Winter 2020

Offices will be closed for upcoming holidays
Christmas/New Years - Dec 24 - Jan 1, 2021
Martin Luther King, Jr. - Jan 20, 2021

Holton Office
114 W 5th St.
Holton, KS  66436-1778
785-364-4125

Oskaloosa Office
P.O. Box 326
100 E Washington
Oskaloosa, KS  66066-0326
785-863-2212

Seneca Office
1500 Community Drive
Seneca, KS  66538-1921
785-336-2184

Meadowlark Extension District
Holton, Oskaloosa and Seneca
Office Hours:  Mon. through Friday, 8:00 AM - Noon & 12:30 - 4:30 PM, closed on designated holidays.

Effective November 10, 2020

Due to a rapid increase in positive COVID-19 cases in our district and in Northeast Kansas, our offices will require all visitors to remain at the main office entrance until further notice. No face to face visits will be allowed unless all involved are practicing social distancing and the wearing of face masks. All office visitors are asked to stay no longer than 10 minutes per visit.

*A mask mandate is now in place for Jackson, Jefferson and Nemaha Counties. Therefore, masks will be required for all visitors to our Holton, Oskaloosa and Seneca offices.***

**All three of our District offices will be closed for Christmas/New Years break from December 24, 2020 through January 3, 2021
In the absence of a balanced nutrient management program, sometimes things go just fine – and sometimes they don’t. If invasive species are on the increase, take a closer look at soil fertility levels. Broomsedge bluestem is one invasive that can be a good indicator of phosphorous and/or pH deficiencies. Stand thinning in general might be another sign of poor fertility. Make sure your program balances all nutrients, not just nitrogen.

For more information about soil testing and fertility management needs of your cool season grass stand, contact any of our District Offices or e-mail me at dhaaluae@ksu.edu.

**Indoor Plant Temperature**

As nice as the fall has been, there’s no doubt we’ll get a cold stretch at some point that could last awhile. If you have foliage plants, think ahead to plan for appropriate locations when it occurs.

When possible, avoid placing plants near windows or entryways that may subject to cold temperatures. Plants in these locations are at the greatest risk for damage. The most sensitive to cold tend to be plants like Chinese evergreen, flamingo flower, croton and false aralia. They like temperatures above 60 to 65 degrees F in most cases. Other indoor plants aren’t quite as cold sensitive, but you still might want to reconsider storing them for the holiday weekend in a back room with the vent turned off or an area with no heat, since they prefer 50 degrees F or higher temperatures. Don’t forget: plants between curtains/drapes and the exterior window can get pretty cold at night, too. During really cold stretches, they may need to be pulled further indoors as well.

**Dormant Seeding of Turfgrass**

Fall cool season turfgrass seedings generally perform the best. They have the best chance to get established before crabgrass can take over as summer heat stress hits. If you missed that window, however, and have some spots you want to fill in, consider dormant season overseeding in December through February when soil temperatures are too cold for germination.

Good seed to soil contact is vital. One way to achieve this is through seeding when there has been a light snowfall (up to an inch). At this depth, you can still see bare spots. Spread seed over them and as snow melts, it places seed into good contact with the soil for germination next spring.

In the absence of snow, you can use the natural freeze/thaw cycles that occur to soils in winter. If soil has adequate moisture, freeze/thaw cycles cause small pockets to form, leaving areas perfect for catching and holding seed. As soils dry, the pockets collapse and cover the seed. If soils are dry and unfrozen, you can also use some sort of tillage, like core aeration, verticutting or even hand raking and broadcasting seed immediately after.

With any of these methods, seed will germinate in the spring as soon as it has opportunity. Be sure and watch your herbicide programs, though. There will be limitations on herbicides that can be used – and timing of use – for many common broadleaf and crabgrass control products. Always read and follow label directions.
Effective Meeting Management

Have your community or group meetings become boring and seem to lack something? Perhaps some thought needs to be given to how your meetings are managed. Careful planning and preparation are essential to maximize meeting effectiveness. Because groups and organizations must conduct much of their business through meetings, it is important that these sessions be meaningful and productive. Meeting participants are busy people who may be willing to become more involved if they know their time will be well spent.

Consider adopting or reviewing the following items when preparing for your next meeting:

Establishing Meeting Procedures

Who is responsible for meeting productivity? The chairperson should be in charge of planning and may delegate some duties to other individuals. Everyone attending the meeting should be prepared to participate and contribute to the business at hand.

Ideally, a meeting should have a standard scheduled date and starting time. The meeting may have a specified ending time or it may be determined by the volume of the business to conduct. At its first meeting the group should decide how future meetings will be conducted.

One of the most important parts of meeting planning is preparing the agenda. The agenda is a helpful tool for guiding discussion and is a written order of business to conduct a meeting. It is a list of things to be done. It is an invaluable tool to help a group focus on the business at hand and more quickly achieve its goals. A good reference for helping prepare a meeting agenda is Roberts Rules of Order.

When decisions and/or recommendations have been made, members need to support them. For this reason, unmistakable communication is critical. Members not only need to speak clearly, but they need to be active listeners. Repeating or summarizing someone’s contribution can be beneficial to the group’s efficiency.

Selecting a Meeting Site

In addition to planning the agenda, the leader should make sure the meeting site has a favorable environment. Meeting participants will contribute to and get more from the meeting if they are comfortable. Pay special attention to acoustics, lighting, temperature and noise levels, table and chair arrangements, physical barriers that discourage participation as well as parking and location directions especially if the meeting area is an unfamiliar location.

Leader Responsibilities

In addition to preparing the agenda and adhering to meeting procedures the leader performs a number of tasks to ensure meeting effectiveness. Some important responsibilities for leaders include:

Be prepared and have meeting materials ready, speak clearly, clarify and ensure communication of the discussion being held, be confident and enthusiastic.

Encourage input from everyone and maintain group focus on the specific item of discussion.

Delegate specific jobs as needed to other group members.

Close on a positive note.

Member Responsibilities

Just as the leader has specific responsibilities, so do the other members of the group. Some ideas for members to consider include the following:

- Be prepared to report or discuss meeting topics and stay focused on the discussion being held.
- Be loyal to the group, be willing to compromise, accept and support group decisions.
- Practice confidentiality.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.

Summary

Group leaders and members can do a number of things to ensure that their meetings are productive and efficient.

Advance planning by everyone involved is the key to achieving this goal!

Welcome A-Board Mini Series is being offered December 7, 2020.

The Meadowlark Extension District is hosting their third online board leadership session focusing on strategic planning for community based boards and organizations. The session is offered free of charge with registration due in early December. The session will be held from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. To register online go to: http://tinyurl.com/bdleader or contact David Key at the Meadowlark Extension District office in Seneca at 785-336-2184 or by email at dkey@ksu.edu.
Ross Mosteller, District Extension Agent

What is a 4-H “Project”??

In 4-H, members learn about topics that interest them. These are referred to as member 4-H “projects.” That could be anything from learning how to cook, build a robot, or care for the environment. One of the most important aspects of 4-H project work is that the 4-H member decides what they want to learn and do as they explore their project. This allows the project to be self-paced, and gives children important skills in setting and working toward their goals. Exploring interests through 4-H project work is an excellent way to discover new skills and potential careers.

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Youth complete hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture and civic engagement, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Kids can concentrate on one focus area or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience. Regardless of the project area, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

4-H makes learning fun! A variety of projects are offered through 4-H so members can pick the ones that most interest them. Or they can find other young people with the same interest and study that topic with the help of a volunteer that shares the same interests. 4-H projects help members to learn by doing. Projects offer hands-on ways to learn about a topic of interest. Some projects have several levels. As members master the work at a beginning level, they are encouraged to advance to higher levels.

Maybe the place to start in the discussion of which 4-H project to try, is to define the word “project”. One way Wikipedia describes it: “any undertaking, carried out individually or collaboratively and possibly involving research or design, that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim.” That actually describes the 4-H project fairly well! Youth have an interest, set goals to learn/do around that interest, work on their own or in conjunction with a caring adult volunteer (project leader) to complete or achieve the goal. This may not result in a physical, tangible item – like what many people think of looking at county fair exhibits – but rather, it is this full experience process that encompasses 4-H project work.

There seems to be a perception that in order to participate in 4-H you need to be a “farm kid” and take animal projects. Nothing could be FARTHER from the truth! As the largest youth serving organization in the United States, there are 4-H members from very rural to large urban settings. Youth with ANY interest can participate. In fact, within Meadowlark Extension District, the projects with the highest enrollment numbers are: Foods & Nutrition, Visual Arts and Crafts and Photography.

In Kansas, there are almost three dozen recognized 4-H projects – that meet the interest of every youth member. This is true, because if a member cannot find a project of interest in the list, there is one called “Self Determined” which can be ANYTHING that the youth finds interest in. Part of the beauty in the design of 4-H project work is that there are set standards for project areas, but creativity within can be celebrated and rewarded.

In addition to goal setting, learn by doing and showcasing by giving project talks, demonstrations or project sharing about the various aspects of the project area. Both of these skills are things 4-Hers are well known for.

If you’d like to learn more about 4-H projects, check out the project selection guide at: [https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/docs/ProjectSelectionGuideColor.pdf](https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/docs/ProjectSelectionGuideColor.pdf) to get ideas. This guide gives a broad overview to what makes up each project area, but as it has been discussed before, most projects can become very specific, creative or in-depth in the various aspects of the general project area. Another place to explore 4-H projects is through the Project Resources page of the Meadowlark District 4-H website [https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/project_resources.html](https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/project_resources.html) This page dives into some of the local specifics and references additional resources by subject matter area.

So, the next time you hear someone mention a 4-H Project, hopefully your mind goes to the work done by a young person all year long, around an interest area, verses a physical exhibit located at a county fair building or barn. What matters most is the growth and development of the 4-H member, not the color of ribbon given to the 4-H exhibit. Contact your local Meadowlark Extension District office to learn more about 4-H or visit our website: [https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/](https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/)
The BRaNDS software is a program used in the formulation of rations for beef cattle. The guidelines are taken from the 2016 NASEM publication on the Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle and some additional peer reviewed research that contributes to this cause. The program allows you to quickly change inputs and see the results. It allows you to change the default feed nutrient values with your own feed’s nutrients. It provides different formulations as well as the projected cost per pound gain and cost per day. With minimal inputs about the cattle being fed rations can be formulated quickly. With a series of rations you can project long range projection of growing animals.

We can use default feed values, or better yet your own forage test results for the best rations.

If you have a ration that you would like analyzed, please call the Extension office. There is no charge for this service.

Preparing for Calving

In the cow-calf sector, the key to increasing income is to increase reproductive efficiency. Once all the work is done to prepare a female for breeding, then breeding occurs and we hope for a live calf. Nothing is more frustrating than making it through this process and then losing a newborn calf.

Open cows and neonatal death are arguably the two largest factors that reduce value and profitability in the cowherd. Over half of neonatal death losses occur in the first 24 hours. The first item to consider is dystocia (meaning "difficult birth"). Not only can dystocia result in a dead calf upon delivery, but it can contribute to other problems too.

Considerations to reduce and help avoid dystocia in your herd, keep breeding females in proper BCS (body condition score). Not too fat, not too thin. A BCS of 6 for cows and 6.5 for heifers at calving is optimum. Select the appropriate bull for your herd. Must be an easy calver that breeds vigor into his calves.

Keep accurate records of projected calving date and be prepared to check cows up to two weeks early with calving ease bulls. During calving season check cattle frequently. Some producers have invested in cameras for night checks or simply to be able to check close up cows remotely. If a problem is identified take action. Don’t be afraid to call a vet for assistance.

Along with maintaining cows in good BCS, proper nutrition and mineral supplementation is crucial. Brood cows require a sufficient mineral program and a diet with adequate energy and protein. Cows in good shape on a good balanced diet will make colostrum that is higher in IGGs which results in better calf immunity. Calves MUST receive colostrum in the first 6 hours of life. If they do not, then a producer MUST intervene with a colostrum replacement.

Colostrum is built to be the first meal in life and it provides the antibodies calves need to have a functioning immune system.

It is also very important to prepare a clean and dry calving area out of the elements. Keeping calves in a dry and clean area is paramount to decrease exposure to pathogens. Also, avoid keeping cows locked up after calving for extended periods of time. The birthing process can lead to damp pathogen loaded bedding which is unhealthy for the neonatal calf. If at all possible deploy some version of the "sandhills system" where cows are calved in a fresh clean area every 2-3 weeks. If you do not have enough room, keeping areas cleaned, disinfected and properly bedded will be crucial. High pathogen loads lead to more issues with scour and respiratory disease. Scours is a huge killer of neonatal calves. They quickly become dehydrated and ill making recovery difficult.

Overall, preparation is crucial to a successful calving season. Pick the right breeding stock, keep accurate records, and be mindful of your calving environment. Good husbandry practices go a long way in a cow calf operation. Not only will some of these practices make your life a lot easier but they will definitely make you more money.
Holiday Cooking: The Potlucks Are Coming

The holidays are here and special dinners are on the horizon. From family gatherings to office celebrations, tis the season for the always engaging potluck dinner. You might have a standard dish your friends and family count on you to bring or you may find yourself wanting to try a new recipe this holiday season. Either way, don’t let “extra” holiday cooking break your budget.

Here are some tips to keep our food costs in line no matter how many holiday dinners are in your future.

1. Stick to your list. Plan your grocery trip based on what you need for your dish. While it’s ok to pick up necessary staples, don’t use the holidays as an excuse for impulse spending at the grocery store.

2. Buy in bulk. If you are taking cheesy potatoes to five different holiday gatherings, buy the needed shelf-stable ingredients in bulk may say you some money.

3. Watch sales, compare prices, find coupons. Digital coupons have made saving money easier and less time consuming. From larger stores in metro markets to the local Dollar General in rural areas, using coupons is as easy as selecting options in an app and typing phone number at checkout.

4. Savor the leftovers. If your dish isn’t devoured at the pantry, take it home and feed to your family at their next meal.

It’s been a rough year. As the holidays approach, celebrate with your family and friends but remember to be safe. Always practice food safety, socially distance when possible and enjoy each other as we navigate this season together.

Holiday Home Hints

- Use a car funnel with a long spout to fill the basin of your Christmas tree.
- Iron table linens weeks ahead and roll them on a cardboard tube—wrinkle free table setting.
- Save money on wrapping paper by wrapping gift with inexpensive plastic table cloths.
- Use a bath or dish towel for wrapping paper and make it part of the gift.
- Remove candle wax by scraping off as much as you can with an old credit card or spatula, then layer paper towels on top and bottom of the stain, use a warm, not hot iron to melt the wax and absorb into the towel. Use a dry cleaning solvent such as Imperial Cleaners, Energine or Goof Off to remove the remaining residue. If color persists, use an oxygen bleach like Biz, Oxiclean or Clorox II.
- Holiday décor for less. Use table salt, cotton balls, snowman figurines or a homemade ice sculpture to decorate your table.
- Refresh ribbons and bows with your curling or flat iron. It will make them look new in seconds.
- Use a removable hook (Command Strip) upside down on the back side of the door to hang the loop hanger of a wreath on.

*Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Homemade Seasoning (Salt Substitute)

| 2 T dry mustard | 1 T white pepper |
| 2 T onion powder | 1 tsp. ground thyme |
| 2 T garlic powder | 2 tsp. crushed basil |
| 2 T paprika |

Combine all ingredients in a shaker and serve in place of salt. Choose spices which are coarsely ground for a better texture. Makes 2/3 cup.

Nutritional Value:

| Serving Size: 1 tsp. | Carbohydrates: 1 gm |
| Calories: 5 | Fat: 0 |
| Protein: 0 | Sodium: 0 |

Hint: The garlic powder may be omitted and 1 or 2 tsp of turmeric can be added for a change of flavor and added color.
Family Bonding for the holidays? Board games hit the mark

Among many things, playing board games is a resource for mental health. It helps people to disconnect from reality for a short period of time, having a break from stressors such as COVID-19 or politics.

When possible for families to get together during the upcoming holiday season, board games can provide valuable bonding time.

You know, these holidays are going to be unique, but that uniqueness has given us the opportunity to re-set our scope and adjust our lenses to focus on who we have close to use and to connect with them. COVID-19 is shifting our attention to what is fundamentally important: people. And board games help to connect or re-connect people in a non-intrusive way.

These six traits of strong families are key aspects that families can focus on.

Carving time for each other

- Appreciation
- Communication
- Shared values
- Resiliency in times of crisis
- Commitment to each other

Playing board games as a family tradition helps to develop those traits in a scaffolding manner. One trait is the result of the previous one when playing board games.

How the Aging Brains Affects Thinking

The brain controls many aspects of thinking – remembering, planning and organizing, making decisions, and much more. These cognitive abilities affect how well we do everyday tasks and whether we can live independently.

Some changes in thinking are common as people get older. For example, older adults may:

- Be slower to find words and recall names
- Find they have more problems with multitasking
- Experience mild decreases in the ability to pay attention

Aging my also bring positive cognitive changes. For example, many studies have shown that older adults have more extensive vocabularies and greater knowledge of the depth of meaning of words than younger adults. Older adults may also have learned from a lifetime of accumulated knowledge and experiences. Whether and how older adults apply this accumulated knowledge, and how the brain changes as a result, is an area of active exploration by researchers.

Despite the changes in cognition that may come with age, older adults can still do many of the things they have enjoyed their whole lives. Research shows that older adults can still:

- Learn new skills
- Form new memories
- Improve vocabulary and language skills.

As a person gets older, changes occur in all parts of the body, including the brain.

- Certain parts of the brain shrink especially those important to learning and other complex mental activities.
- Blood flow in the brain may decrease.
- Inflammation, which occurs when the body responds to an injury or disease, may increase.

These changes in the brain can affect mental function, even in healthy older people. For example, some older adults may find that they usually perform just as well. Needing that extra time is normal as we age. There is growing evidence that the brain maintains the ability to change and adapt so that people can manage new challenges and tasks as they age.

Source: National Institute on Aging

Teen Babysitting Resource

Tween or teens may be “Suddenly in Charge” of taking care of other children. K-State Research and Extension’s resource series will prepare youth with safety tips, activities and snack ideas to help them feel empowered. Visit our website, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/families/suddenly-in-charge/ for information.

The Suddenly in Charge resource was developed during the pandemic when families have been forced to make quick adjustment to routines. The resources focus on safety, activities, food and more. They are useful for a pre-planned or last-minute-planned babysitting experience.
Upcoming Events

- **December 7, 2020** - Welcome A-Board Mini Series via Zoom, 6:30 PM-8:30 PM *(its not too late to register, registrations will be accepted through December 4)*
- **December 8, 2020** – Family Consumer Sciences Program Development Committee via Zoom, 6:30 PM
- **December 24, 2020-January 1, 2021** - Following the recommendation from K-State’s President, Richard Meyers, Provost, Chuck Tabor and the encouragement and support of K-State Research and Extension Director of Extension, Greg Hadley, the Meadowlark Extension District Governing Body will close all District Offices. Our offices will open for business again on Monday, January 4, 2021.
- **January 19-20, 2021** - NW Certified Crop Advisor virtual meeting.
- **January 20, 2021** - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- **January 26, 2021** - Grain Marketing Workshop, Sabetha
- **January 28, 2021**—KSU Dairy Day, Nemaha County Community Building, Seneca

Items available for purchase

*Family Account Books - $7.25  Radon Kits- $6.00
*Farm Account Books - $5.00  IMR Calving Books - $6.80
*Extra Account Book pages - $0.15  *Price as of January 4, 2021

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.