

AGRICULTURE FOCUS

December 2020/January 2021

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Extension Office
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Dodge City, KS 67801**

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Hours:

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 (Noon)
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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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 Andrea Burns at 620-227-4542 or e-mail aburns@ksu.edu.



THE NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK...

The end of this unusual year 2020 is about to come to a close. While I don't think that the beginning of 2021 will be as normal as we had hoped, I do hope that we can get back to doing some of the things we enjoyed with family and friends. While most meetings will still be virtual, stayed tuned for meetings happening in January around the area. While we have all endured lots of changes, I am still available to come out and do one-on-one agronomic and horticulture visits. You can also always send me an e-mail.

As we have seen, the markets continue to change daily and there continue to be changes that affect the way that you do business. K-State Research and Extension is challenged with the task "Providing Knowledge for Life." That gets more difficult as the world we work and live in changes every day. If you have an idea for a program, have a question or just want to visit over a cup of coffee, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here to work for you.

All of us at the Ford County Extension Office, wish you and your family a Holiday season filled with family and giving and a Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea".

KSU Mourns Loss of Esteemed Ag Economics Professor

Barry Flinchbaugh, whose remarkable career in agricultural policy at Kansas State University spanned nearly a half-century, passed away Nov. 2 at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka. He was 78 years old.

The charismatic Flinchbaugh was well known as one of the United States' leading experts on agricultural policy and agricultural economics. For more than four decades, he was a top adviser to politicians of both major political parties, including Secretaries of Agriculture, chairs of the House and Senate Ag committees, and numerous senators and state governors.

Flinchbaugh was involved to some degree in every U.S. Farm Bill written since 1968, and served on many national boards, advisory groups and task forces, providing input on domestic food and agricultural policy.

He served as the Chairman of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture, which was authorized in the 1996 Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act, also known as the Freedom to Farm Act.

Flinchbaugh grew up in York, Pennsylvania, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Penn State University. He earned the doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Purdue University before joining the K-State faculty in 1971.

At the time of his death, he was Professor Emeritus in K-State's Department of Agricultural Economics, teaching a 400-level course in agricultural policy each fall.

A dynamic speaker, it was reported that he would receive as many as 100 speaking invitations per year. He authored more than 100 publications and co-authored a textbook on agricultural policy.

Flinchbaugh is survived in the family's Manhattan home by his wife, Cathy. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Virtual Crop Pest Management School

K-State Research & Extension – NW Region

UPDATE from other announcement: K-State Research and Extension, NW Region counties/districts are hosting two “Virtual” Crop Pest Management Schools, December 8th and December 10th starting at 7:50 AM with “online check-in” to 5:00 PM.

Join us ONLINE to learn about how to control the latest pests – weeds, insects, and diseases – effecting all crops in central and western Kansas!

Commercial Applicators will earn 1 Core Hour & 7 Hours for 1A, certified by Kansas Department of AG. Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) will also earn 8 Pest Management Credits. These schools would also be an excellent educational opportunity for producers!

The cost to participate is \$40. Those wishing to participate are asked to register by Sunday, December 6, by midnight.

Simply go to: <http://www.northwest.k-state.edu/events/crop-pest-management-school> or to any Extension Office website in the NW region or call Craig Dinkel, Midway Extension, 785-483-3157; Cody Miller, Phillips/Rooks Extension, 785-543-6845 or Clint Bain, Golden Prairie Extension, 785-743-6361.

Cattle Chat: Using Crop Residue as a Beef Cattle Feed Source

K-State Experts Say Grazing Cattle on Crop Residue is Option for Winter Feeding

Most cattle producers will agree that hauling feed and delivering hay to the cattle in the winter can be labor intensive and expensive. Experts at the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute point to grazing crop residues as one option to reduce feed expenses and minimize daily labor with proper planning and regular monitoring.

“Many producers have made grazing crop residues part of their management strategy because of the low winter feed costs associated with it,” said veterinarian Bob Larson. In Kansas, these residues are typically corn and sorghum.

To be successful, Larson said producers must plan for a water source, which may take extra labor to deliver it to the field where cattle are grazing. “A lot of times there isn’t a pond on the crop field, so you have to haul out a tank in a way that doesn’t tear up the field,” Larson said, adding that producers need to plan for the cattle congregating around the water source and potentially damaging the ground.

Another step in preparing the field for gazing is making sure there is adequate fence to keep the cattle contained, said Bob Weaber, beef cattle specialist and head of the Northeast Kansas Research and Extension Center.

“Many of these fields are leased ground and they don’t always have good perimeter fencing on them,” Weaber said. “It isn’t uncommon to see cattle out grazing on stalks with a single-wire strand of electric fence surrounding them.”

Weaber said it is especially important to check electric fence often so cows don’t get out, and he stressed the importance of having a reliable fence charger.

Nutritionally speaking, Larson and Weaber agreed that cattle often select plant leaves and fallen corn ears when they first arrive on the field.

“The leaves and fallen ears hold a higher quality energy content as compared to the stalks,” Larson said.

To manage the crop residue resource, Weaber advised producers follow strip grazing protocols.

“Strip grazing allows producers to monitor how much of the field has been grazed and forces the cows to clean up a section before moving them off,” Weaber said, noting that it also allows producers to assess the body condition of the animals in the herd to make sure their nutritional needs are being met.

If strip grazing isn’t an option, Larson said cattle producers may need to consider additional supplementation as the winter months pass by.

“The longer you leave cattle on crop residues, the quality of what they are consuming decreases while at the same time the nutritional demands for gestating, spring-calving cows goes up,” Larson said. “In that case, you may need to increase the protein supplementation as the season progresses.”

To hear more about grazing crop residues, listen to the BCI Cattle Chat podcast online.

Cattle Chat: Controlling Costs is Key to Making Profits

K-State Beef Cattle Expert Discuss Factors for Business Success

If a business wants to keep its doors open, it has to make a profit. Similarly, cattle operations must turn a profit, according to the experts at the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute.

To that point, agricultural economist Dustin Pendell has been analyzing the expenses and revenues of cattle operations through his research. On the weekly podcast, Cattle Chat, K-State's beef cattle experts focused on net return over total costs.

"When we look at average returns over total costs for all operations, most years are below zero," said veterinarian Brad White, who is also director of the Beef Cattle Institute director.

Pendell said some of producers' main fixed costs are expenses from interest, and depreciation of equipment and cattle.

"Another big cost is the unpaid operator labor, and that is one the differences between the variable and fixed cost charts. It's about \$150 per cow difference showing up in the net unpaid labor cost," he said.

Pendell referred to a graph that shows negative net returns, but noted that despite how that graph looks, some people are still making a return on investment. For 66% of producers, costs are the main difference between the net return of low- and high-profit farms.

"A lot of the indications for those herds that are still making profits in tough years is that they control costs," said K-State veterinarian Bob Larson.

Larson noted that another pattern found in the data is that larger operations -- not necessarily larger herds -- tend to have lower total cost per cow.

"If you think about what I want to accomplish for my total farming operation, including cattle and crops, owning the cattle kind of fits in there with some positives," Larson said. "They don't show up totally in your numbers."

White said the producer needs to understand their objective for having cattle, including the fixed and variable costs of an operation. Here are the top considerations for managing fixed costs in the cattle operation:

- Understand your objective of having cows
- Optimize labor use for the operation
- Manage depreciation
- Measure fixed costs: you cannot manage them if you do not measure them

RFID Ear Tags Provided at No Cost via Accredited Veterinarians

KDA and USDA Collaborate to Provide RFID Ear Tags thru Accredited Veterinarians

Earlier this year, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the United State Department of Agriculture collaborated to begin providing RFID ear tags, at no cost, to accredited veterinarians. Each state is allocated an amount of tags based upon numbers of replacement heifers.

Though marketing efforts have focused mainly on veterinarians, the group would like to expand the reach of this program to applicable trade associations, organizations, etc. However, orders must still be placed by an accredited veterinarian.

Thus far in 2020, Kansas producers obtained twice as many RFID tags for cattle by purchasing through manufacturers and retailers rather than requesting free tags. For the FY2021 Kansas allocation is 287,000 RFID tags.

Two colors of low frequency tags are available to order: white and orange. White tags may be used in dairy cows, bulls and replacement animals. Animals intended for feeding purposes only are not eligible for these tags. Orange Tags are only for use when brucellosis vaccinating. Currently there are no UHF (ultra-high frequency) tags available through the program.

Tags are ordered in bags of 100 and are currently shipped out weekly. Orders should provide tags for the upcoming year and not stockpiled. To receive these free tags, reach out to your private veterinarian to place an order. All accredited veterinarians in Kansas have received ordering information. For additional information, contact Karaline Mayer, ADT Coordinator, karaline.mayer@ks.gov, 785-313-0266.

Research on Lighting System Could Help Reduce Deer Collisions

K-State Wildlife Specialist Gives Overview of Emerging Technology

Anyone who has ever driven on a highway or rural road in the early morning or after dark – especially in the fall – has a pretty good idea of an ever-present, lurking danger.

According to the Kansas Department of Transportation, nearly one in six vehicle crashes across the state in 2018 involved a deer. That year, there were 10,734 crashes that were deer-related, roughly 16.5% of all reported crashes on the state’s roadways.

KDOT also notes that the majority of deer-vehicle collisions occur between October and December, when deer are mating and on the move, looking for secure habitat.

While a keen eye can help drivers avoid an unintended encounter, Kansas State University wildlife specialist Charlie Lee said early findings of a research project may provide a valuable assist.

“There is a project being done at the NASA Plum Brook Station near Sandusky, Ohio by scientists at the [National Wildlife Research Center](#), in which researchers are looking at ways to make vehicles more apparent to deer,” Lee said. He notes that deer may be disoriented by vehicle headlights and do not immediately recognize cars. Thus, cars become something of a “high speed predator” that deer fail to flee from until it’s too late.

The new study focuses on a lighting system for the car that illuminates a larger portion of the vehicle’s front surface than standard headlights alone. In early work, researchers have found that the new lighting system takes advantage of the deer’s ‘flight behavior,’ or its natural instinct to avoid predators.

“Their results are surprising in that the interactions between deer and vehicle decreased,” Lee said. “They considered a dangerous interaction to be when wildlife and a vehicle get within 50 meters of each other. That decreased with the use of light shining back toward the vehicle.”

In fact, the wildlife researchers noted a big difference: the number of dangerous interactions fell from 35% to 10%.

“The deer were perhaps better able to see the vehicle rather than being blinded by the lights,” Lee said. “They recognized it as something that was dangerous and got out of the way or did not cross the road in front of that vehicle.”

Previous methods to spook deer from the road – such as whistles, roadside reflectors and mirrors, repellants and others – don’t seem to work. “The only thing that seems to have been effective over the years is roadside fencing,” Lee said. “When you put adequate fencing up in the right locations with animal overpasses or underpasses, we seem to see a substantial reduction in collisions with animals.”

The National Wildlife Research Center is in the process of obtaining a patent for its lighting technology, so the product is not yet on the market, Lee said.

“They have said that future work is necessary to fine-tune the approach, keeping in mind whatever species is most at-risk,” he said.

Tips to Avoid Deer Collisions

The Kansas Department of Transportation offers the following tips to help drivers avoid collisions with deer:

- Be especially watchful at dawn and dusk.
- Watch for more than one deer, as they seldom travel alone.
- Reduce speed and be alert near wooded areas, green spaces and water sources.
- Reduce speed near areas where you see deer crossing signs, which indicate where high levels of deer/vehicles crashes have happened in the past.
- Use your bright lights to help detect deer as far ahead as possible.
- Always wear seatbelts, even if waiting in your car after a collision.

Calving School Coming to Dodge City

Make Plans to attend January 21, 2021

In anticipation of calving season, the Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry and K-State Research and Extension will be hosting 4 calving schools.

The program will outline the normal calving process as well as tips to handle difficult calving situations. A.J. Tarpoff, extension beef veterinarian, said the purpose of the event is to increase knowledge and practical skills and increase the number of live calves born. Experts will also share tips on when and how to intervene to assist the cow and how those times may be different when dealing with young heifers. Presenters will also demonstrate proper use of calving equipment on a life-size scale. For more information email aburns@ksu.edu.

Be looking for further information to be sent out concerning the upcoming Calving School.

Cattle Marketing & Tax Program

Free Online Program

Scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2020, starting at 7:00 p.m., the program will feature two speakers: Glynn Tonsor, Agriculture Economic Professor at Kansas State University and Clay Simon, Extension Agriculture Economist for Kansas Farm Management Association. Sponsored by K-State Research and Extension Districts: Central Kansas, Cottonwood, Midway, Post Rock and River Valley, there is no cost to join the meeting.

Due to COVID, this program is only available online. There will be time for interaction with the speakers, so bring your questions that relate to the topics.

Speaker Tonsor will discuss marking calves at fall weaning and wintering them for the spring market; while Simon will discuss end of the year tax planning. There will be time allotted for questions with each presenter.

Signup for the meeting now at www.bit.ly/ksucattle and you will be sent a link to join the meeting. If you need help joining the meeting or have further questions, contact any of the following Extension Agents:

- Alicia Boor, Cottonwood District, 620-793-1910
- Justine Henderson, Central KS District, 785-392-2147
- Clint Laflin, Midway District, 785-483-3157
- Brett Melton, River Valley District, 785-243-8185
- Sandra Wick, Post Rock District, 785-282-6823

Unwanted Trees? Time to Take Preventive Steps

K-State's Upham Outlines Controls for Volunteer Trees

Ward Upham has trees on his mind these days, but not necessarily the Christmas variety. And it's possible many homeowners should, too.

Upham, a horticulture expert at Kansas State University, said that although trees are a vital part of landscapes, there are situations where volunteer trees – saplings that come up from seeds by themselves in yards and gardens – need to be controlled.

“This is often the case of having the wrong plant in the wrong place,” Upham said. “If the tree is small and a desirable species, you may want to consider leaving it alone and transplanting it in the spring. But if not, then active control measures would be in order right now.”

Upham said cutting trees can be effective for those that do not resprout, such as the eastern redcedar. However, many other varieties resprout after cutting, including the Siberian elm, hackberry, Osage orange (hedgeball), oak, ash, aspen, cottonwood, maple, sycamore, willow and others.

“These trees will either need to be dug out, or the cut stump should be treated with herbicide after you cut it,” Upham said.

He noted that triclopyr and glyphosate are the herbicides most commonly available to homeowners. “Triclopyr is found in many brush killers and glyphosate is found in Roundup, as well as numerous other products,” Upham said.

It's important, he added, to read a product's label before purchasing to make sure that it is appropriate for treating a cut stump. The product can be applied with a paint brush, ideally within five minutes after cutting the stump.

“Trees do not need to be actively growing to be controlled,” Upham said. “Actually, this time of year is a very good time to treat as long as applications are made when the temperature is above freezing.”

Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes. The newsletter is [available to view online](#) or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden- and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu.

Online Pasture Management Meeting

Including Weed Control and ID

Join the Central Kansas, Cottonwood, Midway, Post Rock and River Valley K-State Research and Extension Districts on **Thursday, December 10, 2020 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. online with YouTube.**

Learn about pasture management practices along with grazing strategies, as well as weed identification and control recommendations with K-State Research and Extension agronomists. Due to the increase of COVID-19 cases throughout Kansas, the meeting will be “virtual learning” with YouTube LIVE. There will be an opportunity to ask questions.

There is no cost to attend nor RSVP required. Simply go to the Post Rock Extension District's webpage, www.postrock.ksu.edu, to register. A link connection will then be emailed to you. A LIVE YouTube connection will also be available at the Cottonwood Extension District Facebook page at www.cottonwood.ksu.edu.

Now That's Rural: Alan & Carol VanNahmen, RollBedder

"I need to reach the stuff in the back of my truck. If only I could get to it better." That statement could have served as the inspiration for this new innovative product which uses rollers to help truck owners access the material in their truck beds. Alan and Carol VanNahmen are the owners of this entrepreneurial company which produces this new product for truck beds. It's called RollBedder.

Alan grew up on a farm in southwest Kansas, attended Dodge City Community College and then Kansas State. He embarked on a career with Deere and Company which would take him across the United States and around the world – literally. Alan led initiatives for Deere and Company in France and China, for example. He later worked for a German company named Claas and at a research facility in Indiana before leaving corporate life.

Alan was also an inventor and entrepreneur. He served as a consultant on various projects such as the bi-rotor combine and the ARRO head harvesting system. As we have previously profiled, he founded the Farm Buddy company to help individual farmers advance their product ideas into corporate commercialization.

Growing up on the farm, Alan was frequently hauling things in pickup trucks. He designed side storage boxes along the side walls of the truck bed so as to carry tools and other supplies. When he and his wife started a family, his truck took on additional uses. With two growing sons, the truck carried camping and sports equipment. But when hauling supplies in the bed of his pickup truck, he encountered the same problem that I do: From the back end of the truck bed, it is hard to reach the things that slid to the front end of the truck bed. "Everybody has a challenge hauling their cargo," Alan said. "Stuff slides to the front and you can't retrieve it," he said.

Alan designed a simple and ingenious solution. He invented the RollBedder system on which he has a patent pending. It consists of a set of rollers on a miniature dolly which are placed down inside the grooves in a pickup truck bed floor, with a false floor or bedliner over the top. Then that temporary floor panel can easily be rolled in or out of the bed, making it possible to access the items sitting on it.

In August 2019, Alan founded RollBedder LLC. The business is based in Manhattan where Alan and his wife Carol live today. The name reflects the fact that the rollers enable better access to the truck bed. Alan pointed out several advantages of the RollBedder kit system. "This requires no tools, no drilling, and no modifications of the truck bed," Alan said. "It is a DIY self-installed rolling cargo system and is transferrable between vehicles." Alan also created the truck bed flooring panels called Bi-Liners. These are the plywood sheets that rest on the rollers. They are coated with polyethylene on the underside and carpet on the top. That keeps things from sliding or rattling around.

"I usually put a heavy toolbox or something on the front of the Bi-Liner so it can support several hundred pounds on the back as it rolls in and out," Alan said. "The RollBedder system allows easy access to cargo, tools, groceries, or whatever it might be. It's great for farmers, contractors, tailgaters or people making deliveries, and we've sure seen a lot of that this year," he said. Orders have come from across the country and as far away as Canada.

Alan had seen the need for this type of product firsthand, growing up on the farm near the rural community of Spearville, population 773 people. Now, that's rural.

For more information or to order, go to www.rollbedder.com. "I need the stuff in the bed of my truck. If only I could get to it better." Those types of statements reflect the need for this type of product. We commend Alan and Carol VanNahmen for making a difference with entrepreneurship and inventiveness. They've come up with a better idea. Now, they can let it roll.

After the Hunt

Hunting season is in full swing for a variety of wild game species. Take time to safely handle and preserve wild game to safely provide wholesome and nourishing food for family and friends. Always abide by hunting regulations.

Observe large animals for any disease. Watch for any unusual actions such as stumbling, tremors, excessive salivation, and other traits. Be cautious for signs of Chronic Wasting Disease.

Field dress animals as soon as possible and cool the animal quickly. Improper temperature is the meat's worst enemy. Be prepared with tools and equipment to transport it safely.

Key factors in keeping field dressed wild game safe are temperature control and preventing cross contamination. Meat is susceptible to foodborne pathogen contamination such as *E. coli* or *Salmonella*. This can come from the surroundings, from the gastrointestinal tract, or other handling and transport.

Start with proper equipment when going out hunting. Suggested equipment includes: sharp knives, small hatchet, several feet of rope or nylon cord, rubber bands, clean towels or paper towels, resealable bags, large cooler with lots of ice, disposable plastic gloves and fresh water.

Field dress as soon as possible and chill the carcass quickly with ice or snow. For more information on handling wild game, see the resources at www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/animal.html#game

Making Self-Care a Priority



Caring for ourselves should be a practice we engage in routinely. During challenging times that may be the first thing we take off of our schedule or to-do list. We have the best of intentions, but we easily replace it with another responsibility or to-do.

Self-Care Tips

Self-care is something we do intentionally to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing. Self-care looks differently for everyone. Your self-care plan needs to be customized to your needs, but should ensure that you are caring for your mind, body and spirit. Here are some tips to help you intentionally care for yourself:

- Schedule time for yourself in your daily schedule. Allot some time for yourself each day when you don't obligate yourself to anything. Give yourself total freedom to enjoy one of your favorite activities or states of being.
- Practice self-care first thing in the morning. This could be as simple as five minutes of meditation, prayer, or breath work. It might be journaling or writing down three things you are grateful for.
- Don't be afraid to try new methods or strategies for self-care. There are numerous videos and apps for mind-body methods, stress management, physical activity, etc.
- Remember self-care also includes making healthy eating choices, being physically active, getting sufficient sleep, and getting regular health care check-ups and screenings.

If you already have a self-care practice you engage in routinely, keep it up. If not, I challenge you to incorporate at least one within the next week.

"There is enough time for self-care. There is not enough time to make up for the life you'll miss by not filling yourself up." — Jennifer Williamson

Additional Resources:

[My Coping Strategies Plan](#)

[Keys to Embrace Aging: Taking Time for You](#)

Prepared by Rebecca McFarland, Frontier Extension District, Family and Child Development. March 2020, KSRE Tuesday Letter, Tuesday Health and Wellness Tidbits. KSRE Stress and Resiliency Transdisciplinary Team.

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December 2020/January 2021

The last newsletter for 2020! This newsletter contains information on upcoming meetings. I hope you will take time out to check out what's inside. Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season!

Save the Date...

**January 21st
Calving School
Location TBD
Dodge City KS**

The goal is to have this meeting in person and to also provide a link for virtual viewing. We will abide by the local mask regulations. Be watching for more information!

Sincerely,



Andrea Burns
Ford County Extension Agent
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