



Winter 2024

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Rolling Prairie Extension Upcoming Events

January

- 1 **Happy New Year! - Extension Offices Closed**
- 3 Feeding Cows in a Drought—6:00 pm, 711 S. Fry St. Yates Center
- 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Offices Closed
- 18 Calving School, West Elk School, Howard Supper 5:30; Program 6:00 pm

February

- 6 Swine Profitability Conference Stanley Stout Center, Manhattan More details at KSUswine.org
- 29 Stockmen's Dinner, Manhattan

March

- 1 Cattlemen's Day, Weber Hall & Arena, Manhattan. KSUBeef.org
- 1 Legacy Sale—Manhattan
- 2 KSU Jr. Beef Producer Day—Manhattan
- KSU Jr. Sheep Producer Day—Manhattan 16
- 24 Walk Kansas Begins





4-H Holiday Guide Contains Many Fun and Educational Activities for the Season

Find great ways to spend quality time with family, says K-State's Hinshaw

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan – Kansas 4-H youth development specialist Beth Hinshaw knows how important meaningful family time is during the holidays, and how it may be a challenge to come up with ideas on how to spend that precious time together.

That's one of the very reasons why the national 4-H program has published a <u>holiday activity guide</u>.

"[The Holiday Activity Guide] has great ways to spend quality time with people, and we can learn so much from our family when we see them at the holidays," Hinshaw said. "And to be able to have these learning experiences with them – that'll make a memory for us as well."

The Holiday Guide, she said, contains an array of fun activities, such as making ornaments, family story time, visual art projects, and many food recipes.

"One of the things I think about, in my own experience, is the things I learned in the kitchen, during the holidays from my grandmothers," Hinshaw said.

Within the Holiday Guide is a "cookie book" - listing more than 20 sweet holiday recipes to make together. One of Hinshaw's favorites is the no-bake cookies, a recipe from a Kansas 4-H member.

"In the holiday guide, there are several activities that are

STEM and math-focused, but as you read through and think about it, they're fun as well," Hinshaw said. "That's one of the things we pride ourselves on in 4-H -- to have those experiential, fun learning activities."

Food and STEM are both project areas 4-Hers may already be involved in, and the activity guide includes an additional area important during the holidays: service.

"It shares how you might put together a winter coat drive for your community," Hinshaw said. "Or how you might make fleece scarves by hand for the homeless."

To begin one of the many fun and educational projects offered by 4-H, go online to find the complete Holiday Activity Guide.

More information about opportunities available through Kansas 4-H is available online, or <u>visit your local extension</u> office.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

Kansas 4-H Holiday Activity Guide, https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/08094637/4H-at-Home-Holiday-Activity-Guide-and-Cookie-Making-Recipes-2020.pdf

https://4-h.org/clover/activities/clover-at-home-for-the
-holidays/

USDA Releases Updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – For the first time in 11 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has updated its Plant Hardiness Zone Map, which is historically the standard that gardeners and growers use to determine the perennial plants most likely to thrive at a location.

The update, said Kansas State University nursery crop production and marketing specialist Cheryl Boyer, is a big deal.

"It's been a while since the maps have been updated because it's a significant, coordinated effort," said Boyer, noting that the maps are built based on data from 13,625 weather stations spanning 30 years.

"We use the plant hardiness zones for nearly all aspects of agriculture, horticulture and natural resources research and extension recommendations," she said. "They influence our plant recommendations and production guidelines, both for crops and ornamental species."

Boyer added that USDA's Risk Management Agency uses the Plant Hardiness Zone Map to set some crop insurance standards for farmers. Other scientists use the data in models that might indicate the spread of weeds, insects or diseases.

"The USDA plant hardiness zone map is a critical tool for plant recommendations," Boyer said. "In Kansas, most of the state shifted about a half zone warmer. We still have pockets of Zone 5 in the north, but the range of Zone 7 in the southern part of Kansas is significantly larger.

"We should continue to focus on recommending plants that can handle Zone 5 plant hardiness because we will continue to experience extreme weather events, but we can also begin to expand our plant palette with species that originate in slightly warmer climates. This will also be reflected in a longer season for some food crops."

Boyer served on a USDA technical review team that helped to develop the new map. The group included 40 plant professionals from industry, academic and government as well as "a few consumer horticultural enthusiasts – gardeners – from across the United States."

The experts in the group included horticulturalists, botanists, agricultural meteorologists and climatologists.

"Our role was to serve as a sounding board and provide feedback for the development of the new map, tools, and to look closely at the weather data for our areas to confirm that it matched our lived experiences of the local weather environment," Boyer said. "We discussed methodology, how the new maps will change plant hardiness zones and subsequent plant recommendations."

The new map is available to view online at https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov. Boyer said it's designed to be searchable to locations as precise as one-half mile.

"This is helpful because, for example, urban areas tend to be heat islands and mountain tops tend to be colder than surrounding areas, so the new maps help identify those microclimates."

Another online section, Tips for Growers, highlights resources to enhance the understanding and use of the new maps.

"Much of the information available is high-level guidance on how plants respond to the environment and what they need to survive and thrive, like light, soil, temperature, humidity and duration of exposure to cold," Boyer said.

"Other resources provide different ways of learning, such as reading, watching a video, listening to a recording, and more. USDA provides educational information that can be applied broadly to the entire nation, while each state and county can provide more targeted advice based on local environments."

More information on crop production and gardening also is available at local extension offices in Kansas, or online from <u>K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural</u> Resources.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this article USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov

K-State Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources, https://hnr.k-state.edu

K-State Child Development Expert Encourages Youth to Visit Older Adults

Children, as 'social beings,' benefit from interactions with previous generations

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – It may seem that encouraging younger children to visit older folks is primarily for the benefit of the adults.

Bradford Wiles says research does show that intergenerational connections reduces loneliness and boosts happiness for older adults. But, he adds, the same studies indicate that spending time with older adults helps younger children develop life skills and a sense of who they are.

"Children learn through interactions with other people. We're social beings," said Wiles, a child development specialist with K-State Research and Extension. "The variety of contacts children can have can teach them about themselves – what they like, what they don't like, what other people have experienced.

"That's all part of growing up, particularly in early childhood. They're really starting to develop their understanding of other people's beliefs, thoughts and desires. As they're working with a variety of people – in particular, older adults – it helps them have an understanding of the passage of time, different experiences, and provides them with another adult with whom they can connect, learn and teach."

Wiles said younger children develop life skills by better understanding other people's talents and perspectives. While they get some of that from interactions with parents, teachers and perhaps coaches, many of those relationships are with people of similar ages and experiences.

"When you add an older adult, you get a radically different perspective," Wiles said. "Younger children are generally demonstrating different talents and different ways of engaging than they do in the more

structured environments of family and school."

Older adults also can often offer their undivided attention that, Wiles says, reaffirms the value of the older adult to the community, as well as providing the attention that children crave more than anything."

"So often we know that the solution to some of the issues in early childhood is attention. We can't always provide that. If we're in the middle of fixing our plumbing, we can't stop and play ball with our kid. It's important to recognize that as parents we can't give our undivided attention all the time."

Wiles said intergenerational relationships benefits older adults by providing cognitive practice and engagement.

"We know that social engagement, more than anything, is the most protective factor against age-related declines in cognition, thinking and mobility," Wiles said. "So the more opportunities we can provide for children to engage with older adults, the better off the older adults will be, and the children benefit as well."

Wiles encourages older adults to connect with a local preschool or K-12 school system to ask about opportunities to visit classrooms and share experiences. A national program – <u>Generations United</u> – is an example of opportunities available to help bring older adults and children together with structured activities.

More information on child development <u>is available</u> <u>online</u> from K-State Research and Extension, and at your local extension office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Links used in this story Generations United, https://www.gu.org

Applied Research in Child Health and Enhancing Resilience, www.hhs.k-state.edu/ahs/extension/child-development

K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

Starting Seeds at Home

SEEDING EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Light - overhead light source (fluorescent bulb shop light (T12-T5) or LED

Heat Mat or Soil Heating Cable - either is recommend for best germination. No mat? Try the top of your refrigerator.

Seeding Media - vermiculite, sterilized sand, peat moss or combination

Flat or Container - any will do as long as it has drainage

Seed - your favorite varieties

Transparent Cover - glass, plastic or plastic wrap

GETTING STARTED

 First thing to consider is when will the seeds need to be planted. This depends on how fast the plants grow and when it will be safe to plant outdoors. Check seed packet for this information and hand-outs: Vegetable, Annual and Perennial Seed Sowing Dates available from the Extension office.

- 2. Place seeding medium into flat and leave space for watering. Moisten seeding medium before planting.
- 3. Plant or sow seed. Follow seeding depth on the seed packet. Rule of thumb is 2 times the diameter of the seed.
- 4. Moisten soil again (mister) and cover flat with the transparent cover.
- 5. Place over heat. 70 degrees is common, see Vegetable, Annual and Perennial Seed Sowing dates for specific temperature.
- 6. Put under light source. You may leave lights on constantly. Monitory plant growth.
- 7. Keep flat moist and covered until seeds come up. Then remove the cover.

Note: Leggy or spindly seedlings are caused by two factors. Light is too far from the seedlings. Keep light 1 inch from the seedlings. The other factor is too warm of a growing temperature.

TRANSPLANTING SEEDLINGS

Seedlings are tender plants. Make sure the true leaves (the ones that look more like their adult leaves) have appeared before transplanting.

Seed Starting Mix

Using a packaged seed starting mix is an easy way to get a light, fluffy medium in which to grow your seedlings. However, try not to get one that is amended with a lot of fertilizers. This is not necessary for seedlings. Seeds will not sprout well in garden dirt, which is way too heavy for baby plants to take root. Peat moss, coconut coir, compost, or a mixture of these are the base for seed starting mediums. They are then amended with fine perlite and horticultural grade vermiculite. Seedlings don't need fertilizer to sprout.

Both perlite and vermiculite are lightweight, granular materials from volcanoes and they are both mined substances. That's where their similarities end. Perlite (white) is used to help the seed starting media retain the structure and assist in drainage. Vermiculite (more tan or brownish in color) holds onto the moisture and nutrients in the medium.

A simple DIY mixture is to mix equal parts of the base, perlite and vermiculite. Make sure you use horticultural grade vermiculite, as the other grades are for different uses. Perlite should be finer ground, but if you only have the course ground, no worries.

This can be a fun experiment to find the mix of ingredients that works best for you. This year, I'm trying worm castings and coconut coir as my base. I'll let you know the results next spring!

Calving School

Thursday, January 18, 2024 West Elk School -- Howard

Supper at 5:30 p.m.

Program starts at 6:00 p.m.

Program presented by: A.J. Tarpoff, K-State Research & Extension Beef Veterinarian

TOPICS

- Building a Proper Calving Kit
- Stages of the Normal Calving Process
- Proper Technique in Pulling and Manipulating Calves
- When and How to Intervene or Assist the Cow or Heifer



• Demonstrate Proper Use of Calving Equipment on a Life-Size Cow and Calf Model

No Cost to Attend. RSVP by Friday, January 12 to the Rolling Prairie District Howard Extension Office at 620-374-2174 or rfechter@ksu.edu

Meal Sponsored by Farm Credit Services -- Frontier Farm Credit and American Ag Credit







Butler County



Cowley County



Greenwood County

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Or by calling: 620-583-7455

Presenter:

Dr. Jaymelynn FarneyK-State Beef System Specialist

Topics include:

- Limit feeding hay and grass
- Substitution feeding options
- Dry lot feeding cows







Plan for Health During the Holidays and in the Next Year

It's not always so clear-cut – or easy to follow-through – but being healthy and improving one's quality of life can be summed up in three small phrases.

- *Build a better meal.
- *Boost your physical activity.
- *Balance stress.

"So, the three B's are really important," said Chelsea Reinberg, a nutrition, food safety and health agent in K-State Research and Extension's Johnson County office. "I frame good health that way because it's easy to remember...but sometimes doing all three is difficult. Doing all three is important and they all affect our health."

The three B's, Reinberg said, can provide a valuable road map for people heading into holidays or considering New Year's resolutions.

Build a better meal

Reinberg said the USDA provides a visual reminder to help Americans make healthy choices from each of the five food groups. The graphic is called MyPlate, and can be viewed online.

"MyPlate gives us a great image of how all of our meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner – should be built," Reinberg said. "Half of your plate should be fruits or vegetables, a quarter should be grains – focusing on whole grains – and a quarter should be protein. Then, maybe a side of dairy, for those who consume dairy products."

Fruits and vegetables contain fiber, which may help to manage weight, prevent constipation, enhance gut health and reduce the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes, among other benefits.

"The great thing about food and nutrition is that we can be creative," Reinberg said. "Some people like to eat the same meals...but diversifying our plate is also healthy. As nutritionists, we say, 'eat the rainbow,' because each color had different nutrients, antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals."

Boost your physical activity

"When people think about physical activity, often they thing about going to the gym or going out and running a mile or a marathon or whatever it may be," Reinberg said.

Instead, physical activity may mean a steady 15-20 minute

walk, or another activity that reduces sitting time and gets you away from screens or other technology.

"Being more physically active has some immediate benefits; for example, you may feel like your stress is reduced after a short walk. It reduces your blood pressure, at least temporarily," Reinberg said.

Long-term benefits include a decreased risk of heart disease or diabetes; lower blood pressure; stronger bones and muscles; and better coordination and balance.

"Some studies have shown that no matter how healthy you are in terms of eating, if you sit for a majority of your day, and then you go home and just sit on the couch, that can actually negate some of the other health benefits that you're trying to get by maybe eating an apple in the morning for breakfast."

Balance stress

Physical activity also helps to reduce stress, but colder weather can limit the opportunity to get outside and move. Reinberg said it's important to acknowledge stress and "have a game plan as we go into the holidays."

"If you know that finances or family dynamics are going to be points of stress, make sure you think about it and prepare a plan so that you know that if you're in certain situations, you will know how to handle them," she said. "Your plan of action should help to assure that stress doesn't get the best of you."

Chronic stress can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke or high blood pressure.

"Keeping stress in is not a good thing," Reinberg said.
"People handle stress differently, which I think is important to acknowledge that you and I are going to react differently to stressful situations. But to really make sure that you know what your triggers are and that you know how to resolve those... is very important."

Regarding the three B's, Reinberg said "you don't have to tackle all three at the same time."

"Maybe you start with building a better meal first, and develop a goal for that. Then, once you feel like you're at a good place there, you can move on to setting a goal for boosting your physical activity or balancing your stress, or whatever order works for you."

More information on living healthfully is available at your local extension office..

Winter Prep? Think Safety First, Says K-State Climatologist

MANHATTAN, Kan. – If there's a buzzword for winter that Chip Redmond subscribes to, it would certainly be safety.

As a climatologist and manager of the <u>Kansas Mesonet</u> at Kansas State University, Redmond understands the many risks of winter weather.

"The most obvious may be the cold," Redmond said. "It's definitely a time to start pulling out the warmer stuff; the thermals, the overalls...we really need to become conscious about how many layers we put on in anticipation that the weather can change pretty rapidly this time of year."

Morning temperatures, he said, can be quite chilly, but temperatures in the Midwest and other parts of the country often can warm nicely in the afternoon, before cooling again at sunset. Layering helps to protect during daily weather variations, Redmond said.

He also suggests a warm hat or stocking cap; mittens or gloves; and footwear that provides warmth and traction.

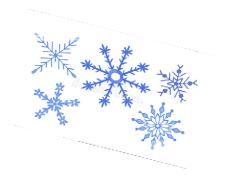
"There is usually an increase in slides or falling accidents this time of year when we get snow," he said. "I suggest minimizing your outside time during slippery periods, or least have the proper footwear and avoid areas where ice might build up. Sometimes it's easier to walk on grass than the sidewalk."

Additional safety tips as winter weather approaches include:

Removing snow

"As much as I don't want to admit it, I'm not as young as I was yesterday," Redmond said. "It takes a toll when we put our bodies under the stress of shoveling snow, especially wet, heavy snow that can be very physically demanding. That has been a leading cause of injuries and even death due to heart attacks. Be vigilant in what your body is capable of."

Redmond suggests asking friends, family, neighbors for help; removing snow in a way that doesn't require picking it up and throwing it; or using a snowblower.



Winter travel

"Travel can be a challenge any time of year, but it becomes much more of a challenge in winter because conditions change quickly over short distances," Redmond said.

He advises travelers to always check weather forecasts for their current location, their destination – and points in between.

"There are some apps available that will give you weather by the road (you're traveling)," said Redmond, who suggest the U.S. government website, weather.gov, for reliable, up-to-date forecasts across the country.

In Kansas, the Kansas Department of Transportation maintains a website, www.kandrive.org, that includes forecasts, road conditions, live cameras, road closures, and more.

Redmond said if a car's tires are worn, get new one's put on immediately. And, he says, keep a winter preparedness kit in the car that includes such items as blankets, flashlight, cell phone charger, water, radio, dry food and other items to help you weather the elements in case of a breakdown.

When storms are imminent, "don't travel," he said. "Make the smart decision to not go out there."

Stay off frozen waterways

"A lot of people in Kansas think that frozen ponds are pretty and they're fun to walk on," Redmond said. "But there's very rarely ever a pond or a lake that's truly safe to walk on. To support a person's weight, you need a lot of ice. To keep that ice frozen, we rarely see those weather conditions align because we still get warmer temperatures in the winter, and enough sun to melt the ice during the afternoon."

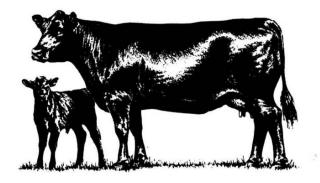
Redmond recently spoke in depth about winter preparedness and safety on the weekly radio program, Sound Living, produced by K-State Research and Extension. Listen to the full program online at www.soundlivingpodcast.net.

Nighttime Feeding Can Influence Timing of Calving

It is generally accepted that adequate supervision at calving has a significant impact on reducing calf mortality. On most ranching operations, supervision of the first calf heifers will be best accomplished in daylight hours and the poorest observation takes place in the middle of the night.

The easiest and most practical method of inhibiting nighttime calving at present is by feeding cows at night; the physiological mechanism is unknown, but some hormonal effect may be involved. Rumen motility studies indicate the frequency of rumen contractions falls a few hours before parturition. Intraruminal pressure begins to fall in the last two weeks of gestation, with a more rapid decline during calving. It has been suggested that night feeding causes intraruminal pressures to rise at night and decline in the daytime.

In a Canadian study of 104 Hereford cows 38.4% of a group fed at 8:00 a.m. and again at 3:00 p.m. delivered calves during the day, 79.6% of a group fed at 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. A British study utilizing 162 cattle on four farms compared the percentages of calves born from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to cows fed at different times. When cattle were fed at 9:00 a.m. 57% of the calves were born during the day, vs 79% with feeding at 10:00 p.m. In field trials by cattlemen utilizing night feeding when 35 cows and heifers were fed once daily between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. 74.5% of the calves were born between 5:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. In the most convincing study to date, 1331 cows on 15 farms in Iowa were fed once daily at dusk, 85% of the calves were born between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Whether cows were started on the night feeding the week before calving started in the herd or two to three weeks earlier made no apparent difference in calving time. On many large ranches, it is physically impossible to feed all of the cows after 5:00 p.m. In those instances, the ranch manager should plan to feed the mature cows earlier in the day, then feed the first calf heifers at dusk. The heifers, of course, are the group of females that are of greatest need of observation during the calving season.



Walk Kansas Begins March 24

Get your walking shoes ready! The annual Walk Kansas event is scheduled to begin March 24. Each year since 2000, people from all over the State of Kansas and beyond have been participating in a fun health initiative that promotes personal health and well-being by helping participants adopt healthful lifestyle habits. It is primarily a team-based program that will help you:

- be more active with support from friends and family.
- make healthier nutrition and beverage choices.
- learn helpful techniques to reduce stress.

Watch our FB page for more information, or call the Rolling Prairie Extension Office.



Agriculture Lease Law

It is estimated that more than 50 percent of Kansas farmland and pastureland is rented. In some areas of the state, this figure is higher. Many producers cannot maintain a viable business without operating through lease arrangements. Leases are growing in prominence and will play an increasingly important role in production agriculture as fewer and fewer producers manage and operate our state's agricultural resources. Some leases are simple oral arrangements, while others are complex, lengthy written documents. An oral agreement may be legally enforceable, but it is much more desirable to spell out the agreement's details in writing.

By definition, a lease is a contract for the exclusive use of land for a specific period. There are at least two parties to any lease: 1) the landowner who owns the land, also known as the lessor; and 2) the tenant who farms or operates the land, also known as the lessee. Certain rights and obligations binding both parties arise from the relationship. When land is leased, the lease is equivalent to a sale of the premises for the length of the lease. The tenant essentially becomes the owner for a time and has the responsibilities of one who is in possession of the land.

Parties to a lease are presumed to know of laws existing at the time the lease is entered. Provisions of statutes, ordinances, and regulations are read into and become a part of the contract by implication as though they were expressly written into the contract, except where the parties have shown a contrary intention. For example, if a written lease says the lease will terminate December 31 and Kansas law states oral leases on farm and pastureland will terminate March 1, the lease will terminate December 31 under the written agreement.

A written lease does not have to be a detailed contract. A memorandum or note concerning the lease may be sufficient if the party against whom it will be enforced signs it. A written lease is a contract and should be approached with the same careful and thorough consideration given when entering into any binding contractual agreement. Though an oral lease is unenforceable if it cannot be performed within one year, a written lease may cover any peri-

od of time. Thus, any beginning and ending dates may be used in the lease.

For all leases, except written leases signed by the parties that provide otherwise, Kansas law provides that notice to terminate farm and pastureland leases must be given as follows:

- 1. in writing
- 2. at least 30 days prior to March 1, and
- 3. must fix March 1 as the termination date of the tenancy.

Any notice to terminate which does not comply with the above requirements is inadequate and the tenancy will continue. The law previously applied to "farm" leases which includes cropland and pastureland.

A lease is a contract for the exclusive possession of land for a definite period, and the landowner cannot use the land for his own purposes while it is leased. For example, the landowner cannot hunt on the leased ground without the permission of the tenant unless the landowner retained these rights in a written lease. A landowner, however, may enter the premises to: 1) make reasonable inspection; 2) make repairs and/or installations; 3) show the premises to prospective buyers; 4) collect rent; and 5) deliver a notice to terminate the tenancy.

The Extension Office has sample lease forms and other information about ag leases.

Publications Available at Extension Offices

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

- 2024 Chemical Weed Control Guide
- 2024 IRM Redbooks
- Farmers Tax Guide For Help in Preparing 2023 Tax Returns
- Farm Account Books

Stop by either office to get your copy.



Rolling Prairie Extension District #8, Chautauqua and Elk Counties 215 N. Chautauqua Sedan, KS 67361

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