



# Meadowlark District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

[meadowlark.ksu.edu](http://meadowlark.ksu.edu)

May  
2023

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## District Office Hours:

**Open Monday-Friday**  
8:00 AM-noon, 12:30-4:30 PM

**Closed for designated  
holidays**

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## Rural Childcare Shortage

By Teresa Hatfield

Kansas is facing a need for more childcare options for working parents. The problem is significant in our rural areas of Kansas. The COVID-19 pandemic further exasperated the shortage; many in Kansas now refer to this as a childcare crisis. According to Child Care Aware of Kansas, Kansas meets 49% of the needed childcare slots. Since 2020, Kansas has lost 344 childcare providers. Currently, Kansas needs 85,000 childcare slots to meet the current demand. Our local area faces similar childcare challenges as the rest of the state. The Meadowlark Extension District, which encompasses Jackson, Jefferson and Nemaha counties, needs approximately 977 more childcare slots to meet demand.

Many Kansas families find that both parents are needed in the workforce to provide for their family's financial stability. The cost of food and other necessities demand this, especially with rising costs. Many working parents, however, struggle to find high-quality, flexible childcare at a reasonable price. Childcare is affordable if it costs no more than 7% of the family budget. According to The Economic Policy Institute, infant care in Kansas costs, on average, \$935 per month or \$11,222 per year, which means it costs more than in-state tuition in a state four-year public college. Kansas is one of 33 states where infant care is more expensive than college.

Besides working families, employers could also benefit from quality, affordable childcare. Employees having access to quality childcare improves absenteeism, the number of lost work hours, concentration and focus on the job and morale. Having childcare on-site is also an added benefit in recruiting and retaining employees. Dr. Bradford Wiles K-State Research and Extension Specialist, states, "Before the pandemic, U.S. businesses lost approximately \$4.4 billion annually due to absent workers dealing with childcare breakdowns".

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## Save the Date

MAY 9 -- 5:30 PM-THE COURTYARD, HOLTON

Dr. Bradford Wiles-K-State Research & Extension Specialist

Investing in Rural Childcare

You can join us for a light meal.

Learn About:

importance of Quality childcare in rural communities

the current childcare situation

opportunities for growth and overcoming hurdles

community partnerships

RSVP--785-364-4125

VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service



David Key, *Extension Agent/Director*

### Why People Volunteer

An effective leader knows that volunteers are people who have chosen to participate in a project, and that they can at any time choose other options. And they probably will if their experience is not a positive one.

Generally, volunteers can be categorized based on whether they want to make a long-term or short-term commitment. One type of volunteer is not better than another. However, their interests and motivations are somewhat different, leading to different levels and kinds of involvement.

Here are some typical reasons that motivate volunteers and their implications for you as a community leader to consider.

- **To make a difference.** Many people volunteer because they want to make things better, to fix a problem, to produce something for others in the community. Wanting to make a difference means wanting to see results.
- **To be with people.** Volunteering can help new people in the community to meet others. It can be a way to develop networks that help people professionally. And it can provide an opportunity for family members to be together by volunteering together.
- **To gain experience.** Volunteering for a project can help people learn more about important community issues or opportunities. This activity assists people to develop skills that transfer to the work world..
- **To respond to a sense of duty.** Sometimes people volunteer because for them, it is simply the “right thing to do.” Their effort may come from a desire to give something back to the community. It may be based on religious convictions or other values.

- **To have fun.** Volunteering is work. But work does not have to be oppressive. If their experience is unpleasant, they can always do something else.
- **To do something different.** For some people, one of the rewards in volunteering is the chance to escape a routine. It maybe an opportunity to use skills that are underused at work.
- **Keep volunteers on the job.** A volunteer’s experience with a project should add to the community’s pool of volunteers, not drain it. Provide good orientation, adequate training, support and recognition.

Four key things can help you get the best return on the time and effort you put into supporting volunteers:

1. **Stay in touch.** Make sure all volunteers get the same information about the project and its progress in a timely way. Make sure they have the resources they need to do their job. Be able to work with volunteers to find a mutually acceptable solution to disputes or problems.
2. **Ask for and give feedback.** Show respect for your volunteers and take them seriously. As them for feedback about their project and its progress. Consider developing a job description for volunteers and ask for feedback about it as they carry it out.
3. **Create a recognition plan.** The surest way to lose volunteers is to take them for granted. Be intentional about recognizing what volunteers accomplish in formal and informal ways.
4. **Understand the volunteer “life cycle.”** When volunteers choose to step back, make sure your organization maintains a positive relationship with them. Remember an old saying: “Our ability to work together tomorrow depends to a large degree on how we treat each other today.”

*Adapted from the “The Community Leadership Handbook” Framing Ideas, Building Relationships and Mobilizing Resources By James F. Krile*





### David Hallauer, *Extension Agent* Fighting Multi-Stemmed Brush Species

The three common multi-stemmed brush species we battle are buckbrush, roughleaf dogwood, and smooth sumac. Native to Kansas, they start as small clumps that shade out (and thin out) the forage below.

The first we'll see in spring is buckbrush. Short in stature at only two or three feet tall (reddish purple berries in fall), it has above ground runners that help the plant to spread.

Roughleaf dogwood shows up a little after buckbrush, exhibiting flat-topped clusters of white flowers in May to early June. It can reach 15 feet in height.

Less common - but more showy - is smooth sumac. A medium height shrub, it grows to five to seven feet tall with an open milo-like head in early June. Leaves are a bright red in fall.

In a perfect world, a single control program would get them all, but being multi-stemmed natives is where the similarities stop and control challenges begin. For example, the best time to control buckbrush is as leaves start to change in color from their early season lighter green to a dark green color. This is the low point of the non-

structural carbohydrate cycle and provides us the best window for chemical control.

Because roughleaf dogwood generally starts a little later, control may have to be delayed a little, too. For best results, apply herbicides between the flower bud stage and early seed production. It generally takes a few years of consistent applications to do much good.

Smooth sumac herbicide applications should be done between the flower bud stage and early seed production. This is most often in early to mid-June.

Herbicide control products may differ, but all species are listed on multiple labels. Application timing to defoliate the plant at the low point of its non-structural carbohydrate cycle is an important consideration for control as well. For a product list, request a copy of the *2023 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide* from any District Office, or out the herbicides for brush and trees on rangeland section online at: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/SRP1176.pdf>.

### Recommended Plants

If a new landscape planting is on your agenda, but you're not sure what to even *begin* to think about for plants, check out the Recommended Plants page at the KSU Horticulture Resource Center website: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/recommended-plants/>.

### Bagworm Scouting

Mid-May is go time for bagworm larvae to get their start. Eggs will soon be hatching and emerging over several weeks, and caterpillars will start looking for a place to feed. Some feeding will occur where the bags hang. Others will disperse by producing a fine strand of silk and using wind to carry them to another host.

To keep bagworms from causing increasing destruction, control programs must be implemented when caterpillars are young and less than a quarter inch long. Scout for small larvae and newly formed bags (about the size of a pencil tip), implementing control in late-May/early June if previous infestations have been bad, or waiting slightly longer if infestations have been light (eggs do not all hatch at the same time. Repeat applications may be needed).

Numerous insecticides are effective, with thorough coverage the key to effective control. Apply insecticides in the morning or evening when larvae are most active. Try to get product coverage from top to bottom and from the interior to the exterior of the tree for best results. A high-pressure sprayer delivering a large volume of spray may be necessary for effective treatment.

While bagworms *do* have natural enemies (birds, parasitic wasps, etc...), natural enemies typically do not kill enough bagworms to affect populations or reduce plant damage.





Ross Mosteller, *Extension Agent*

### Blue-Green Blue-Green Algae, A Concern for Livestock

Water is critical to the survival of all living creatures, but if that water source is compromised, it can have deadly consequences. Watering livestock from ponds is a common practice, but the presence of high amounts of blue-green algae (BGA) can be a threat which can turn quickly! Blue-green algae are present in every body of water and are part of the natural ecosystem. Ponds need to be monitored, especially in the late spring & summer months.

Blue-green algae can be a misnomer, as these toxic blooms can be blue, green, orange to brownish in color. If you notice an oily, scummy substance floating on top of the water, that is a visual cue that a harmful algae bloom is occurring. Many factors contribute to algae blooms, including warmer temperatures, wind speed, water in/out flow and maybe most importantly - nutrient loads, specifically phosphorus.

Testing water any time pond water looks different or suspicious is a good idea. On windy days, these buoyant blooms tend to accumulate on the downwind side of the pond and can more easily be collected, taking care to prevent direct skin contact. Collecting water from a few inches below the surface into a jar to conduct a “jar test” is a good first step. A publication on our website outlines the process. Additional testing can be completed if BGA is suspected.

Blooms come and go, which in turn means the toxins come and go. This is why regular monitoring is so important. Producers need to have a plan to manage livestock and water sources, should BGA become an issue. This can include fencing off ponds, providing alternate water sources and rotation to different pastures. If you suspect blue-green algae, reach out to your local Extension office

and we can help you with collection and analysis of your pond water. Resources about blue-green algae is found at: <http://www.ksvdl.org/laboratories/toxicology/>.

### Grazing Resources

After a long winter of eating hay, crop residue and other dry feedstuffs, both ruminants and their caretakers are ready for turnout on green grass. Getting prepared for this time of year means more than simply going around fences and checking water gaps. Assessing pasture conditions, available forage and adjusting stocking rates accordingly is especially important following prolonged dry periods.

Following are some resources that can help make grass managers make this important decision. There is not implied endorsement of any of these specific products and other products (especially mobile device apps) are available, this is simply a reference to some free online resources.

- **US Drought Monitor:** <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/> Map released every Thursday, showing parts of the U.S. that are in drought, based upon five drought classifications.
- **Kansas Mesonet:** <https://mesonet.k-state.edu/> K-State Research & Extension weather stations, collecting multiple data points in nearly every Kansas county.
- **KSU Weather Data Library:** <https://climate.k-state.edu/> A wealth of weather and climate data, collected and housed through Kansas State.
- **Grassland Productivity Forecast:** <https://grasscast.unl.edu/Outlook.aspx> A tool developed for the western states rangelands, but gives indications for Kansas.
- **Rangeland Analysis Platform:** <https://rangelands.app/> Online tool that measures biomass, forage production and even has a stocking rate calculator.

Recently, K-State Research and Extension hosted an online educational meeting that discussed the decision-making process for turning out livestock in Western Kansas. You can view the presentation at: [https://youtu.be/LjC7tSp4E\\_A](https://youtu.be/LjC7tSp4E_A) or it can be accessed at [www.KSUBeef.org](http://www.KSUBeef.org).



Clay Roland, *Extension Agent*

### 4-H'ers Advocating for Agriculture: A Guide

The agriculture industry is continually changing, and we as producers need to ensure that we have consumer trust in agriculture. Research shows that shared values help build trust with consumers, especially when it comes to safe food, quality nutrition, appropriate animal care, and environmental stewardship. When we, as producers, can demonstrate and assure consumers that these are shared values we have with them, we build trust!

It is also important that we remain advocates for the agricultural community. A great way to do this is to share our story with family, friends, and fair attendees. This is a great way to engage the community in your project, and show them the reason why production agriculture and 4-H is great!

There are many effective ways to advocate! One of the best, and easiest ways to do this is to create an elevator speech. An elevator speech should take about as long as it would take to ride an elevator, (unless it is the one I got stuck on in a hotel in Dallas!) which is approximately 30-45 seconds. It should be a fast summary of how and why you are associated with 4-H and

agriculture and the effect that it has had on your life. If you need guidance, these are four extremely useful questions that can help spark your idea for an elevator pitch:

1. How and when did you get involved in raising animals?
2. What skills or lessons has your project taught you?
3. What's your favorite part of raising and showing animals?
4. What do you want others to know about how producers raise animals?

### National Volunteer Week: A Thank You to the 4-H Volunteers!

National Volunteer Week is celebrated annually during the third week of April, and this year it is from April 16th to the 22nd. This week is about highlighting the individuals who offer their resources of time, money, and knowledge to better our community.

In the Meadowlark District, consisting of Jackson, Jefferson, and Nemaha Counties, there are 229 registered volunteers, and countless others that have yet to register! These selfless individuals assist our offices in doing a multitude of activities, including leading clubs and the 36+ projects areas 4-H offers, serving on the fair boards, and assisting staff and 4-H'ers during the fair.

With that being said, we want to offer a heart-felt thank you to all our volunteers across the district! We understand you aren't always in the spotlight, or recognized for your efforts, but you are the backbone and the

engine that makes 4-H go! We could not offer the programs that we do without your help.

The Meadowlark District is always looking for new volunteers as well. Please call your local office if you want to become involved in helping achieve the 4-H motto "To Make the Best Better".

### Three key questions: *Is it true? Is it kind? Does it need to be said?*

Every day, we experience a menagerie of things and situations. We work with people each and every day because we are in the people business. We are all human and make mistakes. With this work comes the potential for conflict. People come to us to help them. Help solve a problem. Help with a situation that has come about in their 4-H club. And the list goes on and on.

Now, take a moment and think back to when you were a child. Remember playing the game of telephone? Someone started you off with a phrase and that phrase (or some concoction of the phrase) made it down the line. By the time it made it to the last person, was it the same phrase? Rarely!

When volunteers, parents and others come to us with a situation that they are asking us to help them with, it is important that we listen, gather the facts, and help. While these three questions may not always fit in every context and may need to be reframed, they are still relevant. So, remember to ask yourself those questions.



Cindy Williams, *Extension Agent*

### Is It Safe to Refreeze Raw Meat and Poultry That Has Thawed?

It is the season for storms and power outages. With that comes food that may have thawed in the refrigerator or freezer. It is safe to refreeze meat without cooking, although there maybe a loss of quality due to the moisture lost through thawing. After cooking raw foods which were previously frozen, it is safe to freeze the cooked foods. If previously cooked foods are thawed in the refrigerator, you may refreeze the unused portion. Freeze leftovers within 3-4 days. Do not refreeze any foods left outside the refrigerator longer than 2 hours; 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F.

If you purchase previously frozen meat, poultry or fish at a retail store, you can refreeze if it has been handled properly, according to USDA.

**DO NOT thaw meat at room temperature, such as on the kitchen counter.**

Safety will depend on whether the raw product was handled properly before it was frozen, refrozen shortly after it was thawed, cooked to a safe temperature when it is eaten and handled safely if there are any leftovers.

### How to Save Money While Living Paycheck to Paycheck

These tips for how to save money while living paycheck to paycheck can apply to any family and any budgetary needs.

1. **Have savings auto-drafted by your bank when your paycheck is direct deposited.** Even if you only have \$5-\$10 a week put into your savings account, this little fast transaction can add up to create a nice start to a savings account. When you don't see the money, it is easier to not miss it. A \$5 weekly savings can quickly add up to \$260 per year. If both you and your spouse have this done with your paychecks, you will have \$520 at the end of the year in savings. This may not seem like much, but it can be a car repair, a mortgage payment, insurance or even used for holiday gifts.
2. **Get an interest-bearing savings account.** Not only do you want to set yourself up for auto-drafted savings, but you need to make sure you are putting that money in an interest-bearing savings account, instead of checking. Shop around to local banks to find the best rate. Some offer interest each month. Others add the interest at the end of the year for you. You can earn \$20-\$50 a year on just a small savings account of under \$500 with a basic interest-bearing account. May not seem like much, but it is free money.
3. **Adjust the thermostat.** Do you struggle with utility bills being a hassle during super hot or super cold months? There are tons of tips on how to save on utility costs, but one of the first things to do is adjust your thermostat. Use fans and wear fewer layers in the summer and keep your thermostat a bit higher. In the winter, work with alternate heat sources like wood heat and pile on the layers. When you are scrimping money to make ends meet, this is a great place to shave \$25-\$100 off your budget each month. You may want to choose level billing to keep a consistent utility bill every month so there aren't surprises.
4. **Cook from scratch.** Cooking from scratch is the ultimate way to save money. Not only can you avoid chemicals and preservatives in your foods, you'll be able to budget your grocery purchases wisely, use leftovers more regularly and stretch your dollar farther. This includes not eating out to avoid spending unnecessarily.
5. **Downsize and purge items you don't need.** From last years kids' clothes that are in good shape but don't fit, to the excess of kitchen items you no longer need to use, purging is a great way to create money to add to savings. Sell off items you don't need to create an excess in your daily budget, or to simply boost your budget.



Teresa Hatfield, *Extension Agent*

### Businesses Can Help

The cost of childcare is one of the most burdensome challenges parents face. Beginning on July 1, 2022, Kansas businesses can apply for state income tax credits for offering child care for their employees or helping them pay for childcare. This will help employers further support their employees. Parents with access to quality, affordable childcare report increased productivity, improved health, and reduced stress.

## Childcare Shortage . . .

### Continued from Page 1

Childcare providers in Kansas consist of childcare centers, licensed family/group childcare homes, preschools, Head Start and school-aged programs. Childcare workers play an essential role in our communities by caring for our children and providing an environment where they can learn and grow. Most childcare workers, however, are among the lowest-paid of occupations. The average childcare worker in Kansas on average makes \$10.40 per hour. Also, only a few workers receive job-based benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plans, vacation and sick days. Those workers who have received college degrees make substantially less than their peers in other occupations. Many childcare workers are unable to make ends meet.

Communities across Kansas have been working to find innovative solutions to the childcare crisis. Marion County is an example of a rural community challenged by the lack of childcare opportunities in the area. When they looked at their situation, they found that only 32% of their childcare demand was being met. The lack of childcare also impacted local businesses that faced challenges in supporting employees looking for quality childcare. In 2019 a task force was formed to study the issue. Since then, the small task force has formed a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit governing board that represents various community sectors. They are on track to renovate an 11,000-square-foot space into the new Hillsboro Child Care Center. The planned center will serve up to 99 children from birth through 5 years of age.

K-State Research & Extension has been working with community partners across the state, seeking solutions to the problem. K-State Research and Extension-Meadowlark District will host Dr. Bradford Wiles with K-State Research and Extension Special on Tuesday evening, May 9th, at 5:30 PM at the Courtyard, 426 Pennsylvania Ave, in Holton. Wiles will talk with residents and community partners in the Meadowlark Extension about the importance of offering quality, affordable childcare. Wiles is committed to helping communities build capacity for access to childcare. All are welcome to attend the event. We have a virtual option available if you cannot attend in person. We will begin the evening with a light meal at 5:30 PM, followed by Dr. Wiles' presentation. RSVP to the Meadowlark Extension office by May 5th at 785-364-4125 to reserve your meal.

## Kansas Child Day Care Assistance Tax Credit

This tax credit reduces state income tax liability and includes:

- 30% of the amount spent to help employees pay for, locate, or operate a childcare facility. Credits are capped at \$30,000 per tax year.
- 50% of the total amount spent establishing a childcare facility used by the organization's employees. The credit is capped at \$45,000.
- 50% of the total amount spent establishing and operating a childcare facility in connection with another business or organization. The credit is capped at \$45,000.

To claim the credit, businesses must complete Schedule K-56 and file the state income tax return. Only \$3 million is available yearly, so the credit is on a first-come, first-served basis.



**Meadowlark Extension District**

114 W 5th St.  
Holton, KS 66436

Address Service Requested

## Publications and Resources For Sale

**Family Account Book**

**Farm Account Book**

**Radon Kits**

**Predator Calls**

**IMR Calving Books**

**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)

**Field Record Books** (free)

## Items to Check Out

**Soil & Hay Probes**

**Ear Taggers**

**Mole Trap**

**Freeze Branding Irons**

**Pesticide Manuals**

**Buzzers**

## Fruit Salsa

### Ingredients:

1 cup diced strawberries

1 banana, diced

1 kiwi, peeled and diced

1 apple, cored and diced

2 Tablespoon lemon juice or pineapple juice

¼ cup sugar

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

½ teaspoon cinnamon

### Directions:

- Combine fruits in a medium mixing bowl and add lemon or pineapple juice.
- Stir in sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Mix well.
- Refrigerate until serving time.

**Helpful Hints:** Lemon juice keeps fruit looking fresher and diced apples and bananas from turning brown. Washing fruit with fresh, running water is important to remove dirt and germs. It's best to wash strawberries just before eating so they don't mold. Even though you peel the kiwi, it's still important to wash it before cutting.

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving size-1 cup, calories-120; total fat-1%, cholesterol-0%, sodium-0%, protein-1%.

**Source:** *K-State Kid's A Cookin'*