

# March 2024

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### District Office Hours:

#### Open Monday-Friday

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

**Closed for designated  
holidays**

## 4-H Youth Development



### Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Now that January and February are in the rearview mirror, we are starting to settle into 2024. If you are anything like me, you probably set some New Year's resolutions. Surprisingly, by this time of year, nearly 80% of New Year's resolutions have been given up according to a U.S News and World Report article.

A great way to stick with your New Year's resolutions would be setting goals. Setting goals is an important aspect of success, and how we can measure success. It can help guide focus and help trigger new behaviors. Ultimately, they help manage your focus and success.

Additionally, we use these same principles in 4-H. All these principles are applied while completing their projects whether they know it or not! They typically recognize that they had developed S.M.A.R.T. goals (without putting pen to paper) when they begin to work on their record books.

Goals need to be **S.M.A.R.T.** which stands for:

- **Specific** – This is where you should be thinking about what you want to accomplish. This is where you would have to ask yourself the “W” questions; **who** is involved, **what** are you accomplishing, **where** is this, **when** will this be done and **why** are you doing this?
- **Measurable** – What are you measuring to determine if you have met the goal? This will help make more quantifiable and provides a way to determine the progress of your goal.
- **Achievable** – This will focus on the importance of the goal. Additionally, you should think about how to accomplish the goal and if you have the skills and tools to accomplish the goal.
- **Relevant** – This should be focused around what makes sense for the broader picture at hand.
- **Time-bound** – A target finish date should be set for your S.M.A.R.T. goal. Additionally, you should have other check-in dates as well to ensure that you are on track to achieve your goal.

Here are two examples of S.M.A.R.T. goals that I pulled from 4-h.org:

1. Learn how to use my DSLR camera by completing the photography 4-H project and enrolling in the Clover County Library's basic photography class this June.
2. Apply to be a 4-H Camp Counselor for this summer and complete all required training by **June 1st**.

I encourage you and your family to sit down and reflect on what you want to accomplish in the short, intermediate, and long term. Next, I encourage you to think about the future and develop S.M.A.R.T. goals to track your success! All of this is saying, if you need help sticking to your New Year's resolutions, map out some goals with the help of a 4-H'er!



David Key, *Extension Agent/Director*

## What makes newcomers feel at home?

In small towns and rural communities, new folks can bring big changes that matter a lot. When people move to different states or areas, they have all sorts of reasons for choosing those locations. Understanding these reasons is key to knowing how newcomers help places grow.



Newcomers aren't just a face in the crowd—they're the ones who often bring new energy and ideas to small towns. Experts have studied this and they have seen that when fresh faces show

up it can be like a breath of fresh air for communities. You might wonder why someone chooses to move to a specific town or state. Some come for jobs or better work opportunities. Others might move for the beautiful landscapes or a slower pace of life. Some pick a place because of family ties or friends already living there. Understanding these reasons helps communities see what makes them attractive to new folks.

When newcomers arrive, they are like a boost for small towns, they often bring new skills, different perspectives and lots of enthusiasm. They bring a bit of their own spice to the mix, making things more interesting. And it's not just about them moving in; it's about what they do when they get there.

Some newcomers dive right in—they join clubs, volunteer, start businesses and get involved in making decisions for their community. They bring fresh ideas, help businesses grow and make the place feel more connected; others may need a bit more of a "pull" from others in the community to come out of their shell.

Understanding what makes newcomers feel at home is critically important. When communities know what's important to these new residents, they can relieve a bit of the mystery surrounding them. Maybe it's about creating more job opportunities, inventing fun events, improving schools. Knowing these things helps make the place more welcoming and helps keep these new faces around.

Here are few ways your community can become a more welcoming one:

- **Start by listening.** Both newcomers and longtime residents can feel alienated by change and unwelcome in their community.
- **Create "Do It Together" opportunities.** Bring residents together through common projects. It's an opportunity to bring people together through the arts, sports, volunteering, or myriad other ways that provide a chance for neighbors to find common ground.
- **Build a community-wide Welcoming agenda.** Communities can create their own welcoming plan and bring together different sectors—government, business, community, faith, etc.

Remember, when new people come in, they bring fresh perspectives and ideas. And when they feel welcomed and understood, they stick about and help make things better for everyone.

## Grant Writing Basics

### Online Workshop

Grants are a vital piece in your community's funding... and you can do it.

**Join Us March 25 & 27, 2024**

**1:30 - 4:30pm**

**Cost: \$60**

**Register Today**

<https://ksre-learn.com/grant-writing-basics>

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

What you will learn:

- To conquer your fears and start writing.
- Sources of data for community needs.
- Where to find grants.
- How to develop the grant elements: problem, outcomes, activities, evaluation and budget.

Contact David Key at 785-336-2184 or [dkey@ksu.edu](mailto:dkey@ksu.edu) with any questions.



David Hallauer, Extension Agent

## ARC/PLC Decisions – 2024/2025 Marketing Year

**March 15<sup>th</sup>** is the deadline to choose between Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) for the 2024 harvested crop (payments made in late 2025). If you're still evaluating elections, check out this great reference as a starter read about the programs at <https://www.agmanager.info/arc-and-plc-selections-2024>. Additional information can be found on the KSU Ag Economics Farm Policy webpage at <https://www.agmanager.info/ag-policy/2018-farm-bill>.

## Alfalfa Weevil Growing Degree Days

Alfalfa weevils develop based on growing degree days (GDDs), and as warm as this winter has been, it's no surprise we're ahead on GDDs for this season. In fact, according to the Kansas Mesonet alfalfa weevil GDD tool at <https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/degreedays/>, we're almost 150 GDDs ahead or normal – and that means it's time to start scouting. Scouting can be tricky when weevils are small, so be persistent. For scouting tips, contact me via any District Office. You can also find tips in our KSU Alfalfa Weevils publication available at any District Office or: [https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/degreedays/MF2999\\_alfalfaweevil.pdf](https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/degreedays/MF2999_alfalfaweevil.pdf).

## Nutrient Value of Manure

In another article in this newsletter, District Livestock Agent, Ross Mosteller, discusses manure application best management practices. Manure product nutrient content will be our focus here.

The chart below from KSU's MF2562, Estimating Manure Nutrient Availability (<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2562.pdf>), provides estimated values of common manure products. There is a lot of variability associated with the nutrient value of manure products and manure testing is recommended to fine tune values used for application calculations, but it can give you a starting point. Additional work in poultry manure in SE Kansas values further based on the type of bird the litter comes from. Those values can be found in the KSU Agronomy eUpdate at: [https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article\\_new/calculating-the-value-of-poultry-litter-and-proper-storage-considerations-575-1](https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article_new/calculating-the-value-of-poultry-litter-and-proper-storage-considerations-575-1).

Just knowing a nutrient value isn't the only thing you'll need to determine an application rate. Availability in the year of application versus in the future is a huge factor in manure applications. Nitrogen and Phosphorous can vary greatly based on source and soil test value. The aforementioned references can help sort through those numbers as well.

Table 2. Representative Analysis Of Several Manure Systems – Animal Types<sup>1</sup>

|         | Bedding Or Litter | % Dry Matter | Solid Manure Analysis (as received /wet sample analysis) |  |                                     |                        |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
|         |                   |              | Total N  | NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> -N<br>Lbs / ton | Total P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> | Total K <sub>2</sub> O |
| Dairy   | No                | 18           | 9  | 4  | 4                                   | 10                     |
| Dairy   | Yes               | 21           | 9  | 5  | 4                                   | 10                     |
| Beef    | No                | 15           | 11   | 4  | 7                                   | 10                     |
| Beef    | Yes               | 50           | 21   | 8  | 18                                  | 26                     |
| Swine   | No                | 18           | 10   | 6  | 9                                   | 8                      |
| Swine   | Yes               | 18           | 8  | 5  | 7                                   | 7                      |
| Poultry | No                | 45           | 33   | 26   | 48                                  | 34                     |
| Poultry | Yes               | 75           | 56   | 36   | 45                                  | 34                     |
| Turkey  | No                | 22           | 27   | 17   | 20                                  | 17                     |
| Turkey  | Yes               | 29           | 20   | 13   | 16                                  | 13                     |

**DID YOU KNOW:** The National Weather Service has declared March 4-8, 2024 as Severe Weather Preparedness Week, encouraging people to practice for real weather emergencies.

It starts with preparedness. We all should have a plan, including such things as just knowing how you get your weather alerts. You may get those from a weather radio or other sources, such as news media. And then, you need to talk with your family. – Chip Redmond, Kansas State University meteorologist and manager of the Kansas Mesonet.

Additional resources can be found at <https://www.weather.gov/top/swaw>.





**Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent**

## Managing Caregiver Stress

"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 caregivers." Rosalyn Carter

In our busy daily lives, we often overlook family caregivers' impact on our communities. Family caregivers provide unpaid care for those unable to care for themselves. They offer help with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating. They help with medication management and make doctor appointments. They perform household chores, and at the same time, many are running their own households and possibly caring for their own children. There are 43.5 million unpaid caregivers in the United States caring for family and friends. According to AARP, the economic impact of family caregivers in 2022 was 600 billion dollars.

Caregivers often set aside their health and well-being during this time while providing essential care to others. Caregivers often experience sleep loss, a greater risk of depression, and a greater risk of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. They experience poor health from not eating nutritious meals and lacking regular exercise. On an airplane, the flight attendant tells us if we are traveling with young children, first put on our oxygen masks and then help our children. It is the same with caregiving; you must learn to care for yourself to continue effectively caring for others.

Caregivers often find it challenging to take care of themselves. Caregivers often have many reasons for not taking better care of themselves.

- They may feel guilty or that they are being selfish.
- They may feel there is not enough time to practice self-care.
- The person they are caring for needs care, not themselves.
- They think they are not good caregivers if they ask for help or are not living up to their marriage vows.
- Or I'm the only one who can do it right, or they may feel they are burdening others.
- They made promises that were difficult to keep, such as, "I promised Dad I wouldn't put Mom in a nursing home."
- We always take care of our own.



If some of these things sound familiar, ask yourself what is getting in your way. Once you have identified the barrier, you can work to change the situation. It is okay to ask for and accept help from others. Start by listing how others can help out when they volunteer. Maybe someone can pick up a few items from the grocery store, sit with your family member while you take a walk, visit with friends, or sit and read a book. Consider hiring someone to help you relieve the pressure. There are also local agencies that offer services for caregivers, such as local area agencies on aging, the Alzheimer's Association, and organizations that specialize in the care receivers' chronic condition, are some examples.

Another way to ensure you take time for yourself is to set a weekly goal to do something just for you. Make sure you write down your goal as a mini contract with yourself. For example, I will read a novel for 20 min three days a week. Or I will walk for 30 minutes on Saturdays, Mondays, and Wednesdays while the home health nurse visits Mom. Have someone hold you accountable for your plan. If you fail to follow through, tweak your plan next week to fit better. Don't give up; you may need to try several options before you succeed.

The Meadowlark Extension District will conduct a "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" class starting **March 28, 2024**. The classes will meet every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. for six weeks. This educational class series will help family caregivers. The program will help you care for yourself while caring for a relative or friend. Whether you are helping a parent, spouse, child, friend, or someone who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country, you will benefit from this class. Online class includes a Caregiver Help book; topics include hiring in-home help, helping memory-impaired elders, making legal and financial decisions, making decisions about care facility placement, understanding depression, and making driving decisions. For more information about the Powerful Tools for Caregiver's class, please contact Teresa Hatfield at 785-364-4125 or [thatfield@ksu.edu](mailto:thatfield@ksu.edu).



Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

## It is Important to Test Your Pressure Canner

It's not too early to think about getting your pressure gauge tested. Canning season is approaching. Now is the time to evaluate the equipment. One important evaluation is the accuracy of dial gauge pressure of dial gauge pressure canners.

Gauges need to be tested yearly. This can be done at any one of the Meadowlark Extension District Offices. We have offices in Holton, Oskaloosa and Seneca. It is best to call ahead to be sure we can meet your needs on this. To reach the Holton Office call---785-364-4125; Oskaloosa---785-863-2212; and Seneca---785-336-2184. For questions regarding food preservations, contact Cindy at the Oskaloosa Office.

The gauges we can test include: National, Magic Seal, Maid of Honor and Presto. Our testing unit can not be used to on All American canner gauges or any other brand of canners. There is **no charge** for this service. It is important to have it done yearly; when the gauge has been jerked or dropped; you feel something isn't right with it; or you just replaced the gauge.

While you are at the extension office be sure to check out the latest in KSU Extension publications. These are free and many of them have recipes included in the publications. Call soon to get this done before your garden is flourishing with all kinds of fresh produce.

## Filling Your Kid(s) Buckets

The Search Institute has identified Family support as one of the important assets that youth need to become caring, healthy adults. Some children lack adequate support from home, but a caring teacher can be a loving role model and a great encourager. The more love, support and adult contacts of appreciation and affection given is better. Here are some tips to building the characteristic of caring in our youth.

1. Give hugs.
2. Let your love show in the way you look at them, the words you say, the tone of your voice and your body language.
3. When possible, give the child individual attention. Let them know they are important to you.
4. Show an interest in things that are important to them even if it is not your favorite sport or pastime.
5. Be available when kids want to talk.

## What to Keep and What to Throw Away

With the warmer, spring-like weather we have been having is it getting in the mood to do some spring cleaning? You might want to start with getting rid of extra papers. In general, you should hold on to receipts related to tax-deductible expenses or papers dealing with warranties.

- **Throw out now:** Old phone, utility, and supermarket receipts
- **Keep for 1 year:** Canceled checks (except those you need for tax returns), store receipts and credit cards statements (in case you need to return an item, for taxes, or for insurance purposes if an item gets lost or stolen.)
- **Keep for 3 years or longer:** Credit and debit card receipts, loan or mortgage agreements, warranties, insurance policies, tax returns, and year-end transaction statements from investments.
- **Keep and always store separately:** Birth certificates, adoption or naturalization papers, marriage records, divorce decrees and settlements, and college transcripts.

## Shamrock Shake

(Serves 2)

A healthy shake that rocks!!

Ingredients:

1 cup milk

1/2 ripe banana

1 c. lime sherbet

Directions: (Remember to wash your hands!!!)

1. Pour milk into blender.
2. Add banana and lime sherbet.
3. Blend all ingredients until smooth and service.

Helpful Hints: To "blend" is to mix two or more ingredients with a spoon, whisk, electric mixer or blender. If you don't have a blender for this recipe, use a whisk or mash the banana with a fork and shake up the ingredients.

Safety Tip: Store milk in the refrigerator. If it tastes sour, don't drink the rest of it. Sour milk won't make you sick, but it just doesn't taste very good. Check the "sell by" date on the carton of milk. That's the date when the store needs to sell it. Once the carton is open at home, it will only keep fresh about five days.

Source: Kansas Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program, Kids a Cookin'



Laura Phillips, *Extension Agent*

## It is Time to Prune Your Trees

As spring gets closer, one of the most pressing things on our outdoor to-do-list is tree pruning. Late winter and early spring are the best time to prune for a flush of spring growth while causing the least amount of damage to your trees.

Tree pruning can feel intimidating, but by understanding your motives and goals for pruning, it can be an easy and quick task. The biggest goal is to create a safe, strong tree. Most trees should have a strong central leader with large branches coming off 45° to 60° angle. This limits the odds of branches snapping or the tree falling. The early years are the most essential for pruning, as it is difficult to impossible to change the structure of a large tree.

The other reason to prune, is thin out the canopy. Dense branches can prevent light from reaching interior leaves, and you may see increased branch die back. A thick canopy also means that wind cannot flow through the tree. Instead, wind pushes against the tree, which can cause damage and broken branches. Additionally, increased airflow in a canopy helps prevent disease by reducing moisture on the leaves.

To start the pruning process, start by targeting the three D's: dead, damaged, and diseased. Branches that are dead, or are damaged beyond recovery, should be removed. If you see any signs of disease on the branches, like discoloration or irregular growths in the branch, you will likely want to remove those as well.

After that, you will want to target other problem areas. Branches that come off the trunk at a narrow angle will create a weak joint and should be preemptively removed. Branches that overlap and rub against each other are another problem. These branches can hit against each other in the wind and cause damage.

There are a few things to keep in mind while pruning. Although you have a lot to accomplish while pruning, try to limit the number of cuts you make, and selectively take branches that will get you closer to your ideal tree form – which is likely a central leader form. Make sure you take branches from all sides of the tree so that you maintain an even weight distribution.

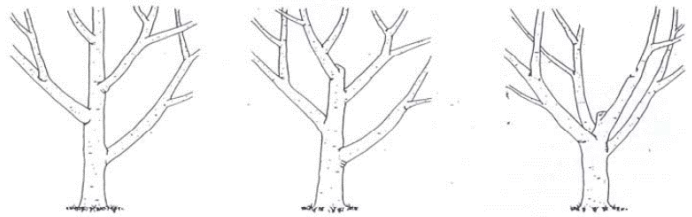
In general, you do not want to remove more than 25% to 30% of your tree's branches at once or you risk damaging your tree. Dead branches that you remove do not count towards this.

Lastly, if you have fruit trees, there are a few more things to keep in mind. When pruning fruit trees, your apples and pears need a central leader form, or a modified central leader form. Stone fruits (like peaches or plums) will do best with an open vase shape (see image). As you prune to the proper shape for your type of fruit tree, look for flower buds. These buds are where fruits will form. If you make cuts that remove all your flower buds, you will not get any fruit. If you leave all the branches, fruit can weigh down the tree and cause significant damage.

Central Leader

Modified Central Leader

Vase or Multiple Leader



Learning to prune trees can be a very visual process. If you are new to pruning, you can find videos and resources available online at <https://kansashealthyyards.org/>, or check out the recording of our Garden Hour Webinar from March 2021 on tree pruning on K-State Research and Extension's YouTube Channel. Lastly, do not forget to reach out to your local extension office for more assistance!

## Act Now to Prevent Fruit Tree Disease

For those of you who have fruit trees, you may also be wondering when to start combating disease and pests. The answer is right now!

- **For peaches and plums**, dormant spraying with fungicide is the only time to control peach leaf curl and plum pockets.
- **For pears and apple**, this is the time to spray dormant oil for scale insects, and bactericide for fire blight (bactericide should NOT be mixed with dormant oil).

To learn more about fruit tree spraying, you can find the K-State publication "Fruit Pest Control for Home Gardens" at [https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/gardening-lawn-care/fruits-vegetables-nuts/Fruit\\_Pest\\_Control\\_for\\_Home\\_Gardens\\_C592.pdf](https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/gardening-lawn-care/fruits-vegetables-nuts/Fruit_Pest_Control_for_Home_Gardens_C592.pdf)



Ross Mosteller, *Extension Agent*

## The Cattle Market Cycle

Recently Dr. Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension Beef Cattle Breeding Specialist, released the following information the phases of the cattle cycle. This seemed a good graphic and timely topic, so including it and giving Dr. Johnson credit for the base work of this article.

The complexity and dynamics of the beef industry can create financial opportunities for cow-calf operations willing to take a business approach to their decision-making process. The cattle cycle is something often referenced, but what

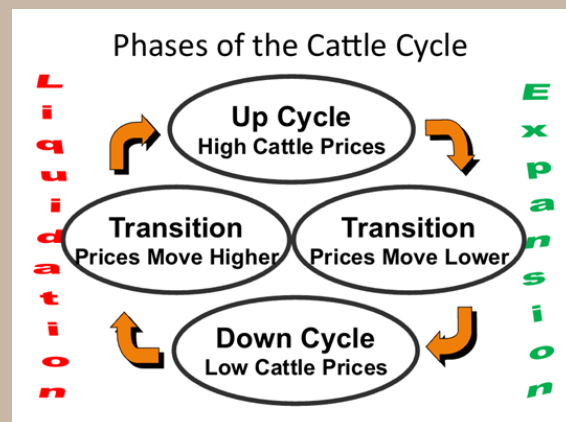
are the parts and how does it look graphically? This cycle is repeated time after time and summarized below:

The cattle cycle reflects the impact that supply and demand have on cattle prices. When cow inventory is low the prices of calves and all age and weight categories of cattle will move higher and vice versa. At the onset of 2024, our national cow inventory is the lowest since the early 1960s and prices of calves, yearlings, fed cattle and cull cows are historically high. High profit potential exists for the cow-calf sector in 2024. But, how long will this last?

This is the question being asked and debated in early 2024. As of now there is little indication of a rising cow inventory in the near future, Why? Several factors are working against it, these include:

- High interest rates
- High numbers of cull cows marketed in 2023
- Persistence of drought in parts of the country
- Low hay and feed inventories relative to drought
- Age demographic of cattle producers who have liquidated cow inventory
- Little evidence of heifer retention

These factors, coupled with cow biology and the long-term process and turning replacement heifers into cows, indicate a slow rebuild. Bottomline: The economic future looks bright for those in the cow-calf sector with inventory. The cow-calf sector serves as the initial source of product in the beef production chain. For producers who can cost-effectively manage their expense of maintaining a cow herd, the value of weaned calves should lead to excellent profit potential.



## Spring Manure Applications

Manure can be an important part of a farming operation's nutrient management planning. I'll defer to my co-worker David Hallauer on the agronomic value of livestock manure and focus today on the considerations that need to be given to the natural resource side of the equation.

At this time of year, livestock producers may be looking at a full manure storage areas and desire to get an early jump on application for the coming growing season. Patience can pay off, as the goal of manure application is to place valuable nutrients on the soil where they are needed and to keep them in place until they can be taken up by the crop. A large piece of this equation is timing. The closer the nutrient is applied to actual crop need, the better.

Application of nutrients during times of snow-cover, frozen soil, or saturated conditions increases risk of nutrient loss. Once a nutrient passes the field edge it is lost to the environment - and lost from crop uptake. Frozen, snow-covered, and saturated soil conditions hinder infiltration. Spring rain events can carry both the soluble and solid portions of manure from the field.

If manure must be applied before conditions are ideal, some things that limit risk of manure nutrient loss include: fields with shallow slopes, fields with a perennial crop such as hay, fields with a cover crop, fields with lots of crop residue, and fields that are more distant to water. Prioritize the order of manure application according to risk and go to the least risky fields first.

Because infiltration can be limited at this time of year, extreme runoff events can occur. For instance, snow melt or rain on frozen or snow-covered ground can cause runoff to occur from lands that rarely lose water. For this reason, it is wise to skip manure application in low areas of these fields where water can gather and flow. Nutrients placed here likely won't stick around. Pay attention to the weather forecast, and avoid situations where upcoming weather may undo the nutrient placement work done.



**Meadowlark Extension District**

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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**

## Upcoming Events

**Mar. 1**—KSU Cattlemen's Day, Manhattan  
**Mar. 13**—Northeast Kansas Sheep & Goat School, Holton  
**Mar. 25 & 27**—Grant Writing Basics Online Workshop  
**Mar. 28-May 2**—Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Seneca/Zoom



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