



The Fork in the Road provides fresh produce and home-cooked meals

By Donna Sullivan,
Editor

The fact that she loves growing food and preparing it into sumptuous feasts is something Valerie Visser of Riley attributes to her parents.

"There's something so rewarding about planting seeds, nurturing them and watching them grow, and then reaping the rewards of that work," she quoted her father as saying in an essay she wrote for her high school English class. The passion with which he spoke the words has stayed with her ever since.

Then her mother would take the food grown on their farm near Selden and turn it into three square meals a day for her family of ten. "I'm still convinced she has superpowers," Val wrote on her website.

Val has combined those two loves into a business that benefits the whole surrounding community, in an area that, until the recent addition of a Dollar General, could have qualified as a food desert, with the nearest grocery stores at least 15 miles away in Manhattan.

In a little cottage with a bright pink door, Val and her husband Justin have established The Fork in the Road, a self-service market offering fresh produce and made-from-scratch food. Along what she grows in her own garden in the summer, she is able to order all kinds of fruits and vegetables year-round. "I order things that are popular and that I would buy," she said. "Like apples, bananas, carrots and celery, that kind of thing. I don't want things that are expensive or have a short shelf life, because I want to avoid waste. Another thing I consider is, if it doesn't sell and gets a little past its prime, can I turn it into something else?"

Val graduated from high school in 2006 and came to Kansas State University. Beginning as an architecture major, she eventually switched to education, then realized that although she has a great respect for teachers, that was simply not her calling. She began working on the Vissers farm, then she and Justin began dating. She left college when they got engaged. She turned the basement of their home into

a commercial kitchen and began making and selling the Satisfiers cookie dough that her parents make, expanding their business into this corner of the state. She did that until they began having children and it became harder to carve out the time needed to make the dough and fill the orders.

She then turned her attention to their garden and started selling the excess vegetables at a stand at the end of their driveway. When the wind kept damaging their tents, she decided a more durable option was needed and, with a bit of help from her brother Andrew Broeckelman, turned an old pickup truck into a food stand in August of 2015. A cash box and scale allowed people to purchase the vegetables on the honor system, and Val never felt like it was taken advantage of. She used the truck for two years, then took a year off to help Justin and his dad on the farm when their hired man quit right before fall harvest. She helped through that fall harvest, then all through the year to the following harvest. And while she enjoyed helping out on the farm, she knew that isn't her calling. "I really wanted to be growing and selling vegetables, catering and being at home, running a business," she said. "Because being away from home was not easy." This past summer, The Fork in the Road truck was back in business, but the truck itself was starting to show wear and tear, and Val began dreaming of a building a permanent structure.

It was at a Women's Encounter with Christ event that Val came to a turning point. "I felt like I was being asked to turn it over to God," she reflected. Her hesitation in surrendering her dream stemmed from the fact that she was afraid God would put a stop to it. "When I did the cookie dough, there was a very clear moment where I felt like God was telling me to shut it down," she recalled. "I was afraid that would happen again if I turned this over to God, so I didn't."

But then she did.

"I said to God, 'If you want me to do it, I will do it the way you want me to,'" Val said. "I know it sounds crazy, but it was

Agriculture's woes drag down Kansas personal income growth

(AP) - Personal income growth in Kansas is below the national average largely because of troubles in agriculture.

Kansas farmers face an expanding drought and low commodity prices, though a break in an ongoing tariff dispute may bring those prices up. Agriculture makes up about 40% of the state's economy, with industries related to agriculture and food production worth about \$65 billion annually.

Kansas Public Radio reports that the state's personal income has grown by 1.6% since late 2007, when



Valerie and Justin Visser are shown with their children, Samuel, 7, Jeremiah, 8 and Ella, 4, in front of The Fork in the Road market this fall.

Photos by Donna Sullivan



A wide variety of fresh produce is available, along with homemade rolls, soups, pies and casseroles.

like I heard, 'Okay, thank you, that's what I've been wanting. Now that you have the Master Builder on board, let's get to work.'"

Once the project was surrendered, Val says she didn't think about it as much, and things just started falling into place. "The design of the building, where we put it and everything," she said. Tyler Eakes, who was building it for her, encouraged her to

go ahead and add electricity so she could have air conditioning, refrigeration and freezers.

Along with the fresh produce, The Fork in the Road offers the Satisfiers cookie dough, homemade pies, cinnamon rolls, bicrocks, soups and casseroles. In fact, it's the homemade meals that sell the best. "I had a note from a lady in Clay Center that works in Manhattan," Val

described. "She told how she can get home and throw them in the oven, get baths and homework done, then sit the family down for a hot, nutritious meal."

Sitting beside the market is a gazebo made from an old grain bin, where Val hopes busy parents can sit and relax, making out their menus and shopping list as their children play on a nearby sandpile. This spring she will have a large

the Great Recession started. The national rate is 2.1%.

"Farmers have bills to pay," Kansas Wheat Commission CEO Justin Gilpin said. "Ultimately, what we need to do is hopefully see commodity prices somewhat bottom out here and get trade going."

The blow to farmers has been softened by a total of \$732 million in federal trade-bailout money in 2019 alone.

But agriculture's troubles in Kansas also come with problems for another major sector of the state's economy, aviation. Boeing plans to halt production

of its troubled 737 Max in January and Kansas may start paying workers at Wichita-based Spirit AeroSystems, which makes their fuselages.

Joanna Biernacka-Lievestro of the Pew Charitable Trusts said the Kansas farm industry was "the biggest drag on personal income growth over the past year."

While all states have seen their economies grow since the Great Recession, Kansas had the eighth-worst personal income growth in the nation over the last year. Biernacka-Lievestro said the Midwest "lags the

country in total personal income growth over the past year."

Kansas Department of Agriculture Economist Peter Oppelt said low commodity prices mean farmers take home less money while costs keep rising for seed, fertilizer and labor.

"If the farming sector is not doing well, those farmers aren't going to go out and buy a new truck or they may not eat out as much at a restaurant," Oppelt said. "The rest of that community is going to feel the effects."

A nearly two-year-old trade fight with China has

led to tit-for-tat tariffs affecting U.S. agriculture exports. Gilpin said he hopes it's temporary pain as the U.S. started forging a truce with China in mid-December. Farmers also might benefit from the impact of renegotiated deals with Japan and Korea.

The U.S. House also recently gave President Donald Trump a big bipartisan victory by approving a renegotiated trade agreement with Canada and Mexico, and the Senate is expected to consider it after the holidays. They are the two top destinations for Kansas crops.

People in Riley and the surrounding communities have wholeheartedly embraced The Fork in the Road, and many travelers have stopped in as well. "The enthusiasm and support from the local community has been overwhelming, more than I ever could have imagined," Val said.

While some might question the honor system way of doing business, it works for Val, as people weigh their own produce, calculate their tabs and leave the money in the box. She can't tell where there has been any problems at all, and she's really not worried about it.

"I'm not doing this to be a big money-maker," she said. "But because it's what I feel like I'm called to do."



Roaring into the 20s

By Jackie Mundt, Pratt County farmer and rancher

Almost 15 years ago, I gave what would be one of the most important speeches of my career at the National FFA Convention. I agonized over creating the right message in hopes of making a lasting impact.

Years later, I watched another FFA member give the exact same speech. It had different stories, but the main points and overall message were the same. I was shocked because there was no way that

this FFA member heard my speech. Their own life experiences must have led them to the same thoughts I had more than a decade prior.

Maybe it is a function of human nature or the product of a constant struggle to achieve the things we yearn for like success, love or the American Dream; ideas and lessons are rarely completely original or unique. Humans throughout history seem to live the same stories and plots repeatedly.

A few weeks ago, in my preoccupation with the too-

short span between Thanksgiving and Christmas, I received invitations to multiple Roaring Twenties-themed New Year's Eve parties. What an original idea (at least to me), to celebrate a time that history books hailed as a time of whimsy, spectacle and entertainment.

Since then, this idea that history repeats itself and has been on my mind. What will the 2020s have in common with the 1920s, and, more importantly, what can be learned from a decade that earned the moniker "roaring"?

This curiosity led me to a brief internet refresher because the attributes filling my mind were all the Great Gatsby. My search revealed interesting facts and similarities to modern life in this gap between World War I and the Great Depression.

Like today, there was a presidential election. Warren Harding's successful campaign used the slogan "Return to Normalcy," painting a nostalgic picture of life before WW I, which ended a year earlier. Harding called for politics that were, "not the dramatic, but the dispassionate" and for people to remember that "human ills are not curable by legislation... excess of government offer(s) no substitute for quality of citizenship." President Harding was popular until scandals came to light after his death in 1923.

The title roaring came from all of the excitement of the time. The economy was grow-

ing. New products like automobiles, moving pictures and radio brought "modernity" to the masses. Social change was prevalent with women winning the right to vote in many states and national debates taking place about prohibition, immigration, political corruption and industrialization. It was the age of Gatsby with jazz, art deco, flappers and speakeasys. The decade has a larger-than-life zeitgeist.

The Roaring Twenties had a definitive and halting end. All that prosperity and liveliness faded with the crash of the stock market in October of 1929 and a new era of hardship and scarcity in the Great Depression.

Parallels exist between the two times. Politicians are

human, and humans are fallible. Some people still yearn for normalcy, while others desire social and political change. Technology and the economy have points of great growth, but that will not last forever.

My takeaway is simple. Spirit, not circumstance, can define people. Times will be both better and worse in my future. Be thankful for your current blessings and live life generously and fully at all times.

"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.

KDHE alerts consumers to recall

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) would like to alert consumers that a voluntary recall was issued on Monday, December 30, 2019, by Clay Center Locker Plant for any ready-to-eat product including smoked pork loins, ham hocks, and smoked ham from the Clay Center Locker Plant located at 212 6th Street, Clay Center, Kansas, produced on November 21, 2019, because of potential contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. KDHE urges the public not to consume any product that will be part of this recall. This includes products purchased at the retail counter in the plant and the hams that were delivered to the Future Farmers of America Clay Center and Chapman chapters.

This recall was initiated after *Listeria monocytogenes* was found in a food sample tested as part of a routine sampling program by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. All known affected distributors and retail and food service customers are being notified. Some of the products were sold through FFA chapters in Chapman and Clay Center. To date, no illnesses have been linked with this recall.

Listeria monocytogenes is an organism that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in pregnant women, newborns, elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Although healthy individuals rarely become ill, older persons and those with weakened immune systems may suffer high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Listeriosis can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women. Symptoms begin from three to 70 days after consuming the bacteria. *Listeria* cannot be spread from person to person.

Anyone who believes they may have become ill with listeriosis should contact their health care provider. For questions related to the recalled products, consumers can contact Clay Center Locker Plant at 785-632-5550. For questions about listeriosis, please visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/listeria or call the KDHE epidemiology hotline at 877-427-7317.

Bill ensures shared FDA, USDA oversight of lab-grown meat

U.S. senators Jon Tester (D., Mont.) and Mike Enzi (R., Wyo.) introduced a bill to ensure transparency in a new line of food products created using animal cell culture technology.

Tester and Enzi's Food Safety Modernization for Innovative Technologies Act works to ensure that an agreement between the Food & Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture — designed to ensure that products are safe and accurately labeled — would have legal authority over animal cell-based products created in a laboratory rather than raised on a ranch.

S.B. 3053, introduced by Enzi and Tester, would ensure that the agreement between the two agencies has the force of law. The Meat & Poultry Inspection Act clearly

indicates that cell culture products (CCPs) should be under the oversight of USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS), while FDA will have a role in ensuring that the ingredients used in the manufacture of such products are safe.

Cell culture technology allows developers to lab-produce consumable animal tissue from cell cultures, which could become purchasable in grocery stores within the coming years. Under the agreement, FDA would be charged with overseeing the process of multiplying collected cells to make tissue, and USDA would oversee processing, packaging and labeling. FDA would oversee all phases of development and production for products not derived from livestock or poultry cells.

"When it comes to mak-

ing products from these cells, only FSIS has the capability to provide continuous, risk-based inspection and apply strict labeling standards that will ensure consumer awareness of what CCP is and how it's produced," the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) said in a statement.

NPPC noted that on March 7, 2019, FDA and FSIS signed a formal agreement to regulate CCPs. The agreement was designed to leverage the expertise of both agencies to protect the country's food supply and provide safe and accurately labeled products.

"It's critical that product names and label claims protect the investments livestock farmers have made to establish a definition of meat protein that is widely understood by consumers," NPPC said.

"Emerging technologies may reshape the food industry in the coming years," Enzi said. "Existing food safety laws were drafted long before these technologies were contemplated. Our legislation would create an up-to-date framework in law so agencies appropriately work together to ensure folks know what they are eating and that it is safe."

In a media call on Dec. 18, Nick Giordano, NPPC vice president and counsel, global government affairs, said getting oversight established at FSIS remains paramount to the pork industry. "We have no problem with competition; we just want to make sure our producers are on a level playing field. They want to call themselves meat. Fine, but you're going to get regulated under the same rigorous oversight at that we are at the Food Safety & Inspection Service," Giordano said.



I have settled into my winter chores. The ewes are all home and about to start lambing any day and the cows are into their calving pastures but about six weeks from calving getting kicked off. That means I am getting into the routine of winter chores and feeding. I noticed a funny pattern a few weeks ago but I kept my thoughts to myself; it wasn't until Tatum came home from college that I shared my observations with anyone else.

Every morning my routine is pretty much the same. Of course, each morning usually brings its own little twist, like cows being out, waterers being frozen or any one of a dozen maladies or pitfalls that generally sidetrack me each morning. However, I am a creature of habit and generally my chore routine is always the same.

I start off by feeding the ewes. If I don't, I am afraid that they will tear the pens down. Sheep are very needy animals and equally as impatient. Then, after I get done throwing feed to the ewes (a time period I refer to as the silence of the lambs, which also induces an eye-roll from whoever is helping me) I move on to the chickens, followed by the cat and dogs. Then I fill a bucket with three scoops of sweet feed for the horses and a bucket of grain for my bulls.

I leave my house and drive a circuit that takes me by all three groups of cows to make sure they are where they are supposed to be and to survey how many bales they might need that afternoon. I feed the bulls because I need their five-gallon bucket later; we all know what kind of valuable commodity five-gallon buckets are and I need eight of them. Once every three days the bulls need water unless someone else has taken the initiative and filled it up sooner.

Then I go to Dad's house and fill up my eight buckets with calf feed. The horses are at the same place the calves are, so I feed them as I open the gate. Then my last chore of the morning is to feed the weaned calves. My entire circuit is carefully planned out to minimize travel and to make the most efficient use of my time. It will remain that way until I start lambing and once again change when we start calving. I am nothing if not a man of routine and habit.

Something else came to my attention very early on this year, a strange occur-

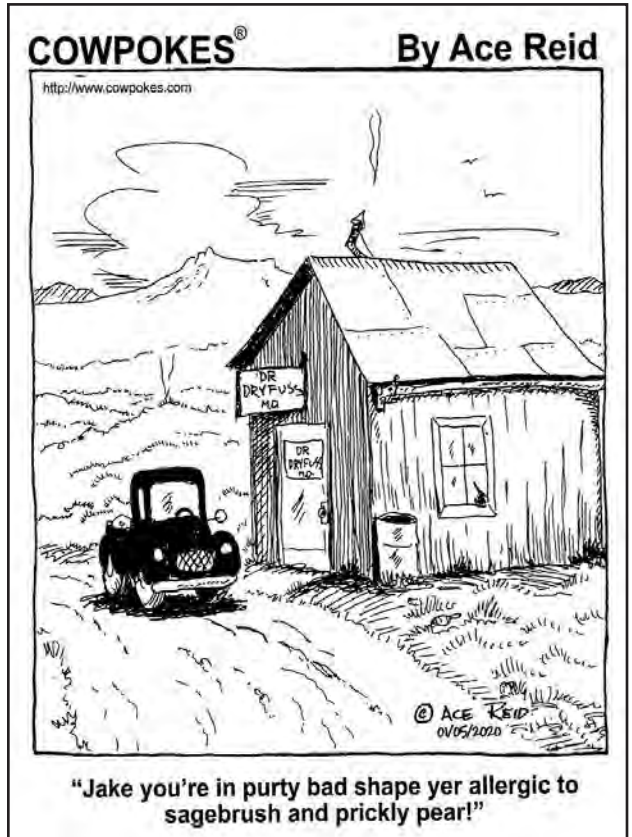
rence that I considered an anomaly but soon I recognized as a pattern. No matter what I do, when I start or what happens, I finish chores somewhere between 9:00 and 9:30 each morning. Almost every morning I start between 7:00 and 7:30 depending on the daylight but occasionally it might be a little earlier or a little later depending on what is going on in my life. Some mornings I must water something and occasionally there will be a cow or ewe out that will necessitate mending fence.

Occasionally I will run into a neighbor and we will discuss matters of importance. According to Jennifer this happens quite often and lasts longer than I admit. I am also prone to getting phone calls and texts during this time and because of my extreme lack of coordination I must stop what I am doing and answer them.

Tatum came home from college a few days before Christmas and volunteered to help with chores each morning. There is nothing better than the kids coming home from college eager and wanting to help with chores and work on the farm, at least that is what I have heard. In any case, Tatum has been going with me each morning on my same route. I assumed that extra help would make chores go faster but to my chagrin we continued to pull into the yard between 9:00 and 9:30 each morning regardless of what challenges the morning had presented.

I shared my observation with her after a couple of days and soon we began to monitor the finish time of chores each morning. Without fail, we pull up to the shop at my house at about 9:15 each and every morning. Tatum is also without explanation of why or how this happens. We have even tried to streamline the chores more by doing things ahead the night before and without fail chores will be done at the same time.

I don't have an answer as to why this happens every morning and Tatum has admitted that she is a bit baffled too. I chalk it up to be a creature of habit and maybe varying my speed (from slow to a fast slow) depending on what challenges await or appear. In the end, I just must take pride in, if nothing else, being consistent. At least that is my story, and I am sticking to it.



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Kansas Agri-Women honored at national convention

Members of Kansas Agri-Women (KAW) were recognized at the 44th national convention of American Agri-Women (AAW), held recently in Tigard, Oregon. Jean Goslin of Dwight, received the LEAVEN award, the national organization's highest honor for members. Lesley Schmidt of Park City was installed for the second year of her two-year term as AAW vice president of education. Both Goslin and Schmidt are past presidents of KAW.

KAW was also awarded a mini-grant toward its "One Kansas Farmer Feeds" project. The project is known for its highway billboard signs and the signs are now available as posters. KAW, which is now in its 45th year, is planning to share the posters state-wide as part of its continuing efforts to support its mission: "From Producer to Consumer With Understanding." Those interested in receiving posters can contact Jean Goslin at dbrokenbar@msn.com.

Jean Goslin and Lynn Woolf, Milton, were also



Lesley Schmidt of Park City (left), was recently installed for the second year of her 2-year term as vice president of education for American Agri-Women. Schmidt is a member of Kansas Agri-Women. Also pictured are Katie Yost of Montana, treasurer; Karolyn Zurn of Minnesota, president; Jane Marshall of Ohio, first vice president; Carie M. Moore of North Dakota, vice president of communications; and Jeanette Lombardo of California, past president.

recognized for their work on the "Cultivating Resiliency" project, a nationwide effort to help those in agriculture

cope with stress. The project includes webinars and interactive sessions to help people focus on what they can

control in these challenging times and help connect them to resources.



Kansas Agri-Women member Jean Goslin of Dwight (right) receives the LEAVEN award from LEAVEN Committee Chair Kim Schmuhl. The award is American Agri-Women's (AAW) highest honor for members. Kansas Agri-Women is a state affiliate of AAW.

National Pork Producers Council: ready to play offense in 2020

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) says they are ready to play offense in 2020.

"They say defense wins championships," says David Herring, NPPC president and a hog farmer from Lillington, N.C. "Frankly, when it comes to trade, we're tired of playing defense and hope 2020 is a year of progress and a strong offensive performance."

NPPC was pleased with the announcement of a phase one trade deal with China that will reportedly benefit U.S. pork and looks forward to learning more of the details, Herring says.

"China represents an unparalleled opportunity for U.S. pork producers to provide the highest quality and most affordable pork

in the world. It's no secret that China needs reliable, affordable sources of pork. No source is better positioned to meet this need than American hog farmers," he adds.

Nick Giordano, NPPC vice president and counsel, global government affairs, says U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer indicated that the U.S. is going to play some offense both with the United Kingdom and the European Union.

"That's really welcome news for producers," Giordano says. "We really ship very little pork to Europe both because of tariffs and non-tariff measures. This is a constant theme across U.S. agriculture so we're looking forward to FTA negotiations with the United Kingdom."

Beyond the United Kingdom and the EU, NPPC has identified a number of countries, most of which are in Southeast Asia, where U.S. pork stands to benefit. Giordano notes Vietnam and the Philippines but says there is a whole list of opportunities.

As 2020 approaches, NPPC revealed its top eight priorities:

Implementation of the USMCA and Japan trade agreements.

Gain unrestricted market access in China to address its need for affordable pork.

Play offense on trade by expanding export opportunities in the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, etc.

Continue prevention efforts for ASF and other foreign animal diseases.

Establish regulatory oversight of gene-edited livestock with the USDA.

Find a solution for livestock agriculture's labor shortage.

Advance their legal challenge of California's Proposition 12.

Reauthorize the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act.

"I am confident that NPPC will successfully face these and other issues of importance for U.S. pork," Herring says.

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Watch the first issue of every month, as we will continue to feature vintage clippings like the ones below!

1966

STILL A USE FOR WORK HORSES. Wesley Millick of Centralia in Nemaha County still finds a use for work horses. He uses them every morning for feeding chores. Millick, who raises Hereford cattle, keeps four work horses and two sorrel horses for pleasure riding.

All Farmers And Their Families
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Wamego's New Fertilizer Bulk Blending Mill

1966

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1966

OLD-TIME HARNESS SHOP. You could buy harness at the Roper Shop in Barnes in Washington County before the turn of the century and you still can. The business now of course mostly runs to saddles and riding equipment, but Floyd Roper says he still gets occasional calls for harness repair. Since 1937 Floyd has operated the business started by his father. Shown with him are friends James Reece and Vic Claeys. Reece is a retired school superintendent and Claeys a retired farmer and longtime customer.

1966

PREPARING TO LOAD CATTLE. Charles Nanninga, Leo Hageman and Glen Q. Walter, all of Leonardville, prepare to load cattle for market. The cattle belong to Walter.

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Mary Bogren, Burlingame, Wins First Grass & Grain Recipe Contest In 2020
 Winner Mary Bogren, Burlingame:

7-LAYER DIP
 (2) cans bean dip or (1) can refried beans mixed with green chiles
 Avocado dip or 3 medium avocados
 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 Taco seasoning
 8-ounce container sour cream
 1 cup mayonnaise
 Green onions, chopped
 6-ounce can black olives, chopped
 3 tomatoes, seeded & chopped
 8 ounces shredded Cheddar cheese

On a platter spread out a layer of bean dip or refried beans mixed with chiles. Combine avocado dip or crushed avocados with lemon juice and layer on top of beans. Mix sour cream, mayonnaise and taco seasoning and make another layer. Top with green onions, olives, tomatoes and cheese. Chill and serve.

 Kellee George, Shawnee, shares the following recipe:

HAM LOAF
 3 3/4-pound ham, ground
 1 pound fresh pork
 1 quart milk
 1/4 cup mustard
 1 quart bread crumbs
 Topping:
 1 3/4 cups brown sugar
 2 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard
 1/2 cup vinegar
 1 can pineapple chunks

Mix ground ham, pork, milk, mustard and bread crumbs together. Make into 3 loaves. Use a 9-by-13-inch pan. Combine topping ingredients and pour over loaves. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

 Nancy Rhodes, Abilene:
YUMMY CHICKEN & DUMPLING SOUP
 3/4 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into

1-inch cubes
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1/8 teaspoon pepper
 2 teaspoons olive oil
 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth, divided
 1 cup water
 2 cups frozen french-cut green beans
 1 1/2 cups sliced onions
 1 cup shredded carrots
 1/4 teaspoon dried marjoram
 2/3 cup reduced-fat biscuit/baking mix
 1/3 cup cornmeal
 1/4 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
 1/3 cup fat-free milk

Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. In a large nonstick skillet heat oil on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir until no longer pink. Remove from heat. In a large saucepan whisk flour and 1/2 cup broth until smooth. Stir in water and remaining broth. Add beans, onions, carrots and marjoram. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Add chicken; return to a simmer. Meanwhile in a small bowl mix biscuit mix, cornmeal and cheese. Stir in milk just until moistened. Drop batter in 12 portions on top of the simmering soup. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 15 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of dumpling comes out clean.

 Kimberly Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma:
LEMON BREAD
 1 package lemon cake mix with pudding
 1 small package instant lemon pudding
 3/4 cup oil
 1 cup water
 4 eggs
 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
 5 teaspoons poppy seeds
 Glaze:
 1/2 cup sugar
 3 tablespoons lemon juice

Put all bread ingredients in a bowl and beat at medium speed for 4 minutes. Grease and flour 2 loaf pans. Split batter equally and bake at 350 degrees for 50-55 minutes. Before removing from pans prick top of loaves with a fork. Make glaze by stirring sugar and lemon juice until the sugar is completely dissolved. Heat mixture 30 seconds in microwave. Drizzle over loaves.

Bernadetta McCollum, Clay Center:
CHICKEN ALMOND CASSEROLE
 4 chicken breasts
 1/3 cup chopped onion
 2 cups Minute Rice (uncooked)
 1 cup chopped celery
 3/4 cup mayonnaise
 2 cans cream of chicken soup (undiluted)
 1 package slivered almonds
 1 stick butter
 1 1/2 cups Rice Krispies

Cook chicken and save 2 cups chicken broth. Dice chicken and mix with broth and all other ingredients except butter and Rice Krispies. Melt butter and mix with Rice Krispies. Pour chicken mixture into casserole dish. Top with Rice Krispies. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

 Rose Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma:
HOMINY CASSEROLE
 4 slices bacon
 2 onions, chopped
 1 green pepper, chopped
 29-ounce can hominy, drained
 10-ounce can Ro-tel
 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Cook bacon until crisp; drain, reserving drippings. Crumble bacon and set aside. Add onions and peppers to drippings and saute until tender. Stir in remaining ingredients except cheese. Heat over medium heat until mixture bubbles. Remove from heat. Pour into 2 1/2-quart casserole. Put cheese on top and bake 20 minutes at 350 degrees.

 The remaining recipes are from Darlene Thomas, Delphos, that submitted a large amount of holiday recipes. Save them for next year or enjoy these anytime!
BEEF FONDUE WITH MUSTARD MAYONNAISE SAUCE
 1 cup mayonnaise
 2 tablespoons horseradish mustard or spicy brown mustard
 2 teaspoons finely chopped onion
 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 1 1/2 pounds beef tenderloin, cut into 3/4-inch cubes

Oil for deep-fat frying
 In a small bowl combine the mayonnaise, onion, lemon juice and mustard; cover and refrigerator for 30 minutes. Pat meat dry with paper towels. Heat oil in a fondue pot to 375 degrees. Use fondue forks to cook meat in oil until it reaches desired doneness. Serve with sauce. Makes 6 servings.

NOTE: To make ahead prepare sauce the day before serving. Keep refrigerated.

STEAK HOUSE SNACK MIX
 4 cups Wheat Chex
 4 cups Rice Chex
 2 cups cheese crackers
 1 cup fat-free miniature pretzels
 6 tablespoons butter, cut up
 3 tablespoons steak sauce
 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 1 cup French-fried onions
 1 cup salted peanuts
 3 teaspoons onion powder
 2 teaspoons garlic powder

In a large microwave-safe bowl combine the cereals, crackers and pretzels. In a small microwave-safe bowl melt butter. Stir in the steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce and cayenne; pour over cereal mixture and toss to coat. Microwave uncovered on high for 4 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. Add the fried onions, peanuts, onion powder and garlic powder. Toss to coat. Spread onto waxed paper to cool. Store in an air-tight container. Yield: 2 1/2 quarts.

COCONUT CHOCOLATE-COVERED CHERRIES

1/2 cup butter, softened
 3 3/4 cups powdered sugar
 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 2 cups flaked coconut
 2 cups finely chopped walnuts
 (2) 16-ounce jars maraschino cherries with stems, well-drained & patted dry
 (2) 11 1/2-ounce packages milk chocolate chips
 1 tablespoon shortening
 In a large bowl beat butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Beat in milk and vanilla until well-blended and mixture looks like softened butter. Fold in the coconut and walnuts. With moist hands shape 2 teaspoonfuls of coconut mixture around each cherry forming a ball. Place on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until chilled. In a microwave melt chocolate

chips and shortening. Stir until smooth. Dip cooled cherries into chocolate. Place on waxed paper. Let stand until set. Store in an air-tight container at room temperature for up to 1 month. Yield: about 5 dozen.

CHERRY PISTACHIO BARK

(2) 10- to 12-ounce packages vanilla or white chips
 12 ounces white candy coating, chopped
 1 1/4 cups dried cherries, chopped
 1 1/4 cups pistachios, chopped
 Line a 15-by-10-by-1-inch pan with foil; set aside. In a microwave-safe dish melt chips and candy coating. Stir until smooth. Stir in the cherries and pistachios. Spread into prepared pan. Refrigerate for 20 minutes. Using a sharp knife score surface of candy about 1/8-inch deep making diamond shapes. Refrigerate 40 minutes longer or until set. Cut along scored lines into diamonds. Store in an air-tight container in the refrigerator. Yield: 3 pounds.

JEWELED FRUITCAKE

(2) 8-ounce packages pitted dates, chopped
 1/2 pound pecan halves
 1/2 pound Brazil nuts
 10-ounce jar red maraschino cherries, well-drained
 10-ounce jar green maraschino cherries, well-drained
 1/2 cup flaked coconut
 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 1/2 cups sugar
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon salt
 3 eggs
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 Line four greased and floured 5 3/4-by-3-by-2-inch loaf pans with waxed paper and grease the paper; set aside. In a large bowl combine the dates, nuts, cherries and coconut. Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt; stir into fruit mixture until well coated. In a small bowl beat eggs and vanilla until foamy. Fold into fruit mixture and mix well. Pour into prepared pans. Bake at 300 degrees for 60 to 70 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Wrap tightly and store in a cool dry place. Cut with a serrated knife. Yield: 4 mini loaves (6 slices each).

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MANHATTAN - A new year is often the time when people make resolutions to exercise more, eat healthier or save more money.

But Kansas State University child development specialist Bradford Wiles says one of the best resolutions that parents can make is to strengthen the connection with their children.

"The biggest thing that I would advocate for is intentionality," Wiles said. "What we know about parenting is that oftentimes we react and are working toward meeting needs without considering all of the other things that are part of those interactions." "But," he adds, "if I could wave a magic wand, I would say if you are going to have a resolution, then resolve to work directly with your child and be intentional in your interactions with them."

For parents, that could mean making additional time to read to young children, or involving them in preparing their lunch. Even young children can help with laundry by putting their folded clothes into their drawers.

"Kids want to be like mom and dad, or like aunt and uncle," Wiles said. "It's our job to show them how to do that, to be really intentional - and the greatest thing is that it is its own reward. When you're doing that and they're paying attention and you're able to build that bond, it is good for parents, too. It's not just children that benefit."

He adds: "We do that pretty well during the holidays; you know, we take them to other people's houses for celebrations ... But throughout the year is a great time to continue to do that, to continue to have them involved. That's how you build that positive relationship. Not only the time, but quality time. So being intentional, and including children in the things you do is such a tremendous way to build a great relationship."

As parents interact with their children more purposefully, the child also begins to develop more self-worth, Wiles said.

"I vividly remember vacuuming with my mother and feeling like I was contributing in that way, and

building self-esteem and self-efficacy," he said. "It's really crucial for children to be able to identify with things that are good."

As children grow, parents can also be intentional in how they increase their helping skills. For example, younger children may first be taught to wash spoons, but as they grow older, they can move up to forks and knives. And when the child does well, help them understand why it was a job well done.

"Use the word 'because,'" Wiles said. "Children may not understand 'why' things were great. So tell them, 'you did a good job because you used the towel the way I showed you,' or, 'you put enough soap into the basin. ...'

"It's about helping them understand that you care about their development. As a parent, you are always modeling behaviors and providing feedback, and helping them understand why things are 'good.'"

Wiles also said parents should be intentional in putting down electronic devices in favor of spending time with children. He said when parents are constantly looking at phones or tablets, "you're modeling this as socially acceptable."

"You are essentially saying that 'whatever is on the phone or tablet is more important than you are,' and I just don't think that is the message we want to convey," Wiles said. "I would submit that we have plenty of time for that after our children go to bed. It is important for us to pay attention and be intentional and engaged because it goes by very quickly. It makes a big difference in our children's lives."

Wiles adds: "Positive attention goes a long way in preventing behavior problems. At our core, we want to be loved and we want attention from our loved ones. Children will certainly remind you of that, and I think it's good that you want to be there for them. One of the greatest things to honor that is you can show them that they're valued."

More information and tips for raising healthy families is available online from K-State's School of Family Studies and Human Services.



Home and Away

New Year, New You

By Lou Ann Thomas

Happy 2020! I hope this year is already offering you hope and goodness. And if you made any resolutions, I hope that you are still sticking to them. But if you aren't, welcome to the rest of us. Studies indicate less than a quarter of us stay committed to our resolutions beyond 30 days and only eight percent of us see them through to completion. So why do we continue to make them every year? I guess we're

a hopeful people.

The tradition of making New Year's resolutions dates back to the early Babylonians, who first observed New Year's about 4,000 years ago. The most popular resolution for those Babylonians was to return borrowed farm equipment. Today's No. 1 resolution is to lose weight, which is far more challenging than returning a borrowed rake or ox.

Because of this focus on weight loss and fitness

goals, the media is bursting with ads for gyms, fitness centers and weight loss aids all promising results. I see a grand business opportunity in this. I'm thinking of opening a gym for the first two months of the year, then turning it into a bar for the rest of it.

Weight loss is on everyone's mind at the beginning of the year because most of us gain an average of seven to 10 pounds from Thanksgiving to the new year. Unfortunately, research indicates that few of us lose those pounds, and like rings on a tree, each year we add another layer, until we find ourselves stuck in our recliners unable to budge our ever-expanding girth.

Making changes to our diet and lifestyle that will foster better health and weight loss, if needed, is honorable and could add years to our lives. It would certainly add joy to what-

ever years we have left. But making a resolution, like "I'm never going to eat sugar again" is likely only setting ourselves up to feel failure and to then numb those feelings with Snickers bars.

A new year is a great time to set goals and make intentions to better ourselves with a healthier diet and habits, or to save money, or learn better relationship skills, or whatever we would like to improve. But every day is a new day, so we can decide to make positive changes any day of the year and don't need to create a heap of pressure for ourselves at the dawning of fresh, new year.

So happy new and gentle year, and for those of us ready to make some changes, whether it's losing weight, quitting smoking, or getting that farm equipment back to its rightful owners, happy new you.

Make A Map For Your Wellness This Season

By Tara Solomon-Smith, Adult Development and Aging Agent, Wildcat Extension District

The end of another year and the beginning of the new often goes by in a blur because of all we have to do in this season. I am the queen of to-lists and get quite a bit of satisfaction out of crossing items off. This can help in busy times, however, I heard some insights from K-State Research and Extension's Behavioral Health Specialist, Brad Dirks, which reminded me to add self-care to the routine.

Stress has great impact on all areas of life which is why it is so important to work to tame it. Relationships, physical health, and job performance can each be negatively affected. Practicing self-care on a regular basis can make life's stressors more manageable. Just like we are each unique,

your wellness will be look different than your friends and family.

Taking action for your wellness will be a journey and like most things in life will not be a straight line. So how do we get there? Create a road map by asking yourself the following questions.

1. 'Who do I want to BE,' not 'what do I want to ACHIEVE?'
 2. How do I want to travel?
- Self-care is the vehicle to your wellness. This will be different for each of us. Do you like to wake before your family to have a few moments to yourself? Do you like to find some time for exercise, maybe a quick walk after supper? Do you practice any deep breathing techniques?
3. Who can help you on this journey?

We all need a little help from our

friends! Who in your life can you trust to help hold you accountable? Who in your circle can give you an outside the box view of you?

4. How will I know if I am moving along the journey?

Schedule some check-ups along with way. Be realistic and honest with yourself and friends.

5. Finally, give yourself grace for bumps and hills along the way!

Don't let the time of year and all the tasks before you overwhelm and steal your joy. Instead, give yourself permission to take care of your wellness so that you can meet all the other demands in life. Remember, your friends at K-State Research and Extension have resources to offer!

For more information, please contact Tara Solomon-Smith, tsolomon@ksu.edu, or by calling 620-724-8233.

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THE WAY WEST

By Jim Gray

The Promised Land

Before there was an official Kansas Territory the larger area including present-day Kansas was known as Nebraska Territory. The organization of Nebraska Territory began with U. S. Congressman Stephen A. Douglas in 1844. Prior to that time the country west of Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas was generally referred to as "The Indian Country." Douglas envisioned a large belt of land through the center of Indian Country he called Nebraska. His great hope was that the nation's first transcontinental railroad would be built through the Platte River valley of his "Nebraska Territory."

To the south, the Kansa tribe and the Kansas River lent the name of "Kansas" to Nebraska's central portion lying west of the City of Kansas on the Missouri River.

Douglas argued that the greatest barrier to settlement of Nebraska was the static border of Indian Country west of the previously mentioned states. "Should not this barrier be broken down?... [or] are our railroads and highways to the Pacific there to end?" A second bill proposed organization of a line of protective military posts on the road to California and Oregon. Douglas envisioned "a continuous line of

settlements from the Mississippi to the Pacific," supported by a modern railroad with telegraph communications.

By 1847 Douglas was a U.S. senator. Across the west new lands were brought under U.S. control following the Mexican War. The old issue of slavery as it applied to the new territories became a contentious issue. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 that designated legal slavery in southern states could not reasonably be applied across the great expanse. The dispute brought heated and divisive debate to Congress.

Henry Clay led negotiations to find a settlement. With the support of Senator Douglas, a set of bills known as the Compromise of 1850 defused the discordant Congress. The compromise allowed self-determination in the question of slavery as states entered the Union.

In 1852 newspaper editors and engaged citizens took up the cause for Nebraska to be organized for settlement. Just north of Kansas City at Parkville, Missouri, residents convened a public meeting on June 17th "to petition Congress for the organization of the Territory of Nebraska. The

petition recognized that "the limits of the United States have been extended to the shores of the Pacific Ocean," including Oregon, California, Utah and New Mexico. Therefore, the "open space between the two flanks of civilization," should be made available to the many thousands of citizens emigrating over "lands of great fertility" which were withheld from settlement "under existing circumstances." The petition found it necessary to "extinguish" Indian title to the land in deference to settlement by American citizens who were expected to bring civilization to the "dreary and waste" of an undeveloped land. The petition suggested that "domiciling the Indians," on small parcels of land meant for "cultivation," would be the proper course of action.

An eventual Nebraska bill was introduced into Congress during the winter of 1852-1853. The bill passed in the House of Representatives, but was defeated in the Senate. However, momentum was growing in the west.

At the Wyandot Council House (present-day Kansas

City, Kansas) "citizens of Nebraska Territory" met July 26, 1853, to begin the formation of a territorial government. At Kickapoo village, four miles north of Fort Leavenworth, a meeting was held September 20th to draft resolutions which included organization of Nebraska Territory, stipulating organization only after negotiations had been completed concerning Indian land title. These actions created great excitement on the frontier, but the proceedings that had been convened without legal authorization were largely ignored by Congress.

On January 9-10, 1854, several hundred "border agitators" met at St. Joseph, Missouri, for a Nebraska Delegate Convention. Although invited, Stephen Douglas was unable to attend. He sent a letter outlining his efforts to bring Nebraska Territory to fruition. He reiterated his most important points. The "Indian barrier" to the west needed to be eliminated for the country to achieve greatness as an "Ocean-bound Republic." Douglas insisted that railroads, telegraph communications, and continuous

settlement from the Atlantic to the Pacific must be demanded by the public at large. Douglas complained that the great national controversy over slavery was consuming the nation and diverting public attention away from the importance of building a prosperous nation. In closing, Douglas hoped that the Compromise of 1850 would bring the slavery issue to an acceptable conclusion.

The convention passed resolutions and produced a document very similar to that of the 1852 petition. Stephen Douglas had toiled for ten years to realize the dream of making one nation by populating the unorganized open spaces. The elements of territorial organization were taking shape as all eyes turned to the promise of settlement of new lands of great fertility on The Way West.

"The Cowboy," Jim Gray is author of the book *Desperate Seed: Ellsworth Kansas on the Violent Frontier*, Ellsworth, KS Contact Kansas Cowboy, 220 21st RD Geneseo, KS Phone 785-531-2058 or kansascowboy@kans.com.

Tomorrow's Agribusiness Leaders program announces 23rd Class

The selection committee for the Tomorrow's Agribusiness Leaders (TAL) program met in early December and finalized the roster for the 2020 TAL class.

The committee, comprised of former TAL graduates chose: Aaron Anderson (Nutrien Ag Solutions); Hillary Birtell (CoMark Equity Alli-

ance); Kalen Cromwell (Farmers Cooperative Grain Association); Kiley DeDonder (WinField United); Micala Dummit (The Scoular Company); Brice Elnicki (Producers Cooperative Association of Girard); Amy Fairchild (KFSA); Scott Moseley (KC Supply Company); Tyler Peterson (Pride Ag Resources); and Spencer Reames (MKC) to complete the 23rd class.

The program, which began in 1998, is a jointly sponsored leadership development course designed to teach members of Kansas Grain and Feed Association (KGFA) and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association (KARA) about the state and federal legislative process and how to be a better leader within the industry.

"Every January, I look forward to the TAL class coming to Topeka for Session I eager to learn about the legislative process and their association," said Ron Seeber, president and CEO of KGFA and KARA. "It's one of the most satisfying parts of my profession to see graduation in November where they walk away with a wealth of experience on both the state and federal govern-

ment. The program is very beneficial to our industry because later, when we call on them to contact their legislator about a proposed law, they answer the call every time."

Each class will participate in three sessions designed to improve the leadership skills of Kansas agribusiness men and women through increasing their understanding of the association's mission and activities, teaching the state and federal legislative process, improving leadership and communication skills, and preparing members for possible public service through campaigns or public office.

The class will begin in January with an introduction to the legislative and regulatory arena in Kansas with keynotes provided by legislative leaders. The group will travel to Washington, D.C., in July for personal visits with Kansas' congressional delegation on Capitol Hill. The final portion of the program teaches the class how to develop into an informed and confident leader in their profession with presentations provided by Wichita State University and the associations' elected leadership.

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Kansas Farm Bureau honors tradition and heritage of family farms

Kansas Farm Bureau is recognizing "Sesquicentennial Farms" in conjunction with its annual "Century Farm" program. The Century Farm program honors farms with owners or operators related to the original farm owner/operator for 100 years by Dec. 31, 2020. The Sesquicentennial Farm recognition goes beyond that to farms in the same family for 150 years.

"Kansas farmers and ranchers have a lot to be proud of," Rich Felts, Kansas Farm Bureau president, says. "One thing we take pride in is our value in the traditions and strong family ties of rural living. Kansas Farm Bureau is honored to celebrate those through the Century Farm and Sesquicentennial Farms programs."

The deadline for consideration to be part of the 2020 programs is May 15. Complete details for qualification and applications for both programs can be obtained at county Farm Bureau offices across Kansas or on the KFB website, <https://www.kfb.org/Get-Involved/Century-Farm-Program>.

New veterinary medicine research projects take on foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever

High-priority diseases in cattle and swine will be tackled by three researchers in the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine with grants totaling nearly \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service.

Jürgen Richt, Regents distinguished professor and director of the Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases, received a \$150,000 USDA ARS grant for "Evaluation of Novel Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus Vaccine Candidates with Broad Breadth of Protection — Phase II."

With a \$176,900 grant, Mike Sanderson, professor of epidemiology and associate director of the Center for Outcomes Research and Epidemiology, is leading the project "Simulation Modeling of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Outbreaks in Livestock in the U.S."

"Actions Supporting the Development of an African Swine Fever Virus Live Attenuated DIVA Vaccine" is under the direction of Jishu Shi, professor of vaccine immunology, with a \$640,720 grant.

Both Sanderson's and Richt's projects focus on foot-and-mouth disease, which affects livestock production in many regions of the world, including much of Asia and Africa.

"Foot-and-mouth disease is a high-priority transboundary disease that would severely impair livestock health and production if introduced to the U.S.," Sanderson said. "The goal of this research is to model outbreak and control scenarios in the U.S. to improve preparedness and identify optimal disease response strategies to mitigate the impacts of a potential foot-and-mouth disease outbreak."

Because the foot-and-mouth disease virus is antigenically diverse, Richt said vaccines must be matched to target certain viral isolates to be effective.

"The objective of this research project is to support the development of novel foot-and-mouth disease virus vaccine candidates and determine their immunogenicity in its natural host," Richt said. "It will also help generate new knowledge on next-generation vaccines for this virus, with broader activity that will ultimately help to prevent and control foot-and-mouth disease."

Shi's research is centered on the development of control strategies against African swine fever virus, a threatening swine disease that has become a major issue in China and other Asian countries.

"The collaboration with USDA ARS is a valuable

partnership for us in African swine fever vaccine research and highlights the importance of the K-State Biosecurity Research Institute as a key facility for K-State researchers working on high-consequence animal diseases," Shi said. "It will strengthen our capability in research that will be related to the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility, or NBAF, and provide new impetus for our long-standing partnership with USDA ARS research scientists."

The Biosecurity Research Institute, known as BRI, is a biosafety-level 3 and biosafety-level 3 agriculture research facility that allows for the study of high-consequence pathogens affecting plants, animals and food products, including zoonotic pathogens that infect humans. NBAF will be the nation's foremost animal disease research facility and is being built by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security adjacent to K-State's Manhattan campus.

The two objectives of Shi's project are the development of accompanying differentiation of infected from vaccinated animals, or DIVA, tests for the African swine fever virus live attenuated DIVA candidate developed by the ARS, and the development of a stable cell line supporting the replication of those vaccine candidates.

Meadowlark Extension District offers crop production meeting opportunities

By David G. Hallauer, Meadowlark District Extension agent, crops & soils/horticulture

Winter is Extension meeting season and January will not disappoint. In addition to Farm Bill meetings, a host of other opportunities are coming up as well.

If you're a soybean producer, consider a KSU Soybean Production School, sponsored by the Kansas Soybean Commission. Topics will include weed control, crop production practices, soil fertility, and insect/disease management. Our NEK versions will be held on Wednesday, January 22 at two locations. The morning session will be at the Cedar

Ridge Restaurant (four miles NW of Atchison) running from 9:30 to 1:30. RSVP by January 17 to Ray Ladd (cladd@ksu.edu). The afternoon session runs from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Helvering/Senior Center in Marysville. RSVP by January 17 to Anastasia Johnson, anastasia@ksu.edu. There is no cost to attend. Online registration is available: <http://bit.ly/KSUSoybean>.

Plus, it's not too late to RSVP for the Nutrient Management/Soil Health Workshop on Thursday, January 23rd at the Evangel United Methodist Church (227 Pennsylvania St.) in Holton. Efficient nutrient use will be our focus, with an emphasis on

managing nutrients in an economically and environmentally sound manner.

The program runs from 9:45 to 2:30, with presentations from two KSU Soil Fertility specialists as well as representatives from the Jackson Co. Conservation District, NRCS, KS Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, and area WRAPS groups. RSVP for the sponsored lunch by January 14th to Brian Boeckman at the Jackson County Conservation District at 785-364-3329, extension 136 or via e-mail to brian.boeckman@ks.nacd.net. A program flyer and information can be found online under the Crops and Soils tab at www.meadowlark.k-state.edu.



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KDA Participates in reverse trade mission from Costa Rica

In early December 2019, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and American International Charolais Association hosted a delegation of Costa Rican beef sector stakeholders. The delegates were nominated by the Costa Rican National Institute of Innovation and Transfer in Agricultural Technology (INTA) and included: Allen Monge, Lajitas de Buena Vista S.A.; Juan Carlos, Perla del Río Góngora Co.; Ronnie Cobb, Biofeed Genética; and Franz Heinsohn, Pradera del Norte. KDA was represented on the trade mission by Suzanne-Ryan Numrich, international trade director, and Shirley Acedo, agribusiness development coordinator. David Hobbs, director of activities, represented the American International Charolais Association (AICA).

The reverse trade mission was the result of a joint project that INTA, AICA, the Montana Department of Agriculture and KDA have been

working on since early 2013. The main objective of the project was to improve and expand the Costa Rican beef cattle herd while increasing the opportunity for the sale of U.S. beef cattle genetics.

The multi-year project used Charolais and Red Angus semen for artificial insemination of native Costa Rican cattle, primarily Brahmans and Nelores, to create F1 crosses. Performance data including birth weight, weaning weight and carcass weight were collected on the calves in order to compare the U.S.-sired calves with the Costa Rican-sired calves.

"The U.S.-sired calves had faster rates of growth and higher quality carcasses compared with the native calves," reported Ryan-Numrich. "Higher quality beef is increasing in popularity because of a growing number of middle-class consumers and booming tourism sector. By utilizing U.S. genetics to produce F1 crosses, Costa Rican



A delegation of Costa Rican beef sector stakeholders visit the Smoky Y Ranch Red Angus in Monument, as part of a reverse trade mission in December, including (from left) Juan Carlos, Kelly Younkin, Randall Younkin, Cody Younkin, Daniel Vega, Ronnie Cobb, Allen Monge, Suzanne Ryan-Numrich and Franz Heinsohn.

cattlemen can improve the efficiency of their calves while producing more desirable and higher quality beef."

The team started the reverse trade mission by attending a beef cattle industry educational seminar at AICA and ended the week at the Wright Charolais 9th Annual Female Sale in Kearney, Missouri. Other ranch visits included: Cody Cattle Company, Scandia; Fink Beef Genetics, Randolph; Hubert Charolais Ranch, Monument; Mushrush Ranches, Strong City; Nextgen Cattle Co., Paxico; Overmiller Red Angus and Gelb-

vieh, Smith Center; Schrader Ranch, Wells; Schumacher Trust Ranch, Hays; Smokey Hill Charolais, Hays; Smoky Y Ranch Red Angus, Monument; and T&S Strand Charolais, Formoso.

"The trade mission provided the Costa Rican cattlemen an opportunity to view Kansas beef cattle genetics in working ranch environments. Kansas seedstock producers that hosted the cattlemen provided answers to many questions from the delegation — from calving ease to feedlot performance," said Hobbs. "From my point of view, the

Costa Rican cattlemen traveled home with solid interest in utilizing Kansas seedstock genetics to improve the efficiency and performance of their bos indicus based cowherds."

The trade mission was organized by KDA and AICA and funded in part by U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. (USLGE). KDA strives to encourage and enhance economic growth of the agriculture industry and the Kansas economy by exploring and expanding both domestic and international marketing opportunities. The Kansas Ag

Growth Project identified the beef sector as a key component for state growth.

KDA is offering two upcoming opportunities to Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses to participate in State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant trade missions planned for 2020: VIC-TAM Asia/Petfood Forum Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, March 24-26; and NAMPO Harvest Day, Bothaville, South Africa, May 12-15. Interested persons should contact Suzanne Ryan-Numrich at suzanne.numrich@ks.gov or 785-564-6704.

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Midwest Farm & Dairy	Hutchinson	877-221-7221
Tim Deters	Baileyville	785-294-0523

The importance of data for commercial cattlemen

By Radale Tiner, American Angus Association
We have all heard people talk about the importance of data, but have you ever given

much thought to how important data truly is? In my nearly eight-year span of being a regional manager for the American Angus Association, I have discovered that many breeders do not fully understand how to take advantage of the data that is available for commercial producers. I hope to share with you how to use the tools available to make more accurate breeding decisions.

One simple tool that I use every day is the pedigree look-up tool. This tool can be found under the management tab on www.angus.org. When you are looking to purchase a bull or to breed to a bull by artificial insemination (AI), it is always a good idea to see how accurate the expected progeny differences (EPDs) are on that bull. If you are breeding heifers, it might be wise to look at the

accuracy of calving ease direct (CED). This would help if you are looking at two bulls with the same CED EPD value, but one bull has a .05 (5%) accurate EPD and another bull has a CED with a .46 (46%) accuracy. You will have fewer surprises with the bull that has a 46% accurate EPD, as opposed to the bull with only 5% accuracy.

The other part of this tool that is very useful for commercial breeders is seeing how the EPDs have changed since you purchased the bulls. Often commercial producers use the original EPDs that were printed in the sale book or what was printed on the original registration papers they received after buying the bull. The American Angus Association updates EPDs every Friday morning. Sometimes there

is minimal change, while other times, when a lot of data has been submitted, we might see significant changes for particular traits.

This is real data at your fingertips, provided to you by the American Angus Association. There is importance of data. The more data that you use when making breeding decisions within your own herd will result in fewer surprises in your calf crop. I encourage all cattlemen to visit with their Angus regional manager for more information on how to utilize this data.

NPPC announces 2020 Lois Britt Memorial Pork Industry Scholarship

The National Pork Producers Council is pleased to announce the 2020 Lois Britt Memorial Pork Industry Scholarship, which is sponsored by CME Group and the National Pork Industry Foundation and is managed and administered by the National Pork Producers Council.

Ten \$2,500 scholarships are awarded to students annually who intend to pursue a career in the pork industry with hopes that they may emerge as pork industry leaders themselves someday. The scholarships are focused at undergraduate students in a two-year swine program or a four-year college of agriculture.

Details on how to apply and who is eligible can also be found online at: <http://nppc.org/programs/scholarships/>

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Predictions for the 2020 U.S. rural economy include challenges for rural economies

The U.S. rural economy will continue to face headwinds in 2020 and is expected to underperform relative to the economy of urban America. Since 2014, GDP growth in rural counties has averaged almost 1% less than in urban counties. That trend is likely to continue without a significant upswing in agricultural commodity prices, energy exploration, rural manufacturing and other industries upon which rural economic growth depend.

Despite that bearish prognosis, there is room for optimism, according to a comprehensive 2020 outlook report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange division. The U.S. farm economy has demonstrated its resiliency in the face of trade wars, extreme weather and other disruptive events. While the downside effects of trade disputes and tariffs will remain severe for many, some ag sectors will see stronger exports and higher prices. Rising animal protein and dairy exports will be a bright spot for producers in 2020.

Despite that bearish prognosis, there is room for optimism, according to a comprehensive 2020 outlook report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange division.

"Most current signals indicate the overall domestic economy is on firm footing, thanks almost exclusively to the consumer," says Dan Kowalski, vice president of CoBank's Knowledge Exchange division. "However, without a meaningful U.S.-China trade deal, the U.S. agricultural economy will continue to struggle with uncertainty in 2020."

The CoBank 2020 outlook report examines 10 key factors that will shape agriculture and market sectors that serve and affect rural communities throughout the United States.

Global economy: Less trade, slower growth

After a year of trade tensions, declining GDP and the slowest global economic growth since the depths of the financial crisis, the world's

leading economies hope to turn the page in 2020. The prognosis, however, offers little to support such optimism. Consumer strength the world over has prevented further slowing in the global economy. The direction and severity of the U.S.-China trade dispute will continue to have the most significant influence on the world economy in 2020. A leveling-off of trade tensions would allow global economic growth to bottom out in early 2020 before showing signs of life later in the year. However, the vulnerable state of the global economy makes it susceptible to contraction if trade conditions worsen.

U.S. economy: Expansion for those left behind

The U.S. economy will enter 2020 decisively split — powered by a resilient and confident consumer but hamstrung by a risk-averse business sector that has stopped investing. Now that stimulus effects from the 2017 tax reform and the 2018 spending bill have faded, the economic expansion will show its age, losing steam in the coming year. There is evidence that since 2017 more people, including those in rural communities, have broadly shared the benefits of economic growth, despite the continual rise in wealth inequality.

Monetary policy: Sustain and prepare

All eyes will be on the central banks as the world inches closer to the end of the longest period of economic growth in history. Japan and Europe are still stimulating their economies with negative interest rates and quantitative easing. After three rate cuts in 2019, the U.S. Federal Reserve is holding a more conservative stance with its target rate near 1.5%. China has the most room to maneuver with its short-term rate just under 3%. All these accommodative stances are made possible because inflation remains inexplicably low despite tightening labor markets. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's role in 2020 is to keep

the late-stage expansion going while simultaneously preparing for the recession that will arrive sooner or later.

U.S. government: Policy and trade up in the air

Ag policy at the federal level has been wrought with uncertainty and volatility. The trade environment for 2020 remains hazy as well. Beyond a possible U.S.-China phase one deal, more progress with China will be a challenge. As a result, it is difficult to see trade as a bright spot in 2020. The current atmosphere in Washington has given way to progress on ag labor legislation and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). However, a protracted partisan fight over impeachment is on tap in the Senate. This rancor makes it difficult to advance legislation that helps agriculture, which would give either side a win for the hotly contested 2020 election. Market Facilitation Program payments to farmers helped make up for persistently low commodity prices in the last year.

U.S. farm economy: Trade uncertainty lingers

Without a substantive U.S.-China trade deal, the U.S. ag economy will continue to struggle with trade uncertainty in 2020 as questions linger as to whether USDA will continue to soften the blow of the trade war for farmers and ranchers with government payments. Amid persistently low commodity prices and rising costs, U.S. farmers and ranchers continue to struggle with low and declining working capital. Farm debt, already at record levels, is expected to continue climbing, as credit quality in farm loans declines, particularly for grain and dairy producers. However, stable farm real-estate values have helped farmers. The resiliency of farmland values, despite the steep drop in net farm income over the years, has allowed farmers to restructure debt and address tight cash flow and liquidity crunches.

Specialty crops: Labor and water in the spotlight

Fruit, nut, and vegetable

markets will continue to face rising production costs in 2020 due to mounting regulations, particularly as they relate to controls over groundwater in California. Regulations under the state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) are about to go into effect and could potentially cause acreage shifts between crops of varying water needs. Other government action in 2020 could have a favorable impact on specialty crop growers. The Farm Workforce Modernization Act currently being debated in Congress is a hopeful sign for an improved regulatory environment for ag labor. If passed, it would help ease the tight labor supply plaguing agriculture.

Grain, farm supply and biofuels: Time to transform

Challenges for the grain sector will persist in 2020, fueled by commodity price pressure, policy uncertainty and export weakness amid growing global supply abundance, especially for corn and soybeans. U.S. wheat producers and exporters, though, may benefit from an improved export pace in 2020 with the Russian wheat crop struggling. Biofuels also face challenges in 2020. U.S. ethanol production, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, is expected to fall by 1.9% in 2019 to 15.8 billion gallons and remain flat in 2020. The outlook for farm supply companies is mixed and continues to be heavily influenced by weather. To improve its value proposition, this sector is actively pursuing vertical and horizontal consolidation.

Dairy and animal protein: Exporting your way to success

With dairy and animal protein production looking toward another year of increased production in 2020, a rebound

in exports will be critical to profitability in both sectors. Per capita consumption of animal protein in the United States will likely set a new record in 2019. Overall dairy consumption in the United States will remain strong in 2020 as Americans continue eating more cheese and butter, but fluid milk will likely continue its long-term decline. Strong demand and rising exports, though, will not erase financial stress at the farm level. Producers of beef, pork, poultry, and dairy will likely experience stress from higher feed costs due to lower crop yields this fall.

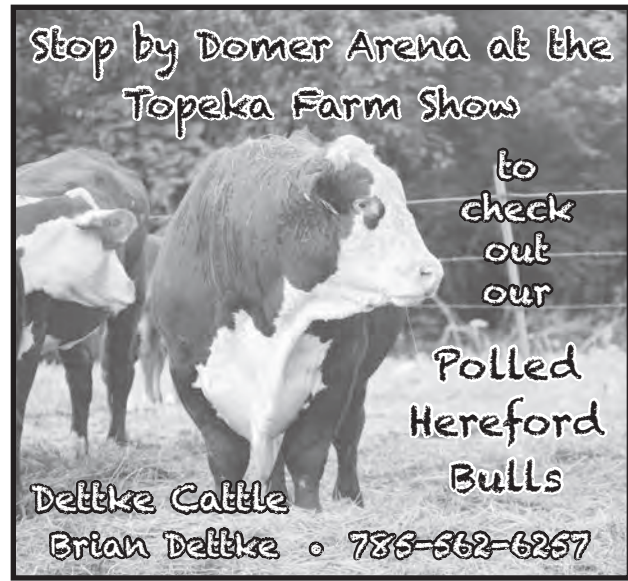
Rural electricity: Demand grows for cleaner, lower-cost power

Companies throughout the electricity supply chain are likely to face heightened, simultaneous demands for cleaner and less-expensive power generation in 2020. These pressures reflect the intense popular concern about climate change, wealth and income inequality, and slowing economic growth — three issues which Americans rank as equally important in recent polling. In many rural communities, these concerns are likely to manifest in more numer-

ous and more vehement calls for greater renewable power generation. For utilities, the task of justifying multi-million-dollar expenditures on new renewable resources will be easier in 2020 as the unsubsidized costs of solar, wind, battery energy storage, and flexible natural-gas-fired resources continue to decline.

Rural communications: Investors have come to buy

Rural and regional telecommunications operators will become targets in 2020 for investors and strategic buyers as the pool of available mid-sized fiber transport companies dries up. Demand for these companies has been so strong that valuations are reaching levels that were unthinkable a few years ago. Mergers and acquisition activity in rural markets should be brisk as the growth in data traffic offers attractive returns for investors, and opportunities for strategic buyers to gain scale and access to new markets. 2020 will also bring the launch of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), the latest broadband incentive program from the Federal Communications Commission and its largest effort to close the urban-rural digital divide.



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Get the dirt at Soil Health U & Trade Show Jan. 22 and 23

Get the dirt on regenerative agriculture at the 2020 Soil Health U & Trade Show, Jan. 22 and 23. The full schedule is available now at www.soilhealthu.net. With two days of expert speakers, producer panels, a trade show with equipment demonstrations, and sessions tailored to a wide variety of soil health questions, there's education for farmers and ranchers of all shapes, sizes and regionalities at this third year of Soil Health U. Speakers like Adam Chappell will discuss the economic benefits of soil health to farm operations, while others like Brian Alexander will help cattlemen understand that pastures need soil health too. New this year is a special breakout session of women leaders in soil health, to talk about how women on the farm can lead the way toward improved soils and profits for their family farms and ranches.

Keynote speakers include: Ray Archuleta, agroecologist and founding partner of Understanding Ag; Lance Gunderson, president of Regen Ag Lab; and Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, president and CEO of Regenerative Agriculture Alliance.

Soil Health U registration is open, at www.soilhealthu.net. Registration is \$125. Student Registration is just \$50. Planning to bring a group of neighbors to Soil Health U? Call 620-227-1834 and ask about discount registrations for parties of 5 or more on the same payment.

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