



Meadowlark Extension District 15th Anniversary Edition of the Extension Response!

The Meadowlark Extension District was officially formed on July 5, 2006, becoming the seventh district in Kansas. Sounds simple enough until you realize how much time, dedication, and public trust was displayed by the many volunteers, elected officials and extension staff to make our district a success!

K-State Research and Extension and the Meadowlark Extension District have been a consistent voice in northeast Kansas providing research-based information to help people, businesses, and communities to solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

We hope you enjoy a review of our last 15 years!

Sincerely
David Key
Meadowlark Extension District Director

Global Food Systems

Educational programs and workshop promoting the benefits of intensively managed pastures began shortly after the formation of the district in 2008 to showcase rotational grazing with an emphasis on improving animal carrying capacity. Interest in the topic continued to grow with the support of the district agents and in 2010 extension agents, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Districts and the Kansas Rural Center met to plan what is now known as the Eastern Kansas Grazing School.



In 2015, district agents reported reaching producers who were managing and developing slightly more than 10,000 acres of pasture and hay ground. At their 2016 school pre-meeting, surveys of attendees indicated 18% of those responding considered themselves fairly knowledgeable about grazing principles after completing the school that number jumped to 82%!

Health



Walk Kansas was just five years old when the district was formed and has been a constant and popular educational program in the district. In 2009, district

agents reported 100 registered teams with a total of 77,000 reported miles walked that year!

In 2020, at the start of the statewide lock down due to the looming COVID-19 pandemic, Walk Kansas was just kicking off for the year. With face-to-face meetings canceled the online system to track participants was a valuable tool to extend knowledge and offer support!

The district purchased its first new vehicle in July of 2008! The 2008 Chevy Uplander cost \$15,683.

In 2010, the Seneca office moved to their new office space provided by the Nemaha County Commissioners in the Nemaha County Community Building.

District agents began reporting their work with an innovative statewide program supporting military youth and their families called Operation Military Kids. In 2010, district agents reported on their first day camp offered at the Holton National Guard Armory reaching 22 children and families living in the district.



In 2011, district agents, reported on their early efforts to communicate with and engage audiences regarding the treatment and care of persons with Alzheimer's by hosting a webcast sponsored by the K-State Center on Aging featuring a speaker giving his account of living with the disease.



This successful grant funded effort continued through 2015 providing a support network for military families in the district. One popular effort which was widely supported by community organizations and individuals, was the filling of Hero Packs. The packs were filled with items to provide school-age children with fun activities and ways to connect with their deployed parent.



Youth nutritional programs conducted throughout the district were first reported in the spring of 2011. District agents reported on conducting "Book In The Bag" programs that combined reading with a nutritional message.

District agents reported on their first in-depth and hands-on districtwide food preservation workshop where participants were able to practice some of the techniques they were shown. Demand for this workshop resulted in the district hosting multiple workshops for both adults and youth through 2019.



In 2011 Betty Barnes Meadowlark Extension District Office Professional in the Oskaloosa office was recognized for 45 years of service with the Meadowlark Extension District and the Jefferson County Extension Council. Later that year Betty became our first employee to retire from the district.

In 2014, district agents first reported on efforts to reach those diagnosed with diabetes by hosting a regional Diabetes and You seminar in Sabetha with more than 63 people attending this event.



District agents became barbecue supporters holding two Barbecue Universities in 2015 and 2016. Offered

as day long workshops the workshops shared information and provided education related to selecting meat products, food safety, healthy side dishes, smoke flavors, sauces and seasonings.

In May of 2015, our district became the first district in the state to acquire and purchase property! The Holton office relocated from the courthouse just across the street.



Our district celebrated its 10th year in 2016 with a sweet treat!



District agents began offering a new multi-week exercise and strength program called Stay Strong Stay Healthy in 2016. Participants met for weekly sessions eight times. Designed to help older adults regain strength and improve their balance through aerobic exercise and the use of weights. The program was successfully offered through 2019 with a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

In 2009 the district reported the following highlights:

4-H Club Enrollment—866 members

Community Clubs—31

Project Clubs—7

Registered and Certified Volunteers—431

4-H Youth Ambassadors—31

The district hired its first ever 4-H and Youth Agent in November of 2006 when Megan Cassidy, a native of Minonk, Illinois was hired. Linda Gantz became our first full time 4-H Program Manager in the Oskaloosa Office after accepting the position in the fall of 2010 followed by Cara Robinson in the Holton Office in 2012. Deb Henry was employed as a part time program assistant and in the fall of 2014 accepted the position as the full time Seneca Office 4-H Program Manager.

The 4-H Cloverbud project was started and youth beginning at age five who wanted to experience 4-H could now do so. In 2011, Cloverbud enrollment had grown to 61 members and there were now 8 project clubs in the district.

A “Clover Challenge” was held in 2011 reaching 131 4-H Club Officers in the district. Sixty-five percent of the participants found the training and resources to be extremely useful!



During the 2011-12 school year, district staff reported 343 youth were reached with school enrichment programs supporting plant sciences, chick embryology, and hand washing.

In 2014, agents reported the following statement when reviewing Kansas 4-H Scholarships from district 4-H members:

“4-H has given me great self-confidence in myself to be a better role model, leader and 4-H member. To this day, I am so thankful that my parents got me involved with 4-H. I went from being that shy little girl that didn't want to do any activities, to becoming a leader and role model. I am ready to pursue life goals because I have reached many of my goals within 4-H.”

Later that year district agents and program managers reported on their participation in a statewide community service effort called 48 Hours of 4-H. District 4-H clubs reported they contributed 48 of the 130 projects completed statewide that year!



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District

In the summer of 2015, district agents and staff reported that the district was now a part of the Pioneer Trails 4-H camp group with 73 4-H'ers and 16 youth counselors attending camp.

Later that year district agents reported that 4-H enrollment had moved to an online enrollment system called "4HOnline." Since the site went live in November of 2014, 877 youth and 268 registered volunteers had completed enrollment.

In the summer of 2016, district agents and staff reported more than 300 youth had participated in their 4-H Ambassador Day Camps hosted across the district. Older 4-H teen ambassadors worked with district agents and program managers to offer the experience.



In 2017 district agents and program managers reported 108 campers and 21 youth counselors attended 4-H camp with the Pioneer Trails Camp Group.

In a 2017 year-end report, it was reported that 2,162 youth in the district representing 30% of the youth population aged 5 - 18 in the district were reached through traditional 4-H programs, school enrichment, Clover Bud experiences, and day camps!



In 2018, our district purchased our second property remodeling a former medical clinic in Oskaloosa. The move more than doubled our office space and provided our staff with meeting space and storage.

Community Vitality

In 2010, after attending an informational meeting sponsored by the district on the use of the Facilities Conservation Improvement Program, the then USD #442 School District moved forward with their plan to update their lighting, heat, ventilation, and air conditioning systems at their high school with a reported yearly savings in utility expenses of nearly \$25,000.

In 2011, district agents cooperated with the Glacial Hills RC&D County to reach more than 350 households and/or individuals in the area providing information and tips on reducing home energy costs. The educational campaign resulted in 2,330 traditional light bulbs being replaced by compact fluorescent bulbs.

Later that year, the district welcomed the communities of Perry, Winchester, Delia, and Wetmore into the Kansas PRIDE program joining the community of Goff who had been active for many years.

In 2012, the district agents reported being the first presenter/speaker on a state-wide web-based board leadership series consisting of four weekly sessions

offering basic leadership instruction with locally facilitated discussion. The popular program continued to be offered statewide until 2018 reaching more than 800 participants.

In 2013, district agents reported on the third annual Regional Entrepreneurship Camp for high-school-aged youth interested in entrepreneurship. The district worked in cooperation with two other regional economic development groups to design, promote, and coordinate the workshop.

Community PRIDE groups reported a successful year in 2016 with Delia PRIDE receiving four community capital awards for their work in the community. Centralia PRIDE nominated the Centralia Community Church as a State PRIDE Partner for their support.

Water

In 2010, district agents reported on the promotion and use of geo-textile fabric by 33 farmers and ranchers to provide a base for a permeable hardened all weather surface to feed and water livestock. First promoted in 2008, funding and promotional support for the project was provided by a grant from the Kansas Center for Agriculture and the Environment and the Meadowlark Extension District.



Ag and water festivals for youth were first reported on by district agents in 2011 following a successful project held at Banner Creek Lake. Partnering with the Jackson County Conservation District and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, district agents reached more than 400 youth who learned the importance of agriculture and being good stewards of our natural resources.

In 2012, district agents reported on a team effort with other agencies to investigate the cause of blue-green algae in the water bodies across the district. The toxic algae blooms were reported to have caused death of animals that swam in or drank the water and resulted in the closing of several lakes and ponds. The first known educational and research effort in the district began with a soil testing project around Centralia Lake in Nemaha County.

In the summer of 2013, district agents continued to work with state agencies including KSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory investigating the contributing factors causing blue, green algae to form resulting in an on-farm testing protocol to help detect the algae.



District agents continued to monitor and assist producers and land owners with blue green algae problems through 2019 when district agents were asked to join a group of state agencies to place demonstration treatments in ponds in the region. Demonstrations involved using barley straw bales anchored to pond banks. The project continues through 2021 and now involves the use of a sand filter system in addition to the barley straw bales.

Global Food Systems

Drought conditions had developed over much of the region in 2012 and 2013 creating the need for

multi-faceted educational effort that district agents were able to respond to in a timely manner.

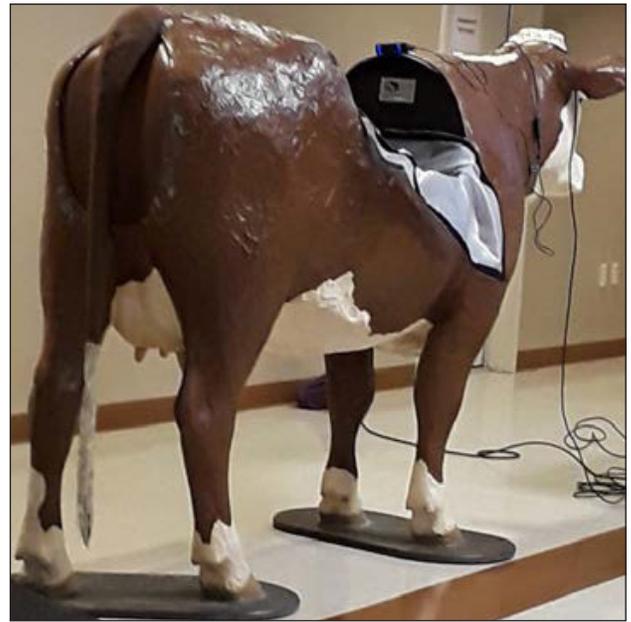
District agents hosted an on-farm demonstration on ammoniating wheat straw for use as feed for cattle. Fourteen producers borrowed the equipment demonstrated at the tour ammoniating more than 700 bales of straw that resulted in a feed cost savings of roughly \$30,000.



In 2014, recognizing the need to provide educational resources to Spanish-speaking and bilingual dairy employees in Nemaha County, district agents hosted the first Bi-lingual Dairy Production Meeting related to artificial insemination.



District agents reported on the outcome of their 2014 calving school with meetings held in Seneca and Nortonville. It was reported that more than 100 farmers/ranchers and dairymen attended the workshops that year representing nearly 7,100 head of beef and dairy cows.



The Agricultural Act of 2014 gave producers multiple program options to choose from when managing risk. District agents worked with County Farm Services Agency directors to present and discussion program options at 14 different meetings across the district. More than 450 individuals were helped via presentations and individual consultations.

In 2015, following input from district program development committee members district agents and staff held three Ag Festivals across the district reaching nearly 600 third-, fourth-, and fifth- grade youth on topics related to water quality, soil and wildlife conservation, soil health, leadership, and livestock production.

District agents started their first beef issues group in 2018. The group known as BIG met during the winter months to discuss topics designed to increase profits and efficiency. The evening sessions featured a professional presenter usually by conference call to reduce travel and expenses.

Health

A partnership formed in 2019 with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and state and regional extension specialists to hold a mini food-preservation workshop. The workshop was conducted as a follow-up to a garden-growing workshop that focused on growing summer vegetables. Sixteen participants prepared and safely canned salsa made from their garden produce.



members collected more than 100 dozen cookies, paper products, disposable dinnerware and laundry detergent for workers and families hit by a massive wildfire in southwest Kansas.

In 2018, a young 4-H member wrote the following statement in his 4-H scholarship application about his experience while involved in his local 4-H club:

"I have learned more can be done as a group than any one person can do alone. Our club's community service project of cleaning the cemetery where we meet is done as a thank you to the church; it's that simple. But what we learn is that a group of people with various talents and abilities can work together to accomplish what no one or two people could do alone for the greater good. We need to the father, that may have a tractor; all the way down to the youngest child, who can find those pieces of trash that have been blown about the grounds." Carter Kabus

In 2019, the Berwick Home Benefit Family and Community Education Unit was recognized for 70 years of active membership and the Corning Family and Community Education Unit was recognized with 65 years of active membership!

In 2019, district agents reported on a "Kid's A Cooking Camp" that was held in partnership with the Oskaloosa Methodist Women and community resource leaders to offer basic nutrition knowledge and cooking skills.



Community Vitality

In 2016, district agents reported on the development of a newsletter related to family financial management called "Money Matters." The newsletter will be compiled by district agents and sent to all of the banks in the district for their assistance in circulating the newsletter.

Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

In 2017, with 48 hours advanced notice, District 4-H families, alumni and generous caring community



In 2017, the Delia PRIDE Program was recognized as a 2017 Partners in PRIDE award winner receiving an \$11,000 cash prize they will be using to fund a landscaping project in Delia.

District agents reported on their first in a series of Grant Writing Workshops in 2017. Forty-one participants attended the workshop held and sponsored locally in Nortonville. Grant Writing Workshops were then held across the district in the next three years reaching hundreds of community-minded participants with the day-long training.

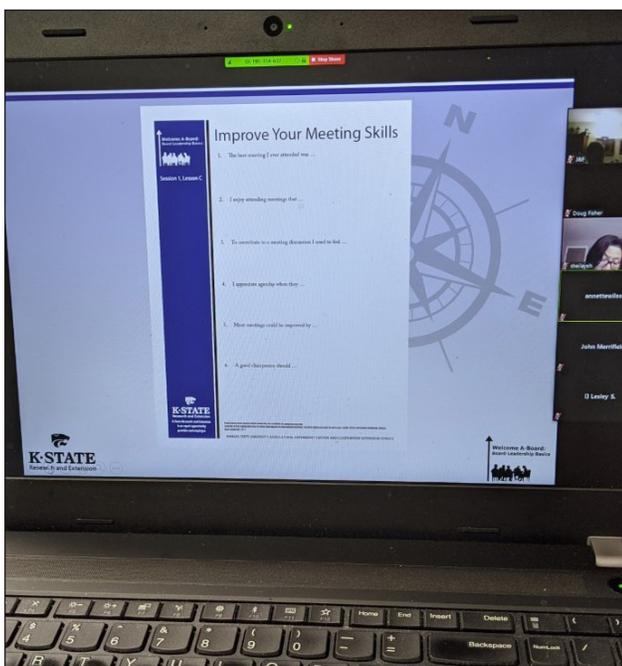
In 2019, district agents, in cooperation with five other regional economic development organizations, promoted and hosted the first Innovators Seminar, reaching 26 innovators and thinkers to learn about protecting intellectual property.

In 2019, PRIDE groups in the district reported working nearly 3,300 volunteer hours in their communities and raising almost \$11,000 in public and private donations to support their efforts.

Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

COVID-19 and the mandate to discontinue in-person extension programming forced the need to become more creative in our effort to hold county fairs in the district in 2020.

Representatives from extension, fair boards, county commissions, public health, and emergency preparedness were called together, across the district, to discuss plans for the county fair 2020 season. After the three



groups met, a modified in-person plan for 4-H participation at fairs was developed. This was a good exercise in working with some new and older partners, to keep the focus on the fourth H of 4-H – HEALTH and share expertise and knowledge. As the pandemic continued and local health requirements adjusted, public health official contact and recommendations allowed us to adjust 4-H program delivery resulting in reduced in-person activities and our first virtual 4-H Achievement celebration.

Community Vitality

The Meadowlark Extension District hosted the 2020 Welcome A-Board leadership series using an online format targeting participants who are new to community leadership or those just wanting a refresher course. Twenty-one participants signed up for the three-part series.



Global Food Systems

In an effort to reach more people, the Meadowlark Extension District gathered the necessary equipment and knowledge in late 2019 to start doing agent video recordings for social media. When the pandemic hit, extension agents were able to offer multiple recordings on a variety of topics. The recordings are posted on



social media and then archived on the Meadowlark Extension District website. By the end of 2020, their recordings had 36,285 views!

In 2019, Meadowlark Extension District agents hosted a site for an innovative educational series designed to reach to women in agriculture. One important session in the series was an educational session led by one of our district agents on family budgeting. As part of this effort, the programming group won the Team Award at the 2020 K-State Research and Extension Annual Extension Conference for their efforts

The first Extension Master Gardener training was offered in the fall of 2020. The Meadowlark Extension District took advantage of the opportunity, enrolling their first class of eight volunteers as the inaugural class from the district.



With summer meetings limited by COVID-19, presenters for the annual Tail Gate Talk series were asked to record their portion of the program to be shared via our Meadowlark Extension District Facebook page and YouTube.

Four video offerings resulted in 658 views, with each session averaging almost twice as many viewers as our typical in-person meetings the year prior.

Meadowlark Extension District Governing Body

Jackson County

Henriette Area, Mayetta
Bruce Yonke, Holton
Carolyn Kennedy, Circleville
Amy Pruyser, Hoyt

Jefferson County

Mike McNary, Meriden
Kim Swearngin, Lawrence
Susan Voelker, Valley Falls
Julie Newman, Oskaloosa

Nemaha County

Marcia Bauerle, Goff
Pam Deters, Baileyville
Marya Haverkamp, Bern
Tresa Jones, Seneca

Meadowlark Extension District Agents and Staff

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

Nancy Nelson, Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

Cara Robinson,
4-H Program Manager

Carol McManigal,
Office Professional

Oskaloosa Office

Cindy Williams, Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

David Hallauer, Extension Agent
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Linda Gantz, 4-H Program Manager

Melanie Bostwick,
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Seneca Office

David Key, District Director and
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Debra Henry, 4-H Program Manager

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Meadowlark Extension District – Nemaha, Jackson, and Jefferson Counties

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