the Organization's Mission and Values

- **Review the mission statement:** Familiarize yourself with the core mission and values of the nonprofit.
- **Know the long-term vision:** Consider how the organization's strategic objectives align with its mission.

2. Review the Meeting Agenda

- **Read the agenda in advance:** This will give you an overview of the topics to be discussed and help you prepare any questions or feedback.
- **Identify key decision points:** Understand where decisions need to be made and where your input is critical.
- **Look for patterns:** Are there recurring issues or trends in the agenda? Recognizing these can help you anticipate the discussion.

3. Review Relevant Documents

- **Board meeting minutes from the previous meeting:** These will provide context on past decisions and updates.
- **Financial reports:** Understand the nonprofit's financial health, including income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow.
- **Program updates:** Get familiar with the progress of current projects and initiatives.
- **Committee reports:** If you're on a committee or a committee is reporting to the board, read their findings in advance.

4. Evaluate Financial Health

- **Review the budget:** Make sure you understand the financial status of the organization. If there are budgetary issues, think about how they could be addressed.
- **Look at key metrics:** These may include revenue, expenses, grants, or donor contributions, depending on the nonprofit's structure.
- **Ask questions:** If you have concerns about financial health or reports, be prepared to ask for clarification or additional information.

5. Know the Key Issues

- **Strategic priorities:** Are there upcoming challenges or opportunities related to fundraising, programs, or partnerships? Be ready to contribute insights or raise concerns.
- **Legal or regulatory issues:** Stay aware of any compliance or legal matters the organization may be facing.

6. Reflect on Your Own Role

- **Consider your specific contributions:** Think about how you can add value based on your experience, knowledge, or connections.
- **Review your action items:** If you have any assigned tasks from previous meetings, make sure you're prepared to report back or update the board.

7. Engage with Fellow Board Members

- **Communicate with fellow members:** If appropriate, have informal conversations with board members or the executive director to discuss issues in advance of the meeting.
- **Collaborate on initiatives:** If you're involved in any subcommittees or working groups, ensure you're on the same page with others.

8. Prepare Mentally and Logistically

- **Ensure you have a clear schedule:** Block time for the meeting, including travel time if necessary.
- **Be ready to listen and contribute:** Board meetings should be collaborative, so balance between listening attentively and offering valuable input.
- **Come with a growth mindset:** Be open to learning and be prepared to ask questions or request more information if something is unclear.

By carefully preparing in these ways, you'll be able to engage meaningfully, make informed decisions, and fulfill your responsibilities as a nonprofit board member effectively.



Dawn Seymour, RN

February is American Heart Health Month

February 7 is National Wear Red Day in America! The American Heart Association's **Go Red for Women** movement was launched in 2004 with the goal of raising awareness and fighting women's greatest health threat-cardiovascular disease (CVD). Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women. It causes 1 in 3 deaths each year.

It is important to understand that women experience unique life stages, such as pregnancy and menopause, that can put them at an increased risk for CVD. There are risk factors you can control and some you can't.

Risk factors that can be managed

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity or overweight
- Smoking
- Lack of regular activity
- Diabetes

Risk factors you can't control

- Age
- Heredity (family history)
- Previous heart attack or stroke
- Gender
- Race

Women don't usually show the same signs or symptoms of a heart attack as men do. It is important for women to understand the unique risk factors that put them at risk for heart disease and know the warning signs of a heart attack.

Understanding the warning signs and symptoms of heart attack

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the center of your chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, in the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.
- The most common symptom is chest pain or discomfort.

CVD is preventable through education and a healthy lifestyle. Together, we're stronger against cardiovascular disease. Visit the American Heart Association website, www.heart.org, for more information about heart disease.

4-H Youth Development

4-H Learning

4-H is a family. With the slogan, "learn by doing," 4-H emphasizes the importance of hands-on education through opportunity. This opportunity appears in different forms depending on the family, club, and community.

4-H members learn by doing within their projects. This learning is project specific: learning how to show a meat goat, grow vegetables, build a bread board, take a photo, bake a pie, or walk a bucket calf. As members gain experience their learning may be how to track livestock expenses, apply fertilizer, master dove joints, use computer imaging software, make a lattice crust, or manage a steer. However, youth in 4-H also learn skills like time management, public speaking, and leadership. They also learn how to delay gratification, advocate for themselves, and contribute to their communities. It is obvious how 4-H helps the member, but how does the rest of the family have the opportunity to learn?

Younger siblings learn by watching their older siblings work, fail, work some more and then succeed. These younger children learn how to interact with others. Our club meeting model involves youth of all ages. They also become excited about all of the possibilities within projects.

Parents learn with their children in 4-H. They have the opportunity to teach resilience, soothe disappointment, model community service, celebrate successes, and develop lasting memories for both their children and themselves. One important parental lesson is that of perspective, learning to let children succeed and fail in a safe environment. Grandparents have the opportunity to learn about their grandchildren are by spending time with them. They can teach the importance of showing up and investing in the family and community. 4-H has generational roots connecting people.

Communities have the chance to learn how to organize and come together for a greater good. This may be a food, clothing, or pet drive. It can be in the form of organizing different personalities and vehicles on a 100°F day for a 4-H parade. Communities come together to support 4-H members through donations to the livestock sale, booster club, 4-H Council, and 4-H Foundation.

Children can enroll in 4-H at any time. If you or someone else is interested in being part of the 4-H family, call your local Extension Office. We all can "learn by doing" in 4-H. I am thankful that we all have the opportunity to be life-long learners and ultimately, "make the best better".

Meadowlark Extension District

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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)

Items to Check Out

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

Upcoming Events

Feb. 6-Apr. 3: A Matter of Balance, Circleville
Feb. 17: Offices Closed for President's Day
Feb. 19: Heifer Management Meeting, Effingham
Feb. 20: KSU Dairy Day, Seneca
Feb. 27: Farm & Ranch Transition Conference, Lawrence
Mar. 7: KSU Cattlemen's Day, Manhattan
Mar. 12: NE KS Sheep & Goat School, Troy

