

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

New K-State Resources Available

If you made it by our booth at the Topeka Farm Show last week, you may have noted the arrival of the annual *KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide*. This reference is a must have if you are trying to evaluate herbicide programs for any of our common Kansas field crops plus range and pasture environments as well. It includes evaluation ratings based upon product labels plus currently available research as well as summary information including any best management practices. It's a great reference from anywhere from the desk to the shop to the sprayer cab.

Books are currently available at any District Office. Have an old copy? There aren't many changes – but an updated copy *will* be worth picking up if you have the opportunity. If you'd rather access it online or bookmark it for easy access in the absence of a physical copy, visit the K-State Extension Bookstore at: https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/item/2026-chemical-weed-control-for-field-crops-pastures-rangeland-and-noncropland_CHEMWEEDGUIDE .

Another resource of interest to corn growers is the newly released *2025 Corn Disease Management* booklet. It summarizes work by KSU Extension Row Crops Pathologist Dr. Rodrigo Onofre evaluating everything from planting time fungicide treatments to corn disease fungicide efficacy to single vs. dual application programs. Check it out at the Corn Disease Resource Center: https://kscorn.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/104475_KS_Corn_Growers_Research_Results_Booklet_2025.pdf

Stop by a local office if you need a copy or call/e-mail me and we'll get either – or both – of these great resources in your hands.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Avoid Farrowing Follies

Looking back on the years of news columns I've compiled, there is a notable absence of attention given to the porcine species. It's not due to a lack of interest in swine; in fact, those who know me best know I'm an old pig guy who's worked in purebred/show pig and commercial swine settings. In my lifetime I've seen nearly every family farm raise pigs, to the vertically integrated large production systems of today, but that doesn't mean there isn't a need to give some attention to pigs from time to time. Show pig farrowing season is in full swing, so a farrowing refresher seems timely.

Monitoring pregnant sows and gilts is very critical for a positive outcome for mothers and babies alike. During the last month of pregnancy, monitor body condition and feed a proper diet according to requirements. If it is necessary to deworm, this should be done three to four weeks before farrowing. Don't forget about a good vaccination program to prevent diarrhea and other diseases. About a week before the due date, wash the sows/gilts so they are clean when moved into farrowing crates.

When delivery starts, monitor labor to make sure the delivery progresses. Signs of labor include restlessness, nesting behavior or trying to find a suitable position in the farrowing crate or pen by heaping up bedding. Respiratory rate increases and sometimes will express open mouth breathing. Clear indications of impending farrowing are vulva softening/swelling, abdominal contractions, mammary gland development and finally milk let down, which usually within a day of farrowing.

The birthing process lasts anywhere from thirty minutes to four hours, with fifteen-minute intervals between piglets. It is not uncommon for two piglets to arrive closely together, one from each uterine horn. If delivery is not progressing, a sow is straining for thirty minutes with no piglet delivered, the cervix is not dilated, the piglet is too big for the birth canal, or the sow has not passed her placenta or afterbirth, help should be considered. Your veterinarian is always a good first call for delivery issues.

Tips to help increase the chances of pig survival and sow health include the following points. Clean mucus and membranes from the piglet's head with a clean cloth or paper towel. Gently insert a piece of straw (or similar item) a short distance into the nose to clear the nasal passage and induce the piglet to sneeze. Spray or dip the newborn piglet's navel with a seven percent tincture of iodine or chlorhexidine/alcohol drying agent to prevent navel illness. Check the sow's birth canal for piglet left in the uterus and for tears to the birth canal. Make sure the sow passes the placenta within a half hour after the last pig. Clean up afterbirth from the delivery site to reduce possible disease spread.

The first twelve hours after birth are the most critical period. Piglets are susceptible to hypothermia the first weeks of life, so piglets need supplemental heat from heat lamps or heating mats. Place piglets in a warm, clean, and dry farrowing crate with their mother. This allows newborns full access to colostrum to get the antibodies available for protection against diseases. Make sure the piglets are nursing within three hours after birth. If piglets are weak and not nursing, colostrum should be given, either by passing a small feeding tube or by a syringe.

Once piglets get started nursing, stay warm and aren't dealing with health challenges, they become rather self-sufficient and grow rapidly on mother's milk. Early processing procedures vary among operations but often include clipping needle teeth, docking tails, administering iron and other medication(s), identification of piglets/ear notching, and castration. The processing time ranges from the first few hours after birth to the first week of life, with an average of two to three days post farrowing being common. Make sure to follow proper procedures for these processes.

Penn State Extension has a good video series related to swine production that could be a good entry level resource for producers wanting to learn more <https://extension.psu.edu/raising-pigs-1-farrowing> Don't forget the K-State swine team is one of the best in the world and a wealth of information can be found at: <https://www.asi.k-state.edu/extension/swine/>

January 16, 2026

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

No news article this week.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Winter Weather Health: Stay Safe This Season

Although we haven't faced a long stretch of freezing temperatures yet, winter is far from over—and cold weather brings serious health hazards, including falls, frostbite, and hypothermia. The good news: there are steps we can take to prevent these risks.

- **Who Is Most at Risk?**

Older adults (especially those over 75), infants, and young children are more vulnerable because they have a harder time regulating body temperature. People with chronic conditions such as diabetes, thyroid disease, Parkinson's, or those taking certain medications also face increased risk. Memory issues like Alzheimer's can make it easy to forget essential precautions.

- **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia occurs when the body's core temperature drops below 95°F. It can lead to irregular heart rhythms, organ damage, and even death. It doesn't have to be below freezing—hypothermia can happen above 40°F if you're wet from rain, sweat, or cold water.

Warning signs include:

- Cold hands and feet
- Puffy or swollen face
- Pale skin
- Shivering or shaking
- Slow or slurred speech
- Sleepiness, anger, or confusion

What to do: Hypothermia is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately. Move the person to a warm place, remove wet clothing, cover them with dry blankets or coats, and stay with them until help arrives.

- **Frostbite**

Frostbite damages skin and tissue, usually on exposed areas like fingers, toes, nose, and ears. Signs include white or grayish-yellow skin, numbness, and hard skin that doesn't move when pressed.

What to do: Call 911. Move the person indoors, remove wet or tight clothing, dry the area, and cover with blankets. Remove rings or jewelry from affected areas.

- **Cold Weather Safety Tips**

- Dress in loose layers to trap warmth; wear hats, scarves, gloves, and waterproof footwear.
- Keep your thermostat at 68°F or higher.
- Limit time outdoors in cold, windy, or damp conditions.
- Stay hydrated—dehydration increases hypothermia risk.
- Check on neighbors during extreme weather.

Cold weather can be dangerous, but preparation saves lives. By dressing warmly, staying dry, and looking out for one another, we can prevent winter emergencies and keep our community safe. Share these tips with family, friends, and neighbors. Stay warm this season.

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

Simple, Time-Smart Ways to Get Healthier

If you've been telling yourself that being healthy takes too much time, too much effort, or too much planning, you're not alone. But here's the truth: poor health costs far more time than healthy habits ever will.

Low energy, brain fog, poor sleep, frequent illnesses, and stress don't just affect your body. They quietly steal your time, productivity, and focus. When you feel better, you manage your time better. When your health improves, everything else fits more easily into your day.

With a simple mindset shift and a few intentional habits, healthier living can actually save time, not take more of it. Here are some ways to help with this:

- Clear out unhealthy snacks from your kitchen. Don't dwell on what they cost. Consider it an investment in your future energy and health. It's far less expensive to toss unhealthy food than to lose time later to illness, fatigue, or preventable health issues.
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. Fresh fruit, vegetables, proteins, and dairy tend to live there. Fewer aisles, fewer impulse buys, faster shopping.
- Prep produce as soon as you get home. Cut and store veggies right away. When healthy food is ready to grab, it saves time and prevents vending machine detours.
- Plan meals once; benefit all week. Choose a few simple, healthy meals ahead of time and buy only what you need. Decision-making takes time; planning once frees up mental energy all week long.
- Eat regularly to avoid energy crashes. Aim for three meals and one or two healthy snacks daily. Skipping meals often leads to poor choices later and wasted time trying to "recover" from low energy.
- Keep smart snacks within reach. Unsalted nuts, yogurt, fruit, or veggies with hummus prevent last-minute food emergencies that derail your focus and schedule.
- Choose crunch wisely. Celery, carrots, sugar snap peas, and almonds satisfy that crunchy craving without slowing you down.
- Enjoy treats intentionally; not automatically. Love ice cream? Enjoy a small serving once or twice a week. Mindful treats save time by preventing mindless over-eating and regret.
- Navigate workplace celebrations strategically. You don't need cake at every event. Eat well beforehand, enjoy the moment socially, and move on.
- Drink water consistently throughout the day. Staying hydrated improves focus, reduces fatigue, and prevents false hunger cues that waste time and energy.
- Cook once, eat twice (or more). Batch-cook proteins or entire meals on the weekend. Frozen leftovers are future-you's best time-management tool.
- Use shortcuts without guilt. Low-sodium vegetable juice, frozen vegetables, or pre-cut produce still count. Healthy doesn't have to mean complicated.
- Read labels quickly and intentionally. Watch sodium, added sugars, and highly processed ingredients. A few seconds now can save hours dealing with health issues later.
- Swap smarter carbs when possible. Rice cakes, whole grains, or vegetables can replace refined bread without much thought or prep.
- Plan easy, sweet alternatives. Sugar-free gelatin, yogurt, or fruit with little whipped topping can satisfy cravings without derailing your energy.
- Walk whenever you can. Walking improves mood, clears your head, and boosts creativity; all while helping you think through goals and problems.

January 16, 2026

- Make social time active. Walk-and-talk meetups, bike rides, or casual movement keep friendships strong without sacrificing health or time.
- Choose joint-friendly movement. Swimming, stretching, or low-impact classes are efficient ways to stay active without burnout or injury.
- Use breaks to recharge, not just scroll social media. A short walk after lunch can refresh your brain and make the afternoon more productive.
- Keep your hands busy in the evening. Reading, crafting, puzzles, games, or gently movement reduce mindless snacking and help you unwind.
- Protect your sleep like an appointment. Consistent, quality sleep improves decision-making, emotional regulation, and productivity, saving time the next day.

Remember, health is a personal responsibility and a powerful one. No one else can do this for you. But small, consistent choices compound quickly. The best time to start is now.