

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

The Ranch

One of my guilty pleasures is to watch “The Ranch” television program. The language is horrible, but I do like to watch for accuracy. I get amused that every fall they sell their cows. They seem to have problems with the terminology, bulls, cows, calves, cattle. All of their “cows” are halter broke and when sick they are led into stalls. Their cows resemble a Hereford market steer ready for market. At least they are trying to acknowledge that ranch work is not easy.

Farming and ranching is not easy, it is stressful and not always profitable. An added stress is the list of people who are trying to put us out of business with “fake news” and damaging videos of animals being mistreated.

Last year different activist groups posted 104 animal abuse videos. These videos generated a lot of buzz, but had little impact on consumer buying practices.

So, what have we learned from all of this? Social media can accelerate a story, it can be shared a thousand times over and reach a huge number of people. Activists can target certain audiences that they might feel are more vulnerable to their cause.

So what should you do regarding attacks or videos on social media? Don’t share the story, don’t help the activists by promoting it, even if it’s to people that are like-minded as you. Help “kill” the story instead. Be proactive, instead of talking about the bad actors tell stories of how you do things “right” on your farm or ranch. If you are asked directly about an animal abuse case, you can acknowledge your concern. Assure consumers that it will be investigated and correction steps will happen.

Avoid any knee jerk reactions, don’t get mad and don’t act out of retaliation. Your anger could fan the fire for some activists.

Clearly, this is just the tip of the iceberg. There are powerful forces out there that will stop at nothing to end animal agriculture and abolish, meat, milk, and eggs from the dinner table, and I think the first step we as producers need to take is share the original study as far and widely as we can.

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

2020 Nitrogen Management

Did your nitrogen management program perform as expected in 2019? Last season's weather variability caused numerous issues for producers, with nitrogen management at the forefront. While no one can tell you what 2020 may throw at us, there are some adjustments we might be able to make that can help us better manage nitrogen in the next crop year.

A focus on nitrogen management is the subject of our 2020 Meadowlark Extension District/Atchison County crop production meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 11th, 2020 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Nortonville. We'll discuss all things nitrogen: differences in N sources, inhibitors, N use efficiency, and more. K-State Research & Extension Nutrient Management Specialist Dr. Dorivar Ruiz-Diaz will be our keynote speaker. He'll discuss the nitrogen cycle, and what we can do to best manage nitrogen heading in to spring.

We'll do a brief update on all things Farm Bill, including an update in marketing year average prices. Our newest KSU Agronomy Department member – Weed Management Specialist Sarah Lancaster may make a guest appearance as well.

We'll wrap up with a light lunch sponsored by the Kendall State Bank (Valley Falls, Nortonville, Winchester) and Bartlett Grain. For a meal count, RSVP by noon, Monday, February 10th to the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 863-2212 or via e-mail to dhallaue@ksu.edu.

Chemical Weed Control Guide Now Available

The 2020 KSU Chemical Weed Control guide shipment has arrived. It includes chemical control recommendations for our major field crops as well as pasture and rangeland plus noxious weeds. Pick up a copy at any of our three District Offices.

Conservation Tree & Shrub Seedlings

The order window for the Kansas Forest Service Conservation Tree & Shrub seedlings program is now open. The spring 2020 order period runs through May 1.

Conservation uses for the plants may include windbreaks, woodlots, riparian plantings, wildlife habitat, and Christmas trees. Trees/shrubs are sold in units of 25 and are not available for landscape planting purposes.

For a list of available seedlings, check out the Conservation Trees section of the Kansas Forest Service website at www.kansasforests.org or by picking up an order form at any District Office. Evergreens include Redcedar and two different pines – available in both bare root and container grown seedlings. Shrub options include lilac, sandhill plum, and chokecherry among others. Over twenty deciduous tree options are available, including multiple oak species.

Orders can be picked up in Manhattan or shipped to your door. Start planning now and get your order place while supplies last.

Cindy Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

The Facts About Depression in Later Life

Loss takes on many forms the older we get, 3.8 percent of people over age 55 residing independently in the community suffer from major depression in any given year. Many adults have more than one of the risk factors for depression. Some of these include social isolation, chronic medical illnesses or pain, loss of physical functioning, reliving bad past experiences, and recent significant loss.

Let's look at some of the myths surrounding depression.

Myth: Depression occurs only when people experience major trauma in life.

Fact: Depression is a commonly occurring mental health condition that may arise due to a variety of factors, including genetic influences body changes, or life stresses.

Myth: Individuals dealing with depression usually can overcome it if they just work to cheer themselves up or pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

Fact: Depression is a complex medical and mental health condition that typically improves with a variety of approaches, which may include therapeutic support, social support, exercise, diet, rest, and medication.

Myth: Seeking assistance from a doctor or mental health professional is a sign of inability to handle problems or personal weakness.

Fact: Depression is a condition that anyone can experience. Seeking assistance from competent professionals often is necessary and signals wisdom, understanding, and strength.

Some key factors to help when dealing with depression are to seek medical care, increase support from family and community members, and focus on healthy living practices. If you are experiencing signs of depression, visit with your doctor or call 2-1-1 for confidential listening, support, and referral.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Talk, Read, Play with Your Child Everyday

We know it's important to read to children from the beginning, plus talking with them and playing with them as they grow helps them learn new words and important skills to interact with others. It may seem like extra effort, but such activities stimulate a child's imagination and help them develop language and listening skills.

Talk to your child every day ... this helps your child learn words. Help your child learn to talk by adding words. If your child says, "Milk," you say, "Do you want some milk?"

You can explain what is happening during the day. "You are using your spoon to eat your peas." Name your toddler's feelings, such as happy, sad, mad and scared. Sing simple songs. Use lots of rhyming words. Play children's music at home or in the car.

Read to your child every day ... this helps your child enjoy learning. Sit close to or hold your toddler when looking at books together.

Let your toddler choose a book, turn the pages, and point to pictures and words. Read favorite books over and over again. Children learn words when they hear them often.

Play with your child every day... this helps the child get along with others. Children learn when they play. Give time to explore new objects, places, and people. Play outside often. Play make-believe by using dress-up clothes, puppets, boxes, pots, and pans.