

# December 2023

### Holton Office

114 W 5th St.  
Holton, KS 66436-1778  
785-364-4125

### Oskaloosa Office

P.O. Box 326  
100 E Washington  
Oskaloosa, KS 66066-0326  
785-863-2212

### Seneca Office

1615 Branch St.  
Seneca, KS 66538-1504  
785-336-2184

### District Office Hours:

#### Open Monday-Friday

8:00 AM-Noon; 12:30-4:30  
PM

**Closed for designated  
holidays**

### Newest Employees to District

#### Office Professional



I would like to introduce myself, my name is Michelle Pentlin. I am the new Office Professional for the Meadowlark District, Oskaloosa Office. I was born and raised in Jefferson County, graduating from Oskaloosa High School. My parents are Joan (Heston) Pentlin and the late George Pentlin. I have 1 child, Brandon, who was also raised in Jefferson County and a Oskaloosa High School graduate.

I am blessed to be from a big family, the Heston's. I grew up being involved on my grandpa's farm just west of Oskaloosa, some may know it as Hestonville. My grandpa was a dairy farmer and raised swine. I was a member of the Fairview 4-H Club, which my mom and her siblings had also been members. The influence of my mom and her brothers and sisters allowed my 2 younger sisters and I to be very active in 4-H.

I previously worked for Oskaloosa Public Schools as the Administrative Assistant for the Superintendent and before that with the Jefferson County Courthouse in the Treasurer's Office and the Appraiser's Office.

I am exciting to be working in the extension office and be involved in the 4-H program. I didn't realize that starting the job in June was going to be such a hectic time, but this full exposure to the fair was a good experience to prepare me for what the position entails. I am glad to say that I have one 4-H Fair and an Achievement Banquet under my belt with many more to come. I am looking forward to what ever else this job has in store for me.

#### 4-H Events Coordinator



Heather Roenne began employment as the Jefferson County 4-H Events Coordinator on November 20. She has been a long-time 4-H advocate and has been involved with the Meadowlark District for many years.

Roenne earned a bachelor's degree in Education from Kansas State University and has taught in the school system for twenty years. Her most recent employment was at Jefferson West High School where she taught English and advised the Student Council. Her ability to create positive relationships with students will be an asset. Roenne brings her teaching experience, organizing skills, and delight in learning with her to the Meadowlark District.

She resides outside of Meriden with her husband, Jason. Her four children have all aged out of the Meadowlark 4-H program, so she understands the concerns, challenges, and successes that parents feel. Roenne has also served as a project leader, project volunteer, and fair superintendent. Roenne also currently serves on the 4-H Foundation. She is excited to help make all of the good that is going on in 4-H visible to the communities because it is in collaboration that good things become great.

### K-State Community Visit

K-State will visit Jackson County and Holton are February 6 and 7. Location and more details to follow. The visit includes activities for K-State leaders and students to engage with, listen to and learn from Kansans in this region. Read more about the initiative at <https://www.k-state.edu/president/initiatives/regional-community-visits/>. Follow the link to full schedule to learn more at [www.k-state.edu/jackson-county](http://www.k-state.edu/jackson-county).





David Hallauer, Extension Agent

## 811

If winter repairs to terraces/ waterways/irrigation structures/ etc... are on your winter to-do list, make sure a call to 811 is on your agenda in advance of starting work. 811 is the national call-before-you-dig number to request marking of buried utilities to avoid unintentional damage that can result from excavation activities. It's even a good idea to call 811 (or visit <https://call811.com/> and scroll down the page to find the Kansas contact information) prior to planting trees or doing deep field-work as well.

Most locations can be done in a fairly short time, but provide plenty of lead time when possible. A little extra effort on the front end can reduce the chances for unintended damage – or even human injury – if the exact location of underground utilities aren't explored first.

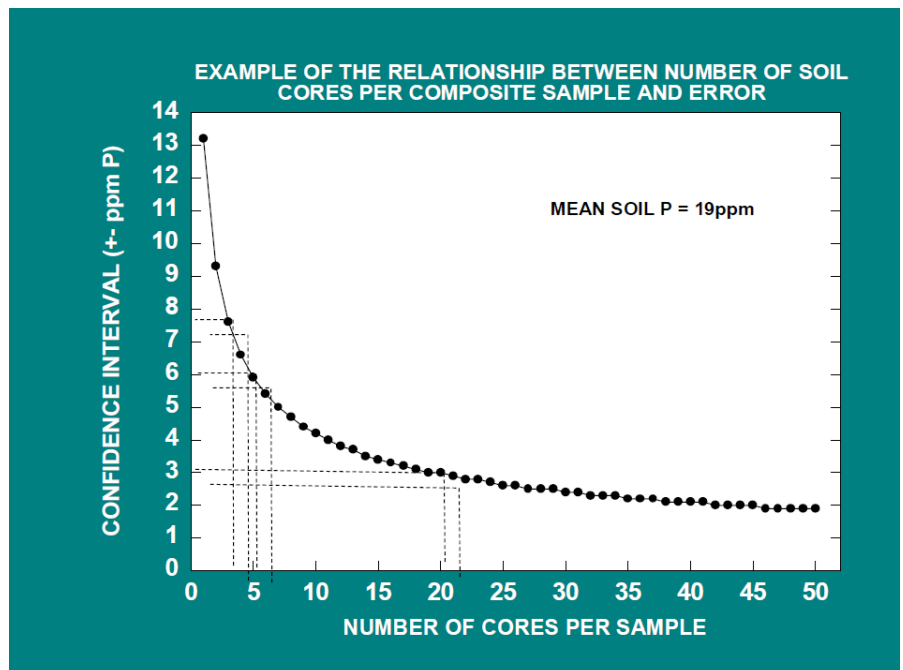
## 2024 KSU Corn/Soybean School

The annual K-State Corn and Soybean schools are back, but with a twist. In collaboration with Kansas Corn and the Kansas Soybean Association, this year's schools will be combined to form a full day program hitting topics on both crops. Four locations will be held across Kansas, with the NEK meeting to be held Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the John Deere Ag Marketing Center in Olathe. More information will be out soon.

## Soil Testing Forage Stands

If you haven't soil tested your forage stand yet, it's not too late. Moisture just prior to Thanksgiving hopefully made sampling a little easier, and the data gleaned from sampling can go a long ways towards increasing the profitability of our forage stands. The following are a few general recommendations:

- Test every three to four years –more frequently if fertilizer prices dictate more fined tuned management. No matter the interval, track results to get an evaluation of your application program.
- Sampling depth IS important. For best results, collect samples from the surface to a depth of six inches. Keep depth consistent. A soil probe is typically your best bet, but a shovel/spade can be used as well. If you want to check out a soil probe, contact any District Office for availability.



- Collect plenty of cores. A good sample consists of 15-20 cores per subsample pulled at random across the sampling area. Sampling zones can include areas previously managed differently, different soil types, or different production areas, but should be limited to 40 acres in size or smaller whenever possible.
- The K-State Soil Testing Lab and many other accredited labs will provide both test results and recommendations based on the crop being fertilized, production, etc... The results you get from different labs will likely be minimal, while the recommendation differences can be significant. Drop me a line if you want to know more about interpreting soil test results.

Interested in setting up a more intense soil testing program – or starting with a program altogether, e-mail me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu) or contact me at any Meadowlark Extension District Office to discuss options to determine which sampling process might be best for you.



Teresa Hatfield, *Extension Agent*

### Helping Caregivers Care for Themselves

Rosalyn Carter said, “There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.”

Family caregivers experience significant stress due to caregiving’s emotional and physical challenges. Caregivers have higher levels of stress than people who are not caregivers. They often report that it is challenging to take care of themselves. Many caregivers report a lack of sleep, poor eating habits, and lack of exercise. They also say that they often provide care when they are sick. They are at a greater risk of depression and a greater risk to abuse alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. These are just a few risk factors faced by caregivers.

Caregivers report facing barriers to self-care. Personal attitudes and beliefs can get in the way of caregivers caring for themselves. Many people believe they are being selfish and that the person they care for is the one that needs care, not themselves. They may feel like they are not a good caregiver if they ask for help or feel they can only care for Dad properly. However, caregivers who fail to care for themselves set themselves up for becoming ill and unable to care for the person they are trying to help.

It is essential to recognize the early signs warning signs of stress. For instance, you may feel frustrated and angry one minute and helpless the next. You may make mistakes when dosing medications or turn to unhealthy behaviors like drinking too much alcohol or smoking. We are all different, so it is vital to know your stress symptoms and take care of them before they become a health issue.

To manage your stress, consider what kind of stress is affecting you. If your stress is physical, like high blood pressure, digestive problems, headaches, or pacing, try physical relaxation activities like walking, swimming, gardening, or a massage. Or suppose your stress is mental, like worrying or having difficulty concentrating. Try mental relaxation, like listening to soothing music or reading for pleasure. You may need to use a combination of physical and mental relaxation techniques. Remember, there are some things you can’t change.



Being a family caregiver can be challenging and rewarding; during the holidays, there is more pressure on the caregiver to maintain and continue family traditions. The holidays can often be a wonderful and joyous time. Still, for many people facing illness or the illness of a loved one, the holidays can be stressful and even depressing.

With the approaching holiday season, don’t be afraid to choose to do less with holiday preparations. Be choosy about which activities to participate in and what decorations to put up. Try to keep things simple. You might ask family and friends to help with a potluck-style meal instead of trying to do everything yourself. Get a prepared meal from a local restaurant or your local grocery store. Encourage friends and family members to visit, but keep the visit brief.

As a caregiver, don’t think that you have to do all the caregiving all the time. Ask for and accept help from others. If someone tells you, “Let me know if you need my help,” give them something to do. You can say, “Yes, can you sit with Dad for a few minutes while I take a brisk walk.” And don’t be so hard on yourself; know that you are doing your best under challenging circumstances.

The Meadowlark Extension District will offer a class for family caregivers starting January 11, 2024, at 1615 Branch, Seneca, KS 66538, at 1:30 p.m. The “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” series will focus on taking care of yourself while caring for others. You become a better caregiver by caring for your own health and well-being. The classes will be held once a week for six weeks and are led by experienced class leaders. Class participants receive The Caregiver Helpbook to accompany the class and provide additional caregiver resources. We will meet for six weeks. Space in the class is limited. For more information, contact Teresa Hatfield at the Meadowlark Extension Office at 785-364-4125 or [thatfield@ksu.edu](mailto:thatfield@ksu.edu).

### Community resources available for caregivers:

- Northeast Area Agency on Aging: 785-742-7152 or 1-800-883-2549 (Jackson and Nemaha Counties)
- Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging: 785-235-1367 or 1-800-798-1366
- VA Caregiver Support Line: 855-260-3274



Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

### Crustless Pumpkin Pie

¾ cup sugar  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
2 large eggs  
1 can (15 ounces) 100% pure pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)  
1 can (12 ounces) evaporated fat-free milk  
Reduced-fat whipped topping, optional

1. Spray 9-inch round glass pie dish with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Mix sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves in small bowl.
3. Beat eggs in large mixing bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture.
4. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate. Top with whipped topping, if desired.

Makes 8 servings

#### Nutrition Facts

**(1/8 of recipe without topping):**

calories—140; saturated fat—0 g;  
fat—1.5 g.; cholesterol—55g;  
sodium—210 mg; carbohydrate—29 g;  
fiber—2g; sugar—26 g; protein—6 g.

Source:  
K-State  
Research  
and  
Extension  
Focus on  
the 'Stars'



### Mindfulness Tips during the Holidays

The holiday season can be stressful for many people. There are several activities people try to manage. There are several mindfulness strategies that can help reduce stress and allow you to experience a calmer holiday season.

- **Practice active listening**—It can be easy to tune out all the holiday hustle and bustle. By minimizing distractions, you may be surprised how much more you observe and hear which can be very rewarding.
- **Be open to the emotions of others**—Consider the feelings of others around you during the holiday season. You can increase your ability to connect by being observant and receptive to them
- **Be open to a range of emotions in yourself**—Unfortunately, the holiday season can trigger a mixture of emotions that are not always joyful. Consider allowing yourself space and recognize these feelings you may experience instead of seeking to lose them.
- **Let go of old habits or patterns that might be holding you back**—There are many traditions and memories that the holidays bring; however, sometimes, old patterns can disseminate negativity. Be mindful of patterns that are bothersome. Allow yourself to be open to new experiences.
- **Expand how you communicate care**—Many cultures practice gift-giving during the holidays; however, there are many additional ways to show you care. Before making a purchase, consider asking yourself what you are trying to communicate through the gift. There may be alternative ways to express your feelings or care like spending quality time or doing something nice for them.
- **Let go of judgment—both for yourself and others**—Try to avoid conflict with others during the holiday season. This can lead to judgment and self-esteem issues. Take a step back and enjoy even the little things.
- **Balance the “shoulds” with awareness of your own needs and practice self-compassion**—Although, the holidays can bring many obligations, try to make time for yourself to avoid burnout and bitterness. Engage in fun and relaxing activities.

### Gifts to Help Youth Be Active

What gift do most kids have on their wish list? Probably some type of technology---from smartphones/tablets, to the latest video game. Before purchasing a gift that promotes more time in front of a screen, consider some options (balls, flying discs, scooters, bikes, riding toys, roller blades/skates, kites, sand box toys, fishing poles, hula hoops) that help kids/families active.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), overuse of digital media and screens may place children and teens at increased risk of obesity; sleep problems; negatively affect school performance.

- **Children younger than 18 months:** With the exception of video-chatting, use of screen media should be discouraged.
- **Children ages 2 to 5:** Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should watch media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- **For children ages 6 and older:** Parents should place consistent limits on time spend and types of media used. Make sure media does not take the place of sleep, physical activity and other behaviors needed for good health.

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Family Fun on the Run Newsletter

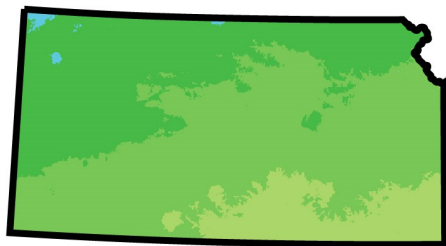


Laura Phillips, *Extension Agent*

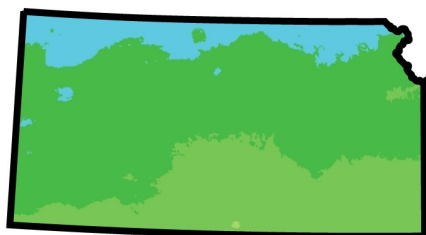
## The USDA Unveils a New Plant Hardiness Zone Map

When you start planning what to put in your garden or lawn, one of your main tools is the U.S. Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM) created by the USDA. A major factor in whether or not a plant can survive in a location is if the plant can endure the coldest parts of the winter. That is where the PHZM comes into play.

The PHZM labels every area in the U.S. on a scale of 1 to 13, with each zone broken into half zones, designated by “a” and “b” (e.g., 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and so on). These zones correspond to the lowest temperature you can expect in that area. For example, you can expect that the coldest weather you will see in zones marked 6a will be between -5° and -10°F. They base these zones on 30 year-averages of the lowest annual winter temperatures, with 1a resembling the warmest, and 13b the coolest. Every time you buy a plant or seed packet, odds are there is a label that tells you which zones it does best in. These maps save us a lot of headaches when it comes time to select plants for our gardens and landscapes.



2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Map of Kansas

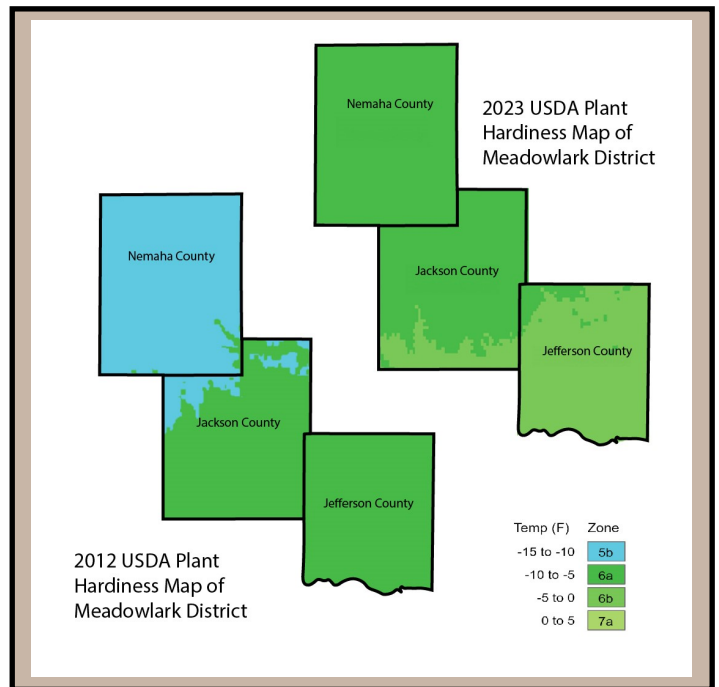


2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Map of Kansas

Temp (F)	Zone
-15 to -10	5b
-10 to -5	6a
-5 to 0	6b
0 to 5	7a

The PHZM has always been an evolving project. The first plant hardiness maps for the US came from the Arnold Arboretum in the 1920’s, and researchers at the Arboretum published a few updates over the following decades. Then, in the 1960’s, the USDA published their first PHZM, and have continued to update it as more detailed information became available. The USDA published an update in 2012, which has been our standard map for the last 11 years.

On November 15, however, the USDA released a new version of the PHZM. Significantly, the USDA notes that this new map incorporates a larger amount of data: “the 2023 map incorporates data from 13,412 weather stations compared to the 7,983 that were used for the 2012 map.” The new data set has shifted the hardiness zones across most of the U.S to a warmer zone, often by half a zone. Nemaha County moved from zone 5b to 6a. Jackson County, which used to be primarily zone 6a, is now split, with the northern portion in zone 6a and the southern half in 6b. Jefferson County, which was zone 6a, is now almost all 6b, with the northeastern portion remaining in 6a.



As you sit down to plan out next year’s garden or landscape improvements, take into consideration the shift in your Plant Hardiness Zone. The updated map can be found on <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>, and, as with the last map, is interactive so you can zoom into your state and county for greater detail. If you have questions on what will grow in your zone, do not hesitate to reach out to your local extension office for more guidance!



Ross Mosteller, *Extension Agent*

### Winterkill in Ponds

Winterkill refers to the loss of fish in winter because oxygen is lacking in the pond. Submerged vegetation and algae create oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. During the winter, oxygen production is often reduced because ice and snow on waterbodies limit sunlight reaching vegetation. In small, shallow lakes, the available oxygen can quickly be used up by live plants and fish that consume oxygen, and by bacteria that feed on dead and decaying vegetation. When the oxygen level declines, fish can begin to suffocate.

Oxygen enters ponds by moving from the air into the water aided by the wind, or from photosynthesis by the plants in the pond. Ice cover blocks oxygen movement from the air into the water, and oxygen produced by algae and plants become the only source. When ice cover continues into late winter and thickens, or worse yet, is covered by snow, problems develop. Sunlight reaching the plants and algae is reduced, as is the amount of oxygen produced. Since metabolism and decomposition continue, oxygen levels begin to drop.

The more water volume there is in a pond, the less likely the pond will experience winterkill. The amount of decaying organic matter on the bottom of the pond is critical. A pond bottom covered with leaves and dead pond plants is more likely to experience winterkill than a pond without such materials. Ponds with a very dense aquatic plant community in summer are most susceptible to winterkill during harsh winters.

So, what can be done? Aeration adds oxygen to the water directly via the bubbles and agitation, as well as creates open areas that allow for the diffusion of oxygen into the pond from the air. The aeration system does not need to run continuously all winter, but rather turn it on when ice is forming on the pond. Leave it off when the pond is ice-free. Obviously, this system needs to be in place before winter, which might pose a problem today! Another more manageable strategy is to keep water open or if iced over, about 30% of the ice-free of extended snow cover to maintain enough light to allow sufficient photosynthesis to occur. Be sure that the ice is safe for the snow removal.

### Winter Cow Cost Savings

Recently it was presented that ranchers are not just in the beef business, protein business, grass business or any other business besides the dollars per day business. This is especially true in discussions on winter feeding cost, which tends to be the majority of annual cow cost. Here are some ideas on reducing expenses in the fall and winter months.

- Have enough standing forage to keep the cows out grazing as long as possible, paired with a small amount of high-protein supplement.
- Split the cowherd into groups based on body condition score (BCS). Anything in thin to borderline condition (under BCS 5) should be fed more, separately to avoid problems later.
- Balance rations to be "best-cost" rations realizing that they may not be least-cost rations. Know the differences in the nutrient requirements for different classes of livestock.
- Rent or utilize dormant, stockpiled pasture or crop residues when needing some low-cost winter grazing.
- Conduct a forage analysis of hay supplies well in advance of winter feeding. At minimum learn how much energy and protein is available. With reduced water supplies, this is a good year to do a water analysis to check for detrimental antagonists like nitrates or sulfates too.
- Know the weight of your cows using a scale to better predict intake. Research shows that the average cattlemen underestimates the average cow weight by up to 200 lbs.
- Minimize feed waste. Research shows that the method of feeding hay can have a dramatic influence on hay waste. Partition the hay out in smaller packages on a daily or alternate-day basis. This practice has been shown to produce less waste than providing free-choice consumption by feeding once weekly. Other trials prove that a cow will eat her daily requirement in four hours. Feeding more forage than she can consume in four hours has been shown to be wasteful.

Nutrition and health programs depend on each other. When developing a year-round nutrition program, the local veterinarian to be a part of the management team to cover all the bases. This includes vaccinations, parasite control, biosecurity measures and recordkeeping. Cattle performance will suffer if either the nutrition or health program is deficient. Not providing an adequate amount of any nutrient -- water, energy, protein, vitamins and minerals -- may result in compromised immune function, reduced conception rates and lighter calves.

**Meadowlark Extension District**

114 W 5th St.  
Holton, KS 66436

Address Service Requested

## Publications & Resources For Sale

**Family Account Book**  
**Farm Account Book**  
**Radon Kits**  
**Predator Calls**  
**IMR Calving Books**  
**Pesticide Manuals**  
**Geo Textile Fabric** (12 1/2' wide-sold per linear ft.)  
**Neutroleum Alpha®**  
**Mosquito Briquets**  
**Soil Tests - Crop, Pasture, Lawn & Garden**  
**Water Test Kits** (pay SDK Labs, not us)  
**Field Record Books** (free)

## Items to Check Out

**Soil & Hay Probes**  
**Ear Taggers**  
**Mole Trap**  
**Freeze Branding Irons**  
**Pesticide Manuals**  
**Buzzers**

<https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/>

K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact the Holton office at 785-364-4125, the Oskaloosa office at 785-863-2212, or the Seneca office at 785-336-2184.

## Upcoming Events

**January 10:** "Matter of Balance" series, Meriden  
**January 11:** Calving School, Holton  
"Powerful Tools for Caregivers", Seneca  
**February:** Heifer Development Meeting, Seneca  
**February 6 & 7:** K-State Community Visit, Jackson County



Meadowlark Extension District Offices will be closed:

- **December 25 & 26** for Christmas
- **December 27-29** for winter break
- **January 1** for New Years Day
- **January 15** for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

We will reopen at 8:00 AM:

Tuesday, **January 2, 2024**

Tuesday, **January 16.**

*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!*