



# K-STATE

## Research and Extension

### Walnut Creek District

WCED District Newsletter

September, 2018

### *Message of the Month*

It is hard to believe that it is already fall! While our County Fairs have been put in the books for a little while now, we would still like to say a big “Thank You” to all that made this possible. It takes many people to make it happen. If you would like to be a part of the fair next year, us, along with our

*Thank  
You*

Fairboards are always looking for volunteers. This may mean helping run a ride, clerk for a judge, be a ring man for a show, and the list goes on. We would also like to say a big thanks to our Program Development Committees (PDC’s) for helping to guide our work and programming efforts throughout the year. We hope to see you at a program in the future!

### Healthcare Marketplace

If you or someone you know needs help enrolling in the Marketplace for the first time or re-enrolling, I am happy to help you with that! Open Enrollment for plans that will start January 1, 2019 will happen November 1-December 15. This is the time that you can change your plan or sign up for the very first time. Outside of this time, you can only enroll if you are granted a Special Enrollment Period. Events such as losing coverage, having a baby, getting married, or just being released from jail are examples of a Special Enrollment Period. This is a free service, so please don’t hesitate to ask questions.

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## Medicare

Open enrollment for Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plans is October 15-December 7. This is your time to check and make sure you have the plan that is best meeting your needs. Call any of our offices to set up a time to come and get your plan checked!

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## Programming

While K-State Research and Extension strives to provide researched based programming, we also know, that sometimes we need to get back to the basics. We have had several requests for such programming.

### Crochet Class

Bess Jensen will be teaching a beginners class on November 2, 9, and 16 at 7:00 pm. in Rush County. Cost will be \$20. More details will be coming.

### Block of the Month meets Book of the Month

Join the Ness City Library where you will read a book and quilt a block for each of the books. This will be the months of January, February, and March. More details will be coming.

### Pie Making Class

Janice Hemel will be teaming up with the Extension Office to have a pie making class in Lane County. This will be November 15, at 6:00 p.m. at the Lane County 4-H Building. Cost will be \$10. You will be making a double crusted apple pie. Please bring if you have a mixing bowl, spoon, and pastry blender. We will provide foil pans, but if you prefer to bake in a glass dish, please bring one. We will need 5 people to make the class happen and there is a cap of 10 people.

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## Building Literacy Every Day

Every time you read a book, write a note, sort the laundry, check the TV Listings, or recount the day's happenings, you are using skills young children need to have to be ready to learn to read and write.



Talk to your child as you do everyday tasks such as sorting the laundry or thinking about what to cook. Explain the piles of laundry, for example, "Here are the dark clothes and here are the white clothes." Show your child the ingredients you have for making a meal and name them together.

Picture books represent a unique literary form that blends stories with art. In a picture book, the illustrations are as important as the text, and both work together to tell the story. When you share picture books with children, be sure to pay attention to the illustrations—reading picture books means exploring the art as well.

We are told, "Don't judge a book by its cover." Well, children do it all the time. A child's first impression of a book is usually shaped by the pictures. So involve children in choosing books with wonderful, eye-catching illustrations that beg to be explored. Conduct "picture walks" through books by leafing through the pages to look at the images and discussing what you see before you read. That way, the illustrations will draw in even the most reluctant reader.

Illustrations can do even more than draw a child into a book; they can hook children into a lifelong love of reading. For our youngest children, pictures are an introduction into the world of books. Long before they can read, children respond to images in an effort to place themselves and the others in their lives into the world around them.

Pictures enable children to explore the world within their own imagination and make connections to characters and events they see depicted in books. When you help children connect with characters and events, you make the book more real to them. Here are some ways that illustrations bring picture books to life:



- Illustrators usually tell stories with pictures.
- Authors use illustrations to depict specific scenes of high emotion or action.
- Illustrators often use a variety of techniques to convey mood and tone as well as character and plot.
- When illustrations reflect people, objects, and situations familiar to children, the images help validate their emotions and experiences.

The process of making an emotional connection can help a child learn empathy and compassion for others.

Visiting the library together is a great way to foster family literacy activities. Not only do libraries often offer access to books on a wide range of literacy levels and subjects, librar-

*(Continued on page 5)*

## What is 4-H?

Kansas 4-H is open to youth between the ages of 7 and 19. The new 4-H year starts in October, so many prefer to join 4-H at the start of the school year. 4-H enrollment, however, is open year round, so youth can join any time.

4-H is a nationwide program led by state land-grant universities in cooperation with local county/district extension councils. In Kansas, 4-H is the largest youth educational program, aside from public school.

Each of the four H's on the clover represent ways youth can grow and develop in 4-H. The four H's represent:

**Head**-critical thinking, problem solving  
**Heart**-self-discipline, integrity, communication  
**Hands**-serving others.  
**Health**-choosing healthy lifestyles

As part of the 4-H experience, 4-H members are encouraged to learn about and contribute to the betterment of the communities. 4-H also utilizes a variety of community resource to enhance the educational experience of members. Those resources may include meeting places, guest speakers, volunteers and field trips.

In 4-H, youth "learn by doing." Much of that learning happens through project experiences. From beef to bicycles...electricity to entomology...forestry to food science...photography to plant sci-

ence...rabbits to rockets...Kansas 4-H offers 36 project areas designed to develop the wide range of interests that appeal to today's young people. In addition to subject-matter skills, many young people develop interests that last a lifetime.

Club participation, projects and friendships with other members become memorable parts of the 4-H Program. Equally important are the skills that last a lifetime. Successful adults often credit their experiences in 4-H as turning points in their lives.

They credit planning, organization and public speaking skills as essential to their success. The Kansas 4-H Program has played a huge leadership role in identifying the five life skills most needed to help young people. Those five skills are:

- A positive self-concept.
- An inquiring mind.
- A concern for the community
- Healthy interpersonal relationships
- Sound decision making.

The 4-H Program, like many other youth groups, relies heavily on volunteers, who are involved in nearly every aspect of the program. More than 16,000 volunteers work directly with 4-H youth throughout the year as club leaders and project specialists. Another 3,500 assist with events, club organization and 4-H promotion.

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ies often have books in several languages as well. Adults and children can improve their literacy skills by reading books in the family's first language and then reading the same book in English. By doing this, family members will build vocabulary, the ability to use context clues to learn new words, and enable adults to ask the child questions about the illustrations and predict what will happen next. Families should also visit the library to connect with community literacy projects, storytelling, tutoring and reading clubs.

Learning to love to read starts at an early age and often starts at home. If families make the effort to encourage, support and engage all aspects of literacy in their homes, children and family members will enjoy reading and writing together for the rest of their lives.

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## **After School 4-H**

The 4-H Youth Development program across the Walnut Creek District has worked toward helping with the after school time. When youth may not have an adult to go home to. Currently we are meeting four times a month, twice a year with those youth who enroll at Dighton, Ness City, LaCrosse and Otis/Bison School Districts. We focus on one of the 4-H projects and do a hands-on experience and work through the Experiential Learning Model each month. For more information about the After School 4H program contact [rdeines@ksu.edu](mailto:rdeines@ksu.edu)

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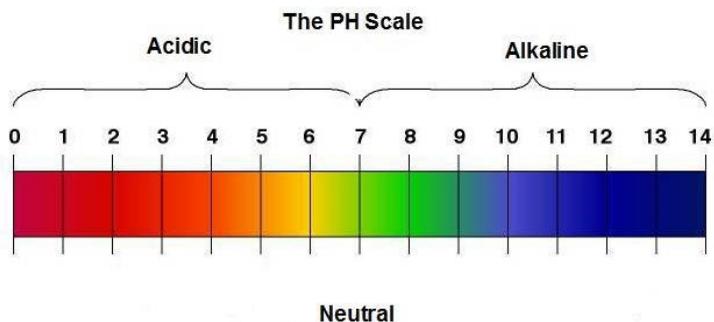
## **Upcoming 4-H Events**

<b>October 1;</b>	2018-19 4-H begins
<b>October 3, 10, 17 &amp; 24:</b>	Ness City After School Program
<b>October 4, 11, 18 &amp; 25:</b>	Otis/Bison After School Program
<b>October 7-13:</b>	National 4-H Week
<b>October 13 &amp; 14:</b>	48 Hours of 4-H
<b>October 21:</b>	Ness Achievement Banquet
<b>October 28:</b>	Rush Achievement Banquet
<b>November 3:</b>	Lane Achievement Banquet
<b>November 17-18:</b>	Leadership Weekend



## Soil pH: What is it and Why Does it Matter?

Have you applied fertilizer, but aren't seeing any results? Soil pH might be the problem. Before we get into why your plants can't uptake essential nutrients, we need to touch on what pH is. Soil pH stands for potential Hydrogen and is measured on a 1-14 scale where 1 is very acidic, 7



is neutral, and 14 is very alkaline. "Building Soils for Better Crops" states that most agronomic crops prefer a soil pH ranging from 6 to 7.5, depending on the crop. Soil pH influences your plants' ability to uptake nutrients. This is important because you might see symptoms of a nutrient deficiency, green veins and yellowing around the leaf, on your plant, but doesn't mean the nutrients are not in the soil. For example, in Kansas the micronutrient iron is plentiful in soils, yet we see iron chlorosis in plants, especially oak trees, and more often maples in our area. This is because iron is in a soluble form and is easily taken up by oak trees when the soil pH ranges from 5.0 to 6.5, but when the soil pH is above 7, iron is no longer soluble and the tree can't use the micronutrient. Understanding soil pH when applying fertilizers, especially nitrogen, is important too, because fertilizer has the potential to raise or lower your soil's pH. One of the best and most accurate ways to determine your soil's pH is to send a soil sample to the K-State Soil Testing Lab.

## Correcting Iron Chlorosis in Trees

Iron chlorosis is a common problem in Kansas, and especially within the Walnut Creek District, due to the high pH in some soils. Though these soils normally contain adequate amounts of iron, the high pH ties up iron so that it is unavailable for plants to use. Classic symptoms of iron chlorosis are yellow leaves with a network of dark green veins. In severe cases the entire leaf turns yellow and the edges of the leaf scorch and turn brown. Plants may eventually die if the case is bad enough and left untreated.

One of the best methods of avoiding iron chlorosis is by planting tolerant trees. Trees that are susceptible to iron chlorosis include pin oak, sweetgum, dawn redwood,

and several maples within our area. Moderately tolerant trees are ash, cottonwood, linden, elm, hawthorn, most oaks, and ginkgo. Even closely related trees can differ markedly in their resistance. For example, pin oak is notorious for sensitivity to iron chlorosis while most other oaks are moderately tolerant. Also, red, silver, and Amur maples are susceptible, but Norway maples are much less so. Several methods are used to correct iron chlorosis in trees. Not all methods work in all situations. The following are the most common.

**Soil treatment:** The idea is to acidify a small quantity of soil so the tree can absorb the iron it needs from these areas. This will only work on non-calcareous soils. If the tree has not been planted yet, have a soil test done. Add the recommended amount of sulfur, if any, and work into the soil before planting. For existing trees, a mixture of equal parts of iron sulfate and elemental sulfur are mixed together, and the mixture is placed in holes made under the dripline of the tree. Holes should be 1-2 inches in diameter and 12-18 inches deep. Space them 18-24 inches apart. Each hole should be filled with the iron sulfate elemental sulfur mixture to within 4 inches of the soil surface. This method is labor intensive and results can vary.

**Iron chelates:** Iron chelates can also be used as a soil treatment. The only chelate that is effective above a soil pH of 7.2 is from EDDHA. It can be found in the products Sequestar 6% Iron Chelate WDG, Sequestrene 138 and Millers FerriPlus. Use these products in the spring before growth starts. Dry chelate can be sprinkled on the soil and watered in or dissolved in water and applied as a drench under the dripline of the tree. Normally, soil applied chelates last only one year.

**Trunk injection or implantation:** In this method, holes are drilled in the lower trunk and ferric ammonium citrate, iron citrate, is introduced through the holes. Successful applications often last several years. The preferred time of application is during the spring just after the leaves have fully expanded. Use a brad point drill bit to minimize tree wounding. Research has shown the uptake is enhanced if the holes are drilled in the root flares near the soil surface.



## Cull Cows Now vs. Later

Jared Petersilie, Ag and Nat. Resources Agent

September has arrived and conversely so has the rain. While the rain gauge reports follow the same trend now that they have all summer; spotty showers with areas of locally HEAVY rain; the overall benefit to the territory in our Extension District is very beneficial. Some could use more, especially in west central Ness Co. while others in parts of Eastern Rush Co. would gladly give up some. As I write this on Sept. 4 following Labor Day, my phone app keeps telling me that there is a flood warning for low lying areas and the weather outlook the next three days is calling for more moisture. I know that we keep pushing wheat drilling back for various reasons, but the realist knows we have to get it up and when it does dry out the drills are going. So, in the meantime we fix the creek crossings, change bearings, clean seed, and.....preg check the cows!?!?!? Here's why-

So yes it is that time of year. If you target a calving date anywhere prior to the first of May, meaning those cows would've been bred prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>, they have now been bred for a minimum of 30 days and any method of pregnancy checking will work. Yes, we have plenty of grass (which is a welcome change) and yes it is early, but I encourage you to look at a drought monitor map and see that you don't have to look very far EAST (or South, or West for that matter) to see the affects of what we normally face. This year is an anomaly in that based on averages, Kansas from West to East is opposite of what it normally would be. All those humid days in July and August have blessed us with grass and still green at that. Conditions for NE KS and some of Missouri are slowly changing even if the rain in Manhattan did more harm than good, but for their crops and grass, it is too late and there is still an overall shortage of forages that can be transported. Compare the price of feed that can be marketed to the pounds of cow that can be marketed eating the same feed. Not to mention, I haven't seen any females as I travel down the road that we can "put any pounds on." The cull prices for cows has held out quite well considering the number of cows that have been liquidated due to drought in many parts of the U.S.

As you read the article from Dr. Justin Waggoner below, take note that it is not too late to sell cull cows, but watch the markets. Time is always a factor, so keep in mind that if retaining the open cows till 2019, (utilizing dry dormant grass and crop residue) to see markets improve that pound for pound of actual nutrients, corn and milo are cheap-no surprises to anyone there however feeding grain in modest amounts vs. selling it over

the scale could pencil out. This year I have not witnessed as many (still some) high Nitrate feed samples, but with the spotty rains, there are course sorghum crops, wind-rows catching rains, and many other of Mother Nature's forces being applied, test your feed and know where you stand. This particular feed crop will not only be fed this year, but some could easily be marketed, and even more will be stored or held back for next year.

We have not experienced a 'rough' winter for several years. There have been some record cold spells, but snow, mud, and blizzards haven't been part of it. So if adequate feed, good stalk usage, and open winters have let you keep some cows "a couple" years longer than anticipated, great! Just don't let that same benefit become a detriment later this year. At some point cull value is better than the alternative of nursing an old cow along in the cold every day.

I know that discussing backgrounding in this article may seem off topic, but I would also encourage producers to compare the added value of keeping the calves and feeding them our 'surplus' as to keeping what is deemed a cull cow. Our cows today are in excellent condition and holding that weight into winter will be difficult even with plenty of dry grass and stalks.



## **“Cull Cows: A Disappointing Failure or Marketing Opportunity”**

Justin Waggoner, Ph.D., Beef Systems Specialist

Most cattle operators view open cows with some degree of disappointment. However, you might be surprised at the amount of revenue that can be realized from cull cow sales. I recently summarized the Kansas Farm Management data on Kansas cow-calf operations from 2010-2015. Participating operations had an average herd size of 126 head, weaned an 84% calf crop, sold 106 calves and 20 head of breeding stock or cull animals annually. In the 2015 data, the average gross income of participating operations was \$118,710, the sale of breeding stock or culls generated \$28,453 of that figure. Thus the sale of cull animals accounted for 24% of the participating operations gross income. Although marketing cull breeding stock/cows is often viewed as a loss, it is a significant source of income that should not be overlooked. Most cull cows are sold

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through local auction markets. Therefore, understanding the market and making timely marketing decisions is one of the most important components of realizing the most dollars out of a cull cow. The figure below illustrates the 15-year average and 2016 slaughter cow prices in Western Kansas.

<http://www.asi.k-state.edu/research-and-extension/August%202018.pdf> page 4 chart

Figure 1: Slaughter Cow Prices, Western KS (Livestock Marketing Information Center, Robin Reid). WHAT'S NEW..... Slaughter cow prices tend to be highest and relatively steady from February to August, and then decline rapidly, being lowest in the months of October, November and December. Essentially, the worst time to market a cull cow based on the seasonal nature of the market aligns with pregnancy determination and weaning on most spring-calving operations. Therefore, if open cows are identified in late summer and are in good condition, marketing those animals as soon as possible would likely result in a higher price than waiting until later in the fall. If open cows are identified later in the fall, deferring marketing until late winter/early spring and placing cull cows on low-input feeding program that would add additional weight and condition (provided resources are available) might be more advantageous than marketing those animals immediately.

An article on cull cows isn't usually a common thought when the grass is tall and green, but decisions now could have larger implications a few months from now. Open cows won't pay bills they just make more, so using them to pay for others is warranted and while the crop production looks good, it'll take a lot of bushels to make up for the price per bushel this year--again. So creating revenue now makes sense.

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## **Shopping Tips for Food Dehydrators**

A food dehydrator is a small electrical appliance for drying foods indoors. It has an electric element for heat and a fan and vents for air circulation. Dehydrators are efficient, dry foods fast at 140<sup>0</sup>F.

Costs vary depending on features. Some models are expandable and additional trays can be purchased later. Twelve square feed of drying space dries about a half-bushel of produce. The major disadvantage is its limited capacity.

## Features to Look for:

- Double wall construction of metal or high grade plastic. Wood is not recommended, because it is a fire hazard and is difficult to clean.
- Enclosed heating elements.
- Counter top design
- An enclosed thermostat from 85<sup>0</sup>F to 160<sup>0</sup>F.
- Fan or blower
- Four to 10 open mesh trays made of sturdy, light-weight plastic for easy washing.
- UL seal of approval
- A one-year guarantee.
- Convenient service
- A dial for regulating temperature.
- A timer. Often the completed drying time may occur during the night and a timer could turn the dehydrator off and prevent scorching.



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

# PRESERVE IT FRESH, PRESERVE IT SAFE

**JUST BECAUSE THE LID SEALS DOES NOT MEAN IT IS SAFE!**

- 1 Adjust processing for altitude of residence**  

Elevation Map of Kansas  
Feet Above Mean Sea Level
- 2 Use researched/ tested recipes**  

Always use up-to-date information  
Always use a tested and approved  
recipe for the food  
Please do not substitute ingredients
- 3 Fight Bac with Pressure Canning and Boiling Water Canning**
- 4 Acidify tomatoes**  

LEMON JUICE

Citric Acid
- 5 Follow canning instructions for proper headspace**  

Headspace

Lid

Liquid Level

Grow a garden? Buy produce at your local farmers market? Put away old recipes and methods. Respect the past and use up-to-date recipes and methods to preserve these fresh foods safely.  
For questions, information, and recipes, contact your local county/district extension office or go to [www.nrc.ksu.edu](http://www.nrc.ksu.edu) and click on "Food Preservation."

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