

COVID-19 affecting Coffey County Extension programming

Kansas Agriculture Month and National Ag Day

Extension friends, the COVID-19 or "Coronavirus" pandemic is beginning to affect us all in some way or another and our local KSU Research and Extension - Coffey County programming is no exception.



Darl Henson
Coffey County
Extension Agent

In alignment with K-State Research and Extension protocol set forth by Kansas State University, ALL local and district programs, meetings, events and activities, regardless of group size, cannot meet face-to-face between now and April 4. This includes, but is not limited to, 4-H club meetings, 4-H and Extension council meetings, Program Development Committee meetings, etc. This also includes project-based learning activities, shows, events and other activities directed toward 4-H youth development and other Extension audiences.

At this time, the Coffey County Extension Office will remain open in accordance with Coffey County Courthouse government and Health Department guidance, and attempt to conduct business as close to usual as possible. We will be utilizing "social distancing" precautions to help ensure the health and well-being of our clientele.

We believe it is our responsibility as a research-based organization to recognize the gravity of the situation. "Social distancing" precautions historically have aided in slowing a disease spread during pandemics. We will provide updates as the situation continues to develop and recommendations change. You may stay informed by calling the Extension Office (620)364-5313, by accessing our Extension Facebook page, or going to our Coffey County Extension website www.coffey.ksu.edu where we will post updates and announcements. We appreciate your understanding and your efforts as individuals with help in protecting the health, wellness and safety of our communities and families.

With recent warming and drying weather there was some farming going on in the area. But "Mother Nature" brought it to a halt once again with moisture. You can tell, though, that farmers are itching' to get in the fields. It's getting to be that time of year.

Kansas has a history deeply rooted in farming and ranching. That tradition lives strong today as agriculture remains our state's largest economic driver. Farmers and ranchers in your communities go to work each day to grow the food, fiber and energy that sustains each of us. Agribusinesses that line your main streets deliver critical support to this important sector in Kansas. The Kansas agricultural community is leading the way in a dynamic, complex and growing agriculture industry.

In honor of Kansas' largest industry, agriculture, the month of March has been proclaimed Kansas Agriculture Month. In addition, National Ag Week is March 22-28 with Tuesday, March 24, being declared National Agriculture Day.

Nationally, there are nearly 440,000 individuals working directly as farmers and ranchers with 12 percent of them being women. A farmer today grows twice as much food as their parents did - using less land, energy, water, and fewer

emissions per unit produced. Today, the average U.S. farmer feeds 155 people. In 1960, a farmer fed just 26 people.

Latest production figures indicate Kansas Farmers produce nearly \$2.5 billion worth of corn, \$1.8 billion worth of soybeans, \$1.2 billion value of wheat and \$770 million worth of grain sorghum.

In Coffey County, there are 667 farms utilizing 329,243 acres of land, including 176,340 harvested acres of crops and 145,000 acres of pasture. The value of harvested crops approximates \$45 to \$50 million dollars annually with the value of livestock and livestock products including milk range near \$30 million dollars per year.

Soybeans are produced on approximately 70,000 of the county's acres. On average, around 1.5 million bushels of the oil grain are produced at a value near \$15 million, ranking Coffey County in the top 10 of all the counties in the state in soybean production.

Around 30,000 to 35,000 acres of corn are harvested annually in the county with a farm value of near \$12 million annually. An increasing portion of the crop is utilized by area ethanol production plants in the production of that renewable fuel.

Livestock production consists mainly of 43,600 head of cattle. Beef enterprises include small to large cow/calf operations and stockers on grass pasture with a handful of feedlot facilities. A couple of small scale dairies are also located in the county. These two sectors of the county's ag industry contributes approximately \$40 million annually to the local economy in value of cattle and milk produced. In addition to the cattle, the county is also home to a large commercial confined swine production unit as well as small to medium sized sheep and goat flocks. U.S. farmers initiate the production of a food supply that is among the safest in the world. Through the incorporation of livestock quality assurance programs they are doing their part to address consumer concerns by practicing low stress stockmanship and reducing antibiotic usage in livestock.

With crop production integrated pest management systems practices, the goal is to lower herbicide and insecticide usage in crops. With the use of new and highly advanced technology available, fertilizer rates are often lowered and usage is more efficient. All with the end goal of creating a more healthy, wholesome food supply for the consumer. After all they are a consumer themselves and want what's best for their families as well.

Combined with their task as food suppliers, farmers continue their role as the original stewards of the land. They continue to incorporate conservation measures to maintain the health and productivity of the soil. By combing practices of reduced tillage with utilization of cover crops as well as other erosion control measures, they strive to ensure the soil vitality and good water quality for the generations of farmers yet to come.

Despite what some arrogant politician might think, farming today is an extremely challenging occupation and today's farmers are highly educated and motivated individuals. We, in the Coffey County Extension office, hope you will join us in recognizing the hard-working men and women in agriculture and raise awareness that the crops and animals raised on farms in Kansas are feeding Kansas families and providing healthy, wholesome food to families around the world. On March 24, I'd encourage you to make an effort to visit with a farmer and find out what it is they REALLY do and tell them thanks!



Photo submitted

The Olma Peak Award for the steers placing second in the grass futurity, first in the live show, 27th in the feedlot and fourth in the carcass contest is presented to G&J Meats Farm and Ranch, Gary and Judy Meats, LeRoy. Pictured are Mike and Gary Meats receiving the \$500 award and plaque from Flint Hills Beef Fest president-elect Jeanette Baker.



Photo submitted

OVERALL GAIN - Steers for the 273 days from weigh-in in April until harvest in January averaged 3.429 pounds per day. First place, winning \$700, was Meats Farms, Inc., Mike LeAnna and Miranda Meats, LeRoy. Pictured are Mike and LeAnna Meats.

Flint Hills Beef Fest award winners

LEROY — The Flint Hills Beef Fest recognized the winners in feedlot, carcass and overall gain contests at an awards banquet held Feb. 15 at the Bowyer Building on the Lyon County Fairgrounds in Emporia. This event was the culmination of the 2019 contest, with

over \$11,000 in contest prize money distributed that evening.

On the steer side of the competition the Overall Gain winner was Meats Farms Inc., Mike, LeAnna and Miranda Meats of LeRoy.

The Olma Peak Award for the steers went to G and J Meats Farm

and Ranch, Gary and Judy Meats of LeRoy. Their steer pen placed second in the grass futurity, on the live show, was 27th in the feedlot contest and fourth in the carcass contest.

Congratulations to all the winners in the 2019 contests.

Engaging in D.C.

This week I am in Washington, D.C., on Kansas Farm Bureau's Leaders Engaged and Acting in D.C. (LEADs) trip. I must admit

Insight



Glenn Brunkow
Pottawatomie
County Farmer
and Rancher

that I always enjoy coming to our nation's capital. Coming here involves many surreal moments for me. This past week I sat down on a bench in the mall and looked around. In one direction was the Capitol itself, how many times is it the backdrop for news stories we watch on our TV. Today, not only will I see the Capitol, I will be inside on business for our Kansas Farm Bureau. Heady stuff for a simple farm kid from Kansas.

When Jennifer and I served on Young Farmers and Ranchers we often said, "The world is ruled by those who show up." Over the years I have come have a better understanding of what that means and just how true it is. I truly wish

that everyone would have the opportunity to come to Washington, D.C. and get involved with the governance of our great nation. It is important that everyday citizens get involved and make their issues and ideas known.

This is especially true for those of us in agriculture. We are less than 2 percent of the population, and I suspect that number is dropping each year. We also run businesses that are highly technical, are not very well understood and operate on razor thin margins. It is of the utmost importance that we make sure we have a good relationship with our elected officials, and we meet them on their own turf. That is why events like LEADs are so important and why it is so important that as many members as possible make regular trips to Washington D.C. and Topeka.

Farm Bureau has become one of the leading voices for agriculture because of our members making trips like this. Whether it is Day at the Statehouse in Topeka or LEADs, it is important for our leg-

islators to see farmers and ranchers and not just KFB staff. It is critical we tell our stories to them about how legislation or regulations affect our operations. It never hurts to remind our elected officials they represent real people.

I also think it is good to come to Washington, D.C., and see the sights, understand a little bit of how government works and have a greater feel of just how to get things done. I know there are a lot of jokes to be made about those things, but I promise you it helps to see it in person. I have always said that the hardest part of any trip is when you can still see your mailbox in the rearview mirror. Getting away is tough and there are sacrifices but I hope each of you will make the time to get involved and travel to our capitals to take an active part in our governance and make your voices heard.

"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

Upcoming KDA events postponed, cancelled

MANHATTAN — Based on the operational and workplace guidelines for state agencies shared over the weekend, the Kansas Department of Agriculture has made changes to plans for scheduled events through the next few weeks. The following events have either been cancelled or postponed to a later date:

- Focus on Food Safety training in Topeka, March 16: cancelled
- Interviews for the Executive Director of the Division of Conservation in Manhattan, March 18-19: postponed
- Agribusiness Development Workshop in Ashland, March 18: postponed

Workshop in Ashland, March 18: postponed

- Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certification Exam in Colby, March 18: cancelled
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certification Exam in Dodge City, March 19: cancelled
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certification Exam in Olathe, March 23: cancelled
- Focus on Food Safety training in Manhattan, March 24: cancelled
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certification Exam in Topeka, March 25: cancelled
- Agribusiness Development Workshop in Manhattan, March 25: postponed

Workshop in Manhattan, March 25: postponed

- Kansas Dairy Industry Conference in Garden City, April 1: cancelled
 - Livestock Export Seminar in Hays, April 3: postponed
- More information may be added to this list in the future. As events are rescheduled, all efforts will be made to contact those who registered for the events to inform them about new plans.

All further changes to scheduling can be found on the KDA Schedule Changes document at www.agriculture.ks.gov/events.

KDA announces specialty crop grant opportunity

MANHATTAN — The Kansas Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for the 2020 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Funds for the program are awarded to the agency by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service. The funds are in turn granted to projects and organizations that promote the competitiveness of specialty crops.

The purpose of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, which are defined by the USDA as "fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture."

Applications will be evaluated by a team of external reviewers. The team will rate proposals on their ability to successfully pro-

mote specialty crops in Kansas and make a positive impact on the Kansas economy. Those recommendations will be submitted to the Kansas Secretary of Agriculture, who will make the final awards.

Applications are due to KDA no later than 5 p.m. April 20. You can find more information about the grant program, including the 2020 application, at the KDA website: agriculture.ks.gov/SpecialtyCrop.

Bluestem Farm & Ranch

2611 W Hwy. 50 • Emporia
(620) 342-5502 • (800) 800-7505

Combes Crop Insurance

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NAPA Auto Parts

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

MARCH 22-28

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Chrisman Hardware

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