

# Walnut Creek Extension District

## May 2026 WCED Monthly Newsletter

### Upcoming Events

#### May Dates

- 1 - Important! - 4-H Add/Drop Deadline
- 2 - Rush 4-H Small Animal Weigh-In -8 am
- 9 - Lane County Spring Show - Dighton
- 11 - Rush 4-H Community Leaders meet
- 13 - Thriller, Filler, Spiller (Exhibiting Flowers) @ Bison Comm. Library - 6 pm
- 17 - Fair Graditim Trail Cleanup - Ness County
- 18 - Staff Meeting/Training: Offices Closed 8 am - Noon and Walnut Creek District Board meeting - 6:30 pm
- 20 - Walnut Creek Extension District Wheat Plot Tour
- 20 - 4-H Judging Extravaganza - LaCrosse Sale Barn
- 20 - Registration due for Tractor Safety Course
- 20 - Registration Due for Babysitting Course
- 21 - Kristen at Leisure Years Senior Center - Ness City
- 22 - Registration for 4 Clover Camp Due
- 24-25 - Bull Ring Spring Show - Rush Co. Fairgrounds
- 25 - Offices Closed - Memorial Day
- 27- Tractor Safety Course - Cimarron
- 28 - Babysitting Course - Rush Co. Extension Office - 9 am - 2 pm

#### June Dates

- 1 - Babysitting Course - Ness Co. Fairgrounds - 9 am
- 1 - Registration due for Cedar Bluff Overnight Camp and Youth Leadership 101 Camp
- 10-12 - 4 Clover Camp for 4-H members - Dodge City
- 18-19 - Cedar Bluff Overnight Camp
- 23 -25 - Youth Leadership 101 - Ford Co. Lake

**Watch for additional youth educational sessions to be scheduled during June!**

[www.walnutcreek.k-state.edu](http://www.walnutcreek.k-state.edu)

#### Lane County Office

144 S. Lane, Courthouse  
P O Box 487  
Dighton, KS 67839  
620-397-2806

- Lacey Noterman, Director and Agriculture Ext. Agent - lnote@ksu.edu
- Chelsey Shapland, 4-H Program Assistant - cshapland@ksu.edu
- Kendyl Wells, Office Professional kgwells@ksu.edu

#### Ness County Office

503 S Pennsylvania Ave  
Ness City, KS 67560  
785-798-3921

- Robyn Trussel, 4-H and Youth Agent - rdeines@ksu.edu
- Kristen Schmidt, Family Comm. Wellness - kbschmidt@ksu.edu
- Randae Rufenacht, Office Professional - rrufenac@ksu.edu

#### Rush County Office

702 Main, P O Box 70  
Lacrosse, KS 67548  
785-222-2710

- Jared Petersilie, Agriculture Ext. Agent - jaredp11@ksu.edu
- Berny Unruh, Office Professional bunruh@ksu.edu

#### 2026 County Fair Dates

Lane County Fair - July 15-18  
Ness County Fair - July 21-25  
Rush Co. Fair- July 29 - Aug. 1

**Save the dates and  
come join the fun!**

K-State Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact, Walnut Creek Extension District, four weeks prior to the start of the event at 620-397-2806 or email lnote@ksu.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request."

# Home Safety Tips for Older Adults

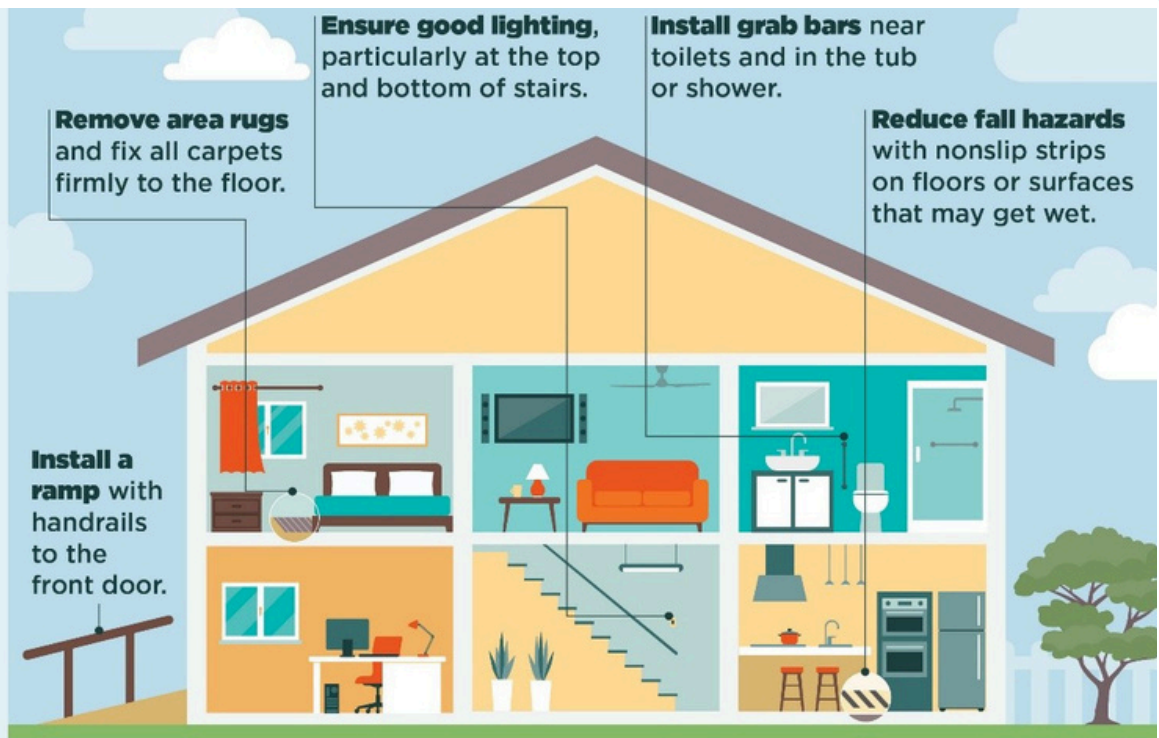
There are a variety of ways to make your home safer and easier to manage so they meet your needs as you age. Go through your home room by room to identify potential problems and safety issues. Keep in mind that it may not be necessary to make all of the suggested changes. It is important to reevaluate home safety every so often as your needs change. This illustration below gives you a few simple steps to get started:



**Kristen Schmidt**  
Family and  
Community  
Wellness Agent  
kbschmidt@ksu.edu

## Home safety tips for older adults

A few changes could make your home easier and safer to live in and help you continue to live independently.



## “Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe” Video Series

Canning and preserving your own fruits, vegetables, and meat can be a tasty and economical way to make the most of your food. Whether it's tomatoes from your own garden, a crate of peaches from the local farmer's market, or the venison harvested during a weekend hunting excursion, there's a safe recipe and method for preserving these foods. In this video series, K-State Extension food safety specialist Karen Blakeslee will guide you through recipe selection, preparation, and the canning process itself, always with an eye towards safety.

**Preserve It Fresh,  
Preserve It Safe**



*Recommended  
Recipes*

Find the video series [HERE](#)



# CLOVER CONNECTION

## Benefits of a Babysitting Course

Babysitting is often one of the first jobs young people experience—and with it comes a great deal of responsibility. While it may seem as simple as watching children for a few hours, quality babysitting requires important skills that can be learned and strengthened through a babysitting course. These courses offer valuable benefits that help youth feel confident, capable, and prepared.

One of the biggest advantages of taking a babysitting course is learning child safety and basic first aid. Participants are taught how to respond to common situations such as minor injuries, choking, or emergencies. Knowing what to do in these moments can make all the difference and provides peace of mind to both the babysitter and the families they serve.

Another key benefit is building confidence and responsibility. Babysitting courses teach youth how to handle different age groups, manage behavior, and create a safe and fun environment for children. This preparation helps young babysitters feel more comfortable stepping into leadership roles and making good decisions on their own. Additionally, completing a babysitting course can make youth more marketable and trustworthy. Parents are more likely to hire someone who has taken the time to learn proper care techniques and safety procedures. It shows initiative, maturity, and a commitment to doing the job well.

**Babysitting Course**

**Do you have what it takes to be a Babysitter?**

**Rush Co. Extension Office Thursday, May 28th**  
9am to 2pm **OR**  
**Ness Co. Fairgrounds - Monday June 1st**  
9am to 2pm

**Cost: \$15.00**

- Basic First Aid
- Simple meal prep & snacks
- Fun activities & playtime
- Be a trustworthy sitter

**Learn the responsibilities of babysitting**

Caring for your little ones as if they were your own!

**Call Rush 785-222-2710 or Ness 785-798-3921 by May 20<sup>th</sup> to register.**

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### Building trust with the kids

- Start with a friendly introduction—get on their level and ask about their favorite games or shows.
- Let them choose between a couple of activities (gives them control without chaos).
- Stay calm and patient—even if they test boundaries.

### Safety first

- Never leave kids alone.
- Keep doors locked and don't let strangers in.
- Avoid distractions like being glued to your phone.

### Food & Snacks

- Stick to what the parents approve.
- Avoid choking hazards for younger kids.
- Clean up together—it teaches responsibility.



**Jared Petersilie**  
Agriculture  
Extension Agent  
jaredp11@ksu.edu

## 2026 Kansas INPUT COSTS Survey

Please complete the survey before May 31<sup>st</sup> at <https://tinyurl.com/input26>

Agricultural production expenses have increased dramatically over years and continue to be extremely volatile. This situation makes your input even more critical for your future decisions and for those of your fellow Kansas agriculture stakeholders.

The purpose of this survey is to collect information on input costs in 2025–2026 for Kansas agricultural production. Please enter your best estimate of the average costs for fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide, and seed in your area. Please exclude the cost of application.

Completion of the survey should take about 5 minutes. We are seeking input from individuals, cooperatives, local agribusinesses, etc. Response to this survey is voluntary, and your response will be kept confidential. For your reference, the report of the 2022 Kansas Input Costs Survey is available at: [https://www.agmanager.info/sites/default/files/pdf/2022\\_InputCostReport.pdf](https://www.agmanager.info/sites/default/files/pdf/2022_InputCostReport.pdf).

If you have any questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact the office at 785–532–3509 or [ltsoodle@ksu.edu](mailto:ltsoodle@ksu.edu). The survey will be open for responses until May 31, 2026.

## Tractor Safety Course – May 27<sup>th</sup> in Cimarron, KS Register by May 20

There is still time to register for this multi-county event designed to provide teens with an awareness of safety practices that are very important around tractors and farm machinery.

The full day program is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2026 from 8 am to 5 pm at the Gray County Fairgrounds in Cimarron, Kansas.

The cost is \$20 (made payable to the Ford County Ag Activity Fund) which includes handouts and the noon hamburger meal. Registration is due by May 20<sup>th</sup> to your local Extension Office.

Participants will need to complete the

- Registration form and the
- Health Participation Form.

Although this program is focused on certifying youth age 14 and 15 for a Tractor Safety certificate, older youth who work on the farm are encouraged to attend.



## Cattle Chat

The Beef Cattle Institute at Kansas State University provides innovative solutions for success in the beef industry. Whether you're a veterinarian or beef producer, they provide resources straight to you and your practice or operation from industry leaders.

Podcast topics range from:

- What may be causing difficult birth,
- Beef Imports and why they matter,
- Treating disease early vs. precisely.

Plus much many more!

Check out the website, [ksubci.org](http://ksubci.org).

If you have any comments/questions/topic ideas, please send them to [bci@ksu.edu](mailto:bci@ksu.edu). You can also email them and ask to be placed on an email list to receive notifications about the latest news and receive their newsletter by email.

## SAVE THE DATE

Our Walnut Creek District Wheat Plot Tour will be held  
**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**  
Stay tuned for more information to come!



**Lacey Noterman**  
District Director  
Agronomy/  
Horticulture  
lnote@ksu.edu

### Freeze Damage to Kansas Wheat

Recent overnight temperatures across Kansas dropped low enough to cause freeze injury in winter wheat, particularly in western and north-central regions. The extent of damage will vary depending on crop stage, temperature, and individual field conditions.

Overnight lows ranged from approximately 24°F in low-lying areas to near 32°F in higher elevations. Wheat at the boot stage may be injured after about two hours at 28°F, while wheat at the heading stage may be injured after about two hours at 30°F. These values are general guidelines, and actual injury depends on several interacting factors.

Fields with thin stands are at greater risk because they allow cold air to penetrate the canopy more easily. Rapidly growing, well-fertilized wheat may also be more susceptible to injury. Residue in no-till systems can limit soil heat radiation, thereby increasing the potential for damage. Soil moisture also plays a role, with dry soils typically increasing risk and moist soils providing some protection. Windy conditions during cold nights increase heat loss, and low-lying areas are often the most impacted due to cold air settling.

Producers should wait 10 to 14 days of warm weather before making management decisions to allow symptoms to develop fully. After jointing and before the boot stage, stems should be split to examine the growing point. A healthy growing point will appear light green and firm, while a damaged one may appear brown and soft. At the boot stage, producers should check the developing head inside the stem. Healthy heads are green and firm, while damaged heads may appear yellow and mushy. During heading and flowering, which is the most sensitive stage, symptoms may include bleached heads, frost rings on stems, and partial or complete sterility resulting in poor grain fill.

Freeze injury is highly variable and depends on crop stage, temperature, and field conditions.

Producers should avoid making immediate decisions and instead focus on careful scouting. Splitting stems and examining developing heads is essential for determining the extent of injury, and scouting efforts should prioritize fields that are most at risk.

More information on freeze damage to wheat is available in Spring Freeze Injury to Kansas Wheat, K-State Extension publication C646, available at: <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/C646.pdf>.



### Managing Sucker Growth in Trees

Many trees, including fruit and shade species, may produce sucker growth at the base of the tree or from roots below the graft. Suckers are vigorous upright shoots that should be removed as soon as they appear and throughout the growing season.

Sucker growth often indicates stress, which may be caused by deep planting, mower or trimmer injury, insect or disease pressure, heavy pruning, drought, or natural decline. Some species, including crabapple, maple, linden, honeylocust, black locust, cottonwood, aspen, poplar, willow, dogwood, and many fruit trees, are also naturally prone to suckering.

Suckers are undesirable because they divert water and nutrients from the main tree, can weaken overall growth, and often do not match the desired variety in grafted trees. They may also create weak structure and increase disease or insect risk.

Remove suckers by cutting them at their point of origin using a sharp pruner. Avoid simply cutting at ground level, as this can lead to rapid regrowth. Herbicides should not be used on suckers, as they can damage or kill the entire tree through the shared root system.

Regular removal and good overall tree care are the best ways to manage sucker growth and maintain tree health.

# WCD 4-H SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



**Trenton Skillett**, LaCrosse High School  
Plans to attend FHSU  
Study Constuction Management



**Ashlynn Hoover**, LaCrosse High School  
Plans to attend Colby Community College  
Study Elementary Education



**Kelsi Maier**, Hoisington High School  
Plans to attend Hutchinson Community College  
Study Agribusiness and Play Volleyball



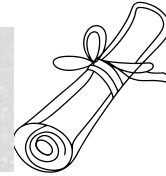
**Tavish Tracy**, Otis-Bison High School  
Plans to attend FHSU Tech NC  
Study Construction Technology



**Luke Krehbiel**, Larned High School  
Plans to attend FHSU  
Study Agribusiness



**Ethan Petersilie**, LaCrosse High School  
Plans to attend Hutchinson Community College  
Study Farm Business Management



**Emma Petersilie**, Ness City High School  
Plans to attend Garden City Community College  
Study Music Education, & Student Ambassador



**Grace Smith**, Otis-Bison High School  
Plans to attend FHSU Tech NC  
Study General Business



**Payton Reeve**, Otis-Bison High School  
Plans to attend FHSU  
Study Criminal Justice



**Chris Roberts**, Dighton High School  
Plans to attend FHSU Tech NC  
Study Information Technology

