



Spring 2023

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## Rolling Prairie Extension Upcoming Events

### March

- 22 YQCA Training, 7-8pm, Howard Extension Office
- 24 "Put A Spring In Your Step" Walk Kansas Kickoff, 5-7pm, Sedan Fairgrounds
- 25 Regional 4-H Club Day, Madison
- 30 4-H Fair Judges Workshop, 3:30-8 pm—Parsons

### April

- 7 **Offices Closed—Good Friday**
- 22 Rolling Prairie Spring Beef Show—Sedan Fairgrounds
- 26 National Lunch & Walk Day, watch for a Walk Kansas event!
- 26 YQCA Training, 4-H Building, Sedan, 7:00 pm

### May

- 1 4-H Drop/Add Project Deadline
- 6 Rolling Prairie Spring Small Animal Show—Sedan Fairgrounds
- 20 Walk Kansas Ends
- 29 **Offices Closed—Memorial Day**

### June

### July

- 4 **Offices Closed—Independence Day**
- 19-22 Elk County 4-H Fair , Howard
- 26-29 Chautauqua County Fair & Rodeo , Sedan



# Walk Kansas

*celebrate healthy living*

## Walk Kansas Kickoff, “Put A Spring In Your Step”

The Walk Kansas Kickoff for Chautauqua County will be held on **March 24 at the Sedan Fairgrounds from 5:00-7:00 p.m.**

This year there will be a “Try-A-Thon” to participate in all kinds of activities that are fun and may be different from what you’ve tried before. A Story Walk will be there for the little ones. Community Health/Wellness providers will have tables of information to share with you, and we will have the Blender Bike there to mix some healthy concoctions while riding the bike.

Mark your calendars for March 24. Anyone for pickle ball?



## Grab Your Team and Your Walking Shoes, It’s Time to Walk Kansas!

The annual Walk Kansas Event will begin March 26 through May 20. Walk Kansas encourages participants to team up with friends and/or family members in order to:

- ⇒ be more active. With the support of friends and/or family.
- ⇒ make better nutrition choices.
- ⇒ Walk away your stress.

Participants will choose from four routes to trek, just to keep track of the miles walked.

Everyone needs to have at least 30 minutes of activity every day. It doesn’t necessarily need to be walking, but doing some activity helps keep our minds and bodies in shape.

Another part of Walk Kansas is making sure you’re eating lots of fruits and vegetables and spending time with family and/or friends. This year we will be sharing food prep tips from the Med instead of Meds website. This website teaches ways to cook fresh vegetables like they do in the Mediterranean. Italian, anyone?

So grab some friends and go do something fun and energizing, then get together for a relaxing meal and good conversation.

## Fair Dates Are Set

It won't be long until it's Fair Season again. We now have the dates for the county fairs in Elk and Chautauqua Counties, the Interstate Fair and Rodeo at Coffeyville, and the Kansas State Fair. The dates are listed below.

July 19-22 Elk County 4-H Fair in Howard

July 26-29 Chautauqua County Fair & Rodeo in Sedan

July 28-29 Elk County Fair in Longton

August 13-19 Interstate Fair & Rodeo at Coffeyville

September 8-17 Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson



## Publications Available at Extension Offices

Several new items are available to producers that may be of help to them starting the new year.

- 2023 Chemical Weed Control Guide
- 2023 IRM Redbooks
- Farmers Tax Guide - For Help in Preparing 2022 Tax Returns
- Farm Account Books

Stop by either office to get your copy.

## 4-H Fair Judges Workshop

**Registration:** March 15th @ <https://tinyurl.com/fairjudgesworkshop>

**Who:** Potential Judges, Agents, Leaders, and Junior Leaders

**When:** March 30, 2023

**Where:** SE Research and Extension Center, 25092 Ness Road, Parsons, KS

If you would like to learn about the role of the judge, understanding your audience, consultation evaluation, using standards and the Danish System of ribbon placing, and project areas in a general session format, you definitely need to register for the Fair Judges Workshop in Parsons. This will help adults and Jr. Leaders to better understand the judging process and educate new judges so you can judge other events in the area. The schedule for the workshop is as follows:

3:30 pm. Registration & Welcome

4:00 p.m. Foods

4:30 p.m. Plant Science

5:00 p.m. Fiber Arts

5:30 p.m. Visual Arts

6:00 p.m. Dinner with General Session

6:30 p.m. Poster, Notebooks, & Misc.

7:00 p.m. Photography

7:30 p.m. Buymanship/Fashion Revue

8:00 p.m. Closing Remarks and Survey

Come join us to become potential judges and learn more about the judging process



## Stretching Your Food Budget

Making a budget for the grocery store has never been more important for consumers as they watch food costs increase over the last year.

“Food costs are higher than ever, which are impacting the grocery store bill as well as dining out options,” said Julie Smith, a family resource management and entrepreneurship agent in K-State Research and Extension’s Wildcat District. Groceries in general have gone up in price, but the price of eating out has skyrocketed. The best way to overcome a busy schedule, which may lead to more meals away from home, is to do a weekly meal plan. This is the #1 tip for stretching your food budget.

Plan by using leftovers to make other meals. Roast on Sunday can become fajitas on Monday, tacos on Tuesday, and Stew on Wednesday.

When shopping, make a list and stick to it. Buy generic, use coupons, or weekly sale ads to get the best bargains. Shop in season, this is a great way to save some money at the checkout. “Seasonal and Simple” is an app that was designed by K-State, Nebraska, and Missouri to help find seasonal produce and it even provides recipes to help you use your produce. The app also has a map and list of farmers’ markets in the 3 state area.

Sometimes we still need, or want, to eat out. When you do, check for coupons or apps that may provide discounts. Some restaurants provide discounts for seniors, children, military, or teachers. Drink water to save about \$2-3 per person on the bill. Split your meal with a dining partner or eat an appetizer instead of an entrée.

**A family of 4 loses approximately \$1,500 in uneaten food every year.**

Here are some ways to save money in your refrigerator and freezer:

- ◆ Buy only what you need.
- ◆ Check the dates and use the most perishable first.
- ◆ Use proper food storage (freezer containers have a snowflake on the bottom).
- ◆ Keep your foods separate.
- ◆ Store meat on the bottom shelf.
- ◆ Condiments and preserved foods in the door because they can handle temperature fluctuations.
- ◆ Store milk on the shelf, not in the door
- ◆ Freeze and preserve foods for later use (Great deal on meat? Portion it out and put what you won’t use this week in the freezer for another time).
- ◆ Sell By Dates – These are dates that the store must sell be, not necessarily a Use By date.
- ◆ Best By or Use By – Use for best flavor & quality. Some may go past this date. Use your best judgment. When in doubt, throw it out.

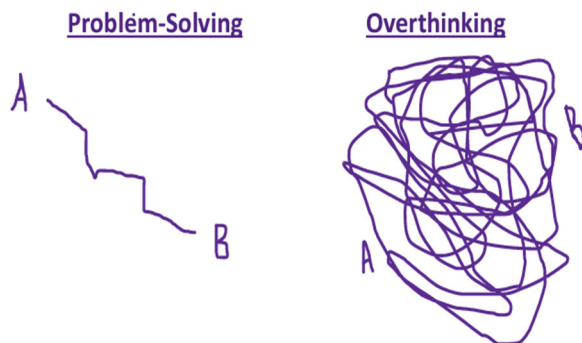
RESOURCE: Living Well Wednesday webinars, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed/> are live every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 12:15. Webinars are free, but you do need to register online. Recorded webinars on various topics are also available on this website.



## Decluttering Your Mind

Have you ever lost sleep because you just couldn't turn your thoughts off? Maybe you continually rehash that conversation you had with someone. Do you find yourself getting lost in the world of Would've-Could've-Should've or If-Only-Ville? If so, you are probably experiencing anxiety or overthinking.

Occasional anxiety is a normal emotion brought about by fear, unease, worry, or stress. Rumination, or overthinking, is that feeling you get when you can't shut off those intrusive thoughts. Both can rob you of your sleep, distract you from things you should be doing, make you irritable and difficult to focus. Not everyone who overthinks has anxiety. Occasional symptoms go away after a bit or you find a way to deal with the problem.



Everyone overthinks at times. The above drawing shows the difference between Problem-Solving and Overthinking.

There are ways to tame anxiety. If you keep your body in good physical health, it helps. Get at least 7 hours of sleep each night; go to bed and get up at the same time each night and morning (Yes, even on the weekends). Avoid caffeine and alcohol, even chocolate, in the evenings. Avoid screen time at least an hour before bed. Eat a well balanced diet; make sure you eat foods that are good sources of magnesium, zinc, B vitamins, and Omega 3s. Lastly, get some physical activity, which releases chemicals in your body (endorphins) that make you feel good.

When you are experiencing anxiety, stress and cortisol levels increase. This isn't bad if it's short-term, but

can wreak havoc on your body if it continues. Cortisol

- ⇒ can be detrimental to your immune, digestive, reproductive and growth systems in your body.
- ⇒ interrupts your sleep patterns.
- ⇒ affects your memory, concentration, and motivation.
- ⇒ affects your mood and anxiety level.
- ⇒ can even affect your weight.

Some things you can do to keep your anxiety levels in check are to practice deep breathing, write down your thoughts or feelings, do a hobby or activity, or listen to calming music (this can be done with any of these things).

When you are overthinking, the first thing to do is realize you're overthinking. Sometimes it helps to talk with someone you trust, sit in a calming place, do things that comfort, ground or re-energize you.

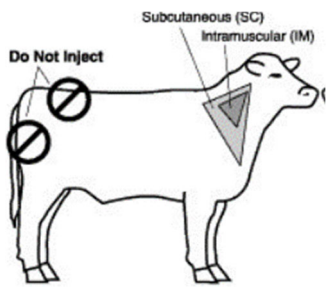
Another thing you can do is to rewrite your script. Often we tell ourselves negative things (i.e. "I can't do that." or "I'm not smart enough.") Change those Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) into positive affirmations. Ask yourself what proof do you have that the ANT is true or isn't true, then change the script (i.e. "I don't know if I can do that, I've never tried." or "I can bake cookies; I guess I can learn to bake bread, too." Then, start telling yourself the positive ("I am a baker." "I am good at figuring things out." "I am a smart cookie.").

Sometimes it's hard to pull yourself out of the slump by yourself. No matter what we do, there is still that feeling of anxiety, rumination on thoughts, even depression. That's when you need professional help. Ask your doctor for help or see a mental health professional. If you need to talk to someone and you don't know who, call or text the **National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988**. Or text **741-741**. There is **always** someone there to help.

RESOURCE: Living Well Wednesday webinars, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed/> are live every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 12:15. Webinars are free, but you do need to register online. Recorded webinars on various topics are also available on this website.

# Cattle Vaccinations: Needle Size and Care Recommendations

Anyone who's ever received a vaccination will verify that needle size matters; and that is true with cattle as well. Many animal health products given to cattle to prevent or treat diseases are injected with a syringe and needle. Selecting the correct size of needle to deliver injections under the skin or into the muscle is important to ensure that the products perform as intended and meet Beef Quality Assurance guidelines.



When it comes to needle selection for cows, the recommendations are using a 16 or 18 gauge needle. The gauge refers to the diameter of the needle. An 18 gauge needle is actually smaller than a 16 and in calves we may go even smaller and use a 20 gauge needle. The chosen needle size relates to the thickness of the animal's skin. Needle size also depends on the viscosity of the product that you are giving.

Another factor is the needle length. The recommended length of the needle is guided by the type of injection given, which is either under the skin or into the muscle. With an under the skin injection the needle length should be  $\frac{5}{8}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch needle, and with an intramuscular injection the length is closer to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch needle. With calves the recommended length would be closer to an inch.

As for the recommended frequency for changing needles; one needle per cow is ideal but depending on the situation you could give up to 10 injections with one needle. It is important to make sure the needle is sharp and clean to keep from causing trauma or contamination.

# Bull Sale Season Considerations

With the annual bull sales approaching, knowing your operation's objectives will help producers select new breeding stock. During the late winter and early spring, rural mailboxes seem to be full with bull sale catalogs. It can be hard to know how to prioritize traits in making bull selections. The most important thing to do is find out what your objectives and goals are for your operation.

## Operation Objectives

When viewing catalogs, look for bulls that offer traits that enhance the operation. Commercial producers need to know the genetic and marketing goals of the operation to determine the best breed fit. EPDs, or expected progeny differences, can provide those insights on what bulls to add to the ranch. Producers should determine the traits they really need for improvement. Then look for bulls that have EPDs above the average EPD for those traits, but also make sure bulls have average EPDs for other traits so you don't lose ground in some traits. The marketing plan dictates a lot about what traits you need to pay attention to when you're looking at those bulls. There will be selection differences if the acquired bull will be breeding heifers or cows. Remember, when breeding heifers, the bull's calving ease and calving weight EPDs should be prioritized. However, there can be a tradeoff if producers are only using one bull to breed the entire herd. If you're buying heifer bulls for your cows, obviously there's a potential for less performance and growth in your calves. Also, the bulls that are best for breeding heifers are typically the highest priced bulls.

## Bull Acclimation

There are health considerations for bulls once producers bring them home. When bringing a new animal into the herd, producers need to make sure that they are not bringing diseases along with that animal. When separating a bull for biosecurity reasons, it is also a good time to let the bull acclimate to new feed and water. Separating the new bull from the others can be beneficial not only from a health standpoint but also from a social standpoint.



## Pruning Deciduous Shrubs

Gardeners are eager to get out and do something in the landscape this time of year. One chore that can be taken care of now is pruning certain shrubs. Often, gardeners approach pruning with trepidation, but it is not as difficult as it may seem. Remember, not all shrubs need to be pruned and certain shrubs, which will be identified later, should not be pruned this time of year. Shrubs are pruned to maintain or reduce size, rejuvenate growth, or to remove diseased, dead or damaged branches. Deciduous shrubs are those that lose their leaves each winter. Evergreen shrubs maintain foliage all year and include yews and junipers.

Deciduous shrubs are placed into three groups:

- ◆ Those that flower in the spring on wood produced last year;
- ◆ Those that flower later in the year on current season's growth; and
- ◆ Those that may produce flowers, but those flowers are of little ornamental value.

Shrubs that flower in the spring should not be pruned until immediately after flowering. Though pruning earlier will not harm the health of the plant, the flowering display will be reduced. Examples of these types of plants include forsythia, lilac and mock orange. Shrubs that bloom on current season's growth or that do not produce ornamental flowers are best pruned in late winter to early spring. Examples include Rose-of-Sharon, pyracantha, Bumald spirea and Japanese spirea.

Pruning during the spring allows wounds to heal quickly without threat from insects or disease. There is no need to treat pruning cuts with paints or sealers. In fact, some of these products may slow healing. There are three basic methods used in pruning shrubs: thinning, heading back and rejuvenating. Thinning is used to thin out branches from a shrub that is too dense. It is accomplished by removing most of the inward growing twigs by cutting them back to a larger branch. On multi-stemmed shrubs, the oldest canes may be completely removed.

Heading back is done by removing the end of a branch by cutting it back to a bud and is used for either reducing height or keeping a shrub compact. Branches are not cut back to a uniform height because this results in a "witches-broom" effect.

Rejuvenation is the most severe type of pruning and may be used on multi-stem shrubs that have become

too large, with too many old branches to justify saving the younger canes. All stems are cut back to 3 to 5 inch stubs. This is not recommended for all shrubs but does work well for spirea, forsythia, pyracantha, ninebark, Russian almond, little leaf mock orange, shrub roses and flowering quince.



## Soil Temperature and Vegetables

One of the most neglected tools for vegetable gardeners is a soil thermometer. Soil temperature is a much better measure of when to plant than air temperature or the calendar. Planting when soil is too cool can cause seeds to rot and transplants to sit there.

A number of vegetables can germinate and grow at cool temperatures. For example, peas will germinate and grow well at a soil temperature of 40 F. Though lettuce, parsnips, and spinach can sprout at a soil temperature of 35 F, they prefer at least 45 F for best germination and growth. Radishes also do well at a soil temperature of 45 F. Warm-season crops such as tomatoes, sweet corn and beans prefer at least 55 F for germination (or transplanting), but others such as peppers, cucumbers, melons and sweet potatoes need it even warmer, about 60 F.

Taking soil temperature accurately is a bit of a science. First, use a metal soil thermometer, which is sold in many garden, auto parts and hardware stores. Take temperature 2.5 inches deep at about 10 to 11 a.m. Temperature variations throughout the day and night affect soil temperature, with lowest readings after dawn and warmest around mid-afternoon. The late-morning reading gives a good average temperature. If taking the soil temperature at this time is not practical, take a reading before you leave for work and a second when you return home and use the average. Also, be sure to get a consistent reading for four to five days in a row before planting, and make sure a cold snap is not predicted.

# 4-H Happenings

## Drop/Add Deadline is May 1st

**The deadline for 4-Hers to finalize their projects for the year is rapidly approaching.**

Amy Sollock, a [Kansas 4-H](#) youth development specialist in the southwest region, said a new 4-H year kicked off in October and youth have some important decisions to make regarding which projects they will pursue over the next 12 months.

“We’ve got more than 30 project areas, so there’s something for everybody,” Sollock said. “Some kids naturally gravitate toward things they’re already interested in. Or sometimes they’ll pick something they’ve never heard of, but it sounds exciting. And sometimes people pick things because a friend had a good time in it, or they know somebody who knows a lot about that and they want to learn with someone.”

Animal sciences, baking, creative arts, photography, livestock...Sollock said information on all of the projects available to Kansas 4-Hers is [available online](#). State 4-H officials have even published a [Project Selection Guide](#), and each project area has its own web page to give in-depth details on the types of activities – and commitment – that is required.

“Every family needs to have that honest conversation at the beginning of the 4-H year,” Sollock said. “How much time do you have to give? How dedicated are you going to be? What’s your budget look like? Some projects – like caring for livestock – have more expense associated with them.”

Other projects, she added, have very little expense involved, but still come with a given amount of time and energy that needs to be given throughout the coming year.

“This is something that we take seriously,” Sollock said. “When you enroll in a project at the beginning of the 4-H year, it’s a year-long experience – not just something to do in July at the county fair. You will learn about, talk about, read about the project all year long.”

Youth are encouraged to select more than one project area for the year, Sollock said. How many, she adds, is up to the family and the amount of time they can dedicate over the next 4-H year.

“We talk a lot about finding your spark in 4-H, and exploring interests and different things that look exciting to kids,” Sollock said. “Project work is an excellent way for them to find their spark. And who knows: It may lead to a potential career years down the road.”

Changing project enrollment in Kansas 4-H is [available online](#). Interested persons can also get more information at their [local extension office](#).

## YQCA: What is it and when can I get trained?

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) is a national, multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 7 to 18. This program promotes food safety, animal well-being and character development. With the YQCA, you’ll discover what it takes to be an informed producer, consumer and employee of the agriculture and food industries. YQCA certification is REQUIRED in order to be eligible to exhibit in ALL ANIMAL EXHIBITS (EXCEPT Horse) at the Chautauqua and Elk County Fairs.

In person YQCA trainings will be held on the following dates:

- ◆ **March 18**, K-State Junior Meat Goat Producer Day, Manhattan
- ◆ **March 22** at Howard, Extension Office
- ◆ **April 26**, 4-H Building at Sedan

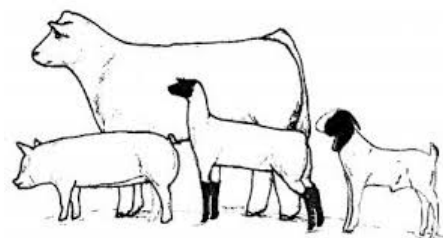
For more information or to register for a training, call the Extension Office or check online at

<https://yqcaprogram.org>

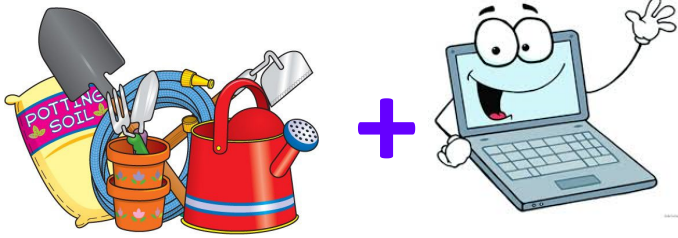
## 2023 Fair Dates

The 2023 Fair Dates have been set!

- ◇ July 19-22 Elk County Fair in Howard
- ◇ July 26-29 Chautauqua County Fair in Sedan
- ◇ August 13-19 Interstate Fair & Rodeo at Coffeyville
- ◇ September 8-17 Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson







Societies and Professional Associations. These are organizations that specialize in the topic in which you are interested, such as 1) American Horticulture Society or 2) Tomato gardening site: .ahs.org (that space between the : and .ahs makes a difference in this search).

## Effective Internet Searching for Gardeners...and Others

The internet can be a great tool when searching for just the right item, but how do we know that item is right for us? Is it just an advertisement, someone's opinion, out of date ideas, or just flat out misinformation? Relax, here are some tips to help you get trustworthy information when you are searching the internet.

Use unique, specific terms. For example, instead of "Good tomatoes to grow" search for "Blossom end rot resistant tomatoes". That will narrow your list significantly.

Use the "minus operator" (-) to narrow the search. Example: Heirloom Tomato -cherry. That will get you all the heirloom tomatoes, minus the cherry tomatoes. Don't put a space between the minus and the item you want to exclude.

Use quotation marks for exact phrases. Example: "Grape Tomato"

Search Reliable Sites. Universities, such as K-State, are great resources. Universities are non-biased and research-based sources of information. Here are a couple of ways to search for university generated information: 1) Tomato gardening site: .edu This will get all university sourced information. 2) Tomato gardening site: ksu.edu. This will get K-State specific information.

Another source for accurate information is to search

## How Do I Know It's Good Information?

Once you've found the information, you can use the CRAAP test to determine if the information is reliable. CRAAP is an acronym to help remember these five criteria for evaluating information.

- **Current Information** - When was the information published or revised? Will older information work as well? Is there newer information available that's better?
- **Relevance**—Will this work in a home garden or a commercial garden? Are there geographic constraints?
- **Authority**—Who wrote it? Who did the study?
- **Accuracy**—Are any sources cited? Is it science based and well written?
- **Purpose**—Is it factual and educational? Or did someone just write it for entertainment or to voice their opinion? Does the article or video seem to have personal bias (i.e. "The best tomatoes to grow are....."). We all know the best tomatoes to grow are the ones that actually grow in your garden!

If you have any questions about searching for information on the internet or growing tomatoes, don't hesitate to contact your local extension office. We're here to help.

**RESOURCE:** K-State Garden Hour: Gardening Myths and Misconceptions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-2GzFGnSdc>.



Rolling Prairie Extension District #8,  
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### Rolling Prairie Extension District on Facebook



“Like” our Facebook page to get the most up-to-date information and news about the happenings of Rolling Prairie District! Visit <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rolling-Prairie-Extension-District/146463602083477> to like our page.

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