

Walnut Creek Extension District

September 2026

Thank You for a great 2026 County Fair Season

A sincere "Thank You" to all community members who helped support the County Fairs in Lane, Ness and Rush Counties. The fair is planned and organized by a passionate group of individuals who believe there is great value in the "County Fair". It is a place where family, friends and neighbors gather to cheer on the young people in the 4-H program, support agriculture and see the community at its very best.

Thank you to all the fair board members, the fair superintendents, the 4-H volunteers, the supporters of the food and livestock auctions, and the Extension Staff for all the extra hours they spent making the County Fair a great event and a great place to be.

Thank You from the Walnut Creek District staff and all our 4-H families for another great Fair!

Upcoming Events

September

- 1-4 - 4-H members - Bring State Fair Exhibits to the Extension Office
- 2 - Kristen program at Dighton Joy Center - Health Insurance Smarts
- 7 - Office closed for Labor Day
- 7 - 4-H Record Book Workshop - Dighton - 5-7 pm
- 9 - Horticulture and Foods State Fair exhibits DUE to the Ext. Office
- 11- 20 - Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson
- 14 - Rush County 4-H Community Leaders meeting
- 15 - 4-H Record Book Workshop - Ness City - 5-7 pm
- 16 - Kristen program at Ransom Sr. Center - Health Insurance Smarts
- 17 - Kristen program at Ness Leisure Years - Metabolism and You
- 17 - Kristen program at Wheatview Apts - Health Insurance Smarts
- 23 - 4-H Record Book Workshop - La Crosse - 5 -7 pm
- 24 - Beef Stocker Day - Manhattan

October

- 17 - Rush Co 4-H Achievement Program
- 18 - Ness County 4-H Achievement Program
- TBD - Walnut Creek District Family Comm. Wellness Mystery Tour

November

- 1 - Lane County 4-H Achievement Program
- 3-5 - 66th Annual Ag Tour to Lincoln Nebraska

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

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.



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

September is a Good Time to Overseed Cool-Season Lawns

Kansas summers can be tough on cool-season grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. High temperatures and limited rainfall often leave lawns thin and stressed by late summer. September is a good time to overseed and help rejuvenate those areas.

Before overseeding, mow the lawn to 1–1½ inches and remove the clippings. This improves seed-to-soil contact and allows more light to reach new seedlings.

Check the lawn's thatch layer as well. Ideally, it should be ¼ inch or less. A power rake can help reduce thatch between ¼ and ¾ inch. If thatch is ¾ inch or thicker, starting over with a new lawn may be the better option.

For small areas, use a hand rake to roughen the soil. Larger areas can be prepared with a verticutter, slit seeder or core aerator. A slit seeder generally provides the best seed-to-soil contact, while core aeration can be helpful when soil is compacted or watering is difficult.

Pruning Trees and Shrubs: Timing is Everything

As spring approaches, many homeowners are ready to begin yard work, but knowing when to prune is just as important as knowing how.

For **deciduous shrubs**, pruning depends on when they bloom. Shrubs such as Rose of Sharon that bloom on new growth should be pruned in early spring before new growth begins. Spring-flowering shrubs such as lilac and forsythia should be pruned about four to six weeks after they finish blooming.

Deciduous trees are generally best pruned in late winter or early spring, before the buds break. This makes it easier to see the tree's structure and remove unwanted branches. Dead, broken or hazardous limbs can be removed anytime.

Evergreens vary by species. Junipers, yews and boxwoods are generally pruned in spring, while spruce and pine should be pruned after their new spring growth develops.

Proper pruning at the right time helps maintain plant health, encourage healthy growth and preserve flowers. Before making cuts, identify the plant and determine the best pruning time for that species.

From Summer to Winter: Kansas Weather Changes Quickly

Kansas weather can change dramatically from the beginning to the end of the fall semester. Average temperatures across the state drop 40–45 degrees from August to December, with rain in August often becoming snow by December.

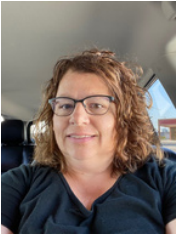
In August, average high temperatures range from the upper 80s to low 90s. By October, statewide highs average around 70 degrees, with morning temperatures dropping into the 30s and 40s.

By December, daytime highs typically average in the 40s, while overnight temperatures are below freezing statewide. Western Kansas can see average lows in the teens to around 20 degrees.

The first frost also arrives earlier in western Kansas. Goodland has a 64% chance of seeing its first frost by October 1. By mid-October, most of Kansas has an 80% or greater chance of experiencing its first frost.

Snowfall increases as winter approaches, with western Kansas generally receiving more snow than eastern parts of the state. Goodland averages 10.7 inches of snowfall from late August through December, compared with 6 inches in Dodge City and 5 inches in Hays.

For historical Kansas weather information, visit the Kansas Mesonet at mesonet.k-state.edu.



Robyn R. Trussel
4-H Youth Development Agent
rdeines@ksu.edu
Cell: 785-798-5020



The NEW 4-H Year Starts October 1st

The theme of "Next is Now" as the New Year theme for Kansas 4-H for the 2026- 2027 4-H year. What will we accomplish in the NEXT year? What is your NEXT goal? Who will be our NEXT outstanding leader? What volunteer will step up NEXT to help us grow? These are all questions that come to mind when I look at this theme. So as we prepare to kick-off the NEW 4-H Year, October 1st. How will you help us take that NEXT step to grow the Walnut Creek District 4-H program? If you have ideas or suggestions on what we should do NEXT, please contact me so we can work with our communities and help our youth continue to GROW.



Sending your kids to school with Kindness, Respect and Understanding



A thank you note, and even a shiny, red apple, are nice, but what our school teachers need from you and your child are kindness, respect and understanding. Supporting teaches show your appreciation for what they are doing to help your child grow and learn.

Parents should see their role as being supportive, compared to teachers as the primary educators at school. We want to make sure that we honor the teachers' roles and not step on their toes, but we also want our children to fully understand the value that we place on forming solid relationships with trusted adults in their lives. When we give respect to the teachers in our children's lives, children start to understand how much they do for them. This is especially important when there are disagreements or issues that need to be addressed in the classroom.

Showing kindness, respect and understanding are building a community of learning that will likely make a positive difference in children's lives.

Back To School Routines

To help ease back-to-school butterflies, try to ease kids into a consistent school-night routine. Also make sure that they:

- get enough sleep, set a reasonable bedtime so that they'll be rested and ready to learn in the morning
- eat a healthy breakfast, they're more alert and do better in school if they eat a good breakfast every day
- write down the need-to-know info to help them remember details such as their locker combination, what time classes and lunch start and end, their homeroom and classroom numbers, teachers' and bus drivers' names, just to name a few.
- use a wall calendar or personal planner to record when assignments are due, tests will be given, extracurricular practices and rehearsals will be held, this will help them plan ahead.
- have them organize and set out what they need the night before, homework and books should be put in their backpacks by the door and clothes should be laid out in their bedrooms.

September is National Food Safety Education Month!

This month take an active role in preventing foodborne illness. The Federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually – that's about 1 in 6 Americans each year. Each year, these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Following simple food safety tips can help lower your chance of getting sick.



Kristen Schmidt
Family and
Community
Wellness
kbschmidt@ksu.edu

CLEAN

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten
- With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening

SEPARATE

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags, and refrigerator
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs unless the plate has been washed in hot, soapy water

COOK

- Color and texture are unreliable indicators of safety. Using a food thermometer and cooking to a safe minimum temperature is the only way to ensure the safety of meal, poultry, seafood, and egg products
- Bring Sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating
- When cooking in a microwave, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking.

CHILL

- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator
- Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the counter top. The three safe ways to defrost food are in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing or within 1 hour if the temperature outside is about 90 degrees F

Hauling Water

We have endured one of the hottest July's on record, and so far August is just as bad and what rain we have received in Rush Co. is spotty at best, so if you are going to start hauling water, and don't have a tank that is solely designated for water, then please use caution.

A common practice is to hook onto the nurse trailer and go fill the tank for the cows, but make sure the pump, hoses, and tank sumps are cleaned out and drained. Concentrated doses of fertilizer pumped into stock tanks is a recipe for disaster and it has already happened a couple times in Western KS. Plastic will absorb some liquid, especially if its aged or brittle from prolonged sun exposure, so there is always risk, but a simple rinse and drain can reduce or dilute the exposure greatly.



Jared Petersilie
Agriculture Agent
jaredp11@ksu.edu

Creep Feeding vs. Early Weaning

We currently have nearly two different worlds within the 100 miles of the Walnut Creek District and its not what we would usually expect. Plenty of rain in the west and lacking rain in the east. So, depending on your specific situation, you may or may not have enough grass to finish the season. Either way, the calf prices are still strong and the price per lb would dictate that creep feeding can be cost effective. BUTTTTT, which do you choose?

Resources for both creep feeding and early weaning can be found readily in many places, one is the podcast recorded on August 7th by the Beef Cattle Institute at K-State University. Regardless of information source, the decision boils down to a few key points.

If you have calves born in January and February, they're old enough to wean and the creep can be better suited to feeding in a controlled environment. Calves can be fed what they need, when they need it once weaned. This will also be the best method to save grass for the cows. The calves will consume roughly 2% of their body weight or about 10 lbs on a 500 lb calf per day. The cow will also reduce their intake by roughly 25% once the calf is removed.

On the other hand, if you have calves that are born April/May, they could be weaned, but they will require a little more management and feed quality to maintain adequate gains. Creep feeding can look many different ways, not just the feeder full of pellets and a creep gate that keeps the cows out. With fall calves later this year, it might be 'creep grazing' on wheat or triticale or it might be cattle panels around a feed bunk. Creep feeding will not reduce milk consumption, so it will not help the condition of the cows or the cow's dry matter intake. It can offset some of the intake for the calves, but much like the analogy given in the podcast, these calves will act like teenagers raiding the fridge after school. They simply increase consumption and that should increase gain simultaneously. If the value of the gain is greater than the value of the feed, then creep feeding works.

We cannot accurately measure the amount of grass the calves are consuming, but we can compare calves with creep to those without and form a basis for the extra gain. As the grass quality reduces, the quality of creep will offset the calves needs and keep them growing. There are some additional benefits towards creep feeding as it pertains to weaning if the calves on the same feeding regime to reduce stress or if bull calves are being developed, but saving grass by creep feeding is marginal.

One aspect that we don't always consider is that of feed lost from a creep feeder, if the ground is clean, we would assume 'no loss,' but as one expert asserts "has anyone weighed the raccoons?" When feed such as creep pellets are readily available, wildlife will tend to indulge as well and that feed loss is not easy to compute.

As always, any effort to vaccinate calves before weaning will be rewarded, either at the time they are marketed or reduced sickness in calves following weaning. If calves are ran thru the chute, don't overlook fly control measures.

66th Annual Walnut Creek District AG Tour Lincoln, Nebraska November 3-5, 2026

Lincoln is the capital city of Nebraska, so we plan to visit another state capitol to add to the list of those visited on previous Ag Tours. It is also home to the University of Nebraska which houses the only Tractor Test Lab in the US. Lincoln is also home to the International Quilt Museum.

A chartered bus and the hotel have been booked. We will stay near the Haymarket District which is UNL's "Aggieville" and breakfast will be included. Tour participants will pay a one time fee to cover most of the known expenses (bus, lodging, meals and admission fees). The estimated cost is \$500 per participant (single occupancy) and \$400 per person for double occupancy. As more tours are booked, the final cost will be determined. IF you would like additional information (registration form, etc.), please email Jared at jaredp11@ksu.edu or call 785-222-2710

