

# December 2024

### Holton Office

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

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### District Office Hours:

#### Open Monday-Friday

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

#### Closed on designated holidays

## Community Vitality/Economic Development



David Key, Extension Agent/Director

### Group Decision-Making

Every group makes decisions. The way a group makes decisions influences how people feel about the group. It can also determine how well the group members support the decision and how they convey their support to others. Groups make decisions regarding their functions and purposes, plans and programs, community projects and political activities. The level of group agreement affects the feelings various group members have when decisions are being made. A process must be implemented to help groups make decisions. The group members must work together to define consequences, decide on an action, and follow through and evaluate the results. Here is a summary of the most common decision-making processes:

- **Parliamentary Procedure**—Most people belong to one or more organizations that use parliamentary procedure, thus they need at least a basic knowledge of the correct procedures. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to help a group transact business efficiently, protect the rights of the individual, and preserve a spirit of harmony. Parliamentary law is simple in principle. It is based on common sense and courtesy. The following simple principles must be observed:

1. Each item presented is entitled to discussion time.
2. The majority's decisions are upheld and the minority's rights to offer dissenting opinions and differing views are respected.
3. Only one person speaks at a time.

4. Every member has equal rights.

Most groups function well with relatively informal procedures. However, the larger the group or the "hotter" the issue, the more important a carefully planned procedure is. Meetings follow a standard order or agenda, and all business is brought before the group using a motion, making the process formal. There are five types of motions, and amendments to the motion can help clarify the decision-making process. A formal vote is held to make group decisions.

- **Consensus Decision-Making**—A meeting conducted by consensus is less formal than one using parliamentary procedure. A problem or opportunity is brought up for discussion, without requiring a formal motion. The group discusses the suggestion, working toward clarifying the issues and the need for action. The group leader encourages input from all and then guides the group towards making a decision. A formal motion is not made, but the leader states the consensus agreement and checks to make sure everyone is willing to support the decision. The consensus decision making process allows for open communication among the group to discuss the problem and exchange concerns and solutions. The decisions are usually more informed due to greater creativity during the discussion. Faster implementation of the decision often occurs due to the amount of discussion and planning due to the cooperative group effort this process offers.

- **Negotiating Decisions**—Dealing with both your interests and the other person's or group's interest is the basis for negotiating a satisfactory agreement. Important steps to follow when negotiating decisions is to separate the people from the problem. When people become angry on a personal level, it is very difficult to reach any solution. You should always listen to understand when using this method and focus on being understood rather than just making your point.



David Hallauer, Extension Agent

## Consider Kansas Farm Management Association

When profits are good – and even when they're not - sound investment advice, aggressive tax management, and forward planning are vital to the growth and success of your agricultural enterprise. The need for sound farm management guidance is as great as it's ever been and if you're looking for that type of guidance, consider membership in the Kansas Farm Management Association (KFMA).

For more than 80 years, KFMA has provided sound accounting systems, enterprise analysis, and year end tax planning and management for producers with a focus on getting to know your operation to help you make the best decisions for its profitability

today and sustainability tomorrow. Their team of 25 economists will get to know your operation via on-farm visits and regular financial update meetings, allowing them to help you make decisions in every financial arena from marketing/ investment strategies today to estate and farm succession planning tomorrow. It's an integrated approach that puts a whole farm financial advisor on *your* team to help make decisions focused on *your* operation.

Interested in knowing more about whether a KFMA Economist might be a fit on your team? Check them out online at [www.agmanager.info/kfma](http://www.agmanager.info/kfma) or contact the NE KFMA Office at (785) 364-2706.

## Rental Rates – Not Just a Number

Mention rental arrangements and the conversation typically centers around: what's the going rate. It's a fair question – but maybe not the only question landlords and tenants should be asking.

There *are* some 'average' numbers out there (start with the Farm Management tab at [www.agmanager.info](http://www.agmanager.info) for a drop down menu with Land Rental Rates, contract examples, etc... at <https://www.agmanager.info/farm-management/land-rental-rates> ) but to really get at the 'fair' number requires some research – and a lot of discussion.

We say 'it's not just a number' because it's so much more complex. If your fall to-do list includes a rental agreement review, visit the link above. Need help? Drop us a line at any Meadowlark Extension District Office for a list of our 'go to' references.

You might also check out our Rental Resources Roundtable workshop (announcement at the right).

## Oral Lease Arrangement 'Deadline'

No lease arrangement is perfect, but one reason written leases are encouraged is because of the 'unknown' encompassing oral agreements. What happens when either party wants something different? What if agreement termination is required? In the absence of a written agreement, Kansas Statutes prevail, with multiple statutes addressing ag leases coming into play.

If you have an oral lease, review the *Kansas Farm Lease Law* publication on the *Papers and Presentations* page above. It outlines the meaning of oral lease agreements in Kansas – including termination requirements. Check it out online or request a copy from any District Office if interested.

## Rental Resources Roundtable

Tuesday, December 17

10:00 AM

Jackson County Courthouse,

Memorial Hall, Room 105

*NO RSVP required*

More information, go to

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

## Belt Tightening Ahead?

Unfortunately, the short-term crop production economic outlook is less than rosy. That may mean cost cutting, and while it *may* be a necessity, careful evaluation *is* necessary to maintain revenue.

Start by re-evaluating crop production products. Some may have a place, but they should be tested (consider small areas vs. whole fields) to make sure they provide consistent performance results.

Review fertilizer recommendations. Are they based on old results/yield goals? Will soil test levels allow application flexibility? A reliable soil test and sound application rate recommendations can make a big difference in overall fertility costs.

Is your crop rotation or cover crop mix performing as intended? Does planting population match yield environment? Take a deeper look at all facets of the production system. Some benefits may not be immediately measurable, but that doesn't mean they aren't helpful. Changes may be possible, but all management practices still deserve a second look.

There may be other options to consider as well, with no one answer fitting every situation. If you're looking to evaluate your management factors, drop me a line and we'll see what resources might help with your decision-making process.



Ross Mosteller, Extension Agent



## Farm and Ranch Transition Conference

The value of land and farming assets continues to grow exponentially, as the average age of farmers continues to grow as well. Farm and ranch families may be uncertain of how to begin developing a succession plan and need guidance in helping the next generation move into the operation. To help with this planning, a one-day transition conference in Lawrence on **February 27, 2025**, will discuss the importance of planning while introducing transition and estate planning topics. This will be an all-day conference with a mix of nationally renowned speakers and local professionals who can help serve you as you go through the transition process. Registration is \$60.00 per individual registration and can be done online at: <https://www.agkansitions.org/>

## Pasture Leasing Considerations

Hopefully you've had opportunity to read David Hallauer's page and see information related to agriculture leases, including a scheduled meeting where we invite you to come visit with us in Holton on December 17 about your leasing questions. Here are some of the major considerations specific to pasture leases that should be considered when writing out your lease arrangement.

Know your grasses, know an acceptable stocking rate and be willing to be flexible on length of grazing season given weather conditions. Six month grazing season leases are common with warm season grazing season grasses typically starting May 1 and cool season grasses can start as early as April 1. Double-stock leases are common with stocker cattle where the number of animals in a season long stocking rate is doubled, but only graze the beginning half of the season.

Perhaps the most important aspect of any pasture lease is the stocking rate, or the number of grazing animals (better yet animal units AU or 1000 pounds of animal) on a given amount of land over a specific period of time. Stocking rate will vary depending on length of the grazing season, type of grass, quality of grass, amount of typical rainfall, etc.

Rental amount can vary, but most commonly this is reported as dollars per acre. Another very common value is per animal (or pair) for the grazing season. It is not uncommon to see shorter lease periods calculated on a per head per day basis. Per pound of gain rates would be more common in stocker/growing cattle arrangements.

## Kansas Fence Law

The end of calendar year is often a point in time to evaluate lease arrangements. Please reference David Hallauer's article discussing this topic in this newsletter. Fence issues can be included in lease discussion or may be a topic of discussion between neighbors, so let's take a look at some of the talking points around this topic. As Robert Frost famously said, "Good fences make good neighbors".

- Kansas law specifies that a partition fence is to be placed on the line between tracts of land owned by different persons, but also does allow for a partition fence to be located entirely on one side of the boundary.
- A legal fence is defined as a barbed wire fence containing at least three wires, but other types of fences in addition to barbed wire can be legal fences under Kansas law.
- In general, the owners of adjoining lands are required to build and maintain in good repair all partition fences in equal shares, unless the parties agree otherwise. That is not necessarily the "right hand rule" that is often practiced, but rather equal share of the entire fence.
- Kansas is a fence-in jurisdiction state, meaning that livestock owners are required to keep animals fenced in. Liability for damages can be applied to negligent livestock owners and non-livestock landowning neighbors, who don't maintain fence.
- In agricultural settings, usage of property may determine property boundaries. An existing fence may become the legal boundary, regardless of the surveyed line, in two ways after 15 years of open and notorious use. 1) Adverse Position or 2) Doctrine of Practical Location.
- If adjoining landowners cannot reach an agreement concerning fence building and/or maintenance, the fence viewers should be called. Under Kansas law, the county commissioners (*or their designees*) in the county where the fence in question is located, are the fence viewers. Their decision is final, conclusive, non-appealable, and binding upon the parties and all succeeding occupants of the land.

This is a very quick dive into all the Kansas statutes surrounding Fence law. K-State Research and Extension has a publication from Roger McEowen that goes into more discussion [https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/kansas-fence-law\\_C663.pdf](https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/kansas-fence-law_C663.pdf)



Cindy Williams, Extension Agent

## Getting Your Car Ready for Winter

With winter closing in and given how much we're in our vehicles every day, assemble an emergency kit for your car or truck. You might want to check out some "Winter Survival Kit" phone apps. Some recommended items to include:

- Flashlight/extra batteries
- Snow and ice scraper
- Shovel/Snow Shovel
- Jumper cables
- First aid kit
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Non-clumping kitty litter or sand for traction
- Flares or reflectors
- Car cell phone charger
- Keep gas tank at least half full

## Holiday Spending

Here are some thoughts to help you with your holiday spending and to avoid becoming financially stressed when the bills come around.

### 1. Stick to your spending plan.

- A spending plan accounts for your monthly expenses and income so you can spend your money the way you want to spend it. A spending plan should have an allotted amount that you can spend on gifts, clothing, electronics or whatever it is that you will be spending for the holidays. Stick to that allotted amount.
- If you don't have a spending plan, now is the perfect time to start. Check out the Essential Living Skills: Money Management, <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/S134G.pdf>.

### 2. Check Your list twice.

- Have you ever accidentally purchased two gifts for one person or realized you didn't purchase enough? Know who you are buying for or what you are wanting to buy. Also, know your budget for each person, as they may warrant different amounts.

### 3. Use cash

- Once it is gone, it is gone. Sometimes, we become zombies and swipe a card without realizing the increasing amount. If you do use a credit card, keep receipts so you can reconcile. Also, pay off the amount as quickly as possible.

### 4. Shop around.

- Compare against other shops or even Cyber Monday. You may think you purchased something at a great deal, but then find it cheaper elsewhere.

So, if you will be stuffing your cart this holiday season, just make sure that you are being aware of your spending and not letting that tryptophan (from the turkey) make you so sleepy that you make bad financial decisions.

## Cheesy Hamburger Dip (Serves 7, 1/2 cup each)

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb. lean ground beef
- 1 lb. processed cheese (such as Velveeta™), diced
- 10 oz. can tomatoes with green chilies (such as Rotel™), undrained

### Directions:

1. Brown ground beef and drain well.
2. In a large 3-quart glass casserole dish, combine beef, cheese and tomatoes.
3. Microwave on medium power for 3 minutes. Uncover, stir and microwave until cheese is melted, about 3 more minutes.

**Helpful Hints:** Cooking temperatures for cheese should be low to prevent stringiness and toughness. That's why melting the cheese on medium power in the microwave allows the dip to be smooth, creamy and have lots of flavor. If you don't have a microwave, you can melt the cheese in the top of a double boiler on the stove. Either way, remember to stir often to combine the ingredients for this dip.

**Nutrition Facts:** 260 calories per serving; calories from fat—150; total fat—17g; sodium—1160mg; protein—17g

## More Ways to Cook a Turkey

Most homes have one oven. That reduces space for cooking multiple dishes for holiday meals. During the holidays, try using another method for cooking the turkey.

Outdoor methods include a grill or smoker, deep fat turkey fryer, and the "Big Green Egg." Indoor options include an electric roaster, multi-electric cookers and even the microwave.

No matter which method you choose to get your turkey to the table, have a food thermometer handy so you can make sure the turkey has reached the safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Let the turkey stand for 20 minutes before carving.



**Teresa Hatfield, Extension Agent**

## Stay Warm This Winter: Understand the Low Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and the Cold Weather Rule

### Low Energy Assistance Program

As we get further into fall, the weather starts to cool down and is often downright cold. Kansas has a couple of programs for residents who are concerned about how they can afford to heat their homes. The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIEAP, and the Cold Weather Rule, can be resources that you or your neighbor need to be aware of.

According to the Kansas Department of Children and Families, the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a Federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per-year benefit. LIEAP assists low-income households struggling to pay their energy bills during the cold winter months. The 2025 LIEAP application period will begin **November 18, 2024**, and end **March 31, 2025**, at 5:00 PM.

To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the current residence's heating costs, payable to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
2. The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may be at most 150% of the federal poverty level.

The benefit amount is based on federal funding received, the anticipated number of applicants, the type of dwelling, the type of primary heating fuel, the number of household members (citizens), and household income.

How can you apply for LIEAP? Use the secure online portal:

1. Go to [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov) and click Apply for Services.
2. You must create an account and password the first time you use the DCF Self-Service Portal.
3. After logging in, click on Apply for assistance to get started.

### Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule is another important program that protects residents from having their utilities shut off during the winter months. The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) enforces this rule, which applies to residential customers of electric and natural gas utilities under its jurisdiction.

A utility can't disconnect you when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 35 degrees Fahrenheit within the following 48 hours, except in certain circumstances. To prevent disconnection when it is 35 degrees or above or to be reconnected regardless of temperature, you must make payment arrangements with your utility company. A utility may start the final notification and disconnection process if there is a 48-hour forecast of temperatures above 35°F.

If the 48-hour forecast changes before the period ends and temperatures are forecast below 35°F, the utility cannot disconnect until there is another Cold Weather Rule 48-hour forecast of temperatures above 35°F.

Utilities must inform you of the Cold Weather Rule payment plan and other available payment plans. Remember, under the Cold Weather Rule, you can spread your payment over 12 months. Utilities must send written notice to customers 10 days before disconnection and attempt a phone call or personal contact the day before. They must also tell customers about agencies that have funds to help pay utility bills.

If you can't pay your entire bill, call your utility company to make payment arrangements:

- Agree to pay 1/12 of the overdue amount of your bill, plus 1/12 of your current bill, all disconnection and reconnection fees, plus any applicable deposit owed to the utility, and agree to pay the remainder in equal payments over the next 11 months; or
- Negotiate a payment plan to pay the overdue amount off quicker than 12 months.

Remember, you must also pay your full bills for the new service you use while paying off the overdue amount. Apply for federal, state, local, or special funds for which you are eligible. If you are behind in a previous payment plan and cannot catch up, you must make a new payment agreement with the utility.

These two programs can be enormously beneficial for families struggling to pay utility bills. Please share this information with anyone you believe could benefit.

For more information on these programs, visit the [Kansas Department for Children and Families] at <https://www.dcf.ks.gov> or the Kansas Corporation Commission at <https://kcc.ks.gov>.

Stay warm, stay informed, and stay connected!



Laura Phillips, Extension Agent

## Destructive Emerald Ash Borer Found in Nemaha Co.

In mid-October, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with K-Sate Research and Extension, and the Kansas Forest Service, confirmed that the highly invasive and destructive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is in Nemaha County, KS. A live EAB larva was found inside a dying ash tree on a private residence in the county on October 14, 2024. The pest had been suspected in the area for several years, but only recently have they found a live insect, which is required to make the detection official.



Image: Adult EAB



Kansas Department of Natural Resources

UGA5016056

Image: EAB larvae have bell shaped segments—especially on segments 7 & 8.

You may have heard of EAB, which is killing ash trees across the United States at an alarming rate. It is an exotic, invasive beetle from eastern Russia and northeastern Asia that likely was brought to the U.S. in infested packing material. The beetle threatens urban and rural forests by killing North American ash species and their cultivars. Kansas Forest Service officials note that at least 70 million ash trees have already been destroyed due to the emerald ash borer, and as many as 9 billion North American ash trees will eventually be destroyed from the continent.

The discovery in Nemaha County makes 15 Kansas counties in which the emerald ash borer has been confirmed. The entire Meadowlark District, (Jackson, Jefferson, and Nemaha) have confirmed EAB presence.

We believe the presence of these beetles is not limited to these counties, and residents of Northeast Kansas should report suspected EAB infestations to the Kansas Forest Service, Kansas Department of Agriculture, or your local extension office immediately.

To determine if the EAB has made your ash tree its new home, look for symptoms on the bark and in the canopy. Woodpeckers eat EAB larvae, so look for light patches of bark and woodpecker holes. The larvae tunnel under the bark and feast on the cambium, the layer just below the bark responsible for water and nutrient movement in the tree. Their feeding can cause splits in the bark with S-shaped tunnels underneath. When the larvae exit the tree, they leave behind small, D-shaped holes about 1/8 of an inch in diameter.

As the tree loses its ability to access nutrients and water, branches of the tree will start to die. The tree may respond by sending out new sprouts near the trunk or lower canopy (a process called epicormic sprouting). Often, landowners do not notice their trees are infected for several years until the canopy starts to die back.

If you notice the EAB in your ash tree, you need to act quickly to save it. Once a tree has lost over 40% of its canopy, the odds of survival even with treatment are very low. Treatments for the EAB include trunk injection, soil drench, or bark spray. These treatments will need to be applied on a regular basis for the rest of the tree's life. We recommend talking to a licensed pesticide applicator. The treatments you can find over the counter will not be as effective as those provided by a licensed applicator.

Even if your ash trees currently do not have the EAB, anyone with an ash tree should either consider treating their tree as a preventative measure, or create a replacement plan. A landscape with many types of tree species is more resilient to insect, disease, and environmental threats that exist or could occur in the future.

All Kansans are reminded of the recommendation to avoid bringing firewood from another state or county where emerald ash borer has been previously detected. Use local sources for firewood.

If you are unsure whether your ash tree is infected, it is best to contact either the Kansas Forest Service, Kansas Department of Agriculture, or your local extension office to get more information and have your tree evaluated.



David Caspari, Michigan State University

UGA5110029

Image: The larvae leave behind tunnels just under the bark, that are S-shaped and get larger as the larvae feed and grow.

## Rural Community Health Worker



Dawn Seymour, RN

### Who are Community Health Workers?

Community Health Workers (CHWs) bridge the gap between individuals and the health care and social services systems. CHWs are usually from the communities they serve. They understand and represent the needs and interests of their clients.

#### • What do Community Health Workers do?

- ◇ Help clients work with the health care and social services systems.
- ◇ Help people self-manage their health conditions.
- ◇ Help clients communicate with health care providers.
- ◇ Access community-based services such as transportation, food assistance and other programs.

#### • Benefits of Community Health Workers?

- ◇ Reduced health care costs.
- ◇ Improved health outcomes.
- ◇ Increased health insurance coverage.
- ◇ Increased use of preventive care.
- ◇ Reduced use of urgent and emergency care.
- ◇ Improved self-management of chronic diseases.
- ◇ More culturally aware of provider practices

#### • What can I do for you?

- ◇ Assist you to identify your needs and come up with a tailored care plan.
- ◇ Connect you with resources available in your community.
- ◇ Help you navigate and understand the healthcare system.
- ◇ Schedule and coordinate doctor visits.
- ◇ Educate and teach on health conditions.

- ◇ Management of chronic health conditions.
- ◇ Medicare counseling upon completion of SHICK training.
- ◇ Check in with you in person or by phone to help you complete your goals.
- ◇ Motivate/encourage you to get back on your feet.
- ◇ Teach you how to do all these things and more on your own.

I have been participating with localized training with the KU Medical Center Communities Organizing to Promote Equality (COPE) project and various other collegiate entities to widen my knowledge base beyond my RN degree, to seamlessly adapt to the role of an RN, Community Health Worker. I'm looking forward to this opportunity to develop and build this project in Jefferson County. I anticipate accepting referrals and seeing clients mid-December.

## 4-H Youth Development

### Thank a 4-H Volunteer & 4-H Member

As the days grow shorter and the air turns a little colder, December brings a special time of year to reflect on our blessings and the spirit of giving. In this season of giving, we would like you to take a moment to acknowledge the heart and soul of our Meadowlark District 4-H Program: our outstanding volunteers and 4-H members who dedicate their time and energy to ensure that our youth 4-H program thrives. Here are some reasons why the 4-H Program Staff are thankful for those individuals:

- **Passion & Commitment:** 4-H members sure know how to demonstrate enthusiasm and dedication. No matter if they show us through their individual 4-H projects or their community service projects. Their eagerness to learn and grow is what makes 4-H such a wonderful program.
- **Community Spirit:** The support among the 4-H families and volunteers are truly inspiring. Together, they create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered. The spirit of togetherness is a key part to our success and enriches the lives of those involved.
- **Mentorship:** 4-H Volunteers are the backbone of the 4-H program. They share their time and expertise, guiding our members and helping them develop the essential life skills that the 4-H program takes so much pride in. Our volunteers' mentorship shapes the next generation of leaders, instilling responsibility, teamwork and community involvement.
- **Positive Impact:** The work that 4-Hers do, extends beyond 4-H. When youth participate in community service projects, you are making a lasting impact on those around you. Your efforts are the true meaning of giving back and inspiring others to give back as well.

As we reflect with those reasons, let's bring that gratitude into our daily lives; remember that by being together, we are creating a brighter future not only for ourselves but for those around us in our community. So THANK YOU 4-H'ers and volunteers for being such a huge part in our Meadowlark District 4-H Program.

**Meadowlark Extension District**

114 W 5th St.  
Holton, KS 66436

Address Service Requested

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

**facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/Meadowlarkextensiondistrict>

## Publications & Resources For Sale

- Caregiver Helpbook
- Family Account Book
- Farm Account Book
- Radon Kits
- Predator Calls
- IMR Calving Books (Red)
- 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)
- Forage Tests
- Grazing Sticks
- 911 Signs
- Pesticide Application Field Record Book (free)
- Cow/Calf Record Book (free)
- Body Condition Record Book (free)
- K-State Publications (free)

## Items to Check Out

- Soil & Hay Probes
- Freeze Branding Irons
- Pesticide Manuals
- Buzzers
- Mole Trap

## Upcoming Events

- Dec. 7:** Medicare Open Enrollment Closes
- Dec. 17:** Rental Resources Roundtable, Holton
- Dec. 24 & 25** Offices Closed for Christmas
- Dec. 26-31:** Offices Closed for Winter Break
- Jan. 1:** Offices Closed for New Years Day
- Jan. 15:** Offices Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

