K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

November 7, 2025

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Transition Planning: Step 11 – Selecting the Best Farm Business Entity

You can put in a lot of work on a transition plan, working successfully through all the previously mentioned steps, and still not have a plan that works if appropriate estate planning isn't part of the process. The purpose of a transition plan is the continuation of the farm for another generation but losing sight of the associated estate planning needs for both current and future generations is part of the continuation process even beyond the current transition plan.

There's not enough room in this space to outline the aspects of each of the legal forms of a farm business, but that doesn't mean they don't each deserve consideration to see which is best for you. How a business is structured, including who makes decisions, how finances are handled, etc… all have tax implications. For a nice overview of different farm business entity options, check out this reference from Mississippi State: https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/legal-forms-farm-business-organization-which-should-i-choose . It outlines the features of many of the options, but determining which is right for you will still likely require legal/financial assistance knowledgeable of your individual operation. If those professionals aren't yet a part of your team, check out some of the suggested resource professionals under the Find a Professional section at https://www.agkansitions.org/resource-links (many other qualified professionals are likely available as well with a little research…).

The focus on many transition plans is providing a way for the current generation to retire, and the next generation can farm. Equally important is looking ahead to provide the same types of options for the next generation. It will take some research, but coming up with the right farm business entity now can help provide that security for generations to come.

Reminder: Upcoming Fall Armyworm/Ag Lease Meetings

Two topics. Three days. November 19, 20, and 21 when we'll be on the road talking fall armyworms and ag leases during three different meetings across the Meadowlark Extension District. Each will be a rapid-fire overview of information on these two important subjects.

Fall armyworm recovery will be the morning theme looking back at 2025 feeding damage with an eye on what to think about heading into 2026. Whether that's stand rejuvenation or planning for the next infestation, we'll hit on things to think about moving forward. Doors open at 10:15. Meetings start at 10:30, ending at noon with a light lunch.

Ag leases will be the focus after lunch. We'll share updated lease numbers, but most of our time will be spent sharing resources you can use to go from the updated numbers to what your number *should* be. Meetings will start around 12:45 concluding by 2:30.

We'll be at the Memorial Hall in the Jackson County Courthouse on Wednesday the 19th. Thursday the 20th we'll be at Taylor Insurance Services in Oskaloosa and Friday the 21st we'll be in Seneca at the Woolsoncroft Events Center. Doors open at 10:15 each day. Come for one or both meetings and join us for lunch before or after if you can. For lunch/handouts, please RSVP to any District Office by noon on November 18th. More information can also be found on the events page at https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/events/ .

K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

November 7, 2025

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Vaccination Best Practices

We are entering the time of year when weaned calves, fall born babies and the breeding herd receive vaccinations. After attending the Kansas Beef Council's Beef Quality Assurance Training (BQA) a few weeks ago at Holton Livestock Exchange, it seems like a good time to share some of the basic best management practices and BQA guidelines as fall vaccinations happen.

Weaning, working and transporting animals are all stressors. Stressed animals have higher levels of cortisol in their bodies, which can have reduced vaccine effectiveness. Allowing animals time to rest gives the immune system a chance to recover and prepare for responding to the vaccine. Improper handling of vaccine, syringes and needles can also affect the ultimate success of the vaccination. Keen observation and attention to BQA guidelines will lead to best chance of success.

Vaccines should be given in front of the shoulder in the target "triangle" unless otherwise directed by the label. All animal health treatments need to be recorded and documented, either in print or electronically. Read the label and follow directions for use, storage, administration, dosage and other instructions. Pay attention to withdrawal times and do not market animals until this period has passed. Handle vaccines carefully. Do not expose vaccines to conditions outside the labeled temperature ranges, including freezing, or to sunlight. Light-sensitive animal health products should be transported and stored chute-side in a cooler with ice packs, if necessary. Use a towel or divider to keep the products from encountering ice packs, which can cause freezing. Some animal health products can be frozen and thawed safely, but others release endotoxins if they are frozen and thawed, which can be harmful and cause serious complications, including death.

If the vaccine or animal health product needs to be mixed, mix only what can be used in an hour or less. Some products are viable for a limited time once mixed, so mixing and using as you go helps ensure effectiveness. Use caution when shaking/mixing animal health products, even when instructed to "mix well" by the label. Shaking vigorously can damage the product, releasing endotoxins. The best way to mix it is to roll it between your hands, swishing it around in the vial, both clockwise and counterclockwise, and turning it upside-down several times.

Syringe management is critical as well. Label and have separate syringes assigned for specific products. Inadvertently mixing animal health products or subjecting products to cross-contamination from syringes can have harmful consequences. Never mix animal health products in the same syringe to reduce the number of injections. Anytime the vaccine gun is not being used, it should be stored in the cooler, or at a minimum out of the sunlight. Sanitize syringes and reusable equipment using boiling water or steam. Do not use detergents or disinfectants to clean syringes, as these products may leave a residue that can damage or destroy animal health products on the next use.

Always use a new, sterile needle when drawing up animal health products, to avoid product contamination left in the bottle. Never reenter a bottle with a used needle. Change needles every 10-15 head and/or every time a syringe is refilled, or if the needles are contaminated, dull, develop a bur, or bend. Needles are cheap, compared to the cost of vaccines and animal health.

Many of the best management practices referenced here come from the National BQA program guidelines. K-State has an excellent publication titled *"Proper Handling and Administration of Cattle Health Products"* MF2603 To learn more about BQA visit: https://www.bqa.org/resources/manuals

K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

November 7, 2025

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Grow Your Own Oak Trees

Oak trees are great additions to many landscapes. However, buying a tree can be expensive. Luckily, there is another option: starting your own tree from a seed. As we enter fall, and many oaks start dropping acorns, it is prime time to start your next oak tree from seed. Thad Rhodes with the KS Forest Service shared the following tips on growing your own oak trees from acorns.

First, collect acorns as soon as the seed is mature. This is typically when the acorns drop from the tree. Other signs that a seed is mature include browning of the acorn (turning from green) and when the acorn slips easily from the cap.

Be selective as you collect seeds. Collect seeds from trees with good form, as they will be more likely produce higher-quality trees. Consider the landscape location of seed trees and planting locations (e.g. pick hillside trees for planting on hillsides and creek bottom trees for planting in lower areas). Select the largest available acorns, as they will have more energy to initially feed the seedling.

Once you have your seeds, keep them from drying out. Try to collect freshly dropped seeds if possible. Soak acorns in water for 2 days, changing water 1-2 times per day to rehydrate them. Before you start the germination process, test to see which seeds are viable. If you are able to remove the cap of the acorn, place it in water to see if it floats. Those that float are generally no good; those that sink are viable. If caps cannot be removed, collect extra acorns to allow for a certain percentage of "bad" seed.

Depending on the type of oak you are growing, you can plant them in the fall or wait to plant them in the spring. Oaks are divided into two groups: white oaks and red oaks. White oaks have rounded leaf tips, like the Bur oak, Chinkapin oak, and White oak. White oaks will germinate in the fall and can be planted right away. One exception is the burr oak, which can be held over to the spring

Red oaks, on the other hand, have pointed leaf tips, like the Northern red oak, Black oak, Pin oak. Red oaks will need to go through a period of time exposed to cold and damp conditions in order to "wake up." We call this stratification. This can be done by field planting in the fall and allowing mother nature to provide cold, snowy weather. Keep in mind that your seeds will be at the mercy of animal predation and at risk of drying out if it is a warm/dry winter.

You can also simulate stratification in the refrigerator and then plant in the spring. To do this, put fully hydrated seeds in gallon ziplock bags with dampened peat moss. Soak the peat moss in water and then squeeze out excess moisture so it is damp, not drenched. Then place the bag in the crisper drawer. Be sure to label bags with species name, collection date, and landscape setting (or other details that might be important for determining planting location). Monitor seeds in early spring and plant once the root begins emerging (or just before); the main item is that the root is not damaged during planting.

When you are ready to plant the acorns, dig a hole twice as deep as the seed's height. For a larger seed, you will need a deeper hole, and for a smaller seed, a shallower hole. At each planting location, plant three seeds – especially if you are planting in the fall or did not float test the seeds. After sprouting, seedlings can be thinned to a single plant. You can protect planting areas from animal damage by installing cages (or similar barriers).

For more details, you can find the US Forest Service Woody Plant Seed Manual available on the US Forest Service website. Plants in this manual are listed by scientific name (e.g. Bur oak will be under "Q" for *Quercus macrocarpa*).

K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

November 7, 2025

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Kansans Confront the Growing Risk Factors for Diabetes

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. Unfortunately, diabetes has become more common, particularly Type 2 diabetes. We are likely all familiar with someone who has diabetes. It touches most families, and the impacts of the disease are staggering. Diabetes affects the whole person, and left uncontrolled, can lead to a host of chronic health problems, including heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, neuropathy, foot complications, and many others.

In Kansas, the number of people diagnosed with diabetes is increasing. According to the American Diabetes Association, more than 257,900 adults in Kansas—about 10.3% of the adult population—have been diagnosed with diabetes. Each year, there are an estimated 17,000 new cases of diabetes, and the economic toll is staggering: $3.3 billion annually, including direct medical costs and lost productivity.

As staggering as these numbers are, 1 in 3 adults has prediabetes, and many don't know they are in danger of developing the disease.

The most common risk factors for prediabetes include:

- Being 45 years or older
- Being overweight or obese
- Having a parent or sibling with Type 2 diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Having had gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing over 9 pounds
- Belonging to certain racial or ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or Asian American

While there are some risk factors you cannot change, there are things you can do to reduce your risk.

- People who lose 5%-7% of their body weight reduce their risk for developing Type 2 diabetes by 58%.
- Get more exercise. Getting 150 minutes of moderate exercise also helps your body move glucose from your blood to your cells, and it also helps reduce insulin resistance.
- Focus on your eating habits. Concentrate on eating more whole foods and fewer processed foods, which tend to be higher in fat and sodium. Eat more whole grains, non-starch vegetables, and healthy fats. Also, remember to consider your portion sizes.

Diabetes is a growing health concern, but it doesn't have to be in your future. Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk factors and discuss things you can do to reduce your chance of developing Type 2 diabetes. Small lifestyle changes can make a significant impact on your health.

K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

November 7, 2025

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

Tips for a Food Safe Thanksgiving

This month, millions of Americans will gather family and friends around the dinner table to give thanks. But for those preparing the meal, it can be a stressful time. Not to mention, for many it is the largest meal they have cooked all year, leaving plenty of room for mistakes that could cause foodborne illness. To avoid making everyone at the table sick, here are tips for a safe Thanksgiving:

- Don't wash that turkey. According to the most recent Food Safety Survey, conducted by the FDA, 68% of the public washes whole turkey before cooking it. USDA does not recommend washing raw meat and poultry before cooking. Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away. Cooking (baking, broiling, boiling, frying or grilling) meat and poultry to the right temperature kills any bacteria that may be present, so washing meat and poultry is not necessary.
- Use the refrigerator, the cold-water method or the microwave to defrost a frozen turkey. There are three safe ways to defrost a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in the microwave oven. Thawing food in the refrigerator is the safety method because the turkey will defrost at a consistent, safe temperature. It will take 24 hours for every 5 pounds of weight for a turkey to thaw in the refrigerator.
- Use a meat thermometer. The only to determine if a turkey (or any meat, poultry or seafood) is cooked is to check its internal temperature with a food thermometer. A whole turkey should be checked in three locations: the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast. Your thermometer should register 165°F in all three of these places.
- Don't store food outside, even if it's cold. Storing food outside is not food safe for two reasons. The first is that animals, both wild or domesticated, can get into food stored outside, consuming it or contaminating it. The second is temperature variation. The best way to keep that extra food at a safe temperature (below 40°F) is in a cooler with ice.
- Leftovers are good in the refrigerator for up to four days. Cut the turkey off the bone and refrigerate it as soon as you can, within 2 hours of the turkey coming out of the oven. Leftovers will last for four days in the refrigerator, so if you know you won't use them right away, pack them into freezer bags or airtight containers and freeze.

Any more questions about food safety or other cooking questions, please contact your local Meadowlark Extension District Office. I am located in the Oskaloosa Office and can be reached at 785-863-2212.